

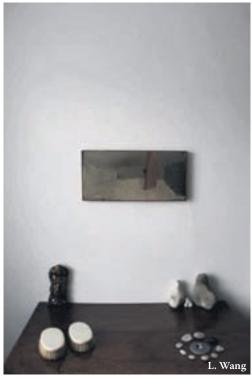
May Week 2012

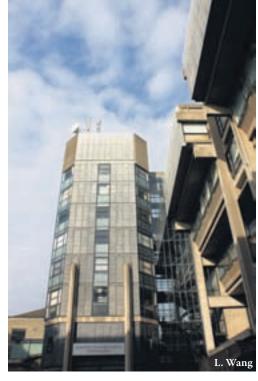


























VARSIJY Est. 1947



Editors Naomi Pallas & Claire Healy



FREEDOM...

May Week is the best week. After countless weeks of overdue book fines, Boots meal deals, library power naps and crying yourself to sleep, the end is nigh. Hasta la vista, Hermes! I'll be seeing ya, 9 am supervisions! With youthful vigour in our step and Berocca in our Pimms, we rise triumphant from the ashes of exams past in order to face a brave new world. A world in which, in the immortal words of Yomanda, you're free (to do what you want to do).

But the joys of May Week don't really lie in everything there is to do - garden parties, punt parties, 'in da club' parties. Rather, the real power of May Week lies in the feeling of having nothing that you have to do. Waking up not to a feeling of impending doom, but instead of having no responsibilities to anyone or anything – for the Cambridge student, this is where true happiness lies.

With no responsibilities comes great promise, however. There is a sense of 'anything goes' to May Week proceedings that doesn't come close to any other week of the year. Presuming that you will remember your May Ball experience ('Getting your money's worth' is a mantra for the self-destructive alone), it can be the most unexpected moments that you will come to treasure. For me, it is the image of my sleeping friend slumped on her front doorstep at 7am, phone still in hand, legs akimbo and mouth open as if to say: 'More drink please!' For a certain John Davies, recalling his May Ball experience in the 50s, it is his date that stands out:

'Unfortunately she had bad breath and didn't speak a word of English, so halfway through the evening I sold her to a drunken Norwegian for two guineas.'

Expecting the unexpected, it seems, is the best approach to the best week of your life (so far).

For many, it is the walk back to respective colleges after a May Ball that forms the fondest of memories. Walking (or being carried) through Cambridge at dawn is the kind of thing we will tell our exasperated grandchildren about. But enough of the sentimentalism. In this magazine we hope to combine something of the haziness and happiness that May Week is all about. With Prom queen photoshoots, shiny indie pop interviews and rebel rebel May Ball break-ins, this is the little book to reflect the very thing that makes May Week so great: that we're all just busy doing nothing.



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Blast off!
Robinson May Ball by Thurstan Redding

Ball Breakers

Whether it's for the thrill of the adventure, to defy elitism or simply because you're lacking in cash: crashing a May Ball may be this week's perfect solution. *Isabella Cookson* hears a few anonymous tales from those party gate-crashers.

Hot Off the Press!

Just back from Robinson. My fellow crashers tried a route squeezing over a gate which worked last year for a party of four. They got rumbled on the first attempt, but managed it a second time by sprinting down the narrow corridors from the security who saw them bundle in. About 10 mins later I approached the same route only to find 2 security staff screwing in a makeshift wooden barrier blocking our carefully chosen route in.

With an earpiece in (£3 ebay!) I look at the men working at the blockade and ask the overseeing skin head, 'Have you sorted this yet?' His eyes fall to my walkie talkie (taken from John's last year) and he says, 'Don't worry, we're sealing it up now.' We walk up the ramp towards the plodge discussing the potential weak spots in Robinson security. I state my concern over the gate passage and describe a fictional route by the bins over the wall on Adams road which is 'crawling with crashers'. He assures me that all his men will guard the route until it's blocked and he'll take a look at the other potentially troublesome spot on his next sweep around.

We reach the top of the ramp where a hench security guy is standing chewing gum mechanically. A manly three way nod of collusion is enough to convey my status as one of the team and I walk past the main guy and then by the set of porters at the plodge straight into the ball - dead walkie talkie clutched firmly in

hand. *Jesus undergraduate*

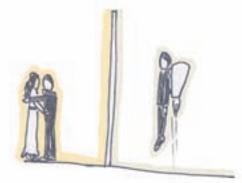


Security companies normally catch people trying to break into May Balls. Last year I saw that they can be quite creative when pre-empting unimaginative students, and probably have fun doing it.

Whilst innocently ambling around the perimeter of King's College, I happened to witness a break-in attempt at the end of Queen's Lane. There was a wide-open window into a room with the lights switched on. It was reachable from a fairly low wall, which helpfully had a bin pushed up against it.

It was the lazy trespasser's dream. It could only have been more enticing if an open bottle of wine was on the window-sill. Unsurprisingly, there was a group debating who would go up first. After little deliberation, the drunkest member of the team climbed effortlessly into the well-lit room. He was promptly ejected from a ground-floor door. It was so fast the security guard must've been waiting for him, and I'm sure he found it delightful to outwit an inebriated Cambridge undergraduate.

Catz undergraduate



The Thrill of Adventure

I've got into Christ's once and Pembroke twice. Pembroke was my first one after a Tit Hall June event a few years ago. It was originally a mad drunken idea spawned on the walk home at 3am, but somehow I managed to get into the worker's room to find it was empty... except for a committee member asleep in an armchair. After tiptoeing past I walked through and out into the ball. The rush of adrenaline when I broke the perimeter and walked out into the party was incredible. That buzz was much better than the few drinks that followed. The other two break-ins were much more maverick affairs that involved scaling walls in the dead of night - neither did my black-tie any good - but the adrenaline kicked in all the same. Peterhouse Post-Graduate

HELEN CAHILL ON How not to break in

Thinking of breaking in? Take these pearls of wisdom with you.

- Hitting the pub after a failed first attempt is understandable, but don't try again after that. Drink is great for drowning sorrows, but won't improve your chances.
- Running directly at the front gate of a College is an extremely poor strategy. You are not a bull-dozer, so don't try to be.
 - If you're in a boiler room, something has gone wrong.
- Don't bother forging a wristband. Your name will need to be on a list too - going to that kind of effort to be thwarted by administrative technicalities is embarrassing.
- When making plans, think about the enjoyment you'll gain for your efforts. Digging under walls is not a valuable use of time on May Week.
- If people swear they got into John's dressed as clowns last year it's because they were high.
- Any method that may ruin clothes should be used for King's Affair, not Magdalene.
- The laws of physics still apply after exams; if you jump from great heights you are likely to break something.
- Only fight security personnel if you have a Kevlar vest and the relevant training. It may also be wise to appreciate that there are safer ways to distract them.



8 May







Are you tired? Are you reading this at 6 a.m? Has *Varsity* been forced upon you by over- eager journalists that see this as the beginning of the day rather than the end of the night? Do your feet feel like you've been serving as a foot-soldier? Are you shivering in the dewy dawn cool, thermal vest foolishly abandoned in favour of beaded chiffon? Are these words dancing dreamily in front of your eyes, like couples slow dancing to Enrique Inglesias? Do you, thrust out from whatever fairyland where you have for a surprisingly long amount of hours existed, feel a rising sense of nausea and like you might fall over? BUT. ISN'T. IT. JUST. FANTASTIC?

Cambridge transforms itself from the nightmare of exam term to the dream land of May Week as suddenly and, apparently, seamlessly as a blink of an eye (I am not, admittedly, on any ball committees...). Our previous exhaustion undergoes a similar transformation. We will *not* leave the UL at 10 p.m, over-caffeinated and

over-wrought, but may instead shimmy past it, dizzy with a new excess and en route to garden party, lido swim, et cetera. With this new exhaustion comes the need for new forms of sustenance

Replace your double shot black coffee with a double shot mango lime daquiri. These became a bastion of Cambridge fun with the discovery of Giraffe's happy hour, which offers half price cocktails from six till seven, and seems to appeal to neither student nor supervisor, leaving you and your chosen "bar buddy" in peace with a glassful of slushy heaven. This week is, of course, happy week, when every hour merits cocktails, so follow

L. Wynn

this recipe in the comfort of your own kitchen. That I couldn't stretch it to more than two bullet points shows its essential difference from dreaded revision To Do lists:

- Put 2 chopped ripe mangoes, 2 cups of ice cubes, a cup of rum, the juice of one lime and sugar to taste in a blender.
 - Pour into glasses and slurp away.

Make every breakfast fit for a queen. Actually, make every breakfast *more* than fit for *our* Queen, who apparently enjoys cornflakes served in Tupperware containers every morning. Gerrr-immmm. This week, banish such bleakness; even those in colleges without kitchens ought to feast on kettle-poached eggs:

- Crackaneggintoacup
- Put a full kettle on to boil
- When the water starts to boil, swirl it with a long spoon to make a sort of whirlpool
- Pour the egg yolk and white into the center of this miniature whirlpool
- Wait for two minutes, and then scoop out your perfectly poached egg

Allow your egg to shamelessly flit between culinary partners - smoked salmon, spinach, and Marmite are all equally seductive - but stay true to one loyal carbohydrate boyfriend: the toasted English muffin. Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* gives us heroes adamant that one "can't eat muffins in an agitated manner" for fear of butter-stained cuffs. This combination of unwieldy costume, lavish quantities of butter and compulsory relaxation makes for the perfect hangover cure.

hangover cure. 'Alternatively, ditch Wilde and tail coats, Byron and balls, and Cambridge's many May Week cliches, and order a take away from *Cocum* (71 Castle Street). Carrying its delicious Keralan curries and plenty of popadums, make your way on a (fingers crossed) sunny evening to the opposite Castle Mound. Having been home to a castle older than the university, provided bricks to build Emmanuel and Magdalene colleges, played host to an odd octagonal prison, it now offers no more than the best views of the city's soaring spires, and the perfect picnic position. Watch as Kings' looming Chapel turns into a temporary disco, and fireworks burst out from college after college: out from this town of frequent greyness and rain, of awe-inspiring productivity, and of impressive history, fireworks blazing in May Week's gloriously pointless, momentary beauty.





15 For the uninitiated, how about introducing Theme Park and what you guys are about?

Hello uninitiated. Theme Park are me and my brother Marcus, and our friend from primary school, Oscar. And live we're joined by Ric on bass and Phil on drums. Hopefully we're making groovy pop tunes people want to dance to. Or party to.

Our issue is all about summertime freedom (beauty, truth, love)...what are Theme Park most looking forward to this Summer?

Summer festivals! Most exciting of all will be Ibiza Rocks! And then just hanging out in the sun, hopefully some swimming on Hampstead Heath.

35 Was there a favourite band or artist as you were growing up that would now be cringe to reveal your love of?

I was a huge Oasis fan, they were my favourite band. The first band I was a fan of I think. But I'm not really sure that's really that cringe! Also Black Sabbath. I remember when we started buying CDs brother M bought Sisquo, Enter the Dragon, and Daniel Bedingfield, Gotta Get Thru This. To be honest I think it'd be quite hard to find something that'd make me cringe.

Cambridge students are pretty culturally deprived over exam term. Presuming that Theme Park is the first band they should listen to, what's the first TV show and film?

Well it's not really a secret, so forgive me if everyone's watched it already, but Game of Thrones! Wow. An exceptional TV show. I've just finished watching it through for the second time, amazing. Film...Hmm. It's not really a film, it's a documentary, but I watched this one called Hoop Dreams the other day. It was about two chaps at school from Chicago who want to be basketball players, following them for 5 years. It went straight into my top ten. Just amazingly touching and emotional.

53 Did you ever play Theme Park? If not, video game of choice?

Nope. Actually once, I played Rollercoaster Tycoon. As a youngster I'd say my favourite games were Caesar 3 and Championship Manager. And then GTA!

65 In the spirit of Summer 2k12!!1!, tell us your best festival experience ever.

My favourite festival was Benicassim. I'd never been on holiday to a hot country, so that was a real revelation for me, a proper beach. Plus it was very easy to be hygienic, as the showers were on the beach, so you could just wash in the open air, which made a real difference.

Have you had any screaming girl fans yet or are they mostly hipster?

Luckily more screaming girls than hipsters! Oscar gets the most crazy girl fans. He got this text recently from someone, just being like "hey", and he was like who is this, and they were like "not telling, hello oscar", and this went on for a while. Anyway it turned out somehow a crazy Oscar fan had got his number from somewhere.

You've been pretty hyped by the blogs over the last 12 months, but probably out-hyped by Grimes. Grimes: hot or not?

I'm unsure whether by hot you mean good at music or sexy! Oscar has a crush on her.

93 One Direction: Hot or not?

They seem fun so hot!

On a more serious (!) note, what's next for the band?

We've just finished the album, it's just being mixed. It's out at the end of the summer, so then it's just gigs gigs I guess! Lots of festivals over the summer then a really exciting support tour in the autumn!

WWW.THEMEPARKBAND.COM

Behind the Buddhas of Bamiyan: The other side of Afghanistan Isabella Cookson spoke to the independent documentary In March 2001 the independent documentary

In March 2001 the world stood in shock as the Taliban destroyed the 2,000 year- old Buddhas of Bamiyan. Award winning documentary maker Phil Grabsky tells a different story.

Living in the caves surrounding the Buddhas lives 8-year-old Mir and his family. Grabsky's unique documentary "The Boy Mir" tracks the life of an ordinary Afghan boy over ten years: there are no patronising voiceovers, no special effects and the family speak straight to the

The project began in 2002, when Grabsky arrived in Afghanistan intent on finding out about the people behind the news coverage that so often focuses on the military attacks. "Mir, in a funny sort of way, found me. He saw me filming on my first day in Bamiyan and leant into the camera. I thought I would be making a film about an adult male but actually in Afghanistan in 2002 the men were exhausted, depressed, broke, without work, without hope and therefore there was no story to drive this along.

There is certainly a beautiful contrast in the films between the cheeky smile of the young boy and the cynical depression of his relatives who have seen better days.

"His brother's narrative doesn't change over the ten years, so the film would not have been as interesting had it followed an older person. Instead, we watch Mir grow from 8-18 and watch him physically change too. At 17 he looks like most 27 year olds, he has aged a lot. If Mir gets to 45 in that culture, he'll be lucky. There were many adventures to be played out, I had no idea that he would end up working down a mine, ploughing fields and so forth. It was scary and exciting because I didn't know how the story would work

With his co-director, Shoaib Sharifi, a film-maker and Afghan national, Grabsky committed to going to Afghanistan each year for almost a decade. I wonder what it was like to film and live there during one of the most turbulent times in its history.

"I personally found it scary. In a funny way, it's not as scary when you are there as it is building up to it: deciding when it's safer to go. I have two small children and I am putting myself at risk. I must say, there are journalists who are doing this all the time. As a filmmaker I only have to spend a few weeks of the year in Afghanistan, nothing compared to someone who goes to Libya, stays there for months on end and is actively looking for those hotspots. That said, there is a difference between perceived risk and actual risk. The perceived risk of Afghanistan is very clear: you could be kidnapped, you could be captured by the Taliban and beheaded on film; this is the perceived risk that has some basis of truth. The actual risk is very hard to judge. More people die in Britain from bad driving than from terrorism. So you have to think realistically. Afghanistan is a wonderful country, full of interesting people and great food. They are very hospitable, but there are security issues you must take very seriously.

Grabsky did experience some very near scrapes with the Taliban, "One time we made the mistake of driving at night back to Kabul in 2003. We ran into a Taliban roadblock and I did not want to be there, my thoughts were immediately back at home with my family. But I mean, Afghans are dealing with this every single day, I was flying back to London immediately and leaving it all behind."

In a documentary the question of how "real" the film is is an inevitable one: something that Phil himself was very self-conscious of. "Everything is a choice: you have to be careful about arguing for the reality of the situation. When I'm there, it's my choice which direction I am pointing the camera, how I'm behaving off screen is affecting the characters, right down to the editing, the music, and in the case of Mir, the translation. All these things are creative or editorial choices. It boils down to the Grierson definition of documentary films that they are definition of documentary films that they are "the creative treatment of actuality". Before you do anything you have to have a sense of what it is that you're trying to achieve. Too often documentary filmmakers rely on access: I've got access to an aircraft carrier or to a hospital

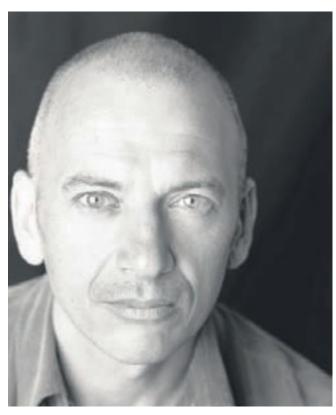
or something. That isn't enough - what is it that you're trying to achieve with that access?

Grabsky describes the film as "the most important film I have made", referring throughout the interview to our cultural need to probe deeper into issues often casually referred to in the media. "We as a society have now invested \$900 billion in the war in Afghanistan. Many people have given life and limb in Afghanistan and for us in a way. How can you not be interested to know who the Afghan people are that this fighting is happening around and for? We unfortunately live in a culture of non-thinking, lots of people drift through life without really thinking about things and aren't that interested in Afghanistan. Personally, I can't imagine why you wouldn't be interested and if you are interested in Afghanistan then you must be interested in the Afghan people."

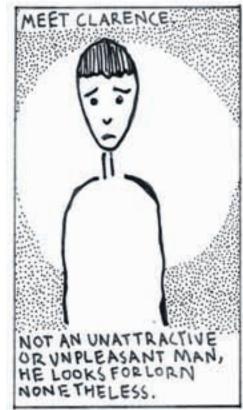
The uncertainty surrounding the continued presence of British and American troops in Afghanistan has been a cause of political polemic. The current opinion seems to favour withdrawal. "When people say, "Oh we've just got to get out of there, why do we care about the Afghan people? We just need to get the troops out" it's a selfish and naïve position, it's much more complicated than that. You need to understand the situation before you can come to a decision on it. I watch Question Time, and I watch people talk about Afghanistan and they haven't a clue.

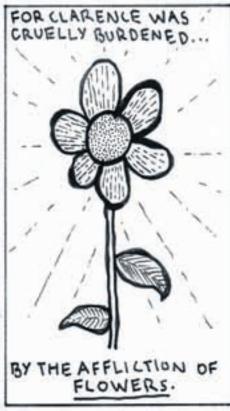
"We are not persecuted here because we are of a particular religion or sex, we don't think about it. But in Afghanistan being Shia or Hazara puts you at risk and there is nothing ignoble about us wanting to help Afghans live better lives. Much more importantly, we need to ask what is the best way to help? The answer, in my opinion, is less focus on military and more focus on aid, more long term planning and less short term running around mountain ranges." around mountain ranges."

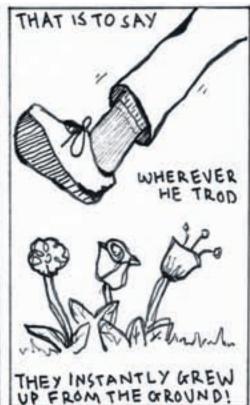
Phil Grabsky is an independent filmmaker and director of Seventh-art; find our more about his work at www.seventh-art.com



















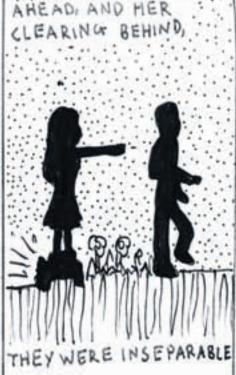


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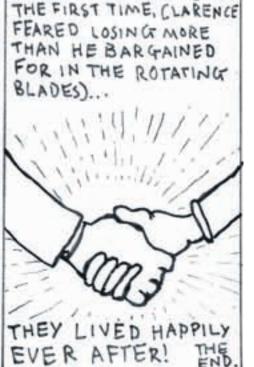
WHEN. MAKING LOVE FOR







WITH HIM WALKING



Week 2012 When we found the cocktail anthology So Red in the Nose (or, Breath in the Afternoon) we couldn't resist pouring some of the literary themed concoctions into our May Week schedule. From a Hemingway Suicide Sunday, to final Scully Saturday, these delicious cocktails are just waiting to be tipple-tasted!

SUICIDE SUNDAY

With Suicide Sunday's garden parties galore, Death in the Afternoon is an inevitable after-effect.

Lust for Life

Ernest Hemingway's

1 oz Absinthe Champagne



"Pour one jigger absinthe into a Champagne glass. Add iced Champagne until it attains the proper opalescent milkiness. Drink three to five of these slowly."

MONDAY

On Monday, you're just a modern guy and your *Lust for Life* is in rude health!

Irving Stone's

1 1/2 oz Galliano liqueur 1 oz fresh orange juice 1/2 oz Marie Brizard peach liqueur

Shake all ingredients with ice and strain into a chilled cocktail glass. Dust with nutmeg, and serve.

TUESDAY

On Tuesday, the Balls are in full swing and it's time to seek Asylum in the lap of luxury.

Asylum

William Seabrook's

1 dash grenadine

1 oz Pernod 1 oz London dry gin

Pour slowly, in this order - grenadine, Pernod, gin - into an Old-Fashionedglass. Add 2 or 3 ice cubes; serve with stirring rod.

WEDNESDAY

On Wednesday's June Events, fancy dress and plentiful bevs will mean you're Laughing, Boy!



1/2 tsp sugar

1 dash Angostura bitters 1/2 oz sweet vermouth

2 oz New England rum

Dissolve sugar in bitters and vermouth. Add rum, fill rocks glass with ice. Add lemon wedge and orange slice, and serve.

THURSDAY

On Thursday the final outings to Lola Los and Life will see students turn into boozed up *Barbarians*.

The Barbarians

Laughing Boy

Virginia Faulkner's

3/4 oz Bourbon 1/4 oz White Mint Plenty of Ice

"Pour into a cocktail shaker and shake as though you were a terrier with a dead rat"

FRIDAY

On Friday events take their toll: only While Rome Burns suffices for such an epic rise and fall.

Alexander Woollcott's

1 3/4 oz New England rum 1/2 oz fresh lemon juice

Shake in iced cocktail shaker & strain.

SATURDAY

On Saturday you can rest your weary head – the only Fun to be had is In Bed.

Frank Scully's

 $1~1/4~{\rm oz}$ grape juice 1 1/4 oz Bourbon whiskey

Shake in iced cocktail shaker & strain into cocktail glass.







EXTRACTS TAKEN FROM SO RED IN THE NOSE BY STERLING NORTH AND CARL KROCH

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GALU

Fun In Bed

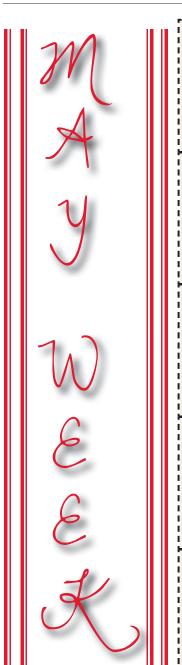


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