

~ DAILY ~ VARSITY

MONDAY

Monday June 15th 2009

The Independent Cambridge Student Newspaper since 1947

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*Sir Michael Parkinson
in the hot seat*

Caius student contracts swine flu

Beth Staton

A male undergraduate at Gonville and Caius College has been confirmed as the University's first case of swine flu.

The student returned from a trip to London with fever and other flu like symptoms, and on Thursday the Health Protection Agency confirmed he had contracted the H1N1 virus.

Varsity has learned that he is currently being cared for by staff at Darwin College, where the diagnosis was made.

A connected but unconfirmed case at Darwin has also been reported.

In an e-mail to students, Caius' Senior Tutor stressed that the H1N1 case was "no cause for concern". He said the student in question has had "limited contact with a small number of members of Caius College" and that "steps have been taken to establish contact with these, and to offer them support".

Speaking to Varsity, a friend of the student said he was doing well, and that his condition had improved with medical treatment.

"I don't think it's anything special really. He's got a cough and hasn't been able to leave his room, so he's been sleeping a lot", the friend said.

University authorities said the case was being dealt with effectively, and that pre-existing mechanisms utilised in previous outbreaks like mumps had been swiftly set into motion.

"The machinery for dealing with this has already sprung into action", said spokesperson Tom Kirk. "Although there's clearly a difference in the nature of the disease itself, the procedures for dealing with all outbreaks are the same".

The case has been dealt with wholly internally, and Addenbrooke's were un-

able to comment. Both the University and local Authorities have issued information on the disease and how to combat it.

Symptoms of swine flu include aching muscles, fever, chills and headaches, and sufferers may also experience a cough, sore throat, or conjunctivitis.

Although there is no vaccine, the disease can be effectively treated using antiviral medications such as Tamiflu.

Anyone suffering from flu-like symptoms should stay inside, drink plenty of fluids and inform their GP and Porters' Lodge.

Several other cases have been reported in Cambridgeshire, but few have been documented in British universities. Although two students at Herriot-Watt University in Edinburgh contracted the disease at the end of May, the cases did not lead to a sustained outbreak.

The news from Cambridge comes just days after the World Health Organisation (WHO) raised the level of influenza pandemic alert from 5 to 6, the highest classification of outbreak. This means that the virus has achieved a sustained spread in communities in at least two WHO regions.

Margaret Chan, Director General of WHO, confirmed the pandemic status of the virus on June 11. "Spread in several countries can no longer be traced to clearly-defined chains of human-to-human transmission", she said. "Further spread is considered inevitable. The world is now at the start of the 2009 influenza pandemic".

The dramatic classification of the virus belies, however, its relatively mild present form. Of over 30,000 confirmed cases, only 144 sufferers have died of the illness, compared to the 250, 000 to 500,000 killed by seasonal influenza each year.



MICHAEL DERRINGER

King's Fun Day

Yesterday, guests at King's College Fun Day lounged on the famous lawns, enjoying ice-cream, punt races and an inflatable assault course (for those not saving their energy for the rest of May Week!).

NUS proposes abolition of top-up fees

Maggie Browning

Proposals made early in May by the NUS (National Union of Students) presented an alternative to the current system of top-up fees.

NUS president Wes Streeting has publicly claimed that current top-up rates are poised to cause a "summer of

misery" for the approximately 300,000 graduates entering the workforce this summer.

One of the new NUS proposals would provide for the abolition of tuition fees and their replacement with a new 'People's Trust for Higher Education'.

Former students would contribute to the Trust for a fixed period of twenty

years after graduating, and graduate contributions to the Trust would be on a progressive sliding scale, with the poorest fifth paying 0.3 percent, compared to 2.5 percent for the top twenty percent of graduate earners.

This would mean a significant decrease in the financial burden placed on students from less wealthy families, who

may currently be deterred from attending university due to fear of debt.

Student debt under the present scheme could rise to as much as £32,000 on graduation, if plans to increase tuition fees to £5,000 or above are put in place.

It has been predicted that these proposals could benefit British universities overall. Estimated revenue of fees under

the current system is £6 billion a year, whereas if these proposals were put into place, revenue could rise to £6.4 billion within twenty years, and then to £8.5 billion after forty years. Streeting says, "NUS is proud to be the first organisation to stick its head above the parapet and propose an alternative to the disastrous top up fee system".

Got a good picture? Email it to mayweek@varsity.co.uk

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*Standard network charges apply

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NEWS FEATURE



The Sidney Sussex Drinking Society, the Sidney Slags

Suicide Sunday

Suicide Sunday is one of the most infamous days in the Cambridge social calendar. This year, some garden parties were cancelled or forced out of city centre grounds by wary College officials. But the fun couldn't be stopped...

Varsity News

Cambridge's various drinking societies were out in full force for yesterday's Suicide Sunday celebrations.

The day offered a timetable packed with garden parties, the most notorious being those hosted by the Gentlemen Wyverns of Magdalene College, the Squires of Gonville and Caius and the Trinity Hall Crescents. The latter are now the only drinking society still allowed to host their Garden Party on College premises.

Although in past years the Wyverns have used Trinity Old Field to celebrate in May Week, for their 80th Annual Garden Party they were compelled to relocate to the grounds of Anstey Hall, a restored seventeenth-century manor house five miles from the city centre. This move involved significant coordination with several coaches provided to and from the event at staggered times to cater for those hopping between different events.

Between (and during) these garden parties, several students faced grueling initiations that involved tasks such as drinking a non-alcoholic beverage through a fish smeared in Marmite and

licking cream off a half-dressed stranger.

On the process of his initiation, all one student had to say was, "What was most surprising was the immediacy with which the bag of vomit exploded over my head".

The day was brought to an early close for another student who was sent to Addenbrooke's Hospital midway through his

"WHAT WAS MOST SURPRISING WAS THE IMMEDIACY WITH WHICH THE BAG OF VOMIT EXPLODED OVER MY HEAD."

initiation, having broken his ankle during a task that involved tackling a University under-20 rugby player.

The injured student has now been released from hospital, where several peers dutifully kept him company during the day. Friends suggested that the injury was not directly related to drinking, although the consumption of large amounts of alcohol probably exacerbated the situation.

"I doubt the fact that he was completely bollocks helped the matter", said one companion. Several other students fortified the University's contingent at Adden-

brooke's, with one fresher injuring his leg on falling down a flight of stairs.

Added to all this was the Wyverns' annual jelly wrestling competition, judged almost purely on the attractiveness of the competitors. Though some of the female students at the event expressed their disapproval of the tradition, last year's winner competed once again. This year,

the attraction proved so popular that rumours spread and a crowd gathered around the pumped and filled paddling pool half an hour before the competition was to start, only to be told to return to the bars.

Despite the 3pm finish printed on Wyvern invitations, no alcohol was served at the party after 2pm. Police were in attendance at all garden parties, as they had pledged to be, in order to enforce licensing laws and ensure safety and sensible behaviour.

"We're making sure that everyone behaves safely and avoids putting themselves at risk", said Carol Lankton, University Liaison Officer for the Cambridge police. Speaking to Varsity in the early afternoon at the Squires' Garden Party, she said no problems had occurred but that it was still early in the day.

"9am is early for a start to drinking and it's easy for people to become vulnerable when consuming too much", she said. "Garden parties are licensed premises so the same rules apply as to a bar - you shouldn't be serving people that are drunk or underage. We're not trying to spoil anyone's fun. Making sure these events happen safely means they can continue into the future".

Safety was also essential to the planning of this year's revelries at Trinity Hall. Trinity Hall Head Porter Mark Whitehead said measures had been taken to ensure responsible behaviour. Students had been put through a course on responsible retailing and there was significant police presence to enforce licensing laws.

Similarly, the Lady Orchids of Downing College had their garden party closely monitored by college authorities. An external security company was hired to operate the doors and staff from the college bar, rather than students and society members, served alcoholic drinks in a limited two hour time-slot.

One member commented, "It's been really tricky to sort everything out. The men's garden party has been completely cancelled and it's been a struggle to get around the authorities for the party to go ahead". The student noted that there had been no problems at the party last year but that student drinking societies, as institutions, have developed a bad reputation in the last year so cautious planning was necessary.

Colleges authorities themselves have



been extra wary this year. The 2009 Newnham Nuns' Garden Party was cancelled by the College, and many other societies have been forced to conduct initiations in secret to avoid disapproving authorities. Natasha Wear, President of the Newnham Nuns, commented, "The College needed to be seen to be doing something to combat the problem of binge drinking. Our garden party was fully organised but the College wouldn't let it go ahead. They cancelled the party as a punishment for the bad press we've received in the past. I think the name 'Nuns' and the fact that we're a girls' college makes the situation worse".

In Brief

Mymayweek.com launches

A new service for planning your May Week has been launched online. Mypidge.com is an open source project which collates information on what's going on in Cambridge and connects individuals to the events which are most relevant to them. Set up by students, it's a resource which anyone can contribute to by posting events, or getting involved with the organisation of the project. For May Week the site can be found on mymayweek.com, and as well as wide-ranging listings of post-exam festivities it provides links to exclusive students offers in restaurants, shops and bars. Information on May Balls, garden parties and club nights can be found alongside theatre listings, talks and lectures, and users can edit which events are displayed according to their preferences.

Armed robbery at Revolution

Five men have been arrested following an armed robbery at Vodka Revolution last week. Two men with scarves wrapped around their faces entered the bar at around 2am on Tuesday 2nd June, threatening the staff and fleeing with thousands of pounds in cash. Following a chase along the M11 the men were reprimanded by Essex police at around 2.30am, with police dogs and a helicopter after they crossed the border from Cambridgeshire. Three men in their early twenties and two 17 year old youths were held for questioning in Parkside police station yesterday. One female staff member was left badly shaken, but no weapons were used and no-one was hurt during the raid. Detective sergeant Adi Bowman was pleased with the police reaction to the crime. "It is great that this incident was brought to a safe conclusion" she said.

Man bailed after arson attack

The Cambridge Youth Hostel has been closed for two weeks following an arson attack. Firefighters were called to the blaze at the hostel, where about 90 guests were staying, at around 6.15pm on May 13th. Several people had to be rescued from inside the guest house, including one who had collapsed on the ground floor and several others who were stranded on a flat roof after escaping from the flames. Hostel staff managed to find alternative accommodation for over 60 guests, and repair work for smoke and fire damage is now under way. A 29 year old man has been arrested under suspicion of arson with intent to endanger life, and has been bailed to appear at Parkside station on July 8th.



An initiation ceremony

Cambridge Spies



Jesus

A rear exit

One vampish damsel, fresh from an examination of the ancient linguistic variety, unsurprisingly found herself celebrating in Cindies, where she happened upon an ol' victim whose loose tongue had embroidered upon the details of their affair. This archetypal Cambridge rogue had claimed to all he knew that he had mounted her on the derriere side. His laddish display was soon shattered, however, by no less than seven strong blows to his visage, dealt by the hand of our female protagonist. Taking pity on our heroine, her new victim for the evening bid her farewell, generously assuring her that she would be more than welcome to continue where they had left off on a less scandalous evening.

Queens'

Society Stripper

Prospective accounts of the upcoming annual dinner of one notorious drinking society so impressed one member of Queens' that he felt the desire to book a table (for himself and a supervisor) the same evening at the very eating establishment where the infamous dinner was to be held. The pair dined to the unseemly sight of the entire membership of the drinking society being escorted away, leaving a telling trail of broken crockery, two concerned policemen and an exceedingly irate – and unpaid – stripper. It goes without saying that the £500 deposit laid down by said society will not be returned any time soon.

Anstey Hall

Fruity Fun

The much-anticipated fun of five bikini-clad babes and some fruit-infused gelatine took a turn for the worse this year when one feisty, fresh-faced Irish combatant received a blow to the nose. So tempting was the resultant blood-and-jelly concoction that crowds of eager and somewhat prurient onlookers dived in post-match to investigate. Little did they realise that the vivid, gory mixture would not be improved by the addition of three blackberries. Random.



Are you going to Strawberry Fair?

400 police bookings didn't stop last week's Strawberry Fair being hailed as a success. Despite 244 people receiving formal warnings for cannabis possession, the free festival passed safely and peacefully, avoiding the problems of anti-social behaviour and illegal camping that plagued last year's event. Revellers travelled in a multicultural 'strawberry nation' carnival to the music, theatre and arts festival on Midsummer Common, which featured cake decorating workshops, a film festival and 'Australian gypsy burlesque pirates'.

'Swan marshals' on the Cam

Anna Harper

Special 'swan marshals' were put in place during the May Bumps to protect swans and their cygnets, following calls for action from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA).

The calls came after an infamously violent swan, nicknamed "Mr Asbo" by student rowers, fathered a brood of five cygnets. "Mr Asbo" and his brood currently live in the Ditton Corner area, where the four-day "bumps and carnage" races took place in the run-up to May Week.

RSPCA Inspector Chris Nice called for special swan marshals to monitor swans during bumps, arguing that Bumps races are potentially hazardous for the birds, and citing past reports which tell of cygnets being run over by boats. There is an additional risk of swans attacking rowers and coxes.

In a recent incident, "Mr Asbo" stole a mobile phone from the cox of Newnham's second women's boat. The bird then dropped the phone in the river and

proceeded to attack the cox herself, who required a tetanus booster the following day. Trinity cox Mark McKelvie has also been attacked, leading to widespread fears for the safety of rowers, and more particularly coxes, during the Bumps races.

Inspector Nice of the RSPCA noted that violent attacks on rowers by swans are not unusual: "During the breeding season [birds] will naturally protect their territory."

The chances of the cygnets surviving Bumps were thought to be slim if measures were not taken to protect the birds.

River Manager Dr Philippa Noon of Cam Conservators said that licenses for the temporary removal of the swans from the river could have been obtained from Natural England. However, such an action might have been distressing to the animals concerned.

In the absence of measures to protect the swans on Ditton Corner, organisers of the Bumps races left themselves open to legal proceedings, as it is an offence to kill or injure a swan or cygnet under the Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1981.



"Mr Asbo" attacks



Students launch Gaza cycle campaign

Tanya Iqbal

Cambridge 'Cycle to Gaza' event was launched on Sunday afternoon as part of the 'Cambridge Gaza Solidarity Campaign' to raise awareness of the continuing blockade of the Gaza area.

More than 70 volunteers, of all ages, both University members and locals, assembled at the Café Project on Jesus Lane where the sunny afternoon set the tone for the charity event.

In preparation for the cycle, participants created banners with slogans such as 'End the blockade' and 'Don't Police the Peace' whilst sitting outdoors to enjoy the £4 charitable lunch provided by the Café Project. Motivating pep-talks reiterated the underlying theme and intention of peace and solidarity of the event from both a Palestinian and Israeli perspective.

The 'Cambridge Gaza Solidarity Campaign' began during the occupa-

tion of the Law Faculty in January this year, demanding action from the University regarding humanitarian aid for Gaza, as well as requesting a full disinvestment from the arms trade of Cambridge University and its Colleges.

The cycle race continued the work of the campaigners, and was a follow-up to Saturday evening's concert held at the Cambridge Union.

The 36km cycle hoped to raise money through sponsorship towards funding educational NGOs in Gaza. The cyclists sported face paint, banners and flags and even strapped a ghetto blaster to one of the bicycles in order to attract the attention of the weekend crowds in Cambridge.

The route was set to last around two hours beginning and ending at the Café Project on Jesus Lane; it included cycling along King's Parade and through Parker's Piece.

Albion Ascendant



MICHAEL STOTHARD

725

number of bottles of champagne

5

number of sages

1,250

number of tickets sold

30

number of live acts

1

number of Ferris wheels

The queue, a mode of organisation that typifies our island's habitual sense of conformity fair play, is the archetypal British activity. So as a 'celebration of Britain and her rich history' the Peterhouse May Ball got off to a good start. However, this dull formality was elevated into the realms of genius by the inspired invitation of the Sealed Knot to perform for the waiting guests.

For those unfamiliar with the Sealed Knot, this historical re-enactment society is made up of creepily dedicated hobbyists who assemble at weekends, dress like extras from a period drama, and revel in their queer perception of Merrie England. We were treated to a performance by the 'King's Army' of circa 1642.

The soldiers invited guests to shoot their muskets, the jester invited ladies to stroke his cock-a-doodle-doo, and the campsite wench invited men to impregnate her. What is more, as the loopy enthusiasts of the Sealed Knot were so happy to offer us their picture of 'Olde England', this bizarre opening entertainment was completely free. The same originality and loving attention to detail characteristic of the Sealed Knot's re-enactments pervaded the whole evening and made the Peterhouse May Ball an unqualified triumph.

On entering the Ball, attractions and decorations instantly turned me into a giddy and excited schoolchild. The team had done a truly magnificent job in transforming their college into an homage to Albion - something that could so easily have looked a bit naff. The entrance was a Village Fête complete with games, a Ferris wheel and the ubiquitous May Ball carousel, and Gibson Court

had been transformed into a Notting Hill Carnival soaked with samba, steel drums and Red Stripe. However, the highlight was definitely the Old Court, decked out as a Jubilee Ball, with Union Jack coloured ribbons and garlands hanging from the windows and Union Jack-coloured champagne to wash down the hog roast.

As usual with these events, I had fasted for the whole day in order to get my money's worth of food come the evening. So the first hour or so was spent manically rushing around in an attempt to visit every food stall. Once my raging appetite had been calmed it was time to relax on the Ferris wheel. Apparently, the committee had booked a classy old Ferris wheel with a tasteful decor -reportedly the one used in the M&S adverts. In its place arrived a magnificently garish wheel covered in porny images (wild cats and naked blonde ladies cheekily caressing their tails), rather at odds with the tasteful restraint of the evening's theme. Lured in by these delightful paintings, my guest and I joined the queue.

"He must be taking the piss," I said to my guest as one of the men staffing the ride shimmied up a ladder with a metal mallet and began hammering one of the struts back into place.

Evidently the majority of those queuing in front of us did not think he was, and in fear of their lives scurried off, leaving us more foolhardy revellers a space on the next ride. The view from the top was truly beautiful, with the last remnants of the setting sun glistening on the horizon behind the silhouette of King's Chapel.

A magnificent job was done on the mu-

sic, with the verbal dexterity of Britain's best beat-boxer, Beardyman, stunning a packed out main stage. His ridiculously versatile voice box recreated club classics, coupled with hilarious interjections worthy of a top stand-up comedian. A similar effect was created by Cambridge's own Finn Beames, who energized the Blitz Black Out Room with his entertaining reworking of girl band hits. Peterhouse natives Ye Derf Evaders filled the Notting Hill Carnival with their classic mix of rock 'n' roll, reggae and ska.

Unfortunately the headliners Simian Mobile Disco did not attract the enthusiasm they deserved. Despite being a brilliant booking, these New Rave kingpins turned out to be too cool for the school of white tie, silk scarves and champagne. The perennially jarring sight, evident at all May Balls, of gimps in dinner jackets and ball gowns bumping and grinding to the UK's hippest acts, was not absent here, and SMD drew an unfortunately small crowd. In comparison, the Choral Scholars of King's College, known as Collegium Regale, packed out the Jubilee Ball stage three hours later.

After the traumatic journey which saw the Peterhouse Ball cancelled last year, and upset by the suspension of its 2009 president last month, the evening had a wonderful sense of culmination. In terms of its organisation, for many the evening was a case of Hamlet without the Prince. However, it remained a magnificent event, infused with that excitement only ever born of seeing a true labour of love completed. Say what you want about Cambridge's stupidest college, they can throw one hell of a party.

Robert Peal

Balls in Brief



Homerton: James Bond 007

Despite winning the award for the most unimaginative May Ball theme (surely every one is, by default, 'James Bond 007': black tie, a token casino, and some cocktails), Homerton wasn't a complete embarrassment. There was a rather charming mixture of the spectacularly tasteless (an Aston Martin plunked on the lawn which disappeared half way through the night) and the genuinely enjoyable. There was a great variety of music and entertainment; a highlight being the Footlights crew, especially that disheveled comic gem Liam Williams. It was an oddjob, but it was fun. The carousel was a nice time consumer, and the casino was all right, but someone should be told that when the champagne runs out - having Becks on tap isn't a great alternative.

Anna Trench

Robinson: Phantasmagoria

'Phantasmagoria' was a spectacular start to May Week. Highlights included the firework display and the musical entertainments which were provided on the main stage by, amongst others, The Magistrates, DJ Yoda and DJ Luck MC Neat. The dodgems, bouncy castle and shisha tent also proved popular. The atmosphere was set by breathtaking surrealist artwork which hung around the College and reflected the different zones of entertainment endowed with mystical names such as the 'Road of the Enigma' and 'Shangri-La'. Guests were spoilt for choice with the wide range of food and drink, which included an elaborate sit-down dinner, hog roast, crêpes and cocktails. As the sun rose and the survivors enjoyed breakfast, there was still a buzz of energy in the air. The ball was an overwhelming success.

Sarah Rodin

Emmanuel: Not Empire

Along with the usual favourites, including dodgems and a champagne bar, Emma Ball had some truly individual features. The shisha area placed under a bowing tree produced a mystical cavern-esque atmosphere and the artificial beach, whilst not popular with guests reluctant to rest their silk-clad behinds on wet sand, was admired theoretically. The Indian tent was especially magnificently decorated with a colossal facade of the Taj Mahal.

Kitty Walsh

Your Passports, Please

CAEDMON TUNSTALL-BEHRENS TRAVELS TO BURGUNDY (IN LONDON) BY WAY OF HUGHES HALL

Greeted at the entrance to Hughes Hall May Ball by the glaring absence of a queue and a seriously awkward silence, I must say I didn't have much hope that the night was going to bring great things. In fact, I only feared confirmation of my suspicions that mature students just don't know how to party.

Design certainly didn't feature hugely in the Ball's budget. A hand-drawn 'Pimlico' tube sign was the first thing we encountered, and a series of tourist snaps of London city-centre promo shots were the disappointing second act.

Which brings me to the theme of the night: 'Passport to Pimlico'. Invited to spend an evening 'partying like we [were] in Burgundy' sounded like a promising prospect at first, but the lack of coherence throughout the venue in terms of setting was a shame.

The 1949 Ealing Studios comedy 'Passport to Pimlico' was itself named for the sought-after postcode of Pimlico in London. In the film, a delayed bomb ex-

plosion reveals a hidden vault containing treasure as well as an ancient document proving that the land was once granted to the Duke of Burgundy in perpetuity. Pimlico's inhabitants thus find that they are Burgundians, and are promptly refused passage out of their district by the London authorities.

As a Ball concept it could have worked quite well, but at Hughes the only features actually alluding to theme were a room called the 'Bomb Shelter', a 'Duke of Burgundy Pub' and a mock Pimlico Tube station.

Venturing into the melée, my companions and I found ourselves on the main stage, where we were greeted by a troupe of five fresh-faced and scantily-clad gyrating girls.

This performance was perhaps the highlight of the evening - much improved from the first act, where the same girls had been dressed as French maids, perhaps in a (weak) allusion to the Burgundian theme.

Outside, among the well-placed deck chairs, I caught part of the conversation going on in a neighbouring group about the merits of the burlesque act. "This isn't burlesque," one gent said. "It's girls prancing around in their pants. Real burlesque is supposed to be suggestive rather than overtly sexual."

"I don't want you to thank me, I just want you to spank me" was the catchphrase of a later but similar act, which included props such as a real-life ping-pong bat and featured a woman's requests for male members of the audience to punish her.

The same dancers were later seen again on the main stage, but in their capacity as a professional band, "The Electric Dolls". Mixing pop beats with well pitched voices, they had the audience on the dance floor showing their moves.

Another big act, Lounge Fly, which has received widespread press coverage in NME, attracted a large gaggle in the dance tent. The group of Gloucestershire

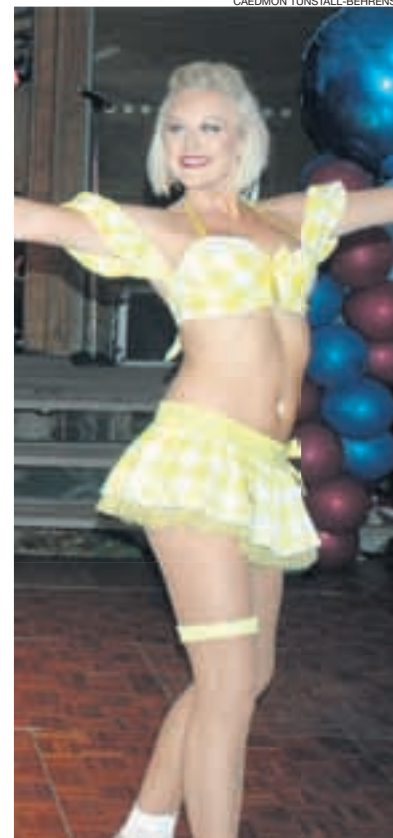
natives, with their skits and lyrics, kept a keen few head-banging for an hour, whilst others queued for the hog-roast, a May Ball essential that was happily not left out.

Other culinary choices included cheesy-chips, jacket potatoes, Beef Bourguignon, fish and chips, ice cream, and crêpes. The oddity was that all were served from the same two trailers, which were rather too reminiscent of the Market Square's Van of Life for my liking.

Drink flowed freely for the whole night and - although the refreshments doubtless weren't as fancy as their counterparts at Peterhouse - no one seemed to mind that Hughes Hall had kept it simple.

In all more a June Event than a May Ball, 'Passport to Pimlico' still exceeded my expectations, despite the fact that I got serious blazer-envy for a "Goldie" jacket, and didn't manage to stay on the Buckingham Bronco for more than ten seconds.

CAEDMON TUNSTALL-BEHRENS



150

number of bottles of champagne

7

number of staff members

12

number of live acts

400

number of guests

Speechwriter, Public Affairs

£27,795 to £31,283
Cambridge



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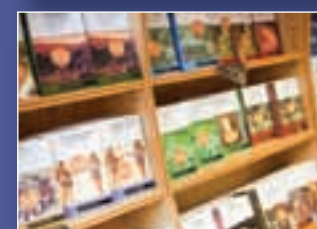
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Joe
Hunter



Achieving the impossible

May Balls are a step beyond our everyday expectations

The May Ball is a grotesque example of the Cambridge ethos of living for postponed pleasure. It makes perfect sense, it may be argued, that the hardest and most concentrated working terms in the land (perhaps the world) culminate in some of the most lavish and overblown celebrations, equally condensed and intense. It's worth noting that we do not 'beat' students at other institutions on quantities of alcohol consumed or even consecutive days and nights of post-exam excess. What sets us apart is our ability to pre-plan and anticipate that excess to an incredible extent.

Without being a committee member for a May Week event (as I was this year), you cannot understand the level of thought that goes into their organisation from people who have nothing concrete to gain from the event's successful execution except a few lines on a CV. You will all, however, be familiar with the scale and complexity of the events themselves. Look, for example, at the programme you are given at the next Ball or June Event you attend. Somebody has thought about that one document, on and off, for almost a full year of their life. Not constantly working on it - but the need to produce it, and the committee role that goes with that responsibility, has been the concern of somebody for all that time. But this is really no different from the experience of the attendee, the punter who receives the programme on the long-awaited evening. In both cases, the main emphasis is on the preparation and anticipation, rather

than its satiation.

It's not true that every Cambridge student lives for May Week, but it is fair to say that during exam term, the intensity of the workload and (often self-induced) academic pressure would be too much to bear without a light at the end of the tunnel. However, because this promise of

In fact, once we are within the future, surprise surprise it does not have the same appeal it had when we imagined it, and so the framework is re-located. Now we look forward to a particular Ball, or to graduation, or whatever. We find again and again that we are denied what we hoped for: the enjoyment of the present

the end of the tunnel.

Ultimately, I suppose it doesn't matter. It helps us perform when we need to perform, and it helps committee members organise great events without the benefit of experience. We must remember, though, that no May Ball is ever really the sum of its parts. I defy anybody to develop a sound ethical argument excusing the kind of expenditure and waste induced by a May Ball. The problem is, if you go down that road, where do you stop? Take all the money spent on May Balls in one year and give it to cancer research. Good. Now: tell me why you don't do the same with the money spent on your education. Oh, you want to get into a better social and financial position so you can help more potently. But when does that happen? What if you get rich? And when you were in the library at 2 am this term, were you really longing for exams to be over so you could plan your future charity work?

By its very nature, a May Ball is an attempt to achieve the impossible. It's the First we always should have got; the gym routine we can never quite stick to; the phone call home we can't find time to make; the future plans that are never quite in place. But there's another way of looking at them. Forget past and future for a moment. You'll find yourself in a beautiful Cambridge college, surrounded by your closest friends, and supplied with food, drink and music in abundance. And maybe you'll find that now - just now - is the best place to be.



a 'life after' the present intense effort has meant so much for the entire academic career of all Cambridge students, we look upon it as the only way to live. During exams, looking towards May Week, our pleasure stems from picturing ourselves inhabiting this future state with gusto and looking back on the past with relief.

in a simple and direct contrast with the past. That is to say, we know that we have worked solidly for seven weeks and sat very difficult exams by the time we reach May Week, and no amount of Pimm's or midday lie-ins or sunburn can compensate for it - certainly not in the way we thought it might when it was our light at

George
Owers



Save the BBC from the market

The license fee is a guarantee of quality

Macaulay once observed that there is "no spectacle so ridiculous as the British public in one of its periodical fits of morality". There has been no fitter monument to this aperçu recently than the Ross/Brand debacle. However, the morality of their ill-judged, boorish antics is secondary to what the hysterical attacks of the gutter press reveal about contemporary British culture.

The *Daily Hate* and *Torygraph* would love us to believe that their attacks on Auntie Beeb merely reflected a sincere and admirable desire to protect the deeply cherished moral values of the British people. The reality is that the right-wing hacks of Fleet Street have long since auctioned their nicotine-stained, booze-soaked souls to the highest bidder, like a swarm of Fausts bowing down to the Murdoch-like figure of Lucifer. They are in the pockets of large media corporations that are direct commercial competitors to the BBC, most notably Sky in the case of Murdoch, who owns *The Times* and *The Sun*. The *Daily Mail* is owned by Northcliffe Media, who owns a string of local news outlets. The BBC is the last bulwark against News International's complete domination of the entire British media.

So, the vicious swipes of these journalistic prostitutes merely constitute self-interest masked by a baroque and faintly distasteful veneer of moralistic panic.

However, by eroding the BBC's reputation in the eyes of the small-minded punters who lap up anything the *Mail* or *Sun* prints, these guttersnipes are striking at the very core of our cultural heritage.

For, what is the BBC but a venerable custodian of our intellectual culture? When broadcasting is exposed to the full blast of the market, it merely results in a levelling-down populism designed to appeal to a homogenised, 'focus-grouped' mediocrity. Surely the mind-numbingly fourth-rate nature of the output of ITV in

British media? Would journalists genuinely interested in getting to the truth and standing up to corporate behemoths get a fair hearing in a world where Rupert Murdoch sat as judge, jury and executioner on every single issue? If we do not stand up for the idea that the BBC exists to make programmes that enrich our national culture, teach us to think more deeply, and challenge us to do and be better, and that it deserves the freedom to do so, then we might as well settle for a future in which the high-point of British

tame media machine ladling intellectual gruel to the punters will do it just fine. Of course, there is also the more overt political aspect; David Cameron would probably do unspeakable and frankly unprintable things for Rupert Murdoch for the support of *The Sun*.

So, unless we are prepared to stand up and take political action to protect the BBC, then there is a grave danger that Northcliffe and Murdoch, aided by Druggie Dave and the Notting Hill mob, will have their wicked way and steal the jewel in the crown of Britain's intellectual life. The BBC's protection from market forces results in the making of programmes that end up being both excellent, and, in the end, popular. This is because creativity needs long-term faith and commitment. Take, for example, *Only Fools and Horses*, or *Blackadder*. Both programmes had poor first series, but were rescued by commissioners who saw promise in these early efforts. Both shows, of course, went on to be phenomenal popular and critical smashes. The market cannot accommodate such long-term commitment. It is a creature of the short-run. It is for this reason, among many, that the BBC is worth defending. So, next time you read some outraged tabloid hissy-fit, remember that the occasional lapse of judgement is the price we pay for originality and culture.

"The big media ogres have political backing"

the past twenty years is evidence enough of this. Only a BBC well-funded and allowed to innovate and appeal to niche interests and minority pursuits can protect us from a future of inane crassness.

Take, for example, Radio 4, one of the last outlets in the UK broadcasting decent, well-researched investigative journalism, serious, balanced news reporting, and high-minded cultural programming. Would *In Our Time*, a programme in which Melvyn Bragg picks the minds of world-experts on subjects ranging from Jonathan Swift to Charles Darwin, exist in a completely marketised

cultural identity and vigour is ogling at page three of *The Sun*.

Of course, the big media ogres are not without political backing. Who is at the vanguard of this cynical attack on the BBC? Could it possibly be the Conservative Party? David Cameron lazily rehearses tabloid assaults on the Beeb, and Tory 'Culture' policy largely consists of attacking the licence fee. Under a Tory government out-and-out privatisation is surely not far away. The political right-wing has no interest in an impartial BBC appealing to our better interests and exposing the realities of our political culture. A

What I love about May Week



Debauchery, like decadence, is a term bandied about far too often at Cambridge. If we think about it, we have had very few nights which really are decadent or debauched. Faded drinking society superheroes clutching their last Apple VKs in Cindies don't really cut it, while formals, despite clinging to the candlelit trappings of silverware and gowns, never turn truly Bacchic. This tends not to be too problematic, as it means you can complete your essay the next day reasonably satisfactorily. Note, by the way, that I'm not confusing drunkenness with debauchery. Any fool can get drunk. But to do so in style, in glory, is a very rare thing indeed. I am not sure I have done it more than a couple of times - including one occasion when I woke up to read, in my inbox, all the way from Romania, "Dear Mr Kingsley, Thank you for your offer to buy my Soviet limo. When can you pick it up?" That, I think, may have been quite decadent, certainly for my bank balance. Thank God it doesn't happen often.

So let me say straight away that mass decadent debauchery would not be what I would be looking for in an ideal May Week. We will probably never see Dionysian revels on the scale of, say, *The Bacchae*, which is in many ways a Good Thing, especially for people who think decapitation at the hands of your own mother is not a great way to end an evening of drinking. But what we can aim for is a bloody good time: one last bash before we all go off on our separate but fairly generic ways; a healthy, cathartic antidote to the horrors of the examination halls; a festive week rather than a chaotic one.

There will be an element of fantasy about the whole affair, as, dressed to the nines, we flit about Balls and garden parties, forgetting for a moment that we live in a somewhat less than ideal world; all the gossip and the scandal that never happened this term will play itself out on the glitzy set that is Cambridge in June; all the Cantabrigian stereotypes will be out in force, from vapid Blu-Tack to pale, furry academics blinking in the sunlight. It will be tremendously jolly and, barring Suicide Sunday, actually quite civilised. Nice, in other words, with just that delicious possibility of naughtiness.

Victor Kingsley



Le Dejeuner sur l'herbe starring Shin-Shin Hua, Jack Furness, Venetia Archer and Tristan Hambleton; Photos by Michael Derringer; Art Direction by Joanna Della-Ragione and Ben Margereson

Look Sharpe in May Week

CAMBRIDGE INSTITUTION JAMES SHARPE GRADUATES IN JUST OVER A WEEK. WE WEREN'T ABOUT TO LET HIM GET AWAY WITHOUT SOME PARTING WORDS OF ADVICE ON MAY WEEK ETIQUETTE...

Black tie

I don't wish to be patronising, but it is worth just being clear: black tie means tuxedo in American English, but with some very important differences. If you have ever visited Marks and Spencer's to purchase a dress shirt with an attachable wing collar, you are purchasing what can only be described as a sartorial nightmare. It is a paradox all of its own because in formal wear it simply does not exist. Only our American cousins could be so foppish as to wear a wing-collared shirt with their tuxedo. In this country we have fold-down collars, thank you very much. Also remember: peaked lapels. Scroll collars on your dinner jacket are nice on your dapper young gentleman around town though. I hope I don't need to remind you that you should be wearing a cummerbund (or waistcoat) and a self-tied bowtie. Seriously, on what planet do you think a pre-tied bowtie is acceptable?!

White tie

For a man, the fun doesn't cease with black tie. Oh no. If you've been lucky enough to sneak a ticket to a more formal May Ball such as Peterhouse or Magdalene (or the CUCA Chairman's Dinner), you shall have the pleasure of donning white tie. Remember that wing collar? Well, this is where it is applicable - but only if it is detachable! Most hire companies will give you one of those American sartorial travesties, which will in fact be acceptable under the circumstances. It's just that if you want a stiff collar, detachable is always better. Also note that shoes should be patent leather (i.e. shiny), and that a white handkerchief may feel right, but a coloured one lets you make a statement. Talking about handkerchiefs, many people like to fold them neatly for their breast pocket, but I've always found that simply stuffing it in produces a better result. Accessories are to be encouraged: make an effort to procure a top hat, an opera cape, a silver-topped cane, or the classic antique pocket watch.



Dresses

Women are forever complaining that the task of preparation for formal events is more complicated for them. This is not true. A man must navigate the precise conventions of black and white tie occasions, while all a women has do is choose a pretty (long) dress. The only thing women really need to worry about is the colour. But as a man, I would not presume to lecture anyone of the opposite sex on the delicate subject of co-ordinating dress with eyes and skin complexion.

Sharpe not lecturing women on colour coordination



Garden parties

Although it might be raining, it is still nudging summer time. Therefore, at garden parties a light-coloured jacket or navy blazer (a tie can look forced) will always be welcome. These events are not the place for tomfoolery, however - that should be saved until the evening. Good conversation is where the real fun of the garden party lies. Once upon a time, politics and religion were no-go subjects. Now they are up for grabs. Just remember that if someone disagrees with you and there is no sight of resolution, the conversation should move on as quickly as possible. Sometimes, if faced with someone so antagonistic that they will never back down (no matter how wrong they may be), it is up to the opponent to use his maturity and submit.



Outdoor drama

If you decide to partake in a little culture during May Week, there is a treasure trove of Shakespeare's best on show during the early afternoons in various Fellows' Gardens. Of course, being outside in the sun, what better accompaniment to bring than a picnic. Nevertheless, while that champagne and those strawberries will no doubt be scrumptious, it is best to put them to one side once the actors burst onto the stage. Outdoor theatre has the potential to delight, but only if everyone is allowed to enjoy it.



Croquet

With sports it is vital to lay down the code of conduct. Not in this case. Because all those who play croquet must be, by definition, gentlemen, there is no need to inform participants that hitting an opponent with a mallet is just not cricket. But, as croquet is the nastiest and most competitive sport in existence, anything goes.

Parkinson on Parkinson

EARLIER THIS TERM, A BRAVE JOEL MASSEY AGREED TO INTERVIEW PROFESSIONAL QUESTIONER SIR MICHAEL PARKINSON LIVE AT THE UNION. PARKY OPENED UP ABOUT THE HEROES AND VILLAINS OF THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY

Sir Michael Parkinson has, by his own estimation, interviewed 2000 of the world's most famous people. So it was with some trepidation that I went to interview him in front of a packed Chamber at The Union earlier this term.

I had last heard of Parky in the news back in April with regard to an article he had written on Jade Goody for *The Radio Times*. "I said that she came to represent all that is wretched about Britain today," Sir Michael explains. "I was making a statement about what I perceive television like *Big Brother* is doing to our society. But then, I would not pay to see the elephant man, I would not pay to see the lunatics at Bedlam, and I would not pay to see the bearded lady. Why should we sit and watch a gang of freaks? When they cast *Big Brother* they don't cast the first people who come through the door, they cast people with psychological problems so they can put them in a room and laugh at them through a spy hole. I don't find that edifying.... And if we can't see the correlation between putting Jade Goody up as a role model and what happens on our streets on a Saturday night then we're dafter than I thought we were. We, as people who work in television, should think about the consequences of what we're doing."

I asked if, more generally, he felt that there was something pernicious about celebrity culture. "It's just futile," he replied in a saddened tone. "I mean, what is this sense in wanting to be recognised? You walk down the street and people say, 'Ooh, look at him,' but for what reason? Of course you become famous if you appear on stage, television or whatever, but that should never be your reason for being there. Anyone who does something just to be famous has got a screw loose. That's the problem with these poor devils in the *Big Brother* house. When they come out what are they other than famous? And where are they now?"

Living in Australia with Nasty Nick, I suggested. "That reminds me," he continued, "I was in a restaurant in London when I saw a man sitting in the corner turned round and staring at the wall. I asked somebody, and it turned it out he was Nasty Nick from the first series of *Big Brother*, facing the wall because he didn't want to be recognised. It hadn't occurred to him that this would attract even more attention."

Later I moved to discuss Sir Michael's accomplished television career. In my research, I had found an interesting quotation in which he revealed that,

tion that the most *remarkable* person he has interviewed was Muhammad Ali.

"I was very lucky," he explained to me in person, "because in 1971 when I first started doing the talk show Muhammad Ali was coming into his prime. I interviewed him four times in the next eleven years and chronicled not only the success of an extraordinary career and a great champion, but also his decline. In the last interview I did with him in 1982, though we didn't know it at the time, he was at the very beginning of his decline into Parkinson's. What was interesting was that I asked Ali if he was frightened of becoming one of those guys you see at every boxing event with dead eyes and cauliflower ears. He got angry with me, but even then I could see in his eyes a change from the man I'd met eleven years ago. He fought twice more after that, the consequence of which is the man we see today."

Moving on from the people he *did* interview, I asked if he had a one-that-got-away. "Frank Sinatra," he responded quickly. "He was the greatest star of the twentieth century and the best singer of popular songs there has ever been, and I'll fight anyone who says otherwise. I got near him once at a cocktail party. A friend of mine, the songwriter Sammy Cahn, had taken me out to meet Frank Sinatra. Sammy said that if I met him and he knew who I was he might do a show next time he was in England. I was introduced to him, he said, 'Mike, how are you?', and I said, 'Fine, Mr Sinatra, how are you?' Then Sammy left and as I didn't know anybody at the party I thought I might as well go. Before I did I figured I should say goodbye to my new best friend. I went over and said, 'Mr Sinatra, I'm going now,' and he said, 'Good to meet you, David.' From then on I had a feeling things wouldn't work out."

My final question was unimaginative, but I felt I had to ask Parky to single out one or two more of the people he had met in the course of his career. "Mandela was always a great hero of mine," he began, "especially as I was quite active as a journalist during apartheid. I was actually banned from South Africa for a while, but then I was allowed to go back when Mandela was out, and I met the great man. I'm not mystical at all, but there are people you meet who have a certain personality, a force or willpower within them. I don't know what it is, but even when your back is turned, you know they've walked into the room. Ali had it, Billy Connolly has



Unsurprisingly, however, not everyone has the immediate charisma of a Muhammad Ali or a Billy Connolly. One interviewee with whom Parkinson failed to 'connect' was Meg Ryan. "She walked out on the show," Parkinson says, "and I don't know what it was. I mean, she just didn't like me, and I didn't like her. I don't know what is wrong with her." Parkinson pauses here to laugh, and the audience giggles appreciatively. "A wonderful interview when you say, 'I don't know what was wrong with her. It wasn't my fault,'" Parkinson reassures us. "It comes to a point when, because the consensual deal is gone, all you can do is wrap it up, basically, because you know you're getting nowhere."

But luckily, this only happens relatively rarely. The interviews that truly

stand out for Parkinson are the ones in which the interviewees lived up to their impressive reputations. "That was the great joy of doing my job," Parkinson concludes. "I got to meet my heroes – and they didn't disappoint."

“IF WE CAN’T SEE THE CORRELATION BETWEEN PUTTING JADE GOODY UP AS A ROLE MODEL AND WHAT HAPPENS ON OUR STREETS ON A SATURDAY NIGHT THEN WE’RE DAFTER THAN I THOUGHT WE WERE.”

although he cannot choose a ‘favourite’ interviewee, he can say without hesitation, Richard Burton had it and Mandela certainly has it.”

Parky by Numbers	
1	Number of years since Parkinson was knighted
2	Number of O-Levels Parkinson achieved before leaving school (English and Art)
361	Number of editions of ‘Parkinson’ Sir Michael created
2,000	Approximate number of celebrities Parkinson has interviewed
12.5 million	Number of viewers who watched the 1997 special ‘BBC’s Auntie’s All Time Greats’, hosted by Parkinson

View from the
Groundlings

If there is one thing that Cambridge students are good at (apart from failing to procreate, abstinence from drugs and shopping at Sainsbury's) then it is ORGANISED FUN, and if you can struggle past the gaggles of comatose blazers on your college lawn then you might just catch a play this May Week. We are glut-tions for punishment, and this year there is a real variety of productions, mostly taking place amongst fairly idyllic surroundings.

Watching plays in this environment is a once in a year opportunity. It's refreshing to see how directors adapt without the conventional staging tricks, a bit (but actually not that much) like bullying a chameleon. Without complicated set changes and overwrought sound cues, the performers are left to shine.

Mixed in amongst the obligatory Shakespeares (*Much Ado*, *Comedy of Errors*, *Julius Caesar*) there are some eye catching treats. Don't miss *Trojan Women* and *Don Juan on Trial*. The latter, which imagines an old lothario confronted by his previous lovers in a French chateau, sounds intriguing. My editor told me I wasn't allowed to plug the play I am in so let's just say it is going to be performed in an orchard. Let me review it now in fact to save *Varsity* the bother – "Yasha, the truculent manservant with great aspirations, was performed heroically by rising star Pascal Porcheron." Too arrogant? Okay: "I haven't seen a production of the C_____ Orchard with this much class since Judi Dench's stunning performance in 1962." Can we put that on the posters?

Are any of the other plays worth a gander, you ask? I have seen the film of *Gigi* so I have high hopes for it. If you don't know it, think *Lolita* with Maurice Chevalier and a happy ending. *The History Boys* starts on Monday at Fitzwilliam, and is causing seemingly universal excitement.

You should be sure to catch the Footlights in *Wishful Thinking* – might be your last chance to see some fantastic comedians, at least until they inevitably reappear on our screens. Also on that day is a piece of new writing called *Fair Youth*, which spins a modern tale of romance around Shakespeare's sonnets. I won't lie, it sounds a little bit wet to me: "three friends, all desperately seeking to hold onto those moments of magic that make up the sunshine of life. Can they stop them from slipping away?" But it will be interesting to see how writers Milo Harries and Sam Stamp have adapted the sonnets. *Pascal Porcheron*

THEATRE

Footlights in Wishful Thinking

ADC Theatre, June 9th-20th (not 14th)

Dir. Rory Mullarkey; Cambridge Footlights

★★★★★

Rumour has it that *Wishful Thinking* came together in one frantic writing period the weekend before opening night. While it is easy to feel sympathy for six people trying to juggle exams and the writing of a full length sketch show, it must be said that the end result sometimes feels a little slapdash. Several sketches are familiar from Smokers earlier in the year, while paying full price for a main show that runs considerably under two hours is a little galling.

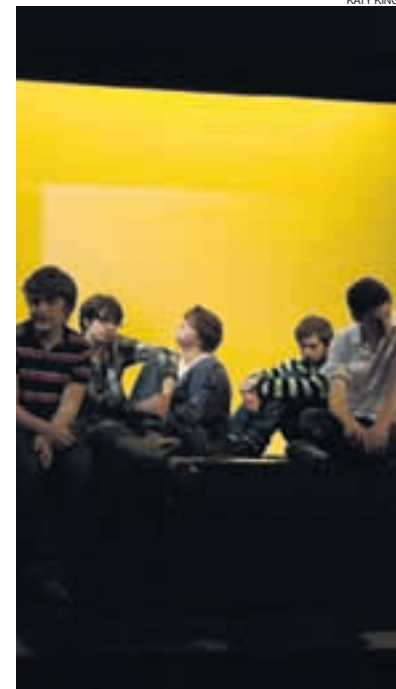
These might amount to serious criticisms, were it not for the fact that the show itself is both well directed, and consistently and hysterically funny. Covering the usual Footlights bases of clever wordplay and studied absurdity, the show also finds room for more experimental sketches, including a twisted and

genuinely engaging relationship drama and an inspired, long-form farce to close the show. While some of the new material dragged a little in places, as it was road-tested for the first time, the cracks were papered over by the performances. This must be the strongest Footlights ensemble of recent years; there is not a weak link in the cast, each of the six getting their time to shine, and all burning equally brightly. From Tom Evans' terrifying zoo keeper and Abi Tedder's hopeless Malory, to Keith Akushie's frightened schoolboy and Daran Johnson's little girl, all make their mark.

Amongst equals, however, the most equal are Liam Williams and Alastair Roberts. Williams portrays a hilarious succession of furiously officious, petty men (PE teachers, caretakers), snarling

at the injustice and incompetence of the world around them, while his show-closing monologue is superb. Roberts, meanwhile, displays his customary Midas touch. Over the past four years he has stolen the show in four successive pantomimes, and is now onto his second tour show; it is sobering to think that this one marks his final appearance on the ADC stage. Whether it is as an arrogant marathon-running alpha male or "a simple country folk", he can be relied on to wring maximum laughs out of any character.

Having seen the show at the beginning and end of its first week, the improvement was marked. If the team can sustain this rate of development for the rest of the run, they should have something special on their hands. *Ed Rowett*



KATY KING

ZING TSJENG



Private Lives

Trinity Fellows' Garden, June 9th-11th

Dir. Alexander Winterbotham; The Dryden Society and The Noël Coward Society

★★★★★

The Englishman is a pluckily optimistic creature. Two fine days in May and he books his holiday to Cornwall, fills the fridge with Pimms and talks authoritatively of the forecasted 'barbecue summer'. If he is of a thespian turn of mind he plans a summer programme of al fresco performances: *Midsummer Night's Dream* in the rose garden, *Some Like it Hot* on the veranda and *Wind in the Willows* beside a picturesque river bank. But he has forgotten that what works in Verona, in Corinth, or in Rome is doomed on English soil. No amount of strawberries and cream will salvage the performance from the inevitable. It will rain.

And so it did on Alexander Winterbotham's production of Noël Coward's

Private Lives. The show, however, must go on, and the cast relocated to Trinity's Old Combination Room.

Noel Coward is feted as a quintessentially English playwright. A man who, one would suppose, endured a lifetime of soggy garden parties and rained-off summer events. There is a misplaced apprehension that Coward (and Oscar Wilde's) brand of 'posh' must mean 'loud' and his lines are delivered in a consistent booming huntin', shootin' and fishin' bray. When the characters are sarcastic, the bray is elongated and when they are angry they shout like Etonians halloing to one another across the sprawl of picnic rugs at the Fourth of June. Victor (Johan Munir) and Elyot (Alexander Owen) drawl their lines

with slack-jawed bravado, while their inconstant wives Amanda (Elizabeth Donnelly) and Sybil (Lizzy Barber) shriek in high-pitched debutante hysterics. Elyot is the strongest of the four, mustering the right degree of bored insouciance and Sybil is fleetingly funny when weeping that she has never been so miserable as she is on her honeymoon. Victor shouts and rages when he ought to be browbeaten and his wife, Amanda, is a banshee. Did anyone ever talk like this? The cast of *Private Lives* seemed lost in some strange high-volume parody of the selfishness of jeunesse dorée.

Still, full marks for optimism and, true to form, the sun came out as the cast took their bows. *Laura Freeman*

Wolfson Howler

Wolfson College, June 8th

★★★★★

At the last Wolfson Howler of the year, headliner Robin Ince delivered the incisive insights of a pensive political commentator with the unap-peasable excitement of a toddler after five double espressos. In his 45-minute comedic onslaught, he barely breathed in between scores of anecdotes and observations as the speed of his thought and the speed of his speech seemed to constantly accelerate past each other to an odd effect by which he seemed like man possessed by his own self. Although never quite reducing the crowd to uproarious explosions to match his own mania as he ranted about the BNP, right-wing media and whatever else popped into his head, Ince's inimitable likableness, consistently hilarious social deconstructions and natural comic flair was more than enough to reduce the audience to laughter-induced exhaus-

tion by the end of the night.

This exhaustion, however, cannot be solely credited to Ince, for before him came four Cambridge student supporting acts and compere Ed Gamble. Cheeky, confident and cheerfully witty, the up-and-coming Gamble was the true star of the support show as he created an instant rapport with the Wolfson crowd. His genuine glee of performing in front of a packed room was infectious and his inter-act riffing with certain lucky audience members got many of the biggest laughs of the night.

The Cambridge acts themselves varied enormously in success. The first and most impressive student of the night was stand-up Dannish Babar whose political invective against the BNP, existential musings and self-derogatory lyrical waxing were meticulously

moulded to hilarious result. Despite lacking a certain endearing warmth in his delivery, Babar's writing ability – very much in the self-reflexive, intellectual style exemplified by Stewart Lee – is in little doubt. Similarly, Rob Carter's delicious rap parody Sleazy Playa about a suburban lothario was pure bottled comedy.

Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for Harry Winstanley's keyboard-supported act which quickly became tiresome due to a kind of misguided self-reflexive short-circuit whereby barely a single sentence could be delivered without a predictable self-referential preamble or appendix to boot. Similarly stilted, although unintentionally, were Lucien Young and James Moran who, oddly for a double-act, had little chemistry with each other let alone with the audience. *James Wan*



REVIEWS

Relapse
Eminem
Interscope Records, out now
★★★★★

Guess who's back! Back again! No, wait. Back, again, again! After a four year sabbatical, Eminem has returned with his sixth studio album, *Relapse*. Rarely does one get to glimpse into the mind of a madman, and seldom one as lyrically gifted as Marshall Bruce Mathers III. Unluckily for Eminem, during his stint on 'time out', the rapper has suffered from a relapse into alcoholism and multiple addictions to sleeping pills and painkillers. Luckily for us, he's back to his tortured best with a bevy of his trademark strait-from-the-heart, tell-it-like-it-seems autobiographical rap numbers. 'Deja Vu' gives a painfully considered account of drug addiction and 'My Mum' gives a playful but painfully considered account of... well... drug

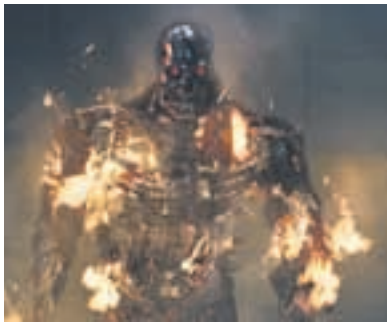
addiction. 'Bagpipes from Baghdad' makes excellent use of bagpipe samples in the backing track and 'Old Times Sake' is a funky-as-anything hark-back to 'Forgot about Dre' that is toe tappingly, guilt trippingly good fun. This is not to say that *Relapse* is all sunshine and daffodils; Eminem still doggedly tries to cause offence at almost any opportunity; the misogyny hasn't gone, the obsession with rape persists and the wince inducing homophobia is almost worse then before. The single 'We made you' is especially bad, with offensive lyrics, terrible pacing and a complete failure to understand the concepts of 'beginning', 'middle' and 'end'. The rapper seems to have lost his ability to use standardized vowels and if he rhymes 'Dr. Dre' with 'N.W.A.' one more time, I

might be forced to pop a cheeky cap in his derriere! Complaints aside, *Relapse* is a testimony to why Eminem is the best white rapper out there and while his no-holes-barred approach to voicing whatever messed up thoughts run through his mind certainly raises your eyebrows, he does it with such finesse that it's difficult not to enjoy. Of course, if you're the sort of person who spells 'rap' with a 'c' then move right along, there's nothing to see here. If, however, you're willing to indulge in the tasteless, playful and, at times, brutally earnest lyrical stylings of Mathers, he has relapsed into his best album since the grammy award winning Marshall Mathers LP. *Duncan Stibbard Hawkes*



Terminator: Salvation
Dir. McG
Starring: Christian Bale
★★★★★

The first three *Terminator* films all had a fairly simple premise – evil robot from the future comes back to try and kill some good-looking people, while the humans in the future send back a nice guy/robot to protect them.



They were set in the present, and made disciplined use of a limited array of cool special effects coupled with moments of fish-out-of-water humour, and a few good one-liners from the Governor. Terminator 4 is something very different. This time we're given a look at mankind's post-apocalyptic future, and it's bleaker than a Caius formal. There is no humour, no emotion, no humanity, just motorcycles with guns on the side and robots who inexplicably wear shoes. Christian Bale is an angry young man, with a voice that sounds like gravel in a coffee grinder, and an expression of near-permanent fury. Visually, *Terminator* works well. Washed-out colours, decent special effects, and some clever camera work

would make it a decent silent movie. Unfortunately, it's not. Instead we get an unending, deafening barrage of robotic groans, explosions and crashes that make sitting in the cinema a punishing experience. I read somewhere that American interrogators in Iraq use the theme from Sesame Street played on a loop at very high volume to drive prisoners into submission. Presumably they'll shortly be making some 'upgrades'. It also seems that Skynet is being run by the same artificial intelligence that powers a Tamagotchi. The machines spend a good portion of the film trying to capture Kyle Reese (the guy who is sent back to protect Sarah Conner in the original film), and when they do, do they kill him? No. When they have John Con-

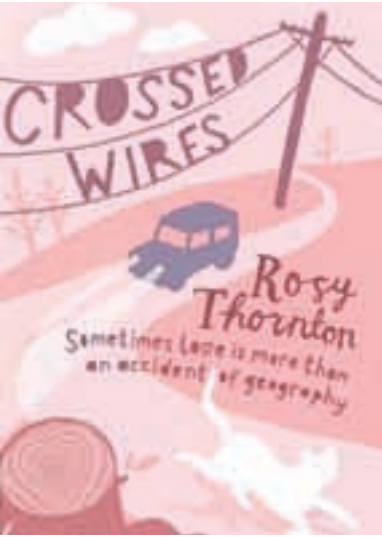
ner exactly where they want him, in a factory full of terminators, how many do they send to kill him. One. Do they succeed? No. When Terminators do decide to terminate someone, they don't use their clever robot brains to shoot them, instead they just throw them repeatedly against walls, or else randomly shoot at all nearby objects in the hope that one of them is a person. Sigh. On the whole, the cast turn in serviceable performances, but since there is no emotion or character development, 'performing' mostly just involves shouting orders at each other. Overall, the director, McG, has produced a film so desolate that you begin to wonder if the Terminator's true target was the audience. *Tom Morris*

Crossed Wires
Rosy Thornton
Headline Review, out now
★★★★★

This is the story of how Mina and Peter's very different lives cross paths when Peter, a Cambridge geography don, calls the call centre where Mina works to report an accident caused by swerving to avoid a cat. Their conversation leaves such an impression on him that, when he next has a car accident, he asks for her at the call centre again. From then on their lives are shown to mirror each other's. Both single parents, one child goes missing from each family, and the parent of the other proves to be a valuable support. Coincidence follows coincidence right up until Mina is persuaded to go and see Peter. A meeting at his college, and the immediate friendship between their children, completes the happy ever after. Every attention is paid to detail. The

characters of the children are particularly well developed, behaving exactly as any other kid does. The detail of one of Peter's twins being left-handed and the other right-handed, whereas Mina's daughter is ambidextrous, seems to represent the whole story and the happy ending, as if all characters fit together. The characters of the adults are also well rounded, yet details about their physical appearance are deliberately missed out in order to mimic their "meeting" over the phone. Even the secondary characters are well developed. To do this without overloading the book with description is particularly impressive. Apart from Mina and Peter's conversations by telephone, their lives continue separately and the story is told in two halves. This allows the suspense to build

and it is also satisfying to know the whole story. On the other hand, some things are missed out. We are told that Mina has been to Cambridge before but didn't see any of the colleges, this and the fact she is reluctant to tell Peter this implies some further plot, that her trip to Cambridge was perhaps not a sightseeing one. However such mysteries do not detract much from the rest of the story. Reading this as a Cambridge student is fine, yet the author does use terms like "supervision", and says "Addenbrookes" instead of hospital at one point, making this a little inaccessible to a wider audience. This is more than just a bit of light relief in the form of chick-lit; it is a heart-warming fairytale of real life with a happy ever after. *Nicole Baskerville*



Food and Drink

Five tips for ludicrous May Week indulgence



May Week is, to put it simply, a week of excess. The average reveller will consume a staggering 100 million units of alcohol. This is a fair amount, and indeed more than the recommended 2-3 daily for women and 3-4 for men. Such indulgence, whichever delights are sampled to wash the liquid down, will begin to get to you down by at least day two. Think about what that's going to be like by week 6...

1. Berocca - This stuff cannot be hyped about enough. A little orange tablet surely shouldn't be legal. I hear it also mixes well with champagne, a saviour for those early morning drinking society boozy breakfasts and can always be passed off as bucks-fizz. It also has exciting effects on your pee. Nice.
2. VKs - Chances are you've been to your last 'clubbing' night out in the 'Bridge, and it would be a save bet that last night's Cindies, Life or Fez extravaganza (lets face we flit between the three) was heavily fuelled on the fluorescent delights that are Vodka Kicks (VKs). The average boozier will spend in the region of £300 per year at Cambridge on VKs alone, based on official stats. L.A.D. Everyone likes caffeine and sugar highs and I never say no to a bout of heart-palpitation.
3. Full English - Branded by the Brewers dictionary of Phrase and Fable as "a substantial breakfast of sundry sorts of good things to eat and drink", the saying "a moment on the lips is a lifetime on the hips" should not put you off, it's a sure fire way to a clear head. Tatties is a steal at £4.95, and Auntie's hash browns are the best in town. Chase it down with a decent coffee. I'd suggest Illy, sold at Sainsbury's for £5.29 a pot. Alternatively there's a regular stall at the market that stocks a range of unusual roasts.
4. Jelly - I debated whether to put this in. Memories of last year's wrestling debacle at the Wyvern's garden party and no doubt something sinister yesterday could well have put you off. Jelly, however, is great. Mix with vodka or Pimm's if you don't feel you can stomach liquids and it doubles up as food. Two birds.
5. Champagne - If you're going to Trinity this evening, be prepared. They have spent an obscene bubbly budget. Efficiency is everything at Cambridge, and this is certainly a time-effective way to get sloshed. Cambridge Wine Merchants stock a good range starting at a very reasonable £18.99. And if you're going for something a bit cheaper, Sainsbury's has a perfectly palatable own-brand cava for £4.12. *Caedmon Tunstall-Behrens*

VARSLITY MAY WEEK

Theatre

History Boys

The Grove Lawn, Fitzwilliam College: 6.30pm (£4 students -£6 other). If you can face the journey up the hill with that Suicide Sunday hangover still dutifully banging at your temples, you'll be rewarded by an outdoor performace of Alan Bennett's award-winning comedy about unruly, sex-obsessed sixth formers and staffroom politics.

Cambridge Comedy Festival

The Junction: 2pm (£8 for one of the evening's shows and £12 for both). The Cambridge Comedy Festival offers "50 shows, 11 days and 4 venues" and tonight Sarah Millican and Richard Herring grace the stage.

Wishful Thinking - Footlights Tour Show 2009

ADC Theatre: 7.45pm (£6-£8) Don't miss the Footlights on home ground before they take their new show to Edinburgh. Previous Tours have produced many a famous face and this year promises to be as hilarious and popular as ever with performances earlier in the week selling out.

Balls

Trinity May Ball

These Trinity catz have been doing this Ball lark for over 100 years, during which time they've learnt how to do it well.

Jesus May Ball: Oz

This is not about Australia. There might be a yellow brick road.

Clare May Ball: The Forbidden City
The Forbidden City (pictured below) used to be smack bang in the middle of Beijing but not anymore.



Art & Classical

May Week Concert

King's College Chapel: 7pm (£10-£15, available from King's Porters' Lodge, The Shop at Kings or on the door). The programme includes Haydn, Puccini, Wagner and Albrechtsberger, with strawberries and champagne served on King's backs after the concert.

Chamber Organ Inaugural Recital

Pembroke College Chapel: 6pm (free). Come and enjoy some May Week music, with drinks following the concert.

Gandhi's Children, a film directed by David MacDougall

The Arts Picturehouse: 2.30pm-5.45pm (tickets £5.50-£6.40, available through the Picturehouse)

A Dollar and a Dream

Robinson College, Umni Theatre: 8pm -10pm. This event could provide the much-needed addition of sobriety to your May Week diary. Meghan Horvath's film will be screened alongside a photography exhibition and a panel discussion on the US elections. Plus a reception with American wine.

Garden Parties

The Dial Garden Party

Private Garden (alternatively, President's Lodge in case of rain), Queens' College: 6pm-7.30pm. 100 beautiful handmade copies of the May Week edition of The Dial will be distributed at the party - surely reason enough to go.

Science Society Garden Party

Sidney Sussex Fellows' Garden: 11am-3pm (£2 members, £5 non-members). Hosted by SciSoc, BioSoc, PhysSoc, The Archimedeans and the Triple Helix. Don't forget your membership cards!

AFC Garden Party

Newnham Gardens, Sidgewick Avenue: 12pm-2pm. AFC stands for Archaeology Field Club. 'Nuff Said.

Pembroke Music Society Garden Party

Fellows' Garden, Pembroke College: (£4): 2pm - 5pm. This event offers an afternoon of live jazz and harp music from well-known string quartets and choirs. Plus Strawberries and Pimms, as always.

Film

Looking for Eric

Arts Picturehouse: 12.00 (daily except Wed), 14.20, 18.50, 21.20
Vue: 12.00, 14.45, 17.30, 20.15
Steve Evets plays a down-and-out postman who seeks existential advice from Eric Cantona, obviously. Shot in Manchester, and filled with good-natured humour, Ken Loach's latest film could well be worth a watch.

Terminator Salvation

Vue: 11.45, 12.30, 14.30, 15.15, 17.15, 18.15 (Wed/Thurs) 20.00, 21.00, 22.45 (Wed), 23.45 (Wed/Thurs)
Christian Bale is repeatedly thrown against things by robots, while looking angry and shouting at nearby humans. If you enjoy LOUD NOISES and boredom then why not try walking next to a motorway for two hours instead.

Red Cliff

Arts Picturehouse: 13.30, 17.00, 20.15
John Woo's latest is the most expensive Asian film ever made. Centred on the epic battle of Red Cliffs at the end of the Chinese Han Dynasty, it has been praised for its epic scale and tight choreography. Thankfully, it's finally made its way to the UK.

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Raking Over The Ashes

The wait is almost over. In just a few weeks’ time, Andrew Strauss and Ricky Ponting will walk out for the toss at Sophia Gardens in Cardiff, and we’ll finally be able to tuck into the main course of this summer’s extravagant feast of cricket – the Ashes. This time around, there are some unfamiliar items on the Aussie side of the menu. While the tourists are confident that these fresh ingredients will spice up their team, the home side are aware that the likes of Hughes, Haddin and Siddle clearly lack the seasoning of the men they have replaced. As a brand new chapter of Ashes history begins, England will fancy their chances of regaining the urn.

Flip through earlier chapters of that history and you notice that a number of Cambridge men figure prominently. Mike Atherton (Downing 1986-89), the most recent CUCC Captain to go on to skipper England, took part in some epic Ashes battles but sadly never tasted success. Mike Brearley (St John’s 1960-68) had better luck, famously masterminding a Botham-inspired comeback in 1981. To find Cambridge’s most significant contributor to Ashes history, however, you have to turn to the very first volume, dated 1882. Therein lies the tale of the very blighter who first brought the urn back to Old Blighty – the Honourable Ivo Bligh (Trinity 1877-81). After

England’s first defeat on home soil had prompted the *Sporting Times* to print its now famous mock obituary of English cricket, it was Bligh who led the touring team that set sail for Australia, declaring that he intended “to recover those Ashes.” And recover them he jolly well did. His personal contribution? Just 33 runs in 3 Tests,

were’n expected to win any games.” The days of Oxbridge and the Public Schools monopolising English cricket are – quite rightly – now long gone. Which brings me back to the Ashes today. The thing is, depending on how you look at it, the battle for the urn is either the greatest contest in sport, or a ludicrously glorified old boys’ match.

“Australia are trying desperately to hang on at the top after a change in personnel”

but plenty of damned fine after-dinner speeches, no doubt. Curiously enough, Bligh’s original plan was to assemble a touring XI comprised solely of his old Cambridge mates. Evidently, this plan never came to fruition, but it was not quite as bonkers as it may sound now. His mates happened to be pretty handy. As a fresher, Bligh had been part of Cambridge’s greatest ever team, which won all 8 matches it played in the summer of 1878, thrashing Oxford and beating the touring Australians by an innings. How times have changed. When interviewed by *Varsity* earlier this term, Mike Atherton admitted that during his stint at Cambridge, “we

As staging a Test match World Cup is utterly unfeasible, we have a situation where beating the old enemy seems to matter above all else. Purportedly the pinnacle of the game, it’s like a final in which the finalists are not chosen on merit. In the last issue of *Varsity*, one of the Sports Editors touched upon Britain’s excellence at inventing sports and exporting them to the rest of the world, only for the rest of the world to then dominate them, corrupt them or completely reinvent them. Well, Ashes cricket is in some sense an exception to this. Even if the England cricket team appointed Steve McLaren as head coach, they couldn’t fail to qualify for

the next Ashes series Down Under. McLaren would probably end up re-signing after a 3-2 series loss to Kenya, but England would still be able to board that plane to Oz. Pretty much the only circumstances in which the invitation would get rescinded are if the UK government introduces an apartheid regime, Robert Mugabe gets elected PM, or Ricky Ponting hears that Gary Pratt is going to be included in the touring party.

You’ve probably gathered by now that I don’t attach as much importance to Ashes series as the average pundit does. Don’t get me wrong – I still think they’re brilliant, just infinitely more so when the mantle of being the world’s best is at stake, as was the case four years ago. That series was the spectacular culmination of a systematic assault on Test cricket’s summit. In comparison, “Botham’s Ashes” were mere bickerings at base camp, at a time when the West Indies stood well and truly on top of the world. Today, the not-so-mighty and ever-so-slightly-frozen West Indies have been brushed aside by an England side that appears to have halted its own freefall, while Australia are trying desperately to hang on at the top after a change in personnel. I’m sure it’ll be a great contest this summer – gripping if not glorious. I can’t wait for it to get underway. But the most important prize in cricket? If you say so.

View of the River

Continued from back page

As it happens, it takes me about forty-five minutes to drink a pint, so when I’d seen the next lot come past for the first time I popped back inside for my second. Again, just as I was ordering, a chorus of cheers went up from the riverside. I can only assume that the students wished to show their approval at my choice of tippie. I got out just about quick enough to see the boats coming back. I assume they were fewer because some of them had capsized. The leaves still confused me.

The process continued all afternoon; beer after beer supped very pleasantly by the water and each time I emerged refilled from the bar just in time to see the boats racing, slowly, back upstream.

Finally at ten to six, as I sat, full ninth pint clutched between sun-blushed fingers and the last few boats made their way unimpressively towards the finish, it dawned on me: Clearly ‘bumps’ refers to bumping into trees. That’s why the leafier boats got more cheers, having bumped into more trees and not capsized, which is obviously the aim of the race. Satisfied that I had solved the riddle of the bumps, I polished off my pint, donned my cap and meandered my way homewards along the towpath, at a leisurely pace.

College Catch-up

Cuppers’ Cricket

The weather always seemed likely to play a part as Jesus and Caius walked out onto the Fenner’s pitch under heavy cloud cover. This match was supposed to be the overture to the second Varsity 20:20, which was sadly cancelled due to rain.

Chris Jones and Frankie Brown padded up and strolled purposefully to the centre to face the Caius opening bowlers.

After a slow start against their pace attack, Chris Jones was the first to get going. Driving comfortably through the covers, he seemed to be marching towards an inevitable fifty. Getting impatient on 43, he stepped up the wicket to play a big stroke and was caught by a fuller ball which struck him on the front pad. Being that far out of his crease, he ought to have been safe, but the umpire had a different opinion and lifted his finger.

The partnership may have been ended but by this stage Brown was well into his stride too. As he cut and drove the ball to all areas of the field, his support started to collapse. An easy-looking 55 helped Jesus to a total of 143, a very competitive score on a big pitch.

One particular Caius bowler put in a sterling effort to skittle his tail and prevent any further runs, walking away with an impressive six-wicket haul.

In the interval, however, the English weather turned, predictably, for the worse. As the rain increased, the game was called off completely in the hope of making more time for the main event. As Caius didn’t get a chance to bat at all, there wasn’t even the possibility of working out a Duckworth-Lewis score.

Hopefully it will be replayed later this week – and if so, we will try to keep you posted on the latest news.

May Bumps Results 2009

Start	MEN’S DIVISION 1/2	Finish
First and Third		First and Third
Lady Margaret		Caius
Jesus		Jesus
Caius		Lady Margaret
Queens’		Pembroke
St Catharine’s		Downing
Downing		Queens’
Trinity Hall		Trinity Hall
Pembroke		Clare
Churchill		St Catharine’s
Clare		Fitzwilliam
Emmanuel		Magdalene
Fitzwilliam		Churchill
First and Third II		Emmanuel
Christ’s		First and Third II
Magdalene		Christ’s
Robinson		King’s
Lady Margaret II		Robinson
Selwyn		Lady Margaret II
Caius II		Peterhouse
King’s		Selwyn
Peterhouse		Downing II
Downing II		Girton
Anglia Ruskin		Caius II
Wolfson		Darwin
Girton		Jesus II
Darwin		Anglia Ruskin
Emmanuel II		Homerton
Jesus II		Homerton
Homerton		Wolfson
Corpus Christi		St. Edmund’s
St Edmund’s		Queens’ II
Sidney Sussex		Emmanuel II
Queens’ II		Sidney Sussex
		Selwyn II

Start	WOMEN’S DIVISION 1/2	Finish
Pembroke		Pembroke
Jesus		Jesus
Emmanuel		Caius
Caius		Emmanuel
Girton		Downing
Lady Margaret		Lady Margaret
Newnham		Christ’s
Clare		Girton
Downing		First and Third
First and Third		Newnham
Christ’s		Clare
Trinity Hall		Magdalene
Queens’		Queens’
Magdalene		Churchill
Jesus II		St. Catharine’s
King’s		Trinity Hall
Churchill		Jesus II
Peterhouse		King’s
St. Catharine’s		Peterhouse
Darwin		Pembroke II
Pembroke II		Selwyn
Selwyn		Darwin
Emmanuel II		Anglia Ruskin
Anglia Ruskin		Lady Margaret II
Robinson		Robinson
Fitzwilliam		Homerton
Lady Margaret II		Emmanuel II
Homerton		Sidney Sussex
Murray Edwards		Fitzwilliam
Sidney Sussex		Murray Edwards
Downing II		Downing II
Corpus Christi		Clare II
Girton II		Corpus Christi
Caius II		Caius II

Sport

*Full Bumps
results on page 15*

VARSITY MATCH RUNNING TOTAL: CAMBRIDGE 20, OXFORD 17. NEXT UP: CRICKET, TENNIS, CYCLING

Bump and Grind



Head of the river First and Third push on past the meadows

View of the river



Jimmy Pickles

May Week

In which Jimmy sees three ships come sailing in...

I've heard of these bumps things before and had always imagined some sort of watery rollercoaster. When I discovered they were races powered by oars, I was understandably intrigued. I woke up early on Saturday morning, trimmed my whiskers, picked up my rake and headed towards the river. Crowds gathered around me on the meadows, and people started to pitch tents. I asked a nice looking fellow in a red swimming hat whether I should've brought a sleeping bag, but he explained that the tents were for beer and barbeques, not beds.

Soon there was a real buzz in the air, which I attribute largely to the thick clouds of Fenflies hovering aimlessly around my face. As the sun started to bake my brow, I caught my first glimpse of a boat, coming towards Fen Ditton. Populated by nine delightful-looking young ladies, it seemed to be going at a rather leisurely pace. A few more went by, some of them even stopping to take a thoroughly undeserved breather in front of the cheering crowds. Not wanting to appear a fool, I cheered along with them, though it didn't seem very competitive. But then, they always send out the slower ones first and leave the real excitement for later.

When no boats had passed for a while, I decided it was time for some 'light refreshment'. I suppose it must have been about eleven o'clock when I stepped into a gazebo to get a drink. After a bit of a chinwag with the surly barkeeper, Steve, I started eyeing up the beer selection. Suddenly, as I ordered a pint of golden ale, there was an almighty roar from the bank behind me. Knowing that the races were forty-five minutes apart, I thought nothing of it: I had plenty of time before the next one started.

A couple of minutes after I re-emerged, I saw some of the boats coming back down the river, at the same leisurely pace, only this time some of them had leaves all over them. Nobody had told me that they raced both ways, but I suppose I was lucky not to have missed them.

Continued on page 15...

» *First and third stay on top of M1 to cap a very successful year on the river*
» *Pembroke and Jesus battle it out for women's Head of the River*

Varsity Sport

May Bumps is always as much social event as a sporting one. This year was no different. As the old boys lined the riverbanks with their Aston Martins and vintage Jags, the atmosphere was boozy, mellow and hot. By the time the racing got underway, the sun was already beating down on a multitude of eager on-lookers.

In the lower divisions there was, as always, much more movement up and down the leagues. Sidney Sussex womens third boat had a great week, moving up a total of eleven places. Hughes Hall's men's seconds did almost as well, propelling themselves up into the fifth division. First and Third sixths didn't do quite so well, receiving their

spoons after slipping to the foot of the league on Saturday. This, however, is an unfair reflection of the strength of the Trinity squad.

At the top of the women's league, Catz, Christ's and Downing all got blades, while Pembroke sealed an impressive week by resisting pressure from the Jesus girls to hold onto their place at the head of the river.

The men's races were a little more eventful. Division two was incredibly tight, with nobody receiving blades at all. Perhaps the most impressive performance came from the Jesus seconds. Timing their race to perfection, they bumped Anglia Ruskin right in front of their own crowds, having held off the seemingly unstoppable charge of the Blue-filled boat from St Edmund's

the day before.

Arguably the most exciting moment of the day came when Jesus, LMB and Downing found themselves getting congested coming through Fen Ditton. As the Jesus boys nervously watched their backs, Downing crept up on Johns and a bump seemed inevitable coming round the corner past the paddock. But the Downing cox mistimed the charge and found himself in the wrong line as LMB crept inside, missing the nudge by inches.

First and Third predictably dominated the top division, though Caius had raced well throughout the week. It has been another brilliant year from the boys in yellow hoops and they will be looking forward to getting back on the water next Lent.

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