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2005 marks the final year in Linacre’s 40th Anniversary fund-raising campaign, “Advancing Linacre”.

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In conjunction with the development office, we are proposing to increase student involvement in the campaign and we are looking for YOUR help! Do you have previous fund-raising experience, some bright ideas for student-led initiatives, lots of energy, or just a desire to help secure the future of Linacre? If so, please get in touch with Lori Colliander, the CR Development officer, and you can be involved.

lori.colliander@linacre.ox.ac.uk
Editorial

This issue of Linacre Lines is dedicated to Pleasure. In my effort to get inspiration for this editorial I started making a list of things I take pleasure in doing (making lists being one of them). The list looked like this:

1. Doing the laundry (at least 4 times a week).
2. Watching "Stars in their Eyes" (Saturday 7pm, ITV1).
3. Fitting big things into small places (This is not an innuendo).
4. Doing 4 digit multiplications in my head (and getting them right).
5. Turning every possible conversation to myself and how cool I am.

This list would go on forever had I not realised that all the pleasures I was listing were extremely uncool. That made me wonder whether it's the small uncool (and sometimes guilty) pleasures that do make all the difference in our lives. It also made me realise that it's these small pleasures that also make us special. Yes, I do like chocolate, massages, getting praise for things (very rarely indeed), good movies and having a drink (even if it's a larger shandy). But who doesn't? These pleasures are great but enjoying them just makes me human, it doesn't make me Christina.

So, don't be embarrassed to admit that you are a sucker for buy 1 get 1 free offers on anti-dandruff shampoo (even though you don't have dandruff). Keep taking pleasure in the small uncool pleasures you experience, be it changing your hairstyle every other day like Stuart, laminating things like Gareth, finding mistakes in every possible motion put in the Common Room like Tom or having cigarette breaks while working out in the gym like Alex and Billy. Celebrate your uncool pleasures because that's what makes YOU special!

Enjoy this issue,

Christina Orphanidou, editor
contact me at: lines@linacre.ox.ac.uk
IMPRESSIONS
And what about the tea?
Tim Rayden doesn’t want to come over all superior

They used to say that half the fun in travelling was returning home. But that was before they built Heathrow. As anyone who has recently been shunted through the grubby passages of our great national airport will testify, returning there is no fun whatsoever.

In the old days of course, you had to go by sea, and the whole process was a long drawn out affair. Your team of bearers might have negotiated river crossings and tropical rainstorms without spilling any of your gin, but you still had to face a few weeks on the high seas before you were home and dry. By the time you reached port you were so sick of promenading on the poop deck that even Southampton was a pleasing sight. If it brought an end to all those dreary games of bridge and the unwelcome attentions of the first mate it was just what was needed. There’s a limit to the number of times you can say “Hello sailor” before the joke starts to wear a little thin. Besides, in Southampton, the returning traveller was welcomed home by great crowds of flag waving onlookers. At Heathrow you get a broken trolley, a used copy of the Daily Mail and thousands of people waiting for somebody else.

But if today’s homecoming isn’t much to write home about, what about the time you spend away? What about the fun to be had before you come home? Unfortunately, I fear that much of the glamour and excitement of overseas exploration has faded. The pith helmet and camel, once the equipage of choice for the discerning voyager, are no longer called for. Returning with a brace of tusks and tiger skins doesn’t seem quite so appropriate, and you can’t get the mineral rights to half of southern Africa in exchange for a silver pocket watch.

Globalisation has taken much of the excitement out of travel, but also transformed what we are likely to learn from it. You are less likely to encounter hitherto undisturbed civilisations that have no written language and thrive on the principle of polygamy. I checked, but Ex-pedia weren’t offering discounted flights to anywhere that still used cocoa beans as a form of currency. When you think you’ve reached the edge of civilisation and you consult the village doctor about your indigestion, he will mix you a paste of ground neem seeds and lime juice, wrap it in a banana leaf and explain that an American pharmaceutical company has intellectual property rights to the remedy.

In 2003, I sat in a village in a remote corner of eastern Cameroon and watched Inspector Morse on satellite television. In the same year, while holidaying in the highlands of northern Ethiopia, I was told by a shepherd boy that David Beckham was about to sign for Real Madrid.

As a result of these upheavals, today’s travellers divide themselves into two camps. There are those nostalgic for the heroes of yesteryear, who see themselves as a David Livingstone or a Wilfred Thesiger. They want to believe that if they go far enough from home, they will discover great tracts of uncharted wilderness, and people who’ve never heard of Manchester United. In the other camp there are those for whom any degree of foreign-ness is intolerable. They want their fish and chips done the way it is at home and are constantly indignant that the waiter doesn’t speak English. They don’t eat anything unless they’ve washed it themselves in bottled water. And what about the tea? Well! They don’t make it properly, do they?

The former types appear to wish globalisation hadn’t happened, and yearn for an encounter with the noble savage. The latter would apparently be happier if they were at home in Dudley. Unfortunately, it’s the Dudleyite that you meet everywhere you go! They are the ones who seem to believe that their digital photos of the Victoria Falls entitles them to hold forth about the ‘real Africa’, but whose only enduring memory of the trip is that the flight was delayed and the departure lounge wasn’t air-conditioned. They are the same tour bus crowd that can be heard josting with each

other over how many places they’ve visited. They match each other destination for destination until one produces the trump card. “Ah!” comes the triumphal shout, “Then you must go!” One suspects that for these folk, most of the fun really is the coming home.

At least the electricity works. And you can drink the water. And you can slip back into your narrow-minded domestic cocoon, utterly unchallenged by what you see around you.

I’m not trying to come over all superior. The fact is, there is something of both types in me, and, I suspect, in all of us. We spend half the time craving an encounter with a culture different from our own, and then quibble when the only thing on the breakfast menu is deep-fried chicken feet. What I’m saying is that on this ever shrinking, over-crowded planet, genuine exploration is harder than it ever was, and its not because it’s still difficult to find a bearer you can trust with your gin. It’s because genuine travel requires an open mind. It’s an acceptance of things as they are,

‘We spend half the time craving an encounter with a culture different from our own, and then quibble when the only thing on the breakfast menu is deep-fried chicken feet’

without nostalgia, envy or judgement, and a genuine interest in people for their own sake. The irony is that as much to learn at home as there is abroad. Each of us is surrounded by enough cultural diversity to satisfy the most ardent explorer. But we need to respond to it in the same way whether we meet it at home or off in some far-flung corner of the world.

It’s also important to remember that the increasing ease of travel puts us under the spotlight in a way that was rare in the past. Britain is also being explored by people who arrive with a romantic ideal; a vision of red pillar boxes and misty autumn mornings. People who find that Britain is not the epitome of opulence, sophistication and tradition about which they had read. Just ask Mr and Mrs Li, newly arrived from China, how they feel when they duck, under the doorway of a quaint English pub to find the only meal choices are Thai curry or chicken chow-mein. And what about the green tea? Well! They don’t make it properly, do they?
**IMPRESSIONS**

**The joys and perils of performance art**

Marianna Ofosu had a profound conversation over lunch.

The Harlem Dancer

Appraising youths laughed with young prostitutes
And watched her perfect, half-clothed body sway;
Her voice was like the sound of blended flutes
Blown by black players upon a picnic day.
She sang and danced on gracefully and calm,
The light gauze hanging loose about her form;
To me she seemed a proudly-swaying palm
Grown lovelier for passing through a storm.
Upon her swarthy neck black, shiny curls
Profusely fell; and, tossing coins in praise,
The wine-flushed, bold-eyed boys, and even the girls,
Devoured her with their eager, passionate gaze;
But, looking at her falsely-smiling face
I knew her self was not in that strange place.

Claude McKay

A my and I met at the MOMA for a Saturday lunch to talk about the pleasure and pain of art. For the past week, Christina had been hounding me to write on dancing, and, since I’ve been living in a ‘dancer’s trough’ lately, I thought I’d better draw attention towards something else. My lunch with Amy was to produce a dialogue on the ‘artistic’, a worthy substitute, I thought, for a submission on my love for dance (the recent lack of love).

Amy, educated at Columbia and Julliard in America, has sung professionally in the opera houses of Europe. I have been trained in a number of dance forms and now compete in Ballroom and Latin American. We’ve dabbled in each others’ disciplines. She’s taken ballet; I’ve had a summer tryst with a musician. So we came, clad in chic black, to MOMA’s restaurant to untangle art as we know it. The batteries on my tape recorder died just before we started so the following is a transcript of sorts, first preserved in part on a white, two-pied napkin and now reconstructed from memory.

M: What do you think it is about art that we love so much?  
A: Connecting to its ‘ideal’. There’s something beautiful about participating in that which aims at transcending our lived realities. Mozart called it the ‘sublime’.

M: So is it, which we’ll limit to performance art to reflect our competencies, about sympathizing or about accessing something that others can’t?
A: It’s about both. It’s tapping into the creative dimension, which is one way to know the world, to say something about who we are as people.

M: When I was a child, I used to dance all the time and others would clap and watch or join in. I don’t think that I knew it then, but dancing at that time, was like having a conversation or hugging someone. It was about communicating with other people; it had an innocent, relaxed communicative intention.

A: Yes, that’s what singing is about in part… revealing a particular emotional truth.

M: There is a difference in the truth that the informal and formal reveal. I dance casually at a party, or a club, or even in my room only when I’m happy or inspired. So still, like the child who I was, I hold on to the innocent intention of using dance to express positive emotion. But I’m not always in the mood to contrive emotion through dance at a competition or a demo. Sometimes it just seems terribly dishonest. So does emotion in art works on two levels: that which the artist feels while performing and that which she is meant to be communicating through the performance?

A: Focus is about snapping into character and me then? A bit of altruism and a bit of narcissism, too. But is my art supposed to make me happy?

A: Well, that’s about focus and honesty to the character. Acting coaches talk a lot about honesty to the character. The focus comes when the physical, emotional and spiritual are in concert. The technique equips the physical to obey the emotional and spiritual that should be informed by inspiration, which is really a love for art. That love should force a commitment or honesty to the character; the character should come first.

M: Well, I like singing because it’s fun. Ideally, you wouldn’t feel the disconnect. I love singing. I don’t necessarily like the business of singing, but I love everything about singing, the practicing and the performance. So since I love it, when I do it, there is no dishonesty. I am the character that I’m playing whatever range of emotions she may be experiencing.

M: There must be some dishonesty or at least a lot of pretense. I knew how to dance a broken heart even before I ever experienced one. I think that it’s honesty that can sometimes compromise a good performance. I’ve never known how to hide what I’m experiencing while dancing. That’s what I mean by the difference between informal and formal or performance dance, they can be contingent on different inspirations.

M: But who does art serve then, me or the character? I remember connecting to the rumba for the first time in a serious way after an intense relationship. It’s a dance that stretches the body and the emotions in a very compelling way and I understood its true nature after I experienced those emotions. It’s a sad dance really and I dance it best when I am at my saddest. Then it is useful to me and I am honest to its character. It’s hard for me to dance the jive when I’m sad.

A: Focus is about snapping into character quickly and then snapping right out of it. It’s hard to do and it requires lots of work and an enormous level of self-control. In art, focus is 50-60% of performance. The rest is self-expression, singing or dancing something in a way uniquely yours.

M: So a compromise between the character and me then? A bit of altruism and a bit of narcissism, too. But is my art supposed to make me happy?

A: Well, I like singing because it’s fun. LL
Robert Langdon walked up the steps and glanced at the plaque next to the door: “Linacre College”. He smiled knowingly as he thought of the thousands of people who had walked through that doorway without realising that this harmless-looking building was actually Linacre Temple, a foundation established in the sixteenth century to protect a secret that if told would shake the beliefs of everyone on the planet. The Temple’s Grand Masters had been drawn from the highest sections of European society and included Thomas Linacre, Sandro Botticelli, Leonardo da Vinci and Paul Slack.

Yet the only outward sign of the Temple’s association with the secret of the sacred feminine was the three shells that adorned the Temple’s badge. It was, Langdon knew, a clear reference to Botticelli’s ‘Birth of Venus’, the 1485 Italian painting that now hangs in the Uffizi Gallery in Florence. A symbol of the creation of the female element in life, Botticelli’s masterpiece had long been mistaken as a triumph of Renaissance art. In fact, it was nothing less than a sign asserting the equal balance of the sexes.

As he entered the foyer of the Temple, Langdon held the door open behind him for the beautiful French cryptologist Sophie Neveu. They had not walked ten feet into the foyer when Sophie suddenly gasped. “The shells!” she said. “It’s the same symbol that my grandfather had tattooed on his derriere!”

Langdon smiled. “That’s right,” he replied. “Your grandfather was also a Grand Master of Linacre. The symbol is a reference to Botticelli’s ‘Birth of Venus’, the 1485 Italian painting that now hangs in the Uffizi Gallery in Florence. It is a symbol of the creation of the female element in life and a sign asserting the equal balance of the sexes.”

“Wow!” said Sophie, stunned, “I never knew.”

“Few people do,” said Robert gravely and his mind went back to a class he had taught last semester at Harvard…

“Does anyone know what this is?” he had asked and had held out to the students a cockle shell picked up on the beach. ‘It’s a bivalve mollusc!’ shouted out some male undergraduate. Langdon had smiled indulgently – college men were so immature. ‘No’, he had calmly continued, ‘it’s a symbol of the sacred feminine and a sign asserting the equal balance of the sexes!’ The class had sat in amazed silence whilst the female undergraduates had gazed up at him with wondrous amazement and respect…

“This is the Common Room,” Langdon informed Sophie as they passed beyond the foyer.

“Can I do anything,” asked Sophie in her perfect English.

Langdon glanced up. “No, you just sit quietly in the corner – there’s a selection of foreign newspapers by the door. I’ve got to go and single-handedly rescue the sacred feminine from the demonising propaganda campaign of the world’s religions.”

“Might that not be a job for a woman?” asked Sophie.

Langdon paused. “Nah,” he said. “That would be going too far.”

When I was thinking of studying literature at university, I was warned that it would deprive me of the simple pleasure of reading trashy books. So acutely honed would become my critical faculties, it was argued, that they would balk at badly-written prose and tear to shreds simply-structured novels. As it happens, the person who told me this was a history teacher and he knew nothing about studying literature. He held that English, not being a discipline, was essentially a leisure activity whose purpose was to refine the sensibilities and cultivate the judgement. When I had the good fortune to win a copy of Dan Brown’s The Da Vinci Code in the pass the parcel at the Linacre Christmas bop, I was reminded of my history teacher’s admonitions. Having read it, it then seemed the ideal book on which to hang a quick discussion of exactly what it is I study. What follows is therefore not per se a review. However, it will become obvious that if there’s one greater pleasure than reading a good book, it’s rubbishing a bad one. Dan Brown’s Da Vinci Code is a 600-page publishing sensation set in a world not too dissimilar from our own. It is a thriller with a hugely promising opening scene and a dull but brisk, narratorial style. The plot concerns our symbologist, Robert Langdon (whose work seems to be a paranoid form of semiology, rather than the study of ancient symbols) and his newly-acquired French side-kick, Sophie Neveu, as they avoid French justice in order to hunt down the Holy Grail, a.k.a. Mary Magdalen, a.k.a. the wife of Jesus, a.k.a. the sacred feminine, a.k.a. the Mona Lisa (or something). They team up with an English conspiracy theorist from the 1890s and struggle against the forces that want to suppress all of this information, represented by the Opus Dei group.

The first thing to point out is that The Da Vinci Code is easy to read. Most texts I come across are not. They contain complicated descriptions, abstract concepts and often abstruse language, as a thriller rarely does. Indeed it is its narrative drive and lack of thought-provoking complexities that makes a thriller a good distraction. Were I to study it (and many do, for English is a broad church), I doubtless would find nothing remotely distracting in it. The second point is that in the study of symbolism, the book offers an interesting counterpoint to good practice in literary studies.

‘If there’s one greater pleasure than reading a good book, it’s rubbishing a bad one.’

Eclectic in method (indeed, undisciplined), English can broadly be described as a process of extrapolation. Take any sentence and shake it hard enough, take any poem or any shopping list and something interesting will emerge, some kind of historical or social or linguistic or psychological insight – something that helps us explain the world and our behaviour a little better.
IMPRESSIONS

At their best, literary studies are robust and penetrating, unconstrained by disciplinary limits. However, there is also an associated freedom from agreed modes of evaluation and within the subject there are such differences of theoretical approach that one style of research may be absolutely unrecognisable and meaningless to a practitioner of another. At their most extreme, literary studies can be obsessed with the meanings that a particular author gives to certain words, which might be interesting biographically or perhaps psychologically but which rarely speak beyond the individual. Alternatively, complicated readings might be founded on a flawed observation or on an imposition of the critic themselves and yet gain widespread acceptance because they seem politically useful.

With this last case we’re approaching something like symbology, as portrayed in The Da Vinci Code. If you try to crack everything open with a sledgehammer, everything you open well tend to look somewhat the same: as if it’s been smashed by a sledgehammer. So it is with the world as viewed by Robert Langdon. Everything he turns his attention to—from painting to architecture to playing cards—appears to bear out the truth of his absurd obsession. Like a literary critic, our Harvard hero specialises in reading beneath the surface of things, in extrapolating a story or alternative meaning from seemingly haphazard or everyday events. Like a critic, too, what he most often uncovers is history. Indeed, the novel is in part nothing more than a repurposed guidebook.

“Shaped like an enormous horseshoe, the Louvre was the longest building in Europe, stretching farther than three Eiffel Towers laid end to end. Not even the million square feet of plaza between the museum wings could challenge the majesty of the façade’s breadth. Langdon had once walked the Louvre’s entire perimeter, an astonishing three-mile journey.

Despite the estimated five weeks it would take a visitor to properly appreciate the 65,300 pieces of art in this building, most tourists chose an abbreviated experience Langdon referred to as ‘Louvre Lite’—a full sprint through the museum to see the three most famous objects: the Mona Lisa, Vénus de Milo and Winged Victory.”

Even at this innocuous level, the tell-tale signs of the professional bore’s superiority complex clutter the description. They become even more apparent when exposing the curious assemblage of conspiracy theories that lies behind the plot. As the tale of secret societies and brainwashed billions unfolds and any kind of insights we ‘tourists’ may have had are dismissed, it becomes clear that Langdon’s symbology is not a means of opening up the world to reveal the richness of allusions and possible interpretations. Rather it is an act of reduction: the variety and wonder of life is shown to have only one possible interpretation. The silliness of all this can be best demonstrated when Langdon uses his skills to explain the ‘meaning’ of the Eiffel Tower and underscore one of his minor themes (that the French are generally appalling):

“Symbologists often remarked that France—a country renowned for machismo, womanizing and diminutive, insecure leaders like Napoleon and Pepin the Short—could not have chosen a more apt national emblem than a thousand-foot phallus.”

Leaving aside the ridiculousness of this observation (what about the hundreds of symbolic phaluses in any US city?), it is obvious that the whole process of symbology is one in which the interesting is reduced to just another trite fact that only makes sense in the mind of Langdon.

Yet, not only does the book fail to make sense outside of its own world, it fails ultimately to bear out its own message. If exposing people to these symbols really can help usher in a new age of sexual equality, if we as readers are seriously expected to react to this rescuing of women from the subordination of men—then why hasn’t the author, Dan Brown, got the message? His novel presents us with the same old thriller world in which the woman tags along, being pretty and impressed. As the two male protagonists lecture to her, Sophie Neveu contributes precisely nil to the action of the book, after an admittedly promising opening. What is worse, she is significant to the plot only because of a male relation who twice sets her name as a password (the clues throughout are tedious, but that’s another story). The ‘sacred feminine’ is reduced to a key in a game played by men. Perhaps it’s because she’s French, ‘every new publishing sensation that emerges (White Teeth, Captain Corelli, Harry Potter), be it literary or otherwise, merely emphasises the gulf between those successful books that have millions spent on promoting them and the many new good books that are ignored’

And why do they create the hype? It seems to me that the attraction of a conspiracy theory is the same as that of a specious reading of a text in literary studies: it offers the hope that things are not as banal as they seem, without the effort of having to go and do some real thinking. It also offers us the appearance of challenging the status quo and the sense of superiority of the cognoscenti.

Rowley’s thoughts turned back to a lecture he had given last year at Linacre... "Does anybody know what’s wrong with The Da Vinci Code?" he had asked the stunned, enraptured audience. "No? Well, it’s like this...”

LL
The pleasure in finding out...
Asif Memon got more than he expected

It's noon as I walk out of a café onto a quiet street. As I walk out I can feel the intensity of the sun, which I assume must be up there suspended directly above, in the clear blue sky. It is this subconscious logical deduction that results in me finding it slightly odd that there is a man standing on the pavement just a few yards away staring straight up at the sky.

Instinctively I look straight up; then curse my stupidity -- averting my gaze a microsecond too late after feeling the full intensity of the midday sun in my eyes. Once I have regained some vision I check again if the man is still there. Sure enough he's there; still looking up. I give up trying to answer why this man is looking straight up at the sun. Instead it is the how that fills my mind. He could be blind.

A closer look at the man's face dispels that idea. I walk around the man, cautiously maintaining my distance. I look up a couple of times shielding my eyes slightly and each time only find the blazing sun and nothing else. This is ridiculous.

'I would give a leg and an arm to unravel what seems like a complete mystery'

I look around wildly to get some agreement on the fact that there is something rather odd here, but there is no one else in the street. I finally decide to ask the man himself. I try a number of times but am met with silence. I wonder if he is deaf, but that is unimportant. I have been playing a mental game with myself thus far and I am quite certain that I have accounted for and subsequently discounted all the logical reasons that could explain how this man is able to stand there staring at the sun.

Extremely perturbed, and barely hanging on to my sanity, I feel I would give a leg and an arm to unravel what seems like a complete mystery. In a blaze of frustration and excitement I run at the man and push him out of the way. I look up and I am surprised not to find the sun, but a piano, staring at me. It seems to be suspended in mid-air a fair distance (approximately 8 light seconds) exactly below the sun. With its white keys it is grinning broadly at me, mocking me at my failure in solving the mystery. It begins to fall…rapidly. In a flash, an entirely useless intuitive leap that a mind can make in moments such as these, I remember noticing that there was a shadow where the other man was standing. Finally, the mystery is solved. A sense of relief and of restored faith in the normalcy of the world rushes through my head just before the grinning piano does...

...that nine lives are better than one.

Wanted:
Staff for the Linacre May Ball
We're looking for people to join the team and work on the night of the ball

Interested? Contact sara.morgan@linacre.ox.ac.uk for more information
Let’s talk about sex, baby… Why, you might ask. But, darling, this term’s issue is all about pleasure, and do tell me, what’s the most magnificent, most utterly amazing, mind-blowing, toe-curling, fireworks-exploding pleasure of them all? Could it be… SEX? Yes, oh yes, oooh yeeees!! (That’s of course, when it’s done right!)

I have to confess, originally I did not intend to write about sex at all. It’s a topic a touch on the risqué side, especially for an Oxford College publication. But then again, our dear editor practically begged me on her hands and knees, and being a long-standing friend and all that, how could I refuse? Yes, I’m either a very magnanimous person or idiotically naïve, delete as appropriate.

Beware dear readers, this article has no divine literature aspirations, nor does its author imagine herself as a new Carrie from Sex & the City. Rather, it will aspire to investigate the curious nature of a University in a country called England, occasionally synonymous with slutiness due to the behaviour of its countrymen in various holiday resorts across the Med. About 10,000 students are members of this illustrious establishment, most of them healthy, bright young things. You would expect that they would spend all of their waking time (and most of the sleeping one as well) humping each other like rabbits (as other students in other well-respected universities do). However, it’s a truth universally acknowledged (and substantiated by numerous statistical studies, surveys, reviews, the lot) that Oxford’s students DO NOT DO IT, at all, niente, zilch, nada, kaput. It’s like going around with a sign stuck on their foreheads: NO SEX PLEASE, WE’RE OXFORD STUDENTS!

Many students arrive in this truly remarkable environment, all fresh faced (i.e. available), feeling very excited (i.e. horny) about meeting new people (SEX!!) and making new friends (i.e. lovers, boyfriends/girlfriends, one-night-stands, whatever). Some have every intention of expanding their horizons (black, white or any colour, really), others look forward to taking part in philosophical debates (Does size matter?). Others are more interested in activities that require physical exertion and athletic prowess (on the bed, on the floor, against the wall, upside down, inside out etc.). Some on the other hand feel the urge to exercise their vocal cords (OH MY GOOOD, OH YES, YES, YEEEEEES!!!), whereas others are into group activities (the more, the merrier). But, and it’s a sad and disappointing fact that quite a vast proportion of them end up being celibate for more time than they would care to. It’s no wonder that sales of the “rabbit” have gone through the roof; Ann Summers can’t stock it fast enough before it flies off the shelves! Is it the heavy working schedule? Oh please, let’s not be so full of our own self-importance, it’s like suggesting that all other academic establishments across the country are really Clubs 18-30 masquerading as universities. So, could it be the oppressive and claustrophobic environment of the city? Oh, excuses, excuses! The city of the dreaming spires is dazzling, romantically haunted and eerie in the winter months, bright and sparkling in the summer; it has inspired countless authors to sing its praises through the centuries. How can such a beautiful, amorous environment not inspire us to have more sex? For the love of God, even Cambridge students manage to put out more than we do! Ladies and gentlemen, forget about the Boat Race; this University’s pride is seriously at stake!!

Instead of writing this article, I should be providing you with a HOT TOP 20 list of where to have sex in Oxford: the stacks in the Bod may be? The Rad Cam? The Linacre library? (Please feel free to combine your own lists and send them to the author, most inspired list wins you the “I’m an Oxford student but I get laid” award, guaranteed to make your fellow Linacrites go green with envy).

In this city of the dreaming spires, it appears that we spend more time dreaming about sex that actually getting it. So it might be dark and gloomy and cold outside, but inside there are lots of people that would love to warm your beds! So get out there and get it on! Forget about the ritual of getting drunk in a crowded student bar, before even building the courage to make eye contact. Just grab the one you fancy and kiss them senselessly! What’s the worst that can happen? Maybe get a slap on the face? What’s the best that can happen? Maybe you’ll get lucky? It’s too good of an opportunity to pass up. So come on, be bold and grab the bull by the horns, be charming and romantic (after all it’s the season for it), make the earth move and shake the dust off these old books in the Bodleian!

And, hey, while you’re at it, do make sure you use protection…

Hmmmm, in a punt?

Well, whatever rocks your boat!!!
At eight, I was an entrepreneur-in-the-making with my own lemonade stand. I enlisted neighborhood children to work for me, setting up, replenishing supplies, and serving our captive audience of commuter traffic. We made only a small fortune, but one large enough to call attention to ourselves by the local police. They closed us down for not having a permit!

Not wanting to be a politician, a lawyer, or a language interpreter, I did what any poli-sci/modern foreign language major would have done. I rode the dot com wave for four years, working for two internet media companies, Salon Media Group, http://www.salon.com, and Lion's Gate Entertainment’s VOD http://www.cinemanolow.com. I mostly focused on new media advertising sales, but in true start-up fashion, also worked in business development, content acquisition, raising venture capital and marketing.

In 2002 I was recruited home to help with my family’s business, a network of vocational schools. The Poughkeepsie, New York campus was in trouble and my challenge was to bring the school to a higher profit level. This is my type of problem solving, but it was a daunting task, to simultaneously play Principal to over 200 students, a large faculty and administration — and without any educational administration experience (except through osmosis growing up). Let’s just say there was a lot of trial and error. In the end, I succeeded at increasing enrollment and establishing better school morale. The experience made me hungry to start my own business. To accomplish this, it seemed natural to want the formal training in areas of finance, economics and accounting that one can traditionally imbibe with an MBA. Ridley-Cowell agreed to sponsor me.

I chose Said Business School at Oxford’s one-year intensive program for its focus on entrepreneurship. But thank god for the college life because I would put my head in a blender if I were surrounded by money obsessed business students all the time! Actually, that is the reputation of MBA’s but many of my SBS classmates work in social entrepreneur networks, and care more about corporate responsibility than you might typically see. This is even evidenced in class discussions when students argue for the customer’s rights, and lecturers respond with ‘CFMITYM.’

But I love escaping to Linacre to get a dose of what we MBA’s are making the money to fund, like research on cow behavior or reducing fungi on rice patties. (You didn’t think I would forget to spell out that nasty acronym did you? “Cash Flow Is More Important Than Your Mother”).

In addition, SBS is in its relative infancy (we are the ninth class), which is a bonus because we are given the chance to help expand and develop the program. We are encouraged by the staff who work around the clock to increase the standards based on our feedback. This also makes the Oxford Business Alumni more active in job recruitment as we are more closely tied to one another through frequent networking events.

But really, after six years of successful work, why did I come to SBS? Was it for the advanced management techniques? Actually, don’t tell my Organizational Behavior lecturer, but I kept thinking last term that all the research on effective manager techniques was pointless because to me it boils down to instinct, not training.

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Firstly, we are fortunate to have solid practice in sourcing deal opportunities. Oxford is a mecca of intellectual property, with advanced science and technology vying for venture capital seed money. MBA’s have more daily exposure to these ‘Angel’ or Venture Capital funders than most people. In fact, our new business development (NBD) project this term is a fantastic practical application of turning our own product or service ideas into a live business for presentation to VC’s.

Secondly, many of our assignments and larger projects like the NBD or strategic consulting project off campus are completed as group work. This can be very challenging at times considering our vast differences in work backgrounds coming from forty-four countries, but it is a wonderful learning experience. I expected to be the unique unicorn of the program among the big bankers, traders, and accountants, but am surrounded by lawyers, medical doctors, radio person ants, military leaders, and small business owners. I will never forget how humbling the introduction days were as we sat in the Nelson Mandela Lecture Theater listening to all one hundred and eighty-four of our one-minute self pitches. Michaelmas term was difficult, but the collaboration among my colleagues made it very positive practice.

Many of you are on your way to the prestigious Dr. title, but I’ll happily settle to be called Master Weymouth. Life in Oxford, with healthy distractions like the varsity tennis team or Linacre’s boat club is making it all the more enjoyable. I already feel rewarded for my decision in taking a year off from the real world to replenish my bag of tricks.

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REFLECTIONS

The Pleasures of being Principal

Professor Paul Slack thinks that being our Principal is not half bad

ike many other pleasures, the particular pleasures of being Principal lie partly in familiarity, partly in novelty. A few (censored) extracts from a Principal’s diary of a typical Michaelmas Term, illustrate some of them.

Week 0. First Newcomers’ dinner: meet lots of impressive new students, from forty-odd countries, doing thirty-odd courses, all bright, eager, and a bit uncertain about what Linacre is. I’m relieved to find they still laugh at the jokes in the Principal’s speech. So do the Fellows, who’ve forgotten the punchlines. Second Newcomers’ dinner, twenty-four hours later: laughter more subdued (word has got round to students; Fellows now remember). Students still impressive.

First Linacre Body: Fellows and Common Room representatives are the same as in June, and so is most of the business, but spirits are high and faces suntanned – from hard labour at conferences and field-work in the Mediterranean naturally. As someone once remarked, there are only three reasons for being an academic: July, August and September.

Week 1. Committees start: usual round: Domestic (repairs required; can the Common Room really need re-decorating again?); Academic (some brilliant people want fellowships or scholarships); Finance (how to pay for it all?); Development (perhaps there’s a solution).

First Linacre seminar: two presentations, one on the archaeology of bits of Roman Italy (questions from students who want to go and visit; and from Fellows who’ve been there and pretend they know it all already). The second paper is on Alzheimer’s disease: all the questions are about the initial symptoms – from students, possibly worried about the Principal; from the Principal, worried about certain Fellows.

Matriculation day: students (well, most of them) are extraordinarily well dressed in sub-fusc, and ranked with military precision by the Domestic Bursar for the photograph. It’s good to see them unbuttoning and looking more normal over lunch. I reflect that in Linacre there is such a thing as a free lunch.

Week 2. First drinks party for new students. I’m amazed as usual by their talents and experience, the sacrifices they’ve made to come here, and the fact that half of them were on the river at dawn. They’re also very tolerant when the Principal asks the predictable questions. Where are you from? What course are you doing? Who’s supervising you? What’s the secret of the ECI’s success (?) John Boardman). I try to get my mind round what I’m told about semiotics and DNA sequencing, and to spot future academic stars and leaders of Common Room.

Panic may strike: still one gap in the programme (saved by brainwave from Nick Brown); two lecturers booked for the same date (saved by tact of Principal’s Secretary, aka Jo). Much rushing back and forth between College and University Offices, but it’s always a pleasure to walk back through the Parks and see the view of Linacre now immortalised by Ben Pritchard’s almanack picture.

Finally, we get to the pleasures of End of Term. Christmas event for old members: they’re loyal and nice, they come back, and like meeting students, who will be old members all too soon. Brian Catling talks eloquently about some of the college pictures and explains why the huge daub in the CTF Room is in fact enormously innovative (and even valuable). Ben Pritchard gives a practical demonstration of how he made the Linacre picture: ink everywhere. Drink follows.

College Christmas dinner: absolutely crowded, everyone has settled in, made friends, relaxed. They now know what Linacre is because they’ve recreated it. The natural leaders, satirists, sports stars and trend-setters are obvious, but not yet the Nobel laureates. The Principal chats to his neighbours with apparent authority about semiotics and DNA, and it’s his turn to laugh at the jokes, in the concluding slide-show.

Vacation: Principal is worn-out and facing the pain of two bulging in-trays. An email comes in from Christina. Will I write something for a special issue of Linacre Lines on the ‘pleasures of being our Principal’? Reply politely, indicating that a special issue on pain seems more appealing just now, but I will reflect on it over New Year. With the inevitability of every essay deadline, this one has now arrived: familiarity, as I say. L.L.
**REFLECTIONS**

**The Great Ball in the Village School**

Istvan Praet went to an interesting party

Doing anthropological fieldwork often involves living in a foreign environment, far away from lovers, relatives, friends, favourite food, etc. My case was no different: I spent more than a year in Esmeraldas, a coastal province in Ecuador, South America. Studying an indigenous group called the Chachi, I lived in Estero Vicente, a small village in the tropical forest. Perhaps not many would consider this “pleasant”. Of course, there were moments of sheer misery and I did not adapt smoothly to a rhythm whereby you get up at six in the morning and go to sleep at nightfall. And as any anthropologist returning from the field, I have anecdotes about eating monkey intestines and waking up with cockroaches in my pyjamas. Still, if one were to ask “Is such fieldwork pleasant?” I would not hesitate to answer yes. Chachi people, to be sure, do not need lessons on how to have pleasure. It would be impossible to recount all the hilarious episodes I experienced, but in what follows I will attempt to give you a small taste.

One night, the people of Estero Vicente organised a ball in the village school. A joyful occasion: women all dressed up in glittery clothes, men in their grooviest shirts and in their clean and shiny wellies. It was my first ball there and I was struck by the rather sharp division between the females and the males. On entering the school, on the left hand side, all the women were sitting with their small children. The men were standing on the other side. In the middle, some of the younger men were fumbling with the hi-fi equipment.

The whole village was present, many toddlers and even a seven day old baby! The DJ set consisted of about ten Spanish pop songs which were randomly repeated. The music was fairly loud, but not so loud as to overpower the sound of the gasoline-driven electricity generator outside the school. The tropical upbeat songs led me to believe that a steaming party will break loose any moment now. But that is not quite how it went. Having heard each of the ten songs about five times, still nobody danced. On one side the women were still sitting in their glittery outfits, furiously flapping their fans, some breastfeeding their babies. On the other side the men were still standing in their neat shirts and shiny wellies, distributing rum, some laughing nervously. Alfonso came beside me: “They don’t dare. They feel too ashamed to dance. It will be better when they have drunk more rum.” The school-teacher, however, saw it rather as a problem of volume or, more precisely, the lack of it. He briefly disappeared and then came back with two amplifiers of a size that I imagine would be more appropriate for a pop concert in a football stadium. The amplifiers were switched on but even then the dance floor remained empty for at least another hour. In a corner I noticed a shady figure. For a few moments, there was an intense coming and going of men and women alike. Money started changing hands and people started walking away secretly with little packets. A drugs-dealer, I thought – after all we were very close to the Colombian border. They just want to get stoned, I speculated; that’s why they don’t bother to dance. However, I soon discover that the truth was rather more innocent. No drugs were dealt, only candy and lollipops: two sweets for five centavos. Then, reluctantly, a few people started dancing. The procedure was always the same. A boy scraped together all his courage, walked over to the other side, picked out the girl of his choice and took her to the dance floor. After the song finished, the boy and girl rushed back to their respective sides. After a while, and after several glasses of rum, some of the elderly women even dared to invite that clumsy stranger to dance. For me, that party marked the beginning of a most wonderful period!

**DO YOU HAVE THE LINACRE LInES BLUES?**

**HAVE YOU MISSED OUT ON YOUR CHANCE TO SHINE?**

**DO YOU WISH YOU WERE PART OF THIS AMAZING CELEBRATION OF INTELLIGENCE AND HUMOUR?**

**DO NO DESPAIR!**

We are now welcoming contributions to the Trinity term issue of Linacre Li(n)es.

Deadline: Friday Wk 3, Theme: Growth, email: lines@linacre.ox.ac.uk

LINACRE LInES: we put the smile back on your face!
REFLECTIONS

Holiday destination: A meditation camp

Carlos Caceres spent ten days on his knees

Linacre College and Oxford in general is full of international students. So you wouldn’t be surprised if I told you that most of the people go for summer holidays to Hawaii, the Caribbean, the Mediterranean, or any other nice and warm place in the world... but I, in the middle of the European Cup, just after my hard and long lasting exams, and some gentle encouragement from my girlfriend, decided to join her for a meditation camp!

So what is all this meditation business about? Basically it consists of a full ten day course, in which you are supposed to sit like a petrified statue on your knees until they, or your back, or any other part of your body, breaks into pieces. Well, that’s how it first appeared to me, anyway. But then the course “sensors” explained to us that the technique consisted, for the first four days, of continuously observing your breath whilst sitting on your knees and nothing else. Then, the last six days, the technique was pretty much the same (i.e. you’ll still have to sit still on your knees) but now you would have to observe all the sensations throughout your body without producing a single reaction or aversion against them. In addition, they told us that this was the simple path to the purification of the mind. I was amused about the use of the word “simple”, as I could not imagine what the “complicated” path would entail...

Hold on, I forgot some very important remarks: men and women are completely separated from each other and you are not allowed to talk or have any sort of contact or communication with anybody else during those ten days (except with the managers). This means that only an idiot would go with his/her partner to a place like that. On the plus side, you do get free food and accommodation for the entire duration of the course since these “organisations” are entirely financed by donations. N.B. you are not allowed to donate on your first meditation course, which makes it a completely free trial.

As any Spanish speaking Linacre member would be able tell you, it is really hard for me to keep my mouth shut. So I was really concerned about this “no speaking” policy. However, during the first dinner (on day “zero” just before the course started) I met two very interesting individuals:

The first one was a friendly shaved head hippieish-looking guy. He told me that this was his twelfth meditation course.

He was, basically, the guru of all gurus. He then went on telling me passionately about all his previous meditation courses, which included one in Bhutan (yes, the guy is really into it) where he completely lost his nerves and started breaking things and insulting the managers. I then decided to better chat to the other guy sitting in front of me who seemed a bit calmer and more conventional in his appearance. Like me, this was, his first meditation course. I asked him how he had found out about the course. He answered very optimistically that some guy had told him about it and that he immediately knew that this was his path in life, even though he had never tried it before. Amazed by such a strong statement, I wanted to change the topic and asked him whether he was a vegetarian, as no meat whatsoever was to be served during the meditation course. To this second question he replied affirmatively and told me that he had been a vegetarian throughout his entire life. I subtly questioned him as to whether his family was “weird”. He did not reply. I immediately assumed that this guy came from a “new age” family and had been brainwashed from birth. I agree with you guys, mathematically: “vegetarian” is a necessary but not sufficient condition for “weird”. But all vegetarians out there should forgive me for not keeping up with the scientific rigour in such an irrational environment. Really, all the guys around me looked like the Dalai Lama himself. I quickly became really fond with the idea of not speaking to any of them for the next ten days.

The following day, we were woken by the morning ‘gong’ (pretty similar to the one the lady bangs before our formal dinner), which indicates the times at which you are supposed to start meditating. I got really pissed off, not only was because I had to get out of my bed at 4:30 a.m. in order to meditate, but also because when I went to the notice board to check the timetable, I discovered that everything there was written in Dutch - which I have no clue about. The only thing I could understand was the “dag 1” notice hanging on the wall, which sadly reminded me that it was only the first day, with nine more to go.

“I subtly questioned him as to whether his family was “weird”.

The first couple of days were horrible. My knees and my lower back were killing me. I was always tired and sleepy. The food was crap and consisted on a strange mixture of different peas and herbs, like a bad tasting vegetable baby food mash. In short, I just wanted to run away from that place. But the meditation centre was in the middle of nowhere and even if I escaped I wouldn’t have a place to go. So I told myself that I would have to stay there anyway and that I should try to make the best out of the course.

Somehow, things started to improve after a few days. I had already survived two diarrhoeas by then (remember the food) and already resigned myself to spend the rest of my life in a wheelchair due to all the strain that I was inflicting on my knees. During the breaks, I used to sit on a bench and observe the rest of the crew. Many times I thought that I should call the authorities at the end of the course, in order to put all these people in a mental hospital. Then, I realised that no matter how crazy they seemed to me, they were actually quite inoffensive. In fact, they are supposed to follow some nice precepts such as: do not steal, do not kill any living creature, do not lie, etc.

The day before the course ended, the guys next door were having a barbecue. The funny thing is that most men were standing near the fence enjoying the delicious aroma coming from the other side. I then realised that I was not the only meat lover in the course. That day I finally understood what economists mean with the offer-demand equilibrium with price and quantity, as I would have paid a million dollars for a single Big Mac and a glass of chilled coke.

The interesting thing is that on the last day, I asked many of the participants about their opinion of the meditation course. To my biggest surprise, everybody else had liked it! Thus, the final question to me was: Am I too “normal” to like such a “weird” thing, or am I too “weird” to dislike such a “normal”, yet unfamiliar, thing?

So, next time that all of you who consider yourself to be “normal” enough are going on holidays, forget about STA and book your tickets now at “www.meditation-camp.com”. Then you’ll probably be able to help me in solving the above paradox, L.L.
or eight days in early January, I went with the women’s blues rowing squad to training camp in Belgium. Four rowers from Linacre were there: Sian Alexander and Linda Reynard (me) in OUWLRC (lightweights), and Emily Ross and Vikki McNair in OUW-BC (openweights). Though the theme of this issue doesn’t really tie in well with the whole idea of training camp, we did manage to have lots fun with all the hard work.

The camp was at a 2km rowing lake on the outskirts of a small town. We stayed in chalets right beside the lake – a change from our usual 30 minute cycle ride to Radley when we train in Oxford. You could actually roll out of bed just a few minutes before you had to be anywhere. The canteen was on site and we were given lots of stodgy food.

We rowed three times a day, starting at 9 am with a technical session. After a ten minute break we then had a 60 minute steady-state piece – rowing non-stop with pain in legs, body, and arms; and blistered and raw hands; praying for the end of the lake to arrive so we could have a short rest as we turned around before rowing some more! Then it was time to put away the boats and have lunch before a few precious hours of free time. The afternoon nap was truly a treasured part of the day. The final session of the day was side-by-side racing over distances of 750 to 1500 m, with four to six races in a row. After each

set of two races a rower was changed in some crews to see who could move a boat faster; this was not seat racing but “information gathering”. It is nerve racking to have your name called to change crews and to know that your ability to make a boat go faster is being judged and the result gives your ranking in the squad. The rankings were used the following weekend as a starting point for seat racing to set the crews for the Boat Race v. Cambridge on March 26. The races were filmed and the following day we could see how well (or not well) we had been rowing. As lightweights we had to monitor our weight constantly. We weighed in first thing in the morning, last thing in the evening, and before and after every rowing session, which was 7 times a day! It got really tedious, and sometimes we managed to forget (conveniently). Other than stepping on and off scales, we had a bit of free time, including one free afternoon on Wednesday.

On our free afternoon five of us lightweights went into a nearby town, Mechelen, to look around and sample the local cuisine. We managed to visit three chocolate shops and one cafe with chocolate crepes. Belgian chocolate is not to be passed up! The scales thankfully didn’t seem to notice much of a difference that evening.

After supper each night we had a quick squad meeting and then had the rest of the evening off. Being quite tired, we didn’t get up to much besides sitting around and playing cards or sipping hot chocolate in the sculling club bar. In true boring rower fashion we were asleep quite early.

The last evening of camp we held a no-talent show, with several very funny contributions. Vikki and Emily played an upside down blind date with faces painted on their chins, and the lightweights put on a parody of the Sound of Music called the Sound of Rowing.

The final day featured 2km races in eights, with each crew vying for glory. After that all was that left was to dismantle the boats, load up the boat trailer, and get onto the bus for our ride back. Unfortunately the journey took longer than expected because our bus broke down outside London leaving us stranded for 3 hours. Back in Oxford we earned a day off before starting our training again. Training camp was a new experience for me. It was strange to have to think only about rowing and nothing else. I felt quite isolated from the outside world, my DPhil, and my friends back in Oxford – it was as if for a time they didn’t exist. Interestingly, it was rather a pleasurable feeling to be able to concentrate solely on one thing and leave the frustrations and problems of Oxford academic life behind.

OUWLRC squad with Linacre students Sian and Linda (4th and 6th from left, standing)

THE HENLEY BOAT RACES

Saturday 26th March

Henley-on-Thames

1:30pm Granta vs Nephtys
2pm Blondie vs Osiris
2:30pm Lightweight Women
3pm Women’s Boat Race
3:30pm Lightweight Men
Enjoy education

As the 4x4 stopped in a large area of baked mud, we could see the children. They were lining the road, singing and clapping, the girls dressed in bright blue, and the boys in beige. We opened the car doors to hear them singing “Welcome you (pronounced uu), wel-come uu we-e-el-come uu”, which was then repeated in French and Kinyarwanda (Rwanda’s national language). We were led up the track between the lines by a group of traditional dancers, who retreated in front of us. This procession travelled a distance of over 400m, still between lines of children, who kept on singing and clapping.

Rwanda is best known in the West for the genocide of the Tutsi by the Hutu majority in 1994. The country is still recovering from this tragic event, in which one million people were killed (out of a total population of 9 million). It left many children orphans, and AIDS orphans, with many more becoming AIDS orphans from this tragic event, in which one million Tutsi were killed (out of a total population of 9 million). It left many children orphans, many more becoming AIDS orphans, and many suffered relapses at the recent “10 years on” remembrance events held in April. There are 25% more Rwandans in primary school than there are actually children of primary school age. The excess is testament to the large numbers whose education lags behind their age. In the Education Minister’s view, primary education reduces poverty, enabling farmers to read and write, to learn when someone is trying to cheat them, and to keep their accounts in order. My estimate would be that 80% of Rwandans farm.

The schools we visited showed a huge variation in wealth. Some had good facilities, computers and a farmyard (for school milk, and lessons about animals), others consisted of no more than a few buildings centred around a yard of hardened mud.

We visited a number of classrooms at different primary schools. I attended one French class, in which the teacher was introducing “le comparatif” to a group of 11-12 year olds. Each time he asked a question, the children strained forwards over their desks, desperately trying to attract his attention by repeatedly clicking their fingers (à la Ali G when he says “innit”). Other classes we observed in primary schools included Human Rights, which illustrates the educational approach taken to genocide reconciliation.

After visiting the classes and school facilities, we were treated to a reception in the open air by the whole school, during which the children performed dances, music, acrobatics (the like of which would never be allowed in the UK due to health and safety considerations) and readings in French and English. One head-teacher was extremely proud of his brass band (the only one in Rwanda!), but generally traditional African drums provided the musical accompaniment.

The secondary school population in Rwanda is 200 000. Factors limiting this number are the lack of facilities and the number of teachers trained to this level. The Kigali Institute of Education has been set up to train secondary school teachers. They take a joint four-year degree in their specialist subjects (grouped in pairs, eg. maths and physics) which includes a focus on education. When the first students arrived in 1999, none of the buildings was ready for use, so the students had their first classes in marquee tents on the grass. The buildings currently under construction at KIE are four stories high, to include laboratories as well as classrooms and administration. We visited a lecture, where a male member of our group talked about the reasons for our visit. His close was greeted by calls of “gender, gender” from the students, indicating that they wanted a female to talk. Rwanda is actively trying to encourage women to stay in education, as well as using women in important roles in public life (49% of the lower house of parliament is female). The students were obviously very aware of this! Another focus is the introduction of distance learning schemes for currently untrained teachers, who currently constitute the majority of secondary-school teachers in the country.

The first phase in the expansion of secondary schooling will be the introduction of middle schools, which should allow the large numbers currently in primary education to move up to the next level as they reach secondary school age. This is really a stop-gap, the resources are not available to build and staff full secondary schooling for the numbers expected to reach this level within the next few years.

The people we met in Rwanda were strongly aware of the opportunity which a good education could give. As a contrast to the British schooling I received, throughout the education system we met people who wanted to be there, and were enjoying themselves. They all had ambitions to do something and to get somewhere. I can only hope that Rwanda can expand education at a rate which can cope with their needs.

Anyone who gets an education should realise how privileged they are. I would be interested to see the standard Oxford undergraduate response to the lack of a classroom, but I strongly suspect the idea of a tent would not appeal!

Jon Home met some great kids in Rwanda

nd in April.
REFLECTIONS
Injustice and Poverty in Paradise

Doreen Montag and Aurelio Arranz Carreno saw the other side of Paradise

Let us take you to a short journey to Peru, one of the most marvellous places on earth where we had the chance to spend the last Christmas break. For one of us this was the first visit and undoubtedly not the last one, but for the other it was merely coming back to a second home. Since the arrival at Lima’s airport, you could feel and sense that something was different. People were more open, friendly, and just warmer. After a visit to the rich neighbourhoods of Lima and a lunch with Zenon Quispe, another Linacrite, and his family we headed south to Paracas. The four-hour bus drive allowed us to witness the big social differences in the country in areas such as infrastructure, housing, cars, and clothes. You could get the impression that many ‘pueblos jóvenes’ (shanty towns) had been forgotten by the rest of the society. Particularly touching was the sight of hundreds of box-like shanty dwellings barely composed of four wooden posts covered by straw in the desert along the Peruvian coast. From Paracas we went on a boat trip to the Ballestas Islands, a national reserve for thousands of sea animals and birds. It is an authentic sanctuary for guanay cormorants, penguins, sea lions, and pelicans. Once back on the coast we enjoyed a thrilling trip on a bogie through the desert to fabulous beaches. On the evening we had to wait on a street corner for the bus to Arequipa - our next stop. The neighbourhood was composed of small stalls for the travellers passing by on their way to Ayacucho. Life for most of them was compressed in one open room which served as a stall, sleeping area, eating area and even place to give birth in! There was no running water, which they had to buy and carry daily. Back to the paradise: after a few hours we got on a luxurious bus with two bathrooms, which is only used by fairly well-off Peruvians. During the 12-hour journey one of us – Aurelio – started feeling extremely sick to the extent of arriving at Arequipa in a half delusional state. Pharyngitis and bronchitis was the diagnosis and antibiotics the treatment. The price of the latter revealed another injustice, as it was about a quarter of the medium salary for more than 80% of the population, who could not even afford such a basic treatment. The sad reality is that very often suffering people only buy the pills for the first day in the hope that they will gather the necessary amount for the next. Therefore, in many cases they have to stop taking antibiotics in the middle of the treatment, which leads to the development of further complications and resistant bacteria. On our last night before heading off to Cuzco, we went out for the local speciality, the exquisite ‘chupe de camarones’ (king prawn soup), at a very special place, accompanied by an incredibly talented old accordionist. We were sitting by the window and only its glass separated us from the poor little children selling sweets outside for a living. You could see that it was originally built in the basin of a valley on 3400 meters above sea level. The Incas used to have their ‘summer houses’ in a nearby very fertile valley, called the Sacred Valley of the Incas, where the largest corn is grown for centuries. We visited some very good Peruvian friends in Urubamba, the heart of the Sacred Valley, which allowed us to take part in their daily life. It was there were we enjoyed their food, customs, the different ways of understanding life and especially their friendliness. From there we started our trip to Machu Picchu, a mountain in the forest on top of which the Incas had built a magnificent city, whose full meaning is still a mystery. We climbed up the Huayna Picchu and it was just there, on the very top, where we could appreciate the greatness of those ‘ruins’ and the nature surrounding it. Poverty and Injustice seemed to be far away from this place. However, getting back to Cuzco took us back to reality. There were many old people and children wandering around the streets with an empty stomach. Every time we went out to eat and could not finish the typical menus, (soup, main course, and a drink or a dessert) we asked the waiter to wrap it up, so that we could give it to those in need outside the restaurant. It broke your heart to see their faces after receiving a warm meal or just a small bread roll. Even late at night you were approached by little children trying to sell sweets, cigarettes for the tourists (Peruvians mostly do not smoke themselves), or postcards for a living. We then heard that the government had forbidden the presence of street children, other poor people, and street sellers in the centre of Cuzco. However, after midnight, when the police went home, those came to the main Plaza to find a place to sleep. After coming back, to Oxford a strange feeling remained in our hearts. LL...
B eing Viennese, one of the pleasures I most enjoy is eating the cakes and pastries of Vienna. One of the more famous cakes is probably the Sachertorte. Rumour has it that its recipe is kept secret by the Sacher family who also run a hotel and café in Vienna. I don't know if it really is a secret because if you google for "Sachertorte," you will find many different recipes. My mother and grandmother also used to show off their own "original" recipes. One of these must be the real one, but which? To my surprise I found it in a book where I least expected it, and I would like to share my knowledge with you. The book is called "The Alice B. Toklas Cookbook" and first appeared in 1954. I think that the recipe I found there is at least close to the original one. The book is not only a cookbook it is also a recollection, where Toklas describes her life with Gertrude Stein.

Gertrude Stein was an avant-garde writer, her main work being the book "The Making of Americans". Picasso portrayed the major figures of the avant-garde at this time, including Gertrude Stein, whose portrait by Picasso can now be seen at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. While her visitors came to talk to Gertrude Stein, their wives sat with Alice B. Toklas. She was Gertrude Stein's secretary and tended to their household. Of course, this household would include a maid and cook, until the war put an end to this life. But Alice B. Toklas had taken an interest in cooking and had learned and collected recipes from their cooks or from friends. One of their cooks was Austrian and had previously worked at the Hotel Sacher in Vienna. It was he who taught Alice B. Toklas how to make the famous cake and it can now be found, among other most interesting recipes, in "The Alice B. Toklas Cookbook".

It was quite a surprise to find it there. I had been given this book by a friend and quite enjoyed reading it during a long train ride. It was not so much the list of recipes that attracted me but the pleasant and hedonistic description of their way of life. The recipes were an added bonus for me. I believe that this resource is quite reliable in terms of the originality of the recipe. It could have been changed slightly for different reasons. Firstly, getting the right ingredients might have been difficult in a different country and the Austrian cook might have adapted the recipe to ingredients available in France. Furthermore, this book has appeared in several languages and translation errors might have occurred.

Does the recipe still work well? I hope you will find out for yourselves! LL

### Sachertorte

**Dough:**
- 100g butter
- 180g powder sugar
- grated peel of one lemon
- 125g chocolate
- 6 eggs
- 3 tablespoons flour

**Filling:**
- 60g chocolate
- 1/8 l water
- 1 teaspoon coffee
- 2 eggs
- 200g cream
- 1 teaspoon sugar

**Glaze:**
- apricot jam
- chocolate glaze

Stir the butter until it becomes creamy. Add the sugar and lemon peel little by little while still stirring. Add the 125g melted chocolate, the yellows of the eggs and the whipped egg whites as well as the flour. Lubricate a springform pan with butter and flour it. Bake for 40 min at 170ºC. After cooling down, cut the cake across in the middle and add filling (or as my grandmother would do it, just a thin layer of apricot jam). Put apricot jam on top and sides of cake and then cover it with chocolate glaze.

Filling: Boil the water and dissolve the coffee. Add the melted chocolate, the yellows of the two eggs, the sugar and the whipped cream.

If the result looks like this, you've done well.
Sticky Toffee Pudding

Ingredients
- 55g/2oz butter
- 170g/6oz demerara sugar
- 2 tbsp black treacle
- 1 tbsp golden syrup
- 2 eggs
- 200g/7oz pitted dates, chopped finely
- 290ml/10fl oz boiling water
- 1 tbsp bicarbonate of soda
- ½ tsp vanilla extract

For the sauce:
- 110ml/4fl oz double cream
- 55g/2oz butter, diced
- 55g/2oz dark muscovado sugar
- 2 tbsp black treacle
- 1 tbsp golden syrup

For the moulds:
- 30g/1oz soft butter
- 30g/1oz flour

Method
1. Butter small pudding moulds or ramkins, and preheat oven to 200C/400F/Gas 6.
2. Beat together the butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Slowly add the golden syrup, treacle and eggs. Continue mixing until the mixture looks smooth, add the flour. Mix until everything is well combined.
3. Add the boiling water to the dates, mash with a fork or potato masher.
4. Add the bicarbonate of soda and vanilla.
5. Pour this into the batter while it is still hot and stir well.
6. Pour into the moulds and bake for 20-25 minutes until the tops are just firm to the touch.
7. Make the sauce: simply place all the ingredients in a pan, bring to the boil, stirring a few times and then remove from the heat. Put to one side until ready to use.
8. Remove the puddings from the moulds and place on the plate. Coat with the warmed sauce and serve thick cream or vanilla ice cream.

Perhaps the greatest strength of the British table is its desserts, or puddings. Many towns have their own speciality, which often rely on hearty ingredients such as flour, eggs, suet, fat, jams, marmalades, and with liberal additions of cream or custard. Hearty concoctions such as jam roly poly, spotted dick, and treacle sponge offer some of the most satisfying ways of ending a meal imaginable, particularly in a bracing British winter. Sadly these dishes are hard to come by, but are surprisingly simple to make, although they do require some time to cook. Products available in tins or microwavable plastic pots do not come close to offering the pleasure of a hand-made pudding, so it's not worth trying, but do keep you eyes peeled in local restaurants. If you are adventurous, then try the sticky toffee pudding recipe. LL.
Take pleasure in beer

Adam Gamsa knows good beer

Are you bored of the tasteless lagers on offer at most pubs and bars in Oxford? Does Carling excite you only a little? Why not try some Belgian beers! You can buy them at Grogs in Jericho and in Copa on George Street. But which to choose? I hope this short piece will inform you and inspire some of you to give Belgian beers a try.

Hoegaarden is a witbeer, brewed with coriander which gives its unique flavour, and is probably the best known Belgian beer. It is fruity and light, perfect if you want refreshment on a hot afternoon. As with all Belgian beers, the brand has their own glasses, which they recommend their beers are sold in. Unfortunately, these are also the most popular targets for glass theft from a pub; one of the reasons why the price of Hoegaarden is so high. But there’s so much more to Belgian beers than Hoegaarden!

Have you tried Chimay? One of the Trappists beers, it is brewed using the same techniques as when monks produced it in abbeys in the dark ages. It is triple distilled, fermented first in vats, then in casks and finally in the bottles in which it is sold. The result is a strong beer, resembling a bitter, but without a thick aftertaste.

Jupiler is a light lager, similar to Carlsberg but with the distinctive Belgian taste. If you like Budweiser or Miller, then the chances are that this may be the only Belgian beer to your taste; most of the others are strongly flavoured, more akin to English bitters than to lagers. You can buy Jupiler in small barrels, ideal in size for barbecues and house parties.

Leffe is becoming popular too. As with Grimbergen, it comes in three varieties: light, dark and triple distilled. Be warned though, they are much stronger than you think.

There are few things in life more pleasurable than sitting in a bar in Brugge with a cool beer so why not try bringing the Flemish flair for fine beers into your life in Oxford!

STOP PRESS!!!

The Wolfson/Linacre Netball team has been promoted to the 2nd division!!!!

Henderson, Anne Mellor, Jake Jones, Chris Higham, Sarah Bird, Lucy Moore, Helen Turner, Charlotte Walden, Sarah Staton, Liliana Costa & Karen Burke

Linacre Netball

Hilary Hamnett thinks they’ve finally dispelled the curse

This season we have been blessed with a few new additions to the team! Not only has this improved our game, but it has also helped to overcome the Linacre Netball curse, of struggling to get the full seven players out on a Friday lunchtime.

Down in the 3rd division we see a lot of teams come and go, and have had some very mixed opposition over the term. Out of the nine games however, Linacre have walked away with seven victories! A few sides have given us very close and enjoyable matches, including St Peter’s (8-7 to Lin) and Merton, against whom Linacre came away with a 14-13 victory, despite only mustering five players against a full seven.

Even though netball is a non-contact sport, our man in the team (we’re only allowed one!) Jake, managed to sustain an arm injury early in the season. My thanks go to Chris, who has taken his place in style with some excellent play. Our last, and particularly satisfying victory was in 8th week against my old undergrad college St Catz, whom we beat 11-3.

In 7th week, we went to Linacre Guest Night Dinner, en masse, and finally got a chance to see each other in smart clothes rather than the usual sweaty gym gear!

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Linacre-Wolfson Netball Team 2004/5: Hilary Hamnett, Catherine
**EXERTIONS**

Linacre’s Golden Balls

Stuart Hunter thinks they deserved more

Last term’s football in three words? A tad disappointing. Having billed ourselves as the perennial underachievers, I’m afraid we seem to be living up to the name, though we also happen to be living up to the title ‘best footballing side in the MCR leagues’ whilst we’re at it. Honestly 9 out of 10 people, when asked whether they prefer our brand of football over other household brands, said yes. While we are capable of some sublime stuff, I’m afraid we are also capable of just ‘not having our heads on the game’. As a famous man called Dom once said this week, ‘we might well expect to win, but we are afraid of losing’. Having beaten them 3-2 in a pre-season friendly with roughly 9 players on the field, we weren’t expecting much from the Wolfson boys. Wrong! It seems that the old adage of not trying to sit on a one goal lead is true even in this league.

As you can see (rows 1 and 2), we generally go out there in those famous college colours (yellow and blue?) and play our opponents off the park, I think we played some champagne stuff against Magdalen, with me directing everyone’s feet like a puppeteer from the sidelines. Jolly well done the lads!, and all was going along rather nicely.

As in hindsight, we should have scored more goals than them. The highlight was definitely beating St John’s 3-0 at our place. As the team which we consider our greatest rivals in terms of actual talent and ability to play the beautiful game at its most beautiful, they were a decent scalp and we gave ourselves reason to celebrate at the hop that night I tell thee. The proverbial ball kept a’rolling, right through Univ’s goal 7 times as we drubbed them convincingly, amidst some stinky chat about how they were good or something. We all hate Keble. They bring the game into disrepute just by playing it. They burgled us at home in a game where only one team tried to play football and the other adopted the old ‘hit and run’ tactic. What’s more, my parents and dog witnessed the debacle, including me baring my teeth and swearing at one of the oafs. The best team lost. Now we couldn’t win the league thanks to them again!!! Anyway, “I was proud of de young lads” in our last game as they played with true spirit against a nice team who I don’t mind giving credit to (said in a David O’Leary voice, and incidentally the young bit isn’t true). Yes, you’ve guessed it, Keble won the league again. But take it from me, they were the 6th best side in the league.

If you don’t know the heroes who go out there at 9.45 on a Saturday morning, here they are in no particular alphabetical order: Big Johnny Loughlin, Moses, Thabs, Tommy A, Big Big Dave, Gamsanator, Paddy, Timmy, Rob Barnes, Dan the Tyler, Manuel, Stevo, Grubby, Sir Kev, Paul L, Luke (actually from Corpus), Gonzalo, Si, Richie P, Dom, Asif, John H, and me (sorry if I forgot you). Clare Lewis gets the ‘best supporter of last term’ award (sorry Dom you are no longer eligible), a high accolade indeed, and something for everyone to aim for this term in the cup season. HINT HINT. We have started well in the cup this term, and all that lies between us and our prize are the other teams, the referees, the weather, our tendency for self-destruction and fate itself...LL

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**Scores for the Term:**

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<td>Lincoln</td>
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<td>1</td>
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The glorious Corpus/Linacre football team.
Michaelmas term is the term when Linacre boat club not only trains its novices, but the returning seniors shake off the excess summer flab and start training seriously again. In both of these tasks Linacre’s male rowers ably succeeded. Although races were thin on the ground (Michaelmas is by far the quietest term for racing), a four was entered for one major event - the Fours Head of the River Race in London. Out of an academic division comprising of 56 crews Linacre’s men finished a very creditable 39th.

In an intercollegiate race the same four came 3rd. Our novice VIII competed in the annual Christ Church regatta for Oxford’s novice rowers. After beating an Exeter college crew they lost to a classy Hertford college outfit in the second round, a result which sadly belied their ability. These novices have since joined the ranks of the seniors and we are now training hard for the main events if Torpids (Hilary term) (already done! ed.) and Eights (Trinity term). Keep an eye out for race times and come and support! LL

For the Women’s boat club Michaelmas term brought with it a new generation of rowers. Three novice boats competed in Christ Church Regatta, having just six weeks to master the art of rowing - and it’s harder than it looks! The intense 1000m race course doesn’t leave much margin for error, but our new rowers responded well, bringing home some excellent victories. Despite a few difficult races and some tough opposition, every crew had at least one successful row, and our “Novice A” boat made it into the last 16 (out of 64 women’s crews entered). Special thanks go to coxes Mary, Linda, Rachel and Ruth for steering them through the novice minefields.

Along with the men, our ‘senior’ rowers also entered the Fours Head of the River Race in November. We joined the spectacle of 550 boats racing along the Thames through central London, and all in all, we were pleased to have finished the 4.25 mile course in one piece.

The next big training goals are the inter-collegiate ‘bumps’ regattas in the last weeks of May. We have a strong, dedicated squad who will hopefully repeat the successes of last year’s crews. Look out, too, for Linacre’s three Blues rowers, Emily, Vikki and Linda, who will be doing some serious Tab-spanking in the Henley Boat Races on March 26th! LL
When we think about pleasure at least the first 6 activities that come to mind have to do with our body. Let me draw your attention to what I will call the “7th activity”, which, though (probably) less pleasurable than the other 6 is a long-standing pleasure without which the other six seem meaningless.

I am talking about the act of socializing, being with others, taking care of them and also enjoying their friendship and love. It took me many years to come to terms with the fact that I am not a very sociable person and in the last two years I started wanting to change that a bit.

The former ‘Captain’ of the college chess team, Stuart, offered his ‘prestigious’ position to me - probably thinking that choosing a bad player as the captain of the team would encourage shy people to come and play. That was based on the opinion that people in Oxford are very sensitive to how the others perceive their intelligence. I accepted the position with shyness and modesty (two attributes which I generally find very irritating and try to avoid). I managed to update the web-site and I tried to make chess more popular in our college. I even created an e-mail list.

At that time, chess seemed a very suitable hobby for me, a game that would make me more sociable and popular - but in a slow and therefore safe way since chess is less sociable than other games. Furthermore, saying that I have this important position was a good way of impressing people! (This is another need I have: I guess something went wrong during my childhood!)

However, things did not go very well. At the beginning of term only 8-10 people expressed some interest and of them just a few actually showed up. I started wondering whether something might be wrong with chess (and me!). And in the end I found the answer! Chess is like a game for nerds that feel the need to pretend that they are lonely warriors or clever. And these people come, play - either they win or lose - and in a short time become bored. On the other hand, more ‘normal’ people do not bother to memorize openings etc, and they assume that they cannot be competitive. So, most of them are afraid to play because they consider competing in a chess game something like a threatening IQ-test.

‘Chess is like a game for nerds that feel the need to pretend that they are lonely warriors or clever.’

By mid-term only Simon Ho (the secretary and treasurer of our committee), the mysterious Mr. D. [1] and myself were still interested and we were playing on our own every Wednesday while my best friend Lori managed to attract more than 15 people to the knitting society and among them some very attractive ladies. As a result, Mr. D was constantly nagging me to merge our society with the knitting society!

So I said “enough is enough!”. I changed the name from ‘chess team’ to ‘chess society’ and asked the other 2 members to stop keeping records of the games in order to encourage other less-confident players to join us. I then went on and invented a new family table game, the “FOX (Family in Oxford) chess” which is a chess game suitable for a whole family (I chose the name FOX for some private reasons too! The 8x8 squares set becomes a bit more fun (see picture below) since it is no longer just black and white but black, white, red and green (And cursed be whoever wants to change the name or the colors)! FOX chess has four players split in teams of two with the two teams playing against each other. The allies are not permitted to consult each other, and therefore each player has independence and autonomy.

Chess is less embarrassing now; it is a team that loses the game, it is not just you! Chess is now friendlier; you do not just attack and defend but also care about others and you meet three people instead of one.

Chess started in the area of the Indus river over 5000 years ago, in an era of violence and wars, as a battle between two warriors. Now, in 2005, in Linacre College, close to Thames river, chess has become more colourful and civilized, suitable for the needs of our epoch: friendship, companionship, and happy families. Please come and share the pleasure with us on Wednesdays …or else I threaten to create “Strip-chess”![1] Mysterious Mr. D is bigger than me and has threatened me so that I would not reveal his name. I think that he knows many things about Lie Algebra or is it just a lie? LL
AMUSEMENTS
The joy of getting (15) down
Tom Wrobel likes it down and across

Lovers of crosswords know the real meaning of pleasure. Not the cheap 'quick' crosswords which give you "satisfaction (8)", but the real, cryptic, crosswords which tease and tempt you in the knowledge that a "concocted pale ruse brings forth ecstasy (8)". Both, of course, give you some kind of pleasure (which is the answer to both clues), but it's the subtlety and uniqueness of a cryptic crossword that makes it one of the three great English gifts to civilization, along with Radio 4 and test cricket.

A cryptic crossword is, as its name suggests, cryptic: the clues should not be read as they are written. Thus "concocted pale ruse brings forth ecstasy (8)" has nothing to do with pale ruses, or concocting; instead the word "concocting" indicates that there is an anagram to come, and the letters in the words "pale ruse" can be mixed around to produce "pleasure", or, as the clue says, to "bring forth ecstasy".

The beauty of a cryptic crossword is the way in which it uses the ambiguity of language. Perhaps this is why they've never taken off in other languages; English, with its absurd double meanings and bizarre idioms, is perfect for clues which rely on misdirection, puns, and sleight-of-hand. To love cryptic crosswords is to love language, and the way in which it is used and misused. A particularly lovely, and well known, clue is "pretty girl in crimson rose (8)", the title of a recent book on crosswords. The solution is "rebelled": a pretty girl is a "belle" and if this word is placed into another word for crimson, "red", we get "rebelled", as in "revolted", "fought back", or, simply, "rose".

This, of course, creates a problem for non-native English speakers. To solve a cryptic clue it is not enough to be fluent in English, you have to think in it as well. For example, the clue "H I J K L M N O (3)" is a very simple example of the English language, but very difficult unless you think in English. The clue gives you the alphabet from H through to O, and "H to O" gives you H2O, which gives you the answer, "water". Master cryptic crosswords, and you've mastered the English language.

Of course, the only way to really understand the beauty of cryptic crosswords is to complete one. The crossword below is intended to provide a gentle introduction to the art of solving them. It's not too tricky, and every clue can be solved by using the guide at http://www.wrobel.net/linacrecrossword. Once hooked, try the slightly harder cryptic crosswords in the Daily Mail or the Mirror, any one of these is far more fun than the Times or Independent quick crosswords. After this, try the Telegraph or the Observer Everyman crosswords, which are perfect for an hour or so at lunch or after dinner. On the other hand don't, until you've got into your stride and have a few hours to spare, start with the Times (very difficult, but somewhat staid), the Independent (whimsical and tricksy) or the Guardian (subtle and wry), until you're ready! You'll know when. It'll be the time when you complete a cryptic crossword with a huge smile on your face, because you've worked out that "a point won after appeal over the French (8)" is what true pleasure really is.

Across
1, 1 down The college rules on down-market publications (7,5)
7 Stiffener in a star chart (6)
8 She denies teen gas confusion (5)
10 Tactless common room leads fool (5)
11 Courtesan with wage is happy (6)
13 Reckless kids in mountain fun (3)
15 Average music returns (3)
17 The beginning of creak at back of hinge makes you squirm (6)
19 Wake up! Rouse! Make money! (5)
22 A small nose could blow you away (7)
23 The most certain can reassure timid undergraduates (6)
24 Study the style and fit (6)

1 see one across
2 Horses are worries (4)
3 Illicit yearning in town (4)
4 Pointed pins make piles (6)
5 Sounds like a donkey on the Lord, it's falling apart! (8)
6 Hero from Florida? (7)
9 Obvious scars – the traumatised CR's chaste! (9)
12 Rulers for penguins? (8)
14 Unbeliever at hold up (7)
16 Hold off tress I fondled (6)
18 The Sultan's women, kept in hutch, are mad (5)
20 Spike shorn short (4)
21 German's the same looked up or down (4)

Down

COMPETITION!!!!! Complete this crossword and submit it to the editor's pigeon hall by the end of March to win a bottle of your favourite wine from the Linacre bar!!!!!
Dear David/Caroline,

I really dislike a girl in my department and it’s making my life miserable. Every time I see her I want to kick her. She keeps pretending she is sweet and all the guys like her but underneath it all I know she is a conniving hyena who hates me too because I am popular. She hasn’t really done anything to me but I just know she hates me. What can I do?

Foxy Warrior

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David:

I can envisage two quite different solutions to this situation. Firstly, have you considered the possibility that she really is genuinely sweet, but for some reason she appears false? If so, you should be utterly ashamed of yourself for wanting to kick her. Shame on you! If she is getting all the guys and all the attention in your department, then you should see that as the driving force for some serious self-analysis of your own life. Maybe a new haircut could bring you back into the limelight? Alternatively, if this dirt-bag really is as conniving as you suggest, then it sounds like she needs to be brought down a peg or two and, frankly, I think you are the one to do it. If, for some reason, she were to suddenly require a short to medium stay in hospital, then that would clear the path for you to take over as Queen in your department. Don’t forget – she’s brought all of this on herself.

Caroline:

These pent-up feelings could be the product of a number of things:
1. You both have a deep seated lust for each other. Admitting it is causing you such psychological pain that you transpose anger onto each other, when really you could be rutting like wild animals. Her brazen behaviour - parading herself to the boys like an overly hormonal tabby cat when you are around, certainly suggests an element of sexual repression.
2. You genuinely do loathe each other – your personalities clash with no chance of salvage.
3. This girl is threatening your place in the departmental hierarchy - your breeding rights are at risk - your chances of being queen bee are decreasing exponentially.

The solutions are:
1. Bite the bullet (not a euphemism). Admit to yourself your true leanings and take a dive (a euphemism). There’s nothing wrong with it – just floss regularly.
2. These grievous feelings are not going to relent. Catharsis is the answer. Indeed, kicking may help – although putting yourself at risk of patella tendonitis unless you change your actions. I’d revert to punching her in the neck, spleen or kidneys – more likely to elicit that o-so-satisfying violence-vomit reflex.
3. Take a look, at yourselves. Could your behaviours be anymore pristine, short of a good old chin wag with Jane Goodall? Put your ‘in season’ chimp swellings away and be a little more cerebral. You can share guys, even occupy the same niche. There is really no need to live in harems anymore.
You are cordially invited to embark on an Extraordinary Voyage
Saturday May 7th, 2005
8pm 'till Dawn
The Jules Verne Ball
Tickets £50