



Issue No 670
Friday Feb 1 2008
varsity.co.uk

The nominations are in. Find out who's making waves on the Cambridge scene in this year's **OLIVER WYMAN VARSITY 100**

Fashion
Haute cowture
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VARSlTY

The Independent Cambridge Student Newspaper since 1947

From Ukraine with love

» 'Criminal' Ukrainian donations funding language tuition at Cambridge Slavonic Studies Centre

RICHARD POWER SAYEED
News Editor

Language courses at Cambridge are being funded by a central-Asian gas trader described as "criminal" by Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko. RosUkrEnergo, a gas trader which owns the export monopoly on Russian, Uzbek and Turkmen gas flowing into Ukraine, is jointly owned by Gazprom, a company with strong links to the Russian state, and billionaire Ukrainian businessman Dmytro Firtash.

Mr Firtash has been funding Ukrainian language courses at the Department of Slavonic Studies since the beginning of the academic year. The company he jointly owns, RosUkrEnergo, is widely viewed as gradually exposing Ukraine to uncontrolled energy markets, after years of subsidisation by Russia. Many in Ukraine and elsewhere believe that RosUkrEnergo is linked to the Kremlin and to organized crime.

Through his DF Foundation, Mr Firtash has funded the continuation of the course since the beginning of the academic year. The course had been running for several years, funded by external donations, but Mr Firtash's donation, which was a matter of thousands, has made extension of provision possible. Only the origins of much larger financial gifts are regularly examined by the University. Professor Simon Franklin, head of the Department of Slavonic Studies, argued that Ukraine's robust political life is "in itself not a matter for the University." Prof Franklin was adamant, however, that he "would not want to receive funding from unethical sources" or if "I thought that anyone was damaging the interests of Ukraine."

Franklin said he believed it was in the interests both of the UK and of Ukraine that there should be people in this country who are capable of studying and interpreting Ukraine in the depth that it deserves". Such study "just doesn't exist in this country" and "is not going to be supported internally". Earlier this month, Slavonic Studies announced the creation of a five-year temporary lectureship in Ukrainian Studies, funded by an anonymous donation of £500,000. Franklin expressed



Gas pipelines in Ukraine and (inset) Mogilevich, the man who allegedly controls them

hope that the donor would not remain anonymous, and told Varsity that "this is part of a wider attempt to further educate about Ukraine. For instance we're running a Public Lecture on contemporary Ukrainian nationalism at Robinson on the 22nd".

Mr Firtash has also been linked to infamous international gangster Semyon Mogilevich, whose arrest in Moscow was announced last Friday. Mogilevich, who has a degree in Economics, is known as "the Brainy Don", and was described by the British authorities as "one of the world's top criminals".

In Ukraine many have alleged that RosUkrEnergo is linked to Vladimir Putin and to organized crime. First deputy prime minister, Oleksandr Turchynov, has claimed that Mogilevich had a business stake in RosUkrEnergo or was

using it to launder money. An inquiry that he ran into Mogilevich's links to RosUkrEnergo whilst chairman of the Ukrainian Security Service was not completed after he left the post.

Stanislav Belkovsky, previously a political aide to Prime Minister Tymoshenko, told the Financial Times that Tymoshenko had been putting pressure on the Kremlin over RosUkrEnergo, and the "real reason" Mr Mogilevich had been arrested now, after living openly in Moscow for several years, was his connections to gas trading. Mogilevich, whose money-laundering resulted in the collapse of one of Russia's largest private banks, and who apparently offered to sell Osama bin Laden enriched uranium, has been on the FBI's most wanted list since 2003.

But Anthony Fisher, President of The EU-Ukraine Business Council,

told Varsity that it was more likely that this arrest "relates more closely to political dealings in Moscow", and suggested that Prime Minister Tymoshenko, a vocal critic of the Kremlin, did not have sufficient leverage to demand Mogilevich's arrest.

There has been much speculation, however, after it emerged that Zeev Gordon, an Israeli lawyer who has represented Mogilevich in the past, previously worked for Firtash in 2003 when he helped him set up EuralTransGas, which preceded RosUkrEnergo as Central Asian oil trader, and was led by very similar management. Gordon insists that this does not indicate any links between Mogilevich and Firtash. Robert Shetler-Jones, Firtash's DF Group's British chief executive, also denies any links between Mogilevich and Firtash, or that Firtash has a financial interest in Arbat, a cos-

metics giant owned by the man with whom Mogilevich was arrested last week.

Prof Franklin also dismissed such links as "a lot of swirling rumour", and told Varsity that he was "comfortable about every penny that we've received." He said that though he was "very well aware of rumours regarding DF", he didn't want to speak about the company. However, he told Varsity that Mr Firtash was increasingly operating in the legal and geographical context of the EU, and that he was "delighted, if the university can satisfy itself through its normal procedures". Franklin applauded the fact that philanthropy is "beginning to enter the mindset of people who have been successful in Eastern Europe in the last fifteen years, and extending beyond investment in football clubs."

Debate

Barack Obama versus Hillary Clinton

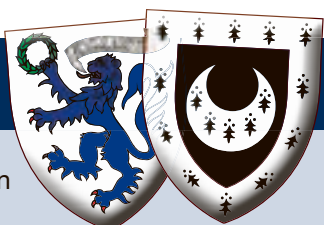
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Face Off

Emma take on Tit Hall in the beauty showdown

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Interview

John Humphreys gets shirty when the tables are turned and he's in the hotseat

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In Brief

Cambridge bursaries on the rise

The Office for Fair Access has published a report on universities' bursaries schemes, the first since top-up fees were introduced. Although there has been an increase in the monetary value of bursaries at Cambridge, from 2008/9 the upper limit at which students from low income homes are entitled to a full Cambridge Bursary will be raised from £18,000 to £25,000. Above that, bursaries will be offered on a tapered basis, up to £60,000.

Katherine Sirrell

Debt double whammy

In the same year that the interest rate on student loans has doubled, plans have been made to include student loan data on credit files, leading graduates to fear their chances of getting on the property ladder will be jeopardized. With the interest rate having gone up from 2.4% to 4.8% this year, students are increasingly complaining that they have been misled over student loans. The new plans propose to include details of missed loan payments on credit files which could lead to even more first-time buyers being turned down for mortgages.

Clementine Dowley

Altercation at the Union

It has been alleged that the Cambridge Union's Secretary Vice President (SVP) punched the former President during a members' business meeting on Monday. James Robinson, Union SVP is purported to have raised his fist in anger and punched former Union chief Ali Al-Ansari in outrage at his resignation. A Union spokesperson confirmed "During a members' business meeting this afternoon a brief altercation occurred between the Vice President and a former President of the Union based on a disputed claim. The Vice-President left the chamber and business resumed".

Katherine Sirrell

Lost for words

Cambridge's very own chatterbox pet parrot Harley has been traumatised by his experience when he was let loose in the British wilderness. Harley escaped his owner's house through an open door and after spending four days in the wild has lost his voice. Prior to the incident he could recite his telephone number and call his owners 'Mum' and 'Dad'. His owners blame wild bird bullies for triggering the trauma by not letting the parrot share their food.

Clementine Dowley

Knicker-thief nicked

» Trinity Hall intruder jailed for 30 months at Cambridge Crown Court

ISABEL SHAPIRO
News Editor

A man has been sentenced to 30 months imprisonment after being found guilty of two counts of burglary at Trinity Hall's student accommodation last term.

Mr Arkadisz Jakusz, a nineteen-year-old Polish man, was linked to the Trinity Hall break-in after being arrested for sexually inappropriate behaviour at a Cambridge nightclub in December. His fingerprints matched those found at Bishop Bateman's Court after the intrusion in November when police conducted forensic tests.

During the break-in, two students were attacked while asleep in their beds, and one unoccupied room was ransacked. In their report to police, students described Mr Jakusz's erratic behaviour, including his alleged throttling of two students and theft of underwear from a girl's room. Mr Jakusz has claimed not to remember the incident owing to his excessive consumption of alcohol that evening.

Following a hearing at the Magistrate's Court in December, Jakusz was remanded in custody and committed for trial to Cambridge Crown Court where he appeared last Friday. A source has suggested to Varsity that this process may have been prolonged as he was being investigated in connection with a number of other incidents. It was confirmed during the trial that Mr Jakusz has previously been sentenced in Poland but the details of the crime are unknown. Mr Jakusz only left Poland three months ago, moving to Cambridge to

start a new life as a car washer in a supermarket car park.

Julia Tilley, who felt "violated and disturbed" when her room was ransacked, attended the trial. Assisted by a translator and with his family watching from the public gallery, Mr Jakusz pleaded guilty to two charges of burglary, which included the theft of suitcases, female underwear and swimwear. Despite there being no jury present at the trial, Mr Jakusz and his solicitor asked to bring forward the sentencing, which allowed a verdict to be reached the same day.

"It was really weird to hear the judge talking about my knickers and to hear the intruder's voice. I'm glad to see that justice has been done, but I feel sorry for the man; he's so young and he'd only been in England a few months," said Tilley, who was unsettled but relieved by the trial's outcome. However, there is consid-

Students have nicknamed Mr Jakusz 'the throttler'

erable consternation among students as to why the charges did not take into account Mr Jakusz's physical assaults.

"It was definitely more than just burglary, he throttled me," said Tom Cheshire, who claims to have woken with the intruder's hands around his neck. Mr Jakusz has since been nicknamed "The Throttler" by students involved in the incident last year.



Victims Julia Tilley and Tom Cheshire outside Bishop Bateman's Court, where the incident took place

But a spokesperson at The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) assured Varsity that "The correct charge has been made". The CPS explained that a charge of burglary would have taken into account the presence of victims and the trauma they suffered. A source has suggested to Varsity that further charges may not have been pressed due to the negative identification of Mr Jakusz by one of the assaulted students in an identity parade last month.

Dr Nick Bampos, Senior Tutor at

Trinity Hall did not wish to make any further statement on the development of the case, but reiterated that the additional safety measures that had been promised for the Bishop Bateman's Court accommodation had been put in place. "Everything we said we'd do, we've acted upon" he said. Security cameras and lights have recently been installed, allowing students to sleep soundly in the knowledge that everything possible has been done to ensure the future security of the building.



Intrepid pair reach Warsaw in sponsored RAG event

Last weekend, 44 pairs of intrepid Cambridge students took part in the RAG Jailbreak, a charity event sponsored by KPMG. Students blagged, hitchhiked and flirted their way as far from Cambridge as possible in 36 hours. Penniless but enterprising jail breakers scaled the breadth of Europe, reaching as far as Warsaw, Madrid, Tarifa and Budapest. Last year the RAG Jailbreak helped raise over £150,000 for over 80 local, national and international charities.

Isabel Shapiro

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Tarique Akhtar, who posed as a Trinity student for almost one year

Imposter apprehended after year-long deceit

» Bogus mathmo banned from Trinity College

» Imposter made advances on numerous girls

CLEMENTINE DOWLEY
News Editor

A man who has been posing as a student of Trinity College for almost a year has been apprehended by porters.

The young man, who goes by the name of Tarique Akhtar, was approached by porters in the College library after complaints were made by genuine students. When asked for identification, he was unable to produce anything other than another student's butterfly card. He has since been banned from the College.

While masquerading as a student at the College, Akhtar was allegedly involved in a series of incidents including faking his identity, illegally accessing a student's computer account, and unauthorised use of College facilities. A fourth-year Engineer claimed to have seen Akhtar in the graduate common room. She said: "There's a kitchen downstairs and we were all cooking a meal. He just sat on the sofa, watching us, for about two hours."

Blog entries entitled "Life in the University" and dating from May 2007 suggest that Akhtar has been masquerading as a student for some time. In an entry dated 8 November 2007, Akhtar wrote: "It's been a little over six months since I got to England and the first term is half way over." His blogs also display a detailed knowledge of life as a student at Cambridge: Akhtar claims to have been to "many supervisions" and to be enjoying the "lecture course format" of the Cambridge system.

But according to Dr Rob Pollen, Junior Bursar at Trinity, "there is no record of any student called Tarique Akhtar ever having studied at Trinity."

Porters were alerted after reports of Akhtar's lecherous behav-

our. One female undergraduate at Trinity claims he passed her a note in the library which read: "I'm really sorry but I can't stop staring at you. Bless you." Another female student reports receiving Facebook messages from him which said: "Hey, it's great to see somebody in a good shape, bless you." The student told Varsity: "I didn't reply. I have no idea how he knows what college I'm at." A fourth year engineer reported a similar experience: "Once, in the computer room, he started telling my friend how difficult he found being at Trinity because there were so many beautiful girls there. He was really weird," she said.

"He is not a member of the College and has been asked not to enter it again."

Very little is known about the imposter. His Facebook profile states: "This is Tarique Akhtar from Gitx-aala Nation, born in North India to my mama Rashda. Youngest in family of 6, but I moved to United States just in time for warm weather and a power crisis... I am happily unmarried to none. Currently working with Nasa-MIT-Cambridge-Langley 2015 moon probe." He claims to have "attended Harvard and Radcliffe before coming to Cambridge." But in a blog entry dated April 9, 2007, Akhtar writes: "One question that people always ask me is, 'Tarique, are you an international student?' Sometimes I say yes, and other times I say no. To be honest, I don't really know myself."

Akhtar has been using Facebook to document the events of recent

days. After his apprehension by porters, Akhtar changed his status to: "Tarique has started campaigning against misbehaving porters" and created a Facebook group with this aim in mind. "I find the behaviour of porters hostile if not offensive. They behave like they are some kind of guardian of a great treasure and you are a thief who is determined to steal it. Go to Stanford and tell them at the front door that you want to visit the campus and they will send a lovely golf cart to collect you. Go to Cambridge and tell them you want to go to the college [and] they will bug you. Its [sic] time to stand for change - please lend your hands." But yesterday his status read: "Tarique is sorry about everything and thinks that the last two days were really meaningful and blessed."

The fact that the imposter has remained undiscovered for almost a year has prompted fears over the efficiency of security measures in place at the College. Tobias Vernon, a first year at Trinity, said: "It's worrying that a man can survive posing as a student unnoticed for so long. Now I have no confidence about who here is an imposter and who is an actual student." Although Porters refused to comment on College security, Dr Pollen said: "In any action that we have taken, the College's primary concern has been to safeguard the safety and welfare of students."

College officials are now on the lookout for Akhtar. The Senior Tutor, Professor John Rallison, said: "He is not a member of the College and has been asked not to enter it again." However, Akhtar has reportedly been sighted there in the last few days. Second-year Trinity student Beatrice Perry told Varsity that she saw Akhtar as recently as yesterday. "He was walking up King's Parade in the direction of Trinity".

CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL DUBLIN

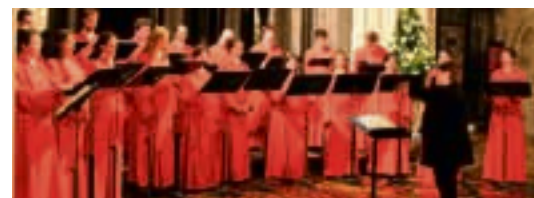
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"People who settle their disputes with fists rather than words have no place in the Union."

*Former Union President Michael Jacobson,
"Shamed VP in Union brawl row"
See front-page article in yesterday's TCS newspaper.*



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2008



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President's Committee

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President's Committee is every Friday at 5:15pm in the Dining Room

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Post-coital controversy

» CUSU President targeted by radicals after international coverage of the Varsity Sex Survey

KAROLINA SAAR

CUSU President Mark Fletcher has received hate mail because of his response to Varsity's survey of the sex lives of Cambridge students.

Fletcher, whose comments on the survey's findings printed alongside statistics in last week's Varsity were quoted by Fox News, has since been bombarded with verbal abuse from American readers offended by his failure to condemn student promiscuity.

In response to the survey's discovery that mathematicians are the least sexually active group, Fletcher commented, "it's obvious mathematicians haven't found the winning formula yet." On being told that medics were the most promiscuous group, he said, "it's good to see that 'Doctors and Nurses' is still a popular game." Both these comments were printed in the survey's accompanying article. One critic condemned Fletcher's attitude as "very immature and irresponsible." Another letter-writer, appalled by Fletcher's failure to express disapproval at the "immoral conduct" discovered by the survey, told him: "It's attitudes such as yours that are literally KILLING our young people." Nancy McInnes told Fletcher to "grow up and have some self respect." She also recommended that he look to "Christ's teachings" in order to do so.

Fletcher expressed surprise at the comments, and told Varsity: "My general reaction is that the survey was meant to be light-hearted. It wasn't scientific or thorough, it was meant as a fun read for Cambridge students. My comments reflected this. As for the people who sent me the letters, I'd really urge them to read the whole story before commenting in the future."

The survey published by Varsity last week has received widespread coverage in the national press. Its findings were reported in The Daily Telegraph, The Daily Mail

and The Cambridge News. In response to the finding that 60% of students admitted to never having been tested for sexually transmitted diseases, The Daily Telegraph expressed concern over the safety of sex among the University's students and drew attention to rumours of high levels of prostitution amongst Cambridge students. In coverage by The Daily Mail, Cambridge has been branded "The University of the Blindingly Obvious". The newspaper seemed distinctly unimpressed by Varsity's findings. "It's another piece of research that makes you wonder why they bothered - apparently students who have the most sex get the worst

"it's attitudes like yours that are literally KILLING our young people"

results. Watch out for more news from the University of the Blindingly Obvious in future editions of the Daily Mail".

The findings of the investigation have also fuelled rivalry between different student communities in Cambridge. One student of Social and Political Sciences (SPS), the subject ranked second in terms of sexual experience with an average of seven sexual partners, told Varsity "The common view is that SPS is an easy subject, and consequently, we have more time to go out, flirt and get laid. But I disagree - medics came top, and they work harder than anyone. We're just hot." In response to finding himself a student of the subject shown to have the greatest number of virgins, a first year mathematician at Girton told Varsity "To be fair I think most male mathmos would probably run away if they so much as sighted a girl on the horizon".



The hate mail
>> After his seemingly innocuous comments, the CUSU President received a torrent of angry emails from the religious right in America

Mr Fletcher,

I just read your comments praising themed students for their immoral conduct and laughing about the math students who have not yet found the winning formula. It seems you very forgot to observe the findings of the study. Didn't it say that students with multiple partners have poorer grades? And isn't health care in a crisis in your country? Now it would seem a thinking individual would understand the connection that it is imperative our medical professionals have the best educational background possible. Obviously your presence at Cambridge is not because you are a thinking individual, but because you hooked onto privilege and got in over other more deserving individuals who display good judgement and intelligence. People like you mock morality and think its cute to do poorly in school. One day when you may be in an emergency or have a debilitating disease, you'll be the one to whine and cry your care isn't up to your expectations. You can't have it both ways, Mark. Laugh now. But people like you are the ones who are always the biggest complainers. Your 15 seconds of fame now hangs across your mocking face as a mask of shame.

Mike Shields, St. Paul, Minnesota

Mr Fletcher,

How sad that you opened your mouth and showed your ignorance. If you think many sexual partners is good for any kid (and you ARE still a kid), you had better check the stats on pesky sexually transmitted disease, HIV, unwanted pregnancy, abortion, neglect by sexual partners, loneliness caused by the neglect, feelings of being used (especially w/ regard to females), etc. And your quick wit did not make you sound bright or funny; rather, it made you (a representative of our young people) sound very immature and irresponsible. Grow up, Mr. Fletcher, and have some self respect. You may attend a very good university (I did as well), but you have MUCH to learn! It's attitudes such as yours that are literally KILLING our young people. I realize Christ's teachings aren't considered 'progressive' in your idealistic world, but they have proven true time and time again.

Nancy McInnes

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See the front-page article in yesterday's TCS newspaper.

Union hosts Holocaust Memorial event

KATHERINE SIRRELL
Senior Reporter

The Cambridge Union Society hosted a Holocaust Memorial event last week to mark the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

The event featured speeches from two Holocaust survivors as well as a survivor of the genocide in Darfur.

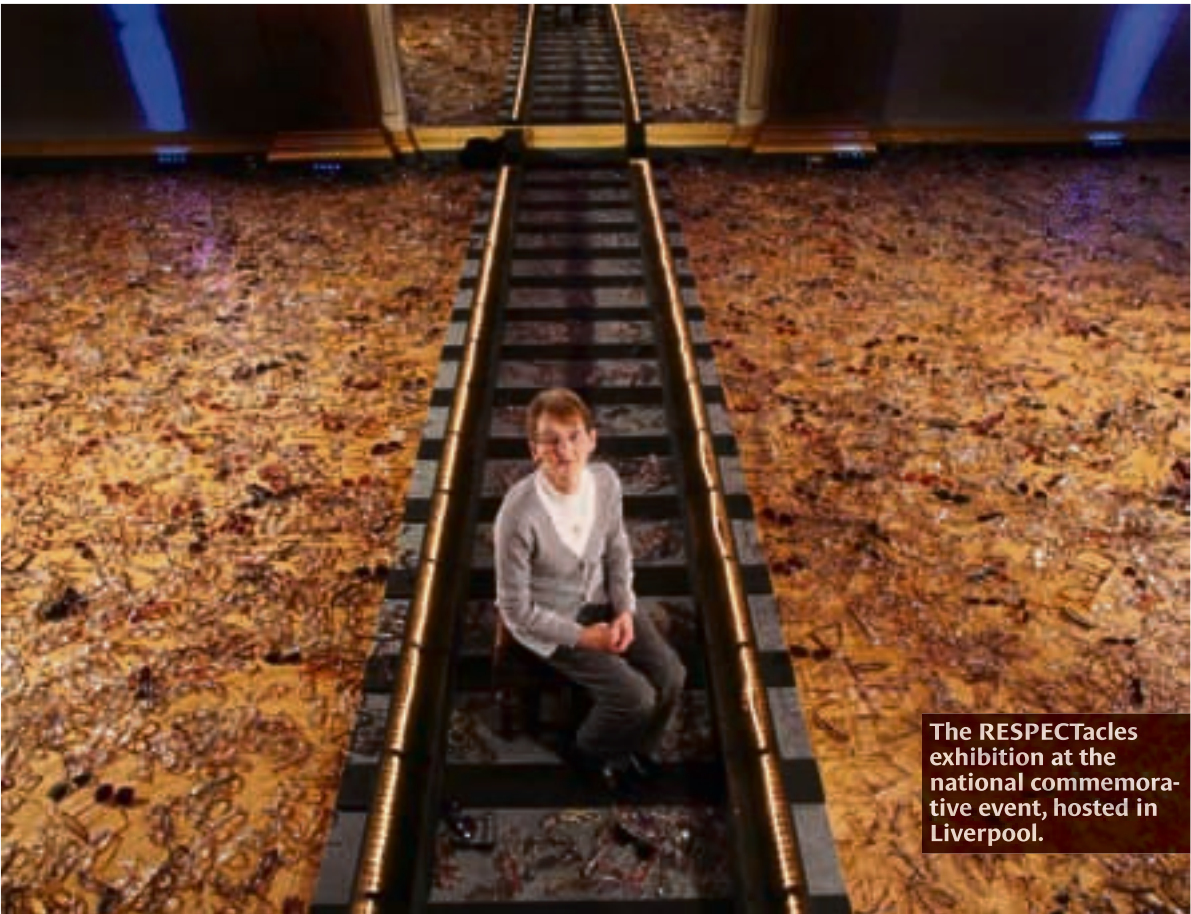
Eva Clarke and Joseph Perl shared their harrowing memories of their time at concentration camps. Perl described how he had “become an old man” at the age of ten as he “witnessed man’s inhumanity to man” at seven concentration camps in Czechoslovakia. Clarke, who was born in a concentration camp, recounted her mother’s struggle to survive “as a scarcely living pregnant skeleton.” She has been telling her story to groups of young people for years and illustrated her speech with family photographs and holocaust art.

The event also drew attention to ongoing genocide and ethnic cleansing. Darfuri asylum-seeker Hammid Haiki gave an account of his experiences growing up in modern war-torn Darfur. Ben Helfgott, a spokesperson from the Holocaust Memorial Trust and a former detainee of the Reisenstadt, told Varsity why such

recent testimonies are so vital in commemorating the past atrocities: “The Holocaust was a defining moment of the twentieth century. Tragically, it was not an isolated incident and even now in Darfur people are being persecuted and killed on the basis of their ethnicity. Humanity must work to learn the lessons of previous genocides and stand up to prejudice wherever it exists.”

The Holocaust has been commemorated officially since 2005, when the UN’s General Assembly passed a resolution designating 27th January as annual Holocaust Memorial Day. The day is set aside to remember the lives lost, educate others about Nazi persecution, and prompt action in the UK against modern forms of discrimination.

Asher Steene, President of the Cambridge University Jewish Society, believes that the evening was a real success and hopes to continue the Society’s involvement with such events. He said: “It was a very poignant evening commemorating tragedies both past and present, and we hope that these messages resonate around our University. Cambridge University Jewish Society is proud to be a part of such a diverse community on campus and we hope that these productive and important relationships continue to thrive.”



The RESPECTacles exhibition at the national commemorative event, hosted in Liverpool.

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The VARSITY

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Tuesday 5th

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Jesus
Copy that

A group of highly esteemed damsels (now in distress) were revelling with visiting friends on a Friday evening, when the formal frolics and bar boozing were drawn to a close with the usual guided tour of the college's best facilities. Concluding with a tour of the college library and its many sculptural offerings, one slightly intoxicated wench suggested ending the night's naughtiness in the style more common to an office Christmas party. Thus, the ladies went forth to the photocopier room and began to perch their derrieres on the machine in question. One unfortunate maiden, whilst mounting the unsuspecting contraption, cried out in shock as the glass surface shattered beneath her. Shrieks rang out as the revellers made a dash for the door. The only thing that slowed down their hasty escape involved the retrieval of the photocopier card from the damaged instrument and the concealment of their faces from the CCTV cameras with their gowns.

Christ's
In the blue

On Tuesday evening, four Christ's students, three female and one male, were typically under the influence. Fortunately for their drunken amusement, one of the four was a member of the College JCR, and had access to Welfare equipment and its untold delights. And what else would an upstanding Cambridge student do with a stash of pregnancy tests, other than liberally douse them with piss? Which is just what they did; apparently all four of them are expecting.

Queens'
Tinkle tinkle

To regular Spies readers, it will come as a surprise that a Queens' entry doesn't involve our favourite swordsman. This week, the spotlight rests on a MIT exchange student, paying his first return visit in over six months. Upon drunkenly collapsing on the floor of his temporary landlady, he soon needed to relieve himself. To this end, he knelt up, unzipped, and was just about to break the seal when the other roommate's boyfriend had the good fortune to be passing through. Having reconnoitred the situation, he caught (a strong word - he estimates an 85% success rate) the liquor in a succession of 2 mugs and, alarmingly, an ash tray.

McDonald's offers A-level equivalent

CAITLIN BREEZE

In a government initiative to increase the number of skilled workers, fast-food giant McDonald's has been awarded the same status as the University of Cambridge's OCR exam board. In conjunction with Tribal Cambridge Training and Development, the company has developed vocational qualifications equivalent to GCSEs and A-levels. This is the first time that commercial companies have been allowed to award nationally recognised qualifications based on their own work-

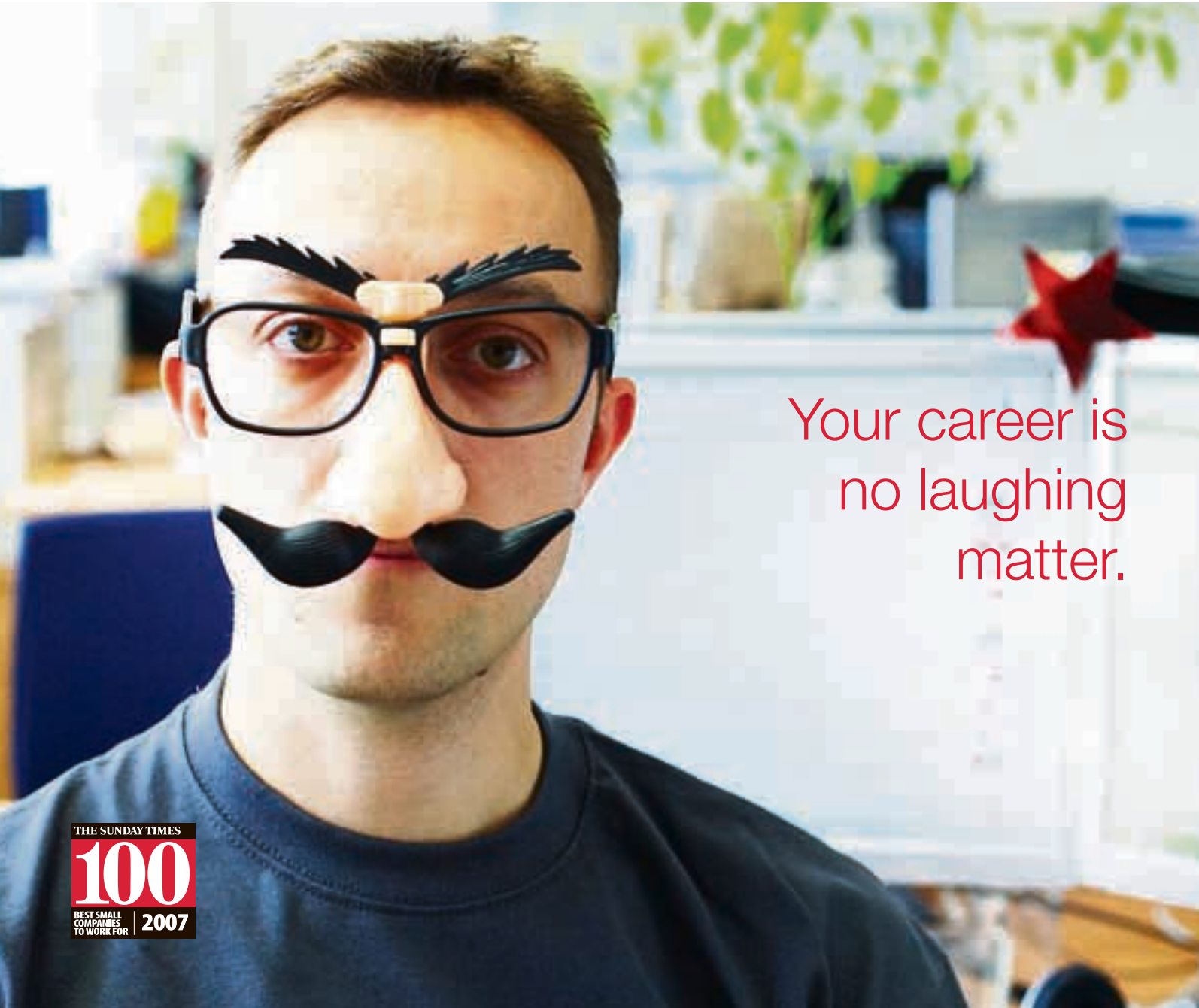
place training schemes in the UK. The "basic shift manager" course will be implemented from this January, training staff in skills such as human resources and marketing. McDonald's spokesman Steven Heywood claimed that the qualifications, which will cover all aspects for day-to-day running of a McDonald's restaurant, including basic operational requirements, finance, marketing and human resources, are "just as valuable" as academic ones, "if not more so." He said that employees could use the scheme "as a spring-board" for university application.

But critics have complained that the qualifications are not sufficiently

"a qualification in burger flipping"

academic. The results of a recent survey showed that 40% of university admissions tutors were "not likely" or "not at all likely" to accept students who had taken the new Diplomas. A spokesperson from the Cambridge

Admissions Office said: "It is hard to see how these qualifications would impart the knowledge or develop the skills needed to flourish on the particular range of courses offered at the University of Cambridge, so taken alone they would not meet our entry requirements." The scheme has attracted public derision with talk of "McGCSE's" and "International Maccalaureates". Cambridge GCSE student Sean said: "It sounds like a bit of a joke. It's unfair that they can get a GCSE for making burgers when I have to work."



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Sex sells

The Varsity Sex Survey, published last week, was an amusing and light-hearted look at the self-declared sexual habits of Cambridge students. It was not intended to reveal any shocking facts or statistics, and it did not do so. But the reaction from outside Cambridge shows how wrongly the survey was perceived by the rest of the world. It is easy to dismiss the handful of rabid Americans who responded angrily to Mark Fletcher's jokey comments on the survey when they were reprinted in Fox News. But the reaction from our own national press is less excusable: the Daily Telegraph has claimed that the survey shows a lack of awareness of sexual health issues, and many newspapers were delighted with our finding of a negative correlation between sexual activity and academic achievement. Much of what they printed was artificial and arbitrary, chosen from isolated statistics in the survey; this episode has proven nothing but the media's prurient thrill at being able to print "Cambridge" and "sex" in the same headline. The press is desperate for stories which will show Cambridge students to be in any way decadent or over-privileged, and will leap on any scrap of evidence, however slight. It is sad that the outside world is only interested in Cambridge when they think they can report a scandal; their response to this non-scandal has been unedifying.

Mob advantage

It has been revealed that the University's Ukrainian course is being funded by a company which is alleged to have links with a Ukrainian mobster. If true, this is extremely unfortunate, and the University must be more discerning in its choice of sponsors. But the fact remains that without the support of Group DF, there would be no Ukrainian at Cambridge. Perhaps, rather than being condemned, the University should instead be commended for being willing to go to any lengths in its pursuit of academic excellence and a broad curriculum. Private enterprise is becoming increasingly important in providing the funds for education, and it is somewhat heartening to see that Cambridge is determined not to be left behind.

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

A sexual complaint

Sir,

I wish to write in complaint about the innate discrimination shown in the sex survey produced by Varsity (Issue 669). In particular, the survey failed to recognise any sexual orientations except heterosexuality, homosexuality and bisexuality. As such, someone who is, say, asexual would be unable to complete the survey in full.

With increasing acceptance of asexuality as a sexual orientation as opposed to some affliction or disease, a growing number of people are willing to admit that they are asexual. One must, therefore, question why Varsity only recognises the most common sexualities.

I hope that such an omission will not happen in the future.

Yours faithfully,

James Sharpe
Fitzwilliam College

Union at the crossroads

Sir,

On Saturday Members of the Union Society will have the opportunity to ratify James Robinson, current Secretary and Vice-President, to the Constitutional Committee of the Union Society. The importance of this can not be understated as the Secretary will bring substantial positive input to this process.

The Union is at a turning point. We are struggling to survive with archaic procedures in an ever changing world. To restructure and reform an old institution such as the Union requires a new approach and a new constitution.

If the Union is to remain a student-run Society as it moves into its third century it is vital that you ratify the Secretary to the Constitutional Committee as he has considerable knowledge with regard to the Society's internal structures and how they need to be changed.

Whilst some may voice concerns over the Secretary's suitability for this role, and even his continuation as Secretary, it is worthwhile remembering that he is the most dedicated servant the Union has seen in many years. We have seen unprecedented and sustained attacks upon his character for many reasons including attempting to deal with the accounting irregularities created by former Officers and for subsequently refusing to cover them up.

Over the past year we have fought against huge opposition to remove the nepotistic bar to getting involved in the Union Society. This was a fight worth fighting. We look forward to continuing to open up the Society to all members. We would relish the opportunity to continue to move from an opaque unaccountable system to a transparent and wholly accountable one where achievements are rewarded and and failure results in appropriate sanction. This will lead to a better Union.



To reject the Secretary upon the basis of an unfortunate altercation that was the culmination of him suffering what we view as a systematic personal and psychological attack by certain awkward opponents would play in to the hand of petty politics.

Therefore because of the Secretary's ongoing dedication to the Union we are declaring our utmost confidence in the Secretary and in his potential to contribute to modernising an archaic institution. This Poll is a vote of confidence in the Secretary and as the Secretary has our complete confidence, in us. Should the Poll fail to the hands of petty politics, we will be resigning our Offices.

Yours faithfully,

William Wearden, President
James Robinson, Secretary
Dominic Benson, Treasurer

Cut CUSU's funding

Sir,

In your editorial ('Granting a Favour', Issue 669) you point out that CUSU will face "a hard time" making the same kind of money from their Ents as they are used to. Yet your proposed solution flies in the face of common sense: you claim that "What is needed is a block grant from the University". Surely the University has better things on which to spend its money than on this outdated and largely useless behemoth? There is an urgent need to maintain and increase spending on teaching, research, facilities sporting and otherwise, and - perhaps most of all - the bursaries scheme, which is a far more effective way of ensuring fair access to all than any of CUSU's access programmes, important as these can be. Perhaps we do not need CUSU - after all, College JCRs and MCRs do the same job on a local level. Perhaps we do: in that case, let CUSU charge a subscription fee like other trade unions, and let us pay directly for its services rather than indirectly through the University, a far more democratic modus operandi. Given, however, that turnout in last year's Internet-enabled CUSU elections stood at a woeful 16%, we may see that students do not care for their union enough to keep it alive; in that case, let it die. But we cannot sanction the University leaking money to a dinosaur which may have outrun its use.

Yours faithfully,

Hugo Gye
Trinity College

Food reviews leave sour taste

Sir,

I see that you have chosen to retain Tom Evans as your restaurant reviewer for this term. I do not understand the logic in this. Having put up with his ignorant, puerile garbage for some time already, I feel it is time for him to step down from his post. Granted, a restaurant review should be written with enough meander to render it accessible and engaging, but Evans feels the need to take this to an absurd degree, week in, week out. Several weeks of reading have perhaps enlightened me to the nuances of American wrestlers, theme parks and other such childish nonsense, but I am none the wiser as to the quality of any of Cambridge's eateries.

Yours faithfully,
J Hodgson,
Clare

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

Correction & Apology

Varsity would like to apologise to CUSU President Mr Mark Fletcher for the reference to an alleged violent outburst in lines 114-116 of Friday 25 January's page three article 'Let me entertain you'. Varsity would like to add that Fletcher "flatly denies" any such incident ever having taken place and acknowledges that Fletcher's statement should have been included in the original piece.

Furthermore, Varsity would like to clarify that, although Mr Fletcher did not comment on certain issues discussed in the article, lines 118-121, this is for contractual reasons rather than because of any personal views on the matter.

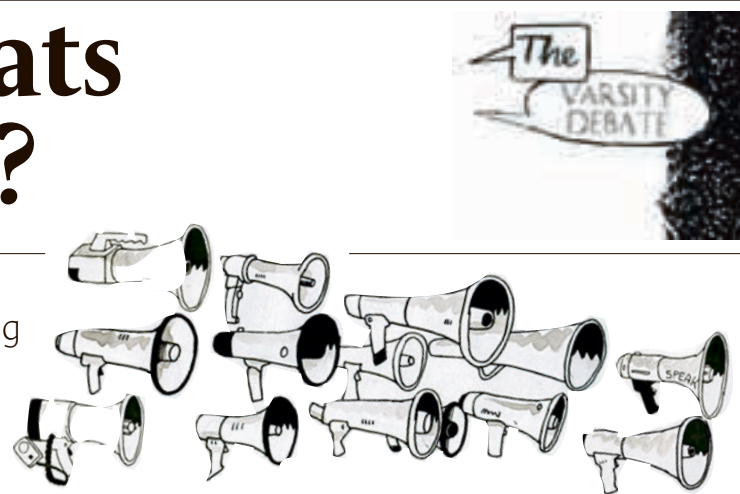
Finally, Varsity would like to apologise to Mr Fletcher for any misconstruction that may be inferred from the inappropriate use of quotations in lines 126 and 127 and acknowledge that, for contractual reasons, current CUSU Sabbatical Officers cannot compare the performance of other CUSU Officers.

Varsity would like to apologise for not having included these details in the original piece as well as for any distress and embarrassment that Mr Fletcher may have suffered as a result of the article's publication.

DEBATE

Who should the Democrats run for the White House?

Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton lead the Democratic push for the White House. Neither has been able to claim a distinct advantage, with each winning two major primaries. In the run-up to Tsunami Tuesday, the February 5th date of primaries across the country, Varsity Comment asks which one of the two ought to be the Democratic nominee.



Netta Chachamu



BARACK obama

When Obama and Clinton are compared to the Republican frontrunners, they look pretty similar - "universal healthcare", "getting out of Iraq", that kind of thing. In fact, as they keep pointing out, their policies are different and much of that has been getting lost amongst pundits who have reduced this election to "Is America more misogynistic or more racist?"

All of the Democratic nominees have made healthcare a big issue in this election. Their solutions differ in an important respect. Obama plans to make his own health insurance - that offered to Senators - available to all Americans, heavily subsidising this with taxes. His focus is on making good health care affordable for everyone. Clinton, by contrast, wants mandatory health insurance - she hopes to make it illegal not to have health care. So the people who currently can't afford health-care still can't afford

healthcare, only now it's compulsory. Another deal breaker for many Americans are their respective attitudes to Iraq. The current prime minister of Iraq once responded

interrogation techniques". Obama will talk to leaders of hostile countries - Clinton may or may not - and he believes that America should lead in terms of nuclear disarmament.

Their records and attitudes towards lobbyists and money also differ markedly. Obama does not support taking money from federal lobbyists; Clinton does. Obama has released his income tax return, the only major democratic candidate to have done so. He's worked on - and passed - a bill which puts all federal spending, loans and grants on a searchable database. Other bills Obama is responsible for include ones which prevent lobbyists from buying politicians flights, gifts and meals. His attitude to money is open and transparent.

Obama's record is surprisingly strong given all the concerns about his "lack of experience" - he's been a state and federal senator for twelve years compared to Hillary's eight. Laws he has passed include one that made the taping of interrogations compulsory, to prevent people from being forced to make confessions, and significantly reduced the likelihood of an innocent person dying on Death Row. He sponsored a bill for children's health insurance which passed both houses of Congress but was vetoed by the President. He has travelled on diplomatic missions as part of his position on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, which helps to form foreign policy. That's a little more reassuring than Hillary's foreign office "experience" claims, which are based entirely on having been First Lady.

Finally, a look at their campaign management is revealing. The Clintons (who are working together closely on this campaign) have been actively misleading voters about Obama's positions on abortion, the Iraq war, economic policy and healthcare. In Nevada, stories abound about voter fraud perpetrated by the Clinton campaign, such as telling Obama supporters there were no ballots left and closing doors early on them. Worse yet, there have been calls to voters talking about "Barack Hussein Obama" in a clear attempt to paint him as a Muslim in a blatant appeal to racism. The calls and vote suppression are an echo of the past, and not one the Clintons want to evoke - this is exactly what Bush's campaign did in Ohio in the 2004 election.

What, on the other hand, does Obama evoke? Caroline Kennedy, the late John F Kennedy's daughter, recently wrote about Obama: "I have never had a president who inspired me the way people tell me that my father inspired them. But for the first time, I believe I have found the man who could be that president - not just for me, but for a new generation of Americans." Kennedy's comments leave no doubt as to whom Democrats - and all Americans - should choose.

Jonathan Birch



HILLARY clinton

It's small wonder that Democratic debates increasingly resemble mud-slinging contests: Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama's personal differences are far more vivid than those of policy. Both brand themselves as inclusive "Change" candidates. Both promise tax cuts for the middle class, action on the environment, fairer pay across race and gender, universal healthcare, and a quick withdrawal from Iraq. Both would maintain support for Israel and uphold capital punishment. Both say "tomayto". A look at the pair's near-identical Senate voting records reveals Hillary is slightly less keen on biofuels than Obama, and that's about it. But the Democratic primaries won't be decided by ethanol. Scratch beneath the surface and there are matters of substance that can, and do, sway American voters.

In increasingly troubled economic conditions, Hillary has the knowledge and composure to execute a responsive fiscal policy. Clinton and Obama have both proposed \$70bn stimulus packages to turn the economy round (though Clinton got there first). But while Obama's focuses on brute tax cuts, Hillary's emphasises relief targeted at mortgages, heating bills and unemployment insurance, with additional pledges to improve energy efficiency. It's a brave, detailed plan, in keeping with Hillary's professed to determination to deliver more than symbolic change. Her 16-page, budgeted healthcare plan is similarly precise.

Knowledge, intellect, experience: these are the qualities the New York Times cited in endorsing Clinton over Obama. The gulf in experience between the rivals is undeniable. Hillary is the closest thing this presidential race has to an incumbent. Clinton, 60, spent eight years in the White House while Obama, 46, was lecturing law in Chicago. Clinton has been a federal senator since 2001, Obama since 2005. If you're wondering why Obama never voted for the Iraq War, it's because he wasn't there. The importance of Hillary's time as First Lady should not be underestimated: Bill Clinton described himself as a "two for the price of one" president. It's not "Vote Hillary, get Bill." It's "Vote Hillary, get Team Clinton again."

Americans trust in Hillary's experience, as polling from the primaries reveals. The New Hampshire polls, including the initial exit polls, were plain wrong, implying voters are embarrassed to admit they support prosaic Hillary over media-darling Barack, but support her they do. Obama has overwhelming African-American support, but Hillary leads with Whites, Hispanics, and liberal-leaning voters. Across all races, the poorer

you are, the more likely you are to vote Hillary. Clinton's core support comprises those who need change delivered, not those who merely like the idea.

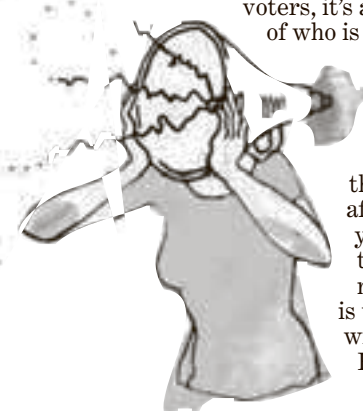
Of course, there's never been a female

"Obama would become the first black president, but he would do so without support from civil rights leaders."

president before. With few differences between the candidates, the chance to strike against misogyny enters the equation. Hillary would champion women's rights with regard to pay, abortion and access to contraception. True, Obama would become the first black president, but he would do so without support from civil rights leaders. Jesse Jackson has sceptically demanded "hope with substance," Al Sharpton has told him "not to take the black vote for granted," while Andrew Young considers Bill Clinton "every bit as black as Obama". Beyond skin colour, Obama has no roots in the African-American struggle. He was, after all, brought up by his "white as milk" mother. By contrast, Hillary's ability to be more than a figurehead is beyond doubt.

Hillary is dependable. She can secure a strong win no matter whom the Republicans nominate. Obama's time has not yet come. He would make a great next-but-one president, and a great vice president: a combined Clinton/Obama ticket would obliterate any GOP contender and put "Change" firmly on the agenda. That's what Democratic voters really want. The Democratic contest has been portrayed as a battle of pragmatism versus idealism, gender versus race, experience versus youth, even prose versus poetry. But, for Democratic voters, it's all a matter of who is likeliest to deliver

the specific, significant changes they crave after eight years in the wilderness. That is why they will choose Hillary.



"Stories abound about voter fraud perpetrated by the Clinton campaign... this is exactly what Bush's campaign did in Ohio."

to Hillary's interference with the comment, "[Clinton] consider[s] Iraq as if it were one of [her] villages." Obama believes in giving Iraq back to the Iraqi people - which means American troops leaving as soon as possible.

In terms of wider foreign policy, Obama is consistently the more diplomatic of the two. He has ruled out the use of nuclear weapons against al-Qaeda - Clinton refuses to do so. Ditto torture, or as it's now called, "enhanced





Kate
Pallas



Thinking on trans-therapy

Our treatment of transpeople limits their self-actualization

I think Scientology has been viewed all wrong. Despite its moniker, “the Church of Scientology” is in fact a secular organisation. As such, its use of the term “church” should more accurately be seen as a heroic act of linguistic reclamation after its unfair, millenia-spanning monopolisation by Christians.

For far too long now we have considered religion (based on divine revelation and tradition) to be opposed to science (based on rational experiment and amendment). This is not so.

It is possible, for instance, for a notable writer of science fiction to have a revelation that presents objective scientific fact, and establish this as a great tradition open to continual amendment. That way we can combine the best of both, whilst still remaining secular.

And instead of being born and initiated into a religion, why not acknowledge our status as a liberal-capitalist democracy by making it both evangelical and fee-paying? Its hardly unprecedented.

Take the Scientologist addition of an electro-galvanic skin response detector (known as the E-meter, formerly the Hubbard electrometer; formerly the Mathison Electropsychometer) to the church’s “auditing” process. With no all-knowing God, the candidness that allows confession and psychoanalysis to alleviate tension has no spur. As a result, a device that bears an uncanny resemblance to a polygraph machine is the only reasonable choice for those dedicated to the true rationalisation of spirituality.

Hubbard’s truly groundbreaking discovery is that the human psyche is divided into a rational and irrational mind (or analytical and reactive in his charming parlance). Imagine the glories that we would be witness to now if other supposedly great thinkers, such as Lao-Tse, Christ, Buddha, Freud, Jung, Hesse, Yoda or Habermas had conceived of dividing the mind into two forms of consciousness, one placid, one chaotic. Imagine the mitigation of suffering that would have occurred by now if people had but known that sometimes they associate neutral stimuli with repressed memories or desires.

Further, the revelation that human beings are constantly exposed to a low background level of toxicity in the environment, and that solar radiation (and stuff) gets stored in our fatty tissues and when you get rid of it you feel rather lovely, has blown many an ecological nay-sayer out of the water. Never again will I be nearly poisoned by homeopaths. Forewarned is forearmed.

It is astounding, given all these astonishing contributions to scientific progress, Scientology has not been vaunted even by lesser scientific publications such as *Nature*. Maybe, just maybe, there will come an age when the true contributions of Scientology to human progress come to light, and it becomes acknowledged as the truest science.

Of course, then Scientology would have to forego the protection under law it has had access to as a religious organisation. But then again, as scientific institution with privileged access to absolute truth, is it really needed?

Last Tuesday saw the start of the most important event in the CUSU LGBT Campaign’s calendar - Awareness Week - coinciding with the beginning of LGBT History month. Having spent the last five months in Paris exploring the political, personal and theoretical implications of the “T”, I was interested to see how CUSU LGBT would incorporate trans issues into its agenda. In Paris, the recent and transgender film festival presented pieces on trans identity at the intersections of class and race, the points of conflict between lesbian feminists and FTMs (female-to-male transsexuals) in American queer communities, and a gender-queer transman who just wanted to join an all-male baking club and went to court to do it.

CUSU LGBT? It offered, “An Introduction to Gender Dysphoria and Harry Benjamin Syndrome”. That sounds like a talk about a disease, doesn’t it? Guess what? Essentially, it is. Someone unfamiliar with the terms might not even realise that it has anything to do with transsexuality, much less that LGBT and queer activists across Europe are currently engaged in a struggle to end the pathologization of trans identities assumed under those very titles.

Given the chronic level of transphobia in our society, transpeople are often cautious about demanding to be understood outside the dominant discourses that only recognize them in a binary gender system. For the most part, the discourse through which

society understands us is medical. Harry Benjamin Syndrome, for example, is the diagnostic term for transsexuality. The theory suggests that at the foetal stage, the body develops one sex and the brain another. In childhood or adolescence, the syndrome is said to manifest itself in feelings of gender confusion and depression that can lead to suicide.

Coming to realise you are transgendered or transsexual and learning to live as yourself – with the loss, discrimination and harassment that often involves – can be a painful and traumatic process. Yet it is worth asking what we further compromise in submitting ourselves to psychiatric analyses, as required by the NHS, to prove our genders are in fact abnormally developed in order to receive hormonal or surgical treatment or legal recognition. Not all transpeople feel it necessary to change their bodies to reflect their true gender, but by the logic of Harry Benjamin Syndrome are simply viewed as “less ill”.

The problem lies in part with the failure to distinguish between the pathologization of transpeople, which posits our claim to selfhood as the effect of a disorder to which surgical and hormonal treatment is the cure, and the medical intervention that is necessary for some transpeople to exercise their right to live full and normal lives and feel at home in their bodies.

Ironically, while the NHS is all too keen on lengthy diagnostic procedures, the treatment of

transpeople, from decade-long waiting lists to certain Primary Care Trusts refusing to fund gender reassignment surgery, is far from a priority. No doubt the effects of some syndrome or other offer a convenient explanation to the tragically high suicide rate among transpeople. Those seeking surgery often feel forced to fund it privately, which can run into thousands of pounds. For many working class transsexual people it is never even a possibility and they are forced to rely on the inadequate services of the NHS.

This lack of vital resources for transpeople is merely symptomatic of an underfunded system run



TIM DRAKE

by a government more interested in profit than the fulfilment of people’s basic rights. Healthcare is one such right, as is the right to determine your own gender. Since 2004, non-operative transgendered in the UK people have been able to change their birth certificate and other documents to reflect their true gender through the Gender Recognition Act. However, this is only possible

with the diagnosis of gender identity disorder. In many countries, those who don’t want to transition medically or can’t because of health reasons find it impossible to have their gender legally recognised. The decision between a long and potentially expensive transition and legal non-existence seems barely a question of choice, and even less so of rights.

Even with the gains of legal recognition, the lives of many transpeople are marred by the threat of unemployment, discrimination and violence. Is it any wonder wider society is failing to tackle its prejudices towards transpeople when we are expected to understand our own genders as the products of mental illness? To pathologize forms of gender that do not correspond with expected social norms is harmful not only for transpeople but for everyone. For many transpeople, the struggle against pathologization is a step towards self-determination and a re-examination of what it really means to be trans, but also a step into the dangerous uncertainty of self-identification.

Those who believe that being transgendered doesn’t mean you’re mentally ill must make this clear. They must oppose the medical establishment’s gender agenda and its systematic dismantling of the welfare state, as the welfare state should belong to the people who use it. Transpeople don’t need treatment because they’re sick; transpeople deserve treatment and legal recognition because it’s their right.

Tom Holder &
James Burgess

Pro-Test for progress

Oxbridge students need to protect animal testing

The boat race, league tables, famous alumni - the list of Cambridge and Oxford battlegrounds go on, yet Oxford appears to be closing for the win in a new battle - who can start, build, and finish a new biomedical facility?

In 2004, construction was halted on a new primate research facility at Cambridge University due to “unacceptable financial risk” brought about by the actions of animal rights groups. Two of these groups in particular played an important role: Stop Primate Experimentation At Cambridge (SPEAC, now SPEAK at Oxford) and the Animal Liberation Front (ALF). Now both of these groups have moved on to target Oxford University.

It took bombs in colleges and an arson attack on a boat house, costing three colleges over £500,000, but finally students at Oxford did what those before them had not - they stood up to the extremists and said ‘no more’. No more to harassment of students walking to morning lectures. No more alienation of the few scientists who dared to speak up on the issue. No more lies about the research that goes on inside our University.

Nearly 1000 students, scientists and members of the general public marched through Oxford not only to defend animal research, but also to stand against the use of violence and

intimidation as a means of legitimate protest.

Now, two years since the original Pro-Test march, we have to do it all again. Another march in favour of animal testing is scheduled for Saturday, February 9th, for after two years of bombs under cars, bombs in



colleges, anonymous threats, endless intimidation, we’ve been told this is just the beginning. Supporters of animal research need again to stand up for science, reason and the belief that a violent minority should not dictate the future of research. Students at Cambridge need to put aside the historic Oxbridge rivalry and help defend our two great academic institutions against this new extremism by joining the Pro-Test march.

With 70% of Nobel Prizes in physiology and medicine going to scientists using animals and many of the most important medical breakthroughs including insulin, the polio vaccine, anaesthetics and penicillin

relying on animal research – this controversial issue is one which affects our lives more than almost any other. Every year over 3 million operations are carried out under anaesthetic, over 30 million prescriptions for asthma treatments are distributed and in excess of 50 million prescriptions for antibiotics are issued. Animal research is a technique we rely upon to bring us the medicines we survive on – to put this scientific method at risk is to put our own health on the line.

Animal research isn’t something to be ashamed of, and the scientists who conduct it should be proud of their work. We should encourage scientists to speak up about their research and happily tell the media, and public, about the animals that made it possible. We all long to celebrate the day where such experiments are no longer needed, and fully support the development and use of alternative methods. Yet we are not at the point where we can do so. In certain fields, such as neuroscience, it is difficult to see how we will get there any time soon.

The UK has by far the strictest regulation on animal research in the world. Scientists must confirm there are no alternative methods before embarking on research using animals. However, as animal rights groups push for tighter restrictions, more and more scientists are moving their research abroad to countries

where the standard of animal welfare is considerably lower. Exporting research in this manner is not in the interests the British public, the scientific community, or indeed the animals themselves.

Of course, there remains the question of the preeminence of humans over animals. Many of us eat meat, believe we may keep pets for our own enjoyment and would not hesitate to save a human from a fire before attempting to save their pet.

Even the great animal rights thinker, Peter Singer, has accepted the need for primate research. As a result, animal rights groups like SPEAK have been quick to disassociate themselves from him.

The point remains, however, as the House of Lords Select Committee noted, “[t]he whole institution of morality, society and law is founded on the belief that human beings are unique amongst animals,” morally entitling humans to “use animals...for their own purposes”.

Cambridge University should have pressed on to complete a lab which, had it been built, might already be helping to develop the next generation of life-saving treatments. Next Saturday’s protest is a second chance to support medical progress.

The authors are members of Pro-Test. For more details on the march, visit www.pro-test.org.uk



Last week, a fair proportion of this mighty organ was devoted to the dubious subject of sex (and by mighty organ, I mean of course this mighty organ of the press, the venerable Varsity herself - other mighty organs have not been so fortuitous). It is indeed high-time that Cambridge sex (as opposed to any other, more normal sex) was dealt with, but it was telling to see how it was dealt with - graphs, tables; even a pie chart, the least sexual of all charts, unless there exists some bizarre mathematical fanfic version of American Pie that I have sadly missed (a pale young man stands alone in the kitchen. Nervously, he glances at the multicoloured pie chart left abandoned of the work-top. Slowly, softly, he reaches out his right hand to caress its pastel segments...). The sex has been sanitised by statistics. Where's all the romance gone?

It got me thinking about idle sex (it doesn't really take much). How can the urge to idleness, the sheer pleasure to be gained from the enjoyment of doing absolutely nothing, be reconciled with sex, a hobby that is invariably passionate, energetic, and worst of all, sweaty. The true idler never sweats. Perspiration is for lesser beings, like athletes, and people who volunteer to give presentations, and dogs (in fact, even dogs don't condescend to sweating, hence their lascivious panting. This says a lot about all you keen-types out there). What is more, getting the sex is just as exhausting as having it. Maintaining a relationship, wading through the weekly Cindies gash-attack, trekking over to that discreet massage parlour I know down on Mill Road - all take time and energy. The committed idler must find an easier way to sensual Nirvana. Insertion without the exertion, if you will.

One looks to the Victorians for advice. Away from all their nasty globe-straddling, captain-of-industry work ethics, they had some sound ideas, not least the "lie back and think of England" sexual philosophy. Admittedly, it's not a brilliant concept - imagining either (a) a modern Britain of desolate urban vistas bestrewn by vomit-stained chavs and knifed-up crackheads, or (b) a ye olde vision of ruddy-faced Morris dancers and worried-looking vicars, is unlikely to spur anyone on to the climactic moment (but hey, whatever floats your boat, right?)

But the central message - lying back, going with flow (not the euphemistic Flow - all floating boats aside, that's just kind of gross) - is one that appeals to the idler. A lazy day in bed, subsuming the occasional graceful fumble and a post-coital cigarette, is just up the idler's alley (not that kind of alley! Although, boat, float, etc.) Elegantly wasted with a good bottle of wine, peeling off the old lounge pants (they're like pyjama bottoms for wankers - the de rigeur in Cam are Jack Chills, though mine are Calvin (re)Kline) and slipping under the warm duvet for a mild spooning session... it's sex and relaxation in perfect harmony. Soon enough the tension mounts, the pleasure grows, a feeling of transcendental physical delight begins to take over, and the room will be filled with blissful sounds of joy, illuminated by beams of heavenly light, and sound-tracked by angelic harmonies, and thunderous chords beaten out upon a humongous organ. No, not that kind...really...

Hugo Gye



The V100 has to go

The list of Cambridge standouts is a pointless exercise in vanity

The Oliver Wyman Varsity100, the annual compilation of the most influential students in Cambridge, walks away with the prize for 'most-annoyingly-punctuated-vacuous-and-arbitrary-list-of-people-you've-never-heard-of-and-don't-care-about of 2008'. And it's only February. Just. It is not the idea per se that is flawed. The problem is that its execution is fundamentally impossible in the bizarro-world that is Cambridge.

There are, naturally, far more than a hundred people at Cambridge of exceptional talent with exceptional achievements, but it is entirely uninteresting to read a list of people of whom one has not heard and of whom one will not hear again. Cambridge is simply too big a place to sustain a large number of local celebrities, and its press not well-developed enough or inward-looking enough to make those people known who deserve to be.

So if most of the truly talented and successful people escape our notice, who then makes it on to the list? An enormous number of actors, some excellent and some less so. There is a mostly arbitrary selection of sportsmen as well as the heads of Cambridge's most prominent political organisations. And, of course, a number of Varsity writers.

The thespians are interesting only to those who already go to the theatre in Cambridge, and those people can make their own minds up about who the best actors are. The sportsmen are too erratically chosen to constitute a representative cross-section of Cambridge sporting talent. If people wish to find out who runs the Union, CUSU, CUCA or any similar body, look at their websites - problem solved.

But the last category is surely the most nefarious. We see at least four people - Elliot Ross, Lizzie Mitchell, Tom Bird and George Grist - making the list purely for having edited Varsity, the creator of the list. Is this not the most blatant piece of nepotism and wankery? How on earth can one justify such circular, self-congratulatory reasoning, one that puts Varsity people in their own list?

Other categories are no easier to define. There is one headed 'Academics'; is this truly a list of the five cleverest or hardest-working people in Cambridge? Or is it five cleverer-than-average people of whom the V100's editor happens to have heard? Three of this year's 'Academics' are classicists. Is this representative of the cream of Cambridge brains?

There are thirty-five 'Organizers' [sic], a category so vague that it appears to include anyone include anyone who has ever put a poster up behind the tills in Sainsbury's. There is one entry in the V100 who is there for his

"The glory of a great Cambridge career is that good students are never defined by what they do, but by who they are."

small part in a schlocky TV series, and another for modelling Sloane clothes.

If this qualifies one for a list of "the most influential students", then what about the Trinitarian who last week "claimed to have slept with over 70 women" in the Varsity Sex Survey? Or Ceri Hon-Tang, whose exquisite cravats and inimitable mannerisms have made him the most recognisable man in Cambridge?

The V100 strips people down from personalities into a list of achievements. It assumes that people can be defined by the positions they have held, and by the plays in which they have appeared, when the glory of a great Cambridge career is that good students are never defined by what they do, but by who they are.

The list takes no notice of this, with the main question asked by its compilers when consid-

ering an entry being, "But what has he/she DONE?" Reading through the descriptions in the V100, each person comes across as boring, and not at all the type of person to whom one would actually want to talk. They are (mostly) not boring people - most of us know people on the list, and we know they are not boring - but by stripping them of anything but their CV, the V100 certainly makes them seem so.

This is not to disparage the efforts of those who put the V100 together: they worked through the night for several days after having spent weeks collecting nominations. Yet the fact remains that the production of this year's issue was far more rushed than would have been ideal, and it is perhaps more instructive to consider last year's issue.

The editors of last year's list put untold hours of work into the magazine, contacting every Director of Studies and every charity, business and organisation with University links to compile as exhaustive a list as possible. But ultimately, it was still as incomplete, pointless and dull as this year's. No amount of research will turn the V100 from a bad thing into a good thing.

To be fair to the editors, they acknowledge some of the list's shortcomings in their editorial. They say the list "isn't definitive or objective", and describe it as "inaccurate, incomplete and unfair". So why bother putting it together?

The 100 is, admittedly, popular. Although people complain about the list, only a handful have managed to overcome their vanity and refuse permission to be included. Yet at heart we know it is not a valid measure of anything, and it is only puerile curiosity that leads people (including me, of course) to read it, and to discuss who's in and who's out.

In the end, there just aren't enough people who deserve to be in the V100. To be talented, successful, well-known and popular is a rare feat, and the number of Cantabrigians who would make such a list would barely stretch into two figures. Sadly, a lot of people have just wasted a lot of time.

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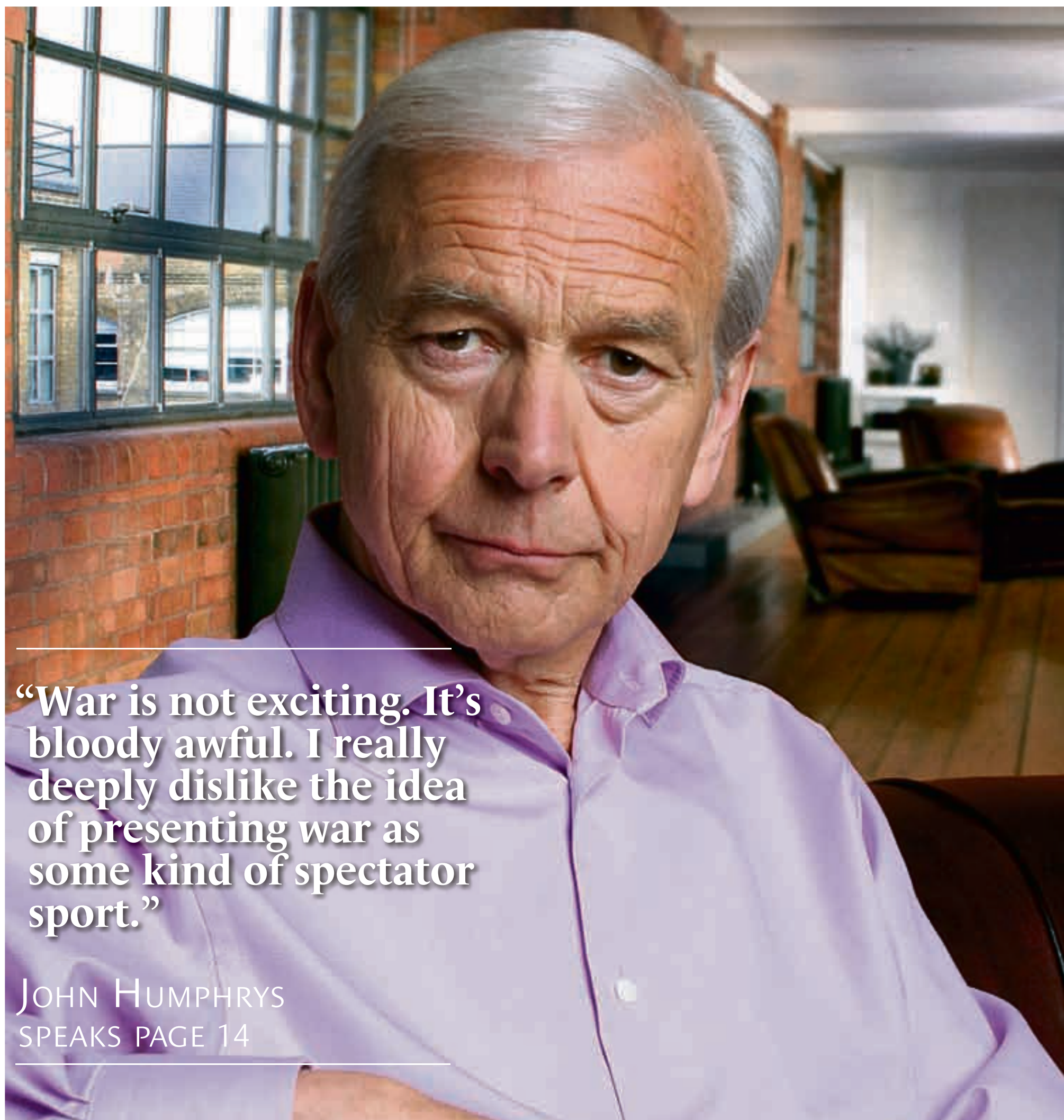
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“War is not exciting. It’s bloody awful. I really deeply dislike the idea of presenting war as some kind of spectator sport.”

JOHN HUMPHRYS
SPEAKS PAGE 14

Ibn Warraq on Islam
Page 18

The art of the trailer
Page 20

Art Brut interviewed
Page 22

VIEW

“This is John Humphrys. Please be brief”

Formidable, ferocious and brusque - the ‘Welsh terrier’ of journalism puts **Katy Lee** firmly in her place.

This is John Humphrys. Please be brief.” The answer-phone message says it all: John Humphrys is a man with no time to waste, especially on insignificant little twits like me. “How much time do you have, Mr Humphrys?” I prattle, when I finally get through to him. “Not very long, so let’s get on with it,” is the brusque response. “Go on, just talk.”

The interview that follows leaves me with a new empathy for Humphrys’ Today programme victims. Turning the tables on Radio Four’s chief interrogator – a man who, after five decades in the business, is one of the true leviathans of British journalism – was always going to be a formidable task, but I was depressingly unprepared for just how wormlike he was going to make me feel. Aptly characterized by some as a Welsh terrier for his habitual ferocity, Humphrys doesn’t miss a single opportunity to pounce on you for whatever witless remark you have spewed up in your state of panic. He is still spry at sixty-four, and is playing football in his kitchen with his small son as we talk.

“I’ve always been extremely argumentative,” he says between dull thuds. “That’s to say I’ve always questioned authority. I don’t think anyone can be a journalist if they don’t do that.” What Humphrys calls questioning authority, others call over-aggressive interviewing. Former Cabinet minister Jonathan Aitken once accused him of “poisoning the well of democratic debate”.

I hear a flicker of that famous derisive snort when I mention this. “Some people say it’s essential to have this kind of questioning,” he says. “I set out to ask challenging questions of politicians. If, as a result of that, someone says something stupid, that’s a result of what they do, not my intent. I’m quite puzzled as to how my style squashes debate.”

I start to say that he has been accused of interrupting too much – he famously interrupted Ken Clarke over thirty times

during one interview – but I am interrupted. “I interrupt because if you don’t interrupt in a short interview, the politician will deliver a party political

“Nobody who’s been a journalist for more than thirty seconds would dream of using the word ‘glamorous’”

broadcast. I don’t blame them for that. If they’re answering the question, I don’t interrupt them. If they’re not answering the question, or repeating the answer they gave four times in the last three and a half minutes, then I do. There’s a purpose to interrupting. One doesn’t do it gratuitously.”

Humphrys grew up in a poor district of Cardiff and left school at the age of fifteen to become a reporter on the Penarth Times. “I was just desperately keen to start working on the newspaper. I read Superman comics when I was a little boy – Superman was Clark Kent, and Clark Kent

was a journalist, so I made the obvious connection. I had this absurd romantic notion of what it would be like to work as a reporter.” This delusion crumbled on his first day of work. “Nobody who’s been a journalist for more than thirty seconds would dream of using the word ‘glamorous’. Journalism is bloody hard work some of the time and extraordinary tedium much of the time.” Taken aback by his glumness, I ask if he actually likes his job. “You asked me about journalism, not about my job,” he snaps. “I’ve been a journalist for a long time and I’ve done lots of different things. My present job has virtually no tedium involved because that’s the sort of job it is. Of course I love my job. I wouldn’t still be doing it if I didn’t.” The high point of his career so far? “I don’t know, it hasn’t come yet,” he says irritably.

He has a ve-

hement dislike of the description of journalism as ‘exciting’. “What it usually means is that lots of people have died. ‘Exciting’ is when your team scores a goal in the closing minutes of the match. When a lot of men get burnt to death on a ship” – he is talking about the sinking of the HMS Sheffield during the Falklands War – “that’s not exciting, that’s hideous. War is not exciting. It’s bloody awful. I really deeply dislike the idea of presenting war as some kind of spectator sport.”

Humphrys drudged his way to the top, working for eight years on local papers and Welsh television before finally breaking into the BBC. Here he reported on northern industry before filling a variety of foreign posts from America to South Africa. He is impressively blasé about the big stories he covered during this time, which include Watergate and Nixon’s resignation. “They all kind of merge, really,” he says vaguely.

“They all become one in the end.”

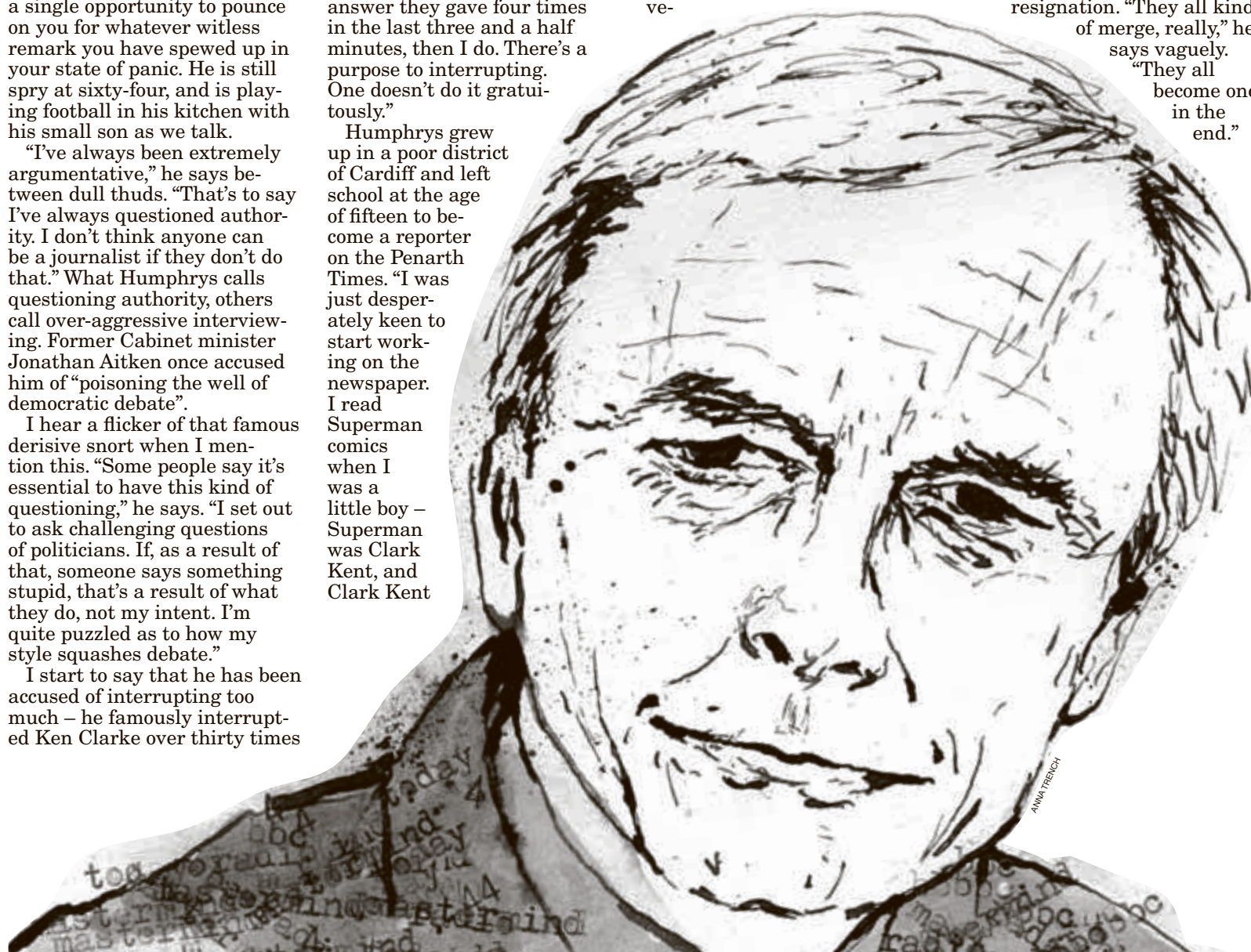
He took up the Today post in 1986 and has been there ever since, but there have been plenty of side-projects along the way – an attempt at organic dairy farming, various radio and TV posts including as the host of Mastermind, and a long-term endeavour to test his agnosticism. In 2006 he presented a Radio Four programme titled “Humphrys in Search of God” challenging British religious leaders to convert him to Christianity, Judaism and Islam, but to no avail. “I haven’t found him. On a purely intellectual level it would be awfully nice to answer the single greatest question: does God exist? But I

“Humphrys doesn’t miss a single opportunity to pounce on you”

suspect that relatively few people come to God as the result of any intellectual process.”

Humphrys is gloomy about most of the things that we talk about, and grumpy about the others. He dislikes I’m A Celebrity, Get Me Out Of Here (“It’s trash. It’s pointless and voyeuristic and rather demeaning. It’s not even worth talking about”). He dislikes people who abuse the English language, and has written two books raging against bad grammar and management speak. He dislikes waste, crushing me effortlessly when I (lame, I admit) express a curiosity about his habit of measuring out cups of water before boiling them. “Oh, I see, that’s thrift, is it?” he barks. “I thought that was good sense. What absolute rubbish. If I’m boiling a mug of water to make a cup of coffee then I will boil a mug of water. I can’t see a lot of point in filling a kettle and waiting an extra twenty minutes while it boils. Waste is a moral issue, and should be for everybody. If it were, the world would be in a better state than it is today.”

I hang up the phone in need of a stiff drink, but more in awe of Humphrys than ever. He may be an ill-tempered old git, but his talent for making people wince is unparalleled.



My Cambridge The Gentlemen of St John's Choir

The lesser known haunts and habits of well known Cambridge groups



Face Off

They're fit, you're fickle. Who's fitter? There's the pickle

Round 3: Emma versus Tit Hall



Felix is a 1st year SPS student and Vicky is a 1st year Linguist

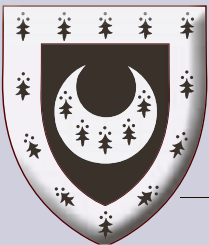


Yusuf is a 3rd year SPS student and Amy is a 1st year English student



TO VOTE FOR EMMA,
TEXT 'VARSITY EMMA' TO
60300.

Standard network charges apply.



TO VOTE FOR TIT HALL,
TEXT 'VARSITY TIT' TO
60300.

Cumming On Euphemism



The time has arrived to challenge the titular wordplay being inflicted on me by my superiors. It is quite punitive. Euphemism is not like a banana; it's not inherently funny. But in the right hands, it acquires a life all of its own, and transforms into a power far beyond its original intent. The power of suggestion takes over, and even the most uptight and recalcitrant find themselves drawn to see hidden meanings, unintended by either the author or God. It can be a raw, humiliating experience for both.

It would be wilfully misleading to suggest that my surname has had no effect on my sensitivity to hidden sexual code. Even in my youth, when I was very small, there was always an air of erotic tension around the house. This was never felt harder than during discussion about the family tree.

One conversation, particularly memorable, went like this: "Daddy?" said a small me, tousled of hair and Malteasered of face.

Bald of hair and stiffly conservative, he replied: "Hello there, son. Is that the family tree? He enquired, pointing to a large, folded piece of paper cocked crisply under my arm. "Yes, Daddy."

"Oh, how curious." He added, before taking a delicate sip from the tall glass of Bristol stout he had perennially at his side. "Why don't you come and show me what you've got." Eager to please and rosy-cheeked, I bounded across the room and hopped up.

It was always easy to sit on my father's knee; corduroy is very adhesive.

"I'm perplexed, father." I said, frowning and sucking thoughtfully on my Malteaser.

"Why's that?" he shot back, intently.

"Well, it says here that Uncle Adrian is Cumming, but I was giving Mummy a hand when she was doing the Christmas cards and she asked me to fill him out and she told me to do

him as Adrian Featherstone. Why is he Featherstone not Cumming?"

"Ah." Said Daddy, ruminating on his favoured snack, black pudding and stuffing. "Your Uncle Adrian, Edward, was Cumming when he was born, but when he became a grown-up he decided that he didn't want to be Cumming any longer, and instead wanted to be Featherstone, so he asked the men in charge if they could do it any they said 'Surely', so he did it."

"Oh." I said. "Yes." He replied. "May I have a Malteaser?"

I offered him my bag, and he patted me in gratitude. But questions were welling up in my mouth, and I blurted one



Maltesers: food for all the family

out. "Why did he not like Cumming?"

"I think he was teased at school. All of the boys ran around him, chanting "Hey Adrian, are you coming or going? Coming or going? Coming or going? It's because Cumming sounds like coming, you see."

"Oh yes. I think so, because I was late for P.E. on the lawn with Mr. Treetorn yesterday because I was having lunch and he shouted 'Edward', and I said 'I'm coming', and people laughed."

"Yes" he said, quite calmly. "It's because 'coming' sounds like 'Cumming', isn't it, Daddy?"

"Mmmph", he grunted, in affirmation.

If you catch my drift.

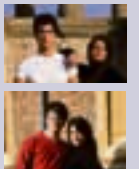


Banana: inherently funny

LAST WEEK'S RESULT:

Trinity
St John's

64%
36%



Both wear: False eyelashes, Shu Uemura, £10
Pails, John Lewis, £8 each; Rachel's Organic Milk, 99p

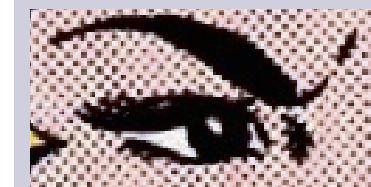


beyond the pail
a lesson in haute cowture

Clementine Dowley wears: Silk embroidered bib shirt, Warehouse, £42; Leggings, Miss Selfridge, £12; Shoes, model's own.



Cecily White wears: Silk embroidered vest, Warehouse, £40; Frayed Misfits Skinny Jeans, Sass & Bide, £135; Red patent heels, Jaeger sale, £35; Hair bows & silk scarf, stylist's own.



VARSITEYE

Cambridge Annual Fashion Show

Should Alexander McQueen be looking nervously over his padded shoulder, or Moss be quaking in her Louboutin boots? If you are looking for a creative outlet; in Cambridge you have found your catwalk.

The Cambridge University Annual Fashion Show 2008 is set to take place on Thursday the 19th June at the Corn Exchange and May Week just got a whole lot more exciting. The running of the show, the design of the clothes and the modelling will all be entirely in the hands of Cambridge University students. And it's not just a catwalk. Think more the Prince's Trust's 'Fashion Rocks', with performances by University dancers, actors, singers and wait for it... sportsmen.

With the space for an audience of more than 900, this is the first fashion event of such a scale to be held in Cambridge. Needless to say, this makes it a phenomenal opportunity for anyone sighing to be involved in the worlds of fashion and entertainment.

All proceeds from ticket sales will be donated to the charity Right To Play for their children HIV/AIDS campaign 'Live Safe-Play Safe'. The campaign endeavours to develop and improve children's knowledge of, and attitudes towards, HIV/AIDS in the third world.

With so many positions on offer, your role in the show can be flexible, and as time intensive as you wish. No sewing skills or previous experience are required for designing pieces – it's a totally open area.

The first meeting for interested students will be held at 6 PM on February 8, at the Graduate Union on Mill Lane. If any aspect of the show, from designing, modelling, publicity, sponsorship, to pre-show events has captured your curiosity and interest, this will be your chance to find out more and get involved.

Terese Hougaard

For more information, visit the website www.camfashion.co.uk or send an email to executive@camfashion.co.uk.

Hosted by the Cambridge University Annual Fashion Show Society

Why I'm not a Muslim

As a critic of Islam and defender of the West, Ibn Warraq promised to be a divisive fixture in the Union calendar. **Shane Murray** went along to meet the man behind the controversy.

Ibn Warraq cuts an unassuming figure, which is perhaps unsurprising for someone who still goes exclusively by his pen-name for "fear of becoming the second Salman Rushdie".

Warraq courted controversy when he published his first articles and a subsequent book called *Why I Am Not a Muslim* in 1995 as a delayed response to the Rushdie affair. Since then, he has written extensively on the origins of the Koran and on the Prophet Muhammad as a historical figure, as well as becoming a general critic of Islam.

He outlines his new book with references to his defence of the "three golden threads of the West: rationalism, universalism and self-criticism", and with his view that Islam is a totalitarian system. But it is clear that above all else Mr Warraq is a scholar and not a fire-breathing neo-con or intransigent defender of liberty. As such he is keen to demolish Edward Said's book *Orientalism* and the academic ideology that it spawned. This subject is clearly close to Mr Warraq's heart and is also what his book defending the West is about.

He quickly identifies Said as a "pernicious influence" in academia and accuses him and his acolytes of "negating centuries of Western scholarship" with their rigid ideology. Getting straight to the point, Warraq accuses Said of being totally one-sided: incapable of criticising non-Western cul-

"This is the real harm of Said... It labels "every European... a racist, imperialist, totally ethnocentric"

tures and accusing everything Western of being "orientalist" and imperialist. Warraq points to some of Said's more ridiculous pronouncements, with the most bizarre being that Jane Austen supported slavery. Warraq also accuses Said

of making it unacceptable for people to "ask or answer potentially embarrassing questions" about Islam and non-Western cultures in general.

Warraq claims that Said is only so dangerous because he has been so influential in the academic world. He attributes his success to a mixture of lazy students, who preferred to use Said's "formula" rather than thinking for themselves, and Western guilt in the aftermath of colonialism. He argues that following Said negates the need for actual empirical research or expertise in languages that would otherwise be required for such studies and that instead, one can

"Warraq argues that cultural relativism has to be done away with and human rights have to be vigorously defended, even if it offends Muslim sensibilities"

construct a grand theory with a few years work. Moreover, he points out that Said presents this formula as being "immune to argument", because when someone criticised Said, Said's response was to insult them and accuse them of imperialism. This is the real harm of Said, Warraq notes. It labels "every European... a racist, imperialist, totally ethnocentric" (Said's words) and has played on Western guilt and self-criticism, while it obscured what Warraq calls "the greatest threat to Western civilisation since the Nazis": Islamic fundamentalism.

Said, he claims, has contributed directly and indirectly to the rise of Islamic terrorism; firstly by cowering the West into becoming too respectful of other cultures and secondly by helping to justify these ideologies. Warraq points out that by blaming everything on the West and presenting the Ori-

ent as a passive victim, Said helped to create the culture of self-pity and accompanying anti-Western ideology in the Arab world. Moreover, he points out that Said held the deranged view that the state of Israel was a Western-Zionist conspiracy to hold back Islam. When asked what could be done to extirpate Said's influence, Warraq suggests that one might write a book called *Defending the West*, or words to that effect. Warraq argues that cultural relativism has to be done away with and human rights have to be vigorously defended, even if it offends Muslim sensibilities and excoriates some Western feminists for their failure to criticise the practice of female genital mutilation.

More generally, Warraq suggests that countries such as Britain need to be vigilant in protecting themselves intellectually. They should teach comparative and critical views of religion in schools, say, or prohibit extremist books being brought into the UK.

When asked whether he thinks the phrase "moderate Muslim" is oxymoronic, he thankfully replied in the negative and instead pointed out that the theological construct of Islam is not moderate, but individual Muslims can depart from this.

On the question of where Islamic fundamentalism has come from and how it can be defeated, he expresses a certain amount of puzzlement, only to say that he was certain that the common causes attributed to its rise – poverty, American policy and the Palestinian problem – were irrelevant, quoting the Ayatollah Khomeini's reasoning: "I did not make the revolution to decrease the price of melons." Many Islamic terrorists, Warraq argues, are in fact relatively affluent and well-educated and argues that their reading of the Koran in fact radicalises them.

Could there be a secular Islamic democracy? Because a democratic government must reflect the views of the people, even their religious views, Warraq is deeply sceptical. He notes that there have been Islamic secular leaders, including Jinnah and Nasser, but expresses pessimism about

the current state of politics in Muslim countries, even Turkey, but particularly Iraq. He lambasts the Coalition Authority for missing a fantastic opportunity to leave the word "Islam" out of the constitution.

"Someone just has to be a bit more courageous" in order to move the Islamic world closer to secularism, says Warraq. He adds that Islam also needs to absorb the lessons that Christianity absorbed from the Enlightenment, namely self-criticism and self-examination, arguing that more criticism and analysis of the Koran must be done to up-

date and liberalise Islam. He points out that this is one of the things that makes Islam more dangerous than even evangelical Christianity, saying that (in a quote that made my day) "Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson are pussycats". He notes that the Danish cartoons controversy showed that for a "European Islam" to emerge, then Muslims must face up to a certain amount of criticism and, on the other hand, the West must be utterly steadfast in standing up for its values of tolerance and free speech: a job Mr Warraq seems more than happy to do.



Who? Said? What?

A little background on Edward Said, the focal point of Warraq's criticism

Edward Said was the author of *Orientalism*, which has had a significant impact on the fields of literary theory, cultural studies and human geography, and to a lesser extent on those of history and oriental studies. Taking his cue from the work of Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault, and from earlier critics of western Orientalism Said argued that Western writings on the Orient,

and the perceptions of the East purveyed in them, are suspect, and cannot be taken at face value. According to Said, the history of European colonial rule and political domination over the East distorts the writings of even the most knowledgeable, well-meaning and sympathetic Western 'Orientalists' (a term that he transformed into a pejorative).

Living a double life?



Bethan Staton explores the difficulties that can arise for practising Muslims in Cambridge.

Theoretically practising a religion alongside typical student life seems fraught with potential difficulty. The classic uni routine of drink and depravity, all the time treading the academic water, doesn't seem to allow much for spiritual contemplation and practise, and the perceived demands of the Muslim faith mean juggling university and religious life can seem a challenge for some.

The relatively small size of the Cambridge Muslim community means relationships between Muslim students and those resident in the city all year can flourish. "A shared purpose and values means that Cambridge and Anglia Ruskin Universities are an important part of the Muslim community as a whole", says Abdul Kayum Aram, of Cambridge Muslims Online. "The Community is made up of people from all over the world, and faith gives a commonality between them."

For some 500 members, the University Islamic Society provides a wide range of activities, whether social or directly related to practise. The Society provides information on when and where to pray, helps Muslim students find accommodation and provides support and advice for potential Muslim applicants to Cambridge. The society runs dinners at local Halal establishments holds an annual garden party, and within the University itself there is a prayer room and an Islamic library, as well as weekly study circles. Prayer meetings, football matches or topical

talks support and provide a community for worship and mutual faith, and many events, such as world food celebrations, are organised within the CU interfaith forum, giving an opportunity for various faiths to meet and socialise.

ISOc is also heavily involved in campaigning for human rights on Muslim issues. An awareness of prejudice and injustice towards Muslims in current affairs, both internationally and at home, prompted the formation of 'newswire', which runs training days and provided information on human rights abuses and issues. In Cambridge, however, the Muslim community doesn't seem to have suffered a great deal of explicit prejudice. "Cambridge is quite a cosmopolitan community...Some problems do arise around issues like 7/7, but these are individual, not endemic".

Despite the strength of the Islamic community, however, a discrepancy between university life and faith can be difficult. In small colleges with less diverse student bodies, not conforming to the stereotypical demands of university life can be isolating, and, you're more likely to be a minority of one within a college.

Issues can also arise in many areas of practise, for example unisex accommodation and halal food. "This is why you find a lot of Hijabis [women who wear a veil] have to narrow their options to the female colleges" said one Muslim student. "Surely this should not be an issue you have to consider. You

should select a college based on its educational performance and if you like it in general. The college should deal with making things good for students, regardless of their background, religion or race".

"Ignorant and not willing to understand" was one perception of the attitude within college to practising Islam. "Ramadan was very isolating. Everyone went to hall even though they knew I couldn't eat until later on. They all socialised and had a laugh whilst I was in my room. The suggested solution was the Islamic Union, but I want people to bother understanding me regardless of their faith. By focusing on ISOc for the first two weeks I'd have lots of Islamic friends, sure, but I'd still feel isolated in college. I wanted friends, not specifically Muslim friends".

Here the problem of balancing religion with university life is clear; the problem of becoming defined by one's religion, rather than it simply being another aspect of a life shared with other students of various faiths, is a difficult one. The idea that ISOc can become the main part of not just religious but social life too builds barriers between faiths rather than fostering integration. And when its perceived that both the student body and the college as an institution are prepared to view not just Islam and its practise, but Muslims themselves, as a part of religious societies and not college life, alienation becomes an issue.

Shackleton and Scott's ECCENTRIC EVENINGS

Mr Shackleton and Mr Scott invite you on a journey into Cambridge's strangest subcultures

This Week:
LIVE ACTION ROLE PLAY



It's the year 1289, and we are standing in the toilets outside the Wessex Arms in Grantabrugge, washing green paint off our faces. Shackleton, a novice to time travel, turns to me and says "What in God's name are we doing here?" We have just been slain by a heroic band of adventurers after trying to hold up the inn. Shackleton's magical spoon and my blinding crystal were not enough to prevent our untimely deaths.

Actually, we aren't in 1289 at all. Grantabrugge is entirely fictitious, and the Wessex Arms is in fact the Gonville and Caius JCR. We have just taken our first traumatic steps into the world of Live Action Roleplay. For the uninitiated, LARP is part game, part improvisation. Players develop their characters with each successive meeting, building up costumes and a substantial armoury. Refs, incongruously dressed in fluorescent, high-visibility jackets, develop overarching plotlines, which provide the framework for the scenes.

Shackleton and I were 'monstering' with the Cambridge University Treasure Trap, a group that has managed to establish a community of reawl LARP enthusiasts. Grantabrugge has its own weekly newspaper, and several of the players boasted impressively customised costumes. One even wore a "Grantabrugge College of the Arts" scarf.

As monsters we were given small, temporary roles. First we were scared peasants (in Grantabrugge, peasants are either scared or angry, but always stupid). Our mother had disappeared, and we sought a hero to save her. Shackleton nearly blew our cover when he handed me an upside down newspaper to demonstrate his illiteracy. We then showed the heroic tracker to our house (by

the Coke machine) where he literally sniffed out the scent of our poor ma. Alas she could not be found.

Next up, we were angry peasants. As religious zealots, we sought to convert the heroes. Unfortunately, Shackleton and I made unconvincing missionaries as we were unable to explain even the most basic tenets of our religion. We distinguished ourselves by shouting "Sinner!" many times. Then we were ordered to destroy a vortex, which involved attacking a black sheet, gaffer taped to the wall, with a rubber sword.

With our time nearly at an end, our faces were painted green and we were sent to rob the inn as goblins. We were informed that goblins speak with one of two accents, scouse or cockney, always at a helium pitch. Our only defences were Shackleton's decorative spoon (an ineffective wand) and my defective blinding crystal, which blinded me as well as my foes. After I yelled "This is a stick up!" in a scouse accent, Shackleton fired his wand with its operative word: "Bastard!" This offered little protection. A mob of fifteen surged towards us and felled us with a barrage of rubber sword blows.

Our time was up. It had been surprisingly easy to accept the world and ways of Grantabrugge, even if the plethora of rules remained baffling. We had assumed that a quick-witted pair like ourselves would have no trouble summoning the inspiration required, but it proved challenging. The other players were extremely kind and helpful, though, and this compensated for our shortcomings. It was a most enjoyable evening – well worth a spin in the DeLorean.

For more information about Treasure Trap, go to <http://www.srcf.ucam.org/tt/>





Trailer trash

Excited by the trailer for the next blockbuster? Be careful, warns **George Reynolds** - trailers can be as slippery as a fish and as deceptive as a witch's gingerbread house

You file into the cinema. After a while, the loungecore porn music they always insist on playing fades; the lights go down. Then: *that* voice. "This summer, two sisters, torn apart by love, will be reunited...and turn against the village that holds them prisoner. Working Title presents Keira Knightley...Mischa Barton... Alan Rickman...Judi Dench, in the greatest story ever told."

What I hope this shows is that anything can be made considerably more sexy and appealing if it appears in a film trailer. For that exciting proposition, with its galaxy of stars, is none other than Middlemarch, unequivocally the most dire and turgid novel ever written. Yet compare this (fictional) trailer with the blurb on the back of the Penguin edition: "George Eliot's greatest work is a magnificent portrait of a provincial town and its inhabitants. Encompassing society as a whole and the struggles of the individual, it is a Victorian masterpiece." There's more, but why go on? You had me at "provincial town".

No arrangement of written words will ever approach the dizzying sensory overload we are subjected to every time we go to the cinema; the geniuses who make trailers have somehow made us judge – and buy – whatever books they are selling based only on the briefest glimpses at their covers. Take *The Dark Knight*, which has certainly got me childishy excited, and seems to have had the same effect on zillions of hairy-palmed obsessives elsewhere. Posters on IMDb – it's a bit like Facebook, but with films – ask questions ranging from the understandably specific (reevesdam's "So is the Joker in this one the acid-transformed version?") to the irrelevant ("godhatesireland.com" by fluke-69) to the interestingly blunt (pmtaran nervously asks "What now with Heath Ledger dead?"). The point is not that

trailers bring the geeks out of their cubby-holes – I don't think any of us has much time for someone who concludes "I am sorry that Ledger died, but I also hope that this does not ruin this new Batman movie I've

"A trailer has the same aim as a stripper...it's no coincidence that sub-one minute trailers are called teasers - you are being guilefully seduced"

been waiting to see." The point is that trailers create anticipation and comment, whatever the demographic: comic-book geeks, excitable children taking a break from their Wiis, Cambridge students trawling YouTube for softcore shots of Britney when she wasn't mental – we've all been exposed, and all been reducing to salivating, gibbering wrecks (a bit like Britney now, incidentally) who would do ANYTHING for it to be Summer 2008 (when is summer? Is it June? July? Does global warming mean it will come sooner?) and to be able to see the film in its entirety. And we discuss it with each other, and whip ourselves into even more of a frenzy.

But here's the thing. When it does come to be Summer 2008 (is it summer now?), *The Dark Knight* will be a bit of a disappointment. Not crushing – not *Spider-Man 3* – but still, just not quite what you expected. The acting will be stellar, the set-pieces outstanding, but it will not deliver on the adrenaline-soaked promise of the 2 minutes and 4 seconds of trailer because that would be impossible. The whole point of a trailer is to take you on such an intense, brief thrill-ride that you cannot wait to get on board the longer version. A good trailer has the same aim as a good stripper: to promise the world,

almost to deliver it, but then just to pull back at the very moment the thrilling glimpses of ecstasy threaten to come together in pure orgasmic pleasure. It's no coincidence that the brief, sub-one minute trailers you

get are called 'teasers' – you are being teased, guilefully seduced, and in the cinema (or in front of your computer) no-one is there to expose this beautiful creature for the hideous chick-boy she will be revealed as when you see the film.

So be wary. When you next see Will Ferrell shout "Shakespeare's haemorrhoids!" / "Pinter's vas deferens!" / "Joyce's perineum!" as he is savaged by a bear/raped by a midget/punched by someone in a wheelchair, just think to yourself that maybe his latest sports pastiche will not give you the hours of mirth that the trailer seems to offer. Will Sex and the City really offer you that much more sex (no one cares about the city) now that it's that little bit longer? No, it won't, but that swing version of the title music and shot of Carrie in her underwear certainly makes you think otherwise. People say that the trailers are the best bit of going to the cinema for the very good reason that, in terms of the short-term effect they have on us, they *are* the best bit. They're brief and shallow and noisy and full of sex and drugs and violence – basically everything you want Atonement to be but know, even before the requisite period-drama strings kick in, you're never going to get. On one hand, it's an appalling indictment of our society that we need thrills that

concentrated to really gain our attention. On the other, it really is amazing that something we know to be totally fictional can still have most of us bouncing up and down with excitement. Watch an old-school trailer: *Jaws* lasts over three minutes, and is soundtracked throughout by a voiceover done by a guy who sounds like he's reading a shopping list. The best bit is the build-up to the film's opening-scene money shot. Voiceover guy intones: "It is as if God created the Devil, and gave him... JAWS!" Tension, pace, excitement: all as lacking as they are ubiquitous today. The game has advanced to a level where even Spielberg at the height of his powers cannot compete.

There is plenty to enjoy in this process of being teased to the point of exasperation; for people who know that Father Christmas is the same guy who'll be berating your mother at lunch the next day, perhaps the only really exciting anticipation we get is in the build-ups to our Summer 2008s and our Coming Soons. And don't get me wrong – I love trailers. I love the jump-cuts, and the spooky disembodied voices, and the swelling soundtracks, and the explosions, and the shouting, and the way you get what you think are the end credits and then one more big shock right before the end so you run out into the lobby and pre-book your tickets months in advance ("So tell me. Summer 2008. When exactly is that?"). I just don't want you to be hurt, that's all. Be aware that the slickness and pace and tension of it is impossible to replicate over two hours, and that, aesthetically, a slower pace and depth of characterization will actually make it a better film. If you crave shallow, momentary thrills, the cinema isn't as ideal for you as you might think – realise that the only thing that will ruin *The Dark Knight* is not Heath Ledger's death, but your expectations.

The 7 Best Trailers EVER

7) *Twelve Monkeys*

An early masterpiece - has all the pacing, intrigue and excitement of anything on our screens today.

6) *Dark City*

So effective that, ten years on, I still HAVE TO SEE THIS FILM. Endlessly mysterious, dazzlingly inventive, absolutely terrifying.

5) *Mission Impossible 3*

"Do you have a wife? Girlfriend? Whoever she is I'm going to find her, and I'm going to hurt her. Then I'm going to kill you right in front of her." Pure evil, then more explosions and shouty bits than most people pack into a whole film. Just ace.

4) *The Dark Knight*

You've seen it. He's got knives! And he's got a bike! And that bird you sort of fancy off of Secretary is in it! And it's called *The Dark Knight*! Words cannot explain the excitement.

3) *The Matrix*

Before they went and ruined the whole thing, this was SO exciting. We're told to "forget everything you know"; after two minutes we can only echo Neo as his eyes are opened: "Woah."

2) *Knocked Up*

"I'm pregnant." "Fuck off... With a baby?!" Sets the tone perfectly for the film; AND you don't have to endure the infamous baby-delivery shot.

1) *The Blair Witch Project*

A key component of one of the most innovative publicity campaigns in film history. I am so, so scared right now...

Money can't buy you art

The Arts Council has announced significant cuts in the projects it funds. **Pascal Porcheron** discovers why

The Arts Council, in trying to cope with the unsolvable problem of unlimited wants facing limited resources, has had to choose which art they value most on some slippery criteria. It's not easy to make value judgements about art, but this is what they have tried to do, to the effect that their search for 'excellence' has led to the removal of funding for nearly 200 organisations, deemed, it can only be assumed, no longer excellent enough.

One of the Council's main concerns was the need to open up access in the arts to groups that have traditionally not participated. Perhaps this explains the decision to remove the Cambridge Arts Theatre's £176,000, whilst the Exeter Northcott has lost three times this amount. Both organisations are currently undertaking major refurbishment, relying partially on the long-standing grants that they had received. Whether or not they do enough to merit a grant, it smacks of insensitivity.

Both, however, had been warned about "static" audiences, a euphemism for a lack of diversity. The first ominous sign of the Council's intentions towards the Cambridge Arts came in August, when front-of-house staff were asked to monitor audiences by age, sex and ethnicity. Given Cambridge's demographics the results were unsurprising. Nevertheless, the Council is not wrong to try to ensure the theatre remains representative. The theatre must be a place for the whole community in

order to survive, and to continue to play a role in the education of its inhabitants.

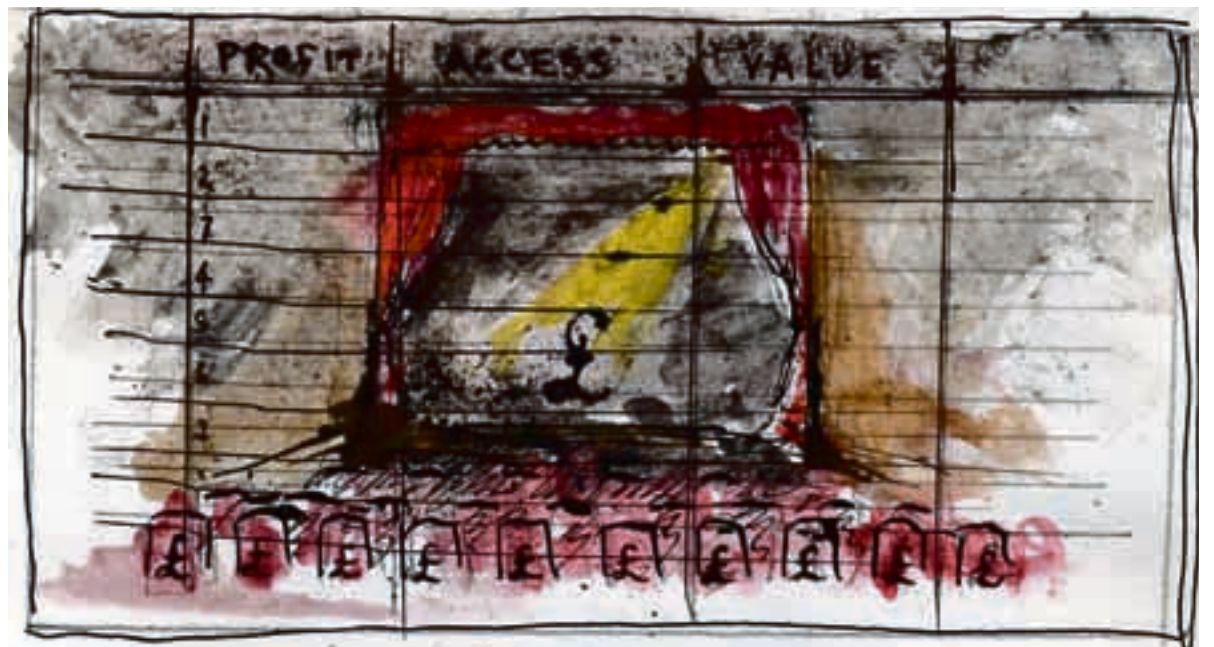
Perhaps the Council should look at more than just audiences, and see that the best way of increasing diversity is by supporting the institutions that are already implementing suggested changes. As Kate Flannery, an Arts Theatre spokeswoman says, "The grant will affect some of our non-commercial activities, such as being able to offer free workshops to schools and putting on work from new playwrights."

Removing the grant will mean less student theatre and contemporary dance at the Arts and the loss of a high-profile platform for the very people the Council would help.

Art must be accessible, but it cannot be compromised into being consumer-led. "High standards and accessibility can go hand in hand," says culture secretary James Purnell. Perhaps they can, but surely the point of funding is to allow things that are undervalued by the consumer to survive. Otherwise, we may as well pocket the cash and watch Strictly Come Dancing instead.

The Government hopes to balance this accessibility by encouraging innovation above all else. The ten most innovative organisations will be given a ten-year funding package to help them realise their potential. At the end of the day the Cambridge Arts put on one too many knockabout farces.

Innovation is essential in stop-



ping art from stagnating, and no-one wants to stifle the emergence of new ideas with strict rules about what is and isn't 'excellent'. The problem is that innovation is being valued over aesthetics. Instead of being a function with which to change the rules it is a rule in itself. What results is a form of gimmickry, whereby one's initial reaction to a piece of art is king: "wow that's different."

If the Arts Council is serious about improving the Arts environment, then it should play closer attention to some of the largest institutions. The Turbine Hall in the Tate Modern has had a seismic crack torn down the middle of its floor as part of a new exhibition.

The crack supposedly represents the schism caused by racism in the Western World. But it could just as easily be representative of the tangible divide between the artist and the real world. We are in danger of wearing the emperor's new clothes.

In any case, these questions probably weren't as important to the Council as they would like us to believe when they styled themselves as progenitors of a new renaissance. This was Purnell's spin on what looks more like a bit of opportunistic financial re-jigging. The council removes funding to some large organisations that should be able to stand on their own feet, and tries to support

smaller ones with more experimental programmes, and everyone at least understands. However, many small companies, even those that tour deprived areas and schools, have also lost their grant. One Manchester company was even told it was because theirs was too small to be viable.

We cannot envy the Arts Council mandarins their positions: balancing commercial interests with artistic ones is hard enough for theatre owners and directors, let alone for public figures who are by definition removed from the front line. But a more coherent line of reasoning and a more open process of decision-making are essential.

Military Action

Imogen Walford reminds us there's nothing wrong with political theatre, as long as it entertains

Anyone for devised theatre about the fall-out of nuclear war? At the ADC? Possibly your idea of esoteric intellectual wank, possibly your idea of good theatre. The Burning of Carthage was a Cambridge production transferred to the National Student Drama Festival – thirty years ago. Now, political theatre is notable only in its absence from the Cambridge stage. But is this a sign that students are apathetic or is it in fact a problem in how political theatre itself is perceived?

There is of course the good argument that all theatre is 'political'. We're smug Said readers now: you can barely hear Austen under the screams of all those slaves. But, life is short and Varsity articles are shorter, so whilst accepting that Ayckbourn does indeed equate to the thrall of the bourgeoisie, I'm talking about Political Theatre with a capital P.

The problem with Political Theatre is its popularly misconceived equation with Left-Wing Theatre. It's true the great gods of the form – Bertolt Brecht, Joan Littlewood, John McGrath and the Red Ladder Theatre – didn't exactly favour the free market. The purpose was in the name of McGrath's 7.84 company, based

on the ratio of those who owned land to the amount they owned (the inequality has increased since the 70s). But for theatre-goers to equate political theatre with a particular politics, for theatre practitioners to insist on this bias and, most particularly, for critics to fill space with 'where's the right-wing political theatre' articles is plain reductionist and silly. The strongest political theatre in the last few years has stepped away from party affiliations. Particularly when a Labour government took us into a war that is now pretty roundly condemned, it makes no sense to label an anti-Iraq play as 'leftie'.

It's this confusion of political theatre with politics that also leads to criticisms of it for not 'making a difference'. Reports of theatre's efficacy are greatly exaggerated: there is a reason why David Hare is not Prime Minister. But some theatre practitioners do seem to think that David Hare should be Prime Minister. In the run-up to the Iraq war, a meeting was held in London of part anti-war protest, part eulogy of Peter Brook's 60s anti-Vietnam play, US – the message seemed to be that we need a play to come and save us from Blair (it was even

wankier than it sounds, if you were wondering). Brook's US was a seminal piece of political theatre. It certainly echoed a zeitgeist of youthful anti-war feeling. It may well have contributed to it. But anyone who thinks that we didn't go to war because of US should

When political theatre remembers what it really is, it has real value

have their head checked.

Political theatre cannot be and shouldn't try to be politics. It's when political theatre remembers what it really is – theatre – that it has real value. Dictatorial Theatre is Deadly Theatre: but rather than try and change the world, theatre can distil it into a comprehensible form. The production Guantanamo presented the audience with accounts from inmates in the prison and their lawyers. It was information that would have been given two sound-bites in a newspaper, fully outlined in front of you. It was powerful – and informative.

The theatre provides a communal space where political matters can be reflected on – just think of the Athenian festival. Theatre-makers aren't elected, they don't have a right to tell us what to think and do. But as members of society, they can provide a forum for discussion. The Colour of Justice, a reproduction of the Stephen Lawrence inquiry, pushed questions of racism and corruption in the police force into the audience's face. The impact it had on those watching was clear: night after night, the audience rose with the actors in the Inquiry's moment of quiet for Lawrence. The theatre is one of the few public places left where people can come together in this way.

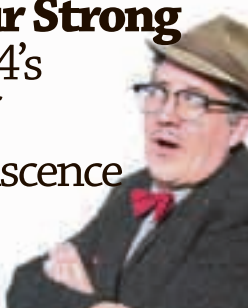
But in making this space for debate and reflection, political theatre practitioners also shouldn't shy away from the fact that theatre is Art. The previous three plays I've cited are all examples of 'verbatim' political theatre; this gets closer to being documentary film, reproducing exact transcripts of events on the stage. It's a powerful form – but it's not the only way theatre can do politics without playing dictator.

In allowing the theatre to be creative about politics, one starts

to enter the realm of questions about the right of Art to re-imagine global suffering and inequality. As the philosopher Adorno stated, "writing poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric". But fear of barbarism shouldn't lead theatre makers away from creativity into a glorified news programme. The most extraordinary, world-altering piece of theatre I've ever seen was by Mnouchkine's Theatre du Soleil company. In a play that had taken two years to put together and ran for over six hours in total, the actors made you imagine what it was like to undertake a refugee's journey. They built up tableaux of imagined characters, each performed in the appropriate language. And in so doing, they shifted the discourse of refugees away from the dichotomy of victims in their country and aliens in ours, into the events in between. It was imagined politics, but it was political none the less.

The theatre is one of the most exciting art forms – it's there to make you look again at the world, to question your role in it and all in an immediate, creative environment. It's not just that 'all theatre is political', it's worth remembering that theatre has the capacity and the right to be political.

Meet **Count Arthur Strong**
Radio 4's
king of
reminiscence



Hello, Count Arthur.

Good morning, afternoon or evening because I don't know what the time is when you're reading this.

Please introduce yourself.

Count Arthur Strong. You should know that! It was you who got in touch with me.

Have you been to Cambridge before?

I changed trains there in 1968. And do you know I've never forgotten the rest of this sentence.

Have you got a message for the youngsters at the University?

Eat your greens and do all your sums. Stop shoplifting.

Tell us about your own childhood.

I ate all my greens, did all my sums and didn't shoplift a Dinky toy car every Friday. I wish I had them now. I saw someone on the Antiques Roadshow with some, the other day and they were worth a bloody fortune. I had the removal van one.

How did you get started in show business?

My mother and father had a variety act together. He played the saw and she sang Knees Up Mother Brown. It's in the blood, so to speak. I was playing the spoons at three!

Have you ever met the Queen?

I've met the Queen on many occasions and we always have a little laugh and a word about her sausage dogs. I have it on good authority that her and her mother are one of the biggest fans of my wonderful radio series. I went to Windsor Castle once as well, on a coach trip, and it looked lovely there.

What do you think of the X Factor?

I like the little fat one in it.

What is your favourite, and least favourite book?

My favouritest book is Through It All I've Always Laughed. My wonderful autobiography of myself I done. It really is a marvellous read. It's just the sort of book I enjoy as well. And it's only £7.99 ono. An ideal read for students they tell me, to bring them on. Other than that, anything with a post mortem in it. My least favouritest book is anything by her with the funny teeth. I can't remember what her name is now.

She talks right "jolly hockey sticks" and looks like she smells of dogs. I've read them all and they're full of smut. It's outrageous! You can't put them down really. I got one in the Oxfam shop for forty pence. That's not bad is it? It should have been £6.99 new. *Count Arthur Strong - The Musical? is on at the Junction on Monday evening.*

Top of the Pops

As Art Brut reach Cambridge on their quest for world domination, frontman **Eddie Argos** talks to **Oli Robinson** and **Hugo Gye** about love and German professors

Do you ever get the feeling that things were just a little bit more exciting when you were younger? When you fell in love it was always completely head over heels in love; when you got dumped it was like the end of the whole world? Eddie Argos, lead singer of Art Brut, thinks so. He wrote the song Emily Kane about a girlfriend he had when he was a teenager. "Other girls went and other girls came, I'm still in love with Emily Kane," he sings. So was he hoping she would hear the song? "Oh definitely," he says in a surprisingly shy, mumbling way, "When I wrote that song I really was still in love with Emily Kane. I thought she'd hear it and we'd get back together and get married or something. In fact, I had a drink with her last night. It's fine now but it was a little bit strange at first. The first time I saw her since I was fifteen she came backstage at a gig and asked to see me – our manager didn't believe her when she told him what her name was." Was it really embarrassing then? "Well we got talking and she reminded me that she used to walk me back to my house every night and then had to walk all the way back to hers. I had this tiny girl walking me home. I insisted that I must have walked her at least once, but apparently not." They didn't get back together.

Where does his inspiration come from now that he's lost his erstwhile muse? "Writing is all about honesty really. I just want to write about how I feel. When

were writing People in Love I had just broken up with a girlfriend and the lyrics were really miserable, but as time went on I kept changing them to make them less depressing." He says that his song-writing is cathartic: "you write about your problems until they don't bother you any more". A bit like a stand-up comedian then? "Yes exactly. In fact I'm writing a song about just that at the moment." His favourite comedian is Stewart Lee: "I wanted to see if we could do a tour with him but our manager said 'No. People already think Art Brut are a joke band, you can't tour with a comedian!'"

Although some people see Art Brut as a joke, others definitely do not. "In Germany some students told us that they were studying us at university. We thought they were joking, but then a lecturer from Berlin University came up to us after a gig and told us he teaches a course

called 'The Depressive Dandy: the lyrics of Eddie Argos'. The professor suggested that our first album was a concept album according to the Birmingham hypothesis – I just nodded and smiled. In France I've heard they use the lyrics of Moving to LA to teach people English!"

Moving to LA, with its refrain of "I'm considering a move to LA", expresses a sentiment many Englishmen have felt (although perhaps its conclusion of "I'll be drinking Hennessy with Morrissey" is a little less universal). "I was sitting in a pub in the rain feeling miserable and lonely and wished I was somewhere hot. Ironically, my girlfriend comes from LA so I am actually now properly considering a move to LA!" So he wouldn't fancy somewhere in the UK, then? Not even Cambridge? "Well actually, I just saw the Portland Arms over the road. I used to have a girlfriend from Cambridge and we would joke in interviews about buying it. We weren't really serious but the woman

who owned it found out and got in touch. She said she was moving to Spain and we could have it when she left." If only it had worked out.

Break-ups provide Argos with much of his material, and he briefly played the role of relationship counsellor during gigs. "I used to give relationship advice during Emily Kane but people would come up and say things like 'We re-met and we've had loads of babies', so I gave up and started saying 'Don't listen to advice'. And then I realised that was just stupid, so I stopped."

So that is where we leave it. Pop songs might help you out of an emotional rut but they can't necessarily provide the answers. As we leave he holds a cup of tea and some Jaffa cakes in one hand and holds the door open for us in the other. He is a very nice man. Go out and buy both their albums please.

Art Brut's gig at the Junction is reviewed on page 25.



Ian Patel On Genius

The nature of genius, for all our wonderment at its workings, can often strike us as perverse. Isaac Newton (about whom Pope proclaimed "Nature and Nature's laws lay hid in night, / God said, Let Newton be! and all was light.") once stuck a bodkin – a needle of the type used for sewing leather – "betwixt my eye and the bone as near to [the] backside of my eye as I could." He conducted this horrific experiment merely to see what would happen – nothing, miraculously. Newton also stared at the sun for as long as he could bear in order to gauge the effect to his vision (he spent the next few days in a darkened room). Newton's alchemical work with mercury may go some way to explain-

ing this behaviour. Charles Babbage, in fine Newtonian fashion, cooked himself in an oven for some minutes in order to determine the effect on his mind. Michelangelo seldom washed and Wittgenstein could be perversely moralistic and solitary. Having determined no good reason why one shouldn't eat tulips, William Empson started popping great numbers into his mouth during a university dinner. He was sick soon afterwards. William Butler Yeats was a theosophist who communed with spirits and believed his poetic form would resurrect the eighth-century Gaelic golden age. More often than not, he seemed desperately insane. The lesson is simple: mere mortals, rejoice!



‘This is a bit much’

Carlos Reygadas is making waves in Mexican film, but don’t ask him about it. **Ravi Amaratunga** did...

Walking in to the Novotel in Central London is a bit of a soul-destroying experience, and when I approached a tired, weary and well-travelled Carlos Reygadas, hidden in dark corner of the bar, stooped over a stale coffee and hiding his head from the bustle of journalists crowding around him, one could tell that the Novotel had begun to get to him.

Reygadas is one of cinema’s latest bright lights. Nominated for Cannes in 2002 for his debut film *Japon*, and slated by some but adored by others for his controversial, blowjob-laden *Battle in Heaven*, Reygadas is a self-styled auteur; young, brash and opinionated, but deeply passionate. He’s led an eccentric life, ending up in Mexico City, a city for which he holds a lot of contempt, only after spending his early years at school in England.

“The worst thing about Yorkshire”, Reygadas begins, rolling his eyes, “was that it was cold. Really cold.” Aside from the weather, however, England provided few formative experiences for him: “I don’t think I watched one film when I was out there. Oh wait. Maybe James Bond.” Sport was his thing back then and, though you wouldn’t be able to tell from his worn and wiry frame, the Mexican filmmaker actually ended up playing rugby for his national side.

Yet, whilst he laughs when remi-

niscing about this, it isn’t until I ask him about how he ended up becoming interested in film that his eyes began to light up, and his hands begin to unclasp his coffee cup. “I actually only began to really engage with cinema at the age of 15.” I asked what kind of stuff he watched, aside from Goldfinger: “Not Mexican films! World cinema. Tarkovsky, for instance. His films were some of the first with which I saw in my life in a different kind of way.”

Indeed, Reygadas’ works, slow in pace but steeped in symbolism and spiritualism, are cinematically similar to many aspects of Andrei Tarkovsky’s films. But he is irritated by this comparison, and a now animated Reygadas exclaims, “Of course it’s a compliment but essentially what you do is what you do and that’s it.” He doesn’t want to be the next Tarkovsky, and is unconcerned about his legacy. “I don’t care about anything because I believe films are only worth analysing seriously after 20 or 25 years. It’s certainly far too early to say anything about mine. Who knows, in 25 years I may have disappeared completely, and that will be the true test for me.”

One reason for Reygadas’ detachment is because, having worked as a lawyer for several years, he remains an outsider in the cinematic world. It seems like a strange career change, but

Reygadas insists it was an easy decision, “It’s pretty simple: I wanted a more exciting life. Don’t get me wrong – I really liked my job, but working as a lawyer Monday to Friday was far too straightforward, and it was mundane, and I guess I yearned for more physical work. I really believe in working with your own two hands. I really like the physical part of my job now, something which was impossible in law.”

Luck seems to have been on the side of the Mexican. “When I was 25 or 26 and I decided to change, I hadn’t filmed anything at all. I didn’t have a camcorder, camera or anything like that. But I had to get these images out of my head, so basically I just left my job and started making short films with a close group of people. After my first year of leaving law, I shot my first film.”

Reygadas’ outsider perspective certainly means that he is a rare bright light in an industry full of carefully-preened, bullshit-speaking and artistically unambitious directors, many of whom were also in town for the London Film Festival and who seemed very at home in the swanky hotel. By contrast, Reygadas is deeply uncomfortable in the fickle glitz and glamour and so, even as I gear up for my next question, he’s already begun to stand up. “I’m sorry,” he tells me. “This is all a bit much.”



Great Works of Art at Cambridge #3: *Fox* by Henri Gaudier-Brzeska *Kettle’s Yard*

The attic in Kettle’s Yard is a charming refuge. Low ceilinged and well lit, there are chairs and books and space to think. But best of all, this is where my favourite drawings reside.

On your right, at the top of the winding narrow staircase, are several plainly framed drawings of animals by Henri Gaudier-Brzeska. Of course, you wouldn’t know they were by him, not just because the art in Kettle’s Yard is unnamed and undated, but because these drawings are miles away from his better-known sculptures, which were made in the heart of Vorticism. Unlike those roughly carved Cubism-influenced works, Gaudier-Brzeska’s very simple animal drawings are made with graceful and economical lines.

Many were made from visits to London Zoo. But my favour-

ite, *Fox*, could not have been. I’ve googled; I’ve searched the library at Kettle’s Yard; I’ve interrogated the lovely staff there – but I can find no information on *Fox*.

Part of me agrees with one of the curators there: “Well”, he said, “I suppose it’s just a fox”. Yes, but have you ever seen a more heartbreaking fox? There is no base yet he sits elegantly upright, legs tucked in and slightly hunched, taking up the whole piece of paper.

In profile he stares in to the distance, as if sitting for Gaudier-Brzeska only. Occasionally the thin line of brown ink has bled, the line is fragmented but it somehow has the feel of being continuous. There are some dirty marks on the page, possibly from un-precious fingers. He is so sensitively drawn, and although it looks effortless, I’m sure the artist must have

sketched him a hundred times. But the most striking part is the fox’s tear, ready to fall from his eye.

When I first found him, it was before the fox-hunting ban, and for research purposes only, I had myself just been on a hunt. The fox’s blood was, so to speak, still on the cheek which had been blooded. Then there was this fox, just sitting there and crying.

Now, I’m not particularly politically active, and nor am I a sentimentalist, but I did consider buying this postcard in bulk and dropping it all over the shires. Fair enough, urban foxes are filthy, skinny overgrown vermin, but this one is beautiful. Never before have I seen an animal drawn with such tenderness. Go and see him, and I dare you not to feel the twinge of a tear yourself.

Anna Trench



view from the groundlings



Judging from the roaring success of *Over the Bridge* last week, which elicited from the audience not only rapturous applause and shrieks of delight, but a standing ovation quite unlike anything I had seen in that theatre before, the groundlings dig a gig. Nay, they absolutely love it. Now, the problems and some virtues of musical theatre have famously been bandied about in this column before, but there has been less discussion about music itself. But, "Sacrilege!" I hear you cry: "this is about plays, not concerts! Shakespeare's groundlings queued for the theatre floor, not for a prototype Baroque mosh pit!" Yes yes, I know. There are many out there who seem inexplicably keen to maintain divisions in the arts, and it is a sorry truth that many of our generation are more used to going to the theatre than to the concert hall; you only have to look at the sea of grey that fills the Royal Festival Hall to understand the concerns of professional musicians that they might soon be out of a job if their audience dies.

But surely it's all just a question of habit: people aren't programmed to like theatre more than music (indeed, maybe the opposite is closer to the truth), and whilst we hear much talk of Cambridge's flourishing musical community, we don't seem to nurture it enough: the West Road Concert Hall is like totally on the wrong side of the Cam, sweetie.

No-one is asking that classical concerts take over the ADC, not least because it would cause outrage amongst those keen to preserve dramatic space for drama only (after all, space is limited: just look at the packed-out programmes of the Fitzpatrick Hall, Homerton Auditorium, Emmanuel Queen's Building – or not), there is huge potential to incorporate more 'popular' music evenings (jazz, barbershop, blues...) into what will remain a predominantly dramatic programme. Last Tuesday the audience went mad; surely, if nothing else, it is an easy way to sell out and replenish the theatrical coffers.

I would be one of the first to defend the cause of theatre to the hilt, but theatre is already nurtured here, whilst music hasn't reached the masses in the same way, which is a shame for both performers and audiences. Playroom and Amateur Dramatic Company they may be, but the fact remains that there are only so many venues in Cambridge which really attract regular large audiences, and anyone who claims that theatre inherently has a better claim to this privilege than music is a surely a shining example of the ignorance bred by our failure to give musicians a chance.

Alex Reza

All the Ordinary Angels ADC

Dir: Anna Marsland

Theatre

★★★★★

1980s Manchester. Bullish Rocco and 'naff' underdog Lino must compete for their retiring father's ice cream business. New girl Lulu takes up with Lino before seducing the married Rocco. What is the powdery secret ingredient of Lulu's celebrated 'Angelato' that causes euphoria and chemical addiction?

In trying to find a new take on gelato, dependence, and betrayal, *All the Ordinary Angels* never quite succeeds in marrying its tragic and comic elements. Perhaps we're overly alert to the sinister, but "Children hospitalised after overdosing on cocaine laced ice cream" is uncomfortably reminiscent of a Daily Mail shocker. When juxtaposed with coke pouring from the skies, characters hiding in ice cream vans and references to the Poll Tax riots it is unclear whether the playwright is attempting black comedy, farce or socio-political comment.

In her clear and sensitive direction Anna Marsland does much to solve this confusion: she surrenders to and embraces the inherent kitsch of the plot and setting. Set on a stage strewn with pastel ice cream boxes, this is a world which is part fairytale. Here lines like "I'm not Lois Lane, I'm Kryptonite" have an unreal charm and the good can triumph without irony or cynicism. As a result, the production exudes

genuine light, warmth, and a rare unpretentiousness. This is further enhanced by many superb visual touches. Lulu blows gorgeous bubbles for Lino by the canal; Rocco boasts that 'global warming is a god-send for the ice cream man' and manically sprays aerosol deodorant into the night; when it does fall from the defunct factory ventilation system, the hidden cocaine is weirdly beautiful.

Headed by Ade O'Brien as Papa, a terrific cast also do much to bring out the subtlety in the characters. As Rocco's wife Bernie, a part that might have been overlooked, Becky Homer dominates the production with quiet pathos. Bernie's problem is that she has nothing to do: she is a childless stay-at-home-mum with a husband who would rather smash up the garden for pseudo-relics of the Berlin Wall than let her close enough to help him. Her dogged commitment to the family means that she is inevitably trampled and overlooked. A scene in which Bernie is saddled with sacking Lulu (Jess Crawford) and accidentally uncovers her affair with Rocco is utterly excruciating and pitched with perfect timing by both actors. Playwright Nick Leather might almost have got more mileage out of this storyline than the ice cream factory itself.

Isabel Taylor

The Gnädiges Fräulein ADC

Dir: Ollie Evans

Theatre

★★★★★

The word tragicomedy should induce vertigo. It just says too much to take in at once. Therefore, when Tennessee Williams added vaudeville burlesque and slapstick, with a dash of pop art, to the genre, you would think people would leave it alone; but fortunately not. Bouncing wildly between all these elements, *The Gnädiges Fräulein* is like theatre in a particle accelerator. Ollie Evans' production grips this disparate mass in both hands but arguably holds on too tight.

The look and feel of the show is hard to fault. The striking, prison-stripe dresses of Polly and Molly which hide the lust and barbarism of the characters beneath, are in stark contrast to the clashing circus-style colours of the carnival of "personages". The onstage musicians add, hugely, to the atmosphere, creating something reminiscent of Kneehigh's early theatre. The set, simple but well designed, works well with the division of the action, isolating the boarding house, like an open television set, whose frame sets the voyeuristic tone of the play.

The performances, similarly, are strong. The admirable vocal and physical energy of Jazz Jagger and Kate Le Versha sustains the frenetic dialogue and Tom Edwards, Patrick Walshe McBride and Natalie Kesterton's physicalised performances exhibit essential menace and playfulness. Even the musicians, cheekily passing round

the wine bottle and trespassing into the action, have conviction. Not a single performance has been left uncertain, and everything feels right.

This, however, is where the production falters. Its slickness never quite captures the disturbing, uncertain nature of Williams' play, its most sublime moments being, sadly, fleeting. Kesterton's bone-chilling groan, as the blind and broken Gnädiges Fräulein, reaches deep into the audience but fails to truly penetrate. Her haunting eyes staring out of the hanging window at the Venetian masked birdman are so swiftly removed that to blink is to miss them. In her blind eyes, ever open, we see the suffering that is the antithesis of the artificial chatter of Molly and Polly. It is a pity we get such little chance to meet her gaze.

Evans' production intelligently manages the many facets of the play. The clowning is well staged alongside the constant babble of dialogue. Physical and vocal performances are convincing. *The Gnädiges Fräulein* is thought-out and well-balanced. Unfortunately, such control serves to blunt the madness and suffering that simmered beneath the surface. The wild spirit of Williams never truly boilsover onto the unsuspecting audience leaving a play that, although strong in so many ways, never quite achieves the laughter or the tears that it deserves.

James Walker

After the End Corpus Christi Playroom

Dir: David Brown

Theatre

★★★★★

As a theatregoer in this town, every now and then you encounter a production that makes you sit up and stare – and feel a bit like you've been punched in the chest. This was certainly the case with *After the End*, which captivates its audience as its dark and desperate vision of humanity's concurrent frailty and brutality unfolds over ninety minutes.

After the End fully exploits the Playroom's potential for an atmosphere of almost unbearable intensity: the already claustrophobic space is transformed into a hotbox of psychosis and confrontation. Indeed, the force and brutality of some scenes had me glancing at the door for reassurance of its fiction. I was taken way out of my theatrical comfort zone by this production, and I was grateful that its unswerving pace did not allow me to slip back in. Its many blackouts deny the audience any breathing space, although the strength of the

acting rendered the overtly tense music, self-consciously heralding the violence to come, unnecessary.

Patrick Warner gives a consummate performance as Mark, handling his character's oscillation between tyrannical oppressor and little-boy victim with



sustained emotional commitment. Mark's moments of unabashed sexual insecurity are perhaps more terrifying than the action of the play, and this is entirely to Warner's credit. Abigail Rokison's performance as Louise is also accomplished. Her finest moment,

however, is deferred to the last scene, in which the vulnerability that we glimpse earlier was fully displayed with arresting sensitivity and poignancy. Furthermore, both actors are receptive to the bleak humour of their characters' situations, and the occasional giggle from the audience only served to accentuate the horror of the plot.

In his director's notes, David Brown claims that Kelly's text was "the most trusted entity in the rehearsal room", a statement which we come to understand after witnessing the dialogue, wrought as it is with tensions, frustrations and pathos. But while this script leaves any company with a potentially powerful – and shocking – production on their hands, a play such as this requires ambition and maturity to do it justice. David Brown clearly has both in serious measure. *After the End* is one of those rare offerings that you really can't afford to miss.

Grace Jackson

Literature
Poem of the Week

That windows could salt shut,
frames, wood and the tendons
clasped with effort,
tense,
facing to the sea.

It took a handful of water for the footing
to disappear, if only to let in a little
air, to breathe in salt and for words
to reach their place, joined and grounded.

The mist is settling in, unfolding, the fingers
stiffen, the figures on the shore removed.

What form finds home, it is so hard,
to return from what departure made.

Luke Roberts

The Mars Volta
The Bedlam in Goliath

Album
★★★★★

The Bedlam in Goliath is the fourth album released by the Mars Volta since the split of At the Drive In. It was inspired by a Ouija board which scared the wits out of lyricist Cedric Bixler-Zavala and producer/lead guitarist Omar Rodriguez-Lopez on tour. Yet even the most astute textual critic would be hard pressed to discover this from the lyrics. “I get the sweats from you listening, primordial cymatics giving birth into reverse, serated mere ephemera undo her mother’s curse”, anyone? The point is perhaps that nobody gets the meaning of the album, not even Cedric himself.

Musically, the album differs little from their previous effort, Amputecture, in its condensed intensity. The sprawling arrangements of their first two albums are not matched on The Bedlam in Goliath, and instead centre stage is given to the overbearingly thick guitar; perhaps little wonder when the guitarist/band leader’ is producing the album himself.

Rather than allowing a song to breathe through its kinks and turns, on this album the band prefers to troop through identical overbearing riffs. Even the nine minute long songs Cavlettas and Soothsayer contain no more than a handful of identical sounding motifs, interspersed with novelty breakdowns. Maybe they have just run out of tricks? A bonus track of a Syd Barrett cover is just embarrassing – it sounds like Green Day blasting out power chords with a terrifying paedophile for a front man.

The biggest musical departure for this album is the appointment of a new drummer. He is apparently a drumming prodigy, and as you would expect his style is priggish



at best. His annoyingly tight metal style rinses the album of any rhythmic subtlety. Yes, he can play the drums loud, fast and consistently, but so can my drum machine. His bass drum and the accompanying chugging guitar drowns out all the nuances which brought their previous albums to life. The band contains saxophonists, keyboard players and additional percussionists, but they are drowned out by the arrogant weightiness of the guitar and drums.

The vocals take a bizarre turn on this album. Cedric’s high pitched yelps and squeals are less prominent and instead he relies on a throaty lower register to deliver his absurdities. Perhaps his voice has broken; in any case, the vocals for the song Tourniquet Man sound like Cher at her gruffest.

The use of shifting styles, genres and voices which enlivened previous Mars Volta albums has been dropped in favour of a semi-metal campiness which only serves to narrow their appeal. The Bedlam in Goliath tries so hard to be ‘intense’ and appeal to an audience of guitar shop nerds that no space is allowed to explore the loonier elements. If only they would slow down and trip out for a bit.

Tom Hamilton

Art Brut
The Graduate

Gig
★★★★★

Art Brut’s first gig in Cambridge got off to what could have easily been a flat start, with a technical hitch worthy of Spinal Tap. This time the over-enthusiastic smoke machine outdid itself; 20 seconds into their first song and Art Brut had disappeared behind a thick cloud.

Fortunately, this posed no hindrance. In fact it started frontman Eddie Argos off on an unstoppable quipping spree, from his faux facetious complaint that the band couldn’t find their instruments, to song links such as “This is our second biggest hit. It was in the top ten in loads of countries. I don’t have time to go into it now but one of them was Korea.”

Despite the difficulty of hearing Argos’s half-singing half-

chatting vocals over the rest of the band, his unpretentious charm and unfaltering energy won over the crowd. Likewise, the rest of the band didn’t just go through the motions, but played with a mad-eyed intensity or else with Argos’ infectious limb-flailing fervour.

It is this enthusiasm that is the best thing about an Art Brut gig; they are genuinely responsive to their audience. Not only did they play most of their back catalogue, as well as brand new songs, they improvised on many numbers. Argos frequently made up and updated lyrics: rather than exhorting us all to “stay off the crack” as usual, they offered their best wishes to Amy Winehouse. Crowd-pleasers, every time.

Izzy de Rosario



The Courteeners
The Graduate

Gig
★★★★★

Lead singer of the Courteeners Liam Fray swaggered onto the stage at the Graduate fashionably late swigging from two cans of Strongbow. Mancunian through and through, from the beard to the abrasive attitude and even *that* first name, it’s inevitable that he has already been drawing comparisons to a certain Mr Gallagher. Their current single What Took You So Long fell a little flat, but the seventeen-year-olds at the front of the crowd didn’t seem to mind. They also didn’t seem to notice that the next three songs sounded exactly the same. Songs like Acrylic and Cavorting which put some melody behind the heavy wall of noise really get the crowd going, “We’re not some shit indie band that’s gonna fuck off in a few months,

we’re gonna be around for ages”, Liam claims. That remains to be seen, but the Courteeners are at their best cracking open a fresh can of lager, and breathing some new life back into rock and roll, saying “Fuck you, I’m not from Sheffield”. On Fallowfield Hilbilly, which references Morrissey and slates indie kids, Liam sings “Can you play guitar/ Can you fuck.” The Courteeners certainly give a good go. At one point someone shouted out “Play Wonderwall.” Liam pauses for a second. “Dickhead. Who got the bigger cheer?” They’ve certainly got the swagger (for which read arrogance), but haven’t got the songs yet. Mind you, that hasn’t bothered Oasis for their last four albums.

Henry Donati

albums

every right-minded person
should own



Rum Sodomy & the Lash
The Pogues

Every Christmas we celebrate two things: Jesus and Fairy-tale of New York. Yet it is a shame that the Pogues are overwhelmingly known for just one (admittedly brilliant) song.

Because before bad teeth, drinking tales and festive numbers ate their reputation like a monkey galumphing down a particularly taut banana, the Pogues released this wonderfully idiosyncratic album. Rum Sodomy & the Lash is very unusual; it combines Irish folk and punk but surpasses all expectations by actually making it listenable. Within this folk/punk brief Shane MacGowan and his laddish yet delicately talented bandmates show great innovation - no two tracks sound even vaguely similar.

The opener, The Sickbed of Cuchulainn is quintessential Pogues fare; an Irish drinking song sung with venom and played at a breakneck speed, evoking a mythical Ireland of poteen and emerald hillsides. The rollicking instrumental Wild Cats of Kilkenny is played with all the momentum and aggression of a whiskey-fuelled hurling match, whilst the sumptuous ballad I’m a Man You Don’t Meet Every Day slows things down like a speed camera, Cait O’Riordan’s ethereal voice making a welcome contrast to Shane’s raspy growl. The Irish diaspora provides much of the album’s inspiration, and Shane’s lyrical precision allows him to inhabit both the battered and abused Piccadilly rent boy of The Old Main Drag, and the wounded Gallipoli veteran in the hauntingly brilliant And the Band Played Waltzing Matilda.

If you have ever complained about how generic pop music can be, you owe it to yourself to buy this remarkable album. Likewise if you still think that Razorlight are edgy and interesting. (But if you think Michael Flatley is the greatest living Irishman, you can give it a miss.) Rum Sodomy & the Lash came from nowhere and stands alone; a magical alignment of Ireland’s folk history and punk’s innovation, expertly produced by Elvis Costello to showcase the band’s genuine musical finesse and the poetic brilliance of Shane MacGowan.

Robert Peal



Restaurant Review
Tom Evans
De Luca
83 Regent Street



A few of you are spoiling this for everybody else. I have on my bedside table a list of 57 people who regularly complain to friends, to close family or just in their heads that this column 'isn't about the food'. Also on my bedside table are the following: a mouldy glass of water; a plastic coin with skull and crossbones on; a paper doily that I like to put my laptop on as a joke when I work; Tom Clancy; a pencil sharpener in the shape of the world which set me back £3 but I've never regretted it; a chewed plastic polar bear; a stain; a loaded revolver and a tome by Dr Seuss. It is 'Bartholemew and the Oobleck', and I have ordered 57 copies off amazon dot co dot ukay. The moral of 'Bartholemew' is that you should be careful what you ask for, because you might just get it. This week you 57 get what you asked for. This week I take a look at real food writing.

Food writing has a number of problematic tendencies. The most common is anthropomorphising the meal. My guest's starter at De Luca, for example:

"The mussels nestled presumptuously in their shells, poking

their affectionate little noses into the subtle moist moist sauce..."

Which is inevitably problematic when you get to the eating stage: "...only to be shucked and wazzled into my guest's mouthy mouth, screaming and screaming and crying for help."

Nor is this unheard of when dealing in the vegetarian side of things- the parmesan in my baked aubergine main was maybe procrastinating, maybe just smiling; it was certainly set off by a well-judged fresh diced salad. Then the question of structure and position. The biggest problem here is with beds and islands.

Example A: There was an island of balsamic vinegar in the sea of olive oil

Example B: The heartwarming swordfish was nodding off in a bed of green beans

Example C: There was an island of plate on the sea of table.

Example D: The restaurant was served on a bed of pavement

So far nothing untoward. But then come the colours. Not so long ago there was an advert on the buses in London which had different shades of red that

you might go were you caught without a ticket ('regretful rouge', 'mortified mauve' etc). When 'food writers' talk about colours, the embarrassing bombast of it all reminds me of this advert. I never liked the advert.

Incidentally, I don't like any of the government projects in which the whole point is spending my money on scaring me. The scariest letter I've ever read in my life came from the TV Licensing Agency. I've told them 12 times that I don't have a TV and they still send me nasty post saying they know I'm pilfering their airwaves. They might as well put everyone in prison and be done with it. I suspect the TVLA must be a very angry and suspicious place to work. No doubt the employees spend a lot of time watching each other through cracks in those grey office cubicle screens, and leave each other memos saying they should expect to be fined/ raided/ fired at any moment. If the whinging 57 don't keep schtum then I fear the last of these fates will be my own. I've given you what you wanted. Now let me have my column. If you want to read about food, read a cookbook.

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BOTTOMS UP

Wine critics often consider themselves ambassadors from the states of science to kingdoms of Dionysus: chubby, cherry-cheeked old men harping on about oxidation rate and gustatorial pleasures. It is understandable really, if one is prepared to sacrifice an ocean-going yacht for a bottle of 1787 Château Lafite, that one has the right to slur about its percentage of organic molecules.

However, it seems a little unnecessary to consider fermentation chronology when necking a bottle of Hardy's in the queue to Life, especially when one's palette is smothered in cheeky vimtos and cheesy chips. Alternatively follow five simpler requirements:

WALLET-TO-VOMIT RATIO: We have a lot to learn from the ancients, and should embrace such wisdom as: 'The cheaper a wine is, the more likely it is to be drunk at a formal. The cheaper a wine is, the more likely it is to come spilling back up, swilling some half-digested starter. Therefore the more one goes to formal, the more likely one is to develop

projectile wine disposal habits. Q.E.D.'

PSUEDO-WINE-BUFFERY: When wining and dining a beautiful damsel, a gentleman who simply opts for the second least expensive red or the second most expensive champagne will not impress.

Instead, identify an established wine region and read up on its wines' flavours, histories, best years, famous-former drinkers and roll in defeating communism. The more the wine gives an opportunity for panegyric platitudes, the finer it will taste to the suitably awed strumpet.

GLUGABILITY: When attending formal, considerations of taste, colour and cost all pale against the importance of glugability. Different wines suit different drinking societies, but general wisdom teaches one that a light, sweet rosé will float down your throat with ease. Alchemical mixtures involving chardonnay and rioja are not an effective substitute.

CCR (CONSUMPTION CONSE-

QUENCE RISKS): Stories which begin 'I was really drunk and ...' rather merge into the familiar blur of Jesus-Horse-mounting and boxing with bouncers. However, it is worth repeating that sipping more than one glass of red a day can lead to embarrassing misdeemeanours, crippling hangovers and functional alcoholism. So really, the fabric of student life.

OSTENTATION: Should your panegyric platitudes run dry, the date need not be deserted. It is an internationally recognised fact that girls like pretty things, and should no romantic sunset or Tiffany tiara be at your disposal, suggest a reconnoitre to your room where a bottle of suitably ostentatious vintage will be residing. Find labels adorned with gothic letters, originating from palatial chateaus, with engraved corks and gold-embossed glass. Failing that, the gleaming pink of Verve Clicquot Ponsardin Rosé will surely have her heart a-flutter with thoughts of romance.

Guy Stagg

Johnny & Luciana



JOHNNY AND LUCIANA SHOW YOU HOW TO WORK IT FOR THAT CRUCIAL INTERVIEW

Appearances are important. Whatever you may have heard, looking good on the outside undeniably reflects how you're feeling on the inside. Nowhere is this more important than at a interview. Round of applause please for the first of this term's make-over victims, Claire Bush.

This before shot reminds

before



Johnny and Luciana of all those poor dears lined up outside the senior tutor's room 3 years ago - a miserable array of badly dressed interviewees, quaking in their ill-fitting suits. Needless to say, we haven't seen any of these unfortunate souls around Cambridge... Take Claire's saggy jacket for example - doesn't she look a state! Shoulder pads on a woman either make you look like a quarterback or one quarterpounder too many. This is teamed with baggy-crotch, ankle-swinging trousers that leave Claire looking like a bow-legged clown. Coupled with the botched blusher, one could never for reprimanded for thinking she was interviewing for the cicus. She's not.

Matching cheap stilettos, gold hoop ghetto earrings and tacky necklace will certainly not impress your prospective employer (unless it's a different kind of job you're going

for...) We swapped hoops for studs, swept Claire's hair into a smart ponytail and switched her black f***-me pumps for sophisticated tan hire-me pumps (Hobbs, £99). Not only do they match her long golden legs, they also compliment her new sharper suit. Girls, don't be afraid to get those pins out. Use your femininity to your advantage. Look how much more confident and commanding Claire looks in this sleeky pencil skirt and fitted jacket (Reiss, £270). Sexy doesn't have to mean slutty - we wouldn't recommend wearing a skirt any shorter than this but just above-the-knee looks great and, if your legs are as shapely as Claire's, we can't see how anyone could turn you down (Luciana wore a mini-skirt and cowboy boots to her Cambridge interview. She's not very smart.)

We traded Claire's gross Debbie-does-Debenhams, tart/old-fart shirt for a younger, crisper white vest. The simpler silhouette plus a clean, jewelry-free neckline draws attention up towards her face rather than down towards her (ample) bosom. Remember: no

after



matter how smart the suit, no one will be convinced if you've got the wrong body language. Shoulders back, chest out and head up. Hired.

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HAPPY 2008

Comprehensive fixtures, tables and results service with **Tom Ling**

Fixtures

24	17	20	13							3	5	3	1	5	2	7	6	8	9	3	7	2	4	5	1	
7	1									7	1	4	6	3	5	2	7	4	5	8	1	9	6	3	2	
9	7									6	1	3	2	7		4	7	4	1	3	4	5	6	9	7	8
8	9	4	1							2	1	7	6	5	5	3	5	2	8	6	3	2	9	7	8	
										6	2	7		7	1	4	8	9	3	6	7	2	4	1	8	5
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7	2									5	6	5	3	1	7	7	1	9	4	2	3	5	8	6	7	
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Someone's Got To Win It...

» The Varsity Sports Team takes a quick glance at the upcoming Six Nations

ENGLAND



Change is in the air; the World Cup is over and Brian Ashton can focus on rebuilding the England team in his own image.

Gone are the likes of Martin Corry, perhaps the greatest personification of the meat-head rugby that so typified the Robson epoch, and baying on the sidelines is a new generation of exciting young talent, with Matthew Tait at the forefront after a good World Cup and sure to play a part later in the tournament. Danny Cipriani, along with his Wasps team mate James Haskell, has also been causing a stir in the Premiership and Heineken Cup (as well as with one of the Cheeky Girls).



Yet it would be foolish to expect too much too soon. England's one-dimensional performance in the World Cup and the players' resistance to Ashton's method suggests it could be a lengthy process, and results remain as crucial for Ashton as any other England coach.

Consequently, expect to see Wilkinson deservedly retained at fly-half, where he has been winning games for Newcastle, perhaps with Cipriani serving an apprenticeship at full-back, as he did for Wasps last season. A typically strong pack, with Shaw and Vickery (retained as captain) setting the tone, should give Wilkinson plenty of ball, but whether it is quick enough to set alight the exciting prospects of Strettle, Sackey and new boy Vainikolo out wide remains to be seen.

Luke Thorne

ONE TO WATCH: Vainikolo.

The Tongan-born winger offers real pace and power out wide.

KEY PLAYER: Jonny Wilkinson (above).

It will be his responsibility to set the young back line firing

SCOTLAND



Even more than France, Scotland are turning into a team with a dual personality. Tame performances in last year's competition against England and Italy were made even worse by a

good win against Wales and a strong last quarter against France. Fortunately, the right team showed up at the World Cup, and Hadden's men put in a creditable performance against eventual third-place Argentina to go out in the quarter finals.

Scotland too often give the appearance of being resigned to defeat before kick-off, not doing justice to some real talent in their squad. Indeed, so competitive has the squad become that the talisman and creative spur of the last five years, Chris Patterson, can only find a place on the bench. In his absence, much of Scotland's success will depend on Dan Parks at fly-half. It is cru-

cial that his boot enables the Scots to play in the right areas, keeping his spirited but hardly fearsome pack on the front foot. He will also be crucial in unleashing the likes of Lamont and Webster, who are genuinely potent attacking weapons. In this he should be helped by the youthful talent of de Luca, who will debut at centre. Hadden is bullish



about Scotland's chances, but the realist struggles to see them doing anything other than fighting to avoid the wooden spoon. Expect to see Patterson make a swift return after a heavy defeat to France on Sunday.

Henry Stannard

ONE TO WATCH: Jason White (above).

Sets the tone for his team. There'll be big hits. Make sure you see them.

KEY PLAYER: Parks.

Will have to step up to pressure with boot and in hand.

ITALY



Italy have been regarded as the whipping boys of this competition since they first joined it in 2000. This reputation is not without foundation: England, Ireland and France have put fifty points past them on

numerous occasions and Scotland are the only side never to have reached forty against the Azzuri. However, things are changing, and, eight years on, the Italians are surfing on a growing wave of respect. Last year they defeated both Scotland and Wales in consecutive



games and finished fourth overall, their highest position to date.

The World Cup might have

seen them better rewarded, but for Chris Patterson's immaculate kicking. However, head coach Nick Mallet has now had time to gather an exciting young squad to launch a new offensive for 2008. Bar the usual presence of the Birgamasco brothers, the starting team sheet could confuse many a casual fan: The recognisable Troncon has retired and top Six Nations scorer Ramiro Pez is out of favour. The loss to injury of back row Marco Bortolami, a familiar name to Gloucester fans, will not benefit them in the opening two matches against Ireland and England, but they ought to be confident about their chances against Wales in Cardiff.

The big match for them, though, comes on the last day of the tournament when the Scots visit Rome. The whole of Rome will be relishing the opportunity to even the score with Frank Hadden and his men. Bearing this in mind, I would not expect them to be propping up the table when it's all over.

Jamie Ptaszynski

ONE TO WATCH: Alberto Sgarbi.

Natural winger but might start at 13, where pace and size could come as a surprise.

KEY PLAYER: Sergio Parisse.

Provides crucial experience in a young side, and carries well from no 8.

WALES



Wales had a disappointing six nations last year; overall they finished fifth a place above Scotland due to their points difference. This year, however, the Welsh will be looking

to resurrect some form thanks to the introduction of a fear-some new coaching line-up. Warren Gatland, a former All Black, took over as head coach in November last year; one of his first moves was to bring in Shaun Edwards, rugby league convert and Wasps head coach, world renowned as one of the leading lights when it comes to defensive organisation. Edwards worked with the Blues prior to the Varsity Match, and its plain to see the impact he had on the Blues defence. If he can



match Wales' attacking flair in this department then they can pose a serious threat to the bigger nations.

Have no fear; the wimpish Welsh side of 2007 will have been beaten into shape, and this year poses a much more formidable opposition. Wales never fails to produce some top quality forwards and hard hitting backs. In an unusual move 13 of the Welsh starting line-up this weekend hail from the Ospreys, a move that may dog Gatland as he's taken some considerable flack from the press. If his boys lose then it may well dog his career for some time; but if they win then it will not just be England hanging their heads in shame.

Nonetheless, they face a tough championship, likely to be battling it out at the bottom with Scotland and Italy.

George Towers

ONE TO WATCH: Gavin Henson. Hopefully the national pretty-boy will be back on top form.

KEY PLAYER: Ryan Jones.

New captain, influential no. 8 and crucial player for Welsh success.

IRELAND



This year, for want of a better alternative, commentators have again been saying that it must surely be Ireland's tournament. However, they ignore the fact that

whenever an Irish team look likely to achieve anything, you can safely put your house on them failing comprehensively. They forget that is a country where bottling is so ingrained that they even bottled their independence.

Apart from a few fringe players being dropped and forward talisman Paul O'Connell out with a long term injury, Steady Eddie O'Sullivan will field the same players that crumbled in the Autumn - sticking with a game plan centred around TWGC and his sidekick Gordon D'Arcy that is so predictable even Georgia had a few ideas about how to deal with it.

Despite the fact that they are now play-

ing at Croke Park, which could reasonably claim the best sporting arena in the whole wide world, and should win their home games against Scotland, Italy and Wales through dint of being slightly less of a shambles, they will undoubtedly come unstuck against France in Paris, as always. In their final game at Twickenham against England they stand a fair chance of winning for old time's sake, unless either team has anything riding on it. This means, therefore, that, like the last five years, the Irish will almost certainly finish second or third in the table, possibly claiming that yet another Triple Crown is a genuine achievement for a squad whose powers are rapidly declining.

Henry Stannard

ONE TO WATCH: Andrew Trimble.

Young winger of whom great things are expected. And he's fit. Apparently.

KEY PLAYER: Brian O'Driscoll.

Hopes rest on the Captain's shoulders, as ever.

FRANCE



Like the old enemy across the Channel, times are changing for France. A

spate of retirements, including legends such as Ibanez, Pelous and Betsen, would have been different enough, but with new coach Lievreumont dropping a further seven World Cup starters, including the proof that werewolves exist, Chabal, and Harinor-doquy, it will be hard to recognise *les bleus*. Understandably, Lievreumont wants to make a stance clearly separate from Laporte, now Minister for Sport, but in doing so he has left out talent other countries would kill for. Fortunately, or not, depending on your view-

point, France's strength in depth is such that they can still put out players of the class of Elissalde, Heymans and new captain, Nallet. They are joined by fresh hopefuls, including Trinh-Duc at fly-half, Julien Malzieu and the destructive Sale prop, Lionel Faure. Even if the 21 year-old Trinh-Duc struggles to find his feat, he will have the tried and tested Skrela outside him, with Jauzion anticipated to return before the competition's out. Expect a return to a game plan which fully incorporates the much-vaunted French flair, in contrast to Laporte's constant attempts to stifle it in his quest for consistency. Whatever Lievreumont does, it is hard to see France struggling and they will certainly be there or thereabouts in the hunt for their third successive championship on 15th March.

Luke Thorne

ONE TO WATCH: Cedric Heymans (above).

Puts in quality performances week after week, and a lethal finisher.

KEY PLAYER: Lievreumont.

When the pressure's on, will he be in shape or calling the old lags back?



Jesus secure second place

» Jesus given redemption by merciful Magdalene

JESUS	81
MAGDALENE	5

JAMIE PTASZYNSKI
Sports Reporter

Contact sports share many basic principles with mass combat as seen before the age of long range weapons: guard your territory; don't let the enemy break your lines; there's always strength in numbers. What happens in the scrum is the modern equivalent of two tightly packed turtle formations coming together to drive and struggle, sweat and die for a few yards of soil. Except nowa-

You hear him panting and groaning in your ear as you squeeze tight to your hooker

days we have no shields, no spears; just our aching, sweating bodies with which to inflict as much damage as possible in a few short seconds. Your blood races, your eyes narrow and shoulder pounds against heavy shoulder. You feel the bristle of your opponent's chin as he tries to burrow through you. You hear him panting and groaning in your ear as you squeeze tight to your hooker and prepare your crumpling legs for one more push. By the time you lift your head out of the melee, those few hot seconds can feel like hours. Your captain screams at you to follow up, to support. And you attempt to obey,

but you know you've had a good scrum because your feet are leaden and your thighs seem utterly disconnected from your waist. Scrums today, by mutual agreement, were uncontested. This renders all of the above rather irrelevant. In what was essentially a play-off for second place in the league, St John's being already clear winners, a crucial part of the game was missing. This, might I boldly suggest, is something that ought to be addressed again before we start the next season. A lot of the college rugby at Cambridge is of a very high quality and it is a pity that good players and potentially great matches can be undermined by one or both sides' lack of scrum training. Ironically, this ought to have served the Magdalene pack better. The atmosphere in the Jesus changing room beforehand was duly tense. A poor result against Downing last week combined with the approaching excitement of Cuppers means that all were playing for themselves as much as for the team. But even having reiterated this point several times, captain Ed White was not sure of battle-keenness. Magdalene knew that a coup was on. To humiliate Jesus in front of their own fans, wearing what would then seem a ridiculous new kit, would be quite an achievement and beating them into third place was certainly not an impossibility. Sadly, over the course of the definitive eighty minutes, they failed to perform. Bar one good break and a tackle busting run from one shaggy-haired flanker, they had little possession and did not take advantage of the ball when it was in their capable but underperforming hands. The try itself was well built through the backs and confidently



The Jesus pack demolish Magdalene

SOPHIE PICKFORD

finished and for a brief minute Jesus looked in trouble: Magdalene won useful turnover ball and Jesus were penalised a couple of times for foolish offences. But their reaction was strong and last Tuesday's performance was soon shaken from the memory. A searing run by Kouj Tambara, followed by some clean rucking from Kearns and Greenfield presented flanker Faivre with a good opportunity, which he gladly took. The forwards continued to support well, with Ed White regularly slipping into the backs to join the merry romp through Magdalene's now untidy lines. Good breaks from Harn-den and Childs and some delightful offloading gave Jesus a healthy 38 point lead by half time. Despite some very audible en-

couragement from their captain, Magdalene's capitulation was beyond recovery and the second half proceeded along the same vein. Charlick's accurate and adventurous kicking was well rewarded, but it was his devastating running which earned him a handful of tries. Jesus demonstrated the size and strength of their squad, bringing on substitutes in every area of the pitch, but this did little to interrupt their momentum. The final score represents the difference between the two sides that walked off the pitch at the end. The losers licked their deep wounds but must ultimately be satisfied with a not unsuccessful season. Jesus, confidence replenished, turned their thoughts immediately towards the possibility of cuppers silverware.

Police Brutality

»Blues in learning experience

CUABC hosted the Metropolitan Police at Chilford Hall on Saturday, and whilst the result wasn't in the Light Blues favour, the match was hotly contested. Only two of the seven Light Blues had boxed before with five stepping into the ring for the very first time. Lightweight, Tom Land from Gonville & Caius stepped up against Constable Dean Ricci. The bout began with Land picking his man off with long shorts before dropping him with a body shot early in the first round. With Ricci beating the count, but with reduced mobility, the Caius 6th year medic stepped in with short shorts to the head and body that dropped his opponent onto the canvas for second time, and this time Ricci stayed down. Middleweight, James Gray from Girton College boxed Special Constable Michael Baah. At times it seemed as if the two were goading each other into seeing who could take the most punches, but both showed some real boxing talent and huge reserves of heart and courage. With two rounds down, Gray had to take some harsh words from his corner before the final round, which turned into two thrilling minutes of non-stop aggression and punching from the Girton economist. Gray took the bout by a single point but most definitely did it the hard way. Light-Heavyweight Luke Smith

from St Edmunds put his PhD to one side to take on Rodgeman from the local 'Town' team in what was three rounds of punching with neither man bothering to defend themselves. This was the hardest fought battle of the night and received a standing ovation from the crowd at the final bell. With victory going to the 'Town' man, it was another hard earned lesson that skills will get you so far, but heart will win you a Varsity Match. With all but three of the Blues Squad in action, selection for VM101 is still as competitive as ever as they head into their last match before facing the Other Place on March 6th. Vincent O'Shea, Coach.



News from the River

For a sport as fundamentally simple as rowing, there are numerous formats in which a race can actually be contested. Some events are long time trials; boats start off with a predetermined gap between each entry and essentially race the clock. Summer international racing is conducted over 2000 metres, with six nations facing off in a side-by-side showdown. The Boat Race is a duel. On the day, the only other crew on the river will be dressed in dark blue and looking to ruin your season.

The difference between a duel race such as ours and the international format that dictates summer racing is the mental game that can only exist between two isolated opponents. Technically, our duel lasts for 4 miles and 374 yards, the distance between Putney and Mortlake. But it is often said that the race only lasts as long as necessary for one crew to realize they can no longer win it; the rest is a formality.

Barney Williams, the 2006 Oxford President, admitted this sentiment while commenting on last year's race. Approaching Hammersmith Bridge, with Oxford still leading by a length, Williams realized that the race had been decided, and not in the leading crews' favour.

Most Londoners who ventured out to watch last April would surely have been puzzled by this prediction. Oxford had a seemingly commanding lead and the course was just starting to bend in their fa-

vour. Yet for anyone who has spent enough time in a boat, or participated in any other sport pitting one opponent directly against another, the shift in momentum was obvious.

Strength, fitness and technique are prerequisites for sporting success. Resolve, commitment and confidence are the true determining factors. Halfway through a twenty minute race, when exhaustion and lactate beg you to stop with stinging fervor, each minute is rationalised with the belief that your opposite man is about to shatter. Eventually, one of those minutes will define the nine months that preceded it.

So for the next two months we will strive, day in and day out, to be mentally tougher than our dark blue competitors. While the training that has taken place since September is invaluable, the side-by-side racing and weekend fixtures dotting our schedule ahead will shape the boats into a hardened mold. The coaches will set the two crews against each other countless times between now and 29 March. Each time, sandwiched between the simple commands of 'go' and 'stop' will be a battle for minutes, for momentum earned and invariably lost. The duality is inescapable and only learned through experience.

In 2007 Cambridge won the Boat Race in 6 minutes and 58 seconds. They were a length down and on the outside of a mile long turn. The remaining ten minutes were just a formality.

Spencer Griffin Hunsberger

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poker casino betting games

Gamblers Unanimous

ED PEACE & NIALL RAFFERTY

After a bad week on the betting shop floor it's always tempting to report how close we were to giving the bookies a real pummelling. This week, however, there can be no agonising sighs about how lady-luck just wasn't on our side. That would be as truthful as Ashley Cole telling his wife she was the only woman he'd ever laid eyes on. The long shot just about made it over the start line before pulling up, and Giuliani was so far beaten in the Florida Republican Primary that he's just dipped out of the race for the White House altogether.

For this week's banker we're heading stateside, where the New York Giants will be taking on the New England Patriots in Superbowl XLII. The Patriots have got to the Superbowl with a perfect record and it's hard to see the Giants stopping their bid for a fourth title in seven years. However, the contest is likely to be far closer than many have predicted. In the Playoffs the Giants have systematically hunted down and beaten those teams which turned them over earlier in the season, shutting down the third highest rated offence of the Cowboys and dismantling the second highest rated Packers. We'll be backing the Giant's with a 12.5 point advantage at 10-11 for this week's banker.

This week's prediction takes the form of a double, where we'll be hoping that Arsenal and Aston Villa can steal all three points on their travels. Manchester City host Arsenal at the City of Manchester Stadium, and while it may appear foolhardy to oppose a side that have taken an average 2.5 points from their 12 home league games this season, Arsenal have lost just one of the last 22 meetings between these two sides and boast outstanding league form. Aston Villa face a Fulham side who, despite the appointment of Roy Hodgson, continue to languish in the drop zone. It is unlikely that Fulham will get any relief against Villa though, as Martin O'Neill's side are in solid form having not lost away since September.

It's back to Doncaster for the long shot, where we'll be hoping Jack the Giant can put in a big performance in the William Hill Handicap Chase. The six year old endeared himself to punters by landing a huge gamble here in December in the Ladbrokes Hurdle. He won his subsequent outing at Leicester and will be difficult to beat if he runs to his full potential on Saturday. It's worth holding off any bets until the morning of the race, as trainer Nicky Henderson has said the horse will not run if the conditions aren't right. But assuming the rain stays away, we'll be plunging on Jack the Giant at 11-2.

THE BANKER	10-11
GIANTS TO BEAT PATRIOTS	
+12.5 POINTS	£4
PREDICTION	3-1
ARSENAL & ASTON-VILLA TO WIN	£3
THE LONG SHOT	11-2
JACK THE GIANT TO WIN	£1.50 e/w
WILLIAM HILL HANDICAP CHASE	
RUNNING TOTAL:	27.80

SPORT



Rugby p30
Country-
by-country
guide to the
Six Nations

Hockey Blues hit top spot

» Convincing win sees Cambridge seal top position and play-off place

CAMBRIDGE

GOALS: BARNES, HALL, STANLEY

3

BIRMINGHAM

0

BECKA LANGTON
Sports Reporter

Expectations were high as the Ladies Blues Hockey team travelled to Birmingham in one of their most important fixtures of the season. A win would secure the top spot of BUSA Midlands division 1A and a place in the play-offs to enter the National Premier Division. With stakes set so high and tension mounting, it was a nervous Blues team that arrived ready to take on bottom of the league Birmingham.

The match began with total territorial domination from the fired up Blues who were determined to make their mark on weaker opponents. Pressure from all sides of the pitch forced the Birmingham team into last-ditch defence from the start and it was only a first rate performance from the opposition keeper which kept the score line even. A solid press maintained Blue possession with chances being lost only at the last moment. It was not until an impressive Tash Barnes, normally noted for her assists rather than goal scoring prowess, unleashed an incredible reverse stick effort which nudged the right hand post and took the Blues ahead after 20 minutes of hard work.

Cambridge, desperate to consolidate on their advantage, found the details suffering in their game. Accuracy slipped, vital passes turned astray and opportunities went begging, an uncharacteristically shoddy display from a usually meticulous side. A number of short corners were won in a solid demonstration of Cambridge ability, but finishing lacked and the away team were unable to convert to nudge the score line past the one goal advantage. However, as frustration rose the Cambridge team stepped up to the challenge. Excellent distribution from midfielder Hannah Rickman gave Birmingham plenty to worry about,



Corks to fly as Blues celebrate successful season

whilst Emma Goater was superior on the wing, and Rosie Evans unerring in defence. The second goal of the game arrived after a period of determined pressure at the mid point in the first half when Jenny Hall was given the space to take a snap shot, which, with a slight deflection, went flying into the roof of the net.

A third goal emphasised Cambridge's superiority shortly afterwards. Anna Stanley claimed the final touch in an ingeniously worked short corner that bore little resemblance to anything Birmingham had ever dealt with before.

Half time arrived with the Blues comfortable in their advantage and Birmingham toothless on the

rare attacks that they did muster. However, the next thirty five minutes saw a disappointing display

“Having led from the start, to be confirmed champions is fantastic”

from a wavering Cambridge side. Basic errors allowed Birmingham to enter a game which should have seen the Blues consolidating on

their hard won advantage. Instead the Cambridge defence were called on far more often than they might have wished. It was only with great direction from the back line and some athletic saves from keeper Lucy Stapleton that Birmingham remained unrewarded.

The final score of 3-0 was a great reflection of Cambridge talent, as Tash Fowlie emphasised. “We have played well all season and look forward with great confidence to the Varsity match which we enter after our most successful season in recent years.” The Blues Team have undoubtedly developed dramatically not only as a unit but as individuals and success has come from a squad effort with every player knowing

and fulfilling their particular role. With the Blues doing so well, the upcoming Varsity matches for the second and third team on the 11th February should see the Nomads and Bedouins doing very well.

The Blues may have not been playing to their normally impeccable standards, but the result was the right one. Coach James Waters was certainly happy with the win. “We began the season targeting a top three finish and have been revising that aim upwards ever since. Having led the table from the start to finally be confirmed as champions is fantastic.” If the Blues are able to consolidate this advantage, Oxford will certainly have something to worry about in March.



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