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Nick Robertson speaks to Tom Bordell and Medhi Jaffer about the rise of his internet store, ASOS.com



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iBelieve: the cult of Jobs and why we shouldn't deify him

Cambridge offers the **Features p24**
very best of British



VARSITY

Friday 14th October 2011

The Independent Student Newspaper since 1947

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Second-rate salary

Getting a 2.i will make you rich, but getting a First won't make you much richer



Anna Goldenberg
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

Working for a First does not pay off – but make sure you don't get a 2.i if you're after a well-paid job, suggests new research.

The study revealed a total income gap of £300,000 across a lifetime between graduates with a higher second (2.i) degree and those with a lower second (2.ii).

The findings, composed by classified ads search engine Adzuna, showed a disparity of £8,000 in average annual income between employees who graduated with a 2.ii and those with a 2.i. class mark.

Employers are still using degree results to filter large piles of CVs, which, as the research shows, can mean a lifetime of lower earnings.

Employers' demands for degree subjects and grades from more than 1 million job postings were analyzed. The results were compiled in a study posted on the search engine's blog,

with the telling title "All degrees are not created equal".

While the average salary for a graduate with a 2.i rather than a 2.ii jumped from £30,500 to £38,100 per year, having a First proved to make little difference, as it gained only a

£38,753

Average annual income for a First

£26,535

Average annual income for a Third

£12,646

Annual salary on the minimum wage

slightly higher average salary than a 2.i, at £38,800 per year.

Should you gain a Third class honours, meanwhile, you can expect to receive an annual income of about £26,500.

Gordon Chesterman, Director of the Careers Service, said: "Employers love students with a First, so long as they didn't spend three years at Cambridge glued into a book the whole time, and missed acquiring a crop of other skills.

"What a student voluntarily chooses to do in their spare time says a lot about the applicant, often more than the degree they've studied."

One student, who graduated with a 2.2 in Maths, said: "After only a few weeks of applications I had a job I love. My company seemed to accept me based only slightly on my grade. It appeared that work experience and a wide range of things on my CV had stood out more.

"If I had known this at the time I might have relaxed, enjoyed the

course more and probably got a 2.i."

Another finding of the study, however, showed that the choice of subject matters when it comes to comparing annual salaries.

While a civil engineer can earn, on average, up to £47,000 per year, closely followed by economists at £41,800 and lawyers at £41,300, anthropologists can expect as little as £21,300 per year, and sociology graduates £22,100 per year.

Chesterman could comfort Cambridge students: "The median salary for Cambridge students six months after graduating last year was £24,000 compared to £22,000 nationally."

He added: "Salary is important, but many Cambridge students are chasing careers that do not pay well in the first year or two.

"Thankfully we still have many students who want to find the cure for cancer, write a best-selling book, or serve the wider society working for the Civil Service or an international development organization."

News p10

Exam results no longer reflect academic ability, claims A.C. Grayling



Reviews p24

"The chemistry between the actors and director kept it alive - just"

Sophie Lewisohn
on *Dorian Gray*



Sport p33

Uphill from here: Varsity talks to Ski and Snowboard Club President, Pete Calvert



Varsity

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Speculation sometimes poses as research. For instance, the claim that your academic performance at university correlates with your income earning potential seems like conjecture; the random guess-work of bored sociologists. Can it really be true that the difference between a 2:1 and a 2:2 is, on average, £8000 a year on your pay-slip? Whilst our front page reports as much, the reality is a little more nuanced than this.

If we accept the findings of Adzuna on face value, then the incentive toward academic success seems to be as much an economic consideration as an issue of pride.

And yet in the world of graduate recruitment, academic achievement,

self-evidently, is not everything. Companies may well use attainment at university as a broad indicator for potential employment, but equally important are the endeavours pursued *outside* academia. Labels like ‘Secretary’, ‘President’, or ‘Editor’ splashed across one’s CV exclaim ambition and dedication.

Of course, a sparkling starred First undeniably indicates excellence, but how many investment banks or management consultancies are so concerned by their lack of, say, First class Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic graduate employees that they feel a need to sift through every application, degree-classbydegree-class,justsecure the most academically impressive? This

is an extreme example, but the point is made: academic success at university is just one indicator of individual achievement.

It’s possible to list on several hands the number of individuals who settled for a Third at university – Hugh Laurie, Michael Morpurgo, Christopher Hitchens – who then went on to become successful and influential movers and shakers.

This, of course, is not an endorsement of the Third class degree; influence and success does not somehow flow from below par performance in examination. But it is a reminder that the average employer is as interested in the personal qualities of the candidate as in his or her performance in finals.

Letters

PRIVATE EDUCATION IS DEAR

Dear Editors,

After the publishing of a report by the Sutton Trust and Varsity’s coverage of it, I felt it a necessity to comment. The findings of the report are of course disappointing, with an independent school pupil being at least seven times more likely to be offered a place at Oxbridge than his or her comprehensive counterpart.

Yet, Andrew Griffin’s ‘analysis’ that ‘Expensive, exclusive and elite schools continue to ensure that the real decider of Oxbridge entry is not potential or intelligence, but personal wealth and connections’, is not only an example of outrageous inverse snobbery but deeply offensive. The very idea that someone can buy their way into Oxbridge is ludicrous. As for ‘connections’, that died out long ago; this is not the age of Brideshead Revisted.

What some people fail to realise is that the stereotype of the independent school brainwashing dim pupils into Oxbridge potentials is utterly false. Yes, one gets a better education at an independent school than a bog standard comprehensive, but to claim that those who get into Oxbridge from independent schools have little intelligence is quite extraordinary. Indeed, it is forgotten that the top independent schools are incredibly selective with challenging entrance tests and interviews being the norm; one has to be incredibly gifted academically just to be admitted.

Westminster School for example, which has sent 235 pupils to Oxbridge over the past 3 years, is an academic hot house with stringent entry requirements. It cannot be surprising then that so many go on to Oxbridge as one has to be so bright to go there in the first place.

What is more, why exactly do people put pressure on Cambridge to change its entrance requirements

to fit in with the underperforming state sector? Surely it should be the other way round? It is not the job of Cambridge or any other university to be social engineers. That is the job of the government. It is they who must improve the state system so that more pupils have the grades to apply and have information about applying! Access schemes from universities do help of course, but they should not be shouldering the burden.

Teaching and class sizes at independent schools do aid their success, but the strong performance of selective independent schools in terms of Oxbridge admissions should show that selective education is the model that works. Interestingly, what has been completely neglected in terms of analysis of the Sutton Trust’s findings is that all ten of the top performing state schools were, in fact, selective grammar schools.

Perhaps then, a return of the grammar schools should be reconsidered or at least a more selective form of secondary education in the

state sector. Whatever the answer is, one thing is for sure, bashing independent school pupils who are guilty only of being lucky is not going to help anyone.

John Messent, Caius College

VIEWS ON VIEWS

Dear Editors,

I would like to challenge the Magazine section’s assertion that Castle Mount is ‘the best view of the city without being on a roof’. The view from the tall but little-known St Edmund’s College Tower offers - as the Cambridge Alumni Magazine stated last edition - ‘a spectacular view across Cambridge’s rooftops’, thus uniquely encompassing all those rooftops mentioned in the feature. Its main advantage, however, is that it is the only spot where one is guaranteed to not see the monstrosity and overall ‘architectural fail’ that is: St Edmund’s College Tower.
Guy Forbat, St Edmund’s College

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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DIGITAL DIGEST



VARSITV

3 Minutes With: Phil Wang

In the first of a new series of 3 Minutes With, Millie Riley speaks to Footlights President Phil Wang about his appearance on the Rob Brydon show, his love of Batman, and the art of wiggling one’s eyebrows.



ARTS

Writers and their Illnesses

Emily Smith continues to explore the effect of chronic illness on the work of eight writers. This week she looks at Terry Pratchett, diagnosed with a rare form of Alzheimer’s.



VETEMENTS

a.visual.dialogue. - day 6

Before the invention of the camera and before the use of photography in fashion, designers had to depend on the skilled hands of the illustrators. Chloe Spiby-Loh assesses the shift to the photographic fashion shoot.



REVIEWS

Midnight in Paris

“Owen Wilson is Woody Allen incarnate; a pair of urban neurotic glasses away from a Madame Tussauds wax-work”. India Ross casts her eye over this new satirical fairytale.



COMMENT

About more than a cat

Have Theresa May’s misguided comments about cats’ powers to fight deportation proceedings obscured a more disturbing argument about the future of the Human Rights Act? Laura McDonald thinks so.

Fresh fears over arms investment

As funding to universities is cut, will they return to arms companies for sponsorship?

Aliya Ram
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

A fresh wave of fears over where a university might look to find its funding has been raised, as the hand of austerity continues to maintain its iron grip on British higher education.

In 2007, The Campaign Against Arms Trade (CAAT) released a report entitled 'Study War No More' which exposed at least 26 of the UK's universities to be investors in military projects exceeding £725 million in value. Of these, Cambridge was one of the largest investors, receiving

BAE systems was once Cambridge's second largest sponsor of research in the aerospace sector



an extraordinary £42,565,637 from its military investments.

In light of the unrelenting squeeze on university budgets, student protestors have stepped up their action against university involvement with

arms trade. One student said: "If they were investing in arms companies then, they must be investing now more than ever," adding that Cambridge must assure students of its clean hands.

Cambridge has denied investing in arms manufacturing and defence companies, but did admit that it holds public equity investments "through exchange-traded and index funds linked to the main stock market indices" and accordingly "will have had indirect exposure to the companies."

According to CAAT, Cambridge's website once openly acknowledged that BAE systems, one of the world's largest military contractors, was Cambridge's "second largest industrial sponsor of research in the aerospace sector" in 2002/3.

Though this ethical ambiguity has been glossed over due to the economic difficulties faced by British universities, the presence of these same arms companies at university recruitment fairs still remains unexplained. BAE, for example, was still present at the University of London Careers Group event in 2010.



Economic crisis harms Greek health

Isobel Weinberg
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

Economic troubles are costing the people of Greece their health, according to recent research from the University of Cambridge.

The study, led by Alexander Kentikelenis (a PhD student at the Department of Sociology), compares national healthcare surveys from 2007, before the onset of the economic crisis, and 2009. Suicides rose 17% in this time, and appear set to rise to 25% for 2010. The national suicide helpline reported that a quarter of callers say

they have financial problems.

The authors of the study, published online in *The Lancet* this week, say the latest HIV figures predict that infection will rise more than 50% between 2010 and 2011. They link this to budget cuts, which have closed a third of the country's street work programmes since 2009.

Fewer Greeks are seeking GP care since the crisis began; the researchers say this is because a weaker health system means fewer people are satisfied with their care. Hospital budgets have been cut 40%, and there are

reports of hospital staff being paid bribes to permit queue-jumping.

Admission to state hospitals rose 24% whilst admission to state hospitals fell correspondingly. Fewer people can obtain sickness benefit, which, say the study's authors, is due to budget cuts and will worsen once austerity measures are introduced. Homicide and theft have doubled.

"Overall, the picture of health in Greece is concerning," write the study's authors. "It reminds us that, in an effort to finance debts, ordinary people are paying the ultimate price."

PEOPLE. PASSION. RESULTS.

BAIN & COMPANY



**What is management consulting?
What do consultants do?
Would you like it?**

Rosie joined Bain in April 2011 after graduating from Selwyn the previous summer. Rosie studied History (BA) and Medieval History (MPhil). She was Blues hockey captain and on the college May Ball committee. At Bain, Rosie has spent her first six months developing Bain's social impact strategy and worked on a client's growth strategy in facilities management.

Why Bain? I chose Bain because of the supportive people and the culture. Everyone I met during the interview process, and since starting work at Bain, is team focused and inclusive. While the office culture is to strive to produce the best work we can for our clients and to constantly challenge ourselves, there is still a strong emphasis on maintaining a healthy work-life balance.

Bain highlight? My highlight of working at Bain is being part of the company's varied charitable initiatives, or 'Bain Cares'. Bain works closely with a number of organisations, such as Business Action Against Homelessness and the University Access Project, so there are loads of opportunities to volunteer. They are so much fun to be involved in and I'm always impressed by everyone's response in the office to donating time and money.

A final thought? During my time at Cambridge I had never considered consulting and didn't really know what consultants did, but I'm so glad that I finally found out! I would encourage anyone who is unsure about what consulting is, or whether it is right for them, to come along to one of the events and find out more.

Where to find us...

Women's Event: An Introduction to Strategy Consulting

Bateman Auditorium, Caius College:

Tuesday, October 18, 19.00-21.00

Women from Bain across all levels will be on hand to share their experiences, run through a case study and answer any questions you may have.

Case Study Workshop

Terrace Room, Trinity Hall:

Wednesday, November 2

12.00-14.00 and 14.30-16.30

In these sessions, we will take you through a typical case study step by step, and share hints and tips on ways to prepare for strategy consulting interviews.

Bain & Company Presentation

Howard Building, Downing College:

Wednesday, November 2

19.00-21.00

Our main presentation is our chance to tell you more about Bain & Company. You will meet Bain staff of all levels and have the opportunity to get to know our people and our firm over drinks.

www.joinbain.com

We would be delighted to meet you at any of our events. Please pre-register via the Cambridge University page of our website.



The race draws to a close as election day arrives

A round-up of Hustings

Varsity News

Brian Blessed opened the Chancellors' hustings on Monday night in full force, quoting Shakespeare and tweaking the noses of audience members in the front row.

He promised to be "completely involved" in student life and was keen to be a student himself.

Asked how he would improve access, he answered: "I haven't a clue. You have here a prospective Chancellor who is coming here to learn." As a state schooled student himself, he saw himself as one to inspire others.

Socialist barrister Michael Mansfield was next to the podium on Tuesday evening. His speech had a very clear focus, stressing that "education is not a commodity but a right."

He attacked the government over tuition fees and referred to his experiences of sensitive court cases as proof of his suitability for the Chancellorship.

Mansfield also criticised the University on access saying, "I know they're trying, but it obviously isn't enough."

Abdul Arain was first to the floor on Wednesday evening, in a two part hustings between him and Lord Sainsbury.

He highlighted local positions he had held, including chairing several

Mill Road committees. He championed at length independent stores and their fight against chain stores.

Asked what he would do to help access, he stressed his diverse background in comparison to other candidates, stating his belief that this would attract students from under-represented groups.

He added: "As a symbol I believe I could inspire more students who would never have thought of applying."

Lord Sainsbury, the official candidate chosen by the University, closed the hustings on Wednesday.

He stressed the importance of Cambridge's world position. Throughout the hustings he retained a modest view of the role of Chancellor, believing it to be more a ceremonial role.

He declined to discuss a few of the issues raised on the basis that the Chancellor should not be involved.

Sainsbury maintained his support for tuition fees, which were brought in by his political party.

He argued that unless evidence emerges that increasing fees is damaging social mobility and preventing students from underprivileged backgrounds from applying, then fees are a necessary condition in order to maintain the high standard of British Universities.

The Election Explained

Voting will take place this weekend between 10am and 8pm

Saturday **Sunday**
15th **16th**

Voters must hold a Cambridge MA degree or higher. Undergraduates and holders of the BA degree may not vote

The results will be announced as soon as they are counted on Sunday evening

Votes must be cast in person at Senate House, and identification may be required

All voters must wear a gown. The University will make gowns available for those without them

The result is anyone's guess at this point

Analysis
Tristan Dunn



The outcome of the election is far from clear; Blessed is being touted by students as the 'runaway favourite' while many in the University itself believe Sainsbury has it covered.

One of the major problems with not having an election in 164 years is that you just don't know how many people are going to turn up and there

are no opinion polls.

Indeed, there are whispers that the University has had a logistical nightmare organising this week's election – nobody living has any experience of organising one.

What is perhaps more worrying is that many alumni don't know that an election is even there in the first place. Information regarding the election is documented on just one page of the University website. Business Weekly's research suggests that few of the eligible electorate recognise the importance of this particular vote or even know how or where to vote.

Unsurprisingly, most undergraduates (ineligible to vote) have no idea what the Chancellor does and are frankly disinterested in the whole affair.

The fact that the result is a lottery then should be a major worry to the university. This is arguably the highest seat in academia in Britain for which the election has become a bit of a joke.

One thing that should come from this episode is electoral reform. It should not be a position where a small select committee chooses an appropriate candidate - it should always be a contested vote.

DESTINATIONS

| | | | |
|----------|----------------|----|--------|
| INDUSTRY | IMPACT | OW | FASTER |
| GLOBAL | ASSIGNMENTS | OW | FASTER |
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 **MARSH & MCLENNAN
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Shakespeare meets Socialism

In the run up to the Chancellor's elections, *Varsity* has spoken to all four contenders for the post. This week, Brian Blessed and Michael Mansfield make their bid.



Brian Blessed



Blessed: "I want to be a servant to the students."

How did you feel to be nominated for the Chancellorship?
Immensely excited. I'm a coal-miner's son and had to leave school at 14, because my father was injured in the coal mines. I used to dream of this remote kingdom where universities were, and Cambridge was of course

the crème de la crème. I have a great love for it. I love inspiring young people, because I never grew up. I'm Peter Pan. I don't want to be somebody who pops up there twice a year and looks like Henry VIII in some clothes. I want to be part of it and inspire them, and drive them on.

How do you feel about the support you've had, and the endorsement you've had from people like Stephen Fry and Derek Jacobi?
I'm touched. It makes me weep. I think it's wonderful, because Stephen's got a tremendous brain and tremendous talent. And Jacobi is such a great actor, we were at Birmingham Rep together for two years and he talked about Cambridge in glowing terms. I'm absolutely astonished and thrilled that the pair of them are endorsing me. I'm really very moved by it.

You said you have no animosity towards the other candidates. What are your thoughts on the University's official candidate Lord Sainsbury?
I think Sainsbury is a terrific man – we need another 50,000 like him. He has devoted his life to the arts, a phenomenal man. I have tremendous respect for him.

What would you say the role of the Chancellor should be, should it just be a ceremonial position?
It should be a servant. I'm not being religious here, but when Jesus was about to die the disciples said, 'but

BLESSED'S THOUGHTS

...on access
"I am a coal-miner's son, that speaks for itself. I want to be very active in that department. I will pour blood and sweat into that. I will do everything to help."

...on tuition fees
"I need to be educated about it. And then I will apply myself with conscience. I don't want to see students suffer."

...on student protests
"If they stopped standing up and protesting, then this affects art, this affects education. Don't sit quietly in a corner and take it, but come out, be seen, be counted."

A love of life. A love of the arts. Neglect the arts at your peril – art is everything. Cambridge's motto is enlightenment and vision, and those are the two principles that I wish to embrace.

Do you think that the fact that you yourself didn't study here will affect your chances?
I think quite the reverse. I can bring something original. I can bring something that is real. If I become Chancellor, it would mean that nothing is impossible in life. If a coal-miner's son can be Chancellor of Cambridge University then anything is possible.

You've been described as the 'runaway favourite'. Do you feel confident that you'll win?
No, you can't be confident about anything. I think that there is a huge difference between people saying things, and when their finger goes onto a piece of paper and puts a cross on it. I think the result of this is a complete and utter mystery. But then isn't that the essence of Cambridge – mystery? I think it's exciting, I think it's fun. I think that the whole election is a gorgeous mystery.

Michael Mansfield

Do you think that your being explicitly political will cause problems in what has traditionally been an apolitical role?
I've practiced law for 42 years, and practiced it with a radical dimension, so I'm used to having to put forward unusual proposals, in a hierarchal and traditional setting – the law – so I'm accustomed to having to overcome all sorts of prejudices and predispositions about what I'm about. So that's not unusual.

Do you think that your politics could cause friction with the University establishment?
I know there's the possibility of friction, but I'm not somebody who has engaged in friction because you don't make much progress that way. The Vice-Chancellor did an inaugural speech last year in which he talked about, essentially, scholarship and excellence. He talked about how he saw the combination of scholarship and people to be the root of success. How are you going to get scholarship and people, unless you have a situation where you have a fairer intake, and a fairer system?

How do you feel the rest of the University has taken your bid?
I can only surmise that the academic hierarchy is much the same as the

MICHAEL'S CASE

...on access
"My basic point on access is education is a right, no one will dispute that. Essentially, there can't be any justice without education."

...on tuition fees
"I'm advocating free education. Most of the people in the House of Commons had free education."

...on student protests
I'm part of something called Defend The Right To Protest, because what I find shocking is that there's been increasing centralisation, and increasing control, and increasing encroachments on that right.

rest of society in the sense that there's a huge division at this very moment, between the political hierarchy who are living on another planet, who have no idea what's going on the street, and the rest of the population. I think it'll be a very divided electorate. If you want more of the same, then don't vote for me. But if you want some kind of shift towards a new age - that's what we're facing now.

Do you see the nomination of other candidates as a protest against

the University and the way that it nominates candidates, or do you actually see it as a personal attack on Sainsbury as the person being nominated?
I don't know, but it seems to me that the emergence of Abdul and then the emergence of Brian and then finally me in that order is a protest at the University's assumption that they can appoint somebody and it'll just go through. That's wrong. People have got to wake up that there's a different world there now, nobody's got a divine right to do anything.

Would you try and change the role in any way?
If you have a vice chancellor doing the day-to-day things, I understand the Chancellor can't be expected to be involved in every decision. But the Chancellor should have an influential role behind the scenes, and should be part of the decision-making process, because if the Chancellor's got to go out there, to the rest of the world, it's no use being on some kind of a pedestal and divorced from what's going on in the University. I want a hands-on job.

Do you think you'll win?
I haven't a clue. All I do know is it's wide open. I don't think it was anticipated by anyone there would



Mansfield: "I want a hands-on job."

be an election – so thank you Abdul for kicking it off – I think he is owed a debt of gratitude for opening it up. I think the four candidates are all very different and I think anyone of us could win. I'm not presuming anything.

If you weren't to win, who would you want to win?
Emotionally I'd like Abdul to win if

I don't, because he's representing what's happening in the world and he's out in it. But I realise he may not actually be able to accomplish it unless he gives up his business. Out of the other two, I fear for Lord Sainsbury because he may treat the University as a business. I don't know what interest Brian Blessed has had in education before now. So it's difficult to say who I'd want.

Calls for Cambridge to cut ties with Veolia

University urged to stop using disposal company accused of human rights abuses

Ross Kempzell
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

Campaigners are calling on the University to cut its ties with a controversial contractor allegedly involved in Israeli human rights abuses.

The ‘Cambridge Bin Veolia’ campaign is seeking to force the termination of the University’s contract with the French environmental services company Veolia, which it currently employs on a waste disposal contract.

A referendum will be held amongst

students from 21-24 October to determine if CUSU should add its weight to the campaign and officially call for a boycott of the firm on behalf of its members.

The Palestine Solidarity Campaign, a national pressure group which campaigns against some actions of the Israeli government, alleges that Veolia is “helping to build and operate a tramway linking illegal settlements in East Jerusalem with Israel”, as well as operating bus services connecting the settlements.

It also alleges that the multinational

“has been supporting illegal settlements by taking their refuse at its Tovlan landfill site”, allegedly located on stolen Palestinian land.

The ‘Cambridge Bin Veolia’ campaign also claimed in a press release that the firm “has lost contracts worth more than €10 billion since 2005, including, just a few months ago, a £300 million contract in Ealing.”

A public meeting in support of the referendum has been scheduled for 18 October at 5:15pm, in the Union Blue Room.

Rafeef Ziadah, from the Palestinian

‘Boycott National Committee’, and Ronnie Barkan, from the Israeli group ‘Boycott from Within’, are expected to speak.

Owen Holland, a student at St Catherine’s College, told *Varsity*: “Israeli settlements in the West Bank are not only illegal, but they have a serious daily impact on Palestinian communities including land and property theft and destruction, settler violence, and restricted movement within Palestine.

“It’s outrageous that the University is contracting with a company

that supports the settlements, and students should vote to break those ties.”

This sentiment was seconded by, Daniel Benjamin, a student at Trinity College, who said: “The University claims that its contracts are free from politics, but in contracting with Veolia, the University is very much involved in the Israeli occupation.

He continued: “It’s naïve to pretend otherwise. Now Cambridge has a chance to own up to its involvement and break its ties with the occupation.”

Lecturers in ongoing pension row

Varsity News

Academics at 67 leading universities across the UK, including the University of Cambridge, have been working to rule this week, in protest against planned changes to pensions.

An estimated 40,000 lecturers only worked their contracted hours, refusing to cover for colleagues or go to meetings.

They are also threatening full strike and boycotting the marking of students’ work unless employers listen to their demands.

The action is in protest to changes to pension schemes, which they argue will leave them significantly worse off in retirement.

Employers want to change the lecturers’ pension scheme – the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) – to put new members on career-average, as opposed to final salary, pensions.

They would also like to introduce a normal pension age of 65, starting



from 1st October, though existing members over the age of 55 would be exempt from this change in retirement age.

The University and College Union (UCU), the trade union for lecturers, said that the average lecturer could lose more than £100,000 during retirement as a result of the change.

The UCU also said that in two

referendums 90% of those in the scheme voted against changes to their pensions, while 77% backed supported industrial action. Sally Hunt, general secretary of UCU, criticised employers’ lack of negotiation with the union, saying: “We cannot negotiate with an empty chair. We are keen to resolve this dispute as quickly as possible with minimal disruption.”

University is best path to millions

Matt Russell
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

Two thirds of self-made millionaires attended university before making their money, a new report has found.

The study, commissioned by investment firm Skandia, also revealed that a third of these university graduates went on to achieve a Master’s degree.

Unsurprisingly, the primary universities attended by these millionaires were in the Russell Group.

Almost a quarter of the people sur-

veyed. Oxford was the second most popular university with 7.8%. A more suprising finding of the report was that over 70% of the millionaires were educated at a state school.

Sunil Sutaria, a third year Economist, told *Varsity*: “This should just reinforce the fact that we’re at a great university and shows how important a good education is.”

He added: “It is also very encouraging to see that such a high percentage went to a state school given how much has been made of private school figures at university – it shows that that’s not the only path to success.”

549 millionaires, 8.5% of whom were classified as multi-millionaires, were surveyed for the report by investment agency Skandia, who commissioned the report in order to gauge the opinions of millionaires on a broad range of economic issues affecting the UK.

Cambridge boasts a variety of notable alumni who have gone on to earn their millions. Particularly famous examples include actors like Sir Ian McKellen and novelists like Nick Hornby.

Over two thirds of the millionaires surveyed were educated at state schools



veyed attended Cambridge, Oxford or the University of London.

5.5% of them studied at Cambridge, making it the third-best university for producing self-made millionaires.

The University of London, which includes the LSE, Imperial and UCL, was attended by 10.9% of those

| Universities attended by millionaire graduates | |
|--|------|
| University | % |
| University of London | 10.9 |
| University of Oxford | 7.8 |
| University of Cambridge | 5.5 |
| University of Leeds | 3.9 |
| University of Birmingham | 3.5 |
| University of Manchester | 3.5 |
| University of St. Andrews | 3.5 |
| University of Bristol | 2.3 |
| University of Edinburgh | 2.3 |
| Aston University | 2.0 |
| University of Liverpool | 2.0 |
| The Open University | 1.6 |
| University of Glasgow | 1.6 |
| Outside UK | 7.8 |
| Other | 41.8 |

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Location: Orchard Suite, Crowne Plaza, Downing Street, Cambridge CB2 3DT
Time: 6.30pm – 8.30pm
Registration: www.deloitte.co.uk/graduates/events

The high street's worst enemy

Nick Robertson, founder and CEO of ASOS.com, discusses the meteoric rise and growth of his online fashion harem with Tom Bordell and Medhi Jaffer

Now a household name in the fashion world, ASOS.com has joined, even surpassed, the likes of H&M, Topshop, River Island and New Look as the go-to store for what's hot to wear.

Nick Robertson, founder and CEO of the online superstore, began his career in advertising immediately after leaving school. After a frustrating 10 years, Nick decided to follow his brother's footsteps as an entrepreneur by starting his own marketing organisation and a small online business, then known as AsSeenOnScreen.com. The concept has since been refined and streamlined into today's slick, dynamic and hugely popular fashion destination ASOS.com - the UK's 2nd largest fashion retailer.

One of the foremost challenges ASOS faced during its outset was where to focus its efforts from a product perspective. "I was told we needed a buyer, but I didn't even know what a buyer was," Robertson recalls.

"If you do what's right for customers, generally that's right for the business"

However, one of his first hires proved to catalyse the transformation from celebrity odd bits to the foremost online fashion destination in the UK.

By chance, Nick's first buyer was a former Topshop buyer, whose focus on fashion attracted the most attention and the most sales. "Once the penny dropped, we realised that fashion was so much better than anything else we were trying to sell - and we turned all our attention to that."

Nick notes the benefit of an online market, particularly in the current economic climate. While the average customer might be spending less



Nick Robertson has grown ASOS into Britain's largest online fashion store, with over 35,000 fashion goods

on the high street, there is a marked reallocation of where consumers are spending their money.

He says: "What do you think John Lewis and Topshop online are doing? Still growing at 50 to 60%."

So while people have about the same or perhaps less money to spend, they are proportionally spending much more online. "Because I only play in that online market channel, I get 100% of the upside."

Nick's flexibility to drive forward new ideas from the very top is an important business characteristic of ASOS, something that he puts down to the sound financial position of the company.

At the outset ASOS raised £2.8m in credit but since then it has not had to take on any debt. Owing nothing to anyone allows Nick to meet the requirements of a relatively unpredictable customer base. "If you are private equity owned or saddled with debt you are limited on how much capital you can invest in any one year. There's too much pressure - don't underestimate the importance of being debt free where you have to move so quickly."

While the best margins for ASOS remain with their own ever more popular label, Robertson is adamant that despite this, the umbrella website format is the way forward. For Nick, there isn't going to be one 'winner' in the

online fashion race, but always a variety of brands.

Winning the hearts and minds of 20 year olds is Nick's mission, and by churning out editorials relevant to that consumer base, ASOS shows loyalty to its customers rather than to one brand or another. "It's about changing the perception of the consumer, from 'what can we sell' to 'what do they want to know and hear' and if we can sell some of that, then that's fantastic."

With a background in advertising, Nick has learned to position his business around the customer. "Do what's right for the customers, not what's right for the business," he says. "Because if you do what's right for customers, generally that's right for the business."

That customer focus is seen most clearly in Nick's adamant commitment to free delivery on all orders. "I knew that free delivery is where the world is going to be in 3 years' time, but I just wanted to get there right away."

Starting ASOS Marketplace, the second-hand vintage online store stocked by the users themselves, was a similarly inspired move.

It is precisely this sort of dynamic and flexible creativity, this sound business definition and execution, and the infectious self-belief of Robertson that percolates every

sinew of his business, which suggests the relentless growth of ASOS.com is unlikely to subside any time soon.

However, ASOS does not believe its future opportunities lie solely within the borders of the United Kingdom.

Nick reminds us with a broad smile: "The UK represents just 3% of global Internet traffic - there's still 97% to play for!"

ASOS has already created dedicated websites for the French, German and American markets and is looking to launch "3 to 5 more this year" as Asia becomes its next target.

The big unexplored is what keeps the ASOS executives excited, motivated and right on the pulse of the online fashion market. "Asia represents 50% of internet traffic. If we want to compete we have to be there."

Before leaving ASOS, Nick shared with us his top tip. "You have to believe in yourself. You spend your life talking to people and everyone has a different opinion and it's quite easy to get distracted by that. You have to know where you are going. Look into the horizon and that is the destination. All the time you are going to have people telling you it's wrong but sometimes trust yourself."

On leaving ASOS HQ we were more in awe of the story behind the company's staggering current share price than the line of models waiting for their next shots to be uploaded onto the site. And all this in just over 10 years, driven by a man who didn't even go to university.

Exam boards face fines for mistakes

Joanna Tang
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

Exam boards could face fines if they make errors marking exam papers.

The Department of Education has made the decision after 140,000 papers were affected by a dozen mistakes made on A-Level and GCSE papers this summer.

Grades were consequently delayed due to the mistakes.

The fines will depend on the severity of the individual mistakes, though there is a threshold of 10% of the organisation's turnover.

Schools minister Nick Gibb explained the reasons behind the decision, saying: "Pupils work hard for years for their GCSEs and A levels. They do not deserve to be let down by exam boards' mistakes. It is unacceptable poor practice for even one paper to contain an error."

"It would act as a deterrent and send a clear signal to students and the wider public that the exam boards will face consequences where they get things wrong."

"Financial penalties would provide an effective and flexible sanction and would act as a very clear deterrent."

The Coalition Government wants the measures in place before next summer's exams.

However, some critics say the new costs would only be passed from boards to schools.

Ofqual, the independent exams watchdog, which would impose the fines, is conducting a 12-week consultation period before the new powers are implemented.

FIVE QUESTIONS

Favourite Business Book

"Never read a business book."

Dinner with a CEO

"Sir Terry Leahy."

Invest £100m in a business today

"Facebook."

Apprentice or Dragons' Den

"I quite fancy the Apprentice because I'm competitive."

Saver or Spender?

"Spender!"



twitterati

What's happening in Cambridge?



@felixdanczak

Felix Danczak, Varsity Comment Editor

This is an amusing tweet. Stat.



@MillicentAlice

Millie Riley, VarsityTV Editor

Watching Edwin Currie on Strictly. A bit like her performance at the Cambridge Union. Clunky and embarrassing.



@lauriemartin2

Laurie Martin, Varsity Co-editor

Blackberry and gmail down? Feeling technologically naked.



@kirstygray1

Kirsty Gray, Varsity Features Editor

Why did the baker have smelly hands? Because he kneaded a poo...

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Grayling criticises A-levels as a measure of ability

Mark Winterburn
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

A. C. Grayling has become the latest figure to criticise the British education system, claiming that exam results no longer reflect the academic ability of the candidate.

The philosopher put the system's failings down to the "tyranny" of repetitive testing throughout a child's academic career.

The revelation came to him, he claimed, when interviewing a female pupil with two As and a B at A-level who was more "interesting, lively and thoughtful" than one with three A*s and two As.

Speaking at the Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference's annual meeting in St Andrews, Grayling said that students "are so focused on getting an A* or getting a first in their first-year modules that they lose the point of what they are doing and they don't read around it and see it as something that they can take up and make use of themselves."

Currently, both GCSEs and A-levels can be taken on a modular basis, with the possibility of retaking exams to improve grades.

As a result of his concerns, Grayling has said that he planned to interview every "plausible-looking" candidate to prevent anyone with the right ability being barred from admission due to their grades.

The Professor stated that a university education should be "accessible to all who are gifted and suitable for it."

No stranger to controversy, Grayling's comments are likely to be contentious due to his position as the public face of the New College for the Humanities. The London college, which is due to open next year, has drawn accusations of elitism for its role as the first 'private university' modelled on the US system, with fees of up to £18,000 a year.

Some have speculated that the comments may in fact be a sign of admission that the college will be forced to accept less able students to fill its places since only a handful have so far made firm applications.

"Social media could potentially save lives"

Peter Storey
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

Social networking sites such as Twitter and Facebook could potentially save lives in the aftermath of disasters, a group of researchers has suggested.

Later this month, the Cambridge Festival of Ideas will hear Professor John Preston of the University of East London reveal the details of his research in this area, saying that the

speed of mass communication offered by these websites could be invaluable in the aftermath of a catastrophe.

Professor James Jackson from the University of Cambridge will also speak on the subject alongside Daniel Walden of Save the Children UK and Andrew Collins of Northumbria University.

Since 2010 Professor Preston, whose book *Disaster Education* is out early next year, has been leading a research programme with the support of the

Research Council's UK Global Uncertainties Programme, which seeks to uncover how sites like Twitter and Facebook could potentially save lives in the event of national crises such as terrorist attacks or natural disasters.

Preston acknowledges that social networks cannot prevent disasters but says they are an efficient and effective way of correcting misinformation.

He argues that Twitter is "like the scientific process" in that "there is an inherent self-correcting bias" and

"when someone posts, it sifts the evidence for and against and the more current information countervails anything that came before."

Professor Preston admits however, that this use of websites in this way could potentially be a double-edged sword: they could be used for "malicious reasons to spread rumours by targeting false information at a few super-connected people."

Professor Preston will be speaking on this topic on 25th October.

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News in Brief

Bedders get place in the limelight

Cambridge University's bedders, cooks, porters and other domestic staff will feature in a new film to be screened in Cambridge this month.

The film, made by Catherine Seymour, takes a look at the day-to-day life of essential staff.

Ms Seymour said: "They're people with whom students can be, without worrying about the pressures of work, or the competitive aspects of their time in Cambridge."

The film will be shown at Cambridge Folk Museum on Thursday, October 27 at 7pm.

Women warned to stay vigilant

Women have been advised to take extra caution at night as a sexual attacker remains at large in Cambridge.

A female was assaulted on Parker's Piece in the early hours of Tuesday morning, the latest in a series of similar incidents in the city centre.

Local police have advised women to take "common sense precautions". The University are providing attack alarms, and many colleges are running a cash-free 'taxi service'.

Varsity Ski Trip sells out at record speed

The University's popular Varsity Ski Trip sold out this year in under 6 hours, a huge increase from last year's record of 30 hours.

In 2009, tickets stayed unsold for as long as ten days.

Many keen students, however, experienced problems with the trip's website, as the vast numbers of people simultaneously visiting the site made it temporarily inaccessible.

81% of students admit to living in filthy conditions

A new report sheds light on the unsanitary conditions that students across the country live in

Stephanie Barrett
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

According to a new report, a third of students arrive at university without ever having done housework, leading to a shocking 81% of students admitting to living in conditions they described as "filthy".

Despite the study, conducted by cleaning giant Vileda, showing that 36 % of fresher students describe themselves as "the very model of cleanliness", a further 30 per cent admitted that while they know how to carry out housework, it becomes simply a case of not bothering once they leave home.

Furthermore, many arrive at university lacking even the simplest knowledge for performing basic household chores. 34% also had no

idea how to wipe a kitchen surface or mop the floor.

One second year, who wished to remain anonymous, said: "Without bedders and helpful friends, most boys at Cambridge would live in abject squalor."

"I personally don't know how the washing machine works and get my friends to help."

34% of respondents said they had no idea how to wipe a kitchen surface or mop the floor



"We all bring enough underwear to last around a fortnight, a month if you're prepared to wear them inside out."

"But what's the harm in being so lazy? We are students after all. We have an image to maintain."

Named after the hit BBC comedy series *The Young Ones*, cleaning experts have now dubbed these appalling hygiene conditions "The Young Ones Syndrome".

This laziness means students are passively playing a hazardous health game. A spokesperson from Vileda described the chances of contracting an illness from unsanitary living conditions as a "lottery".

Other factors, together with a lack of basic knowledge and idleness, also contribute to this unclean student lifestyle. Despite instructive signs plastered everywhere in gyp rooms, many admit that cleaning up after preparing food is not their top priority. Due to time restraints on busy

student lifestyles and kitchens being shared between many, mess rapidly accumulates.

Students seemingly resort to anything to save time. According to the report, which surveyed 3,000 students, an astonishing 40 per cent of freshers said they would eat off paper plates (and undoubtedly with plastic cutlery too) to avoid washing up. For the same reason, almost a third admit to opting for takeaways nearly every night, so that they could eat directly from the containers.

With one in ten students admitting that during their first year at university they swept dust under the rug to save them having to Hoover the floor, perhaps we should express our appreciation for our bedders, even if their early morning knock at the door sometimes feels unwelcome.

Cambridge top place to find job

Gurnak Teja
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

Research by the search engine Adzuna has shown Cambridge to be the best city in the UK to find a job, despite unemployment being at record levels and on the rise.

Comparing the number of local vacancies in its comprehensive database to the claimant count, Adzuna ranked the top 50 cities to attain a job revealing the varying prospects for jobseekers across the UK.

With only 1.3 jobseekers for every available job, Cambridge is a jobseekers haven.

One Cambridge student described the news as "unsurprising" and added that "the support given is first-rate, ensuring everyone has opportunities."

Belfast, Stoke on Trent and

Sunderland on the other hand were amongst the worst cities to find a job, while Hull was top of the list delivering a huge 45.5 claimants per vacancy.

Unsurprisingly, the study illustrated a huge divide in the country, with only Aberdeen representing the North in the top 10 and 6 of the worst cities also hailing from the North. Aberdeen, a surprise 2nd, was boosted by its flourishing energy industry.

Major university towns such as Bristol, Cambridge and Oxford and southern cities dominated the employment hotspots.

The North-South divide has often been attributed to industrial decline and the heavy reliance on a small number of industries.

With skilled workers continuously moving to the South, it seems the gap will widen.



Stephen Mangan starring in the TV show *Dirk Gently*

In a recent interview Cambridge alumnus Stephen Mangan described the legendary Footlights as "cliquey" and "unwelcoming".

Cambridge students show their entrepreneurial flare

Siobhan Coskeran
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

More Cambridge students are showing interest in setting up their own companies, a new report from Cambridge University Entrepreneurs (CUE) has announced.

The news suggests a break from the spell of graduates opting for "safe jobs", reported by CUE last year, as more students are beginning to seek a more entrepreneurial path.

CUE Vice-President Jun Chen said: "Although it is inevitable that some students are still hesitant about starting their own ventures – it can seem a very tough road when they do not know where to start – we are definitely seeing more and more students interested in entrepreneurship."

"Even though many may not start up their business immediately, a good number of students have the intention of starting their own venture in the years to come."

"Our mission is to encourage all those students to realise their entrepreneurial dream by guiding them through the process."

"The competition experience and resource they gain lead them to the next stage of development."

"We cater to our students' needs by teaching them from the very basics to setting up a real business model."

So why are students becoming increasingly willing to carve their own path in the business world?

Andrey Pronin, a recent graduate of the University of Cambridge and co-founder and Director of the

CUE FACT BOX

1999 founded by three graduates
£500,000 in prize money awarded to start-up companies
110 local jobs created
£42,000,000 investment secured by CUE alumni companies

successful Oxbridge Tours company, told *Varsity* that rising unemployment was an important factor in his decision: "Because there are so many people who need jobs, it is far easier

to create new jobs rather than search for one."

But going it alone doesn't have to be a purely practical response to the harsh nature of today's job market. "It is more fun than a 9-5 job," Pronin added. "Much more fun."

CUE organises several events and competitions aimed at inspiring and aiding students with enterprising aspirations.

This year, a new event on the society's calendar is 'speed dating', intended to introduce potential business partners.

Prize money is also available to students with the most promising entrepreneurial ideas.

A high profile panel of business leaders will attend the event, including founder of Cobra Beer, Lord Karan

Bilimoria, and Dr Darrin Disley, CEO of personalised medicines pioneer Horizon Discovery.

Successful CUE alumni will also return to Cambridge to encourage others to take part in the scheme.

Dr Shamus Husheer, CEO of Cambridge Temperature Concepts, Billy Boyle of Owlstone Nanotech, and Jimme Jardine of Qiqqa are among those who hope to share their expertise.

Qiqqa, a software tool designed for academics, had a particularly good run of success in local entrepreneurship competitions this summer, including CUE's own grand finals.

More details of the CUE Competition, which launched on Thursday 13th October, can be found on their website: www.cue.org.uk.

Comment

EDWARD EUSTACE



Comment Question

How much did the vision of Steve Jobs really change the world?

Should we be concerned that such a small number of companies control such an important market, one that by its very nature regulates our access to information on a day-to-day basis?

OFCOM administers how much of a market each broadcaster can possess, and how neutral each medium must be. Is there an argument that not just the providers of content, but those who provide the format for it, should face a regulator's eye?

We just pose the questions. Let us know what you think on Twitter @VarsityUK #comment

iCult: The deification of Steve

The death of Steve Jobs has served to highlight the horrifying state of consumer society

Felix Danczak



Last Wednesday evening, news slowly leaked out over the internet, through Twitter, Facebook, and a host of other media tools, that a man had died.

Within hours, the death of this man had become a global event. The President of the United States of America made a statement. Technology stocks fell. Images were beamed worldwide of wreaths laid at this man's office. Within hours, millions of blogs, articles and tweets had been written and published; bemoaning the death of this man, discussing his greatness, uniting in the opinion that he had truly changed the world.

Within hours, Steve Jobs had become a saint.

This transubstantiation of a man into a deity is a shocking exemplar of the state of modern consumer society. For, at the crunch, Steve Jobs sold stuff. He didn't give it away, he sold it. For a lot of money, at outrageous mark-ups. Pretty stuff, beautiful, simple, elegant stuff, yes. But stuff nonetheless.

After his death, the reactions of many were nigh-on religious. iStores were swamped with well-wishers

laying flowers and bringing gifts for iStore employees. Many were in tears. Gary Hamel, a business professor, epitomised the reaction in the Financial Times: "I came out to this Apple store to pay my respects," he said, clutching the power cord he had just bought inside. Clutching. A grim spectre of a modern-day disciple leaving his Consumerist temple.

"Why Steve?" asked so many, plaintively. Several commentators suggested, in what can only be looked upon with disgust, that they'd have been far less sad if Bill Gates had died. Take a moment to record Bill Gates's achievements: this is a man who literally brought computing to the world.

Without Microsoft, without the PC, the world would be a fundamentally different place, far more so than if we lacked the iPod

"Gadgetry is the religious iconography of our age"

or the Macbook. This is of course not to mention the \$28bn Gates has thus far given to charity in an effort to, amongst other things, eradicate Malaria. Mr Jobs, we should perhaps be reminded, was notable for his lack of charitable giving.

This is not to say that Steve Jobs should not be mourned. He was an extraordinary businessman and should be recognised as such.

Apple, under his leadership, was for a moment last year richer than the US Government, and it is now the world's largest technology company.

Jobs had a complete, coherent vision of what Apple was producing, what it stood for, and how it was going to go about it. No wide availability, or budget models for poorer clients, but expense and with that, exclusivity. No shops as such, but 'spaces', where you could spend as long as you wanted checking your e-mail, playing games, or chatting.

Jobs' success lay partially in his desire for control. He micromanaged incessantly: his name can be seen on dozens of patents for devices across the Apple range, and he allegedly personally specified the manner in which Apple products must be displayed outside of iStores. Try going to John Lewis and ask for their Macbook Air to be picked up. It's glued down. As is every single Macbook Air for sale not in an iStore.

The vision of a control freak perhaps, but Jobs' vision played a part in changing the way we interact with technology. Find out about his death on your iPhone? Broadcast your shock and sadness about it from the same device? It is perhaps unsurprising that we have deified he who hath provided these goods – for some, those gadgets define who and what they are.

Unfortunately, Mr Jobs has been sanctified not for his prodigious personal abilities, but what he

represented. Pretty technology. Gadgetry is the religious iconography of our age. Mr Jobs loved his technology. We loved it too – his product announcement speeches were legendary. We saw in Steve a prophet, a man who could

"Steve Jobs sold stuff. He didn't give it away, he sold it. For a lot of money, at outrageous mark-ups"

give us what we most desired.

What is therefore most sickening about the response to his death is the lack of personal sympathy. Often, thoughts for his bereaved family were a guilty afterthought. The real focus for mourners was, inevitably, stuff. No more pretty stuff. What will the next iPhone look like without Steve? Will it be as pretty, as simple, as elegant?

The deification of Mr Jobs is, in homage to his own mantra, a simple, elegant, unconscious misdirection of our love of stuff. We cannot admit to ourselves the level to which our obsession with stuff has grown, for it would mean admitting the worship of icons for their own sake. Instead, we have placed Steve Jobs on a pedestal. It was not the technology we love – perish the thought. It was Steve. We love Steve for he was our prophet. But we worship his God at our peril.



VARSITY COMMENT BRINGS YOU A WEEKLY GUIDE TO THE BEST TALKS IN CAMBRIDGE

THURSDAY
Talking to Terrorists
Time: 18:00

Location: McCrum Lecture Theatre (behind The Eagle pub)
Why: Jonathan Powell was Tony Blair's Chief of Staff and has since moved on to found Inter-Mediate, a conflict-resolution agency that specialises in back-channels - allowing governments to talk to terrorists off the record and out of the view of the world's media. A must-see, if you can bag a ticket

THURSDAY
The Politics of Speech-making
Time: 18:00

Location: Wolfson Theatre, Churchill College
Why: Do today's political discourses favour sound bites rather than impassioned, well-made arguments? Join Michael White, the Guardian's political editor and Philip Collins, Tony Blair's speech-writer alongside Dr David Runciman for a fascinating talk.

Scientists are Nobel people

The Nobel Prizes have been handed out, and the winners applauded. But we need to look closer

Helen Cahill



It's time to adopt a new perspective on whether scientists are appropriately respected today. The argument over whether scientists are under-appreciated is too focused upon the idea that we don't understand their work, so can't grasp its importance.

Yet a bigger problem is rarely considered: the impact of a scientist's personality. More light needs to be shed upon them as human beings, not just as practitioners in esoteric fields that are inaccessible to the untrained. The Nobel Prizes have been announced for this year, and however fascinating the discoveries concerning the activation of innate immunity are, the story behind these accolades should be considered in greater depth.

Don't just look at the Nobel Prize, look at the person holding it, because their work involves more than theorising and doing experiments. Their journey counts. Scientists are too often seen in one dimension: their contribution to our comprehension of the natural world is all that is considered meaningful. Valuing a scientist in their field only

in terms of successfully proving various hypotheses is tragically unsophisticated.

It is important for the progression of knowledge that we do not persist in such simplicity. We need to pay more attention to scientists as people because it is a scientist's attitudes and ambitions as much as their investigations that shape the landscape of knowledge.

The work of Frederick Hopkins elucidates this. In 1929 he won the Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine. Today this is the achievement for which he is most celebrated by our society, but the man himself needs equal attention.

"Don't just look at the Nobel Prize, look at the person holding it"

He had the determination and single-mindedness required to set up biochemistry as a distinct scientific study in Cambridge, a feat fraught with bureaucratic obstacles. He cemented a discipline through resourcing the funds and researchers necessary, and in doing so laid the foundations for one of the world's best biochemistry departments.

If anyone forgets: it was here that Watson and Crick discovered the structure of DNA, and any biochemist would gladly whisk them over to the Cavendish Laboratory and



make them lick the commemorative plaque. The importance of biochemistry as a subject is rarely debated now. This isn't due to Hopkins' actions as a scientist, but as a person. Had he not won a Nobel Prize in 1929, would his name still be on the building in the Downing Site?

This not to say we shouldn't honour individuals for their scientific achievements. Admiring people from any field for progress in their profession is important whether they are a sportsman, politician, or artist. Yet in other areas we are more aware of the effect of personality on their work.

The public look at an MP's persona for they understand that this will affect their political views. It is almost intuitive that an artist's temperament influences their art. Similarly, we need to think more broadly about what a scientist's 'work' is. Teaching, leadership and perseverance are as intrinsic to the shaping of what

is discovered in the laboratory as accuracy and precision.

When conducting trials or tests a disinterested attitude is crucial, but thinking that the people in laboratories are relentlessly neutral is ridiculous. It's more nuanced than that, and the scientific community does and must consist of headstrong, imaginative people with an enterprising spirit.

Changing our outlook is important. Many are aware that research is often funded by biased parties, and as such findings are questioned accordingly. But the output is definitely a function of the scientist's inclinations as well as those of businessmen - we must look at both parties.

Given the power science wields in our modern world, we cannot ignore this. A once-yearly celebration of science is not enough - we must also assess the politics and personalities behind its formation.

Go on, get rid of the NHS. It would make my day

I sincerely hope that Brendan O'Neill was joking when he wrote in last week's Essay that the NHS is a "patronising" and "oppressive" institution that treats people like "scum of the earth". Pull the other one, sir.

The NHS isn't perfect. Let me make that much clear. But O'Neill seems to think that the best way to fix our public health problems is to go back to the good old days when doctors simply treated patients without ever giving any lifestyle advice, so that everyone can carry on living "riskily and recklessly" as soon as they leave those hospital doors.

To deny the effectiveness of preventative medicine and to call it a "tool for correcting gluttony" is a slap in the face to all those who have dedicated their lives to researching such things. There is no reason why you can't ignore your doctor if you strongly feel the urge to act contrary to their advice and eat burgers all day. What can the doctor do - give you a disapproving look the next time you see them? But don't stop others from getting that advice.

The claim that midwives who look out for domestic violence are participating in some sort of "moral correction" is short sighted and stupidly destructive. Would it be better to live in a world where professionals must turn a blind eye to the little girl with bruises that were clearly not caused by falling over, *because it is meddling?*

Brendan O'Neill also seems to think that the only people who defend the NHS are those with a "vested interest" in it. I am a medical student and so am training to be a part of this "massive, creaking, authoritarian machine". From my point of view, it would be absolutely wonderful if the NHS stopped telling people what to do. Why don't we just let them eat cake?

That way, increasing rates of heart disease and angina will lead to a rich market in middle class patients needing a bypass. If we finish privatisation by the time I start training as a cardiothoracic surgeon, then I can look forward to charging mouth-watering fees per operation (most American cardiac surgeons make between \$250,000 to \$500,000). Brilliant.

I, as a future member of the establishment that he criticises, do not mean to deny the need for change. Carefully controlled privatisation can only help to drive up service quality. But it would be wise to take no notice of polemics such as his - that offer no constructive solutions, just a load of unfounded claims and hyperbole.

GOPAL KOTECHA

Blessed are the Chancellors

Some believe the Chancellorship an empty position. Nonsense — it heralds huge potential

Gerard Tully



By the time you read this, polls will have opened for what is the most contested Chancellor's election in Cambridge history. On one hand, it is an important event for students because of the potential for change that the election represents. On the other hand, we should not be distracted by what is, essentially, a popularity contest for an honorary position from the big issues the University and its students are facing.

What can a chancellor do for us anyway? Well, he (and all the candidates are, unfortunately, men) can technically chair the University Council, which is the governing body - though this has not been a power exercised in living memory. Nevertheless, in a university which is governed from top to bottom by committee politics, this is a position with huge influence on steering our

strategic position and a pulpit from which to set the tone on issues like fees, research policy and admissions.

He can also hold any 'officer' (read: senior manager) to account by making them explain themselves publicly. Greater explanation on what the University does with its public money and our fees is something we should increasingly expect and demand.

For instance, although the University has committed to spending £10,000,000 on bursaries and widening participation, we can't yet account for huge swathes of that cash.

Space restricts me listing several other similar issues which directly affect students, but a decent chancellor could be a useful advocate for students at the top of the University to shine light on a lot of things which would materially improve the Cambridge student experience.

This was something our outgoing titular head, the Duke of Edinburgh, simply wasn't signed up to do. What he was very good at was just as important - building our international presence and inviting the world's great and good to our

doors (or to Buckingham Palace) bringing their philanthropy with them. Without that kind of external investment, in a climate of ongoing financial instability and cuts in the national higher education sector, Cambridge simply cannot sustain its world-leading position.

Any new chancellor has to balance the many demands of the job, and at the end of the day is only one man. We can't rely on a high-profile election, or a high-profile officeholder, to deliver on many of the things that we care about in the University's operation or its future. We have to go out and get many of those things ourselves. It's why I have questioned each of the candidates in turn about what they hope to do for us: the students this University exists to serve. However, I know that no matter how good the answers may be, we will always have to do the heavy lifting ourselves.

It is grossly anachronistic that only graduates of MA standing can vote. We ought to have a say, and we should call for that whenever the rules are revised in the future (also to hopefully include electronic voting).

If I had a vote, I would choose a

candidate who is committed to our principles of higher education and is willing to fight for them, who believes in sustaining Cambridge as the best University in the world while making socio-economic

"A decent chancellor could be a useful advocate for students"

circumstance no barrier to students with potential, and who believes that the office should be more than being an anonymous handshaker, but that the student community ought to be at the forefront of what he does.

It's safe to say, whatever the case, that conventional wisdom says Sainsbury is the favourite. Through Friday we will get a very good sense of how this election is going to go. If considerable numbers of alumni are returning to vote, think 5,000 or more, then we are in my opinion looking at Chancellor Mansfield or Blessed. If not, and the main voters are resident academics, Sainsbury is home and hosed. May the best man win.

GERARD TULLY IS CUSU PRESIDENT

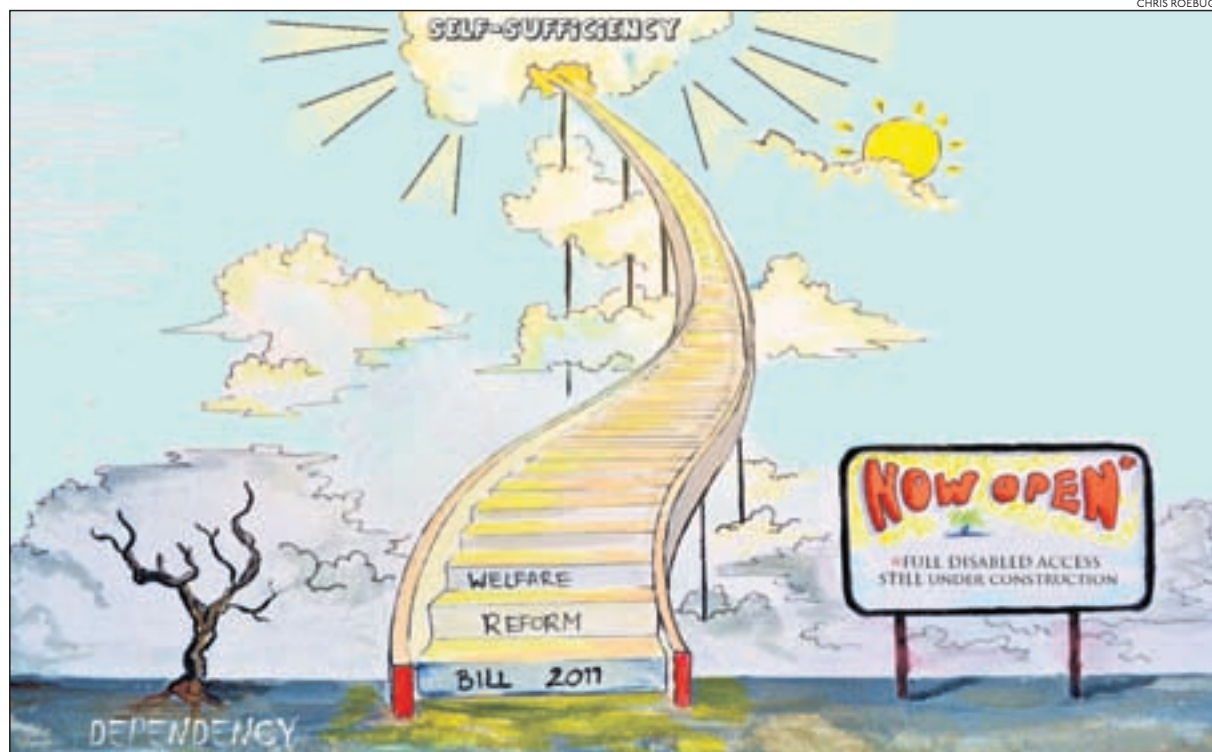
The Welfare Reform Bill is intended to fix a severely outdated system based on post-war values. Taking place against the backdrop of £18bn cuts to welfare, many of those in need will lose out as new rules and sanctions begin to bite, says **Lizzie Iron**

Today's welfare state was born out of the poverty and hardship resulting from the Second World War, and was designed by Sir William Beveridge – an Oxford academic, visionary civil servant and Liberal MP. Since then, it has evolved and morphed under successive governments in ways that reflect both the social upheavals of the past 70 years – increased support for people with disabilities, and extra help for single parents, and the political imperatives of the day such as making more people eligible for sickness benefits in order to reduce the unemployment figures.

As a result of this constant adjusting and re-adjusting, our welfare system is so complicated that many of the people who rely on it for support simply cannot navigate its labyrinthine rules, and even the staff working for Jobcentre Plus and the Benefit Delivery Centres (the government's delivery mechanisms) frequently make mistakes in calculating and paying the right benefits for claimants – hence the volume of inquiries to Citizens Advice Bureaux.

Reform is long overdue, and by way of an interesting set of political revolving doors, the Coalition government is now continuing a process of reform begun by the last Labour team – much of it designed by the current Minister for Welfare Reform, Lord Freud. David Freud was a businessman who advised the Labour government, and then crossed the floor, picked up a peerage, and now has a pivotal role in designing the new system for the Conservative-led Coalition. Another key character is Iain Duncan Smith (IDS) – former leader of the Conservative party, and founder of the flavour-of-the-month think tank, the Centre for Social Justice (CSJ). When he left office, IDS led the CSJ in research into why people behave as they do. He quickly identified that the welfare system makes it a totally rational choice for many people to stay on benefits, rather than seek work.

IDS shares David Cameron's



concerns about broken Britain and rights without responsibilities. They both support solutions based around personal responsibility and the Big Society, and are influenced by behavioural insights and nudge theory. Couple these with IDS's own personal passion and CSJ's research evidence, and then add Lord Freud's experience of market economics and the stage is set for a dramatic rationalisation of welfare support, based around changing behaviours. The aims are to make work pay, and reduce welfare dependency – leading to increased self-esteem, higher levels of personal responsibility and more social cohesion.

The problem is that it has to be done against the legacy of the biggest budget deficit in living memory, and in the context of a proposed cut of £18bn in welfare spending.

The 2011 Welfare Reform Bill has already survived the House of Commons and is passing through the Upper House this autumn. When it receives royal assent sometime next year, it will herald the biggest reforms since Beveridge. It will replace the current system of benefits and tax credits for working age people, with

one new benefit, called the Universal Credit. The intention is to pay the benefit at a certain level and then to taper it away gradually if and when the household increases its income from work.

The reforms include a mixture of carrot and stick, and will include personalised incentives and support, balanced with more severe conditions and sanctions. At Citizens Advice, we have concerns about sanctions being imposed on people who can't fulfil them because their lives don't fit the neat patterns assumed by these new rules. For example – in September, the government confirmed that Universal Credit will be paid on a monthly basis, to reflect the way people live when in work. This is seriously problematic for many of our clients who have difficulties with budgeting, and certainly doesn't reflect the way that all people live when in work.

The government wants to help more people into work, and one of the main barriers for parents – especially lone parents – is paying for reliable childcare. This month's announcement that another £300 million will be found for childcare is a welcome recognition that these reforms can't be achieved

without a realistic injection of cash.

More worrying, however, is the impact on people with disabilities: the government has decided to focus help on people in the greatest need – but this comes at the expense of people with significant, but not the most severe, disabilities. As a result, families with disabled children could have the means-tested support for their children cut in half. Changes to Employment & Support Allowance, and Disability Living Allowance (to be replaced by the Personal Independence Payment) will also mean fewer disabled people will get the support they need.

So the unanswered question is: Will the government's plans, as presented in the Welfare Reform Bill, actually achieve their own high level aims to simplify the system and make work pay? Will able-bodied people be encouraged back to work and into personal responsibility? Or will we see the poorest and most disadvantaged in our society let down by a reduction in welfare support that should shame a caring society?

LIZZIE IRON IS HEAD OF WELFARE POLICY AT CITIZENS ADVICE

This week's featured blog, *Some thoughts that came to me in the shower* writes on Liam Fox's business cards:

Like many a middle-class, middle-England, middle-of-the-road chap, I listen to Radio 4's Today Program. Its a good way to wake up – nothing too inane, lets me know what's happening in the world.

And crucially, at 7.50 the unbearable drivel that is Thought for the Day ensures that I get up and go to work. Sometimes, however, I find myself shouting at my radio, and the reason for this is always the same: a politician is refusing to lie to me.

Its a familiar scene: scandal, crisis, drama. Some unfortunate minister is brought up in front of Humphrys

or Naughtie for a dressing down on behalf of the nation (or at least, the Radio 4 audience) – six of the best, trousers down. And they all seem to work from the same code – say nothing.

It seems logical on paper: we've done something wrong, or which can be framed in a negative way. We mustn't lie, because if found out later we'll be for the high jump. But we mustn't admit our guilt. So we'll just refuse to answer. So they wriggle and writhe, flatly ignoring direct questions and talking around the subject, saying what they have plans for, what they think is right, but never admitting what they actually did.

Continued at
blogs.varsity.co.uk/comment

TASTERS: THE CANAPÉS OF THE BLOGGING WORLD

A view from the armchair: The road to nowhere.

Why do Lib Dems bother? They hover around a pitiful ten per cent in the polls. The difficulties for a smaller party – of carving out a distinct identity whilst ensuring credit for the overall direction of government, of avoiding the semblance of insignificance or petty squabbling – seem insurmountable.

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the essay

VARSITY

BLOGS

COMMENT

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V2

The Varsity Magazine
FASHION, FEATURES, ARTS & REVIEWS

Vermeer Revealed

Review page 26
Feature page 30

PLUS GALLERY GUIDE P19, FASHION P20-21 AND THE BUCKET LIST P27

OPENING NOTES

Louise Benson



Last Saturday I received an email entitled ‘Paper – or a fixed position’. I puzzled over its point of reference until I reached the second paragraph, regarding pedantry and the English language. I picked up a pen from my stationary drawer in order to circle the offending spelling error that Virginia, the sender of the email and pedant in question, had brought to my attention. It glared out from my opening pages of the Varsity Magazine. I chewed the end of the pen, and then moved the drawer to a closed – and again stationary – position. You see, I tend to keep most of my stationery in a cup on top of my desk. Perhaps by now you’ve guessed the oversight – ‘Brand new stationary’ – that featured in V.Good last week. The crowning advice in Virginia’s message read as follows: “A handy way to get these words right is: if papER is involved, use ER; otherwise the word will have something to do with a fixed position and ARY ends it”. This got me thinking of how I’d describe a piece of papER that was firmly fixed under a stationARY paperweight: it would become, effectively, stationary stationery – a wholly unmoving problem. And Paperchase, rendered idle, would surely soon be out of business in such a scenario. Poor sods. This conundrum aside, though, I wholeheartedly appreciated the correction of my inaccuracy; I must admit to being ignorant of the difference prior to Virginia’s email. And please, any further errors spotted should be directed to my inbox immediately for correction. I wouldn’t want to remain stationary, after all.

Room of one’s own



Karen Hargrave is a third year undergraduate student at Downing, studying philosophy.



So you’re in for the night

With Freshers’ week now a thing of the past, the gloomy reality sets in. You have work to do, you’re tired and ill or someone hasn’t texted you back. Looks like a quiet night alone in your room. And for every type of lonely evening, there is always a song to bolster your emotions, whatever they may be. Look no further for the ideal antidote – or accompaniment – to the long night ahead.

Compiled by Theo Evan

It’s Good To Be Here – Digable Planets

With “the ticky ticky buzz, the sun winks the sky”. Evening has come. Your fate is sealed, so you might as well embrace it. Let the Planets remind you it was your choice to stay in. And it was a damn fine one.



Armageddon – Wayne Shorter

The early optimism has collapsed. That seditious bluesy melody is making you tense.

Mothership Connection (Star Child) – Parliament


For those who take pleasure in dancing alone. Just remember to “put on your sunglasses, so you can see what you’re doing”.

September – Earth, Wind and Fire

Guaranteed transient happiness. I mean it.

Waltz for Debby – Bill Evans

Evans’ melody conjures affection and love but with a disturbing aversion to resolution. For those who were never called back.



When Will You Call (feat. Bilal) – Terence Blanchard

That wine on your desk needs drinking. No bed yet – you have moping to do.

I Ain’t Got Nobody – Woody Guthrie

If you’re big on good ol’ fashioned self-pity, this is for you. After all, you’re “Just like a chunk of wood floating on the sea.”

Fancy Clown – Madvillain

A crisp little ditty for those who think they have it bad. The characters in this tune have it worse. And they’re batshit crazy.

Building Steam With a Grain of Salt – DJ Shadow

Goes excellently with the crackles of evening rain hitting your window.



Crooked Creek – Brian Blade Fellowship

For those who aren’t sure which emotion they want to channel, try this. It covers all of them.

Tsunagaru Kanata – Toe

The birds are chirping: the sobering sun gives her condolences. If those drums can’t reinvigorate you, nothing can. Now get some breakfast.

Where did you get your treasure chest from?
I bought it when I spent a month travelling around Morocco this summer. I’ve named him Balthazar, and he was quite the challenge to transport home in my hand luggage.

What are the notes on your desk?
The notes are my (mostly completed now) to-do list for the Blake Society, the Downing Arts and Humanities society. I’m Co-President of it this year, which has been a surprising amount of work, but worth it – we’ve got Quentin Blake coming to dinner next week.

What do you think is the most important non-functional object to have in your room?
I’m quite enchanted by my new sweet bowl. I’ve filled it with mint imperials and get a kick out of asking people to take a mint as they leave. Small pleasures...

What are your favourite things to do in Cambridge?
Most of my favourite things to do in Cambridge involve good cocktails and good company. Luckily, over the years I’ve sourced a bountiful supply of both.

Objects of affection

This week, **Siobhán Forshaw** was invited inside the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology on Downing St. to talk to Sarah-Jane Harknett, their Outreach Organiser

Sarah-Jane Harknett explains about why archaeology and anthropology always come hand-in-hand; how tools and objects can never be separated from their users, and the importance of maintaining a connection between exhibitions and the communities they represent. She boasts of how they have more 'potatoes' than Oxford – museum slang for gold nuggets or precious jewels? No, she really is just talking about spuds...



The Museum has been closed for refurbishment for almost a year now – tell us about the exciting reopening...

There are lots of exciting new changes designed to make the building much more accessible – literally and atmospherically. Visitors used to come in through the tradesman's entrance round the back, but now we have a main one on Downing Street. Inside, we discovered windows that had been previously blocked up, so now we can shed some more light on our exhibitions! It's been a long year, and there were times when it seemed that everything was just a mess with no way out, but now comes the exciting run up to the big opening in February. You can find lots of photos and behind-the-scenes information on our Facebook page: facebook.com/maacambridge.

What drew you to the position of Outreach Organiser; which decisions took you there, and what is the importance of your job?

After my Masters, I got my first 'proper' museum job here, working with the collections at MAA, basically auditing one of the Museum's stores. A group of us working on this project

the door). Eventually, that institution also separated out into the Museum of Classical Archaeology and the MAA. So you see, the University museums are linked with each other in a very intriguing way; it's almost as if they are siblings!

volunteered to do some family events, and two of us restarted the Young Archaeologists Club in Cambridge. After the collections management project, I became the Education Officer at the Folk Museum, but was drawn back to MAA. My current role involves creating, delivering and evaluating public activities. It's different every day – I run object handling sessions; I run teaching sessions for children and adults; I also do a lot of evaluation on the museums displays, observing how visitors use the galleries, where they stop, why, and for how long. We even host sleepovers for young people (and their parents) to spend the night under the totem pole!

They have more 'potatoes' than Oxford – and we really are just talking about spuds...

What is your favourite piece from the permanent collection, and what makes it so special?

Wow! I have so many favourites, it is hard to narrow it down to just one. Our collection is so diverse, with objects from pretty much everywhere in the world, covering the whole of human history. I am quite fond of the pre-Columbian accidentally freeze-dried potatoes which used to be on display in the

Museum (and, incidentally, the Museum has more potatoes in its collection than the Pitt-Rivers Museum in Oxford). I also love a Danish flint knife, below, which has been meticulously knapped to look like leather – it took the kind of skill that not even a dozen people alive today could possess. There's a terrific jade mask that is just fascinating in its mysteriousness; experts have sweated over it and we still don't know where it comes from or how old it is! There's an Iron Age mirror that was dug up in Great Chesterford – you look into it and it's almost as though someone from 2,000 years ago gazes back at you – that thought gives me goosebumps.

The Fitzwilliam Museum Society will be hosting a private sneak-preview of the MAA before its opening in Lent term – sign up to find out more...



There are eight University museums in Cambridge; how do they all interact with one another, and what is the importance of the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology in particular?

The MAA was originally an offshoot of the Fitzwilliam, which had lots of 'old' pieces of stone and sculpture that they didn't know how to handle and had to pass over to a new archaeology institution near Little St. Mary's (you can still see the name of the building above



Frieze Art Fair (13th to 16th Oct)

With 173 stands, a sculpture park and artist talks, this year's fair is surely worth the trip to London.

Woolly socks

With both autumn and the term's workload firmly taking hold, it's time to protect against the cold that sets in after hours sat stationary at your desk. Thick socks do the trick nicely – and make the prospect of that essay you've got to do that much more bearable.



Tilda Swinton

Our favourite actress of the moment and Cambridge alumna stars in Lynne Ramsay's latest film 'We Need To Talk About Kevin', released next Friday. With rave reviews of Swinton's performance upon it's opening at Cannes this year, we can't wait to see her in action.



Mid-week cocktails

Celebrate submitting your week's work in style, with fancy glasses and brightly coloured fruit-flavoured syrups. If everyone chips in a few pennies, a whole array of drinks can be concocted in the comfort of your own room.



Mince pies already in the shops

It's not even Halloween yet and we're being regaled with shelves of Christmas cake and mince pies – they'll be hanging the Christmas lights and playing seasonal jingles in summer before we know it.



Blackberries

A computer crash at the Blackberry and RIM headquarters this week has meant millions around the world have felt the effects of no internet, email, or instant messenger service. With customer confidence in the brand plummeting, plus the furore around Steve Jobs' recent passing, we predict that Blackberries are on their way out, making way for the new iPhone 4s.



Packed lecture halls

First week enthusiasm means we're spilling off lecture benches and onto the floor, such is our dedication to learning. Surely this can't last?



MIND MAPS

Looking at how we imagine the spaces that we live in, we asked students to draw a map and present a photograph of their view of Cambridge, and the places they most like to spend time in. Louise Benson starts the series with the immediate area around her college.



1. Downing College

I spend just enough time here to not run into people too much. And I like that it's the closest college to the train station.

2. Café Julienne

The bright, expansive interior is great for going to get some work done. You'll also find here the best hot chocolate and carrot cake in Cambridge.

3. The Farm Shop

Here you can find brilliant homemade cakes that are easily passed off as your own, as well as half-price sales on their unusual meats – think pigeon, pheasant legs, and wild boar sausages.

4. Parkside swimming pool

The pool is open from 7am every day, and is covered by a glass roof, letting the sun come through onto the water as you swim.

5. Massarro's coffee house

The place to go to talk it all over again just after a really good supervision, over Italian coffee and a sandwich from the deli.

6. Nanna Mexico

The best burritos to get when you're burned out from writing all day - find out more in this week's Take V (p.22).



Left: Coat by Barbour - Limited Edition by To Ki To; Shirt by Heritage Research; Trousers by Norse Projects

Bottom: Jacket by Zegna; Shirt by Izzue Collection; Bow-tie by Topman; Trousers by Penfield

Right: Jacket by Prada; Rollneck Jumper by Topman; Trousers by Penfield; Glasses and shoes model's own





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MODEL: SAM CURRY
PHOTOGRAPHED BY AMY JEFFS

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Coat, shirt and trousers provided by Seven Wolves, 4 Bridge Street, CB2 1UA

The Oxford/Cambridge Dictionary

Varsity gives you a definitive guide to Oxbridge lingo

Places on the Varsity ski trip this year were in such high demand that students were put in online queues of up to six hours and organisers spent the morning frantically booking more hotels in an attempt to open up more places.

So, for the 3200 students who managed to bag a spot, the pressure is on to prove that they deserve it. And that means socialising with those from The Other Place.

Fortunately, Varsity is on hand to explain away those confusing Oxonian attempts to mimic Cambridge slang.

Battels, *n.*
Unnecessarily mysterious way of saying 'college bill'. Though perhaps accurate given the inevitable phonecalls to Student Finance.

Bod Card, *n. abbrev. for Bodleian Card*
Cam ID card.

Bridge, *n.* Popular nightclub for those wishing they'd applied to the University with a similar name.

Collections, *n. pl.* Exams at the beginning of term. Or 'mocks'.

Crew date, *n.* Swap. Legend has it the word derives from the Fresher's mispronunciation of "crudités".

Hussain's, *n.* Kebab van owned by popular local character of international origin. (*cf. Gardie's*)

Jamal's, *n.* Curry restaurant well-suited to hosting 'crew dates', clearly modelling itself on The Mahal.

Michaelmas, Hilary, Trinity
n. Michaelmas, Lent, Easter. Apparently the terms derive from the Legal system. Alternatively, the names of the first ever Oxford boy-band.

Mods, *n. pl.* Prelims.

Oxford-rules, *adj.* Oxonian pennyng dictates that the cup must be in the player's hand.

Scout, *n.* Bedder.

Tute, *n. cf. Tutorial.* Supervision.

Not Lost in translation
Blue; Boatie; Bop; Bumps; Cuppers; Formal; JCR; Lola Lo; Porters; Punting

Take V

Five of Cambridge's best...
takeaways

Unexpected function in Hall? Too close to that deadline to cook? When you need food quick, try one of these restaurants.

Nanna Mexico



33 Regent Street
7 days a week: 11:30 to 22:00.

When your stomach's rumbling and you've got a supervision fast-approaching, head straight to this Mexican fast food joint for a fresh and filling meal. Rice, beans, cheese, and your choice of meat or veg are packed into a floury tortilla or crispy taco – no cutlery needed.

As one Californian friend, accustomed to the array of South American cuisine on offer back home, never tires of pointing out, this is by no means Mexican food stretched to its most complex heights. Instead, expect good, simple fare for low prices, with just a hint of that true Mexican – or Californian – taste.

Bibimbap House



60 Mill Road
12:00–15:00, 19:00–21:00 (Fri-Sat: open to 22:00)

Recently opened on Mill Road, this Korean gem is not one you're likely to stumble upon by chance. A simple, elegant interior, with views onto a tiny kitchen, and loyal clientele of Korean students, mark it as a restaurant worth seeking out.

Immense bowls of rice served with a variety of fish, meat or vegetables, are topped with a fried egg, while the various sauces let you season your food exactly to your taste.

With takeaway prices 20% lower than eating in (and no meals over a tenner), this is the place for those with a more discerning takeaway palette.

Taste of Cambridge



Market Street
Mon-Sat: 10:30–17:00

You've surely walked past this falafel van countless times, located just off the Market Square and round the corner from Sainsbury's on Sidney Street.

Taste of Cambridge is perfect for a filling, healthy – not to mention entirely vegan – lunch when you're out and about in the centre of town.

With something for everyone, you can take your time choosing from a variety of extras to suit your tastes. Whether it's aubergine, roasted carrot or chilli sauce that does it for you; or homemade soups and vegan cakes, this small operation has it all.

Luke's Traditional Fish & Chips



110 Regent Street
Mon-Sat: 12:00–14:30, 16:30–22:00

Here the fish is cooked to order, ensuring that it never acquires that unpleasant tang of cold oil, and instead arrives fresh out of the fryer and swiftly wrapped, still hot, in newspaper.

Mushy peas and chips go through a gratifyingly (un)healthy dousing in vinegar before they're ready to be transported, opened and enjoyed back in the comfort of home, where the clouds of steam that waft up from the wrapping set this apart as one of the best takeaways in Cambridge. Luke's do justice to a takeaway favourite, proving that some traditions persist with good reason.

Renu's Bangladeshi



26 Milton Road, 01223 313233
Mon-Sun: 12:00–14:00, 17:00–23:00

This restaurant is notable most of all for its takeaway delivery service, that kindly and quickly comes right to your doorstep: perfect for when that deadline's so imminent that you can't even afford to leave the self-imposed stress of your room.

Only a phonecall away awaits the best in fresh Bangladeshi food, served in generous portions, and all delivered fast enough to satisfy the worst of hunger's pangs.

Ditch the default option of the dodgy Chinese in favour of this more unusual alternative. Great value, and even greater service, Renu's Bangladeshi are worth the call.

Listings

Don't miss:



Theatre

The Acid Test

CORPUS PLAYROOMS 19.00 (£5/£6) (UNTIL SAT 22ND)
‘The Acid Test’ is the second play from Anya Reiss, who won the award for Most Promising Playwright at the Evening Standard and Critics Circle awards in 2009. Also, rumour has it the producer is amazing. So there’s no reason not to go.

Sat 15th

Film
Met. Opera: Anna Bolena
ARTS PICTUREHOUSE 18.00 (£21.50)
This is almost sold-out so it must be good. Book now to get your chance to catch this top-class Opera.



Sun 16th

Music
Pink Martini
CORN EXCHANGE 19.30 (£26.50, £23.50)
Somewhere between a 1930s Cuban dance orchestra, a classical chamber music ensemble, a Brazilian marching street band and Japanese film noir is the 12-piece Pink Martini.

Music
Songs in the Dark
CLOWNS CAFE, KING'S STREET 20.00 (FREE)
An evening of acoustic music with various sundry performers from around the university.

Mon 17th

Music
Lord Puttnam CBE FRSA
THE UNION 18.30
Lord Puttnam is an Oscar-winning British film producer. His films include ‘Bugsy Malone,’ ‘The Killing Fields,’ ‘Midnight Express’ and ‘Chariots of Fire’, which received an Academy Award for Best Picture.

Music
The Crookes
PORTLAND ARMS 19.00 (£6)
The Crookes favour romanticism over gritty realism, they dress in foppish shirtsleeves rather than polo shirts and trainers and they make you wonder why they’re slumming it playing students’ unions rather than writing poetry in Parisian cafes.



Tue 18th

Theatre
An Inspector Calls
ARTS THEATRE 19.45 (FROM £15) (UNTIL SAT 22ND)
From the Oscar nominated Director of The Reader, The Hours and Billy Elliot, one of Britain's best-loved films, comes the magnificent production of JB Priestley's classic thriller, An Inspector Calls – direct from its fourth West End season.



Wed 19th

Music
Endellion String Quartet
WEST ROAD CONCERT HALL 19.30 (£12 STUDENT)
Beautiful programme of Classical to Romantic repertoire from one of the most esteemed string quartets in the country: highly anticipated performance from the famous ensemble. Featuring works by Mendelsohn and Beethoven.

Film
Women in Love
ARTS PICTUREHOUSE 18.00 (£7 STUDENT)
Women In Love broke new ground in sexual frankness and is remembered for Glenda Jackson's astringent, Oscar-winning performance and the celebrated nude wrestling scene between Alan Bates and Oliver Reed.

Thu 20th

Film
Planet of the Apes
PLANT SCIENCES LECTURE THEATRE, DOWNING SITE 19.00 (FREE)
Feel free to go see the original Charlton Heston classic, a story of slavery, racism, innocence, and brutality, if you haven't already.

Music
Drum Eyes
THE CORNERHOUSE 20.30 (£7)
Featuring DJ Scotch Egg and EDA, formerly drummer with Japanese legends Boredoms, duelling drums, keys, strings, guitars into a devastating psych-electronic sound.



Fri 21st

Film
We Need to Talk About Kevin
ARTS PICTUREHOUSE (£7.50 STUDENT)
After sold out Gala screenings at the BFI earlier this week, the critically acclaimed adaption of Lionel Shriver's novel, complete with a stand out performance from Tilda Swinton, sees general release.



Talk
Talking to Terrorists
MCCRUM LECTURE THEATRE CAMBRIDGE (BEHIND THE EAGLE PUB) 18.00 (FREE)
Part of the Cambridge Public Policy Lecture Series, these lectures provide the opportunity for you to hear from people who are actively steering public policy.

Comedy
Ed Byrne
CORN EXCHANGE 20.00 (£20)
After the massive success of his last show, Different Class, observational comedian and star of Mock The Week and Have I Got News For You Ed Byrne is back with his new ‘Crowd Pleaser’ tour.



Talk
Secret Science of WWII
WOLFSON LECTURE THEATRE, CHURCHILL COLLEGE 19.30 (FREE)
During the 1939-45 war, scientific research accelerated as never before. Professor Brian J Ford, President of CSAR gives this talk about that progression and where it left science in the aftermath.

Theoretically
CORPUS PLAYROOM 21.30 (£6/£5) (TUES 18TH-SAT 22)
This weeks Corpus Mainshow is a new comic play written by the Footlight's very own Lowell Belfield.



Debate
This House Believes God is Not a Delusion
THE UNION 19.30
As ever, this week's Union debate promises to be a good one. Dr William Lane Craig and Peter Williams head up the proposition with Dr Arif Ahmed and Andrew Copson opposing them.

Talk
Making Money
FITZWILLIAM MUSEUM, SEMINAR ROOM 13.15 (FREE)
Part of the Festival of ideas, Dr. Chris Loughlan gves this talk on the art, science and entrepreneurship of Matthew Boulton. Admission is by token, available from 12.45 on the day of talk.

Ongoing ...

Theatre
The Lonesome West
ADC 19.45 (£8/£6) (TUES 18TH-SAT 22)
Two feuding brothers, a Catholic priest and a liquor-selling school-girl take centre stage in this black comedy about suicide, smashed china and a dead dog.

Arts
England and the Dutch Republic in the age of Vermeer
FITZWILLIAM MUSEUM (4TH OCT-1 APR 2012)
Coins and medals from the 1800s describing the relationship between the two powers.

Comedy
Broody
ADC 23.00 (WED 19TH- SAT 22) (£6/£5)
Theo Chester and Ryan O’Sullivan present Broody, a brand new sketch comedy show. “Broody will leave you laughing... and only mildly disturbed” which we presume is a good thing.

Arts
Mirror Lens: Women in film, women making film
MURRAY EDWARDS (21 OCT-22 NOV)
Exhibition in the New Hall Art Collection as part of the Cambridge Festival of Ideas.

Organising an exciting event? Think everyone should be attending? Need someone to go with? Email listings@varsity.co.uk, no later than Monday on the week of publication. Whole new online events calendar on its way...

What makes Britain British?

David Cameron recently launched a Great Britain campaign, promoting the country's reputation abroad after a riotous summer attracted unfavourable publicity worldwide. Cambridge's very own Corpus Christi was chosen as one of the poster boys. The collection of bold images has suffered criticism on both a creative and political level as well as receiving attention for its divisive definitions of 'Britishness'. In a post-imperial country accustomed to absorbing global influences, it is intriguing to consider why one Cambridge college was deemed to say the most about our era's concepts of 'Great Britain' and 'knowledge'. With this in mind, *Varsity* explored alternative, equally photogenic, views of Cambridge and asked contributors to describe what they believe is 'British' today.



In Michael Billington's 2007 book, *State of the Nation*, he defended the idea of a distinctive British theatre, driven by the playwright responding to the world around him.

I love the fact that the Globe Theatre, instead of simply earning its keep by trotting out reruns of the Bard, presents offering like Howard Brenton's *Anne Boleyn*; a glorious attempt to use an old model to tell a new and relevant story.

I love the fact that the Royal Court bookshop sells 'mystery

packs' of six recent playscripts - a cheap way to get rid of their back catalogue but also a great chance to see the vast range of what is being written about.

I love the fact that British theatre privileges young people, often flogging tickets to under-25s for a fiver. Thankfully, the National recognises that we too are perfectly capable of judging whether things are getting boring and that, in the future, it'll be up to writers from among us to ensure that things don't stay that way.

JACK BELLOLI

Thomas Stearnes Eliot didn't arrive in England until the age of 25. Yet his poems on spiritual emptiness, the English countryside and peaches manage to convey a wonderfully rich picture of Britain.

Kazuo Ishiguro, the Japanese emigré, similarly managed to capture Britishness in *The Remains of the Day*, his description of pre-war aristocratic life. 'Britishness' in literature remains something that is impossible to pin down, but these authors probably managed it because of, rather

than despite, their immigrant status.

There has been a flourishing post-colonial trend in British literature which defies any concrete ideas of national boundaries. This is how British literature self-identifies: not with any concept of the 'American novel' or South American 'Magical realism', but a rich and diverse culture.

Writing is all about personal history: different backgrounds can only act to enrich that sprawling idea of 'British literature'.

FREYA BERRY



Seeley Historical Library

Built by one of Britain's greatest and most well known architects, Sir James Stirling, the Seeley Historical Library plainly shows how long British architecture's obsession with glass façades has existed.

Since Stirling, Britain's most internationally recognised architects have been Norman Foster and Richard Rogers, both of whom use glass substantially as a main design feature, from the Gherkin to the Great Court at the British Museum and the Centre Pompidou. CHLOE SPIBY-LOH



The notion of 'British Art' raises more questions than it answers.

Is it the work of artists born in Britain, living in Britain, or simply dealing with British topics? Do any of these categories even denote an inherent 'British-ness' detectable in the art itself?

If anything, we might say that British artists are united by a common cultural state of mind: self-deprecating, 'punk', oppositional. Yet this urge to group art into national schools overlooks more local trends – for example,

Glaswegian modernism – as well as movements which are clearly transnational or trans-historical in scope. As with other forms of 'Britishness' discussed here, the very idea is a slippery slope.

Moore's sculptures [pictured] were heavily influenced by Greek mythology. To uphold certain artists as icons of contemporary British art - Damien Hirst's status springs to mind – is to reductively ignore all the nuances and variety which make modern work interesting.

ZOE LARGE



Over the past few years, British fashion has evolved into something that has been quite hard to explicitly define or stereotype. From the eclectic yet bespoke designs of the late Alexander McQueen, to the punk inspired angst oozing from Vivienne Westwood, British fashion has developed a taste for mis-matching. For both of these designers, their inspirations have clearly come from the work of Britain's artists, today this is more clearly seen in the streets of East London where McQueen's and Westwood's legacies are seen in all the boutique shops littering the high streets.

It would be wrong to place British fashion in the 'designer clothing' category since it is, in its very nature, the antithesis of the 'label whore'. The failing economy has forced this growing vintage trend to develop. Through sourcing our clothes from vintage stalls we began to pair together incongruous patterns, styles and colours with a confident arrogance, leading to the look that has become quintessentially British. CHLOE SPIBY-LOH



British food is thankfully no longer the laughing stock of Europe.

Since spam and boiled beef, cooking in this country has extensively travelled the world

embracing foreign techniques, exotic ingredients and diverse styles of eating in unique and dynamic ways.

As a testament to this success, an impressive total of 143

Michelin stars were awarded to British and Irish restaurants in the Michelin Guide 2011.

On home soil, since the 90s, modern British food has undergone a significant revival

driven by the gastro pub, Slow Food movement and rise of the farmers' market. No longer intimidated by poncy French chefs, British gastronomy has absorbed a multitude of

influences to become a hybrid style of cooking that is as reflective of a multicultural, modern society as it is proud of British heritage.

JESSICA DUNNITHORNE

Once a luxury only enjoyed by the upper classes, tea has become an integral part of British culture on every social level and in every community. From communal tea-breaks to respite from a game of cricket, tea has seeped into just about every aspect of our society. So much so that the National Grid is pumped with extra energy at the end of soap operas due to the increased demand on kettles throughout the country.

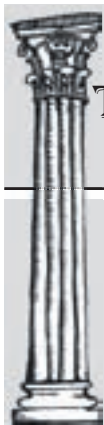
As the largest per capita tea-consuming country in the world, our cuppa culture

has become a significant cultural export, a symbol of quintessential 'Britishness'.

And despite the encroachment of the coffee industry, tea in all its forms and all its ethnicities remains a firm bastion of British identity. Tea remains a fundamental symbol of "Britishness".

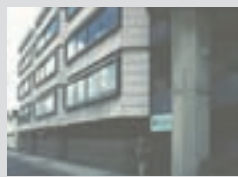
Just as in recent years food has re-hinged itself on British identity, so too the ritual of afternoon tea is constantly being revisited by modern chefs in innovative, retro ways. Our love affair will inevitably continue. JESSICA DUNNITHORNE





THE COLUMN

The University Centre



This week, another lamentably ignored building. Opposite Scudamore's punts sits Cambridge's only castle. A flag-pole topped mound of turrets and riveted, reinforced concrete. The University Centre's lack of crenellations was warranted only by its having a roof garden—sadly closed since the 1970s due to an “insufficiently high perimeter wall”. It's difficult to know whether it was the danger of heroic suicides or the possibility of hot oil poured over enemy intruders. Suffice to say, the view from the top over town is quite something, it is a shame the roof is now closed.

Inside, the allusions to castles of old continue. Wooden doors are studded with rivets, just as the outer concrete façade. Light-bulbs are built into the walls, appearing like candle holders. The stairwell mirrors complicate the visual impression to an impressive degree. It is a pile of inter-suspended self illuminating concrete slabs.

Everywhere there are odd inversions. The third floor bar has the feeling of a basement, despite its being lifted forty-odd feet in the air. The main dining-hall is like a scout hut (scoutmasters Newton, Darwin and Fry look down with benevolent oppression).

People today often wonder why we were so infatuated with concrete in the 60s. This building represents the peak of that trend—the trend now unkindly labelled ‘brutalist’—but this is a building that is full of wit and even whimsy.

The sheer preposterousness of building a castle for graduate students. This is building that consistently is thumbing its nose. Its façade is like that childish forced photo-grimace, bared through dental braces. It is no coincidence that the corridor leading to the Riverside Restaurant is plastered with gastronomically-themed comic panels, the unfunniness of which has to be seen to be believed.

This building has the kind of desperate humour—that reluctantly enthusiastic, over-tired, caffeinated boisterousness—that so characterises graduate life. The humour of overworn jeans and training shoes. There's something dogged about this building: obtuse, blunt, deliberate, sturdy, intolerable, but it is also bizarrely whimsical. A hall, truly, of mirrors. **LAWRENCE DUNN**

LITERATURE

Alfred Jarry: A Pataphysical Life

Alastair Brotchie

★★★★★



ANTONIA STRINGER

Pataphysics: the science of imaginary solutions. Various understood as a pun (in the French) on ‘leg of physics’, ‘not your physics’, ‘physics pastry’. The inventor of this surprisingly influential pseudoscience was Alfred Jarry, a French writer who died in 1907 aged 34, and whose work is considered the foundation of the later absurdist theatre of Beckett and Ionesco.

Jarry liked to refer to himself using the royal ‘we’ – a trait adopted from the anti-hero of his most famous play, *Ubu Roi* – eat meals in reverse order, let his pet owls defecate on the floor, and was terrified of drinking water.

In this, the first full-length critical biography of Jarry published in English, Alastair Brotchie brilliantly evokes the avant-garde artistic movements of fin-de-siècle Paris in all their glittering grubbiness. The literary salons, the prodigious feats of drinking, the creative collaborations and conflicting ‘isms’ of the various members of Jarry's circle – Mallarme,



Production of Alfred Jarry's 'Ubu Roi', directed by Michael Meschke in 1965

Gide, and Picasso among them – are rendered vivid and concrete. The book is gorgeously illustrated; photos, drawings, and facsimiles of letters and manuscripts abound.

Jarry's life, from provincial schoolboy beginnings to Parisian eccentricity, literary renown (and indeed infamy) are extensively chronicled, using a variety of sources, notably anecdotes taken from the memoirs of his literary acquaintances.

The chapters alternate between biography and cultural analysis – a combination that works well, although more of the latter would have been welcome.

The most compelling part of the book is the final chapter dealing with Jarry's protracted illness, aggravated by heavy drug and alcohol use. In a chilling moment, Brotchie lets Jarry effectively narrate his own demise

by quoting from his unfinished final novel *La Dragonne*: “he began, simply but furiously to drink...And he drank the very essence of the tree of science at 80 degrees proof, the spirit that retains the taste of the apple, and he felt at home in Paradise regained”.

Alastair Brotchie brilliantly evokes the avant-garde artistic movements of fin-de-siècle Paris in all their glittering grubbiness

The only real problem with this book is a lack of fidelity to its subtitle – ‘a pataphysical life’. Conventional biography is pursued at the expense of a more whimsical approach that

might have better suited to such a mercurial subject.

Brotchie frets about the difficulty of recovering definite facts in the life of this enigmatic figure, even as he attempts to record in – sometimes tedious – detail, the financial aspects, say, of Jarry's literary career. At times, however, an over-simplistic equation of Jarry himself with the protagonists of his works threatens to reduce the literature to self-dramatization writ large.

Jarry played complex games of selfhood, incorporating elements of his characters into his persona. But these were frequently tongue-in-cheek – a game played with the ‘audience’ present, and Brotchie is good at calling Jarry's bluff, suggesting moments at which he may have lost control over the line between himself and Ubu.

CHARLOTTE KEITH

MUSIC

Joe Rubini & the Spooks

Corpus Playroom

★★★★★

The diminutive artist was equipped with two guitars, a reel-to-reel, a projector, a metronome and a tambourine. Some of these items, which I can only assume were the “spooks”, baffled me when I entered the Corpus Playrooms. After a tuneless but strongly rhythmic opening number (a medley entitled ‘Jack the Ripper’), Rubini moved smoothly into sets of shrieky blues with exquisitely written lyrics.

At various points we were regaled by stories, ghost noises on top of

recordings of his own – one man can only play so many instruments, surely – and a strangely plaintive cover of ‘Lydia the Tattooed Lady’.

White noise served as a back note throughout, providing a purposeful atmospheric intensity that was only enhanced later as an animated series on the projector accompanied a wordless ballad. Rubini straddled several genres with this varied performance: blues, the circus, theatre... perhaps the most apt term is a cabaret.

His energy as a performer never failed to amaze, and even when he had to rewind his reel-to-reel – manually, naturally – it seemed as if it had all been planned. He gauged the audience well, and would occasionally break out of his dry witticisms and into a smile that reminded us of the mischievous ruffian beneath the macabre hair dye.

Unfortunately, I was almost forced to knock this review down to three stars purely because of the highly unnecessary inclusion of the nefarious Toby Parker-Rees and his self-indulgent clowning – but why let that spoil an otherwise excellent evening?

A lone performer, a lengthy set and a truly original act, Rubini did well to return back after graduating in order to share this bizarre spectacle. The whole thing inspired a lot of adjectives, as is evident by this point. He joked at one point, “my material is utterly diverse”. I echo that sentiment wholeheartedly.

DAISY BARD

ART

Veemer's Women: Secrets and Silence

The Fitzwilliam Museum

★★★★★



The figures on show at ‘Vermeer's Women’ self-consciously act out domestic dramas. They know they are being watched. Light falls pointedly on an upturned face and a curtain is theatrically swept aside. If this is not reality, nor melodrama, then what is at stake?

Behind this series of eerie and contrived settings is, consistently, allegory. A woman stands facing away from a dressing table: she turns her back on vanity. She washes her hands and she is purified. References range from the subtle to the bizarre, via the intensely eerie: a shadow of a girl through a darkened window can send chills down the spine.

But something more perverse

is at play. The works are almost too real: rug fibres are rendered in painful detail. We are charmed and seduced as if by real narrative. The result of so much illusion is that the gap between us and them gradually disappears.

Continually confronted with thresholds between viewer and subject or reality and illusion, disorientation sets in. These artists have created something unnervingly strange and compelling.

And all the more unsettling for being enacted in an utterly foreign place and time. The silent stares of the women come distorted by a haze of convention and distance that, today, we cannot really comprehend. To look into a mirror or to laugh may have different implications here and now.

A small criticism: the title is misleading. The man of the title's work plays a small but central role amongst a range of Dutch painters, each of whom offers a different reading of domestic life as allegorical ideal.

As the show's name suggests, however, Vermeer work is the most sympathetic and touching. ‘The Lace-maker’ presents an intimate portrait of a fellow craftsman. Bending over a spread of threads a young girl labours unobserved. There is no story, only the moment of creation.

At once celebratory, surreal and mundane, these tableaux have stayed on my mind. Everyday life has never been so illusory, yet so real.

HOLLY GUPTA



LOUISE BENSON

MUSIC

Emmy the Great
The Junction

★★★★★

I first saw Emmy the Great as a support act in 2006. Then she was a fairly diminutive presence, the sophisticated wit of her acoustic folk songs masked by shy delivery. Tonight could not have been much more different. Half-way through the performance, she notes that the stage is larger than the seating-area, but every inch up to the cavernous ceiling of the Junction 2 is constantly charged with the energy of an utterly assured performance.

The effect of a full band is instantly



noticeable. The introduction “we’re Emmy the Great” is very much to

the point as the backing of guitar, bass, drums and keyboard add a slightly more abrasive edge to many of the songs this evening. ‘Dinosaur Sex’, for instance, becomes far more grandiose, with the weight of a dark rumble of electric guitar constantly threatening to swallow Emma’s voice and acoustic melody.

For the most part, this is a welcome change matched by strong vocal delivery; however, some of the subtlety is lost from the rendition of ‘Creation’, whilst what ‘MIA’ gains in drama from the addition of cymbal flourishes, it loses in intimacy.

That’s not to say this is a show that lacks touching moments: the final two songs from the main set, ‘North’ and ‘Trellick Tower,’ reduce the captive audience to a hushed reverence that is a fitting response to the former’s

sombre organ notes.

The latter song is undoubtedly the evening’s highlight as Emma sings of the fiancé she lost to religion in heart-breakingly frank detail. The air is thick with her lament as it seems like no-one is daring enough to take a breath, all eyes focused intensely on the singer backed by a single white-light smoke meandering behind her.

Even at this moment, she doesn’t betray any of the vulnerability of the performer I saw six years ago, with her deep, resonant vocal ensuring she is not, as she sings, “a relic of a life gone by.”

Far from it, tonight she gives the impression of an artist who has channelled the pain that inspired her most recent album into a beautiful and confident creativity.

RORY WILLIAMSON

LITERATURE

Milligan’s Meaning of Life

Spike Milligan

★★★★★

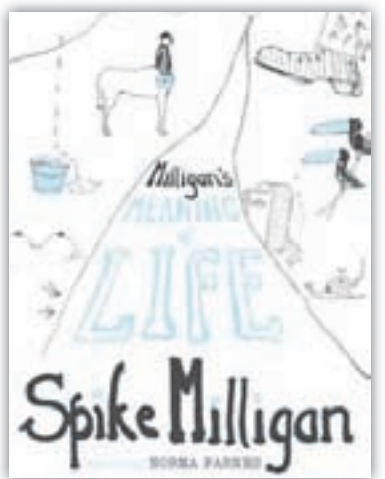
Having been accused...of being an eccentric, I am puzzled as to why they didn’t give me my correct title, i.e. a mechanical contrivance for converting circular into reciprocating rectilinear motion, etc. etc. etc.” From Spike’s memoirs, poetry, scripts and photos, Norma Farnes has collaged “an autobiography of sorts” of a man who grinned his way from the wings to the core of British comedic history.

I still have my hardback of *The Children’s Treasury of Milligan*, its

kingdom of animal absurdity, the mad pen sketches that prefigure any David Shrigley. There’s something gloriously and irrepressibly child-like about his humour. Or, better still, Spike had what a special few adults share with small people, the sense that words can always be a part of play.

His writing has an ability to expose oddity just by taking words literally, refusing to observe the rules that usually smooth out meaning. It must have driven people to love or desperation in his army years: “You can’t swim in army boots.” ‘You’re right, there’s not enough room.’ ‘What are you talking about?’ ‘I’m talking about ten words to the minute.’”

I knew Spike had lived with depression, a binary persona like



many comic greats from Lear to Fry. What this book reminds me, with its shrapnel of war poems, is that Milligan’s selves weren’t merely split

between the public and personal. Here too is a meditative and human voice sounding clear, the same that lurks within the ‘nonsense’.

Farnes’s editing is deft: a page-turn between the death at dawn of a lieutenant on ‘Longstop Hill’ and a limerick, “One morning at one/ They fired the gun/ And Edser, in bed sir, was dead sir.”

The comedy that would turn into broadcast classics like *The Goons* had its origins, too, in the margins. Spike would clown between the songs he played with early jazz trios, ad-libbing on nothing in particular; eventually this would become the central act of the figure we’ve come to know. Like his life, the book is an overflowing variety show. Buy a copy, tumble into it, lest we forget.

ROWAN EVANS

FILM

Tyrannosaur

Paddy Considine
Warp Films

★★★★★



In 2007, Paddy Considine won awards for his short film *Dog Altogether*, a study into the effect of rage upon human behaviour. The film centres around an aging widower, Joseph, whose life is consumed by his anger towards the world around him. In 2011, Considine brings us *Tyrannosaur*, an expanded version of the same story, a hard-hitting drama that exceeds all expectations and proves Considine to be an extremely gifted director, as well as an established British actor.

By the horrific opening scene, it is clear that Considine’s debut will be memorable, to say the least. Joseph, in a drunken rage, viciously kicks his dog to death in the street, stunning the audience from the outset. As he dejectedly carries the dying animal home, it is evident that the ensuing film will not be an easy watch. Peter Mullan (*Trainspotting*) gives a phenomenal performance as Joseph; despite his unforgivable actions, an incredible empathy is aroused towards him, as witness a man consumed both by rage and remorse, concepts that will dominate the film.

With nowhere left to turn, Joseph stumbles into a charity shop, run by the Christian Hannah (played superbly by Olivia Colman, known



Hannah (played by Oliva Colman) with Joseph (Peter Mullan)

Whilst the issues explored in *Tyrannosaur* are familiar – domestic abuse, loneliness, age – Considine avoids any possible clichés. The film is languid, the dialogue often stilted and difficult; yet the relationships are rendered beautifully, and Considine achieves an astounding sense of realism.

In a recent Q&A at the Cambridge Film Festival, Considine talked openly about his personal affiliation with the film. Newly diagnosed with Asperger’s, he spoke about his own struggle dealing with difficult emotions. He described his need to create a ‘protective shell’, admitting that the smallest trigger could affect him, leading to thoughts of violence and anger which he has had to learn how to manage. Where he got his inspiration from for Joseph is clear. As Considine has said, Joseph is not a mindlessly angry man: he

is a man struggling with emotions he is incapable of dealing with, the repercussions of which are often destructive. The complexities of the character are touchingly personal.

A large portion of the praise must ultimately go to Olivia Colman, whose portrayal of a woman destroyed by domestic violence is distressingly convincing. Hannah’s commitment to, and later reliance upon, Joseph is moving.

Until now, Colman has largely been viewed as a comedy actress, having had little opportunity to show off her acting talent. With this role she demonstrates her versatility, and establishes herself as one of the most talented British actresses of her generation.

Eddie Marsan, too, is as compelling as ever in this role which he plays with such ease. In the past Marsan has played similarly creepy characters in *The Disappearance of Alice Creed* (2009) and Mike Leigh’s *Happy-Go-Lucky* (2008). His portrayal of Hannah’s sadistic husband James is chilling.

The only criticism for the film is the name; although its relevance is eventually clarified, the title in no way advertises the profundity of the film, and thus sadly a number of people seem to be unaware as to what it is actually about. *Tyrannosaur* is unique in a way I would have thought impossible, given the prevalence of similar films within this genre. Considine is clearly a director to watch, and a terrific asset to the British film industry.

ALICE BOLLAND

TRACKS



Girls - Honey Bunny



At first, this track seems designed to be hateful, with deliberately throw-away guitar riffs

and lyrics about “messing with so many girls” who “don’t like my bony body” or “dirty hair.” Somehow, though, like a mangy dog the track slowly takes on a form of scruffy charm: as the tempo slows to a woozy waltz towards the close, Christopher Owens’s winking earnestness redeems an otherwise aggravating affair. Girls choose to gallop off again atop further lazy pop melodies and Strokes-lite swagger, giving the impression that this is nothing more than an exercise in disposable pop, all delivered with an ironic grin. RORY WILLIAMSON

Kurt Vile - Life’s A Beach



Along with Atlas Sound, Kurt Vile was also chosen by indie-royalty Animal Collective

to play at ATP festival earlier this year. Vile, like A.S., also has a predilection for dreamy guitar music, though he comes to it from a more stripped-down, Girls-esque direction and the result is pretty enjoyable. Pretty enjoyable – at some points the chord progression and refrain sag a bit. The song picks up again as it dissolves into a drum-led finale, but not enough to really save it. But with a bit more inventiveness, Vile could turn out some good stuff. FELIX BAZALGETTE

Bombay Bicycle Club (Dark Sky Remix) - Lights Out Words Gone



This track has been given the soulful, moody Dark Sky treatment – it is truly

beautiful. The little known South London trio have been injecting indie-electro sophistication into the post-modern genre-ate electronic music scene since they met at Alchemea College of Audio Engineering. Their winning treatment of The XX’s ‘Crystalised’ has been reapplied to the nymph-like vocals of Lucy Rose and fluttering folky sound of Jack Steadman, yet also fused with off-kilter Future Garage sounds that have emerged - blissful serenity, freshly released in shops this morning.

VIOLA CRELLIN

10 Questions for...

Toby Young



Toby Young is a journalist and author of *How to Lose Friends and Alienate People*, the tale of his stint at *Vanity Fair* magazine recently made into a film and West End show. Young judged seasons five and six of *Top Chef* and is co-founder of the West London Free School.

What’s the nicest thing anyone’s ever said to you?

My wife suggesting we live together for three months on a trial basis. It doesn’t sound like much, but I’d proposed to her the previous day and she’d said no and I assumed that was it. We got married 15 months later.

Worst public moment?

Best Man speech at my friend Sean Macaulay’s wedding. Afterwards, the bride’s mother told me I was every bit as bad as she’d been led to expect.

Magic power of choice?

Precognition

What’s the last thing you saw at the theatre?

St Paul’s Boys’ School production of *Fame* at the Lyric Hammersmith

What are you reading at the moment?

Hard Times by Charles Dickens

Guiltiest pleasure?

Beating my children at football. They’re 8,6,4 and 3 so I really should let them win. But I don’t.

Favourite Cambridge haunt?

Tickell Arms in Whittlesford

Fondest memory of studenthood?

Bedding the belle of the ball at Trinity May Ball in 1989. Her date – the son of a prominent Conservative politician – was none too happy.

What would be served at your dream dinner party and who would you invite?

I’d have Michel Roux in the kitchen serving up the tasting menu from Le Gavroche and I’d invite Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, William Thackeray, George Eliot, Evelyn Waugh, Kingsley Amis, the Brontë Sisters and Dr Johnson.

Tell us a joke.

What d’you call a donkey with three legs? A wonky.

TOBY SPOKE TO SOPHIE LEWISOHN

THEATRE

The Lover & Ashes to Ashes

Corpus Playroom

★★★★★

Two of Harold Pinter’s less well-known plays, *The Lover* and *Ashes to Ashes*, are presented as an imaginatively conceived double-bill at the Corpus Playrooms this week. Although they are distinctly different plays in tone and subject matter, and were written several decades apart, both are about the relationship between couples who live together, and therefore offer surprising cross-references.

This production, however, disappoints – it fails to consider either couple beneath their outward surfaces. The nuances and richness of Pinter’s diction is glossed over. Subtext is presented as a binary: she says *x* but actually means *y*. It is as if almost everything that the characters say has been taken at face value, with no scrutiny or challenging of why these characters might be saying what they do.

The Lover starts off the evening, and of the two plays, is the more successfully realised. Richard (Charlie Parham) and Sarah (Celine Lowenthal) isolate sexuality from their marriage: she has a lover, she tells her husband, who comes round in the afternoons while he is at work. Director Ceci Mourkogiannis imaginatively presents this couple in a clinical environment – Sarah’s dress even complements the colour of her cleaning gloves. And the scene in which we first encounter Sarah with ‘Max’ is spot-on, with her crimson shoes, table cloth, and

lighting transforming the sterile home. Further to the credit of the staging, the scene transitions’ pounding, rhythmic music succeeds in minimising the episodic nature of a script that was originally written for television.

It is difficult for a reviewer to criticise this production without giving away the twist in the narrative – but the main issue with Mourkogiannis’s staging is that she does not allow the characters’ masks to ever slip. That is to say that the front they present, the persona each assumes in this play is too rigid. What Pinter presents in *The Lover* is the crisis of a relationship in which the couples’ game, their arrangement, begins to cease working. Yet we don’t get to see enough of that breakdown in this performance.

Worst of all, the plot twist that I avoid mentioning here is fundamentally undermined by Mourkogiannis’s decision that the other minor character, John the milkman, should be played by Lowenthal, which radically alters the whole meaning of the play; an unbelievably misjudged flaw.

“She has a lover, she tells her husband, who comes round in the afternoons

After a short interval, *Ashes to Ashes* follows, in which Parham goes on to play Devlin, opposite Emma Hall’s Rebecca. It does seem a missed opportunity that the dual casting of Parham across the two plays is not also mirrored in unitary casting of the female characters – such casting would heighten the contrasts

THEATRE

Dandelion Heart

ADC Theatre

★★★★★

Sometimes, it’s nice to be completely wrong. There I was, loudly proclaiming that the ADC was being too conservative in its choice of plays, yearning after disciplined physical theatre and dark fantasy and ambitious new writing, when a lateshow comes along to blow away my arrogant assumptions with a simple wave of a tattered black top hat.

Nikki Moss’s *Dandelion Heart* is really something worth celebrating: a piece of student writing that is genuinely hilarious, finely crafted and feels like it might actually be about something important. Quite what, I’m not sure, but it is the triumph of the show that it is obscure and strange without ever giving the impression that the playwright is, for want of a better word, bullshitting.

The play is apparently set in a decaying circus, though it may well also be a shared fantasy-space of its four characters. The new girl, Stephanie (Stephanie Aspin), finds it impossible to leave, though she isn’t quite sure why, while the Boy

(Michael Cotton) yearns for the day when he will take the place of the terrifyingly ebullient emcee Benjamin-Benjamin (Tom England), who, along with technician August (Immy Gardam), is fixated on getting the lighting working again.

This absurd landscape would be bleak and bitter were it not for the brilliantly written and delivered dialogue, as well as stunningly well-timed slices of physical comedy and physical theatre sequences which consistently show a cast utterly at ease with one another and utterly polished.

I hesitate to use the phrase ‘pure theatricality’ since it sounds like it



between the different couples of the two plays.

The set-up is this: Rebecca lives with Devlin, but apart from this apparent fact, the status of their relationship is unclear. The action begins with Devlin questioning Rebecca about a previous lover of hers – but she seems unwilling to describe him in any detail, so Devlin keeps pressing her for answers. *Ashes to Ashes* has the potential to be a deeply uncomfortable and disturbing experience; the audience watching it on the night I saw it seemed merely perplexed.

It doesn’t help that the dialogue is delivered too quickly, not giving the audience time to consider what the actors are saying. More fundamentally, however, both characters are performed as internally static – there is no progression in this production from

the start to the end. Parham begins too sinister and Hall too defiant; an atmosphere of *superficial* menace pervades the staging. Rather, Devlin should become increasingly more like an interrogator, not begin as one; Rebecca should be more evasive and reluctant at first.

In her assured, seemingly calm state, Hall is not convincing as someone who has experienced a deeply upsetting event – even though we are supposed to question the veracity of what she tells Devlin, it is clear that she is indeed a victim of some sort of trauma. Deservedly then, *Ashes to Ashes* was greeted with hoots of laughter in highly inappropriate places.

The ending, like John the milkman’s (non-) appearance, is weakened by a directorial ‘innovation’. In all: a disappointing evening. **OLIVER O’SHEA**

doesn’t mean anything, but I think it is appropriate here. It is a play about people who have nothing left but to perform, and they do so with

“Nikki Moss’s Dandelion Heart is really something worth celebrating

all the skill of silent movie stars – hurling each other across the stage, going through mechanical dance-like routines that brought to mind the work of Frantic Assembly and generally providing such fire, energy



and sheer talent that any questions as to why they were doing any of it were suspended indefinitely.

Every detail of set and costume was perfect, right down to the mismatched shoes, steampunk goggles and half-observed sign we assume tells us not to feed the lions. The lighting design too, by Nick Gebbet and Joe Hobbs, deserves mention for its very unsettling use of strobe effects.

Special mention to any of the cast would seem churlish, so I’ll give the reviewer’s nod to one who wasn’t officially part of it – the enigmatic James Bloor, about whom I think I can only say that Charlie Chaplin himself would have been fairly impressed with the laughs he could get from a battered old hat.


As for what the play was ultimately about – I don’t know, but I didn’t feel irritated by that. Extraordinarily for a student-written piece, I genuinely felt like I could get a better understanding the second time around. While the runtime was perhaps a little long for a lateshow (Moss might benefit from a friendly but brutal editor), this piece really astounded me and the rest of the audience. The play features a rather sad billboard heaped at the back of the set claiming brightly: “it’s something really special!!!” And indeed it is.

FRED MAYNARD

THEATRE

Dorian Gray
ADC Theatre

★★★★☆



As a novel *Dorian Gray* exists as a glittering surface, with characters forever resetting Wilde’s famous verbal gems. As a play it is certainly wordy: Lord Henry Wotton, the decadent, corrupting dandy, is forever pronouncing paradoxes, and Dorian’s verbal style comes to mimic his as he sinks into moral decrepitude. The script’s concentration on linguistic acrobatics over developing characterization meant a lack of sympathetic figures, but a convincing portrayal of the hollowness of Wilde’s dandy.

James Evans was brilliantly cast as Lord Henry Wotton. Fabulously languid, alluringly dragging on a cigarette and with superbly sardonic eyebrows, he delivered one aphorism after another in drawling, bored tones. Lord Henry, like his witticisms, is all style and little substance when you try to unravel him, and Evans portrayed his ghoulish side. Starting out as an entertaining rake, Wotton’s heartlessness is slowly revealed in his lack of compassion for anything not beautiful.

Sam Curry’s Dorian Gray was petulant and childlike, naively fascinated by Lord Henry’s philosophies of pleasure and unthinkingly cruel to the friends



Style over substance: Dorian Gray as a play

who adore him. This is especially so in the scene in which he breaks off his engagement with the beautiful actress Sybil Vane (Rozzi Nicholson Lailey) when her love of him prevents her from convincingly pretending a passion on the stage.

Alluringly dragging on a cigarette, he delivered one aphorism after another

Next to the flighty and wordy Harry and Dorian, the laconic artist Basil Hallward is subtly played by Jack Mosedale. Mosedale opens out in the second act to fill the role of the righteous wronged friend, becoming the solitary and heartfelt voice of reason when he tells his friends, ‘you cannot mean what you say.’

So much of Wilde’s novel is verbal glitter and symbolism that I was curious how John Osborne’s adaptation of *Dorian Gray* would work on stage. The key image of the painting that ages and decays in Dorian’s place is never seen - the easel has its back to us throughout the first half. The changes to the painting are not even described until Basil is finally led to it before his death. I missed the novel’s gradual portrayal of Dorian’s disintegration etched in the portrait: the touch of cruelty in his mouth after he rejects Sybil, the cunning look that comes in to his eyes, the spots of blood on his hands after he murders Basil...

The other problem in staging the novel struck me in the party scene at the Duchess’s salon. Where following a single conversation in a novel is natural, watching a crowd of eight mutely listen to two people speaking is less so. The scene was saved by

Paul Adeyefa, whose Mr Erskine brought some overlapping dialogue and humour to the conversation. (Adeyefa also shone in his role as Alan, the friend Dorian blackmails into disposing of the corpse of Basil.)

The great innovation of the play is director KT Roberts’ creation of a Chorus. Made up of the characters who flit through Dorian’s life, the Chorus lurks menacingly on a raised platform at the back of the stage beneath the cracked mirrors and billowing drapery of the set. Their darkly lit twist of limbs comes to life for the first time at Dorian’s Faustian claim that he’d give *anything* to stay young while his portrait ages, and from then on they listen attentively to every word he says.

The Chorus is deft in its portrayal of the passing of time that leaves Dorian unmarked. In a memorable scene they dance round Dorian as he tells of the passing of years, all set to a tango. Henry and Basil glide past with graying temples. The Chorus also deals neatly with the problem of presenting deaths on stage. Sybil Vane is beckoned into their embrace and transformed from a white-dressed girl into a white-masked creature of Dorian’s conscience; Basil Hallward is enfolded and masked when Alan comes to dispose of his body; and Dorian’s own end is a backwards fall into their arms accompanied by their whispering accusations.

Though there are problems in staging a text so reliant on its surface, the chemistry between the actors and the director’s innovations keep it alive - just.

SOPHIE LEWISOHN

COMEDY

Act Casual
Corpus Playroom

★★★★☆

The first thing to be said about *Act Casual* is that it has excellent pre-show music, and as the packed Corpus Playroom reached full capacity, everyone was undoubtedly happy to have accidentally attended some sort of indie club-night.

When the flying-saucer-esque ceiling lights finally faded, and the giggly hush of comedy anticipation descended, I hoped that the performers were as psyched by the music as the audience clearly was.

The show opened with an energetic ensemble introduction where each cast member contributed one word to proceedings. Although the conceit was simple, the lively - and occasionally slightly manic - delivery really set the tone of the evening. The chicken of poster fame was unfortunately not present in the



lineup, but I allowed that to slide.

The entire cast was strong, but there were, of course, some standout performances, and undoubtably the highlight of the show was Harry Michell’s performance in the ‘Moosical’ sketch. His palpable anxiety and confusion at the preposterous and whimsical situations in which he found himself throughout the show was magnificent, and his orchestral milking of multiple cows was no different: Michell played the udders as effectively as he played the audience with his impressive range of befuddled expressions.

Michell played the udders as effectively as he played the audience

Alex MacKeith, too, deserves a mention for his capacity for mania in various perfectly pitched character pieces, particularly as an increasingly sinister wildlife guide. He sometimes turned his lunatic gaze onto the audience, drawing us into the madness of what was unfolding, and this was when his performance truly shone.

Máirín O’Hagan’s finest role was one with few lines, but her icy pout and slightly demonic stare made her occasional disgusted interjections into Will Chappell’s arms-dealing-for-kids pitch the focus of the sketch.

Looking back on the show, *Act*

Casual largely escaped from that timeless sketch comedy curse of ‘hit and miss’, and this isn’t because the sketches were exclusively ‘hits’, but because none of them overstayed their welcome.

One of the greatest strengths of this show was that anything which fell even slightly flat was over quick enough to be forgotten, and the humorous-but-not-hilarious concepts which can often dominate student comedy were an aspect, not a staple of the writing.

If you don’t see *Act Casual*, you won’t witness the pulverization of a canary, or Will Attenborough nobly taking a basketball to the face for comedy, or the supreme existential despair raised by the question ‘Dave, who ran this bath?’, and frankly, you’ll be missing out.

You’ll also miss the nunnery sketch featuring the talking, light up cocks (I’ll repeat: you need to see this show), which was quite unexpected, and, despite the smut, highly original.

This was penile profundity at its best, and I was suddenly extremely glad that I had brought a Catholic companion. When the ‘apparatus’ of mother superior (Theo Hughes-Morgan) was revealed to have a voice composed only of saintly music, my friend and I both laughed obnoxiously, for which he is undoubtedly going to hell.

And that’s probably the mark of an excellent show: it’s so funny that you’ll laugh yourself into damnation.

ZOE TOMALIN

COMEDY

Footlights Smoker
ADC Theatre

★★★★☆

Put the words ‘Smoker’ and ‘Review’ together and you can expect the phrase ‘mixed bag’ to follow in hot pursuit. Instead, this bag, in the form of a Committee Smoker, offered a pre-combined blend of diverse comedy stylings. As well as the usual equal-opportunities approach to balancing sketches and stand-up, the output ranged from high-concept to scatological, observational to surreal, and even an unusually high concession to puns.

There were some laugh-out-(very)-loud individual moments, most notably Lowell Belfield’s Italian hand, Harry Michell’s ghostly shouting and Ryan O’Sullivan’s vomiting of... something. Some good concept material – Jon Bailey and Matty Bradley’s headless wife sketch being a prime example - was marred by slightly weaker performances. The audience left with smiles, if not stitches. But I can’t help but feel that a year’s worth of material should have produced a better show than this.

OLIVER MARSH

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Behind the Scenes

The Stage Manager Debbie Farquhar



The audience should never really know a stage manager exists. My job is to make sure everything runs smoothly: the lighting, sound, scene changes and props, as well as keeping the cast in line (which is sometimes a very difficult job!).

Essentially the stage manager is in charge of the production during the performances; you’re responsible for everyone’s safety on stage and have to co-ordinate all aspects of the production each night. But the job actually starts from the very beginning of the rehearsal process. You’re right at the centre of the company; the link between the cast and the crew. You’re there backstage every night; the only downside is that you never get to see the show from the front.

It is important that a stage manager is ready to deal with anything and can keep calm in a crisis - if the cast accidentally skip a few pages of dialogue, or the sound effects decide not to work, or perhaps the fire alarm is about to go off during a performance while a group of freshers are watching in the wings.

I got involved with theatre in my first year in Cambridge as an assistant stage manager on a production of Ibsen’s *The Wild Duck*, where my job entailed making the offstage ‘knocking’ sound effect and then firing a gun backstage in the final scene. Since then I’ve stage managed everything from May Week shows to professionally directed plays to international tours.

Being stage manager for the Cambridge American Stage Tour’s 2011 production of *Macbeth* has been the most rewarding theatrical endeavour to date, as I was able to work on a show for an extended period with a very talented group of actors, directors, designers and technicians. Or to put it another way, I got to spend four weeks touring America with a group of friends. There’s nothing like seeing the lights go down on a performance and knowing you nailed it because the audience won’t have even realised you were there.

Poet's
CornerThe humility of the
commuter

Only when it's this quiet might anything be said. You might be anyone, under that coat. Any given carriage might hold all of life in its curve.

What a thing, to depend on movement; and that itself so volatile, so subject to change, and especially at weekends. Light, gapping between our windows and the wall, syncs its swells with the angles around, so that when I look to focus it my image is staggered out into scenes of every seat I might have chosen but this.

There's a pure community in its dirty sweaty money: in its adverts for everyman with a wage; in the thought of jumping. So immediate that even though I try I can't imagine them as children.

Stuck on their separate ways and mute to the world inside, they'll never stop but they're getting there; in these, the spaces that hold us together.

PATRICK SYKES

song of a return

That this too is
distance

london hymns

her buoyant
with moth-

luck to earth

via cordite
rungs

That emmaus is
like this

yarned rest
wheel of

sparrow & hair

& drum

but john
precious in joy

i see now

every
sung

ROWAN EVANS

The artist in his studio

'Vermeer's Women' are the nominal focus of the Fitzwilliam Museum's latest exhibition. For **Anna Souter** however, the real power of the artist's work lies in the space around them

Vermeer's 'The Lacemaker' - the centrepiece of a new exhibition at the Fitzwilliam Museum, has a very specific point of focus. Objects in the foreground are blurred to the extent that the threads falling from the sitter's workbasket are rendered by an apparently careless splash of paint, which wouldn't look out of place in a piece of abstract art.

Crucially, this use of perspective draws the viewer's attention not to the subject's face, but to her hands. Here the threads she holds, drawn taught around her lacemaking equipment, are depicted with such precision that the brush strokes must be no more than a hair's breadth.

The work undertaken by the woman is as delicate and intricate as the painting itself. Vermeer draws attention to the craft and artistry of the lacemaker, whilst the painting's small size and the intimate concentration of the sitter seem to reflect one another. Just as the lacemaker's consciousness seems entirely filled by her work, so the viewer's artistic world is reduced to the small section of whitewashed wall before which she sits.

This wall appears in each of the Vermeer paintings exhibited in the Fitzwilliam's 'Vermeer's Women: Secrets and Silence'. It is, in my view, this simple grainy background which makes the paintings so effective; the sophisticated sumptuousness of the fabrics are thrown into relief, and Vermeer's skilful depiction of light and shade is made tangible.

All of Vermeer's paintings appear to be set in the same room, the artist's studio. Although features of the room change, such as fireplaces and windows, the basic canvas of the left-hand corner of his workspace is pervasive throughout his work; note the black and white tiled floor and the room's uniform proportions.

This has led many art historians

The work undertaken by the woman is as delicate and intricate as the painting itself

to believe that Vermeer used a camera obscura in his work, although there is no record of one in the inventory of his studio made after his death. Some also point to the presence of 'halations' (tiny discs of light which appear in a camera obscura) in his paintings as similar evidence that he used the device.

These glints often appear, as one might expect, on a pearl ornament or a metal pin, but they also occur in more unusual places: the crumpled corner of a well-thumbed music book, for example. Vermeer draws the viewer's attention to the more commonplace objects which surround his sitters.

On first looking at Vermeer's works, the eye is instantly drawn to the women who are the centrepiece of the paintings and of the exhibition itself. On closer inspection, however, Vermeer's depictions of his studio are just as fascinating.



A Young Woman Seated at a Virginal, c.1670



The Music Lesson, c.1665

The startlingly precise detail of the viol in the foreground of 'A Young Woman Seated at a Virginal' contrasts with the softness of the woman's features, over which there is a haze of anonymity. There is a distinct similarity between most of the women depicted in Vermeer's paintings; they all proffer the same dark eyes, pale brows and serene expression.

Vermeer's women are also almost invariably dressed in shades of blue and yellow. This includes what is arguably his most famous painting, 'Girl with a Pearl Earring', in which his subject wears an unusual headdress of expensive yellow and blue cloth. Such uniformity of dress and appearance seems to call into question the plurality of the exhibition's title: perhaps this enigmatic sitter might be known simply as 'Vermeer's woman'.

Very little is known about the subjects of Vermeer's works. In Tracy Chevalier's book based on the aforementioned painting, she provides the portrait's sitter with an identity and personality. In reality, the women of Vermeer's artist worlds are lacking in both. Their similarities mean that they can only be defined by the domestic activities in which they are engaged. In all but one of the paintings exhibited at the Fitzwilliam, the sitter is playing a virginal.

The prevalence of musical instruments depicted in an exhibition which focuses on 'silence' seems to provide an interesting paradox. Music is clearly either being made, or has recently ceased, and yet the sense of silence is certainly both pervasive and powerful. The women are distantly beautiful, and have no autonomous identity beyond their

immediate employment.

This is not, of course, in any way a criticism of Vermeer's beautiful paintings, but a suggestion that the inscrutable nature of the subject allows the viewer's eye to search the rest of the work for clues as to her identity.

On close inspection, Vermeer's works prove to be a treasure trove

On close inspection, Vermeer's works prove to be a treasure trove of intricate and surprising details

of intricate and surprising details. When perusing 'A Young Woman Seated at a Virginal', look for the tiled skirting board at the base of the wall. Despite being only around a square centimetre in size, each tile is individually painted with a different design.

Such fascinating details both offer hints towards the painting's interpretation and serve to add to its mystery. When viewing these works, by all means allow your eye to be drawn in by Vermeer's clever use of perspective towards the wistful gazes of his women: but I would also urge you to linger on the exquisite craftsmanship of Vermeer's work. You will find everyday objects and whitewashed walls lovingly depicted, sitting in harmony with the central figure.

The Fitzwilliam Museum is hosting 'Vermeer's Women: Secrets and Silence' from 5th Oct '11- 15th Jan '12. Admission free.

ZOE LARGE



Song of Myself

Emmy the Great talks to **Rory Williamson** about rejection, avoiding pigeon-holes, and doing it for herself

There is a refreshing frankness about Emma-Lee Moss, the singer-songwriter who performs under the name 'Emmy the Great'. She comes across as warm and relaxed, talking plainly about everything from feminism to the break-up that inspired her recent album, 'Virtue'. Like her lyrics, her responses are both thoughtful and completely honest.

"This was a really soul-searching record," she tells me. "I actually did it to get over something, but as part of that process I discovered what I felt about things." The album is centred upon earth-shattering events in the songwriter's life: in her own words, her fiancé "went ballistic" and left her to become a missionary, something that seeps through the entire record and forms its emotionally affecting core.

The most intriguing aspect of this lyrical exploration is the tense balance between religion's evident influence on her - her 'Virtue' - and her separation from it. Discussing the song 'North,' wherein she sings of her rejection by the Christian missionary's 'piece of Heaven', I discover how profoundly she engaged with the religious life. "I gave myself a blank slate to start with. I was like, I'm not going to be judgemental; I'm going to find out everything I need to find out about this particular niche and decide what I think. I realised from writing my song that I wasn't just upset by what he does, going around the street and trying to convert people in foreign countries. Really, I was upset about the original missionaries."

Many other lyrics focus on wom-

en, with songs written about figures like 'Sylvia,' 'Juliet' and 'Cassandra'. As a result *The Mirror* has referred to her music as "outright feminist pop", but is this accurate? "It's not like I attend society meetings or anything, but in the way that anyone with any level of brain or education should be a feminist, yeah."

As we move on to the sexism she has experienced in her career, it becomes clear that this is an exasperating topic for Moss. "We had this stupid student review the other day with a guy who wanted to be the next Terry Richardson or something. He kept talking about

"I'm not going to be judgemental. I'm going to find out everything I need to find out...and decide what I think

how much he would like to fuck me - my jaw-line being this and that. It would never have happened to a boy-band. I would never go to see Hayden from Wild Beasts and come out saying 'I really want to fuck him.' It's just horrific."

Another irritation is lazy, journalistic comparisons, usually confined to other female artists. Particularly common descriptions are "a mixture between Ellie Goulding and Florence, between Marina and the Diamonds and Kate Bush." A recent comparison to Cowboy Junkies elicits an ecstatic, "there's a man in Cowboy Junkies, I'm so happy!"

Moss recently chose 'Rebel Girl' by Bikini Kill, a seminal part of 90s

feminist punk movement Riot Grrrl, as one of TimeOut's '100 Songs that Changed History.' Unlikely as this musical influence might seem, it's clear that this is a genuine passion: "it basically paved the way for girls like me to do songs about vaginas and semen, without it being an issue. It's about channeling your political will into creativity, and it's not just girls who benefit from this, but anyone who decides, 'I don't want to sit around and wait for a record deal, I'm going to do this for myself.'"

That is exactly what she did with her most recent album, which was enabled by use of PledgeMusic, a way for fans to fund musicians directly. "I do wish that I hadn't been the first of my peers to try it, because we had to make some experiments and make some mistakes, but I've actually learnt a lot. It helped me to come up with new ideas to interact with fans."

All other issues aside, this connection seems to have become one of the songwriter's driving impulses. "I love it, because someone will say, 'your song reminds me of when I was at university,' or 'I met my girlfriend at your gig,' and that's cool. As a musician, you're just a soundtrack to someone's 45 minutes. The best you can hope for when you make an album is that someone will listen to it, with a friend, or while they're cooking, or while they're driving, and that's what you've done, you've given them 45 minutes of music for their day."

Rational yet passionate, this assessment is indicative of the same intelligence and emotion that seem to mark all of the work of this increasingly self-assured artist.



Arts Comment

If only there was a drawing board to go back to...

George Shapter

The art scene in Cambridge is on its last legs. You may not have noticed because it was hardly ever there in the first place.

This year the University's only student run art space, The Shop on Jesus Lane, will be turned into a building site. To most this may mean very little; an embarrassingly large percentage of the university have never heard of The Shop, let alone having in fact attended an exhibition of student art.

But why is there this lack of interest in fine art? Hundreds of students sacrifice hours of their precious week in order to create and perform music, poetry and theatre of all kinds. Operas are produced to great acclaim, indicating that there is not only creative enthusiasm and passion from students for new art, but that there is also an avid audience for it.

Cambridge doesn't offer a fine art degree, meaning that, unlike actors who are happy to complete an English degree knowing that they can also live the ADC life, artists rarely gravitate towards the University. However, there is a genuine interest here (I have faith). The reviews in this very newspaper confirm it, the splattering of life drawing classes occasionally provide proof, sporadic artistic projects (usually initiated by Mr Olly Rees) constitute glimmers of hope.

The infuriating thing is that Cambridge is actually bursting with artistic potential. We just need to step back, stop scribbling nudes for two hours on a Tuesday and play to our real creative strengths.

Here we are, surrounded by some of the brightest minds of our generation and certainly many of those belonging to the generations previous to us. It's also clear from the other more prolific arts that people want a creative outlet, so what are we all waiting for? Artistic projects inspired by the study and research we are all involved in would surely result in some fantastic work.

The problem is that there is no centralised structure or support. Consider the ADC theatre, or the Union's own nineteenth-century mansion, or the £16m sports complex set to be built. With a multitude of stages, concert halls and a chapel in almost every college, student art is left feeling comparatively unloved and under-supported.

Is there nowhere for student art to call home because of widespread disinterest, or would the demand become more visible if a fully funded, functional art centre was realised?

I really, honestly believe the latter to be true. The perceived apathy towards fine art is in fact a failing on the part of the University to amalgamate its sporadic artistic schemes into an encouraging institution.

The new sports complex provides hope in these times of limited financial support and while I doubt the Cambridge University Art Society Building (with adjacent bar and banging P.A. system) will be opening any time soon, we must not allow the student art scene breath its last breath.

Bucket List

Five silent films to see before you graduate

1 Un Chien Andalou
Luis Bunuel and Salvador Dali
One of the greatest low-budget films ever made, this surrealist experiment opens with the infamous eyeball being slit by a razor blade.

2 The General
Buster Keaton/Clyde Bruckton
Orson Welles called it "the greatest comedy ever made, the greatest Civil War film ever made, and perhaps the greatest film ever made." High praise.

3 Pandora's Box
Georg Wilhelm Pabst
Remembered most of all for Louise Brooks, who stars as the seductive young woman whose recklessness leads to her downfall. Her perfectly bobbed hair remains iconic in itself. Cinematographically stunning.

4 The Cabinet of Dr Caligari
Robert Wiene
A classic of German Expressionist cinema, and notable for being one of the earliest horror films. It paved the way for everyone from Jean Cocteau to Tim Burton.

5 Ivan the Terrible
Sergei Eisenstein
Originally intended as a trilogy - but never completed owing to Eisenstein's death - the two existing parts exemplify Soviet cinema at its greatest.



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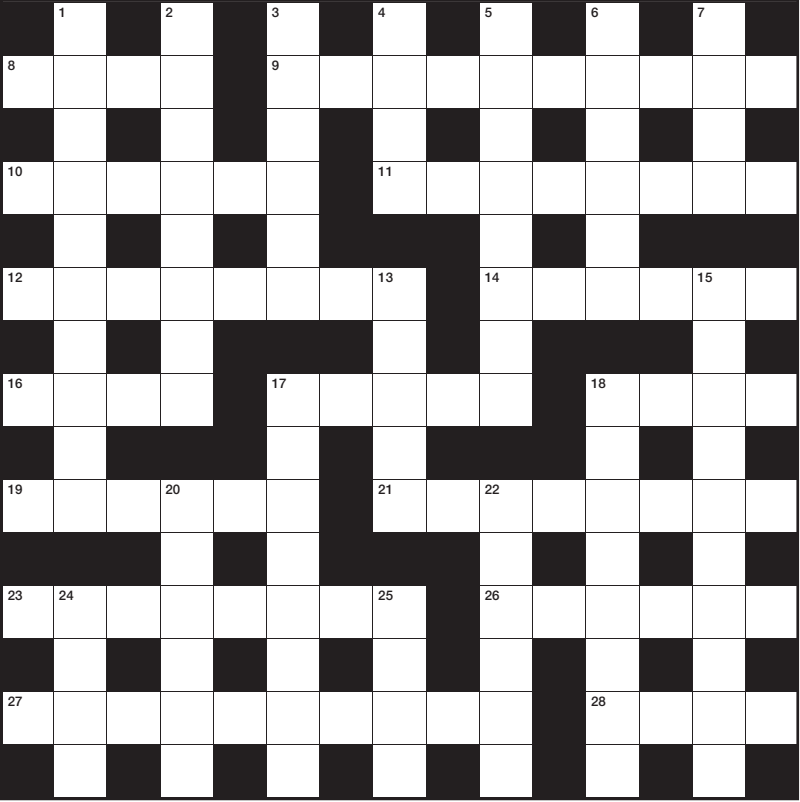
Obviously. But wouldn't it be great if it involved something you actually cared about?

Advertise your play, party or event here in Varsity:
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The Mays, formerly the May Anthologies, are published annually by *Varsity*.

The editor or editors will assemble a committee of students to invite submissions of fiction and non-fiction writing including prose, poetry and drama, as well as illustration and photography. The committee also appoints a 'guest editor' from the literary world.

Varsity Crossword



Across

8 Anna fled anaconda for a final flourish (4)
9 College arranged to re-house pet (10)
10 Genuine pretence is suitable before all late starts (6)
11 Improvised biddable creation (2-6)
12 European politician backs bankrupt college (8)
14 Opening gold dessert (6)
16 Falsehood encapsulates function of existence (4)
17 Endless wine for college (5)
18 Run a test rotation inside (4)
19 Nervous at the sidelines (2,4)
21 College produces lame menu (8)
23 I'm a randy, disorientated milk seller (8)
26 College starts giving information regarding the old nunnery (6)
27 About a hundred and one for a hundred and one, with fifty-one over (10)
28 Label him (4)

Down


1 Solid loses energy with charge accumulation (10)
2 Rich girl is suitable and able (8)
3 A survey often begins space missions (6)
4 Neat eruption for a volcano (4)
5 In favour of record broadcast before the first chapter (8)
6 Dessert is reportedly an extreme gamble (6)
7 Lewis: abnormally pointless island (4)
13 Dead, after a drug to uplift your spirits (5)
15 Honest company directors are after something higher (5,5)
17 Cheese factory messed up my career (8)
18 Start trying word puzzles, not a geometrical puzzle! (8)
20 Charles' college (6)
22 Mongolian's bumps (6)
24 Fresh bits taken from buckled wastebin (4)
25 Snog collar (4)

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.

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

The Varsity Scribblepad



Last week's answers



Week Two: *Varsity* goes skiing

In the second instalment of *Varsity* Sport's weekly look at some of the minor sports, we talk to this year's President of the Cambridge University Ski and Snowboard club, **Pete Calvert**

Matt Dickinson
CHIEF SPORT CORRESPONDENT

When did you first start skiing?

I was eight or nine, practising for a school trip on a dry slope in Aldershot – it wasn't quite the Alps.

What about skiing appeals to you?

The complexity of racing tactics and the sheer speed at which one has to respond and react has always drawn me to skiing. Even when you're not attaining a personal best, with the gates hurtling towards you, you always become acutely aware of the intensity of this discipline.

Favourite skiing memory?

I first competed in the Varsity competition in 2007, and any one of the trips could be my favourite skiing memory. The atmosphere and spectator turnout at the Varsity match are fantastic, and this helps generate an excitement amongst the team which simply does not accompany normal races.

Who's the best skier you've encountered?

There were several members of

the club I attended in Aldershot who made it into Team GB, but the fresher addition to the team this year, JP Espinosa, is the best skier I've personally worked with.

What are your hopes for this season?

The focus is naturally the Varsity competition, but we are also hoping to compete more with other institutions. Loughborough, Newcastle and the Scottish universities have performed well in the past so we would be keen to challenge them. We've also signed up to Edinburgh University's dry slope competition in December for the first time so we're keen to put in a good showing there too.

How will the team prepare before the Varsity race?

The few days prior to the Varsity competition is the only time we have to train on real snow, so getting practice in is a real priority. Just before the race, we like to relax as a team at the top of the slope before rallying one another when our run is imminent. Despite the individual nature of the sport, team spirit is crucial when success depends on

at least four of the six man squad performing.

Who are the big characters in the skiing team?

My teammate Ed Gardner enlivens any situation, often creating a literal song and dance.

Who are favourites for Varsity?

We have a very promising intake this year, and I think with disciplined training we could be very strong. But we won't encounter Oxford's squad until we meet them during regional qualifications, so it's difficult to say.

Any tips for budding skiers?

Always look to improve your skills, try racing or freestyle disciplines if you have the opportunity. When taking up the sport competitively, plenty of good skiers can be frustrated by coaches taking them back to square one, but it is a learning curve we all have to experience.

Are you concerned by the Varsity Trip's image in recent years?

I am not to be honest. The trip provides the opportunity for people to ski who might not have otherwise



Blues skier Evan Scouros hurtles down the Super-G course at Val Thorens

considered doing so and, perhaps more importantly, the chance to ski for those who might not normally be able to afford to do so. Making the trip more 'serious' could only harm this aspect of Varsity, and the competitive racing element is certainly not disappearing from the trip's ethos. What's really important is that more and more people are given the opportunity to ski.

What would you say to any freshers who want to try skiing?

Anyone who has skied knows it is a unique buzz and an experience not to be missed. It can perhaps be compared to motor racing, inasmuch as you must choose a line and keep to it at break-neck speed, except when skiing, there is no machine between you and the elements.



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Hockey Blues dispatch Chelmsford

Gritty performance from Nick Parkes' men sees off strong Chelmsford challenge

David McLean
HOCKEY CORRESPONDENT

The men's Blues quest for promotion into the national leagues stepped up a gear this weekend with their first league win of the season away against Chelmsford.

On paper a 4-0 win looks comfortable, but this was by no means an easy match, for the Chelmsford side started strongly and showed great desire in the latter stages, which made closing out the game a difficult task for the men in blue.

Taking inspiration from the rain which greeted their arrival, the Blues' plan of attack was to dowse opposition resistance in a torrent of high-paced possession hockey beginning immediately from the starting whistle.

Unfortunately unbeknownst to the Cambridge men, the opposition were in a similar frame of mind and immediately gained the upper hand, lightning-attacking play win-

On paper a 4-0 scoreline looks comfortable, but this was by no means an easy ride for the Blues



ning them the chance to score from a penalty corner in the first play of the game.

Barely having touched the ball thus far, the Cambridge defensive unit was called upon to hold the line until the team could rally from the blitzkrieg which had comprised the opening stages.

Keeper Greame Morrison set the

tone for the rest of his match by pulling off a magnificent diving stick-save to his right to deny a well-placed drag flick shot. Chelmsford, exploiting the temporarily dazed Cambridge team, continued to play with pace and put a great deal of pressure on the Cambridge defence.

Despite having three or four more early chances to open the scoring the Chelmsford attackers remained frustrated, mainly thanks to Morrison who continued his virtuoso performance in the Cambridge net.

Now settled, the Blues began to dominate possession and were rewarded for the fortitude they showed earlier with a chance to take the lead from a penalty corner.

David Madden converted after some composed skill at the top of the D. With things now rolling the Blues continued to penetrate the Chelmsford territory, but the match was not one-sided.

Both teams had chances to score, but it was Cambridge who struck again through an Ollie Salvesen deflection. With the confidence of a 2-0 cushion behind them the Blues midfielders began to gain the upper hand over their Chelmsford counterparts. Will Cairns orchestrated play from centre half and just before half time the chance to go into the break 3-0 up materialized in the form of another short corner. This one was not converted though.

The second half began differently from the first, now awoken and relieved to be in front after some tense moments, Cambridge were not to be caught off guard.

From the off both teams attacked



Captain Nick Parkes (St Catharine's) gathers his troops for a quick team-talk

and both had chances to score. With Chelmsford still unable to find the back of the net Cambridge extended their lead through Gus Kennedy who showed true striker's instinct in tagging a final touch onto the end of a Nick Parkes shot.

The remainder of the match saw

attacking forays from both teams and some strong Cambridge defensive play to retain the clean sheet. The match was sealed late in the day by Felix Styles who scored from a penalty corner with a whizzing drag flick.

The final score of 4-0 was perhaps a little flattering to the Cambridge men,

but nonetheless they showed great perseverance to weather the storm at the beginning of the match and pull through with four unanswered goals.

The Blues' next game is at home to Northampton 1st XV on Wednesday 19th October at 2.30pm.

College Hockey Preview: Division One

Varsity Sport

With the new college hockey season already upon us *Varsity* Sport examines in depth the contenders for this year's title.

We begin with college hockey giants, St Catharine's, who last year clinched a remarkable clean sweep of the silverware; winning the League, Cuppers and Mixed Cuppers.

With their ranks swelled by Blues players (Captain Nick Parkes, Charlie Bennett and Henry Delacave, among others) it is little wonder they brushed their rivals aside with ease on the road to glory last year. Even in the league where Blues are not allowed to appear for their college, the depth of their squad is such that they still boast the Wanderers Captain, Joe Bond, and fellow Wanderers defensive stalwart, Jamie Salter.

Moreover, a close fought victory on Sunday over last year's runners-up and their most dangerous opponents, Old Leysians, looks ominous for the rest of the league's chances. With this in mind *Varsity* Sport predicts another stellar season for the men and women in pink.

Given this defeat, the Old Leysians



Last year's all-conquering St Catharine's team in their outlandish pink kit

side must now pray for a slip-up from St Catharine's if they are to have any realistic hope of stealing the title.

Under the stewardship of the imposing centre forward, Will Earl, last year's joint top scorer in the league, they have every right to consider themselves contenders. However, they will certainly need to address their inability to put some of the league's weaker contingent to the sword, as they famously threw away the title last year with a humiliating 5-0 drubbing at the hands of a very weak Jesus side.

The best of the rest includes Robinson, Girton and newcomers Downing, who secured promotion to

the top division with an impressive 100% record in Division Two in Lent term. Girton though look to be a much weakened side with the loss of star player, Alec Dawson, and a lack of outstanding new fresher talent to boot. *Varsity* Sport therefore expect Robinson and Downing to battle it out for 3rd place.

Finally, the league's relegation battle looks set to be fought between Jesus and Emmanuel. Jesus, who last season scored the fewest goals in the league and conceded five to a John's attack that only managed twelve goals in six games, look the most likely to go down and should be the division's proverbial whipping boys

| Division 1 | |
|------------------|----------------|
| Lent 2011 Finish | College |
| 1 | St Catharine's |
| 2 | Old Leysians |
| 3 | Girton |
| 4 | Emmanuel |
| 5 | Robinson |
| 6 | Jesus |
| 7 | Downing (P) |

this time round.

Emmanuel, however, perhaps the most mercurial side in the league, will certainly hope to forget their embarrassing showing against St Catharine's last year and look for victory against either Girton or Jesus, where their chances appear most healthy.

Of course, we must emphasise the unpredictable nature of the college hockey league as midweek fixtures mean that availabilites tend to fluctuate sporadically such that key players suddenly become unavailable for key games. So the balance of power may yet shift in what promises to be an exciting season.

VARSITY PICKS

FAVOURITES

ST CATHARINE'S - champions last year with an astounding goal difference of +31. Their 14-0 demolition of Emmanuel was a particular highlight.

THE DARK HORSE

OLD LEYSIANS - the only team to conquer the might of St Catherine's last year but struggled to impose themselves on the weaker teams.

MIDDLE OF THE ROAD

GIRTON - unlikely to repeat their 3rd place finish with the departure of several key players, including the league's joint top scorer last year, Alec Dawson.

BOTTOM OF THE HEAP

JESUS - avoided the drop by one point last year and only a strong fresher intake is likely to save them from relegation woes this time around.

Town versus Gown

As it happened...
**Cambridge University
v. Cambridge RFC**

START

1
Nigel Conroy opens the scoring, winger Rob Stephens converts. 7-0

12
Try for the Blues forwards as Dave Allen is driven over from the line-out. 12-0

21
Town strike back, with Adam White converting from the touchline. 12-7

26
Blues stand-off Greg Cushing waltzes through the Town's midfield. 17-7

34
Needless penalty in the centre of the park, Stephens makes no mistake. 20-7

HALF TIME

58
Awful mistake by Town full back, who then holds on and is duly pinged. 23-7

68
Stunning individual effort from Stephens, outfoxing Town full-back. 28-7

77
Thrown wide by Town, Jordan Burgess steps through tired Blues defence. 28-14.

80
Last-minute try for Town flatters the visiting side. 28-21.

FULL TIME

Continued from page 36

For the second consecutive week, the rolling maul proved powerfully effective. The scrum, too, when not engaging early, held up well against a considerably heavier pack.

Behind the back foot, the University won another battle. More fluent than before, coming from deeper, and making sure that forays into opposition territory were rewarded with points, this was an encouraging beginning for a new-look line-up: from last Monday night, only two backs – Tom O'Toole and Rob Stevens – remained in position, the half-back and five-eighth partnerships having been completely re-jigged.

Perhaps some grey areas remain: the line-out was immaculate against the Saints, but this week it wobbled. Just occasionally, the handling malaise which infected the City spread across the game line, while lighter, faster backs are becoming something of a thorn in the side of the Blues' defence.

Still, these are relatively minor points: more clinical, more disciplined, more professional, more likely to convert pressure into points, this one was well-earned.

After the game *Varsity*

Sport got Blues Coach Tony Rodgers thoughts on his side's performance: "The most pleasing aspect was getting a win after three defeats on the bounce. That will be a big boost to our confidence. We really played like a team too with the backs and forwards constantly encouraging each other throughout the game.

There's still a lot to work on though and we're staying firmly grounded. It was a real pity to concede the last try but the squad enjoyed it and we continue to improve as a team, so it was a very pleasing evening."

Acting Captain, Scott Annett, gave a more reserved assessment of his side's performance which perhaps reflected his disappointment at conceding two late tries: "Off the back of recent narrow defeats, we were relatively pleased with the win and we're looking to kick on."

The Blues next game is at home to Blackheath RFC on Tuesday 18th October at 8pm.

SEE MORE ONLINE AT
@ @ VARSITY.CO.UK



Blues No. 8 Dave Allen (Pembroke) bundles over for a try

Commentary Box: Why a Blue doesn't matter

Ciaran McAuley



For those fortunate few, pulling on that celebrated blazer and embracing the sense of exclusivity and bewitchment in which the turquoise cloth shrouds their owner is perhaps the highlight of their university years. So long has the Blue been a symbol of status recognised by Cambridge students, that its very sighting often draws gasps and such naked awe. But yet, do we honestly believe that most Cambridge students revere their sporting peers for the cherished competitors they are, or is it nothing more than hoopla trumped up by the student media?

Let me be clear. The vast majority, if not all of us, are here for one major reason: academia. We were handpicked due to our academic prowess and performance at interview. We are here to take advantage of and learn from some of the finest minds around, and it would be fair to say that for most students, sport had little bearing on their application to Cambridge. If a student thought sport was the most important factor in their university application, they probably would have chosen Bath or Loughborough, who are renowned for their sporting pedigree and, are in all likelihood, less academically challenging than Cambridge.

To many, university sport is just a way of letting off steam and easing stress. It is really the ability of Blues players to juggle their work alongside sport commitments that is most commendable and not the winning of a Blue itself, which is simply not the accolade it purports to be.

As for the relative value of one Blue compared to another, it is hard to reconcile such talk. The Blues system is already selective: a Full Blue is awarded to a select thirteen

sports whilst others are given discretionary Full Blues or Half Blues. This means certain sports are already seen to be superior to others. So even an individual who has competed for their country in a Half Blue sport may only be able to achieve an Extraordinary Full Blue, dependent on a Blues Committee decision. Clearly, this is a process that undervalues the talents of such individuals. Surely any comparison between different Blues is just a further level of snobbery in what is already a highly competitive university, both academically and sports-wise?

Those who play university sport probably take the stance that their sport comes second to their studies. Indeed, failing the Tripos because of Blues commitments isn't enough to avoid rustication.

But this is in stark contrast to the American Ivy League universities, who offer enormous scholarships for talented sportsmen and willingly turn a blind eye to poor academic attainment. No such scholarships are offered at Cambridge.

What about the endless stream of world-class rowers who come to row for Cambridge in the Boat Race? Well, even the Winklevoss twins, both Olympians, originally applied to Cambridge in 2010 on essentially the premise of taking part in The Boat Race.

But Cambridge turned them down because of their exceptionally poor grades from Harvard (note the Oxford boat welcomed them with open arms). So it seems that even the rowers are no longer afforded such generous shortcuts into Cambridge.

Ultimately then, a Blue is just not that valuable, especially if your academic ability isn't even at the same level as that of everyone else.

Football Focus: PWC Divison One



Varsity Sport

The first round of college football fixtures kicks off in the PWC Division One on Wednesday 19th October, as the best ten colleges emerge from their summer slumber to ignite the battle for honours this season.

Last year's runners-up and highly regarded Downing side welcome Christs to their ground in what should be a routine win for Downing.

Even considering the lack of match practice over the long vacation, the gulf in class between the two sides should tell, with the incisive partnership of Messrs, Sellman, Corcut and Clare likely to dominate in midfield.

Reigning champions Trinity

OPENING FIXTURES

| HOME | AWAY |
|--------------|-------------|
| CHRISTS | DOWNING |
| TRINITY | EMMANUEL |
| SELWYN | FITZWILLIAM |
| JESUS | CAIUS |
| TRINITY HALL | HOMERTON |

however, start their campaign against somewhat stiffer opposition Emmanuel, who finished an impressive fourth last season.

This is perhaps the pick of the opening fixtures, as it sees the best defence in the league last season, Trinity, up against arguably the best attack which netted more goals than



Last year's champions, Trinity

any other side bar Homerton.

Meanwhile, newly-promoted Selwyn face Fitzwilliam in what should be an interesting clash that determines the battle for mid-table placings later on in the season.

Similarly, Jesus play host to Caius, who were lucky not to follow Girton down to Division Two after a pretty poor season themselves both in front of goal and in defence.

Finally, new boys Trinity Hall take on a very physical and talented Homerton side at home in what could well be a one-sided win for Homerton.

Expect a big score-line and an equally healthy number of yellow cards and flared tempers in this fixture.

Search: Neredi Bijeli Brijeg (it's Bosnian for riot)



The visiting opposition score only to find themselves chased off the park by a pitch invasion - Eastern European style

SPORT

“Surely any comparison between different Blues is just a further level of snobbery in what is already a highly competitive university?”

Ciaran McAuley responds to last week’s feature on the best Blue to earn



Gown seal win over Town

Blues stop the rot of three consecutive defeats with a comfortable victory over an error-prone Cambridge RFC side under the lights at Grange Road



Captain Scott Annett (Clare, black scrum-cap) leads another powerful maul from the Blues forwards as they drive towards Town’s tryline

| | |
|----------------|----|
| CAMBRIDGE UNIV | 28 |
| CAMBRIDGE RFC | 21 |

Michael Taylor
DEPUTY SPORT EDITOR

This was not dull. Loose, fast, maybe scrappy, but always engrossing, Tuesday night’s match between the Blues and Cambridge City did two things. First, it entertained. Second and more important – following three defeats to TCD, the Saints, and Queensland University – a deserved and needed victory returned the University’s season to solid ground. And at no stage did it suggest doing anything different. Within sixty seconds, Blues hooker Nigel Conroy had completed a remarkable move conducted by his front-row colleagues, not least Fergus Austin, and stepped past an overwhelmed line of defence. The visitors had not started; the Blues

were already in fourth. Latecomers missed this all – a shame for them. Ten minutes later, the lead stretched to a dozen. The rolling maul, so potent this season, finished a clean line-out and notched another score on the belt of the pack. The PA had no earthly idea who came up with the ball. *Varsity* Sport reckons it was No.8 Dave Allen. Some kind of comeback was perhaps inevitable. Whether by design or necessity, the Town played a wide, rapid, and expansive game which found and opened gaps at will and, at last, openside Jake McCloud set it up for inside centre Will Lawson to crash over. The students’ response, though, was majestic, fly-half Greg Cushing waltzing through and skipping past some fairly weak tackling to score on the right. A brace of Rob Stephens penalties on each side of the break made things increasingly comfortable and, with twelve to go, his virtuoso effort on

the left wing ended the match as a contest. Not taking on the touchline, Stephens lobbed the Town’s full-back, took advantage of a kind bounce, and cruised under the posts. The margin could have been more, too – a hanging cross-field from Cushing almost found Paul Loudon (surely wasted on the right wing?), and only a couple of relatively soft tries conceded in the dying throes closed the margin. Even when the Town’s phases were strung together, the Blues controlled the breakdown

This was not an insignificant win. Last year, the Blues received a hiding and this was another dangerous Town XV. Prepared to run from its own line, to throw it around, to spurn shots at goal in favour of the five-metre line-

out, it was a pleasure to watch a style of rugby so antithetical to so much of the English game. On another night, playing like this, they could have run in a dozen tries. On this night, however, the Town made as many as twenty-four handling errors, too many by half should any team even entertain thoughts of victory. High ball? Grubber? Flat pass? Miss pass? Offload? Take your pick: each of them was taken with a frantic lack of assurance at least once and likely many times more. So many basic errors; such wasted enterprise. Even when the Town’s phases were strung together, the Blues controlled the breakdown. Too often the visitors went high into contact; too often the tackled man could not turn; too often would he hold on, or his forwards got manual on the floor. Well done the Blues back row, one would think. Elsewhere, the work of the forwards was further rewarded.



College Hockey Preview p34

| RESULTS ROUND-UP | |
|------------------|----|
| FOOTBALL | |
| BLUES | 3 |
| WARWICK | 0 |
| HOCKEY | |
| BLUES | 4 |
| CHELMSFORD | 0 |
| RUGBY | |
| BLUES | 19 |
| QUEENSLAND UNI | 22 |
| RUGBY | |
| BLUES | 28 |
| CAMBRIDGE RFC | 21 |

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