

Issue Four

# The Brick

Joe Pritchard & Alex Marshall



## Banter

The Beating Heart  
of Robinson College

# Robinson Life

## News Flash

- ❖ College marriages have now been introduced to Robinson. So long, Aunts and Uncles; prepare for an all new form of incest. Of course, with a surplus of male students, homosexual marriage requests are inundating Bryn's inbox. This development has been heralded by experts as the reason for Obama's recent policy change.
- ❖ The most tedious saga in student politics, the constitutional reform, has finally come to an unexciting, predictable conclusion. The reform passed with ease.
- ❖ Toby and Will's new sound system for the bop room has been installed and is ready for next year's glorified school discos.
- ❖ Umbrellas.

## Five Questions

1. Have you ever done anything terrible to a panini?

Cat: No, since they're wrapped.

Simon: They're bad enough as they are. I think I'd rather rip your face off if you annoyed me.

2. Has Alistair ever made a move on you?

Cat: All the time, he cannot keep his hands off me.

Simon: He's never touched me, bastard.

3. Which student do you hate the most and why?

Cat: We're not really allowed to say, we can't answer that.

Simon: There's too many.

Cat: What do you mean hate? Like, wish they're dead?

4. Do you prefer conference guests or students?

Simon: Conferencers tip, you guys don't.

5. If you were a panini what type would you be?

Cat: I like meat, so I think a meaty panini; like, I don't think vegetarians are real people. A meat and cheese Panini, maybe a little pesto too.

2 Simon: I fucking hate paninis.

## Exam Welfare

I know this is my first exam term and I'm a fresher, so what do I know right!? But here we go. I find exercise a great relief of stress during exam times; going for a 30 minute walk or run (or a Yoga class on Thursdays at 4 in the Games Room, hint hint) can make all the difference when trying to feel energised and ready for your next revision sesh. Also, making sure you have some down time when you do absolutely NOTHING e.g. watching TOWIE or MIC etc. makes the work that you do even more productive. Basically ladies, CHOCOLATE is the actual way forward when it comes to exams. You can forget about the rest!

-Daisy May Pope, Women's Officer

So, I've been asked how Real Men™ deal with exams and the related levels of stress; I have therefore made a list of destressing activities that are easy and suitably idiotic ('manly' being nearly synonymous with 'stupid'). Firstly, if you do a science, go back in time and apply for an arts subject. (If this works, could you also stop David Lynch from making *Dune*?) Another good destressing technique involves three Scandinavians, a pine cone and crocodile clips attached to a car battery. Not sure if it's legal in Britain, though. Hmm... Of course, if none of these work, then try covering your hand in Tabasco and masturbating vigorously: I promise you, exam stress will be the least of your worries! (It worked for me!)

-Jacob Waller, Men's Officer



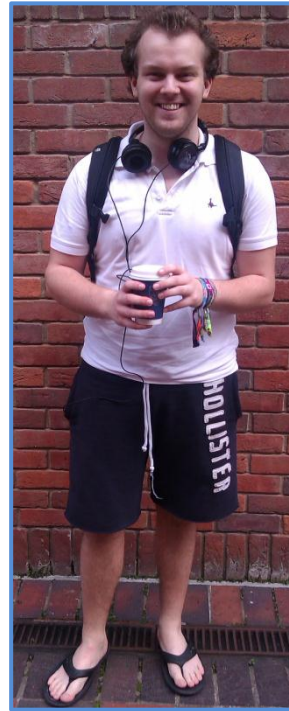
*Cat and Simon, our friendly café duo.*



# Robinson Fashion



**Sarah Pamerter** sparkles in these chic dungarees. For this look, try undoing one strap, to let folk know you're a free loving lass who enjoys a romp in a haystack or saw mill, should the occasion arise. A sunny demeanour perfectly complements this ensemble, so fix a rigid smile on your face and dip your hips. Ideal for the hippy agrarian inside us all.



**Jimmy Campbell** is undoubtedly the bastion of fashion this side of the Danube. Look at his Hollister shorts. Look at his headphones. Look at his real tennis stash. This is a man who cares not for conventions, nor acceptability, nor taste. We should look up to this man as some kind of supra-peacock destined to surpass us all in terms of sheer audacity. Ladies and gentlemen: welcome to 2015.



We caught **Will Nyere** just chilling like this outside the café. His denim jacket, chess board tee and blue kicks simultaneously struck fear in our hearts and awe in our eyes. If you choose to dress in such a manner, take all opportunities to rest one foot against a wall and dip your head. Onlookers will swarm around you, worshipping the fusion of funk and postmodern red shorts.



This is **Daisy May Pope**, the preeminent Welsh beauty of Robinson College. Her fashion is a delightful mix of trendy Aztec patterns and homely brown satchels. One can't help but fill with a deep sense of endearment for this cultural specimen. This is a fashion paradigm we can all aspire to: respectable yet edgy, sophisticated yet colourful; Gok Wan's wet dream.



It came to our attention following Ask Robinson that many members of college are struggling with regard to their apparel. We call on you to cast your eyes on these four fine titans of 21<sup>st</sup> century fashion. They combine comfort with practicality, and are touchstones for the less confident of you. Take the lessons of this page and redefine your wardrobe!

# Banter

Ever since 'banter' entered the public discourse in 2004 debates have raged over the precise definition of this amphibious concept. To my mind, I think of 'banter' as an elusive dialectic, akin to the liminal wanderings of a widowed badger. Yet, this fascination with categorising and defining banter often distracts from its mutable nature, and the questions we *should* be asking. Are chat and banter coterminous? Are our understandings of banter reflections of our imagined identities? Will Jimmy Campbell ever, even accidentally, stumble across a semblance of wit?



## History of Banter

- ❖ King Louis XVI initially dismissed the French Revolution as 'shit chat'.
- ❖ Edward Gibbon's *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* ascribed the imperial collapse to 'interminably weak banter'.
- ❖ The House of Lords first defined banter in the seminal case of *Royal Ascot v Rochester Taxi Company* [1978], Lord Scott famously defining banter as 'any words or conduct objectively interpreted by the reasonable person in the recipient's shoes to be a calculated as chat'.
- ❖ Anything more than cursory glance at *The Communist Manifesto* reveals it to be nothing more than cocaine fuelled banter between Engels and Marx.
- ❖ The word 'banter' is derived from the Ancient Greek *bantein* (βαντείν) which modern scholars have translated literally as 'to teabag one's slave'.
- ❖ Emily Pankhurst campaigned tirelessly not only for the women's vote, but also constitutional equality of banter.
- ❖ The Japanese have no word for 'banter' for they are a humourless people.

## Ye Olde Banter

1. "Good Sir, you smell of cow shit."
2. "I don't believe you can finish that drink"
3. "You tangled with a known wench."
4. "Old chap, I am afraid yestereve you ejected thine gastrict contents upon yonder butler."
5. "It's known round the village that your once reputable serf laid with a mottled swine."
6. "I prithee, reflect upon thine initiation intwixt the Knight's Order: Ye proceeded to expel faecal substance across the walls of thine most private of chambers."



The above image clearly demonstrates the male-orientated nature of banter; these three wild banterers are engaging in 'chat', and the female banteree is ill equipped to hold her own. Sadly, banter remains exclusively in the domain of the penis'd. This must remain an indictment on banter; a form of humour dominated by 'lads' and perpetrating the objectification of women. At a time of social progressiveness, banter remains a bedrock of conservative prejudiced attitudes, under the guise of humour. In reality, our misogynistic friends are most likely constructing a societal façade, to compensate for their hollow sense of masculinity. We call upon Women of Robinson to take up banter arms and confront this chauvinistic blight on our fair college. Don't shy from chat: ridicule scrotal girth, insult Jimmy Campbell and pander to the basic forms of comedy. This is your only chance. Even so, Sarah Pamerter should pipe down.



*Andy Grey,  
sacked by Sky  
News due to shit  
chat. A warning  
for us all.*



# Banter Walkthrough

1. Become centre of attention in a group by being loud, making crude remarks or woodland noises. Once all eyes are on you, move to step two.

2. Now you are the centre of attention, quickly identify the weakest and most susceptible member of the pack (e.g. Bionidini or Shipley). He or she is your target. You now have a choice of three banter-avenues.

3.a) Recall a recent event that has caused them embarrassment or hampered integrity.  
b) If struggling for recent events, cast your mind back over their backlog of compromising stories or anecdotes.  
c) If all else fails unleash a torrent of criticism on either their emotional fragility or physical mediocrity.

4. If this goes down well, jump to step 5. If it bombs, you are Jimmy Campbell; you have lost the game.

5. Rinse and repeat ad infinitum.



*Easy target – Jimmy Campbell*

## Genres of Banter

As a veteran of banter, I feel my experience could be useful for rookies or wannabees. It's important to remain calm and composed, but also cocky and arrogant. You're not trying to get people to like you; you're trying to get them to laugh at others. Don't expect to make any friends, climbing the banter rankings. I've had to make several sacrifices in my time. I used to be a keen recycler, and had a subscription to Traffic Cone Monthly, but hours just don't leave you with free time. This isn't a 9 to 5 job. Yet the primary benefit would be the increased respect from your peers, especially females. They pretend they're not impressed, but you know they love it. In closing, back yourself.



### Shit Banter

Form over content, unfunny observations, weak narrative.

*"I put it to you that I literally smashed a Dominos last night."*

As heard from: Jimmy Campbell, Pete Hall.

### Intellectual Banter

Cutting remarks on your cerebral shortcomings.

*"Your understanding of Plato's Republic leaves much to be desired."*

As heard from: Toby Butcher, Will Ghosh.

### Posh Banter

Exposing the lower-middle class as the Neanderthals they are.

*"You drank a 1973 merlot? What a terrible vintage."*

As heard from: Harry Llawarne, Will Harman.

### Bitchy Banter

Snide targeting of personal foibles.

*"Peter, when was the last time you got with a girl? You have literally no game."*

As heard from: Ewan McGregor, Lucas Squirrel.

### Cambridge Banter

Clichéd non-sequiturs on college or varsity rivalries.

*"I'd rather be at Oxford than at John's." \*collective sigh\**

As heard from: Sam Sloman, Sam Troughton.

### Subject Banter

Ill-informed manifestations of the arts-science divide.

*"Revision? But you're a land ec/historian/geographer."*

As heard from: Ignorant scientists.

# Ask Robinson

## What motivates you through exam term?

"I really like exam term; it's easy to stay motivated." [Chris Halcrow](#)

"Beyonce songs, Chris Halcrow and chocolate."  
[Ros Old](#)

"I don't want to say something xenophobic towards Chinese people." [Lewis Blackwood](#)

"I like fruity men." [Jonny Spencer](#)

"Tell myself 'I am a machine' whilst doing a little dance on my way to the library." [Aakash Patel](#)

"Shit on other people working." [Josh Hoskins](#)

"Coming from a position of academic mediocrity, something fruity, Mandela finest inspiration of speeches." [Darius Alexander](#) (Ed- Wha?)

"Bumps, baths and bitches." [Ewan McGregor](#)

"I'm not motivated. But not letting yourself eat / go toilet until you've done 'x' amount of work helps." [Emily Lodge](#)

"The perhaps misguided view that second year doesn't really matter." [Josh Levy](#)

"You put a rusty pin up your 'japs eye' and you're not allowed to take it out until you do some work. Also my DOS told me I have a limp wrist, which is bad for handwriting, so he advised masturbating. Which I've been doing regularly." [Josh Lomax](#)

"Knowing that the ladies love a man with good exam results." [Pete Hall](#)

"The Only Way is Essex." [Emily Binning](#)

## What do your clothes say about you?

"I should do my washing." [Alex Carruthers](#)

"Chav/prep." [Andrew Dallal](#)

"I am many different stereotypes at once." [Ros Old](#)

"I have little sense of fashion." [Jennifer Mills](#)

"Michael's shoes have the 'N-lock technology' to run fast; mine have a hole in them." [Alex Kennedy](#)

"I shop at Topman a hell of a lot." [John Jarman](#)

"Sometimes I'm Cambridge, sometimes I'm Harrow." [Shershah Assadullah](#)

"I've heard boxers and sunglasses are a great look." [Sam Troughton](#)

"That I'm really un-edgy and it really upsets me!"  
[Lara Tembey](#) *(in response)* Yeah, you're like a blunt, dull, short object." [Josh Lomax](#)

"That I want to be alternative but I like showering too much." [Aakash Patel](#)

"I'm still a nine year old boy inside." [Pete Hall](#)

"I hope my clothes don't talk about me behind my back." [Callum McCutcheon](#)

"I'm so alternative it's unreal." [Katie Harries](#)

"A graphic t shirt and chinos, wow this guy's a fucking maverick!" [Toby Butcher](#)

## How do you define the self?

"My dad used to say, 'Josh, a snake who has no horns may someday become a dragon.'" [Josh Lomax](#)

"As a French philosopher said 'I am the word and the word is me and the word is the self.'" [Faye Lee](#)

"Thatcher defines the self." [Josh Hoskins](#)

"Too philosophical for me. Ask Alice (Udale-Smith), she's an arts student now." [Lucas Squirrel](#)

"I don't understand the question." [James Scholes](#)

"I'm feeling really ill, I've spent 6 hours in bed."  
[Alice Udale-Smith](#)

"It is beyond the limitations of an external observation. We perceive the external world and the self is the means of that perception. We can't understand the self because we need the self for understanding, which makes it difficult to touch yourself." [Michael Boyle](#)

"Cat + box = confusion." [Alex Kennedy](#)

"What was that about masturbation?" [Jimmy](#)

"It's like the shelf minus the 'h'." [Lara Tembey](#)

"An eagle is *basically* a dragon." [Emily Binning](#)

"In the wise words of Lomax's Dad, there are only givers and takers. Apparently I am a giver." [Pete Hall](#)

"The essential qualities that makes one different from all others." [Rob Richardson](#)

"It's the feeling I get naked on top of a cold mountain in the snow." [Alex Dickinson](#)

"Anything below Edinburgh." [Ros Old](#) (Ed – the *self*, not the south)

"As the prefix to all my character-defining words." [Vanny Lambert](#)

"I don't know how to put this but I'm kind of a big deal." [Daisy May Pope](#)

"The self is who you are when you take away all the things you do just because you have to."

[Aakash Patel](#)





# Agony Aunt

One's naughty and the other's nice, your two favourite agony aunts give their advice!



*With exams approaching, I'm worried I don't have enough time to cover all my topics. I've worked really hard throughout the year and I don't want to let myself down*

Kate: Oh no this is me! My theory is that working hard throughout the year cannot let you down. So work as hard but as sensibly as you possibly can and your results will be fruitful.

Dickie: It is not enough for you to succeed; others must fail.

*Agony aunt, I'm uncomfortable with my body. I have the muscle tone of a malnourished gypsy and last holiday I lost an arm wrestle to my invalid mother. My biceps have been described as "Shit" and my nipples are as pink as the day I was spawned intwith this realm, betwixt mine motherly sanctum.*

Kate: It is a fact of life that everyone looks different, so you need to find a way to become confident in yourself. You have good friends and a great life; let this be your focus.

Dickie: Find a reliable source of peer pressure and let them psychologically dominate you into shape.

*Hi guys, I've got a date with a cute boy I've liked for ages and I'm really nervous. I haven't had the best of luck with guys in the past, any tips on how to behave with him?*

Kate: The only way of truly impressing him is to completely be yourself, so don't overthink and have fun.

Dickie: If he's constantly checking his phone throughout, it only means he's texting his mates about how pretty you look.

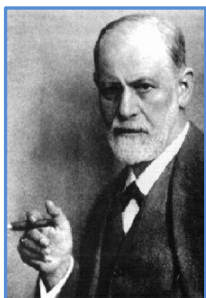
*Kate and Dickie, I'm thinking of running for RCSA president next year. Do you have any advice on leadership skills and how to win over popular support?*

Kate: Get to know as many people in college as possible. Speak in the café, smile in the plodge and hold doors open for innocent freshers. You can't go wrong.

Dickie: Propaganda, repression and Ribena.



## Dean's Dreams



I was in Robinson, in the gardens with Lara Tembey, but half of it was underwater; half was grass, surrounding the water (Ed -So it's a lake?). And we were paying a game where you had a balloon and had to hit people in the face with them. It was me n Lara versus all of college, but mainly Alex Marshall with bunch of freshers. Alex kept screaming, 'Get Emily! Emily Dean!' but me n Lara were so good because of our natural netball skills....

...I was drunk the night before, thought it was real. Hannah came into my room and I apologised that my room smelt, but I thought it was my feet,

then I realised my feet were made of cheese. She was like, its ok, I'll clear it up so. So then she tried to eat my cheese feet.

Freud says: Be wary of lakes, grass and people. Also, you have a foot fetish.



# Sports & Culture

## Lad's Rowing

The rugby boys are out to prove that rowing can't be that difficult. After the first few sessions, we discovered it could. The boaties really do deserve a lot of credit; rowing is very technical and tiring. We've had to put Stefan at the front of the boat to stop him shouting at us and Ryan Warnock has managed to break a seat with his fat arse. To be honest, the whole boat is getting sick of Ryan's incessant whining. But it looks like we're primed to compete in Bumps this term, and we're very confident that we're not going to embarrass ourselves. Then again, there was this time when we thought that we were tanking along, but it actually took us an age to overtake a girls' boat. And we're constantly under attack from a renegade swan.

-Pete Hall

## Squash

After a devastating first campaign, where we failed to win a single match, Lent term witnessed something of a heroic resurgence in fortunes. Spearheaded by myself and Ben Garner, with the occasional contributions of Nathan, Shershah and Freddie, the undisputed star of the drive was Señor Miguel Tapas. With his authoritative attitude and the shortest of shorts, he spunked the Robinson team into promotion to Division Six – the big time! A personal highlight was the demolition of the formidable Corpus third team, again thanks in large part to the sterling work of 'Taplin the Destroyer' (#banter). Lastly, we still would like more squashists, so drop me an email on [th383@cam.ac.uk](mailto:th383@cam.ac.uk) if you're interested in playing. –Toby Hayward-Butcher

## Ghosh's Film Corner

Released in 2009, James Cameron's *Avatar* has left a profound resonance in Western cinema, and not simply for propagating the cancer of three dimensional film making.



Of course, the story of Jake Sully, the paraplegic marine inhabiting an 'avatar' of a Na'vi - native of the "catastrophically beautiful Pandora" (Philips, 2009.) - suggested initially to demonstrate the horrors of colonialism if not an utter indictment upon capitalism itself. However, it is high time for a revisionist approach. The sci-fi construct of the genetically engineered avatars provokes inexorable questions concerning self-identity and metaphysical existence. In this light, the film can quite plausibly be interpreted as a discourse on the nature of sexuality in Western culture, and in particular the process of transcending sexual mores and embracing true liberation of the libido. The Na'vi, an obviously contented and hedonistic society, resembles a paradise of sexual enlightenment.

Jake Sully is literally portrayed as being crippled by orthodox societal practice, and thus the avatar system offers a carnal escapism. Of course, Sully then falls in love for Neytiri, ostensibly a female Na'vi, yet Cameron is clearly subverting our concept of gender by desexing and dehumanizing the characters through azure skin and grotesque height. As Oscar Wilde said, "Man is least himself when he talks in his own person. Give him a mask, and he will tell you the truth." The truth is, in this case, Sully's certain homosexuality.

Cameron portrays the forces of sexual conformity as a militaristic and mechanised legion of demolition; fascistic cavaliers scouring Pandora for 'unobtainium', Cameron's artistic synonym for sensual release and gratification. Whilst Sully commingles with a winged beast and soars the skies, Colonel Quaritch burns the beauty of nature in a spectacle of suppressed desire.

The final, epic battle scene presents a utopian refraction of the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s, and the victory of the Na'vi hints at Cameron's true message: enjoy the triumph of liberalism and confront the constraints of conservative, anachronistic attitudes towards self-perception and intimate behaviour. And *Avatar* conceives this cultural skirmish through three dimensions, providing a melancholic headache.

Have a great May Week Robinson