

The Beaver

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LSE to relocate?

County Hall suggested as "ideal" new site for doubling of student numbers

by Madeline Gwyon

The LSE is close to bidding for County Hall, previously the home of the now abolished GLC. The announcement came from the LSE Press Officer, Iain Crawford, during an interview on Radio Four's "Today" programme.

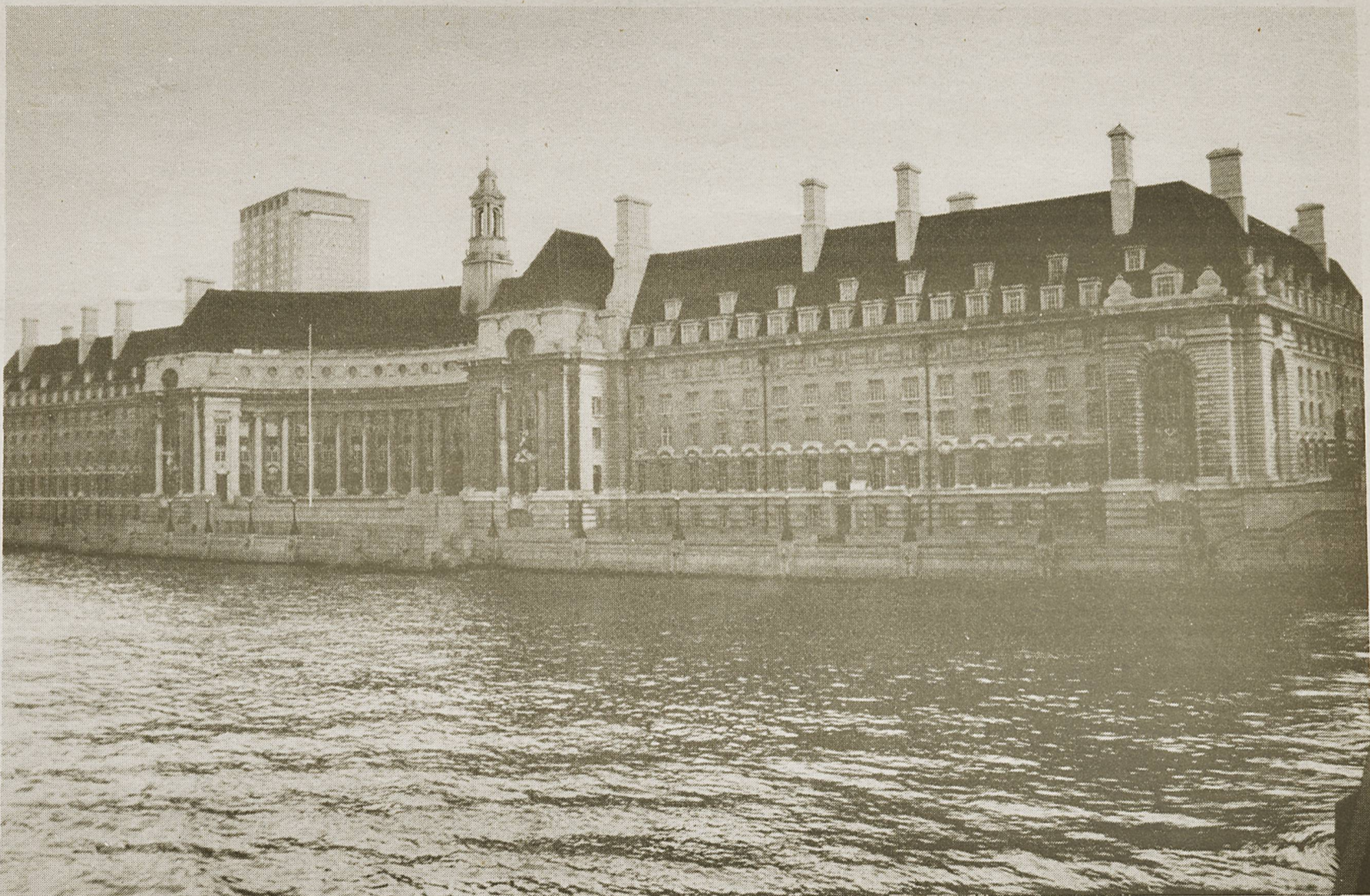
The proposal comes as a result of suggestions made in response to the Director's vision. John Ashworth received some 400 replies to his vision from students, academics and governors. The overwhelming majority of them were opposed to the idea of housing the LSE on a split campus, instead a large number suggested that the college should move to County Hall.

Although there are problems with this site, it is undoubtedly attractive as a solution to the Schools overcrowding problems. The School would be able to expand both postgraduate and undergraduate departments without fear of overcrowding, whilst maintaining a central location.

Restrictive clauses exist on the ownership of the present Houghton Street campus of the School which could prevent the site from being sold and redeveloped along commercial lines. The acquisition of the freehold of the Old Building last year eliminated the restrictions on this property; similar restrictions on the School's remaining properties could be transferred over to County Hall.

However there are numerous difficulties that need to be overcome before the sale becomes reality. The main County Hall complex stands at 1.5 million square feet, over double the LSE's current 600,000 square feet. The purchase of County Hall might therefore prove to be beyond the LSE's budget. Furthermore permission would be necessary from the Universities Funding Council before any serious steps could be taken towards acquiring the site.

Another problem concerns the location of the old GLC building. It is illegal to hold spontaneous demonstrations within a mile of Parliament. Given that County Hall stands on the opposite bank of the Thames to the Palace of Westminster, LSE students demonstrating on campus would, technically speaking, be in breach of the law. A number of demonstrations in recent years have however finished in Jubilee Gardens,



County Hall : future home of the LSE?

Photo : Alex McDowell

an open-plan area behind County Hall. LSE's tradition as a politically active college makes Jubilee Gardens a central issue in the site acquisition.

All of these points seem to make the site beyond the reach of the college, but there are a number of advantages in the acquisition for an academic institution in general, and for LSE in particular.

Whilst there are restrictive ownership clauses on the Houghton Street property, County Hall has even greater restrictions upon it. It would be unsuitable, for example, for hotel or office use since its status as a listed building prohibits alterations to the structure and severely restricts changes in room layout. A hotel or an office development requires on average 80% of the property to be available for commercial use, whilst County Hall has an allocation of

only 55%, a proportion which would suit the School's requirements. In addition the site's size would allow a doubling of staff and student numbers at the School.

One idea being considered for the site plays upon the importance of the BLPES in political spheres. As part of the British Library it contains much material which is essential to researchers in the House of Commons. MPs have complained for years that their facilities are wholly inadequate when compared to those of their American counterparts. Therefore the LSE has suggested that space might be granted to MPs, Peers and researchers in a County Hall located BLPES. This could favour any bid proposed by the college.

A second point in favour of the purchase is the governments wish to conclude the affairs of

the GLC. When the Greater London Council was abolished seven years ago the London Residuary Body (LRB) was established to finalise aspects of the council's affairs, including its buildings. The LRB agreed when it was established that it would try to get what was perceived to be the market price for the building. Should a bid go ahead the LSE feels it has a strong case that the unsuitability of the site for commercial uses greatly reduces the market price.

Even if the site was not deemed suitable as a permanent home for the School, it might possibly be used for temporary accommodation whilst the existing cramped and old-fashioned Houghton Street facilities were refurbished. This would not be the first time that the LSE has been relocated. During the Second World War staff and

students were moved to Cambridge to escape the bombing.

Finally, there are unconfirmed rumours that the School plans to help finance the purchase by the sale of Rosebery Avenue Hall to nearby City University. Students currently housed in Rosebery would then be transferred to a new accommodation facility at the County Hall site. Crawford strenuously denied this, describing it as "complete and utter nonsense".

Clearly though it is still early days and any plans to make a bid for the Lambeth site remain far from concrete.

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£25,000 research fund scandal

History professor suspended whilst investigation carried out

by Madeline Gwyon

One of the LSE's most respected and established academics has been suspended after it was discovered that he misappropriated school funds amounting to about £25,000.

Professor Antony Polonsky, of the International History department, confessed that he misappropriated research funds after a school enquiry investigated these suspected financial irregularities. An Internal Audit report showed that this figure amounted to £24,066 over a period of seven years and that these funds

had been directed to a research institution on Polish Jewish History.

Contrary to some of the reports published in the national press, 'Polonsky's downfall' was not brought about by academic colleagues with political motivations. Two of his associates were alarmed when they were asked to sign a blank research application form and they notified the school auditors. Neither of these was Alan Sked, as was also wrongly reported in the press.

The charge before the hearing committee was that Polonsky had "wrongfully

and dishonestly used his position as Secretary of the International Studies division of the Staff Research Fund of the London School of Economics and Political Sciences, for the benefit of publications produced by the institute with which he was associated." Polonsky has since confessed that this is true and has paid back all the funds.

Colleagues have expressed surprise at the findings. Eugene Smolar, the head of the BBC's Polish section was "shocked by the accusations. This is a most straightforward guy, pleasant and honest. I suspect that he did not

know the correct procedures." A fellow academic, Professor Norman Stone, an Oxford historian and one of those defending Polonsky said that "Antony is a very distinguished figure, someone to whom a great many Poles owe a great deal. As well as being a unique scholar he has always been ready with practical help for Poles in trouble."

As one of Polonsky's colleagues commented "University money is not as carefully accounted for as people might think." However, there is bewilderment in the department that such irregularities could have gone on

undetected for such a long period of time. Another historian in the department showed more immediate discontent by saying "how can he have looked us in the face like that for so long when all the while he was going behind our backs. He has the respect and the experience and doesn't need the research funds as desperately as some of the younger ones in the department who are still trying to get themselves established."

One of the problems when deciding the fate of Polonsky is that the LSE has no disciplinary action short of dismissal. Such a measure

has not been recommended by the Hearing Committee, as Polonsky is undoubtedly an expert on his subject and commands great influence in intellectual spheres. Polonsky himself has been unavailable for comment at this stage in the proceedings. The report from the Hearing Committee and any further representations by the school and Polonsky will be considered by the Standing Committee of the Court of Governors on Tuesday 7th May.

Pink Plaque unveiling

Student Union celebrates Gay liberation movement

by Peter Harrad

The LSESU is to unveil a pink plaque dedicated to the foundation of the Gay Liberation Front (GLF) this Thursday in the Quad. The move comes as a response to the School's refusal to allow one on School premises.

The plaque is being erected to "commemorate the founding of the GLF, to show solidarity with all those campaigning for lesbian and gay equality, and to remem-

ber all those men and women who have been persecuted because of their sexuality."

The establishment of a pink plaque at LSE has been an issue for some time. It was first raised in 1988, but was overshadowed by the election of Winston Silcott as Honorary President. A request was made in 1989 by Peter Tatchell and Rev. Kirker of the GLF; the then Director, I.G. Patel refused permission for one on School buildings, commenting in a letter that "the link between

LSE and the GLF is quite incidental; LSE merely happened to be the site where a room was booked for the occasion of the inaugural meeting."

Mel Taylor, SU Senior Treasurer and a leading figure in the Gay and Lesbian Society, disputed this. She stated that the GLF was founded by a pair of LSE Alumni. She also pointed out that similar monuments exist in Berlin and Amsterdam.

It is not clear whether the move will be opposed by the

school. School policy on memorial plaques is that all such installations must have explicit approval from the Standing Committee, yet the Union has received no comment from the School on the forthcoming event.

At the unveiling ceremony will be a number of famous celebrities and politicians who have been associated with the movement. These include; Ken Livingstone MP, Ron Brown, Michael Cashman and Derek Jarman.



Senior Treasurer Mel Taylor

News in Brief

Burger Theft Silver Walk

A member of the catering staff has been sacked without pension after she was discovered taking hamburgers home with her. The staff member, who has 13 years service, was suspended last term pending a disciplinary hearing.

Some of those aware of the decision, have commented that it seems somewhat extreme; the hamburgers, which retail for 70p, are regularly thrown away if left over at the end of a day. Catering staff receive a food allowance as part of their contract, but are given an explicit warning that any attempt to remove food will result in dismissal.

A number of elegant residences on the exclusive Silver Walk site are now ready for immediate occupation by the young and upwardly aspiring of the LSE.

Eighteen spacious houses, all luxuriously fitted have been made available. Travel time to the LSE is around 45 minutes by bus or three minutes by executive jet.

Rent is between £40 and £62 per person per week.

Single, twin and double rooms (with en-suite facilities) are still available and anyone interested in living there for the rest of this session or all of the next should contact Anna Jones in Room H505 or the Butlers Wharf Residence Office as soon as possible.

Too little Access

by John Pannu

The LSE has experienced one of the lowest take-up rates in the country for Access Funds, a NUS survey has revealed. The findings coincide with criticism of the efforts the school has made to publicize the fund.

Although other institutions surveyed have also experienced problems in han-

dling the fund, LSE's take-up rate of around 20% is low compared to those at other institutions surveyed. Oxford University, for example, has witnessed a take-up rate of around 45%. However, the 355 applications for the Spring term is still a marked increase on the Winter term's figure of 163.

Access Funds were made available by the government

to compensate for loss of housing benefit. Since their introduction, they have a had a troubled history; similar criticisms in the past over take-up rates have been accompanied by anger over a governmental decision to exclude EC students from applying.

'I just didn't know when the deadlines were,' said a 2nd year economist. 'I

wouldn't be in debt now by over £400 if I hadn't lost housing benefit, and if I had got Access funds.' Many other students who missed out have also been forced into debt via student loans and bank overdrafts.

The Scholarships office was not available for comment.

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The Other Side of the Story

Alex Neuber gives his reply to Alan Skeds criticisms of Germany's Gulf role

In mid-February the Bruges Group published a paper by Dr Sked of the LSE which was highly critical of the German stance on the Gulf War. Based on his at times astute, at times polemical analysis of Germany's policies, Dr Sked draws some conclusions about Germany's (un)reliability as an international player and Britain's stance on Europe, which have stirred emotions in the German Embassy and elsewhere. While his analysis reveals many weaknesses of Germany's policies, it is negligent of the broader context of those policies. He uses those weaknesses as a pretext to draw all the wrong conclusions in furtherance of the aims of the Bruges Group; providing it with a "cheap excuse" to continue dragging its feet over European integration.

In this reply, I aim to put Dr Sked's criticism of Germany into perspective and reach quite different conclusions about both its stance on the Gulf crisis and future reliability as a major international power. I also seek to highlight what I see as the other side of the story, the particular way in which Britain, in an endeavour to revive her imperial grandeur, has shadowed the inflexible attitude of US foreign policy in the Gulf crisis, thus pre-empting any common EC policy on the issue. This transatlantic approach, while possibly enhancing her international standing in the short run, is no substitute for policies to further European integration.

It is one thing to make valid points about the shortcomings of Germany's official response to the situation in the Gulf, but it is quite another to fail to acknowledge the background to this policy. In a democratic system a country's policies ought to reflect national sentiment. Germany's wartime experience gives it a different perspective on events. As faulty as the analogy between Dresden and Baghdad may be, it reflects what many people in Germany associate with the allied air campaign in Iraq.

Owing to their history, Germans do not consider war a "continuation of diplomacy by other means", but a failure of diplomacy. Britain, on the other hand, seems more prepared to consider the use of force to solve political conflicts. The national jingoism at the time of the Falklands War is evidence of this. Germans were jubilant about war in 1914, they ceased to be so in 1939. Since in their view diplomacy (and sanctions) were not tried in earnest and for a sufficient period of time, this war created ill feelings for many, despite the nature of Saddam Hussein's regime.

From the outset, there was little common European policy on the Gulf. However, to have a disjointed policy it takes at least two differing factions. Britain, in her instinctive pursuit of the special relationship with the US, shadowed the American position from the beginning. Thus it was quite impossible for Europe to forge a united policy on the Gulf that would arguably have been less hawkish than that of the Anglo-American axis.

One should not forget what US foreign policy had been in the two decades before August 2nd, 1990: while failing to forge an agreement between Israelis and Palestinians, the USA backed any local autocratic ruler she saw fit in order to further her interests in the region. (Developments in the Gulf arose out of the failure of the United States to pursue a more stable, long-term policy in the region). Shadowing US foreign policy also implied concurring with the doubling of US ground forces in November 1990. That move made it impossible to wait for sanctions to work, and in conjunction with the self-imposed credibility-deadline of February 15th created a straightjacket for policy options reminiscent of AJP Taylor's phrase "war by timetable".

Britain and the USA embarked on this campaign. In the face of unjusti-

fiable Iraqi aggression, that stance seemed only reasonable. However, there is little ground to rejoice in the face of blatantly obvious double standards. The US invasions of Grenada and Panama in recent years were in no way condoned by international law; in fact, the Security Council resolutions condemning the latter invasion were vetoed by the US, in one instance together with the UK.

The UN was arguably used in this conflict to provide the moral and political cover that the military option required. Noam Chomsky, a Professor at MIT, has analysed the detrimental effects of US policy on UN effectiveness over the last twenty years, emphasising that "UN peacekeeping efforts have regularly been frustrated by the United States", citing the example of the "Indonesian invasion of East Timor, which reached near genocidal levels thanks to diplomatic and material support from the two righteous avengers of the Gulf." [The Guardian, January 10th, 1991] Morality and justice, therefore, are not useful concepts in appraising the Allies' involvement in the Gulf.

More telling of Britain's motivation to side with the inflexible US position is a comment by Peregrine Worsthorne: "[Britain is] no match for Germany and Japan when it comes to wealth creation; or even for France and Italy. But, when it comes to shouldering world responsibilities we are more than a match." [The Sunday Telegraph, September 16th, 1990] The Gulf crisis afforded Britain with the possibility to wield once again that international power which had been her hallmark until the loss of the empire.

As we approach the third millennium, it should be obvious that military might is no guarantor of international standing and that war is an inadequate means for settling international disputes; the Soviet Union is a lucid example of the former assertion, the aftermath of the Gulf War supports the latter. Soon, however, both Britain and the US will

have to recognize that peace is the norm for industrialised countries, and that military weight is no substitute for security, international cooperation, or socio-economic progress.

After 45 years of careful movement on the international scene and only six months after fears of her pulling too much weight internationally in the wake of unification, a revolution in expectations has taken place. To expect that radical changes in foreign policy would follow this is unrealistic. In fact, after some hesitation Bonn has recently shifted on very important issues (budget deficit, GATT).

Floating some 30 miles off the continent in the North Sea will not enable Britain to withdraw from common European issues at will. Environmental problems, migrations from former Comecon countries, economic policy interdependence, to name just a few issues requiring international cooperation, leave her no choice but to move towards closer European integration.

The French recognized long ago that the best way to maintain an influence over Germany is to work with her in some supranational framework. Germany's politicians support such moves as instinctive self-protection

against the volatility of her own history. "Splendid isolationism" is no alternative to closer European integration. Although the English may wish the British Isles were situated next to Rhode Island rather than off Calais, several decades after the breakup of the empire Britain should take account of her real geopolitical position, rather than her history.

The removal of the illusion of island sanctity is crucial to a more forward looking policy. It is Britain's task to bring her own particular qualities into a uniting Europe and thus to take an active role in shaping both its form and substance. Europe should be seen as Britain's opportunity to prompt the changes so urgently required.

Germany's behaviour during the Gulf crisis is only part of the story of unimpressive European policy actions, and she will probably adapt quickly to the new expectations put before her. Dr Sked might wish to undertake a critical, if less polemical, study of his own country's policies in the late twentieth century in order to further the necessary adjustments in policy making that are needed in order to halt, and reverse, her much quoted decline.



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The Beaver

The Price of A Burger

This week one of the the School's catering staff at the PizzaBurger restaurant was apparently sacked for stealing a 70p Hamburger. She had worked for the School for thirteen years during which time she had built up a pension. As a result of stealing the burger she has not only lost her job, but also her pension.

This week has also seen an alleged recommendation that Professor Polonsky of the International History Department, the man who allegedly embezzled just under twenty five thousand pounds from the School, be reinstated. The National press were quick to hail Polonsky as a modern day Robin Hood, robbing the "rich" to pay the poor of Poland, however further investigation shows that the money went towards a publication on Polish Jewish history. No such glory can be attached to the burger burglar.

Sadly the LSE is not rich in the mould of Robin's victims. The twenty five thousand pounds could probably have been found as many deserving homes within the School. Polonsky has returned the money, but seven years damage is done.

Whatever the motives however, the magnitude of the numbers and of the apparent injustice cannot be ignored. The sole justification lies in the fact that Polonsky is a leading expert on Polish history, whilst the catering lady is a leading expert on cooking hamburgers. Food for thought.

Ban the Cram

Between ten and fifteen thousand exams papers will be sat, written and marked at the LSE this summer. The importance of these exams will vary depending on which year one is in, but for every student exams are the most vital and stressful time of the academic year. Those students who receive degrees this year will have done so on the merits of under twenty hours in an exam room. Their performance during the 1000 hours spent in lectures and classes over the period will count little or nothing towards their degree.

For many students the need to prove their knowledge of a subject in just three hours is a severe disadvantage. However those who have made it to the LSE are the fortunate ones - people who fall far short of their potential in exams are a rare species here. The School's exam system may therefore not disadvantage most LSE students too much, but this is not a reason for keeping it.

Studies show that most of the knowledge being crammed by students over the next four weeks will be forgotten before the exam results are published. By contrast knowledge garnered through more gradual study, such as writing continuous assessment papers, stays with us for the long term. The government pays millions of pounds a year for our study. If we are here to learn then it is time that the school introduced a system of continuous assessment which encourages us to learn and remember, not cram and forget.

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Comment

Stephen Cviic argues that we all have a right to an opinion on every issue, regardless of race, sex or creed.

The diversity of political views at the LSE is certainly impressive, but I sometimes wonder whether we are all equally entitled to say what we think, or whether some people are "more equally" entitled than others. The classic example of this is the abortion debate. Women are more or less entitled to hold any opinion, although they may have to be careful if it becomes clear that they have been "brain-washed" into opposing abortion by a religious faith. Men, on the other hand, speak about it at their peril. Why should this be? The obvious argument is that men do not have abortions whilst women may do, hence women are in a better position to judge. But wait a minute: most women do not have abortions either. Surely this must mean that only women who have actually had an abortion are allowed to hold an opinion on the subject? Extending the logic we might decide that only politicians should have the vote since they are the only ones who know how hard it is to make political decisions.

The attempt to exclude people from arguments is based on the "he-would-say-that-wouldn't-he" view that we are all members of interest groups and prisoners of our race, gender and social class. There is therefore no point in rational argument since we will only ever articulate our own narrow interests.

It is a cynical view but there is obviously some truth in it: I, a man, have spent the last paragraph criticising the attempt to exclude men from the abortion debate. However there are exceptions too, upper class socialists and male supporters of feminism disprove the rule. Even if someone's opinion is predictable given their background, why should it not be treated on its merits? After all there is such a thing as persuasion and people do occasionally change their minds. Is the attempt to exclude others not really a convenient way of avoiding arguments which we are afraid of losing?

I am not, of course, denying the validity of knowledge based on experience - road accident victims know what a car crash is like better than other people - but when it comes to opinions, I do not see why we should deny people the right to argue about things simply because they have an axe to grind. Certainly it is distasteful, for example, to hear rich people arguing that there should be less social security or to hear men say that women prefer being housewives to having a career. Despite this I believe that everyone has the right to something better than the easy, cynical "they-would-say-that-wouldn't-they" reaction, even when it seems most obviously true.

Post Haste

However as a person of some sensitivity and intelligence I realise that there are many people facing far worse dustbins of fate than I - take for example the eminent Tony Travers, director of research at the LSE Greater London Group, skyrocketed to fame by Maggie and John's wayward polltax, the face grinning in bland earnestness through broadcast after broadcast as he soberly revealed all to the viewing masses. An international media star was born.

But then came Heseltine with his spirit of compromise, disarming grin and nefarious VAT plans, and poor crestfallen Tony was relegated, along with the local government finance he knows and loves so well, to an unimpressive sixth division on electoral priority tables.

So spare a thought, I entreat you, for poor old Tony, fallen expert robbed of his stardom just as he was getting the hang of which camera to look at and not saying umm every second word.

We love you Tony.
Kathryn Andrews

End of an Era

Tears low, tempers fray and tantrums flare as the LSE is overshadowed by the burgeoning menace of exam stress. Every year porters smile smugly from their lodges as once confident hacks are transformed into jabbering lunies by the sadistic graffiti of the timetables and examination department - 1991 will be no exception. Times are particularly hard for us third years. Hammered by the combined pressures of academia and a recession gripped job market, I for one have given serious consideration to taking the great lumbering elevator up for a cosy chat with the student psych. on the eighth floor.

Student Union Announcement

Hardship Fund

Closing Date 10th May

Apply through E294 - Welfare Office, East Building

Pink Plaque Day

Unveiling 1p.m.
Thursday 2nd May
Party 8p.m. Thursday 2nd May

From Peter Harris SU Welfare Officer

Union Jack

Spring has at last arrived. Birds gleefully chirp their souls into ecstasy; flowers explode into dazzling colour; and the AGM is inqurate, but in some otherworld, an evil spawn of nameless EXAMINATIONS droll hungrily, gnash their staple-jaws together in vicious anticipation of their coming blood-feast. Meanwhile a bunch of disconsolate hacks shiver in the Spring breeze.

Fear has once again triumphed over laziness - a casual stroll through our well-loved but often cavernously empty BLPES will convince any doubting Thomas. At the "Teaching Collection" procrastinating students belatedly scramble for the few remaining and prized red labels. Queues at photocopiers and check-outs grow to absurd lengths, as do library bills for those unwilling to return overdue books until every page is crammed. On every floor a similar picture: shelves being emptied of their precious contents, brains being crammed with raw hunks of knowledge.

Students love exams. Most of them just haven't realized it yet. Consider the romantic aspect of examinations for a moment. Who hasn't tingled with that thrilling uncertainty as to his ability to pass or reeled with awe at the almost sacred mystery surrounding topics selected to appear on this year's lot by faceless EXAM CREATORS? Who can forget that blast of raw adrenaline released in reaction to a particularly evil choice of questions? Only in the heat of third term madness can such passions burn.

There always exists a serious possibility of disaster of course, but this is the factor which provides such exhilaration. Why do people skydive? Why does the chase after a desirable love interest provide such a delirious high? The answer lies in the possibility of failure, that risk which is the spice of life.

In fact, I would even stake my psychology notes on the theory that those who consistently refuse to even approach their books until well into the Summer Term do so purposefully to increase the risk of failure! The higher the risk the greater the thrill.

Many students (indeed, every student) claim to loathe revision. If anyone dared utter the blasphemy, "Revision for exams - what jolly good fun!", I would expect the Universe itself to recoil in horror. Nevertheless, students can only loathe the vague idea embodied in the phrase "serious studying for final exams", as the concept is seldom, if ever, put into practice. It is more of an unpleasant and disturbing rumour than a palpable reality.

By the time the average student is forced into the library by the pressure of approaching exams, the only type of studying able to save him from certain failure has little to do with "serious studying" and can hardly be labeled boring. We shall label it "high speed cramming". Grasping this concept demands a visit to the crammers main hangout, the BLPES. Watch them at every table: fueled by fear, their minds working in fifth gear, their eyes guzzling up tons of raw information off mammoth stacks of paper. Don't bother interrupting any of them however. You will find them too engrossed in the huge task ahead of them to make any reaction beyond a bleary eyed "go away!"

How can a student switch from a total inability to sit before a desk to such absolute, concentrated dedication? The riddle may perhaps never be solved.. What seems certain however is the lightning speed of the transformation and the spark that sets it off: the realization that it has now become physically impossible to complete even a tenth of the work necessary to assure a pass mark. The race against the clock which inevitably ensues closely resembles the madness of a fifteenth level Tetrix screen rather than a month of studying.

Exam time further allows students to derive untold pleasure from shameless lies about the amount of work they do. Whilst parents are routinely assured that 14 hours of study makes for a short day, friends and colleagues hear a wildly divergent, but equally exaggerated tale of lazy workless days.

There still remains one further and definitive reason for students' subconscious fondness for exam time. Pre-exam, mid-exam and post-exam PARTIES! Jamming 400 hysterical, stressed out exam victims into any sort of enclosed space with half-decent music and an appropriate supply of alcohol can only be compared with detonating a largish nuclear bomb, the collision of our planet with an asteroid the size of Poland or Lee Marriot giving the Tory line on homosexuality.

Let us welcome, therefore, the arrival of exam-time, and make the most of it, as (alas!) it comes but once a year. I suppose that most will continue to complain, but that is the nature of man. Despite the opinions of certain scholars at this and other institutions of higher learning, students are human too.

ARTS AGENDA

Theatre
LITTLE MALCOLM AND HIS STRUGGLE WITH THE EUNUCHS na
 by the Horseshoe Company
 Battersea Arts Centre
 071-223-6557
 7:30 pm ev. day until 12 May

CITIZEN KEANE na
 by Dillie Keane
 Drill Hall Arts Centre
 071-631-1353
 7:00 pm ev. day until 25 May

AN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE na
 by Henrik Ibsen
 Lyric Theatre Hammersmith
 081-741-2311
 7:00 pm ev. day until 11 May

KING LEAR na
 by William Shakespeare
 Barbican Pit
 071-638-8891
 7:00 pm 1,2,6,7,13,14 May

Exhibitions
THE EVENING STANDARD ART MACHINE
 and
THE TRUE NORTH: CANADIAN LANDSCAPE
 and
CONTEMPORARY ART FROM CANADA na
 Art Exhibitions
 Barbican Gallery
 071-638-8891
 from 10:00 am ev. day until 16 June

Parties
ALLNIGHT SPRING DANCE PARTY
 The Rocket (Polytechnic of North London)
 071-700-2421
 10:00 pm until 6:00 am Friday 3 May ONLY

Films
LAWRENCE OF ARABIA ☆☆☆☆
 propped-up re-release
 Prince Charles Cinema

PS.: Sorry for all those "na"s, but even the never-tiring arts reviewers are somehow quite entangled in ☆☆☆☆-exam preparations!



No More Mr Nice Guy

The ENO's " Peter Grimes" is raging at the Coliseum

Wednesday the seventeenth of April marked the return of Peter Grimes, Britten's first, and perhaps greatest Opera, to the company which first performed it at Sadler's Wells in 1945. I first saw this opera about a year and a half ago when it was performed at the Royal Opera House and I can confirm what many other more experienced reviewers have already said, this new production is both revolutionary and a vast improvement. Whereas the Royal Opera production was fidgety and unclear the new production is both smooth and draws the audience to the very center of this gripping story.

Peter Grimes is the story of a loner, a man driven to self-destruction by the oppression of the fishing village life he leads, coupled with his own paranoia. At the beginning of the prologue in this new production the people of the village clutter the stage like corpses. The director, Tim Albery, is making a very important and direct point here: The people of the village are already half dead, leading narrow and unthinking lives. This point is further enhanced in the second scene, set in the Boar pub where the villagers are lifelessly lined up on two benches.

Albery ensures that the audience's minds remain focused on the central characters. In the Royal Opera production the dance at Moat Hall at the beginning of act three was clearly represented, but this merely meant that a group of uneasy people clumped their way across the stage distracting from the

real action. Albery eliminates this disturbance and concentrates on what's happening outside the hall. The villagers remain as a single amorphous entity and appear more menacing as a result.

As Grimes, Philip Langridge almost presents us with the kind of angry young man that became so popular in the 'fifties, yet despite his passionate performance none of the sympathy that Britten felt for this character is lost. As Ellen Orford, the school mistress Grimes hopes to marry, Josephine Barstow does not offer a two-dimensional performance. Though she remains a sympathetic character it is made clear that she lacks the strength to help Grimes when he really needed it. Jason Howard as the chemist Ned Keene also stands out amongst an excellent cast.

Further praise must also go to the conductor David Atherton who ensures that none of the tremendous power of Britten's music is lost. During the second interlude he brought the orchestra to a fine frenzy to indicate the raging storm. During the first interlude, representing the sea coming in at dawn, the orchestra highlights the racing arpeggios of the incoming sea superbly.

All in all this was an enthralling evening, the power and graphicness of Britten's music combines with excellent performances to draw the opera to a dramatic and effective climax.

"Peter Grimes" is currently playing at the London Coliseum
Scott Kelly

The Oscars



Ah well, Oscar night has come and gone and we are already hearing about next year's possible winners - most notably Jodie Foster and Anthony Hopkins for "Silence of the Lambs." (although I find it difficult to believe that the proudly American Academy will give best actor to a Brit for the third year running). Although the actual winners this year appear to have been well deserved, there was more to Oscar night than Jermy Irons' demonstration of his very British stiff upper lip. Why were some people nominated and not others? More importantly, who should have been recognised?

It was obvious that "Dances With Wolves" would win best picture this year. After all, it was a worthy film, in the best traditions of all the worthy films that have gone before it, from "Ordinary People", to "Rainman" with a clear and direct message. It also kept up the tradition of Americans exorcising their past guilt through the cinematic medium (in a similar way, say, to the new Robert de Niro film, "Guilty Without Suspicion", or the whole batch of Vietnam films). By voting for it, the Academy was showing us that they too recognised this guilt and moved with the times. They also appear to like giving awards to actors who direct, as they did for Robert Redford, and Warren Beatty. Thus it was clear that Kevin Costner would win best director, but not best actor too, as that would have been just that bit over the top in their praise. Mind you, there is no denying that "Dances With Wolves" is a great film, and actually deserved to win best film, unlike last year's success "Driving Miss Daisy."

However, there were a few strange things about the Oscars this year. The Academy seemed to take it upon themselves (other than the heavily nominated best film), to only nominate one actor in a film partnership. Thus Meryl Streep was nominated, as it appears she is every year (is this because she is truly great, or because there are so few women's parts for nomination?), and not Shirley MacLaine, whom I thought was superb in "Postcards From the Edge." Similarly Joanne Woodward and not Paul Newman, was nominated for the stifling "Mr and Mrs Bridge", and Robert de Niro and not Robin Williams for "Awakenings". This was a case of the flashier part getting the recognition, as happened in "Rainman" when Tom Cruise was left out in his so-called "Coming of age" part. In the best actor category, what did happen to Al Pacino, unbelievably omitted for "The Godfather Part III?" Surely he has to win an Oscar soon. I fear that he will eventually win one for a poorer role in the future, just because the Academy feel that it is finally time to honour him. After all, that's what happened with Paul Newman, when he finally got his Oscar for "The Color of Money." Gerard Depardieu who was outstanding in "Cyrano de Bergerac", and wonderful in "Green Card", more or less threw away his chance, with some illtimed remarks about his upbringing in the run up to the ceremony. With Richard Harris a very long shot for "The Field", this let Jermy Irons through to snatch away the best actor award.

In the best actress stakes, we have not yet seen Kathy Bates in "Misery." It has been said that she is excellent, although it was another strange omission that she was nominated and not James Caan. There are so few good women's parts around, that it is not really as surprising as some people have been saying, that Julia Roberts was nominated for "Pretty Woman." Her performance was outstanding in it. She managed to be an attractive character not just for the men, but also for women, because she seemed real. Strangely completely ignored, was Bertolucci's spectacular "Sheltering Sky", with its dramatic set and fine performances from Debra Winger and John Malkovich. Malkovich has of course been overlooked before, when "Dangerous Liaisons" was nominated as best picture, and Michelle Pfeiffer and Glenn Close for their acting, in 1988. Perhaps this has to do with Malkovich's continued tirades against films, which he says "anyone can do", as opposed to the theatre. One wonders why he bothers being in films if it pains him so much.

With its usual inconsistency, the Academy failed to nominate Penny Marshall as best director, for "Awakenings", even though the film had not only a best actor, but best picture nomination. Conversely, it did not nominate "The Grifters" for best film, when it had best director, best actress and best supporting actress nominations. This is not the first of such inconsistencies: - despite "Driving Miss Daisy's" success last year, its director Bruce Beresford, was not even nominated. This all reminds me of the controversy in 1985, when Spielberg was ignored for "The Color Purple."

Possibly most surprising of all, however, was the inclusion of "Ghost" for best film. Dear oh dear. It seems that as with Julia Roberts, the Academy was attempting to show that it was up to date. My advice is don't bother again. "Ghost" may have been a hit, but it was in no way a brilliant film. Its rival for box office success, "Pretty Woman", was better, and if looking at other recent romantic pictures, "Green Card" would have been a far more satisfying choice.

Nevertheless, there is nothing the public can do about the Oscars except watch them. We have no say in who gets nominated, or who wins. Yet we still do make a difference. Once a film wins an Oscar, its box-office takings rise dramatically. A best film award can add, according to Richard Schickel of "Time" magazine, \$20 million to domestic takings alone. This seems to prove conclusively to all who dismiss them, that the Oscars do indeed matter. Hands up everyone who went to see "Dances With Wolves" after it had won its seven Oscars!

Sarah Ebner

American Friends

A Tale of Love and Friendship

There is something faintly disturbing about a film that is charming. One is not sure how to go about describing it, or whether to recommend it to people. Michel Palin's new film "American Friends" presents exactly that problem. It is a Victorian romance, beautifully

acted, elegantly directed, but above all, harmless.

Palin not only stars, but also co-wrote this production. It is based on the life of his own ancestor Edward Palin (here Francis Ashby), whose life was transformed by two American ladies he met on a walking trip

in the Swiss Alps. Up to this time, his interests had been strictly academic, as an Oxford Classics don in the times when wives were not allowed. As he did not have the ins and outs of his great-grandfather's adventures, Palin has embellished what he did know, and made it into a very engaging picture. He is helped by consistently good performances, particularly from Connie Booth as the older American lady, who falls for Ashby and then attempts to restrain herself. Trini Alvarado shows again, as she did in "Stella", that she is not only a beautiful, but very talented young actress. She seems to capture the very spirit of Elinor Hartley, Caroline's ward. Although it is easy to see how the somewhat staid Ashby could fall in love with her, Alvarado also manages to show why and how she falls in love with him, and makes it believable.

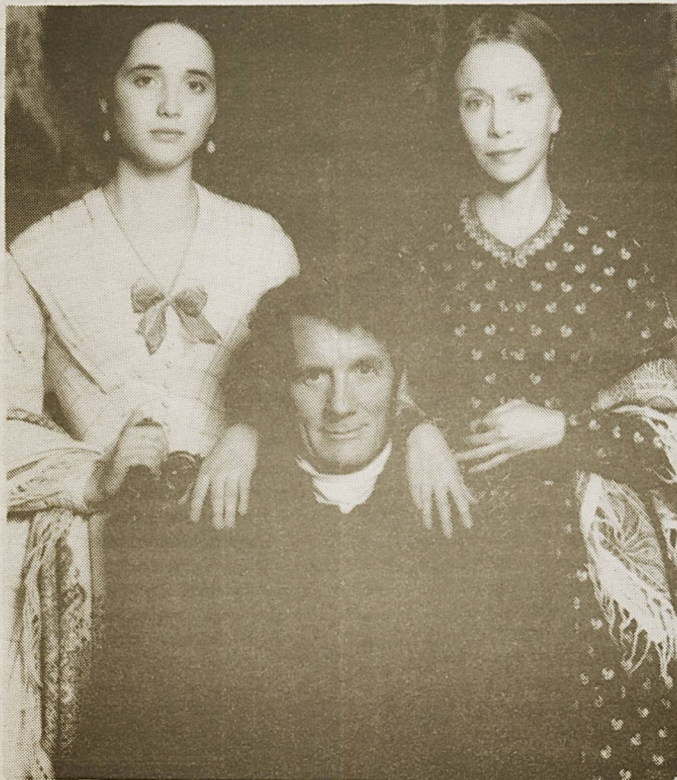
The scenery in the film, particularly in the Alps, is very picturesque. Fortunately, unlike some films, particularly the Merchant Ivory productions, it is, in its way, more accessible, as the gracefulness of the surroundings does not become so overbearing that it distracts from the story. It is just there as background, and the main feature of the film is the attractive per-

formances.

However, there is more to the film than romance. Alfred Molina's worldly Oliver Syme provides an alternate lover interest for the young Elinor, as well as being Ashby's rival for the college presidency. In case you are thinking it all sounds too serious, there is also a good deal of understated humour. I am not saying that Palin stuffs chips up his nose, or stutters amusingly a la "A Fish Called Wanda", but the film is gently amusing, particularly the shock of Ashby's fellow dons when he announces that the two ladies wandering around in male-only Oxford, are his guests.

That is really what the film is about. It is charming, understated and very British. Oh yes, would I recommend it? Well, it is difficult. I certainly would not tell people not to see it, and I did enjoy it. Yet there is something missing. Perhaps it is too understated and "nice", although enjoyable. It is thus difficult to review, and I am going to take the easy way out, and say go and see it, but only after seeing all those other films you're just dying to see! It can wait. It's that kind of film.

Sarah Ebner.



Houghton Street Harry

So many sporting events have been making the headlines since you last heard from me, that I have found it difficult to decide what to write about. Should I spend my time talking of the wonders of boxing, Ian Woosnam's golf triumphs, the London Marathon or the fact that Graham Hicks does actually look like being a brilliant England cricket player? Well, in actual fact, I've decided not to write on any of these things. Halfway through the vacation, I kind of made up my mind what to write about, and I have now decided to stick with my decision. I'm just that kind of person!

At the end of March, a strange tradition took place. Two university rowing teams raced each other on the River Thames. Nothing too unusual about that, one might be mistaken in thinking. Yet this race was not really like similar ones between other universities. These two teams found themselves watched by, well, probably millions of people who have nothing better to do on a Saturday afternoon than watch television. They also had bets placed on them and extensive press coverage. As well as this, the winning team was presented with the "Beefeater Gin Trophy" by the Princess Royal, (patron of London University Rowing Club!) who followed the race in a launch. Yes, you've guessed it, I'm talking about the Oxford-Cambridge Boat Race.

Now, before I go on, I'm waiting for all the comments telling me that I'm only going on about this because I'm jealous. What am I supposed to be jealous of, I do wonder? Perhaps it is the fact that I do not experience living in a little place where you end up in the same place if you walk around for half an hour, and that I do not have the happy experience of cycling safely to my lectures. No, it cannot be these, because they are not true! In fact, you're all wrong. The reason the boat race annoyed me is not because I am jealous, but because I do not see why two university teams, who are not even the best in the country, should have their annual race televised, and taken so seriously. I know that it is tradition, but that does not mean it is a good thing. I do not notice other universities getting the same treatment. Also, as anyone who gets the Sunday Times or rows themselves will know, the London University team is better than both the Oxbridge crews. Why can't it compete? The whole thing seems to me to be completely outdated. I know that ex-Oxbridge people will be sure to disagree with me, but I am not saying the whole thing should be scrapped. I just think that it should be either widened to make it a real race between the two best university teams in the country, or simply take place between the two teams without all the fuss that surrounds it at the moment. It all smacks of old fashioned elitism; something I am not too fond of!

Well, now that I've been a little controversial, and got that off my chest (ooh er!), I've spotted that I still have half a column left. Good, I do have a few other things to say...

You may have guessed that this is the last column of this term (at least I hope it is, because I have got better things to do in my life than sit in front of an apple macintosh computer!) Now, when I became Houghton Street Harry, I told whoever asked me that I knew only about football, and was happily told that if I would do the column, I could write about whatever I wanted, even if it was football every week. Ha bloody Ha. Most people probably don't care, and I certainly would be happy to do that. Yet the two sports editors, well actually the only one I ever come across (apparently there are two!) hassled me to write about other things. Being a particularly nice person (and if this is edited I'm warning you, I resign), I listened to them, and have written about other things. But now I've decided it's a cheek to tell me what to write, and am going to stand up (well, sit down actually, as it's difficult to use a computer standing up) for my rights.

Okay, you're right. This is only a long-winded way to say what I have been dying too. Come on you Spuuuurs! Yes, I was there when we mauled Arsenal. Ha! Thank you and good night.

Losing Finalists

We travelled down to Exeter by car on the Friday night and stayed in a bed and breakfast in the centre of a very quiet almost empty Exeter. After a night's sleep on a soft bed and a hearty English breakfast we arrived at the courts at 9.30a.m sharp to discover the first sign of life since our arrival-the visiting teams practising. In our semi-finals we played Exeter and unfortunately

were disposed of far too quickly. Kelly Cole, Zoe Taylor and Nancy Rooney had the best matches of the tournament so far but lost in straight sets. Christiane Schmidt went to three sets for the first time against a very foul mouthed opponent and narrowly lost out 7-5 in the heartbreak tiebreak, playing really well. In the doubles the first pair had no luck but Christiane and Zoe quickly took

the first set by which time hunger (it was 2 o'clock and the UAU had provided no food nor any suggestions as to where one could find some) and fatigue set in and they were unable to hold on to their lead losing in three sets. A very disappointing day, however losing to a well coached and strong team was better than doing so against a mediocre one.

Overall we came third behind Exeter and Loughborough with Newcastle taking fourth place. I am pleased to have captained such a determined and supportive womens team and next year hope to do even better.

Look out for the LSE mixed doubles tennis tournament on Sports Day in June on LSE's grass courts in New Malden.

Zoe Taylor

Sweet Revenge

BASKETBALL
LSE women.....28
ESSEX women.....23

Those of you who read last article about womens basketball and laughed at last game's defeat against QMC and what you thought the irony of the heading 'better times ahead' should now retreat in shame...

The team's second game against Essex University on Wednesday 13th of March turned out to be a surprising victory for LSE as our opposition has a history in the National League.

LSE played a good, stable game and the team worked well, to some extent thanks to our coach Fred Simkin.

The game was very even from start to finish with LSE being ahead by a maximum of four

points almost throughout the game. Once again our guards played a leading role in the game. Jen's three point outside shots will be remembered with pride. Even though we lost one of the best players on the team, Anda, after the first half this didn't lead to a sudden collapse for the LSE, something which we were rather worried about.

Essex did display their experience though. They played very

professionally and with admirable organisation.

The game certainly showed that the team has improved and I think will get better. The scores overall during the match were rather low and this is probably the team's weakest point. Another game is being provisionally organised for this term. So wish us luck for that and let's hope it will go as well as last time!

By Pernilla Malfalt.

Spotlight

Robert Smith's insider on one of Britain's top athletes

1991 promises to be an exhilarating year for athletics with Tokyo staging the World Championships in August, while in July our very own city of Sheffield hosts the World Student Games, second only to the Olympics as a multi-event sporting festival. In this column I will focus on a British student and athlete who later this year hopes to be challenging for honours in both these prestigious events.

As yet the name or face of Simon Williams may not quite be a household one in the category of say a Linford Christie or Peter Elliott but such is his natural ability and determination to succeed and current progress within the sport that many track and field experts believe that Simon may soon be emulating the major championship winning feats of the current crop of stars. Simon's career to date provides ample substance on which to base such bold predictions, for despite being only twenty-three years old and competing in events - the shot and discus - where athletes do not reach their peak until the mid to late twenties, the North Londoner has already compiled an impressive catalogue of athletic success. A brilliant youth and junior competitor, Simon amassed no less than four English Schools championships, a host of other UK titles and set a string of national records in both shot and discus disciplines. In senior competitive ranks, the Enfield athlete has competed to no less effect, winning successive AAA shot putt titles in 1988 and 1989 on the way to establishing himself as Britain's premier thrower. For Simon, domestic honours have served as a prelude to international success, with the big Briton attaining top six placings in both the prestigious and highly competitive World and Europa Cups of 1989, before capturing the gold medal in the Commonwealth Games shot putt event early last year.

This latter distinguished international triumph provides Simon with the perfect platform from which to achieve further and greater worldwide success, and in this respect, outside observers agree that Simon possesses all the requisite qualities

that one would expect to find in a champion. First and foremost, there is the high degree of natural ability. At six foot two inches and weighing in at a muscular seventeen stone, the North Londoner is a tremendous all round athlete, possessing an abundance of power, speed and coordination. Indeed such is the range and magnitude of his athletic talent, that no less a judge than the late and much respected Ron Pickering believed that, in his earlier days, Simon should have taken up the challenge of the decathlon, an event in which he felt that the Enfield athlete had all the attributes necessary to succeed Daley Thompson as Britain's 'ten-event' world beater.

However, as the fall from grace of many a sporting genius has proved, natural ability alone is seldom enough to sustain or indeed even reach sporting success at the highest level and Simon scores heavily in the search for success by allying equal amounts of dedication and determination to his God-given talent. Accordingly, the Enfield athlete puts his body through a punishing 365 days-a-year training schedule, often training for up to five or six hours a day, whether weightlifting in the gymnasium, clocking up mileage 'on the road' or taking part in throwing technique work etc. The scale of such dedication is thrown into sharper relief when one realises that Simon currently combines such a punishing training programme with the mental rigours of studying for a degree in microbiology (at Louisiana State University) and in common with most students must spend most of the day in college or often in his case, in the laboratory.

Apart from his dedication to the sport, Simon's determination to succeed is probably best reflected in his appetite for major championship honours, and his impressive collection of domestic and international titles reflects a certain Midas like touch in this respect. There was no greater example of this quality than at the Commonwealth Games in Auckland last year, when literally hours after stepping off a transatlantic flight from the USA, Simon

summoned up the necessary courage and reserves of strength to hold off all challengers and claim the gold medal in the shot putt event.

However, despite such widespread success to date, there

and promoter, hope to rectify in the forthcoming months. My aim is to secure a £8000 sponsorship package for the Commonwealth champion which would cover the cost of such essentials as kit, additional



remains one major obstacle hindering Simon's bid to reach the summit of his chosen profession - the lack of financial support. While most of Simon's international rivals are full-time 'professional' athletes, able to devote a greater proportion of time to training as a result of large-scale company or state financial backing (usually with commensurate increases in performances), our own Commonwealth champion competes on a part-time basis and furthermore as an unsponsored athlete, paying for such essentials as kit, traveling expenses, additional nutrition etc. largely out of his own pocket and from what little can be obtained from close friends and family. While one couldn't state categorically that the lack of financial support will definitely prevent Simon from reaching the top, the absence of funding is certainly a major handicap in the North Londoner's bid to win medals for this country at the big international championships.

However, it is a disadvantage which I, as his manager

and so on for a twelve month period, and perhaps even beyond. With luck, the securing of a more extensive £12-13000 deal would enable Simon to train and compete as a full-time athlete for a period of similar duration. While the figures involved may at first glance seem large, when one considers that they are the sort of amounts which a footballer such as John Barnes or Paul Gascoigne could command in a week, or else could easily be earned in a few days at less exacting sports such as snooker or golf, the figures shrink to their true perspective. In all I believe that any sponsorship package is bound to represent a worthwhile deal in that, above all, the finance will be aimed at nurturing and sustaining the career of the best and most talented thrower to emerge in this country for many a decade and will help to provide Simon with the maximum possible chance of winning top honours for Great Britain in future major championships.