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Michael Howard, Nigel Lawson and Geoffrey Howe on David Cameron



The Beaver

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“Blue-Land settlers” pitch their tents on Houghton Street



The primary intention of this settlement was to raise awareness about Israel's illegal settlement colonisation of the West Bank and of East Jerusalem. Mira Hammad, one of the event's organisers and chair of the LSESU Palestine Society also stated that the event served to raise the profile of the society's 'right to read' campaign. During the twenty-six hour settlement, around 200 students signed a petition requesting the LSE to open up all viable electronic resources to students at the Islamic University of Gaza. The improvised settlement consisted of several tents pitched on Houghton Street surrounded by an imitation of the illegal 'separation wall' in the occupied West Bank. Protestors declared the settlement open only to those wearing blue, and closed to all other passers by, in a bid to highlight the ethnic discrimination suffered by Palestinians living in Israel and the occupied territories. The event ran from 14:00 on the 11th March until approximately 16:00 the next day (Friday 12th). Zachariah Sammour, first-year LLB student, said of the event: 'I think it was a big success, not least because of the diversity and number of people who came out in support of our cause. It has served to inform people about a subject that is all too often misrepresented.'

Governors hear of referendum grievances

Shibani Mahtani

Students dissatisfied with the way the recent referendum was run protested outside a Court of Governors meeting last Thursday, in an unprecedented move condemning the Union's actions.

Approximately thirty students were gathered outside the Wolfson Theatre before the Court of Governors meeting commenced, where the governors were having their tea and biscuits. Protestors were holding banners saying "Reclaim your Union", and shouting chants such as: "We cannot believe their cheek, save the Union from this clique". They were also able to talk to some of the Governors present before the meeting itself, airing their discontent with the Union and referendum process.

According to the current Structure of School Governance, the Court of Governors "discusses the major questions affecting the development of the School". It also "receives reports from the Director and Council" and "authorises the Articles of Association". 5 members of the Court of Governors are students nominated by the

Students' Union. Two of the Union's Sabbatical Officers, General Secretary Aled Dilwyn Fisher and Treasurer George Wetz, sit on the Court of Governors.

This move comes after an official complaint was filed by Mira Hammad against the constitutionality of the referendum, the way in which it was run and the conduct of Union officials. Dissatisfied with the Union's suggestion of 21 days to address the complaint, a motion was further put to last week's Union General Meeting (UGM) weeks after it was first tabled. This motion resolved to "request the Returning Officer to re-declare the results of the referendum based upon the super-majority criterion".

Members of this campaign have been arguing that the referendum was passed unconstitutionally by a simple majority rather than a supermajority, a debate that has been played out in the UGM and the Beaver over the past week. This controversy resulted in a motion of no-confidence passed against the Constitution & Steering Committee at the UGM a four weeks ago.

Voicing his thought on the protest, Fisher said: "Protesting to university management against your own Stu-

dent's Union goes completely against the principles of collectivism and student self-organisation. Students have a right to protest but I have no idea why they chose to protest outside a meeting that has no power over the Students' Union or its Constitution - and the Governors were similarly confused and unimpressed.

"The protest, which was very small and dwindled to six by the time the meeting actually began, provided a contrast between the negativity of the past and the positive future that this Union now has, given democratic reforms and internal improvements over the past year."

One of the protestors, third-year History student Estelle Cooch, said: "The overriding reason why we protested was to make those Governors who reside on one of the highest bodies in the School aware of the controversy that surrounded the Reform process, before, during and after. The General Secretary's report to

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Photo: Shibani Mahtani

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Much ado about something

It is the last week of term, and still there is a lingering cloud over the Union – the reforms.

This is perhaps the paper's 849923rd editorial concerning these once-lauded-now-shamed documents; quite frankly, we are bored of writing about this, really. This week however has seen another spurt of discontent erupt in the Union. This time, a small but determined group of protesters chanted outside a Court of Governors meeting, alerting a crucial part of the School's management structure of the recent referendum debacle.

The protest followed a motion passed at the UGM, mandating the Returning Officer to overturn the referendum results and even insisting that the Sabbatical Officers

attend an 'Etiquette and Interpersonal Skills Refreshers' Session'. As hilarious (and necessary) as this is, the Returning Officer has reaffirmed her belief that none of this was unconstitutional, and that the referendum results will remain as stand.

We applaud this group's effort to ensure that their voices are heard by an authority higher than that of the Union, with limited vested interest in doing anything but abiding by the Constitution. However, it does feel like the brick wall that impedes any progress on this issue continues to stand firm. It is, after all, the last week of term. It still remains to be seen whether the School and its administration will take any action on the official complaint that has been submitted regarding the constitutionality of

the referendum.

As things wind down, and exams approach, we do think this campaign needs to recognize their limits. UGM motions, protests and complaints are not going to result in anything if the powers that be remain insistent that no wrong has been committed, ever, at any point before, during and after the referendum. Perhaps all they can, and should hope for, is the opportunity to table another referendum come the next academic year, which has actually been suggested by the General Secretary all along. We only hope that the new team of Sabbaticals will be open to real concerns, and actual student-led change.

Tender loving reflective equilibrium

A week is a long time in student politics. A whole year then, feels like forever. It has been 21 issues, and our pages have been filled with controversy, vitriol, and sometimes, mature and reasoned debate.

Once again, the School's reputation as a hotbed of student activism has not failed us, with a small but vocal and dedicated group of LSE students participating in demonstrations against cuts, for climate change, against the BNP and even against

the Union itself over the recent referendum.

We would like to thank the Students' Union in particular, for always giving us fodder for these pages. Student activists, and those eager to change the face of the Union should also be commended for caring enough to take a stand, despite the institutional forces that stand in their way. It is hoped that next year will be a blank slate for all of us, the Beaver included. With a new team of Sabbaticals (without any two-termers), we hope that the antagonism and dissatisfaction that has marked the

previous term will be quelled.

Once again, though, we must reiterate that we simply would not have a paper, or stories, or a purpose really without the students and staff who read us week after week. For this, we sincerely thank you for your contributions and caring enough to pick up the paper. As summer term looms closer, we wish all students the best of luck for exams and hope that everyone can look past the Union, and look ahead to life outside LSE.

Collective

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OVERHEARD IN E204

Evaluating Alice's
Sex & Gender column
"It hit a sensitive spot..."

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“Discretion” and “systemic bias” contribute to gender pay gap at LSE

Phyllis Lui

Both the School and the Secretary of the LSE University and College Union (UCU) have issued responses to an article by the Beaver last week regarding the School's diversity profile and gender pay gap.

Data obtained by the Beaver indicated that 2% of the School's student population is Black, compared to a White student population of 42.7%. The other document stated that the gender pay gap is 19.9%, whereas the national average is 12.2%.

An LSE spokesman said: “Closing the well documented gender pay gap is a challenge facing workplaces across the country, and higher education institutions are no exception. Nonetheless, it is a challenge which LSE takes very seriously. Indeed, the decision to conduct an Equal Pay Audit was precisely to identify the areas which LSE should prioritise. The audit showed, for example, that for 92% staff (those on salary bands 1-9) the gender pay gap was actually smaller than the national average (8.1% compared to 12.2% nationwide). However, that this gap still exists is undoubtedly a concern.”

The LSE UCU Secretary Mike Cushman told the Beaver that it was the UCU who had pressured the LSE for sometime to conduct the audit. When asked to comment on the gender pay gap at the LSE, Cushman said that there appears to be “systemic bias” at every place in the system where there is discretion such as in determining starting salaries or market supplements. However, he is hopeful that

the report will provoke a “cultural change at LSE”, as “people will realise that individual decisions that they believe to be fair build up into a pattern of discrimination”.

Responding to the coverage on the School's diversity profile, LSE spokesman commented: “The new LSE Single Equality Scheme (SES) will help to ensure that the School is well equipped to tackle any discrimination or harassment and will promote equality for its staff and students. LSE's diversity adviser, Carolyn Solomon-Pryce will be holding a number of SES ‘roadshows’ this week, which will be an excellent opportunity for staff and students to have their say on the equality and diversity needs of LSE.”

There will be motion submitted to the UCU Annual Congress 2010 regarding pay differentials, that Congress should agree that “posts carrying greater responsibility should attract higher pay” and that senior staff “are being awarded salaries that are excessive compared to other staff”.

The Guardian reported on Sunday that it identified eight universities which are top of a “league table based on a combination of chief executive pay and the proportion of high-earning staff”. Further, it also said that almost 4,000 staff in Britain's 150 university institutions are paid more than £100,000, “compared with only a handful at that level a decade ago”.

The LSE was not in those eight universities.



Photo: Jaynesh Patel

Continued from front page

Court made no mention of the controversy, no-confidencing of the Constitution and Steering Committee and motion at the UGM condemning the Referendum as unconstitutional.

“This is not even an issue of where one stands on the matter, but purely an issue of accurate representation and balance by those Sabbatical Officers we elected to represent us. The protest was an overwhelming success and we were able to speak to some of the highest members of the Schools governing structures to raise our concerns, a right that any student should be able to exercise.”

During the Court of Governors meet-

ing, Director Howard Davies began by quipping that according to the protestors, Fisher was supposedly destroying SU democracy. Fisher then presented the Annual Report to the Court of Governors, which was presented to Council, the governing body of the School, last week. He mentioned that the new Constitution passed by 89 per cent, and according to student governors present, the majority of the governors seemed pleased with his report. He briefly mentioned the issue of the protest, which was then brought up by student governor Sarwar Zaman.

According to reports, the dispute was kept to a short to-and-fro between Fisher, Zaman and two governors. The Chairman did not want the discussion to dominate the meeting and was keen to move on to the next item on the agenda. However, a governor disputed that the reforms were

“none of the Court's business”, stating that it was only right that governors should be able to comment on the report, and that he wanted to discuss the issue.

Another governor, an LSE alumnus and former General Secretary, was interested in the changes to the UGM, highlighted by the protests, and asked the Chairman to outline the complaints procedure.

Adrian Hall, Secretary of the School, who received Hammad's complaint, went through the complaints procedure and noted that the last time such a controversy occurred was in the late 1990s.

Wetz, however, felt that the overall opinion in the meeting was that “the protest was small, being targeted at the wrong audience, and all a bit silly”. He also stated that he spoke with many Governors, some for the first time, who disagreed with the

protest. Student governor, Nik Adhia, echoed these sentiments and believed that “the Governors seemed very happy with the progress of the Union”.

Cooch also stated: “I only hope those

with influence will listen and uphold the concerns of a growing number of students and recognise the motion passed at last weeks UGM.”

LSE100 loses a quarter of its students

Nicola Alexander

More than 100 students have dropped out of the LSE100 pilot course.

LSE100 will be a new compulsory course for all first years and employs the studies of economics, anthropology and history to examine topics such as climate change, culture and the difficulty in predicting great events. The pilot began this January, and student registration for the course was deemed a success, with members from all the School's undergraduate courses.

But of the 421 first years that started the LSE100 course, only 301 remain. Some class sizes have shrunk by 80 per cent since the beginning of the term, with two classes having just two or three students. The course's total dropout rate is 28.5 per cent.

Dr Jonathan Leape, the course director says that some withdrawals were expected, given the optional nature of the pilot course.

“Since signing up for the course gave you the option to attend, with no corresponding obligation,” he said. “It made sense [for students] to register if there was even the smallest chance [they] might like to take the course.”

He also suggested that most of the dropouts did not have the initiative to continue on the course: “Looking at those who have withdrawn, the most striking thing is that most of them didn't engage with the course from the beginning. More than half of those who have withdrawn haven't attended any LSE100 classes, or a maximum of one, and almost three-quarters have attended no more than two classes. So, it looks like the vast majority of those who have withdrawn liked the idea of the course but never really got around to taking it.”

He maintained that the problems with the course are structural rather than

substantive.

The workload is one aspect currently under examination. After a meeting with the Staff-Student Liaison Committee, the course's teachers moved a deadline for an assessed essay.

Timetabling will be adjusted for next year's students. There was an above average drop-out rate of students who had long blocks of lectures as a result of LSE100. According to Dr Leape, arrangements have been made with the timetabling staff so that this is avoided next year, especially for Law students who are currently most affected.

He pointed out that the drop outs do not hurt the pilot's results - the 301 volunteers still on the course include students from every department in the School. According to Dr Leape, students “have consistently praised” the teachers' passion and interactive classes, which include card games, debates and presentations.

Shakira Chanria, a first-year Government student says: “The articles are really interesting because they are about subjects that I would never normally read about. It's refreshing to read about these relevant issues, that are sometimes totally unrelated to my course, from a different perspective.”

LSESU Education and Welfare Officer Emmanuel Akpan-Inwang said: “It is true that there have been several drop outs from LSE 100 over recent weeks, but this is to be expected as students who currently take the course are free to leave it and are inclined to do so when the work piles up. However it is important that as much feedback as possible is received from students this year in time for when it becomes compulsory. I would encourage students to use all the avenues that are available.”

LSE100 conducts ongoing assessments though focus groups and surveys. Ultimately Dr Leape stressed that “many of the benefits of the course will become clear only over time.”

Student representatives on Academic Board instigating change

Phyllis Lui

Student representatives on Academic Board will meet at the beginning of Summer Term to discuss a language policy, feedback and course surveys.

Tasmin Begum, Olivia Capra and Joy Damschroder were elected to be student representatives on Academic Board in Michaelmas Term, and believe that unlike their predecessors, “they were committed to promoting real change and to delivering on manifesto pledges to improve the student experience”.

Since their elections, Capra and Damschroder have attended meetings where both have raised concerns over teaching, resources and Orientation.

Damschroder commented: “We have done a lot to improve Orientation and resources for students as well as trying to extract greater levels of coordination from departments to make these easier and more accessible to students. We have been trying to cut through the “bureaucratic red-tape” of the LSE which is why we went straight to the Sabbs and the Directors to get things done instead of merely sitting in on meeting after meeting.”

“From a postgraduate view there is a lack of inter-department cooperation and lack of standardized information on writ-

ing and procedure, which is behind much of the frustration students are feeling.”

It was raised in a meeting last term that Orientation was felt to lack direction for students, as timetables are not released after Orientation. Another point regarding Orientation was the Student Mentor Scheme, that it could be utilised more effectively. Further it was suggested that “problems with student satisfaction could be addressed right at the beginning of the year”.

Capra put forward a proposal on Undergraduate Orientation which aimed to create “an induction program to ensure that incoming students and their families are provided with an orientation that serves as a transition into academic and social life at LSE, as well as the city of London”. The new orientation style would allow “the operations of the week to be consistent, manageable, and have a lasting positive impression on the students”. This includes updating the Student Mentor Scheme, as well as creation of Orientation Groups which will have more interaction with School and the LSESU.

The LSESU Campaign WAF, to keep Wednesday afternoons free also reached Academic Board earlier this term where it was decided that undergraduates will have their Wednesday afternoons free. Due to timetabling issues, postgraduates will not be able to adapt to this. However, this will

be presented to Student Affairs Committee this Wednesday.

Last Thursday's Union General Meeting (UGM) had a question directed to the Sabbatical Officers regarding what was being done about the late release of exam timetables. Reasons that were given for the late publishing date was that the whole process takes a long time due accommodation of departmental requests, and the generating of exam timetables by the software.

“Last week I sat in on the learning spaces meeting where they asked us what furniture is most effective in classrooms for working on, what areas of the school we felt needed refurbishment, and I wish I knew exactly what the students wanted me to fight for. Instead, I was forced to give my best guess. That is a prime example of the fault at LSE, the break down in communication that becomes a barrier for leaders to effectively represent students,” said Capra.

There will be several papers presented at next term's meeting, including a language policy for the LSE to encourage students to take up foreign languages, a paper on feedback across the School including recommendations on current practices and a paper on course survey and the use of its results.

"Constitutional crisis" declared at UGM

Phyllis Lui

Last week's Union General Meeting (UGM) passed two motions. Questions were also posed to the Beaver about its executive editor elections.

A quorum call was made at the beginning of the meeting, conducted by the sabbatical officers and members of the executive committee as the Constitution and Steering Committee (C&S) had a vote of no-confidence passed against them several weeks ago. The meeting was found to be quorate after another count was done by an LSESU staff member.

Following reports by the sabbatical officers and the executive committee, Beaver Executive Editor Shibani Mahtani announced that the collective meeting to elect the new executive editor would be held that evening, as the previous night's meeting was seen as null and void.

But prior to Mahtani's report, LSESU Returning Officer Shanti Keleman stated that she will not certify Thursday night's elections as she believed that an online voting system should be implemented.

A member of the audience raised a question, stating that he was "confused" as to whose version was the correct one.

Mahtani said that a decision was still pending from the LSESU and the editorial board.

The first motion entitled 'iCan and iWill Enforce the Constitution and The Codes of Practice' resolved to "request the Returning Officer to re-declare the results of referendum based upon the super-majority criterion". Keleman's report referred to this motion, stating that even if the motion was passed by the UGM, she would not overturn the results of the referendum.

Sajjad Hassam spoke for the motion, stating that it had been tabled in Week 5 and that it would be "more constitutional" if the referenda had to pass by a super-majority. Further, advice was sought from a Public Law professor at the LSE.

LSESU General Secretary Aled Dilwyn Fisher then spoke against the motion.

"It isn't because I don't want a resolution, but the Returning Officer cannot do it constitutionally," Fisher began his speech. He further believed that a "practical solution" can be found, as this motion "will not change anything".

The seconder of the motion Frank Magennis called the referenda a "constitutional crisis", that as he was a member of C&S, "it was not my fault they messed up" as "it was not conducted correctly".

Member of C&S Sebastian Steinfeld, spoke against the motion, presenting legal letters that would have the case thrown out, if the proposers of the motion were taken to court. He also believed that as the "student have voted" and they should "respect wishes of the voters". He further alleged that Magennis "made constitutional crisis".

Mira Hammad asked Fisher that if a meeting with the LSESU executive committee could be convened in an hour, why is it that her request has taken so long. Fisher replied that her complaint was very long, and that it would take 21 working days to address. He went on to say that since they were all friends of his and campaigned with him, his "office door always open".

A student asked the proposers of the motion why they had not just proceeded to table another referendum as that is "how mature people would do it".

Hassam responded: "500 people signed the petition, the constitutional crisis term was suggested by Jo Murkens... this can result in Charities' Commission revoking the Union's status."

This is now rebutted by Fisher, "It is utterly false to claim that the Charities Commission will revoke our status. The Charities Commission will look at our Constitution, which passed by 89% using the Charities Commission's own model document".

The motion was passed, which also resolved that the "Sabbatical Officers and

the elected Executive Officers of the Union to book a room for one hour before the end of LT 2010 in which no other business is transacted other than the aloud complete reading of the Constitution and the Codes of Practice to members of the Union".

Further, the motion mandated sabbatical officers to attend "a thirty minute-long student-led 'Etiquette and Interpersonal Skills Refresher' session" in which "basic etiquette and email-response skills are covered".

When asked how he felt about the motion's mandate, Fisher commented: "The motion made some sarcastic resolutions to ask the officers and staff to waste their time doing frivolous 'refresher sessions' that the proposers of the motion obviously found amusing. What is not amusing is that the UGM has once again become hostage to minority interests - which further evidences the need for reform."

"When the quoracy call was first made on Thursday, myself and others counted no more than around 125 or 130 in the room... This again shows how barely 150 students can pass resolutions that claim to speak for all students - it cannot continue this way and that is why we proposed reforms that widen the scope of the UGM towards the majority of students."

Second motion, 'No to summary suspensions, no to police brutality on university campuses - support Sussex students' was proposed by Fisher, but one of the five Sussex students who were suspended, Simon Englert, spoke for the motion.

Englert spoke about how riot police with dogs were called by the management of the university to break a peaceful demonstration. Further, he felt that the community was telling the demonstrators to "fuck off".

The motion was passed without any opposers, resolving the Union to "sign a petition calling for the suspension on the Sussex students to be lifted, due process to be followed and an official condemnation of the police response to the protest released by the university".

Union Jack UGM Sketch



Your faithful Jack isn't what you'd call a numerate person, but this week's UGM extracted a large quantity of urine when it came to that recurring problem of quoracy. A cheeky cry from an Anti-Racist-via-Israel resulted in ten solid, agonising, minutes of "Learn to Count with Aled-Fishy-Dill". Even a brief cameo from Amish Paradise (here on a fleeting visit from Auckland), whose very mental arithmetic baffled virtually everyone in the [eventually quorate] crowd, couldn't persuade Jack to hide his most bemused frown.

With the numeracy hour over, Fishy-Dill then treated us to possibly the worst recitation of poetry since Akpan's Wang's last imposition on an open-mike night in the Underground. OK, Jack confesses that his sometimes-mute acquaintance Chewvy was behind the whole sadistic stunt, but he at least expected our "lame duck" GenSuck to make more of an effort. What emerged from his lips was akin to witnessing a dying walrus preaching the Nicene Creed.

Perhaps the best thing to have come out of the recent elections is the appointment of Jack "I'm actually a Tory" Tindale to the Democracy Committee, whose presence in the SU outer sanctum guarantees the requisite Northern-ness every students' union demands. Resembling a slightly less animated Wallace (& Gromit), Tindale proved his improv mettle with a gem of a line, exclaiming, "Anyone who uses multiple exclamation marks

deserves to be punched!" with a certain grim satisfaction.

Tindale also made it clear on numerous occasions how little time he had for theatrics - a tad hypocritical, Jack opined, considering a few minutes later, in a woe-fully choreographed stunt, the Deputy Irrelevant Manager of Pulse emerged from under Tindale's chair to give the weekly update. The highlight of his personality-free speech was definitely the revelation that he was deputising for his superior because "Stuart's massage overran" - Jack will definitely be asking the Scottish sex pest for his masseuse's number.

After the monumental failure that was the previous night's Executive BS Merchant Elections, Jack was fully expecting a shit-storm of a fight when talk of el Beaver passed through our Returning Officer's lips. Killerman doesn't mince her words, and the torrent of abuse she sent forth on the subject of Jack's employer was pretty comprehensive. Nevertheless, to the weeping Beaver's rescue emerged outgoing Editor Shiby Mutiny, whose fearless on-stage coupling with Pantsman Neck-less placed the ball firmly in Killerman's court. "We WILL carry out our own elections! We DO have the authority to elect our own editor! We ARE the independent socialist republic of Palestine!" shouted Mutiny, and the Killerman had no adequate reply.

She did, however, have something to say about the apeshit nature of the iCan iWill iCame motion. It passed, which means that the Sabbs are now mandated to spend one hour this week in a classroom, reading aloud the Constitution and Codes of Practice. Crazy, the Returning Officer can now be asked to re-declare the referendum results based on a requirement of super-majority, which makes another visit from the SU's favourite Antipodean mathematician ever-more likely. Killerman's response to this undeniably socialist conspiracy?

"The lady's not for turning!"

Jack is the Beaver's anonymous mole at the Union General Meeting, every Thursday at 1PM (though there's only one left this term and it'll probably be pretty dull).



Frustration over delayed works at Rosebery

Dominic Lam

Refurbishment work at Rosebery Hall has been delayed, dashing some residents' hopes of having their windows refitted before the Easter holidays.

As reported last November, Rosebery will have new windows installed to conserve heating energy. The roof, some doors and other external fittings would be replaced at the same time. Scaffolding was put up and structural inspections were carried out. The window replacements were meant to be completed on March 5th. But last week, Rosebery students were told that the project was suspended indefinitely.

A message circulated in early March said that the delay is due to a problem with the window's supplier, and that hall management is working with the contractors to draw up a new renovation schedule. Students will be informed as soon as the plan is finalized. The message stressed that refurbishment work will not be conducted during the summer term.

Ovie Faruq, president of Rosebery's students committee said that the delay is obviously disappointing to residents, but says that hall management have been co-operative.

"I appreciate that unforeseen problems are always likely to crop up with this type of work," commented Faruq. "I am pleased with the level of interaction we have had with management at Rosebery, and students are informed of the progress

of the building work through our weekly newsletter."

He said that students have expressed concerns to him and the committee, and "management are aware of students' concerns."

"At the end of the day, the building work needs to be done...I appreciate students have been living in difficult conditions for a while now but the delays have

come due to unforeseen circumstances. It is, however, highly important that there are no disturbances during the exam period," he added.

In response to inquiries, spokesperson

for Rosebery Hall, said: "We will have a meeting with the project manager this week [to discuss the progress.]"

At the time of print, no concrete working plans have surfaced.



Validity of societies' elections questioned

Nicola Alexander

Some society elections held this week may have been unconstitutional.

Section 7.3 The LSE SU's Constitution states that for elections to be valid, at least 25% of full society members must be present to vote. This has not been the case for many recent elections. Last week's Women in Business AGM was run with just 15 members present - 7 of whom were running for positions - barely five per cent of the society's 300 members.

Still more problematic was the election for President of the Business Society last Thursday's AGM, which one attendant described as "total chaos". All three

candidates running for President secured roughly one third of the vote, leaving the ex-President, Nadya Menshikova, unsure of how to proceed. The constitution states in section 8 that "in the event of a draw between two candidates, a recount must be held". Menshikova, acting as chair of the elections, recounted the votes, the candidate with the most votes did not change, and their majority actually increased.

The constitution does not specify how many times votes can be recounted, but it does say that if results stay a draw, the Societies Officer or a representative can hold a 'casting vote'. Confusingly, the constitution also states that elections can just be run by an outgoing committee member without the supervision of a union officer. LSESU Treasurer George Wetz said:

"The Business Society did not inform the Union that it was holding elections until a few hours beforehand. All information related to societies' elections is given to their Chairs at the start of the year, and it is clearly displayed on the Union's website - it is not our fault if they do not read it."

Election chairs have said that the problem is a lack of communication between the SU and societies. Many society members do not know the details of the constitution as they have not been provided with a copy. (nor do they see it as relevant?)

Some elections have also not been run with any member of the Students' Union executive present. For example, Pulse's Station Manager election held in week 5, did not have a Union official present to verify the votes.

Chaos at election of new Executive Editor

Pria Bakhshi

Lack of organisation at the Collective meeting last Wednesday meant that elections for the Beaver's Executive Editor for the next academic year did not take place as planned.

The Collective, the governing body of The Beaver, was set to elect a new Executive Editor of this paper. But the meeting was cut short because the meeting room was only booked for one hour, and someone from the next group interrupted the meeting to urge the meeting to close.

Candidates' question times were cut short, and in the rush, only seventeen votes were cast but names were not marked off. The LSESU Returning Officer Shanti Kelemen then declared that she

would not verify the results. This confusion rendered the entire election unconstitutional.

In a subsequent email to members, Collective Chair Cilu Mathew apologised personally for the disarray, saying: "I accept full responsibility for what happened and hope this will not reflect badly on the paper."

She called for an emergency Collective meeting the day after to hold the elections again. But Kelemen and some members Students' Union Executive objected, citing constitution rules that states Beaver elections must be called at least a week in advance. They also believed that the Collective should be informed of the meeting more than 24 hours in advance.

The Beaver Constitution states that the executive editor elections are to be

overseen by the LSESU Returning Officer.

The Beaver could choose between conducting the vote online which was suggested by Kelemen, and holding another meeting this week.

Mathew explained that, "due to the potential of abuse with a system of online voting" it was decided by her, "ex-returning officers, the executive editor, and other members of the editorial board" to go for the latter.

Further, an appeal was made to the LSESU Executive last Thursday, who subsequently decided that a meeting could be called for, as only the elections of positions need to be announced a week before.

The elections were held last night. At the time of print, the results of the elections are still unknown.

Goldstone debate comes to the LSE

Marie Dunaway

Last Monday, in the final stage of a lecture series titled 'The Brahimi Panels', debate continued at a packed and politically charged public lecture focusing on the Goldstone Report and the Peace Process.

The event was chaired by Lakhdar Brahimi, previous UN diplomat and envoy, who chaired the study effort to address the dysfunctions of the UN particularly in regards to its information gathering. The panel consisted of Ami Ayalon, former head of Israel's Secret Service and Head of Navy, Karma Nabulsi director of the Civitas collective project and two members of the UN fact finding mission in Gaza: Professor Christine Chinkin at the LSE Professor of International Law and retired Colonel Desmond Travers of the Irish Armed Forces.

Brahimi and other UN members released the Goldstone Report in September 2009 after a four month investigation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. They concluded that both Israel Defence Forces and Palestinian militants were guilty of war crimes and possible crimes against humanity. They suggested that both sides publicly investigate these allegations.

Israel deemed the report as prejudiced. Hamas said it made inaccurate claims about their use of human shields.

In Ayalon's opening remarks he said, "War is horrible. If we don't understand it, we understand nothing. There is no ideal war." He continued to say he had been against the winter 2008/2009 military Operation Cast Lead in Gaza, termed by the Israeli government as a war against Hamas. Ayalon declared that the room had a choice: "to discuss Goldstone or discuss peace. We can't do both." He concluded that international politics should move away from "blame and guilt" and look to an era of "responsibility" to create peace in the Middle East.

Nabulsi, speaking for Palestine, argued that Israel's present position does not achieve peace. She said that international law and politics must be split for the region to progress. She concluded that well implemented international law would ensure justice for both sides.

One audience member shouted at the close of the meeting that Ayalon had 'blood on his hands'. Others remarked on Hamas' using women and children as human shields.

Last week, the European Parliament endorsed the Goldstone report.

High hopes for new SRI strategy

Eunice Ng

The Governing Council approved the Student Union's draft strategy for an LSE socially responsible investment (SRI).

Currently, the Council members and School Officers - those on the school's governing body - must comply with seven principles when considering investment decisions. They must also declare any conflict of interest they have with those decisions. Endowment funds must also appoint managers with a record of ethical decision making. Two Students' Union

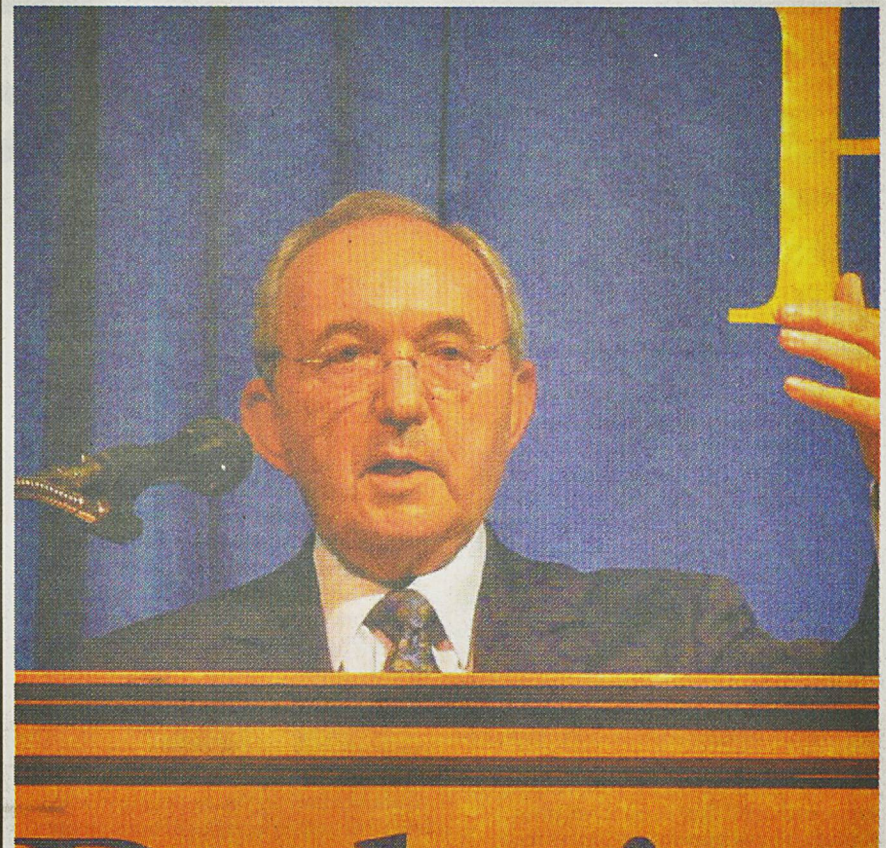
members sit on the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

The new proposal calls for a committee to be formed with representatives of LSE "stakeholders" including students, staff and alumni. It would be responsible for creating a new set of SRI principles for the school. They will advise those who oversee investments on possible strategies for ethical investment. Finally, the proposal asks for LSE to participate in proxy shareholder voting on the decisions of businesses they hold shares with.

In an email to LSE Socially Responsible Investors - a group of people who have attended SRI workshops last term - SU

Treasurer George Wetz said: "In the past, [SRI] proposals always sought to essentially include a list of what we should, or should not, invest in. This was problematic as everyone has a different view as to what is ethical. The new proposal works because it concentrates on the central questions: what is socially responsible, and for whom?"

A final proposal is expected to be heard at Council in the Summer Term.



Comment

A dam-busting year for Beavers

The Executive Editor's customary farewell to friends, and goodbye to others

Shibani Mahtani

Beavers everywhere have had to change with the times this year. Canada's history magazine, who since 1920 has been The Beaver's namesake, changed its name recently to avoid its modern association with a certain part of the female anatomy. Canada's Beaver may have been killed, but despite repeated attempts on the life of this semi-aquatic rodent, our newspaper still stands strong – 61 years on.

It is unfortunate that the paper has had to defend itself on so many fronts this year, rather than simply focusing on our *raison d'être*: providing a campus paper that we at the LSE can be proud of. Michaelmas term saw a motion entitled "Save the Beaver" put to the Union General Meeting (UGM), mandating the Union to return the Beaver to its "former glory". What this means, exactly, we still do not know. And as the previous executive editor succinctly put: "As a contributor to the Beaver's 'former' glory, I would like to tell the proposers of this motion to fuck off and be patronising to someone else."

Thankfully, both the motion and a censure against myself based on the same logic, fell by comfortable margins. A censure is essentially a condemnation against an editor's actions; a disciplinary action against "negligent, neglectful or deliberate actions which compromise the paper". This censure, though, was based on nebulous rants of "dissatisfaction with the Beaver", and the news section in particular. That both these public condemnations fell and evaporated into nothingness indicates that perhaps, these were actions of politically-motivated individuals attempting to punish the Beaver for merely doing its job, whoever that offends.

On a broader level, our Union has seen dramatic changes to its structure this year. A subject of much controversy, the persistent claims that students were "crying out" for a reformed Union remain unsubstantiated. We knew that we would be implicated in this revamp, but never realised how severely the changes could affect us. There were suddenly nine proposed conditions for our editorial independence, where previously this right was only infringed upon should an article be libelous or against the Union's Equal Opportunities policy. Our finances were suddenly completely within the hands of the Union's officials; finances

that could always be retracted should we offend the powers that be. Thanks to a facebook group with 430 members, entitled "The Beaver Must Remain Editorially Independent", and tireless work on the part of previous editors, most of the bye-law was rewritten. What came of it was a much more acceptable and fair protocol, which enshrined our editorial and financial independence. Even more remarkably, a proposed "media group fee", voted on as one of the proposed reforms, fell by a thumping margin. With the help of everyone who has ever been involved and cared about the Beaver, we managed to ensure the paper remains accountable and responsible, but still untouchable.

While this year has been synonymous with particularly bitter sabbatical-Beaver relations, none of the above would have been possible without our dear General Secretary, Aled Dilywn Fisher. Despite a foolish attempt to pull an article on a mere club night without any justifiable reason, Aled was the most receptive to changing the Media Group protocols. While it was a huge victory for the Beaver, it was a victory that was very much dependent on the sabbaticals themselves. His measured and fair interaction with the paper and all its staff throughout the year, despite repeated abuse thrown at him in our pages, is definitely appreciated.

Unfortunately, his team of thuggish Rottweilers have hardly treated the paper and its staff with as much respect or fairness. LSESU Treasurer George Wetz and somewhat ironically, Education and Welfare Officer Emmanuel Akpan-Inwang were often snide, inconsiderate and immature in their dealings with the paper. It is with fondness that I look back on snide renegotiations of our budget, where even the Beaver's gently-spoken General Manager was consistently talked down to. I remember libel check meetings, where phrases like "you are lying! you are living in a fairy-tale world!", "fine, do you want to sit here and do this all night?" and "for a smart girl you are behaving very stupidly" were thrown at me, usually concerning articles that were not even by-lined by myself. Never mind the weekly grind of copy-editing 50 articles every week, or the occasional threat of libel suits - this has undoubtedly been the most trying part of my editorship. It is unfortunate that volunteers who spend hours putting out a paper that students can enjoy and contribute to for free end up feeling intimidated by elected officials for disagreeing with them. Perhaps they perceive this as doing their job; ensuring the welfare of the student body at large rather than the welfare of just the Beaver. However, on several occasions, there has been significant

difference between their tones and mannerism in contrast to that of Fisher's. This conduct is especially worrying since they are given £27,000 to ensure our "welfare".

Amidst all this unnecessary and avoidable politics, the paper has grown remarkably since this time last year. We had more sign ups at fresher's fair this year than ever before. Our pages have consistently bulged with content. This applies to almost all sections, apart from the News section which sometimes found itself scrambling for stories and desperately trying to fill its pages just hours before our print deadline. While the news section should not apologise for important investigations and daring to broach sticky subjects, it admittedly could have tried harder to represent the plethora of student concerns at the LSE. After all, there were one too many public lecture reviews in our paper over the past year. It is also admittedly a lot easier to report on paint peeling off the walls of the Quad, and blaming the Union for this, rather than looking into the School's investments or staff wages. News editors could also have put more effort into training new writers, and making them feel included in decision making; a loyal team of reporters is vital to the sustainability of the paper.

This year has also seen a digital wave sweep across the Beaver. Our redeveloped and revamped website saw about 2,500 independent visitors last week alone, almost matching the distribution of our print version (3,500). The website has turned into a forum for comments, feedback and the occasional debate, fulfilling its purpose of getting more students involved and engaged with The Beaver.

Importantly, this year has heralded a new dawn for media group relations. It has seen combined media group socials and far more interaction between members of the media group than ever before. Notably, the Beaver even had a show on Pulse, and far more members of Pulse radio are not only taking an interest in the Beaver but contributing as well. With the reforms and the new Media Group protocol, there will be far more interaction between various aspects of the Media Group, hopefully pushing us to be less inward looking and a more student-friendly, cohesive, inclusive bloc.

The Beaver is definitely still on an upward trajectory, and continues to see our team of regular contributors expanding. Our editorial board is moving away from being a white, British "old boys club", and represents the diversity at the LSE.

Furthermore, this paper has taken a far more ethical stance this year, treading important issues with concerns of welfare always in mind. We have taken a stand on

issues of international human rights violations, and sexism on campus, to name a few. We have in the past been criticised for mercenary journalism, and picking on individuals for the sake of it, but have ensured that the officials criticised within these pages were always done on justifiable and substantiated grounds.

Of course, it is only appropriate to end this with a word of thanks. This year has seen past editors and members of the editorial board jumping at every opportunity to defend the paper and help out in any way possible. I would also like to

thank our readers for continuing to justify our presence here on Houghton Street. I would like to thank Aled Dilywn Fisher in particular for enduring labourious libel check meetings for not one, but two long years. I do, however, sincerely hope that the next editor can spend more time helping the paper grow and expand, and less time fighting unnecessary battles. I wish the Beaver best of luck for next year, and hope the paper remains a bastion of ethical journalism rather than a mercenary rag, abusing its monopoly on campus.



A collection of this year's Beavers
Photo: Ben Phillips

Gen Sec looks back to the future

Aled-Dilwyn Fisher

Another year is over – and what a year it has been! At this week's Annual General Meeting, I'll be proud to report on a Union that is growing. After a year of record election turnout, record involvement in campaigns, record society and AU membership, and record numbers of students trained by the Union, LSE can still confidently say it has the most active student body in the country and, perhaps, the world.

When I became General Secretary in 2008, this Union was described by an external consultant as the worst managed in the country. Since then, it has been through a huge transformation. After a

complete staffing overhaul, we have staff in campaigns, research, training, democracy and even environmental management for the first time, and we have more staff than ever before to support societies, sports and other activities. On top of this, we have been through a difficult but necessary period of democratic reform. We have new governing documents that reduce the bureaucracy on activists and societies, and we have opened our doors to groups of students that were previously excluded – I cannot wait to see our first Postgraduate Sabbatical Officer elected! Physically, the Union has also dramatically improved – internally, with last summer's long overdue refurbishment, and externally, through our heavy involvement in LSE's project to build a New Students' Centre.

That's not to say that everything has gone perfectly. But, of course, people make mistakes and Students' Unions are all about allowing young people to learn; criticism and differences of opinion are

evidence of a healthy organisation.

Sadly, differences of opinion in this Union often lead to polarisation, and there is still work that needs to be done on the Union's culture. The cynicism and negativity that is often associated with active involvement in 'Union politics' still abounds. A prime example was when a few 'activists' went so far as to protest against their own Union to LSE Governors this week. I couldn't think of a better contrast between the negativity that needs to be put behind us and the positive Union we are building for the future.

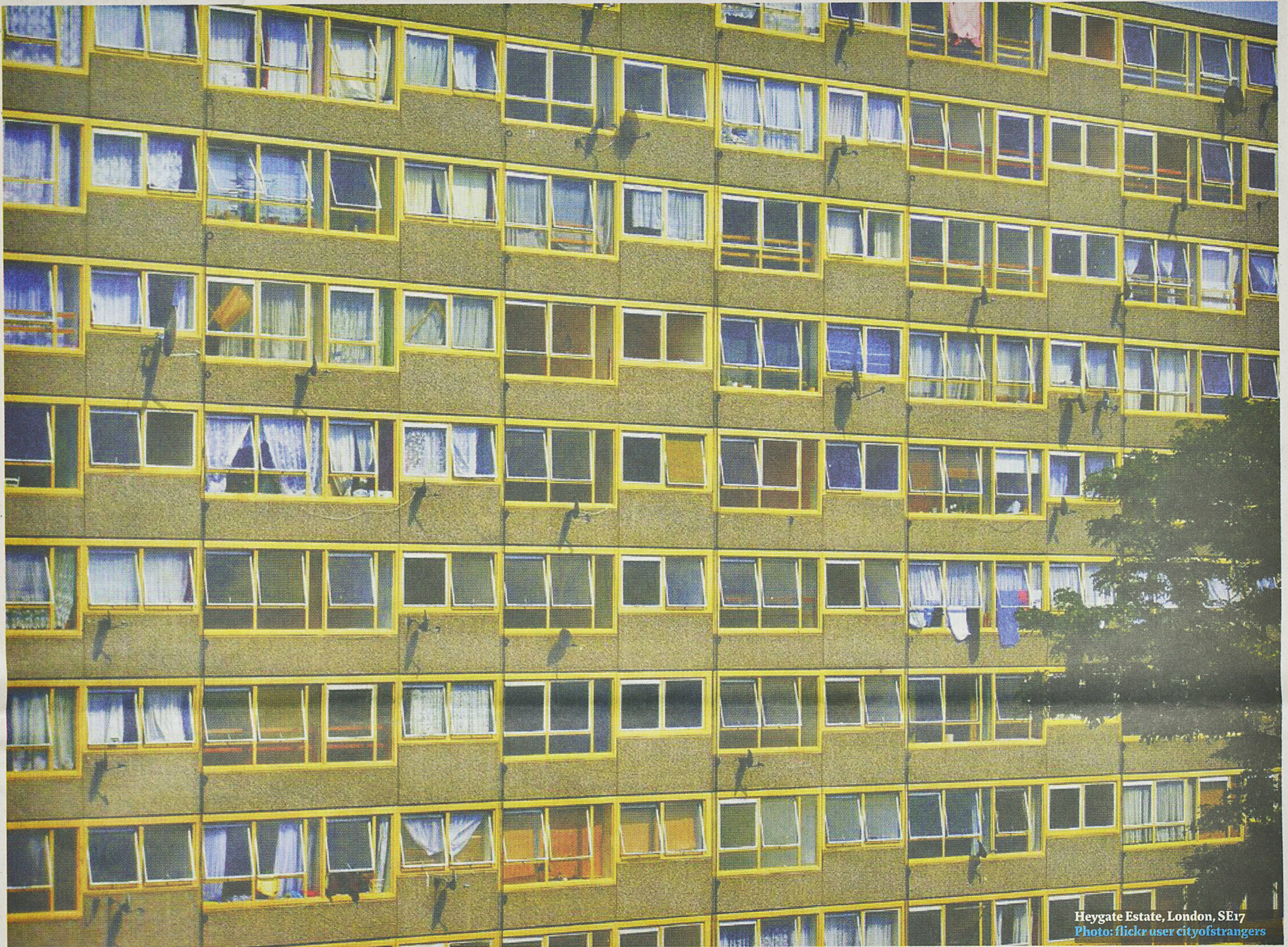
Unfortunately, the Union is still dominated by a clique. These self-proclaimed 'activists' are territorial – they talk about widening involvement but, when challenged, hold on jealously to their self-appointed titles as the Union's 'guardians'. They know what is best for students, not anyone else. When campaigns are organised by people outside this clique, they are shunned; for their own campaigns, they retain strict control and act like their is-

whether an obsession with what goes on between their office in E204 and the Sabbs in the Kingsley Rooms is the best thing for students, or whether it only contributes to the cynicism that often holds this Union back.

Nonetheless, big strides have been made to involve previously distant groups – postgrads (both taught and research), the AU (once seen as separate from the 'central' Union), and others. But more needs to be done. We have not yet even begun to scratch the surface of this Union's potential. But after introspective recent years of deep internal change, the Union is now in a position to realise it. It has been an honour to be General Secretary of this Union, and I look forward to its future. Good luck to Charlotte, Ashok, Charlie, Hero and their team!

issues are the only ones that matter. This is why they are so alarmed that the UGM will now use online voting; they can no longer pack out meetings, passing motions that claim to speak for 9000 students. Still, they shout the loudest and often get the most coverage from campus media.

Coming to The Beaver, being an editor is tough and I have often been in awe of the sacrifices made for the paper. All sorts of groups vie to control the paper and editors have to struggle with the fact that it can become a battleground for these competing interests. I have always tried to support editors when faced with fatuous complaints. It is therefore disheartening that an editorial a few weeks ago tried to claim that the Sabbs had caused a breakdown in the relationship with the paper. It takes two to cause a breakdown and, in my first year as a Sabb, we had a fantastic relationship with The Beaver. We can only speculate why this year was different and, in the end, it doesn't really matter. But future editors need to decide



Heygate Estate, London, SE17
Photo: flickr user cityofstrangers

Inequality for all

Katy Galbraith

When Labour came to power in 1997, they inherited a country with deeply entrenched inequality. Many were optimistic they would be able to reverse this, but thirteen years later the gap between rich and poor has widened even further. The richest 10 per cent are now 100 times better off than the poorest 10 per cent.

The origins of this extreme divide began in the 1980s and early 1990s under the Conservative government, with inequality growing by 60 per cent, but Labour have failed to do enough to tackle the problem, despite heavy investment in public services and successful programmes such as Sure Start.

Social mobility has also rapidly declined; a child born into poverty is automatically at a disadvantage. Of course people can, and do, overcome their background and grow up to be successful but this is becoming less and less likely. The best comprehensive schools are closed off to those who cannot afford to live in their catchment areas.

Working in a school uniform shop

over the summer, it was hard to ignore the divide between mothers of children who often struggled to afford even the cheapest uniforms, and those with children at schools which charge thousands of pounds a year, who happily parted with hundreds of pounds without batting an eyelid.

In London, inequality seems to be magnified, with areas of extreme wealth a few miles away from areas of extreme poverty. In Kensington, the average life expectancy of a man is now 88, whilst in Tottenham it is only 71, less than it is in countries such as Belize, which are poorer and have no national healthcare system. The richest groups will also, on average, have 17 years longer living a life free of serious illness or disability. These inequalities cause not only physical health problems; it has been shown that the worst mental health is found in rich but unequal countries.

Around 19 per cent of children in London are still living in severe poverty, having to cope with Victorian living conditions. One mother said she had to choose between heating her house or feeding her son.

Another factor in poverty is ethnicity; for example, almost half of families from Bangladesh and Pakistan live in poverty.

Many professions like law and medicine are increasingly becoming exclusively middle class, with few people from poorer backgrounds able to afford the years of

training. It is not just lack of money that discourages people, but also social capital. In an article looking at the cyclical nature of poverty, the Guardian noted that 'the business world operates to a middle class/upper class standard', which makes it much harder to enter into without parents who can 'demystify the process'.

Inequality does not just affect lower socio-economic groups but the whole of society. This can be seen even more clearly in countries that are more unequal than Britain, such as Brazil and South Africa. There is clearly a correlation here between the vast gaps in income and the high levels of crime found in these countries. Another effect is the separation and fragmentation of different groups.

Wealthier people may often retreat to gated communities, some of which are entirely self-sufficient, with their own shopping centres and offices, so that there is rarely any need to leave them.

It is a vicious circle; fear of crime leads to the withdrawal of upper and middle class groups from society, leading to further fragmentation and loss of solidarity. With these groups no longer participating in the mainstream life of the city or town, an informal segregation emerges, meaning little or no interaction between people of different social classes. The end result of this is a further increase of fear and lack of trust. Public spaces are often then neglected and abandoned to poverty and crime as the state has retreated and is

In London inequality is magnified further: in Kensington, the average life expectancy of a man is 88, but in Tottenham it is only 71

no longer seen as being able to deal with society's problems.

Although there is nowhere near this level of segregation in Britain, there are now more than 1,000 gated communities here. Violent crime has actually decreased over the last twenty years but the general perception is the opposite, leading people to feel the need to seek refuge from what they see as an increasingly broken society. As a result, there is an increasing lack of social diversity in areas from schools to workplaces.

Recent surveys have shown that while British people have become more socially liberal over issues such as homosexuality and abortion, they have at the same time become more economically conservative, with significantly fewer people in favour of redistribution of wealth.

If the Conservatives win in May, the situation may get worse. Although David Cameron appears more liberal than his predecessors, he is likely to cut spending on public services, as well as on programmes that have made a difference, such as the tax credit system. There have been some progressions recently, such as an increase in the number of people going to university from all backgrounds, but a lot more needs to be done; a more equal society would in the end benefit everyone.

Constitutional quagmire needs a resolution

Franck Magennis

In the Beaver published a fortnight ago (2 March 2010, issue 725), Mr Steinfeld attempted, as so many have already, to close down the debate on the constitutionality (or lack thereof) of the reforms. In his words, 'there is no constitutional debate.' Unfortunately, a significant proportion of the student body would disagree. What is less forgivable is what he proudly admits - namely, that he and others succeeded in preventing students from even discussing the reforms issue, let alone acting to rectify the lamentable situation that has arisen, by dismissing a motion that was submitted to the UGM. Apparently, we aren't allowed to discuss this issue. This is symptomatic of much that was wrong with the process by which these reforms have been passed. Students who offered a dissenting voice have had their views stifled and many now feel completely alienated from their Union.

In his article, Mr Steinfeld consistently misunderstands the nature of students'

objections to the referendum, thereby demonstrating one of the many objections that motivated the no-confidence of the Constitution and Steering committee. The fact that constitutional reform can only pass by a supermajority, mentioned in his article, is but one of the litany of errors that have been conducted in this referendum.

Perhaps Mr Steinfeld has now been made aware of the lengthy complaint lodged by Mira Hammad, which outlines over ten different grounds for dissatisfaction with the reform process? Perhaps he is comfortable with the fact that article three, which passed by the merely three votes, has had over thirty objections raised regarding its conduct? Chief among these complaints were those of several people who have related how they voted in favour of article three, when they intended to vote against it, owing to last minute changes to the ballot. Perhaps, then, he is content that most of these complaints were dismissed before being discussed by C&S, and the remainder have yet to be even considered? Perhaps he is content with this state of affairs. I for one, however, am not.

It seems evident that various members of C&S feel bitter that the students assembled at the UGM chose to vote the way they did. This bitterness is regrettable. However, asserting that the UGM

which carried the vote of no-confidence was packed with what Steinfeld calls 'Pal Soc, the SWP and other usual suspects' is, to use his word, 'insane'. The 'basic truth' is that the UGM was packed with people wanting to see Howard Davies. The vote of no-confidence therefore carried not on the back of a minority clique, but on the basis of popular student dissatisfaction, ironically expressed in a two-thirds vote against C&S, which is more than can be said for the referendum.

Apparently, the 5-2 vote regarding the constitutionality of the motion submitted to discuss the reforms (reported by Steinfeld as 5-1, demonstrating yet another attempt to expunge dissenting opinion) was beset by 'blatant political voting'. It seems that Mr. Steinfeld is projecting his own political bias onto others. It is clear to me (not to mention Public Law lecturer Jo Murkens) that the referendum was unconstitutional. This is a legal, not a political assertion. I would advise anyone who disagrees to look at articles 12.1 and 14.1 of the constitution, available on the Students' Union website. The constitution, which Mr Steinfeld marshals as and when he feels like it, cannot then be dismissed when it conflicts with his political agenda regarding online voting.

Moving on from the constitutional debate (which Steinfeld claims does not

exist), let us consider the political debate regarding online voting, and the reason why so many people opposed it. When people come together in a UGM, they act collectively, coming into contact with like-minded people as well as those they disagree with. Out of this forum, alliances, campaigns, and meaningful action result. By contrast, online voting is an individual act. It serves to atomise the collective student voice, and encourages people to be passive rather than active members of their union. The implications of this 'atomisation' go well beyond the debate surrounding Israel-Palestine on campus, which Mr Steinfeld seeks to reduce it to. It serves to undermine students' power to act collectively to achieve change, a power that we need now more than ever in the climate of public spending cuts and tuition fee hikes.

My sincere hope is that the constitution can be upheld, and the reforms rescued from the constitutional quagmire in which they find themselves. Finding a solution must involve regaining the goodwill and cooperation of those students that have hitherto been consistently shunted aside. However, sticking our heads in the sand and claiming that there is no debate to be had is certainly not a tenable solution.

Women's week is all very well but...

Your Common Chauvinist

Dear User of Women's Hours, As a male member of the LSE gym, I wholeheartedly support your right to women's only hours. Although I occasionally face exclusion from the gym, I find the inconvenience a trivial price for a lasting reward. Women have been trampled by discrimination for centuries; without question, this impediment of human progress has yet to be fully lifted. I was concerned for a time that it nearly had been, given recent gains in social equality. Thankfully, many signs prove otherwise, among them being the recalcitrant wage disparity, sexual mores, and your very own gym discrimination.

I sometimes wonder what spurs your desire to avoid males at the gym. Surely, you have some greater reason than dislike of the more crowded hours. Perhaps you fear that men will stare at you, although I find this hard to believe. The football game on TV is ten times more interesting than your sweaty shoulder press. Perhaps you think a male will simply glance over at you and be overcome by lust. I like this possibility. Maybe we can arrange a few "straight's only" hours and keep the gym from becoming cluttered by the gay man. But these speculations are irrelevant. The discriminatory outcome is all that matters.

The causes of all modern (including sex) discrimination are manifold, but I have no interest in their diversity. I only want their common end: social division. I am glad to see that not everyone has learned from our American friends and the days of Plessy v. Ferguson. Separate is inherently unequal, and where division occurs one group inevitably gains at the expense of others. As a white male, I am a member of the long-standing beneficiary group, and I am grateful for your support. Yes, it may be I who lacks a few hours of gym access, but it is I who prevails in the long run, where any emphasis on the differences, however spurious, between men and women reinforces traditional sexism, leaving men with greater opportunity. So whether you are dogmatically religious, oversensitive, or just deeply insecure, I commend you for endorsing women's hours, and on behalf of all who benefit from social inequality, I thank you for doing your part.

Sincerely,

Your Common Chauvinist

Occupation of Houghton Street

Joana Santos

I am white. I am European. I am a Christian Catholic. If asked to choose between Left and Right, I would choose Right. But race, nationality, religion and political preferences are of secondary importance when faced with the horrendous human rights violations taking place in Gaza.

I am confident when I say that condemning the Israeli human rights viola-

tions in Palestine is not something only Arabs and left wing sympathisers support at LSE, but it is indeed a feeling that many people, from many very different backgrounds, share. This was made clear to me by the number and diversity of students who showed up to demonstrate their solidarity with the Palestinian people during the 24 hour settlement of Houghton Street organized by the LSESU Palestine Society.

Of the more than 30 people who, throughout the 24 hours of campaigning, helped raise awareness of the situation in Gaza through the "Blue Land people" metaphor, only two were Palestinian. Out of the many people who approached us, quite a few were Jewish, and agreed with many

points we raised. All this helps show that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not only a political crisis, but it is also a humanitarian one. With 1.5 million people living in Gaza lacking the most basic humanitarian needs and settlements continuously being built on occupied Palestinian land, ideologies and convictions are - or at least should be - of secondary importance. I share the belief that last week's settlement successfully portrayed this side of the argument, and send a warm thanks to everyone who took part in it.

It is events such as the Blue Land settlement which highlight the diversity of student opinion at the LSE, but which also show that dialogue is key to justice and

freedom, be it in the limited area of our campus, or in the realm of international politics.



Students unite for Chile

Esteban Szmulewicz

As of Wednesday, the Chile Society was officially reconstituted, as a means to integrate and promote the Chilean culture and traditions, but especially to channel relief efforts after the 8.8 Richter scale earthquake and tsunami that hit the mid-southern region of the country.

The group is working on several initiatives to benefit both the victims and the reconstruction of towns and cities around Chile, after the February 27th earthquake. This natural disaster has affected nearly 2 million people, resulted in more than 1,000 deaths and left 500,000 homeless.

The earthquake impacted an area of about 1,000 kilometres, in a region well-known for its wineries, beautiful landscapes, important universities, and key ports. However, as happens in most catastrophes, the most deeply affected are the poorer and unprivileged, which in many cases lived in fragile houses, remote and ill-connected communities, and rural areas. That is where the relief effort

intends to focus.

The Chile Society had been established several years before in order to gather both Chilean students and those interested in the country, supporting events such as the lecture by former President Michelle Bachelet in 2008 and hosting a successful wine tasting last year.

Currently, overwhelmed by the impact of the earthquake, the Society will work, both in the short and long term, to organise several fundraising campaigns, including a wine tasting event at the beginning of Summer Term, and other initiatives where it expects the support from LSE students and alumni, as well as other institutions.

In the meantime, as of the end of Lent Term, several Chilean students have joined students from all over the UK in order to raise money for the British Red Cross. Don't be surprised if you see LSE students outside Public Lectures. They are helping us reconstruct the country!

If you want to help in these efforts in any way or join the Chile Society, please email the society President, Esteban Szmulewicz (MSc Comparative Politics), at E.Szmulewicz@lse.ac.uk or the Secretary, Roberto Pérez (MSc NGOs and Development), at r.i.perez@lse.ac.uk

Letters to the Editor

Madam - I must say I was shocked, confused, and quite frankly offended to read the sentiments described in a comment piece in last week's paper (Broken dreams of student politics).

The author, who ran the colourful campaign of Ashwin Desai for anti-Racism officer, made sweeping (and incorrect) statements on Islam and Judaism (which he describes as 'political affiliations'), and on the LSE Islamic Society, whose members apparently cannot think for themselves and instead vote exactly in line with the endorsement email (which incidentally implores them to read the manifestos of the candidate prior to voting). I understand his friend lost the campaign, and that is unfortunate, but this is no excuse to make bitter statements which belittle two major world faiths and the intelligence of LSE ISOC members.

Ladan Shiek Mohammed
BSc International Relations and History '11

Madam - Looking at the front page article of the Beaver last week: 'Sizeable disparity in diversity profile...at LSE' I couldn't help but assume that April Fool's Day must have arrived early.

In the article, we were told that 42.7 per cent of the School's student population is white, and are encouraged to interpret this as evidence for a huge disparity in the LSE's diversity profile. Though the article is very well written, this does not prevent its conclusion from being laughable. The percentage of white students at LSE points to anything but a lack of diversity. Given that the UK population as a whole is 92.1 per cent white, having only 42.7 per cent white students is a sure sign that the school has succeeded in diversifying its student population; at least 57.3 per cent must be from ethnic minority backgrounds! If anything, given the statistics we are provided with, it would just as easy to conclude that white students are underrepresented on campus and in this sense, perhaps the author would have done better arguing that the LSE doesn't

adequately reflect the UK demographic make-up, rather than that it underrepresents students from ethnic minority backgrounds.

The LSE prides itself on its international, multi-ethnic and varied community. By putting a sensationalist story about an imagined 'absence of diversity' amongst the student population on the front page of the Beaver, the author has merely prevented a more worthy story from making the headlines. Anyone who has walked down Houghton Street will understand why.

Sam Williams
BSc Politics and Philosophy '12

Madam - In reference to Treasurer George Wetz' letter of March 13 I must say I am proud to be so relevant to George's tenure a full year on from my graduation.

While he did indeed win his election fair and square, I must take issue with his figures. He claims to have won a majority of "around double." Of the 1,557 votes

cast in our race, George won 54 per cent (845 votes) to my 37 per cent (584 votes), which is a fine victory to be sure, however, in order to have won by anything like 2-1 he would have needed an extra 323 votes or thereabouts. With his clear lack of mathematical flair, I wonder if it is such a surprise George spent so much of the Union's money on a frankly tacky refurbishment of the bars, or lost so much in legal costs.

As if that isn't enough he claimed it would be "bold" to dare attack his credibility or even "derived by a fictional mind". So what of the student body's overwhelming rejection of the 'Media Group Fee' and 'External Trustees' - both of which Wetz pushed so hard for in his own referendum? Likewise, his many failed attempts to take over this paper would be equally laughable if they weren't so serious. Or how about the fact he will leave the Union more divided and angry than when he arrived, primarily because of his disregard for the constitution, enunciated in a UGM motion passed last week. Embarrassingly,

if unsurprisingly, the student body also voted to banish him to an 'Etiquette and Interpersonal Skills Refresher'. All this is to say nothing of the official complaints leveled against him by fellow students, which will probably be seen to by the school. All in all, I'd say his whingeing in last week's paper is the sign of a sabbatical officer with a very tarnished record indeed.

But not to worry George! No less than 12 months ago, you beat me in an election...

In Solidarity with a fantastic paper,

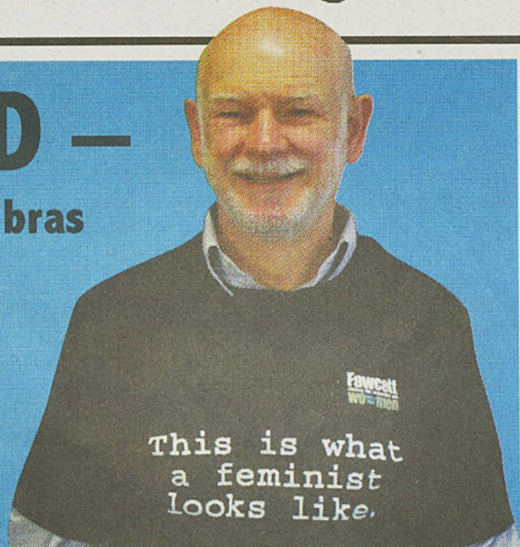
Seph Brown
BSc International Relations '09
LSESU Anti-Racism Officer 08-09

Thanks very much to all who have contributed to Comment this year. It wouldn't be anything with all your efforts.



Howie D –

Why I'm burning bras for feminism
Page 18



Plus!
When Lockey met Mandy
Page 32

SClub7 fanclub, Noddy Holder Appreciation society, Justice for Burmese civilians, 'I got laid at Butlins' – what do these have in common? They're all Facebook groups that Richard Phillips is a member of...

DICK'S SECRET FACEBOOK SHAME

By Armin Tamzarian

IN H://BOGNOR REGIS.EXE

DISCREDITED LSE teacher Richard Phillips is affiliated to a complex web of Facebook groups and fan pages.

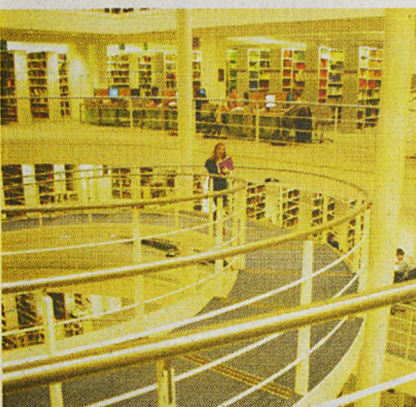
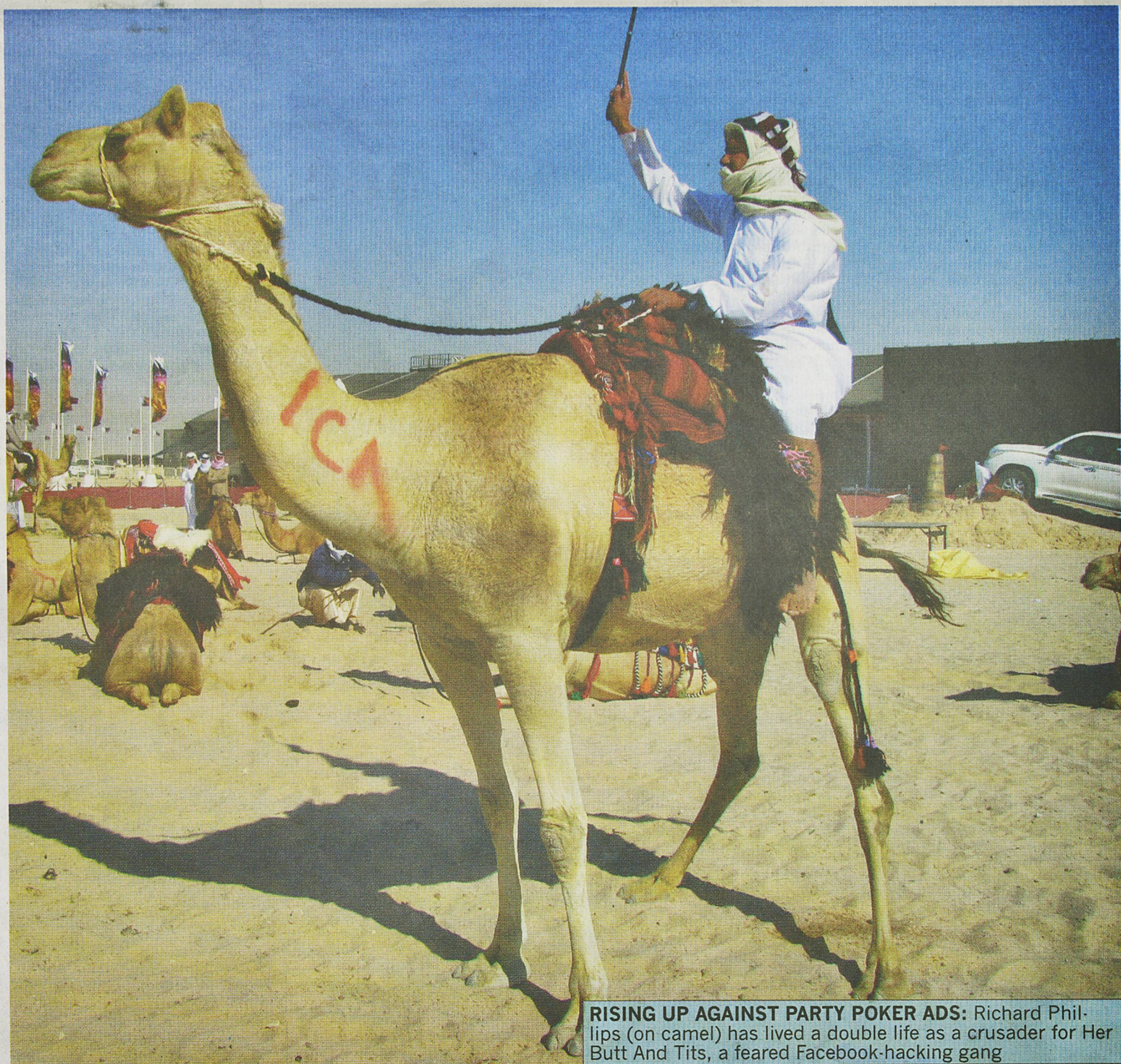
The Daily Male can exclusively disclose an extended list of group affiliations of the School's very own controversy-courting white supremacist, after it was accidentally left on the seat of a bus.

Found on Phillips' Facebook page were 'I get addicted to songs and play them on repeat for hours', 'Who thinks KFC should deliver?', 'Man Flu - it's real', and 'F*ck off Party Poker, I'm trying to have a wank.' Although Phillips was unavailable for comment at his home, his lawyer offered this statement: "Look, the Her Butts And Tits revelation was one thing, but come on guys, surely everyone hates it when those fucking party poker ads keep popping up."

Shockingly, Phillips has also been found to be associated with the 'I hope Blade shows up in the next Twilight movie and fucks everyone up' movement and the 'Heterosexual Meat-eaters Club'.

A fellow member of the latter, who prefers to remain anonymous, claims Phillips once jested "I love steak and vagina, so this is definitely the place for me." Of the former, Phillips is on record saying, "Blade has a pimp samurai sword."

Of these developments, Delphic oracle and part time academic Sonybrava Kawazaki opined: "Phillips' love for red meat and high-octane Wesley Snipes movies clearly illustrates that all Muslims are terrorists."



PREACHING TWILIGHT HATE: The Library, where Phillips brainwashes students into hunting down teenage girls with Robert Pattinson crushes.

RISING UP AGAINST PARTY POKER ADS: Richard Phillips (on camel) has lived a double life as a crusader for Her Butt And Tits, a feared Facebook-hacking gang



ALL CARDS ON THE TABLE: Albarn has played a complete unknown to replace Dave Rowntree - a disaster waiting to happen?

Superhero outfitted election candidates branded a 'disgrace'

BIGGER societies came together in Week 9 to form a united front against perceived discrimination, saying the highly politicised smaller societies do not leave room for fair representation in student elections.

During a 3-day protest outside the New Academic Building, members of a diverse range of previously passive societies vowed not to sleep until their concerns were addressed.

"Societies like Comic Geeks United take this as an opportunity to further their plans of world domination," said one of the protesters. "They have nothing to do with the school or with students' interests, but use their influence and expertise to hack into the school system and send mass emails telling students what to do."

This came after a number of election candidates offered contradictory statements to rival groups, in attempts to gain more endorsements. For instance, one candidate promised to remove sexist publications from campus during the Gal Soc hustings, then at the Guy Soc hustings stated his intention to send copies of The Sun as part of the Freshers' Pack.

"It is absolutely appalling how far candidates are willing to go in pandering to the whims of the small societies," said the same protester, who preferred not to be named.

By **M'dear I'm Sorry**

ON HOUGHTON STREET

It is reported that Camden Town has run out of superhero outfits as candidates rush to buy them and demonstrate their sympathy for the Comic Geeks. Houghton Street has been painted red and blue during the frenzied efforts at graffiti-campaigning.

When questioned about the tastefulness of election campaigning and gimmickry, a spokesperson from the Artistic Union (AU) had the following to say: "Nigh umoler, mah." This was later translated as: "I am hungover, mate."

He then proceeded to remove his trousers and celebrate freedom of expression. The other protesters encouraged him with chants of "No to bloc-voting!" and "Yes to the individual!"

A representative of Comic Geeks denied allegations. "We cannot tell students who to vote for," he said. "If they choose to take our suggestions, then it is of their own free will."

The protest was eventually disbanded by unidentified men wearing dark business suits and sunglasses.



Blur hire little drummer boy for African tour

By **Burger Barry Beelay**

ON PEYOTE

BRITPOP stalwarts Blur, famed for their chart-topping hit 'Country House' are to replace their drummer with an unknown student from north-west London.

Filling in for Dave Rowntree on a forthcoming tour of Africa will be Satchmo "Bo-Bachi" Pate, 19, of Illford.

With their drummer Dave Rowntree now a fully qualified lawyer and unwilling to participate in yet another tour because of his well-publicised reluctance to 'flog Alex James' cheese', Pate has been hired to play the table in the next Blur tour making its way around Eritrea and Djibouti next year.

The band's lead singer, Damon

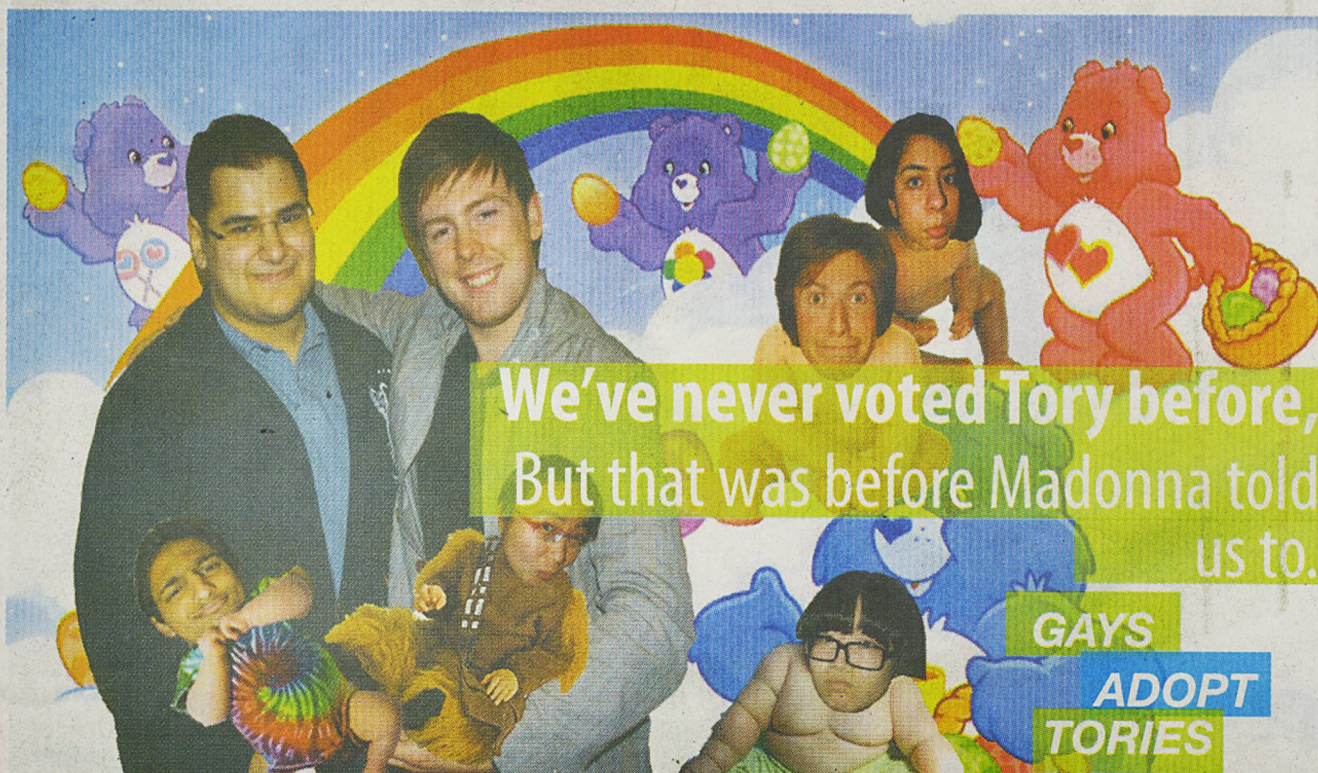
Who our money would have been on...

Shlomo - The Israeli beatboxer has previously performed with Björk at the Olympics, and could easily use his pioneering techniques to work wonders on popular Blur songs

Lars Ulrich - He may be uglier than sin, but the Metallica drummer knows a thing or two about percussion (and tennis!) and would have no trouble bringing a Scandinavian metal vibe to Blur's more down-tempo ballads

Albarn, said: 'We're really happy to have Sachin's table-playing talents in the band. There's no doubting that where playing the table is concerned there's no other person in the world like Sachin, and I should know: I've worked with Mark E Smith and Snoop Doggy Doggy Dogg Dogg Dogg for goodness sake.'

Though Rowntree could not be reached for comment (he was taking part in election hustings organised by Westminster Council), a spokesman stated: "Dave has always been reticent to commit to further Blur performances. With his burgeoning career in politics, Dave is simply unable to fulfill touring commitments, let alone the rigours of life on the tour-bus." The spokesman continued, "We're absolutely thrilled that Damon has found a replacement, though Dave is unsure as to how well hits like 'Parklife' and 'Song 2' will translate onto the table."



**We've never voted Tory before,
But that was before Madonna told
us to.**

**GAYS
ADOPT
TORIES**

EDITORS' SIX OF THE BEST

- 1 Pregnant Maidstone teen gives birth to immigrant heroin syringe
- 2 HackPUSS Society infiltrated by radical Buddhist gang
- 3 Frank Cowell to judge next series of LSE's Got Talent
- 4 Micro I gives you cancer
- 5 Micro II gives you cancer
- 6 Paris Hilton starts Office Hour in NAB

LSESU NextTo Palestine Soc linked with fake ID robbery gang

Shorts Man reveals an impenetrable Abrahamic circle

THE LSE NextToPalestine Society has come under fire following yesterday's accusations that several prominent members have used forged identity documents at a local off-license.

"We were just buying some Special Brew and a bag of Skittles to celebrate last week's announcement of another 1,600 homes being built in East Jerusalem", said Bernard Cohen, a prominent member of the society. "But there's no definite proof we were using fake IDs. Even if we were, we wouldn't tell. We have a policy of ambiguity on these matters." In retaliation to the accusations, the society is expected to declare a state of siege on the off-license in-

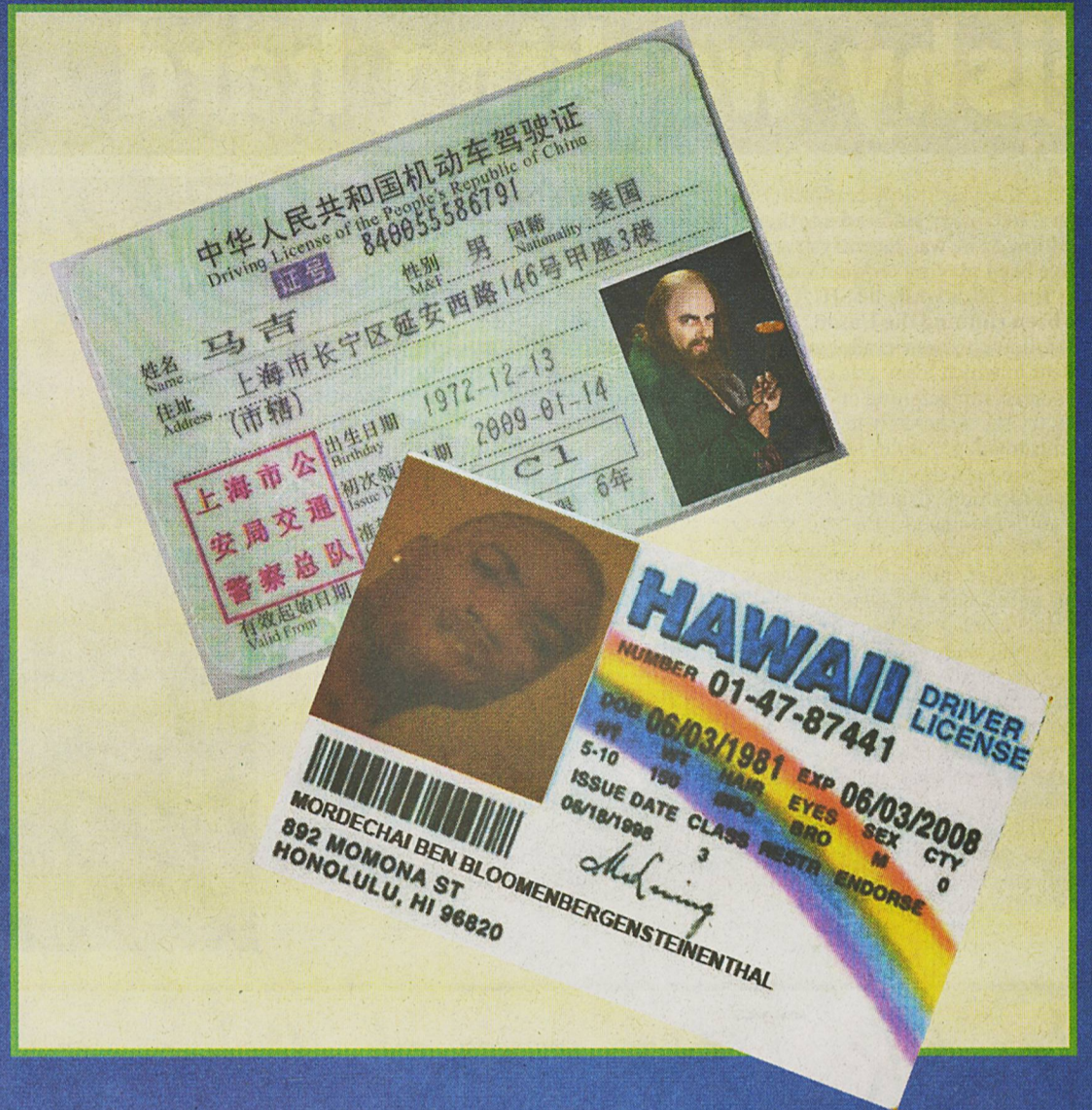
involved later today. "Naturally we hate peace, and like laying siege to things, whether it's an oppressed people or a local corner shop", said Cohen.

The victims of the identity fraud are thought to be furious. In a press statement yesterday afternoon, William Raymond Norwood Jr. (pictured), better known as pornographic actor 'Ray J', said he would be "hitting them hard".

"The IDs were "excellent forgeries, real professional work", commented Mr Patel, the off-license owner. "I only realised they were fake after they left, when it dawned on me that Mr. Bloomenbergensteinthal was not, in fact, a black man." It later became

apparent to Mr. Patel that Bloomenbergensteinthal's accomplice, Cohen, was not the primary antagonist of a popular west end musical.

"They were clearly over the legal drinking age too, which leaves me baffled as to why they'd even use fake IDs. The whole story doesn't make a lot of sense, to be quite honest."



The Israeli flag, the secret symbol of this elusive and dangerous movement

C ya L&r prpr Nglsh!

- Funding cuts spell out disaster for Beaver articles
- Future of historically lame newspaper in disarray after Union lights a match to their finances
- All articles will be limited to 140 characters

By OILY DESPISEMAN

FYI, fanx 2 furda swngn cuts 2 d MG bgt, d BVR hs bn 4ced2 slsh pg #s.

D ed bord, keen 2garan-T d papaz scope'ndepth of cvrage, av D-sided 2 eradict8 hyprble, ful centncs n prpr wrds. N der plce wil be mor scinct txt tlk. Shibni Matni, d papaz X-ed, ad dis 2 say. 'TBH m8, whn i 1st hrd bout it I rofl-d. I fort Wtz woz jkn. Bt dis is serous. No loling mata m8.

When Peltz met the Jonas Brothers...

By SACK INMOUTH

THE Beaver's self-styled "filthy-mouthed fucker", Chastity Pelton, has taken the famously clean-living Jonas Brothers on a two-day sex-fuelled romp. (Our leads are too long, yes).

The paths of Pelton and the Jonas Brothers crossed unexpectedly when the former was travelling through Seattle on a book tour, publicising her new release, *The Virgin Diaries*. The Jonas Brothers were staying in the same American city while recording their new album. During the two-day binge, they indulged in an orgy involving sheedy role-play, huge endowments, and cream skimming.

Beaver criticised by Shag-atical Officers for impenetrably long headlines in first week of Michaelmas Term

I think that just about covers everything.

PALESTINE

The truth is out there...

By Shibby Mutiny & Seth Browny

ON HOUGHTON STREET

NO, really, that's all.

Fishy working hard - at playing croquet!

OLED Dillsauce Fishy's credibility as General Secretary suffered another huge blow as he was recently revealed to have been playing croquet on Lincoln's Inn Fields while he SHOULD have been running the Union.

It follows just weeks after a similar incident in which Fishy was caught red-handed campaigning on Houghton Street, trying desperately to persuade students to adopt Apple's latest revolutionary product, the MP3 playing, soft-drink containing iCan device.

Photos obtained by the Male's source reveal Fishy relaxing with former Snubbs Sweeney Barber and Dani Smelldon, as well as perma cling-ons Andrew Wrong and Pants-smell'us. When confronted as to how he could justify his £126,000 a year salary and still find time to play croquet when there were students out there dying, Fishy said "I'm a tyrannical dictator, doncha know - haven't you ever read the Beaver!?" before being whisked off in a Jaguar.

SU lack-of-Communications Officer Bob Slow claimed that Fishy had in fact been in the office all day, which just goes to show how much he knows. An of-

By **OLIVER TOWNSEND**
ON THE LAWN

Official statement released by the Students Poo-nion tried to downplay the incident, claiming that Fishy was in fact conducting the biggest ever survey of students, and that one of his questioning methods involved taking students out and having one of his infamous 'chats' with them over a pleasant game of croquet.

When that wasn't bought, they tried to claim that he was on his Utter Garbage Meeting enforced holiday following the illegal iCan campaigning, but this was similarly dismissed.

At the time we went to press, rumours were rife that GalSoc were planning an occupation of the Kingsley Rooms in protest at the soon to be gone GenSec's ineptitude, though many are doubtful that this will achieve anything, as the Sabbs already do no work.

Incidentally, Fishy completed his round with a perfect score of twenty-six.



ECHOES OF PRESCOTT?
Of course! Sports journalists are lazy, and you know it.

SEE SOMETHING FISHY? Oled Dillsauce Fishy (centre) enjoys a casual spot of croquet at the expense of high-fee-paying International students

Jock Tanned-Ale a hit in Barnsley

LABOUR Party bosses have been baffled with the storming success of 18-year-old LSE Government and History student Jack Tindale in achieving the Barnsley constituency nomination in the run to replace the incumbent Labour stalwart MP, Jeff Ennis, who's retiring after the May election 'to eat oatcakes and mine coal with his family'.

Although porn director Anna Arrowsmith - professionally known as Anna Span

By **Burger Barry Beelay**
NOT IN BARNLSLEY

- was said to be keen to secure the nomination of the seat, she quickly dashed over to the Liberal Democrats and gained a nomination in Gravesend in Kent after the strength of Tindale's support was made clear in the constituency and after Vince Cable and Chris Huhne, both Liberal Demo-

crat heavyweights, made their admiration for Arrowsmith's work known.

A 340-year-old ex-miner, known locally as 'Mad Cyril', has declared his support for Tindale, and says that much of Barnsley supports him. 'He's a top lad, 'e 's. I know 'e gone dow' ta London, bu' 'e's a 't'p f'ler. 'E's be' deliverin' Lab'r leaf'ts sin' 'e we a nip'r, 'tat oe, sin' I w're abo' 319, I'd sa. W' 'ov' 'im 'ere, I'ke,' before he shouted for no apparent reason, in a tone rather less

clear to what he'd said before: 'Where's North from 'ere?!

Another friend of Tindale, 95-year-old 'Madge', a former 'coke shifter', said of the prospective MP: 'Oh, he's lovely. Every Sunday before he went down to London he'd always help me with my washing and ironing, and sometimes gave me a quick pat on the be-hind, if you know what I mean... He's a lovely lad, is Jack. Big, as well, aye-aye.'

Immigrants cause cancer - leading BS merchant

By **AHMAJIN PHILLANI**
FOREIGN AND TORY

NEW findings from the LSE's notorious oracle of wisdom, Dr Kamikaze, have shown a significant correlation between the number of immigrants entering the UK, and the levels of prostate cancer reported amongst UK citizens.

After the ground-breaking discovery of the cancerous substances contained in Chinese medicine, this new discovery has yet again caused questions as to whether or not the UK borders should even be open to members of 'cancerous countries'.

What is more, it appears that not only is the influx of immigrants causing a spike in the number of cancer cases being reported, but given revelations about how frequent fliers are more prone to developing cancer, namely stewards, stewardesses and pilots, it seems unfair of companies to put their employees at such risk, only to bring with them more risk of cancer. Coupled with the increased risk of cancer amongst impoverished people, it seems only reasonable that air travel to less economically developed countries ought to be the first to be restricted.

Kamikaze has discovered that, due to the emotional response from leaving a home country and the anxieties experienced in relation to the imminent culture shock, a quantum interference with the

immigrant's brain physically and chemically alters the radiation emitted, which, amongst domestics, would ordinarily be harmless. The wavelength of this unique spectral emission is similar to that of gamma radiation, and is consequently considered a level five carcinogen - the same classification that is bestowed upon unstable nuclear-testing sites.

His research extended so far as to discover the existence of several remote cancerous religious sects, located deep in the Amazonian jungle and in scarcely populated habitations of Antarctica. Although direct travel has not yet been established to and from these undisclosed locations, with the ever-developing technology in travel, it appears to be only a matter of time until these unidentified and un-explored strains of cancer reach the white cliffs of Dover.

With an ever changing way of living in the UK, and constant awareness of sources of cancer, it seems only sensible to reduce both the immigration rates and the religious diversity in this country. With a general election looming, this should be high on the parties agendas. Clearly a Conservative government would stem the influx of immigration along with promoting the infiltration of Christianity back into our more and more "un-British" system. It is therefore the advice of many accedemics that voting Conservative in the next General election is realistically our only hope of saviour from this imminent cancer ridden disaster.

BLAIR COMES TO LSE WITH BEGGING BOWL IN HAND

By **Burger Barry Beelay**

IN THE NAB, BEATING UP POOR PEOPLE

TONY Blair, the former British Prime Minister, has accepted the opportunity to become a non-paid lecturer and tutor at the LSE, working in the university's Philosophy department.

He said accepting the place was to show that his 'real goal in life is the nourishment of young brains at one of the best institutions in the country'.

Blair said at a pre-arranged press conference yesterday: 'Helping LSE students is what I've always wanted to do. Being Prime Minister was merely a stepping stone to achieving this goal. The fact that Howard Davies and several LSE academics, like Tim Besley, spoke out against Gordon's [Brown] callous spending sprees, which are quite clearly revolting and a stain on the British name, only made me only more certain that the LSE is the place for me.'

Blair's well publicised lecture series at Yale University ends this summer, and the United Nations' Middle East peace envoy was delighted that the university had given him the opportunity to give his time for free. The LSE have made it clear that they will pay Blair only a £5 lunch salary for each day that he is there.

'I don't need the money. For Christ's sake, you know I don't need the money, so don't take the piss,' Blair said when a journalist asked him whether the lack of money was a worry for him.

Many students are pleased that he is there: the Beaver newspaper, in a poll taken on Houghton Street by polling agency BeelayMORI, showed that 92.222224459324928347 per cent of students were 'very pleased', 'gushing' or 'nearly or were currently having heart palpitations' as result of Blair's imminent arrival at the university.

But the move is likely to 'stir a bit of trouble with regards the Islamic and the Palestinian Society', an insider said. Although there was no official response from the university regarding possible tensions between Blair's arrival and academics and students opposed to his policies when in government, the head of the Israel Society was apparently seen by a source for this newspaper doing cartwheels down Houghton Street on Monday lunchtime at approximately 1:33pm.

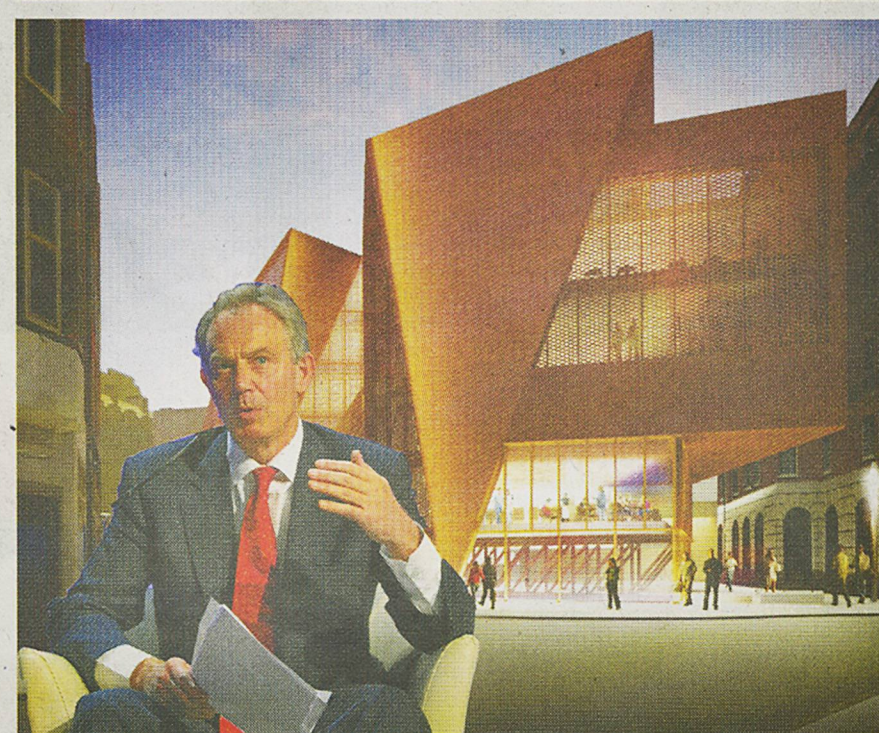
The LSE Live Music Society, however, welcomed Blair's appointment. 'We know he's Grade 3 on the guitar so he might be quite a good addition to the club. We hope he might be able to get Bono down here at some point; they're good mates, apparently. But not The Edge since he's quite obviously a wanker. Actually, I know Blair's quite good mates with Thin and Crispy, the U2's PA, so we might get him along too if possible.'

There was also a welcome from the Athletics' Union (AU). The new President of the AU said he was keen to get Blair to show off his 'silky and definitely very sexy footy skills' demonstrated with then-Newcastle United football manager, Kevin Keegan, as part of a party publicity shoot for the Labour Party, in 1995.

Sir Howard Davies, the Director of the LSE, was happy to take on Blair: 'Quite frankly, as Roy Jenkins said, Tony Blair is the owner of a second-class brain and will therefore settle in at the LSE no problem at all.'

Blair is known to have links to the LSE - his wife, Cherie, passed her LLB with a first in the late 1970s - but it wasn't clear what drove him to choose the LSE over other institutions which had invited him to lecture there. Blair's Faith Foundation, when contacted for further details of educational centres which had approached Blair, named The Friary School, a comprehensive school in Lichfield, Staffordshire, St Xavier's College, a private Catholic boarding school for LGBT students in Wokingham, in Berkshire, and St. Cyril and St. Methodius University, in the Bulgarian city of Veliko Tarnovo, as the 'outstanding choices' from which Blair could choose to work.

Blair starts work at the LSE at the start of the Michaelmas Term in late September 2010.



Features



Photo: Jaynesh Patel

Conservative giants

Benjamin Phillips interviews Michael Howard, Nigel Lawson and Geoffrey Howe

In just a few weeks, the British public will choose the party that is to form Her Majesty's next Government.

While after thirteen years in power, New Labour and Gordon Brown are well-known to voters, David Cameron and his Conservative Party are not. DC (which is what Tory Parliamentarians and activists call him) has been leader of the Conservative Party since 2005, and is more than likely to be the next Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. It would be good to know what his premiership might be like. To learn more about the future Conservative Government, we solicited views on David Cameron and the Conservative Party under his leadership from Michael Howard, David Cameron's predecessor as Party Leader; Nigel Lawson, Chancellor of the Exchequer under Margaret Thatcher, and Geoffrey Howe, Foreign Secretary under Margaret Thatcher.

Michael Howard, in fact, used to be David Cameron's boss. Not only did DC succeed him as Leader of the Opposition, but was also special adviser to Michael Howard when he served as Home Secretary. Michael Howard did much to prepare the ground for David Cameron's 2005 leadership bid. Did he ever mark the man who worked for him in the Home Office as a future leader of the Party? "Oh I did, certainly. His mother reminded me that I had told her more than ten years ago that if it was possible to say if someone in their twenties, which he was then, that they would become Prime Minister, I would say David would become Prime Minister, which I think he will."

Nigel Lawson was Chancellor of the Exchequer from 1983 - 1989, and was so good at his job that Mrs Thatcher held him to be her "unassailable Chancellor". He thinks the number one problem a future Conservative Government will face is the very real structural issue of public finances. In a bad state before the recession hit, and of course now much worse, the question of how the government raises revenue, apportion expenditure, and controls the vast sums borrowed under Gor-

don Brown's Chancellorship will need to be addressed immediately. Lord Lawson believes this issue to be more important for Britain than for any other country in the world. "The state of public finances is very, very bad indeed."

The former Chancellor has in recent years become a notable figure in the field of climate change economics. What does he think of the fact that most Conservative PPCs (prospective parliamentary candidates) do not follow the 2006 mantra: "vote blue, go green"? "I think that is probably the case. It'll be interesting to see, in the next Parliament, how opinion evolves. You're not going to get any change between the next few days and the election. I mean people have staked out their positions and they'd be bloody stupid if they shifted now, but I think that after the election you will see an evolution. And the fact is in the Conservative Party, both Members of Parliament, candidates, and a lot of voluntary workers, are very unhappy about this policy, which I think will be a factor that has to be taken into account."

And what of the man himself? Lord Lawson finds it very difficult to judge what sort of Prime Minister David Cameron will make. "I think it is very difficult to form a judgement now. I think this is true with most party leaders. Even with Margaret Thatcher who was much more clear cut, I don't think that most people quite knew what to expect when she became Prime Minister. I believe, to be honest, that we won the 1979 election because people were determined to get rid of the Labour Government. They had had enough. You could only assess Margaret Thatcher by her performance in office, and I think with David Cameron it will be the same."

Lord Lawson became an MP in 1974. The cabinet of which he was an integral part was not only notably radical compared to Conservative Governments both before and since, but also helped to develop the mainstream Thatcherite consensus followed by the Major, Blair and Brown Governments. He believes,

It is unsurprising that all three party grandees are impressed with a man who has presented the Conservatives with the most realistic prospect of electoral victory since 1902

however, that on the whole the party has not changed much since he first stood for election.

Geoffrey Howe feels much the same way: "I think the essentials are the same. It isn't a deeply ideological party, like the Labour Party has always traditionally been." Lord Howe was Margaret Thatcher's longest serving Cabinet minister: her Foreign Secretary, her Chancellor, her Deputy Prime Minister, and eventually her political assassin in November 1990. For Lord Howe, the Conservatives have always been, and have always tried to be, an all-embracing party with the support of every class and every kind.

He believes David Cameron has been remarkably effective as a leader, especially in neutralising the image of the Conservatives as the "nasty party", though surely Gordon Brown has done enough to earn that title as David Cameron has done to shirk it. Where he is perhaps surprised is that David Cameron has not followed Margaret Thatcher in one respect. "Margaret, don't forget, had been a Cabinet Minister and had much more experience when she was elected leader than David had, and when she became leader, she kept in her Shadow Cabinet, or put into her Shadow Cabinet: Halesham, Carrington, Whitelaw, Thorneycroft, Soames, people who had been in Cabinet as far back as Winston Churchill. And I think that David could've strengthened his position had he done this early on."

And moving to that seemingly eternal Tory bugbear, Europe, an issue Lord Howe has always felt strongly about: it does not sit well with him that a majority of Conservative PPCs believe this country's relationship with the European Union needs to be fundamentally renegotiated. Since he left school, Lord Howe has believed that Britain should take a leading position in Europe, that Europe can magnify Britain's influence. However he is not concerned with any change in Conservative position on the European Union. He notes that William Hague (Shadow Foreign Secretary) and David Cameron

stress that Britain will remain in Europe, and on that there is no question. The curious thing, Lord Howe points out, is that there has been a kind of rhythm in British politics, that when parties are in opposition, they feel obliged to be Euro-sceptic, and when in government they feel obliged to play the European game.

As far as the Party's chances are in the General Election, the date of which has yet to be announced, the men are in agreement. Reserved optimism, perhaps surprising considering the deep, deep unpopularity of Gordon Brown, is the general consensus. Michael Howard doesn't mince his words: "I trust the judgement of the British public and I can't believe that they'd want another five years of Gordon Brown. And I think David has done a good job in showing that we do have a convincing alternative." Lord Lawson would be astonished if the Conservatives were not the largest single party, despite the bias in the electoral system against the Tories. Whether the party has an overall majority remains to be seen.

The magnitude of the victory required for the Conservative Party to return to government is considerable. If, in a few weeks the Party does gain a majority, it would be electoral reversal of a magnitude not seen in this country for 80 years. It is unsurprising that all three Party grandees are impressed with a man who has presented the Conservatives with the most realistic prospect of electoral victory since 1992. That they agree with his politics is to be expected, considering DC is the standard-bearer for the Conservative Party and the economic consensus crafted by Lords Howe and Lawson. As Nigel Lawson said, one cannot judge the Cameron premiership before it happens. We do know, however, what former Prime Minister Sir John Major thinks of David Cameron. In fact he said it here at the London School of Economics three years ago: "here, in David Cameron, is a very attractive political package".



Flickr user: Rita Willaert

Argentinian beef

Oliver Wiseman discusses a re-emerging sovereignty debate

The Falklands are back. Facing economic hardship and political unpopularity, Argentina's president, Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner has brought attention back to Argentina's claim to sovereignty over las Malvinas, also known as the Falkland Islands. The sovereignty stand-off flared this month as Ocean Guardian, a rig to drill offshore for oil and gas, began work in the Southern Atlantic archipelago on behalf of Desire Petroleum, a British company. The exploitation of this natural resource has huge potential. Many speculate on the quantities of oil which would transform the way of life on the Islands and deliver the UK firm huge profits. The prospects of this outcome are good and Phyl Rendell, the Islands' minister for minerals and agriculture is 'cautiously optimistic', with the extraction of oil and gas being a real possibility 'in the next ten years'. Resources have certainly catalysed the renewed vigour in the sovereignty dispute, but in the substantive debate, economics is a secondary issue.

In Argentina, disgruntlement over the Falklands is a component of national identity. The injustice of the present situation is drilled into young Argentinians in classrooms and homes across the country. A British presence in the South Atlantic is seen as an imperial hangover and an anachronism. The grievance is part of a Latin American mindset that sees imperial and later American intervention in the area as the source of a number of its

problems. Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, in a call for a UN debate on the competing claims to the islands asked 'What is the geographic, the political or economic explanation for England to be in Las Malvinas? Could it be because England is a permanent member of the UN's Security Council [where] they can do everything and the others nothing?' To many in the area, the islands are representative of a systematic injustice that needs correcting. It would, however, be easy to overstate the intensity of the Argentinian outrage. Whilst 80 per cent of the population see the Falklands as an important concern, just 3 per cent think they are worth fighting for.

What of their place in Britain's political psyche? The Falklands War is the most popular of any war fought since 1945. The received wisdom in the UK sees the war as an efficient defence of our people and assertion of our sovereignty in the face of an unprovoked act of aggression by an illegitimate and amoral military Junta. Whilst this analysis is not without value, the conflict revealed an outdated jingoism in the British understanding of foreign affairs. The red top reaction included profound insights such as the Sun's 'up your Junta', showing the sense of perspective and reason one has come to expect from them. This included the sponsorship of a missile to be used against Argentina, emblazoning it with the words 'up yours Galtieri' and including a photograph of the projectile in the paper

Jorge Luis Borges compared the squabble between the nations to 'a fight between two bald men over a comb'

with the caption 'here it comes senors.' For too long, the Falklands has served as an opportunity for orgies of imperialistic chauvinism, an excuse to relive a bygone era of dominance.

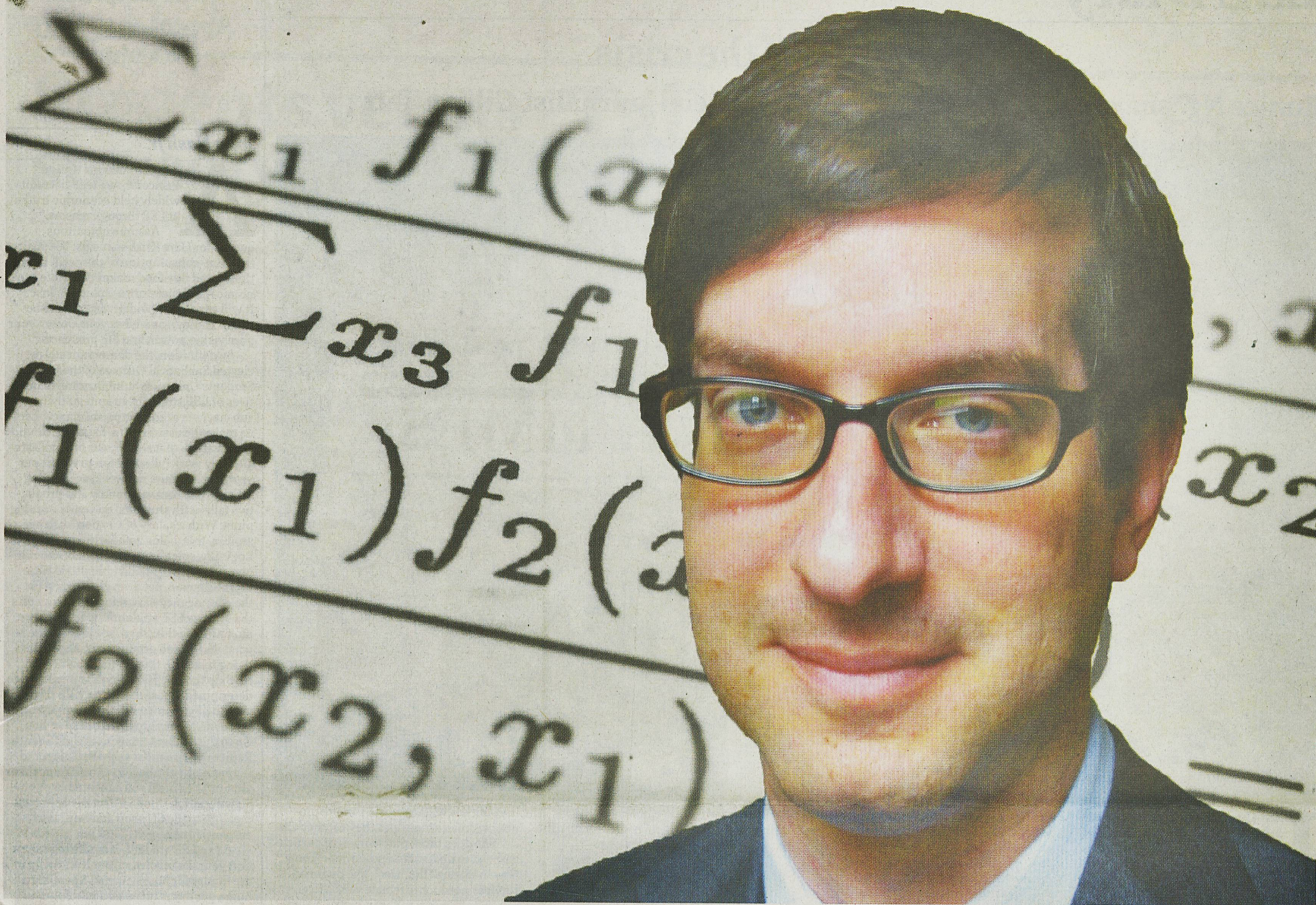
Jorge Luis Borges, the Argentinian writer and essayist, compared the squabble between the nations to 'a fight between two bald men over a comb'. The Argentinian claim surrounds past injustice. The relevant history began in 1713 when the Treaty of Utrecht asserted Spanish sovereignty over the islands. The concord, an agreement between European powers that arranged ownership of far-flung parts of the world, lacks any kind of moral legitimacy. Nonetheless, the strength of Spain's title to the land was reaffirmed in 1823 when the Spanish kept the Falklands despite Argentinian independence. Ten years later, Britain took the Islands by force and colonized the wind-swept archipelago. Ever since there have been persistent Argentinian complaints to the international community calling for a discussion over sovereignty and it is easy to understand why. It is barely more complicated that one set of well-armed foreigners taking their land followed by another doing exactly the same. But history doesn't always matter.

It is indisputable that British rule of the islands is an anachronism and an imperial hangover, but to jump from this fact to a conclusion that the islands must be returned to Argentina ignores a number of crucial steps. Falklanders are unmistak-

ably British and want to remain part of Britain. For a community of Land Rover driving sheep farmers to come under Argentinian rule would be a nonsensical outcome demonstrating the disconnect between diplomacy and reality. As has been demonstrated, the anti-colonialist rationale for Argentinian dominion is far from vacuous, but in a clash between the hurt feelings stemming from events long-passed and the right to self-determination of the people of the Falklands, it has no place.

Empire is little more than the denial of a people's right to self-determination. Thankfully, the days of Britain's worldwide abuse of this right are no more, and to prioritise apology over equivalent abuses today is misguided. Correcting the wrongs of imperialism would lead to instability and conflict, the criminality of which might surpass those of colonialism itself. In a move to mollify awkward neighbours in Latin America and a respect for post-colonial discontent, Obama has encouraged compromise and understanding. Understanding here is nothing more than platitudinous. America should concentrate on the principle of self-determination, the right they themselves fought for against the British.

'Who's colonizing who?' is the question that all those involved need to ask. The answer is not found in history books.



Behaviour and bubbles

Richard Dewey discusses economics and academics with alumnus **David Laibson**

Dr. David Laibson is a Harvard College Professor and the Robert I. Goldman Professor of Economics at Harvard University. Dr. Laibson is also a member of the National Bureau of Economic Research where he is a research associate in the Asset Pricing, Economic Fluctuations and Aging Working Groups. He earned an MSc in Econometrics and Mathematical Economics from the London School of Economics in 1990. He also gave the 2007 Lionel Robbins Lectures at the LSE.

What first attracted you to studying at the LSE?

I was finishing my undergraduate studies at Harvard and applied for a Marshall Scholarship. Everyone told me to go to the LSE to study with Mervyn King, who ran LSE's Financial Markets Group back then. Once I was awarded the Marshall Scholarship there was no doubt that I would go to the LSE.

What was the most interesting or rewarding aspect of your time at the LSE?

Sitting in Mervyn's group, learning how he thought about the world and discussing interesting problems was probably the best part of my experience at the LSE. I had a lot of fantastic courses and enjoyed my interactions with many amazing faculty, including Tony Atkinson, Margart Bray, Charles Goodhart, Chris Pissarides, and David Webb.

My fondest memory of the LSE is working in the Financial Markets Group. At that time we had an office on the roof of the Old Library. It was one part tin shed, one part London penthouse suite (based on its rooftop locale). It was a fantastic little place and we spent a lot of time in the shed working on problems and out on the

roof having fun.

This is a broad question, so feel free to take in any direction, but I'm curious as to your thoughts on the state of economics.

I probably have a little different perspective than most. I don't think that you can say any school of economics did particularly well from the recent economic crisis. With the exception of Robert Shiller, who for a decade had been warning about bubbles in asset and housing markets, I think it has been tough for economists to come out of the crisis looking good. Shiller clearly gets an A+ and Raghuram Rajan and Kenneth Rogoff also stand out as economists who warned us far in advance that there were profound risks in the system. Other than a few examples here and there, economists by and large failed to see the crisis coming, didn't grasp it while it was happening and don't fully understand it even now. That does not mean that we just throw away economics, but we do need to think about it in different ways.

How do you think behavioral economics can help? What will its role be going forward given what we have just come through?

Behavioral economics is a very vibrant area of research right now and I think it can help in not only influencing the academic debate, but also in shaping policy. It won't replace classical economics, nor should it. Behavioral economists have a lot to add to the discussion, but they don't have all the answers. Classical economics has enormous strengths and I think if they take behavioral economics on board the science as a whole can benefit.

Would you tell us a little about the re-

Other than a few examples here and there, economists by and large failed to see the crisis coming, didn't grasp it while it was happening and don't fully understand it even now

search that you are currently working on? Are you working on any new applications for your models of time inconsistent behavior?

There are four big questions that I am currently thinking about. The first is how we can help people think about accumulating wealth while they are working and decumulate wealth by spending their nest eggs in retirement. The second stage of spending nest eggs in retirement has become more important since society is growing older on average and income from pensions or social security does not provide enough resources to sustain households through retirement.

The second question, which really dwarfs the first one, is how to get people to make better decisions about their health. In the face of rising health care costs this could offer enormous savings for society. Most people say that they are going to eat better or exercise more, but the reality is that people don't live up their own rhetoric. If we can figure out how to get people to do simple things, like visiting a physician regularly, taking their pills on time, or maintaining a better diet, than we can improve health in a cost effective way.

On a different path, I am also working on regulation. There is this tremendous push right now for a regulatory overhaul and a lot of it seems to be driven by populist sentiment. A lot of the proposals being bantered about don't seem to be supported by data. I think we need to engage in fundamental analysis, taking into account some of our findings from behavioral economics and consider the by-products of regulation before we implement anything. Too many times we create policies that solve one problem, but create two or three new ones.

The last area of research on my agenda right now is the behavioral economics of bubbles. I think an aspect of the recent crisis that has received relatively little attention is the bubble in the residential housing market. Everyone knows in hindsight that we had a residential real estate bubble, but I think there has been more focus on studying the big banks, rather than what led people to believe that these inflated prices were economically sustainable. I think if we can build models to understand bubbles, then we might be able to lean against the wind the next time asset prices get radically out of line with fundamentals.

What advice would you have for current LSE students considering a career in academia? What aspects have surprised or challenged you the most in your academic career?

In some ways it's the best job in the world and in others it's the worst. It's the best job because you get to work with brilliant students and you get to think about interesting problems all day long. It's the worst job, because you work seven days a week. If thinking about economics seven days a week (plus a bit of grading and committee work) sounds like fun, then an academic career is perfect for you! I love it, but most non-academics think I'm crazy.

Any plans to return to the LSE for a guest lecture?

Not at the moment, however I am giving the Richard Stone lecture at Cambridge University on May 20th. I'll be talking about asset bubbles. LSE students are welcome to attend.

LSE Diary

A celebrity of the crisis

Eunice Ng shares her conversation with financial journalist Gillian Tett



I don't have any journalistic heroes, but if I had to pick one, Gillian Tett would probably be it. Trained as an anthropologist, she came to journalism almost by accident. During her work experience at the Financial Times, revolution broke out in Lithuania and the paper needed a Russian-speaker to cover it. She then joined the FT's graduate scheme and has remained with the paper ever since. With no training in finance or economics, she has managed to forge a career articulating complex financial issues. In 2005, she began covering credit derivatives when these were still deemed largely boring and unfashionable. Now that these have blown up our financial system, Tett has emerged as one of the most recognizable faces of the crisis. Popular opinion hails her as the woman who made the accurate predictions. 'Complete bollocks,' she commented in response to these acclaims at an LSE talk last April.

I had arranged to meet her just before her appearance at the LSE Economics Convention. Waiting at the Old Building reception, I spot a blonde woman in a long overcoat and boots speaking on a mobile phone. Some minutes elapse before I approach her - at one point she wanders down Houghton Street and is lost to sight. She soon returns, however, and a suited first year Economics Society representa-

tive leads us to one of the classrooms behind the Hong Kong Theatre. Tett speaks briskly and keeps to the point, with the confidence of someone used to articulating intricate concepts quickly.

She is passionate about anthropology, and says journalism "has always been an obsession and vocation". When her first story was published, she "was so excited [she] could hardly sleep". Highlights of her career include coverage of the USSR's collapse in 1991, the Japanese financial crisis and, of course, the current global downturn.

She feels "profoundly uncomfortable" about her mini-celebrity status, but understands that people are searching for recognizable faces.

"Banking is very abstract and scary, and people no longer trust bankers." Still, the attention does affect her work. She has to be more careful about what she writes and it is harder to do "be invisible" when researching.

"It's different from the way I used to work as an anthropologist," she grins, "when I would go to people's houses and pretend to be a piece of furniture."

Still, the biggest difficulty of being a financial journalist is dealing with an industry that does not appreciate criticism. Banks have many ways of making life difficult, from making complaints about

articles to forbidding employees from talking to the press, hence forcing journalists to solely deal with PR teams.

"You're writing about people more powerful than you are," Tett explains. "Financial institutions don't want you to write things that reflect badly on them, and they have a thousand subtle ways to make sure you only write what they want you to write."

Even without these outside pressures, reporting on complex financial products is not easy. This difficulty, however, is just something that has to be taken in stride. Helping the public understand how money revolves in the financial industry, Tett insists, is a "very important social mission."

It's a social mission that doesn't just rely on a robust financial press, she tells me the next day on a phone interview. Financial literacy should be in school curriculums, vital in the same way as healthy eating should be. Schools are not equipped to do this, but she praises the financial literacy scheme run by professional bodies such as the Institute of Chartered Accountants.

I ask how she fares as a female financial journalist in a predominantly male industry.

"You definitely stand out," she laughs. At the same time, she mentions working

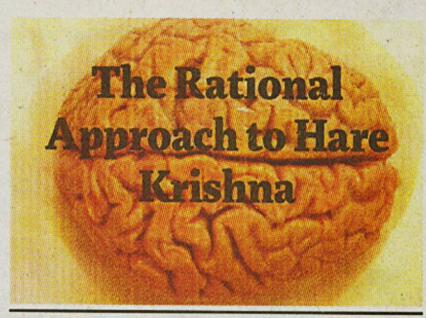
in countries where sexism is more pronounced. Everyone does the best they can.

She does think that women in particular need to understand money and know how to manage finances. The financial services need more female voices to give a greater plurality to the industry. Being a mother also gives you a better awareness of social issues, especially when you need to balance between childcare and work.

Speaking to Tett, it is clear that she is someone who is passionate about showing in her words "how money goes around the world," a passion which is driven by a deep seated social conscience. In a world where people still labour under the idea that finance is not necessary or is too complex for anyone without a mathematical background to understand, she stands out as an example.

So, what advice does she have for people without the mathematical background on how to approach learning about finance?

"Reading the FT is a good start," she grins. "But the key thing is to be curious about how money goes around the world. And don't be intimidated by the fancy language. You have to remember that it's just jargon, which makes [finance] more mysterious than it actually is."



The Rational Approach to Hare Krishna

John Nash Jr.

As Nash did in his time at Princeton, we will discredit widely held economic truths at LSE through reason.

Assume ubiquitous queues for Hare Krishna meals. We posit that non-consumption of this well-intentioned and free food makes complete economic - and therefore absolute - sense. It will save time, (widely accepted to be worth money), as well as your Union, your purchasing power, and life prospects.

By definition, the democratically elected Sabbatical Officers of the LSE Students Union are humble representatives of LSE students, in spite of their sub-average academic performance. Let us make the assumption, based on candid observation, that at LSE, our officers actually only work full-time for 30 weeks per year and 20 hours per week, accounting for cigarette breaks, friendly and productive talks with students, and early evening pints. With a salary of £27,000 or so per annum, this yields an hourly wage of £45. Logically, spending a comfortable 20 minutes per day in the said ubiquitous Hare Krishna queue, not even accounting for the contingency of London weather, costs the average LSE student £15. Since there ain't no such thing as a free lunch, here is what you, homo economicus, should be doing instead.

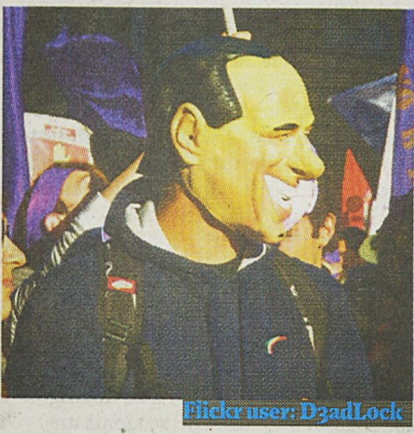
Skip the free Hare Krishna meal. Stride determinedly past the queue with the conviction of your own rationality and pity for those inefficient hippies waiting in line. Go to the SU Bar to make a real difference. Remember, we must save the Union and it is apparently the best food on campus! For about £3 per meal you can purchase some actually edible goods. After the enjoyable meal, go to the SU shop and buy luxury earplugs for £2.

As an LSE student, it is safe to assume that your life revolves around studying in the library for hours on end. Spending 4 hours per day is taken as a minimum to pass. Earplug-induced silence can earn you concentration efficiency gains which might save you 30 minutes per day. If you do the maths, this translates to net savings of £112.5 per week. Then subtract the lunch OPEX and earplugs CAPEX.

Now consider the outcome of these efficiency gains on your career prospects and future earnings. A better degree yields a better job, translating into more utility. In alternative, more spare time from studying gives you time to pursue online applications and extra-curricular activities to bolster your CV. Buying earplugs instead of free Hare Krishna food facilitates the achievement of tremendous utility gains over the next 60 years of your life. Assume a 2 per cent discount rate and multiply any annualized return by 35 to estimate life-long added value.

Overall, by buying earplugs and an SU Panini, you will have preserved your dignity, eaten decent food, helped the Union's finances, saved over a Benjamin's worth of time each week, and optimised your pension prospects. It's fairly straight-forward. Do the right thing. Think to yourself: what would Nash do? Be rational.

Measured musings



The Finns don't even know what prosciutto is". Thus spoke Italy's prime minister in 2001, as Helsinki and Parma competed to host the European Safety Food Agency. The following statement caused an uproar among Finland's media; one of its main dailies even thought it wise to run a mock full page advertisement in clarification: 'Prosciutto is ham'. It seems that whenever Mr Silvio Berlusconi stumbles away from diplomatic maturity, everyone else falls with him.

And indeed, he is too well known for his poor press coverage, doubly at home and abroad. Ranging from a series of scandals relating to an alleged relationship with a 18-year-old prostitute, to diplomatic blunders such as the one described above, his reputation has long lost any credibility. The Economist has made repeated calls against his candidature in Italy's elections. Criticisms are rife as

regards to his attempts to control Italian press, notably television channels, to his favour. Incidents during his years in powers have been rife and most often, highly entertaining. In a most recent flouting of democratic practices, Berlusconi has successfully pressured his government to change electoral rules as to allow his party's candidates to run for the regional elections in the Lazio constituency; originally, the list of the candidates had not been submitted in time. For all of this, any other politician would have gotten the ax long ago. Hence, what Berlusconi can be admired for is the sheer impertinence of him still remaining in power.

However, some admirers associate him with a fiery, slightly machistic, Italian stereotype, which seems to provide excuse enough for his behaviour. Yet times have moved on, and it is impossible to get away with such nonsense nowadays. Attacks upon the legitimacy of the democratic process, even if slight, are too dangerous

to ignore.

Many Italians have found themselves to be of this same opinion. Born of a gathering on Facebook (indeed, where else?) the 'Purple Movement' has brought together people from all over the country, united in a distaste of Berlusconi. Their protests have become all the more frequent over the past months, making waves on the Italian political scene.

Their aim is simple: exercise as much political pressure as possible as to shift Berlusconi and his government out of power. Despite being lent infrastructures from the opposition, they refuse to identify with it. According to them, these spineless parties are simply not doing their job.

In the same spirit, the anti-Berlusconi movement chose the colour purple to represent their anger as it was the only one which remained devoid of any political connotation in Italy. This probably shows the lively crowd-gathering, symbol making, nature of the country's political

campaigning. Yesterday, a protest took place in Rome, gathering near 200,000, was a compelling example of this; banners ranged from the simple "Basta" to "vote for Ali Baba, then at least you'll be sure that there will be only forty thieves."

Despite all of this, Berlusconi still stands high in his poll ratings. Beyond the scandals and blunders, most Italians still trust him to run the country, or perhaps, see him as a much lesser evil. In addition, his theatrics sometimes work in his (political) favour. For instance, a passerby hitting away at his face with a model of Milan's cathedral sprung much sympathy from all across the country. However, a few lost teeth are not sufficient to forgo all of Berlusconi's shady errors. Indeed, it is likely that upon his stepping down from power, the Italian judiciary will be thinking along the same lines.

Marion Koob Features Editor

Social

Students versus stereotypes

Regis Pradal is all about responsible business

The world of business is primed for change. Social entrepreneurs represent a new breed of business men and women who aim to bring sustainable solutions to answer social needs. They believe they can make a change through revolutionizing the way we do business. It appears that many of us here at the LSE believe the same.

Imagine you could earn a decent living and contribute to society's progress every time you go to work. For the aspiring LSE social entrepreneurs, it is 'the best incentive one could have'. This is because you can both 'feel the positive impact of your work' and 'know that your economic activity has the primary goal of tackling a social issue'.

The idea behind social entrepreneurship is that businesses must be responsible for the externalities they produce, affecting our environment, the way we live and the future we will face. The social entrepreneur's message is, really, that we can improve the capitalist system from the inside. We must seek ways to produce and consume so that we do not shoot ourselves in the foot but instead we foster social progress and education, reduce poverty and protect the environment.

On Tuesday 2nd March LSE students embodied the social entrepreneur, and brought their ideas to fruition in the final of the LSE 2010 Pitch It! Social Enterprise Competition. The Old Theatre was packed and the panel of judges was composed of high profile figures, the likes of Julie Meyer, of the BBC's Dragons' Den and founder of Ariadne Capital; Jörn Lyseggen, founder and CEO of Meltwater Group; John Dixon, Head of Media at RBS Finance and Cliff Prior, Chief Executive of UnLtd.

The winners of the first prize, as well as the audience vote, were a team called 'Versus'. Their innovative concept is to introduce an ethical brand, called Versus, that brings customers and shops together to fight poverty and its related issues. Customers engage by choosing to shop in Versus' partner stores, but do not have to spend an extra penny. Prices in Versus shops remain the same; what the brand is giving retailers is a broader range of shoppers as well as customer loyalty. In exchange for this, shops give a percentage of their profits to charity. Versus aims to spread socially responsible shopping by creating a redistribution process in which every time someone buys something, some profits are given back to society through charities' actions. So you shop

and they give. This is collective buying power for charitable causes.

The idea is for brands to be able to say, for example, "LSE versus Ignorance", or "Adidas versus Human rights violations". Customers shopping in major high street stores will be given a unique card that allows them to give the points collected in different shops to the charities of their choice. Web shoppers can raise funds by simply clicking on the logos of online retailers before purchasing anything on their websites. A donation box scheme operates in smaller shops where a small amount is contributed for each purchase made by a customer who recognizes the Versus box. Look out for the Versus launch in September 2010, incorporating a spectacular 'Sing versus Poverty' concert.

Second prize went to Adia Beading, a socially conscious jewellery company that seeks to provide women in the UK and US with a unique, stylish, cause-related jewellery shopping experience, while providing women in Ndathi, Kenya with jobs and stable incomes to support the development of their community.

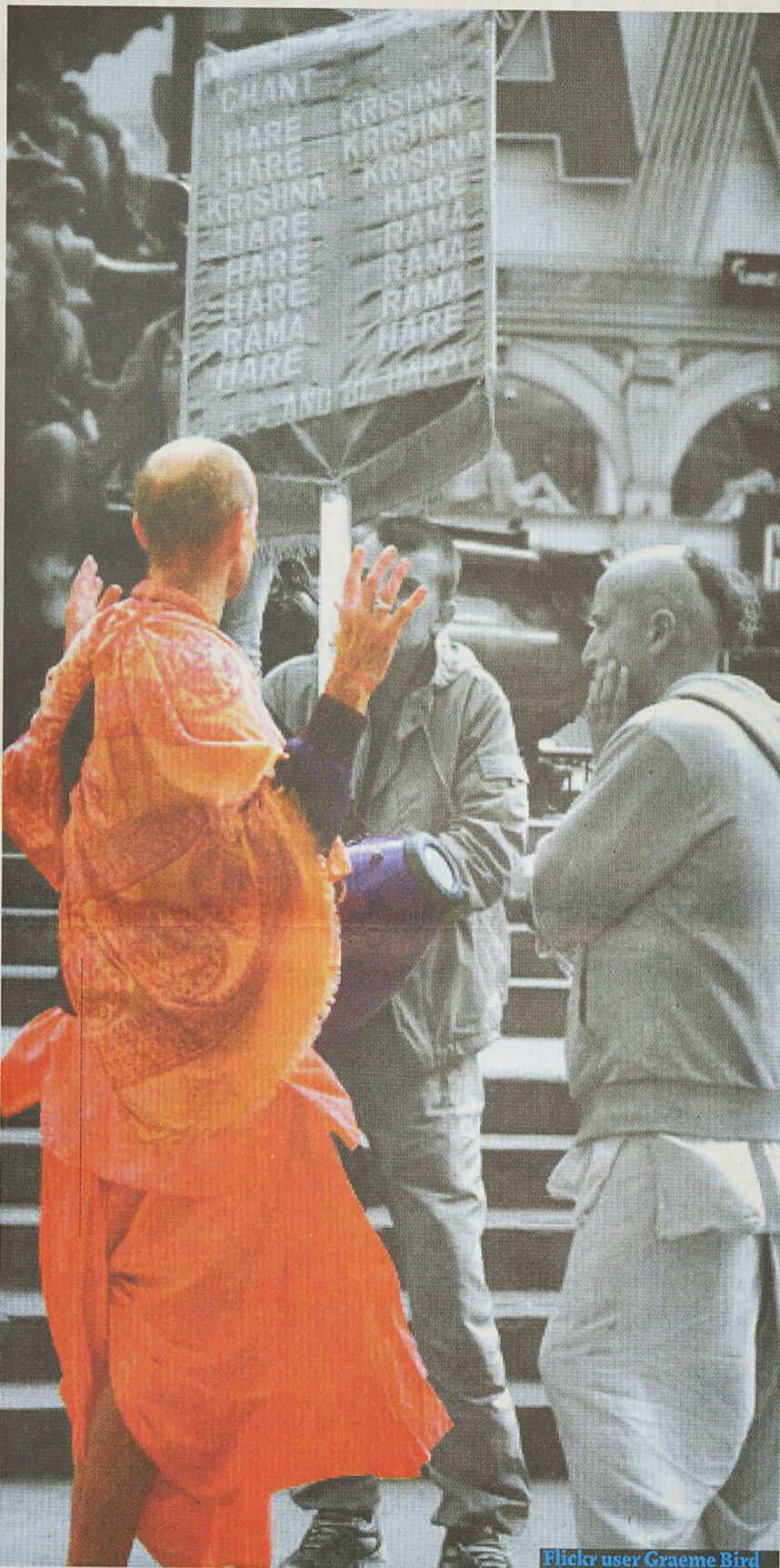
The third prize was won by Technojagriti, a social enterprise that offers expertise in developing socio-environmental solutions for companies, social enterprises, governments, communities and individuals in the UK, Europe, USA and India. Technojagriti partners with its customers to develop green investment strategies, realign business needs, nurture entrepreneurship and create public-private partnerships to develop and sustain a low carbon economy.

So can we all become social entrepreneurs? If we all have the ability to imagine and create, then we must all have the ability to shake the reality around us too. The truth seems to be that we are all architects of the system we live in without suspecting it. However, it is only us, privileged individuals in terms of education, choice of life, personal wealth and so on, that can help the ones in need, not the other way around.

Versus needs you! They are looking for people to join the team, as well as designers, web developers, media coverage, and any contact with the management of high street stores or celebrities. Become a fan on Facebook ([IamVersus](#)), visit our website ([www.iamversus.com](#)), send us an email (iamversus@gmail.com) and spread the word!

Talk about free food

Natalie Wong interviews a Houghton Street staple



Flickr user Graeme Bird

of nature within which we must live. Religious scriptures have shaped Rakshana's attitude to life. According to religious teaching, we must stay away from greed, lust and anger. Rakshana then told me the story of an educated man who treated women other than his wife like mothers.

So do you treat other women as you would your mother?

'Ah, I am not married yet,' he said, slightly embarrassed, 'I am teaching myself and I have to teach myself. This was my favourite moment of our interview.'

I must agree with him that humans have broken the rules of nature; 'These technologies...' said Rakshana, 'will eventually damage the planet.' Every entity has its own role to play in nature, and there are areas into which we should not have intruded. Our role is to serve, said Rakshana, and we should take care of the animals as if they are brothers and sisters. Can anyone make friends with any animal? Interestingly, the answer was no. Rakshana found it hard to explain this point, but we finally conclude, amidst laughter, that we should not approach animals which have long teeth. To show how co-operative animals can be if we treat them well, he told me that the cows at the Hare Krishna Temple's farm in Watford (17 miles outside of London) actually queue up voluntarily as the farmer starts milking them! The cows were 'respecting each other', said Rakshana, and each of them even has a name which they respond to! I was absolutely fascinated.

The importance of role does not only apply to the interaction between man and nature, but is imminent in human society. According to scriptures originally written in Sanskrit (the ancient language of India), the earliest civilization had its population divided into four classes: the intellectuals; people who worked as the administrators and maintainers of the State, including the army; businessmen; and, finally, workmen. From a young age, people were assigned to different positions in society by the teachers (members of the first class). Should we follow this today?

'Er,' Rakshana hesitated, 'we can't change in one day.' And so we can't.

Health and happiness are the two qualities in life that matter to Rakshana. Serving the community makes him happy; that is why he enjoys distributing food to all. As people greet him at the queue, he feels energetic, too. Rakshana has a lot to say about health. He compares the body to a cart which holds the soul, and by keeping the body healthy, we will be able to serve. Practicing Wushu, a kind of traditional Chinese martial arts, is one of Rakshana's way of staying fit. Being vegetarian is another. Vegetarian animals are less aggressive but more active, said Rakshana. He maintains that eating meat not only uses up more of our energy, but will increase our chance of developing cancer and heart disease. I started to think about all the harmful things I had consumed in this one day.

Does a Medicine student have to enter the profession? How many of us have perused the mind of a true healer? Next time when you reach the front of the Houghton queue, greet Rakshana and you'll sense his energy for life!

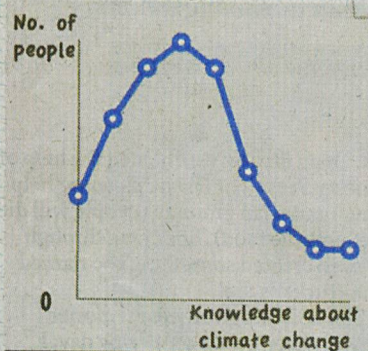
Rakshana usually leaves Houghton Street at around 1.30PM after emptying his cart of vegetarian food, but today he ended up staying on Houghton Street for much longer than he normally would. During our interview, numerous LSE students passed by asking if he was still giving out food, many of whom were his friends.

As you may already know, the free lunch that attracts the long queue ev-

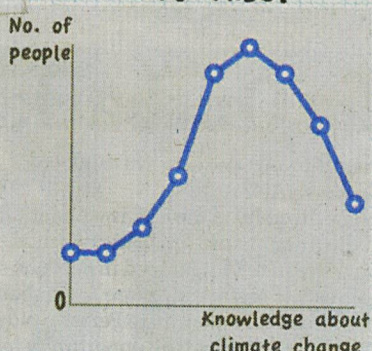
eryday is distributed by a Hare Krishna charity, which is part of the Hindu religion known to Westerners. The food is donated by supermarket chains. It is clear to Rakshana that religion means more than faith: it is a duty to serve. While studying medicine at university, he had been looking for a way to serve the wider population, and this was how he discovered the religion. Throughout our conversation, Rakshana was very keen to convey the world view of Hare Krishna, which emphasizes the order

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LSE's mental health

Jenny McEneaney and Emily Collins

One in four people will suffer from dandruff. One in three people, in their lifetime, will suffer from poor mental health. Yet there seems to be more awareness and less stigma surrounding dandruff than mental health issues. The vast majority of people could not describe the symptoms of depression, never mind understand the experience of helping a loved one through the illness, or recognizing the symptoms in themselves. There also seems to be a lack of

awareness surrounding access to services and resources here at the LSE. We fear that the majority of students here do not know where the counselling services are located (2nd floor of the East building, in case you are wondering), never mind how to arrange an appointment, or what services they provide.

Last year the Education and Welfare Officer, Emmanuel, organized the 'Study Not Stress' campaign focusing on techniques to help stay calm during the exam period, and courses on time management

and memory improvement. This year we plan to make that week bigger and better with the same exam focus, as well as the provision of mental health information, efforts to remove the stigma surrounding mental health issues, and awareness-raising regarding services that you can access at LSE and in your local area. There will be a strong presence on Houghton Street during the first week of Summer Term, and your study space will be plastered with posters and information on where you can go if you feel you can't cope.

A top the spiral stairs

Alizeh Kohari picks at Simon's infallible memory



Flickr user Rex Chen

It is a snug, busy-looking place, Alpha Books is - the size of three broom cupboards', as its owner, Simon, fondly describes it. Tottering, teetering stacks of books vie with one another for space: fact elbows fiction, novels jostle against fat economic theory textbooks. Outside, three sturdy carts of paperbacks seem to keep watch over the flurry of student activity in the Quad.

'Before we put those trolleys out there, people would nervously stick their heads in and ask what this place was,' says Simon wryly, 'And I'd reply 'Oh, we're the grocer's. Look, there's a leg of ham.'

In many ways, the history of Alpha Books is the history of the refurbishment of the Quad. The shop came into being 14 years ago; prior to this, for some four and a half years, it existed as an 'anarchic series of sagging tables', the books lugged out each day, packed back into trunks every night. 'At the end of it, I'd begun to feel a bit like a donkey, with four legs and a tail,' jokes Simon. When the Students' Union decided to renovate the Quad and offered him and his coterie of books a permanent home, he jumped at the idea.

That's one aspect of the LSE that continues to intrigue him: its unceasing architectural 'restlessness'. At some point,

he tells me, albeit well before his time, the Quad didn't have a roof: it was like 'an Athenian open courtyard'. Something or the other, he notes, is constantly being built, or refurbished. 'It's like the concrete that never set.'

But how have the students changed over the years?

'They now have wires in their ears,' he quips, chuckling. 'All these distractions, this technology - it splits their concentration, entrances them. It makes for many an interesting exchange at the till, though, to be fair.'

'The students, they don't change, not really. Just the other day, I was listening to the election hustings going on in the quad below - that's one other thing about the LSE, it always seems to be in some sort of turmoil over elections - and I thought to myself, this sounds familiar, where have I heard this before? And then I realized - aha! - last year. The faces change, but the students, they tend to remain the same.'

'Rumour has it,' says Simon, cupping his hands around a squishy Styrofoam cup containing coffee from Wright's Bar (small, white, one spoonful of sugar), 'that my memory is infallible. But the truth is: just the other day a student asked me for a book that I thought we didn't stock. He

leans forward, lowers his voice as if divulging a fiercely-kept secret. 'But we did. He found it on one of the trolleys.'

Infallible though it perhaps might not be, Simon's memory is nonetheless pretty darn good. There is much that he remembers: the girl who felt compelled to purchase every single P.G. Wodehouse novel in the store to keep her going during her visit to Darfur - 'which, I suppose, was hardly going to be a barrel of laughs'. The bookshop romances, so many of them, all doomed the minute the lady in question realized that her gentleman friend had not in fact read the book he'd so eloquently been expounding upon - just its back cover.

'We have a game that we play here,' he says, 'Former students drop by and ask: 'Simon, do you remember me?' And I reply: 'Yes, yes, of course I do!' And the game that we play is: they ask me, do you remember how long it's been since I graduated? And the challenge is to get the number of years right.'

We are sitting just outside the bookshop, perched awkwardly on the outlandish black and white seats (blobs, really) that the Union introduced in the Quad this year. The wall next to us is speckled with speech bubbles, containing quotes from

LSE students, past and present. He peers at this wall, his glasses misted over by the steaming coffee, and periodically issues a harrumph of recognition: 'I remember this one. And this one. And that chap? I just met him a few weeks ago.'

In the finance-centric world of the LSE, what place does a shop like Alpha Books occupy? Is there really a demand among the students milling about on Houghton Street for Forster and Eliot and for Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky?

'We do stock textbooks but the fiction - the fiction is necessary,' stresses Simon, 'It's where the rest of life is. And the demand for fiction at the LSE has actually increased: there are reading groups now and literature courses - three of them, in fact.'

'People wander into the store looking for a particular book but end up buying other books. It's a bit like a journey, this book-finding business, we come across other things along the way.' He pauses, 'In a sense, we're all looking.'

'You have so many sorts at the LSE: the undergraduates, the single-year General Course students, those on the long, rocky, lonely, road to a PhD. In a place like a bookshop, everyone seems to come together.'

OVERHEARD AT LSE

Girl 1: "He's wearing those avatar glasses."

Girl 2: "What glasses?"

Girl 1: "Avatar glasses."

Girl 2: "You mean AVIATORS?"

EC102 Teacher: "Bob Lucas is an absolute GOD."

Student: "Miss, who's George Lucas?"

In the Library:

Girl: "I get all my sexual information from Alice Pelton's Sex and Gender. I actually think it might be better than sex."

Conversation in the Old Building

Guy 1: "Consultants, they just want to get more clients and satisfy them, they are like prostitutes!"

Guy 2: "We are all prostitutes in the brothel of life."

Guy 1: "Well, my pimp is knowledge."

Girl advertising LSE's play 'The Vagina Monologues':

"COME AND GET YOUR VAGINAS!!"

Monday afternoon, after a student requests for recordings of MA100 lectures to be put online on the Moodle forums (bearing in mind MA100 lectures happen on Tuesdays and Fridays):

"Sorry, the technical people spent most of their time keeping the Echo servers woking. This means the time-travel equipment could not be used ...this week, and we are unable to upload the videos before the lectures actually happened."

GV408 Class on justice and animal rights:

"Until a pig can reason with me about why it is my moral equal and why I shouldn't eat it, I am going to continue to enjoy my bacon sarnies"

Week 9, second last EC201 lecture of the term, 10 minutes to the end of lecture:

Girl: "OMG I've only just realised he's American!"

Girl reading the Beaver: "Can they go one week in this paper without mentioning Palestine? I'll answer. No."

ANZACS at the LSE

Priscilla Anushka Abishegam on missing the Outback

While awaiting my UCAS confirmation for whether I had procured a place at this illustrious school I happened to spend a term at Murdoch University in Australia. University in Australia, amazingly different than university here, actually embodies Australia's greatest cliché as a laid back, sunny and 'no-worries-mate' country. At Murdoch there was little expectation that students would attend lectures, classes were not compulsory and, with its beautiful green surroundings, the atmosphere was almost mystical, so that one could imagine that Aboriginal ancestral spirits walked among us students.

By now you must have come to realize how unlike Murdoch is the city-locked LSE. Here the ethos, if I may put it crudely, is one of 'more worries'. I have always dreamed of coming to the LSE, and for me it is the only place, save for Venice, that has met its story-book quality reputation. But the culture here is written for the

driven and ambitious; there are positions to hold in societies, in the union, in the newspaper - it's an unending spectrum of choice. And that's not even mentioning how academically competitive students are; or, at least, that's my impression as a second year law student. While Murdoch had a Guild President and accompanying officials, the campaigns for their election consisted of a few posters randomly thrown around the university as opposed to the pantomime of campaigners that crowd Houghton Street.

During Fresher's Fayre in my first year I remember trying to find the Australian/New Zealand society stall, only to learn that it had been disbanded! A few months later though I met some Aussies and the token New Zealander who declared that it was 'scandalous' that the continent of Oceania didn't have a presence on campus, and so we formed the ANZAC society. The term ANZAC alludes to the name given to the Australian and New Zealand armed forces that fought in the First World

War. It is a term that every history student associates with the sentiments of courage, camaraderie and patriotism. Now, trite as this may seem, in my moments of homesickness I sometimes feel that the Australian and New Zealand students in the society are like the ANZACS. Okay, I see that look of incredulity plastered across your face. I shall rephrase; we are one millionth of an ANZAC. Let me explain why I think my simile appropriate: our 'patriotism' was obvious in the way we stood hours in the rain, me revisiting my days as a cheerleader, screaming 'join the Australian society' and the guys doing the age old 'Aussie, Aussie, Aussie' chant (as you can see we kind of already forgot the New Zealanders!). Our 'camaraderie' is obvious in the way we spend a good amount of our time empathizing about our workloads at the Walkabout pub and we were 'courageous' in the way we played cricket on the patio above Temple Station, not paying attention to the disapproving glances cast our way by the passing Lon-

doners. So you can see why I think LSE has its own ANZACS!

The diversity at the LSE is wonderful; half the Australians I know here I would never have met if I remained in Perth because, as it is often said, 'more Australians go to Europe than they do to Perth!' Studying at the LSE I've had the opportunity to hear Penny Wong speak, and the society got to meet with the Federal Treasurer, Hon. Wayne Swan - you know it's dramatic irony when you have to leave your country to meet the country's leaders! For me personally, the Australian society is an amazing thing. As President I must confess that we are not the most active society around but when we do get together it is just plain fun. At the international food festival this year we served kebabs, barbecue chicken and Pavlovas made with Sainsbury's meringues and tinned berry compote; the evening before Suraj, from New Zealand, and I, went to buy a ton of ingredients, and spent a good three hours trying to create an Aussie barbie feel to the

food. Upon failing, we enlisted the help of Amnesty President Divya, pleading help on humanitarian grounds (people will die if we burn the food). She came through and even created something she named 'Bush-Tucker's dip'.

The LSE has given me memories that will cheer me up on a rainy day; I will always remember my days with the ANZAC society, as well as all the other fun I had being on the C&S, committee, in the Green Party and the Inns of Court societies, singing for RAG charity week, dancing for 'LSE's Got Talent' and even getting to recite my poetry at the Literature Society's Poetry Open Mike night. I don't think there is anywhere else on earth where I could have done all these things as well as gain a world class degree - LSE's got to be the best!

The AU Ball: A cost-benefit analysis

Following on from last week's look at alcohol's place in sport, and in the wake of the AU Ball, I found myself questioning why it is that we drink to the point vomiting, blackouts, shameful pulls and even hospital.

The AU Ball it right up there with the Carol as the highlight of the AU social calendar. The often scruffy rabble of sportsmen and women scrub themselves

To quote Mastercard: Ticket - £50. Dinner Jacket - £70. Cleaning bill - £30. Being there when Laurence Koo was found passed out on the 4th floor of the hotel across the road to the one the AU ball was in - priceless

up, don dinner jackets and ball gowns and descend upon a fairly nice hotel for the awarding of colours. Sounds civilized, doesn't it?

However, for what should be a glamorous and memorable occasion is

not for most. This isn't because it's not a great event, but because of the copious amounts of grog imbibed. I certainly can't say I'm not guilty of this - I was slurring my words on the Tube on the way there, and my last memory (before American Fried Chicken post Zoo) is of throwing tomatoes and mozzarella everywhere.

So when I woke on Thursday morning, I inevitably asked myself why I had paid £50 for the privilege of a meal I certainly don't remember and probably didn't even eat. It's something I wonder most Thursday mornings as I go through the receipts in my wallet (Zoo Bar is rather appropriately listed as Venom on the statements), my sent messages and Hamdi's photos, but this time it was different, given the increased financial aspect.

So, in a manner you would probably only get at somewhere like LSE, lets perform a cost-benefit analysis of the AU Ball:

Costs: £50 for ticket; Dress/Tux; Dry cleaning; 2-day hangover

Benefits: Legendary night of debauchery, shenanigans, banter, lash and minge; stories that will live on; a nice meal

It may appear from this that it is a simple case of costs outweighing the benefits. All in all, the AU ball can cost hundreds of pounds just for one night. However, ask anyone who has ever been to an AU ball and they will tell you that it is worth every penny, in spite of the complete lack of memories, empty wallets and vomit covered clothes/rooms/girlfriends. What matters most it that you had an absolutely epic tour, the time of your life, and can take away tales that those who weren't there can never be a part of.

As a species, we are social creatures, and have a natural urge to be a part of something. That's something that justifies the cost, being there, feeling a part of it, avoiding the 'fear of missing out' - all things you cant put a price on. To quote Mastercard: Ticket - £50. Dinner Jacket - £70. Cleaning bill - £30. Being there when Laurence Koo was found passed out on the 4th floor of the hotel across the road to the one the AU ball was in - priceless.

Jonas & Xisco: Uncovered!

Jonas and Xisco give their final report on the debauched antics of the AU before returning home (one to be buried, the other crucified!)

Shockwaves of despair reverberated around campus this week as news of the tragic death of Beaver Sports very own Xisco Getege-D'or hit Houghton Street. The Peruvian pervert whose lyrical myricals have often been likened to a young Tupac Shakur fell to his death when rock climbing in Azerbaijan. A mountain goat chewed through his support rope, causing him to plummet a monumental twelve feet to his death (around 6 times his height). This column, written just hours before the author's death will provide a fitting epitaph in what was one of the AU's sluttiest weeks.

Beaver Sports will be further depleted with the news that Jonas has had to return to his native Peru. The victim of a strict Catholic upbringing, Jonas impregnated a local fisherman's friend, so the handsome devil himself has had to return on one knee to see out his remaining years.

This week saw Wimbledon ball boy extraordinaire and newly elected AU President, Ben Robinson, deliver a poem that has been confirmed to have made Xisco turn in his grave. Sources have confirmed that in a bid to win friends early, the John Candy ringer was seen at the table of 'el filthies' playing taps alongside the, as yet unnamed, future of the FC...Black Chris.

Generally, the AU Ball was a debauched affair, with two alleged incidents of coerced debauchery during the evening; for the first, see picture 38 from Vanessa Duckworth's album, *3rd Team Netball Love*, and for the second speak to Monty Ishmael who heard the screams yet could not muster the bravery to help. The evening saw the return of the once predatorial, now mere fat fluffer, Alan from King's. It would appear old habits die-hard as the Phil Mitchell lookalike went 'Homewood Bound' to his Mecca, the KFC by King's Cross Station.

Virgin within the M25 Andrew 'Three Metre Rogers' Rogers almost managed to break his duck with the official 'fittest girl in womens' rugby' (according to last year's champ Kate Strivens). However the form-book didn't lie for Tony as he somehow managed not to convert despite face raping for over 3 hours at the ball and receiving a blozzer.

The final story to emanate from el Ball

was the news that after failing with his usual 'I'm an actor' line, Andrew 'Cheeky' Simpson had to resort to the most working class of chat up lines with 'I've got no key and I'm locked out'. Surprisingly, Simpson's acting skills were up to scratch and he managed to fool a blazed Strivens into allowing him back to hers. What happened next is pure conjecture; however, knowing Strivo's past record, it doesn't take Stephen Hawking nor even a degree from a Strand Poly to have a fairly good idea.

Friday's Crush saw the unlikely event of a foursome occurring, with big John Bown and lil' John Rajeretnamramnam sharing a bed with someone odious and an arrow maker. Raj's usual trick backfired somewhat however, as the session had to be ended prematurely with Bowny caught in the proverbial line of fire which prompted the fridge to say 'Corr, have a day off Raj'. It was noted however that the Bownster's skin was looking mighty soft come Saturday morning football.

Lad of the year: Owly - For continuously winning Lad of the Week and head butting a bouncer in Zoo-Bash.

Worst lad of the year: Rugby's club captain? Who is he? Rees Matthew Townsend-Hall-Strivens I think his name is...

The 'John Terry' lad of the year: Big John Bown. For not only organizing lots of parties but for doing the dirty on teammate Jack 'Bridge' Fellows and trying to take his position of centre back.

Ladette of the year: Emma Heap, BJ Watson, Gabs Butu, Black Chris, Rob Charnock, Alex Pearce, Josh Stacey, Nadir Gohar, Lizzie Bacon, Latif Baluch and of course Sebastian Baccala.

Ginger lad of the year: It was a two horse race, with only Scholesy and Black Chris in the running. Unable to come to a decision the award has been given to both, a little perk to help them forget about the unfortunate colour of their hair.

Fittest Tuns barstaff of the year: After the sacking of George De-Ste-Croix for being (the official reason given) too desirable and putting everyone else off of their work, this award naturally goes to Kate Strivens, with Janine Philips coming a distant second.

The Interview

So what gave you the inspiration and desire to write such a hard-hitting column?

KH: It all started when I was on the LSE Ski Tour, after being mistreated by BJ Watson for the last of many times. I felt it was necessary to let the wider LSE student body know just how undesirable the seedy slutty underbelly of the AU was.

AH: Kate knew I was an avid reader of all the great publications, NY Times, Economist and of course Animal Sex Weekly, so it was only natural that she should come to me to make her vision become a reality.

How interesting, you always were an unlikely partnership somewhat akin to karaoke superstars Rudi and John the Paedo, how exactly did you two meet?

AH: It all started one bright breezy Sunday morning in lent term, I was absent mindedly wiling away the hours exposing myself to minors on a well-known webcam based website when a lil' blonde pops up. Next thing I know I've got a Facebook friend request and the rest is now in the annals of journalistic history.

Was it ever difficult to maintain your anonymity?

KH: At the start we were very concerned about this. That's why I mentioned myself a few times in a less than positive light to try and put the reader off the scent.

AH: However, a few weeks in, these plebs Joseph 'BJ' Watson and George De-Ste-Croix started claiming they were the authors. My first response was utter indignation we soon realized; however, it allowed us to be all the more abusive and allow the pair to suffer the consequences.

One final question: BJ, Luther and Sebby Webby. Snog, Marry, Avoid?

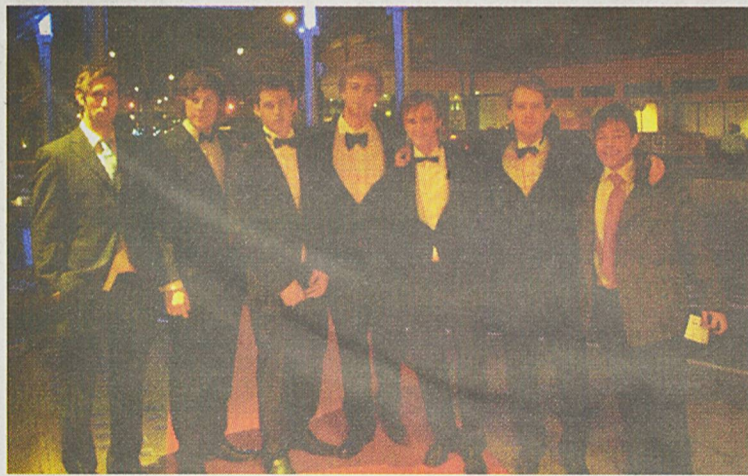
KH: [stifled laughter] Snog Luther, marry BJ and avoid Seb. I've spent enough time with that fat crybaby to know he won't amount to anything in life.

AH: I'm not a homosexual man but if worst came to worst, I'd like to start off slow by snogging Luther, eventually marrying Luther and finally avoiding Luther. Like a young Cunniffe.

Key: KH - Kate Henry; AH - Alex Hillback

Photo

Photos by Duncan McKenna



Sport



Inside:
Jonas & Xisco -
Unmasked!

Smooth stroking snooker superstars

Lee Mager

The sharp-shooting, break-building, smooth-stroking snooker superstars of the LSE emerged triumphant after utterly destroying their competitors at the British Universities Snooker Plate like a psychotic Old Testament God. There also happened to be another concurrent tournament over the weekend referred to as 'the main championship' or something like that, which isn't nearly as prestigious as the Plate.

On a high from the spectacular performance in the individuals, the LSE stars got down to business in the main team event. We only needed to come in the top 2 of the group to get through to the knockout stage, but obviously we were gunning for 1st place as our group contained such laughable opponents as Warwick 1sts, Southampton 1sts and York and Queens 2nds. It started off badly as we didn't hear the call for our first match against York, resulting in an immediate 1-frame deduction. Given that we were actually 45 fucking minutes late, we were really rather lucky not to have been disqualified (bless you Paddy!). Technically we drew 5-5 against York but because of the frame deduction we lost 5-4.

Things got worse as we then played Warwick 1sts. The good news is that they were a man down as apparently one of their legends Jimmy Hill was deemed ineligible for BUCS. This meant we immediately had a 2-0 head-start! We lost 8-2. Alpeh played his best snooker of the weekend against Jay Murphy but still got raped. Will secured a 20 point lead against Matt Bradley but sadly also got forcibly penetrated as Matt knocked in two 40+ breaks. We then lost 8-2 to Southampton 1sts. Our last match against Queens 2nds was absolutely vital, we had to win and win big in order to avoid relegation by coming bottom. Unfortunately we drew and drew big... Will played some awesome

snooker to secure the draw, getting a 65 point lead from only 3 visits. This meant we still had a chance of not coming bottom! Queens simply had to beat York at least 9-1.

That kinda didn't happen. We were out. Bottom from the group, relegated to the Shield for next year, and left sitting in despair crying into our chips. Paddy informed us that we could still play in the plate (the competition for the 4 worst teams in the main championship, and the 4 worst teams in the Shield).

Will's rationale was that we came here to play snooker, and we had a chance of playing some more, so why not? Why not indeed. Aqeel was sympathetic to Will's suggestion, replying "bollocks, I don't give a shit, I'm going", and very nearly

It felt rather like being offered to compete in the Special Olympics

offered his signature Kadrian back-hand, the mental aggro maniac. Alpeh's mood changed and he warmed to the idea. Then Ken said yeah why not. Finally, Paddy suggested that we should play as there would be some good crack there, which convinced Lee, as drugs would probably be the only thing that could have cheered him up at that point.

So off we went to the barren desolate wasteland surrounding the Excelsior Snooker Centre out of town, to face the rest of the useless teams who came last in their groups. It felt rather like being offered to compete in the Special Olympics. As we arrived we faced the incredibly friendly Kent 2nds and embarrassingly shook hands and said good luck. Kent 2nds had come bottom in their shield

group, and Alpeh lost his frame. lolz. Fortunately however Lee, Aqeel and Ken won their matches so we were through to the SEMI-FINAL!! WOOOOOOO!!!

Here we faced the shouty incomprehensible force of Ulster 2nds, which necessitated concentrated lip-reading to understand what on earth they were saying. Lee and Aqeel both won by margins of 50+ points to put the LSE into a solid 2-frame lead and just needed one more to get to the plate final. Alpeh lost again to a team that came bottom in the shield. Ken also lost. We were 2-2 with Will 'Balls of Granite' Dee facing the slowest player ever in the deciding frame. A (s)crappy affair took place and despite getting an early lead Will miscued to leave the Ulster guy with a chance of leveling. And in fact he took the lead. Will was faced with a 10-foot pot down the rail on the green. Watching closely, Lee shouted telepathically to Will: "don't go for the pot, don't go for the pot, you stupid **** DON'T GO FOR THE POT!!" He went for the pot. And thank Christ he made it. He then had an almost as difficult pot on the brown. Will didn't notice the vein in my forehead about to burst as obviously the only viable option was safety. Will thumped the long brown into the pocket. How the hell did he do that?? He then potted the blue but shanked the pink. Fortunately for him the Ulster guy didn't capitalize and we were into the plate final!

Here we faced Warwick 2nds, who on paper are arguably the strongest 2nd team at the event. We beat them 6-0. Oh yes. We finally decided to play well, Alpeh knocking in a 40, Aqeel banging away a 34, it wasn't even close. We had won the title of Best Losers! And with it the beautiful Saints Plate and... GOLD MEDALS! YY-EEEEAAHHHH!!!! Next year we plan on retaining the title - but to do so we will have to come bottom in our Shield group, which will require some genuinely appalling snooker. With Alpeh, Aqeel and Ken graduating however, I think we can do it. Bring on 2011!

Taekwon-doh!

LSE Taekwondo team put up a brave fight, but go home empty handed

David Woodbridge

Last Sunday morning saw Kooyeon, Clarissa, Kevin, Robin and me shivering at quarter to seven in Baker Street station, on our way to the 2010 National Championships at the Stoke Mandeville Stadium in Aylesbury. There is a direct train from Marylebone to Aylesbury, but it didn't run early enough to get us to the tournament in time, so we had to hop on and off the Metropolitan Line at various improbable places all the way out to Zone 9 (bet you didn't even know there was a Zone 9), and then get a train from somewhere named 'Amersham' onwards.

Arriving in the nick of time, everybody

My own match, by contrast, saw me squander my weight, height and belt advantage to go down 8-1

weighed in without too many problems. The commitment shown by Kooyeon and Clarissa in relation to this was exemplary, both having gone on epic diets the week prior to the tournament in order to lose a couple of kilos so as to fit into their weight categories. Kooyeon, an egg burger and fried chicken man, had even gone so far as to substitute these fine meals with boiled celery, or boiled spinach, or something dreadful like that.

Onto the tournament. Clarissa and Robin had opted to compete in poomsae, which involves the execution of a pre-set series of movements before a panel of judges. They would decide who had performed the poomsae well enough to go on to the next round. Unfortunately, despite their best efforts, neither made it to the

finals.

Would the team perform better in sparring? No, we didn't really. Kooyeon and Clarissa fought first (on separate rings against different opponents, I hasten to add), but neither was able to score a victory. Kooyeon was suffering from a groin injury picked up during training, and despite going 6-0 up against his opponent at one point early in the match, was unable to maintain the lead because of it. Clarissa fought with considerable skill and aggression, and had clearly improved immensely since the Cambridge Open at the end of last year. Unfortunately, however, despite landing many points, her opponent was ultimately able to negate these, owing not least to a considerable height advantage.

Kevin's first opponent didn't turn up and so he received a bye into the second round. Again, however, a height disadvantage seriously undermined his strenuous efforts, and despite an heroic fight, he was ultimately not successful (he dances a mean dance, though, which his opponent almost certainly can't do).

Our hopes for a win were now pinned on Robin (I don't really count)...and he almost did it. The match was by far and away one of the most exciting - and closest - of the day. He and his opponent virtually matched each other move for move, and the pace was extraordinary: an excellent reminder of what an exciting sport Taekwondo can be. The only competitor in his weight category, Robin was guaranteed a silver medal, and only missed gold by a whisker.

My own match, by contrast, saw me squander my weight, height and belt advantage to go down 8-1. Bravo, David.

After all our fights were over there didn't seem much point in hanging around for the awards ceremony, so we made our escape. The most noteworthy event afterwards was during the taxi ride to the station, during which Clarissa declared a deep affection for Burger King. But don't we all, really? Especially for those who only ate boiled vegetables for a week.

1st team 'til they die

Alex Casimo, Sean Farrar and Lawrence Fisher

The LSE 1st XI is in the midst of a fortnight that will define their season. Going into week 9 top of both leagues and in the ULU cup final, even the usually ice cool Montague Ismail was showing signs of pressure. Fortunately, team captain Tom 'Admin' Jacques was busy making preparations for the challenge ahead...

It began with trials and hopes were high, especially as the team had managed to keep hold of integral players such as Alex "sex addict" Casimo, Sean "Mr Loyalova" Farrar, and Lawrence Fishy-Fingers. Our optimism was well reinforced by the addition of some top notch fresher's (+ Warrenator), and weird post-grads/general course kids (including a postman and a Princeton academic). The season started well, despite the loss of two very average players to futsal and FIFA, as we went on to win all but two games in the first term. Along with this world beating form, the team began to bond in ways which only Warren could describe. The highlight for the term was definitely the teams tour to coastal shit-hole Portsmouth; quote of the tour- "does my face smell of tit?" summed up the little holiday, but the smelly faced culprit will remain unnamed. On this fateful night seasoned veteran and loving father Rob Low made sure he and his son were tucked up in bed before midnight. Captain Tom "the philosopher" Jacques probably wishes he had joined them after being caught slumped "thinking" in the corner.

Hopes were high entering the second term, with the team's confidence throb-

bing as much as Warrenator's member when thinking of Besty. The term began with two massive ULU cup matches. First came a hard fought victory over league champions Royal Holloway, followed by a dramatic extra-time win over title rivals UCL 1's. This set up a semi-final derby against the poly on the strand whom we demolished 4-1. The final will take place on the 21st March and we encourage as many WAGS, family, and friends to make the trip to the Bank of England pitches to cheer us on. We are playing an in-form Imperial 1's side, and we are sure that with a good performance, and your support, victory will be ours.

The highlight for the term was definitely the teams tour to coastal shit-hole Portsmouth

We backed up our cup success with a league run of 8 successive wins, and despite a mid season slip up against UCL 1's, the title was in our sights. However, we entered week 9 with the daunting task of winning our last three games to clinch the title.

It was a congested and tiring week to end our ULU season, playing UCL 3's, Royal Holloway 1's, and SOAS 1's in the space of six days. First up, UCL 3's, a team with a mixed ULU record for this season, and a game where we could not afford to slip up. A nervous 1st team had a pre-match boost when Jessica Moore (Adam Moore's 'talented' younger sister) promised rewards aplenty for a victory. Disturbingly, Mooresy bagged two goals, whilst Fishy and Casimo got a cheeky little

invite to her 18th. In the end LSE recorded a comfortable 4-2 victory, with Sean "I'm sorry, so sorry, sorry" Farrar celebrating his birthday in style with a solid, steamy performance. Next on the agenda was a victory against Royal Holloway 1sts. After a shaky start we began to take control of the game, and our dominance was rewarded when Tom Gay (ha) latched onto a Dicky Robert's cross with that abnormally large head of his. We maintained this slender lead until the 70th minute when Holloway struck against the run of play. Luckily we reacted quickly and took the lead once more with another trademark goal from our 25 goal-a-season man Tom Gay. The game finished 2-1, despite a late surge by Holloway which proved unsuccessful due to the brilliance of the best goalkeeper the 1st team has ever seen, Niklas "backdoor entry" Stog.

This set us up perfectly for our last league game of the season against title rivals SOAS 1st team. Win the game and win the league, simple. Nerves were on show in the pre-match warm up, and they followed into the start of the game. We didn't play to our full potential in the first half and went in at the break one goal down with a goal from Strivens' boyfriend. After an inspiring team-talk by captain Tom Jacques we started the second half positively, but conceded another goal against the run of play. This, coupled with going down to 10 men soon after, left us with an uphill task and we ultimately lost the game 3-0 despite a gutsy second half performance. We walked away feeling like we had let the league slip, however we still find ourselves at the top of the ULU Premier division and still have a good chance of becoming champions depending on other teams results.

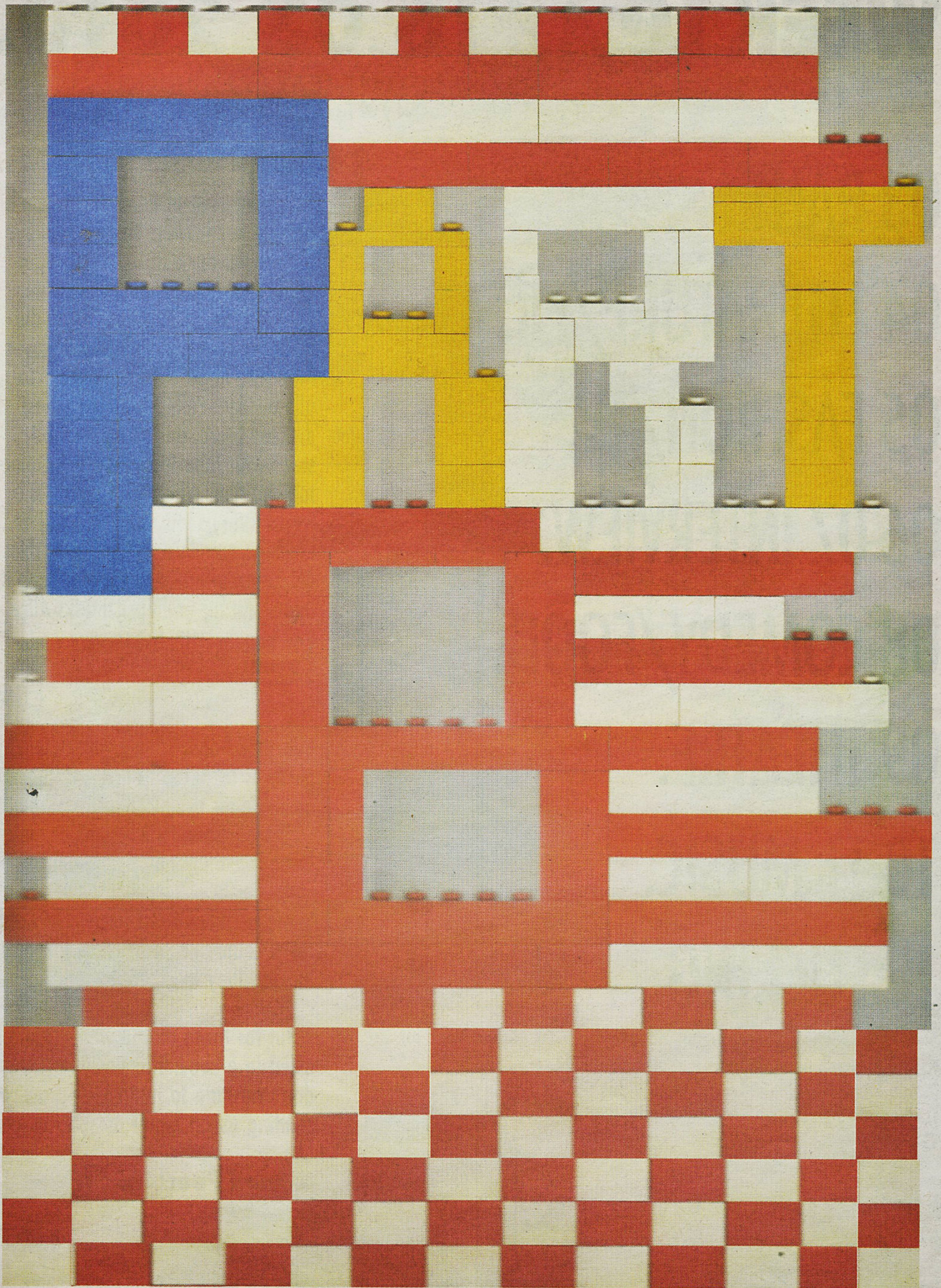
FIGHT NIGHT
> WEDS 28TH APRIL
> CHRIS BAUCH vs STRAND POLY
CAGE FIGHT
 more details soon

ST PADDY'S DAY
 Celtic Soc presents St Patrick's Day celebrations: 3-man Celidh band, Irish stew and £1 Carlsberg
 FRIDAY 19TH MARCH - 3 TUNS/HOUGHTON ST

SPORT RELIEF 2010 - CHARITY RUN

> 4PM, 19 MAR, LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS
> £1 TO RUN, £2 TO SUPPORT EVENT
> ASSEMBLE IN HUB FORECOURT
> TO TAKE PART, EMAIL:
Health.And.Safety@lse.ac.uk

IN AID OF:



WEEK 10 // 16.03.2010.

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03 RANT.

04 LITERATURE/FILM.

05 FASHION/TV.

06-07 INTERVIEW.

08 COMEDY/FOOD.

09 THEATRE.

10-11 MUSIC.

12 FUCKING.

Editorials(?)

This is an issue of PartB which you'll want to keep. We're saying goodbye to many of our editors - Gareth-gorgeous-Lewis, Alex-not really-White, Sophie-Marmite-Marment, Liam-did it for my CV-McLaughlin, Cathy-loves American Apparel-Druce, Alice-actually a virgin-Pelton, Imo-LSE's best dressed-Otoro, and Victoria-didn't sleep with John-Terry. This is a collectors' edition. When Alice Pelton is a world famous journalist you will be kicking yourselves for throwing this vanguard of prose in the bin. Keep it, and sell it for millions (thanks Alice - I do appear witty here).

Calum Young

Cue that Doors song (*wipes tear*). Many of us here at PartB are moving on to better things... Not me though. I'll be here until they remove me by some constitutional arrangement.

Some of them have been doing this for a couple of years. And a mighty fine job they've all done too.

...But for those of you who are interested in a sub-editor position, please don't hesitate to jump in a grave by sending us an email as soon as you like.

Ahmed Peerbux

Can't Get no Satisfaction?

I wonder, when you're tackling a problem set, writing an essay or reading a heavy book, if you ever think that maybe there could be more to life?

At LSE, we try and cover up our insecurities by chasing the pleasures this world has to offer. I fear that we're missing out on the important things of life. Life is short. Once we've gone through the sausage factory of education, the hamster wheel of career and the downward slope of retirement (assuming we make it that far), we're going to find ourselves in a coffin. Death is the ultimate statistic - 1/1 die.

Life is fragile, and life, the way LSE students live it, is futile.

You might know me as the guy who has stood on Houghton Street for most Tuesdays last year, serving free tea and coffee and offering a pizza lunch to anyone who would come to a talk about the life of Jesus in the Underground Bar. That's because I believe Jesus has something to offer every LSE student, and it's the very thing we're all looking for: satisfaction. Jesus Christ offers ultimate satisfaction in life - nothing else ever will. Being an LSE student, you will probably have the chance to search all you like along the avenues of career, the paths of relationships and the highs of drink, drugs and sex, but I promise you - you will not find long-lasting satisfaction - only perhaps momentary pleasure, if you're lucky. Whoever you are, whatever you have or haven't achieved, Jesus' offer of ultimate satisfaction is for you.

Jesus offers foundations that are so secure that whatever happens in this unstable world - earthquakes, recessions, wars - your hope in him is still secure.

You might not think you're a bad person or have done anything major wrong, but imagine if your whole life; everything you've thought, said or done was all recorded on camera and transferred onto a DVD. Would you want your friends to see it? Would you want God to see it? Jesus loves us so much that he shows himself as the one who could forgive the bad things that we've all done. He clears our wrongs and erases our guilt so that we are free to live the way we were made to. To know God and be satisfied in him in a fragile and futile world and therefore not have to worry about the mistakes we have all made and continue to make.

Not only does Jesus offer life to the full on this earth, but he offers eternal life in heaven. We can try and blank out the rubbish that goes on in this world, the pain that we can feel and the problems this planet faces but they will not go away. Jesus knows the mess we're in. Jesus has come to sort it out. 2,000 years ago he is recorded to have lived a perfect life, died on a Roman cross and been raised back to life 3 days later. Why? To show his love for mankind and his power to defeat death, so that every person who has ever lived may be offered the hope of eternal life in a perfect world beyond death.

Look into the real Jesus. Give Him a chance. His claim to offer satisfaction in this life and eternal life after we die is so huge that if it's true, surely you want in? Surely it's worth investigating more than you have already? Why not use this Easter break as an opportunity to find out more about who this Jesus was.

Just a Thought

When I am not eating babies, I like to hear people analyze the world that we live in. Some people take a very positive stance on life and all its terrestrial goings-on, whilst others are more cynical and down-beat in their tone. The former group often criticize the latter group's analysis for being too unpleasant. A truthful and accurate understandings of life simply cannot be so depressing they argue.

This is a criticism frequently leveled at the great Nineteenth Century Philosopher Schopenhauer, his views on the world were notoriously cynical, and if true they shed a very negative light on human behavior. These views cannot be right, his critics said, they're too depressing to be accurate.

Of course Schopenhauer's critics were wrong, truth and sentimentality are not bedfellows. Simply stating that an argument is depressing and unpleasant is not grounds for dismissing it. Looked at another way, whether a glass is perceived to be half-full or half-empty makes no difference to the amount of liquid actually contained within the vessel.

'We have art that we may not perish from the truth' announced Nietzsche, and he may well have been right.

For many people around the LSE, this will be their last Part B. No self-respecting philosophy column misses an opportunity to offer pretentious advice on such occasions so 'Panta Rhei' - Everything flows.

Wristy Business

ALEX WHITE ANTICIPATES PAIN

Believe me when I say that academics are the least of your worries in the coming months. You're all physically and psychologically fucked. Welcome kids, to exam season.

It's almost freak-show entertainment to watch as your hand becomes claw-like, lumpy and raw. Roll up, roll up to see the spectacle of the Annual Hand Maul ladies and gents, a three step process that will render this here writing-hand a corporeal Kosovo.

The first stage of disintegration will hit in your first exam. Your untrained weakening of a hand will clamp up into a depraved, witch-like claw. You find yourself stretching it in, out, in, out, and shaking it all about. It does the hokey-cokey and you've lost 5 minutes of vital writing time. Then, out of the corner of your eye, you catch some guy having a wank. It takes a while before you realise that actually he is simply doing the functional 'wanky-hand-loosening motion', just like you. And so the whole room begins, as though it's an exercise in group masturbation. The Annual Hand Maul is not only physically damaging, but mentally scarring too.

Step two literally pops up about a halfway through your second exam. It is the universally reviled Finger Nubbin. There comes a moment of horror as you look down at your writing hand and notice the extra bone that's growing out of your middle finger. Irrational fears flood the mind: 'Shit, is it my underdeveloped siamese twin? Are there actually teeny hobbits living inside of that?' It grows exponentially with each word you write,

punishing you for not going to art school instead; and the larger it grows, the harder it is to stop yourself from pressing down on it with your pen, creating a vicious circle of finger nubbinery. That shit hurts, readers. It really bloody hurts.

The third and final stage of hand maulage usually hits in your last exam. Racing to fit in whatever garbled bullshit you have, your hand speeds across the page like an elephant on a rampage. Who would have thought that your average A4 lined paper had such effective sandpapering qualities? Suddenly, as though to make up for the extra flesh you've gained in Nubbin, the square centimetre of skin that used to cover the joint in your little finger vanishes, scraped away into a thin white film, cracked to the point of eruption and barely containing the hench muscles your fingers have built up over the course of speed writing twelve essays.

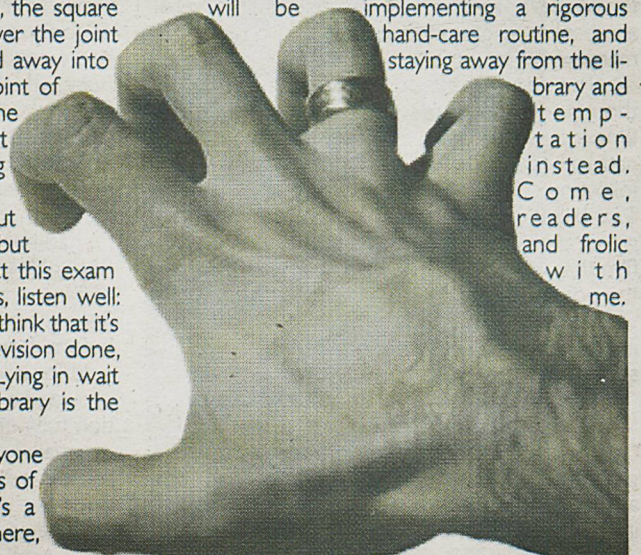
There is nothing to be done about the inevitable Annual Hand Maul, but priceless advice can be doled out at this exam time to our newest intake. Freshers, listen well: avoid the library at all costs. You may think that it's the best place to get some solid revision done, but oh, how wrong you would be. Lying in wait between the bookshelves of the library is the fearsome Library Horn.

Two terms of not finding anyone fit at LSE is dashed within moments of entering our palace of learning. It's a combination of the sterile atmosphere,

the huge amount of people shoved in, the element of the forbidden, and the pure excruciating boredom that makes you suddenly find everyone mind blowingly attractive. The moment that happens, you're totally screwed. (rarely literally, unfortunately). Instead, with each page you turn your thoughts become ever dirtier until you're trying to work out how to get that buffing (read: ugo) across the desk to agree to a bit of Rousseau role-play. Educational fun.

For my final set of exams I will not be revising all hours of the day. To get by this year I will be implementing a rigorous hand-care routine, and staying away from the library and temptation instead.

Come, readers, and frolic with me.



FLAVOUR OF THE MONTH

WHAT I HAVE IN COMMON WITH GIL SCOTT-HERON, BY GARETH LEWIS

If you go for ice cream in Italy, you invariably find the walls of the ice-creams shop are covered in pictures of the ice-cream shop-owner serving his delicious home-made ice-cream to every celebrity under the sun. If you come to my bedroom, you'll find that my walls are covered in pictures of me with every ice-cream shop owner I've ever met. My little tribute.

I love tributes, so I love Gil Scott-Heron's new album *I'm New Here*. It's smashy, a 'special tribute' to his grandmother Lily Scott ('absolutely not your mail order room service type cast black grandmother'). By the way, when G.S.H says 'I'm new here', he doesn't mean I'm new here, he means *I'm* new here (or possibly I'm new [here!]). It all depends on your grammatical *weltanschauung*. He basically says 'I did not become someone different that I did not want to be. But I'm new here. Can you show me around?' He doesn't want you to show him around here, as if you were an employee at Foxtons and G.S.H was a prospective buyer of a pearly Hampstead property. He wants you to show him around (himself? – this is creepy but I think it's what's going on). Get it? And that last track, "On Coming From A Broken Home (Pt. 2)": 'we were working on our lives, on our homes, dealing with what we had, not what we didn't have'. We deal with what we have. I get'cha Gill...

When I was young, about ten, I asked my mum to buy me a Merlin Premier League football sticker album. The other kids ('all the other kids') seemed to have one. They were shiny and popular, about 70 pages long. Furred, battered,

scratched and worked up through use. I came home that evening and found what I'd allegedly asked for on the kitchen table. Bright yellow. On first glance, it didn't look anything like the tract flapping around in the playground. Four sweaty,



long-haired, ballerinas cartwheeled and pranced outwards towards me on the front cover. This was before the era of 3D shins, but out they sprang, all groinal and stretchy. If you've not guessed, I'm not a footballer. Or a sticker collector. But here

I was, inexpert at both, involved in each. Turned out my mum had bought me the Italian Division 2 sticker book. I arrived at school the morning after, flashing my fluorescent brochure about like a shipwrecked marauder in need of rescuing. The true Euro-horror of the situation soon dawned. I tried to persuade the stupidest kid in the class to swap a sticker of Steve Bruce for one of Fabrizio Silvio (or something), but even he wouldn't do it. Eventually I just had the shit beaten out of me and got on with it. We deal with what we have, right. Bethides, football's thtupid.

Literature he ain't, but since Ol' Gil only got a squeasily mention in the music section a few weeks back, I though he'd be worth resurrecting. Besides, he's a poet innee, and poetry is literature too yunno. But then (and here's Will Self) 'if lyricists are poets, then what are poets? Presumably one-man bands without a band?' It all gets a bit fuzzy here: I have to admit, I don't know. I do care though. People like me try to answer the question 'what's poetry for?' by claiming that some musicians are poets and that the *point* of music is self-evident. Despite doing three years of undergraduate philosophy, I can't tell you why this is logically wrong. I just know it is. It's like moving your underwear collection under your bed, because that's where it always ends up anyway. Or mowing your lawn with a rape alarm. It's like my gelato wallpaper bedroom. Yeah, that's what it's like. Those three things, all happening at the same time, within the walls of a Perspex castle. Full of happy cats.

A LAMENT FOR THE ACADEMY AWARDS

TEDDY NICHOLSON THINKS IT'S JUST NOT THE SAME ANYMORE...

The big story out of Los Angeles last week was that the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences held their annual awards ceremony, known to the rest of us as the Oscars. In advance, I was hopeful that this time would feel different to the utter tedium of previous years caused by the inevitable coronation of front runners whose victory was never in doubt. *Slumdog Millionaire*, *No Country for Old Men*, *The Departed*; for whatever reason each year these films were an absolute shoo-in for the top award (and many of the lower ones).

This year was supposed to be different though – we had a real competition for the first time in a while: *Avatar* exploded into the international consciousness last December and in the following couple of months racked up a cool \$2.6 billion and counting, making it the highest grossing film in history. It was that rare mix – a film that was astonishingly popular, well made to the point of deserving awards and actually fun to watch. It is a very good film, and it looked like it was headed for a repeat of Cameron's 1997 success at the box office and at the awards.

Then, out of nowhere, another film began to emerge. *The Hurt Locker* was made for a tiny \$11 million, and has made a tidy profit by grossing (to date) around \$21 million. This is not a large amount of money. However it is tense in the right way, extremely well directed and is

a humane look at modern war at a time when that is exactly what we need. It is also a very good film.

So it seemed, going into the Oscars, that the two films competing hardest for Hollywood's highest honour could not be more different from each other. So why do I still feel so underwhelmed by the Oscars this year? I repeat, *The Hurt Locker* is a very good film. But so is *Inglourious Basterds*, so is *Precious* and so is *An Education*. Similarly in 2006, *Letters from Iwo Jima* was just as good as *The Departed* and yet Clint Eastwood had won just two years before with *Million Dollar Baby*, whereas Marty Scorsese had never got his Oscar.

The point is that in recent years the Academy Awards do not reward quality of film, they reward the film that has the best story associated with it – Scorsese deserved his Oscar as he had been robbed previously for *Taxi Driver*, *Raging Bull*, *Goodfellas* and many more. *Slumdog Millionaire* had been through the difficulties of finding financing and people to believe in it before it proved everyone wrong and produced gold for all involved; similarly, *The Hurt Locker* provided a nice David and Goliath story in relation to *Avatar*. The Academy doesn't vote based on quality, it votes based on the winner that reflects best on them as guardians of taste in the cinematic world.

We now have a situation where there is

an almighty disconnect between the two sides of Hollywood: on the one hand it is a dream factory, designed to provide fantasy, escapism and spectacle. It does this extremely well and it makes a lot of money in the process – 2009 was the highest grossing year in the history of the industry with over \$10 billion made at the box office. On the other hand it is an industry that gives its highest honours to films that no one sees – the combined gross of the last six best picture winners is less than half of what *Avatar* has made.

Watching the ceremony broadcast from the Kodak Theatre in LA the other night made me feel that despite the intense competition we were told about, the result was a foregone conclusion. In the battle for the soul of Hollywood, the small film would always win. I don't believe that *Avatar* and *Hurt Locker* can really be compared properly, much less ranked. The voters felt that the message sent by rewarding a David rather than a Goliath was better. By choosing this path they are biting the hand that feeds them, and the Academy should either stop complaining about declining relevance or accept that being an underdog is not a good enough reason to reward a film. *Braveheart*, *Titanic* and *The Lord of the Rings* prove that the voters are capable of awarding films that the majority of people watch and like, they just seem to have forgotten how to recently.

ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE

IMO OTORO BOWS OUT

The last bow, the final curtain call! Too dramatic? Oui et non. This week's article is indeed the last of its kind from myself, as I will be lending my fair talents to a different kind of audience interested in the musings of a creative enthusiast.

It's been a grand old affair; this fashion editor malarkey, but it is time to move over and let another fabulous fiend take over from my weekly grind (interested applicants apply herein).



In true Mother Theresa style, I will leave you with a few kind and thoughtful insights on how to live your lives post-Imo **PartB** fashion. Hopefully these tips and tricks will see you through the hectic months ahead and hopefully re-

"All the world's a stage! So put your best foot forward and act like everybody's watching. Chances are they are NOT but just in case they are...."

main with you for many years to come. 'All the World's a Stage! So put your best foot forward and act like everybody's watching. Chances are they are NOT but just in case they are...

ACT 1

Do it in studs. Rock them all over the gaff and you will be sure to have the ladies and gents eyeing you up eager to take a bite of your muffin, you stud!

Keep it balanced. If you're afraid of looking like a porcupine, add soft textures and light colours to maintain a feminine silhouette.

For the daring who don't give a 'what what?!' wear the studded look like it's going out of fashion. Then stop wearing them, wear them again and start a revival, you innovator you!

ACT 2

Wear your underwear as outerwear. Soft shells, lace and tulle are key features to flawlessly achieve this flirty look. Do it well and you will look like a sensual, gorgeous being, do it wrong and you will look like a whore. Unless you favour the latter, the following tips will help you successfully wear your undies out-y.

Look for soft textures and fabrics in light shades. Florals, lace and earthy tones compliment this look nicely, giving you that ethereal Ariel from *The Little Mermaid* ain't got nothing on me kinda vibe.

ACT 3

Live like a sexy mo'faux. Although you should be able to wear fur without judgement if it's real, pat yourself on the back if it's fake. Not only have you saved yourself a pretty penny, but you are also saving the chinchilla. SCORE!

ACT 4

Get all ethical. Old habits die hard, but investing in 'slow fashion' splashing out on a garment that has longevity has a great impact on those sweating it out in the factories.

The less people purchase, wear and tear, throwaway items, the less these kind of working conditions will continue to thrive.

ACT 5

The Final Act. Do it in style, your style. Wear what you want to wear as you want to wear it and be a disciple of style over fashion. Do this until the curtain closes and you can rest in the assurance that you lived your life according to the gospel of you.

THE GEMMA FACTOR

JONATHAN STOREY REALLY WISHES IT WAS BETTER

The *Gemma Factor* is truly awful. I could write about how I feel towards *Gemma* in more flowery language or through a diatribal rant, but that would probably have the reverse effect of giving it an oxygen tank of publicity: the last thing this show needs is more viewers. Set in a rural - in the press notes: "backwater" - Yorkshire village, *Gemma* is the tale of a young eponymous girl whose dream in life is to "be as big as Katie Price". While realising such a dream may have been the jumping off point for a clever satire of the celebrity-obsessed culture we live in, *Gemma* (both the show and the character) are as vacuous as the latest edition of *Heat* magazine. Still... at least *Heat* gives their readers a bit of fun while they indulge in their primal quest to discover the latest celebrity rumours; *Gemma* just unleashes a world of awful plot and dialogue and packages it up as "BBC Three comedy".

To say that the characters are stereotypes would give the writers too much credit: they're stereotypes of stereotypes. You have Gemma (Anna Gilthorpe), the "hero" of this disastrous television endeavour; Jeff (Ross Adam) the token gay friend who actually manages to out-camp both Jack from *Will & Grace* and Mr. Humphries from *Are You Being Served?*; Nell (Hannah

Kew), the "goth" confidante who exists solely to question Gemma's pipe dream; Kenny (Angus Barnett), the evil agent who actually has a pencil-bar moustache to twirl; and Nana (Gwyneth Powell), whose sole purpose is to question her granddaughter's wisdom and carry off subplots involving: the theft of a urine and stool sample, spray painting the word 'twat' on a Labrador; and spewing vitriol about how the 'yoof' have gone downhill since 'her day'.

The fact that *Gemma* has an almost American-sized cast is pretty much the only thing that can be said in its favour; it really does want us to believe in this world in which a lingerie saleswoman tries to initiate a liaison with a policeman by ordering a large crate of 'heavy knickers' and requires help opening it. Unfortunately, the only positive aspect of the show is quashed by the hyperbolic and cartoony performances that everyone seems to bring to their respective roles. Add to this dissonant disarray of dialogue some awful direction, plots with as many holes as Swiss cheese and a general sentiment that empathizes with - rather than satirizes - the inanity of celebrity worship and you have *The Gemma Factor*.

To write more about this would not only waste my time in typing my thoughts up, but yours for reading about this drivel. All I can leave

you with is this heartfelt and sincere message: please don't watch *The Gemma Factor*!

THE GEMMA FACTOR AIRS ON BBC THREE.





Volker Bertelmann, under the Hauschka moniker, is a Düsseldorf-based composer and musician who has currently released five critically-acclaimed albums of prepared piano music. Liam McLaughlin met with Volker at King's Place to discuss his inspirations, ideas and the prepared piano.

King's Place is an imposing building, and I can't find the man I'm supposed to interview, Volker Bertelmann whose Hauschka alias is providing a much needed injection of modernity and vitality into the classical world..

Twenty minutes, much running and one locked door later, Volker and I finally manage to find an empty dressing room in the depths of the building where we can sit down to talk. Curious about the themed evening and how the concept of commissioning is used in classical music, I ask Volker to explain how he approached it in this instance.

"You know, 'commissioned piece' always sounds very extreme; where you worked for weeks and weeks and weeks" smiles Volker. "They asked me whether I could participate in this concert series, or festival, which is based around water...and me and Hildur (Guðnadóttir, cellist) had already performed once in Düsseldorf so I thought it would be nice to have a collaboration with somebody I haven't played with so often. So we thought about the possibility of bringing some water aspects across. As you might know, I perform a lot of improvisation pieces, so we thought first of all we could write something down, but then after our rehearsal we decided to only use the sound of tape echo to get the underwater atmosphere in the compositions, but besides that we are free to play what we like."

Despite being a classically trained pianist, Volker chooses to defy convention and play the 'prepared piano'. Following in the tradition of **John Cage**, **Eric Satie** and **Henry Cowell**, the prepared piano is a method of altering the instrument's timbre through placing objects in it to obstruct the sound created by the strings, dampers and/or hammers. So why does he choose to play the prepared piano? Is it a conceptual idea or is it simply a case of better sound?

"Well I like the sounds, I like the conceptual idea, and I like the challenge of having something

other than just the piano. And to be quite honest this discussion that you have with piano builders like Steinway & Sons representing an upper class classical world is a disturbing process for me because I think if an instrument is not there for working with in a way that you can get everything out of it, what's the point? There is a discussion that actually specifies the quality of sound, but in my world I think there's no one who can make rules about what is beautiful and what is not beautiful. And I think that, for me, the prepared piano is therefore to break the instrument. Not to destroy it, but to get to the edge of the sound quality. And I think if companies with this long tradition don't think in different ways, they'll someday be at the end of the discussion and others will take over! It's just something which is actually very influential, and it creates a huge space of new compositions and of new options with an instrument. So that's why I play prepared piano!"

Betraying his anarchic leanings, Volker's ideology of taking the piano to its sonic extremes seems like a rage against the elitist system that the piano is otherwise synonymous with. With the very tool of contention – the piano – through preparing it, Volker is breaking down the snobbish standards of the classical elite, but also the ignorant preconceptions of the 'masses'. Is this a new idea?

"Well I think the prepared piano was already in the beginning like that" he explains. "Henry Cowell was, I think, one of the first guys who started it and it was actually a rage against the establishment. To be quite honest I think it's right when something is established, you have to cut it a little bit down to see if it still has the purpose of being established, or if new things can take over. But I don't want to put too many philosophical aspects in it! I just really love to play the prepared piano... I'm a totally massive fan of working with the stuff I have around me."

Evidently, this attitude is reflected in Volker's influences. "I think everything is inspirational to

me, and is an inspiration that is good. I've listened my whole life to so many different parts of music and I think in every area there is wonderful music and wonderful people who are doing it. I think the discovery of something which effects me is much better than saying 'this and this person or style influences me'. I am definitely influenced by abstract and emotional music which I think is very important because if I were only affected by abstract music I wouldn't say that so many people would go to my concerts! I think if you only represent one side, then your crowd also reflects one side. But it's mixing and also an interaction with the people and suddenly you realise there are people who only like extreme electronic drone music and you are maybe more into the gypsy stuff or whatever y'know?"

A lot of Volker's music is improvised, including songs from his albums. I tell him that I am from a 'rock' background and that improvisation seems to be dying a slow death in the rock circle. However it's barely even employed in the classical circle, so what compels Volker to use improvisation so readily in his compositions?

"Well first of all I have a 'rock' background as well, I played in a very hard hip-hop band where I was rapping, but I was also doing a lot of stuff with distortion and we played with **Suicidal Tendencies** and bands like that who were very heavy, and I stage dived and things like that! When you play long tours – I would say last year I played one hundred shows with the same set-up, and each night I would be so bored with that so I would just think about the mini-bar and whatever...my leisure after the concert rather than concentrating on the gig. But if you were improvising you'd just go on stage and you're insecure...and with this insecurity you go onstage and you start, and I think this insecurity makes you stronger, and I think people actually feel that; that you have no net, and when you make a mistake, you make a mistake. And I think that's also a

statement in terms of being...I wouldn't say radical, but in these times where you can get lazy very easily, especially with music you can let a laptop work for you the whole time, I think in times like this improvisation is a very nice feeling. So that's my concept of improvisation...as well as that I can react to every different room. I can react to a concert area, I can play in a lobby or in a rock club and I have to play a different kind of music."

I like to think that Hauschka is a postmodern project, taking Volker's personal influences from everywhere and applying them to his piano playing. Like a DJ he selects rhythmic snippets of sound, then superimposes them onto counter-rhythmic melodies to create a rich and colourful soundscape that is compelling and progressive.

A few years ago, under the Hauschka title, Volker released his album *Ferndorf*. As soon as I heard it I was hooked, and I remain intrigued by the concept of the album, which seems to be of nostalgic, almost impressionistic snapshots of childhood. I ask Volker if this was the inspiration behind the album, and what it means to him if so.

"It's memories, but also in a way, wherever you were born, there is history around your house and around your family. I was born in this little village and had a wonderful childhood there until I was about 14 or 15, and then the place was getting too small for me. I felt that emotionally I had a very wonderful time, but felt that something was ending, and that I needed more from the outside world to get mental inspiration. Because there it was pure nature and the people who lived there were very grounded, which in a way I would say is very provincial. I wouldn't say they weren't interested in culture but the mentality to reach out to something 'more' is hardly out there, which is a very nice state of mind, but not for a young person, especially not for me. So this album is more for me a kind of peace; I made peace with this time and the area where I grew up, and I found out that the source of my inspiration comes from this time. Then I thought it might be nice to go back and just write down short memories of this time that were intense. So with this record I would say I actually closed the circle of where I came from and where I am now, and I actually found all the roots and now I'm using this in a state of satisfaction to carry on."

Volker has mentioned his electronic influences before, so I begin to wonder how he reconciles his classical and electronic leanings? Are the two compatible?

"I would say they are both very rich when you see just the music. But classical music is old, and if you have modern classical music it's just hard to listen to because people after the war, or just before, found out that there's such a huge trend in getting compared to old composers... and these old composers were very good at what they were doing and they knew a lot about it; they had good teachers and they had no computers so they had to do everything in their head which I think is a big opportunity. When you have the ability to compose these complex pieces it's great, but for the people who came after them it was harder and harder to write something complex and extremely beautiful and then not be compared with them, so the only little corner you could search in was atonal music, or music that you don't want to hear with your girlfriend drinking a glass of wine! You have to listen to it very carefully and afterwards maybe you're in a very mental state of mind, which I think is great, but in a way, the tonal music disappeared a little bit, and I think the people who were still trying to do music like that went into the film area, so they tried to escape to this area where it's actu-

ally more the background music of big films. So when I compare those things, I think in a way they are incomparable, and in another way they are comparable because they are both areas full of beautiful music. I think there's also a habit of closing scenes in terms of announcing your style as the style of the century. Like my grand Aunt always said, 'There is 'musique', and there is 'muzik'. The 'muzik' was all the shit, like all the rock that the nerds listened to, and 'musique' was classical music. But I think that that's not relevant anymore. I think these days we need to open up, I mean concert halls are getting emptier and emptier, the audience is getting older and older and older. There are still people out there who say the best is still **Mozart**. I mean... 1788?! He had a completely different life to me! He had no internet, he communicated with women differently, he was mostly in a kind of royal world, and today people are much more broadly educated. So I think today needs composers of today, not just people sitting in this tower and making music for a handful of people. We need people who are composing music for this period - and that involves techno, that involves hip-hop, rock, whatever; whatever comes to mind can open any kind of field. But quality-wise it has to be good."

I think today needs composers of today, not just people sitting in this tower and making music for a handful of people. We need people who are composing music for this period - and that involves techno, that involves hip-hop, rock, whatever; whatever comes to mind can open any kind of field. But quality-wise it has to be good.

Although Volker is critical of the way old classical music is still venerated amongst the classical elite, he is still highly complementary of stalwarts of the old classical hegemony such as **Mozart**, **Beethoven** and **Bach**. Why then is classical music, both old and new, still relevant today?

"I would say, in my opinion, though a music scientist would maybe say something else,

that the music of each composer who I know has created an extremely strong effect on me; on my world. So when you hear such compositions, they touch you and bring you to extremely beautiful places, extremely dark places; lift you up, disturb you. As long as music touches listeners in that way, they will carry on with this music and will keep it for hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of years. I think that's why these old composers are still around. However, I see in my city that most of the programmes and cultural money is going on these names; on people that are dead! And I think in a way that's awful because it's not financing the young people to maybe get an idea of how they can work with new stuff. I don't know how it is in England but in Germany it's sometimes like that... 80% of the cultural money is straight away going into the old classical world. I'm sure financially these houses are eating up a lot of money, but to constantly finance people who are rehearsing eight hours a day to present a composition that's been done millions and millions of times! You don't know what's the difference between this performance and this performance! Only a few specialists like maybe the critics from *The Guardian*, they are the ones who decide 'That was a killer performance!'

Shocked at how close our opinions lie, I tell him that I completely agree that the media, as well as the establishment, has a stranglehold over art.

"For them it's fantastic as long as it goes on like that, because once this whole thing collapses, everybody will be made aware that it's not the only way... I think it has to open up" Volker muses. "I think collapses are great, they open up new spaces and people start to think again because they get used to always going to the same place; they have season tickets, and in the end they decide after maybe ten years of going to the same music hall that they don't even know who's playing! 'Oh we have the concert tonight at eight!'

Last year as Hauschka, Volker released a generous EP entitled *Snowflakes and Car wrecks* but I want to know what other projects he's working on, and most importantly if there's a new Hauschka album in the works.

"The new album is coming out on the 25th October, which I recorded with a little twelve piece classical ensemble in San Francisco. Then I'm working on a theatre piece in Germany where I'm doing the music and I also play as an actor, which will be at a very nice theatre in Frankfurt. Then I'm doing a US tour - I'm doing South by Southwest festival and a few concerts on the east and west coast. I have a couple of requests for films, but I don't know if they'll come together... but I hope so! I think with the album *Ferndorf*, it was setting a kind of path for me, which is great. It opened a lot of doors and in a lot of ways gives me perspective for my work, and I hope I'm not getting bored!"

With that I formally finish the interview, although Volker and I continue discussing art's place within the societal superstructure for a while after. He assures me once again that he loves the old classical composers as much as anyone else, but that it's just sad that new composers find it very difficult to get the opportunity to play their music to an audience these days. Luckily though, that evening the concert hall is full, and Volker comments on this with some surprise.

Perhaps on this evidence his message is slowly spreading through the diverse range of fans in the audience who are all united by the brilliance and honesty of his music.

Whatever Volker is doing, it's something special.

The full four-thousand word interview can be found on Liam's blog at www.poptonesmusings.blogspot.com

EPITHEMIU!

RUBY BUCKLEY HAS A QUICK CHAT WITH DAN SKINNER'S FANTASTIC ALTER EGO



ACQUIRED TASTE?

DEEP-FRIED SPIDER? NOT FOR VICTORIA TERRY, THANKS.

I am not known for my sense of adventure when it comes to the food I encounter when travelling. I will try some foods common to the country and generally enjoy them, but I have to rule out certain exceptions. I was all ready to test out a goat stew when in Ghana, theorizing that it would probably be like eating a sheep as they look roughly similar... that was until the man next to me began chowing down on a piece of the udder... I slipped my stew onto my boyfriend's plate. Similarly, studiously avoided the various deep fried insects bubbling away in woks in the street markets of Thailand. I don't care if they only taste like whatever they are flavored with, at the end of the day it is still a crispy bug underneath.

However, I have not yet come across the truly terrifying foods I once saw in a TV programme on odd eating customs around the world. Deep fried spiders in Cambodia... I don't really have to say more... Not pretty when alive, still terrifying when dead, there is no way you would find me standing anywhere near these let alone eating them. For those brave souls who are currently thinking 'I'd be able to try those bad boys', keep in mind that the abdomen is said to taste like damp cobwebs

so enjoy! You can say bird's nest soup is a delicacy all you want, but eating a nest made out of bird spit isn't my cup of tea.

Potentially murderous food doesn't really appeal to me either so if I ever go to Korea I will not be eating the live octopus that could suffocate you if not eaten correctly. Or if I travel to Japan, the wildly expensive delicacy of puffer fish (*fugu*) which, if not prepared properly, will contain a poison 1,250 times stronger than cyanide. Definitely, the worst viewing was the *Balut* found in the Philippines. While not an animal rights activist, it does seem rather cruel to boil an egg just before it is due to hatch. I doubt anyone could eat it after seeing the beak, feet and feathers when the presenter broke the boiled egg open!

To be fair, some common foods of Europe could easily be distorted into something you would never consider eating. Of course there are the usual suspects - haggis, frogs' legs and snails - but how about cheese described as 'bacteria-infected mammal secretions'. Yummy. Or the common dish made by grinding meat and stuffing it into the animal's intestines... Yes, that's traditional sausages.

Angelos Epithemiou is the ex-burger van owner alter-ego of the very talented Dan Skinner. He is the Kraftwerk of the comedy circuit - extremely clever and fascinatingly witty. Beware - you won't get this man if you think *Fawlty Towers* was the height of entertainment. Angelos found a happy home with the cast of *Shooting Stars* and is currently filming a second series. Just don't ask him about Ulrika Jonsson - love hurts. He is keeping a positive attitude after his burger van and livelihood were destroyed, and is starting a new career in the Pound Shop industry. Despite already being stroked by the hand of the BBC he is still gigging small venues. His current act is one you cannot miss, especially his skin-tight-silver-jump-suit-finale!

Name... Angelos Neil Epithemiou

Age... a girl doesn't reveal her age, but I'm round about late 30-ish.

Current location... in here.

Distinguishing physical characteristics... sloped hair.

My signature scent is... Angelos for men.

My occupation is... currently unemployed, but I will do anything, and I mean anything, for a living within reason - obviously there are a lot of things I won't do like office work and cleaning and stuff.

I collect... old people from the supermarket, but that is voluntary stuff and I'm not sure they want me to.

My greatest strengths are... in my muscles.

I do the weekly shop at... the shops then I take it home and get stuck in.

Tea before milk, or milk before tea? milk before tea, but this changes from day to day if I'm honest.

I've never voted Tory before, but... eh?

The credit crunch has affected me because... well it's bugged up my business, and it sent it down the pan, because if there's one thing that people stop buying in the credit crunch it's burgers and cars and stuff like that. I can honestly say that the credit crunch ruined my burger van, and also my burger van got blown up so that didn't help neither.

My celebrity crush is... if I was a celebrity then I would like to crush the bloke out of my family, dunno why.

My karaoke classic is... anything by Afrika Bambaataa.

If I could have a super power it would be... Russia or America.

My dream is... to open my own Nando's.

The most I've ever won on a scratch-card is... £25,000 which I immediately invested, I stuck it on a horse. It lost. But you have to speculate to accumulate.

Well, if it's your round... who's round? I'm not round, you're round.

My Fair Lady

SOPHIE MARMENT THINKS IT WILL BE 'LOVERLY'!

It's week ten and it's the time to throw those essays out of the window and to enjoy the last few days of term, after all for some of us it's the last week of formal education we'll ever have. This

week sees assessed essay deadlines, end of term piss-ups and the Drama & Music Societies' annual musical. This year's choice is particularly relevant for the LSE, with a direct link to one of our four founders - **George Bernard Shaw**.

My Fair Lady, set in the first decade of the twentieth century is based on Shaw's play *Pygmalion*. The Drama & Music Societies' production promises to be a real treat with a live orchestra, costumes sourced from the National Theatre and a performance from LSE Director **Howard Davies**, who treads the boards in his

fourth LSE musical as Hungarian count, Zoltan Karparthy. Davies' involvement in the musical is in fact as long as the LSE's recent musical history. The 2007 production of *Into the Woods* was the first LSE musical for forty years but the Drama & Music Societies have revived the tradition and

followed the 2007 revival with *The Wizard of Oz* in 2008, in which Davies played the Wizard and *Crazy For You* last year.

The musical follows Shaw's basic story line,

gins wagers that he can turn Eliza from a woman whose speech is an offence to the English language into a lady fit to attend an Embassy Ball in only six months. Featuring well known song classics, "On the Street

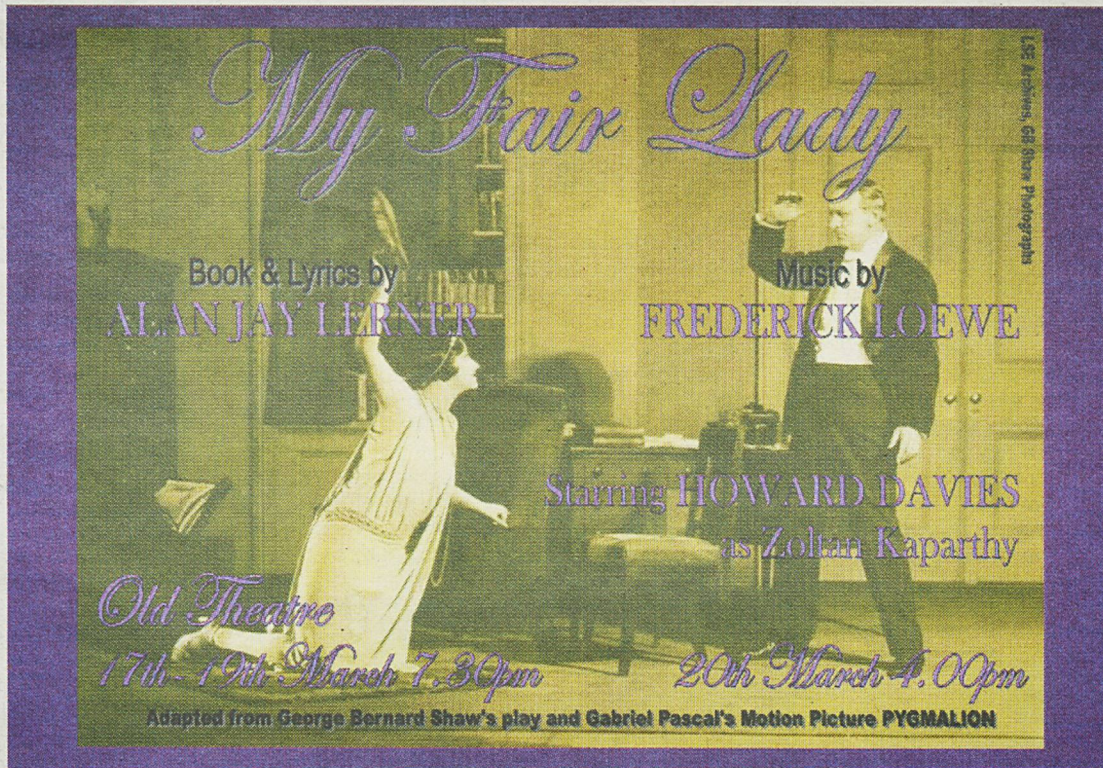
"Where You Live", "Lovely", "I Could Have Danced All Night" and "Get Me to the Church on Time", *My Fair Lady* is packed full of musical magic.

Look out for two promising debuts on the LSE stage from **Annabelle Hägg** who gives Eliza Doolittle a divine voice and **Harvey Daniell** who plays a witty and scathing Henry Higgins. Other highlights are provided by **Nick Davies** as Alfred P. Doolittle and **Edward Howlin** as Pickering.

If you're looking for some relief from end of term blues next week, look up a little bit of LSE's cultural

(yes we can do culture) heritage and come and sing along to a musical classic.

MY FAIR LADY PLAYS 17TH-19TH MARCH AT 7.30PM & 20TH MARCH AT 4PM IN THE OLD THEATRE, HOUGHTON STREET.



though the dialogue and lyrics were rewritten for the musical version by **Alan Jay Lerner**. The heroine of the story is Eliza Doolittle, a young cockney flower girl who becomes entangled in a bet made between speech therapist Henry Higgins and his friend Colonel Pickering. Hig-

Jerusalem

GARETH LEWIS PAYS HOMAGE TO A.A. GILL AND THE BRUNETTE

The night started badly. The brunette lost £40 on the way into the theatre. As everyone took their seats to the sound of **Mike Oldfield's** "Music Of The Spheres" (which, by the way, is much better when you forget where you've heard it before), she started making phone calls. Remarkably, sharing the burden didn't bring the cash back. This dismal truth dawned just as two tall men with colossal haircuts (Mods? Rockers? Mockers?) sat down in front of us. Our seats weren't all that good to start with, but now the stage was obscured by two tidal oil-slicks. I think I saw a dead puffin in one. *Jerusalem* started as the brunette hung up the phone, close to tears.

And what a start. I jumped. Drum and bass, pulsing fluorescents and the tangled silhouettes of mashed wasterlings bled into one another on the stage. In fact, *Jerusalem* has one of the best opening scenes (coupled with one of the best closing moments) I've ever seen in the theatre. We began with cacophony and comedy and ended on a note of pathos, myth and tumultu-

ous magic.

Jerusalem charts a day in the life of Rooster Byron, played quite breathtakingly by **Mark Ry-lance**, a kind of rural Evel Knievel - part luminary, part laughing-stock. Byron is a born mesmerizer. The yarns he spins are hypnotic, the wild offspring of an imagination in which brutal poetry and slapstick nonsense copulate feverishly. But is it all nonsense? If **Shane Meadows** had directed *Big Fish*, this is what he would have come up with. *Jerusalem* is a fantastic, filthy fairy tale. It's impossible, at times, to grasp whether you're still in the real world, or if you've left it for good. Rooster Byron is supposed to be one of those characters that bring those in his company right up to that threshold - what we would call, tritely now, 'a legend'. He faces eviction from the shiny silver capsule in which he lives, a drug-ridden caravan built on land the council want for a new estate. It's no accident, if you ask me, that it looks like a spaceship.

I'm not going to bother suggesting you go and see *Jerusalem* (or be so fatuous as to sug-

gest you see it twice, as Michael Billington has in *The Stage*). It was sold out light years ago. I had to dish out all manner of villainous favours and unheard-of sums to get hold of tickets. What you could do (will anybody do this?) is read it. **Jeze Butterworth** has penned a blinder. Byron's rambling fables are some of the funniest, most hallucinogenic narratives you'll hear. One in which he describes being kidnapped by a group of Nigerian traffic wardens, and held captive for four days, is especially entertaining. With half the stage obscured, and £40 worse off, even the brunette enjoyed the string of meandering chronicles, and was smiling (ish) when we left. This is England. And this is Jerusalem. But this is also Narnia, Wonderland and Mars. Actually, fuck it - get hold of a ticket. Go and see it twice. Do whatever it takes. You will leave unsettled and agasp.

JERUSALEM PLAYS AT THE APOLLO THEATRE UNTIL 24TH APRIL.

THE ROUNDUP

HOLLY RUBENSTEIN REPORTS ON THE LATEST EVENTS IN THE WORLD OF MUSIC

South London's **Tinie** (real name Patrick!) **Tempah** hit the number 1 spot in the singles chart this week, with his debut 'Pass Out'. The track is a fusion of rap and electro with a somewhat confusing drum and bass outro, which sounds like it really should have been added to the remix rather than the single. I am yet to decide whether I actually like 'Pass Out' but I will explain my opinion on the good bits and the bad. My favourite parts of the track are Tempah's (hopefully ironic) lyrics that include "I've got so many clothes I keep them in my aunt's house" and "I've been to Southampton but I've never been to Scunthorpe". However, what has not yet grown on me is Tempah's actual rapping voice. Unlike Dizzee or Chipmunk's, there is nothing endearing about it, and it actually makes me kind of uncomfortable. But maybe that's the appeal – maybe we are meant to feel a bit scared by his aggressive tone. Either way, the fact that Tempah has hit the top spot proves once again that pop music is completely redefining itself, and that urban music now has gained a national appeal – which is a very exciting prospect.

Sticking with rappers, this week US hip-hop star **Lil Wayne**'s one year prison sentence finally began after being postponed for the third time as the courthouse he was due to attend caught fire...coincidence?! Weezy J Baby – that's what the fans call him – has had the most amusing journey to serving his year behind bars, on gun possession charges. He was due to be locked up last month, but his sentence was postponed last minute after claims that he required dental surgery. After this was granted, Weezy filmed seven music videos in a day ...SEVEN... so that he could continue to release tracks while he was away. Sceptics were doubtful of whether there was anything wrong at all with his teeth and whether this was in fact just a shrewd (if illegal) business move, but news this week was

that he actually underwent 8 root canals in one go. Poor man. Still – following the procedure he tweeted that the actual "tragedy" was that he "still haven't got no sex" and that this should become "an America alert". He also reassured us that his 'grills' are back, which I'm sure, was his main concern regarding surgery. To top it off, Weezy held an extravagant 'farewell party' in a Miami club...I wonder if Clinton's makes a 'good luck in jail' card?

Other news include the impending breakup of the **Pussycat Dolls** as two further members have quit, following rumours of their irritation at the attention given to lead singer Nicole Scherzinger. And British fans of Channel 4's '**Glee**' – known as Gleeks – will be jealous to hear that the full cast of the hit series will be performing their number 1 selling soundtrack on a tour across the US. It was also revealed that the future of the **Sugababes** is in jeopardy as reports claim that founding member Mutya Buena has applied for ownership of the band's name.

Tip for the week ... Somalian native **K'naan**, who has nabbed the accolade of the official theme song for this summer's World Cup (and is therefore made for the future) – check out the song, it's called 'Wavin' Flag'.



Holly's tip for the week, K'naan



HOLE
SHEPHERDS
BUSH EMPIRE
17.02

LIAT TUV

Tonight has been billed as the return of **Hole**; their first show in 11 years. Courtney Love, off course, has played since then but the stress is on Hole tonight. Or at least that's the plan. After the two support acts, the background music (the slightly odd choice of classical music) fades and Courtney and Co. hit the stage. Because, to the audience, it is mostly about Courtney. Reacting to one fan's proclamation, "I love Courtney Love," Love corrected the whole audience that it was Hole, not Courtney, that they were here to see. Despite this the crowd would still chant for Courtney, not Hole, before the encore later in the evening.

Playing and writing under the 'Hole' label has caused some controversy among its past members. It is interesting that Love is so adamant this is about the band name not her own character when her right over the 'Hole' moniker is partly because she was its front-woman before. But this is the case for many bands, the current Cure line-up only have one original member (Robert Smith) and most famously The Fall tend to have a line-up reshuffle whenever Mark E. Smith deems it appropriate. But these bands aren't called Robert Smith's band or Mark E. Smith's band and that is because they are distinctly different from solo projects. Courtney Love herself has criticized her solo attempts and notably none of her solo work is played tonight.

The band opened with 'Pretty on the Inside' and continued a set filled with Hole classics and new material. Courtney Love was on form, constantly addressing the crowd between songs to make dedications, pointing out entertaining things or simply to thank them and apologize for her guitar playing or slipping up on lyrics. While the new Hole play through classics like 'Celebrity Skin' and 'Violet' extremely well, the new material is distinctively different. Songs like 'Samantha' and 'Pacific Coast Highway', introduced by Courtney as 'Malibu part 2', do sound like Hole songs but still retain the folksy element that they originally had as demos for her solo album. This is Hole but a markedly different Hole. Visually, tonight lies somewhere in-between the Kinderwhore Hole of the 90s - still present in Love's lacy dress and petticoat as well as some of the audience's outfits - and Courtney's own Bohemian/hippie style of late, not only in stage design but from the newer type of audience tonight has brought. This is Hole, but not as we know it.

A COUPLE OF NEW ALBUMS

CANDLE THIEVES //

SUNSHINE AND OTHER MISFORTUNES

DUE FOR RELEASE 05.04

Thirteen gormless tracks profound only in their apparent monumental lack of irony. This is disgusting twee pop. They use fucking glockenspiels for fucks sake.

LIGHT SPEED CHAMPION //

LIFE IS SWEET! NICE TO MEET YOU!

RELEASED LAST MONTH

This album is all a bit too 'musical theatre' for me. Verging on over-dramatic and camp in places. Inoffensive but unmemorable.



LADY GAGA

AT THE MONSTER BALL, YOU CAN BE WHOEVER YOU WANT TO BE

BY AHMED ALANI

To say I was walking into the O2 arena with high expectations is an understatement. Indeed, such was the expected level of performance from **Lady GaGa** herself, given previous shows at awards ceremonies, that nothing short of perfection would have sufficed for a show that contained a set so elaborate that, despite countless sold-out dates, a loss of over \$4 million has been made to date. Walking into the VIP lounge (yes, I'm a lucky git), I began to realize what a truly peculiar night this would be, as I stared at the countless individuals, including several hairy males, donning peroxide blond wigs, bulge-revealing leotards and unnecessary amounts of lace.

The supporting act, Alphabeat, was a pleasant way to get you excited – though nothing more. But that's all we can expect of most supporting acts. Less pleasant, however, was the agonizing wait between Alphabeat and Lady GaGa, during which time the crowd's evident restlessness grew to breaking point; this was not helped by the merciless onslaught of Michael Jackson hits that we were bombarded with non-stop for a whole hour, courtesy of the organisers AEG. Thanks a million for that. It was later revealed that she had gone through another one of her famed "diva" tantrums that are often splashed across tabloid pages.

At last, however, a projection of the GaGa herself came onto the translucent curtains, and the groaning suddenly morphed into ear-piercing shrieks – who could have ever guessed that the words "silicone, saline, poison – inject me" could result in such a tumultuous roar – a roar that was maintained throughout the truly breathtaking spectacle that was to follow.

Altering the pace, she performed an eclectic mix of all of her music, including crowd-pleasers from her first LP, new favourites from her re-released *The Fame Monster*, as well as never-be-

fore-heard tracks. If these ones are anything to go by, it seems like the world is in store for another round of exceptional Lady GaGa number ones.

It was clear that no expense had been spared with her performance – top quality dancers complemented a bizarre, yet spectacular stage – and don't even get me started on her costumes. I lost count after around 15 changes: suffice it to say, she made sure she retained her reputation for the most outrageous and eccentric outfits conceivable.

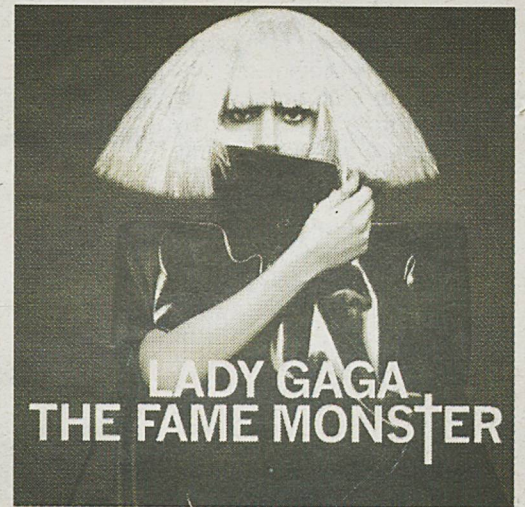
What made the whole evening unforgettable, however, wasn't any of these single items, but rather the way in which they all came together, along with her faultless vocals, to provide each song with its very own unique story, colour scheme, lighting display, background and dance routine. Each track played its own part in getting Lady GaGa to "The Monster Ball", and each one was so different but yet equally special.

If I had to pick one performance that really did blow everyone away, it was her rendition of "Speechless", which she accompanied with a piece on a flaming piano. Perplexed though you may be, that her top performance wasn't the famed "Poker Face", or the stunning finale of "Bad Romance", acknowledge that it's a true testament to a song, when the majority of the arena manages to sing, unaided by Lady GaGa herself, or by any on-screen lyrics, not just the chorus, but the other individual verses, whose words brought with them a painful reminder of her troubled upbringing. Written about her father, and dedicated to "a perfect Lady GaGa fan", this song tugged at the heartstrings of those who fell in love with it from her album, and awed those who had never heard of it before.

Never one to hold her tongue, even with children among the fans, Lady GaGa explicitly thanked the crowd several times, with profani-

ties being used as often as nouns. "Welcome to The Monster Ball...now dance you, motherfuckers", was the tone generally maintained between her songs and, in true Lady GaGa style, she raised several eyebrows, and dropped countless jaws with outbursts such as "to you selfish motherfuckers and your bullshit brown eyes".

Declaring "gay boys" as her best friends, however, before proceeding with the song "Boys Boys Boys" reinforced her unfaltering support and empathy for the minority, and we were reminded of her description, at the start of the show, of The Monster Ball as a "place where all the freaks are outside and we locked the fucking doors". Nothing, however, quite comes close to summarizing the whole surreal experience as, yet again, another one of her quotes "I just have no fucking clue where we are"



"SUNBATHING ON A PLASTIC BEACH"



What kind of women sunbathe on a plastic beach? James Hewlett's toxic, harlequin landscape has been the backdrop of my tube journeys for the past fortnight. But underneath those fluorescent palms, or tucked away somewhere at the back of that elevated lunar hotel, three Sugababes strip and spread. It's the light that gives it away - that tortured glow which swallows up both these ads. If there's anyone flicking charred butts or flinging plastic cocktail cups about the ersatz sand, it's likely, I suspect, to be Heidi, Amelle and Jade. Thank you, and goodnight.

MARK LINKOUS, 1962 - 2010

This week the music world waved a tearful goodbye to **Mark Linkous** of Sparklehorse, aged 47, who departed by way of a self-inflicted shotgun wound.

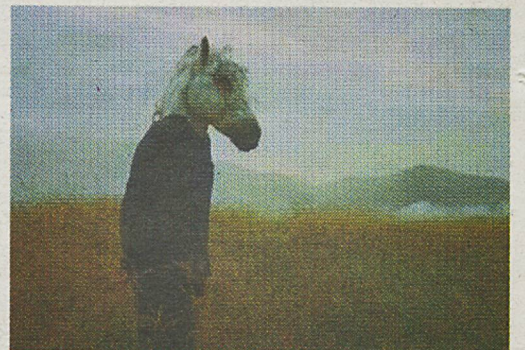
Linkous was a fragile character, but one loved for his sombre and beautiful music, which captured the hearts of many fellow musicians.

Through the vehicle of Sparklehorse, Linkous released numerous albums, EPs and singles blessed with a surrealist lyrical bent and a rich tapestry of musical touchstones. His later releases called upon the sympathetic production skills of luminaries such as Dave Fridmann and Danger Mouse, who complemented his gift for songwriting with their own unique styles.

Latterly, Linkous found a degree of fame through the *Dark Night of the Soul* project - a collaborative effort with Danger Mouse, featuring artistic contributions from James Mercer of The Strokes, Julian Casablancas of The Strokes, and film-maker David Lynch. The album endured an acrimonious dispute with its creators' record label; this drama was characteristic of the trials Linkous encountered during his lifetime. In 1996,

while touring in Europe with Radiohead, Linkous' drug use caught up with him, resulting in an overdose whose effects required major surgery and left him wheelchair-bound for six months.

For all his personal problems, Linkous remained a talented instrumentalist and writer; he was in the process of completing a new Sparklehorse album at the time of his death.



The Cum - Down

ALICE PELTON GOES OUT WITHOUT A BANG, LITERALLY

It's the end. My degree is almost over, and my reign over this page has ended. I'm sure lots of you will be pleased, relieved in fact. For those of you who have been disgusted by these articles, I ask, why have you kept reading them? And for those of you who have wholeheartedly embraced their self-deprecating tone and unabashed openness, I thank you for your everlasting support.

Sex is awkward, messy, and at times overrated. I hate that silent pause as you wait to put a condom on, that depressing moment when you realize a man can't finger you to save his life, and that sinking feeling one gets after downloading Trojan viruses onto their laptop. I've decided that having anal sex and sex on your period are activities best left for long-term relationships, and that fanny farting is best left out altogether.

The reaction from my articles has been hilarious; every week I've received a glut of messages (mainly from men) giving me feedback, comments and requests for article topics. I got this email from a chap yesterday: *'You seem to be a very interesting person. I am moving in London in one month and I'll be working in Mergers and acquisitions (sic) within the investment banking division of Deutsche Bank. I would be delighted to meet you when I'll (sic) be in London if you're ok with it.'* The fact that this man couldn't spell 'acquisitions' and he's going to be working in them was somewhat worrying. But perhaps another disastrous date is on the cards eh? As my dating philosophy goes - if it goes well then that's great, and if it goes shit then it's just another funny story.

There will be many things I will never forget about my time at the LSE: downing 5 pints and grinding a Sabbatical Officer on stage at the Development Society auction, enduring the bus to Calella, winning every dance-off contest in every nightclub I have ever frequented, and never having sex with a single man from the LSE. (I find the latter a huge disappointment but there's still time...perhaps Ringo will be my Starr?) On the whole I'm sad to leave; I've enjoyed drinking a lot of tea, struggling through a lot of Thursday hangovers, and met a lot of lifelong friends.

Because I'm writing this while drinking copious amounts of red wine and consequently feel drunk and emotional, I've decided the rest of this piece should resemble an Oscar speech.

Firstly, I'd like to thank Catherine Druce, who has pretty much helped me every Friday while I've tried to think of witty headlines and find obscure photographs to adorn this page. Oh and that guy Gareth Lewis who writes the Literature section - he is by far one of the most attractive Masters students to grace this institution, and one of the cleverest as well. I'm sure he'll go far. Shame it's not far inside of me.

My housemates as well - Row and Clare, I love you guys - we've been friends since day one, and I cherish what we have. It's beautiful. I enjoy

nothing more than coming home to stand in our kitchen and rant about the lack of attractive men at the LSE and how shit scared we are of giving birth to children. (They actually come out of your uterus!)

My heart also goes out to my beloved women's football team. The WFC truly has been a way of life. Laura Ellis and I met on the Old Building steps before team trials in our first week and have been playing sport together since. I will miss you - and all our chats at the swimming pool and training ground - so much. Alongside Precious and Cherly, and the newcomers this year - Bonnie, Rose, Shamara, Inga, Caroline, Heather, Rosie, and Suzanne - you have been the best teammates I could ever have asked for. You've often been the first ones to hear a new sex-related escapade after I arrive for a match on Sunday with a filthy hangover, and the last ones to care when I fuck up in a match and never score.

ken penis, but splitting up with you was the best thing I ever did. It forced me to get involved with student life at the LSE - to get very drunk, to work a lot harder, and to do stuff like joining the Beaver team. Sam Tempest Keeping took me under his wing after I was elected Sports Editor, healing my love-inflicted wounds. (Now this man is special - who else could smash a window by pressing his bare hairy arse against it, and then blame it on a massive pigeon?) From the Sports section I came to Sex and Gender. Thus if it wasn't for you, Banjo, I would never have joined the Beaver and found out how much I love being a sex columnist. So thank you.

For the next few months I will become supremely skilled in the art of procrastination. My room will be immaculately tidy and my levels of Facebook use will reach unhealthy levels. The library will be filled with people with self-conscious nervous faces, and people will talk endlessly about exams and wrestle each other over precious study-spaces. It will be horrible.

If you feel the need to have a chat or if you ever want to come and have a rant about anything - be it your sex life, the lack of your sex in your life, or how shit your exams are going - I'll be sat in the same spot, in the corner on the first floor of the library for the next 3 months. So if you want to hear some of my not-so-publishable stories, or if you just need someone to laugh with/at, you know where I am.

Then it's back to America for the summer to 'teach' kids how to sail, before I return to London and do everything I've never had time to do during my degree. I'm not lucky enough to have any 'grad scheme' sorted, any 'internship' to run off and do. I just want to read good, interesting books which are totally unrelated to Anthropology

- and not count the pages as I read them. I'm sick to death of page-counting, it's the bane of my life.

My dreams of writing a weekly column in a top men's magazine may be realised (if anyone knows anyone who happens to work for such a magazine and thinks I have a good chance of sleeping with them and getting a job, please get in touch with their contact details.) Hopefully I'll move up and beyond PartB so that I can afford to live my dream; with a beautiful Georgian house in Islington, two cats and a gorgeous husband to match, I'll happily live out the rest of my days.

Good luck to all of you, whatever you decide to do with your lives - and especially if you decide to do nothing. Just remember, no amount of bloody reading, revision and exam success will ever give you the satisfaction you'll gain from a loving relationship with another human being. Those, after all, are the relationships that make life.

For previous, and more explicit, escapades, have a peep at my blog at www.partbbackpage.blogspot.com



I'm probably the worst striker in the history of the WFC, but the best streaker: I'm sorry to the LSE Library security guard who witnessed a flash of my very own Beaver as I ran down the library stairs at 2am that Sunday morning, but it was worth it. As I ran through the turnstiles, the only thing you said to me was 'Do you know you haven't got any clothes on?' It's a testament to the LSE that you get more bollocked for forgetting your library card than running around the library naked. Anyway I'm sorry for any offence caused.

Finally, thanks to all the men - random Squadie, Chad, No Condom Tom, Tag, and Wet Patch - without you, none of this would have been possible. Sadly 'No Condom Tom' never got in touch, but King's Toy boy 'Tag' read the article concerning him, and absolutely loved it. (He has since been renamed 'Tag' by his hockey team.) As for Chad - well, he conveniently lives in another country and will never find out that over 4000 people know he pooped himself on his hallway mirror.

Special thanks go to Banjo. In the words of Jamelia - 'For every last bruise you gave me... thank you.' You may have been a violent thug with a bro-