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Eating disorders amongst Cambridge students



Jonny Walker on the awkward future facing the Facebook Generation

VARSITY

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Varsity survey reveals silence around sexual assault

- Sexual assault among Cambridge students is in line with national average, survey says
- Uncertainty persists among students regarding the definition of sexual assault

OLIVIA CRELLIN & JESSIE WALDMAN

Sexual assault and rape continue to occur at striking rates amongst University of Cambridge students, an exclusive *Varsity* survey has revealed.

According to the survey, which was conducted online over a two-week period, 16 per cent of respondents admitted to being victims of sexual assault and/or rape.

The figure seems to be in line with national statistics relating to sexual assault amongst university and college students. A recent survey conducted by the National Union of Students (NUS) showed that 14 per cent of female students were sexually assaulted during their time at university or college.

The survey responses paint a remarkable picture of student attitudes and experiences regarding

sexual assault. Most notably, *Varsity* found that sexual assault among students continues to remain vastly under-reported: only 1 in 6 respondents who admitted to being assaulted reported the incident to authorities.

For the overwhelming majority who did not report the incident, the reasons were numerous: nearly 27 per cent said they did not report it because they “didn’t think it was a serious matter at the time.” Another 11 per cent said that they did not press charges because they “felt acquainted with the perpetrator”.

CUSU’s Women’s Officer, Sarah Peters-Harrison, was not surprised by this trend. She cited embarrassment and lack of education as the most likely causes for limited reporting of sexual assault, both in the University and more generally.

She added, “It also throws into question those anecdotal stories of how students are discouraged from reporting incidents as it may be damaging to the perpetrators’ academic record as well as their own.”

One anonymous survey-taker made the following comments: “The response from my college regarding the issue of sexual assault of a student was not good enough – the victim was told to feel sorry for the attacker by her Tutor who said that the attacker was feeling picked on.”

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ANDREW GRIFFIN

Mystery of Trinity Great Gate revealed

Students and tourists alike have wondered why the statue of Henry VIII on the Trinity College Great Gate carries a chair leg. *Varsity* got to the bottom of the enduring Cambridge mystery. SEE FULL STORY ON PAGE 3

CUSU Co-ordinator elected at last

CATHY BUEKER

Alex Wood, running unopposed, has won the second by-election held this term for Cambridge University Students’ Union (CUSU) Co-ordinator.

The first by-election for the position was called in October after the original Co-ordinator chosen in the May CUSU elections, Chris Lillycrop, resigned in August amid controversy about his radical proposals for reorganising CUSU staff.

In the October election, Luke Hawksbee, like Wood, was the only candidate, but, in the system of Single Transferable Voting, failed to win enough votes against the option Re-Open Nominations (RON).

With a voter turnout of 4 per cent, Wood won 602 votes, while RON won 258, in a voting period which ran from 8am, on Wednesday 3rd November to 5pm the following day. In comparison, Hawksbee received 275 votes, to RON’s 286 votes.

In his campaign manifesto, Wood stressed his experience as the Secretary of Trinity College Student Union from 2008 to 2009 as well as being its Services Officer from 2009 to 2010. Wood also mentioned that he was Captain of the First and Third Lower Boats from 2009 to 2010.

This experience, he wrote, would be employed “towards building a better support system for University societies and sports clubs”.

He also stated that he would improve funding for welfare by “working with the Executive towards securing a block grant for CUSU from the University”.

CUSU President Rahul Mansigani said: “Congratulations to Alex on defeating RON; it is an increasingly rare occurrence. I look forward to working with him.”

Key Findings:

- Sexual assault is not reported to the police
- Only a minority of sexual assaults were by strangers
- There is a spectrum of sexual misconduct and people have different definitions as well as varying sensitivities

Brutal attack on Sidney student

A brutal, unprovoked attack on a Sidney Sussex student last month, which resulted in the student requiring medical treatment, has raised concerns among students about safety on streets, particularly late at night and in areas of low-lighting. »p3

Cambridge vets save tiger’s life

A team of veterinary experts at the University of Cambridge saved a tiger at the Shepreth Wildlife Park from life-threatening illness by performing complicated surgery. According to all reports, the tiger has made a speedy recovery. »p3

Investigation: sexual assault in Cambridge

In an exclusive survey, *Varsity* set out to find attitudes and experiences relating to sexual assault within the student body. Results show that sexual assault continues to occur at striking rates, while remaining vastly under-reported. »p4

Tuition fees could rise to £9,000

In a move that is being criticised as a “tragedy for an entire generation of people”, universities minister David Willetts has announced that annual tuition fees could rise to as high as £9,000, sparking concerns about higher education access. »p7

News Interview: Peter Tatchell

Renowned human rights activist Peter Tatchell sits down with *Varsity* to talk about his recent Equal Love campaign which fights to achieve civil marriage and civil partnership equality for same-sex and heterosexual couples alike. »p8

The Essay p12

Why science is never enough
Keith Ward



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Varsity

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Sexual assault survey

The results of *Varsity's* sexual assault survey should be a cause for concern for both students and college authorities. Our survey found that 16 per cent of respondents had been victims of sexual assault and/or rape. These figures are in line with national averages for university and college students but this does not relieve welfare authorities of their responsibility to do more. All student bodies should be doing more, Cambridge included.

The view that being in line with national averages is acceptable is indicative of worrying attitudes expressed in our survey. Only 34 per cent of respondents thought that educating men about consent was the most important thing that could be done to prevent male-on-female sexual assault. In contrast, 44 per cent took the view that providing free night-time transport or rape alarms for women was the best solution.

This latter view is symptomatic of the opinion that there is a degree of inevitability to sexual assault, that male attitudes can't be changed and that it is the responsibility of victims to recognise the threat that men may pose to them and to protect themselves against it.

The inefficiency of this view is made explicit by the findings that 71 per cent of victims knew their offender and

12 per cent had been involved in sexual actions with their perpetrator.

There is a common misconception that sexual assault happens primarily in public places and that offenders are unknown to the victims. Our statistics show that this is not the case.

Particularly worrying is students' reluctance to report instances of sexual assault in the face of apparent indifference from some college authorities. The anonymous claim that one tutor told a victim to "feel sorry" for her attacker is worrying and shocking.

Though it seems crass and unnecessary to state it so explicitly, the damage that sexual assault can do to victims' lives is clearly not being taken seriously enough by some authorities.

CUSU Women's Officer Sarah Peters-Harrison has complained about a "lack of training in these issues for key members of pastoral systems" that ought to be addressed promptly and firmly.

As our survey shows, protecting victims is not enough. There are more fundamental problems with attitudes to sexual assault that must be addressed through education.

Letters to the Editor

Sir,

I was delighted to read such a positive interview with Debbie Danon of the Three Faiths Forum in last week's *Varsity*. One of the Forum's most successful programmes, Tools4Trialogue, which brings together religious texts as a basis for discussion in the class-room, has its roots in an academic practice called Scriptural Reasoning, which grew up in Cambridge. Scriptural Reasoning was formed when a group of Christian academics, including Cambridge's Regius Professor of Divinity, Professor David Ford, observed a group of Jewish scholars studying together and loved the questioning, dialectic process

so much that they asked to join in. Over ten years later, Scriptural Reasoning is a Jewish-Christian-Muslim text study practice thriving both inside and outside the academy, and creating strong bonds of friendship between its practitioners. Students can get involved via the Cambridge Inter-faith Programme, where we hold termly demonstrations of Scriptural Reasoning.

There is also a student Scriptural Reasoning group launching this Wednesday 10th November (students are invited to email us if they would like to come along). At the moment there is much attention, in your own publication among others, given to the tensions between faith groups, particularly surrounding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Perhaps this is an opportunity

to start focusing on the potential to cement positive relationships between people of faiths, rather than solely on our divisions.

Miriam Lorie
Cambridge Inter-faith Programme

Sir,

Sunday 14th November is World Diabetes Day and I am writing to ask your readers to support leading health charity Diabetes UK.

I discovered I had Type 2 diabetes at the height of my rowing career and know first-hand how the condition can dramatically change your life. But once diagnosed and under control, diabetes should never stop you from achieving anything you want - my gold medals at five consecutive

Olympic Games is proof of that.

Type 2 diabetes can go undetected for up to ten years, so by the time people are diagnosed around 50 per cent already show signs of complications which include heart disease, stroke, kidney failure, blindness and nerve damage, that can lead to amputation.

Your readers may have Type 2 diabetes but not realise it. So I would encourage them to go online, take the free Diabetes UK Risk Score test and find out about their risk of developing Type 2 diabetes - www.diabetes.org.uk/RiskScore

It could be the best thing they ever did for their health.

Yours faithfully,

Sir Steve Redgrave CBE
Olympic Gold Rower

Online this week

SATIRE

Find all this week's satire online, including Redboy Reports



NEWS

Stay up to date with all the latest news and commentary



SPORT

University and college results as well as sports comment



Inside this week

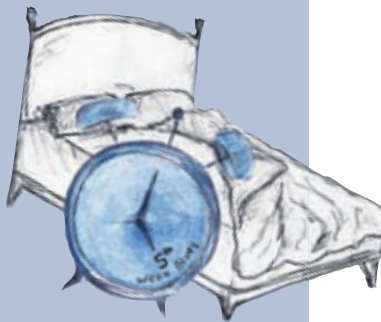
THEATRE

Cambridge theatre reviewed and rated, plus Edward Herring's *View from the Groundlings*



REVIEWS

All the latest reviews, including this week's album releases



MAGAZINE

Charlotte Runcie on 'Reading Week' and those fifth week blues

COMMENT

Jemma Trainor on the imminent "legal murder" of Linda Carty



Get involved

If you would like to find out how to write for *Varsity*, come to one of our weekly meetings.

News: Monday 3.30pm, Pembroke College Bar

Magazine: Wednesday 5pm, The Maypole (Portugal Place)

Alternatively, email the relevant section editor (right) with your ideas.

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

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Sidney student is victim of brutal street attack

EMILY CARLTON

An unusually brutal attack on a student last month has raised the level of concern for student safety on streets.

The student, a Sidney Sussex student, was hospitalised after an attack in the early hours of Saturday 23rd October.

Returning home after a night out in the city centre, the student was severely beaten by a group of 15 male and female participants, who were unprovoked.

The student sustained a significant head injury, which required treatment at Addenbrooke's Hospital.

The incident followed just days after *Varsity* highlighted the issue of student safety in an investigation into incidents of assault in Cambridge.

Warnings have been sent out to students making them aware of the event and advising them to be cautious.

In an email to Sidney Sussex students, Head Porter Sam White stressed that the likelihood of such an incident happening to an individual in Cambridge is very low. However, he advised students to travel in groups, dress 'down' where possible and avoid unnecessary confrontation or poorly lit areas.

Sidney Sussex Deputy Head Porter Colin Maxted, commented that he has seen an increase in violence recently and related this to



Outside Sidney Sussex College

the College's location as situated between a number of nightclubs.

He told *Varsity*, "Monday night is becoming the worst night out". Admitting that incidents are usually linked to alcohol consumption, he added, "I don't feel this is coming from the student population."

Whether the incident is a symptom of the Cambridge 'Town v. Gown' divide remains unclear.

Phil Franklin, Sidney Sussex undergraduate, commented, "People forget that Cambridge isn't just a University, it's a city, and like every city in the UK, violent attacks are increasing."

In light of this incident, some students feel that preventative action should be taken by not just the Students and Colleges, but the City Council, as well.

According to Queens' student Camilla Cook, "Cambridge County Council need to improve the lighting in the city centre. Students can't be expected to be constantly vigilant when the authorities cannot be bothered to tackle the cause. It has got to the point where people are refusing to go out or staying at friends to prevent having to walk home."

Cambridge study reveals impact of cuts to housing benefits

JESSICA KING

The Coalition Government's planned cuts to housing benefits could have a drastic impact on London neighbourhoods, a forthcoming study by the University of Cambridge has revealed.

The study, which was commissioned by homeless charity Shelter aims to assess the social impact of the recent cuts in Local Housing Allowances (LHA).

Due to be released no later than next week, the study is titled 'Which neighbourhoods in London will be affordable for Housing Benefit claimants 2010-16, as the government's reforms take effect?'

The study is being issued by the Cambridge Centre for Housing and Planning Research (CHPR), which is based within the Department of Land Economy.

Alex Fenton, who is in charge of the report, said the Government's measures "have not been fully thought through." Although Fenton is careful not to take a political stance, he points out that it is evidently poorer households who will be affected, as LHA is a means-tested benefit.

The proposed changes could have implications for many current students. According to one third-year economist, "Many students might not anticipate this now, but quite a few graduates do move to London to look for work, and it is possible that some of them may need to apply for housing benefits before they find a job."

The proposed 'Housing Bonus'

scheme would ostensibly provide incentives to local councils to increase social housing provisions, but there is ongoing debate as to whether this will be as effective as the 'regional targets' in place under the previous Labour Government, which made a certain level of provision mandatory.

However, the report is chiefly concerned with the private sector, which is predicted to become "largely unaffordable" to a growing extent.

The new policy (from 2011) of using the thirtieth percentile of the range of local rental rates as the upper limit of housing benefits, is expected to eat into household budgets.

The decision to cap LHA at £290 per week for a two bedroom dwelling, (and equivalent rates for other sizes) will impact especially on areas with high property values, like London and Cambridge.

Fenton does not speculate as to the social consequences, but dire prophecies abound of poorer income families being forced to relocate into 'ghettos' far from the city centre where jobs may be scarce.

The long-term forecast is bleaker still, as from 2013, the maximum LHA is to be paid not by reference to actual local rents, but by Consumer Price Index inflation. This is defined in the report outline as "the median of the forecasts of independent economic consultancies," published by HM Treasury in August 2010.

Although it is assumed that rent prices will increase at 3.6% a year, average annual rental growth in England from 2001-2 to 2007-8 was more than 6%.

University vets save rare tiger's life



JANE ASHFORD-THOM

A team of veterinary experts from the University of Cambridge have saved an endangered breed of tiger from a life-threatening disease.

Amba, a tigress from Shepreth Wildlife Park in Cambridge, required the help of police and a special fire-arms team to deliver life-saving surgery to remove a tumour in her abdomen.

Jackie Demetriou, lead surgeon, commented on the logistical problems of the surgery on the 175 kg tiger, particularly of ensuring that she was fully anaesthetised.

"Pleasingly, after getting this far, the surgery itself went very well indeed," she said. "At this stage we are cautiously optimistic Amba's surgery has been a success and we are very pleased with her progress."

"Tigers are such magnificent

animals and, in light of their endangered nature, operating on Amba was an incredible privilege for all of us and an experience I personally will remember for the rest of my life."

Shepreth animal manager Rebecca Willers said they had been "overwhelmed" by Amba's speedy recovery.

"Though she spent her first 24 hours sleeping and we were all concerned that it was touch and go for a while, we were finally thrilled to see her exploring her outside enclosure again earlier this week, and positively seeking food too," she said.

The news was met positively by undergraduate vets. Queens' third year vet student Peter Silke said: "It's quite promising that she appears to be recovering well from surgery, considering the size the tumour must have been to have had a visible effect on her external abdomen."

Mystery of Trinity chair leg revealed

RAPHAEL GRAY

The secret behind one of Cambridge's oddest mysteries was uncovered by *Varsity* this week.

Over the years, students and tourists alike have wondered why the statue of Henry VIII in the Trinity College Great Gate holds a chair leg. The answer, as it turns out, is even more unlikely than might be expected.

The statue of Henry dates from around 1615, and originally showed the king resplendent with a golden orb and sword. Legend has it that the sword was swapped for the chair leg sometime in the nineteenth century by an irreverent student.

However, *Varsity* was recently tipped-off by Stephen Halliday, a Cambridge city guide and Pembroke alumnus, who advised that it was not a Victorian prankster but a window-cleaner who had armed the statue with the wooden pin. Halliday followed the trail to Peter Binge, a retired employee of the Chesterton Window Cleaning Company, who graciously agreed to talk about the episode.

Mr Binge explained that he had been cleaning the windows of the Great Gate thirty or so years ago when he noticed that the statue of was missing something in its hand.

He thought that the Cambridge Night Climbers, a shadowy group of students known for scrabbling up the University's buildings, must have removed whatever the statue had been holding many years earlier.

He recalls, "So, just for a laugh, I said to my friend [who was holding the ladder]: 'hold on a minute, I'm going to go inside.'" Mr Binge was a familiar face in College at the time and was friendly with the porters.

"I went up the staircase and found an old broken chair which the bedders had put out on the landing. So, I took a leg off and leaned out the window with my friend holding onto me and plonked it in the hand."

"I thought to myself: 'that looks a treat,' but I didn't think anything more about it," he remembers.

Mr. Binge's role in the plant has never been a particularly well-kept secret. He was profiled in a 1988 edition of the *Cambridge Daily News* and and likes retelling his story to friends and curious tourists as he passes Trinity.

He finds it "quite funny" that the leg hasn't been removed.

"I guess it was my famous five minutes," he says.

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INVESTIGATION

Varsity Investigation:

Sexual assault in Cambridge

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The student continued, “This led to another student, who was raped in College, refusing to tell anyone about the incident, because she did not want them to think she was making a big fuss, and thought they would not believe her or respond appropriately.”

Colleges, however, are eager to stress that resources are in place for students who may experience assault. Senior Tutor of St Edmund's, Dr Helen Mason, speaking on behalf of her College, told *Varsity* that, “We have a very strong tutorial support system at St Ed's and I would expect any student to turn to us if they have had unwanted attention.”

“Depending on the circumstances,

“All the advice given to women seems to be ‘don't walk alone.’ That doesn't protect you when your attacker is your friend”

I would also anticipate that they would report the incident to the police,” Dr Mason said.

She added, “I am not aware of any serious incidents happening at St Ed's during the time I have been Senior Tutor.” Dr Mason also pointed out that they do “have several resident Fellows on site and additional security during bops.” She concluded, however, that “in general behaviour has been good”.

Being acquainted with the perpetrator was another recurring fact among many responses. Over two thirds of those who said that they had experienced sexual assault admitted that they knew the perpetrator. Of these, nearly a third said that they knew the perpetrator “well”.

These results are in line with that of the NUS report, ‘Hidden Marks’, published earlier this year following the results of a survey, which gathered over 2,000 responses from female students in the UK. That report found 81% of victims of serious sexual assault knew their attacker.

The report distinguished this figure from the 53% of less serious sexual assault victims who knew the person involved.

According to its legal definition, sexual assault constitutes any intentional sexual touching of a person against his or her will. This could include anything from being kissed or groped in a club against your will, to attempted sexual intercourse (oral, anal or vaginal) to assault by penetration and, of course, rape.

The fact that sexual assault falls into different categories of varying degrees of gravity makes it even more difficult for people to determine whether they have been a victim of sexual assault.

The survey showed that many people continue to be unsure of what exactly constitutes sexual assault. Although 93% of survey takers judged non-consensual sex within a relationship or marriage to be rape, nearly 42% were not sure or did not know the specifics of what constituted sexual assault.

Peters-Harrison was concerned at the ignorance among students on this matter. She commented that: “Much is said at school and during Freshers' Week about STDs

but there is a desperate need for greater sexual awareness, including on matters of consent and emotional harm.”

She went on to explain that “a lack of training in these matters for key members of pastoral systems, such as tutors, mean students can remain unsure and afraid.”

Issues of consent are, however, complex. A controversial case in 2007 involving capacity to give consent highlighted the difficulties in the legalities of sexual assault when drugs and alcohol are involved.

The case commented that while the statement “drunken consent is still consent” is broadly true, this is not entirely so. Section 74 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003, which

“There is a desperate need for greater sexual awareness, including on matters of consent and emotional harm”

defines consent, provides that “a person consents if he agrees by choice, and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice.”

The traveller on the road to alcoholic oblivion, judges say, may reach the point where that “freedom and capacity” is lost.

They added that, “As a matter of practical reality, capacity to consent may evaporate well before a complainant becomes unconscious.”

This is all the more relevant in light of the fact that of the 16% of survey takers who admitted to

being victims of sexual assault, 54% had been drinking or taking drugs before the incident.

Nearly 12% of these victims had also been “engaged in sexual actions with the perpetrator” before the assault, bringing to light issues of trust and social pressures that survey takers saw as an important issue.

The survey question about what should be done to prevent male-on-female rape and/or sexual assault elicited a broad range of responses. Nearly 30% of people suggested the best way to prevent rape was to offer free night-time transport for women, while 14% agreed that providing women with rape alarms was important. On the other hand, 34% said “educating men” was the answer.

The latter certainly seems to be the key since the *Varsity* survey suggests 71% of sexual assault victims knew their offender. This evidence implies that physical self-protection alone is not an effective focus for preventing rape.

One student, in response to the survey, commented, “All the advice given to women seems to be ‘watch your drinks, don't walk alone.’ None of these protect you when your attacker is your friend.”

While the *Varsity* survey has revealed useful insights about student attitudes towards sexual assault, some have criticised the validity of the data collected. One student who took the survey commented, “I believe that this survey is more sensationalist than useful.”

The *Varsity* survey was distributed electronically to all University students via the Cambridge University Students Union (CUSU) weekly bulletin.

The survey was also made available via the *Varsity* website and Facebook page. Over 500 responses

were collected.

It is fair to say, however, that the strong self-selecting nature of the survey has opened up the possibility of results being slightly skewed. However, the fact that the percentage of students who admitted to being victims of sexual assault in the *Varsity* survey is in line with national statistics is striking.

One economist at Trinity said, “All surveys of this kind are open to biases. The important thing is that the issues surrounding sexual assault among students in Cambridge are being raised.”

Additional reporting contributed by Elizabeth Bateman and Yuming Mei (Statistics Consultant)



A Victim of Sexual assault speaks to *Varsity*

“I was sexually assaulted by a stranger, which makes my case slightly unusual since in most cases of rape the attacker is someone known to the victim. On the 4th of May 2009 I was walking back to College at about 3am from Bateman Street, visiting friends. I wasn't drunk at all, nor was I dressed provocatively, although I don't believe this should make a difference in cases of rape. There's a particular section of Hills

Road which is low-lit, but since it's such a well frequented area I didn't feel vulnerable. After a while I became aware of a car driving very slowly behind me and, while my instincts told me to cross the road, I didn't, believing that Cambridge is too safe a place for anything bad to happen. My attacker was a serial offender who'd followed me from the bar in town; he threatened me with a pocket knife and hit my head against the car several times. I feel guilty that I didn't fight back hard enough. Cyclists cycled passed several times throughout the attack without stopping. Afterwards he got into his car and drove off, leaving me with bite marks, bleeding from my head and my clothes ripped. The Porters dealt with the situation very well; they called the police and took me to hospital. The police provided me with my own individual person, and the College offered me counselling sessions, although I didn't find these helpful. I still get panic attacks now and have suffered depression in the last six months, even though I'm starting to feel better about it now. I would advise victims to take advantage of the support available and talk to someone about incidents of assault.”

Student experiences of sexual assault

“A close friend of mine was sexual assaulted at [a popular nightclub]. Two older men were involved. The men were thrown out but no further action was taken or charges pursued by the club. I think it is both appalling and disgusting that [the club] neglected to follow this up.”

“As a male victim of sexual assault I really could have benefited from being able to participate in Cambridge Reclaim The Night. It is very difficult to articulate precisely how excluded, anonymised, and trivialised one's experiences

are when one is not allowed to take advantage of the pastoral services available for university members.”

“The response from my College regarding the issue of sexual assault of a student was not good enough: the victim was told to feel sorry for the attacker by her tutor who said that the attacker was feeling picked on. This led to another student, who was raped in College, refusing to tell anyone about the incident, because she did not want them to think she was making a big fuss.”

ANDREW GRIFFIN

16%

Percentage of survey-takers who said that they'd been a victim of sexual assault

10,000

Number of women sexually assaulted in the UK every week

71%

Percentage of student victims who knew their attacker

4 in 10

Proportion of Cambridge students who did not know, or were not sure, what constitutes sexual assault

84%

Percentage of survey-taking student victims who did not go to the police

Student Opinions

“In Cambridge there is a culture of sexual abuse and exploitation, masquerading under the guise of ‘fun banter’. This normally occurs within college drinking societies which actively foster anti-feminism sentiments, both ideologically and in practice.”

“Self-defence classes are all well and good, but encouraging women to be physically “empowered” in response to sexual assault is monumentally dangerous and leads to a false sense of security.”

“There is a general lack of awareness within certain aspects of the university community that male sexual assault and rape does occur, and it is of equivalent psychological impact to male-on-female assault or rape.”

“I think education for men about the fact that if a woman is unconscious due to alcohol this does not count as consent, is crucial.”

“I think that women also need to be educated, and I say this as a woman. Women need to be aware that certain actions can put them in danger: walking home alone in the dark is an obvious one.”

“I believe that this survey is more sensationalist than useful.”

“It worries me how much young women I know feel ‘obliged’ to have sexual contact with someone, even when they don’t want to, on the grounds that ‘he took me out for dinner, I didn’t want to be rude’, or ‘I didn’t feel ready, but I do like him, and if I hadn’t have slept with him straight away he would’ve broken up with me’.”

“I wouldn’t say that non-consensual sex in a relationship or marriage can be called something as damning as rape but it does suggest that the initiator has dominance or control issues.”

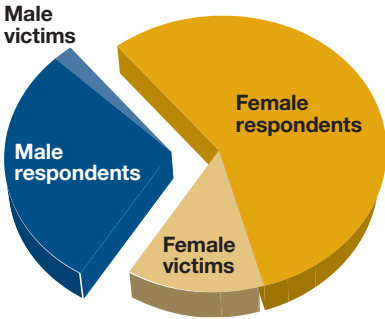
“Drinking society culture emphasises, alongside getting as wasted as possible, getting with or scoring girls from swaps, and putting girls in a situation where they feel pressured to engage in sexual activity they otherwise normally wouldn’t consent to, whether that’s on the dancefloor of Cindies or in the bedroom. The onus shouldn’t be on a girl to ‘not get raped’; the responsibility also lies with the man in deciding not to sexually assault or rape women.”

These anonymous comments were collected as a part of Varsity’s Sexual Assault Survey.

*Have an opinion?
Visit: www.varsity.co.uk*

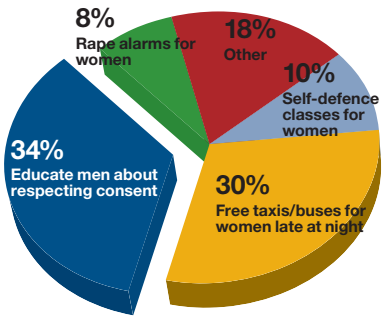
Survey respondents by gender

Of all respondents who admitted to being sexually assaulted, 88% were women, while 12% were men. The statistic reflects the fact that while sexual assault of men does occur, it is far less likely than female sexual assault.

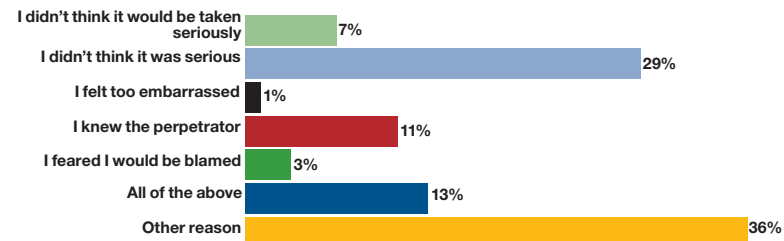


Survey takers’ opinion on how to prevent sexual assault

The survey asked respondents what was the single most important thing that should be done to prevent male-on-female sexual assault. ‘Other’ suggestions included better regulation of drinking societies and wider social awareness of sexual assault.



Reasons why victims did not tell the police



The legal definition of sexual assault

The Sexual Offences Act 2003 was enforced on 1st May 2004. It repealed almost all of the existing statute law in relation to sexual offences. The purpose of the Act was to strengthen and modernize the law on sexual offences, whilst improving preventative measures and the protection of individuals from sexual offenders.

Under the Sexual Offences Act 2003, sexual assault is defined as when person A:

- Intentionally touches another person B
- The touching is sexual
- B does not consent to the touching
- A does not reasonably believe that B consents

Whether a belief is reasonable is to be determined having regard to all the circumstances, including any steps A has taken to ascertain whether B consents.

Under the Act the non-consensual offences are rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault and causing a person to engage in sexual activity.

The Act has three important provisions relating to consent. They are:

- A statutory definition of consent. *This is that a person consents if he or she agrees by choice to the sexual activity and has the freedom and capacity to make that choice. The circumstances at the time of the offence will be considered in determining whether the defendant was reasonable in believing that the complainant consented. People will be considered most unlikely to have agreed to sexual activity if they were subject to threats, or fear of serious harm, unconscious, drugged, abducted or unable to communicate because of a physical disability.*

2. The test of reasonable belief in consent

3. The evidential and conclusive presumptions about consent and the defendant’s belief in consent

How to get help

Linkline: 01223 245888; <http://www.linkline.org.uk>

Cambridge Rape Crisis Centre: 01223245888; <http://www.cambridge-rapecrisis.co.uk>

Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC), based at The Oasis in Peterborough. 0845 089 6262; <http://www.cambs.police.uk/victims/sarc.asp>

Mpower: A phoneline for male victims of sexual assault. 0808 8084231; <http://www.male-rape.org.uk/>

Choices Counselling: A confidential counselling service in Cambridge for those whose lives are affected by childhood sexual abuse. 01223 358149; <http://www.choicescounselling.co.uk/>

University expresses concern over axing of A14 road upgrade

CHARLIE WEEKS

The University of Cambridge has voiced its concern over the scrapping of plans to improve the A14, a major road connecting Ellington and Fen Ditton.

The £1.3 billion plan involved widening the road to have three lanes in both directions, which was seen as a vital prerequisite for the University's 3,000 home development plan.

Cambridge warned several weeks before the decision was announced that any delays to the road improvements would severely compromise the success of the North West Cambridge Development Project.

The University has been looking to create a new development comprising 3,000 homes in its site in North West Cambridge, half of which are intended for academic staff and students, with the other half built for the open housing market.

Plans for the A14 will now need to be readdressed in light of the recent Comprehensive Spending Review, which deemed the A14 upgrade plans

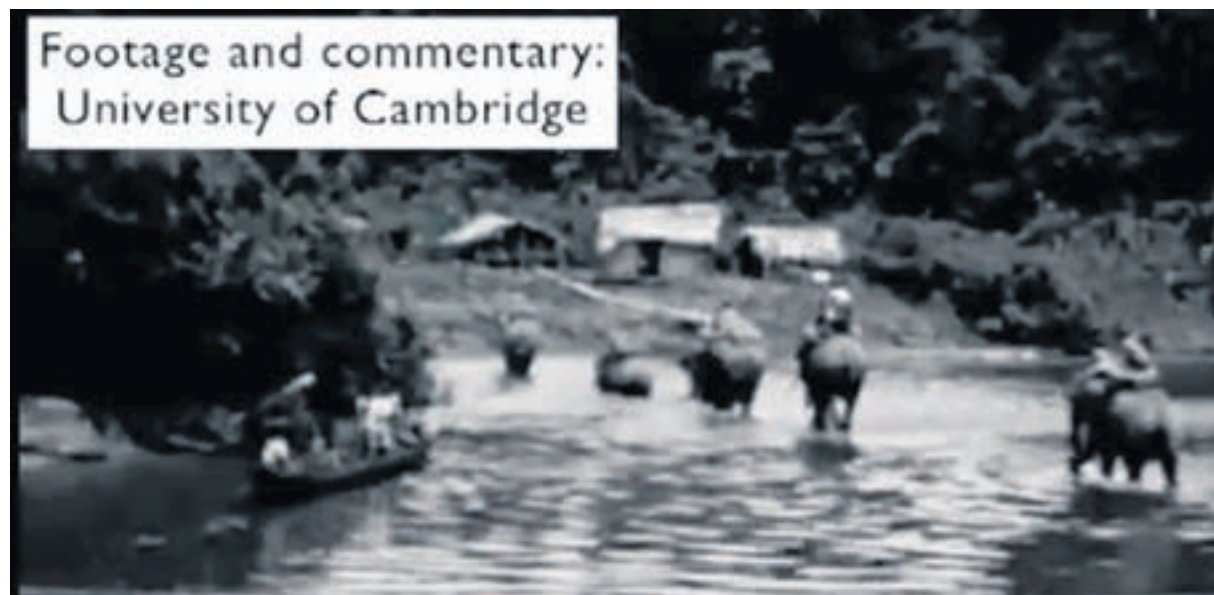
as "simply unaffordable under any reasonable future funding scenario".

The University told *Cambridge News* that it was "disappointed" by the announcement and joins councillors and business leaders in its condemnation of the decision to cancel the road improvement. It will also be "continuing its discussions with the Highways Agency and the local highway authority to assess the implications of the announcement as more details are made public".

Speaking to *Cambridge News*, a spokesperson from the Department of Transport promised to "undertake a study to identify cost-effective and practical proposals which bring benefits and relieve congestion – looking across modes to ensure we develop sustainable proposals".

Sophie Davies, a student at Newnham College, regularly uses the A14 and is disappointed by the decision to axe the road upgrade scheme. She told *Varsity* that "at the moment the road is always congested during rush hour. Only having two lanes means that any slow moving vehicles results in massive hold-ups".

New footage of WW2 rescue mission



A screenshot of Mackrell's footage depicting the elephant convoy crossing into India

ADAM CLARK

The University of Cambridge has released first-hand footage of one of the most fascinating rescue missions

of World War II.

Gyles Mackrell, a British tea planter who became known as 'The Elephant Man' helped hundreds of refugees who were fleeing the Japanese invasion of Burma in 1942 to make the perilous crossing into India with the aid of a convoy of elephants.

His story is told in a collection, including rare amateur film footage and first hand documents, recently donated to the Centre of South Asian Studies by his niece.

The films depict the rescue expedition crossing rivers at the height of the monsoon season with the elephants nearly submerged by the floods, as well as the remarkable accounts of both rescuers and those saved.

Dr Kevin Greenbank, an archivist at the Centre of South Asian Studies, compared the expedition with Dunkirk but said it had been largely forgotten.

The Japanese invasion of Burma in 1942 swept away the British Army. By the summer, thousands were seeking refuge in India. The border

was impassable as rivers swelled by torrential rain made crossing on foot a fatal enterprise. Those caught on the Burmese border were starving and plagued by insects and disease. One account, by John Rowland a railway engineer, tells of his party eating fern fronds to stay alive. The refugees were kept alive by supplies dropped by the RAF but there was no evacuation operation.

Gyles Mackrell was an area supervisor for a tea firm in India and he set off with an expedition of elephants, and the help of local tribes, to help people cross the river on a difficult forced march. The party saved over 200 people, including soldiers from the British army and civilian refugees.

Mackrell was celebrated at home and awarded the George Medal for civilian courage where the Honours Committee estimated he had faced a '50-80%' chance of death.

A short film with footage of the events and narration from the diaries of those involved is available on the University's YouTube page, www.youtube.com/cambridgeuniversity.

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Hi! Society Cambridge Dancers' Club



CLAUDE SCHNEIDER

Tell us a bit about Cambridge Dancers' Club

We are the biggest dance society in Cambridge, and one of the largest in the country, with up to 2,000 members a year. We hold lessons five times a week, in ballroom, Latin, salsa, dance sport and rock 'n' roll, catering for complete beginners up to advanced dancers. There are things happening all the time: so-

cial, tea-dances, workshops, balls. If you'd like to compete, we've got dance sport and rock 'n' roll teams. The classes are taught by professional coaches. You don't need to have danced before and you don't need a partner. I started dancing a year ago and I'm here now! (Ben is the rock 'n' roll team captain).

You say beginners can do it, but what about those with two left feet?

A lot of people come to us who have danced and are looking for a dancing club, but a lot of people just think that it's something to try. We cater for people who've never danced before, in any shape or form. The majority of our classes are beginners classes. We'll teach you, even if you've got two left feet, or perhaps three or four. People come thinking they can't dance and they pick it up. The classes start really slowly.

Your website claims that getting a dancing Half Blue is "better than winning the Boat Race". Can you confirm that?

It's much more fun than the boat race. You get to meet people and dance for fun, and you don't need to get up at five in the morning.

Has *Strictly Come Dancing* changed things?

Yes! When it started six years ago, there was a massive surge in membership. It's really good publicity, because it shows anyone can dance, just come to lessons and surprise yourself! In two months, the celebrities come up with these massive routines that impress even our dance sport team, who compete internationally. We've had Anton du Beke and Erin Boag (*Strictly* dancers) teach classes and coach the team. Now, we have Bruce Lait, who was in the *Strictly Ballroom* Dancing tour.

What makes the club special?

It's addictive! It's so addictive! I started dancing last year: one night a week rock 'n' roll, and now I'm doing three nights rock 'n' roll and three nights ballroom. On the seventh night I dance at College because there's no CDC stuff on

Saturdays! It's a great way to meet people and to leave work behind. Just put some music on and get lost in the dancing.

Do you tend to be short of male dancers?

Yes, especially on the teams. Beginners' classes aren't too bad. You don't need a partner to come to dance. Just turn up, and you swap partners every five minutes. You dance with most people there. The teams could definitely do with more male dancers, all the time. Don't be scared to dance! It's OK for men to dance! There's no stigma to it! It's okay for females to dance as well, but you know what I mean!

What events do you run?

We have weekly classes five nights a week, but you don't have to come to all of them! One night a week would do. We have tea-dances every month or so, where you come for an afternoon, have tea, biscuits, put some music on, do some social dancing. There's general dancing every Friday, which is similar (just put music on, come and dance). Every term we have a black tie ball with a live band and performances from the team. And there are workshops in different styles throughout the term. There are things happening all the time. You can easily dance seven nights a week, which is what I do!

How do you become a member?

Membership costs £15 for the whole year, which is very good value. Classes are £2 for less than an hour and £3 for over an hour. Compared to most dance societies, that is very good.

BEN ROBERTS WAS INTERVIEWED BY **ISOBEL WEINBERG**
Find out more at www.cambridgedancers.org

Cambridge Spies



Henry. Henry. Dear boy. All grown-up and indulging in [taking] advantages of celebrity on the dancefloor at Fez. Tut tut. Dear me.

Cam reels from the return of its most notorious fairy queen, lash and lassitude echoing around the only college queer enough to hold him.

Samian wine, hare terrine, 17th-century prostitutes, and dark plotting in corners. Another day, another party.

Senior antiquity of Cam's senior antiquity's verdict on pennyng: "When I was a student, they called it sconcing. And they did it at Oxford".

Fresher love: so fleeting. One glimpse of him with his hand down other-her knickers in the toilets, and all is ashes. Sad. And rather funny.

One wonders whether someone has been having fun with Clare's remembrance book, or whether Evangelista and Annunziata were real Clarites.

£9,000 cap on tuition fees announced

JEMMA TRAINOR

Universities and Science Minister David Willetts has announced that the tuition fees could rise to a maximum of £9,000 per year.

Fellow Ministers and Liberal Democrats Nick Clegg and Vince Cable looked on uncomfortably from the government benches as Willetts unveiled plans which could potentially see tuition fees almost trebling from the current amount of £3,290.

The general fees cap will be placed at £6,000 but Mr Willetts has said that certain institutions will be able to charge more "in exceptional circumstances". Those universities who wish to demand the higher rate will have to show that they are making an effort to take part in schemes that will encourage students from poorer backgrounds to apply to university.

Mr Willetts was quick to point out that no students will be expected to pay tuition fees upfront. Instead they will pay in the form of graduate contributions, repaying their loans as 9% of their income with a real rate of interest once they begin earning over £21,000 per year.

In addition, Mr Willetts announced that a £150 million National Scholarship Scheme would be targeted at bright students from poor backgrounds. He said that "under our proposals, a quarter of graduates - those on the lowest incomes - will pay less overall than they do at present."

The proposals have prompted anger amongst students and others who feel that the Government is simply trying to price a significant number of people out of going to university. In a statement to *Varsity*, CUSU called the tuition fee increases a "cynical attempt to shift the burden of the spending cuts onto students." They emphasised that "This is not a good deal for students. It is not a good deal for universities. It is not a good deal for society."

A spokesman from the University has said "Cambridge needs to balance its books [and] in that context the University welcomes the Government's decision to increase the maximum annual tuition fee to £9,000."

They added "we remain committed to the provision of bursaries to students from less advantaged backgrounds."



JC WILLS

Students taking part in the demonstration against education cuts and the recommendations of the Browne Report

NEWS INTERVIEW

Peter Tatchell: human rights activist

Talking to Peter Tatchell is like trying to get blood from a stone, which is surprising considering he has so much to say. Like all successful campaigners, Tatchell has an agenda and a ruthless knack for shaping his media coverage, something that he does not fail to implement in this particular instance in the plush environs of one of the Union's reception rooms.

Born in Australia in 1952, Tatchell escaped conscription to the Vietnam War in 1971, coming to England on the eve of the Gay Liberation Front movement in which he became a prominent member. Finishing his education in London, Tatchell became a freelance journalist focusing on foreign news, before 22 years of involvement in Labour politics which included a brief spell as MP for Bermondsey.

In 1990 Tatchell became one of the founding members of Outrage!, the controversial LGBT social movement campaigning group, known for their extreme publicity stunt-style campaigns such as 'FROCS' (Faggots Rooting Out Closeted Sexuality) and their work on confronting religious homophobia in the Church of England. Tatchell's involvement in this group brought him to the fore of LGBT rights activism in the UK and his glittering array of awards, including last year's Liberal Voice of the Year Award, are a testament to his influential status. Tatchell, as I soon discovered, is a person who cannot fail to make a noise: that is, after all, his job.

One of the few topics that Tatchell is keen to talk to me about is his Equal Love campaign which began on Tuesday 2nd November. In this campaign, eight couples – four same-sex couples and four heterosexual couples – will file applications for civil marriages and civil partnerships respectively at their local register offices.

Every week until December 14 one couple will make an application. Tatchell is "confident" that, following the register offices' letter of refusal which will be used as evidence in court at a later stage, "the twin bans on same-sex civil marriage and opposite-sex civil partnerships will eventually be declared unlawful". The first of the eight same-sex and heterosexual couples to challenge the UK's marriage laws, Rev. Sharon Ferguson and her partner Franka Streitzel, have already been denied permission to marry in Greenwich.

Despite there being, according to Tatchell, "little difference between civil marriage and partnerships in terms of the rights and responsibilities they confer," the Equal Love campaign is representative of the fundamental belief that "in a democracy we should all be equal before the law". "No one would accept it if Jewish people were denied the right to civil marriage and were instead fobbed off with civil partnerships," Tatchell tells me, as a means of explaining the overriding human rights dimension of this campaign.

Important for Tatchell is the assertion that he has "never been merely a gay rights activist" but "a campaigner for the human rights of all victimised peoples and nations". Such a statement rings true when



Peter Tatchell, human rights campaigner and co-founder of Outrage!, talks to **Olivia Crellin** on the challenges of destroying a "sexual apartheid" in Britain and his new campaign, Equal Love

we look at Tatchell's impressive record of activism abroad which includes, along with opposition to Israel's occupation and campaigning against imperialism in his native Australia, two attempts at a citizen's arrest of President Mugabe, the second of which resulted in a serious case of brain damage which forced him to step down from Green Party prospective candidacy in 2007.

Denial of civil marriage to same-sex couples... symbolises the second-class legal status of LGBT people, Tatchell claims.

While many believe the Equal Love campaign to be a quibbling over terms, Tatchell, however, finds this argument far from compelling. "People would not accept an academic system that called male university staff professors, but the equivalent female staff senior teachers," he says. "That would be sexist." Denial of civil marriage to same-sex couples is a similar form of discrimination "that signifies and symbolises the second-class legal status of LGBT people," Tatchell claims. With this as the main thrust of the argument behind the operation, Tatchell has denounced this "twin ban" as a "form of sexual apartheid" condemning the existence of two separate laws.

What some might find puzzling about this campaign is not the continuing cry for legal equality regardless of sexuality, combined with a typically Tatchell publicity drive to challenge social attitudes, but the simple and somewhat curious question as to why a heterosexual couple would want a civil

partnership at all.

Tatchell explains: "Many heterosexual couples don't like the patriarchal history of marriage. They want a more democratic, modern system of relationship recognition. Others are motivated by a refusal to avail themselves of the opportunity for civil marriage while this option is denied to their lesbian and gay friends. For them it is a gesture of solidarity."

Perhaps rather worryingly then, the Equal Love campaign is not interested in an assessment of the existing social institutions of civil partnerships and civil marriage, but rather Tatchell's "point is that all couples should have a free and equal choice." The idea that relationships are shaped more by the connotations attached to their official classification than by the unique individuals involved has, in some critics' eyes, reduced this campaign to nothing more than an unimaginative splitting of hairs and a waste of taxpayers' money.

Not only will this campaign use

tax-payers' money to, rightly or wrongly, bring this issue to the courts' attention, but Tatchell himself has set up a personal fund in order to finance his activist work. Having approached 1000 members of the LGBT community, Tatchell is requesting "people to give £5 a month or more by standing order" to the Tatchell Rights Fund in order to provide an office space, extra staff to help Tatchell answer the deluge of requests that he is inundated with everyday, and a salary of £60,000 per year for the currently unpaid and overworked Mr Tatchell.

Tatchell's appeal for funds on

He exposed a thumb-sized scab on his shin, evidence of BNP and Catholic sentiment.

his various websites is candid. "Because I lack sufficient staff support," Tatchell writes, "I am working 12 to 18 hours a day, seven days a week. I'm often tired and ill." The cost of campaigning seems to be taking its toll: this request comes from an activist who has already been championed a hero for the multiple wounds he has received in the line of duty, most notably being punched in the face and nearly knocked unconscious by Russian police while on a Gay Pride march in Moscow in May 2007.

Tatchell's fear of coming under either verbal or physical attack seemed to dog our conversation. When I asked about his ongoing commitment to try to lower the age of consent, he declared the topic to be a "waste of our time" before brusquely pulling up his left trouser leg to expose a thumb-sized scab on his shin, evidence of BNP and Catholic sentiment, apparently, that branded Tatchell a paedophile for speaking out on the issue.

The palpable proof of the opposition that Peter Tatchell comes up against on a daily basis did leave a rather unpleasant taste in my mouth following our parting. It did not, however, explain Tatchell's unwillingness to engage with the more philosophical issues at the heart of human rights activism. It seems to me that Tatchell has, with his most recent campaign, relinquished the change he wanted to make in favour of the headlines he wanted to make. I can't help feel that perhaps, if Peter Tatchell were to pick his battles more carefully, not only would he emerge from the tussles intact but he might also safeguard a reputation which both preceded and overshadowed my meeting with the man himself.

Peter Tatchell spoke last Thursday at the Union debate: 'This House believes that the Free Market has failed'.

To find out more about Equal Love and Mr. Tatchell's other campaigns visit: www.petertatchell.net

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VARSLTY



Comment

Isn't it ironic? (Well no, probably not)

Journalism must stimulate debate, but claims of 'irony' are too often used to escape taking responsibility for what is published



IMOGEN GOODMAN

Strolling into the Faculty library fashionably late this week, after a swarm of insatiable students had finished their pillaging, I scanned the half-empty shelves with dismay. Tatty turn-of-the-century tomes with more indignant scribbles than printed text, far-fetched Freudian interpretations of Sophocles and a few other undesirable books lay in a state of disarray, and my gaze fell, reluctantly, upon the text I knew I would inevitably be taking home. The text was entitled, 'Ironic Drama'.

It seems that, around the fifties and sixties, the term 'irony' began to bleed slowly into Western culture; in the past fifty years, the function

of criticism has often been merely to raise a weary eyebrow at the conception of sincerity in the arts. Who really means anything they say, especially when one engages on such a risky endeavour as promulgating these ideas and passions to a broad spectrum of people? The current consensus appears to be that no one, in modern society, really means anything.

Particularly in intellectual circles, this constant recourse to 'irony' is pervasive as a means of avoiding the appearance of genuine, heart-felt commitment. A friend of mine frequently jokes, "I haven't meant anything I've said since 1997 – including that." It is both a rather clichéd witticism and an apt depiction of a society that is predominantly distrustful of the information it is fed, whether that comes from school, the media, or from each other.



Of course, when we are constantly under fire from companies and individuals who are trying to convince us of various things - from how to 'please your man' to how to waste your money - it is healthy to be discerning. This chronic lack of earnestness, however, has a deep impact upon our relationships and our sense of identity. Romantic advice employs the rhetoric of playing, of acting, of dissembling. We 'play the game', 'play hard to get' and even 'play the field', and these phrases signify a prudent – even a necessary – ability to manipulate another whilst preserving Number One. It is viewed as weak and naïve to express feelings; smart and savvy to withhold them.

It seems significant that this should also be the golden age of the ironic or satirical news story; blogs such as Hipster Runoff, a parodic

depiction of 'alternative' culture written by the infamous hipster persona 'Charles', explore how far we take our own tastes and values seriously.

As a friend of mine frequently jokes, "I haven't meant anything I've said since 1997 – including that."

There is an implicit assumption that you cannot truly be involved with a joke such as Hipster Runoff unless you are part of the counter-culture it claims to mock. Essentially, this sort of journalism is constructed in the negative (establishing what you are not saying) rather than the positive (arguing for or against a standpoint explicitly), and thereby exemplifies a culture which is reluctant to betray an emotional investment in any cause.

Tabloid journalism is one such example that claims to be 'tongue-in-cheek'. In its dealings with public criticism concerning Page 3 girls, or insensitive pieces about celebrity

drug habits, its recurrent defence centres around irony. These pieces, it claims, which on the surface appear blatantly prejudiced, are apparently a purely ironic comment on popular conceptions, designed to raise questions and stimulate debate.

And yet, if the articles and features are supposed to be satirical, then why aren't they explicitly humorous or incisive? How can we draw the line between deliberately controversial subject matter and distastefully irresponsible journalism? It seems that in a world which is so caught up in the idea that no one is trustworthy, to cast your statements as 'ironic' as an afterthought is deemed perfectly acceptable where it would otherwise be laughable.

With great journalism comes great responsibility. When a public article is written, it is understood that the act of writing and disseminating is a testimony to the courage of the writer's convictions, whether the piece is intentionally comedic or not. I agree: we *should* question the claims of, say, tabloid journalism. They should stimulate debate. But it is not enough to simply use the all-pervasive get-out clause of 'irony' in order to escape all responsibility.

For the sake of journalism, art and humanity, I hereby call for the return of sincerity.

The future's bright, the future's awkward

Our generation will continually be confronted by snap-shots of our youth – tread carefully



JONNY WALKER

I was one of those textbook, weedy, milksop boys whose misspent childhood was spent in the glare of television screens. Borne mostly out of overexposure to WWF wrestling (before the panda-huggers re-appropriated their acronym), as a nine year old I started to fetishize tattoos as symbolising a forceful masculine identity.

But when I got to the age at which I could legally get one, I found myself unable to; it wasn't that there weren't any designs

that I liked, the problem was that unshakeable obstacle of foresight: would I really want that tattoo as a young man or as a grey scale pensioner?

A similar thought process ought to be on our minds as we negotiate our precarious existence in Cambridge. We must ask ourselves the question: how accountable are we being to our future selves?

When Nick Clegg was an undergraduate at Robinson, he had some dalliance with Cambridge University Conservative Association. Whilst this isn't altogether surprising given his puppeteer/puppet relationship with the Prime Minister, it must have proved quite embarrassing for him as he climbed the ranks of the Liberal Democrat party machine. But of course, he wouldn't have known then what he would become in later life; and nor do we.

In the Facebook generation, we are all the more constrained by our present when thinking about our futures. So as you stagger your way to Gardies dressed in full black tie, and you gurn in joyful vinolency into

your friend's SLR, remember quite how permanent that image is going to be. You might lose contact with that friend; just next week he could

Whether you're photographed staggering to Gardies or shagging your way across the floor of Cindies, keep in mind that you don't know who those around you will become

sleep with your girlfriend and you could become determined enemies. Cambridge is famed for its elitist grasp on the professions and the

higher you climb, the greater the fall. What if you become one of those dowdy, pontificating Conservative MPs, arguing about the problem of binge-drinking youths in 30 years time? What if your snap-happy friend becomes a journalist?

With Facebook, we actively diarise our every whim, every thought and every activity, and these facts, which we disclose freely ourselves, are out of our control as soon as we press 'send'.

How lucrative a trade would some conniving young Cantabrigian forge if he befriended us all and saved copies of those compromising pictures, made copies of all those political and religious slurs you have aired all over your status and noted which events you have attended!

All he would have to do is wait for you to enter the professional world and the power he wields could be immense – a future prime minister

could be jelly-wrestling this May Week, an aspiring head teacher could be brought down in later life by the pictures of him dressed as a Nazi guard in a bad taste bop when he was just a starry-eyed Fresher.

Our generation is more accountable for its actions than any previously. Whereas public figures today can explain away the deviant foibles of their youth by talking euphemistically about having a 'full university experience', we shall not be spared such liberties. It is all documented. Every uploaded photograph, every blogpost, each tiny tweet has the potential to rain down a torrent of shit on you in your professional life depending on which path you take.

Be you Tab Totty, be you parading in Champagne decadence or be you shagging your way across the sticky dancefloor of Cindies, keep in mind that you don't know who you and those around you will become.





In Death's waiting room

The sham trial and imminent 'legal murder' of Linda Carty is an affront to justice and human decency



JEMMA TRAINOR

My thoughts have spent more time in Linda Carty's cell than anywhere else this past while. As the final door closes on the female Briton on Texas' Death Row, the thoughts of people far away are the only company she has. Hope has definitely left the building.

In reality, there isn't much room for thoughts in there. When the legal action charity Reprieve erected a life-size model of Carty's cell on St Martin-in-the-Fields next to Trafalgar Square in August, the overriding impression was unbearably grim and tiny. Visitors flocked to sit in Death's Waiting Room, contemplating the stark reality faced by those on death row. Whoever designed it did get something right though - it's a dead ringer for purgatory, or perhaps hell itself. And this is Linda Carty's day-to-day existence.

Linda Carty is a British citizen, born on the Caribbean island of St. Kitts. After a complex and difficult

life, including a history as the victim of rape and domestic abuse, she was sentenced to die by lethal injection for murdering her neighbour, Joanna Rodriguez. This sentence was borne out of the kind of criminal justice we like to tell ourselves doesn't exist in the Western world - the facts read somewhat like the reports of a Soviet show trial.

Linda was named as the 'mastermind' in the murder by the three men who actively committed it, their inducement being that they would escape the death penalty for doing so. According to the Assistant District Attorney, the fact that her accusers were "an armed robber, a dope dealer, a drive-by shooter and another armed robber" only made their stories more credible - a naturally logical assumption.

Her motive was, allegedly, that she wanted to steal Rodriguez's unborn baby (of a different race than Carty herself) in order to pass it off as her own and save a failing relationship. Issues about the plausibility of this tale begin to arise at this point. But when you add the knowledge that Carty had done undercover work with the Drug Enforcement Agency in her area - and was, you might say, a tad unpopular amongst the neighbourhood's gangland thugs - things all start to make sense. There is rarely a more powerful motive than the dual prospects of money and power, and Linda Carty had often been standing in the way of both.

I would like to think that no one would ever be convicted on similar evidence in a British court, but then again, this assumption is telling. It

exposes a complacency and places a rather naïve hope that a criminal justice system which exists in a developed, democratic country must have some legitimacy. But leaving aside the substantive issues in this case, all the more frightening is the procedural circus that led to Linda's conviction and sentencing.

No one ends up on death row because they have done terrible things, they do so because they have suffered terrible representation. And the crimes of Linda's defence lawyer who, comfortingly, has had

That anyone living in a liberal democracy can end up on death row on the basis of such flawed evidence is utterly abhorrent

more clients put on death row than any other lawyer in the US, are numerous and extreme. As well as failing to notify the British consulate of her nationality (which would have ruled out the death penalty) and failing to spot obvious inconsistencies with the prosecution's case (Carty's alleged weapon of choice would have apparently been a pair of medical scissors which could only cut cloth), Jerry Guerinot only spent 15

minutes with Linda before her trial. His actions can at best be classified as complete negligence, at worst, as a wilful obstruction of justice.

And now, amidst a hopelessly flawed appeals process drowning in legal technicalities, and a society hell-bent on the destroying its criminal offenders, Linda Carty is right to pray for a miracle because, unfortunately, nothing else will do.

The death penalty discussion may be one for another day, but the mere fact that a woman living in a liberal democracy was able to wind up in Death's Waiting Room on the basis of such a completely flawed case is utterly abhorrent. If we cannot expect the basic right to a fair trial in a country with which we are so inextricably connected, one must wonder how valuable such rights are in terms of international political capital. If it is these sorts of cases that result in a death sentence, how many steps are we away from the possibility of a similar fate?

Linda, a Christian, has a small request of God. She says, "If I have to die, I pray that my family will not look and not feel ashamed of their daughter, or their mother..."

What they should be ashamed of is the archaic and unjust system that is perpetrating Linda's 'death by homicide, performed by lethal injection by order of the people of the State of Texas', and doesn't even have the courage to write 'legal murder' on her death certificate.

If you wish to find out more about Linda Carty, log on to www.reprieve.org.uk

Our Man in Amman



We currently have no water in our flat. Admittedly this is partially our fault, since we didn't realise that the colourful piece of paper wedged between two flowerpots in the entrance to our block was the water bill. Even though it's all paid now, we won't get any of the wet stuff until Sunday, when it gets delivered to our rooftop tanks via a reassuringly large truck. Until then, I'm using mineral water to wash and brush my teeth, which does the job just fine. Honestly, I don't know why everyone relies so much on building wells and pipes and stuff when a 24-pack of Evian will do.

Water is scarce in Jordan. It is one of the top ten most water-poor countries in the world. Every year, the average US citizen has over 9,000 cubic metres of fresh water available to them. A Jordanian citizen receives less than 200. Furthermore, the population is rising and is expected to double by 2029, meaning that the already scarce water supply will be stretched even thinner.

Yet if you saw our neighbourhood in north Amman, you wouldn't have thought such basic resources were in such short supply. Just across the street from us is a large, glass-fronted café that has 40 or so widescreen plasma TVs for customers to watch soap operas and music videos. I have never seen more than a handful of people in there, and normally the staff outnumber the clientele. I have literally no idea how that place exists, given the massive overhead costs. Perhaps I'm wrong and it's actually the Ministry of Finance building, which I suppose would explain the slow service.

The sharp contrast between wealthy and poor is very visible in Amman. Rainbow Street is a smart, clean and pricey area dominated by expatriates, but go 200 metres down a set of warped steps and you come to the 'balad', the centre of town. Here it's noisier and dirtier, with an abundance of delicious-but-basic street side diners. It's great fun, but visibly much poorer than the swanky district that overlooks it.

Amman isn't a third world city by any stretch of the imagination, but it is one of contrasts. Although the economy is growing steadily fuelled by a burgeoning middle class, prices outstrip average earnings and nationally there is an acute lack of natural resources, exemplified by the water shortage. And sometimes all that separates these two worlds is a few dozen steps.

TOM CROOKE

Can we profess a rational belief in God?

My good friend Peter Atkins has written that “atheism is the apotheosis of the Enlightenment,” and that “scientific method is a gloriously optimistic flowering of the human intellect”. The latter statement I agree with; the former seems historically inaccurate. There were many varieties of enlightenment, but most were theistic: Immanuel Kant asserted that belief in God was necessary, and even the French invented a ‘religion of Reason’. Those, like David Hume, who were not theistic were also sceptical of the power of human reason.

There is a deeper philosophical point here: belief in the intelligibility of the universe and the power of human reason to understand it has usually been associated (as in the case of Isaac Newton) with the existence of a rational God who made the universe intelligible, i.e. created through Logos or Reason. Those who exorcise God (like Nietzsche) have seen little reason to think that the universe is intelligible or that the human mind can understand it. So Peter’s claim that science is optimistic about discovering the nature of the cosmos, whereas religion is not, seems upside down.

In any case, it is a gross oversimplification to juxtapose ‘science’ and ‘religion’ and say that one is optimistic and the other pessimistic. There are many forms of science, and many pessimistic scientists. And there are many forms of religion, some of which are extremely optimistic about the scope of reason (late medieval thinkers like Anselm thought reason could prove virtually every truth, even about God).

Science, says Peter, is about experiment, repeatability, and public confirmation. That is broadly true. But it is not just religion, it is all the humanities – literature, art, music, morality, philosophy, and history – that lack these basic features of scientific method. There are no repeatable experiments

It is a huge exaggeration to say that there is nothing at all that points to purpose in the universe

and no conclusive tests that could show whether Heidegger is a profound philosopher or Rubens a great painter. That does not mean that there are no rational criteria of judgment or no uses of reason in these areas, or that they are merely founded on sentiment.

So in religion, the University of Oxford’s Theology Faculty uses critical reasoning to examine various linguistic, textual, cultural, historical and philosophical aspects of religious beliefs, and lays down no preconditions about



In a pointed rebuttal to Professor Peter Atkins’s essay of 8th October, **Keith Ward** outlines why science alone cannot offer us an adequate and reasonable understanding of human existence, and why, without God, many philosophical and personal questions will remain unanswered

what researchers may personally believe.

It is critical reasoning – applied to atheism as well as theism – that is the true apotheosis of the Enlightenment. And it is quite possible to belong to a religious tradition and use critical reasoning about your own tradition. Critical religion asks if its basic beliefs are consistent with those of the sciences, if other traditions and philosophies – including atheism – have good arguments for other ways of believing, if traditional formulations need to be revised, and whether beliefs are harmful or beneficial in personal and social life.

It may be that not many people are good scientists, and that not many people are good at critical thinking about religion. If so, we should try to educate more people in critical thinking – but that means getting them to challenge overly simplistic views of both science and religion, and to understand how people form basic world views that are not conclusively verifiable by science.

Peter says that science tries to

make things simple, whereas religion tries to make them complex. Try comparing quantum theory with the religious claim that an intelligent God created the cosmos to generate finite intelligent beings

There are no experiments or conclusive tests that could show whether Heidegger was a profound philosopher, or Rubens a great painter

that could understand and appreciate it. Which is simpler? Does it even make sense to compare them

for simplicity? Is this not like comparing apples with prime numbers? Many sciences strive for simplicity, in the sense of having a few general laws and forces which may account for observed complex physical behaviour. Religion is not even in that game. Religion, in some of its advanced forms, seeks a different sort of simplicity: one general reason, or at least a relatively small and coherent set of reasons, for the sake of which the cosmos exists. There may not be one, but the idea of God is the postulate of one being which could provide one such general reason or purpose for the cosmos. That is simplicity, but a different sort of simplicity.

Peter says, however, that there is not the “slightest evidence” that the universe has a purpose. That is simply not true. There are hundreds of eminent scientists – I cite only Isaac Newton, Freeman Dyson, and Francis Collins – who think there is discernible direction in cosmic history, from relatively simple, unconscious structures to conscious structures of organised complexity. The direction is set

by the basic constants and forces of nature, and seems to lead, as even Richard Dawkins once said, almost inevitably to the existence of intelligent conscious life sooner or later. That is evidence for purpose, though of course such claims are disputed and do not have overwhelming force. Nevertheless, it is a huge exaggeration to say that there is nothing at all that points to purpose in the universe.

My chief problem with Peter’s article, then, is that it vastly over-generalises, over-simplifies, and historically distorts the very complex relationships between scientific and religious beliefs. ‘Science’ is presented as optimistic, rational, and leading to true under-

The idea of a God or deity is the postulate of one being which could provide some general reason or purpose for the cosmos

standing. ‘Religion’ is pictured as founded on sentiment, prejudice and unexamined faith. But there is more to understanding than scientific understanding. There is the understanding of what it is to live a good human life, what it is that gives value to life, and why it is that humans see their lives in such very different ways. Investigating such personal understanding is the province of the humanities, and religion is investigated within the humanities as one historically important way of understanding human existence that, whilst contested, is capable of rational criticism and defence.

Belief in the existence of God has seemed to most classical philosophers to be a central part of a reasonable – perhaps the most reasonable – perspective on human existence. To dismiss it because it does not conform to canons of scientific enquiry does not, overall, seem a wholly reasonable procedure. And that is the crucial question: can science alone give an adequate and reasonable understanding of human existence? If not, then wider philosophical, personal, and sometimes religious questions remain to be seriously addressed. When they are, God remains a serious candidate for rational and critical belief.

Keith Ward is a Fellow of the British Academy, an ordained priest in the Church of England, the author of over twenty books on theology and the philosophy of religion, and was formerly Regius Professor of Divinity at the University of Oxford.

A photograph of two young men in a room with bookshelves. One man is shirtless and leaning over the other, who is wearing a white shirt and tie. The shirtless man is holding a small object, possibly a cigarette, near the other man's face. The background shows bookshelves filled with books and a small figurine of a horse on the top shelf. The word "VINCE" is written in a stylized, white, outlined font in the top left corner.

VINCE

Album Reviews:
N*E*R*D **p22**

Charlotte Runcie
on 'Reading Week'
p14

My Degree: Law
p20

Charlotte Runcie: On Fifth Week Blues



‘Reading Week’: “A phrase in which the word ‘reading’ operates predominantly as a euphemism for ‘sleeping’, ‘clubbing’, and ‘ill-advised sexual conquests’”

My friend Kate is not known for her tact. “God, I am so glad it’s Reading Week this week,” she breezed at me down the phone, speaking from her room at a northern university which will remain nameless. “Now I’ll finally get a chance to get that essay done.”

“Mmm,” I replied, with a lot of restraint. Reading Week? What are they up there, wusses? “It’s around this part of term that the essays can start to pile up.”

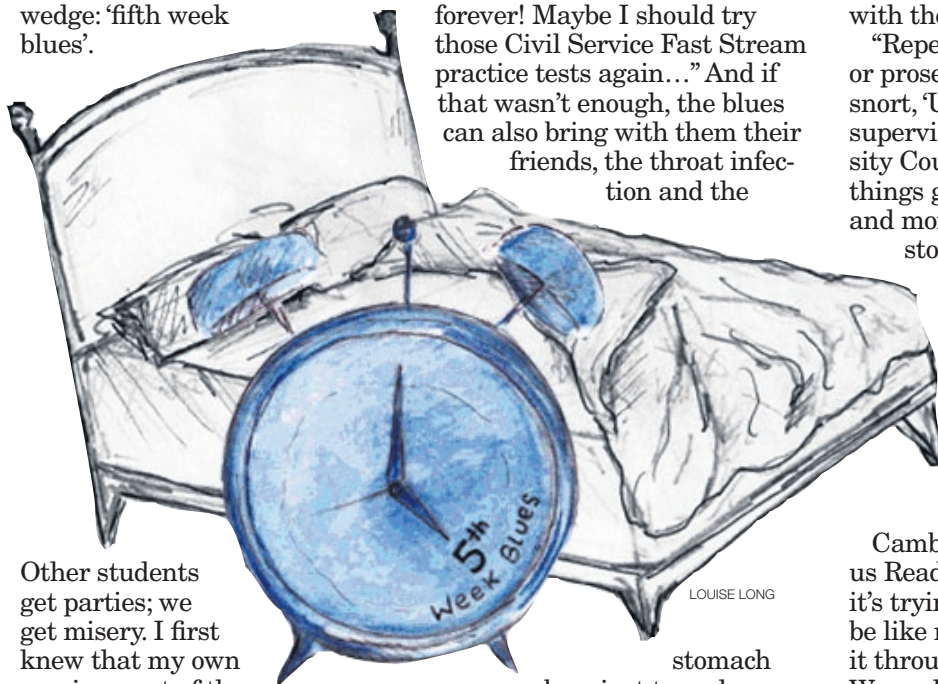
“Essays?” She said sweetly, between sips of an audibly repulsive home-made hangover cure and some absent-minded lipgloss application. “No, no, this is the first one this term. Total nightmare. Two thousand words!”

I think she took my silence as shocked sympathy, which was fortunate for our friendship. I love Kate, but I did need to have a reviving chocolate muffin when I put the phone down.

It’s not fair. Halfway through term, students at most other universities get a Reading Week. This is a phrase in which the word “reading” operates predominantly as a euphemism for “sleeping”, “clubbing”, and “ill-advised sexual conquests”, as far as I can work out, though that may tell you more about

some of my friends than it does about the British university experience.

What do we get instead of Reading Week? Well, here’s the really thin end of the wedge: ‘fifth week blues’.



Other students get parties; we get misery. I first knew that my own consignment of the blues had been delivered when, a few nights ago, I found myself unable to sleep at 4am, feverishly searching YouTube for videos of *X Factor* contestants from three years ago. It was the only way I knew to stave off the panic.

At 3am the next night it happened again. Third year has

definitely given them an extra kick, as now along with the nasty “I’ve got so much work to do” refrain in your head you can also add “I’m going to fail my degree and be unemployed forever! Maybe I should try those Civil Service Fast Stream practice tests again...” And if that wasn’t enough, the blues can also bring with them their friends, the throat infection and the

very helpful, pieces of advice, the site moves on to suggest some mental games you can play in a dark moment to help you drift off, when the pressures of work seem to be closing in with the walls.

“Repeat long pieces of poetry or prose,” it suggests (to which I snort, ‘Um, this is my bed, not a supervision, Cambridge University Counselling Service!’) Then things get both more soothing and more abstract. “Imagine a storm raging outside while you are safe and warm in bed,” it coos, like a beloved aunt, or an obsessive meteorologist. As an alternative, “Make your mind a complete blank then imagine a pleasant colour.”

Cambridge may never give us Reading Week, but bless it, it’s trying. Or you could always be like my friend Ram and see it through by enjoying Diwali. We could all use some extra light right now. But really, this is my advice for dealing with the blues: drink a lot of tea and try to avoid thinking about May. And if you want to stay upbeat and you value your friends at other universities then, whatever you do, wait a week or so before you ring them for a chat. Trust me.

Dear *Varsity*,

A Hallowe’en special (post delayed though I hear): blood! urine! Hamburg!

I get attacked by the lesbians most Hallowe’ens. Last night, at the Berlin Alternative Porn Film Festival After-party (nu-urr), a conclusive defeat on my part. I got a splinter and a slight nosebleed. Last year they left me for dead at the bottom of Columbia Road. The year before I went to Ficken 3000. It was a lesbian-only club, so I had to use my woman’s intuition. Feminine wiles. Well, I pulled a scarf over my head and charmed the door whore in my butchest falsetto.

I got in of course - into a darkroom maze, a sort of labyrinthine sex-dungeon. I saw things there that no man should ever see. In some dark fumble the scarf was pulled from my head. There was a pregnant pause. Then five fanged lesbians gave up whatever they had been doing and moved in for the kill. I ran. They chased me a good four streets, so I pulled into a dark alleyway, turned my coat inside out, scribbled a moustache onto my upper lip...and got savagely beaten when they caught up. It was then that I realised that I was a master of disguise.

So I went to Hamburg to see some girl. We got

I am good you know.

Ali

Haxie is online

MAINZ
die Stadt
Gutenbergs



drunk. I got lost looking for a park to piss in. So I pissed on a car. A police car. They arrested me. I pretended to have a fit. They took me to hospital. In hospital I was thrown on the floor and stuck up like a pincushion. I love a nip of saline now and then. I had to play dead for three hours until the policemen guarding me had turned away. Then I ran: upstairs, downstairs, through a cancer ward and a triple bypass. I reached the front door but out on the street now a row of doctors and policemen had formed to catch me. So I - I ran back, took a green gown and mask from a cupboard in the basement, walked, calmly, through the cordon, and slipped away unseen.

Week 5 Special
V GOOD

Fifth week? More like **Fifth of November** please.

Hot spiced cider and sparklers at the ready. N.B. Burning an effigy of your supervisor probably won’t make a difference to multiple essay crises. Unless you believe in voodoo.



TEXTS FROM LAST NIGHT

“I have no idea what happened after 2am. I woke up ON my bike, in my bed, with a deep thigh bruise.” “At least I wasn’t still dressed as a bottle of dom perignon when they took me to the ER.” Sound familiar? Too familiar? **TextsFromLast-Night.com** the ideal source of schadenfreude.

No words sufficient to express your essay woe...? type ‘Cat Betrayed by His Girlfriend! Sex! Heat Rage! Foul Language!’ into YouTube – you’ll understand WHYYYY when you watch it...



...alternatively indulge your inner five-year-old and reduce stress with sugar-high endorphins from **Barbie’s Dance Workout** (fluoro lycra costumes compulsory).



Essay drudgery is getting you down? From this week, women will work the rest of the year for free according to the average gender pay gap.



Clocks going back – one hour of extra sleep for one day does NOT make up for these eternal hours of darkness.

V BAD

SOME QUESTIONS FOR:

Hannah Keal, CSLD Chair

Alice Hancock and **Charlotte Wu** probe the secrets of Cambridge's no.1 Lib Dem and discover why leather chairs may be the answer to week five blues...

College:
Gonville and Caius.

School:
Lady Lumley's, Pickering, North Yorkshire.

Date of birth:
10/07/91.

Date of death:
The year 3000.

Sexuality:
Straight. Mostly. Ish.

Ethnicity:
Caucasian.

Religion:
Narnian.

Emergency contact:
Gregory Peck. If it's an emergency, he'll definitely be able to come back from the dead, right?

Smoker:
Occasional

Number of sexual partners?
No comment. (I've always wanted to say that, plus...feminine mystique, yeah?)

Mental health problems:
So far avoiding mental breakdown.

Favourite book?
Jude the Obscure by Thomas Hardy.

Actual favourite book?:
The Picture of Dorian Gray by Oscar Wilde.

What are you reading?
The Damage Done by Peter Woolf.

Where do you live?
K-Block, Harvey Court, avec all the Caius musos.

Where do you sleep?
Sleep? What? What does that mean? I literally have no idea what that's supposed to mean.

"I don't like moustaches, which rules out most dictators"

Where will you be on Wednesday night?
Maybe my first Cindies of term to celebrate three harrowing days of successive supervisions...

When did you first realise that you wanted to be a megalomaniac?
When I demanded, as soon as I set eyes on it, that my mum bought me



a mug saying "I'm going to win the Nobel Prize and this is my mug". It was meant to be for a toddler.

Who's your favourite dictator?
Hmm, difficult. I don't like moustaches, which rules out quite a substantial amount of them, so I'm going to go with Mao.

What's the working title for your spill-all memoirs?
These Are My Confessions. Yeah Usher, so me.

How many copies will it sell?
More than Katie Price's and Michael Mansfield's and I'm happy...

Who's your Cambridge arch-nemesis?
It's not a 'who' it's an 'it': contract law.

What's the worst joke you've ever heard?
Why did the monkey fall out of the tree? It was an accident. Why did the second monkey fall out of the tree? Because it copied the first monkey. Why did the bird fall out of the tree? Because it wanted to be a monkey.

If you could rule any country (UK and USA aside) which would it be?
Cuba. I'd make the UN actually do some preservation work on Havana, seeing as it's supposed to be a world heritage site, whilst sipping Mojitos.

When you're rich and powerful and the University is offering to name something after you, what will you request?
Leather armchairs big and soft enough to copulate in.

"I demanded that my mum bought me a mug saying 'I'm going to win the Nobel Prize and this is my mug'"

What did you want to be when you grew up?
An author.

What do you want to be when you grow up?
A war crimes prosecutor/an immigration law specialist/an author/president of the world/an underwear designer/owner of a back in time private members club?

What's the key to happiness?
Leather armchairs, books and a glass of red wine – and a partner in crime.

What will be written on your gravestone?
"I had a lover's quarrel with the world."

Who would play you in the film of your life?
Salma Hayek. She'd have to put on a bit of weight for the role?

Who will play your arch-nemesis in the film of your life?
It would be cut – contract law is so not sexy.

Which *Pokémon* would play you in the cartoon of your life?
I've never watched *Pokémon*. But I'd be Velma in *Scooby Doo*.

What's next for Hannah Keal?
Who knows? (I don't.)

Do you have anything you'd like to ask us?
Do you know what happened to the King's cow?

Cambridge Student Liberal Democrats (CSLD) is the student branch of the Liberal Democrats for students at both the University of Cambridge and Anglia Ruskin University campus in Cambridge. It is currently the largest of the three student parties in Cambridge. Nick Clegg, current Deputy Prime Minister, is the society's honorary Vice-President, along with David Howarth and Simon Hughes MP. Notable alumni include Vince Cable, Peter Cook, CULC founder member and Foreign Secretary (1924-9) Austen Chamberlain, Mervyn King, and John Maynard Keynes. For more information visit <http://www.csld.org.uk>



‘I clutched my protruding hipbones and felt safe.’

Radhika Kapila asks why eating disorders are preying on more Cambridge students than ever before

In the last twelve years, the number of people seeking help for eating disorders at the University Counselling Service has risen from 6% to 9% of the students using

She piled her plate full of carrots. She then told me she wasn't going to eat for the next three days.

the service. This does not include the many who remain undiagnosed.

Formal hall. Sitting at a majestic table and eating an exquisite three-course meal by candlelight is one of the quintessential delights of Cambridge. My first experience of this tradition however, was slightly different; my memory of it dominated not by candlelight and coved ceilings but by sitting next to a skeletal girl who piled her plate full of nothing but carrots. She then jokingly told me that she wasn't going to eat for the next three days. At that moment, in the first week of my first year, it became clear to me that being at one of the best academic institutions in the world

doesn't make us immune to the problems being faced by

One way of dealing with stress when work is spiralling out of control is to monitor what you ingest.

students throughout Britain. It might be thought that somehow, with the importance placed on intellect, appearance would be a more superficial issue for students

here. However, with eating disorders in the UK amounting to an astonishing 1.15 million cases with most occurring between the ages of 16 and 25, it is no surprise that they are on the rise amongst Cambridge students as well.

So why is this issue so prevalent at Cambridge? Although the obvious explanation is the desire for control, there are other triggers for these disorders that are specific to the Cambridge environment. It might be assumed that intelligence makes us less susceptible to the need to conform to images put forward by the media and more aware enough of eating

disorders to prevent them before they develop.

But perhaps it is this very awareness that makes Cambridge students more susceptible to these disorders than other students in the UK.

Environment

The Cambridge lifestyle suggests anything but moderation. Students are faced with the intense pressure of trying to balance a social life with an extensive workload. This stress can mean that providing yourself with a proper diet becomes

Essentially, eating disorders have become a mark of our time, the language of suffering for our generation.

secondary, almost too time-consuming. One way of dealing with stress when work is spiralling out of control is to monitor what you can, and one of the easiest things to monitor is what you ingest.

Cambridge aside, a university environment in general has its own pressures. For many, going to university is the chance to reconstruct identity within a new peer group. On entering Cambridge, however, academic ability no longer provides you with a unique identity. Many students have to face the harsh reality of no longer being the most intelligent in their year. Image, which can be honed more quickly and easily than academic success, gains further importance. This

is coupled with other personality traits shared by the majority of Cambridge students, such as perfectionism. The CUSU website even has an extensive section on how to deal with it, demonstrating how problematic this mindset can become. This aversion to failure and desire to be perfect reflects itself in image just as much as academic achievement.

Background

Another aspect which makes Cambridge students susceptible to eating disorders is their background. For example, the Eating Disorders Association found that, in comparison to 1 in 500 state school students developing eating disorders, 1 out of 100 girls in private schools suffered from them and, disturbingly, these figures have trebled since the research was conducted in 1994. Again, we can associate this rise with the pressures of academic 'hothousing'. Students from private schools still constitute a disproportionate part of our student body and these statistics are therefore, to some degree, carried over to the University.

Surely, though, alongside academic success there is an intellectual curiosity amongst students which provides them with the awareness to prevent the development of these problems? Surprisingly, these factors work in conjunction with eating disorders. Numerous studies demonstrate how added awareness of mental health issues can help to induce them, even when these problems were previously non-existent. For example, the journalist Ethan Watters notes that eating disorders in China were induced by information from the West, despite having been virtually

non-existent in the country before. In many ways, that is exactly what we might be suffering from. As inquiring students we know of the symptoms, but being alert to these might make us aware to such a level that we expose ourselves to the development of them. Essentially, eating disorders have become a mark of our time, the language of suffering for our

Physical excellence is arguably more pertinent to students simply because it is a more tangible and immediate means of demonstrating achievement.

generation and the recognised way to express internal distress, whatever this distress is. Consequently, eating disorders might be symptomatic of numerous problems, from overwhelming stress to acute loneliness.

Body Dysmorphia

Deanne Jade, the founder of the National Centre for Eating Disorders explained to *Varsity* that whilst there is never one specific cause in the development of an eating disorder, "mental over-sensitivity is a key issue". Interestingly, this suggests that Cambridge students might be particularly vulnerable as a consequence of heightened awareness and intellectual sensitivity. Eating disorders are aspects of

Body Dysmorphia, which stems from over-analysing and misinterpreting people's reactions to you. This condition is not confined to women. Male eating disorders are also increasing. However, rather than the female concern with losing weight, the male preoccupation is often on developing masculinity by appearing physically fit, through building up the body. In both these instances of Body Dysmorphia the crux of the problem is the process of over-analysing the perception held by the opposite sex, which is partly the reason why those with higher IQs are more likely to develop these issues. Cambridge students undeniably fit into this category and their circumstances are exacerbated by the general insecurities faced by all students.

It is clear, then, that anyone assuming that intelligence equates to immunity from issues suffered by millions of people of the same age throughout the country, is very mistaken. In fact, Cambridge students are arguably less immune than others primarily because this University is such a centre of achievement, creating an environment which engenders competition. This competitiveness has given us the ability to move from the mind to the body. Physical excellence is arguably more pertinent to students simply because unlike the long process of intellectual success (such as establishing a successful career) it is a more tangible and immediate means of demonstrating achievement.

I return to my companion at that first Formal. As her humorous, mildly cynical attitude showed, she was aware of what she was doing but unlike most other sufferers, had no desire to hide it. Certainly, what resonated most from our brief meeting was her sense of pride in demonstrating the process of her achievement.

'I was aiming for my nothingness; my destruction.'

"To this day, I still don't believe I suffered from an eating disorder. Even though I have been on hands and knees, face-to-face with the porcelain queen, heaving into the basin and going on seven-day fasts, I never quite managed to reach my nirvana; the goal weight I was aiming for; my nothingness, my destruction.

"I didn't intend a slow, sadistic suicide. In fact 'it' crept up behind me before I even realised it had taken

"Before I reached my peak, I was aware that I was altogether too much. Too loud, too tall, too fat. When I was a child I overate, biscuit after biscuit."

me by the throat. What really flung me down the rabbit hole was my dad walking out and my mum having to cope alone – and the niggling thought that it was possibly my fault.

"Before I reached my peak, I was aware that I was altogether too much. Too loud, too tall, too fat. When I was a child I overate, biscuit after biscuit from the tin. I remember finding photographs of myself, hunched over a fire roasting marshmallows on a stick, fat as a

baby piglet. In pure disgust I ripped all of the photos up.

"I managed to get down to about seven stone (I know, not that skinny you're probably thinking) and living on a diet of an apple a day. Still the intense energy I attained from this, the ability to swim one hundred lengths and still keep going, was an attractive thrill. I would stand up, the world would spin and go dark, I would clutch and rub at my protruding collarbones and hipbones, and I would feel

safe.

"I experience insecurity nearly every day."

"I experience insecurity nearly every day. I hate looking in mirrors. And I can't lie, I do miss the control. I played with fire and although like a phoenix I rose from the flames, I am still singed." ANONYMOUS



EMMA SMITH

Border Crossings

Colm Tóibín's fiction pushes the boundaries of topics like multiculturalism, national identity and gender politics. **Philip Maughan** spoke to him during his recent pit-stop in Cambridge this week

Is the novel dying? It's a debate that should probably be dropped given the 85 years people have spent weighing in on it. "Replace the word novel with the word film," suggests Colm Tóibín, arguably Ireland's foremost living novelist, "then you'd actually get somewhere."

Tóibín is confident that during our interview, "the same ten bad films are playing in the same malls everywhere in the world: they're not memorable, they're of no use and they won't survive." I don't doubt his conviction, but Tóibín, for all the melancholy weight of his prose writing, makes for surprisingly jocular company, and you can never be completely sure he isn't pulling your leg.

We soon start talking about Jonathan Franzen, as is the way of all literary-themed discussion at the moment. "The arrival of someone like Franzen has been a big deal," he says, rising to pour some sparkling water, "he's not redefining the novel, he's just using it. Getting all the business down right from the beginning: characters, things they do, funny ones, serious ones, love, family, hate, fights – and putting it all into a book."

From here Tóibín segues into familiar territory. "What's happened in England – the re-creation of the country, multicultural Britain, was not done by politicians or journalists, or on TV. It was done by Salman Rushdie, Monica Ali and Zadie Smith, redefining the public space: it was done by novelists."

Emigration, identity and the significance of 'home' are common themes in Tóibín's fiction. His last novel, the Costa Prize-winning *Brooklyn*, followed a naïve but determined Irish woman from Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford (where the novelist himself was born in 1955)

across the Atlantic to America. Yet while the narrative of departure may be familiar in Irish history, today, the island has become a point of arrival. I wonder if the widespread resistance to immigration in Ireland seems a little hypocritical, in a country where almost everyone knows someone who has moved abroad.

"If a Chinese kid is born in Ireland they are not automatically granted Irish citizenship, and that is wrong, simply wrong," he responds, explaining that nobody will let him talk about the subject in the Irish press because, well, it doesn't appear to have anything to do with the economy.

"Multicultural Britain was not done by politicians or journalists. It was done by Salman Rushdie, Monica Ali, and Zadie Smith."

"It takes a long time for a country to get used to the idea that outsiders nourish a place. It was very disappointing to realise that Ireland couldn't do this. I think it takes a lot of leadership, at every level, to tell people why you cannot do this to others, because you end up doing it to yourselves, because of course they will be Irish."

"People think because there's such a history of bad British landlords that an Irish landlord should be really nice. I'll tell you now, there's nothing worse than an Irish landlord, nothing meaner. Never mind an immigration official."

Tóibín's new book is a collection of nine short stories entitled *The Empty Family*. "There's a story called 'The Street,' which attempts to dramatise the stuff we've been talking about. It's about the Pakistani community in Barcelona." A fluent Spanish and Catalan speaker who spends a portion of his year in Spain, Tóibín has taken an interest in the region ever since his first novel, *The South* (1992), in which an Irish woman moves to Barcelona and falls in love with a local painter.

"Catalan nationalism is so self-consuming and interested in itself, they didn't realise that vast numbers of Pakistanis had arrived and recreated a dead part of the city, making it clean, safe and wonderful. They add so much life. I call them New Catalans in the book, and people have accosted me, saying, 'Surely you can't be serious?' But I am."

Saying what others won't is a striking aspect of Tóibín's writing. *The Blackwater Lightship* (1999) is the story of a gay man suffering from AIDS who must reveal both his sexuality and his illness to his mother and grandmother. A gay man himself, Tóibín had to realise the impact this story was likely to have. "I published that book while my mother was still alive, so, you can imagine! There were things in the book that had never been said, and all of a sudden the whole town could read them."

I explained that the idea of my own family, also from Ireland, reading a sex scene I'd written, was nothing short of horrifying. Yet he was surprisingly optimistic about the need to write these things down. "The danger is in censoring yourself, because if you stop writing, you stop. It was like I was locked in a space, and the

book became a way of trying to chisel out an opening for myself, I wasn't just writing a novel, I was trying to breathe. It became a raid on the unsayable. But it's funny how people handle things, you'd be surprised."

"I wasn't just writing a novel, I was trying to breathe."

I ask if writing women's lives has become the default perspective in his writing. "Not really, I've written six novels and it's split pretty much evenly between men and women, though having said that, I now have real trouble writing straight men. I can't see them, feel them or get them into my system. It's a big problem."

After tonight's stopover in Cambridge, lecturing on English poets in Ireland during the sixteenth century, I ask, what's next? "I'm lecturing on Austen in December, and after Christmas I'll go back to Princeton to teach. Then in June, July and August I'll work hard on fiction in Spain..." He pauses – probably aware of the fact I'm thinking, 'and I've got a bloody dissertation to write sitting in my cold north Cambridge pit' – adding, "there's no perfect life y'know. I often think I should be living in Ireland all the time working on novels, but then I get a letter from somewhere like this asking me to come and speak and I think 'Fuck it, there's something on my mind, it's a distraction but I'm going to do it.' And that's the way it goes, there's no perfect way to live."

Tóibín's new book The Empty Family is published by Viking and is out now.

Parental Advisory

As a new volume of *The World According To Vice* is published, **Zeljka Marosevic** and **Eliot D'Silva** explain what makes the magazine such a divisive phenomenon

Vice: "Still taking the risk"



"Don't forget the nineties," I heard Stephen Malkmus, lead guitarist

of reformed indie rock heroes Pavement, say to the Brixton Academy this May before launching into a slew of wounded and sarcastic old songs. Slung between a heartfelt plea and a bratty aside, his words tap into the kind of nostalgia that *Vice* magazine cultivates with such glee, going beyond the average remember-that-cartoon quality that infantilises a reader into submission.

The mainstream media has long since discovered that there are topics – school days, nudity, and downright embarrassment – that it doesn't really have to cover, like an adolescent who suddenly realises he no longer has to choke down his veggies. But over recent years, as its output has begun to encompass video, music and fiction, *Vice* has continued to supply its readers with their deliciously teenage roughage.

Yet it's always important to provide youth culture with an element of traction in the real world and, particularly in its use and promotion of photography, *Vice* meets this challenge head on. Perhaps the biggest complaint about the magazine's fan-base (captured neatly in YouTube sensation 'Being a Dickhead's Cool') is how their hip lives are so apparently performances. But by putting these unknown kids before the lenses of professional snappers Ryan McGinley and Tim Barber, some shocking and vital new art has been fostered. McGinley's images freeze road-tripping nudes in hazy frames that, like the majority of *Vice*'s loosely edited pages, wear their imperfections more like biographical data than signs of sloppiness.

We've all heard Bob Dylan's famous lines: "If my thought dreams could be seen / They'd probably put my head in a guillotine." Dylan might understand the spirit of a publication like *Vice*, a great example of having those dreams but still taking the risk. **ED**



Vice: "Nothing more than a pose"



Cool is a slippery term, usually defined most precisely by what it isn't rather

than what it is. Luckily, *Vice* magazine has developed a system of signs so clear that anyone looking to crack the cool code would only have to flick through its pages to be educated once and for all. Black and white or grainy Polaroid-esque photographs, articles on casual Class A drug use and mildly lesbian fashion shoots all flash before your eyes in one pure moment of understanding: so this is what you've been missing out on.

In credit to Andy Capper, he's not the one making these assertions. I admire his statement, "When I think of 'cool', I think of a cat wearing shades." He explodes the term that limits our response to a magazine which contributes to a recording of youth culture. Yet in the process of recording, *Vice* seeks to create a lifestyle prototype. I'm reminded of a

house party I attended after the first episode of *Skins* aired. As things, as they do, got hairy and lairy, a stranger walked past me, nodded at one site of carnage and muttered approvingly, "Skins". My new friend believed that as a drunken collective we had reached the apex of what teen life could be, and it had been brought to us direct from Channel 4.

I groaned for many reasons but mostly because teenage life in all its excess and disappointments remains almost ethereal, making attempts to record it ineffective. When you try to write about it or put a lens in front of it, what you're photographing or describing moves from spontaneous, elusive action to nothing more than a pose. Even if you like wearing American Apparel and taking Polaroid photos, seeing someone doing this in a magazine makes it appear contrived and ridiculous. *Vice* reduces youth culture into such homogeneity and then hands it back as a model of how to live, a pale and limp parody of what adolescent experience really is. **zm**

Varsity interrogates *Vice* UK editor **Andy Capper** about youth culture, the gritty underbelly, nakedness, and the essence of cool.

Why a book? Why now?

This is the second 'greatest hits' book we've published. This new one reflects the last six years and concentrates on the English-generated content.

Surely all this talk of 'cool' must get irritating? Is *Vice* ever trying to be cool?

The word "cool" is so over-used these days that I don't really know what it means any more. It used to mean things like Miles Davis doing heroin but now it can be applied to social networking sites and chewing gum. It's a redundant term I think.

"When I think of 'cool' I think of a cat wearing shades."

***Vice* also runs club nights; do you think *Vice* is only recording youth culture or is it initiating a certain type of youth experience?**

As a 'media entity' we worked out very quickly that if you restricted yourself to only print magazines then you'd have a hard time surviving. So we branched out into a bar, tours, festivals, books, films and a record label.

The motivations behind these differ but they're bound together by the glue of us being hyper-active people who want to achieve as many things as possible.

Do you think that youth culture is always about kicking against something?

There's so many different kinds of youth culture these days that it's impossible to say. Are the people who queue up outside Justin Bieber's hotel room kicking against something? How about the Twitter and Facebook addicts who spend all their time telling you what they had for breakfast? Those kinds of 'youth culture' are more conservative and establishment-ass-kissing than going to church on Sunday. Personally I like to kick against things as much as possible because I'm an objectionable grumpy old fuck.

A lot of your cultural reference points – I'm thinking of skateboarding specifically – could be seen as throwbacks to the 1990s. Do you think that culture is still alive in the twenty first century?

I skated until I was about 22. A kid called Geoff Rowley started hanging out with the gang and after skating with him for a year I just thought, "there's no point in me even

trying any more." What I gained from skating and punk rock was a good set

"I would have loved to have studied at Cambridge but at that time of my life I was more interested in punk rock, skateboarding and sniffing glue"

of aesthetics and DIY values. *Vice* was formed by people with those self-same aesthetics and values.

Your investigations often look at the gritty underbelly of societies: is that because you feel no one else is recording these things?

I think everybody should take an interest in the gritty underbelly because it's such a large part of the society we live in. To ignore them is to ignore life itself, but yes, often the gritty underbellies are too dangerous for the mainstream media to want to dig into.

A lot of *Vice* photography relates to a very specific kind of existence. Does someone need to get themselves a cool life before they can start taking good photographs?

They need to get an interesting life with boundless enthusiasm for discovering new things. Cool doesn't really come into it. When I think of 'cool' I think of a cat wearing shades.

The inside of the magazine is an intoxicating cocktail of drugs, nakedness and the absurd; are the offices as organised and corporate as other magazines?

You could name almost every act of deprivation known to man and I could tell you it happened at the old offices in Leonard Street. These days we've moved to a much nicer, less parasite-ridden office across the road and, as far as I know, nothing awful has happened there yet.

What are your thoughts and preconceptions about an institution like The University of Cambridge?

I would have loved to have studied somewhere like Cambridge but at that time of my life I was much more interested in punk rock, skateboarding and sniffing glue in the art room cupboard.

Food and Drink



LETTICE FRANKLIN

“Cambridge-based foodie anecdotes from Uncle John: In the 1950s, all the fast set went to Indian restaurants every night, and got so over-excited by the hot curry they would stand on their heads on the tables. Favourite misspelt item on the menu – Mixed Girls (get it?) How they laughed! He explains that all they ever thought about was puns and girls.”

Among my regular bulletins from the Romance Society, hourly Pizza Express offers, and gloom-inducing exam registration requests, this email from my mum was a gleam of joy. After chuckling for an hour or two at her hilarious use of phrases like “the fast set” and “How they laughed!” (and on a really good day, “Good wheeze” – an expression I think even the Famous Five would taken the piss out of) I turned my attention from the form to the content. Uncle John is my eternally and extraordinarily dashing great uncle, who is, I suppose, a bit of a lad.

I followed in Uncle John’s footsteps and yesterday, for the first time in my nonetheless exciting and fulfilling Cambridge career went to the Mahal. OH. MY. GOD. My view of the Universe has shifted dramatically. Maybe food was made to be thrown (around or up). Maybe Jackson Pollock invented his trademark splatter-style in order to prompt rip-offs that can be gloriously added to by flying korma missiles. My trip was terrifying but thrilling; I now understand Uncle John’s over-excitement, although I reckon this may not have been caused entirely by spice. Cough, wink, B.Y.O.B. wink, cough.

For culinary rather than (sort of) cultural excitement, cook your own curry. A lentil and sweet potato curry is warming, cheap and delicious. I added a whole fresh chilli to mine, just to embrace my new Mahal-prompted spontaneous lifestyle. I know. Seriously, I should control myself, I’ll be in prison before you know it.

Cook up, invite round the fast set and let the food-throwing and head stands commence. Serves 4 mixed girls or boys.

Ingredients: 2 tbsp oil; 1 red onion; a handful of chopped coriander; 1 sweet potato, peeled and cut into chunks; 1 piece of fresh ginger peeled and chopped; Sainsbury’s red curry paste, 1 ½ cups red lentils

1. Boil 3 ½ cups of water. 2. Warm oil in large saucepan. Add the onion and coriander and sauté until the onion softens. 3. Add the sweet potato, ginger and curry paste and sauté for about a minute. 4. Add the boiling water and lentils and cover and simmer for about 20 minutes. 5. Season with salt and a few whole coriander leaves.

My degree: Law

I’ll never get a job. Not after last night. Merrill Lynch took me out for dinner at Jamie’s (my roommate; he’s livid) and I did not impress. My first mistake was dress code. Hallowe’en or not, apparently my dead, run-over dog costume is “ill-considered and wildly offensive”. I borrowed a couple of ties and made do, but I remained uncomfortable – the suit was scaled 1:6, so it weighed a fucking tonne. My second mistake was misjudging the handshake etiquette. I wanted them to see me as an assertive, employable type, so I went straight in with a swinging neck punch. It was, to be fair, a solid hit, but conversation was awkward and stilted until they got up again. Stewart (the shorter one, but height doesn’t matter for the story) didn’t recover properly and his groaning for an ambulance was a real distraction during soup.

I got a few pens from them though. Good ones too: double click and it tells you how many hours until the next careers seminar. Two hours until one with Herbal Essences; it will be a bore, as I’ve already been for two years in a row, but careers is literally the most important thing when you’re a young, free student, so I’ll be there.

Ted got an internship at Dulux, the lucky shit. He gets to work for them every day of summer (weekdays included) and at the end they



KATE JONES

promise to read his CV for spelling errors. And I’m left with an Easter placement at the Mill Lane corner shop which is a nightmare because I have to pay them an inconvenient US\$40 a day for the experience, and the shop burnt down years ago so I’m getting very little insight indeed.

It’s not fair. I go to every lecture (today’s on the prickly issue of contract printing margins) and finish every essay on time (this week: ‘Law: the best Tekken character?’), but because Osborne has replaced every job with a yacht I’m screwed out there. Looks like I’m going to have to be a lawyer.

As told to Ben Ashenden.

LECTURE NOTES: TRAGEDY (Week 4)



What is Tragedy? Dffclt concept. Def. not Comedy. Orig. from Greek, ‘Tragedos’ (lit. Sad play with bad death). Debate as to whether Greeks ever existed. Most critics believe yes. Debate as to existence of debate. Lecturer probably Scottish, hard to tell. T.S. Eliot on Aeschylus: ‘more sugar in tea needed’ (widely considered irrelevant). When Sophocles: ancient period [pre J.C.] Seneca: a Roman (Italian Greek), died in a bath (ironic: having not died in one since or before). Tragic? Compare all to Batman in exam. Fatal flaws.



The Varsitorialist

Mark Crawford, 3rd-year Historian, St Catharine’s “Everything I am I owe to Ikenna Obiekwe. He should be standing here, not me.”

IF YOU’D LIKE TO BE PHOTOGRAPHED BY THE VARSITORIALIST, EMAIL MAGAZINE@VARSITY.CO.UK

Quoted Unquote

Adam Lawrence chooses his top five historical/hysterical words from the ‘wise’



“Science is important” – STEPHEN HAWKING



“The funny thing is we actually filmed it on one of Saturn’s moons” – NEIL ARMSTRONG



“Oh so it’s all MY fault, is it?” – ADOLF HITLER



“Relax, darling, I promise it won’t rain!” – JOHN F. KENNEDY



“The worst is when they take out their dentures” – A WERTHER’S ORIGINAL

Varsity Listings

Pick of the Week



The Chapel Sessions: Session Twelve

JESUS COLLEGE CHAPEL, TUESDAY 9TH NOVEMBER, 22.00

The hugely popular Chapel Sessions return with Strauss's elegiac masterpiece, *Metamorphosen*. Some of the University's finest players will be playing in the candlelit chapel, but be prepared to sit on the floor – there is no standing on ceremony here.



Fired Up

ADC LATESHOW, 23.00, WED 10TH - SATURDAY 13TH NOVEMBER (£4-£6)

The winner of this year's Marlowe/RSC 'The Other Prize', this new play from Annabel Banks invites you to a party with some disturbing guests. Asking difficult questions about friendship, trust and security, why not revel in those 'fifth week blues'?

Film



Another Year: Palme D'Ordinary?

Another Year

ARTS PICTUREHOUSE, (DAILY) 15.10, 18.00, 20.50 (EXCEPT THURS)

Mike Leigh's new film follows an everyday couple through inconsequential events, family tragedy and beautifully observed conversation. Narrowly missing out on the Palme d'Or at Cannes this year, this promises to be another classic from the veteran British director.

Saturday 6th November

For the Love of Film: *Pickpocket*

HOWARD THEATRE, DOWNING COLLEGE, 21.00, £4

A chance to catch Robert Bresson's 1959 film *Pickpocket* in the comfort of Downing's Howard Theatre. Petty crime, romance and fabulously kitsch red leather seats combine for an evening of cinematic thrills.

Sunday 7th November

Christ's Films: *The Darjeeling Limited*

CHRIST'S COLLEGE, 19.30, 22.00, £3

Wes Anderson's hipster classic follows three estranged brothers as they travel across India and attempt to piece their relationship back together. It's beautiful, funny, and at only three quid, unmissable.

Metropolis

ARTS PICTUREHOUSE, SUNDAY 7TH NOVEMBER 15.30 (THURSDAY 11TH NOVEMBER, 16.00)

Fritz Lang's 1927 masterpiece gets an airing. This 2007 re-edit includes more than half an hour of previously lost footage and a re-mastered soundtrack, but promises to be every bit as eerie as the original.



Music & Nightlife

Saturday, 6th November

Mass in B minor

JESUS COLLEGE CHAPEL, 20.00 (£8/£5/£3)

The Cambridge Cantata Consort perform Bach's masterpiece, directed by Alexander Shannon

Kissy Sell Out/Boomslang

J1, THE JUNCTION, 22.00-04.00 (£10)

The Radio 1 DJ headlines a night of heavy basslines and dirty electro at The Junction.

Monday 8th November

The Movement Circus Party

THE PLACE, 22.00-04.00 (£5/£6)



DJs Jonathan Ulysses and Beat Thiefs preside over an evening of circus-themed merriment and up-tempo house.

Tuesday 9th November

CUMS Lunchtime Concert

WEST ROAD CONCERT HALL, 13.10 (£3)

CUCO Wind Quintet play Poulenc's Sextet for Wind Quintet and Piano.

The Chapel Sessions: Session Twelve

JESUS COLLEGE CHAPEL, TUESDAY 9TH NOVEMBER, 22.00

See Pick of the Week.

Pick of the week Music

Wednesday 10th November

Musicircus

KETTLE'S YARD, 20.00-22.00 (FREE)

A night of randomised performed music, inspired by John Cage's *Musicircus*, with all participants playing according to a randomly allotted time chart and the audience free to wander around.

Thursday 11th November

Yann Tiersen

J1, THE JUNCTION, 19.00 (£15)

Composer of the instantly recognisable soundtrack to *Amelie*, Tiersen arrives in Cambridge having supposedly 'gone pop', so expect more of a gig than a piano recital.

Theatre

Betrayal

CORPUS PLAYROOM, 21.15, TUES 9TH - SAT 13TH NOVEMBER (£5/£6)

Another week, another classic from Harold Pinter at the Corpus Playroom. Inspired by the playwright's own affair (with Joan Bakewell, no less), this is a characteristically economical study in frailty, deception and, you guessed it, betrayal.

Ava Adore

PEMBROKE NEW CELLARS, 19.45, TUES 9TH - SAT 13TH NOVEMBER

Germany, 12th November 1938.

Ava Adore has gone. Goering is writing to Goebbels and Helga, apparently, is drunk. Intriguing new writing from Niall Wilson.



Bouncers – The Remix

CORPUS PLAYROOM, 19.00, TUES 9TH - SAT 13TH NOVEMBER

Saturday night, as seen through the eyes of the bouncers who preside over it. A mixture of sardonic observation, moral commentary, and scatological humour, expect lads and ladettes galore, performed by a talented all-male cast.

Fired Up

ADC LATESHOW, 23.00, WED 10TH - SATURDAY 13TH NOVEMBER (£4/£5/£6)

See Pick of the Week.

Pick of the week Theatre

RENT

ADC MAINSHOW, 19.45, TUES 9TH - SATURDAY 13TH NOVEMBER



Rent: Oh So Boho

Jonathan Larson's rock opera follows eight friends living in New York's bohemian Lower East Side, struggling to survive under the shadows of poverty and AIDS. Apparently it's based on *La Bohème*, so do try and forget about that song from *Team America*.

Arts

Specialist Art Talks

The Shahnameh and Modern Iran

FACULTY OF CLASSICS, WED 10TH NOVEMBER, 17.00 (FREE)

Organised in association with the Fitzwilliam's ongoing exhibition, Professor Ali Ansari considers the continued significance of this ancient and beautiful text.



Ongoing exhibitions

Salvator Rosa: Bandits, Wilderness and Magic

DULWICH PICTURE GALLERY, UNTIL 28TH NOVEMBER



See the works of the man who put these words in one of his paintings:

"conception is sinful; birth a punishment; life, hard labour; death, inevitable." Sublime, morose, terrifying and tragic, meet the dark horse of 17th-century Baroque Italy at the lovely Dulwich Picture Gallery.

Pick of the week Arts

Treasures from Budapest

ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS, UNTIL 12TH DECEMBER (£8)

"Yah, I interailed there over the summer actually, but I was just like way too tired to go and look at any art." Catch up on what you missed at the Royal Academy.

Talks & Events

Saturday 6th November

Open Studio

THE SHOP, JESUS LANE, 14.00-17.00 (FREE TO MEMBERS/£5 TO JOIN)

With art materials provided and a professional artist on hand to answer any questions, it's the perfect opportunity to create your own original work. Regular life-drawing classes also continue. See www.theshopjesuslane.co.uk for more details.

Comedy Debate

CAMBRIDGE UNION, 19.30

Serious debate gets a week off, but expect rhetorical flourishes and very silly argument as Cambridge's Footlights take on the Oxford Revue in this highly anticipated event.

Pick of the week Events

Monday 8th November

Forum – Revisiting the Thatcherite Revolution

CAMBRIDGE UNION, 19.30 (£2/FREE FOR UNION & CLIO MEMBERS)

Nigel Lawson speaks alongside Will Hutton, former editor of *The Observer*, and Professor Richard Vinen, with Lord Wilson in the Chair. Proof that, for students at least, this argument will never grow old.



She's back. Again.

Wednesday 10th November

Tony Hayward

CAMBRIDGE UNION, 19.30 (FREE TO MEMBERS)

The recent chairman of BP, Dr Hayward will give a talk on 'Lessons from the Gulf of Mexico Accident.'

Thursday 11th November

Trinity College Literary Society Reading: Philip Gross

THE OLD COMBINATION ROOM, TRINITY COLLEGE, 20.00 (£2/FREE FOR MEMBERS OF TRINITY)

The poet, novelist and recent winner of the T.S. Eliot prize reads a selection of his work.

Album Reviews

The Fool
WARPAINT
★★★★★



Warpaint, an all-female desert rock band, lead the listener down desolate Californian highways with this debut album. Reminiscent of 90s alternative music, the album dreamily twists and turns, driven by Lindberg's bass lines, intricate drum patterns, and Kokal's drifting, ghostly vocals. 'Undertow' adds an element of grunge with its singsong chorus devoid of emotion, followed by 'Composure', full of erratic time signatures and watery bass. In 'Baby', the band looks to their acoustic country roots, at the expense of more 'edgy' sounds. This is recaptured in moody track 'Majesty', influenced by the likes of Nirvana and Sonic Youth. Ending abruptly, 'The Fool' leaves the listener wanting more. It's taken six years for Warpaint to release an album, but by next year, they will be one of the most talked about bands.

JENNA CORDEROY

Nothing
N'ERD
★★★★★



Sexy albums are rare. Most attempts are either too crude, i.e. Nickelback's latest album, which was charged with sexual assault, or too smooth: Trey Songz's boring, lame and measured *Passion, Pain and Pleasure*. Back in 2002, N*E*R*D threatened to bring sexy back with the filthy, fantastic 'Lapdance' but couldn't quite construct the perfect player's album. *Nothing* is the album that steps up and takes your girl. If the rather basic lyrics of lead single 'Hot n Fun' play second fiddle to a pulsating rhythm, standout track 'Hypnotize You' has co-producers Daft Punk bowing to some trademark Pharrellian whisper singing and falsetto, before a return to the perfect percussion of 'Maybe' has everyone begging to be Pharrell groupies. The overall result is an aphrodisiac masterpiece that reminds us that the Neptunes are divine. **SAM GOULD**

Correction

Issue 727 featured a review of the Endellion String Quartet by Katya Herman. The rating should have been five stars.

Singing Bones

Elly Brindle on *Bonesong/Frankenstein!!*, Carmen Elektra's haunting opera evening in the Museum of Zoology



Students gather in the Museum of Zoology before the performance



ELLY BRINDLE

Sitting beneath the Museum of Zoology's pygmy right whale last Friday, I was reminded just how spoilt we are in Cambridge. Not only are we blessed with well-stocked libraries and the biggest Wetherspoon's in the UK, but where else, save perhaps the trendiest of Shoreditch venues, could you listen to cutting-edge 'underground' opera from under a canopy formed by one of the world's most obscure mammals?

The team behind Carmen Elektra are definitely onto something. This Halloween-themed treat in the caverns of the New Museums Site bore witness to the project's growth since its more humble beginnings, only last term, in Clare Cellars. It would seem that the Carmen Elektrolytes' promise that opera can be short, fat-lady-less and actually pretty good hasn't fallen on deaf ears. Barely a third of the queue of hopefuls that snaked through the car park all the way to Fitzbillies were lucky enough to get in.

What did the others miss? Kate Whitley and Joe Snape's *Bonesong*, a new opera commissioned especially for the event, was a promising opener with accomplished performances from both singers and instrumentalists. Jo Songi gave us the simpering, helpless sister with the vocal agility and dramatic skill to which we have become accustomed in her performances, while Josephine Stephenson was the very picture and sound of a little boy (despite being a girl).

Paradoxically, the decision to use microphones, usually reserved for musical theatre, made it difficult to follow the characters' words at times. Stephenson nonetheless managed to puncture every syllable through Snape's curdling electronica, and Whitley's cacophony of blood-lusting notes, even when lying recumbent at the hands of Johnny Langridge's murderous vulture. The phantom of the opera, Langridge's "ugly old scavenger bird", was acted with impressive conviction and sung with flawless command.

There is certainly room for expansion and revision in



Jo Songi in *Bonesong* displays "vocal agility and dramatic skill"

Bonesong. We should have seen and heard more of Langridge and the other fine singers. At times I felt that I had lost track of the supposed plot, and the somewhat antiquated feel to Conrad Steel's libretto may have restricted the development of a complete sense of musical lyricism.

***Bonesong* shows real promise. I just wish there had been more.**

Yet with highlights like the musically impressive death of the brother, in which Snape's electronic interpolations and Whitley's compositional skill interact in the name of destruction, *Bonesong* shows real promise. I just wish there had been more.

On the other hand, I wish there had been rather less of H.K. Gruber's *Frankenstein!!* While the

first few minutes of this grotesque "pandemonium" were undeniably amusing as Thom Andrewes, our chansonnier for the evening, unraveled his protagonist's complicated psyche, the promised radicalism of a new orgiastic staging tired quickly.

Nonetheless, Andrewes imparted the libretto's nonsensical lyrics ("flying circus bats and roasted goats") impressively through a no-frills baritone. The orchestra, who can't have had so much fun in a long time, must be commended also. Under Will Gardner's baton, they sang and played tin whistles and kazooes in addition to their original instruments, and were probably the best thing about this staging of *Frankenstein!!*.

The Elektrolytes have created something that is getting more students seeing and hearing opera. As the event grows and the team learns from experience, Carmen Elektra has the potential to be huge. Let's hope that no Soho-ites sign them up before Cambridge has heard more from them.

AN EXTENDED REVIEW AND MORE PHOTOGRAPHS CAN BE FOUND ONLINE

PERFORMANCE

Cambridge's Got Talent

Cambridge Union

★★★★★

Aware of the growing success of university-born groups like Oxford's Out of the Blue, and firmly indoctrinated by the old adage that 'anything they can do, we can do better' (I think that one's Plato...), my expectations for CU-TVs Cambridge's Got Talent were high. In retrospect, being high might actually have eased the pain of shattered illusions, and lent a comical tone to a night that was otherwise disheartening, distressing, and many other 'dis-' words that I'm too disillusioned to display. In short, I was not impressed.

But before you presume that the event was entirely devoid of talent,

let me state unreservedly that the night's overall winners were excellent. The EllaFunks performed an original piece by pianist Dom that showcased both the resounding vocals of lead singer (the eponymous Ella), and the undeniable

A badly executed spin-off of the Axis of Awesome chord sequence trick doesn't constitute praiseworthy talent

musical talents of her ensemble. Slick and entertaining – two thumbs up. They were followed by Theo Zhang with a beautifully emotional, acoustic rendition of jazz standard 'Autumn Leaves'. Completely unassuming, the night's prizewinner later informed me that their £250 would be going to a

legal aid charity, because he "doesn't perform for the money". Genuinely talented, and talented at being genuine. I'm a little bit smitten.

It was downhill from here. The Free Tenors, a trio of operatic comedians, at least paired their takes on Snoop Dogg and Dean Martin with decent musical ability. The same cannot be said of lads-on-tour singing troupe Porchestra: yes, they may be fun, wear silly costumes and do silly dances, but a badly executed spin-off of the Axis of Awesome chord sequence trick doesn't constitute praiseworthy talent. The Irish dancers were incredibly skilled at Irish dancing, though I remain unconvinced by their relevance in a competition to scout acts for May Balls. The true horror of the evening, however, was final act Markos Valsamis and his erratic digestive gyrations. Having decided "four days ago" that he fancied belly dancing, he subjected



The Free Tenors show "decent musical ability"

us to three minutes of stomach contortionism that felt like a bloated eternity. Then won a place at John's May Ball.

In conclusion, this event was deceptive. Cambridge is undoubtedly saturated with genuine, enviable talent, but I'm convinced this was not an accurate sample. And as for the John's 500th Anniversary Ball, one might question whether the rumoured £6 million budget is being put to good use. Poor St John, he's been through quite enough, don't crucify his College as well. **JENNIE KING**

DANCE

Ravel: La Valse

Invitus Invitam / Winter Dreams / Theme and Variations

Royal Opera House

★★★★★

Ravel's *La Valse* begins with just a suggestion of disintegration and ends with a fatal, ecstatic collapse. The waltz pulses throughout, the music gliding, slipping, at times languid, at others vigorous. Frederick Ashton's choreography was pleasantly humorous, and often very beautiful, with the soft shades of the women's costumes twirling like faded petals.

But the choreography, and Barry Wordsworth's conducting, did not attempt to capture the shattering breakdown in the music; the waltz simply carried blithely on throughout the crashing tympani and brass. Perhaps it was meant to evoke the Austro-Hungarian empire, in which the ballet was set, doomed to failure but blind to their collapse, which was rather effectively suggested as the curtain started to fall even before the piece had ended and the dance had stopped.

As sparse as the two words, though rich in the psychology between them, the highly nuanced pas de deux of Kim Brandstrup's *Invitus Invitam* was powerful and beautifully achieved. The title is taken from Suetonius and the 'plot' derived from Racine's *Berenice*. The beauty of the dancing was sadly confused and overshadowed by projections of classical architectural elements,

further confounded by the projection of a sort-of romanticized medieval town house. Perhaps we were meant to think of the classical world of Suetonius; but then somehow rustic chivalry doesn't work with Racine. The cumulative effect was a mess of post-modernist, 'classical' revival of a chivalric age. Confused? I was.

The set concluded with Kenneth Macmillan's version of Chekhov's *Three Sisters*, entitled *Winter Dreams*, and *Theme and Variations*, George Balanchine's homage to the palmy days of St.

The waltz pulses throughout, the music gliding, slipping, at times languid, at others vigorous

Petersberg's ballets in the time of the Tsars. MacMillan's work was episodic but did capture at times the essence of Chekhov's writing, with its intricate family feuds in a disintegrating bourgeois atmosphere, made clear by a richly-furnished dining room glowing mysteriously behind gauze throughout the piece.

Balanchine's glitzy, lightly frivolous work was kept in check by extraordinary technical feats which went on almost ad nauseam. Sergei Polunin's double tour en l'air followed by a pirouette was startling, though the piece became repetitive and sickly, as if I had been fed macaroons for an hour.

But then that is what the Royal Opera House does well.

YATES NORTON

CLASSICAL

Bax, Walton, Rachmaninov

Conducted by M. Yates

West Road Concert Hall

★★★★★

If you ever have the misfortune of listening to Classic FM for more than a few hours, you will soon get to know Sergei Rachmaninov. Whilst his *Symphony No. 2* is not quite as popular as his *Second Piano Concerto*, which is certain to come up at least once an hour, it is one part of the classical canon that everyone knows. For concert organizers, this isn't a bad thing: putting popular Sergei on the programme gives you the opportunity to play more esoteric items later.

The evening began with a world premiere of Bax's *Symphonic Serenade*. To begin with, I was impressed that a composer who has been dead for nearly 60 years could still be writing. However, according to the informative programme notes, the piece was re-discovered and completed recently by Bax's biographer. This proves that some pieces should remain firmly undiscovered. We were treated to a poor pastiche of Elgarian themes, bound together with only the thinnest thread. A series of disconnected

tunes built up to an underwhelming conclusion that made the audience look to their watches. The wonderful CUMS 1 laboured with Martin Yates to make something out of nothing, but could never quite make it sound interesting.

The concert picked up when Stanley-Smith showed his promise on the cello. Delivering a performance of Walton's *Cello Concerto* with pace, energy and a superb technique, it was clear that he was determined to bring out the best of a piece that can drag when played

The evening began with a world premiere of Bax's Serenade

poorly. The interaction between soloist and orchestra was superb and the audience rightly appreciated it.

And then there was Rachmaninov. With such a popular work, everyone has a clear idea of exactly how it should be performed. Martin Yates coaxed a passionate and powerful performance from the orchestra, and delivered a symphony that moved with purpose towards a thrilling conclusion. Not everyone will have enjoyed it, but I would have preferred it no other way.

SIMON JOHNSON

FILM

UK Premiere: The Promise: the making of Darkness at the Edge of Town

BFI Southside

★★★★★

When Bruce Springsteen's in town, it's big news. Last Friday night, London's South Bank was brought to a near stand-still as word quickly spread that he had pitched up unannounced for the British premiere of new documentary film *The Promise*. Commuters enjoying the Waterloo sunset by the Thames were whipped into a frenzy at the thought of seeing true rock'n'roll royalty. Seeing the film alone was enough for a huge Springsteen fan but to stand a couple of metres away from him, and then hear that he would be doing a Q&A directly after the screening, took the evening from memorable to something truly special.

The Promise provides a fascinating behind-the-scenes insight into the making of the classic *Darkness on the Edge of Town* album. Filmed by a budding film-maker friend, who Springsteen later said was "easy to ignore", it is striking in its candour and honesty; any modern-day self-consciousness and pretence are totally absent. The film charts his struggle to find meaning amidst the beginnings of superstardom, brought by the enormous success of 1975 album *Born To Run*, and a messy legal dispute with former manager Mike Appel. 70 songs in total were

recorded for *Darkness*, of which ten made the cut. The obsessive genius of Springsteen clearly caused tensions amongst his faithful companions, who struggled to understand why he discarded outstanding songs such as 'Because The Night', which would later become a massive hit single for Patti Smith.

"We wanted to make something that was honest," Bruce said afterwards. "We'd smell something in the air, and we wouldn't stop until we had a piece of whatever that was, some distillation of the time." The reissue comes at a time when unemployment in Springsteen's native New Jersey has peaked twice in the last 40 years (1977-2001) and the lyrics feel more potent and relevant today than ever. Thanking us for our attendance, Springsteen described *Darkness* as "the genesis of a life-long conversation I've been having with you". A constantly engaging presence, we are more than happy to hear what he has to say. "They don't make 'em like him anymore," one man ruefully smiled as we walked out. TOM CURRAN

THE PROMISE: DARKNESS ON THE EDGE OF TOWN IS OUT ON NOVEMBER 16TH



LITERATURE

The Grand Design

Stephen Hawking

★★★★★

This book is both an eloquent exposition of modern physics and a piece of desperate, atheist propaganda.

Hawking has an enviable talent for making the frontiers of modern science accessible to the non-scientist. And yet, he still spends much of his time jumping on Richard Dawkins' radically atheist bandwagon.

The Grand Design has hit the headlines because it is an admission by one of the world's most respected scientists that he has changed his mind. In *A Brief History of Time* Hawking said, "if we discover a complete theory... then we should know the mind of God." But throughout his latest book, he

forces science and religion into conflict, in effect encouraging the devoutly religious to reject good science. This, surely, is a mistake.

Philosophers, too, are likely to be

incensed. "Philosophy is dead," he asserts on page one, before quoting liberally from Leibniz, Berkeley and Hume. In fact, much of the first half of the book deals with science's birth as a branch of philosophy.

He goes on to describe quantum mechanics, Einstein's theory of general relativity, and the Big Bang. These are weighty topics and Hawking introduces them

"Philosophy is dead," he asserts on one page

brilliantly. But then he proceeds to extrapolate physics into metaphysics.

A recurring theme is the desire among physicists to find a unifying 'theory of everything'. The most recent attempt at this is M-theory, which predicts a nearly infinite number of universes. Hawking argues that this makes the apparent 'fine-tuning' of our universe irrelevant, removing the need for a God. Yet, as Hawking himself admits, "why M-theory?" A set of mathematical equations is just as much of a stopgap as God.

The most vocal contributors to this particular debate have always been the extremists. Hawking is now amongst them. Good science needs to be communicated much more carefully than this if it is to be well-received. TIM MIDDLETON

Overlooked

When you think A-list, you think blockbuster. You hear John Travolta, you think *Pulp Fiction*, you hear Brad Pitt, you think *Fight Club*. Obviously these outstanding performances should not be overlooked – yet I feel as an avid back-catalogue stalker it is my responsibility to bring to light some of our favourite actors' lesser-known, yet equally exceptional feats.

5 Daniel Craig – Munich (2005)

★★★★★
The powerful true story of the aftermath of the Black September. Whilst Craig is overshadowed by Eric Bana, his performance is equally notable: in my opinion this is his best performance to date.

4 Penelope Cruz – Live Flesh (1997)

★★★★★
Cruz's cameo in this Spanish mystery/romance/thriller is sublime. Directed by Almodóvar, this film truly captures the actress's brilliant abilities to effuse real human emotion and passion.



3 Joseph Gordon-Levitt – Mysterious Skin (2004)

★★★★★
Director Greg Araki combines themes of alien abduction, male prostitution and paedophilia in this exceptionally provocative cult classic. Gordon-Levitt, more widely known for *500 Days of Summer* and *Inception*, is unsurpassable – absolute gold.



2 Ed Norton – 25th Hour (2002)

★★★★★
As a self-confessed Ed Norton groupie, this film remains top of my Norton List. Following the final hours of a New York drug dealer anticipating a prison sentence, it is surprisingly poignant, considering the gritty subject matter.



1 Robert De Niro – Sleepers (1996)

★★★★★
A brutal exploration of the effects of child abuse in a New York detention centre. Leads Billy Crudup and Brad Pitt are outstanding, but De Niro gives an incredibly powerful performance in a supporting role which steals the film. ALICE BOLLAND

View from the Groundlings



EDWARD HERRING

This week varsity@theatre.co.uk became swamped under a weight of complaint-emails, scribed by a squadron of embittered readers who have started to itch with annoyance and rage at the recent content of this column. I quote my favourites:

“Dear Mr Herring,
I have noticed that you have begun writing about your own eccentric little existence and crudely tying whatever unorthodox encounter you might have had to next week’s theatre. Please cease writing these unabashed yarns, for the sake of those who wish to enjoy their copy of *Varsity* without having your authoring force a jet of molten tea onto their laps.
Yours, Viola Tate”

“Dear Edward Herring,
Your ceaseless egomania and self-regard may be very-well-and-good for the other members of your unwashed student body, but now my own kith-and-kin have begun indulging in your sad games. My son (aged 15) reads your article every week and has begun peppering his speech with the most odd and outmoded words and keeps making up weird encounters he claims to have had with people in libraries. If you have any sense of decency you’ll stop these little outrages of yours.
Best, Jackie McMullan, a Concerned Mother”

“Dear ED-itor,
Try to be a little more careful in future concerning what you write about the UL, you dig Eddy boy? They don’t take kindly to being talked about in your weekly ‘mememe’ column. You got that Ed-my-lad? No more UL-talk. Keep it easy Big Man.
Anonymous Librarian”

“Dear Edward,
I’m bloody sick to death of reading about whoever this SIMON HAINES character is and what effect he might have on you, or anyone else’s, scrotums. Please in future keep all mention of this boy (who is he again?) to a minimum. If not then try to seek some form of medical help.
Many thanks, Isaac Floktenderer”

“Herring,
Go away. You are a full-of-yourself pompous dick with nothing good to say about theatre. A Dribbling Cretin, A Dreary Chump, A Drippy Churl. Why don’t you just crawl down some pit to die and leave us all in peace?
AND F**K YOU!”

Also if you don’t like musicals then go see RENT next week (ADC, 9th-13th).

Journey’s End

ADC Mainshow

(until Sat 6th)

★★★★★

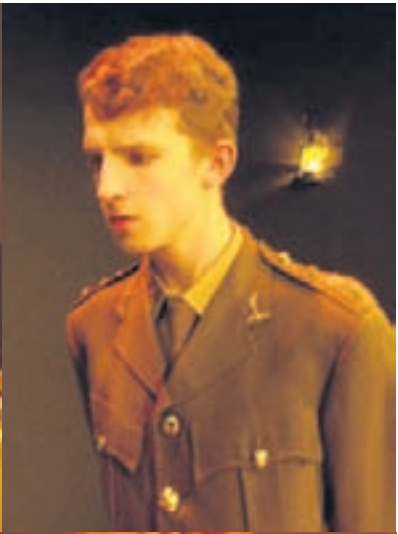


Set in a trench dug-out just before the last great assault by the Germans, *Journey’s End* has a quiet and humbling authority about it that can only come from first-hand experience. It has gained fame among students as a GCSE text, something which was unfortunately reflected in the slightly irritating audience.

However, the power of the play itself lies in showing the constant fear and monotony of life in the trenches during World War One. The play starts off through Hardy promising all the excitement of an earwig race, and it passes with uneventful watches, insipid meals, sleep, and conversations of everything from *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* to ones about women. It is uncompromising in its depic-

It was Hugh Wyld’s exchanges with Will Attenborough where the play’s drama was at its most palpable.

tion of the slowness of time in war and in the turgidity and fear of it all. However, Sherriff apparently did not intend the play to be read primarily as a statement against war, but instead to be a study of men under pressure, motivated only by a strong sense of duty. Therefore, there is no hiding place in the play for bad acting, and in Christopher Poel’s production,



there was thankfully no need for any hiding places.

Despite a slow start as the play began to develop, Hugh Wyld’s entrance as the idolising and naive Raleigh put to rest any fears over the acting. It was in his exchanges with Will Attenborough’s Stanhope that the play’s drama was at its most palpable. Wyld’s progression from innocence to dawning realisation was expertly done, and was complemented by accomplished performances from the cast around him. The erratic and complex nature of Stanhope – the

man driven to alcoholism through stress and duty, and the brief glimpses of the schoolboy he used to be – were caught compellingly by Attenborough. His pithy and sarcastic response to the Colonel’s concern over information rather than men, “It’ll be awfully nice the Brigadier’s pleased,” displayed Stanhope’s character beautifully. At times though, his self-loathing outbursts were too exaggerated, but it was nevertheless impossible not to feel and experience the ever increasing awkwardness of his scenes with Raleigh. The cast as a

There is no hiding place in the play for bad acting, and in this production, there was thankfully no need for any hiding places.

whole though were all convincing in their roles: Joshua Stamp-Simon maturely played the level-headed and older Osborne, balancing his wry humour and his sincerity very capably, Liane Grant’s Trotter hinted at the hidden depth to Trotter’s character without ever fully exposing it, Stephen Bermingham captured Hibbert’s nauseating desperation to go home without melodramatics, and Sam Gilbert provided welcomed chirpiness as Mason.

As for the set-up of the stage, while ultimately it served its purpose, the use of a smoke machine throughout seemed needless and sometimes distracting. The set itself was understandably basic, but a little disappointing. Although difficult to do so, it never really felt like a World War One trench dug-out. These are minor complaints in an otherwise smooth production though.

There were times when the play felt too slow and so it never fully caught the sense of pathos present in Sherriff’s script. However, apart from this and a few other minor issues, the high quality of acting on show ensured that justice was done to Sherriff’s play. It showed the fragility of trench life in a respectful and accomplished manner that makes it well worth the, admittedly slightly lengthy, time.

MATT RUSSELL

View from the Graduate

Emma Hogan



Why am I writing ‘View from the Graduate’? I am still in Cambridge. In the library, the studio, the tea room, the pub. Still scribbling up to the essay deadline, and still trying to juggle academic with creative work. Still invigorated by the condensed terms, and the closeness of this small town, and yet still wary of it, still slightly jealous of my friends who have left, who are more qualified to write this column.

For while they play at being adults, I am playing around with Beckett – or tussling with him, to be more accurate. Tussling with a writer who made up the poet he wrote about when he flirted with academia (Jean du Chas, founder of Concentrism), and who, as he writes plays that are beautiful and graceful for their brevity, has to be

ignored when you yourself try to write.

Which means that while I shall spend a fairly large portion of the next nine months venerating every word S.B. ever wrote, in prose or plays or even postcards to his friends, I shall also try to ignore him, to shut him away like a wrinkled skeleton in my cupboard. Because, while I wrestle or tussle with Beckett and the terms ‘Criticism’ and ‘Culture’ for my MPhil (a programme which gives one the chance to read essays and works that you might never have discovered on your own), I shall also spend some of my time in the wonderful Judith E. Wilson Drama Studio.

Run by Jeremy Hardingham, who is one of the finest theatre-makers alive today, the Drama Studio is where exciting, original performances take place. It is where you are free to try, and fail, and fail again, and find a kind of beauty in that failure. Every year the Miscellaneous Theatre Festival is put on in the Drama Studio at the end of Lent term; a festival which accepts any piece of work from students and artists. This is an unthinkable idea to the dramatic institutions of Cambridge,

where plays and performances are not always given the liberty to be attempts, works-in-progress, or to unfold through devised or workshop processes. And like the fantastic new ‘Hatch’, the Miscellaneous provides a space for people to watch the work of others and to open up a dialogue with work of their own.

However, while the Miscellaneous intends to be inclusive,



it is not an event that everyone will love. It is not always sleek or polished, as many productions in Cambridge rightly aspire to be. But although it is undoubtedly on the fringe of the theatrical scene here, it does not take theatre any less seriously, or treat it with any less integrity, than the larger dramatic institutions.

Indeed, it perhaps condenses that love of the dramatic, of the attempt of performance, and the element of experimentation in the best new writing. Certainly, for me, it has provided me with some of the best evenings of my past three years here, and makes me glad that I am back for a final one.

As an undergraduate, Emma co-organised the Miscellaneous Theatre Festival for two years, where five pieces of her work were performed. Her plays have also been put on in the Corpus Playroom, the Soho Theatre in London (as part of the Marlowe Masterclass showcase), at 22 Jesus Lane, in the 24 hr Plays at the ADC (where she won Best Script) and, after graduating, at the King’s Head Theatre in London.

GUIDE TO STAR RATINGS: ★★★★★ Coulrophobia ★★★★★ Michael Barrymore-Themed Pool Party ★★★★★ Dad’s Fortieth ★★★★★ Surprise Party ★★★★★ Someone ordered a stripper

The Birthday Party

Corpus Playroom
(until Sat 6th)

★★★★★



Harold Pinter's second play is about a chronically apathetic man named Stanley who lives in a boarding house with maternal Meg and paternal Petey, only for his stay-in-bed existence to be disrupted by two ambiguous men called Goldberg and McCann who have a contract of some kind to carry out on him.

This production is mostly traditional, except for one thing: the main part of Stanley was being played by a woman, not a man. This is hastily justified in the programme by the director that there are "various oblique references to Stanley's femininity": I counted one explicit but casual reference to it in the text, and there are flimsy arguments one could make based on Stanley's lifestyle. I'm usually good at suspending my disbelief, but this decision was sometimes unstopably frustrating. Kudos to Ellie Nunn for accepting such a

challenging part, but in trying to make up for her unmanliness she plays a terribly wigged Stanley with a kind of pimply adolescent melodrama: It'd have been fine if she'd have played the role femininely, as the programme suggested she would, but Stanley was instead played as if he were a nauseating male teenager who gets up at noon and doesn't want people to visit his house because he wants to sit around in his boxers all day. It was a strange directorial decision.

Charlotte E. Hamblin gave one of the best performances I've seen in Cambridge.

Elsewhere, however, the direction was stellar: the production ran smoothly through scene changes and the blocking was mostly first rate. Sometimes, the rhythm of the dialogue fell apart a bit from a lack of thoughtfulness, for example the tricky section in which Goldberg and McCann interrogate Stanley: by keeping

the dialogue at a machine-gun rate, this part lacked some of the playfulness it might have otherwise achieved. The other performances were generally wonderful. Charlotte E. Hamblin as Meg was genuinely one of the best performances I've seen in three years of Cambridge theatre, and Quentin Beroud's Goldberg was excellent at wringing out the comedy from the character's dreamy and cliché ridden monologues. Crellen's McCann was very will pitched, but sometimes I wished he'd brought the rage-dial down from 11 once in a while. He was good at simmering tension, but sometimes let himself off the leash too readily. Wainwright's Lulu was super, fluctuating between naivete and coquettishness, and her costumes were very good 60s period pieces. Elsewhere, the costumes were occasionally pretty dodgy: I've already



This production is mostly traditional except for one thing: the main part of Stanley is being played by a woman.

mentioned Stanley's ridiculous Ken Dodd hairpiece, and Meg's crisp party dress looked like it came from H&M, not some seaside town boutique 50 years ago.

This review could easily be three stars on account of my long periods of frustration at the bizarre pitching of the lead role, but I feel it would do the rest of the cast, and the production as a whole, an injustice. One final note, though, is that the director should be less ready to intrude into his or her productions: at the beginning of this show, a hot red light was projected onto the back wall, leaving me in a slack-jawed wonder, and thinking about it now I really can't see any reason why it was there, unless it was implying imminent nuclear holocaust. In which case, I wouldn't really be watching this seaside town romp.

MICHAEL CHRISTIE

The Misanthrope

Fitzpatrick Hall
(until Sat 6th)

★★★★★

I must admit that the technical elements of this show were really impressive. As the director was keen to point out in his programme notes, there were budgeting issues, but even so the Costume Designer, Rian Matanky-Becker, and Set Designer, Paula Petkova, did a fantastic job. The costumes were stunning, and the props and set created an elegant atmosphere for this play.

However, the professional attitudes obvious in the costuming and set design were less noticeable in the performances themselves. The first scene between Aleceste and Philinte dragged a lot, as did many moments in the play when only two characters were on stage. This was perhaps partly due to the limitations of the script which, being in rhyming couplets throughout, posed a challenge to any actor trying to convey a sense of real emotion. Even bearing that in mind, the actors often failed to express any real sense of expression at all, sounding more as though they were reciting their lines by rote than portraying characters.

There were some high points. Rupert Mercer's extraordinarily overwrought poetry recital near the start was a refreshing mood-lift after the lacklustre opening, whilst Kieran Corcoran's appearance as the clumsy and inept DuBois was again highly entertaining. However, this piece of quick-fire slapstick seemed to have been shoe-horned into a play that otherwise tried to revolve around the comedy of words and the intellect,

and as such was more than a little out of place, even if very enjoyable.

There were three actors I'd really like to praise, though. First of all, the double act of Acaste and Clitandre, played by Alex Macketh and Nick Melgaard, had some of the most exciting scenes, really raising the level of the play as a whole. Their relationship was played out in a fascinatingly superficial, self-mocking manner, and raised many laughs from the audience. Melgaard's restrained flamboyancy and camp acting were very humorous, although perhaps straying towards the cliché at

The limitations of the script, in rhyming couplets throughout, posed a challenge to any actor trying to convey real emotion.

times. Considering that this is his first full-length play in Cambridge however, that's no great criticism.

As well as those two, Rosalie Hayes as Eliante was coldly elegant, and very watchable. Although she was sadly not onstage for very long, her performance was perfectly pitched, and subtle, unlike many others in this production.

The portrayal of superficial, gossipy high society was spot on, although Alceste really didn't seem to be that much different from the others around him, which seemed to slightly defeat the point of the play. But in all, there were some real high points to this show (especially the costumes and set) but it didn't really live up to those standards the rest of the time.

ANNA DEGENHARDT

Mirror

Corpus Playroom
(until Sat 6th)

★★★★★

Mirror, written by Sidney Sussex student Luke Al-Rehani, is set in an empty, windowless room. For the purpose of representing this environment, the Corpus Playroom couldn't be better. Along with Al-Rehani's direction and staging – blocking was simple but effective, and the utterly stark set fitted in with the script – this unfortunately remained the best thing about the production.

When the lights went down, three characters lying foetal, prone and supine on the floor stood up. The personified figures of Faith (Rose Beale), Rape (Ami Jones) and Pain (Angela Liu) are trapped together, without recollection of their arrival.

The acting was disappointing. Beale, ever looking skywards, exuded an appropriate amount

of serenity, and Jones sometimes suitably expressed the cold seductiveness that the script has deemed fitting for Rape's characterisation. But Pain remained irritatingly petulant throughout, and, in general, all three performances were far too stilted.

For the entire hour, the three characters discuss the nature of their duties, fears and existences. The figures were supposed to feel frustrated that their questioning of each other was not leading to their release, but that does not excuse the fact that at no point does this dialogue feel consequential or insightful. "Your actual conversation has been superfluous," Faith helpfully points out at the play's end. "I don't know why," Rape states, entirely unsatisfactorily, when asked why she isn't male. "I don't even have the words!" exclaimed Pain angrily at one point.

Despite initial pretence, this is not an eloquent play. And, whilst Faith and Pain are legitimate abstract and independent ideas, rape is not. It feels as if the violent act is trivialised as it is turned into an allegory that is female, seductive and irresistible.

The conclusion was baffling. It was revealed in the closing minutes that the scenario was a test from God to decide whether Rape or Pain was doing a better job on earth, with Faith as 'supervisor'. Pain was left wracked by guilt and lifeless in a corner, and Rape triumphed. She then returned to the world to take over Pain's duties, because he had bizarrely decided that Rape and Pain are so similar to each another that only one of them is required. God is streamlining his workforce in these difficult times, too.

It is good to find student writing being performed in Cambridge, but whether it is worth going to see it is a different matter. In *Mirror*'s case, it is not.

HELEN YOUNG

Incoming



After months of production meetings and rehearsals, this week *Rent* finally hits the ADC stage. Inspired by Puccini's *La Bohème*, Jonathan Larson's rock opera captures the spirit of a generation of struggling artists, addicts and impoverished young people living in New York in 1989. With stunning staging, high energy dance, outstanding vocals and a revolutionary lighting design, *Rent* promises to be the theatrical highlight of the term.

I spoke to co-directors Laurie Stevens and Sarah Danielle Ward to find out what all the fuss was about. "It's definitely not your average musical," said Laurie, "it has big, high-energy dance numbers and catchy tunes, but a much deeper and more realist storyline on top of that. The music has a great rocky feel yet it still manages to pay tribute to *La Bohème*." Sarah agrees saying, "The first thing that struck us about *Rent* was its dynamic score and the fact that, whilst it brings late eighties America to life, it still has lots of modern-day relevance."

Despite its popularity, this is the first time that *Rent* has been put on by Cambridge students, possibly because of the extremely demanding nature of the parts. Sarah and Laurie dismissed this suggestion, saying, "We know our immensely talented cast will be able to do justice to all elements of the show." The show was only cast at the beginning of this term, so the cast and directors have been working solidly to get it ready on time. "The incredibly condensed schedule has been demanding but, because the cast get on brilliantly, we've had such a laugh in every rehearsal," said Sarah.

In fact the directors searched high and low for their ideal cast, who are a mixture of undergraduates, post-graduates and PhD students from the University of Cambridge and Anglia Ruskin. *Rent* is a powerful showcase for Cambridge's hottest young music theatre talent.

Finally closing in 2008 after a 12-year run and 5,124 performances, *Rent* had a spectacularly successful run on Broadway. Sadly the ADC run is only six performances, so book now to make sure you don't miss out on the most eagerly awaited show of the term.

FLORENCE CARR

BAND OF OUTSIDERS

Photographed and styled by Jess Kwong

Assisted by Louise Benson and Mike Hannon



Clockwise from top left: Shearling jacket VINTAGE. Dress ALEXANDER WANG. Boots FRYE. Necklace, model's own. Shearling coat VINTAGE. Cardigan DOLCE & GABBANA. Shirt ALL SAINTS. Trousers ACNE. Boots TIMBERLAND. Jacket RICK OWENS. T-shirt T BY ALEXANDER WANG. Trousers DRKSHDW x RICK OWENS. Scarf PAUL SMITH. Boots TIMBERLAND. Cardigan RUEHL. Shirt ACNE. Boots TIMBERLAND. Shirt COMME DES GARÇONS. Shearling shawl TOPSHOP. Pouchette ALEXANDER WANG. All, as before. Belt TOPSHOP.



Clockwise from top left: *Shirt* ACNE. *Jacket* RICK OWENS. *Jumper* MAISON MARTIN MARGIELA. *Scarf* TOPMAN. *Trousers* ACNE. *Shirt* COMME DES GARÇONS. *Dress* ALEXANDER WANG. *Boots* FRYE. *Bag* ALEXANDER WANG. *Shirt, as before.* *Trousers, DRKSHDW x RICK OWENS.* *Boots* TIMBERLAND. *Shirt, scarf, trousers, as before.* *Boots* TIMBERLAND. *Shirt* ALL SAINTS. *Scarf* TOPMAN. *Pouch* ONE OF A FEW. *Cardigan* RUEHL. *Scarf* PAUL SMITH. *Shearling shawl* TOPSHOP. *Bone and pyramid necklaces, studded feather cuff* RACKK AND RUIN.

With special thanks to Rackk and Ruin.

FOR MORE IMAGES, GO TO [VARSITYFASHION.TUMBLR.COM](http://varsityfashion.tumblr.com)

MAYS 2011

Applications are invited to edit the 2011 Mays Anthology, the collection of the best student writing and artwork from Cambridge and Oxford. Interested candidates should email president@varsity.co.uk by Friday 12th November.

The Mays, formerly the May Anthologies, are published annually by *Varsity*.

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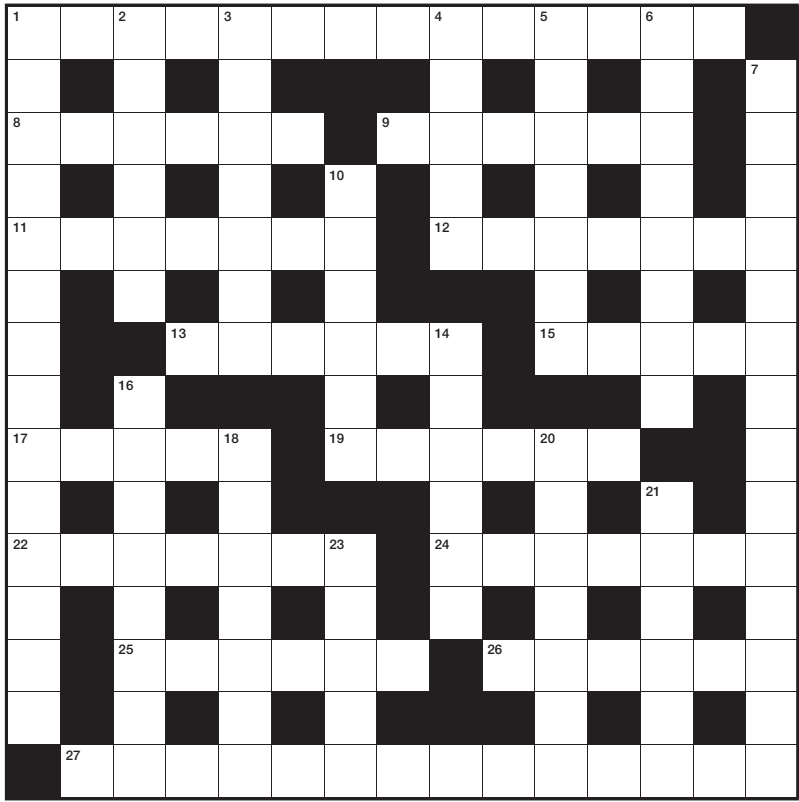
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Varsity

Games & puzzles

Varsity Crossword

no. 534



show (6)
26 Nine English studs start chasing five foxy ladies (6)
27 I'd rebuilt sinister city of existential panic (8, 6)

Down
1 Naughty, noisy flirt in touch with big brother's friends (8, 2, 4)
2 Colloquialism is almost taken the wrong way as cue (6)
3, 24 Cotton cap hurts when adjusted - it won't do (3, 2, 2, 6)
4 Those who act quietly to overthrow record company taken in by extreme militants (5)
5 Mathematical truth is nothing during the period of sleep (7)
6 Ape gets confused with otter in musical comedy (8)
7 Making a light meal? (14)
10 You're evil inside, like a bear (6)
14 Golden wind of nobility (6)
16 Brought in, half upright, full of wine (8)
18 You gain a huge amount after baddie loses fair bit of bread (7)
20 Back then one would hesitate to follow a nobleman (7)
21 Article about the southern city (6)
23 Princess shows off sexy garment (5)

Across
1 Deception is motif in Roman play (14)
8 Deny elegant point, showing gravity (6)
9 Current remix of "Rape Me" (6)
11 Race scoundrel to meet the queen (7)
12 Wriggling beast dispatched before coming back inside (7)
13 Humbert's girl laughing at me in return (6)
15 Fun times for a fly gal? (5)
17 Ancient people merrily come to embrace newbie (5)
19 Chick with broken leg trapped by wolf (6)
22 Bloom of Dublin taken around swimming pool (7)
24 See 3
25 After tea at two, I hear the drum

Answers to last issue's crossword (no. 533):
Across:1 Dukeship,6 Ramadan,8 Oscillate,9 Ruin,10 Mississippi,11 Faraday,13 Escorts,15 Skoptysy,17 Fawning,18 Assassinate,20 Ovum,21 Nailbrush,22 Failure,23 Database
Down: 1 Sheriff, 2 Broly, 3 Heavens, 4 Editing, 5 Costumer, 6 Adamant, 8 Sink, 9 American, 14 Aqualung, 15 Pitfalls, 17 Edifice, 18 Thyroid, 19 Pedlars, 20 Student, 23 Matrix, 24 Trim

Crossword set by Hapax.

Sudoku

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

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

The Varsity Scribblepad

Last issue's solutions

6	28			24	25	2	5	7	5	1	3	3	4	1	5	2	9	8	7	6
2	9					4	1	2	6	3	6	7								
6	7	3		4	1	3	3	5	4	6	5	7	1	6	5	2	8	7	1	3
4		1	2	17			5	2	3	1	6	1	4							
	3	1				2	5	1	5	7	3	5	2	6						
21		8	7	1	5			6	4	1	4	7	4	2						
					6	3			4	7	2	5	5	3	6					

Kakuro

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

			21	17	6			
		20						
	14					31		
19								19
11				6				
				6				
6					16			
				5				
	31							
			10					

Hitori

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



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

College Sport

Men’s Football

Emma breeze past Caius to remain top of Division 1

Varsity Sport

	CAIUS 0
	EMMA 1

Emmanuel I pulled out a confident display at Barton Road on Saturday as they comfortably held off Division 1 strugglers Caius to remain top of Division 1. Despite only winning by one goal, Emmanuel were almost completely dominant for all ninety minutes as a Caius side missing a few key players due to injury and university commitments struggled to keep pace with the league leaders.

Emmanuel should have been ahead within the first ten minutes with first choice striker ‘JD’ rounding

the Caius keeper, only to blast his effort against the bar rather than rolling it into the empty net. The catcalls and jeers from the rabble of Caius IV team players who had hung around to watch their superiors in action were soon silenced as Emma surged forward again and only excellent work by Livingston in the Caius goal stopped the deadlock being broken.

Caius’s only attacking move of the half came from striker Ross Broadway, who ghosted through the Emmanuel defence only to see his shot blocked by the Emmanuel keeper and put out for a corner.

The second half saw a continuation of Emmanuel’s superiority. Slicker passing, and much more threat down the flanks, it seemed to be only a matter of time before the goal came. It did with fifteen minutes to go. Good work by the Emmanuel left winger saw a

slightly hashed clearance from the Caius defence and in the resulting goal-mouth scramble the ball was poked home.

Emmanuel have started this season extremely strongly, having played some excellent football. Yet so far they have played relatively mediocre teams with Jesus

severely weakened this year and Caius and Catz being relegation candidates. The real test will be when they face Downing and Trinity in a few weeks’ time.

If they can continue performing at this level against strong teams, however, Emma could be looking at a very successful season.

PWC Division 1						
	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
EMMANUEL I	3	3	0	0	9	9
TRINITY I	2	3	0	0	6	6
DOWNING I	3	2	0	1	0	6
JESUS I	3	1	1	1	1	4
FITZWILLIAM I	3	1	1	1	0	4
CHRIST’S I	3	1	1	1	0	4
HOMERTON I	2	1	0	1	1	3
CATZ I	3	1	1	2	-7	3
CAIUS I	3	0	1	2	-2	1
GIRTON I	3	0	0	3	-8	0

View from the Bottom Division – Homerton IVs

LUKE CLARKE

Homerton IVs, fresh from our painful Division 6 demise last year, have started with renewed vigour and lofty ambitions. The blame for the heartbreak of last year lies fully with our previous captain, who not only decided against playing every fixture, but also didn’t fancy updating the wins we actually did manage. Nonetheless, here we find ourselves, propping up the rest of Cambridge’s footballing excellence.

It was a devastating start to our year to find out that ‘Big Boot’ Myles would not be featuring to score a guaranteed hat trick every game with a remarkable combination of halfway-line goals and bending, curling direct corners. Whether this is a representation of his overall footballing talent, or the lack of ability of lower-division goalkeepers remains under fierce debate. However, the introduction of three ‘rugby boys’, an Albanian chef and a Polish barman has given us a new lease of life. Surely a side with this much continental talent can only be the Barcelona of Divison 7 this year.

I’d be lying if I said we’d be happy with anything other than the championship this year, but with fierce competition coming from the likes of Gonville & Caius IV



Captain Luke Clarke foolishly compares Homerton IVs to Barcelona

and Queens’ III, we’re under no illusions and realise that we have a formidable array of footballing talent to overcome.

We find ourselves in the lucky position of having enough players to fill four teams, but this does mean that kit is a struggle to obtain: we always settle for the mud-covered, sweat-drenched leftovers from our footballing superiors ten minutes before kick-off. If we’re lucky, the women’s team let us borrow their kit from a few years’ back, which is sick because it’s

Adidas and smells nice.

Our footballing talent varies from those who have never played football before, to those who have never managed to fulfil their undeniable potential after years of experience. That aside, the elation felt after a victory is still a genuine feeling of triumph and achievement.

In summary, our IVs games make us really appreciate how it feels to kick a ball. We may not be the finest footballers, but we have a fucking great time!

Women’s Hockey

Jesus ladies thrashed Pembroke 14-0 in last Sunday’s second round match of the league competition. The victory means that Jesus are now comfortably top of Division 1, having won both their opening fixtures. In the only other game played last week, St John’s managed a 2-0 victory against a Murray Edwards side that many had tipped for success this season. After finishing in a very respectable third place last year, Murray Edwards are suddenly struggling in the top flight, having

lost both their opening two matches. They are also yet to score a goal.

In Division 2 Homerton are setting the early pace, having won their first two matches very comfortably. After comprehensively beating Girton 4-0 in their opening fixture, the Homerton girls then destroyed Christ’s 11-0, with three goals each for Holly Peters, Rachel Smith and Harriet Flower. The victory means that Homerton go to the top of Division 2 on goal difference from Emmanuel, who also won both their games so

far. Girton came back strongly after their early defeat last week, beating Selywn 6-0 with two goals each for Lauren Grant and Victoria Lee.

With so many goals and such porous defences in the opening two rounds of the season, it will be a close competition in both Division 1 and Division 2 for the league’s top scorer. So far Division 1 is headed by Anna Wilson of Jesus with 6 goals, and Division 2 by Rachel Smith with 5.

Women’s Hockey Fixtures	
First Division	
Churchill v Robinson	
Jesus v Clare	
Catz v Downing	
St John’s v Pembroke	
Second Division	
Emmanuel v Selwyn	
Fitzwilliam v Trinity Hall	
Girton v Christ’s	

Sport in Brief

Lacrosse

The women’s lacrosse Blues secured an excellent 24-0 victory against a lacklustre Southampton side last week. Having already defeated Bath and Bristol, the Blues lacrosse team is looking extremely impressive in the early stages of the season. A strong performance from Georgie Pritchard in particular means there is a high degree of optimism around Laura Plant and Anna Harrison’s team. The ease with which their attack shredded the Southampton defence meant that the south coast team were never able to get in the game or or recieve any possession. There will certainly be more difficult tests for the lacrosse Blues, but on current performances there is little need for any concern.

Water Polo

Girton have replaced Homerton in the college water polo leagues due to the Homerton captain pulling his team out at the last minute. A Girton first year has, within weeks, managed to resurrect the Girton water polo scene and they will be competing in the league this year. Currently, Leys A sit on the top of Division 1, with Addenbrooke’s in second place. Trinity are the highest-placed college in third.

BMC

Botswana Meat Commission BFC are searching for a new manager, after Kaizer Kalambo was relieved of his duties following his side’s 2-1 loss against Gaborone United to continue their dismal run of form. Indeed, BMC could feel fortunate only to have lost by a single goal, as Gaborone dominated proceedings throughout. Gaborone took a comfortable lead with goals just either side of half-time. First, Sandaka turned well inside the box to fire past Lom-bala in the BMC goal, before an under-hit pass from Molapo allowed Chikomo to score just after the break. The visitors struck back in the 55th minute, when Kgetholetsile converted a powerful penalty to make it 2-1. However, BMC could not take advantage of this as they were run off the park by Sandaka and Nato. Gaborone hit the wood-work numerous times as they bombarded their opponents’ goal, and saw a retaken penalty by Chikomo saved. The result left BMC 10th in the Botswanan Premier League, with only ten points from a possible thirty. Without a win in six games, Kalambo was fired by chairman Sonny Phiri. He explained: “He was failing to give us the results and there was only one way out – to show him the door. We believe we’ve been patient and he kept losing.”

UNIVERSITY AMERICAN FOOTBALL

PhD student tries to re-establish the Cambridge Pythons

American footballer Thomas Piachaud writes for *Varsity* explaining his vision for a Cambridge University team

With the annual London NFL game between the San Francisco 49ers and Denver Broncos held at Wembley stadium being fresh in our memories I thought I would take the time to write an article about American football across the UK and Cambridge specifically. It is a little known fact (at least to the people I talk to) that American football is actually played on our shores and while the standard is not what you may witness if you're an NFL fan, there are still over 150 active teams throughout the country.

So firstly let me tell you my story. I started my undergraduate degree

at the University of Southampton, I had never been sporty, and my school had never allowed us to play rugby (and let's just say I'm not built to play association football), but I had wanted to be involved in a sport. I went up keen and eager to the rugby sign up table, and when I told them I had no experience I was told to move along.

Disheartened I wondered the hall and was eventually accosted by an American footballer. Being such niche sport in Britain it is not very often that the team get anyone who has played before so they were more than willing to take

on a complete rookie on board. What followed was a rollercoaster ride of four years playing for the Southampton Stags, playing in two Southern Finals and winning a national university championship. I also had the opportunity to represent my country in a tour of Norway, beating the Oslo Vikings just outside the Olympic ice rink in Oslo. I have also played three seasons in the senior leagues in the UK, winning a

senior National championship and narrowly missing out on a second. Whatever anyone might think, there is a thriving American football scene in the UK.

Now many of you reading this will have an image of American football in your head: it is rugby with padding so the players don't get hurt, somehow making it a lesser sport in terms of toughness. Rugby for pansies. I beg to differ. Rugby is a contact sport, and by being so is physically tough. American football is not a contact sport – it is a collision sport. The pads do protect you, but at the same time they make you a weapon, willing to run at full speed and smash into your opponent (as pretty much all forms of tackling are legal). If you don't believe me a short trip to YouTube to view 'NFL's hardest hits' might convince you.

On my arrival in Cambridge I knew that there wasn't an American football team operating within the University; however it may surprise you to learn that there was a team who played from 1988-1997 called the Cambridge Pythons. Now it must be said that I did not find the same opposition to my lack of experience at Rugby in Cambridge and I am happily playing loose



head prop for the Fitz XV's, however my thirst for kitting up and smashing into people still resides deep within. With this in mind, I'm aiming to revive the Pythons, and by next year have the team returning to full time competition as part of the BUAFL (British Universities American Football League). That is the theory at least. Oxford have already created an American football team, the Oxford Lancers, who are also looking to enter the league next year. Competing with

them would be great.

I'm looking for anyone with any interest to get involved - I had never played before my time at Southampton and so experience really is not necessary. Basically I would love to create an American football scene in Cambridge. It is certainly possible.

Contact for anyone wishing to get involved is thp24 or www.CUgridiron.co.uk



Nice to meet Blue...

Kirsty Elder, Women's Hockey Captain, St John's

When did you start playing Hockey?

The first hockey I played was when I was around seven or eight but that was indoor as my primary school didn't have any other facilities at that point. It wasn't until I reached age 10 that I started playing outdoor hockey and would be age 12 at least before I actually understood what was going on in an eleven-a-side full pitch match. Bit slow to catch on but haven't looked back since!

Why did you choose hockey as your sport – what is it that attracts you about the game?

In all honesty, hockey began as a very sociable thing for me. I spent several years more focused on tennis, thinking I was going to win Wimbledon one day – needless to say, that never happened – and it wasn't until I got a tennis injury that I turned to hockey more seriously. Having said that, I soon found that I preferred hockey for one simple reason: it's a team-sport through and through and really does require you to communicate and work together in all aspects of the game. It's also a very skillful and tactical game which requires lots of time and dedication in order to produce a good team performance- there's nothing quite like walking off the hockey pitch feeling both physically and mentally drained but knowing you did your bit for the team.



What is your favourite personal sporting memory?

I know it's a very small country, and we don't tend to win a lot, but I don't think anything will beat the first time I represented Scotland. It was an U16 fixture against Ireland in Dublin and I only really remember the national anthems, taking a ball to the eye and using proper ice-baths for the first time (in Scotland we just use wheelie bins...).

How did you feel before your first university game and how did the game go?

So unbelievably nervous. It was my second week in Cambridge and I'd been to three or four training sessions before being asked to fill in for the blues because someone was

injured. It's probably just as well the coach didn't tell me he was planning on starting me, and at full back, otherwise the nerves might have got the better of me. We were playing against Colchester 2nd XI who had a couple of decent forwards so the match was a tricky one and, in many ways, the perfect way to begin my Blues career: nothing like being thrown in at the deep end!

Who is the best player you have played with?

Being a defender, I used to hate training against a forward called Amy Brodie in the Scottish squads – she was impossible to read and I have never given away so many fouls. She's gone on to various Scottish and GB representation so I don't feel too bad...

What is the dressing room like before a

“There's nothing quite like walking off the pitch feeling both mentally and physically drained but knowing you did your bit for the team.”

game?

Pretty chilled I think. We tend to have our pre-match talk well in advance, then are fairly relaxed getting ready in the changing rooms before really focusing in during the warm up.

What motivates you to get out of bed every morning and go to training?

Again, it's all about the team. You really feel like you're letting everybody else down if you don't turn up to training or aren't prepared to put in 100% when you get there. Cambridge isn't really about doing things half-heartedly and nowhere is this more true than on the sports field. It's also a very good way to escape all the other stresses in Cambridge and spend those hours only focused on the next pass or tackle. I think I might go a little bit insane if I were to stop playing hockey.

Will you beat The Other Place?

Yes. GDBO.

Sport Comment

Rejection of Zimbabwe is the only course of action

Zimbabwean cricket is re-entering the international arena. This must be opposed



MICHAEL TAYLOR

Quietly, surreptitiously, the spectre of Zimbabwean cricket has been resurrected on the international stage. Where the disgraced relative of cricket had once been South Africa, this unwanted epithet now attaches to the land of Robert Mugabe and Zanu-PF. By consequence, the administrators of leading cricketing nations scheduled to play in Zimbabwe are faced with a serious problem. Nevertheless, this problem reduces to a straightforward choice: to fly, or not to fly? So far, India and Sri Lanka have travelled; Ireland hesitated, but soon caved in, while Scotland stayed home. Soon, England must show its own hand. Andrew Strauss has already – and publicly – raised concerns as to the morality of touring. He is right. Refusal to fly is indeed England's only morally defensible course of action.

The principal objection to an English tour is, of course, that such an

action would appear to legitimise – or at least ignore – the brutality of a government which, despite the establishment of a coalition with the Movement for Democratic Change in February 2009, remains controlled by Mugabe. I should not need to elaborate on the horrendous crimes of Mugabe and his regime, and the purpose of this article is not to expose the misdeeds of Zanu-PF: that much is self-evident. This article is about cricket's role in resistance. You may already wish to dismiss my case. You may ask: 'What does this have to do with cricket?' You may wish to argue that sport, as we are told by seers and sages, should not be

Sport should be suffused by the same morality which informs the rest of life.

mixed with politics. Such people, however, are not Cassandra; this is not Troy, and we should ignore them. Let me explain why. If sport is a mere diversion, then only the despicable man does not forgo it to serve a nobler cause. However, if sport is more than that – if it carries weight, meaning and values – then it should be suffused by the same

morality which informs the rest of life. Moreover, sport has always been as politicised as any other facet of life. The sectarian demography of Northern Irish sports, for example, is a commonplace within the academy, as is the relationship between Sunday sports and Sabbatarianism. Sport and politics go hand in hand.

However, in the case of Zimbabwean cricket, politics becomes intrinsic to the argument, primarily because of the peculiar relationship between Zimbabwe Cricket (ZC) and Zanu-PF. For one thing, Robert Mugabe's name endures as an official patron of ZC. For another, Peter Chingoka, chairman of ZC, has been banned from entry to the European Union on the grounds of his links to Mugabe's regime. He has also been accused by former sports minister Kate Hoey of using VIP pavilions at international matches 'to host the ZANU-PF politicians, CIO (Central Intelligence Organisation) operatives and senior army officers on whom he relies for protection'. This, of course, is the same CIO which launched an investigation into ZC's new logo, launched in 2005, on the suspicion it cryptically spelled out 'MDC' in its symbols. Even more sinister is Ozias Bvute, CEO of Zimbabwe Cricket, whose parachuting into the administration in 2001 as Integration Implementation Officer marked the politicisation of the Zimbabwean board. This is a man

who has been forced to deny links to the CIO, who forcibly removed Henry Olonga from the team bus

Zimbabwe Cricket is nothing more than the recreational wing of Zanu-PF.

following the black-armband protest during the 2003 World Cup, and who handed Olonga his ticket back to Zimbabwe with the kind words: 'You're on your own now'. Tell me, how does accepting the invitation of these men to play cricket under their jurisdiction not carry a political weight?

And, more pressingly, that political weight could translate into accusations of compliance with and appeasement of Zimbabwe Cricket, which – given its leadership – is nothing more than the recreational wing of Zanu-PF. If you think I exaggerate, look at how the rebel tourists to South Africa were treated: the English tourists of the early 1980s were labelled 'the Dirty Dozen' by the Commons for placing cricket before the principle of racial equality, while certain South African papers did their utmost to represent all tours as tacit support for apartheid. Of course, that was not the intent of the cricketers.

Nor will supporting Zanu-PF be the intent of whoever may go to Zimbabwe, but intentions are often misconstrued.

Conversely, the consequence of not travelling is the admirable engagement in a practical and effective means of protest. You think cricket is powerless in this respect? Dr Ali Bacher, speaking to Cricinfo in 2008, averred, "Zimbabwe should be isolated and banished from the international arena... I say this because of what brought apartheid down in South Africa: it was the international isolation. The same thing must happen now with Zimbabwe. People who say sport and politics are completely separate are being naïve." At Archbishop Desmond Tutu's 2008 Spirit of Cricket lecture at Lord's, he argued that inaction was wrong: "I think the ICC are erring and it frustrates the hell out of me that Zimbabwe have not been brought to book. It's a moral issue and what [Mugabe] is doing everybody knows is simply not right...cricket can play a part in that."

Ultimately, we may take England's failure to progress in the 2003 World Cup as a salutary reference. Then, sporting failure was forgiven because elimination had resulted only from refusal to play Zimbabwe. Indeed, the English were criticised only for vacillating on the matter. Proof, perhaps, that cricket is more than a game – so what do we know of cricket, if we only cricket know?

BLUES ROWING

Blues squad training intensifies

Training increases to a minimum of 35 and a half hours a week, four months ahead of Boat race

VARSITY SPORT

After the announcement of the squad selection for the 2011 Xchanging Boat Race, the Cambridge rowers have stepped up their preparation a full four months before they take to the river Thames to face Oxford in the annual battle for rowing supremacy. The light blue rowers are operating now at a 35-and-a-half-hour weekly time commitment to the sport, not including compulsory video analysis and talks from dieticians.

Having Monday as a rest day, the Blues squad then have two sessions (two hours in the morning, four and a half in the afternoon) every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Morning sessions are split between ergs and weights. Friday is a two hour weights session at the Goldie Boat-house before spending seven hours in Ely on the water on both Saturday and Sunday. The weekend water sessions are typically 20k each, and



with two on both of the Saturday and the Sunday, the Blues squad members are training on 80k every weekend, along with their daily sessions.

With such commitment and attention to fine detail, the Blues will be confident of a repeat performance of last year's Xchanging Boat Race, especially as they have the more experienced crew this time

round. The light blue squad benefit from having four returning Blues compared to Oxford's one, while Cambridge also have five returning Goldie Boat members. Oxford by contrast only have four who have rowed in the Isis Boat.

Follow the Blues Squad's preparation for the Xchanging Boat Race on varsity.co.uk/sport

Cambridge Squad 2011

George Brown, Sidney Ioan Coleman, St John's
Hardy Cubasch, St Edmund's
Nick Edelman, Hughes Hall
Ben Evans, Clare
Joel Jennings, Clare
Sasha Kasas, Trinity
Jamie Loggie, Downing
George Nash, Catz
David Nelson, Hughes Hall
Josh Pendry, Catz
Charlie Pitt-Ford, Pembroke
Derek Rasmussen, Hughes Hall
Dan Rix-Standing, Catz
James Robinson, St John's
Alex Ross, Caius
James Roth, St Edmund's
Dominic Silk, Hughes Hall
James Strawson, Trinity
Mike Thorp, Homerton
Andrew Viquerat, King's
Felix Wood, Downing

College Rugby

CONTINUED FROM BACK PAGE

It will be interesting to see whether the Jesus backs, who have hauled their college to the top of Division 1, can continue to bail out a forward pack lacking in firepower.

Despite conceding, Queens' once again hauled themselves back into the match by scoring a converted try of their own. A further penalty reduced the deficit to just five points. By now, the tension was palpable as once again Queens' forwards pounded towards the try line. Jesus however was able to hold firm and were able to clinch the match by slotting home two late penalties.

Queens' will certainly not be too disappointed with their performance. Indeed with many suggesting Queens' may be desperate to avoid the drop, they can be very proud of their season so far. The result means that Jesus maintain their 100% record but will have to keep up the performances as Division One continues to be far from predictable this year.

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College Football

p29

Emma defeat Caius to remain top




SPORT

American Football

p30

Grad tries to resurrect Cambridge Pythons





Jesus defeat Queens' to remain top

Jesus backs provide necessary quality to defeat pretenders Queens'



The Jesus forwards are put under heavy pressure by the Queens' pack

 JESUS 29

 QUEENS' 18

MIKE BENJAMIN

Division One rugby is very different now to a year ago. Jesus' toppling of John's last week and Queens' rising challenge has altered the nature of college rugby. A top of the table clash between the two teams was representative of the change at the top and led to an eagerly anticipated match. The match up did not disappoint. It had everything from intensity to drama. Eventual winners Jesus will

have their sights still set on the title but Queens' certainly will not be too disheartened after a strong and powerful display. It was evident from the kick off that both teams were intent on engaging in a tough and physical battle. An intense midfield struggle, marked by ferocious and aggressive tackling, dominated the opening phases as both teams tried to establish themselves. Queens' Sullivan, in particular, looked to lay down a physical marker early on by landing big hit after big hit. Queens' posed the initial threat with a run down the wing which was controversially stopped by the touch judge; it was not long before they notched up the first points on the scoreboard. Jesus were caught out by

winger Blencowe's pace as a fumble when fielding a kick allowed him to hack the ball towards the try line to score. This clearly rattled Jesus as another possible upset looked on the cards. However Jesus responded. The next 15 minutes saw sustained pressure which allowed a reversing of the scoreboard as two tries were sandwiched in between a penalty. Both tries displayed the power and precision of the Jesus backs as they were able to cut through Queens' porous defensive line. At this point, Jesus looked in control of the game and it was in the backs where they continually carried a threat. Nevertheless, Queens' fought their way back into the game utilising their power and strength in the forwards.

Queens' held the advantage up front in both the lineout and the scrum. For the first time this season Jesus were able to contest the scrum but it was clear that they were unhappy in doing so. Their inability to scrum has raised eyebrows so far this season and their tactic in entering every game uncontested is understandable when they look as poor as they did on Tuesday. The pressure on the scrum lasted throughout the game. The referee's continual instruction to the Jesus forwards is an indication of the improvement required. Queens' continued the impetus early in the second half, yet an early penalty was soon cancelled out by a converted score created by the impressive Jesus backline.

CONTINUED INSIDE

Downing pushed into relegation dogfight after third loss of the season

Downing's rugby team continued their abject form on Tuesday after suffering their third straight defeat to a Magdalene side who many expected to be desperately fighting relegation this season. The first division new boys ground out victory against a Downing side who lacked any form of clinical edge and

defensive capability. With only Trinity performing worse in the league at the moment, Downing will be concerned that on current form they and not Magdalene will be favourites for the drop come December. Despite scoring two tries in the first half on Tuesday, Downing were never able to make their superior possession count despite having a try harshly disallowed in the second

half for a forward pass in the move which would have led to Williams scoring underneath the posts. Elsewhere Trinity look certain to go down at the end of the season having suffered yet another heavy loss. Tuesday's was at the hands of the Redboys. John's put 59 points on hapless Trinity, who have now conceded 170 points in four games, scoring only 8. Such figures are

almost comic and while Trinity were always likely to struggle this season, few could have imagined they would have performed quite as poorly as they have. The result would have pleased John's captain Mathonwy Thomas who will be looking to put last week's disappointment behind him as his team attempt to catch leaders Jesus by clawing back a place against Queens' next week.

Redboy Reports

Our man on the inside of the St John's 1st XV tells it like it is



Ok, yes, obviously the Jesus match was a shambles. With hindsight downing four pints with Bunter and three with Toffo (eight in total, once you include the two that Doyley brewed me,) before the game was ambitious. Then again, I did that before my driving test and it was fine. (Just twelve majors, including running over a local sergeant-major in what my instructor called "the most ironic infringement of the rubric I've seen since Toby Dwindell tried to solve a rubix cube during his three-point turn.") Anyway, it was probably a bit stupid, and the fact that I missed the whole of the second half because I was on the Chunder Wagon, next stop Chunder Town, population: me and my good friend Mr Chunder, sort of made that evident. Me vomiting the whole time was also an issue. Speaking of issues, I've got a big one at the moment, and I'm not talking about GQ. During the police inquest about those guys who died on the swap last week (luckily the judge was at John's so his verdict basically said that the dead fellas should be proud to have been involved in some high-end swappage) I got talking to one of the witnesses, a member of Tit Hall Tits Out, who's a second year at Tit Hall college. Physically, she's right out of the top drawer: small and easily stored in high places. The fact that she's a bit short could be a negative, but not for me, I like shorter girls. I used to do this role-play thing with my ex-girlfriend where she'd pretend she was getting crushed by my bicep, and I'd pretend that I loved her. So it turns out that me and this girl (I only know her by her drinking society name, which is Morgiana, "Leavener of Bread") have got literally bucket-loads in common. The only problem is that obviously relationships are difficult in Cambridge – the Redboy lads wouldn't take too kindly to it. The last time one of the boys had a serious girlfriend they took the piss to such an extent that he ended up marrying her as a dare and had to move to Morocco to support her as a subsistence farmer. He had to give up being the Senior Tutor as well so it was chaos this end.