

VAR-SITY



Comedians past-it, fashion presents and music yet to come

In our last issue of the term, *Varsity* chucks you some chestnuts for your open fire

No. 610

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Friday November 26, 2004

Architects denied permission for protest march

But Streeting pledges that standing demo will go ahead

Lucy Phillips

THE POLICE have blocked attempts by CUSU to march from the Architecture Department to Senate House as part of their protest against the department's closure. But a standing demonstration will still take place outside Senate House on Monday.

The demonstration has been organised by CUSU president Wes Streeting, and Luke McLaren, President of ArcSoc. Streeting has expressed his disappointment at the decision to stop the march, which has already been advertised throughout the University. He says that the Police have stopped the march because they claim the organisers did not make contact early enough. But he maintains that he gave the Police the seven days notice he thought required for a march and that "internal and communication problems" led to its cancellation.

A sergeant from Cambridge Constabulary has responded by saying that at least a month's notice is required to hold a march where there may be around 1000 people present. "One week's notice would never have been enough planning time. In any case, the request should come in written form". According to a senior police official involved with city centre issues, he was contacted by phone on Monday by CUSU and received written notice on Wednesday. He added "We don't want to stop things like that [happening] and want to help with public safety".

McLaren expressed his irritation at the changes to the original plans for the demonstration and said, "I'm not sure whether the mix-up lay with the Police or lack of organisation by CUSU."

The organisers had originally hoped that the protest would finish inside the Senate House, but the University has expressed some concern as to the suitability of the venue. On Wednesday a spokesperson said:

"Following consultation with the Proctors, it was felt that [inside] the Senate House would not be an appropriate venue for such a demonstration. It is unfortunate that those who join the rally feel that there is a need for a protest of this kind."

But members of ArcSoc are still unhappy at not being allowed into Senate House for the protest. McLaren said, "I am hugely frustrated that the University has decided to block our protest from using Senate House. This cynical response from the University is typical of the way in which it has dealt with the Architecture Department to date: narrow-minded, petty and quite clearly running their own parallel agenda."

"Aside from the fact that this snub will reflect poorly on the University, it has been deliberately intended to compromise our protest and help minimise pressure on Professor Cliff and the General Board... I can't think of anywhere more appropriate than Senate House to hold a progressive debate about the future of a world-respected department within this University. Have the Proctors considered how wise it is to leave the Cambridge MP and four leading critics in the architectural world out in the wet and cold?"

The demonstration will take place from 1pm on Monday afternoon outside the Senate House. Rowan Moore, Director of the Architecture Foundation, and Anne Campbell MP will be speaking at the event. Unconfirmed speakers include television's Kevin McCloud, Professor Sarah Wigglesworth from Sheffield University, Ted Cullinan, who designed many of Cambridge's buildings, and Guardian design and architecture writer Jonathan Glancey. Many alumni have also shown support for and interest in the campaign.

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Cambridge nightlife to get a makeover



James Dacre on how an evening out in Cambridge will be different in 2005

THE NEW Year will witness dramatic shifts in the infrastructure of Cambridge's city-centre nightlife.

Varsity can reveal that some of the most striking changes to our favourite (or at least most visited) clubs and bars include the closure of Coco's and Ishka and the opening of a large branch of 'The Living Room' chain. CUSU will also run Eclectix nights in disused city buildings including the Guildhall's basement. An extension to Po Na Na is also being proposed. Elsewhere, building has begun on the colossal Robert Sayle building transforming it into the 'Grand Arcade,' to be filled with bars and restaurants. The Kamar will allegedly change ownership (and perhaps close), APU will open a large nightclub and the area around the Railway station is expecting a major redevelopment to include a number of new night spots.

Over the course of the coming year, all existing licences regarding the sale of alcohol and public entertainments are

being replaced by a new licensing system that allows for the possibility of staying open until 5am, as clubs and bars on the continent do. B Bar, Vaults, Bar Ha Ha and Number 1 King's Parade are all applying for extended licenses. The expected effects include a gradual shift away from clubbing culture and towards smaller, more intimate bars. Frank Walding, who has promoted a number of club nights around Cambridge, suggested that "only the best nights out will remain" and that "clubs will disappear". The sudden flurry of interest in investing in Cambridge's night-time scene has been attributed to these nationwide changes to licensing laws.

Local councils in England and Wales will be taking over the alcohol licensing function from the Magistrates' Courts. In the absence of a criminal record, individuals and properties will be able to apply for a late licence as long as they can prove to the local council that their practice will seek to prevent crime and disorder, will prevent minors from

entering inappropriately, and will ensure public safety and avoid public nuisance. Robert Osbourn, Cambridge's Principal Environmental health officer, who will be running the panel that decides venues' suitability for licensing, described how "we will be taking any objections to proposed licences regarding specific organisations very seriously."

In colleges, there presently exists an archaic "Vice-Chancellor's licence" to serve alcohol. Next year, college bars will require personal licences. Osbourn detailed how a number of college Bursars have already looked into securing late-night licenses for their college bars and Ents. A number of colleges have faced problems with licensing laws recently. Whilst there is now talk of re-opening King's Cellar, its bar has not functioned all term.

Last week the promoters of Sunday Roast at Coco's unexpectedly moved their club night to Life...

- Continued on page 4

News in Brief

Guildhall conversion

Cambridge County council have recently decided to convert the ground floor of the Guildhall into a cultural centre to liven up the city.

This decision arose after the Crown Court's moved last month from the Guildhall to East Road

Current ideas being discussed for this cultural quarter include creating a parade of shops, cafes and restaurants, as well as a heritage centre. Other ideas, which have been proposed, include putting up a bridge between the Corn Exchange and the Guildhall which used to be put up in the 1860s for special occasions. The fact that the Guildhall is a listed building may make it hard to implement some of these ideas.

Rumina Hassam

Student attack

A student from Queen's suffered a suspected broken nose and other facial injuries after being attacked in an unprovoked assault at around 8pm on Sunday night.

The 20 year old victim was walking with friends in Downing Street when he was attacked by two unknown men. Police are appealing for witnesses.

Homerton calendar

Homerton's female rowers have ditched their rowing gear in favour of their birthday suits to raise money for the Boat Club. Inspired by the Women's Institute idea for a naked but tasteful collection of photographs and the recent Ospreys' calendar, ten Homerton boaties have posed for the calendar with only boat paraphernalia covering those 'essential' parts.

Heffers for sale

Cambridge's Heffers could be up for sale as its owner, Blackwell's, may sell off a number of its 61 bookshops.

The company announced last week that newly-appointed BDO Stoy Howard is to review the book-selling business as a result of consolidation in the sector, an increase in the number of books being bought online and the growth of internet use for research.

Blackwell's, employs 100 people at its four branches in Cambridge and has admitted that it has received some interest from potential buyers.

Sorry

We incorrectly credited Michael Derringer's photograph on page five of last week's issue to Lucy Phillips.

Football Competition

The lucky winners of the sequel to *Championship Manager*, *Football Manager*, are Natalie Higgins and Matt Hallissey. Nice one. Email business@varsity.co.uk for details of getting your prize.

New Editor

Amol Rajan has been appointed Editor of *Varsity* for Lent term 2005.

Student takes concerns to Straw

Anne Campbell arranges meeting for student wrongly arrested in Israel this September

Chine Mbubaegbu

A CAMBRIDGE student who was subjected to unauthorised detention by Israeli officials whilst travelling in Jerusalem in September, has met with Foreign Secretary Jack Straw to tell him of her ordeal.

Hajira Qureshi, a Maths student from Newnham, had been travelling through Jerusalem with two female companions, Samra Ghafoor and Amina Shaikh to Nablus in the occupied West Bank. They had hoped to spend three weeks there doing charity work for children, when the incident happened.

During the meeting, arranged by Anne Campbell, MP for Cambridge, Hajira described in detail how she was arrested at gunpoint at 3.30am at her hotel in Jerusalem Old City. The British Muslim and her two companions were strip-searched and interrogated before being threatened with deportation. The London-based Islamic Human Rights Commission (IHRC), which has taken up the case, said: "The trio, who went to teach Palestinian children as part of Project Hope, were detained, strip-searched

and taken to court on the basis of 'secret' evidence which suggested that they were terrorists. The judge threw out the charges, but placed them under house arrest at their hostel... until deportation."

Straw had agreed to meet with Campbell and Qureshi in September, when Campbell raised the plight of her constituent in the House of Commons in a question to the Prime Minister on September 15th. When questioned, Mr. Blair had answered "We have raised the matter with the chief of police in Jerusalem and we shall continue to pursue it with the Israeli authorities. At this stage, that is all I can say."

Campbell had wanted the Foreign Secretary to hear first-hand of Hajira's ordeal at the hands of the Israeli police and also wanted to discuss the role of the British authorities in the matter.

Campbell said, "Hajira told Jack Straw that she was unhappy about the way that the British authorities in Jerusalem dealt with her and her friends following the arrest. Jack Straw promised to investigate the way she had been treated and has said he will write to me with the results of the investigations."

Hajira, who is the officer for the



University Islamic Society's recently-formed Human Rights committee, was also able to question Mr. Straw closely on British policy with regards to Palestine and Israel. The Islamic Society said that its Human Rights committee was recently set up because "Widespread public apathy in developed countries, coupled with the 'War on Terror,' has all but stripped billions of people's rights to lead a dignified life."

Campbell was herself subject to such an ordeal when she was stopped at gun-

point by Israeli police at a checkpoint in Ramallah this July. Campbell said: "It is the sort of experience Palestinians go through on a daily basis."

The Foreign Secretary responded to Qureshi and Campbell's concerns by explaining that he had received EU support in putting forward proposals to the United Nations about the line of the Israeli security wall. The REU also joined him in condemning the slaughter that followed the rocket attacks in Gaza in which an Israeli child was killed.

Interviews in Action



Archie Bland

Lucy Phillips

A NEW film about what to expect from admissions interviews at Cambridge was released on Monday. The film, called *Interviews in Action*, is available to watch for free on the University of Cambridge website.

The 20 minute film is based on realistic scenarios and features current Cambridge admission interviewers. It follows two fictional applicants, one for English and one for Natural Sciences, through the process. Viewers are shown extracts including interviews, the interviewers discussing the strengths and weaknesses of the fictional applicants and the qualities they are looking for.

A spokesperson for the University said the aim of the video was to demonstrate "the myths and misconceptions about Cambridge interviews". She explained, "A lot of people don't know what to expect in the interview. She said that the University would like to reassure applicants that they do not need "interview coaching" and that they hoped to show that the interview process is about "how people think rather than their social confidence."

She emphasized that the film makes it clear that it is "a general guide" and that "interviews and academic discussions do vary". She added, "We are trying to ensure that everybody gets a fair

shot at applying to Cambridge and that the interview process should not put people off." She also said that they wanted to get rid of certain 'perceptions' about Cambridge, such as "that everyone is from Eton."

Dr Geoff Parks, Director of Admissions for the Cambridge Colleges pointed towards the growing popularity of broadband technology – according to Government figures, more than 98% of secondary schools and colleges have broadband – which has made it possible to provide students with a free film guide to interviews. "The film is aimed at any applicant at all, some schools have other sources and experiences so it might be more use to those who haven't had many preceding applicants to Cambridge."

The University has said that the film is not in response to companies that train students for interviews such as Oxbridge Applications.

Dr Parks said that the film was screened around staff within the University before being launched online and that it had received 'positive feedback'. Its release comes at the start of 'interview season'.

The project was commissioned by Clare College and funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England.

Oxford Applications

Amy Goodwin

LAST WEEK *Varsity* reported that Cambridge students had been offered £20 each by private company Oxbridge Applications to complete a questionnaire providing detailed information on their interviews. Their answers would be used as material for the company's forthcoming book *Real Oxbridge Applications*. Now Oxford University Student Union (OUSU) has declared itself "outraged" after Oxford undergraduate Nathan Lyons who is an employee of the company sent a similar questionnaire to Oxford students which purported to be from OUSU's 'Target Schools' scheme.

Current OUSU Vice President for Access and Academic affairs Linsey Cole was made aware of the scam by students who had been contacted by Lyons and were concerned about the nature of his questionnaire. Cole, who claims that the company's aims "directly conflict" with Target Schools' outreach programme, stated, "I am furious that the good name of Target Schools had been capitalised on in this way."

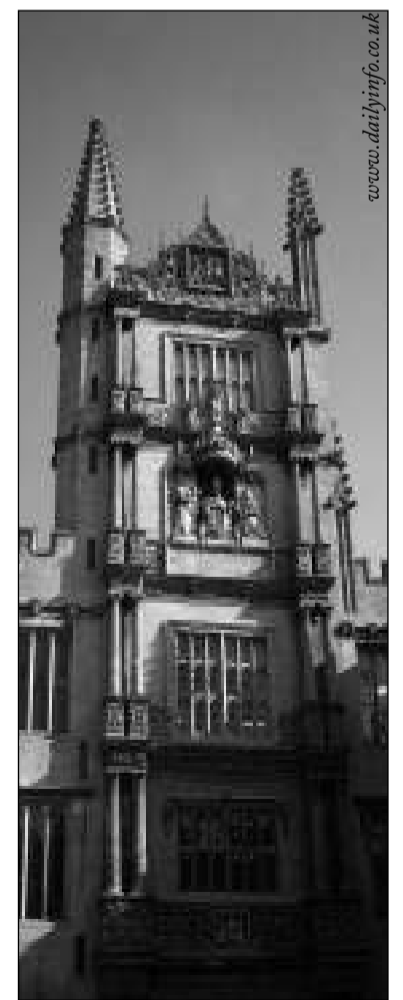
Second year Craig Abrahams's reaction is typical of the Oxford students who have already been accosted by Lyons' randomly-generated emails. He says that he contacted Cole after becoming "sceptical" about the questionnaire's premise, and now believes that the "disgusting" endeavour "undermines all the good work of Target Schools." "The company are being deliberately deceitful in sending the email under the guise of Target Schools." Fellow student Graeme Murray describes how he unsuccessfully tried to contact Lyons on three occasions when trying to determine the survey's origins.

OUSU is currently reviewing its options as to how to proceed but is considering legal action. It is likely that the union will pass a motion this week condemning Oxbridge Applications and resolving to dissuade potential applicants from

using the company's services.

Whilst waiting for an apology for the misappropriation of the 'Target Schools' tag, Cole is also spearheading an attempt to collect the names of all students who may have been duped into answering the company's survey.

She admits that the experience has been "essentially positive" in that it has demonstrated the respect with which Target Schools is regarded by students. The campaign originated twenty-three years ago and is still highly active and thriving in both Oxford and Cambridge.



The Bodleian, Oxford

Degree benchmarking under consideration

Laura Cledwyn

THE CUSU open meeting held on Tuesday evening passed a motion resolving to campaign for transparency of degree classifications and for consistent marking criteria, urging Cambridge University to support a national benchmarking scheme.

With almost 70% of degrees receiving a 2.1 or above, it has become increasingly difficult for employers and students alike to judge their real value, particularly when comparing universities. In some cases students at high-achieving institutions may be losing out as many online job applications automatically filter out grades lower than a 2.1, even though a 2.2 at Cambridge and other well performing universities may be equivalent to 2.1 at some other institutions.

Concerns were raised at the CUSU meeting as to what form this transparency would take and how exactly benchmarking would be implemented. It was asked whether, as a result of this, the automatic MA for Oxbridge graduates might be scrapped, and whether this would give rise to a greater number of firsts at universities like Cambridge or otherwise fewer firsts at lower achieving institutions.

However, Barry Bridges from Downing College, who proposed the motion, insisted that this need not mean the 'dumbing down' of degrees and that for the moment, the motion

simply aimed at supporting the principle of standardisation.

Unease over this has caused the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education to launch a new consultation exercise calling for the benchmarking of standards throughout UK universities. This would essentially lead to the transparency of degrees across the board so that everyone would be able to tell just what each degree is worth according to the department and university where it was awarded.

Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education, Professor McKendrick, told *Varsity* "there has been growing awareness in recent years of the shortcomings of the present classification system." She added that this issue is to be discussed at the next meeting of the General Board's Education Committee on 1st December. Until then no official comment can be made, although rumours suggest that the University may be considering scrapping the current classifications of 1st, 2.1, 2.2 and 3rd altogether in favour of a more transparent system.

The open meeting also discussed the issues of whether CUSU should have a stance on Iraq and the building of a £50million sports centre at West Cambridge. Planning permission has been approved for the site, which will cater for an extensive range of indoor and outdoor sports, and will include an Olympic-sized swimming pool.

The Damned light up Market Square in Christmas event



Michelle Derringer/TCS

THIS SUNDAY saw 70's punk-rock band, The Damned, turn on the Christmas lights in Market Square despite concern from local clergymen which preceded the event. Hundreds turned up to witness the festive season begin in Cambridge in what event organisers have described as one of the biggest turnouts for the event ever.

Varsity reported last week that local church leaders and even Lambeth Palace had condemned the event as "insensitive" because it was separating a Christmas event from the core meaning of Christmas.

The 70's band are notorious for a number of anti-religious songs, including 'Anti Pope,' and had described Christians as "weak." The band's lead singer, Captain Sensible, said: "I'm so glad the council stuck to their guns and kept us on because we are just a bunch of people who like to have fun... We are hoping to start some controversy in every town we go to from now on - it's good for ticket sales."

Chine Mbubaegbu

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Out on the Cam Town

Continued from Front Page

...in what has since been seen as a sensible jump from a sinking ship. The owners of La Raza, Simon Harrow and Charles Anderson, have secured the purchase of the Coco's building in the same week that they have opened a new bar and restaurant, Taboosh, on the former premises of Qi Bar in market passage. Harrow revealed for the first time the name of Coco's replacement, "The Soul Tree," and that in excess of £200,000 will be spent on redecorating the interior of the building. A cafeteria on the ground floor will be open from 8am to 3am, with a fully-equipped concert space above. Po Na Na Brighton's manager Nick Jerrim will look to transform the club into a space "that gives students everything that they want; good food and drink, smart surroundings and quality music with an emphasis upon performance." The management will still look to run student nights at the venue.

Ballare will remain unresponsive to the changes, claiming they "don't need to change anything to be the best place to go out in Cambridge." Life, owned by the same mother company as Ballare, Luminar Leisure, is similarly defiant, although concedes that their Sunday nights have "seriously suffered" this term.

It is rumoured that the former founder of Po Na Na has secured the purchase of the Kambar and that he seeks to turn it into a sister venue for an already established Bristol bar. The Living Room, a national chain attracting a young professional clientele, will take over grand corridors of the old Divinity Faculty. Previously investing only in bigger cities, this move will help to enhance Cambridge's metropolitan status.

MP for Cambridge, Anne Campbell, told *Varsity* how she hopes "that the new licensing laws will not be abused." Concerned by the impact that the new initiative might have, she described Cambridge as "a city whose nightlife is focused too much upon drinking and not enough on genuine entertainment." The new licensing process is unlikely to change this situation. Presently public entertainment often acts as a pre-requisite for a bar seeking a late-licence. Night-time economy already puts great strain on the city's local infrastructure and public services. Transport, policing and street cleaning services are unlikely to be able to support changes to Cambridge's licensing hours. It was recently reported that Cambridge's night bus service looks likely to be scrapped. Wes Streeting said that "attacks on students wandering home late at night are becoming a huge concern for CUSU."

Annette Joyce, Cambridge City Centre manager, outlined the potential problems regarding litter and "clubbers urinating or throwing up in a city centre in which there are no public conveniences." Anne Campbell described how "the Cambridge police force is presently stretched and can't keep up its present level of policing." Later licenses would require more policemen to be on duty round the clock.

The new late-night licensing laws will affect any organisation looking to sell alcohol, provide entertainment, or serve hot food after 11pm - which means that the likes of Gardies and the vans may be effected. Osborn concedes that "If students living around Gardies were to complain about late-night noise levels, that would most probably be the end of their licence."

Student radio DJs make award-winning waves

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY'S radio station CUR1350 has won four awards at the BBC Radio 1 Student Radio Awards. Two gold, one silver and one bronze award made it the station's most successful Student Radio Awards in recent memory.

Val Mellon (pictured with presenter Craig Charles) won a gold award for Best Entertainment Show, 'Mellon 'til Midnight', and a bronze award for Best Female. 'Mellon 'til Midnight' includes features such as 'What's in Val's mouth?', 'Play your Tarts Right' and 'Duff or Bluff'. She also received nominations for Best Documentary Show and Best Jingles and Production. Mellon said, "It was totally overwhelming, I have wanted to win an award for three years now. It's something I'll remember forever."

Andrew Walkingshaw and Rob Ousbey, the station's manager, won the other gold for Technical Achievement, for the CUR1350 Web Player - a platform-independent way of listening to and interacting with the station online. It uses open-source Java and streaming technologies to allow anyone to listen to CUR1350 in any web browser with java support.

The silver award was won for Best Sports Programming, for CUR1350's live coverage of the Varsity rugby match at Twickenham.

The awards, held last Friday in London, were hosted by Steve Lamacq and Jo Whiley and are said to be the equivalent of the Sony Awards for the student radio sector.

Lucy Phillips



Thomas Tsui (SR4)

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Lighting up Parker's Piece



THE CAMPAIGN to improve lighting on Parker's Piece began last Friday, with over 50 students and residents solidly campaigning throughout the evening. To highlight CUSU's campaign, the path was lit with candles and CUSU President Wes Streeting reported receiving over 100 signatures that night, as well as many more over the weekend. On one evening in Selwyn bar, 70 signatures were collected.

The campaign has also prompted a City Council meeting to be held in December to discuss the issue. Streeting called this "a definite movement...although we haven't won yet." CUSU have, however, vowed to keep up the pressure.

Insufficient lighting has been a problem across Parker's Piece with five reported attacks from students alone in the last year. In just this term, two Downing students have been attacked. Richard Reid, CUSU Welfare Officer, also pointed out that there are probably many other attacks which go unreported. Calls and anecdotes from students suggest that this may be a fairly high figure. A Night Time Crime Count in Cambridge, organised in 2002, identified 23 separate incidents of violent crime occurring on Parker's Piece, a level which was far higher than surrounding areas. CUSU has warned all students to be vigilant when walking around at night.

Natasha Anders

Attackers' sentence cut

Barney Jones

A MAN and a woman who viciously mauled a Cambridge student have appealed against their sentences and have had them reduced.

Lauren Barfield, just 17 when she attacked postgraduate student Graham Briggs, was found guilty of robbery and attempting to cause GBH and was handed a four-and-a-half year prison sentence in January this year. Her accomplice, 42 year-old David Aston was convicted of attempting to cause GBH and given a four year sentence.

At the London Court of Appeal the pair both gained sizeable reduc-

tions in their jail terms. Judges reportedly stated that the sentences were "manifestly excessive", whilst admitting that such an unprovoked assault on an innocent victim was unacceptable in a civilised society.

Mr Justice Nelson, who heard the case with two other judges, stated that Barfield's reduction in sentence was due to her previous good character and age. He also reminded the court that Aston, whilst being convicted of attempted GBH, had been acquitted of robbery.

A third attacker, Shilen Chhagen, who had been sentenced to two years in a young offenders' institute, did not appeal against his sentence.

The attack, which took place at 3.30am on March 23 2003, resulting from an argument Barfield started with Briggs, was caught on CCTV. Briggs was followed into St Andrew's Street, where Barfield led the assault on him. He was thrown to the floor, kicked and punched, and while he was lying on the ground Barfield stole £5 from him. As a result of the attack Briggs received a number of cuts and bruises. He later said that the incident had left him psychologically scarred, intimidated by big open spaces and wary of going out at night.

Aston and Barfield will now both serve three years in prison.

Future of night bus looks uncertain

Kirsty McQuire

THE CAMBRIDGE night bus is under threat of termination, it arised last week. This is allegedly due to the underuse of the service as loss of funds as a result. Cambridgeshire County Council is in consultation with the bus operator Stagecoach to decide the fate of the service.

One graduate student from Christ's remarked on the detrimental impact such a withdrawal would have, potentially 'ruining' his social life. A return taxi fare to his shared house in Cherry Hinton costs £10.

CUSU President Wes Streeting has

deplored the move as 'typical of the council... when we are going to great lengths to highlight student safety.' He has implored the council to "improve the service rather than simply scrapping it."

Executive Councillor for the Environment, Nicola Harrison, was quoted in November 2003 as saying: "We don't want to scrap the whole idea of the night bus." She was also quick to state at the time that the new pared-down service in fact "represents a significant improvement in public transport provision," which in retrospect can only raise doubts.

Unfortunately there have been no statistics released by Stagecoach to either

substantiate or challenge the claims of the council, rather it is they who have been criticised so far.

County Council Transport Officer Basil Jackson expressed his suspicions. "I don't think Stagecoach have done as much as they could in terms of marketing and I think there is scope for improvement." The company refutes this claim.

There is a sense that effective communication between the council and the company has been lacking for some time. However, the two organisations are currently poised to produce a report and hold a meeting on the matter, hoping to reach a consensus by April 2005.

Careers Service



UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

LAW INFORMATION EVENT

THURSDAY 2nd & FRIDAY 3rd DECEMBER

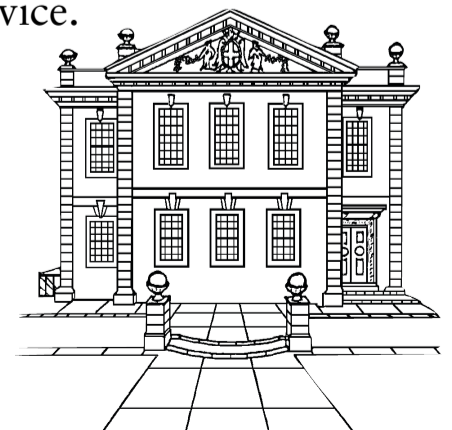
1.30PM-4.30PM

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For a full list of attendees, see the Careers Service website.

www.careers.cam.ac.uk



CUAI campaign ends in success

Sarah Marsh

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY Amnesty International this week celebrated the release of the Burmese political prisoner Min Ko Naing, following a prominent campaign in October 2004 which culminated in the "Cage Event." Campaign co-ordinator Tim Austin said he was "overjoyed" at this unexpected news. "We were told that Burma was a hugely difficult country to make an impact on, so the chances of freeing Min Ko Naing were slight. But we never give up on a prisoner."

The campaign to free Min Ko Naing has been running worldwide for many years, and met with repeated disappointment. Nonetheless in Michaelmas 2004 CUAI joined the efforts of other student Amnesty groups and campaigning bodies to have the student leader freed. The annual "Cage Event" was mounted specifically to call for Min Ko Naing's release, and a 20-metre cloth petition produced to send to the regime about his case.

On November 19 the regime released Min Ko Naing, whom many consider "a modern hero of non-resistance". He had been arrested, incarcerated and physically tortured in 1988 for leading pro-democracy student protests. After 15 years of solitary confinement, he declared "it has been worth it" and sent out his thanks to international students who had supported his cause.

Min Ko Naing's release is not simply the result of Amnesty's campaigning. Power struggles have recently weakened



Michael Derringer/TCS

CUAI publicised the success of their recent campaign outside King's

the dictatorial regime in Burma. Prime Minister Khin Nyunt was ousted last month, causing the disbandment of the National Intelligence Bureau (NIB) that had been under his direct control. Since then the military government has freed up to 30 political prisoners, who were wrongly charged by the NIB according to the state-run media in Burma.

But Austin argues that "there would have been little incentive to free so many prisoners for the remaining hardliners in the regime, themselves responsible for a vast range of human right". He claims that international pressure on the Burmese regime provided the real incentive for the releases: "this kind of pressure from such a large number of sources mounts up — thousands upon thousands of letters, petitions, media

coverage — and so makes the regime aware of just how much the rest of the world knows about what they're doing, and just what we think of them."

Wes Streeting, CUSU President, who sat in the cage himself, concurred: "this case is a shining example of what people can achieve when they mobilise collectively to lead change. By just sparing a few hours a month students can make a difference by getting involved with Amnesty's campaigns."

Min Ko Naing's release has renewed enthusiasm at CUAI. Chairman Will Moy told *Varsity*, "The cage event was a collective effort of 50 people - now we've proved how crucial little contributions are." CUAI posted a triumphant banner where the cage had been declaring "Amnesty Works- Min Ko Naing is free", and celebrated his release on Saturday evening with their live band gig "Paper Scissors and Rock".

Min Ko Naing's release is just the start of CUAI's campaign in Burma. The executive committee stated, "There remains a vast amount that has to happen to improve human rights in Burma and the regime are clearly in no hurry — but the idea that they would remember our pressure and at some point it would start to affect their decision making is valid. In this case this is what we mean by Amnesty Works." CUAI has engaged much local support in their ongoing campaign, from the individual contribution to governmental sponsorship. MP Anne Campbell last week told CUAI she was willing to sponsor a general Early Day Motion on human rights abuses in Burma.

University staff accommodation opens at West Cambridge site

Academics offered solution to city centre housing shortage

Charlotte Forbes

LAST WEEK Cambridge MP Anne Campbell opened a new accommodation centre for visiting academics and university staff in the West Cambridge site, which it is hoped will go a long way to alleviating the acute shortage of suitable housing in the city.

The centre, designed by London-based architects MacCormac Jamieson Prichard, comprises 206 apartments of varying size and is only a short distance from the city centre, with regular bus services to and from the site. At the opening ceremony Campbell congratulated the University on an "imaginative and forward-looking development". With house prices rising so quickly in the area, many members of staff have had to move out of Cambridge and commute into the city, but it is hoped that the centre will allow more people to come back.

The £22 million cost has been funded by a loan from the University, to be repaid through rental income. The site is particularly well suited to scientists and vets, being also the home of the Cavendish Laboratory of the Department of Physics, the Vet School, Computer Science department and Microsoft European Research Centre.

The new centre also includes a nursery capable of looking after 88 children, in a move that has been welcomed by Vice-Chancellor Alison Richard and the Student



Architect Liz Pride shows Anne Campbell MP around the West Cambridge site

Childcare committee. The need for better provision of childcare services for academics, staff and students has long been felt, with currently over 140 members of staff and 40 students on the waiting list for the two University nurseries.

Although childcare provision has been traditionally associated with senior members of the University, there has been an increase in the number of student parents in recent years with the expanding number of mature students, now estimated at around 450. Anne Lonsdale, President of New Hall and Chair of the Student Childcare Committee said: "More

and more people are choosing to come to university as mature students... We must do all we can to help the very able student parents who win places at Cambridge to manage the difficult task of bringing up children while studying themselves."

When opening the nursery in its own special ceremony earlier in the month, Professor Richard said she was "delighted" to be celebrating such an event. "The availability of affordable and accessible childcare is a major factor in our ability to recruit and retain both staff and students. This facility more than doubles the number of places we now offer."

What happened next

As term comes to an end, VARSITY gets nostalgic about stories gone by

Building for the future

CUSU AND ArcSoc have launched a campaign to save the Architecture department after the controversial announcement came that the University was considering its future.

ArcSoc President and third year architecture student, Luke McLaren, highlighted the changes that are taking place within the department in preparation for the next Research Assessment Exercise in 2008: "The department is entering an exciting period of change and has taken measures to ensure its continued status as an integral and unique part of University life. It has the highest number of applicants for each place of any course in the University and produces well qualified graduates. Last week a fundraising auction organised by ArcSoc raised around £3500 for the department. Items up for lot included a colour lithograph, work experience at architecture practises and subscriptions to architecture publications."



Rachel Cooper

The Keeling process

RUTH KEELING, who has just finished her first week in the job, calls her new role "very busy" but "enormously satisfying," and believes that visible changes are already taking place. The union shop is now open every morning and budget proposals are under construction, in preparation for the forthcoming audit.

A report on differential college fees is also underway, as is a college MCR questionnaire and the establishment of a working group with the University. Keeling is said that next term's emphasis will be on addressing issues of concern through the co-ordination of different groups. "The changes next term will be more visible and productive. However, we still need the help of student volunteers and appeal to everyone to get involved."



Charlotte Forbes

Not all the King's men

KING'S COLLEGE has been the centre of controversy over this last term. Many students doubted whether the refurbished bar could replace the legendary Red Bar, or whether the Cellar Bar could survive at all under the new edict to keep all drinks to the main Bar. So far both are doing well.

Varsity reported at the beginning of term on the appointment of three fellows at King's to "advise and guide" the college Provost Dame Judith Mayhew. Martin Reavly and the Reverend Ian Thompsom have been elected to the positions of First Bursar and Dean of Chapel and are due to take up their posts from 1 January 2005. James Laidlaw has announced his intention to resign as Senior Tutor, and a Senior Tutor Search Committee comprising both Fellows and student representatives has been instigated.



Sarah Marsh

Like it or mump it

THERE HAVE been 80 cases of mumps clinically diagnosed since the beginning of term amongst Cambridge students. An estimated 6000 students have received the MMR vaccination through the University wide and College immunisation programme in Cambridge.

A University spokesman said: "According to the Health Protection Agency we have done everything we can to control the spread of infection." Their aim was to halt the spread of infection before the end of term so as to avoid it spreading around the country when students return home.

Many Cambridge students who were affected by the outbreak have now recovered and it is hoped that the vaccination programmes have controlled the situation.



Lucy Phillips

Gardies: the legacy

THIS TERM saw the reversal of Gonville & Caius college's decision to close down The Gardenia. After nearly a year of campaigning by Cambridge students past and present, the owner of Gardies, Vas Anastasiou, reported that lengthy discussions with Caius have led to a lease for the fast-food eatery being secured until 2011.

Anastasiou wanted to thank the college for behaving "very reasonably" and said that he had "no complaints" about the way in which the situation has been handled.

He once again thanked the students of the University and said: "We know now that people love us. Thanks to everyone who supported the campaign."



Chine Mbubaegbu

Those simple Hair Necessities

One of life's hardest lessons: optimism is all very well, but in the end it doesn't stop your hair falling out



John

Beckman

Imagine how it feels. You know you are growing old; you realise your hour of judgement will come. Inexorable Time is bearing down upon you, and one day soon there will be howling, and lamentation, and tearing of vestments. You know you are growing old when you realise you will be bald.

The changes, at first, are almost imperceptible. The primy verdure covering the head appears to have its usual buoyancy and abundance; but look carefully, and the fronds appear thinner. Each hair works to its utmost to hide the evergrowing, mocking expanse of scalp. At night microscopic hair-demons unearth a couple of strands at the corners of the head, the brow grows more prominent and annexes the rest of the cranium. The forehead is no longer afore, but part of a vast continental mass of bare skin running from nape to nose. The stubble on cheeks and chin appears thriving in comparison.

defiance of the inevitable. He will fail to accept his slapheadedness and continue to elongate to their full extent his few remaining limp, grey threads. He will shampoo and condition these arid tufts every day. Children will snigger at him and throw stones.

Let no one says that hair is insignificant. It is a sine qua non for Celtic revolutionaries (William Wallace, Rob Roy, Gerry Adams). God would seem a lot less omnipotent if imagined with a newly polished scalp instead of long white locks lapping his shoulders. And, of

Orthodox Judaism and the Catholic Cardinalship both provide skullcaps of sufficient circumference to hide even the most far-reaching barrenness. But God would probably take the piss when you arrived in heaven. Numerous snake oil merchants are more than willing to take your cash in an exchange for 'guaranteed' remedies involving hormonal realignment. There is, however, the possibility that you might end up looking like a 1960s East German shot-putter or a slightly murderous lesbian. Someone, somewhere will offer the opportunity to graft extraneous hairs from elsewhere on your

images by Jfit Qurashi



Here today...



Going...



Going...



Gone tomorrow

Fewer than half of the people in the world feel this anxiety: most of the rest, instead, must bear the pain of labour and the stress of menopause, which seems a fair division of physiological evils. Baldness is the first sign of decay. If firm skin, supple limbs and a rosy, hale glow are capped by a gleaming pate, it seems that age is consuming you top down with the same callousness that bloodthirsty children show to gingerbread men.

There are two ways to deal with this threat: the pusillanimous and the foolhardy. The pusillanimous punter shaves his head, hoping to elide voluntary abbreviation into the onset of baldness. But you can never efface the faint trace that follows the contours between bona fide bare flesh and its counterfeit. The optimist will grow his hair as long as he can in brave, but ultimately ineffectual,

course, pulling. At this point Sir Sean Connery is normally trundled out as the ultimate example of sexy slappy; but the SNP's least dedicated supporter gained his reputation as a love machine when his hair was plentiful, vibrant and exquisitely waxed with the aid of a spirit level. Bald Bond would have been doing MI6's accounts.

There are some solutions. Ultra-

body to your head. Fortunately the House of Commons All Party Parliamentary Group on Skin is doing stalwart work in bringing such malefaction to light. However hard we deny it and fret about it, we will collapse silently under the implacability of baldness like our fathers did before us. We menfolk will simply have to take it on the chin. So, how about a beard instead?

Architecture's demise would matter to us all



Luke McLaren

Wes Streeting

On Monday, ArcSoc and CUSU are joining forces to make it clear to the University General Board that we do not want to the Architecture Department to close. Thousands of you have already signed the petitions. Students, alumni and significant figures within the profession have rallied, fundraised and campaigned to keep the Department. Now YOU need to turn up to the demo.

1pm. Senate House. Monday.

Let's just get that across again: 1pm. Senate House. Monday.

In case you haven't heard, the University has cast considerable doubt over the future of the Architecture Department and the General Board will be deciding on December 8th whether to follow through with their recommendation to close it. It's make or break time for the Department, but the impact that closure would have is a concern to us all.

Make no mistake: a precedent would be established here. If the Architecture Department were to close, then a similar fate may await many other small departments within the university. Architecture, which excels at educating its students, would be closed because of over-exaggerated problems with research, despite its outstanding teaching record. It will send out a clear message that Cambridge values its research more than its teaching, that it considers finance more important than education, and that in this cut-throat environment no small department is safe.

The recommendation for closure has nothing to do with the quality of education provided by the Department, or its popularity amongst current students and applicants. The Department has long been renowned for its teaching standards; it is currently ranked top among schools of architecture and over

the past five years has remained in the top two – a record unmatched by any other school. There can be no doubt that this unrivalled teaching record and its international reputation are responsible for the Department's established popularity – Architecture currently attracts more undergraduate applicants per place than any other department in the University.

The influence of the Architecture Department extends beyond those who work and study there. The Department has extensive influence on the region, the profession and the Cambridge community. Cambridge Futures, a Departmental research project run in collaboration with the City Council, has been adopted by the local authorities and will have a major impact on the future of the city. The Architecture Department also shares a building and a library with the Department of History of Art, which would undoubtedly suffer enormous disruption were Architecture to be closed.

Furthermore, the debate surrounding the future of the Architecture Department has barely touched upon the potential impact on visual arts in Cambridge. Students and staff from the Department make an enormous

contribution to each of us through exhibitions and galleries, theatre and performance, and the design of endless events and publicity campaigns. It would be a damning indictment on the academic priorities of this University if a city so famous for its architecture and a University so renowned for its contribution to some of the finest buildings – old and new – in the world, were to close its Architecture Department.

On Monday we will assemble outside the Senate House alongside some of the leading voices in the architectural world. Architecture students have mobilised and fought hard so save their Department. They are fighting to save it because it is an outstanding Department, with an outstanding reputation. It supports its students and insists on the teaching standards that have enabled it to become the best teaching facility in this university. These are values which we should all share. Their education is being threatened. So is ours. Don't let them stand alone. Turn up and join us.

1pm. Senate House. Monday.

Luke McLaren is president of ArcSoc
Wes Streeting is Mr CUSU

The Damned? Pah.
Christianity is the
counterculture now



Sam

Richardson

So, The Damned have turned on Cambridge's Christmas lights. In doing so, they constructed a stage in Market Square, which stirred some homeless people from their bench. And they constructed an anti-God persona, which stirred some Christians from their pews, with Lambeth Palace and local churchmen pointing out that the punk rockers' proud atheism contrasted with the Christmas theme.

I must at this point profess (not confess) that I am a Christian. In fact, I'm an evangelical Christian. That doesn't mean that I like George Bush, hate homosexuals, and only wear red hoodies (in fact, I can exclusively reveal that they're green this year); it does mean that I attempt to dedicate my life to following Jesus, and I'm going to tell you about it.

Yes, Jesus, the one they named Christmas after. I believe that he is the Son of God; I believe that he was sinless, that he died on a cross and took the punishment for us; I believe that he rose again so that, if we believe in him, we too can conquer death and gain eternal life.

When the message of Christianity is as positive as this, surely all publicity surrounding it must be good publicity. If The Damned want to tell everyone that Christians are 'weak' and 'ignorant' then fair enough. We have all received harsher and more cutting criticism from friends who are considerably better informed than The Damned.

There is nothing new about The Damned, or about the controversy that surrounded their appearance in Cambridge. Complaints about the secularisation of Christmas are as perennial and futile as complaints that Cambridge is cold. The festive season is a great opportunity for us Christians to put the 'fun' back into 'Christian fundamentalism'. Instead of lamenting a secularised Christmas, we are called to celebrate our unity around the truth that at Christmas God showed his love for us by taking on a human body and coming to Earth.

That word 'truth' is a dirty word in a community which generally falls in with the idea that the only absolute truth is that there is no absolute truth. If, in our pluralistic society, you are offended that I have just told you about my belief, consider this: if you believed what I believe, wouldn't you want to tell people about it? I certainly do, but it would be hypocritical of me to suggest that while I should be allowed to profess my beliefs, The Damned shouldn't be allowed to profess theirs.

Against the backdrop of this pluralistic and materialistic society, faith in God has something radically different to offer. Christians and non-Christians alike need to get used to the fact that in today's England the Gospel's message is counter-cultural, just as it was two thousand years ago when Jesus and his disciples were executed because of it. Today, in China, Sudan and Saudi Arabia (to name but a few places) Christians still face a penalty of death for their beliefs. In comparison to that, having The Damned turn on our Christmas lights is merely something to, er, make light of.

The Clare Essentials

Rebellious ex-minister Clare Short talks to John McHugh

On Monday evening, Clare Short addressed the Cambridge University Labour Club at the Cambridge Union to promote her latest book *An Honourable Deception? New Labour, Iraq, and the Misuse of Power*. Short is currently one of the best known faces in British politics having shaken the government from within whilst serving as Secretary for International Development, with many describing her as 'the conscience' of the Labour Party. Since leaving government she has not held such a high public profile: this reduction in the frequency of press attention has been accompanied by increasing extremity of her opposition to the government and, more specifically, her growing hostility towards Tony Blair.

Short has never been prone to leaping on any populist bandwagons and dismisses any claims that her exit from government was 'managing her political career'. Her political track record would certainly support this claim as she has consistently stood by her principles regardless of the cost. When making her way up through the ranks of the Labour opposition government, Short showed moral integrity by resigning twice, in 1988 over the Prevention of Terrorism Act and in 1990 over the Gulf War. Perhaps some of the career minded, Blairite 'yes' men and women could take note of this politician's commitment to her beliefs.

Before her talk on Monday she spoke to *Varsity* on a number of key issues, most notably the subject of Iraq. I put it to Ms Short that before the war on Iraq, Tony Blair gave the nation many reasons for embarking on a war with Iraq but he explicitly

stated that the only factor which justified this war was that Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction and therefore, now that the claim that weapons of mass destruction were held in Iraq has proved to be a falsehood, Blair should be judged on his own criteria and resign. Clare explicitly stated that in her view Blair 'must now go'. She extended her criticisms of Blair labeling him a 'liar' and his actions to be 'full of contradictions'.

On a personal level, she clearly feels that Blair cannot be trusted: he made a number of empty promises to Short on issues such as the Middle East Road Map to peace. According to Ms Short, she was not the only victim of Blair's dishonesty. Blair misrepresented the French stance on the issue of Iraq to the Cabinet claiming that the French would never move from their so-called anti-war stance whilst the truth of the matter was that the French merely refused to go to war with Iraq until after Hans Blix had had his request for further inspection time fulfilled. Though Blair's competence in deception is shown to shine through in this example, there does seem to be a concerning implication that none of the Cabinet ministers could themselves understand what Chirac was saying and they relied on Blair to act as translator of what were very public statements made by Chirac. There seems to be no question that Cabinet ministers lacked vigour in their questioning of evidence over the Iraq war if they could not even accurately substantiate the public position of the French.

Short progressed to say that the current UK political system, and in particular Prime Ministerial

accountability, is in serious trouble and requires radical reform. She pinpointed electoral reform as the key to this, believing that a more proportional system which maintains the geographical link between Members of Parliament and their constituents is the way to go. Not being easily persuaded I decided to ask Short if she would be willing to exchange higher proportionality for strong leadership as a highly proportional system would inevitably lead to coalition government.

Her response was that what constitutes 'strong leadership' is a 'matter of opinion'. In an obvious criticism of Blair and what she described as 'his decision making clique', Short told me that very centralised leadership is bad at decision making. This has been shown in Labour's passing of legislation on Foundation Hospitals, Top-up Fees and Casinos. During her talk Short defends her right to publicly criticise the leader of her party, claiming that "truth" was the vital element of politics, whether it be politicians staying true to their beliefs or truthful information being passed to the public; yet, on the other hand, she wants to see a system emerge which relies on compromise to operate. It seems difficult to see how her conviction could be consolidated with the compromise necessary for coalition - though her record speaks for itself in terms of her personal commitment to truth in politics.

Speaking about her revelations regarding security services bugging the headquarters of the President of the UN, Kofi Annan, she reveals to Monday night's Cambridge audience that she has not only been threatened with being prevented from



Courtesy of Clare Short MP

Clare Short meeting Kofi Annan when secretary for international development

standing as a Labour candidate in the next general election but also that some warned her that she may face criminal charges as a result of breaking the Official Secrets Act.

This seems to be indicative of Blair's growing use of bullying tactics used against those who, despite being elected by the British people to be involved in decision-making, are expected by Blair to follow his increasingly dictatorial line. When asked if Gordon Brown would be the prime candidate for the Labour leadership, Short agreed that at the moment there is little question that he is the front-runner, but added that if Blair stays on for another full term, as he has publicly committed

to do, then everything could change. As Short wants to see Blair go immediately the implication is that she would entrust Brown to take the party forward in a way which would maintain Labour Party principles.

Her analysis of what will happen in the future includes Labour winning the next election, quite possibly with a limited reduction of their Parliamentary majority. However, she sees this victory as endangered by the high levels of complacency in Downing Street. It does not seem that an election victory will prove that the Labour Party is in a healthy state; Short sees many local Labour Party branches already crumbling to extinction and a massive loss of membership across the Labour Party as a whole. In addition to anti-war and anti-Blair feelings growing within Labour, the cause of Labour being under strain is at least partly the "very strange state" of British politics.

Clare Short sees Britain as a highly politicized nation, discussing politics rampantly. But she also sees the British people as being disillusioned by the current political system. She heavily criticizes the role of both the political press and politicians for their part in alienating the public from institutionalized politics. According to her there is a vicious circle of political journalists searching for eye-catching, paper-selling headlines rather than carefully analyzing government policy proposals. This leads to politicians responding by thinking about which policies would be advantageous for them in the short term rather than looking to long-term goals.

Disagreements with the leadership of the party from individual supporters are to be expected; but such a thoroughgoing critique of the Prime Minister, coming from an individual who has worked so closely with him, does seem to raise serious questions as to whether he will be able to hold his party together in support for much longer.



Courtesy of Clare Short MP



We know it's not Christmas yet. But we don't care. Have a nice holiday

This is the tyranny of the majority, not democracy

Queens' has pre-empted the new smoking ban. Can't they just leave us alone?

This is a no-smoking section," declares the notice, beneath the obligatory symbol of a fuming cigarette adamantly crossed out by a thick double line. Fair enough, I would think, were this not: a) until very recently the smoking section of the college bar; and b) the venue, of a very sudden without-warning theft of our civil liberties (at the hands, I suspect, of a rather over-ambitious and outwardly virtuous JCR-ringleader). Smoking has been banned from Queens' bar. Now my friend Richard, the last bastion of ill-health-for-pleasure, stands outside in the rain, waving through the smeary window, soggy Sovereign in hand. It is a sorry sight indeed.

"A little bit of self-destruction can prevent, well, self-destruction"

Queens' College JCR have pre-empted the government this week in instigating the ban, which will soon stretch to workplaces, restaurants and anywhere else you can be in the company of other people (except, ironically enough, in those pubs where you can drink yourself to death at the same time – so long as you're only eating a bag of pork scratchings). The reason? Apparently, we are incapable of

"We do not go to *The Regal* to sip herbal teas and eat vegan cakes"



Mary
Bowers

knowing what is best for us, though luckily we have a gentle and benevolent nanny-government (and an equally benevolent JCR) to guide us along the way.

I am not stupid enough to suggest that smoking is a completely decent or healthy habit. But then, neither is starving oneself of humane levels of sleep for eight weeks, and no bleary-eyed student I have encountered has received public condemnation for doing it. Or, for that matter, been given orders for an early bedtime and tucked up in bed by the Head Porter. We all know which of our habits are bad for us. But as many doctors will tell you (but not prescribe you), a little bit of self-destruction can prevent, well, self-destruction. Just look at your nearest Cambridge medic and you'll see what I mean. My friend, on a recent trip to his GP, was told that as long as he received his marijuana from a reputable source it was infinitely preferable to his crippling depression.

I have no argument with the statistics that show the number of yearly deaths related to passive

smoking. But what happened to the freedom of choice allowed by smoke-free restaurants, smoking rooms at work and, well, Queens' college bar conservatory? There are some instances in which smoking becomes intrusive – when blown in your face in a bus stop queue, for example – but the pub, surely, does not fit this category. We do not go to *The Regal* to sip herbal teas and eat vegan cakes. We go to indulge in a little bit of communal vice, and it is here that we forge our friendships. Who are these 'people' that have spoken? "Democracy is simply the bludgeoning of the people for the people by the people," said Oscar Wilde. See also: *Work is the curse of the drinking classes*.

Not the smoking classes, you'll note. Since when did a pack of Marlboro Lights cause two bleeding men to be pulled apart outside a pub, or worse, pulled into casualty at 3am? Anyone who has been pushed into the corner of a dingy night bus by a more than

slightly intimidating Londoner stinking of Jack Daniels and breathing obscenities down your neck knows the real meaning of being oppressed by other people's overindulgence.

"The public have made clear where they want support, where they want to be left alone by government, and where they want government to intervene," declares the White Paper. Replace 'Government' with 'nanny' and you'll see what I mean. Britons are growing up, like good little children, under the sheltered wing of Daddy Blair in our New Labour nursery. If you think I'm being a little melodramatic with my metaphor, you should read the part about food colour-coding.

"We all know which of our habits are bad for us"

We all have our own self-destructive tendencies. We need neither to be told what is bad for us, nor slapped on the back of the hand for doing it. Richard, as I write and no doubt as you read this, will still be standing outside in the Cambridge murk puffing on a damp Benson, and I...well...I may just go and seek out a peachy-skinned, clear voiced and inwardly trembling member of the JCR and put a pack of Camels in their pigeonhole, just in case; but I won't make them smoke one.

VARSITY

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Email the business manager to enquire about placing adverts. Letters for publication should be posted to your mum.

To get involved in a section, email my mum, and come along to a meeting. No experience necessary. Steve McBillbong!

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VARSLITY

Caught on camera

It's interview season again. Spare a thought for those poor unfortunates wrestling with the impenetrable problems bound to beset any would-be Cantabrian: which college? Gap year or straight up? What to be 'really passionate about' on the old UCAS statement? Mart or casual? And how to prepare for being asked to surprise your interrogator?

Interviews are inevitably terrifying, and the truth is there isn't very much that can be done about that. There's no getting away from it: however the purpose is phrased, everyone knows that the root of the thing is working out how clever you are. Only a fool would enter the room where such a decision would be made without having a slightly dry mouth. But the nerves are not helped by the apocryphal nonsense which surrounds the process, and the university is to be commended for its efforts to make things as open and comprehensible as possible. The introduction of an online video to let prospective applicants know something of what they can expect is an excellent step along the difficult path to demystifying the interview process in particular, and the Cambridge experience in general.

In the end, though, this is basically a cosmetic step. Because interviews are about assessing things which can't be figured out from a piece of paper listing A-level grades and What I Read On My Holidays, it's to be expected that the criteria and process are a little nebulous – but if the university is really serious about levelling the playing field, it should do more to ensure that the experience is approximately comparable whether you apply to Girton or John's. To date, the university still does not require its academics to undergo any but the most cursory training exercises – and only makes these compulsory for new interviewees, when it is precisely those who are most set in their ways who are likely to benefit from being made to think again about their approach. This plays into the hands of those who would dismiss Cambridge as an out-of-touch institution staffed by old duffers only interested in pert public schoolboys, and it should be a top priority. Like supervisions, interviews are a superbly individualistic element of this university's approach, and they ought not give way to other means of selection; but if Cambridge really cares about challenging people's preconceptions, they must do more to ensure that the scrupulously fair and reasonable online interview videos are not fictions, but fact.

Designs on us all

One positive thing to come out of the threat to Architecture: every other department in Cambridge must be richly envious of the fierce loyalty and creative assistance shown by the student body. Walking around the architecture faculty today, one *Varsity* team member marvelled at the enthusiasm shown by ArcSoc members, who were selling badges and T-shirts, distributing flyers and posters, and generally expressing little interest in anything but the survival of their department. This week a student organised work experience auction raised a remarkable £3,500, and even if the sale of a chance to get ahead in the industry to the highest bidder is a mildly dubious funding method, the innovation and passion of those who are doing all this is genuinely exciting. And warms the cockles of the heart.

This Monday sees a protest which the university has disdained by refusing the same permission regarding Senate House which it granted when fees were the issue of the day, and which has been slightly stymied by the failure to secure the police's permission to march. Despite this, as Wes Streeting and Luke McClaren argue on page 8, the event is a real chance for the rest of our student body to show its solidarity with the architecture department. There are those who whisper that Architecture is a testing ground, that other 'dispensable' humanities might be next – so even if you don't give two hoots about what the buildings you live in look like, there are valid self-interested reasons to attend. *Varsity* won't be coming out next week to report on the demonstration; so if you want to know about it, you'd better just go, instead. And, get a t-shirt. After all, if his or her department manages to survive, the student who made it might be famous one day.

Statutory last words

Oh, permit this minor self-indulgence. At least it's not a fashion shoot starring the *Varsity* staff. (It's happened before.) Thanks, everyone, for making it what seems to me to be more than an excuse for a student newspaper. We have been blessed with an extremely talented and congenial editorial team, which has gone a long way towards making what has the potential for being a nightmarishly arduous enterprise into the opposite.

Space does not permit, but Amol, Eve, James, Lucy, Chine Sarah, and Charlie, Henry, Olly, and especially the indispensable and under-recognised Ifiti and David, deserve special praise, because they are special. And everyone else whose name is listed in that bar to the left. And everyone who's written. Also, the long-suffering and gentle-spirited and open-hearted Laura. And parents, friends, generous supervisors, pets. And your mum.

I was going to write a pompous bit about why student journalism matters, and how great it is that *Varsity* is independent, and how good an editor I think Amol will be; but I think on reflection that the shorter these things are the better. So let's leave it at that, shall we?

Letters

We get thanked. Cool!

Dear Sir,

I write to express my dismay at the Oxbridge Admissions service investigated in *Varsity* last week (News, Nov 19), a "morally bankrupt" company profiting from worried applicants' desires to succeed. For several years – since I was a Cambridge applicant myself in 1999 (I am now a graduate student) – I have been running a similar service for prospective applicants, but with at least one major difference: that of cost.

On my website, www.oxbridge-admissions.org.uk, students who have applied can provide details of their interview experiences and applicants can view these accounts, all free of charge. It is purely an information-providing service which allows people from any background, especially those who do not have access to any resources such as mock interviews, to gain some background on the interview process, and to demystify it: having come from a similar background myself, I can vouch for the amount of help such little insight can be. The many emails I get thanking me for the website's help – help which I have merely facilitated, and which the many generous Oxbridge students have provided – add support to this conclusion.

I have never considered – and never will consider – charging for this service. It seems absurd to me that a company's entire business plan is founded on this notion of profiting from neuroses and circulating the image of an exclusive network one needs to "buy into".

Thank you, *Varsity*, for exposing this company, and I hope that students will continue to use resources which are free to all, rather than to those who subscribe and pay.

Jennie Lees
Trinity College
jal54@cantab.net

God damn them

Dear Sir,

As a Christian, it is with great interest that I read that The Damned are to turn on the Christmas lights this year (News, Nov 19). Not only have Cambridge city council gone to somewhat extreme lengths to turn the Christmas message on its head once and for all, they seem to have thrown the whole "peace and goodwill" idea out of the window as well. So when an eight year old child asks his mum or dad what we are celebrating on this annual festive occasion, what are we going to say? Disgraceful behaviour? A chance to drain our glasses and bank accounts? Religious intolerance? Take the Christ out of Christmas if you want, but be careful what you replace him with.

Mark Hopkins
Fitzwilliam College

A Bush basher strikes back

Dear Sir,

As a recent grad of Emmanuel College now living in Japan, I have to take issue with Devon Runyan's letter about the bashing of Republicans (letters, Nov 19).

Why should people come to knock on your door to understand your political opinion? Perhaps they are too busy: if you want to explain you need to get out there and spread the word yourself. Americans need to understand that many people's issue is not with their country, or even the Republican party, it is with 'Dubya' himself.

How can you complain about Europe wanting to 'force' its' ideals on your country? Last time I checked, Europeans weren't in the States instituting their ideals through the

barrel of a gun. The 'fundamental difference' that you speak of between countries doesn't stop Bush inflicting his right-wing Christian agenda on the rest of the world. What is 'condescending and ignorant' is to expect that people are going to passively accept your self-instituted role as a world policeman, without vocally criticising your policies.

Yours Peacefully,
Alex Swallow
Emmanuel 2003

New internationalists

Dear Sir,

Reading the travel section of *Varsity* (Nov 19) I was once again annoyed by having to settle for the patronising perspective of outsiders, who congratulate themselves for their insightful elucidation of life "beyond the normal tourist route".

Varsity (unlike most publications) does not need to settle for second-hand accounts of life in other countries penned by Brits who congratulate themselves for having some meaningful insight in the reality of foreigners.

In Cambridge we have a wealth of international students who would no doubt welcome the opportunity to tell others more about their places of origin. The quality of the travel section would be immeasurably improved if its articles were written from the viewpoint of people who call those countries home, instead of outsiders.

And that's leaving aside the banal observation that the section is in any event only aimed at those students who can afford foreign travel...

Mary Nel
Sidney Sussex College

Rock Rage

Dear Sir,

There is not the space here to explain the complexities of the small celtic nation down in the far southwest, but I want to say that if you don't understand what this is about, it's because you don't know enough about Cornwall, and what you do know is probably spoonfed by the tourist industry or other anglicising sources. Reading articles like 'Cornish Capers' (Travel, Nov 19) makes Cornish people like me howl in despair.

It seems to me that there are 3 views of Cornwall: 1) that it is a small celtic nation with a culture, history and language different to England. 2) it is a lovely quaint english county. 3) That it has beaches and you can drive there to get wrecked.

We shouldn't have to put up with view 3) any more than any other nation: it's us who choose to share Kernow with you; it's us that make the sacrifices; it's us that wear the false smiles so we don't spoil your hard earned vacation. But why should we? If all we get is property programs and a denial we had anything to sacrifice why don't we just start burning down emmets houses already? When the property prices have increased to the level that no-one who has lived in the county all their life can afford to stay, whilst Londoners, retired couples and the like will happily build or buy their dream home, when the young people of Kernow are unable to live in their own nation, when they find their culture and history is being pointlessly destroyed, what will they do?

Another hilarious point about the Cornish Capers piece was the article beside it, which talked about wandering off the tourist trail. Try it, or go home.

W Manley

letters@varsity.co.uk

Letters may be edited for space or style

Do some good

Dear Sir,

I went into the Oxfam Bookshop earlier this week and discovered that they have a gift system called Oxfam Unwrapped (www.oxfam-unwrapped.com). I thought that many people might be interested in this but might not have heard of it, which is why I am writing to *Varsity* in the hope that this will bring it to the attention of your readers.

It is very simple: you buy a gift, and Oxfam donates it to someone in need. I particularly liked the idea of a goat loan scheme: a goat will set you back £24 and the first female kid goes to the village goat loan scheme so that the process can be repeated. In return, they send you a card with a picture of your chosen gift, which says "I've bought you a goat... but I've sent it to someone who needs it more than you." You give this card instead of a more conventional present, hopefully bringing great happiness to both the family and the receiver of the card.

There's a large range of gifts, of varying types and prices. While obviously not suitable for every present for every person, I wonder how much difference could be made to people's lives if a few more of us sent a brood of chickens or a goat this Christmas, rather than something which we probably don't really need anyway, and which will be forgotten the next day and buried under a pile of old wrapping paper.

Helen Foxhall Forbes
Trinity College

Can anyone help?

Hi

While I was visiting your city a week ago, I found out your web site, so when I came back to my country I went to check it out. Cambridge is very nice indeed. A friend of mine who lives there brought me around and I appreciate a lot your living style.

We went in a local craft market of which I don't remember the name, it was in the city centre and I met a man who sells frames with pictures (it's the first market stand in the right hand side when you walk in). The man, when I told him I was Italian, got emotional because He did the second war world in the navy, his division was in Brindisi and Taranto in south of Italy. He said to me he would like to go to the same place where he died the war, before his died. I got emotional too.

I don't know his name, but maybe you could know the craft market which I said and maybe you, with the help of your communities, can help to realise the dream of that man.

Pietro Cucchi
Italy

(sic)

Correction

In a news piece entitled 'Off with OFFA, says Howard' (Nov 19), we mistakenly gave Joe Powell the title 'CUSU higher education funding officer'. Mr Powell and CUSU president Wes Streeting have both asked us to point out that this is not the case; in fact, Mr Powell is a termly officer at the Cambridge University Labour Club. The error was introduced in editing. Apologies for any confusion.

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Isn't Helen Foxhall Forbes nice? Her selflessness gets her two free cinema tickets. See how goodness is rewarded?

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A brief history of vaccinations

Krystyna Larkham goes back to the roots of the dreaded mumps jab

It started in China, and quickly spread. By the early 1700s it had reached as far as Turkey, and was brought back to England by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, the wife of a British ambassador there, altering the health of an entire nation. Soon variolation, the process of deliberately infecting a healthy individual with matter from the sores of a smallpox sufferer, was adopted by the health profession, and despite causing illness in most inoculated, and even deaths in a few, the system was deemed a success. Death rates due to Smallpox were down, severity of the illness was reduced, and the young Edward Jenner did not contract the potentially fatal disease.

This latter was a particularly useful side effect of the strange process, which involved injecting ground up scabs from smallpox blisters into the blood. Jenner grew up to be a country doctor, who noted that milkmaids, often in close contact with cows infected with the non fatal disease cowpox, did not bear any signs of smallpox scarring souring their creamy complexions. Whilst science has not noted exactly how he made this discovery, it led him to conduct his now infamous 1776 experiment, infecting a small boy first with cowpox and then deliberately with pus from smallpox sores. Thankfully for the boy, Jenner's reputation and the modern pharmaceutical industry, the boy didn't get ill. The world's first attempt at vaccination had succeeded.

One hundred years later, and more than as many miles, Louis Pasteur was investigating the decimation of French livestock from Anthrax and Chicken Cholera. Accidentally leaving valuable cholera strains in a warm laboratory over a long summer, Pasteur was frustrated on his return to discover that injection of this once virulent solution into his test chickens had no effect. Once a new strain had been cultured however and injected into the same test animals, they showed complete immunity to Chicken Cholera, whilst the new culture killed previously uninjected test subjects. Pasteur had discovered a way to create 100% successful animal vaccines, as proved by his public anthrax trials, vaccines which went on to save the French government the 7M francs owed as reparations after the Franco Prussian War.

Nowadays, a vaccineless world is unthinkable. This invisible defence shield, faster and more effective than 'Son of Star Wars' could ever be, successfully recruits our own immune system to combat pathogenic attack, whilst priming it for the next.



Squeamish about needles? Well, at least your mumps jab can't be as bad as being injected with cowpox by Edward Jenner

Like any defence system however, vaccinations are not without their critics. The scientific community has been attacked almost from the very implementation of our national vaccination programs, of falsifying results, of filling the coffers of the pharmaceutical industry with 'lies, damn lies and statistics'.

It is this latter which lends most weight to the anti vaccination lobby. Many reports on the success of mass vaccinations base their findings on the incidence of infectious disease since 1940, and indeed show marked decreases in the childhood illnesses included in the scheme. What the reports fail to note is that these diseases had been in decline since the start of the century, allowing critics to conclude that it is not vaccination, but just better living conditions which has decreased the incidence of childhood illness. In a 1970s vaccination trial for Tuberculosis in India, more individuals suffering from TB were found in the vaccinated than unvaccinated populations. In Oman's Polio outbreak of 1988, the highest incidence of the disease was in the regions of greatest vaccination coverage and vice versa.

The Scientific community requires valid statistics for acceptance of new research. However mis-diagnosis, and false-diagnosis, allegedly practised by the medical profession, can and do greatly alter the numbers of cases of disease x reported in any given year. George Bernard Shaw observed on mis-diagnosis: "During the last considerable

epidemic at the turn of the century, I was a member of the Health Committee of London Borough Council, and I learned how the credit of vaccination is kept up statistically by diagnosing all the revaccinated cases (of smallpox) as postular eczema, varioloid or what not-except smallpox". False diagnosis is the direct opposite, diagnosing a disease the patient is not suffering from, such as polio, falsely boosting numbers of reported cases. This practise died out with the implementation of mass vaccination, lending greater weight to the success of the vaccination programs.

It is not just the effectiveness of vaccines which is called into question by the anti-vaccination camp, however. The 'MMR scare', linking the combined vaccine with autism and crippling bowel disease is the most well known of horror stories, but for almost every vaccine success story, there is a footnote of unease. Only last week an Aberystwyth teenager had a reaction to his BCG shot serious enough to hospitalise him, and the American Government has admitted that along with the 84% of anthrax vaccinated troops who suffered some form of allergic response to the injection, the poorly tested vaccine may have been the cause of death of 22 year old reservist Rachel Lacey last April.

And yet, these numbers of deaths and reactions are miniscule compared to the thousands injected daily by global vaccination programs. Despite this, in the case of the triplicate MMR

vaccine, two children in the same family can appear to develop autism post vaccination, whereas thousands of other infants inoculated with the same batch are symptom free. The explanation may lie in a genetic disposition to reaction; already it has been discovered that children from a family with high rates of neurological disorder are three times more prone to neurological problems post combined diphtheria and tetanus shot.

So what is the future for vaccines? Recent trials of a vaccine for HIV in Thailand have all failed, and our annual flu vaccination programs for the sick and elderly give protection against strains likely to be circulating now. The vaccination development process is slow, and must constantly keep up with ever mutating viruses and bacteria.

There is some hope however; cancer vaccines are performing well in clinical trials, and this week saw the announcement of a vaccine for the cervical cancer causing Human Papilloma Virus. It is thought that the newly developed DNA insertion vaccines, which do not prompt a reaction from the body's immune system but rather provide the tools for attack, will see a new generation of reaction free, 100% effective protection. Until then, whilst the Nuremberg code forbids forced vaccination, in refusing one you are potentially exposing not just yourself, but your entire 'herd' to infection. It is our collective choice; we must use it wisely.

Vaccine Facts

Vaccines make our two-fold immune system believe its defences have been breached. The first response elicits symptoms characteristic of any type of infection, like a fever. Meanwhile, the adaptive immune system develops a specific response to the pathogen. Once created, the response is stored in the memory cells of the immune system, for up to a life span. Subsequent infections with the same micro organism result in a swift action by these memory cells to eradicate it.

The injected material must be safe, but recognisable by the immune system as the cause of disease. This can be done by: killing the organism before injection, (typhoid); injecting only the antigen, (flu); weakening the effects of the pathogen (MMR); injecting only the toxins produced by the micro organism, (short term diphtheria and tetanus immunity), or the infection of the individual with a similar organism, (the BCG to protect against TB).

Bangers and bubbly: what puts the fizz in your pop



Freudian, innit?

Zoe Smeaton

Fireworks and champagne, fireworks and champagne, they go together like a... Well it doesn't rhyme, and its not even always strictly true. But once a year - the 31st of December to be precise - they do indeed go together like the proverbial horse and carriage, and this Hogmanay, I am determined to have both.

And what better way to see in 2005 than with some exciting bangs? Fireworks come in a variety of forms, from the relatively primitive hand-held sparklers to the glorious aerial versions used over Midsummer Common. Despite their differences, all fireworks, great and small, require a combustion process of some sort. Sparklers use a wire scaffold coated with a slow burning compound that often reaches temperatures of up to 900°C, whilst firecrackers are all about dramatic explosions generated using gunpowder-like substances.

Commercial aerial fireworks are launched as shells, powered by explosive

compounds containing charcoal and sulphur, which upon ignition cause an explosion that exerts an upwards force on the shell and lights its fuse. This fuse burns so that at the desired altitude it ignites a second charge within the shell. A second explosion ensues which disperses and lights stars from the firework. These stars often contain metal dust which shines brightly upon heating, giving the sparkling effect observed from the ground. Chemicals emitting coloured light, complex shells which break in several stages, and artistic arrangements of the stars within their shells, combine to create the dazzling displays we witness each year.

With work to improve fireworks ongoing, the displays can only become more spectacular in the future. But what of the all important bubbly factor? Most people are agreed that champagne should be consumed on special occasions such as New Year, but why champagne in particular?

Champagne distinguishes itself from the average celebratory tippie by means of a delectable tingling sensation, warm-

ing the tongue from the very first sip. Contrary to popular belief though this fizzy feeling is not generated by bursting of the bubbles crammed into champagne, but rather comes from tiny acid burns occurring all over the tongue. As the carbon dioxide bubbles enter the mouth they dissolve in saliva and the gas is carried into the tongue tissue where the enzyme Carbonic Anhydrase converts it into carbonic acid which causes the burns. This explains why drinks containing bubbles of other gases, such as Guinness in which the bubbles are composed of nitrogen, feel smoother and less fizzy.

The bubbles in champagne have a lot more to answer for than minor burns, though. Many people claim that champagne goes straight to their head, and it seems the bubbles are to blame. Experiments carried out at the University of Surrey showed that in volunteers drinking the same amount of alcohol per kilogram of body mass, those drinking fizzy champagne averaged 0.7 milligrams of alcohol per millilitre of blood after 40 minutes. This value is

high compared with a mere 0.58 in people drinking flat champagne.

It is unclear how the bubbles can cause faster absorption of alcohol, but some scientists suggest that the carbon dioxide speeds the movement of alcohol from the stomach into the small intestine (where almost 80% of the substance is normally absorbed).

Drinking flat champagne, on the other hand, is almost as bad as staying in with your parents on the big night. Using tall skinny flutes provides less surface area than the shallow goblets often used at New Year and so dissipates the bubbles more slowly. The champagne can also be stopped from frothing over the glass top by pouring into a wet glass. The coating of liquid reduces the rate at which gas particles are drawn to and assemble around surface irregularities, hence slowing the formation of bubbles and preventing frothing over.

Armed with these tips you'll be ready to make the most of your New Year toast now: all that remains is to choose which party to attend. "To champagne and fireworks!" Oh, and 2005.

Have a Ho Ho Ho-liday this Christmas

All of our options have to be better than watching the Queen's speech with your mum...

Diving in Egypt as British temperatures plunge

Apparently Osama Bin-Laden's brother owns the Hard Rock Café in Sharm-el-Sheikh, which is a fact that surprised me when I saw a group of Egyptian waiters unashamedly dancing along to YMCA. Sharm-el Sheikh is not Egypt, although it is, technically, a part of that country, at the end of the Sinai Peninsula. The Egypt of popular imagination is a place of history, of pharaohs and pyramids, of ancient treasure and spectacular landscapes, contrasted, perhaps, with endless desert. Sharm does actually have these things, but they're made out of plastic and plaster, adorning cheap casinos and themed hotels to please European tourists seeking cheap sun. Sharm is one of the most fake towns that I have ever visited, mostly because of the fact that it's a new town, designed for the sole reason that anyone should both-er to visit – the diving.

The best thing about the town is leaving it, getting out of the heat, away from all the street hawkers that have moved in from Cairo to try and sell cheap perfume, getting away from the McDonald's of the desert. Apparently this desire to leave didn't used to be the case; before Sharm became a town that catered for diving tourists, it was a small settlement that was home to hardcore divers, at the edge of the desert and the sea. Now there's a hyperbaric chamber and the Navy on call should there ever be an emergency at sea, so some aspect, at least, of the thrill of danger posed by extreme sports has been removed.

Sharm doesn't stop at night so if diving doesn't take your fancy, or you have a day off the next day, you can always go into some cheap nightclub next to a Bedouin themed restaurant, or go to one of the plenty of bars offering beer, coffee and shisha and British flags.

You can, of course, go to the desert, if that takes your fancy. But the reason most people come is simply for the waters. Even in winter, they're much warmer than UK waters; and thanks to the Egyptian government's forward thinking policy of creating underwater natural parks, the variety of life is rather good down there – although it is being slightly damaged every day by novice divers who have a lack of respect for coral.



Olly Batham

I was always somewhat disparaging about the Red Sea; I'd dived places that had rarely been dived before, where tourism was barely happening. I wasn't sure what could actually be offered to someone who, perhaps arrogantly, considered themselves an experienced diver. You can't do particularly deep diving in Egypt; limited by law and insurance to diving to less than 30m unless you're on a technical course. However, there is more than enough to see in that limit. The coral in the Red Sea came as something of a disappointment to me: if variety and size of coral is really what you are looking for in a dive, go to the Far East. But most people want to see fish, and there are thousands of fish down there, more than I'd seen before, from tiny clownfish to megafauna, reef sharks, turtles, manta rays, and, for the lucky diver, hammerheads and the odd tiger shark. However, there are also a lot of other divers, who are often too adept at scaring off the more interesting wildlife.

More than just fish are offered. The vast number of diving schools out there mean that it's possible to get

trained in some pleasant waters, if you are new to diving, and even get some interesting dives in; it also means that there are more and more interesting sites – especially those for more advanced divers – being found regularly. The SS Thistlegorm, an admittedly overdived war-grave, is still definitely worth a visit if you get the time. It's unique in the fact it's the right way up, and it's easy to penetrate to have a look at the holds. It also has a unique atmosphere amongst the wrecks that I've dived. Thistlegorm is a war grave, and the full holds give the diver a curious sense of seeing a moment slowly being eroded by the sea.

A week is enough to get a snapshot of what can be offered. Luckily, more sites are being discovered all the time, especially further down the coasts. This also means that the dive industry is spreading further down the gulf, opening more of the sea up. So as Sharm-el-Sheikh the town becomes increasingly tackier and annoying, at least the avid diver is secure that there is always something out in the sea for them to find.

Olly Batham

In search of a White Christmas

As snow fell in Cambridge this week and with the holidays coming into view, I was reminded of the time I spent skiing in the last Christmas vacation.

I took advantage of a cheap late-availability deal and travelled to the popular Tyrolean resort of Kitzbühel, in western Austria. Worrying that going so early in the ski season to a resort of only 760m in altitude would yield little snow, my hopes were instantly raised as I arrived amidst heavy snowfall.

A short transfer from Salzburg later, my hopes were realised. In Kitzbühel, I was greeted by a traditional Austrian mountain village, in all its winter splendour – snow topped chapels and cobble stone streets. But there was clearly a pedigree for skiing as well: the vision of an illuminated ski run in the night sky provided immediate testament to this. Indeed, Kitzbühel offered a full complement of open, groomed pistes to which the area lift pass gave full access. I managed to explore the whole mountain range during my stay.

Up one side of the valley, the Kitzbüheler Horn was perfect for beginners or those wishing to break themselves back into skiing gently having not skied for a year. Most impressive however, was the other side of the valley which constituted the bulk of skiing. Apart from the famous World Cup Hannenkamm downhill run, the remainder of the ski area was mainly suited to intermediate level skiers offering a varied range of red-runs, as well as some challenging blacks. The descent into Kitzbühel provided a smooth run home after an arduous day's skiing in addition to spectacular views of the resort.

Kitzbühel was also good for snow-boarders with a fully equipped snow park, though the area did have limited off-piste opportunities. It did, though, have its fair share of jammy-4-year-old-helmeted-semi-professional skiers bombing it down the piste each day in addition to the silver haired, lycra-clad ex-downhill racers imperiously showing off their linked turns. The ski area was also sprawled across a wide area; I found walkie-talkies were a must for anyone wanting to keep in contact with a group; they also provided an ideal medium for eavesdropping on other groups' conversations and random MC-ing.

Skiing aside, for a small Austrian



James Stretton Callender

town, Kitzbühel offered a lively après ski programme. There were plenty of bars and cafés to choose from and Mountain Cafés were in abundance, providing a welcome break after a morning of red-runs. They served up delicacies such as Gernknödel, Glühwein and of course, the high carbohydrate Bratwurst. If we were lucky, lunchtime would be accompanied by the often piercing music of local Tyrolean bands. There were also opportunities to swim and slide the slides at the Aquarena, whilst other activities included night time sledging at a purpose-built track and floodlit skiing on the Hannenkamm for those who had not got their sufficient fix during the day.

When I took the time to stop skiing and admire the scenery, I was not disappointed. Frosty sunrises over The Backs had nothing on the panoramic views across the Alps into Germany and the snow covered pine trees littering mountain sides.

Kitzbühel was not as expensive as you might expect of a premier skiing resort. Food and drink whether in monopolistic mountain cafés or in a bar in town were reasonably priced as was the lift pass (about £90) which gave access to whole ski area (160km of piste). Accommodation was also cheap since it was a late-availability deal – about £270 for seven days half board in a three star hotel – a fraction of the price many residents paid.

So as the term draws to a close, scan those Teletext pages religiously to find that cracking deal – it's not as expensive as you think.

Tom Elkins

Work off those extra mince pies in Scotland

Peter Bell

It was 6:45am and still dark as we stepped out of the car, braving the chilly wind funnelled through Glen Coe. Dressed in thermals and windproof tops, hats and thick gloves, and with plenty of spare layers in our rucksacks, we were ready for anything the Highland weather might bring. This, the week between Christmas and New Year, when most of our Cambridge contemporaries would be sleeping off the excesses of earlier nights, we were in the Western Highlands of Scotland, tackling one of Britain's mightiest mountains.

We were high above the valley when the dawn finally started to break, bringing to the snowy tops above us a warmer, pink glow. The

snow line had already been reached, and our boots were starting to slip on the compacted ice of the path, but there were many more hours of ascent ahead.

Some hours later, the snow in the corrie was deep and hard, and it was time to strap crampons onto our boots and retrieve our ice axes from their cradles on the back of our packs. We climbed up a steep gully on one side of the corrie and broke through a cornice, an over-hanging wall of snow, to attain the summit ridge. The wind had dropped. The sky was a watery blue, and even the weak winter sun tried to dazzle us off the brilliant snow. Then came the final push for the summit. All we could hear was the crisp crunching of crampons, the squeaking of boots compacting

the snow and the metallic clash of ice axe meeting rocks hidden beneath the surface.

Finally we were there, posing for photos on the frost-covered cairn, axes raised triumphantly. The mountains of Scotland stretched to the horizon, white and tall, even the distant ranges appearing distinct in the clean winter air.

Some flee to sunny climates to escape the cold, dark British winter. They go to the sun-drenched beaches beckoning from the front pages of travel agents' magazines. Others head off on skiing holidays, a way of taming and sanitising the outdoors with enumerable road markers, a night life to rival any city, and a mountain restaurant never more than a short lift-ride away.



Toby Speight

Not me: this Christmas, while my parents and sister are heading to the airport en route for Val D'Isere, I'll be throwing my boots and crampons in the back of the car, along with a few crates of food and wine, or even some whisky, to bring cheer in the long evenings, and heading up the M74 to

Scotland. Britain does cold and dark well, and Scotland does it best – so why not take advantage of the island we live on? The beautiful snow and ice, clear skies, and then comfortable firesides, content in the knowledge that we've really earned those extra mince pies.

/clubs

FRIDAY 26

FEZ Stu Banks Chunky House
CLARE Fat Poppaddaddys The soulful sounds tie up the term
JUNCTION Pop Art Indie, alternative, retro, pop

SATURDAY 27

FEZ Liquid People Africanism All Stars and Defected Records
CLARE Fat Poppaddaddys The soulful sounds tie up the term
JUNCTION Dot Cotton The best East-Anglian night
CAIUS Overnight Celebrity The best in A List celebrity blinging
BOILER ROOM Scrambled 'Ed Hip hop and Jungle from Rez

SUNDAY 28

LIFE Sunday Roast Cheese and Chart

MONDAY 29

FEZ Fat Poppaddaddys Mix of Funky Grooves
COCO Dynamo CUSU Eclectix with Fabio

TUESDAY 30

BALLARE Top Banana CUSU's event with Joe Scully
COCO Licked That urban flava
LIFE Unique LBGT extravaganza

WEDNESDAY 1

BALLARE Rumboogie Sports Men and Women

THURSDAY 2

COCO Urbanite CUSU Hip Hop and RnB

FRIDAY 3

JUNCTION Ezio Acoustic sounds
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/guide /stage

FRIDAY 26

19:45 ADC Footlights and ADC present **Great Expectations**
23:00 ADC CUADC present **Matilda Liar!**
22:00 Pembroke New Cellars **How not to come out to your parents**
19:45 Emma College, Queen's Bldng REDS - **The Government Inspector**
20:00 Homerton Auditorium Hats and ADC present **The Tempest**
20:00 Pembroke New Cellars **Hedwig and the Agry Inch**
19:45 Queens College Fitzpatrick Hall **A la reserche du temps perdu**

SATURDAY 27

19:45 ADC Footlights and ADC present **Great Expectations**
23:00 ADC CUADC present **Matilda Liar!**
22:00 Pembroke New Cellars **How not to come out to your parents**
19:45 Emma College, Queen's Bldng REDS - **The Government Inspector**
20:00 Homerton Auditorium Hats and ADC present **The Tempest**
20:00 Pembroke New Cellars **Hedwig and the Agry Inch**
19:45 Queens College Fitzpatrick Hall **A la reserche du temps perdu**

National Student Drama Festival
12-14 & 15-17 St Chads Octagon ACTORS Play & The Actor's Tool Box
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15-17 Jane Harrison Rm, Newnham DIRECTORS workshop
Places are limited: email bella.heesom@cuadc.org

SUNDAY 28

23:00 ADC CUADC present **Matilda Liar!**
19:45 ADC CUADC present **Whose Line is it Anyway?**

MONDAY 29

19:45 ADC Footlights and ADC present **Great Expectations**

TUESDAY 30

19:45 ADC Footlights and ADC present **Great Expectations**
19 & 21 Corpus Playroom **Cleansed and the Pitchfork Disney**
23:00 ADC **The Lover**

WEDNESDAY 1

19:45 ADC Footlights and ADC present **Great Expectations**
19 & 21 Corpus Playroom **Cleansed and the Pitchfork Disney**
23:00 ADC **The Lover**

THURSDAY 2

19:45 ADC Footlights and ADC present **Great Expectations**
19 & 21 Corpus Playroom **Cleansed and the Pitchfork Disney**
23:00 ADC **The Lover**
19:45 Michaelhouse Centre Fleet present **The Winter's Tale**

FRIDAY 3

19:45 ADC Footlights and ADC present **Great Expectations**
19 & 21 Corpus Playroom **Cleansed and the Pitchfork Disney**
23:00 ADC **The Lover**
19:45 Michaelhouse Centre Fleet present **The Winter's Tale**

BRIAN RUNNETT PRIZE
COMPETITION 2005

The Brian Runnett* Prize for organ playing is open to all Junior Members of the University.

- The Competition will take place on Tuesday 8 March 2005 in St John's College Chapel.
- Candidates will be required to play:
 - Vivace (first movement) *only* from Trio Sonata No. 6 in G major BWV 530 Bach
 - Fugue *only* from Sonata 'on the 94th Psalm' Reubke
- The St John's College Chapel Organ will be available for practice (two hours per candidate) during the fortnight before the Competition.
- Intending candidates should inform Caroline Marks, Assistant to the Director of Music of St John's College (c.f.marks@joh.cam.ac.uk) by Monday 7 February 2005.

In the event of a large entry, a short-listing procedure will be implemented.

- There will be three adjudicators: Mr Paul Trepte, Mr Colin Walsh and Dr David Hill.
- The value of the prize is £240.

The Gilbert and Sullivan Society opens auditions for its week 6 Lent term Show at the Cambridge Arts Theatre Orpheus in the Underworld
Please contact jcd42@cam.ac.uk
No experience is necessary for this professional production.

Auditions for **'Victimese'** will be held in Peterhouse Music room on:
FRIDAY 26TH NOV - 1300-1600 SATURDAY 27TH NOV - 1000-1130 SUNDAY 28TH NOV - 1100-1400
Email Gytha Lodge (gl247@cam.ac.uk) for more information.

reDs AUDITIONS FOR
ADC Week Six Lateshow
Lunch 'By Steven Berkoff
12pm - 4pm Sat 27th,
Sun 28th Nov.
Queen's Building, Emmanuel College
Contact Thomas (tce25) for info.

BATS announces auditions for...
HAMLET
(Performed Week 6 Lent Term)
Thursday 25th and Friday 26th
November, 3 - 7pm,
Old Kitchens, Queens' College.
ABIGAIL'S PARTY
(Performed Week 4 Lent Term)
Saturday 27th and Sunday 28th
November, 12 - 4pm,
Angevin Room, Queens' College.
THE MORNING AFTER OPTIMISM
(Performed Week 6 Lent Term)
Saturday 27th November,
11 - 4, Fitzpatrick Hall, Queens' College.

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Congratulations Ben and Cherie on getting hitched. xxx

Footlights
CAMBRIDGE FOOTLIGHTS announces **Smoker Auditions** (for Tue 30th Dec), to be held Saturday 27th from 12:00 till 2:00pm, in the ADC dressing rooms.
Auditions will also be held for this year's **SPRING REVUE** - the Footlights Lent Term **Main Show** - to be held between 4:00pm and 20:00pm this Saturday and Sunday in the Angevin Room, Queens' College.

PEMBROKE
Auditions for Lent Term 2005!!
25th-28th November 2004

Six Degrees of Separation
By John Guare
Week 4 Main Show in Pembroke New Cellars
Fri 26th: 1-6pm, Art Room, King's
Sun 28th: 10-2pm, Art Room, King's
Director: Stacey, ssg28.

The Fire Raisers
By Max Frisch
Week 4 Late Show at the ADC Theatre
Sat 27th: 11.15-4pm, ADC Dressing Room
Sun 28th: 12.30-5pm, ADC Dressing Room
Director: Tom, 07813630766, wtf2.

Titus Andronicus
By William Shakespeare
To be performed at the Corpus Playroom.
Sat 27th: 11-6pm in N7, Pembroke
Sun 28th: 12- 7pm in N7, Pembroke
Director: Daisy, deb31.

An Ideal Husband
By Oscar Wilde
Week 7 Main Show in Pembroke New Cellars:
Sat 27th: 11-2 in O Supervision Room, Pembroke
Sun 28th: 12-2, 4-6 in O Supervision Room, Pembroke
Director: Edmund, eh277.

Bailegangaire
By Tom Murphy
Week 7 Late Show in Pembroke New Cellars
Thu 25th: 4-8pm, F1b Cripps Building, Saint John's.
Fri 26th: 4-8pm, F1b Cripps Building, Saint John's.
Female parts only.
Director: Liliane, lc357.

For more info visit www.pembrokeplayers.org.



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Idler's world news

Chris Smyth rounds up the most important and titillating stories of the week

American Liberals vow to hide their contempt better 'next time'

AFTER MUCH soul-searching following George Bush's decisive victory in the American presidential elections, Democrats have vowed that next time they will conceal their scorn for Republican voters much more thoroughly. "We lost," said Democratic National Committee chairman Terry McAuliffe. "And that means we've had to think long and hard about where we went wrong. In the end we think it comes down to our failure to pretend to respect our opponents' opinions. We're going to do better next time."

Massachusetts Senator Ted Kennedy agreed. "We've really got to listen to ordinary voters next time," he said. "And, even more importantly, to not then mock their ignorant, ill-informed and bigoted opinions."

Defeated Presidential candidate John Kerry also admitted mistakes. "It's true I could have done more to pander to the gun-loving fundamentalist nutjobs during the campaign. A few more hunting photo-ops was all it would have taken to fool them, right? I mean, we all know I'd have ignored them once we'd actually won. I sure won't be making that mistake again."

New York Times columnist Paul Krugman, a noted liberal, made a similar point. "I do think the perception of arrogance and contempt for ordinary people cost us the election. Next time we need to work harder to persuade them we

understand their concerns and values, and show them we respect their redneck, gay-hat... er, their deeply held moral convictions."

Battery chicken celebrates ban on foxhunting



Chicken: has valid opinions of own

CARCASS 3344/55#, a battery chicken housed in an intensive farming unit near Hull, has greeted the passing of a Bill banning fox-hunting with jubilation. "This is excellent news," said 3344/55#. "A major breakthrough for animal rights in Britain, and a truly positive sign for the future."

Speaking from his 30cm by 20cm cubicle, 3344/55# explained how he

saw the implications of the new law.

"Parliament has made it unambiguously clear that it is prepared to place animal welfare above human enjoyment, even in the face of a concerted opposition campaign. I think this is a very strong sign that a ban on battery farming cannot be far away. Soon we may have space to turn around, freedom from the sharp beaks of others, and inadequate diet. And light, natural light..."

3344/55#'s comments were cut short when he was slaughtered, eviscerated and turned into three sandwiches, a cup-a-soup and a box of nuggets.

Iran promises to stop nuclear production 'for now'

IN WHAT is being hailed as a major diplomatic breakthrough, negotiators from the EU trio of France, Germany and Britain have struck a deal whereby Iran will commit to freezing its uranium enrichment program "for the time being".

Many western observers believe that Iran intends to produce nuclear weapons, for which enriched uranium is crucial. Under the new agreement, the Iranian government has said it will not move to industrial-scale production of weapons-grade material 'just yet'.

International analysts agree this is a positive step. In the view of Paul King, of the Institute for Strategic Studies, a full-scale nuclear war in the Middle East is now unlikely, "for the foreseeable future."

Kettle, pot accused of 'racial comment'

Adam Edelshain

AFTER SUFFERING years of abuse, Kettle has recently decided that enough is enough and is pressing charges against Pot for racial jibes. As a football fan, and a firm favourite at half time, Kettle has declared that now is the time to try and stamp racism out of the world, whether it be in football or the kitchen. In his statement to the press, Kettle announced his intentions to take Pot to court, and is thought to be seeking compensation.

Kettle was recorded as saying "I am fed up of being pejoratively called 'black' by that Pot. It is clearly racially motivated, totally unnecessary and not even true. For the record I come in a wide variety of different colours."

Pot has expressed his anger at Kettle's statement and a close friend of Pot's believes he will counter-sue Kettle for besmirching his good name. Pot himself has gone public to say that he has never been racist and that the quote has been taken out of context. He then cited that "If anything, Kettle is the racist. I know that most of the vegetables I cook tend not to be black, but look at Kettle. Have you ever seen him boil anything that wasn't clear? I've heard that he's often referred to as a 'kettle of fish,' but it's a lie. He doesn't like fish. He's the racist."

Kettle refused to comment when these remarks were put to him, but Toaster has come forward in full support of Kettle. In an exclusive inter-

view with *The Idler*, Toaster revealed that Pot was a closet character, making appearances very rarely and only at special times of day. "He's almost never been out past 10 o'clock. He's a complete freak. I'm glad that someone's trying to nail the old fool. He's also bitter at the popularity of Microwave and needs to be taught a lesson."

"Pot may well get put away for some time"

Toaster later added, "Pot's not just a racist. I mean, he hisses all the time and spits a lot but we've seen him smoking too." Pot's smoking habit is unconfirmed but another leading publication ran the headline "CrackPot" only two days ago and though the sources of the aforementioned article were possibly dubious, this does indicate the threat of a burgeoning drug habit.

To ascertain whether the nation was in support of Kettle, we ran a quick poll. Pot seems to be condemned by the public, with Cutlery sharpening their knives in anticipation of a swift and brutal verdict. The Judge will be making his decision early next week, but a court insider was heard to say, "Pot may well get put away for some time."

Varsity's production managers turned agony aunts solve your problems



David and Ifti

Dear David and Ifti,

I'm really worried about my mother - she has recently split up with my father and now has a fetish for younger men. She keeps coming to visit me at uni but constantly flirts with and chats up my male housemates. They are starting to think that I am really weird but I haven't got the heart to tell my mother not to come up to visit.

Love from,
A Camper, Caius

Dear Anthony,

Oh dear. It seems to me that your mother is craving affection. You must make sure that you are there for her but at the same time try to demonstrate your own independence and show that these housemates are your contemporaries and not hers.

Nil carborundum.
David

Dear David and Ifti,

I have no friends. I think there is something wrong with me. I thought that making friends would be hard but not this bad. I must admit that I don't like people very much and people generally don't like me because they say that I

smell. I'd like to make some friends before I finish my mathematics degree next year. How should I go about it?

Yours,
A Loner, New Hall

Dear Andrew,

Yeah, that's a bit sad. Don't worry though. As they say every man is an island, and yours is just well fortified, at least in the olfactory sense. Everyone tries to defend their island, with varying degrees of success. Me, I like picking my nose. You've got the smell thing going for you. Be glad that its not something more debilitating, like being a twat.

Good luck,
Ifti

Dear David and Ifti,

My girlfriend keeps hinting about some 'sexy lingerie' and 'pink fluffy handcuffs' that she would like for Christmas from Ann Summers but I'm too embarrassed to go in there.

Best,
A. String, Pembroke

Dear George,
Just do it. Enjoy the festive season.
David and Ifti

Tories shoot own feet Stefan Fraczek investigates

TORY PARTY members were relieved last week when, after a short absence, the Party returned to its policy of shooting itself in the foot with the controversial sacking of Boris Johnson, following the claims that he had an affair with a fellow Spectator columnist.

Backed by several senior Tory MPs, Howard insisted that the real reason that he had sacked Johnson was because of how he denied the allegations regarding his fling with Petronella Wyatt, and hence committed the cardinal sin of telling lies. He did not respond when some pointed out that his recent statement "Conservatives will win the next General Election" was perhaps an even bigger lie.

Having successfully alienated traditional Tory voters by sacking their favourite MP, Howard went on to alienate the rest of the country by speaking out against Boris' sexual misconduct (although aides pointed out that this elicited a very positive response in the crucial age 74 - 89 demographic).

"We do not stand for fornication in our party," Howard concluded. After another backbench rebellion broke out, he hastily amended his statement, assuring voters that "the Conservative Party nonetheless has absolutely no prejudice against gays, single mothers,



Johnson: has valid feet of own

or university students."

Senior Tories, never fully comfortable with any form of charisma on the front bench, were quick to back Howard. "Adultery is completely unacceptable in the Conservatives," added Ann Widdecombe. When confronted with the names of David Mellor, John Major, and Edwina Currie, she blustered that, in her entire political career, no MP of

any party had been tempted to instigate an affair with her, before refusing to comment any further.

Johnson's comments after the death of Ken Bigley are also cited as a reason for his sacking. A Central Office source claims that Boris' controversial article in the Spectator may have cost the Tories their key target seat of Liverpool Walton. With an "encouraging" 6% of the vote in 2001, a swing of just 36% is needed to topple Labour's fragile majority of 18,000, and it is feared that this will no longer be possible. Indeed, some political analysts speculate that this could be a crushing blow to the Conservatives' hopes of regaining their support amongst the few thousand working-class Northerners who might actually consider voting for them.

The Labour Party condemned the sacking of Johnson, seeing this incident as "yet another example of Tory extremism against immigration, the working class, and now Boris Johnson." Charles Kennedy, meanwhile, promised that the Liberal Democrats would never have sacked such a popular and well-known public figure from their front bench - that is, he admitted, in the unlikely event of a popular and well-known public figure having become a Liberal Democrat MP in the first place.

Alas, this is the last idler. Thanks to all who contributed articles over the past weeks

The world will listen, but only if you turn it up

Stuart Fox feels like music is taking over his life - and it's stuck on repeat

If you've been clubbing recently, you may have witnessed - or perhaps been involved in - one of the most ridiculously ubiquitous spectacles occurring nationwide. Picture the scene: alcohol consumption rising; inhibitions fleeing; confidence swelling at the same rate as the throbbing, overpopulated dance floor. As that anthem of contented individualism, Chesney Hawkes's 'The One and Only', resounds, you can see people singing along in unison: declaring that they are the one and only, there's nobody they'd

rather be, and most absurdly, that they're 'not the same as all the rest'. Right, so everyone's here in this sweaty club, most inebriated, dressed similarly, and affirming their unshakeable sense of individuality by collectively incanting an insipid early 90's pop song.

Okay, so they're just trying to have a good time, the 'cheesy' atmosphere is a tonic to the stresses of over-burdened lives. However, a serious point arises from this miasma of bad taste. If you've ever worked a typical, monotonous 9-5 office job, you'll no doubt be

familiar with the wonders of having an office radio. Cocooned in a drab setting day after day, that radio supplies a vital source of diversion, a window to the apparent freedom of the world outside; you can be steered through the day by it: once Chris Moyles has done one of his hilarious musical parodies it's likely time for the morning's tea break; Ken Bruce's quiz heralds lunch time; and by the time Colin and Edith depart, home time seems comformingly close.

As the end of the week approaches, the DJs on local radio encourage you to go out and 'have it large' in one of the night-spots that glut every city; the subtext of which is 'spend a fair chunk of the money - which 40

hours' tedious labour has rewarded you with - in getting drunk as quickly as possible; sing along to Chesney or similar; get a kebab and a taxi home; and if you're lucky, maybe even cavort with the opposite sex.'

The implication is undeniable: amusement is merely a prolongation of work, defined only in its perceived opposition to the fetters of the working week. Entertainment and the media are complicit: the radio is the friendly voice that assuages until the weekend; television generates vicarious excitement every evening. Pop music lives up to its name only by aurally assaulting listeners, creating false appetites for compositions which are usually only as 'catchy' as they are

inane, and providing the usual soundtrack to the drug and alcohol fuelled revelry which obliterates reality for a few delightful hours each week.

What we all need to do is be a bit more individual and independent - to think for ourselves, be different. You could eat at one of those ethnic places down Mill Road instead of going to Pizza Express; not buy all your clothes from H&M; create your own Libertines fanzine called 'The Dilettantes' instead of buying the NME; buy a rotund cat, name it Capitalism and poke it with a biro.

Perhaps Chesney was right after all. Come back, all's forgiven: we need your songwriter to tell us what to do next...

pick of the week

Learn from your betters...



Sado-minglism Part II Kings College, Friday 3rd December

The termly mingle offers music lovers the chance to party hard to a spectacular line-up. With Jehst, DJ Friction and our very own DJ Moley, this is going to be a roadblock.



I Heart Huckabees Arts Picturehouse, from 26th November

David O'Russell's latest compelling comedy looks really really good. It's been hyped, it has Dustin Hoffman in it and it looked really good in a trailer I saw the other day.



The Lover ADC Theatre, 30th Nov - 4th Dec, 11pm

Pinter's drama of sexual politics takes an apparently stale relationship as its starting point. This ADC lateshow promises to challenge and fascinate the audience.



Chorus and CUMS I Kings College Chapel, Weds 1st Dec, 8pm

Winner of the CUMS Composition Competition Catherine Bott presents Holst's Hymn of Jesus and Vaughan Williams' Sea Symphony.



OPEN Kettle's Yard 13 November - 2 January

This exhibition showcases some of the liveliest art being made in the East of England. Weighted towards painting, with landscape and travel as recurring themes.

image of the week



Easter Festivities in Damascus, Syria. By Nadia von Maltzahn

photo courtesy of



www.phocus.org.uk

Talk: Underwater Photography
Saturday 27th November,
Winstanley Lecture Theatre,
Trinity College

Walking in a Freudian wonderland

Martha Spurrier and Mathilda Imlah explore the darker side of the psyche

Sarah Kane's *Cleansed* is like an inhalation before the apocalypse: Philip Ridley's *The Pitchfork Disney* is like an exhalation afterwards. These are not polar opposites, but rather approach a meridian of the psyche through chocolate and masochistic buggery. Sivapalan directs both these plays consecutively in the closeted space of Corpus Playroom, with a rotating cast consisting of solid Cambridge talent.

Cleansed is a difficult play to stage. After a decade of adjustment to such work as Kane's, confrontational theatre is still not well-received by British audiences. This production addresses the problem head-on, aiming to strike a balance between graphic art and vivid human perception. This is overt experimental theatre, but refreshingly its violence is not lost in a political wilderness – instead channelled into an angry and diverse sensitivity.

Whilst the Daily Mail dubbed *Cleansed*, "Dirty filth", Sivapalan recrafts this pejorative as a double negative; the play actually derives its emotional intensity from escalating brutality. Moreover, as a drama about love, brutality is all the more poignant.

The play traces the machinations of a group of inmates, simultaneously abused and sustained by the institution. There is a deliberate discordance in the piece which reflects this; the set is, in the first



Albert Mochel-Von-Dem-Bausche

Which is the ego and which is the id?

half, a cramped and internalised structure. It is framed by hostile faceless figures, choreographed to create an awkward and limiting dimension, felt keenly by cast and audience.

Approaching the generic stylisation of the play, Sivapalan brings great directorial innovation, particularly in the realisation of the surreal. What we saw in rehearsal was markedly polished, well conceived and perceptive.

Following *Cleansed* is Ridley's *The Pitchfork Disney*: an equally explorative, but gentler foray into the psychology of an embedded emotional complexity. As producer Roz Gater points out, this piece is less shock factor and more a subtle mental perversion.

A nightmarish vision of conscious and subconscious is evoked by twins Haley and Presley – themselves an embodiment of the Freudian 'id' and

'ego' – whose waking or dreaming status is the pivot of the action. Ridley studies the process of transfiguring the horrific to the beautiful, a theme central to *Cleansed*, but with shift towards naturalism. As Sivapalan states, redemption is achieved through retelling.

This redemptive element is perhaps the counterpart to the apocalyptic vein which courses through both plays. It is a balance between love and violence, dependence and decay, which dampens the audience alienation usually achieved by confrontational theatre.

Upon the strength of the acting and direction that we saw these difficult pieces of theatre have much potential. They should be seen because as texts they are not – and yet should be – part of the Cambridge canon.

Cleansed and The Pitchfork Disney are at the Corpus Playroom from 30th November – 4th December at 7pm and 9pm. Performances will be followed by discussion in the bar of the Arts Theatre

See varsity.co.uk for a journey into theatre from the dark side

Lover in the afternoon

Lisa Owens

Following on from John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* in the Corpus Playroom earlier this term, *The Lover*, by Harold Pinter, offers us another take on the stifling domesticity of mid-twentieth century middle-class Britain. Directed by Sophie Middlemiss, this ADC lateshow promises to be a slick, powerful production that will challenge and fascinate the audience.

The protagonists, indeed the only characters, are Richard and Sarah, a suburban archetypal bourgeois couple, who escape the sterile monotony of their marriage by inventing sexual role-playing games. Richard comes home from work in the afternoon as 'Max', Sarah's lover, and their erotic personas take on a life of their own, providing an outlet for their otherwise repressed creative impulses.

The fragile structure of this arrangement begins to break down when Richard, no longer comfortable with the silence between reality and alter-reality, blurs the boundaries, forcing the two worlds together with cruel determination.

Jenny Lee as Sarah delivers a captivating performance. Her voice is melodious, but perfectly controlled, hinting at complex frustration beneath her studied politeness. Her movements are impeccably timed: a suggestion of a pause before getting up to perform domestic tasks, or routine habits, such as lighting a cigarette or taking a sip of whisky, sensitively highlights the chasm between Sarah's predictable daily existence, and the expressive, emotional being she longs to be.

Dan Mansell's interpretation of Richard is meticulously observed and exciting to watch. His clipped tones and quick, sharp reactions very successfully portray a man riddled with insecurities, desperately trying to maintain composure in the face of fundamental self-doubt. These performances are full and complex: clearly the result of a thorough, but organic rehearsal process.

The set design will reflect the stark contrast between the cold reality of Richard and Sarah's relationship, and the thrilling liberation that is unleashed in the afternoon 'lover' sessions. The set is divided into two sections: the bedroom and the living room, which will indicate different moods. The bed is a visual rep-



Jenny Leigh: "her voice is melodious but perfectly controlled"

resentation of the frustrated adherence to marital conduct, and covered in tight, starched white sheets. The atmosphere in the living room will be one of heady seductiveness with diaphanous materials and blurred patterns.

This production of *The Lover* looks certain to reach its full potential, with its remarkable attention to detail and thoughtful, sensitive direction.

At the ADC Theatre from 30th November – 4th December at 11pm

Telling tall tales on a winter's night

Arthur House

'Exciting new theatre companies' in Cambridge are nothing new or exciting, but here comes another one: Fleet. The last thing I want to see is more students resorting to Shakespeare as a safe option, under the impression that the reputation and the 'sacred' text of our national poet will mask their own ineptitude and put bums on seats. Shakespeare is really hard to do well, but director Nick Blackburn has worked with members

of Complicité, Frantic Assembly and the RSC. Oh, and he's doing a PhD on Shakespeare. We should probably give Fleet's first venture, *The Winter's Tale*, a chance.

From conversation, it is clear that Blackburn understands the need to dispel the popular arrogance that Shakespeare magically 'transcends history' in a way that no other writer does. To make a 1611 play resonate today requires more vision and imagination than one that was written last year. The eschewal of traditional student venues

in favour of St. Michael's Church, and the use of lamps, cloths and abstract movement should create something fresh and engaging, whilst the attractive cast (from the brief scenes I saw) show some real promise.

The Winter's Tale, for those that don't know, has nothing to do with winter (or Christmas, for that matter). Part courtly, part domestic, part pastoral idyll, it comes close to being tragic only to achieve redemption, pressing heavily on the interface between illusion and reality.

The majority of the action will unfold on a thrust stage in the west end of the church (now a cavernous café), but the crucial 'statue' scene at the end will happen right down in front of the altar, creating a holy yet distanced perspective from which to believe or disbelieve. To say any more would be to spoil Blackburn's party. I am intrigued to see if it works.

At the Michaelhouse Centre, Trinity Street, from 29th November – 3rd December at 7.45pm

Marat de Sade

Harriet Walker witnessed the sheer debauchery of it all

Musicals are often painful and their audiences oddly masochistic – imagine then, a musical featuring the Marquis de Sade. The Lady Margaret Players' production of Peter Weiss' *Marat de Sade* bases the dilemmas (and the singing) of the French revolution and the Napoleonic wars inside a madhouse, where the deviant de Sade argues with the philosopher Marat about matters of social idealism. All this and a chorus line.

Don't be fooled: *Marat de Sade* is no *Les Misérables*. There is none of the pompous gesturing and optimistic marching with dirty faces that we may associate with French-inspired musicals. The production is unrelentingly disturbing, from the interruptions by the wailing inmates to the on-going groping of bodily parts that madmen seem to enjoy so much.

The production is ambitious and the cast enthusiastic, but there is something worrying lingering behind this play which makes it incredibly uneasy to stage and watch. And I don't mean the ever-present, lurking Marquis.

There are moments of comic genius and Ben Hadley commands attention in his role as the Herald, but there are also moments of intense poignancy, which James Kinman's portrayal of Marat brings out magnificently. But then there is the problem of this poignancy maintaining its equilibrium (and a straight face) when the brass band strikes up and the rest of the cast start dancing.

A play that takes quite a lot of getting used to, the production is not for your average musical-goer. This is the dark side of Lloyd Webber, although just as opulent when it comes to the staging. Strait-jackets abound and Marat sits throughout in the bathwater he will eventually die in, surrounded by eerily dirty off-white lunatics.

The production also encourages audience participation, as you could well find yourself sitting next to the owner of the asylum, Coulmier (played by Ben Bland) or being dragged away by any one of the gibbering inmates. This is a fast-paced and offbeat production which skews expectations and gives them a good hard seeing to.

At St John's School of Pythagoras from 30th November – 4th December at 7.45pm

And the rest...

THE TEMPEST
at the Homerton Auditorium until Saturday



Roz Gater and Kay Drage Downing

Ferdinand and Miranda made your heart swell. The camp Trinculo was side-splittingly hilarious and the whole production was slick and imaginative.

Lying Matilda

Jonathan Beckman

Kids don't get scarred enough these days. The tellytubbyfication of children's culture has led to an entire generation believing that their future is fluffy and bouncy. Little blighters in previous ages, force-fed a grim diet of the Brothers Grimm, soon learnt that life was short, brutal and painful.

Matilda Liar is a fairy-tale which combines modern parental worries and woes with the fabular narrative of Hillaire Belloc's *Cautionary Verses*. Matilda's constant lying causes

A little girl deeply troubled by hypocrisy

her mother, father, brother and sister intense irritation. She is a sensitive teenager, willing, desperately, to be turned into the beautiful princess she knows, deep inside, she doesn't resemble.

However, when she takes a truth pill, her involuntary honesty pushes this family over the brink towards disfunctionality. The necessary lies and faux ignorance that we all employ in order to maintain working social relationships are blown away by the whirlwind of Matilda's veracity. A party not only falls apart in chaos but turns dark and sinister as family mem-

bers discover that secrets are lies, simply by virtue of silence.

All of the cast are engaging. Particularly impressive are Richard J Thomas as the father, whose jovial persona hides a sea-swell of selfishness and rage. Nikky Arding's Fiona, who has left her husband and children, manages to combine a prim brittleness with a spirit of compassion and conciliation.

At the top of this pyramid of theatrical excellence is Esme Harwood's Matilda. Her timing is perfect and seemingly effortlessly. She spits out acid jibes with her eyes burning. Yet she also captures Matilda's emotional depth, her need to love and be loved. Most importantly, throughout, she remains a little girl, with cutely stripped socks and a potentially cherubic grin, who is deeply troubled by inconsistency and hypocrisy.

Chris Adam's clear and cogent direction, bar the occasional unfocused shuffling, gives each of the characters the opportunity to display genuinely complexity. And there is a gruesome ending for those who think that repressed homosexuality and broken families are not painful enough.

Honestly, cross my heart and hope to die (OK, maybe I won't go that far), hop along to the ADC for an evening whose dark humour is the perfect complement to the upbeat ending of the similarly excellent panto.

At the ADC Theatre until Saturday, at 11pm

Dickens with a twist

Tess Riley tucks into a generous slice of festive cheer

Going to a panto is like taking your boyfriend to Cocos; you'll laugh, you'll shout with frustration, and you'll witness some very dodgy dancing. But guess what? You still love 'em at the end of the day.

And so we come to the annual family visit, the Christmas show: in November. Well, time does funny things in Cambridge and, if the wrapping paper is in Sainsburys, it can only mean one thing: this year's pantomime is here, adapted from Dickens' *Great Expectations* by Simon Bird and Joe Thomas and presented by the ADC in collaboration with Footlights.

Now, I could have a wee pun on the title before I get going – "I had great expectations for this play and they were all fulfilled" blah blah blah – but that would just delay the nitty gritty of this article.

Well it was fabulous. Lots of music, fantastic

costumes, dodgy scene-changes and some brilliant one-liners. I was particularly fond of the educated cow, played by Jonny Sweet, the most eminent cow in his...field. Not only is this bovine a delightful tease, but later returns to join the two rapping ghosts of Christmas Present and Future, as the cow-ghost of Christmas Pluperfect – English students clearly had a look-in on this script.

Dan Mansell puts on a sparkling performance as Mrs Joe, Pip's down-trodden sister. He works very well with the "nice-but-dim" Joe, her husband, played by Oli Robinson, who describes the unexplained loss of

Damian the Turkey as "like the mystery of the Virgin Birth".

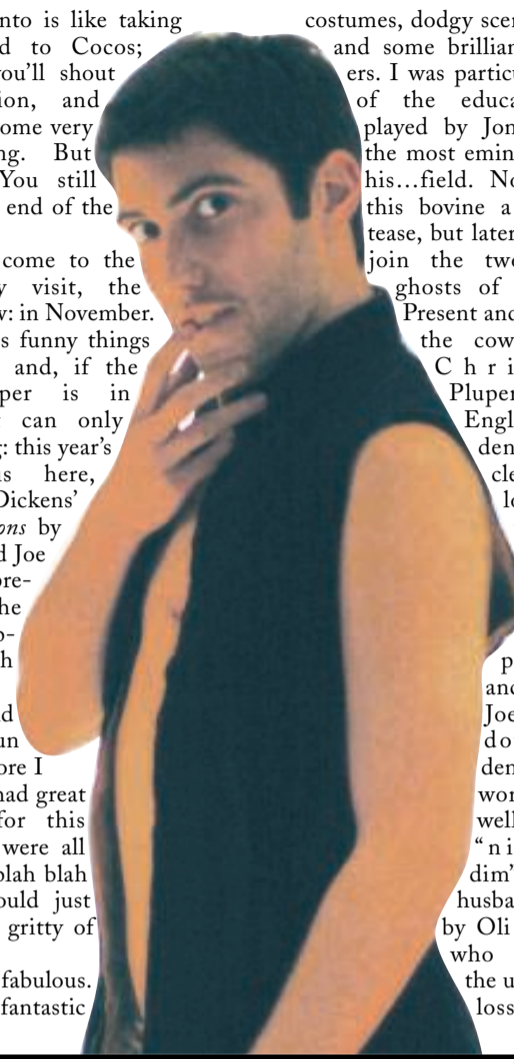
No fan of Dickens would leave satisfied without a worthy portrayal of Magwitch, and Nick Mohammed does not fail to do the character justice, playing with words like they were poppies in his sand, I mean...you know what I mean.

Oh no you don't? Oh yes you do! And how do you? Because it's panto. It's fun, it's a great laugh and the acting is wonderful. The excitement of Christmas is captured in the lively spirit of the performance and the show is a wonderful treat for the whole family.

Miss Havisham (Zack Simons) as the sexed-up, street-busking, blues-singing hussy is a scream in her wedding-cake dress, and her make-up certainly made me scream.

Yet again Footlights/ADC have put on an excellent show for the end of Michaelmas term; my only slight niggle being the long gaps of darkness, while the scene changes occur. However, this did not spoil the great evening I spent having a giggle with my friends. All that's really left to say is "I had great expectations for this play and..." You know what's coming next. No, you don't? Oh yes you do!

At the ADC Theatre until December 4th at 7.45pm



This year the MAYS editors are welcoming submissions for poetry, prose, and graphic literature. We hope to publish a broad range of writing, both creative and non-fiction. For twelve years the MAYS has published the best student writing from Oxford and Cambridge. It is sold across the country and distributed to literary agents and industry professionals.

Deadline for submissions: 30 January 2005

We are also seeking an arresting cover design and innovative ideas about the book's overall presentation.

Application deadline for publication designers: 24 January 2005

MAYS 13

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Cheap Thrills

Mary Bowers meets the Irish cowboys

'Actually, I don't really like Westerns,' insists keyboardist Kevin. His Dublin twang is distinctly audible despite the ruffled hair and sleep-deprived complexion indicative of one of two things: either the Thrills have spent too many nights sleeping in the desert under the stars, or they're half way through their UK tour. I'm going with the latter. For tonight the cowboy popsters are in Cambridge and they seem road weary, but happy. They're here to promote their second album *Let's Bottle Bohemia*, and, as drummer Ben explains, they're finding it rather cold, despite their Irish roots 'but we're still going to try and make it to Gardies'.

Saddle sore or otherwise, they certainly make their entrance tonight. 'Good evenin', drawls Deasy, in a dialect more JR than James Joyce, 'We're da T'rills.' Oh dear, he's given himself away. The quintet are spread out Monkees-esque on stage before their mirrored backdrop, exciting the intermittent and slightly deranged hand-waving of the entire standing section. This Cambridge crowd is impressed. Only here, tonight, could a bearded man in a pink shirt and tight jeans waving a tambourine not only cause such a stir, but be considered the epitome of cool. As they launch into 'Don't Steal our Sun' even the Corn Exchange is roused from their rain-and-drizzle-induced stupor. In the middle of 'One Horse Town', towering over a sea of appreciatively swaying arms, Deasy has one request: 'only one request...can everybody make some fucken' noise?!' Weary they may be, but the boys are pulling out all the stops tonight.

What's more, they do it proving they're not a one-song band, for in fact the Thrills go deeper than the sauntering lilt of a country ballad. *Let's Bottle Bohemia* seems a lot darker than the

wide-eyed, young and naive toe-tapping tunes of *So Much for the City*. 'I wouldn't want a heart that's been dented by you...I hope love, love love, just gets in the way,' croaks Deasy, almost sinister, framed as he is behind a blood-red curtain draped in fairy lights. There seems to be a bitter twist in the tale. Have they become disillusioned with the LA they eulogised so profusely with their debut? 'The first album was written at home when we were kind of down at the time,' explains Kevin, 'a lot of the sounds were trying to cheer us up.' He rubs his eyes and looks down at the floor. 'The latest album was written on the road. We've had a lot of late nights. An awful lot of late nights.'

It's not just a UK tour that's been keeping the Thrills awake either: last weekend they joined ranks with the Band Aid popsters for the recording of 'Do They Know It's Christmas?' II. 'Geldof is such a legend. He started the day off showing that video he always shows when he's doing his speech, you know, it's really harrowing. It reminds you of the point of it.' Did they feel a little incongruous in the line up amongst such pop giants as Jamelia and, well, Busted? Kevin smiles wryly and evades the question. 'It was good to see Damon from Blur there. He had an apron on and he was just collecting empty tea cups and bringing teas and coffees around.' Did he look good in an apron? 'Yeah, he's looking well these days, he went through kind of a scruffy period.'

There's more to these boys than passing round the beers and baked bean tins (or Ginster's pasties, which inexplicably fill their tour bus. 'They're everywhere,' bemoans Kevin. Very rock'n'roll). The collaboration with Van Dyke Parks of *Smile* notoriety gives their new tunes a more sophisticated edge: 'Everything



Andrew Macpherson

he does is a bit different, a bit wacky or a bit twisted. A lot of bands when they try and put strings on go overload, so we wanted to be a bit separate from that.'

Their first London gig was supporting Morrissey at the Royal Albert Hall after he heard an early demo: 'He actually asked us to do a US tour with him, but we were only getting started and that would have been a disaster.' Next, they're touring Australia, before touring the UK again, this time with REM, a collaboration which came about through working with Peter Dinklage on *Bohemia*. 'He's a fairly unassuming guy. I think the whole band is. He does the toilet scene in America, the tiny clubs in rockabilly land.' Not the Corn Exchange then.

Tonight, entering to the backdrop of a giant Irish flag and swathed in the emerald green

light of their triumphant encore, the Thrills are keen to show that neither their time in the Midwest nor the beautiful people of Band Aid fame have stolen their roots: 'I can smell your Catholic shame...' croons Deasy. We believe them. We're from Cambridge.

There's got to be something special about a band who finish their encore by pulling shocked and bemused teenage fans out of the audience to play their guitars and tambourines while they go crowd surfing. What thrills the Thrills the most: Electric shock or rollercoaster ride? Shock ('though I've never really ridden a rollercoaster before'). Speed or Calpol? Calpol. (no question). Fig Rolls or Party Rings? Party Rings (adamant). Dublin or LA? 'To live in or to visit?' He's thinking too hard about this one. 'No, no, Dublin...obviously.'

Still not running out of grime

Ned Beauman dispenses his final pieces of advice on keeping up with the grime scene

See varsity.co.uk for an interview with Clinic



Grime on CD: *Grime* (top left) and *Grime 2* on Rephlex Records feature instrumental tracks by three producers on each, including Plasticman and Kode 9 who we interviewed a few weeks ago. These aren't an easy introduction: they're the sound of a rainy London night when you just know you're going to get mugged, or possibly eaten by rats, before you get on the night bus. This is the future and the future is dark.



The first major-label grime compilation, *Run the Road*, is out in January. I haven't heard it yet, but, with over 40 MCs represented, this is going to be essential. Why such a boring title, though? I would have called it *Grime Singing in the Rain*. Or *Parsley, Sage, Rosemary and Grime*.

To find out what's happening with grime right now, it's all about DVD packs. These contain one DVD, with interviews and performance footage, and a few CDs. The best so far is *Lord of the Decks 2*, but look out for anything with Roll Deep, Wiley, Terror Danjah or Ruff Squad on the tracklist. You can order some on the internet from www.bigapplerecords.co.uk, or if you're in central London try Blackmarket Records in Soho or Release the Groove in Piccadilly.

Apart from compilations? Dizzee Rascal's *Boy in da Corner* (left, middle) and *Showtime* have

been written about so much that I'm not going to add anything, except to say that the rest of grime still hasn't caught up with the boy from Bow. Wiley's *Treadin' on Thin Ice* is nothing compared to Dizzee's work, and it lacks the brutal, ramshackle urgency of today's grime; but Wiley, one of the scene's elder statesmen, certainly knows what he's doing. Mark One's *One Way* is the first solo album by a producer. Like the Rephlex compilations, it's sinister stuff, with beats so shadowy and viscous you could probably only dance to them if you were on cake (although it does have a couple of tracks with MCs). Listen to it at www.bleep.com.

Grime on the radio: John Peel used to play a little bit of grime, and Rob Da Bank (his temporary replacement) has carried on with that, but I doubt it will last. On BBC Radio1Xtra (which you can listen to on the Internet), J Da Flex, Richie Vibe Vee and Hot Sound all drop some. It can't be that long until there's a dedicated grime show on 1Xtra, but, really, as with any new scene, it's all about the pirates. Sadly, I don't think there are any pirate grime stations in Cambridge (I did hear of one operating out of Peterhouse but I think it got shut down by the porters). Even in London, grime is hard to find among hours and hours of old-skool garage and drum'n'bass (and occasionally, surreally, Christian country music). The best stations are Rinse FM (100.3FM in London, www.rinsefm.com) and Raw Blaze (90.0FM in London). Don't bother during the day.

Grime in the club: Grime at Coco's! It actually happened! The night wasn't packed but those who did come made up for it with their enthusiasm. (You may have seen me there looking grumpy, but that's just what journalists do.) Scandalous Unlimited and MC Sharky P were headlining,

along with Cambridge's own DJ Rip. 'It was awesome to be in a club in Cambridge where the massive grime anthems of the past year were getting a bigger response than cheesy old two-step,' says DJ Rip. Encouraging as it is that grime has already found its way to Cambridge (there was a night at the Junction too), the best place to hear grime is of course at one of the raves in London.

Any information I supply will be out of date by the time this is printed. 'I try and make it down to pretty much every Sidewinder or Eskimo Dance [the biggest grime raves],' says DJ Rip. 'I love it when the stage gets overrun with all the biggest MCs, spitting their biggest hook-lines over the biggest basslines and loudest claps with the whole crowd on the verge of riot. The scene seems to be built on the anger and testosterone of disaffected

youth. That's what leads to the constant association of grime with violence, but it's also what leads to the really charged, electric atmosphere of being at a big rave or hearing a really hyped set on pirate radio.' Forward, first Thursday of every month at Plastic People on Curtain Road in Shoreditch, is also worth checking out, and other clubs are starting to catch on.

If you didn't know what grime is when I started this series of articles, then, as hard as I've tried, you probably still don't. The only way is to hear it. No, you probably won't like it. But we're young. We have a duty to be modern. And grime is the modern age. Also, next year, when grime goes commercial, you won't be able to say 'It used to be so much better back in the day' if you never listened to it in the first place.



Left to right: DJ Rip, Scandalous Unlimited, MC Sharky P and MC Trilogy at Coco's

Varsity's end-of-year list-tacular

Best albums of 2004

1. Sufjan Stevens - *Seven Swans*
2. Interpol - *Antics*
3. Joanna Newsom - *Milk-Eyed Mender*
4. Bearsuit [below] - *Cat Spectacular*
5. Mission of Burma - *Onoffon*
6. Bjork - *Medulla*
7. The Arcade Fire - *Funeral*
8. Dizzee Rascal - *Showtime*
9. Franz Ferdinand - *Franz Ferdinand*
10. CocoRosie - *La Maison de Mon Reve*
11. The Futureheads - *The Futureheads*
12. Mclusky - *The Difference Between Me and You Is That I'm Not On Fire*
13. Savath and Savals - *Apropa't*
14. The Streets - *A Grand Don't Come For Free*
15. Graham Coxon - *Happiness in Magazines*
16. Efterklang - *Tripper*

17. Various - *Lost in Translation*
18. Oneida - *Secret Wars*
19. RJD2 - *Since We Last Spoke*
20. The Castanets - *Cathedral*
21. The Delgados - *Universal Audio*
22. Mirah - *C'Mon Miracle*
23. Saturday Looks Good To Me - *Every Night*
24. Mark Lanegan Band - *Bubblegum*
25. Electrelane - *The Power Out*
26. Arovane - *Lilies*
27. Ikara Colt - *Modern Apprentice*
28. Danger Mouse - *The Grey Album*
29. Tom Waits - *Real Gone*
30. Madvillain - *Madvillainy*

Sam Blatherwick, Jon Swaine and Ned Beuman

Top fanboy crushes of 2004

1. Joanna Newsom
2. Regina Spektor
- 3., 4. Rosé and Riotbecki (Pipettes)
5. Bjork (all over again)
6. Lisa from Misora
7. Ellen Allien [below]
8. Rosie Thomas
9. Eleanor Friedberger (Fiery Furnaces)
10. Rachel Blumberg (Decemberists)

Jon Swaine



Michael Mann vs Kobon

Most unlikely covers of 2005

1. Joss Stone - 'Seven Nation Army' (thank goodness)
2. J.Lo - 'I'm Getting Married in the Morning'
3. The Libertines - '(Let's go) Outside' (jail, geddit?)
4. Morrissey - 'You Are My Sunshine'
5. Ol' Dirty Bastard - 'Live Forever'
6. Green Day - 'The Star Spangled Banner'
7. Kings of Convenience - 'Cum on Feel the Noize'
8. The Damned - 'Away in a Manger'
9. The White Stripes - 'Just the Two of Us'
10. Jamie Cullum - has already covered (in ja-aaz, man) almost every song in the whole world. Ever. Music lovers, we can but pray that 2005 sees his career tragically cut short with a non-fatal but still crippling accident involving his own grand piano lid shutting on his fingers...

Mary Bowers

Most excited about in 2005

1. The inevitable shoe-gaze revival (including My Bloody Valentine re-releasing *Glider* with new material)
2. The brutal The Darkness backlash
3. Bloc Party's debut
4. Bearsuit play Cambridge
5. Radiohead sign a new record contract (or don't)
6. Two new albums from Bright Eyes
7. New show *Laptop Idol* where unsmiling experimental musicians in black wire-rimmed spectacles have to face an audience vote over their bleeps and glitches
8. LCD Soundsystem's debut
9. A Beard And A Pipe headline at Fabric
10. First everyone sold their guitars and bought turntables. Then everyone sold their turntables and bought guitars. In 2005 everyone will sell their guitars and turntables and buy accordions.

Jessica Holland and Ned Beuman



Fortuna Pop

Turntable Globalisation

Adam Welch talks to producer and agitator dj/rupture

Personality is not something you expect to find hiding behind piles of turntables, power amplifiers and extraneous robotic punctuation playing other people's records for sweaty folk to dance to. Luckily Jase Clayton, the producer/turntablist behind the dj/rupture and Nettle projects, is in the flesh thoughtful, involving, open and, as far as I can see, completely organic.

I shouldn't be surprised, given the large quantities of these three qualities inherent in his music, whether it is in the form of mix tapes (like his first two major releases, *Gold Teeth Thief* and *Minesweeper Suite*) or in his first full length collection of his own music as dj/rupture, *Special Gunpowder*, released last month on wonderfully brash glitch merchant Kid606's Tigerbeat6 label.

The record is the first fruit proper of Clayton's seven years' experience as a producer and remixer, his excuse being that 'I wanted to work with all these people. So it ended up taking a very long time.' A glance at the list of artists collaborating with Clayton on the album perhaps explains this better than anything else; the guests are drawn from a huge range of backgrounds and genres, creating a massive pool of influence which stretches from world music to dancehall and even into the unexpected territory of Eugene Robinson from avant-metal band Oxbow.

This could easily be the formula for a horrible musical mish-mash of ostentatious genre hopping, but as with his mixing ruptures music has an incredible coherence considering the amount of disparate elements which go into it: 'I am curious musically, so doing the same thing with the same person doesn't appeal to me as much as switching things around, but at a very basic level it's just like "I want to work with this person," like "This girl plays the banjo; I want to work with her. This guy's a rapper; I want to work with him.'" What's more, 'working' with these artists means much more to Clayton than having them lay their vocals down on a pre-sequenced beat

or extracting soundbytes from them to be warped and mashed to his own liking. His respect for their music, and the organic process of making music, is refreshing: 'It's often quite humbling to work with "real musicians" and it's really interesting, this idea of communication, this idea of trying to make some bits working towards like two voices joined into one rather than one person just getting a sample CD and throwing down whatever it is.'

The 'voice' that does emerge from all this is appealing yet challenging, powerful yet subtle. The political undertones, which have always been manifest in rupture's fluid juxtapositions of different ethnicities in his DJ

sets, are hard to ignore here too, from the cosmopolitan leanings of the music itself to, for example, the striking image of watermelon-bullets ('to me it's a charged history of stereotyped icons, you know black people and watermelons, fried chicken... all that imagery') adorning the cover of the album. However, Clayton sees no point in force feeding us his political fruit bombs: '...the overt intention is never to be political, for the most part it's just what is interesting to me musically, and what resonates on a lot of different levels... political music just turns into propaganda. Political hip hop or something like that is just people shouting their beliefs at you.' It is enough for rupture to keep the political undertones as undertones, yet this all adds to the undeniable sense of purpose and unity that he achieves in his work.

dj/rupture recently performed on a mix set on three turntables at the USSC, following the intriguing, beautiful whirs, clicks and chimes of local laptop wizard Ascoltaire, and the quite crazy broken breakbeats of labelmate Ove-Naxx. rupture's set has an effortless style which takes us through hip-hop to raga to ragga to grime to Desmond Dekker's 'Israelites' almost as if it were a matter of course, and without any posturing or scratching gimmicks. He is a DJ that reads the moment, and seldom incorrectly: 'When I perform live, I try to exploit the fact that it's real time, you know that it's improvised and different every night, depending on what records I've got with me. You have react with the crowd. It's very immediate.' The problem is, he deserves bigger crowds than he has tonight, amiable and enthusiastic as they are. It's distressing to see such an interesting artist go by relatively unnoticed in Cambridge, but then again, I always feel like this with Bad Timing, which consistently brings some of the most cutting edge music from the world over to Cambridge yet is still criminally overlooked.



Adam Welch



Domino

Hoodwinked

Rural experimenters Hood discuss their new album

Russell Hoban's novel *Ridley Walker* is about a boy living near Canterbury far in the future. Nuclear war has devastated Europe and the population has regressed to tribal chaos, fighting over scrap iron and avoiding packs of wild mutant dogs. Like *A Clockwork Orange*, it's written in dialect, a degenerate form of English. Hood are the band to soundtrack *Ridley Walker*, their music evoking just the same combination of dead villages, decaying technology, and endless winter.

2002's astonishing *Cold House* was a mix of indie, folk, post-rock, glitchy electronics, and even avant-garde rap. Hood are as miserable as Radiohead at their worst, and their songs are as moving as Radiohead at their best, yet they're hardly known. Their next album, *Outside Closer*, out in January, should change that.

'We were trying to progress on from *Cold House* and do something bolder,' says Richard. 'With that we were trying to make a record that was really of its time, but with *Outside Closer* we wanted to make a record where you wouldn't be able to tell what year it was from.' The album's still hardly traditional: haunting new single 'The Lost You' owes a lot to Warp Records' experimental hip hop producer Prefuse 73. Hood were

doing 'folktronica', mixing pastoral acoustic sounds with electronics, long before it was even a trend. 'I don't know why it's becoming such a popular sound now [with artists like Four Tet]. People seem to be delving back into, and taking inspiration from, music made a long time ago.'

The countryside is crucial to Hood's sound (their song titles and album art always have a rural theme). 'We all live in the city, but we love going out into the countryside and seeing things that have been around for a long long time. You get a much better perspective on everything. You get bogged in daily life when you're at home.' The Yorkshire dales, half an hour's drive from Leeds, the bands home, is Richard's favourite place for inspiration.

So why aren't Hood bigger? Richard blames, in part, the music press. 'They assume people only want easy, palatable music, but I'm convinced people want a bit more mystery sometimes. People like Radiohead and Bjork have proven that you can take risks, you don't have to be commercial all the time. The climate has changed, people are willing to dig a bit deeper.' Hood are never going to stop experimenting. 'There's only so much you can do with a guitar.'

Ned Beuman

Thinking of working for us? See if we work for you.

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**C L I F F O R D
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Scenes from student film-making

Cambridge film-makers give *Varsity* a glimpse into what's up-and-coming

Vow of Bastardy: a manifesto on the state of film today from the Onan Collective

I. Dogme 95 – Vow of Chastity? Bah! A poor prophylactic, rolled off as soon as it became clear that film-goers need more than just a knee-trembler in a badly lit alley...

II. Asking the right questions is easy. Asking the wrong questions is risky, because you might get answers you didn't know you were awaiting!

III. The Right Questions: Question: what was it like to grow up in 1970s Glasgow? Answer: *Ratcatcher*. Question: what is it like to have to move to Hollywood to make your name? Answer: *Memento*. Question: what is it like to feel that your country's film industry deserves only self-parody? Answer: *Once Upon a Time in the Midlands*. Question: which are the best films about American multi-nationals selling substandard goods to the UK? Answer: *Bridget Jones*, *Love Actually*, *Notting Hill*...

IV. The Wrong Questions: Question: why make another film about a grim northern childhood? This we already know: that there are a lot of grim northern children. Question: why complain that the wrong scripts get funded? Jean-Luc Godard often didn't even have a script when he began a film, or funds. But he did have a camera. Question: British director, why do you pretend to be American? There are already enough pretend Americans in America! Question: who are the risk-takers among British directors? Where are the risks in Britain? Answer: There aren't any? Bah! If you take the time to look beneath your feet you will find that your daily life is a hopscotch over risks not taken. And if your life doesn't involve any risk – hopscotch in front of a car! That should give you a taste!

V. We, the signatories to the Fukme 2005 Vow of Bastardy, promise:

Never to follow the easiest route

Never to take an old and easy path as long as there is a new and difficult one to be beaten

To use old ground as we would a graveyard – not to disinter and bother the corpses of the already buried but to inter the corpses of the long-deceased! And to fornicate among the gravestones.

Threat to engender bastards with von Trier, Godard, Herzog, Shakespeare, Tarkovski!

Compiled by the Onan Collective



Tormented by a yellow plastic fish

Matt Knott on rescuing the Freshers' Film from meaningless frivolity

Unlike Vanilla Coca-Cola or Christina Aguilera, I am strongly of the opinion that student film-making deserves its bad reputation.

The first works of most budding film-makers are invariably horrible concoctions of dialogue left on the *Dawson's Creek* cutting room floor, a pornographic over-use of budget zoom effects and alternative camera angles – all of which really only serve to highlight the general awfulness of everything on screen.

Acknowledging this fact though is only the first step away from student film hell. Equally nauseating are those films which – however spunkily written and executed they may be – ring stunningly hollow in their attempts to say something meaningful.

This proved to be the biggest stumbling block in creating the Freshers' Film, *Something to Tell*. Aiming at a ten minute running time, we were always working on a small scale, but every time we pushed the script away from

James Hurley and his yellow plastic fish

The Beautiful Pursuits of Love and Inanimate Objects is a short film about a man who thinks he's being chased by plastic fish. Yellow ones.

I have been making short films for the past three years now and I have tackled themes such as bullying and homosexuality in my previous work.

When directing I prefer to let the actors dictate the way I shoot a scene, especially if it relies heavily on dialogue. I hardly ever storyboard, preferring to be inspired by the locations as I reach them and long languorous takes always take precedence over

short, sharp cuts within my films.

I have long regarded film-making as an art and I believe that, with short-films in particular, every frame counts. So much modern film-making is about security, both financially and artistically. Genuine interest in the art of creating original and moving cinema is being replaced by the desire for safe and successful commercial enterprise. In making the film I sought to demonstrate the massive potential in both student film-making and even the smallest of budgets.

meaningless frivolity, it fell straight into the pit hole of meaningless meaningfulness. Hopefully though, we realized just in time that the compulsive urge to say something interesting is probably the reason that most student films fail to be so.

And so, happy in the knowledge that none of us really had anything to say worth saying anyway, we started again from scratch. It was this process which lead us to that elusive trump card: apparently genuine chemistry

between our three actors. And somehow, from somewhere, a little story sprouted, totally improvised, which finally had a ring of truth about it.

SCREENINGS:

The Cinecam films *The Beautiful Pursuit of Love and Inanimate Objects* and *Something to Tell* will be showing on Tuesday 30th November 7:30pm in the Queen's Building at Emma

From Psycho to se7en, via Quentin Tarantino

Imagine the introduction to David Fincher's *Se7en*. Alfred Hitchcock's shower murder of poor but not so innocent Marion Crane. Twist in some samurai swooshing, with blood-soaked Uma Thurman as the Bride in the *Kill Bill* double bill.

With these visuals in mind I wrote the script for the black-comedy/horror, *A First Class Degree Murder*, a film about students under pressure to top the year. and they will stop at nothing to get rid of their competitors.

The main actor from this short also featured in my previous film *The Art of Freerunning*. It was shot in a somewhat unorthodox fashion, the camera being attached to the right footplate of my wheelchair using a mono-pod!

Even though my current film is not entirely finished, I have started to make notes for my next film projects. Right now I'm in the process of producing a light comedy entitled *Finding Girton*.

I will take on the director's mantle again, and have planned a Hitchcock style romance story called *Zoe* which will get much of its zest from his masterpiece *Vertigo*.

The other project which I have had on my mind for some time is *The Undergraduate*, which explores another one Hitchcock themes, that of mistaken identity.

When filmmaking I have always worked with the idea that I make films for myself. Maybe I use it as a defense from potential tomato throwers, but it certainly seems to be a common mantra among filmmakers whenever they fear things might go pear-shaped.

Davey Jose

The Art of Freerunning is currently showing at *The Union*, as part of the *Cambridge Student Arts Exhibition 2004*. *A First Class Degree Murder* will be screened in early December.



The Art of Freerunning

Heard of the caped crusader? Simon Evans spreads the rumours



Vigilante looks on

The concept of the feature length *Dark Images* links in with the current fad for comic book adaptations, whilst also reminding us of our self-professed culture of fear.

In a city of serious moral and social decline, permeated with a feeling of fear and paranoia, two comic obsessed students believe that the power of a vigilante, featured in comic books and movies, is achieved through rumour and reputation; a man contemplating a mugging is deterred by the fear of some caped crusader hiding down a dark alley, poised to spring upon an unsuspecting suspect.

So these two students, with the help of a morally lax journalist, use his newspaper to spread stories and

start rumours of this imagined "mysterious figure in black".

Readers of the papers and viewers of the news, believing the stories to be true, eventually require photos and even live appearances, and so both must be faked. The students choreograph a scene in a club where this mysterious figure intervenes in an attack, wowing the audience before him.

Many twists and unexpected betrayals later, this "superhero" seems to become increasingly 'real'. Everything, as one would expect, become horribly out of hand, and... lots of shit hits a lot of people's fans.

Dark Images is to be shot in the summer of 2006

Modern master goes beyond Sinfonia

Nicola Simpson and Richard Wilberforce review Nitin Sawhney's latest collaboration

On Wednesday night, The Corn Exchange played host to a spectacular multi-media show as Nitin Sawhney joined the Britten Sinfonia for a concert of epic proportions.

Described as 'one of the world's most innovative musical talents', Sawhney is a multi-instrumentalist, composer, producer, DJ and song-writer, blending Urban R&B, Indian classical music and jazz. Perhaps one of the most striking elements of the concert was the diversity of its programme, featuring music by Arvo Pärt, the Indian composer Ar Rahman, Steve Reich and of course, Sawhney himself.

Sweeping onto the stage in a somewhat epic long coat, he opened the concert with a performance - together with percussionist Joby Burgess - of Steve Reich's 'Clapping Music'. Just that: two pairs of hands clapping, in what seemed initially a simple rhythm, then making the transition into wondrous complexities, and finally closing in perfect sync. This was immediately followed by 'Conference', Sawhney's own exploration of spitfire verbal, melodic rapping and drummed rhythms, where he was joined by Davinder Singh on vocals and Aref Durvesh on drums.

There was a risk that, alongside such a huge musical presence, the Britten Sinfonia might have been sidelined, however their passionate and quite beautiful rendition of Steve Reich's 'Duet', their first piece of the night and one only for the string section, instantly allayed any fears that this might happen. The players communicated a very real sense of unity in this piece, and there was a pronounced interplay between them. The rhythmic drone, something which can so often bring down an otherwise perfect performance, was strong and constant throughout, and the amplification of the instruments added a strong acoustic dimension.

The modal harmonies of 'Frates', the Arvo Pärt composition, were harnessed completely and there were fluid lines created by the wind section, in particular the oboe and flute. The only criticism I would make of this is not one concerning the performance of the piece, but rather its inclusion in an otherwise exuberant programme. Within the context



of the concert, it seemed to drag and by the closing notes, one felt that the audience seemed quite exhausted.

The performance of 'Homelands', one of Sawhney's best-known and popular compositions, and one that fuses various elements of world-music in a particularly haunting way, was eagerly anticipated. Unfortunately, it did not achieve the same balance between the various cultural elements of east and west as in the recorded version - the drums were too heavy and 'western' for the rest of the music. However, in 'Prophecy', the three virtuoso soloists, Davinder Singh on vocals, Aref Durvesh on tabla and Sawhney himself on guitar, produced a genuine excitement. The initially meditative feel of the piece culminated with the vocal and rhythmic complexity of a fast raga.

'The Classroom', the piece commissioned by the Britten Sinfonia, served as confirmation of Sawhney's enduring genius. The composer tells us that this

three-movement composition was inspired by a childhood memory of being entranced by the sight of falling snow, and, indeed, there was a sense of wonder and mysticism throughout. The melodic motifs were subtly manipulated and there was a restrained but incredibly effective use of percussion in the first movement. While the second movement was not as engaging as it might have been, the third movement, with its abundance of explosive rhythmic energy, more than compensated for it and the overall effect was one of powerful exhilaration.

Sawhney's strength is his unique ability to combine a diverse wealth of musical timbres, and he orchestrates them in such a way that none of them overpower each other.

After the encore, 'Pieces of Ten', the audience were completely won over, and the soloists and ensemble left the stage in a cloud of whistles and cheers, and rightfully so.

A Universal Music

Monique Cornwell
speaks to the multi-instrumentalist

Nitin Sawhney's multi-award winning work crosses cultural boundaries and blends Indian classical, jazz, Urban RnB and Drum and bass to create a staggeringly varied and emotive sound. Grown up in Kent, having studied Law at Liverpool University and co-writing the comedy show 'Goodness Gracious Me', his music is as eclectic as the experiences he draws upon.

What early influences inspired you?

I grew up playing the guitar and piano and playing a lot of flamenco, Indian classical music, jazz, funk, soul, lots of things. You have to if you're to be a good musician. I think you have to be able to experiment with different ways of expression. I think in terms of emotional pictures and my music is about integration, celebrating diversity and getting across those ideas in musical emotion.

Through your experiences, have you come across anyone who has had a particularly major impact on you?

I really love Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan - in my opinion the greatest singer who ever lived. He has such an incredibly universal emotion in his voice - a voice of passion and pain. It's powerful and comes from the deepest part of his soul. With music you can be as literal or as abstract as you like. The thing about the human voice is it can express words literally and make your meaning accessible for more people to understand.

You say your music isn't political, what philosophy lies behind your work?

There's not a specific meaning to my music. I'm about expressing what I'm feeling through looking at humanity. We live in a world that's so polarized politically, it's all about nationalism, divisions and being paranoid about it - it's difficult to express something on the basis of humanity without it being automatically taken as a political statement. My recent albums like 'Beyond Skin'

look past that to the simplicity of human nature. Everyone's trying to shove politics down your throat - I think it's politicians who are radical, not musicians.

You've worked with dancers such as the 'Contemporary Kathak' dancer Akram Khan. Can you tell us about the project?

I composed the music for a piece called 'Kaash' about 3 years ago. We worked together with a sculptor, Anish Kapoor, who designed the set. It was exploring connections between Hinduism, nature and modern ideas in theoretical physics. Combining ideas in Hindu philosophy of Shiva, the destroyer of the Universe, and how different paths we take lead to different realities.

I enjoy collaboration because it's interesting to work with other mediums. It stops you from stagnating. I love working with visuals and movement and I've written a lot of music for films and documentaries. Also I think it's a good suspension of your own ego because you have to really listen to other people and understand where they're coming from to make it work.

Are the rumours true that you're currently working with Will Young?

I'm writing some stuff for his new album which will be out next year. Apparently he liked my music and asked if we could meet. We got on well and so I agreed to write something for him.

You've performed in Cambridge with the Britten Sinfonia, what draws you about working with an orchestra?

This performance includes new arrangements of pieces from my albums 'Beyond Skin', 'Prophecy' and 'Displacing the Priest' and also a new piece called 'The Classroom' which I wrote specifically for the Britten Sinfonia. I like the idea of 3D representation and the human element of musical expression is so exciting when there's such a large group of people working together. I like the idea of collaboration and also of integrating harmonic Western Classical traditions with Indian Classical traditions which are more rhythmic.

The end of a Miller's tale

Nicola Simpson looks at the life of this Footlights alumnus

In wake of the recent announcement by Sir Jonathan Miller, one of the UK's best known opera directors, that his opera career is effectively over, we look at the life of a British legend.

Jonathan Miller has carved out a career as satirist, theatre and opera director, medical consultant, sculptor and writer. Born Jonathan Wolfe Miller 1934, he read Natural Sciences at St. John's before preparing for a career in medicine.

As a Cambridge undergraduate he was a member of Footlights, and in 1961, he and three other Cambridge graduates brought their review, 'Beyond the Fringe', to the London stage and in doing so, sparked off the so-called "satire boom", changing the nature of comedy forever.

The three 'other' undergraduates with whom he performed in Beyond the Fringe were none other than the legendary Peter Cook, Dudley Moore and

Alan Bennett. While each of these progressed to much greater things, it is arguable Sir Jonathan has eclipsed all of his former colleagues in the breadth and depth of his many careers.

He has, among other things, presented television programmes on science and medicine, directed opera at Glyndebourne, the Met and La Scala, produced stage works at the National or Old Vic, lectured, written and sculpted. He edited BBC Television's arts programme, Monitor, Laurence Olivier made him associate director at the National Theatre and he directed at Kent Opera. Rarely a man to say no, Sir Jonathan says that his reputation as a polymath rests on "being pathetically susceptible to someone knocking on my door with a frisbee in their hand saying 'Do you want to come out and play'".

His groundbreaking productions include a Mafia-style Rigoletto for English National Opera and Armani-

clad *Così fan Tutti* for the Royal Opera. There was also the medical documentary, *The Living Body*, which he did for BBC TV.

No stranger to controversy, he once called Britain "a mean and peevish little country" with its "acid rain of criticism and condescension". He has spoken bitterly about Italian tenor, Luciano Pavarotti, with whom Miller has constantly refused to work, saying that "There's no point in trying to build a production around someone who's so massively inert". He also described the Royal Opera as "a kind of wife kennel" for rich men.

As for his retirement from opera, Sir Jonathan, now 70 years old recently said in an interview with *The Guardian* that he felt opera houses had turned their backs on him, blaming an "obsession" with the new and cutting-edge.

"If you are as old as I am, you're assumed to be dead - and actually made



Left to right: Miller, Bennett, Moore and Cook in 'Beyond the Fringe'

to be dead in the end," he told the newspaper. He added furthermore that he had always felt undervalued in the UK - he said that he had had to persuade the Royal Opera House to take

on his recent production of *Don Pasquale*, which opens on 27 November. However, he added he has now turned his attentions to junk-metal sculpture.

Sitting comfortably?

Good. Then Tom Kingsley will begin

I have tried to kick the habit of reading children's literature, especially now I'm actually supposed to be a grown-up at University. Fortunately for me though, it seems there's no need for me to be ashamed any more. Everyone's reading children's books, even if they're only the versions with the dodgy-sounding 'adult' cover. The staunchest grown-up would have to be intrigued by the narrator's thoughts from *The Curious Case of the Dog in the Night-Time*:

"I do not like proper novels. In proper novels people say things like, 'I am veined with iron, with silver and with streaks of common mud. I cannot contract into the firm fist which those clench who do not depend on stimulus'. What does this mean? I do not know. Nor does Father. Nor do Siobhan or Mr Jeavons. I have asked them."

Good point. Adult literature can be overly self-indulgent – even for a clever English student like me. The strength of children's literature is that its audience is more demanding. Children's literature competes with computer games, while adult fiction just has to compete with the canon of world literature. This is why you won't find anything less than dazzlingly fresh prose in the Kiddies' Section.

And in the aforementioned *Curious Case*, Mark Haddon's prose is certainly nothing less than dazzlingly fresh.

This, a children's book, is the first novel to have an autistic narrator. Brilliantly original, it's a detective story which stuns its readers with an entirely alien view of the world.

Literary convention is audaciously subverted with its autistic narrator who cannot comprehend the idea of metaphor, who is unable to understand emotion but still writes about it, who can never get a joke but is still funny. You don't get that complexity in your poncey grown-up books, now do you? Which is clearly why *The Curious Case of the Dog in the Night-Time* won last year's Whitbread Prize for Fiction. Not children's fiction – Fiction.

'Adult literature can be overly self-indulgent'

Philip Pullman's *The Amber Spyglass* also won the Whitbread Prize, but, more impressively, it won the Children's Whitbread Prize as well. It's hard to underestimate the genius of Pullman's parallel worlds filled with animals that represent the human soul and an invisible 'Dust' that guides human actions.

This, a children's book, is the first to describe the story of Mankind's Fall since Milton had a bash. Pullman attacks the oppressive structure of the

Church while passionately celebrating the love and the morality tied up in the Christian faith, going on to climax with the death of God and a battle between Heaven and Hell involving flying mountains. And upstaging even that, he finishes with perhaps the most powerful moment in children's literature. Will and Lyra, the two young heroes, are about to commit Original Sin:

"Like two moths clumsily bumping together, with no more weight than that, their lips touched. '...I love you, Will, I love you –"

In Pullman's world, the children discover no shame or nakedness or even that there is good or evil in the world. They just discover love. It holds up well against Milton's version of the Fall – compare page 465 of *The Amber Spyglass* to the end of Book IX in *Paradise Lost*. It's all good stuff.

After all that heavy children's literature, you might want a bit of light adult reading. Well don't. Read Lemony Snicket's hilarious *Series of Unfortunate Events* instead. Thirteen gloriously gothic books about several orphans who remain unfailingly polite throughout their terrifying experiences, they are made unusually surreal by their fictional author, a note on the outside warning readers not to bother reading the inside, and the fact that the fifth in the series is the first novel to have the word 'Ersatz' in the title.

And for the keen reader, there are numerous literary allusions to Dickens, Dante, Plato, Shakespeare,



Varsity archive

Read-rediscover your inner child

silent German horror films, a cross-dressing optician named Dr Georgina Orwell, and even the Virginian Wolfsnake – who the heroes are warned "never to let near a typewriter". The film's out at Christmas, but don't call it the new Harry Potter – it's actually good.

The future looks bright for children's literature. The lines being

blurred between it and adult fiction mean it is scaling new heights. It is developing with the times and becoming increasingly intelligent and original in a way that its adult counterpart arguably is not. Children's literature has started claiming its elder sibling's awards – perhaps soon it will also take up some room on the Cambridge tripods.

Writers anonymous: from private to public

Amol Rajan profiles the Cambridge Writer's Guild

"Fool", said Sir Philip Sidney's muse, "look in thy heart and write". He wasn't the only one to offer such advice; creative writing has been seen for centuries as an intensely private experience. This is largely because, at base, it is. So to try to overcome this perception, and give to creative writing a public persona capable of substituting this reputation for reclusivity, is a daunting challenge.

It is one that has been effectively taken up in Cambridge. Niccolo Milanese, now a finalist in Philosophy at St. John's, set up the Cambridge Writer's Guild (CWG) over two years ago. His task was simple: to give to Cambridge's disparate and disconnected writing societies a centralised umbrella, under which students interested in creative writing could come together and share their (otherwise private) experiences. Public readings, public publications; such was the idea. Milanese recognised a lack of exchange amongst writing societies in Cambridge – one he still thinks prevalent today – and decided to address the issue by setting up the CWG.

It was in his first term here that he set it up. The CWG is an entirely independent organisation that receives no direct funding. With support from Corpus Christi, it produces *Filament*, a fortnightly poetry journal edited by student affiliates of the CWG (and distributed free to the pigeon holes of interested students), and is also heavily involved in the production of *Inprint*, an annual magazine produced by students at St. John's that encompasses writing from across Cambridge.

Milanese's motivation stems from a belief that fewer people are reading poetry nowadays than ought to be. And though the CWG

encourages all forms of creative writing, there seems to be an inherent bias toward poetry. "Poetry helps us to empathise with those around us; to recognise the commonality between The Other and ourselves", he says, almost instinctively rehearsing the obvious answer. "It doesn't need to be coherent or consistent in the way that other forms of literature may need to be, and it provides an excellent way of exercising our imaginative powers".

Milanese is also the Poetry Editor of *The Liberal*, a new and highly acclaimed national publication launched by Cambridge graduate Ben Ramm. Ramm completed his degree in English at St. Catharine's only last year; amongst other things, his new magazine seeks to reassert the value of poetry in political and cultural discourse. There is, in both *The Liberal* and the CWG, something of an ethical crusade, and one can't help but be impressed by this commitment to the creative cause. "There is something morally wrong about a kind of solipsism", Milanese says, "and the CWG is one way of addressing that".

Milanese admits that it is difficult to measure the impact of his project, which will continue when he graduates next year. There are 600 people on the CWG's email list, though that could mean very little. *Inprint*, which Milanese shall be editing this year, is now accepting submissions of poetry, prose, and experimental works in any language, to be sent to the address below by 5th January 2005.

Contacts:
cambridgewritersguild@yahoo.co.uk
inprintmag@yahoo.co.uk

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With a super special merry jerry thanks to all of the above, Ross Masoud, Simon Collins, Tim Perrera, A. C. Berwick, Flora Joll, Oliver Tillio, Adam Fudakowski, Ally Lulu, Dogfish, Catfish, Dix, Lucy Gilbert, James and Joe and especially Johanna's mum Tyra and Mr Jennings.

Judgement day as Varsity match looms

Mike Henson

OF ALL of the University sports teams, none has such a public preparation for their Varsity game as the rugby union Blues. Big name teams and small student prices at Grange Road mean that the inevitable slips and trips of a long journey from pre-season South

Africa into the depths of English winter occur in full public view.

Whatever the ups and downs of these various games however, the only criteria by which the season will be judged is what happens at Twickenham on December 7th. In the stands the whole occasion has the atmosphere of a school outing: lurid college scarves and shirts to the fore

and a chance to indulge in a bit of gentle baiting of 'the other place' before retiring to the pub for the main activity of the day. For those on the field however the match is of almost unbearable importance. The doomsday clock that ticks down the seconds to kick-off all year on the CURUFC website is entirely appropriate.

Despite the comprehensive form guides that both sides produce, this overwhelming importance makes the game a difficult one to predict. Over the last six matches, not more than four points have separated the two teams and it will be as keenly contested as ever this year. When faced with a combination of suffocating pressure and inevitably ferocious defence, it is often the team that dares to chance their arm and ignite a spark of invention that wins through. Which side, or more likely individual, that might be isn't something that comparing results gives away easily. But a search for potential game-breaking players amongst the Cambridge ranks yields a few candidates and, with them, some hope.

For when fly-half Dafydd Lewis looks outside him on match-day, he can only draw confidence in moving the ball through the hands. The southern hemisphere alliance of Simon Frost and Ed Carter are a powerful partnership that will pose problems for whoever they come up against. Carter, the Australian half of the duo, has thrown opposition defences into disarray all season with punchy surges through midfield. Captain Frost, having missed last year's game through injury, will be keen to continue where he left off in 2002 against the dark blues. That day the South African ran in both tries in a 15-13 victory. His experience and leadership in such an intense atmosphere, as well as this happy knack for performing

when it matters, will be crucial.

In fact much of the back line have appeared before in the big game, hopefully easing any nerves that could paralyse their play. The possibility that the two undergraduate flyers who lit up the games in 2002 and 2003 could be united in the Varsity starting line-up for the first time is an enticing one. Aki Abiola's lightning breaks and devastating side-step have secured his status as a cult figure amongst the Grange Road faithful. He played a crucial part in that 2002 win and climbed off the bench last year to set up Girton fresher, Charlie Desmond for the equalising score. The sight of Desmond, dwarfed by his captain Stuart Eru, hoisting aloft the MMC trophy was the climax to the story of last year. Within eight weeks of arriving at university, having just turned 20, he quietly went and stole the show. If Roy of the Rovers had picked up the oval ball instead it probably wouldn't have turned out much better. Strangely in a game where the average age is greater than that of most students these two relative youngsters will be old hands.

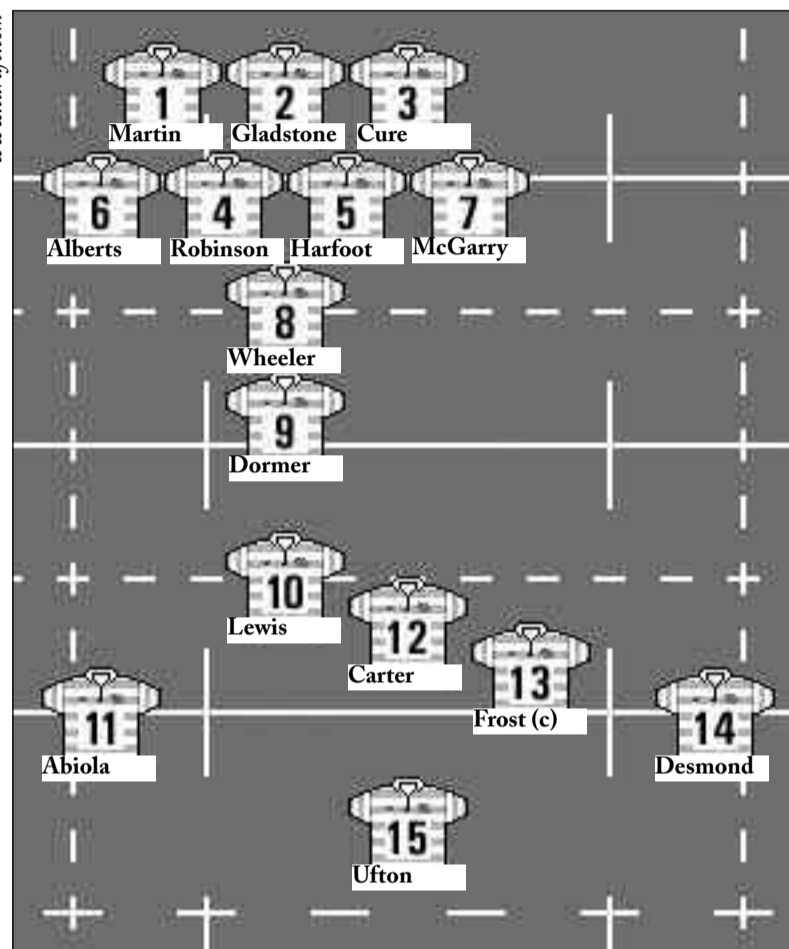
The forwards have their share of young stars as well in Nathan McGarry and Tom Martin. Both have risen more steadily through the ranks of the club than their wing counterparts. McGarry was an unused sub last year at Twickenham, while prop Martin captained the U21s. They have been virtual ever-presents for the Blues this season and have shown plenty of the tenacity and determination that will be in demand.

Also looking to make his Varsity debut is Nic Alberts. Putting yourself down as being able to play across the back-row, in the centre or on either wing could be seen as backing one's

ability a little too readily. You'd be both brave and wrong to point this out to the imposing South African however. Two tries of awesome power and pace against the Spanish last week proved that he would be a welcome addition anywhere on the pitch. With only a few appearances to his name this season, if he makes the team he could prove an unwelcome surprise for Oxford. It is an 'if' however. The back-row will provide a selection dilemma for the coaches with former captain and twice-Blue Duncan Blaikie and Ben Wheeler amongst those also vying for places.

A key area for the front five to concern themselves with is the line-out. Various unlikely candidates have found themselves with the ball in hand at the front and have coped with varying degrees of success. Responsibility seems to have finally been granted to specialist hooker Gladstone. He and his jumpers will be hoping that many hours of drill come to fruition to provide clean first phase ball to that dangerous set of backs.

Twickenham is a strange place on any matchday; waxed jackets, Range Rovers and plastic pints of Tetleys abound. With the game loaded with archaic tradition the effect is only magnified. Until recently the previous year's captains could be seen charging up and down running the touch-line in full blazer and tassel cap regalia. Even now a strange, but charming, mix of the modern professional and the nostalgic amateur persists. A 'Port and Nuts' reception a couple of days before the game probably isn't sanctioned by many sports nutritionists. But look beyond the whole sideshow spectacle and you will see an intensely competitive game that is the product of committed hard work all year by both sides and a grand climax to some players' rugby careers. Enjoy.



The probable line, injuries permitting, who faced Steele Bodger on Wednesday

Not exactly leading the cheers this week



Adam Edelhain

In the last few years, it has been remarkable to note just how far Britain has taken political correctness. Recently Santa was banned from a shopping centre in case he offended non-Christians. It bothers me enormously that some age-old traditions and even our language are under threat for the pettiest reasons.

I don't want to start calling the postman a "postperson". Postperson Pat doesn't have quite the same ring to it. The person who delivers my post can be whatever sex they wish, but it doesn't change the fact that he/she/it is still a postman. It certainly isn't offensive.

However, my frustration with this obsessive desire to be as politically correct as possible has been enhanced by the growth of one "sport" that has seemingly slipped through the net. Watching several top sporting events, I was amazed to see an increase in the popularity of cheerleading.

Cheerleading essentially involves young girls in skimpy clothing, running around, attempting to entertain a predominantly male crowd. Is this not a throwback to the days when women were objectified? Are the guys watching them really thinking, "that pyramid was beautiful and so artistic"?

This then begs the question, why is

cheerleading in Britain being allowed to develop unchallenged as a "sport"? This seems a little preposterous given that some people are questioning whether it is offensive to teach children to sing "ring a ring o' roses", because it refers to the black death.

Perhaps the lack of opposition to cheerleading is rooted in the fact that there are many others like myself that are so fed up with political correctness that they don't care enough anymore to argue when there is something that is genuinely offensive.

Postperson Pat doesn't have quite the same ring to it

It could also simply be that the Americanisation of Britain has gone beyond the physical presence of McDonalds and Starbucks on every street corner. Baseball is becoming more popular here, our children are almost as obese so why not take an interest in cheerleading? Perhaps the conservative and traditional British mentality is starting to crack under pressure from its old American cousin. A cousin that has become even more like that mean, older brother, nannying Britain and always getting his way.

I refuse to believe that people genuinely see it as totally normal and respectable. Is it honestly quality, family entertainment and clean fun?

Take a look at the cheerleading film,

"Bring it on". Its success was partly rooted in the well-worked routines and the soundtrack. However, despite my sister's insistence that the film touches important and relevant issues, it wasn't a box office hit as a result of an incredible storyline. The majority of men who watched the film did so for the sexy cheerleaders and perhaps specifically Eliza Dushku. This isn't exactly a great example of clean family fun.

Is it even a sport? In America, it seems that the cheer squads are principally made up of those girls who aren't quite good enough at gymnastics and are keen on impressing the boys at school.

If they simply want to cheer on the team, why wear the undersized outfits and dance increasingly sexy routines? I expect that most cheerleaders couldn't tell you the rules of the sport that their team is competing in.

All of this bothers me tremendously. Cheerleading was a sexist idea to begin with and the girls aren't even cheering for their team anymore. They don't care about the sport that they're supposed to be so excited and thrilled about. They may seem pumped up but it isn't because of the team that they're supposed to be supporting.

Cheerleading is effectively a mixture of gymnastics and dance sport, whoring itself for the sake of entertainment.

Yet my objections to cheerleading run a little deeper. At a football game, I want to totally immerse myself in sport. I want to be able to discuss the match with the other supporters at halftime, talk tactics, have a few drinks and moan

about the referee. I want to live, eat and breathe football. Cheerleading is an unwelcome distraction.

If I wanted to watch girls flaunt themselves to a crowd, wearing very few clothes and dancing provocatively, I'd go to a strip club. At least there, the girls aren't pretending not to sell sex.

"that young girl on the touchline caught my eye... don't tell your mother"

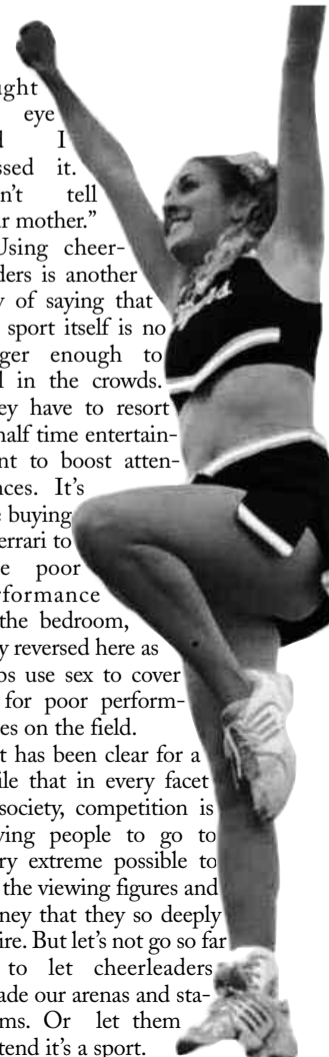
The popular expression goes that men think about sex every four seconds. Whether or not this is true is debatable but what is undeniable is that these thoughts as frustrating as they are satisfying. Not every man can think about sex and then peruse, "oh well, I'll have some tonight then". Sport is a form of escapism from daily sexual frustration among other things. Introducing cheerleaders into football games would shatter this entirely.

It's also distracting from the sport itself. Imagine watching a short dance routine on the sidelines with a particularly eye catching brunette, only to miss a crucial moment in a game; a bone crunching tackle, a bit of magic or even a goal. "Wow", my son will say. "Dad, did you see that thunderous strike from 30 yards? I think it's broken the net!" I don't want to have to tell him, "Sorry son, that young girl on the touchline

caught my eye and I missed it. Don't tell your mother."

Using cheerleaders is another way of saying that the sport itself is no longer enough to pull in the crowds. They have to resort to half time entertainment to boost attendances. It's like buying a Ferrari to hide poor performance in the bedroom, only reversed here as clubs use sex to cover up for poor performances on the field.

It has been clear for a while that in every facet of society, competition is driving people to go to every extreme possible to get the viewing figures and money that they so deeply desire. But let's not go so far as to let cheerleaders invade our arenas and stadiums. Or let them pretend it's a sport.



Showjumping student off to Tokyo

Olivia Day

FOR THIRD-YEAR Churchillian Natalie McGoldrick's, preparations are well underway for her forthcoming trip to Tokyo, where she will be representing Great Britain at the forthcoming World University Equestrian Championships.

On Sunday November 28, the British team of three will be heading off to their most important international competition to date. Twenty-five countries will be represented at the four day long World Championships, but the British team have managed to extend their trip to ten days. "Apparently the jet lag is terrible for Japan, so I think we will need a few days to recover," says Natalie, "And then we are staying on to party with the Irish and American teams for a bit after the riding is over!"

The team were selected back in September before a panel of four selectors, including previous Olympians. Nine riders were asked to trial, based on performances at the BUSA Nationals, as well as previous results on their own horses. Natalie impressed at the Nationals, where she captained Cambridge's team to win, as well as securing individual 3rd, for which she was awarded a Full Blue last year. Outside of university competitions, she has represented the South East in eventing, England in an International Pony teams competition, ridden at the Horse of the Year Show, and started point to pointing last year.

This term has been hectic for McGoldrick, for not only has she had team training in Cirencester to attend,

but she is also team captain of the University Riding team again, and is "attempting to get a degree!" In her third year of the six-year Vet course, she has chosen to study Zoology, which gives her "a bit more time for riding and socialising!"

Although all three of the British team have been to internationals before, this will be the first time that they have ridden together. "The first round of dressage is ridden as a team, so we all enter the arena together," informs McGoldrick, "As we will all be on horses

that we have never ridden before, there is only so much practicing that we can do." The competition is run as a knockout, consisting of both dressage and showjumping on unknown horses, and the riders are only judged against competitors that have ridden the same horse as them. Natalie's first student international was in Germany a few weeks ago, where she pulled off a convincing individual win. "Germany was amazing! I was thrilled to win, but it has put a lot of pressure on me now for Japan - I will probably be knocked out

in the first round of dressage, and fall off in the showjumping!"

The teams will be well looked after in Tokyo, where they will be riding and living on the grounds used for the Tokyo Olympics. The arranged schedule includes cultural tours and Gala dinners, as well as the infamous 'welcome party'. "We spent our time in Germany either inebriated or with hangovers, but we have been told that Japan will be a bit more serious," Natalie said, "Though I am sure that with the Irish there, we will manage to have a few extra parties!"



Natalie McGoldrick competing for her place on the Great British University Equestrian team

Courtesy of Natalie McGoldrick

Sport In Brief

RUGBY - Cambridge defeated Steele Bodger XV in one of their final warm up games for this year's varsity match. In a very attacking game of Rugby, Cambridge breached the 50 point barrier to secure a 51 - 29 victory.

VOLLEYBALL - The quarter final places for Volleyball cuppers were decided this week as holders Jesus were dumped out by John's and Trinity Hall. Darwin and Churchill's first team qualified from their group, while a combined team from Trinity and Churchill 2 finished top of pool B, to qualify with Robinson. In the final Pool, St. Catharine's and Caius were the top two finishers, beating Girton and Magdalene.

CROSS COUNTRY - Pembroke won the men's cross country cuppers, with Richard Ward and Ed Brady leading the way. Support from Dan Chambers and James Traer who both finished inside the top thirty as well, gave the team an unassailable lead. They were followed by Jesus as Queen's were beaten into third place.

AND FINALLY...
HOCKEY - The Men's Blues lost 5-2 to India Gymkhana in a one sided affair that saw the Blues three goals behind at half time. Goals from Adrian Harbour and Steve Morley proved to be scant consolation after a leaky defence conceded a further two soft goals.

Men's College Rugby League Division I

| Place | Team | Pl | W | D | L | F | A | PD | Pts |
|-------|-----------------|----|---|---|---|-----|-----|------|-----|
| 1 | St. John's | 6 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 263 | 17 | 246 | 24 |
| 2 | Downing | 7 | 5 | 0 | 2 | 142 | 77 | 65 | 22 |
| 3 | Jesus | 7 | 5 | 0 | 2 | 112 | 81 | 31 | 22 |
| 4 | Girton | 6 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 58 | 49 | 9 | 14 |
| 5 | St. Catharine's | 6 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 33 | 178 | -145 | 6 |
| 6 | Trinity Hall | 6 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 24 | 223 | -199 | 6 |

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Last weeks' results: Downing 37 - 7 Trinity Hall; Jesus 15 - 3 St. Catharine's; St. John's P - P Girton;

Men's College Football League Division I

| Place | Team | Pl | W | D | L | F | A | GD | Pts |
|-------|-----------------|----|---|---|---|----|----|-----|-----|
| 1 | Fitzwilliam | 5 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 23 | 5 | 18 | 15 |
| 2 | Trinity | 5 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 11 | 7 | 4 | 12 |
| 3 | Jesus | 5 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 13 | 6 | 7 | 10 |
| 4 | St. John's | 5 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 11 | 5 | 6 | 10 |
| 5 | Churchill | 4 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 5 | 5 | 0 | 6 |
| 6 | Darwin | 4 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 9 | 7 | 2 | 4 |
| 7 | Caius | 5 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 6 | 15 | -9 | 4 |
| 8 | Downing | 5 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 8 | 13 | -5 | 3 |
| 9 | St. Catharine's | 5 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 4 | 11 | -7 | 3 |
| 10 | Girton | 5 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 6 | 16 | -10 | 3 |

Last weeks' results: Caius 2 - 3 Girton; Churchill 0 - 7 Fitzwilliam; Darwin 6 - 2 Downing; St. John's 1 - 1 Jesus; Trinity 2 - 0 St. Catharine's;

Seven hours in the cold

John Snowdon

ON A freezing Saturday morning, Cambridge's hardest young men and women took to the Jesus pitches to brave the icy conditions and play seven hours of rugby.

Seven aside rugby for seven hours with lots of people constantly rotating may have seemed like fun in the organising stages, but with the cold weather and lack of people in the early stages, several of the girls may have had to convince themselves that it was still a good idea.

Numbers were more than a little short at the ungodly hour of 9am

and the team members themselves were forced to play for much of the morning to keep the rugby going.

However, after midday, things really began to pick up as students started to wake up from their weekend lie-ins. The men's team popped down in the afternoon and despite the wintry conditions, the CUWRFC were pleasantly surprised by the popularity of the event.

There was the small matter of an England rugby game at 2pm which rather put a dampener on things, but with an England victory, the event wrapped up successfully.

The event raised £321.21 pounds,

both through the rugby and a raffle which had lots of rugby balls to give away. A raffle was also held at the Men's rugby union game against Steele Bodger which saw Cambridge run out comfortable victors.

The Cambridge women's rugby team ran both the event and raffles to raise money for charity as half of the money raised was donated to SPIRE, which stands for Supporting Paraplegics In Rugby Enterprise.

CUWRFC are hoping to run a similar event in the summer but added that they are hoping for better weather conditions.



Adam Edeshain



Adam Edeshain

The Women's Rugby Football Club helped raise money for Supporting Paraplegics In Rugby Enterprise

Trinity lead the fight back at top

Fitz lead Division 1 but Trinity are closing as other divisions take shape

Ben Myers

FITZ ARE this year's team to beat in Division 1, winning all of their opening matches and scoring a prolific 23 goals. Trinity, Jesus and John's make up the chasing pack, but judging on performances so far this term, knocking Fitz off the summit will be a very difficult task indeed. In what is a very tight league – each team having won at least one game – the relegation dogfight has engulfed Girton, Catz and Downing. Newly promoted Churchill can feel pleased with their start, consolidating in mid-table on 6 points.

The race for promotion to the zenith of Cambridge football couldn't be tighter, with Homerton, Christ's and Sidney leading the way on 12 points apiece. Homerton are surely the favourites after their unbeaten starts.

Watch out for Selwyn too, sitting pretty with games in hand, though their less than impressive, negative goal difference could cost them come the final shake-up. At the other end Long Road, John's II, Robinson and Fitz II also need wins to avoid the drop.

Netting 13 times already this season and only conceding twice, Tit Hall look dead certs for promotion from Division 3, with APU seemingly the most likely to join them. With a Blackburnesque goal difference of minus 11 and with just 3 fixtures left, Girton II will be waving goodbye to this level of football for next season, while Queens and Clare will battle it out to avoid the other relegation spot (assuming Long Road play some games).

Both with 100% records thus far, APU II and Catz II are leading the way in Division 4, though any of the top five could still be in with a shout. Despite



Adam Edelsharn

College football, even in the lower leagues, has become even more competitive – but not everyone has enough shirts

having conceded a ludicrous 19 goals in just 5 matches, Caius II have still managed an impressive couple of wins, but their goal difference takes them out of contention. Emma II's weekend victory against CCSS takes them above Peterhouse and out of the bottom two for the first time this season.

In division 5, any of the top 4 could go up whilst any of the bottom 6 could go down. Fitz III and Downing II lead the way on 9 points, though Pembroke II and Catz III also look strong on 6. Churchill and Selwyn's second strings have both failed to notch up wins in 3

attempts; Johns III and Queens II also have no points.

Churchill III have stormed to the top of Division 6, winning 5 out of 5 and scoring a phenomenal 25 goals along the way. Miserly Corpus II and APU III along with free-scoring Tit Hall II and Christ's II will all compete for that elusive, second promotion spot. At the foot of the table Robinson II look dead and buried.

In the lesser known Division 7 North, Magdalene II look good for promotion after their unbeaten start. Jesus II and Girton III also have a 100%

records, whilst Emmanuel Wanderer's 10-2 thrashing of the Christ's All-stars last weekend has them in contention in third, leaving their struggling neighbours rock bottom of the entire league.

Finally, Division 7 South, where Peterhouse II's policy of "if they score, we'll get one more" is working well. Darwin II and Homerton III also look strong contenders for promotion, and Kings II cannot be ruled out yet. Tit Hall III prop up the table, their goal difference only slightly inferior to Queens III's. Meanwhile Clare and Downing's third teams both need to do some work

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