Linacre Li(n)es
Hilary Term 2004

we got Rhythm
EDITORIAL

Welcome to the Hilary 2004 edition of the Linacre Li(n)es

Well here it is, my first attempt at the Linacre Li(n)es. Taking over from Ilona was never going to be easy, and many times did she warn me just how hard it is to actually get people to write for you. But she didn’t warn me enough...

Anyway, as you can see, it got there in the end, albeit a little shorter than originally intended. But what can you do?

Then there was the small matter of a theme. I thought about this for a while, and then settled on ‘rhythm’ because I decided it was one of those topics that could be interpreted from a number of different viewpoints and I was convinced that it would inspire everyone to go off and write reams of beautiful words that would set the Linacre Li(n)es on fire. Unfortunately this idea seems to have burnt down.

I was happy to find that a couple of articles have managed to creep in on the topic of ‘rhythm’, so I could just about justify using the amazing cover that Lucy Helme designed.

One of the main things which I hoped that I would be able to put in this edition was some kind of article discussing the world-famous African sense of rhythm. They all seem to be unjustifiably good at dancing, but no-one can tell why! I asked a few of my African colleagues here at Linacre if they might be interested in writing an insider’s perspective on the matter. They weren’t.

C’est la vie.

So instead I guess I’ll just have to relate my most treasured observation on the topic:

I was watching a documentary about Nelson Mandela on television recently, and I was very impressed by the way that he came across as a very genuine character who had been in politics for the right reasons. One of the things they showed him taking part in was a television advertisement for the Cricket World Cup, for which they wanted him to bang out the celebratory rhythm ‘dum-dum, d-d-dum, d-d-d-dum, d-dum!’ [I hope that reads well...].

If you don’t know what rhythm I mean, it’s not really important, suffice to say that it’s quite simple and easy to replicate. Only Mr Mandela found it impossible. They even had someone doing it next to him off camera to try to get him in time. No luck.

In the end they actually had to film just his hands hitting the board so that they could sync it with the rhythm afterwards, then pan up to him celebrating.

So the moral of this great story? There is at least one African who doesn’t have a particularly good sense of rhythm. Does that teach us anything? Probably not...

Anyways, I hope you enjoy looking at this issue. If you do enjoy it, please give consideration to sending me a contribution to the Trinity Issue. New contributors are always most welcome!

Apologies to all those websites that I’ve blatantly stolen pictures from - the Google picture search is a wonderful thing!

THE GREAT DEBATE

Do you consider yourself a Linacrite, or maybe a Linacreite?

In putting this edition together it became clear to me that the word meaning ‘a Linacre member’ would be required several times. Unfortunately there seems to be no official policy on the spelling of this word.

So, in order to make a decision for this issue, I decided to turn to my favoured decision-maker - the Google Vote. The idea is simple: there are many words that appear in the internet which don’t appear in any dictionaries. So, if you’re not sure how to spell a word and there are two (or more) possibilities, simply enter them separately into Google and count the number of matches. Highest wins.

I also find this a good method of finding out how many people can’t spell. Take the popular mis-spelling ‘milennium’ as an example. Today, I registered 49,400 occurrences of that one, compared with 8.15 million correct versions. The correct one wins, but it also demonstrates just how many people can’t spell!

Anyway, back to the Linacre Debate. I performed my Google-vote technique, and got a 1-0 win for ‘Linacrite’ (thanks to Simon Ho’s website!). So for this issue, ‘Linacrite’ has it (plus I don’t like the extra ‘e’ anyway...). However, if you can convince me otherwise, I might be tempted to switch by the next issue...

Til then - adios...

Daniel Gallichan :o)

(Second Year of 4-yr DPhil in Brain MRI)
Memoirs of a former Linacrite

Samir Sheldenkar laments on those good times of old, when he spent the 2002/3 year at Linacre doing an MSc in Computer Science

Just the name of the college brings back many memories for me - from the highs of the Italia '90 World Cup to the lows of Jonathan Ross's taunts on 'They Think It's All Over'. But leaving aside Gary's glittering football career, I have many memories of Linacre College itself. Having spent last year studying (ahem) there, my plan after leaving was to write a spectacular Nobel Prize for Literature-winning novel exposing all the fascinating details of college life. Unfortunately, the extensive notes that I intended to keep only resulted in one scrawled message on the back of a napkin from an exchange dinner, and I can't even read it now (I think it says something about custard?) So, having to turn to my admittedly poor memory in order to write, I now find that I only have enough material for about 800 words – not enough for an entire novel, but just about the right amount for a Linacre Lines article! Hurrah! How convenient, no?

One of the first things that I noticed when I came to Linacre was the number of different nationalities of which the student body consists – quite possibly more than any other Oxford college. The only other place I’ve seen such a varied cultural mix in one place is the “It’s a Small World" ride at Disneyworld. And in college, coming across a major achievement in the history of sport - my magnificent triple-cushion, double-ball pot. Truly, this was the most spectacular feat of pool-playing ever seen, leaving spectators (well, spectator) open-mouthed with astonishment and admiration (no, he wasn’t yawning). There was even a suggestion of erecting a statue of myself and dedicating the room in honour of the accomplishment, but this idea never got off the ground due to problems with planning permission and funding. Probably also because of complete lack of enthusiasm from everyone except me.

I remember, on my first day in college, coming across a huge line of people waiting for something. My curiosity piqued, I decided to join the queue. As I slowly edged forward, my mind filled with images of the possible wondrous things that could be waiting for me at the end of the line. The longer it took, the more exciting I believed it would be. Imagine my disappointment when I found that it was just the queue for lunch. Eventually I got used to the long waiting times for the meals, though, and I came to depend on the dining hall for basically all of my dietary requirements. Luckily for me, everything was neatly divided into the major food groups – proteins and carbohydrates from the main meal in the first section, vitamins and minerals from the vegetables in the second, chocolate from the deserts in the third, and payment to the person in the fourth. I was a bit worried I would be missing out on the nutritional value of the fourth section after leaving Linacre, but a quick trip to the doctor reassured me that people in the ‘real world’ would be more than happy to help me out with that.

And so, dear reader, we come to the end of this thrilling journey. We’ve laughed, we’ve cried, but above all, I hope we’ve all learned a little something about ourselves. Enjoy your time at Oxford, as, like me, you’ll look back on it and wonder exactly where all the time went.
On July 1st 2002 my life changed. Forever. With little more thought than it takes to choose what film to go and see at the cinema, I signed myself up for one of the most gruelling races in the world. Less than two months before race day. It was one of the most stupid, and probably one of the best decisions of my life.

I was living and working in Vancouver, Canada – the usual corporate lifestyle: sitting behind a desk all day, going soft, jogging to keep fit in the evenings. To do something different, I entered a short triathlon (1.5km swim, 40km bike, 10km run) and set about looking for a bike. After more time spent searching than training, I finally found one, for five times my original budget, three weeks before the race.

Collecting the bike, my dreams of speeding along effortlessly were soon shattered by reality. I could hardly even ride the thing one-handed and discovered the hard way the benefits of unclipping a foot from the pedal at traffic lights to prevent toppling over (to the general amusement of waiting drivers). Things improved though and soon I began to love riding. Which with the benefit of hindsight, was very fortunate.

An Ironman consists of a 3.8km swim, 180km bike and a marathon, done consecutively in a maximum of 17 hours. Nuts in other words. One of those things that exist but aren't really real. Psychotic, pain-loving exercise addicts maybe enter such events, but not normal people. Or so I thought until living in Vancouver skewed my perception. Broken down, an Ironman doesn’t look so impossible - plenty of other people run marathons, the hardest part of the race. The idea of attempting one at some point during my life began knocking around my head. Which with the benefit of hindsight, was very fortunate.

The worst time was the taper leading up to the race. Having looked forward to it so badly when the training was hard, it was horrible. Rather than feeling fit and rested, I felt drained and nauseous. My knees were swollen and hurt to walk across the street, let alone run a marathon. The doubts began to creep in – what on earth had I done? What was I thinking?

Fortunately, adrenalin is a wonderful cure, and once I left Vancouver and headed inland to Penticton where the race is held, it began to pump in force. Ironman Canada is a huge event and the whole town throws itself behind the competitors. I’d never been part of anything like it before, and as I got involved in all the pre-race activities, my excitement mounted and the doubts fell away. I was finally focussed. I
ay in the office... (soon-to-be Common Room President) tries to convince us was going to enjoy the race.

The atmosphere in the town was infectious and there was something incredibly inspiring about the diversity of people participating. These weren’t the psychotic pain-loving exercise addicts I’d imagined, but regular people of all different ages, builds and backgrounds. As an Iron Virgin at the pre-race dinner, I was amazed by the number of repeat Ironmen. Three “shit-heads” were doing Ironman Canada for the nineteenth time and the number of people doing their fifth or tenth was staggering. I left stunned. The challenge of completing an Ironman I could understand and relate to, but what on earth could possess so many normal-seeming people to put themselves through it again and again? I just didn’t get it.

Race day, August 25, 4am, and I was psyched, pure adrenalin pumping through my veins… Less than three hours, some pre-race porridge and a bucket of coffee later, I was standing on the lakeshore listening to the Canadian National Anthem, watching the sun come up. The atmosphere was incredibly emotional as over 2000 competitors made their way into the water. The cannon fired, and we were off.

The first 60kms of the bike course are relatively flat and passed uneventfully. The goal on the bike is to go as fast as possible whilst holding something back for the marathon. One of the key mistakes is to go too hard whilst fresh and then to blow up on the run. The bike is also the time when you eat and drink pretty much everything you need for the day. During the six hours and change that I was cycling, I thought about little except what I was supposed to eat and drink, what gear I was in, how high my heart rate was, and when I’d next see some of my friends. Oh and when the next hill was... there are two mountain passes on the course, interspersed by the so called “eleven bitches” – eleven rolling hills that make it impossible to find a rhythm. Or eat properly. I’ll never forget rounding a corner struggling to open a sports bar to find a steep descent ahead. I just had time to stuff the packet between my teeth before hitting 75kms an hour in the aero position... Something I haven’t tried to repeat in a hurry!

The last hour of the bike was probably the hardest of the race for me. My whole body was sore from cycling for so long and struggling up the second pass on the point of exhaustion, I was forcing down a disgusting banana flavoured Powerbar, trying not to gag, when we hit a headwind. Rather than an easy coast downhill into town, it was hard to keep moving, and as I struggled through those last few miles, conflicting thoughts battled for supremacy. I’d basically succeeded in my goal – nothing could prevent me from finishing now. But there was that small matter of a marathon to run...

It was such a relief to get off my bike that the first six miles of the run were bliss. There was an aid station with food and drinks every mile and my plan was to walk through each station, drinking something. The crucial decision of whether to have Gatorade or water at the next “break” occupied my mind fully for the 10 minutes it took to run each mile and in a blur of drink decisions, the distance passed.

The high after the race was unbelievable, and lasted nearly a week. The experience of competing in such a challenging event surpassed my wildest dreams. Even in the bad times, and despite my lack of preparation, I loved racing with such a dedicated group of people. I’ve never been part of anything so powerfully emotional and rewarding before and the sense of achievement is addictive. I now understand what drives people to return again and again.

If you feel tempted to be as stupid as Helen, get more information from www.ironmanlive.com

The last few miles seemed interminable, but then the crowds increased and before I’d really realised it, I was heading down the last (long) straight, focusing on nothing but the words “FINISH” as they slowly grew larger, willing my legs to carry me there. One final moment of panic when I thought I was going to trip over in front of everyone on the rucks in the carpet, and then I was there, running through the tape. Twelve hours, forty minutes and one second after taking my first stroke early that morning.
I don’t know whether it is Whisky, Scotch or ‘Ishky’ - the way the Scots articulate it - but I know one thing: it tastes like nectar from the gods - especially the single malts.

You might think ‘what on earth is he trying to say?’ – well, I’m trying to tell you that I was one of the fortunate ones to attend the Linacre WCW I function on Friday 30 January 2004. We all enjoyed a Swiss chocolate at the door, settled in for a while and after the third wine everybody had a sound opinion on the specific wine that was tasted. We had wines from different countries, amongst others South Africa, Australia and France. The three countries are renowned for their high standard of wine making and we were gauging their wine makers’ abilities. Although different reactions were to be expected because our palates are different, the Linacre “experts” knew their flavours and aromas after a couple of samples.

After the wine master from Oddbins gave an overview of the wine concerned the “experts” advanced their opinions - almost like comments at a modelling show. You would hear things like “I taste strawberries” (referring to the ‘palate/flavour’ of the wine) or “I smell a bouquet of wild flowers” (referring to the ‘nose/aroma’ of the wine). Did I just mention a modelling show? You might think that a modelling show is out of context but it isn’t because wines have ‘legs’.

The different compositions suggest different things about the particular wine but I went into the gory details because you’ll have to attend a wine tasting next time to find out more about ‘legs’. After you’ve done your tasting you’re supposed to spit out (in the bin provided) or swallow the sip of wine that you took. The remainder of the wine in your glass must be emptied into the bins provided and your glass must be rinsed for the next tasting. Obviously Linacrites are a highly advanced species and realise the importance of unnecessary waste. We decided collectively without discussing the matter that nothing would be wasted that night. I’m sure this collective thinking was an extension of our concerns about the waste and plundering of Mother Nature, global warming and the possible effects of thirst and dehydration. So instead of wasting anything, people got wasted (!) with soft soothing violin and piano music being played in the background by two of our fellow talented Linacrites.

Some wines have long wiry ‘legs’ and others have solid ‘legs’ and so forth. How do you find those ‘legs’? You can look at the ‘legs’ by tilting your glass sideways and slowly reposition it back to an upright position (Tip: try to keep your wine inside the glass). Hold your glass in front of you against a light and you’ll see the ‘legs’ running slowly into the remainder of your glass contents.

The Winelover, the cheese was but the whisky mad

Christiaan Bezuidenhout took time out to write:

Wine, Cheese and Whiskey Tasting (or

Food for thought: If you taste a wine and you don’t like it but other guests rave about it - don’t drink it, because it may put you off wine completely. Try different wines, for example red wine: Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinotage or a combination wine such as Bordeaux (a combination of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot grapes). Search for a taste that you enjoy. The same goes for white or rosé wines. You can taste the wine before you decide to buy at Oddbins or wherever you go to obtain your monthly quota. Buy what you like and don’t go for the cheapest wine - it may taste repulsive.

When we started the Scotch tasting our group of “experts” have increased somewhat since we started the evening’s festivities - the compulsory name list formalities were washed away by the inspirational power of wine and the therapeutic influence of the chamber music. Everybody knew everybody by then and we were all best friends. By that time our new ‘leader,’ or must I say whiskey master, started to negotiate movement and I realised (and so did everybody else) that he was so encapsulated with the tastes of the different whiskies beforehand that our whiskey tasting would not go down quite as smoothly as a single malt. At this point one of the social organisers decided it was a ‘free for all’ - no
more formalities. I didn’t really get a chance to get to all the single malts because the bottles had big holes in them and leaked like rusted radiators after this announcement - you know the single malts evaporated like morning mist before a warm summer sun and I wasn’t going to drink plain old whiskey. Fortunately I did manage to secure a few tots from a bottle of single malt and what can I say: if you’ve acquired the taste, you’re hooked for life. A good Scottish Ishky can, however, cause damage after it is consumed when you’ve already ‘tasted’ a few wines earlier. I saw a number of “experts” in trouble after round 7 of the tasting and realised that their taste buds must have been overloaded by then. With very refined detective intuition (supported by a strong Sherlock Holmes influence in my childhood) I realised that the cheese and whiskey tasting turned into an ‘advanced drinking jamboree’. The regular person would never have guessed the change in the formalities and atmosphere because you really need excellent wits to sense something delicate like this. A few people consumed cheese to layer the intestines as an emergency strategy. In view of this I feel comfortable to put forward to the social committee that a discussion of the fine cheeses and whiskeys that were on offer are not over and done with. This implies that we will have to do something similar in Trinity term with the proviso we start with the whiskeys and cheeses this time.

During the last moments of our distinguished evening I heard some folks reflect on the ‘fact’ that there is no difference between Scotch and Bourbon and who thought that it is one and the same thing – IT’S NOT! If you want to know what the difference is I suggest you come to the Linacre WCW II tasting next time. If you cannot wait for the WCW II, do the following: Buy a bottle of Jack Daniels Kentucky Bourbon and a bottle of Laphroaig Single Malt Scottish Whiskey and compare the tastes. Warning: If you haven’t acquired the taste of Bourbon or Scotch you might be put off the taste for life. You can either donate the almost full bottles to me or you can start your schooling in Bourbon by adding cola to it. With Scotch I suggest you add soda water or appleiser and ice. Tip: One tot measure (25 ml) at a time in a tall glass with lots of impure additives. Eventually you will realise the powerful taste you’re missing and butchering with carbonated additives and you will prefer to drink it neat - now you’ve acquired the taste! This is when you become ‘sophisticated’ and order it in a crystal tumbler. That is the whole idea with Single Malt Scotch anyway.

“In hind sight it was a good night” and the social committee must get all the credit because they made it a very successful and enjoyable evening. I’ll see everybody at the next tasting (WCW II) - and if you haven’t acquired a taste by then, bring the two above-mentioned bottles along so that I can liberate you from your suffering.

For more info about wine, check out www.oxfordwinesociety.org

[Left] Christiaan obviously enjoying his wine. [Below] The congregation listens to wine advice from the Oddbins rep. in the Linacre Dining Hall.
The large number of Canadians at Linacre is well known to anyone who has spent time at the college. The Canadian National Scholarship, awarded each year to a promising Canadian student, is one of our college’s most recognized awards. But few are aware of the impressive list of world-renown Canadians who studied at Linacre over the past four decades. They are truly some of the college’s, if not Oxford’s, most accomplished alumni.

Ken Hamilton finished his D.Phil in English at Linacre in 1964 and went on to write several critically acclaimed novels, among them *Summer of Swans* and *The Wandering*, now considered Canadian classics. In 1982 he won the prestigious Booker Prize with *My Eternal*, a touching Oxford love story, which contains numerous descriptions of our own Common Room.

Jackie Boyd remains Canada’s only Nobel Prize winner, gaining international acclaim for her work in condensed matter physics in 1983. Her research launched a generation of scientific discovery and paved the way for the fibre-optic revolution. She was a Fellow of Linacre in the late 1970’s where she was well known for her prowess as a rower, later winning silver in women’s rowing at the Seoul Olympics.

Canada’s twentieth Prime Minister, Anthony Foster read Modern History at Linacre in the late 1960’s before beginning a career in politics. Once Common Room President, he went on to lead Canada’s Conservative party to two majority victories in the 1980’s, placing important limits on the country’s bloated Constitution and initiating profitable incursions in East Asia and Latin America. He was honoured by the United Nations in 1997.

Certainly Canada’s most famous Linacre alumnus must be actor Richard Wilson who completed an M.Phil in Dramatic Arts here as a Rhodes Scholar in 1985. He shot to fame as John Candy’s sidekick in *Here Comes Lumpy* before winning the Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor opposite Charles Bronson and Sigourney Weaver in 1991’s *Revenge of the Space Ants*. Now dating the other good-looking member of Destiny’s Child (not Beyonce), Wilson is part owner, with Charlie Sheen and Hugh Grant, of a popular men’s club in Las Vegas.

A noble legacy indeed.

**RANDOM FACTS**

- One out of every two hundred women is endowed with an extra nipple.  
  *(INCIDENTALLY, THERE ARE AROUND 200 WOMEN AT LINACRE...)*

- All of the clocks in the film ‘Pulp Fiction’ are fixed at 4:20

- There are 336 dimples on a regulation golf ball

- A person remains conscious for 8 seconds after being decapitated

- Allegedly, Oscar Wilde’s last words were “Either that wallpaper goes or I do”
The Rhythm of the Fight

Angela Cohen, first year DPhil in Physiology, gets some physical therapy

JAB. JAB. JAB. JAB. JAB.
I feel my muscles start to tire, but I keep going.

JAB. JAB. JAB-JAB CROSS.
Got a rhythm going now. Picking up speed.

JAB-JAB CROSS. JAB-JAB CROSS.
An image flashes into my mind.
An experiment that didn’t work today.
Irritation momentarily surges through me, but I quickly refocus on the task at hand.

HOOK-HOOK-UPPER CUT.
I feel the energy arc through my body:
foot, ankle, leg, knee, thigh, hip, back, shoulder, arm, IMPACT.

I register the faint look of surprise on the face of my partner holding the pads.
You don’t have to imagine the leather-encased foam pads represent your supervisor,
or your lit review,
or the cyclist who nearly ran you over as you crossed the road earlier today.
But it helps.
I think that this is what keeps bringing me back week after week.
Through the sweat and the pain and the feeling that I just can’t DO another 30 seconds.
This is the best workout I have ever had.

What makes this class special for me is that for all the physicality, the main target of this workout is not my muscles. The gloves I am wearing are not simply pieces of sporting equipment. They are a conduit, an outlet for all the negative emotions I normally carry around with me. In this class I can vent. I can rage. I can let it all out. The daily frustrations, the doubts, the tiredness and the anger. This is an exorcism. Come 7 o’clock on a Monday night as I stagger out of the Linacre gym, I’m dripping with sweat, my hair is plastered to my forehead, my cheeks are flushed and my arms and legs are trembling with exhaustion. But endorphins are coursing through my veins, my mind is clear, and there is a wide, brilliant, genuine smile on my face as I take on another week with a lighter heart and an extra little bounce in my step.

Refreshed.
Re-energised.
Reborn.

Fighting Fit is on Mondays at 6pm in the Linacre Gym.
Well well well... I was going to write a gossip column for this fine publication, but then decided that it wasn’t such a good idea, if I wanted to have any friends left! Hey, there’s so much gossip flying around Linacre that you could fill this ‘zine ten times over. So, what’s a girl to do? Reading about Jordan and the Beckhams and Prince William gets a bit boring after a while. I want dirt, I want scandals, I want rumours, whispers and slander, and I want it about people that I know, that I see every day, but I don’t want them to know that I know!

According to Frank McAndrew, Professor of Psychology at Knox College in Illinois, cavemen used gossip to gather information about their rivals, and then used it to exploit their weaknesses and manipulate their reputations in order to climb the social ladder. This was natural selection at its finest, and ultimately led to the most successful gossipers being head of the pack.

Not much change there then! The word “gossip” originates back to Anglo-Saxon times, when the word for godparent was “godsipp”. It evolved to mean “close friend”, and by the 16th century, “one who indulges in idle talk”. Well, I don’t know about my stone-age ancestors or my godparents, but I love a good old gossip, and I defy anyone to say that they don’t. There’s definitely something mildly therapeutic about sitting in the common room with a nice drink and nice friends and surreptitiously discussing the ins and outs of the goings-on in the lives of our fellow Linacrites. Gossiping is a way of bonding, and by forming new friendships through gossip, the potential for new sources of gossip increases. Gossiping about other people’s misfortunes can make you feel a bit better about your own crappy little life, and finding out a bit of dirt can add some excitement to an otherwise boring two-hour lunch break.

However, there can be a dark side to gossip, that is, when it gets nasty. Gossip can be malicious, vicious and negative. Sometimes without even realising it, gossip can be exaggerated and inflated and embellished until it bears no truth to the original version, and like a game of Chinese Whispers it can spiral out of control. And then there is the potential for the gossipee to find out and trace it back to the source, who will then tumble down the social ladder that he or she has so carefully climbed after all those strategic gossip sessions. So, after trawling the net in search for the truth between the lines of “Hello” and “Heat”, I came across the six golden rules of gossip, which I give to you in the hope that you may all become more successful and conscientious gossipers... (see box)

So, my friends, if you follow these rules then you too may become a successful gossiper, happy in the knowledge of all that goes on behind closed doors. Just don’t forget who told you first ;-)
Thinking Rhythmically...

Like the rhythm of music, the rhythm of poetry affects our feelings and has some secret power over our imagination. Music is, according to Beethoven, ‘the mediator between the spiritual ad the sensual life’. So rhythm, having an emotional propriety, is a measure of the poetic intensity and prepares the reader for the emotion to come. So intimate is the connection between rhythm and melody that the two call for effective tonality, allowing us to describe a poem as solemn, graceful, pounding or otherwise.

Recurrent in character, the rhythm steers the poem’s general affective movement. Forcing itself with gentle determination, beat by beat, it jolts us awake. At times, this audacity is transformed and the intensity modified with the next beat, which seems to give a sense of relief. Something like a subsiding and a restful abatement is produced, and you slide from wakefulness into the dreamlike... into the innocent play of a child, unaware of any danger...

What makes rhythm so pleasing is, of course, a suitable arrangement of sequence. We are so made to be pleased aesthetically by the artistic management of thought, emotion, the structure of words. Like a painting or a sculpture so does a poem have an architecture of its own which reconciles it with the author, the reader, the matter, and the space available; and the changes of the matter provoke and justify all the varieties of rhythmic configurations, from more to less disciplined rhythms.

Crafting itself, the rhythm tunes to the dominating mood of the poem, becoming the natural result and spontaneous sign of the poet’s emotion. The sly manoeuvres push us to seek satisfaction in the realm of the imaginary. Poetry’s purpose is not to be itself but to give use pleasure and lead the mind off the habitual track that ties it down to the familiar, the commonplace, the matter-of-fact. It is our unconscious obligation to strive for completeness, the Wordsworthian ‘complex feeling of delight’. Somehow, our mind seeks rhythmical consistency while our senses demand rhythmical variability, and it is the combination of the absolute and the intense that leave us satisfied.

So much for the pleasure which rhythm gives to the reader... Release the mind from its routine association and unimaginative habits and feel the rhythm...

A few thoughts from Kate Nowak, first year DPhil in English

It’s all in the Lines...

Asif Memon looks at the new international fascination with drawing lines...

Talking about the Iraq war seems to extract groans of boredom these days. The kind of groan that the last sentence must have extracted from you just now. It seems we’re all in the process of drawing a line under the issue and moving on. The groans are understandable. I mean I do tend to go on about it, right? It’s like floging a dead horse some might say. And anyway, the Iraq war is so last year.

So instead I’ll talk about that line that all of us are drawing. It’s something we seem to do on a regular basis. Similar to the line I expect to draw under ManU’s premiership season this year. I want to move on and not have to meet an Arsenal fan until next year. Except I never really understood the existence of this line until Mr. Blair and his spin machine actually came up with it: Let’s draw a line under it and move on. It’s like some universal reset button. Within the few seconds that it took for him to say it, everyone is expected to suddenly forget about it and start dealing with other issues. How this is in any way better for Mr. Blair is beyond me (see: top-up fees, foundation hospitals, asylum seekers, GM crops, Mr. Blunkett et al).

Does the prime minister expect this ploy to work? Is the British public’s attention so easily averted? A cursory look at the newspapers and you can see that Iraq has gone from being the dominant issue to a secondary story. This is natural. In the modern age of global news war, famine, natural disasters, disease and the Oscars compete for our attention and it’s difficult to pay it to everything all at once. After a while the daily death toll seems like the norm and lives lost turn into numbers ticking on a meter.

And herein lies the problem. While we are by no means apathetic to human suffering, one might argue there is too much of it going on and too far away for us to focus on any one for very long. This collective attention deficit disorder seems to be the escape route that politicians like Mr. Blair are able to exploit.

Of course, it’s not only Mr. Blair who is trying. Mr. Musharraf, Pakistan’s erstwhile general/president, keeps trying to draw a big fat line under the sorry nuclear proliferation saga without much success. Had there not been so many American troop casualties in Iraq, Mr. Bush might have succeeded at it. It is fascinating how similar all three of these cases are. Each leader has gone from absolute denial of any wrongdoing at the beginning, through a painfully slow and drawn out process of accepting some ambiguous level of error in judgement caused by someone else’s mistake, to requesting a public state of closure so we can all move on. How kind of them to be concerned for our mental well being.

There are many who seem to be happy that these leaders have been forced into accepting their mistakes and have been pushed onto the back foot. Seem like hollow victories to me. All three have survived, albeit slightly bruised, to do it all over again.

Of course if you think that my idea of reality is warped and I have in some way insulted your intelligence, I think I’ll be in esteemed company when I say, “there’s a line that’s already been drawn for you below, all you need do is move on”.

Asif finished his MSc in Economics at Linacre last year. He now teaches in Oxford and is a continuing Linacre Member.
Ever wondered where the average Linacrite hails from? Well thanks to the investigative journalism of Daniel Gallichan, you need wonder no more...

I would like to think that I had better things to do with my time than copy the list of Linacre students out of the College website and paste them into Excel. In fact, I know I have better things to do with my time than this, but as the great Jeremy Paxman said so many times, “I’ve started, so I’ll finish....”

The result of all this computer jiggery-pokery may not actually be particularly informative, but I hope you’ll agree with me in finding that it does at least tend towards the mildly interesting.

Just over half of us come from the UK. This isn’t particularly surprising. It even sounds much more interesting if we simply invert the statistic - nearly 50% of Linacre students come from outside the UK! Now we’re getting somewhere - we have evidence that Linacre is genuinely an international environment. But then, we knew that already...

I suppose that in order for the statistics to make any sense, I should state the total number of students involved. Now this is where things do get a bit more interesting. I found it remarkably difficult to ascertain just how many Linacrites there are. The list that appears on the webpage (from which the pie chart shown above was compiled) contains 379 names. This is considerably more than the number quoted on the Linacre homepage of 260!

Then comes the added complication of the completeness and validity of the list I did use. I know of several students who are here but don’t appear on that list for one reason or another. Then again, there are others who aren’t here but do appear on the list. (Incidentally, I am probably just overemphasising this point in a bid to excuse myself to anyone who was mistakenly omitted from receiving an invitation to the Ball - we used the same list for those too!)

The only other point that I guess is worth mentioning is that the pie chart doesn’t quite tell you is that the ‘Rest of Europe’ group is somewhat dominated by Germany (16 out of 53, or 30%). I’m afraid that my wonderful analysis is unable to provide any reasons for such a skew - and being a scientist, I couldn’t possibly make an unfounded guess... But I bet it is so there are more Germans around for the UK majority to laugh at during Euro 2004...

Rowing update

With sunny hours increasing every day and water levels dropping (our sport is after all rowing not white-water rafting) the pressure is on to top the successes we had in last years big Oxford College regattas. With Torpids (meaning ‘slow boats’ for some reason!) rapidly approaching, crews have been selected to battle it out with those who chose the wrong college or did not get into Linacre.

On a more personal level, the hard work over the last months is finally starting to pay off, with strength and fitness reaching new horizons – I would say we are ready to face the challenge!

Of course rowing is not all about rowing, if you see what I mean. A pint or two (cocktails for the ladies) goes down so much easier after one has earned it. I’m not sure whether we deserved quite as much drink as has been had by some (you know who you are!), but we’ll leave that for now.

That leaves me to invite you all to join us for a banter, cheer and laugh down by the river on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday of 7th week and a bit of a party after.

Cheerio!

WHERE DO YOU COME FROM?

Chris Grobler is in his 3rd Year studying Biology at Linacre, and is President of Linacre Boat Club
It’s an old game, but it’s not funny...

Tim Rayden gives us an insider’s viewpoint of the Linacre/Corpus football season.

It’s some god-forsaken hour of the morning on a Saturday. The kind of time you used to think didn’t actually exist, or at least if it did, it was only rowers that ever saw it. It’s cold outside, raining steadily from a dark grey sky. The body aches from too little sleep, but your head is far worse and won’t let you drift off again. You had a pint or two too-many last night, and you remember that you once made a promise not to subject your finely tuned athlete’s physique to this sort of punishment. It’s not the sport that hurts, it the fact that its still so f***ing early!

Every Saturday is the same. While normal people are lounging in bed with the weekend papers, a few of Linacre’s finest are shivering into their shorts, stumbling out onto the turf, and wondering why we force ourselves through this painful ritual. Every Saturday is the same. Si looks like death, Dave smells so strongly of alcohol that you could get drunk just standing next to him, Jusitan is strapping on his bionic arm, and Kev appears to be entirely encased in neoprene. The Africans haven’t turned up again, but on the plus side, Dom had ten pints last night and, mysteriously, seems absolutely fine. (How does he do that? It must be the advantage of youth.) Stu stumbles in a few minutes before kick-off, but there’ll be no space in the changing room until Manny has gathered in Beyonce’s ass and taped it in securely.

You’re right, they don’t look like much, but these assorted specimens, with Sir Kevin of Lane at the helm, represent the combined might of Linacre and Corpus Christi College’s footballing talent. Or at least, the footballing might of Linacre handicapped to the proverbial third leg of Corpus. (They have a pitch, we play on it, but what else have they ever done for us? Their sole contribution to the squad is Teflon Greg the goalkeeper, who makes selection for political reasons, but doesn’t make that many crosses.)

Kev himself, the perennial guardian of Linacre’s glory on whom the sun will never set, apparently played in the legendary double winning side of 1928: a team that boasted such household names as Lefty Linton and Long Dong Lenihan. Kev’s hunger for the battle remains undimmed by his advanced years, and his experience gives the extra yard of pace that still takes even sprightly young whippets like Dom by surprise. This season, he finally finds himself among the kind of quality players capable of returning Linacre to that legendary status. Despite what you might think as you glance around the changing room half an hour before the game, this team is becoming a force to be reckoned with. Three years in the making and drawing its talent from three continents, Linacre football is starting to bear the fruit of its labours. Built on the defensive foundation of Thabit’s guile and Tommy Arnold’s physical presence, and pivoting round Manny’s midfield lynchpin, Linacre has the kind of attacking options that would have your average Russian oil baron reaching for his chequebooks. And with the exception of Paul NJ, none of them are luxury fair-weather players.

Any strike pairing you’d care to choose from African Steve, Richie P, Big Dom, Si, Paul Lewis or Paul NJ would give you a potent enough mix. Each one brings something different to the party, and the resulting cocktail tends to leave defences somewhat, well, shaken and stirred. Throw in Glue-Foot-Dan marauding through the midfield and Stu streaking down the wing faster than even Dave’s ‘jungle guts’ can run, and you’ve got a more awe-inspiring prospect than Dave’s guts themselves. It’s hard to imagine the cold grip of fear that must seize the hearts of those opponents, unless you imagine the sight of Si looking for his lost contact-lens in the shower.

It all adds up to the best chance Linacre has had to add some silverware to its trophy cabinet for some years: since Kev was just a boy, in fact. And some of us are starting to taste that glory once again. Last weekend, seventy-five minutes in, when Kev’s cultured through-ball bisected the St John’s defence and Paul crashed home, the winner, I thought I heard, beyond the noise of that fat Scot moaning at his defence, the faint call of silver trumpets. Silver trumpets I tell you! The same silver trumpets that sound as the gates to the hall of fame swing open. Because this year, instead of a squad that promises much and delivers little, Linacre has produced a team with quality in all departments, and a knack of scoring goals at crucial times. It has a team with strength, pride, passion, Hernan’s chest hair, Dave’s guts and Beyonce’s ass.

With the season’s campaign reaching fever pitch its no wonder the crowds are flooding to the games in their droves. They might never see the like of this again.

Sadly, the Linacre/Corpus powerhouse were shot down by the referee with a 4-3 defeat in the quarter finals on Sat. 28th Feb. They will, of course, be back next year!

Tim studied Forestry at Linacre in 2000/01. He now works for ProForest in Oxford and is a continuing member of Linacre. (See www.proforest.org for info about what he does now!)
The Linacre Netball Warriors

Catherine Henderson, 3rd year in Plant Sciences at Linacre, tells of the drama from the Netball season

Far away, on the other side of town, through the Worcester College gates and formal lawns and on past tranquil lake waters lies a relatively unknown scene on Friday afternoons. A scene of drama, excitement, joy and sometimes despair. I am talking of course of Oxford’s netball league third division matches. Here, Linacre members brave the onslaught of more youthful and perhaps nippy opposition using only their mature wisdom and cunning. The team stood solid in the centre of the third division by the end of last term, biding its time. Now, may I stress, the Linacre netball team does not use conventional methods for success. This term we have been employing the strategy of the hustler. To the untrained eye it may seem that the other teams are dominating, mainly through their accumulating more goals than us. But I assure you this is only a small part of the beautiful game of netball. Linacre is in reality luring them into a complicated game where we will soon be triumphant.

The Linacre netball team accepts all to its breast – any age, sex, ability. More people means we don’t have to run about quite so much so if you feel you would like to have a go at playing and don’t take sport too seriously do get in touch...

CATHERINE.HENDERSON@LINACRE.OX.AC.UK

Ultimate Frisbee

It is somewhat unfortunate that the academic year is just beginning as the great English weather is just descending into dark and icy depths of a wet winter. Somehow we still managed to persuade a hardy group of individuals to come and have a go at the peculiarly named sport of ‘Ultimate Frisbee’.

For those of you yet to be converted, ‘Ultimate’ (you have to drop the ‘Frisbee’ bit in official stuff because it’s a trade-mark...) is a strange hybrid between Netball and American Football. You’re not allowed to run when you have the disc, and the idea is to work up the pitch and catch it inside the ‘endzone’. Take it from me, it is a lot of fun, and it is self-refereed which generally leads to a happier atmosphere on pitch.

Ultimate is also one of the few sports where mixed (or co-ed) teams are the norm, helping to maintain the ‘spirit’ of the game. In fact, so seriously is the importance of the ‘spirit’ taken, that every tournament has a ‘spirit prize’ as well as the prize for the winners. Every team votes to say which team they played had the best spirit. One of the main reasons I mention this is that Linacre’s performance at the Beginner’s Tournament before Christmas was redeemed by achieving the spirit prize (we came last place in the competition, but other teams ideas of what makes a ‘beginner’ did seem to differ somewhat from ours...).

At the time of writing, we find ourselves with one game left in the spring league. With 3 wins and 1 loss, we are well-placed, but now need to beat Queen’s by 7 points if we are to keep the title. We’ll be going for the win for pride!

So now you know a little of what’s going on, maybe as the weather improves and the sun shines long enough to allow an informal ‘pick-up’ game or two before dinner, why not come out and join us some time. You won’t regret it...

DANIEL.GALLICHAN@LINACRE.OX.AC.UK
It's just not cricket... Well, actually, this is

Despite the preconception of cricket as a pastime for upper class English gentlemen to enjoy whilst wearing white clothes on sunny English afternoons, the Cricket Club at Linacre is one of the most diverse groups of people in the College. Last season, around twenty people represented us on the field, a substantial number of whom had never played before and many without having even seen a game, let alone possessing their own whites.

Last year also saw Linacre make their debut in the graduate league. In this competition, the games take just one sunny English afternoon, the Cricket Club at Linacre is one of the most diverse groups of people in the College. Last season, around twenty people represented us on the field, a substantial number of whom had never played before and many without having even seen a game, let alone possessing their own whites.

Last year also saw Linacre make their debut in the graduate league. In this competition, the games take just one sunny English afternoon, the Cricket Club at Linacre is one of the most diverse groups of people in the College. Last season, around twenty people represented us on the field, a substantial number of whom had never played before and many without having even seen a game, let alone possessing their own whites.

BADMINTON

The Linacre badminton club is one of the unknown unsung successes of the College's sporting achievements. In the two seasons since its formation our first team, which is joint with Jesus College, has won its division twice and reached the semi-finals of Cuppers both years. This is an exceptional achievement for a squad with no Blues players (unlike the other three semi-finalists).

As well as the all-conquering A team, the B team caters for developing players, who have performed well this year in the same division as the firsts. Not only this, but we have a large number of social players, who come to the weekly clubnight (currently Sunday 7-9 pm) purely for enjoyment and some exercise. The club is very keen to recruit more members and provides free racquets and shuttles, so that there is no cost to players. We hope to see you at a clubnight soon.

CLIMBING

Linacre Climbing Club is an informal network of climbers at Linacre of all abilities, from diehard E7 leaders (OK, we don’t have any of them at the moment...) to complete beginners. Occasional club trips to the climbing wall at Brookes and social events are sometimes organised, but the main purpose of the club is to provide an email network whereby any member looking for climbing partners can email the club mailing list on lina-mert-climb@maillist.ox.ac.uk and invite others to join them at Brookes wall or further afield for outdoors climbs. To join the mailing list, please email lina-mert-climb-subscribe@maillist.ox.ac.uk

THE LINACRE BALL

Surprising and disgraceful as it may seem to some of you, at £50 a ticket, the Linacre Ball is one of the cheapest college balls there is! You may, however, still be wondering what you will be getting for your money. Well, the college will be transformed. The CR will be part of our ‘ship’ and the Tanner Room, the TV Room, the Dining Hall and a marquee in the Quad will all be different destinations. There will be live bands playing most of the night, as well as DJs, a casino, an ice vodka luge and much more! Included in the cost of the ticket will be free drinks, including cocktails, and free food, including sweet (mmnn, Cleo’s crepes...) and savoury snacks throughout the night - even a breakfast! Dress code is ‘black-tie’, so reach for those dinner jackets and dust off those gowns (although a dress will do!). If you didn’t get an invite in your pigeon hole: sorry, we used the list of students from the Linacre website! Ticket request forms are available from the ball website given below. Don’t forget to buy your tickets soon!

http://www.linacre.ox.ac.uk/ball