

Punting Is Not Easy As Pie

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Cambridge is world-famous for a prestigious university and the breathtaking beauty of a river. For millions of tourists who flock to the town every year, punting on the Cam is something they must not miss during summer. No wonder I saw many boatmen touting for business near the Mathematical Bridge and Trinity College. While hiring a boatman to punt is easy, punting on your own is by no means a piece of cake.

I had an unforgettable experience of punting with two American friends, Kent and Richard. We tried our hand at punting after darkness fell. I thought there were street lamps along the riverside. I was wrong. So we had to punt in darkness. In the dim starry light, we could only see the outlines of buildings along the river. Surprisingly, some other people were punting in the dark too. Their companions lay on the candle-lit punts and some even sang Spanish ballads. I was supposed to enjoy such a romantic atmosphere. But I could not, because I was struggling with the punt.

I did not realise how extraordinarily difficult punting was till that moment. We tried to steer the punt with a 10-foot pole. It was exhausting to handle such a long and heavy wooden pole. To move forward, I had to plunge the pole right to the riverbed, and then push the pole backwards. Immediately after that, I must lift the pole out of the water slowly, and then submerge it into the river again. Lifting the pole is the most challenging job, because it will easily slip from your grasp and fall into the water. Also, the series of actions has to be as smooth as possible to keep the punt moving steadily forward.

Steering is another difficult task. My miserable steering technique made the punt bump into the riverbank several times. Most embarrassingly, I lost control of the punt again near the Bridge of Sighs. It went crashing into the riverbank under the bridge. Alarmed by the awful racket, the porters of St John's College literally brought us to light with their lamps. Wearing curious grins, they could not help asking, 'Oops! What are you all doing there? Are you alright?'

Thanks to my punting skill, it took us more than an hour to return to the Mathematical Bridge, a journey which normally takes just 15 minutes. I hope I can do better next time. Interestingly, my punting on that midsummer night has become my most memorable experience in Cambridge.



Where flowers bloom so does hope.

Lady Bird Johnson



別字辨正

希望上一期《文訊》的“別字辨正”小測試難不倒大家。有沒有興趣再考考自己的眼力，從以下一段文字挑出七個常見的別字？

香港近年興起了一股瘦身之風，纖體廣告矚目皆是，外敷內服的消脂產品林林種種，五花八門，標榜可以極速美化身段。可是，單靠節食、服藥或飲用減肥茶，同時胡亂以零食裹腹，只會令身體缺乏營養，精神不振，試問怎能持之以恆？歸根究底，運動和均衡飲食才是瘦身的不二法門。別再以“忙”為藉口了，勤造運動、注意飲食，相管齊下，體重自會減輕，人也會變得精神奕奕、活力充沛。



“矚目”應為“矚目”，解說詳見《文訊》第十四期《別字辨正》。“林林種種”應為“林林總總”；“總總”為眾多之貌，“林林總總”形容種類繁多。“五花八門”應為“五花八門”；“五花八門”比喻花樣繁多或變化多端。“裹腹”應為“果腹”；“果”有“飽滿”、“充實”之意，“果腹”意指“吃飽肚子”。“藉口”應為“藉口”也作“借口”，指“假託的理由”。“造運動”應為“做運動”，此處“做”是指“從事某種活動”。“相管齊下”應為“相管齊下”；“變管齊下”本指畫畫時兩管筆同時並用，比喻兩方面同時進行。