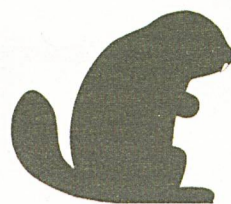


# the beaver



13.03.2012  
Newspaper of the  
LSE Students' Union  
FREE

## £78,000 spent on PR firm for Gaddafi Scandal



Lord Woolf | Photo: Beaver Archive

Alexander Young and  
Sydney Saubestre

The LSE spent somewhere in the region of £78,000 on external public relations (PR) consultancy in the wake of the GICDF donation scandal.

According to the minutes of the Development Committee meeting of 22nd June 2011 obtained by the Beaver following a Freedom of Information Act request, a number of "generous gifts to the School [were] made by a number of our volunteers in the UK and the US following an initiative led by [redacted] to seek incremental donations from current donors to cover the unforeseen costs of PR consultants appointed in the light of the Gaddafi issue and the resignation of the Director."

It was further noted by Fiona Kirk, Director of the Office of Development and Alumni Relations, that "a total of circa £78,000 was raised through this thoughtful initiative, a figure which broadly matched the costs incurred."

The Development Committee is a committee of the LSE Council intended to provide guidance to the Director of the Office of Development and Alumni Relations. To this end, it is charged with the oversight of the fundraising programme at LSE and the provision of "volunteer leadership for strategy, identification and solicitation of significant gifts to the School" according to the Terms of Reference laid out for the Committee.

The decision to take on an external PR consultancy was made at the Council meeting of the 3rd March 2011, an extraordinary meeting brought about by the resignation of Howard Davies, former Director of the LSE. In discussion at this meeting, it was agreed that "the Council supported the appointment that day of Powerscourt (a strategic, financial and corporate public relations firm)."

In the same meeting, it was decided that Lord Woolf would oversee the external inquiry, with terms as following: "Lord Woolf is to make recommendations to the LSE Council as soon as possible. He is to have total discretion as to how he conducts the inquiry, and as to the matters on which he is to report."

Powerscourt's previous clients include BP, for whom they have been an adviser since 2006; Wonga, the payday loan company; and BAE Systems, the defence, security and aerospace firm, for whom they consulted between 2005 and 2008. In 2007, Woolf was confirmed at the chair of an "Ethics Committee" set up by BAE Systems in response to allegations of multimillion pound bribery in arms deals with Saudi Arabia. Woolf made a series of

## 30.4 per cent of home students attended private schools

Nona Buckley-Irvine  
Staff Reporter

Figures obtained by the Beaver show that applicants from private schools are more likely to be admitted to the London School of Economics (LSE) compared to applicants from public schools.

The data being used showed the breakdown of the schooling background of students from the United Kingdom.

In the academic year 2011/12, the LSE received 27 per cent of its applications from the United Kingdom and the European Union from "independent schools". 30.4 per cent of students who are eventually admitted to the LSE came from those applications.

Conversely, the LSE received 1423 out of 5427 applications from students from state school comprehensives for the 2011/12 entry, representing 26 per cent of the applications. In response, only 21.6 per cent of entrants in the year 2011/2012 were from state school,

representing a disparity between the ratio of applications made to the LSE and places offered by the School.

A figure that will not appear surprising is the number of international students at the LSE: it still remains that around half of the LSE students are from overseas.

Overseas students can expect to pay £15,168 per year for their university education, without any UK government support - though some would receive support from their own governments - indicating that overseas students tend to be wealthy.

However, the LSE seemed to fare better in terms of widening participation than expected.

In early 2012, www.studentbeans.com, a website for student discounts and student advice, produced "The Posh University League." The league used statistics from the Higher Education Statistics Authority (HESA) to rank universities according to the proportion of students from independent schools they have.

The LSE was ranked 16th, below Oxbridge, St Andrews and University

College London, with a percentage of 29.2%.

On the LSE website, it is explained that their figures may differ from HESA figures. If LSE figures were used for the league table, the school would move up two places, above the University of Edinburgh and the Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

The statistics do not take into account the background of overseas students, of whom some attended fee-paying "international schools" or standard private schools.

The LSE is outperforming Oxbridge currently in terms of balancing its intake between private and state schooled students. In 2010, 44.6 per cent of students accepted to the University of Oxford were from the independent sector, much higher than the LSE.

However, the proportion of overseas students accepted to Oxbridge is significantly lower, with the LSE being renowned as a truly international university.

Opinion of students at the LSE remains divided as to whether this is a

problem or not.

One first-year student, in receipt of the LSE bursary had this to say: "Although there is a relatively even mix between private and public school pupils, the proportion of private and grammar school students combined seems to heavily outweigh those who went to traditional state comprehensives."

Abir Qazilbash, a first year International Relations student said: "LSE, being founded on left-wing/socialist principles, does still largely reflect that in its student body, and there isn't much of a problem of a private versus state school schism."

Dan Martin, a first year Social Policy student, disagreed. "A disproportionate number of students come to the LSE from independent schools and that shows," Martin said, "that isn't necessarily a problem, as there seems to be very little division between the state schooled and privately schooled. The figures do, however, raise the key issue of education outcomes."

Martin went on to ask: "Why is

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★ FAUX NEWS ★  
SPOOF EDITION INSIDE

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# thebeaver

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Issue No. 770

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## End of Term

This issue, the 770th edition of the Beaver, marks the final time the paper will be published for this academic year. While we would like to publish this newspaper in the Summer Term, the coming onslaught of exams and dissertations is just too great for our volunteer staff to continue to produce content each week. Despite the end of term, and the end of the Beaver for this academic year, we would like to highlight some of the events the Beaver has covered this past year.

Likely the elephant in the room is the Agony Uncles column that was included in this paper in Michaelmas Term under former editors. While we will not go into detail on this matter, we would like to reaffirm that it will not happen again and that the current and former editorial staff of this

newspaper continue to condemn the inclusion of the article in any form in past issues.

Michaelmas Term was also when the Woolf Report was released to much national and international media coverage. The Beaver was the first to cover the report and our Editorial Board was interviewed by the BBC and was relied upon for information by many media organisations.

Early in Lent Term, news of an incident on the Athletics Union Ski Trip which led to speculation of an antisemitic attack was also broken by the Beaver. In that case, our staff were contacted by news organisations from around the world for pictures and information. The Huffington Post even picked up our story and ran it in full form.

While our reports can tend to

be filled with "bad news," the Beaver's article on the treatment of Graduate Teaching Assistants has sparked discussion and promises of reform from many on campus. Incoming Students' Union Education Officer Duncan McKenna (a former Executive Editor of the Beaver) has placed this issue on the top of his agenda for next year.

But as we move into Summer Term, we would like to thank all those who have contributed to the Beaver this year who have helped this paper endeavour to secure our place as an advocate of LSE students and your first point of reference for student news. We will be working hard over the summer to bring you a newspaper you can be proud of next academic year, and we will continue to post breaking news on our website. See you in Michaelmas Term!

-- advertisement --

**DAN JARVIS MP**  
**MARCH 14TH**  
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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

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The Beaver would like to thank the LSE students who contributed to this issue.

The Beaver is published by the LSE Students' Union, East Building, Houghton Street, WC2A 2AE. Printed at Mortons Printing.

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### Correction:

In Alec Webley's election commentary on the Lent Term election results, Mohamed Harrath's election was said to have an unusually high number of RON votes. This was not the case.

The Beaver regrets this error.



## Union Bashō

### Internationalism

Spring maintains its step.  
The Union marches with it.  
Shame about the Trots.

# Beaver Social

The Beaver is holding a social in the Underground to celebrate the end of term!

Come one, come all! Meet our writers, editors, and contributors! Tuesday, March 13th at 7:00pm

# Sabbatical Officers: strangers on campus

Vincent Wong

A survey conducted by the Beaver has found that only five per cent of students are able to recognise the four full-time Sabbatical Officers and name their respective positions.

In total, 111 students took part in the survey, where they were asked to identify each Sabbatical

Officer in the picture above and to name their position. They were also asked about their knowledge of Students' Union campaigns and activities. For the purpose of obtaining a good representation of the student body, about half of students in the sample were either postgraduates or General Course students.

Of the students interviewed, 49 per cent were able to correctly name Alex Peters-Day when shown the photo. This was by far the highest recognition of the full-time Sabbatical Officers.

About the same percentage were able to correctly identify her as the General Secretary. A tenth of students surveyed thought she was the "President/Head/Director of the Students' Union."

Amena Amer was the second most recognised Sabbatical Officer, though only sixteen per cent of students were able to identify her correctly, and fourteen per cent were able to name her as

the Education Officer. According to our survey, she is better known among postgraduates than undergraduates, and there were more than a few "Postgraduate Officer" guesses.

Lukas Slothuus fared a little worse, with fifteen per cent of students being able to identify him, and eleven per cent able to name him as Community and Welfare Officer, though one student, who recognised him from the "Your Hall, Your Call" initiative, repeatedly described him as a "nice guy."

Just over ten per cent of students were able to identify Stanley Ellerby-English, and seven per cent were able to name him as Activities and Development Officer. Perhaps, as some students interviewed suggested, the Beaver ought to have used a more recent photo. A few students complimented his "new" hairstyle and glasses.

In response to this, Ellerby-English commented, "though I don't know how recognisable I would be to the average student I would hope that I have made myself known to most if not all of the people who run the various student groups. I think that visibility and communication are two of the key areas that the SU needs and will be developing more in the future, so I hope that next year's Sabbs take that on board."

Interestingly, Lois Clifton, the Environment and Ethics Officer seemed to have a rather high profile on

# 25%

OF STUDENTS KNOW WHEN UGM IS.

campus, with many mistaking her for the Education Officer.

When asked to name a Students' Union campaign this year, about thirteen per cent of students simply said "fees." Meanwhile, "The Only Way is Ethics" was successfully identified by seventeen per cent, though most who referred to this only managed to get the word "ethics." The "microwave in the Quad" campaign was mentioned by twelve per cent. Walkouts and "the anti-Semitism thing" were also mentioned by a few.

When asked about the Students' Union General Meeting (UGM) colloquially known as the "useless general meeting," about 25 per cent of students knew the day and time. Meanwhile, a third were able to correctly name the venue, the Old Theatre. A close contender for meeting space was the Quad.

One thing that stood out from the responses to the survey was the cynicism towards the Sabbatical Officers. Many interviewed lamented what they perceived to be a lack of engagement with students. A few wondered whether the Sabbatical Officers had ulterior motives for taking their positions.

"They make a lot of noise during elections, that's all they do," said one student, "you don't see them after that."

A few student complained that the campaigns held this year were neither

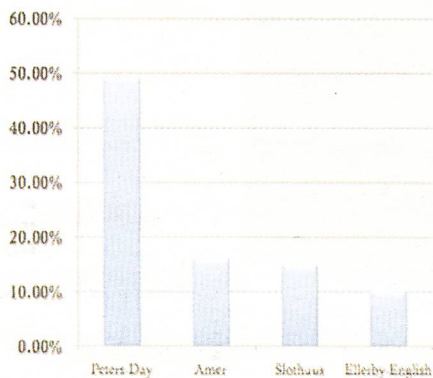
"substantial" nor "visible" enough. In comparison, the "Freeze the Fees" campaign last year still lingered in the memories of many of those surveyed.

Peters-Day spoke in support for the 'Only Way is Ethics' campaign, saying "this years campaign was always going to be different from previous ones. It has to all intents and purposes been very successful, in that the LSE has been looking very seriously at ethics and has launched a school-wide consultation with students at the forefront of the entire process."

"At the beginning of term we held some very well-attended meetings and around 2000 students signed-up to support the 'Only Way is Ethics'. Looking back we could have communicated some things better but I think we still see it is a successful campaign, if not the most visible one," added the General Secretary. "There are a lot of different ways to campaign and different tactics serve different goals."

Amer also responded to the poll stating, "Understandably I think some Sabbs are more well recognised in different student groups. This year we have tried to reach out to other groups and improve on our communication especially with our very own Facebook group and our blogs. This has been a step in the right direction but as always there is room for improvement."

Percentage of Students Who Could Identify the Sabb



# Student counselling centre over-extended

Shu Hang

The Beaver has received several complaints from students regarding the lack of counselling support provided by the London School of Economics (LSE).

The counseling service in the LSE is provided by the Student Counseling Service. According to the website, they "aim to enable students to cope more effectively with any personal or study difficulties that may be affecting them while at LSE." Providing a "free and confidential service", the center offers around 100 sessions of counselling each week.

In addition, it also holds support groups and workshops for issues ranging from stress management to procrastination, which has been utilised by around 500 students last year.

However, several students have expressed dissatisfaction towards the counseling service they have received.

A second year student, who asked to remain anonymous, commented on the difficulty in securing an appointment from the Student Counselling Service. The student claimed

he/she had to wait three weeks before getting an initial assessment appointment. It then took one month for the first counselling session to be scheduled and another three weeks for the second.

"This was at a time when I was close to committing suicide - I was so despondent", the student said. When trying to explain the urgent situation to the Student Counselling Service, the student was told that "the demand was too high at the moment and the best bet was to come in for a twenty minute walk in session."

The student turned to the NHS for help, only to find herself running into another wall. "They told me that short of paying someone 100 pounds per week, which I could not afford, I should just go in to the Emergency Section of any hospital if it got really bad," the student said.

Similar sentiments were echoed by another third year student. "It took them over a month to respond to my inquiry about starting counselling," the student said, "by that time, I was discouraged and had found external help."

In addition, there are also complaints criticising the center's inability in providing adequate long term counselling service and good referrals: "they told me at my first

meeting that they could not offer me more than five sessions and that I should focus on small issues, which wasn't really the problem" a First year student stated.

Adam Sandelson, the Head of Counselling, stated that appointments are offered based on urgency.

"The important issue here is working out who needs to be seen soonest, and if we know someone is in a high risk situation we will find a way to see them the same day," he said, "inevitably, there can be delays given the numbers of people we are seeing - especially in Lent Term."

According to Sandelson, 6.3 per cent of students indicated on the evaluation survey that their counselling sessions had not been arranged in a satisfactory time frame last year. The Student Counselling Service has since introduced a daily drop-in service to "improve our accessibility to students."

Responding to complaints regarding the lack of long term counselling service, Sandelson explained that the center operates on a short-term model, "aiming to see as many students as possible over the course of the year."

"A small number of students do have long term counselling," he said, "but we have to balance their needs

against the rest of the students' at LSE."

He added that the center "has good links with a number of agencies where we refer students. In most cases, students will refer themselves to outside organisations for long term counselling," he added.

Sandelson also shared some positive feedback the center has received from a student, which said: "having someone to talk to about my problems was incredibly useful. The counsellor really helped me to feel better about myself and come up with ways to deal with my problems."

Earlier this year, the LSE Student Union have teamed up with Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM), a charity that strives to bring down suicide rates among young men in the UK through unconventional methods, such as music, football and magazines, in a bid to improve the amount of support available to students in the LSE.

According to Lukas Slothuus, Community and Welfare Officer, the Student Union will "distribute their free magazines and include them on our website and newsletter", though he added that the SU's involvement could "potentially develop further than that."

## News in brief

Anorexia appears to be a socially transmitted disorder according to new research from the LSE.

The "economic analysis" of anorexia, using a sample of nearly 3,000 young women across Europe, concluded that peer group pressure is one of the most significant influences on self-image and the development of anorexia.

During a series of lectures at the LSE, entitled "Worldwide perspectives on Europe," the Czech Prime Minister, Petr Nacas, has called for the EU to overhaul its budget in order to better represent the economic interests of the Union. He called for budget increases in research funding and a reduction in funding for agriculture, specifi-

A study out of the LSE, entitled "India: The Next Superpower?" dismisses US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's statement "I consider India not just a regional power, but a global power" claiming that India will not achieve superpower status in the foreseeable future. The study points to high levels of corruption, poor leadership and a highly stratified soci-

The British Sociology Association (BSA) held an event entitled, 'Social Sciences and the Olympic Games!'

Jill Timms, a PhD student in the Department of Sociology at the LSE, explored the dichotomy between the experiences of workers used in the production of merchandise for the games and the universal principles of fairness as promoted in the Olympic Charter.

LSE Emeritus Professor Peter Loizos died Loizos on 2nd March 2012. Loizos, who taught in the Department of Anthropology for thirty years, started at the LSE in 1969 and became a Professor of anthropology in 1997. He made important contributions to the anthropology of the Hellenic world as well as the study of gender in the Mediterranean.

# Community voting debated at UGM

Shu Hang

Last week's Union General Meeting (UGM) saw a bigger than usual turnout as one of the largest motion of the year, "Community Voting," took center stage.

The motion, which has been repeatedly described as "very complicated" by various students who spoke on the issue, mainly sought to ensure that the Athletics' Union President, the Mature/Part Time Officer, the International Students' Officer, the Disabled Students' Officer, the Women's Officer and the Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender (LGBT) Officer are elected solely by the community

they are representing.

The motion also moved to introduce a Black and Ethnic Minority (BME) Officer, rename the Anti-Racism Officer the Anti-Racism and Anti-Fascism Officer, forming a "LSESU LGBT Alliance" and replacing the Postgraduate Officer position with a Postgraduate (Taught) Officer and a Postgraduate (Research) Officer.

Throughout the meeting, members of the audience showed a visible excitement towards the motion, leaving Jack Tindale, the chair of the UGM, struggling to bring the noise down to a manageable level.

According to Alec Webley, MSc in Comparative Science, who proposed the motion, "allowing different communities to choose their own officers" is the only way to ensure the elected officer's "legitimacy." Apologising for

the complicated nature of the motion, he explained that it has many "knock-on effects" and thus a comprehensive motion is needed to address all of them.

The motion was opposed by Polly McKinlay, the Disabled Students' Officer. Stressing that "everybody can become disabled and need the help of a Disabled Students' Officer at any point of their life," she argued that every student should have the right to elect the Disability Students' Officer.

McKinlay added that the Union should try to address each issue separately instead of using a "blanket motion," and that she "doesn't know what I am voting for" due to the broad scope of the motion.

The opposition was seconded by Sam Barnett who expressed his concerns over the message the motion

is delivering. "By implying to students that they don't understand minority issues," he argued, "the motion would produce broken-up segments of the community that is already divided."

Several concerns were also raised by members of the audience. One student argued that some disabled or LGBT student might not identify him/herself as part of that community, making it hard to draw the line between students who are allowed to vote for a particular officer and students who are not.

Another argued that the decisions of the part-time Executive Officers have an affect on everyone on campus, and thus they should "represent all of us." John Peart, LGBT Officer elect, who seconded the motion responded that the liberation officers has "no responsibility" towards the other stu-

dents. He also reminded the audience that new policies would still require the blessing of the UGM to be passed, and thus the officers would still have accountability towards the wider student body.

The motion was also supported by many in the audience, with one outlining the problem of candidates "trying to get votes from people who are not affected by the issue," which may cause the candidates' decisions to be "swayed by the majority."

Two amendments to the motion were also debated and voted on.

The first amendment would exempt the Disabled Students' Officer from the motion. The debate saw McKinlay reaffirming her stance, stressing once again the "fluid" nature of disability and the difficulty in "picking out" disabled students during the campaigning period. Despite her protests, the amendment fell by a small margin.

The second amendment would rename the Anti-Racism Officer the Anti-Discrimination Officer. One student took the stage to argue that the name of the position should be free of political connotations, and that the officer should have "the platform to tackle any form of discrimination."

The amendment saw opposition from Lois Clifton, the current Environment and Ethics Officer. She stated racism and fascism as one of society's biggest problems today, and thus it should be "made concrete" that the Union is fighting against them. The audience seemingly agreed with Clifton, as the second amendment fell by a significant margin.

After a show of hands, it was resolved that the "Community Voting" motion would vote on online.

This year's Annual General Meeting will be held later this week on Thursday 15th March.



Photo: Matt Worby

## Your Hall Your Call 2012 proves a success

John Armstrong

'Your Hall, Your Call' (YHYC) is a campaign led by the London School of Economics (LSE) Students' Union that seeks to engage with those living in university-owned halls of residence. The aim of the annual tour is for students to "tell LSE what is right and wrong with your hall" so improvements can be made and so opinions are voiced that may otherwise have not been heard.

Lukas Slothuus, Community and Welfare Office, stated that "Your Hall, Your Call has been a great success so far."

Moreover, "having visited Butlers Wharf, Passfield, and Sidney Webb, I've had a chance to speak to a wide range of students. The comments and concerns raised have been overwhelmingly constructive and I am excited about going to the remaining four halls on the on tour next week - Rosebery, Carr-Saunders, High Holborn, and Northumberland" added Slothuus.

The report, published on 6th March 2012 revealed the procedures which have been implemented in response to the issues raised by residents in LSE halls.

This year, many students have

voiced their concerns over building work that has taken place in halls. Josh Babarinde, a first year BSc Government student stated that "construction projects can often be disruptive during the day and there should be increased dialogue between students and those in charge of the work."

In relation to the apparent lack of communication between contractors, LSE and hall staff when major construction projects occur, the YHYC scheme has ensured that "steps have been taken to improve communication about more substantive pieces of work which include upfront information for applicants, webpage information and sharing of overall planned annual works with the Wardens."

Similarly, there were questions raised over the Wardens and Sub-wardens lack of presence within halls. The project has therefore brought about an assurance to make accommodation staff more visible for students. Activities such as Wardens meetings and welcomes have been implemented along with the inclusion of photographs on electronic message boards, welcome email messages to students prior to arrival and an extended feature in the 2011/12 Student Halls Handbook. Reception staff are also often viewed as being unapproachable and according to the campaign, mail and parcels have been stolen. In order to

rectify this problem, staff are required to undergo training and attend conferences, while students are actively encouraged to report suspicions of theft.

The YHYC campaign also focused on the more practical elements of life in halls. Printers often break, run out of toner and are not serviced regularly and the project promises to ensure that "during the next IT Advisor induction, emphasis will be given to ensuring that an appreciation why this is important and how to maintain a consistent service." However, the YHYC campaign concluded that, in relation to the provision of wireless Internet in every hall, "the present hard-wired configuration makes this unlikely in the short term and definitely not achievable for 2011/12."

There has been, however, a successful campaign to provide Kosher and Halal foods in Rosebery Hall which came into affect from Lent Term this year.

According to Slothuus, "the results so far look extremely promising and I am convinced the final report I will be presenting to Residences Committee in May is going to be a real success."

The YHYC campaign will continue to make its way around LSE halls this week and the final report will be published in May 2012.



**YOUR HALL  
YOUR CALL**

LSE STUDENTS' UNION  
www.lse.ac.uk

# Gender inequality at LSE

**Nona Buckley-Irvine**  
Staff Reporter

Moves by the London School of Economics (LSE) to reduce gender inequality among staff in its 'Single Action Plan' are failing. A diversity report, released in 2012, details the composition of the workforce and shows the representation of males and females at the LSE.

Stark disparities in the number of women employed in senior positions still exist, particularly among Readers and Professors. Only a quarter of the positions are occupied by women, with men occupying 75 per cent of these roles. While senior lecturers have a 70:30 male to female ratio, senior management is also dominated by men, with a 65:35 imbalance.

Alternatively, female representation among LSE fellows, lecturers and teaching positions fares somewhat better. For lecturers, the headcount taken in October 2011 shows that 94 lecturers were female, as opposed to 118 male lecturer; 58 per cent of LSE fellows were male, and 57 per cent of teaching staff were male.

A 'Single Action Plan' to tackle inequality at the LSE was issued in 2011, with one of its objectives being, "to examine procedures for the appointment, review and promotion of academic staff, identifying and addressing any gender specific disproportionate effect."

A desired outcome of this was to have "increased representation of women in academic roles where they are currently underrepresented." The data detailed above demonstrates that increased representation has been minimal, with men still dominating

the top roles in the School.

However, 48.6 per cent of the workforce at the LSE is female, compared to the national average of 46 per cent for the Higher Education sector.

This can largely be explained by the high proportion of women in operational support roles and managerial or professional roles, with women occupying over half of all positions in these fields.

Lucy McFadzean, Women's Officer for LSE Student's Union expressed her regret at the continued dominance of men in senior roles: "it's quite sad, although predictable, to see that there is definitely a glass ceiling for women, even in academia and at LSE. It's really important to have women represented right up to the top levels and decision making bodies, and there is really no excuse for the university not to have women fully represented at all levels."

McFadzean further stated, "I think it's also important to highlight the fact that there are more female students at LSE, and to remind ourselves that this doesn't mean we should relax, as clearly it's not the issue of getting women into education that is the problem, but that supposedly once they get to a higher level they are not held in the same regards as men."

"I think the best thing LSE can do is put more women in the top positions, but also to provide and promote good systems of maternity and paternity leave and the like," added McFadzean.

Other measures have also been put forward by the LSE to tackle gender inequality, which do not appear to be successful.

In June 2010, an 'Action Plan' was put forward by the Equal Pay Audit, commissioned by Human Resources at the LSE. It outlined moves to improve

representation of women among the more senior positions at the LSE.

The next Equal Pay Audit has not yet been released, but figures show that there has been little improvement since 2010 in terms of the number of women employed at senior roles, which would suggest that the average salary among women will remain similar.

Senior staff employed at the highest salary band (10) are paid between £64,958 and £116,291. Currently at the LSE, there exists an average pay gap between males and females, with men earning £54,727 on average, compared to £43,255 for women. This pay gap can be explained by the minority of women in senior academic roles, who fall within the highest salary band.

Students at the LSE expressed their perception of the gender balance of their teachers and lecturers.

A 2nd year Anthropology student, said "I have had two female lectures and one female teacher the whole term. The other thirteen have all been male."

Other students in the department of International Relations explained how they "only had one female lecturer," whilst a Law student had "all male class teachers."

Claire Sanders, Head of Communications, discussed the unbalanced gender ratio, saying, "Professor Judith Rees is a highly successful Director of LSE. She made clear on her appointment as Director that she was taking the job only on an interim basis and did not wish to be considered for the post permanently. There are currently three women on the seven-strong Director's management team, including Professor Rees as Director."

The proportion of women in the most senior jobs at LSE (Professors or

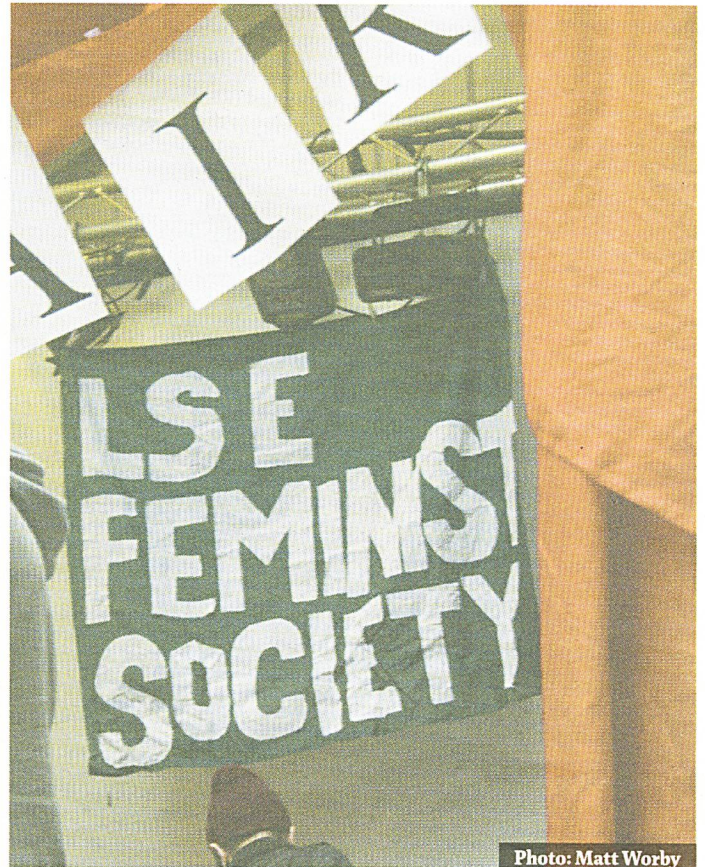


Photo: Matt Worby

Band 9 and 10) is steadily increasing as is the proportion of women in the top five per cent of earners at LSE -- which almost doubled between 2009 to 2011 to a fifth," added Sanders. "So the number of women in senior positions at LSE is moving upward although we clearly need to do more in this area."

Earlier in the term, while speaking at the UGM about Craig Calhoun's appointment as Director, Rees said she was happy with his appointment, though she would be happy to see a woman hold the post somewhere down the line.

## Women march united through London

**Amanda Vanderboegh**

Women across London marched to commemorate the 101st anniversary of International Women's Day last Thursday, in celebration of the achievements of women and girls around the world and to collectively push for global gender equality.

Leading up to Women's Day on the 8th March, the London School of Economics (LSE) Students' Union held several events in celebration of International Women's Week, including a "Sex Fayre" on Tuesday, organised by the Students' Union Feminist Society.

Cordelia Roberts, Co-president of the Feminist Society, distributed leaflets on safe sex and sexual health on Houghton Street. Roberts stated that "a lot of the events last term were reactions to cases of sexism and this year, we thought it would be positive to do something that's focused on the good stuff."

"This is a feminist issue, but it's also a student wide issue. And there's just nowhere to get this information on campus in a relaxed way without going to a doctor and saying 'I want to know about contraception,'" added Roberts.

The Raising and Giving Society (RAG) held a "photo treasure hunt" in which student teams competed to take snapshots of selected "international women-themed" sights around London. Wednesday also saw the Students' Union hosting a Women's Day

party in collaboration with University of the Arts London, which showcased feminist art and featured live music, DJs and various craft-making activities.

Thursday was the culmination of the week's events, when LSE students met on Houghton Street and joined with others from University College London, The School of Oriental and African Studies and the Courthauld Institute to take part in Women for Women's "Join Me on the Bridge" campaign, a celebratory march across Millennium Bridge to London's Southbank. With colorful banners and painted faces, LSE students marched alongside women in seventy countries around the world in an act of strength and solidarity.

Katharine Tengtio, a MSc Gender, Policy and Inequality student, said, "it was great to see so many women from all walks of life join together on the bridge, and even greater to see pictures of other women joining on bridges in other countries around the world."

When asked about the importance of the event, Clement De Rivas, a MSc Economic and Sociology student, added, "it is important to highlight that we need to keep working on gender inequalities as things won't change if awareness decreases."

After crossing the Millennium Bridge, the marchers convened at the Women of the World (WOW) Festival at the Royal Festival Hall to take part in workshops and listen to speeches, comedy acts and music celebrating the talent and creativity of women.

Lucy McFadzean, Students' Union

Women's Officer, is hoping to build on the Women's Week celebration in the future. According to McFadzean, "I think everyone enjoyed the events and learnt a lot about women's struggles and the importance of female solidarity. I hope that the week gets bigger and better next year."

International Women's Day aims

to bring attention to the ongoing struggle for economic, political and social equality for every woman, as well as to honour the women and men who have catalysed real and continuing change towards a brighter future for women everywhere.

Since the first Women's Day in 1910, there has been continuous

progress Nicoleta Benga, a MSc Sociology student, argued that "Women's Day is a good moment to remember all the achievements we've made in women's rights so far, but it is also there to remind us that there is still more to do and that we should not settle for the status quo yet."



International Women's Day march | Photo: Wanda O'Brien

# Alistair Darling on the economy

Harry Burdon  
Staff Reporter

Alistair Darling, Former Chancellor of the Exchequer, spoke at the London School of Economics (LSE) on Tuesday 6th March. In the words of chair Professor Tim Besley, "after taking a break from front bench politics," Darling's current involvements include the 'Keep Scotland in Britain' campaign. He covered a variety of areas in the lecture, from inequality to the UK manufacturing industry, and the global financial crisis.

Darling, the current Member of Parliament (MP) for Edinburgh South West described inequality as both "morally wrong" and "very inefficient." He also depicted the first five or six years of Labour's previous term as one that strove to redistribute wealth, without publicly admitting to doing so.

He also highlighted the UK's relatively small manufacturing industry. Darling attributes this to the seventies, when there was a reaction against public ownership within various industries. The view was taken that the government's role was to "get the macroeconomic environment right." This persuasion was held from the Thatcher government through until 2008, when it became apparent that markets needed closer attention.

Darling clarified that he was not suggesting we return to the previous levels of state ownership, quipping that this was ironic considering he had "nationalised more banks than anyone else." Furthermore, he expressed that the "centre of economic gravity is moving remorselessly from the west to the east to the south." Darling believes that the government has the ability to do more to support manufacturing industries, without owning them, and if they do not he fears the economic power will shift further.

Darling also explored the reasons that lead the financial crisis. In June 2007, when he was appointed as Chancellor, "things looked absolutely fine." Whilst there were warning signs, "they hadn't really been brought together anywhere, despite what some people subsequently claimed."

It was evident there were serious problems in autumn 2007, when "banks became increasingly reluctant to lend to each other." This was due to banks realising that they owned a large amount of assets that "they could not value." They inferred other banks very possibly were in the same position, and stopped lending fearing they would not be paid back. Talking

on his experiences of the situation, Darling spoke of a call he received from the Chairman of the Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS), where he was told that in two or three hours, RBS would run out of money.

Darling also described the time where he got in "serious trouble as Chancellor." In the summer of 2009, he gave an interview to the Guardian stating he "thought it was likely to be the worst downturn in sixty years, and more profound and long lasting than people thought." After saying this, "the substances hit the fan in a style that was deeply unpleasant."

The problem of elusive growth was also highlighted in Darling's lecture. In the 2011 Autumn Statement, the current Chancellor George Osborne announced that £158bn more would be borrowed than predicted in 2010.

He discussed the areas he would look into to tackle the issue of growth. Firstly, he would look at "the incomes of basic rate taxpayers and also the people on low incomes." According to

Darling, the incomes of these people are "being squeezed, if not cut." This leads to them not spending, and consequently hindering growth. Secondly, he would wish to tackle youth unemployment, which has both political and economic repercussions. He would also like to see some consideration put into large infrastructure projects. Darling brought up the failings of planning in the UK. He provided the example of the M6 Express Way, which he opened in 2003. It was planned during Harold Wilson's government spanning from 1964 to 1970.

The former Chancellor also worries that Heathrow Airport will fall into "a long-term decline" under the governments current decisions. Darling emphasised the very high number of jobs dependent on Heathrow. He also showed strong scepticism over plans for an airport on the Thames to provide the demanded plane capacity. Darling believes it would be highly expensive, and that airlines will not wish to bare the costs. Furthermore, the large numbers of geese would cause

great difficulties for planes. He added that "it just isn't going to get built."

The subject of quantitative easing was raised by an audience member after the former Chancellor's speech. Darling described it as part of the central bank's "armoury" when interest rates are so low. The Conservative government's intention of quantitative easing is to increase lending to the high-street though giving the banks more cash.

Darling argued that he would like to see the government take "a more proactive approach in ensuring that the money that is coming into the system actually finds its way out of the bank vaults, into the wider economy."

Another audience member raised the idea of taking advantage of our ownership of a large share of the banking industry. A new entity could be created and managed by the government to lend to businesses and help growth. Darling responded that to increase lending in such a fashion, the government would have to relax the lending criteria. Furthermore, the

government would suffer the consequences if these loans went bad. Using China as an example, he spoke of when the Chinese government got their banks to lend more. Some of these loans are now being rolled over as they could not be paid off. He also emphasised the limitations of trying to encourage lending and borrowing when business confidence is low.

Lastly, the MP for Edinburgh South West argued for Scotland to stay in the UK. He contested the view that Scotland is a "subsidy junky," saying "it depends how you do the sums." Darling also addressed the question of maintaining the pound in Scotland. The Scottish National Party leader, Alex Salmond, currently wishes for Scotland to keep the pound and sign a stability and growth pact with the UK. However, according to Darling, an independent Scotland would then have to return to the rest of the UK to approve its budget.



Alistair Darling MP | Photo: Harry Burdon

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our university – and other top universities in this country – still made up of the privileged few? The evidence suggests state schools do just as good a job as independent schools, yet students from state schools still fail to get into elite universities."

The School has a history of criticism for its admission of students from low-income households. In 2010, the Guardian reported how the LSE was one of few universities "where less than 5% of the intake came from 'low participation neighbourhoods'." The data for 2011 has not been made available as of yet to draw comparisons.

The LSE has put measures in place to advance participation of people from lower socio-economic back-

grounds through their award-winning LSE Widening Participation scheme.

They offer various mentoring schemes, shadowing days and conferences to encourage students, particularly from the inner-city, to apply to the LSE.

Generous bursary schemes are also offered in line with the tuition fee increase to £8,500, with up to £3,500 being offered to students from households with incomes below £18,000.

Certainly the number of overseas students distorts this though, as they occupy half of the places offered.



Photo: Flickr user Mal Booth

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recommendations to the company very similar to those he made in the LSE's Woolf Report.

The Beaver has, at the time of writing, been unable to determine exactly the nature of the work undertaken by Powerscourt under the terms of the contract with the School, with their website merely listing the LSE as a client, with no further information offered.

When contacted, Powerscourt simply said that they were contracted by the LSE to handle the GICDF crisis and that Woolf was independently appointed by an "unknown governing body."

LSE's press office stated that Woolf was asked "to conduct an

independent inquiry into the School's recent ties with Libya because of his unparalleled combination of legal expertise and experience of overseeing complex and high-profile inquiries. The quality and effectiveness of the hard-hitting report he produced only confirm that he was the ideal person for this job."

At the time of print, Woolf had not responded to the Beaver's inquiries.

# AU Ball: masked debauchery ensues

**Nona Buckley-Irvine**  
Staff Reporter

Members of the Athletics Union (AU) donned masks this week for the 'Masquerade-themed' annual AU Ball, the highlight of the AU social calendar to celebrate the end of the year.

340 tickets were sold by the Activities Resource Centre for £55, which included a three-course meal, half a bottle of wine, a drink from reception and DJ and disco. Alternative "After-Ball" tickets were sold for £15, which allowed 22 students from the AU who did not want a meal to attend the disco.

In the evening, sport teams headed to Hotel Russell in Russell Square for a three-course meal, which was followed by DJ entertainment. Spirits were high among the guests, some of whom have started drinking as early as 4pm.

Each guest was seated with their teammates before the awarding of colours - to recognise the contribution of individuals to the AU - began and food was served. Notable efforts were made by AU teams for the masquerade theme, with rugby players sporting

masks as featured in the movie "V for Vendetta", ironically worn by the anti-capitalist Occupy London protesters.

After the Ball, regular Zoo-goers made their way to Leicester Square to what was a particularly hot, sweaty, packed night at Zoo Bar. The night also featured a highly popular photo booth for students to have group photos taken for free.

Hotel Russell was thought to be a good choice of venue by the majority of people. The catering by the four star hotel, in particular, was commended by many of the members. However, the prices of drinks was noted to be particularly high, with a double vodka and mixer costing an exorbitant twelve pounds.

Moreover, "After-Ball" ticket-holders were slightly disgruntled when they arrived at the Ball, as they were initially refused entry due to the delayed serving of dessert.

In spite of these minor issues, it seemed that the AU ball was a success. Katie Dooley, a member of Women's Football, commented: "The photo booth was amazing! Beautiful hotel, beautiful people, and surprisingly good food. It was so good, I don't remember much after the ball as I'm sure every-

one else did."

Meanwhile, Geoffrey Baldwin, a third year student from the Rugby had this to say: "Food was great, atmosphere was great, the people were great. It's a shame that I don't really remember it."

Efforts made by the AU Executive Committee to organise the event did not go unnoticed, with Stanley Ellerby-English, the Activities and Development Officer full of praise for the organisation.

"The AU exec did a really good

job organising everything," Ellerby-English said, "the choice of venue was excellent, the food was delicious, and any night that ends up with me in a suit at Zoo Bar can only be good."



Photo: Facebook

## LSE student runs for President of the European Council

**Wanda O'Brien**

The seat for President of the European Council is being challenged by a London School of Economics (LSE) student seeking to raise debate and open dialogue around the electoral process.

On 1 March, Herman Van Rompuy was unanimously re-elected as President of the European Council to serve a second two-and-half year term.

But also vying to be the face of the European Council was LSE European Institute student Tug. Upon learning in late February that Van Rompuy did not have any competition for his seat, Tug, who has asked to be solely identified on a first-name basis, decided to launch his own Presidential campaign.

"We are 500 million people in Europe and there is just one contender for the president of the European Council?" said the French native. "So I said I am going to do this. I am going to run for candidacy."

Tug's campaign was pursued through social media and a dedicated student team concerned about the democratic nature of the Council's Presidential elections.

Although unsuccessful in his bid stating that, "I don't have any contacts so I cannot call Sarkozy and say hey, buddy, I'm running as well," Tug 2012 focused on bringing to light nature of the European Council's elections. "My main aim is to highlight the fact that there is no formal election," added Tug.

The LSE student went on to state, "I find it disappointing because I think the EU has been a vanguard in democracy and promoting democracy in the world and rule of law. And I find it disappointing that there wouldn't be the same principle at least at the European Council. It's an important position. This guy is talking in the name of the 27 member states."

The position of the President of the European Council was put into effect on 1 December 2009 under the Treaty

of Lisbon. The role includes chairing council meetings, facilitating cohesion and consensus, and acting as an external representative. Van Rompuy was first chosen as President elect on 19 November 2009, at an informal meeting in Brussels, by the member states.

In his acceptance speech for his second mandate on 1st March, Van Rompuy argued, "in a way my job is to be the guardian of trust: fostering mutual understanding around this table among ourselves, knowing that for us together, our duty is to preserve the trust of citizens in the Union."

"[The President] has an important role to play and for an organisation like the EU that promotes democracy all other the world, considers democracy to be one of its founding values, we thought that this process was unworthy of the EU's democratic principles," said an MSc Politics and Government in the European Union student Atte, who also asked to be known on a first-name basis.

An active member of the Tug 2012 campaign team, Atte said "there should be open discussion and debate during elections, where candidates explain their visions for the position and for Europe."

Tug also went on to say that though "it's a joke [but one] I want to push as far as possible."

The team argues that the aim of the campaign is not an attack on Van Rompuy, but meant to increase engagement and dialogue. One way the Tug 2012 campaign team is hoping to do so, is to get more "likes" on Facebook than Van Rompuy's page.

"This campaign shows that a nobody can create a debate and can do something about an issue that is as important as this one," said Atte.

The European Society hosted a talk on Monday on "Tug 2012 vs. Van Rompuy: A Democratic Deficit?" with speakers Simon Hix, LSE Professor of European and Comparative Politics and Fellow of the British Academy and Maurice Fraser, LSE Senior Fellow in European Politics.

**Double Vodka and Mixer**  
**£2.95!! (Excluding Red Bull)**

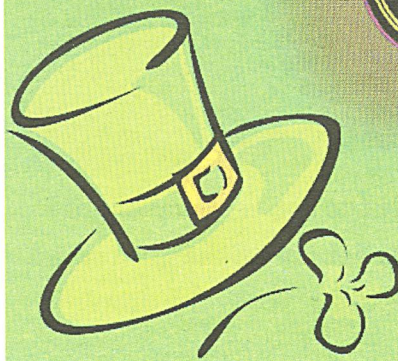
**Jager Bombs £2.30 !!**  
**3VK for £5 !!**

**Doors open 8.30pm**

**£5 Entry LSE Students**

**£6 Entry Other students**

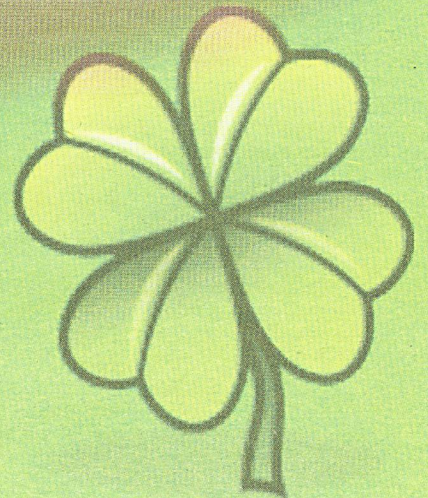
**£7 Entry Non-Student**



**DJ Aleks**  
**Ross**

**playing in the quad**  
**9pm-2am!!!**

**Crush!**



**Friday 16<sup>th</sup> March**  
**8.30pm-2am**

# Comment

## Invisible Children's very visible campaign

What Kony 2012 says about contemporary social media campaigning



KONY 2012  
STOP AT NOTHING

Flickr: lighternorth

**Samira  
Lindner**



I'm sure that most people reading this right now are letting out a big sigh of annoyance and thinking, "Oh, give it a rest already!" It's true that the Kony 2012 video has been incessantly shoved into most people's faces over the past week through numerous online social networks. At the same time, most people that experienced "Kony 2012 shoving" also experienced "anti-Kony 2012 shoving". Many had to endure seemingly endless discussions on their Facebook wall or were begrudgingly dragged into these debates themselves. Overall, it has been quite a nuisance. What a waste of time and energy, right? Well, not really. While the film itself was highly aggravating, the organisation less than ideal and its propagated solution highly questionable, the fact is that it got people talking. It has raised interest, concern and awareness, not only about the plight of the Northern Ugandan people but also about the growing importance of and problems with online campaigning. Therefore, it has been an important learning experience and certainly not a waste of time or energy.

For those who missed out on all of this, a quick recap: "Kony 2012"

is a 30-minute online documentary by American non-profit organisation, Invisible Children. It attempts to shed light on Joseph Kony, leader of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), a militant group formed in Northern Uganda. The organisation wants to bring him to international justice for enlisting an army of child soldiers. My first reaction to this video was, admittedly, one of deep criticism. Having watched previous films made by Invisible Children, I was not surprised at the film's gross generalisations. I was, however, greatly disturbed by its infantilising

refused to watch it or be moved by it was deemed ignorant, heartless or a pompous academic. Many people internalised the "with us or against us" approach of the film and reacted almost allergically to the criticisms. On the one hand, this viral sensation seemed to prove just how fast an online campaign can spread and remain steadfast in its beliefs. On the other hand, it shows how fast a misinformed conception of a situation can spread and be too inflexible to immerse itself in a dynamic and open-minded debate on the topic.

To be fair, I think the film has

cess of this online campaign.

Nevertheless, the Kony 2012 campaign does carry with it a somewhat unprecedented catalogue of critical issues that, no matter how well-intentioned the filmmakers or the activists are, need to be discussed.

Firstly, there were concerns regarding the organisation itself. It has something of a questionable rating from Charity Navigator. In addition, only about one third of its budget goes into direct services whereas the rest goes to salaries, travel and film production. Furthermore, the funds apparently support the Ugandan military, which has a reputation of raping and pillaging.

Secondly, there are a number of contextual errors. Not only are their numbers of child soldiers grossly exaggerated but the LRA, including Kony himself, have not been in Northern Uganda since 2006. Also, the US Africa Command has in the past sent missions to capture Kony but they've failed so far and have even contributed to further instability in the region.

Thirdly, the film inevitably contributes to the so-called "White Man's Burden" discourse and may perpetuate the saviour-complex of the West. The film does not mention local groups working on making things better and it assumes that those living in the region are passive victims. It also presumptuously claims that young people on social networking websites can change

the world with a simple click of a mouse.

Lastly, the film may also create a false impression of what the real world is like and what online campaigning can really achieve. It assumes that raising awareness is important and that policymakers listen to their electorate. It also assumes that awareness and the sharing of a video makes more of an impact than foreign aid itself. Moreover, it assumes that the conflicts in Africa can only be resolved if young people in the West are engaged with it, a very paternalistic idea.

There are several lessons to be learned from the Kony 2012 campaign. It has brought out the best and the worst of viral campaigns. While it is important to actively and openly engage in continuous debate on the matter, we need to also be aware of its limitations. Frankly, the West does not have all the answers, especially to situations so complex and intricate. It would be presumptuous to think that it does. Nevertheless, I hope that the Kony 2012 campaign does not fade out as swiftly as it came in because I fear that most people will just return to their normal lives, normal interests and normal activities. This indifference and apathy is worse than any well-intentioned but badly-executed viral campaign. Indifference assumes that the world is too complex and too hopeless to get involved in, a situation which this indifferent attitude helps to aggravate. ☹

**While it is important to actively and openly engage in continuous debate on the matter, we need to also be aware of its limitations.**

and "tearjerking" film technique, its patronising, solution-oriented tone, and its direct advocacy of military intervention to capture Kony. It simplifies a highly complex situation (so that even the filmmaker's five-year-old child can understand it) and offers a self-professed "no brainer" solution: hunt down Kony and all will be well in Uganda.

What worried me most was that a massive audience of young people, even those with no previous knowledge of the situation, were forwarding and advocating this film as if it was the greatest revelation known to man. In addition, whoever

done an immense job of raising awareness of an issue that most people were probably unaware of. Furthermore, due to its highly emotional depictions, the film was able to generate a huge following, one that is committed to change. Lastly, the film encourages a solutions-oriented approach to the world's problems, which is much better than indifference or plain old cynicism. As a cosmopolitanist would say, it makes the problems of people in Northern Uganda everyone's problem. There is a noble element of solidarity and universality, which is a key factor in explaining the suc-



# The state of the Union

In his final week at the LSE, Laurence suggests some changes

## Laurence Atchison



It appears to me that students fall into three categories regarding their interest in the politics of the LSE Students' Union (SU). The first group comprises those who don't give a crap about the Students' Union and never will. The second group are those who are actively involved in Students' Union politics. The final group is my group. My group is not actively involved but members consider themselves reasonably aware of happenings in the Students' Union. My group is a significant minority to which the Union pays scant attention.

There is a reason for this. As unpleasant as the truth may be, the SU has been dominated by a faction; the left, the Trots, the radicals. Call them what you will - I have no idea what a correct term would be. Everyone knows they exist and this is not the place to name names so I will leave it at that. The point is, however, that they have been dominating our Students' Union, drowning out voices of reason and moderation and making a mockery of some of the very institutions they invest so much in. They have made it a Students' Union for some students, but not for all. I've spent the last three years not knowing whether to laugh, cry or just hang my head in shame when I see them in action.

For myself and others, the recent elections have been particu-

larly interesting. I was not heavily involved in these elections, but I was familiar with the candidates. I was aware from the beginning that this was considered an election between the moderates and the left. As we all now know, the moderates won. This is a good thing. The reactions of the strongly leftist candidates and their supporters on election night showed not only how important these elections were to them but also how bitterly they took their defeat. Claims that this was a "racist" election, somehow unfair or that the "wrong" people were elected were bandied around. This is not only ridiculous but sadly symptomatic of the way in which this faction operates.

For one, these elections were not "racist." Also, they were fair (until proven otherwise), well supported and saw plenty of voting. Many of the results were very close so clearly all candidates and their policies were popular with many people. It just happens that, this year, the moderates were more popular. For some reason, as apparent champions of "progression" with their slogans of "fight the cuts" and "education for the 99 per cent," the left wing seems to think that a vote against them is somehow a vote against progressive policies. They seem to think that only they are qualified to serve the under-represented at LSE when, in fact, all candidates were essentially left wing. I only use the term "moderates" to determine between those who are far left and those who aren't.

The way in which the left wing activists portray Students' Union politics as some sort of binary choice, i.e. "you're either with us or against us," simply serves to alienate other

people from getting involved and makes their own causes look increasingly desperate. You can call us fascist and antisemites all you want. It does not make us so. An example of this is the recent EGM debate over the No-to-Islamophobia motion. When it came to it, a group of moderate people, who agreed with 95 per cent of what was being said, opposed the motion on the rational grounds that it denoted as Islamophobic, "attacking the Qur'an as a manual of hatred" and, as such, was an affront to free speech. I agreed with them, as did many people I know who attended the EGM specifically for this event. What happened next was a perfect example of how the left wing alienates people from the Students' Union. They decried the opposers' requests to rewrite this small part of the motion as blocking progress, saying in an overly-emotional speech that "we shouldn't even be having this debate." Sorry, but should we just let you write and pass the motions yourselves? But wait, this is already happening.

At the end of Lent Term last year, there was a statement published "on behalf of the entire LSE Students' Union" that condemned Howard Davies' links with the Gaddafi regime. Regardless of Davies' motives for his actions, this was a blatant attempt to make a statement with no consultation with the Students' Union at large. It was only by the efforts of two brilliant third-years who brought this to the Students' Union's attention that the statement was altered in the "Thank You, Howard" motion, which passed by over one thousand votes. However, even this was labelled a personal attack on the

left wing Sabbatical Officers. This is yet another example of the left wing sending out an image of it being a clique of like-minded friends, with no space for those who disagree.

Something that cripples our Students' Union is that there constantly has to be some struggle or campaign, frequently over issues on which the Students' Union carries little weight. I am all for raising awareness over the issue of Palestine or education cuts and letting you do your occupations but, at the same time, I would really quite like to have a talk about getting working printers. You know - an issue that actually affects all students who are currently studying at the university. For example, the replacement of the absurd doors in the Students' Union shop by last year's Disabled Student's Officer made life far easier, even for those who are not disabled.

I must say, the one (and only) thing I admire and respect in these people is their willingness to get involved. Congratulations. Also, it must be made clear that not all people involved in the Students' Union have such a negative impact, such as the moderate election winners. It is great that we have people willing to be active and protest according to their views but too much of this is cluttering a forum that has a wider purpose. The Students' Union should represent all of us, particularly as societies cover outside issues anyway. By letting these people overstate the importance of outside issues we overlook the problems that are rife at the LSE now. Poor facilities on campus and excruciatingly slow building work in the library and halls; this is what you should be talking about too.

By effectively bullying anyone

who opposes them, (insert classic phrase from last year's Education Officer: "fascist Tory c\*\*ts"), or just plain ignoring them, the left wing faction continues along its politically and emotionally blinkered path (sorry, struggle). This kind of bullying is exactly the kind of discrimination they claim to oppose and is a towering monument to their egos. Their self-claimed monopoly on progress and inability to accept consensus borders on self-righteousness and, by being such martyrs for their causes, they simply put people off, without realising that many people agree with 95 per cent of their arguments. They will argue that we non-activists can comment safely from behind our computer screens and do not raise the issues with them personally. But, you see, I would rather do that than, as we see so frequently, have a futile argument with you in a UGM that ends with me being shouted at and heckled from the balcony.

I accept that steps are being made to improve involvement and that UGM attendance and the issue of online voting are perennial problems. The Students' Union remains a forum for a small group of undergraduates (the postgraduate issue is one that I have no space for here) and this needs to be resolved. There is room for hope, though. The Students' Union has got some excellent new Sabbatical Officers, who will hopefully address the issues that need to be addressed. Of course, we must hold them to account and disagree when necessary but for now, all I can say is: long live the moderates and long live a Students' Union for all students. ☛

# Dealing with dyslexia

Discussing her experience of dyslexia at university

## Cleo Pearson

In all the years of my examined life, I have scribbled and stressed to get good grades in the hope of making it. When my second session with my Academic Adviser at LSE arrived, he asked whether I have ever had a dyslexia test. Of course not: at my school you only got a dyslexia test if you were failing. Besides, if the question was anything to do with my strange learning styles, I need a psychiatrist not a dyslexia test to explain them. I have always been different. I draw pictures all over my work and use excessive amounts of colour to help me remember; I sit in my chair in 127 different ways throughout an hour long exam; I think of answers that no one quite gets and normally over-complicate things unnecessarily. But apparently that has always been me because, as it turns out, I have always been dyslexic.

So what is dyslexia? Dyslexia is a neurological condition affecting how you deal with information. For me, my brain has poor short term memory so the processing of many things at once can be challenging, because I cannot take them all in. All of a sudden, with this new label, I have 25 per cent extra exam time and I am able to type rather than write in exams. What is not to like? Think you fancy it?

Unfortunately, you cannot cheat the system and the test assesses elements of your intellect too. Therefore, if you were to fail all, you might just be told that you are not only dyslexic but also that you're not the right kind of person to be studying at the LSE!

Why is it that an inability to do some things is considered a condition or disability whilst others are just considered weaknesses? My eyes are weak so I have glasses. My writing speed is slow and so I have extra time. Yet as much as I train at running, I will never be as fast as Paula Radcliffe, so should I get a head start at the beginning of a race in order to level her? Why is it that some weaknesses warrant assistance whereas others are merely what it is to lose in a competition? Prehistorically, these sorts of things would not have had such allowances; it was survival of the fittest. The slowest and the weakest of human beings would be least likely to source food, build sufficient shelter to brave hostile conditions and find a mate. Now, with this diagnosis of weaknesses as treatable conditions, perhaps we should send all D-grade students to the doctor too.

Will we ever have equity but be able to sustain ourselves with any element of competition or efficiency? The philosopher Rawls believes in the pursuit of equity but realises that it can never entirely be achieved. He perceives that, although there may be equal opportunities, talent is non-transferable. However, defining what constitutes talent is far from simple.

If one has poor eyesight or a physical disability, it is easier to measure an improvement. My glasses, for example, bring me back to 20/20 vision. With dyslexia, things are categorised. At LSE you will get 25 per cent extra time, but maybe a particular person only needs 13 per cent more, and so therefore they gain an unfair advantage.

I cannot fathom how much help I am now getting, considering I have gone through my whole academic career without any extra support. Yet, nothing will be changed retroactively. I can only imagine where I might be had things been different. I reckon I could have got my undergraduate degree from Harvard aged 16 and now be onto writing my fifth book about solving world poverty, with someone to correct my spellings for me, of course! If dyslexia deserves so many support measures, perhaps it is important for everyone to be given a screening.

I still do not know if I am a dyslexia believer or not. I know that I certainly do not understand how my mind works and the study support sessions I am having will help that. I am not a neuroscientist and I do not doubt that there has been large amounts of research into the conceptualisation of the condition to allow so much attention and funding to be given to it. In the meantime I will wait for my MacBook to arrive in the post, get my Editor to correct my grammar and keep my fingers crossed for when, one day, I will be able to edit too. ☛



Flickr: SiSter PhotograPher

# The Archbishop's folly

Sunday's Anti-Marriage Equality Letter Symbolises the Church's Pointless Political Hardball

**Joseph Peralta**

Roman Catholic mass-goers in England and Wales last Sunday were treated to the reading of a letter, not from any of the apostles as one would expect, but one crafted by the Archbishop of Westminster. It warns of the dangers of the "radicalisation" of the institution of marriage and calls for the faithful to sign the Coalition for Marriage pledge, an effort to oppose Prime Minister David Cameron's plan to conduct a national consultation as part of the push for marriage equality. If this is not explicit proof of a religious institution's meddling in state affairs, I don't know what is.

As a Catholic gay man of Filipino heritage with a background in community organising, there is absolutely nothing about the Archbishop's diatribe that I have not heard before. This letter is a reverberation of the themes ran by the anti-marriage equality camp that sponsored California's Proposition 8 in 2008, which passed, by a slim margin, a constitutional amendment eliminating rights of same-sex couples to marry. As the rest of the United States basked in the "post-racial America" moment after electing President Barack Obama, California seemed to have stood stunned in shock and disappointment.

While the Mormon Church's influence mostly dominated the resulting religious blame game, the Roman Catholic Church's role in the passage of the ballot initiative was not a secret matter. Many of the parishes took an active role, from pontificating at every mass and printing pro-Proposition 8 literature, to crafting policy papers and donating outrageous

sums of money to the campaign.

The same themes contained within the Archbishop's letter ran rampant through the Proposition 8 religious propaganda: the family is the bedrock of the society; protect the tradition of marriage; do not redefine marriage; marriage is for procreation; children deserve a mother and a father; gay marriage will destroy our civilization; homosexuality is unnatural, hence gay marriage is unnatural; gay people already have equal rights.

The ensuing legal trials, however, demonstrated the flimsy and almost comical reasoning behind these claims. Experts' findings from the fields of history, psychology, economics, and political science chipped away at the moral indignation disguised as factual evidence presented by the anti-equality side.

Chief District Court Judge Vaughn Walker declared in 2010,

**This letter reeks of ignorance and bigotry masked as compassion and duty. This letter, a few years from now, will only read as a desperate call by an institution grasping at its last straw of relevance.**

among other things, that the parents' sexual orientation does not determine whether that individual can be a good parent and that children raised by gay or lesbian parents are as likely as children raised by straight parents to be well adjusted. He further concluded that marriage has always been a civil matter and thus, even though the Church can solemnise unions, it cannot decide who gets to enter into marriage. He went on to say that creating anything other than marriage lacks the social meaning associated with marriage. When popping the question in front of our supportive friends and family, same-sex individuals do not ask their partners to "civil partnership" them.

The Archbishop's argument can be countered by the fact that marriage has not had one true, natural definition. Not only does the tradition vary

across cultures, marriage has also been permeable to the evolving moral attitudes within western societies, especially if one fully understands the role marriage historically played in oppressing ethnic minorities and women. Furthermore, declaring that marriage equality "would reduce it just to the commitment of the two people involved" and that "there would be no recognition of the complementarity of male and female" promotes that somehow the love between two committed same-sex individuals is somehow less worthy of recognition. This is homophobia, plain and simple.

Moreover, there has not been a catastrophe so apocalyptic in scale that it wiped out civilizations as a result of granting marriage equality rights. The Netherlands, the first country to grant marriage equality twelve years ago, has not slipped underneath the North Sea. Nor has

the sky fallen in Massachusetts, the first US state to extend such rights in 2004.

So why are the leaders of the Roman Catholic Church still so adamant in influencing policy-making by brandishing its outmoded beliefs of the dangers posed by marriage equality, despite evidence to the contrary? It is easy to dismiss this as merely the incompatibility between science and religion, but the Catholic Church has shown throughout history that it is capable of relaxing its attitude towards scientific findings and changing social norms.

The leadership of the Roman Catholic Church turns a blind eye to its many devout followers who are forced to choose between sticking to their faith on one hand, and showing support for their LGBT loved ones on another. By reading this letter, the Church has affirmed to continue to do so, further alienating those within its fellowship who are ready to move beyond prejudice and wedge politics.

Moreover, consider the effects of

this antiquated promulgation to the many LGBT and questioning youths who could already be experiencing insurmountable pressure at home, school or even online. It is no surprise that more and more young people are jumping ship from Catholicism. Many see its antiquity, rigidity, authority, and hypocrisy as reasons to leave, albeit hesitantly.

This letter reeks of ignorance and bigotry masked as compassion and duty. This letter, a few years from now, will only read as a desperate call

by an institution grasping at its last straw of relevance. The Archbishop is well within his capacity to offer and reinforce the Church's teachings on marriage equality, but influencing the policy outcome ought to be a matter of civil repercussion. I urge you, the reader, to sign the counter-petition by the Coalition for Equal Marriage (<http://www.c4em.org.uk/>) and to contact your respective MPs, voicing that you will not stand for this religious bigotry. ☘



Flickr: Catholic Westminster

# No to UK immigration changes

LSE Students' Union's International Students' Officer disagrees with government proposals

**Hannah Geis**

One of the key electoral promises made by the Conservatives in 2010 was to reduce net migration from the "hundreds of thousands" to the "tens of thousands." Bound by this promise to drastically reduce the number of foreigners entering the UK, the government has decided to target the largest migrant group - international students - with increasingly severe policies. In this article, "international students" refers to non-UK, non-EU students. Whereas many of the changes proposed last year were overturned thanks to active lobbying by the LSE and other universities, new changes are being proposed, some of which present serious challenges to international students.

The new proposals, which will be presented to Parliament on 15th March include limiting to five years the amount of time international students can stay on degree level courses (with some exceptions), and increasing the amount of maintenance funds students are required to have in their bank account.

Perhaps the most problematic proposal is the imminent removal of the Post Study Work Visa (PSW) on 5th April. This provision allowed international students to apply for a visa to remain in the UK for up to two years after graduation. For some students, the opportunity to work in this country after their studies was a crucial factor in their decision to come to study in the UK. Its removal is likely to discourage some international students from applying to British universities. In fact, Australia recently attempted a similar experiment by tightening its visa system and had to reverse its decision due to a dramatic drop in applications.

Ironically, these changes are

coming at a time when many departments in universities across the UK are desperate to attract more international students (who pay higher fees) to compensate for a sharp decline in government funding.

International students already face many difficulties under the present regulations. If you are not familiar with this experience yourself, ask some of your classmates from overseas about their UK immigration stories. You are bound to hear about ever-rising visa fees, constant changes in regulations and visa delays that cause many students to miss the start of term. Some international students have to register with the police regularly and all face extremely limited working rights.

It is time for international students to stand up and say "no" to further immigration changes in a strong, united voice. The LSE Students' Union is joining a national, social media-based campaign to make a final push against the removal of the PSW this April. The

campaign aims to paint a narrative about student immigration in the UK by collecting as many personal stories as possible from international students across the country and sending these testimonials to top government policymakers.

As part of this campaign, international students are encouraged to write about their experience with the UKBA, the visa system and immigration regulations in general. They are also prompted to explain how they feel they have contributed to their university and the local community. Home and EU students who believe they have benefited from having international students at their institution are also strongly encouraged to share their story on the wall of the campaign's Facebook page (<http://www.facebook.com/IntCampaign>).

"International Students against UK Immigration Changes" is a campaign launched by the NUS International Students' Campaign and backed by the UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA).

Here at the LSE, both the School and the Students' Union have the concerns of international students at heart, since they form a very important part of the student body and are a key element of our university's identity. The International Student Immigration Service (ISIS) will be working to decipher the details of the new laws as soon as they are made public and will organise information sessions to explain these changes to international students. The Students' Union is working to mobilise international students, as well as home and EU students who see the benefit of studying in a nationally diverse environment, to join the campaign.

If you also believe that international students are a true asset for our universities and do not deserve to be targeted in this way by the government, please stop by our stall this Thursday 15th March on Houghton Street, share your story on paper or on video and join the campaign! ☘

# What should the Sabbs do next?

Our new Sabbatical Officers must succeed in re-engaging students

**Alec Webley**



Two weeks ago, in a stunning but extremely close election, four candidates representing the "centre," insofar as we can call ardent leftists "centrists," won election to Sabbatical office by narrow margins. They were elected in the classical way student leaders are elected – with name recognition, catchy slogans (pirates – Jesus, what's not to like?) and no ideology whatsoever. This fact alone means that, while the elections were close, the left's political project of the last two years has been an abject failure.

The various left candidates have stood on a platform of continuing demonstrations and acts of anti-institutional public protest, but this platform demands engagement of the student body. An election based on gimmicks after two full years of that treatment proved that engagement to be utterly absent. We are as apathetic and materialistic as ever.

Yet the centrists, and the new Sabbs, have not won; their victory has little to do with their policies. But this can change. To do so, they must answer the first question of student politics: "why should we care about our Student' Union?" There is only one correct answer: because your Students' Union cares about you. There are three things

campaign needs to actively create positions for students to fill and have regular meetings to keep them engaged. In addition, the Students' Union must explain in a clear and simple way how its utterly byzantine structure works. You shouldn't need at least a degree in politics to figure it out.

Likewise, the UGM needs a

the rafters.

Students cannot participate when they don't know what's going on, so the Sabbs should make all Trustees meetings open by default, publish minutes within 24 hours of any Union meeting they hold, and routinely solicit student feedback on the questions of the day. Jason Wong may be a cretin, but he has a point: there is no excuse for not establishing at least a presumption that all Union financial and governance documents are published to the student body.

Transparency is part of the second challenge: communication. This is a problem of content, not volume. The Union must communicate clearly both (a) how student feedback is leading to actual policy change and (b) that when you have a problem, the Union can fix it. "This week," the emails could begin, "this is what we did for you." Communication must be short, sharp, to the point. The website should be less cluttered, invariably up to date, and focused on services. It should also solicit specific feedback; not "give us your thoughts" but "here is our question, answer it and what we do will change."

Likewise, all Officers in the Un-

ion would be wise to make a point of meeting with students outside the Union hack zone as much as they can. Standing on Houghton Street won't do it – you have to actually reach out to people. There is no reason why the A&D Officer cannot arrange a cup of tea with the head of every single society on campus (for £26,000 p.a., I think they can pull a few weekends) once a term. There is no reason why the Community and Welfare Officer cannot meet once a week with Halls Presidents. There are a few hundred course representatives at the School, which should fill Duncan McKenna's appointments card nicely. It is in these kinds of interactions that the Union can build credibility and communicate effectively.

Finally, the Union must, in its communication and action, remember that it is a charity. A charity exists to serve. The Union must be the Dobby of our School – always there to help. The far left forgot that as it raced ahead with plans of occupation and revolution, leaving students behind. The centre must re-engage them. If it does not, LSE students will be justified in plumbing for revolution once again. ☘

**Yet the centrists, and the new Sabbs, have not won; their victory has little to do with their policies. But this can change. To do so, they must answer the first question of student politics: "why should we care about our Student' Union?"**

they can do to prove it.

First, the Sabbs must give students greater opportunity to participate in the Students' Union's work. Students will not show up to an Assembly where they mill about or listen to speeches. They need structure and something to which they can aspire. The Ethics Campaign vanished into thin air because no one felt they were really contributing anything to it; the next priority

thorough house-cleaning. Motions should be submitted from an easily accessible online form and the process for their submission should be completely transparent. The UGM should also be powerful: we need to see that what we decide actually changes the school. If you knew that every Thursday at 1pm you could take your lunch to the Old Theatre and actually change things you care about, the room would be packed to

# Michael Sandel: the public philosopher

Reviewing Michael Sandel's lecture at the LSE

**Marina Gerner**



The first thought that popped into my head when Michael Sandel walked onto the stage to deliver his lecture at the LSE was that he looks nothing like Mr Burns! According to urban legend, the Harvard Professor of Political Philosophy was the inspiration for Montgomery Burns of the Simpsons, Homer's evil boss and owner of Springfield's nuclear power plant, who has the habit of bribing nuclear safety inspectors.

In one episode he even blocked out the sun to force the residents of Springfield to use more electricity. The legend that Sandel might have served as a template for Mr Burns stems from the fact that several Simpsons writers took Sandel's course on Justice as Harvard undergraduates. However, many argue that the only characteristic they share is a receding hairline.

In fact, Sandel could not be any more different than the amoral Mr Burns. Sandel is a Professor who has spent most of his life disseminating ideas of justice. He is basically the Anti-Burns. Sandel's aforementioned course on Justice has brought him worldwide recognition. Every year, over one thousand undergraduates crowd together in Harvard's largest lecture theatre to attend Sandel's lectures. Some even have to be turned away due to the popularity of the course. Consequently, it was turned into an

online lecture series and broadcast on television in the US. Instead of lecturing, Sandel facilitates dialogue between members of the audience. No PowerPoint. No notes. He calls it a "civic experiment in public philosophy" as he picks people who raise their hands in response to a series of his questions on political issues.

In his lecture at the LSE, Sandel addressed the issue of whether huge income gaps can ever be fair. During a period of recession, when public spending is cut and bonuses are highly controversial, it is very topical to discuss this. The first point the audience discussed was the qualities which should determine pay. One participant suggested that income should depend on skill,

intrinsic value of activities. I was surprised that the intrinsic difference between the job of a nurse and that of a banker was only reflected upon one hour into the debate. One of the first thoughts I expected people to voice was that, put simply, one saves lives while the other makes money. The other thought I had when I saw the title of Sandel's lecture was influenced by the fact that I had just come out of a brilliant lecture on gender representation by Shaku Banaji. I wondered whether the title of the lecture evoked the image of a male banker versus a female nurse. Interestingly, this issue of gender entered the discussion only few minutes into the debate.

Moreover, the point was raised that people start out in life from different levels of wealth and educational opportunity. Sandel suggested the following scenario: if we were able to ensure structures of advancement and equal opportunities for those from an underprivileged background, would that remove

our objections to an income gap? Would a pay difference then be fair? Some said yes, while others said no because two dimensions of luck remain: firstly, our skills can still be regarded as a matter of good luck and, secondly, it is not guaranteed that society will value our particular talent or skill. Therefore, as Sandel concluded, we have drawn out different competing principles about what fairness means in relation to differences in income.

I had hoped to hear more of Sandel's own philosophical theories and I would have preferred him to pinpoint the theories and concepts behind the discussion. However, this might not have appealed to a

broader audience, which is the aim of his lecture series. Therefore, I was more fascinated with the delivery of his lecture than the content. Rarely have I experienced such a great facilitation of discussion. Sandel remembered the names of people in his audience, deserving of applause in itself. Throughout the lecture, Sandel came across as very humble and softly-spoken, despite being one of the dons in political philosophy.

Sandel's lecture was a version of deliberative democracy. Through the dialogical method of Socrates, he connected common sense arguments with political philosophy.

You might say that the downside to such a deliberative lecture is that you might end up hearing uninformed opinions and people speaking nonsense. This is a risk that Sandel is willing to take and is more than capable of handling in order to facilitate proper discussion. He succeeded in showing that political philosophy is not remote or abstract but instead transpires in our everyday understanding of politics. I wonder if participating in Sandel's lecture will inspire me to spontaneously start a debate when I read his new book, "What Money Can't Buy: The Moral Limits of Markets," on the Northern Line. ☘

**Rarely have I experienced such a great facilitation of discussion. Sandel remembered the names of people in his audience, deserving of applause in itself. Throughout the lecture, Sandel came across as very humble and softly-spoken, despite being one of the dons in political philosophy.**

intelligence and creativity. Three arguments were drawn out: justice and fair pay should depend either on 1) effort and hard work, 2) contribution to well-being or 3) the demands of the market (aggregated choices of consumers), e.g. if many fans choose to pay to see Rooney play for United, why shouldn't he earn a lot? But the objection was raised that the talents you inherently possess are not reflective of your own achievement. So why should society discriminate against you by paying you significantly less if you were not born with epic football skills?

In the second part of the discussion, it was pointed out that markets do not pass judgement on the in-



Photo: Marina Gerner

# Conservatism in the US

A humorous study of politics, poverty and 1990's British TV

**Alistair Hughes**



Since the onset of "hard-times," the UK media has been flooded with articles and TV documentaries lambasting the levels of poverty in both Britain and the USA. Poor Kids, a critically acclaimed documentary shown in early 2011 on BBC One, hit home to British audiences the level of poverty in inner city areas from London to Glasgow. More recently, a Panorama investigation into poverty in the US showed tent-cities outside Detroit and huge queues for free health care attention in the mid-West.

As I watched the distressing images of a family living in a storm drain under Las Vegas, I was reminded of the 1990s BBC political drama House of Cards. You might well wonder what a fictional BBC series has got to do with extreme poverty. You might also think that, by using this comparison, I am trivialising a deadly serious societal issue. You might well think that, but in the eternal words of Francis Urquhart (the protagonist from House of Cards played by Ian Richardson): "I couldn't possibly comment."

The basic plot of House of Cards follows a similar line to that of Shakespeare's Richard III: an arch-Machiavellian politician narrates his quest for absolute power. Like many Renaissance-inspired productions, the protagonist draws the audience into his misdeeds: by the end of the first series you feel a sort of paternal love for Mr Urquhart. The beauty of House of Cards, and where all links to Shakespeare end, is its relevance to modern history and politics. The setting is post-Thatcherite Britain, an

imaginary world where the Conservative Party rules into the sunset without the emergence of New Labour.

Like Thatcher, Urquhart is portrayed as a staunch "one-nation conservative" in the Burkeian tradition. Ironically, House of Cards was filmed at a time when this political philosophy was dying out across the world. It is only recently that we have again seen the rise of the "one-nation" view in Britain and most obviously in America. While in the UK Burkeianism is still relatively marginalised, confined mainly to the UK Independence Party, in the US these conservative ideals have recently come to the fore in the Republican Party presidential primaries. Rick Santorum and Newt Gingrich are the epitome of the new-style "one-nation conservatives." Unfortunately for the educated minds of LSE students, it is all too easy to make fun of Santorum and Gingrich. But their politics could prove to be a dangerous reincarnation of those professed by Urquhart if they were given power.

Prime Minister Urquhart, in the second series of House of Cards, made policies that would doubtless draw a standing ovation from a Republican Convention this summer. Urquhart's reintroduction of national service mirrors Gingrich's suggestion that teenagers should become toilet cleaners to learn discipline. Meanwhile, a complete contempt for those lower in society is the hallmark of Urquhart's government. In the second series, Urquhart's government policy is praised because it commands the loyalty of 40 per cent of the electorate and therefore does not need the support of the underclasses.

Worryingly, this seems to apply as much to the fictional Conservative Party as it does to the very real, present day Republicans. Interviewed for Panorama, the head of the Heritage Foundation (a right-wing Washington

think-tank), said the plight of the millions of Americans suffering disgusting levels of poverty across the country was not his concern and probably does not exist.

In the final series of House of Cards, a challenge to Urquhart appears in the form of the wickedly named Tom Makepeace. Tom's concern at the destruction of British social fabric under Urquhart prompts "Makepeace to Makewar." It is extremely sad that Mr Makepeace appears so late into Urquhart's reign of terror. The Republican Party could do with such a character now in the face of the charge of the Tea Party.

Of course, if you have watched House of Cards, you will know that Urquhart would be outraged at being compared to men and women who do not believe in global warming or evolution (and most importantly aren't good upstanding Englishmen). Nevertheless, I fear that the effects of a "President Santorum" or "President Gingrich" regime would be horrifically similar to that of Francis Urquhart's. Thankfully, for the sake of humanity, the prospect of Santorum or Gingrich ever wielding serious power is happily slipping away into the history books.

This article is a humorous study of politics, poverty and 1990s British television: an unusual trio to say the least. But the issue of poverty in both the USA and the UK does need serious attention. Perhaps by watching House of Cards you will see the risks of abandoning people to poverty without compassionate state help.

Perhaps, also, the re-emergence of "one-nation conservatism" in the Republican Party is the last hurrah of an outdated political philosophy. It is probably time to forget Burkeian ideas in the modern liberal world. As Urquhart said about Margaret Thatcher, nothing lasts forever. ☛

## Letter to the Editor

Dear Sir,

I am an alumni of LSE (Stuart McPhail BSc (Econ) 1982). I wandered through Houghton Street on a little nostalgia trip a couple of weeks ago and came upon a little demo by what I presume to be the Palestinian Society. I wanted to go through the "barrier" and had an interesting chat with a good humoured and courteous protestor. He explained why they were there and it is clear their intent was purely peaceful.

I understand that things degenerated when a group started throwing things at them. This is a great pity in my view and I do hope that such protests are not discouraged as a result. They had a perfect right to do what they were doing and those who disrupted it should show some respect for other people's right to express themselves in a way which does not intimidate others.

Those chucking water bombs and intimidating peaceful protestors would find a warm welcome in the Likud Party in Israel, which shows an equal disdain for the rights and dignity of those who do not share their squalid and mean spirited outlook on life.

Yours faithfully,

Stuart McPhail

Want to send us a comment?

Are you outraged by something you've seen in this paper and interested in responding?

You can write about anything, from happenings at LSE, to events further afield.

Contact us by email:  
comment@the  
beaveronline.co.uk

# One editor's wildly unfounded claims

A realistic look at the LSE from a one-year outsider's perspective

**Sydney Saubestre**



I've been one of the News Editors of this illustrious paper for sixteen issues now - sixteen weekends spent in varying degrees of productivity in our little office, East Building 204. At some point during the first week I volunteered to write an article on the first UGM of the year and somehow it transcended into this ever-bashed position.

Now, traditionally, I'm supposed to tell you all the reasons why you should care about our paper or student politics or turn this into a platform for an upcoming Students' Union election. I have been reluctant to write for any other section besides News, partly out of sheer exhaustion and, though mindful of the idiocy of saying that anything we write is completely unbiased since by virtue of including them we are presenting them as worthwhile or at the very least, better than white space, I have always treated my ideologies as a somewhat private pastime, reserved for ranty soliloquies and late night viewings of the

Daily Show.

Of course, I have strong beliefs, but I have always felt that the air of impartiality that News requires was more important. I also attended an absurd amount of schools where everything was "discussed" and I stopped believing in productive debates with most members of my age group or older - a six year old, on the other hand, as demonstrated by Kony 2012, is much more malleable.

So what is the point of this faux-balance? Well, for one, the UGM is ever-entertaining if you walk in with no stance and watch the two sides (because there are always two) draw blood over semantic issues while fighting the good fight. Jack Tindale is responsible for about 78 per cent of the comic relief, but no worries, he has another year to make you giggle.

I came to the LSE from a small, overly-liberal (even for lil' old bleedin' heart me) university in the middle of lower Manhattan. The majority of the student body was political. They occupied Wall Street and then they moved on up to Fourteenth Street. No one cared about the Student Senate, our version of the Students' Union, which was inherently more dysfunctional and less democratic, because everyone was too busy saving the

world through some combination of documentary-filmmaking/blogging/nude-modern-dancing/postmodernism.

LSE seemed like a good idea, a last minute whim as all my ideas are, so I dropped out of school for the year, quit my job and moved to London. It had both the promise of

**Pseudo-journalists that we may be, we fit in well with the pseudo-entrepreneurs, pseudo-politicians, pseudo-anarchists, and let us not forgot the great silent majority, the future pseudo-evil bankers of the world.**

academic rigour and the socially progressive stance that I still wasn't quite ready to let go of. I was less in it for the "Let's See Europe" aspect and saw it more as a trial run at a "real" school that would actually force me to focus on something.

Lo and behold the short attention span of the twenty year old, I fell out of love with Economics when people started calling it a science and decided to stick with Anthropology. Never having had to focus all my attention on one subject area and quickly disenchanted by the numerous kids in suits, cabin fever set in and I took up journalism. My year

at LSE has been increasingly defined by my time behind our feckless office computers. Pseudo-journalists that we may be, we fit in well with the pseudo-entrepreneurs, pseudo-politicians, pseudo-anarchists, and let us not forgot the great silent majority, the future pseudo-evil bankers of the world.

**Pseudo-journalists that we may be, we fit in well with the pseudo-entrepreneurs, pseudo-politicians, pseudo-anarchists, and let us not forgot the great silent majority, the future pseudo-evil bankers of the world.**

Anyway, back to my point, politics as a silent pastime. It's been fun being "opinion-less" but, now that this is my last chance to be labelled, as I've been threatened with by six separate students/institutions over the last two terms (not least by Jason Wong who threatened to stick his lawyers - plural - on me at one in the morning), here are a couple of things I know, but can't prove, from my time at the LSE. Where else but in Comment may I make wild, unfounded assessments without losing my much-lauded journalistic integrity?

One, there is a large python that

roams the campus. I haven't been able to find it, but my ophidiophobia has been on high alert.

Two, the Tata Group, an Indian conglomeration, is evil. The rest of this comment article was utter filler - let me be clear: Tata is bad news, pun intended. It's probably no worse than any other large conglomeration but, while it is upheld as a beacon of love and virtue by those at the LSE who profit from its funding, it has been disparaged by many an academic and conspiracy theorist. Their family-oriented, PR enhanced image has been diminished by a union assassination in 1993 and clever hiring semantics. After spending hours reading about unsolved murders near their plants or on territories they wished to build on, I've decided they are questionable, at best. Even after harassing various staff members at the Telegraph in Calcutta - drawing on both no-sleep-'till-print-time and pestering skills enhanced, but not created, by the Beaver - my beliefs were still unprovable. But then again, so is everything that comes out of Newt Gingrich's mouth and no one has stopped him yet. ☛

# Social

## Diary of a wannabe banker Part 3



### Bakr Al-Akku on lessons learned on the trading floor

Flickr: PoiseWinsTitles

Last week was the UK's turn to take a battering from the credit rating agencies with the aptly named "Moodys" putting the UK on "negative outlook" - whatever that is supposed to mean. The magnitude of the verdict stirred ripples across global markets, with the sum total of no one caring.

Why not you may ask? This same credit rating agency gave maximum triple-A ratings to worthless pieces of paper that promised to pay you a fortune, if by some miracle of God, hundreds of thousands of unemployed broke Americans paid off their \$400,000 mortgages. Well guess what? They didn't.

But news aside my story this week sheds a whole different light on the notion of credit ratings as I divulge details of my work experience at a bank. Having secured a position in Trading and completed one week of initial training, today was my first day on the trading floor. Was I nervous? No. I was shitting it.

Should I believe all the stories about bankers? Were they really going to manipulate me into their bitch? Awesomely-made introductions to everyone aside, where was I going to sit? "We have not got a free desk but James will be on holiday next week so you can sit on his then" "No worries I am good to stand" I eagerly replied.

"Haha, you're not standing, you'll just be sitting with me. You didn't

expect to stand twelve hours a day for the next five days did you?"

"Oh no, I was joking,"

"Oh okay,"

I hadn't been joking.

After that awkward start I eased into talking to everyone for the next few days and taking part in the banter began to feel like part of the team.

Shadowing a trader one morning, a tall blonde I had not seen before strutted down the aisle, hair bouncing off her shoulders. Just as I noticed myself I saw the eyes of many a trader swiftly follow suit as they eyed up what they thought of as the latest piece of meat in the den. Not wishing to appear more interested in the woman than bonds, I quickly regained concentration to see the trader I was sat with typing away on his Bloomberg group chat.

"Did you guys just see that AAA?"

"I've got her"

"Naa, she's mine"

"Only an A+"

"Are you crazy? At least AA"

Noticing me watching his screens, the trader shut it quickly and turned to face me.

"What are you smiling at?"

"Nothing,"

"Shouldn't you be concentrating on these? Why is this bond of the same company & expiration worth less?"

"Well, it depends on their seniority,"

"Explain,"

"Bond A may be more attractive if for example it's AAA than say only an A+," I winked

Smirking at me he whispered "shush" before offering to buy me lunch. Twenty-first century networking at its best.

Having been given bits and bobs to work on I was now looking forward to starting my main project. An equity trader called me over.

"Hey, Newman, I've got something for you"

"Sure," I was getting used to being called Newman.

"I've got a guy outside the McDonalds on the other side of the station, I need you to pay him."

"Errr... Ok"

Handing me £300 he continued "He should be wearing a grey striped hoody and blue trousers. He'll be standing next to the angel statue."

Okay, this was just plain weird now.

"He'll pass you an envelope. Bring it straight here."

What on Earth was going on? Surely it would be reasonable to question him?

"Sure that's fine, what is it for?"

"Ah nothing, just something for the missus."

Ah yes, that explains it. A £300 dropoff to a man in a grey striped hoody for an envelope for the missus? What the hell had I got myself into? And what exactly did missus mean? Was that his wife? Or someone else?

Looking at my manager for some level of support that this wasn't the first of potentially many drug pickups he nodded. Was that a go ahead? Or was he in on it too? Could this six foot black haired man be missus?

This was not quite the project I had in mind.

Anticipating the movements and actions of everyone around whilst simultaneously analysing their clothing, I felt like I was starring in a Bourne movie. Approaching the drop-off location, using shutter holes to check out the area before my arrival I scouted out my target. If only my friends could see me now; they thought I was some high flying trader-in-waiting perhaps helping price important deals. I was not. I had been manipulated into that position of bitch I had tried to avoid. So there I was, a modern-day warrior enrobed in a full suit, crouched like a ninja peering through gaps in a fence, with £300 in my pocket playing "spot the grey hoody". I recalled once asking a recruiter what to expect as an intern? Attend our networking events they said; speak to our employees they said. Well none of them ever said this in the job description.

Aha, there he is! A young man wearing a backpack in blue trackies strolled up to the statue, slits through his brows, hoody up. Approaching him from the front, I nodded and flicked my eyebrows in acknowledgement.

"£300 yeah?"

"Yes boss," he replied looking into the horizon.

Not sure whether to show him the money first or wait for the package I paused a moment. He looked at me weirdly and reached into his jacket pocket where a bulky item was resting. Was that a package or a gun? Now I would like to sound dramatic by saying my whole life flashed before my eyes. But it didn't. I coolly pulled out the cash wad as he removed a package and we casually exchanged simultaneously.

"Cheers mate,"

"Thanks."

I could have been in Goodfellas. Paranoid I was being tailed by an undercover copper, I doubled back twice before taking the subway to the office. James Bond had taught me well. With little conviction I hoped for the best, perhaps things were different here? Because where I come from delivering an unmarked package you just paid £300 to a hooded man for is called possession with intent to supply.

Passing the envelope to the trader, his colleague asked "What's that Rob?"

"Just a couple of tickets for the Take That Concert tonight. It's the missus birthday."

# Considering the end of an era

## Laura Aumeer on the end of three long years at the LSE

It is Week Ten of Lent Term and LSE is shutting up shop so-to-speak, just not the library. Society activities are winding down; this will be the last new issue of the Beaver you read and, scarily, this is our last week of learning before exams. More daunting, for third year undergraduates, such as myself, this is the last week of being taught in our whole degree: the culmination of three years of life at LSE. Naturally this finality leads to a reflection of the highs and lows of the past year.

Deciding that my friends', rather sensible, ideas about settling down to focus on the last chance to improve grades was not for me, I set out to "make the most of it." Though what exactly this meant I was not sure: going to every available public lecture, getting involved in every club and society or merely enjoying the freedom to go out every night? The student experience at LSE can mean a variety of things, and in my three years I tried to do all the above, only to realise that there are a finite number of hours in a day and I did not own Bernard's watch.

Some freshers do get very involved

with things on campus, but I regret that I was not one of them. But, aside from the disadvantage of a lack of time, there are many advantages of being a third year. Without the distraction of halls life, there is the time to really focus on what you want to. After three years you know how things work on campus, what you want to get involved with; you know the academics and teachers better and what is expected of you academically. With the realisation that come July you will be out there in the real world, it has been hard not to appreciate time spent at the LSE.

Despite the best intentions - we are here to get a degree after all - there have been times for all of us when things have piled up. Not to mention there is the potential danger of beginning to hate the subject you loved when your first applied to university, three years ago, all wide-eyed and fresh-faced. Hours spent studying and going into detail you never thought necessary, does not always help.

But LSE is not just about the work, even in third year. It is possible to keep up some semblance of a social life, managing enough nights out to

relax and not lose the plot completely. If only, in my case, to sacrifice nearly losing my belongings and possibly my dignity on several occasions. During the day there is a vibrant network of societies running and indeed there is a life outside classes and lectures and careers events, if you want there to be.

However for much of this year, I have been forced, like many other third year undergraduates, to face up to the daunting question of what to do with that piece of paper and the line on our CVs that the three years working hard were actually for. These three years have been great and I have definitely got more experience and knowledge, but what will I use my newly acquired in-depth knowledge of history and politics for, aside from shouting at the television with more authority during Question Time? This time has also been debt-inducing and making great friends, memorable nights out and even "finding yourself" is not going to pay that off.

But finding a post-degree option that is fulfilling, challenging and might help pay off the debts is not easy. In fact these problems have led to many third years I know, going through what

could be affectionately described as a "quarter-life crisis", as they spend their time reassessing their entire lives over the big question of what to do next year. This has manifested itself in hours upon hours searching various options and discussing them to a trusty friend, willing to put up with the melodrama. Think this does not sound so bad - the time it takes away from doing anything else and the stress and pressure do not make it a particularly happy experience.

This realisation that actually there is no set path, hits many in third year. The "typical" LSE career path - spring week, summer internship, job in a bank earning lots of money - does not apply to many an LSE student. Even if you find a job that seems to fit the bill and an offer that looks amazing on paper, you have to consider if you really want to be committing yourself, to that line of work and to that company, cutting off other possibilities for the foreseeable future. This may just be similar to pre-wedding jitters for most; but for some, it will involve standing your company up at the altar and running away with your love(1): whether that is further study, another

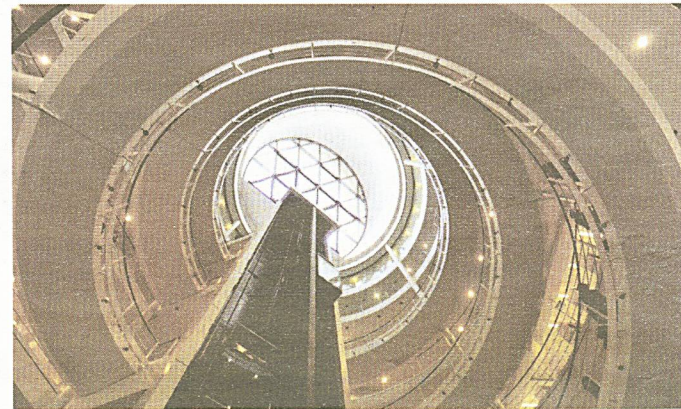
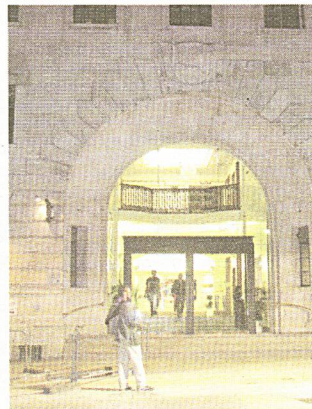
job or just some time out.

Looking back, these worries may seem insignificant in the grand scheme of things, but they undeniably take up a large chunk of time of our university experience, and I cannot help consider them a stain on the last year. With everyone feeling the same way as well, it is almost like we spur each other on. A collective hysteria about careers that means we all easily forget the things we could be doing now as we worry over the things we may hypothetically do later.

But getting back to the present, it is Week Ten, which is considered, for me and my fellow third years our last normal week of learning at LSE. So, how to make the most of it? Well the answer is obvious: in true undergraduate style, Tiger on Monday, Zoo on Wednesday and Crush on Friday, right? It may have been three years, the work may have got harder and what we are all doing next year may be unclear, but some things have not changed.



Photos: Beaver archive



## Chye Shu Wen on the international student life at LSE

As of 12 July 2012 at 5pm, I will be yet another international-student-graduate-statistic from the LSE. Am I proud to have been part of this institution's very international community for the past three years? Yes indeed - but part of that experience meant being just one face in the United Nations crowd, and trying to side step the stereotypical image of being an extremely hard-working and conservative Asian. For one, I do not study economics - "But you go to the London School of Economics!" way too many Asian parents, besides my father, have exclaimed -, or law, or actuarial science, or basically anything to do with mathematics or statistics.

As a history student, and one of the few from Southeast Asia in the history department, adjusting to the competitive and extremely career-oriented

environment of LSE was something that took some time getting used to. When a senior told me in August 2009 to not let the investment-banking-"I-MUST-MAKE-LOTS-OF-MONEY"-mentality get to me, it did not take me long to figure out what she meant: by the third week of Michaelmas Term, my LSE inbox was swarmed with LSE careers service emails, Milkround emails and information about internship fairs and the like. I could not really escape from the LSE grind of getting a summer job or internship. My Lent Terms in LSE were hence spent juggling readings, assignments, and writing many, many cover letters to publishing companies in London and in my home country of Singapore - practically begging them to take me on as an unpaid intern/volunteer for x number of days or weeks.

Jobs and worrying-about-the-future aside, I'll remember my time at

LSE as one where I spent hundreds, and yes it really was hundreds, of hours reading about the history of the twentieth century, the Ottoman Empire, the rise and rise of China and the other East Asian tigers, and learn-

spurred me to try learning a language in my first and second year and I am now proud to say I have the German-speaking capability of a six year old.

But student life wise, I chose not to make great efforts to be seen or

the LSE is trying to be more inclusive, even if some of my state school friends might beg to differ. It has really taught me the value and power of encouraging others to aim for higher education.

Oh, and not mentioning the LSE Events would be a sin: I am glad I got to see history specialists, aka history super-stars, politicians, writers, thinkers and people who have made a name for doing what they love. I was kind of hoping to see Obama on campus, but I am sure he will still make it to the LSE Events list one day. All in all, whether or not I remain in London or return to Asia to begin life as a real person, LSE has really opened my eyes and made me really believe that the world is your oyster; it is up to you to go forth and make life what you want it to be.

## Being just one face in the United Nations crowd and trying to side step the stereotypes

ing more about histories of the Third World. I am also proud to have been part of the small but tight literature community in LSE. In case you didn't know the Language Centre offers four literature courses - yes, there are people in LSE who read poetry and plays as part their degrees. Being part of such an international community also

heard - I am not part of any societies, or any Students' Union related things. The only thing I am involved in is the LSE Student Ambassador programme, which I joined on the spur of the moment in my second year. After giving many campus tours to local and international students, and helping out at higher education fairs, I am really glad

## Katherine Wzorek on life on the general course

I can still remember getting off the plane at I can still remember getting off the plane at Heathrow Airport in late September. I was definitely a bit jet-lagged and nervous because I had no idea what to expect. I had never been so far away from home for so long. Even further, London was so different - so big, confusing, and overwhelming. I have grown up in Philadelphia and I go to school in DC, but London was in no way comparable to the "grid-system cities" I was used to in the US. Throughout the first weeks, I found myself constantly getting lost, Google mapping every location I needed to go, constantly searching the tube map for

the correct stop, and feeling incompetent when unassuming tourists asked me for directions.

But this initial shock of London eventually wore off. After these past six months, London does not seem so scary anymore. By no means am I suggesting that have conquered London, but the city has become comfortable. I have embraced London in all its crowded, chaotic glory -- I no longer feel like a foreigner in London; instead, I feel at home. Moreover, LSE has become a home away from home as well. The classes I have taken have been intellectually stimulating and have challenged my previous ideas and conceptions. LSE is an intellectu-

ally curious place, where students are encouraged to think for themselves, to critique previous thoughts, and to be innovative. My classmates and coworkers' ability and passion to discuss various issues constantly amazes me -- I have no doubt many people in my classes will go on to change the world.

Besides just learning in the classroom, I have also had the opportunity to travel to various places throughout Europe. I have seen the Sagrada Familia in Barcelona, the Blue Mosque in Istanbul, Gamla Stan in Stockholm, and during the break, the headquarters of the ICC in the Hague, and the glaciers of Iceland. I am so appreciative of

having the opportunity to go to these fascinating and incredibly different places with great friends.

While the traveling part has been amazing, I think the greatest part of my time abroad has been the amazing people that I have met, both General Course students and LSE students alike. I have gotten the chance to meet people around the world, hear their perspectives and opinions, and thus understand the world just a little bit better. The people at LSE are so open and willing to listen, eager to hear my stories and happy to share their own. Everyone at LSE is so driven to succeed, to be the best that they can be, and create change in the world.

In sum, this year has been eye opening and humbling. If I had to summarize my entire year studying at LSE in the General Course, I would have to use the word incredible. This year has allowed me the opportunity to meet people from around the world, to travel and, of course, to study exciting and interesting subjects. This year has really shaped me and challenged me, both in and out of the classroom. LSE is a place where you can dive right in, even if you are just studying abroad here for the year. I do not feel like I am an outsider; instead, I really feel that LSE, and London, has become a place in which I can always return.

# The highs and lows of life at LSE

## Geoffrey Baldwin on the lessons learnt over the past three years

**A**t the end of this week my LSE experience draws to a close. Late nights at Zoo Bar will be replaced with late nights at the library, afternoon sessions in C120 will be replaced by afternoon sessions in the library, and morning sessions sleeping will yet again be replaced by morning sessions in the library. I have been at LSE for nearly three years now and it has been an amazing but interesting experience. What has made my experience so great is that each term I have met and got to know a whole new bunch of people. I would like to use this article to give some advice in how to make the most of the LSE experience from the lessons and mistakes I have learnt.

The biggest mistake I made was not joining the AU, a mistake I rectified in my third year. For many the AU stands for lash, gash and spending daddy's cash. To a certain extent this might be true but there is so much

more than some very messy nights at the muddy, sweaty and filthy - and I am not just talking about the people-club that is Zoo Bar. The people you play sport with are amazing and you will build-up such friendships. You don't need to go out on the nights to thoroughly enjoy the AU experience. Joining the AU added significantly to my enjoyment of my third and final year. Whilst you don't need to go on the nights out to thoroughly enjoy the AU experience, joining the AU coincidentally led to my lack of motivation for anything on a Thursday morning/afternoon. But, in all seriousness it is one of the best £10 I have ever spent.

As well as the AU, get involved in other societies. While I am not particularly career minded I spent a stint as the Vice President of the LSE SU Investment Society. Getting a leadership role in any society is really great and I recommend it to anyone. Not only does it look good on the CV, but at least for me I met another load

of new people and friends that under other circumstances I would not have met. Being able to really influence the direction of the society and striving to achieve goals that would benefit our members was something I found really enjoyable. I know many people that have had similar experiences in other societies and although it does involve quite a bit of work, I know that we are all glad we did it.

The library is not one of LSE's strong-points. Much though I like the architectural work of Norman Foster, the LSE library is not his best. The stairs are annoying, the lifts slow, and now you have to swipe out to leave. It is probably for these time wasting reasons that people simply don't leave the library. This is a shame as there is more to LSE than studying. You can get a 2:1, and in many cases a 1st and still have a blinder of a time. This is something I do believe I have managed well over the three years.

I don't spend all my time work-

ing, but when I do I make it count. The secret for success at LSE is to keep up with the work throughout the year. There is nothing better than rocking out with the same grade as someone knowing that while you were having roof top barbecues and drinking chilled beer, they were busting out regressions and drinking coffee.

Wrights Bar. Everyone knows of it and most people love it, but few people know its best secret. The Wrights Bar mixed grill is the big daddy or crème de la crème of what their fryer can offer. For £3.50 you get a plate full of Wrights Bar goodness. It is by far the greatest and one of the cheapest meals that can be bought on campus, yet it is one of the least known about. My LSE experience would have been enhanced far more had I known about it earlier.

Get involved in stuff and try new things. I never skied before so I went on the LSE Ski trip. Yes it was expensive, but it was one of the best weeks of my life. The word mental doesn't even

describe it. I am going on the RAG hitchhike next week. I have not hitchhiked before and I am pretty sure the 8:00am start after the last Crush will not live down as one of my greatest mornings ever. However, it is trying new things that will make you experience at LSE great.

I hope these pieces of advice help improve those people who have more glorious years at this institution. After all, there is more to life than banking, metrics, or protesting. A few mates came around yesterday evening for a night of poker, pizza and French style beer. In many ways my hand in the final round of the game sums up my time at LSE. I had a 2 pair which is a good hand. However, my friend had 3 of a kind. I cannot complain about having a 2 pair, nor complain about my experience at LSE, but with some of the advice above I am sure you could get that three of a kind.

## Kirsty Kenney on her Freshers' experience

**I** was verging on ignorant when I first arrived at LSE. I did not really know much about the school; I chose it for the course, not the name. My options this year have been great, everything that you could want in a human geography degree - lots of colouring in, playing capital city quizzes and the like. Jokes aside, after the blurry fresher's fortnight, there was a bit of a shock to the system. There were pages and pages of readings, essays set with no real guidance, essays marked with no real feedback and all these people with some serious ambitions - the UN, JP Morgan and Goldman Sachs. Yes, it is fair to say that I realised quite quickly that I had finally become a little fish in a big pond.

But what I also soon realised was that university is a lot more than just getting the grades. Well, it just has to be when you are the type of person who just cannot make it to lectures before midday. I don't necessarily mean you should join every society on offer and go to as many public lectures as you can. What I mean is that university should be about becoming the person, and the personality, that you want to be for the rest of your life.

In order to do this, you probably

need to learn to look after yourself first. As someone with the common sense IQ of a pea, learning to look after myself has not been the smoothest of rides. Firstly, I am hopeless at cooking. Metal in the microwave. Guilty. Trying to make a stir-fry with 3 week old, funky smelling bean sprouts. Guilty. Giving up and resorting to a Maccie D's for dinner. Guilty - with the free chips of course!

And don't get me started on washing. That has just been one great big disaster. I finally realised at the beginning of Lent Term that I had been washing my clothes in fabric conditioner the whole time.

When I did manage to buy Daz, and not Persil, I managed to turn all my whites turquoise with a new pair of green jeans. And then there is the cleaning. Who can be bothered to go down to reception to get the Hoover? Well, not me... until my room got so dusty that it

started to aggravate my asthma.

Although it is fair to say that I have learned from my mistakes last term, budgeting is not exactly my strong point either. This morning, with the student budget blown at the Roxy last night, I found myself with empty

cracked the washing machine and become adept with the feather duster. And besides, I feel very at home in London, at halls and at the LSE, so all these little hiccups don't seem to matter any more. I am a city girl. The big smoke doesn't phase me and in fact my world seems quite small with lots of familiar faces. I even have a favourite bus driver. When someone shouts "Wahey, look who it is! You fell asleep on here last week" as you are tapping your oyster, you know it has got to be a small world after all.

What has made my year this year though has to be Carr-Saunders. It is all about the halls for me. It has got a great community spirit and although the dinners are pretty tasteless, we always have a great time together. I have made so many new friends and we have shared so many little, and big, adventures together. We have bonded

over many a cheeky wee in various sinks and alleyways or squares of London when it just gets too much on the walk to the evenings club of choice. And, we must have consumed far too many portions of Wrights bar's 95p chips and afternoon double vodka diet cokes in the Tuns than could possibly be good for you. But I have also found time to do all sorts of other things too: from helping out at the LSE fashion show to setting up my own society, the Album Club, for music enthusiasts who want to share, listen and discuss music.

These are all the things that have made this year great. Needless to say I have loved it! This year has been about new friends, new experiences and a bit of growing up too. It is fair to say that there hasn't been a great deal of hard work this year. Only a handful of times have I found myself setting up camp for a day in the library, or downing cups of coffee before an all-nighter.

But in hindsight, I know now that we were all just little fishes at the start of this year. It just takes a while for everyone to get used to things. Now, with my feet firmly set on the ground, it is time to get down to some revision and take what I have learned with me next year.



Photo: Kirsty Kenney

pockets. With not even enough money for a pint of milk, and not quite cheeky enough to steal someone else's, I resorted to putting water on my cereal. I think I will just go hungry next time.

But, I am getting better. I have

## Manjula Kalliat on returning to student life from the city

**A**wintery Thursday morning in 2011: it is rush hour and my formally-attired self is plastered against the door of a jam-packed Bakerloo line service. Cut to a wintery Thursday morning in 2012: having returned home just a few hours earlier after a night out with course mates, I am still in my pyjamas ruminating on the possible merits of Foucault's panopticon. You can blame it on boredom or disillusionment, but wanting a break from the status quo is all too common. Ways of looking for that break vary though. Some go on holiday to clear the mental clutter while the more motivated start trawling job sites looking for a career change. I simply decided to swap suits and high heels for jeans and trainers.

As a full-time MSc student, the weeks preceding Orientation were spent getting my head around the fact that being a student fundamentally involved thinking like one. Having finished University some years ago, this I reckoned would be a daunting task. Call it the power of human adaptability or the reawakening of the dormant student in me, but before the end of

MT week one comparing prices of binders in the SU shop and elsewhere, demanding student discounts and of course scouring for deals - free being the operative word - had become second nature. However, getting used to a different notion of time required more effort, as the concept of a weekend soon disappeared and the line between night and day got increasingly blurry.

Five exciting and exhausting months on, a definitive list of my LSE highs would have to begin with the people. Nowhere else have I found such a delightful mix, with every other person being an artist, poet, musician, writer, hacker, DJ or some such thing - a far cry from the world of sales directors and account managers I was used to. And just about everyone is a thinker and philosopher, as I have discovered time and again in one of my favourite LSE hangouts - The George. In a city where every second pub is the oldest, the longest, or has some impressive piece of history attached to it, the George is, let's accept it, rather unremarkable. Yet, having spent several evenings there listening to conspiracy theorists of myriad political beliefs arguing it out over cheap lager,

I can safely say that drinks with friends will never be the same again. Whoever said that only the open expanses of red brick universities far out in the country could foster creativity and expression? I have seen in Houghton Street - all 100 metres of it - the most vibrant display of people's varied preoccupations and affiliations. That one tiny street could provide a platform for so many different interests, sometimes conflicting

## Just about everyone is a thinker and philosopher, as I have discovered time and again in one of my favourite LSE hangouts - The George

ones, never ceases to amuse. Killing time has taken on a whole new meaning in the LSE environs. I could spend one half of the day sipping tea at the Garrick and the other half public lecture hopping. And yet, no one ever deems one less stimulating than the other.

In true social scientist fashion, I will now dwell on the other side of the LSE experience. One thing that I found to be dismally similar to work life was competition. Let me quickly clarify that I do not mean competition of the academic kind where people are ready tolobber one another for marks, as I have experienced in some other institutions. It is the competition for resources - of all kinds. And so, at

the start of the term, if you want to get a place in the course of your choice, you need to get online before the rest. There are only so many places on some workshops and everybody wants to be on them. Log on to "LSE for You" thirty minutes too late and others have beaten you to it. Some of this, I suppose,

is unavoidable. But I am still sore with the disappointment of having missed out on some great talks. A related woe is one of timetabling and keeping track of stuff. There is so much going on all the time that despite my best efforts at fitting it all in, even maintaining a diary for the first time ever in my life, I have missed out on a few deadlines and engagements.

But in the wider scheme of things, these are but minor irritants. After all, how often do you get to be in the same room as a Nobel Laureate, a head of state or a movie star or ride the elevator with an MP or an academic you have admired all your life? I never tire of telling envious friends still stuck in employment how much more fun a morning spent reading is than chasing clients for payments. And when the reading and essay-writing gets a little too much, I am quick to tell myself to enjoy what in all likelihood will be my last encounter with student life. Come September, it will be time to take the suit out of its bag and wipe the dust off the high heels. But until then, I am going to enjoy my year out from the real world.

# Life on the breadline

**Abir Qazilbash** on the challenges of living on a fiver a day

**W**hen me and my friend Vivian saw that LSESU Student Action For Refugees (STAR) was looking for volunteers to live on a daily budget of £5.00, we were keen to take up the opportunity. Not only was it an excellent way of increasing the longevity of our ever-diminishing student loans, but more importantly, it was the perfect chance to get a glimpse of what life is like in the shoes of those less fortunate than ourselves.

In the early hours of Tuesday morning, to get ourselves prepared for the week ahead, we decided to walk back for over an hour in total, in quasi-Antarctic conditions from a friend's accommodation at Queen Mary University, East London to our halls. This way, we avoided paying hefty bus and tube fares. On our way back, it was very saddening to see a couple of individuals, one in a tube station alcove, and the other underneath a shop marquee, who were both homeless and forced to sleep in the freezing cold. This really hit home the purpose of our week.

Tuesday morning, I began the day by picking up a £4.00 Ginger Tofu Noodle hotpot from the Crussch Juice Bar in Southwark; a surprisingly filling brunch, while also being full of protein, and having zero fat - I definitely recommend it. This was followed by a brisk walk to Campus

for a relatively early morning lecture, and the aforementioned hotpot actually managed to keep me going through lunch. Slightly concerned with my remaining £1 for dinner, I resolved that I would go to Tesco Express, and buy myself the cheapest deals they had in the shop and make the time for cutting and preparing salad and budget home-cooked meals before I next went to campus. A special deal on a loaf of Tesco Value bread for merely 30p saved the day, and I complimented this with some free jam and Nutella mini-cartons I had fortunately picked up during lunch the day before. It is indeed possible to have a delicious dinner, albeit possibly not the most nutritious one in this particular instance, and pay virtually nothing for it.

Wednesday morning started off later than usual as it was my day off, and in the process, paying for breakfast was not an issue at all. Lunch was home-cooked chips, seasoned with chili and salt - which, in the words of a friend, "tasted bare peng". Dinner was a couple of sachets of instant Miso soup with salad - alas, a couple of pending essays prevented me from devoting time to cooking a meal from scratch.

Thursday, started off with cereal from the Bankside canteen, which came to under a pound. Lunch was at the Hare Krishna stall, consisting of vegetables and lentils cooked with rice. Feeling pretty ravenous after an

"intense" badminton session, cooked a meal using £2.50 worth of frozen veggie burgers, and 2 buns which came to just over £1. The ketchup was free, having picked up the sachet earlier while a friend had her lunch in McDonalds.

Friday was a full day. Started off with some porridge, and grabbed a free lunch from the Hare Krishna stall later in the day. I spoke to the vendor about the Hare Krishna "Food for Life" programme. The choice of targeting relatively well-to-do student demographic in a London university may seem somewhat illogical, but it is a perfect location for promoting their organisation's altruistic message to the student body. Moreover, they also run similar midday meals at a range of homeless shelters, and serve as a source of free daily nutrition to some of the most destitute groups on the margins of society. After picking up a copy of the Big Issue on the way home. Dinner consisted of a hearty roasted and seasoned butternut squash, which only cost 89p.

Overall, in retrospect, living on £5 a day is certainly an experience that is worth trying for everyone. Not only do you get to practice and discover different ways to save money while eating healthily, it also provides a nice oasis from the sometimes overwhelming consumerist-oriented society we live in, which is all about spending more money.



Flickr: p22earl

# Travel Diary: Hidden Hong Kong

**Linda Yang** on another side to Asia's financial hub

**W**hen I first moved to Hong Kong, I was one of sixteen US university graduates sent to teach English at a tertiary institution. One night a friend and I, both from the American Midwest, a place known for corn fields, wide-open sunsets, and running barefoot, took a walk around our campus in the New Territories. We paused halfway through and peered down into a small village in the middle of low trees and brush. Behind us the dark mountains separating the New Territories from Mainland China were dimly lit by the light pollution from the rest of Hong Kong. A sharp dog bark echoed in the saturated air; a bonfire burned in front of a hut, adding to the all-enveloping humidity.

"It's funny," my friend said to me, gesturing to the wooded area below. "When I left for Hong Kong, my dad said, 'Guess you're going to miss a lot of things...like trees.'"

It is a common misconception that Hong Kong is solely a mélange of flying skyscrapers, concrete slabs through which men in suits dart back and forth in their financial pursuits. In particular, since I have come to LSE, I realized the place it occupies in most people's minds is the financial center of Asia, another place to work alongside London and New York. I do not blame them; the Hong Kong government is proud to tout it as "Asia's World City" and the breathtaking night skyline from Victoria Harbour is a testament to cosmopolitanism that deserves to be admired in books, movies and on the Internet.

But the thing is, that is not all. After living there for three years, I

realize my favorite thing about Hong Kong is its ability to be anything to anyone: remote beach town, nightlife hotspot, culinary destination, hiking paradise.

Most people do not realize Hong Kong is actually made up of four regions. The New Territories, the most northerly region, borders Mainland China; then going south there is Kowloon, home of the famous

If you are ever in Hong Kong, I definitely suggest a visit to any of the Outlying Islands, which you can reach in as little as 35 minutes by ferry from Hong Kong Island. One of my favorites is Cheung Chau, a small island where a long line of al fresco eateries meets you right by the pier. These food courts, called dai pai dong, can either be outside or inside but on a beautiful day, you

quaint island which boasts two beaches. Cheung Chau is especially popular for the week-long Bun Festival in the spring, which commemorates the god Pak Tai ridding the island of plague during the late Qing dynasty. There are lion dances and parades and it culminates in a scramble to the top of a conical tower of Chinese steamed buns. This combination of nature, delicious cuisine,

you finish in fishing village Shek O, home to one of my favorite beaches.

If Shek O is too crowded for you, head north to the New Territories to find one of the most remote beaches in Hong Kong. Begin at the bottom of the MacLehose Trail, a 100-kilometer long trail through the region. You can either hike the 13 kilometers to Long Ke Wan, the deserted beach, or cheat and take a cab for ten of those kilometers. At the end of the road, hike some stairs over a mountain dotted with low bushes that shake in the wind as the sun beams down. As you turn a corner near the top, below you a sliver of white sand appears, enclosed by heavily wooded hills. The water can only be described as azure, and on a weekday there is most likely not a single soul on the beach. It is a welcome respite in a city with a population density of 6,300 people per square kilometer.

So, whether you're an urban jet-setter or nature enthusiast, I guarantee Hong Kong has something to entertain you. And as I look back at my time in the city, I realize, yes, I had many fun nights going out in Lan Kwai Fong, blowing my budget in one of its multi-story, city-block-swallowing megamalls and dining at the endless buffets atop towering hotels. But three years later, what stands out in my mind are the cultural and natural surprises - the hidden back streets and winding trails that took me to another side of Hong Kong. Now, when I think back to that walk my friend and I took three years ago, I remember what I said to him as we looked down at the wooded village: "Yeah," I replied with a wry chuckle. "I miss trees too."



Flickr: istolethetv

Victoria Harbour with eye-popping views from the Star Ferry and then Hong Kong Island, land of the Peak and, yes, skyscrapers, including the famous IFC 2 which Batman jumped from in the Dark Knight; finally the most southerly region are the Outlying Islands, where no cars are allowed, which are to the south and west of Hong Kong Island. With the efficient Hong Kong transit system, you are never more than an hour away from visiting any of these areas.

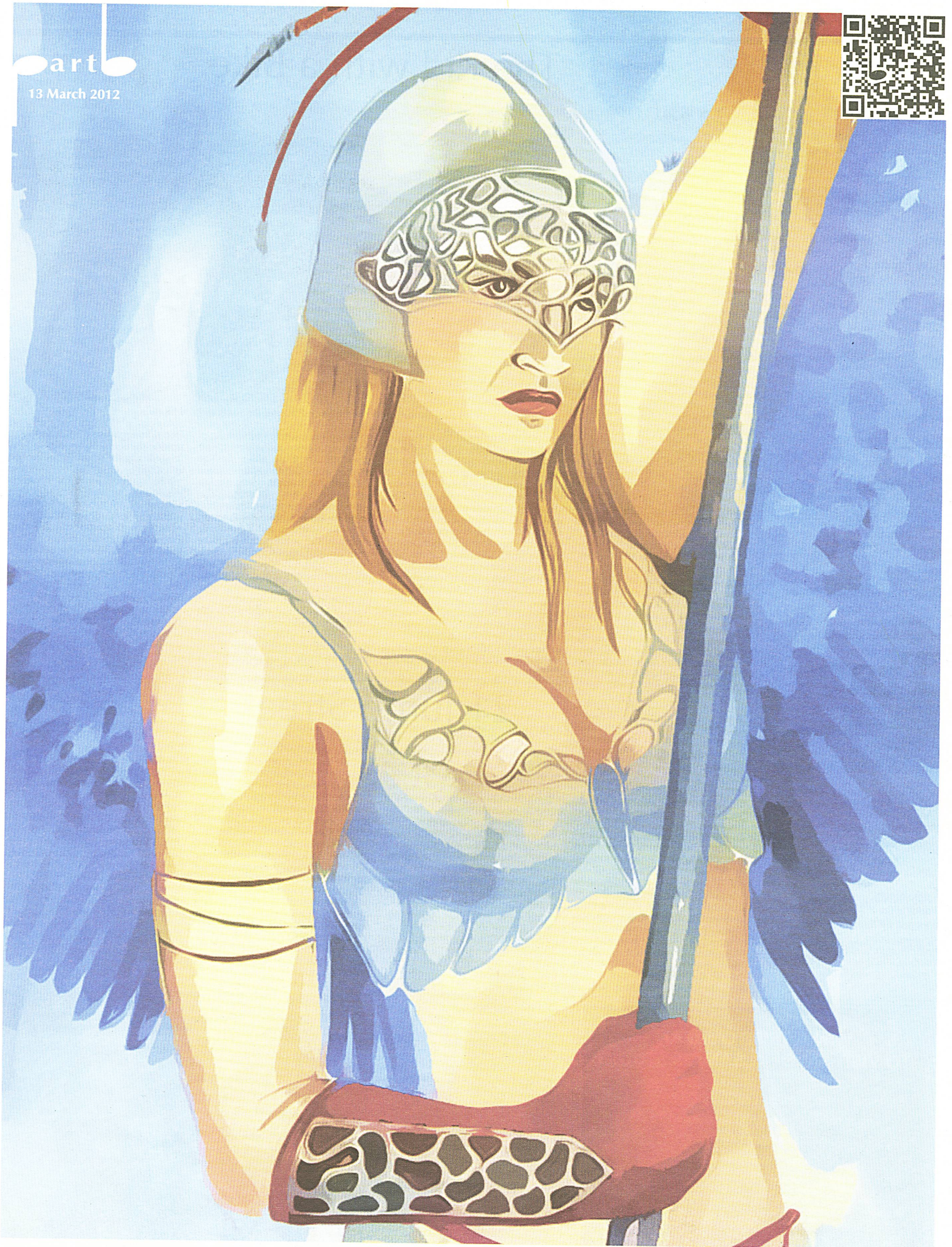
definitely want to partake in seaside dining. The surroundings are humble - plastic sheets over large round tables seating eight or so, plastic patio chairs and plastic orange bowls - but the food is sumptuous. Enjoy plates of steaming fresh oysters on a bed of green onions, tiger prawns and toasted garlic, served, of course, with a big bottle of Tsingtao beer with your closest friends as the locals happily chatter in Cantonese around you.

Afterwards, stroll around the

and culture is hard to beat.

After gorging on great food, you can walk it off on any of the breath-taking hikes in Hong Kong. One easily accessible and stunning trail is Dragon's Back on Hong Kong Island. Start at the legendary Peak Tram and cross the ridges into Shek O Country Park. Suddenly you are overlooking the south side of the island with open views of Big Wave Bay, sheltered by verdant hills and fringed by a long strip of white sand. Similar vistas surround you at the trail's end when





Lucian Freud | The Kid with a Bike | The Social Animal | King Lear |  
Steve Jobs | Bel Ami | John Talbot | Make Bradford British | Video Games

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Valkyrie (2008) by Marie Östling

Adapted by Aameer Patel

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# The Kid with a Bike



**Director:** Jean-Pierre Dardenne, Luc Dardenne

**Screenplay:** Jean-Pierre Dardenne, Luc Dardenne

**Key cast:** Thomas Doret, Cécile De France, Jérémie Renier

**Year:** 2011

**Runtime:** 87 minutes

**In cinemas now**

The plot is somewhat simple. Cyril (Thomas Doret), a young boy who has been deserted by his father, relentlessly pursues him under the watchful eye of his new carer, Samantha (Cécile de France). In many respects the film could be described as simple, with sparing use of music, a very ordinary setting and real life costumes. But do not be deceived, this film is anything but simple. The Dardenne brothers have stuck to their speciality: this is a film about the complexities of real life, a film about people and relationships.

Despite a lack of experience, young Thomas Doret steps into his character with ease. Cyril, who is almost always on screen, is a troubled, pained and often destructive soul, which at times makes for painful viewing. A film about a child's unreciprocated love for a parent is always going to prey on the audience's sensitive side, but the accompanying themes of social problems and the conflicts of inter-generational relationships make the first half in particular uncomfortable to watch.

It is by chance that Cyril meets Samantha, a local hairdresser, who agrees to look after him at weekends. Samantha becomes almost like a fairy godmother to him. A motherly figure, she nurtures him and saves him from his uncontrollable rage. But it seems as though finding his father is the only thing that will calm him. On his only brief encounter, Cyril is quick to forgive



Thomas Doret and Cécile De France as the young boy and his carer

him, "Ce n'est pas grave." He does not see through his father's casual excuses and does not recognise, or understand, the love that Samantha offers him.

In fact, we too do not know much about Samantha's love for Cyril. The Dardenne provide no psychological explanation for the love that she feels for him, although it is evident that she becomes very attached to him. As his mother figure, De France is given only a junior role in the story. Samantha is a guide for Cyril; he always remains the focus of the film. The story is built up entirely around his unrelenting pursuit of his father, his unrestrained temper and uncontrollable behaviour.

There is little variation in setting, but instead of being monotonous, this is symbolic. The Dardenne brothers create

a geographical triangle – comprising of the estate, the forest and a petrol station – in which most of the film is set. The forest is symbolic because it is a place of danger and trouble, where human nature gets the better of people. The estate represents Cyril's complex life; his past with his father and the present in limbo at home and with Samantha at weekends. The petrol station is a place where the plot takes significant turns.

Of course, no modern fairy tale would be complete without a bad guy, and indeed the film changes course when Cyril falls vulnerable to gang leader Wes (Egon Di Mateo), who presses him into crime. This brilliantly captures the vulnerability of a young boy being led astray, relating to youth gang culture. However, these scenes seem a little

forced and perhaps over-dramatised, making them less believable, and for me, reducing the credibility of the film as a whole.

Both De France and Doret perform wonderfully, and despite a compelling screenplay the film is not quite as noteworthy as some of the Dardenne's previous work. Amidst the themes of a troubled childhood, criminality, broken homes and destructive behaviour, a loving relationship emerges from the rubble. Yet, the greatest juxtaposition comes in the form of the ending. It is not happy, but neither is it sad. The film ends somewhat abruptly, unexpectedly perhaps; the uncertainty of the future akin to reality.

✉ Kirsty Kenney

# 21 Jump Street



**Director:** Phil Lord

**Screenplay:** Michael Bacall, Jonah Hill

**Key cast:** Jonah Hill, Channing Tatum, Brie Larson, Dave Franco

**Year:** 2012

**Runtime:** 109 minutes

**In cinemas 16 March 2012**

While watching *21 Jump Street*, three things became undoubtedly clear. First, the source of Jonah Hill's comedy powers were thankfully not in the weight he has lost. Second, Channing Tatum looks like too much sausage meat stuffed into a cardboard box. Third, it is possible for a film to be really, really funny without being any good.

The film, based on the television series that shot Johnny Depp to fame,

follows two inept cops, played by Tatum and Hill, as they are sent on a mission to go undercover in a high school to crack a teenage drug ring. Not an entirely plausible scenario, but then *21 Jump Street* is highly surreal.

The film's humour comes from the dialogue of its brilliant characters, and the actors do an excellent job. Jonah Hill is, as always, hilarious. His newly deflated balloon-head is initially a little distracting for a fan of chubby Jonah, but he retained his inherent likeability and charm. Tatum, however, is the biggest revelation – he has found his niche. He has often been unconvincing in his classic *Dear John* and *Step Up* roles, where he "abs" rather than "acts," but his meaty face worked surprisingly well as the movie's gag punch bag. The dumb jock has been done before, of course, but Tatum is for some reason incredibly convincing, and I found my eye inevitably drawn towards him, away from Hill – though this could of course be because of his tree trunk-sized neck. The film has a host of equally funny supporting actors, the kind with semi-recognisable faces: Ice Cube, Rob Riggle from *The Daily Show*, Nick from *New Girl*, James Franco's brother Dave and one of the chicks from *Bridesmaids*. All are put to good use.

So what exactly is good about it? Well, it is surprisingly hilarious. The script is witty and fast-paced, laced with ridiculous obscenities that make you laugh despite yourself, from Tatum's character especially – on reading the Miranda rights, he fumbles and says "You have the right to... suck my dick, motherfucker!" Not exactly Oscar Wilde, but stupidly funny nonetheless. The humour is pleasantly self-referential, mocking both itself and other clichéd Hollywood tropes. The film flicks schizophrenically from one scene to

the next at a sketchy, hyperactive pace, brutally assaulting the senses – but in a good way. It is manic and surreal with epilepsy-inducing montages and hallucination sequences. The chemistry between Hill and Tatum really brings it back down to earth, and lends the violence and obscenity some heart.

Then, what is bad about it? Firstly, it is stupid. I happen to find this type of infantile humour very funny, but the film is essentially two thirteen year old boys running around with guns making a lot of penis jokes. Secondly, the pace of the film, while making everything very exciting, is at times too jerky and uncomfortable. Thirdly, the film's self-referential humour, while preventing it from becoming too farcical, can be a little wearisome. There are only so many knowing nods of the head you can take

before it starts to grate a little. Finally – and this was the biggest problem – a single, extremely distracting thought kept running around my head: there is no way in hell Hill or Tatum could pass for teenagers. They look about forty-years old, and therefore it is difficult to fully suspend disbelief and enjoy the film. The film is highly flawed, but then again, it's not exactly trying to be *Taxi Driver*. It is, at best, good stupid fun – at worst, offensive idiocy.

So, *21 Jump Street* – it's quick, quirky, and Coke-shooting-out-of-nose-from-laughing funny, but it's equally facile, obscene and stupid. If you, like me, happen to find boys punching each other and swearing a lot funny, then definitely go and see it.

✉ Isabella Silver



Jonah Hill and Channing Tatum star as cops who are sent undercover in a high school

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Background: Yayoi Kusama, Infinity Mirrored Rooms – Filled with the Brilliance of Life, 2011. Courtesy of Yayoi Kusama. Photo by Lucy Dawkins/Tate Photography.

## Bel Ami



**Director:** Declan Donnellan, Nick Ormerod

**Screenplay:** Guy de Maupassant, Rachel Bennette

**Key cast:** Robert Pattinson, Uma Thurman, Christina Ricci, Kristin Scott Thomas, Philip Glenister

**Year:** 2012

**Runtime:** 124 minutes

**In cinemas now**

"I had no conception of the depths of your emptiness." So says Uma Thurman in a quasi-English accent, glaring at Robert Pattinson in contempt. By happy coincidence, this happens to sum up my exact sentiments about the beautiful, yet shallow, *Bel Ami*. This is a film that seemed to consist of nothing more than Robert Pattinson looking angry in a variety of pretty rooms wearing pretty clothes.

The film follows Georges Duroy – played by former *Twilight* star "R.Pattz" – as he storms his way through nineteenth century Paris, sleeping his way up the social ladder and getting his mucky paws all over Kristin Scott Thomas's breasts. *Bel Ami* is based on the book of the same name, and also stars Christina Ricci, Colm Meaney and Philip Glenister. Duroy is a Machiavellian, Becky Sharp-type character, and the film is a portrayal of his attempts to secure a fortune by trying, often unsuccessfully, to manipulate the women around him.

Duroy is the main focus, meaning there is a lot of responsibility on Pattinson's shoulders. I am an avid "R.Pattz" fan, but even I think a director ought to realise that hiring an actor whose previous work includes not biting Kristen Stewart in *Twilight*, looking moody in *Remember Me* and getting some water for some elephants in *Water For Elephants* as your lead might be a little risky. I am embarrassingly fond of Pattinson, but even I was amazed. How is it possible to be more convincing as an undead vampire than a normal human, who – though Pattinson's portrayal at times suggested otherwise – is at the very least alive? He did not even serve very well as eye candy, his supposedly lustful expression making him seem just as likely to head butt his unwitting partner as to kiss her. Granted, the character is a particularly unlikeable one, but Pattinson failed to give anything to identify with, not a shred of humanity to cling to.

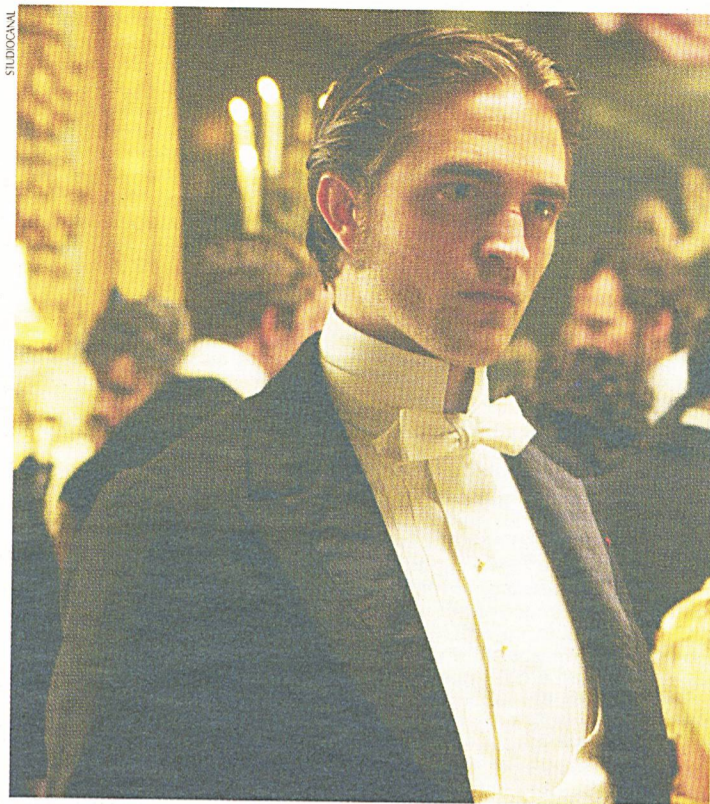
This was not entirely Pattinson's fault. The script verges on the ridiculous in its predictability and elicited some uncomfortable titters from the audience during moments that were supposed to be poignant. The other actors seem to be trying to outdo the gaudy Parisian furniture by being as over-elaborate and dramatic as possible – and to the credit of the female actresses, they did have their rather distracting dresses to

contend with. But even Kristen Scott Thomas, ice queen extraordinaire, seemed a little bit over the top.

That said, I must admit that towards the end, the film does get better. It stops taking itself so seriously and Scott Thomas provides the film with some much-needed comedy. Pattinson tones down the histrionics, stops making his awful grimace of lust or anger – the two become interchangeable – and, thus, he is much more convincing. The ending itself is refreshing, unexpectedly unexpected. Instead of learning his lessons, the shallow angry slime-ball carries on being a shallow angry slime-ball, with no retribution for his wickedness. This defies Hollywood tradition, which should dictate that Georges Duroy be thoroughly punished, and as such, gives the film some depth. But it also gave me the sinking feeling that I had wasted two hours of my life watching Robert Pattinson having sex at things for no real reason.

So my advice to you: watch *Bel Ami* if you like nice furniture and bodices continually being ripped off. The film is a lot like Duroy: very visually pleasing, but ultimately superficial. My advice to Robert Pattinson: stick to the vamp flicks, love. And please, please, for the love of God, take your hands off Kristen Scott Thomas's breasts.

Isabella Silver



Robert Pattinson as Georges Duroy

## The Awakening



**Director:** Nick Murphy

**Screenplay:** Stephen Volk, Nick Murphy

**Key cast:** Rebecca Hall, Dominic West, Imelda Staunton

**Year:** 2011

**Runtime:** 107 minutes

**Available on DVD and Blu-ray 26 March 2012**

I have a very masochistic relationship with horror films. Although I do not enjoy watching them, I often force myself to step into that poorly-lit room and subject myself to two hours of torture. Perhaps it is my Eastern European upbringing, but the need to "toughen up" always seemed to outweigh the fact that I hate horror.

That being said, watching *The Awakening* truly is an experience like no other. Set in 1920s England, it is the story of young hoax exposé Florence Cathcart (Rebecca Hall) and her most

mysterious case, the alleged sightings of a child ghost at a remote boarding school in Cumbria, where a boy had recently been found dead. Having been brought in by one of the school's teachers, Robert Mallory (Dominic West), Florence sets to work, laying traps and gathering scientific evidence to catch the aforementioned ghost, or more likely, to disprove his very existence and to find the true murderer in one of the school's inhabitants. During her stay Florence encounters the school's gatekeeper, Edward Judd (Joseph Maule), has some awkward conversations with Mallory as well as watching him take a bath, and is encouraged by the kooky school matron, Maud Hill (Imelda Staunton) in her investigation.

In spite of the initially intriguing storyline and a very tense score, the film goes downhill from the moment Cathcart arrives at the school. The plot thickens when a new level is introduced into the story – Cathcart's confusing personal background. Being a deep thinker, she

spends very little of her time actually trying to solve the mystery – when she is not looking for ghosts, she is falling into rivers or walking through dark forests. Having resolved the case, Florence prepares to leave, but swiftly changes her mind, having had a chilling spectral encounter which defies all of her rational beliefs. There are many jumpy scenes and more creepy-looking children to throw her off her game, but eventually she discovers the greater meaning behind it all. Unfortunately for the viewer, the ending is the most ludicrous and disappointing part of the film.

Nevertheless, there are some positives in all this – many scenes are so absurd that they are actually funny; although insane and stupid, the ending is anything but predictable. Do not pay to watch this film, but if you have nothing else to do on a Friday night, and have run out of comedies to watch, this is your gig.

Aleona Krechetova



Dominic West and Rebecca Hall try to solve a supernatural mystery in *The Awakening*

## La Grande Illusion



**Director:** Jean Renoir

**Screenplay:** Charles Spaak, Jean Renoir

**Key cast:** Jean Gabin, Dita Parlo, Pierre Fresnay, Erich von Stroheim

**Year:** 1937

**Runtime:** 114 minutes

**From 6 to 19 April 2012 at the BFI Southbank**

**Available on DVD and Blu-ray 23 April 2012**

One of the first things Joseph Goebbels did when the Germans occupied France during the course of the Second World War was to order the seizure of all prints and the negative of *La Grande Illusion*. Such was the power of Jean Renoir's anti-war masterpiece. It stood for everything the Nazis hated. The original nitrate negative was thought to be lost for decades, until it was rediscovered and restored in the 1990s; with a new digital restoration, Renoir's pacifist message is clearer than ever before, while still retaining its poignancy.

Captain de Boeldieu (Pierre Fresnay) and Lieutenant Maréchal (Jean Gabin) were on a reconnaissance mission before being shot down by Captain von Rauffenstein (Erich von Stroheim). They are then transferred to a prisoner-of-war camp where they meet other French captives, including Rosenthal (Marcel Dalio). Ironically, this is a war film without a single battle scene. Renoir's camera serenely roams around these characters, silently observing these prisoners as a microcosm of war, quietly expressing the nobility and futility of it all.

The nonchalant Boeldieu and the stiff, Teutonic Rauffenstein are both aristocrats cut from the same cloth. They have both dined at Maxim's in Paris, courted the same woman, shared the same acquaintances, and they are – most importantly – bound by their duty to the war. Yet they are a dying breed, a fact Boeldieu recognises when he tells Rauffenstein, "Neither you nor I can stop the march of time."

Renoir grounds his film in the characters' humanity, despite being divided by class. The aristocrats are being gradually replaced by the working class and parvenu, epitomised when Boeldieu sacrifices himself to allow Maréchal

and Rosenthal to escape. Boeldieu proves to Rauffenstein that a gentleman's word is now worthless by falsely promising him they will not attempt to escape. In the face of rising fascism, Renoir subverts stereotypes through Rosenthal, a nouveau riche Jew, who generously shares his food parcels with his fellow prisoners, despite their teasing of his Jewishness. Even Elsa (Dita Parlo), a German who lost her brothers and husband in the battles of Verdun, Liège, Charleroi, and Tannenberg – "our greatest victories" – provides food and shelter for the escapees.

*La Grande Illusion* is ultimately a critique of social, political, racial divisions, which are all irrelevant in war, and a case for unity in shared humanity. One can perhaps hear Renoir's voice in Rosenthal's when he says, "it is a grand illusion" in response to the claim that it was a war to end all wars.

Venessa Chan



Rauffenstein, Maréchal and Boeldieu

# Beyond the House of Wisdom

There are some areas of history that even historians have a pretty patchy knowledge of. There are certain periods that, because you don't study them personally, you have to rely on general knowledge garnered from what you do know and, dare I say it, popular history. The focus of Jim Al-Khalili's book falls right into that category.

In *Pathfinders: The Golden Age of Arabic Science* Al-Khalili explores a relatively forgotten and obscure part of history that covers a span of seven centuries from the collapse of the Roman Empire to the High Middle Ages. Throughout this period, scholars from across the Arab world, under the auspices and patronage of numerous Caliphs, translated, expanded and surpassed the works of the great scientists, philosophers and mathematicians of the ancient world. By combining their works with ideas from other regions and peoples, such as ancient India and the Babylonians, the Arabic scholars helped to classify, regulate and professionalise science, mathematics, geography and countless other fields of research, effectively creating the basis for much of the modern science and research taking place today.

What Al-Khalili has attempted to do is rectify the common misconception that much of the knowledge from Late Antiquity was somehow buried in the sands of time and forgotten throughout Europe's "Dark Ages," only to be reawakened and appreciated in the Renaissance. However, it is not that people choose to believe this story over the truth, as he seems to imply. It would be wrong to argue that we are all Western-centric people who either scorn the supposed achievements of others or patronise them. The problem lies in the fact that people have little to absolutely no awareness of the golden age of Arabic science. Al-Khalili in his introduction, explaining his early childhood in Iraq before Saddam Hussein

came to power, tells us that this Europe-centric story was in Iraqi schoolbooks as well. This is hardly encouraging.

As a historian at the LSE I consider myself reasonably knowledgeable and I did have some awareness of this golden age. However, the sheer scale of what went on was far beyond anything I was aware of. The breadth of translation and research ranged from astronomical and astrological texts, geography, biology, chemistry and alchemy, and even poetry and philosophy. For example, I had a vague awareness of the importance of Arabic and Indian numbers from GCSE maths, but the vast range of numerical systems from Rome, India, the Babylonians and the Arab world itself, and their integration into and impact on science today was staggering.

One of the most fascinating and useful parts of this book however, was not even its core subject. Al-Khalili begins his work with a brief, balanced and fairly comprehensive chapter on the birth and early history of Islam itself. Given that the subject matter is based entirely in the Muslim world this is incredibly useful. I personally found it incredibly interesting as this is once again, sadly, a historical narrative of which I only have a vague knowledge. The way in which Islam's relationship with inquiry, reasoned argument and scientific research develops when compared with that of Christianity, especially as the centre of research shifted back to Christian Europe and the Church played an increasingly oppressive role

was particularly thought provoking.

The relationship between science and any religion is of course interesting, so I appreciated Al-Khalili's slight detour to discuss this first real relationship between the two. His description of the birth of the great city of Baghdad was also fascinating, especially for most of us today, whose views of the city are heavily skewed in a negative way. Colourful descriptions of

the great centres of learning and the characters that inhabited them come naturally to Al-Khalili and some of the highlights of the book are not the actual science, but the stories and anecdotes about the people behind it.

Equally so, his discussion of the end of this period, as the great works are translated back by European scholars as the ideas permeate into Europe from Muslim lands in the Middle East and Spain, helps to explain how this story came full circle. It is impressive to see how at a time when much of the world's communication was rudimentary and social attitudes were often conservative, science and the pursuit of knowledge remained a universal interest across cultures.

Al-Khalili presents all this information, it has to be said, quite methodically – after all, he is a theoretical physicist and not a historian. A good third of the book runs through each topic: alchemy, libraries, geography, algebra, philosophy, medicine and so on, covering each one, the prevailing views and Al-Khalili's own opinions. However, this can quickly become quite dense. Perhaps it is just part of being a historian, but fascinating though the stories of Al-Jabr and Al-Khwarizmi are (they give their names to "algebra" and "algorithm" respectfully), the discussions of algebraic terms and quadratic equations can become tiresome. Each chapter ends, however, with a clear statement of the importance of what has been covered and it is these parts that are truly the most informative.

It is not all praise though. Al-Khalili is more than ready to criticise the mistakes and failings of the figures he discusses and is quick to point out that we shouldn't always raise them up as paragons of virtue and reason. In his discussion of geography and early attempts to calculate the size of the earth for example, he acknowledges their successes but makes sure we take this with a pinch of salt, as their methods of calculation were exceptionally rudimentary and lacked the rigour of their peers in other fields.

Perhaps the thorniest issue Al-Khalili addresses is that in his conclusion; the relationship between Islam and



Mediaeval Arab depiction of Aristotle teaching astronomy to other Greek scholars

science today. The impact of centuries of religious conservatism has undoubtedly suppressed the flourishing research that was found at the end of the first millennium. Of course, Europe itself saw centuries of religious repression of science and it is only in the last few centuries that it has emerged from the oppressive shadow of organised religion. As a scientist, Al-Khalili admits that he is unashamed of criticising religion's faults in this area. However, he makes the point that there's more to this than just conservative religion. The Arabic world has seen upheaval in the form of war and colonial rule, as well as neglect and stagnation. Nevertheless, at the dawn of the twenty-first century there is certainly hope that it could once again become a centre of scientific research, especially as preconceptions in the West (heavily influenced by religious discourse) begin to be broken down and as centres of learning are reenergised. Al-Khalili remains optimistic about the future.

This is not a book for light bedtime reading, unless you think you will find the intricate details of the origins of the Pythagorean theorem heavily stimulating in the small hours. It is however, a real eye-opener and opens up a historical period and a dynamic of knowledge that has largely been forgotten and ignored. It has realigned my somewhat layman's understanding of the development of Western thought, both in science but also philosophy and the arts. For this alone I think this book is worth a read. After all, if it taught me anything it is that for the inquisitive mind, a fresh knowledge of both new and old ideas can develop anywhere, anytime and completely change the way we look at things. Even while doing a book review for Part B.

Laurence Atchison

**Pathfinders: The Golden Age of Arabic Science (2012), Jim Al-Khalili, Penguin, Paperback, £9.99**

# Always foolish, always hungry, always different

In her unofficial biography, Karen Blumenthal chronicles the experiences, people and events of Steve Jobs's remarkable life while trying to identify those aspects which ultimately shaped the vision of the founder of one of the most successful companies of all time. The book is a concise, thought-provoking history of Steve Jobs, Apple and its influential products.

Inevitably, every unofficial chronicle of Steve Jobs's remarkable life will be compared to the much-lauded and official biography by Walter Isaacson. Happily, I have not yet had the chance to indulge in Isaacson's version, so it was with limited knowledge but a keen interest that I sat down to read Karen Blumenthal's *Steve Jobs: The Man Who Thought Different*. Flicking forward to the bibliography, (I am a student of history after all) one comes to appreciate two things. Firstly, the depths Blumenthal has traversed in order to ensure that she accurately captured both the semblance and spirit of "employee number 0" (a Jobs interview with *Playboy Magazine* anyone?). Secondly, the sheer amount of material on her subject: aside from various articles and books dedicated to the man, Jobs has featured prominently in countless corporate histories chronicling Apple, Pixar and Atari – all companies he played a significant role in.

What emerges from this intimidating mass of oral accounts, naughty

magazine interviews and company histories is a well-paced, thought-provoking narrative stitched together with the poignant and inspirational, if slightly morbid speech Jobs gave to Stanford graduates during their commencement ceremony in 2005 (well worth a viewing on YouTube if you have not seen it). His parting words at the end of that speech, "Stay Foolish. Stay Hungry," are reprinted by Blumenthal on the final page in the iconic iPod typeface to hauntingly powerful effect, giving this reader the inexplicable urge to go-it-alone and break out as an entrepreneur. Of course, Jobs was never really alone. Even after initially being pushed out of Apple, his charisma convinced many of his loyal, if not enduring colleagues to follow him on his ultimately unsuccessful endeavour with NeXT. It is in his interactions with those around him that Blumenthal highlights his less endearing features. From a penchant for dismissal to cheating

a close friend out of a few dollars, this darker side to the man is now standard fare for any account of his life. It is common knowledge among the technology community that while a visionary leader, he was far from the perfect human being.

Some attention is given to Jobs's turbulent but ultimately enduring relationship with Bill Gates, that other maverick of computing. Blumenthal has gone to some lengths to solicit

opinions and anecdotes from individuals who knew both men, as well as effectively utilising one of the few public appearances, and indeed interviews the two men agreed to: *The Wall Street Journal's* All Things Digital conference in 2007. The result is that, to the casual reader, who may know a little of the rivalry between these two tech giants, a new dynamic in the relationship is revealed. We learn that both men admired one another's achievements while at the same time fundamentally disagreeing with the other's approach. We also learn that the relationship was closer and more personal than it appeared, with Blumenthal referring to Gates occasionally dropping by the Jobs household through the "unlocked" back door.

Blumenthal goes to admirable lengths to educate the reader on some of the more technical topics in which her subject's history is rooted. A charming Mac OS "window" encapsulates these nuggets of information at the end of each chapter, leaving their purpose pointedly unambiguous. While the technical discussion on the computers is more amateur than academic, it fits the purpose of the book well and gives the reader enough information to continue reading comfortably without wondering what is meant by an Apple II or a Newton. An illustrated time line and concise glossary tucked away at the end of the book are also helpful in visualising and understanding some of the technology that Jobs was influenced by and indeed created. Peppered throughout the narrative are images depicting a dashing Steve Jobs (awkward yearbook photo: check) at various points throughout his life. In

the spirit of Apple's early advertising campaigns (and the interests of publishing costs) the images are rendered in glorious black-and-white, which you can't help but linger on – and flick back to – as Jobs's fascinating story unfolds.

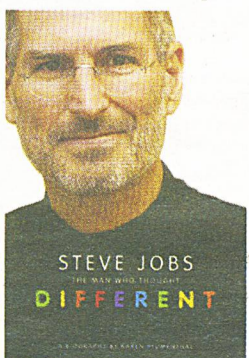
Perhaps one reason to read this take over the officially sanctioned Isaacson iteration is length. Coming in at 268 pages, Blumenthal's biography is less than half the length of Isaacson's epic. Yet as a reader you never feel that the story is rushed or lacking. This is aided by the periodic references to the Stanford graduate speech, enabling the book's logical but concise progression, or, as Jobs would say, "connecting the dots." This concision is possible when you consider Blumenthal's remit: to write about "The man who thought different." Certainly, the author charts this territory well, planting the seeds of Jobs's creativity early on in the book. Whether referring to his decision to drop out and take a calligraphy course, or admiring his adoptive father's craftsmanship, "For you to sleep well at night, the aesthetic, the quality, has to be carried all the way through," Blumenthal later brings these key moments to the reader's attention in a meaningful way: linking calligraphy to Steve's pioneering introduction of different typefaces in the first Mac operating system, or a nod to his appreciation of craftsmanship in chronicling his obsessive perfectionism (he once forced an employee to try 36 different shades of green for the background of a presentation). I would find out later that the book was actually aimed at the teen market, and in hindsight the shorter

length, double-spaced type and bite-sized chapters are telling indicators. I would, however, argue that Blumenthal's concise, relaxed writing style and episodic structure lends to the busy student as much as it does to the Apple-toting teen and in no way detracts from the enjoyment of the book.

Coming in at less than 1 per cent of the price of that iPhone tucked away in your pocket, Blumenthal's unofficial biography is well worth a purchase. For the ultimate "fangirl" or "fanboy" experience (tainted with a hint of Amazon-induced irony) Apple lovers can purchase *Steve Jobs: The Man Who Thought Different* on their iDevices via the Kindle App for a very reasonable £4.65.

Hassan Dar

**Steve Jobs: The Man Who Thought Different (2012), Karen Blumenthal, Bloomsbury, Paperback, £6.99**



Steve Jobs and Bill Gates, 2007

# The Social Animal by David Brooks

David Brooks occupies an important position in American political discourse. An influential columnist for the *New York Times*, Brooks's pragmatic centrist conservatism makes him a favourite conservative-columnist-I-read-proving-that-I'm-open-minded among the left-leaning coastal gentry. An important mediator between the scientific and political communities, Brooks has a well-lubricated gearshift that allows him to discuss Washington politics with the easy jadedness of a veteran and the most recent social psychology research with the wonder of a kid in a science museum.

These talents are prominently displayed in his 2011 book *The Social Animal*. Described as "the happiest story you've ever heard," it centres around the lives of two fictional upper-middle class characters, Harold and Erica. Brooks makes clear from the beginning that while neither is exceptionally smart or talented, they still manage to lead deeply fulfilling lives due to their "noncognitive skills." The format is innovative – Brooks narrates Harold and Erica's rise from childhood to death in a perpetual present moment, thus articulating what it is like to live in the year 2011 for people of all ages. He peppers the narrative with digressions on the latest scientific research (so much so that it sometimes feels like the story is a digression from the latest scientific research), and descriptions of Harold and Erica are frequently interrupted by recent findings from the likes of the Universities of Pennsylvania and Toronto on child development and commentaries on the ideals of the French and British Enlightenments.

Brooks's goal in telling the story of Harold and Erica is to highlight the importance of the unconscious mind on human behaviour. His fascination with "priming" experiments is palpable throughout – Brooks loves relating psychological studies about how people

who have been subtly manipulated at an unconscious level change their conscious behaviour. Variations on "people tend to overpay for apartments when a picture of an attractive woman is placed in the realtor brochure" make all sorts of appearances in *The Social Animal*.

Brooks is at his strongest discussing social psychology; it becomes apparent as the book progresses that this is truly his natural habitat. He does a laudable job of synthesising a voluminous literature on human cognition into a coherent whole without straining or sensationalising the research. Brooks can describe both the sordid aspects of humanity (46 per cent of aroused men would have sex with a 12-year-old girl) and our better angels (contrary to popular belief, our happiness actually increases after many years of marriage, such that long-married couples are as happy as newlyweds) with equanimity. He also demonstrates an impressive ability to talk about the experience of being human with an appealing blend of scientific rigour and soothing, semi-spiritual language – he can discuss vague concepts like "character" and "street smarts" without the overwhelming neuroticism to qualify that tends to plague other popular science books (especially those by academics).

That Brooks is an excellent writer of psychology is important, because the story of Harold and Erica quickly loses steam. As wonderfully complex as Brooks evidently believes humans to be, he certainly struggles to inject any sort of depth into his characters – even at their best, Harold and Erica have all the vitality of a rock. Brooks seems to understand this, however, and their actions begin to seem like increasingly obvious stage props for another disquisition on some aspect of life.

Brooks also struggles to adopt necessary vocabulary to deal with the heavier neuroscience that occasionally

appears in *The Social Animal*. To paraphrase David Foster Wallace (a remark in a review of a John Updike novel), he displays a roughly *Newsweek*-level comprehension of the science. For example, after a humorous riff on the pseudoscience of "neuromarketing," Brooks proceeds to talk about brain regions that "light up" or "activate" in fMRI studies – the exact same language that he just finished mocking. But again, Brooks seems to understand this limitation and adjusts accordingly, and most of the book tends towards the softer end of the spectrum. His ventures into heavy neuroscience might be lacking, but they are usually judicious and timely.

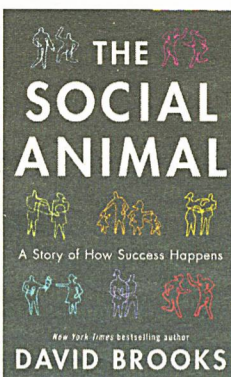
The tone is beguiling but uneven. While humorous at times (his description of management consulting is memorable, although poking fun at management consultants is kind of like shooting fish in a barrel), he tends to pack his humour into dense almost black-hole-like bursts. The beginning of Chapter Five, in which the young Harold sits down to do his homework, has so many jokes jammed into such an incredibly small amount of space that I quite frankly didn't even know how to respond. And while the writing is usually polished as would be expected, there are a few passages of bizarre clumsiness – "the angry dog of her anger," "he collapsed to the floor into a tangle of body parts," "she wanted to punch someone and see a face explode in a flash of blood." How does a face explode? What is a flash of blood?

The true power of *The Social Animal* is that it will cause readers of almost any stripe to step out of their comfort zone. Journalists will get a primer on the emerging focus in the scientific community on systems theory and how it might revolutionise both science and our understanding of complex entities. Neuroscientists will get a dose of political philosophy; anthropologists a dollop of economics; philosophers a sampler

plate of developmental psychology.

These intersections offer rich data points for public policy. Consider that children learn fastest in face-to-face settings and slowest through audio/video lectures (much to the chagrin of techno-utopian optimists who think the internet is the answer to any and all questions about education). Or that despite what would seem to be an intuitive universalising effect of globalisation and technology, cultures are actually moving farther apart. What does it mean for public policy that in 1950, 12 per cent of American teenagers claimed to be important people, while in the late 1980s, 80 per cent did? Or that children raised in wealthy families tend to hear 32 million more words spoken by the age of six than those in poorer households?

While these findings are quite compelling, Brooks is ultimately interested in synthesis. And here, his performance is mixed. It is often hard to know when Brooks is providing a valuable summary of the research and when he makes up for a lack of understanding with comely vanilla language. For example, how is one to make sense of the claim that "mental character is carved into the hinterland of the mind," or "in... sublime moments, internal and external patters are meshing and flow is achieved?" While Brooks seems to have an appreciation of the complexity of the human condition, one major drawback is that he continually details the attempts of social scientists to categorise human beings into simplistic frameworks without providing any judgment as to the merits of the frameworks themselves. We see the world divided between askers and guessers; rationalists and romanticists; life



sliced into discrete stages of "adolescence," "odyssey," and "adulthood," etc. etc.

Despite his hesitation to castigate these models as overly reductive, Brooks's great strength is his inherent scepticism towards faddish thinking. Fads are quite easy to get swept up in (they are fads for a reason), but Brooks has a refreshing way of framing the present intellectual consensus as part of an on-going evolution rather than an endpoint, and he intuitively understands that our unquestioned truths and methods of thought might well be as ephemeral as the movements of the past.

In the end, however, the main complaints are rather minor. Despite the weak ending of Harold and Erica, the landscape surrounding them is lush. Brooks does an admirable job integrating the latest research on the human condition from all sorts of disparate fields and melding them together into an impressive finished product. He is able to talk about basic research and still reflect on its broader thematic importance with flowery language, something that is impossible to do in academic literature and rare in popular science. *The Social Animal* will surely inspire in readers awe at the brain's abilities, a heightened awareness of its weaknesses, and above all, a rethinking of what guides our behaviour. Perhaps witnessing the machinery of the unconscious mind laid bare might cause some of us who fashion ourselves very important to think twice.

Edward Larkin

**The Social Animal: A Story of How Success Happens (2011), David Brooks, Short Books, Paperback, £14.99**

## LSE Literary Festival 2012: Highlights

### Wired for Culture with Professor Mark Pagel

We are often told that we share 98 per cent of our DNA with chimpanzees. However, when we look at one of those apes we see more than 2 per cent of a difference. What Professor Mark Pagel points out in his lecture is that we shouldn't look at this difference from a purely quantitative point of view but understand it qualitatively instead. The emergence of culture made us humans, creating a huge gap between us and our ancestral apes and opening up a whole new dimension for evolution to act upon.

True, apes can learn how to use instruments and do many wonderful things. But what they learn is lost at each generation, since they lack the ability we humans have of learning from our ancestors and improving upon their work. Assembling data from palaeoanthropology, archaeology, genetics and ethnography, Pagel provided a picture of the evolution of humankind, facing what he considers to be the big question: why are human cultures so varied?

Once culture is seen as a new dimension of evolution, this question echoes the title of Darwin's masterpiece: why are there so many species? Drawing a parallel between biological and cultural speciation, Pagel claims that cultures evolve to adapt to a certain environment and that languages evolved to impair, rather than facilitate, communication between "cultural species." By developing their own languages, small tribal groups were able to protect their adaptive innovation from "cultural theft," ensuring they would be beneficial only for their own kind.

By raising the issue of human cooperation and cruelty as two faces

of the same evolutionary coin, Pagel addressed age-old problems from a novel perspective.

Alessandro Allegra

### Myths for a Modern World with AS Byatt and Robert Irwin

However unsuitable our fast-moving modern world might seem for myths, we are still attached to the mythical world. AS Byatt, emphasising the influence of the stories of the Norse gods she read as a girl on her work, asserted that myths "get hold of the minds of the young before they develop." Myths maintain their existence through the relationships they have with people; as long as people continue to relate to the myths which they learned as children the myths will also survive.

The fact there are thirty-two different versions of *Cinderella* seems to suggest that as a myth spreads certain aspects of it adapt to different cultures. She loses her shoe in different places; in some versions, she is benign to her evil stepmother and in others, she retaliates. This, Robert Irwin argues, shows that myths have a role as an explanation for universal human behaviour. They provide a lowest common denominator through which people associate with each other by sharing a common culture.

Myths are not strictly fiction and this is shown by the fact that they do not really have authors. It is also proof that we are story-telling animals and that myths will be perpetuated by humanity. Indeed, we create new myths based on old ones and myths based on bare facts. In the modern world myths are not a matter of belief or non-belief – they are features of the world itself.

Jisoo Yoo

### Book Slam

**Tuesdays at The Clapham Grand, SW11**  
London's "best and only" literary nightclub mixes readings, spoken word, live music and DJ for a literally literary night out! Visiting authors have included Zadie Smith, Ekow Eshun and Andrea Levy.

**Ruth Padel with Andrew O'Hagan: Poetry and the DNA of Migration**  
19:00 on 15 March at London Review Bookshop, WC1

Can poems contribute to the key debates of our time? Migration is one of today's great challenges, but migration shaped civilisation and, as Ruth Padel shows in her new book *The Mara Crossing*, also shaped life itself. Setting immigration in biological and historical perspectives, from microbiology to birds, the Holy Family seeking asylum in Egypt to "Wild Geese" leaving Ireland, Padel's poems interwoven with prose make clear that the point of migration is survival.

**Poetry London: Spring Readings**  
20:00 on 15 March at Southbank Centre (St Paul's Roof Pavilion), SE1  
Poetry London readings have been a popular feature of the London literary calendar for over 20 years. This is a celebration of the launch of the Spring 2012 issue, hosted by editor Colette Bryce and featuring the very best of new and established poets.

**Seamus Heaney, Sebastian Faulks and Jackie Kay: Forward into the 21st Century**

18:30 on 19 March at Kings Place, N1  
A celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the Forward Prize for poetry, presented by William Sieghart, creator and long-time supporter of the prizes. The lineup will also include Nobel Laureate Seamus

## Upcoming events

Heaney, Jackie Kay and two recent first collection prize winners, Hilary Menos and Rachael Boast. Additional past winners' works will be read by Sebastian Faulks.

### Philip Gross

18:30 on 21 March at Lutyens & Rubinstein, W11  
The TS Eliot Prize-winning poet and author will be in conversation with psychoanalyst and critic Adam Phillips.

**Chibundu Onuzo and Noo Saro-Wiwa**  
19:45 on 22 March at Southbank Centre (Level 5 Function Room), SE1

Noo Saro-Wiwa and Chibundu Onuzo explore their native land of Nigeria through travelogue and fiction, sharing their stories of Lagos and beyond.

In *Looking for Transwonderland* Saro-Wiwa journeys through a country of extreme contrasts, of eccentricity, kitsch and modernity, to become reconciled with her homeland. Onuzo's debut novel, *The Spider King's Daughter*, explores the daring and unexpected love affair between Abike Johnson, from the elite of Lagos society, and a young hawker she meets from the city's slums. The novel looks at the rifts and tensions in Nigerian society.

### Jodi Picoult

19:45 on 28 March at Southbank Centre (Purcell Room), SE1  
Jodi Picoult, one of the world's best-selling authors, makes a rare UK appearance to discuss her latest novel *Lone Wolf* and take questions from the audience. The novel follows the life of Luke Baxter, who abandons his family to live amongst wolves. Upon his return he struggles to cope with everyday human life.

**Mahfuz Mir Ali, Rowyda Amin, Nick Makoha and Shazea Quraishi**  
19:45 on 29 March at Southbank Centre (Level 5 Function Room), SE1

Four poets read from their latest work in this special event to celebrate the TEN anthology. The poets' diverse backgrounds, with roots in Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia, Ireland and Uganda, are united through their craft – powerful and moving contemporary writing, which speaks of Britain today. Hosted by Bernardine Evaristo.

### Jung Chang: Wild Swans 21 Years on

19:45 on 24 April at Southbank Centre (Purcell Room), SE1

To mark the twenty-first anniversary of its publication, Jung Chang discusses *Wild Swans*, the most successful non-fiction book in British publishing history. The memoir travels from the early days of Communist hope and struggle to the birth of a superpower at the end of the twentieth century.

As China looks set to dominate the world's economy in the twenty-first century, over 13 million copies of the book have been sold in 36 languages but it remains banned in China. The author discusses the book, her subsequent writing and Chinese politics today.

### Jane Hirshfield

18:30 on 25 April at Southbank Centre (Level 5 Function Room), SE1  
Jane Hirshfield, one of America's most fascinating poets, reads from her new collection of poetry, "Come, Thief."

Her collection "After" was shortlisted for the TS Eliot Prize and she edited the bestselling anthology "Women in Praise of the Sacred."

# Lucian Freud: Portraits, National Portrait Gallery

Lucian Freud's death last year, at the age of 88, has ensured that this retrospective has simultaneously become a shrine to the artist.

The exhibition is organised chronologically; it records the progression of his style and offers a narrative to his life, as told through his relationship with each of his sitters, "The people in my life," as he called them. It begins with his early work: flat, intricately detailed pieces that capture the minutiae of the face. Freud was 18 in 1940 when he painted his art college tutor Cedric Morris; the earliest work in this exhibition. Already his promise was clear.

Moving rooms marks a departure from Freud's early style and a bold move to the thickly layered paint and explicit nudity that was to a part inspired by his friend Francis Bacon. As with Bacon's more grotesque work, visitors often greet the bare genitals of his subjects with a gasp of astonishment or even a look of disgust.

While his early work fastidiously noted each detail of the face, his mature career involved looking deeper into the personality of the subject and the nature of his relationship with them. The change is immediately apparent in the work; there is a palpable tension between himself and his subject in many of his works.

The year 1959 marks the turning point in Freud's work, when he abandoned his fine brushes and fine-grained canvases. While Bacon may have provided an inspiration as to how to depict physical presence with a brushstroke, it was the change in his painting posture from sitting to standing that provided the freedom with which to work so expressively.

*Woman Smiling* (1958-59) depicts Suzy Boyt, the mother of four of his

children. It is the first painting in which he uses the paint to sculpt the face's contours. Her downcast eyes and beginnings of a smile give a strong sense of the intimacy between painter and subject.

His mature paintings, beginning with *Woman Smiling*, provide a graphic confrontation that hides the element of risk in Freud's shift between styles. Danger and risk are forces that shaped Freud's life and work. Notorious for his gambling, he was known to deliberately stake all he had, and received death threats from the Kray twins as a result of the debts he incurred.

In his work, this translated into a constant search for something new or different, some unexplored nuance of his sitter's personality. This probing curiosity took shape in the form of dinners at his favourite restaurant, the Wolseley, and extended conversations in his studios. Freud's work is valued for his ability to communicate what he came to understand about his sitters in the subtlest changes of stroke and tone.

In the 1980s, Freud's portraits began to focus on the texture of the skin. His paintings of the transvestite performer, Leigh Bowery, are laden with pustules of paint emerging from the face. The skin looks as though it has been burnt or ravaged by disease. When combined with the corpulence of his body, the result is a painting that is disquieting and incredible in equal measure.

On the other side of the partitioned last room hang the pieces that Freud was painting at the time of his death. They depict his studio assistant and close friend of 20 years, David Dawson, and Dawson's whippet Eli. The tenderness shown in the unfinished *Portrait of the Hound* confirms the sentiments of the

artist's words printed on the walls: "I work from people that interest me and that I care about, in rooms that I live in and know."

The names of the hundred or so paintings that hang in the gallery are conspicuous by their ordinariness. Titles such as *Girl with White Dog* and *Naked Man with Rat* do not even hint at the sitters' identities. Freud painted the likes of Kate Moss, Francis Bacon and David Hockney, yet largely maintained anonymity in the names of the pieces.

The peculiar names occasionally draw attention to details of the paintings that could easily be missed, such as the sitter's blue toenails. As a whole, they suggest that Freud's work went beyond a simple conception of portraiture. Rather, his forensic approach was a wider exploration of both the mind and the entire physical environment of the studio.

Like his grandfather, Sigmund Freud, his work was a process of meticulous inspection. The mature works have often been compared to still life paintings, as opposed to portraits. The interiors of his studios in Paddington and Holland Park, the floorboards and old stained rags in piles, are painted with as much zeal as the contours of the face.

This extensive showing of Freud's life is fascinating, it starts to peel back the layers of his mind, his occasional confrontations with his own self, his process, influences and the nature of his relationships. Many of his sitters have attested to his acerbic wit and hedonistic energy, but nothing can express his personality as well as his paintings.

↳ Shyam Desai

Lucian Freud: Portraits is at the National Portrait Gallery until 5 June 2012



Lucian Freud, *Woman Smiling*, 1958-59

## Food for Thinkers: Luc Bovens

### What is your staple food?

There is a saying in Russia that if there is no bread with a meal, then it is as if one has not eaten at all. I love great bread. Finnish rye is my absolute favourite.

Contrary to what the picture suggests, Nutella is not my staple food.

### Do you have a favourite café or restaurant in London?

I love Middle Eastern food, so I tend to avoid such venues. It just asks too much will power not to gain five pounds in one sitting. I tend to stick to Japanese restaurants – you will often find me in Sushi Hirobi on Kingsway. Japanese food hits the right balance for me of enjoyment per unit of will power invested. Similarly, during the holidays, we tend to stack up on ginger snaps wherever we find ourselves. They are not as great as Christmas cookies, but it's the only way to survive the holidays.

This is all in line with a famous poem by Blake: "He who binds to himself a joy, Does the winged life destroy; He who kisses the joy as it flies, Lives in eternity's sunrise." It's crucial to know which joys are safe items for in flight kissing. Life is a very delicate exercise of optimisation under constraints.

### What is the strangest food or dish you've had?

I grew up in Belgium where you find horse and rabbit in butcher shops. Rabbit in Belgium is actually sold with the head on. This is due to an old law that dates back from some war or another. Apparently, rabbit and cat very much taste alike and cats were disappearing fast in town and sold as rabbit when there were food shortages.

My hometown also cherishes a recipe of lung simmering in onions and vinegar. But then again, it was part of the staple that I grew up on – so it does not seem strange to me. What is strange is that we don't think twice about throwing half of the animal away, and



furthermore this preference for, say, steak over heart, lung, udder or what have you is not shared across cultures. I do draw the line at chicken feet in dim sum – the image of chicken feet digging for worms in the mud kills my appetite.

The other day I was working my way through a cookbook with soups. Every single one of them was absolutely delicious. Then there was a cauliflower soup with an infusion of camomile flowers. It seemed absolutely disgusting to me, but then, the book had never let me down. Well, induction fails sometimes... the whole batch ended up in the drain. Take it from me: cauliflower soup with camomile is really foul.

I read an article recently that insects are really very efficient engines that can turn just about anything into proteins. So grasshoppers seem to be the way of the future. I must say that I feel some resistance to eating these critters – and

yet if very similar creatures run around in the sea, like shrimp, I love it. These food taboos really make no sense at all, but I guess that it's not only the heart that has its reasons that reason does not understand (following Pascal) but also the palate.

### If you had to cook one dish for a dinner party, what would it be?

I like a sense of adventure when I have dinner guests. So I tend to just open the cookbook and cook something I have never cooked before. It kind of works most of the time, but I remember one occasion when I had found a soufflé recipe in a French cookbook. I was in Boulder, Colorado on the foot of the Rocky Mountains at the time. Now, as I learned the hard way, you simply can't make soufflé at high altitude. It looked frightful and tasted like an omelette with sugar. My dinner guests took a

few spoonfuls and were nice enough to say that it was "interesting." Well, you win some, you lose some.

### Is there a particular dish that you cook more often than any other?

We get a food box every week from Riverford, an organic food delivery company. I highly recommend it in the big city. It's cheap, terrific quality and it makes you feel connected to the land. Most of my food consists in making very basic seasonal soups or stir-fries, with bread, loads of bread. I value the simplicity of dishes in which one recognises every single raw ingredient. We are what we eat and, as the Shaker hymn says, it's a gift to be simple.

### If you could give students a tip about food or eating, what would it be?

A good trick in home-cooking is to spend more money on cheap food types. That is, buy high-quality onions, rice, potatoes. Delicatessen stores may charge twice the price of supermarkets, but it's worth it and at the end of the day it will have minimal effect your food budget. You may even save money, since you'll be more inclined to eat in or to pack lunches.

Another tip is to eat food that is in season. There really is no need to ship in cherries from New Zealand in midwinter or to crank up the heat in greenhouses for watery tomatoes. And in any case, Pooh Bear tells us that it's not the eating of the honey that is his favourite thing in the world but the moment just before he starts eating the honey. So cherish the time of anticipation. You'll be doing the climate a favour and it's good for your soul.

In a multicultural school like the LSE, I really should be able to say something about religious and secular dos and don'ts about food. But frankly, I am confused about it and so what follows is hardly advice. Part of it is that such dos and don'ts build walls between people,

since it stops people from sitting down for a meal in each other's houses and creates an in-group mentality. That's the part that I find worrisome. If the dietary restrictions keep us from forming community with each other then I don't have much respect for these restrictions.

But then, I do have some sympathy for dietary laws as such. Think of the Kosher prescription not to mix milk and meat. There does seem to be something repulsive about killing a calf and then boiling it in its mother's milk – the very milk that was meant to feed it. And maybe we do have a deeply felt need to let our eating be rule-constrained. Note that dietary laws are not a strictly religious phenomenon: secular culture can't seem to get enough of quasi-religious food obsessions with detoxing, food allergies and various dieting guru schemes.

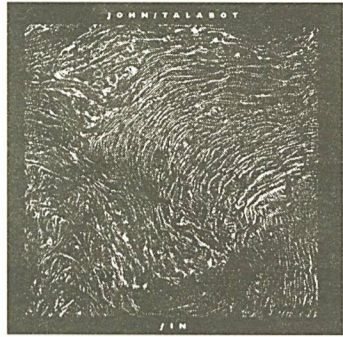
### What are your favourite soft and hard drinks?

Being Belgian, I like Trappist beers of all kinds – Westmalle Double is my favourite. My absolute favourite beers, though, are the various US microbrewery versions of the India Pale Ale – the hops flavouring is out of this world. India Pale Ales came into being in the eighteenth century because beer spoiled on the long journey on the ships from the UK to India and the excess hops were supposed to preserve it. Hence the India in the name. But the US microbreweries really took the hops one notch further.

As to non-alcoholic drinks, I drink pots of infusions which I have shipped in by the kilo from the Bremen Tee Handel in Germany. The Germans give their concoctions all kinds of endearing names like "Grandma's Berry Garden." And then I do appreciate a Scottish whisky. Anything but Laphroaigh though – you might as well chew on peat moss.

**Professor Luc Bovens is Professor of Philosophy and Head of the Department of Philosophy, Logic and Scientific Method**

## John Talabot – *fIN*



Barcelona house producer John Talabot has stated in interviews that he doesn't understand how people call his debut album *fIN* "tropical" or "sunny," preferring to say his music is shadowy and obscured. I can actually see both sides of the coin. There is a definite undercurrent of Balearic

sweep in these tracks, the synths and beats heading ever upward, seeking release. But there are many dark textures lurking in the background as well, giving these house tracks some edge and bite.

While this is technically a "house" record, nothing quite fits perfectly with that label. So many different influences find their way into these tracks, that by the album's end, you're left with a familiar, yet oddly uneasy feeling. Nods to Balearic pop, Boards of Canada style IDM, UK bass music, 80s synthpop, all weave and intertwine throughout *fIN*, never jarring and always in sync with the flow of the record. Vocals are sometimes overt, but mostly he employs a variety of samples that consist of chanting, vowel sounds, burbling or even a horror movie scream, utilising them all as just another sonic element in the mix.

*fIN* is a wonderful headphones album, where multiple listens are necessary to get

the full effect. The most startling aspect to all this is how he keeps everything in control, the builds and releases never seem calculated or unearned, all feeling organic and in the right place.

Lead track "Depak Ine" starts things off on an odd note, a downtempo beat and percussion is banded about with various sounds of nature, like birds and crickets, and a ghostly wash of chanted vocals. This melange of sounds morphs into a more upbeat track, adding more forceful drum programming and banks of keyboards.

Talabot finds his muse with two tracks featuring Pional, who adds his smoky vocals to the house rhythms. "Destiny" multi-tracks his vocals into an amazing chorale, volleyed around by a dense mix of several different synth patterns. He reappears on the intense build and release of final track "So Will Be Now..." his voice echoing all over the track, the bubbling basslines working

with the climbing drum programming. He also uses Barcelona compatriot Ekhi Lopetegi of house rockers Delorean, whose dreamy vocals ride sweetly in the middle of the mass of buzzy, trippy synths on "Journeys."

The remaining tracks are all instrumentals, with various uses of interesting vocal samples. "Missing You" sounds like it takes tribal chanting and spins it through a rubbish disposal factory, the drums getting more liquid as the track moves, with harsh blasts of synths pounded around the mix. "Oro Y Sangre" takes the aforementioned horror movie scream and pairs it against rolling organs and synths, whirring bass lines, and retro drum programming.

What sounds like the penultimate track, the dance floor heavy beats of "When The Past Was Present," combines de rigueur blasts of male diva vocals along with increasingly rising synth

chords that is pure house bliss.

One of the charms of *fIN* is that among all the house beats he takes time to go on detours, with more atmospheric, IDM type material. Like the post-dubstep track "El Oeste," with its broken beats and haunting washes of synths, the skittering percussion and glitchy synths of "H.O.R.S.E.," and even the slight 80s synth-funk of "Estiu," all of which bring a nice range of styles and breadth to the album.

*fIN* is some of the most gorgeously produced house music of the year, and is as effective on the dance floor as it is on headphones. It is a constantly engaging work that is immediate as well as rewarding after multiple listens. Indeed, I have yet to hear many albums that sound just as fresh after 20 listens. It is a remarkable introduction to this intriguing producer.

↳ Russell Beets

## PartBeat

Our final playlist fittingly contains our favourite album closers...

Two-Headed Boy, Pt. 2

Neutral Milk Hotel: *In the Aeroplane Over the Sea* (1998)

The End

The Doors: *The Doors* (1967)

I Shall Be Released

The Band: *Music from the Big Pink* (1968)

Drop

Red House Painters: *Ocean Beach* (1995)

Motion Picture Soundtrack

Radiohead: *Kid A* (2000)

Tea for the Tillerman

Cat Stevens: *Tea for the Tillerman* (1970)

Needles in My Eyes

The Beta Band: *The Three E.P.'s* (1998)

Whipping Post

The Allman Brothers Band: *At Fillmore East* (1971)

A Day In The Life

The Beatles: *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (1967)

When The Levee Breaks

Led Zeppelin: *Led Zeppelin IV* (1971)

You Can't Always Get What You Want

The Rolling Stones: *Let It Bleed* (1969)

Re: Stacks

Bon Iver: *For Emma, Forever Ago* (2008)

## King Lear, Rose Theatre Bankside



**Director:** Grace Wessels

**Playwright:** William Shakespeare

**Key cast:** Julian Bird, Elisa Ashenden, Jessica Guise, Felix Trench, Alex Woolf, Joshua Manning

**At Rose Theatre Bankside until 31 March 2012**

**K**ing Lear. Shakespeare's tale of the eponymous king whose kingdom, and person, is undone by court intrigue and an infectious madness as those around him fight for power. In the end, the kingdom is rightfully restored under the guidance of the honest Albany. The conclusion of this epic tragedy teaches us – in part thanks to political pressure on playwrights at the turn of the seventeenth century – that the house always wins.

It must be a daunting task to put on one of Shakespeare's most celebrated plays; the more interesting recent productions are those that add a touch of originality to the story – perhaps most easily done by relocating Lear's court to a more recent era. The director, Grace Wessels, has used the excess and glamour of the 1920s as a setting for what appears at first to be an interesting adaptation. The audience is treated to a mock cocktail party preamble in which the cast are seen to swan around exchanging gossip and compliments. Yet the play typically opens with a rather tense scene in which Lear divides his kingdom among his three daughters,



Julian Bird as Lear and Jessica Guise as Regan

making the initial, carefully-constructed, amicable atmosphere appear to be a strange decision by Wessels. This set the tone for the rest of the play – there was no further reference made to the 1920s and the cast were undermined in

performing a very obviously Jacobean drama – sword fights and patriarchy – in smart 1920s suits.

The Rose was originally an Elizabethan playhouse, discovered in 1989. It is still under construction, and the indoor

building site was used to depict the moor that the characters amble across in their varying stages of insanity. This gave the actors a great deal of space, and added further depth to the relationship between Lear and his subjects – their

loyalty evident in the way they protect him. It was perhaps overly cinematic though, and with the actors a good 30 yards away, it was difficult to make out their behaviour let alone facial expressions. This area of the stage was dimly lit and bore an uncanny resemblance to the arena on *Robot Wars* – unfortunately, Craig Charles failed to make an appearance.

The performance was flat across the board, the characters appeared to lack any real direction in a shortened script that did at least manage to keep the most relevant scenes. It has to be said that Alex Woolf's performance as the deceitful Edmund was generally very good – he added some welcome depth in the way in which he allowed the audience to engage with his motives and action. Felix Trench played the Fool in an interestingly sinister manner, his relationship with Lear was convincing and his character's showmanship was superbly executed in an entertaining performance.

The Rose's *King Lear* was, on the whole, a real shame. The 1920s theme collapsed from the very first line and the cast then proceeded to drain the script of any meaning. This is not to condemn the performance outright – there were some good moments, the stage is interestingly separated and the actors will certainly improve on what was a lacklustre first night.

↳ Laurence Vardaxoglou

# The only way is sequels

Over the years many games titles have captivated us and left us wanting more and more. Now we only have to wait a year for most of our favourite titles. With the industry churning out sequels at a record rate, what does this practice do to originality in gaming?

An example of one of the many beautiful sequels this year is *The Legend of Zelda: Skyward Sword*, released five years after the release of predecessor *Twilight Princess*. But Nintendo did not dawdle in those five years. Instead, they refreshed the series with a control system built from the ground-up, experimented with previous titles and created a new graphic style that pushes the Wii to its limits. It was an extensive change to the "Zelda formula," as the series seemed to be repeating itself. *Skyward Sword* resulted in mass bowing and chants of "we are not worthy" from the Zelda community, which was not surprising, given that the series is widely regarded as the greatest of all time. The yearly "100 greatest games ever" features we shall see soon will be placing this gem of a title on a high pedestal.

If all sequels were this good, would we really complain? We should. If we carry on playing the same titles, we run the risk of being narrow-minded and less open to other gems. There is also the risk of video games becoming too typical and boring and in the extremes of this case there could be another video games market crash.

During the festive period we were spoilt with so many quality titles. Apart

from the fact that none of these titles were stinkers, they have another trait in common. All are sequels: *Assassin's Creed: Revelations*, *Batman: Arkham City*, *Battlefield 3*, *Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 3*, *Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim*, *FIFA 12*, *Gears of Wars 3*, *Saints Row: The Third*, *Uncharted 3: Drake's Deception*.

You would be forgiven for thinking that with the look and size of this line-up, there would be a street fight in the charts. But all of these titles have sold exceptionally well, despite the competition from each other. *Saints Row: The Third* easily outsold its predecessor, despite predictions that it would be swept-away in the rush. Money is clearly there for developers to use for original projects, but for some reason we rarely see any new titles. Making games is a costly process, but developers are just filling the market with titles that are in most cases just a continuation of their predecessors with slight tweaks. An expansion pack if you want, that costs four times more than an actual one, but justifies the price with longer game time.

The FIFA series is one of the most successful yearly updated games ever – the series is Electronic Arts's cash cow and produces a title every year that has a near identical experience to its predecessor, with a graphical upgrade. But fans do genuinely enjoy the yearly updates. Student and series fan Faradh Maharoo says, "It's a brilliant series that brings all your mates together, I don't really buy games much

anymore, but when I do, I would definitely always pick up FIFA." According to Electronic Arts, one of the largest games producers, "Fans don't actually complain about sequels – editors do," says Tammy Schachter, vice president of public relations for EA. "Besides, they do the same for Hollywood movies."

"Unlike film, there's typically no huge secondary market for video games, such as DVD or cable TV sales," writes columnist Dan Ackerman. "So big initial sales are key, which leads to an abundance of caution and an over reliance on sequels."

We saw so many sequels released at Christmas, but this could just be a matter of timing, as the lead up to Christmas is the most profitable time of the year for the games industry, so much so that no triple A titles are released during the summer. Combine this with the fact that people are always willing to come back to something familiar. A tried and tested formula will always reap rewards, especially with the world's economy still on edge, people will understandably only spend on what they deem as worthwhile. It is also true of other mediums. Some of the most anticipated films of 2011 were sequels: *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2* (eighth instalment), *The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn – Part 1* (fourth instalment) and *Cars 2* did exceptionally well at the box office. TV is also guilty, with fans waiting for months for the next series of their favourite shows, like *The Walking Dead*, *South Park* and *Two and a Half Men*.



FIFA 12 on Xbox 360

Where does this leave originality? Well it is not dead, for one, it is just hard to jump the "it's expensive to make a game" hurdle, for a new franchise to succeed it takes an awful lot of marketing, which of course also means a lot more money. The *Batman Arkham* series is an example of an originality gamble gone right, with Warner Bros giving Rocksteady Studios one of their most prized assets as well as the money, resources and time to fully bring to life their vision of the Dark Knight.

These are good times with so many prequels we can pick on the cheap. But with the way the market seems to be

shaping, we could be seeing even more sequels filling up release schedules, not that many will complain if they match the quality we've seen this year. The stagnation of the industry is something to consider, but realistically it is not as much of a threat as in the past – gaming is now considered a pastime, not a passing fad. But if people have seen something enough times, they will surely get bored of it. Video games make more money than the film and TV industries but this could change. The coming months will shape the way things are done in the games industry for years to come.

↳ Manh Pham

## March video games roundup

Finishing up Lent term like a boss? Resigned to some of end-of-term procrastination? Look no further, our games roundup for this March has just what you need to inhibit your educational aspirations this term's end.

First up, an iPhone game, and a couple of pertinent questions. Do you like music? Do you like stealing? No, I'm not berating you for your questionable methods of music acquisition; I'm referring to *Beat Sneak Bandit* for the iPhone, iPad and iPod Touch. You are the eponymous Beat Sneak Bandit, a sharply dressed, groove-busting thief whose bodily movement is limited only by his ability to get down. He is tasked with "reacquiring" the clocks stolen by the nefarious Dr Clockface and while two wrongs don't make a right (or a decent plot, it seems), our favourite bandit makes up for it with charming graphics and a powerful soundtrack, brother. Play it out loud like it's 1999 on your daily commute if you wish, but on the later levels you'll find yourself reaching for the headphones as the difficulty cranks up and your concentration is put to the test. *Beat Sneak Bandit* is available now for £1.99 in the App Store for iPhone, iPad and iPod Touch.

The Nintendo Wii has enjoyed a comfortable existence as the go-to

video-gaming platform at many a social gathering. However, those of us stuck with two left feet or a unique kind of tone-deafness (*Singstar* still tells me I'm awesome!) have found the curious white box a little less enticing. Thankfully, *Mario Party 9* has arrived and with it a whole new reason to dust off those Wii remotes and invite a few of your chums around for a good thrashing. Through its nine iterations the premise has been the same: traverse a virtual board game set in the *Super Mario* universe with each roll of the dice bringing your team closer to victory, or a huge hissy fit ending with someone upturning the table (except it's virtual, so they can't). Think Monopoly, crossed with Snakes and Ladders interspersed with your favourite iPhone games. It's the iPhone-style mini-games which are the real bread-and-butter here, pitting you against your fellow players in mad 3 minute button-mashing frenzies. From a dizzying dash for mushrooms (drug reference heavily implied) to a strangely satisfying lumberjack "chop-off" (in spite of the pun you'll have to trust me on this one), the games are as fun as they are varied. Your usual selection of cutesy *Super Mario* characters are out in force and the game incorporates a

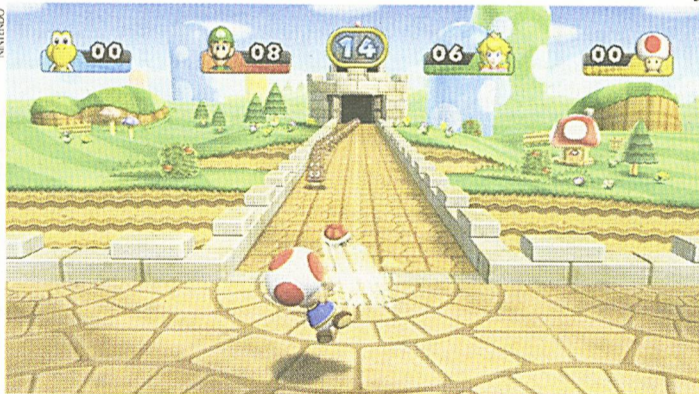
new team mode which takes the rivalry to new friendship-testing proportions. *Mario Party 9* is available now for the Nintendo Wii, from £29.95.

Finally, like the chips you find at the bottom of the bag, we've left the best for last. *Mass Effect 3*: without a doubt the biggest release of March and probably one of the few heavyweight contenders until *Assassin's Creed III* finally stops taunting us in October. The franchise that many describe as the *Star Wars* of video games has us

pointed a deep spacey blue however as we learn that the game will have day one DLC. For those of you wondering why you've not heard of this new boy-band, let me elaborate. DLC actually stands for "downloadable content," paid add-on packs created by game developers which extend your purchase with new game modes or extra storylines. They are generally made available after the game's initial release and do not usually affect the canonical story in any way. Sadly, neither is the case with *ME3*,

meaning fans who purchase the non-special editions will need to fork out another £10 if they want the definitive experience. Tedious money-grabbing aside, the jaw-dropping visuals, steady pace, and galactic clash of civilisations which have become the hallmark of the *Mass Effect* series are dutifully provided by developer BioWare, bringing the trilogy to a fierce, uncompromising conclusion. An eclectic mix of RPG (a turn-based, role-playing game) and classic shooter, the breath-taking pace takes no prisoners as we begin with our reliable Commander Shepard on trial for his part in events which took place in *Mass Effect 2*. Of course, things are cut short by an alien invasion: Reapers have invaded Earth and Shepard, naturally, goes on a recruitment drive to see if there isn't something he can do. This is certainly a game whose prequels need to be played. Both to understand the story, and to pay due respect to one of the most influential video games of all time. *Mass Effect* had always been envisioned as a trilogy and the final piece does well to tie up the story. A must-play. *Mass Effect 3* is available now on XBOX 360 and PlayStation 3 from £29.95.

↳ Hassan Dar



Mario Party 9 on Nintendo Wii

## How not to be British

If there is one thing to take away from this series, it is that we should be grateful to live in London and not Bradford or any place up north. Being a student who spends most of her time in central London, apologising even when someone steps on my feet during a frenzied rush hour, I couldn't envisage the brutal intolerance people face on the show. However, I did expect the drama to be somewhat exaggerated, owing to this being a Channel 4 production. It seems that the producers were more interested in appealing to the type of people that watch such tripe as *Big Brother* and *I'm a Celebrity Get Me Out of Here*, rather than those who are

genuinely interested in contemporary social and cultural trends.

So in that vein, the show presents us with eight selected candidates, most of whom have failed to pass the British citizenship test, to spend some time in a house together, ostensibly to get to know each other better and learn about the different types of people living in the same city. However, the show wouldn't be entertaining enough if it did not descend into a stereotypical mockery showing ethnic minorities to look and behave exactly as you would expect them to do. Naturally, there's always the odd one out who takes either his religion or his culture to extreme

lengths and the show wouldn't be the same if it didn't select exactly those people with a weird tick. One of these was a devout Muslim man who was so dogmatic about his adherence to daily religious rituals that he managed to annoy everyone in the house, including the other Muslim guests.

Then we have Mohammed (the name is almost a synonym to the word "ethnic"), a taxi driver whose perception of British is limited to his experiences with drunken youth roaming the streets in the early hours of the mornings. He doesn't shake this idea out of his head when he speaks of Brits or even when he meets the more respectable Maura

and Jens on the show. His misogynistic demeanour is so appalling that he prides himself on choosing to tap his feet to raise attention in the house rather than using his voice. Not to mention the fit he threw when the presenter asked about his reaction if his daughter was to "come back home with a white boy." You can dismiss the question as irrelevant since his daughter is married, but remember the exaggerated dramatic effect mentioned above.

At the other extreme, we meet a retired officer who finds it completely normal to use phrases such as "black bastard" and shrug them off as banter. The horror continues in the pub as an-

other Caucasian man feels the need to harass the traditionally dressed Sabbiya by feeling her legs and advising her to "wear a mini and show off your titties." Both men, despite being ethnically "white," present "being British" as nothing more than being an oversexed bigot.

More than anything else, this vile representation of the people of Britain left me thinking that the show should have first tackled the question of what it means to be British before launching into educating people on how to become British.

↳ Rasha Al-Dabagh

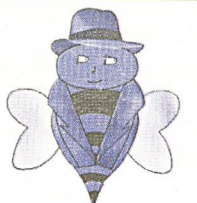


# ★ FAUX NEWS ★

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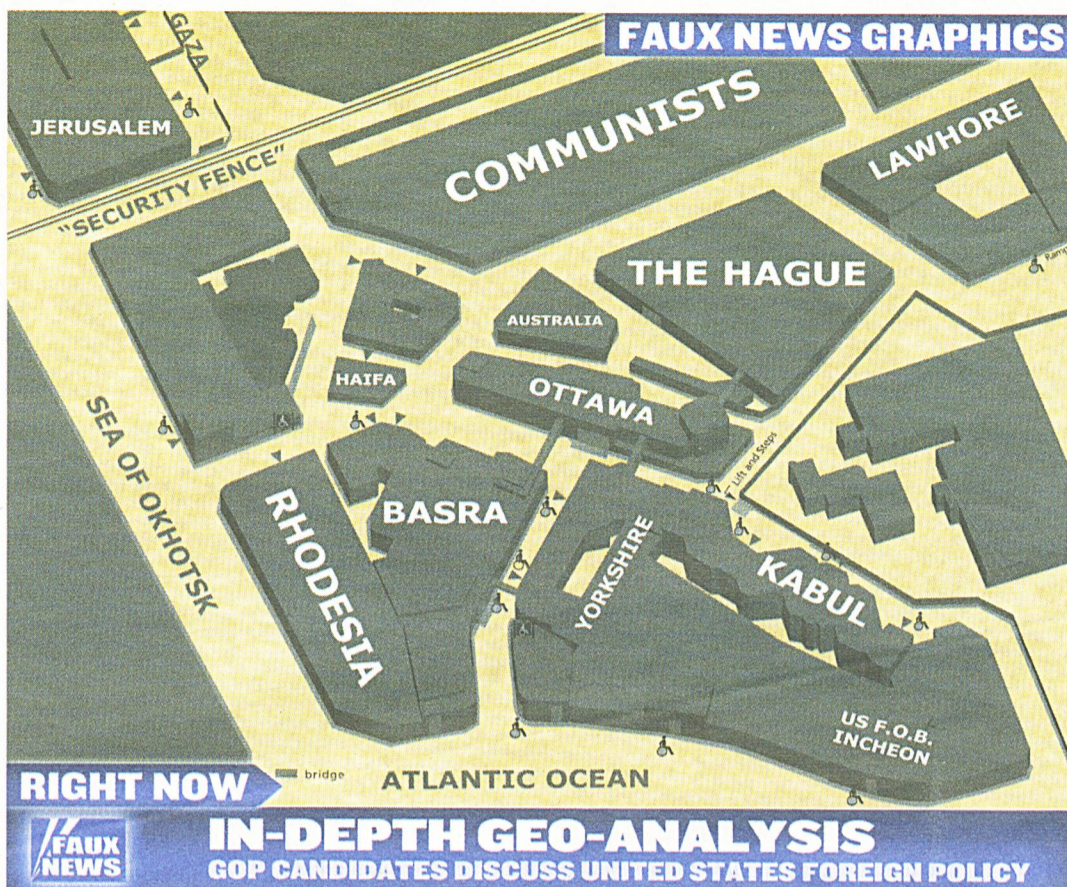
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## Lash Proponents Want Less Spent on Gash

**GINGER WHOREBY**  
reporting live from Homs

In an exclusive report unconnected in any way to waterboarding, extraordinary rendition or any of three camps within the Uzbekistan desert, the B can exclusively reveal the full text and requirements of the LSE Students' Union Budget.

Taken from sources who have since waved any right to pursue litigation, this organ is in a position to showcase the astonishing acts of fiscal irresponsibility emerging on the horizon of our illustrious institution. The conflagration represents the greatest challenge to the fiscal reputation of the London School of Ergonomics since the resignation of Former Secretary of State Duvets for following government policy to the letter.

Divisions within the student body have emerged since the inconclusive power-sharing deal broke down following the Michaelmas Mid-Terms in October. The schism within the Union has arisen owing to a break in the consensus in the noted Lash/Gash Relationship (LGR) that forms the 'Golden Rule' of the Athletics Union Budget.

Speaking to the B, outgoing Athletics Majority Leader Branton Mycoque cited the rising challenge posed between supporters of maintaining the cur-

rent status quo of a 7:3 ratio between the aforementioned Gash and Lash spending commitments. Originally formulated by Community Secretary Harley Quinn during the 2010 shutdown, the LGR has been criticised in recent months by

following the recommendations proposed by Student Union Representative Saul Tryan.

Despite protestations from the Liberals, notably the basement bloggers at the Platypus (named after the 'evolutionary' dead-end), allegations from

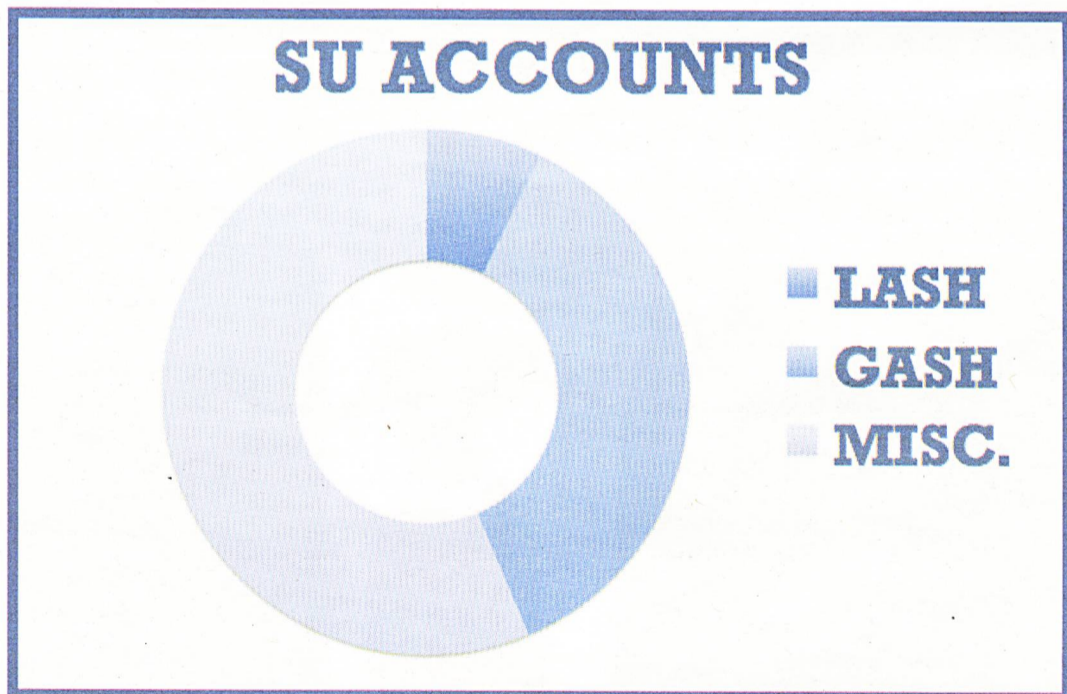
to the division between the far-left and the far far-left, there is a perception that in the event of the two parties not being able to reconcile such differences. By the end of September, the Union may sink even further into debt, forcing itself to break the

prioritise Lash or Gash could lead to formal defaults by smaller and less libertarian Students' Unions. These groups, commonly referred to as "PIIGS", would have have no hope.

Monarch's Poly would be left in an invidious position of being unable to defraud any more elections, whilst the Nursery of Oriental and African (wherever that is) Studies would have to finally come down. As for Goldsmiths, despite their attempts to return to the gold standard have utterly failed in every respect. keep turned faithful faux news readers, in this time of crisis we can only hope that those with an equal interest in both lash and gash can find an equitable agreement between the two.

A potential savior has been found in the unlikely form of Mitt De Jesus, who has since demanded that absolutely no money should be spent on either. In a speech in the Rold Theatre, Sen. De Jesus stated "We as a Union should go back to when we were first established-set up. Returning to the Gold Standard must be made a priority! This would have the duel advantage of allowing the LGR to be dispersed with, whilst also making it far easier for me to understand the exchange rates."

Alex Putin-Day was at an IT Seminar and as such, was unavailable for comment.



the predisposition towards the cheap availability of alcohol-influenced inhibition over promiscuity.

Representatives from Democratic United Democratic Worker's Democratic Front for Democratic Centralism (United-Democratic Miftonites) have demanded a repatriation more in the region of 1:1 between spending on both Lash and Gash

the membership of the 'lame-stream' media continue to pertain to the the complete and utter collapse of the "Union" owing to negative financial balance sheets.

According to a number of commentators, the most serious issues have also arisen owing to divisions between DUDWDFDC (U-DM) and the Students' Union proper. Owing

debt ceiling, currently pegged to the coffee prices in the Garrick.

The unexplainable nature of the above metaphor must be seen in the context of the real world aftershocks that a Union Shut-Down would have on the Londonwide community. By asking one of the handful of economists who were not involved in the last recession, an inability to decide whether to



American students were left wondering if the US Treasury was involved in fixing the Putin-Day campaign after the incumbent's face was seen on a number of United States 1 Dollar bills. Putin-Day has addressed these criticisms claiming that "me and T-Geiths are total BFFs." | Photo: Mr.Wizard

# How 'President' Putin-Day and Her Cronies Are Working to Undermine Democracy and Instigate Socialism

**GRASSY KNOLLINGTON**

Crisis hit the LSE Students' Union fifteen seconds after Alex Putin-Day was re-elected for a Second Term as President. These righteous criticisms are demonstrative of yet another example of the 'Establishment' riding roughshod over the electorate (see also: Watergate, Florida's Hanging Chads and the recent election of Deadwood Milibland.)

Putin-Day won by roughly 196,003,830 votes last week, three more than the number of people that defiantly voted. This latter fact was based on some statistics that someone tweeted five minutes prior from another university.

Less than six months prior to this, the LSE Fourth Tower was demolished by LSE IT Services acting in co-operation

with the Illuminati to further their New World Order. The only reason people claim not to know about the disappearance of said tower can be explained by hallucinogens in Rites Bar, changing campus maps and the very slight probability that it never existed.

Faux News is far from alone in considering such evidence of the pernicious work of the Priory of Sion. Shortly after the London Students' Paper published their report, their story was attacked by those representatives of the CIA, damaging their reputation with 'facts' and 'grammar.' Simply put, the respondent must

argue for this being evidence of either the entire story being made up, or more likely, a coded message from Bobby Kennedy, Lord Lucan and Saif al-Umnus Qaddafi.

**Shortly after the London Students' Paper published their report, their story was attacked by those representatives of the CIA, damaging their reputation with 'facts' and 'grammar.'**

Further evidence of a massive conspiracy to defraud the rightful will of the people (obviously modelled on the process used in explaining Mrs Minerless' three consecutive land-

slide victories) was the way in which Putin-Day 'defeated' her opponent. The 'President' defeated her challenger by a margin of 21,122,112 votes. As could be seen, this is clearly a

sign that nefarious influences within the Bilderberg Group have attempted to defraud the electorate by acting with the SEELE-Dis-cordian-Mayan Axis.

Such a coincidence cannot be explained by mere chance (unless one understands the principles of numbers.) The obvious mess-paulisdeadage that can be heard by listening to the "White Album" backwards after taking a

sizable quantity of nutmeg (just about the only clarity-enhancing substance yet to be abolished by Black Helicopters.)

Obviously, the end of the world that the Olmecs or the other Mesoamerican Civilisation predicted was not that promoted by the other conspiracy theorists (the ones that are wrong) merely represents a ruse.

It is not the actual ending of the world, but the fact we cannot end the reign of terror prompted by the Anti-Zionist Zionist forces of moderation by using democracy.

*These italics at the end mean that we cannot be sued by the powers that be. Honestly, check British Libel Rulings. Nah-nah-nah-nah-nah!*

# Drug Addict McKenna's Birth Certificate Shame

**DR. WHOREBY**  
Rehab Correspondent

Controversy has once again washed across the LSE campus. Not only did our current filthy moderate slate cheat their way into their positions. But now shocking news has arisen that Drunkan McKenna can't even produce his real birth certificate. our current working theory is that somewhere between segueing from weed to heroin he used his certificate to snort several lines of low quality cocaine off a prostitute's lady garden.

When members of her Majesties' constabulary came to investigate the important piece of documentation was quickly ingested, so to avoid any trouble with the pigs. The issue has further been complicated because Drunkan can no longer remember where he was born, which city he grew up in or whether or not his favourite color is green. Attempts to narrow down just where he came from have tightened it down to "the north, basically somewhere up from the Watford gap."

If these allegations are proved true this could further throw the electoral farce that is the LSE SU into disrepute because he wasn't of the middle class, clearly was never a champagne socialite, and therefore was never able to even qualify for electoral eligibility.

In an interview to the beaver he stated, "I needed some help. I had the wellies on cos I was knee deep in clunge. But my motor just wasn't running. I need

Given that we posited the accusation of his ineligibility for elections two questions into our meeting, at which point he was no longer coherent, we're unable to give the officer-elect's actual response. Translations thus far have proved ineffectual.

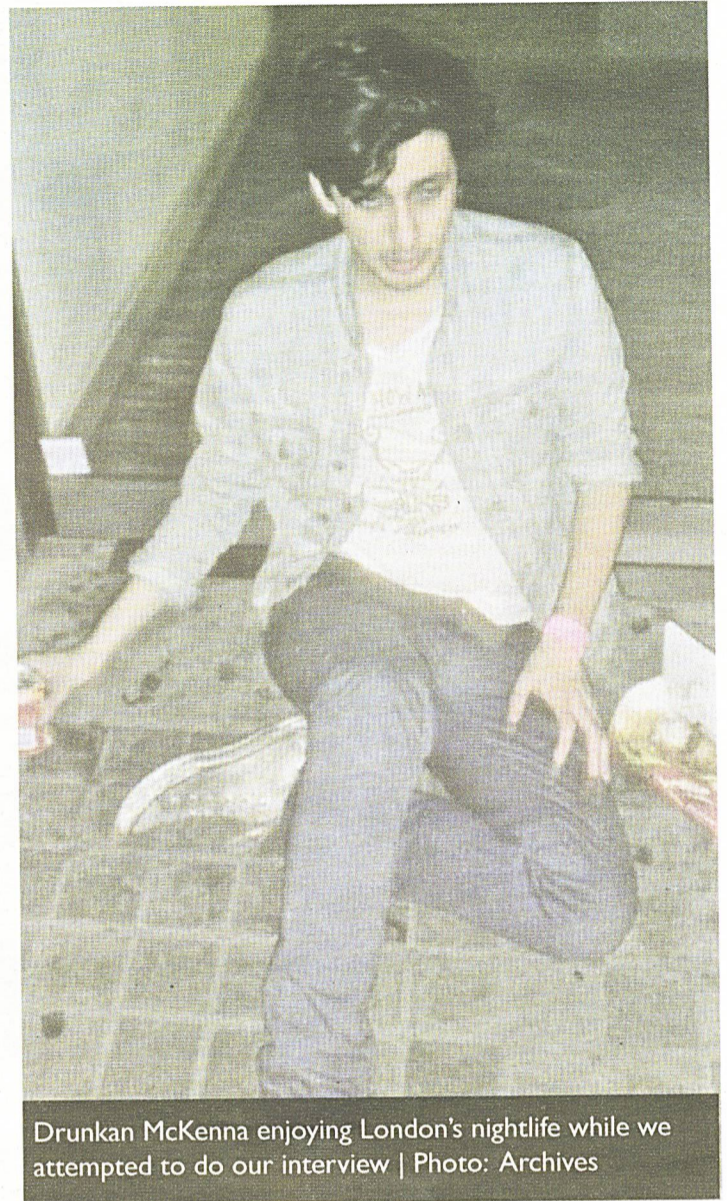
As for his electoral campaign, rumours are flying that all of his £40 election budget was spent on speed-balls, and he needed to beg the ARC to get some more money for posters. He was, of course denied under election rules, but the ARC made the mistake of giving him a written word of warning. Which was promptly used as a cocaine chimney.

Going to Jack Tannedale for his next piece of budgetary relief turned out badly, however. Tannedale was unaware of what was happening, all we can confirm is that he was spotted cranking in a McDee's toilet on the Strand after Drunkan was through persuading him to help out with his campaign. Drunkan is still missing and we presume his friends would like to see him again at some point, so if you know where he is, pointing him in the direction of the Sabb's office would be great.

## Rumours are flying that all of his £40 election budget was spent on speed-balls.

some petrol for lil king Kenny, he wasn't feeling it, you get me fella? Got change for a 20, I'll even throw in this jacket." At this point he felt the need to adjust his 'heroin chic' jacket and relieve himself all over the carpet, whilst muttering, for some reason, "got make money, bro."

We are unsure just how Jasoned our love-able street cat was whilst running the beaver, but suffice to say it was always 50/50 when he was talking about "pounding some beaver stuff tonight" whether any actual work would be done on the paper.



Drunkan McKenna enjoying London's nightlife while we attempted to do our interview | Photo: Archives

# The Inexplicable Rise of the Cult of 'Comrade' Wanke

**BERTOLT ALE**  
'Special' Correspondent

The London School of Ergonomics (LSE) has a proud heritage. Founded generations ago by the individualist Fabians, it is only natural that we have maintained our principles as a committed cornerstone for conservatism, capitalism and Christianity. In the face of adversity, ranging from incubating liberalism and ZaNew Liebour of "Comrade" Giddonesomethingwrong fermenting the fall of the Minerless government, the institution has maintained its reputation for spreading a fair and accountable

Yet this would be to understate the perils of underestimating the challenges facing the vanguard of Haykian Exceptionalism. The prominent place that this institution has enjoyed upon the world stage can no longer be simply taken

for granted. Indeed, to suggest anything to contrary would be an act of eminent foolishness, just as acceptance of weakness represents treachery.

Over the past nine months, spectres long-overlooked by the LSE have emerged to challenge the firmly-set leadership promoted by President Alex Putin-Day and the Grand Old Union. The spectres are limited and rather confused, but left unchallenged, they represent a clear and present danger to the peace and competitive power of our Union.

Jason 'Comrade' Wanke, the diminutive 'Dear Leader' of the far-left cabal many miles to the south of the LSE is such a spectre. Sometimes referred to as 'The Beloved Toast Master', 'Eternal Stick-in-the-Mud'

or simply as 'That Little Sod', Wanke has managed to build a strong and organised regime within the People's Republic of Bankside.

Although Wanke was the instigator behind a failed coup d'état against the PRB Finance Minister several months ago, the 'Great Hindrance' has risen

## Spectres emerged to challenge the firmly-set leadership promoted by President Alex Putin-Day.

to lead the Propaganda Department, tasked with undermining the Union wherever possible. Since consolidating his power within the Party Structures over 'Winterval', Wanke has become the PRB's voice of opposition, instigating a 'Popular Front' with the United Revo-

lutionary Socialist Workers' Party (Cluelessist-Seedettist), BOAC Systems and the Shining Golden Path.

Comrade Wanke, who has challenged an InADrunken-State Department ruling that has barred him from attending the LSESU for any reason other than classes, eating, sleeping, going to public lectures, socialising or using the bathroom, addressed supporters outside Clare Free Market on Monday,

calling for "Vengeance" against "Alex Putin-Day and her Revisionist Cypto-Fascist Socialist Roaders Cabal."

'Comrade' Wanke, dressed in the three-piece suit that has since become a symbol of his Lumpenproletariat Crusade, ranted against our proud na-

tion for a period of around sixteen hours. The speech, largely incoherent given the 'Unshakable Chauvinist's' terminal case "Foot-in-Mouth" Disease, accused President-elect Alex Putin-Day of relying on: "cats, rats, running dogs, discredited members of the intelligentsia, Professor Alyan Skud, the late Boris Yeltsin, the Captain of the Costly Accordion, Captain Haddock, Tintin, Lady Gaggag, Campbell Claret, Al Pointer, the Beeb, CNNNN, Snappie, Cracklie, Poppie, the Honey Monster and Rastamouse."

The instability of 'Comrade' Wanke's regime became apparent soon after the speech with a denouncement of Trotsky as "a statist wrecker and sloth."

A spokesperson for the Mayor of London distanced Comrade Wanke from BoJo, decrying him as "unworthy of attention, even in a poxy little student union satire section."

# He Fucking Loves Activities. He Also Loves Killing.

**GINGER WHOREBY**  
 "Genocide" Correspondent

Nothing is more powerful than an idea, Stanley's time has come, Stanley's time is now.

At the current juncture, there are more people in the Library than there are in Stanley's Activities and Development Commune. Owing to this reduced number of active participants within the S.R.A. (Stanley's Resistance Army), the Faux News Community is now in a position to bring the fight to General Ellerby-Uganda in order to liberate the Invisible Freshers. The Warlord's prolonged campaign of stealing freshers to put to la-

bour within his Underground Sweatshop (within the Underground) has to be eradicated. No longer can the freedom-loving citizens and students continue to turn a blind eye to this practice.

We must act now.

All students are guilty of enjoying the very cheap Students' Union hoodies from the shop, and from time to time those cuddly little beaver plushies. Subsidised though it may be, it is proud institution, and as such, "yuman rites" abuses must be seen in the light of keeping prices at the marginally reduced level that naked consumerism is patriotically entitled to.

This aside, it would be

morally wrong for us to allow the most egregious acts of physical and mental torture to continue. Currently, Faux News has nothing to suggest that the meat in the sandwiches comes from anything other than properly regulated herd animals, but the view that it may one day be constituted of a naive GV100 student cannot be discounted. A concerted campaign must be brought to bear on General Ellerby-Uganda's regime.

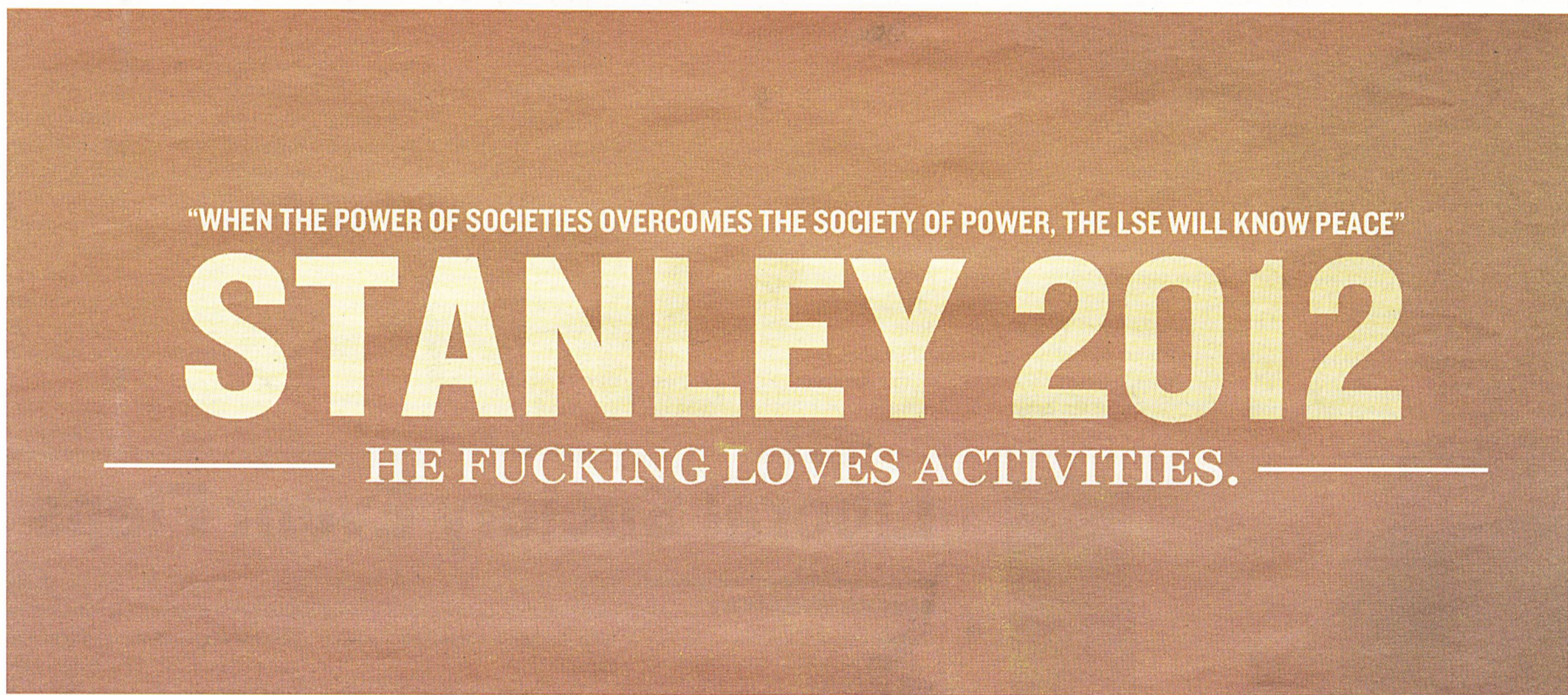
Apologists will argue that dealing with Stanley is the only way that the Students' Union can break even. Some may feel that forced labour exists purely to provide our quality of life. Were it not for

free-market forces and ignoring global issues for the past thirty years, we would say outright that such a view would be unacceptable.

In regaling this story to one of my mentees, I attempted to explain the situation to him. It was tear-jerking to see the sacrificial lamb's response. The expression upon his face when realising that the situation within the Republic of the East Bullying was not as clear cut as Star Wars is one that shall haunt me until my dying days. Not only do the Freshers have to deal with the crushing rejection from Poxbridge, but to have the threat of General Ellerby-Uganda pouncing on them is something that cannot

be allowed to continue.

If this were to occur for General Course members, it would be across the cover of the Platypus immediately. We turn a blind eye because it is easier for us to ignore the facts of the issue. The real issue here is that if every LSE student were to update their Facebook status, share the picture above and buy our attractive sticker-book and keyring set (available online for the very reasonable price of 799 Libyan Dinars) students will be able to sleep safe from the fear of the greatest threat to freshers since the reign of Ashot Kermit, the former Dictator.



## Letters to the Editor

Dear Editors,

It has come to my attention that the vote for your SU elections was only rigged for one of the races.

Under my leadership, in order to get the best outcome for myself possible I'll be altering every result at will, bribes in cash to the Libyan embassy please.

Best,  
 Caliningrad Hooligan

Dear Faux News,

How FAIR and UNBIASED can you call yourself when you REFUSE to comment or even mention the greater CONSPIRACY being perpetrated on a MASSIVE scale by the COUNCIL OF ANCIENTS at the LSD. Money LAUNDERING is a SEVERE and DANGEROUS issue. HOW DOES THE GARRICK EVEN REMAIN OPEN?

Best,  
 Pen:gu'ln\_91

Heyyyy Edzz!!!!!!!

Missing me yet?!?!?!?!?!?!?!  
 Nice to see how much more you hav started to emulate the rite and proper views of the student body!

Leets grab some coffeee sometime, I should have some time in between coming back from one of my many vacations.

Cheers babes xxxx,  
 Halfway-Nickels Rolexander

HeY FaUX NEws,

We KNOW WhAT YoU'Re HiDING. ReLEAsE The INfORMatIoN BeForE It's tOO LatE.

If yOU doN'T wANt fAT BEavER to GEt wACKed, dO It iN 48 hOUrS

KiND REgards,  
 LulzSec

Dear Pions,

The quality of your "publication" has not improved one iota since I lent you my not inconsiderate skills and expertise as Sexecutive Secretary.

I belive it was Erasmus, Descartes or Nozik who said that the frizzy haired freak is king, but I can't remember at the moment, Too lashed.

You are unworthy of a 'Kind regards'  
 Rolex Young

# I Know Who You Engaged in Polyamorous, Pre-Marital Coitus with Last Wednesday

XOXO

As expected, members of the faithful communion, this week's sacrilegious events in Zoo Bar were the usual demonstration of Gomorrah-esc excess. The membership of the faux-Olympians were involved in their usual actions, dirty, depraved and distasteful at best. At worst, such activities would have been out of place in Canada.

The only real explanation in explaining the proliferation of such sordid acts is the easy access to contraceptive devices. Provision of free prophylactics provides of these events to take place. As such, your faithful columnist steps into the breach, figuratively and literally, to hit you all up with the latest goss.

Certain 'Captains' of 'Industry' were seen as preying on the younger members of their herd. The path that the gentlemen were leading the fallen women down as they searched for guidance was not one for salvation, but rather leading to two dangerous destinations. One led towards a painful world of heat and sweat, the other towards hell. A certain 'lady' seemed to get more than she may have been dreaming of in her harlot mentality, given that she was "ap-

parently" seen defiling a member of the opposite gender, "apparently" is used here because of the insistence of libel, despite the fact that it most certainly happened.

In performing fellatio, the Babylonian Whore served to directly contravene Scripture, most heinously being 1st Timothy 2.12. With regards of course to the number of all those leather accouterments she was certainly exercising authority over her man. Filth.

The woman in question had also made a grave mistake in the quality of said outfits, far better would have been to purchase the "Sucha Petal Special Suit"

from Janus on the Old Compton Street, far cheaper and of better quality, the latex also allows for easy cleaning from all but the most stubborn stains.

Or so I have heard.

Meanwhile, the Rowing Team could be seen imbibing cocktails without time being made for even the Wesleyan Grace. Heinous. Brethren, for future reference, comments such as "Let us get this \*ucking sh\*t down our f\*cking ne\*s b\*cause we are so

mu\*h more ma\*ly than those Rug\*y lads. Superman that \*\*\*\*\* moth\*r\*fc\*er." is most certainly not an appropriate substitute for grace.

Given the state of the floor after a pool player managed to turn his alcohol into regurgitated phlegm, you can be excused from having to kneel down on the Sabbath.

Most distressingly I can also reveal to you that despite repeatedly refuting the claims

now. Answers on the back of a Ohio Caucus Ballot, addressed to Hanging Chad, please.

I'm also not one to judge, but having had a few a certain Ray Still was seen Ha-Ha-massing all over the toilets. It was a veritable smorgasbord of vomit. Word went out that he needed help, and your favourite assassination service were quickly on the scene.

The Rowers again courted controversy later on in the night

when they began the simulated drowning of Freshers. Jock Curtsey reportedly started the activity because several of them had hair approaching his lustrous locks. Were he

to spend as much time Churching rather than Conditioning, perhaps his salvation would be more assured. My my.

The actions did warrant documenting on a popular social media group. The MyFace Album Extreeme Rendition 2k12 <3 <3 was unavailable as of Monday. This commentator would love to say that Prius Banter was in the area, but she was on a plane to the next university, ready to run in three new sabbatical elec-

tions having already requested endorsements from the Catholic and LGBT Societies.

A few words must also be spared in this judgement for those that attended and participated in Fight Night. For those expecting it to be the most horrific event since the Fall from Grace, members present were distinctly disappointed. The rules were clearly geared towards a distinctly liberal bias, intending to be 'safe'. As the Lord himself said, "anamarthtos umwn prwtos ton liqon ep auth balet." As it was, there were no knockouts and the ring was barely ruffled. Indeed, given the place was wall-to-wall, with sin proceedings weren't that lively. Thankfully, the seventeen fatalities at the Athletics Union Ball allowed for a semblance of normalcy to be retained.

It's not this correspondents place to say just how many of these lost souls are making their way straight to the antechamber of Lucifer, but since the resurgence in support for Leviticus 20:13, it has clearly increased. Until next Wednesday, I can only encourage the incorruptible amongst you to continued to engage of self-flagellation to repent. Remember, the watcher is eternal.

Oh, and some of them support gay marriage. Pharisees!

## Were he to spend as much time Churching rather than Conditioning, perhaps his salvation would be more assured.

made against him Mycoque seems to have become more and more Clintonian in his enjoyment of a fine cigar. Feculent.

Shortly after witnessing the rather sordid act, which warranted a brief purging of impurities, one also came across rumours of a certain Club Captain, a recent election winner and a goat becoming more intimately acquainted with Sanatorium. This was confusing as he is somewhere in the Midwest right

## Liberal Society Event Flops

GINGER WHOREBY

In yet another embarrassment for the "Liberals" the B can reveal that the inaugural event of the LSESU Liberal Society was completely and utterly ignored by students.

To the betterment, indeed it was the most poorly attended event since 1990, when Pol Pot tried to roll up and speak on "Glasses, what's up with them?" Jock Curtsy, Mashallah's secretary said "what a fucking disaster, I'm going to go home,

open a bottle of expensive french wine and wipe the tears from my eyes with pages from 'On Liberty', we didn't even get the socialist communists turning up to complain." Mashallah just quietly wept, wishing to be kept behind his veil of ignorance so we wouldn't see him

rend his clothes. As yet we've been unable to have a meeting with Lanyard Cole that wasn't inqorate.

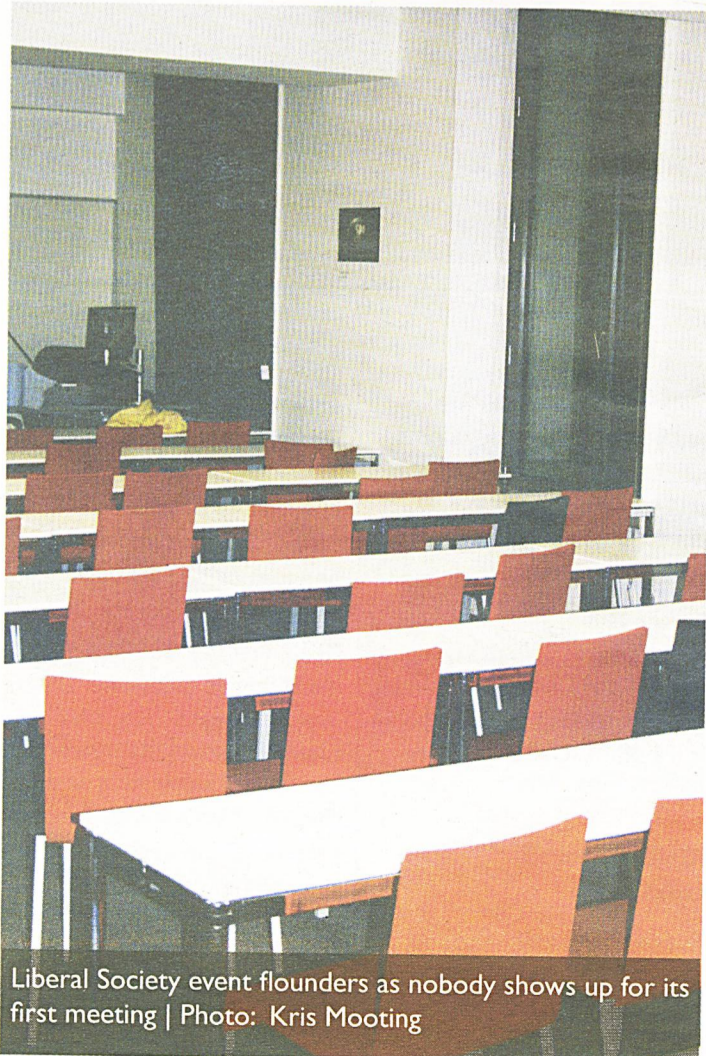
The event was a so called "debate" on whether we should invade Syria, to sort out their crisis. While we were unable to attend the event, it was likely that the gun shy liberals, completely ignoring any human rights abuses or the potential

ally of the US but has a wildly untapped potential for oil, we've seen charts and things from the state dept. Bush 43 argued persuasively and convincingly that humanitarian aid must be sent, by the bayonet if necessary. Completely refuting the Liberal's pathetic thesis of Self Determination, bitches. However the liberals were obviously too baked to care and thus, with

## Refuting the Liberal's pathetic thesis of Self Determination, bitches.

Curtsy being the only non high person there, the meeting drew to a close, driving even more people away from their useless ideology. It is unlikely that we will have to endure anymore of the useless pseudo liberal events, but rest assured us at Faux News shall organise barricades and reveal their half truths for exactly what they are. Don't believe any of their lamestream press releases either, we're the only fair and balanced news source around.

for oil argued that if the A'rab League don't want to ruffle any feathers then why should we? (Mashallah probably said something like that, but in a more insulting and derogatory way.) Curtsy and his little clique clearly completely fail to grasp the fact that Syria, not only an



Liberal Society event flounders as nobody shows up for its first meeting | Photo: Kris Mooting

# Features

## The price of information

Sofia Horta-e-Costa examines the lengths journalists go to get a story



Flickr: DVIDSHUB

**T**he Journalism industry is driven by the passion to uncover the truth. It claims to fly the flag of information and carries the responsibility to disseminate knowledge with speed, accuracy, and integrity. The growing interconnectedness of global information means real-time stories

**The high-profile death of Sunday Times correspondent Marie Colvin on the 22nd Feb in Homs has served as a reminder that real people deliver reporting from the front-line of conflict.**

reach more people every day. But just how deep are reporters expected to go in the name of this mandate?

The media blackout in Syria has seen the worldwide tally of reporter fatalities grow to 21 this year according

to the Committee to Protect Journalist (CPJ). Since 1992, 70 per cent of all reporters were directly murdered, compared to 18 per cent who were caught in the crossfire, and 12 per cent who died as a result of undertaking dangerous assignments.

The high-profile death of Sunday Times correspondent Marie Colvin on the 22nd Feb in Homs has served as a reminder that real people deliver reporting from the front-line of conflict. In an age of social networking, amateur reporting, and free daily newspapers, traditional conflict journalism promises to pick out the truth from a pool of rumours and to show rather than tell. In Colvin's own words, reporting means 'trying to find the truth in a sandstorm of propaganda.' When office-based writers source reports from the front-line, they owe a lot to those willing to risk their lives over their stories.

But surely no story or image can be worth a life. Are writers unable to produce a good story at a safe distance from the front line? Assignments to dangerous areas are voluntary, and reporter behaviour is dictated by an innate sense to investigate deeper and to bring the unknown into the limelight. The bravery of war correspondents should not be confused with bravado or ill-informed decisions; reporters, photographers and cameramen are fully aware of the risks and choose to take them. Our desensitisation of graphic images and violent stories

shows how news consumers might take the industry for granted; these stories are unfortunately part of the quotidian routine of daily life but would be much missed if gone. They have brought greater transparency to warfare and more accountability to the propagation of violence. Today we are (or should be) well aware that atrocities are committed by all sides in a conflict.

**It might therefore feel futile to mention the sensationalist branch of journalism which is pushed by the thirst of scandal and the pressure to sell.**

It might therefore feel futile to mention the sensationalist branch of journalism which is pushed by the thirst of scandal and the pressure to sell. The difference is between sacrificing life for truth or integrity for truth (and money) is enormous to say the

least. The Leveson inquiry into media misconduct in the United Kingdom has uncovered the extent to which reporters are willing to breach legal restrictions and moral obligations to reveal scandal.

It has also drawn attention to the fact that the profitability of the printed newspaper industry relies heavily on tabloids; the former News of the World deputy editor Neil Wallis said in his statement that "the chosen newspaper of this country is the Sun and the red tops.

The Great British population do not want the broadsheets." The current regulation on reporting processes has failed, but it might be impossible to change it dramatically without compromising on the already struggling finances of the industry.

Nevertheless, the decision to publish information obtained through unorthodox processes can sometimes be very problematic for purposes beyond maintaining profitability, especially when the possibility of uncovering truths in the public interest is at stake. The Wikileaks case is a good example of this trade-off, as the confidential cables made available through the organisation have been essentially stolen from government offices.

But some of these leaked documents have made officials accountable to their people; an article in the Foreign Policy journal (13th Jan 2011) regarding unrest in Tunisia last year goes as far as to claim that although

Tunisians already faced grave social discontent.

'WikiLeaks acted as a catalyst: both a trigger and a tool for political outcry' as it provided the hard evidence needed to give meat to rumors of corruption.

Although phone-hacking, celebrity stalking and bribery are condemned by newspaper consumers, it is because of their demand for sensationalism that journalists go to such great extents. Conflict reporters pay with their lives

**The difference is between sacrificing life for truth or integrity for truth (and money) is enormous to say the least**

for stories that might fail to register in the minds of the majority of news consumers, as we are far more interested in Ryan Giggs' affair with his brother's wife.

We want to be distracted and entertained, and not drawn into more horrific news of violence.

But information should not be entertainment. Perhaps it is time we re-evaluate our demands. ☛

# THE EMERGENCE

Ling Yah delves further in to the Invisible Children protest

It is relatively safe to say that a week ago, no one knew who Joseph Kony or the "Invisible Children" were. A lot has changed since then. Unless you've been away from Facebook, Twitter and any other form of social media, chances are that you will know exactly who he is, what it is about and at some point, spent 30 minutes watching a video that continues to make waves on the Internet.

On 5th March, a video (KONY 2012) produced by an American nonprofit activist group called the "Invisible Children" was released. Its sole purpose was to "elect" Joseph Kony into global consciousness, thus making him as famous and visible as any other superstar celebrity. The video is brilliantly made, endearing (with the use of the founder Jason Russell's young son), and heart wrenching in its depiction of the plight of Ugandan children at the hands of the warlord Joseph Kony - leader of the now largely defunct Lords Resistance army (LRA) guerilla group. It has been said that the LRA abducted approximately 60,000 children, and was guilty for the tens of thousands of mutilations and killings over the past 26 years. The head of this "terrorist" group being none other than the now famous Joseph Kony.

If the more than 70 million viewers (thus far), 400,000 YouTube comments, hashtags (#Kony2012, #stopkony, #MakeKonyFamous) and "sharing" on Facebook these past few days are anything to go by, Invisible Children have succeeded in their publicity campaign. And that is a severe understatement. Unsurprisingly, it has also attracted fervent support and sharp criticisms from all sides, and raised questions concerning the power of the social media.

The strategy behind Kony 2012 is brilliant in its simplicity, and essentially takes full advantage of everything that social media has to offer today. Firstly, armed with a strong and emotionally appealing message, it offers a very simple call to action: talk about it and get others to talk about it too. By targeting the children and youth, arguably the most technologically savvy and virtually well connected; awareness of the campaign has quickly spread to all levels of society.

Secondly, it has managed to mobilize a rapid lobbying campaign by targeting twenty "culturemakers" (e.g. Rihanna, Taylor Swift, Ellen DeGeneres) and twelve "policymakers" to make a statement supporting the campaign. There has already been some success on this front. Last year, 100 US troops were deployed to provide assistance and advise to the Ugandan army. Celebrities, and their millions of Twitter and Facebook followers, have also been quick to show their support for the cause. This impressive list includes Oprah, Ryan Seacrest, Rihanna, Bono, Warren Buffet, George Clooney, Lady Gaga, Rush Limbaugh, Justin Bieber... you get the idea.

Thirdly, Invisible Children has responded instantly and at length to

criticisms concerning its finances, charity navigator rating and strategy. It has also rebuked accusations of apparent exaggerations of the impact of the LRA and its apparent portrayal of the "white man's burden". Despite the sudden deluge of interest in the Invisible Children, its website remains accessible, allowing people to continue to have direct access to information from them.

Right now, 20th April is the targeted date that all the Kony 2012 supporters have set their sights on. The night when supporters go out to cover cities throughout the world in posters of Kony 2012. The simple idea being that the issue of Kony will be prioritised in the political agendas of governments, and that military and financial support will continue to be provided until one of the most wanted men on the International Criminal Court list is finally captured, dead or alive.

If there is one thing that everyone agrees on, it is that Joseph Kony is a bad guy. Critics however, have ripped everything else apart. Some of these criticisms are contained below:

The video is accused of misrepresenting reality, and of creating the false impression that Kony is still in Uganda right now, abducting children, turning them into child soldiers and brainwashing them into killing their own parents. The question subsequently raised is this: Why now? Why wasn't something done between 1999 and 2004, when Kony was still in Uganda and actively committing these crimes? Thousands of lives could have been saved, if awareness had been raised back then.

In response to the counterargument that it is "better late than never", recent arguments have surfaced concerning the 1.2 billion barrels of crude oil found in Uganda in 2006, with 2.5 billion barrels confirmed last October. Kony's army has diminished considerably with approximately 250 members in total, scattered across the jungles of neighbouring countries, with Kony himself reported to be in Congo. He has not been in Uganda for the past 6 years. They are no longer a threat, so the calls for capturing Kony to stop these atrocities are misguided; especially given that the governments currently supporting this campaign are suspected of possessing an ulterior motive.

Last year, Invisible Children spent \$8,676,614. Only 32 per cent went to direct services, with most going to staff salaries, travel and transport, and film production. Charity Navigator rates their accountability with two out of four stars. Jason Russell has been accused of misappropriating donated funds for himself.

In response to these criticisms, Russell has been quick to point out that it is an "unorthodox organization" which spends one third of its finances on film, one third on film-related advocacy and the rest on the mission to end the war and rehabilitate war-affected children. This justifies the

prima facie disproportionate spending on video production, with its costly special effects.

Furthermore, its two star rating is because Invisible Children does not have five independent voting members on their board of directors - they have four, and are in the process of interviewing potential board members in order to regain their four-star rating in 2013. Since the fiscal Year of 2006, they have also been independently audited by "Considine and Considine", which resulted in unqualified opinions on the audit reports.

Many are opposed to Invisible Children advocating sending US troops to Uganda to support the Ugandan government's army in capturing Kony. There is a 2008 photo of three Invisible Children members holding guns alongside troops from the Sudan People's Liberation Army, itself accused of rampant human rights abuses. Yet in spite of that, the organization is not calling for any diplomatic pressure to be put on President Museveni's administration.

Kony is just one small part of a much larger problem. Even with the capture of Kony, the Ugandan people are still at the mercy of many of the equally brutal military leaders. For instance, Invisible Children makes the crucial omission of failing to mention that President Museveni himself, who came into power in the civil war, also used child soldiers. Sam Childers, the real life "Machine Gun Preacher", has further stated that President Omar Al-Bashir of Northern Sudan is the true "villain". President Al-Bashir has admitted to backing Kony and is the reason for the genocide currently happening in Darfur. There are much larger, more current problems that need to be addressed.

Invisible Children states that this oversimplification was a deliberate move to summarise a 26-year conflict into a thirty minute film in a clear manner. The film is merely an entry point to this conflict, to raise awareness and encourage people to do their own research and make their own conclusions.

At the end of the day, Invisible Children has succeeded in raising awareness concerning the problems in Uganda and its surrounding regions, and any raised awareness should be regarded as a net positive. People who hate the campaign argue that it will succeed only if people do something, and that "raising awareness" is a futile effort. I beg to differ. Every person viewing the video might not subsequently make a donation, join the 20th April efforts or write to their local MP, but they are aware. Awareness breeds discussion, which in turn will eventually lead to action by people, like Natalie Warne, who recently gave a stirring TED talk on her Kony campaign involvement. It is about being young, and being unafraid to step out and make an impact on an issue that we personally care about.



# OF #KONY2012

Susan Sebatindira and the power of social network campaigns

**L**ike many of you, when I logged into my Facebook account this week, I found my news feed inundated with videos, status updates and article links all focused on one person, Joseph Kony. This raised the question: who was Joseph Kony and how did the Invisible Children campaign to stop him, become this week's

**Social media networks are more often than not full of trivialities but can at times, be one of the most effective platforms to encourage political change.**

social network darling?

After some time on the Internet, I was informed of the campaign's main goals, notably to stop Joseph Kony, a Ugandan warlord who kidnaps young children, enrolling them into his personal army, and the criticism that have arisen from the now famous campaign. Without delving into its strengths and flaws, the campaign has succeeded in its foremost goal, to make Kony famous, something that arguably they could not have achieved without the social media sites, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, and their immense popularity. The hash tags #stopkony and #Kony2012 have produced thousands of tweets and the 30 minute Kony 2012 video, released by the non-profit organisation, "Invisible Children", has garnered over 70 million views. Jason Russell, the main filmmaker pointed out in the video, quite correctly, that social media has

**Raising awareness and binding people together is what Facebook and Twitter do best, but is posting a video on YouTube enough to get rid of a Ugandan warlord?**

revolutionised the way in which people connect with each other.

Social media networks are more often than not full of trivialities but can at times, be one of the most effective platforms to encourage political change. Passionate individuals can come together in a public forum to discuss their frustrations and share

common beliefs, hopes and dreams. The power of social media can clearly be seen in the political movements that constituted the Arab Spring. For all intents and purposes, though the causes behind it were socio-political and economic, the Arab Spring was a revolution of social media. Facebook, Twitter and YouTube's power to bind together groups of fairly diverse people from different backgrounds on common ground, using real-time communication, was now being harnessed for a political purpose; one that gained substantial international exposure.

The free flow of information has proven to be central to the ability of a dissent movement to effectively take hold and spread. The organisation and dissemination of ideas has never been as easy and widespread as it is now. Take Egypt for example. The eighteen days of protests following the "Day of Rage" on 25th January last year would not have been as successfully organised had there not been excessive activity on Twitter, advertising the event under the hash tag #Jan25, and Internet users on Facebook and YouTube calling on other Egyptians to protest. Similar web protests occurred in Tunisia.

The Arab Spring has shown us that the individual can be as much an actor in their state politics as those who run the country. The protestor need not be alone; he can amass widespread support through Facebook and Twitter. A campaign against social injustices can use the Internet domain to gain as much awareness and support as needed. Being Internet savvy can now make you a commodity in attempts to invoke socio-political change. The "Occupy Wall Street" campaign, for example, understood the effectiveness of the Internet and social media. Facebook pages were set up for the various cities in which the Occupy movement had taken off, for example, Occupy London. Images of the tented occupations could be shared on the website, Tumblr.

**The Arab Spring has shown us that the individual can be as much an actor in their state politics as those who run the country.**

The success of social media to some extent relies on the degree of virtual freedom within the state. Some state leaders and governments have recognised the power of social media sites and have sought to control this, notably with Iran's crackdown on some social media sites during the 2009 elections. Libya exercised strong control over the country's Internet infrastructure during the period of unrest against Gaddafi.

The real question that arises from the discussion of the importance of social media is whether social media can actually produce significant change. Raising awareness and binding people together is what Facebook and Twitter do best, but is posting a

**Sharing your opinion is as easy as one click, thus explaining why social and political revolutions are able to manifest as much support as they have in the past.**

video on YouTube enough to get rid of a Ugandan warlord? Social media did not produce the Arab Spring, but it was an effective accelerator of the revolution process, especially within Egypt. Occupy Wall Street originated from discontent with the current financial system, but rose in popularity and encouraged similar movements elsewhere through effective campaigning in social networks. It is important to recognise that social media is a tool, one that can be manipulated for the better, for example by garnering support for protests against undemocratic governments, or for the worse, with select governments having significant control of their country's Internet access. It is also difficult to measure exactly how much of an impact social media can have in ousting a dictator, for example. The social media phenomenon can easily overshadow the actual work of the protestors who took to the streets, in terms of gaining recognition for the quick fall of Ben Ali and Mubarak in Tunisia and Egypt. It is worth noting that the Arab Spring took place in a region with low to middling Internet usage, with the influence of social media sites being higher in Egypt and Tunisia as compared to Yemen, for example.

Should you browse through a website today, more often than not, you will find a small taskbar with the Facebook and Twitter logos, encouraging you to share whatever information you just read. Sharing your opinion is as easy as one click, thus explaining why social and political revolutions are able to manifest as much support as they have in the past. Social media can branch a YouTube user in Tokyo to a Facebook user in Johannesburg. Social media and the Internet are now changing the way the world operates politically. The quickest way to gain attention is to go "viral", so to speak. The Joseph Kony campaign is perhaps the best example of this.

# How we failed as a human society

Anushka Shah examines the riots that took place in Gujarat in 2002

It is important to turn the Gujarat 2002 debate away from Modi. The issue is far larger than one man. All through history mad men have wrecked havoc and destroyed social order. Dictators and fundamentalists groups have prevailed in every part of the world in every age. What is differ-

**In the ten years that have followed, the hapless victims of Naroda Patiya, Gulbarg, and the likes of these now decrepit neighborhoods have been greeted with a cold, still, and bitter silence from the rest of the country.**

ent about the 2002 Gujarat riots or genocide as some may call it, is that it was not inflicted in a derelict and shattered state in a dark part of the world. It was not instrumented by an authority ruling its voiceless and powerless subjects with an iron-fist. And most importantly, it did not happen in an age where barbaric vices such as conquer and conquest were considered virtues. Rather, it was carried out in vibrant, media-savvy, 21st century, democratic India. Not by one mad man, but rather by a perverse nexus of state leaders, public institutions, and a communally-biased society. The most unfortunate in this immoral web is the partisanship of society. In the ten years that have followed, the hapless victims of Naroda Patiya, Gulbarg, and the likes of these now decrepit neighborhoods have been greeted with a cold, still, and bitter silence from the rest of the country. And that is where the biggest blame and the larger issue in the debate of Gujarat 2002 lies.

There is no way that the men in charge of maintaining law and order in Gujarat would have had the courage to, if not commit, then prevent the cessation of the riots unless they knew they had the larger consensus of society. Every single television-watching and newspaper-reading citizen of India knew in February 2002 what was happening in Gujarat. The fateful burning of the S-6 compartment of the train to Godhra signaled to the ranks of right-wing Hindutva youth and dissenters to murder over 2000 Muslims in open streets in broad daylight. The vivid details of burning children and fetus-hailing have been endlessly illustrated since and bear little need for repetition. The aftermath has seen no effective political, judiciary, or police action to bring the perpetrators to book. The network of political leaders and institutions has remained strong and successful in suppressing the cases of 2000 odd deaths and their respective witnesses. The shock peaks at the point where the same government, murderous at worst and irresponsible at best, gets reelected. Its actions have now received the democratic stamp of legitimacy. This is what makes Gujarat a soul-shivering case; the fact that the actions of the party and the bias of the state-institutions are in many ways a reflection of the opinion of the people, and that the brutal violence has been given sanction.

This problem is in no way that of the Gujarati electorate alone. It is of a nation of 1.2 billion hushed citizens. Responses have largely been either to turn a blind-eye, to justify the riots for a greater good, or to criticize them but stop short of any action. In the ten years since, there has been a severe dearth of anger and fist-shaking reaction. Apart from a small and committed community of social activists, the retort has been for the most part muted. Such quiet from thinking, seeing, informed, and democratic citizens, screams of disbelief. How can it be that a nation that considers its greatest attribute the Gandhian legend of non-violence be so apathetic to something so converse? Where and how did we go wrong as a people that our indifference has risen to such alarming levels? Perhaps it is that we are so immersed in the mundane functions of our daily existence that caring is too much of a distraction? Perhaps it is that because it is out of our immediate vicinity we

have no obligation to care? Or worse, perhaps it is because somewhere down in a deep niche even the most religiously mildest of us, harbor a prejudice against the Muslim community. Impoverished. Dirty. Polygamists. Meat-eaters. Marauding forefathers. It won't matter that your colleague, your neighbor, or your best-friend is part of the same sect. What will matter is that sullen image you choose to remember so that you may have an excuse not to react. And so that you will not have to bear the guilt of a lost life, because in

**The shock peaks at the point where the same government, murderous at worst and irresponsible at best, gets reelected. Its actions have now received the democratic stamp of legitimacy. This is what makes Gujarat a soul-shivering case.**

our heart or hearts we all know that there is something that we can all do to make our voices heard. That's perhaps one of the few lonely virtues remaining of democratic India – and we choose to watch it die like we let them die.

I have spent the last 3 years studying in London. India in this part of the world is looked upon as a shining beacon of the East. Full of an ancient glory, a teeming workforce, and a magical determination that will herald its rise. And this bubble has been created so well by grave under-reporting and the fact that the West on many levels is excited by the unexpected rise of its impoverished counter-parts, that incidents like fake-encounters in Gujarat or open-shooting in Assam are responded to with a hint of cyni-

cism. My narration of Godhra 2002 is always greeted with a curious eyebrow and a sympathetic but skeptical nod. How can I explain that below the din and gleam of 'shining India' exists a far larger and horrendous India that no one is willing to see let alone report? Neither do the people of India want to acknowledge this elephant pulling their tiger back, nor does the West want its party of IT geniuses and mystical tourism be dampened. So the silent, struggling majority continue to suffocate below a heavy blanket of illusions.

In many ways this is the crux of the problem of 2002. When we don't want to accept clearly what happened, we become dumb, deaf, blind, and mute to it all. Because the problem is that the day we accept that we allowed over 2000 people to be murdered in open, we would have nothing to regard ourselves as the Great India.

In reflection of this very sentiment, we swing in swift haste on to the bandwagon of Mr. Modi's development train. Heart-warming is the feeling that despite the fact that we let them scream and rot, they now have shining roads and gleaming Nanos. The sight of the skull-capped man bowing to Modi on his circus stage soothes that annoying itch of guilt. And if it was anything but this, then what is the answer to the roaring question as to why we did not care about their well-being back in 2002 but suddenly care that they have development?

Has this great game of numbers, statistics, investment and MOUs become such an obsession that we have also become blind to what it means to have a gentle, loving, and caring life? Of course every state and every nation must have development and growth. And of course Narendra Modi and his administration are no doubt clever and efficient in bringing this to Gujarat. But since when does white justify black? If we were not all guilty, we wouldn't desperately try to hide the black beneath praises of shining gold. We would be able to squarely say yes this is right and no that is wrong. Justifying the actions validates the methods used, along with the absolute disregard for morality that the Gujarat government has slowly come to be recognized with.

It is no one but the victims of 2002 who may claim that it is time to move on from 2002 and focus now on a

more 'Vibrant Gujarat'. This is solely their prerogative. No society's future must be held ransom to its past – forgetting is not the same as forgiving. The question is far greater than that: a simple apology because 2002 is not treated as a mistake.

It's been evaluated by many as considered necessary and hence as legitimate action, thus permitting repetition of similar methods in the future. The nearly ridiculous retort of 1984 or similar or worse violence in other parts of the country rests on a dangerous belief that prevalence makes it permissible. Of course 1984 was ghastly, and of course the dirty game of divide et impera in politics sickening – so why do we ever just in Gujarat?

As citizens of democratic India we truly believe that what happened

**The actions of our leaders and institutions reflect what we permit and what we prevent, but our silence so far has been treated as compliance. Neutrality does not exist in the face of murder – knowing about it and doing nothing is not neutrality, it is in fact choosing side.**

in Gujarat should not have happened and if we have not made any attempt within our own capacity to reach out then we are at the fundamental corner of the problem.

Reaching out does not necessarily mean changing professional careers into that of a social activist. It entails taking stand, debating, writing, arguing, helping society formulate a wise and balanced response. The actions of leaders and institutions reflect what we permit and what we prevent, but our silence so far has been treated as compliance. Neutrality does not exist in the face of murder – knowing about it and doing nothing is not neutrality, it is in fact choosing a side. In the ten years since we have completely failed not just the 2000 victims, but the very notion of being the world's largest democracy that we take such radical pride in.

In more ways than one we are the world's darkest democracy. If we really are to live up to the great truth the world has predicted for us, then we need to crawl out of this light-less abyss. The next time somebody rational development over long-gone death remind them that one is not a justification for the other.

When someone proclaims that was for a larger good and there were lessons needed to be taught, reminding them of their history and what generates the largest tourism income in the country. When someone says that stance is anti-Gujarat remind them that it was not 2000 Muslims that ten years ago, it was 2000 Gujaratis. And most of all, when someone says that ten years is far too long to harp onto one issue, ask them how long years is to wait for justice, compensation, rehabilitation, or even an apology.



# Africa's renewable future

Alex Charles Bickerton Haigh ponders Africa's green energy potential



Flickr: Magharebia

**A**frica is the least economically developed continent in the World and uses only 4 per cent of global electricity. The rapidity of Africa's economic growth has been increasing as of late but the course of its energy policy is unclear. Will it follow the Western model of intensive fossil fuel use? Or will it proffer a new path, that of renewable energy production?

The World Bank has claimed that "Africa could be on the brink of an economic take-off, much like China was 30 years ago and India 20 years ago," and the Economist reported, at the end of 2011, that the economies of Africa are growing at an average of 2.7 per cent a year with many registering double digit growth figures. These levels of growth require an ever increasing energy consumption that has to be sourced from somewhere.

Despite Africa's comparatively low level of economic prowess, it is endowed with a bounty of resources that are the driving force behind its new economic successes but also the causes of many of its worries.

The newest country on Earth, South Sudan, has begun its independent life embroiled in a dispute over oil with Sudan - of which it was part until July 2011. 98 per cent of South Sudan's revenue is derived from oil and yet its

sole means of exporting it is through its more powerful Northern neighbour, which is demanding a larger cut than South Sudan is willing to give. The quarrel is threatening to bring the two countries into armed conflict as the dispute continues after over half a

**The rapidity of Africa's economic growth has been increasing as of late but the course of its energy policy is unclear. Will it follow the Western model of intensive fossil fuel use? Or will it proffer a new path, that of renewable energy production?**

year of haggling.

Similarly, fossil fuel production has created controversy in Nigeria. The disputes between the oil company,

Shell, and the Ogoni people of the Niger Delta has been widely reported on and the problems expose the inadequacy of fossil fuels as an over-arching policy choice for developing countries, particularly in Africa. The dispute centred around the damaging environmental consequences of Shell's drilling in the Niger Delta - much of which Shell attempts to refuse to pay for - and the lack of employment and remuneration provided to local people who lived on the land.

In states not yet strong enough to prevent their own exploitation, fossil fuels represent a particularly worrying problem in light of the inadequacy in promoting the local economy, the associated environmental costs and security issues.

Many African countries' economies are also highly dependent on imports of oil, which could present a choke on future growth. The oil crisis of 1973, where the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) restricted the supply of oil resulting in a stagnation of growth, and even recession, in the West, could be repeated in a global way in the future as oil production decreases but demand increases. Despite China's interest in "African" oil, not all African countries possess an abundance of fossil fuels. Future dependence on them could lead to a quick halt to this prophesied "eco-

nomie take-off," as countries use their limited foreign currency reserves to compete on the energy market against China and the US.

But there is hope of change in Africa. Africa's people are seeing, and will continue to see, the brunt of the effects of climate change. The problem was not caused by Africans but Africans could help to solve it by

**According to the Institute for Environmental Security, 74 per cent of Africa's citizens - and 90 per cent of the continent's rural citizens - live without electricity.**

offering a successful alternative to the unsustainable approach with which the West has so far broached energy policy.

The Sahara Desert receives enough solar energy in 0.3 per cent of its land area to provide energy for

the entire of Europe. As a result, the European Union (EU) has set up "Desertec," a largely German-led plan to provide 15 per cent of the EU's energy through energy production from solar in the Sahara Desert. Both for profit and for energy security, Africa should increase the provision of renewable energy.

Similarly, Africa's propensity for other renewable energy sources is almost unmatched. For example, geothermal energy production, creating energy from heat emitted from the earth, can be widely used along the rift valley in Western Africa. Kenya has already proven this fact, currently exploiting 200 MW - with plans to increase to 500MW - of its energy needs.

According to the Institute for Environmental Security, 74 per cent of Africa's citizens - and 90 per cent of the continent's rural citizens - live without electricity. Many African have to walk to find fuelwood, the collection of which often causes deforestation; many must use dung that would better serve to fertilise the land and creates harmful pollutants. Of course, renewable energy production has problems - not least that it is expensive - but the local production of clean energy has the potential to provide economic growth and national security that fossil fuel use simply cannot. ☘

# The only way is ethics

Alex Peters-Day reviews the central campaign of the Students' Union

**A**s we come towards the end of this term it seems timely to review our priority campaign for the year: the Only Way is Ethics.

We knew we were being ambitious when we started this campaign. We knew we were asking for a lot and we knew it would be hard to ensure LSE made substantive changes to its ethical processes.

What we have seen this last term is a genuine push from LSE to consult across-campus on all things pertaining to Ethics at LSE and a fundamental shift is taking place.

When the LSE Council looked over Lord Woolf's inquiry into LSE's links to Libya in November the school took a strong stance in committing to learning the lessons of the report

and implementing the recommendations through the year. Woolf's inquiry throws up many points and issues-issues on ethics underlay virtually everything within it.

The Woolf inquiry's first of fifteen recommendations was for the School to establish an "embedded code dealing with ethics and reputational risk which applies across the institution." Since the beginning of February we have been doing just this. Together with other key members of the school I now sit on the Ethics Code Consultation Group.

The group is comprised of nine of us - two independent governors, two academic governors, the director of finance and facilities, the academic registrar, a member of the staff

**We knew we were asking for a lot and we knew it would be hard to ensure LSE made substantive changes to its ethical processes.**

consultative council and a senior professor.

We've put together an illustrative draft code and have been undertaking serious consultation within key constituencies of the school. To date this has included a meeting for students interested, a town-hall style meeting for academics, staff and students of LSE to give their views as well as taking consultancies to various other committees and fora, so far we have been to 11 separate consultations.

There has been representation from all stakeholder groups (students, academics, staff and governors) throughout and useful discussions have been had.

Beyond this we are inviting anyone interested to email [ethics@lse.ac.uk](mailto:ethics@lse.ac.uk) with their views on

what they think an ethics code should look like and what they think it should cover. Of course, having an ethics code itself is not enough, which is why one of the things we are looking at is how we embed this within the school, which is why, moving forward, we'll be setting up a proper ethics committee.

These issues affect us all, they may cover areas from ethical investment to guidance on speech, academic processes to donations and grants screenings. We are in an absolutely unique position here. For the first time all members of the school are able to meaningfully shape how LSE operates in regards to ethics.

We have an opportunity here to set a new standard for conduct in not only LSE, but in Higher Education institute everywhere; an opportunity I hope we will grasp. ☛

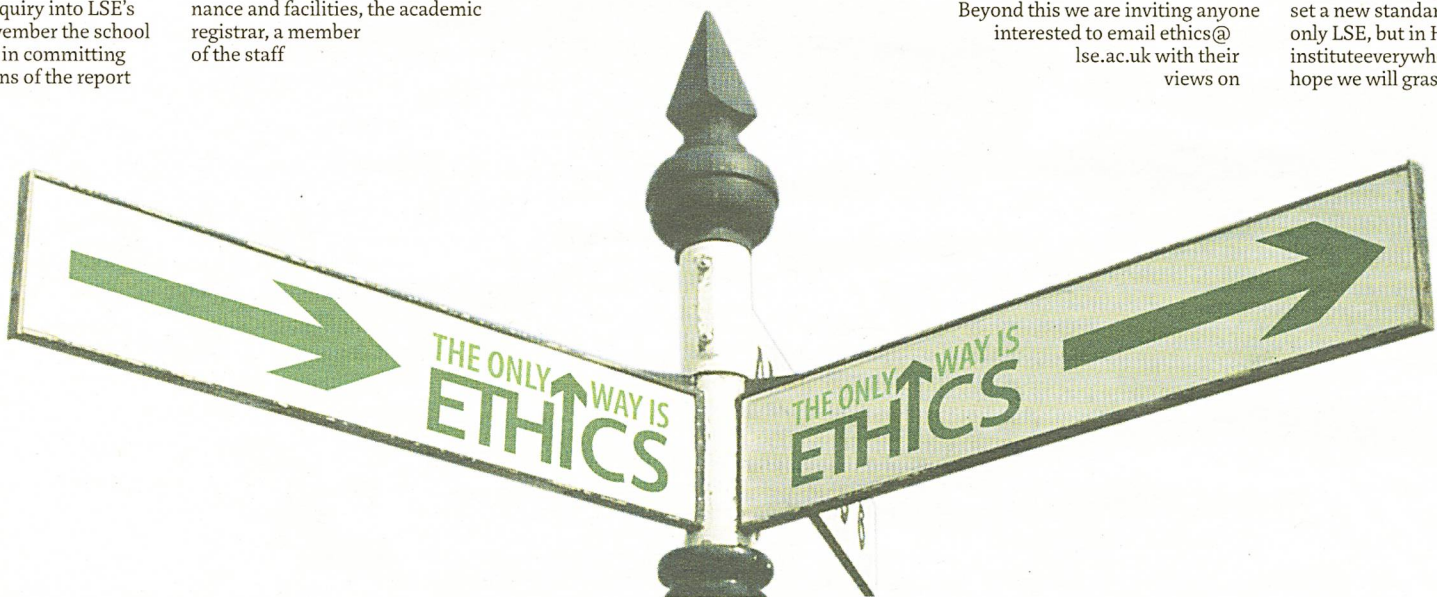


Photo: LSESU

## Measured musings | Afghanistan and women

**T**he conservative forces in Afghanistan are once again placing women's rights under threat. In yet another bid to appease them and win their confidence, President Karzai appears to have embraced recent rulings by the country's most senior religious council which is attempting to instill gender segregation to every aspect of Afghan society. Naturally this has sparked much opposition from across the country and the wider world. Unusually though, it appears that humour has been selected as one of the best weapons of defence against such a serious threat to the women of Afghanistan. The voice of the opposition has manifested itself on social networking sights through mockery, sarcasm and satire.

Karzai and much of the Afghan government has long been fearing the re-emergence of the Taliban; it is the most direct threat to their authority and control of the war-torn country. With the prospect of August's presidential elections looming overhead, it appears this is a fresh attempt by Karzai to bring radical elements on side. This is done, however, at the expense of the country's women; the Ulema council's rulings are effectively based on the idea that "Men are fundamental and women are secondary."

Such claims have catastrophic implications for women in every sphere of life. It would make it much more difficult for women to go in to higher education and to ever consider the possibility of pursuing a career in politics.

We are talking about a worsening situation for women in a country where, let's face it, it was not that great to start off with. For Karzai, it is a tricky balancing act between satisfying foreign powers in order to ensure a steady stream of foreign aid, and at the same time appeasing the radical elements in Afghanistan's power struggle. It seems that this time women's rights seem to have been traded in exchange for the possibility of appeasement.

Mockery seems to be the critics' choice for voicing their opposition on this ruling. "We have asked the Facebook administrators to create separate profiles for women. You are not allowed to 'like' or 'poke' someone on Facebook or you will be cursed." Sarcastic statuses such as these are common across social networking sights. Satirical cartoons have also become commonplace. A popular one being an image of a stereotypical "modern" woman entrapping various clerics in a cage. This common kind of outlet is not coincidental though. The use of humour holds significance. According to Muzhgan Ahmadi, a student from Kabul, younger people are attempting to send out a clear message that "we don't care and we won't obey".

It would be a lie to say that all of Afghanistan agrees with this satire, there are those who are fully in support of the measures. There are many in society who approve of these oppressive traditions. They feel that these rulings are true and accurate representations of Islam. It is the country's youthful urban elite who make up the most vocal opposition.

According to Oxfam, 87 per cent of Afghanistan's women suffer from physical, mental or sexual abuse. Being forced in to marriage by relatives also appears to be commonplace.

These revelations from the country's radical forces appear to have caused uproar both inside and outside of Afghanistan. It appears to have raised a fresh bout of questions regarding the West's involvement in Afghanistan. What has actually been achieved? There is a definite fear that a Western exit will be quickly followed by the re-emergence of a Taliban stronghold. Along with this comes the inevitable oppressive laws which spell trouble for women in Afghanistan.

Gurdeep Chhina  
Features Editor

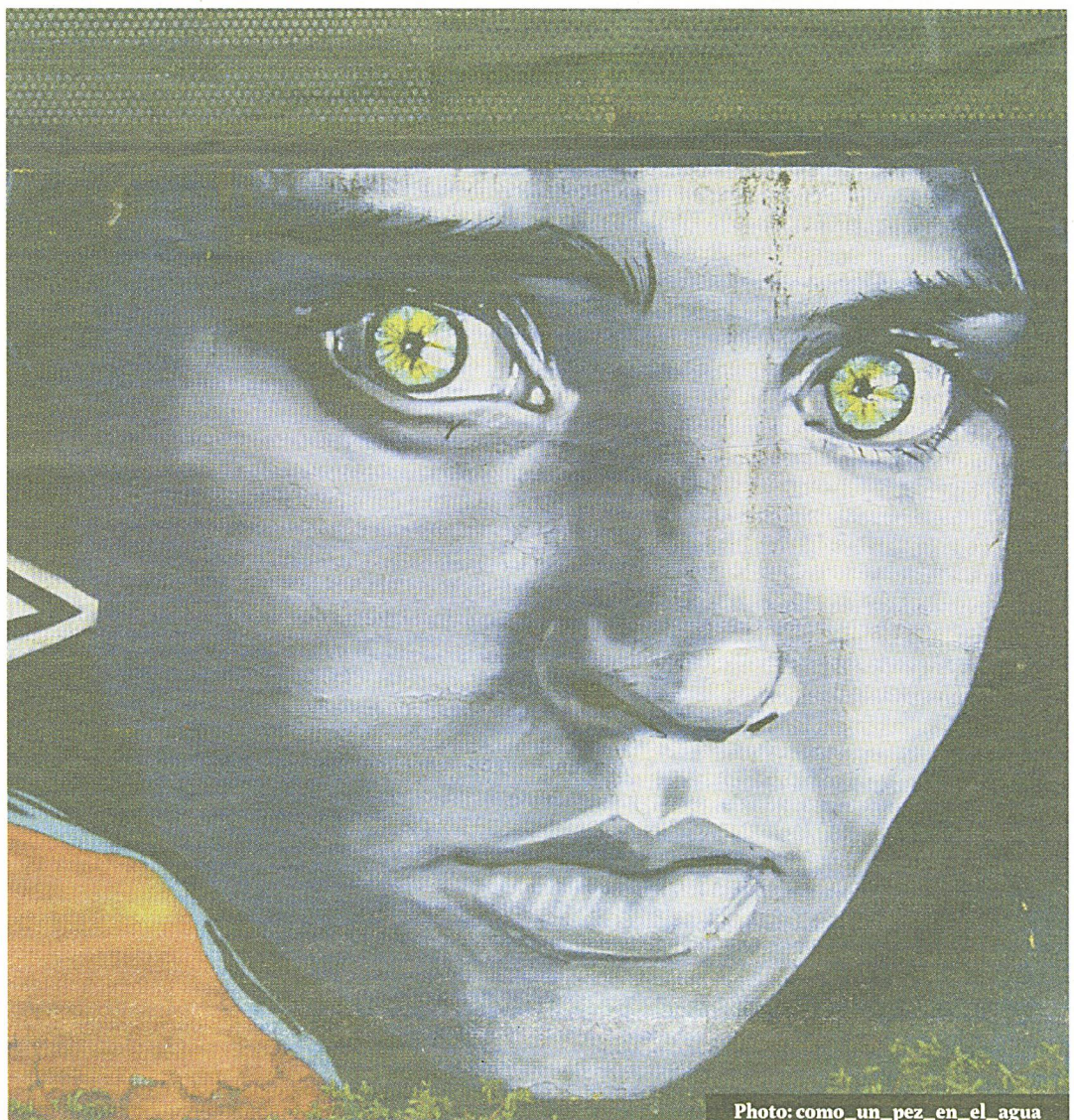


Photo: como\_un\_pez\_en\_el\_agua

# The death of the 4-4-2

Amit Singh

The Premier League has undergone a number of changes in recent years. The 4-4-2 was once a favoured formation for Premier League sides and the England national team, but in its traditional form (two lines of four and a front two) it is rarely, if ever used by top teams. Even towards the end of Capello's reign as England manager, he began to shift to more of a 4-3-3.

A number of factors have contributed to the relative decline of the 4-4-2, most notably a general tactical shift in the modern game to a more possession based game revolving around ball retention. This means that technical sides usually opt for a three man midfield, with a 4-3-3 or 4-5-1 probably being the most popular formations employed by sides nowadays. The reason for this is that a two man midfield simply cannot dominate effectively against a midfield three. The midfield three would, in theory, dominate possession, as Arsenal's midfield three did against Parker and Modric in the recent North London derby. If one midfielder of the two breaks forward, it tends to leave huge gaps in behind, which means many sides like Chelsea or Liverpool opt to play a specialist holding player.

Further to this, the use of aggressive full-backs means that the wide men in the 4-4-2 can prove even more redundant. Overlapping full-backs such as Ashley Cole or Bacary Sagna now provide much of the attacking width for sides. An example of this was seen by Sagna's quality cross into the box for RVP to score the equalizer versus Liverpool.

Tactical shifts to the 4-3-3 have been the main reason for the 4-4-2 going out of fashion. As stated, sides struggle to win midfield battles in a 4-4-2, especially if they're operating against a three man midfield. As well as this, the movement and trend to play in a way that retains possession has led to a decline in the use of out and out

wide-men. Ryan Giggs is a good example, who would have formally played in a 4-4-2. The 4-3-3 sees more inverted forwards or attacking midfielders playing out wide and cutting inside, which makes wingers in a 4-4-2 particularly unimportant.

With games now being much more fluid, the transitions from attack to defence are much quicker and playing in a 4-4-2 can leave a side too rigid to quickly counter-attack or shift the play. With the lines now blurred due to holding midfielders and second strikers, the 4-4-2 doesn't really fit anymore.

The counter-attacking tactics employed by many sides are also much more effective in a 4-5-1, as sides can sit back and shift quickly into a more attacking formation when they receive the ball by turning into a 4-3-3. The 4-4-2 provides less scope for transi-

tions during games other than from perhaps to a 4-4-1-1.

The most obvious tactical significance is the death of strike partnerships. As stated, it is rare for sides to opt for a real front two, which has meant that sides usually have a forward with an AMC in behind. This is one of the factors behind Spurs' loss against Arsenal at the weekend, the use of two out and out strikers in Saha and Adebayor, whilst initially paying dividends as Spurs went 2-0 up contributed to the side's defeat.

Sides do one of two things: they either opt for an AMC, or a DMC with two central midfielders in front. The clearest example of this can be seen by Arsenal and Chelsea in the 2003-2006 period. Arsenal would use Bergkamp

vent him being able to start opposition attacks or have the ball played out short to him by defenders.

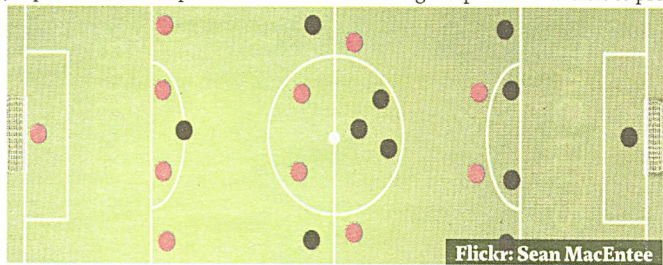
The death of the strike partnership is thus a clear legacy of the decline of the 4-4-2. Once sides would pick the same front pairing to work in tandem e.g. Heskey and Owen at Liverpool or Cole and Yorke at United, who played to great effect during the 90s. One other reason for this decline is the greater emphasis placed on squad rotation, which means pairing the same players together week in week out is a lot less desirable. Generally speaking though, with the movement away from 4-4-2, we have seen the lone striker become much more prominent in the Premier League; Drogba for Chelsea, Torres at Liverpool or Van Persie at Arsenal are

fine examples.

Even United don't play an orthodox 4-4-2. One of the many bonuses about having Wayne Rooney in their side is that, in big games, he can operate as a lone striker in a 4-5-1/4-3-3. Yet also, in games where Ferguson pairs him with Welbeck, he has the quality to sit in behind in a 4-4-1-1, rather than playing right up top with him. Rooney will come deep to become involved in midfield play and contribute to build up play whilst Welbeck can look to run in behind. Rooney's involvement is evidenced by the 50 passes per game he plays on average, double that of Robin Van Persie. The use of Rooney in this role can even shift United into a 4-5-1, with Rooney dropping right back into the midfield, as we have seen him do on occasion this season.

There are actually seven sides in the Premier League currently who enjoy over 55% possession on average per game, none of whom use a traditional 4-4-2. Liverpool have arguably done so in recent years, but even when pairing Carroll with one of Suarez and Bellamy, the latter will always play in behind and Bellamy may drift off the flanks, rather than occupying similar ground to Carroll. As well as this, with Lucas in the side, it almost turns into a 4-1-3-2 or a 4-1-3-1-1, rather than the conventional two lines of four and a front two that we have seen in the past.

With tactical shifts, it's fair to say that very few top teams play an orthodox 4-4-2 in the way sides once did. The days of Man United playing with the potent strike partnership of Dwight Yorke and Andy Cole are well and truly over and this is one of the most obvious legacies of the decline of the 4-4-2: the decline of the strike partnership. Further to this, we have seen England shift away from their traditional 4-4-2 of late. Of course, it remains to be seen what formation England will play at the Euros but a 4-3-3, as they played in the 1-0 victory over Spain would likely give them more chance of victory in June.



## Sport In Brief

### Murray's early exit at Indian Wells

Andy Murray lost his second round match at Indian Wells 6-4 6-2 to world number 92, Guillermo Garcia-Lopez. The shock defeat brings any recent momentum Murray has accumulated to an abrupt end.

### England squeak past France

The Six Nations took another enthralling turn as England masterminded a narrow 24-22 victory away to France. Tom Croft's late try decided the lively Paris encounter, keeping England's slim hopes of tournament victory in tact. The result leaves France in fourth place, with England in second, two points behind leaders, Wales.

### A twist in the title race

Sunday saw a seismic shift in the battle to lift this season's Premier League trophy. Manchester United maintained their impressive run of form, defeating West Brom 2-0 at home. At the same time, Manchester City lost 1-0 to Swansea at the Liberty Stadium. The result: Manchester United returned to the top of the table, heaping the pressure on their city rivals.



YOUR NEW LEADER ALLEGEDLY VOM- MED ON HERSELF WHILST SHITTING!!!!!!

Let's be honest, we all expected that outcome. It's reasons like this that justify why only the AU should vote for the President. But more on that later - with a blow-by-blow account (no pun intended).

As the pinnacle of the AU's social events arrived upon us, ugly girls and dogged men could hide behind elaborate masks, thoroughly increasing their chances of pulling. Credit must go to the current AU Exec for organising a splendid evening - with great pork, but too little wine. It's ok though, because there was an amazing photo-booth to make up for that. So strict was the security, however, that even the Badminton table was silenced 4 times by the bouncers.

Hockey girls decided to be thieves and try and steal wine from other tables, after their red-headed captain threw a thorough fit over the wine sitch; one 6th team member decided to promote herself to the Exec table, before being unceremoniously told to "fuck off"; Hobo Hobbs passed out in a park, missing the whole meal, until the tramp police moved him on (to Zoo Bar); most of the rugby thirds were also found passed out, but on their tables, whilst the other rugby table was removed from the room for not being able to behave themselves.

On the way to Zoo, it seems a special game of "what the fuck" was played. In a cab with 4 guys and 1 girl, it was decided that the sacrifice would no longer be drinks, but

rather a cheeky pull. I can confirm that the lone girl, who came up with a strong Gale from Devon, only landed one pull. However, Lush Sam, YourCock, Queef and yours truly, all exchanged intimate moments, with the passionate pull between Lush and YourCock lasting significantly longer - with tongue.

Too Many Men didn't pull - surprisingly. The Pooleboy/McDonald's bitch-boy officially sealed the deal and did the dirty with Mateer's sidekick - and she clearly didn't want to travel far, as the two did the unthinkable and actually went back to halls, rather than to her flat. Classy indeeed. A big-breasted swimmer/5th team netballer, not unlike Hey Aurthur, pulled the tallest member of the Men's rowing team, who apparently only has two consonants for a surname.

YourCock tried to redeem himself following his success with only men, and attempted to woo one flame-headed Virgin from women's hockey. Several facepalms later, and the poor guy was still, unsurprisingly, unsuccessful. The Sunny bombshell from Tennis makes a reappearance this week as she decided to move on to rugby second teamer Chillingworth, though apparently, he still wasn't quite good enough for her tastes. And the Sherminator was also overheard making frantic phonecalls to check that his place would be empty for the night, obviously expecting to score with Oddity. Whether or not this happened cannot be confirmed, though seems highly unlikely.

This week, last but by no means least, your new leader Sister Meateater decided

to have her very own coronation at Zoo Bar. Despite a fairly sober AU Ball, she rapidly declined as the alcohol began to flow, and we have confirmed reports that she did indeed chunder down her front whilst taking a dump, before deciding to pass out - she was eventually moved to the time-out kitchen area. What a way to welcome in your new reign as Pres, eh?

A selection of the year's highlights and lowlights, must include the elaborate roller-coaster ride that Keith conducted; Biggles for her general tour this year; YourCock's superb ability, punching well above his weight and scoring an incredible number of times with the simple words "pint of wine for the lady"; SammySam's LOLOCRAH; Too many men; Cocktease remaining a cocktease, all this time; Malibu's use of a discount voucher for a date; Dodd's dick; Moffat's knockers; THE EMERGENCE OF THE CREEPER; Action Street; Pooleboy/McDonald's bitch-boy's general tour; Captain Mateer's violent destruction of YourCock and his housemates; the Hoover manoeuvre; my birthday; and hockey girls' anal penetration stories.

Thanks for a year of entertaining stories and all that jazz; to all those who moaned - fuck off and don't be so slutty. To all those who look down upon the AU for these stories, cheer up and live a little. It's been fun, but I'm definitely over this column. As Rebecca from Geordie Shore stated, "I would rather take a shit in my hands and clap" than do this again. PEACE MOTHERFUCKERS!

### continued from back page

According to Micronomics, an economics research and consulting firm in the US, the 2011 Weekend was estimated to bring \$85 million in economic activity for host city, Los Angeles. Losing the Weekend is equally significant. Had the lockdown remained this year, Orlando was forecast to lose somewhere between \$50 to \$92 million due to the cancellation.

And of course, there are the sponsorships. A review of event names for All-Star Weekend quickly reveals a list with more brands than a Texan cattle ranch: The BBVA Rising Stars Challenge, All-Star Saturday Night presented by State Farm, the Haier Shooting Stars, the Taco Bell Skills Challenge, the Foot Locker Three-point Contest, and the Sprite Slam Dunk Contest. Clearly, the name of the game is money.

So, let's recap. This somewhat cynical model shows All-Star Weekend generates major profits from advertising and broadcasting, and increased revenues for the host city. It's also a great way for the league to court sponsors and drum up brand awareness among youngsters and fans overseas, all of which lead to increased revenue in the future. But there is an upside. The All-Star Weekend, despite all the antipathy I feel towards it, serves another, real purpose: giving the players a break. And, in a condensed season with guys grinding out 40 minutes a night three or four times a week, it's a well-deserved break. Thus, the silver lining from the Weekend is the chance for players to get some rest, spend time with their loved ones, and gear up for the second half.

Therefore, even though the All-Star Weekend is no longer an awe-inspiring three days for me, for the league, it's a moneymaking venture to pay all those alley-ooping stars and build brand awareness. For some fans, it's a chance to participate in the NBA via social media, dunk contest votes, and All-Star selection. And for the players, it's a much-welcomed break. So, even though I think the Weekend is basketball junk, I'll call it by another name: a necessary evil.

# Farewell AU Class of 2012

*It's been messy*



# LSE FC 7th team: end of season review

**Brett Lewis**

As the lowest team in the FC, the 7s have traditionally been viewed as a laughing stock or "social team" that doesn't take its football seriously. However, with five wins from their last six (including six points from the top two teams in the league) the Champagne 7s are quietly becoming the FC's form team. Here we evaluate the various highs and lows of the key players throughout the season:

**Rafie Faruq:** Has kept goal for the team excellently, and on the rare occasions that the defence makes an error, he is always there to sweep up efficiently. His handling of aerial balls despite his diminutive stature continues to impress.

**High point:** Point-blank wonder save in the very first game of the season against Heythrop College

**Low point:** Being lobbed directly from kick-off, or getting the completely wrong train and then a cab to the wrong sports ground in a calamitous bid to get to the St. Barts 4s match.

**Yohei Tse:** Yohei has filled in at several positions this season, and has managed to remain equally angry in all of them. Started out as right back but then moved to left back as he was the only person in the team able to kick the ball with both feet.

**High point:** Being thrust into centre back against St. Barts 4s with hardly any notice and still delivering a flawless performance in a 4-0 win.

**Low point:** Being absolutely roasted by the BPP left winger in a 6-3 mauling

**Ali Kafil-Hussain:** AKH is a conundrum in that he is the only player for whom weight and playing ability share a positive correlation. Since he emerged from the Christmas holidays with a fuller figure, his form has enjoyed a positive boost. Thrives off of the negative energy of haters. And cake.

**High point:** A last ditch sliding tackle that saved a certain goal, at a time when we had a precarious one goal lead, which proved to be the turning point in a 4-1 win.

**Low point:** His abysmal performance against St. Barts 3s, with Ali being directly responsible for 3 of the 4 opposition goals.

**Stephen Bee:** Stevie has absolutely

epitomised what it means to be a team player. Coming into the 7s as a striker, he scored at a steady rate before being moving to right back when the team was down to bare bones. He has excelled there and nailed down the position as his own.

**High point:** Being reinvented as a swashbuckling full-back and becoming the best right back in the team within 2 games

**Low point:** Being dropped despite scoring 3 goals in 3 games

**Matt Toms:** Matt largely coasted through Michaelmas term with minimal criticism, but when some truth bombs were dropped in the end of term report, it was the catalyst the centre back needed to move his game to the next level. He has stopped hoofing it out of play and his improved passing and dribbling have really been noticeable to the team. His organisation this term has been pivotal to the set-up of our miserly defence.

**High point:** Dribbling out of defence, playing several one-twos before receiving the ball in the box and calmly slotting it home against St. Barts 4s

**Low point:** Conceding 2 penalties and condemning us to a draw against the lowly Imperial Medics

**Sudev Joshi:** One of the success stories of Lent term, the ladies' man centre back was charged with the formidable task of filling Genti's boots. He has slotted in with ease and has become one of the team's standout performers. It is touching to see him dedicate every win to Celery.

**High point:** Put in a heroic performance against RSM away from home, and was one of the main reasons we managed to keep it down to just one goal

**Low point:** His handball that led to RSM's goal at Berrylands and had us on the ropes for the last 15 or so minutes.

**Ovie Faruq:** The utility man of team has filled in at right back, left back and left wing and his versatility was massively useful to the team. Unfortunately retired from football to focus on cricket, weightlifting and maths.

**High point:** Scoring an outrageous chip against BPP

**Low point:** Retiring when the 7s were in the midst of an injury crisis

**Laxman Regala:** Mr. Consistent is one of two players (along with Matt Toms) not to miss a minute of football

for the 7s this season. Has spent the last few months giving the left-backs of our league nightmares and has now added quality delivery alongside his trickery.

**High point:** Stunning solo goal against RVC away

**Low point:** Being bullied out of doing his favourite skill, THAT standard Lax flick/giving away a penalty against Heythrop

**Hugo Irving:** The only first year in the team, Hugo has brought a youthful enthusiasm to the team. Injury has unfortunately derailed his season but he will have 2 very big years ahead of him in the 7s.

**High point:** Smashing in a last gasp winner against RVC at home

**Low point:** Being marked out of

selections of Brett as a winger and Steve as a right back turn out to be masterstrokes

**Low point:** Spending his 21st birthday in Zoo bar, having drunk two of the worst dirty pints in existence

**Joshun Sandhu:** Quickest in the team on the ball, slowest by far off it. Joshun's form briefly fell off a cliff but he recovered in a big way to become the team's top scorer and assist-maker. The combination of his mumbling + his Brummie accent makes anything he says impossible to decipher.

**High point:** Hatrick against St. George's which included a 30 yard banger

**Low point:** Captaining the team to an abysmal loss against the worst team in London, St. George's



Flickr: beefy\_n1

the game by Kyle Yang at St. Georges

**Justin Hart:** When not professing his love for Tala, Justin can be found controlling the midfield. Has a silky smooth touch and is the most vocal player on the team which is helpful for all of us. Rumoured to have been playing LSE football since the days of Sidney Webb and the Fabians.

**High point:** Nutmegging literally every outfield player of numerous teams this season, including a backwards nutmeg that made the opponent exclaim "Jesus Christ!"

**Low point:** Despite playing the majority of games, still not coming even remotely close to finding the back of the net, lagging behind Matt T in the scoring charts.

**Liam Singh:** Liam's good captaincy has coincided with the team's upturn in form and no one will be more pleased with the side's Lent term domination than the skipper. His quiet leadership and box-to-box style of play are massively important.

**High point:** Seeing his high-risk

**Kyle Yang:** the General Course's finest has been an absolutely incredible member of the team both on and off the pitch. We will all be saddened when his one-year loan deal comes to an end.

**High point:** Filling in at right back and winning man of the match

**Low point:** Picking up the ball on the edge of the St. George's box, going backwards whilst dribbling past all of his own team and launching an attack for the opposition

**Jenagan Rangunathan:** Started well, but his infamous mid-season trip to Australia cost the striker dearly when he returned to find himself in the wilderness. Has now come back into the fold with some good performances

**High point:** A great goal and 2 assists in an all-action performance against St. Barts 4s

**Low point:** Being largely responsible for our pitiful loss against St. George's with a woeful display of finishing

**Ahmed Zbidi:** Despite only playing

2 games for us, Ahmed makes this list because he is one of our best players, which is a sad indictment of the quality of football in the 7s. He has also pulled more girls in 3 nights out than the rest of the team combined has for the year, which is a sad indictment of the quality of lad in the 7s.

**High point:** Scoring twice on his debut before going on to pull at Zoo

**Low point:** continually leaving his computer unattended in the library, resulting in several comedy emails being sent

**Brett Errol Lewis:** Having been a very average striker at best, Brett was in the last chance saloon when he was shunted out to the left wing. Now the "Croydon C. Ronaldo" has become absolutely dynamite, and with 4 goals in his last 4 games, his goals/minute ratio is quite frankly ludicrous. Ginger Chris has been desperately trying to call him up to the 4s on the back of his recent performances.

**High point:** 4 goals in 4 games, including two finishes of the highest calibre against St. Barts 4s

**Low point:** 4 clear cut misses in the preceding 4 games, including an absolute shocker against Imperial 7s

**Goal of the season:** Joshun's hopeful punt into the top corner against St. George's

**Miss of the season:** Neil Patel from under the bar against RVC

**Ringer of the Season:** Noz for his world class performance against RSM at home (honourable mention to Danny Foy, Samil, Nathan, Thebes, Neil Patel)

**Traitor of the Season:** Genti Lamce for leaving us for the 6s, who now never win with him in the team. How d'you like them apples Lorjent? Would have had the goal of the season award sewn up if he had stayed.

**Demotivator of the Season:** Prem Sandhu for literally rebuking Ovie into retirement

**WAG of the Season:** Steph Gale, for not only taking our banter but giving it back when she's on Lax's email. Has poor Laxmanaro so under the thumb he's called Steve Bee "Steph" on numerous occasions.

**Embarrassment of the season:** Losing to Heythrop despite the fact their centre midfielder had a cigarette during the warm-up, a spliff at half-time and another cigarette after the match.

## Men's Basketball 1sts – the team of the decade

**Gio Graglia**

There are a number of reasons why we didn't deserve to be named Team Of The Year by the AU this season.

Firstly, Badminton deserved the award more than we did. That's a fact and that's undisputable.

However, it's not just that. In my five years on the team, we won the award three times – never in consecutive seasons – and it would have been doubly unfair to receive Team Of The Year once more, as it would have left the diversity of the LSE sporting talent unacknowledged. On top of that, our on-court record this season hasn't been as impressive as what we had accomplished over the past few years (we didn't even win a national championship this time around, sorry). With really meager performances at Zoo Bar being totally outweighed by a continuous string of sporting excellence, however, the basketball 1sts have been the most dominant force in the LSE sports world from 2006 onwards, and that's enough for us.

This season, the team exceeded every expectation and this year has been the most fun I have ever had playing basketball. Under-talented (for

the first time in a long while none of our American kids had played varsity basketball) and undersized (with the exception of Michal Kiska and Ernest Brown, we don't really look like stere-

The dedication of the kids has been impressive. Dan Yirinec caught more elbows than many thought humanly possible, and always from bigger and (way) more athletic opponents.

lead us – at times almost single-handedly – to all the victories we needed in order to stay up.

But, of all people, Kevin Ho Yan Luk is probably the one who best em-

puns. He took them with great aplomb, never missed a practice session, and remained focused throughout the season. In the first few games, he missed the unmissable – free throws, wide-open lay-ups, pretty much anything. When he finally scored his first two points of the season against London Met a couple of weeks ago, everyone absolutely erupted. Nobody on the team has ever been loved as much as Kevin – despite our weird way of displaying that love – and we all learned a lot from him.

At this year's AU Ball, we were called on stage to receive the Team Of The Year Award once again. We were all incredibly happy (although none of us really expected it to happen). When, seconds later, we were told that it was actually Badminton to have won and people started laughing at us, we really didn't find that to be particularly amusing, but that might have been us being unable to understand some good-hearted banter (right?!?).

Just like every year, we attended the award ceremony and then left before the real AU Ball began. We all went to Nando's, despite Kazeem Afolabi's desperate and reiterated requests to go to McDonald's. All our lovely groupies were there. We had the best time. Team Of The Year or not.

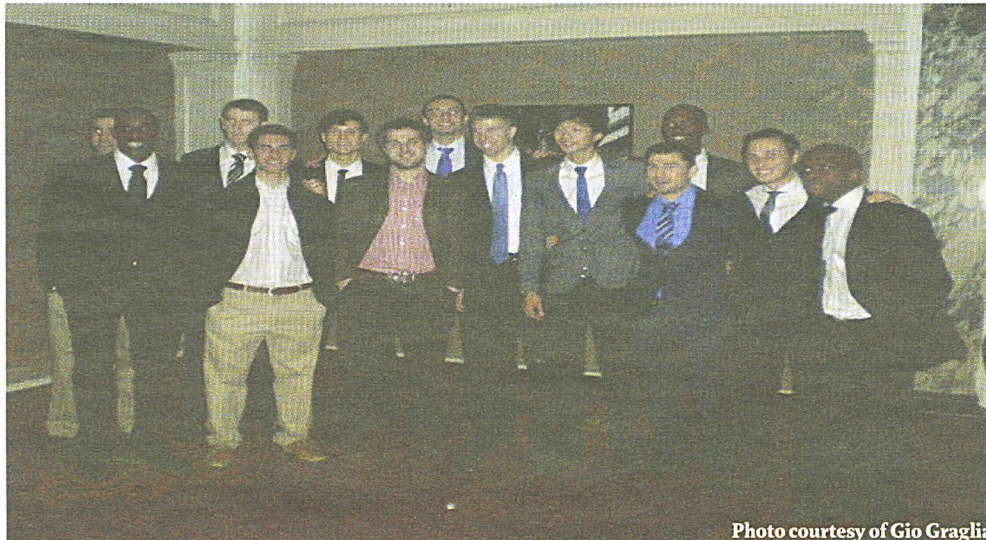


Photo courtesy of Gio Graglia

atypical basketball players). Nevertheless, we managed to keep our spot in Premier League – still the only team in school, as far as I know.

Domenico Fumagalli benched himself whenever he felt that he hadn't been practicing well enough the previous week. Jon Tomashoff proved ready to

bodies the attitude of the team and its commitment to hard work. Kev, being the youngest player on the team, has been at the receiving end of countless

# Sport

## Inside

- The death of the 4-4-2
- I know who you did last Wednesday XXXL
- The team of the decade

## All-Star ambivalence: the NBA all-star weekend

Linda Yang

The first time I remember watching NBA All-Star Weekend, I was five years old. I sat on the brown-and-orange speckled carpet of my parents' apartment in the Midwest U.S. (Nebraska, to be exact). I watched - on our green analog TV with 16 channels - riveted by glass-shaking, 360-spinning jams in the Slam Dunk Contest. When the All-Star Game started, I bought into my dad's enthusiasm that it was a "Dream Team" of players. To be honest, I don't remember much of the game, but I recall hordes of fans cheering as the starters took the court, a long list of guys now immortalized in the NBA Hall of Fame: Magic, Jordan, Ewing, Malone.

Fast-forward two decades and it's a totally different story. I feel no excitement, no enthusiasm, and no desire at all to tune in to All-Star Weekend. The All-Star Game has devolved into a (what some sports commentators call) "an alley-oop fest" - part circus, part self-congratulatory display of machismo, and just a step up from street ball. I'd have to agree. Now

that I'm older and wiser, I've started to see All-Star Weekend for what it really is, and what it started as in 1951: a PR stunt. Given that the Weekend is

still exist?

From a fan's perspective, the All-Star festivities draw some and alienate others. As you can tell, I am of the



Flickr: MattBrittoo

not taken seriously by most - if not all - players and fans over the age of 12, I started pondering: Why does it

latter - I don't want to watch a glorified pick-up game. Whatever happened to real basketball, the type where guys

strategically moved up and down the court playing offense and defense? Taking this year's All-Star Game as an example of recent trends, it's fair to say the only basketball played was in the last four minutes. The Game has always had a showboating aspect to it, but since the late 80's, the quality of play has deteriorated year by year. I dare anyone to watch the 1987 game with icons like Dr. J, Jordan, Olajuwon and Bird, and tell me with a straight face this year was better. It's not just the big names, it's the hustle they exhibited from the very first quarter that stands out.

Naturally, I concede that, for every person like me who ignores the Weekend, there's a fan who loves the show. I'd hazard a guess many are pre-pubescent and outside the U.S. This is because one: after the opening tip of the All-Star Game, all you can hear in the arena are crickets chirping and kids cheering. Two: this year's All-Star Weekend was broadcast to 215 countries and territories in 45 languages. There were also 41 million followers on social media in China and more than 336 journalists from 39 countries in Orlando to cover the events. That's a

lot of international love.

There are American fans, too. Together with the international supporters, they generated 2.5 million comments and mentions about the Weekend via social media, about three times the amount from last year. More than 2.7 million viewers watched the BBVA Rising Stars Challenge, the biggest audience in the history of the event. And don't forget the five million votes cast for the Sprite Slam Dunk Contest, a 15% increase from 2011. For all intensive purposes, the three-day event was a financial and marketing success.

Here we start to understand why the All-Star Weekend still exists. The NBA is a business, and all these eyeballs mean more money. For those who suspected it all along, here are some figures to support your hunch: Last year's All-Star Game netted Turner Sports, the US TV network that airs All-Star Weekend, nearly \$37 million in advertising.

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## LET'S TALK TACTICS



# The Beaver Sports Awards

Timothy Poole

Alas, the Beaver has come to an end for another academic year. Feel free to take a minute out of reading this article to shed a tear - I certainly will be! As this is the last issue for another six months or so, Beaver Sports has decided, instead of writing an opinion piece, to dedicate this column to an awards ceremony. In all our originality, we shall call these awards: The Beaver Sports Awards (didn't see that one coming did you?)

**Greatest moment: Djokovic v Nadal, Australian Open**

For me, the greatest moment of the past several months of sport has to be the winning moment of Novak Djokovic's sensational five-set victory over arch rival, Rafael Nadal, at the Australian Open. The match lasted over five hours and unravelled well into the early hours of the Melbourne morning. The intensity was incredible - shot after shot, twist after twist - by set five, we were no clearer to discovering a winner. However, after Nadal threw everything including the kitchen sink at the Serb, the superhuman Djokovic came back for one more pulsating surge towards the finish line. After sealing a win that appeared impossible at many junctures, 'the joker' celebrated in beastly fashion, ripping his shirt off and roaring at the crowd. In my view, the final moments of the match encapsulated everything that is

now synonymous with modern tennis: gladiatorial fighting spirit, dogged determination and an insatiable will to win from the top players. Bravo, Novak - you provided us with a truly epic encounter.

**Best team: Manchester City**

It has to be said: this award was much more closely contested. Nonetheless, in Manchester City, we see clear candidates that have absolutely shone in recent months. Yes, Barcelona may be one of the greatest sides we have ever seen, but not based on this season. They trail Real Madrid by ten points in La Liga and are arguably not the same team without main man, Lionel Messi. Manchester United and Real Madrid provide tough competition, but City's achievements have deemed them good enough for the award on merit. The intricate passing movement involving David Silva, Sergio Aguero and Yaya Toure has taken the Premier League by storm. Their 'moneybags' spending ethos has certainly seen an influx of world-class talent, giving City a squad depth beyond belief. Though European success has eluded them thus far, City are only the new kids on the super-team block and a 6-1 win at Old Trafford more than cemented their status as one of the strongest sides in British and European football.

**Biggest rising star: Judd Trump**

For this award, I've chosen a less mainstream candidate. Judd Trump,

the new celebrity on the snooker tour, has proven himself to be a force to contend with. Those of you that follow snooker will know that he took John Higgins all the way in last year's World Championship Final and has won the UK Championships since. But the Bristolian is not just a one-hit wonder, maintaining a very consistent level throughout the year. What sets Trump out from the rest of his competitors is his ability to play daring and unique shots - the foremost example of which is the 'banana', more like a football free-kick than a long pot. The 'judernaught' is undeniably one of the biggest rising stars in snooker, and his immense talent puts him in the position of perhaps being the biggest rising star in UK sport.

Now that the serious awards are over, lets breeze over some titles of a lighter nature:

**Worst Jose Mourinho impression: Andres Villas-Boas**

**Best Jose Mourinho impression: Jose Mourinho**

**Best Grand Slam winner who didn't actually win a Grand Slam but may or may not probably win/come close to winning one in the future: Andy Murray.** Enough said.

**World's most patient football owner: Roman Abramovich.** The Russian oligarch waited all the way until March to sack manager, Andres Villas-Boas, the seventh manager to fall under his reign. Pundits have

queued up in their thousands to praise the billionaire for withstanding the antics of 'the not so special one' for more than half a year.

**Safest driver: Lewis Hamilton.** The young driver reduced his amount of accidents by 1700% this year, managing to only crash his car 915 times in total.



Flickr: AlaskaTeacher

**Best tripod thrower: David Haye.** In preparation for this year's World Tripod Throwing Championships, David Haye set a world record for the amount of yards a tripod has ever been thrown, hitting his own trainer, Adam Booth in the head in the process. Booth praised his athlete's dedication after he travelled all the way to Germany, instigated a mass brawl and generated heavy media interest all in

the name of tripod throwing.

**Best anger management counselor: Dereck Chisora.** After losing three fights in a row, Chisora made the brave move into the world of anger management. Academics within the field have praised his immediate impact, citing his method of 'I'm gonna give him two slaps for that' as the most effective calming tactic in recent times.

Finally...

**Best pound for pound striking partnership: Fernando Torres and Andy Carroll.** After having £50 million and £35 million spent on them respectively, the strikers have since terrorised defences up and down the country, scoring a sensational total of EIGHT goals between them. Statisticians have calculated that this amounts to £10 million per goal and when questioned on this, Chelsea owner, Roman Abramovich, was quoted as saying '...' whilst Liverpool Chairman, Tom Werner, was quoted as saying 'five home runs have been very impressive from Andy Carroll this season'.

And so... there we have it. The Beaver and Beaver Sports with it are over until September. Watch out for Let's Talk Tactics in summer - it may hit the blogs - but for now, I'd like to express my sincere thanks to everyone who has read this column since it began. It's been an absolute pleasure to talk tactics at the LSE and I wholeheartedly hope that my writing has been enjoyable to read. Au revoir, auf wiedersehen, dosvedanya - remember, let's not talk rubbish, let's talk tactics!