

# HAPPY 59<sup>TH</sup> HOWIE D!



# The Beaver

16 February 2010  
Newspaper of the  
London School of Economics  
Students' Union  
thebeaveronline.co.uk



Photos: Ben Phillips, Divya Chandran

## Reforms passed amidst complaints regarding constitutional validity

Phyllis Lui

The referendum regarding governance reforms for the LSESU has been met with much controversy after voting closed last Thursday.

The referendum resulted from 18 months of consultations by the LSESU. It contained nine articles that would constitute a new constitutional document, which were voted on by 985 students last Wednesday and Thursday.

The nine articles which were voted on were Articles of Governance; Executive, Trustees and Sub-Committees; General Meetings, Policy and Referenda; External Trustees; Democratic Committee and Appeals; Assemblies; Elections; Student Activities and Media Group Fee.

In an earlier statement to the Beaver, the LSESU felt that the reforms were created after "two years of surveys, consultations and focus groups, which were almost all open to every LSE student - nearly 1,500 student interactions have been recorded. Over 1,000 hours of Union staff and sabbatical time have gone into researching and collecting the data, and creating a new document that

will satisfy as many students as possible."

"A total of 7,877 votes were cast in the referendum, with a peak vote of 985 in the question on the Media Group charge," read another statement from the LSESU after the results were announced.

"The two proposals which didn't pass were one to have External Trustees and one to charge for joining the Media Group. This means that all of the Trustees will be elected students. The winning margins in both of these were roughly 2/3 against the proposals. This shows that, whilst the elections were lost, it was important that this debate was heard on campus."

"The professionalism of LSE's Media Group hinges on our contributors. Imposing a charge to join would reduce participation and erode this foundation. The students' vote has ensured the Media Group will continue to prosper," said Pulse Station Manager Robert Charnock.

LSESU General Secretary Aled Dilwyn Fisher, who campaigned for the reforms last week commented: "I am delighted that these reforms have passed - they will deliver better representation for postgraduates, less bureaucracy for societies and a more effective Union. I can't wait to see our new Sabbatical Of-

ficer positions elected in the Lent Term Elections in Week 8. Save one, all the documents proposed passed by between 80% and 90%, showing overwhelming student support for an improved Union."

Although there were no motions proposed at last Thursday's Union General Meeting (UGM), students asked whether the Sabbatical Officers had taken time off work to campaign. This came after a complaint was filed to the Returning Officer Shanti Kelemen regarding whether they "should have to count their salaries against the £50 campaign budget or have the campaign activities restricted". Fisher had said that he felt such questions to be "petty" but if that was what the crowd wanted, they were willing to take vacation days for Wednesday and Thursday.

Concerns have been raised regarding the conduct of Union staff, as well as voting procedures.

**Continued on pages 4 & 5**

**Comment page 10**

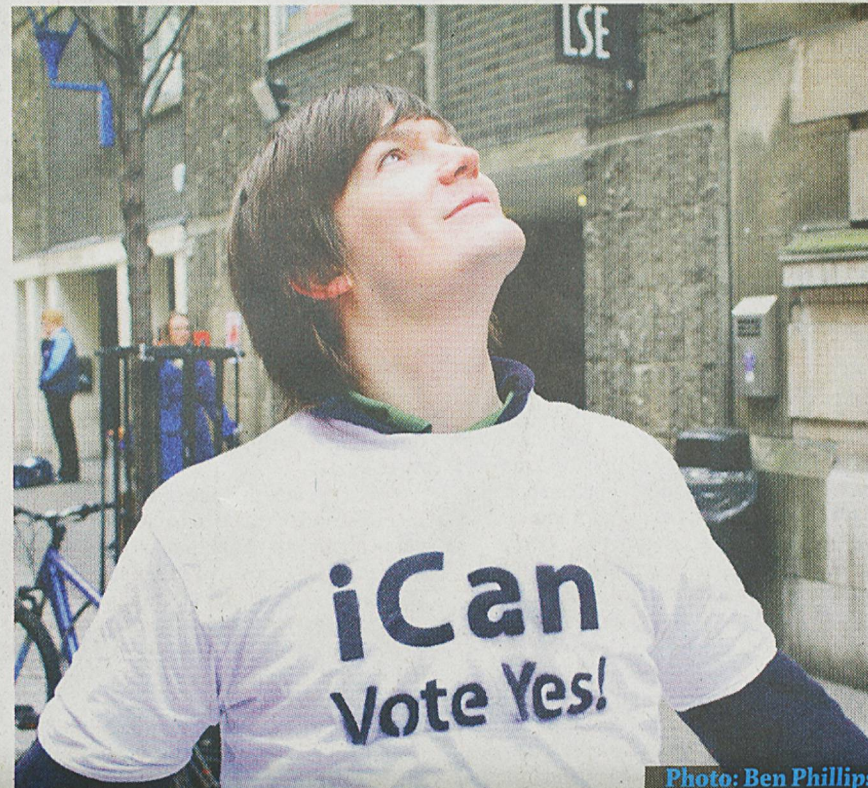


Photo: Ben Phillips

## Editorial Board

**Executive Editor**  
Shibani Mahtani  
editor@thebeaveronline.co.uk

**Managing Editor**  
Sachin Patel  
managing@thebeaveronline.co.uk

**News Editor**  
Phyllis Lui  
Eunice Ng  
news@thebeaveronline.co.uk

**Comment Editor**  
Nathan Briant  
comment@thebeaveronline.co.uk

**Features Editors**  
Madeeha Ansari  
Marion Koob  
features@thebeaveronline.co.uk

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Mehek Zafar  
social@thebeaveronline.co.uk

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Calum Young  
partb@thebeaveronline.co.uk

**Photo Editor**  
Ben Phillips  
photo@thebeaveronline.co.uk

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Ahmed Alani  
design@thebeaveronline.co.uk

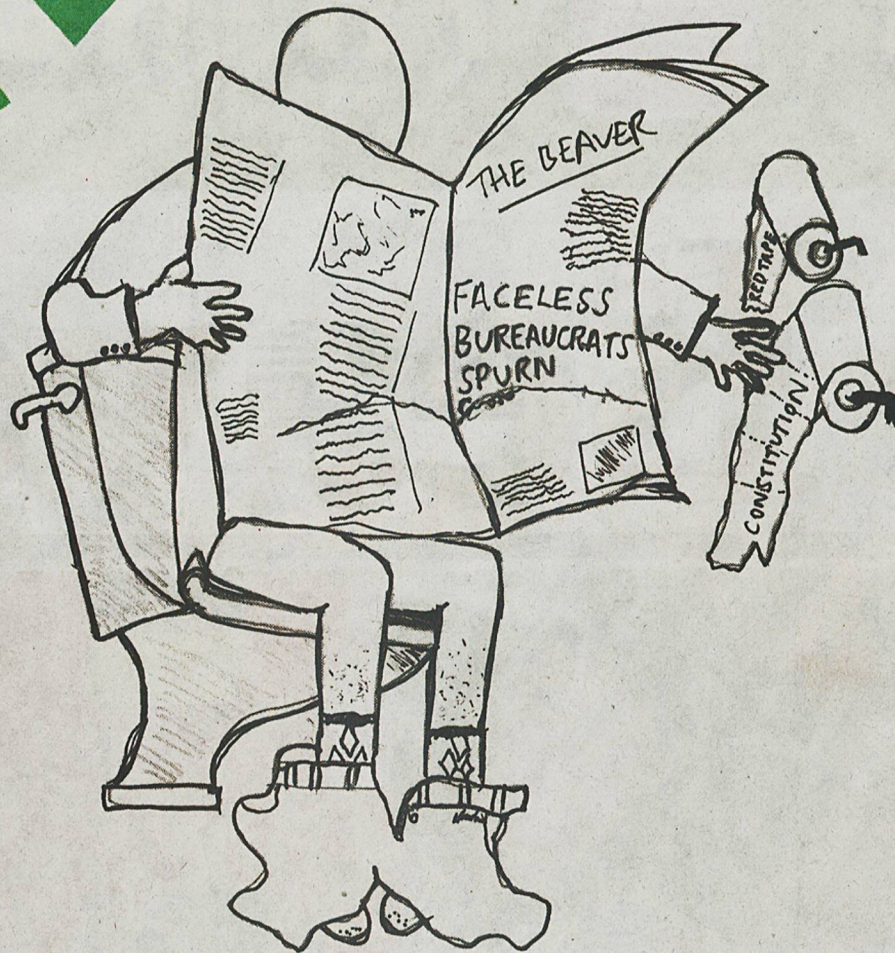
**Web Editor**  
Oliver Wiseman  
web@thebeaveronline.co.uk

**General Manager**  
Louis Dailencourt  
info@thebeaveronline.co.uk

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

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# The Beaver

Established in 1949

Issue No. 723

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## Supercontroversy or simple screw-up?

**E**ighteen months of consultation, several heated UGMs, two weeks of campaigning and two days of voting later - students of the LSE could be forgiven for thinking this was all meant to be over. We were meant to have a more efficient Union, governed by documents that reflect what the students want and respond to their needs. Less bureaucracy, more participation, student voices being heard - all very lovely concepts.

Instead, the words that have been associated with the referendum and the past week's campaigning are vastly different. Riddled with controversy and complaints from both the "for" and "against", there are now loud cries of "returning democracy to our Union".

Reductionist campaigns and the severe lack of information aside, the purpose of the reforms was essentially to put "students" back into the LSE Students' Union. Whatever one's take on how that can actually be achieved - external trustees or not, UGMs as sacrosanct or

online voting, media group charge or not - upholding the Constitution is surely integral to the validity of these changes. The debate surrounding whether or not the reforms need to pass by a simple or supermajority has been heated, with both sides using similar clauses of the Constitution to justify their case. As it stands, the Chair of C&S and the Returning Officer, in their elected roles, have taken the decision that a simple majority is all that is needed, claiming "there is no doubt in this situation".

Still, with thirty complaints in 24 hours, a Facebook group with 225 members (at the time of print), and multiple letters sent to the Beaver, how can two members of the Union, albeit elected members of the Union, make a decision so unequivocally and firmly?

Perhaps more disconcerting are the concerns about the conduct of unelected members of staff surrounding the referendum, allegations that are currently being investigated.

It seems like various structures put in

place to address the concerns of students to do with the referendum have instead become structures that belittle and talk down to these individuals. Concerns; especially justified, vociferous, widespread concerns, should never be dealt with in a way that is anything less than professional and respectful.

What is quickly needed is a firm and fair decision on the matter at hand: one that takes into consideration the concerns and complaints that have emerged from both campaign groups; one that does not resort to talking anyone down, and one that resolves this dispute which is threatening to overshadow all the decisions that have been made by the electorate. If the Students' Union truly wishes to engage with the whole student body, they could do a lot worse than rise out of a constitutional quagmire, cut through the fog of opposing statements and shadowy meetings, and settle on a conclusive future for the way the Union operates.

## Clarification

The Comment piece "Inequality, not Islamophobia" published in the Beaver on 2nd February 2010, written under the pseudonym "André Leo" contained some factual inaccuracies and misrepresentations.

After concerns were raised about the potentially inflammatory nature of the article, it was revealed that there is no verified report that Ahmed Saeed Omar Sheikh, convicted of the murder of journalist Daniel Pearl, was a member of Hizb ut-Tahrir. The article also stated incorrectly that Bilal Abdullah admitted he was radicalized by Hizb ut-Tahrir.

It has also been pointed out to us that any comparison between Hizb ut-Tahrir, and the BNP, neo-Nazi's or KKK may be deeply offensive to the many Muslims on campus, since their ideologies are based upon the premise of racial supremacy, whereas Islam is a religion that is open for anyone of any background to join, whether originally Jewish, Christian, Hindu or other, and does not differentiate on a racial basis.

The article mentioned that "Article 116 of the HT constitution stipulates that once a woman is married, she is obliged to obey her husband, as if she were a dog or a slave; something to be owned and ordered

around". The full text of the translation of Article 116 of the constitution states: "Marital life is one of tranquillity and companionship. The responsibility of the husband on behalf of his wife is one of taking care, and not ruling. She is obliged to obey her husband and he is obliged to meet the costs of her livelihood according to the seemingly standard of living"

Other articles include "She has the right to practice in trading, farming, and industry; to partake in contracts and transactions; to possess all form of property; to invest her funds by herself (or by others); and to conduct all of life's affairs by herself" and "The married couple must fully assist each other in performing the household duties"

We would like to apologize for any offence caused or personal damage to Mr. Pankhurst, and reiterate that it was not our intent to artificially inflame tensions on campus.

We reiterate that the LSE has never received or had cause to have any concerns about Mr. Pankhurst as a student or teacher. The positive comments from students regarding his teaching were made in clear in a previous article in the Beaver, entitled 'Pankhurst "was a very helpful and co-operative teacher", on 19th January 2010.

We would also like to reiterate that Comment pieces are not the views of the Beaver, but the views of the author alone.

Contact The Beaver  
info@thebeaveronline.co.uk  
0207 955 6705

East Building  
LSE Students' Union  
London WC2A 2AE

## Collective

Ajay Agarwal; Shrayans Agarwal; Raidev Akoi; Emmanuel Akpan-Inwang; Ahmed Alani; Madeeha Ansari; Hasib Baber; Fadhil Bakeer-Markar; Sean Graham Baker; Pria Bakhshi; Vishal Banerjee; Natasha Bannister; Ramsey Ben-Achour; Noah Bernstein; Graeme Birrell; Alex Blanc; Julian Boys; Danielle Brown; Nathan Briant; Ruby Buckley; James Bull; Georgina Butler; Beth Cherryman; Angela Chow; Estelle Cooch; Oliver Courtney; Tomas Da-Costa; Louis Dailencourt; Jonathan Damsgaard; Richard Dewey; Cathy Druce; Marie Dunaway; Louisa Evans; Leon Fellas; Ossie Fikret; Aled Dilwyn Fisher; Katy Galbraith; Ben Grabiner; Siddharth George; Justin Gest; Ira Goldstein; Mira Hammad; Aula Hariri; Poorna Harjani; Yisum Heneghon; Charlie Hodgson; Tahiya Islam; Harriet Jackson; Judith Jacob; Felipe Jacome; Alex Jones; Megan Jones; Naeem Kapadia; Sam Tempest Keeping; Pooja Kesavan; Mazida Khatun; Alizeh Kohari; Marion Koob; Vivek Kotecha; Anna Krausova; Ashma Kunde; Dominic Lam; Cherie Leung; Gareth Lewis; Rob Low; Phyllis Lui; Shibani Mahtani; Zeeshan Malik; Nizar Manek; Sophie Marmont; Jamie Mason; James McGibney; Duncan McKenna; Liam McLaughlin; Nitya Menon; Irfan Merali; Anna Mikeda; Utsa Mukherjee; Aditi Nangia; Sanjiv Nanwani; Brett Noble; Ryan Ong; Nicolas Oudin; Kyle Packer; Pantellis Palividas; Anup Patel; Jaynesh Patel; Sachin Patel; Ahmed Peerbux; Alice Pelton; Alex Peters-Day; Ben Phillips; Clare Pickering; Chloe Pieters; Danielle Priestley; Rahim Rahemtulla; Dominic Rampat; Anjali Raval; Ricky Ren; Joe Rennison; Katherine Ripulone; Sacha Robehmed; Joe Sammut; Thienthai Sangkaphanthanon; Amrita Saraogi; Dan Sheldon; Katerina Soukeras; Jonathan Storey; Andre Tartar; Su Wan Tan; Kerry Thompson; Oliver Townsend; Molly Tucker; Mark Twyford; Vladimir Unkovski-Korica; Aliabbas Virani; Simon Wang; Jonathan Weir; Chris Westgarth; George Wetz; David Whitaker; Matthew Willis; Chris Wilkins; Oliver Wiseman; Natalie Wong; David Woodbridge; Daniel Yates; Alex Young; Calum Young; Sofia Zabolotskih; Mehek Zafar; Sadir Zayadine

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Collective Chair

Cilu Mathew

collective@thebeaveronline.co.uk

## OVERHEARD IN E204

Having been subtly Facebook-raped, an editor remarks, "It lists one of my interests as the equal distribution of wealth... how awful!"

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You can browse through the pictures we post to flickr at: flickr.com/photos/beaveronline

## TUESDAY

**Pancake Day Flipping**  
1100 - 1500: Houghton Street  
**Variety Performance**  
1900 - 2200 : The Quad

## WEDNESDAY

**Human Auction**  
1930 - 2230 : The Quad

## THURSDAY

**Pub Quiz**  
2000 : The 3 Tuns

## FRIDAY

**Hacks vs. Jocks**  
1300 : The Quad  
**The Apprentice Final**  
1500 : The Quad  
**RAG/AU Pub Crawl & Crush**



## FRIDAY

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1300 : The Quad  
**The Apprentice Final**  
1500 : The Quad  
**RAG/AU Pub Crawl & Crush**

## SUNDAY

**Interhall Sports Day**  
1400 - 1700 : Berrylands  
**Swing Dance & Hop-a-thon**  
The Quad

## ALL WEEK

LSE does The Apprentice!

To get involved with any of the events, please email su.rag@lse.ac.uk or find us on Facebook!

# Discover Islam Week 2010

Nicola Alexander

In conjunction with a nationwide campus initiative organized by the Federation of Student Islamic Societies (FOSIS), LSESU Islamic Society hosted 'Discover Islam Week 2010' last week.

Events ranged from talks by influential Islamic speakers, such as Professor Timothy Winters, to an Islamic Calligraphy workshop. The society was proud of the scope of projects that they included, believing that they have achieved their aim of providing "an insight into Islam and what it has to offer".

Among the most impressive events of the week was the 'Can you last a Muslim fast?' challenge that saw LSE Director Howard Davies, LSESU General Secretary Aled Dilwyn Fisher and a host of professors, attempt to fast for the day.

"Most participants, whilst understandably hungry, recognized the self-discipline and restraint one should have while fasting," commented Talha Ghannam, President of the LSESU Islamic Society.

Other events, such as the guided tour of Regent's Park Mosque on Wednesday, were similarly effective in offering LSE students an opportunity to connect with Islam on a practical level.

Given the perceived information gap between Muslims and non-Muslims, the Islamic Society were intent on bridging this divide and also occupied a stall on Houghton street throughout the week

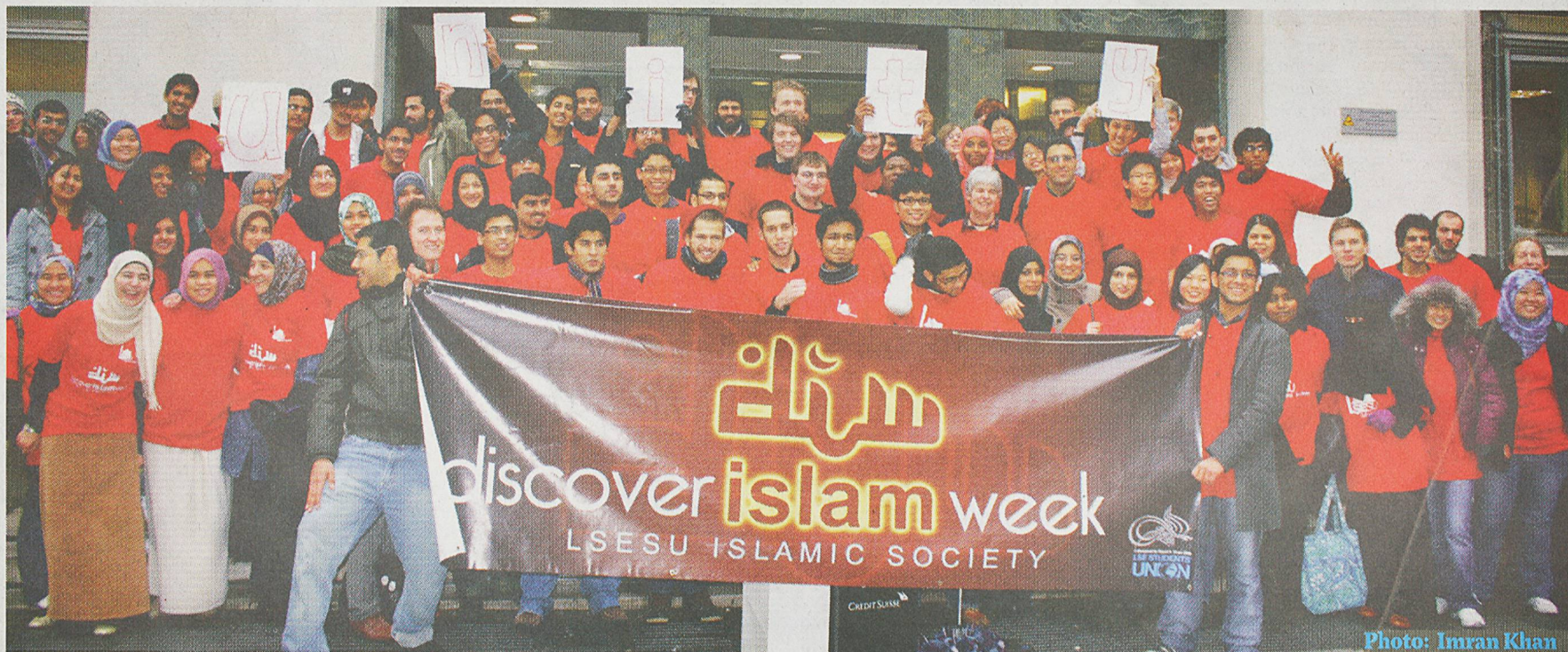


Photo: Imran Khan

to offer a chance for questions to be answered. According to the society, the stall attracted a significant number of students who were able to engage with both Islamic Society members and the literature on offer, including translations of the Qur'an. The Muslim Inventions exhibitions held in the Quad Café also saw an influx of interested students who were able to develop their awareness of Islam.

While the events were attended

mainly by Muslim students at the LSE, the society were pleased that some talks did draw a more diverse audience.

"Our second event in the evening, Can Liberalism Tolerate Islam, saw 110 attend - 45 of whom were non-Muslims," said Ghannam.

Students attending the events have articulated their appreciation to the Islamic Society for hosting such engaging and well organized events.

"Islam society has definitely embraced all the best aspects of Islam," stated Faisal Khan, a second year LSE student.

However, some students have also commented that the week did not fully address issues of political Islam. As one third year student studying International Relations stated: "There is so much debate about Islamic issues. It is a pity that the society didn't try to give us more of an insight into their side of the arguments."

Beyond the student interest in the events, the Islamic Society were also approached by media outlets including GMTV and BBC about the content of the week.

Ghannam concluded that: "The week went very well, thanks to the grace of God." He further stressed that credit was due to the freshers who were responsible for organizing the entire event.

# NUS election campaign streets ahead

Sachin Patel

The National Union of Students' Vote for Students campaign has been launched in the run up to this year's general election.

In the wake of the government's proposed increases to tuition fees, the NUS has launched an online service where students can be advised of which constituency they should vote in to maximize the chances of electing MPs who oppose the fee rises. Students are being asked to supply both their home and term-time postcodes, after which they will receive a recommendation by email.

More than 200 MPs and parliamentary candidates have signed a pledge "to vote against any increase in fees in the

next parliament and to pressure the government to introduce a fairer alternative." The list of signatories includes ex-Health Secretary Frank Dobson, leading backbencher Jon Cruddas, and former Liberal Democrat leader Charles Kennedy. In addition, the NUS has identified twenty key locations in the United Kingdom where a substantial student vote could swing the result - London is eighth on this list.

During his 21st January appearance at the Union General Meeting (UGM), NUS President Wes Streeting implored students to get involved with the campaign, stating that "local action" would leave "politicians quaking in their boots". According to the NUS, those MPs at risk of being de-seated in the forthcoming election include Environment Secretary Hilary Benn and Culture Secretary Ben

Bradshaw. More recently, Streeting has argued that since "no mainstream political party has a clear policy on fees, it is down to individual candidates to take a stand", thus necessitating strong action from students eligible to vote.

The NUS is encouraging action of all kinds from the student population, including aggressive media campaigns. In a document entitled Vote for Students: Communications Handbook, students' unions are advised on radio interview technique, social networking sites, and tips for writing press releases. Several members of the LSE Students' Union Executive have been quick to show their support for the NUS campaign - prominently, Residences Officer Andrew Wright has placed a Vote for Students ribbon on his Twitter profile picture.



# LSE prepares for teaching audit

Eunice Ng

The LSESU is calling on students to complete a survey for the the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) Audit, which will take place in March 2011.

The QAA is the body responsible for reviewing the management of academic quality at UK higher education institutions and its audit takes place every five years. Audit teams consist of five or six senior academics from the school, one student and one senior higher education administrator, supported by a QAA agent.

The process will begin six months before the audit visit with a preliminary visit by the audit team. Documents about teaching standards will be submitted 10 weeks before the actual audit. Key findings will be published two weeks after the visit and the LSE will receive a draft report after that with the final report being published five months after the visit.

The LSESU will have an opportunity to submit its teaching survey results as a Student Written Submission (SWS), which will form part of the LSE's submission to the review. Details about the LSESU's survey have not yet been

released, but the QAA advises student representatives to focus questions on academic support, student awareness of assessment criteria and whether or not they feel that they have a voice that is truly heard by the School.

Other evidence to be submitted to the SWS can include results from the National Student Survey, course representative feedback and course descriptions.

The LSE's last QAA audit took place in 2006, with the Agency placing "broad confidence" in the School's management of academic quality. It also singled out the Centre for Learning Technology (CLT) and the Teaching and Learning Centre (TLC) for praise. It advised the school to review areas that have long been student concern, such as its policy on examination re-sits, training of part-time staff and research students and the school's lack of consistency in formative coursework feedback.

LSESU Education and Welfare Officer Emmanuel Akpan-Inwang said: "Many students feel confused by what is expected of them academically, that they are not receiving enough support or that their expectations did not match the reality of LSE life. The QAA SWS is an excellent opportunity for students to say exactly what they think of their teaching."



### ◀ Continued from front page

3rd Year Accounting student Aliabbas Virani wrote an open letter summarizing how he felt "unjustly insulted" by Kelemen, and "mismanagement of the C&S meeting" by the Constitution and Steering Committee (C&S) Chair Michael Lok.

His letter echoes the common sentiment from members of the against campaign, who have now launched another campaign to appeal the results of the General Meetings Bye-Law, on the grounds that the referendum should be passed by a supermajority. They have started a Facebook group called "Return the LSESU democracy", which had 230 members at the time of print.

Section 12.1 of the Constitution states that: "Proposals for any amendment to the Constitution shall be given at least five weeks public notice in term time and shall require the assent of at least two-thirds of the members present and voting at a quorate General Meeting of the Union. No amendment to the Constitution shall come into effect until it has received the assent of the Court of Governors of the School."

Section 12.2 lays down the same rules for amending the Codes of Practice, with the exception of three weeks public notice.

2nd Year Law student Mira Hammad made several complaints pertaining to the constitutional validity of the referendum. Firstly, she felt that "the decision criterion for the referendum that was carried out on Lent Term Week 5 was incorrect".

However, Kelemen refutes these claims, as "where a level of majority is not specified, that majority must be a simple majority as default - moreover the rules state that the referendum shall be conducted as an election - where one candidate will win once they receive 50% or more of the vote; i.e. a simple majority".

This issue was first raised at 1pm on Thursday, the second day of polling. Kelemen responded to this, stating: "First, this complaint cannot be received since voting has already opened. The simple majority requirement was published in The Beaver this week. The rules of the voting process cannot be altered once voting has begun."

"Second, C&S was consulted prior to the Referendum on this issue, and it

#### F&S Chair appalled by Referendum conduct

##### An Open Letter

Dear Sabbatical Officers, Members of C&S, Members of Union Staff, and distinguished friends,

Before I begin, I'd like to convey my sincere congratulations on your commendable efforts in passing the recent reforms, many of which the Union will greatly benefit from.

I am currently on F&S, having previously served as a member of the LSE Court of Governors, and as a Chair of C&S. In my years of service, I have responsibly and professionally discharged my duties with utmost respect for the Union and its constituent organs, documents, and agencies.

The purpose of this e-mail is to bring to your attention unfortunate developments that transpired yesterday, all of which have personally and professionally affected me.

Firstly, I was unjustly insulted by Shanti Kelemen - the Returning Officer of the LSESU - in a manner that was degrading, hurtful, and certainly unwarranted. When I initially approached her with genuine concerns over the electoral process, I was greeted by sarcastic remarks suggesting that I "dialled 911" instead. This behaviour is utterly unacceptable from a democratically elected official of the Union. Shanti further provocatively criticised me on a personal level, questioning "how did you even get on C&S", in reference to my "not so clever" arguments. Her comments were entirely out of line, given that it is her fiduciary responsibility to account for the Union's electoral procedures and address any outstanding concerns of complaints. I would have been delighted to engage in a mature discussion on the process, but Shanti definitively chose to prioritise a personal attack against my character in an apparent attempt to evade the challenging questions that had been posed.

Secondly, I was shocked by the mismanagement of the C&S meeting by the C&S Chair, Michael Lok. Michael was unable to facilitate discussion amongst the students who were present, unilaterally making decisions without due consultation of C&S committee members.

[The letter goes on to make allegations about the conduct of SU staff. These allegations are currently being formally investigated and therefore cannot be printed for this reason]

The issues that I have raised in this email are being conveyed in the most professional means possible. I have a great deal of respect for this Union including its staff, but I believe that it is critical for me to voice these developments with the aim of achieving genuine progress and improvement in the Union's participatory mechanisms. Students should be encouraged to get involved in the Union, and treated with the due respect that they deserve.

Yours sincerely,

Aliabbas Virani



# RAGATHON BEGINS...

## WE'RE LIVING, SLEEPING AND BROADCASTING

## LIVE FROM THE QUAD ALL WEEK

### THAT'S 113 HOURS OF "QUALITY" RADIO...





Photos: Jaynesh Patel

was determined that a simple majority was required. In addition, independent advice from NUS gave the same opinion. The Codes of Practice make no explicit statement regarding the requirement, so a simple majority is assumed."

Advice was also sought from NUS and lawyers, so that their decision "is based on the fact rather than opinion".

Hammad also submitted: "that any amendment to the Constitution requires "at least five weeks public notice during term time" which "was not provided for during the amendment process; and thus the amendments to the Constitution (i.e. the new 'Articles of Governance') cannot be allowed to amend the current Constitution".

Furthermore, concerns have been raised regarding the potential fairness of campaigning, since the elected officials had 18 months to plan. Kelemen did not believe that to be the case: "This whole process has been conducted in line with the rules of the Union...just a group of elected officers who were mandated by the student body to come up with proposals for change".

There was a change of voting order after the documents had been returned from lawyers the night prior to commencement of polling, which was rectified the next morning. However, complaints have also been made, believing that it could have led to a change in results especially in regards to the General Meetings Bye-Law, which was passed by only 3 votes.

Although voting turn-out was considerably high, some students had issues logging in. A reason for this is that intercolating students are not recognized by the School as members of the LSESU. The Union is making sure that this can be rectified.

Other students did not know how to abstain. Kelemen believed that "as with any voting system there will always be questions from voters whether the vote is on paper, or online using any of the program available...and I'd appreciate any feedback from users who have any ideas about what they'd like changing!"

There is a C&S meeting at 10:30am in G404 today, which is open to all students.

A spokesperson from the Charities Commission said: "If the governing documents have been breached, we can intervene and ask the trustees of the Union to justify why they have done this."

## Referendum Complaints Log

### Monday, February 1st:

**Complaint:** A Facebook group for the "No" campaign was started anonymously by savelsesu@gmail.com. In addition Franck Magennis, a member of C&S, was an administrator of the group. This is illegal, as campaigning opens on Thursday, February 4th at 2pm.

**Response:** The RO contacted "savelsesu" and posted on the facebook group. The post was deleted and savelsesu never responded. The Facebook group remained active, in violation of the Codes of Practice. The RO spoke to Franck regarding his involvement. Franck removed himself as an administrator and was issued a formal warning.

### Tuesday, February 2nd:

**Complaint:** The Beaver posted articles on its website against the Referendum and none in favour of the Referendum.

**Response:** The RO contacted The Beaver. The editors agreed to amend the website.

### Wednesday, February 3rd:

**Complaint:** Sachin Patel sent an email to several societies encouraging them to vote against the reforms.

**Response:** The RO contacted Sachin. He claimed the email was for informational purposes only. However, this was untrue based on the text of the email. The email specifically urged students to vote against the reforms. In addition, it contained information that was false regarding what changes were proposed. The RO sent a response to stating that the email was a violation of the Codes of Practices, and authorized the "Yes" campaign to correct the inaccuracies contained in it. Sachin was banned from using internet campaigning.

### Monday, February 8th:

**Complaint:** A "No" campaign video is on youtube.com. Only facebook.com is allowed for online campaigning.

**Response:** The RO contacted the "No" campaign and requested that it be removed. It was subsequently removed.

**Complaint:** The "No" campaign video was made with assistance from Sachin Patel and Joseph Brown. It is illegal since Sachin was banned from internet campaigning and Joseph is not a member of the SU.

**Response:** It is unclear which statement regarding the creator of the video was true, however in either case the video was in violation of the Codes of Practice. The RO notified the "No" campaign. They first replied that it had been done by the Media Group, and therefore they were not responsible. They ignored a subsequent warning.

### Tuesday, February 9th

**Complaint:** The Beaver increased the text size of abstain manifestos dramatically in the reforms pullout.

**Response:** The RO contacted The Beaver to complain. The editorial staff stated that they did not think the RO would care about the change, but admitted that it looked biased. Further action may be pursued.

**Complaint:** There is significant negative campaigning, both online and on campus, by members of the "No" campaign, attacking the personal motives and character of members of the "Yes" campaign.

**Response:** The RO sent an email to all campaigners requesting that they treat others with respect. Negative campaigning persisted despite that.

**Complaint:** Only three "No" manifestos were in The Beaver.

**Response:** The RO was disappointed by this as well. After only three manifestos were received by Sunday, she contacted the "No" campaign and requested additional manifestos. She extended the deadline until The Beaver's Monday printing deadline. However, no additional manifestos were received.

### Wednesday, February 10th:

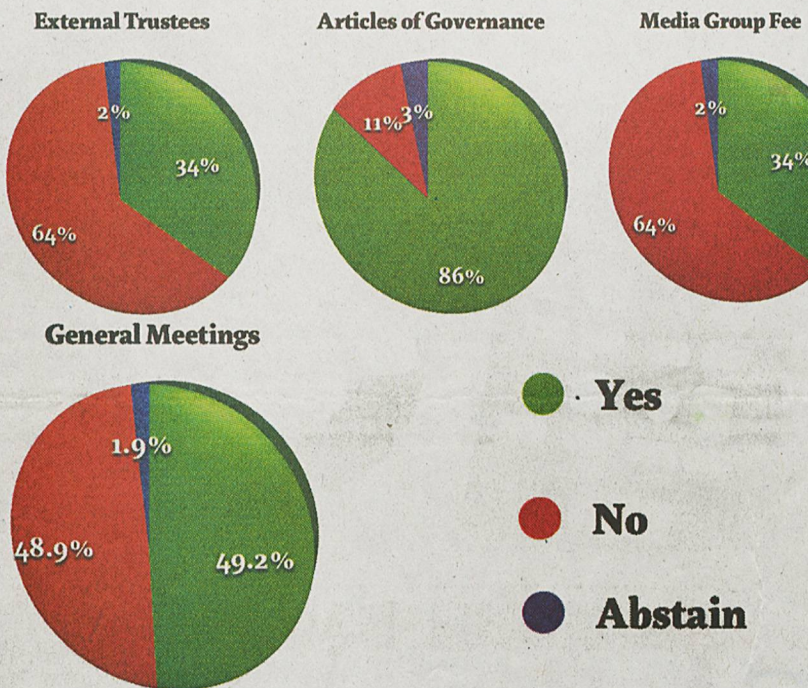
**Complaint:** The numbering of the questions has changed. This is unfair to the "No" campaign and voting should not open.

**Response:** The RO contacted the "No" campaign prior to making the change, and asked if it would impact the campaign. She was told it would not, and acted on that basis. (The RO has emails to support this.) The RO did not know that the "No" campaign was using "3,4,9" as its primary slogan for all posters and t-shirts, due to the limited contact and discussions she'd had with its members. Once the complaint was made, the RO promptly reversed the change and agreed to pull the "Yes" campaign from the street from 1-2pm on Wednesday.

### Thursday, February 11th:

**Complaint:** Prior RO requests to the "No" campaign have been ignored—specifically, negative campaigning, involvement of non-SU members, and online campaigning restrictions.

**Response:** The RO gave the "No" campaign substantial time to respond. In a normal election, it is likely that a candidate exhibiting similar behaviour would have been disqualified. Hence, the RO pulled the "No" campaign from the street at 4pm. The members kindly complied.



## Statement from C&S Chair and Returning Officer:

In the 24 hour complaints window 30 complaints were received and were dealt with in the following way:

### Complaints about the conduct of elected students

Complaints about individually elected students should be directed to the General Secretary and dealt with in the normal complaints procedure. It is not the role of C&S to hear these complaints.

### Complaints about the majority required in this referendum

It is not possible for C&S to make a

decision on this issue for the following reasons:

- There is no decision required; a simple majority is required in this referendum, as confirmed and publicised prior to the start of polling
- Where a decision on the technical nature of a vote is required, that decision cannot be taken after the start of polling
- For peace of mind we have received advice from NUS and independent legal advice supporting both that a only simple majority is required, and that no further decision can be made on this issue

### Complaints about decisions taken by the Returning Officer

A complaint was received concerning the decision taken by the RO to uphold a complaint about the numbering of the questions. This being a reasonable ground of appeal, the C&S Committee will be hearing it at their next meeting and shall report to the Union within 7 days.

### Close of complaints

As of 7:46pm on Friday 12 February 2010 no further complaints may be accepted or heard.

# Nobel Prize winner: "Sound recovery is pretty bleak"

## Eunice Ng

Nobel Prize winner Joseph Stiglitz gave a lecture last Monday entitled 'Freefall', blaming the financial crisis squarely on the banks and regulators.

Speaking at the LSE, Professor Stiglitz, one of the most vocal critics of banks and global response to the financial crisis, gave his take on the crisis. One out of five Americans cannot get a full time job, the reality is even more grim than the statistics show because official unemployment definitions don't include those who are actively seeking a job.

In 2010, 2.5 million Americans will lose their homes which include their life savings, and there will be a large number of vacant homes but lots of homeless. As a result, the financial sector is still not lending, because most loans are collateral based with real estate as security, which is now rendered useless.

"Sound recovery," said Professor Stiglitz, "is pretty bleak."

The reason the crisis happened, he continued, was because banks "didn't do what [they were] supposed to do - allocate capital and manage risk at low transaction costs." Instead, by mismanaging capital and creating risks, they did just the opposite. The fact that banks were allowed to do this stemmed from perverse economic incentives, which encouraged short sighted behavior.

Regulators, which Professor Stiglitz called "the second line of defence", also failed. Economists provided the rationale for deregulation by promoting the belief that markets are efficient and self correcting, which could not be correct, or else we would never have any financial crises.

Professor Stiglitz then talked about examples of "stupidity in the markets." Banks and mortgage lenders lend to less credit-worthy people on the irrational belief that house prices would go up, even when incomes were going down. He then took a swipe at derivative products, widely hailed before the crisis as "the reason they are innovative is because they actually stupid no one had thought of it before."

They also used past data assuming that the world hadn't changed as a result from their new practices."

Next, he criticized the government reaction to the crisis; believing the US stimulus was too small and badly designed. President Obama also hadn't done anything substantial about mortgages which are worth more than their house prices. Alarming, there are pressures to reduce government spending, which would reduce demand just when it is needed. Accounting rules are also less transparent than before. By still allowing banks to take in deposits while conducting proprietary trading on its own accounts, regulators haven't solved banks' fundamental conflict of interest. He reminded the audience that the financial crisis is supremely expensive - the cost of bailing out was more than all the aid given by developed countries to developing states.

"Banks that are too big to fail are too big to be," said Professor Stiglitz. He then concluded that each country has a responsibility to its citizens to guard against the potential of disaster.

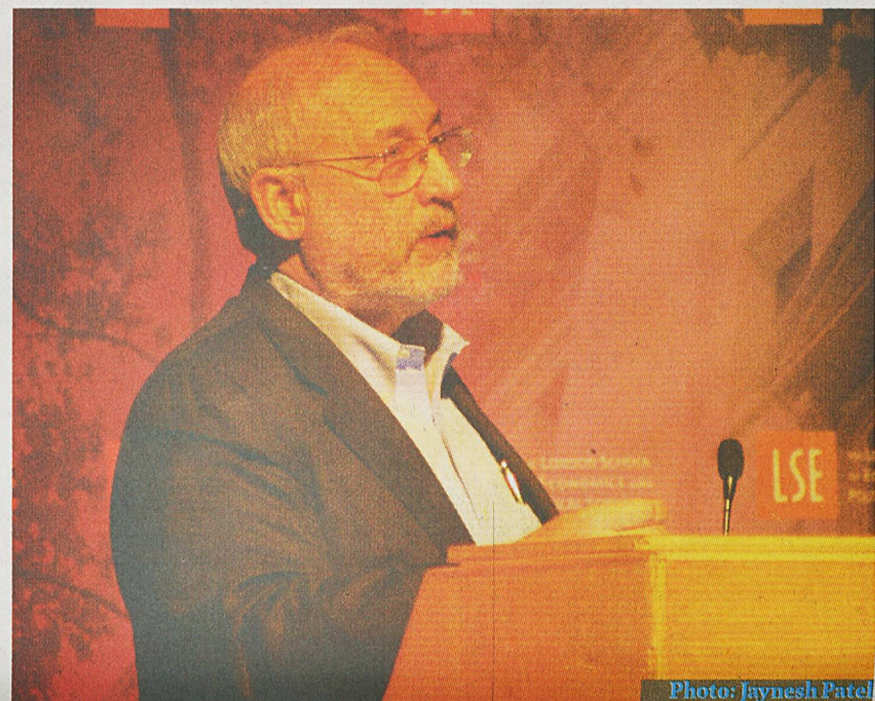


Photo: Jaynesh Patel

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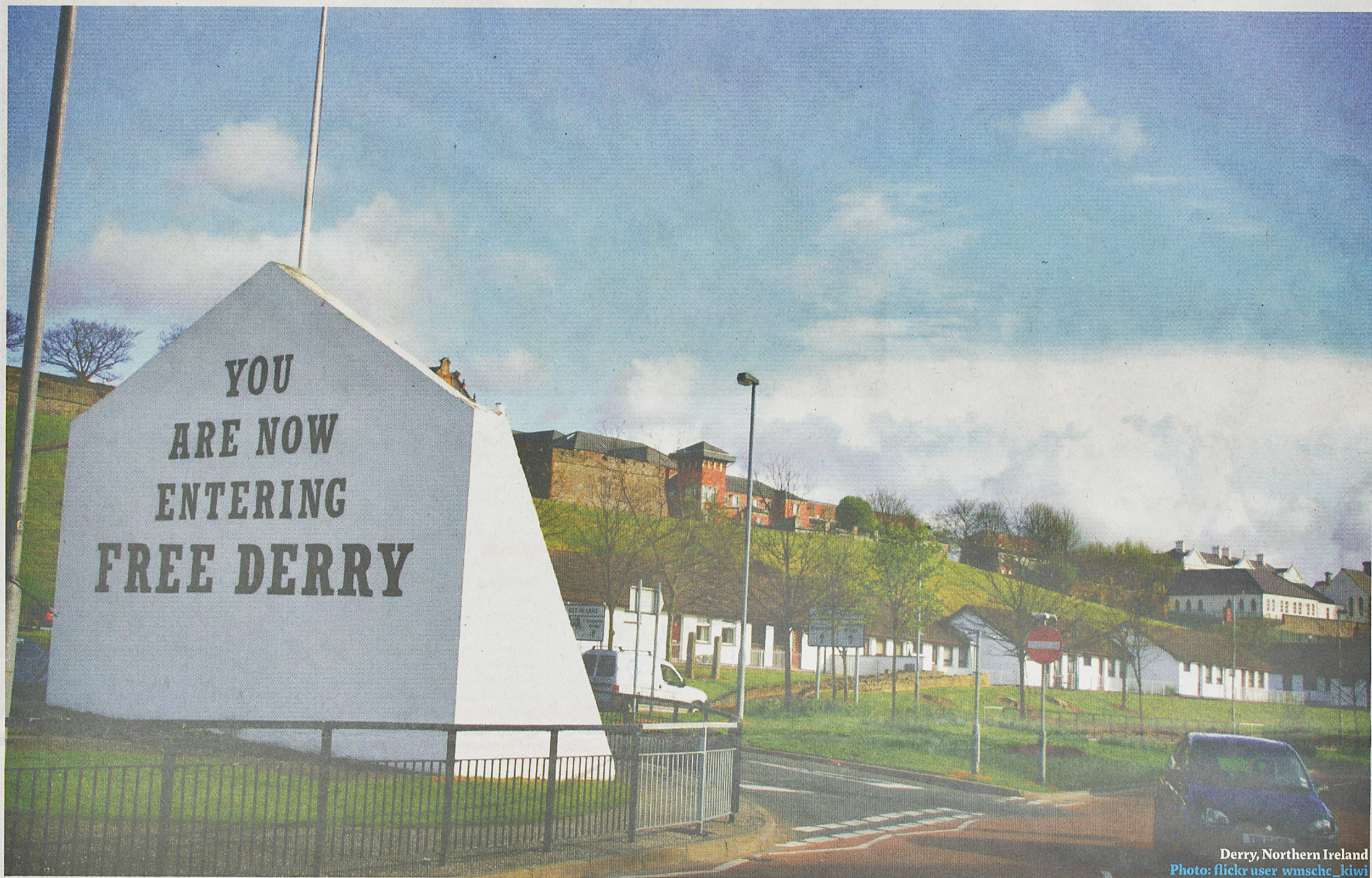
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# Comment



Derry, Northern Ireland  
Photo: flickr user wmsche\_kiwi

## Getting into Troubles again

The situation in Northern Ireland is improving, but divorced from its history

**Liam  
McLaughlin**

**T**he 'Northern Irish question' has recently been brought back into the public consciousness as the seemingly unachievable power-sharing agreement between the Catholic Sinn Féin and the Protestant Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) parties came under strain in the past few weeks over the devolution of law and order powers.

The problem though, is that this blip in an otherwise successful peace-process is disconnected in many people's minds from the long and bloody 350-year history which produced it. Many people of this generation, including myself until I got curious about my heritage two years ago, have no idea how bad things got in Northern Ireland and the extent to which civil rights violations stretched.

Northern Ireland was initially partitioned from the rest of Ireland by the Westminster drafted Government of Ireland Act 1920 as an expression of the 'Home Rule' idea which was based on allowing Northern Irish autonomy. That the British cabinet eventually agreed on a six county state with a population ratio of two Protestants to one Catholic ensured that Protestants would be able to hold their domination over Northern Ireland. However, the history of British occupation of Ireland stretches further back to the 12th century with Henry II's invasion and

**There's no doubt that Northern Ireland is a contentious issue in British politics; a taboo even**

culminated during the 17th century with Cromwell's land confiscation and violent spread of Protestantism.

Ever since, there has been bitterness between 'nationalist' Catholics and 'unionist' Protestants. This came to a head in the opening of the 20th century with heavier retaliation from republican militants against the British Army's often violent presence. In response to this, Britain had to draft the Government of Ireland Act which stopped British occupation and formed the independently (Catholic) governed Republic of Ireland. But Protestants had to live somewhere; the physical landmass of Ireland was their homeland but they felt ethnically British. As a result, Northern Ireland was partitioned and was intended to be a predominantly Protestant, British identified country.

At the time of partition, although the six county area that was to become Northern Ireland had a Protestant majority of 820,000 to 430,000 Catholics, this was not evenly distributed. Two whole counties, Fermanagh and Tyrone, had Catholic majorities of 56.2 per cent and 55.4 per cent respectively, and the city of Derry had a Catholic majority of 56.2 per cent, not to mention predominantly Catholic areas in South Armagh, South Down, and even Belfast.

But despite this, my granddad, who lived in Derry right through 'the Troubles', told me that institutional political and religious discrimination against Catholics was common. For example, if a job application form didn't ask what religion a person was, the information could instead easily be gleaned from which school you went to, or even the street you lived on, such were the obvious physical-religious

divides in Northern Ireland.

In fact, these physical divides were exacerbated by the widespread practice of gerrymandering on the part of the Unionist elite. By re-drawing electoral boundaries, Unionists could ensure that Catholics were entitled to less seats in proportion to their population, compared to Protestants who gained a disproportionate amount of seats in relation to theirs.

Derry provides a sobering example of this. As stated in the Taylor Downing edited book 'The Troubles: The Background to the Question of Northern Ireland', by 1967 more than 60 per cent of the adult population in Derry was Catholic, yet 60 per cent of the seats on the Council were occupied by Unionists. Furthermore, the universal suffrage that applied in Parliamentary elections did not apply in local elections. Firstly, the fact that only home-owners were allowed to vote reduced the number of Catholic voters to a greater extent than it did the Protestants – by 28 per cent in the case of Catholics and 14.5 per cent in the case of Protestants. In Derry's North Ward, a Protestant majority of 1,416 (3,946 Protestant voters to 2,530 Catholics) elected a total of eight Unionist councillors. In the Waterside Ward, a Protestant majority of 1,845 (3,697 Protestants to 1,852 Catholics) a total elected four Unionists. However, in the South Ward, which contained the Catholic ghetto of the Bogside and the solidly Catholic housing estate of the Creggan, there was a massive Catholic majority of 8,909 (10,047 Catholic votes to 1,138 Protestant votes) which resulted in the election of only eight Nationalists.

Thus, despite the overall Catholic majority, the gerrymandering produced

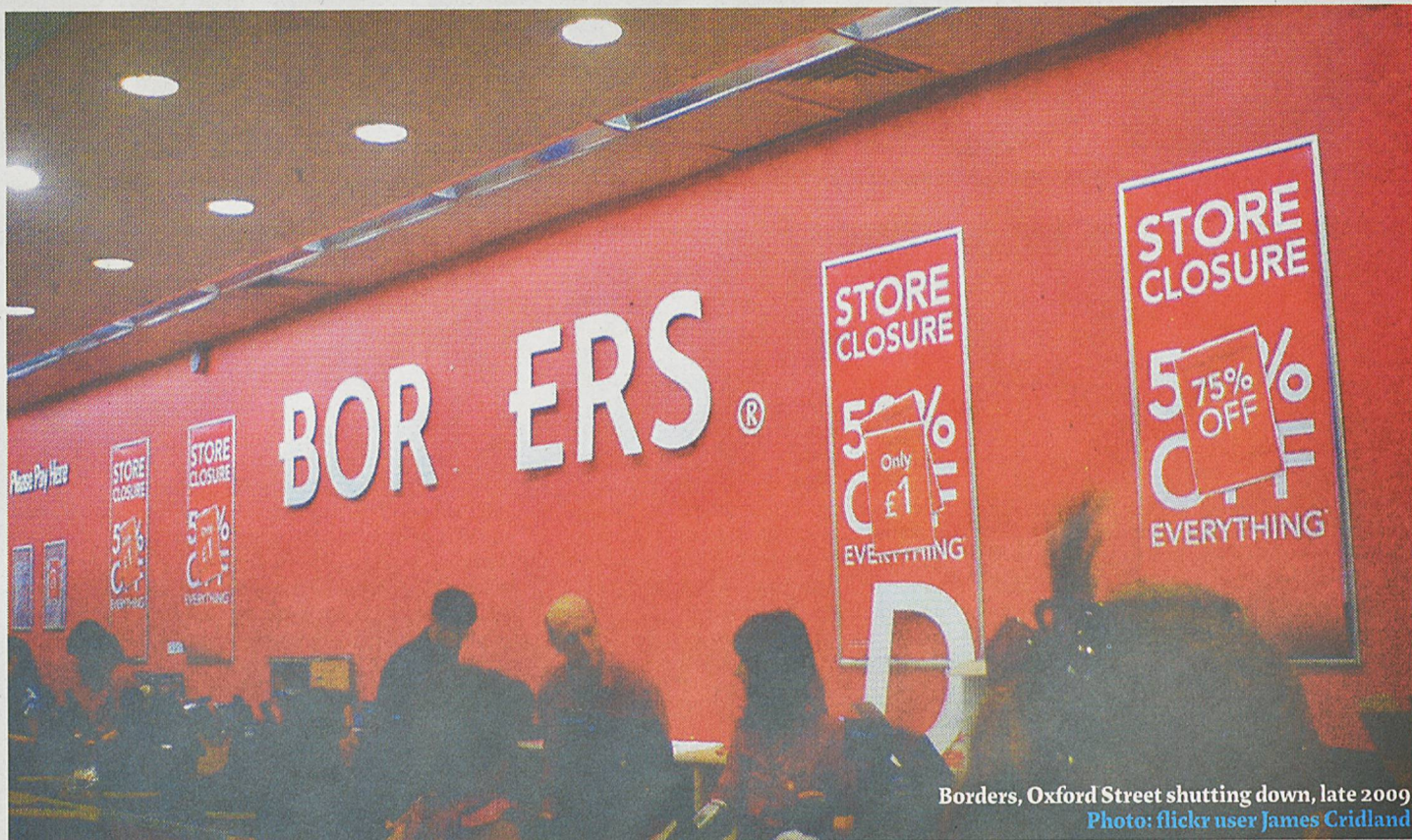
twelve Unionist and only eight Nationalist city councillors. These voting figures were taken from the report of the Cameron Commission, appointed in 1969 by the Government of Northern Ireland to investigate the causes of the widespread outbreaks of violence and civil disturbance in 1968 and 1969.

These civil disturbances are not to be taken lightly either. From 1971 to 1977 over 1800 people were killed in Northern Ireland as a result of the Troubles. And, overall from the late 1960s to the years of the 20th century, over 3,500 people were killed, many of them civilians.

As with any civil conflict though, the original facts and motivations for retaliation become obscured over time. Reactionary ideological rhetoric replaces any 'just cause' on the part of the 'oppressed', and their actions swiftly descend into destructive and vindictive violence. The problems in Northern Ireland, far from being the fault of the innocent Catholics and Protestants who lived there, were precipitated more by self-righteous and militant elites of both sides, but none more so than the British establishment which continually failed on the Northern Irish question.

There's no doubt that Northern Ireland is still a contentious issue in British politics; a taboo even. But progress has been made, including an agreement on the issue of the devolution of law and order. The power-sharing is fragile, but in part thanks to the current targets of media hatred, Blair and Brown, Northern Ireland has finally seen a sustained period of peace.

# In need of retail therapy



Borders, Oxford Street shutting down, late 2009  
Photo: flickr user James Cridland

## Service has taken a tumble in the 'nation of shopkeepers'

**Richard Bullock**

**T**hey used to say that Britain was a nation of shopkeepers. A modern day analogy may be that Britain is a nation of chain stores. And a more complete modern day analogy is that Britain is a nation of chain stores with such dreadful levels of customer service that shopping has become a thoroughly unpleasant experience.

It might well be that my male genetics have imbued me with a natural disliking for shopping but I don't think I'm alone amongst Britain's homo sapiens (the male version at least) in despairing with mod-

ern day retail service standards. A recent excursion to a well known Oxford Street electricals chain store sealed my malcontent. While waiting several minutes at the counter to be served – as the only customer I hasten to add – four shop attendants continued to discuss their Friday night out experience as if I was seemingly invisible. When I was eventually greeted with “yep”, I was cut short several seconds later by another shop floor attendant who needed help. Clearly the “customer is king” mantra counts for little amongst retailers nowadays or maybe electronics retailers are just a particularly affected breed?

The contrast couldn't be more different to the shopping experience I received in New York two years back. Not only did I take a sense of comfort from the fact that what I was buying was great value for money – more than can be said for many UK goods – I was also made to feel valued by the store assistants. Comments like

**I don't think I'm alone... in despairing with modern day retail service standards**

“that looks great on you, Sir” or “you have a nice day now” made the retail experience so much more pleasurable and eliminated any reluctance I had to part with my money.

It baffles me why so many British shops, facing such intense retail competition and in the tough economic climate that they currently find themselves, continue to provide such poor levels of customer service. I suspect that part of the answer is that they can get away with it. The British consumer has long been noted for its stiff upper lip and readiness to “put up with” attitude. But will it always continue to do so?

I fully appreciate that incentive compensation goes a long way to explain the difference between the American and British retail culture. While American shop attendants generally receive a small level of basic pay, they have the opportunity to add to this through sales-driven commission. Perhaps what British retail

needs to lift itself out of the doldrums is a healthy dose of incentivisation. I'm not suggesting that this model would work for all stores, but large-ticket items would be a good place to start.

Disturbingly, some retailers have even shown a willingness to turn their backs on the high street and to focus heavily on their internet brand. Take Dixons for example, owned by DSG Group who also own Currys and PC World. Their recent advertising campaigns encourage customers to visit rival department stores for product advice and service and “then go to dixons.co.uk and buy it”. If this is the way forward, it is a fairly strong indictment that the future for service levels on the British high street looks grim.

# In defence of keeping up our arms

## It is imperative for the British government to consider defence spending a priority

**Edward Longinotti**

**O**ne F35B 'fighter jet' costs £55 million. For the same amount of money, however, eight new schools could be built. Surely such defence spending is irrelevant and unjustified, especially when the opportunity cost of such spending is considered?

Defence of the realm has to be the first priority of any government because without it, the government cannot guarantee the provision of the social contract it makes with the electorate. Both parties on the left and the right have equal interest in maintaining a credible defence, because without it the freedom from coercion required to provide their policies – regardless of the political orientation of the policies – will be lost. Such an argument rests on the distinction between positive and negative freedom as identified by the philosopher Sir Isaiah Berlin. Although the ‘freedom to’ of positive freedom, such as freedom to healthcare and education is fundamentally more tangible and appealing, it is underpinned by negative freedom and the freedom from coercion that it entails.

Critics of this position usually claim one of the following: Britain faces no coercion, we should only deploy significant military force when it is apparent there is a threat, or, we should cede defence of our negative freedom to another power. These positions are not tenable.

While the use of direct military force against either Britain or NATO may seem unlikely, it is not impossible. For example, it is not hard to conceive of a conflict developing between Russia, United States, Denmark, Norway and Canada over their territorial claims to the Arctic. Such a conflict would not only be close to Britain but demand our involvement under NATO obligations. Furthermore, while it is true that a nation can also be coerced economically and diplomatically, rather than simply militarily, military force is also an integral part of combating the other more subtle forms of coercion. In the words of Frederick the Great, “diplomacy without arms is like music without instruments”.

In another example, the European Union imports 50 per cent of its natural gas and 30 per cent of its oil from state controlled Russian companies. The Russian government displayed its willingness to use such power as a coercive tool in the winter of 2009 and it would be naive to think that a militarily weak Europe is not vulnerable to similar coercion. Ultimately, to a certain extent political power flows from military power. This may not be

desirable, but it is the reality of the world we live in. Thus Britain does face coercion and military power is an essential part of combating it.

However, we cannot simply run down our armed forces until a threat emerges. The threats to our society are rarely perceived in time, and modern military capability takes a very long time to develop. It cannot be turned on and off, like a tap. In 1910 an economist wrote that there would never be another war between the major industrialised nations because they were now so economically interdependent; in 1914, the First World War began. We will always underestimate the threat of war because the prospect of it is so unpalatable. However, the price of maintaining a credible defence; currently 2.6 per cent of GDP or £35bn per year, is not a serious burden on the economy, in good times or bad. If we dismantle the Armed Forces there is not a giant pot of gold to be discovered that would transform the provision of the other government services – to do so would save little and lose much. It can be tempting to reduce defence spending ‘until we need it’, but there is no strong financial incentive and there is the constant threat of dangers realised too late. In an area where the stakes are so high, this is surely not a prudent policy.

Finally, secession of our defence to a foreign power inevitably gives that power an unparalleled degree of influence. It is

another compromise of a nation's negative freedom. Such a compromise may seem to be of little significance when the foreign power is friendly, but still ultimately links a nation to another's foreign policy. Critics of the UK's perceived lack of independence from US foreign policy may wish to reflect that the true source of this is the UK's reliance on the US for its defence. Furthermore, the protection of a foreign power is never as sure or as indefinite as self reliance particularly as the US becomes more interested in Asia than in Europe. Reliance on the US defensive umbrella appears both increasingly imprudent and a sacrifice of independence.

I believe the case for defence of the realm is clear and logical. However, we currently fund the fund the Armed Forces to an extent that goes beyond ‘defence of the realm’. I will now consider whether this is desirable.

For Britain to maintain the ability to project force does not represent a desire for a return of the British Empire, yearning for unattainable superpower status or a wish to cleanse the world of dictators. Force projection is not unaffordable – Britain has the sixth largest economy in the world – if we want it we continue to spend between 2.6 per cent and 3 per cent of GDP on defence and we can have force projection. ‘Superpower status’ is not some mysterious prize bequeathed on some and not on others, it is a conscious

decision that can be taken. While there are lessons to be learnt from our conduct in Iraq and Afghanistan we must not let our experiences in those countries prevent us from confronting unacceptable aggression, in clear transgression of international law. The alternative is to retreat from the world stage; with a negligible diplomatic role. We cannot have both. Britain cannot maintain insignificant Armed Forces and still have a leading role in the world, its UN Security Council Seat and NATO. Influence is partially dependent on military power.

The choice is clear – mere defence of realm and the international presence of an almost Scandinavian welfare state, or power projection and the ability to mould the key issues of our time. Britain cannot take the best from both; the two positions are mutually incompatible. I believe Britain should maintain the ability to project power. An influential Britain is another country with the values of tolerance, freedom of speech, freedom of thought and personal liberty engaging with the issues of the day. To vacate our seat at the top table and not have it filled, or even have it taken by the powers of authoritarianism and suppression is surely a serious blow to the cultures of the libertarian world.

We must elucidate and defend the values that we believe in or else we risk their suppression and ultimate loss.



## Artificially constructed arguments

Freedom of speech does not equate to the freedom of false accusations and slander

Asad  
Saeed

Having read Haritaworn, Tauqir and Erdem's joint chapter, 'Gay Imperialism: Gender and Sexuality Discourse in the 'War on Terror'' it is completely clear why the publishers printed such an unreserved apology to Peter Tatchell. The article fails to meet accepted academic standards, is defamatory and splattered with gross generalizations. The authors write: "Peter Tatchell... has successfully claimed the role of liberator of and expert about Muslims gays" (pg 72); "Racism is... the vehicle that transports white gays and feminists into the political mainstream" (pg 72); "many white gays and lesbians seemed almost triumphant when Copeland, after attack-

ing the black area Brixton and the South-Asian Brick Lane, chose gay Soho as his third target" (pg 74); "white people with queer identities often tell us that they do not feel like confronting the gay leadership with its racism." (pg 89)

Tatchell himself denied that he is a "liberator of and expert about Muslims gays" and rightly challenged the authors to find evidence of their claim, which they failed to provide. Haritaworn and colleagues' criticism implies that Tatchell, for trying to learn about Islam's role in relationship to homosexuality, should be chided for daring to seek such knowledge? Should Tatchell similarly be remonstrated for seeking information with regards to other religions' homophobia?

With regards to the above three quotes concerning motivations and thoughts of 'whites' the writers provide no factual, empirical evidence for such inflammatory claims. Not only are they unqualified, they are racially divisive.

Rather than seriously considering arguments against religious homopho-

bia, the writers choose to conflate race with religion throughout their article and thus are quick to interpret any criticism of Islamic homophobia as racist, and/or imperialistic (as their chapter heading suggests).

The authors' assert that there is an 'artificially constructed gay versus Muslim divide', but this statement conveniently ignores facts. For example, in 2009 the Centre for Muslim Studies working alongside Gallup, produced an in-depth analysis of Muslim integration in France, Germany and the UK [Gallop Coexist Index]. It showed that no British Muslims find homosexual acts acceptable (whereas 58 per cent of British non-Muslims do). While Muslims in France and Germany showed more tolerance it is significantly below the level of non-Muslims and Christians. How are white, feminists and gays, responsible for 'constructing' (homophobic) Sharia law or the attitudes of British Muslims?

Haritaworn, Tauqir and Erdem acknowledge migrating to Britain and Germany "in search of a better place" to live. As LGBT/Muslim women, one assumes this must partly be about escaping religious homophobia from their countries of origin. Interestingly the authors do not address the paradox of defending the cultures/religions that they have chosen to leave but instead attack cultures and individuals that have offered them greater sexual and academic freedoms. I have no problem with a migrant criticising a culture - I am a migrant - however that their attack is so one sided belies their lack of objectivity. The liberation these Muslim women enjoy in their adopted countries is largely down to the decades of campaigning from liberal progressives - many of them coincidentally white, feminists and gay men. Peter Tatchell, as one of these campaigners, has challenged all 'fundamentalist religionists' be they Catholic, Jew or Christian, as well as fascists groups like the BNP. Tatchell's presence and protests at the Anglican Lambeth Conference last year and the 2007 Moscow gay pride march (when he faced Russians Orthodox protestors and neo-fascists) are only a few examples of his never ending campaigning against all forms of religious homophobia and intolerance.

I appreciate that some African LGBT people/organisations may strongly disagree with Tatchell's political tactics but they are the same tactics he has deployed across all religions and cultures. Tatchell may have a different approach to those of the writers and some LGBT Africans, but there are sufficient Asian and Black LGBT people who publicly acknowledge they have benefited from Tatchell's campaigns. While academics like Haritaworn, Tauqir and Erdem continue to squabble over semantics from their safe havens and waste airspace attacking Tatchell, homophobic religious fundamentalists worldwide proceed unheeded, winning the bigger battle. Independent of what is happening in countries governed by Sharia law, if you look at the draconian anti-gay legislation being currently introduced across Africa,

clearly African LGBT strategies are not working and white LGBT activists alone cannot be blamed for this failure.

Tatchell himself has acknowledged he is up for debate and intelligent discussion about his political tactics however for Haritaworn, Tauqir and Erdem to imply he is a potential racist, neo-fascist, colonialist imperialist just because he has treated Islam or African countries the same way he has tackled hard line Anglicanism or Catholicism in European countries, is lazy and slanderous deduction. If he did not speak out for Black and Asian gays many would accuse him of racism by claiming he is only protecting the interests of white gays in the West. The ad hominem arguments set up by these authors mean he is damned if he does act and damn if he doesn't.

For the authors to argue, "gay Muslims are controlled by white people" and hence lack a voice and visibility ignores

'white' press wanted to meet the Imams who have sanctioned same sex unions. However they fail to name any Imams who have spoken positively about homosexuality. The only Imam I know personally in the UK who has ever championed homosexuality publicly, now lives in fear as a result of members of the mainstream British Muslim establishment threatening him and his family.

Haritaworn, Tauqir and Erdem defended Iqbal Sacranie (a former leader of the Muslim Council of Britain) - when he said homosexuality was sinful, diseased, immoral and that civil partnerships undermine the foundations of society - because his comments were consistent with British attitudes on homosexuality and "only five years after the age of consent and a mere 3 years after the repeal of the infamous Section 28". This type of reasoning patronises Muslims. When Sacranie, who one assumes understands discrimination as an Asian Muslim, dishes out prejudice towards gays he demonstrates hypocrisy at a grand scale. Tolerance is not a one-way street. His comments went far beyond just challenging the age of consent for homosexuals. Why is it reasonable to lambaste Christian Bishops, such as Graham Dow, and Cardinals like Thomas Winning or Northern Irish MP Iris Robinson for their Christian homophobia but not Sacranie for his Islamic homophobia? Because it would be Islamophobic, and by the writer's criteria, racist, as well? And what was the British establishment's response to Sacranie? They knighted him - more evidence of rampant Islamophobia no doubt.

Inayat Bunglawala, a prominent member of the Muslim Council of Great Britain (MCB), recently saw DV8 Physical Theatre's work called To Be Straight With You, examining religious homophobia within the UK. This verbatim work, made by a white gay man, led Bunglawala to write an article for the Guardian arguing that the Muslim Council of Britain needed to start showing the same tolerance and inclusivity towards gay Muslims, as Muslims expected from British non-Muslims. So despite gay Muslims giving their 'voices up to white people' it seems perhaps a white person has had some, albeit small, impact on the MCB which was welcomed by at least one Muslim intellectual.

Lastly there has been much discussion about the author's article being censored by Tatchell. The book was already out of print before Tatchell wrote to the publishers. Secondly he has never objected to the article being printed, only that making it clear that it contains factual accuracy, surely the benchmark of all academia. The retraction and apology of the chapter by the book's publishers shows how far from away academic standards the authors travelled. While British law champion's freedom of speech, it also rightly protects people from slander and false accusations.

### Peter Tatchell has challenged all 'fundamentalist religionists' be they be Catholic, Jew or Christian

the basic fact that many UK Muslims are fearful of being vocal and identified as gay because of reprisals from within their own communities. Channel 4's film Gay Muslim (2006), where only one British gay Muslim from two hundred people, was prepared to show their face on television - and this is not an isolated pattern - says more about the real problem that any 'white' conspiracy theory.

The authors say no one from the



Peter Tatchell

Photo: flickr user Loz Flowers

## Letters to the Editor

**Madam** - SU General Secretary Aled Fisher may call himself a "third camp socialist" but last week's reform referendum was more of the third world variety. It is unconstitutional and against all good sense that a radical constitutional change should take place based on a mere 0.3% of a vote. The SU constitution clearly states that a super-majority is required. In fact, taking into account abstentions, the majority of voters voted against the "General Meetings" section. This is hardly amoral mandate for this important constitutional change, especially when we consider that the vote should have been conducted under some kind of AV voting system. Yet so desperate to pass their dubious reform

we see have even witnessed the disruption of the only opposition campaign. This has so far resulted in the unpleasant and flagrantly unconstitutional statement by Michael Lok and Shanti Kelemen. When Lok and Kelemen graduate they can always get jobs as election officials in Harare, or for the Jerusalem major writing demolition orders for Palestinian homes since they are clearly well trained in arbitrary bullshit.

**Sam Bennett**  
MSc History of International Relations

**Madam** - I am writing to express my dismay and outrage at events which have transpired regarding the results of the referendum we had last week. The fact that it states in the Code of Practice that any change to the Constitution must be by a super-majority, our Returning Officer and C&S Chair decided to ignore this. Equally of concern is the unilateral decision making that the Chair of C&S - Michael Lok, aided by our Returning Officer - Shanti Kelemen have adopted. Michael ruled that the referendum results regarding Article 3, which was passed by three votes more in favour, was constitutional, despite the fact that the rest of C&S unanimously deemed the result to be unconstitutional. This is contemptible abuse of power, and we students, must be adamant and proactive in ensuring that our rights are not stripped away at the hands of a few individuals.

**Tasnim Begum**  
Academic Board member

**Madam** - As an LSE student and a member of the LSE Students' Union, I am not at all satisfied with the conduct of the referendum, especially the behaviour of the C&S Chair and Returning Officer; who are waving away student complaints without even examining them!

Is this behaviour we should expect from people we employ/vote into office? I have been at the LSE for three years now, and never witnessed such a situation that is practically infringing on student right to democracy in our Union.

Our Union needs to be represented by a collective student voice, not overruled by those in power!

Regards,

**Shaheena Baig**  
BSc Accounting and Finance '10

**Madam** - I am writing to you to express my concern with regard to the recent SU Referendum and more specifically about motion 3. As you will definitely be aware, according to the constitution; if a change is to be made to the constitution it must be done with a 2/3 majority. The passing of motion 3 was with a negligible margin of 3 votes. I am also concerned by the conduct of the elected Returning Officer and the C&S Chair; they seem to be brushing aside any complaint or expression of concern without any proper examination.

The reforms were promoted on a platform of serving students: listening to their concerns and giving a voice to them. Surely the process of reform should do this too.

Yours faithfully,

**Nabeel Moosa**

**IMPORTANT PEOPLE READ YOUR LETTERS,  
SO KEEP THEM COMING!  
comment@thebeaveronline.co.uk**

# Features



Flickr user Kuwait Ra'ed Qutena

## The sustainable woman

**Layla Revis** speaks of the importance of women in politics

A few months ago, The Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) aired a webcast with guests such as New York Governor Michael Bloomberg, The Nike Foundation, Peter and Jennifer Buffett, The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Women for Women's CEO Zainab Salbi and several other notable philanthropists and NGOs from around the world.

During this, Clinton and his panel addressed the most pressing issue facing the developing world today. While he mentioned healthcare, climate change and HIV/AIDS, those were merely symptoms of the most serious problem he and his distinguished guests were there to discuss: the lack of human rights given to women and young girls.

As the CGI noted, "Despite the rhetoric about female empowerment, adolescent girls remain largely underserved in many areas of the world. More than 600 million girls live in developing countries where they struggle with a myriad of life-threatening issues. Yet, less than two cents of every development dollar is spent on them."

With this in mind, representatives from the banking sector and NGOs like Women for Women International discussed the success of micro-finance and community building, when loans are given to women.

"The key to building strong societies is investing in women," said Bloomberg. "Women have become the economic backbone in countries like Rwanda where so many men have died in conflict. Innovative programs such as the Commercial Integrated Farming Initiative in Rwanda have shown real results and we look forward to expanding the programme in Southern Sudan, Nigeria and Congo."

Rwanda, of all countries, is the only one in the world where 56 per cent of the Parliament is female. This is a very new development, primarily due to the fact that so many young able-bodied men died in the civil war and the Rwandan women demanded change. Following the war, their Constitution was amended to include that women must represent at least 30 per cent

in 'all decision-making organs'. In the last five years, the country has notably been rebuilding itself.

It is easy for some those in any of the G8 countries to say: "In America and the West, women have equal rights, make plenty of money, and are in a plethora of powerful positions." The numbers, however, show quite the opposite scenario.

Women account for roughly 52 per cent of the world's population, yet they only own 1 per cent of the world's land. As of last year, only 15.7 per cent of Fortune 500 corporate officers were women. Only 2 per cent were actually CEOs. Given the amount of money it takes to run for political office, it is no wonder women are still fighting for their rightful place beside men.

America stands at 68<sup>th</sup> in the world for female representation in the House and Senate. Only 16.8 per cent of House and Senate seats are women. In case you think the United Kingdom is faring any better, it stands at 60<sup>th</sup> on the list, with about 19 per cent of Parliament being female.

Why is this still the case in the so-called 'developed' world? The answer would probably be because there is no amendment to the Constitution calling for the same representative equality in any of our governing bodies. In short, there is no mandate to even out a playing field that has been tilted for centuries. We are so far behind several countries that it is almost frightening, but it does make a bit more sense when you look at the current economic crisis. Just watch Brookly Born in The Warming (Frontline PBS) if you are curious about why Over-the-counter (OTC) derivatives were not regulated when they should have been.

What else is so strange about this unbalanced First World? The new Afghan Constitution amended in 2004, which the US no doubt had a hand in crafting, requires that the election system provide general and just representation for all. In the lower house, the Wolesi Jirga, on average at least two female candidates should be elected from each province, guaranteeing a representation of 27 per cent of women. For the House of Elders,

### America stands at 68<sup>th</sup> in the world for female representation in the House and the Senate

the Meshrano Jirga, a minimum of 17 per cent of the seats must be occupied by women.

The Women's Committee of the Scottish Trade Union Congress recently proposed their own solution to gender inequality. They're asking for a 50/50 gender balance in the new Scottish parliament. This system is known as "parallelism", i.e. each constituency should return two members, one of whom would be elected from a female list of candidates and one from a male list. All electors would vote for both. Other proposals were put forward, seeking to combine a party principle with a proportional system. Attempts have also been put forward to run this idea for all of the EU.

As of November 2009, the Government of Spain also enacted a balanced gender equality ratio. Nine out of the eighteen members of the Government are women. Under the administration of José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, Spain has been described as being "at the vanguard" in gender equality issues and also that "[no] other modern, democratic, administration outside Scandinavia has taken more steps to place gender issues at the centre of government."

Of course, a dire situation does prevail in much of the developing world - Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Jordan being among the prime examples. It is as if the majority of the world has given up on demanding that we truly free the last of our slaves. Saudi women do not have the right to vote, dress, drive, or travel without a male escort. Much time is spent talking about Iran and Israel in the news, yet we hardly touch upon an entire population of Saudi women without any rights. They are not even allowed to exercise! As a result, underneath the thick burka, 75 per cent of the population is overweight and the country now suffers from an influx in diabetes.

According to the UN, Jordan has one of the highest per-capita "honour" killings rates in the world. King Abdullah and the Upper House of Parliament strongly supported stricter punishments for perpetrators of this brutal practice, on multiple occasions attempting to overturn Article 340

of the penal code which offers leniency to the perpetrators of "honour" killings. However, the elected Lower House of Parliament did not cooperate. At most, brothers, fathers, or cousins who have stabbed, hacked, or stoned their sisters or daughters to death, get a few months in prison. Defying International Human Rights laws and the UN, Jordan still allows its women to be murdered without so much as a slap on the wrist. While women who have been threatened with honor killings are held in protective custody (ie. prison), those who threaten them walk free.

Queen Rania and King Abdullah are not pleased with the matter. They are fighting for women as much as they can, and perhaps if their Lower House mandated 50/50 parallelism, Article 340 would have been scrapped.

"The current law is nothing less than an endorsement for murdering women and girls," said Nadya Khalife, women's rights researcher at Human Rights Watch. "The women of Jordan need protection from these vicious acts enshrined in law, not preferential treatment for their killers."

In the US, for those who do - and do not - support Obama's healthcare reform, the economic cost of violence against women is considerable. In a 2003 report by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) it was estimated that the costs of intimate partner violence in the United States alone exceed US \$5.8 billion per year. So, instead of holding up a sign that calls Obama a 'Socialist', or second-guessing the prospects of changing our own flawed healthcare system, perhaps we ought to instead look at the root of our problems and demand that governments show balanced representation.

If women in office represented our own numbers, when it came to climate change, healthcare reform, economics, gun control, and violent crime, I'd bet money on the fact that we would have safer more stable economies and communities. Unless we - both men and women - demand equality by pushing for policy reform, there is no knowing how long this unjust status quo will persist.



# The Unified Theory of *FHM*

**Sandra Smiley** considers the economics of men's magazines and their place at the LSE

In the name of science, I ventured this week into the nether regions of the Students' Union Shop's magazine racks. Could I make some good rationalist sense out of men's rags? Though I'll admit to getting in a good chuckle at one or two choice rips on Russell Crowe in my research, the whole exercise made me feel, in addition to all-round uncomfortable, a bit empty-headed. These magazines seem to regard their readership as a mass of uncritical consumptive drones with an insatiable appetite for breasts, beer and buying things. Disappointingly, the heady fulminating of an *FHM*-waving public at last week's UGM did little to discredit this.

For those not in the know, the hoopla came in response to a proposed boycott to two infamous 'lads' mags', *The Sun* and *FHM*, in the Students' Union Shop. The motion was brought forth on the grounds, among others, that "any industry that promotes such an objectification of women inevitably has an impact on the sexist attitudes which underpin violence and sexual abuse and as such cannot be said to be "harmless fun".

Indeed, everybody seemed to be talking past each other, taking aim with catcalls, projectiles and careless claims on "rights" instead. The sale of controversial items in a student-subsidized establishment is a salient topic, one that merits further elaboration and discussion. To make sure we are all on the same page, we'll talk about it in terms of economics - a vernacular we assumedly all speak at the London School of it.

The over-the-top nastiness of men's

magazines has something of the economic in it - this is a textbook tale of market competition. The advent of the lads' weekly in 2004 had a deep impact on men's mags: theretofore, but a few had cornered the market for bar room jokes, vinegary advice and dallying interviews with models. They could be divided into two categories: the more popinjay - with the slick, aspirational *Esquire*, *GQ* and *Arena* as exemplars - and the more brusque, like the swashbuckling, oversexed *FHM*.

Then enter the weeklies. Titles like *Nuts* and *Zoo*, with their shorter production cycles, could pump out the bad puns, pushes for gadgets, and celeb gossip glazed with "bro-vetousness" at a break-neck pace. The women, though, were their selling point. These were not the digitally-enhanced Hollywood it-girls like the ones demanding hefty sums of *Esquire* for their images; they were rather the Page 3 set, reality show alumni, even female readers posing as raunchily as was permitted.

The massive commercial success of the ultra-lewd lads' mag saw the relatively more demure monthlies strike back. For one thing, they jacked up their own X-chromosome counts, some similarly recruiting 'real' women to appear on their pages. For another, a crass irony became common currency within the industry. Beginning with the low-brow *Loaded*, it reverberated up to the upmarket titles: even *Arena* has gimmicked with a pack of nude playing cards. Borrowing from and reinventing these magazines' visual and verbal economies, "boy's mags" converged on low-cost production and laddish irony.

**As far as I can glean, within this economy there are three goods - beer, gadgets, and girls**

I perused a selection of men's magazines in order to formulate a Unified Theory of Consumption as per men's mags. I here present my model. As far as I can glean, within this economy there are three goods: beer, gadgets, and girls. All can be bought and sold on the open market - including women. The *FHM* article "How much are you paying for sex?", for instance, invites the reader to calculate their 'pay-per-lay' - for a given courtship, his total expenses in terms of tickets, treats, vodka coolers, are divided by number of sexual encounters. Less than five pounds per is "too cheap - she's about the same price as a Cambodian whore"; while from £11 to £20 is "about the going rate of a Cypriot tart... each shag now needs to be a better purchase than a new CD." For more than that, supposedly, a man should reasonably expect the kind of acrobatics betokened by the Beijing Opera.

So a woman is price inelastic in that one's preference for her actually increases as a direct function of her price instead of decreasing as stated by the law of demand. One can get an "upgrade girlfriend", according to *FHM*'s similarly-titled monthly feature, as if she were an iPhone application or an operating system. Girls and beer are independent goods, whilst she is substitutable with gadgets for the purposes of diversion. Can't afford a contortionist? Get yourself a post-apocalyptic shooting game for PS3 to while away those solitary Saturday evenings. Or maybe that "new CD" - I'd suggest a collection of Barry Manilow's weepy ballads to listen to as you cry comfortlessly night after night into your Budweiser.

The proof is in the cellophane packaging - these publications look at women as objects, as pneumatic jolly-dolls up for purchase. Not just the burnished and buffed models plucked from the red carpet for remunerative photo shoots, but also the women who send in their snapshots for nothing. At last week's UGM, it was said their defense that the the images in men's mags represent "a fantasy" and that men know that women in reality "don't look like that". The truth is, they do, and increasingly so; that's one thing that makes this so discomfiting. "Lads' mags" have become skilled in transmitting the message that real women are to be compared to the "fantasy" and found lacking. That is not to say, of course, that it is any more acceptable to denigrate an airbrushed woman that it is one whose image appears naturally bespeckled and asymmetrical.

These magazines unquestionably objectify women and insult indiscriminately, and consciously so. It is "all in good fun", we are told, and to object to that is to self-style a humourless fun-hating miser. Whatever economic imperatives, stale platitudes, or psychoanalytic antecedents one might whip out to rationalize it are not really all that important. What is important is that, whether you think these publications are hilarious or repugnant, we are paying for them to appear on campus. Issues like this are a testament to how important it is to productively engage the powers-that-be at LSE. Because *caveat emptor* - you get what you pay for.



Flickr user: Ghani, Umair

# An assault to dignity

**Mehek Zafar** speaks of the prevalence of acid attacks in South Asian countries

**C**ountless nameless, and often quite literally faceless, women walk the darker alleyways of this earth. Some hide beneath veils that cloak their hideous scars; others tread like shadows behind the closed doors of their homes; while a few, a very few, find the courage to bare their acid burns, and the identity of their attackers, to the rest of the world.

These women are victims of a heinous crime that seems to be on the rise in South Asia. It is a practice that has its roots in a gender bias that sees women as marginal and insignificant in a society where the man can do as he pleases, and get away with it.

The reasons for acid burning are numerous, but petty. Borne of bruised egos, misplaced righteousness or economic frustration, acid attacks take place due to incendiary motives, such as 'avenging' a man's hurt pride when a woman has refused his sexual advances. In other cases, the assault may be of a domestic nature; an argument between a husband and his wife that takes a violent turn, or a burst of anger against a young bride who has not come with enough dowry. The assailants range from those that the victim may never have met, to people whom she calls her family; from men that have found an all too easy target in an oppressed female to, in many cases, other women who form part of a ring of attackers.

We may list a plethora of motivations for this crime but these are insignificant when facing the number of victims. Despite fear of the aggressor, victims in re-

**Borne of bruised egos, misplaced righteousness or economic frustration, acid attacks take place due to incendiary motives**

cent times have reported the atrocity more than in previous years. Greater awareness of the problem, support systems for battered women and greater legal access have led to an increase in complaints, but the real problem lies in how the victims can continue their charred lives. What is most heartbreaking is that in most societies, the physical self or beauty are strongly associated with the female form. As a result of this crime, victims view themselves as disfigured beings, and cease to be human in the eyes of others. What worsens their disfiguration is a lack of knowledge on how to react to the situation. Going by their instinct, most of them wash off the acid with water, which accentuates the peeling. Not only is their physical being destroyed but their inner self is too.

What hope, then, for these women? While the picture is admittedly bleak, all is not lost. Countless NGOs and other groups have rallied in support of acid burn victims. The Acid Survivors Foundation is one. Their projects include one in Bangladesh where victims are offered free transport to and surgery in Spain. Other groups include the chain of beauty salon in Pakistan known as Depilex which has partnered with Italy's Smile Again Foundation to offer facial reconstructive surgery to acid attack victims, especially to those who cannot afford such treatment. On a more global front the Acid Survivors Trust International (ASTI) works all over the world to surgically reconstruct, and rehabilitate women who have been sufferers of this outrageous crime.

But while treatment is all well and

**Acid that is used in factories and cotton mills remains easily available for purchase in areas where the attacks are prevalent**

good, what of addressing the problem itself, and, most importantly what of prevention? Acid that is used in factories and cotton mills remains easily available for purchase in areas where the attacks are prevalent. Prices remain low, and nothing is being done to place checks on the purpose for which the acid is being bought. Most importantly, the patriarchal structure of the society ensures that men are still able to commit these atrocities with the knowledge that they will walk free.

In this matter too though, the winds of change are gathering, and some defiant young women, such as Farhat from Pakistan, refuse to submit to injustice. Farhat not only took her attacker to court, but when his sentence was changed in the high court to a non-custodial one, she challenged him once again and took the case to the Supreme Court of Pakistan, where the decision was overturned immediately. There is hope that the parliament in Pakistan will take this a step further by enacting legislation against domestic abuse. Such a bill is being debated by the government, and there is hope that it will pass soon, and without any unnecessary delays. The new legislation will comprehensively address the issue of acid attacks.

Farhat, and others like her, have paved the way for countless women to take courage and expose their attackers. They have set a precedent, one which says that women will no longer stand for a society in which they are so abused, and sends a warning to those who still think they can get away with it.

## LSE Diary

### Travel blog: In the slums of Mukuru

Eden-Marie Vance discusses the right to live and let die in Nairobi



Flickr user: Kuwait Ra ed Qutena

No amount of reading could prepare me for the journey I was about to take from London to Nairobi. Seeking volunteer work in local schools and orphanages, little did I realize I would come face to face with the tragic circumstances that breed a desperation to take their life into one's own hands.

Travelling on an extremely conspicuous safari lorry into Nairobi was perhaps not the most subtle entrance into the Mukuru slums. If the sound of our driver revving the engine, struggling through mounds of rubble, crowds of locals, drainage ditches, and shoe stalls wasn't enough to cause havoc, then a group of volunteers stumbling about the rows of seats, almost falling out the truck taking photos sure did! Yet, despite the appalling entrance, we were there for a good cause.

No internet images were enough to prepare anyone for the environment we would be working in. Walking through the slums on foot, the reality of life here in comparison to back home is overwhelming. People queue for hours in the sweltering heat for water which they carry home on their backs. Emaciated cows, chickens and dogs wander around feeding from waste, while children play with litter in the dirt. Shanty houses and 'shops' line the streets, typically constructed from torn cartons, recycled wood or even worn out iron sheets. The houses are single rooms of about two square metres. Each room houses a family, sometimes consisting of up to ten people which produces an extremely claustrophobic, airless space. The slums are heavily populated, the majority of people being unemployed. Those who do attempt to earn a few Kenyan shillings

sell fruit, vegetables and the best cuts of animal intestines and brains. If you're lucky, you may even catch a film showing on a mini TV at the back of the second hand shoe stall.

The stench of the slums is impossible to escape. Residents deposit their waste into plastic bags when they can, throwing the "flying toilets" into a ditch, alley or the ink-black Nairobi river which runs through the middle of the slum. But the most overwhelming smell emanating from the slum is that of burning wood charcoal, which makes it difficult to breathe with ease.

Every year, Kenya suffers losses to HIV/AIDS related illnesses, and an even greater number to water-borne diseases. Of these, 85 per cent occur in the slum areas.

With Mukuru's quality of life, there is little hope for those who contract illness and disease. While working on one of the home-based care projects, visiting homes, we were able to talk to the local women about their experiences of life in Mukuru. They told us that the nearby healthcare centre had recently been carrying out HIV tests, and that one particular man was diagnosed HIV positive. The news struck him so hard that he took the decision to publicly take control of his fate. Supposedly, he had cut himself open from his chest to his stomach and attempted to consume his own intestines, consequently dying from a loss of blood.

People who are victims of life-long diseases often take the difficult decision to end their own lives. Relatives and loved ones are helpless when unable to relieve the victims' suffering. I use the word 'victim' which sounds so impersonal, but

imagine yourself in a situation where someone close to you is in this plight; a grandparent, child, partner or best friend. I believe the majority of people would do their very best to seek help for them. To take one assisted suicide case as an example, 2008 BBC polls suggest public sympathy for Mrs Gilderdale, who assisted the death of her daughter, suffering from chronic fatigue syndrome known as ME. Considering this, the laws on assisted suicide appear quite unresponsive to general opinion, as they are failing to deal with this force for change.

In court, mercy killings, which are acts of compassion whereby a person kills another believed to be permanently helpless or in great pain, may be manslaughter by diminished responsibility, but can still incur life sentences. The question I'd like to pose is: why? Only the suffering individual knows the pain being experienced and the emotions that come with it. So, if they are unable to end their suffering and plead with loved ones to help them, are friends and relatives supposed to sit back?

However, legalizing assisted suicide without investigation of each case would be extremely problematic. Firstly, it is very difficult to ascertain whether the individual has been forced into the decision. If the suicide takes place behind closed doors in an uncontrolled environment, without any outside intervention, it is difficult to determine if it is a genuine case or possibly murder. How can it be determined whether an individual has asked someone to aid them in ending their suffering?

For this reason, I would support Terry Pratchett's suggestion for a non-aggressive tribunal of mercy. Just as I believe was the case in my example of the suicide in

Mukuru slums, those who are suffering from an incurable disease, or who can no longer take the fight for their life, are level headed when they make the decision to commit suicide. It's about maintaining control over your own life.

A tribunal would overcome any problems deciding whether it is the individual's choice and not a case of murder if a loved one is involved in assisting the suicide. The tribunal would ensure that the applicant is of informed mind, having looked at alternative options to deal with their suffering. Lawyers and medical practitioners present would ensure there are no pressures from third parties and can explain the symptoms the applicant is suffering from, and future complications which may inevitably cause their health to deteriorate. The tribunal would have the effect of formalizing the decision of suicide, ensuring any assisting parties will not face charges.

Lack of acknowledgement of this issue increases the taboo around suicide and forces it to go underground. Dignitas House in Switzerland was founded by a Swiss lawyer, Ludwig Minelli, adopting the motto: "Live with dignity, die with dignity". It allows people the freedom to talk about suicide, which reduces their desire to go ahead with it and provides a service to reduce the large number of catastrophically failed suicides carried out in isolation. Perhaps we need to start listening to the voices of suffering individuals who just want to die with dignity surrounded by their loved ones, with the peace of mind that their last moments will not incur a prison sentence for those left behind.

## WHAT IF...

### the Brighton bomb had killed Margaret Thatcher?

Jack Tindale

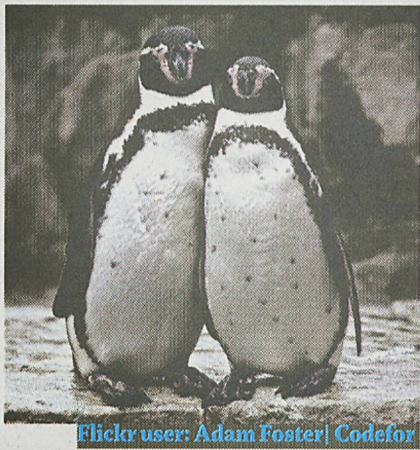
In retrospect, it is perhaps unusual to think that the assassination of Prime Minister Thatcher by the IRA on the 12th October 1984 did not result in a more extreme response than it did. Certainly, given responses such as that of the soon-to-be Defence Secretary, Alan Clark, who expressed a desire to "rip the Paddies to shreds", aside the provision of additional powers of detention to the Home Office, the new Heseltine administration was marked by a large element of moderation in its policies. The curtailing of what Chancellor King termed "rampant Freidmanism" with regards to privatization of public assets and banking liberalization ensured that the second Conservative term of office would be far less socially chaotic than the first.

However, Michael Heseltine would find his administration undone even within via the increasing vexed question of Europe. The argument over Britain's place within the continent would result in the fall of the Tory government in the 1987 General Election to a revived Labour Party in coalition with the Alliance, now under the leadership of Shirley Williams. With the United States, still recovering from the fallout of Iran-Contra, which had forced the abdication of President Reagan, it would be Britain that would play the leading role in negotiating an end to the Greco-Turkish War, a short but bloody conflict over territorial waters in the Aegean.

Like his predecessor, Prime Minister Kinnock would find himself also forced into a showdown with his own party over the signing of the Treaty of Bruges, and the stress resulting from the ratification process is widely seen as being the primary reason for his resignation and replacement by John Smith in the summer of 1991, a period that came following the establishment of the Federation of Russia and the Eurasian States after the aborted *coup d'etat* by hardliners in Moscow in 1987. After four years of chaos within the Eastern bloc, a semblance of normality would return under the leadership of Andrei Sakharov, who had been rehabilitated by the Soviet Government shortly before the attempted seizure of power.

Labour's defeat to the resurgent Conservatives under Alan Sked in 1996 was a narrow one that demonstrated the importance of national heritage to the British electorate. With the Russia-aligned former Warsaw Pact continuing to represent a grave threat to Western Europe, it remains to be seen how the liberal democracies of the European Community will fare in the next century. However, with the recent statements of a new era of nuclear non-proliferation by President Feingold, the ratification of the Treaty of Fontainebleau spearheaded by the new government of John Cruddas and the signing of the landmark Sino-Japanese Agreement by Prime Ministers Tong and Anno, hopes remain high that the current decade will be the one that the Cold War finally comes to an end.

## Measured musings



Flickr user: Adam Foster | Codefor

As has been the great consensus of this generation, technology has re-shaped the ways in which we socially interact, ranging from the immediacy of mobile phone communication to the atmosphere of display to be found on networking sites.

Among this pool of curious exchanges, however, the phenomenon of internet dating is a most striking one. Articles claim that this is the third most popular way to get a date, whilst ex-members gush on about their success in meeting their significant other online. Five million in the UK are registered on online dating services.

Meeting your true and only via a pseudonym in a chat room may be a severe blow to the spirit of romanticism. After all, many express that it is this element of innocuous randomness which makes the occurrence of love (dare we use

## An affectionate market

the word?) so surprising and unique. Yet the world, aside from fiction, has never been truly and fully romantic in the way in which we like to imagine it. Marriages of convenience, or assisted meetings in some cultures are still prominent.

Hence, meeting someone within an 'artificial' context cannot truly be deemed a modern invention; rather, the facility with which this can be done, and the range of options which one faces is. Also, choosing online means is a pragmatic admittance that within the time constraints of a working life, one does not rate the chances of meeting a potential partner very high. From an economic perspective, however, things do get truly interesting. The issue with these sites, as your economics lecturer will happily tell you, is that individuals frequenting these websites are adversely selected. In other words, according to Coase's paper (for which an LSE professor has earned a Nobel Prize), members of

online dating services are there in the first place because they in the past had difficulties finding a partner; hence, this leads to a low likelihood of finding a partner of high quality.

It is perhaps better to consider the matter more optimistically, as a means to increase the rate of liquidity of the supply and demand of partners. If these methods allow a greater proportion of individuals to reach bliss, then let it be it, no matter how unglamorous the reality of it may be. And in a bout of what may be considered naïveté, one may even venture to say that more often than not, a match is usually attempted on the grounds of a complementary personality (through the means of extensive hours of chatting) as opposed to a superficial scan of profile pictures.

Naturally, systems are always abused, and stories of men and women alike turned into factory-chain seducers are rife in articles dedicated to sharing these

anecdotal stories to the general public.

These may scare users away, but after all, as anywhere else, success will in the end depend on luck.

Marion Koob  
Features Editor

# No spin.



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## Mr. LSE

Photos by Ben Phillips, Natasha Bannister and Hannah Dyson



Oh yes, dear students, it's that time of year again, that time in which we are treated to LSE's finest, showcasing there oh-so-many talents. The winner of this year's Mr. LSE was a star from the Ultimate Frisbee team, Henry Loh. Thanks to the evening's entertainment, £600 was raised to help the cause in Haiti.

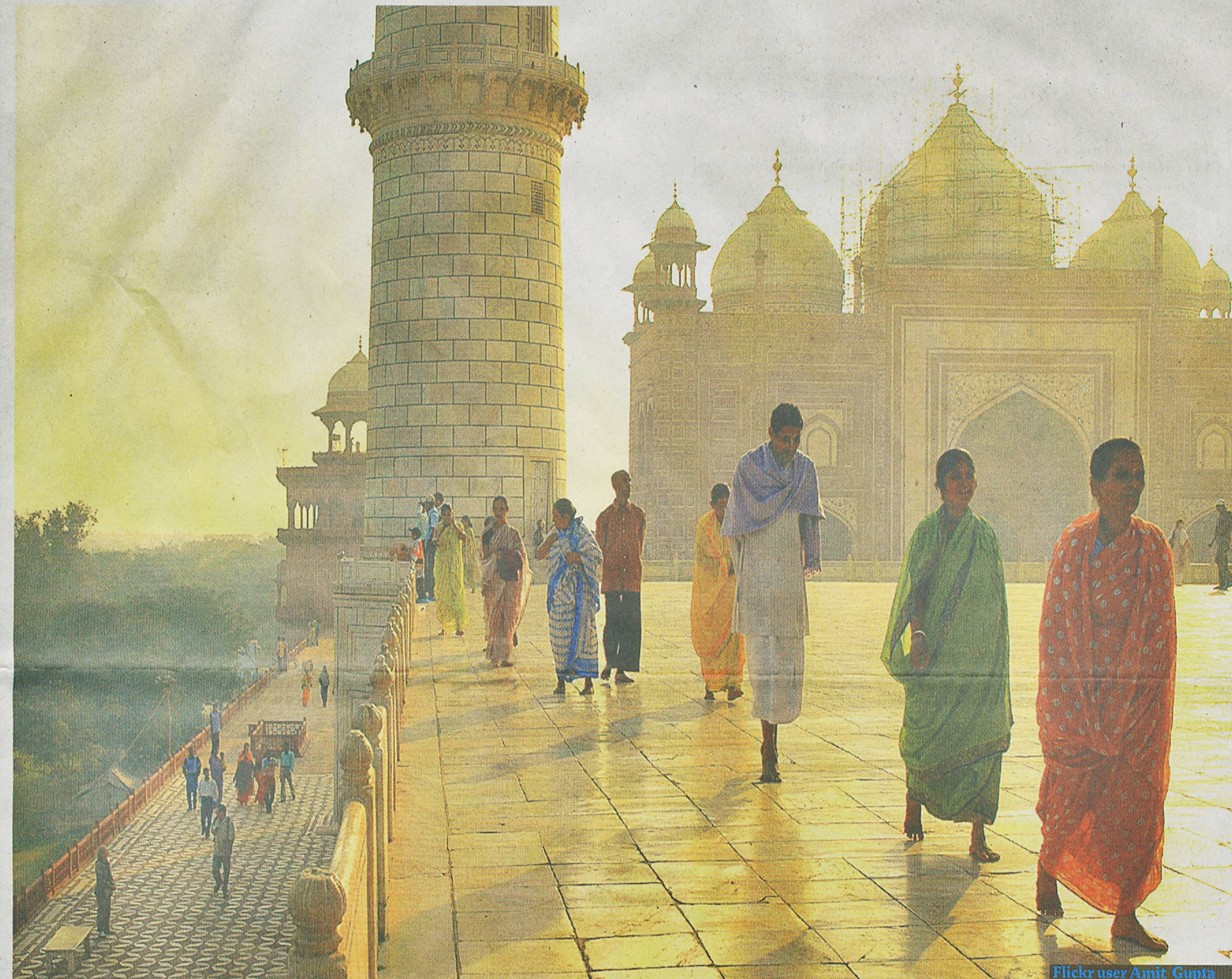
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# Social

## Frappuccinos and Indian slums

**Maatin Patel** traverses India's path to globalization



Flickr user Amit Gupta

**A**s we enter India Week 2010, I've been reminded of some of the colourful and everlasting experiences I encountered in India during my gap year. Whilst both my parents were born in the subcontinent, it wasn't until I spent 3 months volunteering and travelling across the country that I truly felt connected to

**For as India pushes to expand and modernise, this is only happening in tiny pockets of major cities, and domestic concerns are in my opinion falling by the wayside.**

the place; a connection that I'm sure is shared by many fellow students – hence the size and scale of this week's festivities!

India Week succeeds Global Week, which for me can be considered quite poignant. As India grows economically, it strives to hold its own on the international platform and the effects of our increasingly globalized world can be seen

on both Indian and British soil. Modern malls containing top Western brands and European cafes create a slice of home in urban areas of big cities such as Mumbai, New Delhi and Calcutta. Critics of globalization have often used the term "Americanization" to suggest the undermining of traditional culture in countries that instead embrace Western customs in order to reap the benefits of globalized interactivity, such as through foreign direct investment. Whilst indulging in a frappuccino did give me comfort for quite some time, it made me feel very uncomfortable sitting in an air-conditioned mall sipping a drink whilst across the road was a slum community living hand-to-mouth in squalor. In fact, I felt more at home crossing the road and engaging with the locals, exploring the 'real' parts of Calcutta and experiencing how the vast majority of the country live.

For as India pushes to expand and modernize, this is only happening in tiny pockets of major cities, and domestic concerns are in my opinion falling by the wayside. As well as the detrimental effect this is having on India creating a fast-growing divide between rich and poor, there is also the underlying irony that India will not be able to catch up to its Western competitors unless it turns inwards and addresses the multitude of issues that are evident for anyone to see. From conversations with people I have understood better the amount of religious, class and caste stigmas that are still rife within the less-developed parts of India, which do their own part to hold the country back and build walls against domestic growth and eventual global integration. Here the argument can be made that traditional values must be vanquished in order to progress; for India to truly develop I feel there are certain traditions that feel antiquated and narrow-minded

that must be abandoned.

Bollywood was a complete anathema to me a year ago, but having seen posters of Shahrukh Khan (think Tom Cruise) on every street corner I decided to pick the

**Bollywood was a complete anathema to me a year ago, but having seen posters of Shahrukh Khan (think Tom Cruise) on every street corner...I am now emerging as big a fan as anyone, much to the delight of my dad**

brains of a handful of the billion critics that flock adoringly to both the creaky single-screen theaters or the new multiplexes, and I am now emerging as big a fan as anyone (much to the delight of my

dad on my return home). I arrived with the idea that Hindi films were simply long, full of songs and dancing, rain and crying, but the industry is rapidly evolving. Films such as "Rock On!" and "Dostana" have strong Western themes, often plenty of English dialogue (which worked to my benefit) and have started to play with the boundaries of content that divide their audience, be that a heterosexual kiss or even a homosexual one. The release of Karan Johar's latest film "My Name is Khan" shows the first real signs of crossover between the two largest film industries in the world. The plot follows a Muslim man living in San Francisco who marries a Hindu girl, and concerns their struggles following the 9/11 atrocities. Truly international material that should resonate with a global audience, perhaps this is the type of film that will bind Hollywood with its much larger Indian counterpart. Karan Johar is a versatile filmmaker who seems to be pushing the industry forward; I even got the chance to watch his equivalent of Friday Night with Jonathan Ross comically titled Koffee with Karan, which was entertaining to say the least.

It's a fair assumption to say that Indian culture has been lovingly embraced in this country for quite some time. Considered the jewel in the crown of the former Empire, perhaps it is little wonder that Indian takeaway has consistently been voted as a British favourite. Shahrukh Khan again declared that he had never seen anyone shoot India better than Danny Boyle in "Slumdog Millionaire", surely the greatest testimonial to the film that underlined the cultural impact of India on the West. So it wouldn't surprise me to see India Week embraced by the entire LSE community, whether they are getting mehndi tattoos or taking a Bollywood dance workshop or just gorging some delicious food.

## Agonizing

**Neil Hampton** dons a

**W**hen I was asked to try for a role in the Language Centre's production of T. S. Eliot's play Sweeney Agonistes, for this year's Literary Festival, to say I approached the whole business with trepidation would be an understatement. After allowing myself time to adjust to the idea of acting – really acting – I attended my first audition to find that the remaining parts on offer were those of Americans.

Trepidation gave way to outright fear. How could I go in front of my fellow students, lecturers and members of the public, many of whom, no doubt, would hail from the Northern part of that Continent, with a crude approximation of their accent and no acting ability whatsoever? Coupling this with a track record for impropriety, insecurity and general incompetence, things were not looking good for my credibility, the production as a whole, or the reputation of its director, Nick Rushton!

Well, testament to the cast and the aforementioned director, I just want to put it on record that I had the time of my life. Sweeney Agonistes (hereby referred to as The Sweeney, not much shorter but a whole lot cooler) was well attended by both students and the general public, who, contrary to all my pessimistic expectations, didn't just leave after a talk by eminent economist and literary biographer, Lord Desai, and it all went off, almost, without a hitch.

The play, itself, revolves around the rather bizarre concept of a twenties dinner party given by a couple of cosseted English girls, gate crashed by three men who, even after hours of rehearsals, were still trying to establish, were either real or unreal. Typically puzzling Modernist fare, and obviously chosen by the Language Centre for this reason, but no less stimulating, enjoyable and, even, at times, dare I say it, humorous, for that.

The girls, Natasha Dole and Francesca Washtell, while outgoing and friendly in the outside world acted the roles of frigid, if dazzling, twenties' belles with aplomb. Jonathan Weir, despite stubbornly refusing to say a line the same way twice, was wholly convincing as my fellow American, Krumpacker. Mark Richardson played a wonderfully eccentric and camp

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# Sweeney

## American accent

Sam Wauchope, while Jamie Michelson stepped into the breach at the last possible moment to bring off the latter's fellow military man, the boozy Captain Horsefall with a studied lack of decorum. Mark Slade, despite claiming not ever to have heard of Epsom Heath, was a suitably raucous Snow and the director himself took on the role of the equally incongruous Snow, bravely some would maintain, with the amount of singing the role portended. The night belonged to Eugene Oh, however, as the most sinister Sweeney not to be operating out of a barbershop on Fleet Street.

As for my own character, Klipstein, the man with the American accent that refused to be pinned down to one state or region, or perhaps, even that continent, I guess the jury's still out. Furthermore, of all the cast members, I had the rather dubious accolade of being the only one to spill an entire bottle of red moments before the end, in a fit manufactured pique that all got a bit out of hand, much to the director's horror. After a single expletive, I just about recovered myself and was able to deliver the final soliloquy, before the night ended with spectacular jazz from the Kuriev Experience who were a quite genuinely electrifying fixture of the Literary Festival.

My reason for reporting all this is not simply some narcissistic desire for self-aggrandizement, however. Despite my little accident, I can honestly say The Sweeney was some of the most fun I have ever had. I said at the beginning of the festivities, on this very page, that the LSE offers such a rich cultural experience belying its reputation as a mere playpen for city boys. The last week or so, with the assorted talks, poetry evenings and productions, are just a hint of the rich cultural life that lies, not sleeping but sometimes snoozing, just off Kingsway. It doesn't have to stop now the festival is over. All it takes is some particularly enterprising student get involved, twist the arm of a society, put a flier and we could have so many more such evenings as the summer draws nearer; not to mention the plethora of productions, talks and other events already, no doubt on the calendar. Now the flame of culture has again been kindled on Houghton Street, let's see that it never goes out again.

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# OVERHEARD AT LSE

**Person 1:** "The men at LSE are more like women; they are such teases!"  
**Person 2:** "But you are a tease! They just try and play your game. Clearly it's a matter of game theory!"

**In Northumberland House Halls:**  
**Guy talking about the girl next to him:** "She fucking dragged me all the way to KPMG, whoops I mean KFC."  
**Only an LSE student would confuse KPMG and KFC.**

**CPNSS Tea yesterday:**  
**AW:** ... I love Rawls. I would say that Rawls is my favourite 20th century philosopher.  
**AO:** Saying Rawls is your favourite philosopher is like saying vanilla is your favourite flavour of ice cream.

**Outside the library building, a guy and a girl hurriedly crisscrossing:**

**Girl:** "Hi..."  
**Guy (confused at first, later dumfounded):** "Hi! How did you recognise me?"  
**Girl (sort of regretting she said hi):** "I guess, you were near..."  
**Guy:** "I'd like to be closer."

**GV100 lecturer on Rousseau:** "Madame de Warens takes him[Rousseau] under her wing... and takes him in a few other ways too... and this is very important."

**LSE student describing other LSE students to a friend:** "...Yeh, and they all seem to have blueberries there too..."

**At a careers event on the development sector in the UK, guest speaker from Bond:** "Activism should be more than waving banners and flags, something smarter and more organized, like on facebook or twitter."

**Week 5, Lent Term:**  
**Person 1:** "Hey! I hardly ever see you around. What modules do you do this year?"  
**Person 2:** "Erm, jurisprudence, medical law, civil liberties and err..."  
**Person 1:** (waits patiently)  
**Person 2:** "Errr..."  
**Person 1:** (still waiting)  
**Person 2:** "Fuck. I can't remember."

**Greame Wood, LL104 class:** "Remember, we are not humanitarians. We are lawyers."

**Overheard in NatWest:**  
**Clerk 1:** "That Hare Krishna guy should be removed."  
**Clerk 2:** "Sure. There's no such thing as a free lunch."

**Girl sitting in the library facing the wall:** "Please can we move to a table where we can see each other? I don't like looking at walls. I get really distracted!"

**Guy 1:** "Did you see those nude pictures that the AU were presenting in the UGM?"  
**Guy 2:** "Yeah. I managed to squeeze a quick one out before the vote"

# Loveless at the LSE

**Neha Date** believes in appreciating your loved ones everyday



Flickr user SeenaRita

It's Valentine's Day. On an easy Sunday morning, I wake up and check my emails (don't deny it people - we can't live without it, as the LSE system ensures). In the inevitable spirit, there are various articles entitled, "What does your Valentine's day gift mean?", "Top 10 date plans for Valentine's Day" and the inevitable "Valentine's Day secrets for singles; how to ensure that you will have a date by the following year." Unfortunately for the majority of us, we will not necessarily get to put any of these articles to use.

By now you are probably going to suggest that I really ought to change my online homepage to BBC or something to avoid these types of articles. Well, I can't for a lot of reasons. Everytime I do, this particular homepage keeps coming back, and secondly, some of the articles are a guilty pleasure that I feel many of us need once in a while to take our minds off the seriousness we encounter in life. More importantly, it is this guilty pleasure that does give hope that I along with millions of others will find a relationship.

Coming to the LSE a year and a half ago, I didn't know whether I would find a real relationship, or even go on proper dates. While the dating has happened, the

majority of those stints have failed, as they have for most of us. Why is this? I mean at the LSE we are intelligent and decent people. Most of us have been through similar experiences and have a similar capacity to understand each other. The reality is though, that there are various reasons we cannot find relationships. One of the first rumors I heard when I joined the LSE was that 5 per cent of the student body manage to find a proper relationship. I immediately dismissed this rumor; I knew that this statistic could not be true. However, the fact that this type of rumor exists does paint a picture of the LSE - that most people are simply too busy to go looking for relationships. With having to deal with a never-ending to do list, vast amounts to study, job applications, society and sports team commitments etc., it is a wonder that anybody finds time here to do any socializing. More specifically, everybody is so committed to excelling in these fields, that they have no energy to find another relationship. Even after we manage to meet somebody, we find that they are not what we are searching for. Their views and their attitude are just not compatible with ours, or we simply do not have amorous feelings for them. Finally, when we have finally met that someone, the ones we may

**With having to deal with a never-ending to do list, vast amounts to study, job applications, society and sports team commitments etc, it is a wonder that anybody finds time here to do any socializing**

be willing to give up our time for, they are the ones who are already taken! Finally, we have to realize that most students just want to have fun and are still growing and learning about themselves before they are willing to find one partner.

However, the question that we should be asking ourselves is that even if we have not managed to find a relationship, this is hardly a problem to be worrying about just for the purposes of fulfilling one day of the year. Firstly, as students, we have plenty of time ahead to make sure we enjoy the rest of our lives and find the relationships that are worthwhile. In the present there are other relationships in our lives we have to fulfil, such as those to our family and friends. In most religions and cultures, there is no such designated day for the fulfilment of relationships, because the idea is that we should appreciate our loved ones every day of the year.

On Valentine's Day, the online article that most grabbed my attention was the "Farmers wife gives Valentines Manure;" for its obvious symbolism. The hype about Valentine's Day is a lot of manure - life is about spending time and putting effort towards the people you care about the most for all the other days of the year.

# Mr LSE Special

We give you the Loh-down on the events of last week's Mr LSE competition

## The Ultimate Stud

Joe Rennison

This is a story of rags to riches, of pauper to prince. To those that knew him before Wednesday night he is known as Henry Loh, but to those that met him after he is only Mr LSE.

It all began as a punishment by his beloved Ultimate Frisbee team for missing Regionals. Regionals are held on the weekend of Valentine's Day and in true Mr LSE style Henry had gone and booked a weekend in Paris for him and his girlfriend (awwwww!). That's right ladies, he's taken.

The Ultimate team felt that the only possible compensation, for such a travesty, would be to compete in Mr LSE. Henry certainly rose to the challenge. As the motley crew of misfits and mistakes clambered onto the stage it was clear that our man was not without a chance. At the start there were 12 men and after each round two were removed by the delightful judges.

The first round was simple; introduce yourself but include an 'interesting fact'. No doubt some of the competitors misheard because interest was feigning when the buck passed to Henry. Henry is small in stature, a characteristic almost synonymous with being Asian, however his witty riposte was warmly received by the crowd: "My father is actually 6'3."

The next round called for each person to down a pint as quickly as possible. This caused Henry's fans some concern as we knew it was not his strongest round, yet a gallant effort saw him placed above the bottom two.

Onto his talent; a traditional Malaysian dance, beautifully executed to the tune of All The Single Ladies by Beyoncé. I've seen some of the great movers in my time but Henry did more for me than Torvil And Dean ever did.

From here on out Henry looked and sounded like a winner. A tricky request to depict a sexual fantasy using only economic terms was casually brushed off with talk of his supply and his fans demand, much to the delight of the crowd.

A brief intermission to witness a band that will no doubt re-appear in the warm up heats for next year's X-Factor auditions (they were called 'Hot Boyz', need I say more?) and Henry was back on wearing nothing but a carefully selected pair of Calvin Klein boxer shorts. A few ladies were subsequently removed from the Quad to be treated for 'weak knees'. The next round was the eagerly anticipated 'chat-up line' round. However, not one person could hear what Henry said because they were chanting his name so loudly. Even the football team had sided with the unsuspecting entrant and the name 'Henry' reverberated around the room.

At this point only three competitors were left. This was the final. Henry stood next to a ginger footballer and a curly haired rugby player before receiving the command to assume the Plank position. This is essentially a press up position but balancing on your forearms. It tests core strength, especially working on the abdominals. The competition had become a Last Man Standing affair, or rather Last Man Planking.

Henry's support was evident. Alice Pelton, one of the esteemed judges, began to chant his name. The crowd were willing for Henry to win. They needn't have had any fear as Henry was as steady as a rock. He didn't flinch but instead just waited until the competition gradually fell to the ground, defeated.

Henry graciously thanked his competitors, the judges and the overwhelming support from the crowd. It wasn't only the Ultimate Frisbee team that was cheering, it was everyone. He epitomized a people's champion.

The celebrations that later commenced at Zoo Bar saw Henry pounced upon like a Hollywood star. The women, and the men, crowded around for a glimpse at the new champion. He is an Economics student, he's not from England and so some may say he was always 'Mr LSE'. But they who witnessed those magical events on Wednesday will know, it wasn't until he grinded like Beyoncé that he became our Mr LSE.



## Mr LSE Stats

Name: HENRY LOH

Nationality: Malaysian

Race: Chinese

Weight: 62kgs

Height: 5'7

No. of packs: SIX (under the right lighting)

DOB: May 4, 1989

\*\*Relationship Status: TAKEN\*\*

## How to: do the 'Single Ladies' dance

Our own Mr LSE shows us the steps to the Single Ladies Dance



# AU Chat Roulette

With the recent craze of Chat Roulette blowing up around LSE, we thought we would bring you some of our favourite sessions...



**Necrophilia**

**Latex fetishes**

**Arse vs. Nipple Twisting**

Fancy playing this yourself? All you need is a computer connected to the internet, a webcam and a strong stomach (about 1 in 10 searches reveals a man masturbating or performing some form of sex act). When you want to change your partner, simply click next to be assigned a new partner. Repeat ad infinitum/ad nauseam (delete as appropriate). Prepare to be shocked, appalled, disgusted and entertained!

# Jonas and Xisco tell it like it is

Our rebel Peruvian columnists **Jonas and Xisco** managed to sneak into Mr LSE undetected this week to report on the highs and lows of the AU's blue ribband event

This week saw Charlie Glyn's Machiavellian plan to finally see some AU loins come to fruition. It's been a barren year for ol' Scholesy, with only Sebby Webby, John Coton, Niall Quinn, Matthew Box, Oliver Townsend and Tom Sumner to write home to her OBE winning father about. The annual minge-moistener Mr LSE returned on Wednesday. Twelve pre-pubescent boys stood on stage all contemplating how the fuck they were bullied into participation, and four of the AU's most morally corrupt women took their seats; resident virgin Alice Pelton was licking her lips at the prospect of Ginger Chris' ginger pubes.

Jonas&Xisco would like to congratulate the victor and the new Mr LSE, Henry Loh, for swaying the crowd with a traditional Asian dance. As renowned local dancers of the Peruvian skit, Jonas&Xisco appreciate the difficulty in entertaining the English, whose interests

## Four of the AU's most morally corrupt women took their seats

contain nothing further than football, fornication and alcohol. Commiserations to those who managed to make it to the final with pseudo-Strivens doppelgänger Doughy Carr-Saunders-Hall Evans just losing out to Henry in the wank-off. Of course, in an event of this nature, it is unsurprising that the ginger finished first, especially as he was left dangerously close to climax after locking lips with the aforementioned Pelton.

The contest was well received by all, especially the minge of the AU who enjoyed seeing the ugliest, most impressive members of the FC, Rugby and

Ultimate Frisbash embarrass themselves in a futile attempt to ensnare some snatch. Other notable entrants included Norayr 'El Bat' thingamajig serenading all with his home nation of Azerbaijan's national anthem and John Goodman ringer Ben Robinson's rendition of Russell 'Where's Jess Bonner?' Baffy's hit 'Don't stop believing'. The half-time act was performed by RnB sensation 'Hot Boyz'. Despite only reaching tepid the pair managed to avoid being thoroughly embarrassed thanks to their producer who had the foresight to stifle their drones by putting the background beats up to 11.

Major drama erupted on Friday night as former team mates and supposed best pals, Crispy Duck Coton and Skinny Pete Rickett engaged in hand to hand combat worthy of King and Martial Law. Things turned ugly after Law (Rickett) accused King (Coton) of not having any 'Love and Pride'. Coton's retort was to immediately pull Alex Avlonitis; the resulting fight was only stopped after Ed Ball's rent boy and resident Desperate Dan, Jack Follows stepped in. Afterwards, Jack's only comment was that he did what he did because he wants to be the guy that guys count on. BENDER!

**Best Lad:** Owly/Norayr: Everyone's favourite Armenian impressed one particular judge at Mr LSE with his operatic stylings, six pack and general height. Needless to say he woke up at Striven's house.

**Worst Lad:** Josh 'Malibu' Stacey: Another disappointment to compound his on-going goal drought, Malibu absolutely bottled his Napoleon Dynamite routine. Luckily, Kathryn Eastwood loves Malibu more than Trent loves finance, and the pair canoodled the night away.

Fended off Snaville? Email now at [jonas&xisco@thebeaveronline.co.uk](mailto:jonas&xisco@thebeaveronline.co.uk). Also don't forget to join our facebook fan page.

# TORSO OF THE WEEK



## Results

### Men's Football

- LSE 4s 2 v 0 Imperial 4s
- LSE 5s 8 v 0 Queen Mary 4s
- LSE 6s 4 v 4 RHUL 5s
- LSE 7s 1 v 0 St Barts 3s
- LSE 1s 0 v 2 UCL 1s
- LSE 3s 2 v 2 Goldsmiths 1s
- LSE 4s 2 v 0 St Barts 2s
- LSE 6s 0 v 4 RVCs 1s

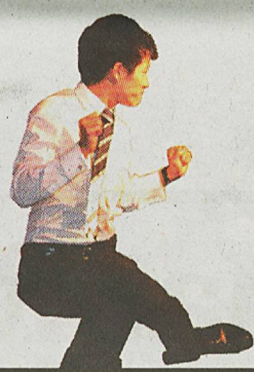
### Rugby

- LSE 1s 48 v 8 Middlesex 1s
- LSE 2s 0 v 44 Buckinghamshire 2s

### Netball

- LSE 4s 29 v 3 Queen Mary 4s

# Sport



Inside:  
How to do the  
'Single Ladies'  
dance by Mr LSE!

## King's lose the battle but win the war

Ben Robinson

For those who watched the build-up to the England Italy game on Sunday afternoon, you will have noticed the hope and ambition steaming from the Italian camp. Here is a team that in its 10 years and 50 games as the sixth nation, have won only 6 games and lost 43. Not much grounds for hope some might say, yet in the Stadio Flaminio on a Roman Sunday afternoon none of that matters.

At the same time, 890 miles away at Fortress Berrylands, a similar story was unfolding. King's College 1st XV were back in the semi-final of the ULU Gutteridge Cup defending their title from 12 months earlier. At the other end of the pitch was the ambitious metaphorical Italy, who have never been known for their achievements but arrived with hope, and more importantly, a solid squad.

King's College stand one league above LSE; however, after seeing off King's 2nd XV earlier in the season (81-0), LSE felt victory over the older brother was achievable, and realistically so. Having won 4 and lost 5, King's would be entering the battle already beaten and bruised. LSE on the other hand were positive and marching on after their 7 victories and only the 1 loss.

Kick-off soon came and went and LSE were right to have arrived with ambition. King's were pinned back in their own 22 for the majority of the first half. The official CBBC stats show first half territory was 83% in favour of LSE. Unfortunately, as is the nature of rugby, King's were able to score two early tries; one from an interception and one from a fumble in our own 22 which was sceptically kicked through and grounded for a try. LSE kept their heads up and ended

the half with a well deserved try from the forwards.

The second half continued in a similar manner. King's were tired, uninventive and out of the game to all intents and purposes. They managed to kick an easy penalty from in front of the posts to take the score to 15-5, but LSE knew the result was coming and continued with the effective phase play that had dominated the first half. Matthew 'Boca' Box put all the hours of gym work into action 'steam-

**The King's captain, the referee and the 3 strong crowd at Berrylands all agreed that the result should have fallen to LSE**

rolling' the King's winger to touch down in the corner, leaving LSE 5 points down with 5 minutes to go. Shortly after, Boca was to be heard screaming like a little girl in the bottom of a ruck for what turned out to be an insignificant knee injury, but nevertheless was replaced by Josh Olloohfytmndjghfhtg. LSE got closer and closer to the King's line before throwing the ball wide leaving Josh Ologhsdmsjdtfyrh to run the ball in to even the scores up. Full time, 15-15.

At this stage there were overtones of the previous day's Wales-Scotland match. Scotland were winning but everyone,



including the Scottish, was thinking surely this can't happen. Unfortunately, at Berrylands, 'Scotland' did do the job. King's scored an early breakaway try in extra time and LSE were unable to come back with a score. At the final whistle, there was an overwhelming sense of disappointment in the LSE ranks. The King's captain, the referee and the 3 strong crowd at Ber-

rylands all agreed that the result should have fallen to LSE.

For years Italy have been the underdogs, and yesterday they came close to beating the most successful team in the 6 Nations. Nick Mullins literally had no Roman clichés left, and Brian Moore was his usual downbeat, depressing, bald, grumpy, thick self. At one stage during a

scuffle between the Italians and the English, Brian Moore intelligently asked, "Eh! I wonder what language they speak when the fightin'?" Good question Brian. Nick Mullins of course had only one answer, "Anglo-Saxon, of course."

We won the battle but we lost the war. Viva L'Italia.

## Reviving the FA Cup

Stuart Smedley on making the FA Cup more attractive to the big teams

Alongside viewing the Queen's Speech on Christmas afternoon, the FA Cup has long been considered a well established English tradition.

Yet, as viewing numbers for Her Majesty's state of the nation address dwindle, and what is often billed as the world's greatest cup competition becomes seen as ever more of a burden for those feeding at the top table of English football, both are in danger of losing their relevance.

In the case of the latter, the past fortnight has seen Arsenal boss Arsène Wenger and his Stoke City counterpart Tony Pulis – two men who have struggled to see eye-to-eye – both come out and state that, in terms of priorities, the knockout competition is akin to nothing more than an unimportant sideshow when compared to progress in the Premier League.

These statements are just the tip of the iceberg though, as the competition's lustre has consistently been brought into question over the past few seasons.

Unsurprisingly, the Football Association has sought to address such issues by proposing to tinker with what is the oldest football contest in the world.

Suggestions range from scrapping replays – one of the greatest aspects of the FA Cup and often a huge reward for lower-league clubs – to staging ties in midweek and trialling 'innovations' such as video technology and additional officials.

In other words, the FA feels that by turning it into nothing more than a gimmick, the competition will improve. Adopting such tactics will not address the most pertinent issue though – namely its treatment by the leading English clubs as second rate.

Despite throwing up fascinating contests like the tie between local rivals Southampton and Portsmouth, as well as the notorious giant-killings, such as non-league Northwich Victoria – of the Blue Square North – beating League One Charlton Athletic and, most notably,



Leeds United overcoming Manchester United, the cup has become stale.

Wenger's attitude toward it typifies why this is the case. In both games his side played in this year's contest, he fielded an understrength team. Thankfully they received their comeuppance against Stoke in the fourth round.

In order to justify his stance, Wenger argued that finishing third in the Premier League was more of an achievement than lifting the famous knockout trophy.

In terms of economics – a subject in which Wenger holds a master's degree from the University of Strasbourg – it certainly is.

Prize money for finishing third in the Premiership last year equalled roughly £13.6 million, excluding TV money and income accrued from UEFA Champions League participation. In comparison, this year's FA Cup winners will earn roughly a sixth of that amount sans television fees, which inevitably are much lower compared to the amounts earned from being in the Premier League.

More astonishing is that by finishing 16th in the league last year, Sunderland earned roughly half a million more in prize

money than this year's cup winners will take, which explains Pulis' attitude.

It would be financial suicide for the FA to increase the cup prize money pot to the levels of the Premier League.

There therefore are two options available to the national governing body: either eradicate prize money – which was only introduced at the dawn of the Millennium, or take away the Champions League spot for the team finishing fourth in the league and give it to the FA Cup winners instead.

The former option would undoubtedly hurt lower league teams, to whom prize money can ensure the club's survival. A case in point is Accrington Stanley, whose journey to the fourth round has helped put them on a firmer financial footing after they were subject to a winding up order from HMRC last year.

Undoubtedly, having a spot available in the holy grail of European football – the Champions League – will spice up the competition no end and force full strength sides to be played throughout.

Although Premier League teams need only win six games to lift the FA Cup, at least they are champions of something – unlike whoever finishes fourth.

LIKE SPORTS?  
have banter?  
(sorry Fenton...)

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**PART B**



# 16.02.10

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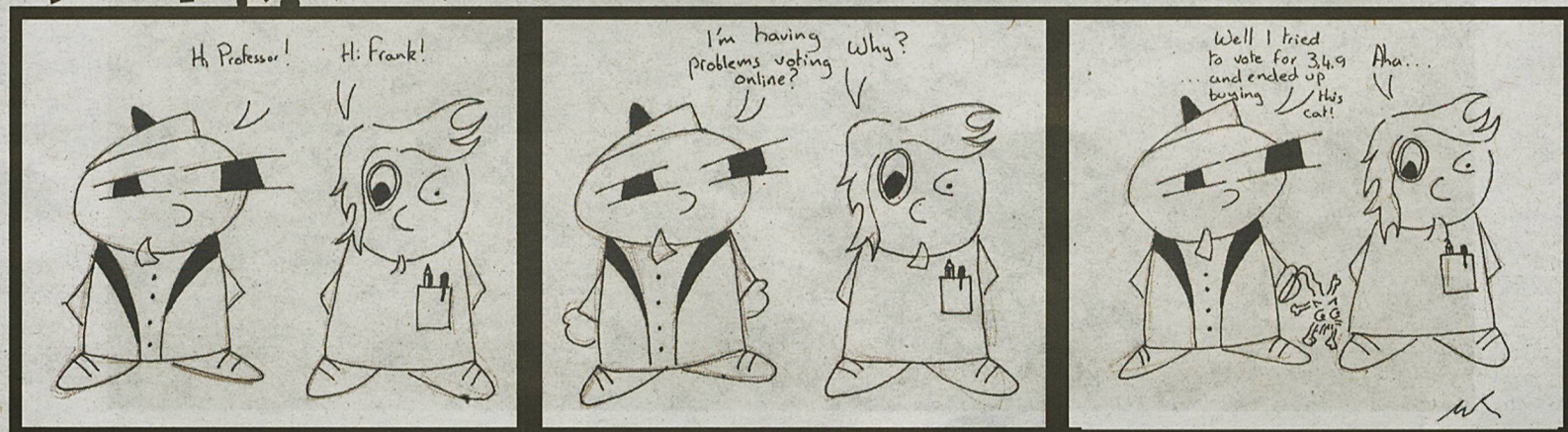
## VISUAL ARTS

ALICE PELTON – PARTB-SEXANDGENDER@THEBEAVERONLINE.CO.UK

## SEX AND GENDER

### Frank!

by Mark Twyford



## EDITORIAL

And so begins my reign of terror as editor-in-chief of the LSE's most prestigious Arts & Culture supplement. I can actually tell people to get out of my office; all I need is a pair of braces and a fat cigar to chomp on, to be some Gordon Gekko flash cunt. No one I inform of my new position has to know I share it with Calum. Mind, that won't be for long. I'm already orchestrating his downfall.

Enough power tripping. For now. This is very much a transitional issue; you won't be seeing much of my magic touch this week, I'm afraid. But be sure to pick up a copy next week, to be thoroughly underwhelmed, and wish the Sabbs had cut even more money from our budget.

Last week's issue was good, no? Apart from that article in TV slugging off Paddy McGuinness and Take Me Out. I personally spend my weekend watching repeats on ITV Player.

Anyway, flick over first to page six for Liam's interview with the up-and-coming Californ-i-a act, Best Coast. It's a good'n. I might just have to sack him for making me look bad.

**Ahmed Peerbux & Calum Young**  
partb@thebeaveronline.co.uk

# AUNT BEVERLY

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

## Dear Aunt Beverly,

My boyfriend doesn't finger me anymore. Perhaps I am being nostalgic, but one cannot beat a good finger fuck. In this modern world, with all its time constraints, no one seems to take the time to make me wet anymore. These days it's all wank, clank and spank. Who took the fore out of foreplay? I am no traditionalist, all aspects of life progress, but this is something our society is worse-off without. Like every other working-girl, I am looking for a good time, so how do I resurrect this proven tradition? Digit deprived, 3rd year

## Dear Fussed by Fingers,

You are right. Nobody takes the time to really enjoy sex anymore. In days of yore, one could settle in for an afternoon of slap-and-tickle. Unfortunately that's all in the past. Now people are looking for sexual intercourse that can be fitted into an increasingly 'tight' (no pun intended) schedule. People want it before work or even during their lunch-hour. The increasing time pressure we all face has spelt the decline and fall of the finger.

Fortunately there is a solution. Don't rush things, when in the bedroom, if something is worth doing, it's worth doing properly. Build-up slowly, start with a massage and gently progress into more exotic ways of expressing your emotions. Remember it's

quality not quantity that counts, so have sex less often, if it means it's better when you do have it.

Eliminate saucy escapades in the mornings or whenever you're not absolutely gagging for it. Instead of planning sex around your day, plan your day around sex. Set aside an afternoon, put the mobile on silent and order in food - nobody wants to be distracted when in the midst of some 'tender loving care'.

Finally, tell your boyfriend what you want. Abstraction is best suited to artists not lovers: don't be afraid to be explicit. Plus there is the natural advantage of this being a probable turn-on for your partner.



# Just a Thought

Last Wednesday I went to Hyde Park for a walk. It was cold and wet, but there were still a few die-hards kicking a football around on the muddy grass. The two sides had placed jumpers for goalposts and were attempting to kick the ball through into the opposing team's goal. Nothing seemed more important to the players than achieving this objective, and for the half-hour they played all concerns beyond the parameters of that pitch seemed to have disappeared.

Then I got to thinking. Those goals have been artificially created. There was no logical reason why passing the ball through that particular piece of geographical space should be any more important than another. But then, we all create objectives in our lives, we are all given existence, but no absolute goals, thus we have to create them. We have to put jumpers down, and play towards them.

Though the question remains; where should we put our jumpers? Which goals should we work towards? What should we choose to value?

The philosopher John Paul Sartre highlighted exactly this dilemma and distilled it far more succinctly than I ever could. "Existence precedes essence," he said. And as a result of this position, he compelled individuals to choose their own lives and not to shy-away from the decision making that is such a substantial part of humanism. To live is to choose.

# NO ONE CARES

CHRIS WESTGARTH THINKS IT'S (A)PATHETIC

I hate the apathy of British people. It's pathetic. The idea that people don't care enough to vote disturbs me. Everyone's got an excuse and very often it's 'politics is boring'. No, I'll tell you what's boring: sitting on your fat arse clicking refresh on Facebook in the desperate hope that somebody will have invited you to a group celebrating the fact that we all inhale and exhale every couple of seconds.

When people find out you're a student, the predictable question that follows is what it is you're studying. For most people at the LSE this question is unlikely to spark great conversation but for those blessed with Politics or Economic degrees, this last year has been particularly crap.

Economics students will inevitably be cajoled with 'So what about this credit crisis, ay? Who's fault is that, ay?' to which nervous laughter is the correct response. You could, I suppose, throw in a side joke that Howard Davies caused it (actually don't bother; they won't understand).

For Politics students like myself, however, the conversation is even more dangerous. The response to the word Politics, in a post 'expenses scandal' Britain, is a cross between being ousted as a sex offender and a scientist who has discovered the cure for cancer and then promptly burnt it for a laugh. You'd literally be better off to tell them you're getting a degree in Petty Theft; such is the belief that your studying of politics is in some way linked to the misappropriation of their tax money.

You can try and claw your way back up the cliff of conversation that you've created but there



really is no point. As soon as they've got over their initial disgust they will inevitably glaze over. It's like a code word that switches something off in their brain (if 'it' was ever on). Sleeper Agents of the Cold War were supposedly activated using just a single word. Politics is the opposite of that word, plunging its victim into disinterest instead of beginning a Spooks-like adventure.

And yet, despite their apparent hatred, these same cretins spend their time setting up Facebook groups that apparently seek to abolish fuel duty. IF 20 MILLION PEOPLE JOIN THIS GROUP THE GOVERNMENT WILL GET RID OF FUEL TAX. What a stupid fucking statement. Facebook has a political mandate equivalent to a homeless man on a park bench. Unless the group is part of an agreement in the Labour cabinet: (Gordon Brown: "No way, people don't like fuel tax? I thought they were really into it. Tell you what Mandy, if you can get 20 million people to join a Facebook group, I'll scrap it. GAME ON!"), then it's a fucking waste of your time to even read the title of the group.

The same goes for a lot of shit on Facebook - people that have no interest or knowledge of the complexity of what they are saying setting up groups with titles like 'PEEDOS SHOULD BE HUNGED' or 'I BET I CAN FIND 1,000,000 THAT DON'T WANT DAVID CAMERON TO BE PRIMEMINISTER'. Here's a really fucking novel idea - how about you find 30,000,000 of our stupendous nation and get them to vote in the general election.

# LITERATURE

# WALT MISERY

GARETH LEWIS GOES MAD READING WALTER BENJAMIN'S ARCADES PROJECT

“ights are blinding my eyes/ People pushing by/ And walking off into the night”. This song is about retinal discomfort. I used to find it very difficult to relate to this song. This was because I had never successfully taken Ecstasy. All that changed last week when I forgot to close the lid on the photocopying machine after pressing Copy. Now I can completely relate to this song [E15: 8ish].

**“I met this wonderful girl...She was buying clothes and I was putting Slinkies on the escalator” [90's Proverb]. The more I ride them (yes, ride), the more I understand the escalators at Holborn station. They are mechanical arteries: huge iron pumps guttering surplus love up out of Subterranea. You know when you catch someone's eye on the way up, or they catch yours on the way down? You know the way the adverts jump these days, from one screen to the next? You see which direction everything's heading. To the light. And to the cold [515A].**

Did you hear the one about the pick-up artist at the GUM clinic? [No?]. Forget that. Try this: Two nuns in a bath. Nun 1: Where's the soap? Nun 2: Does, doesn't it [28.02.86; Mornington Crescent].

**Whilst the LSE library is a bit of a cruddy library, it would make a brilliant superclub. You could have giant birds cages dangling from the central atrium, with libidinal bibliophiles trapped inside, dressed only in the tattered pages of Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du mal*, grinding against the grain. People could smoke hookah in the eerie, silent elevators. The ones powered by the collective fantasy of more plug sockets [H2: 1857; J.D.S. 1919 - 2010].**

“Let me salute NewNovelist, and hope that many millions of them are sold” [C5: Will Self]. Jean Baudrillard thought the best way to refuse cultural bullshit was to over-accept and hyper-invite it. Will Self notoriously, and laboriously, types each of his books on an Olivetti 22, or a Good Companion. That a website selling novel-writing software can take his gesture at face value, and then use it to sell more software, rather shits on Jean's jouissance. Still, I often wonder what this means for counterfeited (and you know it!) designer gear [EC: 1987].

**When there's a power cut, and all the digital clocks start flashing 00:00 00:00 00:00, this means that a starting gun has been fired in another dimension. This province can only be accessed by using outdated train tickets on First Connect services travelling Northeast by Northwest. These spend their lives covering against the wall of your wallet, terrified that at any moment they're going to be called out and stapled in the head [H1: 00.00].**

Be the Rhizome you want to see in the world [De...ze & Gh..di '72].

**The fact that some people don't leave a space between the colon and the bracket on their smiley emoticons is proof that we all see the world differently. I don't know anyone with a face**

**like a burst colostomy bag (: N5; LOL :)**

“The Blu-Tack is better than I even thought it would be...I'm still amazed at how that light touch will pick up the graphite. It's great!!!” [Tony Levin, USA: 2007]. Thanks for all those exclamations Tony. We strive to delight. I have always been a collector. I collect the little pieces of wallpaper that sometimes stay stuck to the Blu-Tack when you pull it off your wall too quickly. I have literally thousands of these little bits. I have every intention of using them, in the future, for the Common Good. [C11: N.Cricklewood]

**When you are young, everyone wants to eat the yellow and black foam footballs you play with indoors at school. They are really eatable. The people who do eat the foam are a crafty lot - you never see them eating it. You just find the ball with lots of chunks taken out of it, and a bit wet. Fresh tennis balls smell great, but you don't want to eat them. This is another example of the Synthetic Sublime [X26: Keep Rollin' Rollin' Rollin' Rollin']**

My DVD collection: a pirated copy of Breck Eisner's 2005 film *Sahara*. Bought in 2004 in Thailand. Recommended to me by the print on the cover of the DVD. 'PASSABLE LIGHT-WEIGHT ENTERTAINMENT' was the promise. Didn't disappoint [Summer 2005: out-man'd].

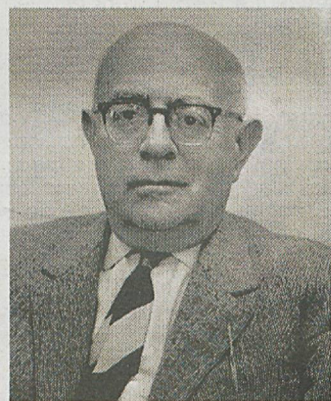
**The lady in charge of painting the numbers on all the bins is the same lady who puts the colours on all the sheep [RV1: I've seen her].**

North Utsera, South Utsera, Tyne, Dogger, German Byte [End: 759505].

**Walt Benjamin Top Trumps**



The Angel of History



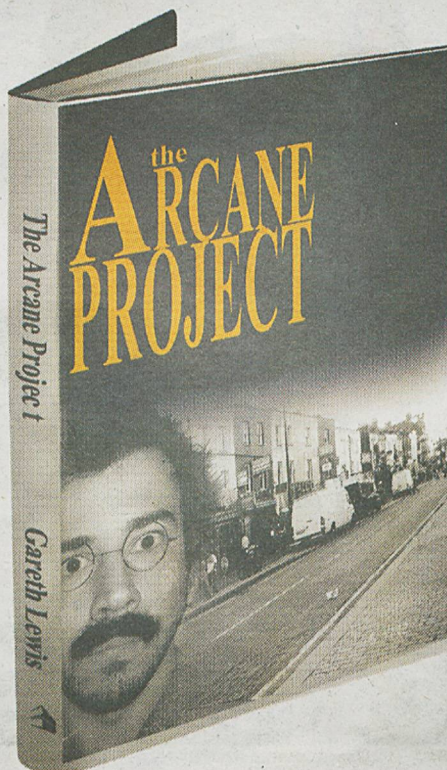
ICE-T.W Adorno



Walt The Colt



Frank The Tank





**AHMED PEERBUX** PENS A LOVE LETTER TO MAX OPHULS'S OPUS, **LETTER FROM AN UNKNOWN WOMAN**



**Director:** Max Ophüls. **Screenplay:** Stefan Zweig, Howard Koch. **Cast:** Joan Fontaine, Louis Jourdan. **Runtime:** 86 min. **Cert:** 15. **Year:** 1948.

'By the time you read this letter, I may be dead...' These heart-rending words are addressed to Stefan Brand (Louis Jourdan), the hedonistic and over-the-hill – though once promising – concert pianist. The letter is penned by Lisa Berndle (Joan Fontaine), a naïve Viennese young girl whose unrequited love leads to a lifelong obsession, and even a child. Reading the letter, relayed in a dreamlike flashback, Stefan gradually comes to remember his lifelong admirer amidst the foray of faces from his countless casual acquaintances.

*Letter from an Unknown Woman* is a touching work of romanticism that doesn't shy away from the tortured, wretched aspects of love. One night Stefan seduces and (unbeknownst to him) impregnates Lisa, only to shortly afterwards abandon her for the excitements of Milan. Years later they meet again, and failing to remember

the woman who has built her life around him, he treats her as just another throwaway housewife who's managed to escape her husband for a few hours. But for all his debauched nights and formidable musical talents, in Stefan's face we see a deep dissatisfaction and lack of fulfilment in the absence of any feelings of devotion, constancy, adoration and care; when Lisa adjusts his scarf on a cold wintry night, he says "no one has done that for me in a long time".

Lisa's stubborn romantic idealism in the face of illustrious suitors and domestic security is now understood as a rejection of the patriarchal norms of the day, choosing what she feels over what will gain the approval of wider society. Her fantasy – and it ultimately remains just that – is poignantly illustrated in a funfair scene in which Lisa and Stefan sit in a make-believe train carriage, with drawn-on landscapes passing them by. It might be a daydream, but it is better than the lie of a loveless match-up.

In spite of all the doom and gloom of unrequited love, however, the audience is ultimately uplifted by Lisa's resilience and integrity despite a lifelong series of disappointments. Even when she has borne his child she does not tell him, so

that she will be the only woman who has never asked him for anything. And so tears roll with the credits, though they are sweet.

*LETTER FROM AN UNKNOWN WOMAN* IS SHOWING AT **THE BFI SOUTHBANK** NOW



DON'T LET THE LARS VON TRIERITES PUT YOU OFF, SAYS **AHMED PEERBUX**. **AVATAR** IS WELL WORTH SEEING



**Director:** James Cameron. **Screenplay:** James Cameron. **Cast:** Sam Worthington, Sigourney Weaver. **Runtime:** 162 min. **Cert:** 15. **Year:** 2009.

It was initially conceived in 1994 and was reportedly made on a budget of \$214million. In spite of this, *Avatar* doesn't live up to its patently gargantuan ambitions. It probably won't find a place among the sci-fi greats of *Star Wars*, *The Matrix*, or even Cameron's own films like *Terminator II* and *Aliens*. But it is still a very good film.

Set on Pandora, *Avatar* follows the paraplegic marine Jake Sully, who replaces his dead brother on a scientific research team. Their intent is to find a diplomatic solution to the Na'vi problem, whose spiritual home also happens to rest on the planet's richest deposit of 'unobtainium', which sells for \$20million per kilo. The team, however, is attached to an amoral corporation which is itching to use the easier option; the best military force the year 2154 has to offer – helicopters like the ones out of the Halo franchise, and Michelle Rodriguez to pilot them.

The fictional universe Cameron has created in *Avatar* is remarkable. To counterbalance its occasionally synthetic feel is the fact that Cameron has clearly drawn his inspiration from the most beautiful of natural phenomena. The jungle floor of Pandora glows as it is trodden over; resembling the deepest depths of the ocean. The seeds that float around the jungle resemble a cross between a jellyfish and dandelion snow. The tree bridges of the Na'vi are not dissimilar from the north east Indian living bridges of Cherrapunji.

But Cameron's latest offering has been dismissed by some critics as just another schmaltzy love-in, with added blue people. But so what if it is? Making no pretensions about being indie chic or an existential critique, *Avatar* is a fine slice of pure Hollywood.

And anyway, it would be unfair to merely write it off as a gimmicky, one-dimensional-three-dimensional CGI circus. Cameron doesn't shy away from social commentary, whether it's making references to the war on terror – "we're gonna fight terror with terror" – or an aptly timed critique on capitalism, in the form of an unyielding hunt for lucrative minerals. But on balance, the social critiques are somewhat compromised by *Avatar*'s patronising formula of 'the white man' infiltrating the alien society, and then becoming its only hope for salvation (think *The Last Samurai*).

In truth, *Avatar* requires a balance to be struck between the loud voices that crowd the discussion, on the one hand throwing clichéd phrases at it like 'tour de force', while on the other hand, calling it a mere blue-dyed gimmick. Though it may not make a particularly interesting conclusion, the answer with *Avatar* is, as with so many things, somewhere in the middle.

AVATAR IS IN CINEMAS NOW

**OLLIE LITTLE** REVIEWS **THE BLIND SIDE**



**Director:** John Lee Hancock. **Screenplay:** John Lee Hancock. **Cast:** Sandra Bullock, Tim McGraw, Quinton Aaron. **Runtime:** 128 min. **Cert:** TBC. **Year:** 2010.

A poor, young homeless fella somewhere in America gets into a posh school. Even though he's a bit thick, he's the size of a small village and may be good at some bastardized form of rugby. Consummate fox Sandra Bullock decides

to take him home to mother him. Spoiler; spoiler; spoiler; spoiler; that crazy bird from *Misery*, spoiler; spoiler; not-rugby; spoiler; obligatory racial remark; spoiler; spoiler; a couple of call-backs from earlier in the film, end.

No really, that's it. No outstanding plot, no ground-breaking direction, just a solid Cinderella story that, put quite simply, works. With no real innovation to speak, the success of this film hinges on great acting, which it delivers in spades. Sandy Bollock excels in the role of Leigh Anne Touhy, a sassy, bible-belt Republican mother striving to make a difference. Hair dyed and accent donned, she glides through the film with an elegance seldom seen in similar rags-to-riches tales. The problem with most of these films is that the acting of the saviour is hammed up to Jesus-like proportions; the Sandman has avoided this genre pratfall entirely, creating a warm and caring character that is actually believable. Her performance has already been rewarded with a Golden Globe for best actress and an Oscar nomination for the same category.

Newcomer Quinton Aaron bursts on to the scene with some panache in this film as Michael Oher. Little know before the film's release, Aaron gives a strong performance and displays some serious acting chops. A wise man once stated that "you never go full retard", and it is this problem that Aaron passes by with grace. With a measured IQ of 80 and a proclivity for not talking, Oher could have easily been butchered and made a drooling halfwit. Aaron manages to portray the character as a sensitive soul; a scared little boy in the body of a man. The character's metamorphosis throughout the film is seamless, where the layers on armour are slowly peeled back, revealing a thoroughly loving (and lovable) young man.

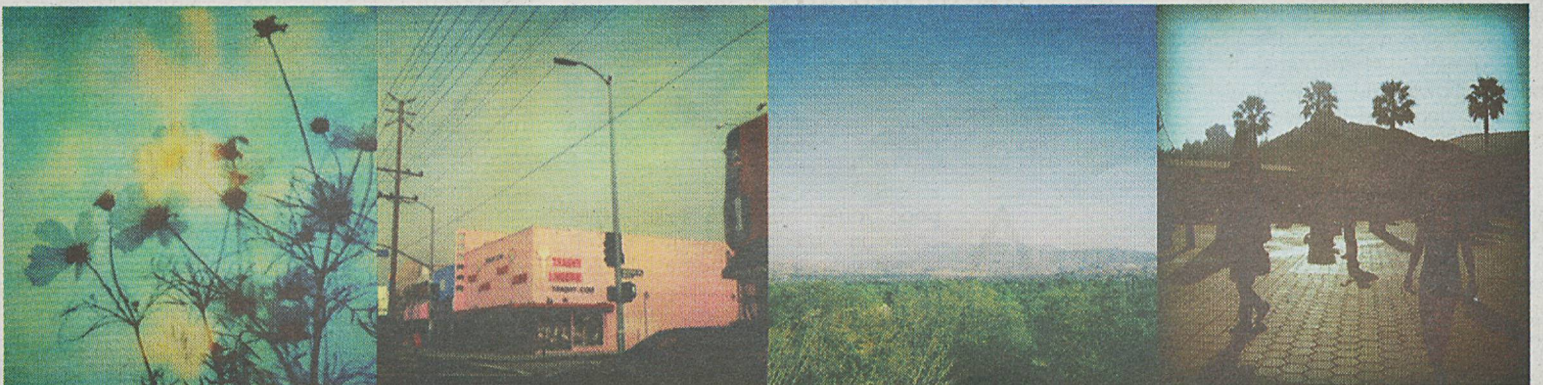
An incredibly watchable film, cast superbly (minus Jae Head) that would bring a smile to the face of the most hardened cynic.

THE BLIND SIDE WILL BE IN CINEMAS IN MARCH

# SURF'S UP



Los Angeles musician Bethany Cosentino's new project **Best Coast** are currently making waves with their EPs which are full of nostalgia and summer haze. Clearly at the top of the current zeitgeist of sunshine pop, **Liam McLaughlin** talked to Bethany about her inspirations, music and why the west coast is the best coast.





Recently there's been an explosion of sun 'n' sea inspired music from the golden land of California, celebrating youth at its most heady and carefree. Cresting the blue wave of this zeitgeist is **Best Coast**, the one-girl band created by Bethany Cosentino. Hotly tipped for big things this year, I spoke to Bethany about her band and music whilst she was recording for her much anticipated debut album.

Being aware that Best Coast are well and truly 'underground' at the moment, like any self-respecting hack I first asked Bethany how Best Coast formed. I mean, everyone likes to know how a band formed, right? "I moved home to

"I think The Beach Boys made it possible for people in places like Michigan to feel like they were participating in some kind of fun, warm, beach life through their music. That's basically the coolest thing ever."

Los Angeles after living in New York for about a year," Bethany says. "I pretty much just started writing songs as soon as I got home. I asked my friend Bobb Bruno if he would help me record the stuff, and if he wanted to play with me, and he said yes, and almost a year later, here we are!"

Best Coast's songs have a keen pop sensibility, neatly mixing a classic 50s and 60s feel with a more contemporary indie aura, emphasized by reverb drenched instrumentation and punky playing. Tellingly, Bethany's main influences are reeled off as "Cats, California, weed, **The Beach Boys**, **Stevie Nicks**, palm trees, ice cream, low-rider oldies, the 60s." All these elements (except perhaps cats) can be heard in Best Coast's music which mixes past and present; pop and indie into a swirling stoned hum of glaring sunshine and fuzzy pop.

What is perhaps one of the most striking aspects of Best Coast's music though is the sense of nostalgia conveyed. It seems strange that someone as young as Bethany is already so nostalgic. Perhaps in a culture where everything and anything is accessible and wholly disposable, from MP3s to drugs to relationships, the turnover of pleasure and pain is so indistinct that nostalgia is the only way of enjoying such fleeting moments of reality. The metaphysical aside, there is also an earthy reality in Bethany's influences. "I think my

music is definitely inspired by the music I listen to; stuff from the 50s and 60s. There's just like this warm, happy, innocence that I feel when I listen to music from those eras...well the pop stuff at least. I guess in a way I am trying to mix that 'nostalgic' era sound with a more modern sound."

I guess modern means 'lo-fi' in this sense so I ask what Bethany reckons the lo-fi aesthetic gives to her music, especially as it could easily alienate a large portion of her potential fan base. Is it a conscious choice to record in that way? "In some ways the reverb and the fuzziness of it all reminds me of what it's like to listen to old songs on vinyl. I mean, I just don't think a voice sounds right without reverb on it, in my opinion. Clean vocals really bother me. I mean they work for some people, but I am way too weird and neurotic about the sound of my own voice to ever let it be out there without reverb or distortion! I mean the earlier stuff is a lot more lo-fi because we recorded it ourselves, but our record will be a little bit cleaner; not by much, it just sounds a little bit, I guess, produced."

The whole lo-fi thing is beginning to seem like a guise under which alternative fans like me can legitimately listen to pop songs. The scuzzed-up sound and production is smeared over the top of golden pop nuggets which would otherwise sound disturbingly like mainstream songs. And far from being an example of style over substance, I think music like Best Coast's, which strikes a balance between unashamed pop and lo-fi values, is an awesome mélange of sounds which keeps your interest far more than 'pure' lo-fi or 'pure' pop ever could.

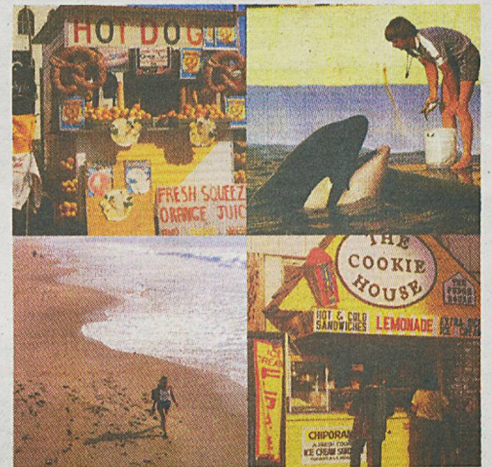
I went to California when I was two years old but remember very little besides being afraid of a dead bee floating in a swimming pool. As a result I really have no idea what the place is like and I'm curious as to how California can be so inspirational to so many people. There have always been bands coming out of there, but right now there is a massive number of very specifically Californian groups, focused quite obviously on the sun, sand and sea. "I mean, I grew up here; this place made me who I am. I say "like" too much, and I'm proud of that. I have a real pride thing going on with California," says Bethany. This mentality seems hard to understand at first but that's because sometimes it's hard to be proud and inspired by England when you're in one of its millions of dreary grey towns, sodden with mizzle and anger. But California is an alien world in comparison, and clearly one which its citizens have a non-cynical, non-ironic love for. Kudos.

Keeping the California theme going, Best Coast explicitly showed their love for the definitive Californian band, The Beach Boys, by covering their song 'In My Room' on an EP last year. What is it about The Beach Boys which seems to be timeless and so inspirational to legions of followers? "The Beach Boys just evoke this really sunny happy sound with their music, and I think that's why I love them so much" muses Bethany. "Even a song like 'God Only Knows' makes

you feel really warm inside. I think The Beach Boys made it possible for people in places like Michigan to feel like they were participating in some kind of fun, warm, beach life through their music. That's basically the coolest thing ever."

Bethany is right. For rain drenched Northern Europeans who see about an hour of sunlight a day during winter, it's even cooler that we can share in the warming harmonies of The Beach Boys' music. But one of the reasons Best Coast are beginning to get so much press is that they, like The Beach Boys, also manage to channel that sparkling, sun-saturated feel through their music. Set in a contemporary frame, songs like "When I'm With You" or "Sun Was High (So Was I)" capture the languid pace of beach life but also the excitement of waking up to see another blue sky. And they say youth is wasted on the young.

Best Coast are one to watch out for if the impressive consistency and strength of their multiple 7" releases is anything to go by. From here, the only way is up, and you can bet Best Coast will be flying high very soon.



**BEST COAST'S PPM 7" EP IS OUT NOW. LOOK OUT FOR A FULL LENGTH ALBUM SOON, AS WELL AS SOME UK DATES IN MAY.**

THE ROUNDUP

HOLLY RUBENSTIEN REPORTS ON THE LATEST EVENTS IN THE WORLD OF MUSIC

This week has shown us the good, bad and ugly sides of the music industry. Beginning on a good note, at the time of going to press it is estimated that sales of the 'Helping Haiti' charity single are likely to top 500,000 by the end of the week, demonstrating the positive and transformative power that music can have. There is no challenge for the number one position this week, with **Owl City's** 'Fireflies' selling approximately 10% of the sales of 'Everybody Hurts'. More money will be raised with the US all-star charity single remake of 'We are the World', originally released in 1985 in aid of African famine relief. The lineup is a who's who of A-list music stars including **Lil Wayne, Snoop Dogg, Miley Cyrus, Pink** and **Barbra Streisand**. Their efforts – also expected to raise millions for Haiti – will be played for the first time during coverage of the Vancouver winter Olympics next week before being released worldwide. Music lovers internationally are excitedly awaiting the outcome of this massive collaborative effort, whilst also contributing to the most worthy of causes. Definitely the good side of the music industry.

The bad side of the industry was exposed when two of our biggest major labels Warner Music and EMI revealed that they are on the brink of collapse. Warner, whose artists include Jay-Z, **Green day, Madonna** and **Muse**, made a loss of £10.9 million in the last 3 months of 2009 alone. EMI, home of **Robbie Williams** and **Coldplay**, said it had recorded a net loss of 1.6 billion pounds for last year. The overwhelming reason, of course, is a drop in record sales. Please let these figures be a message to all of you out there who download your music illegally, I know it's tempting, but if everyone keeps doing it then there really will no longer be a music industry for all of us to love. And those of us who want to make a career in music will not have any prospects of doing so. It really is a very sorry state of affairs.

Now to the ugly – well it's pretty obvious isn't it? **Jedward's** debut single, a hideous cover mashup entitled "Under Pressure (Ice Ice Baby)" – **Fred- die Mercury** will be turning in his grave – very very nearly reached the number 1 spot in our UK

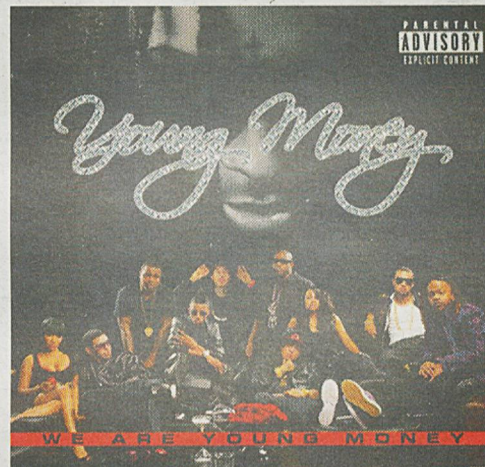
top 40. They entered at number 2 begging the question, are many British citizens tone-deaf? Or taste-deaf? I guess they must be, following the success of the stunningly below average **Susan Boyle**.

Finally my tip for the week... **Sky Ferreira**. 17 year-old LA singer-songwriter and straight-up party girl Sky Ferreira made **Michael Jackson** cry when she was just 11 years old. This is not because she says 'I'm not trying to have a clean image, but I open my books not my legs' (although let's face it, it could well have been in Michael's case) but because of her lovely, hypnotic voice. She's been very busy working with producers such as **Bloodshy and Avant** (Britney), **Paul Epworth** (Annie) and **Dallas Austin** (Sugababes) for her debut album. She's rumoured to have a similar vocal range to **Mariah Carey**, and yet her MySpace tracks are not in any way showy. They are just cool. Like Sky. Every article describes her as this decades' teen Lolita and it's easy to see why – when it comes to Sky, precocious is an understatement. However, when you are in your mid-teens and writing songs for the likes of **Britney Spears** and **Whitney Houston**, counting artists such as **Katy Perry** as your best buds, and being jetted around the world to record your own debut album, being mature for your age doesn't seem to hurt. Expect big things from Sky in the coming year.



Holly's tip for the week, **Sky Ferreira**

YOUNG MONEY- WE ARE YOUNG MONEY



REVIEW BY HUMA YOUNIS

Under the guidance of **Lil Wayne**, **Young Money** as a crew have dropped their first collaborative album which supposedly showcases the future of hip hop. Unfortunately this does not seem to be the case; although we all assumed the Lil Wayne effect would rub off here too, his magic is missing from this release. The album is a mismatched concoction of different artists competing for the spotlight. A spotlight that shines intensely upon only 3 of them; Lil Wayne, **Drake** and **Nicki Minaj** who as a threesome present this album with its three saving graces. Lil Wayne features prominently through the album; throughout these tracks, his slick lyrical genius re-enforces his status as hip hop genius. Drake excels throughout the album; his rhymes are shit-hot especially next to other Young Money artists. The final positive of this album is it's coronating of new queen of rap, Nicki Minaj, who seems to be a fine mix of both Lil's, Kim and Wayne. This girl is definitely explosive, when dropping lines like 'Asalaamalaikum, no oink for me. And I never let a D-boy boink for free', she ends up completely owning the song "Roger that".

"Every girl in the world" is by far the best song on the album and there are a handful of other decent songs competing for second place. Otherwise, "Play in my band" is a disappointing wannabe rock anthem whilst "Girl I got you" sounds as if being sung by two 12 year olds experimenting with helium. The rest of the album unfortunately does not live up to initial expectations; there is nothing amazing, unique or mind-blowing, rather mediocrity.

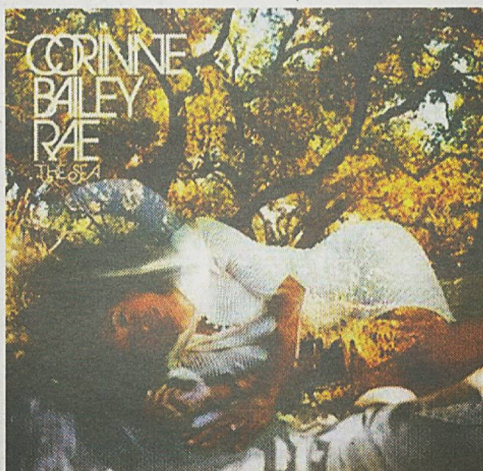
Eager fans of Lil Wayne prayed Young Money would bring the same incredible standard that featured in the *Tha Cater* albums. Lesson learned; don't believe the hype. Young Money has enormous potential but no stage could accommodate all these acts and their egos. Lil Wayne's attempts to capitalise on his fame seem to have fallen short. These artists are far more suited to individual albums as their talents cannot combine coherently.

This new album has given us the chance to see whether or not Young Money can change the face of hip hop. Drake and Nicki have broken the barriers and won acceptance into the world of hip hop; the question remains whether the rest of Young Money can do the same.

CHARTING RELEASES THIS WEEK

Corinne Bailey Rae// The Sea No. 5

Emotionally this album is almost as deep as its name. Not surprising, considering **Corinne's** husband sadly, and unexpectedly, passed away midway through her writing the album. The songs have a less summery feel than her debut, and are more mysterious, taking on broader themes. It's good to hear an artist with an amazing voice maintaining that whilst moving into different musical realms.



# Eco Chic, Eco Bleak?

JESS STUBBS GETS ALL ETHICAL

I find that a well-chosen compliment is some how marred if quickly retorted with 'Yep, £4 from Primark'. My teenage years were accompanied by an eco warrior father intent on converting a barn into an alternative energy source. Together with a Fairtrade obsessed lodger who would take me along to his 'Fair-trade awareness' or Fairtrade chocolate tasting meetings in dingy village halls. The average age was usually around 60 and if five minutes in you hadn't lost your audience, you were doing well.

Despite their best efforts there geriatric composition this meeting convinced me that eco fashion was something totally relevant to modern life and I began to take my interest beyond chocolate. I ran a fair trade tuck shop at school where I was involved in frequent heated debates about stock rotation – and other life and death issues. Later I ran for the Green Party in the mock elections, promoting ethical trading issues in my manifesto. And more recently I attended 'knit for peace', sadly with my novice knitting I only managed about three lines. However my main involvement in ethical fashion was during my gap year when I worked with a Ugandan sculptor. I helped him set-up links with an English Fairtrade business.

Despite my interest, when it comes down to actual knowledge I can't claim to be an expert; so when asked to write this article I thought it would be a good chance for me to learn more about ethical and eco fashion.

Last week I went along to the ethical fashion show which the fashion and development

slugging off the high street too much, vast reports account how these companies have been found in sub-contracted factories which do not comply with ETI guidelines and still use intensive child labour, in poor conditions and pay wages too low to live on.

'Fast fashion' means vast quantities of high quality clothing produced with increasingly short deadlines, putting immense pressure on factories.

A Sri Lankan factory owner commented how deadlines have decreased from 90 days to 60 or 45 in just one year. Fast fashion takes its toll on the environment. On average UK consumers send 30kg per capita of clothing to landfill each year. Also, it tends to use fabrics that have detrimental effects to the environment. Non-organic cotton uses toxic pesticides which spell environmental problems. Whilst nitrous oxide, a greenhouse gas 310 times more polluting than carbon dioxide, is released from the synthetic material nylon.

The production and destruction of our wonderfully cheap clothing is helping out global warming. But what can we do? I was chatting to a girl at a party recently who mentioned 'slow fashion'. She argued that instead of following the buy-trash-bin cycle, purchasing higher quality items which have been sourced responsibly, using organic fabrics and abiding by ethical guidelines, entails buying things less often.

People Tree, an ethical fashion company does

just that. It has shown that working with Agrocel gives Indian farmers an alternative way of farming cotton, using natural pesticides such as garlic, chilli and soap. It ensures equal pay for men and women, paid maternity leave, pension, health insurance and medical care. In Kenya, Bombolulu works with Polio victims training them in jewelry, leatherwork, carving and textile production, providing them with a regular income, medical benefits and housing. The advantages are obvious.

Vintage and charity clothes are also some of the most fashionable. Reuse has benefits for the environment and helps create an individual wardrobe. They create no further demand and also help support local and small businesses. Long gone are the days when charity shops were filled with grandmother's floral skirts and oversized 'save the panda' t-shirts. I managed to kit my whole family out for Christmas from these shops and am yet to have a complaint.

It is a pain that most ethical companies are website only, and virtual changing rooms just aren't as good. But as the shift from high street to internet shopping grows, any arising problems will be more efficiently overcome.

Choosing to be a slow shopper may not eradicate these problems entirely, but it will help somebody somewhere. And the next time you get a compliment you can just smile.

**"A single Primark bag is an anomaly. More often sack loads of dirt-cheap clothes are bought on every visit"**

society held at the LSE It was a great introduction - defining ethical fashion as an approach to the design, sourcing and manufacture of clothing which maximises benefits to people and communities, while minimising impact on the environment. Sandy Black from London School of Fashion and Lyla Patel from TRAIID spoke, followed by a catwalk with LSE models elegantly promoting the garments. The majority of the clothes were very stylish proving that ethical fashion doesn't have to mean hemp sandals and shapeless woven sacks.

However looking at the website revealed prices higher than on the highstreet. Is it possible to be ethically fashion conscious if you are living on a budget? When H & M and Primark offer such cheap fashion similar to more expensive items, why would one pay more? Such shops have made it okay, fashionable even, to wear cheap clothes. It is the prime(mark) example of 'fast fashion' – buy it, wear it a few times or for a night out and then dump it permanently in the washing basket, bottom of the wardrobe or bin. A single Primark bag is an anomaly. More often sack loads of dirt-cheap clothes are bought on every visit. How can it be? Primark says the low prices are because of low mark-ups and lack of advertising. They argue that as part of the ETI (Ethical Trading Initiative) they know how and where their clothes are made. Without



# BBC Three makes me mad

GRAEME BIRRELL PINES FOR GOOD SHOWS ON A FALTERING CHANNEL

Lately, BBC Three has become the worst channel on TV. A couple of years ago I thought it was alright; it broke some good comedy and seemed to be giving unknowns a chance to break into the world of TV. But more recently shows like *The Mighty Boosh*, *The Smoking Room*, and *Man Stroke Woman* have completely disappeared from the channel's line up, and have been replaced by comedy shows that have a funny factor of zero and weird pseudo-investigative documentary tripe.

*Coming of Age* is a pet peeve of mine, as is juvenile writing, and obvious slapstick gags in general. After hating season one, I decided to give the new second season a chance to change my mind, but I found myself greeted by the same lame shite as before. Namely an ugly ginger girl having a dick stuck in her ass and proclaiming "ooo.... You stuck it in my poo-poo instead of my foo-foo." Hardy-har. Good one. Or how about that stereotypical Welsh guy who subtly walks past dog shit, then says "Look I can manage on my own - I walked right past that dog shit without stepping in it." Then he steps in the dog shit. Please...

Other similar comedies haven't been much better, *Off the Hook* has got some realism embedded in it somewhere with its some-people-go-to-university-how-will-they-cope observations, but with superficial episode storylines and two-dimensional characters ('this is a girl who is a goth and likes to spend time alone in her room,' is the most blatant) this was always going nowhere.

Russell Howard's *Good News* is another unfunny show. It should really be renamed *The Clean One Off Mock the Week's Show Where He Shows You Youtube Clips of Stuff You've Already Seen a Million Times Before and Tries to Use Them to Bring Have I Got News For You Type Sarcasm to Retards who Don't Want to Hear Real News*.

But the worst of the bunch has got to be *Horne & Corden*. It brings together two of the actors from *Gavin and Stacey*, a show where their talents were evident. But this is nowhere to be found. What we get instead is just a load of jokes

about how fat **James Corden** is in various situations: What if superman was fat? What's it like to see a fat man shagging from above? How many times in thirty minutes can a fat guy get his tits out? Come on Corden, you're better than this.

BBC Three has lots besides terrible comedy to piss me off too - mainly those shows that try really hard to come across as intellectual. One that really gets me is *Snog, Marry, Avoid* where ex-Atomic Kitten **Jenny Frost** talks to a computer which promises to 'make-under' (see what they've done there?) girls who use too much make up. This consists of bringing in dolled up slags in bras and thongs and asking four 'men on the street' if they would like to snog, marry, or avoid the 'contestant' - opinion based entirely

**"Snog Marry Avoid is utterly pointless and only propagates the misnomer that you definitely should judge a book by its cover"**

on superficial things, of course. After 75% of four people declare they would 'avoid', the computer makes the 'contestants' put on a tee-shirt and tie up their hair, after which the 'survey' now declares that 100% of the entire British public would actually like to marry them now. The entire show is utterly pointless and only propagates the misnomer that you definitely should judge a book by its cover.

Perhaps even worse still is the current run of 'investigative documentaries' in the *I'm a minor celebrity*, and *I believe in...* series. First we had an hour of **Joe Swash** declaring that he was off to find 'tangible evidence' that ghosts exist. Instead, he went to a haunted pub in the coun-

tryside to spend the night, didn't see any ghosts and then declared that just because he didn't see any, it doesn't necessarily mean they don't exist. Mmmm... tangible. Second in the series was **Danny Dyer**, who spent an hour meeting people who believed in UFOs, going to hilltops at night with them, staying five minutes, then declaring that there obviously weren't any aliens coming out that night. All the while making sure to tell us how Cockney he is at least once a minute. After going to the US ('would you believe it - a Cockney in America!') he tells us he is in the alien capital of the world in Colorado, despite the fact that the alien capital of the world is blatantly in New Mexico, where he spends time pandering to some guy who wants \$50,000 for footage of his son in an alien mask as proof that aliens exist. It all ends with Danny declaring he is a Cockney whilst doing some kind of spiritual dance with a bunch of hippies who claim that satellites and shooting stars are definitely UFOs. And they are... if you don't bother identifying them as satellites and shooting stars. Thanks Danny.

BBC Three, then, seems to have absolutely nothing to offer at the moment. Now that *Gavin and Stacey* has finished forever, there also seems to be an increasing number of repeats of *Family Guy* - so much for original broadcasting. Maybe I'm being too harsh on a channel that is so obviously aimed at capturing the non-intellectual easy-watching demands of teenagers. But to be honest, in my teens I was watching *The Office*, repeats of *Seinfeld*, and *South Park* - all shows that bothered to care about what they were putting out there. Namely this was the well-formed comedy and intellectual backing that BBC Three so sorely misses at the moment. Oh well, at least it isn't the only channel on TV - MTV Reality, here I come.

FOR THOSE WHO STILL WANT TO FIND SOMETHING TO MAKE THEM GOUGE THEIR EYES OUT, BBC THREE IS ON SKY AND FREEVIEW.



## FOUNDLINGS AND FLEDGLINGS

TRACEY EMIN, PAULA REGO AND MATT COLLISHAW WITH ANN MARIE EU

Three artists, together for the first time in one museum. **The Foundling Museum** tells the story of the Foundling Hospital, Britain's first home for abandoned children. And it is only appropriate that the issues that lie at the heart of the Foundling story; exploitation, loss, grief, sex, love, parenthood and childhood, form a common thread through the underlying themes of the artworks.

The themes of love and parenthood embedded themselves deeply in the works by **Tracey Emin** in this exhibition. Her monoprints from 1990 drawn during her pregnancy radiate motherly love. The mother and child are never separate. The lines that form the figures swirl around the paper connecting the mother to her child forever. Moments of private intimacy we rarely see are blatantly displayed through simple anonymous faces. Unfortunately her pregnancy ended with an abortion. One monoprint, *Pregnant Nightmare*, is from 1991.

Emin has also lent her collection of baby clothing (noticeably pink and flowery) and shoes, displayed orderly in the corner of a distinguished room. It looks very out of place among the paintings of the Foundling Collection. The installation of baby clothes made by the artist's own grandmother is neatly folded and one cannot help but imagine the breadth of care and love that went into its creation. The text written by the artist above it nicely complements the installation. Roughly written on a piece of paper and protected by a frame, just as the glass box protects the clothes.

**Paula Rego's** paintings and installation starkly contrasts with the underlying themes of Emin's works. Here we see the dark side. A woman faces away from her newborn baby, the consequence of her raping. A pregnant girl with the face of an old woman hides the evidence of infanticide. Women try to drown babies in a well. If you need comfort, it is a good thing



that Emin's monoprints are in the same room.

*Oratorio* is the work you cannot miss when walking through the museum. It dominates the first floor landing with a three metre tall alterpiece based on the traditional alterpieces the artist grew up with in Portugal. The paintings depict women in the 18th century with images of seduction, rape and infanticide. One painting is a reference to Hogarth's *Gin Lane* (on permanent display in the museum) and the infamous photograph of Michael Jackson and his son. But all is not doomed, for near life-size sculptures of chil-

dren despite their grotesque faces provide scenes of care amongst the cruelty surrounding them.

**Matt Collishaw's** series of photographs, *Idle Young*, further draws on the difficult lives of children particularly of those in India. They stare out at the viewer with maturity and wisdom beyond their short years, strong and sophisticated despite their tough circumstances. The background, taken from 18th century grand portraits, is appropriate.

In the first floor foyer hangs a powerful photograph reverberating the legend of Romulus and Remus, two babies raised by wolves and later found the city of Rome. Here in a modern setting are two naked and vulnerable babies, one sleeping and one suckling, bringing an image of parental love and protection. A dog fiercely bares his teeth, guarding his family.

Nearby are daguerreotypes, one of the earliest forms of photography. One has to look carefully to see the images of hurt children being carried to safety, recalling the images in newspapers and on television, especially of the recent earthquake in Haiti. These images of vulnerable children are emphasised by the vulnerable form by which they are displayed. Daguerreotypes are extremely sensitive to air and fingerprints and have to be housed in airtight containers.

Which brings us back to the message of the Foundling: the child is vulnerable to active, wilful cruelty and abuse and face passive neglect of individuals and even society itself. Children are our future as we are our parents' future. They are our individual and collective responsibilities. This exhibition perfectly reflects the children that the Foundling Hospital was founded for: "the vulnerable, the abandoned, the sick, the hungry and the unloved".

MATT COLLISHAW, PAULA REGO AND TRACEY EMIN ARE AT THE FOUNDLING MUSEUM TIL SUNDAY 9TH MAY 2010

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# Handky Panky

ALICE PELTON CHARTS THE RISE AND FALL OF FINGERING

Recently I was reminiscing with a friend about school discos, and the ways in which what happens at them can scar or embolden one for life. In my younger years I only had the pleasure of 'slow dancing' with someone once. Oh Patrick - how I miss you. You were about 4 foot high and wearing a sweaty West Ham shirt. In fact, you were so short my friends ran around us singing the Brimful of Asha classic 'Everybody needs a bosom for a pillow!' It was heaven.

Slow dancing at discos inevitably leads to first kisses. Mine was with my brother's best friend Dan, who I 'snogged' on Christmas Eve, aged 13. He was 16 and thus I automatically thought he was really cool. We were kissing at the bottom of his garden when my mum opened the French windows and peered out into the darkness, calling my name. We just stood there, frozen like that couple in the library in *Atonement*. To this day, I have never found out if she saw us.

It remained a massive secret until four years later I received a phone call from my brother at four in the morning. He was sat in a bus-stop, drunk, after having a massive heart-to-heart on a night out with Dan. When I picked up the phone, his voice started breaking and squeaking as he yelled 'YOU KISSED DAN?! WHEN YOU WERE 13?!' I guess he was going to find out eventually, just would've been funnier to wait for my wedding or something.

After your first kiss, comes your first fingering. Ahh fingering, I could devote a whole article to this quite strange activity. For most women what first springs to mind is a covert hands-trapped-down-your-jeans fumble, occurring anywhere from the ages of 15-17, in a cold park, club, living room, kitchen, or even, a bedroom (liberal parents permitting.) The weird thing is, you don't really enjoy it first time round, it's just something that needs to be done, and you're not really sure why.

My first encounter of being fingered had the effect of causing me to collapse into fits of laughter. His fingers were in the claw-like 'M' position, unlike the orgasmic 'U' and 'R' formations (see right for illustration). At least it wasn't as bad as 'K' - one in the Bakerloo and one in the Central line. And lets not even mention 'E'. That said, without a doubt, getting fingered is the most non-committal, old school, casual thing you can do. No one gets pregnant! No one's feelings get hurt! It's great. Bring back fingering I say.

Several of my friends and I have made vows never to be fingered badly, ever again. Although finding an excuse to stop a boy from fingering you is always a funny one. Suddenly bursting out with 'I need the toilet!' sometimes suffices. (I've learnt that 'needing the toilet' is a great get-out clause that can get you through anything in life.)

I remember when I was in Year 9 I found out that one of my best friends had been fingered. It was like at that point, I knew my childhood was over. She was the prettiest girl in the year and had a boyfriend in the year above - who I happened to have 'asked out' at a school disco the year before. He declined my offer, and went for my prettier mate instead. And guess what? They're still together, 7 years on. (He must have been really good at fingering her.)

After getting fingered you inevitably reach the point where you have to touch their dicks. This is a

difficult thing to do, as dicks are quite scary when you don't know how to handle them. For the boys these can be equally as disastrous; my best friend Jack has renamed hand jobs 'death jobs' due to his ex-girlfriend's over zealous pulling back of his foreskin.

Once you've fiddled around with each other's genitals for a few months or years, then it becomes all about who's going to lose their virginity first, and when and where, and with who, and how was it, and was he good...etc etc etc.

The funniest thing about teenage sex is when your parents say that if your boyfriend

'frigid' if ever I feel depressed, I just remind myself how shit it was to be that age - all the anxiety about having sex caused by pressure from friends, J-17 magazines, and the fear of the unknown.

In fact, I think the biggest problem is teenage girls always read magazines which are intended to be read by girls at least 3 years older than them. I read 'Mizz' when I should have read 'Top of the Pops', 'Sugar' when I should have been on 'Mizz', 'J-17' when I was definitely not 17, and '19' when I was 17. Now I read the Sunday Times 'Style' magazine and I'm nowhere near having the affair-ridden marriage, two kids, mortgage, summer jaunts to St Tropez, and all the other trimmings adorning the lives of Times reading 20-to-30-somethings.

The problem is that it's only about 5 years after we all got 'fingered' and I've already got friends complaining about how their sex lives aren't 'interesting' and how they don't really want have sex anymore. I mean, talk about an anti-climax. Most of us have only just started having sex, when we get stuck in some very complicated and drawn out long term relationship which leads to endless arguments and a generally deteriorating amount of sexual satisfaction.

I'm often fascinated by the accounts of older women's sex lives, merely because I want them to tell me, is this it?! Is this as good as sex will get, and is there something about it which I'm missing? Because, after you've kissed someone, let someone touch your tits, then your vagina, then touched their dick, then sucked it, then fucked it, then had an orgasm, you reach a plateau. There's no more - so then you might as well try having some anal sex, play with hand-cuffs, food, role-play, sexy underwear, or whatever else you have to spend money on, in order to 'spice things up.'

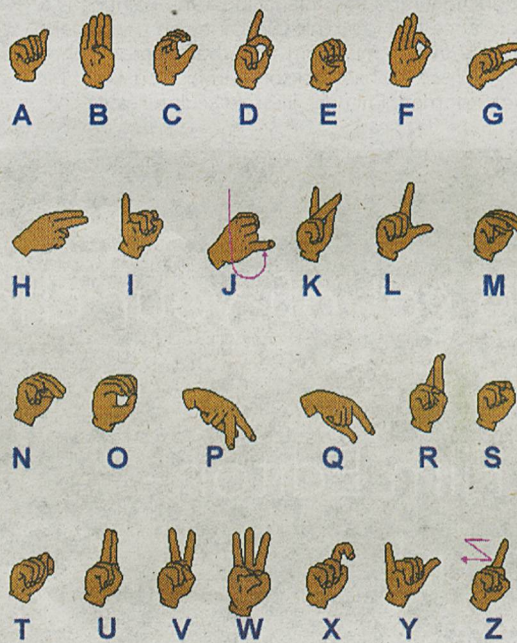
But things do have a funny way of coming back around. Throughout my youth I developed several massive crushes on people, which were, knowing my luck, unrequited. But once I'd got rid of my eye-patch and braces I went on a mission to finish what I'd started.

After Banjo, Dan, my first kiss, called me up and we went out on a strange 'date' - even though we'd been friends since we were about 6 years old. It went well and he ended up coming back to my house, where I decided to relive my youth and engage in some passionate fully-clothed kissing on my living room sofa. I was straddling him, when he suddenly announced he had to leave and got up swiftly and excused himself, muttering something about having to get to work early the next morning. Shutting the front door behind him, I then discovered that the back of the legs of my jeans were wet.

No...it couldn't be...could it?! It seemed Dan had gotten a little too excited. Exactly how kissing a man can do this was a point of almost endless discussion amongst me and my girlfriends for the next year. Dan was soon nicknamed 'Wet patch' and alongside 'Banjo' rightly has his place in the Pelton Hall of Fame. We haven't seen each other much since then, but he does 'poke' me on Facebook a little bit too often...

\* Listen to me talk about sex (and gender) this Wednesday on Pulse Radio at 8pm.

"I remember when I was in Year 9 I found out that one of my best friends had been fingered. It was like at that point, I knew my childhood was over."



comes to visit you can't sleep in the same room together. Everyone knows that you just go and have sex with them until 5am in the spare bedroom and then creep back to your own bed before they wake up. Do they think they will actually be able to stop you from having sex? More to the point, as I once shouted to my mother in anger, 'I could have sex with him in the fucking BHS toilets on the way home if I wanted to!'

The worst thing about teenage sex is that if you aren't having it, then you inevitably get likened to a household cooling appliance and get called