

The Beaver

30th September, 1991

Newspaper of the London School of Economics Student Union

Issue 342

County Hall plans in doubt

Consternation as environment secretary's announcement clears the way for a commercial bid

by Madeline Gwyon

Hopes that the LSE could move to County Hall, the former home of the Greater London Council now look threatened following an announcement by the Environment Secretary. On the 5th September, Michael Heseltine reported that planning permission had been granted for the site to be turned into a hotel and residential flat complex.

While no developer has yet made a bid for the site, several corporations are said to be interested. It is thought to be most likely that a bid would come from a Japanese corporation, such as have been involved in previous bids.

The idea that the LSE could move to County Hall was first mooted as a suggestion in replies made to 'the Director's vision'. It was thought by many of the respondents that the deserted group of buildings would be ideal for the doubling in Student numbers that was proposed. Previously, it had seemed such a scheme would require that a second campus be set up, possibly in Docklands. In addition the extra space still left over could be used to house the 'social science park' that was another aspect of "the vision"

The site, consisting of the Waterfront and Island Buildings, the North and South Wings, and several (mostly derelict) open spaces has lain empty ever since the demise of the GLC in 1984. The LRB, charged with disposing of the site, has rejected all previous bids; however, suspicions exist that the government is attempting to sell the building before any general election, to avoid it being used for a new GLC in the event of Labour winning the election.

A potential problem exists in that demonstrations are forbidden within a mile of Parliament, which lies directly opposite County Hall on the other side of the Thames while it is in session, hence any future SU demos would automatically break the law in most cases. It is hoped that some legal means can be found around this; in recent years several demonstrations have actually finished in Jubilee Gardens, an open area behind the Waterfront building.

However, a more fundamental obstacle remains in the way



An artists impression of how the LSE would look if and when installed in County Hall

Anthony Hudson Architects

of the LSE's bid. The London Residuary Board (LRB) has been instructed to obtain full market value for the site, which entails a price which the School simply cannot afford - a bid in the region of £100 million by one developer has already been rejected as too low.

Hence, several arguments have been put forward as to why the School should receive preferential treatment. The most common one is that the government should intervene in favour of the LSE, to show its commitment to higher education. In the light of Heseltine's announcement, this would now seem doubtful; however, it is known that the Environment secretary is still retaining a veto over the LRB's final decision. It is also argued that the LSE's bid would use the County Hall buildings

more effectively than another usage.

Another potential point mooted in favour is the LRB's reported wish that Jubilee Gardens remain open to the public, as at present. Previous commercial bids have had this point against them.

A final reason for preferential treatment is that several parts of County Hall have a grade II listing, and at present their internal structure is unsuitable for hotel or office use; whereas the School would be able to utilise the existing arrangement of rooms and corridors. Any planning application to change the internal structure would not be considered for five years. Thus any developer would have greater problems than the LSE in utilising the site.

At the time the move to

County Hall was suggested, the School had even proposed linking the LSE with the Houses of Parliament, by merging the BLPES with the House of Commons library. This played on complaints about lack of facilities on the part of MPs. This idea appears to have been abandoned however.

A suggested compromise is that a swop could occur: County Hall for the current Houghton Street site of the LSE. This would leave the LRB with a building of lower market value, but one which possesses no listing and can thus be altered more easily. It is also claimed that the Aldwych situation of Houghton Street would be more suited to commercial development, due to its proximity to the law courts and Covent Garden, and easier travel to the city.

The school is thus attempting a complete valuation of its Houghton Street site, in an attempt to decide whether such a possibility exists. Values of around £80 million have been suggested in the national press.

Were the LSE to move to County Hall, one major beneficiary would be the Students' Union. Initially, union services would be housed along with new indoor sports facilities in the Waterfront building; plans are under discussion for a purpose-built building to be constructed for the union during this period on the Allington Street annexe, a disused piece of waste ground to the south of the other buildings. This, it is felt would be an improvement on the current situation.

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Facelift for C018

New facilities developed below C018, including bar and television link to Three Tuns

by Peter Harrad

C018, the functions room under the Three Tuns bar is to receive a facelift including the installation of a bar, seating and disabled access. A large projection screen with a link to the television in the Three Tuns is a further feature. The move comes as part of an initiative by Fiona Macdonald, union Social and Services secretary, who worked on the refurbishment over the summer in conjunction with Toby Johnson, union Senior Treasurer and Gethin Roberts, the General Manager.

The idea of 'upgrading' C018 dates back two years to when Crispin Leyser was in Macdonald's post. It was taken up as an initiative by Jon Hull, his successor, but nothing serious has been

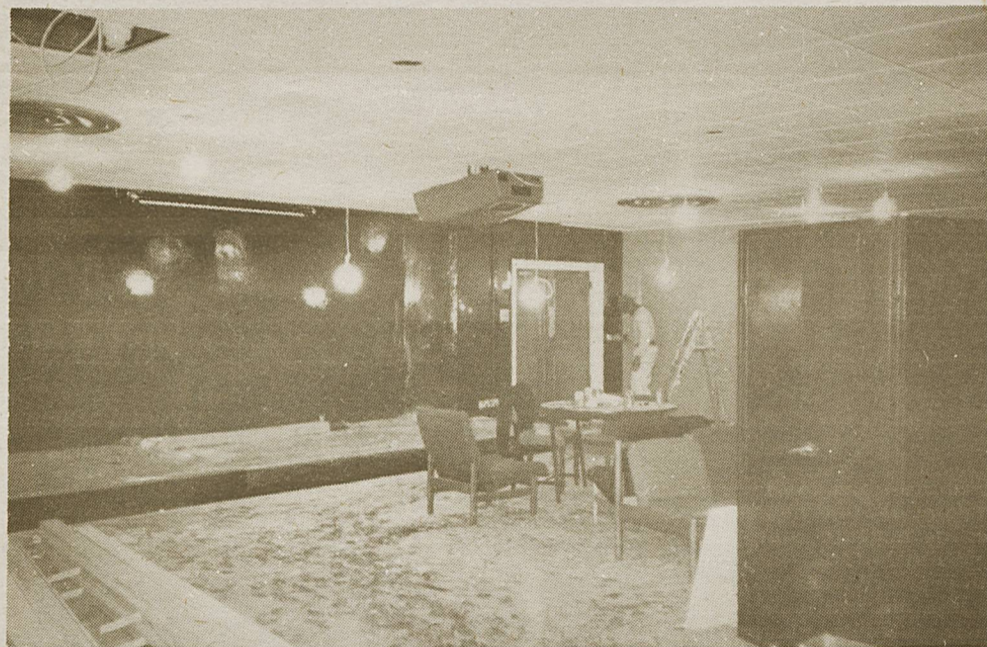
done until now.

Macdonald says that in response to requests from the Students Union, the School has repainted the site, installed new lights and moved the fire escape; she explained that the School was glad that the SU was attempting to make good use of the room with the proviso that as long as it was "in a civilised manner". She feels that the school has been "very helpful".

The television screen is already available for use, but further features such as the bar, seating, and shelving along the walls have yet to be installed and should be available sometime in November. A notable feature of the development is the consideration given to disabled access. The replacements for the notorious Paternoster lifts in the Clare Market

building will give wheelchair access to the room; in addition, one side of the bar will be at wheelchair height.

As regards future uses of the site, Macdonald is keen to book acts into C018, which is to be renamed as "The Underground" and turn it into a regular venue. In addition, for special sports events such as the Rugby World Cup, Macdonald suggested that the bar could be opened and television coverage shown in the room. She is keen that it not just be "a party room". However, the Tequila society has requested and received permission to use it for their introductory party on the 12th October, provided stewards are used and, to quote Macdonald, "not too much damage is done".



Work in progress under the Tuns

News in Brief

Following four years of contentious internal debate, the Student Union has this year appointed a General Manager, to oversee the business and legal activities of the school. Gethin Roberts has joined the LSESU from Goldsmith's college, starting his position on the 2nd September.

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Student Union offices are receiving something of a major switcharound at the moment; the General Secretary, Michiel van Hulst has joined the other sabbaticals on the South corridor of the East building, above the cafe. In addition, the Beaver is receiving a new office in E197, below the Welfare office. It is hoped the changes will be complete by mid-October, according to Senior Treasurer Toby Johnson.

Stephen Twigg, President of NUS, will be visiting LSESU on Wednesday 2nd October, attempting to meet new students and explaining the role that NUS plays. Anyone who feels a need to meet him should come to the SU between 10 and 11.30 am.

New Bar Manager appointed



Paul Harmon, with Bar Manager Jim Fagan

The General Manager was not the only member of staff appointed over the summer. Paul Harmon, the new assistant bar manager, started on the 23rd September. He joins the Tuns after managing "Courtneys Wine Bar", in Aldgate. Paul says that he

likes the Tuns because of its closely knit feel; he is also surprised by the "superb" range of drinks on offer, combined with the low prices. He replaces Phillip 'pip' Walsh, who has left to study for a degree in linguistics at York university.

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Banks -

Everything you wanted to know about the things you haven't got.

This year, by the marvellous work of your ever-so dedicated Sabbaticals, most notably the Senior Treasurer Toby Johnson, the Students' Union is launching a "new initiative" between banks and students.

Apparently, the system will work (unlike most things that come out of the LSE) on a two way basis (tutors take note!!). In theory, students will provide feedback on any problems they are experiencing with their bank accounts and the banks will then supposedly assess this to modify the service that they provide to students. The ultimate aim will be to collate statistics on which is the best bank for student needs. (This, for those who don't already know is likely to mean the banks likely to grant the largest overdrafts with the fewest number of snotty letters concerning your financial woes.)

So, if a student feels that they have been treated unfairly by their bank, they will be able to

register a complaint with the Senior Treasurer of the Students Union. (He is the Sabbatical that looks most like an escaped convict.) The information required will deal with the specific area of complaint but will be entirely anonymous, so you needn't worry about facing your bank manager again knowing that you have said awful things about them behind their backs. In the long term, this information will be passed on to the banks themselves so as to allow them to justify (and hopefully rectify) any problems.

The reasoning behind this new scheme has been based on many cliched but sad truths about the state of student finance today. For example, the Poll Tax, student loans, lack of housing benefit for students, the recent price increases in the Three Tuns beer (need I say more). The scheme is therefore supposed to make the banks more aware of and more sympathetic towards students' finan-

cial problems.

It has been a harsh but fair complaint of students in the past that banks are mainly interested in acquiring students accounts of gullible freshers who want their £30 Our Price record token, and are not prepared to provide a good enough standard of service through the following years of real need. Most complaints have centred around a lack of telephone banking (indeed, we often wonder if they actually know which way to hold the handset), high interest charges on overdrafts and a rapid foreclosure on overdrafts after graduation. These are the areas which the banks really need to tackle over the forthcoming year. With your enthusiasm (as we know all LSE students come equipped with) and your feedback we can perhaps help to alleviate these problems before many of you finish your degrees. Well, one can but hope.

The scheme is also designed

to give students more confidence in dealing with their bank managers. By giving you an additional point of contact which is hopefully more approachable than the bank reception, student finance problems may also be dealt with more smoothly. Instead of 4,500 complaints being fired at the banks from a wide variety of corners of London, we simply get our Senior Treasurer to do it all for us. After all, he really does look like an escaped convict so the bank managers should be more afraid of him than he is of them.

Apparently, Toby Johnson is brimming with enthusiasm about this whole idea. So, please go and see him with all your banking problems so that he can feel loved and wanted again. You can find him in the newly decorated room E205 (which is also a public convenience between the hours of 11pm and 9am) or by phone on extension 7471.

CROSSWORD

Compiled by Neil

Across

1. Carter have found themselves an overweight lawman. (7,6)
- 6 & 11a. They Might Be Giants are singing about a very popular Vietnamese woman (3,2)
- 8 & 12a. Smiths album which includes "Headmaster Ritual" (4,2,6)
9. (see 1 Down)
11. (see 6 across)
12. (see 8 across)
13. "Any _____ Will Do" according to Jason.
18. (see 3 down)
20. "Young People" from Wales who like to play with Christopher Robin (4,6)
22. The Stranglers last studio album with Hugh Cornwall (3)
23. A cover version by the Beatles which can be found on their debut album. (4)
24. Is it true that the Sugarcubes are gin drinkers? (6)
25. "Radio _____ Kiss" by The Wonder Stuff. (3)
27. I remember Hugh, Norman, Paul, Ted and Dave, but who was the sixth Housemartin? (4)
28. Telescopes single which had an eye for pointing things out (6)
29. 1987 comeback album for the Bee Gees (1,1,1)
31. Roxette's record label (1,1,1)
32. Record label now known as Columbia (1,1,1)
35. Indie group who released the "Cool Breeze" EP (5)
36. (see 26 Down)
37. (see 1 Down)
40. Punk group responsible for "Promises" who recently recruited former Smiths' Mike Joyce (9)

Down

- 1 & 9a & 37a. Top Ten hit for the Jesus and Mary Chain back

1		2		3		4		5					
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- in 1986 (4,5,7)
2. "Indie" band responsible for "Sometimes", "Chains of Love" and "A Little Respect" (7)
- 3 & 18a. New FADS Indie Number One from 1990 (6,4)
4. (see 26 Down)
5. "Mad Not _____"; Madness' penultimate album (3)
- 6 & 17d. Angus Young's HM outfit (2,2)
7. (see 30 Down)
10. Manchester band with some foulish rhythms (9)
14. It came after their Disco but before their Introspective (8)
15. Had a Top Ten hit back in 1981 with "Is Vic There?" (10,1)
- 16 & 21d. Dannii Minogue's debut album (4,3,6)
17. (see 6 Down)
19. "What you give is what you get": Number One song for The Jam in 1980 (5)
- 21 (see 16 Down)
- 26 & 36a & 4d. Violent moves from 808 State? (2,3,4)
27. Indie band who recently covered The Flatmates' 1988 hit "Shimmer" (5)
- 30 & 7d. Why not "Fade" away with some heavenly Frenchmen from Manchester (5,6)
33. Blur's third single (4)
34. _____ II Men. Motown artists currently riding high in the US charts (4)
38. _____ Lang. (1,1)
39. Best selling Peter Gabriel album which is not called "Peter Gabriel"

diary

Rupert the Bear could hardly believe his luck. He had managed to get into the London School of Economics through clearing after badly screwing up in his A-levels and today was his first day in his exciting new world. Eager to start socialising, he went to see Badger Bill at Butler's Wharf to see what he was up to.

"Hello, Bill" said Rupert. "What are you going to do today?"

"Well today, Monday 30th September, I'm going to go to the **Disco and Laser/Video lights show in the Quad**" replied Bill. "It only costs £2 and it starts at 7.30 pm."

"Phew, what a bargain" exclaimed Rupert excitedly. "I can't wait"

The little bear was so happy that he skipped all the way home with thoughts of the evening in his head.

Rupert was in the middle of a fantastic dream when the 'phone rang.

"Hello, Rupert" said an excited voice. "It's me Edward Trunk. I've just come back from a fantastic introduction party and got totally out of my head on drugs"

"Golly" exclaimed Rupert.

"Anyway man, I'm ringing to tell you about a great **Alternative Comedy Double Bill that's on in the Old Theatre tonight (Tuesday 1st October)**. It costs £4, or £3 if you bought an ENTS card, and it starts at 8.00 pm"

"Gosh, that's amazing. Who's on?"

"That award winning comedian **Mark Steel and Steve Murray**"

Rupert replaced the receiver and jumped with joy. What fun it was being at University.

The following day, Wednesday 2nd October, Rupert the Bear and Podgy Pig got totally wrecked in the Three Tuns and the Underground because the bar was open all day. Unfortunately they missed **The Dominic Howles Quartet playing latin and jazz funk**, which was followed by a special appearance from **Mark Thomas** at 3.30 pm. There was also amazing drinks promotions, prizes and a pub quiz.

Thursday, 3rd October, Rupert spent all day throwing up and missed the **Intro events in the Halls of Residence**. He did manage to see the **live music in the Three Tuns**, though.

On Friday night Rupert had a choice. A **free disco (the first of many) in the Three Tuns** or the **discos in the halls of Residence**. Unfortunately he could not make his mind up and spent the entire evening travelling around the Circle Line.

The following day, Saturday 5th October, Rupert and Edward trunk ran into some Millwall supporters who thought Rupert looked like West Ham's Frank MacAvennie and proceeded to beat him up. Rupert was so badly injured he missed the **live band Karaoke with Mike's Fab Gear and the Permissive Society which started at 7.30 pm**. This form of entertainment proved very cheap with an admission price of £4 (or £3 with an ENTS card)

In addition to these events scheduled for the first week, there was the amazing **1991 INTRO BASH - THE CLIMAXX** which Rupert missed because Podgy and Edward used up all the hot water.

The Beaver

LSE has had a reputation for active student politics. The first Union General Meeting (UGM) of this year will swing into action with reports from our new sabbaticals: General Secretary Michiel van Hulsten, Senior Treasurer Toby Johnson and Social Secretary Fiona MacDonald. It remains to be seen whether their term in office will represent a real break with the past - in recent years the line up has been based upon one green General Secretary, one militant labour Treasurer and a nice bloke as Social Sec. This year's sabbaticals on the other hand are very different and come into office following a landslide victory for the DSG.

Freshers may wonder what this party stands for. Political pundits have at various times quipped: "Desperately Seeking Government", "Dim Socialist Garbage" or "Dull, Sad and Gormless".

The Democratic Socialist Group, as it is in fact called, was formed nearly two years ago when van Hulsten and friends broke away from the labour party. In their manifesto they suggested that they would focus on issues directly affecting students and not "international issues". To do more effective work for the students is of course a laudable aim but it would be a rejection of LSE's campaigning history if the Silcott and Birmingham Six affairs of the future were selfishly ignored.

Although van Hulsten has been a political hack for as long as most people can remember, he was conspicuous by his absence from UGMs last year. An effective tactic obviously - the DSG benefited more from the general disillusionment with labour than any profile they themselves displayed. The political fortune of the moderates was further strengthened at election time by an electoral pact between the greens and the DSG.

Now there is the concern that with only moderate administrators at the helm, the political agenda of the UGMs will be rather dull. Johnson, for example, was elected more on the strength of his personal popularity than a history of political activism. One fears that the heated debates of the past, often initiated by a radical Senior Treasurer, will give way to UGMs more like board meetings. In which case, the Union itself might run very efficiently but student politics at LSE peter away in apathy.

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Comment

Michiel van Hulsten, General Secretary argues that the National Union of Students is long overdue for reform.

A number of weeks ago, over 60 sabbatical students' union officers from all over the country gathered at Aston University in Birmingham, to attend a conference on reforming the National Union of Students (NUS). The outcome was an agreement on a series of proposals designed to increase student input, reduce bureaucracy and improve communications within NUS. These will now go forward to NUS's winter conference.

It is possible, of course, that the reforms will turn NUS into an efficient supplier of services and a responsive vehicle for political campaigns. But that is highly unlikely. There is a need to look at the fundamentals of student representation in this country, and the Aston conference failed to do so.

The only fundamental criticism of NUS to date has come from the Conservative students. They argue that students should not be forced to become members of an organisation they do not support. But students are not members of NUS; NUS is a confederation of Students' unions. What the Conservatives

are really trying to say, is that NUS is leftwing, and they don't like it for that reason.

But similarly, supporters of NUS always start from the basic assumption that the most desirable form of student service provision and representation is a confederation of Students' Unions. According to them, problems with the way NUS functions are therefore inherently problems with the structure of the organisation, rather than the organisation itself.

The basis on which national student cooperation is decided must surely be twofold: first, it must provide an extensive, high quality range of services for students' unions, at affordable prices. Second, it must ensure the adequate representation of student views. NUS fulfills the first condition, but not the second. NUS welfare and legal services, as well as the supplies organisation NSSO and the consultancy NUS Services, are examples of the kind of service students' unions require. The political work carried out by NUS is not such an effective means.

A possible answer would be to divorce the campaigning

role from the service role. NUS's services branch should continue to operate at present, on the basis of a confederation of students' unions united not in solidarity, but in pursuit of economies of scale. The political wing should be dropped, and replaced by a number of national student organisations, organised according to the political views of its individual student members. This would effectively transfer the campaigning role of NUS to the National Organisation of Labour Students, the Conservative Collegiate Forum, the Student Liberal Democrats and any other organisation which might decide to form.

These new organisations would then recruit members at Freshers Fair like any other society, and their conferences would be devoid of unnecessary infighting between wings. If members become unhappy with the way their organisation is working, they could simply leave for another, or found a new one.

One obvious objection to such an arrangement would be that it would destroy the national power students wield by acting under the NUS

umbrella. There are two points against this objection. First, NUS has not served students much purpose under the present government. Housing benefit has been cut, the grant frozen, student loans introduced and the poll tax has been applied to students. If it ain't broke, why fix it, but it is broke, so let's fix it. Second, the leaderships of the new national organisations could get together in Federal Council of Student Organisations to coordinate action when necessary and desirable, leaving it up to the organisations who they wish to share membership of the council with.

Stephen Twigg, the President of NUS, made history last Tuesday when, as reported by the Guardian, he said that voluntary membership of NUS was a possibility if phased in. It is time to seize the initiative from the opponents of progressive student representation and organisation, and to begin thinking about the way student representation could be changed effectively.

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The Beaver's letters section.

At present, the Beaver is without an office due to Student Union relocations. All letters should for the time being be left in the Beaver pigeonhole in the Union Admin office.

Letters should be in by 3 pm on the Thursday before the issue concerned comes out, otherwise it will not be possible to print them.

Longer opinions pieces such as the one above are welcomed - consult the Editor. First hand accounts of topical experiences are also required. The Beaver reserves the right to edit letters without changing the sense for space considerations.

A fresher face in the Students Union

This year, the Students Union has another full-time member of staff; the General Manager. **Madeline Gwyon** talked to the new occupant of E295

Appointing a General Manager is very much a new venture for LSE's Student Union. Some say it is not before time; others remain sceptical.

Gethin Roberts took office on the 2nd September. Aged 37, Roberts is no stranger to university life. He was a mature student of Leeds University, graduating in Sociology and Politics in 1981. Immediately after that he worked in the Economist's Bookshop and is therefore no stranger to the LSE's geography. A stint as the General Manager at Goldsmiths Student Union followed, giving him the necessary skills and knowledge to take on a similar role here.

The basic idea lying behind the appointment of a General Manager is that he should provide a degree of constancy to the activities of the Student Union and to take overall responsibility for the legal and non-political aspects of Union business. However, given the fact that the Union has survived for such a long time without this overseeing influence, I began by asking Roberts how exactly he thought he would fit in.

He explained that his job description can basically be divided into three functions. Firstly, to co-ordinate all the commercial services which come under the Union's control: the shop; the cafe and the Tuns. This involves ensuring a consistent staffing policy throughout the Union and attempting to avoid conflicts between the activities of different services.

An example would be if the Tuns were to start serving food again; Roberts would try to avoid competition between it and the Cafe for the same type of customers. Another aspect of this role is in the development of new services and ensuring that these new developments don't conflict either with the existing Union services or other, concurrent projects.

His job also includes providing specialist advice on legal and (union) constitutional matters, whilst leaving the political side of Union activity strictly to the elected officers. Again, an example would be on staffing matters.

Finally, he will carry out the personnel function of advising Sabbatical officers on any matters which might extend beyond their term of office. This would include understanding the school's reasons for their position on a given issue - acting almost as a kind of 'Kremlinologist'. The school is, Roberts says, keen for him to act as a permanent point of liaison between the School and the Student Union.

What role therefore, would Roberts play in the event of any conflict arising between the Student's Union and the school? This has happened in the past, the most memorable occasion in recent history being the nomination of Winston Silcott as honorary President of the Students' Union. However, Roberts denies that



he could end up as "piggy in the middle" of Union politics and the school; his loyalties are with the Students Union.

"Certainly there might be times when the School falls out with the Union and the Union falls out with

"Certainly there might be times when the School falls out with the Union and the Union falls out with the school. My role would still be to represent the Union. I am certainly not here to run things. I am here to enable the elected officers to run things."

the school. My role would still be to represent the Union. I am certainly not here to run things. I am here to enable the elected officers to run things."

In such a situation he would advise the Union as to the position of the School but does not see that this would lead to conflicts of interest or misunderstandings in any way. His job is to help the Sabbaticals to make informed decisions. If he does not

have the knowledge to hand in order to advise appropriately, his job is to know where such advice can be obtained.

However, given that he would, as a General Manager, provide confidential advice to Union officers, combined with the permanent nature of his appointment, isn't there a danger his becoming something of a law unto himself?

Roberts felt that this was a valid point. Historically, the first full time staff that unions employed were appointed by the university authorities and they did become almost the "enemy within". In the late sixties and seventies, a new generation arrived who had spent their student days fighting against this group; Roberts now feels that the climate is simply very much against such an attitude in General Managers. As for

concrete safeguards, the Sabbatical officers, and to a lesser extent other union officers are, he thinks, the foremost check on his power, and a sufficient one.

Having done a sideways move from one academic institution to another to perform the same job prompted the question of why the move?

Roberts pointed out that many

differences exist between the LSE and Goldsmiths, most notably in size. Both institutions have commercial activities of bars and shops, but Goldsmiths Union had no welfare operation to speak of. Roberts was at first surprised, he says, that although Goldsmiths was smaller than LSE its Union staff numbered far more. However, he accounts for this not so much in the more efficient running of

be great for the LSE if they get it."

What then are his ambitions, at least for the duration of his employment within the confines of Houghton Street?

"Whether County Hall comes up or not, the LSE is in a period of expansion and development and the Student Union is very much part of

"...the LSE is in a period of expansion and development and the Student Union is very much part of that. Certainly it will be an interesting place to work for the next five, six, seven or eight years anyway."

our Union but in the fact that the school also provides a great many services.

Finally, County Hall is very much on the agenda of the school, so I asked Roberts his opinion of the prevailing situation.

He believes that in some ways it is a shame that the County Hall issue is able to be raised at all as it stems purely from the Government's desire to block the use of the building as a seat for the local government of London. "The Tories' motives on this are undoubtedly sad but it would still

that. Certainly it will be an interesting place to work for the next five, six, seven or eight years anyway."

As it is, Roberts' initial contract is for fifteen months, after which time the Union will decide whether or not the appointment of a General Manager was in fact a good idea. In the meanwhile Roberts' enthusiasm is unabated and he delights in the opportunities presented to him to create his own niche within the Union infrastructure.

The pick of the Fringe

Social Sec **Fiona Macdonald** went to the Edinburgh Fringe and commissioned a few acts for the LSE. This is her story...

This year's Fringe Festival faced a flurry of criticisms from its main organiser. Claims of self-indulgence, corrupt officials playing favourites with prime venue space, and the fact that many cabaret acts (the entertainment most associated with the festival) were London based looking for a working holiday, marred the Fringe this year. Nevertheless, many Fringe fans and journalists came to view the wares of hopeful actors, musicians and comedians. With more than 101 venues, visitors and poseurs alike are bound to stumble into a gig and spot the next French and Saunders.

There are four venues that boast the best comedy and cabaret on the circuit - The Pleasance, The Assembly Rooms, The Traverse Theatre and the Gilded Balloon. There are also many token shows from the old comedy die-hards, unfortunately their performances only show how different the genre of TV is to performances in front of an audience. The once chirpy Simon Fanshaw is a case in point,

whilst his show works on Channel 4, he seems to have forgotten his Banana Club days in South London, because his small stage performance is now simply a boring monologue.

At the popular venues in the Fringe the managers maintain the hype by bringing in top performing acts (usually from London), but they do not necessarily have the "pick of the fringe" since I found many engaging performers in the more intimate halls which can be found alongside. One problem with these venues though is that they have to compete with the raucous noise of the audience next door thrilled by a comic who puts a firecracker up his bum!

To complete one's fringe experience during these golden weeks of comedy in Edinburgh, you must find the "right" places. Journalist wannabies hang out in the City Cafe. No one is there before 2pm as it would be a gross admission of not having had an invite to any late night parties that make mornings impossible. The price you pay for mixing

with journalists is somewhere close to two pounds for a luke warm cappuccino minus the froth (and only if the bartender is inclined to serve you). The cafe has evolved into a community of its own filled with comedy hacks. Persons feigning that they are on the guest list for all shows at the Gilded Balloon congregate here as the venue is right next door.

Out of a crowd of at least one hundred egos emerged none other than the infamous Crispin Leyser - my idol. (Die hard students will remember Crispin for his innovative entertainments schedule when he was Social and Services Secretary from 1989-1990.) We swapped notes on the shows and name dropped, thus blending easily into the City Cafe "set", happily sporting groupie t-shirts of days gone by.

Going to Edinburgh was a working holiday. I averaged about five shows a day. Shows in Edinburgh are very affordable because of the concession rates for students on all shows, and fortunately for me the status of

Social Secretary for a London college provided instant appeal to most cabaret agents. Before I left for the Fringe, there was a barrage of calls from Agents showering me with gifts of free tickets, posters, t-shirts and the like. (These incentives to book acts are doted upon me throughout the year so make sure you get up to E206 to benefit from these freebies as well.)

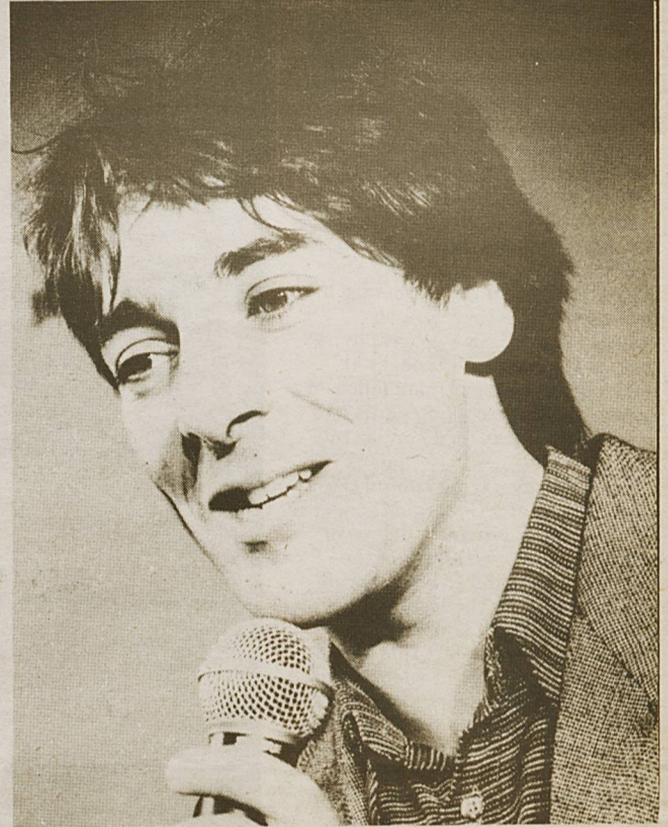
Theatre companies, comedy shows and musical acts want very much to appeal to the masses in order to bring in the crowds that make bringing a show to Edinburgh financially viable. Unfortunately, what is then often lost are alternative comedians who are black, asian, female and controversial.

The Perrier Award is particularly symbolic of the delusions faced by agents. They have assumed that what the punters want is the mainstream comfortable heights of mediocrity. The award is for outstanding comical performances by an entertainer in cabaret. Nominees this year included Eddie Izzard (innovative standup/storyteller and previous nominee). Someone else who deserved a nomination, Avner the Eccentric, was included because of his appeal to children up to 45 years of age. But, also on the shortlist were your usual white male comics; Jack Dee, a comic too popular in my opinion with the critics, and Frank Skinner, the comic who recalls sexual antics with a Rottweiler. The winner, not surprisingly, was the man with the dog fetish.

Was there any justification for this? No. There was absolutely none. When you have the authority to give the most prestigious award at the Fringe Festival, you need give no reason for lack of innovative choices and foresight (much like the politicians who try and run the Students' Union). The awards are usually given to comics who deliver material to the back wall of the audience rather than having the confidence to face their listeners with inadequate material. I would rather listen to drunken Irish students tell jokes about crocodiles in The Three Tuns.

Regardless of my disappointment with the world of comedy at the Fringe Festival, there are some shows and artists who deserve an honourable review from this far from completely unbiased ENT'S officer.

For Eddie Izzard, those contemplating the importance of the Perrier award must have thought that two nominations surely adds up to one award. This storyteller extraordinaire entertains his audience throughout, involving them in a childhood where he was brought up by wolves for whom he now drives a red sports car. (!) Drawn in by the story, and laughing our way down Eddie's memory lane, it is tempting to believe that



Mark Steel (Tuesday 1st in the Old Theatre at 8 pm)

Eddie is making up these diatribes on his merry way to the punch line. Look out for this star doing a date in the Old Theatre. Why didn't Eddie win the Perrier Award?? The man is just too funny.

In the list of nominees for the Perrier Award, there was a distinct lack of female comedians. We ask ourselves - are they not funny? Does their material lack lustre? How does the material of a woman differ? Questions such as these were tackled in the workshops on comedy held at a pasta bar in Edinburgh named The Pleasance. Arnold Brown - fave comedian of Jeremy Hardy - had an interpretation of the psychology of comedians that he felt excluded females from handling humour. "After a good gig, a comedian feels like he wants to conquer Czechoslovakia. I don't think women have the same kind of competitive drive." Although he intended to be sympathetic, this is an excuse well over used.

Whilst well established female comedians can hastily disregard such remarks; up and coming female artists are not so fortunate. They lost their chance of rave reviews because of the emphasis on male comedians in the Fringe press. The following review focuses on two fresh faces in stand up comedy by women.

Brenda Gilhooly

Brenda is a page three girl with personality. Cynicism and wit glare through Brenda's slide show on the life and times of a woman after fame and fortune abounds for three minutes following her bimbo poses on Page three of "The Tabloid". Brenda's quickfire set of smart observations kept the night's audience enraptured in between its fits of laughter. Her gig at the Climax

(11th October) is at 8pm in the Underground.

Linda Smith

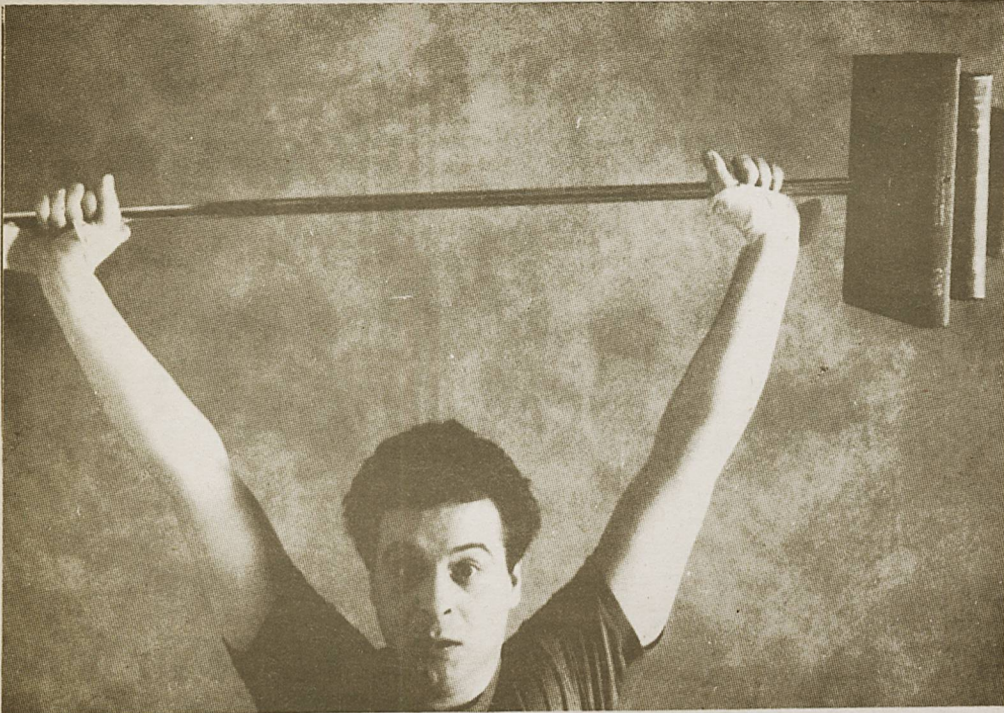
Linda performed as part of a team of six smashing artists in a set called "The Cutting Edge". During her solo set, a series of less than witty remarks came from a table of men out on a stag night. Linda's sharp remarks left this table empty as the men crawled back to the bar and the rest of the audience were in a state of joyous rapture. Linda maintained confidence in her improvisation that had enabled her to carry herself through the set with hilarity.

Other members of the Cutting Edge Team are equally talented when it comes to handling their own material as well as material interjected by the audience. Special mention should be given to the show's compere Mark Thomas (former Perrier Award Winner). Mark is a commendable comic if only to say that his set was different on every occasion that I saw the show. For those unfamiliar with the Fringe's format, most shows run for over two weeks, with performances every night except the odd Sunday or Tuesday. Most comedians spend an entire year attempting to molest people into laughter with the same set, but a seasoned improv artist can mold their sets to suit their audience, hence the circuit performers look to the extraordinary abilities of Mark Thomas.

On Wed 2nd October at 3:30 pm in the Three Tuns Mark Thomas is making a special appearance for your eyes and ears only. He promises that you will never see him in this capacity and at this price again (its absolutely free). Miss at your peril!



Brenda Gilhooly (Friday 11th October in the Underground at 8 pm)



Mark Thomas (Wednesday 2nd October in the Three Tuns at 3.30 pm)

Before we leave Edinburgh in the cool comical breezes of summertime (the weather there requires the two B's all year round - a brollie and a bikini), a special mention needs to be made of two acts that I see as a matter of course several times a year: Mark Steel - winner of the Edinburgh Festival Critics Award for Comedy in 1990 who performs an astounding array of characters and accents with some momentous piano virtuosos thrown in for hilarious measure. Even more importantly Mark Steel will be playing live on Tuesday 1st October in the Old Theatre at 8 pm. Second mention goes to Spontaneous Combustion who perform the most innovative form of improvisation regularly at the LSE to packed audiences. Their combination of theatre sports and ripping literary jukebox is unbeatable.

Noise Annoys

Have you ever wondered which record you'd most like to see at number one for twelve weeks? I have. I would have liked to have seen the Wedding Present's "Kennedy" at the top for three months but no, it was not to be. In the end I had to settle for three weeks chart action and a peak of number 34. Life's not fair is it? Then again, if it had been used as the soundtrack for a film about a man and his merry men in Lincoln green tights then it too would be a record breaker, just like that record by that amiable Canadian chap Bryan Adams. What's more, you would have seen Dave Gedge and his ever-changing band of miserable sods on "Top of the Pops". Instead you got that wonderfully entertaining video starring Kevin Costner for twelve weeks. It's such a shame that Mr Adams is a lazy bastard because I personally would have loved to have seen "The Square Jaw" perform "live" on TOTP along side such other great video performers as The Stone Roses and Marc Bolan, although he has an excuse for not performing in the TOTP studio. He's dead.

What did happen to the great 'Rock Death'. Rock stars don't die like they used to. In the old days, when it was all fields and dinosaurs 'round these parts, rock and pop stars used to make three decent records and then snuff it, ie. Jimi Hendrix. Nowadays they make three good records and an innumerable number of bad records, ie. David Bowie, who has never managed to return to the dizzy heights of success achieved by "The Laughing Gnome".

Some of today's current stars, however, have got things a little muddled and are trying to achieve death before making a decent record, ie. the Happy Mondays, and The Stone Roses are attempting to achieve artistic immortality by pretending they're dead.

Those that do die are usually the least known member of the band. Pete de Freitas, for example, was probably unrecognisable to the average member of the public, but before he died he was drumming for Echo and the Bunnymen. His death failed to credit a mention on Capital Radio but if Ian McCulloch snuffed it, just like his solo career, then it would have been front page news, probably.

Be thankful for small mercies; if that talentless no-hoper from REM, Michael Stipe, died then the world would be echoing to the sounds of balding look-a-likes sobbing to the "great" man's work. Imagine what it would be like if Morrissey met an abrupt ending; colleges up and down the country would go into mourning.

Have you noticed that there have been no great 'Rock Deaths' in the Dance scene recently, unless you count 808 State's drum machine blowing up after a jealous MC Tunes poured a cup of Bovril over it because the drum machine could rap without a lisp. That's because no great figures lie behind it. Most rap acts and dance outfits have no real image or chart pedigree. With the exception of Public Enemy, most rap acts disappear after a few hit singles and one album. 808 State have managed two albums and one collaboration and will probably record another LP, but if one of them died tomorrow would it really make any difference to their sound. They could simply plug in another drum machine to fill the gap.

One group who would find it impossible to feel the gap left by the possible death of one of their members is that ace heavy metal group Guns'n'Roses. Any day now the whole band's gonna come a cropper, but give them their dues, they've made it this far and they could go a lot further given the right medication.

The Lion Roars.

And There's more- 1991 summer of entertainment in London

A musical lull occurs in London during the summer. Bands prepare albums and international hits to tour with during the autumn when universities reconvene and spend thousands on mediocre music that fills the charts of the 1990's. Padding my wallet with special invites from agents around London keen on gaining a percentage, I gig hopped.

JAZZ: The Soho jazz festival is coming to an end (thankfully). The organisers speckled Pizza Express venues with seasoned (in the sense of shrivelled autumn leaves) performers who had little more to offer than tributes to the real innovators of jazz, John Coltrane, Miles Davis or Dave Brubeck.

Make a point of seeing some of the younger generation. Hailing from Bristol is Dominic Howles, ex-member of the behop great Tommy Chase Band. His band has regular guest appearances from Andy Sheppard, Gerry Underwood, Ian Rigby and will play the Three Tuns regularly. If you stay seated during his performance I hope it's because of serious bodily injuries.

Julian Joseph is taking a well deserved spotlight in the cliquy jazz scene with his melodic, entrancing piano style. Those living in Butler Wharfs should dig deep into their grants to catch him at the Design Museum.

Edinburgh audiences were swooned away from the hard

seated auditoriums of comedy venues to catch the two hour musical spectacular provided by Craig McMurdo of *That SwingThang*. The mood was hot and sexy as Craig and his six piece jump jive band crawled into your shoes and made you move. Too hot to handle really, with plenty of audience participation and eager females. If you're lucky you may be able to get a ticket to see them play our aircraft hanger venue - The Quad - in December (a free ticket to anyone who can convince this Social Sec. that they saw *That Swing Thang* in the Quad January 1990).

ROCK/SOUL : (This is beginning to look like the listing section of Time Out)

For any of you who remember the soulful melodies and melancholy lyrics of The Bible, you are in for a treat. They have split up to double your pleasure. The first half is Boo Hewerdine. Now touring with his solo acoustic set in America and then England, if you have any appreciation of the sweetest voice in rock, lyrics more witty than The Housemartins and more mournful than Sting - see him live at his residence at eh Mean Fiddlers or right here in our new venue The Underground (previously C018). The other half isn't his wife but rather the new collaboration to the MacColl brothers (sons of folk singer

Ewan MacColl) called *Liberty Horses*. Ignore the naff name and focus on their brilliant combination of rock, folk and groviness.

As if you needed any encouragement to go and see them, with a little bit of luck they should be supporting Andrew Thistlethwaite (formerly of The Waterboys) with his latest collaboration of rockabilly musicians called The Blue Stars. If you are a dedicated Waterboys fan ignore their version of Fishermans Blues, but go along anyway for the heated sensation of songs like "Love that Burns".

INDIE DANCE: This type of music is going downhill as fast as Manchester with its drug laden imitation of Los Angeles. Moving on from that tedium are bands like Airhead with the best single of the year "Funnyhow". In fact I'm just off to buy the 12 inch so you can boogie down to it at various LSE SU discos. Hopefully, they won't price themselves out of our strapped for cash ENTS budget - again a gig that I would be proud to put in our aircraft hanger.

On the 1st November there will be a premier of two brand new heavies onto the university circuit in The Quad. Yes, exclusive to the LSE we have playing *This Years' Blonde* and *L-Kage*. *This Years' Blonde* should ring a bell as they won the

1990 Battle of the Bands contest held right here at the LSE. In fact, you may bump into the lead singer in the International Relations common room listening to a demo of himself as he prepares for his final year exams. As a judge of the contest I felt compelled to give them top marks for their stunning version of "Sun City". Don't miss their rare indie groove when they support the well established Birmingham four piece *L-Kage* on the 1st Nov. Their first single "Passion" is being released in America as you read. I am addicted to their live set and spend my time blaring their album from a cheap stereo (really just to annoy my fellow sabbaticals). Free tickets to anyone who was at the Battle of the Bands gig in February 1990. The next Battle of the Bands will be held on Saturday 16 November. Start practicing as you too could be on your way to super stardom with the help of a well connected Social Secretary.

Hold the back page!

The Beaver

Beaver

Student Union Issue 324

I have a

Ashworth unveils his vi

As I sit at my desk in the office, I am struck by the fact that I have a...

Welcome to The Beaver, the weekly newspaper of the LSE. It is an invaluable way of keeping you up to date with not only all that is going on at the school and in the union but also of expressing your views on issues of wider concern, whilst the arts pages keep you informed of the entertainment on offer here in London.

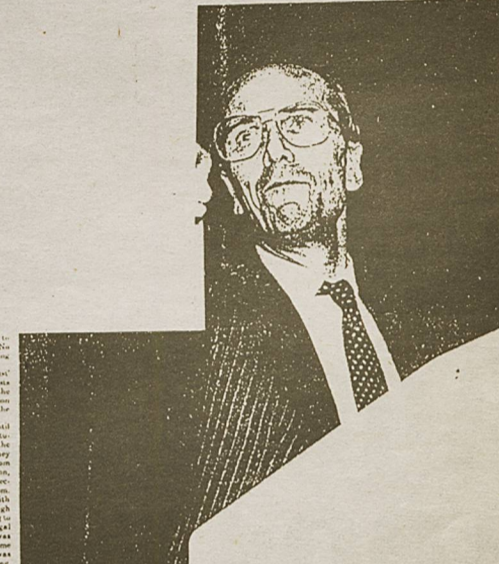


What's more you'll find it distributed around the school at the beginning of every week for free. However, as every economist out there knows there are very few free goods in this world, so if this college wants to continue to have the best student newspaper in London, lots of students need to get involved.

Following an exodus of staff last year when half the Beaver staff graduated only a skeleton crew remain. These lonely hacks are in desperate need of reinforcements. We need writers, photographers and production assistants, no experience is necessary just plenty of enthusiasm.

The Beaver is great fun and an easy way of meeting people and finding your way around LSE, so please make the effort to come along to our intro party in The Underground on Monday 7th October at 7pm. If you can't make that or just want to find out more then pop into E197 at any time.

Rabbit



down another bed for a picnic on the part of the driver. In a letter to the club...

George of the Tuns 6
Sam 7
Sked and Germany 9
The Directors vision 10,11
Arts feature

NEWS EDITORS

The Beaver's news section is traditionally hated by everyone! Past successes have included the discovery of embezzlement in the International History department, exposure of vote rigging in Union politics and exclusive coverage of the Director's "vision". All you need is a love of gossip; here you get a chance to dig up the dirt and then PRINT it. The style is factual and balanced; we are committed to maintaining editorial independence. Both news editors will give you stories to investigate and help you from start to finish.

FEATURES EDITOR

Features are longer pieces on political, economic, social or environmental issues of more general interest. What did you do in your summer holidays? A feature article should be about 1,500 words and entitles you to immediate membership of the collective.

PHOTOGRAPHIC EDITOR

is needed, just keenness and a willingness to be an essential part of the operation. As a bonus, the skills production teaches can earn up to £12 an hour on the temping market. All you have to do is be willing to turn up one or two nights a week.

CAMPUS EDITOR

Anybody can write for the campus page so long as you offer me money, sex, drugs, alcohol, concert tickets etc. Basically the campus page is the most serious page of the paper dealing with such serious issues as why has the Three Tuns got a crap juke box? Why have the BBC scraped DR Who? And Who keeps stealing the condom machine from the men's toilets? Answers on a post card to: Campus Editor, The Beaver, Room E197, LSE

ARTS EDITOR

Beaver Arts can't compete with Time Out, but then we don't aim to. What we do try to give is a unique students eye view of what's on in the capital from Hollywood thrillers to Fringe monologues, but we're still looking to diversify into dance, opera and music of all genres. If you are particularly interested or knowledgeable in any aspect of the Arts, then press tickets can usually be arranged as long as you promise to write about it.

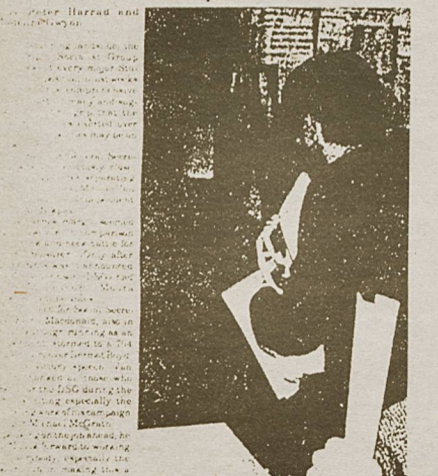
SPORTS EDITOR

We report on as many AU fixtures as we can as well as national sporting events. Interested in any sport, want to write about it? Sports coverage is an easy way to start writing and learn the tricks of the trade.

The I

DSG la

Labour slides from power and MacDonald are to r



"I look forward to work with everybody, especially the Labour club"

PRODUCTION EDITOR

Production tends to be the part of a newspaper that most people forget. All the same, it's a vital one; without layout people, the Beaver wouldn't exist. We produce on Apple Macs using DTP software - no training or previous experience

FINANCIAL DIRECTOR

Are you a sad capitalist? Are you interested in accountancy or advertising? We will soon need a new financial director to take over all our accounts and sell our advertising.

Beaver

in jeopardy set?



enthusiasm among members to organizing the societies events, even before the attack, because of the amount of work involved. He commented that while Tequila was not very popular with the school, there were a large number of students who wanted to continue and said that he personally would like to see the decision of the Executive to ban safety standards. Mr Williams, one of the Tequila committee members at there had been little

sport

sum of £1 for every year of the school's life. The Union will have a collection towards the fund at one of the first Union General Meetings. This year the Union has repaid out £2500 for the club. The Secretary, John Hill, stated that there was almost enough money available to finance the scheme a first term. He felt that by then sponsors might have been arranged or that the school might step in with additional funds. He also planned to have a collection towards the fund at one of the first Union General Meetings.