

Psst: SPS is now called PPSIS

James Baker
News Reporter

On January 1 2009 the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences (SPS) and the Centre of International Studies (CIS) merged to become the Faculty of Politics, Psychology, Sociology and International Studies (PPSIS). On top of this, from October 2010 the Social and Political Sciences (SPS) Tripos will be renamed Politics, Psychology, and Sociology (PPS).

Speaking to *The Cambridge Student* (TCS), Director of Politics Andrew Gamble explained that the changes were effected in the hope of raising the profile of Cambridge as a centre of excellence for the study of the social sciences: "Compared to other universities such as Oxford and LSE... the lack of investment is striking."

Whilst conceding that this is merely a base upon which to build

further expansion, Professor Gamble said that he had high hopes and would be "very disappointed" if within 10 years Cambridge were not widely recognised as one of the top places worldwide for the study of Politics and International Studies, saying: "We want to create something worthy of Cambridge."

A major new faculty building on West Road is also in the pipeline, subject to approval to be granted in March.

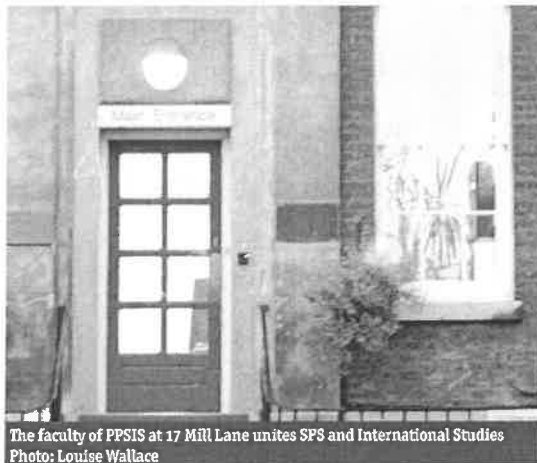
It is not just the politics department that will be effected by the changes. All three departments of PPSIS in fact increase their autonomy with the merger. Michael Lamb, Director of Psychology, explained that the explicit renaming of the faculty as Politics, Psychology, Sociology, and International Relations, as opposed to the previously ambiguous Social and Political Sciences, was intended with this purpose in mind. He also hopes that

this will address the "imbalances" that previously existed, with the majority of students studying politics.

Student input was a significant factor in the changes taking place. Professor Gamble described the Centre of International Studies' previous unavailability to undergraduate students as "crazy."

Consequently, it will be possible for PPS undergraduates to take Part I papers in International Studies from 2010, with Part II papers to be added the following year. Christopher Hill, Chair of the Centre of International Relations said that "International Relations can now be studied in a way not done so far." From this point on it will also be possible for PPS students to concentrate on one particular track for the full three years of the degree.

Professor Hill was also keen to stress that the merger, still in



The faculty of PPSIS at 17 Mill Lane unites SPS and International Studies
Photo: Louise Wallace

progress, would in no way disrupt the work of current students, saying: "I doubt if students will notice much immediate change."

Far from praising this fact how-

ever, SPS first year Toby Jones expressed his disappointment that action had not been taken earlier: "I would have liked to study International Relations".

Baron Cohen defends Pentagon hacker

Alastair Cliff
News Reporter

Pressure has been mounting over the last week to halt the extradition to the United States of Gary McKinnon, who has been accused of hacking into the NASA and Pentagon mainframes in the search for 'UFOs'. The latest call to halt the extradition has come from Simon Baron Cohen; fellow of Trinity College, Professor of Developmental Psychopathology and head of the Autism Research Centre in Cambridge.

While the United States authorities view Mr McKinnon as a dangerous threat, describing his actions as an "intentional and calculated [attempt] to influence and affect the US Government by intimidation and coercion," McKinnon claims he was merely trying to uncover proof of extraterrestrial life hidden in high security databases. He also claims his actions were due to his suffering from Asperger's Syndrome, which was only diagnosed in August last year.

Speaking at a press conference, Professor Baron Cohen said that rather than having any malicious or criminal intent, he was acting through "social naivety."

Professor Baron Cohen said "There are questions about whether he should be imprisoned at all because someone with Asperger's Syndrome will

find it very difficult to tolerate a prison environment. "If, as I believe, the crime was committed through naivety and through an obsession- in this case with computers and trying to find information- without any intent to deceive, without any attempt to hide what he was doing, we should be thinking about this as the activity of somebody with a disability, rather than a criminal activity. It can bring a sort of tunnel vision so that in their pursuit of the truth they are blind to the potential social consequences for them or for other people."

Mr McKinnon, who hacked into the NASA and Pentagon databases from his bedroom in north London, was arrested in 2002 after attempting to download an image of what he thought was an alien spacecraft housed in the Johnson Space centre, Texas. The Crown Prosecution Service is considering a request to have Mr McKinnon tried in the United Kingdom. Mr McKinnon's QC, Edward Fitzgerald told the High Court: "The very fact of extradition will endanger his health."

There have also been suggestions that he would be held in a pre-trial high security prison in tough conditions, violating Article Three of the European Convention on Human Rights against inhumane and degrading treatment.

Tome Raider: Part II

Pete Jefferys
Tom Lovering

Defacing library books is a crime for which students are more often than not responsible. We've all seen pages covered in pretentious notes, coffee stains and unjustified levels of pink highlighter. Last Thursday however, a London millionaire businessman and academic was found to have taken this sort of activity to a new level. He was jailed for two years for systematically removing pages from valuable books in the British Library in London and the Bodleian Library in Oxford.

"The current estimate of the damage is £1million"

Farhad Hakimzadeh, 60, was a member of both libraries as well as maintaining his own collection of rare books and manuscripts.

The court found that for 8 years he had smuggled a scalpel into the libraries, sat down out of sight of the security cameras, and then carefully remove pages from priceless documents, whose absence, according to Detective Chief Inspector Dave Cobb, who worked on the case, "only an expert would be able to identify."

The current estimate of the dam-



age is £1 million, but some experts are suggesting it could be much higher. 150 books had pages removed, some of which dated from the 16th Century.

Dr Kristen Jensen, of the British Library, told *The Independent* that the affair was made worse by the fact that Hakimzadeh was an expert and so "actually knew the importance of what he was damaging."

"Obviously, I'm angry because this is somebody extremely rich who has damaged something which belongs to everybody, completely selfishly destroyed something for his own personal benefit."

"And a historic object, once damaged, is damaged forever. You cannot undo that. There will now forever be a signs on these books that show something has happened to them."

The theft of valuable documents from libraries is nothing new. In 2002 there was the case of the infamous "Tome Raider" William Jacques, who stole more than a million pounds' worth of books from Cambridge University Library, including two 1687 editions of Newton's 'Principia Mathematica' worth £135,000.

Cambridge graduate Jacques fled to Havana after a police interview leaving just a note detailing the location of strong boxes containing stolen books and pages. He returned to England seven weeks later and was subsequently arrested.

While civil proceedings are now underway to recover some of the missing pages from the latest thefts, many believe it is impossible to put a price on the loss resulting from vandalism of such valuable cultural items.