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Varsity

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Occupation turmoil splits JCRs and CUSU



Andrew Griffin
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

College JCRs and CUSU were this morning scrambling to decide their policies concerning the Occupation by Cambridge Defend Education (CDE) of Lady Mitchell Hall on the Sidgwick Site.

The Occupation, which began after protesters interrupted a speech by David Willetts and forced him from the stage, today continued into its fourth day. Early yesterday morning Jimmy Murray, CUSU Chair, sent an email confirming that CUSU Council would debate a motion which proposed that CUSU would “condemn the actions



which prevented students hearing and questioning David Willetts”.

The motion also called for CUSU to disassociate from CDE, to reaffirm both their commitment to fighting against the government cuts in higher education and their commitment to academic freedom and freedom of speech.

The motion was at that time signed by 31 representatives from 15 JCRs, and these are expected to be joined by many more. It will be debated at an extraordinary meeting of CUSU Council on Saturday.

Last night CUSU President Gerard Tully said that the strength and depth of feeling in JCRs on both sides of the

debate is one he’d never seen before.

Tully told *Varsity* that CUSU will not have any official policy until Saturday’s meeting.

CUSU is yet to take any stance on the Occupation.

On Tuesday night Ben Russell and Hannah Capek, President and Vice-President of Trinity Hall JCR, sent an email to Presidents of other JCRs, which said that they were “really rather angry” about the protest, which they believed had obstructed freedom of speech.

They also alleged that CDE had lied to members of CUSU council after “explicitly stat[ing] that they would not prevent Willetts from speaking”.

However, at an open meeting of King’s College Student Union last night representatives from CDE argued that since the organising meeting for the protest took place before and during the meeting of CUSU Council, Chris Page – who proposed the motion – could not have known that the action was going to take place.

Yesterday saw a group of protestors gather outside the Law Faculty to protest against the Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove.

Gove gave a talk at the faculty as part of a lecture series on ‘The Meaning of Liberal Learning’.

News p3

Magdalene JCR in chaos as the President resigns amidst electoral controversy



Theatre p30

“This production wasn’t nearly offensive enough”

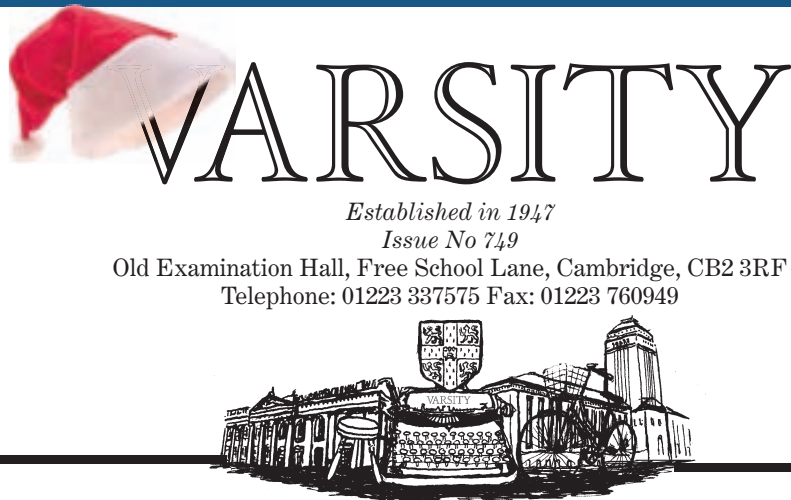
Sophie Lewisohn
on *Children’s Guide to the Birth of Christ*



Sport p33

En garde! Varsity speaks to University fencing captain, Nicolas de Juniac





What you talkin’ bout Willetts?

It would be downright daft to claim that we do not believe in free speech. In any civilised society people should be free to say whatever they wish – however deplorable – and this freedom should be defended.

And yet, as a newspaper we acknowledge that speech – which we believe can be among the most powerful forces available to a person – comes with a responsibility. If speech, free or not, is to have any value at all, then the words must mean something, and do something.

This is clearly not the case in any debate including David Willetts. Those opposing his reforms to higher education funding have won the argument, time and again and in numerous different forums, but it doesn’t seem to matter. As a democratically elected government minister, and one who by all accounts is very intelligent, it is entirely appropriate

that Mr Willetts was asked to speak at a lecture series entitled ‘The Idea of the University’. If CDE truly wanted to reveal the inconsistencies in Willetts’s argument, there was no better space. They wasted an opportunity to exchange arguments in rigorous debate.

But how much of an opportunity this really represented remained unclear. Granted, some of Willetts’s most intelligent critics were in the audience. And granted, he may have squirmed under some important questions. Yet this would never have received the news coverage that the CDE action has. ‘David Willetts subjected to incisive questions’ would never have made it to our front page.

But in taking this action, CDE have left themselves open to just these objections. Strength of feeling does not equal rightness of thinking.

We must accept that, whilst CDE’s

views are representative of a majority within the University, their theatrics alienated an otherwise receptive audience. In the words of W.H. Auden, “poetry makes nothing happen”.

That every speaker in the series came from a vested position in the University system offers no surprises. That no University employee was given the same platform is regressive, and goes some way to condoning CDE’s action.

Any talk which attempts to address a debate as large and important, with such a grand history, should at least demonstrate some concern about what those people who keep this University running – such as students, junior faculty members, porters – think of it.

And yet, in the same poem Auden says poetry is “a way of happening, a mouth”. Let us not allow self-indulgent arguments about “free speech” stop us freely speaking.

Letters, Emails & Comments

WILLETTS WALKS

Dear Sirs,
A University is about an exchange of ideas and thoughts, whether or not you like them. Someone who interrupts this process in the pretence of defending education has completely missed the point. Want to make a difference? Sit down and use the brain that got you here to come up with a better solution, not just antagonise the people who have the power to make the change.
Alan Cruickshank, Cambridge via Varsity.co.uk

Dear Sirs,
CUSU ‘No Platform’ policy: bans ‘attempts by any organization within Cambridge University to provide a platform to any group deemed to pose a very real threat to the welfare of our members’.
If that’s not a description of what the government’s plans to saddle students with £50,000+ of debt (plus interest), I don’t know what is.
Nafaniel Davies, Cambridge via Varsity.co.uk

Dear Sirs,
Jeremy Prynne’s defence of these actions on the CDE website is that students were not invited to speak at the lecture series.
But students were allowed to attend the speech and there was to be a 45 minute opportunity for questions at the end!
Matt Johnson, Chair, Cambridge

University Conservative Association via Varsity.co.uk
Dear Sirs,
The students who interrupted the speech by David Willetts may have won in the sense that they prevented him from speaking, but they and we have lost in more important ways.
Instead of seeing Willetts’ appearance at Cambridge as an opportunity to publicly make a moral and intellectual case by asking him some challenging questions with a view to exposing the weaknesses in his case. In so doing, I believe that they weakened their own position by giving the impression to those present in the lecture theatre. Chanting and barracking is unlikely to persuade anyone not already convinced of the rightness of their stance, but presenting strong arguments and

asking tough questions might just do so. All in all, a sad day for rational debate in Cambridge.
Nick Clarke, Cambridge via e-mail

Dear Sirs,
This entire lecture series was on the “Idea of a University” - I thought that was somewhere for the free and rigorous exchange of ideas because that’s how people grow and develop intellectually - not a pulpit for mindless shouting
Calum McDonald, President, Cambridge Unioni Society via Varsity.co.uk

Dear Sirs,
The protestors should, if anything, be imprisoned for crimes against poetry...
Edgar T. Stunny, Cambridge via e-mail

Varsity has been Cambridge’s independent student newspaper since 1947. We like that fact. And in the infamous words of Alan Partridge: “Ooooh it’s a good paper”

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DIGITAL DIGEST



VARSiTY NEWS

David Willetts protest
Catch the very best coverage of the Cambridge Defend Education protest at Varsity news online. Read more about the Willetts protests and offer your opinion on the occupation.



VARSiTV

VarsiTV Sessions episode 2 – Kitty Norman
In this second episode of VarsiTV Sessions, singer/songwriter Kitty Norman performs ‘Farmyard Days’ from Benet’s cafe.



VARSiTY BLUES

SportsTube
Ice-hockey punch-ups, crap goal-keeping and dodgeball on trampolines: these are the vital ingredients for any respectable SportsTube. See more at the Varsity Blues blog online.



VICE

DIY Christmas truffles
Festive fare from Varsity. Let Jessica Donnithorne show you how to make the perfect DIY christmas truffles – perfect for a present or a moment of indulgence.



VULTURE

The importance of being... Interesting
“I’m nothing special, in fact I’m a bit of a bore,” sings the blonde one from Abba. Freya Berry analyses what makes some of us so damn interesting

University ranks among top fundraisers worldwide

Hannah Miller
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

The University of Cambridge has announced that its 800th Anniversary Campaign raised over £1.17 billion, the largest fundraising total ever announced by a European university.

Calculated at the average year-on-year exchange rate for the ten years of the campaign, a total of £649 million (\$1.1 billion) was raised by the University and £523 million (\$905 million) by the Colleges through initiatives such as telephone campaigns. This does not include a further £390 million of legacy pledges, which will create a significant income in the future.

The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sir Leszek Borysiewicz, paid tribute to his predecessors, Alec Broers and Alison Richard, who initiated and led the campaign. He said that the University is “immensely grateful” for the generous donations it has received.

The figure places Cambridge in the top rank of fundraising institutions worldwide, although significantly behind US stalwarts such as Harvard, who raised over £400 million (\$639 million) in the fiscal year 2011.

The Cambridge campaign, which began in 2001, was at its most public

during 2009 when a series of events were held to celebrate the 800th Anniversary of the university. Donations have come from alumni and friends around the world. 54,000 alumni, more than a quarter of the total, have contributed at least once to a college, with more than 8,000 having donated directly to the University.

The money will be used to enhance provision for student support and improve research facilities, as well as ensuring that Cambridge has the means to attract world-class academics and maintain its heritage.

Indeed, the momentum has been sustained since the campaign was officially ended, with a further £135 million raised in 2010-11, rendering this another record year for the university. The Vice-Chancellor stated that the conclusion of the 800th Anniversary Campaign is simply “the end of the beginning”. In order to remain “a global leader in education and research”, Cambridge must continue to be “a leader in philanthropy”.

The University raised a record £1.17 billion during its 800th Anniversary Campaign



Controversy: JCR president forced to resign amid accusations of electoral malpractice

Magdalene JCR president resigns

Samantha Sharman
NEWS CO-EDITOR

The newly elected JCR President of Magdalene College, Andrew Webster, has announced his resignation after controversy arose over the election of other JCR positions.

Webster was accused of trying to manipulate the outcome of the election, after it emerged that he sent a private email stating the candidates

he wished to see elected, which was then leaked around the College. Webster asked his friend to “talk to your people and propose the following motions”.

Jo Hyland, the returning officer, said that Webster clearly intended for the list to be circulated, in order to influence votes.

Hyland also stated the JCR Committee’s disagreement with Webster’s actions, which he described as “an

abuse of his position”.

In an apology letter sent to students, Webster said: “I feel as though I have been cornered into a position where I have been left with no other option but to resign as president elect in order to preserve the reputation of the JCR and the college.

“I wish therefore to do this with immediate effect, despite feeling that my actions are not the sole factor in this decision”.

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The Occupation: Cambridge stands divided

The occupation of Lady Mitchell Hall, following activists' disruption of a talk given by universities minister David Willetts, has caused a rift amongst students and academics alike.

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Protest outside of the Lady Mitchell Hall begins, featuring a 'speak out' with speakers including students, academics, and a member of the NUS national executive

18:00

David Willetts' speech begins. Immediately, protesters stand up and begin reading from a pre-written speech.

Morgan Wild CUSU education officer

The disruption of David Willetts' speech by a small group of protesters was completely unacceptable and does not speak for the majority of students who are united in their opposition to the government's catastrophic higher education policies. Freedom of expression is one of the founding principles of our University – no matter how vehemently we disagree with the views being espoused. We cannot support any protest that violates this principle. Cambridge has had a fantastic tradition of effective protests in

recent years, such as last year's successful Save Our Bursaries campaign. We must not let this action undermine that tradition. What is important now is remaining united as a student movement in our opposition to this government's policies – our overriding priority must be opposing the White Paper, which proposes a vision of our universities that we should all reject, and continuing to ensure that this government's disastrous policies do not further impact the education

Cambridge can offer to students. CUSU is having an Extraordinary Council meeting this Saturday at 15:00 to discuss these issues, and we invite all students to come and participate in the debate.

Richard Johnson Chair of Cambridge Universities Labour Club

I think that David Willetts and the coalition's university policies are a disgrace, but democracy requires that even those with whom we disagree deeply are allowed to speak freely. As a left-wing person, I'm sympathetic to CDE's goals of eliminating socio-economic barriers to education, but I don't believe you achieve that by shouting someone down. The Labour Party exists because working class people realised that the only way that justice can be achieved is through the means of our Parliamentary democracy.

Ed Turnham Chairman-elect of Cambridge University Conservative Association

This is a very counter productive protest that violates principles of free speech and is aimed at preventing a proper debate from happening. If Cambridge defend education were secure in the strength of their arguments they wouldn't feel the need to shout down Willetts, they'd be willing to engage in the public debate that's been happening for months. They've had the chance to have their say in many forums and media, and there's no reason for David Willetts not to have his.

Jeremy Prynne Poet and Caius Fellow

One aspect of this rather challenging business, the current occupation of Lady Mitchell Hall, which will involve sternest public disapproval of students for denying the right to speak to an invited visitor who happened also to be a Minister of State, will need to be addressed. When this series of lectures and discussions on the theme of 'The Idea of a University' was originally set up, various great & good names were included in the list of those invited to make a presentation, so as to open out a range of views about this topic at the present time and as it bears on the current situation at Cambridge.

This list included *no* representation of the student voice, they were simply excluded, as if somehow they were merely customers for whatever their superiors debated so loftily. I took it upon myself to point out somewhat forcefully, early in the

planning stage and in response to an issued notice of intention about this series, that the exclusion of any student voice was more than negligent, since of course the announced vast increase in fees would affect future students most of all, but this remonstrance was not acted on.

And so now, confronted with the privileged invitation-to-speak issued to the principal architect of this massive threat to fundamental student access to *their* higher education, still leaving them without any voice in the matter, they stormed this citadel by taking the expression of their collective views into their own hands, drowning out the invited speaker with uninvited, prepared speech of their own.

Their anger at being yet again ignored was very palpable. Much blame must be attached to the organisers of this series for effectively instigating this episode, and for leaving these vocal students to carry the public burden of blame largely by themselves.



After Willetts leaves, Professor Simon Goldhill is forced to announce that the speech is cancelled.



Emergency exits forced open as protestors from outside make their way in. Security claim that one of their number has been injured when dealing with protestors.



Protestors place themselves in front of the fire door, preventing it from closing.



Trinity Hall JCR write to the heads of fellow JCRs condemning CDE's actions, asking them for support in CUSU Council meeting.



CUSU propose an emergency motion, to be decided upon this Saturday.

Priya Gopal Fellow in English at Churchill

I'm passionate about free speech: I've debated racists and religious extremists, defending their right to have their say in public, not least so their views can be subjected to challenge.

I view the disruption of occasions for real debate with disquiet. Academic freedom is the lifeblood of universities and should be defended fiercely especially now that it is under massive threat from Coalition policies.

So why do I not rush to condemn the students who disrupted David Willetts' lecture? Firstly, while every debate is an occasion of speaking, not every occasion of speech automatically constitutes a debate. To imagine that a politician who has already articulated his views on the 'Idea of the

"We would have received the same lazy pre-fab corporate-speak Willetts usually peddles"

University' in every imaginable forum, from media interviews and political speeches to the White Paper itself, seeks to 'debate' a handful of academics is delusional. (I doubt many academics really thought there was a 'debate' in the offing, just a chance to personally pose questions, already

asked in numerous articles, to which they would have received the same lazy prefabricated corporate-speak Willetts usually peddles in reply).

The fantastical notion that Willetts would have been skewered by our collective brilliance and convincingly shown the wrongness of his views by our eloquence, returning to Whitehall thoughtful rather than legitimised by another sham 'consultation' that's some particularly donnish arrogance.

The right time for Willetts to have debated, discussed and consulted widely on the idea of the university would have been before decimating the block grant for teaching, trebling tuition fees and producing policy (albeit in consultation with for-profit educational firms) which will liquidate the British University as we know it.

Speech does not take place in a vacuum: it is structured by power relations and institutional realities where some people are far more equal than others.

In being refused a platform, Willetts was hoist by his own petard in a necessary act of refusal.

In the face of institutional realities deliberately skewed against them, having already faced punishment within and beyond the university, kettling and criminalisation when they've exercised their right to dissent, activists decided to make their own voices heard for a change.

By all means, criticise the protestors and their methods. Then lead by active example.

Professor Simon Goldhill Director of CRASSH and organiser of the talk

Dozens of students and other members of the audience at Lady Mitchell have sent me e-mails and comments all expressing their disappointment and rage at the protest. The commonest term has been "ashamed".

There are two reasons why I was disappointed with the form of the protest. I say the form of the protest because, like Naomi Wolf who spoke in Cambridge two weeks ago, I believe that protest is a democratic necessity, and like most who work in the University I have been appalled by the nature of the proposed government reforms of education. I would have been surprised if there had been no expression of the anger many feel. But I was equally annoyed by the way these few students elected to behave.

The first reason is that we lost an extraordinary opportunity. Mr Willetts agreed to do something very few politicians ever do: to face his critics for an hour of questions without any preconditions. We had some of his most articulate critics in the audience. This exceptional opportunity to change public opinion, whatever Mr Willetts' response, was lost.

The second reason is that the protest, in the name of protecting the values of the university, destroyed the

values of the university. You cannot defend the university as a place of rational debate, as the home of the free and critical exchange of ideas, by preventing people from listening to a talk they wish to hear, by refusing to listen to views you disagree with, and by shouting down any opposition. I don't believe governments when they say torture or extrajudicial killings are necessary to protect democracy. I don't believe you can stand up for what we most care about in university

"We have lost a truly extraordinary opportunity"

education by systematically abusing its privileges. You can't shag for chastity. The history of the twentieth century reveals again and again the disastrous consequences of this sort of behaviour. It starts with anger, often, as in this case, justified anger, but when it moves through absolute certainty, to violently excluding other voices, then the political consequences become lethal.

I stood for a good while with the protesters earlier outside Lady Mitchell, and heard speaker after speaker extol the opportunity for anyone to speak, to hear the marginal voices, and many passionate defences of educational principles with which I agree – and then sadly watched the violent destruction of such ideals in the protest's strident, totalitarian yelling.



The protesters take to the stage as the occupation gets underway



Simon Goldhill looks on as students speak from the stage

twitterati

What's occupying Cambridge minds?

OCCUPATION SPECIAL!



@andrewdiver

Andrew Diver, Cambridge PhD student

Unlike Willetts, #OccupyCam is not disrupting any teaching. We are keeping all the doors open for the 9am economics lecture.



@JackRiley

Jack Riley, Digital Content Editor, The Independent

MP David Willetts shouted off in Cam... Those students should be arrested, for crimes against poetry



@JuanDeFrancisco

Juan de Francisco, Cambridge student

The biggest surprise for me was seeing a lot of previously 'hardcore' activists walk away from the actions of the 'dedicated' few tonight.



@PhilRodgers

Phil Rodgers, Cambridge data blogger

Shouting down people you disagree with isn't my idea of a University...



@HollyTu

Holly Tu, Labour activist

Love and solidarity to all at Occupy Cambridge - true revolutionaries, if a tad pretentious



@RichardCook2

Richard Cook, Cambridge

"Go home, David. And learn your gods anew." Cambridge Defend Education ACTUALLY said this?!



@Gregast

Greg Hill, Homerton JCR Vice-President

Cambridge Defend Education occupation continues. They are all sat in the hall lobby looking pleased with themselves.



@Philizopher

Liz Disley, Cambridge philosopher

Inormally support CDE but their actions went against free speech and debate

Tweet us @varsityuk

Union elections: a foregone conclusion?

Helen Charman
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

Friday 25th November sees the termly elections for the Cambridge Union Society Standing Committee for Easter Term 2012.

However, despite what the Union website describes as “our historic defence of free speech and on-going belief in participatory democracy”, almost all of the candidates are running uncontested.

David Leigh, who is currently Treasurer, is running uncontested for President, whilst Executive Officer, Speakers Officer and Social Events Officer are all also uncontested.

The only role with any competition at all for the Standing Committee is that of Treasurer, with three candidates running for the position.

Each elected role is only for a term, due to the amount of commitment it

requires, with the candidates elected a term in advance in order to enable them to plan their term in office.

The current President Calum MacDonald believes that positions are uncontested due to the huge commitment a position on the Standing Committee requires.

He told *Varsity*: “People should remember that these officers will be serving in Easter term in the middle of their exams. I can understand completely if that’s something a lot of people would rather not do.

“The fact that positions for Lent term are massively oversubscribed shows there’s a lot of people who do want to be involved in the Union though.”

Speaking about the end of his term as President, MacDonald further emphasised the commitment the Union requires: “It’s definitely a case of mixed feelings – while there won’t be any more black tie events with MPs,



The Cambridge Union Society, founded in 1815

I also won’t get called up at 7am after a night at Cindies by a speaker stuck at Heathrow.

“The Union is an enormous commitment but also the opportunity of a lifetime and I can only wish those who

come after me the best of luck”.

The Union elections are democratic, but the fact that so many candidates are running uncontested makes them almost a foregone conclusion; whether this is down to the inner

political workings of the Union or just the amount of commitment a Standing Committee position requires in Easter term is unclear.

Members can vote either online or at the Union from 9am until 6pm.

Got to have faith

Varsity Eye investigate religious feeling among Cambridge students

Natalie Gil
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

Just over half of Cambridge students would regard themselves as religious, according to a recent survey conducted by Varsity Eye, *VarsityTV*’s documentary team.

While 45% consider themselves ‘atheist’, religion was often cited as simply being a part of the respondents’ cultural identity.

For Varsity Eye’s documentary ‘Got to have Faith?’, presidents and committee members of religious student societies were interviewed in an investigation of faith and religious activity in Cambridge.

Five societies – the Inter-Collegiate Christian Union, the Buddhist Society, the Hindu Cultural Society, the Jewish Society, and the Atheist and Agnostic Society were all represented. Unfortunately the Islamic Society could not be contacted.

There was consistent mention of the harmony between the societies themselves and with those without faith. 67% of survey respondents said they do not believe they have been treated differently as a result of their faith.

Anna Main, Secretary of CICCUC, and Nikhila Ravi, President of CUHCS, both alluded to the recent inter-faith debate between the Christian, Hindu, and Buddhist societies as being a good example of this. The debate asked the question: “Inner peace: how do we find it?” Nikhila said: “it was really good to see so many people get involved.”

Ben Levy, Development Officer of JSOC, also emphasised the link and mutual understanding between Jews and Muslims, shown through CU Islamic Society and Jewish Society inter-faith football games.

In the interviews for the

documentary, the delegates from the societies mentioned the positive effects that their beliefs and society membership have on dealing with the daily pressure of Cambridge life. Jonathan Woolf, President of the Buddhist Society, said meditation helps with “mitigating stress and anxiety.” While Anna Main of CICCUC claimed she still gets stressed but her faith provides “perspective.”

Religious harmony: 67% said they have not been treated differently for their faith



There was also a strong sense of the importance of religious societies in providing a social and cultural community for students they might miss when away from home. Ben Levy of JSOC said that his society is an extremely “tight-knit community”, both within the university and outside it. Termly Booze for Jews events provide a “focal point whereby Jews of all dominations” can get together.

For those without faith, Ben Millwood, President of the Atheist and Agnostic Society, suggested that it can be harder to form such close networks and that he felt “left out”. So his society now provides like-minded atheists with something similar.

52% of those surveyed claimed that religion’s presence in Cambridge is “about right”, whilst less than a third (29%) claimed it is “too much”. The apparent lack of conflict between the faith groups can be attributed to the rise of inter-faith programs and an increased open-mindedness to the faiths of others.

Visit varsitytv.co.uk to watch the documentary ‘Got to have Faith?’



SPRING INSIGHT

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Die on earth or live in space, says Hawking

Timur Cetin
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

The exploration and colonization of space will be necessary for human survival, cosmologist Stephen Hawking has said.

He explained that it will be necessary to explore space further if humankind is to survive, since it will be difficult for the world's population "to avoid disaster on planet Earth in the next hundred years, let alone the next thousand, or million."

He said: "I don't think the human race will survive the next thousand years, unless we spread into space. There are too many accidents that can befall life on a single planet. But I'm an optimist. We will reach out to the stars."

"I don't think the human race will survive the next thousand years, unless we spread into space"



In a new UK-Canadian documentary series entitled 'Brave new world with Stephen Hawking', he discusses some of the most urgent issues humankind faces on earth.

He said that humans have entered an increasingly dangerous period in history due to exponential population growth and use of finite resources.

Hawking's five-episode TV series throws the spotlight on a number of scientific discoveries that could revolutionize our century, as well as discussing the theme of survival.

In the series a team of experts, including evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins and Canadian astronaut and neurologist Roberta Bondar, travel around the world to uncover and present the various innovations.

This is not the first time that Hawking has discussed the necessity of space travel: he has repeatedly argued that the establishment of space colonies would be vital for our survival.

He has also warned against the self-destructive tendency of human nature ever since, saying: "Our genetic code still carries the selfish and aggressive instincts that were of survival advantage in the past."

He referred to dangerous political situations as starting points for the extermination of life on earth. "I see great dangers for the human race. There have been a number of times in the past when its survival has been a question of touch and go."

Among those 'touch-and-go' situations he lists the Cuban missile crisis in 1963. Furthermore, he argues that the occurrence of similar scenarios is likely to increase in the future.

As well as discussing the possibility of future space adventures, Hawking has not ruled out the existence of aliens, saying that the billions of



Stephen Hawking, cosmologist and Fellow of Gonville and Caius College

galaxies made it 'perfectly rational' to believe in them.

Aliens, he warned, might pillage the earth in search of resources, and likened future encounters with them to the landing of Columbus in America,

"which didn't turn out well for the Native Americans".

Therefore, according to Hawking, instead of actively looking for aliens, humans should rather avoid any possible contact with them.

News in Brief

Dyson to invest £1.4m in Cambridge Chair

James Dyson, the creator of the bagless vacuum cleaner, is to invest £1.4m in a University Chair.

The aim of the position is come up with new research that Dyson's company "hasn't thought of".

The researcher has free reign to explore any area they like within the field of air movement.

Dyson admits that he has "no idea" whether the position will yield new products for his firm.

Effigy of Barack Obama burned by St. Andrews Conservative Association

Students of the St. Andrews Conservative Association have caused controversy by burning an effigy of Barack Obama.

The incident took place on the beach at East Sands in the town on Friday 18th November.

Matthew Marshall, president of the association, said: "This is undoubtedly a stupid act and it is deeply regretted by all of us in the St Andrews Conservative Association."

Washington sources have branded the stunt as an "act of violence".

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We're all middle-class now

Trackies or tweed? **Tom Belger** and **Joanna Tang** investigate what class means to Cambridge students

A Varsity survey has revealed that most Cambridge students view themselves as middle-class. Students were asked on how they identify themselves and for their opinions on what defines class and its importance in Cambridge life.

Just under eight per cent of students saw themselves as 'working class', while the vast majority, 79 per cent, defined themselves as either lower, upper or simply middle-class.

When asked to justify their responses, most respondents cited parental income, their own and their parents' education and their cultural preferences. Geography, houses, cars and the frequency and destination of holidays all came up several times. One student observed that "a choice of restaurant for dinner is a good test".

Croquet anyone?

A mere 2% of students considered themselves upper class.



While some students believed that being a Cambridge student had altered their class, one stated that "I'm working class even if I go to Cambridge and I become some rich banker".

A number of answers by middle- and upper-class respondents were more detailed and controversial, including "because I wear tweed", "the palatial abode in the country", "no reality TV", "I'm white", "I call my parents mummy and daddy" and simply "land".

One working-class student explained: "Some people are from a long line of doctors, teachers, bankers; I am from an illustrious line of cleaners, posties and gin distillers". Another

remarked: "I believe I am one of the many, and not the few".

A striking number of students felt a need to nuance their statements, especially when self-defining as 'middle-class'. Qualifications included "but not absolutely loaded like some people", "but they came from working-class roots", "but less than four sets of cutlery" and "but then we ran out of money".

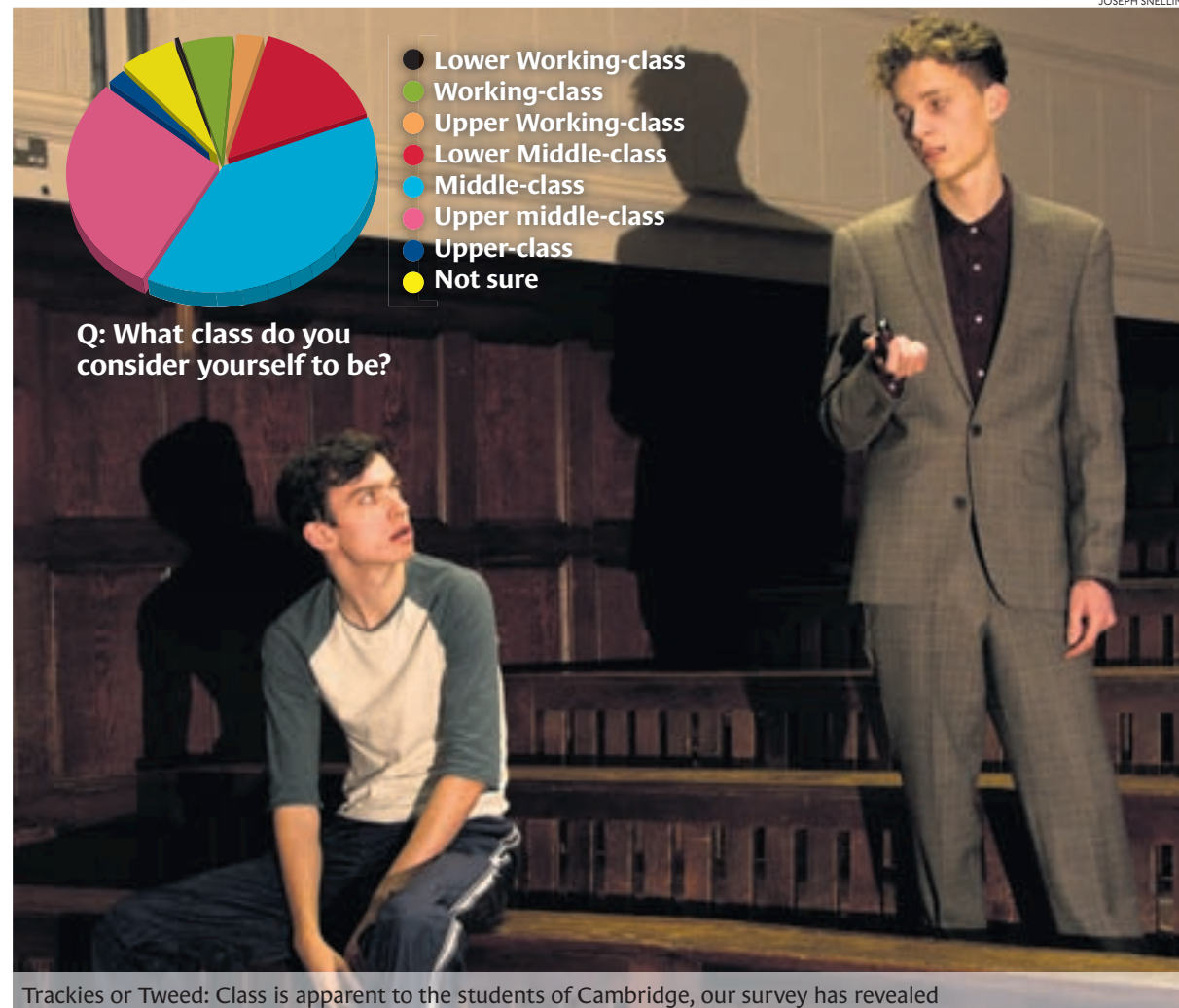
Many students echoed the sentiment of John Prescott's famous remark that "we're all middle-class now".

When asked for the traits they most associate with 'middle class', several attributes came up frequently. These included hard-working, self-confident, polite, interested in arts and culture, conservative, financially comfortable and attaching a high importance to education.

Amongst the more negative views were a bit smug, arrogant, possessing a sense of entitlement, and a skewed idea of what an average income is.

Habits and possessions singled out as emblematic of the middle classes included broadsheet newspapers, kitchens with dotty table-cloths, making recipes found in the Guardian, a fixation with quality cheese, and reading OFSTED reports. Some of the most common were Waitrose, hummus and "Radio 4 – specifically *The Archers*, ugh".

Varsity found that students believe 'friendliness', 'work ethic' and 'honesty' to be key personality traits of the working class. 'Pride' came up time and time again, as well as 'down-to-earth'. Other distinctions identified were accents, manual work, lower incomes and a lower level of education. Significantly more negative terms cropped up than for definitions of 'middle-class',



including ignorance, a lack of ambition, having a chip on their shoulder and having a 'simplistic' view of the world characterised by the Mail.

Some descriptions were almost polar opposites. Working-class people are seen as 'grateful, content' and 'generous' on the one hand, but 'unhappy',

and 'selfish' on the other. Amongst the more original definitions were "being passionate about football clubs with no chance of success", "hammers, communist revolutions and overalls" and "gambling on events other than the Grand National".

While 38 per cent of students said that their class had not made much difference to their experience in Cambridge, 22 per cent thought it had hindered them. One working-class respondent said that it "severely undermines my confidence"; another told us that it made "budgeting a bit tough". Several bemoaned an apparent expectation by the Law faculty that they had studied Latin at school, leaving them struggling to catch up with their peers in their studies of Roman Law.

Middle- and upper-class students aired grievances about attitudes they encountered in Cambridge. These included mockery from friends "for how much money my family has" and assumptions that "I'm obnoxious because of my accent". One who attended a public school felt as though they "shouldn't feel as proud to study here as students from state schools".

However, 40 per cent of students

VARSITY'S FAVOURITE RESPONSES

"Posh students are almost always lovely people but in a group they turn into complete mugs"

"Other than the odd 'Rah', I don't really notice class differences in Cambridge"

felt their class had helped them in some way in Cambridge. Reasons given ranged from the predictable – "it means I feel comfortable and confident in the Cambridge environment" – to the outlandish "my studies would have been impossible without the historical and political conquests of the [working] class of which I am a part".

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Employers are looking for attitude

Gordon Chesterman, director of the University Careers Service, speaks about his career, the current job market and seduction by branding to Stephanie Davin

Gordon Chesterman, the current director of Cambridge's Careers Service, did not get into this line of work via a Careers Service Grad Scheme aged 21. Rather, he started off by studying at the London College of Printing. After this he worked printing banknotes which he describes as "a beautiful product; very, very well designed and beautifully executed". Subsequently he worked in recruiting and publishing until becoming a Careers Advisor thirteen years ago, taking the position of director in 2004. "When I took the position of Director I was the sixth Director in 110 years", he told me, and intends to stay "so long as the students are content with the Careers Service".

I tried to gauge Chesterman's opinion of recruiting practices in Michaelmas term. We are used to pigeonholes full of leaflets and innumerable recruitment drinks parties; a couple of years ago one firm even cleaned their logo into the pavements outside Senate House to attract attention.

"One of his aims is to make smaller and less well-known firms heard"

Chesterman laments having to cancel events from highly attractive firms due to a lack of demand from students – a lack he attributes simply to the omission of the words "consulting" or "banking" in the job title. He admits that they have 1200 students turning up to the management consulting event "simply because [the consulting firms] are the guys who've got the money for the promotional campaigns, the sponsorship with the student societies, the dinners, the rugby shirts and so on." Indeed, one of his aims is to make smaller and less well-known firms heard through the "cacophony of noise coming out of the investment banks".

Chesterman told me that the Careers Service charges companies for having a stall at one of the



Gordon Chesterman, director of the Careers Service, in front of one of his own paintings.

big careers events. This year a bank would pay £1000 for the privilege of mingling with Cambridge's finest students in a very warm room.

This is apparently because the large banks, law firms and consultancies "can damn well afford to pay." The money raised is then used to subsidise events for other areas such as charitable or public sector work. He seemed quite proud of this system of redistribution, calling it "a little like Robin Hood".

Would it be difficult to advise students on a career area to which he had a personal, moral or cultural objection? He replied that careers advisors will only apply a value judgement if an employer has acted unacceptably or illegally where Cambridge students were involved. He spoke angrily of the investment bank which several years ago fired four ex-Cambridge students on a Tuesday, then was back recruiting on Thursday – to him this was unacceptable.

But surely this is still too detached; should they not take a more proactive role in assessing jobs? His reply: that they will always make it clear where students can find unbiased information about different organisations.

Certainly, the Careers Service reflects a highly professional and information-driven method – their databases are extensive and inside knowledge vast, while a meeting

with a careers advisor often involves the kind of strategising so beloved of consultants.

His parting shot? "Don't panic. You are employable," plus the reminder that employers are looking for "the right attitude". But this is qualified with the advice that we might have to adjust our expectations. "This year", he said, "we're worried, because a lot of students are not entertaining the

"When choosing a job there are lots of exciting attributes that won't be exciting in 6 months"

idea of a Plan B or a Plan C". While not all jobs are as appealing as a recent listing: "Senior Scientist to design and develop new chocolate bars for Cadbury's, paying £28,000-£32,000 p.a.", some Cambridge students need a reality check.

He agreed that ego may play a part – students want the status of a job with a well-known firm. Someone who prides themselves on being above seduction by the brand power of Abercrombie clothes or Penguin books may well not realise they are looking for a 'brand-name' employer. Perhaps this is unsurprising after attending such a well-known university.

But Chesterman was sceptical:

"people just need to realise that when choosing a job there are lots of exciting attributes to that particular job that won't be exciting in 6 months time". He wryly told me the story of a student who, after an investment banking internship, excitedly recounted how he had received 17 new shirts – each given to them after all-nighters with the team.

Perhaps I am easily influenced – I received a beautiful thank-you card from him made using the traditional letterpress printing method. But in the current climate we have learnt to question and treat with some cynicism many institutions: certainly the businesses that recruit in Cambridge and perhaps even our own university.

So it was refreshing to genuinely feel that the Careers Service director and its staff remain results-focused, rigorously information-driven and resolutely on our side – whether or not we deserve it.

The Careers Service is running an Internships and Vacation Opportunities Event on 1st December, 1-5pm at the University Centre. It will feature 48 employers offering a wide variety of paid internships, plus details of the Careers Service's bursary scheme. This scheme will offer 40 students each a £500 bursary to enable them to do unpaid or very low paid work experience this summer.

Computer to aid cancer research

Isobel Weinberg
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

Cambridge scientists have developed a computer system that can 'read' in a similar way to humans, meaning it could trawl through scientific papers more quickly and make breakthroughs in cancer research.

The system, called CRAB, is part of generation of new technology which can look at human language and interpret it like a person, making sense of its ambiguities. Siri, the new iPhone voice recognition software, is another example.

The machines 'text mine', sifting through published work to look for useful information and meaningful connections as a human would.

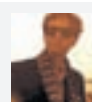
According to Dr Anna Korhonen, a computer scientist at Cambridge, the size of scientific literature available means existing knowledge about the cancer-giving properties of new chemicals is not being used because humans cannot process it fast enough.

An exciting prospect is that text mining technology may be able to generate testable hypotheses and even make connections that the human brain would miss. CRAB has already been used to propose a novel explanation as to why some chemicals increase the risk of pancreatic cancer in men but not in women.

CRAB is now being made available to other researchers in the hope that they will use it for their research.

twitterati

What's happening in Cambridge?



@felixdanczak

Felix Danczak, Varsity Comment Editor

Quote of the day. 'One martini is alright, two are too many, 3 are not enough' – Thurber.



@maximiliansays

Max Levine, student and gymnast

I procrastinate by going on the websites of privileged independent schools & watching their prospectus videos. That's quite common right?



@georgedpotts

George Potts, Witty twitterer

Saw a logo on a lorry today: 'Ratcliff Palfinger'. Almost certain that's a Beano villain.



@andygriffwozere

Andrew Griffin, Varsity Associate Editor

Are we really changing to #OccupyWillemts? Because I'm not sure that makes sense....

Tweet us @varsityuk

QUICK-FIRE

Time as Careers Service Director:

8 years

I don't think the Cambridge name carries as much kudos as it did 20 or 30 years ago

85%

of finalists will have used the Careers Service by the time they graduate

Comment



CHRIS ROEBUCK

Comment Question

Some see the wearing of a mask as essential to the role and rights of protest. Becoming part of a wider group, submitting your individuality to a wider cause, can be argued as intrinsic to protest.

But is this really the case? Shouldn't those with an argument with the status quo be willing to stand up for what they believe in any western democracy?

Does remaining anonymous, refusing to put a name to a cause, undermine the value of the cause itself?

You give us the answers. Let us know what you think Twitter @VarsityUK #comment

The face behind the mask

The cult of anonymity in popular protest is transforming anarchy into an art form

Emily Fittell



Beneath this mask there is more than flesh. There is an idea, Mr Creedy, and ideas are bulletproof," expounds the enigmatic hero of *V For Vendetta*. They call him V, this mysterious, maverick character who now finds his image permeating the streets of cities all over the world, the iconic Guy Fawkes mask the new face of global political protest.

In the film, V champions the causes of revolution and revenge against a futuristic, totalitarian, fascist state. "People should not be afraid of their government; the government should be afraid of its people!", the anarchist cries, as he calls for the destruction of the Houses of Parliament and encourages the British people to rule themselves.

And now the face of this notorious radical pervades the global landscape of political protest. That coy, theatrical grin is repeatedly splashed across our front pages, largely in connection with the current worldwide 'Occupy' movement and the internet hacking group, 'Anonymous'.

From outside St Pauls and the London Stock Exchange to

Wall Street, Rome, Guadalajara, Bucharest, the protests have seen a global generation mask-up and be counted.

Some call it an anti-capitalist movement, a revolt against corporate greed and social and economic disparity. Others are critical, discounting this gesture of anonymity as nothing more than a form of anarchic nihilism which is of little relevance within the context of democracy.

For what place does anonymity have in the world of democratic protest? Does our freedom of speech not merit a freedom to identify ourselves with our expressed beliefs? Clearly not all protestors feel the need to mask their identities (as proved by the theatrical disruption of Willett's speech). In fact, in Germany, anonymous protest is a criminal offence.

Are these protestors not in danger of impinging their own freedom of

"Beneath this mask there is more than flesh. There is an idea, and ideas are bulletproof"

expression, of creating a farce of political protest? Of course not.

Firstly, these protestors are of course identifiable. The mask paradoxically grants the wearer both a sense of individual anonymity and belonging to a greater cause.

The slogan, "we are the 99 percent" speaks for itself.

And so what if the mask has created a form of political carnival? If artistic statements are allowed to be political, why shouldn't political statements be artistic? Any element of farce in the donning of the mask and the manipulation of popular culture within the realms of the political field should really be interpreted not as an act of indiscretion, but as a form of artistic parody, a subversive attack on the state of Western democracy.

In the words of wise old Oscar Wilde: "Man is least himself when he talks in his own person. Give him a mask, and he will tell you the truth."

Through the use of the mask, the cult of anonymity succeeds in questioning and to a certain extent undermining the idea of our ability to engage successively with global politics, to be heard and to bring about change despite the great technological developments of the last decade. This adoption of a unifying persona seeks to symbolise a shared sense of disaffection and a growing fear of disassociation; to make a statement which reflects the paradoxical anonymity and facelessness of the internet generation.

This imaginative allusion to anarchy is refreshing in a society whose political world is truly uninspiring, and so far removed from that of the emerging electorate

that society is now faced with an estranged, disillusioned and (physically) masked youth.

What is significant is therefore not the question of style over substance, but an appraisal of the role that the aesthetics of invention and creation can play in the political field. In the potent words of V: "Artists use lies to tell the truth, whereas politicians use lies to cover it up." Thus, this convergence of the artistic and the political should be considered with

"The adoption of a unifying persona seeks to symbolise a shared sense of disaffection"

the utmost relevance.

To conclude we should see the wearing of the mask less as a form of superficial, vainglorious exhibitionism and more as an act of selfless subjugation in favour of a collective identity and cause, or at least a point of identification and unification. Behind the disguise of this iconic, mysterious and carnivalesque façade, lies, as V himself suggested, a "bulletproof" ideal; in this case, a basic desire for a voice, a voice which demands liberty and parity.

V sniggers at "the paradox of asking a masked man who he is". And perhaps he is right. Mask up, mask up, my friends.



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

TUESDAY 29TH
A Destiny Beyond Death

Location: Garden Room
St. Edmund's College

Time: 13:00

Why: Every story science tells ends in futility. So, if there is a destiny beyond death it must depend upon the faithfulness of the Creator. Making sense of the idea requires satisfying criteria of both continuity and discontinuity. These will be discussed together with the nature of the human soul.

TUESDAY 29TH
Happy... The Movie

Location: Keynes Hall,
King's College

Time: 17:00

Why: Because it's Christmas (in Cambridge). And happiness is important. Taking us from the bayous of Louisiana to the deserts of Namibia, from the beaches of Brazil to the villages of Okinawa, Happy explores the secrets behind our most valued emotion.

What now for Egypt's voters?

There are good arguments for delaying elections. But there are wider concerns facing Egyptians

Louisa Loveluck



The unrest sweeping Egypt represents the broadest challenge to the authority of the Egyptian military since the fall of Hosni Mubarak. Although headlines focus on Cairo, protests continue in a host of other locations, and the grievances are broadly the same. In the months since the Revolution, the hated security services have remained powerful, the space for freedom of speech has rapidly shrunk, and few have seen noticeable improvements in their day-to-day economic circumstances.

The January revolution may have toppled a dictator, but it has not dislodged the roots of an authority that runs far deeper. The history of modern Egypt is intimately connected to the strength of the military, an institution that has outlasted three presidents. Today, the acting president is Field Marshall Tantawi, chairman of the nation's military council (SCAF). His response to the latest wave of unrest has been to announce the formation of a 'government of national salvation' and a promise to cede power in June 2012. The ongoing unrest has raised serious doubts over the wisdom of proceeding with planned elections next week. Although many had foreseen an

upsurge in violence as polling day drew closer, predictions had centred on the role of former ruling-party members. Few imagined that the provocation, when it came, would emanate from the security services themselves, or that it would happen in such a crude manner.

The question of whether to postpone elections is not an easy one to answer. When the decision is taken, it must happen for the right reasons and there is one motivation that must not be allowed to underpin such a choice: fear of the Muslim

"The January revolution has not dislodged the roots of an authority that runs far deeper"

Brotherhood. Despite rumours of a tacit alliance between the military and the Brotherhood, it seems clear that the former is wary of the latter. If the SCAF now use the ongoing unrest as a pretext for postponing elections and therefore denying the Islamists victory at the ballot box, then this tactic is no better than the electoral manipulations of the Mubarak era.

Concerns over security represent a more legitimate justification for postponement. Under the current circumstances the state is unable to guarantee voter safety. Can those giving orders to shoot live rounds at protesters really be expected to transform into the



benevolent guardians of election security in the space of a week? In addition, the victors of any poll conducted next week may struggle to present themselves as legitimate representatives of the people. A number of parties have withdrawn from the election in protest at the week's events. As a result, the electoral field is suddenly skewed in favour of those that have chosen to remain in the running, a development that will have repercussions for how the eventual result is perceived.

If elections are delayed, the interim government must prioritise three related areas of reform in order to ensure that the eventual vote is as fair as possible.

Firstly, they must reassess the proposed electoral system. Current plans are absurdly complicated and there has been little effort to explain how procedure will work. This oversight will affect turnout and the

validity of thousands of polling cards. The new cabinet should reassess current plans, adopt a single method of voting and communicate this clearly to the Egyptian public.

The second priority should be media reform. State-run networks have played an important role in discrediting opposition groups and framing challenges to military authority as an attack on the nation. The reach of government TV channels has allowed the state to maintain firm control of how events are reported, often presenting stories that directly contradict eyewitness testimonies.

Finally, the new cabinet must develop a coherent narrative as to why it is crucial that they take charge, offering a clear explanation as to why the polls were delayed. Only once these steps have been taken can Egyptians hope for the new political dawn that they deserve.

Selfishness: modernity's sin

Are we really a giving society? Christmas approaches, and we need to re-examine ourselves

Charlie Bell



It's a depressing fact of being human that we seem to thrive on cheating; and however much we say it's wrong, or look down on others for doing it, we all seem to be guilty.

Whether it's the fresher who shamelessly cheats on his boyfriend because he won't get caught, or the banker who gets paid a completely unrealistic salary by profiteering off others, if we can get what we want when we want it, and expect no consequences, we will.

I remember a school friend of mine who helped himself to a pair of Doc Martins just because he wanted them – a childish reaction to a natural urge, perhaps; but it doesn't seem to stop there. Think of the US TV evangelists who get caught in bed with the local prostitutes whilst condemning others to hell, or

the politicians paying themselves thousands of pounds to keep their ducks in luxury whilst their constituents can barely scrape enough together to get through a week. If there's no accountability, then we don't seem to think it's all that bad.

I suppose we all do it, even if we think it's not worth thinking about. It's like that time when we go for an illegal parking space knowing that the traffic warden has just clocked off. Why should we pay, we ask ourselves; it's a damned pain. We are, of course, the first to cast judgement when we see a paedophile or a murderer sent down for their crimes; but that's different, isn't it. Or is it?

We don't really seem to feel any sense of respect or responsibility for each other. Democracy has quite rightly smashed apart the archaic and ludicrous civic structures of the past, with lords looking after their serfs provided they get the work done, but have we managed to create our own new order? For all our talk of living in a global village, how much do we really care about world poverty? Why bother giving that twenty quid to

charity? We have a May Ball to pay for, after all. And as much as we go on about how generous our welfare system is, deep down we don't really want to pay our own bit into the pot.

Last weekend, after bishops stated their disgust at the lower capping

"If we won't look after our weakest, then what kind of humanity have we created?"

of welfare payments, the right wing went mad. They weren't having it; this was meaning that people on benefits would be getting more than people who were going out to work – if this is true, it should raise a few eyebrows. However, the point that wasn't made was that this should surely highlight just how poorly some people are being paid, if even a reduced, just-enough welfare payment is more than those in work are getting. Pay gaps in our major companies are obscene and getting larger; even amongst the better paid in the City, it's easy to see: the

traders who are getting millions whilst the compliance officers, absolutely necessary for the former to trade, are getting a pittance.

And at the same time, we complain about tax, tax, tax. Why should we pay out so much of our hard-earned income?

We live in a detached world, where what we pay and public services don't seem to be connected in the public's mind but the over-spend of the last government shows what happens when that goes wrong. If we won't look after our weakest, and realise it's our money needed for that, then what kind of humanity has modernisation created?

As we get towards Christmas, traditionally a time when we are asked to think about others before we think about ourselves, maybe we should reconsider some of the 'truths' that underpin our country's financial system, country and world.

As the famous New Zealand tenor Will Martin puts it, "I am my country like the flag I fly, I will love her to the day I die". We are the generation who can make that true. But will we?

Undemocratic, and unworthy

I wish to be clear. The actions of Cambridge Defend Education should be unilaterally condemned by students of this university. This condemnation should come regardless of any stance each individual might take on planned education reform. For the condemnation need have no ideological basis save the fundamental principles of democracy.

The right to free speech and freedom of expression are cornerstones of our society. The right to say what you like, listen to what you like and, crucially, not listen to what you don't like, underpins the independence of the individual in a liberal-democratic state. The right to protest is a subset of this right, and should be equally protected: the right to voice dissent against opposing views and be heard against the power of others.

I will defend the right of CDE to protest with all my breath. But protest does not entail the right simply to ignore, interrupt and disrupt the views of others. Spin this on its head: imagine the outcry should the state seek to disrupt protest rallies by storming the stage with police.

CDE sees the idea of the university under attack – they claim it will no longer be the place of abstracted value-free learning as market forces are brought to bear on the system. They claim the values that set universities apart – the focus on debate, on reasoned argument – will be lost. How, I ask, does preventing the Higher Education minister from giving a speech, in any way meet the values they aim to protect? Debate drives society – entrenching our positions gets us nowhere.

Some argue that Mr Willetts has been given adequate free speech elsewhere, and thus has not had it denied him. We cannot limit a man's right to free speech 'because he's had enough' – there can be no limit. Otherwise, might someone not decide that CDE 'has had enough' too?

Free speech is an absolute, and must remain so. We cannot permit a system where free speech is free only as long as we agree with it. It must be free for everyone, or no-one at all. If it does not remain free for each and every individual, all the time, then someone, somewhere, is deciding what is acceptable. And we'd better hope they don't get into power.

CDE's defence of their actions in terms of democracy makes a mockery of the term itself. Using democratic facilities when convenient, ignoring them when obstructive, stands as a bigger potential threat than any educational reforms. At least the government was elected.

FELIX DANCZAK

the essay

Exclusive: Why can't Britain do strategy? In a special extended essay, **Colonel Richard Iron** looks at how UK defence policy is constructed, and how problems, failures and inconsistencies continue to dog military planning. But what answers might be out there?

Why can't Britain do strategy? When Tony Blair met George Bush at his ranch at Crawford in early April 2002, nearly a year before the Iraq war, he committed the UK to support a US invasion of Iraq. He set three conditions: firstly, public opinion domestically and internationally must be prepared; secondly, it was important to give the UN weapons inspectors in Iraq a chance to succeed; and thirdly, the Middle East peace process needed to show discernable progress.

What's interesting about the Crawford conditions is what's not there. There's nothing about whether we agreed with the military plan; or about Coalition command arrangements; or what we wanted Iraq to look like after the war. The first the UK's Ministry of Defence knew of Blair's commitment was a week later, when asked for military options to support an invasion of Iraq.

The result was that the UK had no part in designing the plan. We were committed to whatever strategy the US wanted. Of course we had views. These were best summarised by the Foreign Secretary when he wrote to the Prime Minister on 8th July 2002 describing the lacunae in the American plan: no strategic (as opposed to operational) concept for the plan; weak intelligence on WMD; and a legal base for action that was uncertain at best.

These remained key British concerns throughout the remaining eight months build up to war. The problem was that we had no levers with which to influence the American war plan. We were already committed, politically. So there was nothing we could do except complain from the sidelines.

This whole experience was undoubtedly a failure of British strategy; not just our strategy towards the Arabian Gulf, but also

our strategy towards the United States and for our own security. All that followed in Iraq subsequently – our apparent defeat in Basra, our loss of influence across the Arab world, and the radicalisation of own Moslem youth – can all be traced back to that failure in strategy.

There has been no golden age of British strategy, outside wartime. Even Pitt, Lloyd George and Churchill turned their minds to other things once the immediate demands of their wars were over. Instead we have a history of muddling through, aided by a well oiled and still effective government machine which is adept at managing local crises rather than taking the long view and placing events within a strategic context. The key question is why does the UK find it so difficult to make and implement strategy?

“Subordination to the USA is a perfectly legitimate plank to our national strategy”

Strategy – what's in a word? The word 'strategy' has long since lost its unique association with military activity, and is now generally associated with business, administration or politics. Within the Ministry of Defence, where one would expect there to be an interest in military strategy and the military contribution to national strategy, until recently the only people with 'strategy' in their job title were involved in departmental or business strategy.

There are significant differences in the definition and place of strategy across government, let alone among the wider community that should be involved in national strategic debate. There is real confusion between policy (what we want to achieve) and strategy (how we plan to achieve it), and a bewildering reluctance to

engage with the idea of 'national strategy' – how at the highest level we view our national interests, analyse the threats to those interests, lay out plans to achieve our interests in the face of the threats, and allocate resources for those plans.

Perhaps the most worrying indication of the lack of understanding of strategy can be found in the Cabinet Office's formal response the Public Administration Select Committee's report "Who does UK national strategy?", which suggested that the UK's national strategy can primarily be found in the Coalition Agreement following the May 2010 election. This is a list of policy aspirations; it is certainly not a strategy.

The Cold War effectively ended the practice of national strategy in the UK. Strategy

entered the realm of mathematics and game theory in the nuclear standoff between East and West. Our membership of NATO subordinated national strategy making to alliance consensus building. Although withdrawal from empire and the building of new regional relationships, such as with the Arabian Gulf states, demanded a coherent strategic approach, this appeared to be done in an ad hoc way.

However, it is our relationship with the USA that has created the greatest difficulty in UK national strategy making. By being the USA's most loyal ally, and thus to gain American intelligence and technology, we have subordinated our own strategic interests to those of another nation. Thus the 2002 decision to invade Iraq was driven more by the need to support the USA than any calculation of the UK's



VARSLITY

BLOGS

COMMENT

This term, *Varsity Comment* brings you a selection of dedicated bloggers whose sole aim is to debate, disagree and rage against each other for your reading pleasure



This week, 'Some thoughts that came to me in the shower', (Peter Bunch) seeks to explain why we need banks

It's terribly trendy to hate banks just at the moment. They've screwed up the economy, caused unprecedented chaos, and left Europe searching down the back of the sofa for its last spare billions.

With an issue so complicated, it's very easy to lose sight of how everything fits together. Whose fault was it all? What went wrong? Why do we even have banks? Let's try to work it all through from the beginning.

I should state at this point that I am an engineer working in statistical inference. I am not an economist. I have never studied economics.

This is my view constructed from

the outside looking in. As such, it is likely to be incomplete and in places quite definitely wrong. If this is what you think, or you think you can answer any of the questions, then please do. The more complete a picture we can put together, the happier I will be.

By the way, in case you're worried that this blog might be getting political, let me reassure you. Much of banking is (or at least should be) concerned with how to maximise value.



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strategic interests in the Gulf. When deciding the British force package to take part in the invasion, the primary criterion used by the Ministry of Defence was what would gain the most influence with the US; resulting in the deployment of a substantial land force. However, nobody seems to have questioned to what end such influence, so expensively bought,

“The Cold War effectively ended the practice of national strategy in the UK”

should have been wielded. It is the supreme irony of the whole Iraq experience that a conflict that we entered to demonstrate loyal support to the USA ended with separation; the paucity of our national strategic thinking meant that we had no rational framework against which to calculate the relative benefits of remaining in Iraq, alongside the US, against the demands of our own population to withdraw, let alone our longer term interests in the Arabian Gulf.

Subordination to the USA is a perfectly legitimate plank to our national strategy, if we believe that is the best way of achieving our own interests. But we need to be clear it is a pragmatic means to an end, not an end in itself. So in the case of Iraq and Afghanistan our strategy should have started in Washington, not Basra or Helmand.

secretariat to be an engine room where the work is actually done. However, since the publication of the National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review in October 2010, the Secretariat has significantly reduced in size and seniority, meaning it no longer has the capacity to drive collaborative work. Its role is limited to de-conflicting the work of departments, not uniting and leading them.

This situation is exacerbated by departmental sovereignty and the personal accountability of permanent secretaries to Parliament. As the National Security Adviser said, this “can be a real obstacle to genuinely joined up work”; the rationale apparently being that no Department can commit to a project that relies on co-funding from another

“If you deliberately exclude discussion or examination of alternatives, then strategy inevitably leads to a dead end”

Department. Since national strategy is by definition a cross-departmental function, and any meaningful work requires funding, this appears to be a fundamental problem.

However, the creation of the Stabilisation Unit in 2007 demonstrates that ministries can work together if sufficient will exists. Although bureaucratic obstacles abound in the field of national strategy, the fundamental problem appears to be a lack of will, not structures.

An argument against national strategy is that it limits political choice: by creating a strategy, a state needs to make early choices and then abide by them, thereby forcing politicians to make potentially uncomfortable decisions before they have to. This is evidenced by successive governments’ reluctance to articulate national interests, the first step in formulating a national strategy, for fear of political embarrassment.

What this argument

ignores is that good strategy should expand political choice, not limit it. For example, the options open to the Prime Minister over Libya in early 2011 were limited. Potentially, with a sound strategy in place, relating diplomacy, military capability, and our alliances, he could have had a wider range of options from which to choose.

Good strategy will not avoid crises; there will always be unforeseen events with which we have to deal. However, good strategy will help us make better decisions in a crisis, by placing them in a regional context and by allowing us to link them to each other in a coherent way. Strategy should provide an analytical framework by which we can make judgements on the longer term impacts of such decisions. This will allow us to make more rational long term decisions over, for example, Basra and Helmand.

In December last year, The *Financial Times* printed a leaked memo from the Cabinet Secretary that the UK should develop a plan B in case the Coalition government’s economic austerity plan should falter. This caused a political furore and a strong statement from the Treasury that the plan was working and that no alternatives, or contingencies, were being examined. A spokesman said at the time: “Ministers have not asked for any advice on alternative approaches because we are very clear that our approach is the right one.”

This is anathema to those who create and execute strategy, which is all about choice. If you deliberately exclude discussion or examination of alternatives, then strategy inevitably leads to a dead end. But in an environment of leaks and the Freedom of Information Act, serious discussion of unpalatable futures or alternatives is to be avoided even within a government department. For example, it is an uncomfortable truth that US economic, and thus eventually military, strength is on the wane. In ten or twenty years time our alliance with the USA may not be so much to our advantage as it has been in the past. Yet where in government is debate taking place as to what

this means, and where the UK should be positioning itself vis-à-vis Europe, China and the new economies?

The 2010 National Security Strategy does not mention the word ‘enemy’ once. The only group that is specifically identified as a threat is al-Qaeda. Instead the document is designed around abstract “risks”, such as international terrorism, cyber attack, instability and organised crime. Abstraction does not make good strategy; but in a public document it appears impossible to mention, for example, that Argentina poses a threat to British sovereignty of the Falkland Islands.

We thus need to find a way whereby we can engage in strategic debate and assessment of strategic options, but reduce the risk of public exposure and subsequent political embarrassment.

Resulting from this lack of common understanding of strategy across government is little or no coherent education and training for civil servants or military officers in the art or practicalities of strategic planning or execution. While the majority in government view strategy primarily through the lens of business strategy, rather than national or military strategy, it is not surprising that most officials have neither the education nor training necessary to develop and implement national strategy.

Education is not by itself the answer to addressing the obstacles to good strategy; what is needed is a wholesale change of mindset across government, opinion formers, and academia. However, education may in the long term be a contributor to achieving that changed mindset.

So where do we go from here? There are those who argue that things aren’t that bad, and that Basra worked out alright in the end, and that Helmand will be okay. There are also those who argue that the fault lies with gung-ho generals who led us into war despite ourselves. There are further those who admit there is a problem, but believe our Civil Service bureaucracy is so powerful that nothing can be done. Well, as a lifetime professional soldier, I’ve seen too many people die and too much money wasted to accept such platitudes. Yes, we may have to fight some wars, but let’s make sure we do so in a properly thought out way. It’s too important to ignore.

COLONEL RICHARD IRON IS A LIFELONG SOLDIER, WHO HAS SERVED IN NEARLY ALL BRITAIN’S WARS IN THE PAST 40 YEARS. HE IS CURRENTLY A VISITING FELLOW AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.



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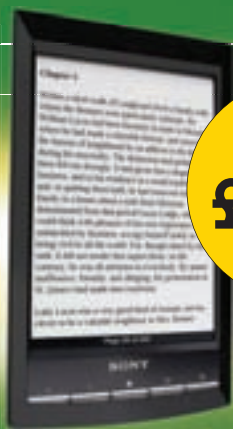


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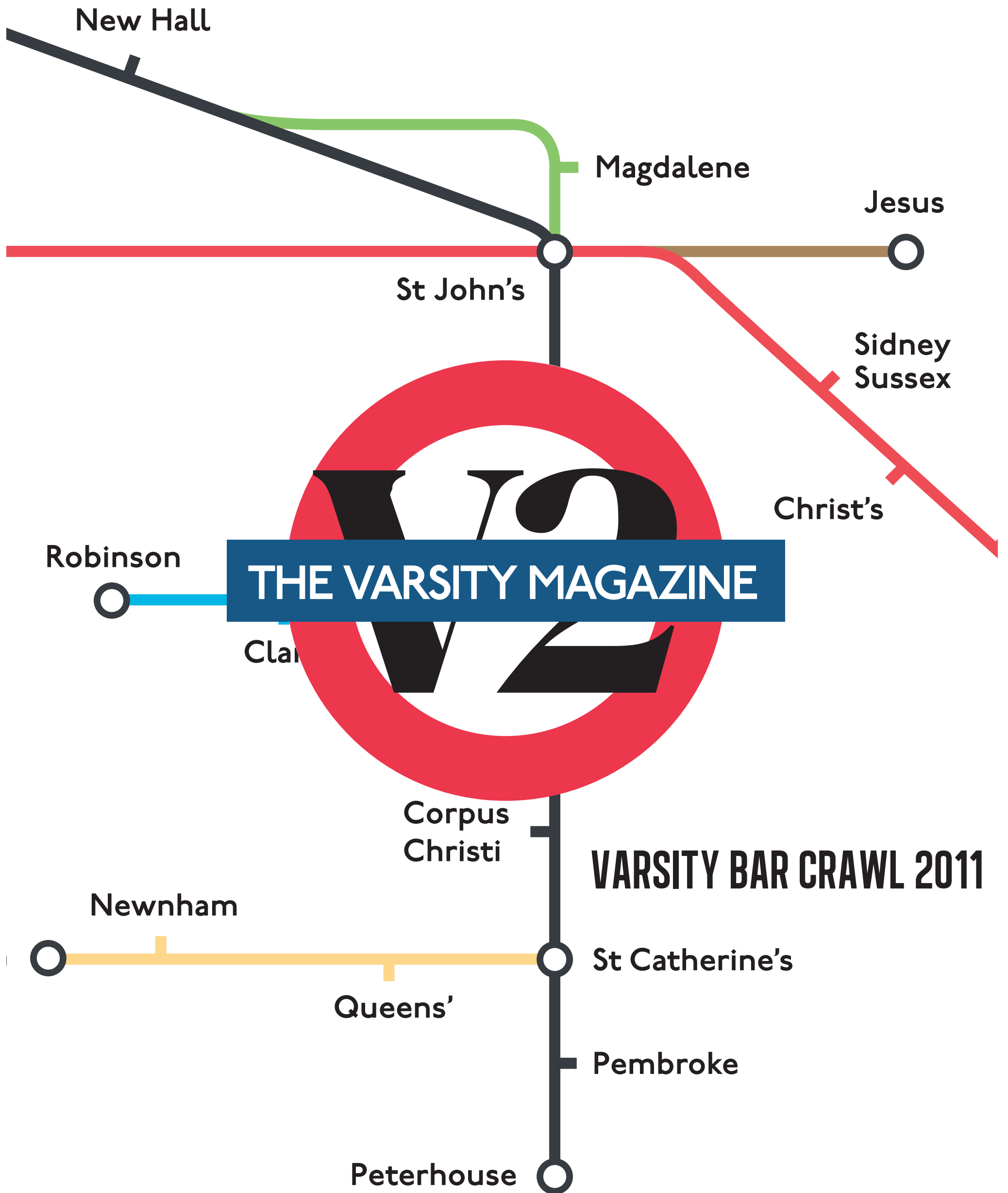
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Playing Parties, Daedelus
Can be described as a lullaby gone awry – the droning piano and simple melodies maneuver through the wild electronic noise and sound of a chugging train, somewhere far away.

Christmas come early

Robin Mcghee on 'Oxmas': the joys of feeling festive, and why we ought to be celebrating roast dinners and sherry as early, noisily, and avidly as we possibly can

One of the great things about Easter – besides the fact that as a celebration focussed on a man being nailed to a cross and dying horribly, it has had to have been recast by the capitalists around the principle of consumption of chocolate – is that it always comes disgustingly early.

Nobody would bat an eyelid if you bought your inamorata an Easter egg for Valentine's Day. If Easter is always this early it strikes me as a dratted shame that we don't do the same for Christmas. I am sitting here writing this in my Christmas jumper, but I don't feel in the least bit Christmassy. Why? Because society refuses to recognise the profound importance of letting Christmas come at its natural time. That is, the middle of July.

Over here we have 'Oxmas'. This is a ceremony in which various haggard and cash-whipped students cook nauseatingly vile Xmas dinners in their shitty little cooker things, and expect everyone to radiate enjoyment of it. Either that, or one's college will put on a dangerously OTT backslapper filled with port and black tie and embarrassment, whilst the poor and homeless shiver horrendously outside. Such is Oxmas. The celebration of Christmas in the first handful of days of December serves only to remind us why we

ought to have it at home – away from bad cookers, drunken friends, and almost certainly anyone on under a 100 grand a year.

It also implies something very bad. Which is that Christmas can only be celebrated a month before it happens. Why? I can think of fewer better things than being filled with food

Society refuses to recognise the importance of letting Christmas come at its natural time. That is, the middle of July.

and cummerbunded up to the nines while Radio Three winsomely parps out some carolling. The plentiful availability of food and drink at Christmas, coupled with its extreme contempt for any form of work or hardship, makes it difficult to see how it can possibly be bad. And the result is that we shouldn't care when it happens. Just so long as it happens now.

If, as I did, you spent the nineties reading the Guinness Book of Records, you will know that the 'Most turkeys eaten by one man' category is decisively filled by Andy Park. Park,

who is extravagantly fat, notoriously claims to celebrate Christmas every day of the year. (Except Christmas. I see what he did there.) Whether or not Park actually does this we have no idea, because we only have his word for it; his local rag has attempted to catch him in the act, and been shooed away on innumerable occasions. He now spends his time talking to eighth-rate radio stations and supporting a commendable Wikipedia entry. But we're with him in spirit. Sherry, roast dinner, patriotism and capitalist greed are all part and parcel of a healthy, vibrant life in Cameron's Britain. We need more of them – though it would probably make everyone vote Tory.

Unfortunately some people choose to ignore the excellence of Christmas. They cannot abide the idea that people will actually have fun. The most fabulous example is of course Winterval. According to the *Daily Mail*, Winterval was the name introduced by various councils to prevent non-Christians becoming offended by the idea of people celebrating Christmas. (As a rationalist, I am deeply offended by the *Daily Mail*, but that doesn't make me prevent it happening.)

Anyway, the story was an utter fabrication. This is revealed by a Mr Kevin Arscott in 'The Winterval Myth'. Weighing in at 47



backbreakingly exhaustive pages – the piece has been described by one *Times* journalist as “beautifully researched and tearfully boring” – Arscott shows how the press has caused outright misery to non-Christians by making them targets of racist abuse, derived from pretending that Christmas had been cancelled by the PC division. Imagine that. Not cancelling Christmas, but pretending it had been cancelled to flog a few papers. Leveson should have a sniff of that.

So start celebrating Christmas as early, noisily, and avidly as you possibly can. Don't do any work. Don't read any books. Buy yourself an Xbox or ten. And although it pains me to say it, this might genuinely mean that some of the spirit of Christmas trickles down to what we actually bloody do.

Robin Mcghee is a Contributing Editor to *The Oxford Cherwell*.



Christmas formals

Every college has one – paper hats, stuffing, mince pies and all before December's barely gotten underway. See article to the left of this for sound justification of such barminess.



Les Enfants du Paradis

French director Marcel Carne's 1945 masterpiece has been remastered and is showing on the big screen at the Arts Picturehouse this week – the perfect way to indulge in a winter's afternoon of (189 minute run) time off. Absolutely time well spent, though.



Secret Santa

This is simply to stress the point: Christmas is nearly here! And coming to a college room near you for an exchange of garish charity shop finds galore.

Mill Road Winter Fair

Tombola, festive food, and arts and crafts are all promised at this annual fair; this year it's on 3rd December. Take note – it's well worth the trip out of town.



November

Many a hirsute upper lip has been spotted around town, with this month giving way to a flurry of sponsored moustaches – all for a good cause. We're just sad to be seeing the end of it – we



were hoping for new and bushier heights in coming weeks.

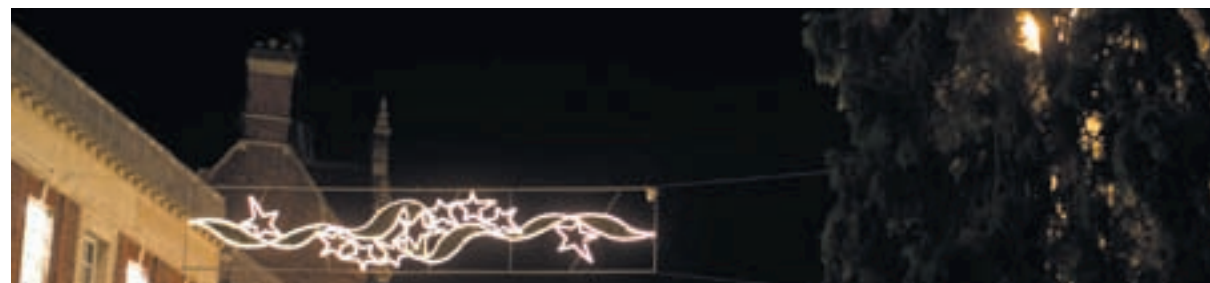
Vacation borrowing

Grand plans to read those novels when you've got the time result inevitably in a stack of books laboriously taken home from the library, only to sit untouched before being shipped right back again.



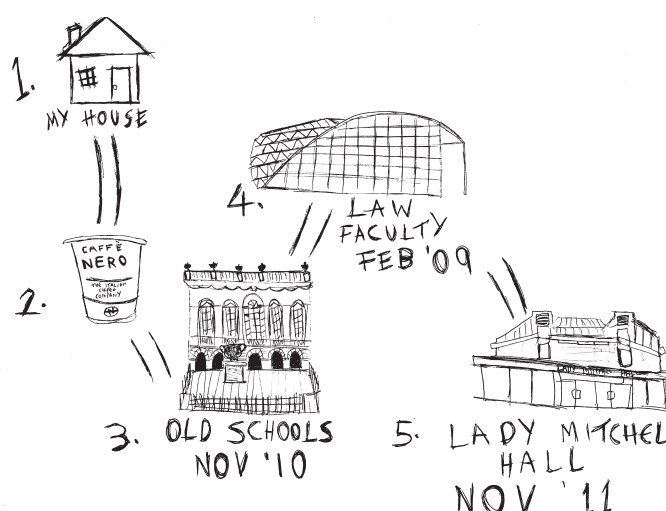
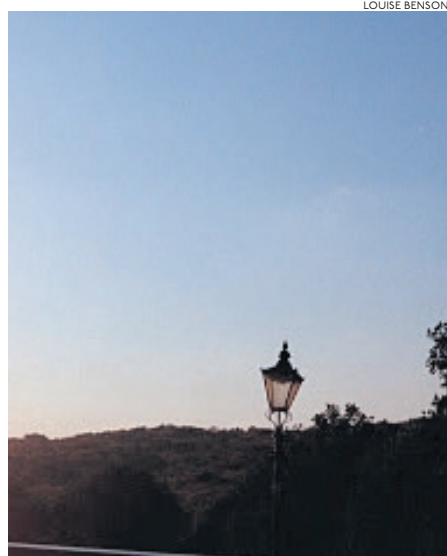
The final end-of-term push

One more essay to go; only another week of deadlines and late nights spent alone in your room bathed in the glare of your laptop. The hours of sleep to be caught up on are almost within your grasp – before that, though: Christmas Formal (see above).



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. This week, Liam McNulty gives his rundown of Cambridge's three occupations of the past year – and his other essential stop-off points.



1. My house on Cherry Hinton Road

Much better than living in Homerton but not any closer to town...

2. Caffé Nero

Don't judge me – small capital is no less exploitative than multinational capital and is probably even worse.

3. The Old Schools Occupation

This was an unforgettable experience and definitely the best 11 days of my time here so far. The atmosphere was amazing and anyone who was there now knows the meaning of 'solidarity'.

4. The Law Faculty Occupation

Another unforgettable occupation but I sometimes wish it wasn't. It was much more contentious and stressful because it involved Israel-Palestine but it provided valuable practical experience for those involved.

5. Lady Mitchell Hall Occupation

Early days and already highly controversial but let's forget its difficult birth and concentrate on building resistance to the white paper ahead of 30th November.

STILLED TIME



MODEL: PHILIPP A BYWATER

PHOTOGRAPHER: CHLOE SPIBY LOH



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iPhoneography Competition

For the past three weeks, Cambridge students have been sending in their entries for Varsity's iPhoneography competition. Now MoMA-featured iPhoneographer **MissPixels** gives her verdict on the competition entrants and selects her winner.

WINNER

BUMBLEBEE ROBIN ŠMÍD



"Stunning image from an iPhone! I love the originality of the subject, the composition lines are solid, the coloured bee contrasts with the white window and the warm outdoor colours give the insect all the place it deserves."

SECOND PLACE

POWER FELIX DANCZAK



Great subject, great story here! Giving the image warmth and texture increases the drama of the subject. The composition is beautiful, Felix is using the square space in a brilliant way.

How the competition was judged

Subject: 5 points
Techniques: 5 points
Composition: 5 points
Originality: 5 points

Subject: Is the subject something surprising or new? Did the artist want to share a vision?

Technique: Do the techniques used help the image? Has the artist used the right techniques in a way that expresses the subject well?

Composition: Is the composition well thought out? Are there superfluous or distracting elements?

Originality: Is the photograph a cliché or is it something innovative?

The competition runners-up...



Yinsey Wang

Eileen Wagner

Katie Hardy

Esther Kezia Harding

Millie Riley

JOINT THIRD PLACE

JAMES PERRY



Do you feel the cold? This subject is traditional but I salute the technical rendering here! The choice to present this image with a bit of desaturated color enhances the coldness of the subject!

M NAGDY



This image is a song, is a poem, is a surreal moment. The editing is great, the artist used the right applications to give to an average subject something special and unique.

“Photography is an element”

Competition judge **MissPixels** talks to Lizzie Marx about the artistry of iPhoneography

An interview over the telephone seems too passé for the iPhoneographer, MissPixels. Instead, I am lucky enough to meet her in her true form, as a pixelated image on Skype. Right from the first fuzzy glimpse of her, I experience passion, energy and ambition radiating through the MacBook screen. Behind her in the Quebec office there is a stack of canvases in bright expressive colours, to which she comments, “It gets out the anger”.

The technologist has been doing iPhoneography since 2009 when she acquired her first iPhone. “I used the camera like everybody else”. But things began to change when she took a picture of her friend with a Mini Cooper. “I didn’t like the colour”, she explains, “so I started to play with apps and got hooked!”

Initially MissPixels’ incessant snapping (250 frames a day) annoyed her friends. But as her fame flourished, “Now all they want is for me to photograph them!” she jokes.

MissPixels is all about art, attaining not only a BA in Visual Art but also a BA in Graphic Design in 1996 as a way to unite her love of art and technology. “I did a photography course for my BA and I got good grades,” but, she firmly states, “I am not a photographer”.

When you study MissPixels’ photographs there is a lot more to them than just a photographic image. “Photography is an element,” she explains, but when she uses the apps to edit the photograph she turns into a painter. “There’s a world between the beginning image and the end”. Indeed, iPhotographs are unique; a sort of marriage of the virtual world with the real world where the photos are texturally enhanced with noise and grain and the movement in shots creates

smudges of colour, like brushstrokes.

I asked MissPixels for advice on how to take a good photograph. “If you shoot a picture and can find the same thing on Google-image, don’t do it”, she asserts. She’s interested in innovative points of view: “Jump on the table!” she exclaims, “That’s the difference between an artist and an amateur”. And the best apps she suggests are ‘Tilt Shift Gen’, ‘Picture Show’, ‘PS Express’, ‘King Camera’, ‘Diptic’ and ‘EXP’.

This is an artist who sees herself as the next page in the history books. Her forebears such as David Hockney and Ai WeiWei, have “opened the

door” for her. “People are listening to me more now than a year ago. I’m taken more seriously.” Last summer the MoMA published her photograph ‘4th July’ on their social network, exposed to 400,000 subscribers. “I was shaking, and couldn’t work all day!” she recalls, adding, “This meant that they had accepted iPhoneography as a true medium.”

This ambitious artist is busy right now. Not only is she jetting to Europe preaching the values of iPhoneography in Apple temples, but she wants to mount a solo exhibition and gain recognition from the arts council as well. In fact, she is the first iPhoneographer

to ask for a grant. If successful, iPhoneography will be officially recognised as an art form.

And what about the resistance from the photography traditionalists? “I don’t mind it”, explains MissPixels sagely. “They feel afraid because it’s new”, adding, “the same thing happened with the revolution of the digital camera”. Her vocabulary is big, speaking of the art world, the future, revolution. No doubt we shall be seeing a great deal more of this pioneer; not solely judging Varsity’s upcoming competition, but perhaps also a photo or two gracing the walls of the Tate, very soon.



CHRISTMAS DINNER

Jess Holland

Bridgemas is coming, it’s time to get your friends fat.

Prep time: 45 mins

Serves: 6 (Caution: greed and the number of vegetarians causes this to fluctuate wildly)

Price: £9.20 (cheap enough to treat yourself to 2for1 yule logs!)

- 1 de-gibletted turkey (Consider your microwave size!)

CLAUDIA STOCKER



- 3 largish potatoes
- 5 or so carrots, chopped
- Brussels sprouts
- 6 Yorkshire puddings
- 2 boxes of 85g stuffing
- Olive oil and spices
- Gravy granules

1. Pop the unwrapped turkey on a plate, garnish with olive oil and season with spices.
2. On a ‘chicken’ setting, microwave for 30mins until you get clear juices when you stick a knife in the breast (ouch!) Without a chicken setting, follow the packet’s cooking instructions using a convection setting or otherwise, it’s best to separate the two halves, making sure there is nothing in the middle.
3. Peel the potatoes and chop into fine slices before covering them with boiling water in a bowl. Put these in another micro for 8 mins.
4. Soak the Brussels in cold water while you cover the carrots in boiling water and microwave them for 7 mins. Cover to keep warm. Check the turkey.
5. Pour boiling water over the stuffing in a bowl, stirring until it takes on a doughy consistency.
6. Leave the stuffing covered and pour boiling water over your sprout(s). Micro for a few mins.
7. If available, brown your sliced potatoes on the highest heat of a George Foreman grill for a few minutes. (Turkey should be beeping now – enlist a hungry friend to get carving!)
8. Now to get dirty! Squash the stuffing into 6 balls then pop them in the micro for about 10 mins.
9. Yorkshire puddings go in next for a few mins and reheat the carrots if necessary, in preparation for the big finish.
10. To the gravy! Spoon granules liberally into a mug and add boiling water, while stirring
11. Voila - season’s greetings!

Best feature: Live band twice a term packs out the bar

Best feature: Cocktail roulette – swap your pitcher for a teapot

Best feature: Comfy sofas and underground

Best feature: Poetry readings and open mic nights

Best feature: Mostly dead atmosphere but friendly bar staff

Best feature: Darts and two £3.30 college cocktails

Best feature: Jukebox, cashback and food and coffee till late

Best feature: Weekly changing deals as part of 'price promise'

Best feature: Cool layout and cheap wine

Best feature: Two pool tables and good music

Best feature: The £4 'Fire Engine' containing 4 vodka shots

Best feature: Fairy lights and Bailey's hot chocolate

Best feature: You can pay on college card – dangerous!

Best feature: Lunchtime meal deal and piano





St John's

Cheapest pint:
Carling, £2.76
Pool table price: n/a
Atmosphere: 4
Appearance: 4
Best night: Fri/Sat
Best feature: Billiards table and late night toasties



Magdalene

Cheapest pint:
Carlsberg, £2.37
Pool table price: Free
Atmosphere: 3
Appearance: 3
Best night: Fri
Best feature: Fairtrade wines and games room



King's

Cheapest pint:
Cider, £2.50
Pool table price: 40p
Atmosphere: 3
Appearance: 2
Best night: Fri/Sat
Best feature: Karaoke Fridays

The Varsity cut-out-and-keep college bar guide

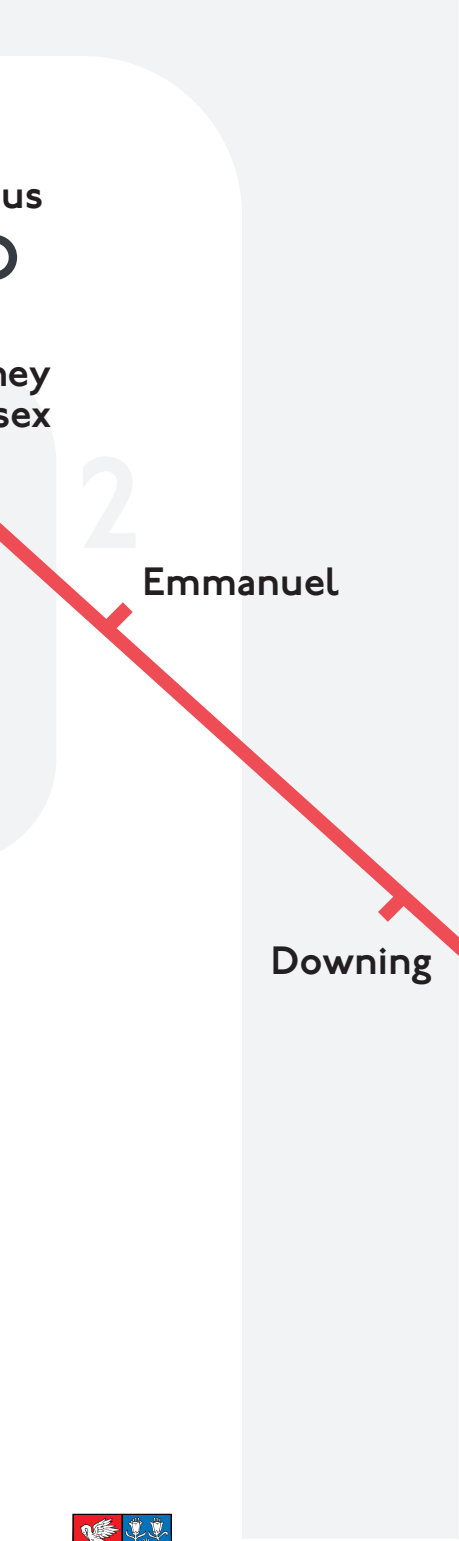


Jesus

Cheapest pint:
Carlsberg, £2.10
Pool table price: 40p
Atmosphere: 4
Appearance: 3
Best night: Sun
Best feature: Wii, jukebox and bar food before 9pm

VARSITY BAR CRAWL 2011

So many college bars, so little time... Fortunately, *Varsity's* done the hard work for you. Use this cut-out-and-keep map to decide where and when it's worth venturing from the Crawl Zone to the Taxi Zone. Whether you're looking for cocktails, comfort or cost, your perfect pint could be only a stop or two away!



- Northern Line
- Sidgwick Line
- Burrell's Byway
- Hills Road Line
- Magdalene Loop
- Jesus Dead End



Sidney Sussex

Cheapest pint:
Becks, £1.70
Pool table price: £1
Atmosphere: 4
Appearance: 2
Best night: Weds/Sun
Best feature: The prices!



Christ's

Cheapest pint:
Carlsberg, £2.12
Pool table price: n/a
Atmosphere: 3
Appearance: 4
Best night: Fri
Best feature: Stand-up events full of rising stars



Pembroke

Cheapest pint:
Carlsberg, £2.65
Pool table price: 20p
Atmosphere: 2
Appearance: 4
Best night: Tues/Weds
Best feature: Comfy sofas and 4-pint jugs for £8.05



Emma

Cheapest pint:
Carlsberg, £1.90
Pool table price: 40p
Atmosphere: 5
Appearance: 4
Best night: Tues/Thurs
Best feature: Extension nights – fancy dress and DJs until 2am!

With thanks to: Clemmie Hain-Cole, Freya Berry, Anna Goldenberg & Jessica Donnithorne



Corpus Christi

Cheapest pint:
Becks, £2.30
Pool table price: Free
Atmosphere: 4
Appearance: 3
Best night: Fri/Sun
Best feature: Fancy cocktail menu and sushi lunches

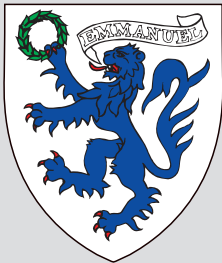


Downing

Cheapest pint:
Carling, £2.30
Pool table price: 50p
Atmosphere: 4
Appearance: 4
Best night: Fri/Sun
Best feature: Free table football and the 'Wendy May' cocktail

And the winner is...

Cheapest: Sidney Sussex
Priciest: St John's
Best atmosphere: Churchill
Best appearance: Clare
Best features: New Hall
Overall best bar: Emma



Homerton

Cheapest pint:
Becks, £2.35
Pool table price: 50p
Atmosphere: 2
Appearance: 4
Best night: Tues post-formal
Best feature: Wide screen TV, projector, iPod dock and Wii

Poet's
Corner

The Onset

My head and I have decided
To brood on
A cheek-chewing cliché
Control-blown;
Cinderella me;
I'm doing love now and
This is not typical.
Unforbid the fruit
You've said it
I suit being naked
I heard you said I heard
I appear to be
It seems I am
Fall-in-lovable-with;
This view is not mistaken.
We're doing love, look
I'm spending all my time with us;
Talpine, embarrassing, purple
Lavender scented days
Spent
Frantic
Holding scolding-cold hands
Give it up
To the double-bass touch
Shit, we're doing love this
Is not typical.
Ask me darling
I'll say no but please ask me.
Well, it's a too-strong boring soul-sore
and
I hate love.
X

LYDIA MORRIS-JONES

Autumn in the Library

Crows whistle to the wind,
outside
and inside
are bodies steeped in leaves:
furious fingers
and soft prints on dog-ears,
background beats
of dewey decimals
and not of dewey decimals,
or the soft abrasive graze
of broken bindings
on bookstands:
type and typing meet
when the million titles
leather-backed
and paper-
out-cry start-up songs
and text messages.
Texts almost atemporal
or sorely temporal
but immemorial
sit shyly on trolleys
and how many pairs of eyes
have caught the minims
and ascending arcs
and biting Bs,
glazed title-pages
and great men's marginalia
yes, these tender quires
quiver like stained leaves,
and weather the long autumn
of so many readers' breaths.

CALLAN J. DAVIES



IMAGES OF TIRANA BY BRIGHT TAL, VIA FLICKR

Critical Colour

We've only got one colourful building in central Cambridge. "Where are the rest?" asks Yates Norton

If you want to change the character of your room, usually changing the colour will do. If, on the other hand, a blighted city, ravaged by ruthless urban campaigns needs transforming, it's usually a bulldozer rather than the brush that does the work. For the population of one city, Tirana (Albania) who suffered constant incompetent demolition and rebuilding, the decisions of which were usually out of their hands, the idea of more full-bodied structural intervention was hardly eagerly anticipated.

Colour is a fact of presence, not merely an unnecessary veil to some essential body behind

For the city's mayor, Edi Rama, colour was the key in transforming the city. Subsidising paint and encouraging the population to paint parts of the tower blocks, the city soon changed from ex-soviet paeon to concrete to a mosaic of colour. Rama's opponents accused him of mere aestheticisation, a failure to engage in a more virile way with the city's people and its space. Colour was associated with ornament – that thing so brutally critiqued by Adolf Loos in *Ornament and Crime* – and banished as bourgeois. Colour was

nebulous rather than firm, rhetorical play rather than substance. Its merely optical re-renderings of space denounced as spectacle, pandering and reflecting an obsession with packaging and surface.

But these were themselves superficial readings, merely rehearsing tired neo-platonisms and cursory dismissals of anything that smacks of an incipient 'superficialising' of all domains of life. The accusation revealed a dreaded fear of the eye, a suspicion of optical play: how can something so insubstantial as colour so transform our interaction in space? Lacking corporeal 'proof', the transformation of space and environment by colour implies a facile duping of our cognitive capacities through mere illusionistic play. Believing in the transformative capacity of colour in space is like believing that a blue steak really does change its flavour. But the fact is that we do see. Colour is a fact of presence, not merely an unnecessary veil to some essential body behind.

The Lockean distinction between secondary and primary qualities is an entrenched dichotomy that has facilitated a measure of suspicion of the secondary as handmaiden to the first. And handmaiden is the word, for the prejudice against colour is a patriarchal prejudice which sustains the binary between feminine play and decoration against masculine tectonic integrity. Their interaction

and overlay is unthinkable in the discourse that maintains their absolute separation. Histories of modernist architecture have eschewed the theme colour in order to maintain its apparently 'essential' patriarchal core, (with De Stijl as a notable exception). Only recently has Le Corbusier be appraised as a colourist. Previously it might have been seen as a violation of his architectonic integrity. If colour were introduced, we'd be in the world of phenomenological play rather than firm, rational structure.

Cities and buildings have been drawn up with lines and grids. The great modernist regimes of urban *tabula rasa* and absolute evisceration from Haussmann to Ceausescu precipitated a brutally sudden change in the social structure of space. The ideologies that drive such aggressive *tabula rasa* are no longer viable in a world which might resist social change effected by a dominant hegemonic force. Colour is subtler, perhaps not in tone, but certainly in the transformation of space. By relieving structures of pure tectonic integrity – key to Modernist tenets of 'truth' and 'honesty' – colour is able to change the dynamic of architecture's intervention in our spaces. This is not to ask for weak architecture; but as an agent of transformation that elides the pitiless act of complete destruction and rebuilding, colour in architecture and space can operate

on a subtler dialectic that transmutes the qualities of environment and building. We can no longer sustain complete urban renewal on the model of Modernist *tabula rasa*: its ecological and sociological implications are too great and negative. Change can be effected by means which circumvent capital driven industrial forces that impose their physical and metaphorical structures on existing communities and spaces. If colour can transform architecture, can transform our space, simply through paint and light, the opportunities for renewal are ecological, and most importantly, available to all.

As an agent of transformation that elides the pitiless act of complete destruction, colour can operate on a subtler dialectic

Colour was picked up in postmodernist architecture, but an imaginative and subtle use of it has remained far from central to architectural and urban practice. The standard lexicon of urban transformation – pick axes, mallets and bulldozer – still dominate today. Let it now be paint and light.



Genre Issues

Charlotte Keith speaks to **Isabella Shaw** about why the dividing line between literature and 'genre fiction' has never been so arbitrary



The divide between so-called literary and genre fiction used to be simple: the former was serious, highbrow stuff; the latter, commercially successful, but slightly embarrassing, evoking images of sword-and-sorcery or sci-fi nerds. Historical fiction was bodice-ripping romance or military romps. Fun and all, but hardly 'serious literature'.

There is an increasing recognition, though, that – for all the continued stigmatisation of certain subject matters – the genre labels on bookshops shelves have never seemed more arbitrary.

Charlotte Keith spoke to student writer Isabella Shaw about her novel-in-progress, *The Telling-Bones*, set in a fantastical medieval world, and the allure of the past.

Why write about the past rather than the present?

I personally don't feel comfortable writing the present; it just doesn't seem authentic. In my writing, at least, I find that there is more imaginative reality in past worlds than in trying to judge a reality that I can't see clearly in the present moment. The Middle Ages is such a different world that we can't possibly hope to understand it entirely, but the snippets we can recover are fascinating. Areas of the past capture the imagination – and I think the popularity of period dramas demonstrates this: we like looking at things that evoke romantic ideas of past.

How do you feel about the distinction between 'genre' and 'literary' fiction made in the world of publishing?

It's definitely something that worries me! It's a very limiting way of looking at things. Although this novel is set in a medieval past, I don't really see it as 'historical fiction'; I think to apply that label would risk disappointing reader expectations. Perhaps it's fantasy – but although generic labels are clearly necessary, they're also very reductive. The guidelines for my writing are really just what I would like to read.

How did this novel come about?

The novel began as a dream that I was then trying to put into words. I closed my eyes and put pen to paper – I didn't try to write grammatically – and then later I would go back and make sense of the different strands of narrative.

Which writers have influenced you the most?

I'm interested in alternate histories that do exciting things with perceptions of reality – like Susanna Clarke's *Jonathan Strange and Mr Norrell*, or *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase* by Joan Aiken, and the work of A.S. Byatt. *The Telling-Bones* includes fragments of 'real' historical songs and poems, some of them anonymous medieval lyrics, some from the [medieval Latin] Cambridge songs.

You use a few actual dates in The Telling-Bones. To what extent do you try to situate your work in a precise historical period?

To be honest, I almost wish I could have come up with an alternate system of numbering – instead of using real dates – to show that I know this is not exactly what the eleventh century was like! The general feel is more important though: so much of the action in what I write is based on word and song, and in a not-quite-yet-literate society – like the one I write about in *The Telling-Bones* – words and stories carry immense power. See below for an extract from Isabella's latest novel, *The Telling-Bones*



Arts Comment

Bored? Don't blame culture, blame yourself.

Alice Hancock

On a recent trawl of the *Guardian* website I came across an article bewailing the 'New Boring' (Stuart Jeffries – 17 November 2011). A melting pot of *Downton Abbey*, a simpering Kirstie Allsopp, crooner Ed Sheeran and novelty woolly jumpers are, Jeffries claims, symptomatic of a 'spiritually depleted' nation. Austerity measures being taken to the point where we are becoming austere ourselves.

The first recorded use of the word 'boredom' was in Dickens's *Bleak House*; possibly not surprising in a novel which explores the machinations of litigation in the Courts of Chancery. Rather than implying fault in the the object, however, boredom as a psychological process says far more about the person who is describing an activity as 'boring'.

The psychologist C.D. Fisher defined it as "a pervasive lack of interest in and difficulty concentrating on the current activity." Cue that familiar chorus about our sound bite, fast food culture, and our consequently tiny attention spans.

It is not that culture is inherently boring, but rather that we are inherently bored. The 'New Boring' is not 'New' at all but something we have created ourselves in our refusal to stay interested in anything beyond 15 minutes. I have to admit, when Jeffries's article reached the 'meta-boring' stage my eyes did begin to glaze.

What needs to be done is to stop complaining and to re-galvanize our interests. Why could Jeffries not find anything positive to say? Because he refused to see it. Our National Gallery is currently hosting one of

the largest da Vinci exhibitions of recent times. David Attenborough has returned to our screens to remind us in his oh-so-soothing voice about the beauty of our planet. The cinema is jam-packed with decent films to see (if you haven't yet seen *We Need To Talk About Kevin*, I recommend that you do) and the Radio 1 chart is, believe it or not, not currently full of pretentiously beige singer-songwriter types. In fact it's full of R'n'B. In fashion news, the 70s are making a comeback, and nobody could argue that that was a boring decade.

Perhaps we have stagnated a bit: originality is not something that I would say characterises much of the current cultural scene. Looking through *Vogue*'s 'Things to look forward to in 2012' was certainly illuminating from this point of view. Much of the list revolved round re-runs of already well-known things: Woody Allen is releasing another film, David Hockney is having a major retrospective, the Queen is having a Diamond Jubilee, as we all know the Olympics are coming, and Salman Rushdie's first TV series will be aired.

But just because things are familiar does not mean they are boring. Christmas is the same every year and yet we still love it from about August onwards.

As I was reading Jeffries's article a favourite maxim of my grandfather came to mind: "only boring people get bored." If we all become boring people, then we really will face a situation of cultural standstill.

Besides, with the nights drawing in, if we really are bored we could always make a start on *Bleak House*...

Bucket List

Five christmas songs to listen to before you graduate

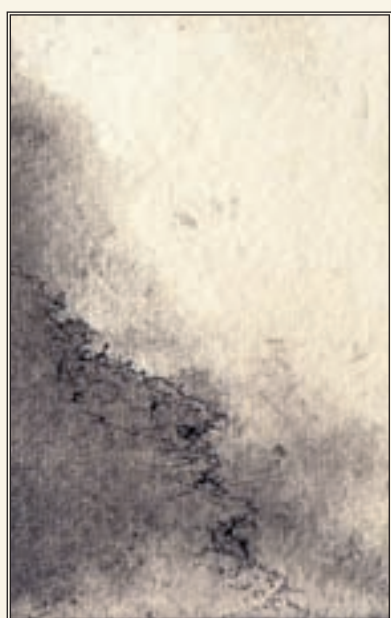
1 George and Andrew
The Boy Least Likely To
The duo's usual tinkling glockenspiels accompany lyrics which imagine a sweet seasonal reunion between Wham! Founders Michael and Ridgeley.

2 Put the Lights on the Tree
Sufjan Stevens
Sufjan Stevens has been writing Christmas songs since 2001, in an effort to combat the fear surrounding the holiday after September 11th.

3 Carol of the Bells
The Bird and the Bee
The traditional song, composed in 1916 for a classical choral group, is transformed into a merry piece of psychedelic pop.

4 Silver Bells
Bright Eyes
I bet you thought you'd never hear Conor Oberst belting out Christmas carols, but it works. A really heart-warming track.

5 It Must be Santa
Bob Dylan
Perhaps this is what happens when the living legend drinks a bit too much eggnog. Watch the video to see Dylan bopping around in a Santa hat.



It was a land between mists, a grey-and-occasionally sungold land, a land of ice and hushed silences, of secrets that the hills confided to each other (in the murmuring stillness between one ember's glow and the next morning sky).

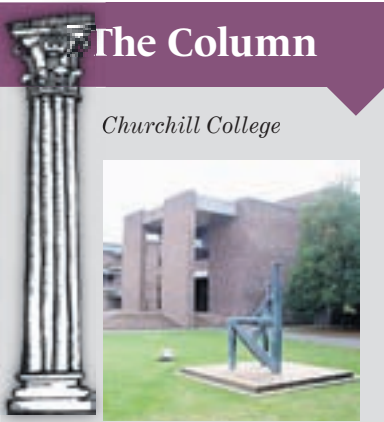
It was a mist-drenched land, but a good one: its soil was dark; its streams and springs limpid; its dreams heavy-laden with soft rain-lashings and sweet wind-sighs.

All along into the silence came a shimmer—a slight change, a hint of something gold-bright and fine, like the supple turning of the day. A tale was fallen upon it.

And yet still, the hushed land bore no remorse—still, it only waited, with bated breath and close-held sighs—

Little by little, it waited. And something emerged. —Something, straightening itself between one fog and the next, standing firm against the mist-covered hills and sunken woods, breathed a new sigh, and all the leaves of all the trees turned and trembled, green and golden, green and golden in the long sun-burnished afternoon. Little by little, the something shook itself, threw back its head, and let the crowning dew drop into the folds of its cloak.

Little by little, the waiting change came. And so it did, out of those long-eyed shadows—a change that would wreak upon the land this word: a word that knew it meant it never could be the same again.



The Column

Churchill College

Churchill, for me, is a difficult place to come to any firm conclusions about. I was tempted to say that it is the most significant modern architectural site in Cambridge, but while that might be true, that doesn't make it the 'best'. It also doesn't help that it was founded by our lovable cigar-chomping, dressing-gown-and-slippers wartime prime minister; and it helps even less that it now houses Margaret Thatcher's papers – along with cryogenically preserved handbag – in a specially built 'archives' wing.

Churchill, then, is a place of contradictions. Originally thought of as the British answer to MIT – hence its continued domination by scientists even today – it instead feels now quite provincial, perhaps even naïve in its architectural determinism. There was also the famous dispute about the Chapel – rather a nice building, if I could venture an opinion – which was deemed inappropriate, by Francis Crick and others, at a college so devoted to science.

Since its original erection, there have been other buildings put up at the Churchill site. To me these augment the original conception, and they are both quite fine. The first is Henning Larsen's Møller centre. This building is somewhat serene, its tower very stylish, and apart from it vaguely reminding me of (could it be) cake layers, I rather like it. The other, which I like even more, is the new music block: a great, black slab of glass that could almost be obsidian.

These new buildings are like focal points, like the Hepworth and Mistry sculptures; they help to turn the college into a proper 'environment' and less of (and it pains me to put it like this) an 'estate'.

For all of its problems, I like Churchill. It exemplifies for me what colleges that are not in the centre really have to offer: a kind of freshness, a lack of pomp and ceremony, which I find attractive.

Don't get me wrong, living centrally is a godsend for me; but getting out to these outer reaches, those ignored parts of town, is a kind of therapy. It's the only way one is able to find air to breath.

LAWRENCE DUNN

MUSIC

Kate Bush's 50 Words For Snow★★★★★



The very idea is excessive, superfluous, even ridiculous, but this is precisely the kind of material from which only Kate Bush can create a masterpiece. As seven songs slowly unfurl for over an hour on the topic, the listener is left only with a strengthened sense of Bush's uncanny ability to form an inhabitable world in an album.

2011 has been an unusually active year for the artist: after 6 years of silence following Aerial, this year has seen two new records, although the reworkings on Director's Cut seem very much a prelude to the stunning development of 50 Words for Snow. The prolonged breaks between albums are well-known and oft-mourned, but here the gap seems fitting to a deeply contemplative set of songs, with Bush displaying a new appreciation for patient and reserved gracefulness.

This is manifest immediately on opener 'Snowflake', as tentative flutters of piano combine with the muffled rumble of percussion in a fragile and tender duet with Bush's 13 year-old son. The track is built



around space as silent as the snowfall it describes, eschewing climactic crescendo for a hushed beauty all the more resonant for its subtlety. Kate's son, Bertie, takes the lead with a delicate soprano that is oddly reminiscent of his mother's vocal flights 20 years ago; the contrast between the pair highlights how Bush's voice has aged, taking on deeper, huskier tones that work to soften some of the icier textures here.

'Snowflake' marks the first of several duets on the album, which features guests as diverse as Elton John and Stephen Fry. It is these figures who will perhaps prove the record's most divisive features, with Elton's melodramatic vocal on 'Snowed In At Wheeler Street' in particular inviting raised eyebrows. Whilst not the record's high point, the strength of Bush's writing and the powerfully emotional tale of lovers

who are constantly held apart lend gravity to a performance that could easily have veered into nauseatingly sentimental territory, as the pair cry "I don't want to lose you again."

The frozen landscape, for all its beauty, is harsh

It's the one moment on 50 Words for Snow that threatens the pensive atmosphere, but its brash emotional directness serves as a welcomed reminder of the songwriter's lauded ability to juggle the sublime and the ridiculous.

The title track is another case of Kate's irrepressible whimsy, as Stephen Fry enunciates 50 words for snow with tangible relish, from the delightful "blackbird Braille" to the more perplexing "bad for

trains." Provided with the album's most propulsive music in the form of pacy, jazz-inflected rhythm section and reverberating swirls of guitar, the song takes a static, inexplicable idea and becomes an exciting journey guided by the ice-queen presence of Bush's commanding countdown.

Lyrical playfulness is second nature for Bush, but 50 Words for Snow achieves cohesiveness across its seven tracks between even the most disparate ideas. It is a landscape populated by lost figures: the "lonely" yeti of 'Wild Man,' the vanishing snowman of 'Misty,' the woman's spirit crying out for her dog on 'Lake Tahoe.' For all of its light-heartedness, the title track's endless synonyms point to the ephemeral fragility of snow that the record explores throughout: nothing here can be pinned down, as lovers have to separate, the animated snowman melts and the snowflake given voice on the opener proves impossible to find. The frozen landscape, for all its beauty, is harsh; it separates, confounds and ultimately disappears as quietly as it came.

'Misty' yields at once the most jarring and touching lyrical turn here, with Bush narrating a surprisingly sensual one-night stand with a snowman. Kate's passionate and yearning delivery of lines like "I can feel him melting in my hands" and "the sheets are soaking" replaces potential humour with blunt sexuality that becomes sad desperation as it evaporates.

As the album closes, it is evident that whilst Bush never fails to surprise, it is not longer a top priority. 50 Words for Snow is the work of a consummate artist who can simultaneously engage with her inherent whimsy and divorce herself from it, producing something both otherworldly and disarmingly, invitingly human. RORY WILLIAMSON

FILM

Oslo, 31st August★★★★★



At the beginning of Oslo, 31st August one, among the menagerie of narrators recounting their memories of Oslo, suggests that melancholy is better than nostalgia. If this is true than one might suggest that Oslo, 31st August is a great film. Director Joachim Trier presents a beautifully understated piece, sensitively portraying the stigma and shame associated with addiction without ever wallowing in depression.

The film follows the actions of Anders (Anders Danielsen Lie), a recovering heroin addict who has been released from his rehabilitation centre to attend a job interview. On his day in Oslo as he attempts to get

back in touch with those estranged by his addiction. Our introduction to Anders makes his state of mind clear, as he loads his pockets with stones and walks into a river, yet the potential for angst and melodrama is aptly avoided. Lie handles his role with great subtly, and delivers some truly touching moments, especially in his interaction with his best friend Thomas (Hans Olav Brenner) and during a fantastic interview scene with Petter Width Kristiansen.

This is not a film for everyone, the drama is relatively slow moving and may test the patience of some. Audience members at this particular screening expressed frustration with

Oslo, 31st August is not a film for everyone

a few of the characters' decisions. The focus on realism within the film means cinematography is not highly indulgent and, in some respects, less impressive than it could have been. These are minor gripes, Oslo, 31st August is a wonderful, introspective, film. The script is entertaining, and insightful and though the ending is perhaps predictable, Trier never attempts to obscure it and provides a touching drama along the way.

VICTORIA GREEN

FILM

The Silence★★★★★



There has been no place for squeamishness in cinema of late. From Antichrist to Kevin, taboos are being broken left and right, and the harrowing account of two murderous child molesters and their psychological trail of destruction is no exception.

The Silence takes a somewhat Lolita-ish approach to paedophilia, with an even-handed perspective on the most egregious of conditions. Two men, united by a perverse and isolating obsession which culminates in the brutal murders of two young girls, are deftly positioned to embody two opposing origins of deviant behaviour. The excellent Wotan Wilke Mohring is the tortured soul whose

self-loathing and compulsive voyeurism are excruciating to watch, while his accomplice, Ulrich Thomsen is a calculated monster whose crimes do nothing to disturb his poker face.

The cinematography is spectacular, with a breathless clockwork rhythmicity steering one haunting composition into the next. It is as if the beating heart of the chase resides within the camera lens itself. The squalid loneliness of victim and perpetrator alike is manifest in the gloomy serenity of forests and corn fields, with an abandoned child's bicycle as chilling as any explicit violence. The alternate endings of the two men are symbolic of an ordeal that is impossible to reconcile, and address a current and relevant debate as to whether such moral corruption is a question of intent or affliction. A cunning and unsettling climax sees the triumph of the insidious and depraved, and at a time when child abductions have littered the news of recent decades, one could forgive a parent for giving this one a miss.

A German import of similar calibre to the Foreign Language Oscar-winner The Lives of Others, this is a disturbing and remorseless thriller. With a residual unease that transcends the four walls of the cinema, this film has done for solitary bike rides what The Blair Witch Project did for woodland walks. INDIA ROSS

MUSIC

J. Cole live at The Junction

★★★★★

With lyrics full of ‘angst and aspiration’, American rapper J.Cole is an up and coming hip-hop star. With the anticipated release of his first official studio album, *Cole World: The Side-line Story*, in September, and three other successful mixtapes behind him, J.Cole is a definite ‘one to watch’. As part of his world tour promoting his No.1 album, he played to a packed crowd at The Junction, with hits from the current album and also previous mixtures, for his most avid fans.



A complete newbie to the concept of a ‘rap gig’, I was not sure what to expect from the night. Cole made a quick side entrance and bounced onto the stage with all the energy and enthusiasm you would expect from listening to his dirty lyrics and angry beats.

It was clear he learnt much from his sell out UK tour with Drake last

year. His interaction with the crowd was confident and charismatic, especially impressive considering that the crowd were initially quite stoic and sullen. With Jay Z as your mentor there is no reason to be a bad showman. J.Cole flowed from song to song seamlessly in a well rehearsed and thoroughly crowd pleasing set.

J. Cole has shown nothing but a determination to rise to the top

By combining some of his very personal and ‘angsty’ songs with some of his, perhaps, more Drake inspired ballads he managed to get the crowd heaving to both his

newer songs and a few of his mixtape favourites.

When fully immersing the crowd in an interpretation of his song ‘Farewell’ from his most famous mixtape Friday Night Lights, he picked out members of the crowd and created short and personal rhymes leaving them swooning and excitable as he left the stage to a dying beat.

From creating his first rough EPs to No.1 albums, J.Cole has shown nothing but a determination to rise to the top, his enthusiasm and love for the show and the music was definitely audible and left everyone with excitement and anticipation for there is surely more to be seen from this rising hip-hop star.

CHLOE SPIBY LOH

MUSIC

Bonnie Prince Billy + The King Blues live at The Junction

★★★★★

Milling through an eclectic crowd of punk rockers, middle aged couples and their children, I was unsure of what to expect when I arrived at The Junction.

Billy Bragg promptly sauntered onto stage following the support acts and his charisma reined supreme. With his inspirational fusion of laddish football banter, politically engaging rants and humility, he was as ever the working class hero.

Bragg’s masterful interludes were somewhat more entertaining and gripping than most of his

music however. Not that the latter lacked energy or quality. Highlights featured ‘Never Buy The Sun’, ‘There is Power in the Union’, and ‘Waiting for the Great Leap Forward’. Bragg constantly updated and made his tracks relevant, old and new. In

With his inspirational fusion of laddish football banter, politically enranging rants and humility, he was as ever the working class hero

contrast, his softer, love-songs lacked consistency and failed to grip the audience in a similar way.

The main reason why Bragg’s musical performance could have

seemed underwhelming was the sublime supporting performance offered by The King Blues. Their melange of punk, rock and ska was at once aggressive, ‘in your face’ and subtly intricate. The balance of rhythmic bass, potent lyricism, expertly timed crowd-baiting and front-man Jonny ‘Itch’ Fox’s charismatic and rousing politically oriented interludes made for an intense atmosphere.

Ranging from suitably abrasive tunes (the passion-fuelled ‘We Are Fucking Angry’ or the vibrant reminder that ‘The Streets Are Ours’) to more mellow ones (the British love song ‘Underneath This Lamppost Light’, a masterclass in making binge drinking and kebab meat sound romantic), their set was tight and engaging.

They represented the anger of a disenfranchised youth, a generation

of the politically disenchanted, but crucially were equally well informed, contemporary and as focused as the headline act; their references to the Occupation movement, student protests and the recent riots around the country exemplary of a new generation of political activism.

The night was somewhat of a baton passing of politically relevant music. TKB’s contemporary take on Bragg’s activist lyricism highlighted more than just the words, they embodied contemporary anger and reminded us that political engagement is not confined to vinyl.

Where The King Blues’ might herald the return of a politically engaged generation of musicians, perhaps, as Bragg says, for the British public it is easier just to ‘keep calm and carry on watching *The X Factor*’.

NICK MORRIS & LUCAS O’DONOHUE

LITERATURE

Don DeLillo – The Angel Esmeralda: Nine Stories

★★★★★

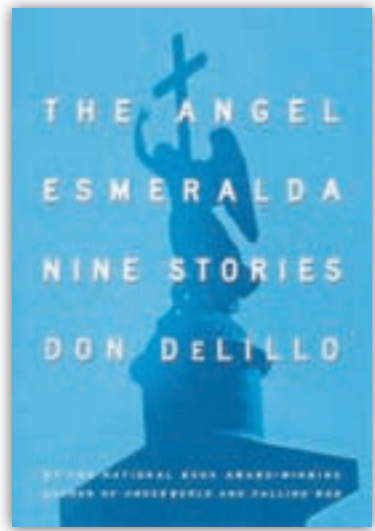


America is the world’s living myth”, Don DeLillo once commented. The rotten core of the American Dream has been a favourite subject of various writers over the years, none more so than DeLillo himself.

Revered by readers and critics alike for his doom-laden treatments of contemporary American life, and the trippy post-modernism of 1997’s *Underworld*, he has often been hailed as a latter-day prophet of paranoia of the ‘War on Terror’. There is plenty of foreboding zeitgeist-y angst in this, his first collection of shorter works.

The nine stories of *The Angel Esmeralda* are often eerily prescient, given that some of the stories were written as far back as 1983. However, the oft-noted topicality of DeLillo’s writing does sometimes fall flat. ‘Hammer and Sickle’, for instance, is a painfully contrived treatment of the banking crisis, which the incarcerated protagonist can only follow via his daughters’ financial news slot on a children’s TV channel – an overly artificial device which aims to convey the absurdity of events, the difficulties of interpretation, but feels embarrassingly laboured.

In general, though, the compression required by the short story form shows DeLillo’s masterful balance of suggesting and withholding. The consistency of style and narrative voice



is particularly remarkable given that these stories span three decades of DeLillo’s career.

As one reviewer commented, “DeLillo knows exactly what he is doing with adjectives”. And verbs, nouns, conjunctions, sentences: even when the stories occasionally fall short in terms of plot, he is in impeccable command of the prose. To quote a favourite passage from ‘Midnight in Dostoevsky’: “If we isolate the stray thought, the passing thought,” he said, “the thought whose origin is unfathomable, then we begin to

understand that we are routinely deranged, every-day crazy. We loved the idea of being everyday crazy. It rang so true, so real.”

Even when the stories occasionally fall short in terms of plot, he is in impeccable command of the prose

The best stories in the collection, ‘Midnight in Dostoevsky’ and ‘The Starveling’, engage with this ‘every-day craziness’, featuring one character who obsessively constructs narratives about a stranger. In an interview with the *Salt Lake Tribune*, DeLillo compared them to “private detectives, on an intellectual level. I’ve never done that myself” – really? – “but I can easily imagine people wanting to recreate the life of someone who is alien to them”.

One of the pleasures of *The Angel Esmeralda* is the experience of rifling through the consciousness of some fascinatingly dysfunctional protagonists (a less sympathetic description might be ‘weirdos and losers’). That is the beauty of this collection: it enables the reader to toy with and then discard the perspectives of the disaffected, alienated, and sometimes seriously deranged – an ageing nun

with a pedant for correct grammar, a film addict, a woman who goes to the same art exhibition of paintings of German terrorists being executed for three days running...

However, the real test of any writing – particularly a short story, whose reading-time is so short-lived – is time: whether or not it stays with you, catches you thinking about it while waiting in the lunch queue or just before you fall asleep.

At his best, DeLillo achieves exactly that: something intangibly awful yet luminous lingers. “Was this meant to be erotic, or ironic”, wonders a minimum-security convict, “or just another random package of cranial debris?”

In the paranoid narrative-making minds of DeLillo’s characters, one can never be quite certain. There is also a wry humour at work throughout – a white-collar prisoner reflects on the “anti-masturbatory principles” of “soccer”; one ex-pat in earthquake stricken Athens asks another “do you have an inner life?”. “I sleep”, he replies, “that’s not what I mean”.

“I want words to be secretive”, muses an astronaut involved in waging World War III, “to cling to a darkness in the deepest interior”. In *The Angel Esmeralda*, DeLillo scrupulously explores that interior darkness, the basic narrative fascination with “people in rooms, what we see and what we miss, how we pass through each other, year by year, second by second”.

CHARLOTTE KEITH



Tracks

Top 5 Tracks of 2011

Wild Beasts ‘Loop the Loop’



Low-key instrumental flourishes allow for an astonishing, yearning vocal to take flight.

The Cumbrian four-piece provide four minutes worth of beautiful lyrical curiosity in a word, majestic.

tUnE-yArDs ‘My Country’



Tribal drums, flashes of synth and chaotic layered vocals combine to form a track of ramshackle perfection.

Merril Garbus’s progressive project of loops layered upon more loops is a thrilling listen.

St. Vincent ‘Cheerleader’



As an artist renowned for complex compositions, when St.Vincent does direct, the results are huge; explosive guitar propels what might

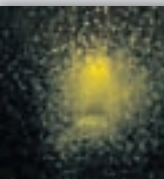
be the year’s best pop hook. Gracefully atmospheric, and a stand-out track on the album, Strange Mercy.

PJ Harvey ‘The Glorious Land’



This is the glittering jewel in the crown of *Let England Shake*; Harvey’s liquid guitar and inhuman caw offer a wonderfully disturbed depiction of the “deformed children” of our “glorious land”.

The Antlers ‘Coriscana’



A shimmering, trembling triumph, Coriscana is the kind of song that can leave you quietly devastated, struggling to find words or breath.

RORY WILLIAMSON

COMPETITION

Duologues Competition
Corpus Playroom

★★★★★

Monday at the Playrooms saw the inaugural Duologues Competition. An intriguing concept, with the audience given the chance to vote for the winning performance, it attracted a reasonable crowd, but was unfortunately lacking in consistent quality. The evening started on a high with a sketch from *I, Claudius*. Max Upton’s obsequiousness was perfectly attuned, while James Parris’s crazed self-infatuation was brilliantly candid. The scene was well-selected and self-contained, with both actors able to establish their characters assertively and immediately.

Max Upton, Fletcher Players President and competition organiser, nobly put his own sketch first and furthest from the voting, though I could not help but feel a little suspicious that all the other acts had been selected so as not to upstage his own.

Many of the duologues struggled for dramatic impact

The eventual winners of the competition were James Bloor and Paul Adeyefa for their original composition, *The Reunion of Sneaksby and Bunn*. However, it was little more than a list of tongue twisters and unlikely book titles, and would not have stood out nearly so far had its rival performances offered sterner competition. Many of the duologues were poorly selected, struggling for dramatic impact in isolation from their contexts. A twenty second plot summary was nowhere near sufficient to give the necessary background for Emma Powell and Lydia Morris-Jones’s excerpt from *The Children’s Hour* to carry any force, though the quality of the acting did not help.

Mark Wartenberg and Hannah Walker’s duologue was more convincingly played, even if Walker rushed a little and spent a good deal of time with her back to the audience. Shakespeare made a double appearance, but neither time was he able to make up for the lack-lustre acting. I am sure that *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* is meant to be funny, but I cannot remember laughing during Angeline Hunt and Rob Wilkinson’s skit.

It is a shame that Matilda Wnek and Dominc Biddle’s excerpt from *Try, Try!* by Frank O’Hara was last in the running order. It seemed rather interesting, but, by now, an hour had passed and I was too bored to concentrate properly. The idea of a duologues competition is a good one, and I do hope that it becomes an annual event. But the general standard was poor; improvement in future years is however possible, if the competition can acquire a bigger profile.

THEATRE

Children’s Guide to the Birth of Christ
Corpus Playroom

★★★★★

For a show with the publicity slogan, “Jeff Carpenter seems to have confused musical with shit”, this production wasn’t nearly offensive enough. Having been promised an outrageous take on the Nativity story as part of Carpenter’s “ongoing offence against theatre”, I was geared up for profane humour and sacrilegious songs. Instead I got a glorified school play, complete with tinsel, keyboard backing track and pantomime chants.

The musical was intended to be cheesy and tongue-in-cheek, but the novelty of a pantomime-villain Herod and German-scientist Magi wasn’t enough to significantly differentiate the show from familiar primary-school fare. Corpus Playroom was intentionally turned into a junior school hall, but the similarities went too far. When Carpenter at the keyboard began mouthing lyrics to the cast, it was because it was necessary rather than because he was playing a music teacher. The awkward air and unreliable

projection of the tinselled angels, who sat cross-legged along the back of the stage waiting for their one line each of scene setting, was similarly too reminiscent of the real thing.

Though it wasn’t enough to sustain over an hour of lateshow, there was some inventive characterization. Herod (Saul Boyer) was a charismatic pantomime villain replete with evil cackle; the three kings were bizarrely German, and stranger still, Zoroastrian scientists; and the horse, ox, cow and cat of the stable made a stirring musical protest against the occupation of their dwelling. The surfer-dude shepherds (Jennie King and Julia Shelley) were a favourite. Happily



and hate, desire and disgust.

Between the two of them, both literally and structurally, is Megan Roberts’s finely tuned Christine, whose negotiation of humility and pride in her subservience is the perfectly pitched and quietly compelling counterpoise to Gaunt’s chillingly convincing moral disorientation. The three actors complement each other in series of triangulated gestures which symbolically express the emotional vectors that connect them: Johnston’s physical advances on both women convey his divided affections; Roberts’ wipes his face with the very same wet cloth Gaunt uses to douse the flames of moral iniquity from her reddened cheeks, and both undress ‘their’ footman, whose chest, bared by Christine, becomes a striking image reflective of the play’s interest

stoned, they lay gazing at the night sky with the occasional “woahhh, duuude, look at that star!” before breaking into their musical number, ‘Chillin’. They looked suitably dazed when they arrived at the holy scene clad in board-shorts and Hawaiian shirts.

Simon Perfect, James Swanton and Jamie Hansen were kooky scientists Melchior, Balthasar and Caspar. Swanton once again astonished with the elasticity of his facial muscles, though his gawping couldn’t prop up the many scenes of unrelenting mad-scientist cliché. Why they were characterized as German was never made clear, though it gave Carpenter the opportunity to compose a euro-techno number for them called ‘It’s Logical’, to which they did a teutonic robot dance.

Theo Boyce as Joseph and Amy Powell as Mary were likeable as the happy couple. Boyce was cutely bashful in his wooing of Mary, and his proposal song, ‘I’m gonna do it’, in which he geared himself up to pop the question, was a highlight – especially when interrupted by Mary putting her head round the kitchen door with a “Sorry, I couldn’t quite hear what you were singing, darling?” His unimpressed reaction to the news of his girlfriend’s pregnancy was fun, leading into their tongue-twister duet ‘what’s God got that I haven’t got?’ Powell had the

strongest voice of the evening and did a good job of her Magnificat. As the emotional centre of the story, I could have done with more of Boyce and Powell at the expense of some of the repetitive Herod and Magi scenes.

This production wasn’t nearly offensive enough.

Though the school play set-up made unflattering parallels with primary school drama hard to avoid, it almost gave the opportunity for some much-needed offensive humour: I hoped Jack Oxley, the class teacher, was being pervy when he welcomed the audience of parents with a “I bet you’ve been looking forward to this all year...I know I have.” Unfortunately, moments of ironic humour were few and far between, and it wasn’t till the very last scene that anyone made an “it’s like Christmas!” joke.

As the strength of the show was in Carpenter’s well-written tunes, it was a shame that the singing was so patchy. The audience were clearly enjoying themselves, raucously joining in the “Oh no you aren’t”s, but their enthusiasm couldn’t make up for the lack-lustre performances onstage.

SOPHIE LEWISOHN

THEATRE

Miss Julie
Corpus Playroom

★★★★★

It’s Midsummer night, 1874, and Corpus Playroom is every inch Strindberg’s subterranean world of social dissatisfaction, sexual frustration and volatile human power dynamics. From freshly cooked kidney, to wax-sealed bottles of Burgundy to real tears, this is a production thoroughly committed to the naturalism of its writing. Holly Gupta’s set showcases exceptional attention to detail, offering a vividly three-dimensional canvas, onto which three stylish performances are cast, and with which they interact with tangible credibility.

A subterranean world of social dissatisfaction, sexual frustration and power dynamics.

Celine Lowenthal’s direction deftly exploits the physical potential of both the space and the actors within it to express with sensitivity the atmospheric sense of imprisonment which is the keynote of this play. George Johnston and Genevieve Gaunt’s Jean and Miss Julie respectively move lithely around the downstairs parlour – in and out of one another’s grasp – and yet at the same time, their dynamic elasticity of gesture maintains the underlying dramatic tension which sees them taut as rubber bands at breaking point, snapping mercurially between malleability and manipulation, love

in what we look like when stripped of socially prescribed morality.

For all the production’s material adherence to the naturalism of the play, however, there are, at times, in Johnston and Gaunt’s rendition of Jean and Julie’s fatal clashes, moments where completely convincing control over the script’s notorious volatility seems to slip their grasp. But only just; slippage amounted to nothing more offensive than the occasionally hurried or snatched final line after long argumentation, a whiff of melodrama in the self-conscious theatricality of Jean’s fervent storytelling, or Gaunt’s sporadic overly screechy retort to Johnston’s verbal transgressions. Any criticism of apparently schizophrenic, point-blank transitions between polarised gesture and vocal tone, however,

must be tempered by remembering that quicksilver volte-faces of sentiment and intention absolutely characterise these roles. Their mutability unlocks Strindberg’s symbolism, too, for confused and enraged by the bars of social rank, they become the caged birds Miss Julie’s green finch – beheaded live* by Jean – symbolises.

A couple of sound niggles including a questionably long thunderstorm and unnecessarily painful opening violin solo are merely superficial and would be easily remediable by contraction, which would provide a simple antidote to their slight slowing of the production’s otherwise pacy pulse rate. For in all other respects there is very little that is superficial about this production. Performances are nuanced and consistently emotionally charged, in all emotional directions, and a palpably tense and textured audience connection is their reward. Roberts, Johnston and Gaunt’s performances together conspire to vivify Strindberg’s psychological freight-train of social insecurity, and their tactile interactions throughout contribute to its indomitable destructive passage through relationships within and without class boundaries.

Verbosity and verbal vitriol is complemented by intelligent body language from all, and, in particular, by Gaunt’s sensitive musicality of tone as she pitches Miss Julie’s fall “down, down, down”. Her sigh at the sordid romance of a young shit-covered Jean’s adoration spoke volumes, and to an extent for the audience, as we observed, for a moment together, the banal irony of domestic tragedy.

* I’m sure no animals were actually harmed during the performance.

CAMILLA WALKER



‘Physical advances’: Jean (George Johnston) with Christine (Megan Roberts)

COMEDY
Fierce
ADC
★★★★★

Kathryn Griffiths is quite clearly a wonderful woman. I know this because a friend of mine by the name of Sebastian Funk recently received a message from her, telling him that he had one of the top 50 names out of the 18,000 at Cambridge, and that for this reason he should probably come and see her new show, *Fierce*, which she had written and would be performing by herself. It tells you a lot about her dedication that she is willing to trawl through an 18,000 strong database on the hunt for 50 cool names. It also might tell you something of the quirky sense of humour of the show itself that it could be marketed in such a way.

Usually I can find quirkiness or kookiness a little grating in large doses. This play certainly has a lot of both. Sample lines might include “why is McDonald’s in McDonald’s at 6am?” or a deconstruction of the movie *Deep Blue Sea* (“They made the sharks massive and intelligent, because they were trying to cure cancer, of course”). And yet each one-liner struck home with such a

charming delivery and such well-wrought wit that I couldn’t begrudge the tone of the show too much. It helped that the play had some heart buried somewhere amongst the oddness.

The play is the recollection of Felicity, who at the age of 15 runs away from home and falls in love with an older female artist, who lives in some squalor with her Australian flatmate. Felicity ends up tied to a bed, for reasons too odd to go into. That is, in essence, the plot, and it is just about enough to hang a play on. There is much of the tenderness of young infatuation here, of trying to clumsily sort out one’s confused sexuality, suggesting that to reach a first kiss they should run at each other still talking until their mouths

“The ending came too slightly too abruptly to justify itself

meet. There is a fascinating power dynamic, Griffiths smoothly jumping from one character to the other, the utterly straight-played Felicity and the older, stranger, more neurotic American, who feels both attraction and fear at the advances of her young suitor. The switch between accents and physicalities is masterful and subtle, with Griffiths never letting



her obvious comic abilities run away with her and detracting from the tenderness of her portrayals.

She moves across the stage with comfort and grace, with an easy, friendly rapport with the audience. She forgot a single line of the play, so endearingly it actually made for a better evening, trying to remember it in character before asking the auditorium in general what it was, to be reminded by the sound box. It was the most majestic flub I have ever seen.

It is an ambitious piece of writing, for which I give her credit, but I had my reservations. While I am fine with theatre that doesn’t wear its themes

on its sleeve, at times I found myself struggling to follow the point of a vignette; there were times when the story lost a sense of why it needed to be told.

The immense awkwardness and weirdness of the characters lost my patience once or twice, and the end came slightly too abruptly to justify itself. I fully commend the attempt to write in a bordering-on-absurdist manner, but it contains structural pitfalls which are not overcome here. But it is a laudable and brave attempt, very funny, and, because clichés are clichés for a reason, I may as well say it: a tour de force from the woman herself. **FRED MAYNARD**

THEATRE
Footlights Panto
ADC
★★★★★



Gender confusion. What more can you ask for, for the perfect night out? A talking but sadly flightless, parrot, you say, deft punch lines (even those delivered by a silent hook), and a spiteful goat? They’re all there, in the brilliant Footlights production of *Treasure Island*, directed by Harry Michell.

Robert Louis Stevenson wouldn’t recognise his book and Andrew Brock’s mother wouldn’t recognise her son. Where there’s a villain, a dame cannot be far away and the ravishing Andrew delivered in abundance. He somehow fell just the right side of ridiculous as an unashamed nurse in a hoop skirt with a canon firing sweets and a satirical catchphrase.

In fact, the cast were all – man, woman and parrot alike – suitably at home in tights. As for the ‘breasted boy’, Lucie Shorthouse, as Jim Hawkins sang marvellously, and rose to the heights of tragic pathos, staring at a small pile of sand on the stage, and reducing the audience to tears with those two despairing words “my hourglass”. Together, Shorthouse and Forbes, the socially awkward parrot, formed the perfect, less than dynamic, duo. In their quest to save the world from being drowned by the bitter Long John Silver, the two survive horrible almost unimaginable tortures; even interpretive dance.

I’d like to say I was rooting for good to triumph over evil throughout

but my heart was stolen by a one-legged Long John Silver (George Potts) who bravely admitted his own limitations: “hurdles, cattle-grids and a successful marriage to a Beagle”.

It occurred to me that Potts had refused to undergo an amputation for the sake of his art, but his commitment to maniacal laughter was unwavering. That and an entire song based around the phrase “Evil’s afoot” made him shine like a freshly minted piece of eight.

Amongst all the slick lines and incredible songs, Michael Campbell seemed to hold the plot together. His is a dominant presence; even when

dead.

With an incredible script and obviously enthusiastic actors, one may wrongly assume a play is sorted. But the music and the set deserve huge credit. Jeff Carpenter composed some fantastic music and the orchestra gave the evening its lively feel from the start.

It is almost impossible to describe Gilleen Denny’s achievement with the set design. The highlight amongst an impressive array had to be the ship which could be adapted from an inside view to a side on one – even during scenes, and even whilst actors climbed/fought across it.

Phil Wang, Adam Lawrence and Jonny Lennard have written a fantastic show. Those of you venturing onto the island should be warned that Rosa Robson, with her excitement at the prospect of “a magic carpet of gold and commitment” and “a pony made of diamonds and feelings”, is not as sugar-coated as she may seem. Though for reasons of delicacy, I simply cannot explain why in print.

I was left with a broad smile on my face but, more importantly, with a desire to know who gets to keep the voodoo doll of the health minister. **LIZZIE MOSS**



“Visceral and relentless”: one of Guy Woolf and Justin Blanchard’s “testosterone-fulled fights”

Behind the Scenes

The Director



A friend and I are hoping next term to jointly direct a production of *The Macedonian Tragedy*, a play about the life of Alexander the Great by fellow student and friend, Thomas Moodie. This will be our first time directing, and the first of his plays to be put on, so it’s all quite exciting.

At this early stage my task is to read through the script and begin the process of figuring out exactly how what’s on the page might work on stage. This involves some fairly logistical seeming decisions, such as scenery, costumes, and props for each scene. But this isn’t simple; whilst each decision is individually important, they’re based on overarching decisions about the aesthetic of the whole play, the kind of mood and style we think most appropriate to apply to the raw materials of the script, in a way which will be accessible and enjoyable to the audience, but also a faithful and respectful realisation of the writer’s aims.

Then there are a set of more subtle decision to be made. One is the personality of each character, a circular process in which an assessment of their appearances throughout the play is used to inform how they might deliver each individual instance of speech, how their history and motivations will be manifested in their tone, actions and non-verbal behaviour. This involves looking in detail at the entire script, identifying areas of ambiguity, and thinking about the movements, gestures and emotions involved. I also have to think about things like relationships, feelings and tensions between characters, and the placing and movement of characters no stage in each scene. This process is quite different with a play written by a close friend, put on for the first time, than it might be with a canonical play the audience might have seen or read before. Rather than trying to find a specifically personal and unique take, perhaps I have a more straight-forward task, but one with more responsibility: to get it right. I still have to make sure the production is thoughtful and interesting, but I don’t have to worry about contradicting anyone’s preconceptions of how the play ‘should’ be.

Listings

Don't miss:



Nightlife
Now That's What I Call Kambiar #4
DEC 1ST KAMBAR 22.00 (£3)
Now That's What I Call Kambiar returns for the last Thursday of term. Don't miss it, it's quite likely that some of the lovely people in this photo will be there.

Sat 26th

Film
Calvet
ARTS PICTUREHOUSE 14.15 (£8.00)
French painter Jean Marc Calvet recounts his incredible life story as a former Cannes bodyguard who abandoned his family, robbed a Miami mobster, hid out in Central America and at the age of 38 overcame addictions through an extraordinary metamorphosis, in which he began to paint.



Nightlife
Big Beat Re-Union
THE JUNCTION 22.00 (£10 ADV)
"Tonight we embrace the Big Beat sound of yesteryear and get back to the atmosphere of the heady days of the scene." If you know what they're talking about and it sounds appealing, head down for what will surely be a great night.

Comedy
Queens' Comedy Night
FITZPATRICK HALL 21.30
What better way to spend your Saturday night? An evening of student comedy not to be missed. Get there early as this one tends to fill up quickly every year.

Sun 27th

Theatre
Hamlet
JUDITH E. WILSON STUDIO 19.30 (FREE)
"A visionary re-imagination of a masterpiece... of the greatest play of them all" the Avant-Garde Stage Company company claim. It's free, so head down to see if it lives up to its ambitious blurb.

Music
Promenade Concert
FITZWILLIAM MUSEUM 13.15 (FREE)
With Jessica Lawrence-Hares singing soprano and Patrick Hemmerlé on the piano with a repertoire including Alma Mahler, Szymanowski and Duparc.

Film
Met Encore: Satyagraha
ARTS PICTUREHOUSE 12.00 (£16.00 STUDENT)
The Met's visually extravagant production is back. Richard Croft once again is Gandhi in Philip Glass's unforgettable opera, which the Washington Post calls "a profound and beautiful work of theater".



Mon 28th

Theatre
The 24 hour Plays
ADC 23.00 (£5 STUDENT)
Could you create a play out of nothing in 24hrs? Come see the best theatrical talent in Cambridge do just that. Five directors, writers, producers, creatives & techies along with 25 actors will form five groups and put on five new plays.

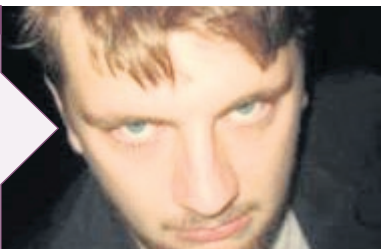
Music
Madama Butterfly
CAMBRIDGE CORN EXCHANGE 19.30 (£10-£34.50)
Back by overwhelming public demand, Ellen Kent's award winning Opera returns, with exquisite sets, such as the stunning Japanese garden and spectacular costumes including antique wedding kimonos from Japan.



Theatre
The Movement Dionysia: A Midsummer Night's Dream
CORPUS PLAYROOM 19.00 (£5/£6)
"One play. Five acts. Five directors." One punchy, unimaginative blurb too. May not be a bad performance though, so check it out.

Tue 29th

Theatre
Nonsense
CORPUS PLAYROOM 21.30 (£5/£6)
Pierre Novellie is one of the writer/performers of *Now, Now* and *The Mexican Standoff*, creator of the Corpus Smoker, a Footlights member and performer of many May Balls. So if you haven't seen him around already it's definitely your fault not his.



Music
Bill Wyman's Rhythm Kings
CAMBRIDGE CORN EXCHANGE 19.30 (£28.50)
Rock and roll icon, author, restaurateur and photographer – legendary former Rolling Stones bassist Bill Wyman has seen it all and continues to live life to the full. Get to the Cambridge Corn Exchange to see him live.

Theatre
Over the Bridge
ADC 23.00 (£5/£6)
Over the Bridge are Cambridge's most entertaining close-harmony group. Fresh from packed performances at last year's May Balls, recent highlights include a concert on Broadway for the University's 800th anniversary and a CD recording with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.

Wed 30th

Event
Cocktail Workshop
THE UNION 19.30 (£6 MEMBERS, £9 NON-MEMBERS)
Ever wondered what the difference is between a Mojito and a Margarita? Head down to the Union to find out. Moreover, learn how to make them too. Even better.

Theatre
Highlights
ADC 23.00 (£5/£6)
A comedy about the sheepish beginnings of love, and the zealous involvement of parents. Clare Actors present a play for "anyone who has practically dated their other half's mum or dad". They probably don't mean that literally.

Talk
Sir Patrick Stewart OBE
THE UNION 19.30
English actor most widely known for roles in X-men, Star Trek and his work with the Royal Shakespeare Company. Don't miss him speak at the Union this week.



Thu 1st

Music
Magnum
THE JUNCTION 19.00 (£18.50 ADV)
For almost 40 years, Magnum have been one of the most consistent leading lights in rock history and continue to impress with their unique style, a mix of powerful energy, deep melodies and perceptive lyrics.

Debate
The Presidential Debate: This House Would Decriminalise All Drugs
THE UNION 19.30
See the outgoing president, Calum Macdonald, take up the proposition on this highly controversial topic in the final debate of the term.



Exhibition
Late opening of Vermeer's Women: Secrets and Silence
FITZWILLIAM MUSEUM 19.00 (FREE)
See Vermeer's Women after hours with entertainment in the Museum Courtyard.

Fri 2nd

Music
Royal Philharmonic Orchestra
CAMBRIDGE CORN EXCHANGE 19.30 (£10 STUDENT)
An event is to celebrate the Cambridge Corn Exchange's 25th Anniversary, starting with Vaughan Williams's elegiac 'Fantasia On A Theme' by Thomas Tallis.



Talk
The Future of Energy: Views & Approaches by Government and Industry
MILL LANE LECTURE ROOM 6 17.30 (FREE)
Prof David MacKay gives this talk as part of the Connections Lecture Series.

Music
Kettle's Yard Friday lunchtime concert
KETTLE'S YARD 13.10
With Gisella Doulton, Oli Pashley, Rosie Breckon, Ben Holmes and Andy Savill. I know for a fact that these people are incredibly talented.

Outside the bubble

Fun
Reindeer Lodge
LONDON ZOO (NOV 26H - DEC 24TH) (£5)
London's very own reindeer herd takes up residence at London Zoo's new Reindeer Lodge in the run-up to Christmas. Rudolph, Dancer, Prancer and Blitzen will be taking a daily walk around the zoo.

Fun
Skate at Somerset House
SOMERSET HOUSE, LONDON (UNTIL 22ND JAN)
The grand courtyard at Somerset House provides this 900-metre-square ice rink with one of the most impressive skating backdrops in town. The Christmas tree is again decorated by Tiffany's.

Film
Underground Film Club
ROUNDHOUSE, LONDON (UNTIL DEC 18TH)
A winter season of screenings in the 'The Dorfman Hub', a labyrinth of brick chambers beneath the main hall of the Roundhouse. The programme includes recent releases, cult classics and plenty of crowd-pleasers.

Event
Bad Santa's Grotto
GRAFFIK GALLERY, PORTOBELLO RD, LONDON (NOV 26TH-DEC 10TH)
Bad Santas paint, rap and beatbox their hearts out at this seasonal exhibition, which includes street art photography as well as a Christmas market.

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...

Week Eight: *Varsity* goes fencing

In the final installment of *Varsity Sport*’s weekly look at some of the minor sports, we talk to the men’s captain of the Cambridge University Fencing Club, **Nicolas de Juniac**

Matt Dickinson
CHIEF SPORT CORRESPONDENT

How did you first become involved in fencing?

I first became involved at school. I think on some level everyone begins fencing because they want to be Zorro. I kept going with the discipline because I found it to be a truly demanding and rewarding activity with a strong historical identity which appeals to a lot of people.

What have been the highlights of your career as a fencer?

I’ve participated in many UK competitions and I always enjoy the individual battles against renowned fencers at these. The Varsity competition last year was of course a highlight, as was our great performance in the BUCS Championship which we have a very good chance of winning this year.

Who’s the best fencer you have encountered?

Our captain of three years ago, Alex O’Connell, participated in the Beijing Olympics and will be doing the same at London in 2012. Anthony Crutchett, who was in the University team around the same time as Alex, won a gold medal at the most recent Commonwealth games. The Cambridge team have produced some very good fencers in the last few years.

How does the physicality of fencing compare with other sports?

I think people tend to perceive fencing as not constituting a true



En garde: Cambridge épéist Matt Rowland fine-tunes his Zorro impersonation at last year’s championships

sport due to its lack of physicality, but I can honestly say that no other sport has tested me in the same way as fencing. Spending at least half an hour in the squat position moving up and down an eight metre strip is extremely tiring.

What makes a good fencer?

There is no physical archetype of a good fencer: short people can use their size to an advantage, while tall people benefit from extra reach. I think it’s really mental strength which is the hallmark of the very strongest fencers.

Is the discipline’s popularity confined to certain regions of the country?

I think there is a misconception that fencing’s popularity is confined to public schools, but all the best fencers I have met are from state schools. The sport is more popular in the United States and the rest of Europe, partly due to the poor infrastructure of the BFA (British Fencing Association) which hampers the quality of coaching at a grass-roots level.

Having said this, the current GB Foil Team are performing very highly

at the moment and should hopefully stir up a good deal of publicity at the 2012 games to boost the sport’s popularity in this country.

What types of people are drawn to fencing?

I think fencers are required to be intelligent, not in an academic sense, but in analysing and responding effectively to an intense tactical environment. There is a true feeling of community amongst fencers; the strong sense of tradition ensures this is the case. That competitors are required to shake hands after every

battle and salute before an encounter breeds respect for participants and the sport itself.

Who are favourites for Varsity?

Both universities have very strong teams this year and, as the focus of our season, we are keen to perform well. Last year we lost very narrowly and have an almost identical team this year. With the sides so even, victory is usually dictated by which side can hold their nerve.

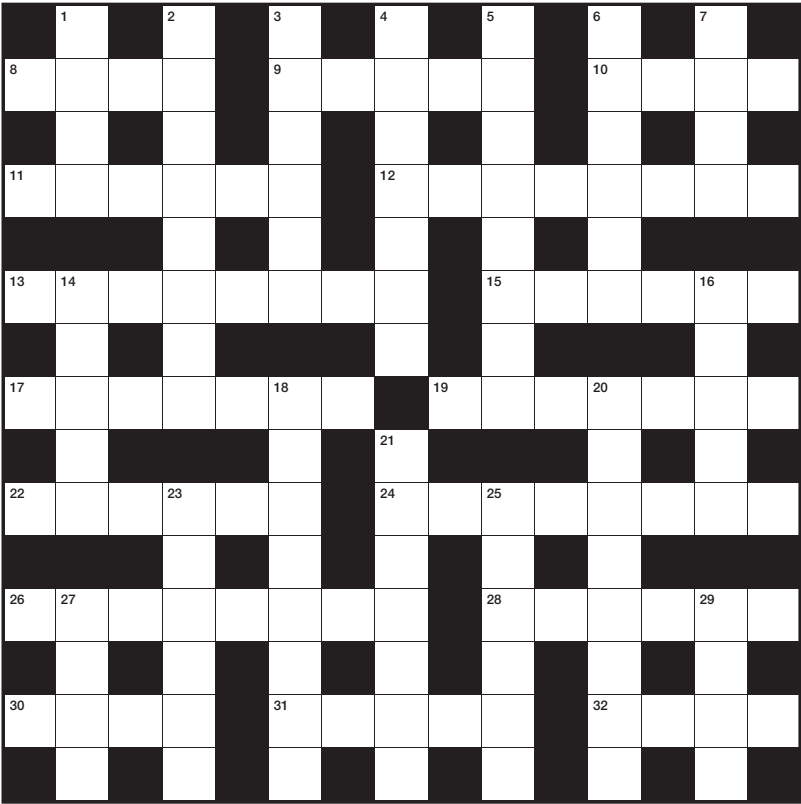
How do you prepare before a battle?

Every fencer has their own specific warm-up, accompanied by a tailored warm-up playlist. With mental disposition so crucial, a lot of competitors have their own pre-match superstition or a technique-based preparation. This can include eating the same special breakfast on the morning before an event, or wearing the same lucky boxers. I personally try to rid my mind of the predictable stream of thoughts which occur immediately prior to an encounter.

What would you say to any freshers who wish to try fencing?

I think the fact that you are battling yourself as much as the other man means the potential gains from the discipline are huge. The sport has something for everyone, if you’re very tactically minded you can train in such a way as to draw on this, and if you’re more physically inclined you can develop your style accordingly. We run beginner sessions, and anyone is welcome to come along.

Varsity Crossword



Across

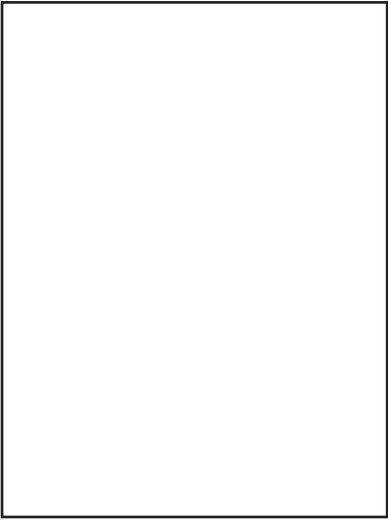
- 8 Vocalise missing part (4)
- 9 Alcohol I’ve included is green (5)
- 10 Originally, in days of lore, a hero (4)
- 11 Roadman gave gold coins to the poor (2,4)
- 12 Royal visit a revelation (8)
- 13 A mason begins re-building the unknown road with precious stone (8)
- 15 500 as her one of 26 (6)
- 17 New, smarter elbow-holder (7)
- 19 Reportedly full of animals, full of bees and full of books (7)
- 22 Dishevelled place enclosing Hindu leader used for worship (6)
- 24 Sure, bridging public relations is a shock (8)
- 26 We hear precipitation, darling, land on the roof (8)
- 28 Crack open fresh recipe (6)
- 30 University library sounds like a festival (4)
- 31 Sweet lavatory should end year (5)
- 32 Leotard without Greek character is lady’s equivalent (4)

Down

- 1 Present soldier with a newspaper (4)
- 2 Sparkling, hybrid, steel guitar no use (8)
- 3 Fellow: chief ass (6)
- 4 Eating area organised net diet (7)
- 5 Band in the German memorial (8)
- 6 Sparks slight mishap (6)
- 7 Shout of disapproval before mid-morning break (4)
- 14 My mid-afternoon run before the end of March has embalming properties (5)
- 16 Toymakers hidden in steel vessels (5)
- 18 Erroneous levy cons attribute of company concerning its debts (8)
- 20 Nag one insect and another (8)
- 21 Worn by strip-tease artists on a violin (1-6)
- 23 Takes a chance on the Cam (6)
- 25 Compensates and goes over the same ground ignoring inexperienced driver (6)
- 27 Assumed sheltered, Australian birds coming back (4)
- 29 Greetings sent home from epic, arduous trip (4)

Set by Phonic

Varsity scribble pad



Last week’s answers

ACROSS
1 Code, 3 Mini, 6 Cower, 10 Tut-tutted, 11 Largo, 12 Zambezi, 13 Surname, 14 Nile, 16 Ascend, 18 Tay, 21 Yen, 22 Occupy, 23 Tees, 25 Scholar, 27 Reserve, 29 Gloss, 30 Vitrified, 31 Somme, 32 Rose, 33 Sexy
DOWN
1 Citizenry, 2 Datum, 4 Intrinsic, 5 Indus, 6 Colorado, 7 Warrantee, 8 Rhone, 9 Julep, 15 Lunchroom, 17 Euphrates, 19 Yesterday, 20 Coalesce, 24 Astir, 25 Signs, 26 River, 27 Rhine



Twice an All-American college sportsman during his time at Berkeley, Asbun has packed a punch since he matriculated this year. Versatile, and capable of playing either at hooker or in the back row, Dark Blues skipper John-Henry Carter has identified Asbun as someone likely to be a major threat to the Light Blues.

Key Forward

DEREK ASBUN

Kellogg

Hooker

6'0"

97kg



VICTORIA CHOW

Key Back

TOM MITCHELL

Kellogg

Fly Half

5'10"

86kg



LAMAS

WHAT DO THE

VARSITY WINS	54
RETURNING BLUES	11
INTERNATIONALS	1
TALLEST MAN	6'8"
HEAVIEST MAN	120kg
BIGGEST WIN	(London Wasps A) 35 - 0
BIGGEST DEFEAT	(N Saints Wanderers) 0 - 68

Behind enemy lines...

Captain's Profile

John-Henry Carter or 'JC' to his friends, is at first glance, a giant neanderthal. The unruly beard and long flowing locks, however, belie an intelligent and thoughtful man.

Formerly of Premiership sides, Sale Sharks and Northampton Saints, Carter's professional career was ended by a series of crippling shoulder injuries. Having dabbled in modelling and business thereafter, Carter soon found the lure of rugby too strong and returned to play at Oxford.

Here though he talks not about his professional days with a wistful sense of longing, but of the fresh challenges ahead.

Given his docile demeanour and friendly manner it's hard to imagine the same person locking horns with England's finest. But this is a man who played alongside the best, amongst others the French colossus and former team-mate at Sale, Sébastien Chabal.

And it's obvious that his team-mates regard him with awe and respect. Carter's leadership and commitment to his team both on and off the field is unquestioned – unrivalled even – and it's clear that his focus on attitude over ability has been taken onboard.

Come December 8th, nobody in the Dark Blues will be underestimating Cambridge.

Talk us through Oxford's season so far. What have been the highlights?

This year we did a summer tour to Siberia which was obviously a fairly unusual place to go in preseason. Contrary to what you might think it wasn't actually that cold, and even though we narrowly lost both our games against Russian opposition, it was a fantastic tour. Certainly that was one of my highlights.

In terms of matches, I think we really came together properly as a team against Richmond. Everything began to gel and the team really progressed that night.

Who are the key new additions to the squad this year?

We've had a couple of American postgrads who've come in this year, who've done very well. In particular, our hooker Derek Asbun, who's got better and better every game.

There's also been an influx of undergraduate talent with players like Matt Janney and Sam Edgerton coming through in the backs.

How would you describe Oxford's style of play?

Very physical but certainly we have a lot of skilful players too.

Do you know anything about the Cambridge team or is it a case of just focusing on your own game?

We've looked at the Cambridge team and certainly there are some good players in there. Tom O'Toole at full back looks to be a real threat and we know they've got a very good tighthead too. Obviously though we can only focus on improving and playing our own game.

How many hours per week do you guys train together?

Probably about 10-15 hours including matches.

Do you still get nervous before big games?

The overbearing feeling is of excitement. I'm happy to say I've enjoyed this season more than most in my life.

How do you prepare the team before or during a match? Manic aggression or the silent approach?

You have to judge the situation. At half-time if I'm not happy with the way it's gone I'll say a few words. But equally sometimes I might not say anything.



MATT BLYTHE

Oxford Captain: John-Henry Carter

Age: 30	Position: No. 8
Height: 6'3"	Previous team: Sale Sharks
Weight: 107kg	OURFC honours: Blue (2009)



STATISTICS SAY?

61	VARSITY WINS
8	RETURNING BLUES
1	INTERNATIONALS
6'4"	TALLEST MAN
118kg	HEAVIEST MAN
53 - 10 (Coventry)	BIGGEST WIN
6 - 31 (UWIC)	BIGGEST DEFEAT



Key Forward

DAVE ALLEN
Pembroke
No. 8
6'1"
100kg

The stand-out back row of Michaelmas term, Allen has played all the roles of the no. 8 with aplomb: carries are made regularly across the gain-line, ferocious tackling is taken for granted, while the value of the Australian’s leadership in the pack – in a season of injuries and changing line-up – has been immeasurable.



Key Back

DON BLAKE
Hughes Hall
Scrum-half
5'11"
80kg

The second half of a crucial 8-9 axis, Blake has become an integral part of the set-up at Grange Road. Outstanding distribution is married to excellent defensive and tactical awareness. Sniping around the breakdown, Blake is an effective force going forward and his marshalling of the pack provides crucial direction.



Cambridge Captain: **Matthew Guinness-King**

Age: 31	Position: Centre
Height: 6'0"	Previous team: Canada
Weight: 97kg	CURUFC honours: Blue (2010)

...back on home turf

Captain’s Profile

Matt Guinness-King is a very different kettle of fish to his Oxford counterpart. Clean-cut and upright, he speaks with a thick Canadian drawl that makes him sound wise beyond his years.

Unlike Carter, he cut his teeth away from the professional scene in England and abroad in his native Canada, where he played on the college circuit and for his country at international level.

Famous for his work ethic and described as a ‘phenomenal athlete’, Guinness-King is one of the most focused individuals you will come across. That he is captain too is testament to his popularity and affability.

Indeed, amongst his inspirations he lists foremost Jonny Wilkinson, for his work ethic and drive. In many other ways they are similar too. Guinness-King has been plagued with injuries these last two seasons and spent most of this season working back towards fitness from a serious neck injury.

But his presence in the backline at Twickenham on December 8th will be a huge lift to the Light Blues. This is a man who has played for Canada in the Rugby World Cup and acquitted himself well against the might of the All Blacks. Good luck Oxford.

Talk us through Cambridge’s season so far. What have been the highlights?

In September we did a tour to Ireland where we played Trinity, Dublin. That was a fantastic tour and it’s always great to have all the guys in a different country. Everybody gets to know each other better and it’s just a great experience.

By November, the squad starts to solidify and the dust settles on the squad. Everybody gets more serious and the socials wind down in the run-up to the big day.

Who are the key new additions to the squad this year?

Our new no.8 Dave Allen, who played for Ulster for a couple of seasons, has been one of the cornerstones of the team.

He has a lot of experience and has shown real leadership in the team. I think he has a really positive impact on the rest of the squad.

How would you describe Cambridge’s style of play?

Last year we had a very flair backline. But I think this year we’ve moved more towards a more hard graft approach, building phases to punch holes in the opposition defence to

create space for the backs.

Do you know anything about the Oxford team or is it a case of just focusing on your own game?

We went up to Oxford to issue the challenge last week and so we watched their game against Major Stanley’s in the evening.

I think they’re a very big team and they’ve clearly got some very good players with the likes of John Carter who has real professional pedigree.

How many hours per week do you guys train together?

We train four times a week which are very short intense sessions. We also do weights twice a week as well and do a quick team-run before matches to keep the skills sharp.

Do you still get nervous before big games?

Absolutely, just as much as ever. Its what keeps us coming back.

How do you prepare the team before a match? Manic aggression or the silent approach?

You have to everyone stimulated and pumped up, but only up to a point.

SPORT

Battle of the Blues: the captains face-off

Varsity gives you all you need to know in the run up to the 130th Varsity match at Twickenham, p34-35



Blues storm Warwick

Tennis Blues brush aside Warwick to top the league standings into Christmas



On the run: Cameron Johnston (Christ's) chases down a lob en route to victory over the Warwick number one

CAMBRIDGE UNI. WARWICK

Cameron Johnston
TENNIS CORRESPONDENT

The Men's Tennis Blues beat Warwick University 8-4 in their last BUCS league match of 2011 to stay top of the Midlands 1a division over Christmas. Warwick travelled to Cambridge off the back of a draw against a strong Coventry side and a 12-0 thrashing of the University of Birmingham, so the Blues knew that they would need to be on their toes from the outset. In the opening doubles, Cameron Johnston and Charlie Cohen started strongly against a talented Warwick pair. They quickly found their range to overturn a 3-2 deficit and, whipping groundstrokes to their opponent's feet, they broke at 4-3 to take the first set.

8 The initiative back to Warwick. The momentum shifted towards the Midlands pair, who won four games on the bounce, and a solitary hold was not enough to rescue the set. In the deciding super tie-break, Johnston leaked a double fault at a crucial moment and the match slipped away. On the adjoining court, Jamie Muirhead and Sam Ashcroft combined well and both players relished the opportunity to cross at the net and skewer their opponents with incisive volleys. Muirhead's explosive backhand returns and Ashcroft's quiet determination allowed the Cambridge pair to raise their level at 4-4 in both sets, break, and serve out for victory. Two matches played then and there was still nothing to separate the two teams. Cambridge would have to win three of the four remaining singles to take the coveted Christmas number one spot. Johnston faced a former Oxford number one in Mark Baghdadi. Mindful of Cambridge stalwart Rutger-Jan Lange's warning that Baghdadi

feeds off pace, Johnston was careful not to attack with reckless abandon, but chose to roll his groundstrokes into his opponent's temperamental forehand. Baghdadi duly spewed errors and Johnston sliced his serves out wide to his opponent's forehand on the key points to record a routine 6-3 6-4 victory. Cypriot Constantine Markides struggled to impose himself at number Up 6-4 and the fate of the tie rested on the narrow shoulders of Fitzwilliam's Jamie Muirhead



match went to Sagar 6-2 6-2. Jersey's Charlie Cohen, sporting the hairstyle of an Argentinian football player, yanked his American opponent this way and that with his heavy, top-spin forehands and after maneuvering him out of position, finished many points off at the net with a simple angled volley or booming smash. He kept his concentration to take the match 7-5 7-5. Cambridge were now 6-4 up and the fate of the tie rested on the narrow shoulders of Fitzwilliam's Jamie Muirhead. At one set all, he quickly changed direction and rolled his ankle but, with no painkillers to hand, he had to grin and bear it. Some monstrous serves, line disputes and fist-pumps got the adrenaline flowing and Muirhead was suddenly flying. Break after break soon fell Muirhead's way and he served out to love at 5-2 in the final set to take the match and the tie. The Tennis Blues now greet the New Year at least three points ahead of the chasing pack.



Varsity goes fencing p29

RESULTS ROUND-UP	
RUGBY	
BLUES	17
STEELE-BODGER XV	14
FOOTBALL	
BLUES	4
BEDFORD II	2
HOCKEY	
BLUES	6
HAVERING	1
NETBALL	
BLUES	48
THE OTHER PLACE	29

