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The Beaver

Pulse 'Hot Boyz' branded "obscene"

Benjamin Butterworth

The reputation of Pulse radio has come into question, following the broadcast of sexual content by two AU members last Monday afternoon.

Liam Goy and Henry Adefope spent more than fifty minutes discussing the details of women they'd slept with, while presenting on the Students' Union radio station, giving full names and descriptions of the women.

The duo, who describe themselves as "Hot Boyz" in their online profile, gave explicit descriptions of their sexual "targets", rating the attractiveness of fellow students according to a variety of criteria.

One host boasted, "Do you know how many girls I've banged at LSE? [...] They fucking love me bro".

The 'Liam, Chris and Henry Show' broadcast in the Quad and online between 2 and 3PM last Monday - just a quarter of an hour after HRH Prince Andrew had been on campus.

Before giving intimate details of their sexual activities, one host declared, "I hope no-one gets easily offended. Tell everyone to listen, 'cos a few names are gonna get dropped!"

The men then proceeded to give details of their sex lives, joking about females they had recently slept with. "You could see her tits jiggling and everything," Adefope crudely explained, adding, "I used my finger to call her over. I was supposed to bang [name removed] - but it was only out of pure animal desperation".

The pair were interrupted part-way through the live show, when Deputy Station Manager Al Smith, who was listening to the show in the Quad, cut into the broadcast in an attempt to temper the situation. At this point, co-host Liam Goy announced: "The supervisors are back", adding that "they only told us to stop swearing - nothing about no names!"

Goy and Adefope continued with the broadcast in spite of pleas from station officials. "When I walk into Zoo [bar] I know

I'm gonna bang one of them. The women are all slags bruv, I don't know why they deny it," he explained. "Them girls should be on my fucking nuts. Easy."

Unbeknown to the hosts, listeners began leaving the Quad rapidly while they continued to talk. Reaction to the episode was universally negative, with one male listener observed shouting, "Shut the fuck up. You're idiots." Meanwhile, first-year undergraduate Lizzy Cassin stated: "You can't put their ego into words. They think they're so good - but they're not. It's pitiful."

The Students' Union Women's Officer Masie Jobe had also been listening in the Quad at the time, but was seen storming out in protest; she branded the show "chauvinistic".

In a separate statement, Jobe described the programme as "massively disrespectful", adding "It was obscene. I don't want to sit in a public place hearing women be spoken about like that."

Station Manager Stuart McColl, who had not been listening to the show at the time, said of the episode, "The content was inappropriate and I'll have to talk to them about what's acceptable to say on air," adding, "they sound like idiots."

In spite of the immediate controversy surrounding the live broadcast, the show remained available to hear on the station's on-demand service all week.

The content also broke Ofcom licensing regulations. According to the terms of license given by the independent regulator, radio programmes broadcast in public spaces must not include "offensive language, sex or violation of human dignity" - all of which occurred repeatedly during the show. The presenters swore on more than ten occasions, including one partially-heard use of the word "cunt".

Pulse officials have stated that there are no plans to pull the show. "It's popular in the AU," McColl claimed.

Isla Woodcock, who heads the Students' Union Feminist Society, said of the incident: "It was completely outrageous, what they did. So cheap." Making clear what steps should be taken, Woodcock added, "They need to undergo serious

monitoring and Pulse should have a much stricter policy on its shows."

In response, Pulse's committee have confirmed that the Head of Communications, who was absent due to illness on the day of the show in question, supervises and monitors every episode of the show, and will intervene immediately if any

regulations are broken. Additionally, the Station Manager has stated that meetings have been held with the presenters, and that they will not be given another chance.

Sabbatical Officer Charlie Glyn, the Activities & Development Officer, concurred, stating: "If this happens again their show will immediately be taken off air."

Commenting on the procedure, Glyn said, "It's essential that presenters adhere to the code of conduct [but] I am fully supportive of Pulse and the professional manner in which they continue to operate." The Women's Officer has also expressed satisfaction regarding the changes that have been implemented as of this week.



Controversial disc jockeys Henry Adefope and Liam Goy
 Photos: Sachin Patel

LSE100 attendance halves

Heather Wang

The pilot course of LSE100, currently being taken voluntarily by second-year students, has seen participation decline this term.

The LSE100 course is scheduled to be taken by first-years from Lent Term this year; however, it is still in developmental stages. While the course director Jonathan Leape and LSE100 students confirmed that perspectives and skills in different fields can be gained, the dropout rate has been unusually high.

The benefits of the LSE100 course have been stressed by Dr. Leape and the LSE100 team: "Perhaps the most important of these [benefits] is to complement their [students'] disciplinary training with the intellectual breadth that comes from understanding the different ways of thinking like a social scientist." Students studying the course have agreed with Leape. Sehrish Eja, a second-year Economic History student said: "The LSE100 course puts lawyers, economists, sociologists and historians in the same room and challenges them to view critical world issues through several new pairs of eyes."

Alissa Voutova, a second-year studying Sociology, added, "I think LSE100 is a different kind of course because it provides you with a variety of topics, perspectives, analytical tools and amazing lecturers that you won't find in any of your degree subjects. Personally, I mostly benefited from the argument building that LSE100 inevitably teaches you. When the topic discussed feels remote from your previous experiences, studies or interests, you have no choice but to discover the best methods to argue a point"

Leape has also highlighted the attraction of LSE100 to employers. When LSE100 was presented at the annual Graduate Recruitment event hosted by the Careers Service in May, 83 per cent of recruiters thought LSE100 would make LSE graduates more attractive than other potential employees. Leape said, "The course also enables students to strengthen the full range of key skills from research and information skills to writing, presentation and group working skills - all of which are in great demand by employers."

In this context the high drop-out rate appears counterintuitive. According to Leape, a total of 200 students have decided to stop taking LSE100 after signing up for it: "As of today (29 October), there

are 221 student volunteers registered on LSE100, drawn from every single department and 35 of the 37 different undergraduate degree programmes." As Leape acknowledges, this is just over 50 per cent of the 421 students that started the pilot. The drop out rate has been slower this term, compared to last term. During last Lent Term 134 students withdrew, and a further 67 have withdrawn between the end of Lent Term and now; this figure includes a number of students who did not progress or withdrew from the School.

Not everyone seems to have a positive view of LSE100. One second-year commented, "The course is boring because the lectures are usually not very good, and most things are common knowledge. The classes are too structured; it makes you feel like you're in primary school. Especially the ones on Economics, as somebody who studies the subject, what's being discussed is often well below my level." This view was confirmed by several students and cited as the reason that they chose to drop the course.

The concern raised the most is the lack of time left to study courses which count towards degrees. One Government and Economics undergraduate said, "It adds an extra three hours of timetabled teaching to my timetable. Then, of course, there is the work you have to do at home, which is mainly reading assignments, which I would say takes an extra hour."

Another cause of the high dropout rate is believed to be "failure to engage with the course from the beginning". Dr. Leape gave statistics that support this view: "Of those that withdrew in the Lent Term, 32 did not attend a single class, another 32 attended only one class and a further 45 only two or three. So, for one reason or another, 109 of the students who originally signed up, never really engaged at all."

Media leaps on Beaver's privatisation back

Luke Smolinski

Students and the national press have reacted with shock to the idea that the LSE Council discussed the option of privatising the School.

The Beaver broke this exclusive story last week, and it was subsequently picked up by the Guardian, the Independent and the BBC. The Guardian were first to report on the matter, publishing it as the fourth highest news story on their website on 26th October, with the headline "LSE looks at option of going private." The Independent ran the story in their 27th October issue; thereafter, "LSE raises spectre of private universities" became the most popular Education story on the Independent's website that day.

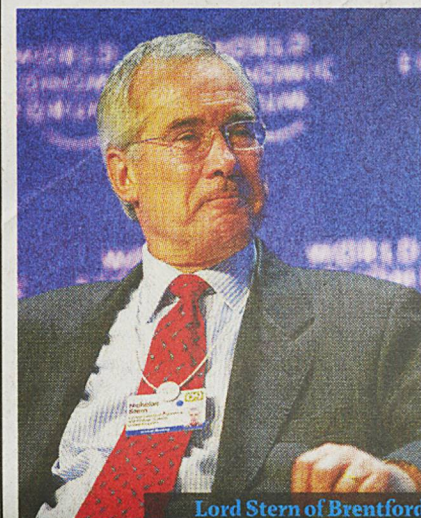
The BBC News website focused on Howard Davies' reaction on 27th October: in their piece, the LSE's Director rejected claims that LSE is to go private, saying, "I have so far seen no arguments which convince me that the school and its students would be better off as a result of 'going private'".

would be able to charge unlimited tuition fees and ignore government quotas on accepting students from poorer backgrounds. In addition, students who came to the LSE would not be automatically eligible for government loans or bursaries.

The possibility of privatisation invited criticism from bloggers on the Guardian website too. One blogger said: "If the LSE goes private I think it should buy back all the publicly funded buildings and facilities it has first. Also, the research councils should rethink awarding research monies to its academics. Why should taxpayer's money go to staff at private institutions?" Another blogger wrote: "LSE has assets which public money has paid for. They can either buy themselves out or live with it."

Others were more open minded about privatising the LSE. One individual commented: "Since a degree from the LSE is a passport to the City, let it roll. Future bankers can easily afford to pay treble the current fee level for a degree."

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Lord Stern of Brentford



Professor Danny Quah

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The Beaver

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An off-beat message from Pulse

Communities don't function without boundaries. Last week, a radio show greatly overstepped the mark when it broadcast obscene personal details about the sex lives of several members of a particular community.

In a break with tradition, however, this misconduct was not perpetrated by Moyles, Brand et al. The comments were instead voiced by presenters on the Students' Union's own Pulse radio station. At a time when University funding is under an enormous degree of scrutiny, to find money being poured into projects of this sort is particularly abhorrent. Moreover, it casts doubt over the worthiness of all student media around Houghton Street if one member of this Gang of Four (Loose TV, Pulse Radio, the Beaver, Clare Market Review) breaks with protocol and abuses the School's generous financial backing. Cash is only allocated to these projects on the condition that they remain accountable to the student community at the LSE and that they continue to provide a service for all those involved with the School.

On these grounds, the outburst on Pulse Radio was doubly damaging. It privately harmed individual students

and in a broader context it weakened the student-run Media Group which attempts to strengthen the social fabric of those who study in Aldwych.

The extreme lapse in the editorial practice of Pulse Radio indirectly poses questions about the worth of all forms of student media. We at the Beaver are acutely aware of the conditions which come with producing the Students' Union's newspaper. We seek to inform, educate and entertain students at the LSE, as well as giving any student the opportunity to voice views about events on campus and in the wider world. But our responsibility is not limited to the content we put in our twenty-six pages each week: it also extends to ensuring that the paper is read widely. That's why as of last week, members of the Editorial Board can now be found handing out copies of the paper on Houghton Street on Tuesday afternoons. Whilst primarily an attempt to drum-up interest in the Beaver, our stall is also designed to help us engage with more people at the LSE. Come and have a chat, tell us what you think of our paper; we are open to criticism. Ultimately our backing comes from you, the student, so if you are not happy with what we produce each week, do tell us why. And, to cap it

all off, we'll try not to publish details of your sexual conquests.

Members of the Editorial Board may have no grave problems in the bedroom, but it appears that we have some difficulty in getting into our own office on a Sunday.

As described on page 3, the School's renovation of the Old Building has a rather malleable deadline. On Friday, students were informed that access to the building would not be forthcoming on the Sunday in order to complete vital construction work – concerning news for us, given our dependence on the fourth-floor sky bridge to cross over into the East Building. Needless to say, we made it there in the end, but not before engaging in some fairly heated discussions with personnel stationed at Reception. One editor was left standing outside in the rain for half an hour, while our position was clarified.

Builders' deadlines should be as fixed as the Beaver's own, and hopefully as solid as their walls. ☘

No shish, Sherlock

Tagged-on provisos against kebab shop unis: Michael Lok's campaign.

Collective

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The Collective is The Beaver's governing body. You must have contributed three pieces of work, or contributed to the production of three issues of the paper (editorially or administratively), to qualify for membership. If you believe you are a Collective member but your name is not on the list above, please email

Benedict Sarhangian

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Marketing Team!
Help get fresh Beaver on Houghton Street – join Mustafa and his Marketing Team.

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BEAVER PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT:

How to get a First

The Beaver has learned that many students at the LSE are unaware of the way their degrees are structured and classified. In a survey conducted for the newspaper, almost half of the people admitted to being "in the dark" about the ins and outs of the LSE degree.

The information is readily available in both the LSE Students' Union handbook and on the LSE website, but evidently in both cases it is not as obvious as it could be. As part of its commitment to informing our readers, the Beaver wishes to use this opportunity to highlight the relevant regulations.

The undergraduate BSc and BA shall be based on nine 'classification marks' comprising all second- and third-year module grades and the average of the top three first-year grades.

So, a first-year grade breakdown of 67, 69, 49 and 80 would give the candidate a first-year average of 72, and this would constitute one of their nine classification marks.

For second-year direct entry students (e.g. General Course transfers) the ninth

grade will be comprised of the average of the other eight.

For example, a student with marks of 58, 62, 60, 71, 69, 55, 70 and 67 would then have an overall average of 64, and this would count as their ninth classification mark.

The majority of LSE students know that to attain a 1st, 2:1 or 2:2 in the BSc and BA, students must attain five of a certain classification mark e.g. marks of 68, 69, 43, 67, 70, 66, 55, 58 and 59 would give the candidate a 2:1 as they have at least five such individual marks.

Fewer students know that there is another way of achieving the aforementioned degree classifications. If a student achieves four of a certain classification, then LSE operates an aggregate system that is designed to reward people with consistently high grades that for whatever reason miss out on the fifth classification mark. The aggregate is then the sum of all nine classification marks.

Under this system, for first class honours, students require either five first class marks; or four first class marks and

an aggregate of at least 590 (average of 65.6 per cent).

For upper second-class honours, students require either five upper second-class marks (or higher); or four upper second-class marks (or higher) and an aggregate of at least 515 (average of 57.2 per cent).

For lower second-class honours, either five lower second-class marks (or higher); or four lower second-class marks (or higher) and an aggregate of at least 440 (average of 48.9 per cent) is permissible.

For third-class honours, eight third class marks (or higher) are required.

For a pass degree: a pass degree will only be awarded as a result of three unredeemed module failures.

The Beaver wishes to apologise to readers who already know this information, but we believe it is truly surprising how many people are unaware of the system. It is important to note, as it can drastically change exam strategy or even module choice.

Benedict Sarhangian

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Election results revealed

Nathan Briant

On Thursday night last week, the Students' Union announced the results of its Michaelmas Term Elections to a distinctly empty Quad.

Daniel Kroop won the Postgraduate Officer position, and a salary worth £11,000, after an exhaustive process in which the whole election, originally fought by thirteen candidates, went down to an 11th round of vote redistribution through the Single Transferable Vote system.

After five of the twelve candidates standing failed to achieve more than 50 votes, Kroop eventually won with 284 votes to Asif Hussain's 222.

Kroop said after the election: 'It's a true honour to represent LSE's talented and diverse class of postgraduates. I am excited to get to work improving student life. My door in the Kingsley Rooms will always be open, and I'm looking forward to a great year, working with the other Execs to get things done.'

Fewer people voted in the Student Members on the Board of Trustees election, with 653 votes cast in total.

In round one, Gaurav Srivastava was elected after he received 254 first preference votes. After the second round of distributed votes, Khaled Shahin received 166 votes and was elected in second place. In the third round, Gabi Kobrin's 168 votes resulted in her being elected too.

Ashok Kumar, the Students' Union's current Education Officer, won the first round of votes for the Court of Governors with 319 first preference votes from the 703 people who voted in the election. After a fourth round of redistribution, Garnett Genuis won 215 votes, only 8 votes more than the next-placed candidate, Jack Tindale.

For the Academic Board elections, 596 ballots were received - Christopher Wilford, with 318 votes, was the first winner.

Philip Kenworthy and Azam Zafar, with 297 and 204 votes respectively, were also elected alongside Wilford.

566 valid ballots were received for the NUS Conference delegate election, and after a second round of redistributing votes, Eden Sweden Dwek, with 186 votes, was elected.

The Mature and Part Time Students' Officer, John Kenny, was elected without contest. He received 247 votes, while 101 people voted to re-open nominations.

The lowest turnout for any election was that of the General Course President. Only 116 ballots were received, and with 58 votes, after the fourth round of redistribution, Rohan Batra was elected, beating his nearest rival, Graham Brookie, by 12 votes.

The chosen few

Postgraduate Sabbatical Officer:

Daniel Kroop

General Course President: Rohan Batra

Student Trustees: Gaurav Srivastava,

Khaled Shahin, Gabi Kobrin

Court of Governors: Ashok Kumar,

Garnett Genuis

Academic Board: Christopher Wilford,

Philip Kenworthy, Azam Zafar

NUS Delegate: Eden Sweden Dwek

Mature & Part-Time Students' Officer:

John Kenny

Union Bashō

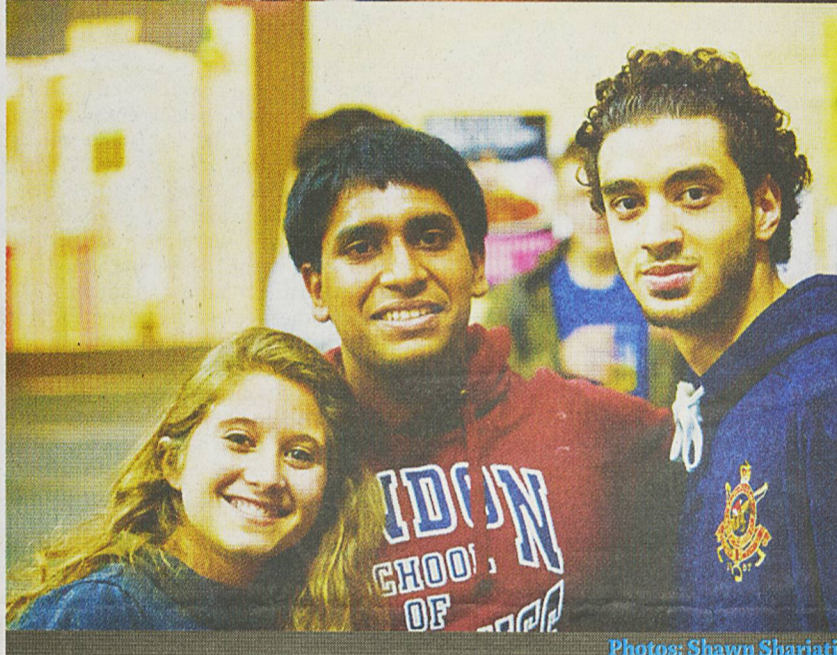
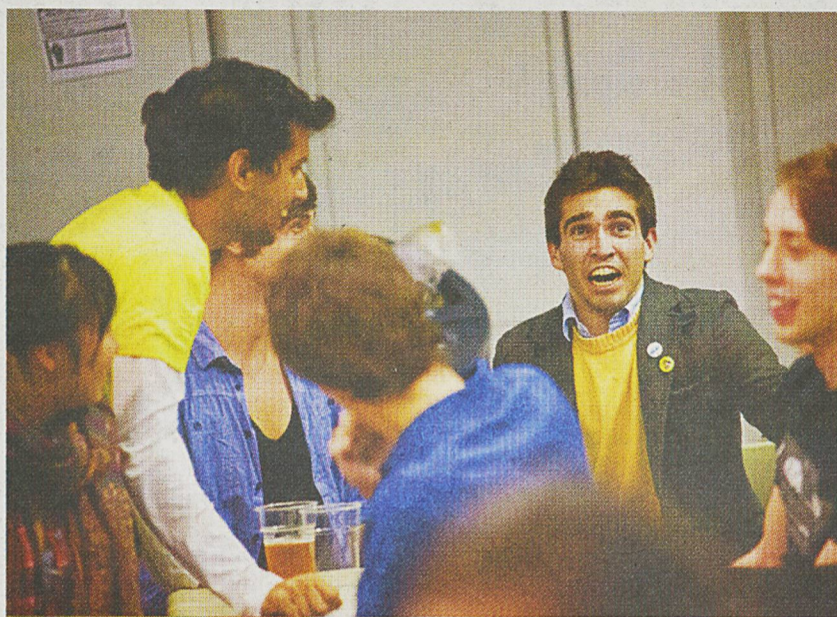
The Obama factor

Silver tongues vow change.

Will results dwarf their campaigns?

Let us hope they can.

Bashō is the Beaver's evasive haiku poet, filling in for Union Jack while he continues his road-trip through the western regions of Lesotho.



Photos: Shawn Shariati

News in brief

LSE STUDENT IS WEAKEST LINK?

LSE first year, Benjamin Butterworth, is set to appear on popular game show The Weakest Link next week. Following several auditions in May 2010 as well as two random general knowledge spot checks, Butterworth was selected as one of a handful of contestants. This is not the first time an LSE student has appeared on the quiz show. Varun Bhanot, a second year law student, appeared on The Weakest Link in 2009. On his experience, Butterworth said, "It was a game show; I lied, cheated and manipulated from start to end."

HOLBORN RAISES A RIOT

Saturday night saw police called to disperse a riot which was taking place in a disused building next to the LSE's residence at High Holborn. Over 50 officers arrived following a call, leading to 8 arrests. Alex Christou, a third-year Maths and Economics student at the LSE, who witnessed the riot, said: "There were SWAT teams and police vans everywhere. The street was filled with people, there were sirens coming from every part of the street and I didn't understand was going-on." Oliver Wiseman, a third year Law student who knew of the rave said, "I predicted a riot."

HIDE AND SIKH

Following a cultural jamboree conducted in Houghton Street, members of the Students' Union Sikh society were threatened with formal punishment last Tuesday. The society set out to engage with the wider community through the media of dhol, dancing and rap, but some passers by did not receive the event in the spirit in which it was intended. The party blocked Houghton Street and restricted access to the Students' Union, and the Head of the Accounting and Finance Department threatened to call the police. Mehek Zafar, a third-year LLB student, said, "noise and irritating people are a small price to pay for the cultural melting-pot."

A DAY AT THE RACES

LSE students attended Ascot, the world famous Horse Racing event, on a promotion from the BYCS (British Union of Snowsports Council). The BUSC had offered the opportunity to attend the event for free for students sporting a student card. The event held on Saturday 30th October, went ahead as planned. Students enjoyed the horse racing as well as fireworks and theme park rides. Some students expressed concern that the opportunity was not well marketed enough, as the only known marketing was a brief blurb published on the SU website.

RUGBY FIRTS INVICTORIOUS

Canterbury University was the latest in a long line of athletic but academically mediocre institutions to be demolished by the LSE's Rugby 1st XV this week. Following promotion at the end of last season, the LSE's finest have enjoyed outstanding success this year. This Saturday's demolition follows a twenty-nil victory over Hertfordshire last week. Mathew Box, who plays on the wing for the team, called the team's performance, "the finest series of sporting evens since Eddy 'the Eagle' discovered skis". This marks one of the most outstanding victories for the LSE Athletics Union this year.



GOT A SCOOP? BRIEF US...

The Beaver welcomes all students to contribute to the News in Brief section of the paper. If you feel that there is anything noteworthy on campus please contact us at news@thebeaveronline.co.uk

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One Economics student shared the same feelings: "The materials were very interesting. So everyone was like, why don't we give it a try. But as it's droppable, if there was anything we could give up releasing our burden it was LSE100. At the end of the year, we all got to a point where we were dying from revision. Also I guess we all signed up for the course with very little commitment from the beginning anyway."

At the same time, first-year students who will start their course in Lent Term gave diverse views on LSE100. Workload is one concern, for example: "I think it's unnecessary to add extra work load when it doesn't affect our degree," opined one International History first-year.

Concerns over time issues aside, many first-years think LSE100 is a useful course and look forward taking it. Some have suggested that it be an optional course instead. One first-year student of Actuarial Science commented, "I think it's a useful subject, but I still don't want to learn it as a compulsory course. We already have so much work to do."

Leape has said that he is addressing the issues that have been raised: "A comprehensive feedback, evaluation and review strategy has been in place for the pilot year, including Teaching Quality surveys, the Staff Student Liaison Committee, quick polls every week, focus groups and exit interviews. All of this feedback has been analysed extensively and a number of changes made in response." The Beaver has learned that, in response to students who have found reading outside of their subject area challenging, reading notes are being developed to accompany the reading packs. This is aimed to help students learn the crucial skill of selective reading for key information and glossaries may also be provided on Moodle for unfamiliar terminology.

As a result of the major educative value of LSE10 the team will enforce students' attendance this year. LSE100 will be just like any other course with compulsory attendance and academic advisers will receive non-attendance alerts.

LSE expands campus

Aimee Reise

The LSE campus is expanding and improving with the purchase of the Land Registry's Head Office building and the granting of planning permission for the New Students' Centre being confirmed this week.

LSE has purchased, subject to contract, the Land Registry's Head Office building located at 32 Lincoln's Inn Fields. The building has 85,000 sq ft and has been bought for the sum of £37.5 million. It was purchased in a bidding process, which is said to have attracted over 100 enquiries.

The Land Registry building is the first property purchase this year. It is said

that the new building will be utilised for academic purposes, although its exact use has not yet been decided. LSE stated that it was bought "as part of its gradual improvement and expansion of facilities for students and researchers."

The School expects to obtain vacant possession in May 2011 and will "undertake a light touch refurbishment" which it says is "impossible to say at this stage exactly how long will take - certainly a matter of months." The School is looking at the possibility of occupying the building in phases.

Students' facilities look set to improve further with the recent grant of planning permission for the New Students' Centre by Westminster City Council. The design by Irish architects, Donnell & Tuomey, will be built on the site of the current St Philips

building. Having now attained planning permission, the building is scheduled to be complete by Easter 2013.

The New Students' Centre will house the Students' Union, which is currently located in the Clare Market Building. Charlotte Gerada, General Secretary of the LSE Students' Union, is particularly excited about the New Students' Centre, which she believes will help to forge a sense of community despite the School's central London location. She describes the Centre as a place where "students can finally feel relaxed and rejuvenated in an open space which caters for all students, and in every way - from meeting friends for lunch, to engaging in multi-faith prayer, to having simple access to all welfare services - all under one roof."

Gerada continues, "LSE's SU welcomes the New Students' Centre as an important development - ensuring that student welfare services are delivered to the same high standards LSE prides itself on academically. Our current, outgrown home is very much a relic of the LSESU activity past. So, we eagerly await our new residence - a place where students can feel really connected as an LSE community."

The School is aiming for the building to achieve a BREEAM (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method) rating of 'Outstanding' with a contractual requirement of 'Excellent'.

Meanwhile, the Old Building is still undergoing refurbishment after several delays that have been traced back to the architect. It is not yet known when the Old Building will be open to students seven days of the week. However, one of the contracting assistants commented that he did not think it would be for another month.

The LSE campus currently consists of approximately 30 buildings. Following the 2009 purchase of Sardinia House and Ye Old White Horse public house, these two new projects continue the improvement plans to LSE's campus.



St. Philips building, due to be demolished
Photo: Beaver archives

LSE receives Royal treatment

Prince Andrew bestows free visit upon LSE

Gurdeep Chhina

His Royal Highness Prince Andrew, the Duke of York, visited the LSE last Monday, 25th October. The Duke explored aspects of the School's most cutting-edge new research and discussed pressing trade issues with Students' Union societies.

On a visit intended to provide him with an understanding of the inner workings of the School, the Duke learned about LSE's research activities through a number of videos. He was given the opportunity to explore a wide range of research projects, including the work of Professor Martin Anthony of the Department of Mathematics ('Mathematics of Machine Learning') and Professor Eileen Munro of the Department of Social Policy ('A New Approach to Child Protection'). Research at the LSE was one of the core interests of Prince Andrew's.

Later in the day, the Duke sampled a lecture from the flagship course LSE100 entitled 'Is population growth sustainable?' LSE100 is intended to give students a flavour of the variety of disciplines studied at LSE by exposing them to topics outside of their degree course. The course is currently being piloted on volunteers, but from next term it will be compulsory for all first-year students.

The Duke, who serves as the UK's Special Representative for International Trade and Investment and has recently concluded a whirlwind tour of Asia, also held

discussions with selected members of the Business, Emerging Markets, and Entrepreneurs Societies. The members invited to meet Prince Andrew were not given full details of the meetings in advance and were told not to publicise the event to the wider society membership.

Among the students given the opportunity to speak to Prince Andrew was Rikesh Haria, President of the Emerging Markets Society. "He was interested in knowing what exactly we did as a society, and after that he posed some very searching questions such as, 'Who exactly defines which country is considered an emerging market?'"

"He also asked whether a country that is emerging can get stuck in the emerging phase forever," said Haria.

Summing up the Duke's approach to the visit, Haria stated, "He was not 'royal-formal' as one might have expected, but instead 'business-formal' in attire and courtesy."

One student who was around LSE at the time that Prince Andrew was touring the School stated: "I couldn't understand why such a large group of security and body guards had assembled on campus. It was only later that I found out that they had been accompanying Prince Andrew on his visit to LSE. It would have been great if I had known that he was visiting LSE!"

At the end of the Duke's visit, he attended an appropriately-themed luncheon on 'The UK and world trade'. The luncheon was attended by an exclusive group of LSE staff and academics.

"Why should taxpayers' money fund private institutions?"

continued from page 1

Mary Evans, centennial professor at the LSE, noted in the Guardian that in considering the option of privatisation, we "have somehow forgotten that all private sectors of any society exclude."

Charlotte Gerada, General Secretary of the LSE Students' Union, said: "The founders of the LSE were committed to social justice and critical in the formation of the modern welfare state."

"It comes as a shock that the LSE would even consider going down the path of making LSE a for-profit institution with no obligation to follow HEFCE [the funding council] regulations to cap fees, increase widening participation, or provide bursaries."

What drew most remarks was not the actual option of privatisation, but the idea that this was even being considered. Ashok Kumar, the Students' Union Education Officer, stated: "It is shocking. When the highest decision-making body of the university, of 25 members, meets once a month for an hour, discusses in-depth the benefits of going private behind closed doors, it means far more than simply 'surveying the financial landscape'."

"The founders of the university are turning in their graves at the direction this university has taken."

LSE alumnus, Joe Sammut, who was involved in the LSE: Not For Profit - a campaign which held that Mr Davies was

running the LSE as a business rather than a not-for-profit university with ideas of public duty - added: "The fact that this is being raised by the governing body confirms the criticisms that students involved in LSE: Not For Profit were making last year."

"This is that the LSE is set on a trajectory away from the intentions of its Fabian founders and the needs and wants of its students and staff. Privatisation is impossible to reconcile with aims of widening participation."

Not all students reacted as seriously

- Third-year economics undergraduate Vivek Kotecha offered a balanced perspective: "I have been pleasantly surprised by national press interest in the story. The issue of whether elite universities like LSE should privatise is an important debate which press coverage with hopefully stimulate."

"The fact that this is even an option now shows both how the ideals of the university have changed and how the state of politics in the UK has changed, for better or for worse."

The screenshot shows the BBC News website interface. The main article is titled "LSE rejects privatisation claim" by Angela Harrison. The article text is partially visible, discussing the LSE's stance on privatization. To the right, there are "Top Stories" and "Features & Analysis" sections with various news snippets and images.

Kumar promotes pelting politicians at UGM

Chris Rogers

This week's Union General Meeting (UGM) considered motions opposing Government's spending cuts and the surveillance of overseas students, and appeared to advocate pelting politicians with snowballs.

Though there was no mention of the "Freeze the Fees" campaign, posters for the 10th November demonstration to "Stop Education Cuts" were prominently positioned.

Following the usual trend of the UGM, the Sabbatical Officers delivered their summaries of the preceding week. Three core announcements were delivered that were of keen interest to the UGM audience. General Secretary Charlotte Gerada announced that the New Students' Centre had received planning permission, although she aired disappointment that it will not be completed until 2013, meaning that most students currently at the School will not be able to use the facility. Charlie Glyn, Activities & Development Officer, then informed the meeting that the LSE had been nominated by the Islamic Society for a Global Peace and Unity Award, which it had subsequently won. Ashok Kumar, Education Officer, addressed the news, first revealed in the Beaver last week, that the LSE Council had mooted privatisation. Kumar suggested that the mere fact that they were discussing such a proposal was "dangerous". He then drew attention to Chris Huhne's visit to the LSE on 2nd November, and encouraged members to protest against government cuts by throwing faux-snowballs at the visiting minister.

Concerns over the encouragement of pelting objects at a leading politician were raised when the floor was opened for questions. One questioner wondered if this meant that the Students' Union was effectively "condoning assault". In response to this allegation, Kumar commented that the balls would be made of foam and stressed that "they were not going to hurt". Nevertheless, a second question was raised, with third-year Social Anthropology undergraduate Stanley Ellerby-English asking whether

the Students' Union should not instead be encouraging people to engage in reasoned debate. Kumar responded that this was merely part of "a diverse range of tactics" and assured the UGM that he fully encourages "people to come and debate" with the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, as well as throwing snowballs at him.

A motion proposing that the Students' Union commit to TUC demonstrations against the spending cuts was the first to be debated. The proposers, laid down the challenge that the government has a range of options other than the current "austerity drive", for example by collecting the £15.2 billion of tax evaded each year, or by cancelling the Trident replacement. They warned that the government's cuts would lead to areas being "socially cleansed".

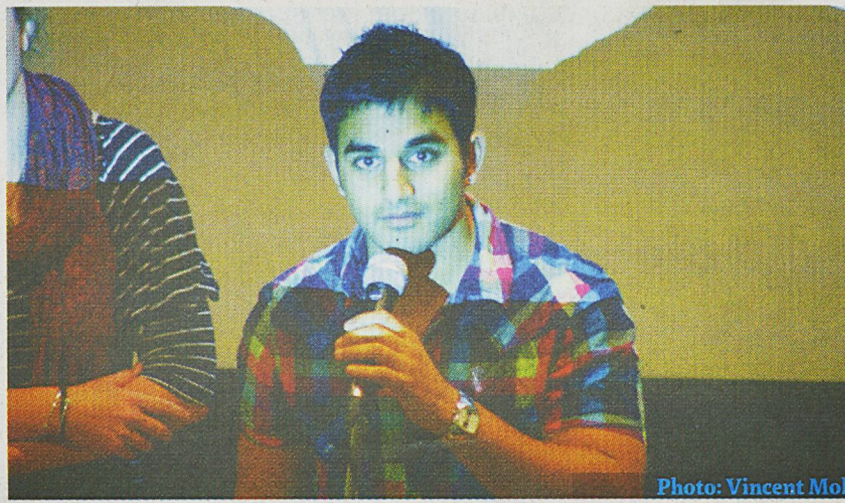
The first opposing speaker asked that the Students' Union not be drawn in to supporting what she called an overtly political, "quasi-socialist policy". Though the opposing debater agreed that some cuts should not be made, believing that they are ideologically driven, she asserted that many of the cuts must be made out of necessity.

The 'Students Not Suspects' motion was finally debated this week, with Michael Lok, the Students' Union International Student Officer, proposing. Lok hoped that passing the motion would bring to prominence the issue of overseas students being treated as "suspects" and

having their activities monitored by their teachers. The motion also hoped to gain Students' Union support to oppose the immigration cap imposed on students hoping to study in the UK. In response to questions about what will follow, Lok said that the next stages are up to the students and that the campaign hopes to work with the Students' Union and prepare for the weeks ahead. There was some confusion regarding the campaign's stance on so-called 'kebab-shop universities'; Lok asserted that the campaign should not look to support students enrolling at bogus universities in order to gain work visas.

UGM motions are now voted on using the Students' Union's website; the procedure requires at least 250 votes to be quorate. Unfortunately for those presenting this week's motions, neither reached this threshold, thus votes registered will not translate into an actual result. The transfer to online voting was a contentious issue in last year's constitutional reforms, with many students believing the change would reduce participation. The abeyance of these motions as a result of low turnout would appear to confirm these fears.

Next week the UGM hosts Sir Howard Davies, Director of the LSE, who will outline plans for the School and report on recent developments. There will also be the opportunity for questions by students - he will undoubtedly be pressed by elements of the audience about his position on tuition fees.



US criticised for their 'Invisible War'

Bethany Clarke

Last Thursday the LSE welcomed Joy Gordon, Professor of Philosophy at Fairfield University, who discussed her book, Invisible War. The event, organised by the Middle East Centre and the Southwest Asia and North Africa (SWANA) Research Seminar Series, part of the LSE Department of Anthropology, saw the author present her research findings.

Joy Gordon spoke on the content of Invisible War, discussing the devastating effect of the economic sanctions imposed on Iraq from 1990 to 2003. She considered this to be the result of the United States' ability to project power through the United Nations Security Council in order to enforce "the cruelest sanctions in the history of international government" and "devastate the health, education and general well-being of most of the Iraqi population."

Drawing from her research in archives, minutes of closed meetings, and interviews with government officials, Professor Gordon strongly condemned the United States' actions. She argued that the humanitarian consequences were "known and recognized" by its politicians. Gordon revealed the level of attention that was given to "crippling Iraq" by presenting the audience with a list of items that were blocked under the sanctions. This included raw cotton, blood bank refrigerators, fire trucks, water tankers, glue, sewing needles and all other items that were deemed "dual use", or capable of being used by the Iraqi military. She argued that the United States, blinded by the singular preoccupation of the possibility of Iraq rebuilding its military, "undermined all of the humanitarian efforts" of the Iraqi government and the United Nations.

Regarding American political objectives, the Professor stated that she believed "it was literally never about getting compliance, but a kind of boundless punishment". This was enabled by "an utter indifference" and an "utter reduction of the value of human lives to zero worth" by American politicians.

"We have good reason to be disappointed with International Law", Gordon

continued, arguing that in the case of the Iraq sanctions, "atrocities have been committed by the very institution charged to prevent it." She stated, "it is not that America is innocent, it is that International Law fails to account for this kind of culpability." Joy Gordon described America's actions as an example of a single nation hijacking an institution of international governance, claiming that their sanctions on Iraq were a display of "the legalisation of atrocity."

It is unsurprising that Gordon's harsh indictment of American actions struck a note with her audience. As the event moved into a question and answer session, an audience member condemned Gordon for being "too kind on American politicians". This was a statement that Gordon immediately refuted, and expressed her regret that her perspective continues to be that of a minority in the United States.

Audience member Valentina Zeparia told the Beaver that "it was quite scary" to discover the extent of the sanctions and their effect on the quality of life of the Iraqi population.

"It definitely opened my eyes to the detail of atrocity imposed by the sanctions", said Josh Cooper, who admitted that he had "never been aware of the scale [of the destruction they caused]".

Professor Gordon's speech not only opened eyes as to the cruelty of the United States' sanctions on Iraq, but also brought to attention a major flaw in the organisation of the Security Council, which Joy Gordon speculated, "might be an entity out of control." She argued that the ability of the United States to have its agenda performed as part of global governance without punishment can only be considered a failure of the system of International Law.

One student, studying first year Government and Economics, commented: "The talk was enlightening. It was interesting to hear about the lengths that the US government went to in their attempt to disable Iraq."

Professor Gordon certainly made an impact on her audience at LSE, who were left with a common resounding question regarding American actions: "Are there no limits?"

Sen honours LSE's Professor Desai

Aman Sahni

Last Thursday, in front of a large audience, and in the company of distinguished guests including Amartya Sen, LSE Global Governance celebrated the work and legacy of its founder, Lord Meghnad Jagdishchandra Desai.

A panel of scholars including Professor Charles Goodhart, Dr. Amartya Sen, Dr. Purna Sen and Clare Short assembled to discuss his work and legacy. The chair for the event was Professor Mary Kaldor, current Co-Director of LSE's Centre for the Study of Global Governance.

Now in the year of his 70th birthday, Lord Desai has taught at LSE since 1965. He was created Lord Desai of St. Clement Danes in 1991, and subsequently established what was then known as the 'Centre for the study of Global Governance' in 1992. Lord Desai has played an active role in British politics through the Labour Party. He has served as Chairman and President of Islington South and Finsbury Constituency Labour Party, and has written several significant books, including the widely acclaimed *Marx's Revenge: The Resurgence of Capitalism and the Death of Statist Socialism*, published in 1992. His research interests include economics, international political economy, economic history, South-Asian studies and globalisation.

Professor Goodhart, Director of the Financial Regulation Research Programme in the LSE's Financial Markets Group, recalled how he and Lord Desai began their work at LSE at nearly the same time. He expressed his admiration for Lord Desai's warmth and generosity, fondly dubbing him a "veritable LSE Budhha".

An avid patron of cultural studies and performing arts, in 2004 Lord Desai published his biography of Indian film star Dilip Kumar, which he describes as his greatest achievement. Dr Purna Sen, who was once Lord Desai's PhD student and

is currently Head of the Human Rights Unit at the Commonwealth Secretariat, discussed Lord Desai's work on cultural and artistic areas of life. She revealed how Lord Desai and herself shared a common interest in the writings of Bengali novelist Sharat Chandra Chatterje, and particularly in Chatterjee's epic novel *Devdas*. She concluded by lauding Lord Desai's efforts to 'step beyond the realm of academic discipline' in his pursuit of justice.

Former Secretary of State for International Development (1997-2003) Clare Short, a Labour Party colleague of Lord Desai's, then thanked him for his "honest thinking contribution to the life of the Labour Party". She warned that the world is heading for "enormously turbulent times", and highlighted the shortcomings of global governance at present. She spoke of the challenges ahead and the need to embark on a journey for change together; a journey in which she said Lord Desai's wisdom would be invaluable.

The final panellist, Amartya Sen, shared fond memories from his now 47-year friendship with Lord Desai, which started in Berkley, California. The Nobel laureate recalled how Lord Desai has always challenged conventional beliefs and embraced activism by narrating several incidents during the length of their friendship. He closed his speech by expressing how 'privileged' he has been to know Lord Desai for almost half a century.

Lord Desai then thanked the panellists and everyone present for their attendance and their tributes. He spoke briefly about segments of his experiences and academic life at LSE, including the motivation for establishing Global Governance. He finished by candidly suggesting that there should be another celebration when he turns 80.

Several students in audience agreed that the event was very enjoyable and reflected the likableness of Lord Desai. Aditya Sinha, an MSc at LSE, said that "the life and work of Lord Desai has been truly inspirational and it was a pleasure to learn of it tonight".

Jesús de Soto pays tribute to Hayek

Andreas Kuersten

Last Friday Professor Jesús Huerta de Soto, of the King Juan Carlos University of Madrid, delivered a lecture at the LSE on the recent financial crisis and economic recession. The event, hosted by Professor Tim Besley of the LSE Economics Department, was held in honor of the work of former LSE Professor and 1974 Nobel laureate Friedrich von Hayek.

Professor de Soto holds doctorates in both Economics and Law from the Complutense University of Madrid and an MBA from Stanford University. He is considered by many to be one of the principle exponents of the Austrian School of Economics, which is largely influenced by Hayek's ideas, and some of his notable publications include the books *Money, Bank Credit, and Economic Cycles* and *Socialism, Economic Calculation, and Entrepreneurship*.

Professor de Soto began his analysis by attributing a great deal of responsibility for modern financial problems to the Bank Charter Act passed on July 19th, 1844 in the United Kingdom. This was a landmark act that sought to eliminate the boom and bust cycle of markets caused by artificial credit expansions induced by private banks which were financed not by savings but by fiduciary media issued in large amounts. In essence, credit granted without reserve backing. The Bank Charter Act required 100 per cent reserve backing for banknotes issued. Yet it did not address demand deposits, which is money created just on the books of banks but which are still part of the money supply. Banks therefore diverted their business from issuing banknotes to demand deposits and thus circumvented the act's requirement for total reserve backing.

This sort of financial business has continued, unaddressed, since then and resulted in a six-step process which led to the recent financial crisis.

Firstly, consumers are not encouraged to save because banks can issue credit without significant reserve backing. De Soto commented that the lack of savings means that demand for consumer prod-

ucts remains high which causes producers of these products to compete with one another for the means of production. This, according to de Soto, causes a rise in prices of these means.

The second step results from an increase in the price of consumer goods at a faster rate than that of the means of production due to consumer producers having to compete so vastly for them.

De Soto identified the third step as accounting profits rise in the companies closest to final consumption of products by consumers due to the rising prices.

The fourth step occurs as the Ricardo Effect takes hold, an effect meant to occur in an environment of savings and reserve backing to allow production to shift from consumer to capital goods to keep jobs and wages and consumer goods production becomes more expensive. Instead real wages decrease so companies hire cheap labour rather than investing in capital to replace labour. Price of capital decreases and further decreases profits of firms further from consumption.

The fifth step is an increase in the interest rate as growth stagnates. Step six then comes as companies farther from consumption incur mounting accounting losses and investment projects are liquidated.

After identifying these three critical steps, de Soto commented that their growth ceases and the receivers of banks loans are seen to not be able to pay them back in which case the banks are discovered not to have the reserve backing to absorb and handle the losses. The banks are shown to be bankrupt and the central bank must step in to stop the collapse of the financial system.

In response to this situation Professor de Soto suggests austerity measures to decrease government need for money and then a reduction of taxes on firms which need to concentrate on paying down debt. All levels of the market also need to be liberalised in order to facilitate easier transition by companies between different sectors depending on profitability.

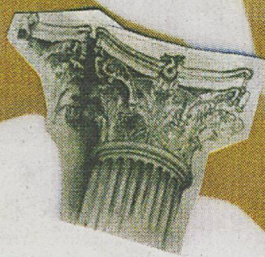
De Soto also outlined a three step process for recovery and prevention. To begin with, the demands of the Bank Charter Act

must be put into law but this time applying to demand deposits and all transactions. 100 per cent reserve backing must be required in all banks dealings. The next step is to get rid of the inherent socialism of our current financial system by getting rid of central banks. They succumb to all of the inherent problems of a socialist system noted by Austrian School of Economics scholars. De Soto acknowledged that they are too large and unable to keep track of myriad dealings and types of dealings done by financial actors, follow changes in supply and demand, and are based on an enormous amount of privilege being given to private bankers who engage in fractional reserve dealings. They cannot coordinate the system.

The final step involves privatizing the source of money and replacing modern paper money with the classical gold standard which would ensure 100 per cent reserve backing.

One of the more interesting questions put forth by the audience was a challenge to the reversion of the financial system to once again being based on the gold standard despite its links with the Great Depression. Professor de Soto responded that it was not the gold standard which led to this crisis but the actions of private bankers in seeking to subvert this system by ignoring it and undertaking fractional reserve transactions. The gold standard system was simply blamed when it failed due to these actions by bankers because it was the system officially recognized, even though it was not being followed.

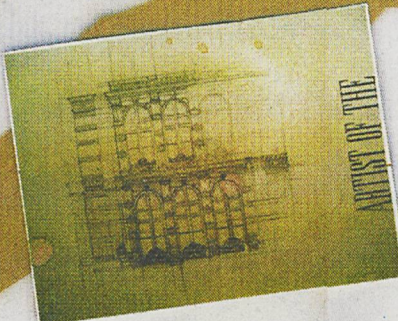
Through his lecture Professor de Soto offered some very radical changes as solutions to the current financial crisis which were quite well received, the audience applauded them loudly. This was exemplified by spontaneous applause for the suggestion of returning to the classical gold standard. De Soto presented his arguments very passionately and, overall, they were received very positively by the audience.



"MARRIAGE IS THE WASTE-PAPER BASKET OF EMOTIONS."
-SIDNEY WEBB



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CLARE

Live music takes aim at racism

Conor Rushby

On Tuesday night, the Love Music Hate Racism (LMHR) campaign came to Houghton Street. The 'gig' was organised as a protest against far-right groups such as the British National Party and the English Defence League. It featured artists 4i2i, Dubstep Pigeon, IntensiT and Big Cakes, as well as an LSE student.

Over 100 people attended the event, raising £200 for the titular charity. £150 of this sum was donated personally by the Students' Union Anti-Racism Officer, Ben Grabiner. Event organiser Emma Clewer said, "It had a really great atmosphere with people sitting down at the beginning watching the acoustic acts and then getting more involved nearer the end."

The LMHR campaign was set up in 2002 "in response to rising levels of racism" and built upon the 'Rock Against Racism' movement launched in the 1970s. The movement argues that "Music is living testimony to the fact that cultures can and do mix. It unites us and gives us strength, and offers a vibrant celebration of our multicultural and multiracial society."

The event builds upon a strong history of anti-racism events and campaigns at the LSE, which boasts the most multi-cultural student body in the United Kingdom. In 1967 the school was the location for numerous demonstrations, sit-ins and hunger strikes protesting the appointment of Director Walter Adams. Adams had previously lived in Rhodesia, and was accused of being complicit in the white minority rule there. In 1983 LSE students also succeeded in stopping Enoch Powell, known for his "Rivers of Blood" speech.

A larger Love Music Hate Racism carnival is being organised for 6th November at 12PM, on Malet Street, which will feature acts such as Lowkey, Flowdem and Drew McConnell of Babyshambles. The Students' Union also plans to hold another LMHR event next term.

Entrepreneurial spirit alive at the LSE

Poorna Harjani

Sparks, the inaugural LSE Entrepreneurship Conference, is expected to welcome students from continental Europe when it takes place next Thursday.

The conference, which is entirely student-run and is scheduled for 11th November, has allocated almost all of its tickets, and some of the 200 students in attendance will be travelling from as far afield as Germany.

By applying lessons of business to the development of the Conference, the Sparks team have organised an impressive panel of speakers, including LSE alumni. In the first steps of raising capital, devising a marketing strategy, pricing model, and even focusing on corporate social responsibility, organisers the Students' Union Entrepreneurs Society have gained much prominence at the School.

Ben Wigoder, President of the Entrepreneurs Society said, "Any student from anywhere in the world can come, with early bird and professional tickets which give better seating."

The Sparks team have identified a niche in the career market for LSE students by drawing attention away from the dominating nature of banking and consultancy. The conference is set to host a broad range of speakers, industries and generations of successful entrepreneurs in their respective fields. The day includes four keynote speakers and two panel-discussions;

main speakers include Edward Way, the founder and Chairman of Betfair; Lord Karan Bilimoria the founder of Cobra Beer; John Bird MBE, the founder and Editor-in-Chief of The Big Issue and Mike Care, the founder of Dreams.

Students will be able to seek industry-specific advice from risk takers such as Edward Way, who famously made a transition into entrepreneurship having worked at JPMorgan. Mike Care

will be available to offer his insights on starting a business from scratch.

Sparks evolved from a group idea and took nine months of perseverance by writing and calling the offices of each individual potential speaker and sponsor. Wigoder said: "From running a society for the first time, I realised people don't actually know what their skills are, and often they're better at something they didn't realise."

Sparks also worked closely with the LSE Office of Development and Alumni Relations (ODAR), stating that they were very helpful in securing key speakers such as Saajad Jetha and Christian Busch, two entrepreneurs. With a strong marketing team, the conference caught the attention of Sir Howard Davies himself, and the Sparks team were invited to speak

to Prince Andrew on the nature of their conference.

Wigoder made a comparison to the Alternative Investment Conference, an annual fixture for geographically diverse students, stating: "Although the idea of Sparks is very different, the AIC showed that students are interested in attending society-led conferences."

Wigoder added, "The conference is very interactive with 40 per cent being based on Q&A. We wanted to do additional workshops but we just didn't have the resources."

Funding was among the difficulties that the Sparks team has faced, with the LSE's Annual Fund expressing enthusiasm about sponsoring the conference; however, the deadlines had already passed. Wigoder said, "We had to

constantly re-write the budget; we were on a shoe-string budget." Sparks' main sponsors are Women in Business, Pulse and 1eat, allowing tickets to be priced at an affordable £27.

Sparks' marketing strategy also includes all conference attendees receiving a free membership card to the 1eat Student Dining Club, which gives students discounts at hundreds of restaurants in London. Attendees will also be provided breakfast, lunch and refreshments throughout the day.

The Sparks team have said that profits will be donated to the Microloan Foundation which provides women in Sub-Saharan Africa with small loans to help them establish and run their own entrepreneurial businesses.



Entrepreneurs Society members meet with HRH Prince Andrew
Photo: Ben Wigoder

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Comment

George Osborne: start smiling

Why the Conservatives should start enjoying their cutting of the state

Sam Williams



I might be wrong, but at the heart of the government's Comprehensive Spending Review, there appears to be an injustice. It's not easy to spot—reams of verbose documentation and intricately-worked figures rarely help with clarity—but nonetheless, I think it is there. What is it though? Is it to do with the tens of thousands of public-sector jobs that are expected to be lost over the next four years? Maybe it has something to do with cuts to universal child benefit payments? Is it, perhaps, related to the emaciation of funding for higher education and the accompanying results of the Browne Review? No, none of these. It is that throughout the whole process of the review—in the build-up stages, in its presentation to Parliament, and now it is being sold to the public—George Osborne has not been allowed to smile.

The official line of the Conservative Party regarding the cuts is one of regret. Tory whips have, since the presentation of the review last week, forcefully and urgently impressed upon their MPs the idea that the party doesn't want to make these cuts. It is only doing so as a matter of unfortunate necessity, as a means of rectifying the damage done to public finances by the reckless spending of its predecessors. Every announcement has been made with funereal sombreness. A casual observer might, on viewing this spectacle of reluctance, believe it. That George Osborne hasn't been allowed to smile is wrong—is a sad reflection of the fact that the coalition has failed to provide a positive case for the cuts. The overwhelming assumption in the sphere of public discussion over the last six months has been that the cuts are entirely regrettable, and that their only benefit is as an instrument to the reduction of the structural deficit. But this is not an accurate reflection of Conservative sentiments. It is an unfortunate truth that the insidious sprawl of the state over the last 13 years

has turned the traditional conservative vocation of state-bashing into something of a political faux-pas. Never mind that the arguments in favour of 'rolling back the state' are numerous and compelling—the persistent spread of government's influence under Labour has successfully rendered such arguments automatically antagonistic to public feeling. By being force-fed government, we have to come to like it. This fondness is only illusory. The coalition should see this, and quickly lose their inhibitions about making a positive case for their budgetary revolution. The next time Osborne announces a cut, he should permit himself a grin.

The point is that Conservatives within the coalition are wary of appearing as anything but reluctant axe men, for fear of vindicating their opponent's claims that the cuts are 'ideologically driven'. But cuts being ideological ought not to be a problem in the first place—and Conservative politicians (the Liberal Democrats might have a tougher time of it) should not be afraid to spell out reasons why they think a controlled shrinking of state is a good thing. The grand plan for a Big Society is predicated upon a smaller, more restrained state. The empowerment of civil society and the tendency to localism that it entails is only possible in a context wherein government influence doesn't permeate into all areas of social life. A smaller government, with fewer pointless and peripheral agencies and bureaus, frees up space for community action and private enterprise. As Burke wrote, love for our 'little platoons' is what bonds us to our broader social structure. A smaller government that focuses its spending in core areas will still perform its fundamental functions, but will simultaneously breathe life into these desirable, but currently moribund, little platoons.

Big cuts to departmental budgets will also have the welcome effect of stimulating a drive for value and efficiency. A reduced welfare budget will force redistributors to make a proper distinction between those truly deserving of support, and those for whom generous benefits are a luxury that taxpayers shouldn't have to pay. A more surgical welfare state is in the interests of all; whilst not shirking its fundamental responsibilities of helping

the very poorest and most vulnerable, it will put an end to the unpleasant culture of reliance on state support that has kept too many people out of work for too long.

The Armed Forces, facing smaller than expected cuts, will still find themselves having to radically reformulate their broad

strategic and structural outlooks. Smaller but more flexible services will emerge, with a new emphasis placed on mobility and high-tech weaponry. Reductions in the Transport budget will, undoubtedly, hit commuters and other users of public transport hard. Is it too much to hope,

though, that new transparency and inevitable hikes in fares will force transport providers to improve their services in order to keep disgruntled travellers appeased? The same principles are true for all departments facing cuts. In the face of smaller budgets, minister will be forced to squeeze more value from less money. Government will emerge meaner, leaner, but almost certainly better.

Yet besides these sorts of ideological justifications for cuts, there is also a good, pragmatic reason for the coalition to set out their positive case. The longer that Osborne sticks to the line that they are regrettable and only serve the purpose of reducing the deficit, the more difficult he will find it to continue to justify them when growth does eventually pick up and the spectre of the deficit recedes back to the shadows of public consciousness. If, as is currently the case, both Labour and the government treat the cuts as a means to that end, but just differ on their notions of their correct pace and timing, when growth returns, Ed Miliband will have a strong case for pressuring the government to ease off. But in their hearts, Conservatives don't see the spending review solely as a means to this end. It would be a great shame if the coalition was forced to leave its project of radically reforming the size and nature of the state unfinished, simply because it was too scared to tell the public why cuts are good when it still had the chance. Moreover, by admitting that the cuts just might have some ideological foundations, the Conservatives will have set British politics up with a necessary and healthy Big State vs. Small State debate. If, after five years, the British public still aren't convinced with Tory arguments (assuming that Lib Dems sit on the fence), then at least the next Labour prime minister will have a decent claim to public support when they embark upon the process of re-bloating government.

So at the heart of the Spending Review is an injustice—a Conservative politician, given a once-in-a-generation opportunity to hone the state down to an appropriate size, is not allowed to look like he's enjoying it, when, secretly, he probably is. This isn't right. So please, George, make your positive case for cuts. But, more importantly, smile while you're doing it.



George Osborne, spring 2010
Photo: flickr user altogetherfool

Eradicating discrimination

The Students' Union Feminist Society is spreading the message of diversity and equality

Alice Rawstone

Last week, the LSE Feminist Society had a stall on Houghton Street as part of our "What is Feminism?" campaign. With an entirely new committee (four women and two men), the society has had to build itself up, and from this perspective the week was a resounding success. Nearly one hundred people signed up to find out more about us and what we have planned for the year—and almost one third of those were male.

The diversity and enthusiasm of supporters was a hugely positive statement on the LSE student body, and was also a reflection of shifts in wider society. As increasing numbers of women and

men come to see that the idea of a post-feminist world is a myth, there is growing opposition to the apathetic or even hostile attitude towards a fight for equality.

This year we are setting out to make clear what feminism is, and why we support it. Being a feminist is not about adhering to false stereotypes of seventies activists, or even about being a woman. It is about believing in equality. People are individuals; it has been shown again and again that individual character differences and social environment can and do play a larger role in a person's development than the perceived 'natural' differences between the sexes. Gender, race, nationality, religion—all should be excluded from judgements on character and ability, and yet pervasive stereotypes continue to impact negatively on individuals and on society as a whole.

The problems caused by such deeply ingrained and widespread stereotypes are not hard to find. Doing the same value work on a full-time basis, women can

expect to earn 17.1 per cent less than a male; less than 20 per cent of members of the UK parliament are female, and in the UK's top 100 companies, just 4 per cent of executive directors are female.

On a global scale, just 1 per cent of the world's land and property is owned by women, and females make up 70 per cent of those living on \$1 or less a day. Women's lower status in many societies takes away their control over sex and reproduction; female genital mutilation is still practised on a huge scale in many countries, there are huge cultural barriers to the acceptance of contraception use, even in rape cases, and there is still no access to abortion in many areas—including the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

Whilst gender stereotypes are still so prevalent in culture and society, these issues, and many others, will remain a problem. In any way it can, the feminist society at LSE hopes to make a difference, and keep fighting for a world in which

Judgements on gender, race, nationality, religion - all should be excluded

the next generations will not be judged on their sex, but on their character and abilities.

Anyone interested in getting involved can email us or join the society through the student union website—and there will be plenty of opportunities to do so. As well as some social events—a party towards the end of Michaelmas term and a monthly book club beginning next week—we plan to get involved with the White Ribbon campaign (men working to end violence against women), to campaign against the cuts (79 per cent of which will directly impact on women), and to work closely with other student societies on campus.

The Goethe Method

How the issue of immigration is becoming more problematic across the western world and what should be done about it

Andreas Kuersten



I, like many, was shocked to recently hear German Chancellor Angela Merkel assert that attempts at a multi-cultural society in Germany have "failed, utterly failed." The immigration debate, mainly revolving around the country's large Turkish minority, has been escalating for some time with Chancellor Merkel's comments following similar ones made by many German politicians, academics and others from around the world. Yet this debate is not limited to Germany - it has been going on all across the West. The United States in particular is another state facing an intensifying immigration debate. Through these two scenarios one can see the main grievances involved in this widespread debate and I feel within one of these states there is already a method present which may prove quite effective in settling many of these.

Germany's situation arose mainly through its Gastarbeiterprogramm during the 1960s and 1970s which sought foreign workers to fill positions within the rapidly growing economy of West Germany. The local population was not able to keep up with the growth. Most of these workers came from Turkey. Initially rules of rotation and the bringing of family members were very strict reflecting the popular German position that these workers would only temporarily be in the country. Yet these regulations proved hard to enforce and were also seen as detrimental to worker moral and productivity. They were thus loosened. As a result a large Turkish minority grew and continues to grow within Germany with a present population of around 2.5 million.

The situation in the US came about in generally the same way: worker immigration. As the American population slowly grew more educated and urban they began leaving rural areas and agricultural work in large numbers. The US thus instituted its own Guest Worker Program, also called the Bracero Program, from 1942 to 1964 which sought Mexican guest-workers to fill these positions. The large influx of Hispanic immigrants also came about and continues because of the long border that the US shares with Mexico, the numerous legal and illegal methods of immigration which have sprouted up around it, and the continued demand for labour in the US. As a result Hispanics make

up 15 per cent of the US population and are projected to make up 30 per cent by 2050. In border states like California this is more pronounced with 43 per cent of California residents speaking a language other than English at home, the state no longer having a majority ethnic group, and Hispanics expected to be the majority as early as 2020.

The immigration debate is not limited to Germany - the United States is another country in a similar position

The main grievances in these two situations are incredibly similar. In both countries there is a white majority which has long held power which feels threatened by growing minority populations and influence. There is also a sense that the national language and culture is being usurped or somehow dissolved through the influence of the native cultures of these minorities. Westerners have come to want diversity but in the form of people who accept their ways and are simply from other places and who look different. As Slavoj Zizek wrote in the Guardian in an excellent article recommended to me by

a friend, Liberal Multiculturalism Masks an Old Barbarism with a Human Face, many desire a 'Decaffeinated Other', a superficial diversity. Minorities are also seen as immigrating simply in order to take advantage of the social programmes available in Germany and the US. They are viewed as a drain on the hard-working natives who ultimately pay for this.

Conversely, from the minorities' side, those who immigrate most often do so in search of work. They see opportunities not present in their native countries and are eager to take advantage of them. Often they stay with others of their ethnicity or nationality because of the potential shock involved in moving to a new country. They face strong social, linguistic and often religious barriers to acceptance in

their new homes. They are forced into the thick of things in a strange place and often feel much safer remaining in their enclaves.

How do we counter this situation? Foremost it must be accepted that the quest for integrated and well-functioning multicultural societies cannot be allowed to fail. There are no new continents to discover for people to spread out to in search of opportunity where they won't run into others. Western economies are also quite dependent on immigrant workers. They fill many positions which are often ignored and passed over by natives without which these countries would not be able to function at their high levels. Living separate but equal runs counter to the ideas of universal equality

and acceptance the West has championed and espoused over the last few decades so there is no other choice but to intermingle. To hear the leader of a prominent nation of the West make such a blunt proclamation as Chancellor Merkel did was truly shocking and regressive and represents a recent turn towards harsh conservative rhetoric of exasperation with integration attempts.

Overall, however, integration in Germany has been quite successful with the exception of small pockets. In addressing this situation there are also many avenues yet to be driven down. Along with a change in mindset, a renewed material effort must also be made. It is here that I feel Germany is already in possession of a potential answer to the immigration debate. The answer lies in the Goethe Institut. It was founded to create centres around the world which would give those in other countries the chance to experience German culture and learn the language. Through the Goethe Institut many have learned of and embraced the art, food, festivals and history of German culture. Not to mention the German language classes available through it. It serves as a beacon for friendly international cultural exchange.

This programme must now be turned inwards. These types of institutions must be built within Germany and other states facing immigrant dilemmas, especially near areas of high minority concentration. The frightening rhetoric espousing forced language proficiency tests, high-tech border fences and walls and other such things must be replaced with welcoming places which will show that, if presented kindly, cultural learning and exchange is something most will readily accept. Free language classes made available in such friendly environments run by instructors receptive to minority situations and troubles would be the starting point of rich exchanges. From this starting point culture and history begin to be more easily traded, friendships built and jobs more easily attained.

It no doubt sounds as though I am prescribing a simple panacea for a complex problem, and this is somewhat true. But I firmly believe that moves in the direction of a kind embrace between cultures can only serve to alleviate tensions and facilitate mutually beneficial integration and growth.



Gastarbeiter in Hamburg
Photo: flickr user Heinrech Klaffs

Striking across the Channel

Why Brits seem so negative about striking, but the French so keen

Hannah Payne



On Wednesday, the National Assembly of France voted, 336 to 233, the increase the retirement age by two years. This was the final piece of Sarkozy's pension reform bill for which strikes and protests involving millions throughout the country have been ongoing for several weeks. There can be no doubt that the French have staged some of the best strikes and demonstrations in the world but did anyone really expect for it to work this time around?

The pension reform bill, first put forward in July, is a major part of the plans of Nicolas Sarkozy for economic reform. Whilst the idea has never been popular as

both polls and the demonstrations show, it is difficult to deny that the country must have seen the passing of the bill as somewhat inevitable. Indeed, throughout the demonstration of distaste, the president has remained both consistent in his plans and confident of his success; and when we consider his attitude from the very start of his role in that he was no fan of yielding to the might of unions, this confidence is unsurprising. This confidence and policy seems to be coming at a serious cost both to the economy - €400m per day was the cost of striking - and his approval rating, which has hit record-breaking lows: less than a third of French citizens support of his actions.

The idea of pension reform is not something that has come as a surprise. Indeed, with the French expected to spend the greatest length of time in retirement of all the OECD countries and the vast majority of people relying on the state pension rather than any sort of private savings, the cost is vast. The question then, as is the case in many of these

situations, is who is to take the burden and what is most fair? And in a country like France in which inequality has been persistently kept low over the past couple of decades, a question of fairness is to be taken seriously. Of course, the meaning here is not that other countries do not take fairness seriously; in Britain I think that it is safe to say that we idealistically aim for a fair system. The significant difference between the two countries, however, is that we are much less likely to stand up for our beliefs en masse in quite such a passionate way.

Perhaps a pivotal role in this difference is that of the unions. The unions in France have previously exercised pressure and influence to positive effect on government, whilst unions in Britain were weakened greatly under Thatcherism. Maybe it is this that makes the difference between the French strikes and the British but I am more inclined to believe that it is much more to do with our attitude towards striking. For example, during the tube strikes earlier this month, the issue

When was the last strike in Britain that actually succeeded?

that was portrayed was that of the 'awful' experiences had by people failing to reach their destinations without a hitch rather than the treatment of the employees that had led to the strike. We can just assume they want a raise and continue to complain about the negative effects on us - it's not something to feel terrible about.

So, when was the last strike in Britain that actually succeeded? Certainly not in my lifetime, but it may have come to a point when taking action is not about success or failure but about taking that stand and making voices heard. After all, democracy should be about representing the will of the people and we have little chance if that will is never shown. Maybe then we should express it, take a leaf out of the book of the French and get behind the tube workers, London firemen and BBC journalists who are fighting for their beliefs and most of all fight for our own. A nice cup of tea and a sit down first though, eh?

Comprehensive blues

What the Comprehensive Spending Review looks to do to the country's education system and why it could be potentially disastrous

Hero Austin



Never having consciously lived through a Tory government, I have found the sense of dread at turning on the news an odd experience to get used to. It may be theatrical, but as the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) was being announced, I felt as if I were witnessing something momentous, and not in a good way at all.

At every level of education, the CSR lays out a series of cuts which do not look like the practical implementation of a government who is committed to a public education system. True, there are a couple of good suggestions, such as more free childcare for deprived children, but overall, it is an immensely worrying document. Moving through the education system, we find the following horrors:

At Secondary School: Labour's £55 billion Building Schools for the Future programme has been abolished, and the projects which have been allowed to go ahead are facing 40 per cent reductions.

My old school was brilliant in many ways, but its basic facilities left a fair amount to be desired. Given that it leaked, was so cold during winter that we wore coats in class, and that the hall was used as a canteen, drama classroom, assembly hall and sports hall, it was not always a perfect environment. There are many schools that are in similar states of overcrowding and disrepair all over the country, and under the Building Schools for the Future programme, they would have been

rebuilt over the next 20 years. As it is, the project will not go ahead and consequently the state of disrepair of those schools will accelerate, increasing costs in the long-term and ensuring that pupils continue to learn in environments which are far from ideally suitable.

At Further Education: The Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) is to be scrapped

80 per cent of those that receive the EMA are from households with an income of less than £20,817 per year. So when the Tories say that they want to scrap it in favour of a more targeted approach, it is difficult to see how this will save them much money unless, of course, they make the eligibility criteria more stringent. If they did, then looking at Scotland, we can see an example of the potential consequences. There, the budget for EMA was only cut by 20 per cent (rather than removed completely), but youth unemployment has risen by 7,000. When 65 per cent of participants on the £30 a week rate state that they could not continue to study without the allowance, it is difficult to argue that these changes to the EMA have not contributed to rising youth unemployment. It is outrageous that the government should scrap something like this whilst maintaining that they are committed to accessible Further Education.

At Higher Education: £4.2 billion cut from university Teaching Grants by 2013-14

Since the science budgets have pretty much been ring-fenced, humanities, arts and social sciences will be hit the hardest. Fortunately, the LSE only receives around £7 million a year from Teaching Grants, so even if it were cut entirely, we already make more than enough through non-core activities (such as charging ludicrous amounts for corporate summer schools)

to compensate. We will not be in an awful financial position that warrants rocketing up fees.

But at a national level, the implications are terrifying - institutions that rely on their Teaching Grant (as opposed to research grants or private income) will be hit immensely hard. And that is where Browne's recommendations come in: charge students more, he says, to plug the funding gap. Many ask, what does it matter, after all, universities will still receive funds, only from a different source. But less elite universities facing large T-grant cuts may well be unable to cover their costs through tuition fee increases. This is because they tend to have a larger percentage of students from lower socio-economic backgrounds, who may well be unwilling to pay that much. Undoubtedly, the CSR and the Browne Review harm those institutions that require the most support.

Moreover, these cuts to higher education demonstrate that the government is failing to see the subsidiary benefits and societal value of higher education generally - hence shifting the burden of cost almost entirely to the individual - and especially failing to recognise the importance of the arts, humanities and social sciences. The LSE should be at the forefront of standing up to these cuts because we know that social scientists educated at the LSE contribute to progress not only in our society but throughout the entire world. A focus on science and maths to the exclusion of other subjects is unbelievably narrow sighted.

A possible outcome of this level of cuts is a move on the part of several prestigious universities to privatisation. Cambridge is considering it and now we know it is not an impossibility at the LSE either. After all, when you sever the link

As the CSR was being announced, I felt as if I were witnessing something momentous, and not in a good way at all

between the state and the university by significantly reducing funding, then you remove a key incentive for top institutions to remain public. Osborne knows this - he is not entirely stupid - and it again shows that the CSR embodies an attack on our public institutions.

The link between all these cuts, especially when we look at the reduction in funding to higher education, is an ideological commitment to privatisation and deficit reduction. It is not only because they believe it to be an economic necessity, but because in a time of difficulty, the government has made its priorities quite clear: a progressive society and a public education system are far below, in fact almost opposed to, its commitment to a small state.

The real world impact remains to be seen, but when these cuts begin to transfer into stories, about the potential student down the road who doesn't go to college because there wasn't the financial support, or the universities that will struggle to stay afloat whilst the most prestigious consider privatising and consequently become increasingly inaccessible, it will be much too late. Right now is the time to add your voice and shout about the necessity of a well funded education system, from Early Years through to higher education and beyond into training at work. Join what looks to be the biggest student demonstration in the last 3 decades on November 10th, meeting at 11.30am on Houghton St.

Because, as my flat mate so eloquently summed up the Comprehensive Spending Review: "For a party that keeps going on about Broken Britain and social problems, they've really shot themselves in the arse haven't they?"

The ball is in Israel's court

If piece between Israel and Palestine is to be achieved, each side needs to take those first, real steps

Nadia Marques de Carvalho



Noble ideas of justice, controversial questions on settlements and the Palestinian right of return are topics being thrown to and fro by four men under a veneer of eloquent language. In the comfort of the beautiful Sharm el Sheikh, under the security of Egyptian and Israeli forces, under the direction of Hillary Clinton, four people yet again negotiate. Is this not the perfect setting for a typical Shakespearean tragedy: 'Much ado to talk about nothing'? The play begins. Look a little closer and you may see that young Palestinian girl, Imman al Hams, hiding in the reflection of the eye of the gun just before her body was ripped apart by 50 bullets, or perhaps you'll manage to catch a glimpse of that Iron Wall - built in the name of democracy, peace and secu-

rity which is actually a way of controlling the lives of Palestinians, reinforcing division, prejudice and discrimination. If you are lucky, under all the banter you'll here a snippet of those "legal" settlements in the West Bank where Jews live in luxury whilst only a few hundred metres away Palestinians are struggling on a daily basis. Sorry, I forgot to mention this is the set for the peace talks, the place for change.

Change will not be found in words strung together to produce a treaty, signed by leaders and applauded by the international community. Why? Because this treaty will not represent the views of the majority of Palestinians, those like Alia Shaheen who are more concerned with their worsening situation in Gaza, lack of electricity and inflation. So in whose name is he talking? In the name of Palestinians? What about the 1.5 million in Gaza where a majority support Hamas? Moreover for change to occur not only is it a gradual process but it involves the slow change of mentality, which comes with understanding. Understanding which one has not been found because there is no communication, communication which is hindered because of emotion: past traumatic events block rationale. Traumatic past events have led to an asymmetry of power: a strong and a weak side, a strong disparity whose gap needs to be filled to achieve a balance of power. With this balance of power comes some basic levels of mutual respect, and with this you go to the negotiating table. However, you do not go to negotiation table when you are not prepared to compromise nor when you do not intend to discuss with those who most disagree with you. It is easy getting someone who agrees with you to say they agree with you, after all whether it be Ireland or South Africa countries would never have achieved any solution had they not begun talking to those whom they did not agree with. If Hamas is not ready to talk, if Israel is not ready to compromise with Jerusalem or the illegal settlements, then it is the time for peace talks. The more failed peace talks we have, the more times I feel a sense of *deja vu* but also the stronger the feeling of distrust, disillusion and resentment by not only the Palestinians but by Israelis, and with this dangerous concoction of sentiments breeds resistance.

Resistance against each other. Resistance against communication. Ultimately,

resistance against peace. What is needed is not more summits but wiser decision making and risks need to be taken in hope of peace. Israel, being the stronger player needs to reach out with an olive branch - if it really wants peace it should show respect and one way to do so would be to not pass the "Jewish Loyalty" oath, relax the checkpoints, have a stronger sense of morality, permits for necessary products, such as cement, to enter Gaza and, of course, knock down the Iron Wall built in the name of everything immoral and wrong in this world. Naturally this is a gradual process, gradual for definite change. In essence, by raising the standard of living in Palestine the Knesset would be weakening the resistance, especially Hamas. This is of course an obvious strategy which should have been employed by the Israelis should they want peace, but then again this begs the point that the Knesset don't want to appear before Israel. Then again, in my eyes, this isn't being weak but doing what is best for your country in the long run. Peace between Palestine and Israel means a secure Israel, a lesser threat from Iran due to lower levels of support and an Israel which

isn't always at risk, where after centuries of persecution the Jews could live in relative peace.

The decision of how to proceed is Israel's. It is the stronger player, with access to money and power. It is time for Israel to change tactics and to make decisions which will define its history in the years to come, and as Obama put it, the politicians are 'all fathers, blessed with sons and daughters whose generation will judge them'. Politicians need to start thinking of a sustainable future, in the sense that Israel cannot be surrounded by enemies forever, America can only so far protect them, a time will come when Israel will have to stand on her own and preferably without the threat of escalating nuclear technology from nearby states. Like Jamal Elshayyal claims, "What is needed is tangible changes on the ground coupled with brave political decisions to speak and listen to the real players and stakeholders in this conflict."

However, the first step for change has yet to be taken, the olive branch has yet to be extended.

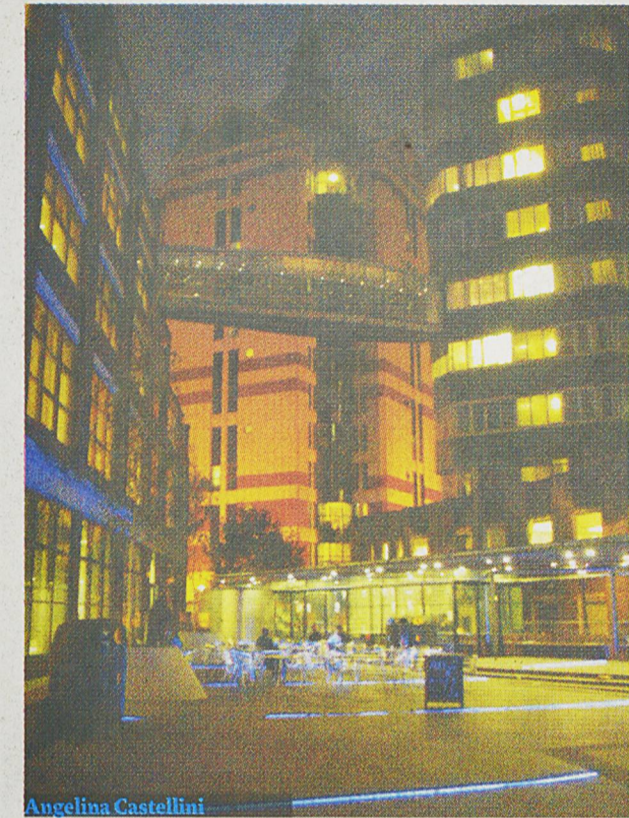
Again, letters, emails and potential article to the Comment email address, please:

comment@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Also, the Comment and Features editors will be on Houghton Street between 12-2PM on Tuesday afternoon, so please ask any questions if you're passing by.

Photo

BEAVERS GET ARTY... The Beaver photographers get free rein of the LSE campus.



Angelina Castellini



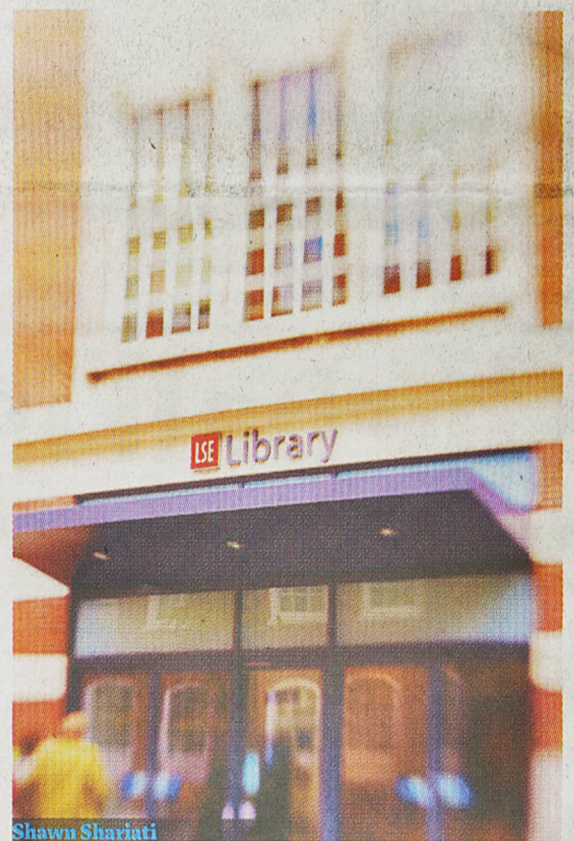
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Shawn Shariati



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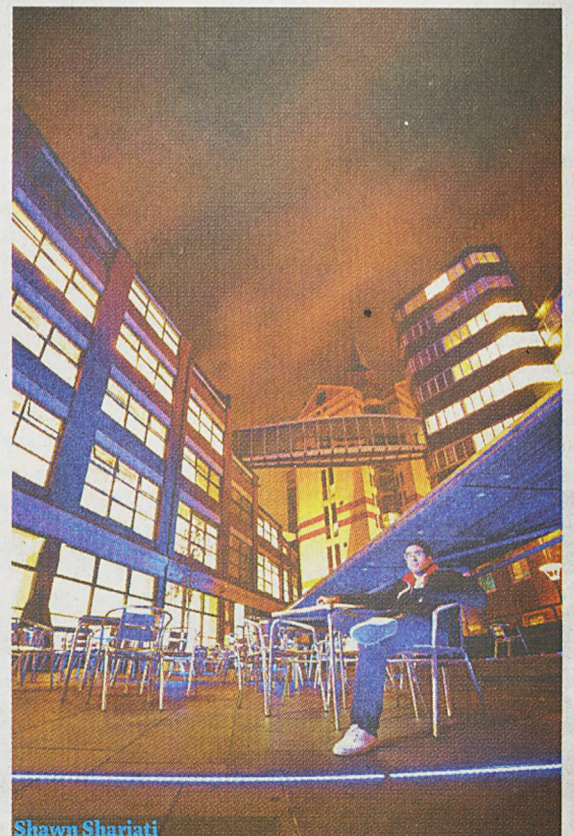
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Social

A Transnational Adventure

M.S. reflects on how five editors of the magazine 'Europe & Me' meet at the LSE



Ever wondered what happened to Europe's sex appeal? Five students at the LSE think they've found a way to bring it back - by looking beyond the EU and Brussels, and viewing 'Europe... as a state of mind'. Together with colleagues from across the continent Christian, Laura, Fabian, Johannes and Matt run an online transnational lifestyle magazine, 'Europe & Me', which does just that.

In four clicks a reader can travel from crazy 'European' English idioms, to a refreshing perspective on Muslim integration in Norway and London; from the story of a young entrepreneur who publishes travel guides to a hot little article on

travel sex. The magazines' mission is to introduce a personal, 'Me', side to 'Europe'. This is represented in each section as it corresponds to a part of the body - the brain for thinking, the heart for emotions, the diaphragm for laughter, the baby for Europe's erotic side, and legs for travelling and careers. Even the un-sexy institutions are getting to grips with this independent non-profit project, and in 2010, Europe & Me was awarded the UK Youth Prize by the European Parliament and Karlspreis Foundation.

In many ways, the magazine is a showcase of the global diversity found at the LSE. None of the starting editors were studying here when the magazine

was founded back in 2007, and the five students currently enrolled did not plan to meet at university. It just so happened that five of the seven current editors, hailing from Germany, Spain, and the UK, met (in many cases for the first time) as students at the LSE. Matt, doing his MSc in International Relations, describes the moment he met Johannes, (Msc Philosophy and Public Policy), as 'a revelation that the person who kept sending me angry emails about missed deadlines was in fact a really nice guy!' Now well acquainted, the two often have face-to-face meetings in the Garrick at 8:30 in the morning, or late at night in the tuns. As well as keeping in contact with editors in Sweden, Germany

and the US, they engage in the usual student gossip, coupled with brain storming sessions for new article ideas!

The LSE brought together this diverse group of people, and so when it came time to launch the next big 'Europe & Me' project, a film documentary called 'A Transnational Adventure', it was clear that it would be the LSE, and not any other university, that would host the party!

'A Transnational Adventure' is a documentary that begins when Matt was dropped off into an unknown location in Europe, with 10 days and £50 to find his way to Munich airport and catch his flight home. Convinced that he was being dropped in Eastern Europe, Matt was shocked when he got off the plane in Haugesund. Not sure which country Haugesund was in, exactly (Norway, for those of you who don't know either!), he was forced to ask the air hostess where he was! What followed was over 2000km of hitchhiking, sleeping in abandoned railway stations and beneath bridges, and a severe lack of warm food. His adventures, and interviews taken to capture the 'face' of Europe, were recorded by faithful E&M cameraman Tim Smith-Laing, who swore he 'will never do this again.. not even if you paid me this time.'

On the 18th November the Quad will host the Launch party for the first episode of this ongoing online series. Reflecting on his travels, Matt said that 'It was hard, tiring and rough, I hope the filming reflects that. Would I do it again? Maybe... once I finish the Masters program'. But even with the pressure of the LSE's academic work the group don't plan to slow down. Fabian describes the E&M project as a 'passion' and really sees the LSE 'as a great opportunity to have as many new people and ideas involved as possible'. With this in mind they're looking for new authors to write for the magazine, published every three months, and will soon be expanding to a new blogging section to look at Europe as a 'live' network of ideas and experience.

LSE has brought these students together and now you can meet the team! The celebration will combine drinks, live music, and an exclusive showing of the film 'A Transnational Adventure'.



The Launch party will take place in the Quad, 7.30-11.00 on Thursday 18th November. Tickets, will be £3 and can be purchased in advance. To view the magazine log onto www.europeandme.eu.

Me fail English?

Anirudh Menon on the challenges of speaking Hinglish

Sitting beside an aged Brit on a ten hour long flight to London can be really interesting if you ask the right questions. I obviously took the initiative and struck up a rather humdrum conversation, and he answered every question with a strong conviction that England was a fine country regardless of its lousy and erratic weather. The Englishman had an elegant accent, the sort that was stiff upper lip and replete with disdain. I've always been captivated by the Received Pronunciation but it is a pity that the world doesn't think the same about the Indian accent.

The Republic of India does not have a national language. It did however try to make Hindi its national language, in the 60's under the guise of 'unification'. This was not taken very well by the citizens of Southern India who lashed out against the 'Hindi Imperialism'. As expected there were massive riots and this led to English and Hindi being conferred the status of 'official' languages. The Indian education system is a relic of colonialism and is largely (especially at the post-secondary level) conducted in English. So most of the students are taught both English and Hindi throughout schooling, but English by and large has been the Lingua Franca for most. It is a minority language, but yet a language of national affairs.

One of the reasons I felt compelled to write this article is because I had witnessed an act of blatant racism on the Tube; a group of Indians had entered the train and occupied vacant seats opposite two middle aged men who were

creating quite a ruckus with their paroxysmal giggling. The Indians were talking in their native tongue and the men found that very amusing. So they started provoking the group by imitating Apu from The Simpsons. The Indians kept smiling and responding with the typical 'nod'. Their parting jibe to the Indians when they got off at the station was 'Gaandu' - which means asshole or a dim witted person in Hindi. It hurt me to see the look on the faces of those men when they brushed aside that affront with a 'let it go'. What really pissed me off was that one of the offenders was of African descent. I was enraged and literally felt like smacking their faces. I'm sure that he would be the kind of person who often takes credit for what the previous generations had gone through to get him the freedom he enjoys today - which he is now quite clearly abusing.

Women don't swoon over the Indian accent. It isn't like the Irish brogue - 'so rich and sweet' nor does it have a reputation of being romantic like the French. It is unique in its own right. I always thought that if you pronounce a word as it ought to be pronounced, with the right enunciation, your accent automatically sounds refined and the listeners will be able to comprehend your speech without much difficulty. Sadly that isn't true when it comes to our accent. There are a few sounds which we aren't trained to produce. Most Indian languages aren't tonal but low pitched and rhythmic. This when complemented with stronger vocalic sounds would end up sounding unintelligent, inelegant and silly.

Following the Received Pronunciation (The Queen's English) is not exactly feasible back home, because you are bound to be ridiculed by everybody. So to blend in, we avoid any alteration of our accents and prefer using native-tinted English, which could be Hinglish (Hindi+English), Manglish (Malayalam+English), Tanglish (Tamil+English) et al. The constant mixture of a regional language with English would always result in these peculiar intonations.

Regardless of the comical accent most Indians have a rather strong foundation in syntactical rules and grammar usage. I've had a chance of meeting students from various countries in this short time in London, and I'm not really surprised at the fact that South Asians have a remarkable mastery over this language.

The rapid ascension of the East is corrupting the language. It might be the language of the Sciences but officials and academics agree that the general proficiency of the language has been declining over the years. "Everyone is breaking the rules and being creative about how to use English," said Rukmini Bhaya Nair, a professor of English at the Indian Institute of Technology in Delhi.

The world is moving towards multilingualism and away from bilingualism backed by English. We might just get comfortable with the reduction of the complexity of our language to suit our transitory needs. Let us hope that in the future, English doesn't share the same fate as Sanskrit and Latin.

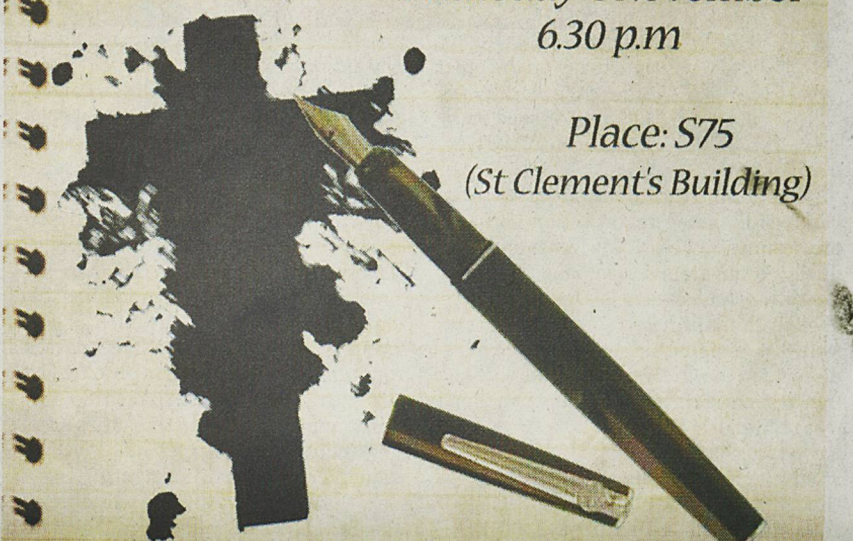
LSESU Atheist & Humanist Society

Speaker: Keith Porteous Wood
Executive Director of the National Secular Society

Is it legitimate to have publicly funded faith schools?

Thursday 4 November
6.30 p.m

Place: S75
(St Clement's Building)



LSE Diary

Angelina Castellini in Newfoundland

“Have you ever seen my home, a place you may not know, have you ever walked the street of only bars? Have you ever seen my band, Have you come to Newfoundland, if you've never, would you ever see my home?”

I was neither born nor raised in Newfoundland, but I can safely say that the country has a very special place in my heart and the song by “At Ships End” hits the nail on the head. Every time I return to St. John's, Newfoundland's capital, I feel like I'm coming home from a year-long vacation. For those of you who think I am stuck in the age of discovery and referring to the whole of the American continent: Newfoundland is an island to the east of Canada. It is the most friendly and welcoming place I have ever visited and it is a bit of a tourists secret.

Downtown St. John's has a distinctly jolly feel to it because the houses all have different colours. Walking through the streets of the city is a pleasure where most people walk with a smile on their face. If you show the slightest interest in crossing the street, even if you are nowhere near a cross-walk the cars will stop and let you cross.

I like to be where the action is, and yet be able to get out and enjoy some peace and quiet. St. John's combines my two needs perfectly. It is a city for the crafty with its many art galleries and venues for concerts. During the summer there are countless events, most of which are open to anyone who wants to participate. I particularly enjoy the 24-hour art-marathon, the Busker's Festival, the Lantern Festival and the Folk Festival. Most of St. John's bars have space for local musicians who play everything from rock to folk, and dancing is encouraged. Speaking of bars,

the annual George Street festival challenges people's ability to walk straight at the end of the night.

When I go to Newfoundland I turn into a night-person. As much as I enjoy going on adventures during the day, there is a lot that can be said about doing this at night. The haunted house hike is an exciting way of getting to know the “dark” side of the city. A guide in period dress took us through St. John's at night, retelling many horror stories and other folklore. Cabot Tower in Signal Hill National Historical Park, Canada's second largest historic park, is also an eerie building, well worth a tour. During the day the view from the tower across the harbour is beautiful, during the night it is otherworldly. Newfoundland's scenery is comparable to Scotland with its hills and coastlines and its web of hiking trails. I am not an experienced hiker, but Newfoundland has trails for everyone. I could not choose a favourite, the walk around Signal Hill, the East Coast trail, or maybe one of the walks deep into the unspoiled woods which make you feel like you are walking through a Bob Ross painting. Every trail in Newfoundland takes you on a different adventure; while some lead to breathtaking viewpoints, others reward you with blueberries, crystal clear lakes, and maybe even the odd moose. The coastline walks are worth a try too, for a view of the cliffs and it is probable that you will see icebergs and humpback whales at certain times of the year. For those interested in a closer look there are puffin and whale watching tours. This two hour boat tour brought me closer to nature than I ever expected. I have seen a whale skeleton in an aquarium before and thought it enormous, but when a full grown humpback whale was diving only a few metres under our boat I had to hold my breath. I was stunned by the elegance of the biggest

species of animal in the world.

The Trans-Canada Highway takes you from the East Coast to the West Coast and I recommend taking at least a week or two to discover the quirky communities and natural heritage sights along the way. The signs along the highway are a laugh and a half when you pass Conception Bay, Bacon Cove, Come-By-Chance, Heart's Content and many other humorous and delightful towns. On my way across I stopped at Cape St. Mary's Ecological Reserve to see the old lighthouse and the big 300-foot-high rock jutting out from the sea covered in seagulls and other birds. I could hear, see, smell and feel the birds. Apparently the latter brings luck... and stains on my jacket.

Newfoundland's wildlife is preserved in a handful of national parks. Terra Nova National Park and Gros Morne National Park are definitely worth a visit.

Rated as one of the top travel destinations by the National Geographic, Newfoundland may not be such a tourism-secret for long!



Little Jordanian in Big America

Rasha Touqan studies abroad - twice!



“You realise that Oregon is actually on the other side of the world?” my father had asked on the phone, all the way from Jordan.

To put things in context, I was embarking for a semester on a study abroad programme in the U.S. My father had finally gotten around to looking at a map, long after I had already left for Oregon. Vaguely thinking it was somewhere in the Midwest, imagine his surprise when he discovered the Oregon was all the way on the West coast. I was closer to Japan than I was to Jordan!

I was lucky enough to begin my study abroad experience with what I thought was a little bit more knowledge than my English counterparts. I wasn't

awestruck by American football and actually didn't go to a single game. I had seen enough American sports films to rule out American football as strange, nonsensical and a bit boring. But that was my personal opinion - A whole nation would disagree with me. I thought I would go into it knowing everything. After all, I did go to an American High School. I was spoon fed American culture through the multitudes of fiction that I read and films that I watched. I even liked indie music. I don't mean Kings of Leon or whatever passes for indie nowadays. I mean obscure little American and Canadian bands. So, I was fairly confident that my transition into an American university would have been smoother than that in England.

Surprisingly America was different to what I had imagined it would be. Maybe

it was Oregon. Or maybe it was the fact that it was so far away. Since I went to a liberal arts college, I was faced with full frontal exposure to hipster culture. My English university experience was more diverse. There was a bit of everything. You had your internationals, academics, Christian youth group types, goths, rockers, geek, AU fanatics and so on. They were never cliquish though! Everybody mingled quite well, which is what I imagined that the university experience entailed. Yet, most of the people that I met initially in America were predominantly hipsters or cheerful athletic types who loved to go hiking.

Also, many Americans had different social habits. British culture is so keen on acquaintances. You meet someone once and have a conversation with them, and

they will still muster some sort of greeting even if you haven't seen them in three years. Americans were different. They are definitely friendlier on initial meeting, but tend to take longer to warm up to you in the long run. Also, the British are quite keen on their socializing. Americans tended to prioritize based on their actual workload.

Eventually, after scratching the surface, I met some wonderful and interesting people. And there was no lack of interesting experiences either. When it comes to food, Americans have a variety of concoctions. It's not often that you can say that you tried beer bread (bread made out of beer, believe it or not) or Mexican pastries. And I got to go to a corn maze and take a picture in the middle of a pumpkin field, which was my touristy American goal. I think the strangest experience was the bakery that sold intentionally Phaellic pastries.

I visited other states as well. I got to see Colorado, which reminded me a lot of Jordan in the winter. It had the same kind of dry coldness. It was freezing, but with little rain and even less snow. I saw Washington and got to go to the Space Needle in Seattle. It may not have been the Alton Tower experience I was expecting, but it's something that needs to be done, like the Empire State Building.

Overall, it was a rewarding experience. People always think it's funny that I studied abroad. They always comment, “But you're already abroad!” Nonetheless, it was a giant leap of faith, to start over in a new place all over again. I know quite a few people left after their first couple of weeks; they missed British Cadbury chocolate and Galaxy too much. It was definitely empowering to go through that process twice. Although I didn't think so at the end of my journey when the worst snow storm in 40 years hit Oregon and I almost didn't go home. Queuing up to get onto the next plane was definitely my most “interesting” experience in the land of wonders that is America.

THE BAG-PACKING BLOG

Poonam Chopra's 48 hours in Berlin

Berlin, often referred to as a “poor, but sexy” city is the political and cultural capital of Germany. The entire city can be covered in 2 days with a little bit of time management coupled with proper guidance.

Day 1:

Breakfast at 'Plus Minus Null' and a walk down Karl Marx Allee to catch a glimpse of architectural facades of the Stalinist era. Don't miss the East Side Gallery, where you can view the Berlin Wall.

Enjoy a bratwurst/currywurst as a sample of true German street food. Drink a cup of coffee at Einstein Café. Marvel at the iconic Brandenburg Gate (Brandenburger Tor) at one end and the beautiful architecture of the Berliner Dom, Humboldt University, and the Staatsoper at the other end. Visit the Holocaust Memorial

Be sure to visit the rooftop terrace of the Reichstag for stunning panoramic views of the city.

Day 2:

Breakfast at 'Keyser Soze' and soak up the architectural splendor of the Neue Synagogue, a monumental Jewish establishment of Berlin.

Walk around the famous Potsdamer Platz area and visit the Sony Center to witness the striking dissimilarities between East and West Berlin.

Walk down Friedrichstrasse, a major cultural and shopping street that was formerly bisected by the Berlin Wall. At the very end of the street, you'll find yourself in the Turkish enclave of Kreuzberg. A visit to Berlin is incomplete without a Turkish meal, so prepare yourself for a Mediterranean feast at Hasir Restaurant.

Grab a quick in Prenzlauer Berg drink and engage in a night of culture with an opera or ballet.

PART B



Cheer up Mandy,
you're a star!

PartB talks to Hannah Rothschild
about her new documentary film,
Mandelson: The Real PM?

RADIO

Nick Clegg's
Desert Island Discs

FILM

Round-up of the
London Film Festival

FASHION

Fashion blogs:
XOXO

Restaurant Review: Brixton Cornercopia

Allie Fonarev finds culinary perfection with an ethical twist hidden in the depths of Brixton Market

After an enduring 30 minute multiple-line tube ride and a short walk past an array of small local shops and some large industrial structures, my friend and I commented that we were far from our now usual tourist-populated West End domain: we were in the 'real' London now. We reached the roofed outdoor Brixton Market and hungrily paced through the produce stands and African cloth ateliers until a khaki-clad Rasta smoking a pipe directed us to our hidden lunchtime destination. Jars of homemade spreads, jams, and pickled goods for sale lined the walls inside **Brixton Cornercopia**, and the pots on the tiny stove behind the counter steamed aromatically. Ian, the enthusiastic and candid co-owner, had just laid checkered napkins on the few wooden tables outside the tiny corner spot and pointed to the menu on the wall. It was easy to pick our grub: with a generously priced menu of only four dishes; we decided on the first three items. The olive sourdough bread and parsnip soup (£3.50) came quickly, creamy and piping hot. While the soup was fairly ordinary, the bread was freshly baked and you could immediately tell it was all made from scratch – and with no Tesco produce. Next came the mains, beautifully presented and looking scrumptious. Contrasting well with its crusty top, the duck cassoulet (£6.00), mixed with white beans, carrots and cheese, was moist and flavoursome. The real winner, however, was the roasted squash (£5.00); sliced and garnished with a delicious mix of salty sheep's cheese,

crunchy pistachios, sprouts, and onions, and sweet golden raisins, it was exquisitely soft with a little crunch on the ends. We dove into our food and didn't speak until the plates were cleared.

As we paid the bill of £14.50 (and our wallets sighed happily) and looked around inside at the variety of produce and freshly baked bread on the counter, Ian explained that the menu items change regularly, and that the restaurant and food store is increasingly becoming more sustainable. As much as possible, the food is locally sourced (that is, from as close as a 1-3 mile radius) or bought from the vendors in Brixton Market. If a rarer item, such as a specific fish, cannot be found locally, he'll ask the surrounding market vendors to order it into their store so that the end profit will go through the community. Proudly pointing to the sign on the door, he explains that every pound spent at his shop contributes 1.83 to the local community economy.

Overall, we left feeling full and healthy, and a little more ethical – and at £7.25 per person for a homemade two-course meal, nothing near LSE or in central London could compare. If you feel like exploring Brixton on a weekend, Cornercopia alone is well worth the trip.

Brixton Cornercopia, Unit 65, Brixton Village Market (Granville Arcade), SW9 8PS London. Nearest Tube and Rail- Brixton. Meal for two - around £20-25 excluding service. More information at <http://brixtoncornercopia.ning.com/>



Photo credit: Allie Fonarev

Fashion Blogs and Retro Togs

Alice Leah Fyfe steps into the world of the virtual and the vintage

YESROY, an online sustainable T-shirt brand born of LSE graduates Rowena Wyles, Cathy Druce and Adam Utting

What's your name(s) and where'd you come from?
We are Rowena, Cathy and Adam, and we come from the far corners of the British Isles.

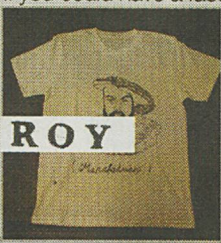
Birthday (of ROY): 17/9/2010

What's the story then?
It all kicked off last summer, when we finally decided to put an idea we had last winter into practice. Roy is a line of (hand) printed clothing. The t-shirts themselves are made from organic cotton, using solar and wind energy in a factory in India where the workers are on a fair trade-like scheme. All this means the carbon footprint of our t-shirts is approximately 90%

less than the average of 6kg per t-shirt. Good huh?
Where do your designs come from?
Anyone- people submit designs here (info@yesroy.co.uk) and if we like them we print them and the lucky designer gets a free t-shirt.

Where do you see yourself this time next year?
This time next year, Rodney, we'll be millionaires.

If you could have a face-for Roy, who would it be?
Roy is a faceless corporate giant. Where can I find you? You can find us (and Roy) here... <http://yesroy.co.uk>



The blog: overdone already? If "being a dickhead's cool" then blogs are certainly the most up to date bread and butter of today's communication and expression. Some may think that creators of these online diaries are self-indulgent or ostentatious, and you are right, some are; don't get me wrong, there are some absolute train wrecks of blogs out there. A bit too pretentious and uninspired, clichéd and self-important all at once. But if you search (not too) hard you'll find some gems.

food, politics, I can't help but wonder what the world wide web of communication will have for us in another 5 years. There is still a market for all the Condé Nast glossies of course, but the blog provides a medium to circulate real expression from real people with curiosities beyond the airbrush. ALF*

Some FAVE blogs..

www.drivingadelorean.com
www.frombetsywithlove.com
www.imz-itsalondonthing.blogspot.com

LSE's own:
Arrange, style, model or shoot your very own fashion editorial! The Fashion Society is looking for anyone in the LSE to pitch ideas for photo spreads and stories for Qualified (<http://the-qualified.blogspot.com>), the Fashion Society's official blog. If you're not the writing type, express yourself through styling and modeling! Whether you have your own team or if you need help from us, come to us with a concept and we'll help you make it happen. For further information contact Chu at c.t.ng1@lse.ac.uk

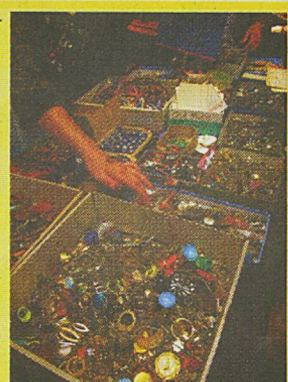
MAAIKE&YAN of www.lselookbook.blogspot.com scour the streets for the prestigious title of LSE's best dressed each week! So doll up girls and suit up guys we are on the style prowl, so whether you regard yourself as the GaGa of Houghton St; or the Gok Wan of Clement house we will happily invite you to divulge in fashion tales from the soul for all!

Chu Ting Ng went to Judy's affordable vintage sale

The London leg of Judy's Affordable Vintage Fair took place last Sunday in Bethnal Green. Vintage shop owners and enthusiasts from all over the UK gathered at York Hall, poring over the delightfully haphazard array of colourful pieces. Founded by Judy Berger, the fair began as a swap-shop and now the crux of the fair is to prevent price from limiting everyone's options, with an added emphasis on facilitating individuality in each shopper's fashion choices. Selling clothing, accessories and homeware since 2005, the items available at Judy's Affordable Vintage Fair originate from the 20s to 80s. With an entrance fee of only £2, the fair

makes enough to cover overheads and serve as level ground for all shoppers regardless of economic strata. Judy and her team ultimately seek to create a shopping atmosphere that is not only diverse, but also fun and unsurprising.

This year's London fair was well-attended, but thankfully not jam-packed due to judicious door management. With an even spread of dresses, separates, bags, jewellery, DIY materials and other accessories, there was no category left unrepresented. The vintage-conscious man will be glad to hear that this fair has no lack of range in male clothing and accessories, and ladies open to a spot of androgyny will definitely find this a great delight. As much as this fair is coined "affordable", shoppers should be warned that certain statement pieces may bust their pre-planned budgets instantly. For example, full-length fur coats, although



relatively cheaper at £60 to £100, would easily wipe out a significant portion of one's allotted shopping allowance. Judicious selection and resistance to impulse purchases are key skills for navigating all fairs.

Judy's Affordable Vintage Fair is currently expanding its reach, increasing both venue size and designer range. Higher end vintage items from the likes of Yves Saint Laurent, Ossie Clark and Christian Dior are being spotted increasingly often, giving every shopper a realistic opportunity at owning a timeless piece of designer history. For more information on tour dates, traders and general information on the fair, visit <http://www.vintagefair.co.uk>.



MY & U

Maaïke Mossel & Yan Giet
scout Houghton Street's best dressed



mustard, wool or tweed will find its way into her wardrobe, a style that she says is

inspired by "kitchen sink" films and plays of the 1960s, such as *A Taste of Honey* and *The L Shaped Room*. As you might expect, she maintains this unique look by frequenting vintage shops, but surprisingly not through the average channels: "The best thing to do is to source out vintage wholesalers and pretend you're a buyer for a vintage shop, or go to charity shops. Don't pay extortionate prices for vintage clothes!" Today however, she made full use of a resource much closer to home: her flatmate's wardrobe, whose tastes should get some credit for this outfit! The jumper, which is her own, is this winter's must-have item according to Kirsty, who offers some practical advice "Don't be silly wafting around in your Topshop crop top, you'll catch a cold, stick a jumper on for God's sake."

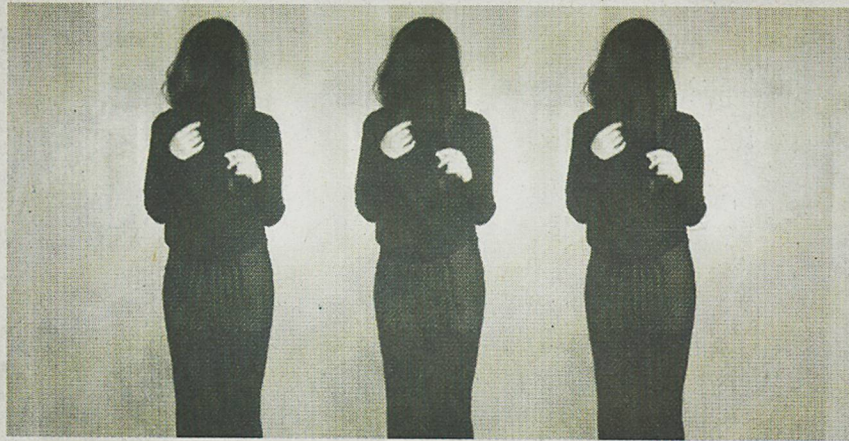
Rory; MPA (Masters Public Administrative) Programme Hailing from East London's burgeoning art scene that is Hackney Wick, Rory cites Bryan Ferry - of 70's Roxy Music fame - as the ultimate style icon that he models himself upon. For those of you who find Bryan Ferry unheard of, Rory kindly lends words to our imagination, "Think Glitter. Think

More Fashion Fairs this coming week!

www.clerkenwellvintagefashionfair.co.uk
www.secretssamplesale.co.uk

Blazers. Think Glitter Blazers! With such a potent fashion muse - it is no wonder Rory has managed to set himself apart from the dull sea of banker's beiges at LSE's campus - kitting himself out in a red lumber-jacket that subtly screams of LSE patriotism. Casually kicking his heels with masculine cowboy boots, Rory is the prime example that boots are not just designated for the set of *Brokeback Mountain*. In fact, I am positive that city-slickers will soon catch on to man-boots, lest they get left behind by their horse-riding counterparts. So where exactly does one acquire such astute fashion taste? "I recommend **The Secret Sample Sale**" at the Truman Brewery - it is the only place in the world where you can snap up a Burberry jacket for a tenner."





Witch? Drag? Chill Wave?

Liat Tuv finds defining the Witch House genre a real drag

One of the major news stories this summer was Lindsay Lohan's unfortunate (and brief) incarceration. LiLo's plight struck a chord within the internet community inspiring blog posts, YouTube dedications and online mixtapes: 'Let Me Shine For You', a collection of Lohan covers released by the Tri Angle label, was my first encounter with 'Witch House' (or 'Drag').

Based loosely around the output of labels Disaro and Tri Angle, this fast-growing genre has started receiving media attention with the recent releases of Salem's album *King Night*, oOoOO's first EP and Balam Acab's debut *See Birds*.

As a genre in its teething stage, much is under debate including the

name, what exactly it involves and whether it even exists. The latter question is redundant as Drag already has a devoted Wikipedia page.

How appropriate that the build-up of interest in Drag has occurred over the end of the summer and towards the coming of Halloween. One aspect is the unsettling feel and sickly lethargy: haunting, slightly mystical themes are inflected into weirdly wonderful band and track names like "+++" and the slightly ridiculous "GuMMY+Be+R!", accompanied by album artwork that is often chilling.

While the slightly gothic aesthetic is there - in the monikers, the artwork, the feel of the tracks - these slowed, bass-heavy sounds borrow more from Burial than Bauhaus. The focus seems to be more on messing with

samples and vocal tracks rather than creating some 'dark' subculture.

The artists that comprise the Drag movement all make use of varying and disparate sources. Rap and hip-hop influences can be heard from the likes of Salem, oOoOO and Stalker, with definite interests in pop as well (made evident by the fact there was even a LiLo mixture).

There are also groups like Modern Witch; reminiscent of cold electronics from the 80s, they sound like the kind of tracks Angular records released earlier this summer on *Cold Waves and Minimal Electronics*. Echoes of grunge can also be heard on their track "Can't Live in a Living Room", sounding like it crawled up from the roots of Nirvana's "Breed" - which, depending on how you look at it, is a botched or successful recreation.

This is the other main feature of Drag: the remixing and the sampling. These groups go beyond the production of simple covers and remixes, constantly editing each other's work. Soundcloud is bursting with tracks uploaded by Disaro, Tri Angle and a plethora of others.

It has now reached a point where a track can exist in numerous reincarnations before being released (if it ever

does), sometimes living out its short yet productive life on the internet. I say productive because each reinvention brings the whole collective of contributors together into a more cohesive 'genre'. Is this merely an indication of the real-time accumulation of data that shapes the way music is experienced in the internet age? Perhaps it is all part of a calculated creation - a 'genre', constructed.

That has been the accusation: some critics fancy themselves as the child who sees the emperor is naked. At one fell swoop, these critics condemn an entire global community as both conniving and stupid; one half mischievously spinning invisible thread for the other half to later proclaim with vacuous glee that, yes, those clothes are indeed magnificent.

These types of genres are often hyped up by blogosphere excitement, progressing at such speeds that one wonders whether the interest is genuine or the genre even real.

This is highlighted by the current success of Die Antwoord. Intended as a joke to highlight this blog-excitement culture ("taking over the internet"), they've become so successful the music press praises them even after being clued-in on the joke.

Pop-culture has reached such a heightened level of irony that no one is sure what is and isn't serious anymore. The question is whether it ever really mattered.

In a recent interview in *Dazed and Confused*, Heather Marlatt (from US witch-trio Salem) said she "would much rather someone be like 'What the fuck?' than like us because it's 'cool'".

Putting aside the irony that the comment was made in *Dazed and Confused*, Marlatt has a point. As far as I'm aware, none of the surrounding internet buzz alters the sounds coming out of your speakers and yet it seems to entirely alter how they are heard.

The problem with the whole 'blog-citement makes bad bands good' theory is that there is an equal danger of bands being written off too quickly for the exact same reason they are lauded, or perhaps because they are lauded in the first place.

In an attempt to take 'Drag' as it is based on the tracks themselves, I personally enjoy a substantial amount of the sounds being created. It's worth a listen if anything.

Concert: Eric Whitacre & London Symphony Chorus

Ingram Cheung waxes lyrical about Whitacre's 'Songs From America'

As a member of the London Symphony Chorus, I seldom get the opportunity to sit in the audience and listen to the Chorus. But because I came back to London in late September and missed a few rehearsals for LSC's "Songs from America" concert conducted by **Eric Whitacre**, I couldn't sing in the concert. Instead, I was given a free ticket and went two weeks ago to the Barbican for the concert.

Eric Whitacre is one of the most popular American composers and will no doubt leave his mark in modern choral music history.

Having previously sung a few pieces by him in the University of London Chamber Choir, I found his music very touching and effective (especially,

"A Boy and A Girl"). But the idea of "Sleep", an acappella choral music, being transposed for the 100-member Chorus and LSO's string orchestra seemed a challenging task. Nonetheless, Whitacre did so successfully while maintaining the almost soporific effects of the music.

The first half of the concert included songs by composers such as Aaron Copland and Morten Lauridsen, whose compositions shaped Whitacre's work. One of my favourites was the selection of Copland's "Old American Songs". The joyous "Ching-a-ring Chaw" juxtaposed against the calmer, more soothing "Long Time Ago", showcasing the ability of the LSC to sing in unity.

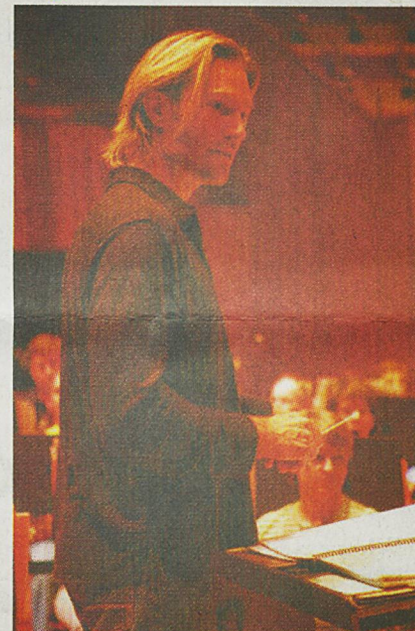
The world premiere of Whitacre's "Songs of Immortality" was perhaps

the most moving part of the evening. Influenced by Whitacre's own personal experience when his father went through a serious illness, he carefully chose poems by Emily Dickinson and Dylan Thomas and set music to "After Great Pain" and "Lie Still, Sleep Becalmed". The combination of words and music was melancholy yet strong-willed, reflecting Whitacre's contemplative views on immortality.

The highlight of the evening was "Five Hebrew Love Songs", the words of which was written by Whitacre's wife (Hila Plitmann) and composed by the man himself. Plitmann sang the solo with a soft but well-supported soprano voice - a pity the orchestra was a bit too *forte* when she later sang another solo, "Knoxville, Summer of 1915", by Samuel Barber.

One of the striking characteristics of Whitacre was how he intimately talked about the music: how the pieces had come about, and why he had chosen them. Whitacre's style of conducting was particularly 'easy' and this can be shown near the end of "Sleep", where he laid down his hands and let the singers go on ad lib repeating the words 'sleep, sleep, sleep...' until the sound diminished into silence.

My biggest regret of the evening was that I wasn't able to take part in the concert. Whether you are a fan of modern choral music or not, Whitacre's music will move you emotionally. *Listen to his compositions online (for free!) on his website: <http://ericwhitacre.com/>*



Desert Island Drivel Luke Smolinski checks out Nick's picks for Desert Island Discs



We confine Nick Clegg to a desert island, and force him to choose eight CDs, a book and a luxury item to take with him. I hear the thud of Lib Dems fainting across the country (from shock or elation, I cannot tell). Relax! Calm down! Grab a bottle of sherry and steady your nerves! It's only the premise for the Radio 4 series, **Desert Island Discs**. What will he choose? The First Cut is the Deepest? Puppet on a String? These were suggestions from the twitter-sphere, no less. Sadly, the list is much more mundane...

1. Chopin's Waltz in A Minor. You wonder whether Clegg had to have these checked over with Cameron, before he could go on the show. Clegg really wanted Jason Derulo, and Cameron really wanted Tinchy Stryder, so they compromised and went for Chopin. Clegg was going to choose War ("Huh! Hwah!") but got a text from Cameron saying, "I am fox is unhappy with this. unless u replace the line 'what is it good for? absolutely nothing' with 'national security, fighting terrorism and promoting a strong stable government'. soz man. xox"

2. Johnny Cash - Sunday Morning Coming Down. Clegg discusses his family. He has a Dutch mother, a half-Russian father and a Spanish wife. It is this xenophilia which prompted the Daily Mail to ask in the run-up to the election, "HOW BRITISH IS THIS MAN?" As a result, he speaks five languages. Five! Makes you wish you never dropped that French class.

3. Prince - The Cross. Clegg tells us he was born in 1967. He is 43. This is young for a politician. He grew up in Buckinghamshire, near Oxford. He went to Westminster School and then Cambridge. This makes him slightly less posh than Cameron.

4. Cesaria Evora - Petit Pays. Westminster School was his public school of choice. It's not hard to picture him there. There is something about Clegg which is distinctly schoolboy-ish. Perhaps it's the image of Cleggers polishing the boots of the Head Boy Cameron, perhaps it's the half-term haircut he sports; perhaps it's the way he says "fair". "Fairness" has always struck me as a soppy, infantile word, worthy of a tell-tale in the playground. If he'd only used the words "justice" or "morality" instead...

5. Radiohead - Street Spirit. Dutch is his first language. Double Dutch seems to be his second. The "kind of's, "bluntly" and "clearly's of Estuary English are all there. The abundance of the word "genuinely" is enough to make anyone suspicious. He also has an irritatingly tiny throaty cough which he uses to begin each sentence. It's like, every so often, he remembers he's in government with Osborne and wretches a little. You listen, he'll do it. "But I *kh*genuinely believe that these cuts are fairly fair but, to be fair, the fairest *kh*cuts in fairness..."

6. David Bowie - Life on Mars. Clegg was elected as an MP in 2005. Five years later, he is Deputy PM. "Meteoritic rise" doesn't even begin to describe this. He has one of those faces, like that of Tim Henman's,

where you look at it and just think, "face." You could run that face on *Crimewatch* every night, and no-one would phone in.

7. Shakira - Waka Waka. Steve Bell of the Guardian is closest when he points out his sad eyes. There is a look in them, not vacant but distant, he says, that reminds him of the boy in Bubbles - the Millais painting. The boy is gazing at a tender bubble, hopeful but a little sad, as if he knows what we know: it will burst. Charlie Brooker puts it best. "He's the coalition's own Pudsey Bear: a cuddly-but-tragic mascot representing the acceptable face of abuse."

8. Schubert's Impromptu No. 3 in G Flat Minor. A song that reminds him of his wife, Miriam. Clegg says he fell utterly in love with her the moment they met. At the time, he spoke no Spanish, and her English was awful, so they made do by speaking clumsy French for a fortnight. He said, the first two weeks, he had no clue what she was saying.

Book: The Leopard by Giuseppe di Lampedusa. Don't worry - I'm as clueless as you are.

Luxury item: Cigarettes. Well, well. Nick Clegg is a smoker. Who would have guessed? I mean, Clegg must know a thing or two about fagging, but still...

Nick Clegg's Desert Island Discs is available on BBC iPlayer now.

Chopin? A real Lib Dem would've gone with The Cheeky Girls...

A ROUNDUP OF THE BFI

For the final week of the LFF, PartB set out

Mandelson: The Real PM? Nathan Briant



Director: Hannah Rothschild
Runtime: 75 minutes Year: 2010

Although it is fair to say that Peter Mandelson has a chequered political past, he will go down in history as one of the most talented and influential politicians of the last couple of decades. As a key player in New Labour, when Hannah Rothschild wrote to him asking to record him for a documentary in the run-up to the last general election, the potential was huge. Sadly, although an enjoyable watch, the film didn't deliver everything that it could have.

Rothschild records from the end of autumn last year - the Labour Party are in the pits of despair; Gordon Brown was leading the party into electoral doom, and it is clear that Mandelson, whatever his gaffer-taped relationship with Brown from 2008, knew it. At one point, we learn that Mandelson and a couple of insiders considered the whole general election campaign 'futile' and 'fucked'.

The film continues in this vein: it is telling and works well but it isn't revelatory - something that I wanted more than anything, particularly with Mandelson now well out of government. And though Rothschild has made clear that Mandelson has had no editorial control, she is relatively charitable with the documentary footage she uses. Indeed, though she said she did not use more explosive moments because she felt it would have upset the overall balance, more explosive footage would have been extremely worthwhile - particularly when a fair amount of the film is made up by Mandelson travelling on trains and reading newspapers.

The audience knows what Mandelson is like even before the film - they know his past; they know of his resignations - but, regrettably, we fail to see much of his private life. The most intimate, telling footage we see of Mandelson is him either handing a finished yoghurt pot to an aide, when he takes his trousers off as he changes suits, or when we see his dog urinating up a lamppost. It is surely ironic that, Peter Mandelson, a strong driver of the personalised politics trend in British politics, is not willing to divulge his whole life to the camera.

The most rewarding footage in the film is the reaction to the Prime Ministerial Debates in Manchester, Bristol and Birmingham - it captures the claustrophobia and humour of those events particularly well. There is something rather thrilling about Alastair

It works well, But Mandelson: The Real PM? isn't revelatory

Campbell and Mandelson's reactions to watching Gordon Brown on a monitor behind the scenes.

But, for all its faults, Rothschild's work is definitely both valuable and enjoyable. Inevitably, it will be worth more over the years to come, when the possible "Mandelsonian" influence and impact has had time to mature, and when politics inevitably will have taken a turn in another direction; nevertheless it stands up well already.



Peter Mandelson, musing on what to wear for the premiere

Pink Saris Aameer Patel



Director: Kim Longinotto
Runtime: 100 minutes Year: 2010

In *Pink Saris* British filmmaker Kim Longinotto (*The Day I Will Never Forget, Rough Aunties*) presents us with a tale of women oppressed in an all too similar fashion, thousands of miles away from the 'aunties' of Durban.

The discriminatory caste system is outlawed in the constitution of India, but it remains an unavoidable part of life for millions in rural parts. As is often the case, being of a particular gender intensifies the problem. A daughter is often seen as a curse in these parts.

Like the landscape, Longinotto's film is stark. Music is sparse. The mostly handheld shots are highly personal, but at times maintain the distance required for a slightly broader view. The film is essentially a few typical days from the diary of Sampat Pal Devi, leader of the pink sari-clad gulabi gang. Even among the colourful fashions of India, they are quite a sight.

The group is born out of necessity. It is a solidarity movement of women who have been abused physically and sexually by their families. They exist to protect other such women, but their numbers continue to swell.

Sampat is a powerful, dominating

presence both in her community and on screen. She makes for a captivating ninety minutes but proves wearisome for those around her every day. Her drive, egotism and stubbornness are necessary just to get heard, but serve to mask her sympathy and devotion to all those who ask for her help, as well as her personal concerns. Not long after seeing her brag about beating up a policeman, we see her cry about the prospect of losing her long-suffering male companion.

One such story is that of Rekha. As an unmarried, pregnant fourteen-year old, her very life is in danger. Herself

Like the landscape of rural India, Pink Saris is stark

and her lover are restrained by his family, who are unwilling to be tarnished by someone of a lower caste. They are nonetheless married after Sampat's intervention.

On the morning of her wedding, the shy bride opens up for a few seconds, when she asks Longinotto if she can accompany her to London, alone. She does not smile during the ceremony, and smiles are quite rare in

the film, but the one I remember was beautiful. Rekha's story is probably as successful as it could have been, yet it is not a happy life awaiting her.

Marriage is an absolute necessity for any girl. She is a burden otherwise. Sampat's home is a refuge for many abused women, young and elderly alike, but this is unsustainable and she is well aware. They must return and the only power she wields is that of publicity - to bring what has historically been done in the dark to light.

The most disheartening part of the film is the consignment felt by most of the women. Financial independence - the means of liberation from the whim of abusive husbands and families, is not a realistic prospect, even for Sampat: "If a woman wants to work, society won't let her. The whole world is against her."

The law provides glimmers of hope, but while its reach is extensive, its eyes are weak. When its enforcers are needed, they must be pressured. Sampat utilises it well, even if it is only to intimidate abusive families. The film is an honest portrayal, and although she is imperfect, hope also emanates from her strength and leadership: "Women have nothing but their tears, what else do they have? But I won't let the darkness swallow us."

Infiltration Teddy Groves



Director: Dover Kosashvili Screenplay: Dover Kosashvili and Reuven Hecker Cast: Guy Adler, Oz Zehavi, Assaf Ben Shimon Runtime: 116 minutes Year: 2010

It's quite unusual for an acclaimed novel to adapt into an excellent film, especially when it involves war, race, disability or the Middle East. *Infiltration* is an adaptation of a famous novel about a platoon of unfit-for-ordinary-service Israeli conscripts struggling to cope with each other through a three-week boot camp in 1956. All of which makes you do a double take every time Emma Thompson doesn't jump out from behind a bush and sigh wistfully. The fact that this film is completely brilliant is positively shocking.

The reason *Infiltration* is so good is that it focuses on details of its characters and their interactions rather than the abstract broader issues that dominate the novel. It's not that the film has nothing political to say: the issues are there, albeit in an understated way. Behind the recruits' petty arguments there are real tensions. The bullied Ben-Hamo might bring his bad luck on himself with laziness, or it might be because he happens to be the only Arab in the group. Alon is too idealistic for his own good, and happens to be fresh from the kibbutz movement, which arguably shared the same fault. There is broader significance in other details: the fact that someone felt that disabled cooks-

to-be needed to be trained to strangle says something about their country's mindset and political situation, while the general lack of motivation, infighting and haphazard buffoonery on show undercuts a comfortable myth about Israel's supposedly heroic and united early years. Crucially, though, the film never lets sage considerations like these do more than merely complement its main human attractions.

The sparse grassy setting and uniforms have a similar effect: apart from the recruits' skin everything seems to be some shade or other of green or brown. All your attention is directed at the immaculately cast, outfitted, and performed characters. Each has individualising features that instantly mark out their personality, balanced with enough complexity that you never quite puzzle them out. The drill sergeant's well-preened hair and deliberate stare give away his distinctive nonchalant competence before he even speaks. All of them interact and deal with their situations in ways that are particular to them, but which anyone who has experienced any kind of rigid hierarchical tribe can recognise. Charles Bronson lookalike Avner, determined to get by with minimal fuss, tolerates everything thrown at him until suddenly he finds he cannot compromise enough to sing a silly song comparing a rifle to a woman. Details like these keep coming, interacting and multiplying until finally the credits roll, your eyes fuzz back and you smile.



Pink Saris

LONDON FILM FESTIVAL

to find the best of the fest. Here's what we saw...

Somewhere Jonathan Storey



Director: Sofia Coppola **Screenplay:** Sofia Coppola **Cast:** Stephen Dorff, Elle Fanning, Benicio del Toro **Runtime:** 98 minutes **Year:** 2010

Somewhere manages the incredible feat of being a better film than *Lost in Translation* whilst having less plot and lots more pretension. Stephen Dorff plays Johnny Marco,

a Hollywood bad-boy stumbling through a life of excess at the Chateau Marmont who receives an unexpected visit from his eleven-year old daughter (Elle Fanning). The bulk of the film

An aura of pretension pervades Somewhere

concerns their exploits to an awards ceremony in Italy, lounging around at the Chateau, and playing Guitar Hero. It's not much, but the moments shared between Dorff and Fanning have genuine chemistry, even if they don't achieve much in the way of plot or even catharsis.

While Coppola has admitted flourishes of an autobiographical nature, given her turbulent childhood with her father - Godfather director Francis Ford Coppola - she unfortunately can't let go of her more pretentious habits.

There are too many long sequences where nothing of value happens. Admittedly, these are designed to showcase the monotony of Johnny Marco's flaccid existence, but the point can be driven home in much more subtle ways that don't require a pervasive aura of pretension.

Murmurs of 'pretentious twaddle' and 'that was boring' marked the end of the screening. Many people will have similar reactions, but the chemistry between Dorff and Fanning means *Somewhere* is not totally without merit.

The Trip Aameer Patel



Director: Michael Winterbottom **Screenplay:** Adam Elliot **Cast:** Steve Coogan, Rob Brydon, Eric Bana **Runtime:** 109 minutes **Year:** 2010

I haven't really watched *I'm Alan Partridge* or *Gavin and Stacey*. Both are among the most popular British comedy series of recent years, and have made household names of their respective stars. Brydon, of the latter, is proud of this achievement but Coogan wants more. This is the key difference between them and facilitates all that is enjoyable in film.

The Trip is a complete change of direction for Michael Winterbottom (*The Killer Inside Me*, *A Mighty Heart*) but he is no less comfortable in this heavily improvised Coogan/Brydon comedy. The pair play themselves on a week-long trip to sample the culinary delights of northern England, as part of Coogan's new role as a food critic. The trip was intended to be romantic, but after his relationship ends, he asks Brydon to accompany him.

Coogan envies his more successful Hollywood contemporaries not out of bitterness, but out of the belief that he is just as capable, if not more. He is arrogant but also vulnerable. His dreams are big, perhaps ridiculously so, but he would "rather have moments of genius than a lifetime of mediocrity". He has reached middle age and is frightened.

The markedly different Brydon is happy with his life - his wife and child, and his work, in that order. He breathes optimism and is content, though he

There is a wonderful, authentic chemistry between Brydon and Coogan

does not have anything more than Coogan. They complement each other well and Winterbottom does a fine job of marking out the differences between the pair in how their time is spent when they're apart.

Both are famed for their voice impressions and are competitive when there is opportunity to make reference to the likes of Sean Connery and Michael Caine. Over a week of long car journeys and multi-course meals, there are plenty of opportunities. They travel to sample food and some of northern England's finest dishes are showcased, but it quickly becomes apparent that it is not the food that the pair enjoy most at mealtime, but the company.

There is a wonderfully watchable and authentic chemistry between the pair and Winterbottom gives us a sense of intimacy with both men, making it clear that they care about each other and enjoy their time together, but Coogan's insecurities often form a barrier. It is best seen upon their return home, when Coogan avails himself only through the window of his car to a hug from Brydon.

The greatest contrast between the pair is left until they return home. Whereas Brydon is received by his wife and child in his warm terrace, Coogan's modern, clinical apartment is cold and lonely. Just the difference in colours between the two is striking. Its extensive use of glass and large windows overlooking central London emphasise this.

As night falls, Brydon agrees with his wife that they should not be apart for so long in the future. In his loneliness, Coogan turns to a video of his estranged girlfriend. Despite his arrogance, we feel for him and see, perhaps alongside him, that company provides comfort that for most people is irreplaceable.

The film in its reviewed form is for foreign audiences. We can look forward to several more thoroughly enjoyable hours of intimacy with the pair in the form of a TV series.

The TV series of *The Trip* airs on Mondays on BBC Two at 10pm

Black Swan Jonathan Storey



Natalie Portman's awe-inspiring performance in *Black Swan*



Director: Darren Aronofsky **Screenplay:** Mark Heyman, Andres Heinz and John McLaughlin **Runtime:** 105 minutes **Year:** 2010

A few weeks ago, I said that *Tabloid* was the film of the festival - nay, the year! - so far. Well, the tide has now turned: the visceral power of **Black Swan** has taken the Crown. The fifth feature by Darren Aronofsky, the film focuses on ballerina prodigy Nina (Natalie Portman) as she deals with being given the lead role in *Swan Lake*. Pressure is coming at her from all sides: from her instructor Thomas (Vincent Cassel), her overbearing stage mother (Barbara Hershey) who is 'only looking out for her best interests', as well as up-and-comer protegee Lily (Mila Kunis) who is taking an unusual interest in Nina's life.

Starting off in a similar vein to Aronofsky's last feature - *The Wrestler* - and morphing into a psychological horror in its final third, *Black Swan* straddles the line between camp and horror deftly; in the hands of a lesser creative team, the film would have been an unmitigated disaster on the level of something like *Showgirls*. Portman is a revelation, performing all

of her own ballet moves herself and still having the acting chops to cope with everything that Aronofsky throws at her to do.

The rest of the cast is equally sublime: Cassel injects a human element into his creepy dance instructor role; Hershey manages not to avoid the stereotypical stage mother clichés but to transcend them into something more terrifying; Kunis portrays her character as a steely temptress reminiscent of Eve Harrington in *All About Eve*; a cameo by Winona Ryder also yields unexpected benefits when she is confronted with a situation reminiscent of her shoplifting escapade of 2001.

Black Swan already has enough to recommend it without getting into its giddy technical achievements: the cinematography is a joy to behold; the score - adapted from the original Tchaikovsky music - knows when to become overblown and when to subdue itself accordingly; the visual effects are stunning without overpowering the narrative; the editing is sharp and sudden and adds considerably to the tone of the film.

If there's one film I'd recommend you go out and watch the moment you can, it would be *Black Swan*. Just go and see it.

The Kids Are All Right Allie Fonarev



Director: Lisa Cholodenko **Screenplay:** Lisa Cholodenko and Stuart Blumberg **Runtime:** 106 minutes **Cert:** 15 **Year:** 2010

After many years together, Jules and Nic are facing the challenges of committed married life. Jules is a messy, free-spirited, mellow, on-again, off-again business owner, alternating between mostly unsuccessful ventures and being a 'stay-at-home mom' for 18 years. Nic is a no-nonsense, workaholic physician trying to perfect the family, and coming off as neurotic, controlling and verging on alcoholic to Jules. As their oldest daughter, 18-year old Joni, is about to go off to college, their 15-year old son, Laser, is beginning to desire a male role model in his life. Oh yeah, did I mention Jules and Nic are both women? Their marriage is already stressful when the kids tell them that they've found and want to meet their biological father, Paul, who donated his sperm years ago. His entrance into their lives makes for a new family dynamic.

The movie is a nice attempt to portray the ups and downs of a 'modern' family life, about the difficulties of marriage and children and those hard moments we all face in life. But while it's nice to see a film try to address the under-discussed topic of same-sex family life, in the end, the flick is no more than a typical Hollywood drama aimed at the average viewer. If you're more into deep or compelling cinema, you'd be better off watching something else.

The film is meant to be a drama (though it has comic touches scattered throughout), but it doesn't dig deeper than the surface. It sweeps through the heavier moments too quickly - such

as when Nic and Jules have a fight in the middle of a restaurant, or when Joni comes home drunk and blows up at her parents. Instead of lengthening these moments and making the audience connect with the characters, the film seems to prefer quantity over quality in term of 'moments'. As the scenes move quickly from one dramatic outburst to the next, the result is a strung-together plot, rather than a compelling development of the characters and a deeper connection with the story.

Both young actors playing the

kids - Josh Hutcherson as Laser, and Mia Wasikowska as Joni - give a great performance, and it's clear we will be seeing more quality roles by them in the future, particularly. Mark Ruffalo, playing irresponsible restaurateur Paul, as always gives a cool and charming performance. Julianne Moore's performance, however, is a bit of a disappointment, as one cannot seem to really connect to the deeper qualities of her character, Jules, and understand her actions. Her portrayal is somewhat unbelievable and over-acted, leaving

her character fairly one-dimensional and disarrayed. But Annette Bening is the true star of the film and delivers a sensational performance, displaying genuine emotion and believable insight into her character of Nic. Also, the scenes between Bening and Ruffalo are exceptionally done. However, the rest of the film skims over the complex moments of life in (unsurprising) blockbuster fashion. The result is a conventional Hollywood drama slapped with less-than-conventional subject matter. *The Kids Are All Right* is in cinemas now



Nuclear family with a twist: *The Kids Are All Right*

"I WAS IN THIS STATE OF PERMANENT NEUROSIIS"

The Real PM's life:

October 1953: Peter Benjamin Mandelson born to George and Mary Mandelson - Mary is the daughter of former Labour deputy leader Herbert Morrison.

1965-72: Attends Hendon County Grammar School.

1973-6: Reads PPE at Oxford.

December 1979: Elected a Labour member of Lambeth Council.

1982: Joins London Weekend Television

September 1985: Appointed Director of Campaigns for the Labour Party.

April 1992: Although Labour lose their fourth general election in a row, Mandelson wins in Hartlepool.

July 1994: Tony Blair elected as Labour Party leader.

May 1997: Labour general election landslide. Mandelson appointed Minister without Portfolio at the Cabinet Office - responsibilities include the Millennium Dome.

December 1998: Resigns over secret home loan from Geoffrey Robinson, a government colleague.

October 1999: Reappointed to Cabinet as Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

January 2001: Resigns from government for second time, after the Hinjuda scandal. Is subsequently exonerated by an independent inquiry.

June 2001: Re-elected to seat in Hartlepool - gives 'I'm a fighter and not a quitter' speech.

November 2004: Becomes Britain's European Commissioner.

Summer 2008: George Osborne/Oleg Deripaska Corfu yacht incident.

October 2008: Leaves post of Trade Commissioner to return to UK politics at the invitation of Gordon Brown.

June 2009: Appointed as First Secretary of State and Lord President of Council. Sits on 35 of 43 Cabinet committees.

May 2010: Labour loses the general election.

July 2010: No longer a Cabinet minister, Mandelson publishes his memoirs; he is criticised by Labour leadership candidates Andy Burnham and Ed and David Miliband.



Filmmaker Hannah Rothschild talks to Ahmed Peerbux about her most ambitious documentary film yet, *Mandelson: The Real PM?*

Born in 1962, Hannah Rothschild is the older sister of Nathaniel Rothschild. You'll recognise the name, but the truth is that Hannah has carved for herself a compelling standalone reputation as a documentary filmmaker, who, after starting off as a researcher at the BBC, has gone on to direct a number of documentaries for BBC series including *Storyville*, *Omnibus* and *Arena*. From October 2009 through to June this year, Hannah was granted unprecedented access to Peter Mandelson - the man, she says, the Labour Party can't live with or without. And as she reveals to PartB, Hannah found herself to be the "fighter not a quitter" by the end of it all...

Was Peter Mandelson the real PM?

(Laughs) that's why I put a question mark at the end of it. No, I don't think he was. It's a bad pun, but I do think he was extraordinarily powerful, especially given that he was unelected and so quickly back in.

Why did he agree to take part?

The wonderful thing about Peter is he is very impulsive. He said he wanted a record of his last months in office, and he wanted to show people what it was all really like.

What did he make of the film?

I think he loved it, though he had no editorial control over it. As he left after having watched it for the first time, he said in that very Peterish way: "I will be available for the premiere..."

There's something very theatrical about Mandelson, isn't there...

Definitely. I saw him at the Labour party conference and thought "goodness, here is the most extraordinary subject." I could quite easily see a 'Mandelson the Musical'! He's funny, and glorious, and flamboyant, and nasty, and good, and clever and camp...He is like this kind of peacock amongst a lot of starlings, frankly.

Did you ever feel Mandelson was using his cunning on you?

Absolutely. He's much cleverer than I am. That's why you kind of have to "get him" if you like, to catch him when, for example, he gets yoghurt

on his tie, because you will not get Peter Mandelson in the interview. There's no point, He's always two steps ahead. You have to try and show, not tell. Spilling yoghurt over your tie, or sitting around with your feet on the desk tells you so much more than a trick question.

After seeing Polanski's *The Ghost* earlier this year, I sort of took it as political gospel.

I saw that with Peter, funnily enough. Robert Harris (author of the book from which the film is adapted) is one of Peter Mandelson's closest friends, and he also knows Tony Blair very well. So I would hazard a guess that Robert Harris was writing from what he knew. It isn't a pretty world. It's about power, the pursuit of power, holding on to power, loving power.

Peter is like this kind of peacock among a lot of starlings, frankly

Did Blair crop up every so often, seeing as your subject matter was one of his closest allies?

Blair was on the telephone the whole time during the election campaign, talking to both Mandelson and Brown. He never went away. He had to go away publicly because he understandably had such a strange relationship with the British electorate.

What else did you learn of politicking?

Well I hope the film exposed a bit of what political life is in its kind of tawdry mundanity. It's a frankly uninspirational situation with a lot of uninspiring people. Today we have really huge issues that we face; climate change, world poverty, terrorism; yet this election was fought on anti-depressants and airbrushing. But I was also very taken by the pressure that these politicians are under. The 24 hour media, the twitter-tweeting-Blackberry relentlessness, the hours. Very often Peter wouldn't get home until well after midnight.

It must have been hard-going for you also...

Absolute hell! What makes it doubly difficult is that you don't really know what's going on. No one really does in politics. It's a total smoke and mirrors arena. As a film maker, you're obviously trying to show what's going on, so I was in this state of permanent neurosis, knowing that I didn't understand what was happening.

Whittling over 200 hours of footage down to 75 minutes must have also been difficult.

It was a nightmare. We were editing for twenty weeks. It's kind of like sifting for gold, going through all that footage. But the things that end up in the film aren't necessarily the most explosive moments. You've got to watch the footage over and over. You choose the material based on the scenes that fit together, otherwise you end up with a kind of strange row of pearls. There was a wonderful tirade from Mandelson against Rupert Murdoch and the Murdoch press. He absolutely lambasts Murdoch in a very personal attack.

I'd love to see that.

Everyone wants to see that! But I couldn't get it in. I just couldn't make it work. It seemed to unbalance and unsettle everything else. Though I hope one day that people who are interested in it can look at the footage. I think it would be great for students of politics to have a look at.

Was anyone uncomfortable with your presence? Alistair Campbell didn't look too happy...

Nobody wanted me there but Peter, and I think even he had second thoughts, frankly. Alistair Campbell is a very powerful, and quite frightening individual. He's rude and brash, but also peculiarly attractive. He flirts, but it's not comfortable flirting. It's like coming face to face with a boa constrictor.

Mandelson and Osborne's encounters offer some of the film's best moments. Do they all get on well behind closed doors?

What people forget about this extraordinary world is that the whole of Westminster fits into an area of 23 acres. That's less than a quarter of

the size of Terminal 5. So you've got all these people, from all the different parties, bumping into each other all day. The moment you put a camera on them, they're all at each other's throats and they suddenly come over all "Tory this" and "Tory that". The whole thing's a complete theatre. It's all a bit naughty and childish.

Having been granted access to all areas of Mandelson's life, who else would you like to document?

It's all I'm thinking about at the moment. I literally wake up, read the paper and think: "god, who could I do next?" If you've got any ideas, please tell me! I don't think there's anybody else in British politics who's as filmically interesting as Peter. He makes terrible mistakes, and he's very fallible. On the other hand you get someone like David Cameron, who doesn't make that many mistakes, who therefore isn't very interesting.

Even Cameron's Desert Island Discs choices seemed carefully chosen by researchers...

I'd imagine they were! (laughs)

What do you make of the decision to axe the UK Film Council?

I think it's right to subsidise the film industry - within reason. People forget that the film industry is a business. I sit on the board of the National Gallery, and that's a very good example of something that needs and deserves subsidy, because it has no real opportunity to generate an income. But films do generate money. For that reason I think it's quite right that some of the subsidies be removed.

What will happen to Peter now?

This is a guy who had a budget of £21 billion; he had 7000 people in his department, and 30 people working just for him alone. And overnight he goes from that to nothing. You lose your drivers, you lose your assistants, you lose everything. What do you do? There are no second or third acts. But I don't think anyone feels particularly sorry for Peter, or worries about his future. He'll be fine.

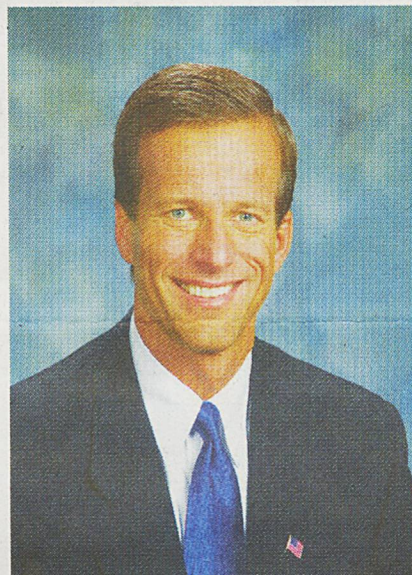
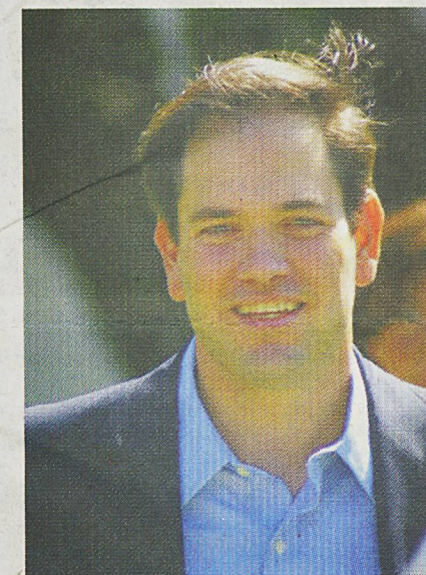
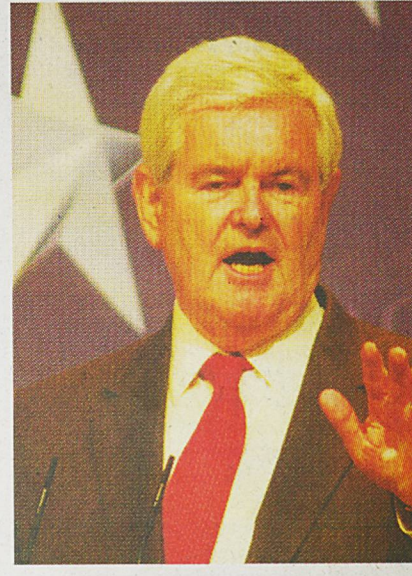
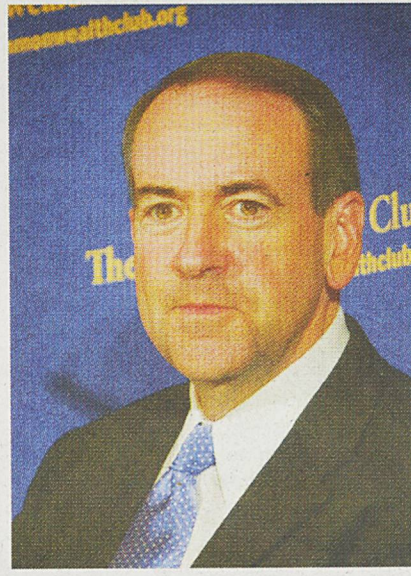
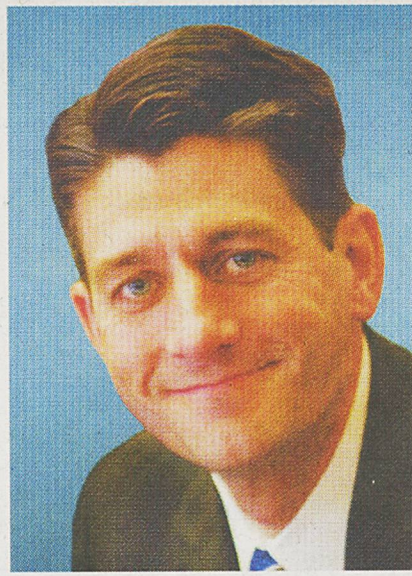
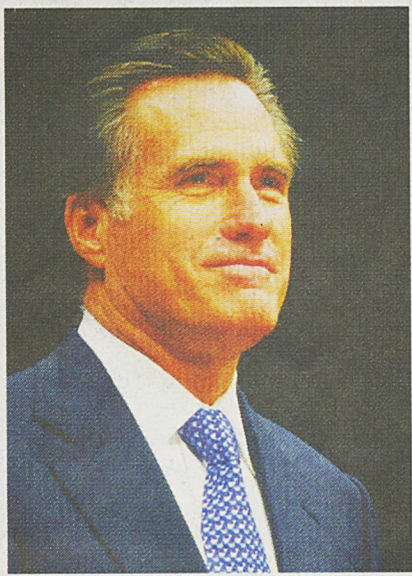
Mandelson: The Real PM? will be broadcast on the BBC this month. Nathan Briant, the Beaver's Comment editor, has reviewed it in this week's PartB.



Features

In it to win it?

Zac Beauchamp bets on who'll snatch the GOP nomination



Republican hopefuls (clockwise from top left): Sarah Palin, Mitt Romney, Paul Ryan, Mike Huckabee, Newt Gingrich, Marco Rubio, John Thune, Chris Christie and Tim Pawlenty

With the midterm elections taking place this week, and all factors pointing to a Democratic thrashing, the next craze in American politics will be determining which of the newly ascendant Republicans is going to take up the party mantle against President Obama in 2012. As such, it's about time to start handicapping the odds of the various contenders, including both the familiar faces and some just coming to the scene.

THE OLD HANDS

Mitt Romney

Pros: The GOP establishment's choice. Romney's tenure as Governor of Massachusetts and previous shot at nomination has given Romney more extensive access to the Republican upper-crust than any other candidate in the field. Plus, the second-place candidate in the previous Republican primary has historically won the nomination the next time around, and Romney only narrowly lost to McCain in 2008.

Cons: Romney flip-flops more than a dying fish on dry land. His perpetual reinvention on core GOP issues like gay marriage has led many Republicans to believe that his only guiding principle is political expediency. The health care bill he passed as governor, for example, is exactly like the 2010 national health care bill, which Romney criticized fiercely. Further, his Mormon faith makes evangelicals mighty uncomfortable.

Odds: 3:1

Sarah Palin

Pros: What's left to say about Alaska's most famous half term Governor and Vice-Presidential candidate? Palin's name recognition and popularity are unmatched among the most die-hard Republicans, who crucially are the demo-

graphic statistically most likely to turn out in primary elections.

Cons: Her surprisingly poor performance in some early 2012 polling suggests that many Republicans have awoken to her unsurprisingly abysmal numbers among the general electorate. If moderates scared by Palin's Tea Party radicalism and conservatives skeptical of her ability to win the general election intervene, Palin's chances go down dramatically.

Odds: 4:1

Mike Huckabee

Pros: The former Governor of Arkansas' surprise victory in the 2008 Iowa primary catapulted him to national prominence, which he's maintained through his weekend show on Fox News. Huckabee's "gee, shucks" demeanor and commitment to bringing religion into the statehouse has made him a favorite in the crucial evangelical bloc.

Cons: His particular brand of Christian populism supports a degree of government intervention in the economy anathema both to big business and libertarians. Further, his occasional willingness to question the utility of an activist foreign policy has alienated many neoconservatives.

Odds: 8:1

John Thune

Pros: Thune's years representing South Dakota in the House and Senate (he has served in the latter since defeating then-Minority Leader Tom Daschle in 2004) has made him a lot of powerful friends: New York Times columnist and eminent conservative commentator David Brooks wrote "as [Republicans] look to the future of their party, and who might lead it in 2012, the name John Thune keeps popping up." His party-line conservative record and Aaron Eckhart-esque looks don't

hurt, either.

Cons: On paper, he's got all the right attributes, but his ability to translate these advantages into the kind of national recognition needed to win a primary remains to be seen - polling data suggests that very few people outside of South Dakota and D.C. know much about him. His vote for TARP - the dreaded 'bailout' legislation - may also rub Tea Party types the wrong way.

Odds: 8:1

Tim Pawlenty

Pros: "T-Paw," as the Governor of Minnesota's friends call him, rose to national attention as a potential Vice President for John McCain in 2008. Pawlenty's working class "Sam's Club" Republicanism may resonate during tough economic times, and the story of his conversion to evangelical Christianity gives him a built-in appeal to the faithful.

Cons: "Can I get a side of bland with that bland?" T-Paw may be affable, but he lacks both the type of charisma that can take support away from the evangelicals fired up to vote for Palin or Huckabee and Romney's level of institutional support.

Odds: 10:1

Newt Gingrich

Pros: The former Speaker of the House responsible for Bill Clinton's impeachment is back in the limelight, recently having emerged as one of the most prominent critics of Islam and the "Ground Zero Mosque." Gingrich has recently specialized in this sort of appeal to conservative radicalism - in addition to his prominent anti-Muslim rhetoric, Gingrich has also been the driving force behind the movement to mainstream Dinesh D'Souza's thesis that Obama adheres to a "Kenyan, anti-colonial" worldview.

Cons: Gingrich's overtures to the hard right may end creating a worst of both worlds situation wherein the moderates who might have been attracted to the "man of ideas" persona he cultivated before 2009 see him as unacceptably radical, and the radicals see him as a pale imitation of Sarah Palin.

Odds: 16:1

THE NEW CROWD

Chris Christie

Pros: The hard-headed and large-bellied Governor of New Jersey, Christie took office after a 2009 special election that many Republicans believe to be the first crest of their 2010 wave. Since he began governing, Christie's deft handling of fights over tax policy and education has made him a symbol of GOP revival for national Republicans seeking a credible, experienced executive to lead the party in 2012.

Cons: Name recognition. Christie is such an unknown nationally that a major polling company chose not to include him in their poll assessing the GOP field as recently as September 30th. To be fair, 1% wrote him in, but Ron Paul (who's got no shot) got 7 times as many votes.

Odds: 20:1

Paul Ryan

Pros: Widely considered to be the intellectual leading light of the Republican Congressional delegation, Representative Ryan took the lead in presenting substantive GOP critiques of health care reform. Since then, Ryan has offered the only in-depth Republican budget ("Ryan's Roadmap") that provides concrete policy alternatives to Obama's policies.

Cons: Ryan's Roadmap. Because Ryan couldn't propose raising taxes or cutting defense spending without a triggering a

GOP revolt, his budget proposal had to dramatically slash spending on Social Security and Medicare in order to achieve the stated goal of cutting the deficit. These old-age benefits are highly popular among both the GOP's aging base and the electorate as a whole.

Odds: 33:1

Marco Rubio

Pros: A charismatic minority politician with limited political experience wins a Senate seat in a wave election, launching himself to national prominence with electrifying speeches that captivate the party faithful. Sound familiar? If Rubio wins his Senate election in Florida this week, which seems likely, expect to start hearing this implicit comparison a lot come primary time.

Cons: There's a reason the Obama campaign was such a great story: it's really hard for newly elected politicians, no matter how much the party base likes them, to compete with more seasoned opponents, who have had much more time to build extensive political connections and bases of operation all over the country. Christie and Ryan will have both had some time in office to start this process before the campaign season begins in earnest, but Rubio will be just starting out.

Odds: 33:1

Zac Beauchamp was the 'election candidate' behind last week's wonderful 'Capacity to Intervene' piece. Incidentally, he still thinks the beer is too damn expensive. Comiserations on your failure in the polls.

Spellbound

Joseph Wenner explains the Christine O'Donnell phenomeon

When Christine O'Donnell strolled into a Wilmington, Delaware television studio to film her introductory campaign advertisement, she probably had a single objective—damage control. Since her victory in the September 14th primary to secure the Republican nomination for Delaware's open seat in United States Senate, the Tea Party-darling had faced scathing criticism from across the political spectrum, even from those in her own camp. So with no waste in words or screen time, she began: "I am not a witch."

Certainly not the typical opening for a politician's debut television advertisement. Then again, few would label Ms O'Donnell an ordinary candidate for the United States Senate. While most candidates cannot avoid having to justify past statements, few must explain televised claims of experimentation in sorcery. Even fewer contend with proclaiming that masturbation is equivalent to adultery. Couple these statements with accusations of CV fabrication and questionable financial dealings, and we have a political race that has America and even the world rapt at attention for all the wrong reasons. Yet O'Donnell's unpredicted political clout not only has implications for her state and the nation, but also demonstrates the American voter dissatisfaction fueling the Tea Party.

Flashback to the days before Christine O'Donnell exploded into the national spotlight, and one realizes how unlikely a candidate she truly is.

Delaware's Establishment Politics

Before the Tea Party's current populist wave of conservative fervor, before Barack Obama was even a Senator, Christine O'Donnell was only an obscure perennial candidate. With a focus on pro-life, anti-pornography measures and religious values, O'Donnell made a name for herself in quixotic campaigns against well-established political foes, for whom elections were mere technicalities before their next terms.

One thing must be understood

about the quirky ways of Delaware's state politics: no matter the party, the establishment wins big. Since 1983, the state's three national offices—its two U.S. Senators and its seat in Congress—have been held by only five men. Of these five, three have hopped from one of these offices to the another within this period. Interestingly, most of these offices have transitioned gracefully from Democrat to Republican and vice-versa. In fact, in 1993, current Congressman Michael Castle (Republican) and Senator Tom Carper (Democrat) demonstrated this statism with their unspoken power-sharing agreement.

At that time, Castle was Delaware's governor, while Carper was in his fifth term as the state's sole Congressman. With Castle facing term limits, it was well known across the state that he had been eyeing Carper's seat. Rather than erupt into a bitter party-line battle, this bipartisan duo simply came to a gentleman's agreement. Carper agreed to step down from Congress at the end of his term to run for the open Governor's slot, leaving the Congressional seat warm and waiting for Castle. Both won their respective elections in landslide fashion.

It was this political climate of a bipartisan establishment that greeted Christine O'Donnell's political entrance. Yet, the well entrenched statesmen hardly discouraged her efforts. In 2006, she challenged Tom Carper, who was in his second term as U.S. Senator. Despite failing to secure her party's nomination against the Democratic incumbent, O'Donnell continued her campaign as a write-in candidate, garnering a paltry 4.6 per cent of votes.

Continuing to push her socially and fiscally conservative platform, she ran against yet another of the state's political juggernauts in 2008—six term senator and then-Vice Presidential nominee, Joe Biden. While this time her name appeared on the ballot, her reshaped campaign strategy yielded similar results, as O'Donnell lost with 32 per cent of the vote to Biden's 68 per cent.

And again two years, later the cycle seemed destined to repeat itself. With

Biden's Senate seat open, Mike Castle—who had continued in Congress since the 1993 switch—decided to make a push for the Delaware office trifecta. Once the popular moderate Republican had announced his candidacy for the Senate, polls showed massive double digit leads and state Democrats all but accepted the the seat would turn red. Never mind the anti-incumbency mood that had been steadily sweeping the states since 2008. Few noticed that Christine O'Donnell had, for the third consecutive race, also announced her candidacy for the U.S. Senate.

A Symbiotic Relationship?

Yet when the polls closed on September 14th, it was O'Donnell who emerged as the victor in the Republican primary. The fact that Castle—previously undefeated through his 44 year career in Delaware politics—had lost indicated that even the seemingly isolated politics of Delaware had been injected with wide voter dissatisfaction. The political landscape had changed. Where O'Donnell's harsh calls against the establishment had been benignly ignored by past Delaware voters, this year they struck a salient chord. Helped along by the Tea Party Express and the publicized endorsement of her ideological—and some say identical—twin Sarah Palin, O'Donnell earned what she had lacked in the past: a receptive audience for her vocal views.

What's more, this support is affluent and transcends state borders. Between August 28 and September 30, she raised over \$3.8 million dollars, \$2.5 million more than her opponent, Democrat Chris Coons. Nearly all of her fundraising—98.7 per cent—has come from outside the state. Conservative groups such as the National Rifle Association and Citizens United—all with known Tea Party supporters—have been among the highest donors. With the influx of funds, she has used \$1.2 million to expand her campaign staff and flood the airwaves with advertisements. She has set \$2 million for her final push as the election draws nearer.

Clearly, the Tea Party has given

Christine O'Donnell a soapbox on which to stand. But what has her candidacy done for the organization in return? In a group which continually seeks to prove to its critics that its views are held by mainstream Americans, every questionable act by its supporters or candidates is a liability, and the emergence of Ms O'Donnell has brought about quite a few new ones. Her bizarre statements range from uniquely absurd (refer to her first television ad) to trite right wing 'evolution is a myth'. All of them reinforce the perception that the Tea Party is a fringe movement and will remain as such.

Moreover, O'Donnell's drawbacks go beyond her rhetoric. Despite her calls for fiscal restraint from the government, her personal finances had been in disarray since her 2008 Senate campaign. With her campaign \$24,000 in debt and burdened with \$11,000 in unpaid taxes, O'Donnell owed staffers and consultants payment for hundreds of hours of work. The reputation of her college degree had been delayed ten years due to outstanding tuition payments.

Waiting for Election Day

Christine O'Donnell's less-than-perfect record of financial responsibility undermines her credibility as an advocate of a smaller, less spendthrift state. As a result, her critics include prominent conservatives. Upon hearing of her victory, Rove proclaimed, "O'Donnell is now going to have to answer to her own checkered background". His prediction has proven to be accurate. In the hectic and embarrassing weeks following her primary victory, Ms O'Donnell witnessed her gap with Coons widen, settling around a 15 per cent deficit.

As the campaign draws to a close O'Donnell continues to focus on damage control. Besides clarifying her stance on witchcraft, she has agreed to a series of debates with Coons. Her first performance two weeks ago even won over CNN anchor Wolf Blitzer, who thought she had given the better performance. Unfortunately for O'Donnell, he qualified the victory with the statement, "she didn't come across as

just a weirdo or anything like that."

With the anti-incumbency fervor at a high in America, it would be foolish to write-off Christine O'Donnell's chances just yet. This is why the world continues to discuss her intriguing candidacy. Perhaps, we are all simply spellbound. ☛

Tea and taxes

Features writers have a Tea Party tea party

In a dingy room in the basement of the old building, five students are gathered around a set of wobbly desks. A recorder is set on the table, and each holds a cup of tea, courtesy of the Beaver. On the agenda of this round-table, the Tea Party movement in light of the US Midterm elections. *Marya Hanun, Joseph Wenner, Pern-Yi Quah and Thomas Drake held the following discussion, chaired by Features editor Oliver Wiseman.*

Oliver: In his book 'The Cracked Bell', Tristram Riley-Smith, a British civil servant and anthropologist offers a diagnosis for the problems in American society. "There is," in Riley-Smith's words, "a thread of positive, energetic advocacy for liberty which can at times become a kind of radical individualism, which causes so many of the paradoxes in American society." Do you think this analysis goes some way in explaining the rise of Tea Party politics?

Marya: I'm not so sure - it's not necessarily something new to have parties on the fringe that are a reaction to the political mainstream, especially when we're in trying political or economic times. During the Cold War we had the John Birch Society [a right-wing anti-communism movement]. As a result of the Democratic win in 2008, conservatives have felt under-represented in government. The solution to this has been to work outside of the system. A lot of the original tea party organisations were reacting directly to the steps the government took to deal with the economy.

Pern: Its important to remember that the tea party movement didn't begin that

long ago - the reason why it became such a strong movement was because of the substantial reforms introduced by the Obama administration.

M: That's definitely true. The idea that they're purely reactionary is evidenced by the fact that the majority of their policies aren't substantive. Rather, you know what they're against.

Thomas: But a lot of what they're against was happening in the Republican administration as well. George Bush was just as statist. He was the one who set up the stimulus package in the first place. People were angry then but the tea party movement didn't get going till 2009. I don't want to make race too much of an issue, but coming from the south, I know how a lot of those people think. Tea Party activists tend to have more money and are better educated than the average American. But a large contingent of the Tea Party movement are angry and poor 'white folks'. People never say they're racist but Obama is living the middle-class white dream that a lot of people wish they had. People must, therefore, foster residual hate. When asked why they don't like him [Obama], most answer 'I just don't like him'. He's only been in office for two years, we haven't even begun to feel the effects of his decisions, and people already hate him.

O: To formulate the question differently, would you have the Tea Party without Obama? Are they simply a reaction to him?

M: I don't think they'd have had the same

political traction. There's a definite phobia of his 'socialism'. When you look at the placards at Tea Party rallies, they mostly refer to Obama.

Joseph: I'd say the anti-Obama is one of the Tea Party's defining characteristics. But you can't ignore the tough economic conditions when looking at the rise of this movement. They wouldn't have as much salience in the media and in society if the economic situation wasn't so poor.

T: Much of it is ignorance. When 30 per cent of a group make an issue out of Obama's birth certificate, that's racism.

P: I don't think it just comes down to racism. It might make up the fringe of the movement, but it is more complicated than that. Educated people have a stake in maintaining the status quo.

M: The main issues that the Tea Party keep coming back to the economy and healthcare reform and not the social issues they're related to. I think their policies aren't really to do with race.

T: But the composure of the group does happen to be slightly less tolerant, slightly more anti-gay, slightly more anti-immigration.

O: To give them a bit more credit, they do seek to embody a very American sense of freedom - a kind of frontier, very individualistic concept shrouded in national myths. In that sense is the tea party a cultural phenomenon or is it ultimately grounded in policies?

M: I think it is more to do with policies. This idea that we are individuals trying to live the American dream is problematic. The 'we' is defined as upper middle class white men.

O: But so much of their rhetoric is about elites and other fairly hazy concepts. Isn't that broader than a political ideology?

T: I find the elites thing fascinating. I read an article a few years ago talking about Bush and how he convinced middle America that he is just one of them. Yet, he went to Harvard and Yale and he's from a wealthy elite family. Those he convinced want an average Joe to lead them, instead of Obama.

P: I think there is a cultural element about the Tea Party. Many of their rhetoric consists of criticisms of Obama being anti-American. As you said, America is defined by individualism. It rewards people who make something of themselves. The view that Obama is undermining American values by raising taxes and building safety nets is at the heart of the issue.

O: How anachronistic is the Tea Party? Is it built to last?

M: What they are saying has a lot of merit in the sense that there is a polarization between liberals who think regulation should be stronger and health care socialised, and Republicans who are both fiscally conservative and social traditionalists - there's no middle ground. I think the way in which the tea party has caught so much traction and moved many to the right is how two-party systems work.



Either these groups fail to gain weight and have no effect, or they force the mainstream to incorporate what their saying. It happened with labour movements in the 1900s.

J: You'll see over the next few years if they have a coherent message and a set of policies. Right now they're just anti-Obama and oppose anything he does. Once they gain some seats in congress and have some power they'll be in the driving seat and will have to come up with material concrete alternative measures.

P: I don't think the importance of the tea party should be seen in terms of Congress seats. Rather, when they get attention it is a proof that there are a large group of individuals who feels disenfranchised.

T: I think in order for them to survive for any length of time they've got to figure out what they stand for - put it down somewhere and be consistent.

M: I don't think the Tea Party is going to capture Congress. The Republicans probably won't capture the Senate and of those who will win seats in the House, a minority of them will be fully-fledged tea

The Beckoning

Ashwin Desai tries to understand an angry man

It is in the weird and wonderful United States of America that Glenn Beck, a Fox TV cable show host, radio personality, bestselling author, public lecturer (...scholar, historian and educator, or fear-monger, conspiracist, demagogue, depending on your politics) and unofficial Tea Party leader, has, in the last two years, established himself as one of America's most effective, divisive, nigh dangerous, media performers.

The word performer is not used lightly. Beck is above all an entertainer, and one whose popularity rests on the remarkable ability of his shows (part-

history lesson, psychodrama, religious sermon and stand-up comedy) to tap into the growing mood of mistrust and paranoia that has engulfed much of America, and speak to a country that the conservative and liberal elites have long either patronised or ignored.

For these supposedly 'normal and hardworking Americans,' Glenn Beck, unlike America's upper crust, lets them in on the reasons for the perceived socio-economic impasse of their country, which in his interpretation turn out to be quite astonishingly simple.

Today's progressives, the story goes, are the ideological descendants of the stalwarts of the progressive movement of the very beginning of the 20th century. Y'know, around the time that America set off on the road to serfdom. These original progressives, including Wilson and the two Roosevelts, attempted to 'DESTROY' (he likes capitals) America's 'faith, history and Constitution,' subverting the nation's founding principles and leading her onto the path to socialism (which = super-bad, naturally). The (depending on which day of the week it is) Marxist-Leninist, Nazi, Maoist, Jihadist, Anti-Colonialist, Christian Liberation Theology policies of the current President are merely an extension of these same principles. How the influences that shaped these policies might be related to the thinking of Messrs Roosevelt, Roosevelt and Wilson remain unclear but, as he boldly declared to the 2010 Conservative Political Action Conference, what is surely beyond doubt is that this progressivism is the 'disease' that afflicts the nation. It 'is the cancer in America,' he said, 'and it is eating our Constitution.'

This all makes him awfully scared. Scared of Obama's deep-seated hatred for 'white people or the white culture' (though he's quick to clarify that he doesn't really think 'Obama doesn't like white people'); scared that his country's 'children are being indoctrinated with liberal views on a daily basis'; scared that there might have been a communist conspiracy behind the planning of the Rockefeller Plaza in New York. This all leads him to publicly proclaim his desire to murder filmmakers, Congressmen and women with a mixture of poison, shovels and his own bare hands... live on air.

In a recent book about Beck, Washington Post columnist Dana Milbank claims that in the

first 14 months of Beck's show, he mentioned fascism 172 times, Nazis 134 times, Hitler 115 times, the Holocaust 58 times and Joseph Goebbels 8 times. And in a country supposedly riven with pseudo-Nazis, Beck has compared himself to the Israeli Nazi-hunters, telling his ardent viewers that until the day he dies he will remain 'a progressive hunter.' 'I'm going to find these people that have done this to our country and expose them,' he has said, 'I don't care if they're in nursing homes.'

But his audience does think, unlike all those urban elites, this guy really really cares. He's just like 'one of us' - but to the power of something very large.

His daily TV show records an average 2 million viewers every day. His radio show, broadcast on over 400 channels across the country, is listened to by around 8 million daily. His podcast gets 2.5 million views per week, while his website gets around 5 million unique visitors a month. He's even gone so far as to create the online Beck University (with the revealing motto, 'Tyrannis Seditio, Obsequium Deo' - rebellion to tyrants is obedience to God). Tellingly, with just a quick mention, he can make other authors jump up bestseller lists. When he recommended an obscure book called *The 5000 Year Leap* on his shows a few months ago, it jumped to pole position on Amazon. Beck Inc. is a lucrative business. According to a recent profile on *Forbes Magazine*, his

presence spanning books, television, radio, Internet and countrywide speaking tours (with tickets often in the region of \$125-\$150) earned him in the region of \$35 million between June 2009 and June 2010.

These are serious credentials for any public personality, and certainly for a man who, only 16 years ago, as a small-time Top 40 morning radio host, was a drug addict and a struggling alcoholic, or 'in therapy with Dr. Jack Daniels,' as he likes to put it. Born to a small town couple who owned a bakery in Mount Vernon, Beck has hardly had the smoothest ride to the top. His parents divorced when he was 13, and his mother, a struggling alcoholic, died in a boating accident a few years later. Beck has never sought to hide his belief that she committed suicide. He moved to Washington DC to live with his father, only to see tragedy strike again in the suicide of his stepbrother. In these circumstances, 'Dr Jack Daniels' was a rare comfort.

It was with the help of Alcoholics Anonymous that he found his way to sobriety and propriety. A reference from the then Democrat Senator Joe Lieberman, a fan of Beck's radio show, propelled him to Yale University. He enrolled in a class in Early Christology, only to leave halfway through - he preferred instead to self-educate.



The American Right

politicians. As an entity, their longevity I think is based on their ideas infusing into the Republican platform. What is interesting is that you're already seeing Republicans like John McCain and Lindsay Graham getting vastly more Conservative on their rhetoric.

O: Let's talk about the impact of the Tea Party on the landscape of American politics. To look at the Republicans, isn't Christine O'Donnell an example of what a candidate can stand for nowadays? Is the more acceptable face of Republicanism gone?

J: Mike Castle's losing to Christine O'Donnell in the primary is a perfect example of a Republican who would be perfectly acceptable in a general election failing because of the concentrated unhappiness of those registered Republican. Mike Castle is one of the most popular politicians in Delaware with a broad appeal. He would have been a shoo-in to the Senate if he had won, but O'Donnell beat him. The primary system now makes it more difficult for moderates in the Republican party to gain power and office. It will be interesting to see how Republican elites handle this new wave of more

conservative candidates when transitioning to a general election.

M: There's a lot to be said for that analysis. Lindsey Graham is competing in the state I am from, South Carolina. I'm not a Republican but I'd vote for him. He's hailed as a great Senator because he reaches across the aisle. He is very moderate on lots of issues, and he has done great things for rights of prisoners. Lately, however, he's been in political hot water for it. In order to maintain his viability with the Tea Party base, he's had to really step up his conservative stance to shore up his vote. He was one of the few Republicans willing to do it. There is now a huge schism in American politics. The greater the Tea Party shifts the Republicans to the right, the bigger the stalemate. So I think their influence is very important.

T: I think there is a tendency to say that if you're a moderate Republican, you are a traitor. To avoid this, John McCain has become increasingly right wing - he now supports some pretty questionable policies on immigration.

M: There are many examples of people maintaining middle-ground positions and losing out in the primaries. But what about the general election?

J: I think that it depends on the candidate. O'Donnell is one of the kookier runners. It'd be unfair to put her face to the entire Republican party, but it seems that in the last few years, Republican voters have valued ideological purity higher than working with democrats and effective government.

This idea that we are individuals trying to live the American dream is problematic; the 'we' is defined as upper middle class white men

O: What do you think of Republican nominations for presidency and the part the Tea Party will play? What chance does Palin have?

T: She won't be nominated!

M: Chris Christie looks more likely to win it than her. The republicans need to remember that its incredibly difficult to win a presidential election on a radical set of ideas.

O: This may seem basic maths, but assuming there isn't a large number of new voters, a Palin win would have to involve many people who had voted Obama switching to Sarah Palin. I can't see it happening.

M: The Tea Party isn't really a political party per say. That is why they can say outrageous things. They're not thinking about the long term effect of their statements. The Republican party needs to think about putting up candidates that will win a general election. If they're strategic about it they'll put up a more moderate candidate.

O: Delaware is a blueprint for that. O'Donnell winning the primary undermines the more important race.

M: And it has happened before in 08 with McCain choosing Palin as his running mate and putting off moderates.

O: There therefore appears to be a big risk of getting caught in a 'no man's land'. How can you simultaneously appeal to

As a recent biographer has noted, Beck's is a tale of struggle and redemption, and one that is carried out in, and perhaps distended for, the public eye. But for all his showmanship, there's something remarkably authentic about his persona. His tears aren't always those of a snake. They are the upshot of a life of misfortune, a story of a radio-obsessed teenager who just wouldn't put down the mic. And that's why he means so much to so many: enough, at least, to find himself at the forefront of the Tea Party and the American Christian Right.

One of Beck's common lecture circuit themes is the liberal media's inability to understand the Tea Party movement. Or as he is fond of putting it, darkness can never understand light. He makes a good point. For the war that is today being waged on the establishment is not really about tax rates and out-of-control fiscal spending, failed stimuli and government bailouts. Though these issues are important, they are mere sideshows to a far greater and more pressing socio-cultural divide. What the Tea Partiers and the associated flock really yearn for, in a political system that has gradually become hollowed out by the elite, devoid of morality in all but rhetoric, is for two related things: one, for the values and traditions that they consider constitutive of their nationality to remain sacred, and two, for a return to the mythical Golden Age of the Founders, when each and all shared freely in the forging of the community and the Republic.

To his followers, he is prophet and a visionary, and to his enemies, a swindler and a demagogue. Remind you of anyone? Yes, for all their differences, there's something remarkably similar about Glenn Beck and Barack Obama. Sure, one's clearly mentally unstable and often unconscionable, while the other seems like a thoroughly good chap. But beyond that, or maybe before that, there is some likeness. Both are divisive. And both derive their divisiveness from their mastery at manufacturing fragmentary narratives and uniting their nations behind them. If Beck's success is to teach the much-maligned President anything, it's that cultural radicalism won't yield to political compromise, or even rationality. He needs to concoct an alternative, morally infused cultural narrative, and fast. ☛

moderates and keep the Tea Party happy?

T: Politics will swing back to the more moderate ground by the next presidential election. The broad appeal of these kind of radical candidates is largely unknown.

J: We have to look at the economy. If unemployment is high, no doubt the electorate will be more tolerant of a conservative candidate. Democrat economic policy will have been demonstrated to be a failure.

M: The Democrats PR is also to blame. Why are they so bad at selling what they have achieved? Obama has to prove himself as a candidate in a way others wouldn't have to.

O: A concluding idea: recently, John Stewart held 'the rally to restore sanity'. Do you think everyone is finally calming down? The sensible liberals are here and the tea party will subside - how likely is that narrative?

J: Stewart and Colbert are some of the few exciting liberals. We're not sure if Obama can still excite people. That's maybe part of the problem. Liberals just aren't as exciting as tea party activists.

M: Also, the rally was organized by Comedy Central. I think this shows how ineffectual the left wing response is. The Tea Party means business. ☛

Governor as gerrymanderer

Lauren Fedor knows that the midterms aren't just about the House and the Senate

In the days, weeks and months leading up to this week's US midterm elections, all eyes have been on Congress. With all 435 seats in the House of Representatives and 37 coveted spots in the Senate at stake, everyone seems to have just one question in mind: Will the GOP "take back" the US legislature?

Amidst the "will-they-or-won't they" numbers game, little attention has been paid to the gubernatorial races in 37 of the nation's 50 states. In 24 of those states, the current governors are either term-limited or have decided not to seek re-election—and in at least 10 other states, incumbents are battling in tight races to maintain their positions. In other words, it's not unlikely that, come January, more than half of the nation's states will be under new leadership.

"It's the most important gubernatorial election in a generation" said Nathan Daschle, executive director of the Democratic Governors Association: So why doesn't the public—or at least, the media—seem to care? To be sure, the gubernatorial field isn't lacking for colourful characters.

'It's the most important gubernatorial election in a generation'

In California, GOP candidate and former eBay CEO Meg Whitman is expected to fall to her Democratic challenger, Jerry Brown, despite having spent more of her own money—upwards of \$140 million—on her campaign than any political candidate in US history.

In New York, Democratic candidate Andrew Cuomo is set to triumph over the GOP's Carl Paladino, who has repeatedly been the subject of tabloid fodder: first for allegedly forwarding racist and sexually explicit emails to his colleagues, then admitting that he fathered a daughter a decade ago during an extramarital affair, and most recently, accusing Mr Cuomo of

cheating on his own ex-wife.

And even in the nation's smallest state, Rhode Island, Democratic contender Frank Caprio—who is likely to lose to Independent candidate Lincoln Chafee—caused a stir when, disappointed by President Obama's refusal to endorse his candidacy, he told reporters the Mr Obama "can take his endorsement and really shove it as far as I'm concerned."

But I digress. Beyond the money, sex and scandal, this year's 37 gubernatorial races merit careful thought, analysis and attention. While the outcome of Congressional races certainly do "count" in the short-term—and will most definitely have a profound effect on the next two years of Washington Politics—the results of the gubernatorial races, for many reasons, have the potential to shape the landscape of American politics for the next decade.

GERRYMANDERING

The first, and perhaps most important, reason why these oft-overlooked races "matter" is the role governors play in the processes of reallocation and redistricting. This year, the US completed its decennial, Constitutionally mandated census, the results of which will be used in 2011 to determine the reallocation of seats in the House of Representatives. While the House will—as it has for nearly a century—maintain its size at 435 seats, the seats will be reapportioned among the 50 states, in accordance with the population shifts that have taken place over the last decade.

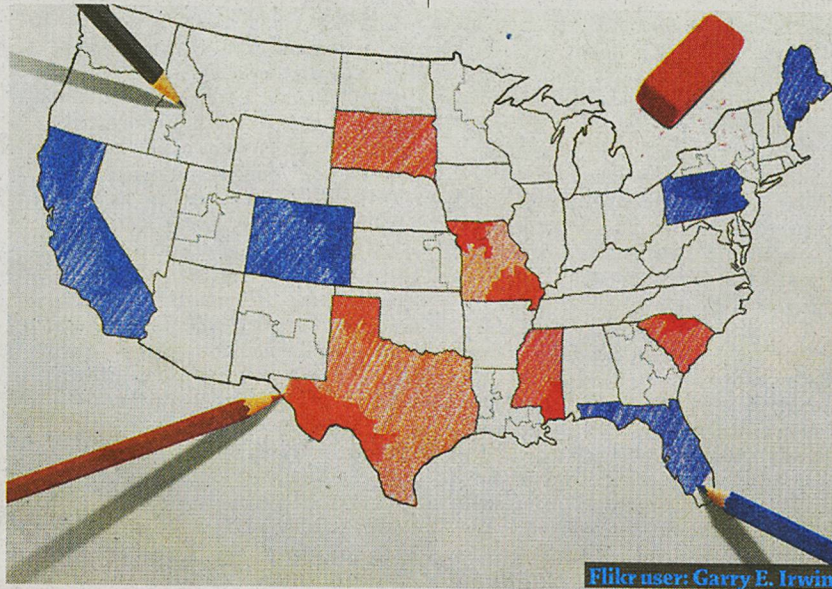
Since the early 1940s, a "method of equal proportions" has been used to effectively allocate these seats; today, most districts average 700,000 constituents. The US Constitution requires that each state, regardless of size, be granted at least one representative; however, Congressional districts cannot cross state lines. In short, it's a zero-sum game: One state's gain is sure to be another state's loss. Though the official census results have yet to be released, analysts predict states such as Florida, Arizona, Georgia, Nevada, South Carolina, Utah and Washington will gain seats; meanwhile, Illinois, Iowa, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan,

Missouri, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania are expected to lose at least one representative.

Once these seats are apportioned among the states, the responsibility falls upon each individual state to divide itself into districts. In nearly all states, the state legislature is responsible for redistricting. The governor must then accept the

lines to include as many of one party's voters as possible, thereby securing the district for the party in power.

In simplest terms, the governors of 2011 will oversee a process that could drastically influence the delegation of congressmen from their state for the next decade—and in doing so, fundamentally change the landscape of the US federal



legislature's proposal, or reject it. In rare cases of deadlock, the federal courts may intervene.

Sounds simple enough, right? Not quite. Redistricting has long been a highly controversial process, in which the parties controlling the state legislatures, not to mention the governors, often try to change

legislature.

GOVERNORS AND CONGRESS

But the outcomes of this week's gubernatorial elections won't only affect the future of Congress; the governor's races will likely have serious implications for the presidential elections of 2012, as well.

GERRYMANDERING

district boundaries to ensure their parties maintain control of certain regions.

This scheme of manipulative map-making is typically called "gerrymandering," and it generally involves dividing a strongly partisan area among two or more districts—with the intent of diluting a certain party's influence and thus limiting its voting leverage—or redrawing district

In many cases, especially in particularly close races, presidential candidates perform better in states where the governor is a member of his or her political party. For instance, in 2000, George Bush just-barely won Florida—with a Republican in the governor's mansion. Likewise, in 2004, Bush again seized a narrow victory in Ohio, due at least in part to the

influence of then-Governor Bob Taft.

What does this mean for Barack Obama's potential 2012 bid for re-election? In 2008, Obama took back nine states that had gone "red" for George W. Bush in 2004: Nevada, Colorado, New Mexico, Iowa, Indiana, Ohio, Florida, North Carolina and Virginia. Now, pollsters are claiming that at least four of those states—Nevada, New Mexico, Iowa, and Ohio—are likely to elect Republican governors. Moreover, Indiana and Virginia's sitting governors, neither of whose seats are up for grabs, are both Republicans, while Florida's current race is deemed too close to call, (sound familiar?) with many polls reporting a less-than one percentage-point difference between GOP candidate, Rick Scott, and Democratic contender, Alex Sink.

As if that weren't enough cause for concern for the Obama White House, it should be noted that in recent decades, the governor's mansions have been seen, in many cases, as stepping-stones to the White House. After all, Barack Obama was the first sitting senator to take on the presidency since John F. Kennedy in 1960. Four of the last five US presidents were former governors: George W. Bush, Texas; Bill Clinton, Arkansas; Ronald Reagan, California; and Jimmy Carter, Georgia. (A foreign policy specialist, George H.W. Bush served as vice president, ambassador to the United Nations, director of Central Intelligence, and congressman before moving into the White House in January 1989).

So, are the rising stars of the GOP—or potential challengers to President Obama's Democratic leadership—among this year's 70-plus gubernatorial candidates? Will Republican victories in gubernatorial races damage Mr Obama's chances of re-election in 2012? Moreover, could Republican triumphs today guarantee a GOP advantage in next year's redistricting processes? Only time will tell. For now, I suggest that whilst waiting for John Boehner to seize speaker's seat, or Christine O'Donnell to concede with one last screwy soundbite, you check out the returns for the governor's races, too. They might just matter more. ☛

Americans, reclaim your country!

Alex Mather thinks that the US deserves better than Sarah Palin

With the impending U.S. midterm elections set to fundamentally alter the political landscape in America, many have turned to everyone's favourite former Alaskan governor for guidance. What did the inimitable Sarah Palin promise her supporters? Why, that she would "go more rogue", of course. We wouldn't have expected any less.

As the widespread anger with the current political establishment in Washington continues to permeate through America and the Tea Party movement continues to gain steam, one can't help but wonder what reasonable, informed and enlightened Americans think about how these machinations affect the world's view of their country.

The rest of the world is left mystified as to how such a figure could gain such prominence

Ms Palin's proficiency—or lack thereof—in relatively inconsequential matters, such as foreign and economic policy, international relations, or use of the English language, is well documented. It is, in fact, tempting to write an article on the self-described "mama grizzly bear hockey mom" which includes nothing other than a list of her most outrageous quotes. The Beaver, unfortunately, is not of sufficient

length to permit such an undertaking.

The more salient problem is that current critical examination of one of the most popular American politicians has moved into a space that renders her somewhat immune to the criticisms that would normally be levied against such a figure. Her rhetoric is so outrageous and off-base most of the time that it has become difficult to engage in any substantive dialogue about her politics—a scenario which also has come to define debate around the Tea Party.

If just about any other politician in the world were to, in commenting on the Obama administration, ask the question, "how's that whole hope-y, change-y thing workin' out for 'ya?," as Ms. Palin recently did, they would most assuredly be dis-

counted and lowered in public perception. With Palin, this is commonplace.

This is, if we recall, the same former vice presidential candidate who, when queried on her foreign policy experience, responded that her qualifications were established by the fact that she could see Russia from her front porch. Which is sort of analogous to Madonna's masseuse claiming that she picked up vocal and dancing talent via osmosis.

As such, the rest of the world is left in wonderment, mystified, alarmed and confused as to how such a figure could gain such prominence. Simply, it makes America look bad. Really bad.

There is, unfortunately, no repudiating (or, "refudiating", care of S.P.), the massive popularity that she, and the associative

Tea Party, are currently enjoying in the US. As the midterms draw near, Democrats seem set to lose control of at least one, if not both, houses of Congress. The world is taking notice of this unfortunate possibility. Foreign Policy Magazine recently published an article featuring global commentaries on Palin and the Tea Party movement, appropriately entitled "The Horror, the Horror... and the Pity."

A French newspaper identified the Tea Party as "conspiracy theorists, reactionaries and anti-elitists." In Spain, writers mused that they "don't know if we feel more profound horror or more profound pity towards Americans." A German piece commented on "a fear of American decline." The global community is confounded. How could a country's political culture that produced Jefferson, Lincoln, Kennedy—and even that scary liberal socialist, Obama—have fallen into the farce by which it can currently be identified?

In fairness, it is obvious that the majority of Americans support neither the Tea Party movement, nor Palin. A New York Times survey found recently that the Tea Party enjoys the support of only about 18 per cent of Americans. It also noted that, overwhelmingly, supporters are white, male, married (to a woman) and over 45 years old. These demographics are of course not reflective of American demographics.

However, these supporters are motivated. They are angry. And they want change—of a seismically different sort than was promised to Americans by President Obama over a year ago.

Even now, the Tea Party movement and 'Palinism' are under attack from both sides of the political spectrum. Even Karl Rove, former Bush administration special advisor and devil-in-residence observed that Palin lacks the "gravitas" to ever be

seriously considered for a seat in the Oval Office, citing her upcoming Discovery Channel reality show, among other follies. Another columnist nicely summed up Palin's popularity as "having made ignorance chic."

But herein lies the fundamental problem with the Palin/Tea Party movement itself. The commentary which signals to the rest of the world that the rational side of American political culture—that's the "lamestream media" to Palin—is still alive and kicking is completely and utterly lost on the hardcore conservative supporters. In fact, it appears only to further fuel their already smoldering fire and associated hatred of reasonableness and compromise.

This refutation of reality shows no signs of abating, if recent campaign stumping is any indication. Last week, Palin-backed Nevada senatorial candidate Sharron Angle said to a classroom of Hispanic students, "some of you look a little more Asian to me." Angle currently enjoys a 4-point lead in the polls. I couldn't make this up.

The continued acceptance of the Palinesque politics of a disheartened America is simultaneously disheartening to the rest of the world. While the last 18 months haven't been kind to the U.S., the decline in prominence hasn't been so precipitous as to enable the rest of the world to simply "write-off" the U.S.—far from it.

Some claim that the extreme conservatism and general lack of coherent thought employed by Palin and select Tea Party candidates may actually be a boon to the Democratic party and liberal establishment, as it will contribute to the further splintering of an already fractious Republican party. Let us hope they are right. Either way, this is my plea to Americans: reclaim your country. ☛



The President in the Bronx

Shibani Mathani explores Obama's popularity among minorities

The internet allows us an almost instant flashback to the past. Youtube videos document the reactions in the Bronx to the historic moment when Barack Obama was elected president on 4 November, 2008. Shouts of "Obama! Obama! Obama!" rung out as people danced on corners with the American flag. People cheered from the windows of their low-rise flats while car horns honked away on the streets below. These streets were pitch dark, only lit by street lamps that seemed to shine with the light of hope and the expectation of change.

The Bronx and its large Hispanic population was a crucial slice of Barack Obama's victory back in 2008. America's Hispanic population nationally favored Obama over McCain 67 per cent to 31 per cent according to a report released by the Pew Hispanic Center. According to the same report, the majority of Hispanic youth voted for Obama at 76 per cent compared to 19 per cent for McCain. But almost two years on, a week before the mid-term elections, a very different mood filled the air. The media hype around the election is largely missed by many Bronx residents - only four of 15 people polled said they were definitely going to vote. Even support for Obama, the supposed saviour of the working-class, minority population has waned. Out of these 15 interviewed, nine said they still supported

President Obama, while the rest had mixed opinions. "Many Dominicans feel like me, they're not so sure about him because he hasn't done what he promised, but they want to see what he does now," said Tony Lopez, 29. An immigrant from the Dominican Republic who has been here for 17 years and owns a small car hire company, Lopez voted for Obama in both the presidential primary and election in 2008. When asked what issues are closest to him, Lopez said, "we are Latinos - we have to care a lot about immigration." He added that Obama has not satisfied many Bronx residents like himself when it comes to this issue, telling stories of undocumented workers who work harder than many legal immigrants and American citizens but for far less pay. He believed the inaction has more to do with the system, stating that change is "not about one person."

Agreeing with Lopez, Rosemary Accona, 28, said "he has not done what he promised to do... I think it was basically a scam," through a translator as she walked by the Yankee Stadium hand-in-hand with her six year old daughter. She referred in particular to Obama's promised immigration reform, a key issue in his 2008 platform. On his website, the President states: "it's unacceptable to have 11 million people in the United States who are living here illegally and outside of the system", adding that it affects the

entire nation and not just one community. Accona said that she expected the issue to be dealt with a lot sooner, but because it has already been more than a year, she is losing faith that anything will be done. She stressed that she is not against the President, but does not support him now either.

Nationally, 63 per cent of Hispanics still approve of President Obama, as compared to 47 per cent of all voters according to the aforementioned survey by the Pew Hispanic Center. According to Mark Lopez, associate director of the Pew Hispanic Center, part of the Washington, D.C.-based Pew Research Center, the number reflects the large numbers of Latinos supporting Obama in 2008. Lopez said in a phone interview that even though many panelists and academics at the center have said the lack of immigration reform is a reason for their dissatisfaction with the Obama administration, Pew surveys show that "immigration has never ranked as the top issue for Hispanics nationally", but education, jobs and healthcare do.

Two weeks ago, Conservative group Latinos For Reform aired an ad in Nevada, encouraging Latinos not to vote and urging Hispanics not to vote as a statement against failed promises of immigration reform on the part of the Democratic Party. The ad said: "If we just go on supporting [Democrats] again this November, they

will keep playing games with our future and taking our vote for granted. Don't vote this November. This is the only way to send them a clear message." According to the Pew Center poll, there is indeed weak voter motivation to go out to the polls, with only 32 per cent of Hispanics nationally saying they gave the election "much thought." However, Mark Lopez of the Pew Hispanic Center believes there is an unfair correlation between failure to vote and apathy.

"You need to see more than voting to gauge political and community involvement," said Lopez, "especially in a city like New York where you can be involved in so much else. Young people often get involved in their schools and people frequently feel that they can change the system more from involvement in their institutions, like churches, rather than the political system."

"It does not mean people are apathetic," he added.

Shibani Mathani was Executive Editor of the Beaver in 2009-10. She is currently a student at the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, and a freelance writer for the Guardian.

WHAT IF... ... the Whiskey Rebellion was Successful?

Jack Tindale

The obvious long-term effects of the decision of former Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson to support the Pennsylvania distillers over federal troops in 1794 can be seen in a cursory glance at a map of North America. The continent is occupied by eight nations north of the Rio Grande with the vast and civil strife-wracked Empire of Mexico contrasted with the icy wilderness of New Kamchatka and the British Dominion of Labrador. Most historians view Jefferson's speech in support of the insurrectionists in February 1794 as being the moment that irrevocably shifted the political future of the fledgling United States of America. Jefferson's march on Philadelphia at the head of the frontier army eventually culminated in George Washington's resignation. The brief civil crisis now known to the world as the Whiskey Revolt or the Second American Revolution was brought to end.

John Adams, Acting President following Washington's surprise decision to step down, chose to call a Second Constitutional Convention in September that year which ended in a thorough redrafting of the sacred document. Owing to the mass walkout by Alexander Hamilton and his fellow supporters of the federal government, Jefferson's faction emerged victorious in the talks, resulting in the establishment of a far less centralised administration. The secession of the north-west from the Union later that year was personally opposed by the new President. However, mediation by his new Secretary of State, Albert Gallatin and his counterpart in New York, Aaron Burr, allowed the Republic of New England to have an amicable divorce from the mother country.

The widely divergent paths taken by the two nations is clearly visible to this day. The United States of America survives as an harmonious and primarily agrarian confederation, occupying the North American continent from Toronto to Florida and from Maryland to the border with the Kingdom of Louisiana. The government in Richmond remains dominated by the Democratic-Republican Party although the power of the central government remains exceptionally limited, most powers being devolved to the individual states. The USA has done little to intervene abroad, although it is clear that her new government, led by the youthful President Randolph Parker, may choose to adopt stricter border controls, especially from the increasingly flood-like wave of immigration from the Mexican Empire.

In direct contrast to this, the Republic of New England is an industrial superpower dominating the Eastern Seaboard, especially since annexing and the République du Québec during the St. Lawrence War of 1856. Politically, New York had seen the consolidation of the two-party system, primarily between the conservative Whigs and the Socialist Party. President Burr's decision to reopen trade links with the United Kingdom proved controversial at the time, but the warming relations with London allowed for the establishment of the highly influential Trans-Atlantic Alliance that remains to this day. With the evolution of the position of Prime Minister, eventually formalised into a constitutional role during the Presidency of Henry Clay, the RNE, after the Kingdom of Canada, remains the most Anglophile nation in the hemisphere...

It's the economy, stupid

Paula VanLaningham corners the salient issues of the electoral race

Media discourse on the 2010 US mid-term elections is frequently dominated by a discussion of the Tea Party movement and its implications for continued Democratic control of the US government. The question remains, however, whether or not the Tea Party movement is genuinely controlling the tone of the debate in individual elections.

Political analysts have predicted a major blow for the Democratic Party on Tuesday. Frustration with the continued sluggish growth of the American economy, persistently high employment, the new health care bill, and the ever-unpopular financial bailout of 2009 has turned the tide on the idealism that swept President Obama and the Democratic Party into office in 2008.

Recent polls place Senator Harry Reid, the Democrat Majority Leader, behind Sharron Angle, his Republican opponent. Angle has gone after Reid as a Washington insider and has criticized him for his close relationship with the President and his position on a slate of issues including health care reform and the financial bailout plan.

This type of attack was a problem for many moderate-leaning Republicans in the primary elections this spring: Senator Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) narrowly lost the 2010 Republican primary election to Sarah Palin-endorsed, Tea Party-backed candidate Joe Miller. Murkowski has launched a write-in campaign to maintain her seat. In Pennsylvania, the overwhelming popularity of conservative Congressman Pat

Toomey with Pennsylvania Republicans encouraged five-term Republican senator Arlen Specter to switch his allegiance to the Democratic Party. Toomey had also attacked Specter for his long-serving position in the US Senate and his support for health care reform.

The overall message facing candidates is very clear: jobs come first

Now many Democrats face the same problems. Senator Russ Feingold (D-WI) is in a tight race which has also found him defending his long-time position in the Senate. Even in the traditionally Democrat-leaning Washington State, incumbent Senator Patty Murray is statistically tied with Republican challenger Dino Rossi, according to the Rasmussen polling agency.

But which issues are really at the center of this election? "It is really an election about the economy," a source close to Connecticut Democrat politics commented. "It is all about jobs and the unemployment rate." Connecticut, a traditionally left-leaning state, is currently home to a close Senate battle between Connecticut Attorney General Richard Blumenthal and WWE CEO Linda McMahon.

"The national rhetoric about the economy really takes shape here," the source said. "It's about looking out for the middle class."

Recent numbers from the Connecticut Department of Labour put the unemployment rate at 9.1 per cent, which is slightly below the national average of 9.6 per cent.

In fact, local concern for the economy has been one of the most important issues in elections across the country and across all levels of government. In California, Democrat candidate Jerry Whitman currently dominates Republican candidate Meg Whitman by a relatively narrow margin. California's budget deficit is estimated at around \$19 billion dollars and both candidates have submitted detailed plans to correct it. Paying down the deficit has coloured rhetoric on a wide range of other issues, including immigration reform, the health care debate, and the upcoming vote on Proposition 19, which would legalize the sale of marijuana.

Other issues have also enjoyed a prominent place in the dialogue. In the Alaska Senate race, for example, energy legislation has been front and center. "Resource development and the ways in which we can develop our resources responsibly is incredibly important in Alaska," Heather Handyside, Communications Director for Democrat Scott McAdams told The Beaver.

The health care bill, despite having been passed in March this year, has also been front center for a number of Candidates. First-term Congressman Tom Pariello (D-VA-5) was elected in a Conservative district in 2008 and

now faces a tough challenge from Robert Hurt. Pariello's support of the President's healthcare bill has been a major issue during this election.

"If you ask people whether or not they support the healthcare bill," Pariello's Press Secretary, Jessica Barba said, "you'll get a lot of people who say they don't. But if you take each piece independently, they poll very highly."

Additionally, the future of social security and Medicare continues to concern voters, particularly given the environment of economic uncertainty. "Privatization of social security, and how to reform it," Ms. Handyside said, "is an important issue for Alaskans."

In past elections, moral issue voting has been a major factor in voting trends. For example, the wave of anti-gay marriage sentiment dominated the 2004 presidential election while the abortion debate, always a hot issue in American, has frequently come to the forefront of electoral discourse.

Issues are a bit different this year, however. Steve Wacowskil, Spokesman for the Lisa Murkowski campaign in Alaska, said "Abortion is partially an issue, but it's not the biggest one."

Regardless of Tuesday's results, the election debate and the ultimate success of the Republicans, Democrats or Tea Partiers, the important issues to Americans is the economy, healthcare and the future of social security. The verdict remains out on how successful the Tea Party rebellion is likely to be come Tuesday - but the overall message facing candidates is very clear: jobs come first.

Measured musings



Blame it on our common language or common heritage. Heck, even blame it on 501s and Big Macs: we're all Americans. Or so we think. A British visitor to the United States is, almost invariably, surprised at where they find themselves. Expecting the America they see on screen, instead they are greeted by a huge, complicated, and diverse place. The apparent ubiquity of American culture all too often obfuscates these important differences between us and them - differences we readily forget when judging Americans on their politics. News of mainstream candidates with strong opinions on masturbation, commentators that cry tears of patriotism on prime time television, and activists'

Curiosity not Judgement

posters comparing a progressive 'leader of the free world' to Hitler reach our shores to sharp intakes of breath. This in vogue reaction to goings on 'across the pond' is the product of a lapse in thinking and a failure in comprehension. Indeed, the lenses we see other parts of the world through are oft-forgotten when looking at America.

A good student of a foreign land's politics should never take what she sees at face value. A foreign correspondent is only of worth if she has the capacity to distinguish what can be put down to a place's unique culture from what cuts through as a universal story. Remembering that some things are global while others are local is something we forget to do when looking at America. Instead, we choose

to read American politics as a grandiose parable, thinking that all virtue and sin can be found in the 'goodies' and 'baddies' of the United States. This is our fatal error. Once we begin to moralise on the matter, our curiosity and intrigue subsides leaving only unforgiving judgement. One must steer a course between complacency and stereotyping. It is as easy to think of Americans as gun-owning, low IQ test scoring, arch capitalists as it is to think of them as one of us. Edward Said's 'orientalist' analysis of how Europe looks east, criticising the enduring pervasion of stereotypes in our construction of assumptions on the Asia and the Middle East, is of surprising relevance here. Misinformed caricatures of Americans can be dangerous to.

When you discover the results of the mid-term elections, you will, if the outcome is as predicted, discover the triumph of a strange kind of politics - a kind of conservatism rooted in liberty, the individual, and the constitution. This is the first and least surprising of countless paradoxes you will find. Whatever your political persuasion, remain curious and do not forget the discrepancies between us and them. After all, as the great observer of American society, Alistair Cooke reminds us, 'people in America, when listening to the radio, like to lean forward. People in Britain like to lean back.'

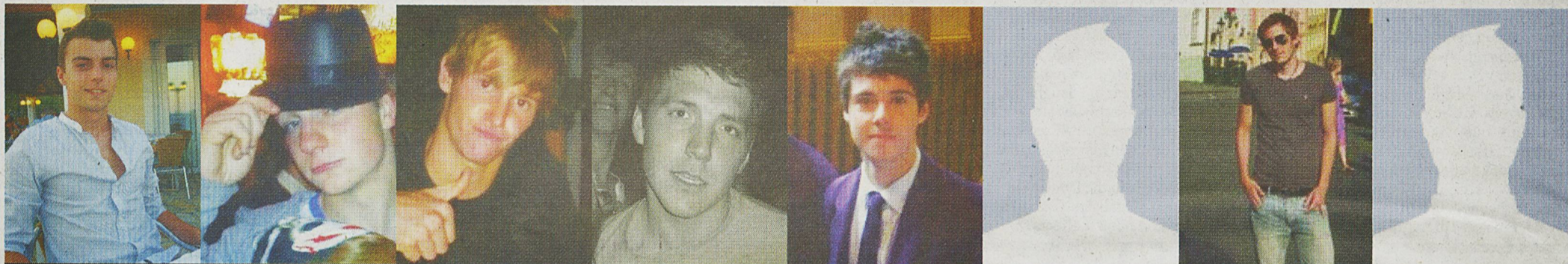
1st XI Teammates

Tom Gay (Besty)

Do you enjoy handling balls? The FC has a shortage of goalkeepers this season, so if anyone is reasonably competent in the nets and fancies a game, please get in contact with Latif Baluch at L.A.Baluch@lse.ac.uk
If you would like to dish some dirt on your teammates with witty profiles, contact us at sports@thebeaveronline.co.uk



Dirtiest – Casimo. Self-named 'The Don', our half-scouse, half-sicilian captain was nearly killed in a gang brawl last year and should have seen red against the 2s.	Shittiest barnet – Moore-sy. Who else? The safety pin, 80s style tracksuit wearing ladies man has animals living in his hair.	Worst taste in music – Tom 'Michael Buble' Mason – "He is a great man."	Quickest – Vikrant. We've not raced but if we raced he'd probably win. More fast-twitch fibers than the rest of us put together.	Most stacked – Jonny. Wasn't he an extra in 300?	Most popular with the ladies – Fishy Finger.	Biggest engine – Matt 'the headless chicken' Roderick. Our new import from Newport never stops running.	Most relaxed – Victor. Turned up to trials with nothing but a pair of Astroturf trainers and an Alice Band –
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Most improved – Far-rar has already doubled his goal tally from last season.	Longest in the shower – Warren. That lad takes male grooming too far.	Most skilful – Ingy. We don't know what he does with the ball but when he gets it everything goes blurry. He'd last longest in prison –three lads couldn't corner him.	Biggest Joker –Me. Football's not about fun, it's about winning. 1st team mantra.	Best vision – Harry 'you don't need a licence for these eyes' Licence.	Most nomadic – Sam the Frenchman steals Danny Foy's title (sponsored by FIFA '11 – 'EA Sports. It's in the Game!')	Oldest – Rick Roberts. He thinks he's a post-grad bless him. He's just senile. How do you tell somebody they'll have to go into a home?	Most Scandinavian – Hendrik Sundvik. Noticeably Aryan.
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Gossip Gollum goes GaGa

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in to use once again, as in an attempt to woo a certain blonde back-combed Jock, (whose hair didn't fit in her Cat Hat), self-proclaimed Shia LeBoeuf lookalike Comrade Lex Teplukhingrad was attempting to leverage his social capital in return for another smash of a Cat. GG can quote the beatiful line in its entirety, "I'm the most upper-class person you will EVER date." In a week of piss-poor chat up lines, this one also seemed to do the trick. God knows how.

PAMELA

Following what seems to be the current trend of netballers getting their Pam on when those first few beats of Baywatch are heard, AU Secretary and Mrs LSE, was seen majestically swinging her shirt over her head. GG will be compiling a league table to rank each netballer who decides to Baywatch in correct attire. They will be ranked on various "attributes", including IQ, voluntary work, and philosophical views.

BEATBOXING

The Tuns was a lively affair this week, with the RFC putting on a variety show more curious than Britain's Got Talent. The first act was Lewis "Full Monty" Jones, who let everyone know he was definitely too sexy for his shirt. Surely a low point in any man's LSE career is standing next to Rudi covering your modesty with a builder's hat. Next up was Ben "I'm your President" Robinson, who went all BeardedMan to Bob the Builder's Mambo Number 5. His Wednesday night may have killed too many braincells, as rumours are circulating that the President no longer possesses the ability to dress himself.

GANG-BANG

A gang-bang slightly less heterosexual than the FC's previous attempts in Salou was witnessed this Wednesday. After sniffing around Roseberry for some vulnerable fresher's, two esteemed senior members of the Association Code Football Club and one of the Gaelic persuasion, found the prospect of the three of them in a bed more appealing than anything they found at Roseberry.

Malibu Stacey passed up an actual opportunity to snuggle a female fresher, dressed as a dalmation (insert doggy pun here), in order to spoon his Club Captain and his Gaelic counterpart. GG is not one to purvey unfounded gossip, however he has heard it said that "spooning can lead to forking".

ASSAULT

Everyone's favourite blonde bombshell bartender, (pull) and Strivla's partner in crime has had allegations made against her of sexual assault. One of the FC's smallest members (that's what she said), Noz, was overheard claiming she had taken advantage of him. However after a successful cross-examination of witnesses GG can conclude that it was quite a different story. Noz made it third time lucky for shit chat-up lines on Wednesday, using the line "I'm the biggest man in Armenia" (that's not what she said). Other witnesses have attributed his success to the fact that Bowlaah had spent an amount in the region of Greece's national debt on £1.50 Reefs and 2-for-1 Cocktails courtesy of Roadhouse.

TOUR

GG had an absolute tour this week, as the AU's finest females did not disappoint with their costumes, and the males did not disappoint with their atrocious chat up lines. These seemed to work 60% of the time, everytime. Next week sees the return of Zoo, where no doubt GG will see the AU going back to the Old-Skool. Bouncers with high-vis jackets and South African accents will be upset, especially when they hear its Boca's 21st: he will NOT put his shirt back on.

Costumes this week did not dissappoint GG. Netball 3rds pulled no punches whatsoever with their tasteful "Burlesque" outfits, although it seemed that the male members of the AU were, worryingly, more inclined to smash a Cat-In-a-Hat.

POLYS

Speaking of smashing a Cat-In-a-Hat, GG overheard one 6th team netballer (who happens to share a surname with GG's employer) using a rather forward chat-up line to a member of a popular London-based Polytechnical College, to the tune of "imagine me later in just this hat." This, girls, is apparently a Poly-friendly chat up line, as the GG saw the aforementioned Cat leaving with the Polytechnical undergraduate. Whether or not the hat stayed on GG cannot confirm.

CELEBRITIES

An effort from Miss Bevie Ege had many an AU reveller taking a second glance, (and not just because of the patent-leather leggings.) The Deevster was convinced Lady GaGa was in Walkabout making the most of the "5 Shots for £8" offer. Not Movidia, not the Ivy, but Temple Walkabout, the new hot-spot for the social elite. GG is convinced it has something to do with £1.50 reefs.

TOFFS

The social elite in attendance did not just end at Lady GaGa on Wednesday. GG's eavesdropping skills were put

LSE SPORT RESULTS

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Athl Union LSE Athletics Union Football:
1sts 3 - 1 St Georges Polytechnical College
2nds 2 - 5 UCL 1sts
3rds 0 - 3 Gimperial 3rds
4ths 0 - 2 St Barts
7ths 0 - 1 Queen Mary 5ths
a few seconds ago · [Comment](#) · [Like](#) · [Promote](#)

Athl Union LSE Athletics Union Men's Rugby:
1sts 29 - 15 Canterbury 1sts
2nds 22 - 25 Westminster 1sts
3 minutes ago · [Comment](#) · [Like](#) · [Promote](#)

Athl Union LSE Athletics Union Tennis:
2nds 4 - 6 Brighton 1sts
1sts 10 - 2 Roehampton 1sts
4 minutes ago · [Comment](#) · [Like](#) · [Promote](#)

Athl Union LSE Athletics Union Netball:
4ths 22 - 14 Queen Mary 4ths
6ths 13 - 23 SOAS 1sts
2nds 28 - 12 Roehampton 2nds
1sts 38 - 47 Imperial 1sts
7 minutes ago · [Comment](#) · [Like](#) · [Promote](#)

Athl Union LSE Athletics Union Women's Rugby 51 - 0 RVC
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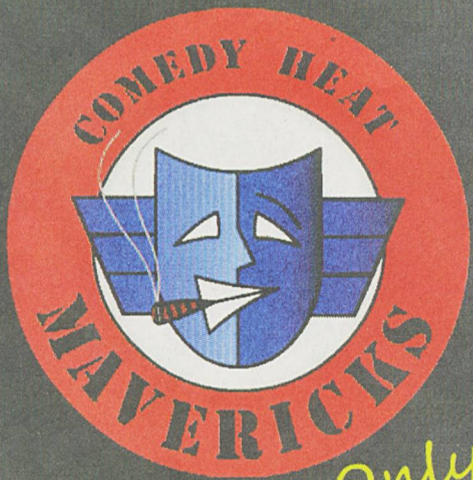
Athl Union LSE Athletics Union Women's Basketball 41 - 37 Hertfordshire
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Don't see your sports results here? Then email your Communications Officer, Megan Protheroe. She is very hardworking and good at her job so go ahead and send her through your scores in order to receive recognition for hard-fought victories! (Or defeats in the case of the FC this week)

TORSO OF THE WEEK



Josh Olomolaiye on his latest allegations of match-fixing: "There is no 'known' corruption in the LSE Rugby Club"



Only £3!!!

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Sport



This week: GG goes GaGa with gossip

WFC onwards and upwards

Rose De-Mondonca

Here we are again, another year, another bunch of hooligans. Whilst Bonnie's last premature ejaculation from Zoo, following an epic vomit on the dance floor, still lingers in our minds like a fart on a still day, it's time to look forward to the coming year.



We have a new team, new players and some new potential AU regulars lining up to hold the line that last year's team so carelessly dropped. Despite a poor effort in the welcome party boat race the WFC are more than ready to stand up and represent.

With Shamara frequently bailing to pursue an elusive male interest, Pippa AWOL (rumoured to have been found fraternising with a Rosebery Fresher) and Katie being found lying on a zebra crossing outside Verve after having informed the bouncer "I think I would like to leave now", it looks like other team members will have to take the mantle in endeavouring to do the social sec proud.

So far there has been no shortage of antics. Our resident Northerner was caught on the N550, engaging in some incest with a football lad at midnight. Could

it be love? Bonnie has lapsed on her statement that she only wants to be an "on the pitch Captain" with some hardcore Zoo attendance. The WFC also managed to leave their 'mark' on the Quad on a messy Wednesday during which Ella's blood splattered the walls while Alice fought to not chunder everywhere.

Some intense training sessions prior to the start of the season, with numerous drills and tutorials on the rules (mainly aimed at me) unseated initial fears that

"The WFC also managed to leave their 'mark' on the Quad on a messy Wednesday during which Ella's blood splattered the walls while Alice fought to not chunder everywhere."

WFC could be better at representing off the pitch than on.

On the Sunday of week 2, in an uneventful game, the WFC achieved a 2-1



win against Queen Mary's, with goals from Vice Captain Helena, and newbie Jen. In week 3, the club's confidence grew with a 0-0 draw against UCL firsts, an excellent result since they trounced us last



season.

Confidence was so high in fact that Pippa felt secure enough to bunk off the remainder of the game by hiding in a hedge, whilst Meredith engaged in a brilliant re-enactment of a popular sci-fi movie to keep the crowds entertained.

The new found love of amateur dramatics worryingly seems to be spreading throughout the club, with members following the Twilight trend this Wednesday, battling it out for maximum attention.

Coach John joined in with the spirit of things feeling that passing out on the train en route to training was the only way to get the spotlight trained back onto him. Let's hope this new thirst for glory doesn't spread any further and that we don't start losing members to the Drama Society, especially when we've only recently reclaimed Tala from the evils of Netball.

Excellent coaching? Check. Capable Captain? Check. New talent? Check. Looks as if the LSE WFC is shaping up well and early wins inspire confidence that we could be able to continue the legacy of last year and climb the league, hopefully this time to the top.

LSE Boxers wage war at Club Debut

S.T. Sinokki

It takes a lot more than mere courage to step into a boxing ring. The drunken crowd watches and yells as you walk towards the squared circle. On the opposite corner a muscled-up stranger is coldly waiting to try and take your head off once the bell rings. Unlike most sports, when you have a bad day in boxing you don't just lose, you literally get beaten. This is probably the reason why the opponents of Chris Baugh and Amar Gulati decided to pull out at the last minute before their scheduled bouts in Club Debut on Friday the 22nd. Luckily the opponents of Ryan Ward and Joe Resnick were man enough to show up and the gladiators from LSE Boxing put on quite a show.

Joe's final week of training had unfortunately been disturbed by a persistent flu and he showed up at the venue sporting a high fever. With a remarkable warrior spirit and veins pumping with paracetamol, he decided to go out and fight. His opponent on the other hand stepped into the ring appearing fresh and ready with his arms tattooed from wrist to shoulder. Yet the first round was all Joe. He out-boxed his opponent, who was nowhere near his level in terms of skill.

Misfortune struck at the beginning of the second round as Joe was caught with a jab that opened up his nose. His nose had bled occasionally in the past weeks whilst sparring and during that fateful second round the profuse bleeding just wouldn't stop. The referee was forced to call the fight to an end. It was an undeserved loss for Joe in a fight he was clearly dominating but that's boxing - sometimes a lucky punch can change the course of a fight in an instant.

"He literally caught me with about four clean shots throughout the whole fight," the disappointed fighter commented

afterwards.

A few bouts after Joe's, it was Ryan's turn. His opponent had changed at the last minute due to another pull-out. The only thing we knew about the replacement was an ominous warning by the promoter. He had hinted the new opponent was a lot bigger and awfully strong. However, no one had expected the monster that entered the opposite corner to face Ryan. He appeared twice Ryan's size, bound with muscle and looking exactly like Clubber Lang on steroids - truly an intimidating sight!

The first round gave us all a decent scare. The imposter Clubber Lang imposed his physical strength on Ryan, who has always had a hard time resisting a good old-fashioned brawl, and took the round, even wobbling Ryan on a couple of occasions. A lesser man would probably have given up at that point but instead Ryan stood up and clearly out-boxed his physically much larger opponent for the next two rounds. It was truly a brilliant performance with Ryan throwing quick combinations and moving out of Clubber's reach. By the last round Ryan had his opponent beaten and out of breath and most likely only the final bell saved him from getting flattened. The result was evident even before it was announced: a unanimous decision victory for Ryan.

"I feel on top of the world", Ryan exclaimed after the bout and he surely had a good reason for saying so. It was one hell of an entertaining fight.

Congratulations to both of the fighters. It takes some serious guts and commitment to get in the ring. LSE Boxing Club is proud of its warriors!

LSE Boxing is a part of LSE MMA. <http://www.lsesu.com/activities/ausports/mma/> Boxing training is on Tuesdays and Fridays from 6-8pm at the basement of the Old Building.

Football on the Wayne?

Stuart Smedley

Ever since he completed a U-turn of epic proportions, rumours have been flying as to why Wayne Rooney decided to sign a new contract with a team he only days before admitted - in a notably coherent statement - could no longer match his ambition to win trophy after trophy.

Instead of wanting to remain with a manager who has during his spell at Manchester United collected eleven league titles, nine domestic cups and won three continental competitions, Rooney seemed intent for a brief couple days to move to their cross-town rivals, whose most recent addition to their trophy cabinet was the Football League Division One title - back in 2001/02. (Sorry Howie D, but I sincerely hope that the drought continues for years to come - and that's from a fan of a team playing nowhere near the Premier League.)

But who forced his change of heart so quickly and so unexpectedly? Was it Sir Alex's astonishing press conference performance? The Glazers' promise to invest heavily in the Red Devils' squad? Ian Holloway's passionate, yet misdirected diatribe? Or the 'hoodies', who surrounded the England forward's mansion and daubed death threats across the walls of Manchester?

The answer is probably none of those. Instead, the best explanation was that it was the taxman.

Forget the spiel about United no longer possessing the prerequisite talent to fulfil Wayne's desires. Instead, it was

a perfect, yet cynical reading by his agent Paul Stretford of HMRC's intentions as they seek to close a loophole that would have cost his client millions.

Once again, a member of the most reputable profession in the beautiful game had struck themselves (and their client) gold.

For his part in negotiating Rooney's initial move to United, Stretford pocketed

"For his part in negotiating Rooney's initial move to United, Stretford pocketed himself a cool £1 million, while he also nets significant sums from any commercial deals or image rights the forward receives."

himself a cool £1 million, while he also nets significant sums from any commercial deals or image rights the forward receives.

But Stretford isn't the only devil dancing in money courtesy of the beautiful game, for the Premier League is expected soon to report that £80 million entered the pockets of his ilk courtesy of its member clubs last season.

And all for just playing a part in ne-

gotiations. As the noted economist Gary Neville has previously pointed out, hiring a lawyer and paying them by the hour would be far most cost-effective.

But who ultimately is to blame for agents' continued presence in the game? Fault arguably lies with three groups: players, clubs and the media.

Quite simply, players believe that without hiring a middle man they will strike it rich. Indeed, the websites of agency companies highlight how their extensive contacts can allow players to set up tax avoidance schemes more familiar with the likes of Lord Ashcroft.

Through promising riches, agents will even make ridiculous amounts of money from naive players who may never even make it at the game's highest level. Taking a look at one company's published list of clients is astonishing as amongst established stars such as Theo Walcott, you will find they represent the likes of Josh McEachran of Chelsea and Man City's Alex Henshall (aged 17 and 16 respectively) Of what exact use is an agent to a teenager other than to exploit them?

Clubs on the other hand have turned to agents to perform the role of scouts, demonstrating how lazy and complacent they have become when looking for talent. Portsmouth's astonishing creditors report is a perfect example of how dependent teams have become on using third parties to talent spot as at the time of going into administration the south coast side owed £9.7 million to middle men.

The media meanwhile, while criticising the amount of money that players' 'representatives' suck out of the game, will never take them fully to task. Why? Quite

simply because without these points of contact, their gossip columns - which are generally full to the brim with ridiculous rumours of player X going to team Y that never come close to coming true - would constitute a solitary paragraph rather than the countless columns inches they currently occupy.

At a time of penny-pinching, it's time football got its own priorities sorted and put a stop to the money haemorrhaging out of the game to greedy intermediaries. Otherwise, even more financial ruin lies ahead.

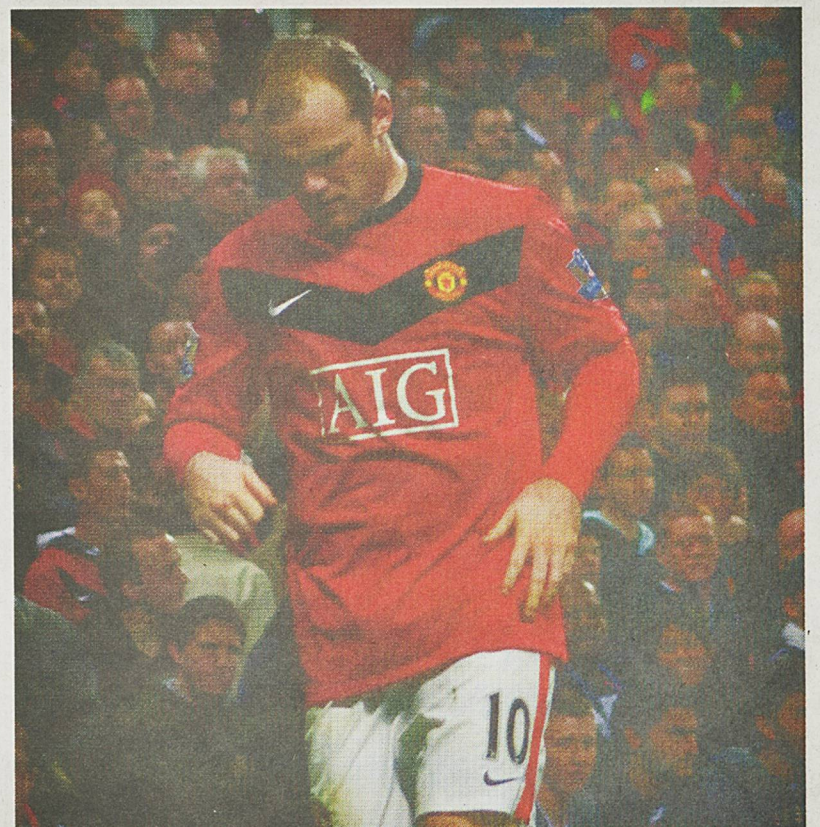


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Wayne Rooney: overweight and overpaid?