

TRINITY COLLEGE

CAMBRIDGE



ANNUAL RECORD 2014



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Cover photo: Remembrance Sunday at the College honoured the
619 Trinity men who lost their lives during the First World War.

Courtesy of Music Secretary, José Ignacio Alcántara

The Students' Union and College Societies

Trinity College Students' Union

By Jeremy Bernstein, President (2012)

A Fresher with grand plans and an eye for the perks of office might well be put off joining the TCSU. Trinity is an old college. How could he or she hope to make change in a place where the famous last words *semper eadem* ('always the same') proudly adorn a wall of their Great Hall?

In a place where tradition rules, it is fortunate that Trinity has a history of student-led reform. In the 1830s undergraduates were unhappily required to attend Chapel eight times a week: once each day and twice on Sundays. Rather than take it on their chins, an enterprising group of Trinity students formed *The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Undergraduates*. Each week they recorded and published the Fellowship's own attendance at Chapel. At the end of Lent Term 1838, the so-called 'examination of the Fellows' took place. The Society released a class list based on the figures of attendance: the Master Christopher Wordsworth, nephew of the poet, was ranked fourth from last, and Whewell, who was to succeed him as Master three years later, only achieved a low Second Class. The Fellows acted swiftly, and the required attendance was reduced from eight weekly visits to six.

Could the strength of the Society's approach have lain in its indirect nature? Purportedly, the students involved were worried not about wasting their own time in Chapel, but sought only to help the Fellows in their religious duty. It was in this spirit that in Lent Term 2014 the TCSU set out to see what it could achieve.

With the strong committee we have, it does not surprise me that the TCSU has enjoyed a successful few months. Using money from the TCSU's own reserves, we renovated the JCR during Easter Term. We live in the information age, and the TCSU is not a heartbeat behind – a selection of classic movie posters was chosen by Facebook vote, giving the Upper JCR a cinematic theme. Sofas, a 65-inch TV, and a Twister were added too. Our shrewd Treasurer, Ryan Patel, was able to negotiate John Lewis down by over £1000 on the TV alone. Encouraged by our ventures, the College added to our budget enabling the purchase of sofas and a reading lamp for the Lower JCR, to accompany shelves and shelves of books kindly left to the students by the late Professor Barton.

Cornelius Römer, Junior Steward and two-time winner of the Great Court Run, went on a mission to improve the Hall experience. A new TCSU suggestion box garnered useful comments about the shortcomings of the vegetarian option, as well as a request from one satisfied student: 'Cornelius, I want to have your babies'. The combined chance of winning BA formal tickets and getting nicer food convinced over fifty per cent. of the student body to complete a long, systematic survey evaluating the entire menu. By taking these survey results into regular meetings with the Catering Manager, Cornelius is hoping to secure more of the dishes we all like, and less ... well ... less polenta. We have also succeeded in reducing inflationary increases to Hall prices, saving the typical Hall-goer £30 a year.

The TCSU continued its work of dispelling myths and welcoming prospective students, much helped by the important contributions of Access Officer Will Green. Will created the brand new *Trinity College Alternative Prospectus*. This document gives the student perspective on all walks of Trinity life. Within its pages lies everything from 'A day in the life of an Arts/Sciences Student' to a catalogue of societies. Did you know that Trinity has its very own Sauna Society? Will also held an Access formal – an event to entertain those who helped run access events during the year.

The fact that Trinity's got talent was unequivocally proved by Catriona Chaplin on Ents. Following a storming season of WPRs and talent nights in the bar, festivities came to a head with the annual Garden Party: a Mexican Fiesta on the bowling green. Works staff provided a pair of foreboding gallows to suspend piñatas, Trinity Kitchens catered with nachos, fajitas and sangria, and a student band created the soundtrack. Trinitarians could be found sheltering under sombreros or soaking in the sunshine as they relaxed on the grass. Student welfare is one of our staunch pillars, and Welfare Officers Rose Lander and Matt Dammers were certainly up to the job. Beyond the glamour of dispensing contraceptives, Rose and Matt were always available for a chat to help a student in need, or to recommend further help when necessary. Henry the Welbear was introduced to Trinity – a giant teddy bear sporting a TCSU jacket, who would boost morale in the Library (or wherever Henry was called in the line of duty). Rose and Matt ran stress-busting movie nights during exam term, and they even commissioned Trinity's very own meditation CD to help students relax. And, at the cost of alliteration, Free Fruit Fridays were moved to Saturday when more students were free.

Back and forth dealings between TCSU, the Liaison Committee, and the Catering Department ended well in the installation of our new Societies Blackboard. Situated in the Servery Passage, students can now read about sports results and society events as they queue for food. Along with the JCR renovation, it was a nice feeling to deliver on an item from my manifesto. Thankfully the blackboard is so far phallus free.

We kept an eye on the Living Wage Campaign thanks to our Secretary, Leo Sands, wanting to ensure a fair wage for Trinity employees. Vice President, Tom Hughes Mclure, applied pressure on the College Staff Committee. Now all staff directly employed by the College are paid at a rate above the Living Wage. Still the College has made no endorsement of the campaign, and so this status is subject to change.*

How Tim Large, Overseas Officer, found time to organise international swaps with other colleges, run the iTCSU Committee, and still top the Maths Tripos – for the second time – is beyond me. Tom Hampson, Environmental and Domestic Officer, led Trinity's involvement in Student Switchoff: a campaign organised by NUS to reward students for their energy saving endeavours. Kshitij Sabnis, Publicity and Computing Officer, further developed the fresh design of tcsu.net, to make it as friendly as possible towards prospective students. With the same aim, Kshitij liaised with the College on plans for their own new website, providing feedback on behalf of the students.

Perhaps the greatest strength of *The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Undergraduates* was not their wiles but their organisation. The College is in a nascent stage of thought about the future of the Brewhouse. Some Fellows have suggested that registering a student vote for a social space and bar by the river would not go amiss. It might take over ten years, but with high levels of organisation, and a little grit, we could aim for a bar that was not only passable but one to be proud of.

* [Note by the Junior Bursar: "The College offers permanent staff an employment package including free medical and dental insurance, assistance with housing, an attractive pension scheme, and for all staff, permanent and casual, free meals when on duty. College pay scales are considered by the College Staff Committee and recommendations made to the College Council. The Staff Committee reviews a range of information including changes to the Retail and Consumer Price Indices, pay increases in the Private and Public sector both nationally and in the Cambridge area, any pay increases agreed nationally in the collective negotiations between relevant Unions and Universities (of which Cambridge is one), and any other relevant information. The representations from the TCSU concerning the Living Wage were considered as part of this process. There is, however, no explicit link between College pay and any external scale or index, nor is it intended to introduce one: the College takes its own decisions."]

