

VARSITY

Friday February 6th 2009

The Independent Cambridge Student Newspaper since 1947

Issue no 689 | varsity.co.uk

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Is CUSU working?



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Shoe-thrower student faces criminal charge

» **Protester will appear in court after throwing shoe at Chinese prime minister**
» **Vice-Chancellor says: 'This University is not a place for shoe-throwing'**

Caedmon Tunstall-Behrens

A Cambridge student has been charged by police after throwing a shoe at the Chinese prime minister during a speech on Monday.

The 27-year-old student, who has not been named, will appear in court on Tuesday charged with causing fear of violence.

Wen Jiabao was giving a lecture at the West Road Concert Hall when a loud whistle interrupted him. A student stood up and said: "How can the University prostitute itself with this dictator? How can you listen to these lies?"

The protester was heckled by much of the audience, who were predominantly Chinese. One member of the audience told the protester: "You are being extremely rude."

The student then took off his shoe and threw it towards the stage, but it missed Mr Wen and landed a few feet away.

Proctors and University Constables immediately ran towards where he was seated, pushing past other attendees to reach him at the far end of the row.

As he was being escorted out of the hall by security, the student shouted: "Stand up and protest and get out!"

Mr Wen seemed unfazed by the encounter, initially continuing with his speech on the state of the Chinese economy within the global market. He barely flinched as the shoe was thrown and responded after the protester was removed from the room by saying: "This despicable behaviour cannot stand in the way of friendship between China and the UK."

China's foreign ministry later de-

scribed the protest as "despicable".

"The Chinese side has expressed its strong feelings against the occurrence of the incident," a statement said. "The facts demonstrate that the despicable conduct of this troublemaker will win no sympathy," it continued.

Cambridge's Vice-Chancellor, Alison Richard, said: "I deeply regret that a single member of the audience failed to show the respect for our speaker that is customary at Cambridge. This University is a place for considered argument and debate, not for shoe-throwing."

Last year, an Iraqi journalist famously threw both his shoes at former US president George Bush during a news conference in Baghdad.

Hundreds of protesters gathered outside the venue. Human rights campaigners wanted to raise awareness of China's perceived poor human rights record.

Director of Free Tibet, Stephanie Brigden, said: "No-one attending the Rede Lecture in Cambridge should be under any illusions about Premier Wen.

"He is the public face of China's violent crackdown inside Tibet. As China's second most powerful leader, it is inconceivable that the orders for Chinese troops to fire on unarmed Tibetan protesters last year could have come without his knowledge and consent."

The ticketed event was open to all members of the student and faculty body at Cambridge and was also attended by a number of accompanying Chinese delegates.

Over 2,000 people applied for tickets for only 400 places, according to the

University.

The prime minister titled his speech 'See China in the light of her development', describing China as "both young and old", referring to the fact that China is a "big Oriental country with a civilisation spreading stretching back several thousand years.

"She is young, because the People's Republic is just 60 years old, and the country began reform and opening-up only 30 years ago."

He concluded his address with a hope that British-Chinese cooperation would develop into the future. "As the first industrialized country, Britain has accumulated rich experience in economic development and environmental protection.

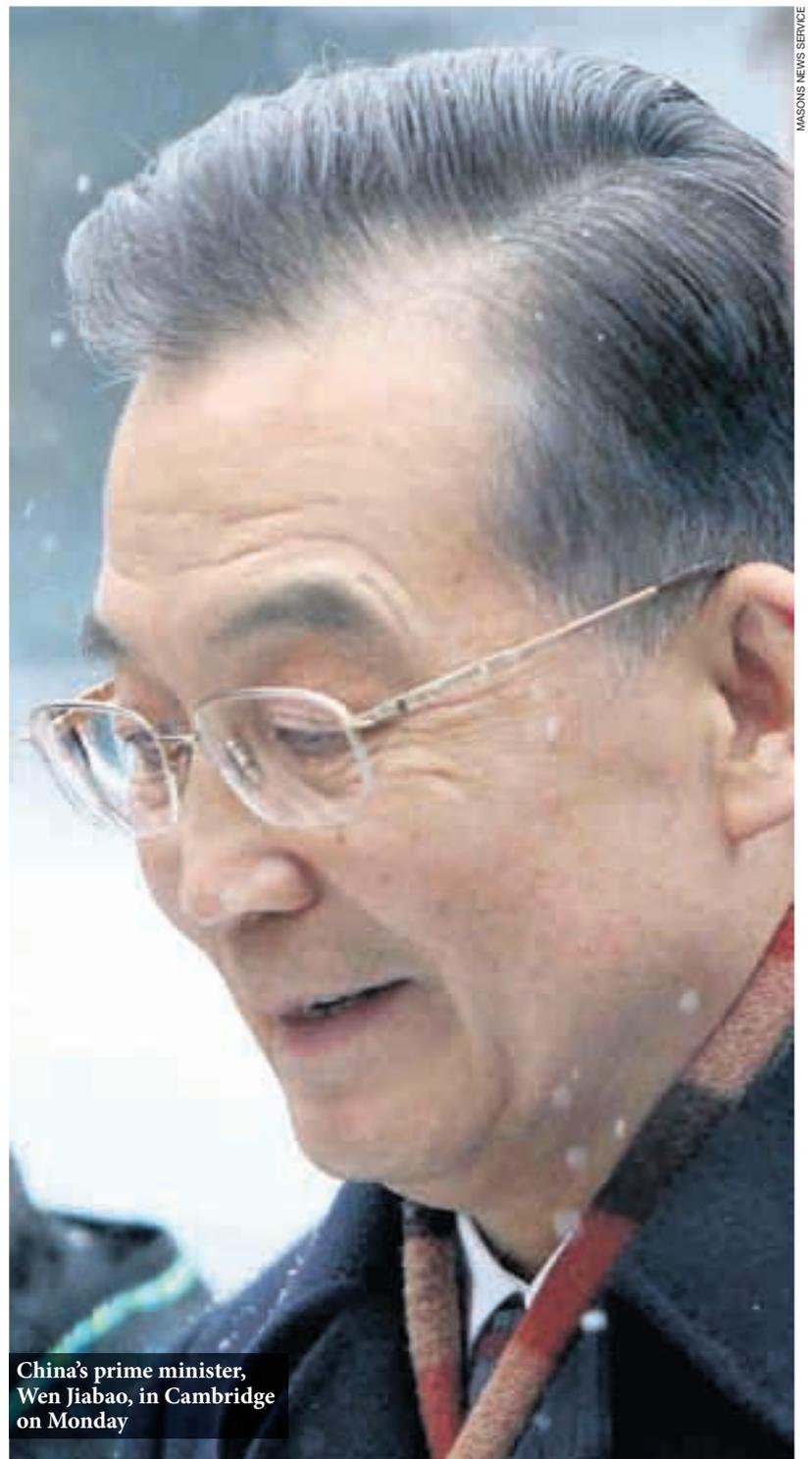
"We hope to learn from your experience and strengthen exchanges and co-operation with you," he said.

There was only time for two questions at the end of the lecture since Jiabao had to leave for a flight back to Beijing that afternoon.

In Alison Richard's address of gratitude at the end of the afternoon, she commented on that fact that many arms were raised for questions that were left unanswered. "There is a conversation to be continued and an exchange to be continued. We do hope that you will return," she said.

Security at the event was tight, with body searches on entry and a ban on laptops coming into the building. Scores of police were deployed to control the event. Police were placed on the roofs of surrounding buildings, including the English Faculty.

Continued on page 9



China's prime minister, Wen Jiabao, in Cambridge on Monday

Cambridge's anniversary fundraising total hits £800m

Andrew Bellis

Cambridge has raised £800m towards its £1bn fundraising target, the University announced yesterday.

The 800th anniversary campaign's annual fundraising report said that the total raised centrally and by the Col-

leges was £138m, lifting the total raised so far to £801m.

In 2005, Cambridge launched a campaign to raise £1bn to safeguard the University's financial future.

The announcement, which reflects donations up until August 2008, comes amid growing concerns about the eco-

nomical climate and Britain's deepening recession. But the campaign says it is conscious of the "financial storms" that could affect future fundraising.

The Vice-Chancellor, Alison Richard, expressed her delight at the announcement. "Our high hopes for the support of our alumni and friends

have been far exceeded thanks to their commitment and generosity. This is all the more remarkable as financial and economic concerns mounted during the year."

The co-chairman of the campaign, Sir David Walker, said: "This milestone year for Cambridge has brought

us ever closer to our campaign target of £1 billion. However, we are keenly aware of the financial storms around us. We know that achieving our shared goal will demand even more intense commitment from all of us, as we continue to build a firm financial base for collegiate Cambridge."

VARSITY

A special preview issue of How the Geeks Built Cities, a new independent magazine, can be found inside the centrefold. It is the first in a series of magazine previews in Varsity.

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It was Oxford. Life goes on.



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Find out exactly how bad we have it.

Give sport a chance

Cambridge is justly proud of much of its elite sport. Its rugby, rowing and (to some extent) cricket teams challenge the world's best, and accordingly attract some truly world-class sportsmen. Shown on national television, they hold the attention of much of the country. At the grassroots, however, it is a different matter entirely.

The University has no sports facilities for the use of all its members. This would be considered shameful in a primary school, let alone a world-leading university; it cannot be allowed to continue. We do not have even as simple a facility as a swimming pool: this puts the swimming and water polo Blues at an obvious and grave disadvantage to all its rivals (including Oxford), but is also highly unfortunate for the vast number of Cambridge students who would otherwise go swimming for fitness or fun.

Some might very reasonably point out that this is an academic institution which must concentrate on intellectual activities above all else. However, the University already makes extensive provision for drama, music and even, through College bars, drinking. To ignore the wide popularity of sports among normal students is simply baffling. Moreover, it may affect Cambridge's academic standards in the long run, as clever students who are also sporty may prefer to try their luck at Oxford or another more athletically endowed university.

It is surely this inadequacy of provision which has led to the desperate situation of some College sports. It is common to see Colleges needing to club together to field a team even in the flagship sport of rugby; this would not happen if the University cared nearly as much about the sporting needs of its whole student body as it does about the ringers it calls up for the big occasions.

Cambridge has just announced that it has raised £800 million from its 800th anniversary campaign. Is it really too much to hope that some of that money will be spent on an area of University life which is valued by so many, and which has been hitherto so neglected?

letters@varsity.co.uk

Submit your letter for the chance to win a bottle of wine from the Cambridge Wine Merchants. All letters may be edited for space and style.

Impostor in our midst?

Dear Sirs,

I felt that someone should write and inform you that there is clearly an impostor working as a *Varsity* writer. Mark Wolfson's argument [*Issue 688, January 30th*] that, essentially, non-violent protest is tantamount to terrorism quite clearly



cannot be the argument of a Cambridge student, and therefore I can only conclude that a very precocious primary school pupil has somehow managed to slip under the radar and contribute an article. You have to admire their spirit, but I'm afraid it is impossible to admire their argument, as they have not yet mastered a few very basic political concepts, and seem confused by ideas such as 'democracy' and 'freedom of speech'. Perhaps a politics textbook might be a useful gift for this young impersonator to save him making such a mistake again.

Yours faithfully,
Helena Barton
Newnham College

An intimidating protest

Sirs,

In last week's edition [*Issue 688*], the Cambridge Gaza Solidarity Occupation stated that 'there has been nothing intimidating about this occupation'. With respect, surely it is not up to them to decide whether it has been intimidating, merely to state whether this was their intention.

I was intimidated by their refusal to condemn Hamas, an organisation whose charter commits to kill not just all Israelis but all Jews. I was intimidated by the fact that they showed solidarity with other similar occupations elsewhere in the country, which made statements including: "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free". This insinuates that Palestinian freedom must come at the cost of the destruction of Israel.

I was intimidated by the fact that they refused to condemn bloggers in support of the occupation whose posts included ill-informed and frankly startling statements such as: "There's nothing distinctive or special about the way that the Nazis slaughtered people in WWII." I was intimidated by the fact that they refused to condemn comments on their blog which stated that Palestine

had been occupied for 60 years, a claim which again forsakes Israel's right to exist.

I was intimidated and I would like to know whether this was their intention.

Yours faithfully,

Alex Cohen
St John's College

Cumming all over George

Dear Sirs,

How unfortunate it was that George Reynolds tried to be funny about Scotland next to an article by Ed Cumming, about the Maypole, which was actually funny. Anyone who has read what Mr Reynolds attempts to pass off as theatre reviews will have been unsurprised (or bored) to see the apparent subject of his piece quickly slip from view, providing the subtext for yet another syntactically garbled, charmless appraisal of his own importance.

Yours faithfully,

Elliot Ross
St John's College

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Weekly meetings are held for anyone interested in writing for *Varsity*.

News

Sunday, 4pm in the Maypole (Portugal Place)

Magazine

Wednesday, 5.30pm in the Maypole

OR

E-mail editor@varsity.co.uk to find out more.



Cambridge freezes after heaviest snowfall in 20 years



TM JOHNS

» 60% chance of disruption due to heavy snow across Cambridgeshire today, says Met Office
» Transport links and hundreds of schools closed due to bad weather

Beth Staton

The Met Office has warned of a 60 per cent chance of disruption due to heavy snow across Cambridgeshire yesterday. The severe weather warning comes after Cambridge experienced its heaviest snowfalls in almost two decades this week, causing widespread disruption across the city and surrounding area.

With temperatures dropping significantly at the weekend, the snow began to fall lightly on Sunday afternoon. It continued with increasing heaviness through the night, and students emerging from clubs in the early hours of the morning were met with a town transformed, covered in a 5cm-thick blanket of snow. Another inch of snow fell on Cambridge early yesterday morning.

The Met Office says the last comparable snowy spell was in 1991.

At the University, many sports fixtures were called off and supervisions cancelled due to transport and childcare difficulties. Some debates, including one on the Israel-Palestine conflict, were also postponed due to flight problems. Most shops in Lion's Yard closed early due to staffing difficulties.

The faculties, however, suffered re-

markably few problems. "Everything was business as usual really," said the secretary of the Biological Sciences school. "Some of the staff from smaller villages found it difficult to get into town, but everyone did eventually."

Of the two teaching sessions that the Law faculty had to postpone, one was traffic-related and the other was caused by a back injury incurred while shovelling snow.

It was to the intense relief of eager students that very few lectures were called off. "Frankly," commented one second-year NatSci, "I wouldn't have known even if they were."

The poor weather has had a significant impact on transport around the region, with major disruption to the London-Cambridge train route and Stansted Airport.

Police yesterday urged people not to travel on some of the region's major roads unless "absolutely necessary" as plunging temperatures caused dangerous icy conditions and a series of traffic accidents.

For most of Monday the rail link between Cambridge and London was out of action, mostly due to signalling problems created by heavy snow and reduced visibility. Planes from Stan-

sted were also grounded, but both are now operating on a normal service. The train service to King's Cross was suspended again on Wednesday after a power line failure.

Cambridgeshire County Council is one of many local authorities across the country to be affected by a national shortage of grit. The council's gritters, who have been dispatched more than 60 times this winter, have spread more than 11,000 tonnes of rocksalt across the county's roads since October at a cost of more than £1.2m.

"These are record-breaking conditions this season and nationwide it has meant the suppliers for all coun-

cils cannot keep up with demand," said Mark Kemp, the council's director of highways.

More than 200 schools and colleges across the region were closed yesterday as authorities attempted to cope with the wintry conditions.

The snow has been caused by an area of high pressure, drawing in very cold continental air across the UK as it moved slowly westwards from southern Scandinavia out into the Atlantic Ocean. "The outlook remains rather wintry with further spells of rain, sleet and snow for parts of the UK on Friday and through the weekend," according to the Met Office.

Additional reporting by Sufyan Khan



PATRICK GARETY

In Brief

Royal to name Blues' boat

The Duke of Edinburgh is scheduled to name the 2009 Blues boat as well as a London-Cambridge train next week. The Chancellor of the University will attend the boat-naming ceremony at the Cambridge University Boat Club on February 12. He will then go to the railway station to name the train to mark the 800th anniversary of the University. He will later attend a Civic Reception at the Guildhall before visiting various departments of the University. The Duke is then expected to make an appearance at Old Schools for a reception for the University of Cambridge Alumni before attending a reception, lecture and dinner to mark the bicentenary of Charles Darwin's birth at Christ's.

Chicken-shaped tree

Motorists have been doing a double-take when they spot a bizarre-looking tree – which is in the shape of a giant chicken. The tree, believed to be an ash or a hawthorn, is smothered in ivy so that it naturally forms the animal shape which resembles a pruned tree. It rules the roost looming by a slip road off the A10 near Milton, causing many commuters to wonder if someone was playing a prank. Bob Widd, an arboriculturist with tree surgery firm Global Tree Solutions, of Willingham, said time and weather had formed the tree into its remarkable shape.

Police to be named

A police force is set to become the first in Britain to stitch officers' names onto the outside of their uniforms in a bid to improve public relations. Cambridgeshire Police plans to sew the names of all uniformed staff onto their shoulder epaulettes alongside other rank insignia. Chief Constable Julie Spence said members of the public have a right to know the names of officers they are dealing with. She said: "I think it can only help if people know the names of police officers they are dealing with – why shouldn't people know who we are?" The trial scheme, which began last month, will now be rolled out to include all 1,400 uniformed officers and 200 PC-SOs at Cambridgeshire Police. If successful, it could be rolled out in other forces across the country.

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Fee cap review delayed until after election

» Universities Minister admits decision on removing fee cap won't be made until June 2010
» CUSU President calls announcement a "disgrace", as admission is attacked by opposition politicians



David Lammy, the universities minister

Gemma Oke

The Universities Minister has admitted that a review on the tuition fee cap will not be completed until after the next general election.

Answering a question after a speech at a higher education conference this week, David Lammy said that the government's tuition fee review would not be concluded until June 2010. The last possible date for a general election is May 5th 2010.

The government is reviewing whether to lift the cap on tuition fees, currently set at £3,145 per year. Most universities in England and Wales charge the maximum possible fees to British students.

There are fears that raising the cap on tuition fees could have implications for the widening university access to disadvantaged social groups. Some universities are reportedly seeking to charge students up to £6,000 per year for some courses.

The CUSU President, Mark Fletcher, said he was "not massively surprised" by talk of postponing a review of tuition fees, adding that to do so was a "disgrace" given the government's commitment to improving access to higher education.

Shadow Innovation, Universities and Skills Secretary David Willetts criticised Lammy's admission and called for the review to take place immediately.

"We want the fees review to start now and to be as wide-ranging as possible," the Conservative MP said. "There is already plenty of evidence available which should be looked at and I see no reason for there to be a delay."

A spokesman for the Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills defended the minister's comments.

"David has answered the question he was asked [at the conference]," a spokeswoman said. "An independent review is scheduled to begin later this year to account for the new intake of students in the 2009-10 academic year, as part of a long term review of higher education provision."

CUSU's access officer, Charlotte Richer, said: "The topic of tuition fees is politically divisive, but that doesn't mean that people seeking election, particularly anyone depending on the student vote, shouldn't be transparent about their intentions."

"It's no surprise that neither party

want to run into an election with tuition fees as a prominent topic. The fees review should be non-binding and conducted by an independent panel, so there's no reason that it shouldn't take place in 2009, irrespective of party politics or a general election."

"David Lammy is right when he says the review should be part of a much wider review of the funding of higher education," she added.

In his speech, Lammy also urged businesses, particularly in law and medicine, to look beyond Oxbridge graduates when recruiting to become more representative of society.

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Council slashes rape centre funds

» Council cuts funding to £2.50 per caller amid spending reductions

Beth Staton

Cambridge Rape Crisis has been allocated just £683 of council funding, despite applying for £11,000. This averages out at £2.50 for each caller to the rape helpline.

Adjusted for inflation, the sum amounts to a cut in funding, despite the fact that the original application was backed by Cambridgeshire Police and David Howarth MP. In 2007 exactly the same amount was awarded, and the centre was forced to temporarily close.

"We speak to hundreds of some of the most vulnerable women and children in Cambridge who have survived childhood sexual abuse and rape," said Susan Turner of Rape Crisis.

"As sad as this setback is, we want to let our callers know that we will fight to secure further funding and that our crisis line will remain open every week," she said.

"We are the only voice that many of our callers have, and we will shout loudly to ensure that they have the service they deserve."

Cambridge City Council says that the failure to meet the request was

down to unavoidable funding restrictions. "The community development budget has decreased this year, but we've strived to maintain the same level of funding for all the organisations which depend on us," a spokesman said.

"We're pleased that we've managed to do so with Rape Crisis despite the very limited budgets we're running on," he added.

Natalie Szarek, CUSU women's officer, condemned the move, calling it "completely unacceptable that the council can't meet the funding request proportionate for this essential service."

"Cambridge Rape Crisis is the only source of support for many women and girls in who have been affected by sexual abuse in Cambridge: it is of the greatest importance for the whole community, and a benefit to the students who are involved with the running of the helpline as well as those who call on it for help and support."

The centre, which can only afford to open two hours a week, received over 260 calls in 2008, 20% of which were from children. Funding is needed for basic costs such as office rental and phone bills, as well as for volunteer

training and development.

According to the government, sexual violence and rape costs the state over £76,000 per victim in loss of earnings and long term health problems. Rape Crisis condemned the city council for failing to fulfil a statutory duty, warning that the city of Cambridge "will end up paying the moral and economic costs if their most vulnerable residents are left without adequate support".

In light of the shortfall, the centre are looking elsewhere for funding opportunities. "The volunteers are working hard to ensure that the centre won't shut down like last year" said Szarek. "The service is up and running again, and volunteers are looking for funding from elsewhere. It is disgraceful, however, that resources are being expended on searching for funding and that it is not provided publicly."

Szarek was keen to stress that the Rape Crisis was appealing to May Ball committees as a potential source of income for the coming year, and the centre has urged residents to pressure their local councillors.

The Cambridge Rape Crisis helpline is open every Wednesday from 7.30-9.30pm on 01223 245888.

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NEWS FEATURE

Inside Cambridge's drinking societies

In the year after university society initiations were laid bare in the national press, Varsity has delved into the secretive world of drinking societies in Cambridge and how new members are brought on board

Caedmon Tunstall-Behrens

In October of last year the BBC exposed a society initiation at Gloucester University, posting a video of students lined up with plastic bags over their heads, vomiting intermittently and being shouted at by another student dressed in a Nazi uniform.

But it is a widespread issue within British universities, Cambridge included.

Adrian Boyle, an Accident and Emergency consultant at Addenbrooke's, told Varsity that most of the students he sees visiting A&E come with alcohol-related problems, and the number of alcohol-related admittances increases substantially during university term time, "because there is much more activity around town."

"In the last 10 years, the number of female students who are coming in extremely drunk and incapable has shot up. More too are being assaulted, which I think is a large safety concern."

Many, if not most, undergraduates will have been out with a society at one stage or another. An average night out begins with a couple of pints, followed by a bottle of wine at dinner, followed by more pints back in the college bar and then three or four VKs at a club. Total intake on a single night out will frequently match or even exceed the 24 weekly units recommended by the Government.

But if drinking societies are the lifeblood of this culture of bingeing, their initiations are the pressure points, where normal undergraduate excesses are distilled into ritualised orgies of consumption.

Some are more notorious than others. The Wyverns, Magdalene's men's drinking society, have an infamous method for testing out their new members. The ordeal involves a "meal" consisting of over 15 courses, specially prepared for those to be initiated.

Perhaps surprisingly, the first ten courses are served without alcohol, and include such questionable delicacies as

a pig's snout accompanied with wasabi sauce, and a pint of water with a live goldfish swimming inside; a dish which, if regurgitated with said creature still alive, exempts the diner from two of the following courses.

Their latest initiation took place last week and featured raw leeks, whole, uncooked squids and entire chillies. The four prospective members were then adorned with kippers around their necks and doused in treacle and flour. At the end of the trial, hosted at the Punter on Pound Hill, they had to down four "dirty" pints in 3 minutes, each containing foods, spices and foreign liquids, spurred on by yells from onlookers of "down it, down it!"

In other societies fine dining in classy settings is taken equally seriously. Members of the Beefsteak Club, a cross-Cambridge society, are treated to a lavish seven-course dinner, each dish accompanied with a full bottle of wine. The meal is served in a room with tarpaulin covering every surface to avoid damage to the property.

The Ferretz, an inter-collegiate drinking society, must consume 80 units on their initiation, beginning with a bottle of gin and finishing off with a bottle of port, consumed through a condom.

Whilst most initiations will end in little more than an embarrassment or a severe hangover the next day, some have become tragic. One 18-year-old student at Exeter University died after taking part in a golf initiation ceremony in 2006, and another died in 2003 following a similar initiation after choking on his own vomit.

After the BBC's exposé, the National Union of Students called for a blanket ban on initiation ceremonies in all British universities.

One second year student said, "I disagree with NUS' calls for a ban because it is part of the fabric of the social life at the University. It may not be one that the University sanctions, but it's just as important

as the lectures or the beautiful buildings."

The Senior Tutor at Murray Edwards, Dr Owen Saxon, said of the Harlots, the College's drinking society, "it certainly doesn't seem to be something that would do Cambridge's reputation any favours."

Yet despite this official condemnation, CUSU Welfare Officer Andrea Walko was reluctant to condemn the initiations so strongly.

She said: "In terms of initiations specifically, I'm not sure they are as much of a problem here in Cambridge as other universities. What I think is more of a problem are the drinking societies."

Ben, 21, is a member of one of the central Colleges' drinking societies, and was initiated in his first year. "Initiation day was just a day out with the lads really, but with lots of booze" he said. "There's a fair

THE TOP FIVE SALACIOUS DRINKING SOCIETY NAMES

1. Fresh Meat
2. Coc Soc
3. The S.L.A.G.S
4. G-Spots
5. The Emmanuel Kants

bit of shagging, but that's only an aside to the drinking.

"There's a points system for the girls - it's pretty straightforward, from pulling to shagging. Maybe more for something special."

Prior to initiation, potential members will swap with other Colleges or drink with existing members, often being set challenging tasks to test their suitability for society membership. "You have to chop a bottle of wine before formal, shirtless, because vomiting is always a possibility. The other lads serenade you with the society's song," said one student.

Another well-known society's initiation for female members is alleged to involve the member-to-be standing on a chair, lowering her tights and an existing member dipping her fingers in wine and simulating digital penetration.

The classic culmination to the drinking society year is Suicide Sunday, when many hold garden parties. The Wyverns' party last year ended in police involvement as a Trinity student punched a co-competitor and a security guard in a jelly wrestling competition. The event is believed to be going ahead, although in a new location.

Its winter equivalent, the VT valley rally, occurring during the annual Varsity ski trip, is quickly catching up to Suicide Sunday's levels of debauchery. This year activities included teabagging, the act of dangling the scrotal sack in some-

one's mouth, at every checkpoint, flaming socks being placed on male genitals, the consumption of sweets from various orifices and entire teams giving each other back, sack and crack waxes. The winners received a trip to Canada.

One student, recently initiated into a drinking society, told Varsity that they are a way of formalising friendships. "Membership draws people who can't necessarily sustain such a wide social group themselves together. In a sociological sense, members might feel higher up on the social ladder. It could be that most abuse directed at prospective members on swaps is from those less confident with their social situations."

Swaps at the Bombay Brasserie, a favourite haunt for many societies, present opportunities for drinking games beyond the standard "pennying" tradition. Breaking poppadums over your neighbour's head is a favourite, as is dunking your naan bread in curry and slapping the girl next to you with it.

The Patricians, Downing's male drinking society, are alleged to have to drink eight pints in two hours, followed by cocktails in one of the city's parks. Their uniform is chinos and a blazer and members are fined with downing their drinks if they are not appropriately attired.

Another second year girl added, "if a guy isn't in a society, he could be seen as socially less up there and so less attractive."

The Caesarians, Jesus' inter-year drinking society, has a tradition whereby



SARAH MOONEY

any initiated member can point at an invited male, or 'Legionary' as they call it, keeping with the Roman theme, and he must then down his drink. There is no

limit to the number of

times this can be done to any one individual, and it has been reported that many don't make it much past the end of the meal, if that.

Caesarian Sunday, occurring in the first Bank Holiday in Easter Term, sees the annual fight between the Girton 'Green Giants' and the Caesarians on Jesus Green. Legend has it that a member of the Green Giants stole a bottle of Pimms from a member of the Caesarians. The bottle was subsequently thrown at the group of Caesarians in a challenge to a fight. The day sees most college drinking societies descend on the Green for a day of drinking.

Not all initiations involve heavy drinking. Many female societies prefer to set the girls tasks, such as running sex surveys in town, collecting obscure items of clothing from strangers, kissing strangers and dressing up.

The Newnham Nuns' ceremony, for instance, involves eating liquorice held by a volunteering male's teeth. The girl is then expected to kiss the boy when she reaches his lips. Another part sees a topless man covered in whipped cream and chocolate buttons, being cleaned by the girl, using only her mouth. More degrading, perhaps, is when the girls are told to put a condom onto a banana, again using only their mouths.

Additional reporting by Beth Staton



A Cambridge student with jugs of vomit after his initiation.



Students at the Nuns' initiation put condoms on bananas with their mouths

TOM FORRESTER

In Brief

Cambridge to expand its borders

Cambridge's historic boundaries look set to expand following an unprecedented agreement between the city's council and the rural district that encircles it. Cambridge is one of a number of cities in the country criticised for its tightly drawn boundaries which some say have restricted growth. Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council sent a joint letter to the Boundary Committee requesting changes to be made to the existing border between the two authorities. Cambridge's boundary would be extended to the A14 to the north and the M11 to the south.

Councillor in ambulance scandal

A councillor accused of obstructing an ambulance on an emergency call is to appear before a standards committee. The East of England Ambulance Service complained that Colin Rosenstiel, of Cambridge City Council, challenged an ambulance trying to get into Jesus Green in June 2007. Mr Rosenstiel is due to appear before the city council's standards committee next week. A spokeswoman for the council said an investigation was launched following a complaint by the East of England Ambulance Service whose driver was trying to reach a patient with a knee injury.

Protests against housing development

Students are campaigning to save a house close to Magdalene College. The house, at 13 Chesterton Road, on the corner at Hertford street was the setting of Uncle Alan and Aunt Gwen's house in *Tom's Midnight Garden*, a children's novel by Philippa Pearce. The building has been derelict for some time and a fire in December 2008, later confirmed as arson, on the first floor make it more likely the council will allow it to be demolished to make room for a housing development containing twelve studio apartments and car parking.

Cambridge represented at the Grammys

Tarik O'Regan, a current Fellow of Trinity and former postgraduate at Corpus Christi, has been nominated for two categories at this year's Grammy Awards. His album *Threshold of Night* has been shortlisted for both the 'Best Classical Album' and 'Best Choral Album' categories. The recording is performed by Conspirare, a twice Grammy-nominated ensemble, and conducted by Craig Hella Johnson, founder and artistic director. O'Regan's other new album, called *Scattered Rhymes*, is part of Robina G. Young's 'Producer of the Year' portfolio. The ceremony takes place this Sunday.

Record total for Jailbreak as students travel 52,000 miles for free



The winning team, Magdalene students Henry Fovargue and Annie Spencer, in Detroit

Nat Sokolova

This year's RAG Jailbreak is set to raise a record amount of money for charity, according to its organisers.

At 9am last Friday, almost two hundred adventurers began trying to get as far from Cambridge as they could without using any of their own money. In total, the students travelled 52,800 miles, with the winners travelling over 3,000 miles to Detroit, Michigan.

The winning team, Magdalene students Henry Fovargue and Annie Spencer (*above*), hope to raise £1,200 for World Vision as the pair were promised special sponsorship if they reached the USA.

The winners began by hitching a ride from Cambridge to Heathrow before bagging two free transatlantic flights to Detroit.

"We started ringing around the local radio stations asking if they would ask motorists listening in to give us a lift," Fovargue said.

"Nobody picked us up but passing motorists did donate money which we used to get down to Heathrow very cheaply on the bus.

"Once we got there we went around all of the major airlines explaining our charitable cause and asking if any of them would be willing to sponsor us or give us a flight.

"They were all incredibly stingy so we decided to try and raise money in the airport by asking passengers in the waiting rooms.

"The kindness of some of the passengers was incredible. We ended up with about £400 which we used to book the two of us onto a flight using an internet booking site.

"At a time when many people are really struggling because of the economic conditions, people were so generous."

The pair arrived in Motor City, Detroit, on Saturday night, and were given complimentary return tickets to the UK via New York's La Guardia airport and Amsterdam in the Netherlands - a journey that would have cost £3,000 in flights, taxis and taxes.

They finally arrived back in the UK on Monday morning after their return flight was delayed by five hours due to snow on the runway at Heathrow.

Jailbreak is a charity competition organised by Cambridge RAG, which has been running since 2004. This year, 87 teams out of 102 successfully completed the competition, travelling more than 52,000 miles overall. For every mile they went, every border they crossed, or every continent they reached, they will be able to claim sponsorship from their family and friends, and this money will then be sent to the 25 local and national charities sponsored by RAG. Chris McKennon, one of the Jailbreak reps, believes that this year's outcome will beat last year's £7,800 by far.

Emily Ahlers and Henry Hughes, from Jesus, travelled to Reykjavik, Iceland, a distance of 1,140 miles, placing them eighth overall.

"We got to Stansted early on in the

day and set about asking for a free flight to the specified destination 'anywhere!' We were kindly given a free ticket to Reykjavik in Iceland by Iceland Express and after spending an incredible ten hours in Stansted we eventually took off for Iceland," Emily told *Varsity*.

"Having not seen any other successful Jailbreakers in the airport and making fast progress away from Cambridge, we were pretty sure we were in the lead. Landing in Iceland was an experience in itself - ice caked to the runway and a seriously wobbly plane!

"That was explained by the blizzard we found as we got off the plane... minus 5 degrees and snow pelting down. A night in the airport was not an appealing prospect so luckily we blagged a bus into

town. The next day was spent being rejected by every form of public transport available in Reykjavik. So Reykjavik was our final destination: 1,140 miles for the grand total of £0.00."

Other participants were a lot less lucky. Matt Sutton and Andrey Pronin from Fitzwilliam had to end their trip in London after being stopped by the Metropolitan Police, who stripped them of all their money while they were begging on the tube. Even the RAG Jailbreak T-shirts and letters of authentication didn't help them sound credible.

Similar was the fate of Margherita Manca and Kit Fitton's attempt to make their way to Berlin without a train ticket: in the guard's words: "Nice fairytale for you - now get off my train!"



Jess Nicholls and Flo Sharp on their way to Ljubljana, Slovenia



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Varsity Profile

» Week 4: Tamsin Omond, Cambridge alumna and eco-warrior

Tamsin Omond describes her life as “really fierce and fun”. She is part of the new generation of eco-warriors, making it her mission to spread the word about climate change.

Meeting her dispels any preconceptions I had from reading articles about her in the past. She much prefers face-to-face interviews, and I can understand why. Her facial expressions and quickening speech as she explains her activities and motivation really exude excitement. Omond is not playing the role of rebellious granddaughter to a Baronet, she is truly committed to the climate change cause.

She rolls a cigarette and tells me about Climate Rush, a group launched in spring last year with a celebratory rush on Parliament where Omond nearly faced imprisonment for breaking bail. The group’s homepage states that they are “inspired by the actions of the suffragettes 100 years ago, who showed that peaceful civil disobedience could inspire positive change”.

Omond wasn’t active at all in the environmental movement whilst studying English at Trinity, from where she graduated in 2006. She dabbled in drama, though found it quite exclusive. “If you’re not on the scene, it’s probably quite difficult to get involved”, she ponders. “I suppose it was the usual story – hours in the library and then searching for a party.” Here she guiltily glances at her friend across the table. Her friend grins back.

Having been convinced by a housemate to attend climate camp at the end

of her first summer free from academia, Tamsin felt that “suddenly everything was certain”. She had decided to do “this whole thing of falling right into the deep end of the environmental movement”.

With the current recession, she suggests, “the jobs available a few years ago just aren’t there. In the past two years, climate change has been so much further up on the global agenda”, something she hopes will encourage more to come into fighting it.

In February 2008, Omond, along with five others, climbed to the rooftop of the Houses of Parliament in a protest against the lack of involvement other parties had in the debate on the future of Heathrow airport aside from the shareholders. “BAA HQ was the best slogan, it captured the imagination of the public”, she says of the banner they draped over the main façade of the building.

“It was ironic because Brown said that decisions were to be made in the House rather than on the roofs, but since he didn’t even give the commons a vote on the future at Heathrow, even that doesn’t happen”.

The preparation for the protest took a long time. Since their first Plane Stupid action of interrupting a committee meeting on the future of aviation in Parliament didn’t make headlines, Omond said they “had to think creatively about how to capture the public eye and elevate the issue”.

Omond has been the subject in an array of media coverage, much of it con-

2

The number of times Tamsin has appeared in court

12

The number of large-scale protests Climate Rush is holding this year.

centrating on the “privilege” of her upbringing, a portrayal she wishes to knock back straight away. “I think the press are always going to want to make you intelligible to their audience. It tends to just choose epithets like ‘Grand-daughter of a baronet’ etc.”

“But I guess I shouldn’t be surprised that they choose to stereotype. This is especially so with environmentalism – it’s so much easier to present it as a fringe movement – something that ‘those’ people do, rather than something everyone should be a part of. Instead the media divides it into boxes, am I of the Zac Goldsmith or the Climate Camp ilk?”

But why focus on Britain, which accounts for just two per cent of the world’s carbon dioxide emissions? “Someone must act first and in doing so they will lead others.”

Caedmon Tunstall-Behrens

If you would like to contact Tamsin email her at tamsin@climaterush.co.uk.

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Outrage

Week 4: Mayweek 1952

Farsity's account of a "survey" they didn't carry out but thought it would be amusing to cover it all the same.

Maintaining its long tradition of service to the public, "Farsity" this week presents the results of an elaborate inquiry into the plans, characters, morals, ambitions, and achievements of those who in a few days will be leaving Cambridge forever. Detailed questionnaires were distributed to four thousand undergraduates who said they were expecting to go down this year, of whom over a thousand were third-year.

Opposite the space marked "Name," 64% of those who replied put "Don't Know," 32% put "Name What?" and the remaining 4%, a rather unsavoury little man in Fitzwilliam put, "Stevens." Why he should have thought it necessary to resort to so clumsy a subterfuge remains obscure. On the line marked "Sex" 76% put "Yes, please," 20% put "Occasionally," and the remaining 4% (Uh-huh, I'm afraid so) covered the offending word with gummed paper in an excess of inexplicable prudery.

So much for the preliminary details. The query, "What is the most precious thing you will take away from Cambridge?" evoked far less uniform replies: D. ("Swine") Herd answered "My honour," which seemed a little abstract, while the irrepressible four-percenter mentioned above replied "Seven nickel-plated teaspoons stamped 'G.W.R.', overprinted 'Fitzwilliam House,' which erred rather in the opposite direction.

More varied still were the replies to Question No. 4 "Little man, what next?" J. Silberrad wrote: "I shall take up my abode in the wooded fastnesses of Loughton, whence I shall sally forth periodically to scourge the Union Committee members and distribute broadsheets," while F. Champer scribbled, "Providing the bailiffs do not discover my new address, I will be in Cambridge for some -." At this point the forecast ceases abruptly. Many of those interrogated are evidently preparing to take it on the lam rather than on the chin: Side-bel-Abbes was mentioned four times as a likely destination. While Devil's Island, Beverly Hills, and Samarkand appeared once each. One funny little man, who gave his name a M. Boxer, came to outline his plans personally. "I don't quite know how to explain to you where I'm going," he said, mustering up strength enough to wrinkle his tiny brow. He paused thoughtfully. "Here let me draw you a diagram," he went on drawing a diagram out of his pocket... Well, of course, we have to take a pretty stern view of that sort of thing; we lifted him up by his gay print foulard and dropped him thoughtfully out of a fourth floor window. We lose a good many visitors that way.

We lose a good many readers this way, too.

Cindies in Oompa Loompa night row

» Willy Wonka-themed club night causes controversy for Big Fish Ents
» Actors with dwarfism hired to pose as Oompa Loompas with partygoers



Raymond Griffiths poses with a student at Cindies

Amber Medland

The organisers of a Willy Wonka-themed club night at Ballare on Tuesday caused controversy with their decision to employ actors suffering from dwarfism as part of the evening's entertainment.

The actors were hired to dress up as the Oompa Loompa characters featured in the film *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, and to stand outside the nightclub handing out free chocolates and having their photographs taken with partygoers.

Some clubbers, however, expressed discomfort with the situation, suggesting that dressing adult men up in funny costumes made light of a serious medical condition by turning it into a side-show novelty entertainment for a night out.

Some guests entering the nightclub were extremely entertained by the welcome they received and happily had their photographs taken, exclaiming loudly about how "cute" the employees were.

Others appeared uncertain about how best to react, and shuffled inside as quickly as possible.

A bouncer working at Ballare on the evening in question pointed out that all the club's employees are paid for their work, and that the men could of course have chosen to decline the offer of work.

The night is run by Big Fish Ents as part of the Jelly Baby club night franchise. The managing director of the company, Simon Burdus, defended his actions.

"The night was based on Willy Wonka's *Chocolate Factory*. They had dwarves in the films, so in trying to recreate the theme as best as possible we hired them. If I hadn't used small actors I could have been accused of being size-ist."

He also reported that the main actor, Raymond Griffiths, called the event "one of the best night I have done in a long time."

CUSU President Mark Fletcher said, "I wouldn't expect anything less from Big Fish Ents."

In response to Fletcher's comment, Burdus said, "As far as CUSU go, they should focus on their own nights which aren't doing too well and I physically couldn't care any less about what they say."



Students warned over 'gag mag' fakers

» Rogue salesman claim to sell magazines for charity

Lizzy Tyler

The run up to RAG Week has been troubled by people selling fake magazines in Cambridge. Students have reported two men selling the magazines in Market Passage in the past week.

Titled 'Gag Mag', as opposed to the official 'Rag Mags', the magazines appear linked to the fundraising group – until one sees the inside cover which, according to one student says: "In fact, the money was going to the person I'd bought it from."

The real RAG Mags are sold to raise money for RAG charities and promote RAG Week, which this year runs from the February 28th to March 7th.

When confronted by members of RAG, the two men claimed they had been misheard, had never claimed a link to RAG week and that the money raised was for a "hardship loan fund for students".

These claims have been difficult to verify as there are no details of such a scheme in the magazine and no registered charity number.

The RAG website warns students that

"anyone attempting to sell these magazines and telling you that they're from Cambridge Rag is lying."

"We have encountered these sellers several times and they have been reported to Trading Standards."

The real RAG week magazine will not be released until the 28th of February, with all proceeds going to Cambridge Council for Voluntary Services.

Students are advised to demand ID before buying any such magazines on the street, and that 'Gag Mags' have absolutely nothing to do with RAG.

The president of Cambridge RAG, Catriona Armstrong, expressed her anger at the rogue salesman. "My committee gives up a lot of time and effort to raise money for local charities in Rag Week and it's disgusting that these fakes are undermining their good work," she said.

The group of people behind the fake magazines has also carried out the same scam in a number of other university towns, affecting other branches of RAG. "This is the first time it's happened in Cambridge, however," Armstrong added.

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Academic freedom at risk, say Cambridge fellows

» Dons speak out over reforms to disciplinary procedures

Beth Staton

Cambridge dons have voiced concern over proposed reforms of the University's disciplinary procedures.

The proposals were detailed in a white paper put forward by senior members in December, and officially challenged last week.

They seek to repeal the University's Statute U, concerning discipline and dismissal, replacing it with a chapter that brings the discipline of academics closer to that of staff and lab technicians.

Those who face redundancy would no longer have the right to a hearing from the Vice-Chancellor, University tribunal or appeal court, and a tribunal of three individuals chosen at random by a head of department would

instead decide their case.

The current opportunity for dismissed staff to appeal to the final review of seven peers would no longer be available.

Andrew Cliff, pro-vice-chancellor for human resources, proposed the reforms, which were supported by many members. "The University's current procedures are clumsy, potentially unfair, and can drag on interminably," said William Brown, Master of Darwin. "We must and we can reform them."

Mike Clark, Reader of Pathology, regarded the reforms as a serious threat to academic freedom. "The reason why university staff have greater protection is that we're expected to conduct research and generate new and challenging ideas," he said.

"When putting forward a major criticism of a held viewpoint, you immediately come into criticism with the old guard. You can't compare this with standard employment law, where you don't have the right to criticise your employer, because in academia it's absolutely essential that people can speak out without fear of losing their jobs."

Whilst declining to comment on the likelihood of the reform, a spokesperson for the University maintained that academic freedoms would not be threatened, saying: "The proposals contain exactly the same statutory protection of academic freedom of speech as does existing University Statute U, augmented by a code of practice which explicitly allows individuals to criticise the running of the University without

discrimination of any kind."

Clark, however, perceives a very real danger that measures designed for the discipline of 'bad conduct' would in be used against staff in academic conflicts.

"The University can state that academic freedoms will be protected, but they can get you on other violations of the code of practice, such as 'bringing the University into disrepute'."

He stressed that the proposed reforms made it very easy for such dismissals to take place.

"A tribunal selected by heads of department has never, in my experience, decided in favour of an appealing member of staff, because individuals are carefully selected to uphold the views of the establishment," he said.

Cambridge Spies



Sidney Sussex

Flashing the headlights

Saturday evening saw two inebriated fillies frolic into the bar after a birthday formal attired in rather less clothing than they sported at the celebratory meal. On entering the championing cheap watering-hole, they lowered the top halves of their, already belt-like, dresses to their waists and gave the occupants a cheeky burlesque show before scampering out with their tails between their legs. I hear it was a very cold night, lets hope their bosoms were protected from the south-westerly wind.

Homerton

Big boys don't cry

A notorious gentlemen's society in search of new blood was holding an open day for potential recruits last week. As events wore on, the group's plus-sized spokesman invited those assembled to extol their own merits in order to seek entry to this most double-edged of 'elites'. Most speeches were well-received, but one orator found himself shouted down following his refusal to divulge that he attended a College founded after 1600. A thicker-skinned man might have shrugged off the heckles, but our hero is a sensitive fellow, and could soon be spotted shedding tears at his disappointing performance. Before disappearing into the night, his last reported words were "You just don't know how much this means to me..."

Girton

Mass mangina

During the weekly swap, at one of Cambridge's highly acclaimed curry houses, of these larger than life green gentlemen, it was decided that the males around the table should imitate their female counterparts transforming their genital areas. The men stood up one by one and performed said act, in what has been called a "mangina Mexican wave". The girls around the table were shocked and appalled by such behaviour and showed it by squealing and clapping with catty glee. Whoever said that to tell that a man was a man was from the size of his feet?

Hundreds protest as Chinese PM visits

» Crowds gather in freezing weather to voice opposition to Chinese regime

» Demonstrators urge action on perceived poor human rights record

Continued from front page

Hundreds of protesters had gathered outside the West Road Concert Hall to voice their opposition to the prime minister before he gave his lecture.

It follows the death of more than 200 Tibetan protesters last year, in disturbances that also saw the arrest of 6,000 people.

Many of yesterday's protesters lining the road outside the hall were Chinese students living in the Cambridge.

Free Tibet campaigner Lucy Fairbrother, 23, who was arrested in Beijing

last summer for unfurling a protest banner during the Olympics, said she was "really pleased" to hear about the shoe-throwing protest.

Lucy, who is from Cambridge, said: "It's great to hear someone is taking a stand just like against George Bush. I say good for him."

"We have training on what constitutes violent and non-violent protest. I suppose shoe-throwing comes somewhere in the middle."

"It's important that the issues in Tibet and the abuses over there are kept in the public eye."

Padma Fielitz, 22, a half-German, half-Tibetan student of economics at the School of African and Oriental Studies, London, was protesting outside the hall when the shoe-throwing incident took place.

She welcomed news of the protest: "It's great news and a very brave thing to do."

"We are a free country here and if we see injustice we should do something because we do not have much to lose."

"Wen Jiabao is a controversial man who instigated lots of crime," she said.



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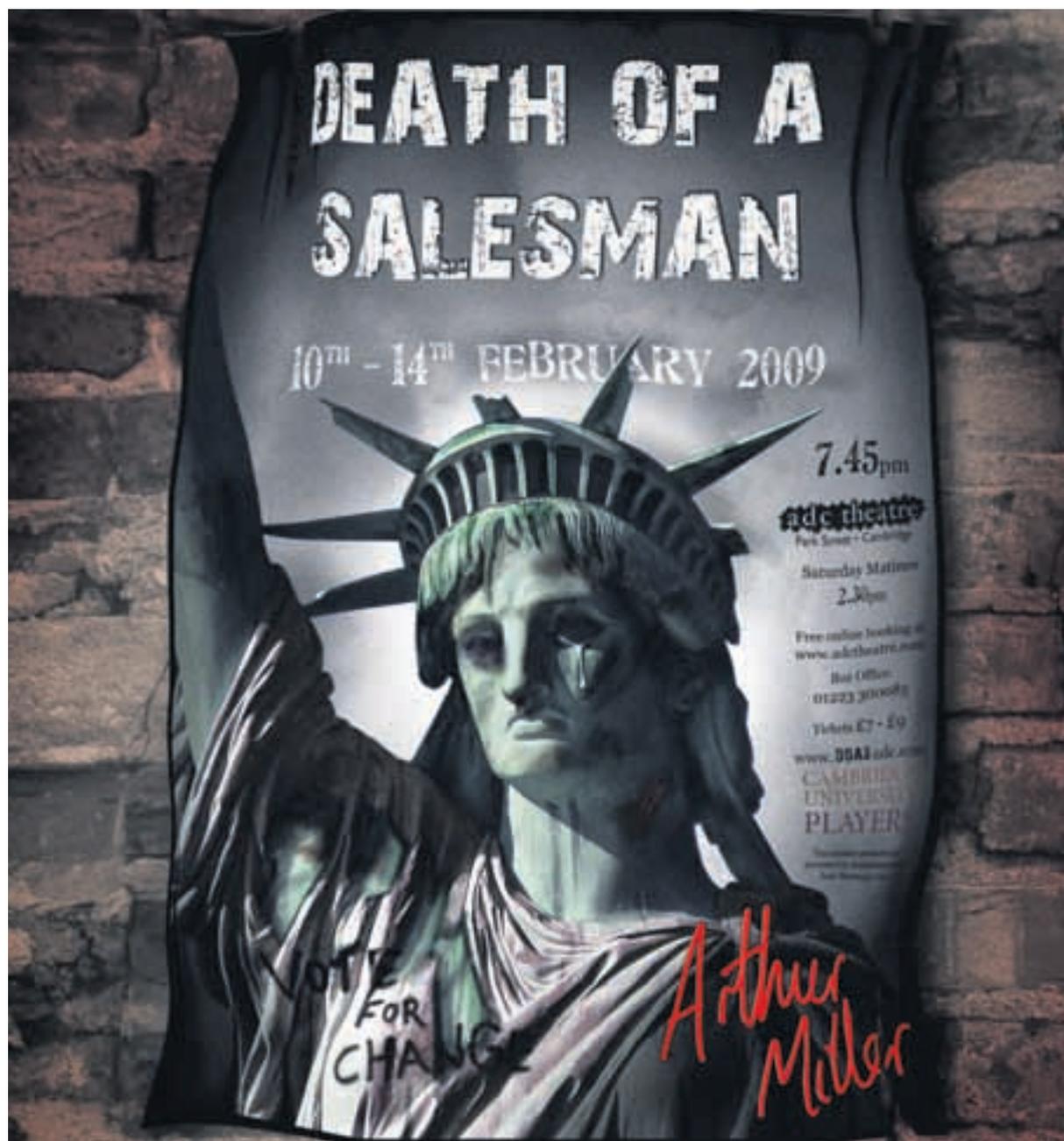
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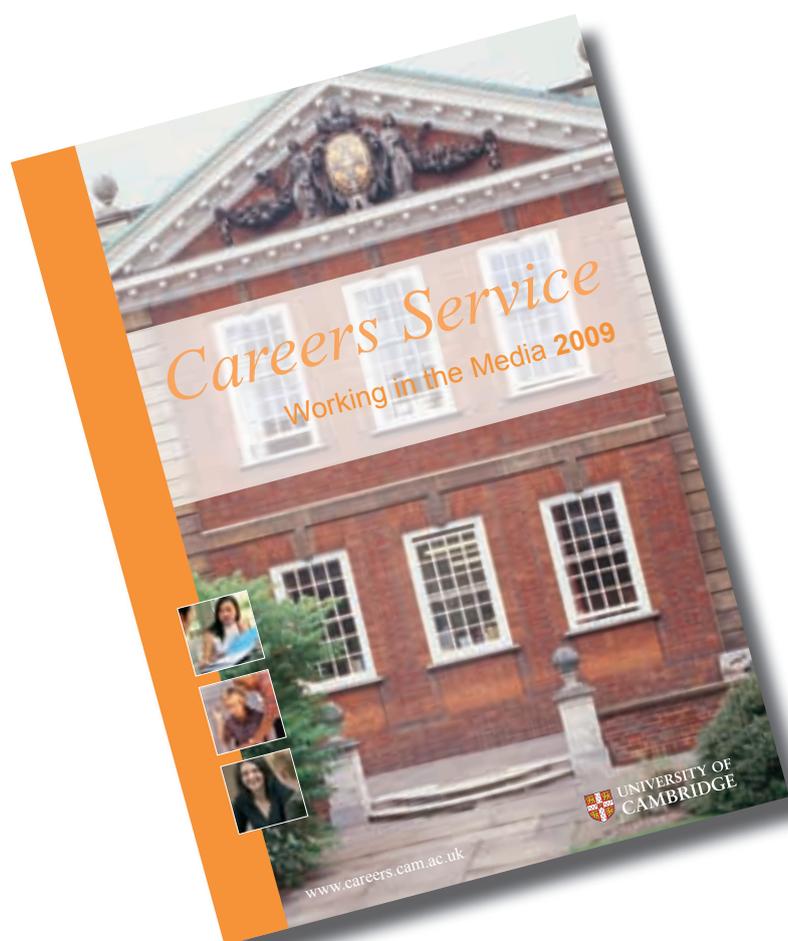
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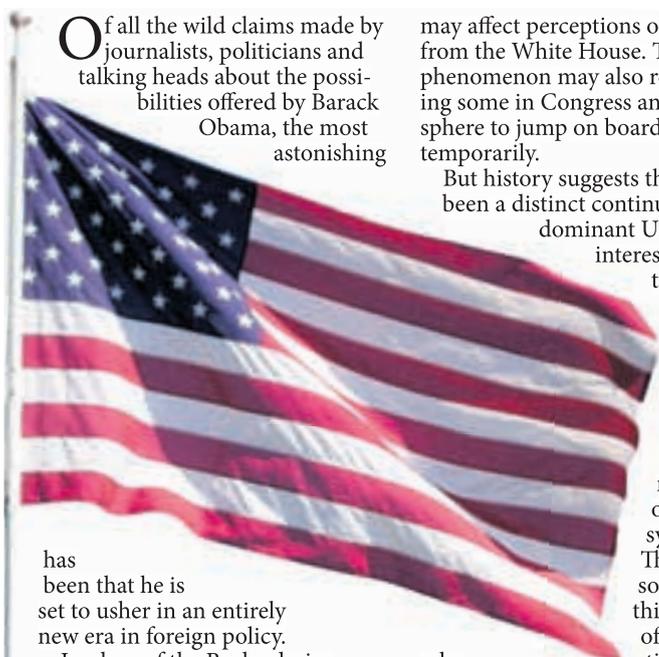


Will Obama bring 'the end of history'?

Jamie Miller

The new American President is keen to talk about 'hope', 'change' and a 'new dawn'. Jamie Miller argues that such talk idly neglects historical precedent, and that cold national interest will govern Obama's foreign policy.

Of all the wild claims made by journalists, politicians and talking heads about the possibilities offered by Barack Obama, the most astonishing



has been that he is set to usher in an entirely new era in foreign policy.

In place of the Bush administration's 'with us or against us' crusading and cavalier disregard for human rights, everyone from *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman to the ambitious Boris Johnson opines that the messianic Obama will provide a more responsible American global presence shaped by an intrinsic morality and concern for individual dignity.

One really has to wonder where the evidence for such ridiculous assertions lies. The op-ed community functions like the Serengeti wildebeest migration: one brazen soul takes a new tack southwards, only to be blindly followed, and then overtaken, by a million other repulsive, unthinking creatures. The politicians are the hyenas hoping to pick up the scraps by heading in the same direction.

Yet historical precedent suggests that the herd is currently delusional. This is largely because of the disjunct between the media focus on personalities and the reality that foreign policy is dictated – as any first year SPS student can recite – by 'interests'.

A change in presidential leadership

may affect perceptions of priorities from the White House. The Obama phenomenon may also result in swaying some in Congress and the public sphere to jump on board, at least temporarily.

But history suggests that there has been a distinct continuity in the dominant US national

interest for at least the past fifty

years. That interest lies in the preservation

of prosperity at home through the maintenance

of an economic system abroad.

There is no reason to think that this shibboleth

of international relations is about

change. American hegemony depends on its existence.

Regardless of Obama's ascension to the throne, the rest of the apparatus for constructing foreign policy – think tanks, advisers and bureaucrats – are old hands schooled in protecting the national interest. The conductor may have changed, but the train tracks still lead the engine in the same direction.

Throughout the Cold War, behind the ideological misdirection, a mafia system of international relations reigned, predicated on the protection of financial interests through coercion. Those within the mafia family – Western nations – profited handsomely.

Those outside it paid for others' prosperity, often with their lives. A raft of Third World nations were buried in debt by US-sponsored financial institutions, earning temporary respite only by offering up pieces of flesh – an oil concession here, a hydroelectric dam contract there.

A horrible trio of mechanisms enforced compliance. First, local elites were co-opted to stand over their people's misery – and profited person-

ally, through bribery and corruption, from their betrayals. Second, crippling sanctions were imposed on nations that refused to partake in the "global economy", such as Cuba or post-war Vietnam, leading to severe hardship. And third, the perpetual threat of violence was periodically carried out to deter others from following their lead. Justifications of threats to 'national security' were often absurd, never more so than with Ronald Reagan's 1983 attack on the tiny neo-Marxist Grenada (population less than 100,000).

Many policymakers deluded themselves, and others, with the moral purposes of their actions. 'Anti-communist' interventions in Nicaragua led Reagan's officials to commit perjury and treason under domestic law, while abroad the International Court of Justice ruled that US policies constituted state-sponsored terrorism.

President Obama is not the first to claim a new dawn in foreign policy, a decisive shift away from this brutal system. In 1978, Jimmy Carter heralded the end of the nihilistic realpolitik of the Kissinger era and excesses of the Vietnam War, claiming that henceforth human rights would be 'the soul' of American foreign policy.

Obama-esque hopes were quickly dashed. Under Carter, the United States continued to support the embattled Shah in Iran, described by Amnesty International as the worst offender of human rights in the world.

The US also armed, funded and defended the "dirty wars" perpetrated by Indonesia in East Timor and by military juntas in Argentina, Chile and Paraguay. Documents since declassified show that US officials knew that their support underpinned the systematic torture, murder and rape of thousands of South American civilians by security forces. But for all the private words from ambassadors, US support remained steadfast: the regimes responsible provided "stability" from dangerous popular left-wing movements.

Fifteen years on from Carter's promises of rejuvenation, post-Cold War

triumphalism (epitomised by Francis Fukuyama's *The End of History and the Last Man*) claimed to offer new opportunities for an even more moral foreign policy freed of the constraints placed on US actions by rival powers.

This was, of course, obscene nonsense. The bodies continued to pile up in defence of the same national interest. But this time the mist of Cold War victory imbued the perpetrators of human rights abuses of past decades – the Rumsfelds, Bushs and Holbrookes of previous administrations – with a sense of infallibility.

Sure enough, the pillars of post-Cold War foreign policies remained much the same. George H. W. Bush's invasion of Iraq was a clear extension

of the Carter Doctrine expressed in the 1980 State of the Union Address: "An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital

interests of the United States of America, and

such an assault

will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force."

Bill Clinton continued this policy with airstrikes and sanctions on Iraq that led two United Nations humanitarian co-ordinators to resign in protest at the massive human cost of the programmes they were supposed to be implementing.

Party affiliation and rhetoric were insignificant in comparison to the durability of underlying national interests. The key themes of US foreign policy are not 'hope' or 'change', but 'violence' and 'continuity'. And there is no historical evidence to suggest that this encapsulation, or the underlying interests, will change overnight.

Prepare for disappointment.



Jamie Miller is a postgraduate researcher in the Department of History.

Foreign Correspondence

Cambridge goes all over the world in a riot of semi-imperialist journalism



Week 4: Zimbabwe

Mugabe pulled Zimbabwe apart long ago. People wait in long, snaking queues for basic foodstuffs. They wait for days. Fear of the police is ever-present.

In Harare, I was arrested for 'journalism' (I had been photographing empty shelves). I was treated roughly by a man in a smart suit, accompanied by several uniformed policemen, and taken to an area behind the shop. Though they tightly placed one handcuff on me, they left my other hand free so I could thrust it into my pocket and press a small wad of US dollars into the suited man's hand. Still shouting, he undid the handcuff and left me free – if a little shaken.

Coverage of Zimbabwe details its disintegration. But it survives, despite the odds. Traders – mostly women – travel for days to neighbouring countries to bring goods for sale or barter: Smarties in the bottom of my bag proved more useful than money. 'Wheeler-dealers' speed by in black humvees.

The few remaining whites are often engaged in these practices. Stepping into 'Paul's Pest Control', I am surprised by Dennis' faint Irish twang, and more surprised by the vast warehouse that he leads me to, full of fuel and other essentials the dollar-rich can afford. The police intermittently cause a fuss, but only because they want their cut.

Yet only survival is possible. For services like health, education, employment, food not from a can, freedom – look elsewhere. The majority of Zimbabweans can't. They can only wait: the unity government might be cause for hope, but like other flashes of expectation, it may fade. Much more real is the hope that the hateful old man will soon die.

Zimbabwe is utterly remarkable. Forced to its knees, it is staying there and refusing, because humans are humans, to lie down. And despite all the death, people still smile, guffaw, greet you in the street, offer what hospitality they can. Humour remains. One of the few times I heard Mugabe's name mentioned was in a joke. Two men wait in a bread queue. Eventually one man storms off saying, "I've had enough – I'm going to shoot Mugabe!" Soon, he returns. "What happened to shooting Mugabe?" He responds, "The queue was longer than this one."

What they feel they can't change, Zimbabweans accept; they get on with the task of survival, stoically awaiting whatever the future may bring.

Rocco Falconer

Adam Colligan



The System Worked

The myth of CUSU bureaucracy is a scapegoat for failed ideas

Let's start with what happened. On January 14th there was an extraordinary meeting of the CUSU Council, essentially common room and faculty representatives, to elect NUS delegates. A motion was brought about 15 minutes before the meeting calling for CUSU to, among other things, denounce Israeli military actions.

Nothing referenced in the motion was breaking news since the submission deadline: it was entered so late solely because the proposers took forever to settle on a text, and so the Chair ruled it out as an 'emergency' motion. Certain whiners later conveniently forgot that the Chair's ruling was challenged, and Council voted not to hear the motion until they had been able to consult with their constituents.

So at this point, the Gaza protesters saw the demand for mass participation as a barrier to the efficient passage of their views into policy, and they called this 'bureaucracy'.

The motion would have been moot in any case, as many of its provisions, including both 'resolves' points, would have been unlawful as CUSU policy.

So, did CUSU officers hide behind layers of decision making and appeal structure thus ensuring action would be delayed for months? No. We worked proactively with the proposers on what could be done and volunteered new ideas about ways that the Students' Union would be able to help their cause within its powers. The result? An excellent motion brought to the next Council

that enjoyed widespread support and is now CUSU policy.

Cue the occupation. In this case, the protesters demanded that all decisions were taken by a sort of consensus-ocracy through mass participation – although according to one account, they ended up having a contentious consensus-led conflict about what consensus-leading consisted of.

The occupation itself was also an attempt to create what you might call a filibustocracy: rule by whoever seizes the floor. The University wanted them to appoint negotiators and to adhere to response deadlines, that is, to pass their views into policy efficiently. Now that roles were reversed, what did the occupiers blame? That's right, a University bureaucracy that wasn't responsive enough to their demands for procedural tedium.

Meanwhile, motions were coming to CUSU Council, and councillors and pollsters were getting a chance to talk to students beforehand. This was bad news for the occupation from the start, as it became increasingly clear that the

weight of student opinion was against them. *Varsity* described the difference between this and decisions by the protesters in terms of how exciting the occupation process was versus how – you guessed it – "bureaucratic" the CUSU process was. Just imagine our shame. *Varsity's* choice of 'bureaucratic' as an appropriate antonym for 'exciting and passionate', becomes particularly amusing

when one considers that people were videotaped calling a democratic, anti-bureaucratic vote on whether to eat upstairs or downstairs.

But there is a more serious point here. What the occupiers were condemning in their students' union was not 'bureaucracy' in the sense of unnecessary delay or overly-elaborate procedure. After all, the only delay came from voters themselves, and that was long before the occupation started setting records for deliberation.

The protesters were accusing a debate with a format and constituencies of being *de facto* soul destroying, and highlighting their suspicion that somewhere in the shadows Cambridge's student leaders are running what John Stuart Mill described as a "vast network of administrative tyranny." It couldn't possibly be that the resistance they were

experiencing was actually the snowballing mass of true opposition being very efficiently communicated through good representative structures.

So where were the CUSU sabbaticals during the emergency Council motions? Trying to delay them through procedural motions and red tape? Hardly. One had taken holiday and could be found in a certain faculty building. One was taking casework, having prioritized human interaction over policy-making procedure. One stayed behind to answer questions. And the other three of us, one of whom an occupier called a "bureaucratic shite-hawk"? Actually, having received the news of the 9pm deadline, we were rushing to the Law Faculty and negotiating entry through the sealed perimeter so that we could watch the protesters' backs.

This meant ensuring that all of the rituals of University due process were being followed, rituals scorned by the likes of the occupiers as 'bureaucratic' when they are in the way, but which that they cling to for dear life when they are in trouble. And it will always be, as it should be, CUSU that will hold their ungrateful hands as they dangle over the cliff.

What we witnessed from the occupiers, then, was neither democracy nor bureaucracy but hypocrisy: rule by those whose democratic principles are as flexible as their yoga positions.

Adam Colligan is the sabbatical CUSU Co-Ordinator. The opinions expressed here are entirely his own.



Edward Kiely



Bland, Boring, Beige

CUSU has covered itself in tedium and irrelevance

Last week was a high-point for organic self-satisfaction in Cambridge.

I'm not referring to the occupation of the Law Faculty, but to those who labelled the occupiers "champagne socialists" and "grubby anarchists", who should "get on the first plane to Gaza and see how they like it", and to the way in which said people responded to the occupation's conclusion. "Aha!" they crowed, faces bloated with satisfaction, "At last, proof that direct student protest is dead, and that the true locus of action still is, and always will be, CUSU!"

Their satisfaction stems from CUSU's total unwillingness to take an active stance on major political issues. It would never support the occupation. (The flipside for those in opposition, obviously, was that CUSU was also never going to agree to send in the riot police and attack dogs on the demonstrators.) CUSU seems committed to a totally beige existence. It was even argued by one JCR representative that CUSU is not the forum for political debate – that's the Union, apparently. Well, I'm not a Union member – CUSU is all I have. If CUSU is indeed "recognised by the University as *the representative body of all students*" (their italics), then do my political views also not deserve representation?

If CUSU does represent the political views of the students, then an outside

observer at the recent Council meeting (if they managed not to kill themselves due to incredulous boredom at the horrible bureaucracy of it all) would be given the impression that the views of the students of this University on the occupation amount to absolutely nothing.

Based on the resolutions adopted by CUSU, Cambridge students think that the humanitarian crisis in Gaza is a Bad Thing, the occupation is a Don't Know and whether the occupiers should be

as representative of the student voice as a drunken cowboy shooting cans with opinions written on them.

Of course, the responsibility to represent student opinion ultimately rests with JCR presidents and external officers. But technically these people can come along and vote even if they put their fingers in their ears and sing loudly and obnoxiously whenever anyone tries to express an opinion to them.

Of course, this doesn't happen, and presidents and external officers do

"The aching, life-draining dullness of it all"

kicked out of the Law Faculty is, again, a Don't Know.

Uncanny, isn't it? After all, there was barely any strength of feeling about the occupation. It's not as if hundreds of students joined Facebook groups related to the occupation. It's not as if 2600 people responded to an independent poll on the occupation in less than 48 hours. It's not as if, for a whole week, nobody would listen if you wanted to talk about *Gossip Girl* because the occupation was all anyone everyone was banging on about. Accept these facts and CUSU begins to look about

try to be receptive and responsive to student opinion. But the means at their disposal are often poor: open meetings or email polls will only attract the most vocal minority. As extremists often bizarrely equal each other in numbers, this leaves presidents and externals to perform the calculation that results in dullness. Two Trotskyites plus two Fascists divided by two equals No Opinion.

The same problem infects CUSU council meetings. Only the most extreme voices are heard, and these inevitably balance each other out. This is because the only way that anyone can

manage to sit through an entire CUSU Council meeting is if they've got a strong enough opinion to provide them with sustenance against the aching, life-draining dullness of it all.

I don't believe that University-wide opinion on this issue was so divided as to result in fifty percent of the students being strongly for and fifty percent being strongly against the occupation. And this would not be difficult to prove.

There should be a requirement that presidents and externals must actually poll at least ten per cent of the students in their College, and get their signatures to prove it. Based on these, there would be a swing in one direction or the other – then a motion passed entitled 'We support your brave occupation', 'Get out of our Law Faculty now' or, in the event of a tie, 'We support your brave occupation but get out of our Law Faculty now'.

Dullness with a mandate is tolerable. A total unwillingness to take a stand in either direction on an issue with this much student following is unacceptable, especially without any real attempt to survey student opinion.

Ultimately, any stand is better than none: if CUSU actively opposes my opinion, then at least there is a platform for me to campaign against. If they refuse to say anything at all, then everyone loses because nothing ever changes.



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Week 4: Strikes

Brown can talk but he needs to walk. ASAP.

lolcakes

I fully support the strikers. Jobs should go to local workers. Good on yer boys, wrap up warm. Let's hope this is the beginning of the end of the un-elected Brown who seems to want to take all our rights away. We NEED to put the Great back into Britain and hold on to what our grandparents fought so hard for.

news-lover, Stoke on Trent

If the local people are suitably qualified then yes. However, it has been my experience in industry that there is a lot of the "Red Robbo" mentality in various pockets of the country.

Geoff

Lets hope this is the trigger that the majority of the British born and bred have been waiting for, A general strike should be on the cards now to force a complete withdrawal from the EU. And the start of protecting our borders again, something clown brown and his co-horts have no intention of ever doing. British jobs for British workers!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

[the gorgeously named] Joyce Crank, UK

This is an outrage to democracy. How dare they come over here and steal our jobs it beggars belief it really does. We all know what they're like - they say they want to work but then they get a council house and start banging children. It's enough to make you sick it really is. To think we once had an Empire. Makes me sad to my stomach.

honesttaxpayer, bedford

Well, it's all a free market problem really, isn't it? No point whinging, boys! Our Maggie would have been out there breaking down the picket lines like the lion she was. Not Gordon! He just sits there in his office lol! I've never been a fan of the EU (short for 'gravy train' if you ask me), but they've got it right on this one! Go Boris!!! He would understand and put (or should that be 'pit?') things right!!

Sally Roberts, aka BORIS FAN

Tom
Cheshire



A Load of Balls

May Week themes are missing the point

I don't know how I endured the wait. Since the sun came up on the end of last May Week, I've been fraught with questions.

Will Peterhouse be back this year? Will the recession affect budgets? Who can I pretend to be friends with for a term to get tickets to Trinity? As information is slowly leaked, rumours start to fly. Like, apparently, U2 are playing John's. You heard it here first, so don't complain to me if they actually do.

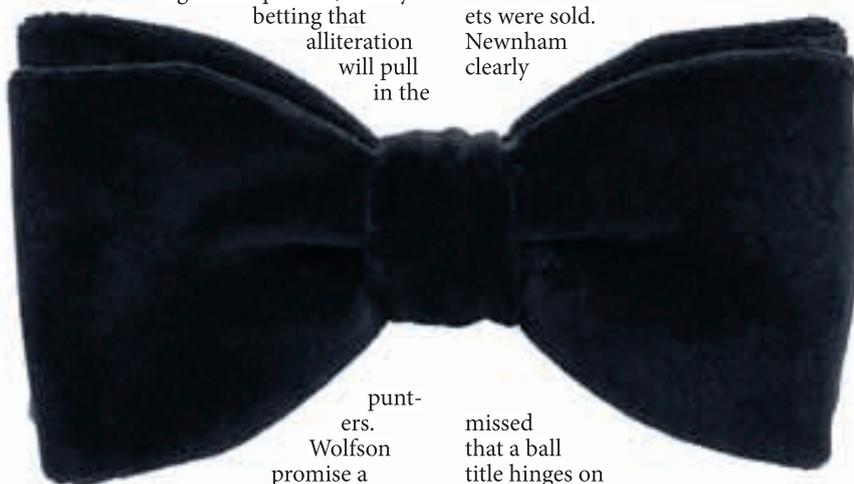
It's like a tantalising and prolonged striptease, as alluring headlines are revealed and exotic foodstands are unveiled. The first *negligé* thrown saucily to the floor is the theme. Several have already been made public. They're a fairly mixed bag.

It's good to see some Colleges making an effort *really* to do those Oxbridge stereotypes down: Corpus offer 'The Grand Tour', Peterhouse opt simply for a 'British' theme, Queens' for 'The Beautiful and Damned' (Dress: 1920/30s), and Hughes Hall host 'Passport to Pimlico'. While the last one may take its name from the knockabout (a word that should provoke instant distrust) Ealing comedy, I fear this may rather reflect the moneyed element's view on venturing further south in the capital than Victoria.

Meanwhile Trinity Hall, my own cherished *alma mater*, has gone for 'Fusion'. This is perhaps slightly racist. It's an umbrella term encompassing everything and anything a little bit, well, you know, *foreign* - 'we'll have some of that Japanese stuff, some Bud-

dhist gear (N.B. get some bindis), do you think a Gary Glitter zone is going too far...?' Fusion is, of course, a type of cooking and can be brilliant: the best bits of diverse cultures together in one place. It can also be a tasteless wok of ricey goo, steam-rolling regional idiosyncrasies to make it easier for Bluewater customers who can't decide between Thai or Chinese.

Blander still Pembroke, with 'Moonlight Masquerade', clearly betting that alliteration will pull in the



punters. Wolfson promise a spicier affair with 'Red Hot', but I frankly don't believe them. For the more independent minded consumer of May Week, the King's Affair is titled 'Hedonopolis', which is of course a combination of the Greek words 'self-conscious' and 'posturing', but they deserve a bit of fun after all that protesting. Homerton are offering 'James Bond 007' and so manage to be both unoriginal and

quite ridiculous at the same time.

Now before every committee writes in to complain, I know from experience that it's not an easy job. I was on my College's event committee last year and we came up with 'Pangaea', which is both unilluminating and hard to spell. It's probably wiser to err on the side of caution too. Newnham last year chose 'Smoke' as their theme and it indeed went up in it: the ball was cancelled after too few tickets were sold. Newnham clearly

missed that a ball title hinges on the image provoked in the student's mind. An evening spent coughing, followed by a sandpaper-throated morning explaining to your mother that you hadn't had any cigarettes, it was just really, really smoky: hard to see why it didn't appeal.

The point of having a theme to a May Ball is to offer escapism, undoubtedly much needed after a long term geared exclusively to exams. Lights and

music instead of books and ProPlus. It's Disneyland for burnt-out students. But no matter how inventive the title, there is no escaping the very Cantabrian nature of May Balls. All the fairy lights in the world won't blot out the spires and courts of your College.

Nor should they. May Balls are a unique phenomenon, a fantastic night out however you define or decorate it. Themed fun can just get in the way. Trinity, among others, don't bother with one. While this is the sort of non-chalance that a million pound budget will bring, it lets the evening stand on its own feet, however wobbly through champagne consumption those feet may be. A bad theme can be the Achilles heel that brings down a whole ball. Themes are necessary for the smaller colleges as they compete to sell tickets. Not every College can rely on the budgets of Trinity or John's, so how you present your ball makes a crucial difference. The problem is the emphasis placed on them. Themes should be a springboard for ideas, nothing more. That it's a May Ball is theme enough.

By themselves they can conjure up whatever image a student wants in his or her head, whether it's getting down and dirty to Dizzee in black tie, winning and dining in white at Magdalene (where the jelly is for pudding, not wrestling), or walking haphazardly but happily home at six the next day. We don't need a theme to dictate the terms on which we'll have our fun. Just give us booze, loud music and some of the most evocative settings for a party in the world and we'll get on with it.

Logic will get you from A to B.
Imagination will take you anywhere.

- Albert Einstein

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MAGAZINE



THIS WEEK IN THE MAGAZINE: KNITTA PLEASE WEAVE DOWN AND DIRTY / ANTHONY SELDON SPEAKS / MAYFAIR'S MIDDLE-CLASS SQUATTERS / THE TECHNOLOGY OF TOMORROW / THIS WEEK'S THEATRE

Photograph of the week by *Emily Matthews*



“On Monday’s walk to lectures, snowflakes flurrying around me, a red flutter caught my eye. The intense colour of the balloons provides a great contrast to the crisp, white surroundings, and all against a backdrop of iconic Cambridge; King’s imposing, grand chapel and two-wheeled locomotion. Despite the cold and the snow of February, I was reminded of happy summer times and anticipation of the revelry of the May Balls which the balloons were boldly advertising.”
If you have a potential Photograph of the week send it to features@varsity.co.uk

My week by Agnes Dourgrave, college librarian*

Monday

Passed a pleasant morning matching up graffiti with hand-writing on former Tripos papers. Have correctly identified “Marx was a twat” on page 16 of Karl Popper’s *The Spell of Plato* as belonging to Harry Allbright, who graduated 1976 with a II.ii in History. I have written to him asking for the £20 fine to be paid in full. Crouched behind the photocopier for an hour and a half this afternoon for a spot of casual espionage. Caught an ASNaC in the act of depositing his nostril evacuations between the pages of *Beowulf*. Have e-mailed the Master, Senior Tutor, and Dean about having him sent down. Went to go and cheer on the President of China, Mr Wen Jiabao in the afternoon. Although instinctively distrustful of yellow people, I wanted to ask him for some advice on committing human rights abuses with indemnity and how to further run my library like a totalitarian state.



Tuesday

Today is a red-letter day. The library has received a donation of rare books on the herring trade in 17th-century Holland from the recently deceased Emeritus Professor of Piscatorial History. Have devised a new and byzantine class mark system to keep them safe from student hands. Hans van der Mander’s *Whither the Herring?* and Johannes Blout’s *The Herring as Mercantile Icon* will henceforth be housed in a locked cupboard under the back stairs and appear on Newton under the elusive location mark ‘stack’.

Wednesday

Spent the afternoon confiscating contraband items. The haul thus far this week: eighteen water bottles without sportscaps, five cans of Red Bull, four sandwiches mid-consumption, eleven chocolate bars, and two packets of Hobnobs. But the students are devious about hiding their victuals. Have e-mailed the Master, Senior Tutor and Dean about employing a sniffer dog. No reply regarding the nose-picker.

Thursday

I hear whispers everywhere I go. I could have sworn I heard someone talking in the Law

Library but when I leapt out from behind the bookcases, all was silence. I thought I heard a mobile ringing in the History shelves but the students feigned ignorance. After three phantom Nokia ringtones I had to go and have a quiet lie down in my office. My repose was broken by the distant blip blip of text message alerts. I have e-mailed the Master requesting permission to cavity-search the students for concealed electronics.

Friday

My nerves are in shatters. Some thieving Prometheus has stolen volume eighteen of the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. I have removed the surviving twenty-nine volumes and have hidden them behind the photocopier. I have telephoned the Master’s secretary. She says he is a busy man and cannot be disturbed. The Dean and Senior Tutor do not seem to understand the gravity of the situation. I have called Scotland Yard. They have put me on hold.

Saturday

Usually I take the weekend off. Spend some time with Norman, repair loose book bindings, and listen to Lynne Truss on Radio 4. But I fear for the library in my absence and, Norman has had to go to the vet to be wormed. The weekends see an influx of NatScis with their horrible personal habits. They’re the worst sort of sneezers, coughers and defacers of books. Show them a book on the Reproduction of Plants and they are compelled to draw diagrams in the margins and to scrawl “PHOTOSYTHESIS?!!?” across the top of the pages. Spent the afternoon removing all 578 books from the Natural Science shelves and stacking them neatly in my office.

Sunday

To compound my already frail state, Russia sent over a deluge of snow. The volatile adolescents of this College went berserk, smattering their library time with intermittent snowball fights in the gardens outside. Only one solution; if pubs can do lock ins, so can I. Thirty six students trapped inside the library for three and a half hours. Victory.

Receive a call from the Senior Tutor suggesting I enjoy a paid sabbatical. He tells me he will be sending someone round to collect the keys to my office. He wants to know if I can tell him where the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* has been re-shelved. I use my free evening to make a chocolate, Red Bull and biscuit cake. Norman has been keenly eyeing my complete works of Shakespeare. I have locked him in the coal shed.

*As told to Laura Freeman

Ed at large

EDITOR-AT-LARGE ED CUMMING COCKS
A CRITICAL SNOOP AT D'ARRY'S AND THE
RELATIVE MERITS OF ITS PUNCTUATION

What isn't there?
Go on – what's not there?
For this column's purposes I'm going to help you out of your misery; what's not there is 'I'. Although I'm personally here, obviously, despite missing my 'A'. Sometimes what you can't see will be 'No'. Capiche? Good. What is there, on the other hand, is emphatically "".

The mighty apostrophe, as I need hardly remind you, has twin powers. It is there when other things aren't (o) there, and it is there when you need something to command something. What I've cleverly done (ha) here is put an example of this in the third sentence so you can all read back.

My favourite examples are the apostrophes that pop up just to remind you that they still have a right to be there, even when they're not strictly wanted, like a parking warden at a wedding:

'cello, for instance, or 'phone. These are big, bad apostrophes, apostrophes that have come out of the closet and are now running around tickling people's balls with challenging abandon.

You might well be wondering where this grammar lesson came from, since it's very boring to read, but I have my reasons – in the first instance 'D'Arry's is unique in restaurants in that it has, built into its name, apostrophes of both possession and omission. It is the restaurant that looked at restaurant names and decided they weren't confusing enough, and came up with one that instead asks question after perplexing question of the unwitting diner. Namely: who is D'Arry? Or perhaps, since the restaurant is 'of him' from the 'D', who is Arry? Yet if it's 'of him', then why the need for the closing possessive? Has the restaurant left him since I began reading the word? Has he now got it back? (As I discovered, this

question should be approached with a certain tactful delicacy when one is actually inside the restaurant, since it only recently burned to the ground.) Is it even a he? It could be Arry as in Harriet, or Ariadne. Perhaps the second apostrophe is an omission too? It could be an abstract statement: 'D'Arry is'. You see my difficulties.

But once you've (ha) gotten around to reading the name, and concluded that it sounds like a faux-sophisticate Italian place from a cartoon, you can relax for a bit, and concentrate on the things which are actually there. Or at least you might, were the place not so desperately keen to remind you cosnantly of the things which aren't (o).

The first thing which wasn't (o) there was someone to answer the phone, and

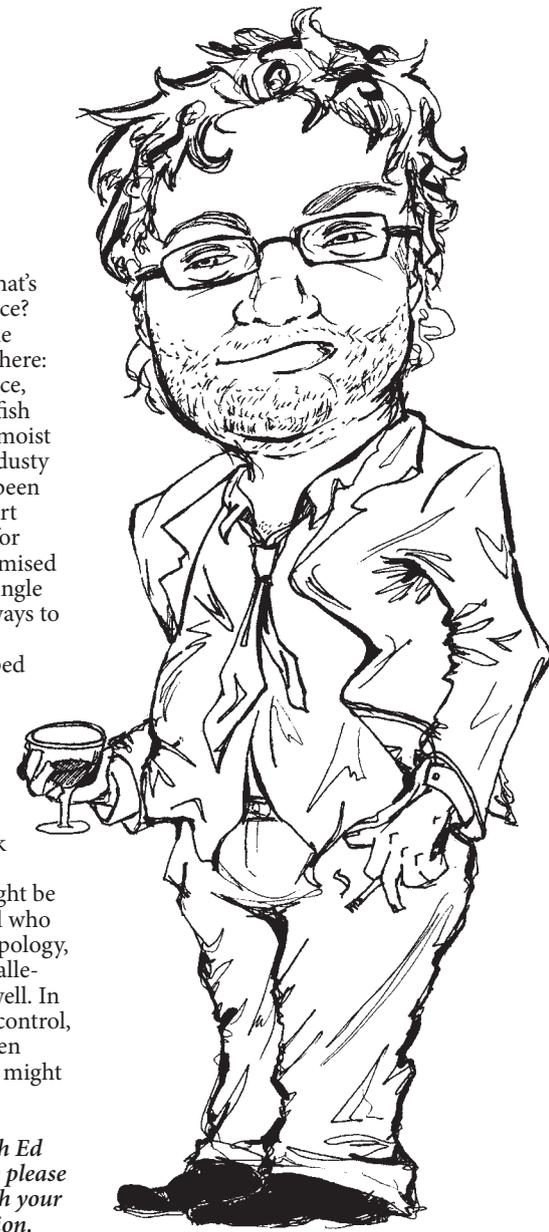
after that there was no way to make a reservation. When we arrived, things which weren't (o) there were menus and staff, and

when we got the menus what wasn't (o) there was the specific menu advertising the otherwise rather fine 2 courses for £10 deal that we'd come in search of (ha).

After this glut of absences (what's (i) the collective noun for absence? vacuum? disappointment?) came the things which were actually there: a Caesar salad starter, for instance, followed by fish and chips. The fish was excellent – light batter and moist haddock. The chips tasted a bit dusty to me, but that might have just been nostalgic synaesthesia on my part caused by a childhood fondness for Jenga blocks. The salad also promised 'anchovies', yet proffered but a single anchovy, filleted cruelly lengthways to craft the semblance of plurality.

The staff, once they had stopped being notable for their absence, were intimidating by being universally male, good-looking and baldly muscular in a way usually expected of backing dancers and gigolos. Given that my companions were two drunk and reasonably ugly men, we were slightly hoping that we might be served by a small Australian girl who we could tip heavily by way of apology, rather than by way of swinging allegiance in future bar fights. Oh well. In D'Arry's you never feel quite in control, and if you can't feel like that when you're paying for it (a) then you might as well leave it out altogether.

If you fancy going 'At Large' with Ed (and maybe getting a free meal) please write to large@varsity.co.uk with your name, College, year and suggestion.



Tasting the biscuit

AMANDA PALIN PRESENTS INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM AT ITS MOST BASIC(S).

Under UK law, the Jaffa Cake is indeed, a cake. This is just one example of the abuses the good name of The Cake sustains in this country. The biscuit section in Sainsbury's (home to the Jaffa Cake, incidentally) sits between the shiny purple 'cake-bars' and the green and white purity packaging of the 'rice-cakes'. Call me the *Daily Mail*, but what, exactly, do rounds of puffed rice have in common with the butter/sugar/eggs/flour-based teatime treat?

Anyway, I ignored this nebulous world of 'cakes', and focussed on the humble biscuit. The classics – bourbons, custard creams, digestives – come in yellows and reds and light browns. But it's not all warm and homely hues. On my research trip I found pastel Pink 'n' Whites, garish Orange Clubs. Then there are the ingenious slogans: the name of the Breakaway biscuit is preceded by "Don't take away my..." The succeeding bit of wrapper-text, "with whole-meal flour", is less exciting perhaps, but there's only so much an advertising guru can do. Gazing at the Animal biscuits in nostalgic reverie, I sensed some disapproving glances from fellow shoppers. But then, no one looks you in the eye in the biscuit section, so there wasn't much to worry about. It's a personal experience, biscuit selection,

as I found when I did a simple survey.

I was only asking people what their favourite biscuit was, but they dithered and swithered, and asked about other people's answers before committing to anything. Biscuit choice says a lot about one's soul, as I'm sure Freud would agree. There's a socio-economic element, for sure (do you buy Basics, Fox's, Taste the Difference, Duchy Originals even?), there are health issues, and inevitably, gender issues at stake. I've never seen a packet of pink wafers in the basket of a rugby player, for example. Indeed, some boys seemed quite embarrassed about owning to eating biscuits at all, saying instead that they were "hot pudding men"... Anyway, the survey brought out ginger nuts, garibaldi's, party rings, Hob Nobs, and the Twix of the biscuit world: the caramel chocolate digestive. Ultimately, though, it was the custard cream and the milk chocolate digestive that came out on top. I acquired a packet of each with which to conduct a head-to-head. The King's porters were my first participants, calling the CCs "scrummy", and the MCDs "double scrummy". One point to McVities. The King's library-goers were no less verbose; the CCs were "ornate", "fun", and "the Cindies of the biscuit world". The MCDs on the other hand "mealy", "wholesome", and "a biscuit that you'd

take home to meet your parents". People felt that they could rely on the digestive, successfully dip it in tea, and thus it came out overall winner. Without wanting to be a glory supporter, I have to agree with the result. Seriously, what's not to love?

My last bit of investigation involved finding out more about the particularities of people's biscuit consumption. Some claimed to be sharers; "Oh I just love opening a packet of biscuits with friends as we swap hair-styling tips and have a lovely time." Yeah right. Most were more honest: "I eat them on my own so that no one yoinks them from me", said one King's undergraduate. What it is to yoink, I'm not sure, but that was only the beginning of the perversions unearthed. The very vocabulary of biscuit-eating is carnal. Turns out people suck, nibble, bite, lick; they'll basically do the same things to a biscuit that a set of love dice might instruct them to do. (I myself have been known to bite into a Kit-Kat without splitting the fingers. Two at a time; and what?) Biscuits are there for us for better or worse (during essay crises or in times of celebration), and certainly for richer or poorer (33p for Basics MCDs/ £1.26 for McVities). However many sections of Sainsbury's they occupy, cakes couldn't possibly compete.



Cake in a mug (yes, actually).

OK, I may just have slammed cakes, but this one is almost as easy-access as a Basics biscuit.

You will need:

- 4 Tablespoons flour
- 9 Tablespoons hot chocolate mix
- 1 Egg
- 3 Tablespoons water
- 3 Tablespoons oil
- a mug
- a microwave

1. Lightly grease your (preferably massive) mug.
2. Put in the flour and hot chocolate powder.
3. Crack the egg in, and stir.
4. Pour in the water and the oil.
5. Again, STIR, so that all the ingredients are thoroughly moistened.
6. Microwave for 3 minutes.
7. Realise that this recipe is not a cruel joke, and enjoy your cakeinamug.



Fitzbillies

I decided to do my Cantabrigian duty and finally visit the institution that is Fitzbillies. I even wore a tea dress. Yet we were welcomed in not to Wedgewood and chintzy doilies, but to a shabby, austere interior and a notice instructing us to switch off our mobile phones. We prepared for serious cake-eating. The world-famous, ludicrously expensive, and now mail-orderable Chelsea buns did not disappoint: doughiness, stickiness, spiciness and fruitiness were delicately swirled in delectable equilibrium. The sinful chocolate cake was a little too sinful and the apple turnover disappointingly bready, but the apple pie was, objectively and empirically, perfect. Light, buttery pastry and crisp, moist apple filling. Fitzbillies may be lacking in style but it delivers on substance: masculine portions of traditional British cake fare (which also whet my appetite for the days of misogyny and Empire, as any good tea shop should). The food, like the interior, is honest in a surprisingly provincial way, and it sits satisfyingly in the stomach for hours afterwards. Great tea, too. Fitzbillies is the place your granny takes you to fatten you up, where you reminisce about childhood country walks, or conduct a grade-saving and strictly above-table romance with an elderly supervisor.

Hannah Bass

Scenes of Mild Suburbia

TO MARK THE RELEASE OF REVOLUTIONARY ROAD, VICTORIA BEALE PONDERES THAT VERY PARTICULAR HOLLYWOOD DISASTER MOVIE – SUBURBAN NEUROSIS.

In films of suburban decay, no dialogue is needed; the cinema audience have only to see a quiet street of detached houses with lovingly tended lawns, and already we anticipate the morass of self-loathing and moral turpitude about to be revealed.

The equation is simple: the more beautiful the house, the redder the roses in the front garden, the more likely the wife is a pill-popping alcoholic with a violent streak, the husband a fantasist adulterer, and the teenage child a high-school shooter. The soon-to-be Oscar-laden film *Revolutionary Road* starring Kate Winslet and Leonardo DiCaprio, is only the most recent film to present suburbia as a high-income, low-crime form of Purgatory.

Angsty suburban cinema is basically intent on smashing the white picket fence and revealing the myth of unexceptional middle class happiness. But are anyone's illusions going to be shattered by the suggestion that, actually, after the age of twenty five, life is essentially a lot of killing time, broken up by babies and moving house? These films, if done badly, reveal such paradigm-smashing truths as 'housework gets a

bit repetitive' and 'insurance sales are a bit dull really'. You could be forgiven for thinking that Sam Mendes' essential formula in *Revolutionary Road* is contracting two brilliant actors, costuming them in drab suit and paisley apron, rolling on a cocktail party backdrop, telling them to look a bit glum and hoping this is enough to mess with our smalltown minds and impress the Academy.

Films about suburban breakdown are usually populated by a few reasonable characters. We shall of course recognise them as kindred due to their cynical faces in school playgrounds, in grim office blocks and at dinner parties, looking listless over the vol-au-vents. They are pitted against demons of suburban orthodoxy such as Kitty Farmer in *Donnie Darko*, the shrill PTA harpy who tries to ban Graham Greene from the English syllabus, and is battled against by the eponymous Donnie and other sensitive brunette adolescents. Movies from the parents' perspective are most likely to blame the Man getting them down, the false optimism of the Sixties or their spoiled teenage offspring. The older generation in these films are confronted with the horrible inevitability of death, consumed with existential panic and tormented by their lost youth. And so, they have sex. Desperate, adulterous, body-double requiring sex.

Depictions of suburbia in film tip so

often into cartoonish exaggeration that it is no surprise their conventions are parodied. A truly interesting film about suburbia must acknowledge the clichés with which it plays, something best achieved by the now over-exposed but nonetheless significant *American Beauty* (also directed by Mendes). It sums up the splendid nihilism and absurdity of the suburban mid-life crisis in a few brilliantly bitter lines; "Janie, today I quit my job. And then I told my boss to go fuck himself, and then I blackmailed him for almost sixty thousand dollars. Pass the asparagus."

It is easy to attack the ubiquity of the 'suburban America' film, but there is a reason they keep getting made. The fact is that vast numbers of Americans (and Brits) live in these amorphous housing blocks, and pretty much everyone except the baby is hopped up on Prozac. So, going to the cinema and indulging in some mawkish silver screen diversion is understandable. Ultimately a good film of this genre provides both humorous ignominy and high tragedy, and shows why ordinary lives are worth examining. And so, even if it's no *American Beauty*, *Revolutionary Road* provides temporary cinematic *Schadenfreude*, as well as a rough approximation of the average graduate's future. If you want a glimpse of your next fifty years, skip a lecture, buy your ticket, and pass the asparagus.



Competition adc theatre

Each week we set a different creative writing exercise. The person who submits the winning entrance has their story printed in the next week's *Varsity*, and is rewarded with two free tickets to an ADC Theatre show.

Week 4: Pantoums. Pantoums are poems that work in quartets; the second and fourth lines of each stanza are repeated as the first and third lines of the next. This sequence can go on as long as you want, but the last stanza's second and fourth lines should be the first and third lines of the first stanza. Feel free to let the form break in places, as long as the 'pantoum' spirit is retained.

Winner:

Home Sweet Homelessness

Once again you're on the train
Travelling between here and home
Your life is lived just in two towns
The journey between can only be awkward.

Travelling between here and home
Is the limbo between two unknowns
The journey between can only be awkward.
Which town do *you* now call your home?

Is the limbo between two unknowns
An enjoyable place to be?
Which town do *you* now call your home?
Being half-here and half-there, you're fully nowhere.

An enjoyable place to be
Only for those of you who dare to know yourself
Being half-here and half-there, you're fully nowhere
Your home becomes your constant luggage.

Only for those of you who dare to know yourself
Consider always your direction – the same time, both to and from home
Your home becomes your constant luggage
You cannot be encumbered by your own transiency

Consider always your direction – the same time, both to and from home
Once again you're on the train
You cannot be encumbered by your own transiency
You life is lived in just two towns.

Jonathan Walker

Runner-up:

In the Temple

'Ave virgo sanctissima':
The voices are suspended
In the temple, unaccompanied;
Nothing above, nothing below

The voices are suspended
In a harmony of stained-glass –
Nothing above, nothing below
Against a backdrop of silence

Look through the stained-glass.
Do the fixed stars twinkle and sing
Against a backdrop of silence?
In which desperate tonality

Do the fixed stars twinkle and sing?
My mind was an empty ocean
From which desperate tonality
Gradually emerged

My mind was an empty ocean
As a child. Awareness
Gradually emerged
Without explanation,

Like the child, appearing
In the temple, unaccompanied,
Without explanation.
Ave virgo sanctissima.

Thomas Athorne

Next week's competition: Love sonnets. In honour of Valentine's day, compose a sonnet (or two!) on the pleasures or the pains of love. Shakespearean, Spenserian, Petrarchan, or more free-form - it's up to you. Send submissions to literary@varsity.co.uk by 9am on Monday February 9th for the chance to win two tickets to the following week's ADC main show, and see your work printed in our next issue.

THE CAMBRIDGE INVADER

MISSION: TO DELVE INTO CAMBRIDGE'S SECRET ORIFICES
WEEK 4: THE HAWKS' CLUB

The Hawks' club. Where the big fish open their gills. An elitist group within an elite university, with membership only for blues sportsmen, it was going to be a tough nut to invade. Maybe it was just the challenge; maybe I just wanted to escape my own mediocrity by visiting this sporting Olympus; probably I was just tricked whilst drunk. It doesn't matter really: the invasion is larger than the invader.

It all started so well. Five minutes in the shadows waiting for a target; a brief jog along the road – the most cardiovascular I'd done all week – and we sneaked through the fingerprint-controlled door just before it swung close.

"That was too easy", I whispered as we made our way downstairs towards the murmur of excited voices.

"You're not a bloody spy" responded E, my accomplice, who - being first more drunk and second considerably more sporting - felt fairly secure in this temple to sporting excellence. I, on the other hand, with my sporting pedigree being of the Sainsbury's basics as opposed to the M&S variety, was continually reminded of my own inadequacy as we passed rows of portraits depicting stern sportsmen of yesteryear.

We wandered towards the bar. I'd like

to say I moved with carefree nonchalance, but in reality a combination of crippling nerves and inebriation meant that I looked more like a lost puppy.

At the bar I steeled myself and ordered my Tomahawk cocktail – apparently the done thing in this part of the world. Looking round I saw that E had already found some new friends and so took my phone, pretending to check the football scores in order to avoid attention.

I had just received my drink when a huge hulk of a human being bore down upon me.

"Johnny" he roared, slapping me heartily on the back with one massy paw. Though I was aware that my name was not Johnny, I did not want to upset this vast creature and so simply smiled back at him hoping he would realise his mistake and go quietly on his way to find 'Johnny'. Unfortunately, although said hulk realised his mistake, he did pursue Johnny, and instead stopped for a chat.

"Oh, sorry mate." He offered a meaty handshake, which I duly accepted with sympathy for the bones in my hand. "I'm J. Lacrosse captain."

"S." I replied, gently massaging my crushed mitt. There was a pause. I thought perhaps we were done, but no...

"And what do you do?"

"SPS" I ventured. He chuckled. Perhaps I should have tried Land Economy.

"No mate, what do you play?"
Deciding that clarinet was probably not the response he was looking for, I replied, "Badminton," with all the confidence I could muster. His face lit up.

"Oh, so you know Tsing then?" Shit. Of course I didn't know Tsing. How would I know Tsing? I don't even know how to play badminton. I only chose the stupid sport because I'd realised on the way that I didn't actually know what korfbal – my initial alibi – was. I resorted to an incoherent grunt as my response.

"Weren't you guys on a swap tonight?" J continued. Double shit. Was he on to me? Who swaps with the badminton club?! This was getting silly; I needed to get out of here before he called Tsing over and blew my cover wide open.

Pleading a toilet break, I left John and made my way rapidly towards the steps; narrowly avoiding two rowers discussing their split times ("sub 1.25 mate"). They gave me a friendly nod – must have thought I was a cox – but thankfully did not engage me in conversation. I was done invading. Eyes downcast, I continued towards the exit and burst through it into my world: a world full of comforting mediocrity.

REPOSSESSION



Purple dress £18, ditzzy floral dress £20,
both Ark Vintage

Red shoes £22, Ark
Vintage

Printed scarf £12,
eBay

Liberty tie £2.50,
Oxfam

Brown shoes £25, Ark
Vintage

Necklace £3.99,
Oxfam

Black and white jacket £3, Sally Ann's

Pheasant print scarf, £5,
Ark Vintage

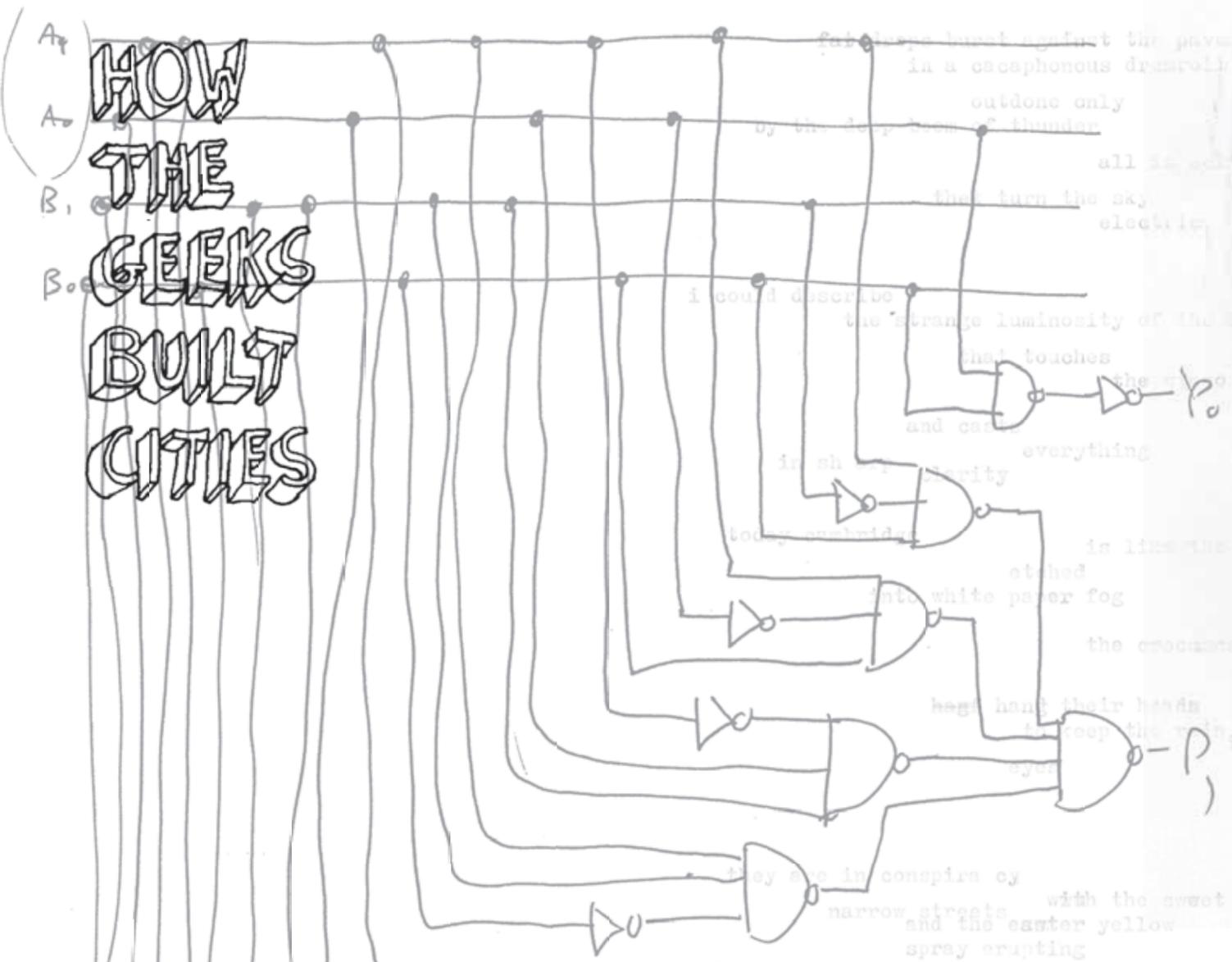
Blue floral dress
£26, Ark Vintage;
Admiral's jacket
£6.99, Mind

Leather sports bag £2.50,
Sally Ann's



Illustration: Anna Trench
Styling: Alice Newell-Hanson &
Kate Womersley
Photography: Katy King
Shot on location at Ark Vintage





HOW THE GEEKS BUILT CITIES

A₁
A₂
B₁
B₂

The world's smallest city lies near the port of Valparaiso, Chile, South America.

The buildings within the city rest lightly, on concrete stabilised timber piles or on shallow flexible steel foundations, in an ever shifting domain of sand dunes. It was founded by a community of architects and poets, with an aim to synthesise life and learning. Its citizens are architects, poets, sculptors, engineers, students, young children, dogs and an old woman. On an average day there are about twenty-four of them. The old woman is the closest thing the city has to a history and metropolis. She is determined to die there.

It is a city that is also countryside. In that respect it is closer in its character to the early classical cities. It is built with a chronic respect for ground that we only in rare cases give to the resting places of our dead. Each structure is unique and considered. All of them were built communally and as poetic rituals.

from 'Open City/Closed City'

Surrounded:

- (how: concrete/steel)
- (what: individual/community/progress/symbiosis - a relationship of mutual benefit or dependence)
- (Why: tough/question)
- (who: you/)

Multiplies numbers



London Lament

London you opened up and rained on me.
As I wandered in and out of your public spaces
You poured over me,
Your invisible corpses littered every quiet alleyway.
In this grey evening, with thoughts twisted
By clouds, I was lost amongst the dead.
Lost amongst the living.
You emptied your streets for me
But still were not naked.
You filled me with history
Which left my present unfinished.

London you are a leech you suck day and night.
All the talent of a nation
Becomes the effort of adventurers
Banging on your door. You suck
Everything from my sight, leave me wet, cold and
Longing for home but longing to call you home.
Longing to write but suffocated and purged of all utility
By your brilliance, your grandeur
Your thick river of history.
What could I say?

You were everything and I was nothing
Sheffield Summer
Went to the park today.
Pissing with rain but still there's no view like it.
The city, steaming, smouldering,
The summer heat radiating from impatient streets
Scratching the screen of air with flames of anticipation.
From Ruskin's house to the new and empty apartments
Sprung from false utility,
The stubborn weather engenders a sigh of... nothing, no-one.

Where the cranes stand like rigid musicians
Gripped by stage fright,
History has got the better of them
And the audience are too attentive,
Picking up false notes easily.
Sometime, the city taught itself to listen,
Tuned its hearing to the wails of catastrophe,
Schooled itself in melancholy bleating.

And yet, one sound escapes its memory:
The white-hot all-encompassing, deathly, crashing explosion
That exists only from the marriage of boredom and imagination,
And yet is real enough.

Went up the park today.
My thoughts floated above the skyline
As the city shivered with tension.



How the Geeks Built Cities is a magazine, set up as a forum for the varied creative and intellectual output of students at Cambridge & elsewhere. It is currently published termly in a simple A4 format, with minimal editorial intervention - contributors are encouraged to experiment and format their work themselves, resulting in an eclectic mix of drawing, painting, diagrams, poetry, photography, academic articles and prose.

Future contributors should send work by Friday 13th February to lb397@cam.ac.uk or adm62@cam.ac.uk. We also have a facebook group. Issue 3 will be out in sixth week of this term. We look forward to hearing from you...



THE VARSITY WEEK

THE COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO THE NEXT SEVEN DAYS

Theatre

Friday 5th & Saturday 6th

Ongoing:
Road
Feelgood
Life and Beth
42nd Street

Read reviews of **Road**, **Feelgood** and **Life and Beth** on p24-5.

Le Fil
Fellows' Garden, King's College: 8pm (free)
A sharp sensory experience, inspired by French singer Camille's album of the same name. Runs until Tues 10th.

Tuesday 10th
Death of a Salesman
ADC: 7.45pm, Saturday matinee 2.30pm (£6-£9)
See **Pick of the Week**.

Footlights Smoker
ADC: 11pm (£5-£6)
The usual hits and misses. Book now because it WILL sell out.

The Rivals
Corpus Playroom: 7pm (£5/£5.50)
Sheridan's play (below) about forbidden love, deception and a dramatic duel - what more could you want? Runs until Sat 14th.



Wednesday 11th
Sophrosyne
Fitzpatrick Hall, Queens': 7.45pm (£4-£7)
An intriguing piece of new student writing, about family and evil, from Freddy Syborn.

Music & Nightlife

Friday 6th
Radar
The Junction 1: 7.30pm (£5 adv.)
See next week's **Varsity** for a review of this month's **Radar Club**, with headliners **Brakes**, featuring ex-members of **British Sea Power** and **Electric Soft Parade**.

Sunday 8th
Andy Bowie Quartet
Cricketers: 8.30pm (free)
Sax-led modern jazz from Ellington to Shorter from an ever-expanding repertoire, in a new, larger venue.

Monday 9th
Reel Big Fish
The Junction 1: 8pm (£14 adv.)
They may be best known for that cover of 'Take On Me', but these student favourites have over seven albums' worth of ska-punk to treat you with tonight.

Tuesday 10th
Woomble, Drever and McCusker
The Junction 1: 8pm (£14 adv.)
The Junction's double whammy of Scottish folk sees this recently assembled trio of musicians, including Roddy Woomble of Idlewild fame take to the stage in J1...

Fence Collective
The Junction 2: 8pm (£10 adv.)
... while this motley crew take over J2. See **Pick of the Week**.

'Its A-Happening!'
Kambar: 10pm (£3)
Kambar's new night kicks off here, with all things '60s music-wise: expect soul, funk, beat, garage and psych.

Wednesday 11th
The Art of the Matter
CUR 1350 AM/MW: 6pm
CUR 1350's spoof arts show with a cult podcast following. Listen up to hear what all the fuss is about!

Art & Classical

Ongoing Exhibitions
Fitzwilliam Museum (free):
• Sir Sydney Cockerell and the Fitz (until March 17th)
• Picasso Prints - Dreams and Lies (until Sun 8th)
• The Immortal Stone - Chinese jades (until May 31st)
Kettle's Yard (free):
• The Roundhouse Of International Spirits (until March 15th)
Scott Polar Research Institute (free):
• John Gale & Sons (until Sat 14th)
• British Antarctic (Nimrod) Expedition, 1907-9 (until April 4th)
Churchill College (free):
• 'Direct Observation': Chinese prints (until Sun 8th)

Friday 6th
CUMC - Purcell, Rubbra, Martinu, Shostakovich and Brahms
West Road Concert Hall: 8pm (£7/£5/£3)
Expect good things from this performance, being put on by past and present students of the Royal Academy of Music and Cambridge alumni.

Sunday 8th
Cappé Quartet
Kettle's Yard: 12pm (free)
Mix classical music with modern art as the quartet play a programme of contemporary music.

Monday 9th
King's Recital Series 9/2
King's College Keynes Hall: 9.30pm (free)
The third concert in the King's College Lent Term Recital series features flautist Tristan Meares and pianist Tom Kimber.

Wednesday 11th
St. Catharine's Music Society
St. Catharine's Chapel: 7.30pm
Harry Winstanley and Kausikan Rajeshkumar present a recital of Bach, Fauré, Reinecke and Doppler.

Talks & Events



John Gale & Sons exhibition

Friday 6th
Miscellaneous Theatre Festival preview
Judith E. Wilson, English Faculty: all day (free)
With extracts from plays that will be performed, and a chance to still get involved, head to the English Faculty for a preview of the March 11th-13th festival.

Saturday 7th
Fitz Sessions
Fitzwilliam Bar: 8.30pm (free)
Fitz Ents present the second in their series of acoustic and electric sets from students.

Sunday 8th
Burn After Reading
Yusuf Hamied Theatre, Christ's: 7.30pm and 10pm (£2.50)
A disk containing the memoirs of a CIA agent ends up with a pair of hapless gym employees who foolishly attempt to bribe the disk's owner.

Monday 9th
Wolfson Howler
Wolfson College Bar: 8pm (£6, £2 Wolfson members)
Headliner Craig Campbell. And the usual showcase of talent from Cambridge and elsewhere.

Thursday 12th
A falling star - the sovereign self in Otto Weininger
CRASSH, 17 Mill Lane: 5pm (free)
Louis Sass explores the post-Kantian theories of Weininger whose notorious book *Sex and Character* influenced many 20th century luminaries.

Film

The Curious Case of Benjamin Button
Arts Picturehouse: daily 1.45pm, 5pm, 8.15pm
Loose adaptation of an F. Scott Fitzgerald short story. Watch Brad Pitt scrape away the years and the stage makeup in this epic that has him land on a doorstep as a baby with the physical attributes of an 86-year old. Co-starring Cate Blanchett, who only gets older.

Frost/Nixon
Arts Picturehouse: daily (not Sat and Thurs) 1pm
Sat and Thurs: 11am
Disgraced American President meets wholesome British talkshow host: film based on the play based on the TV show based on the juiciest political scandal ever seen.

Milk
Arts Picturehouse: Fri and Sun: 11am, 6.15pm; Sat: 3pm; Mon and Tues: 11.15am, 6.15pm; Weds: 6.15pm; Thurs: 11.15am, 2.30pm
Gus Van Sant's new picture has Sean Penn playing politician Harvey Milk. Harvey Milk is gay. This is the '70s - people ain't down with that.

Rachel Getting Married
Vue: daily 4pm
Anne Hathaway is Oscar-nominated for her role in this ensemble wedding movie. Go see!

Revolutionary Road
Arts Picturehouse: daily (not Tues) 1.30pm, 4pm, 6.30pm, 9pm
Adaptation of the Richard Yates novel that received no major nominations from the Academy, despite the reunion of Titanic stars Leonardo di Caprio and Kate Winslet. This time it's their marriage that's the sinking ship.

St. John's Films
Sunday 8th: 7pm and 10pm
RocknRolla
Thursday 12th: 9pm
Hunger



Fence Collective
Tuesday 10th
The Junction 2: 8pm (£10 adv.)
Claiming K.T. Tunstall as a sometime member and led by rising star King Creosote, the Collective hail from Fife in Scotland and combine a down-to-earth work ethos with high-quality pseudonyms - expect to hear HMS Ginafore and Uncle Beesly. Recently featured on the BBC's *The Culture Show*, these are ones to watch - buy your tickets now.



Death of a Salesman
Tuesday 10th - Saturday 14th
ADC: 7.45pm, Saturday matinee (£6-£9)
Along with the release of *Revolutionary Road*, the American Dream takes a beating this week. This new production aims to bring Miller's characters into our current economic climate, and brings a new poignancy to the image of Willy Loman, "riding on a smile and a shoeshine".



The Educator

A HISTORIAN AND BIOGRAPHER OF TONY BLAIR, ANTHONY SELDON IS ONE OF BRITAIN'S LEADING CONTEMPORARY COMMENTATORS. HE IS ALSO A HEADMASTER, AND AS HE TELLS ROB PEAL, IN HIS NEW BOOK HE WILL BE FIRMLY WEARING HIS TEACHING HAT.

Anthony Seldon's greeting is characteristically welcoming, but he soon warns me, "I've got everything in the world to give you apart from time - it's a frantic, frantic Saturday morning."

This comes as no surprise.

For the lucky few who reach the top of their profession, it must be galling to lay eyes on the likes of Seldon, who has reached the top of two. He has written or edited some twenty-five books, a prolific output including works on history, politics and education. Most recently, he has published *Blair Unbound*, the second volume of his definitive and meticulously researched biography of the former prime minister. However, what is remarkable is that Seldon fits this all around being headmaster of Wellington College, and one of Britain's most iconoclastic and innovative commentators on education.

Education is what he wants to talk about today. Seldon presents the thesis of his upcoming book *Educare* (the Latin for educate) with the excitement and passion of an explorer who has chanced upon a wonderful discovery. "I feel very strongly about this," he reassures me, as if the tone of his voice did not betray it. "I think that education has gone in a wrong direction in Britain and in the world; fundamentally, root-and-branch wrong."

The reasons for this, he claims, are three "top-down drivers" which manipulate education to their own end, and prevent us from realising the original and fundamental reasons why a good education is worth having. These three drivers are the "government who pays for the bulk of it and who wants to see an economically viable and socially compliant work force; universities who want fodder for their academics; and employers who want a basic set of numeric and literacy skills."

Seldon is quick to add that these clearly necessary components are not intrinsically bad, but are harmfully dominant. "What is missing is sufficient weight given to bottom-up factors by which I mean the development within each child of all the faculties that go to make them a human being." With the help of Harvard Professor Howard Gardner, Seldon has devised a theory of education based around eight aptitudes or intelligences, of which contemporary education fulfils only one or two at best. As he continues, "If children and young adults do not have their faculties developed at school and at university, then they will remain dormant and underdeveloped for the rest of their lives."

Such an emphasis on character forma-

tion has always been an aspect of public school education, and having predominantly taught in the private sector, it would be easy to assume Seldon's ideas have a narrow appeal. However, Seldon is keen to emphasise that his ideas apply to "every single human being born anywhere from Bracknell to Beijing." This is not empty rhetoric; his school has been heavily involved in sponsoring the new Wellington Academy in Wiltshire which will ensure that his ideas can be equally applied to the state and independent sector alike.

He is very aware that "those advertising these views can be characterised as cranks, or quaint, or quirky", but in Seldon's case such insults do not quite fit. As a professional teacher he is by no means stuck in an ivory tower of educational theory, and he applies these ideas on a day to day basis. Two years ago, Seldon achieved a huge amount of press interest with Wellington's classes in 'happiness', taught with the help of Cambridge's own Nick Baylis and his Well Being Institute. He believes that driving for success through education should never become dominant, and asks me, "What is life if it is just spent vexed and troubled to get A-levels, and vexed and troubled to get a II.i, and vexed and troubled to get into

"EDUCATION HAS GONE IN A WRONG DIRECTION IN BRITAIN AND IN THE WORLD; FUNDAMENTALLY, ROOT-AND-BRANCH WRONG."

Linklaters or whatever?" He continues to tell me of all the vexations and troubles that we have to fear through life right up until we are "vexed and troubled about whether you are going to make it into the right plot at the cemetery. This is not life."

Such rhetoric brings to mind the more toe-curling aspects of Robin Williams' 'inspiring teacher' in *Dead Poets Society*, but Seldon seems too formidable to be dismissed as an idealist, and I am willing to suspend my cynicism. The Latin word *educare*, Seldon informs me, means 'to lead out', but the exact opposite is achieved in most educational establishments. "Too much education, including education at Cambridge, can close down minds by making people certain of what they believe in a very narrow area, an extraordinarily narrow area of either one or perhaps two of the eight intelligences. This too easily encourages the belief that they have mastered the universe."

For Seldon, Oxbridge is clearly not an unimpeachable shrine of academic excellence. He studied PPE at Oxford,

but complains, "the teachers were neither interested in nor very good at teaching, and philosophy was utterly boring. Philosophy could and should have been magical and challenging and extraordinary but it wasn't." His ideal of an expansive and holistic education does not sit well with the professional specialisation which has been fostered amongst modern academics: "I think that academics can increasingly talk to themselves and their discourse can become very self-regarding. They lose the connectedness with the world at large or indeed with the lives of the students."

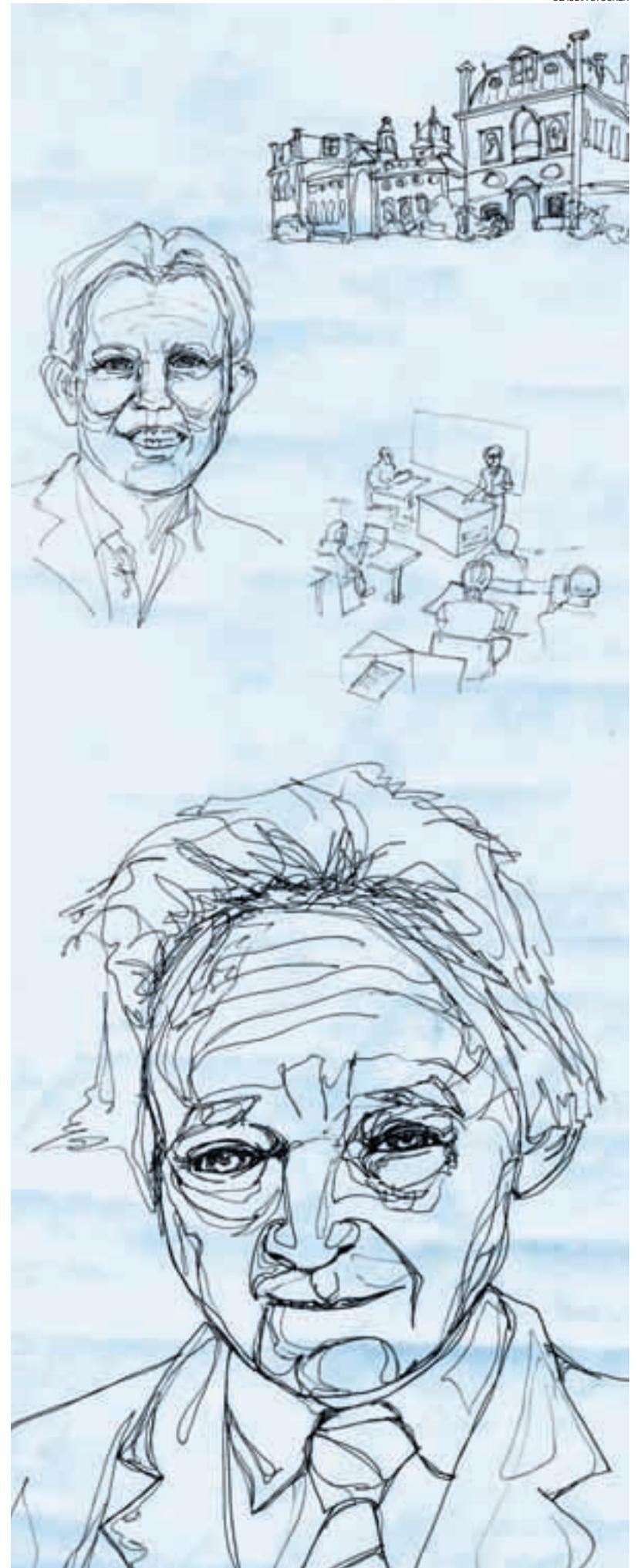
One only has to see Seldon speak on one of his many specialisations to see that he is a man who revels in his studies. Therefore, my guess is that he would be shocked to see how many students at Cambridge are so burdened with stress that they never get round to actually enjoying their work. In his view, this is needless worry: "I hate to disappoint the vast majority of undergraduates, but it will make next to no difference about how happy they'll be in life, or even indeed what jobs they get in many cases whether they get a first or a II.i." For a teacher, he has an admirably sceptical view of the value of exam results: "What does getting a first mean? It means that

one has a certain set of skills which align with a particular faculty which academic discipline believes is worthy at this point in time, and an ability to organise oneself to work hard - it means no more than that. It doesn't mean to say that one's a highly intelligent person."

Seldon has, of course, made himself famous through his highly detailed and nuanced accounts of that most enigmatic figure of recent history, Tony Blair. The two of them clearly share the opinion that education is important, and Seldon does praise Blair's dedication: "I think he put enormous time and attention into education, and he ensured that more money went into it than ever before."

However, Seldon remains critical of the way in which Blair pursued this priority. "He will realise that the mechanistic measures that he put in place with the emphasis on exams and league tables and tests, did not necessarily run in the interests of happy and effective schools, or indeed intelligent, effective and happy children. In some cases it countered that."

My lingering reservation was that his idea that education has somehow 'gone wrong' seems to suggest a rather retrogressive assumption that there was a time in history when it was once all hunky-dory. Seldon assures me that this is not his angle: "I don't think there has been a golden age. There have been golden cities and golden schools and golden teachers." He lands upon a summary of his views, and contentedly wraps it up by telling me, "The key is the opening, does education open minds or does it narrow, that is the key. One can keep on coming back to that."



CLAUDIA STOCKER

Seldon seen kid

- 1981 Wins the Best First Work Prize with *Churchill's Indian Summer*.
- 1986 Founds the Institute of Contemporary British History.
- 1997 Becomes headmaster of Brighton College.
- 1997 Writes the authorised biography of John Major.
- 2007 Publishes *Blair*, the first half of the biography.



SCIENCE CORRESPONDENT ARTHUR TURRELL LOOKS TO FUTURE TECHNOLOGIES THAT COULD CHANGE OUR LIVES – OR AT LEAST MAKE THEM EASIER

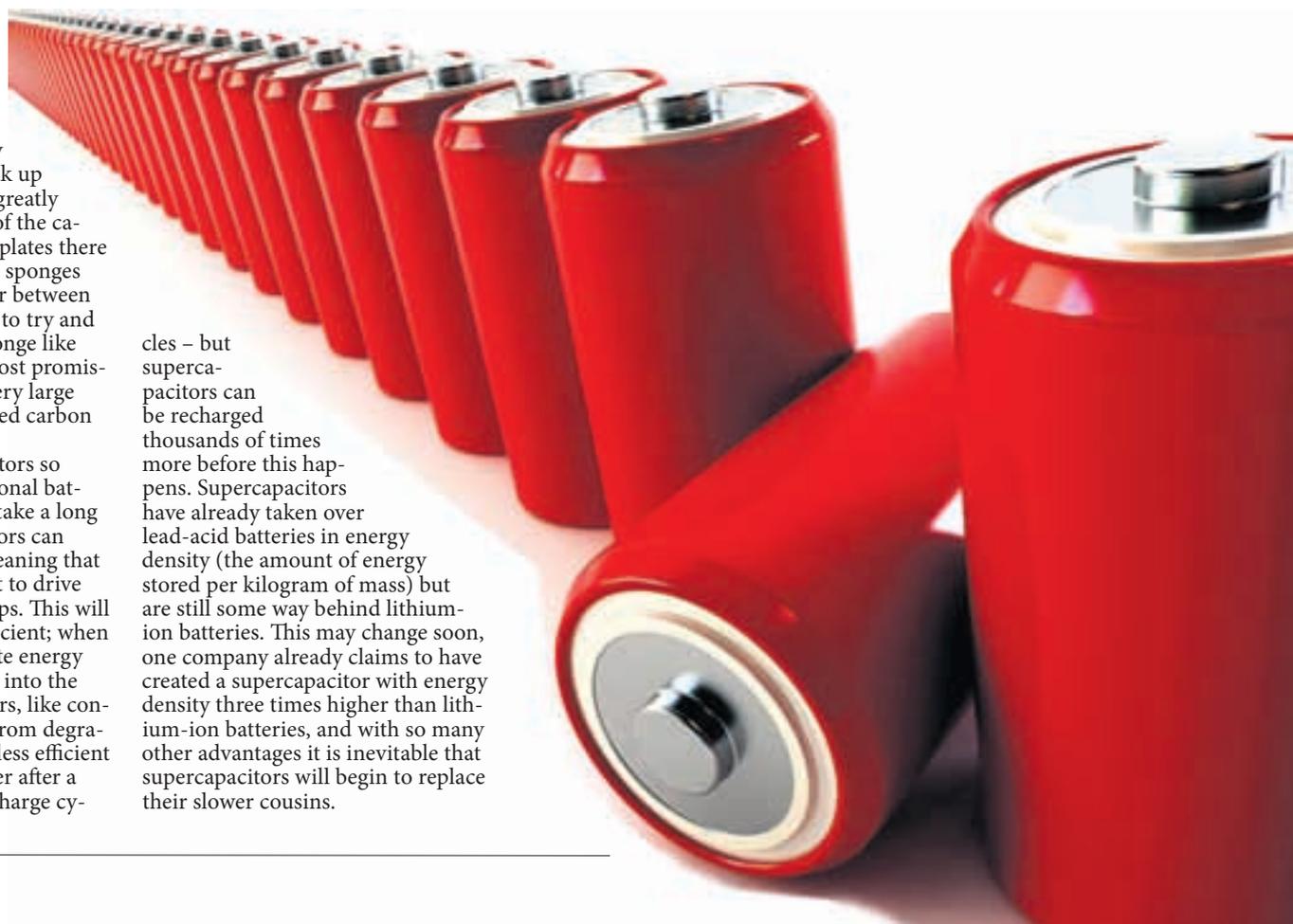
Supercapacitorfragilistic

Hybrid cars that run on both petrol and electricity have been around for a while now but there are still very few entirely electric-powered cars on the road. One of the technological problems with the electric car is their batteries, which suffer from a number of problems: size, the time they take to charge, and their degradation over time. A possible solution is a type of battery called a 'supercapacitor' that works in a very different way.

Most batteries in circulation today use chemical reactions to provide electricity, but in a supercapacitor electricity is stored physically as charged particles. Capacitors have been around since the 16th century and they work by storing opposite charges on two conducting plates with a non-conducting layer in the middle. Capacitors are used in televisions, lasers, computers, and the flashbulb in a camera. The simplest version is just two metal plates with an air gap between them; but they have traditionally been very large as the amount of charge they store is proportional to the area of the plates and to the inverse of the distance between the plates.

The novel feature of supercapacitors is that they use a material, usually carbon, as a 'sponge' to soak up charged particles and this greatly increases the surface area of the capacitor. Instead of the two plates there are two oppositely charged sponges of material with a separator between them. Research is ongoing to try and increase the area of the sponge like material with one of the most promising groups at MIT using very large surface area structures called carbon nanotubes.

So why are supercapacitors so much better than conventional batteries? Chemical batteries take a long time to charge, but capacitors can charge almost instantly, meaning that there is no wait if you want to drive your electric car to the shops. This will also make them energy efficient; when cars break they can generate energy that could go straight back into the capacitor battery. Capacitors, like conventional batteries, suffer from degradation – they will become less efficient and stop working altogether after a number of charge and discharge cycles – but supercapacitors can be recharged thousands of times more before this happens. Supercapacitors have already taken over lead-acid batteries in energy density (the amount of energy stored per kilogram of mass) but are still some way behind lithium-ion batteries. This may change soon, one company already claims to have created a supercapacitor with energy density three times higher than lithium-ion batteries, and with so many other advantages it is inevitable that supercapacitors will begin to replace their slower cousins.



Children of the Sun

Clean, cheap energy is one of science's greatest challenges, and 'dye sensitized' solar cells could provide the answer. Conventional solar cells have one or more layers of material that absorb particles of light, freeing up electrons and thus allowing them to flow as electricity. The efficiency is limited because each type of material can only absorb a narrow range of frequencies of light and the amount of light collected is proportional to the area of the panel. Additionally solar cells do not work in dim light, making them of questionable value in places like Britain.

Dye sensitized solar cells generate

their electricity in a completely different way and have more in common with photosynthesis. They use a dye deposited on a metal crystalline structure to catch light and this provides a surface area that is 1000 times larger than a conventional flat solar cell of the same size. Even better, dye sensitized solar cells will work with low light sources.

They are also commercially viable, paying for themselves after about a year – much less time than traditional solar cells. Although they currently suffer from some problems – such as only absorbing certain frequencies of light – it is feasible that they could be

mass-produced cheaply, and research teams at Cambridge are working on this. Companies such as Sony and Toyota have also shown an interest, ploughing money into research aimed at developing the technology to the point at which it can be used to create solar cells with a high enough energy conversion efficiency to be profitable.

The government has committed to increasing the UK's renewable energy generation to 20 per cent by 2020, and solar power is going to be a huge part of achieving that goal. Britain has a higher renewable mountain to climb than some other EU member states, as its base is so low.



OMG! OLED!

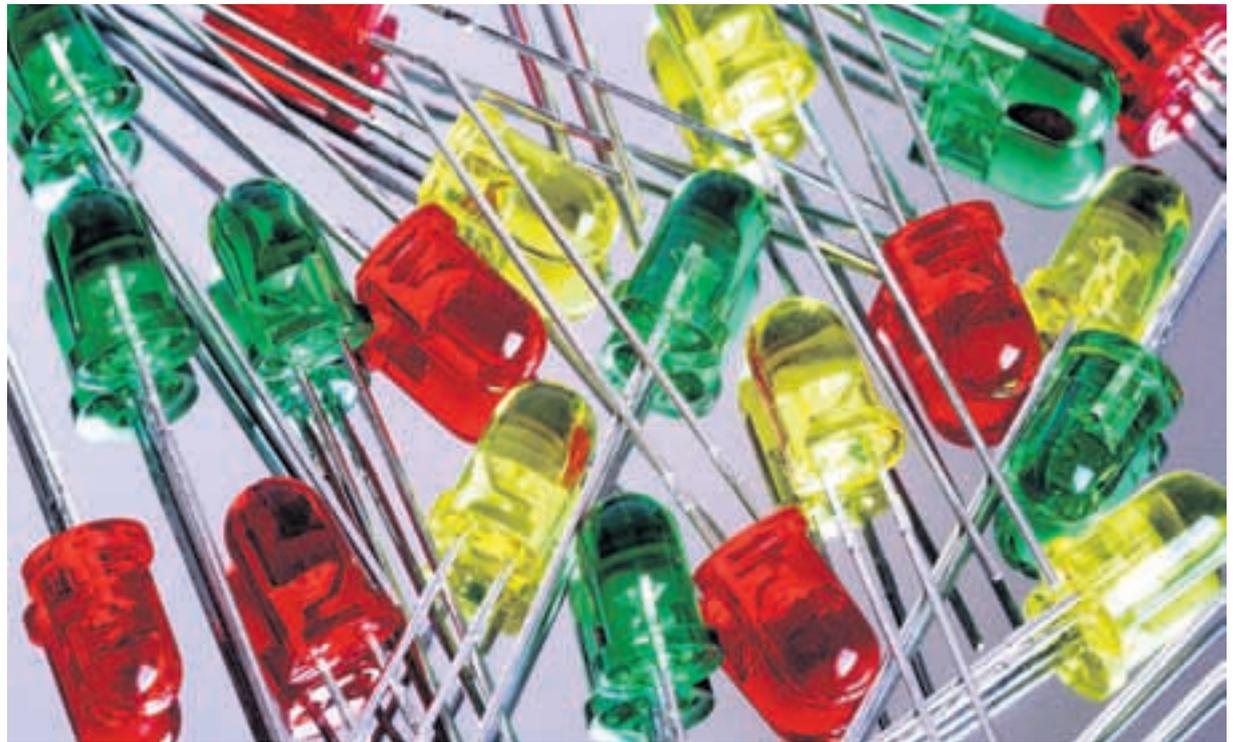
Traditional incandescent light bulbs are slowly being phased out in the UK, and will be gone completely by 2011. They are being replaced by low-energy fluorescent bulbs. However, there is something much more interesting happening in the lighting business: a new way of making light that has already started to creep into mobile phones, mp3 players, cameras, and televisions.

These bright stars of the future are called OLEDs (or Organic Light-Emitting Diodes) and they work in a similar way to the LEDs (Light-Emitting Diodes) that are commonly used in bicycle lamps or on the front panel of laptops. The main difference is that OLEDs are made up of polymers, long-chain molecules, which are organic semiconductors unlike the semiconducting metals in LEDs. However OLEDs are much more useful than LEDs as they can generate a wide range of vivid colours and are extremely energy efficient, a feature which has made them increasingly popular.

Their greatest commercial

potential lies in display technology, and OLED televisions are starting to appear on the market. They give rich colours and deep contrasts because they don't require backlighting, unlike LCDs (Liquid Crystal Displays). LCD televisions and monitors can be built thin, but OLEDs can be made far thinner. Samsung hold the current record with a display that is only 0.05mm thin – thinner than paper. The small size of the components allows displays made up of OLEDs to be flexed and curled without damaging them. OLEDs have another benefit that sets them apart – it is possible to use an inkjet printer to deposit OLEDs on a substrate so they could be manufactured as easily and as quickly as a newspaper.

Televisions are just one of many innovative products using OLEDs: watches that are just a strip of OLED screen and super-thin mobile phones that can be rolled up are also being developed. There have even been plans to create OLED wall lighting panels, meaning that the reign of the fluorescent bulb could be cut short.



I am Electro Boy

With a multitude of modern appliances taking over homes and bedrooms it is a relief to know that in the future the need for hundreds of different chargers and wires will be a thing of the past. Technology developed by scientists at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) allows energy to be transmitted wirelessly from a transmitter in the home (a tabletop, for instance) to gadgets like laptops and mobile phones.

The energy is emitted in the form of electromagnetic waves by the transmitter. These are then picked up by an antenna within the gadget. The trick to the process is a phenomenon called resonance which may be more familiar to musicians; it happens with sound waves when a string played on one instrument causes a string on another to vibrate strongly. It is the same phenomenon that allows sopranos to smash a wineglass with their voice: they sing a note at the

glass. Similarly the transmitter and receiver are tuned to the same electromagnetic frequency so that only the antenna absorbs energy and not anybody standing nearby, making the technology safe. Any energy not absorbed by the antenna is reabsorbed by the emitter.

Several companies, including one based in Cambridge, are already offering wireless charging tables, but as yet the technology only works over relatively short distances with a loss in energy of 50 per cent over several metres – but progress is being made. Eventually transmitters could cover an entire house, meaning you would never have to bother with cables again.



'resonant frequency' of the

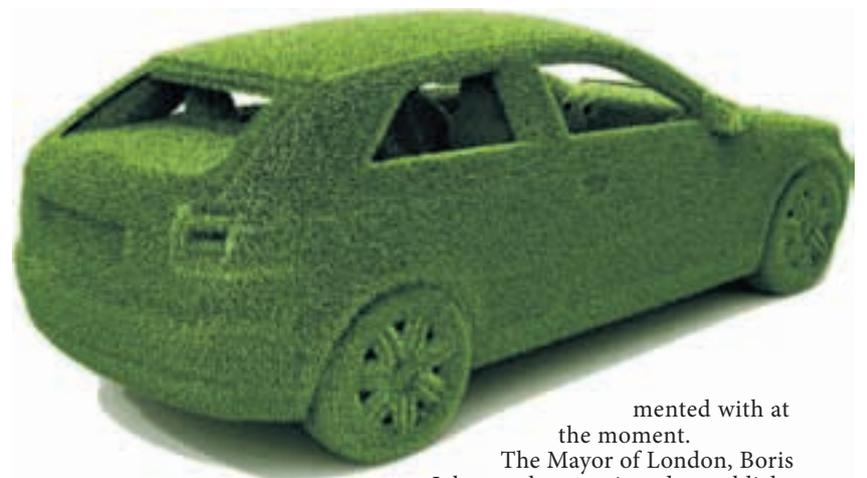
Fuel the World

Almost everyone agrees that the addiction to oil must end, be it for environmental or political reasons. Unsurprisingly, not everyone agrees how that should be done, and the main competitor to the electric car is the hydrogen fuel cell powered car. Technically hydrogen fuel cell cars are electric too; but instead of filling up with electricity at a station you would fill up with hydrogen (the most abundant element in the universe) and generate the electricity on board.

Fuel cells are an attractive prospect because they produce only water as a waste product, generating power by combining hydrogen from a tank with oxygen from the atmosphere. This means that the dense clouds of smog above cities like Beijing, which are mostly due to cars, would disappear giving health benefits as well as reducing the amount of carbon dioxide in the air. They are also more efficient than combustion engines, extracting 60 per cent of the energy available rather than just 20 per cent.

There are major challenges to the champions of the hydrogen economy, however. The first is that most of the hydrogen used now is produced using fossil fuels with carbon dioxide as a by-product. Hydrogen can be produced in a carbon-neutral way but it is inefficient and relies on the use of renewable energy sources, which themselves have many problems. Even worse, fuel cells are extremely expensive because they use precious metals as a catalyst to make the electricity generating reaction take place. By far the most commonly used metal for this is platinum, which is only mined in five places worldwide and can be as much as twice the price of the same quantity of gold.

Despite this, there are a few hydrogen buses in London and



mented with at the moment.

Arnold Schwarzenegger, the governor of California, has promised to build 100 hydrogen fuel stations in his state by 2010 for the handful of hydrogen cars that are currently available. Scientists are busy finding ways to circumvent the need for the costly platinum catalyst and progress has been made at Wuhan University in China, where cheaper nickel catalysts are being experi-

The Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, has continued to publicly support hydrogen buses, despite recently cancelling an order of 60. A spokesperson told journalists: "The Mayor remains fully committed to the development of hydrogen as a cleaner, greener fuel in London." It appears that the streets of London may be humming to the sound of hydrogen engines sooner than you might think; how they will compare to 'bendy buses' remains to be seen.





Squat Rot

THE DA! COLLECTIVE ARE A GROUP OF DISCERNING SQUATTERS FOR WHOM ONLY MULTIMILLION POUND EIGHTEENTH CENTURY RESIDENCIES WILL DO. MIDDLE CLASS PSEUDO-BOHEMIANS OR INSPIRING ACTIVISTS? ZING TSJENG GOES TO LONDON TO FIND OUT.

I am on the phone with a squatter, and she is giving me life advice. "Don't walk in your master's shadow," Steph Smith, 21, murmurs. "Find your own path." A pause. She giggles. "Sorry, I'm in a really weird mood today." She tells me to talk to Alex, who told me to talk to her, who told me to email the group, which I did in the first place. I've met porn directors more accessible than the group of squatters who, up till last Tuesday, occupied a £22.5m townhouse in Mayfair, London.

The owners of the Grade II*-listed property, Timekeeper Ltd., only realized their house had been taken over when they spotted a festive Christmas tree in the window. Their solicitor, Andrew Jeffrey, was at pains to clarify that the building was not abandoned, and was only left unoccupied since 2007 as the owners were going through a series of complicated planning applications. The court date for the squatters was set for late January, and they celebrated by throwing the house open to the public and setting up The Temporary School of Thought, organizing workshops and talks on topics from climate change to laughter. This wasn't the first time they'd done it, either – their previous residence was a £6.25m property on upper Grosvenor Street, which they'd

turned into an art gallery under the name of the Da! Collective.

It's a week and a half later when I walk past the Ritz Hotel and down to what the tabloids are calling "posh squat". Even the broadsheets aren't ashamed to throw in some choice adjectives: "middle-class bohemians", sniffs *The Times*, noting in a purely neutral, journalistic fashion, I presume, the majority of the squatters' "private school backgrounds". I'm primed to indulge in that most English of hobbies: inverse snobbery.

Are those Nike high tops my guide is wearing? Is it just me, or do all of the people I'm talking to have that distinctive middle-class accent of the urban and trendy London young? Is that blonde Australian girl with the crew-cut wearing a vintage RUN DMC sweatshirt ironically, or is she really a fan of early 80's rap?

"People are starting to have optimism again," the blonde in question enthuses, "it's really cool." She's reading *Adbusters*, an anti-capitalist magazine for artists and writers. Predictably, it's got a picture of Obama on the front. It seems even anti-capitalists fall for a bit of that good old "hope and glory" patter.

Steph, the girl from the phone conversation, is far cagier. I try to make small talk: "So, what kind of press are

you used to getting?" No response. "You guys get a lot of bad press, don't you?"

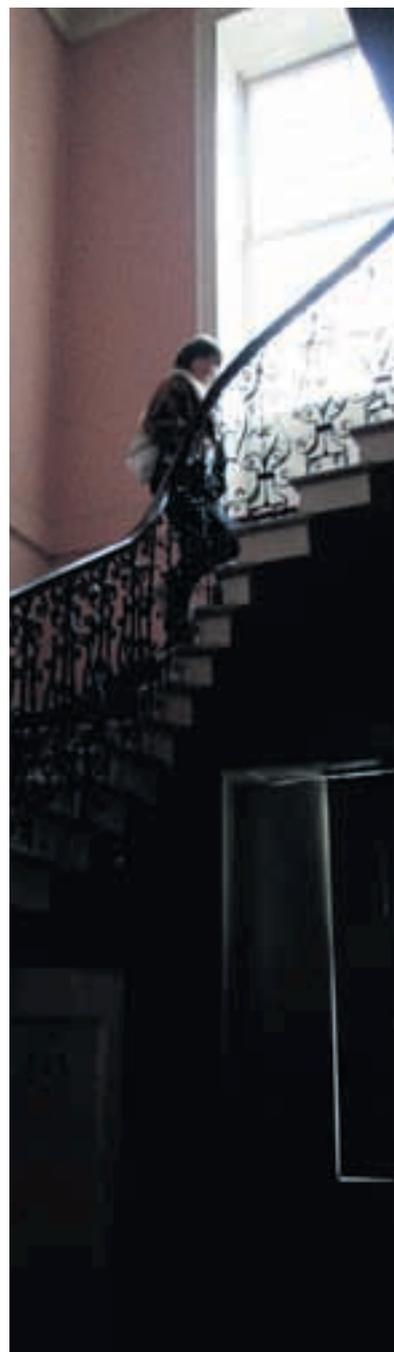
"Do we?" she stares blankly. Five minutes later, she rips up a copy of the *London Paper*, and cries, "Why do these people keep appearing in our house?" It's not exactly your house, I reason in my head. Even in my head, I sound like a nob. I stare at the washing-up rota tacked above the sink: even middle-class bohemians like a good timetable, it seems. I feel miserably like I'm back at art school, and still not cool enough to hang out with the cool kids.

So instead, I talk to the Australian girl. Australians don't care about coolness. All Australians are chirpy, even ones wearing aggressive RUN DMC sweatshirts. But she skips off before I can get her name. I'm left with Steph, who instructs me to find Alex. It occurs to me that I am in a perpetual game of finding Alex. I feel like I'm stuck in a Beckett play. I wonder what Alex will look like: a culmination of every single *Daily Mail* headline on the squat. I imagine a very tall and thin artist who looks like an unwashed hobo and wears pointy-toed shoes: a cross between the Artful Dodger and Andy Warhol.

I wander out the kitchen area of the house, and feel distinctly unim-

pressed. The actual living quarters of the squatters look like any other landed property in London – long, narrow corridors and dirty terrace windows. Through a row of the latter, I see a group of women in tracksuits, shouting, "No! No! No!" They're on a self-defence class. Then I bump into Alex – or rather, I ignore Alex several times because he looks nothing like how I imagined him to be. He is balding slightly, has ruddy cheeks, a slight paunch, and is at a push at least 15 years older than Steph. He is also wearing what appears to be a Gore-tex jacket and hiking boots. I feel immediately at home with him, my fellow pleb in sensible clothing.

He invites me on a bike tour of Mayfair, to check out the other abandoned buildings. It's one of the activities listed at the Temporary School of Thought. Our motley crew of five sets off as Alex bicycles up the wrong ends of streets and down pavements, receiving dubious stares from Mayfair residents with Chloe bags and fur coats. We stop periodically at several ramshackle properties with dusty windows; Alex rejects each one as being unsafe or too high profile. The latter doesn't seem to be something they were so afraid of before, I suggest. Occupying buildings in the richest neighbourhoods of London



doesn't exactly lend itself to anonymity. Alex shrugs and mentions they're moving soon, anyway.

It occurs to me that the squatters weren't even considering their profile; the squat has a feel of a bunch of mates wanting to do something fun, who in the process wound up on the front page of newspapers. They were definitely less than prepared for the amount of vitriol hurled their way, especially on the Internet: "Take the wankers home for a good old-fashioned beating," says Bones1. Rustle opines: "These upper class nits don't live in the real world, so what would they know of the daily struggles felt by genuine homeless squatters?"

"Actually," Alex points out. "Most homeless people don't squat." The

crops to followers free of charge, in the hope that other poor people would follow their example. Following World War II, disenfranchised ex-servicemen and their families squatted in former military bases and West London luxury apartments. The 70's saw a wave of younger squatters, claiming the act as part of a revolutionary political stand. Even at their ascendancy, the Sex Pistols squatted in Hampstead – a blue plaque is now in the making. The long, complex history of British squatting is recognized in law, which states that squatting is not a criminal offence if you can get into an unoccupied building without forced entry. You can stay as long as no damage is incurred and as long as you leave once an eviction

““WHY DO THESE PEOPLE KEEP APPEARING IN OUR HOUSE?” IT'S NOT EXACTLY YOUR HOUSE, I REASON IN MY HEAD.”

homeless tend to have less access to information about squatters' rights, and are, perhaps justifiably, slightly warier of the long arm of the law. They prefer to remain mobile and hardly ever linger in one place, whereas squatters try to remain under the radar long enough to settle in. Alex speaks primly of the Park Lane squatters – a group now known as "Dog Squat" in the tabloids – who have taken over two £15m houses that overlook Hyde Park. We stop long enough to have a look, and Alex is disappointed there aren't any "punks spitting and stuff". There is, however, a very grumpy photographer banging away at the door. The mistake of the squatters there, Alex informs me, is to let anybody stay. They were soon overrun by hobos with dogs and druggies coming off their weekend high. "We're good squat, they're bad squat," Alex laughs, and pedals on. He refuses to speak for any of the group as to why they squat; he personally enjoys being part of an artistic community, and from the way he lovingly glances over every beautiful house we pass, you can tell he's far from the type to hold a destructive rave in any of them.

This refusal to speak for the group is characteristic; considering that the group refuses to speak to the mainstream media at all, I'm lucky to get a word out of Steph or Alex, who are among its core members. At the beginning of their big media break, the squatters were more than happy to pose for photographers and read out public statements to confused passers-by. After all, their first coverage from *Time Out* spoke warmly of their previous squat as an "artistic, bohemian microcosm". Nowadays, if Steph's behaviour is any indication, they seem more guarded, less willing to affiliate themselves with any kind of political or artistic ethos that would leave them vulnerable to outside attack; more comfortable to let the assorted workshops and talks at the Temporary School of Thought speak for them. And who can blame them? This was before the *Daily Mail* and the *Sun* turned their artistic endeavor into a story about how a bunch of unwashed public-schoolkids-in-denial would overtake your suburban semi the minute you nipped away to the Co-op.

Squatting has a long, illustrious history in Britain: in 1649, a Surrey-based group calling themselves The Diggers occupied disused common land, cultivating and distributing

notice is served. Squatting as an act of social protest is nothing new – you would think that in these troubled times, more people would support squatters. It seems a crime that these beautiful houses are locked up and left to rot while their owners scabble to save the last of their millions.

Back at the house, Alex instructs me to tour the part that I haven't seen, which the squatters don't live in. I move from the cramped servants quarters of the living space, the corridors of which are decorated with life drawing sketches, and into rooms of 19th century handpainted wallpaper and vaulted ceilings. There are about five floors of increasingly elaborate rooms, served by beautiful spiral staircases and a creaky elevator. The squatters have left these rooms mostly untouched, except to pile up mattresses scavenged from nearby hotel bins to form makeshift cinema seats and to pull together old tables and chairs for upcoming talks, overseen today by Steph. I attend a talk about Playful Cities – which basically translates to putting grand pianos in streets and flash-mobs bursting into song – led by a hyperkinetic American woman who went to "that Fame school – the real one". It sounds like a hippy-dippy enterprise if not for the fact the Olympics Committee funds her group, Sing London, as part of their charity outreach. In attendance are architects, newspaper managers, foreign exchange students and a builder in a David Bowie t-shirt. At the end of the talk, she gets everybody to sing goodbye to one another.

And you know what? Everybody does, with a smile. I even get a hug out of most of them. (The builder is the best.) This is London. I'm gob-smacked. Most people would rather die than touch a stranger in public. It seems like grand, ornate properties bring out the best in people – people are walking around appreciatively, striking up conversations with each other. Everybody knows they wouldn't ordinarily be here, that it's something special, even slightly mischievous, in how we've been let in under the dozy eye of the law. The squatters might be long inured to the charm of such a grand slum, but their real genius was throwing it open to the public and letting them make up their own minds. Criminals or artists? Mucky squatters or rescuers of beautiful, unused houses? Steph sits in a corner and smiles. She might be on to something after all.



Thumping Good Yarns

'GRAFFITI KNITTERS' ARE REINVENTING A TRADITIONAL CRAFT AND TAKING THE WORLD OF STREET ART BY STORM. VARSITY CORRESPONDENT ROISIN KIBERD TALKS TO MAGDA SAYEG OF KNITTAPLEASE, ONE OF GUERRILLA KNITTING'S MOST NOTORIOUS GANGS

Graffiti has traditionally been the preserve of middle-class suburban teenagers, fuelled by a frustration with their urban landscape. But 'graffiti knitting', a recent fusion of illegal street culture with a traditionally domestic, mild-mannered pursuit, bridges the divide between the shadowy night-time world of spray can-wielding tag artists and the less criminal urban creative field. There is something simultaneously terrifying and comforting about the sight of your granny's chosen art form coming out of the attic and onto the streets; ripples of acrylic yarn, woven onto road signs, snaking down streetlights and trailing off of car antennae. Knitta Please, a group devoted to the creation of such humble masterpieces, is in many ways partaking in a tradition shared by artists of all mediums: the urge to celebrate the ordinary, to bring attention to something that is otherwise ignored.

Founded four years ago, a project that began with a solitary 'doorknob cozy' has since reached international proportions, appearing both on the streets and in the media worldwide. Its founder, Magda Sayeg, spends less time knitting in front of *The Sopranos* than she does travelling the world, promoting 'graffiti knitting' and tagging international

landmarks (she even boasts of a recent request she's received to cover an entire Brooklyn street in yarn!). Interviewing Sayeg on the phone, I'm in awe of her organisation and business skills, which she still manages to balance with an infectious passion for the creative, grass-roots side of her projects.

"Knitta Please, when it started, was just me," says Sayeg. "Then it grew to about twelve people... I didn't even know everyone in the group. So when people had to leave, I just let them. Now that it's just me, suddenly everything's happened. I love having the autonomy to do what I want with this." Sayeg travels the world like a one-woman knitting machine, leaving a trail of fibrous street-art which is then catalogued on her website, www.knittaplease.com.

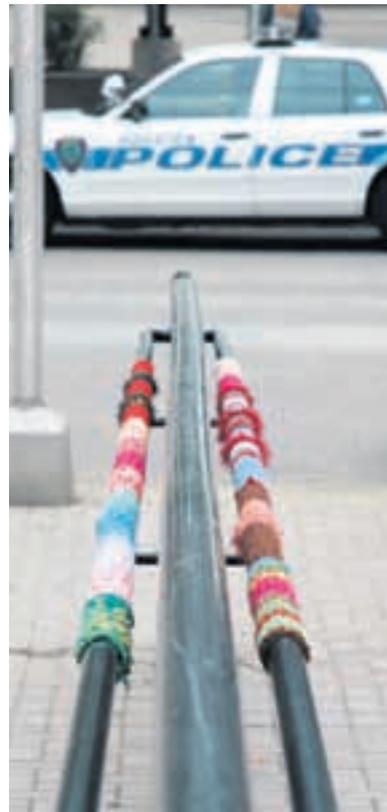
In fact, Sayeg says, internet buzz has played a crucial part in the rise of graffiti knitting. "If it wasn't for the internet success, especially in the first six months, none of this would have happened," she admits. "People hire PR to get that kind of attention." Just like an unsigned musician using Myspace, Magda used the website at first as a way to measure Knitta Please's popularity. She also profited from the chance to create a photo-catalogue of Knitta's graffiti, which are,

by their very nature, impermanent.

Indeed, like all mediums of street art, knitted graffiti is ephemeral; not only can it be removed by authorities, but the yarn can also easily fall foul of rain and winds. Sayeg remembers fondly how her car antenna cozies were "so popular... but then I would get e-mails saying they'd blown off in the wind, or someone had stolen it. We saw one piece on Ebay!" She concludes, "I guess it's the idea that it's free art. That's a part of its beauty to me, the possibility that it might not be there tomorrow, so you might as well enjoy it today."

However, unlike normal graffiti artists, Sayeg has never run into trouble with the law. "They have stopped me to ask what I was doing, but they go on their merry way... I'll usually say I'm decorating for my friend who's coming back from the war, or I'm doing a scavenger hunt with my youth group... If it's about God or the war, they won't question it." The authorities' relaxed approach to her daytime adventures has been oddly anticlimactic: "I almost think it would be fun to get arrested. It would probably cause a sensation."

No one could have foreseen that Knitta Please would gain quite so much attention in so little time, least of all its



founder. "I've done many things in my life," says Sayeg proudly, "but nothing has taken me all over the world and given me as much attention as this. It makes me realise that life can be crazy and wonderful."

Sayeg's work breaks down our preconceptions both about knitting as a dull, domestic activity, and about the much-maligned graffiti artists with whom she empathises. "It's important to break the mould - I definitely feel like I've taken knitting and I've flipped it on its head." Previous work in galleries left her dissatisfied with art world pretension: "That's what ruins art - artists working for the critics, who are writing for art people." Instead, graffiti knitting takes art into the open, on traffic islands and lamp-posts, accessible and visible to all.

Sayeg describes her plans with an enthusiasm that's nothing short of inspirational. "I know people who would never, ever, do the kind of crazy shit that I've done... Sometimes you have to be ballsy, so that something magical can happen. I want this to get bigger and bigger - larger than life!" She's eager to visit London and, hopefully, Cambridge, where she plans to leave her woven handiwork on the trees in Fellows' Gardens.

The New Omaha Pioneers

ELECTRO-FUTURIST ROCK GODS THE FAINT MAY NOT LIKE ENGLAND OR NECESSARILY CARE WHAT YOU THINK OF THEIR MUSIC, BUT WE LIKE THEM ANYWAY. ALICE SHYY OVER-INTELLECTUALIZES THE BAND'S MODUS OPERANDI WITH JACOB THIELE AND JOEL PETERSON

"How come you don't talk with a funny accent?" Joel Peterson, bassist and guitarist for electro-rock outfit The Faint, is the first to ask a question in this interview on a dismal London afternoon. Fitting - one listen to classic single 'Paranoiattack' and it's evident that the American quintet from Omaha, Nebraska like to do things their way. In this vein, rather than give a throw-away answer to my (admittedly throw-away) first question of "How's it

going?" synthesizer player Jacob Thiele gripes about the day's less than ideal equipment load-in process. Certainly, the band's sound skews more toward the dystopic than the popstastic, but I wasn't expecting this hardness from Midwestern musicians who've made it on world tour. As Jacob and Joel indulge my queries, visual and aural grit pollutes our dive-y, has-been alcove four storeys over Pentonville Road in London's La Scala. The Faint would later pump the

venue to swelling with ballistic beats and entranced dancers, but the mood at the moment is set to 'grim'.

"I don't like this country," Joel asserts. "You can write that down." Joel's near-acrid honesty and droll pessimism ironically make his personality more in keeping with the British cultural backdrop he deprecates. Still, he's very charming, in spite, or perhaps because, of it; when I, in the British mode, respond to his distaste for England by apologising, he pauses pensively before carefully deadpanning, "I don't think it's your fault. I think it happened a long time ago."

Endowed with a more stereotypically American temperament, Jacob is surprisingly earnest for a cooler-than-cool rock star. Jacob handles the Customer Service Department of The Faint—he manages their Myspace and Facebook accounts, taking care to respond to every message. (He takes special pleasure in responding to hate mail.) Well-attuned to his fans' feelings, he later apologizes to me for the dismal start: "I didn't mean to complain about the load-in. It's too easy to say things are great, so I tried to think of something that wasn't great." Apology accepted - sometimes innovation doesn't deliver its desired effect at first, but The Faint work hard to tweak it until it does.

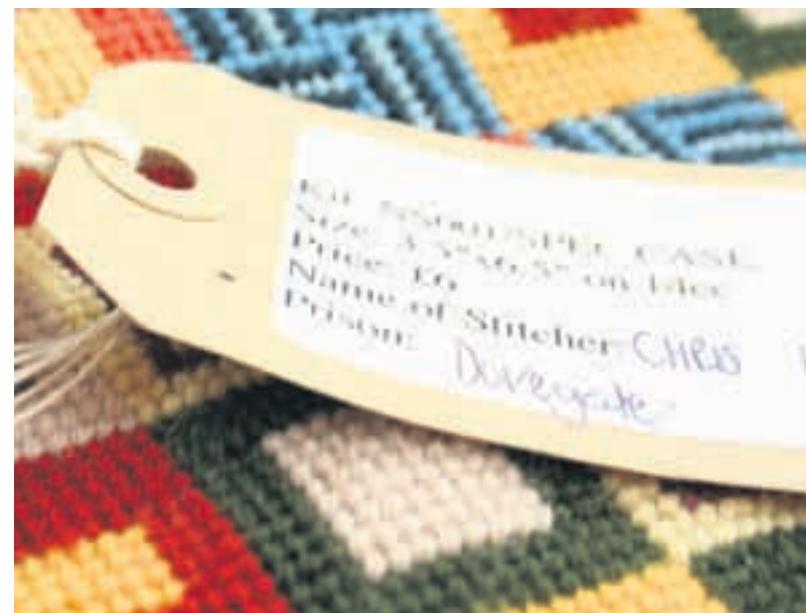
With fourteen years of innovation and five full-length studio albums behind them, The Faint cover a lot of ground in the realms of mad scientist-cum-retro-rocker experimentation. From the beginning, The Faint have embraced the DIY ethic—they designed their own graphics, built their own studio, self-released their latest album—not only because of their punk origins, but also because it allows them maximum agency in crafting their art. Jacob muses, "I think it's a better way to live life—learning and having the experience of trying something new, failing at something new." Currently, the band face increasing difficulties in finding new material to 'Faint-ify'. "With each consecutive album it's the process of us figuring out what is necessary and what is not necessary... lyrically, sonically, dynamically," explains Joel. "We have crossed a lot of stuff off our lists already and there are fewer avenues left to travel."

The self-professed "open-minded control freaks" have titled their latest album offering, for which they are on tour, *Fascination*—an idiosyncratic and futuristic claiming of a word that is the product and promise of inspiration. "Inspiration" is a key word for Jacob and Joel, who represent two different takes on how The Faint are influenced by the human response

to creation through creating. Jacob's greatest hope is that The Faint can inspire others, for he remembers how his own heroes have done him a similar favor. As for Joel: "I want to inspire myself," he declared. "I'm incredibly selfish. As far as the creative process goes, I only really care about what I think and what my bandmates think. Success, or not, is irrelevant to me."

Luckily for Joel, success has come to The Faint, in the form of industry respect, a die-hard fan base, and even a couple of Omaha Entertainment Awards for good measure. But in the pulsing rush of progress, both in terms of their careers and technology, they take care to look at the residue, having found that increasingly elusive inspiration in everything from broken equipment to 'artifacts' from the cutting room floor. As human executives of unapologetically mechanical noise, The Faint hold a double gaze on the digital world; begoggled and lab-coat-donning frontman Todd Fink finds the steampunk movement a useful aesthetic metaphor for trying to create a prehistory out of post-industrialism. "It's the best or maybe the easiest way to come up with things that haven't been done before," says Jacob. "New technologies breed new ideas, and it's exciting."





Stitched Up

FINE CELL WORK IS AN ELEVEN-YEAR-OLD INITIATIVE THAT TEACHES THE ART OF EMBROIDERY IN TWENTY-TWO BRITISH PRISONS. LAURA FREEMAN TALKS TO CONNIE HASSELGAARD ABOUT THE JOYS AND DIFFICULTIES OF BRINGING DELICACY INTO ROUGH REALMS

The Old Testament rubric for crime and retribution warns that as you sow so shall you reap – or, for the purposes of this article, as you sew so shall you reap. I hope Fine Cell Work will forgive the pun. As their own name suggests, they are not adverse to a spot of word play. The Cell of the title refers both to the prisons where this programme teaches embroidery and quilting, and to each cell of canvas that prisoners dutifully stitch. The American cell-block jailbird stitching mailbags may be a familiar icon, but the prisoners working under the Fine Cell Work scheme have transformed the humble mailbag stitch into an art form.

Fine Cell Work was founded in 1998 by Lady Anne Tree, with the aim of teaching prisoners the art of embroi-

dery. It is a time consuming occupation, but behind bars, time is the one thing inmates have. Eleven years after its founding, Fine Cell Work teaches 350 inmates (two-thirds of them men) in 22 prisons across the country, and last year turned over £180,000.

The scheme has three aims: to teach inmates new skills, to instil a sense of pride in work, and to enable its beneficiaries to earn money which can be sent home to families or put towards a fresh start on the outside. Inmates learn quilting and embroidery at volunteer-run evening classes, and between each class they stitch in their cells: cot blankets, scatter cushions, tapestry rugs, and elaborate folk-blankets. The handiwork is immaculate, and cushions sell for £90, while rugs and quilts can cost as

much as £400. The money is divided three-fold: a third goes to the charity, a third covers cost, and a final third goes to the prisoners.

Connie Hasselgaard has been a volunteer for Fine Cell Work since 2002. When she isn't teaching at HMP Wandsworth, she is several worlds away, restoring royal tapestries at Hampton Court Palace. Kind, meticulous, and unshakably patient, Connie began volunteering for Fine Cell Work because she was "tired of being a committee woman. I wanted to be down in the arena with the sawdust."

She objects fiercely to the school of thought (much loved by knee-jerk newspapers) that prison is a 'holiday camp'. Helping prisoners is not everyone's priority. "Their freedom is taken away," she muses. "You don't have to treat them badly whilst they are in there." The guards can be hostile to groups such as Fine Cell Work, dubbing the volunteers "bloody do-gooders". But hostility is most fiercely voiced by those inmates who opt out of classes. Any sign of effeminacy or 'faggish' behaviour is leapt upon. It takes strength of character to persevere in embroidery classes in an environment where aggressive masculinity is key to survival. Connie tells me there is no 'type'. Her classes are full of "macho tough guys with tattoos and rotten teeth". What unites the class members is a desire to change, to learn, to support their families, and to reclaim some semblance of pride. "Self-esteem," she sighs, "is a rare commodity in prison."

There are, inevitably, issues of security. Scissors are forbidden, and even nail clippers are a risk. Instead of these tools, prisoners are provided with 'cutters', like those in a dental floss lid, to trim their threads. Volunteers teach classes on their own or in pairs, and guards do not attend classes. "I have a whistle, but I've never had to use it," Connie tells me. In eleven years and across twenty-two prisons there has never been an incident. The worst that volunteers

usually have to contend with is a bit of bad language. Connie tends to brush off any cursing with a brisk, "I've heard worse from a building site." Volunteers are never told about an inmate's past, and the philosophy they are encouraged to adopt is, "I don't know what they did, and I don't want to know".

The cushions and quilts stitched by the inmates are of exceptional quality, and accordingly, Fine Cell Work supplies the interior decoration shops of the Fulham Road with scatter cushions and hand-stitched rugs. William Ye-

in a birdcage of spidery stitching, while, in another, a pair of feet dangle over an upturned chair, with the words "I can't take it anymore" shakily stitched below.

To desperate inmates, Fine Cell Work represents hope, occupation, and therapy all in one. Letters by prisoners are testament to the redemptive power of the needle and thread. To some, the classes provide a semblance of family, or a way of keeping calm, passing the time, keeping out of fights. A letter from an inmate at HMP Maidstone talks of pride in helping others: "It is

"SELF-ESTEEM IS A RARE COMMODITY IN PRISON"

ward, Colefax and Fowler, and Allegra Hicks have all proudly displayed Fine Cell Work in their windows. The current collection boasts cushions embroidered with the Fleur de Lys, sorbet pink carnations, and delicate tangles of vine leaves all stitched by Connie's tough, tattooed pupils. Fine Cell Work's best-seller is a cream cushion marked with a series of hatchings, crossing off the days. The design is simple: eleven sets of four lines, each with a fifth crossed through it. On the twelfth set the four lines are ringed in red, marking the end of crossed-off days – and, hopefully, a better beginning.

Not content with the humble cushion, Fine Cell Work have embarked on a series of large public commissions. The Jerwood Arts Foundation has commissioned a colossal 10x10 metre wall-hanging to hang in Norman Foster's Sage Concert Hall in Gateshead. At Wandsworth, work is underway on a quilt for the Victoria and Albert Museum's 2010 Quilts Exhibition.

The theme is 'life on the inside', and each inmate has produced a square detailing his or her daily experiences. Some of the scenes are unbearable. Wandsworth is notoriously overcrowded, and prisoners are confined two to a cell. The recurring themes are loneliness, suffocation, and despair. In one square, a yellow canary is encased

nice to be needed by other inmates who are just learning, and need help from time to time." Fine Cell Work graduates have found work as tailors and money earned from quilts and cushions is put towards suits for job interviews on the outside.

Charities such as Fine Cell Work are under threat. In December last year, Justice Secretary Jack Straw closed down a comedy club at Whitemoor Prison when a press leak revealed that Al Qaeda terrorist Zia ul-Haq was enrolled. All other drama projects at Whitemoor were cancelled, and prisoners returned to their cells. The knee-jerk newspapers sounded victory over the 'holiday camp' prison system. Such a reaction misunderstands the redemptive and rehabilitative power of art, drama, and craftsmanship. Perhaps Straw should have read this letter from Jeffrey at HMP Wandsworth: "You're rejected by society and you have to reflect on what you've done. Then you need something in place so that you can actually get some self-worth back. With the quilting you can actually go inside yourself, start creating things and feeling like you can actually belong to society."

You can lock the canary up in its cage, and take away its freedom, but stop it from singing, stitching, quilting and you take away all hope.



Round Up

Lucien Young tells us what's
what in theatrical week 3

As Shakespeare once figuratively remarked: "all the world's a stage, and all the men and woman merely players." The ruff-wearing idiot wasn't aware there would one day be a place where this was literally true. That place is Cambridge, where there is more theatre than you can shake a RADA-trained stick at. When more than two Cambridge students gather in a room, there is a 40% chance that, at some point, a production of *Coriolanus* will happen. It is practically impossible to walk down Kings' Parade without being cast in *The Seagull*. I'm not complaining: this is a beautiful, wondrous thing. However, it does make it hard to find the golden tickets that will keep you entertained between essay deadlines. I hope this round-up of mine can help. So, before you put your bums on seats, put your bum in my hands.

Kiss of the Spider Woman follows the adventures of a young girl, Petra Parker, who, having been bitten by a radioactive spider, is transformed into a web-slinging nymphomaniac. Not really, but it should do, shouldn't it? The answer is no, this show sounds cool enough as it is: a Tony Award-winning musical, featuring sex, Marxism and despair, all set in a brutal South American prison. Unless you're banged up yourself, you've no excuse not to see it. While we're talking musicals, *42nd Street* sounds like caramelised fabulousness, with a cast so sexy that the producer is actively barring me from meeting them.

On the dramatic front, you can't say fairer than *Death of a Salesman* (spoiler warning: the salesman dies at the end). It's a 20th-century masterpiece, and I applaud the director's instinct in staging this searing indictment of the free market at the end of Bush's dismal reign.

Anyone who knows me knows I'm all about oddness, which may be why *Le Fil* so catches my eye. It's a 'sharp sensory experience', based around an album by French songstress Camille. I'm game.

And, looking further ahead, this promises to be a great term theatrically. A production of *Romeo and Juliet* at the Arts Theatre excites with its stellar cast, but the Shakespeare that really intrigues me is *Richard II*. Richard's a difficult play: its dense layers of language sing on the page, but will they work on the stage? I look forward to finding out, even though Shakespeare is an idiot.

Damn, I've finished my piece, and with four words to spare. Oh, well: *Derek, Derek, Derek, Derek*.

THEATRE

Road by Jim Cartwright
ADC Theatre, February 3rd-7th
Dir. Anna Marsland; Alcock Players & HATS

★★★★★

As soon as I entered the ADC I knew something was up. Lowri Amies was whizzing about on a scooter, blocking the theatre entrance. Come on Lowri, I thought, have a bit more respect, you love this place. The feeling of unease gathered pace as I stepped into the bar. There were paper posters dotted about the walls, ones advertising pies, ones talking about sex toys and ones that had bizarre pictures of the Statue of Liberty crying on them. It was like stepping into another world. A world vaguely redolent of the 1980s. Then I laughed to myself. Of course! *Road!* That's set in the 1980s! Suddenly everything made sense. It was like *Life on Mars* or something.

This 'timewarp' gave me vague trepidations about the play. Surely it couldn't all be as kooky as this? I saw *Blood Brothers* once and, I get it, life is no bed of roses for those Northerners who happen to live below the poverty line. But I don't want this message to be drummed in through some patronising tale about people called Barry and Linda. So when 'Somewhere over the Rainbow' started blaring out, followed shortly after by a speech from everyone's favourite national treasure, Margaret Thatcher, I began to start looking at my watch. Thankfully, though, the music picked up (no Damien Rice here!), and the play swiftly followed suit.

There really were some excellent performances. Oliver Soden was highly impressive, if only through the sheer diversity of his roles. Nick Ricketts gave a thought-provoking performance as a young man starving himself to death. Eve Hedderwick-Turner was captivating throughout, her characters showing a touch of vulnerability which undermined the displays of confidence they attempted to present.

The production was stimulating and engaging throughout, which I found particularly impressive considering how well trodden this particular path has been. The anger was still there in the original script, and the power of it was felt by the audience. It did at times feel like a bit of a museum piece, for much of the dialogue in Cartwright's script has not aged very well. I haven't heard so much talk about "snogging" since I was about 10. The play was also too long. There should have been more cutting than there was so as to sustain the audience's attention throughout all those monologues. It is no coincidence that the most engaging scene in the play, the final one, had the snappiest dialogue. The pared-down monologues at the end of the scene were brilliantly worked, and all the more powerful for the pace shown earlier in the scene.

But the fundamental flaw of the production was that the ADC was simply too big for it. I have never been more aware of how much space there is in this theatre. What the play screamed out for was intimacy, for the claustrophobic environment of the Corpus Playroom or the Larkum Studio. Their attempts to create a voyeuristic atmosphere by incorporating the audience into the play were ill suited to the venue. The setting and props merely seemed like reasons to justify the use of such a big stage.

The poignancy of the monologues was at times lost on the audience. The futility of the ADC's endeavours to make the venue 'feel' like the 1980s became apparent while watching the play. For you can put up as many unconvincing posters as you like; it will not paper over the cracks that arise when a well-done production is performed in the wrong venue. *Nick Beck*



TIM JOHNS



VANESSA WHYTE

NICK MOHAMMED is a character comedian
ADC Theatre, February 3rd

★★★★★

We have to thank the Department of Earth Sciences: we must get down on our knees and show our enormous gratitude that they offered Nick Mohammed a place to embark upon a PhD in Seismology. Without them, this extraordinary comedian would never have joined Footlights and may not have become the man he is today.

Nick is not a *stand-up* comedian, as most others on the London comedy circuit are, but a *character* comedian. Imitating real people, he draws the audience into his world. Last night, his show began with *The Weatherman* and he immediately had the crowd falling about giggling. Perfectly capturing the little idiosyncrasies of so many weathermen on television, he smiled, made big gestures and hoped he had persuaded us that

meteorology was a "real science".

Next up was *The Sloane* at Cambridge: flicking his long white pashmina and describing parties as "debauched" and "ending in complete carnage," Nick convinced us that he was an upper-class 19-year-old just arriving at Cambridge. The imitation was uncanny. His *Wedding Photographer* was another crowd pleaser; he advised the bride to get out of the photo, instead preferring to have all the Grade 7 and above musicians squatting in the shape of their instrument. The highlight of the evening was probably his last character, *The Orchestra Conductor*. This sketch had to be incredibly well-rehearsed to work and it most certainly was. The Northern French Philosophy professor was well acted but the audience participation and magic tricks dragged

a little.

The show was so slick: Nick attacked the all-too-willing audience, presenting characters and situations at which we couldn't help but laugh. Technically, the ADC lighting team did very well to cover the quick changes between characters. It was such a shame that there were quite a few empty seats (perhaps mumps and the snow prevented some people from coming). The warm-up act, Johnny Sweet, ready to "gee us up", was amusing too and got the audience going with funny cowboy slang and dry book blurbs. It did, however, make us realise how individual Nick's work is, especially on a live stage. He is still to finish that PhD in Seismology, but everyone would agree that Nick Mohammed has found his vocation and should not look back. *Victoria Ball*

CAN'T WAIT TILL FRIDAY? BE THE FIRST TO READ THE REVIEWS ONLINE AT VARSITY.CO.UK/REVIEWS

Feelgood by Alistair Beaton

ADC Theatre, February 4th-7th

Dir. Toby Jones; Downing Dramatic Society

★★★★★

I met a traveller from a far-off land. Actually, that's a lie – I didn't. Instead, I met a charmingly bald gay man in the ADC foyer who, as we were leaving, turned to thank the ADC underlings, telling them the all the plays so far this season had been great. Now, I think this speaks volumes: both of the peculiar qualities of this production and of the power of shows like it to make you feel that all is right in the world.

Perhaps fittingly for a play that plumbs the depths of British politics, this is a coke-snorting bastard of a show, painted with as broad a brush as can be. Like a drugged-up cabinet minister, it's all energy, energy, ENERGY; perhaps unfortunately, this also makes it about as subtle as a user's request for a tenner for "a cup of tea."

As the distinctly Feelbad publicity informs us: it's party conference time. We follow PR wizards and spin kings as they try to save the government from a series of crises. Largely, the plot is irrelevant (except for a brilliantly executed final twist which had the audience audibly gasping). It's all about the cast, and the enthusiasm of their engagement with a hugely funny, but also very wordy, script. Alice Malin primps and poses as a self-important press officer; Matt Kilroy bumbles convincingly and amusingly as a party dinosaur; Joshua Stamp-Simon is wonderfully naff as the terminally unfunny sitcom writer brought in to give the PM some street cred.

Their collective thunder is stolen, however, by Joe Bunker. His Eddie – part Alistair Campbell, part Malcolm

Tucker – is a monster, an inhuman, rude (and FUCKING hilarious) example of why politicians deserve their bad press. Whilst he didn't always live up to the highest points of his performance, he was an electric presence that kept the show full of impetus and truly inventive invective.

This won't be everyone's cup of tea. You might – whisper it quietly – not like it at all. Like a cokehead coming down from a high, it lags and crashes into some deeply enervated low-spots, and at an hour and a half it is criminally long for something this late. The performances, for all their drive, are little more than caricatures. But surely (surely?) this is what this type of show requires, and I for one agree with my new bald friend. Feelgood? Probably. *George Reynolds*



TIM JOHNS

Context



Week 3: Modernising Miller

Arthur Miller is undoubtedly one of the twentieth century's greatest playwrights. Born in 1915 to moderately affluent Jewish-American parents, Miller wrote during a fascinating time in American history. The Great Depression was a period of deprivation for many that left an indelible mark on the national psyche, and it is in this light that *Death of a Salesman* can be best understood.

Moving the play from its original context by swapping the financial troubles of the forties for the naughties, next week the ADC hosts a modern interpretation of the play, from director Alex Winterbotham.

Some argue that the central idea behind this play, connected with the door-to-door salesman and the Darwinian nature of rampant capitalism, has withered with time and changing technology. Out of the context of 1940s Brooklyn, then, much of the play's meaning is lost. Others, such as Kate Egerton, President of the Arthur Miller Society, argue otherwise.

Welcoming the news that Cambridge students are producing an up-to-date version of the play, she said: "Miller was always interested in what new stagings of his plays told him about the state of the world and he would be pleased to see actors and audiences turn to *Death of a Salesman* today.

"While Miller the social critic would probably have harsh words for the bankers who got us into this mess, he would be more interested in those washed along in the wake of the storm.

"*Salesman* helped playwrights and audiences understand the dignity of the little guy, even as he's drowning, and that's not something we should forget any time soon."

Director Winterbotham also draws parallels between the worldwide recession which prompted Miller to pen his most famous piece and the financial turmoil of today: "Miller wrote *Death of a Salesman* soon after the Great Depression, when stock markets crashed and a worldwide recession loomed. The economic pessimism that is so prominent in the play mirrors events which grip our own current financial climate."

Regardless of this assessment, there are many reasons why *Death of a Salesman* is still relevant today. Issues such as a lack of security in both our personal and professional lives can cause anyone to become disillusioned with the present and worried about the future. They were more than Willy could handle in Miller's time, and continue to be equally potent today. Perhaps Winterbotham's modern adaptation will neatly capture this. Decide for yourself, from Tuesday February 10th. *Tim Checkley*

Macbeth by William Shakespeare

Hamied Theatre, Christ's College, January 30th-February 2nd

Dir. Ben Blyth, Tom de Freston & Rory Atwood; Christ's Shakespeare Company

★★★★★

Shakespeare in Cambridge is a theatre staple. With no rights to pay, it is to the drama bubble what chips are to the English stomach – cheap and popular. Yet rather like chips without condiments, the Scottish play is decidedly difficult to pull off without dollops of dedication.

Upon entry, I was immediately assaulted by deafening and dramatic music, ironically contrasted by the dazzling halogen lighting in a theatre so new you could smell the glue drying. Sound and lighting posed problems throughout. I heard absolutely nothing that was said in the second and third scenes due to the violent rain encapsulating us. No imagination was employed with the lighting. In most scenes the stars' fires were so bright that it was hardly surprising Macbeth failed to hide his black and deep desires.

The set was shabby, the exposed duck tape on the red material upstage destroying the doom it was intended to convey. The costume and make-up decisions proved no better, but were certainly more entertaining. Duncan's paper crown, a gaggle of secretaries, and characters from *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* all graced the stage. White faces and black eyes were applied inexplicably on some characters, including Macduff the emo teen.

The blatant problem with the production was its lack of direction. All three directors also starred in the play, including Ben Blyth as Macbeth. A healthy dose of objective criticism would have helped many of the actors fulfil their potential. Holly Olivia Braine's Lady Macbeth was engaging with impressive physicality.

Nonetheless, I felt I was sitting in on her admirable audition pieces, and not polished works of drama. A lack of commitment to blocking plagued most of the play except in the case of the witches, who truly shone. Writhing, tumbling, and meowing like cats one minute, and gnashing on a corpse like hyenas the next, they fully succeeded in creeping out the audience. The most effective and creative directorial decision came in their scene at the start of the fourth act, when the prophecies were delivered by dunking Macbeth's head in a bucket of blood.

Although the show felt a bit like a play in a teen flick set in a high school, those onstage were clearly having fun. A refreshing amateur production that didn't take itself very seriously, *Macbeth* was awesomely bad. *Laura Andrews*



ZING TSJENG

Life and Beth by Alan Ayckbourn

Arts Theatre, February 2nd-7th

Dir. Alan Ayckbourn; Stephen Joseph Theatre & Yvonne Arnaud Theatre

★★★★★

On Monday, you recall, there was so much snow that everyone went a bit silly and decided not to go into work and instead build wee men in their gardens. Still, in Cambridge, the show must go on. So I traipsed my merry way through the melting, gritty slush to see Alan Ayckbourn's *Life and Beth* at the Arts Theatre. The only thing is, I'd rather I hadn't bothered.

If you hadn't noticed, the name *Life and Beth* is a very clever play on the phrase 'life and death': you see? That is, sadly, about as deep and as sharp as it got.

The curtain rose and it was clear straightaway that we'd plunged into very familiar Ayckbournian waters: drawing room comedy; standard box set decorated realistically; couple of elderly

ladies; exquisite bone-china tea set – you know the drill.

It's Christmas and newly bereaved widow Beth (Liza Goddard) is bombarded with well-wishers hell-bent on being with her over the difficult festive period. The theme of the piece is obvious from the off: Beth is absolutely fine about coping with her bereavement, thank you very much; it's everyone else who's in a pickle. It took Ayckbourn two hours to say that last night.

Of course, there's a rather sinister twist at the end of act one when the ghost of Gordon, Beth's late husband, shows up at the dinner table. Nods to Banquo anyone? Donning a rather unconvincing gingery hairpiece, Gordon (Adrain McLoughlin) looked intriguingly like the

nation's favourite gargoyle, Andrew Lloyd Webber. Bizarrely, however, his character was even more annoying than the grinning theatrical impresario and I found myself literally dreading every whiny, nasally syllable that he took an eternity to drag out of his mouth.

There were a few laughs in the piece, and its heart was definitely in the right place, but it was pretty lightweight. The performances were fairly good on the whole, but ultimately forgettable.

I would recommend however (how can I put this delicately?) that if you're the sort of person that likes Murray Mints or *Midsomer Murders*, and you smell vaguely of lavender, then *Life and Beth* is for you! If not, leave well alone. *Nathan Brooker*



iWatch

Week 4: Piers Morgan in... Dubai, Thurs 9pm, available on ITVplayer.



In an effort to salvage his public persona, Piers Morgan has decided to make a documentary about something even more monstrous and vile than himself. It worked. When stood beside the bloated love-letter to all that is loathsome about capitalism, Dubai, Piers comes across as a magnanimous angel.

No documentary about Dubai could fail to be anything but gob-smacking. The place absolutely beggars belief and even after watching the show I still found it hard to accept that it really does exist. Morgan gets shown the country in all its garish, diamond encrusted excess. When he goes for a tour of the town, it's in a private jet; when he watches a spot of sport, it's a chukka of polo; and when he browses the shopping malls, the golden phone handsets cost upward of £100,000.

One of my abiding questions about Dubai is who actually lives there. We are introduced to a collection of mostly English expats who have cashed in on the Dubai gold rush and now drip with jewels and quaff champagne like its Sainsbury's Basics cola. Their whole existence seems to be centred around the endless cycle of furious wealth and conspicuous consumption. But wealth is all that Dubai has, and showing off their wealth is all that concerns its inhabitants. This is keeping up with the Jones's, where Jones is a billionaire sheik who lives in a palace and owns a football team.

The adjective one keeps coming back to when thinking about this place is fake. Fake, fake, fake, fake. Fake islands, fake tans, fake faces, fake breasts, fake ski slopes, fake friends. Nothing is of organic origin; everything you see has been imposed. They are currently planning to build a theme park with scale replicas (fakes) of the Houses of Parliament, the Taj Mahal, the Pyramids and the Eiffel Tower. They even want a Las Vegas style gambling strip three times larger – yes, three times the size of the American original. This place is so lacking in culture and history that it makes Milton Keynes seem like Machu Picchu.

Looking over this billionaires playground at the end of the program, Morgan offers the handy observation "It's almost surreal here". That is almost the biggest understatement I have ever heard.

Rob Peal

MUSIC

Jeremy Warmlesley
The Portland Arms
Thursday January 29th

★★★★★

Jeremy Warmlesley's show last Wednesday was something of a homecoming for him: "The Portland Arms is something of a spiritual home for me, I played my first ever show here". The ex-Churchill singer-songwriter should be proud; it was an exceptional return.

The show was one of those great nights when you never look at your watch or even realise how many songs have been played. And he looked as if he felt the same. There is nothing worse than a bored performer, too cool for the crowd he's playing to, but Warmlesley could never be accused of such a thing; his facial expressions are those of a man who enjoys playing every note of his songs (as attested to by his keyboard, which shook as he played).

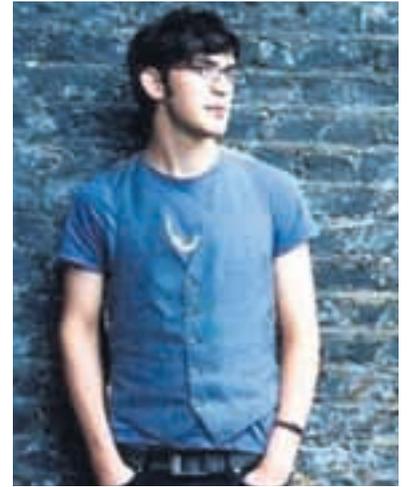
Warmlesley's performance was impressive for many reasons, but an overriding, inescapable one is his amazing singing voice. I rarely find myself thinking that a voice sounds better in the flesh than on the record, but Warmlesley's voice is so warm, with a quality to it that just can't be captured in an mp3. It certainly makes a welcome change from lead singers who only seem to have become lead singers by default.

There were numerous little gems in his set. His New Order cover, 'Temptation', was inspired. A great song anyway, Warmlesley's take brought something extra to it and it really came to life (with some assistance from a disco ball spinning overhead of course). Another highlight of the night was an incred-

ibly delicate performance of one of his best songs, 'If He Breaks Your Heart'. A heartfelt promise to an unrequited love, the song is painfully cute and realistic, and Warmlesley sings as if he means every word of it, so much so that at points it almost becomes awkward to look at him. This satisfying contrast was what made the night: some songs took a serious tone, but there were elements of wonderful poppy fun too.

I asked Warmlesley about how he wanted people to feel when they'd seen him live. "Happy", he answered; "I used to want people to go away better people but now I've reassessed my position on live playing, now I just want people to go away happy." And they do.

Lucy Bryant



Fight Like Apes and the Mystery of the Golden Medallion

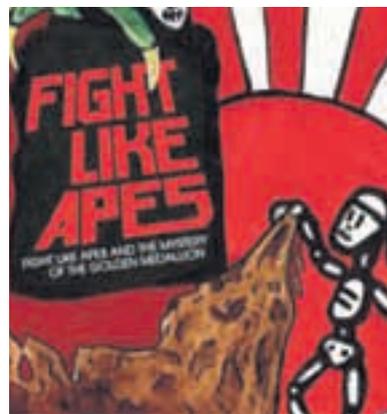
Fight Like Apes

Model Citizen, out now

★★★★★

Fight Like Apes don't throw shoes at world leaders, yet they still know how to cause a commotion. The Dubliners' debut *Fight Like Apes and the Mystery of the Golden Medallion* is, as the title suggests, quite a riotous affair.

One of the most original bands to emerge from Ireland in recent years, they possess a raw energy unrivalled in the current landfill-indie climate. Singer MayKay's expansive tangled hair and pale Celtic complexion recall Robert Smith of the Cure, but her howling voice and warped sense of humour is incomparable. Blending Siouxsie and the Banshees with McClusky, whilst chucking in some '80s bedroom keyboards for good measure might sound horrific on pa-



per, but the results are gripping. 'Something Global' is a radio-friendly and an infectious opener,

but it isn't until 'Jake Summers' that we get a real idea of what the Apes are about. Its pleasant introduction is misleading. Once the drums kick in, its chorus explodes into a whirlwind of pounding guitars and swirling synths, as MayKay screeches "you're like Kentucky Fried Chicken but without the taste". These twisted cartoonish lyrics obviously won't appeal to every listener, but FLA can't be discarded as a novelty band. The dark 'Lumpy Dough', for instance, is a wondrous sonic collision of moody bass and keyboard while album highlight 'Lend Me Your Face' clocks in at a mere one minute and forty nine seconds, but sees FLA at their most visceral.

Fight Like Apes and the Mystery of

the Golden Medallion isn't entirely consistent though. It loses momentum on the ridiculously titled 'I'm Beginning To Think You Prefer Beverly Hills 90210 To Me'. Sitting among a dynamic collection of violent three-minute pop gems, its lilting down-tempo sounds like a funeral march by comparison.

Also, the collision of the wacky and sentimental on current single 'Tie Me Up With Jackets' doesn't quite work. With lyrics like: 'tie me up in jackets and fumigate my room' the charm begins to wear thin. Nevertheless, with moments of genius like 'Do You Karate?' Fight Like Apes make up in character what they lack in substance.

Paul Smith

Mozart, Bruch and Beethoven

The Beethoven Ensemble; soloists: Tom Gould and Rosie Ventris; conductor: Daniel Hill

Saturday January 31st

★★★★★

Bruch's Double Concerto is a rarity on concert programmes. On the evidence presented to us by The Beethoven Ensemble, however, it ought to be more regularly heard.

Tom Gould and Rosie Ventris were utterly convincing exponents of the solo parts. Beautifully matched in their full-bodied tones, they played almost as one: Ventris' viola was naturally the more brooding of the couple, suggesting a more melancholy alter ego to Gould's piercingly pure violin. This was reflected, too, in their physical movements. Gould was the more histrionic, his expansive gestures contrasting well with the dogged sobriety of Ventris.

The opening Andante began with grandiose drama, giving way to still call and response sections, with the viola a soothing balm to the violin. Phrases were caressingly moulded, and

the orchestra provided appropriately wistful, Straussian carpets of sound. The central Allegro moderato again showed how well suited the soloists were to one another. The finale's brass introduction could have been cleaner and more arresting, but sparks flew as Gould and Ventris turned on the virtuosity, over a curious mixture of orchestral pride and torment, reflecting the roles of the soloists. This was a magnificent performance.

The Bruch followed an unimaginative, if polished, performance of Mozart's 31st Symphony. A fairly early piece, despite its numbering, this is quite obviously the work of a master still learning his trade. The first movement is little more than a procession of themes, and conductor Daniel Hill didn't quite make them any more than non-descript (rather oddly, I was reminded of Bruckner). The slow

movement's violin melody was surely played, but lacked light and shade, and though the finale's quicksilver opening and crashing full orchestral entry brought more life to proceedings, it still needed extra invigoration.

Much the same could be said of Beethoven's 8th. For a symphony that emphasises playfulness and wit, this rendition was slightly on the heavy side; indeed, it was the tumultuously serious development section of the first movement that made the greatest impression. Quiet, flickering string passages needed a little more mystery, and the finale would have benefited from a less episodic, more cohesive account. That said, playing throughout was top-notch, and these quibbles are based only on the high standards the Ensemble has set itself in earlier concerts.

David Allen



Rosie Ventris

ART, FILM & LITERATURE

The Dying Animal

Various artists; *The Shop*, Jesus Lane

Sunday February 1st

★★★★★

The publishing sensation du jour is *Wetlands*, a novel by Charlotte Roche detailing the scatological sexual misadventures of teenage heroine Helen. The book, which has sold 1.5million copies in Roche's native Germany, recounts the intimate details of Helen's spots, menstrual cycle, and intimate shaving infections and launches in British bookstores this week.

Can there be any taboos left unchallenged by modern art and literature? Defecation? Piero Manzoni busted that one in 1961 when he relieved himself into 90 small containers in the name of modern art. Abortion? Tracy Emin has been rehashing that old chestnut since the '90s. Paedophilia? Step forward the Chapman Brothers. Artists and writers are under-terred and unrepentant. Sex, obscenity, a spot of boundary pushing, sell.

The Shop are in the throes of an

exhibition inspired by Philip Roth's *The Dying Animal* which describes a liaison between a college professor and his student. A brief plot synopsis from two of the exhibiting artists reveals a novel that is low on charm and high on fellatio, misogyny and an adolescent obsession with breasts.

The responses from the artists to the text are wildly varied. Sarah Lüdemann's light/sound installation encourages you to pick up a pair of earphones through which heavy, ecstatic breathing plays. Miriam Austin has taken a series of subtly-lit photos of a naked body embedded with wax trumpets while Fraser Stewart's performance piece uses four bottles of spilled milk as a metaphor for ejaculated semen.

More successful are works by Tom de Freston (artist in residence at Christ's) and Matthew Drage. De Freston's

monoprints are restrained responses to the theme. The murky clouds of ink half-conceal couples engaged in sexual contortions borrowed from the Kama Sutra. The mottled ink slicks draw in the eye before unveiling the intertwined figures. Here is sex treated with measure and nuance, with a sense of privacy rather than voyeurism.

Drage's life-drawings similarly couch explicit images in a medium that part-conceals, part-reveals like an elaborate Dance of the Seven Veils. These refined and intricate drawings are gynaecologically exact, ten-times life-size renderings of female genitalia. His use of line is refined and often uncompromising. These are not the



air-brushed images of pornography but exacting and even cruel reproductions of slack skin and wrinkles. The explicit nature of the images is quieted by layerings of paper and newsprint, which serve as a modest screen from viewer's eyes.

Laura Freeman

Take V *Suburbia*



Five of the Best

'Rockin' The Suburbs' (2001)

Definitely the best track celebrating the 'burbs, Ben Folds nails the concerns of the white middle-class male with such lines as "I'm pissed off but I'm too polite, with people breaking the McDonald's line."

American Beauty (1999)

Sam Mendes' directorial debut follows Lester Burnham as he works his way out of suburban disillusionment. Also features *that* rose petal scene.

Revolutionary Road (1962)

With a Mendes-directed film version just released (see our review), Richard Yates' novel perfectly captures the isolated underside of the American Dream.

Desperate Housewives

We're pretty sure that not every suburban neighbourhood is exciting enough to feature murderous secrets and Eva Longoria.

'Metro' versions of supermarkets

Handy for when the bolognese is missing the spaghetti or it's film night and you have a craving for Butterkist: we salute you, Tesco Express/Sainsbury's Central.

Five of the Worst

'Jesus Of Suburbia' (2005)

Okay, America was in a bad way, but did Green Day really think that the problem would be solved by a nine-minute pop punk magnum opus?

Disturbia (2007)

Whoa, we see what you've done with the name there! Ripping off Hitchcock's *Rear Window*, this killin'-in-the-suburbs shocker just goes to show that not everything Shia 'Even Stevens' LaBeouf touches turns to gold.

4x4s

These unnecessary gas guzzlers have become as much a part of the suburban landscape as rubbish chain pubs and two-point-four children.

Mock-Tudor homes

Hey, is that St James's Palace? No, it's a crap imitation on an estate in Redditch.

Neighbourhood Watch

Screw the police, twitching curtains and that little yellow sticker in the window take prime position in the world of suburban crime-fighting.



Revolutionary Road

Dir. Sam Mendes

Starring: Leonardo DiCaprio, Kate Winslet and Kathy Bates

★★★★★

Imagine *American Beauty*, then take out everything you liked about it. Ditch the soundtrack. Throw out anything that made you smile, or think. Now give it a plot so excruciatingly dull that you'll be counting down the seconds until it ends. You can leave in the clever cinematography. This is *Revolutionary Road*.

Sam Mendes is arguably the most successful director to emerge from the ADC, and has produced a sting of critically acclaimed films since his 1999 debut. *Revolutionary Road* sees him return to the familiar territory of suburban America, and the broken families that hide behind white picket fences and pretty plates of biscuits. We follow a youngish couple, played by Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet, who are bored with their lives and so decide to escape to Paris, where

everything is bound to be more fun. A succession of very predictable set-backs occurs. What we end up with is a pair of dull, angry people shouting at each other, then making up, then shouting at each other again, for two hours. If you can picture *Big Brother* with better production values then you're half way there.

Ultimately, this film has nothing new to say. The idea of exploring what lurks behind the veneers of seemingly happy families has been done a thousand times before. The 50s setting, and all the office scenes, are ripped straight out of *Mad Men*, and there's a minor character who's crazy, but, get this, speaks the truth! As soon as you see how the Paris plan ends, you know that there's only one possible conclusion for this film, and, what a surprise, you're right.

I feel a bit awkward asking this, but was sex, well, quicker, in the 50s? The two scenes we see here are shorter than this sentence, and less erotic.

Kate Winslet is deservedly raking in awards for her performance, which is by far the best thing on show (probably worth staying awake for). She manages to be both fragile and strong, and does her best with the character's binary shout/weep storyline. Special mention must also go to Michael Shannon, who manages to portray a man with mental problems without resorting to the usual limping, lisping and lurching.

Unfortunately though, it takes more than a couple of good performances to make a film worth watching. All suburbia and no originality makes Sam a dull boy.

Tom Morris

Don Paterson

Winstanley Lecture Theatre, Trinity College

Tuesday January 27th

★★★★★

Author of three previous collections, a translation of Rilke's *Orpheus*, two books of aphorisms and recent winner of the Forward Prize (which, he tells us, his girlfriend made him spend on a carpet) Paterson introduced the first poem of his as-yet-untitled collection, "Two Trees", by saying "this might be the title poem... I don't know what it's about." The audience were then treated to an hour's worth of his fresh and musical poetry, delivered with great skill and understated power.

Paterson rarely tours, and this opportunity to hear him read his work was a remarkable one. He seemed apprehensive about unleashing the "grim stuff" – poems that he claims to have written "to get them out of the house." This is sometimes unnerving – as in the sequence of poems that "became an elegy" for his friend Michael Donaghy, a poet who died in

2004. The sequence ends with a haunting poem on Zurbarán's *St Francis in Meditation*, which investigates the relationship between the saint and the abyss – "I'd say that the skull is working on him."

Paterson's humility forms a large part of both his reading style and his poetry. The second poem he read was described as an "apology to the silence", a theme which he says is common in his work. Paterson's poetry is tentative and observational – Frieda Hughes has named him "the benevolent stalker" – with a non-invasive viewpoint. His poem on St Francis uses this lack of arrogance to great effect, with the eerie repetition "I'd say that" giving, as Paterson believes the painting does, a strange power to uncertainty.

Elsewhere, our relationship to the abyss is explored in a poem inspired

jointly by a friend's wedding and by *Battleship Galactica*, "one of the great things in Western culture", which explores the distance between us, "like specks of gold in the sea". In other poems, the loveable solidity of his children, trees, a Georgian artist's "VST plug-ins", and "all the earth and sky for breath and space to breathe in" shine through natural syntax and a flexible, beautiful rhyme. In a Q&A session after the reading, he discussed the difficulty in incorporating these last two elements, the rigidity of modern English syntax necessitating the half-rhyme common in modern verse.

The release of Paterson's new collection looks set to be something unmissable; get to the bookshops come September and curl up with these poems.

Colette Sensier



Great Works Of Art In Cambridge

#22: Dancer by Henri Gaudier-Brzeska

Kettle's Yard House

Henri Gaudier-Brzeska's sculptures, angular drawings, and paintings pop up everywhere in Kettle's Yard: from the tiny, abstracted 'Toy' next to the guest book to the huge, quite frightening yellow-and-blue poster of Lady Macbeth in the modern extension. One work of his, however, will strike you instantly, as it did me – though it was only on a recent visit that I actually, properly, looked at it. 'Dancer' (1913) captures that quality of really wonderful sculpture, where the lines between art and life, movement and stillness have become temporarily blurred. It depicts a young girl, her unusually long limbs stretched out in gracefully awkward angles. She dances with her arms thrown joyously up in the air, her foot sliding down the plinth as if to take flight. Her swaying arms suggest a freedom, a flash of carelessness and lack of self-consciousness. Yet they are also oddly heavy, weighing the sculpture down. She seems compelled to dance, with a sternness of expression that frightens as it compels, remaining, however hard you look at her, stonily mysterious.

This quality – of freedom and secrecy, of delight and danger – seems to run throughout all of Gaudier-Brzeska's work, and makes it easy to mutter forebod-

ingly about his death, in the First World War, two years after this sculpture was made. Yet to do so (or to whisper about his relationship with older woman Sophie Brzeska) is to miss the essential quality of his work, removed from all autobiographical fumbblings: a quality of elusiveness, of secrecy and mystery which makes you want to go back to his pictures and sculptures, look at them again: try and figure out why he drew himself three times (in the attic of Kettle's Yard), or how he captured that moment when you are dancing, when you do not want to dance anymore.

I did not know until recently that the sculpture is located in a room in Kettle's Yard called the 'Dancer Room.' Yet it makes sense. Tucked away behind a bookshelf full of old Penguin paperbacks and copies of Gwen Raverat's *Period Piece*, surrounded by paintings by Christopher Wood and William Congdon, 'Dancer' somehow always manages to capture your attention. Indeed, as the grey afternoon sunlight streams through the nearby arched window, rippling her shadow across the wooden table and floor, it almost seems as if she is dancing again.
Emma Hogan



COURTESY OF KETTLE'S YARD

Sex in the University



Week 4: Feel a little Fresher everyday

It has been a while since a new year of fresh blood triggered a wave of general hysteria across Cambridge. Cries of "shotgun" rang out across the Colleges as dignity was cast aside and first dibs were made based almost entirely on deceptively sexy facebook profiles. Curious second-years prowled the college bars, examining this terrified new species and gnashing their teeth at the prospect of young flesh.

However, even though Fresher's Formals have been consigned to that hazy, inebriated collection of Michaelmas memories, inter-year liaisons have not been given up for Lent. We have heard mixed reviews of fresher trysts from both parties. For second years, the potential inexperience of your chosen fresher can lead to some uncomfortable situations. From the fresher perspective, when making uninformed choices of second-years early on, the twin foes of embarrassment and regret are but a sleepover away.

Unfortunately, the freshers are no longer blank slates – they have been fully inducted into the sexual web of the College community. This changes everything. Those hoping for an inconsequential shag have missed the boat, as freshers have created their own erotic histories and lost their anonymity in the process. Plus, they are no longer naïve enough to be impressed by just your second-year status and the size of your Tripos.

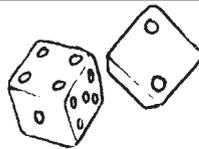
But this is not to say the appeal has gone. For girls getting with freshers, there is definite appeal to playing Mrs Robinson. You get to act the authority figure, benevolently guiding them through their sexual awakening. After all, Cambridge is a learning institution.

But beware of gossip. Discretion is not aided by omniscient College rags circulated indiscriminately and thus reaching, it has recently been revealed the acute embarrassment of us both, DoSs, tutors and fellows. The liberation of university life clearly compounds the situation. One second year estimates he has kissed 21 people within College: "one for every year of my life". Another, having kissed a member of the catering staff in Fez, couldn't bring herself to attend formal the rest of the term.

So the freshers are no longer fresh, and the college population is very entangled, but really who cares. For those still reeling from the loss of parental pampering, perhaps sharing is caring.

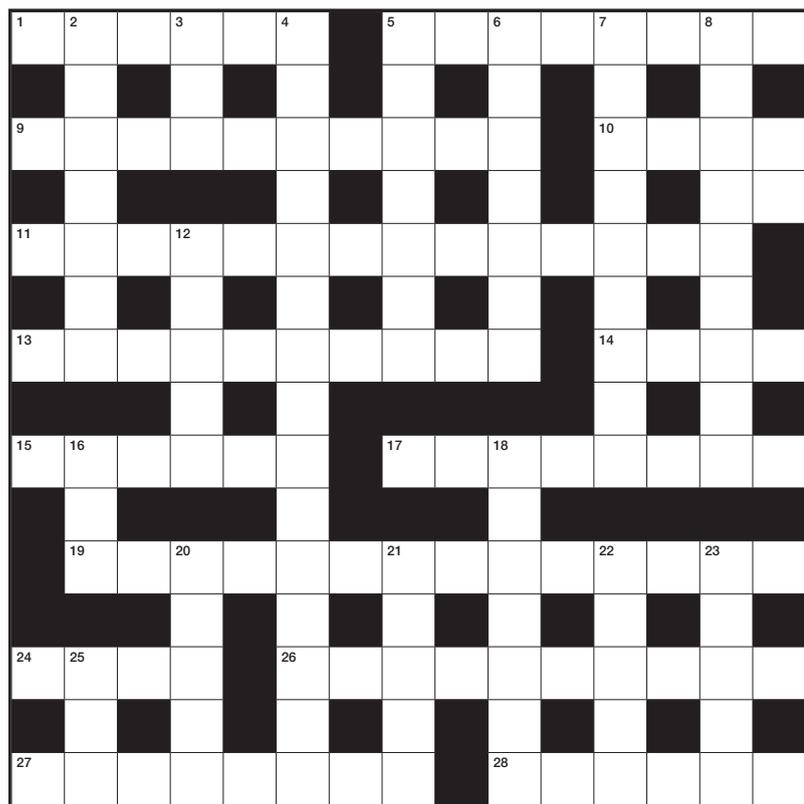
The Salacious Sisters

Games & puzzles



Varsity Crossword

no. 498



Across

- 1 Early morning hair is a trap! (6)
- 5 Messy cock slap causes aggressive messaging (4,4)
- 9 Old American variety show: Crossword solver and Crossword setter together in a pit. (10)
- 10 Former mothers hold celebration. (4)

- 11 New London University used for hearing about player produces power. (7,7)
- 13 Two scenes at once is negligible problem for turtles. (10)
- 14 Express feelings against party. (4)
- 15 Worship the priest when he's without most of his make-up. (6)

- 17 Mixed up paedo loses nothing with girl inside fence. (8)
- 19 I scent Madeleine (it's not cold, though it is mangled) – it makes me forgetful. (6,8)
- 24 Agent has two forms of street address. (1-3)
- 26 I can wait longer than hospital leaver. (10)
- 27 Good luck, it's raining. (8)
- 28 Ace gynaecologist a bit of a mess – but gets it done. (6)

Down

- 2 Hythloday performs Vienna by Ultravox? It's a shot. (7)
- 3 Money is composed of mostly dust. (1,1,1)
- 4 To be crazy, arseholes take vow. Ace! (4,1,5,5)
- 5 This vessel is named Ronald, I hear. (7)
- 6 Before coffee, not tea, see priest. (7)
- 7 Airport at Saint's town relieves flow problems. (9)
- 8 Saddened, grind each mixture. (9)
- 12 A Belgian town, my Lord. (5)
- 16 First on the scene find mostly semen. (1,1,1)
- 18 Dance of evil within Tibetan leader. (7)
- 20 Sounds like a facial deformity – they're not allowed. (2-3)
- 21 Went out with Benny Hill. (5)
- 22 Hythloday in part of church is failing to comprehend. (5)
- 23 'Puccini on ice' has a sort of capital. (5)
- 25 This is an almost complete mockery of a trial, the cow says. (3)

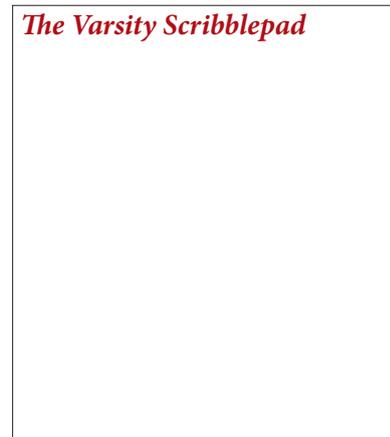
Set by Hythloday

Sudoku

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

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

The Varsity Scribblepad



Last week's solution

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

Answers to last week's crossword (no. 497)
Across: 1 Girtton, 9 Nieces, 12 Ironside, 13 Goalie, 15 Loiter around, 18 Predilection, 23 Darwin, 24 Agitator, 26 Rose bush, 27/11 Murray Edwards, 28 Disowned, 29 Staple. Down: 1/4 Gonville and Caius, 2 Rhetoric, 3 Oversee, 5 Nags, 6 Conjoin, 7 Itself, 8 Sidney, 14 College, 16 Gift wrap, 17 End rhyme, 19 Rainbow, 20 Catsuit, 21 Adored, 22 Crisps, 25 Isle.

REPORTS

Northampton not good enough for Cam

» Mixed lacrosse team stay strong in the snow

Frankie Brown

On a freezing day with predictions of blizzards in the afternoon, Cambridge overcame stubborn resistance from Northampton to carve out a convincing 10-4 victory at Queens' Fields on Saturday.

The game was briefly delayed due to the late appearance of the opposition, who had little time for any preparation, starting virtually as soon as they arrived. It was they, however, who seized the early initiative; from the very first draw the right wing streaked down the field to find an unmarked attacker with a pinpoint pass, who then eluded two Cambridge defenders and scored a superb goal, leaving the goalkeeper with no chance.

A shell-shocked Cambridge sought to establish some stability, playing calmly and passing the ball intelligently around, but solid defensive play from the visitors kept them at bay. Eventually, however, the pressure told, as a patient build-up allowed Hannah Jones to slot the ball crisply past the keeper to bring the scores level.

The match became increasingly scrappy, as both sides strived to assert themselves upon the game. With many promising runs being brought to a halt due to the five-second rule (designed to prevent the men from dominating) there was little flow to either side's play.

Inaccurate passing was also a factor,

Cambridge	10
Northampton	4

and Cambridge were becoming increasingly exasperated. Just before the end of the first quarter, they managed to break the deadlock, with Andy Hacket-Pain scoring a fine individual goal.

Following a two-minute quarter break, Cambridge mounted an excellent counter-attack, which Jones clinically finished off, to increase the score to 3-1. The supremacy on the score-sheet increasingly translated into superiority on the field, with Cambridge dominating both territory and possession, and the Northampton defence began to panic. Another goal seemed inevitable, and it duly came, and was shortly followed by another fine individual effort from Hacket-Pain, leaving the score at 5-1 at the interval.

Going into the second half, Cambridge would have been confident of stretching their lead further. A surprise early goal from Northampton kept them on their toes, but they soon began to string together good phases of play, and two more well-worked goals were scored. Shots rained down upon the Northampton keeper, who worked tirelessly to keep the score within reach, hurling himself at the feet of attackers and ensuring that Cambridge certainly had to work hard for their goals.

As the snow began to fall, the third quarter ended with Cambridge 7-2 up. This quickly became a blizzard, and with snow flying horizontally across the pitch, straight into the faces of Cambridge, Northampton scored a couple of consolation goals in the final quarter.

However, captain James Verity then

scored a fine individual goal to shut the door firmly on Northampton's hopes, and a final score was added just before the end of the game, to give Cambridge the win, 10-4. It was a convincing performance, particularly having lost to the same side last term, as Verity's side seek to gain in confidence and form ahead of the Varsity Match.

SEAN JONES



Andy Hacket-Pain makes a dash for the crease

Cambridge outplayed by familiar foe

» Oxford now favourites for basketball Varsity Match

Pranav Sood

Anticipation was running high ahead of this Saturday afternoon men's basketball fixture against Oxford. As well as being the final league match of the BUCS calendar, it was also the Light Blues' last chance to gauge the strength of their Oxonian counterparts ahead of this year's Varsity Match. Oxford have enjoyed a far better season to date and currently sit at the top of the division, their team having been bolstered by the addition of several American college players.

Nevertheless, and despite a heavy defeat in the corresponding away fixture, the Cambridge camp was upbeat in the build-up to the game and even hopeful that a fetching new kit might prove the key to unlocking the

Cambridge	56
Oxford	81

opposition defence.

The game began tentatively, with both sides attempting to dictate the pace of the play. The Dark Blues in particular seemed to take a while to get into their rhythm and it was the home team who eventually broke the deadlock. This seemed to be the wake-up call that Oxford needed and as the first quarter progressed the visitors grew in confidence, making increasingly frequent forays into the Cambridge half.

A large group of Anglia Ruskin supporters provided vocal and occa-

sionally libellous support for Oxford throughout the quarter and, despite the best efforts of Cambridge point guard Chris Blohn, the away team led 26-15 at its end. The beginning of the second quarter was marked by a mysterious switching of sides by the Anglia Ruskin fans, a setback which Oxford took in their stride as they continued to play well, mixing strong defence with creative offensive play to take a 55-24 lead into half time.

Cambridge, however, resolutely refused to roll over and excellent work from top-scorer Aralbayev and captain Drochon ensured that the home team dominated the third quarter, thereby hauling themselves back into contention (just about) at 46-67. Cambridge continued to show encouraging initiative at the begin-

ning of a lively fourth quarter before some slack defensive work saw the momentum shift back towards the visitors. As the clock wore on, both teams seemed to struggle to maintain their intensity levels and the game fizzled out at the close, with Oxford holding on to win 81-56.

Despite losing this game, Cambridge have much to be positive about in the run-up to the Varsity fixture. Although the first half of the match was unquestionably dominated by Oxford, tactical wizardry from coach Nebojsa Radic at half time meant that Cambridge actually only lost the second half by a single point. If the Light Blues can continue in this vein and even develop Radic's game plans further then the Varsity Match should be a cracking contest.



Varsity Preview

Swimming

The 106th annual Varsity swimming gala promises to be an exciting affair, this year more than ever. Last year the Light Blues saw the end of their 8-year dominance in the pool, with a loss in the men's event and a draw in the ladies. This year a young Cambridge team will be fighting to prove this to be just a minor blemish on their score sheet.

Sat 7, 14.40, Kelsey Kerridge

Water Polo

With recent years showing little to distinguish between the water polo teams, this year's matches are also as tight as ever. Last year's draw in the men's match left the Light Blues robbed of what should have been their win, leaving them more eager than ever to come out on top this Saturday.

Sat 7, 18.15, Kelsey Kerridge

Varsity Preview

Korfball

Popular in the lowlands, Korfball is relatively unheard of, and equally unplayed, in this country. It's a mixed sport akin to indoor netball, which means that you'll be warm while you watch it, and you won't have to sit through a men's and a women's match. Cambridge won last year.

Sat 7, 10.00, Kelsey Kerridge

Quick Catch-up

Cuppers Football

Jesus 8 Magdalene 0

Jesus eased their way into the third round of the knockout tournament with a high-scoring victory over the lowly Magdalene side on Saturday.

Magdalene put up a spirited defence for twenty-five minutes, with their crowd offering plenty of verbal support. Finally Michael Johnson opened the scoring from the penalty spot after a debatable decision by the referee.

Centrebacks James Day and Miceal Canavan both got on the scoresheet, the latter after a dazzling run straight up the centre of the pitch. Matt Benger got two and could have had a hat trick after coming on as a sub, but just missed out. Left-back Patrick Knight scored the goal of the day, a cracker from thirty yards.

The game was not without physical confrontation though, and PK himself ended up bloodied and black-eyed after a painful collision with teammate James Day.

Jesus will face either Catz or Caius in the next round of matches.

Varsity Report

Canoeing

For the canoe club, Varsity is a little different. With no one single event against the old enemy, instead they take the results of five BUCS finals for the various events as a running total. And with two events down, Cambridge are looking good, leading 2-0 after the slalom and the whitewater disciplines.

The whitewater event on the River Washburn saw the Blues' star Richard Hendron steal 7th in the full length course and 5th in the sprint. Fiona Breckenridge was the best of the women's sprint in 18th. Along with their team mates' efforts, this was enough to put Cambridge in 10th place, with Oxford trailing in 17th.

The slalom saw some similarly strong results in difficult conditions. The wind was so strong that paddlers were being blown upstream whilst waiting for the start, but Fiona Breckenridge was well up again, this time taking 26th place for the women. Captain James Dixon led the men's effort, ending up in 13th, just ahead of team mate Alex Hellowell in 17th. A joint effort in the men's team from Dixon, Hellowell and Ian Dumolo left them in 8th, despite suffering two unavoidable time penalties when the wind blew the gates out of reach. Cambridge ended up 10th again, whilst Oxford could not even field a team for this event.

These results are particularly impressive given the lack of whitewater to train on in Cambridge. With the freestyle up next, followed by canoe polo and the marathon, both of which Cambridge won last year, the chances of a Varsity whitewash are looking more and more possible; here's hoping.

Sport Feature: Cambridge Sports Facilities

Extent of facilities and funding deficit revealed in full

IS CAMBRIDGE PROVIDING FOR ITS SPORTING STUDENTS? JENNY MORGAN INVESTIGATES...

The facilities and support for student sport at Cambridge have been declared to be woefully inadequate for an institution of its size and reputation. The problem was highlighted by the McCrum Report in 1973 and definite action was begun back in the 1990s, but today's generation of students is no better off than those of nearly forty years ago.

A CUSU motion passed ten days ago to tackle the issue is the latest in a series of efforts to bring Cambridge sport up to date and in line with standards taken for granted at other institutions.

There is a general agreement that the primary problem is a lack of appropriate facilities for particular sports. With no University sports hall, the basketball team have to fork out £3,500 on hiring a venue for training throughout the year, which they can then only use at weekends. In similarly dire straits is the trampolining club, which has to find £1,500 a year for hall rental and has to limit its members due to restricted training hours and problems with equipment storage. The Eton Fives club have the use of just one court

in Cambridge which, with space for only four players at a time, severely limits their training possibilities and membership intake.

On a larger scale, the absence of a University-owned swimming pool leaves the club having to find £22,000 a year to fund just six hours of training per week, around ten hours off what they would need to enable them to compete at the highest level. The Varsity Match alone this Saturday will cost a further £2,500 to stage.

Many teams also have to travel outside of Cambridge for their home matches and training. The tennis teams struggle in the winter terms with no indoor court facilities, and end up playing matches at Huntingdon or Peterborough. The ice hockey team, a University sport since 1885, can train only once a week, paying £300 to hire the rink at Peterborough and often not returning until the early hours of the morning. The kickboxers meanwhile are resigned to using a church hall for their practice.

The absence of floodlights is another issue for much of the year. The athletics team have a greatly limited training time in the first two terms because of this, and the hockey team have to hire out local school pitches to cover their evening training.

All of these issues are addressed by the plans in place for the West Cambridge Site sports complex. Plans which are prevented from moving forward by the deficits in funding.

There is currently no coherent fundraising initiative to tackle the problem. Cambridge alumni have been forthcoming in their support: Lennard Lee swam the channel to raise £500 for the

swimming pool, but the University authorities had to refuse the donation as there was no fundraising account at that time. Another former athlete asked his guests to donate money to the pool project instead of giving wedding gifts to him and his wife, but again the money could not be used.

In the mean time, students have to seek help from a series of bursaries set up by the Blues Committees or from their Colleges. The cost of subs to account for the transport and hiring costs associated with train-

ing at a non-university venue are increasing, especially as many clubs struggle to find sponsors in tighter economic climes. The fear is that talented students will be pushed out of competing through financial limitations.

Andrew Baddeley, Britain's number one middle distance runner and an Olympic finalist in Beijing who graduated from Cambridge in 2004, has offered his support for the student-led campaign. "I have experienced first hand the lack of decent training facilities and

(perhaps more importantly) the lack of medical support. There are a number of Cambridge sportsmen and women who competed in the Beijing Olympics, but they did so despite their Cambridge education, not because of it."

The evidence is damning and abundant, and support for the plans increasingly widespread amongst the student body. Cambridge obviously falls well behind what has come to be expected of an educational institution of its calibre. It is a situation that can no longer be ignored.

£22,000

Annual cost of pool hire

36 years

Since problem was first addressed

£100

Termly individual hockey subs



The plans for the Cambridge University sports complex - now more than 10 years old

» CAMBRIDGE SPORTS STARS SPEAK OUT

Timeline

- 1973 McCrum report highlights inadequacy of sports facilities.
- 1995 Discussions begin for the building of a new sports centre.
- 1999 Planning permission granted and land acquired at West Cambridge Site.
- 2000 Plans halted by university.
- 2005 All science buildings and housing completed.
- 2009 Lack of action on sport centre prompts CUSU campaign.
- 2009 University raises £800m for its anniversary.



Beth Ashbridge talks tennis

Here at Cambridge the Blues tennis squad are lucky. We enjoy some amazing fixtures against the likes of Wimbledon and the International Club of GB which require us to be at the top of our games. But the cost of hiring indoor facilities has forced us to drop from three training sessions a week to two this year.

When the weather picks up we will be able to train outside at Fenner's but the consistency of indoor tennis training during Michaelmas and Lent is essential for us to develop a strong squad from the beginning.

The recession has meant fundraising is suffering while the cost of this already expensive sport will increase as prices of

coaching and indoor facilities soar.

Our goal is to defeat Oxford in June but as they galavant off to Peru for their annual tennis tour, highly subsidised by the university, we will remain in the UK and hope the sun shines early this year.



Nick Russell discusses swimming

There is a strong case for believing that CUSWPC is worst-hit by the lack of sporting facilities provided by the University. Not having a university pool forces us to hire another location for training. Although these are perfectly adequate facilities for our use, they come at a price: the entirety of the grant received by the club from the Sports Syndicate is

spent on a single term's pool hire charges, leaving members to cover the rest out of their own pocket.

Subs are now set at £160/year (excluding e.g. travel expenses). The swimming team finds itself unable to afford a coach, putting us at a serious disadvantage against Oxford. Another consequence is the huge cost to the club of hosting the Varsity match. And although the facilities are adequate for water polo, they are not ideal. Both pools available to us are far too shallow at one end, which makes the game very difficult to play.



Anna Stanley & Clare Sibley talk hockey

With six teams, CUHC is the biggest combined club in the University. Each week, it spends approximately £750 on transport for its away teams, and more

still on pitch bookings for those at home.

Training at the University pitch for the club is free, but, as we don't have floodlights, we have to rent the Leys school for £150 once a week for four hours to allow us to train in the evening.

The teams also have paid coaches, who attend both training sessions each week and all Blues games. On top of that, match teas and coaching expenses have to be paid for. As a result, subs for the club are £100 per person per term. When you add to this the costs of compulsory team kit, new sticks and astros every year, playing hockey is really quite expensive.

The club has three sponsors this year, but finding help is getting harder; takers for Varsity Match sponsorship are considerably down on last year. Interest acquired from the sale of the club's old pitches a number of years ago also makes up some of the funding.

The worry is that some players will be put off without more support from the University and look to play for local clubs instead. This could mean the standard of the team might drop as the club becomes more financially elitist. Cambridge needs to act now to stop this from happening.

Charlotte Roach



Sport
Comment

Why the wait?

Cambridge is not a university full of workaholics with no time for sport. The reality of the situation is that Cambridge has far more sporting success than the interest and support invested by the University might suggest. Without a doubt this success is down to the mentality and commitment of the hardworking and sporty Cambridge student. And what success it is: ten Beijing Olympians and many international caps every year cannot be ignored.

But sport is just clearly not high on the University's agenda. Stopping short of outwardly suppressing interest in sport in favour of academic activities, instead they are adding additional time and financial pressure to already stretched students. Any sportingly inclined academic achiever given an inch of research would surely go to Oxford or even to US universities where better facilities, coaching and work-sporting life balance can be achieved.

After all, it is hardly uncommon for many schools to have their own swimming pool. For a top-class university not to have one should

be simply unheard of. And I'm sure OFSTED would have a field day at a school without a basic sports hall for indoor activities: where is Cambridge's?

It won't be for much longer that Cambridge can rely on its prestigious title and ancient buildings to secure the best applicants. Surely at some point it will reluctantly have to open

is approaching its 10th and the actual centre is still in the prenatal stages.

The University couldn't really do less to support its best athletes. Congratulations on achieving a Blue, the highest university accolade! You can now dig deeper into your pockets and pay £180 for a Blues blazer (for those credit crunched I suggest a simple sign around one's neck: "By the way,

in the hope that it will go some way to covering the costs.

This is on top of the regular training, equipment and hiring of facility costs. And God forbid that one should get injured. You are alone, there are no university-recommended doctors or physiotherapists; finding a good one is an expensive and risky minefield.

Rehab is also a pot luck and expensive situation, depending on your college facilities, and the size of your pocket. Since anything the University has to offer is simply inadequate, queuing for a machine in Fenner's and wrestling with old women in Parkside is the only if not the most effective cross training.

It has got to the stage where it is beyond discrepancies in facilities and support. The University is now blatantly snubbing the needs of its student body. It is isolating itself from a newer more demanding student population, as better is becoming far easier to find elsewhere. The need is there, the money is there, the plans are there and the permission is there, and the time is ticking by...

'I'm sure OFSTED would have a field day at a school without a sports hall: where is Cambridge's?'

its wallet and spend some money on the needs of its current student population.

Displayed in Fenner's (our gym that is just about large enough to ensure that Trinitarians can reach the Maths Dept) is a carefully designed and beautiful model of our new sports centre. But as the University reaches its 800th birthday the model

I'm good at sport").

At many universities it is an honour to represent the institution, and you are rewarded and recognised by receiving the university kit and transport to the match for which you have been selected. In Cambridge the closest we get is the time consuming and unpredictable approach of applying to around twenty different funds

Cooney's Marathon



Lauren
Cooney

Week 4

In which Lauren takes a break from the pounding the tarmac to chat about charity

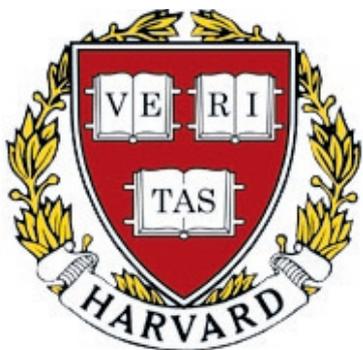
So, like, yarr, it was snow day a few days back. The Cambridge streets were knee deep in the stuff and townies and gawnies forgot their intellectual and demographical differences to join forces in a snowball fight that would make even the Varsity Rugby match seem to be no more than a G&T-inspired heckle at a Footlights virgin smoker. No mean feat. I felt the spirit of the snowballs as I slipped down orgasm-bridge in full crouch position and vaulted that little wall outside King's. Dodging the snow firing squad, it seemed to me that I was a lot like Leonardo DiCaprio at the end of *The Beach* when he hits virtual reality and becomes the avenging lead of a computer game assault course.

I wasn't actually out on a run. It was snowy and I might have had an accident. I was going to make up some impressive sounding story in which I ran a half-marathon in 49 minutes, part ice-skating, part skiing, part vaulting, but I thought 'hey, enough of the proverbial martyrdom (see last week's column), hey, enough with the puerile masturbation (see last week's TCS), and hey, enough with pumping irony... so let's just jog on and talk about the task at hand; picking which charity I'm going to give my hard-earned sponsorship money to.

I really believed that writing this column would 'raise my profile' and encourage a sanctimonious flurry of charitable suggestions. I'd already invited 160 friends to join the Facebook group, and was quietly smug that number was sure to triple. Yesterday my flatmate asked how many were in the group. 'Oh, I don't know, about 160,' I said. We checked, and there are 161. Which is lucky, because if you all give a tenner I will now be surpassing my desired sum of £1600.

Actually, I'd rather most of you didn't join the Facebook group, nor offer your support. If I run the New York Marathon in November for a large charity, and can raise a certain amount, they will fly me out and accommodate me for free. So perhaps hold onto your wallets till then. But if you are part of the group, then get ready for a flurry of private messages. Today's column serves as a warning that I am about to create one of those self-righteous justgiving.com accounts and am pretty excited about it. I'll probably change my Facebook status in its honour. So for the last time, if you've got an idea, give us a shout: Lauren Cooney London Marathon.

» HOW DOES CAMBRIDGE COMPARE TO OTHER TOP UNIVERSITIES?

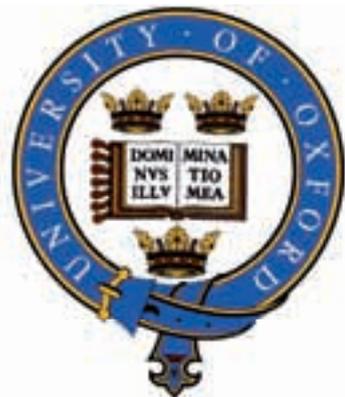


Harvard

Harvard's facilities are second to none on both sides of the Atlantic. Not content with just one athletics stadium, the Gordon Indoor Track provides rainy day facilities for all athletes. There are also eighteen tennis courts with stadium seating, along with a further six indoor courts. Alongside this lie fourteen international size squash courts and basketball facilities. They boast an eight-lane swimming pool with diving area, and an ice rink for hockey. And of course an enormous gym with separate conditioning suite.

Oxford

The Iffley Road Sports Complex at the Other Place boasts an enviable array of facilities. A 400m running track with adjacent athletics facilities, floodlit water-based astroturf pitch, eight-lane swimming pool and large sports hall are the main attractions. There are also indoor and outdoor courts for squash, tennis, badminton, Eton Fives and Rugby Fives. An indoor climbing wall and dojo (for martial arts) are also fitted. A large gym with separate conditioning and strength suite finishes it off.



Durham

Third-placed Durham University is well up when it comes to sport. The main centre with a recently refurbished gym and weights room also has a large sports hall and squash courts. Outside there are tennis and netball courts, 400m synthetic athletics track, and sand and water-based hockey pitches. The support is also fantastic: Team Durham Performance provides specialist training, nutrition, and sports medicine advice. Their stated aim is to help their top athletes enter world-class clubs and teams upon graduation.



Loughborough

Loughborough is perhaps Britain's best answer to the American heavyweights. It boasts indoor and outdoor athletics stadiums with the most advanced indoor cricket facility in the world, a purpose-built martial arts centre, and an Olympic-size swimming pool. There are three artificial pitches, floodlit of course, and basketball, volleyball, handball, trampoline and archery facilities to boot. The fitness centre and gym employs personal trainers and has links to local GP practices to assist with general student use.

The Week Ahead

International

Six Nations Rugby

England play Italy at Twickenham in what will hopefully be an easy opening match. Meanwhile O'Driscoll's off-form Ireland host the French and Scotland face Wales at Murrayfield the next day in an interesting first round match.

Saturday 7th, BBC1

University

Women's Lacrosse

The Blues team take on Bath in the first round of the BUCS knockout tournament. Cambridge have been in unstoppable form so far and scoring freely. A comfortable win is predicted, but you can never be sure.

Wednesday 11th, Queen's pitches, 2pm

International

England vs West Indies

After a winter break disrupted by management politics, Pietersen looked good with the bat and knocked 97 runs on the first day. Can our bowlers do what is asked of them and keep us on top going into the third day?

Friday 6th - Sunday 8th, Sky-Sports 1

College

League Football

Jesus play Downing in a top-of-the-table clash. Jesus take some good scoring form into the game from their recent Cuppers victories, but Downing have been the surprise package in the league this season.

Sunday 8th

Sport



Sports facilities scrutinised...

... we reveal the shocking extent of the problem.

VARSITY MATCH RUNNING TOTAL: CAMBRIDGE 0, OXFORD 2. NEXT UP: SWIMMING, WATER POLO AND KORFBALL 07/02/09

Croydon Crush Cam

» Fiery face-off on freezing afternoon between only two unbeaten teams in SEMLA East Division 1
» A static Cambridge men's team struggle to gain control against the more physical Croydon

Jenny Morgan

Before the white stuff put paid to all reasonable attempts at sport in Cambridge this week, the undefeated Blues lacrosse team met their match in league rivals Croydon on Saturday. As the wind whipped across the open pitches, the men were left exposed and vulnerable in what turned out to be a gruelling physical encounter.

Cambridge did look strong from the start, taking firm control in possession and passing smoothly around the goal. But it soon became clear that, far from just taking their time, they were actually unable to take their shots as Croydon aggressively closed down the angles. Soon the visitors were able to steal the ball and counter-attack, forcing Cambridge keeper Sam Spurrell to make some desperate saves. Then a fierce shot from ten metres slammed into the back of the net for Croydon to take the lead.

A short while later, some ill discipline from the Cambridge men resulted in several of them forcibly taking a minute off and Croydon capitalised with a second. Cambridge called for a time out to regroup whilst a chanting Croydon took up battle formation for the restart.

Literally flattening the defence, the huge Croydon attackers soon found themselves back at the Cambridge crease and hammered home a third. But Cambridge finally found their feet and Phil Hall came bursting out of defence to sprint the length of the pitch and put Cambridge back in the game. Soon afterwards attackman Todd Nichols was on hand to receive and engineer a straight shot for himself to put the first Cambridge point on the board.

But Croydon were quick to respond, and two more goals at the end of the first quarter stretched the scoreline yet further. The strength and precision of their shooting punished any mistakes in the Cambridge defence, who looked shocked at such an affront so late in their season.

The second quarter saw a more even

Cambridge	5
Croydon	11

contest with some good attacking efforts from the Blues. As several of the opposition took time out on the sidelines after unnecessary physicality, Cambridge looked to take their chance. But some top class work from the Croydon keeper kept his team in the black, while the attackmen added three more goals to put the half time score at 8-1 to the visiting team.

Pumped up after the break, the Blues came out a different team. Intercepting the ball, they showed strength and speed up the pitch and soon the play was focused around the Croydon crease. Todd Nichols was on hand once more, this time to set up his captain Ian Ralby for the score.

Let down only by their accuracy of passing and ball control, Cambridge at least began to look more like they wanted to win, though they still had a long way to go.

As the final quarter got underway, co-captain Phil Hall did his best to motivate his team, leading by example and setting up Nichols to fire in another goal. But Croydon had already stretched the score to an excruciating 10-3, adding one more to the tally with just ten minutes to go.

Cambridge stood up to the brute force of Croydon and weaved their way through the tackles to the attacking end. But even the frenzy that followed only allowed two more goals for Ian Ralby; nowhere near enough to close the gap in the scoreline.

This was a devastating loss for the Cambridge boys, so recently buoyed by their string of league successes. Promotion may just have to wait until next year.

Varsity Man of the Match: Ian Ralby put in a true captain's performance, scoring three goals and lifting his team.



JAMES GRAVESTON

Co-Captain Phil Hall drives up the pitch

View from the River

Silas Stafford



Where I come from, rowing is not exactly a high profile sport. In California, when I tell people that I am a rower, I am inevitably met with either blank stares, or the response "Oh, you mean, like, rowing?" This response is ubiquitously accompanied by a flailing motion of the arms meant to represent the rowing stroke.

At American universities, rowing is near the bottom of the sporting totem pole, surviving on historical reputation, rich alumni, and Title 9 (ask your friendly neighbourhood American what this is), capturing only the budgetary dregs of American football and basketball.

Let's face it, rowing isn't exactly the most fun sport to watch. While most rowers (myself included) will defend the value of participation, few will defend the merits of spectating. Spectators see only a short portion of the race, the parallax between the boats making it nearly impossible to even tell who is winning. There are few surprises, as the better boat almost always wins. What's more, the sport of rowing involves only (you guessed it) rowing; there is no dynamic athleticism, no tempo change and relatively little strategy.

Imagine my surprise when I came to Cambridge. People here actually care about rowing; how extraordinary! It feels as if almost everyone has been out in a boat on the Cam at least once. There is something enchanting about rowing at Cambridge; something special about the hierarchical shifting of collegiate dynasties moving slowly like tectonic plates in the Bumps; something compelling about the dramatic duel of wills that takes place on the Thames every year in the Boat Race. The extraordinariness of the tradition and culture of rowing at Cambridge may be lost on some Brits, but to me, it is incredible.

OXBRIDGE VARSITY BOXING MATCH

Standing tickets on balcony overlooking ring }
Seated rows 10-18 }

Student rate before 15th Feb:

£20 Tuesday 10th March 2009
£28 from 6.00pm

Tickets include post-boxing party on site for all: food and drink available.

For further details, VIP discounts and coach tickets please visit www.cuabc.org, ring 01223 30 80 30 to pay by card, visit Ryder and Amies or The Glassworks.

At 1 Old Billingsgate,
London (overlooking Tower Bridge)
Event covered by ch 4 television

