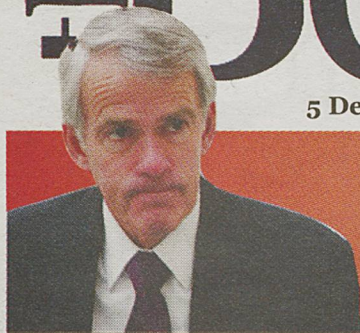


The Beaver

5 December 2006 Issue 653 The newspaper of the LSE



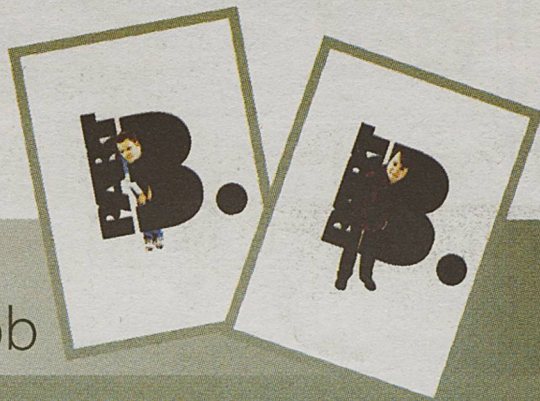
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interview with a senator

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SPORTS 20 Carnage at the Carol exposed

PART B 6 Top ten albums of the year

Mr TV haunts LSE for months

- **ILLEGAL RESIDENT HAS BEEN LIVING IN MULTIPLE LOCATIONS ACROSS THE SCHOOL SINCE OCTOBER 2005**
- **MAKES USE OF ROSEBERY HALL'S LAX ENTRANCE SECURITY TO ACCESS HALL**
- **HAS BEEN 'BORROWING' MONEY FROM STUDENTS**

Sidhanth Kamath
Executive Editor

The individual illegally living in the LSE's Rosebery Hall and the School's library has also been stealing personal belongings and borrowing money from students, further investigation by *The Beaver* can reveal.

Raman Preet Singh Sohi has also been living in LSE buildings and halls for much longer than the 4 months originally revealed by *The Beaver* last week. Several students have sighted him on campus as far back as October 2005. Sources have also indicated that it is a distinct possibility that Sohi has been living at the School since completing a summer school program at the LSE in 2004, rather than a graduate program as originally thought. Sohi was a resident at Rosebery during the program.

Places he is known to have inhabited at some point during the last year include the LSE Library, the School's Rosebery Hall and the Social Policy common room. Rosebery currently uses a front door key system

which allows any room key to open the front door, unlike other halls which have separate 'fob' keys or 'Chubb' cards to open the main door. This allows former students to make copies of their keys during their tenure at the hall, which gives them unrestricted access to it in future years.

However, in a further development, *The Beaver* has learnt that Sohi has been "borrowing" money off students he has befriended. In one instance he asked a student, who wished to remain anonymous, to pay his application fee for the GMAT test online, claiming he didn't have a bank card or a bank account. While he paid the student back in cash on the spot, he subsequently claimed to have missed the test and asked the student to fill in their card details again. This time he did not refund the £160 fee.

The same student also says that they had their laptop taken away by Sohi for several days, after he asked to borrow their room to study on 18 September. When the student returned home in the late evening on the same day, Sohi reassured them claiming that

he had borrowed the laptop. However, when asked for the laptop the following day, he said the laptop was safe with him, and that he had also borrowed the student's camera. Two further requests in the next two days by the student to return the items were ignored by Sohi.

The laptop and camera were ultimately returned four days later on 23 September after a protracted argument, with the student having to threaten to call the police and dialling 999 before Sohi relented. He eventually returned the items, which he had stored in lockers in the School.

During the month of August, Sohi allegedly had possession of a key to a room on the 6th floor of Rosebery, which was given to him by a friend who had gone to Italy on holiday and had paid for the room for an extra number of days. Once access to the room expired, he moved to the TV room in for several days, before convincing another student to let him stay in their room for five days promising to pay the

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'Mr TV' in a student's room at Rosebery Hall
Inset: The picture he took of himself with the camera he 'borrowed' from a student

Oxford's 'Rebel Dons' reject outsiders

Laura Deck
Senior Reporter

Oxford University's Congregation voted down a proposal last Tuesday that would have dramatically changed the 800-year-old university's system of self-government. The vote was 730 against the proposals and 456 in favour. In light of the



recent controversy concerning the appointment of Peter Sutherland as Chairman of the LSE Council, the vote at Oxford has highlighted a contest against external influence in school policymaking.

Since 2000, Oxford's principal policy-making structure has been the University Council which is composed of 26 members, including four members from outside of

Oxford University. The scheme championed by Vice-Chancellor John Hood would have fundamentally changed the composition of the Council. Under the proposal, the Council would have 15 members, with seven internal university representatives, seven external members, and an external Council chairperson.

Critics of the proposal claim that having a lay majori-

ty on the Council would make the University susceptible to the financial interests of outsiders and would erode the University's academic integrity. Earlier this year, Erik Ringmar, an LSE academic, highlighted similar concerns: "the fundamental, underlying, problem is the commercialisation of education. When education becomes a commodity, academics too must become salesmen."

However, Vice-Chancellor Hood has promoted the reforms as a way to increase the accountability and transparency of the University which he says would help it to maintain its renowned status around the world.

Tuesday's debate lasted over three hours with 28 different academics speaking in favour of

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Replacing Trident

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NEWS
BLOG

DRUGS AT LSE
Students come forward
about drugs at 'Crush'
and at LSE in general

UNION BUDGET PASSED
Students vote to approve
SU finances at last
week's ABM

**DEMONSTRATION AT
HILARY BENN TALK**
Students request govern-
ment action on AIDS

**Banking degree established by
Barclays Bank at Nottingham;
S.H.A.G. Week held by LSE SU;
Grimshaw hosts Turkey/EU debate**

Complaint against Passfield President ignites controversy

Roger Lewis
Senior Reporter

An investigation was held at the LSE's Passfield Hall of Residence in Bloomsbury last week after allegations were made that its newly-elected President had violated the Hall's constitution. The investigation subsequently concluded that there were insufficient grounds for a constitutional complaint.

Joseph Angolano, the author of the constitution, was made aware of the possible violation after he was informed that the Hall's President, Orlando Bama, requested a number of new computers for the Hall's computer room from the LSE Finance Director, Andy Farrell. It is said that Bama approached Farrell despite the Passfield Committee arguing against this course of action, in violation of Section 5i of Passfield's constitution, which states, "Committee decisions are authoritative."

Three residents of the Hall made constitutional complaints against Bama, who was described by one resident as "autocratic". The critic added: "I cannot believe the President has gone against the Committee and our constitution. It's disgraceful and many residents are distressed."

The violation, described by one commentator as "very serious", could potentially have resulted in Bama's removal from office. However, a source

close to the investigation said this was "unlikely".

Supporters of Bama, however, have highlighted the personal nature of the controversy, citing his status as a postgraduate as having angered undergraduates at the Hall who differ in outlook.

After an inquiry administered by Louise Robinson, the LSE Students' Union (SU) Residences Officer, it was decided that no action would be taken against Bama.

Robinson concluded that even though Bama had contradicted the general sentiment of the Committee's discussions, since no vote had technically been taken and recorded, he could not be found in breach of the constitution. After Robinson had clarified the results of the investigation, they were widely approved by many.

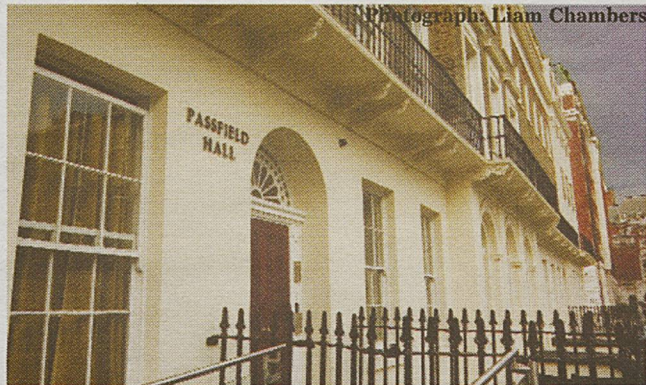
However, despite this resolution, Sunday night's Hall Committee meeting returned to

controversy.

The meeting became increasingly hostile towards the end. It is understood that accusations were made by Bama against Nick Luder, the formal Hall's President, concerning problems related to the Hall's finances.

Luder issued a statement, saying that "the finances are completely in order. All transactions are done with the approval of the committee. The current treasurer is in possession of all relevant materials." This has since been confirmed by the Hall's Warden, Dr. Bradley Franks.

Robinson concluded by saying that "this does highlight awareness of students' right to hold their elected representatives to account and it does demonstrate that when personalities on committees become embroiled in conflict only personal resolution can benefit Passfield residents."



Passfield Hall's President was the subject of a complaint

University Christian Unions engaged in disputes with SUs

Michael Deas

University Christian Unions (CUs) featured in the national press this week following recent disputes between them and their wider Student Unions (SUs). *The Times* and *The Guardian* newspapers both reported that the Exeter University's CU is considering legal action against its SU following the suspension of its bank account and withdrawal of its access to facilities for having violated the university's equal opportunities policies. The University of Edinburgh's CU was also recently prevented from teaching a course on sexuality because the SU considered it to be homophobic, and the Birmingham University CU was temporarily suspended earlier this year for failing to open up its membership to all students.

Jemma Percy, President of the University of Exeter SU, said that because the CU required students to sign a declaration of faith, "participation in the society was not open to every student", contravening the SU's constitution and equal opportunity policy. This nationwide requirement of CUs has also prevented the Heriot-Watt CU from affiliating with its SU. The Exeter University CU also ignored an SU vote ordering them to change their name to the Evangelical Christian Union after complaints from a Christian student that the group was too

narrow in its beliefs. Birmingham University's CU was also required to undergo a name change before it reopened.

The Universities and Colleges Christian Fellowship, the national organisation of CUs, said that "The politically correct agenda is being used to shut people up under the guise of tolerance. We believe that we are going to see more situations like this in our universities." Leading religious leaders expressed their concerns in an open letter to *The Times* newspaper, saying that groups faced "considerable opposition and discrimination of their rights of freedom of expression, freedom of belief and freedom of association".

Josephine Tay, the Secretary of the LSE CU, said that CUs were sometimes "misunderstood as being against many things a secular society would have no qualms tolerating. We never prescribe attitudes towards those who have different worldviews to Christians." She added: "It has been said that the average person does not value freedom - he values safety. Perhaps it can feel like there is more safety when everyone on campus agrees not to speak against each other's beliefs and to tolerate each other? Today's world has become so afraid of offending minority groups or groups who have only recently gained a voice for themselves that it tries to look after their interests at the expense of other groups."

The National Union of Students (NUS) has said it will do everything it can to "resolve the issue and to continue to promote inter-faith dialogue on campus". A report it commissioned by think tank Ekklesia concluded that the SUs were not unfairly targeting Christian groups but only taking action when the CUs "have actively contradicted the SU's constitution and/or equal opportunities policy". The report suggests that internal mediation via university chaplaincies can help the groups understand that they must work within SU rules on equal opportunities and democratic procedure, and that their fundamental right to exist is not under threat. The report also criticised media "misreporting" that has seemingly confused the separate cases and exaggerated the extent of disputes.

Arthur Krebbers, LSE SU Societies Officer, said "I am shocked by the extreme measures taken by other universities against Christian Unions. I feel this is a highly illiberal and dangerous path to take, setting a dangerous precedent and stifling debate on campus. Before we would resort to such an intervention, I can guarantee that we would consult all relevant stakeholders and try and come up with a more productive solution to the matter. The LSE SU wants to foster a respectable environment where all faith communities are allowed to worship and gather freely. Recent developments have been very positive."

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

£16-a-day rent to them, which he subsequently never paid.

He is also alleged to have a "huge collection of USB sticks", which he collects from computer rooms across the School and the Library when students forget them. These sticks have then reportedly been exchanged by Sohi for cash on several occasions.

Commonly known as 'Mr TV' at Rosebery due to his use of the Hall's TV room to sleep in since August, Sohi has only recently vacated Rosebery after hall authorities asked him to leave on 12 November. However, during his time at the Hall he has seemingly built up an extensive network of friends, which initially allowed him access to the hall and subsequently ensured that he was able to use other students' cards and passwords to access the Library as well as computers on campus. He has also been accessing Facebook, a popular social networking tool, from Rosebery and the LSE, using other students' passwords.

Another source of astonishment to many students at Rosebery who knew Sohi was the large number of breakfast coupons for the canteen he always had in his possession, far more than any other student. He is also alleged to have Waterstones bookshop vouch-

ers in his possession which he trades for money. He currently retains in his possession a 'Freedom Pass' for use on London public transport, which offers free travel to citizens aged 60 or over.

"Given the amount of time this individual seems to have on his hands if he is living at the School, it is no surprise he has been picking up things around the School which he can then use or sell", Ricky Ren, a 1st Year Economics student told *The Beaver*.

Sohi has seemingly been very careful when interacting with other students and using passwords. He would always delete all 'Temporary Internet Files' on computers after using them. Furthermore, most text messages sent by Sohi to his acquaintances were sent through www.cbfsms.com - a website that allows free text messaging.

Tim Turner, a 3rd year Anthropology student, indicated his disapproval of School security's handling of the situation, saying: "It's frankly quite alarming that LSE security staff are more concerned with peaceful LSE protesters than a persistent trespasser and criminal like Mr TV. They need to address their priorities; Mr TV poses a real and significant threat to LSE staff and students, and should be dealt with as a matter of urgency. The fact that any Rosebery resident can just copy their key and then access the Hall forever is

ridiculous. This clearly comes under LSE Security's remit, and as a concerned student I am eager to hear how they are addressing the problem."

However, the School has drawn attention to the nature of the open LSE campus, which is freely accessible to all individuals - excluding certain areas like the Library - and a spokesperson said: "Security staff are aware of this person, at Rosebery and around other LSE buildings. If necessary, LSE security staff can, and do sometimes, call on the assistance of the police but this would depend on the nature of any alleged offence. We are, however, an open campus and, other than shutting down buildings completely, it would be difficult to prevent anyone entering some of our buildings."

"In halls, we would repeat the request for current students not to let people they don't know follow them inside, or sign in people they don't know. We have consulted with the SU Residences Officer Louise Robinson (herself a Rosebery resident) and will be making some changes to the reception arrangements to reduce risks of unwanted visitors. However, it is students' responsibility to ensure that any guests they sign in themselves are bonafide visitors."

The School also refused to allow *The Beaver* to view documentation that included photocopies of Sohi's drivers license and LSE card.



Concerns have been raised about LSE Security's handling of the issue

Sohi has subsequently been sighted on several occasions at the School. On 13 November, Raman was spotted wearing a thick scarf and hat in the LSE library. He was also spotted on 14 November sleeping in the library, when he was escorted from the premises by security. He was allegedly made to sign an undertaking stating he

would not enter School buildings or residences again. On 16 November he was again spotted in A038, a computer room in the basement of the Old Building. He was last seen at the School on Monday, 27 November, again in the Social Policy common room.

Further investigation by *The Beaver* sourced Sohi's

mobile number, but when contacted he refused to answer any questions, asking "What newspaper?" before disconnecting the line and ignoring further calls. He subsequently turned off his phone, which had not been turned back on by the time *The Beaver* went to press.

LSE's drug culture exposed

Patrick Cullen
Senior Reporter

Students at the London School of Economics (LSE) have recently come forward to reveal the School's drugs culture. Last week, *The Beaver* was approached by students claiming to have taken narcotics at the LSE student night 'Crush'.

One undergraduate student said that he had "taken cocaine during 'Crush', and [had] previously witnessed others doing so in the toilets." In addition, he said that he had "known people to do 'pills' etc.", referring to a variety of substances including ecstasy and speed.

Furthermore, the student said that "I have also bought both cannabis and ecstasy on campus, off a fellow student at LSE". Other sources acknowledged that Crush, while not being an event where usage is prevalent, provides an environment in which drugs could easily be obtained, and that this extended to the School itself.

According to another student of residence, such as High Holborn in particular, have low-level drug dealers who provide marijuana and other drugs. This student also

revealed that "Ritalin is really big amongst General Coursers and American students." Ritalin is prescribed to children with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD). It is often taken by students to aid continual concentration on academic work; the drug becomes addictive after a while and consequently the user has difficulty concentrating without it.

Another source spoke about her experiences at Crush. The source revealed that on one occasion, her drink was spiked. "I was really scared by what had happened and concerned by the lack of safety precautions at Crush...I woke up in the morning feeling very strange and couldn't remember a thing ... [it] took me about three days to even begin to feel normal again; the drug had definitely affected my body."

However, many students have expressed a lack of surprise at the idea that drugs are available at 'Crush' and around campus. One student stated that "this is a university, what do you expect?" The culture is not confined to the LSE alone. Only recently *The Observer* newspaper published an article on a report by Professor Howard Parker, of Manchester University, which showed that

cocaine use has seen a five-fold increase among students. As a result, cocaine is now the second most widely used drug at universities across Britain, following closely behind cannabis.

Professor Parker told *The Observer* newspaper that "I have no doubt that cocaine is becoming the drug of choice after cannabis. Among our [study] group, who are now [aged] 22, we have seen a 400 per cent rise in those who have tried cocaine. We went back expecting to see them beginning to settle down but what we found was a normalization of cocaine use." His long-term study's latest findings on drug-use among British university students will be published later this year.

The article also quoted a Sussex University student as saying that "At first I couldn't believe how many people had coke and I would only take it when someone offered me some. But the most normal, straight people now will sell you some and it is cheap enough to do every weekend. It is far safer than drinking too much or taking ecstasy. And it is cleaner because you feel fine the next day and can get on with work."

The original source confirmed the rise of cocaine

Photograph: Liam Chambers



Recent figures indicate a rise in cocaine use among students

usage. He spoke of spending £60 per gram in order to ensure that he acquires "the good quality shit, which isn't cut with anything unpleasant." Other reports suggest that the

rise in cocaine use is tied to the cheaper, more widely available 'middle-class drug' which can now be found for between £30 and £40 a gram.

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or against the reforms.

Nicholas Bamforth, a law fellow of The Queen's College and one of the elected internal members of the current University Council, led the challenge to the proposed changes.

Bamforth explained the view of the opposition: "My

"...the fundamental, underlying, problem is the commercialisation of education. When education becomes a commodity, academics too must become salesmen."

**Eric Ringmar,
former LSE
academic**

feeling from the meeting was that most colleagues did not feel that it was appropriate for external board members to control the University. We strongly welcome external members as advisers, but that is a very different thing from control."

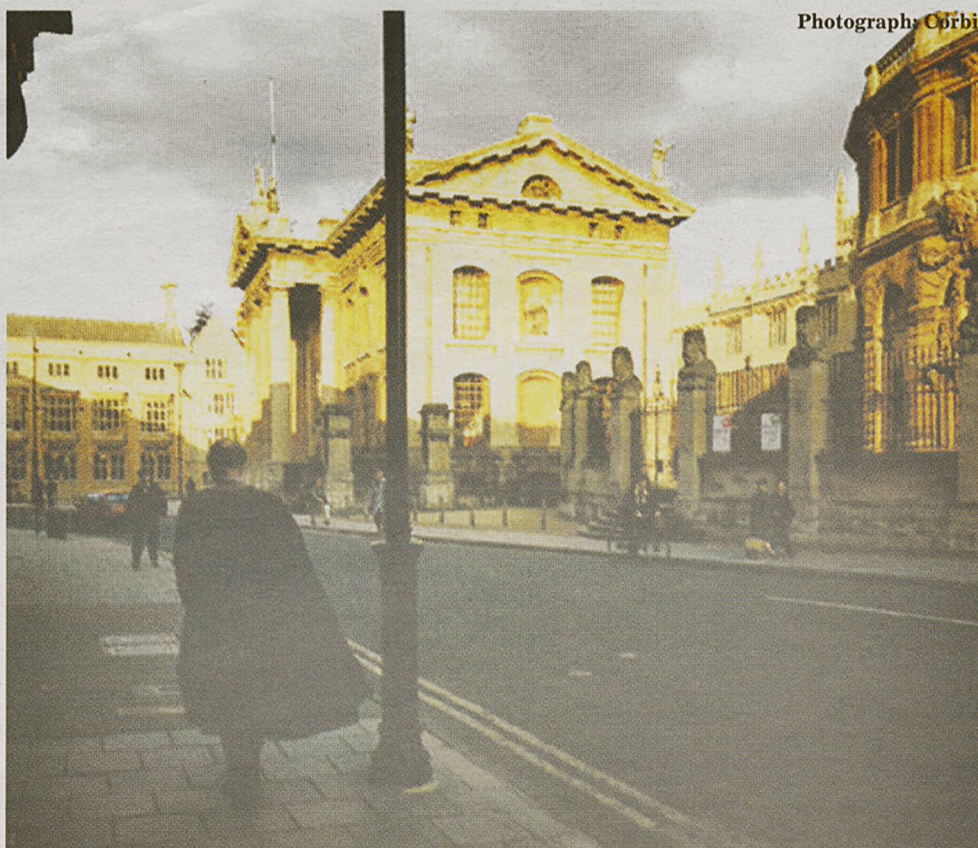
Oxford University members are clearly aware that other UK universities, such as the LSE, have struggled with the matter. "It was felt that the experience at other universities demonstrates that external members tend in practice to delegate that control or defer to the university executive - which as a result obtains far too much power to push things through without questioning," Bamforth explained.

On the matter of external influence in university policy-making, an LSE spokesperson said: "The governance code of practice produced by the Committee of University Chairmen, and endorsed by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), states that 'it is an important principle that the governing body has a lay majority, that it is a majority of members who are external and independent i.e. not staff or students of the university.' LSE, along with the great majority of universities in the UK, conforms to this practice."

Bamforth disagrees with the idea of such practice at Oxford and said that he and his supporters "felt that academics were the better people to hold the university executive to account. Internal accountability was also felt to promote greater efficiency: people feel far greater commitment to an institution when they can feel themselves to have a stake in the decision-making; an external board is inevitably more remote and is likely to diminish people's commitment and in turn their work."

Some students at the LSE tout the merits of Oxford's current system which gives the majority of decision-making power to internal members, and feel that it would be beneficial for the LSE to do the same. James Caspell, SU Postgraduate Students Officer and former student governor and member of Council at the LSE said, "if Oxford can be run in majority by academics you have to question why LSE cannot be governed by a mixture of students and staff, instead of lay governors who have no connection with the day-to-day operations of the School - after all we are a university and not a business."

Critics of the reforms at Oxford echo Caspell's argument. They believe that decisions concerning the direction

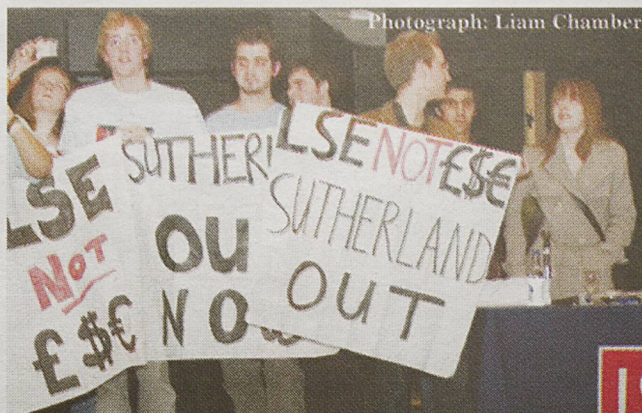


Photograph: Corbis

Oxford academics have rejected outside influence in University decision-making

of the University and its academic and financial policies are best made by academics and senior staff. Bamforth reported that during Tuesday's debate "many speakers drew analogies with the NHS, where administrators now have the power to overrule or regulate medical decisions by doctors - something which cannot be sensible."

A decision on whether the reforms should be sent out to all 3,700 members of the Congregation by postal vote was to be made by 4 o'clock on Monday 4 December. Sceptics believe the results of such a vote could prompt calls for Hood's resignation. The Vice-Chancellor's reform proposals



Photograph: Liam Chambers

LSE students demonstrate "marketisation" of School governance

are supported by the HEFCE Chancellor, Lord Patten of and the University's Barnes.



Union Jack

SPECIAL BUDGET REVIEW

Always budget week, Jack always looks forward to the one day a year where the Treasurer has to be seen to be doing something. It's always the same as last year and mostly written by the LSE SU civil service bureaucracy (the man who runs the copy shop mainly) but nonetheless KenReich was on pretty top form; speaking behind a lecturn big enough to be an armoured vehicle (paper throwing has been banned JoKe) cleverly putting the slides in upside down so we couldn't read them and sipping something so strong they probably use it on the Tuns toilet floors.

Dewj-bag briefly interrupted the proceedings with his panic-driven attempt to farm out more of his job to eager underlings on the RAG task-force. Jack has worked it out and in Dewj's case £22,000 buys the Union a Comms Officer who doesn't; do websites, banners, RAG week, Global week, advertising, a half-decent global email, election publicity or work well with anyone else. But he is very good at debates (so he argues).

And speaking of which, there was loadsa dosh for Ali's cronies at Debate HQ, but only a few hacks noticed. Bad news for the Drama Society (that's what happens when you're next alphabetically), no one was impressed with their impro act at getting more cash.

Other than that though, all was pretty quiet. The usual question about the Women's Right to Choose fund came up this year from a strange Tory who looked like he'd never kissed a girl let alone got one pregnant.

Now that the Union has some money again after paying off the Tuns refurb and selling its loss-making private arms trade (thanks Aled!) Jack wonders if it's time to refurb the Tuns again as the Ikea furniture and perma-broke windows are looking a bit shabby.

Still next week's Mich 06 finale should be good. The UGM masses can look forward to delivering their verdict on the Sutherland Four's revolutionary protest as long as the malcontents go ahead with censure motions. But for a match report on all the fun and games of the Dilhole/Caspell show trial readers will have to wait until the new year as Jack is taking a well earned break from Hackery.

Until then the hacks can get on stabbing each other in the back ahead of Sabb Idol '07. Will Kreeep give Mrs Dewj a run for her money or will Mr Dewj fulfil his dream of the Presidency? Will Vincenti do a Sian and do another year of mysterious 'casework' or will new-comer Finnegan have a shot? Van Man or dozy Jeff for Treasurer? Another jonny come lately for Comms? Who knows!?

See you in January! x

Union budget passed by UGM

Patrick Cullen
Senior Reporter

Last Thursday's Union General Meeting (UGM) was time allotted to the Annual Budget Meeting (ABM), at which Joel Kenrick, Students' Union (SU) Treasurer, presented the budget to the SU for approval. The budget was passed by ABM.

The meeting consisted primarily of Kenrick's presentation of the 19-page budget, for which he wore a three-piece suit. Kenrick also had with him a bottle of 1991 vintage whisky. During his talk which considered overhead projections of the Budget, Kenrick emphasised the fact that he had "inherited a very healthy budget" from Natalie Black, the previous SU Treasurer.

According to Kenrick, the Budget for 2006/07 "consolidates [the Union's] strengths", and has been produced with his election promises firmly in mind. Kenrick said, "Fair Trade goods" and "ethical T-shirts" were now available at the SU Shop, while "recycling around the School" was as a direct result of his talks with the School. Furthermore, Kenrick said, the SU has received an additional "£23,000 block grant and an extra £43,000 [for the] much-needed refurbishment of the Quad over the winter holidays."

Following his presentation, the ABM voted on the Budget page-by-page. There were relatively few questions. The Sabbatical Officers' salary (which has decreased, as Kenrick noted, declaring



Photograph: John Philpott

SU Treasurer Joel Kenrick delivers budget to the UGM

"we're no longer the best-paid Sabbs in the country") came in for brief questioning. One question from the floor asked why the Sabbatical Officers were paid £23,000 each per annum when the Budget allocated £106,000 for all four of them. Kenrick explained that "the difference goes on employer related costs...our salary is definitely £23,000."

The rest of the Budget passed relatively consensually, with the brief exception of Samuel Burke's question regarding the Right To Choose Fund. Burke asked Kenrick, "Given the expense of raising a new born child, shouldn't the Right to Choose fund be substantially more than £2000?

Or is it really a 'Right to Abortion' fund?" In response, Kenrick told Burke and the ABM that the fund "gives people a helping hand...it's not a major amount, but it is a useful part of the Budget...if more funds are needed, there is always the option for a fund transfer from elsewhere in the Budget."

Burke later said, "The purpose of my question was to expose whether the 'Right-to-Choose' fund was a euphemism for a 'Right-to-Abortion'. I remain unconvinced that is not the case. I feel that a portion of £2000 is insufficient to guarantee the welfare of mother and baby. In an attempt to further choice, the Union Budget seems

to suggest a preference for the cheaper option of aborting babies."

The only proposed amendment to the Budget came from the Drama Society. Some complained that the Society took the opportunity to advertise their productions while attempting to gain an extra pound in their budget. Ultimately their amendment fell. The majority of the Budget passed without event, although Kenrick did raise some laughs when he informed one society that the reason they had not been given any money was because they had not requested any.

New banking degree established at Nottingham

Doug Oliver
Senior Reporter

Barclays Bank is hoping to attract top students to a career with its establishment of Britain's first retail banking degree, which will operate in partnership with Nottingham Business School. The new scheme will exempt students from paying tuition fees, guarantee a job upon graduation and pay students a salary of around £12,000 a year throughout their period of study.

The scheme, which was launched as a pilot last September will be expanded next year. It offers students work experience in a customer-centred environment and, according to Gary Hoffman,

Vice-Chairman of Barclays, it "addresses two of the main concerns of today's students: how to pay their way through university and what to do after graduating".

The select group of students enrolled in the course will first complete a year of a Business Management Course at Nottingham Business School and then do two four-month placements at Barclays branches learning customer relations, sales and management skills. Students will also be expected to work full time toward their degree during the period of their placement.

Speaking to the *Guardian Unlimited: Education* journal, Alison Hopkins co-network director at Barclays said the scheme "adds a valuable new route to becoming a branch manager at Barclays."



Photograph: Corbis

Barclays Bank has established a new university banking degree

Elster delivers Comte Memorial Lecture

Rajan Patel
Senior Reporter

Professor Jon Elster delivered the Auguste Comte Memorial Lecture last week, speaking on the subject of 'Disinterestedness in Politics'.

Elster, the holder of the *Chaire de Rationalité et Sciences Sociales* at the Collège de France, gave two separate lectures on the subject. Each addressed the scope for disinterested political behaviour and the mechanisms that may bring it about.

Disinterestedness, Elster argued, is similar to 'public-spiritedness' in political decision-making, whereby the benefit of the nation as a whole is prioritised over the interests of individual policy makers. As such, disinterestedness bears no relation to apathy or a lack of interest in the political process.

Elster presented evidence to demonstrate that disinterested action can be motivated by emotions such as "envy, resentment, vindictiveness and fear". Elster even argued that such emotions sustained the French Revolution as much as a general desire for an equitable republic.

Much of Elster's cited material came from the late 18th century, focusing on the drafting of the American Constitution and the French



Photograph: Gaia Innes Fasso

Elster explores selfless behaviour among political elites

Revolution.

Elster spoke of a "mania for disinterestedness" in American politics in the late 18th century, but identified reluctance on the part of the Founding Fathers to place their faith in the disinterestedness of generations to come. The checks and balances on the power of the executive branch of government enshrined in the American Constitution, reflect this "organized mistrust" of politicians' capacity for public-spirited behaviour over self-

interested behaviour.

Elster concluded by arguing that a degree of trust in politicians' better natures is a prerequisite for any functioning political system, since a vast quantity of checks and balances can obstruct progress and legislation. However, Elster maintained that the potential for conflicts of interest afforded by the nature of politics today, requires vigilance if the public wish to keep their elected representatives accountable and disinterested.

Heritage Foundation President expresses hope for UN

Vishal Banerjee

Dr Edwin J. Feulner, President of the Heritage Foundation, spoke in the Old Theatre on Thursday regarding the need for reform within the United Nations (UN). The public lecture, chaired by Howard Davies, was the fourth in the series of lectures at the LSE: *The United Nations at 60 - relic or relevant?*

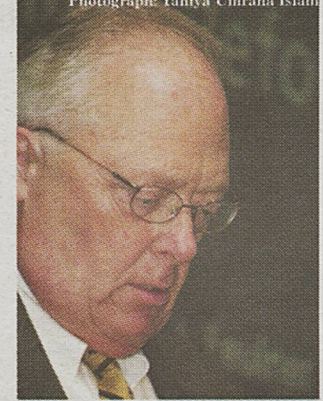
Feulner, who has been President of the Heritage Foundation in America since 1974, described his organisation as 'the largest independent think tank' in the USA today. He spoke about the time having come for drastic change within the UN, and about general reform being critical.

Having spoken briefly about himself and his background, which included serving on the Gingrich-Mitchell Congressional Task Force on UN reform, Feulner went on to dedicate a large portion of his speech to examples of human rights violations across the globe, and how the United Nations was not fulfilling its purpose by failing to end such abuses. Using the examples of Darfur and Rwanda, Feulner claimed the UN had become a "bureaucratic quagmire", leaving "much to be desired" as an institution.

This led Feulner to discussing member states of the UN who were themselves guilty of human rights violations. Using the examples of Saudi

Arabia, Zimbabwe and China in his lecture, he claimed that these countries did not meet the standards of the Human Rights Commission and that a "tougher and objective" screening process needed to be put in place for membership.

Feulner was not entirely critical of the UN though. He was quick to point out that he believed in its goals and aspirations.



Photograph: Tahiya Umrana Islam

Feulner argues for UN reform

rations, and that it had done some "good work", especially with the World Health Organisation helping to tackle disease worldwide.

Feulner referred to his report from the Heritage Foundation throughout his lecture, and gave some of his proposals for reform within the UN. He told the audience that the UN Secretary-General needed to have his "administrative responsibilities" enforced and that the efficiencies of the Human Rights

Commission needed to be improved. Passionately using the metaphor of machinery, noting that sometimes only "small fixes" were needed, Feulner emphasised that the large ones he had been proposing were not his only suggestions. He conceded that some of the UN's defects were traceable to its member states, and that it was not fair to attribute all the blame to the institution.

Feulner acknowledged himself that some of his proposals were controversial, especially his suggestion that perhaps a country should use its "financial leverage" when trying to see important changes realised. He stated that the US was the contributor of a vast amount of the UN's budget, and that they should not be "ashamed" to use its economic advantages.

Inevitably, as a great deal of his lecture had centred on human rights, Feulner was asked whether he thought the US' conduct should cause concern with respect to human rights law. Feulner immediately responded that he was prepared to "stack up the US' record against any other country", and told the audience that he thought the US' system was "transparent".

Accepting that we have to "recognise and accept the UN's limitations", when asked where he saw the UN in the future, Feulner replied that he still believed there would always be an "institution where nations come to talk", regardless of the UN's fate.

Demonstration at Hilary Benn talk

Rajan Patel
Senior Reporter

Twenty-six students from the LSE Students' Union (SU) People and Planet Society staged a demonstration at a lecture given at the School by the UK Secretary of State for International Development, Hilary Benn, last week.

The talk, given on the eve of World AIDS day, was entitled, "HIV/AIDS: prevention, treatment and care – how will the world deliver universal access by 2010?" In it, Benn spoke of the progress made in the fight against AIDS in recent years and of how the UK's policy on AIDS was developing to meet the 2010 target.

However, People and Planet – a national student network campaigning for the alleviation of poverty and the defence of human rights – argue that government funding for anti-AIDS programmes remains inadequate and that there still exist legislative barriers to universal access.

The demonstration consisted of members of People and Planet drafting a question to Hilary Benn, asked by the society's chairperson, Megan Gaventa. Gaventa also presented Benn with a petition consisting of approximately 200 signatures of LSE students, demanding greater funding and more political leadership on the issue of AIDS. Prior to the lecture, leaflets and petitions had been distributed to the audience and a number of large banners



Photograph: Tahiya Umrana Islam

Demonstrators listen to Benn's talk on the eve of World AIDS

and placards were displayed outside the Hong Kong Theatre.

The group's placards bearing pictures of large eyes were intended, Gaventa explained, "to remind the Minister that we're still watching him" and his AIDS policy. The placards were forbidden from being in the theatre by the LSE's Conference and Events Manager, Alan Revel.

Revel explained that it was "the School's standard policy not to allow placards in public lectures" for fear that some might construe the messages advertised by them as "offensive". While acknowledging that, in this case, "no-one could object to the issues being raised", the placards – which displayed the same symbols as those on the T-shirts worn by the demonstrators – were forbidden to avoid establishing a

"dangerous precedent".

After the lecture, Gaventa expressed her "disappointment" at the Conference and Events Office's decision, saying that the use of eyes as a symbol could "in no way be seen as offensive" given that "everybody has them".

Aside from this, no other restrictions were placed on the students by the School and the group accepted Revel's decision without significant protest.

Furthermore, Benn welcomed the actions of the LSE students, expressing his surprise that the demonstrators had not "collared" him before he entered the theatre. He said that the work of campaign groups in gathering petitions and mounting vocal protest "made it easier for the UK Government to achieve progress", as it demonstrated

to other countries that "it's not just us, the politicians, who want this to work".

In their question to the minister, People and Planet said that the goal of universal access to treatment will not be achieved "without political leadership to ensure international action". They stated that at the current rate of progress, five million people will remain in urgent need of treatment in 2010 because "the world won't make treatment available", not because their cases are untreatable.

It was asked whether Benn accepted "the necessity of generic production" to cut the cost of anti-retroviral (ARV) treatment, and what action the UK Government will take to reform the trade rules that discourage generic production and block access to life-saving treatment.

In his lecture, Benn cited new funding – such as \$70 million from the international drug purchase facility UNITAID – to expand provision of second line ARVs. He also spoke of a recent agreement brokered by the Clinton Foundation, under whose terms two leading pharmaceutical companies (Cipla and Ranbaxy) will provide developing countries with a range of paediatric ARVs at \$60 per year, less than half of their current price.

However, such isolated accords are still a long way from the liberalisation called for by campaign groups such as People and Planet. Gaventa later said that Benn "didn't come anywhere close to answering my question."

Gaventa went on to say that, "his response was that we should be following on with the amendments [to legislation governing drug provision] already in place, but these amendments have been in place for three years and to date we haven't had any progress on the issue."

A large part of Benn's lecture was focused on the need for "moral and political leadership" and an appeal to our "common humanity" to tackle the "stigma, prejudice and discrimination" that still surround AIDS. The higher prevalence of HIV in women in the developing world, and particularly in girls who had left school at an early age, was also noted. Benn concluded that "education is a social vaccine" and spoke of the allocation of £8.5 billion for ten-year education plans in poor countries.

Benn also commented on the benefits of debt relief for developing countries, agreed on at Gleneagles last year, highlighting the case of Zambia. Since the summer of 2005, the Zambian Government has been able to introduce free health-care at the point of use in some areas. This, Benn argued, represented a crucial stepping-stone on the path towards universal access within that country.

The minister even tried to encourage audience involvement by actually asking questions himself of audience members. He appeared interested in the work being done at the LSE by the People and Planet Society, inviting the campaigners to the drinks reception which followed the lecture and commending them on their commitment and research.

Gaventa, however, remained unconvinced by the UK Government's record on AIDS and its pledges for future action. She spoke about the inability to secure real progress on the issue of generic provision, especially given the length of time it has been debated for. Gaventa concluded by saying, "To me, and to students all over the country, this is evidence of failure already."

Benn accepted that the achievement of universal access by 2010 is a difficult target to meet, but exhorted others to follow the example of campaigners and activists in "challenging the silence and denial that shrouds AIDS" by taking action. The more people that are involved, he argued, the more likely we are to succeed.

SU holds S.H.A.G. Week

Michael Deas

Last week, the LSE Students' Union (SU) held the annual Sexual Health And Guidance (S.H.A.G.) week. Timed to coincide with World AIDS Day on Friday, a series of events was organized by SU officers and societies aimed at improving student awareness of sexual health and the global AIDS epidemic.

The week opened with a film showing of The Constant Gardener and a Sexual Awareness Open Mic Night organized by the live music society in the Quad. The SU Executive also distributed over 1000 "S.H.A.G. bags", which contained condoms and awareness leaflets.

On World AIDS Day, the LSE SU People and Planet Society ran "Unfair Day". The society set up a stall, which featured games such as "Batter Bono" and "Pin the Condom on the Man". The Islamic Society also ran a stall highlighting the global effects of AIDS worldwide on Wednesday and Friday.

Later that evening, a candlelit vigil was attended by approximately 15 students to mark World AIDS Day and remember the AIDS victims across the world with a prayer reading and a two-minute silence.

The AIDS awareness party, also run by People and Planet, included a charity auction that raised over £1400, in support of the AIDS charity Crusaid.

However, some events were

affected by a poor turnout. On Wednesday, Rowan Harvey from the Terrence Higgins Trust spoke on how a lack of openness about sexual health, especially AIDS, prevented people seeking and receiving equal treatment. Commenting on the lack of attendance Vincenti said, "I was disappointed but as anyone who organises talks knows this can just happen sometimes, and there is often no one reason – however the facts and information she provided was very useful for future work on sexual health and AIDS, and we hope she can return for Womens' Week next year."

Over 1000 'S.H.A.G. bags' distributed with condoms and awareness leaflets

A literature society discussion on 'South African Plays', a collection of the experiences of AIDS sufferers with its publisher, Carol Robson, was postponed and will take place in the following week.

In the most high profile event of the week Hilary Benn delivered a public lecture at the LSE, in which he detailed the global progress in providing universal access to anti-retroviral therapies. He said that he was proud that the UK was the second largest donor in the fight against AIDS. He also said that long-term donations and international cooperation

were needed to achieve the ambitious aim of universal access to AIDS treatment by 2010.

The People and Planet Society carried out a demonstration at the public lecture. A group of students distributed leaflets and held banners before the lecture. Several stood up in unison while a planned question was read out by the People and Planet Society Chairperson Megan Gaventa, asking how Benn hoped to remove the trade inequalities that make access to treatment harder for poorer countries.

Benn even thanked them for their campaigning and said "When we, as politicians, fight like tigers to get things done, public support helps."

In addition to raising awareness of AIDS the week also aimed to improve knowledge of sexual health amongst LSE students. Vincenti stated "I think the combination of the S.H.A.G. bags, STI of the day posters, S.H.A.G. crush with the condom happy hour, Pulse's jingle and then the fact that I must have given away close to 9000 condoms helped to achieve this."

Vincenti, said "Overall I feel the week was a great success. Many societies got involved, with the Islamic Society running a bake sale, UNICEF having a coffee morning, Dignitas braving the weather all week to be on the street to raise money, and People and Planet putting a lot of time and effort into organising some great events."

Grimshaw hosts debate on Turkey's accession to the EU

Nada Mansy

The LSE SU Grimshaw Club hosted a debate last Tuesday entitled 'EU, Turkey & Political Islam.' The panel included Dr Denis MacShane, Labour MP for Rotherham, Abdul-Rahman Malik, Editor of Q-news and Dr Gül Berna Özcan, an academic from the School of Management at Royal Holloway. The debate addressed the effect of Turkey's accession process on Europe, Muslim political identity and Turkey itself, as well as the view of the European Union (EU) as a 'Christian club'.

MacShane started the talk by stating that "Turkey is central to the EU and the world...It is an absolute historic choice for Turkey to go West (in the widest sense)." He cited it as an example of an "historical compromise reached between faith and society", and a good model for struggling democracies in the Islamic World. He continued that the notion of shutting the doors to Turkey is "naïve...Europe can't keep Turkey out...it is at the heart of Black Sea, Mediterranean and Middle-Eastern politics."

MacShane also stressed the importance of Turkey's accession in the current political climate in Europe, with a rising extreme right and an "extremely worrying" amount of anti-immigration propaganda.



Photograph: Liam Chambers

Speakers debate Turkey's accession to the EU

He did say however, that "Europe is not an 'Open Sesame' to happiness." There was broad consensus across the panel on this point.

In relation to this, Özcan stressed the importance of the EU changing its mentality as much as Turkey: "The EU is going through a difficult period, it doesn't know where it's heading. The EU is not yet a Union, there is nothing to justify a Union...it's a decaying continent." In reply to a question on why Turkey would want to join the EU if it is as she described, Özcan explained that the reasons are no different to the ones stated by Europeans, but also that the EU would help Turkey with things that it needs: more democracy, more freedom of speech and less human rights violations. In answer to what Europe would gain from Turkey joining the EU, Özcan argued, "Europe needs to make peace with Islam and needs to strengthen multiculturalism; Turkey will give it this." She

further explained how Turkey would also bring to Europe a dynamism that is a product of its younger population.

Nevertheless, she was careful to point out that Turkey should join "an EU that is being built, not something that is big and put in front of them...those who see Turkey as having to change must remember that other countries took 20 or 30 years for their transition...Turkey is seen as a sinful outsider."

Malik echoed these points: "Europe is constantly evolving; there is a constant discussion of what it is... the European project is on the rocks". Malik also stated that Turkey's accession would be positive in terms of forcing Europe to resolve its identity crisis and challenge the pervasive idea of the EU being a 'Christian Club'.

Grimshaw Club President Eddy Fonyódi said that he was "very pleased" at the turnout of the event, especially with regards to the enthusiasm of the audience.

COMMENT & ANALYSIS

The NUS has a "no-platform" which stops the BNP from speaking at Conference. LSESU anti-racism officer, **Shanela Haque** argues that this is necessary, while NUS delegate **Douglas Oliver** says it's not.



Gemma Tumelty, NUS President, at the UGM earlier this term

Douglas Oliver



No platform is a step too far

The most alarming political trend of recent years has been the apparent rise of the British National Party (BNP) who have reaped increasing electoral dividends from an agenda sown of racial and religious intolerance. Amongst campaigning organisations, NUS has been one of the most ardent in calling for the organisation to be tackled and support for its "No Platform Policy" has solidified. However, it harmed the BNP little and infringed free speech.

The NUS "No-Platform" policy was conceived in the 1970s with the intention of banning fascist organisations from participating in the NUS. According to the policy, "Fascist" groups not just including the BNP, ought to be banned from holding a platform in University campuses.

Like all of NUS policy "No Platform" is not binding to constituent members, but some do take it further. In September 2003 for instance, the Keele University "England Society" were banned from holding a stall at their Freshers' fair. The ban is in operation in many Unions around the country. In 2004 the policy was further extended to extremist Islamic organ-

isations like Hizb ut-Tahrir (HT), the now-defunct Al-Muhajiroun, and the Muslim Public Affairs Committee UK.

Whilst most supporters of "No-Platform" would claim to support the notion of free-speech, they would argue that it is justified when certain ideas propagated by certain groups are so offensive and unpalatable as to be beyond

If some "extreme" groups offend our sensibilities, why not ban ultra-free market Conservatives

the pale. NUS also argues that by preventing certain groups to debate it "denies fascists the opportunity to gain political credibility". However, debating with certain extremist groups provides opponents the opportunity to scrutinize them. By exposing groups like the BNP to debate, the true nature of their policy can be revealed: one driven by an ignorant and irrational racial perspective. By not speaking to the BNP, their unfounded arguments remain unchallenged and their political strength is allowed to fester.

The action of the NUS perhaps reflects the current illib-

eral zeitgeist - the British Government has also been affected by the tempting reflex of banning disagreeable ideas. Free speech can never exist in a partial form. By making apparently "obvious" exceptions, a dangerous precedent is set. If some "extreme" groups offend our sensibilities, why not ban Communists or ultra-free market Conservatives? With this precedent intact, the status of Student Unions as a crucible of free-expression is seriously undermined and the importance of free speech in society is diminished.

In common with many LSE students, I believe that organisations like the BNP are reprehensible. However by censoring our opponents in this manner, we only weaken ourselves by showing the hypocrisy of our purported adherence to "free speech" and failing to expose extremist sophistry. As John Stuart Mill argued: "The peculiar evil of silencing the expression of an opinion is, that it is robbing the human race... those who dissent from the opinion, still more than those who hold it. If the opinion is right, they are deprived of the opportunity of exchanging error for truth: if wrong, they lose, what is almost as great a benefit, the clearer perception and livelier impression of truth, produced by its collision with error."

Fighting fascism is NUS priority

Shanela Haque



Since the early nineties, the National Union of Students has not given the BNP or any other fascist group a platform. Nor have these groups been given a public forum through the NUS. Yes, free speech is important and yes we do all have the right to criticise and voice our opinions. But let us examine the concept of 'freedom of speech' for a moment. Many people deem this to be one aspect of an ideal, utopian world. Classing the belief that one must be allowed to say what they want and where they want as a 'freedom' immediately implies that morally it is a good thing. In many cases, it is extremely important. We have seen through examples in history what the effects of censorship can be. Public book pyres were favoured by the Nazi regime, while Under Stalin, publications were banned and the import of foreign books prevented. These methods of censorship were used to cover up brutal regimes of mass murder and show why free speech is important. However, if we flip the coin, we can see that it is by abusing this principle of free speech that groups such as the Nazis and Ku Klux Klan were able to spread ideologies of hate and incite violence. It was because of 'freedom of

speech' that the Nazis were able to spread their fascist ideas in the first place, gain the support that they did and eventually murder and torture millions.

Abusing 'freedom of speech' is precisely what groups such as the BNP attempt to do today. By spreading racist lies and politics of hate whilst claiming it is 'their right' to do so, the BNP aims to create an all white Britain and one where the rights of all non-whites will be lower than those of white people. Fascist groups (the BNP in particular) incite violence

Abusing freedom of speech is precisely what groups such as the BNP attempt to do today.

towards ethnic groups. Wherever there is a strong BNP presence, there are an increased number of attacks against ethnic minorities. Once racist ideologies become ingrained in a person's mind, they can lead to horrendous attacks such as the vicious murder of Anthony Walker last year and of Jay Abatan who was punched to death in a racist attack.

NUS took up the no plat-

form policy for fascist groups in order to take the stance against racism, to show that racist and fascist views are not legitimate and will not be condoned by the NUS. By undertaking this policy, the NUS has not by any means censored the BNP from exposing what they have to say but have made the point that the BNP and other fascist groups do not have the backing of the NUS.

In this country, we are extremely lucky to have free press and we do indeed possess many ways of expressing ourselves. However, to consider ourselves as having complete freedom of speech is delusional. Many things that people regard as perfectly within the idea of free speech already break age old laws. For example, the law against blasphemy is still in place. Also, expressing words which incite violence or murder are also illegal. It can therefore be seen that there have been limits placed upon our 'freedom of speech'. We will never have complete freedom of speech. It will always have some boundaries placed around it. What we need to try to ensure is that we use the bounded freedom that we do have in a responsible way - that we do not abuse it but use it to make constructive and truthful arguments in order to better our society, especially in public forums.

Filling in the void: Helen Roberts tells her story

Cut hacks some slack

Helen Roberts



Last year I studied at UCL and lived in intercollegiate halls with James Ketteringha, who, much to our disgust, got involved in the LSESU. Despite being badgered by the SU due to James even before I got to LSE, I was at the UGM on my first week and I have been hooked since.

The UGMs were a bit of a mess, though. In the fourth week of the, C&S were no confided. In the fifth week, the Returning Officer, Wil Barber, quit. Codes of Practice say the C&S have to elect an interim returning officer - but what to do when C&S have no mandate? To cut a long story short, after this constitutional crisis and a lot of discussion, it was decided that I would become interim Returning Officer.

Here started my journey into the depths of SU. That night I had many joyous tasks including reading the Codes of Practice and sorting through the Returning Officer's stuffed inbox. During the next two weeks my inbox was packed due to the by-elections. I was receiving and sending around 40 emails a day. I had queries and complaints to deal with, and was attending some exec meeting and also C&S. This was taking up more time than my degree.

I have to say though, despite the time and the stress, I have loved every minute. However, as soon as I got involved, I began to realise why James had spent a lot of his first year ranting about it. People don't seem to understand the union unless you are involved in it and it's a pity that this is such a small number. Maybe if it wasn't seen by some as a petty, self gaining institution that was bogged down by red tape then more people would care.

On another note, the

Sabbs, the Exec, the C&S, F&S, the media group; they slog their guts out. Many of these people spend more than 20 hours a week (that's probably more time than most of us spend studying!) doing things for the



Photo: Aditi Nangia

I think people forget that the hacks are human

union whilst attempting to study for their degrees but they get a lot of stick when anything goes wrong. I think people forget that the Sabbs, the Exec, the C&S etc are only human and that one mistake does not counteract all the good they do. Sabbs are often in at 8.30am and sometimes

don't leave until the last tube. The Exec and C&S etc show similar commitment. Fellow students seem to be totally unappreciative of the work they put in. I totally understand and agree that when something goes wrong, they need to be held accountable. However, sometimes I think it would be nice to give them credit for what they achieve.

Personally, I received a lot of stick for making unpopular decisions that were nonetheless right. There really should be a certain amount of generosity for the people who work so hard to try and keep your union in running order.

This is my final week as Returning Officer (pending any election complaints!) and I have had a great time. I wish my successor the best of luck.

Old Theatre, 6 & 7 Dec, 8.30 pm

Tickets on sale Houghton St / at the door

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around
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THE LSESU DRAMA SOC
CHRISTMAS VARIETY SHOW
Spectacular
Spectacular

COMMENT & ANALYSIS

Tuns falling revenue

Lack of drinking is not geeks' fault

Subash Viroomal helps to take the blame for falling Three Tuns takings

Amazing isn't it? Every time I succeed in creating something newsworthy, Geek's gets the credit. I will not allow it any longer. The telephone, the automobile, the atom bomb, falling Student Union Bar revenue's ... ok, so Alexander Graham Bell invented the telephone, but the rest are mine! The Geeks didn't do it, I DID!

Reading the Beavers lead article from two weeks ago would lead one to believe that "falling bar revenues" can be blamed on the fact that Geeks have overrun the LSE (Shock! Horror!). The message is that the growing number of Geeks has caused a migration from a life in a bar to a nest in the library. Whilst

this idyllic image may be reassuring to our parents, the truth is very different.

Does it sound right to anybody out there that "falling bar revenues" should be blamed on Geeks? 2nd and 3rd Year Geeks have never gone to a bar so they cannot be held responsible. Therefore this year's Freshers - the traditional scourge of bars, clubs, buses and sidewalks - are dwindling in their party-animalness. Let me defend my dear fellow Freshers.

They are drunks. Make no mistakes about it. Go to any Accommodation bar on a Friday night and the amount of alcohol consumed could run ethanol-powered cars in Brazil till the turn of the next century.

Every night. So it's not the Freshers fault.

Although many go to "alternative venues...to socialise" this fact cannot be held solely responsible for falling Union bar revenues. After all, as Mr "Vodka-is-my-first-Love" (an amalgamation of 2nd year LSE students) would tell you, "we used to (*hiccup) party everywhere last year man. (Long pause whilst examining the ground) We used to party in loads of places in London... (*hiccup), never at the LSE... We go there enough man!"

The reason, may I reiterate, is not that there are more Geeks in the new Freshers population; it's MY FAULT!

I'll tell you why. Proudly voted "Most likely to be found passed-out face-down in a London ditch by his first

Christmas at University" at my previous school, I should be at the forefront of the fading teenage fantasy of drinking, dancing and finding some "nocturnal company."

Yet I am not. Somehow I do not party much anymore.

When I get back from one of the LSE's fascinating public lectures, I cant wait to get into

It's MY FAULT!

my evening routine: comfy clothes, lie around in my room checking up on my sport teams, go down for a sociable dinner, win at table-football, go back to my room, watch Family Guy with my neighbours and then crawl under my warm covers not to awaken

until the alarm I left at the other side of the room force me get up.

I don't party; NOT because I have to pay top-up fees (all this complaint about top-up fees: They take up about 25% of your total expenditure for the year and they would be a lot higher if our cherished principles of demand and supply were followed!!); NOT because I spend more on pencils as the article alluded to and certainly NOT because I avoid Union bars to go elsewhere to get hammered.

I resent being called a Geek. They always get the credit. Do you see any time spent at the library or working in my timetable above? No.

What I am is a member of a growing group of students who enjoy relaxation and spending calm time with friends chat-

ting, playing poker or pool and watching a game of football together. Do I need alcohol to do that? No. That's not to say we can't party. Hell, when we get going, dance floors and bars part to admire the technique.

What we don't want to do is go to the Tuns thrice a week, drink gallons of beer and stumble home with a 9am lesson the next day.

So as you see, it is MY fault Union Bar revenues have decreased. And it's NOT because, as the growing hordes of people like me will testify, I am a Geek.

(Unless no-on understands this, in which case consider me Master Geek Number 1 - And loving it)

China & Falun Gong

Reconsider CCP's Falun Gong view

Qin Cao continues to argue with **Leeshai Lemish** over Chinese Falun Gong policy

In April, U.S. Department of State spokesperson Sean McCormack said that a U.S.-Embassy-led visit to one labour reform camp in northeaster China found "no evidence" in support of Falun Gong's report of things like organ harvesting. Of course, Leeshai and other practitioners may argue that the Americans may have made a deal with the Communist Party. But why should we trust the information provided by Falun Gong?

Let me start by Leeshai's direct response to me. He claims that I recalled incorrectly because Li Hongzhi did graduate high school. The fact is that Li, in his 30s, got his so-called diploma from the mail-delivering adult education programme (the "han-shou" programme). Anyone familiar with the Chinese educational system can tell the difference.

Leeshai also asks us whether we got our negative impressions about Falun Gong only after 1999. In fact, I heard almost nothing before

that, and people around me say the same. However, I believe this contradicts another fact provided by Leeshai. "(Falun Gong) was so popular in China that the government estimated as many as 80 million people practiced it in 1998". I don't know what source he can refer to. As far as I know, the official claim is that there are 2 million practitioners in China. If it is true that there were 80 million practitioners, how can

I heard almost nothing about Falun Gong before 1999

it be that few people ever notice their existence? Suppose there are 4million practitioners of a certain religion in Britain, is it possible that people are unaware of them? Therefore I find the Communist Party's claim, though it may also be inaccurate, much more reliable than Falun Gong.

Yet this is certainly not

Falun Gong's biggest lie. In the last couple of years, the members of Falun Gong have claimed that there are more and more CCP members quit the party. The most recent relevant information I can find is that, 15 million party members have quit the CCP (nearly a quarter of all party members). Leeshai didn't mention this good news in his article, probably because even he didn't find it convincing. Other Falun Gong practitioners are less shameful and tend to act like orthodox Stalinists.

Leeshai's strategy of argument is a different one. He asks if any of us who speak against Falun Gong have ever met Li Hongzhi himself. It seems that Leeshai thinks his contact with Li puts him in a good position to judge Falun Gong. Yet I wonder if he ever contacted Jia Qinglin, Jiang Zemin, Howard Davies, or anyone he mentioned in his articles. Besides, to judge Li as ignorant needs no more evidence than his writings. I suggest those of you who can read Chinese find his writings from the internet, and judge his intelligence yourself. For those of you who can't, I will just mention two examples. He

once claimed that Jesus Christ forbade his followers from spreading Christianity to eastern countries. And he once said that it is very hot on Mars.

I bet Leeshai won't change his opinion about the party

Another "personal impression" strategy Leeshai uses is to describe other practitioners as people who just want to be "left alone to meditate quietly in the park". I don't know what he tries to prove by this. I myself know a lot CCP members who are very liberal indeed, but I bet Leeshai won't change his impression about the party even if I tell him that. Leeshai also says that all Falun Gong protests, including the one in Zhongnanhai before the ban, are in response to "slander and persecution". It seems that there was no persecution before the protest in Zhongnanhai, so it must be some slanders which made them do so. What was the slander? It was an article published on a magazine by a physical scientist, in which he

criticised some of Falun Gong's ridiculous, anti-scientific stories rather mildly. If that is slander, then teaching evolutionary theory in schools should be treated as an intolerable slander to Christianity.

Leeshai praises Sidhanth Kamath's report as a solid research. This thoroughly shakes my idea of good research. In Sid's work, the part which called Falun Gong a "spiritual practice based on traditional (!) Chinese self-cultivating technique", and the part which questions the Communist Party's legitimacy in praising Confucianism, are both apparently copied from Leeshai's article in another page (or vice-versa, I don't know). I have refuted both in my last letter. A solid research is not likely to make such mistakes. The proof of the report's solidness Leeshai provides is Sid's talk with another Falun Gong practitioner (in which the comparison of current Chinese regime and Nazi was made). So the interesting stuffs in Sid's report come almost

exclusively from the Falun Gong side. To say such a partial report is solid is like to say my research on Iraqi War is solid because I've read the latest address from President Bush.

I'm very glad that Beaver gives us the chance to debate a controversial issue. However, I do find that the defenders of Falun Gong are somewhat blind to certain facts and simple logic reasoning. During my time in UK, I've seen a lot of Chinese change their perceptions about the government, the Party, the Chinese history in the last century, and the moral and political views they used to hold solidly. But I know few who have changed their opinions about Falun Gong. So simply blaming the Party's propaganda and brainwashing is no reasonable response to the Chinese people's dislike of Falun Gong.

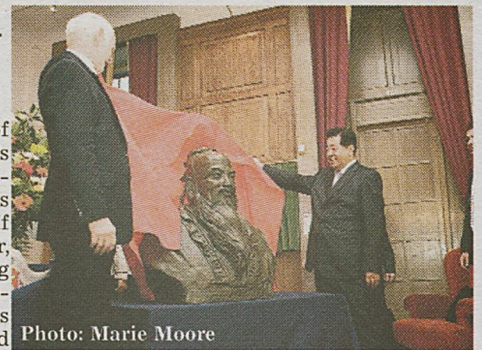


Photo: Marie Moore

Sutherland Protest

Protest: it was ill-advised

Arthur Krebbers thinks some issues have been missed on last week's protest

The run-up to Peter Sutherland's election to chairman of the LSE council was anything but flawless, I'd be the first to admit it.

Nevertheless, the way in which a handful of students have escalated the cross-campus lobby against Sutherland's election is worrying. The stubborn on-stage sit-in showed student activism at its worst, proving illiberal, counterproductive and unnecessarily polarising.

The head of Environmental Policy for the 'Campaign to protect rural England' condemned the protest by saying that "(T)he effect of the student protest being conducted in the way it

was, has been to polarise numerous people against the issues which students were raising."

This remarks is spot-on. Whilst the concerns trumpeted by the wider campaign are important the way they were raised by this sub-group has proved unnecessarily divisive. Because of the sit-in, a number of other students were barred from conducting 'legitimate' protests, by holding up posters from the balcony or asking critical questions. As well as that, hundreds of students were prevented from even hearing Sutherland speak, as the lecture had to be moved to a much smaller theatre.

Moreover, the nature of the protests go completely counter

to LSE's proud tradition of free speech. Our public lectures have provided a platform for everyone from Respect leader George Galloway to US secretary of homeland security Tom Ridge. The codes of practice of the school states this very clearly: "Any conduct which is engaged in with a view to denying the speaker a

Issues were brought up in an unnecessarily decisive way

hearing (...) is contrary to the code."

By transgressing this code, a dangerous precedent has been set. The fact that an European commissioner was almost prevented from delivering an address on the future of

the EU is therefore disquieting.

It was also not conducive to our bargaining position with the school. As we speak, the SU is preparing a long term strategic plan, which will cater for its move to a new location. As such, we will be in need of new facilities and finances from the school. Recent events will hardly increase the school's generosity to the SU.

It is doubtful that the average student would actually oppose Sutherland, someone who has had a successful career in law, politics, business, finance and academia.

There are sensible ways of addressing the serious issues surrounding Sutherland's election as Chair of Council. But a farcical on-stage poster-waving session is certainly not one of them.

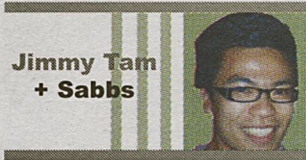


This space was left for Hactivist, but after the C&A sub-editor left him out last week, he's defected to the Daily Beaver.

COMMENT & ANALYSIS

How is the view from the pinnacle of the LSE Students' Union? Gen Sec Tam tells us how it's been for the last 10 weeks

Where has all the Sabb time gone?



Jimmy Tam
+ Sabbs

When Ronan Keating sang 'Life is a rollercoaster' he could've very well been talking about the life of a sabbatical officer: many ups, many downs, but thrilling all the same.

Our biggest project this term has been our five-year strategic plan, triggered by LSE growing to 9,000 students and us in dire need of a new home. With the recent space issues, mapping out a long-term vision and laying the groundwork for much-needed sparkly new facilities is probably the most important legacy we will leave our successors.

Freshers' Week, I must admit, is my favourite time of the year (no jokes please) and this year we worked to make it the best yet. LSE alumna and Britain's youngest MP Jo Swinson opened the week; our pioneering 'treasure hunt' was commended by the School and mentioned in the Guardian; I practiced for my TV career in my induction speech while Alexandra cemented her maternal

instincts at hers; Joel's Freshers' Fair was fabulous, with societies getting more members than ever; and Ali's lovely handbooks were handed out personally to all new students. The Exec hospitality team (think we've all found a new career) was out in force to welcome the new residents at Lilian Knowles and Northumberland. We'll be continuing to work with the School on improving future freshers' weeks.

A herd of reluctant "cash cows" took to the streets at the end of October for the national demonstration against fees. Whilst I admit that the message from NUS was perhaps a tad confused, the sight of thousands of students coming/mooing together for a common cause is one I won't forget. Another more recent and controversial demo involved Peter Sutherland's appointment as Chair of LSE Council. Whatever you think of the protestors' actions, one positive outcome of such a demonstration is that it has got people talking about issues. The ongoing Living Wage campaign has shown that students don't just care about themselves and has made the School consider all of its employees.

What have your sabbs been up to?



Our reception in memory of Simon Wiesenthal and Thet Win Aung, outgoing Honorary President and Vice-President respectively, was particularly moving with Wiesenthal's grandson Joeri talk, emotionally, about his grandfather. The Union awareness weeks this year have been bigger and better than ever. The first Climate Change Week generated phone calls of interest from all over London; we impressed our students and sponsors JPMorgan with LGBT Awareness Week; and Alexandra got everyone (even Howard Davies) SHAGging with her bags.

Being a sabbatical officer, you get to meet your contemporaries from across the country, which is a revealing experience. You realise that, for example, many unions don't even have a functioning newspaper and some sabbatical officers are elected by less than 1% of their student body. Conversely, the turnout for the

election at which your current sabbatical team got elected was according to NUS figures the highest in the UK. My sabb peers sit in amazement when they hear that 150+ students come every week to our UGM – they wish that they actually had students turn up to their meetings, let alone ones who throw

inclusion of student representation on the committee that selects Howard's three Deputy Directors shows. I will stand up and defend this Union with full support from my peers, that's after I've read out a poem, reported on Neighbours and sung a song, of course.

Looking to next term, we'll be campaigning for re-sits and continuing to build on programme reps, as well as focusing on the role and treatment of PhD student teachers. For the first time, all LSE students will be automatically enfranchised in the University of London Union elections and I'll be exploring the possibility of online voting. We'll see student artwork in classrooms, the Quad will have undergone a major facelift and we'll have cocktails in the Underground – mine's a Sex on the Beach (with a condom) please...

It's a common misconception that Newsround presenters only work for ten minutes a day, when in reality, much like us sabbaticals, there's a ton of work done behind the scenes – as any one of the hundreds of students who's been helped by our Advice & Counselling Centre can testify. Enjoy the break, whatever you do. Alexandra and I may well be visiting the Careers Service. Then again, we hear there are some vacancies coming up in Week 8 of Lent.

I will stand up and defend this Union

paper. At Brunel, for example, attendance at their last UGM was two. Yes, two. So we mustn't let something like paper throwing make us lose sight of the value and function of a great institution that we often take for granted. We should be proud of a Union that's led by students and taken seriously by the School, as the recent

Andrew Yeoh introduces the Investment Banker Factory LSE to "acitism" and offers solace to its practitioners

Rise up against the LSE Bankers



Andrew Yeoh

There is a hidden movement in LSE that I count myself a part of. We are a silent minority, carefully tiptoeing around an institution that is simply unsuitable for our way of thinking. We have a dirty secret, and when groups of us meet our frustrated whispers become a clear, loud and undeniable chant, a chant that a friend of mine finally vocalised the other day.

"Bollocks to the city!" Succinctly put, I felt, but let me elaborate: Nuts to the pressure to get a massive starting salary; arse to cynical CV building and to the frantic internship competitions; fiddlesticks the ridiculous interview questions and the mightier than thou attitudes and bollocks to this constant idea that the world consists only and entirely of analysts, investment bankers, consultants and lawyers.

This is indeed a radical view for some. In fact it calls for a new word; a critical, sceptical view of the supposedly wondrous city career. I submit to you the word

"acitism"; the ideology of an "acitist".

The acitist does not hate the city. He or she believes that there are many people for whom the city is an excellent career choice. What an acitist objects to is the narrow-mindedness of it all. We see it around us in the career-hunting frenzies that hit this institution, every year, about this time. Maybe you are destined

How dare I forsake the city?!

to become one.

By now the latest batch of rosy-cheeked, dewy-eyed and adorable first years will have begun to settle into their degrees. A few of them will be having your first doubts. Is university life supposed to be this cynical? The veteran second years have it worse because, if what you've been led to believe is true, if you fail to get an internship this summer, you will die poor, miserable and alone. Overall, some will be getting uncomfortable with the feeling that universi-

ty is a one-stop-career-shop. To you all I extend the invitation of acitism and the reassurance that you are not alone.

What of the dangers of acitism? How dare I forsake the city! Surely it will be my downfall!

Polly Courtney, Author of "Golden Handcuffs: The Lowly Life of a High Flyer", reminisced about her city job in a recent newspaper article – thoughts that have been confirmed by many in the city whom I have talked to:

"I was earning a huge salary, but had no chance to spend it. When I did get spare time, I was too exhausted to do anything with it."

Courtney postulates that the reason that city firms have such a massively high turnover is that they recruit the interesting, creative, extra-curricular people into careers which simply suppress all these attributes. Misery results.

"Then why did you come to the LSE?", I am asked as an acitist. "It's a leading institution of education, smack bang in the middle of London! Surely you should have predicted a heavy slant towards the city careers." Perhaps, but I also would have expected at least an element of diversity. A visit to the LSE careers website shows exactly how bad it is. We are confronted with a carefully formatted list of times, dates and submission



details for careers such as consultancy and finance. Prospective politicians, social entrepreneurs and researchers get a page of website links and digital pat on the head. This is not to mention the myriad of thousands of careers, devoid of any information whatsoever.

My acitism takes issue with the idea that any kind of career other than a city one would constitute a waste of my education, but more importantly, what simple-minded person posits that a job offer will be the only thing I take away from this three-year experience? I have developed as an individual; I have gained recognition of my academic achievements. I cherish my whole university experience a great deal more than a mere

opportunity to sell my soul.

There isn't even an element of sour grapes at work here; I am not acitist through circumstances – my CV is just fine, thank you. So is my ambition, by the way.

And so, I suspect, is yours. The problem is a tendency to become hemmed in by the narrow thinking of those around you. You realised that the city is just not right for you but you have decided to go along with it because you can't see an alternative. I can't hope to offer any direct advice in this short article, but rest assured that there are very many similar people. The important thing is not to despair; the future is a great deal broader than you have been led to believe. Acitists unite.

the Beaver

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thebeaver.editor@lse.ac.uk
and you will be added to the list in next week's paper.

The *Beaver* is available in alternative formats.

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COMMENT & ANALYSIS

The Beaver

Established 1949 - Issue 653

Sohi undermines security at LSE...

...as strangers can settle in around campus

Last week The Beaver revealed that an LSE alumnus Raman Preet Singhi Sohi had been illegally living in Rosebery Hall for the past four months. This week, there have been further revelations that he has in fact been stealing from other LSE students and from around the School.

Although in some sense comical, the issue raises real doubts about security at the School and Halls of Residence. It has raised questions about whether we should be really giving implicit trust to LSE alumni - by giving them easy and free access to facilities around the School such as the Library. Most people would agree that it is silly to argue that we should do otherwise. We simply cannot be constantly looking over our shoulders and turn the LSE into an environment where everyone is under suspicion. However, when someone is actually able to 'live' on campus, as in this case by sleeping in the 24-hour library, then something is clearly going wrong.

Sohi clearly has skills. Talking his way in through the front door at Rosebery Hall on many occasions and sleeping in the TV room so many nights is no mean feat - some might say that students are foolish for letting him in and more stupid for letting him into their rooms. However, this does not give enough credit to Sohi's own remarkable powers of persuasion and his own 'staying power'. Nevertheless the fact that he was sleeping in the TV room for so long is also damning of the security procedures at Rosebery Hall - the ease of his entry illustrates that students were at genuine risk.

At Rosebery Hall, it is still possible to copy a key and have access anytime through the front door virtually forever. Most halls use 'fob' key systems simply because once a resident leaves, it is easy to digitally destroy the access their card retains. Once inside a hall, a miscreant can cause havoc, simply due to the fact that many students leave rooms unlocked. While this blind faith in security on the part of students is borne of extreme naivety, that does not take away from the fact that the School must introduce an enhanced security system to the one currently in use at Rosebery.

Although this may not have been the method of entry by Sohi, it is still an ongoing risk that former students or even strangers could quite easily access a hall of residence.

Sohi's own motives for dwelling at LSE still remain a mystery. It is unreasonable to put all the blame on him - he clearly needs help of some sort. However, given how relaxed security measures are at the moment, it would not be surprising to find more people staying at Hotel LSE in the future.

Oxford says academia is an end in itself

...external influences place the future of our institution at risk

Earlier last week, academics at Oxford University grouped together to prevent their Vice-Chancellor from fundamentally changing the composition of the University's Council to contain a majority of non-academic external members. The LSE has faced similar controversy over university governance. Two weeks ago, students staged a sit-in at Peter Sutherland's public lecture to protest his appointment as Chair of the LSE Council.

However, Sutherland's appointment, like the Vice-Chancellor of Oxford's plans is rooted in something deeper than BP's poor human rights record and tuition fees. It has struck at the heart of what education actually is.

The Oxford dons echoed the words of an academic at the London School of Economics and Political Science, who not so long ago spoke out against the "commercialization of education." Erik Ringmar was an honourable man, who knew that his words contravened an inevitable tide which was never going to be in his favour, yet he spoke them anyway.

While the flow of funds from big businesses can certainly strengthen the research clout of this institution, to take that money is to take the influence of big business.

Both Oxford and the LSE are academic institutions. They are elite academic institutions. They are not graduate pools; they are not recruitment centres. Academia is not a means to an end. It represents an end in itself. To allow businessmen or others to influence the policy of an academic institution, begs the question, why would a non-academic care more about education than an academic? Yet this institution above all has embodied this academic culture.

"To know the cause of things" is to question an issue beyond the conventional answer, to delve deeper. There are many business schools in the world, yet there is only one LSE. In a thousand-year-old bastion of conservatism, academics have rejected their leadership's erosion in university policy, yet at the LSE, where in the last hundred years, scholars and students alike have not strayed from controversy and bold views, the School's academics and staff sit silently as a handful of students sit on a stage to prevent what is increasingly inevitable.

Director Howard Davies, is the first corporate figure to lead the School following from a long line of academics, and is more than capable of addressing the business needs of the School. Why then does it need another similar figure?

The line of academics that headed the School led us through 100 years of development, such that a small economics faculty of a federalist university has now become one of the institutions that changed the world. Surely then, our academics should not be ignored when we need a new leader.

I would like to personally thank, on behalf of *The Beaver*, all our contributors, the members of the Collective, the marketing, administration and business teams, the PartB comptrollers, the Senior Reporters, the columnists, the photographers, the layout and graphics teams, the LSE Press Office, the Secretary and last but not least all the editors and sub-editors of this term who have spent an incredible amount of time and effort on making this paper the quality publication it truly is. Your dedication and efforts are what truly characterise what *The Beaver* is all about.

Sidhanth Kamath
Executive Editor

Letters to the Editor

The Beaver offers all readers the right to reply to anything that appears in the paper. Letters should be sent to thebeaver.editor@lse.ac.uk and should be no longer than 250 words. All letters must be received by 3pm on the Sunday prior to publication. The Beaver reserves the right to edit letters prior to publication.

China/ Falun Gong

Dear Sir,

I read with great sadness the article in last week's Beaver about the opening of a Confucian Business Institute at LSE with a high-level Chinese government official accused of torture and other atrocities. I am an American student who has travelled to China and is currently studying this fascinating and beautiful country. I was sad for the obvious reasons, and angry that a respected institution such as the LSE has chosen to associate itself with such questionable people. Furthermore, I'm sad on another level for the impression this article may give of China and the Chinese people. China is being hammered in the world press for its human rights record, and rightly so, but I'm afraid this kind of attention may fan the flames of racism against the Chinese people. I don't think the Chinese people are any more responsible for these crimes than the British and American people for the crimes of Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay and many others. I'm not arguing that the press shouldn't criticize China's human rights record, simply that readers should make a distinction between the Chinese government and the Chinese people when reading these stories.

Tony Smith-Grieco

Dear Sir,

This is in response to the numerous articles in recent weeks over Falun Gong.

The opposing views voiced by Leeshai and the Chinese students at LSE reflect the diversity between the general public opinions in the two countries - China and Britain. This is not surprising; for mass media, through which we obtain most of our information, vary in opinions nationally and internationally. While our method of obtaining information through mass media is obviously unavoidable, our willingness to simply take at face value what we hear or read, without critical examination of the origins of certain opinions results in the assumption of the inaccuracy and even the insincerity of opposing views. Both Leeshai's article, and the letters in reply by Chinese students display this flaw; and in effect, both arguments seem to me, rather irrational, undeveloped and essentially unconvincing.

A fact not mentioned: at the height of the Falun Gong movement in China, which was soon accompanied by the Chinese government's persecution of Falun Gong groups; the usual 7.00 pm News broadcasted by CCTV1 (the official TV broadcast company in China), prolonged its duration from the usual 30 minutes to an hour, dedicating 30 minutes or more of exclusive news and background information on the Falun Gong movement. The content of which often included reports of gruesome, extremist and yet disheartening actions of group members, who were referred to as 'victims' of Falun Gong. With this being the main source on which the majority of the population formed their judgements of Falun Gong; it is not surprising that people without direct involvement in the movement regard it as one that is socially subversive and potentially 'dangerous', which would see the necessity of government intervention to eliminate the movement. This is also indicative of the limitations of popular Chinese views, which I suspect is essentially oblivious to the majority of Chinese people themselves due to a number of reasons.

As I have little knowledge of the western response to the events at the time, I cannot make similar comparisons. However, it is interesting to note that Leeshai's article contained no comments about the opinions of Chinese populace at LSE, regardless of its lack of insight into the nature of popular Chinese views towards the Falun Gong movement; thus indicating his lack of understanding in the nature of modern Chinese society. At the same time, the responses written by the Chinese students

demonstrate little appreciation of the western democratic and humanitarian culture, which could at times produce exaggerated protestation in defence of such ideals.

I do appreciate and understand the difficulty in dissecting such a controversial topic. Reading Leeshai's article has got me thinking a lot; what I have expressed here are simply ideas of alternative perspectives on the matter, and duly I have no intention of undermining anyone else's opinions and their effort in expressing them.

Min

Sutherland protest

Dear Sir,

I am privileged to work as the events manager for an institution which attracts a wide variety of high profile speakers including Prime Minister and Presidents, senior figures from business and some of the leading academics from around the world who come to the School and engage with staff, students and the wider LSE community. These public events provide an opportunity for ideas to be discussed, debated and challenged in a civilised, tolerant and respectful environment. I was therefore greatly saddened that a small group of students challenged the principle of free speech by staging a sit in at the public lecture with Peter Sutherland on 22/11/06. I understand there are those who have an issue with the appointment of Mr Sutherland as the next chair of the governing body. I support their right to make those feelings clear but denying anyone the right of free speech is not in my opinion the way to express those views. LSE should be about debate, dialogue and discourse. It was rather strange that after alleging that Mr Sutherland would not engage with students the protesting students declined the opportunity to question Mr Sutherland in a very public forum in full view of hundreds of people and representatives of the press. Free speech is inalienable to any democratic society and its imperative that the right to free speech is defended vigorously both at LSE and in society at large.

Alan Revel

Dear Sir,

I am deeply disappointed with the photo on the Front Page of the 28 November edition of your esteemed publication. If I am not mistaken, you are depicted second from left holding a poster with the slogan "LSE not \$\$\$" in protest at Peter Sutherland speaking at the Old Theatre on Wednesday 22 November. Whilst you may disagree with the policies of the company Sutherland represents, the man should nevertheless be given a chance to explain himself. As Executive Editor you should understand this. Furthermore, you have a duty to your readership to report the news, not to be the news. I hope you take this into consideration next time you have an urge to storm the Old Theatre bearing such an original poster.

Chris Colvin

Dear Sir,

Should we assume that students will now protest and stage sit-ins at every public lecture in the Old Theatre rather than taking the mature and intelligent course of action - engaging in debate with those who hold opposing views? The future of high-profile public lectures in the Old Theatre could be doomed by the actions of a moronic minority.

Mark Kobayashi-Hillary
1st year PhD Psychology

Dear Sir,

We wish to apologise for any misunderstanding that may have resulted from our actions at the peaceful protest which took place at Peter Sutherland's lecture on the 22 November. The students who took part did so as individuals, and did not claim to represent anyone but themselves in their actions. We have made this clear to the School. Nevertheless, we continue to

believe that the appointment of Peter Sutherland is not appropriate for the School, or for future students, and stand by our individual rights to express our opinion and right to assembly with regards to the protest. Given that the lecture continued without impediment in an alternative venue, and that the protest was silent, peaceful and involved no physical intimidation it is incorrect to state that we prevented freedom of speech. Meanwhile senior staff in the School have commended our behaviour and attitude on the protest, which has put the issue back on the School's agenda and forced them to listen, which is clearly in the interests of students.

We will continue to campaign against any threat to the lifting of the cap on top-up fees and for environmental and social justice - issues on which we have an elected mandate and which have consistently been supported by the UGM. Given Sutherland's questionable human and environmental rights record and his probable support for any increase in tuition fees, we hope that students will unite behind the emerging campaign against his appointment as Chair of LSE. It should also be noted that the campaign against Sutherland is submitting a UGM motion seeking a clearly defined democratic mandate from the Union to campaign against Sutherland's appointment.

Joel Kenrick
Alexandra Vincenti
Aled Dilwyn Fisher
James Caspell

Dear Sir,

As someone who actually attended the infamous Peter Sutherland lecture, I would like to criticise your front page article on protest. The article was heavily spun and facts were omitted to the benefit of the protestors. Anyone who read the article would have thought that the audience was comprised of heartless, evil capitalists! There were two serious omissions from the article; Firstly numerous members of the audience sympathised with the protestors aims (but not methods) and asked reasonable questions that were ignored; Secondly a referendum was held by LSE students in the audience on whether they supported the protest - they did not. Finally the article contained a serious factual inaccuracy: at no point was there a motion to "forcibly eject" the protestors. Instead members of the public voted in favour of the lecture continuing not for acts of violence as your article implied. A small number of detestable audience members shouted obscenities which the protestors admirably ignored, however, these audience members were in the minority. The article portrayed a small number of idiots in the audience as being representative of the whole and ignored serious issues and as such favoured the protestors. Why would the Beaver which is meant to be 'editorially independent' pursue the agenda of a small number of students? I find it worrying that LSE students cannot rely on the Beaver for accurate non-biased coverage.

James Bull

Beaver maturity

Dear Sir,

LSE is a diverse place, not just in terms of ethnicity/ religion/ nationality and/ or political opinions, but also in the level of 'maturity' (I hate the word but can't currently think of a better one) found both between, and within, its students. A flick through the Beaver shows this to be true: some like to talk about civil rights or globalisation, others like to talk about sex, alcohol, and maybe some sport. For Giles Wilkes and Elisabeth Lund Engebretsen, I have only one thing to say: there's plenty of room for both of these displays of maturity (or lack thereof) to satisfy everyone. I myself sometimes like reading high-brow books, watching university challenge and other things one would probably consider mature, but I also proudly like

being immature and stupid at times too, like drinking until I can't remember who I am, etc. Most LSE students are probably in their early 20's, meaning that they're adults but probably enjoy occasional fits of stupidity and immaturity as much as I, or your average AU sports writer. Surely we should have a bit of both in the newspaper of the Students Union? I think the Beaver has got it right on this issue (and I rarely say that). Maybe the two of you should just occasionally put down your textbooks and relax before the pressure of job-hunting, mortgages and council taxes make you forget how great it is to be childish and immature sometimes.

Graham Fightling
MSc Public Policy and Administration

"like Jesus"

Dear Sir,

I am sure all of PuLSE fm's DJs and listeners will agree with me when I say that the station has leapt ahead in terms of quality this year. This is wholly as a result of the hard work of the committee who, like Jesus, have sacrificed their lives - both social and academic - so that we can enjoy excellent broadcasting and go to radio heaven. Thank you!

Benjamin Partridge

Labour like ladies

Dear Sir

We would like to respond to the remarks made by Sarah Walker, spokesperson for the English Collective of Prostitutes, regarding Labour's policies concerning the welfare of women in last week's Beaver. We stongly believe that her statement that Labour are 'not concerned with women at all' is unfounded as this government has done more than any other previous government in working to achieve greater rights and dignity for women.

Since 1997 Labour has introduced a number of policies enabling women to go out to work, offered greater child support and made huge steps in getting more women into politics. Labour has greatly extended child care facilities through schemes such as Sure Start, increased women's pay through the introduction of the minimum wage and introduced Child Tax Credits, greatly benefiting women with children, especially single mothers. Ms Walker's claims that Labour cut single mothers' benefits are untrue, women continue to be in a much better position now than they were 10 years ago.

Her assertions that the many women Labour MPs 'do nothing' is counter-productive to achieving greater representation in parliament, as Labour's record number of female MPs have made vital contributions to government policy and given a voice to women in parliament. Indeed, Labour pioneered all-women short lists which the Tories are now reluctantly accepting work. There are more women in the cabinet than ever before, more women being appointed to top executive roles than ever before and more women participating in the world of work at every level. Labour has strived to ensure women are treated equally in the workplace, and our continued relationship with trade unions allows us to campaign in the workplace to bring about real change.

Of course there is always more to be done by the government to achieve equality, and we support Ms Walker's campaign for changes in prostitution laws, yet Labour's record since 1997 shows that it is the best and only government capable of bringing change to the lives of women.

Amy Williams
Chair, LSESU Labour Society
Hannah Lyons
Women's Officer, LSESU Labour Society
Zoe Sullivan
LSESU Womens' Officer

Lucie: You're doing a great job boss

FEATURES

In this section:

Interview/Politics/Profile/
Education/Society

thebeaver.features@lse.ac.uk

Trident

Nuclear Deterrence
Does it work?

Bingaman

Interview with a
Senator



Education

Experiences of a
Student in France



Eyes to the Left



Amy
Williams

The last time I dedicated a column to the issue of education, it prompted a response in the letters pages accusing me of being a totalitarian with a penchant for eugenics. It's nice to be able to provoke measured views like these and so I couldn't help but give my response to a speech made by Tony Blair just last week on the thorny topic of education.

Blair's speech was his apparent farewell to dealings with education. Amongst other things the A-level will get harder with a new A* tier being created and more British schools will offer the International Baccalaureate as an alternative to A levels. Yet what really caught my eye and those of the national press, was the proposal to increase the number of Academy schools to 400 by the year 2010. Academies have been a controversial subject from their very inception, and despite the government's efforts to quell opposition it seems that this new declaration by the Prime Minister is just as controversial as it ever has been. The principle of these schools is earnest and one that I would whole heartedly agree with.

Academies stand as independent schools which are funded partly by public funds, but also by private investors. Often housed in state of the art buildings, more and more of these schools are popping up all over the country in some of the most deprived areas of the UK. And so far in raw statistical terms, they have shown some early promise with results achieved by pupils at GCSE rising above the national average rate.

Despite this there are problems with the system. Take a closer look at some of the statistics involved and you will see that these schools are effectively selective schools, despite claiming not to be. A large number of academies have far higher rates of pupil expulsion than the state run schools in the area, suggesting that these schools will take anyone and help the most disadvantaged as long as they are not too disadvantaged or rowdy, in which case they decide to offload them back into the state sector.

Academies do not offer a worse education to their pupils, they offer excellent facilities, teachers and support. But they do not offer them to the people who are supposed to be helped by them. Once an academy is created in an area, there will be once again be a clamour to get into the good local school and local ordinary state schools are abandoned in favour of the academy. We are still forgetting and neglecting large numbers of pupils that these schools are designed to help. The system does not work.

The injection of private money to help fund the academies is worrying. Call me cynical, but we must question the motives for these multi-millionaires' desire to put a few million quid into a school. There surely cannot be that many philanthropists chomping at the bit to give away their money to help some spotty teenagers learn maths. There must be something in return for their hard earned cash to depart from their hands into the control of a Local Education Authority. The scope for an investor to have undue influence over the content of what is taught is a threat to education. Similarly, religious groups are seizing the opportunity handed to them by the government to step into the education system once more. This is creating a religiously divided education system and teaching pupils lies - creationism has been taught as a fact in schools funded by the Evangelist Sir Peter Vardy.

I don't for one moment question the motives of Mr. Blair, as he attempts to create aspiration and achievement in communities which have very little expectations from education. And yet, the academy schools, whilst providing a short term solution of some grades moving up at GCSE do not solve the long term problems of education in this country. The contracts entered into by this government are in most circumstances twenty five to thirty years long. I find this a very worrying situation, which I fear our generation will have to deal with in the future. I hope I am proved wrong. ■

Editors' Blog

Last month BNP leader Nick Griffin and party activist Mark Collett were cleared of inciting racial hatred after a retrial at Leeds Crown Court. Mr Griffin had denied two charges of using words or behaviour intended to stir up racial hatred in a speech in Keighley. This came after an undercover BBC documentary in which a reporter taped the men giving a racist speech to a group of supporters. Straight after the verdict, members of the government were lining up to heap scorn on the result and called for tougher laws to be put in place.

The inability of so many ministers to understand the principle of free speech is one of the more alarming qualities of this government. Gordon Brown, who intends to become prime minister next year, responded to the acquittal of Nick Griffin by suggesting that the law ought to be changed. What Mr Griffin said was offensive and revolting. But the point of freedom of speech is that he has the right to offend. It is one of the rights for which the founders of the LSE spent their lives fighting for. So when Mr Brown says that the preaching of religious hatred "will offend mainstream opinion in this country" he is making the argument not for changing the law but for defending it with all the power that a democracy can give. When Lord Falconer, the Lord Chancellor, says that describing Islam as "wicked and evil," as Mr Griffin did, should have "consequences," he could not be more wrong. The law must protect those who criticise any religion from suffering graver consequences than mere disagreement.



Yeh, like Islam's well 'wicked' immit!

There are and indeed should be limits to free speech. Incitement to violence is one of them, and much of the BNP's hateful rhetoric comes close to the line. The purpose of the court case was to decide whether or not Mr Griffin and his co-defendant, Mark Collett, had crossed that line. The jury decided that they had not. Ministers are certainly justified in worrying about the extent to which young British Muslims see this country as somehow filled with anti-Islam sentiments. It was widely reported a couple of weeks ago by *The Independent* that John Reid, the Home Secretary, plans to counter al-Qa'ida propaganda which seeks to turn Muslims against their own country. Dame Eliza Manningham-Buller, director-general of the Security Service, has outlined the problem of Muslim alienation, which is creating a pool of potential terrorist recruits. But it is not obvious that a top-down Ministry of Truth is the most effective response.

We need to hear the message of tolerance and moderation more clearly from the mainstreams of all religions. This includes mainstream, moderate Christians to demand the abolition of blasphemy law. Just as we urgently need mainstream, moderate Muslims to defend the principle of free speech - but they will do this only if ministers do too. ■

Interested in Features?

Come along to our Writers Forum - 2pm, G102 TODAY!

This week Features says goodbye to one of its editors. Ben Biggs has been invaluable to this section, ensuring it remains the best section of this paper and he will be greatly missed. -Eutima.



The Prime Minister's Christmas message: Peace and goodwill to all men!

The Right Approach

Sam
Burke



"Invest, invest, invest!" That's what we're constantly told. Whether it's the Government needing to put more money in the NHS, young professionals needing to get on the property ladder or even as LSE students, being encouraged to buy a good padlock for our lockers - the focus is on putting money into something for a long term gain. It's the very premise of a business.

But what if putting money into something had a consequence so despicable that it wrong, even from the outset? What if that money was being used to support a Government who choose to massacre 400,000 of its own people, drive out 3 million from their homes and systematically implement a genocide cumulating in "the world's worst humanitarian disaster"? What if we were investing in Darfur?

There is no escaping the fact that genocide is an expensive venture; guns, soldiers, tacticians, transport, bribes - all come at a price. The Sudanese government is dependent on foreign investment to implement its mission to eliminate the non-Arab population of Darfur. An estimated 70-80% of oil revenue in Sudan, fuelled by foreign investment, goes to the military.

"Foreign investment" is a cushy term. It suggests banana republics, American dollars, Japanese stock traders and so on. But British and European companies are literally bankrolling the army and militia forces who inflicting a horror of slaughter, rape and destruction.

A sense of moral indignation is the only natural response to such a revelation. This sentiment must be a call-to-action. As much as political advocacy is vital, it can have a varying degree of impact. Diplomacy can only take you so far if the Government doesn't listen - and Khartoum has continued to wreak death and destruction with impunity. When we hit this brick wall, other methods must be sought. Despite all the political and media focus (which, by the way, has often been woefully flagging) there is, in fact, one thing that we have not yet done in the UK: divestment.

What exactly do I mean by divestment? Targeted divestment is the removal of invested money from companies that are directly or indirectly helping the Sudanese government perpetuate genocide. Since the ultimate intent of divesting from Sudan is to protect the victims of genocide, it is important to tailor divestment to have maximal impact on the government of Sudan's behaviour and minimal harm to innocent Sudanese (and to the financial health of the divesting institution). Divestment should therefore be targeted to those companies having a business relationship with the government or a government-created consortium, impart minimal benefit to the country's underprivileged, and have expressed no significant corporate governance policy regarding the Darfur situation (so-called targeted divestment).

Targeted divestment has been extremely successful in the US, and these successes mean that a UK divestment campaign would have a particularly significant impact as it would show both the companies involved and the Government of Sudan that there was international impetus for divestment and that genocide will incur an economic penalty internationally, not just in the US. American students, under the auspices of Sudan Divestment Task Force have spectacularly led the US divestment effort. Just students like you and me, choosing to act on moral indignation.

It is appropriate that we here at the London School of Economics do something. We must divest ourselves as an institution, a union and as far as possible as individual consumers and taxpayers from the Sudan.

We can no longer claim ignorance. We cannot leave it to others. I'm reminded of the sentiment so powerfully encapsulated in the memorable graffiti painted across Eastern Europe in the uprisings: "If not now, when? If not us, who?" If money talks, it's time we started to shout. ■

For further information visit:

www.sudaninvest.org

Vive le Québec libre?

Canadian student John Philpott looks at the ongoing debate on whether Quebec belongs in the Canadian nation

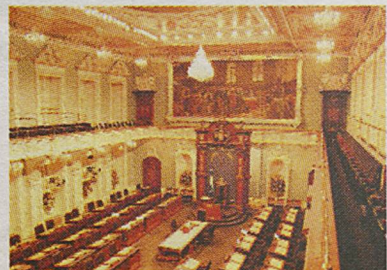
The issue of Quebec secession is a defining and reoccurring theme of Canadian politics. In 1995, a referendum on secession was posed in Quebec and was narrowly defeated. Support for sovereignty has since waned, but continues to be a potent issue and the *raison d'être* of the Bloc Québécois who hold a substantial number of seats in Parliament. Last week, the issue suddenly re-surfaced when Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper passed legislation recognizing the Québécois as a distinct nation within Canada.

Any development on this issue arouses immense attention and is often misconstrued as a historical turning point. Many of my friends and acquaintances asked me if separation was on the horizon. Happy as I am to talk politics over a few Molson's and a tub of steaming poutine, in reacting to this 'event' we should be aware of its political purpose. Prime Minister Harper's legislation was designed to thwart the Bloc's most recent attempt to advance the separatist agenda. Simply put, the media attention, international curiosity and predictions of major changes in Canada are all much ado about politics. The extreme ambiguity of Mr. Harper's legislation suggests that once the fog of sound-bites settles, the country will be essentially the same. The motion amounts to little more than a reminder that Canada is a complicated and often fragmented country.

To clarify, this issue was actually reintroduced by the Bloc Québécois and not Mr. Harper. A parliamentary motion was tabled by the Bloc stating



Recognizing the nation - a step in the right direction?



As long as Québécois see themselves as distinct, the government of Quebec will consider itself mandated to act on their behalf

that Quebec is a nation and should be recognized as such. The motivation for the BQ to (yet again) resurrect this issue can be linked to Michael Ignatieff, Liberal Party leadership candidate and academic pundit who stated: "Other candidates have said...recognizing Quebec as a nation in the Constitution is too difficult. Yes, it's difficult, but we must do it." Given the volatility of Canadian constitutional issues, many have determined that 'Iggy' may be a bit unfamiliar with Canadian politics and should head back to Harvard. In any case, the stage was set for the Bloc to raise what was supposed to be a political quagmire for the federalist Conservatives.

But Harper surprised the nation - or nations - by introducing a motion recognizing that the Québécois form a distinct nation "within a united Canada." As stated by the Prime

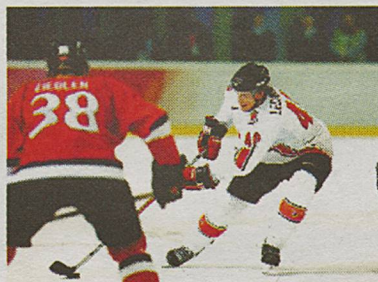
Minister, "Our position is clear. Do the Québécois form a nation within Canada? The answer is yes. Do the Québécois form an independent nation? The answer is no and the answer will always be no." Essentially, Harper is separating the issue of the Québécois from the boundaries of Quebec.

Bloc leader Gilles Duceppe responded in the spirit of self-determination; "It isn't up to the Prime Minister to decide what Quebecers will choose as an option... Never will I accept that the only condition to be a nation is to recognize the right to remain in Canada." Despite the strength of Duceppe's initial rhetoric, the Conservative Party's motion put the Bloc in an awkward political position and they eventually backed it.

In the end, two parties with different agendas actually converged on the most divisive issue in Canadian politics. This does not represent a significant change in political culture, but rather reflects the ambiguity of the legislation. While the Bloc may try to incorporate this legislation as part of a scheme seeking international recognition (and ultimately independence), the Conservatives will probably use this moment to declare that Quebec's demands have been met and that it's time for the country to move on.

Regardless of how appealing it is to Mr. Harper or other Anglo-Canadians to declare the issue settled, the power to do so rests with Quebec.

Canada; like most former colonies, champions the principle of self-determination. It is fundamentally against that principle to put an expiration date on Quebec's options. As long as Québécois see themselves as distinct, the government of Quebec will con-



A prominent constitutional lawyer is currently arguing that Quebec should have its own ice hockey team by 2008

sider itself mandated to act on their behalf. Despite Harper's statements

that this legislation affirms the role of Quebec in Canada, the Québécois interpret it as affirming their nation status. Thus, the government of Quebec will feel more justified in having unique laws and attempting unilateral international action. For example, Quebec recently attempted to take a separate stance to Canada in regards to the Kyoto Protocol.

Constitutional experts have declared the legislation irrelevant insofar as 'peoples' are not legal entities. Nevertheless, many fear that Harper is taking Canada down a divisive slippery slope. Rex Murphy of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation asks what is next: "Why not a Ukrainian nation?...A nation of Alberta?" Murphy is highlighting a common concern with communitarian thinking: If the state bestows recognition on one 'distinct' group, then it is obligated to recognize other 'distinct' groups. If a shallow enough criteria was used, eventually the concept of a united Canada would be lost to a plethora of ethnicities.

This is where common sense and a little *je ne sais quoi* trumps strict logic. The Québécois, similar to Canadian Aboriginals, are a special case in regards to the history of Canada and their identity. As stated by Thomas Courchene of Queen's University, "Whereas Canadians outside Quebec tend to look to Ottawa as the embodiment of both nation and state, most Quebecers view Quebec

as their nation and Canada as their state." In a sense, Quebec is distinct not just for its language, but for what is said. While the differences between the Anglo-provinces are considerable, their citizens consider themselves first and foremost Canadian. Whereas in Quebec, as one Québécois student told me, "You will often notice people in Quebec speaking of 'what Canadians think' as if they were speaking of a group from which they did not belong to."

Building bridges first requires recognizing the divide. Whether or not this motion properly recognizes Quebec remains a matter of debate. The meaning of Harper's legislation will be determined in the minds of Canadians who choose what to emphasize: a united Canada or a Quebec nation. So, is it a step towards maintaining a diverse country or dividing it? Secession is not likely to be an issue in the short-term, but one cannot rule out it arising again in the future. A prominent constitutional lawyer is currently arguing that Quebec should have its own ice hockey team for the 2008 world hockey championships. If this happens, both the Quebec team and the Canadian team will be not only be less competitive, but weaker in the broader sense. Given how much Canadians care about hockey, especially the Québécois, it's reason enough to stay together. ■

The case against re

Nitya Menon argues there are clear legal issues and the Non-Proliferation Treaty must be re-examined

Those following the recent furore relating to the replacement of the Trident weapons system, no doubt share the overwhelming sense of fatigue that I feel. Somehow, this seems all too familiar. One questions the efficacy of even contributing to a conversation where though the pertinent party clearly hears you, they find no need to actually listen. After all, despite promises from the Government of wide ranging debate and discussion, there is a growing feeling of inevitability underlining the entire matter. With both the current Prime Minister and his likely successor asserting strongly their intention to keep a nuclear deterrent, and House of Commons Leader Jack Straw reminding us that "this is not the Shops Act or fox hunting," where MPs can afford not to be whipped into obedience - it seems fairly patent that any decision that needs to be taken has quite clearly already been made. Yes, this definitely is no shop opening hour or hunting situation; those bills were after all debated and discussed over many years. In contrast, Parliamentary debate (if you can even call it that), about the replacement of Britain's nuclear missile system, will be over almost before it has begun. This seems assured by the fact that the White Paper outlining the Government's recommendation will come out days before Christmas - hardly the moment to trigger any sort of debate, let alone one on something with such long-term strategic and financial consequences. With the existing trident missiles



While the Leader of the House might believe that only "a simpleton could think replacing Trident would breach the Nuclear Non Proliferation treaty," unsurprisingly some of the country's leading legal minds beg to differ

only likely to become obsolete in the late 2020s, it seems fairly obvious that this rush to decide now is based on a politically expedient timetable rather than a military one. And let us not of course forget the fact that the Government does not in reality require Parliamentary approval to go ahead anyway. Yet, despite the abject pessimism I seem to be spewing, here I am still

insisting on voicing my opinion. For make no mistake, regardless of the effect (or lack of it) that any of our thoughts may make on the larger scheme of things, *this* is definitely not the time for apathy and silence.

Framing any coherent argument about nuclear weapons is however both unbelievably tiresome and tedious. There seems to be little scope for actual objective debate, with anything you say standing the risk of being instantly dismissed as the words of a 'liberal in la-la land' or a 'fear-mongering fascist.' Somewhere though, amongst all the babble and repeated rhetoric, there seems to be a missed point. This is not a simple matter of political ideology, nor does it have a convenient 'keep it' or 'scrap it' answer. Instead, there are wider-ranging ricochet issues that need both careful and critical consideration. Surely this is proved by the very fact that the Labour Party, albeit a supposedly new labour, who in the 80s very publicly propagated unilateral nuclear-disarmament is now somehow pitching for the other side. I for one will not be in the least surprised to witness the somewhat surreal situation in Parliament, where a Labour Government passes through a motion almost entirely on the support of the Conservatives! Before I myself stand the risk of losing the plot and departing on tangents, let me now quickly state my point. To reach any reasoned solution to this debacle, there can only be two angles of approach: international law or common sense. Both of these in reality reach a similar answer anyway.

International law may be of dubious value to much of the wider public, but law that is binding it still undoubtedly is. While the Right Honourable Leader of the House might believe that only "a simpleton could think replacing Trident would breach the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty," unsurprisingly some of the country's leading legal minds beg to differ. While it may be true that the Treaty obligation in Article VI is not to disarm as such, there is a very clearly stated positive obligation to pursue in good faith negotiations towards these ends and to bring them to a conclusion. This is apparent from both the text of the treaty and its drafting history. An obligation to negotiate in good faith would thereby involve abstaining from action that would make a successful outcome impossible or unlikely. In this context it seems reasonably questionable that a British policy to extend or replace Trident can be compatible with what is clearly the fundamental aim of the Treaty.

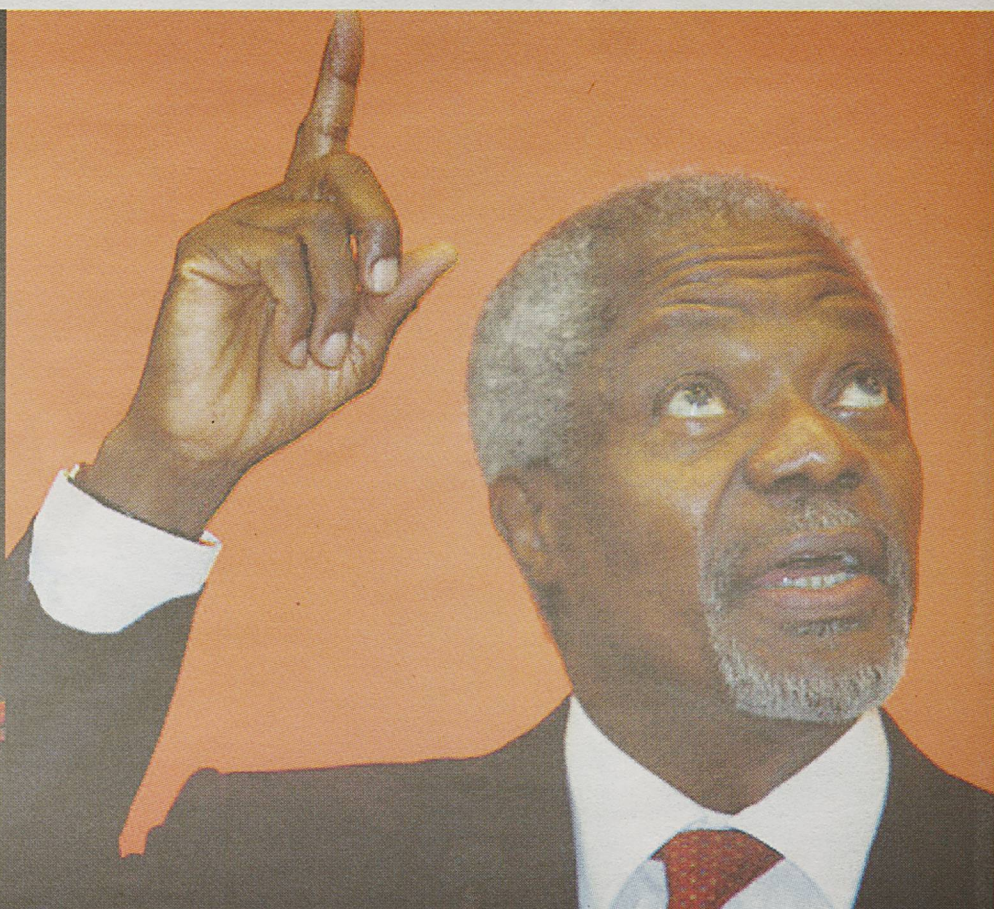
With regard to the legality of the actual use of nuclear weapons, while the International Court of Justice may have been disappointingly uncertain in 1996 - I think it is quite evident to any half-intelligent lawyer that its use could never conceivably be compatible with the laws of armed conflict. But even putting the law aside and thinking about it pragmatically, there is no state today that would in reality be stupid enough to use a nuclear weapon. After all what pleasure can there be in proudly establishing yourself as the last remaining

superpower if there is no world left to preside over? Where then is the actual logic behind a deterrence argument, if it is obvious to both the parties seeking to deter and the parties being deterred that even if push comes to shove, no one is really going to risk a full-blown nuclear war? The deterrence argument of course is that regardless of whether we *would* use it is the fact that we *could* that deters. Somehow to me this is far from convincing. Even if it were true however, what possible arguments to justify the United Kingdom or the United States having a nuclear deterrent could not apply to every other country in the world? In fact, the way I see it, considering very recent history, their case for nuclear deterrence is surely stronger than ours. Oh but wait...are we not one of the few *truly* good and trustworthy states of the world? Surely it is quite a different matter for the likes of us to have nuclear weapons then say Iran? What is easily forgotten however is that questions of good states and bad states are mere matters of perception. I for one am not entirely persuaded that the 'coalition of the willing' possessing nuclear weapons is somehow any better than the so-called rogue states' possession of the same. Besides, as Hans Blix recently said there is no logic behind "big boys lighting up cigars while telling children not to smoke." The unsavoury truth is that as long as some states continue to keep their nuclear weapons, other states will feel the need to develop them. Claiming then that some states

are more responsible than others ultimately does little to alleviate the dangers posed by an all-out nuclear arms race.

Another puzzling point is the fact that the Government seems to conveniently have forgotten their own brainwash campaign of the past five years, where terrorism was touted as the greatest threat to national security. A campaign at the altar of which, let us not forget, we sacrificed a great many of our civil liberties. With nuclear weapons failing quite abysmally at deterring terrorists what pray has changed so suddenly that our biggest security threat once again reverts to requiring nuclear deterrence?

Before I am misinterpreted, let me state quite clearly that I am not asking for foolish unilateral disarmament that is likely to change nothing and solve no problems. What I am however hoping is that the UK stands up and takes the lead in driving a consorted global effort at complete nuclear disarmament, as was the underlying intention behind the Non-Proliferation Treaty. This will of course mean doing the seemingly impossible of getting everyone who is currently a nuclear power on board while making sure no newcomers join the party, but it is much too convenient to 'dismiss things as impossible. Complete nuclear disarmament is likely to take years, even decades - but someone has to start making a realistic effort at some point. With the lifetime of nuclear programmes running out in much of the world, to me at least this seems a good a point to start as any. ■





Contents

INSIDE THIS ISSUE AROUND LONDON



Interview

Robert Webb is half of Mitchell & Webb. here we speak to him. in the other half we speak to his other half. confused? you will be.

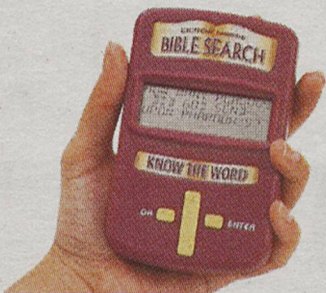
Style

Alternative Gift Guide. buy a llama, but you can't have it in your house.



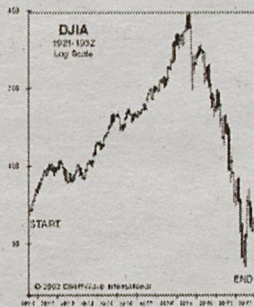
Literature

Christmas in a book. Not the bible. Other, slightly more random books.



Travel

Black markets, the drugs markets, christmas markets.



Food & Drink

Christmas sandwiches. Convenient and wholly disgusting.

Aunty Shaw

LSE's 1st Lady spreads herself over the centre.



Somerset House Ice Rink and Ice Wall

Somerset ice-ink is the original, and the nearest, ice-ink in town. This year there is an ice-wall as well which sounds exciting but I think you may have to climb it.

When: Daily 10am to 10pm
Until: Jan 29th
Price: £9.50, after 6.15pm £11

Hampstead Heath Ice Rink

Moments of madness on Ice, in a 900 square metre monster in the faux-country. But remember kids, Cottaging is more dangerous on skates.

Where: Daily 10am-10pm
Until: December 3rd
Price: £9.50

Natural History Museum Ice Rink

Ice dance around Sloane's specimens, well not actually around them but next to the building that they're in. Also try not to crash into the Victorian style fair-stalls surrounding it.

Until: December 30th
Price: £10

Tower of London Ice Rink

Skate or stumble in the shadow of the historic medieval palace. For those with superb balance and mobility there is the opportunity to steal suits of armour to skate in.

When: Daily 10am to 10pm
Until: Jan 8th
Price: £10 for an hour

rant comptrroller
joshheller

music comptrroller
samashon

visual arts comptrroller
daisymitchell-forster

film comptrroller
angustse

literature comptrroller
erinorozco

theatre comptrroller
mollytucker

style comptrroller
abaosunsade

travel comptrroller
jessicamcardle

food & drinking comptrroller
kimmandeng

comedy comptrroller
christinewhyte

thebeaver.partb@lse.ac.uk

EDITORIAL

This week I have been sleeping in the organ. After having bought a copy of Mr TV's book 'How to Hang About on a Shoestring' I have quit LSE in favour of a peripatetic lifestyle and work at a start-up USB drive dealership. I spend my days watching Loose Women and Neighbours whilst fearfully dodging security guards. Kevin used to live like this in his special-white-world period. Merry Christmas.

Enjoy,

Daniel B Yates



yuletide greetings

timturner likes christmas more than his own family

Can you feel it? There's something in the air at this time of year. Its cold, its rainy, but people are happy. It's a joy to behold. Maybe its because of something in the water; maybe its because TFL are being a little less shit than usual; but maybe, just maybe, it's because it's Christmas.

'Tis the season to be jolly. It's the most wonderful time of the year. We get presents. Christmas is obviously great and I'm going to tell you why. Follow me on a journey through what Christmas is all about and why I love it.

The greatest thing about Christmas is that it brings us together with the people we'd usually cross the road to avoid, like our families. For once it's actually nice to sit round the table and enjoy some festive tipples, share stories we'd normally keep to ourselves, and listen in to our great-uncle's vaguely/hugely racist ramblings. We review the year together, not caring at all that it was pretty much exactly the same as last year.

Christmas is a time of selflessness. People shop for hours, brav-

wonders that bring joy to our palates. It's a sprout miracle.

The leftovers get dealt with magnificently. Not a thing goes to waste, we work magic with whatever we can find to put together sandwiches that defy the laws of taste and decency. A favourite of mine is cranberry sauce, honeyed parsnip, and mistletoe.

With the meal slowly working its way round our insides, we surrender to Christmas TV. Only with seasonal specials and staple movies is the year complete. At any other time of the year it would all be written off as garbage, dumbing down, and a waste of the license payer's money. But it's Christmas, so instead it gets revered. We laugh again at Del Boy's festive antics, someone on Eastenders gets married, or killed, or both. The saccharine Coke ads make us feel warm inside, and movies like Jingle All The Way dominate the listings.

Jingle All The Way holds a special place in my heart. It's a 103 minute journey with a man battling both modern life and his postman nemesis named Sinbad. Arnwold Schwarznegger dresses as

yuletide beatings

lauraparfitt hates christmas more than elephantitis of the clitoris

Is it really the most wonderful time of the year? For a self-confessed Scrooge like me, it is anything but that. My earliest memories of Christmas are lying in bed, awake, and actually seeing my Mummy come in and fill up my stocking that was hanging off my bedpost. Then I spent six years pretending to my parents that I actually believed in Father Christmas while at the same time destroying many of my friends' faith in all mankind. Now for a young child, my Christmas experiences looked like they should have been photographed and made into a Christmas card. I grew up out on the wiley, windy Saddleworth moor and my Christmas days were snow-covered and turkey-stuffed. I would wake up and immediately run downstairs to find what seemed like a mountain of presents all for me, Daddy pointing a camcorder at me and Mummy in the kitchen cooking an enormous meal. Family would actually turn up on time for dinner and Gran's senile mutterings were very amusing, and I was allowed to laugh at her. I never had to worry about buying presents, pretending to like presents received (because they were all "what I'd always wanted") or how much

own, so the only dinner guests we have are my bum of a brother who hasn't made anything of his life and my now even more senile Gran. It's a sorry sight. Two years ago I was awoken by a loud rumbling sound and got up to find that very 90-year-old Gran in a heap at the bottom of the almost vertical Victorian staircase with her bottom set of false teeth teetering on her forehead. She was ok, but then refused to attempt to scale the stairs again for the rest of the day. The most disturbing thing was that we don't have a downstairs toilet so I subsequently spent Christmas day waiting for the moment Gran decided she just couldn't wait any longer. I seriously considered swallowing a silver sixpence, covering myself in brandy and setting myself alight that day.

As for the other pseudo-festive traditions such as the bad repeated films, awful Christmas number one attempts by Big Brother throw-backs and the Queen's speech, they speak for themselves. I admit you may catch me bopping to some of the older Christmas pop but I can assure you, the only bit of telly I look forward to is the Vicar of Dibley special where Geraldine has to eat about



ing the cold crowded streets to get their hands on the perfect gift for their otherwise neglected loved ones. It's an annual joy to do our duty as consumers, putting stacks of money behind the tills with barely a thought to our bank balances. We could wait a few days for the sales, but we don't care. It's all a part of Christmas.

It's not just presents that get bought, its beautiful decorations. We don't simply line the streets with stunning decorations, we bring them into our homes, adorably adorn the tree, transforming it from a scraggy green mess into a tinselly bauble work of art. It's a statement of family solidarity. A symbolic ornament gracing our living rooms. It's the most beautiful fire hazard imaginable.

And then we to relax. It's the one time of the year when lying on the sofa with a drink is not only condoned, its actively encouraged. At Yuletide we recharge our batteries. Gone are the lectures, classes, and essays, its time for biscuits, mulled wine, and mince pies. The festive music helps us drift into a peaceful trance, and those crowded buses feel miles away.

With Christmas Day comes the greatest meal of the year. Meat is taken from every animal known to man, its stuffed, basted, and roasted together, and then we eat. This delicious new meat-based species is dished up with vegetables seen only once a year, natural green

a toy, gets in a stress, and fights with a giant elf. It's a wholesome tale we can all relate to. While Jingle may be lacking in some departments (namely plot and dialogue), it really doesn't matter. It's excused, because it's Christmas, and that's what Christmas is all about.

When the festive period finishes, things all go downhill. The cold starts to get to us. Our fridges run out of great food. The presents break, as do our dreams. Those decorations reveal themselves for what they really are - plastic tat.

Why does it have to end? The Christmas magic should happen all year round, it's that good. Christmas should start 6 months earlier and end 6 months later. That's right, I really do wish it could be Christmas everyday.

If we gave ourselves over to the Christmas spirit all year round, the world would be a much better place. It may have religious roots, but that's not what Christmas is about anymore. It's about togetherness, good food, and great TV. It's just what the world needs. Mistletoe on every street corner, mulled wine on tap, and Christmas pudding all round. It's paradise.

Merry Christmas everyone. It's the most wonderful time of the year, hope you enjoy it.

weight I was going to put on over the festive period. And The Snowman and Mighty Ducks were being shown for only the tenth time.

Nowadays, Christmas is a commercial venture for retailers to cash in on, the media to glorify and spoil brats to rinse their parents' bank accounts. If you have ever been stupid enough to brave Oxford Street or the Trafford Centre on Christmas Eve you will have had to literally push your way through the other plonkers who left their shopping 'til then, when we all know they could have done it all in early August when Harrods has already started displaying their Christmas stock. We are bombarded with charity adverts about those who are alone and hungry intermittent with Thornton's and HMV adverts enticing us to spend more and eat more and all in all we simply end up feeling shit.

Somehow over the years, my personal Christmas experience has majorly deteriorated and significantly contributed to my cynicism. I will wake up around lunchtime on Christmas day, hungover, roll over and go back to sleep. Eventually I would make my way downstairs, somehow still having the tiniest smidgen of hope that there will be something waiting for me other than my annoying brother or a little gift from the cat. The mountain of presents for me has become not even a molehill, but a lone Terry's chocolate orange at the bottom of a pile of high-tech gadgets for my numerous nieces and nephews. My siblings have all grown up and have families of their

six dinners and is challenged to a brussel sprout eating competition. I like it so much because it represents the epitome of all things a middle-aged singleton has to look forward to, and in a depressing sense I see myself in a similar Bridget-Jones-esque situation in years to come.

It is for these reasons that this year I am using my opt-out clause and sidestepping the whole Christmas period. When most will be at home just about putting up with their distant relatives' annoying habits and laughing uneasily at jokes about mince pies stuck in places they shouldn't, I'll be bombing it down the side of Mont Blanc, with a select few. When most will forcing down the last mince pie and having to change into their tracky bottoms, I'll be contemplating which après-ski activity sounds the most interesting. And when most wake up on boxing day pretending they wished it wasn't all over for another year, I'll be thanking my lucky stars that it bloody well is.

GRANT

mr robert webb (BA HONS Cantab)

danielyates talks to robert webb about doing nothing at cambridge, shooting bitches in cans and his forthcoming sextape



“

going to LSE
would've
scared me

my sextape
would be in the
Lesley-
Grantham-toss-
ing-off-over-a-
webcam mould

“I think you might have a hard time getting that commissioned” Robert Webb told me. At least I think that’s what he said. We were conducting the interview down a phone line so sonically molested by interference it sounded like it was made out of garrulous brillo pads by a popcorn machine. I had just recounted a comedy series I had conceived of at school. Based partly on the *Koran* and mostly on *Wallace & Gromit* it was to consist of 114 5-minute episodes featuring Aardman-style animated animals reciting Koranic verses in a variety of bored English accents. What I thought was quite a good idea at the time – a claymation tortoise saying ‘abundance diverts you, until you come to the graves’ in a thick Somerset accent – was in reality a grotesque reduction of a profoundly meaningful religious text, borderline Islamophobic, and most unforgivably, not very funny.

Robert Webb tends to be funny. “I wrote searing parodies of *Blue Peter* and *The A-Team* and charged everyone in the audience 20p, which I pretended was going to charity. Don’t worry, things, they get better.” he cheerfully informed me through the crackle. He was relaxing on his tour bus, somewhere outside of Ipswich, midway through his UK tour of *The Two Faces of Mitchell and Webb*. I was perched on the shelf-like balcony outside *The Beaver* office with a note pad one knee and a long dead pot-plant on the other. Webb audibly stretched and with luxurious irony described his situation, somewhere on the A14, as “glamorous”. I was trying to not to plunge to an untidy death on the sepia-paned roof of the quad, while writing the word “glmros” in psychopath-script on my thigh, the notebook having slipped to its untimely death a few moments before. “I never dreamt I would be on a bus like this. But had I done so it would’ve been a dream come true.”

And what more succinct a visual illustration of relative success could one ask for. The man on the other end of this fizz machine has recorded three series of the cult TV hit *Peep Show*, with a new series to be filmed in January, a show that has been hailed by *Ricky Gervais* as the best British comedy in years. A BBC Radio 4 sketch show, *That Mitchell and Webb Sound*, ran for 2 series before being converted into a prime time BBC 2 sketch show, inventively named *That Mitchell and Webb Look*. In 2005 he snagged a major part in a big British film and is now toddling around on a live tour of the UK. Despite not yet having done any porn (“unless you count *Confetti*, which I hope you wouldn’t”) he’s doing everything there is to do as a top-flight comic actor. Of course this man has a tour bus, it is natural and just that he should, and of course he can undertake an interview in a place where he doesn’t have to face death and disability. I on the other hand, am a sociology student at LSE.

But there is indeed hope. Robert Webb was a student once and his days at Cambridge are fondly remembered as something forged out of sheer utility. ‘I had a plan more than David [Mitchell, his long-term comic partner] did. I

went to Cambridge to do drama, although I didn’t study drama, I did English, as a sort of nominal degree, but I really went there to do acting.” And the academic work suffered as a result? “I didn’t really do any work for it to suffer. I worked really hard to get there, carefully re-sat everything I failed, carefully re-sat everything, and when I was there I was kind of ‘that’s that then, I’ve done it, now to do something proper’ and started acting. I probably read, no I definitely read, more books in the two years I spent getting to Cambridge than I did in the three years doing my degree there.” And so the *Cambridge Footlights* beckoned, the drama society that had produced the comic aristocracy of *Stephen Fry*, *Peter Cook*, *Alan Bennett* and *John Cleese*. It beckoned “because it was kind of there. A pre-existing place where I could go and work. I’m not a stand-up. At that point in my career the idea of going into a room full of possibly hateful people and trying to make them laugh scared me to death, so I wasn’t going to carve a career on a circuit. *Footlights* was there, ready-made, an institution which I could just fit into.” And the LSE drama society didn’t tempt you? “LSE would have scared me. I couldn’t go to London because that scares me. Coming from a tiny hamlet in rural Lincolnshire I was totally overwhelmed by the bright lights of Cambridge! I’d never seen a house with more than one storey before, or roads with houses on both sides. I remember some of the people from London at university complaining that Cambridge only had one club. I was like ‘it’s got a club!’”

Webb is the bedazzled and excitable one of the duo he formed while at university, strategically slipping into the role of a faux-naif simpleton for comic purposes, but this ruritanian cloak disguises a comic mind at least as sharp as his partner David Mitchell’s. They began writing together at Cambridge while Rob was in his second year and David was in his first. “It was just quite easy with David. We were quite funny and we liked to make each other laugh. Not that we don’t harbour a lot of anger and bitterness towards one another. I wouldn’t want anyone to think we didn’t have that.” I wonder if he actually likes David. “Halfway through a tour is not a good time to ask me this. Okay, let’s just say I like him.” Why does he like him? “Oh, I like him for lots of reasons, I like him because he’s funny,” here he pauses. For a long time. “I think I may have exhausted his good qualities. But no, he’s fine and I don’t, at the moment, see any pressing need to kill him.”

Which is probably politick considering it is their partnership that has propelled him to where he is now. They have just finished filming *Magicians*, a feature film about two warring magicians written by *Peep Show* scribes *Bain* and *Armstrong*. “I quite enjoyed recording the film”, at this point he chastises himself, “God no, I’ve got to stop saying it like that, it’s far too uncool, I didn’t record a film. I shot a film. I shot that bitch. It’s in the can. Shot that bitch inside the can”. I mentioned that we have a similar phrase at the paper, we don’t

finish a paper, we put it to bed. “Like it’s a child, or an elderly woman?” I tell him ours generally has the worst elements of both. “Perhaps you should be putting the paper to sleep. Which is still marginally more caring than shooting something.” It seems fair to say that Webb doesn’t always seem to like the process of filming. He has publicly described his involvement with *Confetti* as the biggest mistake he ever made. “Live work is simply so much more fun. When you’re recording you’re lucky if you get the crew to smirk but making 1000 people laugh at your joke, all at the same time, is a terrific thing.” But surely the pitfalls of live performance prey on his mind, “right, there is also the potential for a thousand people to be silent at the same time, and that’s quite a big silence”. How much scope is there for things to go horrible, I wonder, slightly pruriently. “We stumble out into the crowd, there’s a version of big talk where we try and get a massive question out of someone in the audience” I tell him that sounds weird and painful “well it really might be just that. It’s quite unpredictable and terrible things may happen so I can thoroughly recommend it on that basis.” And we can see it in London. “Brixton Academy is usually known for its rock, it’s a hall full of sweat and rock, but they’ve promised us they’ll put some chairs in so that’s nice of them.” And can we see the things we love in comic flesh? “There’s some new stuff, some old stuff, some stuff that is so old that it would seem new.”

At this point it only seems fair that I tell him I have auctioned off two questions to people I know, he is *that* popular. He laughs jovially, “fire away”. Are you more of a Lillet or a tube of Canesten? “I have no idea what you’re saying”. Fair enough, neither do I, all I know is that I just won me a fiver. Now, for the tenner, have you got any plans to release a sextape? “Perhaps I should, it worked for Paris Hilton, although mine would more likely be in the Lesley-Grantham-tossing-off-over-a-webcam mould of sextape.” That’s not the best kind. I wonder if he’s ever done any porn, in a fragile past state, a young actor trying to break the bigtime. “I’m afraid I haven’t, done any porn, that I’m aware of. Obviously the porn that you’re not aware of, that’s what’s going to get you, but not being aware of that porn, I can’t really comment on it.”

At least I think that’s what he said. The crackle was now so intense it sounded like I was on the phone to a newly industrialising nation. I tried to write something down but the pain of just having stabbed my thigh with a Z-Grip medium roller-ball proved too distracting. Did he have some advice to students before I passed out? “Have fun, do some work. It’s all about finding that balance. Then tipping that balance towards alcohol. Do that and you should be fine.” I passed out.

Mitchell and Webb play London’s Brixton Academy on 12, 13 and 14 December. For tickets and info go to www.MitchellandWebbLive.com. Their live DVD is in shops now.



stocking fillers

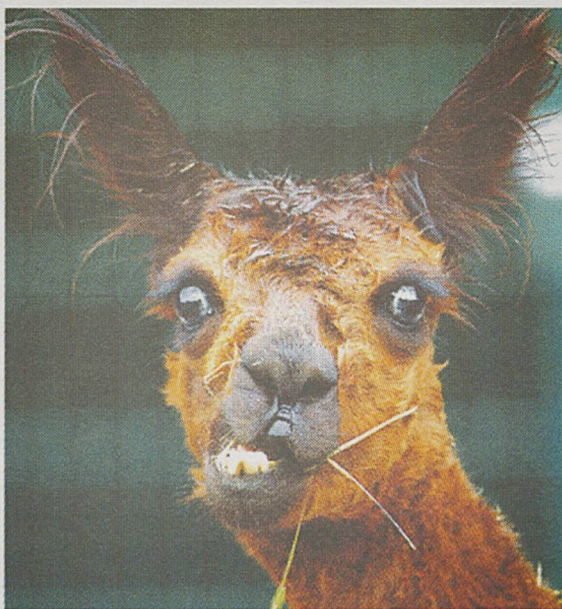
abaosunsade explores the alternative side of the holiday gift guide

“Tis’ the season to be jolly,” the popular carol proclaims, but the stresses of modern Yuletide make it difficult to follow such sage advice. You’ve only just stopped wearing your Halloween costume, you’re still having turkey sandwiches for every meal as a result of an indulgent Thanksgiving, and now the abundance of tinsel-covered Evergreens and fairy-light lined streets indicate Christmas is back (with a vengeance) even sooner than last year. This shocking revelation brings with it an inevitable consequence, the herald we city-dwelling consumers would hasten to, but cannot, ignore. Yes, ladies and gentlemen, it’s time once more to hit the shops, hardcore styl-ee. It’s a funny thing, this phenomenon I have dubbed “The Crimbo Conundrum”. You anticipate its arrival and yet when it dawns, you’re still stuck for a solution. What on earth are you going to get all your friends, family and significant others for Christmas? Your friends have already received the usual clothing/accessories/CDs in the past. Your parents have caught on to the fact that you buy them stuff you know they won’t like just so you can have it. And your girl/boyfriend will no longer accept hand-written, sexual favour I.O.U.’s as a proper Christmas present. What then is a poor student soul, more concerned with conquering an abnormal sleeping cycle and meeting end-of-term deadlines, to do? Lucky for you, there are some ingenious gift ideas out there that will satisfy both your time and creativity constraints.

Oxfam Unwrapped, for starters, is by far the Utilitarian’s optimum choice. A quick glance at the website reveals an array of alternative gift ideas – as they say on the homepage “Forget the socks” and

other predictable gifts, aim instead to shop from the comfort of your home whilst simultaneously improving the lives of the less fortunate around the world. If your idealistic anti-capitalist sibling abhors the consumerism of Christmas time; there’s no need to spend hours making a present in order to satisfy their discontent with big business profit, simply buy them an Alpaca! Or an “Alpaca package” to be precise – for only £20, Oxfam can provide Alpaca farmers in the Andes enough financial support to purchase one of these lovable creatures, and subsequently make a living from their wool. Not into alpacas? Don’t know what they are? (Hint: like a sheep, but with an 80’s mullet) Well, there are also “gifts that grow” – plant 50 trees for £16, or if you’re a real big spender, splash out on a whole mango plantation for that special someone – it’ll only cost you £1600.

Admittedly, it is often hardest to find



over readers, I have the solution: a Russian bride, so you can finally get some alone time. Log onto www.russianbride.com and take a gander at the lovely ladies waiting eagerly to be united with any type of companion. If you doubt your friend will appreciate the exoticism of this gift, why not create a “Gaydar” profile for them, instead? Nick a photo off your mate’s “Facebook”, list their favourite band as “Scissor Sisters”, and wait for the responses to pour in. They’re not gay? No worries, they will be. Gaydar has been voted best adult dating site by various magazines – and reporters don’t lie.

gifts for the people we know the best. What do you get for the friend that’s ever by your side? The confidant who, more than a companion, is almost an extension of you. Never more than phone call or text message away, they are always with you, whether you like it or not. What do you get them?

The search is on. Use www.counselling-directory.org.uk to locate your parent’s nearest counsellor, and help them begin the journey of recovery – mending those mental strains bringing up a hell-raiser like yourself induced.

Now we arrive at the toughest hurdle yet. They met, they mated and now, decades on, they have you to thank for countless pairs of socks, an innumerable amount of unread books, and a decaying pile of hand-made cards and creations. (not to mention anxiety-induced premature aging) Parents, it seems, are not the priority when it comes to Christmas present shopping. They expound relentless rants against your behaviour, spend hours listening to you moan and groan when no one else will, and ultimately fork out desperately needed dosh when such a situation arises. Yet every year, without fail, you will tire after five seconds of searching for a special gift, and settle for the usual standard parental gift, whatever it may be. What do you get the person/people who have supported you throughout your entire existence? From suckling to student, through pampers and puberty, parents have been through the best and worst times of your life. Their ideal present therefore lies not in consumerist creations, but in the science of psychiatry.

Speaking of you – what do you get for yourself this Christmas? The answer to this is the simplest yet – absolutely nothing. After all, you’ll only be upset when your bank statement arrives in the New Year and you realise you’re not dipping into your overdraft, you’re drowning in it. And then there’s the walk down the high street during January sales, when a glance at a shop window reveals the fact that the £80 shoes you splashed out on have been reduced to £20. Jingle all the way.

Christmas, and indeed winter in general, is one of the few times of year that adults are allowed to act like absolute children. There are presents to give and to get, festivities a-plenty, magical weather, and people that come together, forgetting old differences, for the simple purpose of enjoying themselves. Seasonal traditions are those that are cherished from a very early age, and as a result, it seems appropriate to reminisce about the books that made a difference to this author in winters past.

How the Grinch Stole Christmas by Dr. Seuss was a holiday classic in my house, not merely because any cool kid of reading age was practically required to harbour a healthy obsession with the Good Doctor, but also because the story itself managed to repeat a well-worn theme in holiday literature in a refreshingly different way. Anyone who has even considered reading a holiday or Christmas themed piece of literature knows that by the conclusion, all characters will have learned the same or a similar lesson: the reason for the season rests not only in the material elements of festivities, but in the time spent with family and loved ones. The Grinch taught us this in pure Grinchy fashion – by taking away the superficial for his own personal gain. The innocence with which the setting is constructed (who ever heard of Whoville, and why do these strange creatures, the Whos, celebrate the same holidays as us?) inexplicably endears readers, young and old. Finally,

the grumpy old Grinch has a change of heart, which is to say that he gains one, upon hearing the persistent celebrations of the Whos, and returns to the town to participate in this once resented holiday, making him a loveable, albeit eccentric, curmudgeon after all.

Speaking of curmudgeons, for the more mature adolescents, there is Charles Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol*, which has been reincarnated a number of times via the magic of Disney, *The Flintstones*, and even *Blackadder*. Younger children are more acquainted with Scrooge McDuck than the original literary character; yet the original text deserves some illumination due to the numerous literary traditions it has engendered. While some of the themes of inequality and social relations are a bit heavy to say the least, children identify with the more simplistic characteristics of the characters. Scrooge is stingy; his clerk

Bob Cratchit is faithful and goodhearted. What we miss out on as children is the complex biographical picture that Dickens constructs for Scrooge. As the ghosts of Christmas Past, Present, and Future lead Mr. Bah Humbug through a progression of life events, the reader

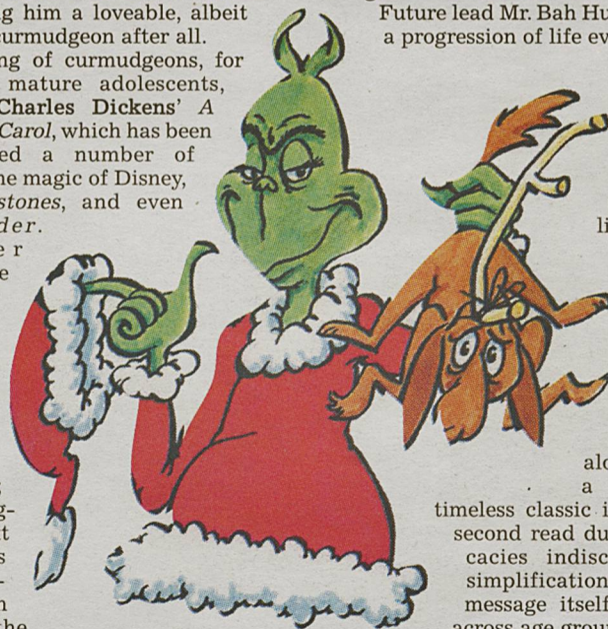
becomes more inclined to feel sorry for the unfortunate man. And like Dr. Seuss, Dickens manages to convey the true meaning of

Christmas along the way. As a result, this timeless classic is worthy of a second read due to the intricacies indiscernible upon simplification, even if the message itself is accessible across age groups.

Completing this Christmas compilation is a fairy tale by the Brothers Grimm. *The Elves and the Shoemaker* is one of their lesser known stories (though by far not the strangest) about a shoemaker and his wife who, doing poorly in their given

trade – by no fault of their own of course – come to rely upon the voluntary help of little, tiny, naked elves. Due to the high quality of the elf-made shoes, faithful customers immediately begin paying exponentially higher prices for these wares of their own accord and outside of previous agreements on price. In return, the shoemaker and his wife decide to make tiny clothes for the elves so that they will be naked no more, and the story concludes amid much dancing and continued shoemaking success. Overlooking the bizarre economics on which the story hinges, this quaint tale will delight kiddie-winkles and induce extreme amusement among the more mature. And that is what the holiday is all about after all.

More notably, it is clear that there are defined traditions within literature to make the holiday season a happy and sappy one. Popular themes include giving, togetherness, empathy, and fidelity. These are all in some way illuminated throughout the texts of the above books as well as many others. Yet the important thing to consider is that despite our very grown-up exteriors, we are attracted to that which was instilled in us at very early ages. All of these books, whether enjoyed previously or recommended for the first time, will invoke our inner child and remind us what this season is all about.



literature

erinorozco is dreaming of a white christmas

christmas paloozah

christmas in the marketplace

christmas and new year is frequently ruined by people who think it's not about shopping, we show them where to go in the world

Edinburgh and Glasgow, Scotland by christinewhyte

Christmas in Scotland is just the pre-match warm-up for the debauchathon of New Year. But tourists looking for pointless tat and a little local flavour could do worse than hit 'The Barras' for knocked-off DVDs and sectarian flags.

However, if you want to celebrate New Year's Eve in style, there's only one place to go. The home of Hogmanay, haggis and heroin - Scotland. Edinburgh's Hogmanay party is world-famous and tickets are sold out for the **Street Party**, but you can still join in with some traditional Scottish fun at the **The Ceilidh** in the Gardens or chill out with **Paolo Nutini at The Concert in the Gardens**.

Or, if spending the night with a bunch of smacked-out fag-hags and luvvies isn't your idea of fun, head for Glasgow. It's bigger, cheaper, and rough as fuck. It holds numerous European titles; **Stab Capital**, **Teen Pregnancy**, **Fattest Chain-smoking Bastards** (I'd guess). But it's also the home of **Franz Ferdinand**, **Robbie Coltrane** and **The Glasgow Boys** so there's some culture and that going on too.

For Hogmanay, there are events all over the city, from hipster evenings in Ashton Lane's trendy bars to wild, shouting, Scotland-flag-waving, kissing everybody you see, singing along to **The Proclaimers**, fun in George Square.

If that's not north enough for you, or you have plans for New Year already, there's always Shetland's Hogmanay - **Up Helly Aa**. Those tricky northern types celebrate it on the 31 January and there's a program of events Nordic enough to satisfy any raping and pillaging urges you might have.



Nuremberg, Germany by jessicamcardle

Say hello to Christkindlesmart! If the Nuremberg Christmas markets don't get you into the Christmas spirit you need to take a long look at yourself and consider whether you might be a modern day Grinch.

Within the 180 wooden stalls draped in red and white table-cloths you will find everything from Christmas tree Angels to toys and arts and crafts products. They also have something called "Glow wine", which I for one am

pretty excited about- do I glow or does it? The brandy butter on the metaphorical plum pudding for me is that there is a staff of people employed to keep up the high standards of the markets; ie. discourage sales of such items as plastic fir garlands, they also say "NO" to back-to-back streams of Christmas Musak.

If you see no lure in the quaintness of this shopping treat, there are plenty of department stores for those more specific presents; you know the type for your sister/ partner/ cousin who would land you a black eye were you to give them a

"Nuremberg Plum-Person" for Christmas (a wonderful souvenir if you ask me). For the non-shoppers there is plenty of roasted Nuremberg sausage to fill your mouth with.

The markets have already started but there's no mad hurry to get there as they will carry on until Christmas Eve, by which time you should be tucked up at home or drinking away your homesickness with strangers. A return will cost £100 but you can always shop around. It'll be well worth it for Christmas shopping without the traditional aches to the head and wallet.

Krakow, Poland by rahimrahemtulla

If you've got a little bit more time to kill and more shopping to do, then why not get a taste of the Eastern European winter wonderland known as Krakow. It may be the perfect place to stir up your yuletide spirit. Thanks to its sub-zero temperatures, you are virtually guaranteed the fairy tale white Christmas we so sorely lack here in Britain. Its numerous Gothic churches and Baroque palaces create an atmosphere and beauty which are rooted in centuries-old tradition.

Chief among this tradition is the Krakow Christmas markets, a less commercial version of Nuremberg markets, which are held throughout December in the gloriously medieval Rynek or Market Square, at the heart of the city. Here you will find a plethora of stalls selling all manner of gifts and trinkets, drawn from all over the country and beyond. Apart from the material goods, there is a range of seasonal food and drink on offer. Take the time to enjoy a cup of grzaniec galicyjski, also known as mulled wine. If that doesn't do it for you there are always your taste buds to consider- why not indulge in the numerous gastronomic delights on offer.

Whilst you have your fill and bask in the timeless ambience of it all, be sure to look out for carol concerts or plays re-enacting the Nativity scene, which take place throughout December. If all this Christmas fun makes you want to say 'humbug' don't forget that you're in Eastern Europe, so you can always go get drunk on seriously cheap vodka, then pay a visit to the nearest 'massage parlour' for a different kind of holiday cheer.

Picture a perfect Christmas day, a snow covered landscape outside your window, a Christmas tree, stacks of presents, some carol singers singing at your front door and of course a mountain of food. I bet you're thinking of a lavish feast on a nicely decorated table, maybe a few candles and a tablecloth. What you are probably not imagining is a sandwich from **Pret A Manger**. The Pret Christmas Lunch sandwich is an example of a staggering increase of Christmas themed foods creeping up onto the shelves in sandwich and coffee shops around the country. Considering that we are barreling towards Christmas, this is not exactly a surprise. What does seem surprising, at least to me anyway, is the demand for these items. Don't get me wrong I love Christmas as much as the next Santa's little helper. I queued up to wait for the supermarket to open one cold October morning to get my Advent Calendar, which now sits among my other prized possessions in my room, but I cannot call myself a fan of the Christmas sandwich, panino, or wrap.

Unlike the Advent Calendar, which is a form of anticipating Christmas and all its chocolate and other food binging glory, the Christmas sandwich craze brings the festive food event forward in a neatly packaged format minus the decorated surroundings. Okay, that is not entirely true, the Pret Christmas Lunch sandwich does come boxed in a pretty cranberry version of the normal sandwich box. A

nice and much needed touch as the sandwich has a bland look about it to say the least, and does not have much likeness to a colorful and multi-textured Christmas banquet. One resemblance it does have to a traditional Christmas Lunch, or if your used to the main celebration occurring on the night before, a Christmas Eve dinner, includes a high calorie count, five hundred and forty nine to be exact. Wow.

Along with the fresh leaf spinach, onions and mayonnaise, the sandwich also contains turkey breast meat and impressively, stuffing. Which I guess is



sort of the key in making it taste Christmassy because without the stuffing it is arguably much like any other turkey sandwich. Actually, thinking back on it the whole experience reminded me of the post-Christmas period, particularly of leftovers. The sandwich tasted much like a sandwich you would make a couple of days after the feast, when you've moved beyond the initial nausea of having stuffed your face at the main meal and not being able to face the leftovers the next day, to having achieved a new plateau where turkey and stuffing sound exciting all over again. In that sense this is the perfect leftovers sandwich, because it is way below par in terms

of an actual Christmas lunch or dinner but just about right for that craving you get when its all over, but don't want to let go of the festive season just yet.

Which is why I do not understand why anyone would want to eat this type of sandwich earlier. Before the main banquet this sandwich is just a way to reduce your anticipation of the event by consuming a vague resemblance of the main meal, which is in no way as exciting. I am tempted to think that it may even put you off the actual meal. How could something that is a bad version of the real thing intensify your desire for it? On a charitable note however, 10p of the price of the Pret Christmas Lunch sandwich goes towards their efforts to feed the hungry, which may help you forget about the calorie count and make you feel good about yourself and your choice again, even if this feeling is just temporary.

I am saddened to think of the possibility that any of you staying in London over Christmas may be hoarding a bunch of these sandwiches for your Christmas meal, so I beg you please don't. I would offer to cook you dinner or lunch myself, but I can't cook and also, my family eats sushi on Christmas Eve. Because not being able to cook is a family trait. Whatever you do, I wish you happy holidays.

kimmandeng finds cons and convenience where she expected to find home and hearth

killing christmas one sandwich at a time



Confessions of Student-



My first picture. My oral fixation is blossoming.



Auntie's Sexmas Recipe



If you're good boys and girls and follow this recipe then you'll have 30 minced pies to feed you and whoever you're sharing the kitchen with. Make sure your surfaces are good and clean, you can make a mess once the pies are in the oven



Sexmas Mince pies

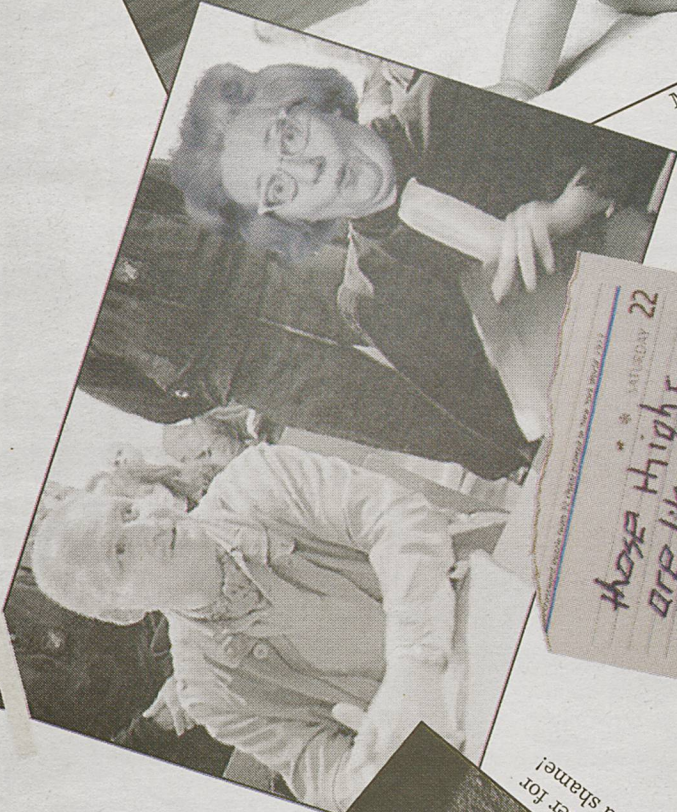
- 8 oz butter, soft like a peachy bum, still firm before it has ripened
- 1 lb all purpose flour, leave the self raising to your male companion
- 2 oz icing sugar, plus a couple of drops more for nipple fun
- 2 generous egg yolks
- 1 lb mincemeat/mince pie filling, that's about the weight of the average penis
- an ounce or two of brandy or rum - compulsory beaten egg, for glaze and more stimulating system



Delicately slice the butter into cubes. Gradually tease the flour into a mixing bowl maxing sure the bowl is left wanting more. Add the luscious butter and, using your fingertips, ever so gently rub the pieces into the flour until it resembles fine breadcrumbs, leaving soft gelatinous consistency, like freshly ejaculated jism. Now seductively stir in the icing sugar. Make a well in the centre, stir in the egg yolk and about 3-4 tbsp iced water to make a soft but not sticky dough. Pound and knead lightly to form a smooth dough (if there is time - chill for 30 minutes). Preheat oven to mark 400F or gas mark 6.

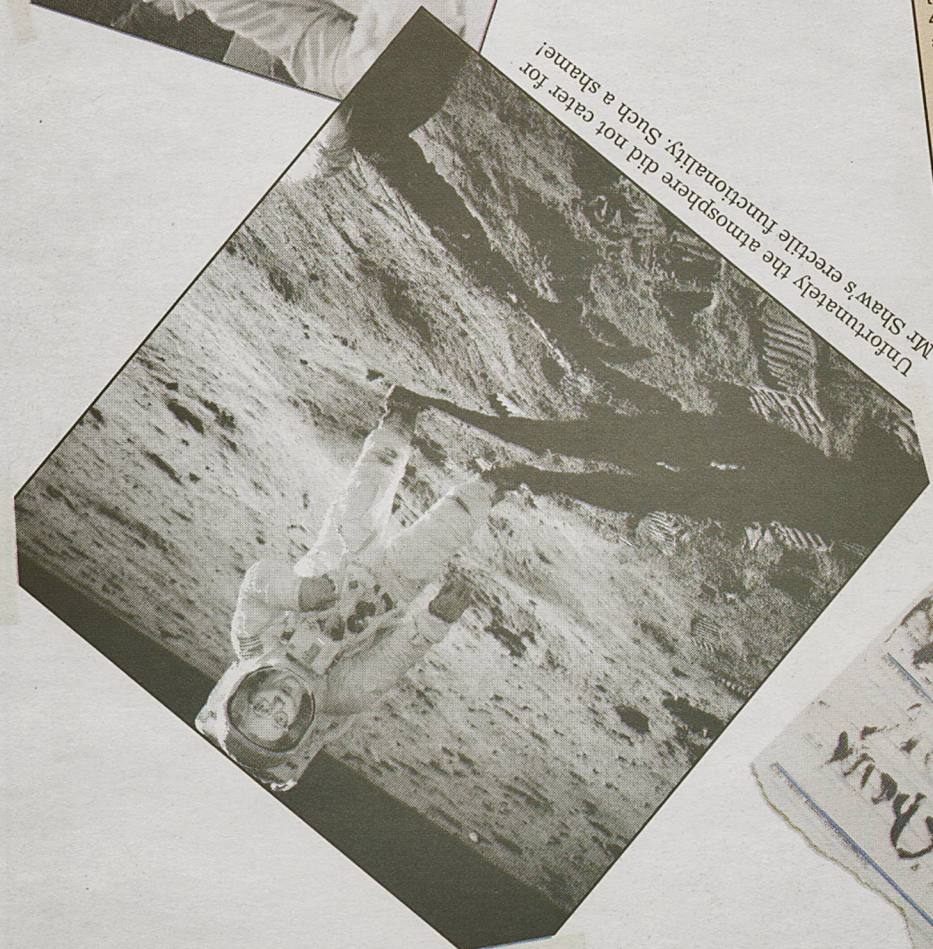
On a floured surface, roll out two thirds of the dough and cut out 30 rounds using a 2-inch fluted cutter. Use to line the bun tins. Fill with that girthy mincemeat...Ahhh...oooh...Mmmm!!!

Re-roll remaining pastry and trimmings and cut out circles using a 2 inch cutter. Dampen edges of circle and place on pies. Seal edges, brush tops with beaten egg and cook for 20 minutes. Serve hot and steamy.



these highs are like pythons made of beef

A page from Carlos the Jackal's diary.



Unfortunately the atmosphere did not cater for Mr. Shaw's erectile functionality. Such a shame!



Peter Sutherland's emotional oil-spill



The Three Tuns c.1962

atie Shaw

"A frisky fresh LSE experience Little Mick. B for life. The sa



"Auntie Shaw repr for taste and decen and beyond. I learn



Daily Beaver

turn to page 72 to find out how we save the environment everyday. urine (and aled) point the way forward

This issue is FREE*

*if you are a racist, bigot or homophobic, white middle-class, Tory, and hold a handicap of below 12. Being adept at reading small print is a bonus

Biased far beyond your wildest imagination, yet a beacon of free speech and democracy

An immigrant student's experience (fresh off the boat) P28

Awarded the Guardian Student Media Award for 'Most likely to incite dangerous aggressive and FEAROFCRIME racial hatred'

Will Goo-Goo single-handedly kill single mothers? YES!! (Its an in joke we know we know we know we know)



DEWJI DOWNED. UNION IN DISARRAY

MESSAGES OF SYMPATHY POURED INTO THE *DAILY BEAVER* OFFICES LAST WEEK AFTER BELOVED COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER ALI DEWJI WAS STRUCK BY A SINGLE PAPER MISSILE AT AN EGM, AND COLLAPSED DUE TO SHEER EXHAUSTION.

STUDENTS ORGANISED A 24-HOUR VIGIL IN PROTEST ALL DAY IN THE OLD THEATRE AND CALLED FOR A STUDENT REFERENDUM TO BAN THE COMMS JOB THAT HAS SO TORTURED POPULAR DEWJI.

Daily Beaver's Turncoat Turner reports

Why are the smallest faeces always the smelliest? We ask Krebbers on pg 24. Read THE TRUTH pg 9.



AU build new King's College department

The AU is in disarray after the "Carol" drinking event degenerated into a drunken rampage. The ensuing riot culminated in the construction of a new department at King's College.

The drunken revelers are understood to have collected materials and machinery from nearby building sites and worked through the night at the King's campus on the Strand, finishing at around 6am. With many still too inebriated to stand, the unused bricks and mortar were returned to their rightful owners.

Stunned members of the AU marvelled at their own work, a building which has been widely praised for staying in character with its baroque surroundings while seamlessly incorporating facets of neoclassicism. The interior has been noted for balancing minimalism with functionality.

"We can only apologise to our LSE brethren", pleaded an AU member who wished to remain anonymous. "We never intended to perform such a recklessly generous gesture, especially not towards our rivals. We've let the school down, and we've let ourselves down."

How the situation will be resolved remains unclear. King's are apparently already scheduling lectures in the building, whilst some at LSE are now claiming King's "owe us one".

Suggested names for the structure include the frankly bizarre "New Academic Building."

Sutherland has "no ulterior motives"

Newly appointed chair of LSE's council Pierre Underhand has claimed he has no hidden agenda. His comments come in the wake of a vicious campaign aiming to restrict Underhand's freedom of speech.

"I am here to plunder the university, spread wickedness, and ruin life not only for LSE students but the entire world", Underhand explained. "I have always made this position absolutely clear, and will continue to do so."

On the protests greeting his appointment, Underhand continued: "The protesters of course have their right to free speech, just as I have the right to track them down and mutilate their genitals". The BP supremo went on to describe himself as "bigger than Jesus, Mohammed, and Bono combined".

Underhand's frank approach to the situation is understood to have changed campus opinion following his controversial appointment. "Pierre's just the kind of guy we need at the top," said one pleased student. "I'd heard he was a bit of a prick, but we shouldn't listen to the protesters. It's them who are the pricks".

A senior member of the protesters had also changed his position on Underhand. "We really had the wrong idea of Pierre. We were wrong to mess with him, and we have paid the price."

If you wish to donate to the "Protester Genital Replacement Fund", get a life.

Capsell kills Russian spy for *The Beaver* through radiation poisoning

By *Daily Beaver* investigative reporters Mora Carpitt, Bartlet Bloggs, and Fat-Tina Banjo



Russian spy Alexander Teytelvinenko in his final days, Right: The infamous Capsell.

Alexander Teytelvinenko was found lying cold in a radioactive pit. The pit, known to local neighbours as Cesspit, is located in Ilford, Essex at the rear of Capsell's house. It is thought that Teytelvinenko discovered Capsell's evil plot of trying to take over the *Daily Beaver*, the first step in his plan to secure world domination. A neighbour reported seeing the two rowing after the Russian was caught with a camera hiding behind Capsell's favourite tree (the one he saved at great expense from the Brazilian rainforest). Capsell allegedly pushed Teytelvinenko to his death into the nuclear pit. The Coroner's report states the cause of death was radiation poisoning.

The cesspit has been accumulated with nuclear waste by Capsell in an attempt to prevent the government from developing nuclear energy. Capsell's housemate, none other than the current, I mean former, I mean current Editor of the *Daily Beaver*, a Mr Sam Jones claims, "No comment. Psst, this is off the record, wink wink, but you might want to speak to his illegitimate child."

Subsequently the *Daily Beaver* spoke to Baby Dilwyn who naively said, "Say no to Peter Sutherland." He then cancelled his interview with the *Daily Beaver* claiming that the questions were too hostile after Dave Vincenti refused to move off the sofa. The *Daily Beaver* reporter overheard Dilwyn telling his Kermit teddy (Lou Lou) that despite the death of Teytelvinenko, his

protest against the *Daily Beaver* had been a 'great success', although he was not acting as a Green Party spokesman at the time.

Further investigation (the concept of which the news reporters at our rival *The Beaver* do not understand the meaning of) revealed even Capsell's closest friends (members of the Green Army) were unaware of the Cesspit. One student Phil Pack-and-off-ski told the *Daily Beaver*, "I have never been invited to the Holy Father's house. I just thought it was because he was ashamed of the fact that he only had one outfit. My faith in the Green doctrine has been shaken so much that Laurence Charles from Blue Labour has convinced me to join his club. He even gave me a bagel free as an introductory offer because they were out of policies." However the *Daily Beaver* has also received a tip-off that Pack-and-off-ski has sympathies with Teytelvinenko because his name also "sounds a bit Russian."

Unconfirmed information from the fashion police currently suggests Capsell really only does own one outfit and the poisoning was inspired by a recent high-profile case. Capsell other role models includes stingrays of the type who killed an Australian idiot who played with snakes. Capsell is now thought to be recruiting these stingrays to strengthen his killing power. Can anyone stop this mean, green, killing machine? Find out in tomorrow's *Daily Beaver*....

Comms Officer Dewji in critical condition



The Daily Beaver wishes to put on record its admiration for Alistair Kingmaker Dewji and all his work, and to state that we all wish him a speedy recovery.

Beloved Communications Officer Ali Dewji was last night said to be in critical but stable condition after being struck by a paper missile. It is suspected he was unable to withstand the missile's strike due to his dangerous level of fatigue.

The incident occurred at an emergency EGM (Extraordinary General Meeting) called with the express intention of ordering Dewji to take a recuperative break. In a dramatic turn of events an impromptu protest occurred before the motion had even been put forward.

A band of protesters stormed the Old Theatre stage, claiming that debating such a motion would contravene Dewji's right to free speech. Another group argued that preventing the debate was itself denying freedom of speech. Chinese students in attendance were visibly bewildered.

In the ensuing paper battle, Dewji himself was stuck on the chest with a small paper ball. The floor is said to have fallen silent as Dewji let out a bear-like groan and toppled to the ground. Onlookers began to softly weep as SU Education and Welfare officer Dave Vincenti attempted to resuscitate the fallen giant, before Dewji was spirited from the stage to a waiting ambulance on a sea of supporting hands. This was an outpouring of goodwill never before seen at the LSE.

The guilty paper thrower was understandably distraught. Wishing to remain anonymous to prevent violent backlash, he told The Daily Beaver it was never his intention to hit the SU Communications Officer. "I'd never do that to Mr Dewji," he said. "Ali is a hero of mine, he is a hero for the entire university". The paper assassin is understood to be keeping a low profile, choosing not to attend the on-going vigil in the Old Theatre.

The missile had a greater than expected effect due to Dewji's already fragile state. Concerned students, staff, and alumni (including Mr TV) had long suggested Dewji's health may be at risk, as he had simply been working too hard.

A fellow member of the Executive was among the

alarmed, claiming Dewji had "been known not to leave his office for thirty-six hours at a time. He isn't satisfied unless all of LSE is communicating at 110%".

Dewji had continually declined to comment on his condition, claiming he was "too busy communicating".

Earlier in the term, Dewji's fellow Sabbatical Officers are reported to have staged a dramatic intervention. They were witnessed bursting into Dewji's office and forcibly shaving off his beard, with SU head Jimmy Tam insisting on holding the razor. "I am the chief", explained Tam boisterously.

But the loss of beard had failed to dampen Dewji's enthusiasm for work. In his popular blog, Dewji assured fans that next term was to bring even more communication, including a much improved SU website. The SU has pledged to fulfil all of Dewji's promises, even in his tragic absence.

Read this and get angry

LSE alumni are swarming to Rosebery Hall claiming sofas, breakfast vouchers and shower time.

EVERY day our careers service shows itself to be incompetent. Alumni are becoming more and more depraved in their desperation to dodge paid work and blag off our tuition fees.

The *Daily Beaver* supports alumni relations - where justified - but we are now a soft touch for any old chancer with a mate in security and an out-of-date id. The LSE is not an old newspaper for ex-students to wipe their arses on.

They take advantage of a system that allows people to move **FREE**LY in and out of buildings. Swanning around campus with barely a police check or an armed road-block to prevent alumni cashing in.

Today we have a message to our ten million readers:

IT IS TIME FOR TAM TO TAKE ACTION

Mr TV's plan revealed

The riddle of Mr TV becomes more sinister by the day. Illegal asylum-seeker Mr TV (46) aka 'The Dodgy Dossier' has compiled a dastardly duplicity which can be exclusively revealed by The Daily Beaver. The piss-stained papers reveal that a tidal wave of alumni are planning to abuse LSE's generous hand-outs.

LSE authorities discovered the felch-worthy file tucked behind a broken urinal in the Shaw Library. The dodgy documents show how Mr TV planned his LSE free-ride, using blue-prints obtained from the mysterious 'fifth floor' of the LSE library.

In addition to running a filched USB drive business from the Common Room, sleeping in a variety of campus locations and shaving regularly in the ladies changing rooms, Mr TV planned to orchestrate a flood of ex-students to take up residence in and around Houghton Street.

The LSE Business Society commended Mr TV on his business acumen, saying "he's spotted a definite hole in the market for trampy losers. LSE currently only has around 45 trampy losers on campus, and all work on that pinko commie rag The Beaver."

We're all Mr TV

Mr TV is a person, just like the rest of us. That's what seems to have been forgotten in this "debate". Everyone's at eachother's necks trying to crush the poor guy. But, hey. We're all Mr TV.

Things go wrong for all of us, it's a fact of life. But we get helped out by those around us. Mr TV has arrived at a difficult time in his life, and its just not acceptable for us to leave him by the wayside.

That could be us, you know; it could be me or you or anybody reading this newspaper. Any one of us could be forced to sleep in a TV room, a library, a common room. Some of us have probably already done it. I certainly have.

We need to have open these doors, its what stops us becoming monsters. We could lock people out. We could tell them to go find their own way, to hit the road. We could say "let them eat cake".

But come on, this is LSE. We're above than that, aren't we? We're learning how to make the world a better place. And I'm sure you'll agree, at no point does that involve throwing people onto the street.

We can't just ignore these people. If anything, it's our fault that they're in this position in the first place. If society had just given them a chance to prove themselves, these poor souls wouldn't be in such a God damned mess.

So they should be getting greater access, if anything. Bernie Taffs did the right thing.

There's no one in this world who deserves to be treated like muck, and Mr TV is no different. He's not hurting anyone is he? Let him stay in the TV room. Get him a flatscreen and a DVD player, a Sky+ box and all the junk food he needs. Come on, the guy deserves it.

Mr TV: Time to worry

A secret report leaked to The Daily Beaver reveals that just 4% of LSE students are expected to ever enter employment.

And this startling revelation comes just a huge number of LSE students have completed applications for internships, placements, and graduate entry schemes.

What's going on with this place? It's like a factory with all the cogs taken out.

We all came here for an education, but what we got was a fake dream. We've been sold up the river, we're up shit creek (excuse my French) without a paddle. What a joke. We're going to leave this place with not a thing to our name.

And what are the LSE doing about it?

Quite a lot, actually.

They're opening their doors to any Tom, Dick, or Ishtaq whose ever had an LSE card, even when they were printed on parchment. Roll up, roll up, and welcome to the LSE pantomime. Mr TV, Mr Newspaper, Mr Whateveryoulike, come on in, welcome back to the LSE. Pull up a chair, have a smoke, and relax.

It's a joke.

But you want to know the really funny thing? We're all in the same boat as TV and his chums. We're not getting a job, 96% of us, we're not going anywhere. Nice to know we can come back for a snooze whenever we want though, eh?

It has to change. Taffs out, for a start. And Davies. Bring in some people who actually know what's what. That Capsell's got a brain, and that Dave Vincenti. Sutherland, too.

And to anyone who think's different? Good luck in life, you're going to need it!

Harry Potter Exclusive

From the depths of the East Building comes an epic tale of incest, corruption and boring meetings. Jesserfon Hurtme leads an all-celebrity cast to self-righteousness, self-loathing and self-harm due to C & S' own incompetence.

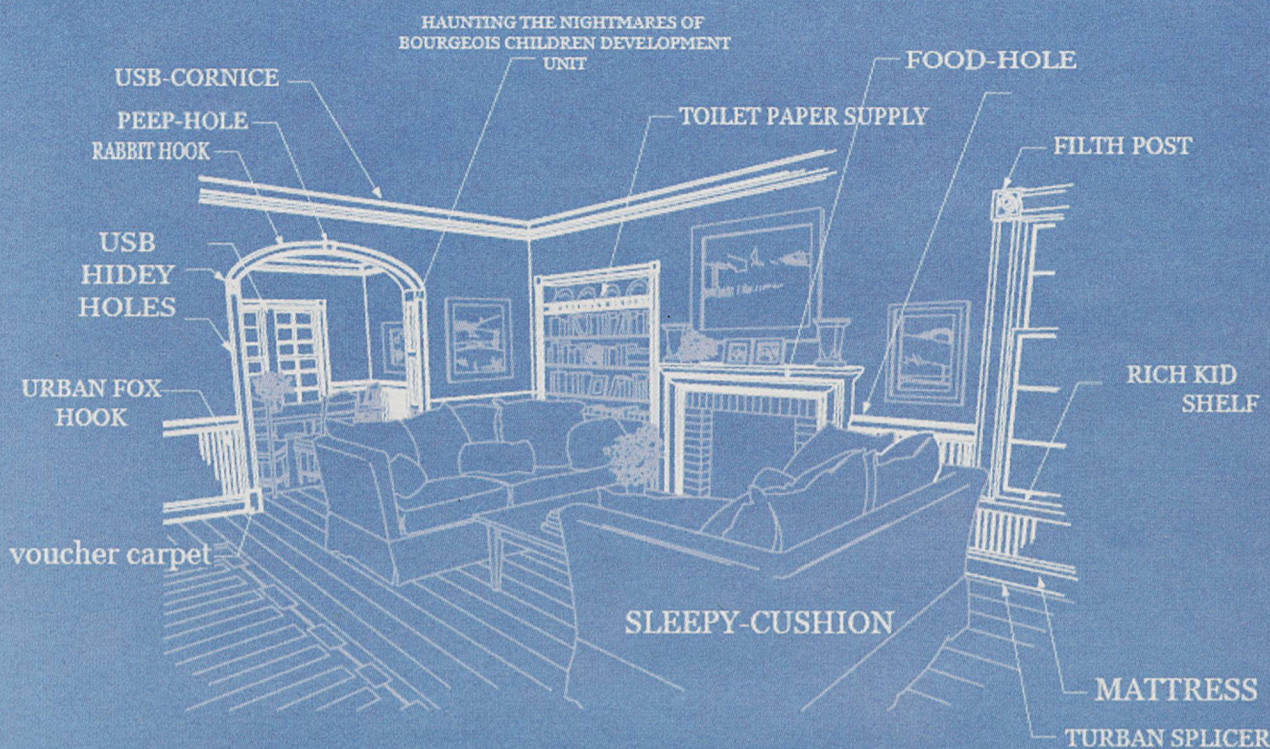
Will the evil Smugless ever become King of the age-old LSE tradition: the UGM?

Who will Parys choose? Geeky friend Heathcock or everybody else?

Find out in Harry Potter and the Constitution...



ROSEBERRY HALL COMMON ROOM PLANS



MFI - UNIT PLAN - COMMISSIONED BY MR TV.	Drawn By: Mr Taffs Drawing No. 007
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Arthur's
Literary Review

Hello friends!

I've read some really nice poems this week. They made me think some really nice thoughts - that's what good poems are all about!

I've written this one for you guys. Hope you like it, let me know what you think!

Societies

*My societies are really nice
I like them once, I like them twice
Societies, new ones every day
Its societies societies, come and play*

*Life is really pretty good
Even for those guys in the 'hood!
But I wish they could have societies
Just like here at LSE*

Hey that's it! Whenever I write a poem, at the end, I say "that's a wrap!" just like a film director in Hollywood. You should do the same with your essays and courseworks. It'll be great!

Your societies officer, your representative!

Arthur

xxx

Taffs: "Blame me for Mr TV"

Bernie Taffs, LSE Head of Security, has told The Daily Beaver that Mr TV's continued presence on school property is almost entirely his fault. In an emotional statement, Taffs took entire responsibility for the affair, but insisted that he regretted nothing of his involvement and had enjoyed every moment of his and TV's friendship. Taffs revealed that not only had he persistently turned a blind eye to TV's presence on LSE property, he'd knowingly given the trespasser an LSE card, six laptop security straps, and a blueprint of

Roseberry. "When I first met TV he was rude, out of control, and in need of a shower" a tearful Taffs stated. "But I was not scared," he continued defiantly, "this was a man who needed my help."

Taffs went on to explain that despite his position as head of security, he was not concerned with crime on campus. "We shouldn't be fearful of crime. It is something we should welcome with open arms and try to understand."

A spokesman for TV later declined to comment on rumours the pair plan to holiday together.



Dave Vincenti, P.I.

Adventures of the SU detective

The morning hurts. Every day I wake up and its still here. That feeling. That smell. Am I ever going to be free?

I take the journey slow as I walk to my office. The vapour escapes my mouth as I breathe out. But I won't ever escape, not Old Dave. I've been here forever and forever I will stay.

I look out of the window, my little corner of the world staring me straight in the face. Just like before. But is it? Something's different. They're watching me. I feel their eyes. Like a mirror looking at me they watch. They see through my skin, to my soul, and then further. Their eyes hurt.

Time to hit the bottle. 8:36am, that's got to be

some kind of record. I've never lasted this long.

I start work. Or more like I continue my work. It was started before me, it'll go on after me, and then on after that. Makes you think. Makes you think "what's the point?" Makes you think "do I matter?"

So you wait. You wait for that phone to ring. You wait forever for that phone to ring. You forget your own name, just waiting.

Then it rings.

"Dave?"

That's me.

"We've got a job for you."

Fuckin' A.

Letters to (the individual that pretends to be) the Editor

Dear Sir,

Recent reports in your sad excuse for a 'democratic' paper have painted me as a self-centred and egotistical maniac. You have repeatedly scrutinised my actions and last week ran a highly inaccurate report on how I 'punched' a woman. As a very important and respected person in the Union, I believe that my actions set a standard for the entire LSE hack community. Every hack in this university looks up to me and trusts me to act in their best interests. Following the recent articles, I was approached on Houghton Street by many students who were highly distressed by what they had read. Fortunately I was able to convince them that I am still a whore to their demands. Stories such as these are blatant attempts at character assassination and, I believe, are part of a greater conspiracy to undermine the immense love, support (and votes) that I receive from the LSE student population. But I will not let you continue with this culture of irresponsible story-mongering since I am the holy saviour of this Union and take it upon myself to deliver all students from the evil that you have decided to spread. I request you to steer clear from this sort of journalism in the future since otherwise I might simply quit the Union due to the emotional stress that you have caused me, and obviously without my all-seeing presence this Union would crumble.

Very insincerely,

Prominent SU Member

Dear Sir,

I am shocked by the lack of sympathy your paper has shown to the man referred to as "Mr. TV". Is there any shame in attempting to maintain a student lifestyle post-graduation? I'll have you know that I too masquerade as a current student, despite having left the LSE approximately seven years ago. And I doubt I'm the only one. Have a look around the library, the Garrick or the Quad - does anyone look out of place? Of course not: with the diversity of ethnicities, and wide age range of undergrads and post-grads, you'd never be able to guess who fit in and who didn't here at the LSE. And let's face it; it's a sweet life we fakers live. With central London rent rates continuously going through the roof, it's tempting to avoid entering the real world. I commend Mr TV on keeping up his act in a Halls of Residence; I've had a slightly easier time manoeuvring myself on campus premises. Crashing in departmental common rooms, showering in the gym, partying at Crush and all the while living off the loose coins found under the tuns' sofa cushions, I have managed to avoid growing up. Sure, bribing security staff with sexual favours has helped out a lot, too, but the point is - Mr TV should not be condemned for his actions, he should be commended. Us clever cats have discovered our own Neverland in the world of LSE. Peter Pan - eat your heart out.

Mr Library Study Group Room 5

Dear Sir,

Due to the fact that I'm really very stupid and can't handle paper throwing, I can't attend the UGM each week. So I rely on your wonderful publication to keep me abreast of the shenanigans of the Union. I've become addicted and whilst I usually don't bother to read the articles, I can tell from the headlines that this is the very worst Union we have ever had. I fear for the next four weeks when I won't be able to get my fix. Thankfully the great pull-out arts section has taught me another way to get high; cocaine. I've started on the powder this week and I'll soon be moving to crack. I can't feel my teeth. Is this normal?

Bruno G Polyskalinksifrrrr

Dear Sir,

I have read with the utmost consternation the ongoing debate on all of this Fallen Gong nonsense. I say "read"; I actually mean "spat on". These are a bunch of students who normally don't give a toss about what goes on in the Union and The Beaver. When I vote for whichever fallen member of the nobility is standing as my local Tory candidate, I then reserve the right to criticise him because I voted. If you don't vote, you can't criticise. You don't usually get involved in the Union. We reserve the post of General Secretary for gay men of minority ethnic origin, but after that, what else do you want? Piss off, and stop bothering those of us who've had a quality White education from properly running this organisation. Yes: I mean you Chinese, Nigerian, Eastern European, Indian, Thai, American, Canadian, Iranian, Algerian, Welsh, Indonesian "students". We've allowed you into the LSE because political correctness dictates that we must. Now leave the hard stuff to us.

Yours,

Humphrey Cornwall

Dear Sir,

I am writing in response to my own atavistic needs to write to newspapers, specifically concerning nearly every article you've ever published. To use writing in such a way that opinions are expressed, positions constructed and 'jokes' festeringly harboured, to me is redolent of the modern horrors of 'free speech' and 'freedom of expression'. Further, and perhaps most importantly, this offends the fear and mistrust with which I approach every aspect of life. When are we to return to the vacuum of a mythical former era where I could cut my lawn, water my aspidistra and abuse my black slave child, without newspapers publishing articles and words to which I feel compelled to respond?

It is widely known that your editor is extremely sensitive to the sensibilities of narrow-minded reactionary bigots such as myself and it would be greatly appreciated if all writing were hitherto removed, bar an apology written in the menstrual blood of Kevin Perry.

P.B.Righteous

Editorial BY (individual that pretends to be) the Editor

So the Daily Beaver would like to apologise. Yes, its inevitable we'd get some things wrong when our editorials are written at 5am. We're either all drunk, stoned or thinking of ways to caress Ali Dewji. As its our last edition this term and it's the season of good will we thought we'd put our hands and clarify what we really think. The benefit of hindsight is a wonderful thing you know.

First up, we'd like to apologise to the great man that is Peter Sutherland. So, Pete, you've spilt a few drops of oil in your time. We've all done it, spilt a drink or two in the Tuns. As Dave Vincentti says, "there's no point crying over spilt milk... Here, have a condom." And as for the 'furore' over the LSE not 'consulting' its students - come on, the students' time would be better spent thinking about things we can really change. Like ways to begin unilateral nuclear disarmament. Mr Sutherland, we salute you; take us to the market, let's put the LSE on the London Stock Exchange.

Next up, our Chinese cousins. China we love you more than you know. So your government's not got quite the same attitude as ours when it comes to dissidents. The death sentence is quite alright when you take overcrowding into consideration. Its time LSE got in the act and learnt a few tricks of the trade. Think of all the extra library spaces we could acquire.

Thirdly, the living wage. None of us want to pay top-up fees, so how are we going to pay the cleaners? Anyway, one of their number, a man who we will only identify as 'Richard the cleaner' has enough free time to be Honorary President of the Union. If he can get a part-time job why can't the rest of them?

Finally, where we got it most wrong was this time last year on our editorial for the Barrel (RIP). Is destroying one of your closest rivals really such a bad crime? In LSE's bid to be the best university in London anything goes. It's time we learnt the Sutherland way, "all's fair in business and war". We see it now... this is war.

Farewell readers,

The most popular, biased, single-mother and immigrant hating, homophobic individuals to ever grace the world of scandalous tabloids

Will gay marriages speed up global warming? YES! Page 98

HACKTIVIST!

Off the record, on the QT, and very... hush-hush.

Hacktivist has always considered it to be His duty to deliver exciting News (unlike the 'News' section of our rival so called 'news'paper 'The Beaver') - and so here, it is...the very first sneak preview for the four big races in the Lent term Elections.

GenSec might well be a scene for catfights. All beauty and no brains Stepford Sullivan is set to be challenged by both Gobinson Green and Fayke Strawberry Blond of Pulse 'fame.' Gobinson Green and the self-annointed AU superstar Sullivan might appear to be cosy on their double with the Dilwyn and the Dewji but the two girls already fought it out earlier this term for a position on Council and the bitchiness is likely to escalate with Women's Week on its way.

Women's Week is apparently to be called 'Walk in my Shoes,' which may explain why Sully has decided to follow in the footsteps of her hubby by creating a blog. Probably an attempt to appear vaguely intellectual, yet Hacktivist can inform you the 'comments' posted on there is far from riveting and just about as boring as Sullivan herself would be as GenSec.

Meanwhile, both will face a dif-

ferent challenge from Fayke Strawberry again on the AU front; hockey and netball - the two least interesting sports in the Union finally get a mention.

Fayke is also trying to recruit all 29 listeners of Pulse. Hacktivist wonders if any of them have a Pulse...

Wannabe blond, Korporate Krebbers is also trying to get in on the act despite his lies to the contrary about Saddam Hussein having nuclear weapons which can be launched in 90 minutes, whoops, wrong dodgy dossier. Hacktivist would like to remind readers of Korrupt Konman Krebbers' record in election scandal - first FinSoc Gate, then vote rigging in recent C&S elections.

Seems like the only non-blonde in the race is International Student collector Fadhil Permenant-Markar, whose only pledge is to increase numbers of international students at LSE and further oppress the British minority. With their numbers already waning at 29 (probably the same ones who listen to Pulse) it seems like Permenant-Markar is looking to wipe out the British students and make his own mark on the elections.

Moving onto the role of Condom pusher: EdWelfare. Hacktivist has information to suggest Dave Vincentti may well re-run if she doesn't meet her baby killing target this year, a scene which looks likely given Cardinal Some Berk's crusade against women. However it seems Dave is too pre-occupied. Hacktivist has noticed Dave's late-night trips to the The Daily Beaver office but Dave has not yet plucked up her courage to declare her endless love for Kaption Killer Kamath (KKK).

However if the stress of listening to whiney students all day and her mad obsession with the KKK doesn't end - it seems Dave won't be able to handle the pressure of re-running and may well hand the baton onto Labour-turncoat and decolonizer Feminist Man-basher-ji. Man-basher-ji has already been known to turn aggressive towards males, particularly those in The Daily Beaver office. Like a Black Widow Spider, each week she picks a victim, lures him into her web and makes them suffer the indignity of running for News Editor. If elected, she's unlikely to care for the welfare of males and will probably be too busy banging on about patriarchal colonialism.

One candidate who definitely will 'care' for the males in the Union is current LGBT officer Alex Can-He-Win-Agan. He clearly hopes to buck the trend of EdWelfare being reserved for women - a task that may well prove difficult given his being a newcomer to serious politics - having previously served as Chair of Lie-Bore Soc.

Spot the Greens: Easily-Led & the Gob



Some more...

No doubt Hacktivist's avid readers will be wondering which incompetent male of the Union will be set to continue the tradition that is Comms Sabb. Hacktivist can exclusively reveal three potentials have come forward; Captain Caspell-Clone Fisher of the Green army, Limp Dem Ben of Football & Features fame and Beaver-reject, treacherous traitor D-Oliver. Caspell-Clone was spotted hand in hand with his master last month, whilst Barmy Biggs has already quit his Beaver job in order to begin his campaign. Let's hope Biggs, who is already trying somewhat unsuccessfully to turn himself into a balcony boy at UGMs, has learnt from his disastrous campaign to elect a fictitious man as Honorary President earlier this term.

If you're feeling like spreading the 'good' word at Christmas, give Hacktivist your news. Email at hacktivist@tellusthegossip.com

A 2 month old baby was found in a basket outside Dave Vincenti's office on Friday night. The mother of the child has been urged by police to come forward but so there has been few leads into who is responsible for the child. A note was left in the basket stating "Please, Dave, look after my baby, Bam Surke made me keep it". So far police have questioned many hairy members of the SU, but have yet to reach a conclusion. The discovery of the child has alarmed many on campus who are worried about it "raining babies" in future weeks. Anyone with information is urged by the police to come forward.

A poem...

The mind of a gladiator,
the smile of an angel.
Hair from all four corners of world.
The arms of a rhino, the skin of a peach.
A voice that reaches half the known galaxy.
A mind that can reach it all.
A grip of iron, with hands soft as butter.
The perfect leader.
The perfect friend.
The perfect love.

Features' Critical Insightful Analytical writing masterclass: US Presidential Race Heats Up

By Bungling Biggs and Moronic Manji

The Republican Baddie party made a huge leap towards securing the White House Death Star for another four years yesterday when they unveiled their four-point plan Final Solution American success world domination.

(Ed's note - I've not read this, please check on Guardian Unlimited and give me a summary.)

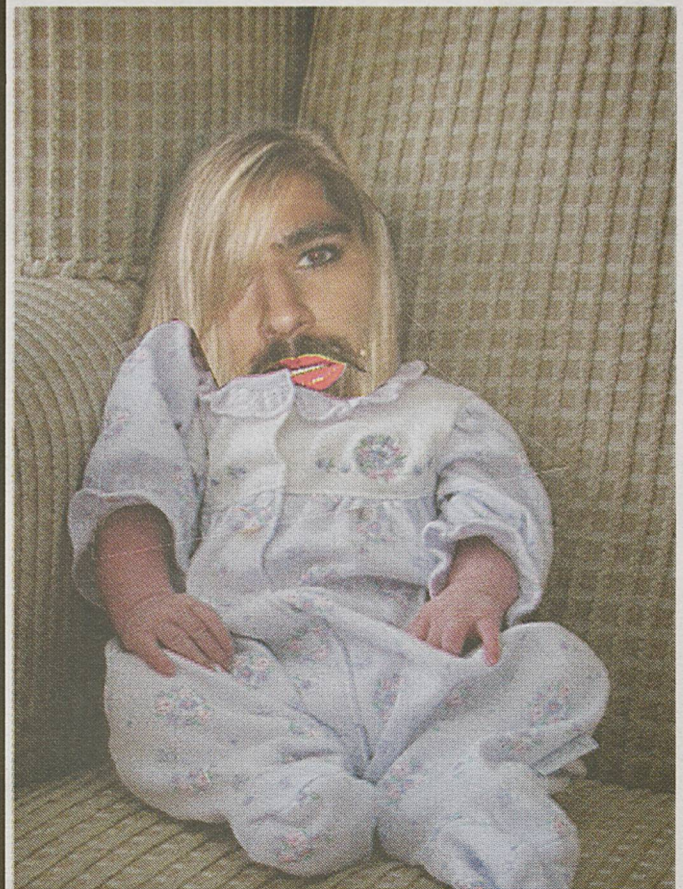
The plan Solution, which covered foreign policy crusades, domestic taxes, and health care and homeland security rabid Islamophobia, was greeted with critical plaudits by all the major papers dodgy dossiers. Tony Blair, the UK Prime Minister Grand High Wizard, said that the plan "represented the best of free market innovation, combined with a responsible plan to ensure world peace."

The plan Solution, outlined by popular, prominent black race traitor politician Colin Powell, set out a four-year agenda which would put an end to the federal deficit, reduce the tax burden on working families, negotiate an effective two state solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict and ensure the eradication of international terrorism.

The Democrats; gallant knights of righteousness; in a shock move, announced that they would not be field-

ing a candidate for the 2008 race, in the face of overwhelming public support for the Republicans' Baddies' agenda. Hillary Clinton; the stunning star of Boys Don't Cry; has announced her intention to stand as an independent, but insiders close to the previous First Lady; and Queen of Hearts; are hinting that she may be in talks with the Republicans Baddies to stand as their vice-presidential candidate.

In Europe, parties from the left and right fascist have come together to applaud the Republicans' Baddies' progressive ideas. They agreed that party politics must take second place to the smooth-running of the international community. It is time for us to put petty arguments aside and take on the challenge of putting aside our petty squabbles, working together for the improvement of the animal, mineral, vegetable and lastly human lot. The Republicans Baddies have developed the ideas of free-thinkers such as Milton Friedman, Margaret Thatcher (Ed's note - insert graphic of me dancing on Thatcher's grave here) and Ronald Reagan to the acme of free market exploitative thinking creating a new field of thought propaganda which will redefine political thought for this century, and probably centuries to come.





want to look as fucking cool as me? come along to the lse su shop and get a hilarious 'graduated without honour' tshirt. you'll be the envy of all your i banker friends

if you don't look enough of a c**t in your lse branded clothes, we also sell dan yates hats



Classifieds

Coy, caring and giving Sabb seeks sleep-deprived Indian Sam-clone for protected sex and a choice over having children.	Double-D'd, organised Asian bride seeks man for the week. Subject to scrutiny by three musketeers.
Green economist seeks hair.	20'x30'x50' pit for rent in Ilford. Could be used as pool or tank for tropical fish. Possibly radioactive.
Women's Hockey team seek boyfriends before they resort to each other. Most already turned so hurry!	Cheeky sports writer seeks alcohol-fuelled liaisons for short periods at a time. No non-whites.
Head of LSE council required for immediate start. Must not have (or have had) any employment that anyone could find anything morally dubious about.	Indecisive, fun-loving secretary seeks friends to do stuff for him and to take to Disneyland. Must not already be Facebook friend.
Hairy and aggressive yet relaxed about appearance seeks someone to Mother me and tell me I'm great since no-one else will. So laid back I'm almost horizontal	Top London University hall of residences seeks alumni to guard communal areas. Illegal immigrants who are willing to be paid in USB sticks need only apply.

open positions

RAB.

filmwriter

Pathological hatred of a) anything with an American person involved b) anything with a budget over that of 4 goats c) anything filmed in cinematic warzones with lots of incomprehensible marginalised voices shouting over one another. Subtitles must be deemed superior to actual speech.

musicwriter

Your favourite genre of music must be so obscure that even you haven't heard of it. If you don't vomit out of your ears when you hear Radio 1 then you needn't apply.

visual artswriter

If you've never pickled your Gran, stuck her in a tank and called it 'the monumental truth of inter-subjective perspectivation' then you don't understand art and needn't apply.

rantwriter

No opinions needed. Literacy optional. An ability to write aggressively about nothing for 2000 words and a superhuman sense of your own self-importance essential.

literaturewriter

If you never used original Russian copies of War and Peace as nipple-clamps or snapped your cock in a copy of A la Recherche des Temps Perdu, you are an illiterate. Don't apply.

stylewriter

If you've ever worn something as vulgar and obvious as shoes, don't apply. If you believe that coloured bits of cloth speak louder than words do apply.

travewriter

If daddy's never paid for you to construct a pre-fabricated toilet in a patronising manner for a bunch of African's in South-East Asia then don't apply. Experience touching a dirty black child optional.

- Writers block? We recommend Class A's. Because we are so impossibly cool.
- Pick off the weakest disenfranchised minorities first; such as Titty Trollies or Pink Cigar Smokers.
- Be esoteric. Every word should have more than ten letters and less than ten people should understand it.
- Why use one adverb when you can use seven?
- Punctuation is for the weak.
- Green grammar lines are great.
- The Nazi's invented spellcheck.
- If you spell words correctly you're letting the terrorists win.
- English not your first language? No worries, injudiciously vomit from the thesaurus, onto our nice paper.



the prestige

irfaanmerali witnesses a filmic kind of magic

Based on a book by Christopher Priest, *The Prestige* is the latest offering from Memento director Christopher Nolan. It is a thrilling ride through the world of magicians and illusions in Victorian London, while taking in intense rivalry, obsession and death. The title refers to the third and final stage of a magic trick, the first one being the 'pledge,' or setup; the second being the 'turn,' where the magician performs something special; and the 'prestige' being the final part of the trick that completes the illusion. The film itself is constructed like this, and concerns the rivalry between two magicians.

Borden (Christian Bale) and Angier (Hugh Jackman) are the aspiring illusionists working as audience plants in someone else's act. But when Angier's wife is killed because of what may or may not be Borden's fault, the two split and become fierce rivals, each trying to outperform – and sabotage – the other in their respective performances. Then when Borden performs a trick that Angier cannot figure out, Angier begins a mammoth search to find the secret. He employs an assistant (Scarlett Johansson) to learn Borden's secrets, and eventually his search takes him to the enigmatic Tesla (David Bowie), a real-life scientist, in order to find out more.

Since the script is written by Nolan with his brother Jonathan, it would be reasonable to expect this film's plot to be complicated. It does not disappoint.



Taking place on three separate timescales, due to each magician finding the other's diary, attention must be paid throughout. The opening half an hour is especially difficult to decipher. However, the thrills gained are well worth the effect, with every moment riveting right up to the final frame. And despite being over two hours long it does not outstay its welcome. The twists and turns make for a wonderful ride, although the final twist is discovered a little too soon. Nolan also brilliantly evokes the atmosphere with

the dimly lit scenes and sombre colours. The period is convincingly portrayed, and its backdrop of technological invention forms an apt stage for Borden and Angier's obsessions.

The centre theme of the film is the desire of each magician to be the best and be remembered forever, however far that they need to go. Though friends previously, the one incident establishes Borden and Angier as enemies. Thus the competition escalates, each striving for perfection and pushing boundaries in order to

achieve it. As Caine's character puts it, it is necessary to 'get your hands dirty.' This is what drives the plot forward towards its climaxes.

Credit must go to the two leads, who effectively portray the two characters as fierce foes. However, though Jackman and Bale, the latter a Nolan favourite (last seen in *Batman Begins*), are brilliant as the well-off and working-class magicians respectively, there does not seem to be much more to their characters beyond their obsessions. Without this they are just ordinary people, such is the extent their lives are dominated by it. Michael Caine is great as the old, wise man he has become used to playing recently. David Bowie is surprisingly convincing, and Andy Serkis appears as his assistant. Scarlett Johansson is underused here, and supports the criticism that Nolan's films do not have any substantial female parts.

A separate film, *The Illusionist*, starring Edward Norton, should be releasing here early next year. Also a period film about magic, it should be interesting to compare it with *The Prestige*. As for now, Nolan has once again come up with a winner to add to an already impressive CV which includes *Memento*, *Insomnia* and *Batman Begins*. Firmly established now as one of the top directors around, let us hope he continues to produce films of such quality. Though not perfect, *The Prestige* is well worth watching.



David Smith was reaching a high-point of fame and praise in his career when he was tragically killed in a road accident. Although he left over 600 works, the mystery of what might have come next still hangs heavily as you wander into the last room of the *Tate Modern's* exhibition, curated along his progression as an artist, and wonder where the next room has disappeared to. Smith dropped out of university and trained as a welder, joining the Art Students League in New York in 1927. This exposed Smith to the abstract painters that were taking Europe by storm. Indeed, Smith was to be one of the pioneers in assimilating this European technique into American sculpture – taking abstract paintings movement from solid mass to open structures into the sphere of sculpture.

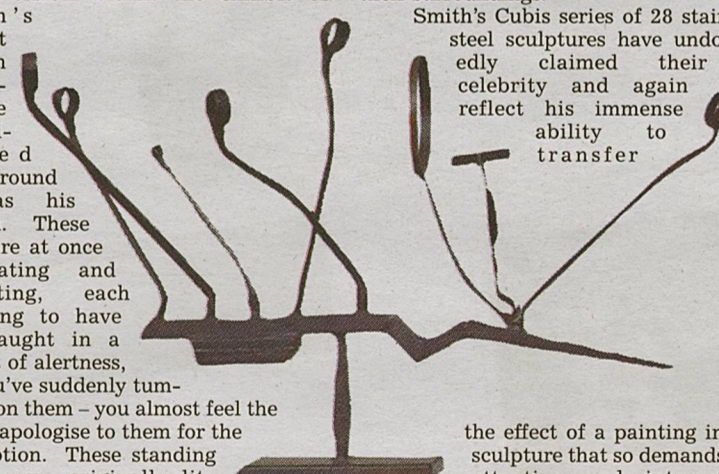
Confronted at first by the fierce faces Smith produced out of iron, works that were probably the first welded sculptures to be made in America, they evoke Picasso's use of perspective. His tabletop tableaux, often autobiographical such as 'Home of the Welder' portraying Smith's own frustration in his childless first marriage and increasing sense of containment, take this theme of perspective further. Smith was one of the first artists to conceive the techniques of abstract painting and sculpture into more direct graphic potential – it's only as you move around these pieces that their intricacies become apparent drawing you into their intimacy.

It is strange, considering Smith later Cubis works, that the most striking of the

exhibits are Smith's series of life-size figures called "Personages". Smith himself coined the term of Personages – a point between the 'person' and 'assemblage' – inherently ties to his choice of materials. These mechanical manifestations of human reality for me, are the fundamental expression within the exhibit of Smith's strident belief in embracing the industrialised world around him as his medium. These figure are at once intimidating and captivating, each appearing to have been caught in a moment of alertness, as if you've suddenly tumbled upon them – you almost feel the need to apologise to them for the interruption. These standing figures were originally littered around Smith's farmland where he would occasionally rearrange them, and it's this need for active interaction rather than the passive gaze that led Smith, when invited by the Italian government to make two sculptures for the Fourth Festival of Two Worlds, to the rapid creation of 27 sculptures in 30 days. Again, the transition of these pieces, named Voltri, into a gallery dampens their

initially intended effect, having originally been shown in the commanding amphitheatre of Spoleto and throughout the surrounding streets. One is left to imagine how Smith's work of industrial vigour were transformed by this rich setting to evoke the classical tradition of their surroundings.

Smith's Cubis series of 28 stainless steel sculptures have undoubtedly claimed their celebrity and again reflect his immense ability to transfer



the effect of a painting into a sculpture that so demands our attention and interaction. They are astonishingly impressive – having abandoned the pictorial narrative Smith pursued an encompassing geometric form. Their scale is heightened by Smith's use of burnishing – a technique which allows these pieces to reflect and mirror the changing light conditions, and again we are reminded of the effect these pieces would have in their original context. For Smith, this burnishing tech-

nique was intended to take "the colours of nature", creating a quiet and captivating juxtaposition of the glaringly industrial and predictable creations of mankind's brutish progression to the fickle effects of nature.

The Tate Modern's exhibition is dutifully curated along Smith's career, and is all the more captivating for it. Walking into the exhibition space certainly creates a calm space away from the marauding sketchbook clutching hordes of school parties and, as we move through the ten rooms the growing resources and development of Smith as an artist build up a momentum. Although the sterile white walls of the Tate take dig at dispersing Smith's oeuvre his figures the work still become animated – they demand from the viewer an intensity that require a double-take at the very least. The position of the Cubis series, looking out through a wall of glass, go some way to reflecting the paradoxical light changes – go during the late afternoon for a guaranteed mystifying effect. The exhibition provides a much needed exposure of Smith's work on a larger scale than previously seen before in Britain and, whilst Smith's dizzying enthusiasm in his creations are evident, his work is also coloured by both the eerie uncertainty of a mechanical-based future and the melancholy of what he might have continued to produce.

PartB would like to offer a grovelling and heartfelt apology to Mila Askarova, who was not credited for the last Visual Arts article entitled 'Velazquez'

Visual arts

daisymitchell-forster wonders what the tragic artist might have done next

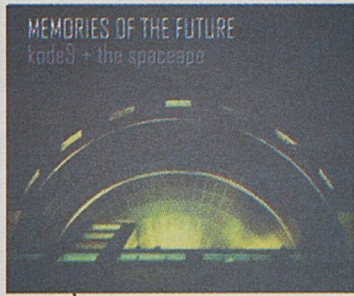
david smith

2006: a year in music

samashton and loisjeary rate the top ten albums of the last twelve months

Whenever he was asked to pick his favourite year in music, John Peel would always answer 'This year'. The point being that endlessly creative, emotional, funny and challenging is always being made, regardless of the time period. This year has been no exception, as our list demonstrates. The list encompasses hip-hop, folk, house, dubstep, pop & avant rock, and though hardly conclusive is an ample display of the veritable feast of musical treats that were laid before us this year.

Kode 9 & the Spaceape
Memories of the Future



Dubstep finally broke this year, the bass heavy genre moving out of south London to dance floors all over the world. Kode 9 acts as the scene's intellectual head with his PHD and meditative dubs. With Spaceapes reverb heavy chants floating atop Kode 9s eerie rhythms the album creates an atmosphere of total dread, conjuring images of the rotting urban landscapes that spawned it.

The Knife - Silent Shout

Everyone by now should have heard the Knife's joyous pop anthem 'Heartbeats', or the distressingly dull folk cover that graced Sony's surprising enchanting TV ad. Hopefully that song's buoyant pop will have led people to check out this album. Cut from significantly darker cloth than its predecessors, the jubilant steel drums of 'Heartbeats' replaced with icily monotonous beats and laser sharp synths. The most striking feature of the album is the vocals; choirs of eerily pitch shifted vocals accompany each track.



Joanna Newsom - Ys



There's no way to review this album without resorting to ridiculous hyperbole. The fact of the matter is that upon listening it should become immediately apparent that this is one of the greatest pieces of recorded music you'll ever hear. That the album manages to sound as good as the indie dream team (Van Dyke Parks, Steve Albini and Jim O'Rourke) that made it would suggest is a feat of its own, that it sounds better than your wildest dreams is truly remarkable. The album has five long songs each with beautifully complex allegorical lyrics that tell five different, yet connected, epic stories. Newsom's voice has grown stronger without sacrificing any of her wonderful idiosyncrasies, her harp playing has only increased in its majestic virtuosity, and Van Dyke Parks orchestral arrangements are truly breath tacking in their scale.

The Blow - Paper Television

The Blow - Paper Television



Khaela Maricich used to be in lo-fi legends the Microphones, Jona Bechtolt is Devendra Banhart's drummer, so who'd of thought their collaboration as the Blow would turn up an album of slick electronic pop? Bechtolt takes

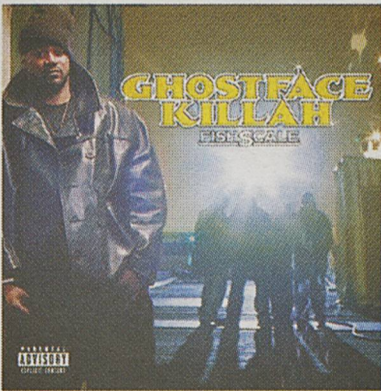
control of the production, creating a glorious collage of Soft Cell/Yaz esque 80s electro, Missy Elliot's unique brand of chart rap, and Timbaland's pop nous. The album could of course come across as a couple of indie kids ironically aping pop culture, but Khaela's vocal performance destroys any such fears. Her fey indie vocals sound wonderful juxtaposed with Bechtolt's slick beats, and with lyrics like 'If there's something in the Deli Aisle / That make you cry / I'll put my arm around you / And walk you outside' its bound to be a record you return to time and time again.

Instruments are so commonplace and over-rated in music these days. So when everybody is playing instruments, where is the quirky, free-spirit to start in constructing her unique sound? Well, grunting, clucking, humming and making various other incomprehensible noises should do it, and New York's anti-folk queen is a master of all things oral! Although this album departed slightly from her usual, stripped-bare sound in favour of more instruments (the traitor) it retained most of her charm and individuality, most notably 'Apres Moi' - the only song I can recall which combines English, French, Russian and grunting!



Regina Spektor - Begin to Hope

Ghostface Killah - Fishscale



The Wu family has had trouble maintaining its relevance to hip-hop in recent years. Its last two albums failing to meet the classic standards of the first two, and many solo albums quickly fading into the pile of substandard hip-hop. The death of core member Old Dirty Bastard in '04 can't of helped matters, and in a youth obsessed genre it must be hard for rappers swiftly approaching middle age to remain relevant. So it was with much surprise that we found Ghost's fourth solo album Fishscale full of vivid hurt, strafing alarm, and captivating drug tales. The lyrics here never stray far from Ghost's standard topics; the ever humorous barbs aimed at other rappers nestle up against stories of drug deals gone wrong and the occasional emotional trip to his tough childhood. But the lack of new ground is hardly a bad thing because what Ghost has given us is an album of transfixing tales told over some of the best beats of his career, proving him to be a totally relevant creative force.

Liars - Drum s Not Dead

When did anyone ever suggest drum was dead? Whatever, because if anyone ever doubted Drums capacity for life this album would've squashed said doubts. Recorded in a cavernous east Berlin radio recording facility this album is, as the title suggests, all about the drums. With their two drummers recording through guitar amps and variety of peddles and effects the drums on this record sound quite unlike the usual. Complex rhythms, rim shots, stick clicking, and echo laden snare are to be found through out this album, where the guitar often plays little more than two distorted notes, acting as a textural counterpart to the visceral drums. Apparently the lyrics pertain to some sort of narrative struggle between two characters; Drum and Mt. Heart Attack, I didn't follow the narrative but I'm pretty sure Drum won.



BITCHES IS LORD

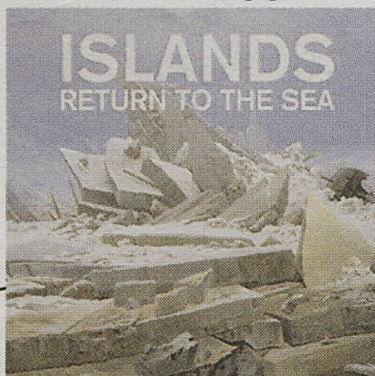


Adrian Orange - Bitches is Lord

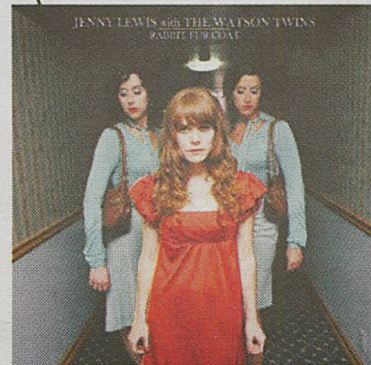
On his 7th album, and his first under his own name, Adrian Orange has once again given beautiful collection of songs, all of which will chill and break your heart, in turns. Abandoning his long held Thanksgiving moniker for the time being Adrian plays all the instruments and produced the album himself. His lyrics cover the usual topics of love and the universe, while acknowledging that songs exist in a two way relationship between the singer and the listener 'I'm not my singing or my songs / But my name is Adrian Orange / I know a lot about now knowing / So I make CDs full of helpless things / Won't you put a little life in these / Won't you put my record on and set it free'. Adrian knows his songs are meaningless unless they connect with those that listen, and as such he's found what I believe to be the true purpose of music.

Islands - Return to the Sea

Former Unicorns members Nick Diamonds and J'aime Tambeur returned with their new band Islands this year. Return to the Sea sported a more grown up song writing style, with actual song structures in place of the Unicorns wilfully formless pop gems. The album sparkles with all the charm and wit you could want from an album of indie-pop.



Jenny Lewis with The Watson Twins - Rabbit Fur Coat



It turns out country music really is quite good, especially when it is delivered by Rilo Kiley's, flame-haired, goddess of a front woman, along with a set of Southern twins and cameos from members of indie royalty, such as Death Cab for Cutie's Ben Gibbard and Bright Eyes's Connor Oberst. The lyrics are autobiographical, but they never feel pretentious or crude and the album pays a tribute to country, while remaining rooted in indie-rock.

music



K
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live peep show action

one half of comedy double act
mitchell and webb, david mitchell
 tells **kevin perry** about footlights, his
 love of television, making it on the big
 screen and why he's terrified of car
 crashes

David Mitchell is a happy man, and he has every right to be. He is currently mid-way through a UK tour as one face of *The Two Faces of Mitchell and Webb*, which comes to London next week. "We feel like we're back in it now. We've been touring for just over a week, but we hadn't been on stage before that for about five years, and that was when we were playing the Edinburgh Fringe and tiny little venues, not the massive hangers we're playing now."

David is clearly enjoying his return to the theatre. "It's really good to be on stage again. You feel like you can shout and ham it up a bit. You can't really do that on television. On stage it's not just that you can shout, you actually feel like you should!"

However, he can't help sounding a little like his *Peep Show* alter-ego Mark Corrigan when he mentions some paranoia about the upcoming dates. "The shows we've had have gone really well. Everyone's laughed. We haven't had any awkward silences yet, where there's been a car crash outside the venue that we don't know about and the whole audience is still traumatised."

It is of course starring in Channel 4's cult sitcom *Peep Show* that Mitchell and Webb have garnered the most attention, but they have been working together since meeting at Cambridge's legendary Footlights society, of which Mitchell became president. Footlights is a veritable production line of comedy genius, and the presidency has previously been held by the likes of **Peter Cook**, **Eric Idle** and **Hugh Laurie**. "Footlights was a great experience, it's like a drama society but it only puts on comedy. We did three main shows a year, including a pantomime, and then also lots of little informal shows as well. There's an ongoing show called 'Smokers' where you can go along and try out new material every week, so it's a really good place to just be creative and come up with fresh ideas. It's somewhere where you feel like you can just have a go at it."

I ask how much influence he feels the ability to join Footlights had on his career. How would he have fared, for example, if he had ended up at the LSE? "I'd probably have still have had a go at comedy. Do you have a drama society? I would definitely have joined that. Without Footlights I would probably have become a serious actor or something like that. Or maybe an economist, who knows?"

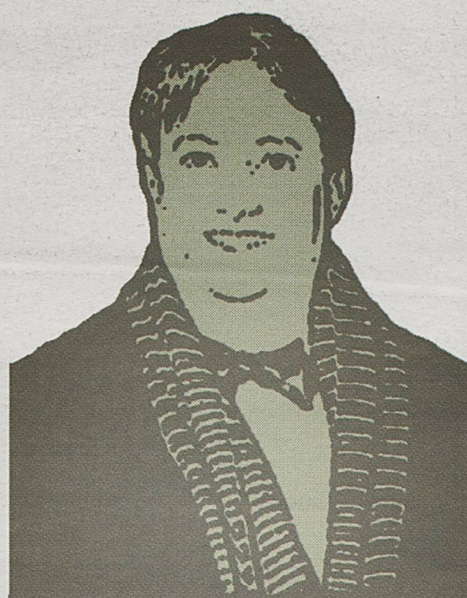
I ask whether he was ever tempted to go it alone as a stand-up comic. "I much prefer comedy that's sketch based. I think you tend to start off doing what you like, and I'd got into comedy through watching TV. My heroes were people like *Monty Python*, *Fry and Laurie*, and shows like *Blackadder*. I didn't grow up watching *Lenny Bruce*, or *Billy Connolly*. Even though they're very funny, it's not what I want-

ed to do. Also, I don't think stand-up comedy works that well on TV. My goal was always to get into television, and to me that meant sketch-based comedy."

After graduating, Mitchell's partnership with Webb continued, as they began searching out their niche in the comedy mountain, stuffed full of vivid dreams of television superstardom. Inevitably, however, their first work was less glamorous, and away from the cameras, and indeed the limelight. "Our first jobs were writing for other shows. We were writing for *The Armstrong and Miller Show*, and lots of other places, for television and for **Radio 4**. At first it was just exciting to be getting properly paid, to be able to see your jokes on actual television shows was great! At the same time we always knew that we really wanted to be doing something for ourselves. That's why we kept doing live shows, and kept going and playing the Edinburgh fringe. In the end, it was actually a bit of a surprise that we eventually broke through with a show that someone else had written for us. For a long time we thought we'd break through with something we had written for someone else."

That show, of course, was *Peep Show*. Since its humble beginnings in 2003, the show went on to win the inaugural sitcom Rose d'Or in 2004, had more than a million pairs of eyes peeping inside the heads of Mark and Jez in 2005, and in 2006 if you piled up all the DVDs they've shifted, you'd have a pile over half the size of Mount Fuji, and eight times more explosive. A fourth series was commissioned just a minute ago. "Yeah, we start shooting series four in January, so that should be on TV sometime next year, Spring I guess. We're incredibly proud of the show. But we're also very happy with our own show that's on BBC2 at the moment."

That would be *That Mitchell and Webb Look*, in which the duo stop satirising the foibles and neuroses of thirty-something men, and instead start dressing up in silly costumes, putting on funny voices, and generally farting around pretending to be game show hosts, posh waiters or superheroes. I ask David about the contrast between *Peep Show* and *That Mitchell and Webb Look*, and about how challenging he finds it to be funny in two very different scenarios. "I really like the fact that I have that mixture. Sometimes when we've been shooting for seven weeks I can hear myself moaning on and on, as Mark does, and realise I'm starting to get bored of it, and worry that other people will as well. But I suppose they just get it in 24 minute bursts. They don't have to live with it for seven weeks. At the end of that it's nice to be able to put on a funny beard and a silly voice and pretend to be a superhero. On the other hand, after a few weeks of that you get sick of all the make-up



“

we haven't had a show with a car crash outside yet

it's nice to be able to put on a funny beard

and just want to go back to playing someone who looks a bit more like you!"

All this success means that you'll be seeing a lot more of Mitchell and Webb in the New Year. As well as the new series of *Peep Show*, they'll be stretching their faces by a factor of 1000 in order for them to appear on great big cinematic silver screens in a proper moving picture about a pair of competing magicians. David is excited. "We've just finished shooting *Magicians*, which will be out next April. It was written by **Sam Bain** and **Jesse Armstrong**, the same guys who write *Peep Show*. It's really great to be working with them again, not only because we respect their work and enjoy working with them, but they're also both really funny! Shooting the film was very similar to shooting *Peep Show*, except that we were all aware that it had to look even better, you have to kind of justify the use of the much bigger screen. It was also great to have the time to go back and do things in different ways. When you're shooting for TV, or doing a theatre show, you're always working against the clock, but with the film you have the extra time to go and try things from different angles and in different ways."

While on this form Mitchell may seem inseparable from Webb, they have in fact worked separately on a couple of recent projects. Mitchell has a small part in the forthcoming **Michelle Pfeiffer** vehicle *I Could Never Be Your Woman*, and Webb played a lead part in last year's *Confetti*, with Mitchell relegated to a fleeting appearance. As anyone who has seen *Confetti* will testify however, it seems that the two do their best work together, and David agrees. "I still love working with Robert. Having time working on separate projects was really good though, as it meant we were able to give each other some much needed space, after we'd been working in such close proximity to each other for so long. Also, when we started working together again we were able to come back with fresh new ideas."

In that case, rejoice merriment-seekers! Mitchell and Webb are together again. Next spring, they will be on your television sets and in your cinemas. But wait! Put down those pills and forget about sedating yourself until next year, for this very week they are playing a great big show in London, and, like some sort of mirth-orientated **Justin Timberlake**, they're bringing funny back.

Mitchell and Webb play London's Brixton Academy on 12, 13 and 14 December. For tickets and info go to www.MitchellandWebbLive.com. Their live DVD is in shops now.

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Interview

David Mitchell, one half of Mitchell and Webb, talks comedy. His other half is in the other half.

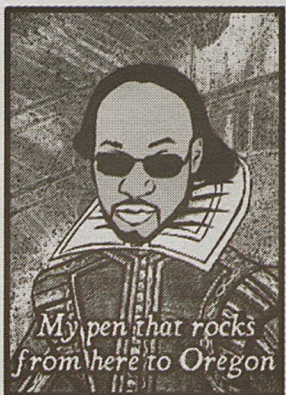
Music

The ten best albums of the year, including reknowned dramtaist Ghostface.



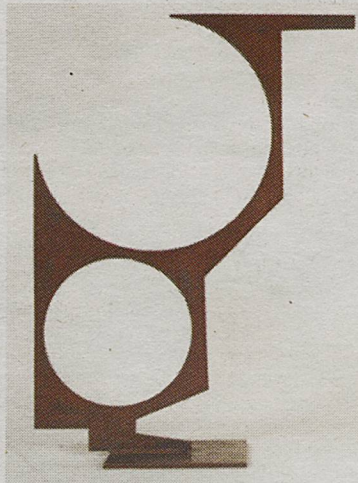
Film

The quite magical Prestige. It's magic.



Visual Arts

David Smith made some twisted metal shapes.



Auntie Shaw

Everyone's favourite Auntie shares some secrets.

Jack Penate

The rock star in the making sings some songs and dances like a person whose only understanding of what dancing is was an explanation from a man with Tourettes. Hypnotic.

Where: The Troubadour
When: Thursday 7th
Price£5

Santa's Ghetto

Banksy and co. open a seasonal gallery. In a statement the artist said "I felt the spirit of Christmas was being lost - it was being increasingly uncommercialised and more and more to do with religion. So we decided to open our own shop and sell pointless stuff you didn't need."

Where: Oxford Street
Until December 24th
Price Free

Santa's Grotto

Santa is spending his weekends doing cookie decorating, Christmas craft workshops, balloon modelling and face-painting at Canary Wharf.

Where: Jubilee Place
When: Saturday and Sunday 11am-4pm
Until December 24th
Price£1

Goldie Lookin' Chain

Welsh rappers bring their 'Doin' It For The Taxman' tour to London. Smoke some soapbar and giggle like a schoolkid.

Where: ULU
When: December 12th
Price£15

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music comptroller
samashon

visual arts comptroller
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food & drinking comptroller
kimmandeng

comedy comptroller
christinewhyte

thebeaver.partb@lse.ac.uk

EDITORIAL

Dan rang my mum the other day and asked if she'd ever slept with a wolf. Apparently he's been concerned about my birth lineage for some time. Anyway, my mum took offence and Dan blamed me, all of which means I'm not invited home for Christmas this year. As Mitchell and Webb testify, being part of a double act isn't as hilarious as it seems. Dan generously offered to let me spend Christmas with him, but the thought of being bugged out of a brandy-induced coma on Christmas morning was more than I could bear. I'll be spending Christmas with Auntie Shaw this year.

Bon Appétit,

Kevin Perry



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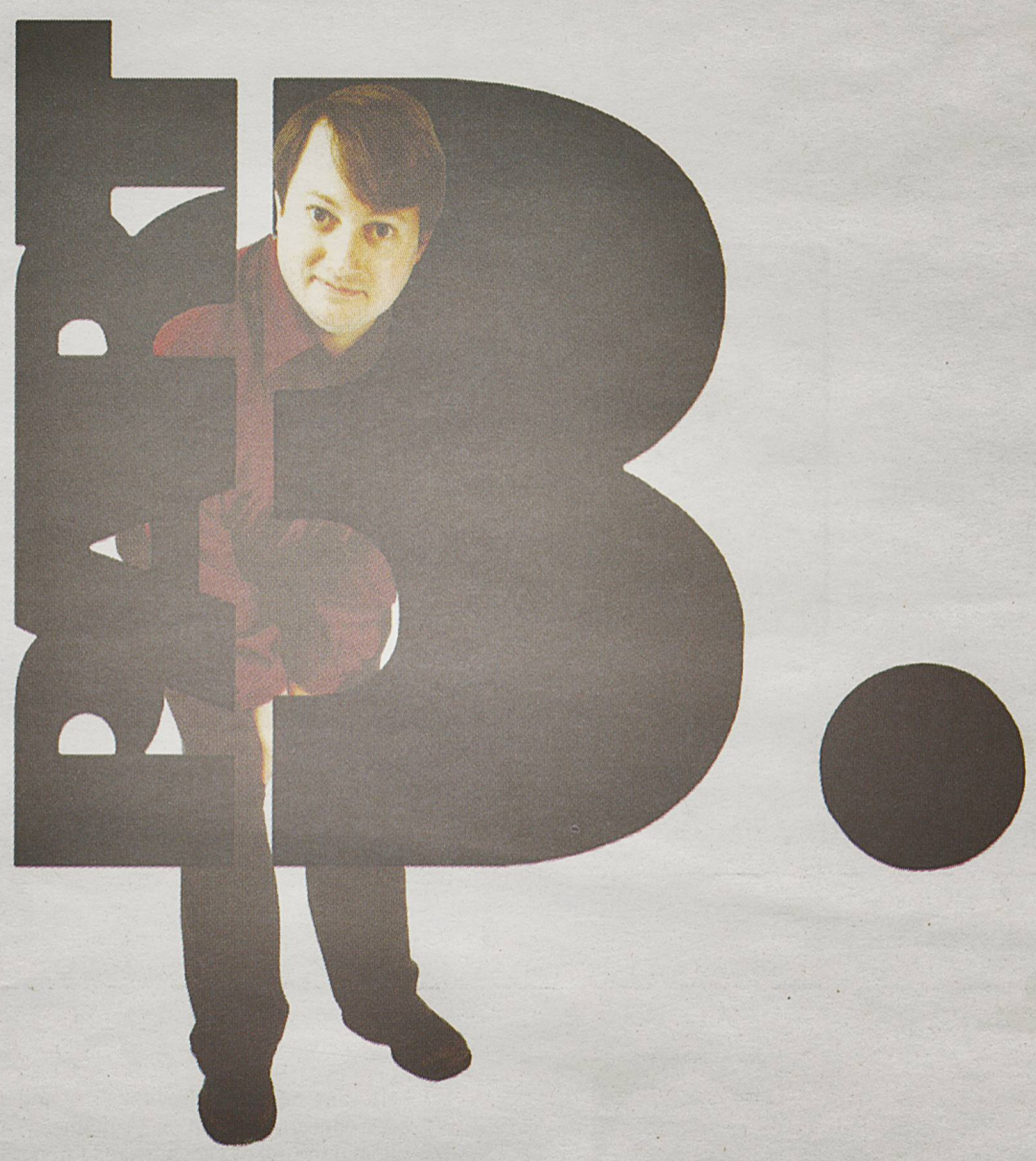
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Replacing Trident

Wong Chun Han says there is no practical reason for the renewal of Trident



Even the old Trident can kill millions

Since his vindication for playing devil's advocate on the dodgy dossier, it is unsurprising Dr Hans Blix has an axe to grind with Prime Minister Tony Blair. With an impeccable resume reading former Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, former chief UN weapons inspector and current Chairman of the Commission on Weapons of Mass Destruction, there is hardly anyone better qualified to deliver criticism of Blair's favourable stand for Trident. Unfortunately, wise words often fall on deaf ears.

Being part of a disinterested international organisation, Blix speaks with the voice of reason and impartiality. His accusations are blistering and well-founded. The renewal or replacement of Trident would be yet another disservice done to the 1970 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Although the Treaty did not specify full nuclear disarmament, Article IV iterates that the NPT was meant to foster negotiations for a complete disarmament treaty. While significant progress had certainly been made (60,000 active warheads in 1985 to 20,000 active warheads

in 2002), nuclear powers have generally paid only lip service to the true spirit of the NPT. In the thirty-six years since its ratification, no complete nuclear disarmament agreement has been discussed. Should Britain opt to maintain its nuclear capability, it will not only renege on its own NPT commitment, but also concede moral ground in attempting to dissuade other powers from realising their nuclear ambitions. Rather than achieve deterrence, maintenance of nuclear weapons will encourage disadvantaged nations to pursue weapons programmes. The arms race would continue slowly but surely, albeit not in the appalling manner it manifested itself at the height of the Cold War.

The practicality perspective also favours disarmament. The fact that Britain runs no greater strategic security risk regardless of whoever possesses the nuclear deterrent umbrella is a compelling argument for the non-renewal of Trident. Britain has little use for an independent deterrent, which even in the current state of affairs, it arguably does not have. The current Trident II D5 submarine launched ballistic missile

(SLBM) system is an American design. British warhead design is based on the American model and the US military helps maintain British Trident missiles. The shared missile pool is located in and managed by the US; even the current "independent" nuclear deterrent that Britain possesses is far from truly independent. This is unlikely to change even if Trident is to be replaced, either through wholesale replacement requiring a new missile system and ballistic missile submarine design, or a service life extension. Any decision apart from decommissioning nuclear armaments would invariably require American assistance. Considering Trident in terms of cost, it would make economic sense to disarm and place Britain under the American nuclear deterrence umbrella. Initial projections put price tag of replacing the Trident system at £25bn and possibly even £76bn over 30 years, dependent on how the system is to be replaced or extended. Should the UK taxpayer be asked to fork out such astronomical sums of money for a diplomatic status symbol? Is there a real need for an independent UK nuclear deterrent?

It is easy for armchair politicians and activists to state their case for a nuclear free world. The world would indeed be a better place without the shadow of Armageddon lurking beneath underground silos and the ocean blue. Even J. Robert Oppenheimer, the father of the atomic bomb, acknowledged as much when he recalled the Hindu verse while witnessing the 1945 Trinity bomb test, "Now, I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds." It is unfortunate that nuclear armaments have become something of the Ring of Power; a power so overwhelming it ensnares whoever that comes to possess them. Mankind is unlikely to be rid of it. The logical course of action then is to control and limit this power.

Unlike well-meaning crusaders of disarmament, leaders of nuclear and nuclear-ambitious states are bound by real world considerations. Nuclear armaments may no longer have a practical military purpose but in political terms, these weapons are worth their weight in gold. North Korea and Iran both recognise the value of nuclear weapons as a fast track to political eminence. As a mili-

tary weapon, nuclear arms have become a non-factor in a world stricken with asymmetrical warfare and global terrorism. As a status symbol, its attractiveness has not waned in despite ostensible commitments to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Crucially, its modern day value is not measured by yield in megatons but by political status and diplomatic leverage. The very fact that the West invaded Iraq over alleged possession of weapons of mass destruction whereas peaceful diplomacy was exercised with North Korea is a clear vindication of Kim Jong-Il's nuclear programme. Nuclear powers will not be invaded, lest one decides to tempt fate.

The nuclear weapon is the ultimate *deus ex machina*. Regardless of how formidable a conventionally armed force may be, it is reduced to a non-factor in the face of a thermonuclear threat. Indeed, when political observers assert the lack of deterrence of nuclear weapons in the post-Cold War era, they are only considering international relations in the bipolar world paradigm. To the fundamentally insecure state in the Israeli or North Korean mould, a nuclear arsenal is the best possible security guarantee in the world. Geographically and politically isolated with few friends and literally surrounded by foes, no amount of conventional military power can displace the security that comes along with nuclear weapons. For a regional power resentful of external intervention and foreign domination of regional politics, what better path is there for a state to assert its ambition and authority apart from the nuclear one?

However, the fact that nuclear weapons serve no practical military purpose perhaps



Unlike well-meaning crusaders of disarmament, leaders of nuclear and nuclear ambitious states are bound by real world considerations

is also its biggest advantage. Since the advent of the ther-

monuclear warhead in 1952, nuclear warfare has become synonymous with apocalypse. Its very nature almost certainly guarantees that it will never be utilised in actual combat. The relegation of nuclear arms to merely a political object may not suit the disarmament advocates, but it may be the best scenario possible that can be realistically accomplished. The threat of revival of the practical usage of nuclear arms is more compelling than that of proliferation of strategic and almost certainly never-to-be-used weapons. President Bush's attempt at unilateral weapons projects in 2002 threatened to make nuclear weapons tactical once more, with attempts to develop theatre warheads and bunker-buster nuclear devices. Although the plan was dropped from the budget in 2005, rumours of its continuation remain abound. Moreover, the greatest danger of nuclear weapons in the modern era lay less with military-scale harbingers of death than it does with the threat posed by global terrorism. The possibility of terrorist deployed dirty bombs is arguably by far the more realistic threat posed by nuclear proliferation. Rogue nuclear states with less stringent weapons monitoring and security measures are potential supplies of nuclear technology for the resourceful terrorist. The world certainly does not need reruns of the stark realities of 'loose nukes' and nuclear material black markets following the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Staying in a persuasive position of advantage is important in trying to control nuclear proliferation or monitor existing programmes. The prospect of a nuclear-free West attempting to dissuade India or Pakistan from expanding their nuclear arsenals is about as reassuring as unarmed policemen attempting to negotiate the surrender of gun-toting felons. We can only talk about complete multilateral nuclear disarmament when all parties see no purpose in maintaining nuclear arms, be it the recognised powers or the nuclear aspirants. With all to gain and nothing to lose, there is no obligation for the likes of Iran and North Korea to stop. And in all likelihood, they will not.

A world free of nuclear arms is a utopian ideal - desirable but unachievable. In the game of global power plays, Britain has all to lose by unilateral disarmament. In realistic terms, nuclear ambitious states will remain unfazed, and the problems of nuclear proliferation persists with one less power capable of keeping a lid on it. Rather than removing a responsible power from the equation, it is more prudent to maintain the status quo; allowing the recognised nuclear powers to regulate the problem. Perhaps the way to keep peace is indeed to tread carefully while carrying a big stick. And in the UK, sticks do not get any bigger than Trident. ■

Jeff Bingaman on climate change, Iraq and the Presidential Elections

Features Editor Fatima Manji spoke to the US Senator for New Mexico about the issues facing America today

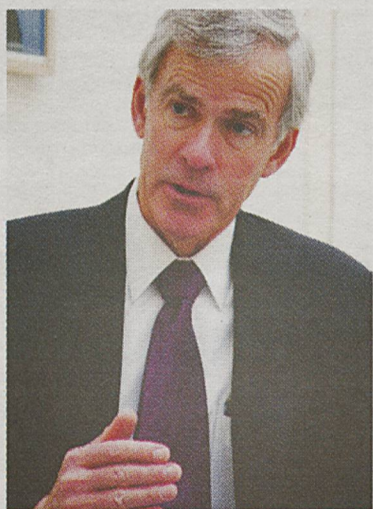
Dignified and statesman-like Jeff Bingaman is the epitome of an American Senator. Clearly an experienced politician, he comes across as articulate and thoughtful. Bingaman, the Senator for New Mexico is now serving his fourth term in the Senate, having first won election in 1982, he is also currently the lead Democratic Senator on Education Standards, a Senior Member of the Joint Economic Committee and a Ranking Member of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee. In his public lecture here at the LSE, he spoke of American policy on climate change and energy, and the future for the Democrats after the recent mid-term elections. A graduate of both Stanford and Harvard, Bingaman says he was always interested in politics even during his university days, but never ran for student government.

Ever politically astute, Bingaman is cautious not to reveal his thoughts on the 2008 Presidential Race too early. He rather reluctantly, but calmly tells me: "My own Governor... Governor Richardson I believe is going to be a candidate. Many of the people who serve with me in the Senate; both Democrats and Republicans from are going to be candidates and I'm not predicting who will prevail." So, what does he make of the two current celebrities of American politics; the much talked of African-American Senator for Illinois; Barack Obama and Senator for New York, former first lady Hillary Clinton? "Obama is very smart, well liked and capable" says Bingaman, "He would bring a lot of qualities to a race for President, that would be very



Photographs: Liam Chambers

Features asks the tough questions



"I voted against authorising the President to invade Iraq, I felt it was a mistake. Now that we are there I think that its not clear what the best way to disengage is..."

attractive." Obama has been criticised by many for his lack of legislative record, I ask Bingaman what he makes of this and receive a simple but short defence; "Well he hasn't been in

the Senate very long, that's why he doesn't have a legislative record."

Bingaman also shows calm optimism towards Hillary Clinton's chances. He states "she is well respected in the Senate and knows the issues as well as anyone on the national scene." But is America ready for a female President? Bingaman thinks so; "I think the fact that she's female is not a barrier to her being elected...she's a capable campaigner and a formidable competitor for nomination." Yet despite his praise for both these candidates, Bingaman says he will not be expressing his support for any one candidate just yet.

Earlier in his speech to the audience, I got a sense of somewhat restrained optimism from Bingaman as to what the Democrats could achieve before 2008, despite their gains in the mid-terms. I ask him what real achievements are possible: "We can hope to gain consensus on bipartisan issues" says Bingaman and he expresses his belief that improvements for issues such as the Medicare Prescription Drug Bill and raising the minimum wage are also possible: "too much time has passed since that issue was addressed and I hope we can make these improvements." But Bingaman believes "initiatives that would require a major change in policy for the administration" are more difficult to address; with climate change being one of these.

"This administration has not supported mandatory limits on greenhouse gases" and to bring about a change in this area is problematic in Bingaman's view. Although his manner of speaking is calm rather than passionately enthusiastic, climate change is clearly an issue close to Bingaman's heart and he speaks with authority when he says: "If you

believe what the majority of scientists say, the consequences of leaving the issue unaddressed will be catastrophic. Out of the long term challenges we face, this one requires attention." What does it take to change the mindset of the vast majority of American politicians and make them more aware of this pertinent issue? Bingaman's answer: "A focus on issues, a growing level of public concern and education." Education in general is of course also an important issue for Bingaman and he hopes to continue "improving the standards in our public schools" in his role on the Senate committee. One of the biggest priorities for him in this field is to ensure more students stay on at school before they graduate, something which requires "persistence" to make a difference according to Bingaman.

Education in general is of course also an important issue for Bingaman and he hopes to continue "improving the standards in our public schools" in his role on the Senate committee. One of the biggest priorities for him in this field is to ensure more students stay on at school before they graduate, something which requires "persistence" to make a difference according to Bingaman.

His state of New Mexico is home to large numbers of Hispanics, I ask him what he thinks of the somewhat controversial Positive Discrimination principle in education. At first he seems slightly disturbed at the idea of any discrimination being positive and repeats the two words in a slightly bewildered manner. A minute later I realise the American term is 'Affirmative Action' and as soon as I clarify this Bingaman returns from confusion back into 'dignified Senator mode' giving me a rather textbook-ish answer: "I've always supported affir-

mative action, not just in education but in other areas as well. There are occasions when you need additional incentives and additional assistance to make up for deficiencies which may

guest worker programme entails and simply states that he had supported this version of it.

And what of the polarising issue of Iraq? Here Bingaman is much clearer about his own views: "I voted against authorising the President to invade Iraq, I felt it was a mistake. Now that we are there I think that its not clear what the best way to disengage is. We need to find a way to disengage that does not add to the instability and violence in that country. A way that will allow the current government to consolidate its power and be in a position to provide for the common security of the Iraq people." And despite his hopes for a better future in Iraq, Bingaman is still aware, that the issue of Iraq is complicated and there are no magical solutions: "That's what our goal needs to be, I don't have a clear path to get us there."

Finally, what does he believe America's role should be in the international community? It is clear Bingaman desires for a strong change to the current foreign policy pursued by the Bush administration and this is not just on the Iraq issue. He speaks of hoping to "resume some of the leadership that we were trying to provide on multilateral security arrangements in previous decades; that was particularly important in dealing with terrorism for example." He hopes for an America which takes leadership globally on the issues of Aids, global poverty and climate change; "We need to be providing world leadership to deal with climate change - we are not today because we have not participated in a real way in international discussions on the issue." He may not obviously appear passionate because of his composed manner, but Jeff Bingaman clearly has a vision. ■



"We need to be providing world leadership to deal with climate change - we are not today because we have not participated in a real way in international discussions on the issue."

result from a student's background."

Similarly, when I ask him for his views on immigration (particularly pertinent for a Senator of New Mexico), he provides me with a standard answer of what President Bush's

John McCain: From Prisoner of War to President?

Political Correspondent **Ben Gianforti** profiles Republican Senator and Presidential hopeful John McCain

After the recent midterm elections, Senator John McCain (R-Arizona) set up a presidential exploratory committee to assess his chances of winning in 2008. This process includes identifying donors, formulating policy, hiring consultants, reaching out to interest groups, polling and generally setting up the infrastructure one needs to conduct a successful presidential campaign. What this process quite conspicuously lacks is a formal announcement of McCain's candidacy. As with Senators Barack Obama (D-Illinois) and Hillary Clinton (D-New York), McCain is performing the old presidential striptease; the only difference being that he is almost naked whereas Obama and Clinton are still undulating suggestively in g-strings and feather boas. Allow me to drop this metaphor before it gets any more disturbing.

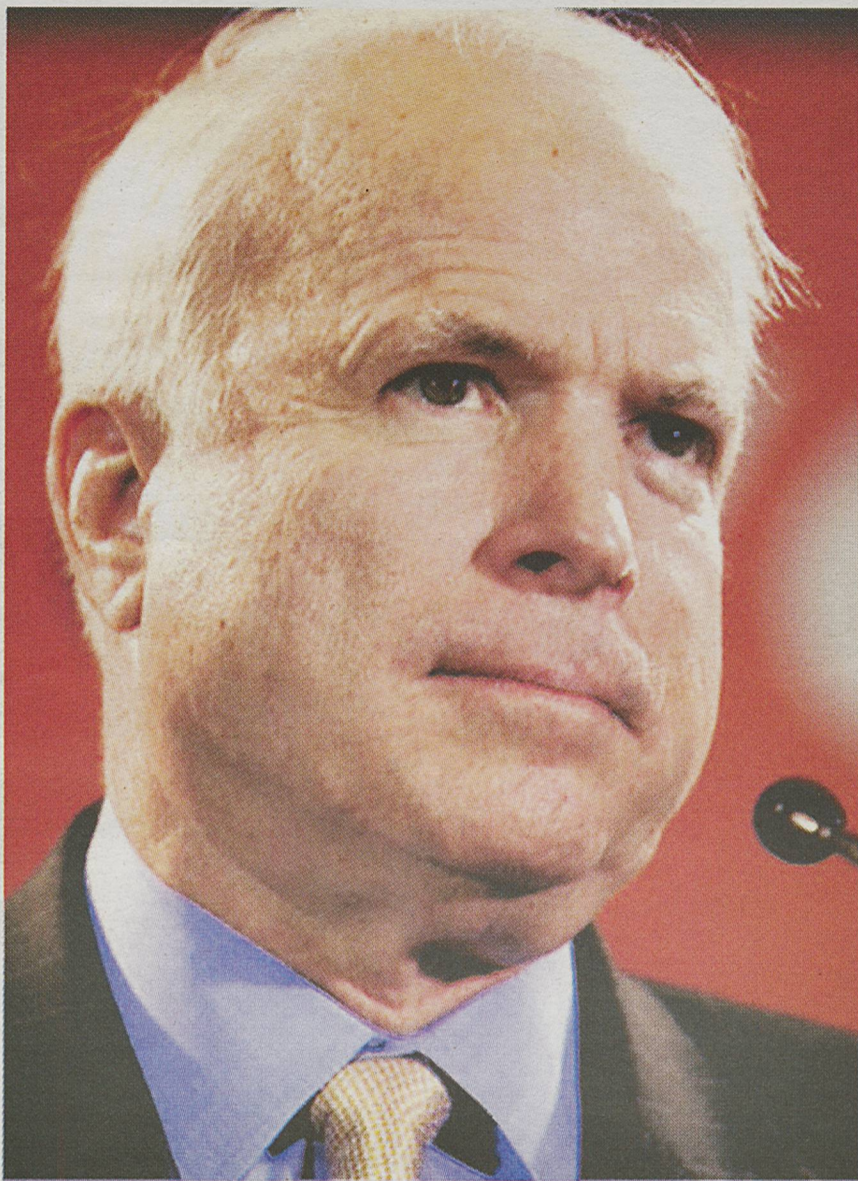
McCain has been the Republican 2008 frontrunner since Bush's re-election. He was a strong candidate in 2000 and his profile has been rising steadily over the past 6 years. But McCain has a problem. It is the mirror image of Clinton's potential electoral dilemma: McCain may have a tougher time escaping the primaries than winning a general election. He has been branded as a "maverick" because of his willingness to buck the administration, work "across the aisle" and speak his mind. While this may have earned him vast bipartisan appeal, it could spell trouble for rallying the base, particularly conservative, evangelical Christians.

Unlike most of the Republicans in Congress, McCain has been a consistent critic of the Bush administration. Most prominently, he has taken issue with outgoing Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld's conduct of the war in Iraq and the treatment of detainees. Though he voted for the war, McCain has echoed the so-called "Powell Doctrine," calling for larger

McCain has echoed the so-called "Powell Doctrine," calling for larger troop numbers since the invasion began

troop numbers since the invasion began. In recent months, he has become increasingly insistent on putting more boots on the ground in Iraq despite the war's flagging popularity. His opinion on the war is bolstered by decades of foreign policy and military experience.

McCain's agitation over the treatment of detainees has been another thorn in the Bush administration's side. No doubt they find it difficult to argue with a man who somewhat voluntarily spent over 5 years in the infamous "Hanoi Hilton" Vietcong POW camp where he was tortured repeatedly. When the Vietcong found out that McCain's father was an American admiral they offered to release him but he refused to be afforded special treatment. His experiences in Vietnam led him to become the Senate's most vociferous advocate of detainee rights. The McCain Torture Amendment to a 2005 defence spending bill banned inhumane treat-



McCain chips in

ment of prisoners by military personnel. However, when Bush signed the bill into law he issued a "signing statement" which asserted that he could waive this ban if he felt it to be in the interest of national security. McCain also pushed for a ban on torture at the hands of CIA operatives in the Military Commissions Act 2006. Unfortunately, the bill that was eventually signed into law again left much to the discretion of the president.

While his clashes with the Bush administration may have endeared him to moderates of both parties, McCain is at risk of alienating the Republicans' ultra-loyal right wing. There are many who subscribe to Karl Rove's "criticism = soft on terrorism" philosophy. Even a decorated Vietnam

veteran and former POW such as McCain is not immune to challenges to his patriotism and resolve. However, it's unlikely that these kinds of attacks will bring him down in the primaries. McCain was quick to bury the hatchet with Bush after an ugly primary season in 2000. He actively endorsed Bush during his 2004 re-election campaign and by-and-large has good things to say about Bush in public. McCain is much more likely to have defend his bipartisanship and loose lips.

Leading up to the 2000 presidential election, McCain's signature issue was campaign finance reform. His crusade to divorce politics from money culminated in the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act 2002 (BCRA)

which banned "soft money," the unlimited contributions political parties (rather than specific candidates) use for "party-building" activities. McCain's dogged advocacy for campaign finance reform could hurt him in two ways. First, he cosponsored the BCRA with Senator Russ Feingold (D-Wisconsin), one of the most liberal members of the upper chamber, who incidentally was the only Senator to vote against the Patriot Act.

Second and more importantly, Republicans traditionally have the advantage in fundraising because they are the party of big business. To get a sense of just how large this advantage is, visit www.opensecrets.org. Any effort to curtail the amount of money that corporations, wealthy individuals and interest groups can contribute will be met with great hostility by the libertarian wing of the GOP.

McCain will also likely suffer from his enlightened approach to illegal immigration. The bill he co-sponsored with Senator Ted Kennedy (D-Massachusetts) includes a guest worker program and a path to citizenship for the estimated 10-12 million illegally residing in the United States. Once again, McCain has teamed up with one of the most reviled Democrats in the Senate. But rather than alienating the pro-business elements, this bill has drawn the ire of xenophobic, law-and-order Republicans despite the fact that it enjoys the President's full endorsement.

Perhaps most crucially, McCain will have to repair the damage he did to his relationship with the Christian Right in the 2000 primaries. Though he is often commended for being candid and a straight shooter, it was exactly this lack of self-censorship that got him in trouble with Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell, the king-makers of the Christian Right. McCain referred to the two Christian leaders as "agents of intolerance" and compared them to Louis Farrakhan, the racist and anti-Semitic head of the Nation of Islam. He has also annoyed evangelicals with his vote against the gay marriage amendment, his vote for stem cell research and his role in the "Gang of 14," a bipartisan group of Senators who helped to broker a deal that would guarantee the continued availability of the filibuster for the minority party to block objec-

tionable judicial appointments.

McCain is too shrewd of a political operator to let the Christian vote fall by the wayside. Robertson and Falwell were able to derail his campaign in 2000; he won't let that happen again. His positioning for 2008 has included courting the very leaders he offended six years ago. In May 2006, McCain delivered the com-

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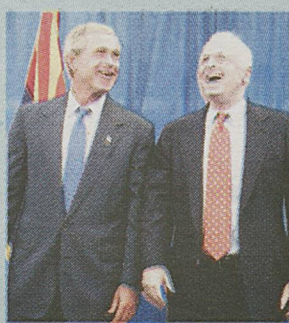
mencement speech to graduating seniors at Liberty University, the evangelical institution founded by Falwell. He has distanced himself from his "agents of intolerance" comment and has been markedly less critical of the Christian Right. His stance on abortion has become more and more conservative to the point where he endorsed South Dakota's full ban, though he supported an exception for rape and incest. In his defence, he tried to maintain a nuanced, "necessary evil" position on abortion but was quickly excoriated by the Christian Right. He is a politician after all.

Above all else, McCain is watching his words. He recognises that he is living in an era where an unguarded moment caught on someone's mobile phone can explode into a YouTube-fuelled media frenzy. If McCain can somehow unite the disparate factions of the Republican party he's managed to piss off in his decades of public service, he has a strong chance of becoming the next President of the United States. The Republican primaries will be a crowded field but McCain has the name recognition and national security credentials that most of his opponents lack. His moderation and independent mindedness will play well with unaffiliated swing voters and meat-and-potatoes Democrats who (unfortunately) might be reluctant to vote for a woman or a black man. Perhaps his biggest liability will be his age. If victorious, McCain would be 72 when inaugurated, older than Ronald Reagan. But keep your eye on this maverick. Even an old dog can learn new tricks. ■

In his own words...



"Thank God for our form of government. The media won't let there be any cover-up."



"Do not yield. Stand up with our President and fight. We're Americans. We're Americans, and we'll never surrender. They will."



"Only the most deluded of us could doubt the necessity of this war."

Mickey Mouse Degrees

Charlie Samuda looks at the explosion in so-called 'Mickey Mouse' degrees

Last week saw the publication of a report by Universities UK (a leading education policy forum) which argued that so-called 'Mickey Mouse degrees' are vital to creating a smooth path from graduation to employment for today's students. Mickey Mouse degrees are those which do not have a traditional focus on an academic discipline but instead are directly vocational or highly industry specific. In other words degrees such as golf course management, cosmetics, computer games design and of course media studies. By and large such courses are the unintended by-product of Labour's 1997 election pledge to get 50% of all school leavers into higher education by 2010. As a result, many universities expanded the number of

The Telegraph and *Spectator*. Educational purists and small 'c' conservatives tend to believe that such courses dilute the more 'serious' subjects. Cosmetics and Classics, they argue, are just not the same thing. It is true that universities and their departments have long traditions of scholarly excellence and if financially constrained institutions started offering lots of new courses the old ones would inevitably suffer. LSE maintains such a good reputation in so many degree programmes (both graduate and postgraduate) because it offers so few of them. More than the pragmatic arguments, however, is an underlying educational snobbery that it is not hard to share. Staffordshire University offers a module in "Football Culture" (instantly dubbed 'David Beckham Studies') while the University of Plymouth runs a BSc in Surf Science and Technology. One doesn't have to be Boris Johnson (who studied Classics at Oxford before you ask) to see that many courses are about as serious as a day at Disneyland and I'm sure plenty of students would be less than pleased to see their hard earned Firsts and 2:1s in Abstract Maths, Chemistry and Economics being compared to studies of Posh and Becks.

And yet, as with so many issues, it is the caricatures which emerge to shape perceptions of industry related courses. Yes, an MSc in Wine, Games Technology or Acupuncture from the University of Coventry do all seem a bit silly but then most of the courses have a direct relationship to a career at the end of study - something you can hardly say about abstract maths, history or even my own subject of

International Relations. After people have finished scoffing at the courses with the funniest titles (a degree in Stained Glass from Swansea anyone?) most seem highly sensible, very few of these new degrees are as outlandish as the ones which make the headlines. It is worth remembering that academic snobbery has a long history, UCL (perhaps unsurprisingly) were the first to 'dumb down' when they offered English Literature in 1828 but since then subjects that today are considered of great importance, especially at LSE, were similarly derided upon arrival. Sociology was mocked in the 1980's, Gender Studies was considered to be Mickey Mouse in its day, International Relations has only really emerged as a subject of study in the last half century.

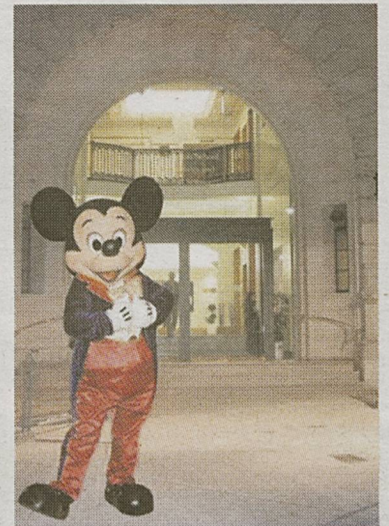
Not only is this educational elitism largely unfounded but it also misses the point. If you want to manage a golf course then applying for Golf Course Management at Lincoln University isn't unreasonable. Large numbers of students leave higher education with money troubles and are in need of employment, but many spend a further few months or years turning their purely academic degree into something that can pay the bills. This benefits neither the student nor the economy as a whole. As the Universities UK report pointed out, courses in Media Studies and Fashion seem a lot more sensible when you consider that "the media & fashion industry... is worth £90 billion a year to the economy and employs more than four million people". Richard Lambert, Director General of the CBI praised the report and the new trend of industry related degrees. "If the UK

is to retain its position as the fifth largest economy in the world", he wrote in a forward to the report "we need highly-skilled graduates".

More than this, not everyone wants to spend three years in an academic ivory tower doing a course that's as alien to them as it is expensive. So should higher education be denied to the vocationally minded? Of course not. Both Blair and Cameron agree that education for school leavers is valuable for more than academic reasons. In addition to being an opportunity to immerse themselves in Facebook and Deal or No Deal, university life is important to developing as a person (even if that person is a lazy, sleepless alcoholic). Even Boris Johnson, the famous educational purist, was moved to say that "it must be good for society and the economy if the number of people getting degrees of one kind or another increases".

So what is LSE to do? Ours is already a highly vocational institution. Just try walking a few paces down Houghton Street without having at least three flyers for internships, careers receptions or graduate opportunities thrust at you. It is hard to believe that all of the students are here to appreciate the intrinsic value of education when so many would sell their granny (and probably yours too) to get their foot in the door of Goldman Sachs. Offer an undergraduate course in 'Hedge Fund Management' for example and see how many eager faces shun it for the pleasures of pure academic contemplation. Not many.

On the other hand the previous caricature of LSE students was probably about as fair as saying that these



Stop goofing around!

new vocational degrees are all about learning to surf and do make-up and acupuncture. Fundamentally LSE gets its reputation for academic brilliance and challenging convention from its focus; we have fewer departments than most universities but all are stronger because of it. There's plenty of time on campus to find your own internships and learn about something that's just plain interesting for its own sake, which is what makes LSE students more broadminded and ultimately more successful. Don't forget...Margaret Thatcher studied Chemistry not 'governmental management' (now there is an example *The Telegraph* and the *Spectator* would appreciate). ■

If you want to manage a golf course then applying for Golf Course management at Lincoln University isn't unreasonable

courses they offer and, after exhausting new ways to teach old subjects came up with new degrees altogether.

The case against these new degrees has been re-hashed many times particularly in sections of the right-of-centre newspapers such as

A Year in La Merde

Ruth Knox reports back from her experiences from living in France as an LLF student

Strasbourg, Strasbourg. Centre of Europe - reputedly equi-distant to the other great European cities of Barcelona, Warsaw, Munich and Paris, but only with a bit of dodgy geography. Home to those great bastions of liberal democracy, the European institutions. And adoptive parent city to fourteen London-sick, linguistically challenged Law with French Law students, who have all disappeared from the LSE, except for its hallowed 'Facebook' network.

So, will this be a rant or a rave about *l'hexagone*? I shall mention the first of a few 'Facebook' group titles used in this article to answer that question = "Any Bad Day Is Bettered By Remembering That I Am Not

French". Indeed. Grievances are subdivided into three categories: 'administrative', 'romantic' and lastly but most pertinently, 'general'. *On y va!*

Grievance with *l'administration* = Was it the fact that it took me six weeks to get my ERASMUS grant cashed? Perhaps the fact that I had to register for everything ten times over with a passport photo? Or simply because of their apparent fetish for everything to be signed with 'read and approved' as well as my signature? No - it's actually because I didn't get my bank card for four weeks because the front desk clerk repeatedly mistook me for a male. *Beeeeeeeeh...*

Le romantique = as the world well knows, french is the language of love,

and the french know how to speak it. Images of lingering conversations on moonlit terraces with a bottle of Bordeaux red shared between doting lovers spring to mind. Perhaps someone could then explain to me why my french date, let's call him Jean-Pierre, turned up ten minutes late, smelling of tequila and proceeded to eat the face off me, responding to my prudish protests with "*beeeeeeeeh, c'est le moyen francais!*" ('it's the french method'.) In which, apparently, I must be schooled. At least he manages to see me in a different light to the bank clerk....

Le general = and so I return to the title of this article, and the name of another 'Facebook' group - 'A Year in the Merde'. As I'm sure many of you are aware, it is also the name of a book by Stephen Clarke, termed in the aforementioned group as the "ERASMUS bibleactually anyone coming from a civilised country's bible!" The book tells the enchanting story of a young Englishman uprooted from the lovely land of properly functioning teabags and judge-made law sent to settle in the anti-world where Napoleon/De Gaulle's evil influence is still felt, and where nightclubs have no air conditioning (see 'Facebook' group "Another Sweaty Night in Strasbourg"). In many respects, despite stepping in an awful lot of dog crap the other day, I can see where he is coming from. We can't see the Don, the ultimate representative of the student body, because he doesn't see students. We can't print things on the university printers because we have to



French is the language of love and the French know how to speak it

bring our own paper. We can't use our student discount cards at the cinema before 10 o'clock at night. And obviously, we can't have a rule that isn't entirely and excessively arbitrary...

And yet....despite all this....you've got to love it. The budget discount supermarket called 'Norma'. Gold standard public services. Over reliance on slapstick humour. Bitching about LSE corporate whoring while eating *torte caramelle au fromage blanc* with vanilla tea in a café where the owner carries a labrador pup about like a basket of washing. The fact that you can get away with practically everything (except praising the Americans) by revealing your English diction.

All things aside, the ERASMUS scheme itself merits a mention. The European Region Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students was set up under the SOCRATES II programme, aiming to 'strengthen the European dimension of education at all levels'. Essentially, we receive all the tuition, course material, student status reductions and exam accreditation as the natives themselves, without the obligations of tuition fees, attendance, regular work or even passing the year! Being thrown together with two hundred other students from various European nations was already quite familiar to LSE students, but feeling such a strong sense of community with them in the land of the 'other' was not.

For those who wish to take a year to develop a language, reflect, or simply see how they fare in a foreign clime, it's the ideal opportunity. This accounts for its popularity with many graduates who decide to 'gap it' in Europe via the scheme. Plus, with a more-than-welcome grant of 1,800 pounds from the European Parliament for the year, each ERASMUS student is guaranteed buoyancy....in the financial domain at least....

Quelle conclusion tirer de cette analyse? In fairness, you could argue that the experience couldn't be that impressive given that it took me under four months to write a heavily cynical article that blatantly filches off the book 'A Year in the Merde'. On the other hand, I could simply say the experience is so far, so good. ■



The centre of European 'democracy'

DIY State-building

Features Editor Ben Biggs discusses the process of inventing your own country



Hail to Freedomia!

What's the best present you could want this Christmas? A new phone? A new car? A new place to live? How about your own country? This is not as fanciful as it may sound. Many people who are not George Bush have set up their own countries. And this is how....

Take Monaco for example. This tiny principality and its 32,000 residents would fit inside Central Park in New York. Tiny it may be, but for those who dream of founding their own country, Monaco stands as an example of what persistence can achieve. Seized in 1297 by Italian explorer, Francesco Grimaldi, Monaco has been transformed by his descendants into a principality that has its own flag, passports, stamps, and seats at the United Nations and the Council of Europe.

Over the past half-century many people have tried to replicate Monaco's success. Most of these attempts at nationhood have been frivolous and many crackpot. But a few have been serious and autonomy for their fledgling states has been achieved. With the number of 'real' countries increasing; thirty more since 1990, some people think one of these 'micro-nations' could eventually be accepted as a legitimate state.

Until two centuries ago, all you needed to do to get your own country was to find a *terra incognita* or unknown territory and stake your claim. Most of these new nations died along with the adventurers who founded them. But some survived into the 20th century. For example the Clunies-Ross family, who settled in the Cocos Islands in 1827 and held them until 1978 when a descendant ceded control to Australia.

Today the only unclaimed land lies in Antarctica. This has forced contemporary nation-builders to think more creatively. In the 1960s and

1970s, the vogue was founding states in international waters. This basically involved joining together floating platforms. Leicester Hemingway (younger brother of Ernest) did just this, off the west coast of Jamaica in 1964. Dubbed the Republic of New



Britain's most famous secessionist is probably Richard Booth, who in 1977 declared himself king, and his horse prime minister, of the Welsh village of Hay-on-Wye.

Atlantis, the platform was created to house a marine-research society and to help protect Jamaican fishing.

Official recognition of the place never materialized, despite the minting of some stamps and an approach to American President Lyndon Johnson. Scavenging fishermen and a big storm ended the dream.

Another inspired idea was to try and make islands by sinking ships in shallow water. Few of these got beyond the drawing board, though the Republic of Minerva made enough progress to cause alarm amongst neighbouring countries. The brain-child of Las Vegas-based Michael Oliver, the tiny republic was created in 1971 by dumping sand on the Minerva Reefs, which lie about 500km (310 miles) south-west of the South Pacific kingdom of Tonga. Independence was proclaimed the next year and a small tower constructed on the emerging island. But Tonga got wind of the project and dispatched a token occupying force that annexed the place, a move recognised by the South Pacific Forum. The island sank beneath the waves soon afterwards.

Most of these micro-revolts are really publicity stunts, with little real intention of founding an independent state. Britain's most famous secessionist is probably Richard Booth, who in 1977 declared himself king, and his horse prime minister, of the Welsh village of Hay-on-Wye. Today, it still accounts for a healthy trade in passports, government scrolls, car stickers and 'official' titles.

The longest-running secessionist micronation is the Hutt River Province Principality in Western Australia. Sitting 595km north of Perth, it was born out of a dispute in 1970 over wheat quotas. Leonard Casley, a farmer, declared his property independent and called himself Prince Leonard I. Australia's government refuses to recognise Mr Casley's claim, but this has not deterred him or

his subjects. The principality has issued over 200 types of coins and a few banknotes. By giving out passports to visitors, it also claims 13,000 overseas citizens and has foreign consuls in a many countries. Last year it even offered help to the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

If you don't fancy finding far flung islands to stake claims on you can always delve into the history books. Many prospective rulers have looked to the past for anomaly or legal precedent on which to base claims. Seborga, a village in the Italian Alps, traces its heritage to medieval times when it became a principality of the Holy Roman Empire. Subsequently omitted from a succession of treaties - including, importantly, Italy's Act of Unification of 1861. This hasn't stopped its 350-odd residents who to this day claim to live in a sovereign state. Like other micronations, Seborga mints its own currency (the Luigino), sells stamps and issues passports. The Italian government does not seem to mind, so long as the Seborgans pay their taxes and respect Italian laws.

The world's most successful micronation, according to people who know about this sort of stuff, exists thanks to a legal loophole. Founded by a former British army major named Paddy Roy Bates in 1967, the Principality of Sealand occupies an abandoned anti-aircraft tower in the English Channel. "Prince Roy" asserts that because the tower was derelict and lay outside British territorial waters when it was occupied, the British government has no claim. A handful of legal skirmishes have strengthened his hand. Although British territorial waters have been extended and now include Sealand, and the British government refuses to recognise its claim, the principality continues to exist.

Sealand's turbulent history is a warning to nation-builders. In 1978 the tower was temporarily captured by a German businessman who wanted to use the place as a tax haven. Baddies have forged its passports (one of which turned up in the investigation into Gianni Versace's murder in 1997), which prompted Sealand's rulers to revoke all 150,000 of them.

The easiest way to get your own country may be start online. How many 'virtual states' exist is impossible to say. Most virtual countries are little more than exercises in fantasy or self-importance. Best-known is the Kingdom of Talossa. Founded by a schoolboy, Robert Ben Madison, in 1979, Talossa migrated from his bedroom to the internet, where it now exists in the form of a number of rival websites. With its own language, government, written history, laws, constitution and citizens, Talossa looks surprisingly like a real place.

Life for small countries is tough even if they do escape cyberspace. Unlike Monaco, most are recent creations with poorly developed economies, weak institutions and a large helping of social problems. A report on developing small states published earlier this year by the World Bank and the Commonwealth Secretariat found their problems had multiplied over the past five years.

Even Monaco has more than its share of problems. Larger neighbours regard it as merely a haven for dodgy business dealings. And its professed independence is largely illusory. These days Monaco exercises its sovereignty "in accordance with the fundamental interests of the French Republic," and its French residents have been unable to evade the French taxman since 1963. When Monaco's new prince, Albert II, was enthroned on November 19th, the only head of state to attend was the president of Iceland. ■

#

1

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TUESDAY

8:30
CU
Prayer meeting,
Chaplaincy

14:00
Yoga
Ashtanga Yoga,
Badminton Court

15:00A
CSSA
Chinese Classes: B-
class *D206*

18:00
AIESEC
Weekly meeting
S421
Catholic
Carol Service at St
Anselm and St Caecilia
(Kingsway) - *Meet up*
at LSE Chaplaincy
Maritime Business
'An Introduction to
Maritime Business': Mr.
D. Barrow, Chief execu-
tive of Maritime
London
G212

18:15
Yoga
Intermediate Ashtanga
Yoga *D002*

19:00
Debate
Weekly meeting
D302

WEDNESDAY

8:30
Catholic
Prayer meeting
Chaplaincy

12:00
STAR
Trip to exhibition
'Belonging: Voices of
london's refugees', *meet*
outside Old Building
Catholic
Mass,
Chaplaincy

Green Party
Weekly meeting
H104
Hindu
Vedic Lunch
D211
Anime & Manga
Drawing class
Z129
Accounting
Homework help session
G107
Student Action for
Refugees
Weekly meeting
A283
Go
weekly meeting
V101

14:00
Pakistan
Weekly meeting
U203
Opera
Weekly meeting
H104
Yoga
Intermediate Hatha Yoga
D702
Faith Groups Forum
Tour through St Paul's
Cathedral, Meet at St
Paul's Cathedral

15:00
Maths and Stats
Homework help session
Z332

Chess
Weekly meeting
K05
CSSA
Chinese Classes - B-
class *V103*
Anime & Manga
Anime Screening of
"Hiragushi no Naku
Koro ni"

16:00
Bridge
Weekly meeting
G107
CSSA
Chinese Classes - I-class
H206

17:00
LGBT Awareness Week
GMFA Sex and Your
Health Workshop.
Followed by pre-film
drinks *D206*

18.15
Politics
Discussion forum /
meeting *H103*

18.30
Filipino
Film showing: The great
Raid *D311*

19.00
Swing Dance
Improvers Classes
G108
Classes cost £2.50/£3.50
(members/non-members)
European
Santa Claus Pub Night -
Meet up at the George
(Fleet Street)

19.30
Public Affairs
Panel discussion:
'Morality and Ethics in
Business and Politiics
D302

8:30
Drama
Christmas variety show:
'S p e c t a c u l a r ,
Specatacular'

18.15
Politics
Discussion forum /
meeting *H103*

18.30
Filipino
Film showing: The great
Raid *D311*

19.00
Swing Dance
Improvers Classes
G108
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Panel discussion:
'Morality and Ethics in
Business and Politiics
D302

8:30
Drama
Christmas variety show:
'S p e c t a c u l a r ,
Specatacular'

THURSDAY

8.30
CU
Prayer Meeting,
Chaplaincy

11:00
Australia and New
Zealand
Weekly meeting
D9

13:00
SU UGM, Old Theatre

15:00
CSSA
Chinese Classes
K05

Survival International
AGM
S306

Yoga
Hatha Yoga, Badminton
Court
18:00

People and planet
Weekly meeting
H103

Sikh-Punjab
Music class
S78

Dance
Intermediate hip hop class
S75

Filipino
Tagalong lessons
G107

Visual Arts
Life drawing class
D206

Friends of Palestine
Film: Keys, and discussion
with director Salim Dow

19.00
Debate
Workshop
D302

Scandinavian
Christmas Dinner, *Quad*

Drama
Christmas variety show,
Old Theatre

FRIDAY

8:30
CU
Prayer meeting,
Chaplaincy

13:00
Yoga
Intermediate Acrobatic
Yoga *D702*

15:00

CSSA
Chinese Classes Class
K05

15:00
Go
Weekly meeting
K05

16:00
CSSA
Chinese Classes - O-
class *S221*
Hindu
Gita Classes
D11

19:00
Dance
Ballet Class
S75

20.00-
Christmas Chaos Crush

MONDAY

16:00
CSSA
Chinese Classes - B -
class *K05*

19:00
Swing Dance
Beginner's Classes
Classes cost £2.50/3.50
(members/non-members)
D502

SOC NEWS

Want your own society
webpage? Go to
www.lsesu.com/register
and speak to
su.comms@lse.ac.uk for
more info and advice.

The LSE Arts advisory
forum is hosting the
'LSE Perspectives' pho-
tography competition. E-
m a i l
lseperspectives@lse.ac.uk
k for more info.
Book your end of term
party in the
Underground Bar or the
Quad! E-mail
su.ents@lse.ac.uk for
more info.

Any Society questions?
Pop in to the Society's
officer's office hour from
1-2 pm every Friday in
the quad.

Want to be included in
these listings? Send your
event details to su.societies@lse.ac.uk Friday
evening at the latest.

QUAD OFFICE HOURS

Jimmy Tam, General
Secretary
Wednesday, 1-2PM

Joel Kenrick, Treasurer
Thursday, 2-3PM

Alex Finnegan, LGBT
Thursday, 2-3PM (in office
of Alex Vincenti) E299

Alexandra Vincenti,
Education and Welfare
Thursday, 2-3PM

Ali Dewji,
Communications
Friday, 2-3PM

Arthur Krebbers,
Societies
Friday, 1-2PM

Aled Fisher, Environment
and Ethics
Monday, 1-2PM

Fadhil Bakeer Markar,
International Students
Tuesday, 1-2PM

Emma Hallgren, Students
with Disabilities
Tuesday 1-2PM

Shanela Haque, Anti-
Racism
Friday, 10AM-12PM

James Caspell,
Postgraduate Officer
Thursday, 3-4PM

Zoe Sullivan, Womens
Thursday 10-11 in D703

Louise Robinson,
Residences
Thursday, 2-3PM

Anushka Shenoy, General
Course Tuesday 1-2pm

Sid Kamath, Executive
Editor
The Beaver
Tuesday, 2-3PM in E204

Team mates

This week Gareth Fishlock and Alex Bond name and shame the Footie 1sts

Best Trainer: Jim Davies - still tries to train even though his ankle's barely connected to his leg at the moment.

Homosexual Weekly

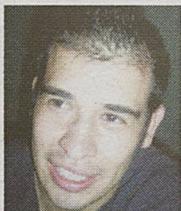


Worst trainer: 'Sick Note' San Grewal - conveniently picks up an injury just before training, only to make a miraculous recovery shortly after, every week.

Fastest Player: Matthew 'Brummie' Davenport - on the way back from Sussex he out paced Fish and Bondy to get to Burger King. He said he needed to get there first because his order takes a long time and he didn't want to be late for the bus. He's right, 2 Super-size Rodeo burger meals with an XL Double Bacon Cheeseburger on the side does take a while to cook.



Most intelligent: Ron Hogsett - he's got his own business for fuck's sake.



Least intelligent: Matthew 'Brummie' Davenport - MA100 Year1 = 32, MA100 Re-sit Year 2= 21. Doesn't know when to use the phrase 'so-to-speak' and likes to start new sentences when he's halfway through his current one. What a fucking idiot.

Most skilful: Ron Hogsett - the yank's got the ability to make defenders look very silly.

Biggest moaner: Matthew 'Brummie' Davenport - 'The Slug' sits at the back shouting about how shit we are. Always loud, always negative.

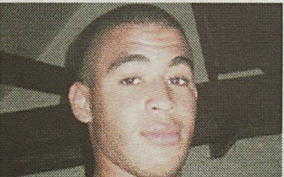
Hard-man: Mike Maynard - never pulls out of anything.

Most likely to be a raging gay: Rich Gull - loves the sight of a good cock, although to be fair the whole team is just a little bit too comfortable with male nudity after 'naked wednesdays' were born in Brighton.

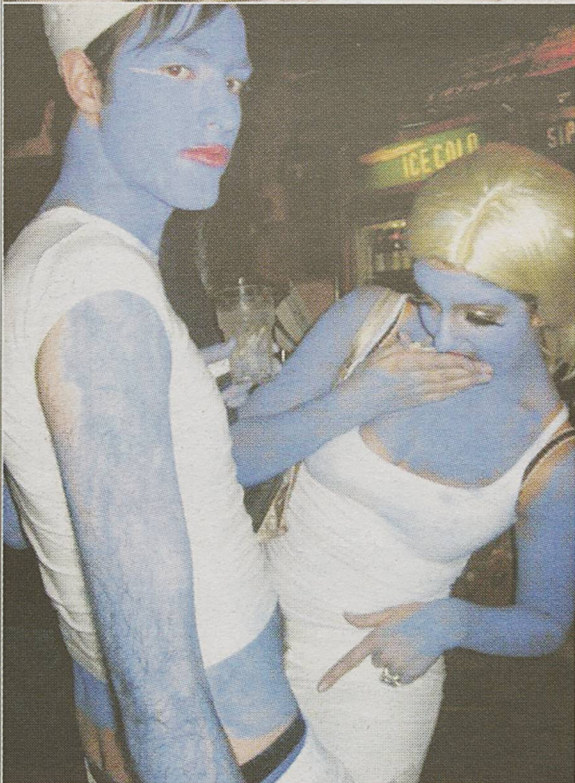
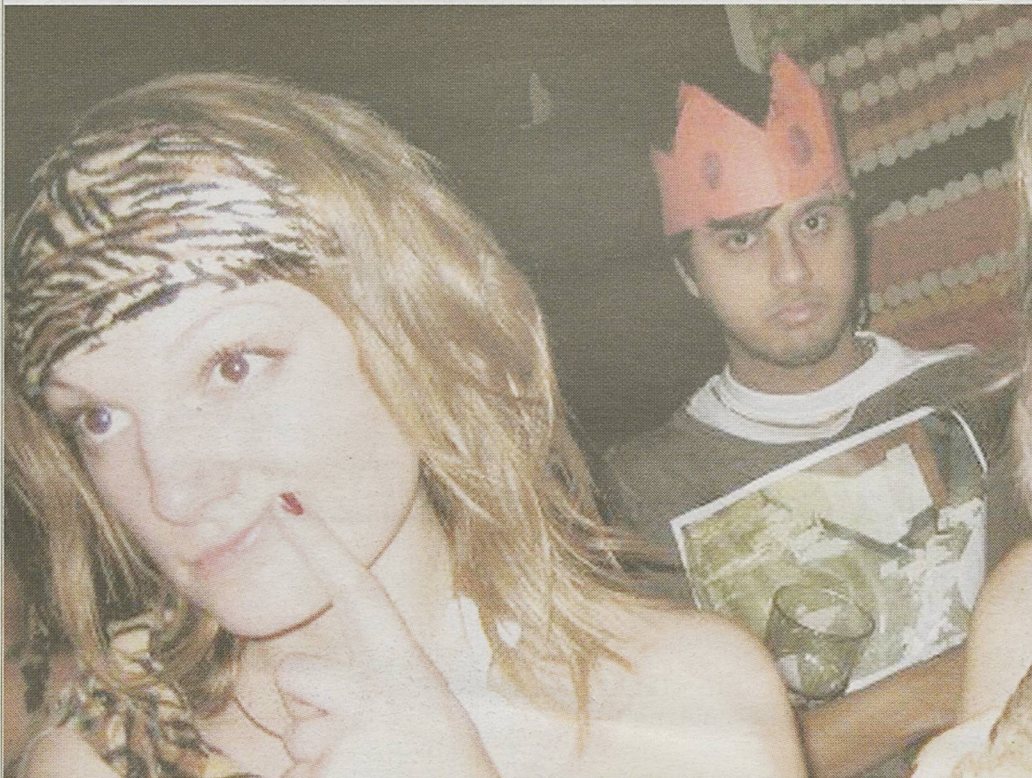
The joker: Matthew 'Brummie' Davenport - "I played fucking good today". Hilariously delusional.

Biggest slag-puller: Matthew 'Brummie' Davenport - the self proclaimed 'pussy magnet' strolls around molesting young girls as well as claiming to have several 'bitches' waiting for him at home. Playaaaaa!

Who's the longest in the shower: Mike Maynard - we make him shower on his own.



Carnage at



Fanny

Did you all have fun at the Barrel? Oops, I meant Carol. There were fines to be dished out, drinks to be spat out and boobs to whipped out at the AU Christmas party and Fanny saw all (not that she remembers it all, though.)

The night got underway at a fast pace with Kath With NoNicksOn leading the race to get hammered. From 8.30pm Kath has no recollection of the events that ensued. A special dedication must go out to her, since she was awarded the much-coveted title of "By far the drunkest there", a fact that was reinforced by her numerous dishonourable acts. Firstly, she was fined rather early on and had the not-so-tricky task of pulling Handy Birdman while scratching him.

She didn't manage that. She then had to exchange her drinks vouchers. She was refused service. She then had to go the rest of the night without making a tit of herself. She certainly did not manage that by any means. She loaned her bra to a tranny who she later went home with, was vomited on and didn't notice, had a drink poured on her head and didn't realise and was heard screaming "spin the wheel" in the toilets, when there was no wheel to be found at the event.

Surprisingly, Kath was allowed to remain in the building, unlike Scarlet O'Hara and Virile Mullerman who are now eligible to join the "I've been escorted out of Walkabout" Facebook group. The two were almost joined by Lampard,

who was refused service, as was Carly Feeler. Tom Fool tried to recreate the Barrel's mascot naked rugby boy, on his own, on the way home only to be arrested for indecent exposure and almost shared a cell with Wheel Barrow who refused to pay for his Crispy Duck meal.

Whorer Halfwit lezzed it up a little too much after her fine put ideas in her head and caused Gobby Felon to slip away faster than anyone on the snakebite-covered floor and also unwrapped the gift that was Sucha Stateman. After her potty impression, Mannesqueeze Vermin succumbed to the floor, only to land on her chin when the obvious option would have been to break her fall with the

wads of loo roll stuffed down her bra. Whorer saw her chance to pounce on the Women's Rugby groupie and swiftly moved on to Lemming Pullgrim, who had already made her way through most of the AU.

The Cave girls were relatively tame but proved they can't hold their drink since one poor girl was spotted hugging the toilet bowl by 8pm and later her friend was caught putting her club under Lippy Slayer's loincloth. Laid Curls was also spotted under a certain Netball 6ths' loincloth and then down Vish's pants, against the wall for all to see, and then exposed herself repeatedly.

Finally, the night came to a close after popper-addict Snidy Moaner face-raped a

feline Rugby 3rds and wondered why he wasn't interested. She then tried to get her next popper hit from a lit cigarette lighter which resulted in a security alert after one concerned barmaid reported smelling burning flesh. Brummie came to her rescue and extinguished the nasal inferno by spitting his drink on in her face.

I hope you weren't all too emotionally scarred from the mild debauchery of the Carol, and hope any more Barrel reenactments in the Tuns do not result in the Saloon-esque scrapping that Birdman and little Jimmy took part in. Remember people, a chair is for sitting, not for hitting.

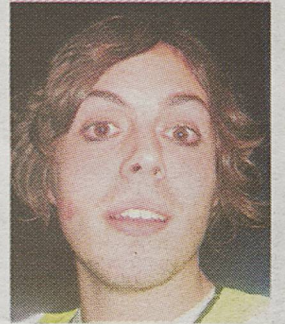
See you in the new year!

Mwah xxx

The Carol

Our Favourites

Man of the Week - James Little

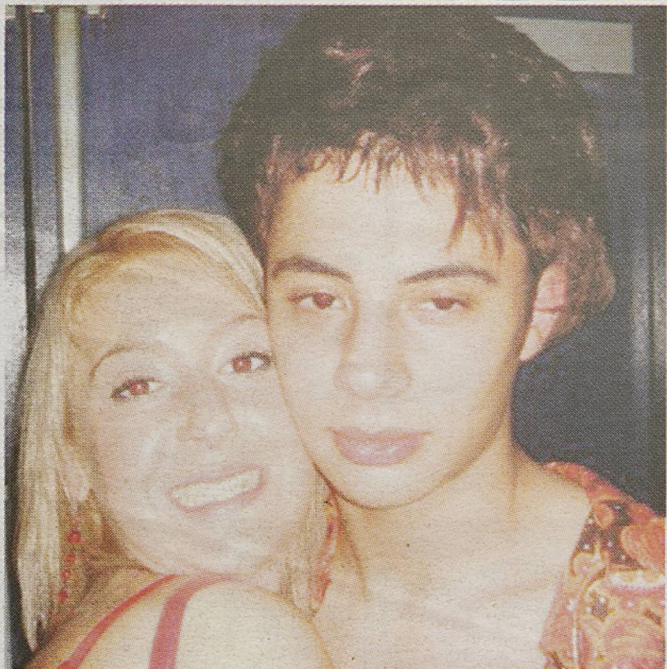


Congratulations this week must go to 4th year student and LSEFC 1st teamer, James Little for some truly despicable behaviour last Friday which left many feeling frightened, embarrassed and disgusted by his shameful actions. The day had started off with young James taking it upon himself to honour the tradition of the AU Barrel by organising an eight hour piss-up with his FC brothers before rocking out at the netball girls house party. So far so good it would seem. However, no-one expected what was to follow. At 9pm Jimmy was spotted sitting in a supermarket trolley in the middle of Old Street with cars screeching on their brakes to avoid ending his worthless life. Instead of calling it a night, however, Jimmy was then seen laughing while he sprawled himself over the bonnet of a car that had narrowly avoided killing him just moments earlier. Arriving at the netball party Jimmy continued to drink heavily much to the dismay of the other revellers before being kicked out at 2am. This was unfortunately about three hours too late as Jimmy had already physically assaulted one housemate, verbally abused another, completely destroyed the living room and physically intimidated many of the women present. Jimmy attempted to defend himself by claiming that he was too rock and roll for the LSE but in actual fact he only succeeded in cementing his reputation as a social embarrassment and complete cock. What a man!

Woman of the Week - Naomi Snider



The coveted title this week goes to Miss Naomi Snider for an incident she was involved with at the AU Carol. Miss Snider is known in the AU as a member of the discontinued Netball 7ths team and now is simply a groupie with a raging amyl nitrate habit. On Wednesday, dying for her next popper hit, she attempted to inhale from a cigarette lighter. Unfortunately for her, the lighter was lit and subsequently cooked the poor girl's septum to a crisp. Now sporting a nasty Kate Moss-esque blister on her nostril, her mother questioned whether Naomi actually had a cocaine problem and Naomi had no choice but to concoct an unbelievable story involving some skewered beef that had gone astray. Naomi narrowly avoided being admitted to the Priory in the end, and her Mother has insisted on a weekly nasal check-up. Well done Naomi!



Joey's bits

'Disgusting', 'Absolute filth' and 'I want to die' were just some of the words and phrases used to describe the sight of seeing Andy Burton topless at last Wednesday's AU Carol. Despite this setback, however, the event proved to be a roaring success as 300 of the LSE's finest congregated for a night of alcohol fuelled hedonism and debauchery. The following extract is taken from the weekly letter I send home to my mum which details what I have been up to in London. I thought I may as well just include the whole entry for the 29th and hope it proves enlightening to those of you who either didn't go or simply can't remember anything.

29th November 2006.

18:30 - Depart Passfield Hall and walk to Walkabout dressed as a nerd. No longer find the fact my trousers are above my nipples 'hilarious' as strangers stop to stare and shout verbal abuse. Feel slightly bad for making spastic jokes earlier in the day.

19:00 - Arrive at Walkabout to meet the other members of the AU Exec.

Pretend to be surprised when informed I am half an hour late and feign disappointment that everything has already been organized.

19:15 - Take Viagra pills with 5 other members of the Exec and wash them down with 2 reefs. Discuss my recent erection problems but am concerned when I sense they think I am joking. I am not.

19:30 - The good people of the AU descend on Walkabout and I am asked to hand out lolly pops to people as they enter. Make mental note to only hand lollies to girls I want to sleep with and get accused of being a 'sexist, racist cock' by one of the rugby team. He is wearing a skirt and has 'blacked' himself up.

19:45 - Approach the bar and make sure all the girls around me know I have a blue VIP wrist-band enabling me to get served straight way. Wink at a girl who looks about 16. Begin to hate myself.

20:00 - Down a pint of wine on stage in front of the packed audience as quickly as I can. Even I am impressed with the speed of which I empty the contents. Notice

moments later that most of my wine is on my shoes and the rest is on my face. High five people anyway.

20:15 - Fines are underway. My job is to stand on stage and hold open the 'lucky dip' bag. Notice that women's ruby are surrounding the stage and are all horrifically drunk and intimidating. Narrowly avoid getting my trousers pulled down. Begin to sweat.

20:30 - Andy Burton gets topless while Brummie spits Reef over him on stage. Begin to feel sick.

20:45 - Still no erection.

21:00 - Fix one of the lucky dip fines so that Scott Hall has to eat a whole lemon on stage. Feel slightly bad as I watch him being sick but laugh heartily anyway.

21:15 - Snog one of the hockey girls on stage whilst being cheered on by the 4th team FC. Feel bad that I don't know her name. Begin to accept that I will never have another erection in my life. Decide drinking more might help.

21:30 - Adjudicate the '12 days of Christmas' competition between men's rugby and foot-

ball. Am impressed and slightly disgusted as I watch Charlie Davies single handedly eat 3 large slabs of spam. Pretend not to notice the blatant cheating by both teams but get confronted and verbally abused anyway.

22:00 - Attempt to get to the bar but begin to trip up over all the girls littering the wet, slippery floor.

22:30 - Stare at Susie Stanford's breasts for about 5 minutes until I am caught. Strongly deny that I was even looking in that direction and claim, that before she spoke to me, I had no idea she was wearing a very sexy, low cut, blue, furry top.

23:00 - Fines end and I desperately get as many free drinks as possible before my blue VIP wristband becomes worthless. Spill most of them on girls.

23:15 - Begin to hug people or as I later find out, strangers.

23:30 - Realise that every girl in the room is absolutely bloody gorgeous.

23:45 to 02:00 - Moments of my life I will never have back. Absolutely no idea but no doubt off engaging in witty,

intellectual conversations with members of the opposite sex and definitely not slumped over a sick covered toilet on my own.

02:15 - Decide now is the right time to speak to the Executive Editor of the Beaver about the Sutherland protest and my future ambitions for the sports section in the new year. Can't help but notice that we are standing by Tottenham Court Road tube station which is not inside Walkabout. Begin to wonder whether I left or was ejected.

10:00 - Wake up in a urine covered bed. Am pretty gutted to discover it's mine. Feel relieved when I realise I am actually lying in strawberry milkshake from McDonalds.

13:00 - Arrive at the UGM just in time for Joel's exhilarating SU Budget talk. Begin to wish it was the AU Carol every day.

Joey xxx

Question Time Debate

The ugly face of the Beautiful Game?

Last Monday the LSE Question Time Society held a debate concerning the state of football today. The five panellists Hugh Robertson (MP), Malcolm Clarke (Chairman of the Football Supporters Federation), Nick Cusack (ex-professional with Swansea FC), Bobby Barnes (Assistant Executive of the PFA) and Chris Davies (sports writer for the Daily Telegraph) entertained the new theatre with a heated debate on all things football.

Bobby Barnes, the assistant chief executive of the PFA and former player, began by asking whether the game is really in such a bad way? As he put it the game was in much worse shape twenty years ago with grounds crumbling and hooliganism dominating the sport, so surely now we are in a better place with higher attendance and ever increasing incomes. This point was heavily argued by Malcolm Clarke, Chairman of The Football Supporters Federation, who insisted that in our uncompetitive leagues, prices have risen way above inflation, pricing



fans out of the game with two match day tickets to a Premiership game costing more than a week's dole money which has in turn reduced attendances.

Hugh Robertson MP talked over the political connections of politics and the beautiful game, admitting that there was a lack of funding in the game. However, he concluded that there cannot be much wrong with a game that is played by 12 million people on a weekly basis.

Chris Davies, sports writer for the Daily Telegraph, mainly talked about referees and the way they are treated by British fans. He, along with many others in the auditorium, did not believe it should be necessary for referees to arrive in safe cars at the ground after the abuse and attacks several have faced. He also asked whether the referees integrity should be questioned? Especially by those managers, players and fans who do not know the rules. It would not be allowed to happen in any other competitive sport, so why is this allowed to happen in football?

The first question put to the panel from the floor asked the visitors what they thought about the financially ugly side of the game. Hugh Robertson MP talked about the ever growing demand for tickets to Premiership football matches which are increasingly expensive simply due to the theory of supply and demand which pleased the economists in the room. Malcolm Clarke again disagreed strongly with his opposite numbers detailing the ever-increasing gap between the Premier League and other leagues.

The second question talked about the Italian match-fixing

scandals that rocked Italy earlier this year, did the professionals think this could happen in the UK? Bobby Barnes believed there was too much honesty and professional pride in the English game for players to be involved. However, he did question the honesty of the game's governance, asset stripping and financial governance have been seen in the lower leagues but Barnes believes the FA is finally getting its act together. Chris Davies, on the other hand, talked about how the recent 'bung' allegations in the UK differ totally to those problems in Italy.

The next question asked the panel on their opinions of referees in the game and the constant criticism of these individuals. Chris Davies talked of the ignorance of many players and managers which could be dangerous to the game and also believed better knowledge of the rules would help this, often ugly, side of the game. We were told of that the PFA wants more players to take refereeing courses but there had been resistance from the refereeing authorities. Hugh Robertson MP questioned the footballing rules and why these rules were so much stricter in the other big four sports in the UK, namely: cricket; rugby union; rugby league; and tennis. Later in the session the question of female referees in the game was brought up. Bobby Barnes admitted it was harder for women to get involved in this career path however it was not impossible by any means and that there are already female referees in the game, Nick Cusack also encouraged the support of women in the game.

The next question from the

floor took on some true LSE style, questioning whether young children should be looking at footballers, such as Wayne Rooney as role models when they could be looking up to politicians?

Hugh Robertson MP jumped straight in to this question stating that young boys and girls should never stop idolising sportsmen and women, however he did believe it was important for these stars to be aware of their status and hence behave in a suitable manner, not something we are always accustomed too. Bobby Barnes agreed with this and reminded us that it is society who looks for these role models not vice versa, Chris Davies also added that many footballers help in society, a point raised by Bobby Barnes who detailed the good work of players such as Frank Lampard and Wayne Rooney who are heavily involved in children's charities. So why is it that we only hear about the negative side of these stars? The panel agreed that these stories did not sell papers and hence that the media promoted badly behaved players.

I asked the panel what they thought about the large inflows of equity into the game and what kind of effect this was having on 'the best league in the world'. Malcolm Clarke, ever the pessimist, believed the money was being used in detrimental ways. After all it was increasing the gap between rich and poor clubs and making the leagues even more uncompetitive. One interesting point he raised about this influx of money and the huge number of international players in the British game was that this was affecting the English national team. After



all, surely a strong presence of Englishmen in the Premiership is needed to strengthen the squad.

Chris Davies took the opposite view to this, looking at the number of world class players in the Premier League, and added that our leagues are no more uncompetitive than the Bundesliga or Serie A all of which are a two or three horse race. Hugh Robertson MP also believed the inflow of money to be positive, with improved safety, salaries and state of the art stadiums with which to attract the world's best players. He did however admit that this affected competition. After all how can the Charlton's of the world compete with the Chelsea's.

With far more economists present than LSE sports stars the next question inevitably turned to finance, and whether Chelsea moving into financial services had anything to do with football? Hugh Robertson MP agreed this had nothing to do with the beautiful game, however provided they gained the support of regulators there was nothing to stop them. The panel also discussed the excessive TV revenues received by the big clubs and why this money was not spent on youth

development, and why there was no limit to what this money could be spent on. As Chris Davies commented, the money clubs earn from gate receipts and TV revenues is their own and no governing body can force them to do anything with this. Nick Cusack agreed that it would be nice to see this revenue reaching the lower leagues however market forces dominate in the game and there is simply a much smaller demand to watch lower league games on live TV.

The final question of the day looked at the use of video evidence in refereeing decisions. Nick Cusack agreed that it would be useful for the referee to always be correct, however, with the game being played at such a high tempo it could create further problems and ruin the flow of the game, after all the referee only has a split second to make that decision. Hugh Robertson thought the initiative could perhaps be tried in the lower leagues as it is used successfully in many other sports who were initially against it.

Time quickly ran out, with plenty more bursting out of the speakers' mouths, so thank you to the Question Time Society for an interesting discussion...

Ultimate Frisbee

Ultimate Frisbee climb the ladder



D Piddy

Ultimate Frisbee Ladder league
Regent's Park

Photographs: Liam Chambers

Good afternoon LSE. I'm proud of you. Not for your shameless self-aggrandisement or fashion sense, but for the quality of your Ultimate players. There was a time in these parts where Ultimate was considered something of a poof game. Well, after the ladder tourna-

ment of Nov. 25, my penis is incapable of ever 'stemming the rose' as it is now inverted; that's right, it's an 'innie.' That's dedication.

For those of you assholes awake at 9am on Saturday morning and not at Regent's Park, you will understand why I am now forced to piss sitting down and spend four days a month insufferably bitchy. It was bloody cold out with heavy rain and wind; the trifecta of misery, especially for the half of our team that originates from Singapore. Despite the intermittent lightning and thick mud, we stuck with it for eight hours and defended our school's increasingly fragile reputation while most of you pounded back a succession of low fat fair-trade caramel frappuccinos and contemplated the impending trendiness of the ascot. Well hear this: Fuck Ascots.

For this particular event, our large team split into a '1' and a '2' squad to ensure greater playing time. Our competition came in the form of teams representing King's, Imperial, and UCL, who also had two sides. LSE 1 finished with a record of 3-2, losing to

UCL 1 and Imperial in overtime. The team's morale was nearly shot at the start after the (fairly devastating) loss to UCL, but solid handling from Frenchie, Darkness, Yo! and Beat Box, combined with some amazing catches and strong defence from Pagget, Mamabear, Xian, and McNewGuy, allowed us to regain much confidence and finish with a respectable result in the remaining games. The win against King's at the end was particularly sweet, in part because the AU 'Carol' is fast approaching, but mostly because they are a bunch of soft-skulled, low-watt shit gurglers and the thought of them sulking makes my bum hum.

On the other side, LSE 2 played really well despite the scoresheet. To be serious for a moment, they played with a number of beginners on the team in some of the worst Ultimate weather imaginable and still showed great character, attitude and sportsmanship, and that is what the game should be about. Weeyang, with throws so devastating we should probably change his nickname to 9/11 (too soon?)

led this squad with a smile and some of the softest, most luscious hair I have ever run my fingers through. Casey proved that, in addition to steers and queers, Texas can produce some fine ultimate players, while Angie and Cass ran their asses off on defence. Nut 'busted' free for some fine catches, as did Winston, Limpy and Weiham, while Chubby and Fangs ran both ends of the pitch, tirelessly handling and cutting.

It was a filthy and cold Equilibrium squad that left Regent's Park Saturday evening, but one that demonstrated how far they have come since starting just 8 weeks ago. The teamwork and spirit were exceptional all around and we all finished the day shivering but smiling. There was even more shivering and smiling when we returned home, for, under the auspices of washing all the mud off, we proceeded to treat our bodies like amusement parks. I myself discovered something which I won't describe to you, but will simply refer to as 'Throbbin Hood's Grotto.' A suggestion: it feels less like sandpaper if you wash the mud out first.



Karate

LSE KC worth their weight in golds



Akshay Kundaiker

The summer was finally over and competition time beckoned for the LSE Karate Club. As is often heard resonating through the Three Tuns on a Wednesday night from the LSE Football teams, 'FC till I die!', the same mentality stands true for the LSE KC and if you had the pleasure of watching our team compete at the recent KUGB Student Nationals you would have witnessed a real example of 'KC till I die!'

First on the cards was the Individual Brown Belt and below Kata. The day started with a strong showing from our entrants into this category: Sam Mir, Haymon Sinapius, James Gordon, Fan Miao and yours truly. The LSE students bulldozed through the several rounds of competition, but after some fiercely contested bouts, Sam and Haymon fought their way through to the finals, with expert displays of the katas; Heian Godan and Tekki Shodan. In the finals both these competitors went all out with their trump card, the kata Bassai Dai. The stances and definition which these competitors exuberated were obvious to all. The judges' cards showed a different picture, and with a fraction of a point between the top three,

Haymon and Sam had to settle for the Silver and Bronze medals respectively.

Next up was former captain, Kizito Kiyimba. In Individual Black Belt Kata and Kumite he was a true force to be reckoned with. When his victims met his piercing eyes they knew that their matches were over and time and time again Kizito's beautiful kata's and trademark gyaku tsuki's bewildered both his opponents and the judges. Missing out on the finals did not discourage Kizito as he would demonstrate later in the team events.

A truly LSE affair commenced in the Individual Novice Kumite. All four LSE entrants - Akshay, Haymon, James and Fan, had their sights set on the gold, and for one of them the gold would be theirs shortly. All four men ran rings around their opponents and cruised to the quarter finals. With Haymon, James and Fan all progressing to the semis all that remained was for me to follow suit to make it an all LSE semi-final. In a heated exchange of fists and feet my opponent scored a decisive point with a strong gyaku tsuki. Unphased by this I continued forward aggressively in what became a stalemate of attack and counter-attack all the way till the final buzzer sounded. My opponent took the short lived victory for my team mate would exact revenge in the semi-finals.

In his first competition, Fan showed exceptional speed and power and floored his

opponent with a rocket gyaku tsuki and ura mawashi geri combo. His victory was decisive and in his first competition Fan was through to the finals. The second semi-finals pitted two LSE stalwarts against one another. Both had dominated at BUSA last year, but this would be the first time they would face one another. Haymon gained the upper hand early on with a speedy gyaku tsuki to give the advantage, or so he thought. James upped the ante and proved that he would not remain on the back foot for long scoring a distinctive gyaku tsuki which brought his opponent to his knees. Both were now looking for the final point for the victory. With a feint to the left and a couple of steady streams of punches, James landed the final blow for victory. James was through to the final, with Haymon awarded the bronze.

If the previous bout had been exciting what would follow next would be explosive. From the hajime both competitors circled one another looking for the right time to strike. After a couple of exchanges Fan pounced with a thundering gyaku tsuki, the force of which bowled over his opponent. A lesser man would have broken his ribs after a punch like that, but not James, as moments later he was back on his feet. With the match heating up James used a combination of mawashi geri's, ura's and gyaku tsuki's to score the decisive championship point! James was the new Champion,



and with Fan attaining the Silver Medal the club had pulled off an all LSE 1, 2, 3!

Feeling the passion from his team-mates matches, the seasoned pro Sam stepped up to the tatami as the defending champion from last years student nationals. From the go Sam made it clear to his opponents that the title was his to stay and with dashi's and his now flagship ura mawashi geri he flew through the finals, sailing to his second championship gold. This would not however be the end of his medal tally.

Having battled through their earlier opponents, Kizito, Sam and Haymon found themselves gracing the finals of the Team Kata. Opting for Bassai Dai, the terrific trio wowed the audience and were rewarded

with bronze medals for their troubles.

Last up was the Team Kumite contest, where the trio from team kata were joined by yours truly with the aim of defending the championship gold earned the previous year. Brushing aside all that came our way the team marched through to the semi finals, which pitted us against a fearsome black belt team. First up was their star player, a black belt who had won the Gold in the Individual Black Belt Kumite. Everyone thought that the bout against our purple belt opener was a foregone conclusion, but Haymon knew different. With Sensei Dario coaching the team throughout the day his excellent coaching was evident in this bout. His team talk had got us all psy-

ched and Haymon knew what he had to do. After weighing up his opponent and dodging his attacks, Haymon faked with a flurry of punches waiting for his moment and with his opponents guard down Haymon leaped and landed a lightning mawashi geri to his opponents exposed neck to pick up the instant win, much to the crowds shock. Kizito and Sam powered through the remaining combatants and moments later the LSE team were champions once more!

Our season had opened with a roaring start of six Gold, two Silver and five Bronze medals. With more talent coming up through the club we can expect to see more of the same as the year continues.

Netball

Netball 3rds are dirty and wrong



Libby Meyer

Netball 3rds 40
RUMS 15
Berrylands

Dirty and wrong. These are the only two words that are needed to describe the Power Team's life last week...

Monday: battle our way through the dirty tactics of the opposition in a cracking netball match. Tuesday: a very wrong day. First, our fantastic article doesn't appear in the Beaver. Then we are labelled sexist! We never realised it was a crime to point out the obvious! Especially when the obvious is a team who pride themselves in displaying as much of their fake tan gone wrong and white granny pants as possible.

Wednesday: the pinnacle of the week. Dirtiness and wrongness to the max. It all started off innocently as we used face paint to look like dirty cave-woman for authenticity. After the floodgates of alcohol opened, we have heard rumours the dirtiness reached a new level. Some of the Power Team experienced severe wrongness. The excitement of

the pre-lash was a little too much for Loo-ren. Impressively, she successfully managed to enter the wonderful Walkabout only to use the toilets and be escorted home!

Thursday: the innocent among you might describe the state of our livers on the National Day of Hangovers as wrong. We prefer to call them livers of steel.

Friday: Miss Universe spots a floating condom in the library. The Power Team email each other debating whether this falls under the 'dirty' or 'wrong' category of the week. It's a beautiful start to a typical debauched and messy weekend.

Since Tuesday was spent in outrage, there is a severe lack of flashbacks from Wednesday and Thursday was a day of suffering, Monday is the only day worthy of writing about.

A miracle occurred on Monday night. The Power Team had a match and it wasn't raining! Little did we realise, this was actually a curse in disguise. It was only when we got on the court that Miss Universe discovered what the acronym RUMS stood for: Reek and Urine in My Scalp.

RUMS had done their homework before the match. They knew that people across the globe refer to us as the Power Team. Investigating our goal scores, they discovered we had shooters with a 100% suc-

cess rate. But most importantly, their spies had told them that we take great pride in our appearance and hygiene. The RUMS captain ordered her team to stop showering a week before the match. By the smell of it, she told the goal keeper to go a little further and spice up her scalp with a dash of urine. The reek was so intense it almost knocked poor Miss Universe out!

But RUMS had underestimated the strength of the Power Team. Miss Universe and The Bodyguard used opera singing to distract themselves from the smell. We were scoring goals at a cracking pace. When RUMS realised smelling like an abattoir during a heat wave was not enough to stop our insatiable appetite for goals, they decided it was time to transform netball into a contact sport.

While RUMS' general aim was to barge us off court, their goal defence took physicalness to a new level. Revealing her sexual preference she continually groped The Bodyguard as she pretended to grab the ball. The Twangmeyster decided RUMS had gone too far. It was time for retribution. While the wonderful writer of this article does not recall such a moment occurring, it has been confirmed that she ploughed straight into the opposition centre. This stepped up the rivalry between centres and

later both teams witnessed what can only be described as a slapping attack on court as the two centres supposedly fought for the ball.

With a fan club cheering on the sidelines, we knew it was time to show why we are referred to across the lands as the Power Team. There were shouts of "hard and high" and "keep it tight" (supposedly referring to our passing and spacing; not off court pass times).

It was BarkerJJ who set the tone of the match. Her possession of Mini Sabai meant she was blessed with a special power that guaranteed all of our passes were beautiful. Parky Parkinson demonstrated

once again that she can sprint faster than the speed of light. While Bingo was constantly free due to skilful dodging, Rajal gained player of the match status since she constantly intercepted the ball. At first we thought her impeccable play might have been spurred on by her parents cheering on the sidelines. At the end of the match we learned the truth. Rajal only invited her parents to the Berrylands fortress to deliver a stash of food.

There were some rare occasions when RUMS possessed the ball. These moments only ever occurred when gusts of wind made their stench even more unbearable. Anita Wings-

It reached for her life as she defended every ball even though she had side pains (chest infection) and a sore bum. While Say-No-More and Loo-ren prevented RUMS' goals from reaching anywhere near the goal post.

There were no surprises when the final whistle blew. Miss Universe, as per usual, looked like she'd just stepped off the catwalk instead of the netball court. And yet again, we kicked arse! Even stench couldn't stop the Power Team and we won 40 -15. Bring on next week when we face another RUMS team. We have our fingers crossed they remember to shower this time!





Question Time
The ugly face of the Beautiful game?

The AU Carol
What ended up in your mouth?



The Power Team
Netball 3rds: Sexy or just plain sexist?
Libby Meyer

05.12.06 | thebeaver.sports@lse.ac.uk

Beaver **sports**

Bringing Wexy Back



Justin Gest

LSE Beavers 116
UCL 62
Brixton Rec

Men's basketball stars Phil Worland and Edward Wexler-Beron just about outsourced University College London last Wednesday. That's right. By themselves.

A 27-point effort from "Wexy" and a 26-point contribution from Worland helped seal the deal early for the still undefeated Beavers.

Wexler had 14 points in the first quarter alone, spotting LSE to a 37-12 lead after the initial 10 minutes - the highest scoring first quarter of the Beaver's season. UCL kept the game competitive in the second with a hoop-for-hoop

run against a tiring LSE starting five. But after LSE Head Coach Torbjorn Gehrke and Assistant Coach Ronnie Baker released the bench at halftime, the Beavers pushed the ball, fast-breaking to an enormous lead and the highest scoring game of the season; a 116-62 thumping.

Baker, who has his hopes set on league, conference, and cup titles, still sees significant room for improvement. "We still have a way to go," said the captain of the British Men's national team. "We have a good team, but you can't just admire a lot of high-scoring routs. There are better teams out there and we need to keep preparing ourselves."

Worland, for one, seems ready. On Wednesday, he overcame a nagging shoulder injury and had a string of key third quarter jumpers to push LSE ahead in the second half. Worland's hot streak helped run the Beaver's Wednesday night record to a potent 7-0.

On Friday nights at the Euston Rocket, however, Worland remains a flaccid 0-7. Wexler-Beron has been a dependable 20-points-a-night player. After the game, he exclaimed, "There is nothing more important to me than this team." (Wexler had missed a training session earlier in the week, because he had an unassessed essay due next month.) But Worland and Wexler's effort overshadowed very strong performances by forwards Rob Steinmetz and Nick Broadway.

In email correspondence after the game, Steinmetz expressed his excitement: "Wow!!!! => What a great game! ;) I thought we played reeally well. :D.". Broadway played a solid 20 minutes against UCL, in the midst of a personal controversy instigated by human rights NGOs. Over the past few weeks, various organizations have demanded that his playing time be cut to meet international child labour limitations.

In case Broadway is forbidden to return to the court, his teammate B.D. Kiehm said that his absence should be ephemeral. "I mean, it's just a matter of weeks before he hits puberty," he said. Third-year big man Henrik Jorem saw significant minutes in the LSE frontcourt, and grabbed key rebounds down the stretch. Changing clothes after the game, Jorem revealed his "good luck panties": bloomers made of fishnet leggings and a satin pouch. Speaking with regard to the loincloth, Jorem said that he picked it up at a sex shop clearance sale in Soho and claimed it makes him "feel more confident."

Power forward Michael McMahon said he has his own superstitions, but was hesitant to share them. "You'll never get me lucky charms!" he shrilled. But good fortune is not a major concern for a team that has been outscoring the opposition by an average of 32 points a game. They have often done it

despite injuries or illnesses endured by key players.

Guard Mark Ferullo seemed hampered by a noticeable limp during the UCL match-up. When pressed after the game, he maintained that it had nothing to do with recent accusations of bestiality made against him by a goat shepherd in Leicestershire. Allegedly, Ferullo likes to receive. Also, after the last Beaver article mistakenly wrote that Andrew Butters was allegedly undergoing treatment for cancer, he wanted to assure his fans. "It's not cancer," he said. "It's gonorrhoea."

Adversity aside, the team is well on their way to a sweep of the BUSA Southeastern 2B League. After a road game against Essex next week, the Beavers will return in January for matches against Greenwich at home followed by Kent away.

Asked for further thoughts after Wednesday's big victory,

Head Coach Torbjorn Gehrke said, "Man, I was so whacked out on shit during the 80s, I don't know what happened." But Coach, we were asking about the game. "Oh. No comment."

In light of their great success and their indomitable spirit, the Beavers are encouraging more student fans to join their supporters on gameday. Currently, the team is cheered on by a chorus of unemployed bodybuilders, janitors on break, kids waiting to use the court next, and a collection of Brixton streetwalkers who call themselves "The Walking Clap."

Point guard Dan Greenberg, a leader in the gay community, is making a particular appeal for more "diversity in the cheering section."

For more information on the next home and away match-ups, email Greenberg at dgberg@lse.ac.uk or team captain Justin Gest at j.gest@lse.ac.uk.