

VARSITY

From Mike Leigh to Peter Pan

Varsity walks you through British cinema - and ends up in Neverland

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GU president sacked after dramatic vote

Graduate Union saga comes to a close as ousted president Tharakan blames lack of support for failures

Amy Goodwin

RIBU THARAKAN was sacked as Graduate Union president last night. In a notably acrimonious debate, MCR presidents and graduate faculty representatives voted 23-6 in favour of a motion of no confidence proposed by members of the GU Executive. In an emotionally fraught plea to the council, Tharakan accused the Exec of reneging on their responsibility of supporting him in his role as president. He told *Varsity*: 'I have come to work here without a functioning Executive or support staff. I have tried to work for the students, but without these important people I have been unsuccessful'.

The debate was disrupted when Tharakan broke down. It was proposed that the council should adjourn the meeting after it became clear that Tharakan was unable to continue a coherent defence of his four months in the post. However, the substantial body of GU members who had gathered for the vote decided to resume proceedings, as it was felt that the GU would be neglecting the University's graduate community if it failed to immediately resolve the situation.

David Riley, who proposed the motion, declared that the currently 'farical' state of affairs made it clear to all that Tharakan's presidency was 'not salvageable'. The GU has been in a state of escalating crisis since the beginning of the academic year, with many services inoperative, numerous key resignations and accusations of financial mismanagement.

Tharakan has been held personally to blame for many of the setbacks that have impeded the Union's recent operations and damaged its image in the eyes of the graduate community, although he claimed last night that 'not one of the problems was the direct result of my actions'. Foremost amongst the issues discussed was the Union's virtual invisibility during Freshers' Week. Handbooks for new graduate students were not distributed until two weeks after the last had arrived, and the GU had no pres-



Fiona Symington

Tharakan making his case last night

ence at either the Freshers' Fair or the CUSU Societies Fair. The union-run shop was closed due to staff shortages throughout this period.

The Union has been plagued by internal disputes, allegedly stemming from Tharakan's leadership. He has been accused of large-scale mismanagement, organisational apathy and a lack of vision for the union, in contrast to the ambitious initiatives outlined in his manifesto. Relations with both MCRs and the University have deteriorated due to a lack of communication and actions conflicting directly with those mandated. Recent resignations from the Executive, including that of former president Sarah Airey who was co-opted onto the committee to ease the transfer,

have confirmed the general sense of frustration and disappointment. For many of those involved in the GU, Tharakan's absence during the crucial hand-over stage in July foreshadowed all subsequent problems.

The highly personalised and fractious battle that marred the last weeks of Tharakan's tenure resulted in David Riley being obliged to state he would not himself run for president 'should the job become vacant'. In addition to his mistrust of what he calls the 'old guard' of the GU, Tharakan pointed out that he had held the post for only four months and had not had time either to sufficiently familiarise himself with the organisation or implement changes. All of the main speakers emphasised their recognition that the job of president was, in the words of last year's president Sarah Airey, 'too much for one person'. They concurred with CUSU president Wes Streeting, chairing the meeting, who said that the GU's problems were 'historic and deep-rooted'.

Riley admitted in his rebuttal that 'things were unarguably bad last year', but stated that the situation had begun to improve during Sarah Airey's tenure. He then claimed that all of this progress had been 'stalled' over the summer as a result of Tharakan's inaction. At this stage Tharakan apologised to the GU both for the 'commotion' that he had caused earlier in the evening and for the initial mistakes that he had made as president.

The latter part of the debate focused on the future of the GU. It was agreed that whatever the outcome of the vote, its role and structure need to be radically rethought if it is to succeed in its aim of meeting the specific needs of graduate students within the University. The meeting ended with the passing of a motion which invested the vice president, Rhiannon Mohammed, with the authority to organise elections and pledged to reassess the situation in ten days' time.

-Editorial: Page 11

Architects still working



Albert Mockel-von-dem-Bausche

Amol Rajan

CUSU, UNDERGRADUATES and staff at all levels within the Department of Architecture have urged the University to continue to fund the department for the next three years, claiming that there is no serious cause for concern over its future.

Professor Alan Short has stepped down from his post as the head of the Department, and, pending ratification by University authorities, will be replaced by Professor Marcial Echenique, a veteran with over 30 years experience in Cambridge. ArcSoc called an open meeting with Short last Friday evening, which was open to all students and staff, at which he announced his departure.

A joint email sent earlier that day by him and Echenique said that the Department was "entering a period of intense negotiation and strategic planning", and that Echenique would "lead these discussions". Echenique's appointment has been widely welcomed by students and staff, who feel that his experience of University management, including a term of office on the General

Board of the University, make him a suitable replacement for Short.

In a public statement on Wednesday morning by Professor Andrew Cliff, Pro-Vice Chancellor for Personnel, it emerged that academic but not financial problems within the department could lead to its closure. The statement noted that the General Board felt "insufficient progress" had been made in improving research standards, and that "closure of the Department and redeployment of the staff to other allied Departments would be justified."

Support for the Department has been forthcoming. CUSU is to launch a campaign to avert the department's closure. After tabling an emergency motion, it has resolved to aid student representatives on the General Board and University Council in "opposing any moves by the University to close the Architecture Department". Other senior figures within the University have also offered their support. A final decision will be made on December 8th as to whether or not the proposals be taken to Regent House.

- Architecture's impact in Cambridge: Page 6

Tiddlywinks tournament at Queen's



All art Mockel von dem Bussche-Ippenburger

LAST WEEKEND Queen's College hosted the premier event of the Tiddlywinks calendar, the World Singles Tournament. Andy Purvis, enthusiast of the "noble art" for nearly twenty years, has claimed the title of World Tiddlywinks Champion from his American rival, Larry Kahn.

Purvis beat the defending champion, winning with a score of 30 and a third to 11 and two thirds and played a high risk game strategy; all guns blazing, he attempts to tiddle all his winks into the pot as fast as he can. His attack is relentless; he takes no prisoners. Kahn plays a safer, more conservative game by trying to cover-up his opponent's winks so that they are out of play. These diverse tactics made for an exciting match, and the crowd fell silent in awe of the competitors' intense concentration. However, neither Kahn's dedi-

cation to two-hour daily practices nor his personalised squidgers were of any use once up against the UCL lecturer's exceptional combination of manual dexterity and mental strategy.

Purvis was unstoppable last weekend, going on to win the National Singles Tournament also held at Queen's.

Purvis feels indebted to Cambridge where he learnt the game as an undergraduate, and indeed, where students invented the modern version in 1955. The demographic of the thriving CU Tiddlywinks Club shows it to be a sport which transcends all boundaries, as undergrads, fellows, and the local population gather alike to practice their skills and tactics on infinitely squared boards.

The Varsity tiddlywinks match will take place in March.

Kay Drage

Student attacked for £15

Chine Mbubaegbu

THE ISSUE of student safety has been highlighted again as a student found himself the victim of a vicious attack in which he was robbed for just £15.

Kristian Coates-Ulrichsen, who is studying for a PhD in history at Pembroke College, was on his way from a formal to the college's graduate accommodation in Grantchester Meadows on Thursday when the incident occurred. He described how he was followed along the towpath near the Mill Lane area by two young men who subsequently struck him from behind and began to assault him. Both men kicked and punched Ulrichsen, demanding that he give them his wallet. They continued to assault Mr. Coates-Ulrichsen even after he threw his wallet to them. The PhD student told of his ordeal and explained that after punching and kicking him in a "frenzied attack," the two men pushed him into the river before running away towards the Fen Causeway. He then pulled himself out of the river and returned to Pembroke in order to raise the alarm. The police arrived at the scene within ten minutes, cordoning off the area and sending in dog handlers in order to try and catch the attackers.

This incident is the latest in a series of attacks on students in the Mill Lane area this month. The earlier assaults took place at the beginning of the month. In two separate incidents, male students were attacked by a group of men whilst walking along Mill Lane.

Cambridge Police have issued a

warning to students urging them to be vigilant whilst in the city at night. Sergeant Jonathan Hutchinson, head of the newly formed robbery squad said: "I am giving people practical advice on how to try to reduce the risk of them becoming a victim of a street robbery. Most commonly this type of crime is committed by opportunistic thieves, so I am urging people to, as much as possible, take that opportunity away."

Kristian Coates-Ulrichsen, who suffered cuts and bruising to the face and ribs, said that he is lucky the men did not have knives. He emphasised the importance, however, of the University doing better to protect its students. He told *Varsity*: "The University and colleges could make it safer for students who live in college accommodation to commute into and out of Cambridge, particularly during the winter when the roads and paths that lead to many of the college accommodation houses in places like Newnham, Grantchester Meadows or Grange Road are very quiet and dark at nights... If colleges are going to offer accommodation to students out there, they ought to consider the safety issues involved."

Nick Champion of the University Press Office explained that the University does not have a formal plan in place for preventing student crime because, in recent memory, no such incidents have been reported to have taken place on actual University property. He stressed, however, that the colleges themselves do provide

services to students, such as alarms or taxi services, in order to protect them from such vicious attacks.

CUSU's Welfare Officer Richard Reid said "Obviously we're very concerned by these attacks, as we want our students to be safe. It can be difficult for colleges to ensure the safety of students when they are outside the college area, but obviously we would encourage colleges to do what they can."

Having formerly been a student at UCL in London, Coates-Ulrichsen highlighted the differences between the two cities. Although people may see Cambridge as a small University town, it does not necessarily mean that it is a safer place. London students are more vigilant, and since the capital is more populated, there are always people around. Coates-Ulrichsen added: "Because of the high concentration of pubs and bars in Cambridge, and the open spaces, there is a lot of potential for trouble." He also raised the issue of the poor lighting around Cambridge. This is an issue that the PhD student feels very strongly about.

Reid said that, as part of CUSU's campaign to improve lighting around Cambridge, it will be running a one-off event called "Light Up Parkers Piece" on November 19th. He said "We would like as many students to come along and take part in a candlelight protest, as well as bringing along as much light as possible."

Protestors in Cambridge back fox hunting 'compromise'



Lucy Phillips

Pro-hunt demonstrators stand outside the new crown court last Friday chanting "No ban" as Lord Falconer arrived for the official opening; the Bill is currently in The House of Lords

Lucy Phillips

OVER 200 people attended a pro-hunt demonstration outside the new Cambridge Crown Courts when they were officially opened by Lord Falconer on Friday.

Lord Falconer, a former undergraduate at Queen's and now the Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs, had originally backed a total ban on fox hunting. However, earlier this week he became one of 58 Labour peers to vote in favour of a 'compromise' to regulate hunting under a licensing scheme.

The police praised protestors for a peaceful demonstration. Liz Mort, of the Countryside Alliance, said, "People here in Cambridgeshire will not accept a ban on hunting. It is corrupt politics. Our protests are always peaceful."

Peter O'Connor, Spokesman for the department of Constitutional Affairs, described the protest as "democratic and peaceful" and "non-aggressive but

quite vocal". He explained that after the official ceremony Lord Falconer met four delegates from the demonstration and "has brought back their concerns to Westminster."

He added, "The matter is not down to Lord Falconer or to Alun Michael [Minister of Rural Affairs], it's down to Parliament - for the Lords to scrutinize and the Commons to vote."

Sarah Booth, a first-year Land Economist at Newnham and a member of the Trinity Foot and South Herts Beagles, was among a group of University students who attended the protest. She said, "Hunting is a natural thing in natural environment. It's in the dog's instinct and the best way to control foxes. Hunting ensures that only the weak are culled, around 90% of healthy ones survive. Hounds kill the animals quickly, whereas a gun shot fox could take up to 2 weeks to die."

Matthew Higgs, Master of TFSHB, told *Varsity*, "Hare coursing, stag and fox

hunting have a valuable role in management of the countryside. It has worked for hundreds of years".

"We are not afraid of being licensed and if they do not think that we can police ourselves effectively it would be better than an outright ban."

Mr Higgs, who has been hunting all his life, noted that at this year's University fresher's fair there was more interest than ever to join the club and that nobody had expressed any animosity towards them. "Several people said that they did not like it but that we ought to be allowed to carry on."

Twink Allen, CU Professor of Equine Reproduction and chairman of the Veterinary Association for Wildlife Management, in a recent meeting at the House of Lords, explained, "The vital contribution that hunting makes towards wildlife management is through its search and dispatch function whereby the weak, the sick and the injured are discovered and humanely dispatched in

direct relation to their degree of debility. No other method of culling performs this function, and, were hunting to be banned, the welfare implications for all hunted species would be profound."

"In our man made countryside, control of an over-successful species is best achieved by a combination of legal methods undertaken by farmers, gamekeepers, landowners, naturalists and huntsmen, with their divergent interests using the appropriate methods of control for their particular circumstance."

Aubrey de Grey of the University Department of Genetics said, "I'm certainly strongly against fox hunting: I regard it as barbaric. So I think MPs have the right to ban it, like anything else barbaric. But this is a purely personal emotion, not at all based on anything scientific; it's not a matter of whether the fox feels pain or anything like that, it's purely the nature of the activity itself and its effect on the humans involved."

The Hunting Bill is currently being

discussed in the House of Lords. On Tuesday they voted, by a majority of 250, to amend the Hunting Bill so that a ban would be replaced with a 'compromise' licensing scheme. The amendment hopes to recreate the Government's original proposals for strict regulation of hunting instead of a ban.

However, the Government is still likely to use the Parliament Act if it cannot break the division between the Commons and the Lords. Pro-hunt MPs insist that they will not compromise on a ban.

Despite events in the House of Lords pro-hunt demonstrators hit the national news again on Wednesday. Commons leader Peter Hain was pelted with eggs and his aide punched during a protest at Oxford University. Mr Hain condemned the incident as "violence and thuggery". Two people were arrested.

On the same day a fox was let loose in the Houses of Parliament but it is not yet known if it was part of a protest stunt.

MP U-Turn?

Sarah Marsh

LABOUR MP Anne Campbell faced harsh criticism last week for endorsing the deployment of British troops to a US-controlled region of Iraq.

Campbell's "U-turn" on Iraq exacerbated the growing disillusion with her wavering policies. Mark Gettleton, Chair of the Cambridge Student Liberal Democrats, argued: "Anne Campbell declared 'no tuition fees here' and then voted for them, then opposed variable top-up fees and subsequently voted for them – and we're now meant to trust her and Tony Blair on Iraq?"

Campbell, however, defended herself: "I voted against the war and even resigned a governmental post in order to do so. But now we are involved, I believe we have a certain responsibility, in particular to make sure that elections are safely held in January."

She tackled defence secretary Geoff Hoon in the House of Commons and met with the Prime Minister to express her doubts. "I was assured that that this was a military decision rather than a political one. The Black Watch is needed to fill in behind US marines when they go in to secure the rebellious city of Falluja, and is one of the few regiments out there that could do the job."

Campbell pointed out that the British troops are to be sent as a peacekeeping force, at which they are "much better than the Americans who are more aggressive and antagonize people. The British soldiers really try to win over the hearts of the people."

Critics doubt whether they will succeed though, in what has been described as the "triangle of death".

Crystal clear cosmology



Might the new Lucky Imaging technique developed at the Institute of Astronomy reveal more about the wonders of space?

Steve Elliott

ASTRONOMERS IN Cambridge have invented a new method of photographing the universe from the ground, with a quality previously available only from telescopes hundreds of miles above.

Charge Coupled Devices (or CCDs) were previously used for ground-based observations of the skies, such as automatic detection of supernovae, exploding stars that would dwarf the Sun. However, the accuracy of CCD images is limited by 'noise' generated inside the device, making it impossible to take an extremely clear picture. Chelmsford based E2V Technologies Ltd have developed a noise-free device.

This enables Dr. Craig Mackay's team at the Cambridge Institute of Astronomy and Professor John Baldwin at the Cavendish Laboratory

to selectively combine thousands of high quality pictures, eliminating atmospheric blurring in a process called 'Lucky Imaging'.

Dr. Mackay explains: "If you are out on a warm day then you will often see a shimmering or heat haze on the horizon. This is caused by the hot air close to the ground bubbling up and distorting our view of what is in the distance. You know that if you take a photograph then you will not see anything very much at all because of the blurring this causes. However, if you continue to stare at the horizon you will find that from time to time you get glimpses of what is beyond and can identify trees, houses, people and so on. Your brain is synthesising an image that is free from much of the distortion."

According to Dr. Mackay, Lucky Imaging "will allow us to measure the

way images of distant galaxies are distorted by invisible dark matter, something of great importance for cosmology. This is the first time we may have a technique that will allow the tracing of dark matter throughout the universe to be tackled properly."

This technology will not replace projects such as the Hubble Space Telescope, but instead allows high quality pictures to be taken over large portions of the sky, which has not been possible with previous equipment. In fact, Lucky Imaging was first proposed in 1978, but has only been possible now due to advances in CCD technology.

Research is continuing to make the imaging process more automatic, and new improved CCDs will follow with time, but Lucky Imaging has already made a large step towards bringing the mysteries of the universe down to earth.

News in Brief

Ice-cream mayhem

Over 200 litres of free ice cream attracted hundreds of members of the Cambridge Union on Saturday night. The evening, sponsored by Ben & Jerry's, was the largest of its kind ever held at the Union, attracting almost a quarter of its 4000 members.

Musicians from Crumbassive, who played at last year's Queens' May Ball, and Cambridge Magic Society's Miles Bullock and Simon Evans entertained the crowds as they patiently waited in line for a scoop of a selection from Ben & Jerry's favourites.

The night was hailed a great success by all.

Barney Jones

Apple aficionados

Apple appetisers were aplenty at the 8th annual Apple Fair held at the University's Botanical Gardens on Sunday.

Over 30 varieties of locally grown apples were available for enthusiasts, families, tourists and students to try and buy.

A record number of people turned out for what was a truly British celebration of our favourite fruit, involving queuing, tasting, drinking and buying of everything and anything to do with apples, and some things, like the WI's home-made plum chutney for example, that were not.

Laura Cledwyn

Historic passage reopens

Plans to reopen Christ's Lane and bulldoze Bradwell's Court have been given the green light. The passage way, which runs between St Andrew's Street and Christ's Piece along the wall of Christ's College, was blocked off in the 1960s and will now be reopened for pedestrians only.

Members of the Cambridge Cycling Campaign are asking for it to be made into a cycleway as well but Councillors want pedestrians to be able to walk freely down it safely.

Shops and apartments will be built on the former Bradwell's Court site. Despite concerns about the disruption that would be caused during construction, the new passageway is thought to be of historical importance.

Student dials 999

A Kings' student dialled 999 for an ambulance to fetch some pain killers last weekend. The 19-year-old was suffering from period pains when she made the emergency call because she had run out of her usual pain relief.

The Ambulance Service is now urging people not to call 999 unless it is an emergency since inappropriate calls "can cost lives". Wes Streeting, CUSU president, is encouraging students to make use of their college Nurse.

Police enquiry at Girton

A brand new college map that was stolen last week from the porter's lodge at Girton has been found in the college pond. JCR President, Pete Quentin, said "fantastic".

Don't forget...

British Summer Time ends on Sunday. Clocks go back one hour at 2 am.

Lucy Phillips

Trinity's race against the clock



The annual Great Court run took place last weekend. Athletes compete to run the 367 metres in the length of time it takes the college clock to strike noon. There are 43 seconds between the first and last chimes. This year nobody completed the circuit in time and the front runner was tripped up by a bystander.

WISE award nomination

Charlotte Forbes

A CAMBRIDGE PhD student has been nominated for a national award in recognition of her dedication to promoting science and engineering opportunities for women.

Laura James, who is in her final year, is one of six finalists for the Women Into Science and Engineering (WISE) Excellence Award, the results of which are to be announced next Tuesday.

"I'm delighted to be a finalist for the WISE Excellence Award. It's really exciting, I never thought I'd get through. I would never have found out about careers in engineering or stuck with it for so long if it wasn't for the help of many people who have given their time to advise or mentor me," she said.

Laura has been invited to attend a ceremony presided over by the Princess Royal, who is the royal patron of WISE, at the Engineering Employers' Federation (EEF) in London.

She is currently working with Intel Research Cambridge at the new Centre for Advanced Photonics and Electronics (CAPE) on a project to build an optically switched network for short distance data transport. This will enable information to travel within computer networks at a much faster speed over short distances.

However, the award also recognises her efforts to promote science to both children and female students.

Laura has worked at SETPoint for some time as a Science and Engineering Ambassador, which

involves monthly visits to schools and the annual TechLinks programme at Duxford in which children work in small groups on projects such as building model hovercrafts, robots and rockets. The aim of such schemes is to demystify popular misconceptions about engineering and encourage students to get involved. "Children often don't have an idea of what engineering can involve. When they take part in such hands-on work and see projects come to life, their faces light up. It gives them a wonderful sense of accomplishment," she said.

Laura has also been heavily involved with Women@CL, a national scheme based in the University, providing support to women engaged in computer research and academic leadership. The group organises regular lunches with speakers such as Shirley Jamieson to show women in the field that they "really can reach the top." Currently only a quarter of those studying for PhDs in computing in women, and there are only 1 in 20 female computing professors.

The WISE campaign was launched in 1984 to attract more women into science, engineering and technology and support organisations that enable women to advance their careers and stay in the sector. Since its launch the number of women in engineering has doubled.

For more information on SETPoint visit www.satromidanglia.co.uk; see www.cl.cam.ac.uk/women for information on Women@CL.

Green Cam

A NEW energy contract signed between Cambridge University and Scottish and Southern power has made Cambridge one of Britain's biggest purchasers of Green Energy.

The contract, which runs until October 2006, guarantees that less than one percent of the University's energy will come from fossil fuels. 76% will be generated hydroelectrically in Scotland, while 23% will come from other renewable sources such as solar, wind or wave power.

In the previous contract 88% of the University's energy came from fossil fuels. The CUSU Green Campaign has long campaigned on this issue, warning that "climate change and the environment must be taken seriously and acted upon in the near future".

However, the fact that the University has only recently decided to follow their advice suggests that the switch was sparked by financial concerns: the current surge in oil prices and the government's tax break incentives on renewable energy.

Nevertheless, Tom Russon, the CUSU Green Officer, commended the move as "a great step forward". He added that he hoped the University would "continue down this progressive and responsible road", urging it to "look beyond immediate financial factors and give due priority and recognition to environmental considerations."

Currently, less than 3% of the UK's energy is supplied from sustainable sources. The government has set a target of 10% by 2010.

Tom Kingsley

CUAI path to freedom

Sarah Marsh

LAST WEEKEND Cambridge University Amnesty International (CUAI) volunteers sat in a wooden cage outside King's College, campaigning for the release of Burmese prisoner of conscience Min Ko Naing.

Volunteers took shifts over 48 hours to sit inside the cage or stand outside collecting donations and encouraging passers-by to sign a petition for the release of Min Ko Naing. They succeeded in collecting 1,359 signatures on forty metres of cloth, and nearly £200.

"this case is about students' rights to freedom of expression"

The cage event has been held by CUAI for 30 years and is the organisation's major annual event for fundraising and raising awareness of the continuing struggle against human rights abuses.

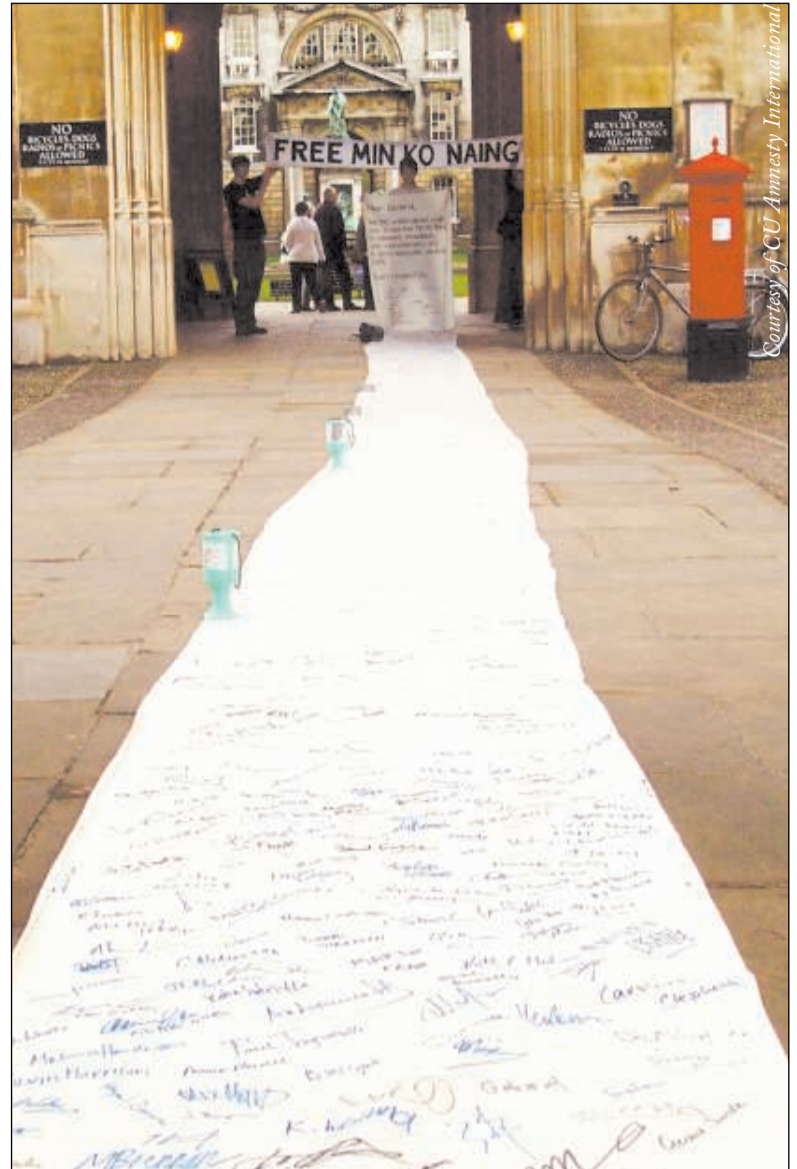
This is the first time however that it was geared towards a specific campaign. Tim Austin, who is on CUAI's executive committee, commented, "in the past the Cage event was a little vague and didn't make it clear exactly what we do. But this year we wanted to both raise Amnesty's profile and involve all members of the community in the fight against human rights abuses".

Min Ko Naing was arrested on March 24, 1989, tortured and sentenced to twenty years in jail for organizing peaceful student protests against the Burmese military regime. Will Moy, chair of CUAI, explained: "this case was assigned to all student groups across the country as it is about students' rights to freedom of expression."

Both Wes Streeting, CUSU president, and local MP Anne Campbell turned up on Saturday morning to publicly support the campaign by sitting in the cage and signing the petition. Streeting told Varsity: "although CUSU generally refrains from getting involved with international politics, an event like this focussing on the student's right to protest engages the responsibility of students and student leaders around the world."

Visiting the cage for the first year, Campbell undertook to lay down an Early Day Motion at the start of the new parliament backing the campaign to free Min Ko Naing. CUAI hopes this will prompt other Amnesty International student groups around the country to request their own MP's support.

Will Moy reflected that this case was "difficult as Burma pays little heed to external criticism. But the fact that Burma now faces hassle from ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) and that it is an unstable military regime gives Amnesty hope that the current situation of grave human rights abuse can be resolved." The Burmese Prime Minister was arrested last week.



CUAI collected 1,359 signatures last weekend in support of Min Ko Naing

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**Eric Parry - Principal
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It is quite probable that the University is unaware of the impact that the closure of the Department of Architecture at Cambridge will have. In the longer term there is no doubt that the culture of the built environment in this country will be badly undermined and it is therefore not just a parochial university issue but one of national importance. It has uncomfortable echoes of the closure of the Bauhaus by the Dessau Parliament in 1932. It would be wise of the General Board to raise its head above the parapet of its financial strictures and look at what impact this decision will have judged by the accomplishments of the alumni of the Department.

Eric Parry studied and has taught at the Department of Architecture and is now Principal of Eric Parry Architects in London.


**Luke McLaren -
ARCSOC President**

That the General Board has recommend closure of the Department of Architecture is only public confirmation of a situation the students were already familiar with. This is not news that needs to be sensationalised. The department is entering an exciting period of change and has taken measures to ensure its continued status as an integral and unique part of university life. Personnel have already been reshuffled to manoeuvre the department into a strong position for presenting its case to the General Board on December 8th. The suggestion of closure is not one we are willing to consider. The department will continue to offer the best architectural education in the country. Students for the 2005/06 academic year will be accepted as usual. It is sad that the university does not recognize one of the jewels in its own crown, but there is a huge voice of opinion growing - one which knows the effect any closure would have on the built environment of the future.


**Dan Changer and
Mike Gibson - 5th
Year Diploma**

The Diploma course has been at the forefront of architectural education for 50 years. The announcement of the suspension of the Diploma course in 2003 sent shockwaves through the architectural community. Our department is not alone in the struggle against quantitative research assessments both in the architectural world and within other Cambridge departments. Whilst other universities such as UCL have underwritten their post-graduate architecture courses, we feel disappointed that the General Board cannot see the value in a department that actively fuses humanities and sciences, and instead are pre-occupied with assessments that do not take account of the heart of the subject. We have no doubt that the department will play a leading role in the re-invention of architectural education as it did in the 50's and we look forward to the re-introduction of the post-graduate courses in the near future.


**Joseph Bedford -
Graduated in 2003**

Universities should be places where we consider universal questions. They expose students to broader concerns before being cast into a complex and contingent world and asked to make judgements that affect so many people's lives. I am no longer able to do the m.phil and PhD course which would have been a chance to consider the deeper philosophical and ethical dimensions of Architecture before being thrown to a world of market forces, regulations and planning policy. I am saddened that the University views Architecture only as a 'bricks and mortar' subject, that it's somehow not 'academic' enough. Why is it that other leading research institutions such as Harvard, Yale and Princeton, consider Architecture to be a central discipline within the University? It would be very sad indeed if this course of action was being taken without a proper understanding of the long term value the department has in the wider architectural community.

**Why it matters:
from the archi-
tecture society**

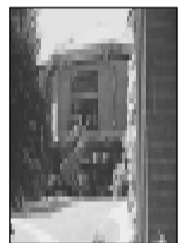


Fundamentally important to the discussion about closing the Department of Architecture is the question of research. Cambridge University exists primarily as a centre of excellence for academic research. The university General Board have made no secret of the fact that their recommendation to close the Department of Architecture is directly linked to the research rating of '4' it received in 2001.

As a world leading institution, Cambridge expects all of its research departments to achieve a minimum RAE rating of '5'. Given that the General Board has not recommended any other departments for closure, one would assume that no others had been rated '4', but this is not the case.

Architectural Research Quarterly, an independent publication, asserts that 'the RAE has driven a wedge between teaching and research... Worst, it seems to be threatening to divide the science from the art of architecture.' There is no clearer statement that such a multidisciplinary subject as architecture is unquestionably suffering under these restrictive means of research evaluation.

Needing structural support



"Many of Cambridge's buildings have been designed by Cambridge architecture alumni and the department continues to have a considerable influence on the way the city looks"


**ANALYSIS
JAMES DACRE**

Cambridge will seriously damage her academic reputation, and risks jeopardising the teaching of Architecture as a subject across Britain, if, on December 8th, she chooses to proceed with proposals to close the Department of Architecture. All current anxieties about the future of Architecture at Cambridge began in 2001 when HEFCE graded the department with four out of an expected five points in a Research Assessment Exercise (RAE). Despite this, the research performance of the Department of Architecture is in the top ten percent of the UK. A number of other departments in the University, including Physiology and 'Politics and International Studies' received the same score, but have not been threatened with closure. Architecture must not be made an example of, nor neglected, as no real problem with its academic profile exists.

The RAE is widely thought to fail in its duty to fairly assess subjects that cannot be clearly classed as either Arts or Sciences. Architecture is by definition an inter-disciplinary academic method; a mother to the arts and sciences. HEFCE fails to provide a category for the assessment of Architectural departments nationwide, and so the subject is bundled in under the assessment category of 'built environment,' which is dominated by construction and surveying courses. Architectural research is consequently directly compared to quantitative scientific research.

Of the 11 members of the 2001 'Built Environment' panel that assessed the architecture department, only two had interests focused on architectural research. There were no practicing

designers on the panel. Additionally, RAE panels are obliged to take advice from international referees. Although 6 international referees were appointed by the panel, they only saw a tiny proportion of the submissions, made no valid comments and changed no ratings. Five of the seven 5 star rated Universities in the country had full-time members of staff on the judging panel.

Of the nine British universities graded above Cambridge by the RAE, only Cardiff, Bath and Sheffield offer Architecture. Furthermore, in the interests of fair assessment, Cambridge made the unnecessary mistake of submitting all of their staff for review. The hope was that the more they submitted, the more funding they would receive. Bath only submitted 4 of their 13 research staff. So, when broken down, Cambridge potentially only ranks second, behind Cardiff, in this review.

For Cambridge to cease to run the course would be a statement of defeat likely to cause a domino effect throughout the country. The Department of Architecture is not alone in its problems regarding research. It is the smallest department in the country and without the subsidies and infrastructure of bigger departments it is only natural that it is the first to encounter these problems.

The Pro Vice-Chancellor, Professor Cliff's statement suggests the department faces problems on "academic, not financial grounds." He doesn't explain the implications of the University cutting the department's budget. This ultimately led to a depletion of non-teaching research staff, as the department didn't want to compromise its teaching standards. Alison Richard conceded to me that "financial concerns are part of the overall concern." A very senior departmental figure confirmed that "It is very clearly a question of money."

The university receives £3800 from HEFCE for each architectural student here. Of that, the Architecture depart-

ment receives £2400. Including composition fees, this leaves the department with £3400 for each student, whilst the resources required for teaching students amount to around £10,000. The department survives through the money it makes from research; it is dependent upon the RAE. The department lost a potential £400,000 by being graded at 4 instead of 5. The council of the School of Arts and Humanities must help the faculty for the next 3 years, to make up for the deficit until the next RAE report is published. In 2008 the department will be assessed under the category of "Architecture and the Built Environment." This will constitute a significant change.

New department head Echenique is keenly aware of the importance of teaching, and assured me that 'We are not a pure research institution; this is an educational institution and we will protect that at all costs. The Undergraduate will not suffer.' The RAE has done everything possible to tear apart research and teaching. In some universities these have been split into completely different units. At Cambridge, there has been a crisis of allegiance, with staff attempting to balance teaching alongside research and being stretched too thin.

The Vice-Chancellor, Alison Richard, told me of the importance of being "as open and candid as possible," about the state of the department. Recent events have been so secretive that the Head of Department didn't know about a vital press release until after it had been published. Now, a number of Directors of Architectural Studies proved ignorant to the happenings. Professor Cliff's statement was only released by the University Press department following the intrusive interests of a national newspaper into the state of the department. There seems to be a crisis of confidence amongst students and staff alike that must be calmed so that a careful and united strategy of response can be established.

There is a danger here that student bodies separate from the department could sensationalise these concerns for their own benefit. For CUSU must raise awareness of the problems besetting the department and encourage pronounced student resistance to its closure; for them to be the centre of the campaign could be detrimental to its cause; people often jump from a sinking ship. This is why we have chosen not to run with a "disaster" emblazoned front page.

The department contributes hugely to the infrastructure of university life in a way that few others are able to. There is a huge degree of cross-pollination between the department's resources and university life and Architects are trained to be able to offer unique design skills to the University. This very week a space is being designed for the Student Art Exhibition by a group of architects, plays are being produced that are designed by architects, the department is hosting three unique seminar lectures and two new websites have been launched, all by undergraduates. Many of Cambridge's buildings have been designed by Cambridge architecture alumni and the department continues to have a considerable influence on the way the city looks.

There is no significant reason why the Architecture Department cannot survive and prosper. The closure of any department would be highly detrimental to the reputation of the University and the reputation of the staff in the department. The closure of the department would be an obvious sign of weakness that would deprive the Higher education sector and the Architectural industry of a centre of teaching that is undeniably at the forefront of its profession. It is because of a legacy of poor support and a confusion of priorities from the University that the department is in this supposed crisis. The university management have a duty to sustain the department until the next RAE report.

**"The Research
Assesment has
driven a wedge
between teaching
and research"**

Research funding works on the basis that for each project submitted for assessment, the associated department receives a financial lump sum from the government. It would therefore seem logical to submit all departmental research projects to secure maximum funding. Unfortunately, departments are increasingly concerned about their RAE score, and only submit their best candidates to ensure a '5' or better research rating. It is unfortunate that such politically motivated decisions are denying the university of increased government funding.

The list of departments to have taken this precaution is surprising: genetics, veterinary science, computer science, economics, english...the list goes on. Their decision to omit weaker research projects from the RAE assessment is reflected in their 'B' rating for 'proportion of staff selected'. It does, however, mean that they have avoided pressure from the General Board. The Department of Architecture, having submitted all of its research, rated 'A'. The assumption is that the General Board are content to allow some departments to withhold sub-standard research from being assessed, yet jump on others trying to secure further government funding. How does the General Board explain a clear prejudice in whom it decides to close down?

Nationally, the problem is only intensified. The department is not alone in struggling to be recognised for the varied research it carries out. Architecture is bundled in under the assessment category of 'Built Environment' and, quite apart from competing with other architecture schools, it has the unenviable task of measuring up against institutions that exist purely on a quantitative research basis. These are not reasonable grounds on which to make comparisons, both within Cambridge and throughout the UK.

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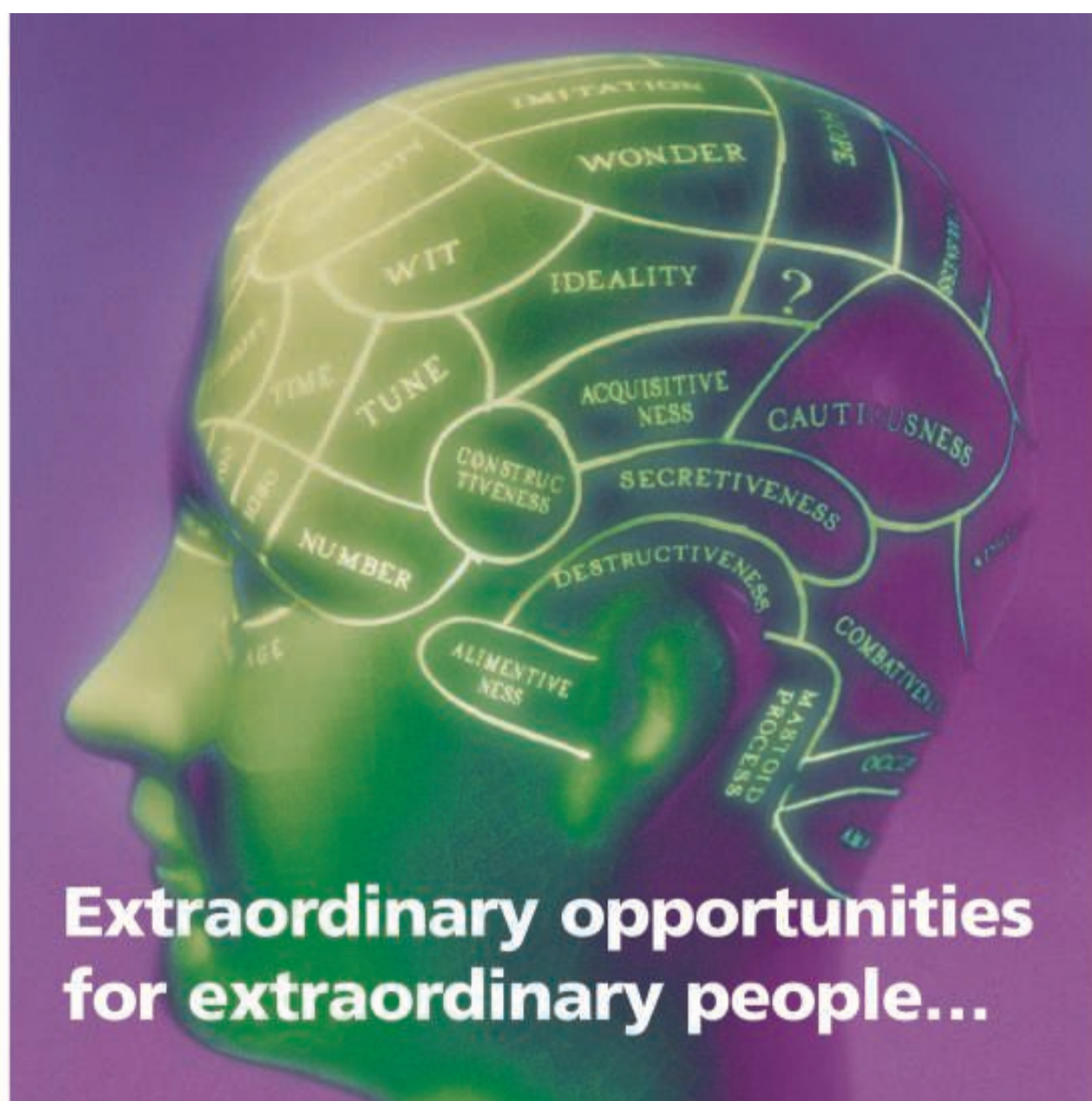


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Oxbridge Wars

Our correspondent from the Other Place, **Jamie Rann**, wonders if we're really so very different

"Hi - I just got back from Oxbridge University." So said Halle Berry's doe-eyed (albeit intermittently fat-thighed) predecessor as Catwoman, Alicia Silverstone, in the unremittingly awful *Batman and Robin*. But even in a film that bad - why Oxbridge? Why couldn't they choose one or the other? Were *Varsity* lobbyists campaigning for equal representation? Or is it simply because to the rest of the world Oxford and Cambridge are identical?

After all, barring minor and obsolete distinguishing features - for Oxford *Brideshead*, for Cambridge gay spies - they are, essentially, the same university in two places at once. Like the Scandinavians, Oxbridgeans are so fixated on their own differences that they can't see no-one knows or cares which is which. This is not a call to arms (cloistered geeks of the world unite! You have nothing to lose but your virginity), but a question: if each university is the same, why can students at each list hundreds of reasons why theirs is far superior?

But I say this with a nagging worry. I worry that I am preaching to the converted. I worry that the good people of Cambridge do not take such vitriolic glee from victory in the Varsity shove ha'penny. I worry, in short, that Oxford has an inferiority complex. This complex manifests itself chiefly in the jingoistic and incestuous world of student journalism. Headlines such as "Tabs trounced" are not uncommon. What concerns me is less that particular bit of clumsy alliteration than the fact that we have a derogatory word for you, and you do not seem to need one for us. Are we

beneath contempt, or, as patriotic Oxonians have suggested, are you too dumb to invent one? (Fordies? Oxes? One can see, on reflection, why you wouldn't bother).

Where could such a complex come from? Why, it's the league tables, stupid. We are constantly reminded that we are lagging behind. But perhaps it goes further back than that: Robert Hooke was great but no Isaac Newton; Shelley good, Byron better; and whilst Roger Bannister certainly ran very fast, Crick and Watson discovered the basis of human existence. Bastards.

Still, for us Oxonians there are reasons, more and less plausible, to be cheerful. Cambridge's recent higher academic profile has predictably led to Oxford students seeing it as harder working. Even physicists here can be heard to say of Cambridge that "it's a bit sciency there, isn't it?" Oxford sees itself under an oak in summer leafing through *Ulysses*, while Cambridge toils diligently over a Bunsen burner.

The most common Oxford response to Cambridge is that the university is fine but the town is a bit of a village. This has more bite: though I applaud *Varsity's* campaign to save Gardies, that sort of thing just would not be necessary in busy Oxford - I can see three kebab shops from my bedroom window. Perhaps, though, this is a lazy steew-vent point of comparison, so let's wheel out the big guns. The Bodleian's a better library than yours, the Ashmolean a better museum, and we have a decent modern art spot. So there. This sense of Cambridge's parochialism, in particular



Varsity archive

Bosh! But the well-reputed rivalry's hard to find outside the sporting arena

when placed alongside the fact that fewer Cambridge students live out, creates the impression that life at Oxford is that little bit closer to life at a 'normal' university. That, and the fact that you don't engage in the Oxford religion of darts. What a bunch of losers.

Nevertheless, beneath all this posturing, most students can remember the time when they chose between Oxford and Cambridge. If they are honest, they'll remember that, unless they were studious enough to know what their course contained, there was not much between them. I for one (don't tell my tutors) plumped for Oxford because of that exotic and slightly louche 'x' lurking in the name. Frankly, if there were a university in Ashby-de-la-Zouche, I'd probably be there. A sense of university

pride is merely something freshers pick up in their first term because they remember seeing the boat race once, and like the idea of belonging.

It really is trying too hard, like wearing one of those tourist-friendly hoodies, emblazoned with your university's name. And this half-arsed rivalry is still subordinate to that between some colleges: the high street here regularly echoes to drunken cries of "I'd rather go to Cambridge than to Queens." Outside the heated rivalry of Blues' shove ha'penny, or the bitter rancour of defeat in Varsity elephant polo, the truth is - no one really cares that much these days. You Tabs are all right by me.

The author is in his third year at University College, Oxford

"Neptotism is not unlike sleeping with your cousin"



A C
Berwick

I have always imagined A C Berwick (to refer to myself in the third person for a moment) as the archetypal working-class hero, the happy-go-lucky maverick ragamuffin living off his roguish wit and dashing good looks alone. Arriving to chance his arm in Cambridge, he assumed that nepotism wasn't for the likes of him, the down-trodden boy from the mean streets of Chelmsford. How wrong he was.

In Cambridge, nepotism is a way of life, disarmingly egalitarian, and by no means limited to those with four initials, a trust fund and a lazily-stereotyped first name. Nepotism is for all, rich or poor; good, bad or ugly. Well, not ugly. (Don't you just loathe ugly people? So selfish. Always ruining perfectly good photos.)

I can't imagine how I ever lived without nepotism. Why advertise any kind of position, and risk that you will end up with some drooling idiot, when you can get somebody good to do it? If they are your friend, why, all the better: you can guarantee you'll get on. Nepotism's the most friendly way of conducting business: you want to have as many friends as possible to help you get that spot as head of the Chipmunk Players/Wombat Drinking Society, and in return you receive the adulation of all the eager prospective Wombats/Chipmunks in order that they can join in the fun once you are at the top. With all of this congeniality being spread around like muck on the spring fields, it is almost possible to forget that you don't really like anyone apart from yourself.

Of course in an ideal world we would all be friends with everyone, and so nepotism would be irrelevant. However, inevitably, some people insist on being losers (generally the ugly people, bitter because everyone used to cut them out of their photos in high school), and so we must accept that they will object to nepotism. Perhaps if they spent less time moaning about never having fun and more time drinking then they could get involved as well.

Because, you see, secretly everyone aspires to be the head of the Wombats, whether they admit it to themselves or not: this is, after all, how success is measured in Cambridge, and the only basis upon which people like the *Varsity* editor can claim to be celebrities, a trend that appears to be somewhat en vogue. (Incidentally, could I have your autograph please, Archie? Cheers.) No-one ever seems to object to nepotism on purely moral grounds; complaints come from the slighted and the excluded, but not the morally superior. In this respect, nepotism is not unlike sleeping with your cousin. The only ones who object are those that got knocked back.

And yet we should hate nepotism, for it represents the start of a life that will be wonderfully comfortable - by third year there is no need to venture off the well-trodden path from the college bar to Cindy's - but irredeemably dull. When was the last time you met someone who really surprised you? Think about it: maybe it's time you started getting out less.

I'd vote Kerry, but I'm not writing any letters about it



Jonathan
Beckman

Next Tuesday is the most important day in the history of the world. Ever. Listening to left-leaning demagoguery, a stark picture emerges: if George W. Bush is victorious in the USA general election, the world, gloomy with smog pumped from the oil refineries of venal and portly moneybags, will inevitably be plunged into a terrifying Hades. Rivers of blood will flow from mountains of bodies, and so on.

A win for John Kerry, on the other hand, will bring light, love, peace, joy, bright copper kettles, warm woollen mittens and brown paper packages tied up with string. I'm not so sure: both parties, however reluctantly, will be stuck in Iraq for a long time to come. The Bush

administration may be bombastic, but they have been stung badly by events in the Middle East, and will think long and hard before any further foreign capers. Conversely, a Democrat victory (headed by a half-Jew and staunch supporter of Israel) is hardly likely to convince Osama Bin-Laden to retire to Bexhill-on-Sea for a few hands of bridge and regular dialysis.

The Guardian, which can always be relied on for a blast of liberal piety, was so worried about a Bush victory, though, that it encouraged readers to write letters to undecided voters in the swing-state of Ohio. Though scrupulously balanced in its presentation, it was obvious, as the sample missives showed, that most would urge support for Kerry.

The response seems to have taken the instigators by surprise. *The Guardian* was deluged with replies pointing out that Britain was an insignificant latrine, known only for castles and bad teeth. Even Democrats Abroad pointed out the detrimental effect of such epistolary advice on the Kerry campaign.

I can think of nothing more likely to enrage me than someone I don't know earnestly suggesting that I vote a certain way for the good of mankind. *The Guardian* argued that it would be "spectacularly patronising" to suggest that Ohioan voters were so flammable that they would vote for one party if someone wrote to them advising the opposite.

I suppose it's not spectacularly patronising to inform Americans that foreign policy decisions made by their President might, conceivably, have consequences for people throughout the world. But hey, don't we all know that all Yanks think that abroad is a myth, and Iraq is an uppity island off the coast of Alaska?

Floating voters don't wobble because they are stupid or uninformed. Most people are never going to be able to align all of their views with the position of one of the two parties. When people vote they choose which issues matter most for them. But in the *Guardian* piece, in place of any nuanced political analysis, John Le Carré and Richard Dawkins (who labelled Bush a "smirking gunslinger")

competed to see whose cheeks could glow the most effulgently scarlet in their fulfilment.

The Guardian is an intelligent and provocative read. Its problem, which has emerged in this instance, is that it wants to matter. The liberal *Guardian* readership are generally middle-class, comfortable and satisfied but with an admirable pang of conscience about the obvious inequality around them. The letter-writing initiative was an attempt by the paper to tell its readership that they were significant and could save the world from evil. Finally the rank odour of guilt would be expunged from the sweet smell of success.

Instead, the correspondents meandered through personal anecdote, sentimentality and abuse, unable to avoid arrogance and condescension. I hope that Kerry wins on November 2nd; but I also know that my hopes are insignificant, and that Americans will choose what they think is best for them. And if they get it wrong, it won't matter that much anyway.



“This newspaper doesn’t have a vote, but it has its fingers well and truly crossed”.

Why aren't there any Republicans in New York?

It may be a 50-50 nation, but in the city that never sleeps, Bush is a dirty word

I have a new ambition. I've been in New York now for nearly three weeks, and I still haven't met a Republican. I've been out and about, and met a lot of people, but not a single person I've spoken to, from lawyers to cabbies to policemen, has had admitted to supporting the Grand Old Party. This is partly because New York, as a state, is a Democrat dead-cert, so the Republicans haven't bothered to campaign very much. But I'd still like to meet one – you know, see what they're like, measure their skull size, that sort of thing.

On the other hand, my workplace hosts a constant stream of email banter which is decidedly anti-Dubya. Someone yesterday sent a message to the whole office which advertised George Bush toilet paper, and debate commenced over whether we should get it for the staff toilets. In all the little shops lining 5th Avenue, traders are making a mint with anti-Bush paraphernalia. He's not very popular here.

But the scary thing is, it really doesn't matter. Kerry will win the State of New York, and the Republicans don't give a monkey's. Because of the electoral college system, the national popular vote is technically irrelevant. Each state has a certain number of 'electors', dependent on its population. There are 538 'electors' in the College, and to become President, you need to have 270 of them. But you only need a majority of 1 vote to win the whole state, so if Kerry wins New York by 1 or 6.5million, he'll still get 33 electors.

(Peter Snow mode now). It's technically possible – and this is just a bit

“You know what these folks don't like? They don't like you!”



of fun, remember – for Kerry to win every vote cast in California, New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey, lose the states of Texas, Ohio, North Carolina, Virginia, Georgia, Indiana, and Tennessee, by one vote each, and therefore come away with 24.5 million more votes than Bush, and yet only win 126 electoral votes compared to Bush's 129.

“I've been in New York for three weeks and I still haven't met a Republican”

There are only eight states left now which are still considered in the balance, and both the Democrats and Republicans are concentrating all their resources there. So for Bush it's unimportant whether I wipe my arse on his face next week or not. New York's never particularly been worth his efforts. Because of demographic quirks, if you look at a map of America based on which state voted for Bush or Gore in 2000, all the north-eastern states, the west-coast states, and those

clustered around the Great Lakes (plus New Mexico, which Gore won by 365 out of 550,000) would be coloured blue for the Democrats, and everything in the substantial middle, the 'heartland', would be red for the Republicans. The rural heartland is what counts for Bush, and, quite rightly, the voters there have just as much a right to choose the President as their more cosmopolitan fellow-citizens up on the edges.

But because of the now stark ideological differences between the two candidates, this has become more than just a vote to decide the next American President. A tension is beginning to emerge between the two sides of America, and because both passionate Democrats and Republican now really don't like each other, a slightly hostile atmosphere has become apparent. A friend told me, quite seriously, that she wouldn't feel comfortable being in a room full of Bush supporters. Some people I've met here, highly educated, well travelled, wise and witty, all say they genuinely can't understand why anyone would vote for Bush.

But they can puzzle all they like.

An article last Sunday by Ron Suskind in The New York Times has become the talk of the town. Suskind says that in 2002 Mark McKinnon, a senior media advisor to Bush, tried to explain to Suskind the Republicans' position on this: “Let me clue you in. We don't care. You see, you're [the anti-Bush brigade] outnumbered 2 to 1 by folks in the big, wide middle of America, busy working people who don't read The New York Times or Washington Post or The L.A. Times. And you know what they like? They like the way he walks and the way he points, the way he exudes confidence. They have faith in him. And when you attack him for his malaprops, his jumbled syntax, it's good for us. Because you know what those folks don't like? They don't like you!”

This got me thinking. I'm constantly comparing stuff to good old Blighty, and in a way, the Republicans remind me of Millwall F.C. Very few people know a Millwall fan, as they tend to remain in their 'heartland' of south-east London. They play dirty, and their fans will stop at very little to win a fight. Their mission in to Europe this season was a disaster. They've got a moronic manager, who used to drink too much, has a habit of saying the wrong thing, but is ultra-passionate. And their theme tune is 'No One Likes Us, We Don't Care'. See the similarity?

However, Millwall aren't looking too good this season, whereas the Republicans F.C. have taken the game to penalties. To famously quote Brian Moore, “it's up for grabs now!”. And whatever happens, half the ground will go home very disappointed.

VARSITY

 11-12 Trumpington Street
 Cambridge CB2 1QA
 01223 353422

Editor	Archie Bland <i>editor@varsity.co.uk</i>
Deputy Editor	Amol Rajan <i>deputynews@varsity.co.uk</i>
Online Editor	Sam Richardson <i>webeditor@varsity.co.uk</i>
Arts Editors	Henry Bowen Oliver Tilley <i>deputyarts@varsity.co.uk</i>
Photos Editors	Fiona Symington Albert Mockel-Von-Dem-Bussche <i>photos@varsity.co.uk</i>
Chief News Editor	James Dacre
News Editors	Charlotte Forbes Chine Mbubaegbu Sarah Marsh Lucy Phillips <i>news@varsity.co.uk</i>
Features Editor	Ross McElwain <i>features@varsity.co.uk</i>
Science Editor	Krystyna Larkham <i>science@varsity.co.uk</i>
Interviews Editor	Ronojoy Dam <i>interviews@varsity.co.uk</i>
Travel Editor	Michael Fordham <i>travel@varsity.co.uk</i>
Idler Editor	Oliver Batham <i>idler@varsity.co.uk</i>
Theatre Editor	Alice Harper <i>theatre@varsity.co.uk</i>
Music Editors	Ned Beauman Jessica Holland <i>music@varsity.co.uk</i>
Classical Editor	Nicola Simpson <i>classical@varsity.co.uk</i>
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Literature Editor	Rachel Wilcock <i>literature@varsity.co.uk</i>
Visual Arts Editor	Sophie Priestley <i>visual@varsity.co.uk</i>
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Business Manager	Eve Williams <i>business@varsity.co.uk</i>

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VARSLITY

President past

And so farewell, Ribu. A stormy passage in the Graduate Union's otherwise obscure history seems to have come to a close, in extremely sad fashion. Whilst this situation is in large part the result of poor decision-making in the short term, it is nevertheless clear, as one attendee pointed out at last night's meeting, that the GU would be in dire straits whoever was in charge. Tharakan should not be vilified after his difficult period in office, and it is to be hoped that this separation of ways will be for the good of all concerned.

So much for this unhappy narrative: the GU must now look forward. Unfortunately, the view is not a particularly encouraging one. There is, understandably, a conspicuous absence of enthusiastic applicants to fill the departing president's shoes. David Riley, who tabled the motion of no confidence, has had trouble convincing many that he has no interest in the post, and he may well emerge as the inevitable replacement; but at the moment he insists he does not wish to become president, and if he means it, the options look rather sparse. This leaves the GU in something of a quandary. Getting rid of presidents, and dismissing ideas, is all very well; replacing them successfully is a different order of task altogether.

Meanwhile, CUSU continues to insist it has no interest in taking over the organisation. Wes Streeting was at last night's meeting, but he had his neutral cap on. No-one would be very surprised, though, if the GU had moved considerably closer to its bigger sibling in the not-so-distant future. The ideal is clearly for the GU to run its own affairs autonomously, but if it is incapable of doing so – and it will take a President of superhuman administrative capabilities, or, better still, a sabbatical staff – a merger, or something like it, begins to appear inevitable. Graduates have inevitably different priorities to the main student body, and there seems no straightforward answer as to how a common organisation will effectively represent both of these interests when they clash, as they inevitably will.

But these are questions for another day. For now, all those involved can at least breathe a sigh of relief that this dismal business is concluded, for better or worse, and, perhaps, reflect: if one of the chief problems the GU faced was lack of publicity, it can make no such complaints now. Whoever succeeds Tharakan will be on a very public stage indeed.

President future

A website called editorandpublisher.com is keeping a running tally of newspaper endorsements of the two American presidential candidates. At the moment, the score stands at 149 for the challenger against 126 for the incumbent, and, in circulation terms, 17.7 million to 11.11 million. This is a significant margin, and this particular battle is probably a) already won for Kerry, and b) of no great significance, except as a matter of wonkish interest; still, we hope he will be pleased to learn (as he presumably will) that *Varsity* is putting its full weight – and influence with its readership of 15,600, no fewer than a few of whom are American, and might even vote – behind the Democratic bid for the White House.

This will probably come to no great surprise to anyone with a passing familiarity with Cambridge demographics. If the US electorate was composed sheerly of British undergraduates, the margin would be a resounding one. Apologies, then, if this is predictable; apologies, too, if you think this isn't our remit.

The thing is, even if it's a cry into the void, it's hard to ignore the issue. There are those, like our columnist Jon Beckman, who assert that this election isn't actually all that significant, because even if Kerry does win he'll be stuck in Iraq with no hope of a quick exit, and a likely Republican majority in the Senate will limit his room for manoeuvre on domestic policy too. Well, it's hard to argue, when the ideological chasm is so deep, and so wide, that there won't be palpable differences in policy on issues as diverse as stem cell research and the budget deficit – but even if this were the case, this election would still matter. It would matter because Kerry's election would give America some kind of clean slate with the many nations it has alienated in the past four years. It would matter because Kerry is a leader who might respect the fundamental importance of the separation of church and state. It would matter because it would demonstrate that you can't rely on lies, and scare-mongering, and lazy stereotyping, as a surefire election winner. It would matter because –

There isn't space. George W Bush's record, in the words of the *New Yorker*, which has endorsed a candidate for the first time in its illustrious history, 'has been one of failure, arrogance, and incompetence'. Above all, when faced with a defining moment in his country's history and offered the chance to use it to unite the nation, and indeed the world, around a set of common ideals which might have helped forge a better future, the president chose instead to go down a calamitous unilateralist path which has created the bitterest ideological divisions in American history, and done terrible damage to his country's reputation as a defender of freedom. George W. Bush has made the world a more dangerous place, not a safer one. There can be few bitterer or more compelling indictments of this administration's catastrophic failures, both of competence and of conscience. This newspaper doesn't have a vote, but it has its fingers well and truly crossed.

Letters

letters@varsity.co.uk

Letters may be edited for space or style.

Character in Bloom

Sir:

Whatever the truth is about Rebecca Bowtell's allegations of sexual harassment against Godfrey Bloom, what comes across quite strongly in your interview (News, 22nd Oct) is what an unpleasant person he is. To vow to be 'a complete, total 18 carat bastard' rather than simply to uphold the truth (even Jonathan Aitken could manage that, albeit in the most flowery way imaginable) is childish and unguarded.

Similarly, attacks on Ms Bowtell's character (Isn't the type of Christianity she practises irrelevant? One of those girls from a school where they let in people with C grades? What?) show a very mean-spirited, and, might I venture, defensive attitude.

Of course Mr Bloom is hurt by these allegations, particularly if they are untrue. But the way he has reacted in this particular situation, even without considering his infamous comments about women and women's rights in the past, make me very unlikely to support him. Mr Bloom is only undermining himself – this situation would be far better resolved for him if he remained quiet and tactful.

Gloria Dawson
Emmanuel College

Dear Sir,

Rebecca Bowtell has had a terrible time recently, and it seems wholly undeserved. Above all, her treatment at the hands of the Cambridge Women's Rugby Football Club has been distinctly shabby: one must question their motivations when so much of their income depends on keeping Godfrey Bloom – who, on the evidence of your interview, is not a particularly pleasant character – onside. Whatever finally emerges from this case, there are those who have cause to be ashamed of their lack of support for Miss Bowtell – but seems unlikely they will ever acknowledge this.

Yours sincerely

Neil Gregory
Selwyn College

Cambridge Celebrity

Dear Sir,

I must commend you for last week's article 'The cult of Cambridge celebrity is simply a fantasy', (Opinion, Oct 22) which was not only correct, but also excellently written. As *Varsity* editor however, you are central to the machine that feeds this damp hysteria.

The ludicrous "Varsity Power 100" of last year was bad enough, but now I see you are rolling out a new initiative, "The Varsity Talent List", for which a full-page advertisement appeared on page 17. I can only assume that it will be similar, and worse. Are you not fanning the flames of the very absurdity you so elegantly satirised?

Yours faithfully,

Jonny Mather
Girton College

Dear Sir,

You may not have noticed it, but when enough people think you are famous (and write about it in newspapers), then you are. This holds even if your supervisors do not recognise you anymore.

Best regards,

Sebastian Raedler
Hughes Hall

Poetry made plain

Dear Sir,

The much-needed coverage of one of Cambridge's many poetry readings in your paper this week (Literature, October 22nd) was wholly undermined by your correspondents' patronizing and narrow-minded attitudes.

Rachel Willcock's article makes direct links between the English Faculty and poetry readings, even poetry production, yet she does nothing to refute endemic prejudice towards arts students by role-playing for her friend's entertainment.

Thoughtless, poorly researched and groundless analysis of poetry does indeed confirm Olly Buxton's lazy stereotype of English students as 'pretentious bullshitters'. No one would argue that all poetry is equal, 'good' or even engaging, but the almost banal symmetry in these articles shows a lack of independent thought.

The merit in poetry readings is that you may be provoked, enthralled or repulsed by poetry you would not otherwise encounter; you do not go for a pre-Cindies drink. Frankly, to send Buxton to a reading by the school of poetry pioneered by Prynne (and charted in these very pages just last term), is as presumptuous as an arts student arriving at the engineering faculty, a glass of wine the worse for wear, and expecting to gain from going to a Part II structures lecture.

Willcock is quite right that there is a market for 'high brow literary events' in Cambridge, and if she wishes to hear more 'narrative poetry' she might do well to go to narrative poetry readings, or even open a popular anthology.

Well done for undermining the status of poetry, English students and even the new faculty building in one fell swoop – but then maybe I'm just being an over-analytical English student – we're all just hysterical beret-wearing wannabes anyway.

Yours,

Celia Davidson
Queens' College

Merrily down the stream

Dear Sir,

I read with amusement Olivia Day's lightly researched article on the Oxford-Cambridge rowing trip to Zambia earlier this month (Sport, October 22). The British crews attending the regatta were not "the" Oxford and Cambridge crews, but rather were made up of CUBC and OUBC alumni, most of whom are retired

from competitive rowing. Ms Day concludes that the crews return home "with much work to do."

The only work these men are likely to be doing is in City offices. A more interesting story for Ms Day to report is the victory of the real Cambridge crew in Boston, USA, on October 24. In the annual Head of the Charles regatta, Cambridge soundly beat the Olympic silver medallist Dutch eight and every US university crew in attendance.

Yours sincerely,

Wayne Pommen
CUBC President 2003-2004 (Ret.)

Union debate

Sir,

Last week's *Varsity* editorial, "incompatible truths", seemed to unfairly suggest that the Cambridge Union was doing its best to stir up controversy over the Godfrey Bloom affair. I invited Bloom to speak on the European Constitution at the Union during the summer, many months before the Rebecca Bowtell scandal emerged – any suggestion that the Union asked him to debate as a reaction to the press coverage he received due to Bowtell's allegations is simply untrue.

Yours,

Bobby Friedman
President, Cambridge Union

Varsity regrets any misunderstanding, and is glad to acknowledge that the Union invited Godfrey Bloom to speak before the Rebecca Bowtell incident. If any inference was drawn to the contrary, it was not intended.

Har(r?)assment

Dear Sir,

Where you had 'harassment' in your front page headline, TCS had 'harrassment'. Which is it? I think we should be told. Newspapers – even those written by and for students – remain among the last bastions of our fine language, and I am keen for you and your staff to retain an acute perception of your responsibilities in this area.

Orwell wrote in 1942 of the decline of the English language. He suggested that in times of war, when the very fabric of civilisations are being threatened by hostile enemies, the media, with their tendency for sensationalism, facilitate a cultural disregard for the rules of grammar, spelling and syntax. These are times of war, and I hope that your writers and headline-conjurors do not play a part in spreading what I consider to be a most virulent disease. Our language is at stake.

Yours &c

Allen A. Johns
Fitzwilliam College

**Arts
Picture house**

This week's prize winner is the uncomfortably accurate Jonny Mather, who wins two tickets to the Arts Picturehouse.

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4 November, 2.00pm - 4.00pm, 2nd Floor, South Granta Place

IBD Case Study with Cambridge Futures

4 November, 6.30pm - 8.30pm, Mong Building, Sidney Sussex College

To learn more about registering for these events and to apply for a position, please visit our website: www.ubs.com/graduates

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Arthur D Little

A Small Step to Kyrgyzstan

Anil A. Stocker discovers the hidden gem of Central Asia

Planning a trip to Kyrgyzstan is almost like planning a trip to the moon, the only difference being that most people know more about our lunar neighbour than this young Central Asian republic. Announcing my travel plans met with blank expressions, confused attempts to locate the destination and even concerned disapproval. Forming part of the Soviet Union until full independence in 1991, this small country now finds itself tightly squashed between its large neighbours Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, China and Tajikistan, in what is one of the remotest regions on the planet.

Bishkek is known as the 'Garden City' of Central Asia. Seemingly drab Soviet-era apartment blocs are smothered by spruce, juniper and nut trees which create a gentler feel, especially as the sun shines brightly most days of the year. The 800,000 or so population are extremely diverse. Not all settled here of their own accord: a Turkish taxi driver explained how his family was 'picked up' by Stalin and 'dumped' here; the Soviet premier similarly relocated part of his German minority to the region prior to the Second World War, and a number of Koreans also took refuge here to avoid the imperialist Japanese.

The result is a highly tolerant society which embraces many religions, although Muslims are officially in the majority. However, theirs is a looser form of Islam than that which exists in other parts of the world: hardly any women in the capital wear headscarves and certain Russian traditions have remained, not only with regard to education and the emancipation of women, but a hearty toast over a large dinner would not be complete without the swigs of vodka that follow.

Independence has sparked an effort to re-establish a coherent national identity balancing Siberian ancestry and the legendary Manas who succeeded in driving the Chinese armies back over the Tien Shan mountain range, with long periods of submission



Adan Edelsbain

Kyrgyzstan specialises in eco-tourism; by venturing into the mountains on horseback you can truly appreciate its beauty

to foreign conquerors such as Alexander the Great, Genghis Khan and Timur of Samarkand.

The local university students give the city a young energetic feel. The cafés are filled at lunch time with national dishes such as 'lagman' (thick noodles served with meat), 'plov' (an Uzbek dish of rice and lamb) and shashlik (grilled meat) in hot demand.

in, pay five som (0.05 pence), and tell the driver to drop them off wherever they want. There are also trolley-buses and taxis, in which you usually have the opportunity to practice your basic Russian with the animated characters behind the wheel.

You soon begin to appreciate how far your money goes in a place like this: I had private tennis coaching

at 1600 metres above sea level.

Kyrgyzstan specialises in eco-tourism, particularly trekking and mountaineering. I spent 4 days on horseback traversing the high-altitude plateau between Song-Kul Lake and the town of Naryn. The scenery varies from a tree-less lunar landscape around the lake, to steep inclines with touches of snow, and then finally declines into warmer tree-filled valleys with the rivers flowing at only a small trickle during the summer.

It was with some sadness that I boarded my flight back to the normality that is Cambridge. I had only scratched the surface and am already planning a return trip for next summer. Kyrgyzstan has a lot to offer, especially if you are willing to learn some Russian and connect with the students through the universities in Bishkek as well as appreciate the countryside. Its manageable size makes it a gateway to the rest of the region: who knows, next time I might take a drive to Almaty, Kazakhstan, or a train to Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Forget the moon, the true adventure is in Central Asia...

"Planning a trip to Kyrgyzstan is like planning a trip to the moon, only most people know where the moon is"

Road side kiosks sell 'Komist' - a fermented drink from mare's milk with a highly unique taste, and 'Kvas' - a staple drink from the Soviet Union derived from bread.

Getting around by 'marsrutka' (a minivan turned bus) is highly entertaining; locals wave them down at any point along the route, cram themselves

from the former Kyrgyz national champion for 10 dollars an hour, and he quotes his rate as 'very expensive'.

Only by venturing out into the countryside do you appreciate the true beauty of this country. 94% of Kyrgyzstan is mountainous and the second largest alpine lake, Issyk-Kul, can be found in the east of the country

The Kenya Project: a different style of travel

Tom Ebbutt

I am firmly of the belief that there are two very different types of travel experiences.

The first takes place as you skim across a country, or quite often a continent, stopping to take pictures whenever the Lonely Planet decrees and mixing mainly with those who are from roughly the same background as you but with rather longer hair.

The second allows you to become part of a country rather than an observer of it, and to become to the people upon whose lives you are imposing not just an extremely large pound sign but, and at best this should work in both directions, someone from which something of another world can be taken, and hopefully a friend as well.

This kind of travel is somewhat different. You plan, you go, you stay, you learn from what surrounds you. Instead of passing through and maybe picking up Coca Cola before you

catch the night bus to the next backpacker hostel, you stop, shop at the market and bargain for a chicken.

I say to the next backpackers' hostel but if you choose your destination well there won't be one. Over the past two summers (yes, this is the bit where I declare my vested interest) I've spent 3 months up in the highlands of south west Kenya in and around a town called Kisii working for the Kenya Project Partnership, a educational development charity which has its roots at Cambridge University.

This summer I spent my time out there working to organise HIV/AIDS education for our network of schools in partnership with an international NGO called Merlin. Every week since arriving home I've received emails of some sort or other from Joel Mwencha, the HIV/AIDS supervisor in Kenya, informing me of the scheme's progress. Last week there arrived in the post a series of letters from teachers and pupils at the schools involved. I would quite happily

sit here and quote them at length but I would just be shamelessly pulling heart strings, so in return for sparing you that, I hope you see what I mean.

There are benefits from any sort of travel for those that you visit. To take one example, the Nepali economy relies (post-Maoists perhaps relied?) almost solely on tourist dollars and welcomes every visit with open arms. Hopping from city to city can give you just as good a feel as spending half a year holed up in a north Dakota summer camp. On the other hand, the wrong sort of work can do more harm than it does good, though there is also an argument that says perhaps the cultural exchange and capital flow are positives that should also weigh heavily on this equation.

However on the whole this contrast holds more than true. Those who go travelling without working are depriving both them and the country they visit of invaluable benefits to both sides. Discuss.



Tim Button

Applications for the Kenya Project Partnership close on 6th November. To get more information, or download an application form, visit <http://www.okp.org.uk/>

Escape

Explore & Pioneer

Ian Ball

EVERY SUMMER since the early 1950s Cambridge Students have been going to the far flung corners of the Earth in search of science and adventure. CU Expeditions Society (CUEx) is here to help it happen, offering advice and expertise to help expeditions become a success.

Expeditions allow you to experience some of the remotest and most beautiful corners of the earth. They offer you an incredible opportunity to gain a deep and fulfilling appreciation of cultures and ways of life, to get to know people who don't look and think like you, to visit places as far as the eye can reach and be inspired by natural wonders and exotic wildlife.

From mountaineering, community development projects to scientific research, an expedition can be anything you want it to be. Some expeditions are subject based; others are pure adventure, such as crossing over the centre of Greenland using kites. Previous projects have been done on high altitude medicine research in the Andes, coral research in Fuji, conservation projects in South East Asia and Rock Art surveys in Lesotho.



Matthew Wordsworth

As a student expedition you potentially have access to many funding sources; make good use of them while you can. Once your expedition has been approved by the Cambridge Expeditions Committee, you are entitled to privileges such as charitable status and the CUEx medical scheme.

We aim to make sure that every expedition goes out with the appropriate skill set for a successful expedition. Most expeditions have a medical officer, and he or she will normally attend the Royal Geographical Society (RGS) wilderness medicine training course.

It doesn't matter if you've never done anything like this before; if you have an expedition idea we want to hear from you. There are many experienced people in the university who will guide you along the way and CUEx is here for you.

If you like the idea of an expedition but aren't sure what to do or where to go, come to our Introduction Squash on Thursday 4th November at 8pm in the Latimer room, Clare College. For more information visit our website www.srccf.ucam.org/cuex or email CUEx at isb25@cam.ac.uk.

Hippy communes, white cubes, and YBAS

Ronojoy Dam talks to Sam Taylor-Wood, Brit Art's leading lady

Midday on a Monday and Sam Taylor-Wood is not feeling too great. But she is still in a warm and friendly mood. I am slightly taken aback by this, expecting somewhat more of a proud and shirking arrogance. Instead I am greeted with a genuine honesty, joviality and belief that is immediately endearing.

Described as the 'renaissance woman of the British art scene', Sam Taylor-Wood graduated from Goldsmiths College in 1990 and has since been critically praised internationally for her work in film and photography, receiving the Illy Café Prize for Most Promising Artist at the Venice Biennale (1997), a Turner Prize nomination (1998), as well as being the youngest ever artist to have a solo exhibition at the Hayward Gallery, London (2002). Leaving art school, Taylor-Wood found her focus in a different field. "After graduating, I worked at the Royal Opera House. Goldsmiths had been very intense and I just wanted to get away from art." However to art she returned, "I had been studying sculpture at college and photography and video work seemed a very natural development from that."

Human vulnerability and strength is at the core of much of Taylor-Wood's work. For a mother who has fought two battles with cancer, I ask her how she feels events in her personal life have affected her work. "Motherhood and serious operations are, and have been, a major part of my life and obviously they have affected my work but not in any one single particular way." However, Taylor-Wood is not an artist without a sense of humour. Last year she was persuaded to sing on a version of Donna Summer's 'Love To Love You', which she performed at a night club bedecked in black wig and sunglasses. It seems like an adolescent shower-singing ambition being fulfilled. "What do you mean teenage?! It still is a dream to be a pop star," she says with an ironic indignance, "The Pet Shop Boys work in the same studio as me and are good friends. It was their idea. I was totally up for it and it was a lot of fun."

She spent her teenage years in a Sussex hippy commune with her mother and stepfather but she does anything but go all trees and lentils on me when the topic comes up in our conversation. "Growing up in a hippy commune, I knew it wasn't normal. It really pissed me off. I longed for normal." She becomes even more endearing.

Taylor-Wood is currently working with Ray Winstone on a feature film based on the life of William Blake. This seems like one of those ideas hatched in the early hours of intoxicated midnight rambling adrenalin. She elucidates that, "Making a film about William Bake was Ray's idea. It's very exciting to be involved with a film, which is something I've never done before and the drawn out process is one that I'm not used to. My art process is very direct. I have an idea

and I make it. I love challenges and this is definitely a challenge for me." I heard a rumour she wanted some sort of Johnny Cash influence upon the Blake character. "The Johnny Cash parallel was something of a Blakean revelation in the middle of the night, which stemmed from Blake's somewhat rock 'n' roll character."

Fundamental human emotions, such as desire, anger, loneliness and boredom, are at the core of Taylor-Wood's work. She creates provocative situations that hinge on an unremitting urge to defamiliarise and a manipulation of audience expectation through an ironic and subversive use of her media. The play of reality against artifice is inherent within her art and this can be seen in her recent work 'Crying Men', which depicts Hollywood's leading men such as Paul Newman and Benicio Del Toro in various states of sorrow. "I'm fascinated by portraiture. People are so used to smiling in front of a camera. It's what they're used to. I wanted to reverse those expectations. I used actors for the project because they challenge your perception of reality with regards to the picture you see in front of you. You are forced to question how genuine the sentiments on show are." Taylor-Wood took a different take on portraiture earlier on in the year with her film 'David' for the National Portrait Gallery, capturing the England football captain in a serene state of sleep. She has been criticized, however, by what some see as a gratuitous use of celebrity. How does she feel about such comments? She shrugs this off without a hint of bitterness, saying, "People who make that sort of criticism are not looking closely enough at the work."

Taylor-Wood is famous for her use of classical references in works such as her reconstruction of Michelangelo's 'Pieta' (2001) in the form of a film of her cradling a semi-naked Robert Downey Jr. "I use a lot of sources from



Self Portrait Suspended VIII 2004

the history of art. I like making work where you're demystifying, decoding and looking at things with a new perspective." It is religious imagery in particular, especially that from Renaissance and Baroque painting, that Taylor-Wood often incorporates into her work as she explores the divisions between sacred and profane.



Jude Law from 'Crying Men' 2003

There is even something saintly and rather reverential about her 'Crying Men' and 'David' portraits too. Are the roots of this perhaps to be found in any personal religious belief? "I'm not religious and not a big fan of organised religion at all. However religious iconography has provided an established art form for thousands of years and I'm completely fascinated by it."

Taylor-Wood is calm and light-hearted throughout our conversation and not at all guarded or edgy but much of her work exudes a sense of solitariness and inward looking. With a humble frankness she explains, "Isolation is a difficult one to explain. I often feel the need to be apart from people, to be in my own little world, to be on my own, you know?" A lot of her focus rests upon the individual within society and ideas about identity whether it be 1993's 'Fuck, Suck, Spank, Wank' self-portrait or her new photographic series 'Self-Portrait Suspended'. These expressions of fragility and strength seem to be indicative of something very close at the heart of Taylor-Wood. "Political and cultural context is intertwined with the personal. It's part and parcel of the same thing. You cannot avoid it. Sexuality is of course a major part of our lives. It's inherent within it and is definitely important."

She is still very much associated with

her involvement in the notorious YBA (Young British Artists) movement, a title that covered a wealth of artistic diversity. "The YBAs was a name given to us rather than a name taken. A lot of strong artists emerged from it like Damien Hirst. People provided its controversy rather than the actual art. All that we really shared was that we were all young at the same time."

So what's exciting her right now? "What excites me?" she repeats with a toying deliberation. And then immediately she replies with a slight laugh, "Lemsp for the next two hours and my new show at the White Cube." At the end of my emails I have the tag line from *Rocky*: "His whole life was a million-to-one shot." As our conversation draws to a close, this is one of the last things I expect to come up. While I get ready to say goodbye, she hurriedly blurts out, "And honestly your *Rocky* quote at the end, I loved it. That's the only reason I did it because I thought 'Oh God I've got so many interviews to do. I can't do them all' but when I read that I thought I've got to do it. It's the same sort of thing as how I feel in life; you can't always be so serious. You have to take a chance on some things."

Sam Taylor-Wood's exhibition of new work is at White Cube, from 28th October to 4th December 2004

Is Big Brother watching your computer?

The University knows everything but does nothing, says Sam Richardson

Every single web page requested by every Cambridge student in a College room is logged and stored by the University. The powers that be have a record of every item students have downloaded in the past six months.

Since the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000, the above situation is a fact of life. According to the website of CUDN (Cambridge University Data Network), 'users need to be aware that their communications may be intercepted by IT staff as permitted by UK legislation. The legislation allows the interception of network traffic without consent for purposes such as recording evidence of transactions, ensuring regulatory compliance, detecting crime or unauthorized use, and ensuring the efficient operation of University communications systems.'

This 'unauthorized use' includes 'the downloading or storage of offensive material including pornography (whether technically legal or not) and copyright material'. This copyright material includes music MP3s and video files, which, according to one IT Officer, over 90% of Cambridge students have on their computers. Furthermore, using the computer for personal profit is a very grey area, and theoretically everything from selling stuff on ebay to setting up a high interest bank account could be clamped down on if the IT bigwigs felt like it.

But Cambridge's IT officers don't have it all their own way. In March of this year Andrew Perry, a 22-year-old IT Officer at Trinity, was jailed for 18

months after pleading guilty to 18 charges of making indecent images of children, and two of possession, reflecting the 1,420 pornographic pictures involving children as young as two months old.

Nonetheless, potentially at least, the University is more spying than spied against. However, the reality is far different. CUDN is not actively policed, but instead stores its information in case organisations such as the Police (generally investigating hacking or child pornography) or the BPI (the British Phonographic Institute, which represents record companies) find evidence of illegality. The network is, therefore, policed passively rather than actively.

This is partly simply due to time constraints. The sheer volume of traffic that passes through CUDN is enormous, and separating the deliberate misdemeanours with accidental wanderings would be very difficult. For example, this Summer CUSU set up the website camexams.com, to assist students taking their exams. However, typing in camexam.com led a number of students to an entirely different website, which promised 'tasteful adult content' such as 'I just turned 18' and 'nude cam'.

Furthermore, CUDN is one of no less than three organisations which, in a Weberian bureaucracy to rival only the organisation of the SPS faculty, can lay claim to the authority to police our computers. And each of these organisations has its own set of rules.

At one end is JANET. This is not the Janet, 18, who wants to show you



Luke Walker

Who's looking over your shoulder? What you do in the comfort of your own room may not be as private as you think

her assets' on the camexam.com website, but rather the Joint Academic Network facilities which are shared by universities across the country. CUDN is merely the middleman, and its user rules are similar to those of JANET's. Below this are the colleges, which retain some of the most stringent rules of all.

The rules on the use of College IT services vary widely. The rules of use tend to reflect those of CUDN, but often the punishments could involve being fined or deaned. Some Colleges

even reserve the right to demand immediate entry to a student's room in order to inspect a computer. Yet, despite this potential, less than fifty students across Cambridge have been deaned for computing offences (excluding excessive use of bandwidth) in the past five years.

The likelihood is that students who wish to break the law, or to satisfy their urges on adult sites, can act with impunity so long as their actions do not threaten other users (stealing user identities or sending viruses would, for example, invite the immediate falling

of the proverbial ton of bricks)

The main disincentive against downloading is the moral one, and the fact that serial downloaders (such as a Jesuan who told Varsity 'at HMV all you really pay for is the CD's packaging, so by downloading a song I'm not actually stealing at all') feel compelled to try to justify themselves show that this is the case.

But if you do get caught, don't blame us. Big Brother is watching. But, for the time being at least, that's all he is doing.

Latest footy sims battle for the top prize

Luke Walker

Every year, a new version of EA's FIFA simulator comes along with all the unwanted inevitability of the Cambridge winter, but nonetheless it maintains a car-crash-like ability to attract the gaze of console football fans.

However, for some years now an upstart has upset the money-making machine that is the FIFA series. Konami's Pro Evolution Soccer (nee International Superstar Soccer) is the Brian Clough of the football games: doing great things when no one expected it, enthralling and frustrating in equal measure, providing brilliant performances but with rough edges.

FIFA, on the other hand, has traditionally been the Manchester United of the gaming world: it's glossy and glamorous and was the dominant force in the nineties, but it has underachieved in recent years, and tends to be supported mainly by boys in the home counties who don't know much about football except that Daddy will buy them the new version of FIFA every Christmas.

But a student's money is much harder earned. Have these franchises done enough to be worthy of your forty quid. Or should you, like Alex Ferguson, rest on your laurels and hope that Santa will still go down your chimney as easily as Wayne Rooney goes down in the box?

We'll start with FIFA: an appro-



FIFA Football 2005 is the eleventh installment in EA's legendary football series...

appropriate starting point, since it really is starting point of all football sims. FIFA International Soccer came out on PC in 1994, boasting a quasi-3D isometric viewpoint, and Tony Gubba's commentary which was the greatest ever to grace a football game. However, the Manchester United striker was called Brian Plank.

Since then, the FIFA series has at times been guilty of spending too much effort on getting real leagues and players, and not enough on the gameplay. Even now, the controls remain unresponsive, and the slide tackles seem to lack the ferocity you'd find on the average Saturday of college football. The main gameplay enhancement is the ability to make

players move off the ball, although in reality this just seems to result in them being caught offside, by a meticulously detailed 3D linesman.

The player is, in some ways, elevated to a spectator. The show on parade is gorgeous to look at, and never have the graphics of a sports game looked so good, or paid so much attention to detail. But FIFA does, ultimately, seem like a show and not a game. When you get down to pitch level, everything happens a little slower than it should do - just what you'd expect from the true veteran that FIFA is.

Pro Evo, on the other hand, provides the most involving gameplay of any sports game on any console. The players' artificial intelligence is truly



...But in Konami's Pro Evolution Soccer 4 it has serious competition

stunning. Who needs to move their players around off the ball, when they make such realistic runs? The referee, just like real life, is a prima donna with a penchant for harsh sendings off and bizarre penalties. Like Eric Cantona, Pro Evo is frustrating and brilliant in equal measure. Just when you think you've got it mastered, it will come and karate kick you in the groin.

The graphics, while still inferior to FIFA's, are pretty impressive, and the new free kick system is a vast improvement. Winning at Pro Evo comes down to a combination of flare, luck, determination, and unplugging your opponent's controller at the vital moment. Winning at FIFA requires you spending lots

of time locked in your room practicing free kicks.

And EA need to be locked in their room, until they will realise that the key to a football game does not lie in graphics or in having hundreds of teams, but in being something that you want to play with your mates, and beat them at. Don't get me wrong, FIFA 2005 is a competent game. It has the icing, but Pro Evolution Soccer has the cake.

FIFA Football 2005 (EA Sports)
£39.99 (PS2 and Xbox)
Also on PC, GB and GameCube.

Pro Evolution Soccer 4 (Konami)
£39.99 (PS2 and Xbox)

/guide		/stage	
FRIDAY 29			
19:45	ADC	Top Quark Productions present Oxygen	
23:00	ADC	CUADC present Landscape/ Elle est la	
19:45	Arts Theatre	Premiere tour of witty romantic comedy Clouds	
SATURDAY 30			
19:45	ADC	Top Quark Productions present Oxygen	
23:00	ADC	CUADC present Landscape/ Elle est la	
19:45	Arts Theatre	Premiere tour of witty romantic comedy Clouds	
SUNDAY 31			
19:45	ADC	CUMTS Bar Night	
19:30	Arts Theatre	The Crofters - Distinctive and entertaining folk music	
MONDAY 1			
19:45	Arts Theatre	The Complete Works of William Shakespeare	
TUESDAY 2			
19:45	ADC	CUADC presents Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead	
23:00	ADC	Footlights: Smoker	
19:45	Arts Theatre	The Complete Works of William Shakespeare	
WEDNESDAY 3			
19:45	ADC	CUADC presents Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead	
22:30	ADC	The Marlowe Society present Rostov's House	
19:45	Arts Theatre	The Complete Works of William Shakespeare	
THURSDAY 4			
19:45	ADC	CUADC presents Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead	
22:30	ADC	The Marlowe Society present Rostov's House	
19:45	Arts Theatre	The Complete Works of William Shakespeare	

/clubs		
FRIDAY 29		
QUEENS	Cyberia	Dance / Electronica
FEZ	Stu Banks	Chunky house
JUNCTION	Pop Art	Indie / Alternative
LIFE	Boogienight	70s and 80s night
SATURDAY 30		
CLARE	C.R.Y.P.T.I.C.	Breaks and bootlegs from the freelance Hellraiser and ZerO (Streetwise)
QUEENS	Rocky Horror	Halloween Cheese
FEZ	Liquid People	Africanism All Stars & Defected Records
SUNDAY 31		
COCO	Sunday Roast	Cheese and Chart
FEZ	Funky Affairs	Vibe FM's Rick Grooves
LIFE	Sunday Session	Commercial dance, party, r'n'b
MONDAY 1		
FEZ	Fat Poppaddaddys	Mix of Funky Grooves
TUESDAY 2		
BALLARE	Top Banana	CUSU's Best Cheese
COCO	Licked	That urban flava
LIFE	Unique	LBGT extravaganza
WEDNESDAY 3		
BALLARE	Rumboogie	Sports Men and Women come out to play
THURSDAY 4		
COCO	Urbanite	C USU Hip Hop and RnB

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/guide	/the rest
FRIDAY 29	
13:10	Charles Siem - violin and Caroline Jaya-Ratnam piano will perform works by Grieg and Vitali. Amongst the permanent collection at Kettle's Yard . Admission is free. Concerts will be over by 2pm.
MONDAY 1	
13:00 - 14:00	CU Baha'i Society 10 min readings from many religions on "Peacefulness" followed by a free simple lunch. Newnham College MCR

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tact Simon Bird at sab77.




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DOGVILLE
thursday 4th november
9pm



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(wks 4&7, main&late)
and elsewhere - Mignight Mon 8th Nov
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Contact Holly, hbs23. Info and coversheet at
www.pembrokeplayers.org

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Cambridge architecture: ancient joke

Olly Batham and Martin Brown investigate a startling intellectual design mystery

CAMBRIDGE ARCHITECTURE has been one of the world's longest running practical jokes, new research suggests. The completion of the English Faculty building on West Road has led to the discovery of documents which suggest that a sinister, now international coalition of architects, decided in the late 13th century that they were to wreak aesthetic havoc upon the university that had just been founded.

University officials, concerned about the future technical stability of their buildings, have been consulting Dr. T.R.Would, an international expert on subversive architecture, and more recently a successful swimmer. Would's controversial theories concerning Cambridge architecture first came to light after he gave a lecture entitled 'Marble: Why?' The most debated points were his comments on the older, central colleges.

'Look at the confused, chaotic m el e of the Sidgwick Site!'

"Many would point to the beauty of these colleges as being a high point of Cambridge architecture, yet this attitude smacks of the inbred views of

over-privileged morons convincing themselves that useless 14th century ornamentation is somehow central to their lives."

Would finished his lecture by stating that King's College could lift itself out of its 'burgundy debt' problem without having to concede anything to the students by selling off all the superfluous stone of the college to a cut-price housing organisation. The more recently founded out-of-town-centre colleges did not escape Would's diatribe. He accused them of being of a 'council estate-cum-prison' design, the 'enormous abstract concrete clitoris' of New Hall (recently voted on the BBC website as being one of the most hideous architectural vulva in the country) receiving particularly vitriolic attack.

The *Idler* contacted Would to interview the man about his views on the recent English faculty discoveries.

"The architects are just getting lazier, so their ancient, dark joke is becoming more and more evident," Would stated, sat nude upon the Doric column that makes sole seat of his home, eating tuna.

"When it was the really clever guys, like Wren, they could design something that was so unbelievably hideous that only Cambridge University members could possibly conceive that there might be something aesthetically redeeming about it. Just look at the size of St. John's!

Fiona Symington



The new English Faculty building: the latest in a centuries-old tradition of dark, subversive architecture

Isn't it vulgar? Of course they missed the point completely with Cripps' Court."

Would pointed to the 'confused, chaotic m el e' of architecture at the Sidgwick Site as being indicative of the spreading problem in Cambridge as a whole. "What started out as a bit of an

in-joke has become a fully-fledged nightmare that shows no signs of stopping. First they build that enormous red History turd, then the corporate, soulless hall of the Law faculty is erected, and finally this! The giant pink doughnut of the English department!"

Would finally delivered his chilling solution to the chilling problem. "We either pave over everything right now or resign ourselves to seeing enormous marble dragons with six eyes fondling Tit Hall by 2025. I'm only trying to help you."

Sporting shock extra *Idler's* international roundup

Olly Batham

SINCE THE dissolution of CUWRFC's UKIP Division due to the discovery of a sordid back-door refrigerator orgy, *The Idler* has commissioned an independent survey into the political ties and sexual activities of University sports teams. Our mysterious deep throat in the



Sport: sexy, costly, evil?

University sporting scene, Mr. Gloom, provided us with a statement, claiming that "Arses, tits and willies are important parts of University sporting life. Don't you think the Osprey's new calendar, with all those nubile, flexible, moist young delicious bimbettes proves that?" Circumstantial evidence highlights the significant role of willies in

University sport, for many of the teams, although 'twats' has come up as an important bodily part more than once. Bottom of the relevant sporting word table is 'sperm.'

Furthermore, The *Idler's* investigations have led us to believe that sporting teams being courted by political parties is nothing new – in fact, the outcomes of the past ten General Elections were accurately predicted by a method using the results of various college and University teams and their requisite sponsors. The intricate, arcane system that has been devised by these political diviners is, as yet, undiscovered: what is known, however, is that the attitude of certain sports teams in becoming so public about their 'sordid money grabbing' has not gone down well. "We're not pimps," said one source, who preferred, unusually, to remain anonymous. "Any extras that come are purely down to the discretion of individual members." Whereupon, he had to return to his job punting.

In other University sporting news, public drive-by abortions have become the third favourite extra-curricular activity in Cambridge.

"It's not just a life – it IS life!" stated one enthusiastic exponent of the sport. The winners of the half blue are likely to be invited to special dinners, perhaps even on the Continent.

Chris Smyth

Tony Blair apologises; critics forgive him

THE PRIME Minister today offered a full and unreserved apology for misleading Parliament and taking the nation into an unnecessary war. "I'm sorry," Mr Blair announced during Prime Minister's Question Time.

"I made a grave misjudgement when I told you in 2003 that Saddam Hussein was a growing threat to this country. I believed it strongly at the time, but I accept I should not have exaggerated intelligence reports to convince others. For that I sincerely apologise."

The announcement was greeted with delight and forgiveness by opponents of the war. "I welcome the Prime Minister's words," said Robin Cook, the former foreign secretary who resigned over the conflict. "I am glad he has had the courage to admit to his mistakes and express contrition for them. I for one forgive him, and as far as I am concerned, this now ends the matter."

Liberal Democrat leader Charles Kennedy was also full of praise for Mr Blair's decision which he called 'courageous'. "Mr Blair has done the statesmanlike thing in apologising," Mr Kennedy told the Commons. "He and I have disagreed on this issue from the beginning, but today I

would like to join the Right Honourable member for Folkestone and Hythe in congratulating him for admitting his errors, and excusing him from any further consequences. I believe we can now draw a line under this issue, and get on with fighting the General Election on the Liberal Democrats' strong ground of crime, schools, and pensions."

More vocal critics of the Prime Minister also echoed these words of absolution.

"I have previously called on the Prime Minister to resign for his lies and betrayals," said former International Development Secretary Clare Short. "But this apology changes things. I can see he is genuinely upset about his mistakes and I think he has suffered enough now."

Playwright and activist Harold Pinter, who has previously condemned the 'warmonger Bush and his greasy lapdog Blair,' said in a statement that "in apologising for his lies and war crimes, Blair has shown he does have a conscience after all. He's done his grovelling, now let him get on with running the country."

Polls suggested that the Prime Minister's trust rating had risen significantly as a result of the apology, with one swing voter calling Mr Blair's words and his single, glistening tear "very convincing" and "deeply moving."

Government refuses American request for troops

THE DEFENCE secretary Geoff Hoon has announced that Britain will not be acceding to an American request to send troops into the Sunni triangle, in support of the US assault on Falluja. "We have considered the military situation carefully," Mr Hoon told the Commons. "And we have decided that this deployment is not in British interests. Therefore we have refused the American request."

The Pentagon was philosophical about the decision. "It's a disappointment," said spokesman Lt Col. Fulton Hughes. "But we respect the decision of our allies and partners." Col Hughes denied that the refusal would cause a significant military problem. "We've got plenty of troops over there. And if we need more, we can just call some more Reservists over from Missouri. I don't think that will cause any major problems."

INSIDE

Hostage Crisis! Does media coverage encourage the Kidnappers? See pages 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 12, 17, 94

Harry Crisis! Do paparazzi snaps encourage hounding of Royals? See pics, pages 2, 8, 9, 10, 11, 19, 108

Silence on the radio: let the airwaves flow

Henry Bowen tunes into the state of the student radio station

Last week, the student radio station CUR1350 was nominated a record eight times for this year's Student Radio Awards. But this fairly impressive feat has gone almost completely unnoticed by much of the student body; in fact, many students have been surprised to find out that a student radio station exists at all.

My first experience of a CUR1350 show was sitting on my mate's floor listening to a show being presented by a friend of his. It seemed fairly boring and unstructured, but the fact that the DJ was a complete stranger to me seemed to hinder my appreciation of the show: my mate was loving it. I left with the general impression that the structure of CUR1350 was built around a small group of friends, with one half being behind the mikes and the other half listening intently in their bedrooms. But are there oth-

ers out there, who listen to the station not because they're listening to their friends, but just because they enjoy it?

Like all broadcast media, CUR1350 has no direct way of telling how many people are listening to their station. The usual measurement is carried out by means of a survey, and the last one, about a year ago, estimated that there was an audience of just short of 1000 regular listeners. This is a pretty healthy number, far larger than what I had expected from my own limited experience. The fact that I've never actually been able to tune in on my radio was probably a factor.

CUR1350 broadcasts on the AM radio frequency. The licensing laws restrict the broadcast to a low power, which probably explains why the signal never seems to reach much beyond the immediate surroundings of

Churchill (although apparently on a good day it can reach as far as Bedford). However, the station is also available to listen to online, and with many student rooms having computers connected to college networks, the station is available to most of the university at high quality.

Of course, being able to listen to the station doesn't mean I want to listen to it. The shows have to have something I want to hear. And to be quite honest, most of them don't. The prevailing style during the daytime seems to be attempts to replicate daytime commercial radio - forgettable music interspersed with even more forgettable chat about nothing in particular. And even more frighteningly, there also seems to be a heavy bias towards indie with many of the presenters.

Ah yes, the indie scene. This strange crowd are rumoured to lurk deep within your college, jealously guarding their record collections. Bitterly scorning the delights of Cindy's or Coco's, they congregate occasionally at indie nights in

Queens', obscure bands at the Junction or Amnesty meetings in King's. Perhaps this secretive movement is responsible for swelling the listening figures of CUR1350.

Fortunately, come the evening, the musical tastes broaden considerably. So-called 'specialist' music shows take to the airwaves, and many of these are well worth listening to. Most of these are run by music lovers rather than budding Marks or Lards, so you actually get to hear something fresh most of the time. However, any DJs hoping to mix live on air are going to be disappointed: the decks and the mixer in the CUR1350 studio are placed so far apart that only Inspector Gadget could be expected to mix on them.

Unlike many other university radio stations, CUR1350 is completely self-funded. Paying for their licence fees by advertising and sponsorship alone, they have little to spare on their studio or their production. Therefore it is all the more impressive that their station is comparable with other university stations which are often generously fund-

ed by their student unions. Leeds Student Radio even has a full-time sabbatical position on the student body in charge of the radio station, and Bath University recently built a new TV and Radio broadcasting facility at a cost of £1.4m. Without even a central union building here in Cambridge, it's unlikely we'll see that level of support for a long time.

CUR1350 is 25 years old this year, but for much of its history it functioned purely for the people in the studios. The audience was neglected, and the station was instead used as a possible jumping off point for people who wanted to get a career in radio. Only in the last few years has the station been trying to focus equally on the audience, and to provide a station that would be as popular with students in general as with the presenters and their mates. Even though there's still a lot more to do, considering how far it's come, there's no reason to expect anything but a student radio station that keeps improving.

www.cur1350.co.uk

pick of the week

picking the wheat from the chaff



L'Avventura (Re)
Arts Picture House, Thursday 4th November, 5pm.

Antonioni, Italian and top banana. It may be black and white and old but don't hold this against it. You would be cheating yourself.



Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead
ADC, 7.45pm, November 2nd - 6th

Tom Stoppard was ridiculously young when he wrote this and, depressingly, it doesn't show. Watch it and develop an inferiority complex.



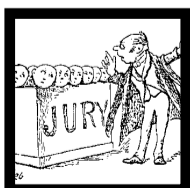
Christian Wolff
Kettle's Yard, Monday 1st November, 6.30pm or 7.30pm.

Kettle's Yard hosts a 70th birthday celebration of the influential American composer Christian Wolff with a concert and a talk by the man himself an hour earlier.



John Mayall & the Bluesbreakers
The Corn Exchange, Tuesday 2nd Nov

British rock'n'roll was born when musicians like Eric Clapton and the Rolling Stones picked up American blues, and John Mayall was the man who started it all. Don't miss it.



Trial By Jury
Union Chamber, 30th Oct - 1st Nov

The University Gilbert and Sullivan society reprise their popular May Week version of this satirical operetta of jilted brides and unrequited love. 7.30pm

image of the week



photo courtesy of

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'Voyage' competition - enter now

Roma, by Petra Vertes

The split personality of British Film

The Janus face of the British film industry highlights the clash between the Loach/Leigh school of uncompromising realism and the Working Title wish-fulfilling chocolate-box fantasy of England

Harry Joll

Another year, another repressed-middle-class-man-meets-glamorous-American-woman insipid injection of saccharine to the brain. Richard Curtis has a lot to answer for as *Wimbledon* (essentially his bastard child) stammers its way onto screens nationwide.

But for all those worried about the face of the British film industry this presents to the world, there is another way. Directors such as Ken Loach and Mike Leigh offer work of great quality.

Leigh and Loach have much in common. Both cut their teeth in television. With the exception of the former's debut, *Bleak Moments* (1971), his output was at first made for the medium and barely seen outside England.

After the video revolution, his films have come further into the public eye. *The Short & Curlies* (1990) and *Secrets And Lies* (1996) exemplify Leigh's range, his abilities both as a writer and director to strike a balance between the seriousness of the issues he examines and the comic characters or situations he creates. He develops a script by collaborating with his actors in an improvisational atmosphere. It is this kind of flexibility that lends his films such refreshing unpredictability.

In Loach's case it was documentaries that formed his distinctive style. He mastered the technical side of his craft, learning how to suit hand-held cameras and grainy 16mm film stock to his style.

He developed a sharp eye for the everyday, as well as the exceptional, that led him to make one of the finest British films of all time with the acclaimed *Kes* (1969). The story of a young boy and his escape from hardship through his friendship with a falcon offered at least the glimmer of hope in a grim look at the stifling impact of an unfeeling class

system.

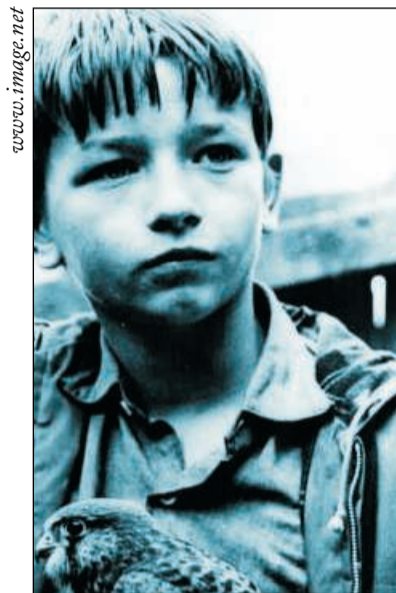
Social comment is central to both filmmakers' work, and if that doesn't sound like bubbly, light-hearted giggles that's because it isn't. However, to lump the films together as unrelentingly dour would be not only inaccurate but unfair. There is huge diversity between the darkness of *Bleak Moments* and the comedy of Loach's *Riff-Raff*.

These two directors in particular stand out as having consciously resisted, indeed rebelled against, the cash-tinged lure of the American studio system. It's for the best – not only are we spared more artistic whoring and drain of talent across the pond, but their brand of British socialist realism probably wouldn't have translated too well.

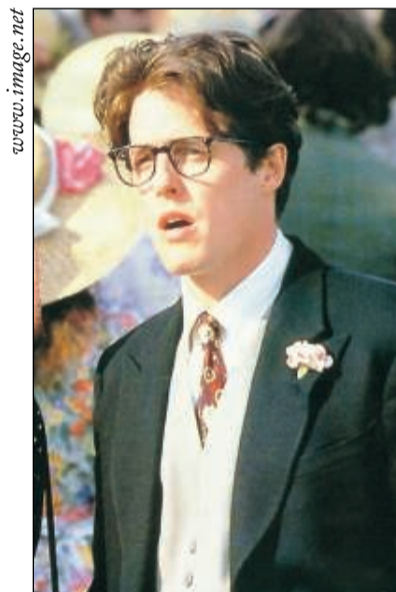
Their decision comes at a price. Poor distribution is one of the crosses directors who remain in Britain have to bear. Others are that financial success does not always follow critics' praise, and backing is simply harder to find. Despite this, a huge amount of talent opted to stay and determinedly convert their ideas into movies. Actors such as Robert Carlyle were launched from the Leigh/Loach school, and are the better for it.

Perhaps their methods and films can best be summed up in one word as 'uncompromising', and the idea of studio interference is an anathema. Everything from their style to their substance stems from a desire to follow the path they set out to follow.

The escapism of Curtis and co. has a place, but I'd choose innovation, unpredictability and the best actors in the country on most days. Certainly, it can be harrowing stuff but this is filmmaking both accomplished and unflinching; the humour is subtler and darker perhaps, but when found it makes for a much more profoundly satisfying experience.



Ken Loach's *Kes* 1969



Grant: man or mouse?

Ruth Palmer

Hollywood's favourite Englishman, Cary Grant, may have dashed to a church or two in his time but he was never captured on celluloid reversing up the M25 in a clapped-out old Mini Cooper.

In the expletive-laden opening sequence of surprise 1994 hit *Four Weddings and a Funeral* his namesake successor, Hugh Grant, looked less like the standard-issue romantic lead and more like Basil Fawlty auditioning for *The Italian Job*. A Union Jack on the car roof could not have made the message clearer: then-minor production company, Working Title, wanted us to Buy British.

There was no guarantee that the cinema-going nation would comply because, as it happened, Working Title wasn't selling another *Fawlty Towers*-meets-a-Mockney-heist caper. *Four Weddings* would follow the romantic entanglements of a thirtysomething public schoolboy and his band of merry toffs as they sauntered between manicured lawn and gilded ballroom, champagne flute in hand.

Scriptwriter Richard Curtis's previous creation, the conniving snob Edmund Blackadder, would have been a safer bet in terms of audience appeal. Yet – budding Marxist-Leninists look away now – Curtis's ear for a self-deprecating one-liner made the upper crust ensemble endearing embodiments of a national character. Grant's portrayal of Charles is one part diffident Old Etonian charm to two parts uncanny knack for social embarrassment. Bashing his forehead penitently against a satin-draped marquee support at one stage provides a neat metaphor for his wedding-relat-

ed sufferings throughout.

Amid a raft of flawless supporting performances, James Fleet excels as an Englishman with a literal castle, but also a puppyish exuberance which treads in cowpats and makes appallingly ill-judged speeches.

Where the cinematography seduces with a chocolate-box fantasy of England, the characterisation is ruefully, comically candid. Beyond Kristin Scott Thomas's icy but vulnerable Fi, the only elegance is in the writing.

A decade on, and the luxuriant wedding cake of a Working Title Romantic Comedy has acquired more frothy, elaborate icing with each tier (*Notting Hill*, *Bridget Jones's Diary*, *Love Actually*, *Wimbledon*). Yes, the usual plot is recipe-formulaic: upper-class Englishman meets sassy American, falls for her, falls out with her, and is variously aided and hindered by eccentric friends or family into realizing the strength of his feelings and making a mad dash (typically to an airport) to declare his love in an impossibly feel-good final set piece.

This is filmmaking with half an eye on the transatlantic market: unashamedly commercial and implausibly wish-fulfilling. But provided Working Title continue to ensure that for every creamy, beguiling American starlet, there's an unshowy but upstaging performance from a stalwart British talent; for every meltingly sweet romantic moment there's a Welshman pulling muscleman poses in ancient Y-fronts; for every implausibly festive London tableau there's a sherry-sodden heroine telling a party of carol singers to bugger off, Britishness on celluloid is in really rather good hands.

Earning his free cup of coffee

Lucy Styles talks to legendary British film-maker Ken Loach

The great Polish director Kieslowski said he'd be a slave to no man. But he'd buy Ken Loach a cup of coffee. This is a testament to his ability and following the recent release of *Ae Fond Kiss*, Ken Loach discusses filmmaking, politics and how the extraordinary is to be found in the most ordinary of circumstances.

You repeatedly focus on the rawness of everyday life. Is this because you feel that most cinema denies ordinary people their voice?

Most cinema is about making a commodity that people will want to see, escapism for those who don't want to confront aspects of their own lives. The ordinary becoming extraordinary is integral to our existence and we try to reflect this in the films.

Is this why you tend to work mainly with non-actors?

Non-actors tend to have a more intuitive response to the script. Though of course once they're in the film, they're essentially actors.

How do you choose these people?

It's a long process. It means meeting some of them on eight or nine occasions and putting them in different situations. If they can move you each time, you know they can do anything. **Is the rehearsal process for untrained**

actors very different from that suited to the experienced?

If the right people have been cast, the rehearsal process is simple and quite brief. I look to set up various scenes outside the script that bring out the essence of the personalities and the relationships between them, so they can develop the right mannerisms without killing the film. By the time we shoot, the actors know their characters so well that I don't need to tell them what to do – they do it intuitively. My role as director is merely to trigger that intuition. I can't simply tell someone to be more angry, the others in the scene need to justify it.

In a single word, how would you describe your directorial style?

Reckless. I don't work things out shot by shot. We begin filming and see where the shoot takes us. It's a risky process – we could easily come away with nothing. It would be pointless to decide the shots in advance because I believe that the inflections of the conversation should dictate the rhythm of the footage.

If the process is so organic, how do you draw it to a conclusion?

The actors know that the conflict of the film needs to be resolved, but they are free to draw the arc of the film in

their own hand. It's a huge privilege to do my job, I don't want to be dictatorial.

Is that why you don't approve of the phrase 'a Ken Loach film'?

Yes, because no project is mine, it belongs to everyone involved. I only write and direct – it would be more correct to call it a "a Kodak film" if anything.

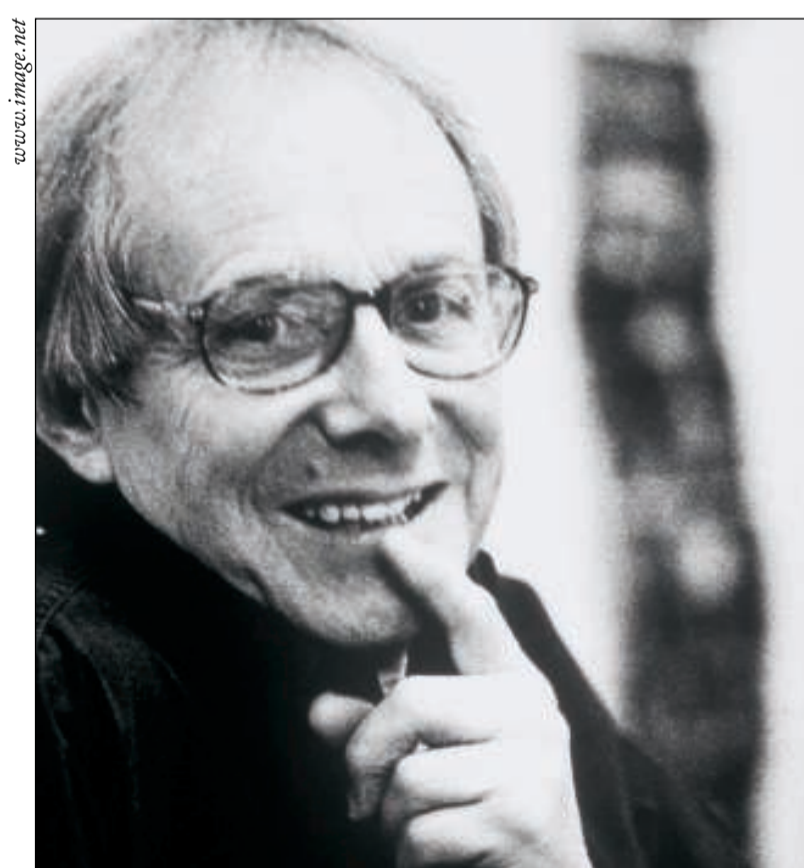
With so little cinematographic preparation, do you have to do many takes of each scene?

We shoot the scenes quickly so that the footage that reaches the screens is fresh and the actors are bright-eyed. Much more time goes into the editing process.

Was this formula in part dictated by limited budgets?

Yes, at first this process emerged out of the practical factor of having to work with small budgets where it was impossible to do innumerable re-shoots. We had to work with what we had in post-production. We continue to work this way because it seems that in general less money leads to more creative freedom. The only real limitation is your imagination.

You have been criticised for your filming on foreign land as in *Bread and Roses*. Do you feel that an inability to



Ken Loach

fully penetrate a culture other than your own is another limitation on your filmmaking?

Fair comment, I feel much more comfortable on British soil. There are a lot of films about foreign political con-

licts that I think ought to be made but I don't know that I would be able to.

Finally, do you have a favourite amongst the films you have made?

Films are like babies – you can't prefer one to another!

Power of imagination fails to impress

Finding Neverland, Marc Foster's follow-up to *Monster's Ball*, tells the story of JM Barrie's relationship with the Llewellyn-Davis family, the long-acknowledged inspiration behind his classic work of children's literature, *Peter Pan*.

From the opening bars of its Sugar Plum Fairy-esque soundtrack, *Finding Neverland* soon lays aside any pretensions to being a serious literary bio-pic. Instead, this is going to be one of those 'heart-warming' tales about the power of the human imagination to overcome mortality, economic realities, the basic laws of physics and just about anything else you care to throw at it.

Rather than criticising or analysing Barrie's tendency to romanticise childhood, the film is annoyingly content to participate, offering an over-simplistic division of characters into either tyrants or playmates; those who disrupt the fantasy and those who collude in it. Barrie's wife (Radha Mitchell) and the icy Llewellyn-Davies grandmother (Julie Christie) are both depicted as unsympathetic "baddies," because they question Barrie's innocent (though undeniably suspicious) involvement with the boys. In a suggestively inter-textual nod to *Hook*, Dustin Hoffman plays the only viable anchor to adult reality, Barrie's world-weary, cynical producer, Charles Frohman.

Aside from the dependable brilliance of Hoffman, the only other performance of note comes from twelve-year old Freddie Highmore, impressively moving as the boy who grew up too fast, Peter Barrie. Depp is competent,



A lost boys' picnic

but the fleeting appearance of *Pirates of The Caribbean* collaborator Mackenzie Crook serves as a wistful reminder of the heights of camp brilliance he has reached in his portrayals of other English eccentrics, while Kate Winslet might as well be reprising her role from *Titanic* as yet another plucky, rosy-cheeked Edwardian femme, the Llewellyn-Davies mother.

Despite the beautifully realised fantasy sequences, designed in pleasing homage to Edwardian set design, it is a

little too easy to resist what charms *Finding Neverland* may have and find yourself asking why this irresponsible man doesn't start facing up to his responsibilities – a question entirely at odds with the spirit of *Peter Pan* and moreover unsatisfactorily answered by the film.

As a literary bio-pic *Finding Neverland* lacks insight, and as a children's film it's simply a little dull - disappointing on both counts.

Ellen E. Jones

A bit of Leigh way

There is no denying that Mike Leigh understands film; he knows the smell of its morning breath and how to butter its bread. So for Sandra Hebron, Artistic Director of the London Film Festival, *Vera Drake*, Leigh's latest offering, was a self-evident choice for the opening night Gala. "So beautifully crafted and performed. It is a film that makes you think as well as feel." And with these words she defined it absolutely.

Seemingly mundane daily tasks are focused upon throughout: we watch Vera (Imelda Staunton) unbutton her jacket and take off her hat, then her daughter do the same. Later scenes are dedicated to the laying of the table and the unpacking of a bag. But these unavoidable life tasks are not portrayed so that one can philosophise over the meaningless of it all, nor to attribute some ritualistic sanctity to the actions of the lowly 'heroine'. They are included because life does necessitate that we take off our outerwear and prepare dinner, so why fool ourselves for two hours into thinking that it doesn't?

But equally it's not that *Vera Drake* is suffering from meta-film sensibilities. It isn't trying to comment on the illusory nature of filmmaking, and Leigh doesn't hesitate to use traditional filmmaking techniques. For above all this is a story. That of a woman like so many "who have always been in the backstreets for hundreds of years", Leigh comments, helping other women who get in "trouble".

"My job is to present a moral dilemma, because this is a moral dilemma, which you [the audience] have to confront." Leigh has no qualms about his

position as a writer and director. He is not trying to dictate to the audience what we should think, or what the right choices might be, and so consciously he avoids outrightly polemical direction.

But when the police come to arrest Vera for carrying out abortions, the camera rests on her, at eye-level, as she sits. There is only the smallest change in her expression, in her eyes, but it is so precise that it is almost terrifying. So it's not that Leigh is afraid to use emotion-invoking performances to stimulate controversial thought. In fact, once employed they continue until the end and this is why you can leave the cinema feeling somewhat drained.

Vera begins to deteriorate after her arrest. Vigorous and agile for the first part of the film, constantly rushing around, walking briskly through one shot straight to the next, she becomes inward and very fragile in the slow ultimate scenes, not even being able to sit down without assistance.

And that's when things started to annoy me. Why are Vera and her husband Stan so short, and their son Sid so tall? That's not very realistic. And who is playing the female officer, taking away from Staunton's emotionally-charged performance with her wooden lines?

Vera Drake unashamedly sets out to make a social comment, and there is no catharsis to take the load off. But it succeeds because it does make you angry and it does make you feel, and above all you find yourself asking why is she being punished for this? Which is all that Mike Leigh asks for.

Agata Belcen

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There's life in the old clowns yet

Harriet Walker previews the Stoppard classic, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*

"Every exit is an entry to somewhere else." Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* has long been celebrated on a wall of the Baron of Beef, but attempting to locate these exits during the ADC's latest production of it would be a serious error. The team that brought us Stephen's Berkoff's *East* as a lateshow, and won the Play of the Year award for it, have come through again for Cambridge theatregoers, this time with a fully deserving mainshow.

Stoppard's play can perhaps be seen as a 'safe' option. Its blend of poignant wit, the snigger factor and intellectually sound throwaway comments has ensured an enduring popularity with audiences since it was first performed in 1966. His intelligence, humour and straight-down-the-line theatrical common sense make the play an amiable and thought-provoking spectacle.

This is not a work of uproarious hilarity, but it doesn't try to be - plenty of wry smiles, titters and snorts of agreement with the lovable main characters are on offer. This is absurdist humour at its most endearing, yet with a fair amount of existential angst lurking beneath it, and this produc-



Tom Secretan and Ben Deery as Stoppard's interchangeable clowns

tion is sensitive and competent enough to convey both aspects. There is a fine balance between the comically ridiculous and the tear-jerkingly heart-rending throughout.

Rosencrantz and Guildenstern is based around Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and provides us with supposed bloopers that the Bard left out. Summoned to the royal court on an unknown whim, the pair are bewildered and forgetful, lost in

the intellectual guff of Prince Hamlet's indecision. Their attempts to make sense of their situation make light of the tormented prince on whom our gaze is normally focussed. Suddenly T.S. Eliot's 'attendant lords' are placed centre stage and Hamlet is pushed off to mutter to himself in a corner.

The sense of a rapport between lead actors, Ben Deery and Tom Secretan as the interchangeable clowns, is incredi-

bly strong and sets a solid base for the play, allowing the production to flow well and constantly keep the audience on their toes. Stoppard's high-flown hypothesising is at times confusing, as it is meant to be, but Deery's confident and posturing Guildenstern (though they have forgot which one each is supposed to be, so distinguishing the two can be tricky) is brought back down to Earth by Secretan's exquisite buffoon-

ery as Rosencrantz, time and again. The duo's mutual enthusiasm and innate interaction are wonderful to watch.

The leads are supported by a host of consistently good smaller characters: Hamlet, played by Ben Dabby, is still an enigma, but the commentary that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern provide is humane and insightful. For those familiar with Shakespeare's text, it is fascinating to see recognisable scenes from new angles.

The production will no doubt be slick and thoughtful. Director Victoria Scopes' plans for the set are minimalist but loaded with relevance. The characters find themselves trapped within a play and the scenery reflects and revs up this sense of dramatic claustrophobia. Costumes on hire from the RSC are equally striking, though with Stoppard's script and the pairing of the two lead actors, superficial glamour is not really needed - take it as a bonus. This production will make you wipe your eyes, scratch your head and wish you too could be as clever as Tom Stoppard.

At the ADC Theatre from 2nd - 6th November at 7.45 p.m.

Rostov's House

Martha Spurrier

The epitome of the middle classes: banality itself. Rostov is the height of the bourgeoisie (a member of the Duma) and Rostov is a wanted man. That is, if the protagonists could find him.

Rostov's House is a play which challenges genre by combining an intertextual perspective with the classic elements of Russian farce, as the narrator himself admits, "how hard it is to say anything original these days when there are so many good slogans around". The premise involved is the hunt for the elusive Rostov. Rostov, however, is nowhere to be found, in an exploration of the mentality behind the Revolution of 1917. If this were merely a political drama it would be simple to address the meaning of this RSC/Marlowe Society prize-winning text. Yet the experience of the cast and crew belies the complexity of this new drama.

Director Allegra Galvin envisions a play with many dimensions, whereby clowns pontificate on the nature of the action, and a typical farce evolves into an altogether different drama by the conclusion. The script, written by Cambridge graduate James Topham, is a pacy and informed version of microcosm versus macrocosm, taking place over the space of a night. Although the Revolution occurs beyond the perceived stage, the set continually concentrates upon the disintegration of the old order, and with it the established knowledge of the regime. As characters explore both their own personalities and the internal world, Rostov himself is no more approached than he is distanced by the increasingly brief scenes leading to the climactic ending.

In fact, this is a tactic employed effectively by Allegra Galvin to encapsulate the amplifying motion of the production, a rapidity which lends itself to a steady disillusionment, a feature of the narrative standpoint conveyed by Adam Shindler. Adam's masterly portrayal of student "Paul" is a delight to watch. Even in the rehears-



A symbol of Russian decadence

As a piece of new writing, the skills of director and actors have been taxed: a large element of interpretation has been demanded. Galvin believes one of the most exciting elements of the Cambridge drama scene is that of innovation. This is a conspicuous trend within the rehearsal process of *Rostov's House*, and one that Galvin views as a constant dialogue between writer, director and actor.

The technical design of Liz Bell follows the direction of the script by utilising multiple revolutions of backdrop to mirror the outside world; immediate upheaval underscored by constancy. This paradox is reflected in the figures onstage: the farce that ends in death, the idealist that falls in love, and the protagonist that never appears.

This is well worth a visit for either the remarkable nature of the writing, or the dramatic talent involved - together they could create a revolution in drama which would make the intelligentsia proud.

At the ADC Theatre from 3rd - 6th November at 10.30 p.m.

Wainwright's theory of relativity

Tom Kingsley

In *Relatively Speaking*, Dan feels he can't talk to his father about his job, his friends or his holiday. Or his new boyfriend. And Ralph can't talk to his wife. She's dead. As the title suggests, relatives only speak to each other up to a point. It's difficult to communicate with your relatives precisely because you know them so well.

The family's superficial calm is ruined upon the arrival of Dan's boyfriend Matt. But this unwelcome intrusion of reality doesn't bring the characters to their senses - it makes them even more desperate to hide them.

Relatively Speaking is so immediate, so natural, and so unpretentious, that I found it impossible not to be absorbed by its depiction of a troubled family constrained by civility. It's frequently funny, always fast-

paced, and, ultimately, moving. Populated by appreciably complex characters, it's a satisfyingly human piece of writing. Indeed, the script was shortlisted for the 2004 RSC/Marlowe Society 'Other Prize'.

The first stage direction describes concisely the extra power one can gain from performance: "the more a line suggests a character is upset or angry, or excited, the more casually and offhandedly it is to be delivered." Mark Wainwright, directing his own script, conveys this idea intelligently - while the words may suggest one thought, their emphasis suggests another. In this, the actors are generally successful.

The sarcasm Daniel presents to his father as a defence mechanism is rapidly relaxed once among friends. Lewis Westbury balanced these two sides of Daniel's character, memo-

rably capturing the instant of the sudden tension quickly created and released when he first kisses Matt.

With Jonathan Lis' magnificently intimidating portrayal of Ralph, the father's sympathetic vulnerability is occasionally visible behind his façade of imposing hostility. His seemingly innocent lines are given a disconcerting emphasis, to the extent that simply asking Matt how he knows Daniel becomes a sinisterly barbed question.

It is only Daniel's godmother who is sufficiently open to allow both Ralph and Dan to confide in her. "You should come more often, Judith - I might find out what my son actually does," says Ralph, only able to communicate with his son through someone else.

At the Corpus Playroom from 2nd - 6th November at 9.30 p.m.

Theatre bridging the language gap

Joseph Dance

Pinter, with his stilted colloquialisms and subtle graduations of silence, and Sarraute, with her mocking effacement of character and non sequitur dialogues, rarely present the average student director with a ready-made opportunity to entertain. On the contrary, amateur productions of Pinter tend to be variations on the "I'll-sit-down-and-you-stand-up-oh-dear-god-there's-something-menacing-yet-indefinable-outside-let's-have-a-shouting-match-and-not-resolve-anything" theme, failing to address emotional nuances of the language, or crucial whispers of humour which inform the narrative.

A technical rehearsal for Frédérique Ait-Touati's latest production of Pinter's *Landscape* and Sarraute's *Elle est là* changed my mind.

The idea behind the two-play performance is a thematic one, with both works exploring the ways in which

men and women can become isolated, enraged, and obsessed by the ambiguities of verbal communication. *Landscape*, the first half of the double bill, is the story of a frustrated couple's inability to interact with one another. Duff, played by a slightly overly vociferous Nick Mullet, is a cellar-man working in a once "grand" stately home. He and his wife Beth spend the first twenty minutes or so each telling their own hermetic tales, occasionally pausing to reference one another before moving on to narrate another mutually exclusive experience.

The jagged blocking of both the characters and the few domestic props Ait-Touati has allowed on set lend an unnerving atmosphere to the proceedings. As Duff's temper frays, and Beth's recollection of her past becomes more disjointed, the scenario starts to become increasingly frenetic, culminating in some of the most expressive gestures I have seen on stage in a long

time. What is more, the final scene's well thought-out visual homage to Edward Hopper makes this an aesthetically challenging production.

Sarraute's *Elle est là* similarly deals with the problem of language as an imperfect vector between thought and verbal expression. To give a synopsis of the work would be to do it injustice, as at face value its immediate topic matter is decidedly mundane. I was initially disappointed that it hadn't been coupled with another of her short works, *C'est Beau*, which almost always forms the perfect theatrical counterbalance.

However, I can appreciate what Ait-Touati is wanting to achieve, and besides the acting in this second play was so beautiful that I quickly forgot any prejudices I might have once harboured. See them both, if only to witness an incredible performance given by Esteban Buch.

At the ADC Theatre from 27th - 30th November at 11.00 p.m.

Ask the audience

OXYGEN



Aine Mulkeen
New Hall

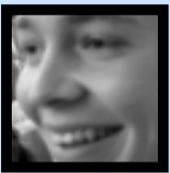
They juxtaposed the science and theatrical stuff well - they had court dances and intrigue as well as scientific details. The acting was up to scratch too!



Rebecca Jones Churchill

You could tell a scientist had written it - sometimes the dialogue jarred a bit and was a bit unnatural. The acting was good.

LANDSCAPE/
ELLE EST LA



Nick Phillips Pembroke

The subtitles were out of sync with the dialogue. The weirdness of the Sarraute play was something to hide behind rather than a feature. Some of the Pinter lines were destroyed, as if they lacked the confidence to pause. Overall, it was quite self-indulgent.

The big bad Virginia Woolf

Miriam Gillinson previews a sexy take on Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*

Who's afraid of Virginia Woolf? The playwright Edward Albee interpreted this song to mean 'Who is afraid to live without illusion?' I, for one, am pretty shit scared if this play is the result of such fearlessness.

This is the stubborn and ruthless goal of the protagonist George: a life without illusion, which also means a life without sensitivity. No illusions; no emotional boundaries or taboos. The problem that emerges in this play is that this life without illusion is just another game. It is the mother-ship of all illusions. The games the characters play are chillingly real though, with George as ringmaster of his own personal favourites: "Humiliate the Host", "Get the Guests" and "Hump the Hostess." The rules are written by George, and the drama shows him playing with his guests' and wife Martha's emotions, sending them down snakes so he can climb up his own twisted ladders.

The play dates from 1962, with the halcyon days of the 1950s still lingering in the background. Writing during the Cold War, Albee was responding to a public that was just beginning to question the simple ideals of the 50s; Honey and Nick (George's guests) are products of that era. George's aim is to crush these already receding ideals. Cruel truth is the dominant theme here, which means that the rare tenderness materialises onstage in a strange, subtle way.

Ben Hadley, playing George, lingers over these tender moments with perfect timing. Near the end of the play, George says to his wife, "Lord, Martha, if you want the boy that much...have him...but do it honestly, will you? Don't cover it over with all this...all this...footwork." It is an electric moment, as we see George's pledge to honesty begin to destroy his marriage.

Megan Prosser and Ben Hadley spark incredibly off each other, capturing the balance between hatred and love. They are mercilessly cold towards each other, but the actors' dialogue and their obvious enthusiasm during these verbal match-ups enforces the fact that these two really do work as a pair.

The dynamic seen between George and Martha was not as successfully within Honey and Nick's relationship. They are a tricky couple to play, being stuck at a party which has begun to question all their values. Caroline Roberts seemed slightly uncomfortable in her role: not quite sure whether to break down completely, or retain some dignity. As a result, she didn't quite get to grips with Honey, unsure of what she was trying to say. Patrick Gleeson (Nick) and Megan Prosser screamed though; in fact, they almost came. The scene when they dance, with George and Honey as helpless spec-



Ben Hadley and Megan Prosser take chunks out of each other

tators on the sofa, is one of the sexiest moments to have ever graced the Playroom boards.

The play and the space work well together. Director Sebastian Raedlar has not ignored the particular qualities of this stage, and he uses its claustrophobic effect perfectly. Martha, Nick, Honey and the audience are all just watching George's games unfold.

During the filming of the screen adaptation of *Who's afraid of Virginia Woolf*, the actress Sandy Dennis (playing

Honey) suffered a miscarriage. Real life came to reflect the play in a disturbing fashion. In Albee's play, instead of just a miscarriage occurring, Honey is accused viciously (but perhaps correctly) of "murdering" her babies. Albee takes real life, puts despair in its place, and makes us question if our lives are quite as lively after all.

At the Corpus Playroom from 2nd - 6th November at 7.00p.m.

Euripides Bacchan action

Mathilda Imlah on a student adaptation of *The Bacchae*

This is not a classical tragedy. This is 1930's Thebes, the last act for Dionysus, lord of the music hall. The Pembroke New Cellars are transformed into a smoke-filled den of depravity, wherein suited Bacchantes proffer the nectar of the gods to a less than ancient audience. The emotional excess of the standard tragedy is given a hedonistic backdrop of drugs, sex, and jazz. Simon Evans recasts the god as a figure of iconic celebrity, famous for parlour tricks: a magician of Houdini's heyday with a reputation for sensual magnetism.

Despite transporting the play to the modern day, Evans remains loyal to the plot and themes of Euripides. Rumour and suspicion are rife, lives depend on reputations and families are quite literally torn apart. The original rejection of all that Dionysus embodies by Pentheus, King of Thebes, incites the destruction of his monochrome and monotonous kingdom.

Evans exploits the idea of a conservative society in conflict with the animalistic abandon heralded by the arrival of the travelling mountebank. The lone voices of reason, of moderation in all things, are the aged (and occasionally drunken) prophet Tiresias and Cadmus, grandmother of the King. Pentheus' stubborn refusal of counsel and constant attempts to restrain the elusive Dionysus end in a horribly ironic version of curiosity killing the cat.

The sinister and seductive Dionysus is convincingly portrayed by Miles Bullock, who casts a roving eye over chorus and spectator alike. The atmosphere promises to be one of extravagance and intensity: the magician in his scarlet livery, the live



Miles Bullock as the sinister and seductive Bacchus, with Bacchantes

music, and the Maenad dancers in gaudy lingerie.

The staging, like the play, holds a strong element of metatheatricality; the audience are the citizens of Thebes, deceived by the colourful decadence of their surroundings, their chronology dictated by the Master of Ceremonies, Coryphaeus (played by Evans). Cory runs the show like a ringmaster, whose circus spirals increasingly out of control in a sequence of vaudeville performances.

The impulse to script, direct and perform in this production demonstrates Evans' dedication to the text both on and off the page. His background in classical performance allows for a truthful adaptation, and one that is driven by a great deal of energy. It is this energy which will, we hope, give the play the momentum which was evident on the rehearsal stage. The actors walk a fine line between raw and choreo-

graphed emotion, but deliver both with alacrity.

The direction is simple and intuitive, ensuring that the classical and the modern are simultaneously distinct and complementary without being over the top. The comfortable setting is corrupted by the tragedy, making the experience altogether perverse and disturbing. This, at least, is Evans' aim; as the audience sip their wine it becomes clear that they are not only voyeurs but participants in the action.

No doubt the evening will be an enjoyable one, if for no other reason than that (as promised by Coryphaeus himself), "Amongst the blood, the gore, the razz-ma-tazz, were games, and toys... and all... that... jazz!"

At the Pembroke New Cellars from 2nd - 6th November at 10 p.m.

Private living

Lottie Oram on pure entertainment

The works of Noel Coward epitomise the fading decadence of the 1920's and 30's. Set in a gin-soaked world of perpetual twilight filled with shallowness, wit and regret, his cut glass characters bark and bitch with fabulous intensity and wonderful stupidity, alongside a roaring soundtrack of ridiculous mishaps and romantic entanglements. *Private Lives* is of course no exception to this formula.

It concerns the amorous escapades of Eliot and Amanda, once married, now divorced, who remarry very unsuitably and then decide to run off together all over again. Naturally the course of true love does not run smooth for the obstinate, temperamental couple. The tension between this volatile pair and their weak, cloying new partners, Victor and Sybil, creates an exasperatingly comic atmosphere.

This is a wonderfully melodramatic comedy fraught with frightful coincidences, borderline violent slapstick, vicious one-liners and plenty of opportunities for the players to "ham it up". This is something that the Pembroke Players are relishing and they have, in rehearsal, produced a quartet of brilliantly camp, exaggerated, acerbic and pathetic characters.

This is going to be a fun production: the director Ben Irving promises no pretentiousness, just an enjoyably chaotic ninety-minute farce and the opportunity to buy cheaply priced refreshments during the interval. As this is an ensemble piece, filled with rapid-fire dialogue and visual gags, the impetus will be on style and pace over substance and depth: entertainment for the simple

sake of entertainment.

But it is hard to appreciate in this desensitised, very un-private world of today, just how risqué and potentially scandalous this play would have been when it was first performed. Before the days of Heat magazine, Piers Morgan and Trisha, people had a chance of keeping their business off the grapevine if they wished.

Coward relentlessly portrays violence, infidelity and mendacity through a succession of selfish, over-privileged, morally relaxed characters to create what is essentially a playful yet satirical assassination of upper class wantonness. Indeed, one of the slightly worrying reasons why Coward's work is still very popular today is that we can often identify with the actions of many of his characters; ignoring the "hamming it up" element, that core of instability and fickleness that drives Coward's plays is also mirrored in the heart of modern society.

Essentially, though, *Private Lives* is just a slick, funny play and can be enjoyed without any unnecessary philosophising or justification. The play will be performed in contemporary 1930's style costume, accompanied by appropriate set and lighting design, which should give the whole production an authentic, sophisticated feel. Entertainment for the sake of it, seeing *Private Lives* will require no depth of thought nor demand intelligent conversation afterwards. Have a laugh and cringe and forget about work for a while, I'm sure it'll do us all some good.

At the Pembroke New Cellars from 2nd - 6th November at 7 p.m.

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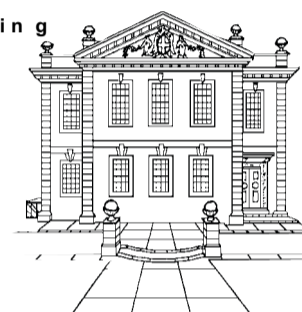
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Bach Conductor's UK Debut

Richard Wilberforce reviews the Academy of Ancient Music's West Road Concert

Harmonia Mundi's comedy CD release, *The Three Countertenors*, does not do much for all those budding countertenors out there trying to persuade attractive women that there's more to their art than being a man who sings like a woman. It did, however, give a great deal of (debatable good) publicity to the singer Pascal Bertin: a young and trendy Frenchman with a rather beautiful voice, who was the featured artist in last Wednesday's West Road Concert of music by Bach.

You may be as surprised as I was to hear that one of the world's finest period instrument orchestras is based in Cambridge. The Academy of Ancient Music has an impressive discography of landmark recordings, which all showcase the orchestra's impeccable ensemble, and with Christopher Hogwood's skills of interpretation, they have earned worldwide notoriety. This concert was part of a series in which guest conductor and acclaimed Bach interpreter Masaaki Suzuki makes his UK debut.

In Bertin's first Solo Cantata (no.54), I wondered whether the somewhat pained expression on his face was to reflect the morbid text of Satan, Sin and Sodom, or simply down to not knowing the work well enough. I suspect the latter, as his eyes rarely left the music stand, and this certainly was a shame as it is the

only negative point I will make about his extremely good performance. The Cantata poses notorious range difficulties as it lies very low and therefore necessitates frequent gear-changes from falsetto to chest voice that can have listeners in fits of laughter when it goes wrong. This can't be said of Bertin who handled it with ease, even during the semi-quaver runs.

But it was in the second half that he really excelled, as he gave a stunning performance of the fiendishly difficult Cantata No. 35, which in contrast to the first, is all very high. It was up here that Bertin seemed most happy as he floated some lovely top E's with his understated and very easy sounding voice. As a reviewer, you don't expect to find yourself writing about the recitative, but Bertin's pace, diction and musicality made it some of the best I've ever heard and certainly worthy of mention.

However, it was their guest conductor for this season who was certainly the star of the show. One of the most respected interpreters and conductors of Bach in the world, Suzuki is famous for his gigantic project with the Bach Collegium in Japan: to record the complete Bach Cantatas. What sets Suzuki apart from the rest is his concern for drawing feeling and religious meaning from the works, along with his lovely

Academy of Ancient Music



Masaaki Suzuki makes his UK debut with the Academy of Ancient Music

nature and obvious rapport with the players.

His Concerto in D Major for harpsichord was impressive, if only for the fact that he played a concerto whilst conducting an orchestra. When I asked how he managed to do this so proficiently, he helpfully replied 'very hard - takes much practice.' That's me told then. I didn't think then was the time to start making jokes about The Ha-re-ru-rah Chorus...

I've never seen the West Road Concert Hall so packed, and the persistent loud applause was more than aptly rewarded with the first movement of Bach's best-known Alto Cantata, *Vergnügte Ruh, beliebte Seelenlust* (No.170). Although taken at rather a brisk pace for my taste, it was the icing on the cake, and ended what was an all-round fantastic concert. Better than Rumboogie, without having to put up with the sticky floors.

This week...

...why not try one of these:

This Wednesday at West Road, Joanna MacGregor gives the European premiere of James MacMillan's Piano Concerto No.2, with MacMillan himself conducting Britten Sinfonia.

www.brittensinfonia.co.uk

On Monday, Kettle's Yard are doing a special concert to celebrate the 70th Birthday of influential American composer Christian Wolff at 7.30pm with a pre-concert talk 6.30pm by the man himself.

www.kettlesyard.co.uk

The Cambridge Taverner Choir open their Choral Music of the Renaissance series on Saturday at 8pm in St John's College Chapel with John Tallis's Spem in Alium.

www.cambridgetavernerchoir.org.uk

Our own talent are battling it out with the best of them. Check out CUCO's concert on Saturday, also at West Road, featuring Mozart's Symphony no. 38. featuring music by Janacek and Martinu.

The Clare College Music Society's Term Concert is this Thursday at West Road at 8pm, featuring, amongst other pieces, *Utopia* by Christopher Willis, a CCMS Commission and World Premiere, conducted by the composer.

www.clare.cam.ac.uk/life/music

Visit the websites for more information and details of ticket prices.

Spoilt for choice

Nicola Simpson reviews Cambridge's musical diversity

The past two weeks have seen a stupendous number and variety of concerts in Cambridge, leaving us quite breathless and exhilarated in their wake.

The highly-acclaimed Fitzwilliam String Quartet came to the Fitz auditorium on Sunday the 17th to conclude the college music society's Weekend of Music, and had no problems defending their well-deserved reputation.

Their program, at first glance, seemed somewhat random and unconnected, but as the performance went on it became very clear how all the pieces were intrinsically linked. My personal favourite was perhaps their first number, Purcell's *Music from the 'Fairy Queen'*. The ornamentation was graceful, the tempo never flagged and it was always played with all the delicacy and elegance necessary for the music.

The (fairly hefty) demands of the more modern pieces (Dyson, Shostakovich and Janacek) were met with relish - double-stops, harmonics and rapid swaps between arco and pizzicato were deftly handled, and there was a pleasing sense of communication between the four, with each piece being finished with a satisfying flourish.

As a reviewer, one goes to a concert hoping to find at least one criticism to avoid seeming overly sycophantic, but in this instance, it simply wasn't possible, and I felt privileged to be a listener.

Wednesday night, however, rapidly dragged us away from highly-strung (no pun intended) elevated chamber music scene right to the other end of town, when the Renegade Big Band hit the newly renovated Junction with a fusion of swing, funky blues and soul. They managed to transform the still rather dark and oppressive surroundings of the venue, for a short time at least, into a lively, swinging

jazz club, and lifted the atmosphere with the first note they played.

Our attention was immediately captured by a rendition of *Feeling Good*, opened by a solo intro by their incredibly charismatic and engaging female vocalist.

The repertoire was varied and audience-friendly, ranging from Stevie Wonder and Michael Jackson covers to Carol King's soulful ballad *Natural Woman*. There were some ambitious choices - Elvis's *A Little Less Conversation* and Joss Stone's *Super Duper Love* - but they all fell easily within the capabilities of the band.

Courtesy of Fitzwilliam quartet



The Fitzwilliam String Quartet

The instrumentalists provided a perfect accompaniment to the vocals, maintaining a fine balance throughout. Their timing was impeccable, not least due to the direction of the animated MD, and the soloists improvised with flair and originality. Perhaps special mention should go to the rhythm section, and in particular the drummer, for their consistently strong support. All that was needed in order to gauge their success was to see the number of people they managed to lift out of their seats and get shaking their booty. Great stuff.

So, another mission of a musical week done and dusted, bring on the next one - aren't we lucky students.

Jazz@John's put to the test

Tom Morey
Andrew Macaskill

The fact that this is the first time Jazz@Johns has ever received a review in *Varsity* seems surprising, as the night has been going at least as long as we have been around. However, it does show just how good this popular jazz evening actually is, in that it is consistently able to fill up primarily, by word of mouth.

Throwing off the stereotypes associated with jazz nights, of smoky, dimly lit rooms, the atmosphere is friendly, the bar cheap and the room full.

The support act, Jazztank, provided just what was needed, a wide variety of funk-tinged jazz standards to start the night on the right note. Bassist, Rich Cummings, provided a wonderfully unobtrusive groove,

while Mike Spencer-Chapman on horns soloed with an incredibly bright sound.

The addition of a beautifully soft melody line by Nicc Simpson gave an extra edge to the band, and it was clear that by the end of their set, the audience were right behind them.

This gave Jon Opstad and his trio the perfect platform for his headline spot. Having heard his very atmospheric and minimalist album, it was interesting to hear how this could be carried over into a live performance. The introduction using an E-bowed bassline set the tone well for the performance to come.

Opstad himself provided deft cymbal work and throughout had an inescapable sense of time. Together, the Opstad brothers provided the perfect base for the obvious talents of

John Turville on keys.

Unfortunately the lack of variety in tempo slightly marred the overall performance and it was clear that the audience was yearning for a more obvious and accessible groove.

This is hardly a criticism of Jon Opstad for he clearly makes a deliberate effort to produce jazz in a post modern, minimalist way. But for a crowd consisting mainly of casual jazz enthusiasts, one got the feeling that his style on the night was slightly misplaced.

On the whole, the night was a real success, and as Jazz@Johns is one of the few forums for showcasing local jazz talent, one can only hope that it continues to increase in popularity as it so clearly deserves to.



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The Delays: Faded Seaside Clamour

Mary Bowers talks to the harmonious heartbreakers before last week's gig at the Junction

Cambridge hipsters take note: boys, it's all about tanktops, skin-tight seventies shirts and, most of all, hairdos – and we're not talking wash'n'go here. The Delays are almost as serious about their demure coiffage as the late Kula Shaker. There is something touchingly self-deprecating about the Delays ('we went to a charity shop and bought loads of shit clothes' declares Aaron) but don't be fooled – there is no shoegazing evident in tonight's performance from Gilbert brothers *et al.* They are signed to Rough Trade now. They have had one summer radio hit single in the form of the toe-tapping, La's-esque 'Long Time Coming' – and a best-selling debut album *Faded Seaside Glamour* under their hipster belts.

These boys are well out of the realm of support-band apologetics, having just returned from a US tour with Franz Ferdinand. When I meet up with drummer Rowly he seems effusive: 'In Toronto Drew Barrymore came backstage to say she was a big fan...she'd be like "Thank you so much for the beer" and you'd be like "Thank you for *ET!*"' So, has their debut success changed them – or are they just Southampton lads made good? 'We all live on the same street, and there's not much to do there, so whenever we're not on tour we spend all day every day in the garage.'

Don't be fooled – the Delays are not just a bunch of naïve Byrds/Hollies replicas, despite the retro-pop shots fired at them by the music press. What distinguishes the sound of *Faded Seaside Glamour* is its maturity. These are not boys singing to their high school sweethearts, gawkishly nodding their heads and twanging away gaily on their telecasters. These are gorgeously layered fragile harmonies

purred in perfect tune, and presided over by Greg's dulcet falsetto ('a lot of people come to our gigs assuming the singer's a girl and being really surprised'). It is almost impossible to overlook the fact that there is an incredibly grown-up tenderness in the Delays' style, especially in the gorgeous 'Bedroom Scene' – their first song of the set. 'A lot of our songs evoke the same mood as bands like My Bloody Valentine, Ride and Slowdive. But we're just as much into Abba and Daft Punk.' It is this mix of the ethereal and the electro that make the Delays appeal to both sides of the mainstream divide, and in tonight's crowd dad-rockers nod their heads alongside shaggy-maned popsters. 'Lose yourself through touch / Lose yourself in love' croons Greg's refined falsetto. These boys may seem gauche, but they sure know how to break hearts – and they do it in three-part harmony.

Tonight at the Junction, newly refurbished and still looking pristine, there are a few twee neck-boppers about. Is Cambridge the kind of crowd the Delays are used to after returning from the US? 'They danced in this really Manchester Bez-like manner, thinking that's the dance you do to English Bands. It's really sweet.' Tonight, our surroundings are more Byker-Grove than Boston, and despite the thought that at any moment we might be passed a plastic cup of Geff's orange squash rather than a pint of Carling, The Delays provide us with a more grown-up gig than their retro-reputation might lead us to believe.

They say 'Thank you very much' a lot, and have little time for banter in what seems essentially a get on – get off gig. They hammer out the tunes, the popstastic 'Hey Girl', the retro-ethereal

Rough Trade



'Come on! Give me tiger! Rrrrr! Roar like a tiger! Rrrrrrrr!'

'Nearer Than Heaven', and leave this Cambridge bunch happy with a predictable encore of 'Long Time Coming'. There's a bit of fan worship tonight, but no Drew Barrymore fighting past the bouncers to get backstage.

So what's next for the Delays? Fan-worship and comfortable mainstream status? Success really hasn't been a long time coming for them, the audacity of their debut album already signalling

them as young and cheeky upstarts in the world of guitar-pop. After the glamour of a national tour they're hibernating in the hills of Wales, rather than retreating to their trusty seaside garage in Southampton to record their next album. 'It's going to go more extreme than the last one, it won't sound like a debut album. We've all been listening to the Brian Wilson *Smile* album a lot. Until we get into the

studio we don't know how it's going to be.' Judging by their new single, 'Lost in a Melody', – an excursion into the world of 80s disco/electro ('It's like shoegaze meets Daft Punk' according to Rowly) and due to be released on 22nd November – they continue along the road of hip-swivelling, sugar-coated pop pills that get more than a few carefully-styled barnets nodding this evening. More hairspray, anyone?

Hail to the Blank Generation

Jocelyn Beats goes in search of London's most elusive scene

What is Blank? Asking this question is like losing sight in one eye. I hadn't heard of Blank before one still and starry night at Clapham Common's bandstand. On a late night bus service a friend and I met Stu the hefty New Zealander, who matter-of-factly asked us to come and hear him play his ukulele for free. A chance like this cannot be ignored in innocence.

We stood with a crowd of perhaps forty silent people who had come for the occasion equipped with flasks of tea, and watched not only Stu play with an acoustic ensemble calling itself the Closed Marriage Treaty but several other acoustic musicians and a bearded man with a laptop whose battery ran out before his set finished. The sound of all the instruments from brass to strings was simultaneously simple yet unrepentive, soothing yet disturbing. It was the sound of musicians with a clinical psychological understanding, and I was hooked.

Grabbing Stu when the music finished I learnt about the host of Blank events taking place over the summer, and naturally asked what Blank was. With a gleam in his seeing eye he responded 'Bollocks Luck And Nobody Knows'. Blank musicians, many of whom are from Australia or New

Zealand, are out of work but can't stop playing. There have been Blank releases on local indie labels, but the tag isn't used and no Blank band retains the same name (or members) once each project is finished. The bracket is loose – not quite a musical style, not saying anything shocking – a last bastion of resistance to the work done by the music press which makes bands passé before you know anything more than how they look in a full page spread.

A last bastion of resistance

The 'Blank' reference is an obvious look back to seventies punk and the 'Blank generation' coined by Richard Hell of Television. Yet whereas punk bands were rebelling against the lie that artists had to be talented to be famous, Blank is reacting against the lie that you have to want to be famous at all – an idea not easy to digest amid *Pop Idol*, *X-Factor* and the host of musicians whose careers say only 'love me: buy me'.

If the larger Blank collectives around at the moment (Pride of the Force Fed, Non-Conference) have specific influ-

ences, they are to be found in the minimalist Japanese pseudo-pop of Cornelius, or the deliberate pastiche of New American indie bands like Cerberus Shoal. Not the least confusing thing about these groups, however, is the variety of instrumentation they use and the range of moods they seek to provoke. The exhilaration of subtle computerisation proclaiming just cause with Bartok's *Romanian Folk Dances* is unfathomable though, and it all hangs together on the conviction of those involved. Every one of the people I met at Blank concerts in Clapham and Camden was friendly and passionate about music. The arrangements may be secretive and the outdoor locations frankly uncomfortable, but I soon began carrying my own tea and accepting the situation for what it was. However much you theorise, Blank speaks for itself.

The summer was over before I felt any of it could possibly have actually happened. Without publicity, stars, long-term record contracts or a definable fan base, Blank may well be doomed to premature death. The last time I saw Stu I asked him what he thought would happen next. 'It's like the First World War' he said, 'It'll all be over by Christmas.'

Album Reviews



The Koreans
The Koreans

Out now
(Storm Music)



DFA Records
Compilation #2

November 1st
(DFA)

I find it extremely difficult to conjure up in my mind anything more passé than disco-punk. Electric Six have thankfully fucked off back to whatever pit they came from; fagin-friendly waifs The Rapture have reverted to a secluded NY life, stealing silver pennies from the rich to feed their poor, electricity starved 909's in the wake of DFA selling its soul (see right).

With this in mind, it's a considerable feat that The Koreans have made this tired genre sound so virile. Perhaps it's because their influences, unlike the above, sit on the cusp of retro's current early nineties wave, all sampled dial-ups and Stonehenge harmonies. Maybe it's the production; their guitars come in warm, fizzy Pixies chunks rather than Sandinista soup tins, and there is a gratifying dearth of slap bass. Whatever the reason, they don't sound like PiL, they don't have light up codpieces, and they'll make you jig without having to sport an obligatory 45-degree fringe.

Tom Durno

DFA Records is so over. So, so over. In fact, they're so over that, give it a few months, and they might even be ironically meta-hip.

The label started mind-blowingly well back in 2002 with 'House of Jealous Lovers' by the Rapture and 'Losing My Edge' by LCD Soundsystem, two of the greatest tracks of the century so far. But now they've been bought out by industry megalith EMI. And the one thing which I do not understand, is that for a long time the only format on which they released, was vinyl.

As a record label, you do that because you want to be cool. That's okay, we all want to be cool. But if you want to be cool, you definitely don't sell yourself to EMI.

Maybe they listened to their own compilation and said to each other, 'We have the Rapture. Awesome. We have LCD Soundsystem. Awesome. And we have – oh. We have endless dull prog-disco-punk. Not awesome. When people realise, we're doomed. Time to sell out. Get on the phone.'

Ned Beauman

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The Student has never been a major fashion trend. We've had preppy cool and The Uptown Boho, both of which are crucial elements of The Student, but never a season completely dedicated to the sartorial melting pot which constitutes scholarly chic. The whole thing is surrounded by a hazy stereotype of anti-war t-shirts, tie-dye trousers and Doc Martins.

Student chic is about looking good in things that aren't meant to look good. Scruffy and effortless, yet well presented: The Student never looks like they tried too hard. Over-sized jeans and tiny tops; retro eighties shell suit tops with cords; flip flops on a Sunday. The Student foregrounds comfort but is not dictated to by it. Narrow jeans, kitten heels and a blazer work equally well at lectures or in the pub, as do battered jeans, vintage tees and old converse trainers. On the other hand, stilettos and micro-mini skirts are also passable down at the faculty.

The range of student fashion, beginning with chinos and smoking jackets, and ending with high waistbands and sensible shoes, is rife with 'types' and hybrids. The alternative Indie Kid, influenced heavily by Topshop. The post-modern Edwardian Gent with umbrella, pocket watch and Evisu pumps, armed with GHD straighteners. And The Ethno-Ra, bedecked in gap-yaaaar jewellery, Paul's Boutique and Miss Selfridge. The Student adapts or rejects what they are given and employs initiative to find what best suits. The same thing seems to happen with lectures and essays.

On the flipside, The Student is a mere fashion spring chicken. The transition from fresh-faced Cambridge ingénue to addled library hag is an alarmingly easy one to make, so outfits that celebrate a youthful zest for life and flamboyancy are another necessary strong point. Practicality has never been a young person's trait and therein lies the strength of The Student. Our clothes are meant to look good and make people wonder, not to keep us warm or dry. A ballet tutu, worn with woolly tights, vintage shoes, an over-sized cardigan and lots of pearls is a useful way of reminding supervisors that university is actually about being frivolous, decadent and downright stupid a lot of the time.

Harry Walker



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Blues try to see a point through the red mist

University Football

CAMBRIDGE 1
LINCOLN 1

Sam Richardson

CLASS WAR burst onto the football pitch on Wednesday, as the Blues took a hard-earned BUSA point against Lincoln, from a game that saw no less than four players sent off.

This was the Blues' first BUSA game of the season, and it hinged on an incident in the seventy-fifth minute. A Cambridge cross came in too deep, leaving the Lincoln goalkeeper and Alex Mugan entangled on the ground. The Blues turned the ball back across, and with the keeper still stranded, Nick Pantelides drove a shot goal-wards from eight yards. A Lincoln defender on the line stretched out a hand to pull off a save of which Gordon Banks would have been extremely proud.

The referee, in line with his efforts throughout the afternoon, appeared to have missed the incident. However, the linesman, sporting a posh voice and a double-barrelled name, pointed immediately and correctly to the spot. Ten minutes of wrangling ensued, during which wannabe goalkeeper, now already sent off, spat at the linesman and complained that he was a "posh cunt".

The shout of "let's take these toffs down" emanated from the Lincoln University side on the touchline, but

nothing could put Blues skipper Jon Darby off his stride, as he slammed the penalty into the top right-hand corner to earn the Blues a one-all draw.

Darby's pre-match email had promised that "we owe these fuckers from last year". Lincoln had been promoted behind the Blues last season, after beating Cambridge at home and losing away. At one point in the game at Cambridge, a ginger-haired supporter who looked suspiciously like Prince Harry had been heard to shout, "Let's turn UCAS points into goals".

However, it was Lincoln who started more strongly, as the Blues defence seemed to be caught cold on a chilly afternoon at Fenners. A Lincoln long throw found a man in the box who appeared to be Iain Dowie's bigger, uglier brother. His knock-down left Rob Hale five yards out, but his crisp volley was superbly blocked by keeper Duncan Heath.

On closer inspection, the bald colossus turned out to be Lincoln's captain, a centre-back who went by the name of Jonah Edwards. His foray forward proved to be a rare one in the first half, because he and his fellow defenders found themselves besieged by a Blues onslaught.

Steve Smith's header (pictured right) was well tipped over by Lincoln goalkeeper Dan Vaughan. Rich Payne pounced on Alex Mugan's drilled cross, only to see his goalbound shot ricochet off a defender. Mugan then clipped a shot from twenty-five yards that the keeper flicked over the bar, and from the ensuing corner Payne's

glancing header missed by inches.

But the Blues efforts seemed to peter out towards half time, as Lincoln managed to calm the tempo. Indeed, they could have stolen the lead. The impressive Heath did well to keep out an outrageous lob from his opposite number, but could only watch as another long-ranger pinged off the angle of post and bar.

The Blues came out of half-time confident, but in the end they had the stuffing knocked out of them by a soft goal ten minutes in.

The warning signs had been evident already, as two Lincoln corners had resulted in a free header wide and a deflection into the side-netting. Then, at the third time of asking, the

hanging cross was powerfully headed home from eight yards by none other than the Lincoln captain.

The Blues struggled to create any clear opportunities until just before Darby's penalty. Up until that moment, they had been in a battle. After they took the lead, they were in a war. Smith limped off after going in for a crunching challenge, Matt Clamp needed treatment for a bloody lip and substitute Mike Adams was kicked while the ball was at the other end of the pitch.

It was Adams, returning from injury, who proved the biggest threat in the closing stages. Firstly he cut into the channel and hit the post with a shot from a tight angle. Then he

beat Edwards to cut in a low cross. The Lincoln keeper claimed the cross, and then threw the ball out of play because Edwards was injured in the challenge.

Such was the bad blood by this stage that Darby ordered the Blues not to give the ball back to Lincoln. The throw-in was taken quickly, and Mugan cut in on goal only for the referee to apply some common sense and give a foul throw. A scuffle ensued, which resulted in a Lincoln player being sent off for throwing a punch, and Rich Payne being sent off for "aggressive walking".

Lincoln's goalkeeper was later shown the red card for arguing with the referee.



Cambridge's Stevie Smith heads on goal, but the keeper tips the ball over the bar to stop the Blues taking the lead

Sam Richardson

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England run out of escape routes

Mark Adair deliberates on England's doomed tour of Zimbabwe

WITH THE English Cricket team on the verge of a tour that few want to see, it seems that the question of whether sport should have a conscience has reappeared with vengeance. However, as the stakes are raised and financial rewards grow, it seems that the English Cricket Board may be turning a blind eye to Zimbabwe while looking squarely at their bank balances.

There are many English fans who simply want to see their cricket team rule the world and beat every team out there. They believe that 'sport and politics should not mix'. Now that the council have confirmed that the players will be safe, then they should go. There can be no doubt that the current government in Zimbabwe is abhorrent, but what has a game of cricket got to do with that?

Meanwhile, England are gradually winning back the goodwill of the International Cricket Community (ICC) after their refusing to play Zimbabwe in a World Cup match in Harare last year. This decision not to play was made on "safety and security grounds" rather than for moral reasons. To jeopardise their standing in the cricketing world would do English cricket enormous harm.

It is also argued that the criticism of England and Wales Cricket Board is deeply unfair given that the tour itself won't generate much money. It is financial threat by the ICC that is forcing the ECB to try and preserve

their funding. The ECB are terrified of ICC sanctions which could bankrupt English cricket if the team refused to tour Zimbabwe or if they choose to send a reserve team. The ICC have also made threats to suspend England from Test cricket if they do not tour.

However, putting aside all moral issues, the tour is a waste of time as it cannot even be classed as a contest. The fifteen best white cricketers in Zimbabwe are refusing to play for their country in protest as what they see as the racist selection criteria of picking players based on the colour of their skin rather than their cricketing ability. As a result, the Zimbabwean team are a group of inexperienced cricketers with an average age of only twenty-one. No match for a full England side who are currently number 2 in the world.

Perhaps the tour should be boycotted for moral and political reasons as well. Eighteen months ago, the England and Wales Cricket Board outlined a powerful case for boycotting Zimbabwe as a gesture of revulsion at President Robert Mugabe's tyranny. They noted that non-participation in sport helped to bring down the regime in South Africa.

It must be remembered that President Mugabe is closely tied to Zimbabwe's cricket hierarchy. He himself is the patron. A corrupt and dictatorial regime, such as that in Zimbabwe, should not be given cre-

dence by a touring England side. To suggest that sport has nothing to do with politics is extremely naive as many corrupt dictators have used sport to portray their regime in a good light.

Ian Botham has urged the British Government to intervene and order the England cricket team not to tour Zimbabwe. This would, he believes, make a stance against Mugabe's regime. Botham said "As long as [Zimbabwe] is run by a barbaric regime that sponsors genocide and starvation, [England] shouldn't be going anywhere near the place."

Now it seems that only the weath-

er could save England's cricketers from touring Zimbabwe, yet the issue is likely to resurface as the tour approaches.

In his Sunday newspaper column England's Steve Harmison, the current Number one bowler in the world, perhaps summed it up best when justifying his decision not to tour on moral grounds: "It's not been an easy [decision] to make after what England have achieved this year, but nothing has changed in Zimbabwe since we pulled out of playing there in the World Cup [2003], which is why I can't go now." Other players may yet follow suit.



Only the weather could conceivably come to England's rescue

Sport In Brief

RUGBY LEAGUE - The Rugby League season kicked off in style with a Nick Rusling hat-trick and a win at St. Mary's. Not so positive however was a loss on Wednesday to Bristol 22-18. Cambridge was on top for most of the game but were unable to convert this into points.

HOCKEY - The men's Blues were destroyed 10 - 0 in the EHL cup on Sunday. They played well for long periods of the game but made too many unforgivable errors. The Wanderers won 3 - 2 against Long Sutton at home.

ROWING - Although having to cope with very windy conditions on Saturday, the Cambridge Autumn Head took place. Churchill was the fastest college, beating Emma by one second in the men's 8+ category with 9.55mins over the 2.6km course. Pembroke won the women's with 11.38, nine seconds ahead of Jesus. Churchill also came first in the women's fours event.

AND FINALLY....
CORRECTION - *Varsity* sport would like to apologise for inaccuracies in the article in last week's issue concerning the Cambridge boat that raced in Zambia. (see letters, page 11)

Men's College Rugby League

Division I

Place	Team	Pl	W	D	L	F	A	PD	Pts
1	St. John's	3	3	0	0	92	6	84	12
2	Jesus	2	2	0	0	49	13	36	8
3	Downing	3	1	0	2	32	44	-8	6
4	Girton	2	1	0	1	12	40	-28	5
5	Trinity Hall	2	0	0	2	5	44	-39	2
6	St Catharine's	2	0	0	2	16	59	-43	2

Last weeks' results:
Tit. Hall P - P St. Catz

St. John's 22 - 3 Downing
Jesus P - P Girton

Men's College Football League

Division I

Place	Team	Pl	W	D	L	F	A	PD	Pts
1	Fitzwilliam	2	2	0	0	5	2	3	6
2	St. John's	2	2	0	0	4	1	3	6
3	Jesus	2	1	0	1	7	4	3	3
4	Trinity	1	1	0	0	3	1	2	3
5	Downing	2	1	0	1	6	5	1	3
6	Churchill	2	1	0	1	3	3	0	3
7	Darwin	2	0	1	1	2	3	-1	1
8	Caius	2	0	1	1	2	4	-2	1
9	Girton	1	0	0	1	1	5	-4	0
10	St. Catharine's	2	0	0	2	2	7	-5	0

Last weeks' results: Darwin 2 - 2 Caius; Downing 1 - 3 St. John's; Fitzwilliam 2 - 0 St. Catz; Girton 1 - 5 Jesus; Trinity 3 - 1 Churchill

Blues beat London Wasps

University Rugby

CAMBRIDGE 23
LONDON WASPS 13

Michael Henson

IN FRONT of a home crowd swelled by the presence of Zurich Premiership headliners, the Blues landed a first pre-Varsity psychological blow squarely on the Oxford chin. Where the Bees were swatted away with relative ease last week, it was expected that the Wasps would prove a much more testing adversary. And so it proved. Yet the Blues met the challenge and, in the process, filed an ominous progress report for those at Iffley Road to consider.

Through the mists of exertion that hung around the players in the chill night air, their delight at this result was clear. While the win in itself is reason enough to celebrate, the promise that came with it will be a more sustained source of happiness for the team. It is from performances such as these that the Blues will know what they are capable of, where they will look when all isn't going quite so well.

Cambridge forced the opposition onto the back foot through the sheer energy and tenacity of their play early on. Abiola just failed to sweep up a bobbling ball with the line at his mercy, Ufton saw a penalty fly wide. However, this early pressure was eased in a most unsatisfactory, if dramatic, manner. From inside their own 22, Wasps dared to zip the ball out wide to expose an overlap which Desmond tried in vain to stem. His opposite man, England

Sevens international Roberts, punished the faulty defence mercilessly. He raced into the space afforded him and cut beautifully inside the last remnants of cover for a fine, solo try under the posts. The momentum that Cambridge had been building seemed to have been brought to a shuddering halt. Roberts, who racked up a hat-trick in the 41-10 victory over Oxford last week, sensed another student sacrifice to his own young talents.

Yet Cambridge's forwards imposed themselves around the fringes and in the loose. James Cure crashed into the Wasps' backline, relishing the opportunity to cross the gain-line and keep the opposition on the retreat. Nathan McGarry continued his impressive form as he roamed looking to pilfer ball and turn defence to attack.

Wasps maintained dominance in possession and territory however, even as the Blues kept them at bay with some stout defence. As they struggled to string phases together they were limited to just a penalty and drop goal to extend their lead. Indeed, just before half time it was fortunate that the embarrassment of options that presented themselves to the Wasps' no. 8, as he broke free proved to be of such distraction that it prevented him picking any of them.

Just after the break, a scuffle broke out and served as a catalyst for the forwards to wrestle further control of the match from Wasps. Wheeler especially, restored to the starting back-row, grew stronger and stronger as the game went on. A powerful forwards drive over the Wasps line underlined the point. McGarry's emergence from the very depths of the mess that resulted was enough to draw further positive attention to himself and make

the score 13-11. With the Wasps team shedding players at an increasing rate, the early departure from the scene of recovering first teamer Fraser Waters being the most disappointing, the tide of the game flowed gradually away from the professionals.

The quick running of a penalty close to the Wasps' line led to a knock-on that seemed to have let them off the hook once again. However, the weak attempted clearance kick from Edd Thrower gave Hughes the chance to run the ball straight back. Cambridge crept closer and closer to the Wasps' line before finally, with the backs begging for the opportunity to scythe through some ragged backs' defence, no.1 James Cure hurled himself through the last few yards to seize the lead for the first time for the Blues.

A quick penalty was the option taken again by Ufton just a few minutes later, with much more favourable consequences. His try put the Blues 10 points out in front at 23-13, a gap that the Wasps never managed to close. Indeed it could have been an even bigger win.

Carter and Akinluyi, a hugely powerful combination in the centres, drilled their men back in defence and were a constant menace in attack. Some wonderfully improvised interplay involving the pair and Hughes unfortunately failed to put Desmond into space, forcing him to check back into the swarming masses. McGarry and Wheeler both had breaks of luck attributed to foul play as the referee's whistle dragged them back as they bore down on the tryline. By the close, buoyed by such an important victory becoming reality, it was the students rather than the professionals who seemed to be finishing stronger.

Red mist forms over Lincoln

Four sent off in action packed football match

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Surprise win for Jesus

College Football

Luke Pickering

GIRTON BEGAN the defence of their title with a shock 5-1 home defeat to Jesus that has immediately sprung the title race wide open. In an incident packed game, the league champions, who were undefeated for all of last season, lost no fewer than four players to injury.

With the ceding of their frontline to graduation, star man Alex Mugan to blues commitments, and numerous injuries during the game, "fortress Girton" finally succumbed to a Jesus side that grew throughout the game ably led by influential captain John Russell.

It could have all been so different. Girton looked to begin the season as they had ended the last, with good pressure from striker Tom Baden forcing the otherwise impressive Jesus back line to fumble the ball into the path of oncoming Sam Bowie, who poked home to finally break his goal scoring duck. However, the joy was to be short-lived, with the replacement of Girton midfield maestro Donald Davidson after 15 minutes proving a harbinger of the problems that were later to beset the reigning champions.

Chances continued to be created at either end with both keepers showing their class. First, Girton's own answer to Peter Schmeichel, Rob Jones, saved bravely at the feet of an oncoming forward. Then Jesus' answer to Jens Lehmann, Sam Richardson, put his kicking problems behind him to acrobatically tip over a Mike Dankis drive.

Once again, a Girton reshuffle was

needed with goal scorer Bowie having to be replaced after being sandwiched in the penalty area, only for the referee to wave away appeals to the dismay of the typically vociferous home support. This time the Jesus team were able to seize upon the confusion among the Girton ranks after a floating free kick was finally tapped home by unmarked midfielder Brenig-Jones, with Girton having failed to clear the danger.

The away team continued to press with last ditch defending, led by softly spoken captain Jamie Knibbs, keeping the score level as half time approached. Yet the action was far from over. Another of Jesus' many penetrating through balls saw Girton's Phil Gomersall and keeper Jones clear the danger but only at the expense of an horrific injury to the irreplaceable Jones, who boasted six clean sheets in the league last year.

A 12-minute stoppage ensued as the stricken stopper was transported to Addenbrooke's with a broken tibia. With no substitute keeper on the bench and desperate attempts to reach the seconds' keeper proving futile, it was left to novice goalkeeper Andy Owen to fill the sticks.

Jesus continued to attack until the break, but wasted numerous attempts to trouble the fill-in keeper and so the score remained level at a goal a piece as the half-time whistle blew.

Both teams came out for the second half searching for the win, with Girton looking dangerous via the clever use of the long throw, a tactic that saw the powerful Jamie Knibbs isolated with his marker at the back post, but to no avail. Jesus themselves looked threatening with a looping shot from winger Ed Bond clipping the cross bar.

The next goal would prove decisive, and it was Jesus who snatched it on 70 minutes with a speculative shot that flew from the foot of Tim Swain into the top corner to the delight of the travelling Jesusans. The visitors continued to attack to secure victory with Blues squad member Russell grabbing the game by the scruff of the neck with two fine strikes from the edge of the box as Girton heads began to drop.

'Fortress Girton' finally succumbed to a Jesus side

Finally, late substitute and Jason Lee look-a-like, Theo Bard, shook off the jeers of a disgruntled crowd and nodded home with his pineapple shaped haircut to score Jesus's fifth of the game.

Tragically for the home side, there was still time for Richard Staff to break a bone in his foot in an innocuous challenge. Keeper Jones is set to be sidelined for a full 11 months, with defensive lynchpin Staff out until the New Year. The psychological damage this game has dealt Girton could take just as long to heal. Jesus, meanwhile, can dream about the title.

In other games, Fitzwilliam, who edged past Jesus in their first game of the season, are top of the table after a comfortable win against last year's runners up, St Catherine's. St John's are also still unbeaten but only after a shaky start in an unconvincing 3 - 1 win at Downing, while Churchill lost 3 - 1 to Trinity. Trinity have played just one game after their match with Girton was postponed but are one of only three teams that remain unbeaten.

-League Table on page 31



Girton chase back as Jesus attempt another quick counter attack

Ladies' Lacrosse teams both win comfortably

CAMBRIDGE 18
LONDON 4

Sascha Grimm
Annalise Katz-Summercorn

CAMBRIDGE DESTROYED a poor London side that were expected to put up much more of a fight. The match got off to a flying start, with Cambridge taking a firm hold of the game with a goal within the first minute. There was some strong pressure on the ball in defence, holding back the opposition and some great passing and driving up the midfield, leaving London far behind.

Despite being one man up, Cambridge kept the level of game high, playing their advantage cleverly. Work around the goal by the attacks was fluid and showed a high level of teamwork, with a number of great cuts leading to several well-timed goals. Fresher Tanya Wallis and Phil Geering scored a respectable 9 goals between them. Fresher Lizzie Maughan really commanded the goal circle with some inspirational saves.

The whole team exhibited drive and determination, with each individual showing a great awareness for the other players. For so early on in the season, this result is a great achievement and bodes well for the rest of the year.

Meanwhile, the Kingfishers, Cambridge's second team, lost to a strong Oxford side 8-4 in a thrilling encounter.

This being the first real match the team has played together, it was clear that there was a lack of cohesion in the first half, leaving Oxford 6 - 0 up. The play was far from poor, but the players hadn't managed to click into place with each other.

However, in the second half it was as if a different team had stepped onto the pitch - the defence was impenetrable and as soon as Oxford had the ball, they were forced to lose possession of it. Some extremely impressive saves by Amanda Casto in goal ensured Oxford weren't going to inflict a repeat of the first half. Runs up the pitch took the ball to the attacks, who suddenly began really working together controlling the pace and setting up goals.

A fantastic goal by Helen Leppard seemed to be the catalyst. Mentally and physically Cambridge were back in the game. Two more goals by Helen Leppard and one from Sascha Grimm meant that the second half score finished 4-2 to Cambridge, though the final score was 8-4 to Oxford.

However, Cambridge dominated right to the final whistle and it was clear that the team had finally managed to gel and work with each other. A barrier was overcome in the match, and the future holds much promise for Kingfishers.

Manchester Relays help prepare Hare and Hounds for Varsity race

Jacob Eisler

ON SATURDAY 9th October, most members of the Hare and Hounds either diligently prepared for the pounding roads of the Fresher's Fun Run or recovered from the start of the first real weekend of the year. However, a few brave or foolish souls woke at the crack of dawn to venture to the Manchester Relays and represent Cambridge at one of the larger relay events of the year. Consisting of six two mile laps for the men and three laps for the women, the meet gives the CUHH the opportunity to flex its muscle prior to the onset of College League and Varsity matches.

The men's team, otherwise known as "The Cambridge Mums", consisted of two fleet alumni, Dave Barker and Ben Davies, and four current Haries, Andy Bell, Ed Brady, Dan Chambers, and Jacob Eisler. The women, fondly referred to as "Baddeley's Bitches", were ably represented by the trio of Lucy Cundliffe, Claire Willer and Catharine Wood.

Prior to the actual running race, however, was the race to reach Manchester from Cambridge before the 2pm start, a task complicated by several factors, particularly the crush of football fans out to see the Wales-England game in Manchester. Our mighty captain's decision to leave the hand brake slightly on for the entire forward journey further complicated matters, as did going around the final traffic ring at Manchester a total of 5 times. With roughly 3 or 4 minutes to go before the start time of 2pm, Ms. Wood began to lace up her spikes while still cramped in the back seat. Meanwhile, the men's team could only take solace in the fact that the two alumni had arrived early, and could register and start the race in the absence of the rest of the team.

However, a delay on the part of the relay organisers spared the Haries any great stress, and even the first racers were allowed a bit of time to warm up and prepare for the race. The course itself was a flat, smooth and fairly fast two mile loop, mostly grass or dirt with a few short patches of tarmac. A fairly steep water jump from the lower to the

higher bank of a small stream and a log obstacle, confronting racers with the dilemma of either hurdling it or running around it, provided a variety of terrain. To complicate matters further, as the race proceeded, the banks of the stream were reduced to mud, making things a bit more challenging for the latter competitors.

The races themselves were fairly impressive. On the women's side, Wood (13.12) and Cundliffe (13.44) both provided solid efforts despite relatively little warm-up time. This set up Willer for an impressively speedy finish (12.11), earning the women a final position of 10th. On the men's side, the alumni provided a strong start with Barker (10.50) and Davies (11.05) both securing fast results. Bell (11.00) and Chambers (11.17) also demonstrated good speed in the first race of the season, and Eisler (12.18) recovered from a brief mix-up at the turnover to show a solid kick at the finish line. The most impressive performance on the men's side, however was by Brady, whose classically heroic stride helped him make up several places as he ran a swift 10.43, cheered

on by much of the team over the last 400 meters as he raised the men's team to 14th place. For both teams, the swift anchor runners proved crucial in securing the team positions.



One contestant takes it less seriously