

# PRIDE WEEK SPECIAL

# The Beaver

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London School of Economics  
Students' Union  
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## LSESU twins with Islamic University of Gaza despite voting controversy



Photo: Cherie Leung & Ben Phillips

Marie Dunaway

The passing of a motion to twin the LSE Students' Union with the Islamic University of Gaza at last Thursday's UGM has caused much controversy, after complaints over the voting system used suggests the results were unfair. The final vote was won by 30 votes; 161 for, 131 against and with 10 abstentions.

The motion resolved to twin the LSESU with the Islamic University of Gaza, so to "show solidarity with the students there who have had their campus bombed and their colleagues killed by the Israeli Occupation Forces." Proposer of the motion, Samer Araabi, stated that the twinning was in "no way a sign of support for Hamas" but to support the people of Gaza and their right to education. The motion states that due to Israeli attacks, blockades and military incursions on Gaza, and the occupation of Palestinian territories by the Israeli military, that this right is currently being breached.

The motion faced large opposition from many members of the Israeli and Jewish Societies, who launched a "Humus not Hamas" campaign to create awareness of their perceived problems

with the twinning. The Opposers of the motion, Erica Dobin, alleged that Hamas had built the university, many prominent Hamas members had been educated at the University and that bombs and weaponry were built and stored in the basement of the establishment.

Questions were asked from the floor regarding the choice of such a controversial university. The Student Union has been twinned with An-Najah National University in Nablus, Palestine since January 2007, but this is due to expire at the end of November. Students also mandated the Union to support the Right to Education Campaign in 2007, based in Palestine and to raise awareness of the impact of the Israeli occupation in the right to education of Palestinians. Araabi and other proposers acknowledged this twinning as a "fantastic success" but wanted to "provide this opportunity so a different area could benefit".

An amendment was proposed to twin the Student Union with many other universities across the world who could benefit from such a twinning. Kate Strivens, the proposer, said this would aim not to "isolate student bodies" whilst also giving these universities greater opportunities. These included educational establishments in Burma, Israel, Palestine, Sudan and Latin America. Opposer

to the Amendment, Mira Hammad, said in principle this was a good idea, but that it was not well thought out and that each institution would require different Union resolutions. Hammad claimed that large number of twinings could make the concept a "vacuous exercise." Hammad also offered to second any motion put forward that would further the right to education in other countries. The amendment fell.

The final vote was taken by paper ballot, the back page of Order of Business. After initial confusion over the placement of the ballot boxes inside and outside the Old Theatre, concerns were raised to the Constitution and Steering Committee that the process was being abused. Accusations were made that some voters, who were voting for the motion, were voting more than once by gaining a multiple papers and voting in a different box. There were also votes counted from those who did not attend the meeting and no regulation of those voting who had sat in the balcony.

When similarly controversial issue, "Defend Gaza, Condemn the Israeli Massacre", was voted on last year, voting was carried out in the Quad through a controlled paper ballot vote. Ben Grabiner, President of the Israel Society, questioned C&S as to why this was not done for this motion. He claimed this would have

helped eliminate voter fraud.

C&S released a statement on Friday afternoon after a meeting to determine the constitutionality of the voting procedures used at the UGM. The statement asserted that: "the evidence does not suggest that these issues affected the overall result." Although agreed that the system used by the "Constitution was not perfect", the committee has deemed that the "procedures were fair and constitutional."

Grabiner remarked that: "The motion, debate and vote have been handled in a pretty shambolic way by the Union and C&S." He concluded that "Once again they have alienated large sections of the student body. We are now considering how to take this further."

In response to the allegations of electoral fraud, Hammad said: "The procedures were pretty simple and were explained to the UGM by C&S and there are no allegations of a concerted effort by anybody to cheat. I am at a loss to understand why the validity of C&S's work has been called into question, unless it is because those opposing the motion are attempting to produce the result they would like through bureaucratic rather than democratic means. That the motion itself passed by a reasonable majority is testament of the willingness of the SU to stand up for the universal right of education for all students, regardless of where they are or who their government is."

LSESU General Secretary Aled Fisher believed that: "The Constitutional and Steering Committee did their best on Thursday under what were difficult circumstances. No one has actually reported seeing anyone successfully vote twice, and the only attempt was stopped successfully by a member of C&S."

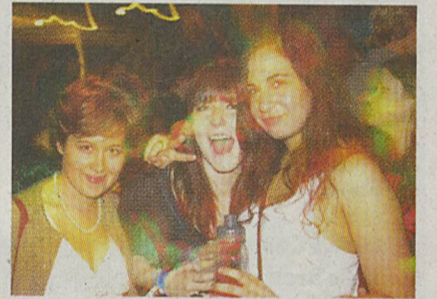
Fisher added: "Under our current procedures, there are few choices about what to do at UGM in terms of voting. Choosing a secret ballot was better than simply having people voting with their hands visibly and publicly, as this can lead to intimidation. The difficulty is organising a UGM vote once again shows the inadequacy of our current structures and the need for change and reform."

## Comment



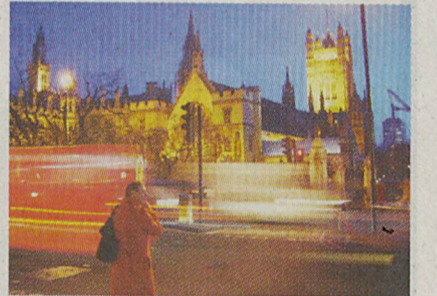
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**Disenchantment with democracy?**  
pages 13, 16-18

## LSE launches new website with intranet

Sanjiv Nanwani

The London School of Economics and Political Science last Friday launched a new public and internal website, which draws on the simplicity of the LSE logo, with its strong use of red, to introduce a distinctive look and feel.

The website, which aims to portray debate as a central focus of the university, has attracted mixed reviews from staff and students.

LSE Director Howard Davies said: "Our website reflects the fact that LSE academics draw on their research and teaching to inform policy globally, shedding expert light on subjects from the international impact of the credit crunch to school admissions and the economics of happiness."

He added that the website would draw quotes from research, newspapers articles and comment pieces, as well as the LSE's public events, to highlight the "breadth and depth" of the university.

Using a strong central quote, instead of a picture, on its home page, the School has drawn on the "extensive engagement

of its academics with key public debates and policy issues" to frame and shape the new site.

The website now places a larger emphasis on the growing number of online videos that allow academics to explain their research in short films and give an insight into life on campus. It also provides audiences with ready access to the increasingly popular podcasts of university and public events.

Prospective students will also benefit from two new channels of information: "Study" and "Life at LSE". These portals aim to give them clear information on the courses available, as well as insights into student life, the support available and, for the first time, the opportunity to take a virtual tour of the LSE campus.

The site also improves access to LSE's core activities of teaching and research, offering easy access to LSE's departments and research centres through a new drop-down menu at the top of the page. This allows quick access to the range and depth of the social sciences taught and researched at LSE. Long-established features, such as the pioneering Experts directory, which allows direct access to academics and their online research

The screenshot shows the LSE website interface. At the top, there are navigation menus for 'LSE website', 'Staff & students', 'Library', 'Academic departments', and 'Research centres'. Below this is a search bar and a 'Home' button. The main content area is divided into several sections: 'Home' with 'Programme and courses', 'Research and expertise', 'Supporting LSE', and 'About LSE'; 'News and events' with a featured article 'Capturing the sun' and a 'China's UK ambassador' article; 'Students' with 'Prospective students' and 'New and current students'; and 'Quick links' for 'New and current students', 'Staff', 'Swine flu advice', 'Academic departments', 'Research centres', 'Telephone directory', 'Alumni Relations', 'Podcasts of public lectures', 'Maps and directions', 'Experts', 'Jobs at LSE', 'Disability & Well-being Office', 'Useful contacts', and 'LSE for You'. There are also 'Public events', 'Videos and podcasts', and 'New books' sections.

papers, maintain a prominent place on the site.

A new internally-facing set of pages - an intranet for staff and students - will make it easier for the different communities across the school to share news and communicate with each other, building on the success of two new e-bulletins -

Student News and Staff News - launched at the start of this term.

LSE worked with consultants Precedent Communications to carry out extensive research into what users wanted of the LSE site, and to trial the new site. "We found that people wanted a consistent look and feel to the site," said Stephen

Emmott, Head of Web Services.

"They wanted it to reflect the excitement of the debate that takes place here, and to ensure that it met the needs of prospective students, current students and staff. We have worked with Precedent to achieve that, and welcome feedback."

## Collective

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## LSE events Highlights of this week's public lectures and talks

**Confronting Corporate Complicity in International Human Rights Abuses**  
Justice Ian Binnie  
Tonight, D502, 1300-1400

**The growing importance of international organisations in society, and an evaluation of their effectiveness**  
Erik Berglof  
Tonight, U8, 1830-2000

**Our Future in Copenhagen: will the world rise to the challenge of climate change?**  
Professor Lord Stern  
Tonight, OT, 1830-2000

**How China Tackles Climate Change in its Wider Development Agenda**  
Madam Fu Ying  
Wednesday, SZT, 1830-1930

**Security and Strategic Trends in the Middle East**  
Professor Anoush Ehteshami  
Wednesday, A318, 1630-1800

**Can Europe Pay its People?: policy options for a continent in transition**  
David Willetts  
Wednesday, NT, 1830-2000

**Scroogenomics: Why You Shouldn't Buy Presents for Christmas**  
Professor Joel Waldfogel, Martin Lewis  
Thursday, OT, 1700-1800

## Positions of the week LSE Careers Service's pick of the best jobs

**Great Grottos**  
Elf, Father Christmas

**Hackney Council for Voluntary Service**  
Communications and Marketing Intern

**Business Monitor International**  
Agribusiness Industry Analyst

**London Research International**  
Portugal Energy Researcher

**Marie Curie Cancer Care**  
Christmas Collection Volunteer

**Regent's College**  
Part-time Library Assistants

**Transnational Crisis Project**  
Digital Gazette Researcher

**Roubini Global Economics**  
Middle East Economic Analyst

**Charities Advisory Trust**  
Christmas Volunteer

**Interaction London**  
Data Analyst

## Interested?

For details of these posts and over 500 more, visit **My Careers Service** at [www.lse.ac.uk](http://www.lse.ac.uk)

# COME INTO THE FOLDS COLLECTIVE MEETING



The Beaver is excited for good reason! Come and vote in the elections for the new **Managing Editor**  
**Photo Editor**  
**Features Editor**  
and  
**Sports Editor**

**Thursday 3 December - 6pm - G212**  
Email [collective@thebeaveronline.co.uk](mailto:collective@thebeaveronline.co.uk) for more details. Anyone can stand for election, and no prior experience is required!

# Do you know who your course reps are?

Eunice Ng

Changes have still not been made to improve the course representative system where concerns have been raised with regards to the accountability and standardisation of the whole process.

Course representatives are students who are chosen to be members of their department's Staff Student Liaison Committees (SSLC). Their principal role is to deliver feedback to departments and liaise with the departments on the students' behalf during weekly departmental meetings. All postgraduate and undergraduate programmes have at least one representative on the SSLC.

However, the system lacks homogeneity as there is no standard way of choosing course reps.

"Some departments have elections," said LSESU Education and Welfare Officer Emmanuel Akpan-Inwang. "But often it's just the first two people who put their hands up in a lecture, so there's a lack of accountability in that respect."

Once course reps are chosen, students often don't know who their course representatives are. There is no central database for students to find out about them and many don't even know that such a system exists.

Meanwhile, there is a lack of consistency in how departments deal with the SSLC. Some representatives find their departments very receptive to feedback, while others felt that their departments took a defensive attitude towards any sort of criticism.

Reena Gehlani, a third year course representative for the Social Policy department, has found her experience positive: "The [Social Policy] department has acknowledged the year opinions and provided step by step solutions. Before I took on the role, I wasn't sure what they did and never bothered to raise my



Photo: Natalie Wong

opinions to them. Being a representative, I now realise how easy it is to get discontentment within the university addressed."

She continued: "Students don't know their representatives often because they get emailed who their representatives are but they don't read their emails carefully and delete them straight away. Maybe if the students had a meeting themselves with the representative, it would raise more opinions and people would speak out as well as being able to meet their representative. This would also help to es-

timate the number of people who feel the same way about certain matters, which definitely helps in the general departmental meetings."

Reforming the system is an issue on the LSESU's agenda. Last year, the Students' Union submitted proposals to the LSE Council for the system to be managed by the LSESU. However, the proposal was rejected. At a recent Student Affairs Committee, the issue about course representative was addressed through a working group being set up. The group consists of

two Deans, LSESU General Secretary Aled Dilwyn Fisher, LSE Academic Registrar Simeon Underwood, and Akpan-Inwang. They will look at reforming the structure of the SSLCs, as well as consulting on issues about the course representative system. A guide for course representatives can also be found on the LSESU website.

According to Akpan-Inwang, the decentralised course rep system is not unique to the LSE. He said: "The problem with the course reps system is that each individual is only attached to their depart-

ment. But all the institutions we've looked at that have a robust course rep system are one where the system has been managed by their students union."

For her part, Gehlani says that improving their credibility is still the most important way to reform the system: "We need to make students more aware that their concerns can be raised and addressed, no matter how small they are."

## Bankside security guard assaulted in promoter fracas



Photo: Edmond Lee

Nik Adhia

The increase in the number of student nights and London clubs has increased the distribution of flyers and promotion of events. In a majority of cases, students are paid to distribute flyers for a vast range of companies. The promoters that employ them often endeavour to gain access to LSE halls of residence so as to target the residents, even at the expense of trespassing or using violence.

This has become a cause for concern to security staff at residences, wardens

and hall committees, as it poses a risk to the safety of residents as reflected in an incident at Bankside hall.

In that instance, which occurred during the late hours a number of weeks ago, three promoters were challenged by Bankside security guards when they were caught littering the hall with masses of flyers. After the three were removed by one guard into the car park area, the security guard was then assaulted. The incident was recorded on the residence's CCTV cameras and witnessed by multiple residents.

Responding to the incident, Dev Gangjee, Warden at Bankside hall, said:

"No hall staff should be put at risk by violent and aggressive behaviour. These incidents are encouraged by a minority of LSE students who give access to such promoters by signing them in as guests in residence halls and allowing them access." He added that there were instances where promoters refuse to leave. "Staff have had to resort to calling the police because promoters have been obstinate on a few occasions in the past."

In another incident, security guards in High Holborn hall were placed on high alert as anonymous phone calls were made to security querying times when there are security changes - a prime time

for promoters to gain access to such halls.

These incidents have been mirrored in reports across other halls where residents have been challenged and intimidated by promoters. Some promoters can pose as official staff or committee members, especially with companies with the name of "Union", which can be easily confused by students as the official Students' Union.

Gangjee said that the issue concerning promoters was one of "collective responsibility" where students should be aware of the dangers posed by the unauthorised individuals on site. He suggested that awareness should be raised by the SU and residences themselves.

## LSESU launches resits campaign

Pria Bakshi

The LSE Students' Union has launched a campaign for the School to allow students to resit their summer exams.

The LSE does not currently offer resits, instead students who miss or fail their exams may only retake them at the end of the next academic year, or in the worst scenario, some must repeat the whole year.

The LSESU would like to see a change made to the current system. This is to include resits for students who have missed their exams due to difficult circumstances, in which case they should be able to obtain any mark. An additional hope is that people who fail their exams should be able to choose whether they want to resit them that summer, where the final grade will be capped at a pass or to repeat the year.

Week 8 marked the beginning of Resits Action Fortnight, during which students can get involved with campaign activities including chalking on Houghton Street and signing postcards around campus.

The postcards are to be sent to Heads of Department, to prove that there is interest among the student body to be allowed resits during the summer. There is also an option to write postcards to the relevant Heads of Department online, where students are allowed to give individual views on why they believe we need the opportunity to resit exams.

Many students seem to support this campaign. Ameena Almezha, a second year BSc Economics student, said: "I think we do need summer resits; five modules is definitely too much to handle, especially since you have to think about things like internship applications on top of that. Failing is also sometimes due to extraneous circumstances so it's not really in students' hands, which makes not having the choice to resit quite unfair."

# The Great Saturday

Phyllis Lui  
Sam Tempest Keeping

The LSESU's previous Saturday night entertainment - Afterskool Klub, Exilio and the Chuckle Club - departed due to a breakdown in communication between the external promoters and members of staff.

All three nights were synonymous with the LSESU, having been based there for nine, six and twelve years respectively, but fell foul of the Union restructure which took place over the summer.

Earlier in this term the Beaver ran a story detailing the uncertain circumstances surrounding the Afterskool and Chuckle Club promoters' decision to move their events to Kings College London Students Union (KCLSU). After individuals approached the Beaver claiming they had been unfairly treated, an investigation was launched which has uncovered a catalogue of broken promises and conflicting information coming from within the LSESU. The consequences of this have been widespread with students expressing dissatisfaction at the loss of a reputable club night in the form of Afterskool, as well as financial and emotional woes for individuals who once worked closely with the Union.

Events began on the 18th April when the promoters of Exilio, Gloria Lizcano, and Afterskool, Glyn Peppiatt, were told by then Bar Manager Jim Fagan that the Union was to undergo a major restructuring. Lizcano said: "Jim called me five minutes before 10 o'clock. He said the... LSE is merging with another university." On the same night Peppiatt said he was also informed that changes were due to take place and that he should "start looking for a new venue" for use "within two or three weeks."

He added, crucially, that "we had known for some time that LSESU would have been closed over Summer 2009, due to a planned refurb so we were prepared to be closed or move for what we initially understood to be 2 or 3 months over the summer."

"The impression I was given at the time was that the change of staff at the LSESU and the looming refurb were the reasons we had to move so soon."

Lizcano also alleges that Fagan said to her that he was due to meet with other members of SU staff the following Monday in order to discuss their situation. For reasons unbeknown to the Beaver this meeting was then postponed until the Tuesday after which Fagan indicated to Lizcano that there may be a chance that Exilio could remain at the LSESU. She told the Beaver "he [Fagan] said that given the nature of Exilio being an LGBT Latino night they might keep you but its not certain." When the Beaver contacted

Fagan he declined to comment.

On 2nd May Lizcano was informed of the planned refurbishment of the LSESU and told that she would have to find alternative premises until September when, she claims, staff assured her the club could return to the premises. The Afterskool club also sent an e-mail, dated 15th May, informing members of their mailing list that the club would be moving to KCLSU along with the Chuckle Club. The following day saw the last time the three nights opened at the LSE.

At the final Exilio, Fagan apparently called Lizcano and said: "I'm really sorry Gloria but its not happening you will have to stay in the new venue." Her reaction was one of shock and confusion. Peppiatt expressed that he was in a similar state of mind at the time and commented that: "initially [at the time of sending our email] we had assumed that the move we were being told to make was absolute and finite."

"Only after we'd made arrangements and agreements to move to Kings were we told that we were wanted back, just like we had always planned for this summer," said Peppiatt. When asked whether he had even been told by Fagan that they would not be able to return to the venue he said "it was advised that it might be wise to seek permanent residency in our new home."

The invitation to return he alluded to came on the 18th May when an acting member of LSESU staff contacted him to say that their e-mail was the first they had heard of the move and that they would like them back. Peppiatt responded that "obviously we couldn't come back immediately since we just moved, and now had an agreement in place with Kings."

"We also agreed that coming back before the refurb was probably not such a good idea and arranged to speak later about coming back after the refurb," he added.

The same day Paul Jay, promoter of the Chuckle Club, contacted LSESU General Secretary Aled Dilwyn Fisher to ask for clarification of why they were being asked to move. Fisher responded and later in the day Jay received a phone call from a member of staff who allegedly quizzed him on his relationship with Jim Fagan.

A day later the same member of staff spoke on the phone to Lizcano saying that Exilio was also never meant to leave and requested a meeting.

She met with staff to ask for an explanation of what was going on. She claims she was told that "you will be coming back to the LSE, we will offer you a good contract."

"This gave me a lot of hope...the staff seemed very genuine and were very sympathetic," she said. Staff also allegedly asked her not to remove the LSESU address from her business card in an apparent symbol of their good faith.

After asking when they would get in contact staff responded that "right now we are doing an internal investigation and we can't tell you much but after we have done the investigation we will get in contact." Also on the 19th Jay received an e-mail which featured a number of noted bullet points from the previous day's conversation. For example it claimed that Jay had remarked that "Jim [Fagan] confirmed that last Saturday [16th May] was your last Saturday at the LSE."

It also said the SU "would like to open the doors of LSE to Chuckle Club again and take this opportunity to formalise our relationship" and added that "we will be opening this Saturday night and you are welcome to use the venue as you have done for the past 12 years."

Jay responded to each of the comments which seemed to have been manipulated to reflect unfavourably on, particularly, Fagan and Nick Pauro, the former Events Manager. He also pointed out that it would take a minimum of two weeks to return and asked whether he would have to close during the refurb given he already booked acts up until December.

He never received a response.

More of the same was to follow. Peppiatt told the Beaver that he also had had two positive meetings with LSESU employees on the possibility of a return for Afterskool. The second meeting, which took place in early July, allegedly involved discussions about Afterskool being back in time for freshers week and concluded with him being assured that "we'd meet again to discuss things further."

They never did. The next time Peppiatt was contacted by the LSESU, after making repeated effort to speak to them, was on the 3rd September when he was told that they had decided to take Saturday nights "in a different direction."

Lizcano told a startlingly similar story. On the 26th June she called the SU to enquire about rumours circulating that there were plans to put on a replacement LGBT Latino night at the LSE. She was met by short shrift from a member of staff who allegedly hung up on her. After this she also received no more contact from the LSESU.

Another former contractor of the Union also criticised the way in which his departure was dealt with. Bill Borez, a freelance sound engineer, was uncompromising when asked when he actually found out that he would no longer be needed at the LSE. He said "They never asked me one thing about anything, I found out after [I was told] they have a new technician looking around."

"Every email I sent to anyone was never answered. I've been working for the students' union for 20 years, all they had to do was ask me. No one ever asked me anything."

arrangement three weeks later.

After three weeks, they made it was clear that they did not want to return to LSE at that point.

Just before the beginning of term, Exilio called members of Students' Union management and very aggressively asked why there was to be a replacement to their night. We explained that there was no intention of doing an LGBT Latino night here. This information was met with some anger and the caller had to be asked to refrain from shouting abuse. As the abuse continued, the manager receiving the call had to inform the caller that he was hanging up.

## Afterskool

Following their departure, our staff contacted Afterskool looking to secure their return. They did not seem interested, having put an email out to their mailing lists abusing the Union.

After conversations with Afterskool, it became clear that they were not going to commit to a return to LSE. Furthermore, it became clear that there was an official, long-term deal struck with Kings. We decided that it was best for the stability of both LSE and Kings that we should look to find another partner so that both Unions could benefit.



## LSESU's Official Response:

The Beaver claims to have carried out an "investigation" into the loss of external promoters. However, the reporters wrote the article before putting any specific allegations to the Union. An "investigation" cannot be one-sided; it must involve asking all participants before the article is written.

The timeline of events, as the article itself shows, is as follows:

Former members of staff, who left the Union after we found out what they had been up to, told the external promoters to leave, against the wishes of the Union;

When we discovered what had happened, as they all admit, the promoters were asked back;

There have been discussions with those promoters to come back, some of which have been more fruitful than others.

This is exactly what we told The Beaver was going on.

Apparently, these promoters cannot wait a few weeks for further contact from our staff and think going to The Beaver is going to help them return quickly. If they really want a good relationship with us, they a) would not have left on the say-so of two junior members of staff, b) would have contacted us in good faith to confirm what they were hearing, and c) would not be wasting their time talking to The Beaver; instead, they could simply contact us.

As The Beaver have pointed out them-

selves, few LSE students actually went to our Saturday night events. That doesn't mean we don't want to do Saturday night events, but it is utterly unfounded to claim that there has been student dissatisfaction since the changes. We have received no complaints from students about the loss of the three events.

## Chuckle Club

There were at least seven lengthy telephone conversations with Mr. Jay where Students' Union managers gave clarifications for the Chuckle Club's removal from the Tuns. Mr. Jay was often difficult to contact. Nonetheless, members of Students' Union management were given the impression that Mr. Jay would consider coming back to LSE but would not give any commitment as he had a strong association with Afterskool and felt a loyalty that was to see them remain at Kings. We are prepared for further contact and surprised that he is so willing to take a dispute to The Beaver.

## Exilio

Members of Students' Union management met with Exilio after they were informed by former members of staff to leave. We offered the venue on the same terms as before - but Exilio were committed to moving to Vauxhall and had indicated that they would review the

## Mr. Borez

Mr Borez was a contractor working in the Union. After he stopped turning up for his usual Friday night event, we deemed this to be his decision to leave.

Following his departure, a health and safety inspection identified no less than 20 breaches of health and safety, including electrical appliances being held together with parcel tape. In addition, we received a complaint from a student regarding the inappropriate and unprofessional behaviour of Mr Borez.

He also showed rude and threatening behaviour towards Union staff. He sent a Facebook message to a former Sabbatical Officer threatening him with a baseball bat, and sent a further threatening email to another Officer several months ago.

I was shocked to find that The Beaver still considered him a reputable source after I informed them of this. But Sam Tempest Keeping, The Beaver's News Editor, informed me he was meeting Mr. Borez, despite his threatening behaviour towards students and indeed people Sam calls his friends, because he had worked with him for several years in the Three Tuns.

## Profile

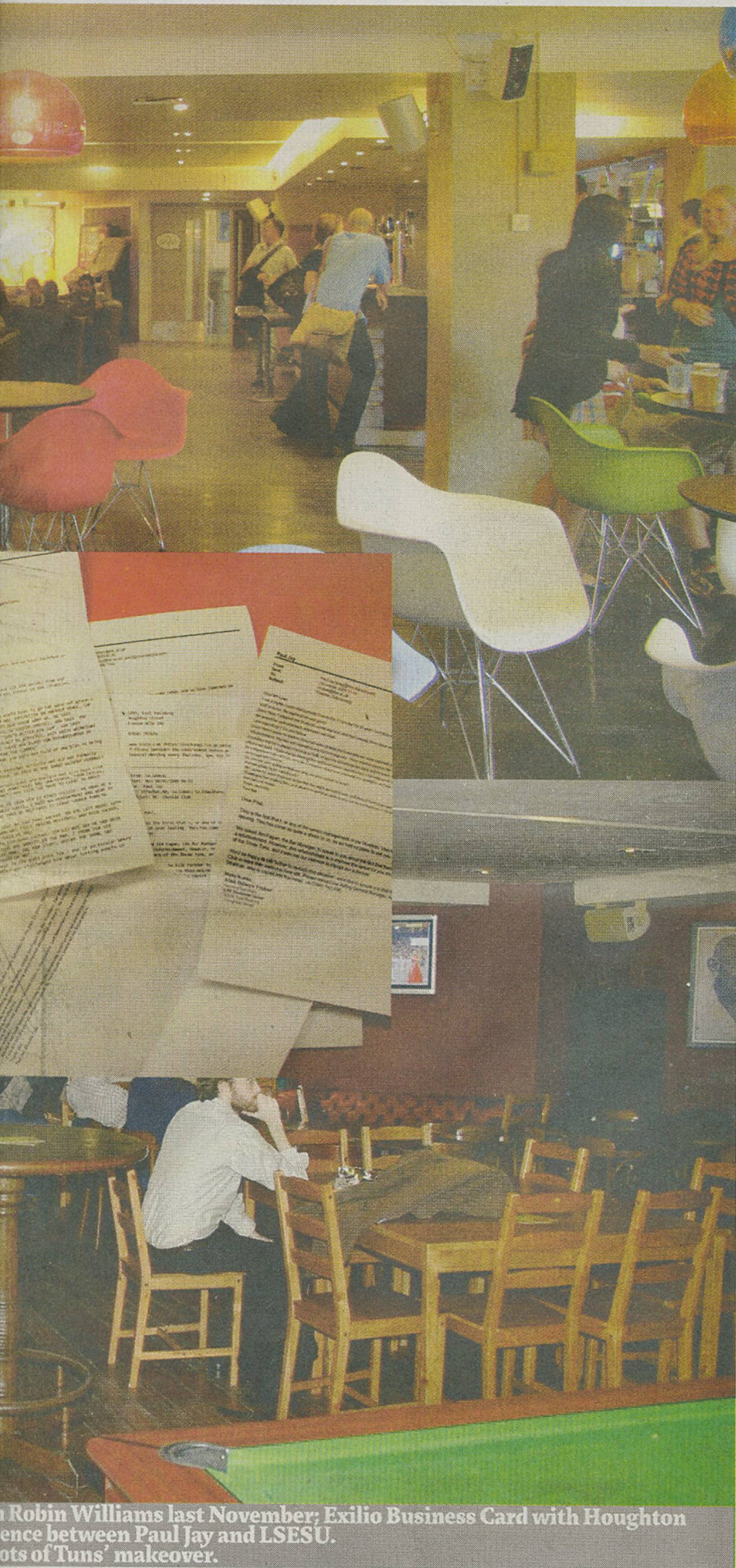
### Chuckle Club

Founded by Paul Jay, better known as Eugene Cheese, and billed as a "Comedy Cabaret Show in Central London. Every Saturday Night for 23 Years!"

Used to open every Saturday evening in the Three Tuns as a precursor to the Afterskool Klub.

Previous acts at the night include Harry Hill, Al Murray, Eddie Izzard, Alan Davies, Alistair McGowan and David Baddiel. On the 8th November 2008 Robin Williams performed a surprise, his first show in London for 25 years, to a shocked audience.

# Friday Night Scandal



Robin Williams last November; Exilio Business Card with Houghton  
 ence between Paul Jay and LSESU.  
 ots of Tuns' makeover.

## What they said:

### Paul Jay Chuckle Club

**On Kings:**  
 King's has been really lovely to us, wouldn't hear a word against them, they have been marvelous. Don't even know if I want to come back here. Just wanted to tell me the whole truth why we have been thrown out. Would like the opportunity to come back here. At least be offered it, at the moment, as it stands, we can't use the Three Tuns, as they took away the spotlights. It was only in the last 5 years that we had them, I used to had to bring in clip-on ones. Other things have disappeared, which you would have to speak to Glynn about. Even by coming here, I feel like that we are betraying King's.

**Did you ever meet face to face with them (SU staff)?**  
 We did a lot over email, we talked a lot about meeting...

**But they have made it out to be that they have been corresponding with you over the summer?**

I've been phoning them, on and off, for a long time. Leaving messages at the office, mainly for Mr Fisher. One point, I actually spoke to Mr Fisher. About 5-6 weeks ago. He said he couldn't talk right now and would get back to me after the meeting.  
 At no time had I raised my voice at anyone at the SU. I haven't been treated with any respect, and still haven't been told officially why we have been asked to leave. We have heard rumours, that it was Jim Fagan's doing and that he was upset with changes being made to his job and got rid of us all out of spite. Again, that

was a rumour.

**We spoke to Aled a month ago about the Chuckle Club, that he was getting you back...if that were the case, he should have in contact with you before the refurb.**

He's not been in touch with us in any way, he knows it's called Chuckle Club and find our website, with my email and phone number. I am quite easy to get hold of by anybody. Very visible.

**Did you get in contact to clarify the notes?**

When I didn't tell them what they wanted about Jim Fagan, I never got a response from them. But I did phone them up and I did ask them what was happening. All they said was that they'd be in touch. I haven't had any emails from them after that.

**In our phone conversation, you mentioned that you weren't doing well at King's and that it was affecting your business...**

This is why I got in touch with you, this time last year, we were averaging 130-160 people, now we are averaging 30-50. We can't afford the acts what they are worth, and eventually no one will come, no one's refused so far to work for me, but for example, Nick [comedian] came last week, he doesn't live in London, we were his only gig that night, and we were only pay him £50. Normally, these acts are £100+. On a busy night we pay £350 per act. There's going some truth that a lot of clubs have opened in the West End, they had this time last year

and we weren't affected to a huge degree. We don't know why, we suspected it's something to do with the move, but we are not sure.

**On that note, what do you see as the outcome of this meeting?**

I am confused about what I want. I don't want to upset Matt Fisher, because he's been so good to us. On the other hand, if we are going to die, and the last show would be 19th Dec, I am an old man but I am not ready to retire. I don't know what I'd do with the rest of my life, I certainly don't want to retire nor stop the club, unless I have to. The answer is really, I am not sure.

**Re: Treatment of Chuckle Club.**

I'd like the truth to come out, that's certain. We've been here (LSE) and haven't been told where we are, I've attempted to put that right with security desk. They are sending people to us now, but we weren't allowed to put maps up on the noticeboard just over there, but we have been told that they were SU noticeboards...and had to pull any notices down that weren't permitted. The bar in darkness, what service is that to students?

I don't want to be too emotional but we are facing...we won't be skint. We don't want to retire, I am old enough to retire, I will get a small pension. But I love the Chuckle Club, and I am bloody good at it. We get the best acts. If we get nasty hackers...I just want to get back to the successful club it was. It would be lovely if the LSE and King's could kiss and share us or something

### Bill Borez Sound Engineer

**What was going on, what exactly were the nuts and bolts of the situation?**

Basically it was a complete witch hunt, wasn't it? It all started with the Fresh thing, I sent them with an email, nasty email, about why it wouldn't work. They tried to get me sacked over the email. All the points in the email started to come true. I've been clubbing for 20 years. I kind of know what works and what won't. It's not clubbing 101.

**LSESU: Mr. Borez sent an abusive and threatening email to the then Communications Officer after we decided, on the basis of feedback from student surveys, to rebrand our Friday night entertainment. It is utterly false to say that we tried to sack him over the email; he was simply sent a formal letter by the then General Manager outlining why the sending of such a nasty letter was unprofessional. He made no substantive "points" in the email; it was simply a long string of abuse.**

**Was that when you had the first inklings of the changes that were to take place?**

Bang (Nick Pauro) went into a meeting with them, loads of great stuff lined up for the year but they knocked it off the table. This was around early October last year, they changed it to Fresh which didn't work. They never even spoke to me the whole time, blatantly ignored me.

**LSESU: Mr. Borez was not a member of the Union's permanent staff. Had he wanted to make points to the Sabbatical Officers, he could have done so, at any time, through the Entertainments Manager. He did not. If the Entertainments Manager did not consult him on changes, that is hardly our fault.**

**You tried to communicate with them?**

Yes...we are supposed to work together. They got rid of (former paid staff member) straight away, didn't they? They decided to vet him, when he wouldn't let himself be vetted. I don't know what charge they brought him up on. I don't know what went on behind the scenes but he was always a great manager to me. Things ran pretty smoothly, to be honest.

**LSESU: Again, he never communicated with us, save for his abusive email. To allege that we tried to get rid of anyone "straight away" is a bare faced lie; if he doesn't have any proof, he cannot make such serious allegations. I've no idea what the remark about vetting means, but at no point was anyone "vetted" by any defini-**

**tion that I understand. Things were not running "smoothly"; entertainments was making a £40,000 loss.**

**What happened with the changes being pushed through at the end, were you consulted on about them?**

They asked me about nothing, nothing! They lost out big time. I found out their £200000 budget, I got really excited and approached a friend, who owns one of the biggest touring companies in the world. He's got warehouses, and I said, 'we got all this money to refurbish the venue, what can you get me cheap?' and he went, 'to be honest, we have a whole warehouse of lights and sound systems, I will give you them for 100 grand. That's what I wanted to put in the venue, and it would have made it the best student night in London. Someone said to me the other day, the new sound system sounded great. I said that it was the old one painted white. The place lacked a really good lighting system.

**LSESU: Again, it would be up to the person he was responsible to, the Entertainments Manager, to consult with him. We did not lose out "big time"; since Bill has left, our profit in entertainments and commercial has increased massively. Mr. Borez never told us about his 'friend' with the 'warehouse'. The sound and lighting has improved massively since he left.**

**Each member of staff who had left, felt that they have been unfairly treated...**

I've been there 8 years, no pat on the back. They have done it terribly, gross misconduct. It's been a terrible job. I have seen pictures of the new Saturday night. Considering Glyn (Peppiat) offered to go back there...they have no idea how difficult it is to get a Saturday night running, especially when there's no walk-in trade. It's out of the way. They should have taken the warning from Fresh, it's not as easy as you think it is to run a new club. Even if the crowd's there, if they don't like it the first time, they won't come back. Crush was a phenomenal night...

With this lot, it's almost not about what students want, it's about what they have on their CVs to say we are the ones who changed the LSESU. It didn't need changing, there was nothing wrong with it. The few bits are the lack of budget for things. **LSESU: I have no idea what he means by "gross misconduct", but he has never accused on gross misconduct. Crush continues to be a "phenomenal night" - it has**

**improved massively since Mr. Borez left. If he thinks "there was nothing wrong", he must have no idea; entertainments was, again, losing, and therefore costing students, £40,000 a year. A Students' Union cannot survive with such an enormous drain on resources. Following the changes we have made, entertainments is delivering a profit once again that can be invested in societies, sports, the Media Group, campaigns and welfare services for students.**

**And having spoken to several people, and with venues, you never paint them grey?**

You never, never paint a venue grey or white, it's clubbing 101. Especially with the skylights in the summer, and it won't get dark in there at half 11. You want it as dark as possible. It's lit above from the offices. You can never run a band night through the week since it won't get dark. When Nick changed it from dark blue to red, it was enough of a problem, never mind white. It's not going to get dark in the summer, it's supposed to be a nightclub. You don't want to see the people next to you.

**LSESU: The Quad is not just a club venue. It is a café in the day and does a lot of evening events other than clubbing ones.**

**In response to an email sent by SU staff regarding getting gear back...**

He went have you got the paper trail? I am a sound engineer...

I have never known four kids to have caused so much hell, to an establishment. It's unbelievable. There was a point during Christmas, when people were actually scared. No one knew who'd get the knock on their door, getting suspended.

**LSESU: Mr. Borez sent a threatening email to me, demanding I return a list of equipment. He was simply asked to provide proof that the equipment was his. If he provides proof of purchase, he can have it back. We are not going to just hand over a load of equipment to a disgruntled staff without proof of purchase!**

**When did it all start?**

From when they were elected, over the summer. Steam roller throughout. Basically cutting loose things they weren't in control of.

**LSESU: This is yet another demonstrable lie that Mr. Borez cannot back up, because it is simply false. If he does not have evidence, he should not make such assertions.**

## Profile

### Exilio

London's first Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transsexual Latino club night. Described as having "longevity and great Latin music. The attention is like no other, friendly and very accommodating." Initially moved to a location in Vauxhall after being forced to leave the Underground bar. However after poor attendance levels the night was moved to KCLSU with the help of Paul Jay. Promoter Gloria Lizcarno estimates she lost upwards of £6,000 due to the her treatment by the LSESU.

## Profile

### Afterskool Klub

Alternative Indie club night which was based in the Quad for the last nine years. This summer they relocated to KCLSU. According to their website "Afterskool welcomes people of all races, creeds, and sexualities" and "frown on corporate sponsored events, bands and clubs." Earlier in the year the night received the only special mention for a club in the student edition of London events bulletin Time Out, incidentally a publication in which the LSESU failed to feature.

# De Botton: "The Pleasures and Sorrows of Work"

Nicola Alexander

Alain de Botton's talk last Thursday, entitled "The Pleasures and Sorrows of Work", offered an invaluable reminder that in the pursuit of economic gains, humanity is often sacrificed.

In the stimulating talk, De Botton considered the tension between the health of the human spirit and our obsession with maximising output, using psychology and philosophy to criticise the economic theory of specialisation.

De Botton began by considering the change in popular perceptions of labour from the ancients until today, concluding that it was only in the 1750s that work actually began to be valued by society.

A similar observation was made about the shift in popular opinion of marriage and romance. De Botton added that from a Freudian perspective, it is absolutely expected that such significant change occurred in the perceptions of labour and love at the same time, as Freud believed that these are the two pillars of satisfaction for all men. De Botton argued that Freud is still relevant, commenting that: "It is hard to find anyone in our society not suffering a crisis of love or work or both."

Focusing on the modern world, De Botton delved into his key observation on the dislocation between the world of production and leisure time. De Botton pointed out that in "the modern way of life" there is a brutal distinction between the time you spend working and the time

you spend in leisure, so that it has become unusual to find individuals who are able to be fascinated by the workplace in a way that is not purely for production.

The exception to this rule is children. De Botton cited his own children as key case studies, explaining how he was intrigued by their curiosity with the logistics of work and how they could be captivated by books such as "What People Do All Day". This pleasure time spent being fascinated with the methods of production is unfortunately an activity that is no longer enjoyed by adults, argued De Botton. It is De Botton's own interest in this underexplored aspect of life that inspired his two most recent books: 'The Pleasures and Sorrows of work' and 'A week at the airport'.

Using the experience he had gained from writing his philosophy books, De Botton was able to expose the audience to a new realm of the work place linking economics, philosophy and psychology with unique clarity. To launch his enquiry De Botton used the "world of logistics", a most fundamental aspect of the production process. As a result of the many stages in transportation from producer to consumer, the connection between those who provide and those who enjoy is lost. De Botton cited Marx's theory of social "alienation", guilt and "loss of a sense of wonder" as dangerous consequences of this modern occurrence.

De Botton explained how he was constantly interested in people's subconscious or conscious desire to fulfil their "calling". He identified that even for those



Photo: Chris John

in a secular society, where this idea may seem difficult to understand, the idea that people feel that there exists a perfectly fulfilling occupation is important in the work place. However, De Botton dismissed this belief, stating that it is unrealistic to believe that the only reason people have not found their ideal job is because they have not realised a greater potential within themselves, essentially some people have more promise than others.

Ultimately De Botton concluded that as a result of difficulties to harness what you believe is the best that you can offer, human potential remains the "greatest waste" in society.

De Botton used the "waste" of human capital and loss of spirit as the key psychological consequence of economic specialisation as a tactic to generate greater wealth for the economy. In a positive assessment of human character De Botton stated that workers are motivated not only by self-interest but also by an ambition to "change the world for the

better". He pointed out that with overspecialisation, there exists so many links that separate the activities of the worker and the beneficial outcome so that the worker does not feel he has fulfilled his second incentive.

De Botton also addressed the attempt of human resources to deter personal relationships within the office. De Botton argued that the institution is "jealous" that humans can find satisfaction in their private life as they hope to be the main source of fulfilment.

In his final assessment of human behaviour and the psychology of work, De Botton argued that this area needs to be given special attention as work is the most fundamental aspect of life. Essentially De Botton concluded that work provides an escape from our deepest fears and insecurities, its value lies not only in terms of the economy but also for individuals who crave order in a chaotic universe and are able to achieve this through the systematic process of labour.



## Pitch for £1,000 for doing what you enjoy

# EXPOSED




Dave Prentice, 22 - Trainee Auditor  
Spotted playing football with workmates

We're in over 120 countries globally, and are the UK's fifth largest accountancy firm so with us you can get where you want to go faster. We believe in being honest and plain-speaking so that you know what to expect from us without waffle or jargon. We're looking for like-minded teams or

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Graduates Telling it like it is

# Students fall victim to crime

Nik Adhia

Last week saw two further incidents of distraction theft at cash points from another gang, after LSE Security arrested two thieves targeting the NatWest cash point on campus.

This form of attack has extended to off-campus incidents, usually occurring during rush hour. Two groups of first-year female students at LSE have become victims of such thefts this week.

The first incident occurred on Oxford Street at a Halifax Bank cash point. The victims, who wish to remain anonymous, were two female first year LSE students residing at Carr-Saunders hall. The gang formed a fake line and grouped around the student during rush hour in order to disguise the attack.

The student said: "I was really confused and scared, it happened so quickly".

Through using a newspaper, two men distracted the student by firstly asking if her card was working and covered her eyes with a newspaper. One man tapped in £200 while the other tied her hands behind her back. She explained: "They asked me what I was doing and then grabbed my hands."

One of the men was reported to have been hiding something that resembled a sharp instrument. The student was in trauma after the incident, and said: "I could live and I do live on £200 a month - my whole months living expenses have been stolen from me."

The second incident occurred during rush hour at the NatWest cash points near Holborn station, close to the students' residence hall High Holborn. The descriptions of the perpetrators given by the students report mirror the descriptions given by the students in the first incident.

The two men approached the student as soon as she type her PIN number in. She said: "They shoved an Evening Standard newspaper at me and one of



them covered the screen." The student's friend challenged the attackers and was violently thrown to one side, after which the student immediately cancelled her transaction.

She suggested: "It was a planned attack; it was like they were watching us the whole time."

Newly elected High Holborn President Priyan Patel said: "Often these attacks can occur when it is dark, and as it approaching the winter months, students should try to (where possible) use cash points with friends in daylight hours."

The LSE and LSESU have both stressed that students do remain aware of their surroundings and come forward

**"It was a planned attack; it was like they were watching us the whole time."**

should they have been victim to such attacks or any attack. This can be done anonymously and further guidance and support can be provided. If you know of someone or you are someone who has been affected by such incidents or a particular incident and you would like to remain anonymous, please contact Emmanuel Akpan-Inwang at su.edwelfare@lse.ac.uk. All matters are dealt with the highest level of discretion and confidentiality. It important for you to come forward as it will prevent re-occurrences of such incidents to others around you and the LSESU and LSE can provide you with a vast range of advice and support.

## Tips from Paul Thornbury Head of LSE Security

How can students protect themselves against such attacks?

- \* Use cash points inside banks where possible (rather than the street) - the key to these situations is awareness.
- \* Always observe the area of the machine - if there are people paying undue attention to the machine or it seems suspicious, do not approach it.
- \* Attackers will often wait attack the last person in the queue - always take a group of friends or a trusted companion with you.

If a student is in that situation, what should they do?

- \* Keep calm and think of your physical safety first.
- \* As soon as you suspect something suspicious or that someone is trying to distract you - cancel your transaction, retrieve your card and move away from the cash-point machine.

What should students NOT do in those situations particularly if a weapon (like a knife) is seen carried by the attacker?

- \* Minimise the assailants opportunity to attack you by putting distance or an obstacle between yourself and the person you suspect of having the weapon.
- \* Your response will be conditioned by circumstances (for instance you should not turn your back and run when an individual is within striking range of you, as this can often encourage an attack).
- \* If the attacker is in a position where an attack has any chance of success it is better to surrender cash or valuables than to risk physical injury.

How can the Halls of Residence staff, LSESU and LSE Staff provide support and assistance?

- \* All incidents should be reported immediately - LSE Security will assist in liaison with the Police and investigation of incidents
- \* If this takes place on campus, and the perpetrators are in the vicinity, the LSE Security will co-ordinate to apprehend them
- \* Financial support may also be available - bridging loans in event that a victim has sustained considerable loss and there will be a delay before they have funds again.

Word up to the LSE!  
The journal is now complete!  
Let us make this clear.  
Better prick up your ear,  
Clare be callin out to YOU,  
(Yeh, Howard Davies too)

On the 7th decemba  
Twill be a night to rememba,  
Come, gather one and all,  
The big, tall and the small,  
To this year's launch partee,  
(For the next issue is bare lovely)

The Black Heart is the start,  
Dont be no bumbaclart,  
Best play your part,  
(Dress up like a tart)

Also, we just won a prize!  
(yeh, little bit of a lie)  
But one of our writers did,  
Cos she's a well clever kid,  
(So big up to Jessi!) \*  
Now lets get messy...

**CLARE  
MARKET  
REVIEW**

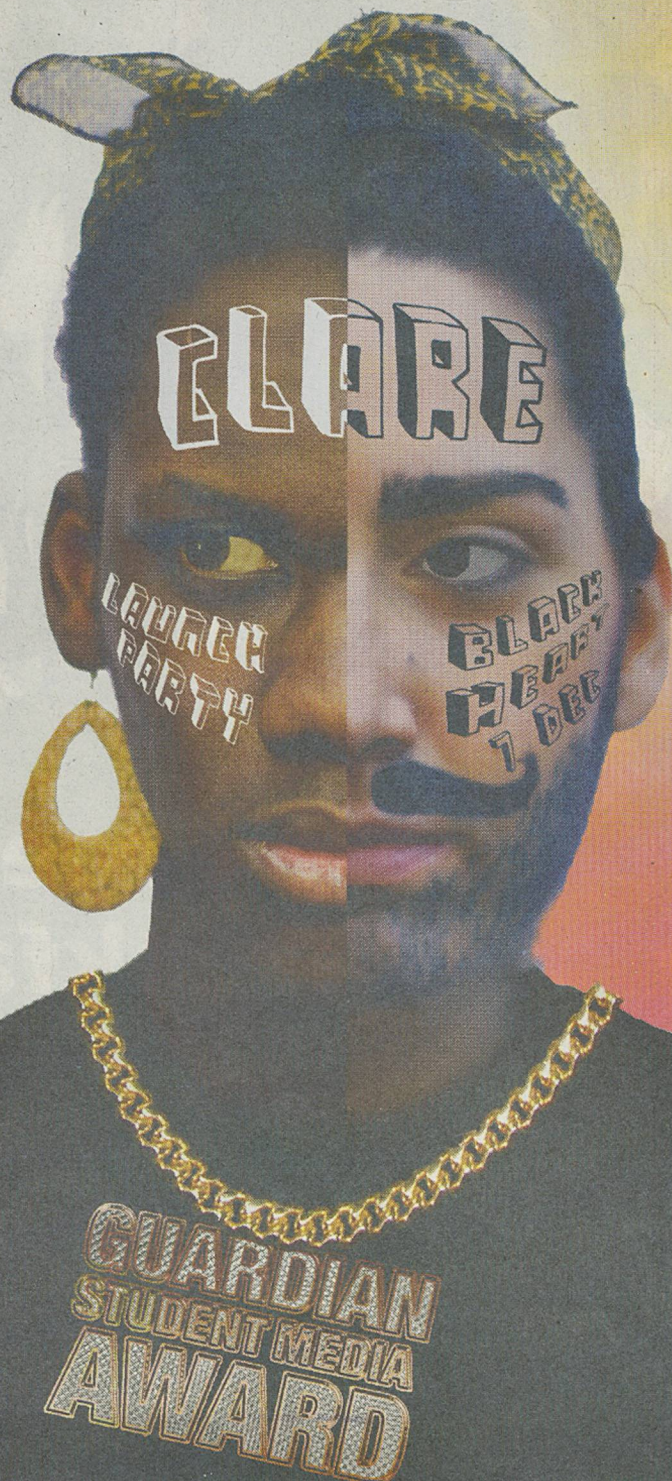
note: persuade the person next to you to beatbox for maximum appreciation

\* Jessi Tabalba was named diversity writer of the year by seriously important people from The Guardian.

**ISSUE 1 2009  
LSESU JOURNAL  
LAUNCH  
PARTY**

Swing by the golden marquee on Houghton Street this Thursday and Friday to pick up tickets for what will surely be the best party happening on a Monday.

The Black Heart  
Camden  
7th December, 7pm  
£3 a ticket



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**pulse.** RADIO

# THE WAVE

THE UK'S BIGGEST CLIMATE CHANGE MARCH

## LONDON 5.12.09

Meet at LSE from 10:30am

**Banner  
making session!**

3rd December

5-7pm

Basement of the  
Kings Chambers

(K01)

**Jonathan Neale**

'Copenhagen and the  
Fight for the Future  
of the Planet'

1st Dec

4-5.30pm

Underground

**Free  
Breakfast**



# Comment



## The Beaver

Established in 1949  
Issue No. 716

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

### Pride (in the name of tolerance)

**L**ondon should be the socially progressive hub of this liberal democracy. We may have a mayor who once raised hell with the Bullingdon Club, and who has made a habit of offending vast tranches of society, but here in the capital, it is the general hope that our confined surroundings have the side-effect of pro-

moting tolerance and modern values of acceptance and cultural integration. And yet, with incidences of hate crime and, in particular, violence motivated by homophobia on the rise, it is only natural for us to consider how we can effect the social change so greatly needed.

For students at the LSE, who pride themselves on the propagation

of tolerance and liberal values, the inaugural Pride Week has provided the ideal opportunity to re-assert their wholly encouraging system of beliefs. Rainbows have been unfurled across Houghton Street; preconceptions about gender and beauty have been questioned; potentially clueless portions of the student body have been most enthusiastically tutored in the intricacies

of L, G, B and T. The boundless energy and creativity of the LGBT Society and our puce-maned LGBT Officer are to be commended, for it is only through their spirit and pluck that we can hope for wholesale acceptance of gay rights to be engendered by other students. The statistics equating coming out during the throes of one's teenage years with suicide, depression and physical tor-

ment are undoubtedly concerning and saddening. But if as wide a spectrum of the population as possible is taught - and from as young an age as possible - that people who identify as LGBT "aren't really that scary", we can live in hope that the sacrifices made by Stonewall campaigners were not in vain, and that their battle's end is in sight.

### Letters to the Editor

**Madam** - I am writing to inform the student body over an incident of misuse of Union funds by The Beaver, and for the purpose of transparency. It had been giving advertising space to an external company in exchange for £800 of free food for its editors. This is clearly utterly inappropriate and plainly unethical. No one can, or should, use their position to benefit in this way, particularly when it is all students who bare the cost for this - I can only imagine the field day The Beaver would have if a Sabbatical Officer had done the same, our positions would have been untenable and rightly so. 5,000 pages were printed using students' money to advertise this company so that The Beaver could benefit. This is obviously unacceptable. The Beaver has been fined for this abuse, and this will not be able to occur again.

No other society would be able to get away with this, and for The Beaver to think this was okay shows a severe lack of judgement and will undoubtedly

damage some of the trust between The Beaver and its readership. It is not only a problem because of the cost of printing that many pages for a free advert, but that this is money that could have gone to societies and clubs, rather than benefiting the editors personally. It is clear from this that we as a Union need to re-evaluate the relationship with the Media Group and the power it has. Now is the time for this re-evaluation. We are carrying out a governance review as we speak, and certainly one of the questions that shall be asked is how we can make our spending more accountable. It is unfortunate that the editors chose to take this approach, but it has highlighted the flaws in the system, flaws that will no longer be there once the governance review has taken place and students have had the chance to vote for it.

**Robin Low**  
Communications Officer  
LSE Students' Union

**Madam** - In your article "Your Hall, Your Call" (The Beaver, 17 November 2009), the General Secretary of the LSESU, Mr. Aled Dilwyn Fisher, was quoted as saying that "Singaporean students are literally spied upon by their embassy". Mr Fisher's comment is untrue, absurd and ill-informed. It reflects a misunderstanding of the purposes of a diplomatic mission.

The Singapore High Commission in London is a small set-up, busy with consular, diplomatic, cultural and trade issues. The thousands of Singaporean students in the UK are free to pursue whatever endeavor interests them, and this includes participating in student politics. The Singapore High Commission is proud of the many contributions that Singaporeans have made to their host country in one form or another. Many Singapore students are doing their part in service of their respective institutions and student bodies, whether within student unions or otherwise.

We may be busy in the office, but we

will certainly not let irresponsible comments about our work be left unchecked. We thank the Beaver for alerting us to Mr Fisher's comment and offering us this right of reply.

**Karolyn Poon**  
First Secretary (Overseas Singaporeans)  
Singapore High Commission in London

**Madam** - I'd like to thank Alison Stallard for her shameless manipulation of a worthy cause. My mum has had cancer, and she was more offended by your patronising comments than anyone. Women who have experienced cancer, women who have scars, women who have lost their hair and nails, those women know better than anyone that limited definitions of female attractiveness can leave you feeling essentially worthless.

As for my opinions being dated, I honestly can't think of anything more dated than parading women up and down a stage like donkeys; beauty pageants

ceased to exist because they're inconsistent with perceptions of women as equal citizens. Just because women's equality has progressed somewhat in recent years, we haven't got the green light to return to outdated sexist practices. Now that we have a black president of America would you suggest we bring back the gollywog? Is it time to stop taking racism seriously? No, of course it's not.

Ms. Stallard, next time you want to do some good for cancer sufferers, perhaps, in my 'dated' way, I'll suggest you just hold a bring-and-buy sale.

**Jessie Robinson**  
LSESU Women's Officer

# Twinning with

The passing of the controversial Motion Four means our Students' Union a coalition that is alternately noble, shocking or illegitimate. We reflect on

## Radicalised out of necessity

**Samer Araabi**

The passage of the motion twinning our Students' Union with the Islamic University of Gaza was a deeply powerful and meaningful gesture; one that will substantively change the lives of countless people for the better. This is the first step toward providing Gaza's only higher education institution with much-needed funding, supplies, and awareness from places where the horrendous plight of Gaza is often forgotten. The situation as it exists must be understood in its unique political and historical context. For years now Gaza has been systematically denied the tools to rebuild its shattered society, both in terms of the physical infrastructure required to reconstruct the countless homes and other buildings demolished during the criminal Israeli siege of the effectively defenseless territory, and also in terms of the human capital required to produce a viable society capable of sustaining itself. So, while Israel keeps medical supplies and construction materials out, it keeps aspiring students and professionals in, unable to attend

their demolished university, blocked from travel by countless checkpoints and travel restrictions.

Meanwhile, the only way Israel can justify what is essentially a cut-and-dry case of systematic oppression is by appealing to the nascent undercurrent of Orientalism that colours all debate on the Israeli/Palestinian issue. This was made patently clear at the UGM this past Thursday; completely different standards of conduct are projected on the Palestinians than their Israeli counterparts, partly borne of a misleading narrative that Palestinians are all terrorists, or that anything with an "Islamic" affiliation is somehow dangerous to Western liberal ideas. Of course, while most people would never consider themselves to espouse such patently racist views, this formed the entire backbone of the arguments against the motion.

Apparently, the idea that weapons research may (or may not - no substantial evidence has yet been presented aside from a justifying statement by the IDF after bombing the university) have taken place at IUG is absolutely unacceptable, even though Israeli universities have produced some of the most dangerous and indiscriminate weapons on the planet. Similarly, the notion that one of the founders of the school espoused radical views sent gasps through the audience. LSE was also founded by ardent socialists,

but we certainly don't assume all current students are socialists. And while one of the students at IUG did go on to commit acts of violence, this is also not unique to Gaza. In fact, a former student of LSE was partly responsible for the kidnapping and murder of Daniel Pearl. Needless to say, these acts are horrendous and unforgivable, and every action should be taken to prevent future radicalisation. But does it delegitimise our own educational institution? It most certainly does not.

The bottom line is simple. People deserve an education, and for many in Gaza this university is their only hope to lift themselves out of poverty, degradation, and humiliation, and become doctors, engineers, lawyers, and businessmen. The Islamic University of Gaza is not a radical institution. Gaza is a radicalised society, radicalised through decades of humiliation at the hands of an occupying force that considers them to be less than human. IUG may be one of the only avenues for people to lift themselves above those circumstances, and as such is an essential pillar in the achievement of some semblance of equity with their neighbours. We have no right whatsoever to deny them that opportunity.

• Samer Araabi is studying for an MSc in Comparative Politics, and was the proposer of the motion at UGM

## We need to talk...

**Robin Burrett**

It is difficult to talk about facts surrounding the Israel-Palestine conflict without being accused of bias or worse, anti-Semitism. Seemingly uncontested statements, like those concerning numbers killed or the extent of damage to civilian infrastructure, are labelled 'needlessly controversial' when they are used as the basis for taking meaningful action. It seems that merely describing the nature of life under occupation and siege for Palestinians is a taboo. The motion passed on Thursday to twin the LSESU with the Islamic University of Gaza went a little way towards overcoming this silence.

In light of the prevailing bias in the debate around the conflict towards accommodation of Israel as the UK's 'natural ally' and villification of the Palestinians as the irrational, dangerous 'other', this motion could have chosen to mince its words. It could have neglected to mention

the assault on Palestinians' right to education and pandered to the biased lens that this issue is so often viewed through. But this would have perpetuated the impression that this is a conflict of equals, and would thereby seemingly undermine the very logic in favour of twinning. If the ongoing assault on Palestine is written out of the equation, why would LSESU twin with IUG over any other university? It is only when placed within the context of the ongoing struggles of Palestinians that twinning becomes a meaningful gesture from one student body to another.

Thus, instead of accommodating those voices that would rather stifle criticism of Israeli government policy, the proposers of this motion sought to take a stand with the oppressed Palestinians against their Israeli government oppressors, and to justify this characterisation using well substantiated facts. That is not to say that this is not a conflict and that there are not wrongs committed on all sides. But there remains an underlying disparity which is seldom addressed, and which this motion sought to engage with.

The reality is that there is no equivalent in Israel of an educational institution being bombed to the ground. There are no checkpoints that prevent students

and other Israeli citizens from getting to their destinations. There is no siege that so cripples the economy and prevents Palestinians from rebuilding their lives after the most recent assault that everyone in the West heard about, and the countless smaller assaults that go unnoticed outside of the region. It is for these reasons and the catalogue of other struggles faced by Palestinians on a daily basis that the motion was necessary.

The LSESU Palestine Society have once again taken a leading role in pro-Palestinian and human rights activism in UK campuses. As with LSE's occupation last year which led to a wave of similar student-led direct action across the country, LSE students continue to make powerful gestures which serve to counteract the spineless stance of our government on the issue of Palestinian rights. After the assault on Gaza, the international community and the dialogue surrounding the Israel-Palestine conflict has shifted perceptibly. Students are now able to talk more frankly about the realities of this conflict and move away from the role of uncritical Israeli apologists towards a just resolution to the conflict. This motion was one more step in that direction. May it be the first of many.

## Two fledgling democracies

In 2006, Hamas won free and fair elections in the Palestinian occupied territories. As a result, the US, EU and Israel decided to punish the civilian population by withholding humanitarian aid. In relation to the Gaza war earlier this year, the UN stated that Israel intended to 'humiliate and terrorize a civilian population'. As Jimmy Carter said recently, 'the

citizens of Gaza are being treated more like animals than human beings', solely because of who controls the government.

This week, LSE students showed themselves to have more honour than this. After an informative and well mannered debate in the UGM they voted in favour of twinning our SU with the Islamic University of Gaza. They saw past dehumanising

stereotypes to see the conflict for what it is: a people resisting illegal occupation. Whatever we may think of Hamas, every Gazan student is as much a human being as an LSE student and has the same right to an education and to aspirations.

Samuel Bennett  
MSc History of International Relations '10



## A reason to fight for UGM

I was extremely disappointed by the tone of the dialogue at the UGM during the motion to twin the SU with the Islamic University of Gaza. I frequently hear two reasons students give as to why they no longer attend the UGMs; either they feel that most of the motions are ineffective and don't matter, or that the forum has descended into conflict between the Palestine Society and Israel Society. To me, the twinning motion was a chance to overcome both of these problems, a chance to do something meaningful for other students, to provide them with a taste of our own academic privileges, and do so in a way that wasn't directly politically controversial. This was a great opportunity for both societies to come together and stand up for something all students should be able to agree on, the right to education for all. Instead, the Israel society seems to think that any motion that attempts to uplift the Palestinians is something they have to fight, and resorted to unfounded, emotional rhetoric, and petty attacks. If they have a legitimate reason why citizens of Gaza don't deserve to attend the only university available to them, I'd like to hear it. What I don't like to hear is throwing around the name "Hamas" as a boogie-man to frighten away all reasonable debate. Maybe if the debate could stick to the facts next time, people wouldn't be so disillusioned with the whole process.

Mark Twyford  
BA History '10

## Freedom from controversy

LSE students have consistently voted in support of the Palestinian struggle for liberation, this time twinning with the Islamic University of Gaza. It has become convention for such disagreements to be labelled as "controversial". Before such a term is applied, we urge students to take a reality check. There is no controversy in supporting the right to education of Palestinians, in defending human rights, freedom from colonial domination and true equality between Israelis and Palestinians. What is controversial is the persistent and often vicious defense of Israel's murderous actions by Israel's supporters.

Israel was founded through the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians from their land, five million of whom now live in squalid refugee camps. The million odd Palestinians living as "citizens" inside Israel are routinely targets of racism by the Israeli state and society. Those in the West Bank live under an illegal and immoral occupation and those in Gaza under a genocidal siege. The treatment of Palestinians wherever they are is a direct consequence of Israel's definition as an ethno-nationalist state for Jews only. It's unsurprising thus that the BNP has publicly expressed support for Israel. The heat should be on those espousing these bigoted views and that is where the real "controversy" lies.

Ziyaad Lunat and James Caspell  
Palestine Solidarity Initiative (www.palestinesolidarity.org),  
LSE Alumni and Honorary Students, LSE Students' Union

# the troubles

must now engage with the concerns facing the Islamic University of Gaza - whether the right to education can be divorced from the ongoing conflict



Gaza City - deserving of your Union's support?  
Photo: Creative Commons user OneArmedMan

## Mine's a referendum

Sophia Sleigh

**A** flawed UGM; pathetic methods of vote counting and extreme motions - it is no wonder the LSE's student population is disillusioned with politics. Week after week the UGM exposes itself to be insufficient in representing students' views. Each Thursday motions are passed on the basis of very few votes, votes that are unrepresentative of the student body as a whole: this is the problem with the UGM that urgently needs to be solved. The Constitution of the LSE Students' Union states that the Quorum of the Union General Meeting should be 150 full members; if 150 members aren't present then it must be postponed until the next week. And yet, I have been in underpopulated UGMs where - instead of postponement - the Chair has asked us to gather friends and random strangers off Houghton Street in order for the meeting to go ahead and for motions to go through. So how can anything that is passed in these sorts of meetings, where they are literally scraping the barrel for voters, ever reflect the view of the entire Students' Union? The student population of the LSE is around 8,600 fulltime and 800 part time students, so 150 people as a bare minimum only works out at around 1.8 per cent of the student population. Even when the UGM is full, the Old

Theatre itself can only hold 450 people, which is 5.4 per cent of the student population. I am no mathematician, but considering there are nearly always spare seats at the UGM, it is safe to say motions passed at the UGM are not properly representative of the students. Furthermore, the UGM's ridiculous methods of voting need to be changed. Simple hand counting is flawed considering the scope for human error in a lecture theatre and the number of people who merely run in and out to vote for their mate's motion. Even the ballot is flawed: last week, someone was caught trying to slip in three ballot papers! The UGM is unrepresentative and has a poor voting system that is open to abuse. Corruption aside, another tragedy of it all is that motions are passed in our name merely because Joe Bloggs put forward his motion and all his mates came along to vote for it. Such was the case last year when a motion was passed which meant the official stance of our union was opposed to the Chinese government's actions in Tibet. After the uproar the event caused, you would have thought the UGM would have seen more changes than merely posting the motions online a few days beforehand. The UGM is continuously used as a political platform for those with extreme points of view, particularly the Palestine and Israel societies. Take for example the motion with regards to Othman's right to study at the LSE: it is fantastic in itself, as we all believe in the right to education and all that jazz. But the ulterior motive of this motion is revealed in the Union Resolves, "To press Howard Davies and the school administration to issue a statement condemning the

## Matter not in motion

Eve Guterman

**L**ast Thursday, the Old Theatre was packed with 302 eager LSE students awaiting a heated debate. What type of issue could draw such a crowd to the UGM after weeks of less than optimal turnout, which forced some motions to be tabled for weeks as a result of dismal UGM attendance? One would hope that the masses were present to support change in the form of lower fees, better services, or even a salad bar at the Garrick - but alas, this was not the case. The majority of these 302 students were present to partake in the age old debate of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Motion Four of last week's UGM, the "Twinning with the Islamic University of Gaza," sought a bond between our Students' Union and that of the Islamic University of Gaza. Those students who spoke in favour of the motion called for an

exchange of information and services and a show of solidarity with an institution that had experienced recent hardships. And yet, the few who read the motion in its entirety would note that between the 17 union notes, 6 union beliefs, and 10 union resolutions, arguably only one statement called for direct assistance to the University (Union resolution 8 - "Access for Palestinian Universities to the LSE's on-line journal subscriptions"). Most of the remaining 32 motion statements berated Israel for its actions in border protection and outlined less than accurate statistical data. One of the motion's more absurd points even called for the naming of a room in the new students' union building, to be completed in 2012, after a Palestinian student "killed by the IDF". How a room in London will help in the educating of Palestinian students is simply beyond me. The debate itself is not surprising or unexpected; only incongruous since the motion's proposer and main vocal supporter, Samer Araabi, made it clear from the beginning that this motion was "not about Israel and Palestine, but about the right to education for all people".

I do not take issue with the act of twinning, or even twinning with a Pales-

tinian university (our partnership with An-Najah University was a great success, though about to expire), my issue is with the way the motion was put forward. The debate over the appropriateness of international issues in the UGM is one that will not fade any time soon; however, until a decision is made, those issues have as much right to be voted on as our right to eat kebabs in the NAB. Let us instead call these motions what they truly are. Calling Motion Four a decision on the right to education is as insulting to our intelligence as calling the Queen a political decision maker. In order to avoid the stigma that comes with a motion on international issues, this motion was passed under the guise of the right to education, since as we know, a rose by any other name wouldn't smell as sweet. Though the Palestinian Society put their best foot forward with eloquent, heartfelt speeches and calls for universal right to education, the motion spoke for itself. This motion was not about education, it was a passionate cry for the Union to choose a side on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Since the sabbatical officers refused to take a public stance on the issue, whether we allow this farce to continue is up to you, the students.

## I really wanted to vote for this

Aron Cohen

**S**itting in the UGM last week, I found myself in a very uncomfortable position. The motion under debate - a proposal to twin the LSESU with the Islamic University of Gaza seemed to be a no-brainer, in theory, and I found myself agreeing with the arguments of those speaking in support of the motion. We, as LSE students, support the universal right to education, and we support it in Gaza. Of course. The motion, one speaker proclaimed, was not about Hamas, and was not about the highly emotional political situation in the region. It was about the right to education, and extending some of the same privileges that we enjoy at LSE to those who do not have the same resources. How could anyone disagree with such a worthy goal? Unfortunately, the actual text of the motion fell short of presenting the idea so eloquently put forward in the UGM. The first page and a half of the motion consisted of notes denigrating Israel, its

content only marginally related to education. Further, the language used throughout this section was undeniably incendiary. If the motion was not political in nature, why did the majority of the motion consist of a political attack on Israel? And perhaps more importantly, if the motion was supposed to be apolitical, or at least marginally politically impartial, why was there extensive mention of Israel and no mention of Hamas whatsoever?

Educational opportunities available in Gaza are unquestionably inadequate. However, we would be naive to believe that the problem is solely of Israel's creation. A more balanced motion might have called on both Hamas and Israel to ensure that educational facilities in Gaza remain far from conflict. Or, to keep the motion as apolitical as possible, perhaps the motion could have left out all mention of Israel or Hamas. Leaving out the political attacks would have helped maintain the focus on the students in Gaza and not obfuscate the "real" intention of the motion with controversial political overtones.

As students at the London School of Economics and Political Science, however, we know that the political situation of the region is inexorably linked to the lives of its inhabitants, and we should not be afraid to confront difficult political questions. Indeed, we are here to ask difficult

questions and to explore difficult issues. However, we must do so honestly and in a way that does not inappropriately conflate issues. And this is where my true criticism of the motion lies: not that the issue of education was made political, but that the motion put before the LSESU improperly polarised the issue of education along political lines.

The authors and supporters of the motion made the issue seem black and white. Do you support the right to education? Yes or no. Forget nuance, forget the grey area in between. According to the motion, if you support education, you do not support Israel, and you unilaterally blame Israel for all of Gaza's problems. If you have reservations about some of the motion's content (as I do), you must not support education. So what's it to be?

As students at the LSE, we are constantly being told that we are the future leaders of the world - of its financial institutions and its governments. We should engage in debate with this in mind. Within the LSE community, we should try hard to understand the nuances of issues that are so often lost in popular discourse. Thus, when considering a motion to support education in areas of political conflict, we should do so in a way that fosters collaboration and constructive dialogue on campus.

siege". Whether or not the siege is right or wrong has no bearing on the issue being discussed in the UGM.

After last week's motion on twinning LSE with the Islamic University of Gaza, I and many others have had enough of the UGM. Such motions are not about "the right to education", rather it is a regular theme of the LSE where the Arab-Israeli conflict is brought into the UGM. The SU should not simply issue statements about such serious world issues merely on the basis of a few hundred unrepresentative votes and a short debate between four or five students on the Old Theatre's stage.

Just two weeks ago a motion passed that was for the creation of referenda outside of elections and a clearing up of referenda procedures. I fully support this motion - so why has nothing been done

about it? Why are there still shoddy motions being passed that don't represent the views of all the students? Was it simply lip service to shut us moderates up? Perhaps an online voting system would be beneficial; it could give our UGM credibility and democracy as everyone could vote regardless of whether or not they are at the UGM. Furthermore, it would actually give some meaning to the motions passed as, in theory, all 9,400 students can have their say. I look forward to a day when I sit in the UGM and no longer want to heave at self righteous and pointless motions. In spite of my pessimism, a fairer voting system might mean that our Students' Union no longer just takes the view of Joe Bloggs and all his mates.

**HEAD FOR THE GREAT BEAVER IN THE SKY!**

For more on the Motion Four debate, and to add your own views, visit <http://thebeaveronline.co.uk/section/comment/>

# Let's Get on Better Together

Following LSE's inaugural Pride Week, we ask whether the great strides taken by students can help solve the wider problems faced by the LGBT community

## Reagan Persaud

Last week, a collaboration between the LGBT Society and the LSESU LGBT Officer resulted in the first ever LSE Pride Week.

This week was filled with fun, educational, and inspiring events which sought to better inform LSE students about what LGBT stands for (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender, for those who still don't know), help them to understand who we are, and promote greater acceptance on campus.

The struggle was not necessarily against homophobia, but ignorance. It would amaze even the greatest of minds to learn how many LSE students, with their great breadth of knowledge and successful futures, have no idea who we are, or that we even exist. Whilst signing people up at our stall during Orientation Festival, it wasn't the scoffing or laughing that was hurtful - there being very little to none of that. It was the number of people who asked me "what does LGBT stand

for?" that was shocking! All my life I have fought to be accepted and understood, respected and valued as an equal, and it was in these moments that I realised I was fighting a losing battle if no one knew I existed.

The LGBT Society and LGBT Officer, Scott MacDonald, sought to readdress this. In the name of everyone Queer, closeted or not, we sought to stamp our name on the LSE... and we succeeded!

Our events began with a stall on Houghton Street on Tuesday, where we were able to spread the word wildly across campus. Blunt, but honest, posters covered campus with our LGBT friends proudly portraying themselves and identifying for who they really were - not a lifestyle choice, I might add!

We shook things up with Same Sex Salsa on Wednesday, where the boys were brutally beaten by the girls! It would appear that even across boundaries of sexuality, girls just have better moves! It was an insightful opportunity to hang out and get to know real LGBT students and I'm pleased to say that many took this opportunity seriously.

Thursday was our educational day. We decided to screen Milk; an inspirational gay film which never fails to shake the audience. Viewers were able to better

understand our struggle - to know that we're not 'possessed', or choosing to be like 'that'. But instead, this is who we are. After all, why would anyone choose to be excluded from society, misunderstood and looked down upon?

Our grand finale was Queer Crush. The bar staff were very supportive in helping us to organise our very own student LGBT clubbing night at the LSE, where we had cheap drinks, cheap entry, and drag queens all round. We even managed to host our very own Mr/Miss LSE pageant to compensate for the lack of a Miss LSE 2009. Our winner was dressed to impress! The whole night turned out to be a huge success which the LGBT Society and LGBT Officer are truly proud of.

The war has not been won by a long shot. But the battle for recognition; the battle to fight ignorance and intolerance; the battle to get the right just to be ourselves - these battles, we have won in style! We came, we informed, and we conquered! It was a victory for all LGBT students on campus and it is worth recognising that no longer are we in the shadows of the LSE. We are here to stay and it's about time people knew who we are!

• Reagan Persaud is the President of the LSESU LGBT Society

## Estelle Cooch

According to the American singer-songwriter Anita Bryant, 'If homosexuality was the normal way, God would have made Adam and Bruce'.

Now, I don't claim to be an expert in the teachings of any religion. For ten years, my religious grounding was based on my conviction that 'if the tooth fairy and Father Christmas exist, then I'd give God a chance as well' and when my faith in the former was shattered, I'm afraid to say the latter went with it. But as I remember it, God was never overly keen on 'the normal way' anyway. I mean come on: the ark, the immaculate conception, the resurrection? Hardly what you see on BBC Breakfast news every morning. Despite this there has of course been a sea change in public attitudes towards sexuality since 1967 when sex between men was decriminalised in Britain. While 40 years ago gay sex was illegal, from 2005 we saw the first civil partnerships, but there is still a long way to go.

The past year has seen a huge increase in homophobic attacks, an increase of 62% in Manchester; the attack on James Parkes, an off-duty trainee police officer in Liverpool; the death of Ian Baynham, a 62 year old man attacked near Trafalgar Square. Both these attacks followed the now notorious column by the Daily Mail's Jan Moir about the death of Boyzone singer Stephen Gately. Moir wrote, "Whatever the cause of death is, it is not,

by any yardstick, a natural one... Once again, under the carapace of glittering, hedonistic celebrity, the ooze of a very different and more dangerous lifestyle has seeped out for all to see." More than 25,000 people complained to the Press Complaints Commission about the article, the most complaints it has ever received about a single article.

Some of the most horrifying statistics displaying the institutional homophobia are those about school children. In a 2007 school report produced by Stonewall, the LGBT rights organisation, they found that nearly two thirds of young lesbian, gay and bisexual pupils have experienced direct bullying, but less than a quarter were told that homophobic bullying is wrong. It is little wonder that one in five young LGBT people have tried to kill themselves. It is worth remembering that we are still living with the legacy of the Tories' Section 28 legislation from 1988, banning teachers from "promoting homosexuality". In practice this removed any discussion of it from schools except in relation to AIDS. Labour didn't reverse the law until the end of 2003.

Since then, the framework in which we talk about homosexuality has changed. There has been an attempt to bring gays into the family fold and "normalise" homosexual relationships. But this has come alongside a concerted effort to reassert the family as the dominant social unit in society. If we really want genuine liberation we have to fight for more than legal reforms or striving merely for the rights that heterosexual people already have. Every week two women are murdered by their partner or ex-partner, while 54 percent of all rapes reported are said to be perpetrated by a partner. Women's oppression, the alienation of children from their parents

and the pain of physical and psychological violence are all part of "family life". Surely genuine liberation for LGBT people means more than just a right to share in this?

Capitalism is a system based on competition, profit and greed. It requires inequality and division to sustain itself. Amidst economic crisis when people fear for their jobs and homes, it becomes all too easy for the media and politicians to encourage us to blame the minority in society, be it Muslims, immigrants or LGBT people. The recent attacks have forced all those who want to defend the gains made for LGBT people to come together. Now we need to build a militant movement against homophobia that unites gay and straight, black and white. Whenever the Pope speaks out against homosexuality or abortion, my friends often ask, 'Why would we take sex tips of an 82-year old virgin?' I agree. Love is love. And nobody, be it the state or homophobic bigots, have the right to stand in its way.

↑ Pride Week ensured everyone at LSE knew what LGBT stood for;

← The rise in homophobic attacks shows there is much still to do in defending gay rights; → It is essential for LGBT campaigns to improve perceptions of the LGBT community in the wider world;

↓ The rise of the fag hag is a positive step in the integration of gay and mainstream culture

## Maitiu Corbett

For many years it seemed that the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender members of the population constituted a discreet group, apart from the rest of society.

The 2008 biopic Milk (which, incidentally, everyone on the planet should see) depicted a gay population that constituted most of a neighbourhood in San Francisco in the 1970s. However, to stop here would be to deny the point of the film; the inalienable right of gays to be considered part of a community, and it would also be to deny social reality.

Homosexuality and bisexuality have become part of our social fabric, demanding both our acceptance of them as every-

day and our recognition of their identity. This is the sort of paradox that animates a fair and functional society. Thankfully, for most people this has become so automatic that it barely even needs to be mentioned. Nevertheless, the social dynamics between LGBT and non-LGBT are fascinating. To represent them as two separate camps is again to totally miss the point. Even still, there is a certain way, for example, in which gay men and the straight women they are friends with seem to base their relationship on the glorious mutual embrace of their own stereotypes.

At some point in the 90s the term "fag hag" was coined. Despite sounding like an insult it has now become the self-proclaimed battle cry of women who have realised that straight guys are, for the most part, dull, uninterested, and singly dreadful at constructive compliments. They relish in the ability of gay men to hold a conversation that actually relates to their interests, and both parties enjoy the utter lack of sexual tension. But can't ladies get

this from other ladies? Well perhaps that's not actually the way to look at it. Gay men are just other friends, girls to all intents and purposes. But even still, there's a certain (dare I say it) kudos in having a gay friend, perhaps to rant at about other girls. They are not "one of the girls", they are "like one of the girls".

At this point this article is getting achingly close to sounding like veiled bigotry. This is difficult to avoid, as I can't actually write what's between the lines; you have to do that for yourselves.

Moving on, this dynamic is not reserved to gay men and "fag hags". People don't play drag queen bingo in Las Vegas for the bingo. They go because the broad-shouldered madams of the stage are more fun than a bath full of jelly, and the display of inverted sexuality offers a welcome respite from the suffocating social identities of everyday life. Sod the bingo, I'm buying that tall lady a drink.

In fact, one of my flatmates recently realised that back home in New York she



LSE Pride Week is a hit on Houghton Street  
Photo: Scott MacDonald

## Scott MacDonald

While Pride Week has been a huge success on campus, let's not forget the struggles faced by LGBT people in areas less

tolerant and liberal. Recently there has been a widely reported rise in homophobic hate crime attacks; the murder of Ian Baynham being the prime example. The 62-year old man was beaten to death less than 200 metres from Northumberland House, the hall of residence where I stayed last year. This truly brings home how real the dangers of intolerance are. What if this had happened to an LSE student, walking home from Mind The Gap, forgetting to remove their t-shirt? What if the 62-year old had been an academic at LSE? When homophobic attacks are this close to our students it should be impossible for the student body to stand by and do nothing.

The campaigning this term has been focussed around raising awareness of LGBT students on campus. While there may not be explicit homophobia, the negative attitudes of many students when learning that their friends and classmates

are gay certainly proves there is work to be done.

Next term, LGBT campaigns will be focussing on the wider community in London and ensuring that we campaign for our rights to be recognised on regional, national and global levels. We have forged links which will allow LGBT students from LSE to visit London schools so that kids can meet a gay, lesbian, bi or trans person and see that they aren't really that scary. If we can spread some of the tolerance which exists at LSE to the wider community it can only help to prevent future generations from falling into the trap of homophobia.

The student population is unique also in terms of the diversity of people's backgrounds. Each year we meet students who come to London from countries where it is illegal to be LGBT, where the punishments may not only be isolation from family members but jail, or even death. It is even more important then to ensure that LSE is proud of its diversity; to give these students hope that one day their respective states can be as progressive and respectful of minority views as the United Kingdom is. Pride should be both a reason to rejoice at how accepting LSE is and to contemplate what we can do to help those who aren't quite as fortunate as ourselves.

• Scott MacDonald is the LGBT Officer of the LSE Students Union

is socially gay - all the NY friends she can think of are lesbian, gay, bi or transgender. If anything, this is an inversion of the "fag hag" situation; the LGBT crowd seem to relish having a conspicuously straight friend. The pull of the LGBT community has become so strong that a whole cult of tongue-in-cheek adulation has developed around it. For a particularly inspired example (and an awesome Christmas present), you may wish to search for the "LGBTerrific!" t-shirt on sale on the internet.

Nevertheless, there are still parts of society that view this cult with all the negative connotations of the word. 'Cult' is often used to describe indoctrination and perverse values. Many gay teenagers in small-town America are treated with disgust and sent to bible camps to be 'fixed'. More sinister still, scientists in Oregon in 2007 started tests to reverse homosexuality as a genetic trait, with the aim of offering prospective mothers the chance to avoid this 'birth defect' which

defied the laws of procreation. 'Innovations' like these leave one rather speechless. It suffices to say that it is in fact their views that are defective.

Effective campaigning can aid a reversal of such views, but on my reckoning their days are numbered in any case. The tide of the cult of LGBT has become, it seems, irresistible. It is everywhere, and only adds to the glorious diversity of a place like LSE. The very fact that I am far from an expert on the subject, and yet feel compelled to talk about it, tells you something about the proliferation of its 'cult status'.

It is therefore time for people to stop tiptoeing around. LGBT is exactly what any society should be: the paradox of people united by difference. If someone is gay, call them gay - they might actually appreciate it. I don't mean suddenly blurt it out; just acknowledge it, talk about it, and for God's sake joke about it. Just don't do it in front of their parents.

# Features



Photo: flickr user Stuart Chalmers

## Taxation without representation

**Kyle Packer** discusses how the European Union is eroding national sovereignty

**W**hen it comes to the European Union, the average British citizen's utter lack of knowledge and involvement has always inspired a certain political unease – or a tamed, silent foreboding – regarding parliamentary sovereignty; why are we so habitually disengaged from the very meta-institution that is “democratically” moving to dominate our national and global direction? Do we simply not care, or is the establishment itself subtly designed to impede our participation, geared as it is towards nationalism?

I had never heard of Baroness Ashton of Upholland or Herman Van Rompuy. This I can admit without considerable embarrassment, for the vast majority of people stand alongside me in that particular ‘shortcoming’. Yet on Thursday 19th November, without due process, European leaders arbitrarily ‘chose’ them to lead policymaking at the highest level. The creation of their respective roles – ‘High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy’ and ‘President of the European Council’ – will be the first of a myriad of power-related changes brought about by the controversial ‘Lisbon Treaty’, enacted as of today.

The national press has portrayed the rushed appointment of these inexperienced individuals as “an insult to democracy”, though deeper investigation, it has been suggested, reveals that the sham that is European Parliamentary Elections has been operative for so long that the ‘insult’

is now a full-blown offensive upon our civil liberties.

The EU presents its authority structure as a ‘balance of powers’ that provides solutions for the inevitable problems of legitimate rule. The theory in short is that all EU legislation and policy is the result of decisions taken by an “institutional triangle”, comprised of The Council of Ministers, The EU Parliament, and ‘The European Commission’. While it all sounds very democratic in a dialectical sense, there are underlying issues in the recent appointments and the accompanying legislation that evoke something troubling.

As of today, we are living under the legal provisions of the Lisbon Treaty – this is no mere ‘amendment’, but effectively the ‘final draft’ of the European Constitution. It must be stressed that the British people did not vote on this: we were promised a referendum by the Labour Party during the election of 2005, but it never came to be. The situation mirrors the days of former Conservative Prime Minister, Edward Heath, who in 1973 took the United Kingdom into the ‘European Community’, without our consent. I am choosing my words carefully; my argument is not a nationalist one, but a democratic one. You cannot democratically change the constitution of a country without consulting the people through a vote. Heath did not consult the people, just as Brown has not consulted the people today.

The Lisbon treaty makes us official

**The European Parliament has been modelled to appear democratic, but many have emphasised its vacuum of representative power**

citizens of Europe, but it has simultaneously taken the future of the European constitution out of the hands of the national electorate. More power has been transferred to the ever-obscure entity that is ‘Europe’. In a democracy, sovereignty belongs to the people, not the parliament, and if the latter transfers powers away from the former it is stealing powers that do not belong to it – it is a theft of public rights.

People are habitually trained to brush these realisations aside as obsolete nationalism. I am not a nationalist; I do not want a return to the old Europe of fighting and turmoil, but the treaty will not, contrary to propaganda, lead to a reduction in nationalism: it is likely to cause an explosion of it. People will eventually discover that they no longer have the democratic right to change the law in Britain, and they will not blame the constitution; they will irrationally point the finger at the French, Germans, and so forth. At the same time, these populations will be facing the very same dilemma.

The European Parliament has been modelled to appear democratic, but many have emphasised its vacuum of representative power. Within Europe, we do not elect MEPs, we ‘elect’ the party to the seat, whose leaders choose the candidate; the individual remains unelected, and not directly accountable to the voters. This ‘democracy’ is a dangerous fraud against our own national system. Perhaps the most important instrument of democratic balance has been the ability of our

own parliament to repeal a law passed by a previous government. Is this free evolution of the public law, in accordance with the people's will, not the essence of democracy? From this day onwards, if any government enters into an agreement with the Council of Ministers to introduce a EU law, it cannot be repealed. Those of us who thought that the destruction of our civil liberties had ended with Tony Blair's scrapping of Habeas Corpus were naïve – the trend is ongoing.

A united Europe governed by democracy is the desired outcome; unfortunately the benefactors behind the EU have never had the moral fibre to convey its true nature. The commonality of vague catch-phrases describing “trading agreements”, “little adjustments”, “cooperation”, only serve to obscure the fundamental changes sneaking in through the back door. If we persist in shifting this power, we risk becoming a mere local authority of a borderless federation made up of clandestine leaders and priorities, and which will see the private – as opposed to public – dictation of the law. The recent appointments, not having been made in any formal way, only serve to be symptomatic of a greater problem. Overwhelmingly, the European Union has not been subject to direct election, with a partial exception of the Parliament. National governments may fall short of protecting our civil liberties, but compared with the EU institutions they appear immediate, transparent and democratic – perhaps this is the point.



# Understanding the Israeli Right

**Jonathan Neumann** discusses the success of the Israeli right's 'economic peace'

In light of the interest in the visit of the Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister, Danny Ayalon, and the determination of a vocal minority to silence him, it is important for those genuinely interested in the Arab-Israeli conflict to discover what drives the Israeli Right. This is not a polemic, but a clarification of how some on the Right view and justify some of its foreign and security policies. While others are welcome to disagree, the prerequisite is to listen and understand.

The first and fundamental step to this understanding is to appreciate that Israel is a Jewish state. We're not talking theocracy - Israeli leaders actually tend to be quite secular. However this does mean that Israel is there to absorb and protect Jews from across the globe, enabling them to live Jewish lives in security. This may sound trivial, but remember that the Jews had been stateless for two millennia, expelled from almost every country and persecuted in both the Christian and Muslim worlds. In modern times, the need for a Jewish state was accepted by the British rulers of Palestine and the United Nations, which resolved to create it where ancient Israel once stood.

Israel's identity as this Jewish state has two implications. Firstly, all Jews have a right to immigrate to Israel. This has been condemned by some observers as racist, yet not only is it entirely justifiable to prioritise immigration of any nationals to their homeland, but it also fulfils Israel's purpose as envisioned by all Zionists and the United Nations. Israel exists to welcome Jewish refugees and immigrants and it is proud to have absorbed more immigrants per capita than any other country in the world.

The second implication is that Israel can never enjoy genuine peace with its neighbours until they recognise it as a

Jewish state. Only when Israel's purpose is recognised, respected and accepted - along with all the tribulations and rights of the Jewish people - will Israel be satisfied. The rest of the world must deliver similar recognition, as only some countries have hitherto been prepared to do.

With that in mind, we can turn to some of the particular issues. Firstly, there is the question of the Arab-Israelis, brethren of the Palestinian Arabs who happen to live within Israel's borders or annexed territory. Non-Jewish Israelis enjoy full rights in Israel's democracy: there are Arab political parties in parliament, Arab ministers and Arab diplomats. Inevitably, some sectors of the Arab population have caused difficulties, for instance roaming Bedouin tribes who are not easily reconciled to Western society, and Arab-Israelis who have directly aided terrorist groups. More fundamentally, given Israel's military adversary is Arab, it would be unreasonable to expect Arabs to take up arms against them, so they are exempt from the national conscription. Still, some minorities such as the Druze do enlist. Moreover, Israel's national anthem speaks of the yearning of the 'Jewish soul', so it is only natural for some Arabs to feel excluded and to feel affinity to their Palestinian brethren, even if in practice they share the same rights as their fellow Jewish citizens.

Many Jewish Israelis fear this latent disloyalty and, more practically, its realisation in the form of violence by Arab-Israeli citizens, not to mention the looming possibility of the total Arab population west of the River Jordan outnumbering that of the Jews. These factors directly threaten Israel's purpose as a Jewish state and protector of Jews at home and abroad. Israel is therefore faced with a dilemma in the form of the Arab sector, of which a

**Unlike the quite universal leftist appetite for grand plans and self-indulgent peace processes, the view of the Israeli Right tends to be pragmatic**

significant part - though by no means all - does not endorse Israel's purpose for a variety of reasons. However as a democracy which affords all its citizens equal rights, the hands of the state are somewhat tied in dealing with this problem.

The approach associated with the Yisrael Beteinu Party of which Danny Ayalon is a member advocates territory exchange: it supports a two-state solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, but suggests that major settlement blocs in the West Bank be exchanged for major Arab blocs within recognised Israeli borders. Under this solution, nobody has to move physically, but the affected Arabs lose their Israeli citizenship and get Palestinian citizenship in return. This policy is opposed by some Arabs as, observing the fate of the chronically underdeveloped and undemocratic Arab countries across the Middle East, realise the benefits of living under Israeli democracy as compared to those likely to be available under a future Palestinian state. The policy is opposed by some Israelis who do not like the idea of any Israeli losing his or her citizenship. Finally, the policy is opposed by those who prefer to see a Palestinian state on the entire West Bank area, usually without any Jewish citizens, though they insist Arab-Israelis must be allowed to remain in Israel.

Of course, other parties on the Israeli Right are not keen on a Palestinian state at all, or at least demand to see an end to Palestinian support of terrorism against Israeli citizens first. They oppose withdrawal from the West Bank based on observation of the withdrawal from southern Lebanon in 1999, following which the terrorist group Hezbollah took control of the area, and from Gaza in 2005, when the Israeli Defence Forces pulled out of the Strip and all settlements there were disbanded

at a huge emotional cost to Israeli society. Since then, the terrorist group Hamas took control and have launched thousands of rockets into Israel's recognised borders. Both developments have strengthened the influence of Iran and the most extreme elements in the Middle East on Israel's doorstep, hence the Right's insistence on seeing the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in the context of the wider Middle East.

Given these precedents, the Israeli Right's scepticism regarding future withdrawals from the West Bank is not surprising. Hence, the current prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, has preferred to focus on building an 'economic peace', whereby the Palestinian economy and institutions are strengthened and their autonomous security apparatus is bolstered. Because the world's attention is on Gaza, the growing success of this policy in the West Bank, due in great part to the courageous cooperation of particular Palestinian leaders, has gone unnoticed. Unlike the quite universal leftist appetite for grand plans and self-indulgent peace processes, the view of the Israeli Right tends to be pragmatic.

Israel is a thriving democracy, facilitating national debate on contentious issues which few other Western countries confront. Comprehending the fundamental questions and complexities with which Israel is forced to grapple, and some of the varied solutions offered by the Israeli Right is a prerequisite to understanding what Israel is about, and for a genuine debate about the future of the Middle East. That opportunity was missed by the hecklers of Danny Ayalon.



Photo: Alex Young

# Dispatches from the frontlines

**Shibani Mahtani** discusses conflict journalism and Al-Jazeera with **Alan Fisher**

**A**lan Fisher is a Scottish broadcast journalist currently working as a correspondent for Al-Jazeera English, based in the London office. He was a frontline correspondent during Georgia's war with Russia in August 2008 and came under sustained fire while reporting on US army operations in Afghanistan. Most recently, he covered the Israeli assault on Gaza in December 2008 - January 2009. Together with his colleague Sherine Tadros, who had been inside Gaza at the time, BBC Middle East Editor Jeremy Bowen and 'Unseen Gaza' director Louise Turner he had been speaking at the LSE last week in an event organised by journalism think tank POLIS on 'Managing the News in Conflict: Reporting Gaza under the Media Ban'.

**How detrimental did you feel Israel's media ban (during the siege on Gaza in Dec - Jan 09) was on what you were trying to achieve as a journalist?**

It did not affect me as much simply because we had Al Jazeera English reporters in Gaza so it did not really restrict what we were doing. There was a problem when I was detained by the Israelis because they thought we were too close to the border and we were operating in a restricted military area, even though we drove past two police patrols to get there. To be released, I had to sign an agreement that we would not go into the restricted military areas again, so that did put some restrictions on me. On the whole, it did not impact as much as it impacted other journalists who simply could not get into Gaza. We were covered because we had the foresight to put a team in there before the war.

**Did the fact that you were able to avoid most of the effects of the media blockade on Gaza make it more difficult for you to retain your journalistic objectivity?**

Not being in Gaza, it is hard for me to talk about the Al-Jazeera reporters who were there, and neither do I presume to. But I think what they did was a very good example of truth-telling. I think they went out onto the streets and saw what was happening, and reported this accurately and I think you can ask for no more from journalists. From my side of the border,

it was again telling what you can see and explaining the context of what was going on. Obviously from the Hill you had a better view of the area and perhaps could give people a geographic idea of where things were. I think a lot of people think Gaza is just one place, it is just one amorphous lump whereas we know that the strip contains a number of towns where people live and I think our job was to tell the truth. I think if anything we were aware that because we were the only ones there we had to be objective. I think we are always objective, I do not think there is any time we set out with any sort of slant on the story.

**I'm not sure if you heard the quip during the panel discussion that Al-Jazeera was Hamas' media wing. Do you find that that sort of prejudiced comment makes it difficult for Al-Jazeera English to reach audiences in the Western world?**

I think people talk about Al-Jazeera English never having watched it. A lot of people speak about what we do from positions of ignorance. I can't understand why anyone would think we were the television wing of Hamas and I don't think that is a fair reflection at all. We are not a news service that broadcasts from the traditional centres of New York and London. This is something entirely different and people are fearful of that. It is interesting that in Southeast Asia and South America and across the Middle East, and in Africa as well, people have really welcomed Al-Jazeera as a different voice and something that moves away from what can be considered the traditional Western view of news. I covered the climate change conference in Barcelona, which was a precursor to Copenhagen. We could not offer enough slots to African delegates who wanted to be on Al-Jazeera because it is watched across the continent, and they felt it was an important way of getting the news out.

**Do you think that Al-Jazeera is seen by other news outlets as being on equal footing and an equal partner in the global media infrastructure?**

I think no one underestimates Al-Jazeera now. I think the war on Gaza for Al-Jazeera English was a defining conflict in the way that the Gulf War was a defin-

ing conflict for CNN in 1991. They were no longer perceived as "Chicken Noodle News", they were an important media player and we showed that as well. People became much more aware of what we were doing and our coverage at that point. Going back to the Hamas comment, if we were seen as their media wing, then I don't think the Israelis would be as keen to get on air with us as they are. When TV channels were being taken off cable systems because of their perceived bias in Israel, whether that was true or not, it was not Al-Jazeera. We were regarded as very much straight down the line.

**Do you see your experience working in Al-Jazeera any different than your experience in working in any other 'Western' news organisation?**

No it's really not that different. There's no sort of agenda, when I go up on a story whether it's in Israel or Pakistan, we are not told you must see this and you must see that. I think what becomes incumbent on us is to think of the language we use. It's very easy having grown up watching channels like BBC and ITN and more recently the like of CNN and Sky that it is easy to fall into the language of the Western journalist. I think it is really incumbent on us to think about 'well if I say that is that a value laden term? Am I making an assumption there that would be ok in the West but global is that how everyone would think?'. It is a good thing that journalists sometimes stop and check themselves and think 'Am I doing the right thing? Am I approaching this in the right way? Am I thinking about this in a global context rather than the traditional Western perspective that we've grown up in?'. It is like Jeremy Bowen (BBC Middle East Editor) said in the POLIS debate, when he explained how he wakes up in the morning and thinks about what he is going to do. Journalists are informed by what school they went to, what education they have had, where they have worked and what sort of socialisation had gone on in their newsroom. I think it is a really good thing when you work for a global broadcaster who is slightly different from the BBCs and CNNs of this world to look at it from a different perspective.

**How similar do you think your experi-**

**ences were in reporting on the war in Afghanistan and the assault on Gaza?**

If you are looking at it on a very basic level, there were restrictions in both places. Trying to cover the war in Gaza, there were restrictions placed on us by the Israelis so we could not go to all the places we wanted to. In Afghanistan, access is again difficult so we could only go to certain places, and certainly if you are a white like I am, you are restricted from going certain places under the control of the military, or have to seek approval from the Taliban in advance. The stories I covered in Afghanistan were done by largely embeds with the American military forces, so there were restrictions placed on us there as well. A soldier was killed when we were there but we could not film anything to do with the coffin or the repatriation of the body. By and large, they were fairly open but there were restrictions on that macro level.

**How did you get involved in reporting from the front lines and conflict journalism?**

Conflict journalism was not something I actively sought out but assignments tend to be given to be people that are trusted to be self-starters, people who can go out and work on their own. A lot of the time, when you cover a conflict you can't keep calling up the news desk and saying "Oh what do I do now?". I covered the peripheries of the Gulf War in 1991, and the preparation before, and I was in Kuwait a few days after. I moved to work in Northern Ireland, which gives you the air of being a conflict journalist; I was there in the early 1990s and the troubles were still in full swing. I was seen as being able to handle that conflict situation and from there I was dispatched to cover the humanitarian crisis in Rwanda and also covered the war in the Balkans. Once you've done one war, the news editors tend to look round the office and say "who can I send? He's been to a conflict zone, let's send him again" and almost by default you become the conflict reporter. But I don't think anyone, certainly no one I know with any sense, likes to be called a "war correspondent"; perhaps correspondents who cover wars instead.

**Considering newspaper journalism is an**

**industry that is said to be dying, do you see the role of broadcast journalism and broadcast journalists growing?**

I think if you look at newspaper circulation in Britain it has been declining since the middle of the 1950s which is when television really took off with ITV. I think that what the Telegraph has shown over the last 6 to 8 months is that if you invest in journalism, you get the rewards - you get stories and your readership goes up. What has happened in newspapers is that the people who run the papers aren't journalists, they are businessmen and they are looking at the bottom line, they are looking at how much more their profits can be. A lot of newspapers have been profitable but they are looking at how much more they can be so they cut back on staff and ask staff to do more. That detracts from the journalism, which has always driven sales. As far as television journalism is concerned, just because we are as ubiquitous as we are, we are going to be important. Sequences and moving images imprint more than still images and television journalists have been growing in importance over the last 20 years and will continue to be so as more and more people get TV. Citizen journalism has an important part to play as well, whether it be from newspapers or television.

**What do you think your best experience as a journalist has been?**

It's funny, Sherine Tadros and I were just talking about this. We have known each other for a few years and I was saying that one of the best gigs I got was going to the Article Circle this year and shooting about in a snow mobile. This sounds like a really patronising answer but its not meant to be - a lot of experiences are really good because I like meeting people, so when I go somewhere new and meet people that I like and places that I like, I really enjoy that. I'd never like to say that something has been my best experience, I hope that my best experience is still yet to come. We were wondering whether there is a point where you say, "I've had enough time on the road", I've been doing this now for 26 years and I still don't see that point.



Flickr user : J-Cornelius

# The People's Parliament

**Mazida Khatun** considers the apathy and disenchantment rotting democracy

One would think that a Politics Society at the LSE would be full of wannabe politicians just waiting in the wings, ready to pounce on unsuspecting voters and bedazzle them with promises that 'things can only get better'. But alas, I've met only a few of these enthusiastic power-grabbers during my two years on the committee of the society. More often than not I have listened to our members tell me how disillusioned they are with politics, and how much they despise politicians.

Now I must either be inanelly optimistic or I have had the immense good fortune to have been represented by politicians with what I deem as a good character and firm set of principles, because I still believe in the ability of politicians to do good, if they choose to do so. My local MP was one of the few politicians that wasn't implicated in the expenses scandal of late, and he has always had a record of staying committed to his constituents, which proves that being charged with great responsibility does not necessarily mean that this power will corrupt.

My optimism is tempered however, by my experience with a very corrupt system in a faraway land. Bangladesh is the 31st

most corrupt country for 2009 according to Transparency International. There, any small possession of power corrupts absolutely because there is no institutional framework to prevent corruption, to protect citizens or to hold anyone to account. The UK is ranked as one of the least corrupt countries on the list, in part because our parliamentary system has evolved over many years and we have learnt from our mistakes, just as we have learnt to be less permissive from this latest scandal. This is why term limits, independent ombudsmen and the media exist, so it is possible to reign in greedy tendencies. Once we have the systems in place to safeguard the public against the Ann Keens of this world, it is up to us to hold our representatives to account.

The public has never been more powerful than it is today; we are all citizen journalists now, we can inundate the system with Freedom of Information requests, or we can just remind politicians of what we expect of them, as we have done recently. I would never presume to even try and attempt to defend corrupt politicians but we must remember that politicians are merely human beings who will never be infallible. Let us expect the worst of them if that will keep them from

**I don't believe that it is feasible to expect our politicians to be saints, but if we carry on with this apathy and disillusionment, we will be left with a long trail of disappointments**

claiming expenses for bath plugs, but why don't we attempt to set the bar a little higher and demand more?

There was a time in the eighteenth century, when election rigging was par for the course. 'Rotten boroughs' were places where votes were bought openly and without any compunction. Nonetheless, Britain still transformed into no less than one of the twenty corruption-light states (taking into account the fiddled expenses). This change is not due to some act of God, nor is it an act of a political leviathan in Westminster. Rather, we should congratulate civil society for keeping a beady eye on our elected representatives and giving them a stern talking to when they have stepped out of line.

I don't believe that it is feasible to expect our politicians to be saints, but if we carry on with this apathy and disillusionment, we will be left with a long trail of disappointments. Let us take up the challenge of cleaning up politics and demanding dynamic and committed representatives who will work for the public interest. We have already begun to do this with the naming and shaming of MPs who not only claimed money they certainly did not deserve, but also by calling them up on how dedicated they are to our interests.

This is not just true of the UK, but also in Russia where brave journalists and most recently a local police chief have risked the wrath of several dangerous groups to highlight corruption. It is these people that make politicians behave properly, because we know that rules carry very little weight unless there is a guarantee of enforcement.

If we continue to expect little and berate a lot, 'populist' parties like the BNP will find their memberships swelling and that will hardly improve the ethics of politics. Thus through waking up from our apathetic slumber, we may realise that we have an integral part to play in ensuring that politics is free from corruption.



## LSE Diary

### Personal perspective: Who am I?

**Nik Adhia** describes his confused cultural experience as a British Indian



Photo: petitplat

**B**ollywood movies, Bankside residence hall, Shah Rukh Khan, High Holborn residence hall, Priyanka Chopra and Tiger Tiger Mondays – what do they all have in common? They all attract Indians. I am a British Born Indian, or so I am told. Since coming to LSE a couple of years ago, at times I find myself questioning exactly where my roots and culture lie, where I fit in and what it means to be an Indian at the LSE.

On one hand I have friends from India and abroad, on the other there are British born Indians. Both sets of friends are great in their own ways but also distinctly different. This is strange, considering we all did originate from the same country, heritage and culture at one point. After volunteering and working in India this summer and being brought up in the United Kingdom, I realise that both worlds are far apart even if they occasionally do overlap.

Some days I find myself with my friends from India submerged in Hindi conversations which I never understand, where I am slowly but surely alienated. The time goes by whilst I politely laugh where there seems to be some sort of joke about “Koffee with Karan”, or something else I

find it hard to relate to. If you’ve been in this situation before – and if you’re at the LSE you probably have – be careful when you laugh. If people are looking at you in a disgusted way, you’ve probably gone and laughed at something quite inappropriate.

Other days, I may be going out from time to time clubbing with all my British born Indian friends, with them chatting about people I’ve never even heard of, in places I didn’t know existed, in situations that I find hard to relate to. I grew up in the east side of London, while the majority of them grew up together in closely connected circles, in other parts of London with a large concentration of Indians. So, I sit there pretending to understand how fun it was meeting friends I never knew or heard of when we all apparently used to meet up in Harrow or Hounslow, even if I could never locate it on a map.

While these may be slight generalisations about two extremes and this is not to suggest that everyone conforms to them. However, since I do find distinct differences between these two worlds in my own life, I still find myself in an existential dilemma.

In addition, there is yet another complication to add to the

identity crisis. I have grown up in quite a racist and rough side of east London, where the BNP has gained increasing support over the years. Although things have improved since my parents arrived in the 1960s, there are some who would prefer that I leave the country rather than acknowledge me as a real British citizen. So if some do not consider me to be British and according to some I might not be Indian enough, does that mean I can still be defined as being “British-Indian”? Good luck trying to find that option in the ethnic equality section of an application form.

After going through all this confusion, though, I have finally come to a conclusion as to where I fit in and who I am. In fact, I am very proud to be British. This country has provided me with a place to live, grow and prosper by providing me with the tools to become what I am today and for that I am extremely grateful. Indeed, I love the fact that I was born here.

I am also immensely proud of my Indian roots. I don’t feel I need to be part of either extreme, or speak a certain language or be from a certain area to realise that I am just as Indian as anyone else. Being a true Indian is about remembering my culture and

heritage, which I have learnt not only from the qualities of my family and friends, but the great people from my history and literature. For example, at this time of Geetajayanti – the birthday of the Hindu holy book, the Srimad Bhagavad Geeta – I am learning qualities such as being loyal as Arjun demonstrated to Krishna in the battle of Kurukshetra in the war that brought the Geet to life 5,000 years ago. There are lessons of courage to be learnt from the Rani (Queen) of Jhansi and Bhagat Singh, both Indian freedom fighters. Most of all, I am learning to be comfortable and happy with myself as a person. As long as there are English subtitles I love old Bollywood movies and I have my favourites when it comes to traditional cuisine – the sweet gulab jamun and the savoury samosas.

I don’t feel it’s about where I come from or what language I speak, but about being able to associate oneself with the culture and heritage as well as the rich values, ideals and characteristics that come with them. Ultimately, it is these values and ideals that define a true Indian, and that I would want to see passed down from generation to generation.



Photo: penguincakes

## WHAT IF...

### Mill’s amendment had passed

**Ossie Fikret**

**J**ohn Stuart Mill, often described as the ‘father of feminism’, attempted to sneak through an amendment in 1867 that would have reshaped the political, social and economic landscape. Mill proposed to change every reference to ‘man’ in the Conservative Reform Bill, to ‘person’. This minor amendment would have made the UK the first modern state to grant women the right to vote on equal terms with their male counterparts. Through this minor grammatical amendment, Mill could have changed the position and perception of women and made redundant the need for the Women’s Rights movement of the 1960s.

Due to Britain’s extensive empire – which was at its peak in the early twentieth century – these rights would have diffused across the globe, improving (if only marginally) the rights of women generations earlier than in our world. Women would have found themselves with greater political representation earlier and thus an increasing entitlement to rights which had previously been exclusively the ‘rights of men’. A simplified divorce process would have come earlier and it would not have taken until 1991 for ‘spousal rape exemptions’ to be thrown out by the judiciary.

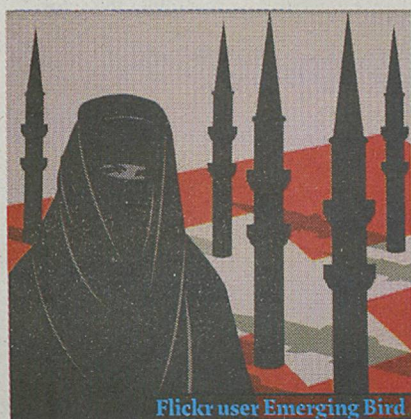
In this parallel Britain, the term ‘suffragette’ and the name ‘Pankhurst’ are unknown and the multitude of organizations such as the National Society for Women’s Suffrage and the Women’s Franchise League have never existed. They have never needed to exist. Bra burning happened in the 1920s and the civil rights of LGBT and Ethnic Minorities – which have been so intrinsically involved with female struggles for equality – came decades earlier.

Margaret Thatcher was still Prime Minister, but she is far more famous for her sale of national assets rather than the fact that she was a woman. She was one in a long line of female Prime Ministers in a parliament where approximately half of British constituencies were represented by women (compared to only 20 per cent at present). Paternity and maternity leave were introduced in the 1960s alongside a range of other welfare measures, aimed at supporting women’s right to have children as well as pursue a career.

The recent statistic that 1 in 7 people believe it justified to hit a woman would almost certainly not exist and while it would be fantastic to suggest that domestic violence would have been eradicated, it would be lower than it currently is. Chauvinistic attitudes would have been undermined by more women in the office, in the boardroom and leading the country.

Yet, in this alternate world financial crashes would still happen and ‘Lehman Sisters’ would have fallen as quickly as ‘Lehman Brothers’. Women are different to men yet female investment bankers, even if they do dominate the boardroom, are unlikely to be more ‘risk averse’ than their male counterparts. If anything, these ‘feminine traits’ we espouse in our world are nothing but a product of our society, and would probably not exist in the alternate world.

## Measured musings



Flickr user Emerging Bird

**T**he Swiss have voted and the results are in. Twenty two out of twenty six provinces support a proposed constitutional ban on the construction of minarets in Switzerland. Once again, the champions of democracy have a private joke to chuckle about.

It is difficult to pinpoint the most ridiculous aspect of this scenario. Firstly and most obviously, this very democratic decision mocks the very essence of what democratic and secular values were meant to represent: freedom. By imposing the diktat of the majority it impinges on the fundamental rights of the Muslim community in Switzerland. This is particularly ironic given that the controversial posters campaigning for the ban were allowed in Zurich to “protect free speech”. The right-wing Swiss People’s Party (SVP) was therefore given full license to post vile images of black minarets sprouting up behind a dark figure in a ninja-style burkah. They could easily have been advertise-

## Direct(ed) Democracy

ments for a violent video game. Indeed, it appears that there already exists an online game in which players can shoot down rising minarets. That has to be among the most disturbing forms of xenophobia to exist in the world today.

Interestingly enough, polls show that the voters in favour of the ban went from 35% in early October – before the smear campaign – to 57% in the final referendum. One should be wondering what “direct democracy” really means in this situation.

It is also worthwhile to explore the context of the proposal. The justification offered by the SVP is that minarets represent Islamisation, the tenets of which are incompatible with Swiss values of democracy. There have been, however, no immediate instances of trouble from the Muslims in the country, and no grounds to believe in the growth of extremism. They have been practicing their religion in peace, with or without the construction of minarets around their places of worship.

At this point it would not go amiss to note that if minarets are to be viewed as the embodiment of radical Islamisation, at present there are a total of four minarets in Switzerland. Even if the logic of the SVP were to be accepted, there was no threat of militant Islam taking root there any time soon.

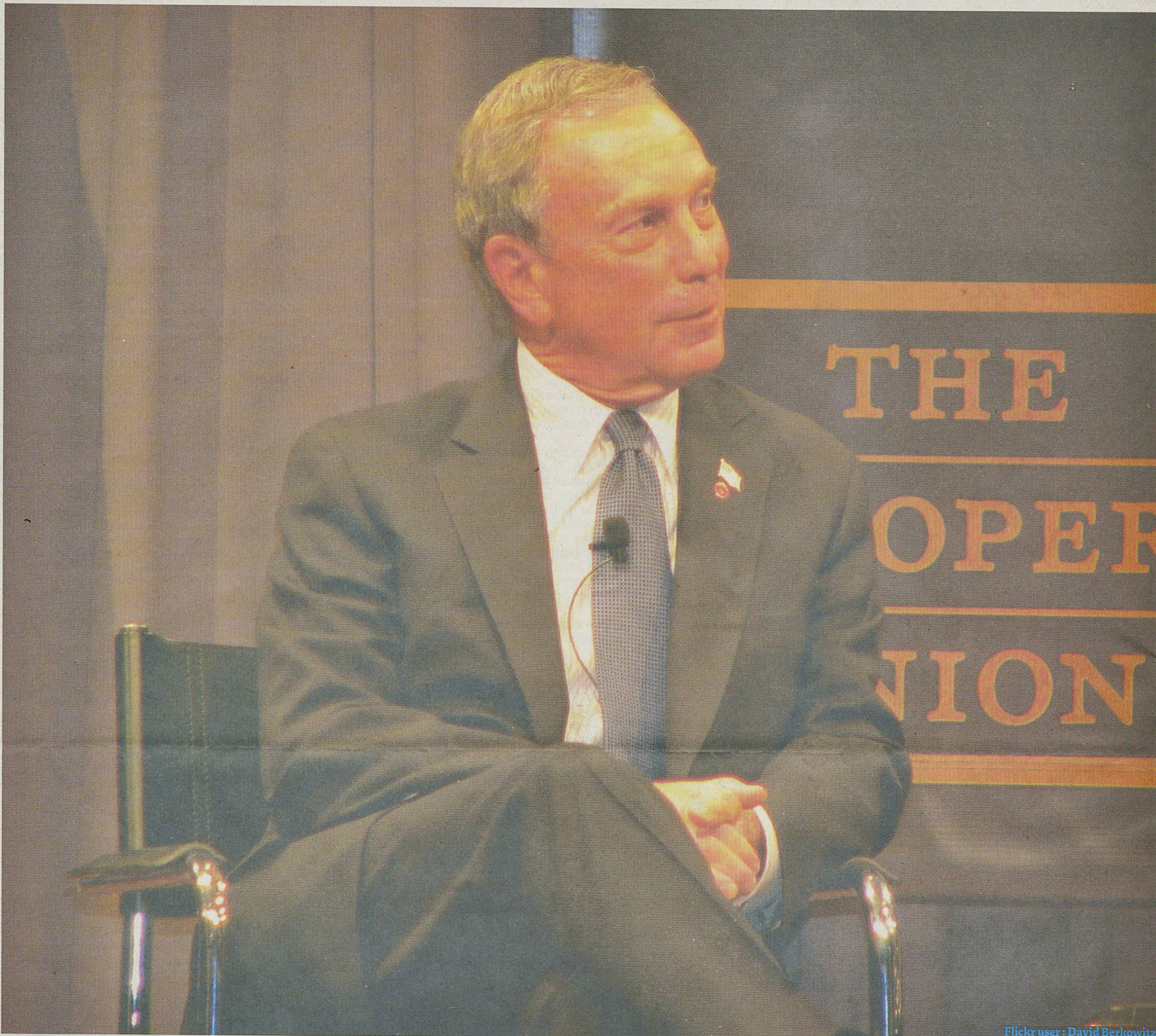
The minaret is simply an architectural feature, like an arch or a dome, or a Roman column. It is incredibly naive to give in to right-wing propaganda and believe that a construction of bricks and mortar can give rise to extremism. Placing a ban on a harmless symbol of a culture is like pretending a community simply does not exist. It does not achieve anything apart from ensuring that the Swiss skyline will physically remain as it is. In fact if anything, repression breeds extreme reactions.

By making this clear statement, Switzerland has simply invited attention to itself. It has not just exposed the fallacy of the harmonious, accepting nature of

the perfectly democratic state. Intolerance is contagious and one can only hope that there will be no major backlash.

Perhaps the Swiss should just have stayed neutral.

**Madeeha Ansari**  
Features Editor



Flickr user: David Berkowitz

# Bloomberg's billions

**Sandra Smiley** discusses big money, electoral politics and the other kind of 'class'

**I**f Michael Bloomberg didn't take New York City in his third mayoral win this month, he probably could have just bought it. Or at least a few city blocks - whatever his estimated net worth of \$17.5 billion should afford him. Bloomberg is a fabulously wealthy man. The New York Times reports that he will have spent upwards of one hundred million dollars getting re-elected this year and as such has now spent more out of his own pocket than any other individual in United States history in the pursuit of public office.

The Merrill Lynch alumnus' hefty fortune has been a major strategic asset in his past political pursuits. Over the course of his term, he has tossed more than two hundred million dollars cash at charitable organizations for health, education, and the arts, nearly half of them New-York based. The charity circuit and patronage of the arts involves an impressive headcount of the city's power élite, whose fervent support Bloomberg enjoyed in his machinations to overturn the voter-mandated law that would have barred him from running for the third term in October 2008.

So Mayor Mike got the thumbs up from his twelve hundred beneficiary organizations, and, as is apparent after this

month's win, the narrow majority of his publique. And why shouldn't he? Though the record is mixed, it's largely positive, with leaps and bounds made in education, gun control, health and welfare during his two terms to date. Yet the whole affair has been somewhat unpalatable for the public. The suggestion is that it's got something to do with disenchantment over his successful 2008 campaign to undermine term limits and run for a third subsequent election. Albeit in small majority, New Yorkers went to the polls on November 2 and pulled the lever in his favour nonetheless.

The discussion echoes a larger and increasingly public post-2007 discussion on the sordid 'love affair' of finance and politics. Tersely, the argument goes that City and Wall Street heavies have politics in a headlock, both by way of the flow of individuals between Big Board and bureaucracy and the amassing of a kind of 'cultural capital'. American economists Simon Johnson and James Kwak conjecture that financiers now enjoy exorbitant political privilege on top of their exorbitant paycheques, having successfully perpetuated the idea that the maintenance of large financial institutions and free-flowing capital markets (and, by proxy, obscenely large salaries) are of crucial importance to the fate of the world. Their

**Though the record is mixed, it's largely positive, with leaps and bounds made in education, gun control, health and welfare during his two terms to date**

British colleague, John Kay, has made urgent pushes for the restructuring of the relationship between the financial sectors and government. It could be they're on to something - it's worth taking heed when centrist economists blog about Pierre Bourdieu.

Following this strain of French post-structuralist thought, we might chalk up the bad taste Bloomberg's win has left in our mouths to, well, 'bad taste'. The flagrant excess of his campaign and his profigate philanthropic spending may have been un peu de trop considering widespread popular contempt for excessive executive pay and bonus and politicians' propensity to prop them up post-crisis. Bloomberg's unapologetic pecuniary peacocking goes against the 'ethic of sobriety' Bourdieu says we associate with the real 'upper crust', which considerably conceals its wealth and privilege. Florida displays of affluence are the domain of social climbers and class impostors, like your National Lottery winner or overweight, bejeweled and barbiturates-popping Elvis Presley.

Given the present popular scorn of the uber-salary, tripartite tensions among politics, finance and the rest of the population and the current state of the economic affairs, it was probably just as blasé of Bloomberg to be writing blank

cheques as it was for MPs to be blowing their allowances on refuges for water fowl. That we have come to expect leaders to be of a certain station, the stuffed-shirted custodians of the status quo, is no secret: novelty aside, celebrities in politics has made Americans feel dirty and Brits feel superior and parliament seems to have a convenient allergy to academia. The boring, self-effacing privileged and influential we tend to vote in have thus far proven to be satisfactory, at least tolerable, as public servants and administrators. Isn't it a necessary corollary that we have come to expect a certain degree of *savoir vivre*?

# Social

## Interview with Alain de Botton

Calum Young and Marion Koob contemplate the pleasures and sorrows of a writer's work

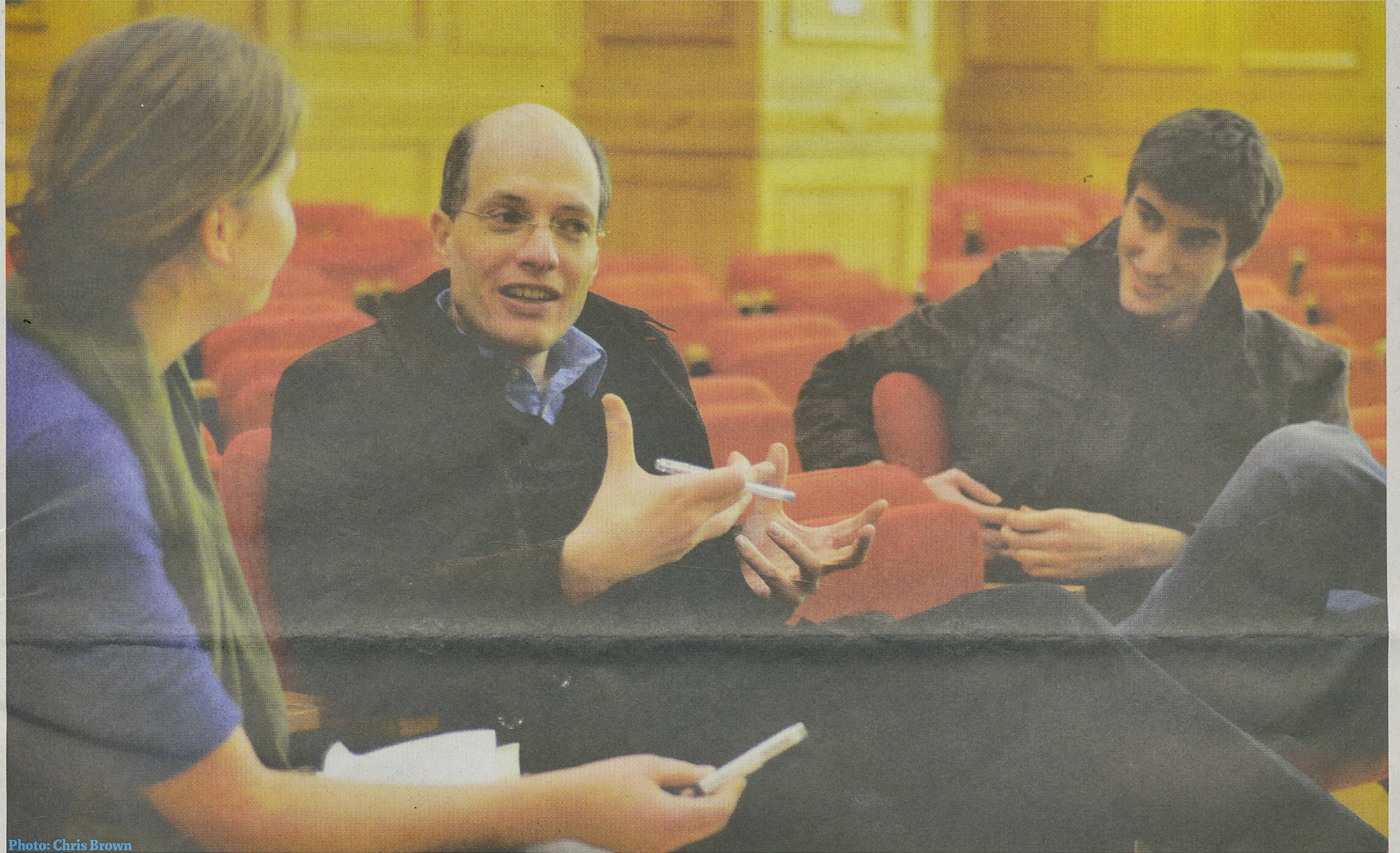


Photo: Chris Brown

Sitting down with Alain de Botton ought to be an intimidating experience. Since the publication of his first book, *Essays in Love* in 1997, he has been synonymous with wisdom in every *Guardian*-reading household in the land. Armed with a double first from Cambridge, de Botton has reinvented modern philosophy. His work is both popular and accessible. To his critics, he is a charlatan pop-psychologist, but to his fans, of which there are plenty, he represents the oft forgotten linkup between knowledge and happiness.

The son of a wealthy financier, de Botton was born in Geneva, before moving to Britain at the age of eight. One might say that de Botton definitely did not start at the bottom of society. Schooled at Harrow, there are elements of his demeanour which could be judged condescending, but his overwhelming character trait is a simple kindness. Sitting down to chat on Thursday evening, he was happy to delay dinner with friends in order to talk to us. Blue eyes ablaze, de Botton was animated in conversation, personable and amicable. He chatted to his readers with enthusiasm, as a wise friend rather than an aloof academic. His delivery was quick, at times bordering on the hyperactive. Yet after some questions, he would pause for thought, as if contemplating the numerous implications of his words.

These warming traits are as characteristic of his books as of his private life. De Botton's work is usually based on autobiographical experiences. His best-seller *The Art of Travel* is littered with references to ex-partners and relationship bust-ups. His style befriends the reader; he shares anecdotes and reflects on the common feelings which we all endure. Few other authors have the breadth to discuss fights over misshapen crèmes brûlées and Nietzsche's 'will to power', in the same work. Thus, the tone of his work and the way it dips in-and-out of mundane occurrences has led many to call his thought 'a

philosophy of daily-life'.

As he signed books following his talk, de Botton was met by a volley of questions ranging from career change to his book, *Status Anxiety*. This is an odd disposition for a man who claims "not to know any answers." In his readers' eyes, if not his own, he straddles the line between therapist and philosopher – a Tony Robbins for people with a degree. Yet this is dodgy ground. Whilst it is a philosopher's job is to look for truth, de Botton's work often seems far more concerned with happiness. His most celebrated book to date, *How Proust can Change your Life*, has chapters which extol the positive effects of suffering. In fact, de Botton rejects this contention; "I don't think there's ultimately a conflict [between truth and happiness]. The concept of wisdom is an interesting one. I think wisdom is that bit of the truth which actually also happens to be helpful." Even so, any way of thinking about the world which selects and deselected things to include, cannot be considered entirely honest: "I do very much believe that if you don't face up to these [tragic truths] they'll crash into you late at night, when you're unprepared." Whilst he gives credence to awkward truths, his books dodge the unpalatable.

De Botton's desire to help people expands beyond the realm of books. A year ago he established the School of Life, a one stop shop for self-improvement. The organisation offers bibliotherapy; this consists in supplying a reading-list in order to help tackle anything from self-repugnance to depression. The School also gives seminars designed to help combat 'feelings of negativity', or other routine difficulties. However, anyone expecting a day course costing north of £200 to boost their morale is, to my mind at least, already suffering from deranged levels of optimism. It is also interesting to hear de Botton purport to "steer between the alternatives of someone who can totally change life, or do nothing at all." Being "ambiguous really" on the

subject of whether thought can change life must be a kick in the teeth for the punters queuing-up to the 'how to stop being full of contradictions' bibliotherapy.

As well as using his own life experience, de Botton also bases his work around other thinkers. In his books, he adopts a strategy of surveying the issue at hand through discussion of what other great minds have had to say about it. Some have called this derivative, but as he defensively explains, "leaning on another person's thought doesn't tell you about what someone is going to do with it." So why then use it? The answer is paradoxical. Whilst de Botton is willing to put many autobiographical details into a book, he is reticent about what his personal thoughts actually are. Other thinkers become shields behind which the man and his own ideas hide.

**Anyone expecting a day course costing north of £200 to boost their morale is, to my mind at least, already suffering from deranged optimism**

De Botton's critics make much of the apparent contradictions in his work. He can be found arguing for a passive acceptance of life's frustrations in television documentaries, only to praise unforgiving individuality in the pages of his latest best-seller. Likewise, de Botton's brand of self-appeasement and his tendency toward an almost ostentatious compassion does seem to rile his peers. A recent

*New York Times* interview dubbed his work 'successful as entertainment but not analysis'. De Botton responded by publicly declaring he would 'hate the author until his death'. Most of this criticism stems from de Botton being smarter than his reviewers. In truth, his work aspires to do little more than get us through the day, which has led to allegations that he has scaled down the ends of philosophy.

The inability to produce a solid, holistic philosophy may well be a consequence of de Botton's self confessed negativity. "I am pessimistic by nature. I do have a tragic view of life." Admittedly, addressing the question 'how should I live?' will lead to misallocations, and proclaiming a right way to live is necessarily fallible – but it is also an act of extreme confidence. De Botton claims individual lives are made up of vulnerabilities, not strengths, hence the rejection of any attempt to master our world. He prefers tit-bits of philosophy, snippets of virtue and righteousness to major schemes of thought. Early in our interview he admitted, "I am conflicted inside, and perhaps send out confusing messages." This equates to a sort of pick-a-mix view of reality, in which one can sample from the best parts of one ideology and then hoodwink elements of another. He neglects the reality that all choice is painful, and that when we choose one alternative we may forego another which has positive elements.

De Botton's avoidance of difficult questions is forgivable, whilst his desire to pepper his work with obvious answers is less-so. The introduction to *The Pleasures and Sorrows of Work* is littered with blunt truisms; "work is an activity which earns you money", "Lucky people enjoy their work, but even they might not do it without pay". Gee Alain, what next, 'some people work in offices'. Points like this have led some to question de Botton's qualifications for a book on work, as he holds for sole experience a brief period of work in an office. Sometimes, this detachment spills over into condescen-

sion. When visiting to a career advisor's flat in south London, he remarks that "the place stank almost continuously of boiled cabbage." Similarly he remarks of a biscuit manufacturer "as being intelligent enough to not fully believe his own claims to significance." The road from compassion to bitchiness is, thus, remarkably short.

Beyond its questionable tone, this book conveyed compelling observations on our attitudes towards work. As consumers, he deplored a dire lack of interest towards the production of goods. "We are discouraged by firms who are principally paranoid that certain abuses will come to light. Or, and perhaps most naively and stupidly, they think that we may be put off consumption by a knowledge of production. I don't think that's true at all." As a result of this, he claims, we are assailed by alienation and guilt. In a Marxist fashion, the change in the means of production has affected mentalities worldwide. "We live in a world where attitudes to work incline very strongly to an American vision, in which work is at the centre of your life, and money is incredibly important." Obvious statements, perhaps, but de Botton does not pretend to much; he considers his efforts of two years as simply "a survey of the world of work." Although witty about anecdotes of his time of research, at the end of his lecture, little more than a few reflective assertions had been settled.

At the conclusion of our encounter, we spoke of our disillusion regarding the careerist atmosphere of the LSE. Alain was amused, but optimistic. "The majority will always be displeasing," he confessed. "I follow the five-friend rule; it's the number necessary to feel comfortable within a group." With these cordial words, we parted into the evening. Despite his many contradictions in both character and content, and his ambivalent approach to philosophy, Alain de Botton remains a good conversationalist and his books a pleasing read. It is with great curiosity that we await his future projects.

# An institutional prejudice

## Christine Woolf dreams of a broader acceptance for homosexuality

**G**o on, laugh at my anonymity. I do not fear exposing my identity, but being gay is not necessarily a 'feature' of an individual. Even when desperate for recognition, it does not follow that one is seeking escalated attention. The 'pride' that I proclaim is not a about power struggle in society, but rather a set of values and emotions that are yet to be legitimised. It is true that I enjoy making fun of sexuality, but it is precisely my endorsement of all kinds of sexuality that allows such political incorrectness. While hoping for a more tolerant society in which sexuality and orientation are seen as part of our character rather than as a platform of stigma, I am hesitant to foresee such progression in the near future.

Religion and family are the two institutions which are keeping the closet closed. I can't help admitting that it's probably the faith in heterosexuality that protects our family ties all along. By relating our romantic and sexual experiences to our parents' (whether we've actually discussed it with them or not), we may find comfort and trust in the continuity that this kinship provides. Since a fairytale romance with a guy never appealed, I thought I would never experience a relationship like the ones which parents have, primarily because I could not bring myself to act like an epitome of femininity, similar to my mother. The way she gets along with my dad, I know that no man will find in me. I will never identify to the Twilight fantasy which fills the heart of many girls. Surely, a relationship between husband and wife can take many forms, and my parents display only the most traditional of them. Anyhow, the thought of spending my life alongside a man makes me sick. (No offense! Good guys deserve somebody better than me.) Perhaps I should regard myself as fortunate to live in an era in which heterosexual marriage is not seen as a lifetime duty, but one of many paths in life. If society appreciates the interdependent spirit of sisterhood, why should it be a taboo for two men to share the rest of their lives? The definition of family needs to be challenged. Insofar, the typical depiction seems to assume an element of reproduction, with a byproduct of sympathetic attitudes towards infertile

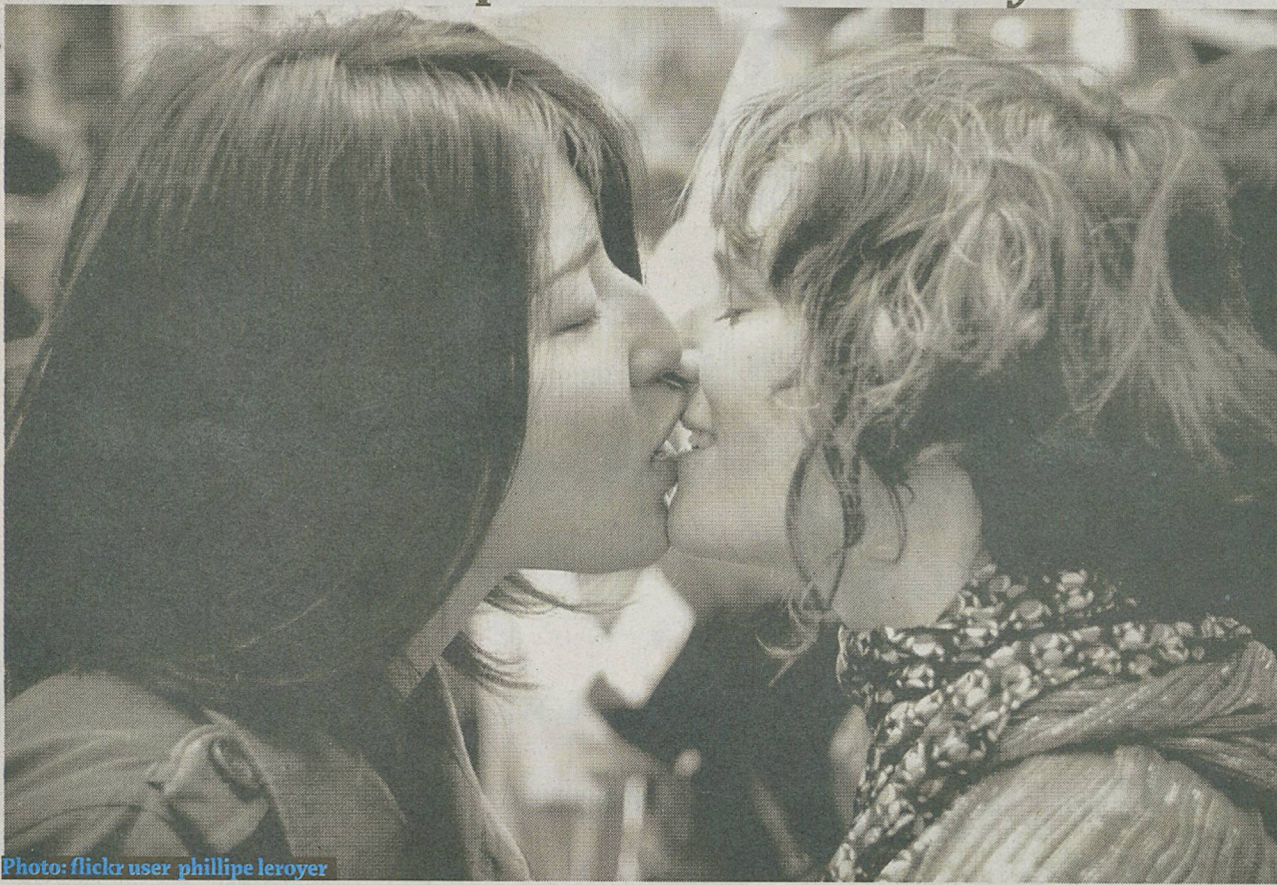


Photo: flickr user phillipe leroyer

couples. Instead, we should hold on to the mutual bond between human beings, whatever the bond may deter from. On one hand, we denounce sex as the most important part in romantic relationship; on the other, we define the legal union between two people by their sexes. What kind of reasoning is that?

If you reduce the conflicting societal values to a much smaller scale, it is, in the end, the disappointment and shock on your parents' faces that you want to look away from. Although I had displayed signs of homosexuality all along my teenage years, when I confirmed this, my mother's reaction seemed to imply that my orientation is a source of mourning. The differential expectations of life between generations can open a spasm which evokes pain and spite, characterised by an unspoken tension of loving tolerance and guilt.

Then here come the grand religions. Recently, a registrar for Islington council claims that her religious rights as a Christian are being disregarded as she has to carry out same-sex ceremonies, recognised under the Civil Partnership Act (2004), against her beliefs. Two other registrars in the council, including a Muslim, also objected to the Act. While faiths have long been a crucial aspect in life, desires which are unrecognised or damned by gods have always existed. Value conflicts remain unresolved, yet both worlds epitomise central human needs. Nevertheless, who has the prerogative to place gay rights over personal faith, or vice versa? What does law do for people who are offended by its terms, such as that of the Civil Partnership (2004)? Trapped between 'subversive' sexuality and religion, one either faces a moral crisis or is forced to

abandon a significant identity, be it the true believer or the free man. (Let's forget political correctness. Gender, after all, isn't binomial.) To create an inclusive nature of the two mental spheres, radical revolutions are needed in the moral grounds of the world's major religions, which is virtually impossible. As we are living under the scrutiny of other people, peer accusation based on inarguable abstract faiths can be unbearable. When an evangelical friend offers a kind hand and 'guides' you from 'the evil', do you not feel more wronged than helped?

I wish for respect and approval from my family. As for gods... they will put me in hell any way. Pride it may be, but let us not overdo it: being gay is no special identity, merely part of our traits.

### Overheard at LSE...

At the Garrick. Howard Davies is talking to his assistant: "Wasn't it a great idea to let this first-year computer science student from King's College design our new Website?"

In the queue for Christopher Andrews' public lecture on the History of the M15, speaking with a shifty-looking gentleman in a grey suit: "You did your doctoral studies with Professor Andrews. What are you doing now?" "I work... in the City [hesitates]. Yes... in the City."

Clement House, completely full lift. Guy 1 to Guy 2: "Guy 2, did you just grab my ass?" Guy 2: "No!" Guy 1: \*sigh\* "That must have just been me dreaming."

I came to realise that I am teaching the world's elite when I read in a student's essay that "Durkheim was interviewing the victims of suicide to discover their motives."

At the Garrick. Self-satisfied Female: "I live in Miami." Obsequious Male: "Oh wow! You are so lucky!" Self-satisfied Female: "Yeah, I know. That's what everyone says."

Philosophy common room: "When someone tells me they got a B in one of their A-levels, I'm sorry but I just assume they're stupid. I mean, I got an E in one of mine, but I just couldn't be bothered with it, you know."

In the library the other day, as I walked past a table, my bag knocked this guy's Mac. When I turned around to apologise, I heard him shout out - "My seventeen inch!" then kiss the top of the laptop...

I overheard yesterday these two guys talking about some sort of statistics project. I caught the end of it: "...and then we can do some proper residual analysis. I'm not gonna lie, I'm very aroused."

# Ethically careerist?

## Shrayans Agrawal is looking for his vocation

**A**braham Lincoln once said: "My father taught me to work; he did not teach me to love it." As Michaelmas term sped past me, the impending doom which is the world of work is coming ever so close. Will I love it? Who honestly enters university eager to start work? Sadly, there are focused individuals who utilise their university experience to fulfill their career ambitions, rather than use it as an opportunity to explore themselves. This puts one at odds at the beginning of university, particularly at the LSE: should they decide quickly on something they "might" enjoy and pursue it wholeheartedly to succeed in it, or explore, despite running the risk of ending up with an idea about everything but a conclusion about nothing.

I hope to enjoy work, and I hope everyone else does as well. The preacher wouldn't preach, the writer wouldn't write and the singer wouldn't sing if they didn't enjoy what they did. These professions don't pay very well, unless you are JK Rowling or Madonna. The most likely situation is that you enter a career and a lot of your life is spent doing either exactly or something similar to that; while money is a motivator, it is not sufficient. Maslow defined a whole hierarchy of needs which

need to be met for a person to be satisfied with work, ranging from security to self-actualisation. When the alarm goes off at 5:45am for a grueling day of work, you will become miserable unless you are passionate about your role. Michael Phelps wouldn't do five hours of intense training each day if he didn't enjoy it. Warren Buffet wouldn't work if it was about the money, at the age of 79, with a net worth of approximately \$40 billion. True, these are extreme cases, and one can simply argue that they were motivated by the cash at an early age of their careers when success didn't come as easily for them. I think that is a simplistic approach to human behaviour, and it degenerates humans to solely wealth-generating creatures. The Bhutanese have it right when they don't use the GDP of the country to measure their well being, but rather a Happiness Index! Work is a way of life, and the best way of life is a happy one.

Once you enter work, your days of exploration, of being whoever you want to be whenever you want to, and of daring are over. No recruitment brochure will ever tell you this, but realistically, once work has started, who will have the time or the chance to do all that one aspires to? Yes, time management is the key determinant, but practically speaking, with mounting

responsibilities and work pressure, life can fall down a track of boredom and suck you into an inescapable black hole. I have painted quite a grim image of work I think, but all hope is not lost, as long as you can find that "dream" job which will get you out of work in the morning and will provide that spark in your eyes when the topic of work comes up at cocktail parties.

Finally the ultimate question; should it be meaningful? I think this is a consequence of what form of work you are looking for. If you are happy as long as you are raking in the dough, then perhaps it doesn't have to be a meaningful profession. Personally, I find many streams of employment lacking significance beyond the fact that they are value generating. The question of how meaningful work should be is a very personal one, and each person will approach it with a different light.

If you are searching for a meaningful occupation, then philanthropy is not the light at the end of the tunnel, frankly if you can justify to your grand children that you didn't work just for the money and you honestly thought you were helping society then your work was meaningful.

I am not dreading entering the world of work, but I am cautious wanting to realize who I am and what my purpose is. The learning curve at university has been the sharpest possible enabling me to continuously re-assess where I belong and what I want to do, providing me with some direction but simultaneously generating more uncertainties which need to be dealt with at an ad-hoc basis. As long as I haven't made a decision, my search will continue and it will end only when I am certain the path I take will lead me to be as happy as I can be, and not a compromise to my priorities. Hopefully the next year and a half allow this search to end on a fruitful note, with a pot of happiness at the end of this colorful rainbow called life.

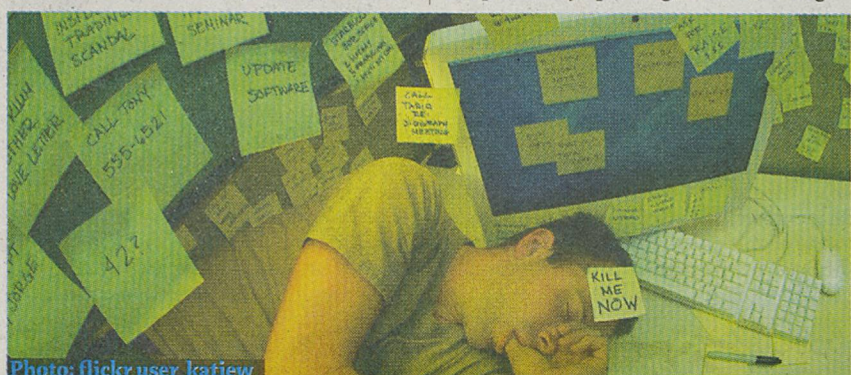


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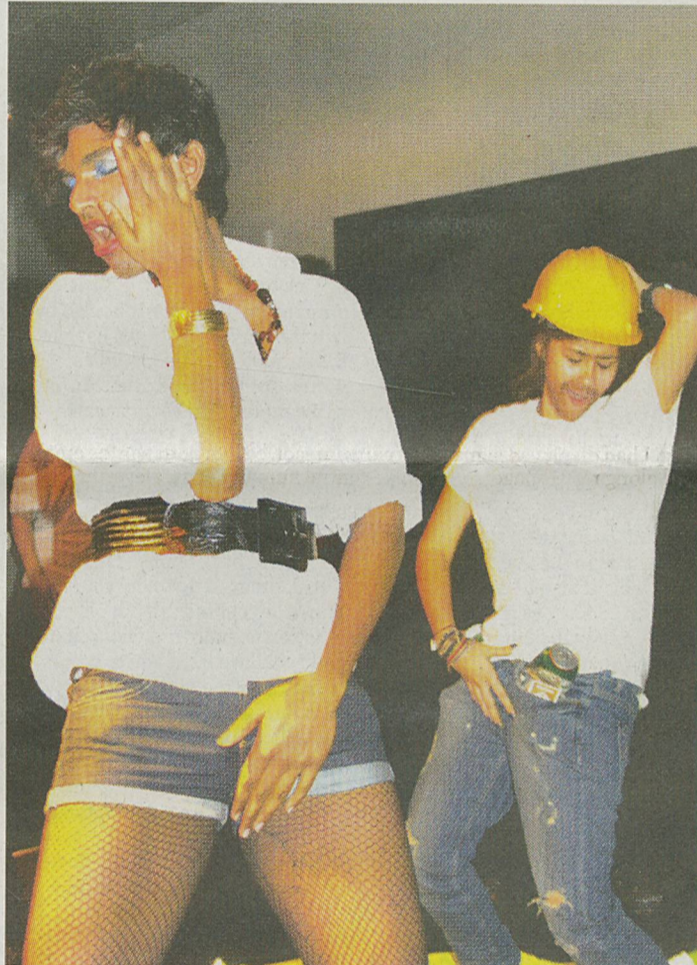
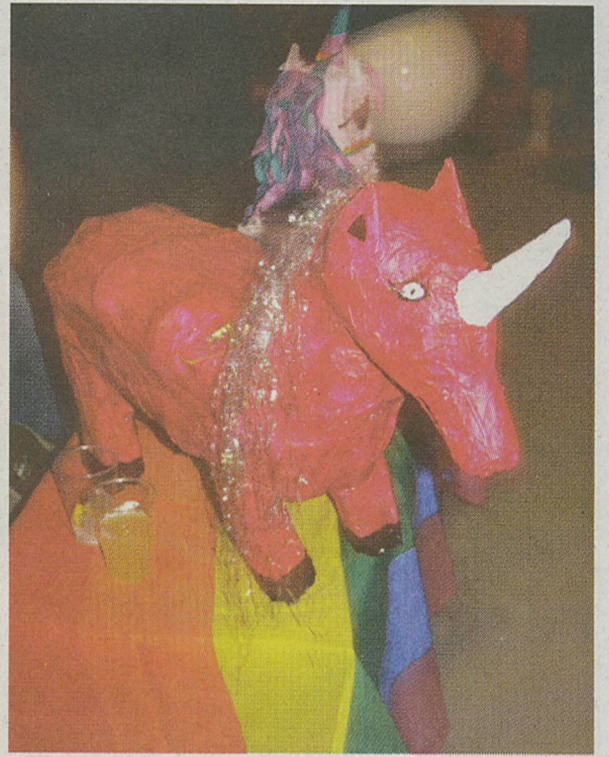
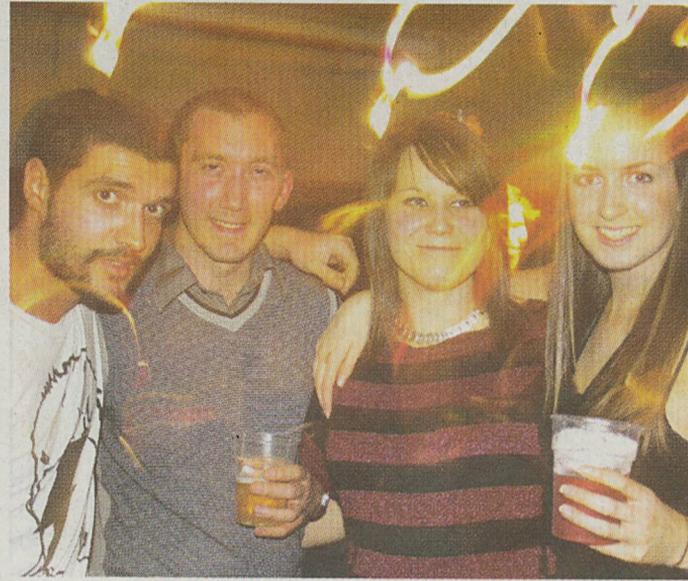
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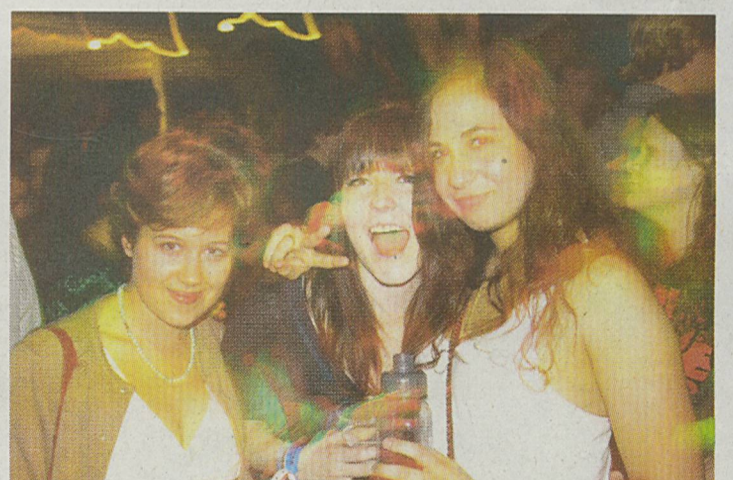
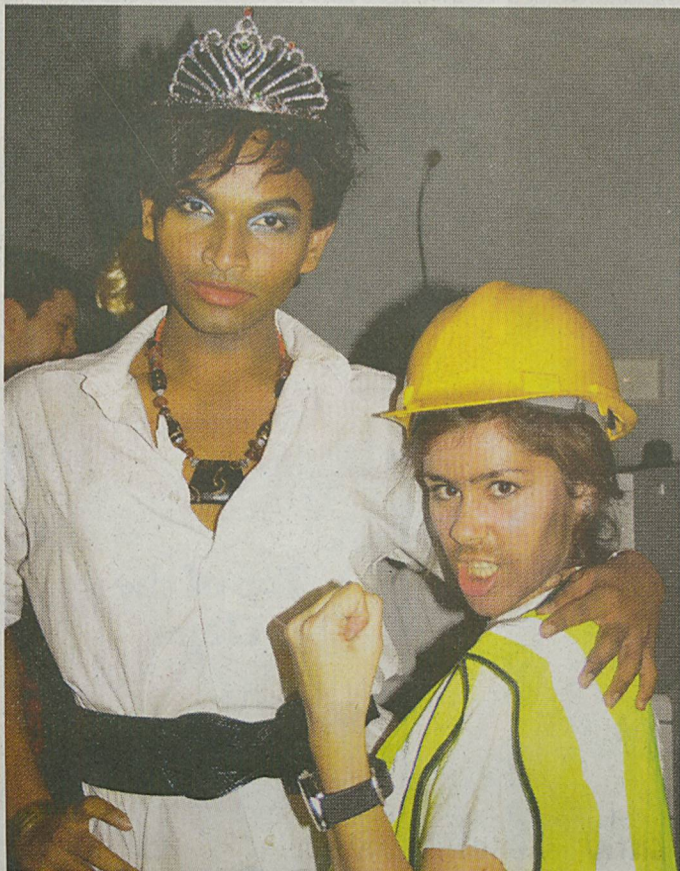
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## LOUD AND PROUD



In celebration of Pride Week, Crush went Queer for one night only. The crowned Mr/Miss LSE is ... **Reagan Persaud**

Photos by Katy Staten





# LSE in the Running for a successful year

Harriet Jackson

**L**SE Running team is back. You may see other sports like rowing and women's football trying to steal our glory by hanging around Houghton Street in running kit, but don't be fooled - we are the real deal. With giant red hoodies to prove it.

Despite having a committee that consists of an alcoholic, a treasurer with a semi-broken leg and a female with a tendency to slap guys when they are being pricks, we are having some success in the London College's League this year, with the Men's team currently 7th out of 27 teams and Women's team 4th out of 29 teams. However, it doesn't help the embarrassment of getting off one bus stop early for a race, with the Kings' team saying nothing then laughing hysterically as we trudged along behind the bus in the rain.

Even with the most anti-social captain known to mankind (zoo visits this term: 0, despite being carried there once), the running team has turned over a new leaf

and started to be a respectably sociable team. Either that, or Alex has got better at bullying his mates to go out on Wednesday instead of Thursday. Roughly 90% of the Wednesday night running crowd are male, British, and undergraduates, while this category makes up about 10% of the running club. Go figure.

A few of the regulars are Richard, who speaks only in a primitive language of innuendos, and Ed, who is happy to devote hours at attempting to pull each Wednesday night yet still hasn't been to a race. And he lost his hoodie in the quest for a girl. Sort it out. Clement also likes drinking, but he's French so he does it with class, rather than ending up being repeatedly sick over the balcony into a

**Clement also likes drinking, but he's French so he does it with class**

neighbour's garden.

Our token male from the 80s is Scott, who sports tight leggings, neon running tops and a sweat band over his long hair.

Only an American could (almost) pull it off. Scott has redeemed himself by not only being sick on himself in the 'Tuns after a company presentation, but also by being 4th in the London Colleges League, taking 28.43 minutes to run 5.4 miles cross-country. And this was after running the course a couple of times for a warm up.

Zoe Anton and Meg Casson are the star female runners this year, coming 5th and 7th respectively in our last race at Wimbledon, meaning that the Women's team came 3rd out of 15 teams. Obviously not at all dragged down by yours truly leading from behind at 26th place... females who can actually run faster than an asthmatic snail we need you to come to our next race! Even if you are slower, we still get points for each person who participates. These two lovely ladies are the ideal antidote to the male-dominated craziness of our Wednesday races, and are responsible for keeping me relatively sane.

If you are interested in the LSE Running Team and would like to run in our next race on Wednesday 2nd December in Hackney marshes, please contact Harriet Jackson at h.f.jackson@lse.ac.uk

# Reffin' 'ell

A referee reviews the age old case for video analysis in sports arbitration

Stuart Smedley

**I**t seems that every incident deemed controversial in football leads to an increase in the clamouring for the introduction of video technology to aid those on the receiving end of the spite and scorn of today's players, managers and media - referees.

Unsurprisingly, Thierry Henry's sleight of hand that led to France's winning goal against the Republic of Ireland has led to such a reaction.

What makes it stand out from other similar incidents though is that it is hoped it will be the straw that breaks the camel's back and leads Sepp Blatter, Michel Platini et al. to finally shift from their reluctant stance on the issue.

There is no mistaking that Henry committed a foul - even the most ardent of French patriots would be insane not to believe Ireland were the victims of a cruel injustice - and that with the referee being helped by a third eye, the goal would have been ruled out.

Yet, introducing a comprehensive instant replay system in practice is unworkable.

Now, it must be pointed out that I am a qualified referee (and one of slight fame too - type my name followed by 'referee headbutt' into any reputable search engine, and feel free to revel in the Schadenfreude) and therefore sympathetic towards the cause of my whistle-blowing brethren.

But to me, those who jump to the conclusion that 'if technology is good enough for tennis, cricket, rugby and American football, then why not the most

**The Henry incident - as stupid as this may sound - was a decision that would require interpretation.**

popular ball game on earth' are overlooking some serious issues that hinder such an introduction.

They argue that with football being such a fast-paced game, oversights on the behalf of the officials are inevitable. But, surely allowing them to consult replays would render the game frustratingly slow?

The fact is, the only pre-determined break in a football match is half time. When the ball does leave the field of play

or a free kick is given, the ball does not remain dead for long, and inviting teams to challenge decisions would only lead to the death of the quick set piece - a tactical ploy that can be hugely beneficial.

In cricket, every ball will at some point become dead. And with the time between each delivery there allowing the shiny red thing to be tossed around and rubbed into the groin of every other player, whilst the wicketkeeper and slips debate the sexual preferences of the batsman's partner, there is ample room for alternative angles of events to be seen.

Similarly in American football, every play eventually comes to an end, whilst before the next begins, both teams engage in group hugs, and in tennis the gaps between each point can take up as much as half a minute.

Rugby - the advocates would argue to this point - is similar to football in that breaks in play are unpredictable. However, video officials here can only be used to adjudicate upon possible tries - a matter of fact.

Likewise cricket, gridiron and tennis only allow facts that are difficult for the trained human eye to spot to be contested, whether that be a close run-out situation, if a catch has been made, or if a passing shot has narrowly clipped the baseline.

In football, the only matter of fact is if the ball has crossed the line. Within the laws of the game, it comes across clearly that the awarding of a free kick or penalty is up to the officials to determine because a player's actions must be deemed to be 'careless, reckless or using excessive force', or in - the case of handball - deliberate. Even the offside rule - with the issue of interference - is not clear cut.

The Henry incident - as stupid as this may sound - was a decision that would require interpretation. Opening up such a call for video review would undoubtedly mean allowing all other decisions of opinion to be replayed - something that would still lead to yet more perceived miscarriages of justice due to the subjectivity involved.

After all one man's stone-wall penalty is another man's woeful decision.



**RUGBY**  
LSE 2<sup>ND</sup> 22 - 7 SURREY  
LSE 3<sup>RD</sup> 7 - 48 SUSSEX

**NETBALL**  
LSE 3<sup>RD</sup> 30 - 10 ST. BARTS 3<sup>RD</sup>  
LSE 4<sup>TH</sup> 4 - 48 ROYAL HOLLOWAY

**FOOTBALL**  
LSE 1<sup>ST</sup> 4 - 0 ST BARTS 1<sup>ST</sup>  
LSE 2<sup>ND</sup> 1 - 0 HOLLOWAY 3<sup>RD</sup>  
LSE 6<sup>TH</sup> 1 - 2 QUEEN MARKS 4<sup>TH</sup>  
LSE 7<sup>TH</sup> 3 - 1 HOLLOWAY 6<sup>TH</sup>

**LADIES' BADMINTON**  
LSE 4 - 4 UCL  
LSE 0 - 8 CHICHESTER

**RUNNING**  
MEN'S TEAM (6<sup>TH</sup> OUT OF 20)  
SCOTT BASTER (3<sup>RD</sup> PLACE)  
WOMEN'S TEAM (3<sup>RD</sup> OUT OF 15)  
ZOE ANTON (5<sup>TH</sup> PLACE)

**Results**

**Players of the Week**

**Emma Heap (WHC) £15m**  
1 (Tuns) +  
1 (Zoo) +  
3 (Drunk and disorderly) +  
10 (Shag) = 15pts  
(Second week in a row for Heap, not a typo...)

**BJ Watson (FC) £17.5m**  
1 (Tuns) +  
1 (Zoo) +  
3 (Drunk and disorderly) +  
10 (Shag) = 15pts

**Henry Adefope (FC) £2.5m**  
1 (Tuns) +  
1 (Zoo) +  
2 (Visibly Drunk) +  
5 (Pull) = 9pts

**Top of the Flops**

**Mel Mok (Tuns) £15m**  
1 (Zoo)  
2 (Visibly drunk) +  
5 (Pull) +  
-10 (Not converting?) = -2pts?

# Hands in the Eire

A Frenchman responds to the outrage surrounding Henry's controversial handball

Louis Daillencourt  
A Frenchman

There is no need here to remind everybody of the facts, since the media outburst at the end of the play-off games between France and Ireland makes it impossible for anyone (unless they've been buried deep down under books in the library) not to know that an unfortunate event helped France qualify for the World Cup next summer. This article sets out to first defend Thierry Henry and secondly to send the Irish back to their recession. Yes, the writer of this article is French, sorry, call me biased.

### On Henry.

I have just watched the video of the handball about 300 times on YouTube. Yes, in slow motion it looks bad, the first handball appears to be a reflex, the second one looks deliberate, almost "cynical", as I've heard some say. Watch it at full speed, the lapse between the two times Henry's hand touches the ball is of less than a few hundred milliseconds apart. Someone called Benjamin Libet helps me out here, in a paper published in "Scientific American Mind" in 2005, to show that Henry's handballs was not deliberate:

"He found that between 500 and 1,000 milliseconds before we actually move our hand there is a wave of brain activity, called the readiness potential.

Libet found that the time between the onset of the readiness potential and the moment of conscious decision making was about 300 milliseconds.

But Libet argued that because the time from the onset of the readiness potential to the actual hand movement is about 500 milliseconds, and it takes 50 to 100 milliseconds for the neural signal to travel from the brain to the hand to actually make it move, then there are 100 milliseconds left for the conscious self to either act on the unconscious decision or veto it. That, he said, is where free will arises--in the vetoing power.

### What does that tell us?

1) The lapse between both handballs was two short for Henry to consciously play the ball with his hand back into the path of his right foot, and

2) That even if the time-lapse was sufficient; this could have been a case where Henry's brain had made the decision to control the ball before the ball even arrived, and his brain didn't veto it in time.

Put yourself in a footballer's shoes in the extra time of a deciding game for your country, and come and tell me your super-brain would have vetoed the reflex order from the same brain to control the ball. Henry's only human.

After that the media backlash against him was absolutely pitiful in my own view. That a player who has demonstrated high levels of integrity and earned the respect of so many fans - not just in France, but also in England where his 200+ goals at Arsenal serve as a testimony to his character - can be severely trashed by the press that once adored him shows us how inconsistent and oversensitive the sport press can be. It's not like he's a Materazzi who's obvious contempt for fair play is more than well documented. French players don't always behave well as the Basteraud affair in New Zealand showed us a few months ago, this time in Rugby. But that the power of the media can have on such young minds in unbelievable. Basteraud had to be checked into hospital for serious psychological problems after he was picked apart by the press. Henry seriously considered quitting International Football. What a loss for the game that would have been.

### Of Ireland.

The Irish have played the losing hand well after this debacle, putting themselves in the shoes of the unlucky David (this time around) against a big bad Goliath.

Plea: "Oh but, this was unfair from the beginning since we were always going to play one of the stronger teams so that there is no chance of two major European teams crashing out before the World Cup"

Answer: "Yeah, because it's true that a World Cup with Ireland and Bosnia is going to be much better than one with France and Portugal... Wait a minute, did you just accuse FIFA of rigging draws?"

On top of that, let's not forget that, overall, we like the Irish (they make Guinness, give us a good excuse to drink in mid March, they're all green and they have a funny accent), and we seriously hate the French (because they're arrogant, they smell weird and Blackpool tower sucks

compared to its Eiffel counterpart). This would have never been a big deal if the team crashing because of Henry's action had been Lithuania, or even Bosnia, who are not (no disrespect), as likeable for the Brits as the Irish.

Would it have been the same was this a friendly game? Not in a million years, so the Irish are just frustrated with the circumstances, unable to face the fact that their team is just not good enough to make it to the World Cup. France's team is. France may get poor results against more modest teams, hence its presence in the Play-Offs (just like Portugal and Russia, two other strong teams), but in the last three World Cups they won one and made the final of another. Robbie Keane can just go back to the training grounds and rue his bad luck.

What's more, it's not like Irish deserved victory anyway. They missed a hundred clear chances in the game, especially thanks to a very competent French goalkeeper, as Roy Keane said;

"France were there for the taking and Ireland didn't do it. Same old story (...) Ireland had their chances in the two games and they never took them. They had chances at Croke Park (in the first leg) and they had chances at the Stade de France.

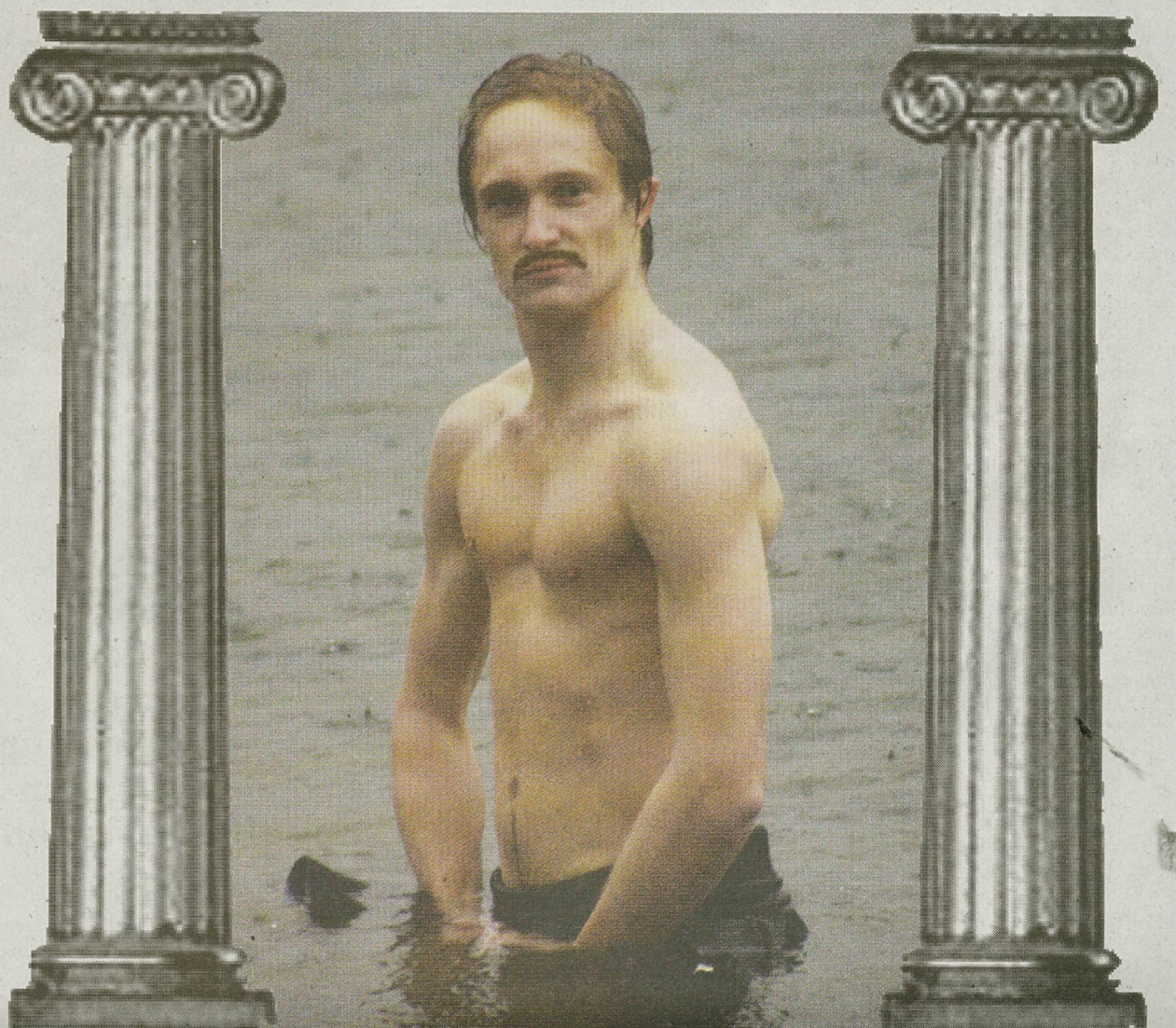
"They didn't take them, but it's the usual FAI (Football Association of Ireland) reaction - 'we've been robbed, the honesty of the game... It's rubbish'"

Irish and also themselves benefited from a obvious refereeing mistake in their game against Georgia which resulted in a penalty. Go lecture people about honesty and fair play. I didn't see Robbie Keane walking up to the referee saying "there is no penalty" like he wanted Henry to do after his goal.

If you think Henry's handball looks bad have a look at the most stupid penalty ever whistled in history. See how you feel about the Irish then.



## TORSO OF THE WEEK





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# Sport



**Whistleblower:  
A referee rules on  
video technology  
in football**

pg 22

## Not so gently down the stream

Rookie rowers race relentlessly, rampantly ravaging rubbish rivals. Result!



Matthew Allan

Last Sunday witnessed the dawn of a new age for the LSE Rowing Club. The Men's Novice 1st VIII began its season with an emphatic win over St George's Hospital Medics at the United Hospitals Novice Regatta in Chiswick, demolishing

them by no less than four lengths over 500 metres. This comprehensive victory was a marked improvement on last years' performance which saw the LSE boat pull up short due to a minor technical problem caused when novice captain Sam Hopkins' seat came off the boat. This time around though, with revenge in his mind and fighting talk in his mouth, Hopkins led a crew, which included six guys who had never raced before, to beat the hardest

competition those men had ever faced. Conditions appeared perfect on the morning of the 22nd. On an ebb tide, the water was calm enough to have been confused for land, but unlike the logistical problems that this would have posed, the crew were quietly confident they could indeed row on it. Initial anxieties were soon put aside with the creation of a new pre-race chant. This comprised of loudly repeating the name of our school and the club we were a part of, then holding each other tightly for moral support. It psyched us up well the first dozen times but began to lose its magic thereafter and we took to the water having intimidated no one but ourselves.

The race pitted us against the most professional of opponents, complete with matching rubber boots with their names written on in marker pen. After starting the race at a jaunty 45° angle we quickly began to make our move. To limit whatever perceived advantage we had starting at the Surrey station on the river, St George's cox quickly took a bold decision to place the front of their boat on top of the back of ours. This less than traditional approach meant that Pete Lamb was slightly impeded in his management of our stroke rate (being under their boat etc.). But despite such setbacks we each continued to row at our own (separate) pace and began to pull away.

The weather turned for the worse just over half way through with the wind coming ferociously across our bow. Our

(limited) form suffered from a few technical set backs at this stage and allowed St George's to pull within a mere three lengths, proving their resilience in the face of our unrelenting power. We managed to resist this late onslaught and eked out a win of just over four lengths.

After a brief read of the glossary of rowing terms on Wikipedia for this article, I now realise that we may have been guilty

**The race pitted us against the most professional of opponents, complete with matching rubber boots with their names written on in marker pen**

of a few errors ourselves (apparently every stroke is meant to include the blade going into the water). But although our technique lacked a certain element of any technique, let it not detract from this story

of the triumph of brawn over beauty, of fecklessness over finesse, of eight guys who despite their various racial and cultural handicaps were moved to act as one by the dulcet tones of a dainty American woman.

Despite progressing to the semi-finals of the regatta, we all agreed that it would be only fair to allow the United Hospitals Regatta to be competed for by actual medical schools and so graciously declined to continue waiting around in the rain for another two hours for our next race and bowed out to go to the pub. LSE RC's next outing will be at the University of London Allom Cup where we hope to continue this unprecedented form.

Points of no interest include 'Jimmy' Hendrik Scheer going home early in tears to write an essay, Monty Bond catching a crab despite his powerful new onesie and Club President Daniel Fountain accidentally revealing a practice shot of himself for Torso of the Week on his Blackberry.

The Crew was (from Stern to Bow): Pete Lamb, Captain Sam Hopkins, 'Jimmy' Hendrik Scheer, Igor of Saint-Tropez, Rob Monty Bond Rogers, Przemek, Richard Brassiere, Matthew Allan BSc Econ; Cox Valerie Jordan

Absent from the normal crew was Johnny Gillespie, who was last heard from trying to improve relations with the Netball Club.

## Seconds become seconds for second time

After a month below the thirds in the league, the seconds finally reclaim their rightful place

Ollie Townsend  
Sports Editor

After a long league break for the seconds (partly due to cancelling refs, defaulting opponents and cup matches), the time had finally come for Dewi's team to respond to the barrage of criticism that has been levelled at them lately. Going in to this week's games, the seconds sat below the thirds in the league, and knew that failure to win would not only prolong their shame at 'being the thirds', but essentially end their chances of competing at the sharp end of the league this year.

So it was with 100% focus, and not even a passing thought for the England - Rest of the World game later that day, that the seconds ran out onto the hallowed turf at Fortress Berrylands to play Surrey. The LSE thirds had travelled to Surrey two weeks before and had been unlucky to lose, so we were optimistic. This, coupled with several third teamers telling us we should win easily, gave us real belief as we kicked off. Indeed, we started strong, with Tim Cooper dominating the lineup on both our and their ball. Barely five minutes had passed before Sayo burst through the Surrey backs for the third time, this time scoring just to the right of the posts. Josh Olkahashcbuwaondhfe stepped up and slotted over the conversion to give us a 7-0 lead.

It turned out that this was probably the worst start we could have hoped for. An early try coupled with a dose of complacency going into the match caused our intensity to drop, and we let Surrey right back into the game. After conceding a few penalties and letting the opposition deep into our half, we were very fortunate not to concede, with their full back stepping over the dead ball line when running round to score under the posts. After this let-off, a

period of sustained pressure ensued, with a totally dominant Surrey scrum nearly driving us over several times. However, some determined and disciplined defence allowed us to hold firm and see out the half - an event sped up by Aquil being tackled into a floodlight!

The second half kicked off once the aforementioned dangerous floodlight had been removed, and now we had the wind behind us. Knowing full well that they would be fired-up having ended the first half on the front foot, we knew we had to start strong. Unfortunately things didn't go quite to plan. Thinking there was an opportunity to break from just inside our 22, I got stripped looking for an offload out of a tackle and their inside centre ran in under the posts. 7-7. Shit!

Fortunately, our response was swift. From a ruck on the Surrey 10m line, we took the ball blind and I managed to find a gap. After stepping the full back and beating him to the line to score under the posts, it looked like I had redeemed myself for the 7 points given away at the start of the half. However, that was without reckoning on Josh's kicking abilities. Josh promptly stepped up to the seemingly unmissable conversion and... missed. Still, we were back ahead.

Shortly after this we were able to build on our lead. Some ill discipline from the opposition forwards at the breakdown gave us a penalty under the posts. Josh, nervous after his last attempt to convert from such an easy position, decided he couldn't take the pressure so handed over kicking duties to me, who made no mistake. This gave us an 8-point margin, meaning they would have to score at least twice to beat us. However the game was effectively put to bed after Sayo pounced on a loose ball in midfield, utilising his footballing skills to knock the ball through their defence. After helping turn their full back over, Alexei scored, and with the conversion added, we had an unassailable 22-7 lead, which we comfortably saw out



without major incident. After the game, a proud Dewi lead the seconds in their first victorious rendition of the club song, and we all headed to the bar to 'rehydrate' before the England - Rest of the World game.

**However, that was without reckoning on Josh's kicking abilities. Josh promptly stepped up to the seemingly unmissable conversion and... missed**

The evening's exhibition match probably deserves a full-page report in its own right. In fact, a full page would probably be needed just to list the England tries! The England - Rest of the World match

has become an integral part of the AU fireworks night down at Berrylands, with the guys in the club putting on a show for the (mainly female) spectators. The game got a good turn-out this year, and those brave enough to stand out in the cold were treated to a performance of 'God Save the Queen' from the England team, and then the Haka from the Rest of the World, led by Sayo.

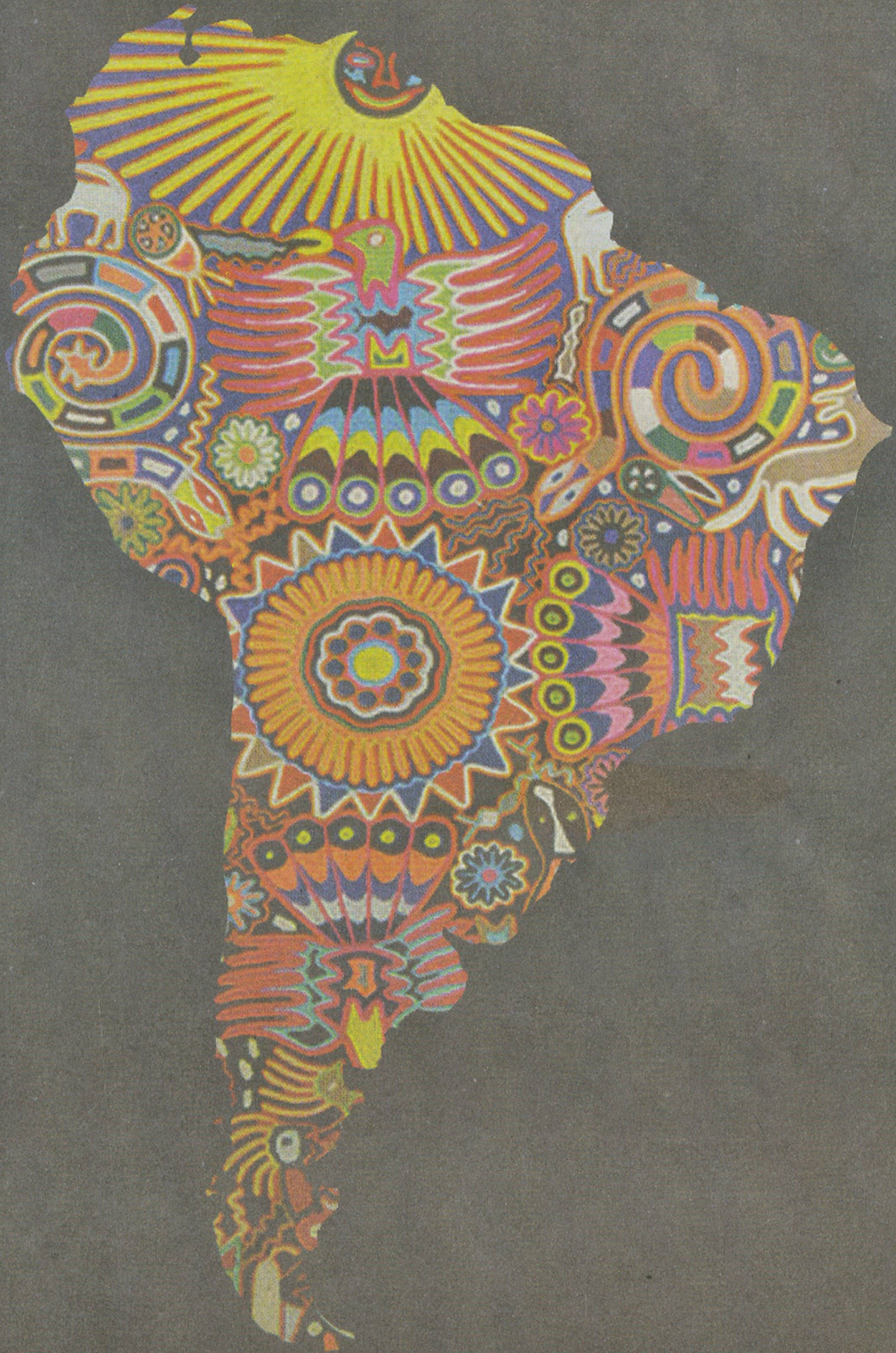
With the pre-match formalities out of the way, the game begun, and England proceeded to run in the tries, cutting open the RoW at will. Uncle Hamdi put in a strong performance for the foreigners, daring to score under the posts after yet another turnover he had won. The second half was more competitive, yet sadly as one-sided on the score sheet as the first. Mysteriously, Boca stayed on the wing nearest the on-looking netballers, despite the fact we had changed ends. Vain, Boca? After the match, we all went up to the clubhouse and enjoyed the beer and the fireworks, before heading out to Zoo. Staaaandard!

the home of petty slander

# BESAWER!

SPORTS





01.12.09

AHMED PEERBUX

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EDITORIAL

Come with us now on a journey through time and space... to the world of the Mighty PartB...

We can't promise your journey will be pleasant, or that you'll actually get anywhere at the end of it, but we do offer an inflight meal and a choice of movies.

Also, we can't really travel through time either. That was a lie. Sorry.

Calum Young & Graeme Birrell

partb@thebeaveronline.co.uk

COVER DESIGN BY:

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Frank! by Mark Twyford



# Such is Fame

Graeme Birrell

The lights around the mirror hit me hard in my eyes. I've had them closed tightly for so long that they struggle to adjust to the naked yellow bulbs. I bring the white square handkerchief to my brow and find that not only am I sweating to no end, I also have a light damp path down my cheek where an unnoticed tear has rolled down. As my eyes come into focus I begin to see myself. But it's not myself. Not the me I once knew. Once upon a time I had a full head of black hair — now it's thinning a little and makes me look a bit like my dad. A few grey hairs at the sides? When did they come through? Were they there this morning? I can't remember. Once upon a time my skin was supple and pink and dean. Now it looks slightly inelastic and dumpty. I touch my lips with my hand. Fingertips are yellow from years of too many cigarettes. God I wish I could light one in here. Sweet nicotine sounds so soothing right now.

A man in a white tee-shirt knocks on the dressing room door, comes in without waiting for me to answer and tells me that I only have ten minutes. But I'm not really listening to him as he talks. All I can hear is what is down the corridor. I go there mentally. Out the door. Left to the end of the pallid white corridor and through the muslin curtain to the stage. The stage. The lights. But above all the people. The noise and the people. I feel my neck muscles tense slightly and my heart sinks like a stone as the realisation of what I will be doing soon plays out in my mind. Ten minutes. I nod my head and force a cracked smile at the announcer.

As he leaves my 'manager' pushes past him, at the door and immediately I know he he's going to tell me something stupid, or banal, or discouraging. But it isn't really that bad, what he tells me. Apparently some "fans" want to meet me. I tell him no, and look down at my black lace shoes. When was the last time they were polished? Were they ever? But my 'manager' lets the "fans" in despite my weak protest, such is the power in what I think these days — it's nonexistent. When did he begin to disregard what I think, I wonder? Five years ago? Longer, surely. Ten probably. He probably saw this coming a long time before I did, this 'life' I lead now.

The "fans" are two women quite dear in their late thirties. The worst kind. Their generation has been around to see my whole existence from start to... well, not finish... just a kind of limbo of what I suppose is 'now'. They loved watching me on TV the first one says. I nod in apparent appreciation. I loved watching me on TV too. Not now, though, those tapes are too painful to sit through. Too many memories of what was. Where have I been since that show the second one asks. Immediately I see every dub I've ever played at in my mind. Every dank, depressing, decrepit hellhole that looks and sounds and feels exactly like this one does too. Has exactly the same dressing room as the one I'm in now. Exactly the same corridor and muslin curtain to get to the stage as this dub. Exactly the same drunken noises and smells and chatter that I can hear now, just outside the room. Exactly the same "fans" who always wonder where I've been and why I'm no longer on TV.

Working on new material, I tell them. Like fuck I am. The last time I 'worked' on anything myself Major was still prime minister. They smile and thank me for signing their arms and leave. My 'manager' and I look at each other and have nothing to say to each other. Pffft... That's new. He leaves the room and closes the door behind him. I'm alone. Just me and the mirror, I don't do anything but stare at my own tired eyes for a while.

The white tee-shirt man comes back in — this time without knocking — and tells me one minute. I nod again, and feel my stomach contract strongly and painfully as I stand up. Looking in the mirror I try to tie my bow-tie. But I can't — my fingers shake too much. God I need a cigarette. I go over the words in my mind. But I can't remember them. Fuckin' hell; I wrote that song thirty years ago and people still want to hear it. Maybe not TV audiences, but shitty clubs in the east end still pay a couple hundred pounds for an appearance.

Such is "Fame"

# AUNT BEVERLY

Do you have problems? Stuff on your mind that you can't sort out on your own? Why not email PartB's own Agony Aunt/Slut at [partb@thebeaveronline.co.uk](mailto:partb@thebeaveronline.co.uk) and see if she can help.

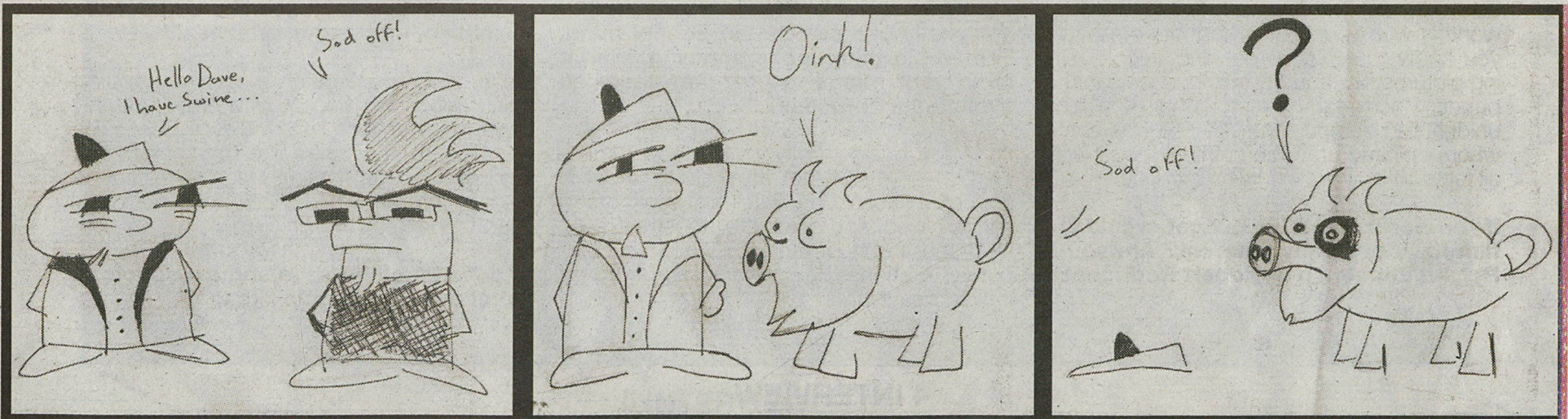
Dear Aunt Beverly,  
I have developed a rather inappropriate fondness for a few of my younger sister's friends. My Mum and Dad had a 'mid-life' crisis so she is quite a bit younger than me; I'm 26, they're 15. Is it so bad? I thought girls wanted a mature bloke?  
Lascivious and Distracted, MSc student

Dear Child Predator,  
Yes it really is that bad. The poor girls aren't even legal yet. Not that has ever stopped a man before but still. I don't think your sister would take too kindly to you 'slipping one' to her friends and think of the tension it could then cause between you and your sister. Are there no women your own age? Or have you scared them all off with your wildly inappropriate lustful fantasies? I suggest you take a long hard look in the mirror and get back to your extortionate studies. Or at least wait until they're 16.

Dear Aunt Beverly,  
I have been swindled into going to my girlfriend's house for Christmas. I feel a bit odd about the whole thing anyway, we've only been going out for 2 years. But my family decamped to Australia and the bastards won't pay my airfare. How will ever survive and is it wrong to expect sex in my in-laws house?  
Jingle-Bell-I-Hope-I-Can-Still-Get-My-Rocks-Off, 3rd Year

Dear Scrooge's Nympho Cousin,  
Christmas is all about spending time at the heart of dysfunctional families. You have to enjoy it to survive it. It can be vastly entertaining and a way to remain cheerful in such a socially awkward situation. Look for the 'Uncle Eddy', the grossly perverted one; the 'Grandma Kathleen', the one who says fabulously inappropriate things about homosexuals; and of course the 'Aunt Beverly', the one you can ask anything of.

As per your other wondering, I'd say it's fine to want sex, just scope out the thickness of walls, other people's bed times and the sturdiness of the bed that probably survived her childhood. And don't do it under the tree, in the loo or in her parents' bed.



# HOMEMADE WEIRDO MOVIES, MULTI- DIMENSIONAL TRAMPS AND A POLISH SHOE MUSEUM.

## AHMED PEERBUX TALKS TO DIRECTOR PAUL KING

**Paul King, esteemed kooky director of *the Mighty Boosh* talks to PartB Film about his feature debut *Bunny and the Bull*, not getting paid and what else he's got in the pipeline.**

**Seeing as this is your first feature film, did you feel apprehensive at all as to how it would be received?**

I was shitting it. It's absolutely the most terrifying thing I've done in my whole life. I kind of thought it would be alright, but it wasn't. Suddenly, I'm doing this proper film, going from working with your mates and lots of people you know to a red carpet and people taking pictures. Me and my girlfriend were in the paper, which read "Director Paul King plus unidentified companion", like she was some whore I picked up or something! It suddenly all felt a bit proper, and I was really nervous...

**If you were given a big budget, would the film have been any different? Are you a Roland Emmerich or Robert Rodriguez?**

I really like how it looked, I like the kind of lo-fi and homemade thing. The main thing is people would have been paid... there were so many people working for nothing, like me and the producer. It was a bit of a nightmare, because we needed to make a living and we just didn't get paid for two years. The newspaper model bit was like six weeks of 30 volunteers from Nottingham Arts School putting it all together. If we had another two million we could have given people a pay check, but it probably wouldn't have looked any different on screen.

**You really can see the art school thing. The whole thing looks amazing. Was it all in your mind's eye, or was there an evolutionary process?**

I'd feel arrogant to say it's just how I imagined it. It wasn't, not at all...like the flat is a nicer version of my flat. I just took lots of things I liked, and stuck it all together really. I wanted a sort of timeless thing, no computers or phones, like in *Fantastic Mr Fox*, it looked beautiful.

**Speaking of Wes Anderson, people are starting to favourably compare you to these directors; Gondry, Gilliam, and the like.**

They're only my childhood heroes (laughs) fucking hell! That's great! But no, it's enormously flattering for people not to just go "sub-standard Gondry rip-off!" – I'd rather not have that, but people seem to think it looks good, so I'm proud of that...

**This is a move away from *the Boosh*, exploring darker issues like compulsive gambling, loss and mental health**

Yeah... these are much more real people I think. I love *the Boosh*, obviously, probably more than anyone. It's wilfully surreal, with bubblegum characters like Betamax Bandit and people with flamingo legs. It refuses to deal in the real world, and this is obviously much more real.

**It does touch home in some respects. A lot of us know people like that.**

Yeah, a lot of people have had relationships where their best friend was actually a bit of a fuck up and a bastard. Like Bunny is incredibly horrible and really selfish. And I think it's all about coming to realise that. He's bad news, and it's all about moving on.

**There seems to be a tendency of TV comics in this country to make that transition onto the big screen and just make a really shit film; *Alien Autopsy*, *Lesbian Vampire Killers*, *Sex Lives of the Potato men* and that. Was that something you were constantly aware and trying to steer clear of?**

Weirdly I haven't seen any of those films... or not so weirdly since they got a fairly bad write-up. But I do think I need to step in on behalf of British cinema. There's also *In the Loop* which is really good, *Le Donk* which is really good. There are obviously lots of good British comedies, all the *Python* movies... I wasn't so worried about it, because it isn't the *Mighty Boosh* movie, where it has to be a big step up. I thought it would be better to go down the Edgar Wright route, in that we're not making *Spaced* the movie, but instead a totally different film. It is its own beast, but hopefully people who like *the Boosh* will like this.

**What was it like writing? Often with comedies you have writing partners, two people, three, four, even five people working on the script. People to bounce off, to moderate ideas.**

I did use a lot of people, Richard did a lot of script editing and I had a couple of script editors. It's quite weird because I always thought I was going to try and bring someone else in, because like you say it's a good thing to do with two people. And then I thought I'll just write the treatment, I'll just write the second draft, I'll just do the second draft. and by the

time I finished it I sort of thought I just want this to be mine now.

**So you preferred the extra creative control?**

It's really different. It's definitely harder on a personal level. On *the Boosh* I can go "is this what you want?" But this is a lot more lonely, there's no one to hide behind. It's just you. But I wouldn't have to write if someone came along with a script that allowed for the visual invention. I'd do it in a heartbeat, but they're hard to come by.

***The Boosh* is very much a cult phenomenon, whereas now you'll perhaps be enjoying mainstream success.**

Let's hope so! If it happens it'd be amazing, but how do you know? An obviously something like this is not going to be for everyone. Set in a world made of cardboard and newspaper, there's going to be some people saying "I will not watch that". So I really hope people would like it, the more the merrier. I never set out to be fringe. I want everyone to love it! But I'm not worried that it'll be too Hollywood.

**Where did you draw your inspiration for the films distinct aesthetic?**

Lots of different things, I definitely had music I was listening to while I was writing. I was listening to lots of Tom Waits, especially *Mule Variations*. And I really liked Ralfe Band, that slightly gypsy home-made thing. And lots of visual art really, pinching things from photographers. Obviously there are other films have done things a bit like it, But there aren't so many films like this that you can just go "I'm gonna watch all the homemade weirdo films"; you can watch them all in an afternoon. Whereas if you go "I'm making a robot takes over the world movie", there's a

hundred to watch. So it was a little tough to find things.

**The film is a road trip. Did you really visit all these places? A Polish shoe museum? That's real?**

Yes. All of them. They are all real, all there in the credits. We had no money, so it's not like anyone else would go out and take pictures, so me and this photographer spent like six days driving from Brussels to Poland, we were sleeping in the car and it was a fucking nightmare, but it was amazing. The museums were brilliant and there's so many we didn't get to, like there's a museum of birds nests. I mean what is that!?

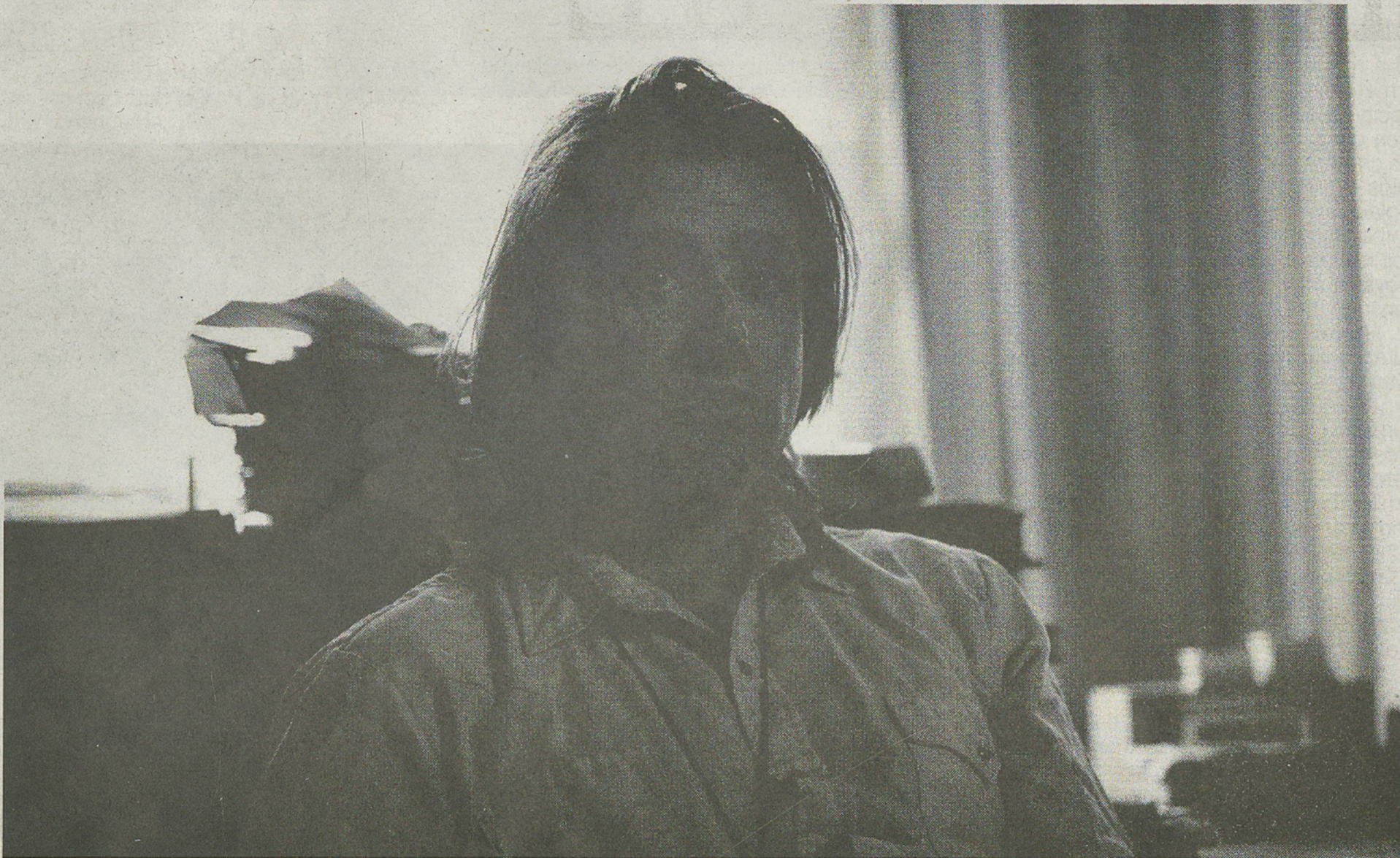
**Where will we see you next?**

I'm working on something that's all about a multi-dimensional tramp, and I'm writing a script of *Paddington Bear*.

**Finally, why should people go and watch *Bunny and the Bull*?**

Because it's funny and it's beautiful and it's touching, and a lot of people put a lot of love into it.

**BUNNY AND THE BULL IS IN CINEMAS NOW**



# Turning Heads

DUNCAN MCKENNA EXPLORES THE TURNER AND THE MASTERS EXHIBITION

This is not a typical exhibition. Rather than a self-justifying glorification of Turner's mastery, it concerns itself more with narrative. Anybody who has seen Turner's work, knows that he was a virtuoso of the Romantic school; his skilful paintings are frequently populated by the rolling hillsides and ethereal seascapes he is best known for, all portrayed with a beguiling mix of explosive power and tender delicacy. However, *Turner and the Masters*, doesn't rest on its laurels, but rather challenges Turner and holds to account his attempts to expand his repertoire by juxtaposing his wider works with the originals of other greats that inspired him.

The exhibition spans across six rooms, the first of which is entitled 'Education and Emulation'. In these early works, already emerging is Turner's penchant for the epic and ephemeral. Even at this stage we can see Turner's typically brilliant use of light and the seascape emerge in *Moonlight*, *a Study at Millbank* and even more so in *Harlech Castle*; the meandering estuary is treated with a soft beauty, Turner embalming the scene in golden evening light. This first room is a good encapsulation of the exhibition as a whole, as here Turner challenges a multitude of the Old Masters and, whether he succeeds or fails, is always daring and tenacious. A prime example of his bravery is situated on the final wall of Room One. Turner was asked to paint a piece to be hung with Willem Van de Velde's *Ships in a Stormy Sea*, and so he produced *Dutch Boats in a Gale*, an almost mirror image. Turner, in creating an exact counterpoint to a revered master of seascapes, makes a metaphorical statement of intent, the audacity of which is heightened when Turner then goes on to make the picture his own. He challenges Van de Velde's precision and adds a far more textural style to the waves, replacing the black, glassy expanse of sea in the Dutchman's work, with an energetic application of whites, browns and intense greys, imbuing the piece with a genuine sense of threat.

However in the next rooms, the assurance Turner shows early on seems to evaporate. Room Two focuses on Turner's experiments with the Grand Style. When Turner's *Crossing the Brook* and Lorrain's *Moses Saved from the Waters* are compared, the two classical scenes look very similar, but Turner's effort looks grandiose and pale compared to the characteristic richness in the other piece. Comparisons between Turner and Salvator Rosa, Lorrain and Titian see him repeatedly left wanting as he tries to impress his dreamlike style on pieces that are simply unsuitable.

It was in Room Three - when Turner challenges the Dutch school - that I began to think that the curators didn't actually much like Turner. Two walls are dedicated to Rembrandt, and Turner's attempts to emulate him; the most piquant contrast is between Jessica and Rembrandt's *Girl at*

*a Window*. Turner's imitation feels like just that, an imitation. There are many direct parallels but the most striking are the faces; Rembrandt depicts a sweet and charming girl with a healthy flush in her cheeks, spot lit in perfect white light; and Jessica, cast in shadow, looks goggled eyed, her cheeks over-rouged - she feels like a fake in comparison. Again, when Rembrandt's *Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery* is compared with *Pilate Washing his Hands*, the contrast is clear. The spiel on the wall claims "all who approached [Rembrandt's piece] pulled off their hats" in reverence.' It is hard to imagine anybody removing their hat for Pilate, screwing up their face into a mildly confused squint is more likely.

One of the true gems of the exhibition, Aelbert Cuyp's *Herdsmen with Five Cows*, lies in the back right corner of this room. Turner himself poetically praised Cuyp for his ability "to blend minutiae in all the golden colour of vapour." His response, *Abingdon*, loses the crispness and perfect wisps of gold that Cuyp exhibits and ends up feeling washed out.

It was to my great relief then, when the tide began to turn, coincidentally - or not - when Turner returns to painting water-scapes. As we see him lusciously depict a vibrant and energetic Venice in some of his most beautiful paintings in the exhibition (*Bridge of Sighs*, *Ducal Palace...*), and his dramatic portrayal of naval warfare *Battle of Trafalgar*, he begins to find his feet in a style that was truly becoming his own.

In the final room, we find a comparison that Turner wins hands down, when Lorrain's *Seaport at Sunset* and Turner's *Regulus* are hung together. Here finally the styles of the Old Masters yield to Turner's

greatness. Both paintings feature a low sun however the orange light of *Sunset* is made to look pedestrian next to the breathtaking, powder-white burst of almost celestial light in *Regulus*. Epic buildings and dramatic seas are all but overwhelmed by the powerful burst of light that Turner portrays.

Turner and the Masters reaches its crescendo halfway along the left wall of Room Six with the breathlessly panicked and powerful *Snow Storm*. Now, rather than imitation, Turner had mastered his own style, which he defined as 'atmosphere.' Where Ruisdale's *Rough Sea*, hung nearby, looks static, a moment captured in a storm, *Snow Storm* catches the whole thing in all its terrible power and awful majesty. It is a painting which endows motion, sound and fear to the canvas. The colours and vivid movements of the brush reveal genuine vigour. It achieves everything that Turner had spent his life striving for and is a fitting end to a bold exhibition.

The final room is filled with other masterpieces that safely reassert our admiration for Turner, which is questioned throughout. Yet now it is all the stronger. And that is the brilliance of what the curators have achieved here. Turner and the Masters reveals the struggles and stages that Turner went through on his journey to becoming the historical figure he is today, and Turner aside, the wealth of other fantastic works on display, by a multitude of history's greatest painters, are worth the visit alone. This is a genuinely courageous exhibition that is not to be missed.

TURNER AND THE MASTERS IS AT THE TATE BRITAIN UNTIL JANUARY 31ST 2010



# CAT-NIP JUNKIE

GARETH LEWIS ON WHY BILL BURROUGHS WAS A TOTAL PUSSY

Writers spend a lot of time at home, in silent rooms, staring at paper. In these eerie vacuums, the chirr and grind of an HP printer becomes as loud as the CERN particle collider ingesto-regurgitating its own atomic excrement. The unexpected appearance of a sparrow at the window can be genuinely terrifying, similar to when window-cleaners force *coitus interruptus* (usually *sans coitus*, in my case) by appearing without warning on the wrong side of the *fenetre*. Writers are strange creatures, loathing distraction, craving life. A screaming infant is repulsive, a doting but uninteresting spouse, anathema. Pets, on the other hand, are just right.

Listening to writers go on about their animals is a bit like listening to fortysomething housewives go on about their kids. One does rather suspect the topic to be a symptom of lack rather than affluence in terms of sentient-life-capital. And yet writers aren't that predictable. William Burroughs's *The Cat Inside* is as much a psycho-paeon to human cosmologies as it is a tender rumination on his (vast) collection of strays. And what of all the hybridised texts – Hesse's *Steppenwolf*, Will Self's *Great Apes* or Kafka's *Metamorphosis*? These books are concerned with one very particular animal, and it's not a wolf, or a baboon, or a beetle.

People who read Burroughs tend to read *The Naked Lunch*, and nothing else. Two reasons. Firstly, once read, people feel they've 'done' Burroughs, and need never return (a bit like how salty teenagers tell you they 'did' Argentina when all they really did was 'get done' by a night-clerk in an expensive Buenos Aires hostel). Secondly, there's nothing more likely to put someone off reading William Burroughs, than reading William Burroughs. *The Naked Lunch* is, in my opinion, Burroughs at his alienating, reader-repelling, incentive-destroying best. But the next time you're in the book shop, let your Water-stoned eyes wander a little further through the fiction section, and you might come across a slight, light, mighty gem of a book. *The Cat Inside* is about ninety paragraphs long – you can read the whole thing on the tube journey home.

William Burroughs was a cat-man. This appeals to me. Allergic though I am to the scrawny little bastards, I own two. I've always been slightly repelled by the deference of the dog – its pawing, panhandling a-persona. It says a lot about a person that they prefer dogs to cats – as Burroughs says, 'Man molded the dog in his own worst image...self-righteous as a lynch-mob, servile and vicious, replete with the vilest coprophagic perversions...and what other animal tries to fuck your leg?' (The Dumbledores at Time Magazine claim this is a

book full of 'heartwarming anecdotes', which rather suggests they didn't make it past page ten before closing shop and leaping to a conclusion. Even Burroughs says it's 'an allegory, in which the writers past life is presented to him in a cat charade'). Cats retain a certain purity of Being, for Burroughs. They understand the nature of relationships as being predicated – Marx wouldn't like this – on some form of exchange, regardless of content. Dogs, on the other hand, aspire to something like morality, and in the process become man's 'best' friend, his bumbling servant, his fumbling Hennemore.



We tend to associate Burroughs with dystopian futures or twice-removed apocalyptic otherworlds – arid Interzones. But Burroughs is as much about the receding road as he is the approaching horizon, a fact that creeps through this moggy meditation like a hieroglyphed coffin in an ancient funeral procession.

**'In these eerie vacuums, the chirr and grind of an HP printer becomes as loud as the CERN particle collider ingesto-regurgitating its own atomic excrement'**

Burroughs postulates that 'cats started as psychic companions, as Familiars, and have never deviated from this function'. Some cerebral interlink – a cognitive affiliation wound up in cosmic time – crosses between the minds of cats and humankind alike. It is this intellectual laterality that allows for a strange, history-bound harmony, something you don't find with other animals and the odd manoeuvring of responsibilities demanded by their neediness. Man and cat alike is bound in Time, and through it both are linked to all that has passed and all that is yet to be. When a cat called Ruski injures itself, the cry it makes is 'a sad, plaintive voice of lost spirits, the grief that comes from knowing you are the last of your kind.' Burroughs is as savvy to the immemorial as he is the *in memoriam* – as psychic companions his pets are also front-seat riders on a winding highway of dark and doom-laden moments, spots of time that stretch back far beyond living memory.

But a good reason to read *The Cat Inside* that isn't to do with cosmic frequencies or temporal trajectories, is that it's funny. Burroughs muses on whether cats write signs like hoboes to mark their turf: 'FUCKING CAT HOUSE', and breaks from his dyspeptic canine abuse to remark how bollocks bunnies are too: 'They aren't cute at all, even the little ones. All they do is make stupid, galvanic attempts to get out of your hands, and big rabbits can give you a very nasty bite.' If you want an introduction to Burroughs the humorist,

the moralist, the sage, *The Cat Inside* isn't a bad place to start. So long as we think of Burroughs's texts as psychotic perambulations, and his life as a mystery and a mess, we will forever see him as a different breed indeed, a vagrant species. *The Cat Inside* suggests, to the contrary, that there is more of him in us, and more of us all in each other, than we might previously have supposed: 'All you cat lovers, remember all the millions of cats mewing through the world's rooms lay all their hopes and trust in you.' Cat owners of the world UNITE! You have nothing but your rat-problem to lose.

*P.S. I should apologise to anybody who read last week's column (I realise I'm being optimistic here), and noticed how at one point I had misspelt Ireland, Island. This was an elementary gaff wrapped up in my wondering whether Ireland was called Ireland for the same reasons that an orange is called an orange; i.e. when they were deciding what to call it, did the Irish simply get stuck, name it after what it is (an island), and then misspell Island? I'm yet to receive a satisfactory answer to this question.*

# LOCATION LOCATION FORNICATION

FE  
NO  
HO  
AF

## TOILETS AT THE TUNS

**Pros:**

*Easy access to  
Condoms  
Exciting street art on  
walls*

**Cons:**

*Chance of septicimia*



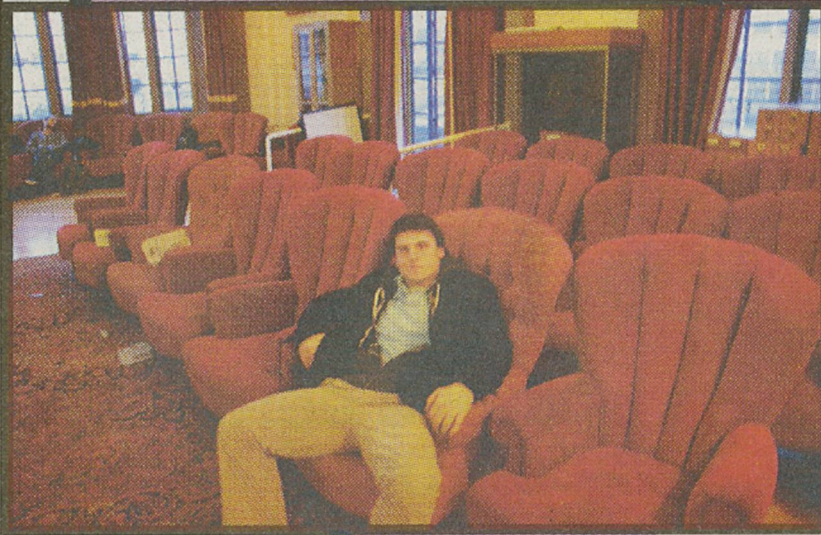
## SHAW LIBRARY

**Pros:**

*Chance of a sleep  
afterwards  
Velvety upholstery  
Woody smell*

**Cons:**

*It's a long walk up  
there  
Free newspapers may  
be a distraction  
Likely friction burns  
Creaky floorboards*





FEELING FRISKY IN LECTURES? NEED A QUICKIE RIGHT  
NOW? PART B TAKES YOU THROUGH THE PREMIER  
HIDEOUTS ON CAMPUS FOR DOING THE DIRTY IN THE  
AFTERNOON



## BRIDGE FROM S BUILDING TO THE LIBRARY

**Pros:**  
*Exhibitionists  
dream  
Plenty of light  
Good views*

**Cons:**  
*paucity of anchorage  
points*



## THE BEAVER OFFICE

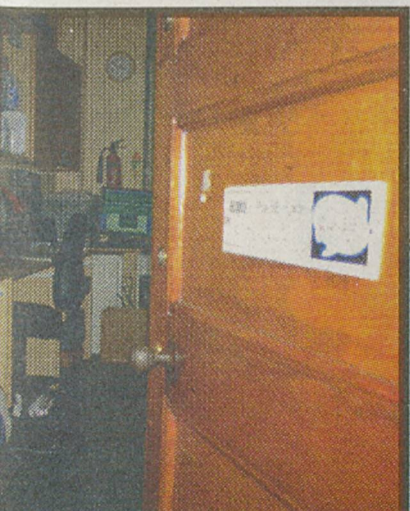
**Pros:**  
*warm in winter  
Reliable internet ac-  
cess*

**Cons:**  
*N/A*

## PULSE RADIO OFFICE

**Pros:**  
*The Beanbag Ex-  
perience  
Nobody is likely  
to be listening in.*

**Cons:**  
*Poor Play List*



# MUSIC

## METHELA HAQUE CELEBRATES WOMEN OF THE NOUGHTIES

This decade has certainly served up what can only be described as musical drudge. With the emergence of the 'reality pop star', effectively reducing the charts to a weekly contest between glorified karaoke acts, you would be forgiven for thinking this decade has been a particularly bad one for producing original music. There has been light at the end of the tunnel however, with the emergence of a new crop of female artists producing some of the most innovative albums of this decade. This may seem like a strange observation as women have been making music since music was invented. What is different about this decade is that a wide range of female artists have been able to combine commercial success with critical acclaim – a goal many of their predecessors have not been able to attain. It therefore, seems apt to mention just a few of the musical highlights this decade has produced from some of the very best female artists.

### Fur and Gold - Bat for Lashes (2006)

Natasha Khan (a.k.a *Bat for Lashes*) has produced in '*Fur and Gold*', a debut LP that combines haunting melodies with an utterly feminine vocal sound. A nomination for the Mercury Music Prize in 2007 enabled Khan's music to reach a wider audience and introduced them to her magical sound.

### Stories from the City, Stories from the Sea- P.J Harvey (2000)

This is the 6th studio album from the Dorset singer/song writer and one which allowed her to cross over from a lesser known indie act to a critically acclaimed rock star. This album won the Mercury Music Prize in 2001 and influenced a new generation of female singer/song writers that deviated from the usual pop/rock staple that dominated the charts in the 1990's.

### Fever To Tell - Yeah Yeah Yeahs (2003)

Fronted by the inimitable Karen O, *Fever To Tell* is a messy combination of punk, garage rock, and pop. However messy and chaotic it may sound, all 11 tracks on the *Yeah Yeah Yeahs'* debut album seem to fit together as a collection of thoroughly exceptional songs.

### Deb - Souad Massi (2003)

Although Middle Eastern in origin, 'Deb' (meaning 'heartbroken' in Arabic) incorporates western styles such as rock, country, and pop. Massi sings in Arabic, French, and occasionally English as well as 'Kabyle' (a Berber language), often employing multiple languages in the same song. You do not need to be fluent in any of these languages to appreciate Massi's beautiful voice and genre defying sound.

### Back to Black - Amy Winehouse (2006)

'*Back to Black*' combines the sound of Motown girl groups with Winehouse's distinctive vocals (with a little help from super star DJ Mark Ronson). This Grammy award winning album contains brazen confessions of heartbreak, infidelity and Winehouse's continued battle with drink and drugs. Forget the manufactured pop of reality TV shows. *Back To Black* is what pop music should sound like.

## BOTTOM FIVE NO.1s OF THE YEAR.

(Yes, we're haters.)

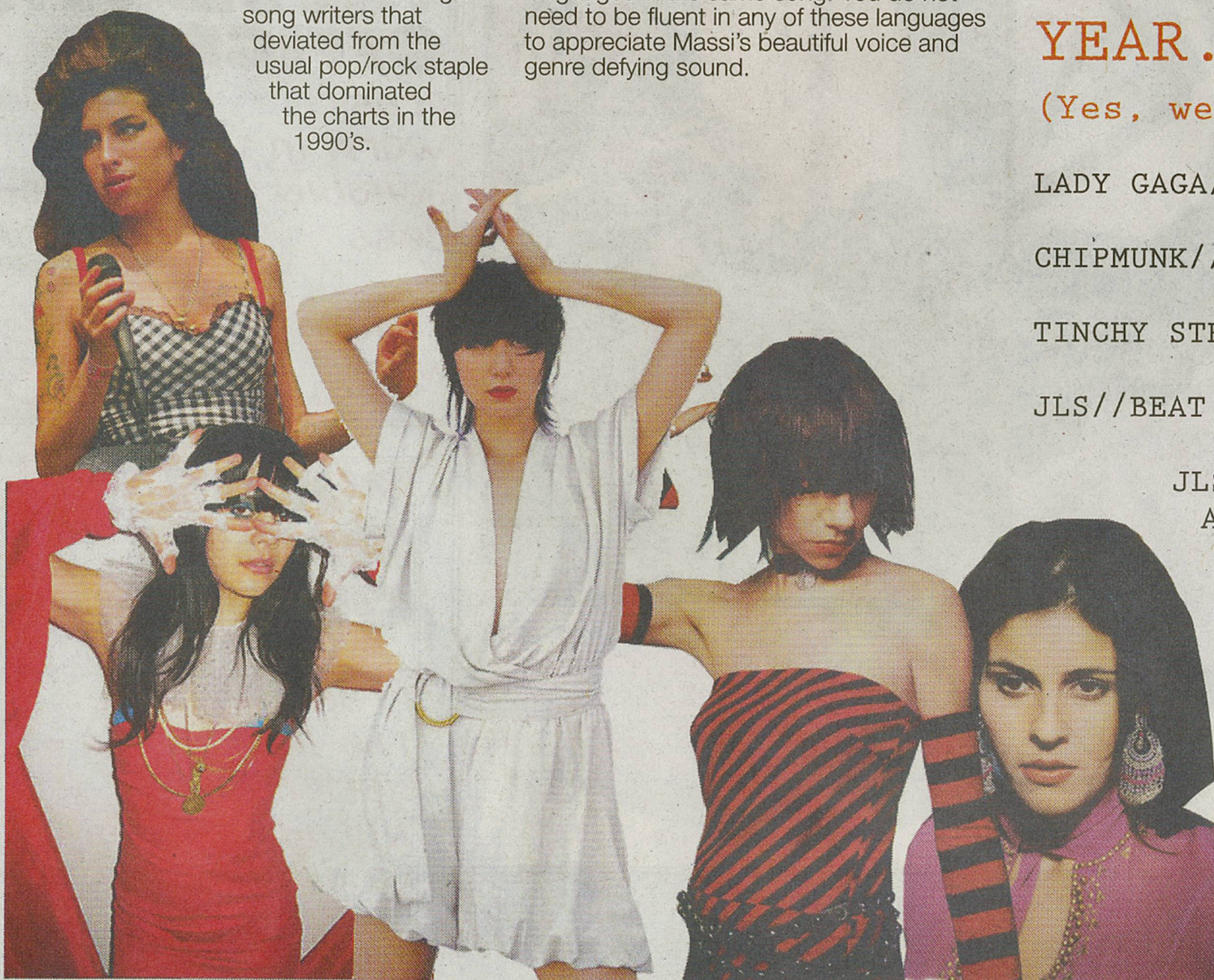
LADY GAGA//POKER FACE

CHIPMUNK//OOPSY DAISY

TINCHY STRYDER//NUMBER 1

JLS//BEAT AGAIN

JLS//EVERYBODY AT LOVE



# VAGARIES OF MADNES

**JULIAN BOYS** SEES *WORRIEDABOUTSATAN* @ THE LUMINAIRE 21.11

I set off with an umbrella and a collection of stories by Poe, which faithfully reflected the spitting bitter night, into a city beset by improvement works. These contrived to deprive me of my companion for the evening, which perhaps contributed to my boarding the overground at Dalston King-land in a state of profound metaphysical introspection. The impetuous fury of the gusts battered our carriage as we mournfully wended our way to the Kilburn High Road. The grim phantasm at a bus stop couldn't direct me to the Luminaire, but some peculiar instinct guided me there forthwith.

A hypochondriac sat wringing his hands on the stairs; I flinched with every twist of those mangled knuckles but didn't succumb to pity. The dark interior of the Luminaire was bedecked with signs prohibiting conversation: this was a Live Music Venue, not a Pub where you can 'chat' with your 'friends'. An horrendous vision of the sickeningly embittered crone daubing these phrases on the wall came to me forcefully and I retched dryly in the corner.

I was only diverted by the shadowy arrival of my immediate reason for being, 'Worriedaboutsatan', a duo of artistes who somehow produce unfathomably emotive minimal techno. I approached the stage and became aware that all colour had faded from the scene, everybody in my line of sight was clothed in black garments, all was monochrome. The stage was lit only by the projection of a black and white film and be-

fore it a frantically bobbing hooded figure hunched over mixers and a laptop seemed in the midst of interminably looping death throes. Opposite him a man inexplicably stood holding a guitar, the instrument visually clashing with my conception of what could make the spectral sounds I perceived.

Yet somehow the clean, crisp yet organic blips melded with the wash of the electric guitar, which was played with a violin bow. Otherworldly bass was emitted intermittently into this noir scene as the spirit of the piece rose and rose in tone and tempo, before falling back into dreamy ambience. The audience, mostly there for the later headliners, perhaps missed how *Worriedaboutsatan* drew subtle motifs from their breathtaking summer LP, *Arrivals*, and flawlessly integrated them into the otherwise improvised set.

The line between vivid, dark soundscape and pummelling, all encompassing techno was ever trepidatiously trod. At one point the now unhooded figure swore quietly in a strong Northern accent over an unexpected lull as he vigorously struggled to plug a jack back into his laptop; the dearth of bass-weight and driving glitches disquieting all. I tasted blood in my mouth and felt panic rise in my stomach, realising how much I needed that immersion to return.

I can hear sirens in the distance as I write this, and I cannot but urge you to listen to this band. My heart fills with dread at the thought of what might happen if you don't.



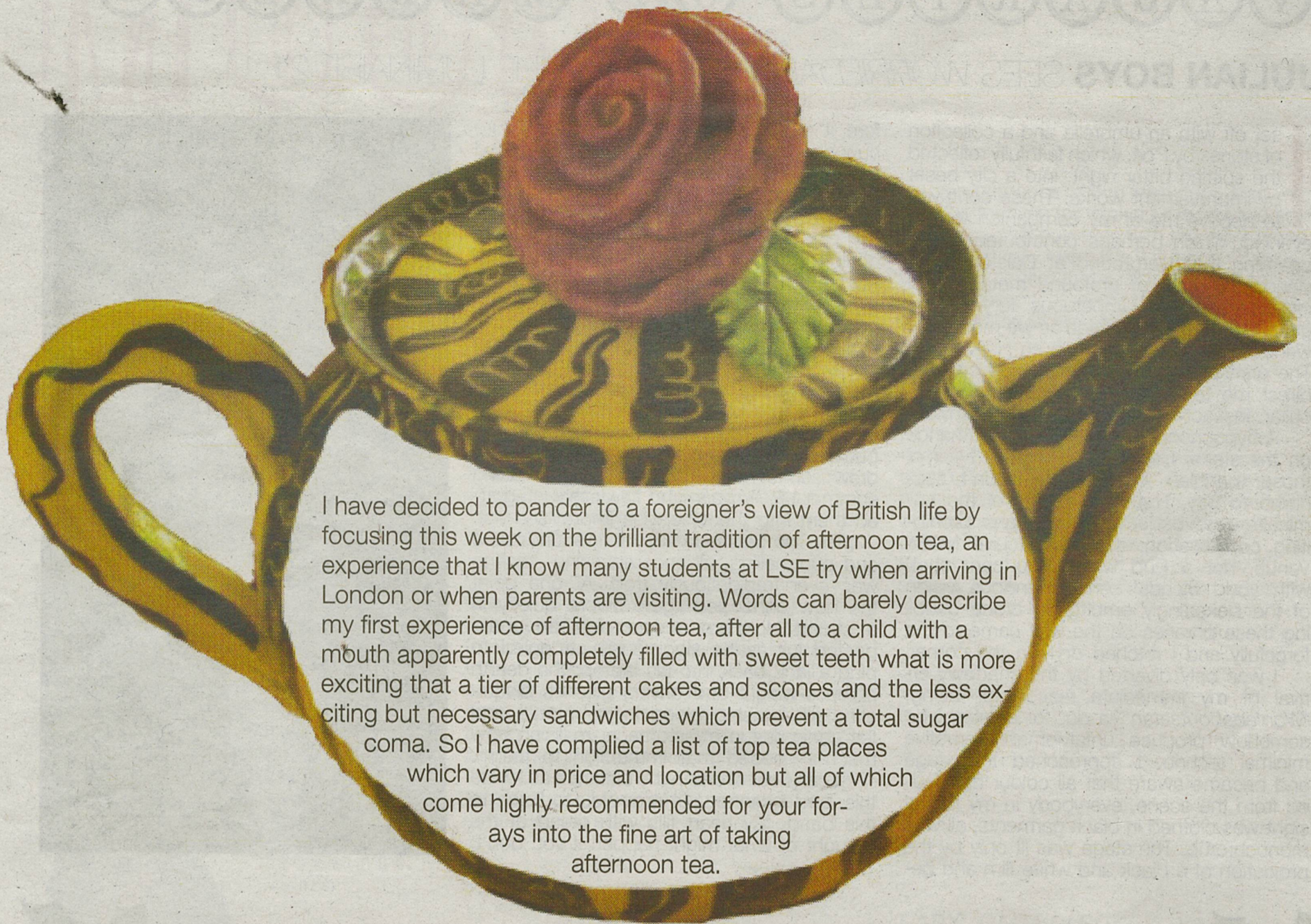
## CHRISTMAS MIXTAPE.

It being December 1st, "Christmas" has finally begun. Pulse's music Nazis are finally letting DJs play Mariah Carey's "All I Want for Christmas is You" every ten minutes. We are now justified in printing a list of our favourite Christmas jingles.



# Tea-riffic Afternoons

VICTORIA TERRY EXPLORES THE ART OF TAKING TEA



I have decided to pander to a foreigner's view of British life by focusing this week on the brilliant tradition of afternoon tea, an experience that I know many students at LSE try when arriving in London or when parents are visiting. Words can barely describe my first experience of afternoon tea, after all to a child with a mouth apparently completely filled with sweet teeth what is more exciting that a tier of different cakes and scones and the less exciting but necessary sandwiches which prevent a total sugar coma. So I have compiled a list of top tea places which vary in price and location but all of which come highly recommended for your forays into the fine art of taking afternoon tea.

## Cheaper but still delicious

*St Martin-in-the-Fields  
Café in the Crypt*

£5.25 per person

Daily at 2.00pm-6.00pm

Served in a landmark church crypt with vaulted ceilings and gravestones on the floor yet wonderfully cheap for such dramatic surroundings.

*Bea's of Bloomsury*

£9 per person

Monday to Friday 2.30 p.m. onwards and from noon on Weekends.

Often described as a home away from home and this cosy café also does gluten free cakes!

*National Portrait Gallery Café*

£15 per person

15:15 - 17:00

Amazing views and featured in the film *Closer* with Julia Roberts and Clive Owen makes this a must for fans and tourists.



## Pricier but Classier

*Fortnum and Mason*

£32 per person

2-7pm except Sundays 12- 4.30pm.

Elegance is expected from guests to reflect the sumptuous surroundings. There is a huge array of teas and a pianist to set the mood

*Berkeley Hotel, Pret-à-Portea*

£35 per person

Daily at 1pm to 6pm.

The menu is transformed every 6 months to follow the changing seasons in fashion. This season's afternoon tea includes designs by Christian Dior, Burberry, Christian Lacroix, Louis Vuitton, and Mulberry.

*Ritz*

£37 per person

5 daily sittings- 11.30am, 1.30pm, 3.30pm, 5.30pm and 7.30pm

The royalty of tea-time reflected by the need to book 6-12 weeks in advance.

# THE FAHRENHEIT TWINS

SOPHIE MARMENT TAKES AN ICY VIEW OF AN ARCTIC PLAY



Told By an Idiot's ingenious two-person production is based on author Michael Faber's captivating tales of *the Fahrenheit Twins*. The story follows the antics of twins Tainto'llilith and Marko'cain, two children born in the deepest Arctic, where they live with their anthropologist parents Una and Boris Fahrenheit, who are stationed there to observe the rituals of the indigenous people, the 'Uw-Innoui'. The negligent parents allow the twins ultimate freedom in their icy paradise, but when their mother takes to bed one day the children are thrust into a search for personal discovery and understanding of life's truths.

Naomi Wilkinson's set design is the stand-out of the piece, a flexible and central necessity, comprising a moving circular platform and slide-come-living-quarters, all covered in soft, white, snowy fur. The entire construction is filled with secret hidey-holes, delightful pockets of fur and cupboards which open to reveal night skies, cuckoo clocks and toothbrushes with bells attached, amongst others.

Hayley Carmichael (Tainto'llilith) and Paul Hunter (Marko'cain) are entertaining in their transformations, playing not only the twins but also their parents, and skipping between acting capering huskies and a pair of sunglass-toting, champagne slurping Arctic foxes. Whilst some transformations are slicker than others, the pair do an outstanding job at miraculously flicking between characters in the blink of an eye.

The costumes contribute greatly to the split-second character changes, with each actor being dressed in a baby-gro of white fur with carefully concealed Velcro bibs which, when quickly ripped open revealed lederhosen and, at one point, a childish painting of the naked human form. Hats, masks and wigs also played their part, swiftly plucked from the set's copious hiding places. The one downside to their fast changing ensemble was the addition of velcroed stuffed rats, lending a sense of the ridiculous rather than the comical.

The performances are fun with flashes of comic brilliance and emotional anguish but disappointingly fall short of delivering genuine and convincing theatre. Certainly the production is full of imagination and charm, but as Carmichael and Hunter slide repeatedly down a snow slide, and gleefully skip into another quick costume change, they seem too self-satisfied to be genuinely endearing. This is the theatrical equivalent of the boy riding a bike with no hands, shouting 'look at me, Mum!': after a while you find yourself willing them to fall.

The choice of source material is excellent, as Faber's story offers a kaleidoscope of wonderful ideas to be explored. The Twins' innocence is striking in their determination to never age, but leads to the creation of bizarre rituals which, in their attempts to remain young, ultimately strip them of their innocence. Set against the Arctic void, harsh nature and personal freedom come into contact in a world with few constraints. The threat of the unknown indigenous people is mirrored by the threat of the unforgiving environment, and while this gradually pulls the twins' parents apart, it facilitates exploration and self-discovery for the twins. The frozen wasteland removes social boundaries, but creates physical ones, and leads us into an examination of what our limits truly are, and why we are so driven to discover what lies beyond.

Unfortunately the strength of the source material is fumbled in a show with a frustrating lack of clarity. What could have been a play truly connecting with the coming-of-age and loss-of-innocence threads which were so clearly there to be woven together, simply petered out into out-of-place dream sequences and an unconvincing ending, lacking in emotional punch. The production is perhaps worth seeing for its occasional flashes of brilliance, but they are only occasional, and ultimately this is a play that adds up to rather less than the sum of its parts.

THE FAHRENHEIT TWINS PLAYS AT THE BARBICAN UNTIL 5TH DECEMBER 2009



## PICK OF THE WEEK

### Endgame

Directed by Stephen McBurney and starring Mark Rylance, this classic Beckett play gets a new rework.

Duchess Theatre until 5 Dec.  
[www.duchesstheatre.co.uk](http://www.duchesstheatre.co.uk)

### The Pitmen Painters

The National's latest 5-star offering. This is the tale of a group of pit miners who begin a history of art class in 1934. They soon abandon critique for practical skills as they begin to paint. This comes to London following a sell-out run at Live Theatre Newcastle

National Theatre, 2 Dec -18 Jan 2010.  
Box Office 020 7229 0706

### Sweet Charity

A feel-good musical, just in time for the festive season. Starring Tamsin Outhwaite, returning to her musical roots, this should be a sweet treat.

Mernier Chocolate Factory, 2 Dec - 7 Mar 2010  
Box Office 020 7229 0706

## LSE THEATRE

### No Sex Please, We're British

This year's first contribution from the LSESU Drama Society promises a barrell of laughs and a romp through the stiff upper lip of seventies British etiquette.

Old Theatre, 4 Dec -19 Dec at 7.30pm  
Ticket's available on Houghton Street

# EXCLUSIVITY FOR THE MASSES

## ADETOUN & JACQUI DO FASHION IN A TOUGH ECONOMIC CLIMATE

**F**ashion is renowned for its chameleon-like qualities. Its ability to adapt to changing times has never been more evident than now. Recession chic is the new look on the street, the overt spending of diamond dripping wives of moguls, oil tycoons a la Dynasty and Dallas is a thing of the Nineties.

In today's world of busy career women in their twenties, value is key. The High Street has stepped up its game and has garnered a niche in the market; the likes of Topshop, French Connection, and Karen Millen have perfected the mix of expensive looking bang-on-trend-yet-still-affordable to a tee. Rather

than a top to toe designer look, it's now cool to mix high street with designer bags and shoes. Even celebrities are emulating this trend mixing Balmain with Topshop as seen on the likes of Beyonce and Rihanna.

Not to be left out of this Mecca of profits, established fashion houses have thought of a way of getting a shoe into this market. And so the high street and elite designer collaboration is born. This new trend has produced a frenzy on the part of customers and mega profits on the part of the companies involved. Ever the trend-setters, film stars, musicians; and models are everywhere mixing designer gear with affordability.

The chic, elegant, faux-designer wardrobe has never been more accessible to all than it is. Some high street stores have taken advantage of this more than others. Leading the way is H&M whose collaborators have included Viktor and Rolf, Matthew Williamson, Roberto Cavalli more recently Jimmy Choo. Zara had the beautiful Cruz sisters, and New Look collabora-

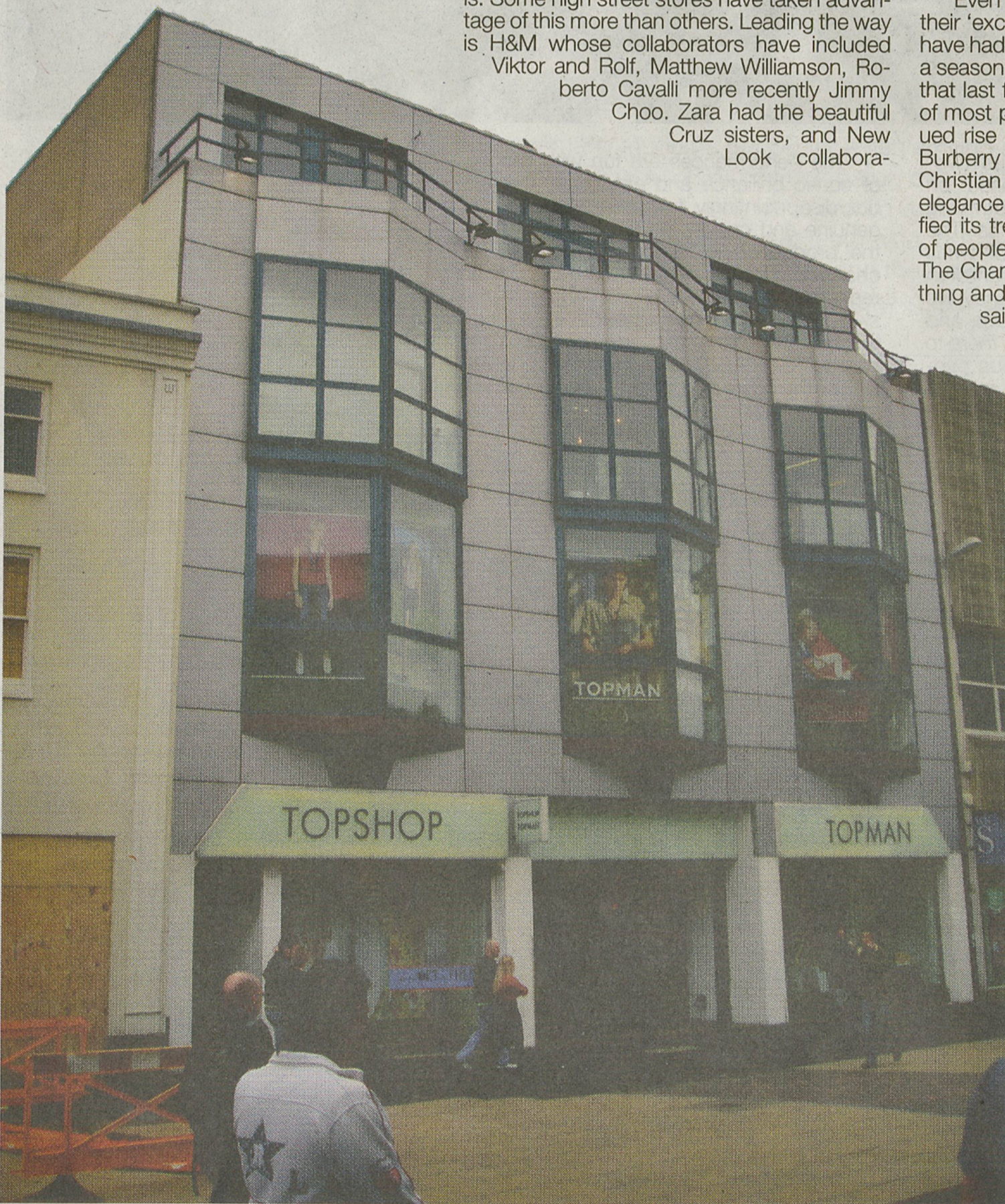
tions had both the legitimate designer in the form of Giles Deacon as well as the pop stars in Lily Allen and Beth Ditto designing signature ranges. And perhaps most prominently Sir Phillip Green's Topshop have their wonder girl Kate Moss at the helm, designing multiple sell out collections each year.

Fashion houses that can seem too 'exclusive' for the high street have designed cheaper capsule collections for the savvy shopper. Armani has its cheap and chic collection, Marc Jacobs has Marc by Marc Jacobs, Donna Karen has the popular DKNY and that's just a few of the big names who have ventured into this domain. Never before has the fashion elite catered more to the needs of the everyday woman on a budget.

Even designers that have decided to keep their 'exclusivity' and not design on the cheap have had to adjust. The era of 3 designer bags a season are gone, beautiful statement pieces that last for a lifetime is what is on the minds of most people. This is proved by the continued rise in sales of these items. The classic Burberry trench coat, the Chanel 2.5 bag, Christian Louboutin heels. All these spell out elegance, and durability. Burberry has diversified its trench so it appeals to a wider range of people not just middle aged, middle class. The Chanel bag is on the arms of 40 something and 20 year olds alike, the same can be said for Louboutin heels. The secret of these items is their ability to transcend barriers such as age and ethnicity.

Yet one brand keeps nagging me, simply because of how it continually bucks the trend. Louis Vuitton does not offer sales, it has maintained its traditional design, it manufactures its products the same way it always has, and it streamlines its costs to a bare minimum without losing any of its key characteristics. It took me a while to figure out its continued appeal without any serious re-branding, but it seems to me that Louis Vuitton isn't so different from any of the others after all - it has made use of musicians and film stars to sell its wares as well, and its reluctance to back down from high end exclusivity is perhaps just its unique selling point in this highly competitive industry. Applying the cross generational tactics in its subtle ways, Madonna for the older, Rihanna for the younger.

The recession may possibly be over, and the economy back on the rise with Christmas shopping acting as a boost, but recession chic fashion is not going anywhere in a hurry, it is definitely here to stay.



# A Man walks into an ad agency...

EMMA KELLY GIVES FIVE REASONS TO TUNE INTO 'MAD MEN'

1) **The story:** Set in a 1960s advertising agency, *Mad Men* initially looks like an office drama; but it's so much more than that. We get a glimpse into how the advertising world works as well as all the work place interaction. It's about people running away from their past, covering up secrets, failing marriages, rash affairs and so much more! Most shows focus on one issue but, like *The Wire*, it encompasses so much more than a normal TV show.

2) **Slow build up:** *Mad Men* is the perfect antidote for any *Wire* fan who is exhausted from keeping up with 16 storylines in each episode. The main character, Don Draper, is portrayed as having the perfect life of an advertising executive; yet as the show develops you start to see the cracks appear very slowly. Watching *Mad Men* is an experience, immersing you in the swinging '60s. It's worth watching because it rewards patience; when something big happens, it's better than any 'end of season' cliff-hanger another show could ever come up with. I've literally had to phone up fellow *Mad Men* fans late at night to discuss the episode I've just watched because something amazing has happened; this is something I've never bothered to do with any other show.

3) **Attention to detail:** You know you're watching a great programme when you can hear 1960s Manhattan street noise

and smell actual '60s cigarettes (not literally of course). One particularly excellent area of attention to detail is the fashion. All the women in the show are impeccably dressed, especially Don's wife Betty who has all the best the '60s had to offer. People go on about the fashion in *Gossip Girl* but in reality



they should be talking about *Mad Men* with its sharp suits and perfect perms. *Mad Men* really looks like the 1960s and these high production values mark it out above the usual humdrum so-called period pieces.

4) **Historical links:** Because of its historical setting, *Mad Men* uses real events to provide a timeline for the view. Events like the Cuban Missile Crisis link into the story line in a way other shows wouldn't bother

about. A third season episode is set entirely around the shooting of JFK, providing an insight into how it affected normal Americans, an perspective rarely considered. It's this level of attention to detail and clever story telling that sets *Mad Men* apart

5) **Smoking and drinking:** *Mad Men* is unapologetically accurate in its depiction of the excesses of the 1960s. The drinking and smoking is such an institution in *Mad Men* that when someone isn't smoking or pouring themselves a Scotch from the ever handy decanter in the office you become a little confused. What other show revels in such un-politically correct debauchery?

As *Mad Men* creator Matthew Weiner tellingly reveals: 'I try and tell a story that you don't know the ending, but when you see it, it seems inevitable': you have no excuse for not watching!

**'MAD MEN' SEASON THREE WILL AIR ON BBC FOUR IN 2010**



# FAT LAD AT A SOUNDDESK

NATHAN BRIANT LISTENS TO CELEBARAMA FM

A few weeks ago the controversial 'Execution of Gary Glitter' was broadcast on Channel 4. The Guardian's take on it demonstrated that that 'everything' on TV or radio today needs to be about celebrity. *The Chris Moyles Show* on BBC Radio 1 is further proof if we ever needed it - it's utterly fixated on the culture of celebrity.

Henry Winkler is the first celebrity mentioned of many on the show today - Moyles saw him at a visit to BBC studios to see *Strictly Come Dancing*. How relatively young people of my age and below are supposed to have an almost mandatory education in *Happy Days* is a mystery to me; the last time I saw the programme must have been about fifteen years ago. The fact that Moyles' material is based on someone whose career peaked in the mid 1980s is telling regarding.

Just as quickly as Moyles moves on from Winkler-spotting he introduces Ruth Jones and James Corden, the writers of BBC One's mild sitcom *Gavin and Stacey* to the programme, and quickly pushes them off once they've had chance to promote their forthcoming show. The presenter seems proud to announce that he hasn't watched the preview of their forthcoming



**'How relatively young people are supposed to have an education in Happy Days is a mystery to me.'**

series, which strikes as simply rude, and other else than funny. Plus, why would anyone blurt that out in the first place?

After Jones and Corden, Jedward get their opportunity to plug themselves on the programme, shoving into onto crassy populist ground if it wasn't already. A production assistant gets the Irish tuneless gorms to record a trailer for the show. They even manage to bungle that, which isn't really a surprise if you've suffered the torture of listening to their musical horrors recently.

Just as if this extravaganza of celebrity couldn't get any more mainstream in walks Northern Funny Man Peter Kay. To be honest, I pulled out my headphones here. I couldn't take any more show promotion. Moyles' programme wasn't a sly signpost towards Jones and Corden, and Kay's forthcoming projects, more a huge shove.

Moyles isn't a poor presenter if you're not averse to listening to regular use of double entendre and repeated sound effects; Moyles' programme is barnstorming if you're one of the millions who like worrying about Jordan and Peter Andre, and unemployed sitcom stars. Clearly people do, unfortunately: it's *the X Factor* transferred to national radio.

# GAME OFF

ALEX WHITE DOESN'T WANT TO PLAY WITH YOU

When Geri Halliwell sang about men precipitating from the heavens above, *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare II* had clearly not been released on the same weekend. A mere two weeks ago the majority of men vanished temporarily, not to be contacted or seen until they've obliterated mankind, or whoever and whatever the hell it is that they're supposed to be shooting at.

A friend of mine queued up at midnight to get his pre-ordered copy. Sweet Jesus man, it's not the new bloody *Harry Potter*, you're not a 12 year old girl, and no sex-goddess from the game is going to jump out of the box and play with your game console.

## 'They've pretty much sold Christmas 1914 in the Trenches'

By the way, players of either gender, it's well creepy. You could be enjoying time spent in the company of alluring members of the other sex, or with friends, or at the absolute very least people you've actually sodding met. Instead, you're on your sofa talking to Max\_the\_destroyer37 from Canada about the imminent threat of the zombiepiratewerewolfafghan warriors coming over the hills. It's just never going

to be cool in my eyes. Although, the graphics are *amazing* man.

Why do people hide behind the foil of appreciating the art of a computer game? That's clearly not why you're playing. You want to like, shoot stuff and shit. Cut the crap and admit it, so that I can streamline my piss-takery. Of course, gamers are not drawn exclusively to the mind-bending violence that corrupts our children and leads to terrorism and that. Never underestimate the power of football games.

I am convinced that *Pro-Evolution Soccer* is the devil's curse on womankind. I could walk into a room naked but for a whip and lace up boots, and prance around in front of the screen whilst pro-evo is being played and men will not so much as blink.

Once, my friend James introduced me to his two best friends, who were playing pro-evo at the time. 'Guys, this is my good friend Alex. Alex, Tom and Max'. 'Alright', Tom yaps in-between players names. Is he saying 'hi' to me or to the pixelated Thierry Henry? I just can't tell.

Max though, oh irritatingly attractive Max, takes it to a whole new level: 'James, is she cute? Describe her to me', says he without

taking his eyes off the screen. Are you bloody kidding me? I'm sitting right fucking here, and you can't even have the human decency to flick your eyes over to perv on me? I demand to be objectified properly, damnit.

This I fully attribute to the latent evil of *PES*. Poor, good looking, but misguided Max was but a foot soldier in the war against women waged by Playstation. Not just women though. Oh no, the devil makes work for idle thumbs, allegedly. Men with dexterous and slimline thumbs, but great big beer guts are rife in our modern society. Love up the football, if you want, but if that's the case then get the hell out and actually play it. Even if you're no good. I promise, you're still substantially more likely to trick someone into bed. Me,



maybe.

It's not even that I don't like video games. A cheeky little bit of *Diddy Kong Racing*? *Cracking*. Any game on the Wii, I'm loving it like the advertising campaign is loving Mac-Donalds. I've even been known to rock out to a bit of *Dungeons and Dragons*.

That last one was a lie. I totally haven't. Escapism I understand. Taking out your aggression on computer coding that look like enemies isn't the worst idea in the world, and the wish-fulfillment enabled by some games is grand too. But bugger me if there's any need to lock yourself in for a week, following a month of anticipation at the release of a new game. That must be the absolute physical antithesis of escapism.

So it is that I have come, twenty years into my life, to despise our postmodern condition: a wealth of game manufacturers have taken the joy of living in a peaceful and prosperous time, and sold the thrill of war. War and football. They've pretty much sold Christmas 1914 in the Trenches.

Call me a grinch, but I'm not buying into it. But really I'm just jealous.

