

VARSITY

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Cambridge puts itself up for sale

Overwhelming demand from investors for University's first bond issue

GRISHMA SHANBHAG
NEWS REPORTER

For the first time since its inception in 1209, Cambridge University has decided to tap the public bond market instead of the pockets of wealthy benefactors to fund its latest development plans.

On Wednesday the University announced its £350 million issue of 40-year bonds. Net proceeds will be applied towards research facilities, accommodation and other assets including a potential site in northwest Cambridge with 1,500 housing units and 100,000 square metres of research space.

The University has had to turn away many potential investors after receiving a surplus of offers totalling over £1.5bn on Tuesday.

The 40-year term to maturity will enable the University to tap into the longer investment horizons afforded by insurance and pensions funds, who in particular have shown a growing interest to invest in national universities.

Moody's assignment of the top Aaa (stable outlook) rating to the bonds last week has fuelled demand from investors seeking to invest in top-rated securities offering a premium over sovereign paper. The rating is said to be indicative of the university's "outstanding market position, significant amount of liquid assets and strong governance structure".

Cambridge's strong cash flows and stable revenues from its printing and assessment businesses, fund research facilities and endowments have enabled it to fund capital projects without debt so far, and the central institution commands around £2.6bn in net assets. The University's highly transparent governance structure and strong regulatory

framework under the Higher Education Funding Council for England has also been commended.

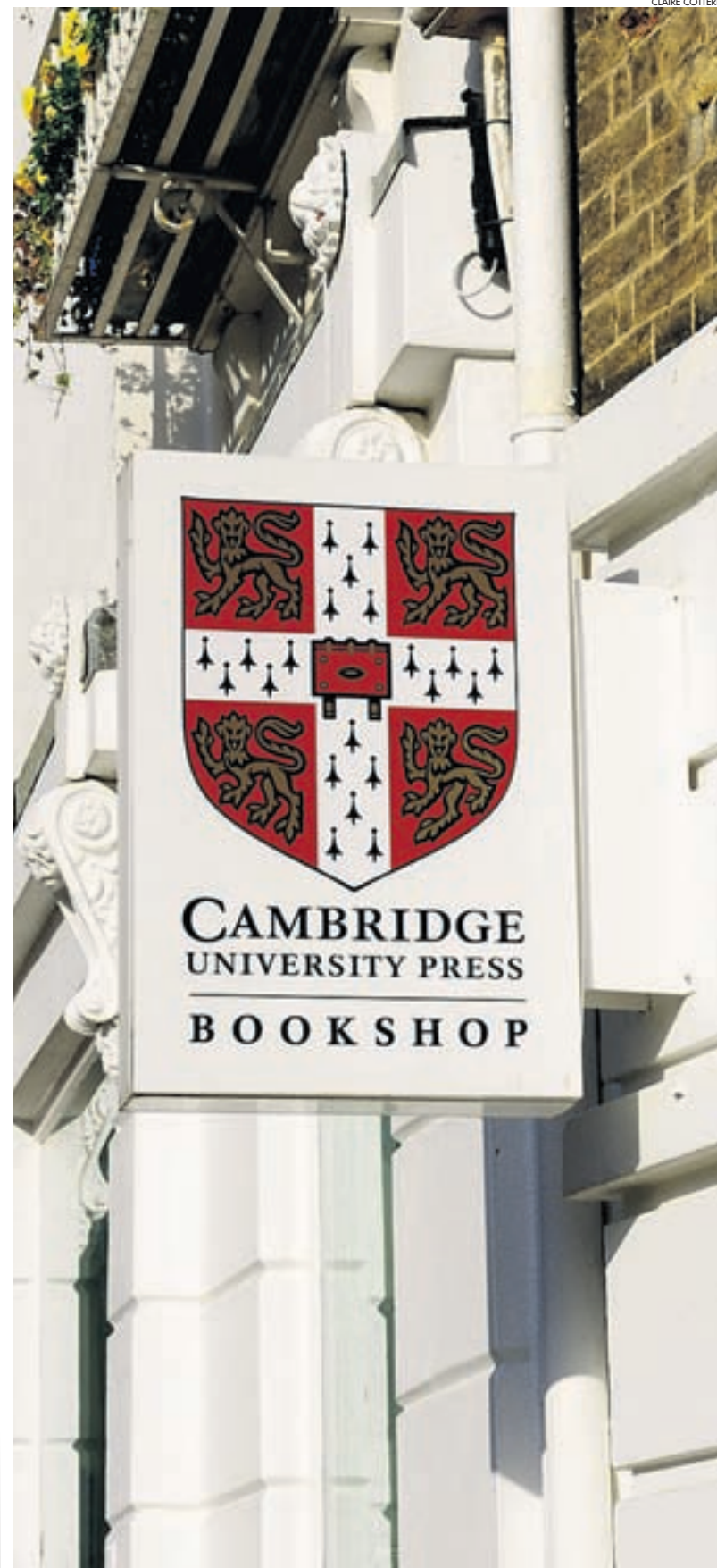
The stable outlook reflects the importance of the institution to the national economy and limited reliance on government funding compared to its peers. In amusing contrast the UK itself is rated Aaa with a negative outlook, signalling Moody's inclination to lower its rating.

Commenting on the interest garnered, Professor Sir Leszek Borysiewicz, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, said: "we are delighted by the success of this issue, and by the strong support shown by investors in the University and its mission. The proceeds will enable us to continue to invest in teaching and research at the highest international levels."

The issuance marks a shift from the University's traditional reliance on philanthropy as a source of income. Launched in 2005 as "the most ambitious educational fundraising initiative in Europe", the Cambridge 800th Anniversary Campaign raised an astounding £1.2 billion. However, the recent sharp fall in average yields on corporate debt caused by worldwide central bank activity has provided an opportune environment for the University to make its bond market debut.

Despite the rise in the tuition fees cap from £3,375 to £9,000, direct subsidies for facility upgrades have been reduced under the higher education reforms and banks are increasingly reluctant to engage in long term lending. Capital markets offer an alternative for institutions wishing to secure certainty over their long-term financing and reduce their reliance on taxpayers amid public sector budget cuts.

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Online:

Hopefully the Daily Distraction hasn't ruined anyone's work schedule too much (yet). Look online for such gems as 'Downton for Dummies', not one but TWO pieces in defence of One Direction. Also a lovely video of Laurie & Fry doing what they do best. Email digital@varsity.co.uk to join this motley crew.

VarsiTV:

If you're interested in getting involved with VarsiTV this term, please email editor@varsity.co.uk. A meeting will be arranged shortly.

Abroad:

If you know someone on their year abroad who might have interesting things to say...tell them to get in touch with Emily Fitzell on international@varsity.co.uk. Or just back and want to write about your time away? Get in touch.

THE TEAM

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& Charlotte Keith

Some people dressed as sharks, some photos to make you fall in love with Cambridge again, and some to make you yearn to be elsewhere. If you take enough copies of this newspaper from your plodge, they could also serve as a doorstep or improptu stool. You might as well read it first, though.

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Find out why some diehard protestors took to the Guildhall in shark costumes. No, really.



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Oli Thicknesse lays into the soulful songstress, confessing his preference for – don't hate him – one Lana Del Rey.



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The branded writer 21

Alice Boughton likes reading. She doesn't, however, much care to know what her favourite writers eat for breakfast.



Letters to the Editor

Regurgitated bollocks

Simplistic liberal drivel, and factually wrong at every point. I wish the government were spending less; nevertheless, private jobs are mopping up lost public sector ones, and unemployment is falling. Poor little James Counsell is also unable to distinguish debt from deficit and obviously, like the loathsome Balls himself, offers no alternative. Indeed, the loathsome Balls himself has already conceded that he would carry on the baby-eating tory fiscal policy if elected. In short, poor little James Counsell is writing tired, regurgitated bollocks which we have all heard a thousand times before and not even the loathsome Balls himself believes.

CHARLES REESE (VIA VARSITY.CO.UK), COMMENTING ON JAMES COUNSELL'S ARTICLE ON THE COALITION'S ECONOMIC POLICY

Loathsome balls aside...

Charles, your fascination with loathsome balls aside, your post is nonsensical. I explicitly distinguish between the debt and the deficit - the failure to eliminate the deficit, as planned, will lead to an increase in the debt. I hoped that this elementary distinction would be easy to grasp. Unemployment is falling as a consequence of a rise in low paid, part time work - this is a result of firms hoarding labour, a phenomena that is revealed in the pre-

cipitous fall in the UK's productivity figures. It is not the result of a recovery. As for an alternative plan, I argue for it explicitly throughout the above article - counter cyclical economic stimulus to prevent our economy flat lining due to low demand.

I can, if you like, explain some fundamentals that you appear to have missed. We'll begin with the difference between household and public debt. Let me know if this is something you think you can keep up with and we'll begin.

JAMES COUNSELL

Apocalypse Bear: get it right

Your version of Teddy Bear history is totally garbled. President Roosevelt refused to shoot a captured bear in 1902 and Clifford Berryman drew a cartoon of the event. Coincidentally in 1903 Steiff introduced a plush jointed mohair bear. But it only became popular in 1906 based on a series of stories in 20 newspapers by Seymour Eaton featuring Teddy B and Teddy G Roosevelt, based on a 1905 hunting trip by TR. Later in 1906 the term "Teddy Bears" was first applied to the jointed bears. By then, T.R. was well into his second term. NO spin involved.

CHARLES MOOSE, DREXEL INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, (VIA VARSITY.CO.UK)

Herardlry is great fun, promise

The Cambridge Heraldic and Genealogical Society was huge fun in my days as an undergraduate, and Go really is better than chess.

ANDREW WITCOMBE-SMALL, (VIA VARSITY.CO.UK)

EDITORIAL

The University of Cambridge – differentially capitalised throughout the paper, a convention dating back to who knows when – is a complicated beast. Its innermost workings are frequently baffling. Given the nation's current economic situation, it's certainly reassuring to see that the University is – at least in some ways – doing very well financially. A better credit rating than France, the new sixteen million pound Sports Centre, the West Cambridge development – and now, the issuing of bonds.

What students want to know, though, is how this will affect them: if the University is so financially stable, then why are one-to-one supervisions under threat from funding cuts? Why do some colleges have such bad food and charge such high rent? But then also offer you amazing travel grants? And why the nine thousand pounds? The reason for the apparent discrepancy is, of course, to do with the relationship between the University and the colleges. There are ludicrous sums of money floating around – but often squirreled away in obscure

college funds, often for specific, if eccentric, purposes. Money is at once plentiful and – perpetually, it seems – in short supply.

That Cambridge is currently in a strong enough financial position to issue bonds is undoubtedly a good thing. All the more so if this means a more secure future for University funding. But no matter how good the University's credit rating, it should never forget that its responsibilities to students and academics must come first. American universities like Harvard and Princeton, who have been issuing bonds for years, have been criticised for operating more like corporations than educational institutions; there is a real danger that the business side of things dominates. That the University needs a lot of funding is obvious, but where – and who – that money comes from is still a vital consideration.

This is fundamentally a place of learning. Cambridge University Press might do well to remember that in their dealings with the University of Delhi.

Charlotte Keith
Editor, Michaelmas 2012

Apologies to Lizzie Marx, whose illustrations were not fully credited in the 'Business as usual for the Oxbridge-bash-last issue, and also to June Tong, who ers' was written by Jonathan Booth, who took the photo for the lovely magazine was miscredited. Also: sorry Fred. Really. cover.

Missed the squash but still want to write?

Many thanks to everyone who came to our Freshers' Squash on Monday; there have (probably) never been that many people in the Varsity offices before.

If you weren't able to make it but would still like to get involved – or if you've been on our mailing lists since your first term but ignored most if not all of the emails – there are still plenty of opportunities to write, blog, illustrate, and take photos.

Please get in touch with the relevant section editor (see the team list on the lefthand side of this page) to register your interest and pitch ideas. What would you like to see in the paper? What do you want to write about? Let us know.

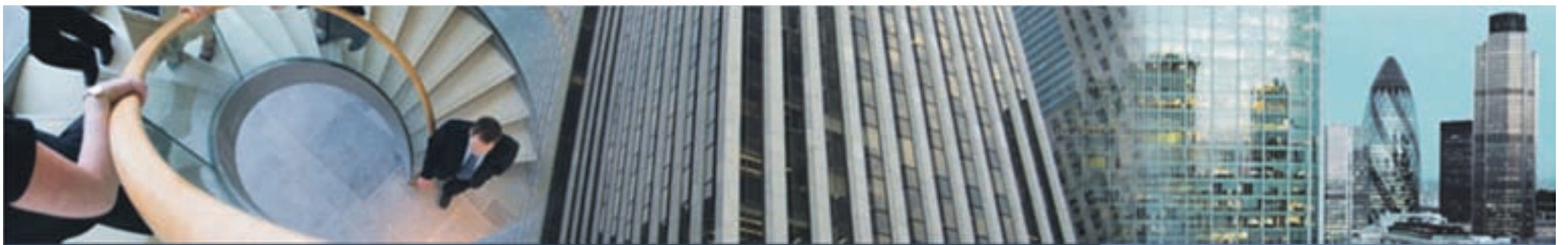
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Angus joined Bain in March 2012, eight months after graduating from Magdalene in PPS. While at Cambridge, Angus won a Rugby League Half Blue and was closely involved with Magdalene's Access programme. Angus spent his first four months at Bain working in the Oil & Gas industry and has since worked in Financial Services in Edinburgh.

BAIN HIGHLIGHT? I recently built a model on customer satisfaction which delivered insights that our client was not expecting. This ultimately led them to change their customer proposition. On a personal level it was great to see my insights being presented to the CEO, but more importantly, we delivered results to the client to set them up for future success.

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WHY BAIN? The people. Everyone says it, but the people really do differentiate Bain. Everyone is smart and driven, but they're also approachable, encouraging and eager to lend a hand. It's a great place to work, and I've already made many good friends.

A FINAL THOUGHT? What you study doesn't matter. During the application process I worried that an arts background might hold me back. Not at all; Bain hires people from all degree subjects. In fact, it's often an advantage to be able to bring something new to the table!

WHERE TO FIND US

CASE STUDY WORKSHOP

Sidgwick Hall, Newnham College
Thursday, October 18 • 12.00–14.00 and 14.30–16.30

BAIN DNA: FIND OUT WHAT MAKES BAIN A UNIQUE PLACE TO WORK

The Hicks Room, University Centre
Monday, October 22 • 19.00–21.00

WOMEN'S EVENT: IS STRATEGY CONSULTING FOR YOU AND HOW TO APPLY SUCCESSFULLY

Bateman Auditorium, Gonville and Caius College
Thursday, October 25 • 16.00–18.00

CASE STUDY WORKSHOP

Lecture Theatre and Terrace Room, Trinity Hall
Tuesday, October 30 • 12.00–14.00 and 14.30–16.30

BAIN AND COMPANY PRESENTATION

Howard Theatre, Downing College
Tuesday, October 30 • 19.00–21.00

We would be delighted to meet you at any of our events. Please pre-register via the Cambridge University page of our website

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CAMBRIDGE FALLS TO 7TH PLACE

CAMBRIDGE Cambridge has dropped to seventh place in the latest Times Higher Education rankings, which list the world's best universities, released earlier this week. The university fell from last year's sixth place, now appearing five places below rival Oxford, ranked joint second (up from fourth last year). The California Institute of Technology, which maintains a student exchange programme with Cambridge, came first in the new table.

The new survey raises the question of whether British universities can keep up with international rivals in terms of investment. Last year Cambridge's University Council opted to apply a 2% funding cut to many academic programmes, as well as taking other steps to reduce costs, citing the "challenging economic environment". The Council noted that the government's new higher education settlement, along with the continuing adverse effects of the downturn, had created a "gloomy outlook" across universities in the UK.

SCIENTISTS DISCOVER "SUPERMASSIVE BLACK HOLES"

CAMBRIDGE Using the UK Infrared Telescope based in Hawaii, a Cambridge-led survey has managed to find previously unseen black holes. This collection of black holes had been previously unobservable as they were surrounded by dust.

Dr Manda Banerji, lead author of the paper published by the Royal Astronomical Society, explained that "Although these black holes have been studied for some time, the new results indicate that some of the most massive ones may have so far been hidden from our view." One of the supermassive black holes, situated 11 billion light years away, is thought to have a mass 10 billion times that of our Sun.

Although supermassive black holes are the largest type of galactic black holes by mass, they are less dense than their smaller cousins and their origins are still unknown. This newly found population allows scientists to be able to further investigate the relationship between supermassive black holes and galaxies.

PRINCE ANDREW GIVEN TOUR OF 'SILICON FEN'

CAMBRIDGE A meeting was held on Tuesday by some of the biggest names in the Cambridge technology industry. The meeting coincided with a tour of the Cambridge technology sector by Prince Andrew at the headquarters of Abcam, a biotech company based in the Cambridge Science Park. The Duke also visited Ubisense, the winner of two Queen's Awards for Enterprise this year. The Duke, who until last year acted as the UK's Special Representative for International Trade and Investment, also visited Ubisense, a geo-location technology company and the winner of two Queen's Awards for Enterprise earlier this year.

FITZWILLIAM THIEVES SENTENCED

CAMBRIDGE Three of the four men connected with the theft of Chinese jade artefacts have been sentenced to six years in prison after pleading guilty to conspiracy to burglary. The fourth burglar, Marvin Simos, 16, has been sentenced to a four month detention and training order.

CUSU ranks sixth from bottom in student survey

Adam Clark
NEWS REPORTER

The Cambridge University Students' Union has one of the worst satisfaction ratings of any student union in the country according to the results of the annual National Student Survey.

Only 46% of finalists surveyed said they were satisfied with CUSU, ranking it sixth from bottom in the survey. Even further down the rankings was Oxford University Students' Union, in joint last place in the country with a satisfaction rate of 39%.

Rosalyn Old, CUSU President, released a statement welcoming "the exposure of our students' union satisfaction score in the National Student Survey" and suggesting that students have an "inconclusive" view of student union services due to the provision of

'The results were generally underwhelming'

services via college common rooms.

The statement said "CUSU have long campaigned to the University for a better social space and greater funding to improve our services; to help us communicate and involve more students; and to employ more staff to support and resource our active student groups". However, it defended CUSU's record on issues of Access and support

for students in the absence of a block grant from the University.

The results contrasted poorly against a 92% satisfaction rate with students' courses at Cambridge. This was the first year that satisfaction with student unions has been asked by the National Student Survey and the results were generally underwhelming.

The University of Sheffield's Student Union performed best, with a 95% satisfaction rate, but it was the exception as on average only 66% of students were satisfied with their student union. A further 24% were ambivalent.

Gerard Tully, former President of CUSU, argued in the Guardian that student unions at collegiate universities were at a disadvantage in such surveys. However, other unions with collegiate structures such as Durham (56%) and York (61%) outperformed CUSU.

The results are likely to again raise doubts as to CUSU's ability to communicate its role to students, a key factor in the decision of Corpus Christi's JCR to disaffiliate from CUSU two years ago.

The National Student Survey has been criticised as being unrepresentative of the Cambridge experience and CUSU has previously boycotted the survey. Since the publication of the survey results, CUSU has launched its own student survey in an attempt to gauge awareness and understanding of CUSU's activities. A third year from Downing told Varsity that "since Cambridge is collegiate and colleges have

their own JCR to provide student services, it is unsurprising that CUSU get a bad press because the nature of their activities at the very least appears not to be directly relevant to student life."

The role of the JCR was also seen to

'The National Student Survey has been criticised as being unrepresentative of the Cambridge experience'

be important by a second year at Downing, who believes that "with all the JCRs it is understandable that many see CUSU as slightly superfluous to their university experience. However, when it comes to procedures such as Access, CUSU comes into it's own."

However, a second year at Churchill stressed the unique Cambridge lifestyle: "I'm not at all surprised by this result. In a university as hectic as Cambridge, with deadlines, displeased DOSs and not a lot of respite, CUSU can only foster a weak relationship with students. It can't hope to achieve a high level of satisfaction if it doesn't play a significant role in students' lives as at other universities."

The results of the National Students Survey are accessible for the first time via the website Unistats, although they are not presented in a league table format.

Cambridge makes £350 million bond market debut

Continued from page 1

While access to debt capital markets is common for leading US universities such as Stanford and Columbia, the concept of using an institution's reputation and research as collateral is a new one in Europe. De Montford University was the first UK University to make a bond offer in ten years. Lancaster University previously issued £35m worth of bonds in 1995, whilst Imperial took the alternative route of "private placement" agreements with investors.

The recent success of De Montford and now Cambridge will undoubtedly spark interest from other universities who have traditionally relied on bank borrowing to fund new buildings and equipment.

However, it must be noted that in issuing corporate debt, universities must be prepared to face the attendant risks as demonstrated by their American counterparts. The downgrades of the University of Cincinnati and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute following misjudged levels of borrowing a few years ago highlight the necessity to ensure that borrowing does not outpace revenue and resource growth.

The bonds were priced at 60 basis points over gilts and will be formally issued on October 17th. HSBC, Morgan Stanley and The Royal Bank of Scotland acted as joint bookrunners with Rothschild providing independent debt advice.

So, how many condoms does a Cambridge student?

Ainslie Johnstone
NEWS REPORTER

An all new CUSU scheme will allow all Cambridge students to register for a C-Card, a small plastic card attached to a key-ring, which can be used to pick up a free pack of 6 condoms and a sachet of lube. The service is available at various points around the city including Superdrug on Sidney Street, Boots on Petty Curry and many of the colleges. Each card can be used up to 10 times, after which students can re-register for another.

Though many colleges already give away free condoms, it is hoped that the new scheme will improve accessibility and anonymity. The scheme also promises to provide highly trained support and information to students on sexual health issues. Though most colleges include welfare talks in their Freshers' program, many of these are presented by untrained members of the college.

To join the C-Card scheme students must visit a registration site which can be viewed on the CUSU website. Registration consists of a short meeting with a member of the trained C-Card team about how to use the card, as well as advice on condoms and sexual health.

With the potential for every student to use 60 condoms a week, there have been questions about whether the scheme is a waste of money, which duplicates services already on offer. CUSU's website, however, states that the C-card scheme is a re-allocation



of funds already spent on condoms to create a fairer and more effective system, and does not involve any additional expenditure.

Chris Page, CUSU welfare officer said, "In the few days of term we have had so far I have received a positive response. Lots of students have signed up."

Several colleges have not yet officially joined the scheme, but welfare officers at these colleges said that this was only a temporary situation. Even Corpus Christi students can get a C-Card if they want, as – despite being disaffiliated from CUSU – individual students can still use its services. Corpus Women's Welfare Officer, Ingrid Hesselbo, said that: "the system we run in Corpus provides all undergrads with access to free contraceptives already so this means that we currently provide the same service as that of the C-Card, or indeed the old CUSU system."

£3000 video to combat student drinking culture

Alice Twomey
NEWS REPORTER

A short film has been made which offers advice to students on how to stay safe on nights out and warns of the dangers of drinking too much. The film, which is primarily aimed at international students who might not be familiar with British drinking culture, was commissioned by a senior tutors' committee and is to be shown to new students. The university developed 'playing hard doesn't necessarily mean drinking hard'

the film in conjunction with Cambac - Cambridge Businesses Against Crime - in an attempt to promote responsible drinking.

The students presenting the film acknowledge that Cambridge has a drinking culture but insist that it is not compulsory, saying, "There might be rules and traditions but you don't need to join in unless you want to. Nobody's going to think less of you if you don't." Many students at Cambridge colleges adopt a "work hard, play hard" attitude, one presenter says, "but it's important to remember that playing hard doesn't necessarily mean drinking hard."

The film also contains advice from an A&E doctor, a nightclub owner and the police. Dr Adrian Boyle reveals in the film that about 40% of the people

who arrive at the A&E department of Addenbrooke's hospital after 12 o'clock are there because of drinking related problems whilst Chief Inspector Neil Sloan discusses the link between binge drinking and anti social behaviour and warns how, "one moment's madness can be a change of a person's future as they end up, potentially, with a criminal record."

The presenters of the film offer some common sense advice on how to stay safe on a night out: for instance, drinking plenty of water, walking home in a group and not carrying an excessive amount of cash. They also recommend that students "ditch the gown and tux" before heading out, to avoid standing out as an easy target.

The manager of Cambac, Vicky Hornsby, has welcomed the ini-

'A great example of a positive partnership between Town and Gown'

tiative and described the film as "a great example of a positive partnership between Town and Gown." However, the £3000 production costs, shared amongst participating colleges, have raised questions as to whether this was a worthwhile venture, particularly as it seems to repeat obvious advice that most students will have heard before.



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Time: 18.30-20.30

Venue: Double Tree by Hilton,
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* Questions we have helped clients answer in 2011/12; ** Please book via our website

Does 'macho' science culture put girls off?

Emily Chan
NEWS REPORTER

A large gender imbalance persists within the Sciences. The latest admissions statistics to be published show that 33.4 per cent of successful undergraduate applicants for science subjects in the 2011 cycle were female, compared to 37 per cent the previous year.

The gap is most evident among engineers and computer scientists: only 19 per cent of Engineering applicants were female, while just two women were accepted for Computer Science in the whole year. Around two in five applicants for Natural Sciences were female.

The problems begin at school. Research by the Institute of Physics (IOP) published last week revealed that nearly half of all state schools in England did not have any girls sitting A-level Physics last year. Overall, only 20 per cent of students taking the exam were girls.

Professor Athene Donald, director of the Women in Science, Engineering and Technology Initiative (WiSETI), says: "The number of girls doing Physics A-level remains low, so they never start on the ladder. I think we need to look at schools, as to how they teach boys and girls. Single-sex schools seem to manage to encourage more girls to take up science."

The IOP report highlighted that girls who went to a single-sex school were almost two and a half times more likely to continue studying physics at A-level compared to girls at co-educational schools in the maintained sector.

Stephanie Mennecier, a second-year Engineering student at Peterhouse, went to an all-girls school: "I went to a school with a specialism in Engineering, so science and technology were strongly encouraged, and a large majority of people would study at least one of Biology, Chemistry or Physics. In fact, my sixth form had the largest all-girls Maths department in the country."

Mennecier worked on the Victoria Station Upgrade project this summer and found that only around one in ten of the engineers there were female: "I think that women have slightly different skills to men and it would be beneficial having more of them in the industry. The best way to do this would probably be by getting kids more involved at school."

20%

of A-level physics students were girls

In June, the European Commission launched a campaign called 'Science: It's a Girl Thing' in order to encourage more girls to consider careers in science. However, an accompanying minute-long video that appeared on YouTube was branded "patronising". The advert was heavily criticised for conforming to the very gender stereotypes that it sought to challenge. Some people in fact thought the video was a joke, which led to the EC spokesman for science, Michael Jennings to write on Twitter that the commission "doesn't really do irony".

An Ofsted report on girls' career aspirations published last year argued that setting up mentoring schemes in schools and bringing role models into the classroom were effective ways of overcoming gender stereotypes. The report also suggested that media representations of women had a strong



A recent video supported by the European Commission tried to encourage girls to study science; Professor Athene Donald, right, the University's Gender Equality Champion: "Single-sex schools seem to manage to encourage more girls to take up science"

THE FIGURES

- 20 per cent of A-level Physics candidates were girls
- Nearly half of all state schools didn't have any girls sitting A-level Physics
- Around one third of Cambridge science applicants were female
- Only 2 female undergraduates were accepted for computer science (for 2011)
- 19 per cent of all engineering applicants were female
- Across all subjects, only 12.3 per cent of professors at Cambridge are women

influence on pupils' aspirations. Professor Brian Cox, presenter of *Wonders of the Solar System* and *Wonders of the Universe*, has been praised for increasing the popularity of science, but there is not yet a high-profile female equivalent.

There is a large body of research on whether innate differences between the male and female brain leads to gender disparity in the sciences. In his 2004 book *The Essential Difference*, Simon Baron-Cohen, Professor of Developmental Psychopathology, argues that the average male brain is more likely to be good at "systemising", while the average female brain is "hard-wired for empathy".

"In trying to understand sex differences we shouldn't neglect either social or biological factors, since this was the error of the past," says Professor Baron-Cohen. However, he points out that

'Unconscious bias is very common but overt sexism is probably rare'

in America the average SAT score for mathematics have been consistently higher for male students over the last fifteen years, and emphasises that looking at this type of statistical evidence "might also help us to understand why some neurodevelopmental conditions such as autism often entail giftedness in mathematics." One suggestion made in the book is that people with autism have an "extreme male brain".

Professor Melissa Hines, who



Marie Curie won a Nobel Prize for Physics as long ago as 1903 but the numbers of women in Physics and other STEM subjects have remained surprisingly low

specialises in gender development, agrees that the nature-nurture debate is unhelpful, but argues: "Claims that irreversible brain differences caused by inborn factors cause women to be bad at, or avoid, science are overblown. A complex array of factors causes gender differences in occupational choices, beginning with factors that occur early in development and are then built on across the lifespan."

Hines suggests that "biases that work against women hinder their progress" and adds that in her opinion, "society should decide if they want to change these discrepancies in occupational choices and success."

A Yale University study published last month found an implicit gender bias in the hiring of scientists. Faculty members were asked to review a job applicant, who was randomly given a male or female name. The male candidate was rated more highly for hireability and competence in comparison to the identical female candidate, by both men and women in the science faculty. They also agreed on a higher starting salary for the male applicant.

"I am sure unconscious bias is very common but overt sexism is probably rare," says Professor Donald. "The trouble with unconscious bias is that it is hard to overcome because it is invisible." However, she believes that the 'macho' culture within science is a problem: "Many women will cite examples where men talk over them, ignore them, or claim a woman's idea as their own at committees."

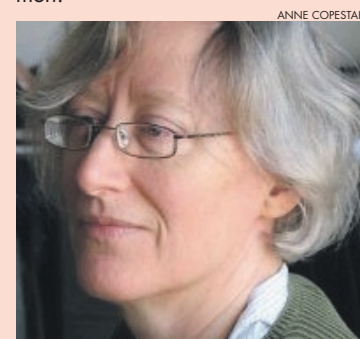
There are significantly fewer female than male science professors at the



ATHENE DONALD

ANALYSIS

Although it is Physics that has been in the spotlight this week, there are several other STEM subjects where the ratio of female to male students is even lower than in Physics. One of these is Computer Science, which as a subject is still dominated by men.



ANNE COPESTAKE

"Women are not applying to computer science departments" says Professor Ann Copestake

There's a general problem of severe gender imbalance in Computer Science in the UK, US, Australia and most of Western Europe and there are a range of explanations for this.

The ratio of women has been going down quite steadily over the years, which is probably not what one would expect if discrimination against women were a major factor. Women are not applying to Computer Science departments.

My personal view is that the gender imbalance is (partially) a reflection of the fact that Computer Science is not well understood as a subject. In particular, few people realise quite how human-centered much of Computer Science is.

Besides human-computer interaction, there is work on modelling human behaviour in various contexts (social networks, security, image processing and computational linguistics, for example). So to some extent I see improving the gender imbalance as part of more general outreach efforts.

But there is also a place for more specific initiatives aimed at attracting more women applicants. Trying to improve the ratio is a priority for me as a deputy head of department, but I haven't been in the role very long, and I'm still trying to work out what we might do most effectively.

In fact, I would be very happy to get comments from women in Cambridge who didn't choose Computer Science as to what put them off.

Computer technology has affected our lives more radically than any other technology in the last 60 years or so.

Computer Science isn't the only academic subject that relates to this, but it's the most central. Diversity is essential for the health of the subject as well as for equality.

Professor Ann Copestake is the Deputy Head of the Computer Science department in Cambridge

12.3%

of University professors are women

In 2006, the University was one of the first in the UK to receive the Athena SWAN bronze award in recognition of the work being done to increase the representation of women in science, engineering and technology.

"One of the reasons it is so important for a University such as ours to have people like myself as gender equality champion speaking out, is that it constantly reminds people of the issues and challenges," says Donald. "Cambridge is undoubtedly moving in the right direction."

COLLEGE
ROUND-UPTRINITY WELCOMES
NEW MASTER SIR
GREGORY WINTER

TRINITY Students were perhaps for the first time in their lives told to stand on the grass during the installation of Sir Gregory Winter as the new Master of Trinity College. The ceremony itself was held in a traditional manner with Sir Winter presenting himself at the Great Gate and knocking on the doors of the side entrance after a nine-minute long peal of bells. Wearing academic dress and holding his Letters Patent from the Queen, he handed them on to the Head Porter who then passed them on to the Vice Master for verification. After gaining official approval the Fellows of the College, gathered in order of seniority, processed from the Ante Chapel towards the Great Gate to welcome the new Master.

VINCE CABLE DISCUSSES
ECONOMIC POLICY

GONVILLE AND CAIUS Business Secretary Vince Cable returned to Cambridge on Wednesday evening to visit Caius, where he gave a short speech on economic policy. He also fielded questions from students on topics that ranged from Keynesian economics to social mobility. The event was jointly hosted by Caius Politics and Cambridge Student Liberal Democrats societies in the college's relatively-small auditorium; the room could easily have been filled at least twice over with the number of people who had been queuing outside for half an hour before the event's start time. During Cable's short speech, he insisted that "nobody really understood why our economy collapsed" but that he was certain that part of the problem was that "our banking system was allowed to become too big."

STEM CELL RESEARCH
EARNS NOBEL PRIZE

CORPUS CHRISTI Sir John Gurdon, a developmental biologist at Cambridge for the last forty-one years, has been awarded the Nobel Prize in physiology or medicine for his research into stem cells. Sharing the prize with Japanese scientist Shinya Yamanaka, Gurdon said he was "immensely honoured to be awarded this spectacular recognition" and "delighted" to be sharing it with Yamanaka. Both have completed pioneering research into how stem cells, the organisms used to produce all tissue, can be derived from ordinary, specialised cells, opening the possibility of using them to fight disease. Knighted in 1995, Gurdon was master of Magdalene College from 1995 to 2002 and has worked in the Department of Zoology since 1983.

DIVINE INTERVENTION

ST JOHN'S In 2004 planning permission was approved to convert the Divinity school on Trinity Street into a bar. However, a multi-million pound investment by St John's, which owns the property, has converted the space into a 170-seat lecture theatre, teaching rooms, and a basement archive. The scaffolding has finally been removed to reveal the neo-Tudor building, built in 1878.

“We cannot go back to the fifteenth century”

Isabella Cookson meets the Saudi Princess after her talk at the Cambridge Union

This summer saw the first women from Saudi Arabia compete in the Olympics. Yet the domestic picture of the 11 million women who live in Saudi Arabia remains largely unchanged. They have no political rights, must have a male guardian (regardless of their age) and are the only women in the world prohibited from driving. The call for change is being championed by an unexpected and polemic figure.

HRH Princess Basma Bint Saud Bin Abdulaziz is the niece of the current ruler King Abdullah and the 115th child of King Saud. Despite being one of the most elite royals in the country, she is using her prominent position to speak out for women in a culture where they have no voice. She writes copiously as a journalist and blogger tackling issues of poverty and women's rights both in the press at home and more recently across the globe. The divorced mother of five also owns her own business, a chain of restaurants, which she hopes to expand to the UK soon. Sitting in front of me, wearing no veil, trousers and a pair of heels, she seems a world apart from the stereotypical image of a woman in Saudi Arabia.

Yet that is exactly what she is: a world apart, the exception, not the rule. "I am very much a woman of high privileges. I have been educated; I have travelled the world. Whatever I say, it can never be as honest as if you had heard it from them. I can try and draw you a picture however, but it isn't a very rosy one. A woman in Saudi Arabia lives on a daily basis in fear. There's nothing she can count on. She lives under the tyranny of the man; she has no rights; nowhere to go if she's abused. She lives in darkness and some light must be shed in her way."

The Princess is, however, very keen to defend the royal family. She wants reform not revolution. She claims that the King is in fact a reformist who desires change. I wonder, therefore, who and what, prevents progress for women? Her explanation is not black and white, something she herself was keen to emphasise. "The King is a Bedouin man and he gives a big role to women. In that culture, the women tend to raise the children and do the housework, do the fieldwork and drive the camel or the horse. The men are there for protection from other tribes. The woman has her role in this tradition but it's not modern and it's in a completely different shape to that in the West."

Her tie to her family is evidently strong but it does place her in a difficult position, both intellectually and personally. I wonder what her family's reaction has been and her answer is frank and heartfelt. "Everyone has a price to pay. My family are not against me, but they are not pleased. They have not done anything to stop me. It would not be

‘A woman in Saudi
Arabia lives on a daily
basis in fear’

fair to say that they do not have a hand in what is happening on the ground. Women's rights would threaten their position with the religious authorities. There are so many grey areas, so many areas that must be reformed."

Her campaign is directed principally against the Mutawa, the draconian religious police force who in 2002 refused to allow schoolgirls to leave a blazing building because they were not wearing the correct Islamic dress. "I am a very religious person but for me the



HRH Princess Basma Bint Saud claims that her family are not pleased with her stance

Mutawa does not represent Islam, they represent extremism and Islam is a religion that forbids extremism. They misinterpret the Qu'ran. Unfortunately, they are getting more and more power. King Abdullah, since he is a reformist, has been giving money to lots of other organisations in the country. One of the organisations is the religious one, and they've taken advantage of that power. King Abdullah wanted to give more rights, more freedom for other organisations to form, to be socially active. Like the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, they have taken the reign."

The battle she is fighting is not just against the patriarchy. Women themselves have proven to be an enemy to reform. "They are playing into the mindset of the culture. It's the same in Egypt now- you have Egyptian women in the parliament who are saying that women should go back behind doors, raise their

family, wear their veils. I am not saying that women shouldn't play their role but they should play their role within the twenty first century. We cannot go back to the fifteenth century."

Unexpectedly, the Princess publicly declared that women should not be able to drive. Progress, she thinks, needs to happen over time: "It's not safe. They would be beaten up by men on the streets which would merely reaffirm that women driving is bad for them. First of all we need to change the constitution, men and women need to be made equal on the streets, in the law courts, in the home, in the workplace, in all rights. Then we might be ready, then women should drive."

This is not a simple problem, nor one without its contradictions. Yet the unlikely advocate of change must also be a seed of hope for the future of women in Saudi Arabia.

Julian Huppert, MP: “Higher education should be free”

Alice Udale-Smith talks apologising, rebellion and cycling with Cambridge's local MP

Julian Huppert is not your stereotypical MP. For a start, he is part of a dying breed of non-career politicians. And then there's the fact that he holds a PhD in Biological Chemistry from Trinity. You have to hope he is therefore one of the few politicians recently surveyed who would actually know what the correct probability of getting two heads is when a coin is tossed twice (something I'm fairly certain is taught even in today's GCSE maths).

Inevitably, the talk immediately turns to the recent statistics showing an increase of applications to Cambridge, particularly from state school applicants, despite the increased fees. He admits to being surprised about the increase, albeit "really pleased". "I believe passionately that higher education should be free" he says, but admits that deciding exactly how to fund it will always be an issue. As an undergrad at Cambridge when Labour first introduced tuition fees, he has campaigned against the initial introduction of fees, top-up fees and now also against the latest rise. Huppert also thinks that the fees may yet deter students from applying, and says that the impact on mature and postgraduate students will be more severe than it was on undergraduates.

Perhaps most importantly to students, Huppert stood true to his pre-election promise to vote against the proposal to increase fees, unlike some



LESLEY INNES

‘Why should politicians
pretend we never
make mistakes?’

of his fellow Lib Dem MPs. The plan when he ran for MP in 2000 was always to "stand up for the things I care about", and he acknowledges that as a result he has "rebelled a number of times." He is keen to stress that he is not an anarchist though, and says that "I don't like rebelling, it's better to try and change what the government is doing instead,

and then if you succeed you don't need to rebel". All the same, he admits that "we don't win all the fights with George Osborne".

Huppert argues that in Australia's university system, on which the current fee model is loosely based, the result has been bigger universities taking over small ones which are struggling financially. In Cambridge he says "we have three great universities [ARU, Cambridge, and the Open University], all aiming to do different things, and to lose any one of them would be a great shame." He remains positive that the fee system will not be changed soon, though, as the "pain and anguish is too great."

As to whether students should forgive Liberal Democrats for breaking their election pledges, he admits that trust issues are currently a problem for all parties. He is however "keen on the idea that people apologise when we get it wrong" and is critical of the current climate in Whitehall were admitting that a policy is flawed is seen as the worst possible thing to do: "why should politicians pretend we never make mistakes?" In science, he argues, there is nothing wrong with having lots of ideas and then discarding the ones that prove to be wrong. Politics, he argues, should be more like that, with an emphasis on "evidence informed policy", rather than sticking to a clearly flawed plan just to save face. Otherwise, he says, the result

is situations where, as recently, "Justine Greening was effectively fired for standing up for Government policy."

With his pro-honesty stance on politicians apologising, it is hardly surprising that he found the recent autotuned Nick Clegg apology video "very well done." After all, he added, "what other party has a leader who's been in the Top 40?"

On the subject of local issues he says that "being an MP in Cambridge is a very unique position" due to the variety of people in the city. He is particularly keen on improving the cycle network both in the city and surrounding countryside. "Cambridge is great nationally" he says, "but if you compare us to somewhere like Holland we're only average; there is still more to be done. Improving the infrastructure, having separated cycle paths and even reassuring people they can cycle in normal clothes are all necessary to improve the state of cycling in this country."

Despite all the current doom and gloom in the papers, Huppert is optimistic about the future – particularly for young people. He is keen to stress that he is happy to assist students with any problems they might encounter, especially if a college can't or won't help. He appreciates that students care deeply about a range of issues, and insists that we have the power to affect what he - as our MP - says and does. Sorry to Girton and Homerton students, though: your areas are covered by a different MP

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Delhi students threaten boycott of CUP

Clare Cotterill
NEWS REPORTER

Cambridge University Press is one of three major publishing companies involved in a dispute over the photocopying of academic course texts at a printing shop at the University of Delhi.

The civil suit against Rameshwari Photocopying Service and the University of Delhi centres around the production of 'coursepacks', bound collections of photocopied course material.

Protests against the actions of Cambridge University Press, Oxford University Press and Taylor & Francis group have grown, with a number of online petitions, and the threat to boycott these publishers at the University of Delhi. A letter signed by the "Students and Faculty of Delhi University" concludes: "[a]s a reaction, if this case is not revoked immediately, we students

'A call for boycott is also a way of seizing the initiative and in that sense is certainly practicable'

and faculty members have decided to boycott these three presses. We will actively ensure that no books of these three presses are used in the campus and will urge all teachers not to recommend any books or readings published by them."

Varsity spoke to Abhishek Bhattacharyya, who has studied at Cambridge, Oxford and Delhi universities, and who has been involved in the protests and specifically in drafting a petition by the members and alumni of Oxford, calling upon OUP to withdraw its case.

Bhattacharyya believes that, "given the way OUP, CUP and Taylor and Francis – the three litigants in this case

– hold sway over the academic market, even in India, such a boycott should make things difficult for students, and might also be difficult to enforce."

However, he added that, should the publishing companies win their case, "a boycott of sorts would be enforced upon the vast majority of students anyway – and so a call for boycott is also a way of seizing the initiative and in that sense is certainly practicable."

"The call is also meant to express the fact that these publishers' actions are seriously antagonizing its primary pool of readers and contributors in India, and the campaign in Delhi also seeks to make this a commercially undesirable step."

The case hinges on two strands of the Indian Copyright Act, 1957. Section 14 (a) of the Act states that copyright, "in the case of a literary, dramatic or musical work" comprises "the exclusive right subject to the provisions of this Act, to do or authorise the doing of any of the following acts in respect of a work or any substantial part thereof", including, specifically, "(i) to reproduce the work in any material form including the storing of it in any medium by electronic means" and "(ii) to issue copies of the work to the public not being copies already in circulation".

Indian Politics & Culture Journal *The Caravan* emphasizes Section 14 (a) as the specific area of copyright that the publishing companies claim is violated by these coursepacks.

However, defenders of the Rameshwari Photocopy Service quote a different section of the 1957 Act. Section 52 lists actions which "shall not constitute an infringement of copyright", citing "private use, including research" as part of a so-called 'fair dealing' with a literary work. Part of this series of exemptions also includes the reproduction of a work 'by a teacher or a pupil in the course of instruction'. Whether or not this 'fair dealing' has been violated is central to the court case.



Hands off our intellectual property: the Cambridge University Press Bookshop and headquarters, the Pitt Building

Highlighting these legal grounds for defence, Bhattacharyya admits that "this might still function as a test case and lead to the specification of a limit to photocopying for educational purposes [...], which would hurt the ability of students to access texts all over India given the different material conditions here."

The petition on *change.org* – which, at last count, had 877 supporters – asserts that, in keeping with these exemptions to copyright infringement, most of the readings "are for private circulation and academic purposes and not mass produced or produced for mass commercial purposes".

Bhattacharyya points to his personal experience at all of the universities involved in this debate: "at all three universities I have been in classes where teachers have distributed copies of chapters or sections of books in class, or uploaded scans on something like CamTools. [The] publications of presses based in the global North tend to be more expensive in the global South, in terms of opportunity costs or as a

percentage of average national income, and this makes the situation more difficult in a place like Delhi. While these presses remain as powerful as they are, the only way large sections of Indian society can enter this knowledge economy is by photocopying".

Bhattacharyya references recent estimates made in *The Hindu* newspaper

'Teachers have distributed copies of chapters or sections of books in class, or uploaded scans on something like CamTools'

of the costs individual students would incur in the absence of photocopying. "Even an upper-middle class student... would usually not be able to afford all the texts prescribed for a masters course", he commented, adding that



CLARE COTTERILL

"with classes comprising at least 60-70 people, libraries simply cannot provide sufficient copies of required readings."

"Even if Delhi University libraries miraculously reach Oxbridge standards in terms of number of copies of a text available per student – and that is not exactly going to happen given the larger student numbers involved and the fact that India is a poorer economy – students in Delhi would still need to photocopy and scan texts for courses, as happens in Oxbridge today."

Bhattacharyya believes that "[i]t is important for members of Oxbridge colleges and faculties to express their solidarity with students in different places to avoid appearing complacent in their privileges, and also to build broader struggles when even British education is massively hit by plans to further corporatize things." He believes that CUP is "seeking to contain knowledge [...] within entrenched circuits of privilege", and that "protests by people at Oxford and Cambridge can certainly help the situation."

Galloway tweets: I'll sue NUS for ban

Patrick O'Grady
NEWS EDITOR

George Galloway has announced plans to sue the NUS for the passing of a 'No Platform' motion, which prevents any NUS officers speaking alongside him, in addition to preventing him speaking at Union organised events.

Galloway took to Twitter to declare that "any damages that I recover from the NUS for defamation will be donated to the Defence Fund for Julian Assange and Bradley Manning." The Respect MP sparked controversy in a podcast in August in which he stated that the allegations against Assange were "bad sexual etiquette" and "don't constitute rape".

Despite the NUS motion, Galloway has been invited to speak in Cambridge this term by both the Wilberforce Society and by Clare Politics. The MP for Bradford West is due to speak on October 13th at a Wilberforce Society seminar, and again on November 26th, to Clare Politics. He will be attending a seminar entitled 'Engaging young people in UK politics' and discussing Scottish independence respectively.

A spokesperson for the Wilberforce Society told *Varsity*: "As an independent-



GEORGE GALLOWAY

"Bad sexual etiquette": a justification for Assange rape charges?

minded MP, with a successful record of political engagement in East London and Bradford, Mr. Galloway is an ideal choice of guest speaker on this issue. TWS neither endorses nor condemns Mr. Galloway's personal beliefs – these are his and his only – but we respect his right to free speech on a matter about which he is an acknowledged expert, for which we invited him to our event.

Further, NUS has banned Mr. Galloway from sharing a platform with any NUS speakers or attending any of their events. The upcoming TWS seminar is not an NUS event and TWS is not affiliated with NUS."

The secretary of Clare Politics expressed a similar view, explaining that: "We don't feel that banning people who express controversial views is necessarily the best way forward; if you keep that person from speaking, you take away their accountability."

How are they ever going to be made to defend or discuss what they have said if they are banned? We don't think that the NUS decision against Mr. Galloway can achieve much for these very reasons; if you repress something, it cannot be analysed or criticised."

The NUS explained to the Huffington Post UK that the decision to ban Galloway was part of a "campaign to tackle attitudes on campus that trivialise sexual assault or seek to blame survivors, and instead promote a better understanding of consent."

A member of Galloway's office responded by stating that the Respect MP's views are "widely held on the left of the political spectrum."

A fin-free Cambridge



FIN FREE CAMBRIDGE

Sharking: Louise Ruddell and Teale Phelps Bondaroff of Fin Free Cambridge

Varsity News

On Wednesday two intrepid volunteers from Fin Free Cambridge delivered a petition, containing 3595 signatures to the Cambridge Guild Hall, dressed as sharks. The local community group is hoping to make Cambridge the first UK city to take a strong stance against the use of shark fins. The issue of how to make Cambridge shark fin free will now

be debated by the City Council when it meets on 25th October. Shark fins are used in a variety of ways, including for food production; they are considered a delicacy in some countries. The UK is currently ranked 19th in the world for shark fin exports. According to Fin Free Cambridge, 4 business in Cambridge currently use shark fins. 50% of the of UK's 21 native sharks species are now listed as threatened.

Women in Cambridge: an education

Before starting a new year at such a traditional university, [Anna Seigal](#) asks female students to think about how their actions can offset asymmetries in the educational structure and promote a culture of equality and respect

And how do we keep our balance? "That I can tell you in one word – tradition". Just like the shtetl in *Fiddler on the Roof*, Cambridge has an awful lot of tradition. But the persistence of long-standing norms at Cambridge is not necessarily an indication of their value. They do not mean that during your time here, you cannot change things.

Women have only been accepted as full members of the University of Cambridge since 1948, and even then they were not a part of the mixed colleges until the sixties. Nowadays women studying maths and sciences are still vastly outnumbered by their

'Much of our current educational structure dates from long ago'

male counterparts, with proportions becoming even more skewed at postgraduate level. Cambridge is an ancient institution steeped in and greatly attached to its traditions so it should be no surprise that much of its current educational structure dates from long ago – when there were no, or very few, women at the university.

The lack of inclusion of women is no longer explicitly mentioned and, of course, degrees do not seek to purposefully disadvantage anyone. Still, since they were largely put together at a time when women were not given consideration, it is not surprising that systemic inequalities still exist. Cambridge's traditions (as well as attracting tourists) are part of what makes the university special. But to compensate for their shortfalls now, women must take possession of

the way they are taught and recognize the changes that can be made – by them – to increase the enjoyability and efficacy of their degree.

For instance, if official contact hours seem excessively formal, set up a relaxed study group for students (or make sure the faculty organises one). You are not the only one who wants to easily and approachably seek academic advice. If you want a different supervisor, request one.

The threat of implicit biases and stereotyping have resulted in statistics which report underperformance and lower degree satisfaction for female students at Cambridge. For example, according to a survey from February 2012 taken in the Philosophy faculty, over 60% of students agreed that men contribute more than women in discussion groups.

Of course not all difficulties are the fault of the system. Although on a local level the cause of stereotype threat can be attributed to Cambridge's particularities (it is possible to reach third year never having had a female lecturer, for example) the issue clearly has wider cultural roots. And what's more, Cambridge degrees are supposed to be challenging. But the challenge should be productive – think about what you can do to help enhance your education and further your studies. You are well within your right to make demands. Do not tell yourself "they have probably accepted me by mistake" – they probably haven't.

The CUSU Women's Campaign seeks in part to reform the way we are taught. They are doing pretty well, but struggle with low levels of student interest. There are small turnouts for the fortnightly women's forum and

those in attendance do not span the spectrum of women studying here. If the Women's Campaign does not accurately reflect your needs, then attend and introduce improvements, or set up an independent project to achieve your aims. It is not a big time commitment and you will find a great deal more satisfaction



from your time here if you do.

Looking beyond the campaign, there are other ways our negligence shows: in our lack of consideration about how women's actions might unintentionally reinforce unhelpful gender stereotypes, for instance. Certain types of behaviour are not only unproductive for the culture in Cambridge (a stereotypical judgment rarely involves admiration of a

'You are well within your right to make demands of the University'

woman's intellectual capacity), but also do nothing to help women's academic performance.

It is worth giving some thought to the ways in which your behaviour is perceived, and to how it will affect the way you think of yourself in the academic world. Whilst you might not act like a woo-girl in a supervision, doing so the night before might mean you're not in a mindset which is about empowerment, strength or academic success. Think about how you relate to your friends and the implications of the behaviour that you choose to exhibit. Be proactive and reflective, and allow yourself to create a time here which does justice to yourself.

Anna Seigal is founder of "The Emmy Noether Society: Women that count". Dedicated to the promotion of women in the mathematical sciences, the society hosts welfare sessions, talks by eminent female mathematicians and is setting up a mentoring scheme. She is happy to advise people interested in putting together similar initiatives.

In all honesty...

In all honesty, I think there has been an Adele overkill. I've had it up to here with her. Hell yes, she can sing. But did she have her heart broken? Pur-lease. You would find more emotional expression in the average King Edward Potato. And for those I have slightly more sympathy. We've all had our hearts broken, FACT. The difference is that I didn't mope over it for 11 tracks of self-pity (at least, not 11 tracks of my own music).

Oh, and thanks for the Bond theme. No, really. 390 seconds of mediocrity, lathered with the most inane, generic lyrics possible.

If you want to revert back to the themes of the 1960s, be my guest. Lord knows how much I long for the return of the Great Basset. But if that's what you were going for, you'd be better off with Lana del Rey. In the battle between mysterious American siren and Essex...thing, there will only ever be one winner.



LIZZIE MARX

Email your 170 word opinion to comment@varsity.co.uk. We can publish it anonymously.

Older and more cynical now, we still support Obama

[Alex Marshall](#) wonders how to deal with the dying fall of a man who made us so optimistic

Four years ago I was seventeen. I had just learned to drive, Avatar hadn't yet infected cinemas with 3D glasses and Nicki Minaj was a stranger to the charts. 2008 was a simpler time. It was also the year I watched with bated breath as Barack Obama was elected President of the United States.

Four years later I am awaiting the upcoming election with an altogether different attitude. The 2008 election was fascinating, with memorable characters like the venerable veteran John McCain and Democrat stalwart Hillary Clinton. There was even the unfortunate but exciting sideshow of Sarah Palin. I had told myself I would not fall for the electioneering of this elaborate, if sometimes vulgar, contest. But I was a bushy-eyed and bright-tailed history student and Barack Obama's inspirational rhetoric proved impossible to resist. I believed his sweeping victory in November could genuinely be a momentous occasion for America – one of those rare events you recall in years to come.

Last week I found three copies of *The Times* from the 4th to the 6th of November stashed in my room. Imagine the naïve optimism that compelled my 17-year-old self to keep these particular editions. However,

reading the faded pages today I can see the ways in which my outlook has changed: to my disappointment, I've become jaded.

Guantanamo Bay survives, the situation in Afghanistan is still deeply troubling and the Iranian crisis slowly worsens. Domestic issues are just as worrying: the struggling economy means unemployment levels are high while Republicans scramble to repeal the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act known to us as 'Obamacare'.

Obama was probably always promising too much with his progressive attitude towards healthcare and ambitious ideas for a post-Bush foreign policy. He was handicapped right from his inauguration by the gravity of the financial crisis. The right man at the wrong time, perhaps.

To see Obama, once such a symbol of hope, hamstrung by political and financial realities has been distressing. "Change is going to take more than one term or one President or one party," he said at a recent fundraiser. When one remembers his damaging debate with Congressional Republicans about the debt ceiling, the 'one party' seems a particular sticking point.

Similarly, the platform of confidence and progress he so eloquently presented in '08 has been replaced with

petty negative television adverts about Mitt Romney. Obama's performance in the first presidential debate last week lacked the energy of the eloquence he displayed in confrontations with John McCain.

But of course, this is the way politics works. Incumbent politicians must defend themselves against aggressive opposition. Disappointment at lost campaign promises is to be expected, which is why someone went to the effort of mocking Nick Clegg's very belated apology by turning it autotune. Still, the manner in which Obama's presidential term has coincided with the maturing of young people like myself makes this transformation especially poignant. It seems a shame such genuine passion can cool so quickly to cynicism.

Indeed, this may merely be an example of the celebrity-democracy crisis that comes when a leader is mythologised into a political saviour. It is no secret that the executive branch of the American government is often over-estimated in its ability to pass legislation, and the mid-term losses in Congress explain much about the difficulty Obama has had passing economic and social law. In many ways, Obama provided a dose of radical politics in a nation with a

remarkable capacity for conservative stubbornness.

So don't get me wrong, I will be rooting for Obama to win a second term: I would rather it was he who dealt with a potential escalation in Iran

'It seems a shame such genuine passion can cool so quickly to cynicism'

and I think it more prudent to continue with his economic strategy than hope free markets magically provide the answers. Perhaps most importantly of all, I hope he can safeguard his healthcare bill for posterity.

However, I wonder how many people around my age have gone through the same changes, leaving their support for Obama in 2012 feeling a whole lot different from how it did in 2008. I expect what we feel is not disenchantment with one man, but a natural rite of passage: maturing and losing faith in the political process. Perhaps it is inescapable. But I can only hope that at some point in my life I may feel the same sense of enthusiasm and optimism that I did for Barack Obama in 2008.

● *Letter from America, p18*

This is dysfunctional discrimination

Justina Kehinde argues that blaming leadership issues on racial or ethnic discrimination can unhelpfully misrepresent the real questions and difficulties that people in power

If, hypothetically, Mitt Romney had related the perceived failure of Obamacare to the President's ethnicity (it doesn't require too much creativity to imagine him doing that), it would have been seen as a gross display of discrimination – an Olympic leap over the acceptability line. Yet eliding difficulties of leadership with racial prejudice seems to have become a popular pastime for critics of the GU and CUSU.

March saw the CUSU Presidential elections marred by allegations of prejudice as candidate Akilah Jeffers was docked 200 points for an alleged breach of campaign regulations. Had Akilah beaten eventual winner Rosalyn Old, she would have been the first black CUSU president. And so, instead of a thorough exploration of campaign regulations or of Jeffers' conduct, her penalty elicited immediate cries of racial discrimination. All this despite the fact that during her campaign Jeffers did not once use her ethnicity as a selling point.

Indeed it was her intellect, involvement with the student body and vision for CUSU that she consistently emphasized. Had she been elected by virtue of her skin pigmentation, the University's student body would not only have been exposed as positive discriminators but would have simultaneously undermined Jeffers'



KATHERINE MORRIS

real leadership capabilities.

A major Pakistani website, *The News International*, claims in a scathing article on the Graduate Union that Jeffers' penalty exposed the racial prejudice endemic at Cambridge University. As the current Graduate President Arsahlan Ghani takes action against the GU for perceived racial discrimination, *The News* are

emphasizing his “dysfunctional[ity]” and lack of power rather than looking at the actual problems which are “undermining” his rights as the democratically elected president. Investigating the “prejudice” which has allegedly reduced Ghani to a “toothless” President, *Varsity's* graduate reporter discovered that the alleged discrimination was in fact due to a misunderstanding about the new GU constitution, which automatically makes the Welfare Officer a trustee of the Union, something which Ghani sees as reducing his Presidential influence.

If there is conflict in the Graduate Union, the injustice has nothing to do with race or ethnicity but is about the structure of the Union itself. If the appointment of the Welfare Officer to the trustee board does undermine the President, then it will do so whether that President is British or Pakistani.

The News International's portrayal of Ghani's case is both disconcerting and disheartening. Irrespective of whether Ghani is the first Pakistani GU president or not, his success at elections came down to his ability to move the Union in a positive direction. If he is being undermined, then anger should be directed to the possible loss of that vision.

I wonder whether the impassioned declarations of foul play which the

article caused would exist if Ghani were white. Too quickly are issues in leadership aligned to questions about ethnic discrimination. To assume or imply that someone's success is down to race, or to see constitutional issues as manifestations of xenophobia is to do a disservice to the very real problems our student leaders face. We perpetuate an anxiety about race that ultimately reinforces differentiation to the detriment of minority students.

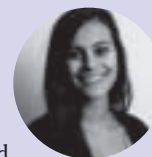
'Too quickly are issues in leadership aligned to questions about ethnic discrimination'

The success or failure of Obamacare has never been and will never be dependent on either Obama's white American mother or his Kenyan father. As Cambridge improves its racial diversity, the proportion of ethnic minority students in leadership positions will inevitably increase. Like any leaders, they will face challenges – and it will become more and more important that these trials be analyzed according to job descriptions and not race relations.

Justina Kehinde blogs at deathofthewriter.wordpress.com

CURRENT AFFAIRS

FREYA BERRY



This week, my friend's gay BFF suddenly left men behind him, hopped back into the closet and asked her out. People can surprise you. This might not matter in the long run for my friend but it has nastier effects on a political level – particularly when the person who surprises you is the President of the United States. Obama and Romney went head-to-head during the presidential debates last Wednesday. And, amazingly enough, the man praised for bringing rhetoric back to politics was defeated by an opponent so mistake-prone he makes Joe Biden look like a man who watches his words.

Four years after Obama-mania first struck, it's hard to think of the hope that accompanied his election as anything more than mindless optimism. Giving Obama the Nobel Peace Prize was no less ironic a gesture than giving it to Henry Kissinger – a man still pursued by a French court. The Obama administration has used five times more drones than the Bush government in northern Pakistan. Their multiple strikes have scared off the humanitarian workers who try to help injured civilians. According to estimates, just 2% of lives taken by such attacks were those of high-level targets. On Wednesday, Obama failed to bring Romney to task on his personal tax, his history with Bain Capital or his idiotic remark about the 47%. Romney, despite being widely scorned for who he is – essentially, a die-hard supporter of the rich with a flexible sliding scale of right-wing ideas – managed for the first time to come across as a confident prospective leader. Charisma shouldn't take precedence over actual policies, but it does – and is doubly important if the actual leader is floundering with the latter.

As the party conferences carry on in the UK, the news is full of members of the public doubting whether Ed Miliband can really lead when he speaks a bit like a frog. Public image still reigns supreme in our minds and we are all guilty of thinking that just because someone can speak well, they will behave well. Look at Boris fever: Ipsos Mori recently found that 61% of people would prefer the blond bombshell to the beleaguered David Cameron, who came off much worse than his rival on the David Letterman Show just a few months ago. Boris' popularity comes more from his ability to hold a crowd than from his political behaviour, which includes dining with the Murdochs while Scotland Yard was investigating the company over phone hacking. Don't get me wrong, the man does have nice hair. But keratin alone cannot rule a nation, and offering a frog the electoral kiss won't necessarily result in a prince.

Obama rose to power on a tide of personal appeal. Unfortunately, he has been lost in the four-year mire that comes from a blocked Senate and foreign policies that would make Bush blush. 'Change' was the message of his last campaign. It's a shame that in the years since then, instead of changing the country for the better, he seems to have changed himself for the worse.

Talking Point: You wanted us to know...

My internet presence is liberated by Twitter. It's like a sieve for everything else online: it delimits photos, recommendations, thoughts and articles into a manageable space. I can voice my ideas into the public domain without having to deal with tangled social awarenesses. The ephemerality of conversations is successfully recreated. Interest is engaged without time being wasted.

Aliya Ram, Gonville and Caius

So, just when we were looking forward to a lull following her appointment as Poet Laureate, Carol Ann Duffy has shown she still insists on churning out 'verse'. Her newest offering, written in commemoration of the 1612 Pendle Witches Trial, promises more of the ineptitude displayed in her Olympic offering ('We sense new weather. / We are on our marks. We are all in this together.')

Lewis Wynn, Emmanuel

Twitter talks: Lib Dems taking even more from The Thick Of It than 'we bank'—Nick Clegg's heavy use of the imaginary fits in speech yesterday.

Harry McNeill Adams, Pembroke

The E-Bac's technical deficit

The E-bac is branding itself as the GCSE for the modern world, but Sam Smith isn't convinced

Gove's exam reforms show promise, but overlooking computer science misses a great opportunity. I suspect many *Varsity* readers will broadly support the proposed elimination of GCSEs in core subjects, which was announced this September following an earlier leak from the Department for Education. After twenty five years of grade inflation and syllabus reduction, GCSEs are not fit for purpose. Employers do not know what a “grade B” student can do, and the modular exam system eats into time which should be reserved for teaching.

The proposed 'English Baccalaureate' will consist of core papers in English Language and Literature, Pure and Applied Maths, Physics, Chemistry and Biology. Students will also sit a paper in the Humanities and a foreign language. Modular exams will be abandoned and there will be only one exam board for each paper, which will have no incentive to boost profits by lowering its standards. Broadly speaking, this is a promising initiative.

That being said, the E-Bac's selection of core subjects is out of date. If we expect every school student to dissect a sheep's eye, then we should also expect every student to take apart an old laptop. If we know how to construct simple sentences in French or Arabic, then we should also know how to run a simple program in Python or Java. The omission of computer science is a wasted opportunity to introduce students to modern society.

Medical research relies on statistical software. Financial trades are chosen by numerical models. Yet the typical

Physics undergraduate arrives at university having never used a Linux OS. Few school leavers have any experience of programming or web design. Educationalists like to talk about the “digital native” generation but in reality, many technically minded students leave school lacking basic skills.



BETH OPPENHEIM

It is not just scientists and engineers who are unprepared. Businesses lose millions every year to routine computer errors, which staff could fix if they understood better how their software operates. A little knowledge of shell scripting speeds up everyday repetitive tasks. Sceptics argue that schools cannot offer such courses given the great shortage of specialist teachers, but most adults learn their computing skills from written tutorials. There are teacher shortages in Maths, Physics and many foreign languages, but nobody proposes we remove these subjects from school curricula. Small oversights can ruin good ideas. I hope that this omission is corrected.

Are you too stressed to function?

Where do we draw the line between student stress and anxiety issues? This week, *Varsity* talks to those suffering from anxiety in Cambridge and asks who to call when the pressure gets too much

Anxiety is a natural and important part of life. In the right doses, feelings of anxiety help to prepare us for important events and can even protect us from harm. However, for some people, anxiety can be an uncontrollable and overwhelming sensation, even in the absence of any real threat or danger. UK statistics show that, each year, 1 in 4 people will experience some kind of mental health problem. On top of this, mixed anxiety and depression is the most common mental disorder in the country and yet, in far too many cases, goes completely untreated and unaddressed.

A high-pressure environment like Cambridge clearly adds to the problem. Having spoken to university students about their own battles with anxiety it seems that the personal task of judging exactly how much anxiety is too much is a difficult one. The infamously fast-pace of Cambridge life induces stress by default, so it seems that for those grappling with an anxiety disorder, the feelings of worry and strain that are heralded as 'normal' are, to an extent, felt to undermine their struggle.

One student told *Varsity* that "going to Cambridge makes it [anxiety] even more difficult to cope with because everyone here is stressed out anyway, so I worry that if I tell people how I'm feeling, they'll just think I'm being melodramatic or weak and either not take it seriously or perhaps even judge me."

Indeed, another student said "I guess my main point of anxiety would be feeling like I don't belong in Cambridge... I feel like I'm working as hard as I can and I can barely keep up. I've got good friends, but I still feel quite isolated and alone a lot of the time and the prospect of telling people about my

feelings of anxiety and low self worth makes me panic and so I'd rather just keep the problem to myself."

It appears that the problem of anxiety is somewhat self-perpetuating. A highly stressful environment normalises feelings of anxiety, resulting in an increased reluctance to speak out about it, which in turn makes those suffering feel altogether more alone in their struggles.

To shine greater light on the problem of anxiety in Cambridge, CUSU Welfare Officer Charlie Bindels spoke to *Varsity* with her thoughts on the issue. Bindels initially pointed out that "obviously anxiety is a normal emotion, it's not necessarily a bad thing to feel it in a given situation – just before a test, for example – but when it dominates your day-to-day life that's when it becomes a problem and, unfortunately, I think that's just the case here. I don't think it's healthy for anyone to be living with stress constantly and yet it's becoming the norm for an awful lot of Cambridge students."

When asked about the extent to which an intense environment such as Cambridge could potentially contribute to issues of anxiety, Bindels told us she is "cautious about creating a hype around the 'pressure of Cambridge'" but agreed that "Cambridge has become an environment which normalises anxiety: 'week 5 blues', 'all-nighters' and 'essay-crises' are all phrases I've heard going around already this term. This perpetuates the stress and anxiety that students are already feeling and it also becomes problematic because it means they become dismissive of anxiety felt by themselves and others."

In terms of factors contributing to anxiety, Bindels assessed the possibility that 'the process of moving from school to University plays a big part in the anxiety students feel.'

She notes that "before arriving at Cambridge, the majority of the students have been high achievers, coming top in their classes, setting and achieving high goals and have had to be incredibly driven in order to achieve what they have. Suddenly they arrive at one of the world's most prestigious universities, where so many famous and powerful people have studied, they are being taught by world class experts and they don't feel they can live up to the standards of these people. A lot of students feel like 'imposters', believing that they 'got in by mistake' or they simply 'shouldn't be here.'"

She told *Varsity*: "when I first arrived I was convinced I'd been mixed up with another, cleverer, Charlie Bindels who would come and claim her place as soon as she realised what had happened. Obviously this kind of thing causes massive anxieties for students, and it's made worse because the person feeling it often feels that they are unique in their 'imposter' status, when in fact it is caused by the environment."

When asked about where the university stood on dealing with issue of mental health and anxiety, Charlie told us "whilst really vital support systems are in place – the University Counselling Service, CUSU's Student Advice Service, Tutors, CUSU

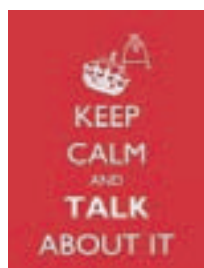
Welfare Officer – they aren't receiving enough support and attention...". And, unfortunately, many of these services are "underfunded, and under-staffed". In spite of this, the University Counselling Service (UCS) is working as hard as possible to combat (amongst other things) anxiety in Cambridge.

Charlie informs us that "the Counselling Service can be approached through a web-form on the UCS website. Students are asked for information about themselves, and to give as much information as possible about their problem. Once the form is sent off, the Counselling service will be in contact with an appointment as soon as possible. UCS provides a number of different forms of counselling, including psychotherapy, cognitive behavioural therapy as well as group therapy sessions. The information on the form allows the Service to understand what kind of counselling best suits a student."

Bindels finally advises *Varsity* that "the most important piece of advice I can give

someone turning to any of Cambridge's welfare services (from your Welfare officer to the Student Advice Service to the Counselling Service) is that asking for help is not in any way 'failing' and it is vital to remember that "Cambridge is a tough place and you should never feel that you can't talk to someone in the strictest confidence."

Jack Mosedale



Cambridge's through-the-night confidential helpline, Linkline, (01223 367575, or, alternatively, 01223 744444) uses a now popular wartime slogan (see next page) for its poster



Keep calm and carry on

The poster above my desk tells me to 'panic and freak out'. At the end of what is apparently 'Freshers' week' (but is, in fact, a true Cambridge example of fitting what other universities do in a week into the space of about three days) I am standing at the foot of a mountain of essays, lectures and supervisions, and – more worryingly – thinking that the poster above my desk might be right.

Like many students across the country, I am stressed. Worries over Chaucer and medieval literature might have ruined my first week, and yet they haven't yet ruined my term, my year or my time at Cambridge. However, for the annually increasing numbers of students who use the University Counselling service, these worries pose more of an issue.

As well as facing exam pressure, students must leave home for the first time, provide for themselves and lose the comforting structure of school or college. Meanwhile, the student is confronted by hundreds of new people, supposedly meant to make lifelong friends in a matter of days, whilst

also finding themselves incarcerated alone with a pile of books in the silence of the library. It's a stressful time for everyone and, unfortunately, only 3-10% of us will seek help, believing these feelings to be just another part of the Cambridge experience.

Last year, The Tab published three students' experiences of issues such as depression, eating disorders and self-harm. These students deserve praise for talking about the issues they have faced, and yet in order for their stories to come out, their anonymity had to be preserved. There is still the continued reluctance to speak out about such matters in fear of judgement and misunderstanding.

Admittedly, the British are famous for their stiff upper lip and



FROM THE WELFARE OFFICERS

Starting and attending any university is a nerve-wracking experience for everyone. For many people it is the first time they have stayed away from home for an extended period of time and everyone is experiencing a whole new level of independence. Of course, the prospect of work is daunting here, but most students soon realise that they are not the only ones to feel that way.

As welfare officers, we have mostly had to deal with anxiety in week 5 and exam term. Week 5 is when many students begin to feel homesick and stressed with the work piling up and in Caius every member of the student union executive has to organise a special week 5 event to try to help deal with the anxiety. Exam term is stressful at any university and again, the student union makes special efforts throughout exam time in order to lighten the general atmosphere."

Leanne Baker and Karthik Chandrasekharan (Gonville and Caius Student Union Welfare Officers)

Advice from the University Counselling Service

Anxiety is very common - it is one of the 3 most common reasons for students coming to the University Counselling Service (UCS). It can be triggered by many things, and not just essay deadlines or exams! However, it's worth mentioning that not it's not all bad news - for we often need a certain degree of pressure to motivate us to get things done and achieve what we want. However, when the anxiety goes beyond that helpful motivation and becomes disabling, stopping us from achieving what we want, then there

is certainly help available.

We have self-help information on the UCS website at: www.counselling.cam.ac.uk

We also have counsellors and CBT Therapists who know a lot about this area and are able to offer effective help, either in 1:1 counselling or in groups or workshops. Other sources of support would include Linkline (www.linkline.org.uk) and the Peer-2-Peer scheme which runs in some Colleges (ptp.soc.srpf.net)

Mark Phippen,
Head of Counselling at the UCS.

'Anxiety is very common: it is one of the three most common reasons for students coming to the University Counselling Service'



A CAMBRIDGE PHENOMENON?

At the risk of stating the painfully obvious, Cambridge is very much a place where anxiety can flourish. The incessant workload, the competitiveness, overachievers in every extracurricular field - while there is certainly room to draw a lot of satisfaction from these, they don't always make for the most relaxing of lifestyles.

However, there does almost seem to be an anxiety phenomenon in Cambridge, one that is out of all proportion with the daily stresses of the average student's life. So, if such a phenomenon does exist, how has it come about?

The collegiate system itself must play a part. Each college is like an academic Petri dish, with the student-amoeba permanently under the watchful gaze of tutors, supervisors, porters, college staff, and above all else, fellow students. While belonging to a college undoubtedly has

its perks (and is often one of, if not *the*, main attractions of a Cambridge education), it is the kind of environment which does sometimes exacerbate feelings of stress and anxiety.

But there must be more to blame for the high level of anxiety than the composition of the institution itself. There is an 'anxiety culture' at work here, where to be stressed and anxious becomes the norm. There is even a measure of success in some sorts of stress.

People often complain of being stressed as a result of having to juggle multiple deadlines and extra-curriculars - in other words, they're incredibly busy. And in being busy, there is also an amount of achievement implied. This can sometimes escalate until people have 'busy-offs', comparing hectic schedules to subtly discern who is the more busy, and therefore achieving more.

Gwenni Hawkins

push ourselves on a daily basis to keep up with the fast paced working environment that comes with the daily grind of one of the best universities in the world.

'We often need a certain degree of pressure to motivate us to get things done'

Freshers are thrown headfirst into a world of terrifying reading lists, new and abstract concepts, Saturday lectures and imminent deadlines. They are cajoled by tutors to make the most of their time here and are told by family and friends how lucky they are to be at a university where they can sit in ancient halls and learn from the best minds of the country.

Unsurprisingly, for some, it's just a bit too much. As Freshers' week fades into distant memory, another term of working hard and pretending to play harder awaits. So instead of relying on the advice of a poster, why not speak to someone first and stop attempting to 'carry on'

Morwenna Jones

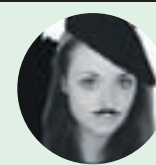
discomfort when asked to discuss their problems, but why, in a society in which 25% of people will suffer from a mental health problem at some point in their lives, do we find it so hard to talk about our problems and ask for help?

The answer is simple. We are too embarrassed to accept that we are struggling with our own issues when everyone else seems to be in the same boat, whilst students in particular fear scaring off new friends with their own insecurities. Students all over the country are told that these are supposed to be the best years of their lives and as a result, they feel pressured into enjoying themselves with the fear of missing out if they do not.

At Cambridge especially, we all

PARIS ÇA VA?

EMILY FITZELL



I admit it: I'm attempting to cook my way into the hearts of my new Parisian neighbours. And bar a minor accident with an exceedingly boozy beef bourguignon (at least they won't remember it), all seemed to be going to plan. So with National Chocolate Day in mind, I decided to push the boat out and have a stab at making some salted-caramel truffles. And finally, success, I found myself surrounded - a throng of clearly smitten moths were drawn to my cocoa-dusted flame. This was perhaps less a testimony to my culinary skills, however, than to the potency of Paris' love-affair with chocolate. Since the first chocolatier opened its doors back in 1659, the city has boasted a top-quality boutique industry with an unrivalled capacity for gastronomic innovation.

Popular culture has romanticised the notion of chocolate and its production and elevated it to a seemingly magical status. However, the reality of the chocolate factory outside Europe is far from sugar-coated. Willy Wonka's workshop brought one lucky family out of poverty and his Oompa-Loompas never went on strike, but in a real-world cocoa industry which seeks to support not one family but a mass of 50 million people, corruption is widespread and exploitation rife. Child labour is commonplace and with over 40% of the world's cocoa sourced in the Côte d'Ivoire, a French ex-colony, the ethical concerns raise an issue close to home.

Perhaps this was the influence behind Paris' contributions to the Journée Mondiale du Cacao et du Chocolat this week. A tasting session with Chloé Doutre-Rousse, author of *The Chocolate Connoisseur* and chocolatier Alexandra Whisnant, for instance, unexpectedly opened my eyes to a self-conscious, responsible and ethical world of modern Parisian chocolaterie. True, it may be exclusive, and at times, excessively poncey (there was no way I could taste 'notes of mushroom' in that ganache), but their admirable emphasis on ethical production was a more than worthy return. Their audience was warned: "you just can't buy crap any more".

The revered Patrick Roger currently boasts a window display easily mistakable for that of an art gallery, yet his 7m-long edible sculpture featuring a montage of giant Hippopotami in fact serves primarily to spread awareness of the environmental issues which affect the West African countries where his cocoa originates, such as climate-driven animal extinction. Despite the example set by these independent entrepreneurs, the issue of exploitation continues to fester in the world of corporate, large-scale production. As such, a day of designated decadence left a taste in my mouth too bitter for even the darkest of chocolates to account for.

But don't give up on choc. This delectable disguise of brain-boosters and flavonoids is, after all, practically medicinal. Please, indulge away, but try to do so ethically. Like the French, indulge in quality and at the same time, in food for thought.



LISTINGS

Pull out and pin up on your board



Bill Oddie

Tuesday 16th, Cambridge Union, 7.30pm
Join this national treasure of a bearded bird-fanatic and Pembroke alumni as he talks about his career as a BBC television presenter, author, comedian and much-loved eccentric. *Dominic Kelly*

Potato smilies turn your stomach? Got a event you'd like to see in the listing? Doodle in lectures and want to see it published? Get in touch: reviews@varsity.co.uk

THEATRE

Jeff Carpenter and A Piano
Tuesday 16th, 11pm
ADC Theatre, £6/£5
Following the success of *Bereavement: The Musical*, award-winning composer Jeff Carpenter takes centre stage in Cambridge with a live band for one night only. *Ella Griffiths*

MUSIC

Liars
Monday 15th, 7pm
The Junction, £12.50
The always shapeshifting experimental New York punk band bring their tour to Cambridge in promotion of their new album *WIXW*. Should be a great, uber cool, show. *Dominic Kelly*

FILM

On The Road
Multiple showings
Arts Picturehouse, Vue,
Film adaptation of Jack Kerouac's legendary, 'unfilmable' coming-of-age novel. The road-tripping youth burning like fabulous roman candles include Kristen Stewart and Sam Riley. Yum. *Ella Griffiths*

BEST OF BLOGS

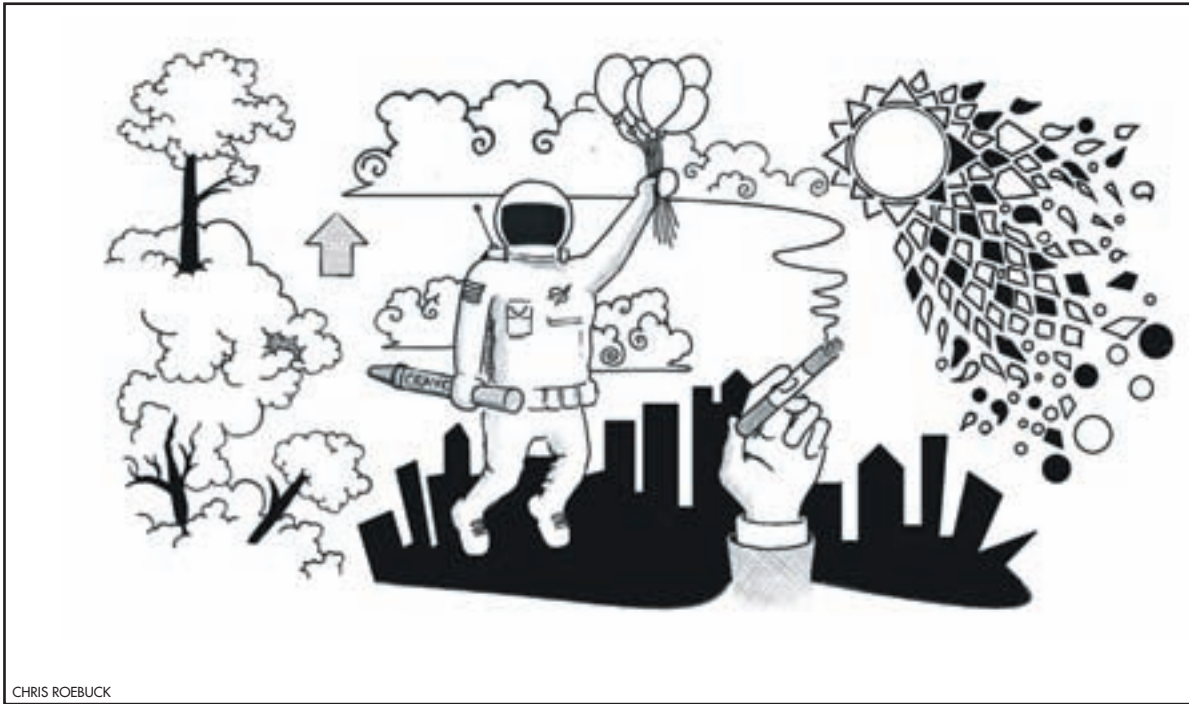
Holly Richards on the joy of lyrics:
"These songwriters craft lyrics that remain in my mind as much as the Spice Girls or (those pioneers of double denim) B*witched. It's not due to catchy choruses and heavy repetition, but the impact their lyrics has had upon me and the awe I experience on hearing lines such as "Truth is a story scribbled in chalk/ Just an hour before the flood" (Karine Polwart) and "Who knows who wrote that song of Summer/ That blackbirds sing at dusk" (Kate Bush). This isn't about musical snobbery, where deliciously poetic lines such as these are all that I consider worthwhile. Songs need heart, emotion and honesty, and not all require weighty words to convey this."

Rosie Sergeant on Lindy Hopping:
"My mission began with an evening spent in the company of Cambridge's Lindy Hoppers, involving an hour-long class followed by an evening of 'social dancing', accompanied by a live band. Fortunately the class caters to beginners' needs, and the emphasis tended more towards having fun than perfecting the steps (or so one of my partners told me, perhaps to make me feel better about my rather haphazard footwork). Fortunately we changed partners regularly, so I didn't have to feel too bad about my lack of co-ordination impeding the more ambitious dancers in the bunch. It did make for somewhat clammy hand-holds though, which I could have done without when it was my turn to dance with a very cute guy with floppy hair..."

Hannah Wilkinson on the beginning of her year at Cairo University:
"It has four stories of long corridors, each door opening onto an office or a lecture theatre. On and around each door there are something like four room numbers, so you can only know by trial and error which room your lecture is actually in. The food sold in the university is almost all drowning in chip fat. Everyone we've spoken to so far has tried to politely guide us back to the English-speaking section. But it's also a brilliant place. The campus seems to be constantly teeming with activity. It's like a continuous Freshers' Fair, with huge marquees and people walking round in t-shirts with clipboards. People are friendly and have no qualms about coming up to you randomly in the corridor."

	Friday 12 th	Saturday 13 th	Sunday 14 th	M
MUSIC	Vivian Choi MUMFORD THEATRE (ANGLIA RUSKIN), 1.10PM & 3PM, FREE The award-winning pianist plays work by Berg, Debussy and Kapustin as part of Anglia Ruskin's lunchtime series of concerts.		Deacon Blue CORN EXCHANGE, 8PM, £29.50 Underrated band reunited in 2012 to celebrate 25 years since the release of their debut album and will play their greatest hits as well as some new tracks on this tour.	Lost In WWW.CAM...
FILM S	 The Perks of Being a Wall-flower ARTS PICTUREHOUSE, VUE; MULTIPLE SHOWINGS Emma Watson stars in this coming-of-age heart-warmer based on Stephen Chbosky's cult classic of the same name. Goodbye, Hogwarts.	Marvel Avengers Assemble ST JOHN'S PICTUREHOUSE; 7:00PM, 22:00PM; £3 The superheroes of Marvel Comics save the world in this unsubtle yet enjoyable feast of explosions, capes and martial arts, starring Robert Downey Jr, Scarlet Johansson and Samuel L Jackson.		
TALKS	Text & Content VARIOUS LOCATIONS; FREE Creative, diverse exhibition exploring art and language, featuring 25 national, local and international artists who will place their artwork in specially selected and significant venues and locations.		Winged KING'S COLLEGE, 10.00-4.00; FREE Visit one of Cambridge's most prestigious art galleries of wildlife prints and artwork, as well as nature-themed prints, cards and photographs by a selection of artists.	Master for You ADC THEATRE Natalie W Theatre Ce workshop for audien
VIEW	Macbeth CORPUS PLAYROOMS, 7PM; £6/5 After bringing a healthy dose of Scottish supernatural wildness to Japan, the Pembroke Players Japan Tour returns to Cambridge with their Edwardian adaptation of Macbeth.	Bartholomew Fayre ADC THEATRE; 7.45PM; £10/£8 'Tis in fashion to go to the ADC, especially to catch the last night of the chaotic farce that is Ben Jonson's comedy, featuring punning, Puritans and pig-women.		Corpus CORPUS PLAYR The ideal op of Cambridg perform live ol' audience prizes up fo
STAY IN	TV: Baggage CHANNEL 4, 8PM Western Civilisation reaches its peak with a dating show where single men and women select strangers for a holiday based on their emotional baggage and issues. Hosted by Gok Wan. Yes.		Film: Do The Right Thing Spike Lee's finest feature is filled with racial tension, big questions and boomboxes in Brooklyn. Controversial, challenging and utterly essential viewing.	Food: I Pre-Jamie C revolution, slop were to some pe that grin to
GO OUT		Warning THE JUNCTION, 10PM-6AM; FREE How does an all night rave featuring more DJs than you can shake a stick at until 6am sound? Cult films will also be shown in a private cinema throughout the night.		Joan Ar CORN EXCHAN Ivor Novello Award nom from throug UK tour.

DOODLE OF THE WEEK



CHRIS ROEBUCK

Monday
15th

Translation

FM.CO.UK, 8PM

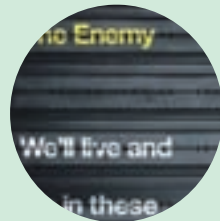
brings you its weekly dose of non-anglophone music. Expect sounds and an insight into what's listening to.

Tuesday
16th

Dry The River

THE JUNCTION, 7PM, £10

Stratford's finest folk collective bring their brand of semi-acoustic jingles to Cambridge. The band appeared on the BBC Sound of 2012 longlist and could be an emerging talent.

Wednesday
17th

The Enemy

CORN EXCHANGE, 7.30PM, £17.50

With three top five albums under their belt, the "Had Enough" hitmakers' songs are perfect for belting out with your friends on a Thursday night. Expect it to get lairy.

Thursday
18th

Shame

CORPUS CHRISTI COLLEGE, 8PM, FREE

In this term's series of independent and foreign pieces of cinema, Corpus Films will be showing Shame, Steve McQueen's celebrated portrait of sex addiction and dysfunctional siblings.

Taken 2

VUE, MULTIPLE SHOWINGS

This sequel to seminal thriller Taken sees Liam Neeson on holiday in Istanbul, returning to what he does best – being exceptionally manly in tense and action-packed movies. Enjoy.

Holy Motors

ARTS PICTUREHOUSE, 4PM

An unmissable piece of cinema from Maverick director Leos Carax fusing reality and fantasy. Denis Lavant stars as a master of disguises in this series of stunning set pieces.

Class in Playwriting
ing Audiences

E, 7:00PM; £8/7

Wilson, Artistic Director of Centre, gives a development for playwrights hoping to write pieces of younger age-groups.

Lord Giddens: Understanding Society

CAMBRIDGE UNION SOCIETY; 7:30PM

Giddens speaks about the integral role communication plays in social evolution from hunter-gatherers to today's societies.



'This House has No Confidence in Her Majesty's Government'

CAMBRIDGE UNION SOCIETY; 7:30PM

Prominent political figures and former MP Lembit Opik debate the current government.

Smoker

OOMS; 9:30PM; £6/5

opportunity to watch some of the newest comedic talent, helped by a dash of good participation and the Smoker or grabs.

The Last Five Years

CORPUS PLAYROOM, 7PM; £6/£5

Jason Robert Brown's unique two-hander musical following the relationship of Jamie and Cathy comes to the intimate setting of Corpus Playrooms.

Sophie Scholl

ADC THEATRE 11PM; £6/£5

The bravery of Sophie Scholl during the Nazi regime has made her a worldwide heroine. This first ever stage adaptation of the successful German film will bring her tragic story to the stage.



Potato Smilies

Oliver's school dinner the best bit of any lunchlady's these bad boys. Treat yourself perfectly crisp ones and return to your face.



Music: The Beatles- Love Me Do

50 years ago this month, a little known band from Liverpool released a relatively simple bluesy number but one genius harmonica riff. Little did they know it would change the world forever.

Radio: Shaun Keaveny

Who cares about Moyles or Grimshaw, it's 6Music that has the best breakfast show on the air. Expect the latest and hippest tunes and thankfully no Comedy Dave in sight.

matrading

NGE, 7.30PM, £29.50

o winning, Grammy and Brit nominated songstress plays songs about her career in this huge

Kindling- Rut

THE JUNCTION 3, 8PM, £8/£6

Night Light Theatre present "an explosive dance theatre experiment" developed by two Cambridge theatre makers which was taken to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

Rumboogie!

CINDIES, 10.30PM, £5

The club known as Ballare brings back the quintessential student night. There will be drink offers. There will be the nice bouncer. There will be the not-so-nice bouncer. Choose wisely.

Benjamin Francis Leftwich

THE JUNCTION, 7PM, £12

Fresh from supporting Noah & The Whale on their UK tour, Francis brings his Elliot Smith-inspired singer-songwriter tracks to the Junction.

WISH YOU WERE HERE

To the uninitiated, Florence in high season is one labyrinthine and unbearably hot art gallery. With beauty at every turn, the mind-blowing Duomo and bucketloads of Italian character, you could scratch the surface and still return fully satisfied, if a little flustered and still wondering just how that Vespa didn't knock you into the next Trattoria.

But with a month to pass, Florence becomes a new city altogether. It is a place in which you can lose yourself, ambling down twisting streets and popping in to the rambling shops. The 'main sights' could overwhelm even the most sceptical visitor; the view of the city, from the Campanile is without comparison and seeing Michelangelo's David up close is a humbling experience.

And yet, picking aspects of Firenze cannot explain what truly makes it such a gem. The harmony in the Renaissance grandeur, the tranquillity of the Arno as it snakes under the Ponte Vecchio, the incredible food... Florence is a fairytale city that is blissfully real, a place that implores its visitors to return with an engrossing splendour that is also unsettlingly nonchalant. Go, take a walk, and you will understand. *James Hansen*

JETHRO THOMPSON



Letter from America

Following a summer spent working for the Obama campaign ahead of the upcoming US elections, **Phelim Brady** details his time in Virginia, a swing state which looks set to play a deciding role in the upcoming presidential elections

We all remember the euphoria, in America and much of the rest of the world that followed Obama's election in 2008. Like most of us, I was too young to take part in that campaign and that victory which changed the way so many people view America. Echoing previous leaders such as JFK, Obama's election seemed to herald a new era for America, and for America's relations with others. In particular, it united young people from countries across the globe with a sense that things would never be the same again. Since the start of my time at Cambridge last year, I knew I wanted to visit the US to experience the presidential campaigns firsthand and to be involved with Obama's re-election effort.

I wrote to the campaign in states across the country asking if they would be prepared to have a foreigner campaign with them. Understandably busy, some took months to reply. But the reply from one state, Virginia, was immediate. "We'd be honored to have you". Virginia is split, roughly, between a conservative south, and a more moderate and left-leaning north, oriented towards Washington DC. Obama's 2008 victory in Virginia was the first time a Democratic presidential nominee had won the state since the time of Lyndon Johnson and so, unsurprisingly, Virginia has been one of several closely watched battleground

'He is such a great man, his family is so beautiful. Why won't Congress let them act?'

states in this year's contest. Republican super PACs and the Romney campaign have poured tens of millions of dollars into buying television ads in the state, and Obama and his donors have done much the same.

I arrived in September, thinking that my time with the campaign would mainly consist of knocking on doors and making phone calls, speaking with Democrat-leaning voters to make sure they came out to support Obama on election day. This is the hard graft necessary in almost any political campaign: identifying supporters, persuading the undecided and then making sure those people vote. This kind of voter contact is particularly crucial in a state like Virginia, where the campaign strategy was clear: squeeze every last Democratic vote out of the northern cities in the hope that, as in 2008, the region's Democrat supporters might outweigh the Republicans in the rest of the state.

While canvassing one Sunday I spoke at length with an elderly Latino woman who said of Obama, "he is such a great man, his family is so beautiful - Michelle, oh! Michelle! I pray for them every night. Why won't Congress let him act? They won't let him change things". She brought me the photos she had of the President and told me how she implores her neighbours to vote for him. The next day, I registered to vote a man who realised that, despite having been convicted of a misdemeanor, he still had the right to cast his ballot in November. Before handing me his registration form he made sure I was from the Obama campaign, saying he wouldn't trust a Romney volunteer with his information. Most of all I was struck by the people who, even if they only passed me in the street while canvassing, stopped to thank me for what I was doing, without considering the fact that I was clearly not from Virginia.



Everywhere you look: Obamania on virtually all available surfaces in this Virginia campaign office



VIEW FROM THE VOTER

I think it's very hard to really like either one of the top two candidates. Romney, right, seems too close to 'big business' for the everyday American to support him and his policies, frankly, scare me, especially as a woman. Obama, while I support many more of his policies, has to make up for unfulfilled promises last term. I thought Romney had truly lost the race when his '47%' comments came out, but then his less-than-eloquent win on the debate floor last week has the political world abuzz about his increased chances of an upset. If anything, the closeness of the race will encourage more voters to participate, but I very much hope that Obama's policies will not be reversed with a scary R-Money regime.

Alexandria Hall, MIT graduate

Much more of my time, however, was spent in the campaign office working with the campaign's voter database and recruiting volunteers. Most rewarding was training others - other interns and local, neighbourhood volunteers - to campaign and speaking to voters. 'Community organising' is fast becoming an over-used phrase in politics, but giving local people the tools to campaign themselves, rather than relying excessively on outsiders and professionals from different states, and even different countries, is exactly what the Obama campaign tries to do.

It is not hard to see how a relationship with a neighbour and face-to-face conversations with someone living on the same street are much more effective tools, not only to persuade people to vote, but also to inveigle them to volunteer



1. Campaign central in Virginia.
2. Mitt Romney at the Republican Convention.
3. Obama: four more years?



their time. Despite being a foreigner, without a vote and without a clear stake in the election, I was welcomed into the homes of many supporters and worked with them to help create enthusiastic local teams of campaigners, fully versed in the workings of the Obama machine.

When I arrived I saw that a volunteer who had come before me had already added 'Brits 4 Obama' to one of the many displays adorning the walls of the campaign office. While one or two voters raised eyebrows when they heard my accent, not a single other office volunteer questioned why I was there or why I felt it so important to contribute.

We all knew why we were there, putting in 11-hour days six or seven days a week. A young lawyer working two jobs, an accountant from Kenya, a veteran campaigner from Chicago in town for two weeks, a well-travelled humanitarian worker, an Australian over for three months, students and graduates from America, the Netherlands and others from Britain; the team was anything but unvaried and one of the best aspects of my time with the campaign was working alongside such different people.

Having to leave the campaign as is reaching its peak has been painful. But I know the team I was once part of will go on trying to make a difference, trying to give ordinary people the power to organise in their communities and to inspire and excite their neighbours.

I know that the Latino woman I spoke to on that doorstep in Virginia will still be there, day after day, making the case for Obama with her family and friends. For her, Obama is not the disappointment some tell us he is; for her, he still represents hope.

Change we can still believe in?

FAIL TO THE CHIEF

The story so far: the gaffes from the candidates for the 2012 USA Presidential Election

THE WORLD ACCORDING TO MITT ROMNEY

♦ "The first response of the United States must be outrage at the breach of the sovereignty of our nation. And apology for America's values is never the right course": following attacks on the American consulate in Libya

♦ "Everything corporations earn ultimately goes to the people. Where do you think it goes? Whose pockets? Whose pockets? People's pockets. Human beings, my friend": in response to a heckler at the Iowa State fair who suggested raising corporation tax.

♦ "I'm not familiar precisely with exactly what I said, but I stand by what I said. Whatever it was": speaking in Jacksonville, Florida, in reference to his discussion of the connection between Obama and the controversial preacher Rev. Jeremiah Wright

♦ "There are 47% of the people who will vote for the president no matter what. All right, there are 47% who are with him, who are dependent upon government, who believe that they are victims, who believe the government has a responsibility to take care of them, who believe that they are entitled to healthcare, to food, to housing, to you name it": the infamous leaked 47% video. Surprisingly, not mentioned by Obama during the first presidential debate.

Although Romney is a tough man to beat when it comes to the controversial and mildly insulting public statement, Obama can't be let off without a mention or two. He may have stayed pretty clean so far in this 2012 campaign, especially in contrast to his gaffe-prone rival, and yet even this prim and proper, media-savvy president is known for an awkward silence or two.

IN THE WORDS OF OBAMA

♦ "When I meet with world leaders, what's striking - whether it's in Europe or here in Asia...": speaking at a conference outside Honolulu, Hawaii.

♦ "The Middle East is obviously an issue that has plagued the region for centuries": speaking in Tampa, Florida back in 2010.

♦ "What I was suggesting - you're absolutely right that John McCain has not talked about my Muslim faith..." - Obama had to be reminded of his Christian faith by presenter George Stephanopoulos on ABC's *This Week* programme.

♦ "I've now been in 57 states - I think one left to go": the President, presumably meant to say 47, and later that day acknowledged his own mistake, joking about his 'numeracy problem'.

♦ "In case you missed it, this week, there was a tragedy in Kansas. Ten thousand people died - an entire town destroyed." The tornado he is referring to actually killed 12 people.

♦ "You can't change Washington from the inside": at a rally in Sarasota, Florida last month. Although this remark was aimed at praising public support for Obama's healthcare reforms, many took this as a personal confession of defeatism. Romney later seized on the remark, suggesting that Obama should try things on the 'outside'.

FEATURES, FILM, BOOKS, MUSIC, ART & REVIEWS

Varsity
Magazine

PUT A SOC IN IT**ROSIE SERGEANT**

I love Sundays. Given the chaotic pace of life at Cambridge, I afford myself the luxury of taking the day at a blissfully slow pace: a long lie-in, catching up on trashy TV, reading the newspapers, enjoying a relaxed roast dinner. Not so, it seems, for members of the University Water Polo Squad, who sacrifice these pleasures in favour of a morning of training in the swimming pool. Dragging myself out of bed and lamenting the omnipresence of closed curtains in the rooms of my fellow students, I prepared myself to join in their exploits.

Things didn't get off to a winning start. Having not swum since my secondary school days (I prefer to lounge poolside, darling), I had entirely overlooked my lack of suitable attire for pool-based activities. I was forced to forgo breakfast and make a last-minute dash to John Lewis. I arrived in the nick of time, already red-faced and sweaty, only to discover that today the Varsity team trials were taking place. The captain, seeing the look of horror on my face, reassured me that there would be no pressure and we would take things easy. "Just twenty or so lengths to start off with, girls – no biggie," she beamed.

Halfway through my first, I was ready to faint with hunger, my legs had turned to jelly, and I had unintentionally swallowed copious amounts of water. With much coughing and spluttering, I reverted to doggy paddle. "Don't worry – your technique's great!" she reassured me, as I huffed and puffed my way to the shallow end. "It takes a while to get back into the swing of things – you should have seen me when I got back to training after the vac!" Something tells me she was anything but the pathetic paddler I was, longing for the comfort of my floats, woggles and – dare I say it? – armbands.

You see, water polo is played in deep water, and, to further complicate matters, involves a very specific style of treading water called the 'egg-beater', the ins and outs of which got me thoroughly scrambled. Keeping afloat is only part of the battle – there are various manoeuvres, passes, catches and goals to execute, as well as warding off opponents' attempts to 'dunk' you (thankfully, existing team members promised not to submit me to that treatment just yet, though I was given a bonnet with some rather hefty ear protectors to wear in case of any rough play...).

I never thought I would last the whole session, but somehow the team's infectious enthusiasm won me over. My legs might have only been capable of a gentle swish rather than the mighty egg-beating of my teammates, but I managed a couple of passes and even a shot on goal (easily saved, but, as the perpetually smiley captain pointed out, "at least it was on target!"). I returned home with a runny nose, dripping hair and bloodshot eyes. As my friends showed up in hall bleary-eyed, I felt a sneaky sense of pride for having spent my morning engaging in such activity whilst they slept off last night's beers. But next time, I won't skip the Weetabix.

Rosie's column is online weekly.



Art comes to the High Street

What can art bring to our recession-ruined shopping districts? **Gabrielle Schwartz** finds the answers in new Cambridge project Changing Spaces



A space successfully changed: *Hunt and Darton café*

CHRISTA HOLKA



Painting by Monica Umba

In Cambridge – a city so filled with artistic individuals, flourishing theatre and music scenes and a rich cultural history – contemporary art often seems to be distinctly absent. Cambridge art project *Changing Spaces* is a notable exception. Chances are, however, you haven't even heard of it, unless you have had the fortune of happening across one of their window or pop-up exhibitions as you walk through the city.

It is an exciting experience to stumble upon these spaces, often in unexpected locations. One example is a current showcase of student work from Cambridge School of Art in the Grafton Centre, incongruously situated between Claire's Accessories and the Orange shop. Another is a blink-and-you'll-miss-it window exhibiting textile work on Regent St. Locations magically appear and disappear, as the property-owners find new commercial uses for the shops. But the heterogeneous and fleeting nature of the exhibitions can also leave the whole project shrouded in obscurity. My curiosity piqued, I sought to meet with one director of the project, artist Anji Main, to find out more about its fascinating story.

So what exactly is *Changing Spaces*? Founded in 2009 with a grant from the City Council, it is a project designed to 'creatively enhance our high street' through a continuously changing cycle of exhibitions put on in empty shop spaces around Cambridge.

There are few criteria for applications to exhibit, with an online form and an open policy designed to encourage a diverse range of art, from professional live or performance art to student artists. Much of the project's

emphasis therefore lies in a desire to assist and provide a platform for what Anji describes as the 'cutting edge of contemporary art'. As a non-commercial project which focuses on emerging artists, it is a fresh and welcome alternative from either the established sites or commercial galleries that otherwise populate Cambridge. I wonder if the use of shop spaces is merely a gimmick, and if the enigmatic nature of the project preventing it from reaching its full potential. As Anji points out, however, contemporary art often alienates exhibition-goers who are unfamiliar with the traditional museum context.

'In the open, non-exclusive domain of the high street, people feel free to enter and explore the space'

When art is located in the open, non-exclusive domain of the high street, people might feel far freer to enter and explore the space.

The spaces can attract a weird and wonderful variety of exhibitions. One example is performance installation 'The Fencing Project', which with live choreographed fencing and a projected backdrop of digital sport 'explore[d] the relationship between live action and remote interaction, via the digital mediation of an invented sport'. Or live art project, the 'Hunt and Darton café', which merged art and enterprise to create a fully functioning café. So successful was the café that

Anji tells me that in recent months, *Changing Spaces* has been contacted by numerous businesses and culinary enterprises asking to use a space. But the project isn't about getting rid of spaces or making huge profits: it's hard enough procuring and keeping hold of spaces in the first place, and the organisers charge a very minimal fee for window space. Run entirely by volunteers who also happen to be artists, they are passionate about continuing to discover and exhibit new art, and find more spaces to fill with new exhibitions.

This is an intriguing premise, and what strikes me most about the project is the sheer amount of work and energy put into it by the directors. They often play a large role in curating the exhibitions, particularly in the cases of non-professional artists such as students currently exhibiting their work at the Grafton Centre. Admittedly, I found this exhibition lacking in professional polish or interesting curation, but it nevertheless contained some interesting highlights. 'Curating can make or break an exhibition', Anji rightly points out, and it can be a sensitive task gauging just how much assistance or control to give the exhibiting artists in their temporary space.

Originally funded by a one-off grant, and therefore not intended to be permanent, *Changing Spaces* now employs an expanded team of directors who continue to seek out funding and new spaces. One exciting future project is a studio space, sought in conjunction with a Cambridge college, which would provide a space to exhibit the work of Cambridge students in

term-time and of other artists in the holidays. Of Cambridge students, Anji says that 'I would love to work with any of them', again driven by a desire to nurture more creative minds to enrich the city's culture.

And indeed, once discovered, it feels as though *Changing Spaces* has succeeded in this enrichment.

The exhibitions may not always be very well publicised or entirely successful, but it is their continuing presence which is to be valued. The serendipity of happening across an unexpected trove of art is a delighting experience, a unique feature of *Changing Spaces* that makes it well worth keeping an eye on.

CURRENT SPACES

Grafton Centre

A pop-up gallery featuring a collaboration of artists from Cambridge School of Art. From Thursday 18th there will be a Masters printmaking show.

5-7 Sussex Street

A window exhibition featuring paintings by John Routledge.

38 Regent Street

A window exhibition at 38 Regent Street of A-Level textile projects from Leys School.

For more information on current/past/future exhibitions go to changing-spaces.org.

Branding our writers

As we approach authors with increasingly specific expectations, **Alice Boughton** finds a danger in our urge to categorise

On a recent visit to Waterstones, I was affronted not only by the usual hundred copies of the latest craze book, but by a shelf of twenty other near identical texts. A banner informed me that if I had liked the original book, I would also enjoy the similarly-coloured, similarly-titled spin-offs around it. Ten minutes of browsing revealed most of these suggestions to be either follow-ons of the same book, or interchangeable members of the same fad sub-genre.

Perhaps this is hardly surprising: the need for repetition can be seen in the prolific number of sequels which dominate our shelves, guaranteeing the same characters undergoing the same escapades. A writer's name, and indeed now his or her photograph, becomes synonymous with one particular mode of writing. The result is a stagnation in stylistic or conceptual decisions. Authors are forced to epitomise a particular mode or set of ideas – to break out of this image, created often by extensive and expensive publicity, can be challenging.

Take the anticipation surrounding the release of J. K. Rowling's first adult novel. We have seen both excitement and scepticism at the attempt of this author, who has defined young adult fiction, to create a politicised, adult social commentary. Author Joanna Penn, creator of 'The Creative Penn' website, has herself stressed the stifling effect of authorial branding. Problems are particularly prevalent amongst unestablished writers, who feel especially strong financial and social pressures to continue satisfying their initial market.

Whilst this difficulty is not a particularly novel concept, the expansion of social media and television is now encouraging us to attach these brands to the authors themselves: to make them a personality

rather than an intellectual mind. I am able to 'like' my favourite authors on social networks – in doing so, I am not simply identifying them as representative of a type of writing, but using this branding to try to summarise my own interests to my peers. As such, I wear the image of the author like a clothing label to make my own statement. Even Shakespeare, who reputedly utilised every major plot possible, must now be categorised, his works compartmentalised into neat genres which allow us to anticipate the ending before the play has even begun. In our society, so accustomed

'Our interest is diverted towards the author as a social being, away from the texts themselves'

to instant gratification, fuelled by fast speed internet and one line Twitter tags, we feel compelled to label even our art; to 'brand' our authors as we do our clothes. We expect the same consistency of material as we would from a yearly Jack Wills catalogue.

Not only does such a cult idolisation expect a consistency of produce on the part of the writer – in order for my public declaration to succeed in defining my own personality – but the author's use of social media also fabricates a supposed social tie between reader and creator. Once I am able to 'friend' a writer, and to view on

Twitter when they eat breakfast or visit the dentist (information which cult-producing writers like E. L. James are so determined to share), the way that I view their work will surely change. My interest is diverted towards their lives as social beings rather than the texts themselves.

Whilst interesting discussions of an author's personal opinions can be inspiring (the BBC's 'My Life in Books' is a lovely way to explore such intricacies), an overload of trivial information actually encourages us to take them less seriously.

They ask us to engage on an everyday, social level, instead of an intellectual one. Rather than actually giving the impression that their literature is of everyday importance, they simply remind us that their everyday activities are of none. We expect interviews in which authors reveal the secrets of their inspiration and their empathies with their characters, and they are quizzed about the events of their own lives which prompted their book.

This expectation alters the way that we see their art; we expect to understand it in terms of the author, and to be able to instantly identify what these terms are, rather than engaging with the work with our own ideas, and for our own ends.

In turning authors into our 'friends', and their works into semi-biographical, neatly explained accounts, we ask their art not to challenge us, but rather to keep us precisely within our comfort zones.



Rowling: breaking out of the teenage brand

Edward Johnson is disappointed by the chart-storming band's lack of progression



Mumford & Sons
Babel

● If 'Babel' suggests division and confusion – a cacophony of competing voices – then it's a misleading title for the new Mumford & Sons album.

Listeners will find no musical upheaval or experimentation here. Their latest offering is essentially a refined version of their debut, 'Sigh No More'. The glorious chaos promised by the title is sadly absent. Admirers of their first album will certainly enjoy this new collection of songs but those who value progression and innovation will be disappointed.

The banjo-plucking and stomping drums that characterised their first record return in full force. Mumford & Sons are clearly aware of what made their debut so successful: those dramatic pauses and rousing outros that proved so popular on *Sigh No More* are commonplace in *Babel*.

An acoustic guitar and a lone voice will suddenly be joined by banjo, brass and strings to create a stirring finale. Quite simply, they have mastered this formula. Small variations in this well-tested pattern allow the band to play with expectation; in 'Not With Haste' they move into a half-time breakdown just when fans will expect one of their signature bombastic climaxes.

But as with any musical formula, repetition reduces its power. The album's twelve tracks soon become indistinguishable. The biblical imagery that dominates the lyrics quickly becomes tiresome and only briefly comes alive on the track 'Broken Crown' ('Now in this twilight / How dare you speak of grace') when Marcus' vocals show their potential ferocity.

However, aside from the occasional moment, *Babel* is all sound and no fury. It's an album that clamours for nothing. One feels this all the more strongly because of the link between

folk music and political agitation. There's no anger at injustice here – just a faux-bucolic atmosphere and an abundance of clichés: "Because I know my weakness, know my choice / But I believe in grace and choice."

The final track 'Not with Haste' finishes on a moment of resolution: "And I will love with urgency / But not with hate". Unfortunately, this finale lacks any sort of impact. 'Babel' is a record devoid of urgency.

Musically, it's the product of a band that is quite happy to repeat what they've already accomplished. The concluding song may close the album's narrative neatly, but it brings to an end a story that lacks emotion. There is no desire to evolve, there is no disorder to rectify, there is no desperation in *Babel*.

'There is no desire to evolve, no disorder to rectify, no desperation'

The lyrical imagery focuses on reconstruction, but the album itself appears to oppose this very sentiment: it seems that Mumford & Sons don't feel that anything needs mending. Perhaps, in their eyes, nothing was ever broken.

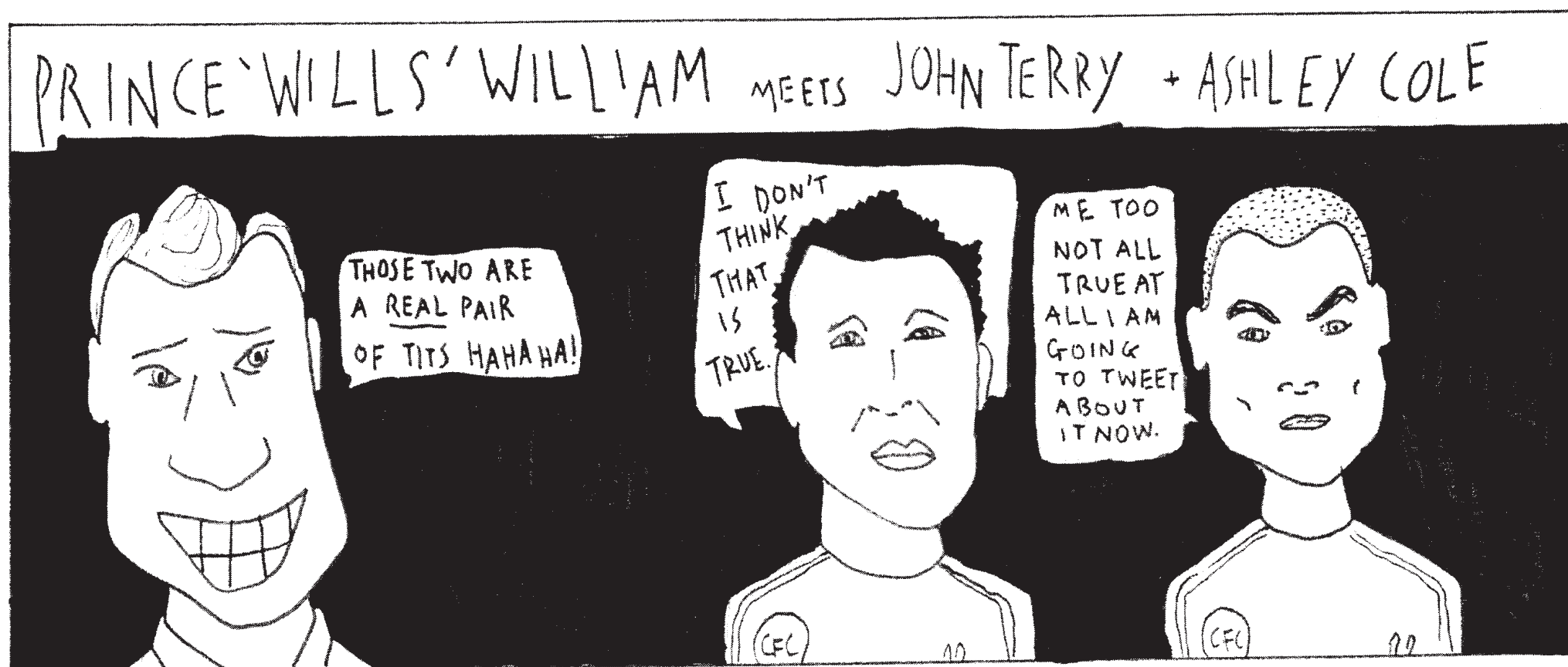
But what's wrong with making an album that one knows their fans will enjoy? After all, giving pleasure to the listener is surely what it's all about? Any album has to perform a difficult balancing act: pleasing existing fans whilst also displaying development.

Unfortunately, *Babel* feels stagnant. It's hard to see where Mumford & Sons can go from here – they have the capacity to create a stirring finale and can time a powerful pause perfectly, but how far can they take this?

The use of tracks from *Sigh No More* on adverts hasn't helped – we've become more or less immune due to constant exposure. Development is needed and hopefully their third album will bring this.

● Available now, Island Records.

THE COMIC LEWIS WYN



Musical Therapy: Sharon Van Etten

Rory Williamson talks to Brooklyn singer-songwriter Sharon Van Etten, currently touring her new record *Tramp*, about musical development, acknowledging darkness and moving on from it through music

Goofy" was never a word I expected to use in describing Brooklyn singer-songwriter Sharon Van Etten; yet here she is, laughing off a catastrophe involving a lot of melted butter in her tour van and claiming, "I'm actually a really happy, goofy person in real life. Sometimes people forget that part: I'm singing these songs from the perspective of a particular moment, but in reality I'm this goofball."

Her live performances bear out her claim: in between the weighty, melancholic songs for which she has been justly lauded, Van Etten peppers her set with hilarious tour stories and even winning impersonations (her Tom Cruise, as it turns out, is spot on). "I'm not this dark, brooding goth or anything." After any time in her company, this becomes very clear.

While this lightness of touch does come as a surprise, it's undeniable that her latest release, *Tramp*, saw a broadening in both emotional and sonic palettes. The transition from the introspective, hushed folk of her debut album *Because I Was In Love* to the full, varied arrangements on *Tramp* was, she says, a natural progression. "I really think my personal life has paralleled my career a lot:

"A really goofy person in real life": Sharon Van Etten



starting out with an ex who really wasn't supportive of my music, and going into relationships in which people were much more supportive than I was used to. It's been both a progression as a person and in music: my confidence level has improved since I started writing, but also in terms of my life, the content I'm writing about isn't so sad anymore. I'm allowing myself to feel other emotions that I wasn't really doing before."

This increased confidence is everywhere in evidence in her latest work, with part of her aim being "to show that I can write about all these other things, I can play these other instruments, I have more than one emotion."

This narrative of personal and musical development even extends to her live set: "we try to do a kind of autobiographical set, where we play old songs in amongst the new to create a more interesting dynamic."

The larger band she now plays with have also

opened up different avenues for emotional expression: her recent increase in volume has been part of "allowing myself to be more aggressive. I started with more of a whisper and now I'm not afraid to shout, just to be loud. It's a different form of catharsis."

'I started with more of a whisper and now I'm not afraid to shout'

This increase in variety and confidence was aided by a rotating cast of collaborators: The National's Aaron Dessner produced the record, whilst she enlisted friends including Julianna Barwick and Beirut's Zach Condon to lend their voices to various tracks. Though she still writes "from a very closed environment," Van Etten now leaves her songs "a lot more open, rather than having something in mind when I go into the studio."

"What I learned from writing on this last record with Aaron is that, when you leave people to their own devices because you respect what they do, and let them run wild on the songs and show their own strengths, it will help the songs become new."

Diversity is one of *Tramp*'s primary strengths, one that isn't solely down to Van Etten's collaborators. The title alludes to the fact that she essentially had no fixed home for the year during which it was recorded; working with Dessner meant the clashing of "crazy schedules," and the "only constant" became "going back to the studio. That was our home."

As a result, "each song was written

in a different little world." Songwriting, then, seems to be a natural part of her life, an outpouring from the "little world" inhabited at particular moments. Indeed, she was unaware of a move away from the more insularly personal lyrics of previous records: "I'm not the kind of person who sits down and writes a record yet; I write as I go and then I find songs that make sense together."

One connective thread is writing as a therapeutic exercise: "I write when I'm going through a really hard time, because I don't know how to understand it yet."

Her focus is not simply confessional, though; it's more hopeful than that, driven by progression and learning from experience rather than wallowing. With time and repeated live performances, she says, comes growth: "I didn't know at the time that the songs weren't just about me, but I write all the time about friends, family about other things outside romance."

"I definitely reanalyse the situation every time I sing the song, and I'm in a different mindset every time I perform them. I'm still learning from songs that I wrote years ago, still getting to understand what they mean and how they affect me. It took me a couple of years to realise one of my older songs is about my parents – I'm just not always aware at the time."

Music, then, can be a way of "writing about a negative situation and getting out of it. It's important to feel sadness and acknowledge it, but also to move on from there."

This resolution can be heard on songs like 'Love More', from her second album *Epic*: through the lyrics, suffering from an unstable



and mentally abusive relationship becomes a means toward increased strength and positivity.

Another element of the past she continues to acknowledge and learn from is her DIY beginnings as an artist: though the days of self-recorded CDs with hand-written lyrics may be long gone, it's important to Van Etten to remember "how organically things really happened for me. I don't want to lose sight of that. Things are starting to get a little crazier than I had anticipated, and so it's really grounding to remind yourself that it all started because people cared about your music and who you were."

What might have seemed like insularity becomes communal in Van Etten's hands; the personal becomes a means not only of connection but also of growth and movement beyond the isolated self.

"It was all about connecting with people, having a conversation and creating intimacy. No matter how I write or where I am, I have to remember that."

THIS WEEK ONLINE

Hannah Wilkinson discusses the craze of retromania, from Instagram to Steampunk...

And this is when we went cycling in France..." I peer over at the iPhone. Courtesy of her favourite app, Instagram, my friend and her boyfriend stare back up at me from behind a yellow filter.

"When did you go, 1967?"

"Last Tuesday."

I knew that. I was being facetious. Starting life as a humble social networking site in 2010, Instagram has now blossomed into a huge phenomenon, with 100 million users. If Retromania looks at the world through rose-tinted spectacles, Mark Zuckerberg, new owner of the company, just bought the lenses.

I should be exactly the customer they're looking for, snapping away like it's 1939. After all, I spent much of my childhood obsessed with the idea of being evacuated to some idyllic village to have twee, vintage adventures, ration book in hand. But now that there's an app that can make my photos look like that's what I spent my day doing, suddenly I'm not so keen. Recent incursions of Retromania into modern life make me deeply uncomfortable.

Read the rest at www.varsity.co.uk

Marianne Brooker is seriously underwhelmed by J.K. Rowling's new novel



The Casual Vacancy
J.K. Rowling

● For me, J. K. Rowling embodies a memory of wizardry past; I read the first four Harry Potter books as a child and then lost interest a little.

While this is probably a damning confession, I imagined this would make for

a fair reading of *The Casual Vacancy*. However, as I ploughed through the five hundred and three page tome, I realised that the novel is lacking in much more than magic.

The book is a very strange manifestation of the freedom that Harry Potter has bought Rowling. She is a self-confessed 'moral writer', although her latest work is far from the 'retelling of the Communist Manifesto' that it has been dubbed by The Telegraph.

Had it been, it might have had more to offer, by being more provocative or at least a little more profound. This state-of-England novel is a confused one: it's been likened to a nineteenth century pastoral, a murder mystery, political polemic, dark teen fiction. Rowling never quite seems sure of what she's writing or who she's writing for.

For all that it touches on a critique of a disenchanted modernity, the work as a whole is a muddle. This story of a sleepy English town and a neighbouring council estate is a sturdy fortress of cliché

and pretension; there is little character development, and what there is could be written by anyone else in touch with modern stereotypes.

What makes it 'adult fiction' is the incessant, often unrealistic swearing, the rough sex, the heroin, the relentless nastiness and the occasional use of words like 'obstreperous'. While Rowling seems eager to explore important social and political issues, the writing is often hard to reconcile with these weighty ambitions.

Between these two covers lies almost everything that is wrong with humanity, yet it offers no meaning, no explanation or motivation, and no real point. Rowling's working title was 'Responsibility', and while I'm glad she opted for

'Sadly, the novel is more grey comedy than it is black, more Eastenders than tragedy'

something a little less self-righteous, this idea and all the prejudices it embodies haunt the book.

Everyone here has their agenda: the over-burdened social worker, the stuffy middle classes, the Indians, the child-beaters, the teaching staff and the misunderstood teenagers.

Sadly, they are all stiflingly

predictable and, at least in their execution, banal. Without spoiling the ending, I persevered hoping that it was here that I would find the method and that loose ends would be satisfactorily tied up; perhaps here the violent actions and dubious writing would culminate in something good. It didn't.

Rowling has crammed too much into one novel and as a result, she has lost any sense of individuality or purpose. The novel switches quickly from one character to another or from one house to another, creating a style which has the potential to broaden the scope of a

novel, but here creates a strange kind of claustrophobia.

Changes of perspective are explicitly marked by italics or



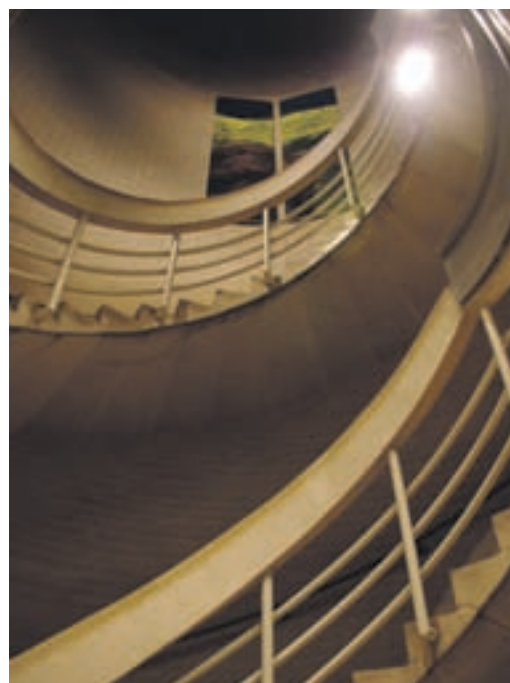
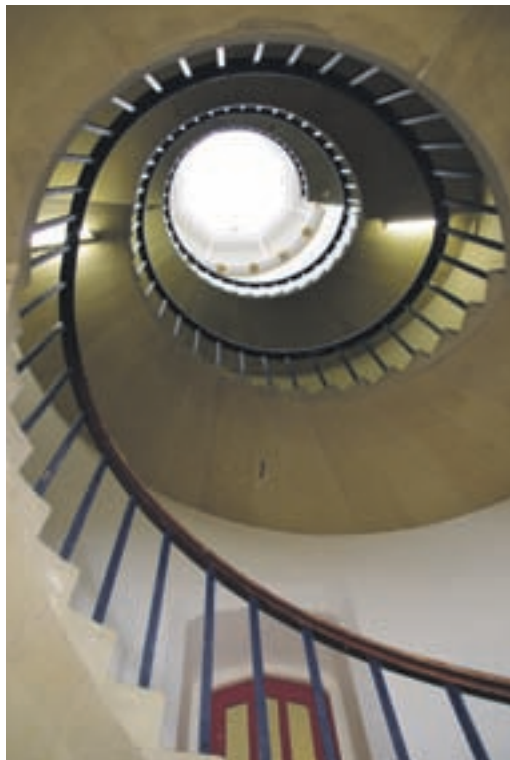
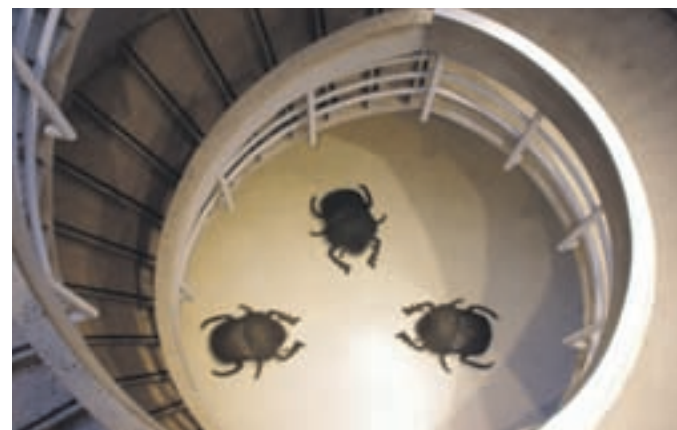
parentheses or, at worst, by inconsistent dialect; there is no subtlety, no mystery, and, despite often terrifying content, the novel is more grey comedy than it is black, more Eastenders than tragedy.

The over-arching narrative is not the "frilly tablecloth of polite fiction" woven by the characters in their own lives, but nor is it hard hitting, tender or even particularly interesting. We know that drug addicts and rape victims live horrendous lives; we know that villages can be insular, gossip-ridden, that their inhabitants can be frustrated and repressed; we know that local politics can be more vicious and selfish than Cabinet meetings.

Rowling's latest book does nothing but regurgitate these snippets which literature has taken for granted for years. At its best, the book is commercial fiction that will sell. While it poses questions when it has no real desire to answer them, it is certainly a good yarn in parts.

However, at its worst, it merely props up the hardened and dangerous perspectives one hopes that Rowling was attempting to break down. It feels as though she just enjoys writing about bad things and their bad repercussions, with no real willingness to challenge or change the status quo. After five hundred and three pages, *The Casual Vacancy* becomes exactly that: flippant and empty.

● Little Brown Book Group, £20.00



Staircases

Top to bottom, L to R: Annabel Crowther, Clare Cotterill, Clare Cotterill, June Tong, Clare Cotterill, Clare Cotterill, Clare Cotterill

BUSY DOING NOTHING

CLAIRE HEALY

Get involved!" Two words to strike fear in the hearts of the perennially idle everywhere – but perhaps especially those of us in Cambridge. Last week I ventured into the unknown landscape of the Freshers Fair, battling off societies who were desperate for me to "get involved", only for me to balk under the pressure and opt to get some pizza instead. It was too much too soon, and with so little talent to go on, I was just going to have to find a smaller stage on which to shine.

How about the JCR? The Junior Combination Room is not just a room, but rather the board of students who represent our views at college and university level. If you want to make a stand around here, you're going to have to approach a few of these fleece-wearing folks first. I however have never been tempted to "get involved" with our JCR, for a number of reasons: reasons we can probably place under a general header of "trust issues." The JCR are here to help. Would you trust somebody who legitimately circulates that kind of sentiment? We need only glance at the facts and figures of CUSU's recent condom scheme to feel a little worried. Better to be busy doing something than busy doing nothing, but I'm not sure that approaching my final year with the mentality of a wanton rabbit is really the answer.

Back to the JCR, then, and between free biscuits, attack alarms and sanitary towels, I'm wholly unconvinced. But as I found myself on the wrong side of a JCR treasurer in a Superhero costume last Tuesday, I had to concede that maybe the JCR are only human after all. I love bops. There ain't nothing wrong with a little bump and grind (as the 100 free condoms in your pigeonhole will demonstrate) and there ain't nothing wrong with a little bop and grind, either. I say this with all the youthful abandon of a shiny-nosed fresher because I have never actually paid for the privilege. Whether it was through secret underground passages, hiding under the pool table or just battling JCR members out of my goddamn way, my three pounds has remained firmly in my pocket.

Having dismissed the rumoured 'security clampdown' as just another untrustworthy ruse, I was surprised to find my usual path blocked. A hop, skip and a quick "is that a fresher making off with your societies budget?" was all it took. My triumph was shortlived, as somewhere between Gangnam Style and Beyoncé I felt two taps on my shoulder. "Excuse me, but you haven't paid for the bop." My assertion that there were others who hadn't paid was futile: "Yes, but I don't know them, and I do know you." Punished for my popularity! Penalized for being a woman of the people! It would appear I have already been inadvertently "getting involved" with our JCR without even realising it. I emerge from Week 2 three pounds poorer, then, but certainly a little wiser. The JCR: they get you in the end.

Now we've taken those first intrepid steps up the staircase of term, who knows what lies around the corner? With deadline pests to contend with, things could spiral out of control.

Every week, Varsity will feature a variety of pictures of architecture from around Cambridge. Want to see your work in the paper? Next week's theme is 'bridges'; email your contributions to magazine@varsity.co.uk!

Harry Jackson admires a new science-fiction film that balances its deeply moral message with high-quality storytelling and plenty of adrenaline-fuelled action



Looper
Rian Johnson

● Much like most time-travelling science-fiction dramas, whether it be the recent Duncan Jones-directed *Source Code* or even the mindbreaking *Lost* episode 'The Constant' this film's plot is really rather complex. Set in the near-future, it involves Joseph Gordon-Levitt being tasked with executing his future self (Bruce Willis) who is sent back in time from the future by the mob. His future self escapes and seeks to pre-emptively kill the person who will eventually be responsible for the murder of his wife, while Gordon-Levitt waits for him to come to the

rural home of a strange and complicated mother and son.

Whether or not the plot bends to easy summary, this story is told exceptionally well on the screen. It treats its audience with respect and trust while eschewing the long-winded expositions found in recent high-concept films by diving straight into the business of good, immersive storytelling. The narrative unfolds with great pace and presents the viewer with a large number of unexpected, but purposeful, surprises. Despite dragging ever so slightly around its third quarter, this is more than excusable given that this section introduces much of the thematic weight of the picture and lends the film its moral complexity.

At its core, this is a deeply moral film, albeit with a fair whack of incidental excitement. There is very little chance of its violence, which is unquestionably presented in an aestheticised manner,

being mistaken as celebratory.

For director Rian Johnson, violence lies at the heart of our society. It's a mechanism we are forced to use to protect ourselves, our property and our

'This is a deeply moral film, albeit with a fair whack of incidental excitement'

loved ones. It has tainted society so deeply that the invention of time travel – an invention with obvious potential to do good – merely creates another means of committing murder.

As such, Johnson must be commended for not merely wallowing in the observation that violence is widespread and negative. Instead, he actually attacks the issue by offering ideas of agency and personal responsibility as

a solution. While it is a rather unhip film in this regard that takes itself more seriously than the Johnson's widely-loved debut *Brick*, the conclusion is nonetheless incredibly satisfying. On all levels, the film lends itself to easy recommendation, as a weighty and sophisticated piece of storytelling that is well performed throughout.

Joseph Gordon-Levitt, in particular, gives an exceptionally fine performance that conveys the emotional development of his character despite working under heavy make-up.

The near future is convincingly rendered by Steve Yedlin's competent cinematography and the production design is both believably futuristic and familiar. Its plot probably has more holes than a sieve – all time-travelling stories do – but it serves its purpose as a framework for providing a compelling treatment of violence.

● Now showing at Cambridge Vue

Jim Ross finds this adaptation of Stephen Chbosky's novel surprisingly enjoyable, fresh and sincere



The Perks of Being A Wallflower
Channel 4

● *The Perks Of Being A Wallflower* feels very familiar. You could be forgiven for thinking this was because of stock teen characters and their predictable traits, but that would be unfair to this darkly sincere film. Whilst Stephen Chbosky's adaptation of his own novel has some issues, it feels

familiar because he has captured a great deal of the universal adolescent experience in a character-driven film. Logan Lerman stars as Charlie, an emotionally troubled youngster who

'Captures the universal adolescent experience in a character-driven film'

has just begun high school in the early 1990s. To get through his testing days as classic outsider and wallflower of the title, he writes unsent letters to a 'friend' as he navigates the adolescent

greenhouse in the wake of a deeply traumatic summer (for reasons not made explicit to begin with, at the very least).

However, he finds companionship in final year half-siblings Sam (Emma Watson) and Patrick (Ezra Miller), joining their gang of misfit friends, (think one step up from *Inbetweeners*). This helps him to blossom socially, but brings it own challenges – not least that of containing his feelings for the transfixing Sam. It feels like we've seen a lot of these characters before, but



the young leads all pull them off with aplomb and freshness. A standout is Ezra Miller, a young man destined

'That special type of young woman you only seem to encounter in independent cinema'

for critical acclaim. Following up his simply astounding performance in *We Need To Talk About Kevin*, Miller does an excellent job portraying the engaging mix of confident wisdom and personal insecurity in the extroverted Patrick. Much is down to Chbosky's writing as well, of course, but in the wrong hands the character could easily have slipped into caricature. However, for the

film as whole, much rests on the dynamic between Charlie and Sam. In this regard, Logan Lerman's performance is superb in selling his character's transfixion with the most thinly written character; Emma Watson's Sam.

Sam is that special type of young woman you only seem to encounter in independent American cinema. She loves The Smiths, and openly talks about how cool they are (something I maintain folks like me shouldn't do until they are at least 23).

She loves Bowie's 'Heroes' intuitively (quite how this group of youngsters born, presumably, in the late 1970s know Morrissey but not Bowie is a minor quibble). She buys typewriters for guys she likes. We've listened to this broken (vintage vinyl) record before.

Fortunately, Watson shows some potential as an actress beyond Hogwarts, and manages to sell this archetype with a confident but humble performance, which makes us understand why the younger Charlie could become so enamoured.



The narrative moves along well, even if it does perhaps meander around the middle in excessive deference to the book. Although it requires a third-act acceleration when examining the reason for Charlie's fragile mental state, the balance of the personal character story and a more relatable one on the general adolescent experience is admirable. At once, the film captures the world-ending minutiae, the transient feeling of a social circle, and the undefined future as a source of both boundless optimism and crushing anxiety.

● Now showing at Cambridge Vue and Arts Picturehouse, multiple showings per day, call 0871 902 5720.

Jonathan Booth finds lots to laugh at in Fresh Meat – but does it really manage to represent the regimens of student life?



Fresh Meat
Channel 4

● The first series of *Fresh Meat* was a little hard to get into this time last year, at least for me. A fresher watching a bunch of freshers being comically awkward was a little too meta in those mysterious times. With both myself and the series comfortably

in our second years, the show's light entertainment is easier to watch; not groundbreaking stuff exactly, nor anything special for a student audience, but one of the few decent British sitcoms on television right now. Written by 30-something-year-olds, largely for 30-something-year-olds,

it is unsurprising that wistful critics cooed over the first series. The whole show reeks of reminiscence: from peculiar phallic graffiti to awkward morning-after conversation, it hardly makes for escapist viewing for current students between bouts of Cindies and desperate essay deadlines.

Nevertheless, the *raison d'être* is in the script. Written by Jesse Armstrong and Sam Bain, the creators of *Peep Show*, there are so many beautiful one-liners it's hard not to fall in love.

What *Peep Show* did, though, was to nail the comedy, tragedy and above all inanity of post-university, pre-middle age life. Above and beyond the awkward scenes and fantastic dialogue, there isn't the same sense that Armstrong and Bain have captured student life in *Fresh Meat*. Sure, it avoids the *Skins*-treatment of sex and drugs, but there is an all too

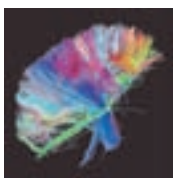
self-conscious tinge to proceedings that mean it's hard to care about what happens to the characters. Whilst characters like JP, the condescendingly brilliant 'posh one' played by Jack Whitehall, are almost too familiar to Cambridge students, the rest are faux-lovable cardboard cutouts.

Perhaps it's expecting too much to hope for a sitcom which captures the self-seeking loneliness that goes with being a student, but it still feels like there is a massive gap in the market that *Fresh Meat* could have filled.

Watching student life through the eyes of nostalgic graduates at least teaches us one thing: you don't learn any grand life lessons at university, and ultimately an hour's laughter is worth its weight in gold. For that alone, I'll be tuning in next week.

● Channel 4, Tuesday, 10pm, also available on 4oD

James Hansen takes on Muse's latest schizophrenic LP and commends them for their bravery, despite a few misfires



Muse
The 2nd Law

● About 55 seconds into 'Animals', Matt Bellamy sings an insidious boardroom mantra: "Analyse... Advertise... Expand..." *The 2nd Law*, though, follows this trend: a paralysing dubstep trailer detailing

thermodynamics followed by what is an unmistakable widening of Muse's already Ulysses-esque horizons.

Retention of bombast and the introduction of new musical energies (thus preventing the entropy that *The 2nd Law* discusses) would be a fitting showcase for Matt Bellamy, Chris Wolstenhome and Dom Howard's unquestionable talents, proven as it is on few tracks.

'Panic Station' carries an undeniably Flea-like groove, channelling the Chillis at their bass-slapping, rapturous

best with Bellamy's vocal flourishes and a horn section completing a glorious, exuberant demonstration of

'There are fanfares of true inspiration, and the sheer magnificence and scale is sublime'

just what Muse can do on form.

'Madness' is a beautiful crescendo of acceptance of love's irrationality, as Bellamy croons that he has "finally realised what you mean" over an electronic bass dub before giving way to a linear, jerky guitar solo, airy backing vocals and a final, desperate wail loaded with genuine yearning.

This is without doubt a swelling, pulsating album at its finest points, channelling the rugged grandeur of the sublime and almost makes up for Muse's lazy headbangs to Led Zeppelin (Muse don't do nods) on the James Bond-esque 'Supremacy.'

These moments do not cover for the frankly boring middle section of the album: a potent example of Muse resting on their admittedly titanic laurels. These are songs devoid of development and nuance, qualities which Muse so frequently display on a grandiose scale. The pair of closing tracks are more successful experiments than the 'Exogenesis' denouement to *The Resistance*, with that dub drop in the former and a bell-like piano motif in the latter allowing Bellamy to tick off those final two boxes on his genre-bending clipboard.

The 2nd Law does prove that Muse can resist musical entropy: there are fanfares of true inspiration, and the sheer magnificence and scale is sublime. But, considering that the sheer amplitude of the ambition here invites insufficient attention to detail, it is hard to suggest that Muse will never bow to musical entropy without revisiting what has made them the force that they are.

● Available now; Warner Bros, £14

Eurydice Paris-Falcon

Hello once again, my friends and foes (as Andy Warhol probably once said, making enemies shows that you dress well). So freshers' week is over and term has begun *in proprietas*, as they say in the Classics faculty, and amidst the hangovers and comedowns (obviously I myself prefer only the finest of illegal substances. Everyone knows drugs make you look cool and alcohol makes you look like a virgin or a football fan) your inboxes and timetables will be filling up with essay deadlines and canned precooked meat product from all the societies that you still haven't managed to leave the mailing lists of.

Obviously only post-grads are actually at Cambridge to focus on their degrees rather than develop glamorous sleep habits and make friends with people who know other people you want people who look at your Facebook profile to think you're friends with, so the key thing to focus on at this point in the term is deciding which societies to honour with your precious time.

I myself am very busy most of the time: I barely have time to think about thinking. Things to do, people to see, things to do in a prominent way that means people can see me doing them.

As I've said before, politics is really just an excuse for un-trust-fund worthy people in questionable sheepskin coats to complain about Startrite centres being closed down or something, but the whole large society idea is applicable to Cambridge: some societies are bigger than others (apologies if I've lost some of you here with my

advanced mental gymnastics: I didn't get pooled, if you know what I mean. Which you might not, if you're not the sharpest tool in the Churchillian shed).

The best way to decide which *curriculum extrararis* activities to attend with a blasé attitude and a slight smirk that suggests to the casual observer that you're on a higher plane is wikipediaing the famous alumni that used to saunter through the Cantabrigian cobbles in Russell and Bromley brogues that you yourself would like to follow in the hoof prints of.

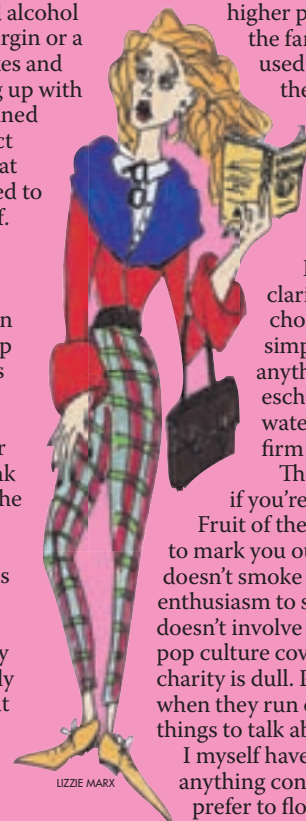
If this isn't enough to clarify what the thinking choice of society is, simply avoid joining anything. In particular, eschew the dangerous waters of sport with a firm hand.

The stash is only good if you're a Blue: wearing Fruit of the Loom serves only to mark you out as someone who doesn't smoke and commits with enthusiasm to something that doesn't involve having an amusing pop culture cover photo. Similarly, charity is dull. People only join RAG when they run out of interesting things to talk about.

I myself have yet to commit to anything concrete, society-wise: I prefer to float in the ether of the extracurricular like titillating tumbleweed.

If in doubt, it's best to follow my example and remember that it's better to socialise than join a society: the true *socialiste* (if you'll excuse my French) is one who devotes time to careful cultivation of personal charm, not Amnesty International.

Yawn.



The dawn of a new museum era

Phoebe Lindsley is intrigued by the Tate Modern's newest addition, The Tanks

At the beginning of May, Chris Dercon, Director of the Tate Modern, spoke at the Union, offering his vision of the art gallery's future. He spoke of the development of his own museum and the opening under his tenure of The Tanks at Tate Modern. This new exhibition space caters to the specific needs of performance, video, and sound art; a space for any art that you might label alternative, avant-garde or unconventional.

The Tanks were opened to the public on July 18th, and are the first in a line of ambitious new extensions at Tate Modern. So called because they were originally oil tanks in Bankside Power Station, you take a sharp right turn from the Turbine Hall and you're in front of The Tanks. The space has a comfortable, trendy-urban-warehouse-pop-up-boutique aesthetic without looking tired. Choosing to project titling and info onto the concrete surfaces is appropriate to the space, certainly better than print.

Yes, these are dark galleries. You'll inevitably stumble through it, tripping over snaking wires, manoeuvring around piles of people watching on the floor. There are no obvious labels: of course, it would be too dark to read them, leaving you with just the work of art to look at; otherwise you must huddle about the explanatory signs of the entrance, distant from the works themselves. The entire Tanks area stands in marked dark contrast to the white galleries above it, with the neutral Turbine Hall mediating the space between them.

The Tanks fill a space in the museum left by the closure of the Unilever series. This hugely successful changing display of videos, slides, sculptures and sunflower seeds inside the enormous vacuum of the Turbine Hall was one of the most memorable and exciting moments in a Tate Modern visit. The series culminated with a performance piece by Tino



US RHODES, TATE MODERN

Sehgal consisting of 'live encounters' between people walking up, down and through the space – just the kind of The Tanks: Art in Action aims to display on a permanent basis.

The fact that many of the pieces within The Tanks, namely those belonging to the permanent collection, were created during the 70s and 80s are a reminder that performance art, video art and sound art are hardly new phenomena. The expansion and diversification of the types of media used to create works of art is decidedly twentieth century. Why did we have to wait until the second decade of the 21st century for a national, mainstream museum to open a space built for this kind of art? Were they waiting for the British public to finally accept art made without paint or canvas? Alternatively, could it suggest that Tate Modern is not really doing anything groundbreaking? It's late. It's past it. It's already passé. Are The Tanks are

over before they have even begun? Perhaps they shouldn't be making any distinction at all, mixing all different media together and allowing the public to order it all in their own minds,

The Tanks raise many questions about the display of art, the relation of the work of art to the space it is viewed in and the subsequent experience of the audience. The decision to mark out these galleries specifically for performance, video and sound art and to make them so different to the rest of the museum draws attention to the experience of seeing art in a way that is too often forgotten. The Tanks do well to draw your attention to it. A gallery manipulates and directs the viewer's eye as much as the supermarket does: leaving expensive items at eye level, making cheaper ones harder to find.

Many of the pieces that the tanks aim to show in changing displays are meant to be ephemeral, temporary or spontaneous. If the art is in the action

you cannot put it into a gallery to be reenacted again and again. A lot of performance art gains its excitement, danger and value from the unexpected places it is performed in. Perhaps having a dedicated space for this kind of work sanitises it, making it less natural and more forced. In a purpose built space some works of art flounder.

The Tanks at Tate Modern do have heaps of good things going, despite these criticisms. The variety that The Tanks provides – getting you outside the bloody White Cube – is refreshing. It is a good thing to have as many different ways of seeing art as possible. Best of all, this exhibition is not too big, too taxing or too confrontational. It is a fun, bitesize introduction into the long established world of 'alternative' art. It has certainly been missing from school trips on a wet Wednesday afternoon for far too long.

● *The Tanks are open daily at the Tate Modern, London*

“War: The Exile and The Rock Limpet”

A CLOSER LOOK AT ART

The Exile and The Rock Limpet' is a painting by JMW Turner, designed to be hung alongside companion piece, 'Peace: Burial at Sea'; it shows Napoleon – indeed, it was painted in the year his ashes returned to France – in exile on the island of St. Helena.

The lonely figure stands on the island, emphasising the disgrace of Napoleon's death – particularly poignant when compared to 'Peace'. The sister painting sees Turner's friend David Wilkie's dignified death depicted in a calm, cool palette – striking when compared to the violent reds and oranges of 'War'; in verses on the reverse of the canvas, Turner echoes the sentiment, calling the sunset a “sea of blood”. However, Turner does not fully demonise Turner, but merely suggests the futility of conflict, and the pointlessness of war. The two main titles of the paintings – 'War' and 'Peace' – are depicted as abstract concepts, summarised by colour, brushstroke and tone; no actual event or set place can be found within them.

When the exhibition was originally shown, contemporary critics criticised the pieces for their lack of finish and decorum: Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine dismissed 'War' as “a greater absurdity than ever”. Another critic described the depiction of Napoleon as “truly ridiculous”. However, in Modern Painters, Ruskin expressed his liking for “the glowing scarlet and gold of Napoleon and Slave Ship”.

Naomi Pallas

“The Exile and the Rock Limpet” is owned by the Tate, London

Jon Sanders checks out Kettle's Yard's latest offering, and discovers an alternate reality in the trappings of daily life

● Jim Ede, founder of Kettle's Yard, said that Winifred Nicholson “taught [him] much about the fusing of art and daily living”. Yet, as I wander through the new exhibition of Nicholson's paintings in Ede's gallery, I wonder what exactly 'daily living' refers to: the works are in no way realistic. They are not realistic – not because they depict fantasy – but because they seem created from entirely unfamiliar raw material. Not 'unfamiliar raw material' in a physical sense – the activity of

brush and paint is evident – but in that a more abstract raw material, Nicholson's thinking, is alien. The paintings are scenes of an alternate reality.

The exhibition puts this unfamiliar quality down to the 'Music of Colour', and Nicholson's construction of tones is certainly interesting: an apparent orange is upon inspection scarlet, flesh-pink and turquoise. But what is most intriguing about the paintings is their perspective – or lack thereof. Backgrounds are sometimes indeterminate (as in 'White Saxifrage'); other times they resolve after a few transformative seconds of inspection – as seen in the blue obelisk in 'Daffodils and Hyacinths in a Norman Window'. Sometimes lines and shapes lacking depth appear irreconcilable with burrowing perspective (subtly in 'Flowers' and more strikingly in 'Seascape') yet are ultimately not incoherent. These perspectival exercises are varying effective and disappointing across the exhibition.

Nicholson did not experiment in texture, and the exhibition testifies to this fact. Having said that, undoubtedly the single most arresting phenomenon in the paintings is one instance of textural audacity: Nicholson's works

are small, and so whilst stepping in closer to view 'Seascape' – simply to distinguish colours and lines – a rushing mass of paint rose like a wave in the corner of my eye. It is this arching confidence, and not 'music of colour', or surprising harmony of perspective, which is the painting's centre-piece.

What surrounds the minute wave of boldness is paintings which leave me feeling unsure. I am uncertain as to how to receive work so ostensibly familiar, but so undefinably strange. I want someone to explain to me that Nicholson was insane, or experienced an uncommon form of synaesthesia – anything that might explain her paintings' imperceptibly alien quality.

And as I leave, I find the oddity I have been missing: in a neglected niche of the gallery there is a large photograph of the artist looking frightened, anxious, as if I am a dangerous animal that has trespassed upon her woodland setting.

I feel that she has been watching me as I looked at her paintings, worried about what I might think, worried that she might be this creature's critical dinner.

● *'Winifred Nicholson: Music of Colour' runs at Kettle's Yard until 21st December*



KETTLE'S YARD, UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

“Daffodils and Hyacinths in a Norman Window”, Winifred Nicholson



TATE, 2011

“War: The Exile and the Rock Limpet”, Joseph Mallord William Turner, oil paint on canvas, exhibited 1842 with the lines:

*‘Ah! thy tent-formed shell is like
A soldier's nightly bivouac, alone
Amidst a sea of blood
but you can join your comrades’
— Fallacies of Hope*

STAGE DOOR

EMMA WILKINSON

Like me, Flintlock Theatre like silly. Flintlock is made up of recent graduates from the Guildford School of Acting, including two members who have since set up their own youth theatre school. They seriously know what they are doing, yet they can do it with a serious sense of fun. Their inaugural production was a four-man rendition of *The Government Inspector*, staged last month in a room above the popular student pub, The Jericho Tavern in Oxford. An incredible combination of group dance, gentle chaos and farcical movement meant that this unusual layout was utilized in a number of surprising, clever ways.

Peppered throughout this charming production were ingenious moments of audience involvement, onstage choreography specifically designed to ease costume changes and lovingly created short entertainment interludes. Far from distracting from the sense of the play, these additions helped to create an entirely coherent, playful piece. Particularly commendable was the use of audience members in cameo roles – wigs and cue cards were thrust at unwitting front-row viewers. This is exactly the kind of simple magic that could so easily liven up our own theatre scene. While Flintlock's show is just one example of fringe theatre pieces being put on nationwide, their performance seems to be a real indicator of what is possible if you throw yourself into a show creatively. In an age where almost no topic is too outrageous, the idea of constructing a piece of theatre – or indeed comedy – through the whimsical and daft often gets unduly overlooked. 'Silly' in its light-hearted sense doesn't have to be synonymous with simplistic or puerile. There are still plenty of barriers to be broken in the world of silliness. While the existence of much impressive, carefully-considered theatre in Cambridge can only be applauded, an increase in quirkier productions would be nonetheless welcome.

It would be unfair to suggest that no theatre in Cambridge attempts to innovate, but it could definitely go further. Maintaining such a near-professional standard of acting is clearly important, but the idea of theatre purely for ridiculous, uproarious fun should not be forgotten. Why not swap the ADC stage for a rampant production above a pub? Why not incorporate a serving of hot desserts into the show (Flintlock's fudge cake complemented the production particularly well)? The potent combination of remarkable talent, concentrated intelligence and accessible performance spaces that is so unique to Cambridge means that truly creative and outlandish theatre could readily be achieved. Whether it's directors' personal inhibitions, or a long-standing tradition of honourable – rather than eccentric – theatre that keeps Cambridge's programme relatively straight-laced, I'd like to see an occasional break from taking ourselves too seriously. It's time to let the silly out.

Emma is a Varsity theatre critic



Shakespeare's Kremlin

Daniel Fulvio on what the Bard can still tell us about Putin's Russia, and his new studio production of *Richard III*

Like many people in the West, I've become fascinated and appalled by the Russian president Vladimir Putin in much the same way that audiences of Shakespeare's *Richard III* are both charmed and horrified by its iconic protagonist.

Like Richard, Putin emerged to seize the crown after a period of destructive instability caused (in Putin's case) by his predecessor Boris Yeltsin's commitment to a classic 'shock therapy' transition to capitalism.

State privatisation and market reforms created some very wealthy winners (the oligarchs) and many impoverished losers, and the combination of rocketing price rises, government cutbacks and economic depression resulted in a standoff between the parliament and the president.

In an almost Shakespearean irony, Yeltsin ended up ordering the shelling of the very same parliament building from which he had led the resistance to the anti-Gorbachev plotters in 1991 (shades of Coriolanus marching on Rome at the head of the enemy Volscians?). By the end of Russia's first decade as capitalist economy, the country was in the kind of political and economic disarray that was an open invitation to any opportunist politician who could present themselves as a strong man, capable of restoring national pride and power. Putin, recognising "the tide in the affairs of men which taken at the flood leads on to fortune," seized his moment and, from the position of Yeltsin's deputy, and then acting president, won his first election in 2000.

His time in office has provoked huge amounts of comment in the West. To some, he is an incarnation of neo-Stalinism, the kind of leader who crushes opposition wherever it raises its head – whether that's in the form of Chechen separatists or

punk performance artists Pussy Riot, currently appealing their two-year jail sentences for performing an anti-Putin 'punk prayer' inside a Moscow cathedral. To these commentators, he is the kind of whimsical autocrat who would turn on a political opponent for nothing more than insufficiently agreeing with him (as Shakespeare's Richard orders Hastings's death for saying "If").

To others, he is the godfather at the top of a mafia state. In the same way that Shakespeare's Richard hires various murderers to sub-contract the

'We are not suggesting that we have the answers to any of these questions about who Putin really is'

political assassinations that will help him secure the throne, in the eyes of commentators such as *The Guardian's* former Moscow correspondent Luke Harding, Putin has eliminated and intimidated opponents using muscle supplied by the Federal Security Bureau (FSB), the new name for the KGB in which he spent 16 years climbing steadily to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, until he left on the second day of the '91 coup (by which time it was already clear it was doomed to failure).

Others still argue that the action-man image, regularly burnished by official photo portraits of him stripped to the waist, fishing and horse-riding, is all smoke and mirrors: this is a man who has resumed the presidency of a state which is politically, economically and militarily much weaker than it appears. Like Shakespeare's Richard, Putin was hungry for power, but seems to lack any real idea of what to do with it now he has it. By staging Shakespeare's Richard III in something

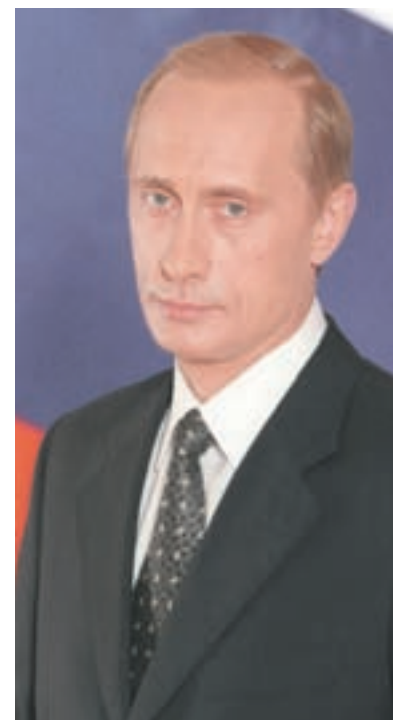
like contemporary Russia, we are not suggesting that we have the answers to any of these questions about who Putin really is. Nor are we arguing that the Russia of today is precisely like the England of the Wars of the Roses, let alone like Shakespeare's representation of that era.

However, the parallels are intriguing. The factional battles of the English court of the play are strikingly similar to the power struggles that gripped the post-Soviet Kremlin. Any number of the big players could have come out on top in either time or place. At the beginning of his post-KGB political career, Putin looked as unlikely as Richard of Gloucester to ascend the equivalent of the throne (although the crook-backed Richard, by his own admission "not shaped for sportive tricks," is unlikely to have regularly posed topless in his pursuit of power). And both effectively crowned themselves – Putin in the recent disputed presidential elections that some have suggested were less than fair. Both eras are steeped in blood. The brutal Chechen wars have caused the deaths of at least 25,000 Chechen civilians and 5,000 Russian soldiers, while the Wars of the Roses included the longest and bloodiest battle fought on English soil, the Battle of Towton in which 28,000 died so that Edward IV could claim the throne, until Richard plotted and murdered his way to the top. Beyond that, all we can do is raise some important questions about the nature of power, as seen through the double lens of Shakespeare's verse and Putin's court. And, with luck, shine a light on the oligarchs, many of whom have not only established homes and power bases for themselves in this country, but have also sent their children to be educated at elite universities such as ours.

● *Richard III runs at the Judith E. Wilson Drama Studio from 18-20 October*



Above: Richard III, Shakespeare's hunchbacked villain. Below: Vladimir Putin, Russia's own strong man



Um.
Corpus Playroom
★★★★★

well. Playing to a packed Corpus Playroom full of Cambridge students, he shyly assaulted them with a verbal whirlwind of terrible punchlines, hilarious imagery and dark humour which managed to tread the extremely frayed tightrope of funny above the spiked pit of being overly offensive.

Beginning with an apology – "This is it, there are no dancing monkeys" – Pope appeared on stage, slightly dishevelled, hunched over and playing on his status as a socially awkward introvert. Comparing himself to a grumpy old man but with none of the privileges that entails, such as "being racist in public", he continually rails against, well, everything. The classic political comedy topics of religion and class both, predictably, made an appearance, being accompanied by the Cambridge staples: tourists and posh people.

Some of the subjects chosen did somewhat smack of being so many fish in so many barrels, such as *The X Factor* (and in particular Simon Cowell's trousers) and Justin Bieber – "He's an embryo with a haircut" – but every single joke was delivered with panache and an infectious enthusiasm for life's

● Ben Pope's Um.
is a show that above all knows its target audience perfectly

idiosyncrasies. The act overflowed with an abundance of lovingly crafted imagery which had the audience in stitches, including such gems as likening posh people running down wildlife in the countryside at night to "*Water-ship Down* crossed with *The Wire*".

Much of Pope's comedy was clearly tailored to the Cambridge audience, contrasting mildly intellectual references to Plato and Alan Bennett with a tale of his one and only foray into Life, as well as taking advantage of the intimacy of the Corpus Playroom to get the entire audience to greet his mum, before eventually making several jokes at her expense.

A couple of fudged segues were recovered quickly enough, and appalling punchlines were followed up with apologies often funnier than the jokes themselves. Indeed, his entire performance was hallmarked by an apologetic, self-effacing stage presence which perfectly suited a young comedian doing his first solo gig. Pope's combination of dark humour, passionate political and satirical comedy, made this a stand-out stand-up act which was a joy to watch. This show ran only for a night, but Pope is appearing at Corpus for the rest of this week in *Faces*, as well as playing compère for the Corpus Smoker next week.

Tim Squirrel

Bartholomew Fair
ADC
★★★★★

Shakespeare? Not often at all. So this Marlowe Society performance of Ben Jonson's comedy brought with it high expectations. With 25 cast members, often all rollicking about on stage at once, director Harry Michell scores top marks for ambition. Unfortunately, ambition alone cannot save this Elizabethan comedy from being fundamentally unfunny.

And there really is nothing more painful to watch than unfunny comedy. Part of the problem is the limitation of Jonson's play. The man who famously declared Shakespeare "was not of an age but for all time" could not have the same said for himself. Despite being very long, nothing of any consequence happens. Actions are poorly motivated, so that a long comic sequence – about a pregnancy craving for roast pork requiring an irreligious visit to the titular fair – makes very little sense and elicits still fewer laughs. This

● How often do you see early modern drama on stage that is not

is despite the valiant efforts of the cast members. In this instance, Jennie King as Win is working her socks off, bawling and flailing, and generally looking as hormonally pregnant as is possible with her slim frame. Yet it's hard to feel any dramatic satisfaction when she gets her way. Fred Maynard's Troubleall runs around forbidding anything from happening without a warrant, even accidental loss, but these echoes of the nonsense of bureaucracy, are left to peter out as other, louder, characters burst on stage with uncertain accents and indiscriminate fistfights.

Jonson's language is dense and made denser by a general preference for volume over clarity. Gratefully

received exceptions to this are to be found in the soliloquys and asides of Freddy Sawyer's accomplished Overdo. When, he describes "a savage kick to the testes", it is far funnier than seeing someone actually wallop someone in the nuts. But if the latter sounds more amusing to you, by all means go spend a fiver and three hours of your life at the ADC main-show this week.

Rachel Stoplar



Freddie Sawyer as Justice Overdo

ALL PHOTOS: DAISY BARD



The girls from *Beard* – is calling them Bearded Ladies too obvious? – with a cat. (The cat has nothing to do with the show, apparently.)



The growth of a Beard

Tom Powell speaks to comedy duo Matty and Rosa about the experience of developing their Edinburgh sketch show

I guess by now Rosa Robson and Matilda Wnek should be a pretty fluent pair, but it's a little unnerving how smoothly they come across. Over the course of the interview, a clear pattern emerges – Rosa begins their answer, Matilda will interject and intensely, at vertiginous speed unpack the substance, and Rosa will sum it up with a joke and a smile. That their words are overlapping, endearing, and occasionally nonsensical, speaks volumes of a duo who aren't afraid to take silliness seriously.

I meet them on their return from the Edinburgh Fringe festival, where they performed *Beard*, their two woman, one pianist (an absent Stephen Bermingham) show. They're each adamant it's not like regular Cambridge sketch shows – “Beard has a very clear idea of its sense of humour, it's self-aware, playful, surreal” Matilda says. Structurally, it's different too: the sketches are spliced together with snippets from a TV channel called, surprisingly, *Beard*.

‘They can’t speak highly enough of the gift of the “autonomous critic” that getting bums on seats provides’

This is where Bermingham comes to the fore: Stephen is the voice of *Beard* TV. He's worked before with *The Scat Pack*, amongst many other vaguely theatrical ventures, and they see him as the rock of their show – an anchor at the back, staying seated and calm whilst they run themselves into exhaustion on stage. Whilst in conversation they barely pause for breath, on the stage there's less running around these days, as the show has become less frenetic with time. Part of that's a response to audience feedback

– they can't speak highly enough of the gift of the “autonomous critic” that getting bums on seats provides – which means they're taking more time with their material. They had an epiphany very early on in their performance run: Matilda finally let a close friend of hers see it, and their favourite jokes fell completely flat. So what went wrong? “We skipped a step,” Rosa says. The set-ups weren't easily discernible – “there's a lesson to all sketch writers out there,” Matilda interjects – “half the battle is making yourself clear.” After that, they went through the show, put in the set-ups, and, according to Matilda “it just flew, it was great.”

They've gradually been putting a stop to some of the misunderstandings that two women playing over one hundred and fifty characters can engender. They recall Rosa's dad coming to see it one night, and being a little bemused by his reaction. He said, a little uncomfortably, that there were a lot of lesbian encounters in the show – though they weren't aware of any. It's to this end, after every show they'd have some noodles and work on clarifying the sketches – “thinking it through, being like ‘oh, now we know that's a woman!’” They recall being obsessively attentive to the show in Edinburgh – “it was like a drug. A fun drug. We didn't really go out in Edinburgh, we were just spending time with the show, writing and re-writing bits. We were very antisocial.”

It feels like they're putting in the work so the punters don't have to. Certainly, I get the impression that their brand of comedy is otherwise remarkably laid-back – Rosa says of the audience “we don't want them to have to do any work, we want them to come in, to enjoy it and have fun.” There's an eagerness to please in the way they speak, something that echoes with some of their performance experiences at the Fringe. Matilda, who has been the more forthright of the pair, recalls

with a blush the first time they had kids in the front row – “I felt uncomfortable and so I changed the script so that there were no swear words” Rosa too, confesses to coughing over a particularly choice expletive when her Grandma came to see the show.

‘They’ve gradually been putting a stop to some of the misunderstandings that two women playing over 150 characters can engender’

I'm a little sceptical of such a malleable approach, but they say they're over that now, seasoned by a month of performing to an Edinburgh audience of all shapes and sizes. Their sensibility is also part of their appeal: they make it clear how grateful they are for all the help they received in Edinburgh, and there's no hint of disingenuousness when they speak of how excited they are to be performing it twice more, to their home crowd. The excitement extends to the new intake of freshers; they're over-brimming with advice to wannabe comedians. Matilda is the membership secretary for the Footlights Committee, and she urges those with a comedy bent to “audition for every smoker. I cannot express that enough. You'll always learn from it and you'll get better.” Rosa adds – “Don't be afraid to venture out on your own, grab a group of like-minded people and give it a go.” It's an admirable attitude.

With *Beard*, Rosa and Matilda seem to want to work together on a different approach to comedy – more slapstick, more surreal. It sounds pretty fun. ● *Beard* is on at the ADC at 11pm on Thursday 18th and Saturday 20th October.

Beyond theADC: a guide to the Cambridge's range of theatrical venues

THE ADC THEATRE

The official home of the Amateur Dramatics Club and the main theatrical space for student productions, the ADC is a hub of dramatic activity. It hosts the biggest, most extravagant shows (the annual Footlights Panto and European Theatre Group Tour Show, to name a few), as well as a plethora of smaller or one-man shows (*Anything But* was a recent favourite of mine). Though there is no hard and fast rule about this, ADC shows are generally of a high quality, and they often choose preferring bigger, crowd-pleasers instead of riskier options. The theatre itself is surprisingly small considering its enormous reputation, and will easily fill up for a mainshow. ‘Mainshows’ are the first production of the evening, usually starting around 7.45pm, with the ‘lateshow’, a shorter, usually hour-long production, beginning shortly afterwards around 11pm. That said, productions always seem to maximise stage-space, which can be enlarged or contracted depending on the size of the show.

As well as drama and comedy, the ADC occasionally plays host to concerts and academic talks. It

also has a fantastic (and cheap) bar, which serves cocktails themed to the mainshow.

Good For: Big productions, drama, variety, safer options.

Not So Good For: Size, unconventional theatre, new writing.

Fun Fact: Four out of the five directors of the National Theatre, (Sir Peter Hall, Richard Eyre, Sir Trevor Nunn and Nicholas Hytner) are alumni of the theatre.

THE CORPUS PLAYROOM

Though owned by Corpus Christi College, the Playroom is a central landmark for thespians of all Cambridge colleges. Far smaller than the ADC, the Corpus Playroom is tucked away on St Edward's Passage (just opposite King's College), and is intimate to say the least. The problem is less one of seating (there is a surprisingly large capacity of 80), but stage size: there is very little room for manoeuvre, and the front row danger that an actor might fall into your lap is quite immediate.

The modest size of the Playroom's stage creates certain logistical issues, such as entrances and exits; I have seen productions at the Playroom where off-stage actors are forced

to stand awkwardly at the sides of the stage. On the bright side, the Playroom's dinkiness makes it perfect for less experienced comics to perform at Smokers (Corpus holds them frequently), whilst giving certain performances a warmth and immediacy that can be lost in larger venues such as the ADC.

More awkward than the size of the Playroom, however, is its shape: the L-shape of the room can sometimes create a sense of alienation, as performers find it difficult to address both halves of their audience. I have occasionally witnessed comics attempting to use this to their advantage, such as one Corpus Smoker when Pierre Novellie divided his audience into two ‘tribes’. Not sure about the shelf life of this tactic, though.

Good For: Small productions, stand-up, Smokers, first-time actors.

Not So Good For: Reliable quality, large productions, tech.

Fun Fact: Stephen Fry wrote the play *Latin!* for the opening of the Playroom in 1979.

THE JUDITH E WILSON STUDIO

The Judith E. Wilson sits in the

basement of the English Faculty building on the Sidgwick Site, making it absolutely great for a post-library theatre trip, but mildly inconvenient otherwise. It is a robust, basic theatre space, with no fixed seating or backstage area. Like the ADC, it is used not only for drama, but also for literary talks and poetry readings, and is therefore a firm favourite with many an English student.

The Studio is known for putting on few, but good (and free) student productions. This term we've got the rather formidable-sounding combination of *Richard III* and *Goodbye Iraq*.

Good For: Off the beaten track, poetry, literature, small productions.

Not So Good For: Location, big productions, comedy.

Fun Fact: The poet Louis MacNeice spoke at the Studio for the 1958-9 Judith E. Wilson Lecture on Poetry and Drama, on the subject of ‘Lyric into Drama’.

THE PEMBROKE NEW CELLARS

Tucked away in the basement of Pembroke's Foundress Court, this dark corner of Cambridge theatre is hard to find, but worth the finding. While

it has played host to some notorious stinkers (take a bow, *Fresher: the Musical*) the Cellars have also, under the supervision of the Pembroke Players, produced some fine new work such as *Unconditional*. Look out for new writing *What? World* and *Indelible Acts* later in the term

THE FITZPATRICK HALL

This converted badminton court in Queens' College makes for a surprisingly good theatre venue. While the raked seating is rarely filled and feels a bit distant from the stage, the acoustics from all the wood is very nice, and the technical possibilities of the large space are impressive. The dressing rooms are a crèche by day, so you always have the satisfaction of knowing that actors are enjoying *Mr Men* books backstage.

THE REST

There's the very out-of-the-way Newnham Old Labs, the Howard Theatre at Downing, and a whole host of converted theatres in just about every college. Even King's Chapel is getting in on the act this term. **Rivkah Brown**





The days

TOM RASMUSSEN



Since our previous issue hit your plodge, a lot has gone down. No doubt you're in recovery; freshers' flu, that week-long hangover or the awkward walk(s) of shame across your new home town. I, too, am in recovery. This week I died. I died an accessory death. The launch of H&M's line of affordable accessories designed by the heart-stoppingly glamorous Anna dello Russo has taken over my life. Last Thursday saw me forcing five of my good friends to drag themselves from their duvets and prep for buying my new season jewels at 8:45am. Mission accomplished.

It has all been far too emotional, and when designing the concept for this shoot I felt like celebrating: a new era for fashion and, especially, accessories. This shoot is about excess - ignoring the negative connotations rolled up in the word - and revelling in the texture, colour and presence of things which fuel our lives. AdR x H&M is all about awakening the senses, thus I felt the combination of food and accessories would combine two very sensory and visually stimulating mediums. (Never have I had the chance to pour custard all over a metal clad man either, so of course I jumped at the thought.)

Now that the butterflies of being back in Cambridge are beginning to be scared away by the bats of work worry, I think it's important to remember to keep living. Find what does it for you - your escape route from the stresses of Cambridge - and take time to enjoy that! GUILT FREE! In the meantime you can find me sleeping in Queens' plodge, awaiting the arrival of my beautiful new jewels (AKA my babies).

For more photos, and to see the shoot in video form get clicking and check out fashion at varsity.co.uk.



More Is More

STYLING / TOM RASMUSSEN

PHOTOGRAPHY / THURSTAN
REDDING & NICK MORRIS

MODEL / JACOB MALLINSON BIRD

JACOB WEARS ACCESSORIES FROM A
SELECTION AT JWA, TOPSHOP, H&M, YSL,
PRIMARK, RIVER ISLAND & ROLEX



Northampton Wanderers walk over Blues

Triumph in last week's Town v Gown didn't last for rugby Blues, writes **Ruairi Bowen**, as they proved no match for Northampton



Back row pairing Hugo Kelly and Rob Malaney put in a big hit as part of a solid defensive display, as the Blues comfortably overcame their Town rivals last Wednesday

Monday 8th October - Home

Cambridge: 13
Northampton: 49

Following an excellent 31-12 victory against Cambridge RFC last week, the Blues were brought back down to earth

with a bump on a damp and drizzly Monday evening at Grange Road. They were outrun and outplayed by a young, slick Northampton Wanderers outfit, with England U19 full-back Tom Collins running in four tries.

Northampton were on the board inside three minutes as pressure in the Blues' 22 led to a charge down and a try for skipper, Ben Nutley. Despite a near immediate riposte from the

boot of scrum-half Seb Tullie, which the Saints were punished for offside, a loose kick and a poor kick-chase enabled Northampton's back three to break clear, with Collins finishing off.

With Northampton a man down after repeated infringements, Tullie, making his first start for the Blues, hit his second penalty. But Cambridge would have hoped for more as they were camped on the Saints' try line with

a succession of powerful rolling mauls. The opportunity went begging, and the failure to capitalise on sustained pressure was punished by the Saints as Tom Stephenson scored under the post before half-time to make the score 6-21.

In the second half, the pace and precision of the Northampton outside backs proved to be too strong for the Blues, at a numerical deficit on the hour following Scott Annett's yellow card.

Four unanswered tries opened up a 43 point gap in proceedings before a penalty try two minutes from time added some respectability to the score line. There was commendable defence from centre pairing Dugal Bain and Danny Holmes, and a periodically dominant display from the forwards (characterized by the trademark bulldozing runs and thundering hits of Captain Rob Malaney). Yet this proved to be mere consolation in a game where the Blues were ultimately no match for this highly professional Northampton outfit; the final score 13-49.

The Town vs Gown match last week had marked the occasion of veteran second-row Scott Annett's fiftieth appearance for the Blues. Speaking after the winning game, the Northern Irishman played down his achievement, focussing more on the significance of the result: "we needed a win coming off the back of a couple of losses in pre-season - we want to build momentum towards Varsity and today is step one". Annett cited the need to improve on the first half performance, particularly at the breakdown, but was buoyant: "we have a fantastic coach who's immediately made a huge difference. We're in a good place: work to do, but you don't want to be the finished article now."

As thoughts turn towards the all-important Varsity match on December 6th, the Blues will be hoping to bounce back from this heavy defeat, starting with a trip to Ealing on Wednesday. For the next home game, played against Blackheath RFC on October 24th, they will hope to build on last year's authoritative second-half display that saw them run out 24-18 winners.

If they can draw on the positives from their opening two games, in particular the force of the scrum - which proved too strong for Town rivals Cambridge RFC - they can set about establishing the momentum that will be crucial leading into the fabled 'Battle of the Blues' at Twickenham.

Cambridge footballers unable to loosen AFA's seven-year stranglehold

Richard Totten reports promising set pieces but a failure to hit the back of the net

Wednesday 10th October - Away

Cambridge: 0
Amateur FA: 1

CAMBRIDGE STARTING 11:

F Kent

A Childs - J Day - M Smith - J Rutt

R Totten - J May - B Tsuda - R Broadway - D Forde

H Sheriff

Subs: H Dempsey - S Elliott - G Hill - D Kerrigan

Despite putting in their best performance of the season so far, the Blues footballers were unable to break the AFA's seven-year stranglehold on this particular fixture and succumbed to an undeserved 1-0 defeat. The failure to properly clear the ball from a second half corner resulted in a goalmouth scramble, allowing the AFA centre mid to fire home from eight yards. He gave them the goal they needed from what proved to be their own shot on target of the match.



Things had started well for the Blues side: Totten forced the opposition left back into an error, before managing to deliver a dangerous cross which just evaded Sheriff and Forde as they attacked the six yard box. Unfortunately this was a sign of things to come: Cambridge's front three made powerful runs in the opposition's final third, but weren't able to manoeuvre the ball into

the back of the net.

As the first half progressed, the Blues - driven forwards by a dominant centre midfield partnership of Broadway and May - continually threatened, looking especially dangerous from set pieces. From a corner midway through the first half, Day managed to power a header across goal. It was parried into the path of new-boy Ben Tsuda on the edge of

the box, only for his low drive to be blocked on the line.

Going in at half time, there was little question as to who had had the better forty-five. Having been unable to convert this dominance into goals, however, the Cambridge side could not afford to relax. The AFA reappeared with the words of their manager ringing in their ears, and the second half began with a

much greater balance in play than had been seen at any point in the first half. With Cambridge's defence still on top, the AFA's sixtieth-minute strike was a tough blow to take.

Despite this, the Blues continued to create more chances. Totten's left-footed strike (from Forde's centre) was well-saved by the keeper and substitute Kerrigan fired just wide. The closest the Blues came was from another set piece: after Totten was hacked down on the right-hand side, Rutt produced a teasing free kick which was flicked first by Broadway, then by Day, into the top corner of the net. But the goal was not to stand as the linesman awarded the fortunate AFA defence a free kick for pushing in the box. The fresh legs of Hill, Elliott and Dempsey looked like they might be able to conjure something in the closing stages but the Blues once again fell just short of the mark in this traditional fixture.

Many positives can be taken from this match, from the performance of Mikey Smith (who played his first ninety minutes for the Blues), to the strength of Sheriff, who looks like he may be hitting form at just the right time. An inability to put the ball in the back of the net will worry coach Che Wilson, however, who will be looking to put this to rights before BUCs starts in two weeks' time.

£16m Sports Centre construction work right on track

Katie Bartholomew investigates progress at the University's biggest ever investment in sport facilities



Striking construction work done so far on the new Sports Centre (photograph as of 20th September 2012)

Cambridge's '800 Years With No Sports Centre' - as the student campaign protested - are nearly over. A cutting-edge sport facility moves ever closer to completion, and construction work is right on track.

While students broke themselves into revision for last term's exams, ground for the new Sports Centre was broken on 1st May 2012. Representatives from seven Cambridge sports teams attended the ground-breaking ceremony, along with the scheme's engineers, architects and other contractors. Hannah Pennicott, representing the Blues netball team, says: "The ground-breaking ceremony for the long awaited Sports Centre was great to be part of: a good opportunity to showcase the Sports Centre plans, as well as to thank those involved with the project. Representatives from some of the sports who will use the centre were all very excited at the

prospect of having an excellent venue to train and compete in. There was much anticipation after the ceremony for the muddy field in west Cambridge to be transformed into a state-of-the-art Sports Centre - we now cannot wait for the opening ceremony!"

'The building work is going absolutely to schedule: absolutely on time, on budget'

Since then, construction has been smooth and efficient: welcome and well-deserved news to those campaigners who fought through years of reluctance and snail-paced progression to allow the Sports Centre to be funded and built at all. Now, finally, much of the fundamental structural work has been

completed over the summer vacation. It has brought a dramatic change to the west Cambridge site (off Madingley road), which many students may not yet have noticed.

The completed centre will certainly not go unnoticed, however: the fitness suite will boast a sizable strength and conditioning wing, a three-lane plyometric track and free-weights platforms; currently homeless sports - such as netball, basketball, badminton and volleyball - will be catered for by a large sports hall of two full-size basketball courts; multi-purpose rooms will provide space for fitness classes, martial arts and fencing. At sixteen million pounds, the Sport Centre indeed represents the largest financial investment in student sport facilities in the University's history.

Those keen to slam-dunk into the new basketball courts still have to wait until

- 8 Badminton courts
- 2 Basketball courts
- 2 Netball courts
- 2 Volleyball courts
- 2 Five-a-side football pitches
- 2 Martial Arts dojos
- 4 Fencing pistes
- 9 Table tennis tables
- 8 Weight training platforms
- 1 Plyometric track

August 2013 for the scheduled opening of these Phase 1 developments. But project leader Antony Lemons is optimistic that his team's work is on target: "The building work is going absolutely to schedule: absolutely on time, on budget." He hopes to be taking possession of the building on June 14th, and then to begin commissioning. "This next part of the year will be extremely busy

with marketing the facilities, setting up price structures and really ensuring that we staff it correctly. We want to hit the ground running with new members in August next year. There's still an awful lot to do, but we've got it in hand."

Mr Lemons also drew attention to other improvements to sporting facilities: namely, the summer refurbishment of the hockey pitches at Wilberforce Road Sports Ground. The new sand-dressed, colour-coded surface - which is "up there with the best surfaces in the UK" - came into use for league matches last week.

A dip in the proposed 50m swimming pool would require a slightly longer academic commitment for those studying here now. Keen swimmers should consider PhD proposals: this next venture lacks, as yet, funding. Indoor tennis courts have also been proposed for a potential second phase.

For now, Cambridge students can be confident that completion of the Sports Centre is less than a year away.



Sports representatives at the ground-breaking ceremony, 1st May 2012

EYES ON...

TOM HILL fresh from a 5.30am pool session, talks of trunks that have kept him winning for 6 years

Sport:
Swimming

Event:
100m breaststroke

Age:
21

Height:
191cm

Weight:
85kg

Varsity caps for Cambridge:
3

Personal Best:
1.05.6mins

What's your weekly training programme?
6 pool sessions, 2 gym sessions, 1 run and 1 land training session. I usually do evenings at the pool, but make it up with a 5.30 morning session if I miss one.

Any superstitions or rituals?
I've worn the same pair of swimming trunks to warm up in for 6 years. They've actually got holes in them now.

How did you get into swimming?
My mum took me to swimming lessons when I was 4, and I've been competing ever since I was 9.

Injuries along the way?
As I do breaststroke, loads of knee problems. I normally can't train for about a month every season because of my knees.

Sporting hero?
Kosuke Kitajima - best breastroker who's ever lived

Rivals?
I used to train with an Olympian (Andrew Willis): so I never won any competitions for my club, but it's done me good working with someone so fast.
Here, a guy who swims the same stroke as me was doing an MPhil at Cambridge, but now he's doing a PhD at Oxford...

Best gym in Cambridge?
I only use my college gym, at Jesus.

What's a blues swimmer's diet?
I eat when I'm hungry! Usually 5 meals a day. But I suppose no fatty foods for a few days before a race.

● To get involved with Cambridge University Swimming and Water Polo Club contact c.u.swimmingandwaterpolo@sport.cam.ac.uk

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SUDOKU

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	7	3				6	2	

SPORT

30 **Football: Amateur**
*Fotball Alliance
conceded nothing to the
Blues on Wednesday*

Almost triple triumph



Will Cairns (above right) was a deserving 'Man of the Match' for his three goals and a generally authoritative performance at the heart of the Blues midfield

Jasper Joyce reviews an action-packed fortnight of Hockey successes which ended in heart-break

With visions of that heroic 5-3 defeat over their Dark Blue counterparts still so fresh in the memory, the start of a new league season for the Men's Hockey Blues seems to have come round rather quickly. The squad are now a month into their league campaign. Well prepared by three gruelling weeks of pre-season training and a brief, but action-packed, tour of Brussels, the 2012 vintage are beginning to hit their straps. The squad boasts an exciting combination of new talent and returning Blues. Felix Styles, in his third year at the heart of the Light Blue defence, will skipper the side this season.

Vice-Captain Dave Harrison, named 'Man of the Match' in last year's Varsity victory, will

work closely with him to push this talented new outfit towards promotion into the National Leagues and, of course, repeat success against Oxford come March.

The last fortnight has provided a flurry of testing encounters. The Blues had to deliver industry and innovation in equal measure to seal victory against a notoriously combative Dereham XI. Swinn latched onto a delectable slice of Charles Hardy V skill to scramble in the only score of the game. At the other end, Dereham launched a wave of late attacks and the Blues had to call on the experience of Styles as well as the characteristic reflexes of keeper Morrison to maintain their advantage.

A vital three points were fine reward for such a composed display at an infamously hostile venue. Just twenty-four hours later the Blues hosted Wisbech Town in the second round of the National 1st XI Cup. Cambridge proved far too polished for the visitors. Their unrelenting control of possession from the outset ensured that it wasn't long before Cairns

fired home from close range to get the scoreboard moving. Assured in their structure and game plan, the home side added two more to their tally before the break. Harrison provided some short corner artistry to send the ball into the roof of the Wisbech net after Charlie Bennett had deflected an irresistible Mclean cross to double the lead.

The second half saw Cambridge's dominance

'The Blues displayed a maturity generally uncharacteristic of such a young side'

continue. The home side eventually ran out comfortable 6-2 victors with Cairns securing his hat-trick and Grimshaw opening his account for the season. Two late Wisbech goals were a consolation that the tenacious visitors perhaps deserved.

The Blues will undoubtedly be disappointed, however, to have conceded to a side that never really looked to pose a legitimate threat.

Saturday 6th October - Home

Cambridge: 1
St Albans: 2

It would have made for a magical fortnight had the Blues snatched victory when league leaders St Albans visited Tab-land the following week. From the off, the visitors showed the pedigree in their forward line and the abrasive physicality in the midfield that make them such a force in the East League. The Blues displayed a maturity generally uncharacteristic of such a young side and matched the Albans' belligerence with their own brand of flare and creativity. Grimshaw grabbed the only goal of the first period. He nudged home to complete a fluid counter attack, thereby giving the home side the slenderest of advantages to take into the half time break.

Early in the second half, as Cambridge clung desperately to their narrow lead, Albans were justly punished with yellow cards for a cocktail of wayward tackles. But Cambridge could not make their

numerical advantage tell. Eventually, when restored to their full complement, a long period of Albans pressure reaped a deserved equaliser.

With a draw looking like the most likely result, it was only a freak own-goal that could separate the two sides. With 90 seconds remaining Albans crashed a ball across the Cambridge 'D', to see it deflected by a light blue stick past the helpless Morrison and high into the Cambridge net. It was a heart-breaking conclusion to a fixture from which the home side surely deserved to depart with at least a point.



Bennett leads the forward line

It has been a promising start to the new season but, perhaps inevitably, a great deal of work remains to be done if this year's squad are to fulfil their immense potential.

SPORT ROUND-UP

WOMEN'S LACROSSE WIN AT LOUGHBOROUGH

UNIVERSITY The Women's Lacrosse Blues started their BUCS Championships-defending season with a solid 8-6 win over North Premiership side Loughborough. With prior academic commitments preventing a full squad from travelling, the team set off with only 12 players.

Cambridge struck first, but the girls found themselves down 5-3 with minutes remaining in the first half. Multiple goal efforts from Dani Allard and rookie Lara Pleydell-Bouverie led the rally on attack, and the Blues' young defensive unit regrouped to hold Loughborough to only 1 goal in the second half.

HOCKEY GIRLS FALL SHORT

UNIVERSITY On Saturday 6th, the women's Hockey Blues played St Albans, away. The girls started nicely until a good aerial from St Albans left an unmarked player open to score. Cambridge quickly recovered to make it 1-1 with a lovely finish from Izzy Smith.

The relief was short lived, however, after a short-corner goal brought them 2-1 down just before half time. Cambridge fought valiantly in the second half, keeping possession in St Albans' half for most of the play.

Unfortunately, the deserved outcomes just didn't appear, and the girls tired toward the end allowing St Albans back into the game. A final score of Cambridge 1 - 4 St Albans didn't reflect the Blues' good standard of play.

DOWNING DEFEAT THE RED BOYS

COLLEGE After a steady start, Downing were the first to score when they met St John's on the rugby pitch on Tuesday. At half-time, the Red Boys were still yet to score. Downing defence crumbled as the second half got under way, taking the Red Boys into a 7-5 lead.

Downing quickly replied, however, pulling ahead once more. A penalty finally boosted the scorecard for Downing to claim an important 19-7 victory.

CHRIST'S FOOTBALLERS CRUSHED BY DOWNING

COLLEGE Not letting standards slip at the start of a new year, Downing footballers retained their dominance as league champions in a pre-season friendly against Christ's. An impressive 3-0 win will give the college confidence as the college league kicks off this weekend.

● Keep up with sports results as they happen: find match reports and commentary online at www.varsity.co.uk/sport



SIMON TIM WEBB