

busy year ahead in her new role

# her feet



**STOPPING TRAFFIC:** Miss Cork, Samina Zia, is pictured asking taxi driver Mick Connolly to lend his support to Denim Day in aid of disadvantaged children, one of her many promotions in the year ahead. Right: Looking good in denims.

Picture: Brian Loughheed

Indeed, she would never have got this far without her remarkable work ethic either.

Despite her considerable achievement, Samina was back working in Brown Thomas the morning after her big win.

She has worked there for the past two years as a brand manager for Tommy Hilfiger women's wear and Hilfiger sport to support her modelling career.

Now Samina hopes her Miss Cork success will give her that extra edge.

"I'm hoping this will improve my modelling profile and just get me more work, although I'm already I'm very busy."

But Samina, who does not have a boyfriend or time for hobbies, admits play is important too.

"The most important thing for me is to be happy, to make the most of what I'm doing and to grab every opportunity that comes my way," says Samina.

"You have to work hard for what you get. Nothing is handed to you on a plate but then you've just got to, enjoy it and, well, I know I'm doing that anyway."



## O'Shea on Monday

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### Misty-eyed over Jeremy Paxman

**ROBERT O'SHEA**  
*puts your brain to the test with some trivia*

STARTERS for ten.

What quiz show has been running on the BBC since 1963 and pits the best minds in Higher Education in the UK against each other?

Bullseye.

Er, no. The answer is *University Challenge*.

And why should that interest us?

Because the final of the series is on tonight at 8.30pm on BBC2. But, hey, I'm supposed to be asking the questions.

Shoot.

Who will be contesting the decider tonight?

Would it be Corpus Christi College, Oxford against University College London?

Correct. And who will you be shouting for and why?

UCL, because Corpus Christi have a smug-looking guy on their team who dresses like a James Bond villain.

How do you usually choose whom to throw your support behind?

Well, at the start of the show, contestants tell the audience what they are doing at college and while some say they are "studying" a subject, a lot say they are "reading" a subject, e.g. "I'm reading philosophy and English." The latter sounds more pretentious so we usually support a college where the majority say "studying." Or sometimes we root for the team with a hot chick.

What is the single most common mistake among viewers who only catch a glimpse of UC while channel-surfing?

That one team is sitting above the other.

What is the most irritating thing about the show?

When the gong goes at the end of the quizmaster Jeremy Paxman doesn't say, a la Magnus Magnusson, "I've started so I'll finish"; no, instead he just ignores that question and doesn't even give the answer to it.

What else is irritating?

That some of the questions are so long and complicated that by the time Paxman has reached the end of them you don't remember how they started and you end up shouting something like "Winston Churchill" at the telly, when the answer is actually "pi."

Is it okay to continue to shout answers at the telly when guests or people who wanted to watch *East Enders* are also in the living room?

You must! Because while it may seem rude, there is nothing worse than sitting there tight-lipped when you think you know an answer. And then the guest/soap watcher answers it correctly. And it was "Winston Churchill."

Paxman acts incredibly irked when asked to repeat a question, and for long ones he will often refuse to do so. Why is this strange?

A journalist famed for his forthright style of interviewing, he holds the record on British TV for repeating the same question. In 1997 on current affairs show *Newsnight* he asked current

Tory leader Michael Howard if he had threatened to overrule the head of the Prison Service following a jailbreak. Howard evaded the question with the usual politicospeak ("I'd like to assure you, that first of all" etc) and finally answered a different question: "I did not overrule him." Eleven more times Paxman asked him: "Did you threaten to overrule him?" without getting a yes or no answer. Had Howard been on *University Challenge*, he would have accumulated minus-60 points.

The author of this piece seems to know a lot about UC. He didn't appear on it or anything, did he?

Alas, no. But not for want of trying. Having specifically moved over to England to study so he could get on, it was heartbreakingly not meant to be.

The first year he designed a *University Challenge* poster in photoshop and stuck it up around campus. He then organised a room where hopeful team members could meet. He had devised a sheet of 30 questions so he could whittle down their number to six (a team including two subs). When he was booking the room in the university, the lady asked whether he wanted a 50- or 80-person capacity. Being of the optimistic bent, this chap chose 80.

When the day came for the meeting there was a huge crowd of students outside the door. He excused his way past them and entered. They then went into the room across the way.

For 30 minutes he sat (interspersed with writing the words: "University Challenge" in large letters on the whiteboard; sticking his head out the door and seeing no-one about; gazing melancholically out the windows) and waited. As he was about to leave, a woman aged around 70 came to the door. She told him she had once been on *15 to 1* and she was now learning Spanish at the college. He pretended he wasn't the organiser of the team.

The second year, he used his position as university magazine editor to drum up interest by refusing to write editorials about anything else. Eventually he banded together four guys and a lady, all of middling intelligence. They travelled to Granada studios in London for a qualifier and the Birkbeck College team that hammered them went on to win the series outright and had as a member of their team, we are serious here, a priest from *Fr Ted*.

Just because the final of *University Challenge* is on tonight, a show most readers don't even watch, is that any excuse for personal reminiscences or to use a tired question-and-answer format instead of putting some thought into a... BONNNNNNGG!