

The Beaver

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Newspaper of the
London School of Economics
Students' Union
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Gaddafi gives £1.5mil to LSE GIDCF donates to LSE Centre of Global Governance

Phyllis Lui
Sam Tempest Keeping

The LSE has accepted a donation from a Libyan non-governmental organisation headed by Saif Al Islam Al Gaddafi, LSE alumnus and son of the Libyan leader Muammar al-Gaddafi.

The donation from Gaddafi International Charity and Development Foundation (GICDF) amounted to £1.5 million and was intended to support LSE Global Governance.

In a press release from the School, it was stated that LSE Global Governance "has produced pioneering work on global governance, shifting debate away from the role of individual governments in global affairs to far-reaching analysis of the framework of principles, rules and laws necessary to tackle global problems".

"This donation will support us as we work to increase understanding of global problems and to encourage interaction between academics and policy makers," said Professor David Held, a co-director of the centre along with Professors Mary Kaldor and Danny Quah in the press release. "It is a generous donation from an NGO committed to the promotion of civil society and the development of democracy."

The GICDF "carries out developmental and humanitarian activities in the social, economic, cultural and human rights fields", as described on their website. It has been praised in particular for its work in supporting human rights for Libyan citizens.

In 2004 Amnesty wrote that the "organisation has made strong calls for long-term human rights violations, including deaths in custody, to be addressed." This appears to tally with arguments made by Professor David Held in the Council meeting on the Foundation's donation where he argued that the Foundation's stance on both democracy and human rights had sometimes led to disagreement with the Libyan state but nonetheless had enjoyed success in areas such as penal reform.

LSE Council, which is the Governing Body of the School, met twice to discuss and subsequently approve the donation.

In the first meeting on 23rd June 2009 which resolved to accept the donation, the matter was raised by Professor Held. It was noted in the minutes that "no academic constraints had been placed on the use of the gift, although Mr Gaddafi had requested Professor Held's assistance in developing a Centre for Democracy and Civil Society in Tripoli", "Libya's relationship with the West had improved in recent years, and that Saif Gaddafi was considered by many to be a reformer". Furthermore, "the gift would not be funded by the Libyan State or regime", and "that the principal risk of acceptance was reputational".

It was further noted that the Development Committee whose role is to

"oversee the fundraising programme at LSE and provide volunteer leadership for strategy, identification and solicitation of significant gift to the School", had a clear majority in favour of accepting the donation, and "due diligence work had been undertaken to ensure the probity of the Foundation".

Victor Dahdaleh, a governor of the LSE, on whom the Beaver reported was involved for alleged involvement in bribery and fraud against the Bahraini Royal Family, also spoke of "the high regard in which [senior politicians and opinion formers in the Gulf region] held Saif Gaddafi".

Dahdaleh is currently under investigation by US authorities for his part in a fraud case involving Alcoa, the world's largest supplier of alumina, for whom he worked as an agent. In March 2008 Aluminium Bahrain (Alba) filed a civil suit against Alcoa claiming that the company had overcharged for its alumina and used the earnings to bribe Bahraini public officials. Dahdaleh was named as one of the defendants for allegedly acting as a go-between for Alcoa and the public officials who were to be bribed, a claim Dahdaleh strongly denies.

The case has currently been put on hold until an investigation by the US department of justice has been completed.

LSESU General Secretary Aled Dilwyn Fisher had attended the meeting but did not possess prior knowledge of the Foundation and wished to "make enquiries before exercising judgement". Fisher told The Beaver that he feels this highlights the need for student representation on the Development Committee, as he wasn't able to consult students' opinions and thus not adequately representing their interests on such matters.

Professor Held was invited to join the Council of Trustees of GICDF in an individual capacity afterwards, but resigned after concerns about perceived conflict of interests were raised at a Council meeting on 20th October 2009.

In the same meeting, a letter from Emeritus Professor Fred Halliday entitled "LSE and the Qaddafi Foundation: A Dissenting Note" which counselled against acceptance of the donation, was presented along with a collection of media reports on lines between the LSE and Libya. This was in light of the "widespread condemnation of Libya's handling of the return of Abdelbaset Al-Megrahi".

Professor Held defended the decision to accept the gift as a matter for the LSE/Council, reinforcing what he had said in the prior meeting, and that "a public signing ceremony had been undertaken, and that a u-turn at this juncture might affect the School's relations with Libya and cause personal embarrassment to the Chairman of the Foundation, Dr Saif al-Islam Gaddafi".

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LSESU settles out of court

Sam Tempest Keeping

An out of court settlement has been reached between the LSESU and a former member of staff who had been claiming unfair dismissal.

The Beaver was able to obtain information on the case from a variety of sources who were not party to the agreement given neither the staff member in question nor the Students' Union could provide information that would breach it. Details of the settlement itself cannot be revealed for similar legal reasons.

The case dates back to a review of Union staff that was launched by the SU executive in 2005 and continued by last years sabbatical team. This review, the completion of which featured prominently in the election manifesto of previous Treasurer Wil Barber, formed the prelude to the Union restructure which took place over the summer.

As a result of issues encountered during the review process, the sabbatical officers, in their capacity as trustees of the Union, were advised to suspend former members of staff pending a full investigation of their activities.

After the investigation the member of staff in question was charged with a number of offences in violation of his contractual obligations. He was subsequently called before the Administration and Staffing Committee (ASC). The ASC, according to the Union's codes of practice, is the "sole body responsible for the management and co-ordination of Union staffing matters. Once all evidence was heard and deliberations had taken place, the members of the ASC proceeded to find

the individual guilty of gross misconduct.

In line with the Union's disciplinary procedures the accused decided to appeal against the decision to the Special Disciplinary Panel (SDP), the decisions of which regarded as "final" within the LSESU.

If an appeal is lodged with the SDP then the Secretary of the school is obliged to name a chair, who may be a member of LSE staff, or a senior officer or staff member at another Students' Union.

The rest of the ad hoc panel is comprised of two members who are appointed by the ASC, who may be officers or staff members at another Students' Union or NUS; and the final two are appointed by the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) and are trade unionists.

In this case the SDP voted to uphold the initial ruling of the ASC. On hearing of this outcome, the member of staff decided to take their case to an Employment Tribunal. These are non judicial independent bodies that are set up by the government to "determine disputes between employers and employees over employment rights." The tribunal panel convened on September 15th where it heard testimonies from a number of witnesses involved in the case. After two days of evidence the chair adjourned the case until the 4th January 2010.

When asked about why the Union had opted to settle rather than continue the case, Union General Secretary Aled Dilwyn Fisher commented: "Settlement of the case does not imply guilt on either side. Rather, it is in the best interests of both parties, including the Students' Union, to settle the matter without incurring further legal costs."

On the matter of whether the settlement would have any knock on effect for this year's budget Fisher stated that: "Money has been clearly budgeted for costs associated with the restructure of the Students' Union, including severance costs. Legal costs were also put forward and approved by students at the Annual Budget Meeting (ABM) last term."

"The costs of this settlement and any other costs associated with the restructure in the summer will therefore have absolutely no effect on the Union's ability to fund its campaigns, societies, sports clubs, activities or welfare services. The restructure and other changes ensure that the Students' Union is set up for a financially sustainable future and, most importantly, in a dramatically improved position to meet the needs of students."

Regarding the restructure, an LSE spokesperson said: "The LSESU made LSE aware of the restructure for information but at no time during the process sought the School's support or were offered it. LSE respected the Students' Union's autonomy. At the meeting of Council on 22 June 2009 a full report was provided by SU General Secretary Aled Fisher and Council, after discussion, commended the thorough way in which the SU had approached the reorganisation. The minutes of that discussion were released to the LSE intranet the day after the meeting of Council on 21 September 2009."

Aside from this case, the Union is involved in two other disputes with former staff members that claim to have been mistreated. One of these is also linked to the LSESU's recent restructure while the other case began three years ago and is still ongoing.

M101

The Centre for the Study of
Global Governance

Collective

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LSE events The best of the week's lectures, talks and exhibitions

LSE Arts exhibition: The Golden Road
Andrew Jackson
11 January - 13 February, Atrium Gallery

When China Rules the World
Martin Jacques
Tomorrow, Old Theatre, 18:30 - 20:00

Lunchtime Concert
Julian Byzantine (guitar)
Thursday, Shaw Library, 13:05 - 14:00

Forum for European Philosophy: Modernity and the Meaning of Life
Dr. Simon Glendinning, Dr. Edward Skidelsky
18 January, Wolfson Theatre, 18:30 - 20:00

LSESU Refresh Join sports teams and societies; network, and meet new people

School Fair
Today, Quad, 11:00 - 15:00

Refreshers Fair
Thursday, Quad, 11:00 - 15:00

Speed Mate
Friday, Underground, 19:00 - 21:00

London Tour
Saturday, Hyde Park Corner, 12:50

LSE Careers' picks of the week For when your student loan runs out

United Nations
Summer Internship Programme

Edelman
Media Research Intern

Giraffe restaurant
Part Time - Baristas

Entext Communications
Part Time - Economic Research Assistant

Macquarie
Part Time - Assessment Administrator

Diageo (Greece)
Graduate Sales & Marketing Programme

Deloitte
Full Time - Management Consulting

Transport for London
Graduate Opportunities

Macmillan Publishers
Editorial Assistant

Charity - The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
Full Time - Research Analyst

Government of Dubai, Department of Tourism and Commerce
Paid Internship, UK/Ireland Office

Interested?

For details of these posts and over 500 more, visit My Careers Service at <http://careers.lse.ac.uk>

BEAVERS! EMERGE FROM HIBERNATION.

Spot the
beaver hiding
in the woods and
win a PRIZE!*

*Prize consists of regular publication in the Beaver. Provided you'd like to write for us, that is. And who wouldn't? Terms and conditions apply. See www.thebeaveronline.co.uk/getinvolved to enter our foliage-filled universe.

Library staff accused of bullying

Sam Tempest Keeping

Members staff in the library have been criticised for their strong-armed approach in enforcing rules.

The complaints centre around the library's so-called "patrolling unit for health and safety". Students claim that they have felt "bullied" and "belittled" by methods that some of the unit's members, according to Academic Board representative Joy Damschroder.

Members of the unit have also been observed demanding the names and ID numbers of students who are in violation of library policy. The impression given to these students was that they were likely to face some kind of punishment or subsequent action from the library management.

In response to the allegations a Library spokesperson said: "The patrols referred to are not Health & Safety patrols but are patrols which aim to stop students from eating, drinking and using their mobile phones in line with Library rules. This is in order to maintain the Library as a comfortable environment for students to engage in quiet study. The problem of students eating and making a noise in the Library has been raised several times by individual students, via the Students' Union officers and at the consultative students forums and we have actually been asked for more of a staff presence on the floors to keep the library conducive to study."

"We collect names and ID numbers of any users found breaking library rules so that we can follow up the initial conversation with an email to reinforce appropriate behaviour and we keep records of those we email so that we can take further action if required. There is a sanctions regime for repeat offenders which was

agreed a few years ago with the SU Officers as a reasonable way of maintaining Library rules."

"Furthermore in our recent annual Library User Student Survey, over 65% of respondents felt either satisfied or very satisfied with the Library's enforcement of Library rules, with some even asking for the rules to be enforced more strongly, and 70% felt effective enforcement of rules was either important or very important."

"If a student feels unhappy with the way in which they have been approached with regard to these rules, we recommend that they let us have details of the incident, so that it can be properly investigated, using the feedback form on the Library website."

It was also made clear that the library would continue to enforce rules in the manner hitherto employed as there was clear evidence that this is in line with majority student opinion.

The spokesman added that: "It is worth noting that this session a new social area, 'Escape', was opened in the Library entrance area, to provide a space where students could take a break, eat and drink, chat to their friends and use their mobile phones. There is therefore even less reason for students to do these things in the main parts of the Library, which are intended for quiet study."

Students felt "bullied" and "belittled" by the behaviour of some members of staff

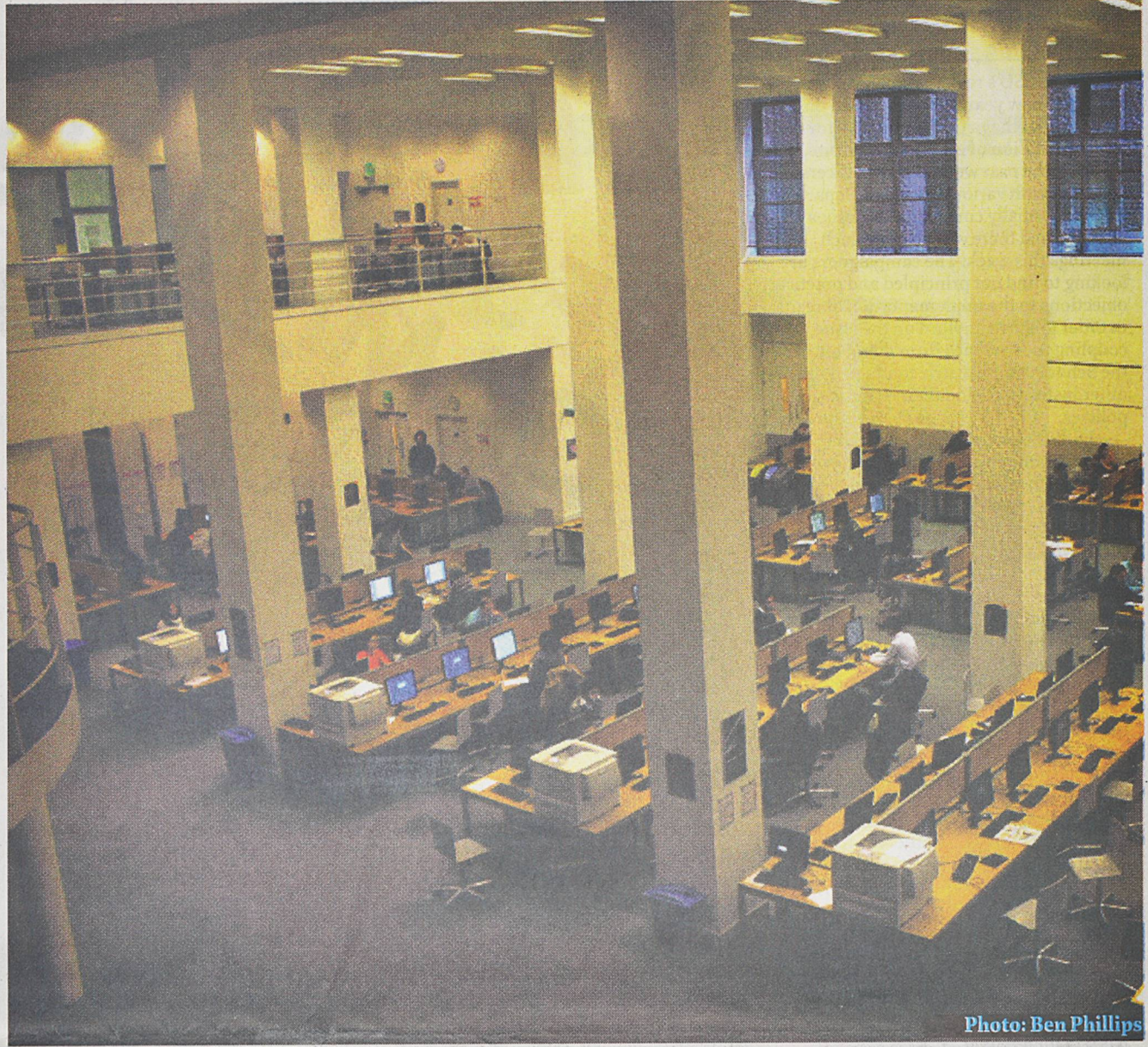


Photo: Ben Phillips

» Continued from pg 1

He continued: "the views espoused by Professor Halliday were not necessarily shared by all in the academic community" and "having trawled traditional media and the blogosphere, no evidence had been found that LSE's links with Libya had attracted criticism, despite the 'storm created by the Al-Megrahi affair'".

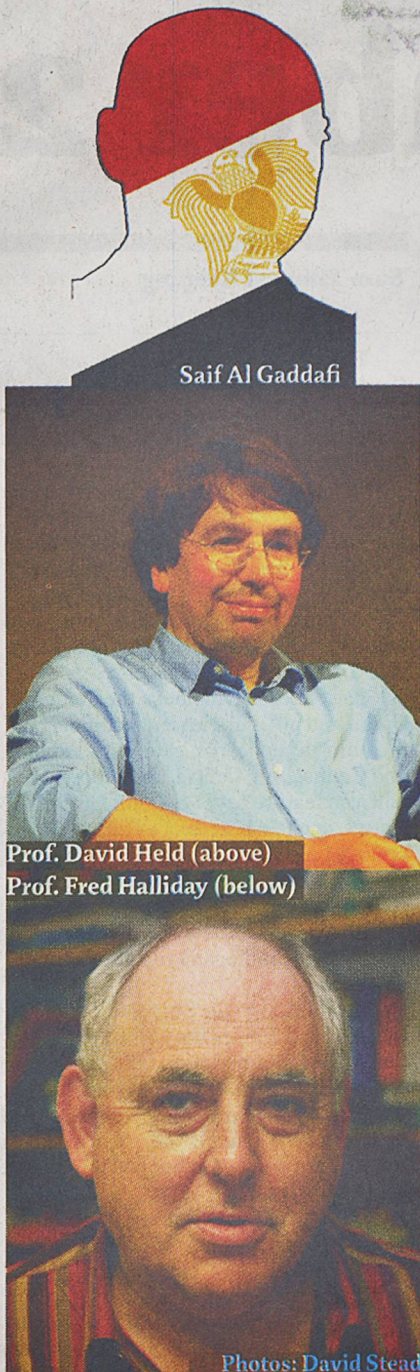
However, in the discussion that followed, it was raised that "the timing of the original discussion" might have been why beyond Professor Halliday, no other member of the School community had queried the decision. Further, LSE Enterprise had provided professional training for Libyan officials, which was said to have "operated with complete independence and their work had been positively received by others, including the School's supporters in the United States".

According to Professor Held, the £1.5 million donation "represented less than 20% of the operating costs of the Centre for Global Governance".

It was resolved that "the totality of the School's relationship with, and work in Libya needed to be carefully monitored and handled to avoid misunderstanding of the School's position".

This is not the first time that the School has been connected to Libya: LSE Director Howard Davies was an economic envoy to Libya at the request of the UK Government.

Professor Held defended the decision to accept the gift as a matter for the LSE/Council, reinforcing what he had said in the prior meeting, and that "a public signing ceremony had been undertaken, and that a u-turn at this juncture might affect the School's relations with Libya and cause personal embarrassment to the Chairman of the Foundation, Dr Saif al-Islam Gaddafi".



Saif Al Gaddafi

Prof. David Held (above)
Prof. Fred Halliday (below)

Photos: David Stead

Rugby captain apologises for racist actions at Carol

Shibani Mahtani

The controversy surrounding the AU Carol has led the School to intervene on behalf of students to whom offence might have been caused.

An apology has been issued by the captain of the Rugby Club, Arun Kalra, for offences perpetrated by members of the club during the event at the request of The Director's Management Team.

Many students expressed their displeasure at the appearance on campus of members of the Rugby club with faces that were "blacked up" and clad in orange jump suits in the style of those worn by the inmates of the Guantanamo Bay detention centre. Witnesses claim that they saw other members of the club, dressed as American guards, force the 'inmates', who turned out to be first year students, to kneel in a circle and accept "punishment" by finishing their drinks.

It has also been alleged that some of the 'inmates' were performing actions which mimicked Muslim prayer, while other team members dressed as American soldiers shouted orders at them.

The apology from Kalra read that "We, as the LSE rugby club, are acutely aware of the offence that was caused at this year's AU Christmas event. We would like to assure you and other members of the university that any concerns that were expressed over the behaviour of certain individuals have not gone unheard."

"I understand that it is totally unacceptable for anybody's actions to cause offence to members of the LSE community, and that is a sentiment that is shared by the rest of the club. I would once again like to express my sincere regret about this incident, and to assure you that the behaviour of the rugby club will be of no future concern or detriment to the AU, the LSE brand, or (most importantly) the university's student body."

Regarding the perceived "anti-Islamic" nature of the stunt Kalra responded that: "These actions did not go unnoticed



by either me or other senior members of the team, and I would like to make it clear that as soon as it was noticed their behaviour was stopped, prohibited, and the individuals in question were severely reprimanded."

"I do, however, feel it is my duty to emphasize that although such behaviour was incredibly insensitive and inexcusable (particularly given the diverse nature of the LSE student body) it was not intended in a malicious or racist way."

AU president Charlie Glyn added that: "Before the event the AU Exec sent an email to all Club Captains clearly stating the rules and boundaries that needed to be adhered to, especially since this was the first year that an alternative event would be returning to campus, even for a small part. This is the first year that anything has been done in such a proactive manner."

"Instead of this informative approach,

the AU are now putting in place new mechanisms to ensure that this absolutely won't happen again. Clubs will need to have their costume ideas vetted by not only the AU Exec but also a Sabbatical Officer and possibly some of the part-time SU liberation officers e.g. Anti-racism, LGBT and Women's Officer."

"Those who do not adhere to these rules will face severe consequences which could include financial implications, Club Captains or Team captains being removed from their positions and further action from the School."

▲ Above: AU President Charlie Glyn along with other members of the Netball 1st team at this year's Carol event.

LSESU hopeful for Resits Campaign success

Natasha Bannister

The LSESU's resits campaign continues in the new year, and is focussed on working together a policy proposal for the implementation of examination resits.

Over the past week, LSESU officers have met with various Heads of Department to formally consult on the issues of resits, and there will be more such meetings this week. The campaigners are looking to find out principled and practical objections to the implementation of resits in order to move forward on the issue, coupling the feedback from members of the School with research conducted on other institutions and their examinations policies.

LSESU General Secretary Aled Dilwyn Fisher commented: "The issue of resits has come up every few years, and there are many academics in the School who are somewhat sick of the issue.

Nevertheless, it remains an issue of key importance to students, particularly those in need; we are committed to working with people in the School to work out solutions to the issue that will allow us to move forward and make a difference to students. We hope that all Departments of the School will see the reasons why so many students feel passionately about the issue, and why the previous impasse on the issue must be broken."

Before Christmas, the LSESU began collecting postcards, addressed to departments, on which students have written messages detailing the reasons why implementing a resits policy is so important.

Over 700 of these have already been collected and more will be collected this term. Students can sign an e-postcard at <http://tinyurl.com/resitslse>. A Facebook group in support of the resits campaign has 977 members.

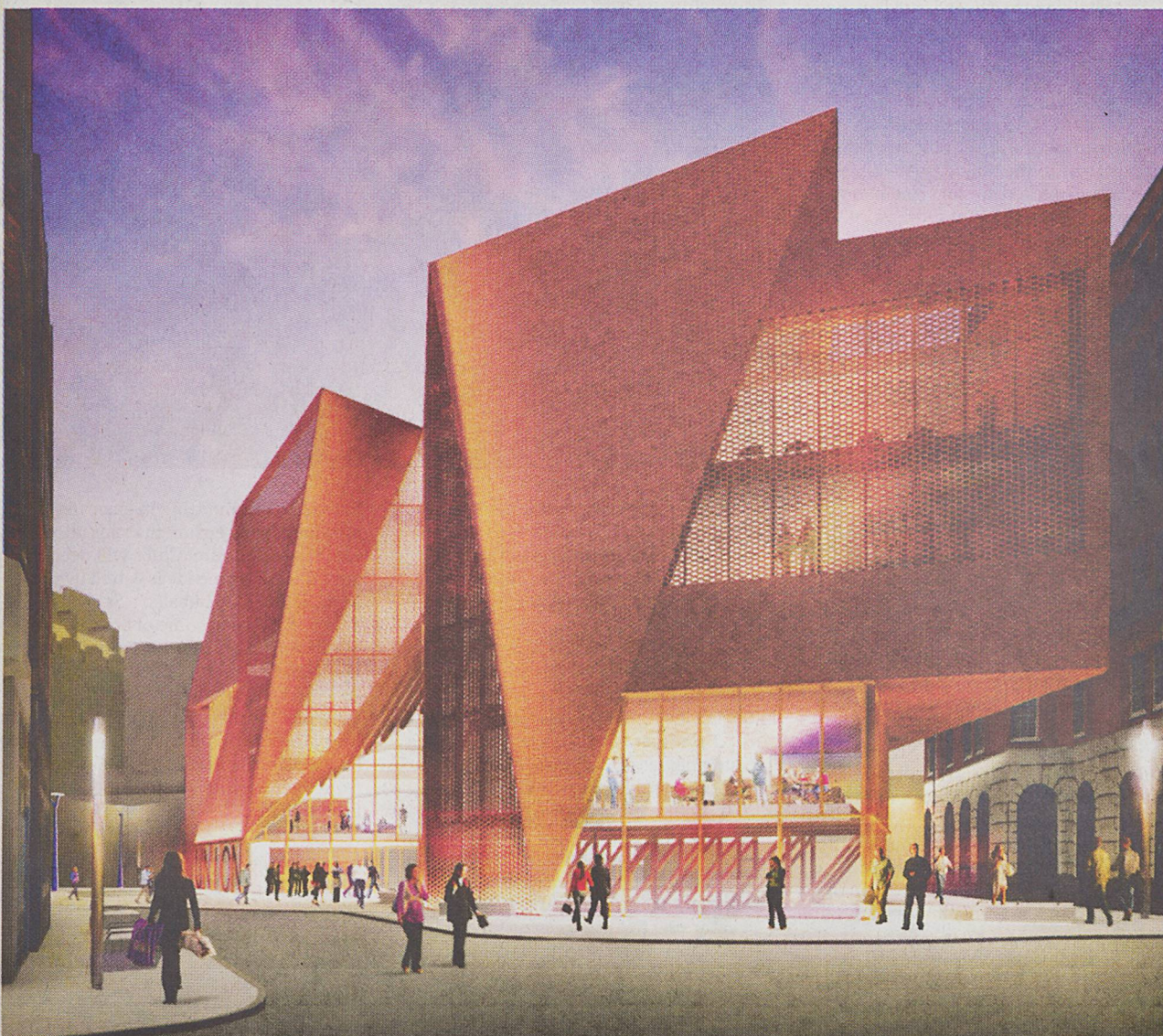


LSE STUDENTS'
UNION

Students who miss their exams because of exceptional circumstances, or those who fail their exams, shouldn't have to wait a whole year to take their exams again. This affects all students.

If 99.4%
of other unis
in the UK
have resits,
why can't LSE?

New Students' Centre on track for December 2012



Sam Tempest Keeping

The design of the New Students' Centre (NSC), the new building for the LSESU, continues apace, with the layouts for the building having been agreed by the Project Board.

The £35m project, which will be built in place of the existing St. Phillips (X, Y and Z) buildings, aims to be completed in December 2012. Following the appointment of Irish architects O'Donnell and Tuomey in July 2009, work has continued on producing a design of the basic layout of the building and its spaces.

The building will house the Students' Union and all of its current facilities, including a venue, bar, café, gym, Advice and Counselling Centre, and offices. It will also feature new Students' Union spaces, such as a Media Centre for The Beaver, Pulse Radio, LooseTV and the Clare Market Review, and an expanded Activities Centre for societies. The NSC will also provide a new dedicated learning café, Dance Studio, and top floor venue/café area.

In addition to the Students' Union, the NSC will feature the LSE Careers Service, Accommodation Office and new Multifaith Centre, encompassing the Chaplaincy, Muslim Prayer Rooms and new interfaith spaces. There will also be a roof garden on the top floor, adjoining the venue/café area.

LSESU General Secretary Aled Dilwyn Fisher and the student representative on the Project Board, commented: "The new building represents a massive improvement in the quality and quantity of space for the Students' Union, its societies and sports clubs, and all of its services. It

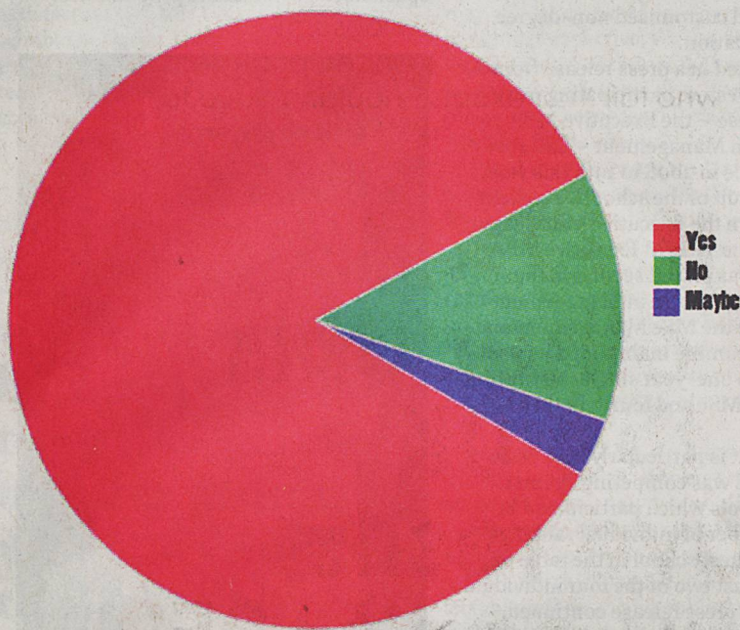
will be a truly world-class student centre fit for the energy, activity and ambitions of LSE's students. By bringing together student-focused services in the School, the building will hopefully become a key central point for students at LSE."

Following agreement of the layouts just before Christmas by the Project Board, the building process now turns to detailed work on the design of each specific area of the building. Subject to planning consent, it is envisaged that demolition of the current St. Phillips buildings will commence in early 2011.

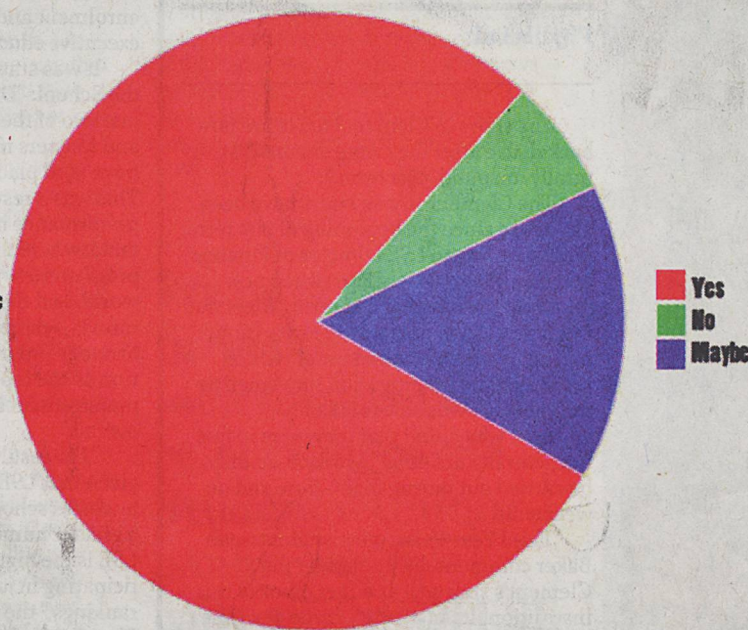
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Students Responses to LSESU Proposed Reforms

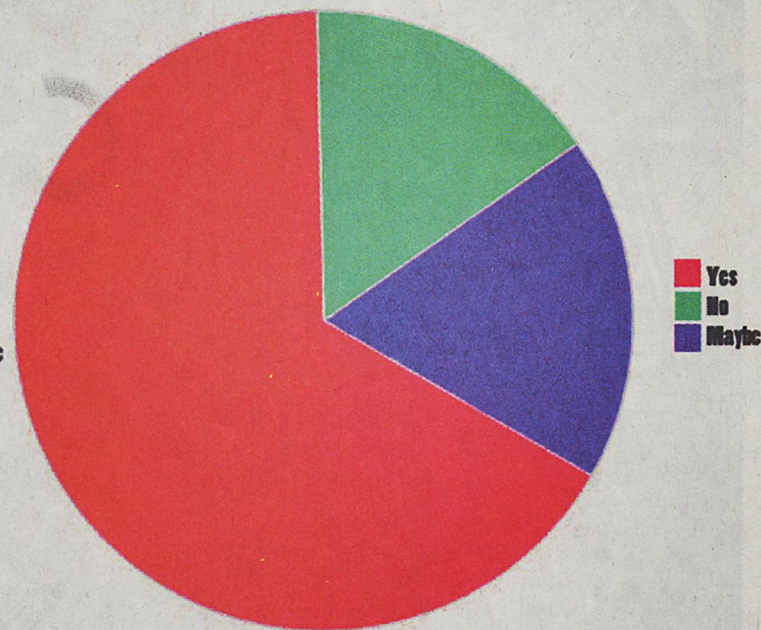
DO YOU THINK THE UGM ONLINE VOTING IS A GOOD IDEA (VOTING BEYOND THE PHYSICAL MEETING)?



DO YOU AGREE WITH THE PROPOSED ROLES OF THE OTHER SABBATICAL OFFICERS (EDUCATION, COMMUNITY & WELFARE, ACTIVITIES & DEVELOPMENT)?



DO YOU THINK CREATING ASSEMBLIES WILL ALLOW GREATER PARTICIPATION IN THE UNION?



Phyllis Lui

Feedback received by the LSESU found that LSE students believed the proposed reforms to its democratic structures to be "a positive change".

In a press release by the LSESU, it was stated that 500 students had responded to the survey which targeted "newly-proposed 'Assemblies' and their content, the Union General Meeting (UGM), the Sabbaticals and Executive Committee and additional representation for postgraduates". The Beaver had previously reported on the the draft proposals, which "will lead towards a referendum on a new Constitution during Lent Term".

When asked whether creating Assemblies would allow for greater partici-

pation in the Union, 66% of respondents agreed. Respondents believed that the most important Assemblies were Education, Welfare and Community, Activities, International Students and Postgraduates. Questions on the UGM saw students give a clear indication that the suggested proposals would improve its effectiveness. 84% thought online voting after a UGM was a good idea, and 88% of students agreed that more people would be able to participate this way.

Furthermore, 82% agreed that the purposes of the UGM should be to create an opportunity for free and lively debate and discussion, to involve as large a number of students as possible in policy decisions, and to nurture the forum as a leading example of democratic student debate.

Students were unclear whether the

General Secretary should be renamed President, "to bring a more modern feel... to a term steeped in history", with an even split between the two. They were, however, more certain that having an Education Sabbatical, a Community and Welfare Sabbatical and Activities and Development Sabbatical was a good idea, as 78% agreed with this.

The proposed purposes of the Executive Committee also showed great support, with 82% of students agreeing that its purposes should be to prioritise topics for discussion and debate in a representative body, to execute policy through Assemblies and other methods, to review policy annually and to lead the Union in delivering on students' representative and political priorities.

Of all the survey questions, the ones which provoked most debate were those

focused on postgraduate representation. Over half of students agreed there should be a Postgraduate Sabbatical. The debate has arisen because of the differences between taught (masters) and research (PhD) postgraduates and how to ensure they are equally represented. One suggestion currently being examined by the Union is the possibility of having two part-time Sabbatical Officers, one representing taught masters students, the other for research students.

LSESU Communications Officer Robin Low, commented: "We are extremely grateful for students' feedback on the proposed reforms. Students have sent a clear message that their Union needs to improve and become a more effective, representative and successful organisation. This was not an empty exercise which is why the views and comments

that students have given will feed directly into the final proposals. The reform proposals will deliver better representation for postgraduate students, less bureaucracy for societies, sports, campaigns and other activities, and more opportunities for all students to get involved in their Union."

The results of this survey are being analysed now to be fed into a final document on reform. This finalised document is currently being produced and will be available shortly.

Beaver does not need saving, says UGM

Eunice Ng

The last Union General Meeting (UGM) of Michaelmas Term took place with various motions being passed.

Although the motion 'Say No to the Minaret Ban, Say No to Islamophobia?' was tabled as the first motion, another motion 'I want to eat my kebab in the NAB' had been on the UGM agenda for several weeks and was moved ahead.

The Beaver had reported earlier in Michaelmas Term that students who were eating in the Atrium and other areas of the NAB were told to vacate the premises. Furthermore, LSE Director Howard Davies had pledged at a UGM last year that students would be allowed to consume their own food in LSE owned food outlets. The motion was passed.

'Say No to the Minaret Ban, Say No to Islamophobia?' was debated next. There was heated discussion by the speakers, as the objector to the motion had believed the motion to impinge upon the freedom of speech. LSESU Anti-Racism Office Ben Jones questioned why the motion was specific to minarets. The motion was also passed.

The following motion 'Right to Work Conference' was proposed by Mark Twyford, who spoke for the motion, which opposed job losses and cuts in public spending, working closely with UCU and other Students' Unions against cuts in London.

The last motion, 'Save the Beaver' fell by 10 votes. Speaking for the motion was proposer Eve Guterman, a General Course student. She began her speech by claiming that the Media Group's budget was voted down "only because of the Beaver" and further claimed that the Beaver was grossly over-funded, being allocated £45,000 last year, compared to the £35,000 allocated for all societies. Such over-funding "wouldn't be an issue if the Beaver was doing its job."

Other ills included the fact that the Beaver was a clique of a few editors who hold on to their positions. Guterman also claimed that instead of genuinely raising debate about school issues, the News section simply repeated official LSE press releases.

Speaking against the motion was Managing Editor of the Beaver, Sachin Patel. He refuted Guterman's claims that the Beaver was not living up to its former glories, suggesting that the paper's critics



The Policies voted on:

- Say No to the Minaret Ban, Say No to Islamophobia?
- I want to eat my kebab in the NAB
- Right to Work Conference
- Save the Beaver

were ill-informed and rash to make such accusations. He also stated that many of the figures cited by Guterman were factually incorrect. Contrary to Guterman's belief that an inordinately large number of editors had stepped down during Michaelmas Term, Patel re-affirmed that Beaver editors quit throughout the year, every year, and further went on to defend the News section by saying that it occupied only eight of the Beaver's 24 pages. In the light of the accusation that news coverage tended to be focused on berating the actions of Union officials, the Managing Editor pointed out that Beaver writers were in the midst of carrying out investigations into School issues, which could only be published once all the facts were in place.

There were also reports from the AU president Charlie Glyn, who outlined procedures for dealing with any racist or unethical behavior during the AU Carol. She also promised that Carol members would be supervised next year. A representative from the Academic Board spoke briefly about what students should expect from staff at library closing times.

A meeting has been held with the Finances and Steering Committee regarding the Media Group's budget.

Clement House stairs back in action

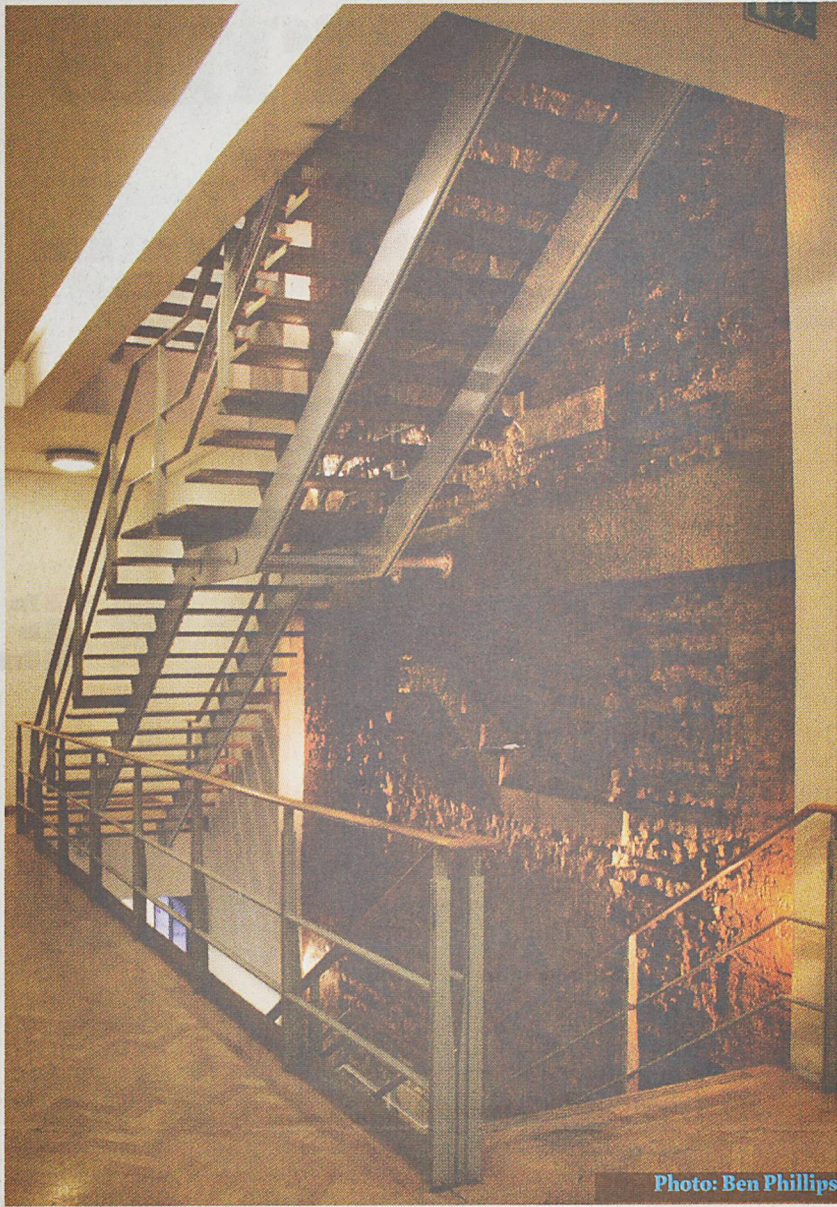


Photo: Ben Phillips



Photo: Chris Johns

Phyllis Lui

The stairs in Clement House are now back in use after they were deemed "structurally unsound" last term.

The Clement House stairs have been out of use since the beginning of last term, and according to LSE Director of Finance and Facilities Andrew Farrell at a new pilot scheme meeting last term, 'Meet the Managers', "a member of security [noticing] more vibration than usual" which prompted the investigation into whether the staircase was safe for use.

As it was found that they were in fact "structurally unsound", work could only be carried out during night-time and on weekends.

Third Year Philosophy student Sean Baker commented: "I consider the St Clement's stairwell as a metaphor of this institution. Its instability came at a time when the student radio station's Head of Music failed to recognize the significance of musical tour de force Lady Gaga. The successful ossifying of the stairwell represents a campus-wide acceptance that Stefani Joanne Angelina Germanotta is the greatest thing to happen to pop music since the emergence of Ultravox."

The staircase is now in full operation.

LSE amongst top 20 in Financial Times league table

Sachin Patel

The School has risen four places from last year in a table that was compiled from four individual Financial Times business education rankings published in 2009, including full-time MBA, Executive MBA, Masters in Management, and open enrolment and customised non-degree executive education.

It was stated in a press release from the School: "Despite participating in just two of these – the Executive MBA and Masters in Management – LSE rose from 23rd place in 2008 to 19th this year. This was a result of the school's excellent performance in the Executive MBA league table, where the TRIUM Executive MBA programme was placed second in the world, and the Masters in Management ratings, where the MSc Management and Strategy programme maintained its position as the top one-year single-institution management MSc and fourth in the world overall."

"The result is particularly impressive given that LSE was competing against business schools which participated in a greater number of individual rankings. LSE is the highest school in the table participating in just two of the four individual rankings," the press release continued. That this new accolade has been received enthusiastically by the School should come as no surprise: leading figures, including the Director, Howard Davies, have expended significant energies over the past two years in responding to a series of negative perceptions of the School arising from several league tables. On previous occasions, the justification for LSE's poor performance has been attributed to poor

methodology; in this instance, there has been no such criticism.

Third year BSc Mathematics & Economics student, Stuart McColl opined, "This news will be well-received by anyone considering a career in management consulting; however, for less career-motivated students, this is more evidence of the School focusing its energies on specialised postgraduate programmes."



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the journal of the LSE SU

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PERSPECTIVES ON IMMIGRATION

A special issue produced in conjunction with LSE Arts available from:

The Golden Road by Andrew Jackson

11 January - 13 February

LSE Atrium Gallery

Old Building



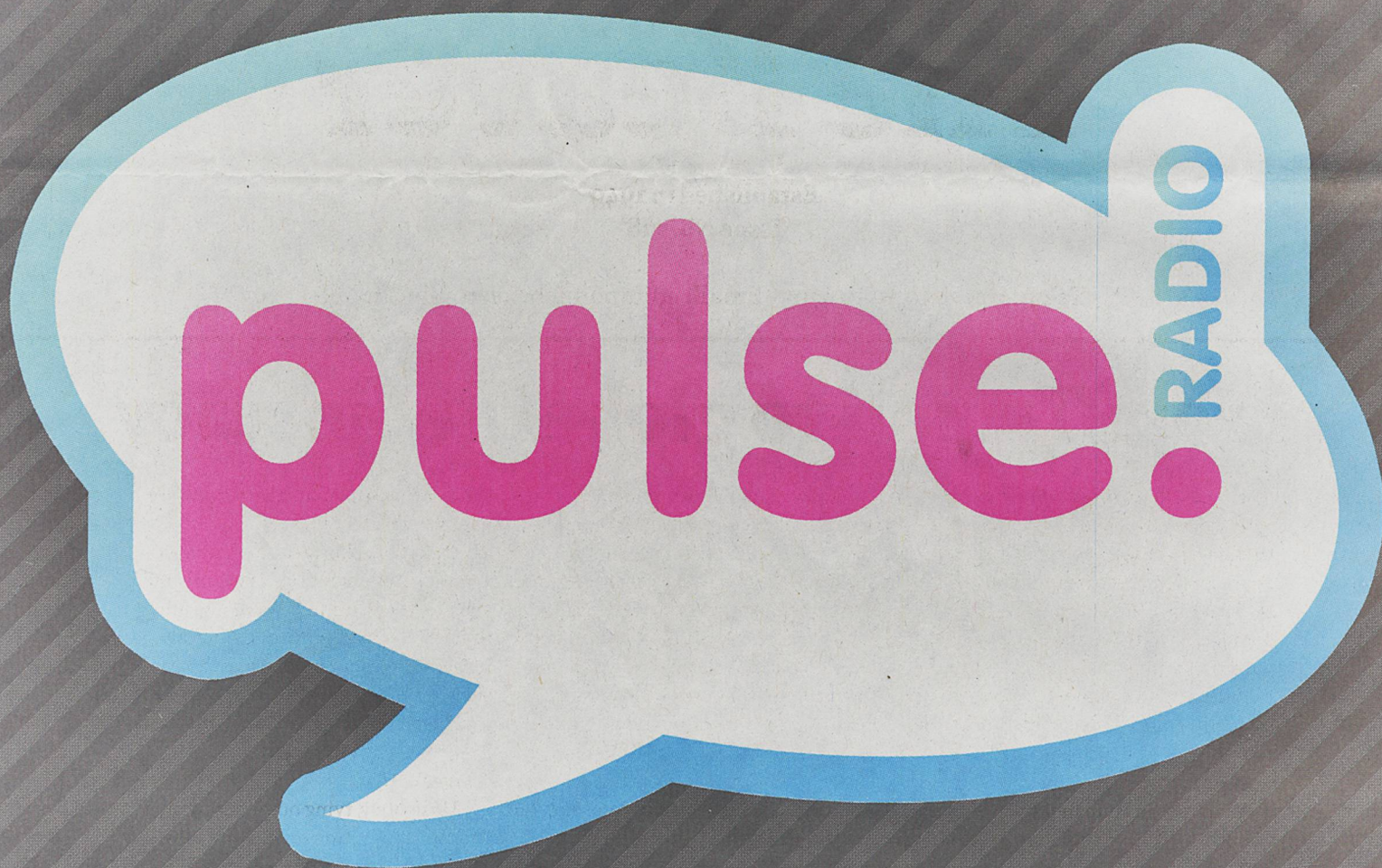
Heavy snow and icy conditions have gripped the United Kingdom over the past weeks, leading to widespread travel chaos. Fortunately conditions are set to improve over the next few weeks as the weather warnings ease, just in time for the new term. Few students are likely to still be affected by the weather conditions and disrupted travel at this point.

Catch up

with us

at Refreshers

fair

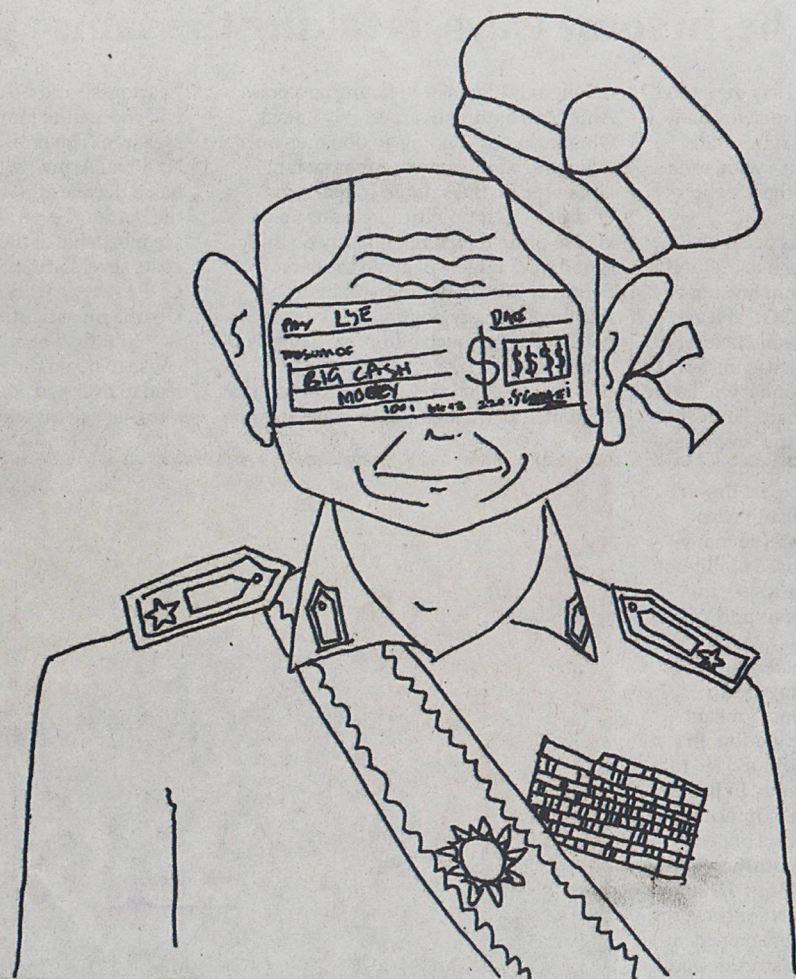


Thursday 14th January

11am - 3pm The Quad

www.pulse.dj

Comment



The Beaver

Established in 1949
Issue No. 718

Telephone: 0207 955 6705 Email: editor@thebeaveronline.co.uk

From Tripoli to global democracy

More than a year on from the storm-in-a-teacup that was the naming of the Sheikh Zayed theatre, the dodgy donations continue. This time, the LSE has accepted a gracious donation of £1.5 million from a Libyan non-governmental organisation, headed by the son of coup-loving Colonel Gaddafi.

Perhaps ironically, the donation was intended to support the Centre for the Study of Global Governance, a centre that is committed to research

on global governance and research on "principles, rules and laws necessary to tackle global problems". It does not take a stretch of the imagination to say that Libya is hardly the bastion of democracy, or that it looks to global governance for solutions to global problems, with Colonel Gaddafi himself calling the UN Security Council the "Terror Council" in September 2009. Gaddafi himself has been in power for 40 years after a coup in 1969, which is atypical for any state that claims to be deeply committed to democracy.

This is not the school's only

involvement with Libya, with our esteemed Director sent as an economic envoy to Libya at the request of the UK Government. In the wake of Al-Megrahi's suspiciously motivated release last year, which tested the resolve of many leading politicians, is it prudent for our university to be linked so closely to a country whose government offends most liberal sensibilities? As generous as the donation is, can we really be proud of the LSE when we name our newest lecture theatres after leaders who have been tried for torture; when we accept hefty sums of money from

sources that we instinctively think are questionable?

Donations, however, are not the same as investment. This is hardly the same as investing in BAE, or any other arms company. Promises of ethical investment of our money have not yet seen to be grotesquely compromised, at least as of yet, and perhaps this is more important than donations that the school receives.

Ultimately, tying our institution to any organisation or nation that will mar LSE's already tainted reputation for being unethical and business-

mindful is going to dampen our pride in our institution. We are part-way through an academic year in which the School has resolved to try harder with regard to ethical investment - a noble step towards cleaning up its image and reassuring inquisitive students that this is an open establishment, founded on clear principles. If the School does not act expediently to assure us that Saif al Gaddafi's millions do not come with strings attached, it risks looking like a helpless schoolboy who has knotted his shoelaces.

We never lie in the gutter, man

In the last UGM of Michaelmas Term, a first-time speaker, while on stage, was subjected to a torrent of abusive language from a member of the audience who, temporarily forgetting his prominent station within the student community, proceeded to shout and swear like a crude parody of Alan Sugar. Enlightened debate, this was not. Thankfully, you'll find no such debasement within these august pages, which - we hope you will agree - continue not only to cover the campus and student issues that matter to you and represent your views, but also remain appealingly designed by a committed editorial team. An editorial team who give up their sleepy Sundays to

slave away, without pay, so that this newspaper receives approving gazes from students, academics, and the baristas at the Starbucks on Kingsway. Of course, this endeavour is time-consuming and frequently goes unthanked, which would explain why our personnel changes with the seasons, to reflect individuals' decisions to concentrate on their studies, or reconnect with lost acquaintances.

The School's student body is stunningly diverse and international, reflecting a wide range of backgrounds, interests, and academic pursuits. It is for these reasons that the Beaver remains committed to casting a wider net in its coverage of social, political and humanitarian themes. Peruse through

Features, Comment, Social or Sport - the number of first-time writers bears witness to the fact that interesting people like writing about interesting things. In a university where students are academically motivated towards interesting subject matter, and where essay writing forms an integral component of many degree programmes, there is little excuse to wield the sword of under-representation with one hand, while handcuffing the other to a mountain of apathy. If you feel your opinions are not adequately voiced, the pen is the greater weapon. Unlike other avenues of discourse within the Union, the Beaver is not the home of petty slander - Sport excepted - for in this temple to freedom of expression,

everyone has the right to reply.

With increasing frequency, our website, which airs all comments regardless of the vigour of their convictions, is becoming a vital tool for fostering debate and gauging opinions from across the globe. Readers are correct to affirm the belief that berating the Sabbatical officers should not be the priority of our News section - and nor is it. Our team of News writers, who are perhaps the most industrious and resourceful of all our contributors, are in the midst of carrying out investigations into weighty School issues, which can only be published when all the facts are in place. The impartial airing of facts is our bread and butter. At our Collective meetings, all are wel-

come - indeed, on previous occasions, the extent of individuals' desire to interface with regular contributors has burst the seams of the room booked for the meeting. At the Beaver, we strive to be open and inclusive: the money pensively allocated to us is never spent on insular, alcohol-fuelled parties; our financial accounts can be scrutinised by any inquisitive soul. And now, with the role of the newspaper being questioned from all sides, we have taken stock of our position and opened our doors ever wider to encourage greater participation, greater enthusiasm, and greater support from our loyal readership.

Dominance at the drop of presidents' hats

Despite Obama's Nobel Prize win he, in some ways, is taking the same approach as previous presidents

Craig Willy



The United States of America is the only country today with the ability to independently send large amounts of forces almost anywhere in the world. To those who face the prospect of American bombs and boys in their country, it can be hard to fathom why Washington might choose to intervene in their forlorn corner of the Earth, and not others.

The answer cannot usually be found in terms of "vital national interest". The most hard-headed "realist" scholars – from Hans Morgenthau and George Kennan on Vietnam to Stephen Walt and John Mearsheimer on Iraq – have tended to oppose America's wars in the Third World. The countries of the South are underdeveloped, often fractious and unstable, typically lacking in industry and technology. So, when (as is frequently the case) our American presidents bring up Hitler and Stalin, World War and Cold War, Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, we can only be somewhat dubious at the contrast.

American wars of intervention are overwhelmingly "optional". Prior to waging war in Korea, General Douglas MacArthur had said the peninsula held little strategic value. The "fall" of South Vietnam to Communism could hardly mean that the Viet Cong guerrillas would now swim across the South China Sea to seize Malaysia or Indonesia (Lyndon Johnson once said they would be on the shores of Hawaii). Equally, in places like Rwanda, Bosnia or Kosovo, where "humanitarian intervention" is called upon or practiced, there is rarely a serious American national

security interest. One could say the same with Iraq. There was no reason why Saddam Hussein with his little rump state would be more difficult to live with, even if he had nuclear weapons, than Stalin's Soviet Union or Mao's China.

American interventions occur because American leaders feel like it. But if the idea of war holds a certain mystique, Americans do not like wars. Or, at least, do not like the cost in youth and taxes. So if American leaders feel like waging a war, it is usually because they think it will be an easy thing. Yet the "Wilsonian", "universalist" and "liberal democratic" impulses of the American ideology place high standards. Suddenly they expect flowering Republics and economic miracles wherever American boots are, so many countries – whether composed of illiterate peasants or warring ethnicities – promise to become post-war Japans and West Germanies.

The record of past interventions, however, is not very encouraging. In Vietnam, "counter-insurgency" meant the removal of the rural population. In Panama, the U.S. invasion of 1989 led to much chaos, looting and death. In Bosnia and Kosovo, huge amounts of international aid and ten and fifteen years of peace have not made Serb, Croat, Bosnian or Albanian any more likely to live in the same democracy. Their economies continue to be extremely weak, with over 40 per cent unemployment. All the disasters in Iraq – human, economic, ethnic, anarchic – were presaged in past interventions. Against this record, the invasion of Iraq can only be attributed to the Bush era national security clique's inordinate sense of themselves and their power. That they in fact were gods in whose hands the Arabs were only so much malleable putty that they could reshape in their own image.

But we are not there today. We have a new, good, liberal president, one whom Europeans cannot accuse of pandering

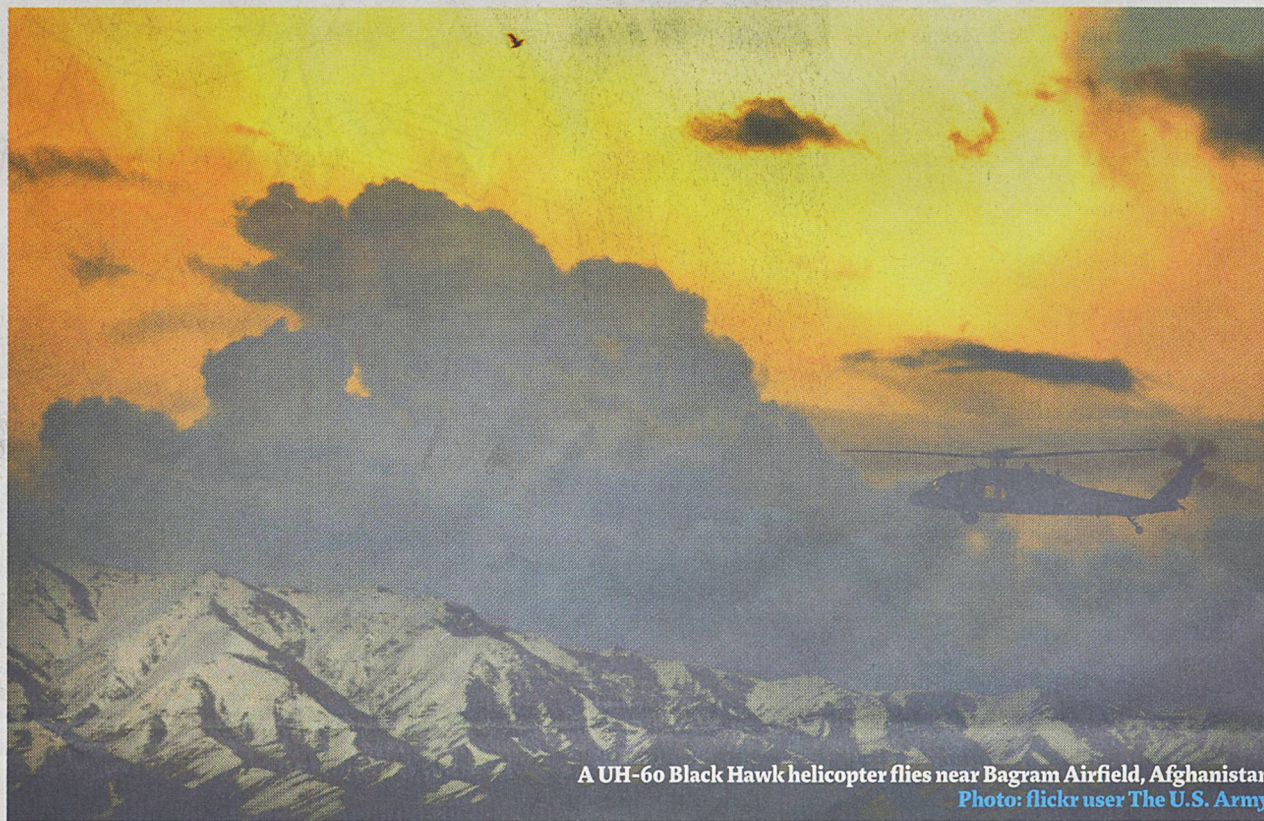
to religious bigots or of flaunting a crass American nationalism. Yet it is Barack Obama who is sending 30,000 men on a "quick-fix" mission to Afghanistan, as George W. Bush did in Iraq in 2007. Obama goes for political reasons above all. He campaigned relentlessly on this "good war," largely to avoid the curse of Jimmy Carter. But more than that, it is difficult for any politician to concede defeat after so much effort, particularly in America.

Yet, we can be reasonably certain that Afghanistan will again face "anarchy" and

"warlords," and no doubt a few of the latter will choose the moniker "Islamic" for good measure. The notion that the "Afghan National Army" will be tripled in size in half a decade and will be able to "secure the borders" even as the U.S. and NATO are incapable of the task (and the attempt costs several times Afghanistan's entire GDP every year) is manifestly absurd. Yet Obama must fight.

In 1965, President Lyndon Johnson chose to begin the movement that would lead to over 550,000 Americans in Vietnam, just so that the Republicans would

not be able to accuse him of "losing" 20 million more Asians to Communism. The Vietnam War's cost was great, wrecking Johnson's half-fulfilled domestic programs, ruining an endeavor that might have given America a true welfare state. In purely economic terms, the Afghan War is likely to cost at least as much over the next few years as Obama's vaunted project of universal health insurance. Of course, Johnson did not have the embarrassment of being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in his first year in office, only to use the occasion to expound on theories of just war.



A UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter flies near Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan
Photo: flickr user The U.S. Army

The January snowplot

Labour will lose the next election. Their replacements will be worse.

Estelle Cooch



Christmas is meant to be a time of goodwill, of thankfulness, of family and most of all contentment. My niece however, was not content last week, when her favourite television programme was followed by the six 'o' clock news. But it was not the end of her favourite programme that bothered her, but the appearance on the screen of a very white, very chubby and sickeningly smug David Cameron. I have never seen a six year old child so frightened and sob so much. To most of us it beggars belief; how is it even possible that someone with as much charisma as Harold Shipman, for whom smoking cannabis in his youth was probably his peak of rational thought, is likely to be the next prime minister?

And yet in the same week as the Tory election launch former health secretary Patricia Hewitt and former defence minister and current war criminal Geoff Hoon demanded a vote on Gordon Brown's leadership in what was termed 'the snowstorm mutiny'. Indeed, like a snowstorm the point of the demand was lost quite quickly and out of the flurry emerged Hewitt and Hoon looking battered and miserable. What they neglected to realise is that Labour's success or defeat

at the polls no longer rests on Gordon Brown. The antipathy that most people in this country now feel towards the party they elected in a landslide 13 years ago is much broader based than that. It rests on 13 years of feelings of betrayal by ordinary working class people who remember benefit cuts, the introduction of tuition fees, privatisation of the NHS though foundation hospitals, the invasion and occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan and the continuing onslaught of attacks on the poorest during a recession caused by the rich.

A new report by the Equality and Human Rights Commission last week detailed the effects of the recession on the most vulnerable in Britain. Unemployment for Britain's African Caribbean community has seen the highest surge since 2008 from 13.2 percent to 20.1 percent. The study pointed out that the trend has become more marked over the past six months – giving lie to the claim that the crisis is easing. Similarly youth unemployment has risen from 16.2 percent to 12 percent for the same period last year. Yet again and again we are told by parts of the media and some trade union leaders that we should not try to resist cuts or attacks on wages out of fear of 'letting the Tories in'. In fact Gordon Brown recognised the need to crucially sure up Labour's traditional support base last month when he declared Conservative strategy was "dreamt up on the playing fields of Eton". Unsurprisingly he was quickly encouraged by Labour whips to dismiss the remarks as a joke.

The reasons for a Labour loss at the next election are straightforward. Their continuation of Conservative neoliberal policies has had an entirely predictable effect. Slashing taxes on the rich, smashing unions, privatising public services and kowtowing to corporate power has widened inequality, lowered class mobility and working class living standards – and allowed for a bonanza for the tiny minority at the top of society. The result has been a decade marked by the restoration of ruling class privilege. We cannot trust Labour to defend working class people amidst one of the worst global recessions. I desperately hope that the Tories do not win the next election, but fear of such a scenario should not stop us organising the grassroots organic resistance that is needed to protect the poorest in Britain from attacks now.

In the meantime the Conservative election campaign consists of plastering the country with over 1,000 posters branded with David Cameron's face. As I searched through my room for the biggest black marker pens with which to scrawl 'Tory Scum' across his smug face, I thank you David Cameron. Christmas 2010 has come early.



David Cameron in 2006: surveying a possible majority?
Photo: flickr user Steve C

Increasing fairness with fairer fees

Danny Blanchflower's proposal to charge the rich more for tuition fees isn't too different to what we have presently

Ossie Fikret

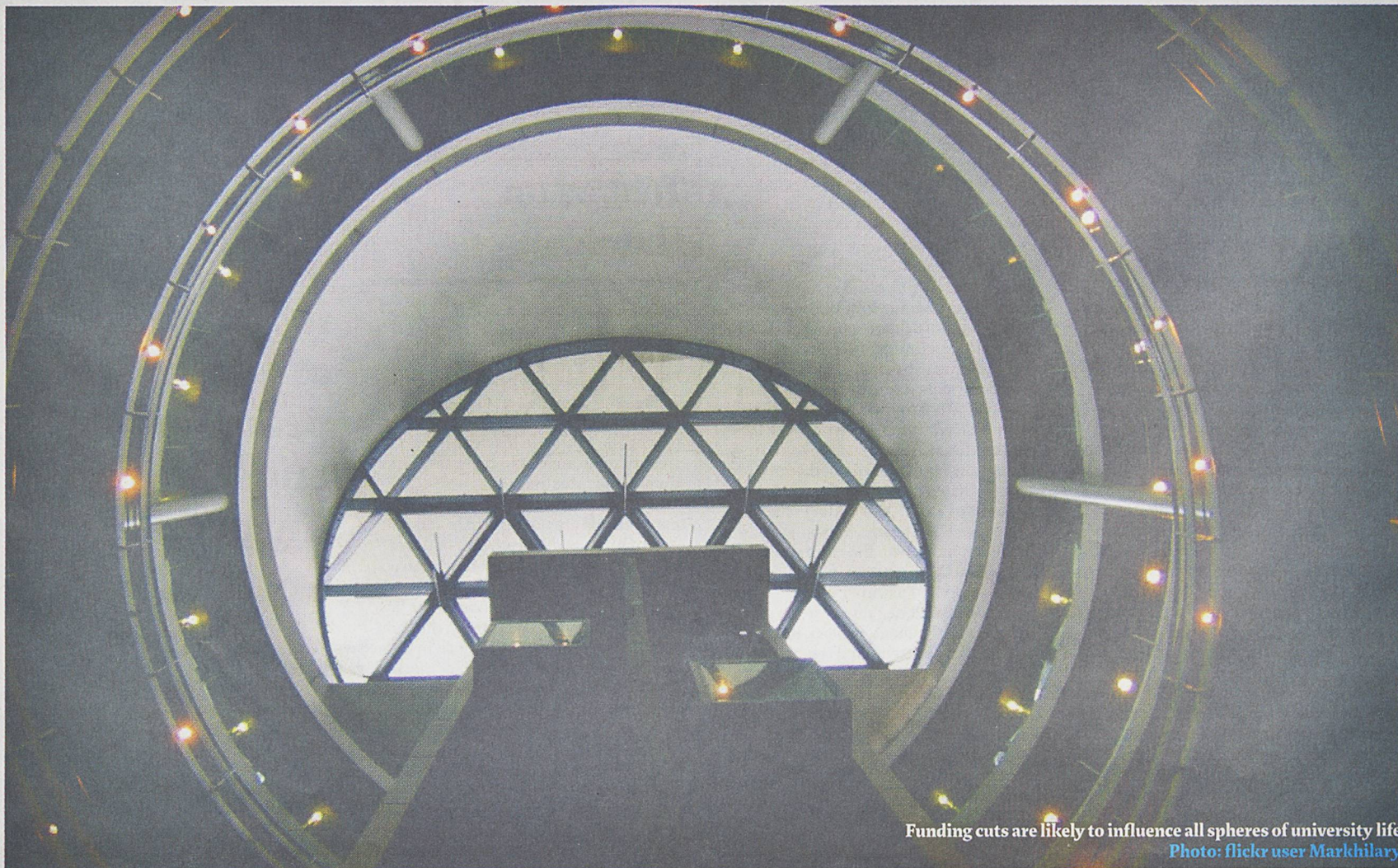


Tuition fees have been a contentious issue amongst students for as long as there have been students. And quite rightly so: education is a right, not a privilege. Yet as much as one pays lip service to this belief, it is difficult to square it up against the fact that education seems to be a right for the privileged few. Even the most ideologically devoted to an education system free at the point of use cannot deny that the growth in higher education over the recent past in the UK has disproportionately benefited the middle and upper classes - and those who least need the stability, diversity and the broadening of horizons that only higher education can provide.

Without a doubt the introduction of tuition fees in 2006/7 has intensified this problem; despite generous bursary packages, the fear of debt is still holding back some of the most talented students. Students who have no family link to university do not see opportunity at the end of three years; they see £30,000 of debt. From a personal experience, I know that the fear of debt has as corrosive an effect on ambition as any other factor. Debt for many of the poorest in Britain is not associated with a mortgage, a loan or long-term investment. Debt is associated with bailiffs, it means worrying about answering the phone, and ultimately fear. This is what the poorest in Britain associate with tuition fees.

With this context in mind, over the Christmas break Professor Danny Blanchflower (Dartmouth College, USA) mooted the suggestion, in *The Observer*; that tuition fees should be means tested and based upon parental income. If enacted, this would create a fees system whereby the poorest would pay no tuition fees and - with the £3,000 cap lifted - students from a wealthier background would be expected to pay fees determined by the market. In doing so, the wealthiest would subsidise poorer students. The University and College Union (UCU) lambasted this idea as "insulting" and no doubt many domestic students share this sentiment. Yet before domestic students get on their high horses, it may be worth remembering that such a system is already in place at our very own LSE.

The Director has described the domestic students of the LSE as "loss



Funding cuts are likely to influence all spheres of university life
Photo: flickr user Markhilary

makers" (to much outrage) and in his most recent appearance at the UGM, described a system where international students are actually subsidising the domestic students. It can therefore reasonably be asked why should we tolerate a system where we accept extortionate fees on international students and yet are angered by suggestions that would encourage some domestic students to pay a similar price. Although I accept that many of the most vocal supporters of scrapping tuition fees often argue against fee increases on international students it is worth noting that these campaigns often have a great deal less energy and enthusiasm, despite the large international population at the LSE.

The fact is that wealthy parents of international students are as likely as wealthy British parents to want to send their beloved offspring to the LSE. Many of whom will have already 'invested' in

their education through private schools, where the yearly fees often massively exceed the current tuition fees of universities. Furthermore, if we hold the initial statement to be true - that higher education has disproportionately benefited the middle classes - then on what grounds can we legitimately charge international students market fees while at the same time, using their fees to subsidise the sons and daughters of wealthy British families? The current system, if anything, is completely unfair. Although arguments have been made justifying international students fees on the basis that they are unlikely to remain in the UK and therefore pay taxes it must be remembered that European students also have access to domestic student rates. While the European Union is one big continental socio-political family in an age of globalisation it is very difficult to defend a system that verges on being both nationalistic in tone

and exclusionary in nature.

Predicting the future is never easy, but we may have found an exception. Should there not be a change in the way domestic students pay for their university education in the very near future, then tuition fees on international students will have to increase. The government has already announced cuts in higher education budgets which will leave research-intensive universities struggling to find another source of income. Thus should the symbolic £3,000 cap remain in place tuition fees on international students and postgraduate students will increase to meet financial demands.

Privatising universities is almost certainly not the solution, yet nor is the current system we have in place. Thus we need to develop some form of chimera, which allows universities to charge fees to those who can pay them, while offering generous bursaries to those who cannot,

irrespective of their nationality. At the same time there needs to be continuing support for those caught in the middle-ground. This system would allow British universities to compete against the likes of Harvard and Princeton, while keeping higher education in the public domain, thus allowing the state to regulate and monitor the number of students from low-income households. It would also ensure that higher education in Britain is able to avoid some of the many pitfalls of the American private system. Undoubtedly, the offer of a free university place to those from the poorest background could and would make all the difference when it comes to deciding whether or not to attend. Coupled with the urgent need for a re-think on tuition fees, the recession could be the perfect time to innovate higher education finance and to put equality back on the agenda.

Keeping our library to ourselves

Overcrowding and a lack of fundamental resources means that that all LSE students lose out

Poorna Harjani

Finding a computer or a workspace at the LSE Library is like looking for a parking space: you depend solely on luck. Sometimes you wait on the side, hoping a person will move, at other times students roam the aisles, cruising endlessly for the perfect spot. Some spaces are reserved for disability users, while others have entitlement through visiting permits. You might have your belongings removed if you stay too long and often the closest and most convenient spots are always taken. If there are the rare spaces, they may be in your blind spot and you just miss them. Few libraries, understandably, are able to satisfy all the needs of its users due to various constraints, however, the LSE is a constantly congested zone during the daytime with too many outsiders be-

ing able to enter leaving little workspace for LSE's own students.

Just like parking on a yellow line after 6.30pm is free in most central London zones and guarantees more space, more study spaces are inevitably found during evenings and weekends. Students otherwise are compelled to use the mirrors-signal-maneuvre technique; you have to use effective all-round observation in the library to see a gap. If you're lucky enough to find an expected spot you can an instinct emergency stop.

This general anticipation of finding a workspace means that during between classes one's study hour is forestalled by time one attempts to find a computer, a good workspace, or to print out lecture slides, on printers which appear to be on their last legs. Computers on the ground floor are on a meter of 15 minute slots so that people can print quickly, however these computers do not always work nor do the decrepid printers. Some people don't always stay within their bays; some people don't think twice about taking up whole desks. There is an lingering and inevitable worry here LSE about what

will happen when exams come. Graduate intake has increased this year and these so-called permits only benefit a minority here - problems of endless waiting times will get worse.

The LSE Library is putting further resources online and maybe it could be time to give students from other universities further access to these online resources. Several libraries in the world have formed consortia to share their electronic resources to meet the demands of a growing student population. We are not as obligated to be a part of University of London as in previous years, therefore there must be a possibility for LSE not to share its physical resources - such as our library, as generously. Undergraduate local fees might rise to seven thousand pounds at least if some in and on the fringes of government get their way. Most of all whom I feel sympathetic for are international masters students with their exorbitant fees who do not get their full consumer surplus. It's not good enough.

Furthermore, overcrowding is having a significant effect on many LSE services. This could simply by withdrawing cash at

the cash machines, buying food or at IT services. A university's central library can offer the best environment for productivity - and it should be able to provide this option for any student who wishes to use it. This is an integral part of a university experience, after all.

LSE is not the quintessential British university campus so we need to make use of all the social spaces and the library is one of them, especially now it has the 'Escape'. I like to know that the people around me are my fellow colleagues and not strangers from other universities: I enjoy the more comfortable and familiar ambience, but more must be done.

The trick to find a good parking space is knowing where to go and when to give in. My tips for finding a workspace are when entering the lot do not take the first entrance or lane. Do not make a beeline for the last one either. That is what the majority of people do. Instead go to the third or fourth floor, The Shaw Library, St Clement's basement, or King's Chambers; I recently discovered an IT room above the quad.

Few things in life can be more

frustrating than driving to a destination and not being able to park your vehicle anywhere near the buildings. Likewise, students at the LSE are becoming increasingly frustrated by coming to their own library and having to look for hidden rooms around campus. Christmas time showed that just like when parking lots are crammed with last-minute frantic shoppers, students from other universities who have forthcoming essay deadlines make the library even more intolerably congested.

The library is the hub of the LSE; it's probably one of the privileges of being here. We're situated in central London where 'parking' is a premium, but the university is our territory and during working times it should be treated like a congestion zone - perhaps for LSE's 'residents' only, similar to how parking bays are for resident holders from a certain time.

Local residents - us local LSE students - should be given priority. In the words of Henry Ward Beecher, "A library is not a luxury but one of the necessities of life". It is our permit; our right that we bought when we enrolled at the LSE.

Detroit and beyond

After the attempted bombing of a passenger plane over America on Christmas Day the impacts of this on modern British society and the LSE must be dealt with sensitively

**Zachariah
Sammour**



There lurking in the shadows, the eternal problem that has plagued societies since the dawn of time: the other. Whether it's the Jew in 1930s Germany, the communist in 1950s America or the Muslim in the west today all have been viewed with suspicion. Distressingly, it seems that recently even The Beaver has not been immune from such fear-mongering directed towards Muslims.

It is undeniable that the newest other to endure the wrath and hysteria of the British and American media machine are Muslims. For those who dispute the extent, or even the existence of Islamophobia, look no further for evidence than to Nick Griffin, a man who has made his political career out of assessing and exploiting the racial and religious fault lines in Britain. In 2006 he said: "We should be positioning ourselves to take advantage for our own political ends of the growing wave of public hostility to Islam currently being whipped up by the mass media".

Furthermore, though a proudly diverse and tolerant university, recent events on our campus seem to indicate an unsettling attitude toward Islam and Muslims prevalent amongst some members of the student body.

Two incidents are of particular note, the first being the decision of an LSE rugby team to dress as Guantanamo Bay inmates, even painting their faces brown, and proceeding to mock the Muslim method of prayer by prostrating them-

selves and shouting 'Oh Allah'. A further illustration of ignorance of Islam on campus was demonstrated by a student who opposed a motion at the last UGM before Christmas break, during which he asserted "Muslims stone their women".

That a student would have the confidence to stand on a stage in front of hundreds of his peers and make such a statement, or that a school team would feel comfortable painting their faces brown and shouting 'Oh Allah' is indicative of an increasingly unpleasant atmosphere at LSE. It is not the actions themselves that are so worrying, rather it is the lack of concern for Muslim students, a courtesy almost always extended to other minority groups, that is most distressing. Could we conceive of a student standing in front of a crowded Old Theatre, opposing an Anti-Semitism motion on the grounds of the blood libel? Can we imagine an LSE team feel comfortable painting their faces black and carrying out negative stereotypical behaviours attributed to black British youth? This differentiated treatment shows that Muslims appear to be the other in the minds of some LSE students.

We must take a stance against Islamophobia, as a student body and as individuals in our own right. As students of LSE we must acknowledge this growing trend within our society and on our own campus, and we must work to stamp it out; we must demonstrate to those who would sow the seeds of intolerance and hatred in our university that they will not be permitted to do so. In a community as diverse as ours intolerance of anybody has absolutely no place.

**Tabbasam
Hamid**

Umar Abdul Mullaab: on whose behalf did he hope to blow up an airliner carrying civilians heading for Detroit? In whose name were his actions to be performed? Who did he hope to represent through his deeds? Let us be clear that the answer to these three questions is not 'Muslims'.

For those who are weary of hearing that Muslims are not terrorists and that Muslims do not advocate acts of terrorism after every actual or potential atrocity, there is nothing we can do but reiterate the message. We cannot account for the actions of misguided and warped individuals. Whatever conclusions those in the media might come to as to what motivated him in his attempts, where he gathered his ideas from, and why he thought it heroic to take innocent lives, only Abdul Mutallab can tell us why.

His background has been well-documented: a young man from a privileged background, who came to England to study engineering at the prestigious University College London. These facts certainly struck me when I read them because it seemed inconceivable that a person of his background and evident intellect could be capable of what he attempted to do. We must surely ask ourselves that if UCL could produce such a person, why not our other seats of learning?

This is a dangerous development in thought. For the mass media to tell us that a terrorist could be anyone from a grocer, to a student, doctor, or lawyer, makes the

It must be reiterated that the overwhelming majority of Muslims are peace-loving and law-abiding people

spectre of suspicion loom over us all. It creates a potential drift towards viewing the activities of all Muslims with mistrust. Even before the Detroit bomb plot, last term at campus was a particularly torrid time for Muslims after suggestions in an article in this newspaper that some Muslims assemble after Friday prayers for sinister purposes. There is certainly greater potential now for tension in campus relations between Muslims and non-Muslims and it would be saddening if this were the path we allowed ourselves to take.

But it must be reiterated that the overwhelming majority of Muslims are peace-loving and law-abiding people. Conflict without a just cause has no place in Islam, and even where the cause is just, there are limits that must be observed in the pursuit of realising justice. Indiscriminate attacks against civilians certainly lie well beyond the boundaries of acceptability, as does suicide bombing. What non-Muslims of can be reassured with is that we all share the same basic tenets of moral decency. Grand political ideologies, visions of beautiful revolutions, and longed-for utopias are rotten to the core if they reject at the outset fundamental moral principles in the pursuit of their realisation.

Let me make it abundantly clear that I know of no member of the LSESU Islamic society who would ever contemplate taking the route Abdul Mullaab has chosen, for it jars with our identity. It is written in the Quran that to take the life of a single person is like killing all of humanity, and that to save the life of one person is like saving all of humanity (Quran 5:32). We are not terrorists or plotters. We are not angry, or radical. We are simply Muslims and, as such, wish to practice our faith. And it is our faith that calls us to condemn those who would tarnish its name.

**QWERTYUIOPASDFGHIJKLZ
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Features



A mutual distrust

Ossie Fikret speaks of China's future and the state of its relations with the west

The current worldwide angst towards China is intriguing. Not only is the People's Republic (PRC) being labeled as the reason for the failure at Copenhagen, but is also being attacked as the number one human rights abuser in the world and as having been the root of the recession (see Professor Niall Ferguson on 'Chimerica'). While all of this may be true, one cannot help but wonder why China has suddenly entered the limelight and instantaneously become the source of all Western problems.

Claims that the PRC is following a 'beggar-thy-neighbour' approach to economic policy, reminiscent of the 1920s economic nationalism, are almost certainly true; with their currency (the Renminbi) being kept artificially low in order to maintain and increase their trade surplus, at the expense of the rest of the world, in particular the US. This has precipitated international calls for the currency to appreciate and for China to 'recycle' her surplus, in an attempt to cut the bloated American trade deficit and possibly reduce domestic unemployment (as suggested by Nobel Prize winning economist Paul Krugman). Yet the cause of these demands are rooted in both a naive assessment of the bilateral trade situation mixed with a potent fear harboured by the West; reminiscent of the racist 'yellow peril' from the early twentieth century.

The new 'yellow peril' of the early twenty-first century finds its origins in a very real fear that China will eventually displace the United States as the world's largest economy and in doing so, dominate the international political arena. If you are experiencing a sense of déjà vu, it may be because similar remarks were made about the USSR in the 1950s/60s. Unlike then, at the heart of this fear is an element of truth that is routed in a paradigm shift of power eastwards, towards

the world's most populous nations, India and China. With a seemingly endless supply of excess labour, which is rapidly transferring from agriculture to industry and rising total factor productivity (TFP), the People's Republic appears to be experiencing both intensive and extensive growth and in doing so, escaping the economic trap that befell the former challenger to American power, the Soviet Union.

Nonetheless, despite the enviable growth statistics of China, fears of long-term displacement of the USA are – at least at this moment in time – fantastical. Banking, investment in education and infrastructure and living standards – all crucial elements in long-term growth – leave a lot to be desired. When one considers that the four major Chinese banks (which administer government loans) may all be insolvent and that of the 300,000 state-owned enterprises roughly half are loss making; it is very hard to believe that Chinese growth rates can continue at their present level beyond the next decade. That is unless an institutional and organisational revolution takes place over the next decade. This revolution would have to be greater than Deng Xiaoping's, for it would be forced to expose hundreds of thousands of state enterprises to competition and reform a fragile banking sector. Ultimately, it would probably lead the People's Republic of China to resemble the neighbouring Republic of China (Taiwan).

Thus while western fears may be misplaced (at least for the foreseeable future), they are not necessary wrong. China has shown an amazing resilience in its growth, no matter what the obstacle. Growth has in fact become something of a Chinese institution, guarded by organisations of the state and powered by the people. This also explains the recent experience of China dragging her feet in Copenhagen. Quick and cheap economic growth is crucial to

Nonetheless, despite the enviable growth statistics of China, fears of long-term displacement of the USA are-at this moment in time-fantastical

the short-term maintenance of Chinese growth rates; and it is the growth rates that are crucial to the maintenance of the current status quo. Should growth falter it may awaken a restless dragon in the Chinese people. It is only 'socialism with Chinese characteristics' that could place growth as the opiate of the people. While the externalities of this opiate, namely global warming, remain exogenous to the (short-term) interests and concerns of the state, we can continue to expect nothing more than lip service paid to a reduction in carbon emissions.

On human rights, the West has been quick to attack China and more often than not this has been justified. Justice and human rights have no borders and suggestions of the 'positional limitations' of justice are ignorant of the plight of those suffering. Yet in her global relationships and bilateral agreements, one can see a China exhibiting all of the characteristics of a nation asserting ever-growing confidence in the international arena. Thus China confidently questions further sanctions of Iran, willingly trades with Zimbabwe and props up North Korea. Human rights are as external to state concerns as those of global warming, yet unlike global warming it is unlikely that we will see any change in attitudes to human rights until there is an institutional revolution in China that makes the state more accountable to its people. As is almost a universal experience in industrialisation, labour is seen as an expendable unit, and while economic growth continues to be the sole aim of the state one cannot expect to see a China that values and truly appreciates human rights, whether at home or abroad.

Yet China's coming of age must be put into a context, it is at a time when the west is repeating the mantra 'mea culpa' and has found itself philosophically and morally bankrupt. One can quite easily imagine the cries of "hypocrisy" that must echo

through Beijing when the British, who built an industrial revolution on coal, call for reduced emissions or when the United States, who supported Pinochet in Chile and invaded Iraq, question human rights in Tibet. It must be stressed that this is not a defence of China's human rights abuses, they cannot and should not be defended. But rather, it is placing them into a context of systematic abuses worldwide and a reminder that while Guantanamo Bay exists, the United States and her allies have no basis to dictate human rights.

The process of economic modernisation and of rapid industrialisation is a bloody, brutish and cold process. Yet as recent experiences have shown in East Asia, this process is often followed by the development of a stable democracy and polity. The Chinese experience with be distinct from that of East Asia, if only as a result of its sheer size. China is a nation coming of age and this is where the fear originates. China represents the unknown; it is a communist country, of virtually unlimited labour and ambition. This is what strikes fear into the west. Yet this fear is almost certainly irrational and is borne of a context specific fear. The west has found itself in the worst recession since the Great Depression, while China is (relatively) booming.

In the near future China will be obliged to reform or face stagnation. Chinese banking and education will ultimately have to be re-thought. Otherwise, the Chinese state will find continued growth beyond its reach. In terms of trade, if China continues to grow, an increasingly affluent population will boost demand for higher value-added items produced by the west, thereby reinforcing the idea that trade is a positive-sum game. Ultimately, the current fear of China is as ignorant as the 'yellow peril' of years gone by and it will remain to be seen how quickly it will be before we come to our senses.

HOPENHAGEN



Photos: Courtesy Kim Wall

On the failure of COP15

Kieran Nelson presents an analysis of climate change in a rational world

One month on, the legacy of the inconclusive Copenhagen conference still lingers. Those of us truly interested in the fate of the planet were left deeply troubled, and the spectacular failure of the Conference of the Parties to come up with any plan of action will haunt world politics for years to come. Why did it happen? Commentators offered dozens of reasons. Some blamed the American Senate, which cripples the negotiating power of its president; others blamed China's unwillingness to agree to anything that might threaten its economic ascendancy. Many blamed Denmark for the botched organization of the conference itself. But rather than blame individual nations, the UK director of Greenpeace, John Sauven, declared that the conference failed because "there are too few politicians in this world capable of looking beyond the horizon of their own narrow self-interest."

Simple, pithy, and ultimately correct, this one phrase captures the true the true spirit of the breakdown of international cooperation when it comes to solving the problem of climate change—a problem which threatens our world with a period of economic collapse, resource shortage, social dislocation, and perpetual war on a scale never before experienced. However, it would be naive to ascribe the failure of Copenhagen to the failure of the moral fiber of every bureaucrat involved. If our leaders are unable to see beyond their "own narrow self-interest," it represents a failure of the institutions which give these politicians the incentives to act the way they do; institutions which define the limits in which these politicians must operate. The failure of international cooperation on climate change is not the result of the actions of any particular politician or government, but rather the result of the two most sacred and entrenched institu-

tions of our society — national sovereignty and liberal democracy.

During the final days of the conference, China rejected America's proposal that it agree to international oversight of their fossil fuel emissions. Instead, China offered to provide its own statistics which, according to the delegation was essential to maintain "our sovereignty and our national interest."

It is important to remember that for China, America's proposal was rubbing a 150-year-old wound. The Chinese will never forget the way in which their country was humiliated by foreign powers for over a century, from the beginning of the Opium Wars to the withdrawal of the Japanese. In refusing international oversight, the Chinese government was doing precisely what the institution of national government is designed to do: promote the interests of the nation and its citizens. National governments are neither designed nor expected to promote the interests of anything else.

However, it is equally important to remember that solving the problem of climate change will require repeated and invasive violations of national sovereignty for every nation in the world. International oversight of fossil fuel consumption, for example, will be unquestionably necessary: it is the only way for nations to be certain that if they curb their own emissions, other nations will also comply. On the issues of industrial regulation, forest preservation, and especially the controversial issue of population control, it must be recognized that national interests are diametrically opposed to the interests of the world as a whole. Hence our national governments, designed specifically to protect those national interests, are currently scuttling any possible climate agreement in the name of national sovereignty.

The second major obstacle in our society to cooperation on climate change

Individual self-interest, for as long as we maintain the democratic process, will always be a threat to the collective cooperation necessary to create a carbon-neutral world

is liberal democracy.

Hanging over Obama during his entire time at the conference was the ghost of Woodrow Wilson, who in 1919 created the League of Nations only to watch the Senate vote to reject America's participation in it. Many criticize American democracy, citing the examples of European nations whose presidents have the power to make any negotiation binding under national law. But the problem runs far deeper than the institutions of particular democratic nations. The problem is democracy itself, in which each individual citizen has the power to vote for the party of his or her choice.

In America today, 48 per cent of the population supports a party that denies that climate change is even taking place. While this percentage is temporarily a minority, it will not take much time before the pendulum swings, and the country is once more controlled by a government hostile to any agreement that prevents its increased consumption of fossil fuels. And while the citizens of Europe and Japan appear to have garnered the political will to solve the problem, only time will tell if such support is more than superficial.

The problem we face is that to progressively starve the world economies of carbon until the transition to a carbon-free energy grid is achieved will inevitably be a shock-ridden, depressive process: it will blight many of the economies of the developed world. If we actually want to solve the problem of climate change, we will have to implement policies which will vastly alter the lives of the world's citizens, and maintain them for longer than a century. To trust the solution of climate change to the democratic process is to have faith that during the economic turbulence of the years to come, the majority will always vote for leaders who continue these policies, even when they are destroying their individual lives.

Needless to say, for citizens to vote directly against their own self-interest is not the way democracy is designed to work. This individual self-interest, for as long as we maintain the democratic process, will always be a threat to the collective cooperation necessary to create a carbon-neutral world.

In order to solve the problems of climate change, the following measures will be necessary: central rationing of the world's fossil fuel supplies; worldwide regulation of industrial processes which produce greenhouse gases; protection and expansion of forests and other ecosystems; universal population control; and a meaningful system of international law to ensure these measures are not only implemented, but maintained.

While these measures are necessary for the salvation of the planet, they are also impossible to achieve under current political conditions. They require not only the violation of national sovereignty, but in the case of population control, the violation of human rights. It is inconceivable that such measures could be implemented by a coalition of national governments; it is equally inconceivable that they could be implemented by a democratic polity.

It is time to acknowledge these ideological foundations of the Western world are the two most intractable obstacles to the creation of a carbon-free economy. There is, therefore, a necessary trade-off between the survival of national sovereignty and liberal democracy and the survival of the human species as a whole.

In order to effectively solve the problem of climate change, humanity will need nothing less than a world government. And such a government, in order to implement measures which will inevitably be deeply unpopular, must necessarily be authoritarian.

NOPENHAGEN



Looking back, looking ahead

Kim Wall looks at the conference as a necessary learning step

Curiously, the situation facing the world leaders in Copenhagen at the end of last year shares some fascinating parallels with the state of affairs that led to the creation of the forum through which the discussion was facilitated. The United Nations came into existence as a result of its predecessor the League of Nations' inability to provide the collective security it stated as its main purpose. The main reason for this fiasco was a rather typical example of the 'prisoner's dilemma': a game theoretic counterexample of strategic gain-maximising, showing how two players pursuing their self-interest end up with a significantly smaller gain than they would had they cooperated. Acting unselfishly alone however, would comprise the largest loss – a risk no one dared to take in the hostile climate of the interwar years. Woodrow Wilson's aspirations of international cooperation in form of the League of Nations were reduced to naive ideas and the worst possible outcome of a second world war. A similar lack of trust characterizes international relations today, remarkably, considering how the global atmosphere is significantly more interdependent and cooperative now.

In his first speech after arriving in Copenhagen, president Obama stated that 'while the reality of climate change is not in doubt, our ability to take collective action hangs in the balance'. Cop15 was indeed characterized by an unprecedented breadth of negotiation, bargaining and drama, the latter provided both by developing states feeling overrun by rich countries and rich countries annoyed over developing states deliberately spoiling the process. No one expected it to be easy for almost 200 delegates to reach a consensus and conclusive deal on responsibility, targets and approaches.

World leaders, it seems, have always

had a peculiar approach towards dealing with severe threat towards our survival, characterized mainly by a predisposition towards securing short-term gains and an ostrich-strategy of ignoring the consequences. Normal risk management simply does not apply – whether it means giving up armies and weapon arsenals and resorting to peaceful settlement of disputes, or rethinking luxurious, profitable and climate-hazardous habits.

The Stern Review 2006 stated that if we act now, the investments we make will still pay off. Even with this hindsight and several other expert predictions of immense financial losses to come, we find ourselves caught in a status quo of reluctance to plan for a not-so-distant future without assurance of the commitment of others. The problem of collective action is exactly that it does not help much to act alone but it requires trust in others to act multilaterally as well.

There are of course striking differences between the two examples. The processes in Copenhagen were of a different nature entirely. Given the nature of climate change as a ruthless force indifferent to national borders the participants were not only government officials. Far from it. The interwar years and the need for collective security were the results of a very different threat, namely the more directly man-made disaster of war.

A rather cynical dimension of the analogy is that what was at risk in the 1930s preventing the collective action was the fear of committing to disarmament and diplomacy and then being left vulnerable to invasion and exploitation should the other parties keep their promises. Today, cooperative initiatives would not constitute any national security threats, but the sacrificing of unsustainable lifestyles. The real prisoners of the climate dilemma are indeed our political leaders, trapped by their own shortsightedness and egotism

The real prisoners of the climate dilemma are indeed our political leaders, trapped by their own short-sightedness and egotism in the face of real dangers

in the face of real dangers. However, the price could have been much higher for our imprisoned politicians – and it will be, the longer we wait.

Seemingly, the overarching reason for the gathering of presidents, prime ministers, non-governmental organizations, worried individuals, financial corporations and technological innovators in Denmark is largely the same as after the First World War. COP15 is being held because the survival of the world as we know it is at stake, just as League of Nations came into existence to avoid another devastating world war. Climate change threatens the existence of entire nations, notably the Maldives, and the livelihood of billions. It is indeed the threat – and challenge – of our generation.

In the 1920s and 30s, the general idea of Armageddon was total war – a popular theme for decades only further fuelled by the introduction of nuclear weapons and other means of mass destruction. Today, natural disasters and the revenge of Mother Earth have taken over the function of apocalypse agents. Hollywood films, in all their triviality and entertainment value, can certainly reflect our deepest fears spot on.

There is no longer much doubt that global warming is manmade and placing our planet at significant risk. The prisoners' individual gain is so insignificant in relation to the outcome of cooperation and long-term disastrous consequences of self-seeking policies, that the choice should be a given for any rational politician. So, then, why did nothing happen in Copenhagen?

While climate change is an immensely complex task to handle and the process in Copenhagen embodied a significant number of parallel debates, the answer to why the outcome was so disappointing is an easy one. Afraid of being the first and only one to act and thus ending up sacrificing

more, leaders preferred to opt for as little commitment and real targets as possible. While this strategy is never sustainable in the long run, it is extraordinarily stupid when it comes to the environment, where we will all feel the consequences.

Hopefully the analogy of the interwar period does not stretch as far as to the wake up call needed to efficiently address the problem. The potential destruction of the environmental equivalent to the threat of World War II may finally get the world leaders to understand the seriousness of the situation, but the scope of the destruction would leave us in real trouble.

When the most powerful men of the world concluded the climate deal late on the Friday night after a marathon of bargaining, it certainly was not the fair, ambitious and binding deal the world had hoped for. The relative success of Copenhagen however, might lie in the unprecedented scale of global cooperation that actually did take place. Never before has so many nations tried to agree on an issue as globally transcending as this one. This, however, is hardly a comforting idea if the physical outcome of the conference remains just an ambitious and vague agreement with no real legal influence.

It is tempting to hope that this is signaling a new era, just like the failure of the League of Nations gave birth to its far more successful successor. After all, it was the United Nations as an organization that has now been able to initiate the first proposal of a global climate regime on the grounds of collectively securing the lives and livelihoods of the earth's population. Hopefully, the failure in Copenhagen was the experience of trial-and-error that the international community needed to get out of the deadlock and finally come to a 'Real Deal' in Mexico at the end of this year.



Flickr user: Steve Rhodes

A state of fear

Marion Koob depicts the revolt in Iran, and international reactions to it

For now many years, Iran and the notion of fear have been considered to be two sides of the same coin. The West fears it because of its progressing uranium enrichment, its overt threats to Israel, and general refusal to cooperate on these matters. Within the nation itself, a dynamic of terror has established itself between government and governed. Iranians live in terror and oppression, under the dogma of archaic religious laws, brutal breaches of basic human rights, and an atmosphere of severe censorship. The government, in turn, whose backbone is a clerical council and appointed by the figure of Supreme leader—currently Ayatollah Khamenei—stands weakened by the ever-increasing protests in Tehran and across Iran.

Western countries have, for many years, hesitated as to how to approach the Iran 'case'. Should economic sanctions be imposed? It has often been indicated, through popular examples, that these are far from effective; take the example of Cuba, for instance whom, nearing fifty years onwards, still stands relatively untouched. Despite this, Cuba has undoubtedly been economically stunted by this measure, and this has reduced its diplomatic weight.

Economic sanctions harm the poorer segments of the population, argues Shrin

Ebadi, Nobel Peace Prize laureate whom has in November 2009 been confiscated her medal by the Iranian government. Yet it is an convenient midway amongst fruitless negotiations and a conflict outbreak. Through economic sanctions, the West is attempting to create a shift within Iranian mentality, from a distaste of foreign power to a distaste of their own government.

And since the last presidential election, marks of such a dissatisfaction have been all the more obvious. Challenges to the outcome have emerged from all sides, including Ayatollah Hoseyn Ali Montazeri, at the time condemned to house arrest, but previously a prominent figure amongst the ruling clerics. Montazeri was a well-known critic of the Iranian government. His high religious status made his claims difficult to ward off by the regime. His death and the repression which followed against mourners, created a fresh upsurge of protests. Aides, family members and close friends of prominent opposition members have been arrested and the death toll has continued to rise—showing that the government is still ready to use violence against its own citizens.

The establishment itself, however, stands poised in hesitation; a rift has opened among the clerics. The brutal

Through economic sanctions, the West is attempting to create a shift within Iranian mentality, from a distaste of foreign power to a distaste of their own government

reappraisals are a clear sign that its own precariousness is felt.

The question inevitably follows; what now?

It has been reported that neither side, so far, has designed a clear 'game plan' of upcoming events. As is often pointed out, the opposition lacks a clear leader. Many question the possibility of a change in government from the grassroots. Authoritarian regimes which are ready to use violence on their own citizens cannot be defeated, argues, for instance, radio correspondent Bridget Kendall; rather, the Soviet Union is held up as an example of a 'top-down' transformation.

As long as Mr. Khamenei remains Supreme Leader and holds the power of approval of the president, as well as the power to appoint leaders of the media, judiciary, and army, the possibility of a gradual change, or him simply stepping down, appears limited. Perhaps the continuing signs of dissatisfaction might intensify the disagreements among the government itself and push for such a change, or generate a modification of its tone in foreign policy. Protesters have shown that they are not, at least not yet, intimidated.

Despite Western criticism, it must however be reminded that Iran is at its basis, a 'part' democracy, and that during

his first term, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was 'popularly elected'. Undoubtedly, its authoritarian branch has corrupted this legitimacy, and hence provoked the present crisis. It was, after all, the Supreme Leader who approved of Ahmadinejad's supposed re-election.

It is said that the West cannot allow itself to show anything but discreet support of these events. To do otherwise might compromise both the authenticity of the movement itself (it would be claimed, as it already is, this was very simply 'planted' by foreigners) and the discussions on nuclear development, towards which the government has potentially shown signs of becoming more lenient. However, what is more important is to ensure the continuation of the opposition; the clear support of other nations, added to international attention is a clear encouragement of this. Thus, Obama and other leaders have thankfully been outspoken in their protests.

The moving autobiographical film *Persepolis* (2007), by Marjane Satrapi, is one of many cries of disillusionment of Iranian nationals since the events of the Islamic Revolution of 1979. One can only look forward to a time at which the fate of Iran is not determined by fear.

LSE Diary

The existence of fear

Sam Tempest Keeping admits to being afraid



Flickr user daveelmore

Almost every aspect of one's adult life is conditioned by experience, unless you subscribe to some kind of doctrine akin to pre-destination or determinism. Frequently I hear people speak of how a particularly embarrassing experience, not to mention a stinking hangover, has caused them to refrain from a particular apéritif or other alcoholic beverage. Smoking is abhorrent to those who have seen its disastrous effects on the health of loved ones. Their anger at those who partake in it represents a manifestation of concern, or fear, of anything which might harm their well-being.

Amazingly fear seems to be able to spread beyond its original confines far quicker than any other emotion. Perhaps this is why there have been so many instances in history of groups of fertile minds grouping together to lament the hopelessness of existence. The question does have to be asked: If our own minds are against us, what hope do we have? This is a point I will return to later.

Its peculiar trait is that fear's pervasiveness is often, but not exclusively, founded upon an illusion. Actually, if one surveys the average LSE student, chances are you will encounter a least smidgen of deluded grandeur. The particular mechanisms of this complex subconscious rea-

soning process are a bridge too far for this author's knowledge, but what I can say is that in general, people seem to be far more prone to depression - which obviously encapsulates more than just fear - than they are to elation or joy.

Here I will take the opportunity to note that I am speaking as a recovering freetholic. I have chosen fret rather than fear as I think it serves to somewhat alleviate the blow of being an individual who is often caught in the clutches of terror. In other words, it makes me feel less of a pussy.

Back in 2006 I was admitted to hospital with an irregular heartbeat. It turned out that I was suffering from an infection of the sack which contained my heart, a condition known as Pericarditis. Unfortunately in the week prior, I had been hot with some bad news that had led me down a dangerous path of debauchery. The result was that my coronary artery had become dangerously narrow. As I led A & E, the paraphernalia of the resuscitation room all around me, numbness in my fingertips, tears welling up my eyes, I sincerely believed I was going to die.

But I didn't. And I was realistically never going to. But the experience had a monumental effect on my life. A hitherto caged animal had been released and was ready to tear me apart.

A few weeks after I was discharged from hospital it happened for the first

time. I was briskly walking down the street when I closed my eyes for a brief moment to catch my breath. All of a sudden I was back in that hospital room, the same sensations, the same thoughts running through my head. After rushing back to A & E I was told there was nothing wrong with me, I had merely suffered a panic attack.

As I walked out the door I could barely comprehend what had just happened. While everyone around was admonishing me that I was totally fine, I felt sick. Not just nauseous, I felt mortally wounded. From my privileged upbringing I never understood what people meant when they said that you don't have to be dead to have your life taken away. Over the next two years I was to be given at least an indication.

Life became more of a struggle than I had heretofore experienced. I began to live in fear of returning to that room at any moment. It tainted every experience. Be it sitting at the end of the row in the cinema so as to escape unnoticed, or avoiding sex for fear of the exertion triggering an attack. I would spend hours lying awake for fear of dying in my sleep and in the worst case I whiled away the night in an empty A & E waiting room. It became such a habit that I usually didn't even make myself known to the triage nurse. My life had begun to wilt in the spring of my existence.

Something had to give. After a par-

ticularly sustained bout of melancholy I sought refuge and help from mental health services. I finally found a body of persons who seemed to understand my problem, and they offered practical solutions to it.

After six months' hard work, I finally began to gain the upper hand over my demons. The door to the room remained shut for longer and longer periods.

The whole experience revealed an awful lot to this young and sensitive soul. I began to understand that the reason fear is so powerful, those illusions anything but, is that it is there to save and not destroy one's life. The physical effect of fear pushes performance to new levels, but it is the psychological impact that matters. It allows us to learn the virtues of courage, recognise our own insignificance and to shed many of the burdens which modern life places upon us.

To return to the question I posed at the beginning of this little confession, are our own minds against us?

The answer: it depends on your experience. I'm just one of the lucky ones I guess.

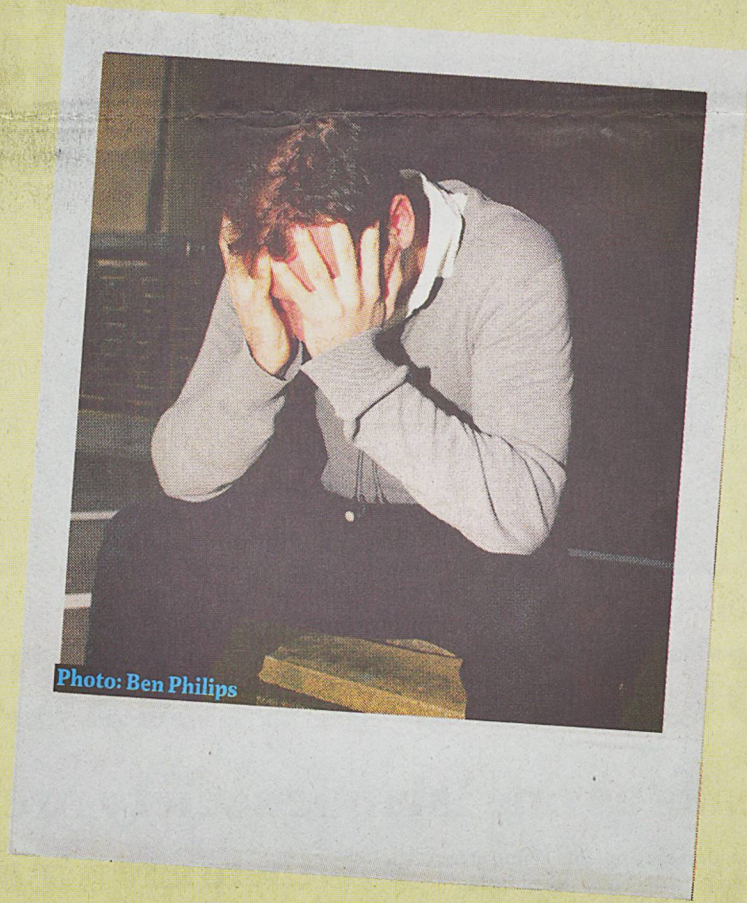
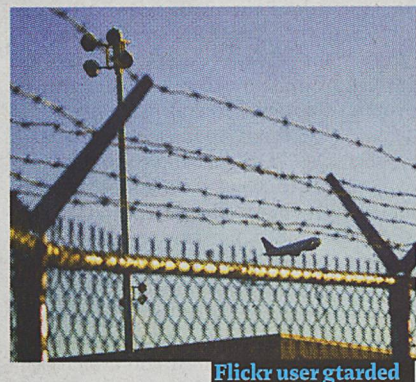


Photo: Ben Philips

Measured musings



Flickr user gttaded

A strange form of vertigo is present in the world today. Whether it is an international flight from Detroit to Amsterdam or a domestic flight from Peshawar to Karachi, few feel comfortable while thousands of feet above the ground without any channel for escape.

On the list of President Obama's New Year resolutions was a drive to increase airport security by expanding the screening process for residents of specific countries. Afghanistan, Iraq, Lebanon, Nigeria, Pakistan, Somalia and Yemen have made it to the set of fourteen countries to which this shall be applied. The explosive-detecting teams at airports are to be increased, along with the contingents of sky marshals on airliners. In the general atmosphere of insecurity, international airports all over the world are following suit, with the UK planning to introduce full-body scanners and a more sophisticated passenger database.

However, one is led to wonder whether all this really constitutes a movement towards a more "sophisticated" world. In many ways there seems to be a regression in technology as well as society, with body pat-down searches and hand-baggage checks becoming the order of the day. While we may boast of the many leaps that the past few decades have facilitated in the field of human rights and sensitivity to sensibilities, practical life makes their application truly difficult. Dignity, privacy, even comfort, all are becoming old-fashioned ideas for mobile world citizens. The sad thing is that this obsolescence is born of necessity.

We can understand why we spend hours standing in customs queues, or why there may be talk of virtual strip searches. At the same time, we can also understand the sentiments of those who would be offended during the process. Rubber-glove treatment is not easy to handle, especially if administered more strongly on the

basis of nationality. It is one of the many paradoxes of the liberal world that fluid borders give rise to barriers; that students who were academic royalty in high school can get admissions abroad but not visas. It is not fair, but the actions of isolated individuals have real repercussions on how anyone with a remotely similar background is treated. In order to avoid a "failure to connect" dots in the case of the unsuccessful Detroit bomber, the details of every individual who joined the UCL Islamic Society in the last five years have now been forwarded to the authorities. It makes one take trivial choices so much more seriously than before - a pound spent on Refreshers' Fair could make the customs procedure that much longer.

There is no doubt that security concerns deserve to be near the top of any government agenda. The steely sternness of airport personnel may be entirely justified, along with the growth in the ranks of the air-police. However, it is ironic how

WHAT IF...

we were to ignore species at risk?

Sandra Smiley

Millennial doomsday-ists have had ten years to make good on their prophecies of environmental destruction, resource exhaustion and species extinction. One such forecast is that of the fate of the common Cavendish banana, the causus causans of the ice cream sundae and cash crop agriculture, will soon be unviable for commercial production. Whether owing to the machinations of geneticists or simply millennia of human cultivation, Cavendishes lack the genetic diversity crucial to a species' health. What can befall one banana, then, can befall all: a blight riddling one plantation could roil millions, leaving supermarket shelves empty and hapless farmers empty-handed.

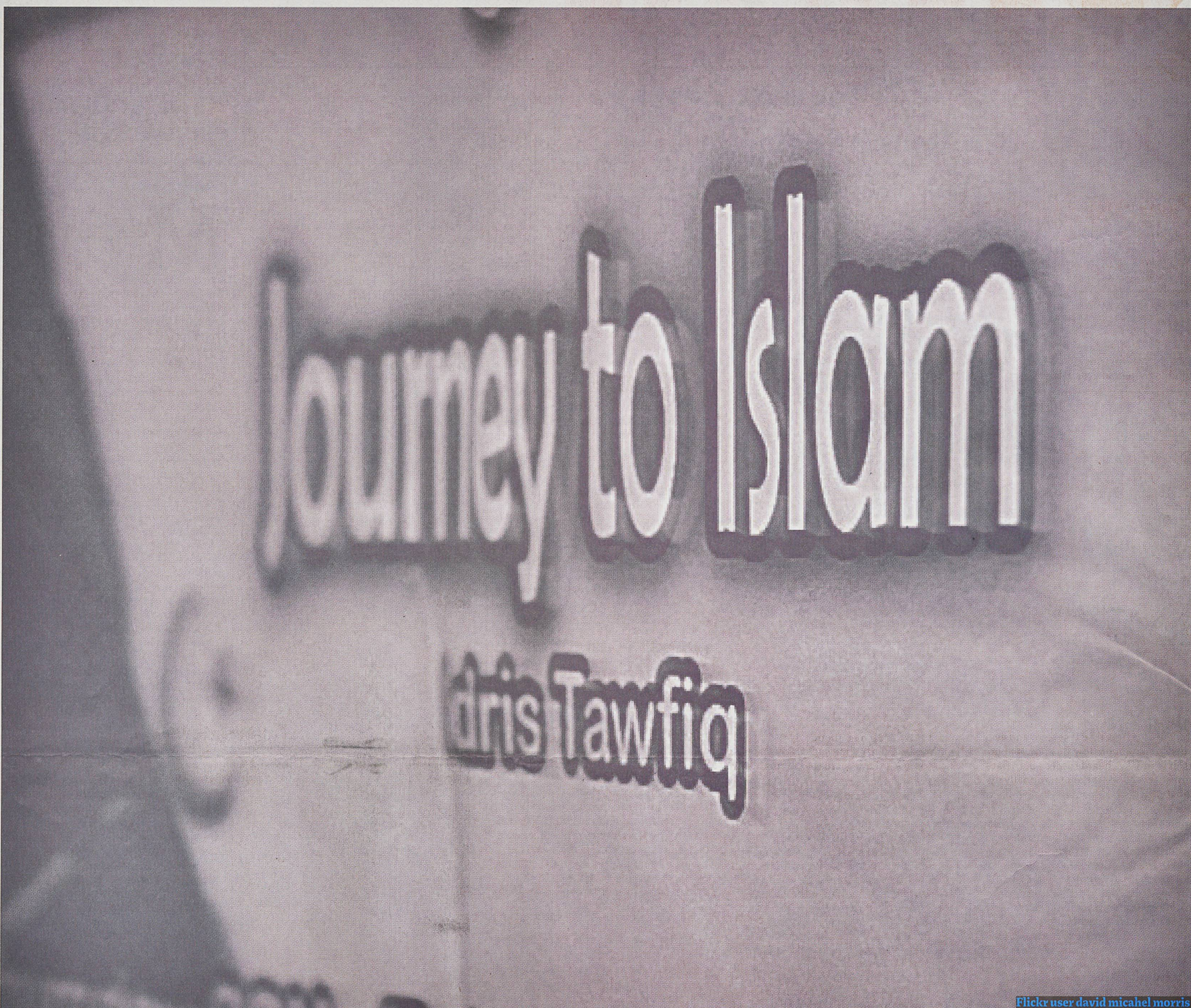
So what if the fruit disappears forever? It's worth noting we've already bid adieu to the banana: until the mid-60s, the Gros Michel strain was au choix in the Americas and Europe. When a variant of Dutch Elm swept through the tropics, yields of the banana bated. The episode destroyed millions of acres of rainforest and bankrupted banana barons and smallholder farmers alike as growers frantically shifted crops to unoccupied lands at massive financial and environmental expense.

On the subject of international business, the \$30 barrel of oil is another species-at-risk. By most accounts, there's no shortage of oil just yet; at present, so much of the slick stuff can be pumped from the planet that the current price of about \$30 per barrel would sag if not for the OPEC cartel. Though oil aplenty means, for now, a relatively low cost, slaking the world's oil avarice is getting tougher all the time. Old sources can't be relied upon anymore; oil companies are thus braving high human and economic costs in a dramatic search for new supplies, one that will ultimately climax and denouement. Some foresee Hollywood-worthy consequences: shortages, spikes, stagflation, and a desperate and destructive clawing at "unconventional" sources such as tar sands, coal, and shale.

We'll make do without, you might say. Soft sweet bananas and cheap oil are amenities, and our McSociety could stand to be a bit more Spartan. But doesn't a world suddenly shorn of these 'frills' signal something much more malign? Part-time augur and full-time author Margaret Atwood wrote an in a Guardian op-ed late last week that we ignore the current decline in bird populations at our peril. There is a clear connection between productive, healthy ecosystems and a hale human population - consider the "canary in the coal mine" which, upon keeling over dead, warned miners of imminent danger from methane poisoning. Sure, we could whip out the wartime pragmatism, exercise some austerity, and say goodbye to these 'superfluities' with a stiff upper lip. But can we afford to be so sparing?

Madeeha Ansari
Features Editor

Travelling tension



Flickr user david micahel morris

Against the radical route

Talha Ghannam speaks as one Islamic society president about the path of another

The alleged actions of Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab have shocked and saddened us all. Terrorism can never be tolerated in Islam in any of the forms it takes and it is clear how we must unite to oppose it as fellow human beings.

The emergence of the fact that he was UCL Islamic Society president between 2006 and 2007 make this story particularly shocking, as my experience to date of Islamic societies across the UK has been only positive. As the current president of the LSESU Islamic Society, I struggle to understand how a person heading a society which so actively engages with students on campus can turn to such ways. What could cause such an impulse within in an individual? Is there any correlation between his presidency of the Islamic society and the actions that Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab took?

These questions are not only being discussed among students, but constitute the motivation behind an enquiry led by the government to learn of the path of radicalisation of Umar Farouk. Recently, in a statement released by the government, it seems clear that "he was radicalised outside the UK". This view has been supported widely including by Malcolm Grant, president and provost of University College London as well as the Federation of Student Islamic Societies (FOSIS).

As far as the Islamic society at LSE is concerned, it has a long history of engage-

ment within the Students Union with a strong record of achievement including "Best Society Event of the Year" in 2006-07. Students of the Islamic Society have achieved recognition as well, with the prestigious "Honorary Student Award" granted to eight active members of the Islamic Society over the last 5 years, including one former Islamic Society President. This is not just exclusive to LSE as Islamic Societies across the country are often recognised for their good work in building good campus relations, charity and so on.

So what drives individuals like the accused down such a route? With a combination of several different factors, some of which may never be understood, there is no simple answer to this. Islam condemns terrorism unconditionally so it cannot be the religion which caused this. As someone who is actively involved in the Islamic Society at LSE and similar societies across the country, I can assert that it cannot have been his experiences at the UCL Islamic Society either.

However, as fellow citizens of Britain, we must recognise our own crucial role in fighting such terror. Too long have we seen violence from both sides, whether it is in the form of bombs dropped in Afghanistan and Iraq or the plane attacks of 9/11, and till this day it has taken us nowhere. Violence will only ever breed more violence, and this is why we must all unite together against it unconditionally. As Noam Chomsky said in a speech at

Is there any correlation between his presidency of the Islamic society and the actions that Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab took?

Harvard University soon after Americas Invasion in Afghanistan in 2002, "You say I blame America and that is false. I blame you, and I blame me... who are allowing this to happen".

We can no longer tolerate violence perpetrated in our name. Just as Muslims in this country have openly condemned the violence perpetrated in the name of their faith, so too must we all condemn the actions of war and violence perpetrated in the name of this country.

However, that cannot be the end. How many of among us have actively sought to learn about Islam, the religion which seems so topical these days? Should it not be our duty to learn about the religion and circumstances of the countries we fight against if we are ever to build a meaningful peace with them? Imagine if the \$1 trillion spent so far in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq had gone to feed the estimated 5 million people of Afghanistan who are suffering from starvation. We would certainly have made more Afghan friends. The same applies to communities living as minorities. Measures like the €700 fine in France to women wearing the burkha, a ban on minarets in Switzerland and the Islamophobic campaign led by the BNP, naturally breed a sense of victimisation amongst those targeted in Europe.

At LSE, we have constructed a strong front to tackle extremism on campus by passing a motion condemning Islamophobia in all its forms, in addition to the

against anti-Semitism that was passed in the previous academic year. As a Union, we have demonstrated countless times that, despite any political or ideological differences we may have, we stand united against discrimination and work together to build good campus relations through things like RAG, the interfaith forum and weekly UGMs. Next term, the Islamic Society's annual Discover Islam Week will be held to provide people with the opportunity to learn about Islam and the Muslims at LSE. Such interaction will strengthen understanding between us and quell any extremism in our communities.

When it comes to individuals like the accused Umar Farouk, there is little doubt that his radicalisation did not occur either in UCL or the Islamic Society because the unity in the student community is too strong for someone to lose hope in the world. Although it is legitimate to feel aggrieved at foreign policy decisions made by the US and UK, succumbing to terrorism can never be justified. For the many Muslim students who understand the truly humanitarian nature of Islamic values, this path is unthinkable and worthy of condemnation. Instead it is important to build relationships by learning of one another's beliefs and being open to discussion and challenging of opinions. Only then would it be possible to work together through the lawful means to oppose these illegal wars perpetrated in our name and unite to bring back peace to the world.

Social

Something to celebrate?

Poorna Harjani looks forward to a better LSE

Scrutiny. The word holds powerful meaning for us human beings. Last year, the LSE was more publicly scrutinized than in any recent memory. I can list a hundred different complaints of dissatisfaction that this University has been bombarded with. There is no denying that last year the gap between students, teachers and the Union widened on many colliding issues such as rising fees, poor

to the ways it needs to be perceived by the outside world. It has reduced class sizes, re-assigned its teaching task force and allowed the Union to publicise a resits campaign. And these are just the more visible changes. Though the University may still lean towards an investment banking perspective, we can see this as an advantage; we attend a University that is in touch with firms directly and thus the campus becomes the starting point of many students' careers.

And then there are the Universities' assets, and the reasons for the remaining levels of student satisfaction with the University. LSE still has a faculty composed of renowned professors, who are leading research in their respective fields, and it is still the hub for budding bankers. The Indians tell me its international reputation as a leading University holds even in the crisis of disrepute it is currently going through.

Moreover, LSE has a history of producing Nobel prize winners and of hosting some of the most diverse public lecturers. I managed to hear Amratya Sen, George Soros and Queen Noor speak all in one term. With this long list of highly intellectual professors and public lecturers, LSE stimulates and encourages thinking and it has done phenomenally for such a relatively modern institution with respect to its alumni history.

Graduate intake increased this year and applicants for the Social Policy department, a department not always as well known as departments such as those of Economics or Law, increased dramatically this year.

Finally, we have new refurbishments to look forward to, a relocation of the Students' Union, a more technically advanced LSE website, and even a newly carpeted Library. The smaller changes count too.

This does not mean that the scrutiny will automatically vanish in the new year. Rather, in order to maintain our drive to re-build this University's reputation we should not stop checking for improve-

ments in the University. However, this new year I think LSE will be on its way up again. The levels of scrutiny have shaken up much needed changes that will set LSE up to make a rise through the ranks again. It would also lead to the restoration of student pride and the creation of a less hostile environment. It is the students at the end of the day who will give news reporters their comments and who will go out into the world as graduates from this university, carrying their experiences with them.

We have new refurbishments to look forward to, a relocation of the Students' Union, a more technically advanced LSE website, and even a newly carpeted Library.

As T.S. Eliot said, "for last year's words belong to last year's language and next year's words await another voice", so this year will be a fresh voice. The voice of a harmonious consortium between the many different interest groups that make up this University. So, Howard, to a new term inspired by brotherhood and student unity, 'we've got your back'.

The new decade offers a chance to bring the students, teachers and Union together in order to re-instill pride in this University

teaching quality, too many private school students infiltrating the system and even a disagreement on how this newspaper itself is run. We heard the less than flattering words imprinted in nationally distributed Times Educational Supplements trumpeted all over Houghton Street. This intense surveillance has done the LSE good by bringing many pressing issues to light. However, the new decade offers a chance to bring the students, teachers and Union together in order to re-instill pride in this University.

The LSE has responded to this outspoken criticism by beginning to cater



Devoid of resolve

Shrayans Agarwal doesn't see the point in making New Year's Resolutions

So it's the start of a new year and everyone is excited about what it is likely to bring with it, but a barrage of Facebook statuses about looking forward to an exciting year ahead get repetitive and overdone. Personally, I don't see the point to making New Year's resolutions. I think everyday can be as stimulating as you want to make it. I am a skeptic and a cynic.

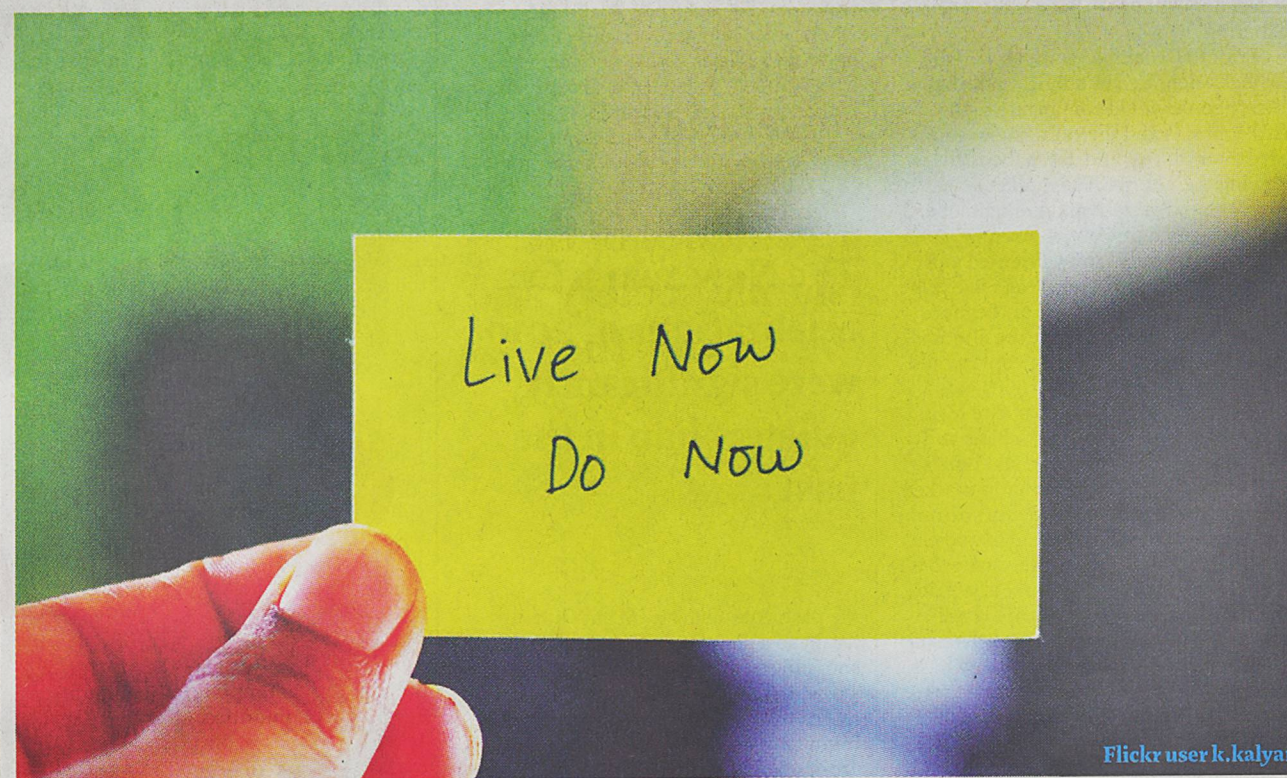
A new date isn't a 'new' start; it's the same as the day before

My key argument against New Year's resolutions is that a mere change in the numbers on a calendar does not mean that there has been a fundamental change in anything else. A new date isn't a "new" start; it's the same as the day before, except now instead of changing the first two columns in your date header for assignments, you have to remember to change the third column as well. For some a new start may just as well come on December

1st, or on any other date that they choose to begin afresh. One may wake up on any particular day and decide the path they

While time may help people forget certain insignificant things, if you are hoping that a new year will undo the wrongs of

most need one. As an example, and no disrespect to any smokers, but if a smoker decides they want to quit smoking why



want their life to take, or if that is asking too much of a person then, surely, one may decide the path they want their day to take.

So then why wait till the coming of a new year to make changes to your life?

your past year, think again. People are not likely to forget. And so, while I agree that the idea that you can make a "fresh" start is comforting it's more of a psychological comfort rather than a practical advantage. A fresh start is best made when you

do they wait till January 1st? If they have made the decision not to smoke anymore, then they ought to quit at that moment. If I decide I should study harder surely doing that now rather than waiting for a new year would make more sense.

More mental strength is required in order to refrain from living in an illusory world where a change of a date can miraculously affect our behaviour. Same goes for birthdays, of course; just because on your birthday you hit 21 doesn't mean you will suddenly become more mature! But that is a separate issue all together.

Resolutions are a laughable concept. What they are really is one of the tools we use to keep the mind at peace. The heart flutters and worries too easily, and to keep it calm people give themselves artificial goals "for the new year". I am not denying that goal setting is a good idea, it's amazing, however the reasons should be well aligned. Resolutions are usually set to make personal improvements or to be happier in one's life, if this is the case, and one realizes it, one should make the resolution now! There is a famous Indian proverb kal kar so aaj kar, aaj kar so aab, which means if you are planning on doing something tomorrow, do it today and if you are planning on doing it today do it now, implying the need for decisiveness and immediate action. Obviously the proverb is not universally applicable, but on the generic theme of resolutions, I do feel that it's an apt comment.

So how am I approaching the New Year? I am firm in my belief that each day is the same as it was last year and so I am striving to be happy and striving to make the most of each moment possible, whether it be doing work, spending time with family and friends or going on a lonely promenade with music filling my ears. A pragmatic approach is what is needed; Neverland is just slightly out of reach for us.

Flickr user k.kalyan

Technology rocked my world

Ehae Long laments the loss of communication due to the decade's innovations in technology



Flickr user moriza

As if real life is not complicated enough, we are now surrounded by technology that has added a virtual dimension to it. Relationships, communication and interactions have been rendered more complex through such innovations as Facebook and the LSE students' gadget of choice, the Blackberry. Nowadays, one can hardly walk down the street without seeing people with their noses seemingly stuck to their phone screens, and their hands frantically typing away, mercilessly hammering at their keypads. The Facebook disease is no less real. It's everywhere: even parents have it now, run for cover! They can now search your profiles, as well as your rooms! The world has definitely changed enormously in the past five years thanks to these developments. Two years ago, the Blackberry was a phone for businessmen: a way to help them keep in touch with the ever-changing professional world. It was the dream of those men and women in suits - a dream that has now been corrupted by teens in jeans. Having a Blackberry is the new fad: one that may stay a while due to the appeal of free instant messaging with other Blackberry users. This blackberry messenger feature (BBM) has been both helpful and hurtful in people's lives. Having such a great application at one's fingertips may not be as great as it seems. The Blackberry has opened us up to the virtual world, and at the same time affected our interactions in the real world. This mostly applies to hard-core Blackberry users: that sad little group known as "crackberry addicts". You know who they are, you see them every day. They are the ones who nod along, not really listening as their friends go on about different topics; the ones who say "okay" when an opinion is required, or who giggle when no joke has been made. They are the ones in a group of friends at the club who never really appreciate the amazing song that the DJ is playing, or don't end up trying out the wacky dance moves with the others. They are the ones who are told off at dinner for putting their phones on the table, and checking every minute for a new update. Of course you know them: they could be friends whose addiction drives you crazy, or they could be you. Always out of touch with reality. You have BBM to thank for that.

Facebook is a more general issue, as more people have access to it. It has been out for years, and is now firmly rooted in people's psyches. The addiction has got

so bad, that now, people (the real fans) do things solely for the purpose of Facebook. Think about it: When you are at a club, or somewhere else with friends, and taking pictures, what is going through your mind? Is it the thought that the pictures will be held in by you forever as a part of your eternal memory, or that they will make a great Facebook album? The latter is the reality for many people I know. These are the type of people who also look through their photo archives contemplating which should be their next profile picture (I'll be honest, I'm one of such people). This is not the only way Facebook has affected our realities. Do the words, "status updates" ring a bell? A lot of people feel that they must let their friends know what is happening at every stage in their lives. It literally feels like they are walking you through a story of their existence. You read that this person "just woke up and is craving a sandwich" or that this other person "feels like they should do some exercise." It could even get more ridiculous than that. I hope that you are not unfortunate enough to have friends that make you realize this. It is as though the experiences are no longer real if they are not put down in the statuses. Even relationship statuses have complicated our lives. I have heard of so many people who have gotten into trouble with their significant other because they had not yet changed their relationship status from "single" to "in a relationship". As if real life isn't dramatic enough!

So, thanks to these creations, we not only have to worry about how we physically present ourselves to people, but we must also think of how they may see us through our profiles and statuses. We not only have to think about entertaining our dates through amazing conversation, but must also beat out his/her Blackberry in terms of sustaining their level of interest. The world is operating on such a complex level with the interactions in both the virtual and real dimensions, that it's a wonder we don't just create a virtual version of classes so that we never have to get out of bed and actually attend them. Only have to think about entertaining our dates through amazing conversation, but must also beat out his/her blackberry in terms of sustaining their level of interest. The world is operating on such a complex level with the interactions in both the virtual and real dimensions, that it's a wonder we don't just create a virtual version of classes so that we never have to get out of bed and actually attend them.

Overheard at LSE...

(Outside High Holborn)
Person 1: So it's new year coming up, what's your resolution going to be?
Person 2: I'm going to give up smoking...
Person 1: But you don't smoke?!
Person 2: Yeah well at least it will be easy to keep!

Person 1: I'm doing an Arnold
Person 2: eh?
Person 1: I'm doing an Arnold... I'll be back

Guy applying to RBS: "These things R BS!"

Person 1: Mate did you know 10% of LSE students are depressed
Person 2: That's shocking. God knows what the fuck the other 90% are so happy about.

Girl who got rejected by a bank:
"They told me i knew too much?! they wanted people they could train. I don't get it. What are they looking for?"
Girl 2: They want virgins. People who haven't been defiled by other companies.

"east london is like boston--historic, but not in a good way."

IS471 Revision Lecture: "This is the meat and potatoes of this course, or if you're vegetarian the potatoes and potatoes"

(In the garrick)
Guy looks at queue for Hare Krishna while hare krishna is not yet there and says to friend: "this is an existentialist queue. It's like humans waiting for god's salvation. From outside the queue, you have no idea what the hell they're waiting for. But if you have faith, then you're like 'ohhh Hare Krishna'"

A guy in my halls asks me and my flatmate,
"Did you guys do PE at school? You know, Private Equity, no what was it..."
You know you're an LSE student when you confuse Physical Education with Private Equity.

The normal sleeping patterns at LSE:
"Why would I need to sleep tonight, I slept last night..."

Blasted into the new decade

Saira Rasheed discusses the difficulties of celebrating the New Year in Pakistan

Despite the fact that the majority of Pakistanis are Muslims, the Gregorian rather than the Islamic calendar is the one predominantly used in the country. The reason for this is partly the lasting effects of colonialism. One consequence of using the Gregorian calendar is that New Year's Eve is a more excitedly anticipated occasion in Pakistan than the Islamic New Year (though the two Islamic celebrations of Eid-ul-Azha and Eid-ul-Fitr may give New Year's Eve a run for its money, popularity wise). Nonetheless, it is safe to say that the start of the new year has always been a reason for the country to celebrate.

The Taliban and other perpetrators of these inhumane attacks tend to target public venues and act on days of celebration

As in other parts of the world where the Gregorian calendar is used, 31 December/1 January in Pakistan marks the completion of one cycle and the commencement of a new cycle. It is eagerly awaited because it brings with it a clean

slate. Moreover, Pakistanis love making new resolutions (whether or not they stick to said resolutions is an entirely different matter) and New Year's Eve gives them a perfect opportunity to have a loud social gathering.

Prior to December 2007, New Year's Eve was celebrated in public. In the bigger cities, people would congregate in the market places and the youngsters would drive their cars up and down the roads, honking their horns. The market places and shopping plazas would remain open until the early hours of the morning. As Pakistanis are very family oriented and are voracious eaters, New Year's Eve was a bonanza for restaurants. For the more popular restaurants, it would be almost impossible to get a table as people would book tables for large parties of friends or family. Still others would spend loads of money in buying tickets for balls and high-flying events in the five star hotels.

The carnage and chaos that is marked by the assassination of former prime minister Benazir Bhutto at the end of 2007, and that has intensified since, changed all of this. There has been a marked deterioration of the security situation in Pakistan. Due to Pakistan's support of Western policies in Afghanistan, the country has fallen victim to Taliban and other extremist attacks. It now appears that suicide attacks occur almost daily. The Taliban and other perpetrators of these inhumane attacks tend to target public venues and act on days of celebration, as this allows them to maximise the death toll and cause the greatest possible psychological damage to the nation.

To give you one example, the bombings of the five-star Marriott Hotel in

2008 shook Islamabad, which is where I live. Many locals and diplomats were killed. The panic resulting from this attack still lingers in the minds of Islamabad's residents. The once popular Food Street, where you could get delicious snacks from open-air stalls, is now deserted. People have stopped gathering in large groups in market places and restaurants.

The New Year's Eve celebrations of 2010 were significantly quieter than in

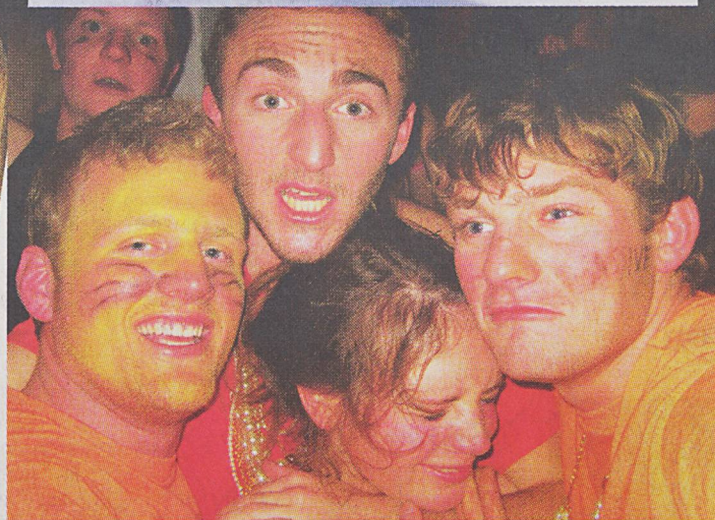
The New Year's Eve celebrations of 2010 were significantly quieter than in the past

the past. Although I went out with my family to a popular restaurant in the main shopping area on 31 December, I could sense that the public face of New Year's Eve came to an end much sooner than midnight for the entire country. Families are concerned with their personal security and prefer having quiet gatherings at home. Hopefully, 2010 will bring more positive changes to the lives of the citizens and give them the security they deserve to celebrate the coming of 2011.

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DEBAUCHERY IN THE ALPS

Combining a hard day on the slopes and copious amounts of alcohol, can only result in the inevitable...



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Highlights of 2009

We take a look back at some of the most significant sporting moments and achievements of 2009.

Barcelona's six trophies

Many people in England seem to cling on stubbornly to the belief that English clubs are the best in the world, and that all of the best players in the world ply their trade on 'England's green and pleasant land'. Then, last season, along came a young manager to lead a Barcelona team which hadn't won anything for 2 years to win everything in front of them: the Spanish league, the Spanish Cup, the Champions League (beating Manchester United in the final), the Spanish Super Cup, the European Super Cup and the World Club Cup. Not only did they win everything possible, but they did so playing some of the most enjoyable and beautiful football in the world, as even the most die-hard fans their arch rivals Real Madrid would admit.

Then, last season, along came a young manager to lead a Barcelona team which hadn't won anything for 2 years to win everything in front of them.

Just to put what they achieved into context, when Sir Alex Ferguson won 'The Treble', Manchester United had a parade through the streets, and it was hailed as historic. Barcelona's glory came from a manager who was in his first season of full professional management, and without the same level of investment that clubs like Man City and Chelsea have put in to

try to achieve success. With Real Madrid spending €280 over the summer to try and bridge the gap, you can see just how significant a year it was for the Catalan giants. What to me makes their success even more impressive is the way the team was built predominantly from young players developed through 'la cantera', the Barcelona youth system – 6 of the starting line up in the Champions League had come up through the ranks.

With FIFA player of the year Leo Messi and 2 of the other 4 candidates for the prize, Andres Iniesta and Xavi Hernandez, in the team again this season, the bar has been set for the other big European teams to try to step up to this year.

The Ashes

Following the embarrassment of losing the Ashes 5-0 in Australia in 2007, hopes of winning them back again were high, but expectations weren't. Despite this, with many key members of the 5-0 series Australian team stepping down (including Glen McGrath and Shane Warne), many felt England were in with a chance.

After the escape of the first test in Cardiff came England's first test win in the

The series saw the end of Andrew Flintoff's test match career.

Ashes at Lords in 75 years. Rain effectively drew the next test, and after an Australian win at Headingley, England needed a win at the Oval to regain the Ashes, which they duly got with a comfortable fashion.

The series saw the end of Andrew Flintoff's test match career, and as one of the key members of both this win and the 2005 series win, he will be sorely missed as England travel to Australia to try and avoid a repeat of 2007.

Roger Federer

This year saw a lot of movement in the men's tennis top 4, with Rafael Nadal slipping from the top spot following injury, Andy Murray briefly climbing to number 2, and Roger Federer regaining 'his' number one place.

The year also saw him crowned arguably the greatest player of all time,

The year also saw him crowned arguably the greatest player of all time.

as he won a record breaking 15th Major Title with his 6th Wimbledon victory in a thrilling final watched by one of the other all-time tennis greats and previous record holder with 14 Majors, Pete Sampras.

Following this victory, and the birth of his child, Federer claims to be more relaxed with his game, though few interpret this as a declaration that he will stop winning titles. Though the Majors this year have been more closely fought, and since



players such as Juan Martin Del Potro and Nikolay Davydenko have begun to beat both Federer and Nadal, Federer remains in many people's eyes the most naturally gifted player in the game. When he is on form, no one in the world can touch him.

Introducing the netball World Series

2009 saw for the first time the World Netball Series, held in the MEN Arena in Manchester, contested by the six top national netball teams in the world, according to the IFNA World Rankings of the previous year. This included England, Australia, New Zealand, Jamaica, Samoa and Malawi. The Series was held over three days and featured modified rules designed to make games faster and more television-friendly. The new format, aptly named 'Fast Net', tested fitness, technical ability and tactical awareness and was overall a fantastic opportunity to showcase some of the best players in the world.

Ultimately, the aim was to raise the profile of the sport and thus attract more spectators and greater sponsorship. Spectators in return were rewarded with a fast, ferocious and vibrant competition.

England proved a strong side in the first four rounds of the competition, beating the overall winner New Zealand in a tantalizing head to head in the second round. In the England v Samoa match, England shooter Rachel Dunn made netball history by becoming the first player to ever score four points with just one shot. Following the innovative and somewhat

controversial 'Fast Net' rules, her shot was taken outside the circle and during a 'Power Play' quarter.

England versus Australia was predicted by most to be the final but Jamaica and

...overall a fantastic opportunity to showcase some of the best players in the world.

New Zealand booked their places in the showpiece of the Series instead. Australia, still stinging from defeat by their 'down under' enemy New Zealand in the day's first game, were raring to go in the play-off for third place and took an early lead. Despite stepping up their game, England, could not catch Australia even with some impressive play towards the end.

Mwayi Kumwend from the Malawi side was awarded player of the tournament.

There is hope that this new exciting event, will increasingly promote female participation in sports from a young age and add some variation on sports coverage in an otherwise male dominated field.

Looking ahead, will we see netball in the United Kingdom attaining Semi-



professional status as seen Down-Under? Netball is already a key sport in the Commonwealth Games. Furthermore, a campaign has already gone ahead to allow netball to become a demonstration sport in the 2012 Olympic Games and potentially as a competitive sport from 2016.

The futures bright, the futures netball.



Looking ahead to 2010

We have a look ahead at what we think will be some of the key sporting moments and events of 2010.

Formula 1

An exciting season kicks off this year, (for anyone who enjoys Formula 1, which I appreciate isn't everyone!) with new world champion Jenson Button joining former world champion Lewis Hamilton at McLaren, creating a British super-team. In the driving seats at the other leading team in the sport, Ferrari, are double world champion Fernando Alonso and Felipe Massa, and with 7 time world champion Michael Schumacher also returning to race with former Brawn team Mercedes, this season could be better

New world champion Jenson Button joins former world champion Lewis Hamilton at McLaren, creating a British super-team.

than any other in recent times.

This year also sees a change in the line-up on the grid, with several manufacturers leaving the sport but many new small private teams stepping in, forming a grid of 13 teams and 26 cars. The technical regulations are largely unchanged from last year, so the teams are likely to be closer matched than at the start of 2009, and the big budget teams are likely to return to the top of the field after a largely disappointing year last year. However, this year does also see a ban on in-race refuelling, the effects of which on the track, and most importantly on increasing the chance of overtaking, are unknown.

Winter Olympics

To be held this year in Vancouver, the Winter Olympics always provides a fascinating mix of weird, interesting and downright dangerous disciplines most of us never knew existed. For those of you who have never watched a tense 'end' of curling where everything rests on the

The Winter Olympics is guaranteed to keep you on the edge of your seat.

'hammer' have never lived, and for those who appreciate something a little more adrenaline filled, there's the skeleton event (like lying face down on a tea tray and going down the bobsleigh run at 80mph!). Throw in classics like ski jumping and super giant slalom, and combine with new additions such as snowboard halfpipe and the Winter Olympics is guaranteed to keep you on the edge of your seat.

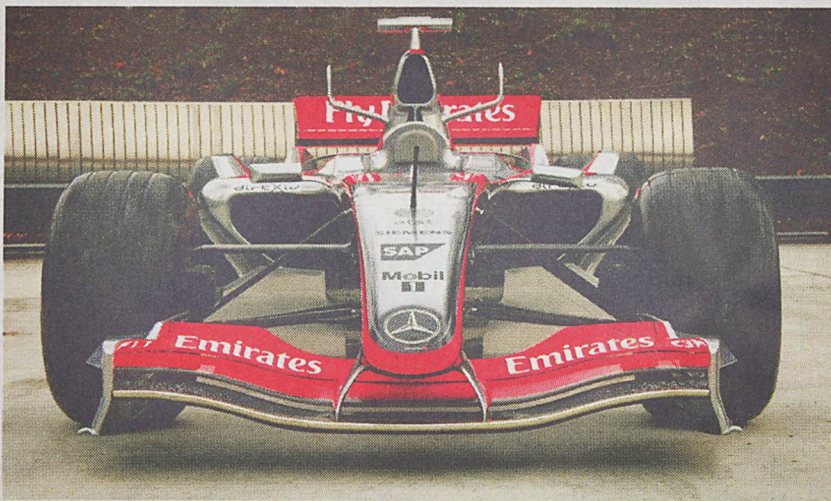
Football World Cup

Of course, for many people (probably the majority of the world's population, but they don't all read the Beaver – their loss...), 2010 is all about the World Cup, being held down in South Africa this summer. With Fabio Capello's England team

looking strong in the World Cup Qualifiers, it could be time for a repeat of 1966... then again, we say and expect that every year, so on second thoughts Portugal will probably just knock us out in the quarter finals, but we can hope!

One of the most talked about issues is to do with the host nation (will they be ready in time, and is it safe enough?), and indeed the entire African continent, with many pundits tipping an African team to win for the first time ever.

Of course, for many people (probably the majority of the world's population) 2010 is all about the World Cup.



For the ski trip special edition of the Fantasy League, we bring you the week-long total score of the biggest players on the tour.

Players of the Ski Trip

Emma Heap
 1 (Yeti)+
 1 (Avalanche)+
 1 (Maya)+
 1 (Smithys)+
 3 (Drunk and disorderly)+
 15 (3 pulls)+
 10 (Shag)
 = 32pts

Sebby "So Small" Webby
 1 (Yeti)+
 1 (Avalanche)+
 1 (Maya)+
 1 (Smithys)+
 3 (Drunk and disorderly)+
 10 (2 Pulls)
 10 (Shag)
 = 27pts

"Rack Broncho"
 1 (Yeti)+
 1 (Avalanche)+
 1 (Maya)+
 1 (Smithys)+
 3 (Drunk and disorderly)+
 15 (3 Pulls)
 7 (Rim-Job)
 10 (First shag of the trip)
 = 39pts

Flop of the Week

BJ Watson
 1 (Yeti)+
 1 (Avalanche)+
 1 (Maya)+
 1 (Smithys)+
 3 (Drunk and disorderly)+
 5 (Pull) +
 5 (Pull)+
 20 (2 Shags)+
 -25 (AU relationship)
 = 12pts

Gashleigh Blow
 1 (Yeti)+
 1 (Avalanche)+
 1 (Maya)+
 1 (Smithys)+
 3 (Drunk and disorderly)+
 10 (Shag)
 = 17pts

JONAS AND XISCO TELL IT LIKE IT IS

This week sees the inaugural banter column from Jonas and Xisco, two renegade reporters hailing from the Peruvian coast. They will be accurately depicting the week's banterous AU activities, cutting short and exacerbating existing rumours.

Jonas Westoph
Xisco Getege-D'ore

The AU called for an enquiry today into the alleged allegations against perennial scowler, Georgia Gately. The case, dubbed "Gately-gate" has caused wide spread consternation across the Amish community of Les Deux Alpes.

The rumours, permeated by baby-faced assassin James Cunniffe, paint a picture of unbridled poly sex games and elementary mathematics (5+1=6), more vivid than anything Andy Warhol dared to dream.

Continuing the theme of dreams, and more importantly dreams becoming realities, it is fair to say that a dream came true for Emma Heap whilst on tour. Hockey's very own steel lady managed to procreate with every male on the LSSki tour, though amazingly this excluded Rodney Trotter impersonator Joseph Watson. Conversely, one woman who was swayed by Watson's emaciated frame and gaunt features was poor man's Barbie doll Kate Henry. Watson's proposal, which occurred approximately 4.3 seconds after she entered Yeti bash was grudgingly accepted. All eyes are now on LSE's answer to Posh and Becks for a wedding date.

Her Royal 'Holness' Charlie Glyn was the next in line on the ski debauchery tour, managing to bag herself Sebby "Jobs at: Goldman, MacCap and Blackrock, First in the bag, Herandi in the sack, who's that fat Japanese Kid?" Yoshida. The chubby love-muffin even had a crowd of eavesdroppers chanting his name as he snuggled up to the Steve Davis impersonator.

All eyes are now on LSE's answer to Posh and Becks for a wedding date.

One of these witnesses, perpetual loser Jonathan 'Snavilletooth' Saville, found himself alone in bed consistently throughout the tour. However, do not be fooled into thinking that this was either because of some vow of chastity or lack of trying as Snaville tried it on with every minge still warm. The one time Snaville succeeded in taking a girl back to his room (the impressionable young Strivens) was with the promise of 'funny fags.'

Meeting James Heath was not, however, what Strivens had envisioned and she promptly fell asleep as a consequence

of Snaville's putrid chat. Other hook-ups of note were Ashleigh Snow vs. Russian Greg, and 'voice of an angel' Kate Strivens vs. Rob Charnock.

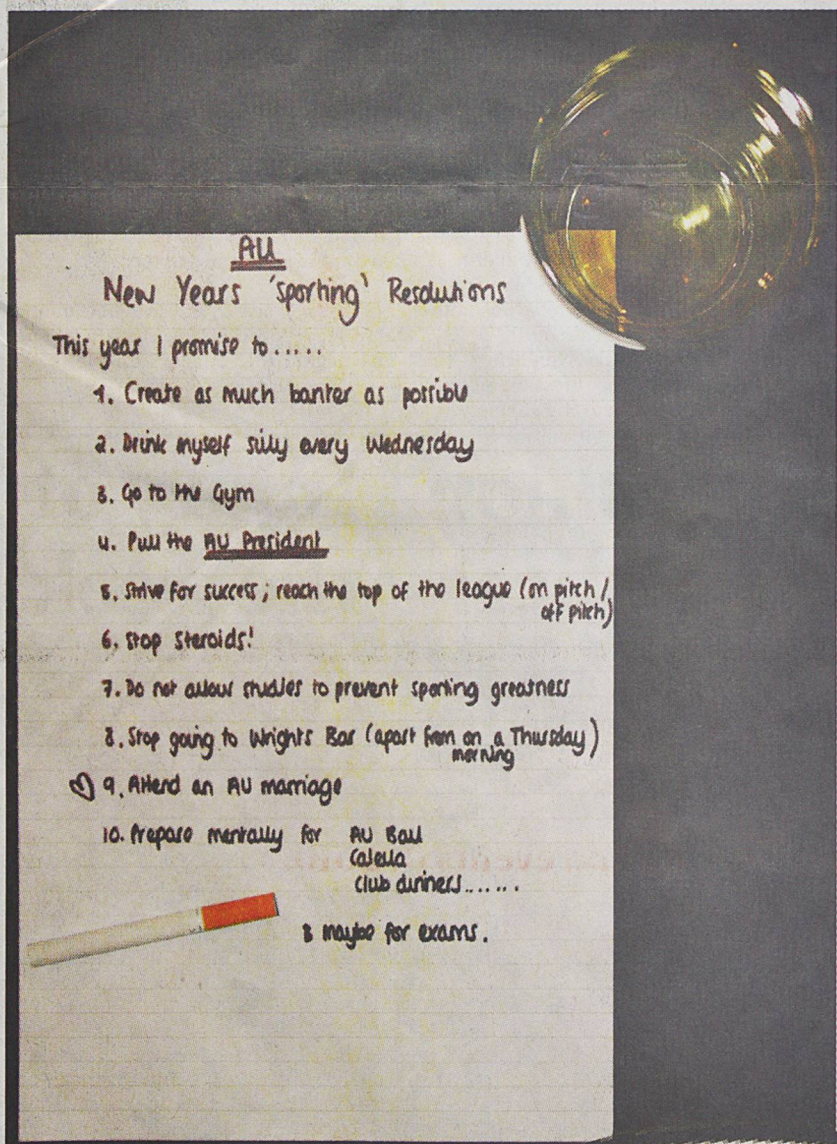
All that was left was for recurrent girlfriend stealer Oliver Townsend (you know...the balding one who sits in the tuns ALL the time) to give the tour its last rites by remixing Robbie Williams. By translating the chart topper 'Angels' into Russian, Townsend managed to snaffle Roman Abramovich's daughter Katya.

Tour Awards:

• Best Lad: Owly; no explanation required

• Worst Lad: Dan Carroll; the wannabe Yank's futile attempts at skiing were painful to watch and on several occasions he had to enlist the help of world under-9 ski champ and girlfriend Eleanor Foster-Gregg, to nurse him down the baby slopes.

Got a friend who likes to get fingered at Zoo Bar? Know that little blond slut? (you know the one). Fended off Jonathan Snaville? EMAIL NOW: jonas&xisco@



We felt that this week's Torso shot deserved a little explanation. Originally the plan was to get the skinniest man at the LSE, the ski club president Will Barrow, to pose for the Torso of the Week shot. However, on the last day of the trip we were all far too hung-over, and promptly forgot. After Christmas however, the ULU trip came out to Les Arcs for their week. On it was Sam James, an LSE student who had been on the LSE trip to L2A. After complaining one day that he thought he was never going to feature in the Beaver, the idea hit us to put him in as the Torso. So, on a lovely clear day we went up to 3250m and, in the -29 degree windchill, made him take his jacket and shirt off and pose in front of the majestic Mont Blanc. Beautiful.

TORSO OF THE ALPS



Sport



Ski Trip Special

Before we all got 'treated' to snow of our own back here in Blighty, a small horde of budding mountain adventurers headed out to the French Alps in search of the white stuff. This year saw nearly 200 members of the ski club head over to Les Deux Alpes for what turned out to be a great week of snow, sun and smashed-ness. You've probably all heard about the guy who passed out on the ferry and nearly got sent home, Gashleigh Blow's Russian lovin', and of course THAT rim-job, but for those of you who haven't, or for those of you who just want to revel in the glorious (and slightly hazy) memories of the trip, here's our highlights package:

L*S*SKI Poem

by Daniel Carroll

We'd all heard the rumours from previous years. Disorderly debauchery, ferocious fornication, indescribable inebriation and absonant alliteration; but still we boarded buses, naïve to what depravity lay ahead. To taste the fresh mountain air, to feel the crunch of snow underfoot, to sense the faint beat of "Riverside" echoing across the French mountains. Were we ignorant? Would my confidence in Tom Sumner's ability to pull underage poly's wane? Would Schmandy Lawrence actually drink a bottle of Pimms and vomit literally everywhere? Did BCC actually have a BC?

Does size matter?

I will set the scene...

It occurred a late winters night: the moon bathed the town of Les Deux Alpes in a gentle glow, the clouds hung low like Cunniffe's package and the door "apartment" 62 was shut tight with care. As the wind howled about the rooftops, two figures lay motionless in bed, nestled among an array of bottles and yellow pages, oblivious to what the future held.

'Twas a night during skiing, when all through the flat Not a badger was stirring, as it would fuck up the format. The Ouzo was empty, Vodka smashed on the floor, and Gately "hadn't pulled," even though everyone saw.

Polys were nestled all snug in their beds, While visions of degrees danced in their heads. Andy passed out drunk, and I in my cap, We had just levelled our heads for a long two hour nap. When out on in the hall there arose such a clatter, we crawled from the bed to see what was the matter. Could it be Jake with his sexy moustache? Could it be Sumner bringing home poly gash?

I had dreamed of directories lying down in the snow Giving more figures than polys ever could know. When, WHAT to my wondering eyes should appear! But third floor Cunniffe, with a bird at his rear!

I quickly lay down as I felt kind of sick, but knew in a moment he was a huge dick. Louder then cymbals his chat up lines they came, And he sang, and shouted, and called her by name!

"Cunn man! We said. We were both fast asleep! Now you've made all this noise we will sleep not a peep! You can fuck off now, or we'll tell her the truth A truth that can be backed by sight of your proof! As Andy after some Pimms, the chunder does fly Cunniffe called out our bluff and turned with a sigh, He just denied it all, hoping that she wouldn't see, Why everyone called him the great B-C-C.

Unlike Joseph Watson, with his marriage ahead, Cunniffe knew if she left, he had nothing to dread, So he opened door and with her pasta in hand, Pushed her out the door into the vast foreign land.

We gave him some shit, and the ski chat did fly, and the memories of them nights will never die The nights on the pole, the cuddles in bed "We're a uni not a poly" rings in my head!

View from the Social Sec's by Tash Storm Jones & Olivia Herbert

It's the 11th December and the time has finally come to make our annual LSE pilgrimage to the Alps. It's been a great term, but we're all ready for a holiday, and boy will this be a holiday! Departure time is midnight from Houghton Street, which of course allows everyone to get more than slightly gazebo-ed at Crush, but off we go all the same. Four coaches, 192 people, and two Alps. The ferry is mostly uneventful apart from one very special guy who is so drunk the coach drivers nearly didn't let him back onto the coach! We arrive the next evening at Les Deux Alpes and it is snowing! Everyone quickly checks in and then it is straight to Smithys, our resident bar, minus our president and one of our vice presidents. Their excuse? First lifts! But don't worry, they more than make up for this initial error during the rest of the week. The first day's skiing is immense. The sun shines, the powder is fresh, and a good time is had by all. All the beginners shake off their Bambi legs; even those who are taken right to the top of the mountain on their first day by some very unfair friends make it down eventually...aided by vin

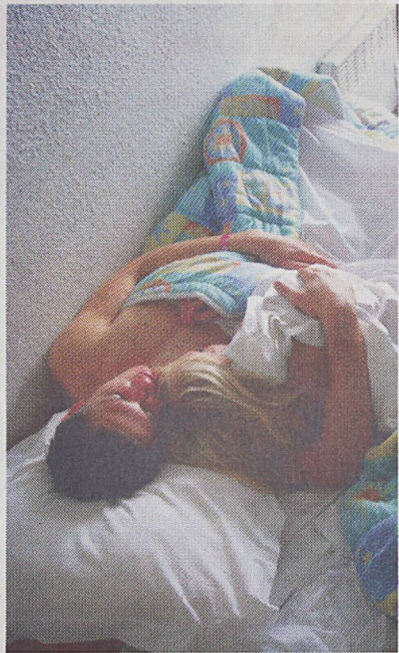
chaud of course!

Then, of course, it's time for the mountain meal. We are told by the Wasteland reps that it's just a short walk up the piste to the restaurant...they failed to mention that the piste was a red, and that we would all arrive incredibly puffed out with very red faces. However, it was worth it, and the view from the top was beautiful. As we arrive we're told by the manager that he's not going to let us bumboard down after the meal because it is too icy. In order to make sure we don't, he takes our bumboards off us...however this doesn't stop three very sneaky students from taking them back once we're thoroughly full and leaving without anyone seeing them. We all leave a little later after a few too many shots which tasted like herb du provence, and half way down we find poor Wai who has crashed on her bumboard...badly! A hospital trip, an overnight stay and 15 stitches later, she's back on form. Wai, can we just say now, that you were an absolute legend...you didn't complain once! Pre-lash, Jagerbombs and Avalanche did not disappoint. Fancy dress themes throughout the week were High Society,

King of the Jungle and Boiler Suit Rave. The committee sported sequined leggings and bling galore...the boys were even spotted in gold thongs at one point. Valley Rally sees Dewhurst ski down in just a sexy Mrs Santa Claus dress. Our last night arrives and we're sad that the week is up, but celebrate with some fines, which are delivered by the President and Vices in between some poly chants. Special shoutout to Bateman who managed to sodomise a rep...1000 points! Thanks one and all for an amazing week. A trip reunion at the 1920's themed Lent Speak Easy will take place in The Quad on Monday 18th January. There will be a special live performance from one of the freshest acts of the 2009 summer festival scene "The Correspondents" whose combination of Hip-Hop, Swing and Drum'n'Bass is not to be missed. We look forward to seeing you all there!

(Tickets £6 adv/£7 otd, available online at www.wegotickets.co/event/67127 or on Houghton Street Thurs/Fri/Mon)

Cuddle of the week



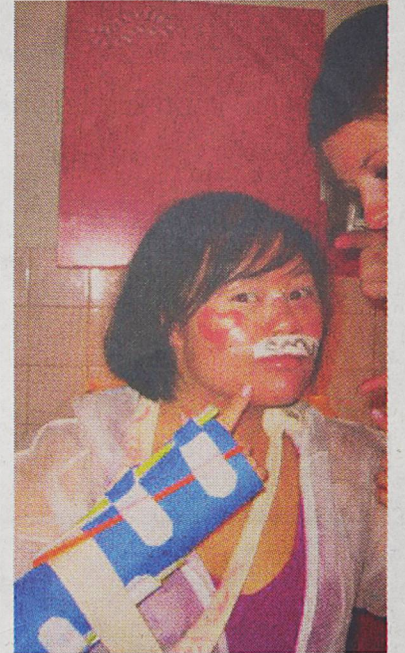
Closest to being Pro



Fashion Police!



Injury of the week



Les 2 Alpes by Alex Wolynski

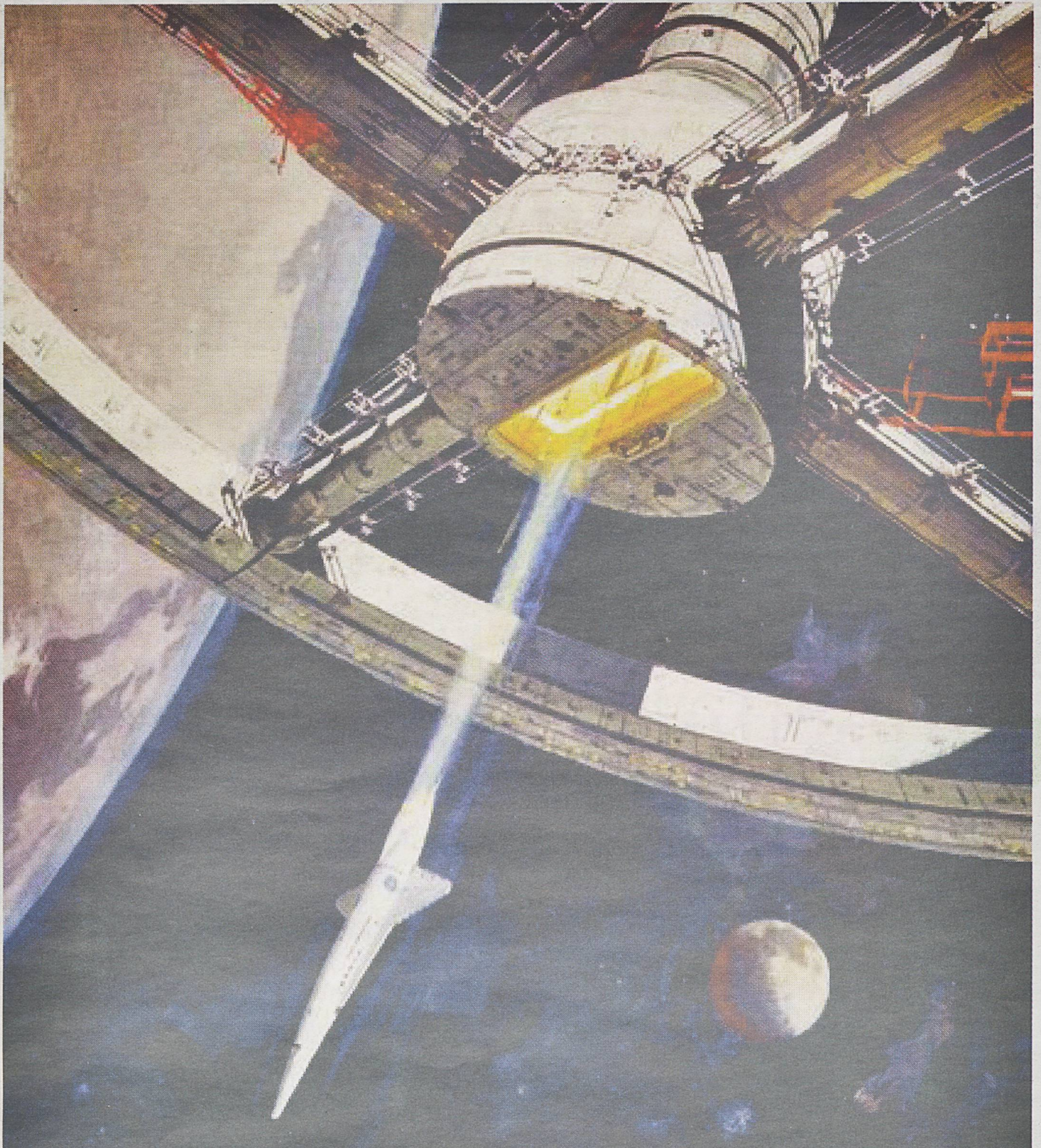
I knew that this year's trip would surpass all others, when interestingly enough I found a drunken bearded guy, easily mistaken for a tramp, asleep on the back-seats of our coach. After persuading him to move over to allow me to take the last available seat, he informed me that he had every intention of having anal sex with whoever was sitting on his right or his left. I happened to be sitting on his right. I then found out the guys sitting in front of me didn't even go to LSE and never had. They were recent graduates from Bournemouth. I wasn't sure if I was on the right

coach, wasn't Bournemouth LSE's sworn enemy on the past two trips? Nevertheless, I was thankful when I heard 'a load' of Americans and I was assured that I was indeed on the LSE coach. After spending most of last year's trip in bed from the flu; or in the bathroom battling the after effects of alcohol; or on the only open ski slope weaving around the "gapers", the ice, the moguls and the boarders; I decided that this year that I would get the most out of the ski trip. I would be out on the slopes from the moment the lifts opened to the minute they

closed. I would be out every night and on top of that I wouldn't be affected by hangovers. In fact, I wouldn't even have hangovers and I would not get ill. So, naturally, I caught a cold off my flat-mate before I had even left London and although I had an early morning start on the first day, I never made it onto the slopes before noon for the rest of the week. But, besides that, this ski trip was by far the best so far. Following my oath, I decided to find a group of skiers, who, well, could actually ski and would encourage me to take skiing a bit more seriously (I assure you I do). So serious in fact, we managed to pretty much ski every slope in the resort on the first day, only stopping for food until I complained of feeling faint. That level of

dedication lasted all about a whole day. Due to the social side of the trip taking a toll on our sleep, I managed to make it out onto the slopes later and later every day. My favourite night was the "King of the Jungle" theme, with some brave enough to go out in the cold with nothing but an off-the-shoulder piece of leopard skin material. Another of the more memorable nights was the mountain meal. After trekking up an icy slope in complete darkness, we made it to a nice quaint chalet, complete with a fire place in the middle, home-made absinthe (apparently) and a bottomless supply of wine. We then went and threw ourselves down the icy slope on our bums to find an ambulance waiting for us at the bottom. Good night.

The journey back was pretty quiet- what else would you expect from a sleep deprived, hungover group of students? In order to make it onto our scheduled ferry, the coach drivers sped their way through the Alps' snow blizzards and were very reluctant to give us toilet breaks, even though the onboard toilet was frozen and thus unusable. In the end, it didn't matter whether we were on time or not as all the previous night's ferries had been cancelled and we had to wait in a 5-hour-long queue at Calais. I heard rumours of icebergs floating in the Channel but in the end it was just the British panicking at the first sight of snow. Nevertheless, we got home safely. I think so anyway, last I heard, two of our coaches only just made it onto their ferry by the time we got back to LSE.



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SOPHIE MARMENT

4 INTERVIEW: ELEANOR RHODE

ALEX WHITE - PARTB-RANT@THEBEAVERONLINE.CO.UK

6 RANT

GARETH LEWIS - PARTB-LITERATURE@THEBEAVERONLINE

7 LITERATURE

8 A DETAILED ANALYSIS OF THE HABITABILITY OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM

LIAM MCLAUGHLIN & CATHY DRUCE - PARTB-MUSIC@THEBEAVERONLINE.CO.UK

10 MUSIC

SARA DOWNES - PARTB-VISUALARTS@THEBEAVERONLINE

12 VISUAL ARTS

PARTB-FASHION@THEBEAVERONLINE

13 FASHION

AHMED PEERBUX - PARTB-FILM@THEBEAVERONLINE

14 FILM

JONATHAN STOREY - PARTB-TV@THEBEAVERONLINE

15 TV

ALICE PELTON - PARTB-SEXANDGENDER@THEBEAVERONLINE.CO.UK

16 SEX & GENDER

EDITORIAL

Ten principles I live my life by. A reflection on humanity by Graeme Birrell

1. The Five Second Rule: Don't let casual accidents ruin your meals - if it falls on the floor, it's still good. For a while.

2. Don't make New Year's resolutions: If you write yourself goals in life, you're only setting yourself up for disappointment. Why not just go with the flow and surprise yourself at your natural ingenuity and inevitable brilliance?

3. The bus is always better than the tube: On the bus you get to look at stuff. On the tube, weird people often just look at you.

4. Always reuse carrier bags: It's environmentally friendly, practical, and you get Nectar points for doing it.

5. Offence is a nebulous concept: But that still doesn't make it right. Respect thy neighbour and his views.

6. If it ain't broke, don't fix it: I've had the same iPod since I was 14, and guess what? It still plays music perfectly. I don't need your fancy touchscreen or internet capabilities to appreciate Whitney and Shania.

7. Don't listen to Vampire Weekend: Music should be a celebration of love and soulfulness, not pretentious middle class indie masquerading as originality.

8. When playing Monopoly, always be the banker: It may not be to your everyday moral sentiment, but sometimes you have to play dirty to win.

9. Drink as much champagne as possible: you're only in your twenties once, so live it up all you can. But not too much, or you might get liver damage.

10. Haggle with shopkeepers: it's the norm in many parts of the world, so why shouldn't it feature in the UK? And it really pisses them off if you try it in Sainsbury's.

**Graeme Birrell and
Calum Young**
partb@thebeaveronline.co.uk



london y'all

FROM THE US TO THE UK, GRAD STUDENT **GILIAN CORRAL** HAS JUST ONE YEAR TO BLOG IT ALL

Wednesday, December 30, 2009

most awesome money?



Just got home from a trip back home....wait. Let's try that again. Just got back to London from a brief visit to Virginia. When I finally got all of my crap unpacked I discovered four different currencies in my travel purse. Pounds, Canadian whatever's, Euros and American Dollars. What am I going to do with 10 Canadian whatchamajiggers? I mean, it's pretty and all, but useless unless I happen to layover in Ottawa again.

This begs another very serious question for the world traveler. Which money is the best? I'm taking votes here. The results will be judged on your best argument for categories other than exchange rate:

1. cool-looking
2. usefulness (coins vs. notes, denomination efficiency)
3. transferability (where it can be used.)

Here's your big chance to rant about how boring your money is or how totally awesome. Go.

Posted by [Gilee Girl](#) at 1:56PM 2 comments

2 Comments:

[Brian Sal Corral](#) said...

I am not from Japan but, they have the koollest coins. Any country willing to poke a full fledged hole into their currency is worthy of the Awesome Money, title.

December 30, 2009 4:30 PM

[Christine G.](#) said...

I'll go look at the bulletin board in El Rodeo and report back.

December 31, 2009 3:19 PM

[Click HERE](#) to post a comment

UNCLE LARRY

Our resident agnoy aunt, Bev, can't be with us this week, as she's been snowed in at her love-cottage in the Cotswolds. Thankfully, though, Uncle Larry jumped on his tractor and powered through the snowdrift to answer your quibbles. Send any problems you have to partb@thebeaveronline.co.uk and Aunt Beverly will return to answer them next week.

Dear Uncle Larry,

I find myself hugely attracted to an elderly member of my immediate family. At Christmas the tension between us was unbearable, or was I imagining? At any rate I don't know what to do, should I make a move after bringing him his slippers, or wait for him to shuffle out of this mortal coil?

Scared and confused, 2nd year

Dear Filial Fellator,

We live in a world where romance is scarce. I suggest you make a move on that sexy septuagenarian while there is still time. Naturally though, this is a delicate issue in more ways than one. Foremost, you'll need to be a gentle, considerate lover. Second, be tactful in your advance, an unexpected approach from a prurient young thing can spell cardiac problems for gentlemen of a certain age.

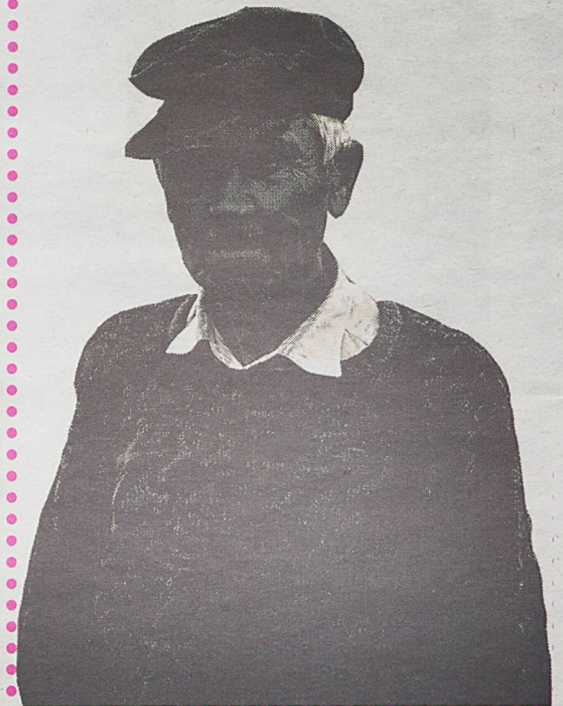
Dear Uncle Larry,

I am an amoral man, often when I reflect on my life I think of myself as evil. I have stolen and raped, and worse, much worse. How can I deal with this issue?

Repentant male, Msc student

Dear Satan's Child,

Whenever I look at ITV2's schedule I am left in no doubt, pure evil exists in life. Perhaps you are it. I would prescribe, either try to tone-down those tendencies, or commit suicide. It's probably for the greater good.



IMPRESSED BY GENEROSITY

SOPHIE MARMENT MEETS ELEANOR RHODE, DIRECTOR OF THE FORTHCOMING PLAY-
GENEROUS



I was to meet the young, dynamic director of 'Generous', a play by Canadian writer Michael Healey, during the lunch break of the cast's rehearsal. I was unsure what to expect from Eleanor Rhode, only three years out of theatre school and already Senior Reader in the Literary Department of the Finborough Theatre with one major production under her belt and one booked in for later this year.

Having arrived at the charming rehearsal space, a Church Hall off a not-so-charming street in Pimlico, I stood in front of the blue double doors rather sheepishly wondering how to get through the combination lock, until a stray actor returned from his lunch break and let me in. He, it transpired was from a different cast (I never found out which one), but he helpfully guided me into a large flagstoned kitchen where he pointed me to a chair and wandered off with vague murmurings that he'd 'find Eleanor'. The kitchen was what you would call classically middle class with sage-green wooden cupboards, a large dresser adorned with stripy, Cath-Kidstonesque mugs, Emma Bridgewater plates and fired orange le Creuset casserole dishes. An impressive fireplace took up most of the wall at one end with a black, coal fuelled range and an interesting collection of half burnt candles in glass jam jars. Beethoven played on a small but no doubt expensive stereo-system and an assortment of actors tripped in and out, making tea and peanut butter sandwiches whilst memorising lines and discussing warm-up techniques. The kitchen could quite easily have been the set of a play itself.

When Eleanor came to find me, no doubt informed of my presence by the stray actor, she was surprisingly young. I knew she was young, that was one of the reasons I'd been keen to interview her as she and the rest of the production team are all recent graduates. As she rather candidly told me, "I really am not that experienced in terms of credits or anything else." Nevertheless, I was taken aback by the bouncy, enthusiastic twenty-something standing in front of me. Wearing

jeans, a red and blue check shirt and sporting a short boyish crop of brown hair she was not the intimidating, polished image I'd had in my head when I thought of the word 'director'. As she made me a cup of very milky tea, she apologised, she'd got a bit over excited and slopped half the bottle in, she chattered away non-stop, asking me where I was from, what I was interested in and generally seeming like someone I'd meet at uni or go for a coffee with.

Sitting in the rehearsal room, one leg curled up underneath her on a wooden chair, it soon became apparent that whilst she is hugely down to earth, she is intensely passionate and enthusiastic about what she does. She discovered Michael Healey's plays whilst interning at the Southwark Playhouse whilst she was still at drama school. She was hooked and when she approached Neil MacPherson, who runs the Finborough Theatre with three plays she wanted to direct, 'Generous' was one of them. From that meeting she was offered a residency at the Finborough and put on a six day run of 'Generous' last summer. It was a big success and therefore Rhode is bringing it back for a longer run this year. Such a big success in fact that Michael Healey, who flew over care of the Canadian government, Rhode adds as an aside, "they really like to fund their writers," was so impressed he gave her the rights to his seminal work 'The Drawer Boy', in the interval. Rhode's production of 'The Drawer Boy' will be premiering at the Finborough this October and she is clearly thrilled at the prospect of being able to direct it.

Talking about Healey, Rhode gushes, "he's been very open and very, um you know he's always there, its such a luxury having a writer being able to ... being on the end of an email. Being able to ask questions, its really incredible." She bemoans the fact that he is not better known <http://www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk/images/2009images/generous.jpg> <http://www.finboroughtheatre.co.uk/images/2009images/generous.jpg> in England, "Everyone should have heard of this guy by now. They should have heard of Michael Healey. He's won the equivalent of the Olivier Award for everything he's written." And she's right, it is surprising he isn't better known, just as there are surprisingly few Canadian plays performed in Britain or from any of the Commonwealth countries for that matter.

One of the criticisms of 'Generous' when it was first performed at the Tarrogan theatre in Toronto was that it would not transfer across the border to the U.S. or to the rest of the world. Rhode is not a subscriber to this view. "I'm of the belief that if you took away the fact that we've been so inundated with imports from the United States, if you took away all our exposure to sitcoms, and therefore to their literature and to their art," she blurts, gesturing excitedly, "If you take that away, I'd say that the actual, the natural connection in terms of humour and sensibility and political thinking and artistic vision is actually much more, much closer to being England." Her intensity is impressive and you can't help feeling from the way she stops, doubles back and changes course throughout her

sentences that there is so much excitement and enthusiasm in what she has to say that she can't get it all out fast enough before she thinks of the next thing. She goes on, "But I think actually there's a fear of the unknown in this country that goes beyond art, definitely, but there's actually something there that's not threatening but is incredibly interesting that is as yet untapped."

Unsurprisingly for a Canadian play, Rhode has chosen to use as many Canadian actors as possible. Four out of the cast of eight are Canadian, along with three Englishmen and a Scot, "Just for you know, ethnic diversity," she jokes, laughingly. She talks of them all proudly and protectively, of the Canadian actors she says, "the thing is you have a lot of Canadian actors over here who were of quite big note working for... the Tarrogan and places like that and then they come over here and they get pigeonholed into playing American roles or they're seen as being unclassified, uncastable ... when actually there's a huge amount of talent that's come over here and we're not really capitalising on it." She can't tell me which of the cast I should be looking out for in the play, they're all great, all talented. But she does tell me that what I should be looking forward to is the performances and the writing, "What I love about this play and production is that its really a fascinating and brilliant cast and in my opinion that's, forget the money and all the rest of it and all the technical stuff, ... at the end of the day I don't think something is worth watching unless you could actually just tell the story with just a person and the audience. You know, for the writing to be that strong and the performances to be that strong. That. That's really why I like to do theatre."

She tells me what the play is really about, "There's a line in the play when a character says "when we deny the instinct to help we become hideous" and that's really what its about. In a way its not a cynical play, it's a play filled with a lot of cynical characters and a lot of horrible people but actually the message is not cynical, the message is this is something that makes you human, that we have to decide to help others. It can't always be about self-preservation, its got to be more than that." The idea that the need to give is instinctive to humans is an interesting one. Healey wrote 'Generous' as a reaction to his decision to donate a quarter of his liver to a stranger. Rhode says, "There's no intellectual reason to it, it's just purely an instinctive thing, he had to do it." 'Generous' was, she says, Healey's way of working out his motivations for his decision. The play is a collection of four separate stories, or as Healey calls it four different plays, each with a first and second act. Each story involves the instinct to give, in one we see a couple fighting wordlessly and seemingly without reason over a bucket of fried chicken. It is only in the second act that we discover that the man has high blood pressure and his girlfriend is trying to stop him from permanently damaging his health. We also see the death and coverup of the Minister of Heritage who killed an opposition minister at the instruction of the Canadian Prime Minister as well as a mature female judge's affair with a young lawyer's clerk. Each of the

four narratives interlink in some small and often unrelated and insignificant way but they are clever and realistic connections and every one is injected with humour.

Rhode is clearly passionate about Healey's work, this is her second run of 'Generous', she is directing 'The Drawer Boy' later this year and she is flying out to Canada in February to see the sequel to 'Generous', 'Courageous' which is performing at the Tarrogan. Her connection to the Finborough too, seems to be blossoming, "You prove your worth then you're trusted," she states, And to be honest, considering that I started working there less than a year ago, to already have had a very small production and then to have two quite big ones lined up here, well its, its incredible. Its very generous and trusting of Neil [MacPherson] that he's allowed me to do that." The Finborough is completely unfunded despite having been established for thirty years and one several awards. Rhode is clear thought that this is not something she minds, "the first thing you discover is that yes I'm a director first. And it doesn't mean that I'm not a director because its not a paying job. Its what I do, its what I care about and it doesn't matter that I don't get paid just yet." Her advice to aspiring young directors is to "read everything you can possibly read and watch everything you can possibly watch and that's not just theatre, but that's film and read books and watch people and experience as much as you possibly can, um, legally!" She laughs. It is scary to be a Director though she says, "you're not one of a company, you're supposed to be in charge and it is quite isolating, it is quite scary." She feels she's found a family of sorts at the Finborough though, people who will support her and its clear that she is set for big things there.

As the interview is coming to an end I ask her what I should be looking out for when I go to see the play, she struggles visibly to pinpoint one part of the myriad of scenes she's been preparing for the last couple of months. Just as she's about to answer in comes one of the actors, apologises awkwardly for interrupting and backs out. Rhode bursts out laughing, "Watch out for actors who interrupt interviews!" she giggles.

The European premiere of 'Generous' by Michael Healey plays at the Finborough Theatre from 5 Jan 2010 and is directed by Eleanor Rhode.



SPOON ME?

ALEX WHITE HAS GOT NO TIME FOR SPORK USERS

Oh spoons. You are quite the mystery to me: such an underused utensil with such a great number of incarnations. The dark horse of the silverware drawer.

The spoon is forever to be thought of as the child's utensil. When you're too young to understand the complex procedure of stab and slice, and can't master the shoveling chopstick technique, then the spoon is brought out so you can simply scoop and go. Ergonomic and idiot-proof, to be sure, but the obvious underdog in this cut and thrust world.

Explain to me then spoon manufacturers worldwide, what's with the dickload of spoons? Take a look at some of our comforting friends in the first drawer down (nobody in the world stores their cutlery in the 2nd or 3rd draw. Senseless conformity, or practical utility? You decide). You've got your butter, normal, fish and steak knife. That just about covers it. At a posh do you may struggle with a salad fork, a normal fork and a fork for your starters. Already unnecessarily complex, you must agree.

But heavens to Betsy, the overarching title of 'spoon' commands a whole army of the species; a tiresome pernicky system of dining regulations invented to fuck you

over in polite society. Teaspoon, tablespoon, soup spoon, chinese rice spoon, desert spoon, serving spoon, salad spoon, cocktail spoon, bloody sundae spoon even. And no doubt there's a legion more lurking in that third drawer, polished to a mirror and daring you to think that you'd mastered etiquette.

These could all be whittled down to your basic tea and tablespoons. The need for the former's a bit suspect anyway. Does the slightly rounder shape of a soup spoon help me drink my soup? Is a salad spoon not just a bit of a bigger tablespoon? Why does it even need to be bigger? Salad just isn't that big. When making a sundae, why not just put it in a wider bowl so you don't need a freakishly long handle? Questioning the status quo of our eating habits are the only way to stop the spoon conglomerates grabbing our cash and owning our cutlery drawers, Comrades. Rise up and take knives.

Maybe you disagree and think spoons are the ultimate utensil. Spoons are functional and safe! You proclaim as you swap the metal cutlery of old on airplanes and replace them with shit new plastic ones. 'If there were only spoons, we wouldn't need to replace plane utensils with environmentally unfriendly cutlery not worth your effort to thieve!'

To them I say: if you can't commit a crime with it, what the hell good is it anyway?

And that friends, is the problem with spoons. Whatever their size or prescribed use, they cannot stab or hold any foodstuff still. They can't cut for shit. Slippery bastards would be good for nothing in the wild. Spoons are therefore basically a luxury item, and their many shapes and guises little more than pure vanity.

Over time though, I've learnt to tolerate spoons, in much the same way that animals in a safari park have learnt to tolerate gawking tourists: with deep mistrust and annoyance, but the fundamental understanding that they are beneficial to the feeding process.

But lo, arrived to stick it's offensively curved prongs into my bubble of complacency came the mongrel cutlery, the bastard lovechild of my arch-nemesis and old reliable: the motherfucking Spork. The patronising utensil goes back as far as the late Nineteenth Century. For over a hundred years people either too mind bendingly thick or unhealthily lazy have been clutching at their one-contraption-does-all mouth shovel.

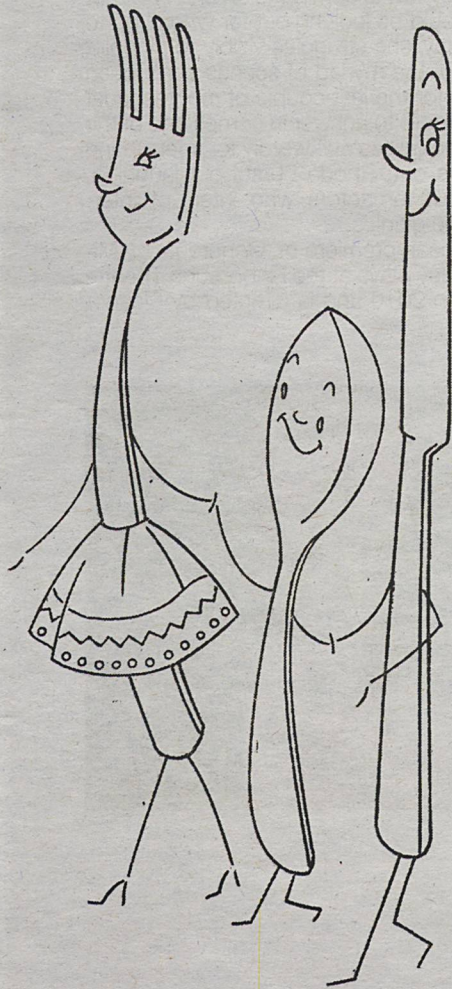
How has it existed so long in our age of survival-of-the-best? The 'spo' part isn't even nearly concave enough to hold anything in it. The 'ork' isn't sufficiently narrow to be used satisfyingly. It's like a child who inherited the worst traits from each parent: nobody's going to want to be his friend, and he doesn't have the social grace to know when to leave the party. It has overstayed its welcome, and so the Spork must go, nestled into the same sensible grave as the

cocktail spoon.

In this new decade, as China poises itself to take over the world it's time that the Western world forgets the child's play of stupid cutlery, and learns to appreciate what this great nation was built on. The simple chopstick, my fellow diners, is where it's at.

That being said, I do love a good spoon at night.

This week Alex is also angry about: Climate change, of all descriptions



KLING-ON - IT'S 2010

SCIENCE-FICTION-FANTASY IS TAKING OVER. FACT. BY GARETH LEWIS

For every person who thinks 2009 belonged to bankers, Obama and CO2, there are ten (million - we call ourselves the Ampersand Chorus) who believe it was successfully hijacked by Klingons, Ood and - just in the nick of time - the Na'vi. In other words, an infinite number of Us (we call ourselves *Florence and the Machine*, or did, until that crimson she-devil stole the Love) know that if 2009 belonged to anything, it belonged to Sci-fi.

The most impressive effect of 3-D films is to make everyone in the audience look like Suggs from *Madness*. Two weeks ago,

Where are these kinds of exalted landscapes available without the slimy past-their-date giblets of hyper-Americanized heroism and residual warfare? Like Wordsworth playing *Second Life* (whilst on LSD, or one of these new legal ones that you mince up and then inject into your banjo-string), the fluorescent jungles dazzled. Two books suggested themselves.

Jack Vance published the first part of his *Dying Earth* quadrilogy in 1950, and the collection is seen as a classic of the fantasy genre (a category I admit to knowing nothing much about). He's won *Hugo*, *Nebula* and *World Fan-*

Comprised of what feel more like six thematically related short stories than a single one, *The Dying Earth* is visually marvellous, viscerally gruesome and not a little ridiculous. One individual is punished for a magical misdemeanour, and ordered 'to cut off his toes and sew the severed members into the skin at his neck'. On another occasion, a Rubenesque princess warns her would-be saviour that 'should we attempt to scamp our duty we should be bound to stakes, stripped of our skins by the inch and at last be placed in bags with a thousand scorpions poured around our heads'. There's lots more like this, but the true



squozed up in a popcorn-sweet auditorium in North Finchley, I sat admiring the phenomenal efforts of James Cameron... 's technical team. A narrative of stifling tedium wasn't able to detract from what Frederic Jameson would have recognized immediately as the postmodern sublime: a profoundly elegant, profoundly digitized rendering of an alien Gaia. *Avatar* looks beautiful.

Lovelock's notion of planetary self-sustainability, the not-so-neo-liberal paradox of 'fighting terror with terror' and the contemporary dilemma/panacea of genetic exploration are all mixed up in this Smurfy hullabaloo. Attentive viewers will spot the substitution of one kind of (blatant) American infiltration for another (subtler one) in the films sappy denouement, but I don't suppose its director did, and for the most part this majestic and exotic territorial rendering is defiled by Hollywood storyline pap.

tasy awards (which for the earthlings among you is like winning everything ever, three times), and is described by other scribbling wizards as 'a major genius'.

It's a pretty big deal for fantasy writers to receive acknowledgement in the mainstream press, but I first read about Vance in a feature in the *New York Times*. I'm glad I did. If the neon futures of science fiction have dominated the cultural year, then the ashen in-between space of post-apocalypsia is just around the corner. Vance lashes these two predicaments together. In the first of these books, *The Dying Earth*, our planet is barely recognizable: 'a dim place, ancient beyond knowledge. Ages of rain and wind have beaten and rounded the granite and the sun is feeble and red. A million cities have fallen to dust. In place of the old peoples, a few thousand strange souls live. There is evil on earth...Earth is dying'.

dance belongs to the novel's orbs. The rise and fall of a pulsating red sun, set off against the dimming glow of a spinning, slowing globe, is diabolically graceful.

If the harlequin luminescence of *Avatar*'s Pandora (a region to which the fated remnants of a dying Earth have in fact fled) is more captivating still, then J.G. Ballard's *Crystal World* is a radiant postscript to any viewing. A mysterious seepage in the Time continuum drastically affects the world's rainforests, causing their flora to crystallise into shards of variegated, kaleidoscopic matter. Sex and suspicion cast long shadows against this polychromatic backdrop - the gung-ho tropes of the author's best novels are all here too. The hues and stokes of Ballard's storytelling should be enough to banish the memory of Cameron's most clichéd one-liners, if not the appalling nomenclature of his oil substitute: Unobtanium.



TOO FAR FROM SUN

TOO FAR FROM SUN •

• JUST RIGHT

TOO CLOSE TO SUN •

• TOO CLOSE TO SUN



TOO FAR FROM SUN



TOO FAR FROM SUN



TOO FAR FROM SUN



TOO FAR FROM SUN

MUSIC

GIRLS - ALBUM

A blast from the past- or 2009 at least!

There was a great quote in the Simpsons episode where Homer joins the Hullabalooza festival tour where one guy says to another "Are you being ironic?" and he responds "I don't even know anymore". That kind of attitude, when applied to music, can put me right off. That and sanctimonious internet hype. Oh, and uncut versions of videos which show a guy singing into another guy's knob. Is that what's cool now? All this explains why I never bothered listening to **Girls'** stupidly titled debut album entitled, well, *Album*. I don't have time for postmodern irony anymore; it confuses me. But then *Girls'* album, I mean *Album*, appeared on Spotify and I gave it a listen because, after all, it was hyped so much last year that I began to doubt my own cynical judgements. But y'know what? It's actually quite good. The twattish vocals are overshadowed by the lo-fi, dorky, slacker songwriting style, reminiscent, in feel at least, of **Pavement** and the **Silver Jews'** effortless simplicity and cool, albeit with way more reverb. The aforementioned single "Lust For Life" is a slice of stupid teenage nostalgia and second track "Laura"'s spiralling instrumentals are actually quite impressive. Then there are the silly songs like "Big Bad Mean Moth-



GIRLS
ALBUM

erfucker" which for all its ironic 50s posturing, is still fun enough to avoid being contrived. However, the carefree feel starkly disappears when the unexpected downer comes, with the youthful idiocy of the first bunch of tracks being replaced by songs of existential angst where the vocalist wails "I'm sick and tired of the way that I feel/I'm sick of dreaming and its never for real/I'm all alone with my deep thoughts/I'm all alone with my heartache

and my good intentions". Don't laugh, it's on the real, man. Then, to throw the album onto another left turn, shock of shocks, a mature song comes on the speakers! The song in question, "Headache", sees dreamy instrumentation and deep crooning replace the ramshackle indie and annoying vocals. Why, it's just hit me - this is a coming-of-age record! It all makes sense now! The youthful abandon, the mournful moments; the collage of influences and styles - "Morning Light" sounds like a shoegaze **Joy Division** compared to "Curls" hallucinogenic instrumental nod to the **Grateful Dead**. The whole record actually means something, it's not just boneheaded indie as "Lust For Life" would have you believe; the album is in fact a cohesive and most impressive work. It says something about this generation's moronic bravado but sensitive and intelligent interior, if you listen hard enough. It also serves as a palette of must-hear influences from **The Beatles** to **Deerhunter**, clearly showing the culmination of pop music's progression from the 60s to the 00s. Yeah, this is good.

VAMPIRE WEEKEND - CONTRA

A reflective thumbs-up from SACHIN PATEL.

What I really loved about *Vampire Weekend* was its fusing of catchy pop music, subtle world influences, and some seriously smart lyrics about "college" life. It was the great unifying soundtrack to my first year at university, depicting the perfect, globe-trotting lives of four Ivy Leaguers while I stumbled drunkenly around rainy, gloomy London. That their critiques of privileged youth appropriating distant cultural trends were misinterpreted as somehow endorsing colonialism was bizarre - as anyone who listened properly to "Oxford Comma" would know, Ezra Koenig wasn't so much flaunting his knowledge of punctuation as criticising that kind of pedant.

Anyway, now they're back, with the knowingly titled *Contra* - a wink and a nod to **The Clash**, and we're off, with the starry-eyed vocals and thumb piano of "Horchata", a song that rhymes aforesaid milky drink with "balaclava" and "aranciata". Cheeky bugger. The next song, "White Sky", melds the chirpiness of the band's debut with a new-found love of synthesiser bleeps and beats, no doubt informed by producer-at-large Rostam

Batmanglij's side-project **Discovery**. At this point, the most noticeable change in direction exhibited on *Contra* must be brought to



the fore - namely, the sense of sadness and regret that tinges large swathes of the album. This is not as upbeat an album as a song like "Holiday" would suggest: where cheeky vers-

es once practically fell into rousing choruses, now the default setting is slightly detuned synths and pitter-patter beats. It's certainly less baroque, as the AutoTuned dancehall of "California English" and the ambitious, sample-heavy "Diplomat's Son" will testify.

The second noteworthy progression on *Contra* is, unsurprisingly, in the lyrics. *Vampire Weekend* was very much an album about campus life; *Contra* is all about this same set of Ivy League types graduating, inheriting the earth, and now re-evaluating their place in society. So, relationships crumble, and tales of distant shores are nostalgic and wistful. Which, all told, is probably a good thing, because I don't think another thirty-six minutes of cold professors studying romances, and Blake, with his new face, would have washed with *Vampire Weekend's* more astute listeners. *Contra* is a subtle, limbering creature; less catchy and celebratory; more reflective and critical in its aesthetic and lyrical bent.

FYFE DANGERFIELD - FLY YELLOW MOON

Better known for his work with **The Guillemots** and for being on the legendary episode of *Never Mind the Buzzcocks* when Preston stropily walked off, classically trained musician **Fyfe Dangerfield** has now added a solo album to his box of tricks. Beginning with a bouncy synth line more reminiscent of **Roots Manuva** than rock, first track "When You Walk in the Room" swiftly bursts into a sunny, danceable indie song with Dangerfield yelling "I can't help it if I'm happy". But it's not contrived, and it's sure good to hear an album as upbeat as *Fly Yel-*

low Moon when the current zeitgeist is so dark and miserable. The mature songwriting exhibited on tracks like "Barricades", "High on the Tide" and the strangely **Wilco**-esque "She Needs Me" are a breath of fresh air with their relaxed seaside ambience and sky-high melodies, especially in this cold January. If you like your pop upbeat but thoughtful, then check out *Fly Yellow Moon*.

Fly Yellow Moon will be released on January 18th on Polydor Records



THE PAINS OF BEING PURE AT HEART

@ SCALA 8.12.09

New York's **The Pains of Being Pure at Heart**, fresh from a set at the All Tomorrow's Parties Nightmare Before Christmas festival, played London's Scala to a sold out show. Almost being late due to the infuriatingly perpetual roadworks London has been subject to for more than two years, I finally stumbled into the venue just as the band had stepped onstage. Immediately kicking into gear at a relatively gentle volume, the band's brilliantly fun and catchy pop music, covered by a gauze of fuzz had the whole room bopping and dancing along.

Most of the songs in the set were from the band's excellent eponymously titled debut album including my personal favourites "Contender" and "Everything With You", and the crowd-pleasing singles "Come Saturday" and "Young Adult Friction". The Pains of Being Pure at Heart's perfect pop certainly put smiles on the faces of the diverse crowd and singer Kip Berman's humble thanks echoed out into screams for more. In an age where albums as strong and catchy as *The Pains of Being Pure at Heart* are less frequent, here's hoping the group's popularity remains as fervent as it was at the Scala.

SACHIN PATEL REVIEWS MODEST MOUSE

@ ELECTRIC BALLROOM 16.12.09

The last time I saw **Modest Mouse** performing live, it was May 2007 – they were raising the roof of the Royal Albert Hall while Liverpool were busy losing in the Champions League final. Since then, a lot has changed. Johnny Marr has taken time out of the band to work with **The Cribs**; Liverpool are no longer even competing in the Champions League. And this time round, Modest Mouse have swapped the hallowed hall imbued with the spirit of Hendrix for the sardine-packed club atmosphere of Camden's Electric Ballroom. Their numerous instruments and bandmembers shoehorned onto a stage barely bigger than my bedroom, the band look and sound like a troupe of consummate professionals, ostensibly touring in support of an EP, but in reality taking to the stage out of love for their devoted followers, and love of taking their rural groove out on the road.

Marr's absence is missed, just. His replacement, Jim Fairchild, cut his teeth in **Grandaddy**, and there's no doubt he's competent enough, but come on, he didn't spend the 80s writing songs for **The Smiths**. Luckily, in frontman Isaac Brock, Modest Mouse still have at least one outlandishly talented noisemaker, equally at home screaming into his pickups as he is coaxing crazed feedback from guitars and banjos. The rest of the line-up, meanwhile, is as stable ever – in particular, the twin drum-kit set-up has developed into a fero-

cious, loose-limbed beast, doing full justice to Jeremiah Green's intricate studio rhythms.

As predicted, the setlist reflects the recent change in personnel and the band's record label commitments, with much material ploughed from the *No One's First And You're Next* EP and the last pre-Marr album, *Good News For People Who Like Bad News*. The older material suits the band well, giving them the chance to rock out in a less nuanced fashion than Marr's guitar work permitted. Of the new songs, it is the Heath Ledger-related "King Rat" that impresses the most, unfurling from Tom Peloso's trumpet blares. The EP's lead single, "Satellite Skin", is a far tamer invention, part "Float On", part relative boredom. They should get back to what they do best, as evidenced by the stunning "The Whale Song", sadly absent from last night's performance.

On record, Modest Mouse have reaped the benefits of pruning down their more meandering grooves – whereas on *The Lonesome Crowded West*, five tracks crossed the 6-minute mark on the back of an endless motorik beat, of late they have learnt the virtues of economy in the CD age. By contrast, live, the band really let go, turning ordinarily concise pop songs like "Tiny Cities Made Of Ashes" into the monstrous epics they always threatened to be. And that's okay, in this setting, because it's in a club or theatre that we can really appreciate the wonderful musicianship that goes into creating such a behemo-



moth. Distended to at least ten minutes, the song culminated with a ritual bout of Brock screaming into his guitar while the rest of the band played out a stunning tattoo. It was just as thrilling as the first time I witnessed it.

On a tangential note, I'm still intrigued as to how Brock achieves his trademark pitch-warp guitar effect, which combines extreme pitch-shift, sudden de-tuning and a curious kind of harmonic. Needless to say, this technical aside in no way spoiled my enjoyment of this brilliant performance by a band who have taken their seat at the head of the alternative rock table. Devoid of Johnny Marr, they are certainly a little more brutal and less beautiful, but no one can really deny them their strange, sea-faring, trailer-trash-baiting party.

PARTB'S PICK OF THIS YEAR'S EXHIBITIONS

SARA DOWNES LOOKS AHEAD AT WHAT'S TO COME

From Renaissance masterpieces to elephant dung on canvas, this year's crop of art exhibitions in London promises to be as diverse and fascinating as always. Here are PartB's pick of this year's must see exhibitions:

Irving Penn at the National Portrait Gallery

This celebration of the seven decade long career of one of the greatest photographers of the twentieth century will be a captivating exhibition, showing a life time of work that began humbly yet elegantly with Vogue in the 1940s. Over the course of the century, Irving Penn went on to capture icons from Christian Dior to Pablo Picasso and even The Hell's Angels in his beautifully simple yet pioneering style

Chris Ofili at the Tate Britain

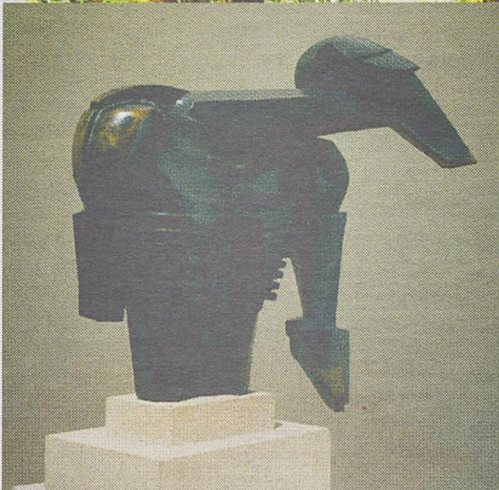
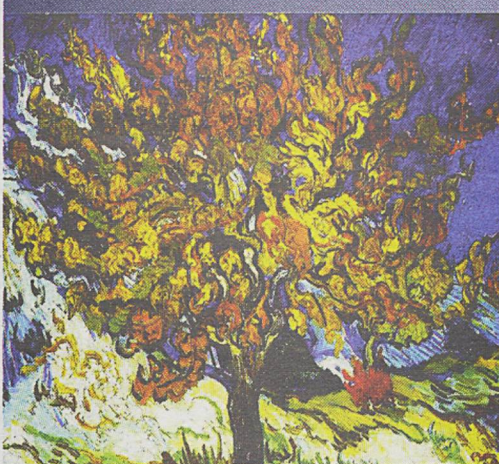
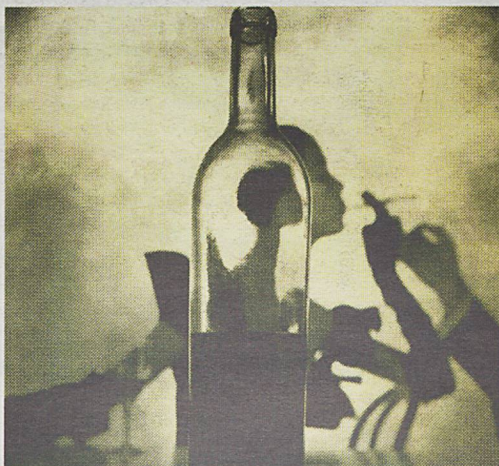
The artist that won the Turner Prize in 1998 with his use of elephant dung on canvas and fame for his piece entitled 'no woman no cry'; a tribute to the murdered London teenager Stephen Lawrence, will be the focus of a major exhibition at the Tate Britain from late January. A retrospective of over 45 paintings, as well as drawings and watercolours will be presented to celebrate the importance of this contemporary British artist who deals with black culture using often controversial methods that famously upset the mayor of New York City, Rudy Giuliani. Creating beautifully crafted collages made up of such things as close ups of female genitalia and the infamous elephant faeces, Ofili makes thought provoking art that is well worth viewing.

Michelangelo's Dream at the Courtauld Gallery

Located just over the road from LSE in Somerset House, there's no excuse for not going to see this. The Gallery houses a huge collection of treasured pieces from the renaissance onwards, but from the 18th February, Michelangelo's drawings will be exhibited as well. His famous 'The Dream', claimed to be one of the finest of all renaissance drawings, will be on show along with a selection of rarely seen letters and poems by the old master.

Franz Ackermann at the White Cube

The exact details what will be on show in Mason's Yard from the 10th February are hazy but if Ackermann's past pieces are anything to go by this will be well worth visiting. The artist paints big canvases full of bright swirling colours which he likens to mental maps that show abstract landscapes and futuristic architecture. This is the kind of bold and impressive art that people want on their



walls.

The Empire Strikes Back: Indian Art Today at the Saatchi Gallery

Charles Saatchi's collections never fail to incite fascination and disbelief in equal measure. This exhibition of contemporary Indian art is no different; showing such things as a Hama Mulji's taxidermy camel bound up in a suitcase and a cow awkwardly and humiliatingly trapped in a concrete water pipe. But this is not just about unnecessarily shocking pieces. The artists deal with a wide range of issues facing India and the world today such as the global food crisis, the destruction of the environment and India's changing position within international society. If you go to one exhibition this term, go to this one; it's showing real, passionate art from around the world and is totally free.

British Comic Art Exhibition at the Tate Britain

This won't be open till June but should be an interesting visit whether you're a fan of comic art or not. The exhibition will include everything from political satire to seaside postcards and even ancient illustrations by Hogarth but should remain a more light hearted approach to visual arts that promises to make you giggle as well as think more deeply about what is funny and what is simply going too far.

Van Gogh at the Royal Academy

From the 23rd January, a selection of Van Gogh's paintings, drawings and letters to other greats such as Paul Gauguin will be presented at the Royal Academy. This promises to be more than just a few pictures on a wall; instead the exhibition aims to broaden our understanding and admiration of this Post-Impressionist painter who is much more than just the bloke who cut off his own ear.

The Sacred Made Real

Running from the 21st of October to the 24th of January, *The Sacred Made Real* tours the bloody brilliance of the Spanish Baroque. The exhibition contains highlights from the Spanish Golden Age (17th Century) which includes works by Zurbarán, Valasquez and Canot. Also on display are a series of wooden polychrome works, which depict Christ pre and post crucifixion. Bloody marvelous.

Wild Thing

Taking its name from the poet, Ezra Pound's description of Jacob Epstein, Wild Thing showcases sculptures produced in the early 20th century. Aping earlier modernist architecture, the work of Epstein captures the fear and trepidation present within the western world on the eve of the Great War.

HOW TO BE A STUD MUFFIN

IMO OTORO THINKS THAT STUDED CLOTHING SUITS 2010

We may have just entered into the start of a new decade but past trends always seem to find their way back into the fashion circuit. Vintage lace, the 'high tops' of the 80's and even the *MC Hammer* parachute pant have made a revival, although now re-branded as the ubiquitous Harem pant (*yawns*). So what is hot in 2010? Furthermore, what should we look out for in the months ahead? Ladies and gents I for one would like to propose the return (if they ever really went away) of STUDS.

If you didn't know about them, get to know. Inspired by the Anti-Establishment Punk movement of the 80's, this trend has been translated on to the catwalk, and has even featured in various designer collections and shows; including London based design duo *Felder Felder's Spring Summer 2010* catwalk show at *London Fashion Week*.

If you're still having trouble imagining translating this into everyday wear, think Balmain, buckles, spikes, spiked buckles and you are halfway there.

For living breathing references look towards figures such as Alice Dellal and Taylor Momsen. Although highly favoured by these peeps, there are many ways to rock the studded look. Becoming a stud muffin does not involve being covered head to toe in studs, but it requires pieces to be put together in a way where studded accents are features as opposed to an overall look.

Additionally, feminine touches can definitely be incorporated to get a balance that gives you an 'edge' without looking like an overbearing studded ragamuffin from an 80's band gone wrong. To channel edge with feminine grace look towards Lily Donaldson and Mary Kate Olsen as references.

Enough lolly gagging, here is my breakdown of what you need to do to be a stud muffin:

Rule number 1: Go Hard or Go Home

When shopping for items, look for garments and accessories that say 'yeah I have studs and what?' None of this pussy footing around, where the studs are few and far between.

In the case of accessories you can never have too many studs, eyelets or spikes. For clothes however, look for studded detailing, i.e. studded collars on a shirt, or studded shoulders on a cute mini dress or top.

Rule number 2: Balance

Feminine accents can be added to an outfit laden with the 'stud factor'. Think vintage florals, old gold and a touch of lace. I personally love to work in the mode of grandma chic a la Dot Cotton from *Eastenders*, edged out with a leather buckled jacket with silver/gold hardware or a pair of vintage *Doc Martens*.

Rule number 3: There are NO RULES!

Do what makes you feel most comfortable and do it with confidence. Nothing is worse than a person who looks uncomfortable in their clothing...YES everyone can tell and NO, it is not a good look.

For the fashion discerning individuals amongst you, this article is probably not for

you as it concerns those who exalt style over fashion, individuality over the collective experience and generally those dudes that just don't really give a shit.

Remember that this trend is what is being offered to us on the high street and by the designers at the moment, but do not forget that we all have a choice. My choice is to work with the textures and concept of the 'edgy 80's' and translate it into what I like to wear, in way I feel most comfortable to do so. Finally, just do what you gotta do but whatever you do, make it BIG, make it brassy and make it you. That, my good readers, is how stud muffins are created.



tokyo story

JONATHAN STOREY GLIMPSES AT ONE OF CINEMA'S GREATEST MASTERS

Restored by the BFI, *Tokyo Story* has been heralded as one of the best films of all time by *Sight & Sound* magazine (the one 'best of' poll that is universally accepted by critics worldwide). Directed by Japanese filmmaker Yasujiro Ozu, it tells the tale of two post-war Japanese parents from the countryside who visit their grown-up children in the Tokyo metropolis. As the children have busy lives of their own, they end up shifting their parents from one sibling to the other, much to the chagrin of the flustered parents. A death in the family then reveals the true colours of the children's feelings for their parents, and it's only the ever-loving daughter-in-law that bothers to show any form of respect to the bereaved.

Tokyo Story is a rich portrait of familial breakdown, with subtle yet devastating clashes between children and parents.

Ever more relevant today than in its original release date of the 1950s, Ozu's capturing of this domestic collapse is as heartbreaking as it is effective: which is to say it is very much both. The performances of the parents (Chishu Ryu and Chieko Higashiyama)

and the daughter-in-law especially (Setsuko Hara) are exercises in simplicity and elegance.

However, this film will not be for everyone. For starters, the pace can feel incredibly slow. Whilst not detrimental in itself, it is the length of the film may be the main cause for viewers to start twitching in their seats. Ozu also frequently uses his characteristic camera style, often called "tatami-mat" shot, in which the camera height is low and almost never moves: with most films designed always to focus on the eye level of the characters, this distinctive style will take a lot of getting used to.

If you feel like these won't affect your judgment of the film, you will be thoroughly rewarded with a heartbreakingly tender cinema experience.



'TOKYO STORY' RUNS AT THE BFI SOUTHBANK UNTIL JANUARY 28 AS PART OF THE YASUJIRO OZU SEASON

up in the air

GEORGE CLOONEY, YOU'VE DONE IT AGAIN. JONATHAN STOREY REVIEWS

George Clooney's first film of this year is a winner. One of the main front-runners going into the Oscar, *U2R* is the third film by Jason Reitman, of *Juno* fame, and deals fittingly with the impact of the recession that no one wants to talk about: unemployment.

Clooney plays Ryan Bingham, a "corporate downsizer": a man who makes his living travelling to workplaces around the country and conducting employee layoffs for bosses too cowardly to do it themselves. His job requires constant travel around the US, giving credence to the title, and he loves it.

Ryan loves the travel aspects of his job so much, (the platinum American Airlines card, the business class food etc.) he feels instantly threatened when a bright-eyed Cornell graduate called Natalie (Anna Kendrick of *Twilight* fame) creates a system to fire people over the internet. It's up to Ryan to show her the ropes and hopefully

show her the benefits of a face-to-face firing.

Along the way, Ryan meets fellow high-flyer Alex (Vera Farmiga), and the two start a passionate relation-

ship, with unfortunate consequences.

There really isn't a bad performance in *U2R*. Clooney essentially plays himself (an effortless egotistic lothario), but he does so extremely well; Kendrick gives a delicate performance as a naïve yet full-of-herself university graduate (which may end up being certain graduates from this establishment). The standout is Farmiga, who is mesmerising for every minute she is on screen. All the supporting players are brilliantly played, right down to a blink-and-you'll-miss-it appearance from *The Hangover's* Zach Galifianakis as a disgruntled employee.

Where the film falls slightly short is in its overall tone: it's extremely light for a film dealing with mass unemployment and relationship crises. On top of this, the ending devolves slightly into over-sentimentality. But for most of the way, *Up in the Air* is mainstream cinema at its best, cleverly mixing grand themes and profound messages into an enjoyable and watchable film.



WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF TOMORROW

GEORGINA BUTLER, EMMA KELLY, DAVID OOI AND JONATHAN STOREY

LOOK FORWARD TO A NEW DECADE OF TV

PartB TV is going all futuristic on your asses and looking forward to the new US shows gracing British TV this new year.

Glee

Let's start with the most talked about, and certainly most polarising, show: *Glee*. The best description for *Glee* is that someone took *'High School Musical'* and decided to make it as silly, witty and dark as possible. The show is essentially about a high school show choir (or 'glee club') who are working their way to win a national competition for glee clubs, as well as dealing with inter-clique tensions and the lives of both the students and teachers within.

Not content with merely talking, what is arguably the best or worst thing about *Glee* is that characters will often break out into famous songs, both from musicals and the greater popular culture; the show uses these as ways of dealing with character development, much like a stage musical. Whilst sure to put people off, this is *Glee's* most endearing feature: when gotten right, the songs are marvellously executed and feel strangely right!

Every character in *Glee* fits into the perfect stereotype: try hard diva, dumb jock, queen bee cheerleader, the camp guy, and then there's Sue Sylvester. Jane Lynch, always a bit-part player in films and television, has found the part she was always meant to play, the exceedingly cruel cheerleader coach, handing out brilliant one-liners whilst wearing her ever present tracksuit. Her acid-tongued remarks are a highlight of the show, and even *Glee*-haters can attest to this.

Depending on how you view this, *Glee* is either the perfect balance of cheese and happy ending, or a dreadful mix of crappy songs shoved into teen angst drama. Whatever you think of it, it's certainly here to stay, garnering massive ratings and awards buzz in America.

Nurse Jackie

And now for something completely different. *Nurse Jackie* is an intriguing, darkly comedic American import new to *BBC Two*. The title role is played by Edie Falco (best-known from *The Sopranos*) and both the acting and writing are sharp and witty. Jackie is not your standard nurse - although dedicated and good her job, the character is fatally flawed as all human beings are to some extent and home-grown shows like *'Casualty'* fail to explore. Set in a New York emergency room, these flaws manifest through her penchant for sexual gratification with a colleague and her addiction to painkillers (getting through copious amounts of drug-laced coffee during her shift).

The peculiar form of comedy produced through Jackie holding a reputation as a consummate professional while breaking more rules than one would think possible is dark and at times gruesome, yet immeasurably entertaining. In the pilot episode, she violates medical ethics by forging a donor

card; later we witness her flushing a sex-attacker patients' ear down the toilet. Her no-nonsense bureaucracy-battling approach inspires adoration from a puppy-like student nurse and yet in the next scene Jackie will be getting up close and personal with a colleague (her lover/dealer) in the labs.

So, with a morally ambiguous, cynical, gruff nurse as the lead, this import shies away from the tried and tested doctor-centric approach. Too silly for a drama and too bleak for a comedy, *Nurse Jackie* is a strange thirty minutes of escapism which is hard to categorize or pin down - much like the protagonist herself. Check this out if you want something different.

Community

Unfortunately, one of the best and funniest shows to come out of the US last year hasn't reached UK shores as of yet. Here's hoping that it gets picked up as soon as possible.

Community concerns Jeff Winger (Joel McHale) who, having lost his law license, goes back to community college whereby in the process of hitting on an attractive young student, he inadvertently starts a Spanish study group of misfits.

Aside from its brilliant writing, the creators have managed to bring together a great cast to play this bunch of wonderfully dysfunctional characters that the writers use to great effect. Abed and Troy (a cocky 'jock' character and a TV obsessed savant) especially play extremely well off of each other and when the writers put those two together, hilarity ensues. Joel McHale

is great as the confident and charming douchebag with a glib tongue who we say we hate, but secretly wish we could be, and Chevy Chase brings with him his brilliant penchant for physical comedy.

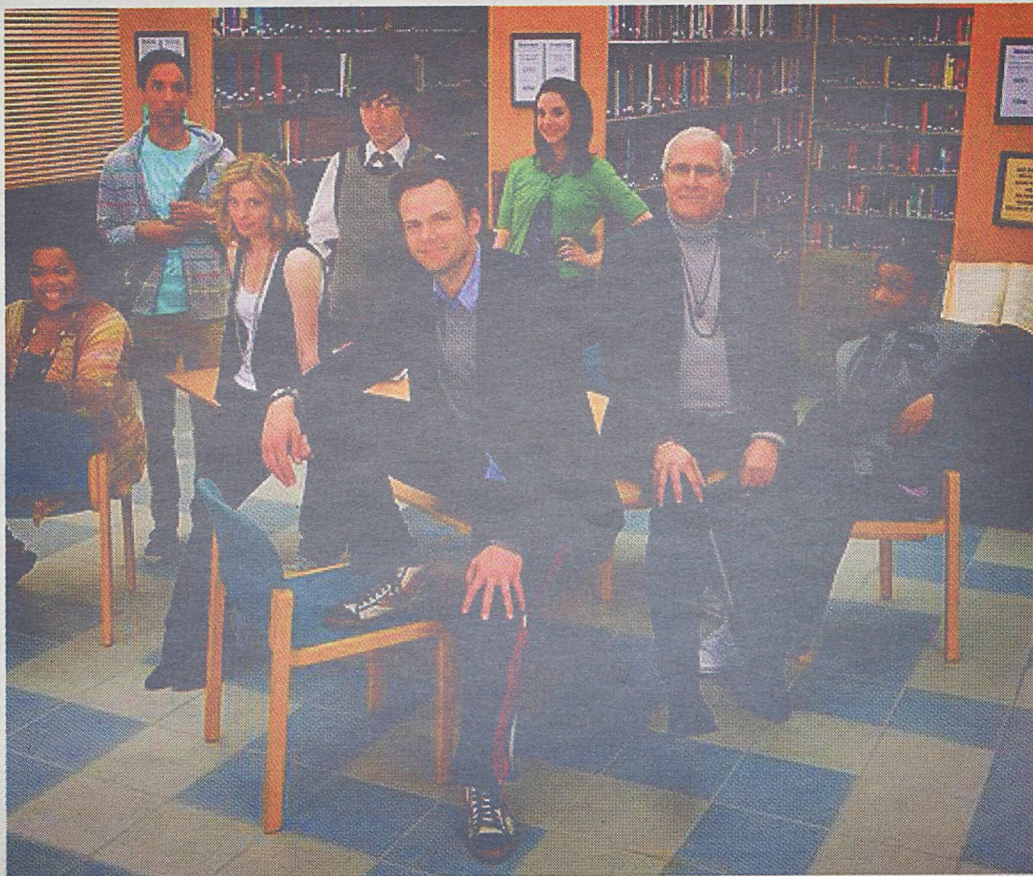
The beauty of *Community* is that even when it is wrestling with themes which are more than a bit trite it still manages to come off completely fresh and, more importantly, absolutely hilarious. This is in a large part due to the excellent writing which will hopefully become a hallmark of this brilliant show. *Community* is comedy that works on so many levels and certainly one of the very few that has left people in stitches on the floor again and again.

And there you have it. With so much to look forward to, it's a wonder anyone's going to get any work done. Well... at least you can blame TV when your essays become two weeks overdue!

'GLEE' CURRENTLY AIRS ON E4 ON MONDAYS.

'NURSE JACKIE' AIRS ON BBC TWO ON WEEKDAYS AND ON IPLAYER.

'COMMUNITY' UNFORTUNATELY HASN'T FOUND A



Banjo Strings

ALICE PELTON TEARS THEM APART

Those of you who read this section last term will be familiar with the time my mum found a used condom on our sofa. Well, over the Christmas holidays Natasha and I were reminiscing about the 'hilarity' of the incident, when Natasha came out with a vital bit of information that seemed to have elided my attention.

Apparently Natasha and 'Darren' never actually had sex on my sofa. He eagerly put the condom on, but then Natasha suddenly decided she didn't want to add to the (already pretty high) number of people she'd had sex with. So she left him - in the words of *Radiohead*, High and Dry - and walked outside to roll a joint on my doorstep. 'I wasn't gonna fuck him mate!' she told me, outraged, in her thick Wiltshire accent.

But the condom was used? Thus the next thing I can then infer from this information is that a random bloke called Darren came back to my house and had a 'posh wank' on my bloody sofa. And then left the condom. Brilliant.

How I can top this story, no one knows. However, there was a particular incident that happened over a year ago, with my ex-boyfriend, which might just fit the bill.

Now, obviously, going out with Matt-massive-penis-Marsh for 4 years of my life, has left my senses of penis size relatively disproportioned. This is probably why I stayed single for over a year after we broke up, in the vain hope of finding a fitting replacement. Then I met Will. Thank God.

I think the problem when you meet a man with such a beautiful penis, is that you end up staying with them longer than you should. You try so hard to break up with them, but every attempt fails because at the back of your mind is their penis, encompassing all the joy it holds, laughing at you, taunting you, shouting 'You'll never find one like me again!'

So we've established that Will fitted the bill. He was muscly as well; I always go for muscly men. Besides his previous conviction for GBH - which I secretly loved in rebellion against my middle-class Grammar school girl upbringing - and his scary penchant for getting angry when he was drunk, the sex was good.

That was until I snapped his banjo string. It happened in his house, which he still lived in with his parents. In hindsight his decision to take Viagra without telling me was a bit of a mistake. We'd been at it for what seemed like an eternity, when mid-intercourse his sheets were suddenly soaked in a pool of blood. My first reaction, like many women of the menstruating age, was, 'shit'. He looked at me with a face of utter disbelief and confusion. Voice trembling, he asked 'Is that you or me?'

For those of you who aren't as well acquainted with the male genitalia, 'the banjo string' is actually a frenulum; the fine length of skin on the underside of the penis linking

the fireman's helmet to the foreskin and main shaft. It is sensitive but also vulnerable during particularly rough sex. Urban dictionary helpfully elucidates its usage: '*bryn snapped his banjo string at his party the other night while fucking one of his munters.*'

I broke his penis. The only thing that I really liked about him, was broken. He screamed, and lay in bed clutching his injury like a war wound. I immediately cared more about staining the sheets and ran downstairs stark naked like a mad woman, to grab some Vanish and a bucket of hot water.

The problem was, his parents then decided to both get out of bed and stand outside the bathroom door and shout 'Alice? Are you in there? What on earth is going on?'

I looked at the radiators. There were no towels. There was nothing to hide my modesty. They kept shouting. I had to open the door as

his dad repeatedly demanded to speak to me. Clutching my bits I shuffled outside and apologised profusely for keeping them awake.

'I don't know what you two were getting up to up there...some sort of love making?!' His Dad shouted, his eyes wandering. I ran upstairs, naked and mortified.

Anyway, the problem with men is if they hurt their penises, they don't really like to talk about it. That night Will grew very withdrawn and had to leave the house to 'be alone.' As he walked away I heard him phoning his best mate; 'Dan? Hi mate, yeah...you'll never believe this...'

We couldn't have good, hard, sex for months. Every time he became erect it hurt him, not that he would tell me, God no! Real men feel no pain! (He did tell me eagerly that lots of gentle blow-jobs helped. Funny that.) To make things worse, in the months to follow,

he re-snapped it twice. My girlfriends have faithfully nicknamed him 'Banjo' ever since.

There is a serious point to this story. What can you do to stop you or your partner snapping their frenulum? Well you could just never have sex. Or you could get circumcised. Too extreme? Apparently using a condom helps as it acts like a second foreskin, insuring the frenulum is not left as out and open to the elements.

There is even a procedure called 'Frenuloplasty' which is the surgical alteration of a frenulum to stop its presence restricting a range of motion between interconnected tissue. It may be performed under local or general anaesthetic. If the repair is extensive, it may require closure with absorbable sutures, which fall out in approximately 10 days. Ouch.

To research frenulums I consulted an online forum, where I found this beauty - 'I got a very minor cut (horizontal) on my frenulum an (sic) year ago when I took a lap dance in a florida strip club, which resulted in just a couple of drops of blood.'

I had no idea lap dances could cause this sort of damage. Another poor man even admitted 'I had a cut on my frenulum was when the stripper suddenly sat/jumped on my erect penis (I was sitting on a chair).' We are then informed that 'Her butt hit my penis with great force.'

One does wonder how much taxpayers spend every year on broken frenulums? Or immigrant frenulums? I don't know, but I'm sure the Daily Mail is scandalised about it. Anyway, be safe kids. Watch out for those strippers and keep those banjos intact.



'In hindsight his decision to take Viagra without telling me was a bit of a mistake. We'd been at it for what seemed like an eternity, when mid-intercourse his sheets were suddenly soaked in a pool of blood.'
