OPINIONS
(04)  EDITORIAL: LINACRE SHEDS ITS CARBON NEUTRALITY
(05)  VIVA AMERICA
(06)  OF GIANTS AND LEVIATHANS, OR DUDE WHERE’S MY HEGEMON?
(08)  CANADA’S POLICY RESPONSE TO A GROWING THREAT TO THE CONTINUED EXISTENCE OF...

FEATURES
(10)  BOOK RELEASE: ASHISH JISWAL, HOW TO SPEND THREE YEARS IN THE LINACRE LIBRARY
(12)  PHOTO SHOWCASE: JEAN LUC JUCKER, WAR AND OTHER STRUGGLES
(18)  SHORT STORY: REGENERATION
(19)  GHOST STORY

SPORTS
(20)  HOCKEY
(20)  DARTS!
(20)  SQUASH
(20)  YOGA

FREE TIME
(21)  OXFORD HUB: VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES
(22)  BOGGLE
(22)  SUDOKU
(23)  RECIPE: MISTAKE CAKE

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In June 2006, following a Common Room resolution, the college agreed to become ‘carbon neutral’ by purchasing carbon offsets. The college signed a 3-year contract with the local firm ClimateCare, which used our funds toward projects in the developing world aimed at reducing emissions, turning Linacre into a ‘carbon neutral’ college. In a joint 50/50 effort, the college and the common room paid approximately £8,000 in the last three years toward the initiative. The cost is determined by the amount of CO2 emitted by the college, taking into account emissions including gas consumption, travel pollution and the use of paper. The college did reduce its CO2 emissions in the second year due to reduced gas consumptions, but in our third year emissions increased, as well as the cost of offsetting.

But it gets worse. Earlier this year, ClimateCare was bought out by JP Morgan. Mike Mason, founder of ClimateCare, said: “After building up this business for over a decade, becoming part of JP Morgan is exactly what ClimateCare needs in order to grow rapidly and achieve its goal of having the biggest impact possible in tackling climate change.” Good news for Mason, not so good news for Linacre. Because of JP Morgan’s acquisition of Climate Care (which was initially not-for-profit), Linacre had to pay an extra 17.5% VAT charge on last year’s fee (this extra money is not being used to counter carbon emissions). In light of these developments, Linacre’s Governing Body has decided to drop the carbon offsetting initiative, and to use the committed funds toward making Linacre a greener college.

Was this decision a step in the wrong direction?

Achieving carbon neutrality was in many ways a sensible move in a succession of green college initiatives; Linacre, Oxford’s greenest college, was making a name for itself as a norm-setting environmental trailblazer. The initiative was more than just a public relations triumph. In the short-run, it is doubtful that spending roughly £3,000 next year on double-glazing our windows could come close to offsetting our emissions, so a case can be made for spending that money on projects in the developing world, where it may go further in reducing emissions than it would here. It appears that the projects that have offset our emissions are worthwhile. ClimateCare’s initiatives include investing in water pump technology on Indian farms to avoid the costly rental of diesel pumps for irrigation, investing in wind farms in China, and replacing cooking stoves in Cambodia.

While the initiatives that we are funding through ClimateCare may be successfully offsetting our emissions and promoting sustainable industry in the developing world, there are shortcomings to adopting a policy of carbon neutrality per se. In the long-run, this ‘easy way out’ does not necessarily cause emitters to cut their own harmful emissions. Carbon offsetting can be used to justify the continued deferment of green investments and practices, especially if the emitter has no clear plan.

The badge of being ‘carbon neutral’ can also lead to apathy regarding direct reductions of emissions. There are also ways to fund sustainable projects in developing countries, through non-profit organizations, without having to pay VAT (but I don’t believe that will get you a fancy carbon neutral certificate).

It is better to enter into a carbon offsetting scheme in the developed world that invests in sustainable initiatives in the developing world than to do nothing, but it is still not a sustainable solution. Carbon offsetting does not allow the developed world to get around the fact that it pollutes too much. Going carbon neutral does have its merits, especially when it is combined with a clear plan to reduce emissions and a willingness to avoid wearing the ‘carbon neutral’ badge without bothering to go green at home.

It appears that in its three-year stint as a carbon-neutral college, Linacre has not reduced emissions with significant investments on campus. This is the real shame. Last year, there was talk about having no one run for the position of Common Room Environmental Representative, to protest the college’s failure to do so. This would most likely have been a step backwards. Linacre abandoning carbon offsets may turn out to be a step backwards, but it doesn’t have to be. Perhaps this will shake off some complacency and force us to look ahead. Thirteen years after the Abraham building’s completion, we are still talking about all of its green bells and whistles, and ending our carbon neutral streak means that we have one less green badge to boast about. It’s critical that we adopt a viable carbon management plan that will ensure we have more to talk about soon.
Last November I sat in my Washington, DC apartment filling out graduate school applications while America’s forty-third president was across town in that blanched house of his, undoubtedly polishing off a dessert cordial and contemplating the short year that stood between him and obsolescence. As an applicant, I was immediately drawn to Linacre’s reputedly vibrant international community (reputation since affirmed), having grown up with very limited opportunities for world travel. Now an ocean away from Washington, I’m awed, impressed, and sometimes a little frightened by Transatlantic Presidential Election Mania 2008. I’ve compiled some abroad-perspective election notes below as part of my post-election withdrawal therapy.

Washington in an election year is not without its own charms, being the sort of place where the cocktail waitress who just spilled an appletini down your pants really does have more foreign policy experience than Sarah Palin, and gives a more articulate interview too. But in Oxford, where the cocktail waitresses spill Pimm’s by night and read for immunology doctorates by day, there’s no shortage of geopolitical knowledge or interest. Linacrites from all corners of the world could be spotted wearing Obama-Biden pins or poring over the abundant U.S. election coverage in The Guardian, Der Spiegel, El Pais, or Le Monde. At the height of election mania at Linacre, political claims and counterclaims fell on all ears in proximity, compelling even the most politically abstemious to join in on election-focused discussions.

As (frequently) the only American in the room during these discussions, I mostly relegated myself to the role of fly on the wall. I eavesdropped as shamelessly as a Nixon crony, not because I believe such behavior is acceptable, but because the experience of being simultaneously an insider—a voting American and former government consultant—and an outsider—a foreign national ignorant to countless international perspectives on my country’s current affairs—was one of the most genuinely and sociologically fascinating experiences of my life. Plus, people tend to talk quite loudly after a few pints and much torrid conversation. The things people said to me (and the things I heard people say to others) about the election took on a unique profundity in and of the fact that they weren’t distinctly American perspectives, filtered through American media, or carbon-copied from American political sloganeers. I’ve always read international newspapers; but in these student conversations I found new ways to understand my American identity, and new ways to articulate my American perspectives.

I’ve always felt privileged to be an American; but I’ve also counted myself among my country’s toughest critics, having been nothing short of ashamed at times of America’s missteps and shortcomings in the history of its semi-enlightened global self-fashioning. Experiencing this election in Oxford has given me fresh opportunities to be proud of my country for producing someone like Barack Obama, who so viscerally inspired not just Americans, but the broader world; and for producing moments like John McCain’s concession speech, in which he stifled the boos of a disappointed crowd of supporters, and graciously and movingly congratulated America’s first African-American president. My friends in Washington joined an elated city and revelled in the streets until 4am on election night after the press declared Obama president-elect. I was jealous for a moment, until I realized that I too was privy first-hand to something extraordinary: an international community’s collective smiles and signs of relief when it got the American president it was hoping for.

I breathed a sigh of relief as well on that night, not just because I’m an Obama supporter, but because the torrent of election energy, the emotion, the discussion, the absentee-ballot complications, and the concomitant anxiety of all these things for me, a meagre and at times transparently clueless representative abroad of the country in the global spotlight, was starting to wear me thin. Retrospectively, though, I cherish this new slice of knowledge about what the 2008 election meant for a variegated community of Linacrites, even if this discovery required a bit of light espionage.

Aaron Hanlon is running for Linacre Lines Editor. Thanks Aaron for your high level of awesome.
OF GIANTS AND LEVIATHANS
OR ‘DUDE, WHERE’S MY HEGEMON?’

His Excellency the Honourable Burchell Whiteman, Jamaican High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, recently gave a speech at Rhodes House that dwelt on the dwindling status of the United States as a world power. He provided us with a description of – and vision for – a more equal sharing of power following the demise of American hegemony.

Mr. Burchell stated that American military, economic, and media dominance had left the developing countries economically disadvantaged, politically sidelined, and symbolically silent: consuming American films and videos but without the possibility of bringing their own voices, their own visions of themselves and of the world to the global market. His remedy for this imbalance was, with the decline of American global hegemony, for states like India and South Africa to take on the mantle of “leading nations”, to provide development aid, leadership, and most of all a positive example for the countries in their geographical areas. Thus, the single super-state would be replaced by several world powers, a plurality of voices and visions for the future.

While I admire Mr. Whiteman’s optimism, I find myself wondering whether it is, after all, misplaced. It is doubtless true that American political hegemony rankles, the point of the global economic compass swings – despite decades of development efforts – persistently north, and Hollywood and McDonalds are omnipresent. However, we should perhaps take a closer look at the alternatives. After all, does it necessarily follow that the ascension of new state actors to power will make things better?

We need not look further back than two decades into the past to find an alternative to the single superpower model. Barricading all Ostalgie, the years of the great global divide between the USSR and the US are not generally remembered as a time of international plurality and equality. Is there any reason to assume that the foundation of new power blocs will lead to greater, rather than lesser global harmony?

Furthermore, why would the new “leading states” be concerned with the well-being of their neighbours?

Why would the new “leading states” be concerned with the well-being of their neighbours? As long as powerful states and groups of states continue to define themselves in opposition to each other and to drive the interests of their own citizens, their humanitarian gaze will always carry a covetous glint, and their aid shipments a hefty price-tag in terms of national autonomy.

After all, regional superpowers like the late Mengistu’s Ethiopia have a well-deserved reputation for interfering in the affairs of
the nations in their spheres of influence. I doubt I am being overly cynical in stating that these states have no reason to promote the political, economic, and military autonomy of their neighbours; quite the opposite, in fact. Relations of dependence and dominance are necessary for their ambitions as regional powers, and their primary raison d’etre is, above all, to promote the interests of their own citizens — often in opposition to the interests of the citizens of other states. Like Hobbes’ Leviathans, rival nations square off in a zero-sum game, a (usually polite) war of everyone against everyone.

And yet, recent events have made two things very clear: American economic power — and the ideology of the unregulated free market which it rests on — are in trouble, and the world economy is, in the good and the bad, truly global. The way the banking crisis has spread from America to both European and Asian stock markets has, in a negative sense, highlighted our mutual connections and interdependence.

Nevertheless, these connections — both economic and political — have been anything but equal. But still, what if the American giant really does falter, fall, and fail to get up again? After our schadenfreude has passed, will another giant, or several, take its place? Will anarchy and strife proliferate on a globe that has lost its “world police”? What shape will such a world take?

While I yearn for a future where every nation — or better yet, every social group, minority or majority — will get its voice heard and its right to development and self-determination respected on an equal basis, I have trouble believing that such a vision will come to pass any time in the near future. My faith does not rest with nations — big or small — in creating a more equal and multivocal world, but with both global and local Non Government Organizations, world forums like the UN (however feeble and partisan its efforts may occasionally be), and new global communications media like the Internet.

For me, nations — divisive, protectionist, mutually opposed — are one of the problems, rather than the solutions in creating a better world. It is my belief that political, economic, and symbolic equality must be sought for elsewhere than in the coils of the warring Leviathans.
Many western democracies are now facing a pressing policy issue – how to adequately support an aging population in the face of increased fiscal constraint. Compounded by the current “credit crunch”, policy makers are being forced to address a growing dilemma; how to meet the health and social security demands of an aging population that outnumbers those contributing to the tax base.

These issues arise as a consequence of a demographic anomaly popularly known as the “baby boom”. Would-be parents in western nations, caught up in the euphoria of the end of the Second World War, began producing children at an alarming rate. This led to a population explosion in such countries as the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia and Canada. However, the demographic bulge of the baby boom was not a sustained phenomenon. It was followed by a return to population-replacement normalcy. These two population waves are described by Foot and Stoffman in *Boom, Bust & Echo: How to Profit From the Coming Demographic Shift* (1996) as the “boom” and the “bust” generations.
The front edge of the boom generation, notably those born from 1945-50, has benefited from its position relative to generations after. These individuals were able to move easily into the job market, replacing retirees and filling newly created positions resulting from an economy expanding to accommodate the boom generation. The educational sector, elementary, secondary and postsecondary, expanded as this massive generation proceeded through the educational pipeline as a squirrel passes through the esophagus of a snake. Furthermore, the public absorbed the cost of supporting students, driven by the sheer demand created by the boom. The economy and popular culture also bent to the will of this generation, as it controlled the greatest proportion of disposable income in just about any economy.

The tail end of the boom (referred to by author Douglas Coupland as “Generation X” in his 1991 book of the same name) and the front edge of the bust generation were, comparatively speaking, totally screwed. The hapless members of these groups experienced massive increases in student fees as governments realized the rampant higher education spending of the 1960s-70s was unsustainable. As graduates, they found a hostile employment market choked-up by middle-aged managers still decades from retirement (a problem compounded in the early twenty-first century through the removal of mandatory retirement requirements). And finally, as parents, they were incapable of locating adequate child care as a consequence of continued demand driven by their senior generational counterparts.

However, as the front edge of the baby boom reaches retirement age, governments face a real threat to their financial security: rising health care costs. Projections suggest that the baby boom generation will bankrupt public and private health care systems. The educational sector, elementary, secondary and postsecondary, expanded as this massive generation proceeded through the educational pipeline as a squirrel passes through the esophagus of a snake. Furthermore, the public absorbed the cost of supporting students, driven by the sheer demand created by the boom. The economy and popular culture also bent to the will of this generation, as it controlled the greatest proportion of disposable income in just about any economy.

It is when a difficult public policy crisis such as this arises that public leaders must look to unique and creative solutions. As such, the Government of Canada has struck upon an ancient practice of Canada’s northern aboriginal peoples, the Inuit. When faced with lean times, every member of an Inuit tribe was expected to contribute to the survival and future success of the group. Children, although consuming more resources than they produce, were fundamental to the future survival of a tribe. Adult males and females would generate the greatest proportion of resources. However, elderly tribe members, recognizing the resource drain they represented, would choose to absent themselves from the group. In some cases, the image we are given is of the self-sacrificing Inuit elder, slipping away from their family in the middle of the night, and simply drifting off on an ice flow, into oblivion.

Inspired by this vision of self sacrifice in the collective interest, the Government of Canada has designed a new program to help ensure the country’s financial stability, as well as provide new employment opportunities for Canadians interested in the leisure industry.

Over the last eight years, Canada has been purchasing decommissioned cruise ships from the major leisure cruise providers. Although far from being at the cutting edge of cruising technology, these ships have well-maintained and serviceable galleys, pools, movie theatres, casinos, dining rooms and discothèques. The Canadian plan is simple: to offer free or heavily subsidized month-long cruises to all citizens over the age of sixty. A widespread advertising campaign will inform members of the boom generation that these cruises are the nation’s way of thanking them for their historic contributions to culture, the economy and national identity. While none of these things are true, the market place has been telling the boom generation the same thing since the 1960s so they will be inclined to believe the government’s commercial campaign.

Millions of well-deserving baby boomers will board ships leaving from Toronto, Montreal, Quebec City and Halifax for the Caribbean at the same time as millions board ships in Vancouver and Victoria leaving for Hawaii. Revellers will spend the first week of their cruise enjoying entertainment provided by 30-40 year old Canadian performers unemployed as a consequence of the high value of the Canadian dollar in relation to the US greenback, gourmet meals prepared by 30-40 year old chefs and served by hospitality workers left jobless due to health scares in major Canadian cities and recreational facilities staffed by 30-40 year old university graduates unable to find work but repaying crippling student loans required to finance unprecedented tuition increases made through the 1990s. And everything will be generously paid for by the Government of Canada.

At the end of that first week, all of the 30-40 year old crew members will silently leave the ships under the cover of night. But the cruise will continue. Provided those remaining can determine how to operate a 15,000 person cruise liner. Without fuel. Like the Inuit elder, Canada’s boomers will have chosen to nobly drift out to sea in the interest of the future of their country. While the individual motivation may be quite different, the end result will be the same – the survival of generations to come. Until the children of the boomers reach retirement age.
Ashish Jaiswal, who wrote a novel while his friends warily thought he was using the Linacre library as a place to sleep, has been signed by Rupa Publications, India’s largest book publisher.

True Dummy - A Fable of Existence is to be launched on the Indian subcontinent in December with large print run of the first edition and a book tour circling 12-13 cities. Ashish, who studied for his M.Sc (Education) in 2005-2006 at Linacre is currently doing his D.Phil in Education at New College. He calls his novel an attempt ‘to release my wisdom from the shackles of panoptic cage’. According to Ashish, True Dummy is a metaphysical quest of a boy who wants to conquer the world pinned on a theosophical canvas. A newspaper review described True Dummy as ‘an allegorical exploration of the deepest human questions’.

Ashish, who recently had a pre-launch book reading session at Yale University, is excited that his novel is starting its journey from his home country – India. “It is a land of storytellers, where the first fabulist of the world, Vishnu Sharma was born. I hope I live up to the standards.”
I actually found that our library was a chapel initially, so that inspired me a lot, that kept me going...I could not find a place where I could get the same kind of vibes.

TRUE DUMMY - A FABLE FOR EXISTENCE (2008)
The book is being printed by Rupa Publications, the largest publisher in India. This is one of the largest first editions runs (25,000 copies). It will be released this month. The novel took Ashish three years to finish, all due to the faith and support of his wife, Pooja, and friends who stood by him, read his stuff and ironed out his ‘clumsy English’.

FAVORITE QUOTE FROM TRUE DUMMY?
Ashish had many, but perhaps the following stands out: “Life is like a game of chess, which you have to play even after losing the king!”

WHAT NEXT?
“I have a beautiful story in my mind. My thesis.”

FEEDBACK
“A thoroughly engrossing story, imaginative yet startlingly real. The book is filled with stylish wit, spiritual undertones and rich, emphatic emotions. As magical as it is real, True Dummy has an imaginative reach to convey the most heart-searching dilemmas of the human race.”

– Kate Nowak, Poland

“Beautifully formed and precious as it is rare, True Dummy is not only filled with true pearls of wisdom but is a blessing of a book that should be passed on to all.”

– Jebi Rahman, UK

Ashish says that True Dummy has a closely guarded reader’s club under which more than 70 friends have read and reviewed the book and the response has been amazing. True Dummy has inspired some of its readers write music and poetry. After reading the book, one reader has decided to take a break from his corporate life to spend one month in rural India, helping people.

According to Ashish, Linacre Library, where he wrote most of his novel (never changing his chair) has played a special part in the creation of the book. “It is a divine place and I could sense it. Although I spent hundreds of nights writing in it all alone, I never felt so. I was at Yale University when I had to write my epilogue. I moved from library to library but could not find a place with the same serenity. Finally, it was a small room located in one corner of the Yale Forestry and Environmental Studies where I could write the ending of True Dummy.”

Those who are interested to know more can visit his facebook group, ‘True Dummy - A Fable of Existence’: http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=13309302948
PHOTO SHOWCASE

WAR AND OTHER STRUGGLES

PHOTOS, CAPTIONS BY JEAN-LUC JUCKER
Jean-Luc Jucker doesn’t remember how he got started in photography. But one year before beginning university, he had already become a professional photographer. He thinks perhaps his father and grandfather, who both dabbled in photography, and his admiration for photographer-turned-director Stanley Kubrick may have spurred him.

Regardless, he learned on his own, and quickly gained an interest in photojournalism. He took photos for fashion magazines but says that was more for money than personal interest. What really interested him was war photography.

During the Kosovo War, in 1999, a considerable percentage of Kosovar refugees were welcomed in Switzerland, Jean-Luc’s country of origin. His experience as a photographer had helped him gain good relations with Swiss authorities, and he had the opportunity to meet and speak to many refugees. Their situation began to pique his interest.

He travelled to Kosovo many times, during and after the war. The country was very difficult to access – he had to enter Kosovo through Macedonia during the war. Jean-Luc had his doubts; it was dangerous and he travelled alone. Luckily, he returned unscathed. He had left for Kosovo very quickly, before many other photojournalists, and upon his return a reputable Swiss weekly published seven of his photos as well as a three-page article.

He finally gave up professional photography because his main goal, photographing war, was mentally and physically difficult.

In this photo showcase, we will go through some of Jean-Luc’s work, from war-torn Kosovo in to the peaceful rural mountains of Switzerland. His sobering work offers candid glimpses into the daily lives of subjects of all ages, working, playing and surviving. In his diverse exploration of people and environments, Jean-Luc has captured a sadness that is oddly similar.

Olivier Jarda

I met Bujar when he was a refugee in Switzerland. When he returned home shortly after the war ended (1999), I decided to accompany him. Here he finds his flat in Pristina wrecked (right) and a café that he owned completely destroyed by a fire (left). I was very impressed by his calm detachment.
Above: The village was filled with children; it was very disturbing, because it was as if there were only children. Smiling, playing children in such a heavy atmosphere. Below: This is in Suhareka, a small village about two hours by car from the capital city, Pristina. Several mass graves have been found there. The picture was taken in what had been a restaurant, and it is highly probable that it had been used as an execution place.
When I shot these photos, I was only working with 35mm film cameras, with fixed lenses (no zoom). I developed my own negatives and photos. I mostly used a Leica M6 with two fixed lenses (50mm and 35mm). At times I used a Nikon FM2 and Nikon FE2, for wider shots at 28mm. I never used a flash. It’s a minimalist setup, small and lightweight, which is suitable for dangerous locations, and to go unnoticed for candid shots (when using a 50mm lens, you often have to be less than a meter away from your subject, so it’s best to be discreet).

**Above:** The centre of Pristina was in ruins. The picture was taken shortly after the bombings. The bustling activity of the army (here two British soldiers are waiting for a convoy) was in contrast with the sombre locals marching in remembrance of the dead (below). In the midst of all this, the presence of Romany people reminds us of the ethnic diversity which characterizes the Balkans.

**Equipment Specs**

When I shot these photos, I was only working with 35mm film cameras, with fixed lenses (no zoom). I developed my own negatives and photos. I mostly used a Leica M6 with two fixed lenses (50mm and 35mm). At times I used a Nikon FM2 and Nikon FE2, for wider shots at 28mm. I never used a flash. It’s a minimalist setup, small and lightweight, which is suitable for dangerous locations, and to go unnoticed for candid shots (when using a 50mm lens, you often have to be less than a meter away from your subject, so it’s best to be discreet).

**Cameras**
- Leica M6
- Nikon FM2
- Nikon FE2

**Lenses**
- Leica-Elmarit 50mm: f1.8
- Leica-Elmarit 35mm: f2.8
- Nikkor 50mm: f1.8
- Nikkor 28mm: f2.8

**Film**
- Kodak 400 (usually exposed at 800)
- Kodak 100
- Ilford 100 (pushed to 1200)
These three pictures are taken from a work on the Swiss clichés; here I tried to approach a typical mountain farming family, but in a situation which is usually not considered as worthy of attention, namely the slaughtering day in all its simplicity – and brutality.

Here are my two grandmothers. At this time, I was working on age and the appreciation of age.
This one was taken on the 31/12/1999, just before midnight, and just for fun. It is a mannequin, which was taken through the display window of a fashion design shop. Due to this, one can see both the interior of the shop and the exterior in reflection. Later I ended up working with the designer.

This one is taken from work on what I call “transitional places”, such as airports, railway stations, waiting rooms, and so on. What interested me in these places was this kind of a cohabitation between anonymity and intimacy.

I was very influenced by the work of [Henri] Cartier-Bresson at this time. This woman is watching someone being arrested; she stands before a Benetton ad showing a prisoner on death row.

This one was taken during a demonstration for equality and solidarity in my home country. To photograph a demonstration has always been difficult for me: it’s a bit like being in the crossfire, both physically and psychologically.
A friend from Exeter College gave me a collection of Oxford ghost stories. After having read it I knew exactly where to look out for spirited presences in Brasenose, Wadham or indeed Exeter College. Maybe it was my heightened receptiveness to old buildings, or perhaps my wounded Linacrite pride, but I found it hard to believe that Linacre would not have its legends and rumours. So I plunged once again into our collective memory (see LL HT08). But neither the archives nor oral history yielded any results. So I gave up this quest and turned to more tangible remains of the past (that is, my dissertation).

However, you would not be reading this article if the following had not happened to me.

You probably knew that candles are forbidden in Linacre College. And you probably assumed this had to do with fire precautions. Well, I would not say you are wrong.

In those days, I nonetheless kept a box of matches in my room: just in case of a power cut; just to make my way outside through what still seemed to me a strange, unpredictable old building, where the floors could squeak, and stairs would suddenly end or continue for longer than you thought they would, in the dark, in the night; and where sometimes, on the landing between the Victorian and the modern staircases near the large kitchen, I had heard a high-pitched shuddering and sobbing. This, being from an unimaginative country across the sea, I ascribed to differences in air pressure in the water pipes.

One evening towards the end of October, I noticed something different. As I walked to the kitchen to prepare tea, there was a calling from room 12. Now you should know, no one lives in room 12. The housekeepers use it for storage. This evening, as usual, the door was locked. Yet the calls did not come from directly behind the door. They came from farther away, and a little to the left. I kept still, and listened. Yes, this was definitely what I heard: 'Natalie? Natalie! Is that you? Come, come and get me something. I am hungry, and cold.' After some hesitation I called. 'Hello? ... Who is there?' But all was silent now. Maybe, the noise had come from the student room to the left. Indeed, when I listened for a second in front of the door with 11 on it, a film must have been playing, as far as I could make out from the various voices within.

Relieved I entered the kitchen and made my tea.

I immediately sensed how unfeeling this was of me.

The girl's entire skin was swollen with blisters, making it almost impossible to see her left eye (she had blue eyes); curdled blood marked the edges of the folds and bubbles in her skin, and her hair had receded on the left side of her skull to reveal a large bald patch over her ear where some individual, creased hairs still stuck.

So I smiled and said 'Hi, have you come to live with us?' - 'No, I am here just temporarily,' she answered. 'Could you perhaps lend me some matches?'

I hurried to get them, with my boiling-hot tea flowing over the edges of the cup onto my hand. On my way, it struck me that it was matches she had asked me for; people usually seemed to be needing a lighter. Being old-fashioned myself, I immediately took a liking to the girl.

She took the matches from my hand with a wonderful expression on her face (it must hurt, I remember thinking), as if a burden had fallen from her.

She said goodbye, I said goodbye, and when I looked over my shoulder while I opened the fire door to the new staircase, she was gone.

That same day the college had an evacuation exercise, or else there was a false alarm, for when we got back upstairs we smelt burnt toast, and that was that.

Only months later I came across an old newspaper article from the time when Linacre College moved into Cherwell Edge and the Sisters of the Holy Child left. The journalist had found some elderly Oxonians prepared to reminisce about its former occupiers. One of their stories was of a female, Catholic undergraduate before the Great War, boarding at the hostel the nuns kept here. Apparently the girl had been separated from her loved one in order to study in Oxford - they could not tell whether this had been her own wish. Yet while she was away, her friend died, and she turned mad. They had to lock her up in a closet or she would hurt herself. But then there was a fire in the house, beginning from the second floor on the front side, and she was found dead. They never knew how she did it.

But when I later slipped into room 12, one morning when the housekeepers had left the door open, I found another door, with a tiny window, leading to a cell. And when I scraped a little of the white paint off the wall with my thumbnail, it was soot black underneath. On the floor lay the matchbox, and the matches, scattered over the floor.
Hundreds of people walk past the construction sign every day. It is stretched between two pieces of railing and hangs over the corrugated roof of the basement flat. It hangs there for the bankers who work in the newly built office blocks that surround the building, across the door way of the main entrance. The house stands on the edge of what was the old Thames boundary of the city of London, a hundred yards from The Strand. Small porthole windows adorn the bottom of the basement masonry where three hundred years ago, the waters of the Thames would have lapped against the walls at high tide.

By the time that we arrive in the opening of the street, the office workers have left and only a few cars remain by the blocks. There are several dimmed lights that have been left to light the office receptions. The street lamps give us a little light to see by, but the lane is narrow and ends at the tall river barriers, meaning that there is little illumination available to those who walk down it after dark. We stand by the wall and look at the clock attached to the side of the house. Like many of the features attached to the building, it has been left to decay and many years have passed since it last kept the proper time. At this moment, there is movement at the end of the street; a motion that we catch from the corner of our eye. The brief flicker begins to grow and take form. This is not a shadow from a moving object as first we thought, but a man who starts to move away from the edge of the street to a place where he is more visible. Shortly he will begin to move towards the centre of the street, but for now he is content with examining the set of keys that he has taken from his coat pocket.

We stand by the wall and look through the window of the ground floor. He begins to walk down the alley towards us and it is only when he reaches the railings dividing the house from its office neighbours that we see he is carrying an empty bag under his right arm. He stops and looks up at the top floor where one of the chandeliers swings a little towards the window. Sometimes the street lights catch upon the mirrored segments of the chandelier and the upstairs room is, for a brief moment, illuminated by the reflection. But tonight it only flickers against the glare of the window pane and the man’s attention moves from the window to the door behind the sign. He mumbles under his breath; we can think he hears the words ‘Good night’ but the rest is indiscernible. He walks towards the door and turns to us and for the first time we see his face. He looks like one of those children at fairground school holidays who bolt out the tunnel of a rollercoaster, alarmed and perspiring.

We edge towards him as he takes his keys and unlocks the oak door and slips inside; we are still beside him. The door shuts behind us and we are suddenly thrown into an unlit windowless corridor. Our eyes are just becoming accustomed to the dark when we hear a tapping sound as he brings a torch from his pocket and switches it on. We walk down the stairs, through the library and down to a large room that fills the entire basement floor. What is first apparent about the house is not the decrepit state of the furniture or the way in which the local wildlife had taken over the vaults. It was the portraits hanging on the walls and the manner in which he began to take each one down and line it up as if it were a purgative exercise. Each portrait depicted the same female subject at different stages of life. She existed as a child on the staircase and a young woman in the library walls. She bounded in and out of the rooms as a mother, a wife, a grandmother and a foreboding elderly woman.

He walks towards the back of the caverns where there stands a huge brick fireplace, almost as tall as the man himself. He stands by the brickwork, pulling strands of horse hair from the concrete as he watches the coals in the mouth of the furnace and at once, in another time the fire ignited and filled the hearthside with smoke and luminosity. But the man keeps still, pulling the strands of horse hair as he watches. He picks up a sheet and carefully drapes it over the fire, ensuring that every corner is covered. The man walks past the fireplace, picking up objects as he moved and putting them inside the bag. We follow. He walks back through the centre of the room, past the port-holes where the water of the Thames once lapped and up through to the library where the pile of portraits lay. All this time we follow in silence until he reaches the staircase that leads to the main door. It is at this point that he thinks he sees us briefly from the corner of his eye; he turns towards us, startled and then relieved as he appears to summarise our movements as a trick of the light or a shadow.

He moves quickly up the stairs and stops only to hook the keys on the back of the door frame before slipping back out to the street. This time we do not pursue him, instead stopping at the base of the staircase, plunged back into the sort of blackness where only bleach shapes and lines can be seen. We have stopped at the small patch of landing which serves as both the base of the staircase and the entrance to the vaults. Six or perhaps seven more hours will pass until the morning when the first bricks are pulled from the walls. The fireplace and the portraits linger in the vaults, waiting to be replaced by something fresh, the final stage of regeneration in the narrow street.
**HOCKEY**

It has been another great term for Linacre Hockey Club. As well as continuing our fine tradition of always running out as the ‘moral victors’, we managed to win our first league point in 2 years with a 2-2 draw against Oriel - no doubt the highlight of the term. The nine men and women of Linacre valiantly held off eleven younger, fitter and significantly more arrogant opponents, to trail 2-1 at half time. When former captain Sara Morgan finally got out of bed for the second half, a Linacre onslaught was capped by a late goal from Courtney Lawrence to win us a glorious point. We have had either a match or practice most weekends this term and this should continue in Hilary. We’re always on the lookout for new players, if you would like to try out a new sport we’d love to hear from you.

Thanks to everyone who has played this term, you were all heroes and will surely go down in history as legends of Linacre sport.

Will and Chris

**SQUASH**

The men’s team was promoted last season to the dizzy heights of league 4B! So far this season we’ve only managed to complete two sets of matches against other colleges due to scheduling problems with booking courts and injury problems. Of those two, we’ve won one against Hertford and lost one against St. John’s. We’re in the process of finishing games against Keble, New, and University. Our aim this season is to get promoted again, to league 4A! There will also be some shiny new squash rackets, and hopefully not so shiny balls, in the sports cupboard soon.

Rob Holbrook, Squash Captain

**DARTS**

After last-season’s promotion-winning heroics, the difficult business of maintaining our standing has begun. Linacre are currently sitting fourth in the league after the first few matches, and although the standard is far higher this season, good battling performances from novice and veteran players alike auger well for the rest of this season. The darts club continues to bring darts to the dartless and the common room resounds to the sound of tungsten on sisal. If you’ve ever fancied having a shot at a real traditional pub sport, then come and give darts a shot.

Hilary term will see the conclusion of this year’s intercollegiate league campaign and play will get under way in the third annual Linacre Championship, where Dr Rosario faces a strong field in defence of his 2008 title. The season runs right through to Trinity term, when the inter-college cuppers matches take place. Darts is dryer than rowing, faster-scoring than football and closer to the bar than rugby. When the nights grow long darts is the sport of choice for the numerate sportsman and scholar, so get involved in the darts team this winter.

**LINACRE YOGA**

No battles fought or cuppers won here. Instead: a steadily growing group of Linacrites who gather twice weekly under the directions of a team of enthusiastic and attentive teachers to practice different branches of yoga for their physical and mental well-being.

Be amazed by what your own body can do - Forget about your worries and just be - Become stronger and more supple - Grant your body some attention - Focus - Relax - Breath - Sink - Float. The Linacre Yoga Society is there for all students, fellows and staff. We offer two evening classes each week of term: one in hatha yoga, one in ashtanga yoga. No need to sign up: just show up for either, or both!

For more information, visit:
http://www.linacre.ox.ac.uk/CommonRoom/societies/yoga

**MONDAYS 7-8:30PM (HATHA YOGA)**
**FRIDAYS 5:30-6:45PM (ASHTANGA YOGA)**
**IN THE TANNER ROOM**
VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

AS AN OXFORD STUDENT YOU ARE DESTINED TO BE A UNIQUELY POWERFUL PART OF A WORLDWIDE COMMUNITY. ENGAGE WITH IT.

OXFORD HUB COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS (OH:CV) aims to encourage more students to volunteer in the local community. We have a particular focus on helping you set up and run your own student led projects, based entirely around your needs, skills and passions as an Oxford University student.

We believe that volunteering offers you some of the best opportunities to gain new experiences, develop your skills, meet loads of new people and have fun, while doing something that benefits the community. If you feel you have something to give, if you want to make a contribution – have a look at what is on offer and get involved. If you want to get involved and we don’t have a project that is exactly what you are looking for you we can put you in touch with many more community opportunities or even support you to set up your own project.

Below is a summary of some of the great projects that we are currently supporting, all of these projects are looking for new volunteers and coordinators.

For more information contact projects@oxfordhub.org

YOUTH DROP-IN PROJECT - Currently volunteers are helping out at the Thursday evening activity session. The project provides an hour and a quarter’s entertainment for kids from the local housing estate, from table tennis, to ‘wii’, to dodge ball tournaments, in an effort to get them off the streets and socialising in a safe and fun environment. A worthy cause certainly, but also a rewarding challenge for the Oxford students involved: getting out of college, let alone interacting with the local community, is not a common preoccupation of most students, but the skills that we can relay to the kids and the paces through which they put us (!) provide for a mutually stimulating environment. From next term the project is opening on Mondays and Fridays for a post-school cafe-themed session, and so we really hope to recruit some more enthusiastic volunteers to help out, join in, and, first and foremost, get to know the kids. We would love to expand this project to more kids and to provide a really great club for them; the more people that join us, the better we can make it.

To get involved contact youthdropin@oxfordhub.org

AGEAID - Why should you get involved? Elderly people face being isolated in their homes as well as retirement homes. The vibrant energy that you can bring them is enormously appreciated and will help alleviate some of the boredom and loneliness that they experience. Not only is this a fantastic opportunity to escape the Oxford bubble for a couple of hours a week, but it will also look great on your CV. What does it involve? Ideally, you would be able to give up 1-2 hours of your time per week on a specific day at a specific time. We would like you to be a regular visitor, so that you can bring the elderly people a sense of continuity, and at the same time, this is the best way for you to make friendships with the same people. There is also the chance to do your own bit of co-ordinating. There will be opportunities to lead group activities (e.g. day trips), and we are looking for someone to become a sports co-ordinator (in collaboration with an Oxford Leisure Centre).

To get involved contact ageaid@oxfordhub.org

HOMELESS PROJECT - Welcome to Oxford: the land of dreaming spires. A place where more people sleep rough each night than anywhere else in the UK besides central London; an Oxford where the average life expectancy of those seeking refuge is only 42 years. Yes that’s right; this is Oxford beyond the world-class university and the classical grandeur. So, while you may well expound dramatic mathematical theorems, write prize-winning essays, or discover ground-breaking medical curries during your time here, why not go a little further? Volunteering with the homeless is guaranteed to give you a character building experience which you certainly won’t discover holed up in the Bodleian! Volunteering once a week at the Gap, a day-centre on Park End Street which focuses on providing support, care and advice for young homeless people. We are looking for eager volunteers to teach clients at the Gap between six to eight classes per term, focusing on basic skills, such as literacy, numeracy, IT, C.V. writing or budgeting. The Gap are enthusiastic that volunteers having a large degree of freedom in designing the focus and content of the classes, so that they may bring any special skills such as music or art to the project. It is a richly rewarding experience, allowing you to make a genuine difference to the lives of those who need it most. Not only will it greatly help the local community and help improve town-gown relations, it will also look fantastic on the old CV.

To get involved contact homeless@oxfordhub.org

STIR READING PROJECT - In some of the more socially deprived areas of Oxford there are large numbers of young children who, for a variety of reasons, receive little or no support for their reading development at home. Such children tend to go on to struggle with education more generally, and this impacts negatively on their future academic and life chances. This in turn means that they are ill-equipped to support the reading development of their own children, and so the cycle continues. STIR Oxford (Students Together to Improve Reading in Oxford) was set up with the aim of working towards breaking this cycle. The basic idea behind the project is simple but effective; Oxford students give up a couple of hours of their time a week to go into primary schools and read with the children who are most in need of their help. By engaging in shared reading with an interested, motivating adult, we hope that these children will gain confidence in their reading skills, and discover that as well as being a passport to more chances in life, reading is lots of fun!

To get involved contact stir@oxfordhub.org

THE TALENT BANK - consists of societies, speakers, artists, musicians and other gifted individuals who are willing to share their talents with community organisations. Our aim is to provide Community Organisations with a diverse range of student talents and offer students an easily accessible, enjoyable volunteering opportunity that will inspire them to volunteer regularly. Over one hundred societies and individuals signed up to express an interest in the Talent Bank at the Freshers’ Fair, and links with a similar initiative at Oxford Brookes University have been made. With three new co-ordinators on board, we now aim to work with Community Organisations to create and advertise relevant opportunities and continue to promote the Talent Bank within the University.

To get involved contact talentbank@oxfordhub.org

THE SKILLS POOL - looks for people with every and any skills that might benefit our projects and charity members. This project aims to create a pool of talented students with skills in any of the following areas: design, marketing, PR, fundraising, training, public speaking, ICT and general business skills.

To get involved contact skillspool@oxfordhub.org

TASK FORCE - advertises one-off events and projects, regularly informing people of ‘taskforce’ events taking place each term. These events will sometimes be last minute and will be the Oxford Hub’s way of helping the wider charitable community as well as our own projects. Events may include painting schools, planting trees or redesigning a charity shop window display, to one off bucket shakes in town to raise money, manning the door for charity gigs, marshalling fun days and charity races.

To get involved contact taskforce@oxfordhub.org
BOGGLE BOGGLE
FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

PLAYING
When the timer starts, each player searches the assortment of letters for words of four letters or more. When you find a word, write it down.

Words are formed from adjoining letters. Letters must join in the proper sequence to spell a word. They may join horizontally, vertically, or diagonally, to the left, right, or up-and-down. No letter cube, however, may be used more than once within a single word.

TYPES OF WORDS ALLOWED
Any word (noun, adjective, adverb, etc.) is acceptable as long as it can be found in a standard English dictionary. Plural nouns are allowed, as are all verb tenses. Words within words are also permissible; e.g., spare: spa, par, are, spar, pare.

SCORING AND WINNING:
When the timer runs out, everyone must stop writing. Each player in turn then reads aloud his or her list of words. Any word that appears on more than one player’s list must be crossed off all lists, including that of the reader.

After all players have read their lists, each player scores his or her remaining words:

SCORING
No. of letters: 4 5 6 7 8 or more
Points: 1 2 3 5 11

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You can use either US or UK measures, as long as you stay consistent. The original recipe used the dates and cinnamon, and full-fat, full-cholesterol butter, eggs, sugar, etc. The suggested substitutions for a lighter version are mine. The original ‘mistake’ was reading ‘cumin’ for ‘cinnamon’ with surprising and delicious results!

1 cup softened butter (or 2/3 cup mild baking-quality olive oil)
2 cups sugar (or 1 1/2 cups honey)
2 eggs (or 1/2 cup egg substitute)
2 1/2 cups flour
2 tsp. baking soda
3 tsp. cumin (or cinnamon)
1 tsp. cloves
2 cups unsweet, hot applesauce
2 cups raisins
1 cup chopped nuts
1 cup dates, if desired

Cream butter and sugar together until light and fluffy. Add eggs, beat well. Shift flour, baking soda, cumin and cloves together. Add flour to creamed mixture, alternating with applesauce. Add raisins, nuts and dates. Bake in a 9 X 11 pan for approximately 50 minutes in a 350 F/177 C oven. Enjoy!