

LSE WOMEN'S WEEK



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The Beaver

9 March 2010
Newspaper of the
London School of Economics
Students' Union
thebeaveronline.co.uk

Sizeable disparity in diversity profile and gender pay gap exist at LSE

- » 2% of student population is Black, 42.7% is White
- » Gender pay gap at LSE is 19.9%, national average is 12.2%
- » 23.6% of Professors at LSE are female

Phyllis Lui

Data obtained by the Beaver shows that there is a sizeable disparity in the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) students and staff, and an existence of a gender pay gap within the LSE.

In one of the two documents, it indicated that 2% of the School's student population is Black, compared to a White student population of 42.7%. The other document stated that the gender pay gap is 19.9%, whereas the national average is 12.2%.

Entitled 'Update on the School's Diversity Profile', the report states that only 5.8% of the School's senior lecturers, 6.8% of professors and 2.1% of senior managers are from a BME background. Furthermore, the School's senior management cohort does not employ any UK BME staff.

It also names departments with particularly low numbers of BME senior academic staff including International Relations (0%), Sociology (3.3%), Social Policy (4.4%), Law (5.9%) and Economics (6.1%).

Only 1.2% of the School's non-white student population is Black Caribbean students.

LSESU Education and Welfare Officer Emmanuel Akpan-Inwang, who is also Chair of Aldwych Group, the consolidated students' union of the Russell Group universities, stated: "There is a dearth of representation of students from Widening Participation backgrounds in the Russell Group of research universities, so LSE is not alone in this respect. However for an institution founded on Fabian ideals, more

needs to be done to improve on not just acceptance but application rates."

More significant was the gender pay gap between female and male LSE staff, which was revealed at a Council meeting last week. Although 47.4% of the school's employees are female, only 31.2% are members of senior management. Only 23.6% are professors and 27.6% are senior lecturers. The Finance department has the lowest percentage of female senior academic staff at 8.8%.

An 'Equal Pay Audit' was carried out by the Human Resources division of the LSE for the 2008-9 academic session. It mentioned that after Salary Band 6, "the number of male employees steadily rises compared to the proportion of female employees until the highest, Band 10, where the number of women is a third of the number of male employees".

"The imbalance for off-scale employees is further exaggerated where the number of women is nearly a sixth of the number of male employees," it further read. "...the data suggests that women are under-represented in all academic and senior management roles, and are over-represented in other support roles up to Salary Band 8 and research only roles."

The pay gap for part time staff, 25.7% is also higher than that of full time staff, 17.9%, which is "causing further concern".

More striking is the fact that the audit found men to be more likely to receive a higher starting salary than women, particularly at the higher ends of the pay scale. This was said to be attributed to "a higher than expected level of experience amongst the appointees". A similar reason was adopted in respect to why there is a significant higher proportion of male

employees in Salary Band 3, as "predominantly make security staff are situated in Band 3".

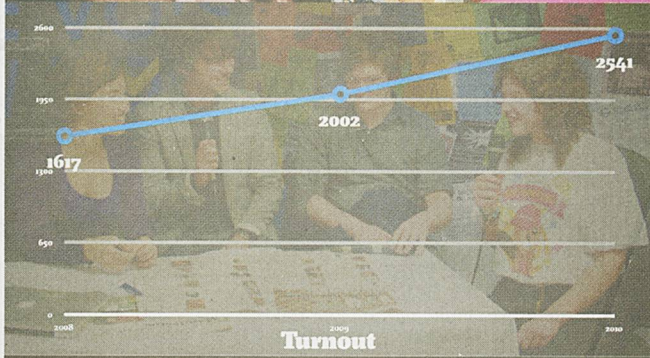
Men were also found to be routinely claiming more overtime than "women deemed to be doing equal work", particularly at Salary Band 4, where female claims per contract are 0.5 compared to 3.9 per contract in male claims. In terms to market supplements, the overall pay gap for all salary supplements is "much less favourable to women at 24.6%".

LSE Enterprise Ltd payments are suggested as "proportionally significant" in contributing to the total remuneration gap. The LSE Enterprise payments for women constitute almost half as much as that for men.

Akpan-Inwang commented: "For a progressive institution like the London School of Economics to have such a stark gender pay gap is astonishing. There is no excuse for paying men and women who do exactly the same job different amounts of money. I can only hope that the LSE Council and senior administration will be taking immediate action on this issue."

LSESU Women's Officer Jessie Robinson, who is also organising Women's Week this week, said: "This gender gap disparity is really embarrassing for the LSE, and proves that there remains a great need to focus upon division of power between the genders in many spheres of work. Until women are equally represented in top jobs, there can never be true equality."

Meet your new Sabbs...



Complete Lent Term election coverage: **»»**
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Rosebery staff member in bullying inquiry

Sachin Patel

An internal investigation responding to claims that a member of staff at Rosebery Hall had bullied members of the kitchen staff has found "no evidence of the serious accusations".

An open letter was sent by a group of students who live at the residence on 14th February, which accused the member of staff in question of "publicly berating kitchen staff for the smallest of infractions" on "countless occasions".

The letter, which contained 24 signatories, also claimed that the individual had insulted the heritage of another member of staff, stating: "when staff member Nigel told one resident that he was Goan-Portuguese, [the accused member of staff] claimed 'Nigel is a liar', point blank".

Upon receipt of the letter, an investigation was immediately set up, during

which "the author of the complaint... and catering staff were interviewed". The investigation concluded that "no evidence" could verify the accusations, and that "only the original author of the complaint" had provided evidence.

The letter, which was authored by Ashok Kumar, a Masters student who has recently been elected as Education Officer of the LSE Students' Union, was also signed by resident Lukas Slothuus. Slothuus, in a statement provided independent of the letter, said that the member of staff at the centre of the investigation "has verbally abused workers" and that his actions "cannot be tolerated".

Further, Slothuus stated that the intention of the signatories was to "speak up for those who are rarely given a voice". This verifies the letter's sentiments, that students at the residence have been "greet[ed] with nothing but kindness and respect" by the catering staff, but that "out of mutual respect [this] serious issue must be addressed immediately." In response,

Liz Thomas, the Head of Catering at Rosebery Hall, stated: "No complaints have been made by staff".

At present, it is believed that no further action is due to take place, but the concerns of some students remain un-

answered, with Slothuus adding: "LSE needs to seriously address these issues."



Photo: Ben Phillips

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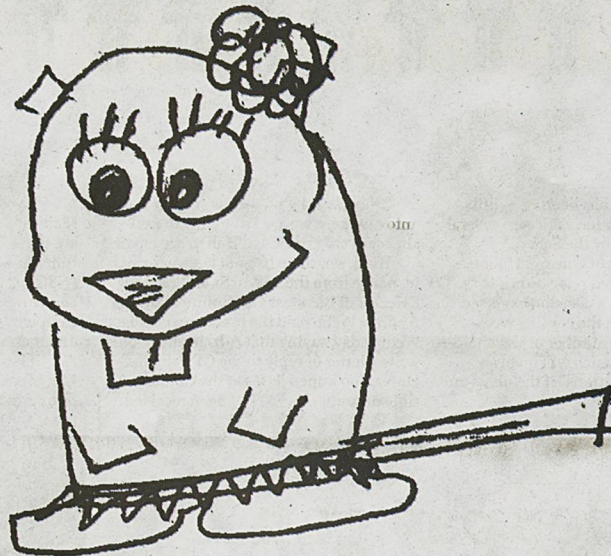
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The Beaver

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This is what a feminist looks like

While this editorial is being written, Happy Women's Day is a trending topic on Twitter, beating other topics such as the Oscars and Hurt Locker.

Surely, if something is the top trend on Twitter, it must be a pretty big deal.

This week, we are celebrating 100 years of women's liberation. With Howard Davies and Nick Stern looking spiffy in their clever "this is what a feminist looks like" t-shirts, and an exciting line-up of events over the next week, it's hoped that this important week will not go unnoticed by the LSE student community. Hopefully our bright yellow banner on the front page helps as well.

It is appropriate, then, that last week we celebrated the win of our first female General Secretary in 8 years. In fact, 3 out of 4 of next year's sabbatical team are female, most of them beating their male counterparts in their respective races. Undoubtedly, comments on Houghton Street and even this office have sometimes been along the lines of: "I'm definitely voting for Charlotte! She's so pretty!". Correct if we are wrong, but that sounds like

reducing the worth of a candidate to their bright smile and lovely curls, as appealing as they may be. Extrapolating, that might sound a little like (dare we say it?) objectification. Nonetheless, it still shows the rest of LSE community that men are not always the pinnacle of competency and principle, and that women can be just as much capable of leading our Union forward. Even this paper has seen its first female executive editor in 8 years this year.

It is somewhat ironic, then, that our front page story this week is sadly one that reveals a stark gender pay gap at the LSE. Although 47.4% of the school's employees are female, they represent only 31.2% of senior management. Even more perturbing, only 23.6% of professors and 27.6% of senior lecturers are women. The finance department, the jewel in the crown that is the LSE, is only 8.8% female in its faculty make-up. If this does not reinforce stereotypes and go against any equal opportunities or diversity policies that exist in this Union, School and even country, we aren't sure what does.

And let's not forget the recent overflow of "casual sexism" on the part of

some members of the Athletics Union (or those-that-sit-upstairs-at-the-UGM) during the recent motion to ban the Sun and FHM from being sold in the SU shop. Wolf-whistling, name-calling and ludicrous comments including claims that those proposing the motion were militant lesbians were a definite indication that the women's liberation movement has so much left to achieve. If even being respectful to women (just women in general, forget an elected official meant to represent women at the LSESU), surely sexism is not dead.

While we celebrate the improvement we have seen in the lives of women everywhere over the past 100 years, we must not forget that even in a liberal institution in the heart of central London, gender inequality is far from dead. As we say goodbye to the old guards of the Union and celebrate our new mostly-female sabbatical team, we can only hope that they do not tear the Union apart and cause as much disillusionment and anger as this year's sabbaticals have. Perhaps, then, it will prove that women can do a job that is as good as, or even better than, their male counterparts.

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OVERHEARD IN E204

Discussing the SU Elections

(in jest, obviously)

"If I were made anti-racism officer, you'd all be on a boat back to your countries"

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LSE WOMEN'S WEEK 2010

TUESDAY 9TH

Speaker from 'Abortion Rights' - "What is the future of Abortion Rights in light of the upcoming general election?"
1800: D202

WEDNESDAY 10TH

Human Auction
1930 - 2230 : The Quad

THURSDAY 11TH

All Day: 17% discount on all food and non-alcoholic drinks in the SU shop and Cafe

High and Mighty charity race
1430 - 1530 : Houghton Street, outside Waterstones
Vagina Monologues
1900 - 2030: Old Theatre
Afterparty at the Knights Templar, 95 Chancery Lane

MONDAY 15TH

2nd Performance of Vagina Monologues
1900 - 2030: Old theatre

This is what a feminist looks like.



Queens House the proposed relocation site for St. Philips

Phyllis Lui

Plans to relocate St Philips Medical Centre to Queens House were announced last week, following the Beaver's coverage of Camden Primary Care Trust's (PCT) rejection of other relocation plans.

A campaign has been launched by the LSE after a motion was passed at the Union General Meeting (UGM) last Thursday. This came after responses from LSE Secretary and Director of Administration Adrian Hall and LSESU General Secretary Aled Dilwyn Fisher regarding the practice's fear of potential closure.

The Medical Centre was meant to be relocated to the 'Island Site' and other sites around the LSE, as a result of plans to redevelop the site for a New Students' Centre. This site, which houses the Medical Centre, was listed by the Guardian's article as a "structurally unsound" site at the LSE. However, as it was not located in Camden, the proposals were rejected by Camden PCT. Further, Westminster PCT refused to take over from Camden.

Fisher wrote on the Facebook group, 'Save St. Philip's Medical Centre': "LSE throughout have assured the Students' Union, and Dr. Naidoo and his staff, that the relocation was going smoothly. It was only a few weeks ago that we were informed it was not. It is very frustrating that communication between LSE and the medical practice, and with the Students' Union, has been poor, but we are where we are and time is of the essence."

Hall said in a global email last week: "...work has been going on to find suitable alternative premises for the St Philips Medical Centre once demolition starts in July. This is not a straightforward matter... It is the responsibility of Camden Primary Care Trust (PCT) to ensure these requirements are met. Finding premises that

satisfy Camden PCT has been very difficult and, to date, they have rejected several options put forward by the School."

The ground floor of Queen's House is the current proposed relocation site for the practice, with a decision expected from Camden PCT in the coming weeks. However, there are a number of leaseholders in the building, which will involve "complicated negotiations" if the plans are approved.

"Success is by no means certain and, unfortunately, we are struggling to find alternatives," concluded Hall in the email.

However, there has not been a formal response from the LSE to St Philips. LSE Director of Business Continuity Planning Andrew Webb paid the practice a visit last Wednesday, saying that Adrian Hall would write a letter of reply to the GP Principal Dr Naidoo's open letter to the Council. At time of print, this has not been received.

Fisher commented: "St. Phillips Medical Centre is an essential service for students. The Students' Union's position from the start of the New Students' Centre (NSC) project has been that a medical centre must be retained for students on campus or as near to campus as possible, and that remains our position.

"It would completely perverse for the LSE Medical Centre to be lost in the name of improving the 'student experience' and

providing us a new building."

The motion, which was proposed by Fisher, resolved that the LSESU campaign for the relocation of St Philips to be "as near as possible to LSE campus" as well as the lobbying of politicians in Camden to support the campaign.

"It is crucial that we put pressure on Camden PCT to approve the new location if it can be secured, and that should be our focus over the coming weeks," stated Fisher.



Photo: Jaymash Patel

LSE still concerned about new visa system

Eunice Ng
Nicola Alexander

LSE Academic Registrar has responded to a new report examining the new visa system, promising that the School is working with other universities to come to a solution with the Home Office.

In the report 'Fortress Academy', former MSc Social and public communications student Valerie Hartwich examines the effect PBIS has had on all UK university admissions for this academic year. Hartwich's report states that since PBIS was introduced in March 2009, it has further burdened international students by raising the visa application fees from £99 to £145. It has put further financial barriers by demanding that masters students are able to prove £7200 in maintenance funds for a one year course.

The report has affected all University of London students, which have a high international student population. It also reports that students have had their visas rejected for bureaucratic reasons - one student had his visa rejected for writing 'Malaysia' as his nationality rather than 'Malaysian'. It also contains details of students falling victim to incompetent customer service from embassies and the UK Border agency (UKBA).

PBIS has brought "an increase in late arrivals and no-shows of international students for the academic year 2009-2010". Visa refusals have doubled with almost 50% of applications now being rejected. Overall, it is students from modest backgrounds, who cannot afford extra money to overcome bureaucratic hurdles who are most affected.

The points-based visa system has equally affected academics seeking to lec-

ture in the UK, with one Israeli academic describing the process as "bureaucratic absurdity raised to the level of art". Saima Yousaf, NUS International Students Officer commented that: "The new rules are a rigid nightmare, it seems a political stunt or a voter-grabbing policy."

Hartwich's research largely consisted of interviews with affected students and concerned academics, supplemented with statistics obtained from various higher education bodies. She states that she had very little help from the LSE. Neither LSE Academic Registrar Simeon Underwood nor the LSESU's International Officer at the time, Suraj Girijashanker, responded to her inquiries.

Hartwich believes that with the stricter regulations it is possible that some institutions may seek to reach an individual solution with the UK Border Association, "and there is enough opposi-

tion for there to be a united front."

In a statement to the Beaver, Simeon Underwood, academic registrar, said the PBIS was introduced "at very short notice and with inadequate consultation," worsened by "erratic decision-making on the part of Entry Clearance Officers at embassies overseas."

Underwood stated: "After a turbulent time in August and September last year, we think that the net result was that some students started the academic year later than they might have done otherwise. Our estimate, which can only be rough, is that about 50 students were in this category. Also, some students who were expecting to be able to do so. Our estimate for this group, again rough, would be about 20 students. Most of these are deferring entry to 2010. Most of the offer-holders in these two categories were coming to us from India and Pakistan."

The School also said that as far as they know, all academics who applied under PBIS were able to come to the UK.

The report says that PBIS will cause even more damage for admissions in 2010-2011 and ultimately calls for the new points-based immigration system (PBIS) to be scrapped. But Underwood was slightly more optimistic about the situation next year:

"In theory, they should be better. The Home Office has moved from a system based on letters to an on-line 'sponsor management system': but this has been introduced without comprehensive load testing, and the sector is nervous of whether it will be able to cope with the volume of traffic it will have to handle in August and September. They have also issued guidance which should reduce the amount of erratic decision-making overseas."

LSE participates in Palestinian Scholarship Scheme

Shibani Mahtani

LSE is one of the UK's ten 'partner' universities in the new Higher Education Scholarships for Palestine (HESPAL), launched by the Government and the British Council last Tuesday.

The scholarship programme will see up to 10 academics each year from Palestinian Universities sponsored to complete a year's postgraduate study from one of the partner UK universities. LSE will be offering one scholarship for the next four years in either finance, business, law or international development.

Other universities joining the LSE in taking part in the scheme are: City, Essex, Exeter, Kings' College London, Manchester, Newcastle, Oxford Brookes, School of

Oriental and African Studies, and Sussex. Applicants for scholarships will be sought from all 10 Universities in Palestine, based on a rigorous selection process.

HESPAL is an initiative created by the British Council in partnership with the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS), with support from Consolidated Contractors Ltd, The Pears Foundation, The Arab Palestinian Investment Company and Sir Trevor Chinn. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has also pledged to contribute £5000 in the first year of the scheme.

Welcoming the scheme Minister of State for Higher Education, David Lammy said:

"In countries all over the world, the link between a burgeoning HE sector and a thriving economy is clear. Through training the next generation of academic



Photo: User: egwin

leaders, HESPAL will make a real difference to local communities in Palestine, benefit the academic community and the wider society and re-energise the economy."

Sandra Hamrouni, Director, British Council Palestine commented: "HESPAL will have a direct role in developing the quality of higher education in Palestine, building mutual links between the people of the UK and Palestine and developing further opportunities for cross-cultural engagement."

Antoine Mattar, Chair of the Palestine Britain Business Council, and a key fundraiser for the scheme, said: "The Palestine Britain Business Council views this initiative as a milestone in the development of higher education in Palestine, which will enhance the skills, expertise and knowledge needed for all disciplines

in the socio-economic environment of the communities."

Commending the scheme, Chair of the LSESU Palestine Society said: "This initiative is a brilliant start to ensuring the Right To Education for Palestinian students, and I applaud it as it will undoubtedly change the lives of students whose lives under occupation make it otherwise impossible for them to pursue academic study."

She added: "However, much more needs to be done, not just in terms of scholarships and funding but also in terms of sharing online university resources in order to help students who are trapped in Gaza by the Israeli siege."

Sabbs: How have they performed?

Have your say at thebeaveronline.co.uk

Communications Officer: Robin Low

The most prevalent question on students' minds is: Where is our website, Rob?

Low's reply: "The website - last year the Annual Fund gave us money towards building a new website. Whilst the website and its maintenance fall under my remit, I am not a website designer, and for that reason external companies with expertise in the field were used. Obviously the site was anticipated at the start of the year, and the companies that we worked with failed to deliver what we expected of them. I am currently continuing to work on resolving this situation, as clearly it is unacceptable, and we will definitely have the new and updated website for the start of the next academic year." Otherwise, in the same Beaver survey, Rob Low has been described as "beautiful" and thought of as the only Sabbatical Officer. Low saw this year as "interesting" as it "has opened my eyes to the world of student politics". We will most definitely miss his report at the UGM: "Report as tabled."

Wise words

"I thought I could see the light at the end of the tunnel, but it was just some bastard with a torch, bringing me more work."
"If at first you don't succeed, remove all evidence you ever tried."

Treasurer: George Wetz

With a campaign that has gone down in Union history as one of the most memorable, (a Wetz beans can and selling himself as a "Beancounter") whether Wetz's creativity has been utilized to its fullest potential is up for debate. Although comments in a Beaver survey have generally seen Wetz as "rude" or "very helpful", he claims to have fulfilled 40 of his 57 policies.

"On balance, I will walk away with my head held high from my year as Treasurer. I set myself a tough (and somewhat gimmicky) target of 57 things I wanted to achieve. Since over 40 of them have been achieved over the past 8 ½ months, the initial indication is of relative success. The three main areas I focused on were developing societies, improving our social space and taking action on the environment, and I feel that we've made good progress in all of these areas. It's not been an easy ride, but it sure has been a thrill. The best thing is that you get to see the (hopefully positive) effects your decisions make right in front of your very eyes. I learned more than I could have imagined."

Wise words

"If I was to pass on one piece of advice to next year's sabbs, it would be this: Do what you think is right. So long as you've based your decisions on sound research and advice, and you're comfortable with your judgement, you have nothing to worry about. People won't always understand, or agree, with what you've done, but always remember that students elected you for a reason: you were better than the other candidates."

How close exactly?

Sachin Patel
Post-election analysis

Last week's Students' Union elections were voted on by a record number of students, and the results reflected the strong campaigning pursued by many candidates.

In contrast to last year's elections, in which General Secretary Aled-Dilwyn Fisher triumphed over Peter Barton with a majority of just under 6 per cent, this year's victor, Charlotte Gerada, secured a majority of 22.4 per cent over her nearest rival, Suraj Girijashanker.

Many students may have been convinced by Gerada's fervent campaigning methods, which included a cover of The Clash's "London Calling" incorporating altered lyrics, and a large-scale brand identity which borrowed liberally from the London Underground's famous roundel.

Girijashanker and his street team, meanwhile, donned Superman outfits and attempted to appeal to those who might not traditionally have participated in the elections. A similar tactic was used by the Community and Welfare Officer candidates, Hero Austin and Oliver Townsend, whose campaigners were observed around computers in the library, encouraging study groups to have their say and cast their vote.

Townsend is to be commended for his election night performance, given that his supporters were less visible. Further, Townsend's association with the Athletics Union did him few favours at the Palestine Society's hustings, where his marked difference of opinion to that of Austin's was observed and duly noted by all.

What of the other election races? The relatively high number of votes cast for RON in the Activities and Development Officer race could indicate the concerns of many students that such an important role was contested by just one candidate.

Of the non-Sabbatical positions, this set of elections at last brought Michael Lok the role of International Officer which he fought unsuccessfully the previous year. In the Anti-Racism Officer contest, Ben Grabiner won by only 29 votes (incidentally, the identical margin of victory for Hero Austin), a result that was seized upon by him as a chance to aim for an "inclusive" approach. Grabiner, currently the Chairman of the LSESU Israel Society, may be seen in some quarters as a return to the politicized nature of the role,

occupied by Joseph Brown in the 2008-9 academic year.

But surely the greatest shock of the night was that of Education Officer - a new Sabbatical role - which was secured by Ashok Kumar with 40.1 per cent of the vote. Kumar pledged to "aggravate, agitate and motivate" in order to preserve the rights of the lay student. Adding that "You can't just have policies... the question is about power", Kumar represents a significant show of support for an elected official who believes in mass social action and grassroots campaigning.

Next year's SU Executive promises altered roles and responsibilities, and a refocusing of priorities on putting students' concerns first.



General Secretary: Aled Dilwyn-Fisher

In his second and last term as the General Secretary of this Union, Fisher has this to say about his performance: "As promised, my main focus has delivering 'no-holes-barred reform... to focus resources on campaigns, societies and sports' through internal change. I led a full restructure of Union staffing, launching the first collaboration of its kind that has seen sharing of staff with another Students' Union. This has led to an overall increase in staff and a shift in investment from commercial to membership services, meaning more support than ever before for societies and sports, and staff for the first time in campaigns, training and democracy." Although he had taken a backseat in the lead up to the referendum, he ended up campaigning strongly for it as "students are crying out for change". Noticeably absent from Houghton Street were the said students. (Most of the reforms passed by a large margin.) He believes that they will "ensure better representation for postgrads and reduce bureaucracy on student activities". However, despite being accused of being on a "tyrannical rampage" or just a "dictator" during most of his reign, and even having a formal complaint put in to the School towards the end of his tenure (though no decision has been taken regarding it), we will miss him.

Wise words

"Prioritise, prioritise, prioritise; focus on the long-term, not just the weekly cycle of checking The Beaver and going to the UGM; always maintain a focus on increasing student participation in your campaigns; always focus on the main point of a Students' Union - campaigning to change the lives of students and others."

Education and Welfare Officer: Emmanuel Akpan-Inwang

Perhaps more known for his "chats" with students in the Quad, no one really understands what his role encompasses, although he is "tirelessly serving students".

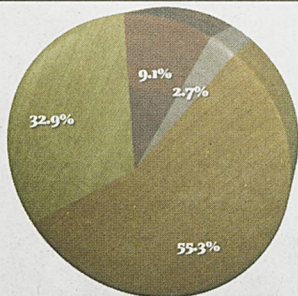
Ever the great communicator, he had this to say:

"I have often been commended for my chats with students. Actually talking students and finding out what their concerns are can only be a good thing. I do work very late nights, often due to the fact that I have been engaging with students during the day, attending meetings and making a positive change on their behalf. This is one of the reasons why we moved our offices to the Kingsley Rooms, so that any students can come in and talk to us. I am sure that there are a few students who do not know my name and I have never claimed to know every single one of LSE's 9,000 students, but I do know many, and a great many more are either aware of what I have done or will recognise me at a glance. Even those who have disagreed with my decisions have said that I will be missed by all."

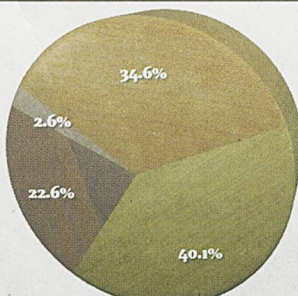
Akpan-Inwang is also the most vocal of the four in his beliefs on a wide variety of matters. However, he is always in the Kingsley Rooms, or attending a variety of meetings with the School regarding teaching and other welfare issues concerning students. Consequently, one respondent observed, "I didn't even know he existed." There is no general consensus as to whether he will be missed.

Wise words

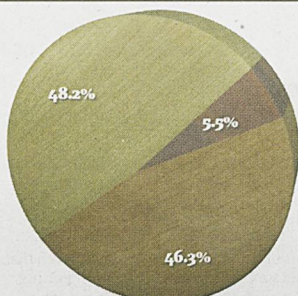
"Students' matter first and foremost. There will come times when you will need to make the right albeit unpopular decision. Always remember that the students who are most in need often don't shout as loud. Don't let everything you read or hear discourage or detract you from your goals. There are parts of the student population who have a clear agenda and don't mind fabricating information to push their own views or opinions - don't get bitter, focus on what matters."



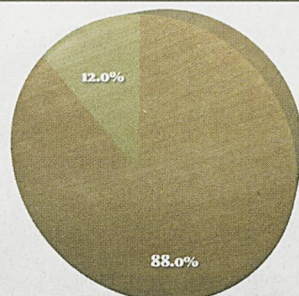
GENERAL SECRETARY
Charlotte Gerada, Suraj Girijashanker, Dan Kacinski, RON



EDUCATION OFFICER
Ashok Kumar, Paul Rees Jones, Andrew Wright, RON



COMMUNITY & WELFARE
Hero Austin, Oliver Townsend, RON



ACTIVITIES & DEVELOPMENT
Charlie Glyn, RON

(Candidates listed in order of vote share)

You can still find all our election coverage on our blog, [HTTP://VOTESU2010.WORDPRESS.COM](http://votesu2010.wordpress.com) and our Twitter profile, [HTTP://TWITTER.COM/VOTESU2010](http://twitter.com/votesu2010)

Microsoft COO: China has to change intellectual property rights



Nicola Alexander

In a lecture last Wednesday Kevin Turner, Microsoft's Chief Operating Officer, presented an optimistic perspective for Microsoft's future, stressing that it is now "time to get back to business".

According to Turner, the economic downturn gave Microsoft the opportunity to re-evaluate its expenditure and streamline activities by cutting loss-making operations. The company will invest \$9.5 billion in Research and Development this year, a record figure that sets Microsoft

above all other companies in terms of investment.

Turner stated that Windows 7 will be the product that will lead Microsoft's expected growth this year. Already the operating system's sales have boosted Microsoft's quarterly profits by 60% and has generated "lots of momentum" in terms of consumption, now running over 9 out of 10 computers worldwide. With 90 million copies of Windows 7 sold since its October 2009 launch, Microsoft is expecting sales to reach 300 million by the end of the year.

He further said that the improved Xbox video game console will be an

important product development for Microsoft. The new console will feature advanced control operations that use the entire body. Turner was also enthusiastic about Microsoft's stake in the Facebook enterprise, saying "[Microsoft has] a great relationship with Facebook and we expect it to deepen".

The nature of the consumer has changed after the economic crisis, Turner said, becoming more conservative as "most people are on new budget cycles". This means that any company growth will "be more a gradual thing". Turner stayed vague about specific revenue forecasts.

On the international front, Microsoft

Thieves strike three times in one day

Eunice Ng

LSE Head of Security Paul Thornbury is urging students to remain vigilant over their belongings, following three robberies that happened in the space of 24 hours.

The thefts all happened in the afternoon between the hours of 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. They took place in the communal areas in the Old Building, Columbia House and Connaught house. The victims included both staff and students. The items taken were all personal belongings, including wallets and a laptop. Two items were taken from office common rooms. The third was taken changing area behind a catering room.

Speaking to the Beaver, Thornbury said that the robberies took place in the same time period, indicating that they were likely to have been conducted by the same people. The fact that they targeted the three buildings in succession shows

that they are familiar with the LSE campus.

"We just want everyone to keep an eye out for their personal belongings, especially in corridors," said Thornbury, "LSE has an open access campus, which allows thieves to move around."

These robberies correspond with existing knowledge about on-campus thefts. The majority of LSE's thefts happen in communal areas between late morning and early evening, thieves usually target personal belongings such as wallets and laptops.

Security has already issued an alert in the LSE email already features an alert. Thornbury says that this shows the dangers of LSE's open access campus.

will focus on investing in fast developing markets, especially India, Russia and Brazil. However, Turner said that Microsoft would not consider investment in China, "until we can work with China to respect intellectual property rights". The Chinese government would have to change the entire nature of their Intellectual Property Right legislation before Microsoft considers investing in that economy. He reinforced his point with statistics showing that out of the 98% usage of Microsoft software in China, only 10% is legitimately paid for. "This is a real barrier from a software standpoint," commented Turner.

Turner also spoke of the software

industry's new regulations. Microsoft is keen to build strong government relationships by working with international regulatory bodies. "We're global but we must localise for core compliance," argued Turner. Regarding Microsoft's alleged complaints against Google made to the European Commission, Turner stated "Every competitor we have makes us a better company."

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Clare Market Review, the Journal of the LSE SU

Comment

Broken dreams of student politics

Filipe Henriques Martins

It's election night, 22:35 to be precise. Some of the results have already been announced, and I am in the library writing this piece, taking advantage of the fact that its theme won't leave my mind.

I came to LSE a year and a half ago, excited at the prospect of a university where people cared about things. Back home in Portugal, extra-curriculars are dismissed as unimportant; here, they can become your career. So I thought: "This is an opportunity to do something different, to do something meaningful, and participate." But what I have found is the sheer dirtiness of student politics, which has so much of the back-stabbing, behind-the-door meetings and who-you-know-ness of real politics. So much for the cause of democracy.

Forgetting all this, we ran a campaign literally "on the streets". With a comical YouTube video to get us some attention, Ashwin's campaign for Anti-Racism Officer was one for the "real" minorities of the LSE: the people who want to do something different; the people who do not usually vote; the people who think that student politics should be fun. Had the voting been done through YouTube video viewing counts, we would have "won" with 546 votes, followed by Ashok Kumar, who ran and was successful for the full-time sabbatical position of Education Officer. Instead of having "forums" to discuss "anti-racism issues" there would be a Diversity Festival, bringing together LSE talent to celebrate the differences and similarities they share, instead of discussing this in flat forums and discussions which, although potentially beneficial, bring nothing different or radical to what is out there already. Most importantly, it was the only campaign in which the candidate had no political affiliation with either Islam and Judaism and which, considering the conflicts on campus over the last year over Israel and Palestine, it would make sense not to have an Anti-Racism Officer involved with either of the two sides. I am not saying that any of the candidates who were up for votes would not be excellent in their positions, but it is definitely an interesting fact that the winner of the race is also the Chair of the Israel Society, while the third runner up had the much sought-after "easy-click" endorsement of the Islamic Society.



Houghton Street campaigning
Photo: Ben Phillips

What I discovered in this election process is how the "behind-the-scenes" politics works at the LSE. The most damaging of all things: society endorsements. Get the "endorsement" of a major society, such as the Islamic Society or the Athletics Union, and "bag" yourself 300 votes, minimum. It is not necessarily the fault

of the members of these societies, who perhaps simply vote for the candidates they are told to vote for. It is perhaps also not the fault of the candidates themselves, who see a real need to navigate through this dirty sea of endorsements to win over votes for themselves. But what happens in the end? A minority-led vote, thanks

to the people who bothered to fill out the online ballot. And whose fault is it then? To an extent, it is the fault of anyone too apathetic to vote, or even care about what is going on. Perhaps these are the same people who criticise the Students' Union, but then again don't care enough to find out what's going on and make a change for the better, rather just choosing to whine. And partly, it is also the fault of "easy votes": if you get yourself endorsed by a major society with faithful members, and if you are not guaranteed a win, then you can rest assured you will not have to try so hard to gain much-needed votes. You can be one of those people at the LSE who no one has heard about, and who has not, or even will not do much. But get an endorsement, and your chances of winning are boosted. So much for democracy: you do not care or are not bothered about who you are voting for, you do not care what their policies are. It is easier to just do as you're told, isn't it?

I am proud to say that our campaign ran without any of these so-called "major" endorsements, so sought after by eager future politicians to facilitate their "career advancement," or by determined Facebook-friend-adding "CV Sprucers". Instead, it is fair to say that our campaign consisted of what was probably the most diverse team on campus. There were Sikhs, Catholics, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, atheists, Buddhists, agnostics, of all skin colours you might care to define. Fortunately (note, fortunately and not unfortunately), there were no major society endorsements. We lost by 29 votes, but mobilised 743 of the "real" minorities at LSE to vote.

When I say "real" minorities, I do not necessarily mean ethnic minorities; sometimes minority representations actually turn out to be majority representations at the LSESU. The "real" minorities I refer to are the disengaged, those who do not bother to vote, either because they are too lazy, do not know what is going on, or do not even care. It is the people who criticise the SU, but know nothing about the reforms that were made (many for the better), such as having full time staff employed to deal with student societies that, believe it or not, did not exist before. And believe me, from two days of campaigning, you will find many who really just do not care. It might not even be their fault specifically, but if democracy is supposed to be efficient, it has also got to be relevant. What is the point of having society endorsements so that only the minorities, and strictly not the majority, are represented? And more worrying, what is the point of democracy in the case where most people just do not care about

it? And is nagging people on the streets, handing them leaflets, even a good way to campaign? Surely, if you have got a nice smile and can chat to strangers, that will help, but does it mean you are the best candidate for the role you are running for?

It is a sad reality with regards the one we are in. It is a reality of broken dreams of student democracy, of dirty politics that works by "suggesting" society members to vote (to the extreme of endorsing the first to the last preference on the ballot box), of flawed systems, or worse and most worrying, people who just don't give a damn about what is going on around them.

And there is a very disappointing, sad story which has really struck me in the whole of this campaign. A friend of mine, who is a Muslim, and decided to campaign and vote for Ashwin's Anti-Racism Officer campaign, lost a handful of friendships after sending out a Facebook message to 20 or so friends explaining why she was voting and campaigning for this particular campaign (meaning that she was not supporting the candidate that the Islamic Society "recommended" for voting). It is a personal case, and perhaps a very specific case, but the fact that it happened just comes to show the lack of freedom of speech that exists, even within personal relationships at our university. To me, it is repugnant, and comes to show the ignorant sheepishness of people who are at the LSE and who may become our bankers, our community champions or our HR managers of the future. This brings me back to the point that not only might the system be flawed, but perhaps so too are the people that make the system what it currently is.

But this story is not a sad story. It is a fun one, of two amazing days (plus all the days of preparation) of tireless campaigning in the freezing cold in which so many candidates and their supporters swamped and flooded the streets to win student votes (and special congratulations to Hannah Polly Williams for withstanding this with only very few layers of clothing and trays of cupcakes!) There was a 30 per cent rise in voting when compared to the last elections, which can only be a good thing. The exchanged smiles of support between candidates, the toughness developed when passers-by refused to take one's flyers, down to the anxiety of election night: it was all part of the fun of democracy, as dirty as it may be.

Unfortunately, the reality of general student politics is still bleak and concerning; not only do systems not work in favour of democracy, but people do not seem to care enough about the good of everyone as a whole to even bother to achieve it.

Jed Bartlet lied to me

Student politics at the LSE has been disappointing - and its political roots are slowly dying

Matthew J. Allan

So who is the real winner of this year's LSE elections? My vote goes to General Disinterest on behalf of everyone unconnected with a campaign. The feeling towards these elections amongst my fellow graduate students was at best one of apathy, and at worst, one of minor indignation, namely at their apparent lack of inclusion which so many of the candidates campaigned about.

This was not a revolutionary election, just because it heralded a new era of online democracy. This was an election that saw people take (maybe) five minutes to vote for their friend who told them to, who would not have if it involved queuing anywhere. That said, even then it was apparently a struggle to motivate anyone to walk to a computer and vote. I would be interested to see how many students took the time to vote for every position on the ballot. Obviously the organisers will cite any increase in voter turnout as a success, but I think that such a simplistic view of things is missing the real point of student elections: to build a sense of community and shared goals. Just perpetuating the cliquy atmosphere of the UGM is not a success.

I guess my main problem here is all the rhetoric about this being the greatest election ever held in the history of the world. I personally only voted for one position. Not (only) because I'm lazy but because I no longer have a burning desire to 'Make the union mine'. I did back in October when I voted for would have had bearing on my time here, but now I'm pretty content to run down the clock.

The real issue is: why does no one give a hoot? The answer is because whether you participate in the elections or not, your time here will largely go unnoticed. Departments apparently have so little interest in creating a social element to courses they seem content with holding a Christmas party, and then letting you get on with it. This type of thing does nothing

to support LSE's purported Holy Grail of 'networking' or 'community'. I guess if the school doesn't have a problem with excluding people, why should the Union? Conversely, why should graduate students fight for 'inclusion' if only a handful care about it?

The LSE clings desperately to its political roots. But to paraphrase, if you kick at the roots the tree will die. Today's students are so disengaged and uninterested in 'school spirit' even organising a beer after class turns into a four page thread on an internet forum. If we can't generate enough interest to get a bunch of students to go to the pub I think there is something badly wrong with what the school does to build cohesion. As I like to pass the blame around though, I'm more than happy to

put at least some of it on the apathetic schmucks who want nothing more out of their time here than eight hours of contact time a week and LSE on their CV.

This isn't my Union; I'm only around for a few more months, then I'm out-tahere. In jaded reflection of what I had hoped to get from LSE, I guess I was a bit naive to think it would be more than this. Can we really be at the school that produced President Bartlet and other notable notables? I can't see it.

Concluding, it turns out I can't solve the problem of graduate student apathy towards the *nion in a few hundred words. But what can you do, eh?

Leaving aside Bernard Levin

The LSE regularly talks about valued 'Freedom of Speech' but it does not always follow that path

Kurt Krap

Violence is actually a solution. No, really, it is. Imagine Joe and Jack argue, and you know words won't satisfy their desire for mutual exchange. Unless Joe does not beat up Jack a little bit and Jack does not beat up Joe a little bit, their faces will remain insalubriously red, whereas if they fight they will embrace each other afterwards, bursting into tears how they could have done such beastly things to each other. But, leaving aside alcohol (and love), what was the beef all about?

Assume it was opinion. I mean, it is unfair to judge others because of their political opinions. Or their opinions on tidiness. Or on appearances. Or because of what they eat. But at the end of the day, it is hard to live with somebody who wants chilli sauce on his kebab. Not that the choice of sauce matters for other kebab consumers, but it supports one of the most trivial kitchen sink psychology truths that we cannot help but have prejudices towards others because of their opinion.

However, the empire of civilisation has been invoked, which means we do not anymore submit ourselves to primitive instincts and animal-like behaviour - gorging, hunting, and eliminating competitors - as opposed to what some civilisation theorists might claim. Rather, we

have adopted a policy of mutual respect and acceptance, which entails that we may have negative opinions on the opinions of others but we won't kill to satisfy our inclinations. Thank God, we have laws that are supposed to ensure nobody falls back into the Medieval period. These laws protect our opinions and we have even invented a term for the protection of these opinions. We call it Freedom of Speech.

Let us for a moment leave aside that in 1990 members of the press in the UK established the so-called Press Complaints Commission, a self-regulatory body, in order to obviate the Home Office founding a legally-empowered department which would thenceforth control the press. Let us also leave aside the reasons why such a commission was regarded necessary. Let us for the moment accept that Freedom of Speech is unconditionally an achievement, namely of Western civilisation, and let us for the moment completely focus on the pioneering role the LSE plays with respect to Freedom of Speech.

I do not exaggerate nor do I dissemble when saying I was deeply moved by this professor's efforts to uphold Freedom of Speech at one recent LSE event. In the face of half of the audience shouting "racist", but not to the professor, and the other half shouting back "shut up" on the respective person's behalf, whilst some young guys in black suits already looked very nervous, reaching to the left under the jacket, the professor kept repeating his mantra: "He has the right to deliver his opinion as has everybody else of us. I do not agree with him personally, but let us first hear what he has to say."

He is Danny Ayalon. Deputy Foreign

Minister of Israel and member of the party Yisrael Beiteinu, who has allegedly demanded that all Israeli Arab members of the Knesset should be strung up on lampposts. Leaving this aside, some other observers would call the party racist. Now, to really be able to comprehend the LSE's stance towards Freedom of Speech, one must know that, red-faced as he was, this professor would not let the security throw out the shouting students, in spite of some comments to that effect by the others and in spite of the two aforementioned, very alarmed looking young men in black suits. No. He was trying to convince them, to convince them that everybody has the Freedom of Speech.

Leaving aside that LSE boosts its image as a brand, the School considers itself a platform. And beyond? It claims to be a university - although it does not say so in its name - teaching on internationally high level included. Yet, hopefully, the reader has understood that LSE does not do things by halves. Thus, I assume it comes within Freedom of Speech that in an Econ B lecture, the lecturer, a person who is entrusted with 900 young and pliable brains, talks at length about the reason why Obama's new health system is wrong, obviously leaving aside other things that neither the Peacock Theatre nor Econ B lectures are appropriate forums for. Not to speak of the minor detail that economic models in an introductory course are pretty much simplified models.

Well, before delivering the big blow, taken en masse, it cannot be regarded more than a marginal note that a teacher's membership of Hizb ut-Tahrir, an Islamic movement which was banned in Germany,

is of no significance to his teachership at LSE. This is consistent. Just as it cannot surprise that the public utterances of another LSE lecturer, whose identity I invite you to find out yourself, seems only to bother the persons concerned and some knights in shining armour. But yes, let us hear what he has to say in March 2008: "Imagine that, on September 11, 2001, when the Twin Towers came down, the President of the United States was not George W. Bush, but Ann Coulter. [...] On September 12, President Coulter would have ordered the US military forces to drop 35 nuclear bombs throughout the Middle East, killing all of our actual and potential enemy combatants, and their wives and children. On September 13, the war would have been over and won, without a single American life lost. Yes, we need a woman in the White House."

Suppose it was only a bad joke - even Chuck Norris would have sacked him (though, he would maybe have liked to play a role in one of the other lecturer's scientific scripts perhaps "Men do everything they do in order to get laid III")! But Howard Davies, the LSE director, at the weekly Student Union's General Meeting (UGM) made clear that "Well, I don't agree with him, but..." Oh sure.

Admittedly, the big blow is a very small step. Nearly needless to say, that LSE students have not managed to be completely unaffected by the university's policy. Just recently in the name of Freedom of Speech a motion was rejected at the said UGM, which proposed not to sell The Sun and FHM at Students' Union's Shops anymore. Whether the voters have left aside that it is quite plausible not to

make money out of selling papers which do not comply with the policy of the seller, namely the Students' Union, will unfortunately remain a mystery. That Freedom of Speech has nothing to do with the decision of a group to abide by its own rules is an insight, which was not given to the respective students, let alone the people from the Athletics' Union. We haven't waited for the 21st century to come to see that page three of The Sun is upheld as evidence of the accomplishments of Western societies - if there is something alike.

Enough. The patient reader might think the impetus to write this article is obvious, but she is mistaken. This article is rooted in me stumbling over the Bernard Levin Award, a journalistic prize awarded at LSE. Promoting the concept of Freedom of Speech, it asks the participants to write "an article or column of up to 1000 words which celebrates the benefits to an LSE student of the intellectual, cultural, political, professional, business, media, or entertainment life surrounding the School's campus in the heart of London." Now the first answer to this, which popped into my head was: How can they ask you to do that when LSE is avouching for Freedom of Speech without even providing a proper room to discuss it? I mean, you are not even allowed to talk in the Shaw Library! How inconsistent.

Defending Kanazawa

After recent criticism of him because of his views and academic publications Satoshi Kanazawa is - rightfully - only voicing his opinion

Members of the BSc

Management class, 2011

Free media: a small phrase with large implications. On a superficial level, all it preaches is that media should have the freedom to observe and broadcast the "truth", whatever it may be. On a much deeper level however, it also means sharing all sides of the story with readers, hence giving them the freedom to judge and opine accurately. On this basis, students of Management class of 2011, feel the Beaver has not been an embodiment of free media with regards Satoshi Kanazawa. Compiled below are a list of comments, by students who have read Satoshi Kanazawa's many works and attended his lectures and classes, on why firing Kanazawa would be LSE's worst academic decision to date:

I am writing this comment, because I feel that, like any other subject, the whole Kanazawa issue deserves a well-researched balanced discussion. Presenting one side of the argument only, I believe, is what is called bad journalism.

Since you are students yourselves, you should know that those who liked a teacher never have much to say, whereas students who feel the need to blame someone for bad examination grades always seem to have plenty. Therefore the comments you have received so far are very biased towards the negative. However, if you had done your research, you would have discovered that there are just as many students who absolutely loved Kanazawa as a teacher. There are two main points I want to address below: first of all, I think that the course taught by Dr Kanazawa was the most interesting one I have attended so far. I found

it extremely stimulating; it gives you something to really think about and form your own opinion and for that reason not only friends but also family enjoyed both, debates about Evolutionary Psychology findings and Kanazawa's book.

Secondly, the papers the beaver refers to which are supposed to be "racist" are not part of the course syllabus of MN101 and the whole discussion about racist teachers at LSE is therefore irrelevant. Kanazawa did not say anything racist in our classes or lectures. And at no point he meant to offend anyone. As a scientist he is entitled to publish whatever results his research tells him. He does not say that this is necessarily the truth; he says these are his findings and the interpretation of those findings. Yes, I agree some of his statements are controversial, and yes I felt offended by some of them, but only until I realized that - whether I like it or not - they do capture some reality. Also, Evolutionary Psychology is a whole new field of study, the theses are not Kanazawa's alone but the one of many many researchers.

On a concluding note I would also like to say that it is pathetic that an LSE newspaper is creating such a hate campaign against another person who is just trying to do their job.

Satoshi Kanazawa is different. He isn't the stereotypical LSE professor, nor does he want to be. His thoughts are different, his science proposes different things, he teaches differently. As a result, he is often misunderstood by outsiders - he seems extreme and sometimes even crazy. But the students that have had the privilege to take his class, they know differently. For his course MN101, no student could deny its interesting nature. Some students may not like the findings as they are often slightly controversial, but they never left with hatred or disgust. They always left with new things to think about.

Satoshi never taught his most con-

troversial subjects. What he writes about in his own time is his business, and he does not force this on his students. The LSE cannot fire him for something that he writes about externally. Sure, some topics may seem extreme, but if one were to take the time to get to know Satoshi, he does not mean any individual harm. He is not racist. Evolutionary Psychology is a new science and therefore comes under fire because it goes against normal thought.

It would be a travesty to fire him from the school. His course is the one course students tend to apply to general life, and it is the one course we all still discuss. It is fascinating. Sure, it is different. Sure, it goes against the investment-banking norm of the LSE, but that is what is needed. It brings a new dimension to history. It stops us from thinking in a homogenized manner. Do not let Satoshi get fired!

Expressing the outcomes of scientific studies and personal disagreements about them, without making reference to the reasoning or explanation provided behind them, is in my view naive. No matter how racist or discriminatory these results may sound to some people, they are backed up with evidence; they are, under the evolutionary psychology reasoning, true. What has been studied as part of our course was Evolutionary Psychology, a theory, a way of thinking, a basis for thought and discussion. The aim of the course was not to impose any beliefs as students complained to do so. For those who consider it provocative, the blame should not be on Dr. Kanazawa, there are hundreds of evolutionary psychologists out there with the same beliefs, backed-up by logic, evidence, and scientific studies. For what it's worth, I have to admit it was one of the (if not the) most interesting modules I have ever studied.

The aim of Satoshi's course was to give first year management students

Kanazawa isn't the stereotypical LSE professor, nor does he want to be

an idea of why people do what they do, above and beyond tautological economic concepts of "utility maximization." In this, it would be confusing, if not impossible, to give an account of how one would like the world to be; hence he did not, nor has he since. Through his course, BSc management students have gained an invaluable perspective on human motivation, providing a basis on which to formulate real-world strategy, which many of the cohort will have to do at some point in our careers. I wholeheartedly support Satoshi Kanazawa and hope that this experience will not deter him from continuing to teach this fascinating course.

Kanazawa is a scientist, not a politician. He is neither racist nor discriminative as all claims he makes are based on masses of data.

I agree to an extent that the way in which Kanazawa presents his findings, for example the titles of his papers can seem outrageous at first glance but I strongly feel that one cannot dismiss his work without fully understanding the branch of science known as Evolutionary Psychology. In the first class of his infamous course last year, I can remember naively thinking that Kanazawa's claims were otherworldly, nonsensical and rather inventive; however, after reading his book and allowing myself delve further as a 'neutral' student, I regret making these assumptions. This course is just as credible as any other social science.

Kanazawa should be respected, as are all the other academics at the LSE. If you choose not to accept his claims, you are battling against science. Kanazawa's motto runs: "If the truth offends, it is our job to offend". Free media, at its innermost core, runs on the very same concept. Censorship should have no place at the LSE, and we sincerely hope the Beaver uses its freedom to publish our side of the Kanazawa story.

The philosophy of the welfare state

Investigating the recent impact and future of welfare states in Britain and beyond

Edward Longinotti

The 'welfare state' is understood to be a widespread transfer of income used, directly or indirectly, in order for the concept of social justice to prevail. Such income transfers increase the wealth of one group in society at the expense of another group and the ability of the society as a whole to generate further growth and wealth. Income transfers harm the overall growth rate when they reach such a level that no part of society has the means or wealth to pursue what are today's luxuries; luxuries that will be tomorrow's commodities through this very pursuit. The commodities of life today have all been facilitated by past inequalities. Thus, when a society imposes a uniform level on all through excessive income transfers relative poverty in the society is reduced but the absolute poverty of society as a whole increases as it is unable to continue to innovate. Eventually the electorate refuses to sacrifice any more economic growth for an increase in income transfers, as was seen in the UK in 1979 when a radical Conservative government under the leadership of Margaret Thatcher was elected.

Thatcher's legacy is often the subject of debate, but there are few who would reverse her economic reforms – reforms which enabled the continued generation of wealth that have ultimately sustained the welfare state. This is rejected by some who like to draw a link between Thatcherite deregulation and the current financial

crisis. Whilst superficially appealing, there are far too many intervening factors and years, of which an ongoing thirteen are in the hands of a Labour government, to draw such a causal link. Indeed, to blame Thatcher for deregulation of the markets surely begs the question have Labour not failed in a re-regulation of the markets. Prior to Thatcher's economic reforms the British economy was undoubtedly underperforming. In the 'golden age' of economic growth in post-World War Two Europe - 1950-73 - many European nations attained growth rates previously considered impossible. Europe was growing much faster than the United States, picking the economic "low hanging fruit" the United States had already harvested. Britain did not participate in the 'Economic Miracle' experienced in continental Europe. Indeed, the British economy grew about half as quickly as the other leading European economies, despite having similar potential as the other European economies for 'catch up' growth to the United States. In summary, Thatcherite reforms ensured British economic growth reached its potential, though in response it is often argued this was at the expense of social cohesion.

It is possible to view British political history through the Hegelian dialectic, thesis and antithesis leading to synthesis, ideology and counter ideology combining and advancing. There is strong evidence for this; Labour governments post-1997 have adopted all the key planks of Thatcherite economic reform, yet attempted to temper them with programmes aimed at maintaining 'social cohesion'. However, the welfare state has changed in its original emphasis. As Hayek observed, "An apparatus meant to relieve poverty is being turned into a tool of egalitarian redistribution". Beveridge's five giants

of "want, ignorance, disease, squalor and idleness" have been conquered and replaced by the belief that the government should control all variables relative to an individual's prospects and adjust them to ensure all individuals have an identical starting place in life. This shift in the role of the welfare state has important implications. In a society where all are free and equal before the law, the result is inequality. Thus the elimination, or closing up of inequality requires the selective coercion of different groups in society. Such actions improve the position of the poorest in society in the short run but slow down the rate of advance of society as a whole - to the extent that even more of the next advance must come from redistribution of existing wealth as less will be provided from economic growth and the welfare state begins to enter a self-perpetuating cycle. This perpetuation is further enhanced by the political impossibility of removing the welfare state. Otto von Bismarck, the right wing leader of Prussia 1871-1890, introduced the pre-cursor to the modern welfare state because he recognised that whoever did so would attain power. Similarly, in today's democracy the impossibility of removing or modifying the welfare state is ensured by the extreme likelihood of loss of political power that would befall any party that attempted it. This leads to the current situation where the Hegelian cycle of thesis and antithesis appears to have to be broken. Any British government elected in 2010 will perpetuate all the staples of the welfare state. Labour offers the welfare state and in essence the Conservatives offer the welfare state with cosmetic changes. Francis Fukuyama famously stated - but then retracted his comment - that the end of the Cold War marked the "end of history", in that it marked the final

triumph of Western liberalism. Likewise, the welfare state may also represent the end of political history, evolution beyond it seems to have stagnated and there are serious question marks over whether it is politically possible to do so.

If this is the case, the implications for European and wider western civilisation are unpalatable. JS Mill identified the need for a constant conflict of beliefs and ideas within society. When society has no further challenge to it stagnation and decline ultimately ensue. The only alternative is a radical change in the structure of society, either through peaceful or violent means, to reignite the conflict of ideas. The Western world and Europe in particular faces this dichotomy. A relatively homogenous welfare state is entrenched across Europe, both intellectually and in government. However, the welfare state is ultimately financially unsustainable, especially as the problem of demographics becomes increasingly pertinent. The President of European Union admits growth in the Eurozone must double in order to continue to fund, let alone expand, the welfare state. Such an increase seems highly improbable. With no alternative offered to the electorate as all parties in essence offer variations upon the welfare state the electorate may ultimately open a new political chapter not through election but through emigration, or in extreme cases, open revolt. The Soviet Union could perhaps be regarded as the ultimate welfare state and found its provision of universal health, education and a common income level similarly unsustainable. With the financial demands of this system creating increasing discontent among a population that was unable to elect an alternative in a single party system, mass emigration ensued until that option was removed through the Berlin Wall. Thus the

Soviet Union eventually fell through the revolution of its populace, as there was no other mechanism for facilitating change present.

Similarly, the populace of the European welfare states may become increasingly discontented as the tax burden of maintaining the welfare state mounts. The citizens of Europe cannot elect an alternative either, if only this time because of the homogeneity of political parties. Emigration is already starting to occur, not only amongst high income earners in the financial sector and sporting arena, but also amongst scientists and researchers as Europe reduces funding in those areas to maintain the universal healthcare, education and direct income transfer that define the welfare state. The European welfare states may ultimately face the same choice as the Soviet Union, restrict emigration or if emigration is not restricted see the slow decay of Europe, its economy and thus ability to fund the welfare state. The Soviet Union refused to choose the latter, and Europe is unlikely to choose the former. Either choice ultimately results in the collapse of the respective society.

Of course, such a choice can be avoided through a political party offering the electorate an alternative. This is not a veiled attack on all measures to alleviate poverty, but recognition that wholesale provision of such measures is no longer tenable. Who will have the prescient vision to offer the electorate the antithesis to the welfare state? History suggests that it is imperative to do so.

The future of women's liberation

Celebrate increased women's liberation this week, but be aware that further progress is needed

Anja Krausova

In the wake of the 100th International Women's Day on March 8th 2010, the women's movement has undergone fundamental transformations. While women suffrage has been radically extended and female heads of state are not uncommon, the worldwide reality of violence and discrimination against women persists. In the UK, 2 women die each week from domestic violence and 1 in 4 women report being raped, while rape conviction rate nationally remains at below 8 per cent but can reach as low as 2.8 per cent in some

Media in the West is full of sexist images of women on the one hand and the idea of 'empowerment' on the other

regions of the UK. On a global scale, more than 100 million women are missing as a result of violence, neglect, trafficking and sex-selective abortions.

At the same time, the media in the UK as well as in the West in general is full of sexist and dehumanizing images of women on the hand and the prevalent idea of 'empowerment' that ironically conforms to sexist stereotypes on the other. Large sections of the women's campaigns appear to have subscribed to this culture where notions of women as objects of sex and pleasure, such as in lads' mags and the sex industry in general, are not only not seen as harmful, but also as 'empowering'.

What such an approach fails to evaluate is the link between sexist culture and sexual violence. The objectification of women's bodies in Western culture is a crucial, if unintended, part of sexism, sexual violence and gender discrimination.

By turning women's bodies into objects of sex for sale, women's bodies are inevitably dehumanized and the dehumanization of the "other" is a crucial part of sexism. The Miss University of London beauty pageant, taking place on the 16th March, is a perfect example of the flawed logic of 'empowerment'. The feminist movement should be there to protest against it.

Another challenge to women's liberation comes from the argument - outdated but sadly still present - that the 'differences' between women and men justify inequality and discrimination. Satoshi Kanazawa, an LSE lecturer, recently wrote that feminism is "illogical, unnecessary and evil" and, in his view, its failure to recognize that the stark underrepresentation of women in positions of power, as well as other inequalities, are not unjust but 'natural'.

In order to fight sexism and gender

violence, the women's movement needs to challenge these damaging notions as part of its campaigns. It also needs to break away from the orientalist paradigm of Western liberal feminism which portrays the women in the global South as victims waiting for our help rather than women capable of fighting for their own liberation. What we can do as feminists in the West is support women across the world in the struggles of their own choosing.

As part of the LSE Women's Week, LSE feminists will be on Houghton Street all week, collecting donations for Refuge, V-Day and Rights of Women, performing two productions of the Vagina Monologues and planning a protest against the Miss University of London beauty pageant.

Letters to the Editor

Madam -

I was "this" close to falling off my (new, and very comfortable) office chair through utter disbelief last Tuesday when I read your Editorial ("I'm on the pavement, thinking about government"). Your paper implied that I, like many others, had over promised in last year's SU elections during my campaign, which, by the way, I won by a thumping margin, being graced with around double the votes that my runny, Brown opposition could muster. But credit where it is due; at least he fared better than the third candidate, who was petrified out of the race on the first day of campaigning upon realising the Wetz campaign machine would not be stopped by a streaky rash of Bacon.

I had 57 Policies (not promises), of which, to date, I have delivered (or bettered) 39 and two halves i.e. 40. If I continue at this rate, I will in fact deliver more policies than I could think of at the

time of the election last year.

As with many articles in your paper, I don't know where the Beaver got its evidence from, particularly to make such a bold attack on my credibility (although I assume it is more derived by a fictional mind than a factual matter). After all, this year my policies have been stuck to my office wall in the vain hope that a deep-throat Beaver investigative reporter might - just might - recognise my contributions. Alas, a reporter's intuition does not stretch so far at this fine institution.

The danger is, of course, that poorly researched and unproven power will, in time, corrupt itself for the holder.

Yours, in anticipation of the impending Executive Editor election,
George Wetz
LSE Students' Union Treasurer

Madam -

As you are presumably aware, the Comment section of 16th February edition contained the phrase "...be they Catholic, Jew or Christian". Could the Beaver's next edition perhaps highlight the reason why Catholics are not to be considered "Christian" and are to be defined separately from other denominations, before continuing to promote this interesting distinction?

Regards,
Dominic Baldwin

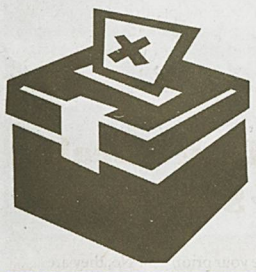
ONE MORE WEEK TO GO IN LENT TERM.

SEND YOUR COMPLAINTS/ LETTERS/EMAILS TO:

comment@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Features

RUNNING UP TO THE GENERAL ELECTION



Mazida Khatun
LSESU Politics Society Vice-Chair

With the SU elections a not-so-distant memory, we have upon us yet another week of campaigning for your votes. This time you will not be begged or harassed for them, but we will be asking you to make sure that you are registered to vote. If, like me, this is the first time you will be voting in a UK general election, then be sure that you are eligible to vote, are registered and know what the issues are that will decide who gets that all important mark of approval from you. As there would be uproar across the country if the local elections were not held on the same day, this opens up the franchise to many of you who may not have realised that you have a role in determining the outcome in terms of governance for the next few years.

Just as it is important to contribute, it is also important to reflect on the state of politics in the UK and ask yourself some pertinent questions. For instance, why is overall voter turnout for the elections so low? Have people lost faith in the institution of democracy, or the parliamentary system of this country? How far does the press affect your decisions and your image of individual political candidates? We are constantly told that our politicians are untrustworthy and our system faulty, but is there a British politician worthy of admiration?

My challenge to you is to find one champion of British politics who you can admire. Then pinpoint the areas that you want to see major changes in - be they constitutional reform, tuition fees, the environment, the economy or public services. We have to be aware of the things that concern us and the channels through which they can be influenced. After all, if we don't provide a check Westminster, who will?

For most of us, the little crosses that we mark on our ballot papers and the few drops of ink we use to do this are our only contributions to democracy (unless you are Swiss, in which case you will use a few pens' worth of ink). We speak of safe seats and swing-o-meters that barely move in this country come election time, but this year there are few safe bets. With the possibility of a hung parliament, our votes will count more than ever before. So when we get that long awaited election day, get out to those polling stations and make your mark - because it matters.



Alex Blance
LSESU Conservative Party Chair

When I confess my terrible secret to my fellow students, the reaction is usually the same: a raised eyebrow, a snort of derision, and a tirade of abuse. Yes, it's not easy being a campus Conservative; students are notoriously left wing. But it seems that behind closed doors, a growing number of young people are discovering the love that dare not speak its name. The Conservatives are the biggest political society in the LSE, a situation that is reflected around the country, where Conservative Future has many more members than Young Labour. At first glance this may seem surprising: the Conservatives have made no attempt to win the student vote by promising to scrap top-up fees, and remain in favour of continued engagement in Iraq and Afghanistan.

For me, this failure to pander to the student vote is the very essence of Conservative philosophy. While Labour governs according to the principle of 'divide and rule', splitting the electorate up into minority groups who can be bought with targeted giveaways, the Conservatives believe that we are 'one nation', with a shared purpose and common interests. It is little wonder that the Conservatives had the first female and the first Jewish prime ministers; it would be no surprise if we were the first to have a black or Asian prime minister in due course. That is because Conservatives have always believed that people are not defined by their class or race, but by their individual personalities and abilities.

So, what sort of a society does the Conservative Party believe in? As it turns out, it is one that many students would like to live in. A Britain where you don't have to carry an ID card to prove your identity and you can't be locked up for 48 days without a trial; a country where wind turbines and solar power help tackle energy insecurity and climate change; a society where we trust people to make the decisions that affect their own families, schools and communities, rather than running around trying to follow the latest Five Year Plan from Number 10. The Conservatives believe that Britain is a fundamentally good place, filled with pretty good people. If we free them from the shackles of state interference, economic growth and social improvement will follow. And that is good for all of us, whether or not we are students.

Luckily, we are too young to remember the Britain of the late 1970s, a country that was slowly going down the pan. While many on the left saw nothing but decline in the future, Mrs Thatcher strongly believed that Britain could still be a serious world player. The economic revolution she ushered in saw us rediscover our prosperity and our place in the world. After another decade of Labour mismanagement, Britain faces new problems: crippling levels of debts and the growing visibility of a 'broken society'. Luckily, once again there is an opposition party ready to step in and make the difficult decisions needed to get the country back on its feet. Now the PM just needs to stop dithering and call the election!

Personality

Harriet Deane comments on the projection

In the last few weeks, it has been difficult to open a paper without coming across fresh claims about the commonality of intimidating, threatening and bullying behaviour within the walls of 10 Downing Street. Many of them target Gordon Brown directly; one of the most recent additions concerns one of Brown's closest advisors, Stewart Wood, who claims that he was left "shocked and upset" when the Prime Minister pushed him aside during a tense moment in his office. Whilst some have been led to question the stamina of Number 10 staff rather than the character of the Prime Minister, others have enthusiastically jumped at the chance to tarnish the reputation of the entire Labour Party. David Cameron called for an inquiry, stating that it was reflective of a "fag-end of a government that is tired and discredited". Meanwhile, the opposition leaders have been keen to paint themselves as the sort of approachable, caring chaps who would be more likely to sit you down with a box of Kleenex and ask about your boyfriend's commitment problems than scream about your incompetency and throw a stapler at your head. We had David 'call-me-Dave' Cameron lamenting about his struggle to prevent his daughter from being corrupted by foul-mouth Lily Allen lyrics, while a brief glance at Nick Clegg's official website shows a charming photo of him breakfasting with his pretty Spanish wife.

It is difficult to find an MP's website that does not refer to their penchant for

ballroom dancing, their participation in a local football club or devotion to their family pug. The growing importance of individual personality traits to electoral success has been a significant development in post-war politics, and seems to play a particularly strong role in the current run-up to the general election. One possible contributing factor is the de-stratification of political parties. In the mid twentieth century, parties were largely class-based organisations, with clear ideologies and high levels of membership. In the last 25 years alone, membership of the main political parties has declined by almost two-thirds. As both Labour and The Conservatives have edged increasingly closer to the centre of the political spectrum, the electorate are increasingly confused as to who will best represent their values and implement policies accordingly. Each of the three main parties promise to address the same concerns - reduce child poverty, cut crime and unemployment, improve state education and health - in varying but not markedly different ways. In the race for votes, they all know which buzz-lines will look good to the electorate. No-one will emphasise leniency in criminal sentencing for fear of appearing 'soft on crime'; nor would they dare to imply that they might significantly cut funding for vital public services. Given this confusing spectrum of identical promises, it is hardly surprising that voters have come to rely increasingly on the representative's personality when choosing their favoured party. Leaders have thus come to represent their parties



Flickr user: cornfed1975

LECTIONS

Politics

The evolution of the personal image in politics today

in ways that they rarely did in the past.

Another significant change in the last twenty years has been the accessibility of politicians via television and the internet. The Erik Gandini documentary, 'Videocracy', argues that Silvio Berlusconi has surrounded himself with a celebrity-obsessed world, in which "the President of television is the President of the whole country". Barbara Matera, a serving MEP and former television presenter, had no discernible political experience prior to being put forward for election by Berlusconi. She followed in the footsteps of former topless glamour model and Minister for Equal Opportunities, Mara Carfagna. Whilst the UK has not levelled Italy in its overlapping of the political and celebrity spheres, the internet has certainly provided a wealth of opportunities for politicians to 'engage' with the general public. Nick Clegg's twitter page features wishes for his Welsh followers to have a happy St David's Day (no, not that David) and links to question and answer sessions via Twitter and Facebook. The website 'Tweetminster' offers a livestream of tweets from MPs and political commentators. Politicians are not wrong in thinking that this is a powerful mode of communication: just look at the US president, whose personality and personal life are arguably more significant to his political standing than anywhere else in the world. Barack Obama's twitter page has over three million followers, and his public persona is widely recognised as one of the most

finely crafted in political history. His good looks and popular, stylish wife certainly seem fairly central to widespread comparisons between himself and the late JFK.

Whatever the reasons behind it, the politicians of the past would, no doubt, be flabbergasted at the degree of scrutiny under which modern politicians live. Winston Churchill, who is frequently voted as our greatest Prime Minister, even the greatest Briton in history, was hardly known for his looks or social etiquette. Few can have failed to have come across his infamous words to Bessie Braddock in response to her accusation that he was "disgustingly drunk": "Bessie, my dear, you are ugly, and what's more, you are disgustingly ugly. But tomorrow I shall be sober and you will still be disgustingly ugly."

In contrast to this, the current political arena seems to be a very image conscious place. Should David Miliband become the next leader of the Labour Party, the three leaders would look, to the untrained eye, like a triplet of forty-something, floppy-haired, Call-Me-Dave/Nick PR clones. That's not to say they are not capable; just that it can only be a matter of time before we open a copy of Hellø! to see heart-warming photos of their Boden-clad children playing with pedigree puppies in the manicured gardens of 10 Downing Street.



Danny Beales,
LSESU Labour Society Chair

Fox-hunting, inheritance tax cuts for millionaires, cutting EMA and Sure-Start. Are these your priorities? No, they are not ours either. In such difficult economic times we believe it says a great deal about the Conservative Party that these are some of their only firm commitments. This party has not changed, and Thatcher's children are seeking the same failed policies of the eighties. Certainly the national debt needs to be addressed, on this all parties agree, however they are the only party which seem to have an unattractive relish for it. The axe under the Tories will not fall equally across the board, but will be focused on our public services, which have taken over a decade to rejuvenate from the sorry state of 1997.

Certainly we know as well as anyone that the Labour party has not succeeded in everything it has pursued. There have been many things which can be looked at with regret, either as bad decisions or missed opportunities. However if you look around Britain today, you cannot help but see that great improvements have been made, which were and often still are opposed by the Conservatives. People no longer earn as little as one pound-fifty an hour since the National Minimum wage and tax-credits enable families to return to work. Record numbers now study at university, there are over a hundred new hospitals, a record number of doctors, nurses, police and teachers and we have a health-service which we can and should be genuinely proud of.

David Cameron says we live in a 'broken-Britain', but this is not the Britain we see. Overall Britons are drinking less alcohol, drug usage has fallen, rates of smoking are now among the lowest in Europe and the number of teenage pregnancies has also declined. Crime has been cut by over thirty percent, our young people are doing better in education than ever and women have more rights in the work-place, as do gay and lesbian couples.

The promise of Conservative change is an oxymoron, entailing nothing but a return to old failed policies such as the marriage tax-breaks, which would help only 11 per cent of the poorest families while giving tax-breaks to well-off couples. The only thing seemingly broken part of Britain is the Conservative party, which opposes European integration, the Equality Bill, Proportional Representation and House of Lords Reform, and says nothing relevant to a modern, dynamic and more equal Britain.

There is of course still a lot to do and we want to see a Britain which is fairer, safer, greener and happier. Everyone's vote is crucial come May 6th, so that we can stop a return to the Britain of the 1980s. Many of us will not remember this period of continued high unemployment and ever-increasing crime, of under-investment in our public-services, of booming class sizes, dilapidated hospitals and waiting lists of years not weeks. Labour believes in collective social responsibility. No one can or should be left behind as Britain moves forward, and this is what the Labour party will be fighting for on the 6th of May.



Edwin Loo
LSESU Liberal Democrat Society

This has been a decade of disappointment and disaffection. We have seen a Labour government come in under the pretension of progressive politics, and end its reign under a cloud of sleaze, lies and betrayal. Labour has spent the past 10 years chipping away at freedom, hiking up the cost of education and widening the gap between the richest and poorest in society. The Conservatives ten years before destroyed much of the social fabric of the country and brought us the economic bubble that burst with spectacular consequences in 2007. And they promise to do the exact same thing if they win in May 2010. Disaffection would be a natural response, simply because politics has failed this generation. However, this election you do have a choice - the 'third party'.

As easy as it is to bash the two main parties, this is not only about the letdown of two decades of Labour and Tory misrule but also about practical alternatives. The Liberal Democrats are a party committed to fairness. Despite twenty years of solid growth, child poverty is endemic and future generations are sinking into debt to pay for education while the richest get richer. We are the only party that has pledged to scrap tuition fees, rebalance the tax system to end the trials of poorer families and to put the environment at the forefront of its efforts. Liberal Democrat councils throughout the capital and country, including Camden and Islington, have pledged to cut carbon emissions as part of the 10:10 campaign. While the Tories play with climate change denial, and Labour refuse to push for decisive action in fear of angering the tabloids, our councils are insulating homes, spearheading better recycling and working for a sustainable economy.

This is perhaps our last chance to deal with the structural problems plaguing our politics. Liberal Democrats in Parliament will put forward radical solutions: a fair electoral system, greater power for local communities and young people. We will force through the necessary changes to bring about a green transformation in the British Economy, and put our country on a fairer and firmer footing. We started off with an unprecedented recession in 1979 under the Conservatives. We ended it in 2010 with yet another one under Labour. It does not need to be like this. You can abstain, waste a vote on a party that will never win like the Greens, or vote for a party like the Liberal Democrats, which has the interests of students and young people at the core of its philosophy.

Your vote in May 2010 will not be a wasted one. The Liberal Democrats are on the verge of a breakthrough in London. We are only fractionally behind tired, incompetent and spineless Labour MPs in Islington and Camden, with the Greens and Conservatives out of the race. In this election, and more so in London, the choice is between the tired, broken politics of the two hegemonic parties, and the dynamism offered by the Liberal Democrats. This is a once in a generation chance to make a change for the better.





Cheney versus Palin

Anand Bhat gives the lowdown on the recent elections in the Lone Star State

“And he sticks by his guns - and you know how I feel about guns,” wrote Sarah Palin in her letter endorsing Texas Governor Rick Perry for re-election in early 2009. Liberal Texans groaned at the thought of their most despised national politician standing arm in arm with George W. Bush’s incompetent successor as governor.

Governor Perry is the longest serving governor in the history of Texas, having served since Bush’s 2000 resignation from the office. Perry’s push for an unprecedented third four-year term has sane Texans convulsing at the thought that his brand of insipid cowboy leadership will hold the state back for a few more years. For instance, changes are much needed regarding rapacious insurance companies, improving school financing for our majority-minority schoolchildren, action against industrial plants making Texas the most polluted state in America, and insurance for the 25 per cent of Texans which have no access to health care - the highest in America.

This year, however, things were meant to change. Mainstream country club conservative, U.S. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison, was to ride out her massive popularity to defeat Perry in a Republican primary, bringing crossover moderate and Democratic voters to the election to throw out the hated Perry. Then at last the state would be under still conservative but more solution-oriented management. She even

had the support of Dick Cheney and the Bush family.

Except her victory never took place. Perry landed her by over twenty points on 2nd March 2010, in what was supposed to be the fabled Republican civil war between the “establishment” and the “tea bag wing”. Why? To answer this we have to look at the quirks, oddities, and hilarities that make up the politics of the US’ second largest state.

In a state where Democrats have not won a state election since 1994, the only prominent Democrat of any stature was Bill White, the mayor of Houston - America’s fourth largest city. A competent local politician, he astutely handled the disastrous effects two hurricanes and settled the exodus of tens of thousands of New Orleans’s evacuees from Hurricane Katrina, also raising the city’s stature and taking on the chemical plants in America’s most polluted city. White, who served in the Clinton Cabinet, wanted to return to Washington by running to replace Senator Hutchison when she resigned to stand for election as governor.

Rick Perry decided to make things difficult. Around the time of the Palin endorsement, he decided to stick to the Republican base rather than play to the middle. He “rejected” parts of the stimulus package, denounced the bank bailout Hutchison voted for, and propagated the myth that Texas could secede from the Union unilaterally (and we just might, dang it!). This endeared him to the citizens which populate the majority of Texas

Liberal Texans groaned at the thought of their most despised national politician standing arm in arm with George W. Bush’s incompetent successor

Republican primary voters and the embryonic “Tea Party” movement. Perry became nationally famous as a conservative leader with the Tea Party from the start.

When the former cheerleader saw her poll numbers drop against Perry - another former cheerleader - she decided not to resign, and Mayor White joined the governor’s race. The Democratic gubernatorial race included Kinky Friedman (a singing Jewish cowboy who then switched to run for Agriculture Commissioner) and Farouk Shami, a billionaire shampoo salesman, who grew up in the West Bank. Shami threatened to spend millions of his own fortune on the race and promised he would give the state \$10 million if he failed to create 100,000 new jobs.

If you thought the excitement was just on the left, former nurse Debra Medina brought the purest kettle of teabags to the Republicans. A Ron Paul follower and a local party chairwoman, she brought an endearingly genuine passion to the gubernatorial debates that the other two scripted candidates lacked. Her poll numbers shot up after the debates and could have toppled Hutchison for a spot in a runoff election. Then on a conservative radio show, she questioned the official truth about 9/11 and slumped down to third place. Medina voters shifted back to Perry allowing him to win the 51 per cent of the vote he needed to avoid a runoff.

Despite Perry’s win, it was a very poor election day for the insurgent Tea Party. Their challenges to the commonsense of Republican legislators failed across

the board, including their challenges to Democrats who switched parties. Don McLeroy, a man who denied evolution as chair of the State Board of Education and brought the state to international shame, was defeated by a mainstream Republican. This brings into question the goals, methods and popularity of the Tea Party movement.

The vapidness of the movement should not be underestimated. Perry’s disgust with the federal government did not prevent him from taking stimulus money that exactly bridged the state budget shortfall. Sarah Palin did not really oppose the Alaskan bridge to nowhere, and Scott Brown supported universal health scare as a local senator in Massachusetts even if he will not do so in D.C. There was no movement against government tyranny when Bush was eliminating habeas corpus, starting military tribunals, torturing people, or invading nations illegally. That all their ire is focused on Obama’s health care proposal and not the bipartisan thievery that is the banking bailout shows their lack of depth. Tea Party rhetoric can only go so far against the realities of government.

Speaking as resident under a Tea Party governor, I can say that it is all show, no substance. One cannot expect government misrule to end under self-appointed leaders, especially when they define the movement’s aims for themselves. All the more reason to rise against leaders like Perry and his faux-movement in November.

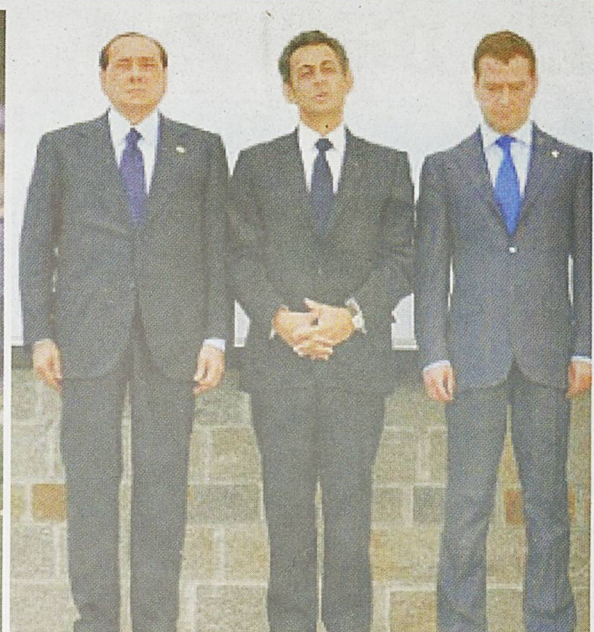


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Qaddafi on the world stage

Sandra Smiley explains why she would hate to be in charge of PR for the Libyan leader

Last week, Ali Aujali, the Libyan ambassador to Washington, clarified remarks made by leader Muammar Qaddafi, who apparently called for an armed holy war against Switzerland in yet another high-profile invective. Aujali told press last week that Qaddafi was, in fact, bidding for an economic boycott when he invoked jihad against the Alpine nation last month.

"It is a call for [an] economic and commercial boycott against Switzerland. This is true, but it doesn't mean by any means that it is an armed struggle," he said.

Qaddafi's remarks came in response to a referendum vote banning the construction of mosque minarets in Switzerland last November. The vote is grounds for jihad, he insisted, and its visitation upon the Swiss would not be terrorism. Needless to say, Qaddafi's potentially ambiguous use of the term has evoked just as much austerity from the international community as it has from Swiss chocolate.

This is certainly not the first of Qaddafi's diplomatic gaffes to make headlines. Since his ascension to power following a 1969 coup, the Libyan leader has made a reputation for himself as international poet laureate of faux pas. The President's eccentricities include keeping wildcats as pets, opting for Bedouin tents over Hyatts during diplomatic trips and playing Charlie to a gaggle of beautiful gun-toting female bodyguards. His most recent misstep is his performance at last September's UN Summit in Pittsburgh. Meant to be a fifteen-minute "taster" oratory, Qaddafi's speech before delegates expatiated into a dazzling hour-and-a-half-long burlesque

Since his ascension to power following a 1969 coup, the Libyan leader has made a reputation for himself as international poet laureate of faux pas

during which he painted swine flu as a Strangelove-esque conspiracy theory, tore up a copy of the UN charter, accused the Security Council of being a a terrorist body akin to Al-Qaeda, and proposed a \$7.7 trillion tariff on industrialised countries as compensation for colonialism. Planting one on the Lockerbie bomber after his expatriation back to Libya from a Scottish prison last August, Qaddafi did nothing to dodge diplomatic animus. In February of 2009, six days after taking his place at the head of the African Union, the self-styled "King of African Kings" managed to similarly incense with the revival of his plan for a "United States of Africa".

Qaddafi is a PR nightmare because he goes against well-established orthodoxies in international affairs. A sector betokened by nondescript grey suits and inoffensive, oft circumlocutory language, diplomatic culture is by many descriptions a culture in itself. Of course, it is predicated entirely upon a set of subjective realities which we - as Britons for the duration of our degrees - take for granted, as they look conspicuously like ours. According to this understanding, Qaddafi seems to be seriously lacking in Super-ego. While it is true that Qaddafi is very proudly a product of a distinctive cultural context, the same could be argued for all one hundred and ninety one other heads of state at the United Nations. Diplomacy is a job, to be performed at summits, cocktail mixers and confabs workplaces alike. Having been privy to that working culture for almost forty years, it is almost offensive to excuse Qaddafi's misconduct on cultural grounds. His provocative behavior is a conscious breach of HQ norms,

A sector betokened by nondescript grey suits and inoffensive, oft circumlocutory language, diplomatic culture is by many descriptions a culture in itself

more easily likened to showing up to your cubicle on casual Friday in a tube top, or hoarding company stationery.

For all his foibles, one cannot help but think that maybe Qaddafi's on to something. It is true, and interesting, that many even more clever than Paris Hilton tend to view Africa as a "great country", a hulking red monolith bobbing on the Atlantic ocean. Indeed, without getting into too much detail, a great deal of foreign policy tends to view it that way. Save strategically significant South Africa, of course, the US and Europe can be said to take a panacean policy approach to Africa's variant areas and issues comprehending aid, measured investment, defense and "sound advice". Since the world treats Africa as an obelisk, maybe it would get more attention on the international stage if it acted like one? It might put Qaddafi's stand-up act out of commission; but the grave and multifarious issues weighing on the continent along the lines of disease, resource use and rights - admittedly not as magnetizing news items as jihad - may then get the urgent consideration they merit.

QADDAFI COUTURE

Colonel Qaddafi's attention-seeking does not stop at the sartorial. The longest-serving leader in Africa and the Arab world, Qaddafi shows that one's own bizarre éclat is not incompatible with international diplomacy's immutable drab. A bit Liberace, a little Lacroix, the leader's operetta-like wardrobe earned him accolades from Vanity Fair as "simply the most unabashed dresser on the world stage".

LSE Diary

Interview experience: Lord Waheed Alli

Oliver Wiseman is inspired by talk of pragmatic change and an end to homophobic discrimination

Lord Waheed Alli is not your average peer. He was raised as an Indo-Caribbean Muslim, left school at 16, is just 45 and is the only openly gay member of the House of Lords. Despite his outsider credentials, he has been labeled a crony and was originally cited by several newspapers as a member of the undemocratic 'Kitchen Cabinet'. But this caricature of Alli invokes the wrong connotations. He is not a manipulative politician playing a self-interested game. His involvement in the Labour party predates the making of his media fortune and to him, the Lords is certainly not the comfortable gentlemen's club it is to others. Rather, it is a battleground for change on which Alli has fought difficult and personal battles; helping the passage of legislation on the age of consent, civil partnerships, gay adoption and more recently, race and gender-based discrimination.

I meet him in the offices of Chorion, the media company he runs, to discuss what New Labour has done for equality in Britain today and what the future holds for those persecuted in the past. He tells me of the "extraordinary change" in levels of discrimination against different races, creeds and sexualities. "There was a real euphoria. There were eighteen years of Conservative government where there was never a chance of things changing... That changing of attitudes dates back to that election and the feeling of huge relief."

To Alli, this change was a proactive process. New Labour had to drag Britain forwards. "The country and the Conservatives had always been backward looking. It was warm beer and cricket. It was John Major. It was a return to the values of a different era and the country was really comfortable with that. I like warm beer and cricket, don't get me wrong. But what Tony Blair did was say "That's fine. I'm not taking that away from you but our future can't be returning to the past." You have to turn around and show them a future that's different."

Employing a characteristic reasonableness, Alli clarifies: "Traditional values that are a moral framework, a religious framework, I accept is the bedrock of what

we believe. But that does not mean that all people are not equal, it does not mean you can discriminate against people you don't like."

He is keen to point out the credit Blair deserves for progress on gay rights. "Tony had the opportunity, at that age of consent debate, to walk away from the issue in the same way Bill Clinton had walked away from gays in the military. He could have said, 'I've fulfilled my commitment. There are two houses in Parliament and the Lords have blocked it. We tried our best.'"

"But he didn't... practically every year after that he did something on the issue."

Alli approaches politics with an enchantingly principled pragmatism. Not one to dwell on the conceptual intricacies of an issue, Alli seems keener to employ the skills that no doubt helped him to succeed in business. He is a man who wants to effect change, not just talk about it.

"It's really easy, when you're not sitting in Parliament, to take very entrenched positions and to argue because in the end it's an argument between friends. When you

At the top of Alli's current political to-do list is the safe passage of the Equality Bill through the Lords. The bill aims to 'take all the changes we've made over the last decade or so [relating to equality and discrimination], look at the inconsistencies and sort them out'. Alli tries to make it sound like a technocratic formality. In fact, the proposed changes have faced fervent criticism on a number of grounds. One provision enables positive discrimination. Employers will be empowered to choose a woman or a black man over a white man when they are equally well suited to the job in the name of increasing diversity in the workforce. "We should employ more women in the workforce because clearly half the population can't be stupid. Most importantly, it's about changing the way people look at someone. There are two candidates to do the job. Why are you going for one not the other?"

A second area of contention involves a section seeking to end the right of religious organizations to exclude people from employment on the grounds of

communities will have different views, but there's a huge disconnect between what the Pope says and what the mainstream Catholic community believes. Religion teaches us that we are equal, and deserve to be treated equally. I often sweep away the justification of how you've reached your moral code and ask what your moral code is. If you're saying to me all people should be treated equally with love, care and respect, I'm probably with you. If your moral code is that the only people who can enter our kingdom of heaven are people that do this, this and this, I don't agree."

To Alli, this bill 'completes the puzzle for gay rights'. With the next step being "making sure the things we've done with legislation filter down and are deep in the way they change how society views people... If you go to small villages up and down the country I'm still pretty sure a 17-year-old girl feels particularly comfortable coming out to her family. The last 13 years have been about extending and equalizing the rights of gay men and women and we're completing a long jour-

Conservative Party, but unless you have moral leadership from the front those people will be left out in the cold."

The essence of Alli's politics is clear in his disdain for fundamentalism and any influence it might have on politics. Perhaps influenced by his place as an outsider, he shows an intense skepticism when it comes to any political or social force that attempts to preach. Any institution or movement that claims a moral authority or adopts a condescending tone, Alli seems to resist almost instinctively. "I view fundamental movements as a threat to rights of all descriptions because they define themselves by saying if you're not with us you must be wrong. They have a fight with gay people and let everyone else join in, they have a fight with the single parents and let everyone else join in, they have a fight against people who have sex before marriage and in the end you realize it's ninety percent of the population you're fighting against."

For all its achievements in the area of discrimination and equality, Alli sees his party as "partly to blame for the disenfranchisement of the white working class" that has fostered racism and homophobia. "There are people who are poor and whose lives are really hard and our job is not to make them fed-up. They have a fair claim to a better life." Solving these social problems is, to Alli, intimately related to building a Britain with less discrimination. "I can see why, if you live on an estate in Bradford, you might think your black neighbors get everything and you get nothing."

Whether it be Bishops in the House of Lords, the Conservatives, or the man on a Bradford estate, Alli is keen to understand why they think a certain way. His complexion consists of clarity and certainty about what he thinks is right, a desire to understand and reconcile and a desire to act not just talk. Thankfully, these components have been working in tandem inside Alli's head with extraordinary success, helping to make Britain a place free from discrimination. I hope, for all our sakes, he continues this brave crusade.



Photo: Oliver Wiseman

sit in those chambers, your job is to take people with you and if you can, it sticks - it won't go backwards. If you force people to accept it they'll reverse it when they get into power." The same pragmatism is evident in his dealing with the Lords as an institution. "I used to fight about all kind of things... You're not supposed to take your jacket off. I take my jacket off. What are they going to do about it? Absolutely nothing. They leave you alone and you leave them alone."

sexuality. It also includes an amendment that Alli himself has successfully attached to the bill, removing the ban on religious venues and language for civil partnerships. The Pope has described these changes as an offence to natural law. "I can't appease the Pope! He thinks what I do is evil and wrong." But Alli, raised as a Muslim, is keen to show his deep respect for religion, without seeing it as sacrosanct. "I think it's always important to understand that different religious

ness. The next decade will be defending." In Alli's eyes one of the threats in the future will be the Conservatives. "My worry is they say one thing and they do something else. They say they support us but every vote in the Lords is a free vote, they never whip it. They say they support us but their front bench never talks for us. On section 28, David Cameron voted against us but now says he was wrong. And so it's always not now, not here, not this vote but I do support you. There are good people in the

Measured musings



Flickr user: blinkxxxx

A recent BBC World Service poll says that four in five people in the world view internet access as a "fundamental" right, with countries like Finland and Estonia having accorded it the status of a human right. Perhaps it is because they can afford to.

The construction of a statistic is never an easy task. The survey attempted to access as large a sample as possible, being extended to 27,000 people in 26 countries. However, it is also important to consider the kind of people who would have answered it. Those who realize the value of the internet are primarily those who have been exposed to it, or derived some benefit from it. These would be people from developed countries, or from the urban areas of developing countries. South Korea, the most digitalized country in the world, predictably had the highest number of responses claiming internet

A virtual right

access to be of "fundamental" importance. Yet, there are those who still do exist at the periphery of the "knowledge society". The inhabitants of the vast swathes of untamed land in Africa may be too generic and obvious an example. However, even a large proportion of the population in India - one of the countries directly targeted by the survey - would not be familiar with the merits of broadband.

It can be argued that human rights are not simplistic, that social rights constitute a separate tier. Ideally, technological development should occur alongside the development of roads, schools and water and sanitation facilities. Realistically, one needs to follow the other. Electricity cables need to precede their fibre optic counterparts; basic literacy is required to operate a Mac. A minimum level of income and the existence of an Apple franchise is needed to buy a Mac in the first place. To imply that 80 per cent of the

world's people are in a position to assert that internet access is an inalienable right, therefore, would be hugely misrepresentative.

This is not to say that people on the other side of the digital divide do not have the right to a better life. It would not do to belittle the wonders of the virtual world, where every aspect of life can be managed by a combination of clicks. The internet is not just a boundless reservoir of information. It is the embodiment of globalization, facilitating communication from emails to distance-learning. At the individual level, it makes research, travel, entertainment and shopping simpler than our parents could possibly have imagined. On a broader level, it plays Atlas to the world of business and finance, being the invisible infrastructure supporting international transactions.

No one should be denied admission to the knowledge society, through an

invention that exponentially increases the conveniences of life. It is admirable that the EU is aiming to expand high-speed internet access to rural areas in spite of constraints. However, it would be misleading to say that nearly everyone in the world is aware of the advantages of the web, and places it just as high on the priority list. A single skewed statistic does not make ours a homogenous world.

Madeeha Ansari
Features Editor



Photos by Ben Phillips,
Katy Staten and Jaynesh Patel.

"ELECTIONEERING!"

Social

Time out at LSE

Alizeh Kohari muses over a cup of coffee



You can't eat food in the library. Just you try. Crunch of a cracker and one of the library's security personnel will appear so quickly you will begin to believe that apparitions, Harry-Potter syle, must indeed exist. Said black-suited, black-booted gentleman will then proceed to expound upon the demerits of eating in a space as sacred as the BPLES. That death-defying, capture-evading fugitive rodent on the lower ground floor is the result of that cracker in your hand (the

fact that your study camp is based in the laptop area of the first floor is irrelevant, of course it is). And the dubious smell in the course collection area? That has something to do with you too and so, out you go.

The man - stony-faced upholder of our (ostensibly) foodless library's sanctity - is doing you a favour. Sometimes it's good to take a break, to snap shut those massive dusty dictionaries and, as Zadie Smith would say, stand upon a pile of them to reach the high shelf where the

whisky is kept.

Admittedly, curling up on one of the red sofas in the Fourth Floor Café and dipping a chocolate-chunk cookie into a mocha is hardly the embodiment of Emersonian experience, but I suppose it is a step away from the Miltonic: the dark room, the book, the hushed whispers, the smell of a lamp.

And the Fourth Floor Café is a lovely, lovely place to be. Tinkle of glass, clink of cutlery, the discreet murmur of voices. At the far end of the room, a map of sprawling London; towards the front, framed portraits of the London School of Economics Class of 1923: prim, proper, high-necked youths peering down with knowing eyes as you surreptitiously slip an extra spoonful of sugar into your latte. And the conversation in the café, if you deign to listen carefully, is loaded with enough life to mollify even the most ardent of Emerson's disciples.

The professorial-looking gentleman on the table next to you believes that putting biomedical enhancements in a historical context demolishes the ethical aspect to the debate. His colleague disagrees but - unfortunate man! - his mouth is filled with the café's special Snickers-filled almond tart; all he can do is shake his head helplessly. The EC102 study group at the far end despairs over Alwyn Young's fourth and final problem set; the two girls just next to them resolve to eat the Caesar salad but melt at the sight of the blueberry cheesecake on display. And the two guys on your other side - well, they're just interested in each other.

And on it goes, on and on, the voices climbing higher and higher, a microcosm of life at the LSE. Outside London changes weather with characteristic English non-chalance, splattering sunlight onto the red sofas from time to occasional time - and sometimes, if the blue-rimmed window is accidentally left open, slipping in fat droplets of rain.



Oh Lord! Phillips

Benjamin Phillips talks to the President



My companion for the interview told me afterward that the man who journeyed with us on the lift up to Lord Phillips' office was Justice Lord Mance - such is the intimacy of the new Supreme Court of the United Kingdom. The nation's final court of appeal is the rather modest and quite frankly lovely Art Nouveau building that you may fail to notice if you happen to be in the Parliament Square area. As you enter the office of the President of the Supreme Court, however, you won't be able to take your eyes off Big Ben: it will be staring right back at you, framed as it is behind Lord Phillips' desk.

Lord Phillips, or Nicholas as he prefers, is a friendly, generous man with a manner quite unexpected of one of the world's senior jurists. Opting to dress in a jumper rather than a jacket for the interview, Lord Phillip's very appearance reminds one of the informality that surrounds the Court and its proceedings. According to Lord Phillips, when the Lords of Appeal in Ordinary crossed the Square and became Justices, there were a number of aspects of their previous life they wanted to maintain. No robes or wigs for a start. As Law Lords they weren't technically judges, so men wore suits, a practice continued in the Supreme Court. Another aspect of the Court borrowed from the old House of Lords Committee is the layout. The Justices, barristers, clerks, and audience are all on the same level. The benches are arranged in a semicircle, just as a Lords Committee would be, so everyone in the Court is quite close together. Instead of having judges throned on high and council down below, Courtrooms 1, 2, and 3 try to capture the intimate atmosphere of a debating chamber.

Why did they leave then? Well, it certainly wasn't without controversy; even some current Justices were opposed to the creation of the Supreme Court. But now, says Lord Phillips, all fully support the Court.

"The fact that we are called the Supreme Court is not going to result in what Lord Bingham described as 'a rush of blood to the head' and start to overturn Parliamentary legislation"

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of the Supreme Court



"The announcement was made in June 2003 as part of a package of proposed constitutional reforms which took everybody by surprise because there hadn't been any consultation. I was one of those who believed it would be a good idea to have a Supreme Court and I've remained of that view. Some of the Law Lords were not enthusiastic initially but, since we've moved, all my colleagues on the Supreme Court are now persuaded that the move was a good idea."

And what of Lord Neuberger, the only Law Lord not to follow his colleagues to the Court, and who instead became Master of the Rolls? He believes that the creation of the Supreme Court was not a good idea, and that one should not tamper with an unwritten constitution like Britain's by introducing something as powerful and unpredictable as a Supreme Court.

Lord Phillips will have none of this: "The object of having a Supreme Court was primarily one of form rather than substance. I don't think anybody suggested the Law Lords were not acting as an independent court of final appeal for the United Kingdom. The purpose behind the creation of the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom was perception: the general public didn't understand who the Law Lords were. They certainly didn't know who they were, why they were in the House of Lords, or what they were doing." When I asked Lord Phillips if he thought the very creation of a court that Parliament had named Supreme had created some unstoppable momentum moving towards legislative oversight, he replies that "the fact that we are called the Supreme Court is not going to result in what Lord Bingham described as 'a rush of blood to the head' and start to overturn Parliamentary legislation".

This sort of deferral to his immediate predecessor as Senior Law Lord, Lord Bingham, is the sort of disarming modesty that marks one's time with Lord Phillips. There are two goals he wants to achieve over the next four years until his manda-

tory retirement. The first is to ensure that the judgements delivered by the court remain of the calibre delivered by the Law Lords. "I'm also very keen that the object of moving here will be achieved, that the public will get to know precisely what the Supreme Court is and the job that it is doing. We have an open door here; I'm keen that people should come and attend our hearings. We already get nine-hundred visitors a week; people are obviously interested in what we are doing. All of this is highly desirable and I hope we get as many visitors as we can manage." No desire for major constitutional change there; no aim to make his presence felt on Britain's unwritten constitution.

How does he feel about David Cameron's pledge to reverse the Human Rights Act and establish a British Bill of Rights? "I have no idea what will change for the Court because until I see the draft Bill of Rights I won't be in a position to comment on that. But I think it will be difficult for any administration to introduce a Bill of Rights that won't have as its basis the obligations of this country under the Human Rights Act, an international legal obligation to make sure the European Convention on Human Rights is observed in this jurisdiction."

While he may be covert in his expression of displeasure towards David Cameron's judicial policies, he is far more open to expressing himself in other matters. When asked what his advice would be for readers who happen to be law students, this was his reply, full of unexpected candour: "I think law students need tremendous courage. The law is over-subscribed. It has always been quite tough to make it in the law. But all I can say is that if you do, it's a great life. All I can say is that if you're keen, you should give it a go. If you're not keen then my advice would be don't give it a go, because it's a very challenging career to set out on."

The next Bill Gates?

LSE Ideas institutes a philanthropic venture

It is a question we all ask ourselves, one that flits through each of our minds at some point in our lives, 'Can I be the next Bill Gates?'. It is a question that we think about, smile about, daydream about, but ultimately forget about - for it is one of those unattainable aspirations that remain as questions lingering in the backs of our minds.

But what if we are taught the means to achieve this dream? The Institute for Philanthropy and LSE IDEAS, the centre for international affairs at the London School of Economics and Political Science have devised a way to teach us just that; they have devised a contest in which two of the UK's leading philanthropists will address students on how to spend money in ways that improve the world. For the first time, students at one of the world's best universities will - over the course of three seminars - learn many of the same skills in strategic philanthropy that are taught to participants in The Philanthropy Workshop, the Institute for Philanthropy's international education programme for wealthy individuals.

The Sheikh Zayed Theatre will, on 10th March, become the podium for 'The Philanthropy Challenge: Could you be the next Bill Gates?' Competing teams of students will be invited to work out how (if they were philanthropists) they

could make a practical and permanent difference to any of the planet's most pressing international problems. It will be launched with a public panel discussion on Wednesday 10th March, in the Sheikh Zayed Theatre, during which students will hear from two of the UK's most successful executives and philanthropists. They will be addressed by Dame Stephanie Shirley, the Government's Ambassador for Philanthropy, who started technology group Xansa from her dining-room and built it into a FTSE 250 company; and by Nicholas Ferguson, chairman of the Institute for Philanthropy and private equity firm SVG Capital. There will also be addresses from Professor Arne Westad of LSE IDEAS on the intersection between philanthropy and global politics, and Dr. Salvatore LaSpada, the Chief Executive of the Institute for Philanthropy, who advised the Rockefeller family on their giving and who directs The Philanthropy Workshop.

The panel discussion will be followed later in the year by three seminars, to be led by the Institute's Chief Executive Dr. Salvatore LaSpada. Here, teams of students will develop projects as to how, with a sum of money provided, they can make a permanent difference in today's global society. The winning team's projects entry will be published as an academic paper by LSE, and a sum of money will be made as

a grant to a non-governmental organisation selected by the winners.

Professor Arne Westad, co-director of LSE IDEAS, said: "This is a novel and extremely imaginative challenge which we think will stimulate our students and push their thinking in new directions. Whoever wins will have to understand not only some of the complexities of international relations and government but also the philosophy and strategy of targeted giving that that the Institute for Philanthropy is promoting."

Dr Salvatore LaSpada, chief executive of the Institute for Philanthropy, said: "Given LSE's international renown, this is an excellent opportunity for us to work with some of the finest young entrepreneurial minds from around the world, several of whom we hope will form the next generation of engaged and strategic philanthropists."

The panel discussion will take place at 6.30pm on Wednesday 10th March in the Sheikh Zayed Theatre. For more information please contact Musa Okwonga, Press Director, Institute for Philanthropy 020 7240 0262; musa@instituteofphilanthropy.org or Warwick Smith, Head of Press, LSE 020 7955 7060; w.smith@lse.ac.uk

OVERHEARD AT LSE

EC102 class:
Teacher: "Why did the black plague increase productivity in medieval Europe?"
Guy: "Because it killed all the inefficient people."

First year girl in the Garrick: "I hate the library... it looks like a hospital and all the people in there are sick."

Property Law teacher: "So in Chinese you don't have a different subject or object in your language when speaking."
Student: "I am not Chinese."

Girl in the library working the calculator: "How many zeros are there in a million?"

Houghton Street:
Campaigner to a postgrad: "Vote Ben Robinson for AU President."
Postgrad looks at me and asks: "Is the AU the African Union?"

Campaigner: "Vote for Adam!!!"
Russian-number-1: "I'm apolitical."
Russian-number-2: "I don't go to LSE."

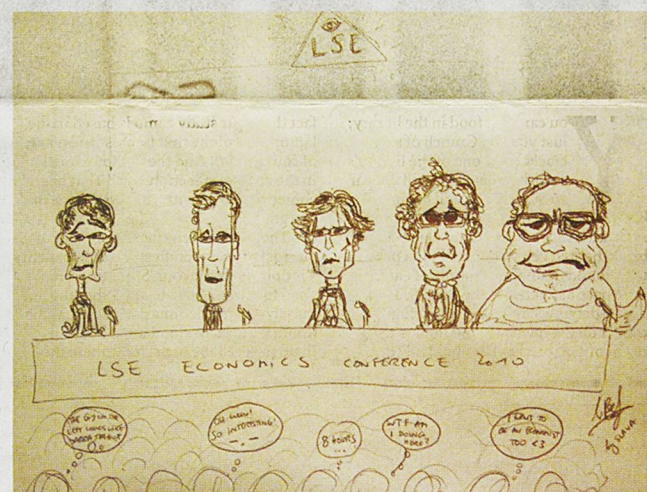
In the Garrick today:
Person 1: "What do you think about the SU elections?"
Person 2: "I just want LSE to be a dictatorship."

Library:
Person 1: "What are you doing?"
Moodlerapping someone? Moodlerapping is excellent."

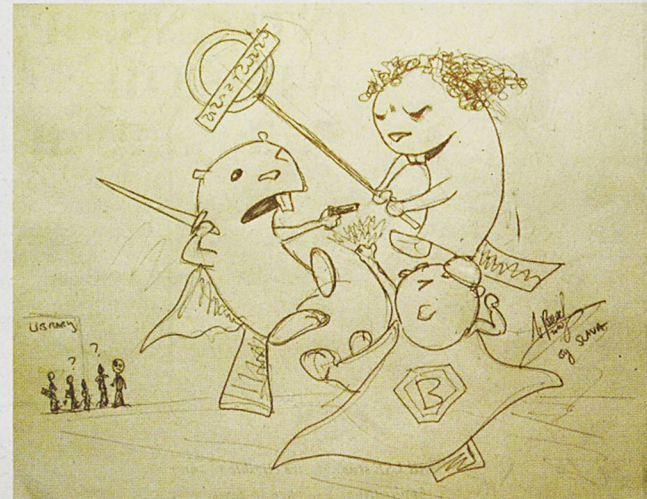
Person outside the library when approached by manifesto people: "No, no. I'm voting for RON - anyone with the balls to run for everything deserves it!"

History Class:
Teacher: "So in 1770, the Boston massacre..."
Student: "Wasn't that 1773?"
Teacher: "Err... yes, April, no wait December? Err... whatever, you know what it doesn't matter."

EH101 lecture, Tim Leung:
"the 90s were the touchy feely decade."



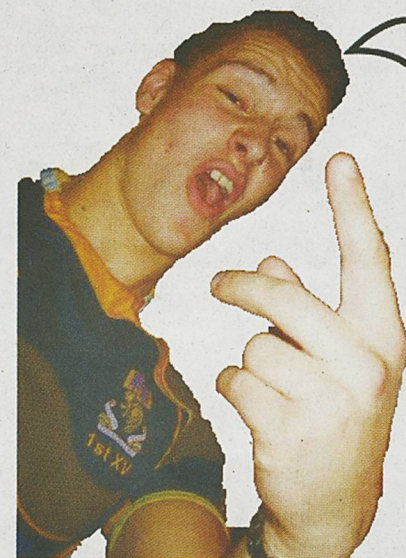
The LSESU Finance and Economics Societies held their annual conference, "Lessons from Crises." Howard Davies kicked off the conference with a speech enumerating the reasons behind the financial crises, especially blaming traders who, he said, worked as though they were playing video games. The conference panels included impressive academics and professionals such as the FT's star journalist and Assistant Editor Gillian Tett; Accenture's Global Head of Strategy Mark Spelman; Dr Paola Subacchi, Research Director in International Economics of Chatam House, and LSE's own Professor John Van Reenen, director of the Centre for Economic Performance.



The future of the LSE Students' Union: candidates battled their way through election week, with the situation heating up outside the library last Thursday, just before voting closed.

AU acceptance speeches

We bring you the acceptance speeches you DIDN'T hear at election results night!



Matthew 'Boca' Box - AU Events

Why aye man! Well am fookin' 'appy t' be winnin' this like, canny chuffed. I tole me mam an' pa, an' they was so proud a me like, that their 'lil' nippa's become a man.

I wan' t' say ta t' Maximuscle, Sainsbury's basics cottage cheese (fookin' 'ell - 28 grams of pro'ein per 100 grams like!) an' me pals, this means so [sobs] much t' me [sobs, necks bottle of Brown Ale] an', an', an' [bursts into incomprehensible rendition of 'Bladen Races' and is escorted from the premises].

Given the incomprehensible nature of anything that Boca says, we felt obliged to provide our readership with a translation into English of his speech:

Good evening. I am very pleased to have won, very pleased indeed. I informed my mother and father, and they were very proud that their son had won.

I would like to thank Maximuscle, Sainsbury's Basics cottage cheese and my friends, this means so much to me.

First, I would like to thank my parents, my friends, Ralph Lauren and finally the electorate for their support, both during my campaign and in making me what I am today.

There were times when I felt like quitting, but my dream of the AU one day all running out in Polo Ralph Lauren Spring 10' Limited Edition 'large logo' range kept me strong and spurred me on.

Now I am in, I will work tirelessly to ensure that no one ever has to wear Jack Wills or Canterbury stash ever again, and to give everyone a lovely leather kit-bag like mine.

AU Revoir!



Ben Robinson - AU President



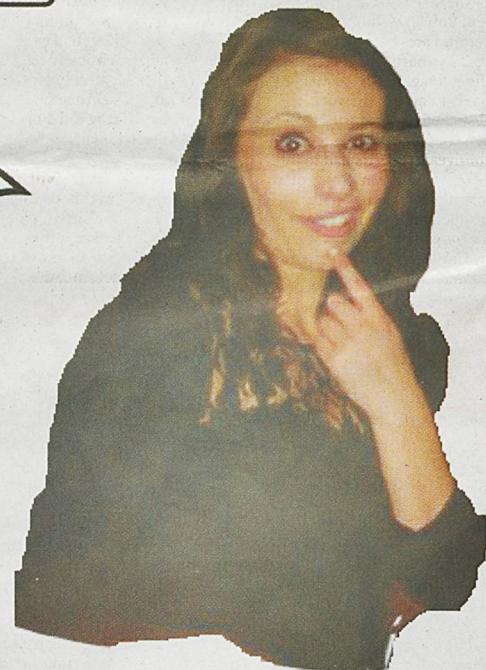
Megan Protheroe - AU Comms

I knew that, baa-ing any major catastrophe, I was going to win this race. My competitor, Josh Oloyrdsgsheeparzaiye, has been shorn of his dignity after his second AU exec election defeat in 2 years.

I want to thank the flock of voters I managed to round up to prevent this joker from fleecing me. In the end, he must be regretting the moment of bleating madness that made him decide to run - he was led like a lamb to the slaughter.

As secretary, I look forward to shepherding in a new era of transparency, putting an end to wooly procedures and decisions.

I think I really need to thank my opponent, BJ Watson for being an even bigger slag than me - he probably put more girls off voting for him because of his loatharious Wednesday night actions than I have put off guys by face raping them - result!



Rhiannon Edwards - AU Secretary

Kate Strivens - AU Liaisons



This is a huge victory for improved club liaisons - I have been known to bring Men's Rugby, Women's Rugby and Netball closer than they have ever been before, and I look forward to continuing in the same manner now I have been elected.

I will also continue in my campaign to legalize cannabis, as everyone gets along much better after a 'doobie' and I think that getting baked with all the various club captains is definitely the way forward... [mumbles into microphone "I wonder if I can claim back for my weed on the AU budget..." before wandering off red-eyed in a cloud of smoke].

Unavailable for comment, too busy putting on PDA (Public Display of Affection) with Charlotte Emma Snaville in the middle of the Quad - we get it, you love each other!



Jonny Saville - AU Treasurer

Jonas & Xisco

tell it like it is

Fresh from a landslide defeat in the Peruvian Telecommunications Minister race to minge extraordinary Hatemonger Rope, worldwide lad of the year Jonas has returned to add much needed spice to LSE's premier news column.

Sean Farrar: "There is an FC rule that FC players cannot run against each other... and yet at the last minute Saville snuck in and decided to run against Latif. Not happy"

At this week's SU elections special, J&X's favourite Three Metre Rogers commented with the integrity and passion for which he is famed. Snavatar Emma Ryan completed a remarkable coup by winning the AU treasurer position. His promise of ending the relentless stalking of former Outlaw Latif conquest Kate 'Dewi' Strivens captured the AU's sympathetic side, a double edged sword emerged however as unfortunately for Strivo she will find herself alongside LSE's least interesting individual on our new and improved Athletics Union low-brows anonymous.

The real story of the week however, emerged not from campus but from far away in Ginger Chris's dungeon. Dressed in gimp attire (leading to a new nickname 'Black Chris') LSE's most eligible bachelor... and Gabs Butu, gave superstar hockey chump Emma Heap a threes up of the sort she had previously only dreamt. J&X were very fortunate to be privy to such information which only came to light after the sterling work from LSE media mogul Rob 'Rim-Job' Charnock. Filming the sordid acts however led to the dismissal of Charnock from his job as Pulse Radio manager; a Pulse insider has been quoted as saying "He would've been OK if he'd stuck to filming, however jumping on a post-coital Heap for a go was truly unforgivable, heads had to roll." Long time partner Joseph Whats'on was seen in tears after seeing the terrible acts, and the plans the pair had forged to spend their golden wedding anniversary at a local Toby Carvery have been put on the back

burner.

Final talking points were the news that Turkish national hero Norayr Martin finally lost his virginity with 'the best

The minge added "his willy is above average". However this was later downgraded to "average" and finally "pretty small" after the acid Noz slipped her had worn off

looking girl in Phase'. The minge added "His willy is above average". However this was later downgraded to "average" and finally "pretty small" after the acid Noz slipped her had worn off. Furthermore, the aforementioned Latif Ballack was rushed to A&E after listening to SuBo's debut album *I Dreamed A Dream* caused him to bleed from the most unlikely of orifices; his Japs eye.

Fended off Snaville? Didn't vote Protheroe in the AU Comms race? Gonna shag a fat bird in Calella? E-mail now to jonas&xisco@thebeaveronline.co.uk or keep up with us on our Facebook fanpage.

Results

Rugby

1s 48 - 18 Greenwich 1s
2s 30 - 7 Canterbury 3s
3s 5 - 42 Canterbury 2s

Men's Football

1s 2 - 1 Portsmouth 5s
2s 0 - 7 SOAS 1s
3s 1 - 2 UCL 4s
4s 4 - 2 Imperial 5s
5s 3 - 0 St georges 2s
6s 1 - 12 QM 4th's

Netball

1s 31 - 34 Imperial
2s 48 - 25 Kings 2s

DIVE INTO DYSON'S BEAVER

**We need a new
Sports Editor
to start in
September '10**



**If you reckon you've got what it takes,
email a 150-word manifesto to:
collective@thebeaveronline.co.uk
by 12pm Tues 16th March**

TORSO OF THE WEEK



Sport



Inside:
Meet the new AU
exec and read their
acceptance speeches!

Dance show Fl*sh of brilliance

The AU Dance Club put on a great show, and raise money for charity

Jenny Lee
Dance Club Captain

This year's annual Dance Show took place on 1st March at the Peacock Theatre. In my humble opinion, I think Fl*shdance was a massive success. We managed to coordinate some amazing dancers for 14 acts in less than two months. From the beginning of term, rehearsals literally took over our lives. LSE became LSD (the London School of Dance), and it got so bad that people were going to lectures just to miss the rehearsals! The whole ordeal was difficult, people got pissy and I cried in front of the whole cast...twice.

With huge pressure on us to beat last year's show (not entirely difficult), we wanted to make the show something worth seeing. Having auditioned endless acts and dancers at the end of Michaelmas Term, we could finally begin choreographing ready for the start of the New Year. We had acts that could create everything from human transformers to mildly erotic Moulin Rouge dancers (trying not to look at my Dad whilst rubbing my thighs), and classical ballet (where I chainés-ed into the wing) to a crotch-grabbing MJ act with his own MJ sparkly coat.

We had 5 hours before the show to practice on the stage, so tensions were running high. 30 minutes before the show we finally finished, and had just enough time to gabble a quick pep talk, grab food, alter costumes and rest. The time had finally come for what we'd spent months practising, weeks perfecting and days trying to lose as much weight as possible... **SHOW TIME!** The audience was, as usual, a raucous rabble of LSE goers. Trying not to concentrate on them (helped massively by the blinding lights), we opened the show successfully. Everything went to plan, the tech was a million miles better than last year (where we failed miserably) and the atmosphere was fantastic. For those who missed out, you missed out on some incredible performances. We had secret agents tutting (really fast finger and hand movements), breakers breaking, belly dancers belly-ing, beyond normal

flexibility and, more importantly, solid acts.

The curtains fell and 24 was the place to be. Dancers simply cannot wait for the next opportunity to show off, so there was, perhaps unsurprisingly, a dance off, followed by a strange hip-hop class in the club, led by none other than Del, our hip-hop choreographer. Drinks were flowing, the bass was pumping and apparently love was in the air.

Aside from all the highs of performing, we also managed to raise money

The time had finally come for what we'd spent months practising, weeks perfecting and days trying to lose as much weight as possible... SHOW TIME!

for our two charities; BISEE books and EducAid, both charities for the education of the underprivileged in Ecuador and Sierra Leone respectively, and both with meaning to me. We managed to raise over £2,000, which may not sound like a lot, but every penny counts and I'm happy that we even built up awareness of these two charities.

Despite there being tears and tan-



trums, splitting of the legs and split costumes, the show was a massive triumph for the Dance Club. I think it's safe to say we've finally established ourselves as a serious part of the AU. All I can say now

is thank you to everyone who took part, thank you to the audience who helped to raise money for our charities, and thank you to Li Ee (fellow Captain) and Constantina (Secretary) for helping to put

on an incredible show, and indeed making my final year at LSE so extra-curricular! Good Luck to all the committee next year - you have big shoes to fill!

AU - Alcoholics Unlimited?

Andy Powell's recent post match antics put the relationship between sport and alcohol back in the spotlight

Ollie Townsend
Sports Editor

As most people who have been in the AU, seen the AU or even heard of the AU can tell you, there is a clear relationship between sport and alcohol. From the days of sneaking underage into clubs after sixth form matches to Premiership footballers blowing tens of thousands of pounds on Cristal champagne, drinking is an inherent part of playing sport. Many people at LSE only join the AU for the social side (think back to the 'Social Eighthths' last year in netball, who had no scheduled fixtures), and often the night-out after the afternoon's on-field frivolities is by far the highlight of the day, and for many people, you can't have one without the other.

Of course, with drinking often comes amusing, embarrassing and illegal behaviour. From our own ranks, think of Fenton's recent time spent at Her Majesty's pleasure, Reesy 'getting acquainted' with the Zoo Bar bouncers and Ben Leith climbing various lampposts around central London. The wider sporting world is no different, so we thought we would share our favourite incidents with you.

So next time you wake up and shamefully try and recount your last night's movements, remember some of these and realize that whatever you did, it probably wasn't as bad as it could be:

1. Andy Powell - Following Wales' last minute victory over Scotland in the 6 Nations last month, Wales' number 6 Andy Powell went out for 'more than a few beers' to celebrate. Upon returning to the team hotel, he decided to go for a ride in one of the hotel's golf buggies as a prank. However, he then got the munchies, and headed for the motorway services to pick up some food. He was stopped and arrested at 5.30am at Junction 33 on the M4, and was (obviously) found to be well over the drink-drive limit. He was subsequently dropped from the Wales squad, fined £1,000 and banned from driving for 15 months. Oooops!

2. Andrew Flintoff - The infamous 'Fredalo' incident came during the 2007 Cricket World Cup in the West Indies. A late night drinking session, just 2 days before a vital game, resulted in Flintoff having to be rescued after falling off a pedalo and getting into difficulties in the water. He was stripped of the England vice-captaincy as a result.

3. Mathieu Bastareaud - After a 14-10 loss in Wellington, he suffered facial cuts and bruising at some point during the night out afterwards. He claimed that he had been attacked on his way home by 4 or 5 people, however he withdrew this claim after CCTV footage released by the hotel showed him coming home unharmed. It turns out that what actually happened was that he went home pissed, tripped over in

his room and hit his face on a table, and was too embarrassed to tell the truth!

4. Doug Howlett - arrested in the early hours at Heathrow Hilton for causing criminal damage to two cars after New Zealand's Quarter Final defeat to France in the World Cup. In his video apology, he admitted that "There was drink involved..."

5. Gavin Henson - with repeated bursts of drunken behaviour that would make even Reesy proud, Welsh rugby star found himself banned from most clubs and pubs in Cardiff, with door staff describing him as "an absolute nightmare" and behaving like a "spoilt child who wants to shout and be the centre of attention".

Still, with all this in mind, the one event in the AU social calendar when the most outrageous, banterous and debauched antics take place is still to come. Yes, that's right, the AU ball is this Wednesday at Radisson Blu, Marble Arch, so anyone who hasn't got a ticket (what's wrong with you?!) can still come over for the after-party for just a tenner and see the AU's finest at their absolute worst. And if you can't make it, or don't remember anything from it, don't worry! You'll be able to catch up on all the highlights in Sport next week where we name, shame, and spread rumours - staaaaaaandard!



B

P A R T

M U S I C F I

L M F A S H I O N

T V R A N T I N T E R

V I E W C O M E D Y F O O

D S E X G E N D E R T H E A T R E L I T E R A T

U R E V I S U A L A R T S J O U R N E Y S H O N E S T Y

L I F E , L O V E , T R U T H , P A S S I O N .

WEEK 9 // 09.03.2010.

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PARTB-(SECTION)@THEBEAVERONLINE.CO.UK

03 RANT.

04 LITERATURE.

05 VISUAL ARTS.

06-07 INTERVIEW.

08-09 MUSIC.

10 TV.

11 PHILOSOPHY.

12 SEX AND GENDER.

editorial(s)?

This week we couldn't be arsed to come up with an editorial. The editorial is always written last, just before we leave the office. Tired and hungry, we simply don't have the will to construct witticism when we could be gathering food.

However if we were to write one, it would extol the brilliance of our interview this week, the exceptional quality of our SEX & gender, and the always brilliant Literature.

Music, this week, is also astonishingly good. And Visual Arts is mesmeric.

Calum Young

Hooray, we're nearing the end of term. You'll only have to read this drivel for a couple more weeks. But next week is the last issue! Send in an article, and have your name in print before you leave, so you can (barely) claim you're a published writer.

Another hooray - we can once more navigate our way through campus, without being hounded by some prat with a silly t-shirt and a stub of chalk. But seriously though, congratulations to whoever won. And I did actually end up voting, for Hannah Polly Williams. Why, I hear you ask? You damn well know why.

PS If Vicky is reading this, you have my pendrive that I left in the library. But I've lost your number, so I've been unable to contact you. Get in touch through the email address printed above. Safe.

Ahmed Peerbux

AUNT BEVERLY

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

Dear Aunt Beverly,

The annual AU Ball is next Wednesday and I haven't a thing to wear! That's not true actually, I have lots to wear, but can't fit in to any of my dresses. At first I thought it was because I got too fat, but I've realised that actually it's just that my boobs have gotten even huger recently! How will I (tea) bag the lad of my dreams with my boobs hanging out?

Busty bird in search of a bonk

Dear Katie Price,

I think you've answered your own question petal. Netball girls and rugby boys alike won't be keeping their goodies in, and they don't even have your problems! Naturally you can't be buying a new dress, funds must be saved for the epic lash that it will be. Consider burlap-sack chic, it's practical, roomy, and cheap. Like you.

On a personal note, I sympathize with you sweetpea. Aunt Beverly, too, suffers from the Jugs of Doom. We large-chested ladies should make sure we keep complaining, just in case the flatter of our friends forget how lucky they really are.

Dear Aunt Beverly,

I was recently accosted by a woman offering free chlamydia testing. I happily obliged, and she led me to the toilets located by the Underground so that I could

deposit my sample. As I went to piss in the pot she emerged through the door and we proceeded to wildly fornicate. Alas it now burns when I pee. What should I do?
Screaming-while-screening

Dear S. Teedee,

Oh dear, have you not received that all-clear text yet? In my days, sexually transmitted diseases didn't exist, but I know all about sexually predatorial women. It sounds as though she took advantage of your dogooding instincts. Drink cranberry juice and get yourself down to a proper clinic to get checked out for the whole spectrum of disease: those test-girls are filthy. Those who can't get rid, teach. In good news, at least she's already got your phone number.



Just a Thought

When I am not eating babies, I like to spend my time betting on something called the terrorism stock-market. This website allows one to place bets on where the next terrorist attack will take place within America. It's a difficult business posturing where the latest example of mass murder will take place, but I enjoy analyzing all the factors which might lead terror to occur. It's interesting and I derive pleasure from it. According to the website the information I impart is even useful in so far as the government uses it to assess threat levels in a particular area at a particular time.

When I revealed this mundane detail of my private life to friends they were appalled. 'You mean, you make money from the death of others?' they said. I was shocked that such amiable and intelligent individuals could consider my actions immoral.

Nobody is hurt by what I do. Indeed, it's probable that people actually derive pleasure from it - isn't that all that matters. The greatest happiness for the greatest number.

Some people seem to think differently. They say that what's really important in life is living a virtuous, upstanding and 'moral' life. That all seems to miss the point. Surely all that is good or could possibly be good about being virtuous is happiness.

But how can that be quantified or accounted for or panned around say my critics. You like a practical understanding of morality. I am confused by this and retire to my bed - to eat babies. Yum.

First Past The Piss-Off

MAITIU CORBETT DOESN'T GIVE A SHIT ABOUT YOUR MANIFESTO

'ELECTION WEEK!' screams the Beaver again. So this is the really important one right? No, hang on, was that a few weeks ago. Shit no, that was a referendum on something. Constitutional stuff I think. But I'm sure there was another election...

Being a Masters student is a weird experience at the LSE. On the one hand you're in the majority (just) and yet all the student organizations and societies are overwhelmed with pesky (hot) undergrads. At Pulse (where I do a totally hip show) the whole fucking committee is two or three years my junior, owing to the fact that I studied in Scotland where they give you an extra year of university to make sure the poor darlings don't feel they have to rush themselves. And shit, I actually find myself looking up to these people. It's like when I realised my brother was as tall and probably stronger than me: I had to respect him. A travesty.

I'm not only being bombarded with pleas to vote for people I once considered underlings, but the results mean nothing to me whatsoever. I'm not even going to be here next year. And yes I know 'apathy is the enemy of progress', but seriously, there's a real election in June this year. Can I concentrate on my own expanding turd-pile of a to-do list and save my political self for the big one?

Do you people have any idea how much paper you're asking me to trawl through on a daily basis? I have about 500 pages a week of reading

for classes, plus all the shit for two dissertations and the job-hunt I'm stressfully not doing. But this manageable odyssey of reading is as nothing compared to the barrage of emails from every society I signed up to during fresher's week (I did go a little mental, what with the £1 per membership candy shop effect).

Add to this the constant editorials in the Beaver, which are usually so colourful and weirdly-formatted that it gives you inner ear problems. Then add the relevant articles in the News and a bloody pull-out section. And to top it all off, this week the editor urged me to read every single SU manifesto! Good God woman, I've got shit to do! I need to go sit down (which for the secretly middle-aged twenty-something like me is very much on the to-do list, after 'eat soggy home-made sandwich').

All this is compounded by the fact that the very position that incites my apathy also denies me the possibility of 'getting involved' myself. I can't run for any of these positions because I'm not sticking around. In this case, my apathy may be excused by my exclusion. Isn't

democracy built on the right to run for office? There is some idealism in me after all, just not enough to spread around the fractured electoral chaos of university politics.

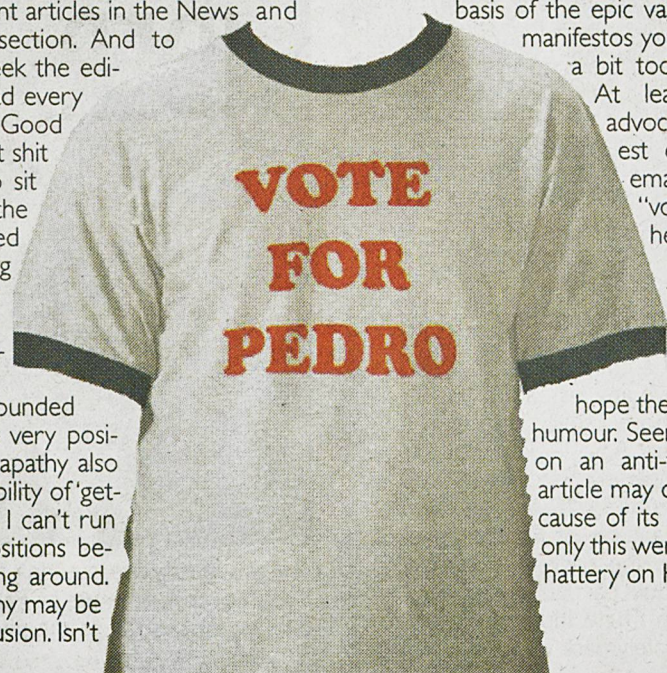
And in the last few days it got even more irritating: the endorsements started rolling in. Lots of official emails from society presidents beseeching me to vote for their chosen messiahs. Admit it, you're just asking me to vote for your mates, and if you're really recommending them on the

basis of the epic vaguery of student manifestos you're taking this all a bit too seriously mate.

At least in Glasgow advocates were honest enough to send emails out saying "vote for Gary - he's a laaaaad!".

Given that the paper I've sent this to is at the brunt of my ireful twattery, I

hope they have a sense of humour. Seems weird to end on an anti-tautology - this article may cease to exist because of its very existence. If only this were true of the ass-hattery on Houghton Street.



T.S. SLEAZE

GARETH LEWIS ON WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF ALICE PELTON HAD A SEX CHANGE

I don't advise you read this article. What follows is dishonourable in the same way that fox hunting is dishonourable. It amounts to bullying. The poor fox doesn't stand a chance.

Neither does this author. Unlike our vulpine fugitive, however, this vermin sprung himself. We've been getting e-mails for weeks asking us to review this book. Apparently a copy was sent to the Beaver office. It's since - worryingly - disappeared. Luckily, there are a couple of chapters posted online. I can't guarantee the digital word is, verbatim, that printed. I can guarantee it's not going to morph into Tolstoy on the page.

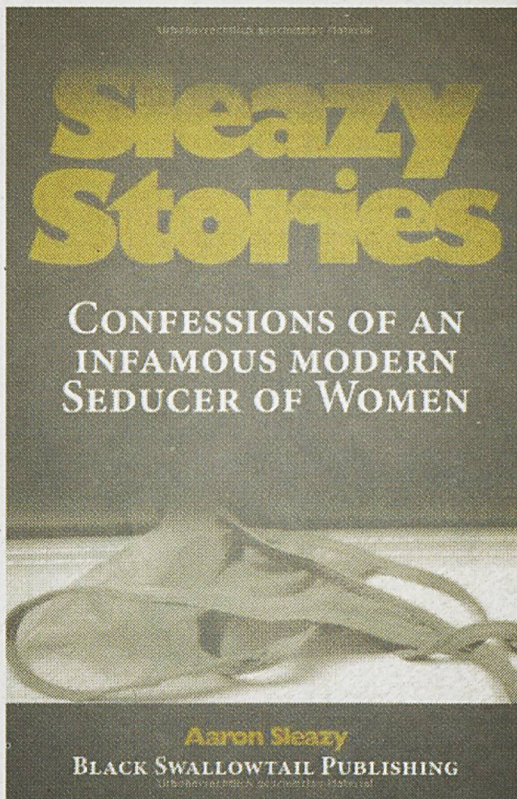
I've spent whole minutes of my life trying to unearth the real name of this guy, not least because I didn't want to besmirch my Google search bar with his pseudonym. Aaron Sleazy (A.S.S henceforth) is the disquietingly proud author of *Sleazy Stories: Confessions of An Infamous Modern Seducer of Women* (S.C.A.M.S from now). On his website, A.S.S informs us that his credentials 'include an MSc from the London School of Economics'. It might come as a surprise that not all LSE grads become world-leaders, bankers or astronauts. Some take the path less travelled by: they become pick-up artists.

The chapter I read is called "Do you want to fuck me?" I don't even want to read this, so we are not off to a good start. Besides, it's a misleading title because nobody ends up having sex. One night, A.S.S goes off to a club called The End, apparently on his own, where he spots a familiar group of pick-up wizards. They too have changed their names to make themselves sound more like superheroes: 'One of them, Dr Yen, walked up to me to tell me I was a monster. My reputation apparently exceeded my actual level of skill'. A.S.S is modest enough to admit that his skill-level (he frequently refers to himself as if he were a Top Trump) is not, yet, 'Monster'. I suddenly find myself fascinated by the Pick-Up Skill-Scale. What's below Monster? Vampire Bat? And then what? Poisoned Frog? Field Mouse? I sense A.S.S rates himself as a Fanged Barracuda, but it would be nice for him to spell it out.

In fact, A.S.S is always leaving out tantalizing pieces of information. Like here: "I need some drugs. Do you have some coke?" she suddenly asked. (I don't do drugs, even though many believe the opposite to be the case). Do they? Why's that then? Or here: 'Later on she even said that she wouldn't need anything tonight. However, I have reason to suspect that she snorted a line somewhere in between'. Do you? What reason? The sneaky Sleaze always keeps us guessing. It's cute how he likes to make himself sound like a detective though ('I have reason to believe...the opposite is the case', and so on. Over and over).

That modesty I mentioned earlier doesn't last, mind. Here's A.S.S after leaving with a girl he ingeniously nicknames 'Sunshine': 'After we got off the bus she wanted to buy some chocolate at a nearby gas station. This was when I realised that I only had one condom with me. I wanted to stock up and get a couple of extra large ones but they did not have any. Instead I bought some regular ones, but those usually lead to a rather bad experience.' Poor A.S.S - like forcing a baby into a balloon. I completely understand. I've found that a well-restored 14th Century cannon, a prosthetic arm or a tube of Pringles - preferably paprika - does the trick in an emergency.

The Pringles should particularly appeal. Aaron Sleazy is also Aaron Quite Hungry. He's forever eating. Here he is, safely back at Sunshine's place:



'I still played it cool. Instead I should have pinned her down and railed her right there. We took a break to eat some more. Because I felt stuffed I lied down and we cuddled for bit'. OK - so the retrospective rape-wish ruins the effect of the snuggly embrace, but we can forgive him that. Cookies, anyway, are still the way to a Monster's heart.

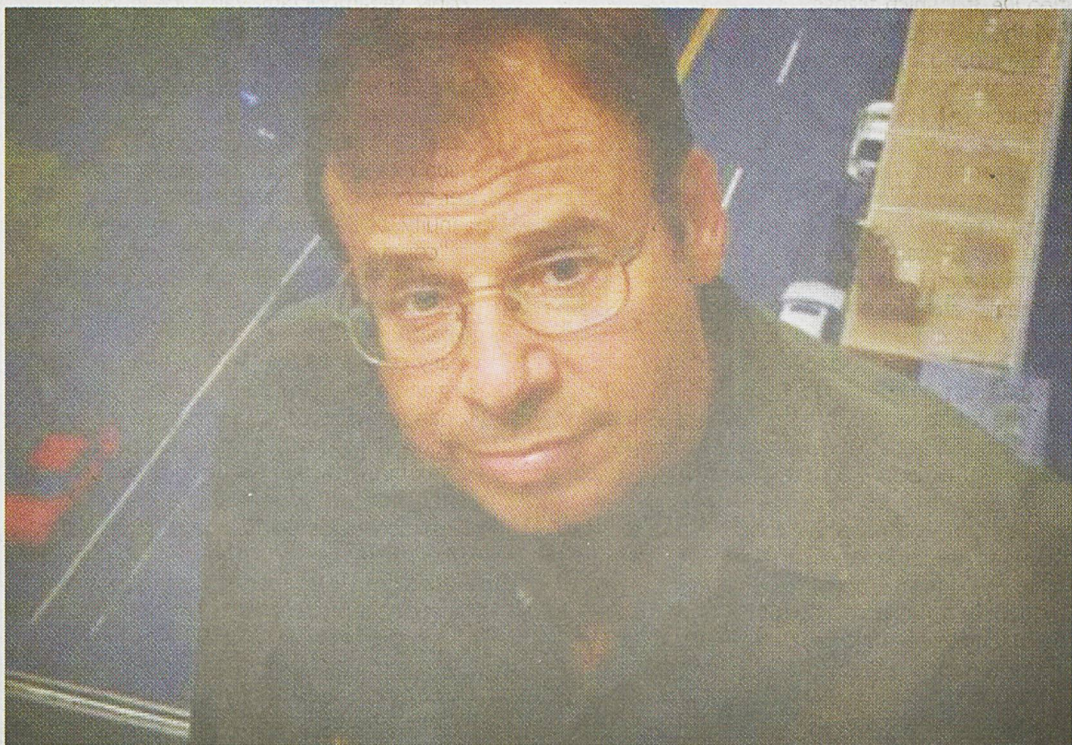
My favourite quote from A.S.S's chapter is also the most confusing. Out of nowhere, A.S.S gleans a weird and wonderful insight into his own complicated moral maze. At least, I think he does: 'I liked this girl. I used to think that women who treat you nicely only do so because they don't want to feel like sluts. However, I have later learnt that they

have no scruples about using you only for your penis if this is all they desire. I was too concerned about "being in control" and thus acted aloof. This meant that I blew a chance to get to know someone as a person.' I don't really understand this, but I am now worried - this is turning into *Jane Eyre*. Has our arch-player gone soft - literally?

Luckily we've nothing to fear. A paragraph later and A.S.S is over it and back in action. This time he means business: "I grabbed her hair and fucked her head with a few good thrusts". Nice bit of headfucking there. Sunshine begins to morph into a horse undergoing a medical examination: "I kept a grip on her blonde mane and yanked her head back and forth while I was administering forceful thrusts with my pelvis". He then administers two milligrams of morphine and prescribes some antihistamines.

Soon after, Sunshine experiences a devastating orgasm that arrives 'in multiple waves' and leaves thousands without food or shelter. A.S.S's honesty here is not only commendable, it's hilarious: 'She may even have squirted a little bit. I am quite sure that a small load splashed against the palm of my hand but I could not verify it because she had only lit some candles.' A.S.S's need to empirically verify Sunshine's seasonal downpour proves one thing: you can take the pick up artist out of the LSE, but you can't take the LSE out of the pick-up artist.

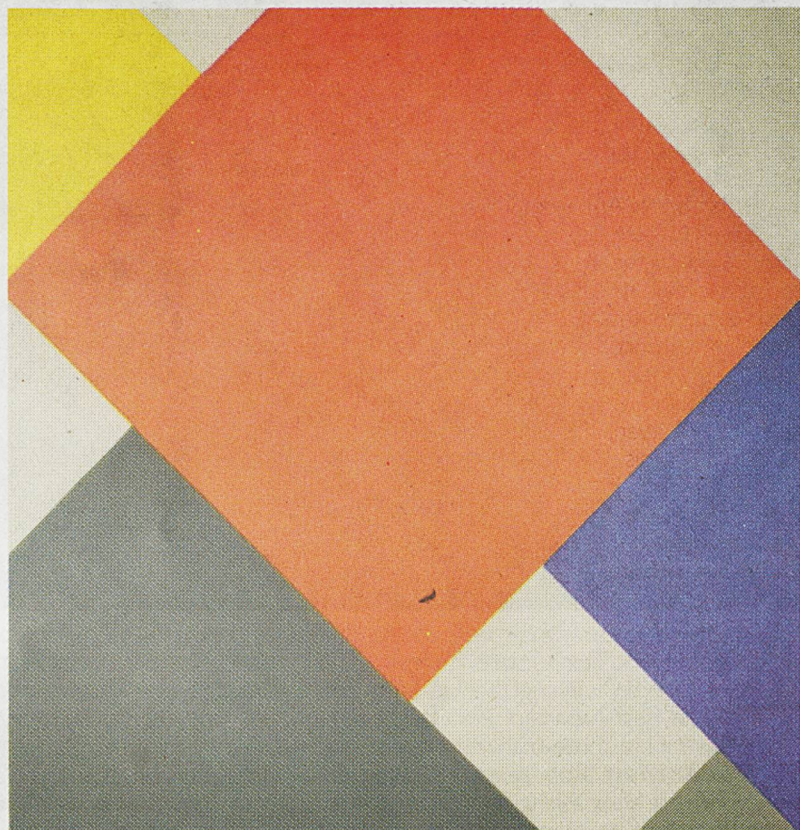
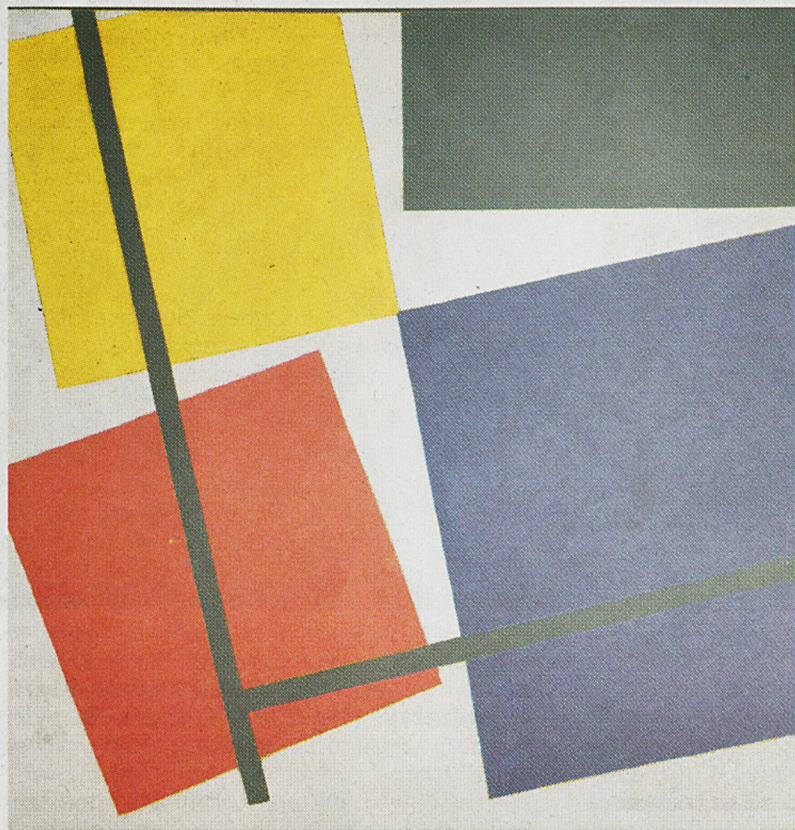
'Sleazy Stories: Confessions of An Infamous Modern Seducer of Women' by Aaron Sleazy is, it turns out, at Alice Pelton's house. She was going to write about it this week but opted to describe anal ovulation instead. Turn to the back page for a drip by drip account of this miracle of rectal expulsion. Incidentally, if you do find you're missing any of your porn magazines, sex toys or shit-specked petri dishes, it's always worth checking with A.P. before making the long walk to lost property. (But I do love her).



Try as we may, we couldn't find a picture of Aaron Sleazy, so we've had to improvise. Apologies to Rick Moranis, who we at PartB all love dearly. As this picture clearly shows, Rick is extraordinarily tall (but not as tall as the photographer).

CONSTRUCTING A NEW WORLD

THEO VAN DOESBURG: COMPOSITION V TO COMPOSITION XX WITH JX SHEN



It was as if a group of artists decided that they wanted to do some mathematics – that was the impression I was left with at the end of the exhibition entitled **Van Doesburg and the International Avant-garde** at the Tate Modern. Avant-garde represents a pushing of boundaries of the norm or the status quo, primarily in the cultural realm. In the culture of art, **Theo van Doesburg** sought to create a kind of universal aesthetic utopia consisting of brightly coloured squares and boldly delineated lines. He founded the Dutch art movement entitled *De Stijl* which, translated, means “The Style”. And the work of Van Doesburg and his followers are indeed highly stylized, just like the building blocks of an economics model. In this sprawling exhibition of 11 rooms, you will come across just about as many colourful rectangles and squares as the manufacturers of Rubik’s cubes do – which is a lot more colourful rectangles and squares than you really want to see.

A bit of background: Theo van Doesburg was the leading figure in the development of geometric abstraction following the era of Picasso’s cubism, fostering contacts with devotees of Dada and the Bauhaus, preaching the austere geometrical principles of *De Stijl* – the art movement he founded – and thus becoming a sounding board and transmitter of ideas for the diverse network of artists who shared his vision. Moved by the idea that art had to improve the lot of the masses by coming down off gallery walls and going into the streets, Van Doesburg wanted to create the kind of art that is universal. He sought to establish a visual vocabulary comprised of elementary geometric forms comprehensible by all and adaptable to any discipline. Despite being the founder, it was not Van Doesburg, but Piet Mondrian who became the artist most commonly associated with *De Stijl* art movement, especially since he achieved major celebrity when fashion designer Yves Saint Laurent, in his fall collection of 1965, featured shift dresses in blocks of primary color with black bordering – a design inspired by

Mondrian.

It was not easy to enjoy the exhibition: Van Doesburg’s incessant zest for order and rationality gradually becomes stifling. There is a distinct lack of human element in the works exhibited. Instead, art is rationalized with cartesian formulation and mathematical precision. The work entitled *Arithmetic Composition*, for example, is a mathematical arrangement based on the ratio 3, 6, 12, 24 on a grid displaying the progression of four diagonally aligned black squares. It is a piece of work that is sombre and precise, not to mention terribly self-important. Van Doesburg justified the work as a way to express simultaneity and time sequences in space – an artistic expression of the 4th dimension, if you will. A lot of the art works present had unsentimentally functional names devised with cold clinical detachment: *composition V*, *composition XX*, *counter-composition VI*, *counter-composition XII*, etc. With a little derivative ingenuity, one would be able to figure out that the “counter-composition” pictures are the likeliness of the original “composition” pictures tilted at 45 degrees. Incidentally, innocuously tilting the paintings has often been speculated as the primary reason for the fall-out between Van Doesburg and Mondrian: Mondrian never accepted diagonals and insisted on horizontals, whereas van Doesburg proclaimed diagonals to be superior because of their dynamic aspects, and featured much of the diagonals in his art. They found their differences irreconcilable and thus declared a split in their friendship.

Although *De Stijl* appears to be lacking in appeal as a method of painting, its simple functionality and inherent equilibrium shines through in architecture and everyday design. In the rooms of architecture, there are more madly intricate assemblies of coloured cubes and rectangles, but here they serve a more tangible *raison d’être*. *Model of the Small Ballroom, Café l’Aubette, Strasbourg*, a wooden miniature ballroom designed by Van Doesburg, invites one to peer through the doors into a space of lively balance, where the

exuberance of colours is contained by the rigidity of lines and grids. Room 5 of the exhibition was dedicated to *De Stijl* typography, which is inscribed with a square or rectangle, with absolutely no curves. The typeface is a succinct representation of the artworks in this exhibition – structured, ordered, meticulous, remorselessly simple and unapologetically loud in the invariable use of capital letters. There were also aesthetically pleasing examples of invitation cards, signage and advertising posters incorporated with geometric visions that exude a distinctly modern feel, even today.

Nevertheless, 10 rooms later, one is left with a gasping need for the fluidity and natural curvature that had been present in the earlier works of Van Doesburg, as displayed in the first room. In *De Stijl*, the artist is a mechanic who manufactures and assembles. With the serialization of artworks, the proliferation of grids, lines and angles, and the mathematical mechanics, one cannot help but feel that to *De Stijl* group, art seems like something to be controlled, contained and rationalized, rather than expressed and set free. This is a far cry from the “spiritual expression” that art should be about according to Wassily Kandinsky, the man who had once been a source of Van Doesburg’s inspiration. Still, the key of avant-garde is the overturning of what has come before, so we must not be surprised. While it is not difficult to understand the *De Stijl* notion and desire to elegantly combine mathematics, art and musical symphony, it is much more difficult to appreciate the end result. Modern art has, too often, been a series of very good ideas that gave birth to very ugly manifestations.

Van Doesburg and The International Avant-garde: Constructing a New World is open until 16TH MAY 2010 at the Tate Modern



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After improvising his way to the final of *So You Think You're Funny* in 2005 and then winning the Hackney Empire Best New Act Award for 2010 with his three-man impro hip hop band **Abandoman**, Rob seems destined for big things. Indeed, after asking to meet me in an exclusive Soho private members club, I couldn't help but feel he may have already made it. But after meeting him, it became immediately obvious that he's just a down-to-earth Irishman who loves what he does.

Lets start at the beginning, how did you get into comedy and hip-hop?

Comedy came after hip-hop. I got into hip-hop for the very first time, and went 'this is amazing', it was House of Pain. You know the way you always look up to the guys who are three years older than you? Well, the coolest guy, the one I perceived as being the most popular guy, he loved "Jump Around" by House of Pain. I was twelve, he was fifteen, he was a Scout, and we went on this trip and that was all he played, him and his mate. And they would rap all the lyrics - I remember thinking they were like Kid and Play from House Party! They kinda swapped over rhymes and stuff, and I was like 'this is dope, it's the greatest thing ever!'

Then about a year later I went off to Irish College where you live in the west of Ireland for three weeks in a place that speaks Irish, you live with a family that speaks Irish and you go to a college during the day. This guy who was in my room was really into Body Count - Ice-T's metal group - and that's all he would play. It still makes me giggle - it's the crudest album I've ever heard. So when I left Irish College, I was like 'so I think I really like hip-hop', bought a Snoop Dogg album - *Doggy Style* had just come out - and then became the only guy in my year who liked hip-hop. Even the guy who is now Ireland's biggest rapper who was in my year hated hip-hop - he was a big Nirvana-head.

As an Irishman who only grew up with very much commercial radio, the first time I put in *Doggy Style*, and it had all these routines like in between the songs it has all these fills - as a 14-year old who'd never heard this before, it was such a big deal. And it was like 'I didn't know you could do this in music'. Then I got into Public Enemy - that was the first concert I ever went to see and they were phenomenal. It was kind of

embarrassing as well, because Ireland didn't really have a band to open - they had this one called Grasshopper who were all guitarists singing songs and opening for like the best hip-hop group at the time. I remember the sound guy came on stage, and he was black, and a lot of the audience thought he was Chuck D, so they started chanting 'Chuck, Chuck, Chuck' and I remember thinking, 'this makes us look retarded'.

And it went from there. When I was sixteen I started a little hip hop crew - for one night, and we gigged. We were called Two Sac and the Enormous DIC, because we really loved Beavis and Butthead and dick jokes.

So this is kind of the beginning of a natural progression into comedy already?

Yeah, kinda. Connor Deasy - the lead singer of The Thrills - as well, was two years ahead of me at school, and he'd seen us that night. I asked him why The Thrills weren't there, and he was like 'we're too big'. So I was like 'what a dick'. Then two years later I saw him on the cover of Rolling Stone, and I was like 'nope, he was right!' So Two Sac and the Enormous DIC were never really destined for fame and fortune.

Anyway, from all that comedy kinda came in 1998 when I started debating in school after I crushed a vertebrae playing rugby and couldn't do much else. But English debating was full up, so I had to do French debating. And I don't speak French. So what I did was to write speeches in English, and give them to my older brother James, who got an A in French. He translated them and gave them back. But I still can't read them. So he has to give me phonetics. So I end up doing this entire series of debates for a year but all off phonetic cards. So essentially, if I didn't sell it with huge performance I was screwed because people could heckle you in French, and I wouldn't know what they were saying. So we'd prepare on the back of these cards generic rebuttals, which would all start with me praising them on what a good question they'd asked. These performances became larger and larger to the point that people would crack up. I'd be so angry and banging my fists, and strutting about, and everything was pure emotion. People would be pissing themselves laughing - and I wouldn't know why it was funny! I remember one time I got a giggle and a round of applause, because my brother had put in a joke, and I hadn't even asked him to.

At the same time as this, I was going to comedy clubs where you'd see **Dara Ó Briain** as a 25-year old, and **Des Bishop**, **Mark O'Doherty** (**David O'Doherty's** older brother) - and I just went 'bang, that's what I'm doing!'

Then I went off to university and it took another five years before I had another 'fuckin' hell' moment when I worked with Jonzie D. He's a big rapper from the 90s who now runs huge hip-hop theatre shows - half of them are breaking conventions, where people like Diversity and Flawless came through, and half of them are theatre shows. So I did a show for him where I freestyled the whole thing, and I killed. And it was the greatest feeling I ever had on stage. I was like 'wow, this is insane' - I'd never mixed comedy and hip-hop, let alone feestyled a routine that got a bigger applause than I'd ever got doing stand up. Then a month later Jonzie cast me in a show with Basy and Soweto Kinch - both MOBO Award winners. And that was when I started thinking 'I could do this'.

So I booked a month in Brighton, and took down a show that was nothing but a few thoughts and a guitarist and freestyled. And it's just grown ever since from that.

So freestyle came quite naturally to you?

Yeah, it did. When I was 18 I started freestyling without much concept of me freestyling, which is kind of a weird thing to look back on. People always say 'when did you start? Can you teach me?' and I'm just like 'well, I was 18 and I'd be drunk, and I'd freestyle' and I don't know where it came from, apart from listening to hip-hop.

And impro, I adore. When I did stand-up, for the first two years I had one joke, maybe. And I got to the final of *So You Think You're Funny?* - every single word improvised - which was nuts, because it wasn't intelligent, but it worked. It was much more natural for me than going, 'this is my joke' - I hate that. For many years I've been envious of people who are writers. For me it's just get on stage and see what happens.

That's a good niche to have. You just won the Hackney Empire Best New Act Award; you must be pretty pleased about that?

Yeah we were thrilled. The whole thing was really good. As a band we've only been together

FREESTYLE COMEDY

FREESTYLE HIP-HOP, IMPROVISED COMEDY AND IRISHNESS ARE THREE THINGS THAT SOUND LIKE THEY SHOULD NEVER BE IN THE SAME ROOM TOGETHER. LET ONE COMBINED ON STAGE. DOING JUST THAT, **ROB BRODERICK** IS ALL ABOUT MAKING THE MOLD. **GRAEME BIRRELL** MET UP WITH HIM TO FIND OUT HOW HE ME TO MIX HIS RAP WITH HIS FUNNY, AND WHERE HE IS GOING WITH IT NEXT.

for a few months, not long. We got together one night when we were on the same bill - James [another member of Abandoman] doing music, I was doing my rap thing, and I just asked him to join me on stage. We did that twice, and then my favourite rap group, Atmosphere, came to London and I blagged my way into being Atmosphere's support act at Scala. We didn't even have routines - we wrote them backstage. When we sound-checked, Slug from Atmosphere asked us what we did, and we had no idea what to say! But we went out to a full hip-hop crowd and it was lovely. And then we've more or less worked together since then.

Hackney was a big date in the diary. We went out to 1,500 people - we're not used to that. And, yeah, we just blew them away - I'm still surprised. We got a standing ovation, which we couldn't see because of the lights. It was quite insane when we won. When they were announcing fourth place I was like 'cool - if we get fourth place, I'm happy', then fourth place got announced, and I was like 'cool - if we get third place, I'm happy', then third place got announced, and I went 'cool - I really want to win!'

Winning has been a cool thing - the main thing for us has been that Irish hip-hop that's improvised doesn't sound very good [on paper], so having Hackney in our back pocket is phenomenal.

Would you say it's been a bit of a turning point, where people start to take you a bit more seriously as a comedy act?

It has. The kind of gigs I was getting before Hackney were mainly me as a compère. And since Abandoman has taken off, I've changed the focus of my direction. I really want to take the band to comedy clubs - but it's always hard. You're kind of back to where you started as a new act. So it's been lovely having Hackney behind us for that. It allows us to go 'look, it doesn't sound like it works, but this is something we have won.' The nice thing about this whole project is that we can do hip-hop clubs too.

Do you get a pretty good reception there?

Yeah - they're lovely places. They're really into it because they are looking at different things. They probably enjoy the comedy, but they also are more aware of the freestyle, its capacities and

what goes into it. And we try to bring something to hip-hop clubs that they maybe don't get a lot of. And we seem to get very good receptions.

So have you got any big gigs lined up in the future? Are you going to Edinburgh?

Definitely going to Edinburgh with the band, which will be very good. We're also working on getting back to Ireland more. And we have a bunch of other great shows coming up in London too - we're doing the Bloomsbury Theatre. We did Daisy Lowe's birthday party recently - she actually talks about us in Vogue magazine! We did the BRITs afterparty last week. We just have more and more cool gigs coming up each month.

Are you interested in doing the summer music festivals? They seem be gaining profile with their 'comedy tents'.

We're actually trying to get into festivals more at the moment. We did Bestival last year. It was very cool, so we're trying to get more of those. What's really cool is that the band can play a music stage as well as it could a comedy venue - when someone comes in with a comedy show that also works musically, there's quite a bit of excitement there. Which is why I think **Flight of the Conchords** really works - musically their stuff stands up, the same with **Tim Minchin** - his music is fantastic. A lot of people are worried that musical comedy will only work in a comedy club - and in some cases that's true. But those guys can play both rooms. I'm not saying we're in the same league, but that's kinda what we're trying to do.

Would you compare yourself to Flight of the Conchords? It could easily work in a TV series couldn't it? An Irish improv hip-hop crew that moves to New York?

No, but it could work. We've got a few ideas like that, and places we want to experiment with actually. Drama stuff especially. I write for a hip-hop touring show, and I'm a performer in that as well. So it would be interesting to do something like this with Abandoman. At the moment we just play songs, but it would be interesting to try and open that door and maybe do something more dramatic with songs in it. Possibly something akin to a hip-hop musical?

Is that the long-term goal, then?

Well, the long-term goal is just performing like this for life. That sounds so cheesy! I'm taking that back! My long-term goal is just that it gets to the point where we can tour easily. To be able to continue doing what we're doing now, but on a bigger and bigger scale. I'd love to tour with music bands as their opening act - that's something we're trying to work on more. That would be dope. And then getting to the point where the act stands on its own feet, and we're able to do music venues as well as comedy ones. Music venues are like the Holy Grail for me. Well, maybe not the Holy Grail, but they're what I aspire to. I think I've always seen them as really impressive places to do live concerts.

People go to music venues with a slightly different attitude don't they?

Yeah, when I used to go to hip-hop shows back in Dublin and people like Ugly Duckling were coming through and doing these live shows that had all these different elements - really good interplay between the MCs and the DJ, and the whole thing was really fun and really silly. That's what I'd love to take to our hip-hop shows. Like Kanye West when he did Late Orchestration, that was a show! In music shows, the great live performers are the ones that give you a great show - The Flaming Lips, for example - they give you a great production that is so much more than you could ever get from listening to their records. That's what we'd love to do.

What about Comcomedy [the first place I saw Rob on stage; a great venue for up-and-coming comedy acts] as a venue? It's the only place I've really seen you. What are your thoughts on it?

It's definitely one of my favourite shows around. They've been really great to us, and we're looking at shooting more stuff with them - they're really cool people.

Do you feel like you get a good vibe at their live nights?

Yeah, they get really good audiences. I think it's probably something to do with them having a good space. And they get really good acts too, that are often really experimental. It's brilliant. It's different from the 'one man and his mic' experience of other comedy nights, a really varied bill.

Field Music @ Scala 03.03

SACHIN PATEL

The Brewis brothers are clearly extremely gifted musicians, who write songs (under the banner of **Field Music**) which are intricately arranged, structurally complex, and traditionally evoke

XTC, Steely Dan and the **Beach Boys**. None of this makes their music particularly easy to love – though their Geordie voices are thick with region, they rarely let their emotional guards down, hence why some critics have labelled their music cold and mechanical and knowingly tricky.

None of this can prepare me for witnessing them live – an environment which accentuates their flaws as well as their virtues. Augmented by Ian Black and Kevin Dosdale on bass and guitar respectively, the band launch into *Tones of Town* opener, "Give It Lose It Take It" amidst found sound, glockenspiels, rousing piano and thoroughly excellent drumming. For a few songs at least, the playfulness is plain to see, and the predominantly Sunderland-bookish crowd rewards them with a whole lotta love.

When the band cut to newer material, taken from the recent *Field Music (Measure)* double-album, the response is notably muted, because the band have to an extent abandoned the bucolic textures of their earlier work, in favour of a more guitar-based aesthetic that owes much more to **Led Zeppelin, Fleetwood Mac** and, on oc-



casion, **Queen**. However, bereft of the intense personalities bestowed upon these progenitors, the songs sound strangely lurching and mathematical. Though Field Music are, individually, some of the funniest, warmest and most virtuosic musicians, the sum is sadly less than its constituent parts.

All the more infuriating is just how playful and quick-witted the band seem in between songs, where they deal with all manner of obstacles, from troublesome electricals to the bassist's Hawaiian shirt. The Prince-meets-Sunderland funk of "Let's Write A Book" is very much the exception to this disappointing revelation – for once, the groove is remarkably simple, and it evinces the band's personality. For the middle chunk of the performance, songs like "Something Familiar" and "Each Time Is A New Time" are dispatched with maximum skill (replete with tasteful bluesy guitar licks) but less-than satisfactory enjoyment.

I have really loved Field Music for far too long, championing them to my friends when their chips were down. Now, after a three-year hiatus, I find it hard to empathise with their new direction which, though on record comes across as lovingly crafted and "makes sense", doesn't work that well on stage. Though the band pad out the pure Field Music work with excerpts from their solo albums, I left with mixed opinions of a band who I thought I had really figured out.

Los Campesinos! @ KOKO 25.02

JONATHAN STOREY

Being a law geek who ventures outside the house only to go to occasional classes and to buy DVDs, it may come as some surprise to say that I've never been to a gig before. I told this to my fellow PartB people and most of them nearly had a heart attack or a stroke with shock – the music editors nearly spontaneously combusted right there in the office, quite the fire hazard. This was all a big preface to the news that I was in fact going to my first gig sometime next week, to see **Los Campesinos!** at KOKO, of which I was almost compelled to write an article to get a newbie's take on gigging.

The night started off on a sombre note, with one of my friends reminding me of how shit LCI are and how I was going to have a horrible time and that I would regret going and other such put-me-downs. He quickly shut up when we changed the subject to his own deficiencies in musical taste. **S Club 7** was mentioned...

And with that, me and my guides in 'gigging initiation' were on our way to KOKO. Upon arriving - two hours late, which is apparently normal, and missing both support acts – I was slightly surprised to find that my conservative attire of a shirt and jeans was not completely out of the ordinary. Having expected the cast of *Skins* to have procreated with the cast of *Misfits* in a gigantic Topman orgy and release their spawn in KOKO, it was pleasantly surprising to see at least one pair of normal jeans for every five/six pairs of skinny jeans.

Take that, me, for relying on ignorant stereotypes!

Before the gig started, I kept asking inane questions like: "How will we know when they come on?", "Will there be something telling me to turn my phone off?", "What about photos, aren't there copyright restrictions?" Suffice to say, these didn't go down well, and the groupies and fans alike kept glaring at me to shut the fuck up. But before I could be lynched and have my decapitated head placed on a spike outside the Tower of London, the band themselves came on to a deafening cacophony of cheers.

So, to the gig, which was, contrary to the expectations my disgruntled friend had put in my head, really very excellent. Despite my concerns that he'd be too shouty, Gareth Campesinos! kept his vocal chords remarkably in check, taking care only to vocally explode when the emotion of the song deemed it strictly necessary. To make up for this, he proved his flexibility by occasionally gyrating quite provocatively around the stage. On top of this, the song selection was really good, managing to get a mixture of hits from their previous albums and most of the hits from their new album. The only slight niggle on my part was that they replaced the sublime "We've Got Your Back" with the less sublime "I Just Sighed. I Just Sighed, Just So You Know." This was simply a minor blip in an otherwise flawless set.

The only thing that slightly marred the whole experience was the lesbian couple standing in front of me who had obviously no desire to be

there, and decided to drown in their disappointment by eating each other's faces off via every orifice. Upon being accidentally touched by one of them – who proceeded to not apologise and not make any movement, thinking that my leg was some body part of her partner – I quickly moved away, gaining some irrational homophobic stare for not submitting to their disillusioned foreplay.

But, apart from that, the whole experience was really very good. On being chided by the nameless S Club 7 friend when I returned, I simply retorted with the best retort one can retort with: Fuck off!



Fyfe Dangerfield

DAVID OOI INTERVIEWS GUILLEMOTS FRONTMAN TURNED SOLO ARTIST FYFE DANGERFIELD BEFORE HIS LONDON GIG PROMOTING HIS NEW ALBUM, *FLY YELLOW MOON*

What's your creative process like?

It's a mixture of moments of spontaneity and having to sort of work at things and I am not very good at the working things bit. I'm trying to work on being very good at that.

I tend to be quite impulsive in the way that I write, a lot of the stuff just comes out very suddenly and sort of at random moments. I improvise a lot, by myself and with the Guillemots all the time we write stuff, we're improvising. I am sort of concerned with the way we do improvise that something very true happens and we can then sort of work on it too much and lose that atmosphere that was there originally, and with *Fly Yellow Moon* that was kind of the thing of this record, the majority of it was sort of spontaneous and not entirely finished when it got to the studio, I like that because you can sort of hear, certainly ones like "So Brand New", (the) second track, ones like that it really almost was the first time I really sung it, like "Faster Than the Setting Sun", we decided to have a run through, so Jamie started playing and we got to the end and we were like "Err..., were you recording that?" and he was like "Yeah! That's alright." It's lovely like we'd never played it through before, and that was what we used for the record. I really liked that because I think you get something quite genuine that maybe you don't get. There are benefits of playing the song for months and then recording it but with this record it was sort of just about capturing moments.

Love seems to be a recurring theme in your work, is there a reason for that?

It is and it isn't. It's weird because it does feel like an album with a lot of that in it but when you actually go through and

listen to the lyrics it's only really the first three tracks that are sort of actually what you could call love songs really, and then after that the other songs like "High on the Tide" is about getting away and trying to get your head straight, "Faster Than the Setting Sun" is sort of after an argument and quite a fraught song, "Firebird" and "Don't Be Shy" is all sort of introspective. I'm trying to push for something more in terms of what you write, but you can only write what naturally comes out. It wouldn't really sit right if I tried to write, unless it comes out at the moment of anger or something like that. It's just not what I'm good at, I think I tend to write in quite a romantic way and it's not necessarily quite the same as writing about love. It's to do with the way I just sort of tend to be quite gushy in the way that I write songs, it's just how it comes out. I don't really know why, but I just tend to get very touched by music.

To a degree of course you tend to write from experience. You use what's happened in your life and you put that into the stuff you do. But it's not like, "this is a love song for this". A lot of songs I trace back to certain moments but it doesn't mean it's about that moment I sort of have an idea in my head about what I am writing about and sometimes I don't. Like a track like "Firebird" on the record I don't really know what's that about, I just woke up one night, couldn't sleep, heard a tune, and then you just find the lyrics and it just comes out I'm not really sure exactly what it's about but you're aware of a sort of feeling in the air and you sort of capture that thing.

Do you have to work hard at the lyrics, to get it right?

Well no, you don't have to work that hard. Generally it comes out quickly, it depends, sometimes some of it will come out but then you need to work at the rest of it. Something like "Firebird" sort of came out in like 20 minutes.

Do you have a favourite track in the album?

Genuinely proud of the whole thing, maybe like "So Brand New" is like my favourite track, just really fun to record, I just like the way it sound but I just like the whole thing.

Is there anything you would like to explore in the future, musically?

God yeah, there's a million things I want to explore. I feel like I've only just begun I want to really makes groundbreaking original music but at the same time I love writing song, that's the thing with this record I'd rather try to do something that's really out there, something very traditional and focused that just fitted how I felt. I also really want to start writing lots of instrumental music, really want to get into film soundtracks, I want to start writing pop songs for other people, I

want to write more classical music.

Has your music evolved?

I definitely think it has evolved, and I think probably my standards are higher so that now maybe what I think is a shit song I would have thought was good five years ago. It's weird also how some things, certain sounds and certain call patterns; like I remember how 10 years ago I can just sit there playing that bit. And that's the thing, some of those things that make me feel something, sometimes I wish I didn't, because I am a total sucker for quite cheesy records and certain changes that just bring out this sort of emotion and you could say that that's just too easy but I mean it's what I naturally find myself doing and I think you can't be too contrived and try to be something you're not too much, it would just seem a bit false I think.

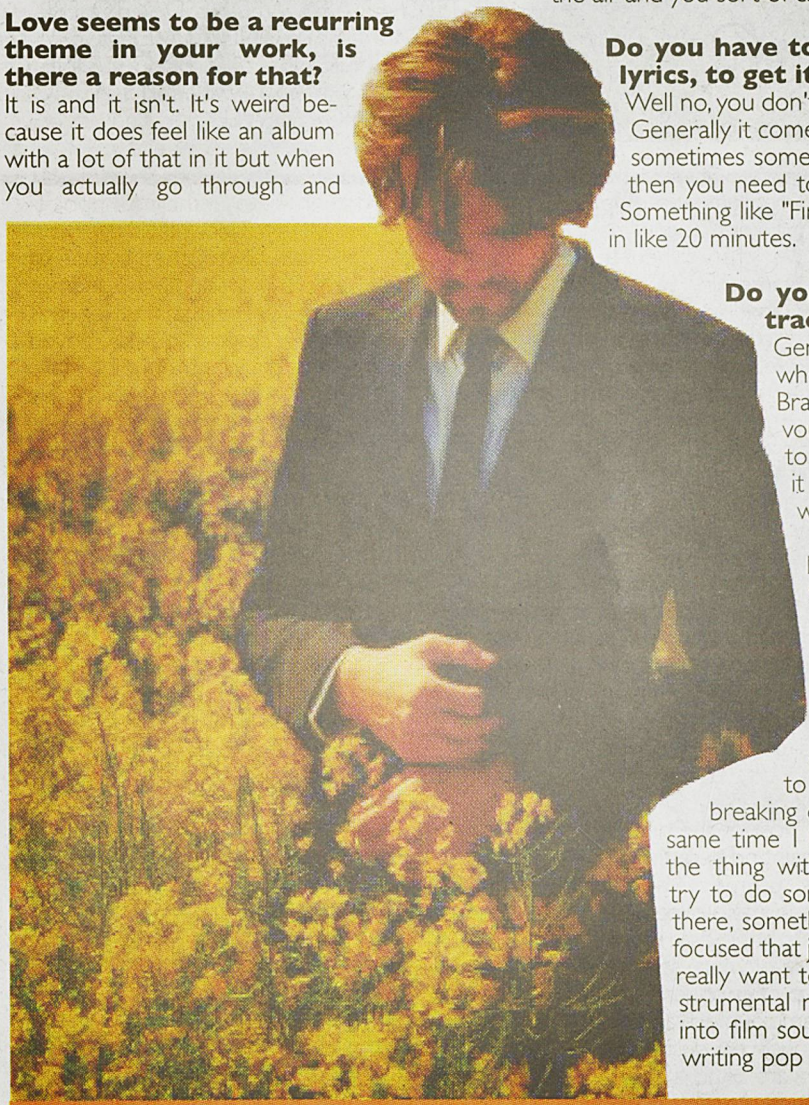
Is there anything you would like to go back and change?

Don't think so, there plenty that I think I've done, that we've done in Guillemots that I think could've been better or that we didn't do that right, but I don't wish we could go back and change. There's stuff that we've done that I am really proud, and I'm happy with the way everything's gone, *smiling*. It's not something I think about too much, I was talking about this last night, about how the tiniest moment has this massive impact on your life, like when I met Greig and the Guillemots, it was only because me and him both got dragged, me by my brother and him by his partner to go and watch this weird comedy programme that they were both taking part in and neither of us wanted to go, and we both got sort of "Come on, you've got to come and support me." and we both met.

And you trace that point to that tiny little decision and that had such a massive influence on so many people's life, like my life, his life you connect to the rest of the band, and the people that work with the band and all this things come out from this one tiny and anything could've happened, I could have gone a different way and something else could've happened, you just never know. But I don't sort of look back on my life and think, "I wish I hadn't done that", it doesn't mean like there are things that you look back and think: "I could have seen how I could have done that differently and maybe that would have been a bit more sensible," but there is a difference between thinking that and actually wishing it. I think I would only really regret things if I didn't think I had tried my hardest at the time and I know I have, I know that with the Guillemots, I know that with both the Guillemots albums. Whether or not there are things I think are right or wrong, now, I know at that time though, I just did my best. I know with this album I did my best and I think as long as you think that, you haven't got any cause to regret anything, I would say.

This album seems 'a step out of this place and time', would you say that?

It's certainly a very 'unfashionable' sounding record. It doesn't sound like a kind of cool modern thing at all, I think what it is, is that, it sort of sounds timeless but not retro. I didn't want it to sound like it was trying to be old but I didn't want it to sound like it was trying to be new either.



SERVING UP SUCCESS

EMMA KELLY IS HAVING A FEAST WITH TV COOKING SHOWS

I am a self-confessed television snob. My favourite shows are **Mad Men**, **The Wire** and **Arrested Development**. However, I do have one guilty secret: cookery shows. Anything with cooking, and you can bet I've seen it. The God of all TV cookery shows is of course **Come Dine With Me**.

The premise of the show is simple - five people cook dinner for each other over the course of a week. The guests mark the host after each meal and then, the following day, move on to the next house. The contestant with the highest

score at the end of the week wins £1,000. My friends and I have actually seen all the episodes. My friend Lois even recognized someone in an episode from about three years ago on a bus, and could tell me all about the episode she was in. Though the idea is simple, it is one of the funniest shows on television at the moment. It's amazing that there have been so many good moments on it that have come out of nowhere, such as a snake crapping on the table, drag queens and an ever present belly dancer.

Celebrity Come Dine with Me is also

over-the-top brilliant and is like a special treat. This version also provides us with some surreal yet amazing moments involving celebrities. Peter Stringfellow's sink collapsing or Jan Leeming flirting with David Spinx are some of my favourites to date. It is also the anomaly of all celebrity reality TV shows, the longer it goes on, the better the guests are getting, which is something to be treasured.

The trouble is that my obsession doesn't end there; it just continues to the other granddaddy of TV cookery shows: **MasterChef**. Members of the public compete with each other through various rounds to be crowned the one and only MasterChef. There's nothing better when eating your breakfast than to watch some random people panicking about the dish they've made and then looking like they're about to cry when Greg tells them it has too much salt! It has all the best elements of a competition-based show. John and Greg are brilliant hosts; their presenting skills extend to randomly shouting things like 'cooking doesn't get much better than this' and then eating amazingly large spoonfuls of whatever food is on offer as though they have been starved for a week before filming.

I may love *The Wire* but I'd happily sit through *Brummies* eating sushi off a worryingly hairy man any day!

MASTERCHEF AIRS WEDNESDAY TO FRIDAY NIGHTS ON BBC ONE. *COME DINE WITH ME* WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BE ON ONE OF CHANNEL 4'S MANY VARIANTS AT SOME POINT DURING THE WEEK.



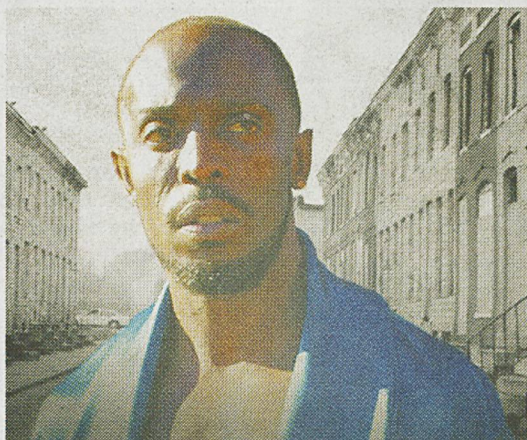
GET WIRED.

DAVID HEWITT APPLAUDS BALTIMORE'S FINEST

The *Wire* is epic. Sometimes I wonder if I would value my life at all if I hadn't seen it. Sometimes I wonder if I would value human life at all if it hadn't been created. It is the first artistic masterpiece to have been created for television. You must watch it.

When it comes to this Baltimore based cop-show there are essentially two groups of people. Those who absolutely love it and those who haven't seen it. *The Wire's* novelistic density is unrivalled in the medium heretofore. Each show is a labyrinth packed with an array of plots and sub-plots that would make a palace-coup seem simple. The characters without exception have an epic depth to their personality, customs and even language. No two individuals will react in the same way to a given scenario and by the end of a few episodes you will have grasped the intricacies of each protagonist.

Ostensibly a police drama, *The Wire* is so much more. It's an epitaph to American Industry, a sociological study of Baltimore and an induction into the drug industry all in one. The show spans the class divide; it engages with people who we would otherwise find repellent and makes them loveable. And it has what literary critics call 'negative capability'. The capacity to step into the



shoes of multiple individuals and explain life as they see it.

The visuals of the city are also exceptional. It gives a glimpse of the realism this drama generates, when I say I am aware of which season of the year a particular group of episodes has been filmed in. Series 2 for example, which tells the story of a bunch of dock-workers, starts in the depths of winter. The men are as hard as the crates they move and the visuals of crisp winter days radiate this sentiment. There is an atmosphere to this part of the story, something which

grows beyond words and speaks to the audience on a level they probably didn't know television could reach.

Another aspect of the show I love is the drugs and the drug industry. Set in an urban area with America's highest crime rate, the show doesn't skimp on the hardships and degenerate behaviour which make up daily life. Having watched five seasons I now feel well-versed in the micro-economy and unique social relations that make up this seedy aspect of society which seldom gets reported. This is real.

Finally, *The Wire* delights on a verbal and philosophical level. The ironies of life 'on the edge' and the absurdities thrust on so many of the characters are often distilled in pithy axioms which help the mind savour each episode. A drug baron lectures a lawyer, 'I got the shotgun, you got the brief-case what's the difference', while the short life expectancy of the low-level drug runners is summed-up at the chess board. 'The pawns get capped early in the game'.

So I implore you. Set aside the revision books this Easter. Invest a hundred quid in buying the box sets and settle down for a month of exceptional television. The world would be heavenly if people watched a television show about hell.

CONDITIONED BY CIRCUMSTANCE

FREE WILL IS PROBABLY AN ILLUSION, SAYS **AMBER WILLOWS**

To be or not to be. That's not really a question. However, the existence of free will remains a debatable issue. Do I make the decisions which govern my life or does someone / something else make them for me?

A great many of our decisions are made for us by the times we live in. Virtually nobody these days thinks it's acceptable to be homophobic or racist. But that is not a consequence of millions of rational minds individually coming to the conclusion that prejudice on those grounds is illogical. While a few leading intellectuals might have realized the folly involved, the vast majority of people have simply accepted new cultural precepts and gone with the flow. Our characters, then, are products of the times we live in. Do we think it's acceptable not to stand when a figure of authority enters the room? Or to heckle someone of a different race? These questions are answered primarily by our circumstance rather than our innate faculties for reason.

All sorts of social prejudices and customs also govern us. I would love to be a film maker, for example. Unfortunately, in this life independent film-making is incredibly expensive and there are very few positions available doing that type of work. Instead, because Law is better respected and the pay is considerably greater I have decided to pursue a career in the legal trade. Thus, the nature of the world has once again foiled my true self; I am coerced into doing something I don't really want to do.

Another source of restriction, is our upbringing. According to George Bernard Shaw 'They fuck you up, your mum and dad'. Our formative years and the expectations of the world which we take from them are probably the single biggest determinant of how our lives will turn out. Expectations and results have an alarming correlation. Parents who demand that their children go to university invariably have children who go to university; those who have a burning love of books will often impart this onto their offspring. Our class prejudices, our life expectations and a great deal of the knowledge which shapes us comes from our parents and their values. And we have absolutely no choice over who they are.

One of the most intriguing ways in which inequality is driven into us is through expectations. Peter Mandelson, hardly a fan of Socratic dialectic, was philosophical enough to spot that in a just society 'an equality of opportunity' was not enough, what is needed is an 'equality of expectation'. That is, people around you and you yourself need to have high expectations if you are to achieve in life. Being an excellent mathematician is not enough if you regard university as being snobbish and pretentious. Alternatively, parents who succumbed to alcoholism and drug-taking

may be far more willing to accept the same traits in their children rather than enforcing a work ethic. What you are expected to be is usually what you become. If you are expected to get drunk at the pub on weekday night or leave school to take up a menial job – chances are, that's what you'll become.

Life's questions are frequently answered by circumstance rather than reason

The Spanish philosopher, Jose Ortega y Gasset noted this dilemma. 'I am me and my circumstance,' he said. Our class, age and nationality all make us act in certain ways. Gasset was quick to spot that this aspect of our own character was not chosen, nor was it biologically predetermined – yet it is inevitably going to change who we are.

A child born to a middle-class household with both parents at home is likely to enjoy a more prosperous and cultured existence than someone who is not. Just as the student who can draw on a wealth of financial and emotional support from home is likely to do better in their exams.

However this argument can be taken too far.

Those who blame their circumstance are shifting blame away from themselves. When the law castigates someone for a misdeed it does so because each human is fundamentally responsible for their own lives and the course that they take. The suggestion that a character flaw is society's fault rather than the individual's is evidently invalid. Society is nothing more than a collection of individuals.

Even so, the individual and the aspect of society they are part of are entwined. That doesn't mean we should condone violence on the basis that someone grew up on a rough estate. But through understanding what drives people and sections of the population to do certain things, we will be better placed to stop them doing wrong. Understanding and forgiveness are not the same thing.

Why people are who they are is also an important subject for politicians. If we judge where someone is in life solely to be a consequence of their own actions then we are unlikely to help them. If people are poor because they haven't worked hard enough then state hand-outs and social security appear an injustice towards those who have done well. Alternatively, if we think people who have 'failed' in life have done so through no fault of their own then the inclination to give such unfortunates a wedge of cash for their troubles grows.

Thus how we think other people came to be should be as important as who they are.



NOMOGAMY

ALICE PELTON'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY CONTINUES...

Recently, newspapers and magazines have been full to the brim with articles discussing infidelity, as Tiger Woods, Ashley Cole and John Terry fight it out to win the title of 'World's Most Apologetic husband'. I think the public 'outcry' caused by all this is hilarious; who on earth would expect Tiger Woods to stay faithful? The man is one of the richest and most successful sportsmen on this earth. Everyone knows that pretty much all incredibly rich and successful men and women will at some point cheat on their partners; the difference is, Woods actually married a woman who cared.

More to the point, how does this make a difference as to whether someone should captain a national football team? Shagging a model and kicking a ball around are separate acts, which, apart from the fact that doing the latter as a profession affords the lifestyle in order to get the former, don't affect each other. India Knight summed it up perfectly in last week's Sunday Times when she wrote; 'I don't understand why being good at something means you automatically have to be a moral exemplar. Why? Whose stupid idea was that?'

When asked, I always say I've never cheated on anyone. But in hindsight that statement is not really true. I was with my first boyfriend - who I probably should stop naming seeing as people actually read these articles now - for over 3 years. I'm cursed with 'grass is always greener' tendencies and thus about 6 months after we first got together I'm ashamed to admit I sort of gave one of his best friends a sneaky hand-job. We were both at a house party which had just been shut down by the police who ram-raided the front door and found me in a compromising position with a bong in the front room. Later, in no fit state for 15 year olds, this bloke and I found ourselves sat on a pavement in the middle of a miserable council estate.

My reasoning was if I didn't kiss him on the lips it didn't count as cheating. Like a 15 year old version of Julia Roberts in *Pretty Woman*, I avoided the sense of intimacy which locking lips imposes, making it easier to suppress my trenchant feelings of guilt afterwards. I told my boyfriend about my infidelity a year after it happened and his reaction was surprisingly calm. He said the next day he felt a bit weird sitting next to the aforementioned-hand-job recipient on the bus, but he didn't break up with me or make a fuss.

This taught me an important lesson in the land of cheating: if your partner is a little bit too forgiving or says the words '*honestly, that's fine, why did you think that you needed to tell me about it?*' it inevitably means they have done the same thing, and don't have the grounds to get really pissed off at you. (It turned out he'd fingered a girl he'd met while I was away on holiday one summer. Lucky bitch.)

On the subject of hand-jobs, last Wednesday I walked past the two guys who dish out Chlamydia tests on Houghton Street, to find they had pinned my article from last week onto their stall. When I enquired, they said that my description of middle-class outrage at the suggestion of a Chlamydia test was spot on; I then did a test myself and they offered me some condoms and lube for my efforts. I paused when accepting the lube - I

wish I hadn't; the next 10 minutes were spent listening to their descriptions of how good it feels when a girl wanks you off using gallons of the stuff. 'Oh and if you put a little bit on the inside of the condom it's game over!' I love the fact that the taxpayer is funding these two lovable chaps to dish out such sex advice; it gives a whole new meaning to the words Camden's Sexual Health 'outreach programme.'

Anyway, I only came close to cheating on my first boyfriend just one other time. It happened when I was on a Year 11 history field trip to St. Petersburg; I drank 6 Bacardi Breezers (cos I was like, so cool) and met a gorgeous young man from the boys' school that happened to be sharing the hotel with us. We were sat in his room chatting away about our lives, when he told me of his dreams to study Economics at the LSE.

'What's the LSE?' I remember asking him. He



told me it was a highly regarded university, and I was so in awe of his supreme confidence and intelligence that, I kid you not, when it came to perusing prospectuses a year later I remembered his comments and decided to see if this 'LSE' thing really existed. When I first came here I saw him around on Houghton Street quite a lot - he'd grown up and become an arrogant twat, but whenever I saw him I thought 'that man will never know the profound effect he has had on my life.' It was always a deep moment.

I've also been stupid enough to be the third woman. Whilst I was getting over my first boyfriend I spent the night with a Policeman who unbeknown to me had a girlfriend. We met through mutual friends and late one night me and a girlfriend were invited back to his place; using his connections he dialled a secret number and got crates of alcohol delivered by taxi to his house, where a catastrophic game of strip poker ensued.

I'm no poker player and I ended up writhing naked on his sofa, like the late Jade Goody, desperately trying to cup my 'kebab'. Later, when we got to the bedroom I quite rudely asked where his uniform was. 'Err...it's in my wardrobe!' he replied, before asking if he could teabag me. Put it this way; the police gear didn't stay in the wardrobe for much longer. I think I must have been angry I'd got so drunk and naked, or that he'd assumed I would willingly let him dangle his testicles

into my mouth, but I woke up the next morning severely lacking recollection, wearing a bullet vest. My friend, who slept in the room next door, said the only thing she overheard through the night was me shouting 'Get down on the floor and put your hands up bitch!'

Teabagging - now that is an activity. What kind of man wants to stuff his scrotum into your mouth like a taxidermist? I wonder what came first, the tea bag or the act of teabagging? I imagine the Roman Empire had a lot of teabags but not a lot of cups; they did however have a lot of slaves, so they probably filled their mouths with hot water to make a nice brew. That was until one Roman looked down at his testicles and realised that they were missing out on a fantastic opportunity. And that's what cups were invented for, so they could take the actual teabags out of slaves' mouths to make room for their testicles.

Moving on, as Karma goes, I soon got bitten on the ass for my previous infidelity. I've written quite a lot about Banjo cheating on me, but the thing I've learnt the most from this experience was that if you have a hunch, it's probably right, so you should trust your instincts. And there's no smoke without fire. (My originality is, at times, astonishing.)

I'm not really sure what my feelings are on monogamy. If it all seems such a bloody effort, and people literally have to restrain themselves constantly from copulating with other people, then what's the point? And does it matter if you just kissed, or gave him a hand job or a blozzer? I think the thing about being monogamous is having something which only you get to share with your partner. This would lead me to argue that if you ever wanted to be truly monogamous you wouldn't sleep with anyone else before and after you meet them. When I put this theory to my grandma last week she laughed in my face and gave me a piece of advice which was the tremendous culmination of 90 years' life experience; 'Alice, never marry a virgin.' That was that sorted then.

My last point is that it has always amazed me how much this society seems to value Weddings. It's as if two people buying H. Samuel rings for each other and wasting 20K of their life's savings on some shitty ceremony in Kent, is an achievement. It's an absolute load of crap. What is an achievement is making it through the first decade of your marriage intact - trying to have kids, bringing up kids, losing jobs, caring for elderly parents - I don't know how people do it - and a lot of people don't.

How about we actually celebrate people's anniversaries? That's a fucking achievement. I'll gladly spend time commemorating the fact that someone I know has toiled and fought long and hard for a marriage and wants to let everyone know about it. And I'll even celebrate a divorce - because lets face it, there will be so much alcohol there, you can get completely battered for free.

My housemate and I have vowed to keep the corks from the champagne bottles that are popped when we announce our respective engagements; we're keeping them as the first mementos to be tossed onto the fire at our 'Burn Baby Burn' Divorce parties. Now *that* is cynicism.