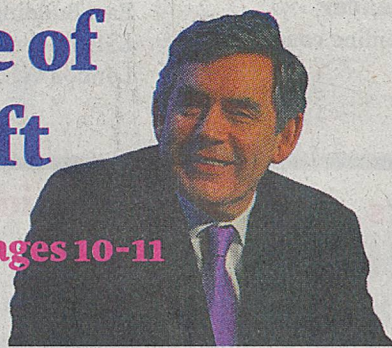


## Future of the Left

Comment pages 10-11



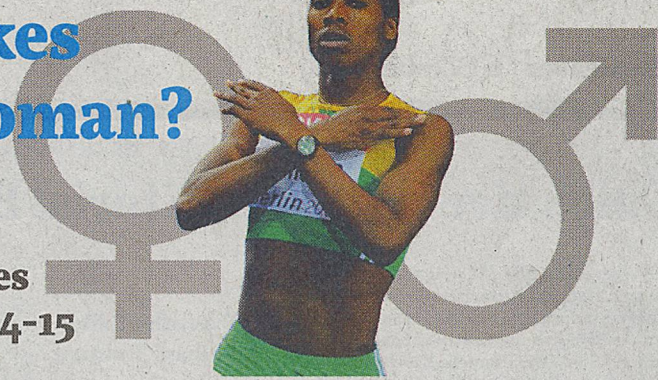
## Picture with the Beaver?

Photo page 21



## What makes a woman?

Features pages 14-15



# The Beaver

6 October 2009  
Newspaper of the  
London School of Economics  
Students' Union  
thebeaveronline.co.uk

## Palestinian student denied right to study at LSE

Shibani Mahtani

Students and alumni of the LSE have started a campaign to allow a Palestinian student to leave Gaza and begin his studies at the School.

Othman Sakallah, who was accepted for an MSc Analysis, Design and Management of Information Systems, was due to enroll at the LSE for the coming academic year. However, as a result of Israel's siege of Gaza and the three-week military operation in Gaza last winter, Othman and his family are homeless and prospects of obtaining the financial and diplomatic assistance required to exit to travel to the United Kingdom are slim.

In response to the Palestine Society's Right to Education Campaign in 2007, LSE's governing body, the LSE Council, had stated that, "It is not the practice of the school to take political positions, unless its own policies and practices are at issue".

As actions by the Israeli government are now directly affecting one of the school's own offer holders, campaigners are hopeful that the school will assist Othman in any way possible, including waiving his tuition fees and facilitating his exit from Gaza.

In response to an email from Othman explaining the forced circumstances under which he had to defer his entry to the 2010 academic year and requesting assistance, LSE Director Howard Davies said, "I have asked others here to investigate your case further, and we will get back to you. Obviously we have limited influence as far as the security situation is concerned, but I hope it will be possible to offer some financial assistance if you are able to come".

Further outlining the school's position to the Beaver, Howard Davies stated that, "Mr. Sakallah accepts that he cannot come this year. His deferral deposit will be waived and the department has said that they will be able to help with funding, but the entry would be for 2010 so there is

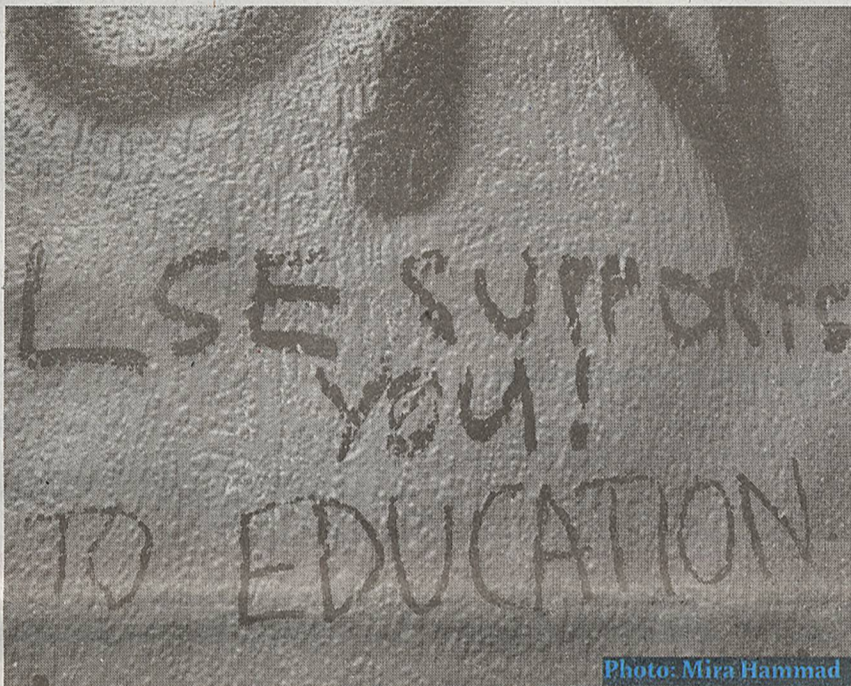


Photo: Mira Hammad

plenty of time to sort that out."

The Director also mentioned that there will be a full response later in the week, since academic registrars "have understandably been heavily engaged in dealing with students who are arriving".

LSE Dean of Graduate Studies Dr Julian Fulbrook said he was "sympathetic" to the case and that the school "will try very much to make sure students can take advantage of their course" but there are "quite difficult practical circumstances" impeding this.

LSESU General Secretary Aled Dilwyn Fisher fully backs the campaign, stating, "Students from around the globe look to advance their education at LSE and nothing should stand in the way of their ability, especially not a cruel and unjustifiable siege, or the crippling effects of a brutal war."

"LSE and other supporters of human

rights and justice must stand up again against the oppressive actions of the Israeli government, and for the numerous students denied their education across the world."

As a result of last year's occupation of the Old Theatre by the Palestine Society, the waiver of application fees for all Palestinians living under Israeli occupation was agreed, along with material assistance and a commitment to facilitate Palestine-specific scholarships. The LSE SU has also been mandated to provide support for the Palestinian Right to Education campaign by popular student vote on a number of occasions.

A spokesperson for the Palestine Society at LSE said, "Students will do all we can to secure the necessary assistance for Othman from the school. We expect the school to meet our expectations and allow Othman to continue his studies."

## Sardinia for £8.8 million

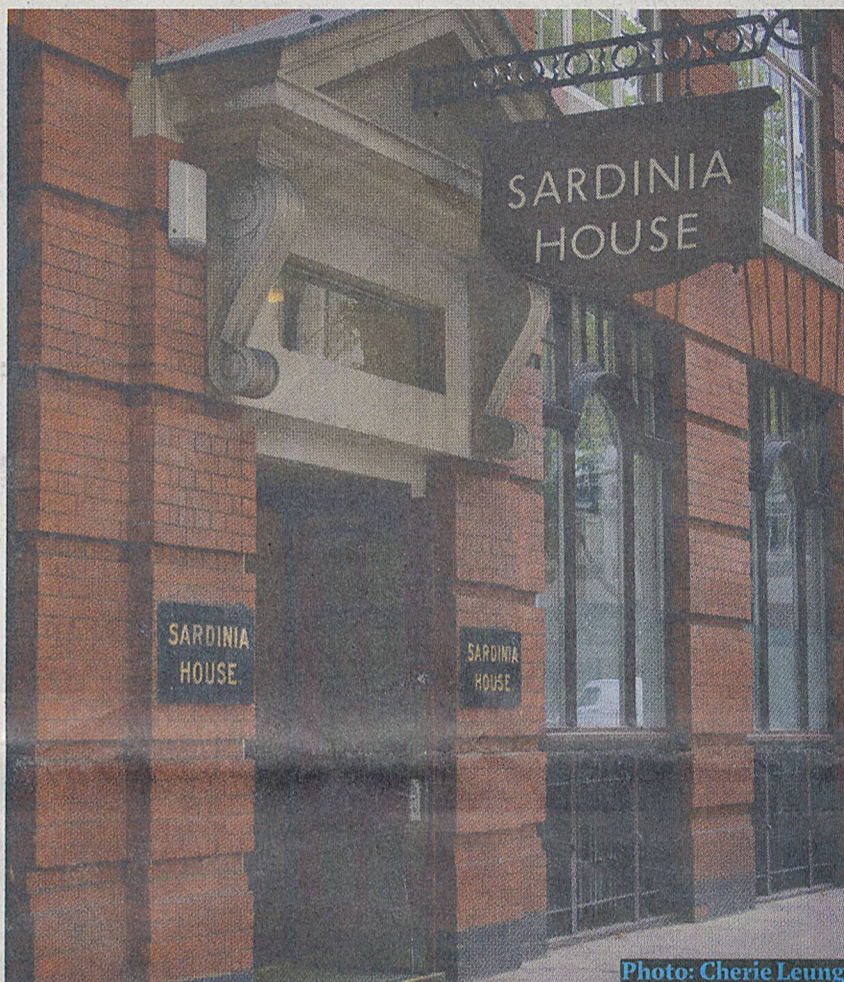


Photo: Cherie Leung

Phyllis Lui

The School has purchased Sardinia House as part of a "long term strategic acquisition".

"We have taken advantage of the current depressed state of the property market and have just purchased Sardinia House for an excellent price from a major developer," said LSE Director of Planning & Development Julian Robinson. "We will consider using it for suitable School functions as demand arises, on the expiry of the

tenants' leases."

LSE paid £8.8 million for the building, which was "significantly less than the price paid by the vendor to acquire the property only a year earlier". Among the tenants in Sardinia House is Make Yourself Amazing, a cosmetic surgery clinic.

When asked how he felt about the acquisition of a new building, 2nd year Government & Economics student James Wyse stated, "The new building shouldn't be wasted, it needs to be part of LSE."

"The property is currently fully let producing an income for the LSE," Robinson further explained.

## Miscarriage of justice suffered by LSE graduate



Photo: Jaynesh Patel

Phyllis Lui

Protests have been held by LSE and SOAS students in support of a recent LSE graduate who was humiliated during legal proceedings in India.

Kaya Eldridge was sexually assaulted by a plumber during her 3 month-long exchange programme in Ahmedabad, which had left her with bruises and scratches. The accused had grabbed her "bottom, breast and waist when he came to fix her shower at her house".

The defense lawyer, Sanjay Prakapati, had asked Eldridge, in open court proceedings, whether she had bathed, smoked or drunk alcohol. Prakapati further questioned whether her stay in India was illegal. Eldridge's lawyer has decided to launch contempt proceedings against Prakapati, who stated in an interview with Times Now that he had done everything for his client.

Eldridge commented to the Daily Mail, "...the way I was questioned and treated in

court was equally demeaning...aggressive and relentless and seemed to be entirely aimed at breaking me as far as possible."

"The treatment of Kaya Eldridge is disgusting, inhumane and sexist," stated LSESU General Secretary Aled Dilwyn Fisher. "I hope local and international pressure can be brought to ensure a fair and just outcome to her case."

The Chief Justice of the Gujarat High Court has considered Eldridge's application for judicial review and asked for an inquiry to be conducted by the chief metropolitan magistrate.

A protest led by LSESU Womens' Officer Jessie Robinson to the Indian High Commission was held last Monday to show support for Eldridge and raise awareness for the "unfair treatment of women in the courts".

"Humiliation by courts of law is an attempt to remove women of their power. By coming together and protesting we reclaim some of this power and reverse some of this humiliation back upon the courts of law who all too often treat women in an unacceptable manner," said Robinson.

The second protest organized by Eldridge's flat mate, Sophie Kaufman and Jessie Bonham, took place on Monday. LSE and SOAS students had participated, handing in a petition to the Indian High Commission asking for "judges of the courts of India to maintain the decorum of their courtrooms and prevent the defence council in sexual assault cases from attacking the victim's moral character in an

attempt to suggest the attack was invited".

Kaufman commented, "When the case came to trial she was made to face her attacker and humiliated by the defense lawyer as the judge looked on, unphased."

"The media reports of this case are disturbing but no one at LSE has any detailed knowledge of these court proceedings so we can't comment further," the School's official statement read.

"Sexism within courts of law should be openly condemned wherever it occurs. I'm sure Kaya Eldridge would have found it very encouraging to have received a supportive statement from the LSE, and I am saddened that we couldn't give her this," Robinson said in response to the School's statement.



Photo: thisislondon.co.uk

## Collective

Ajay Agarwal; Raidev Akoi; Emmanuel Akpan-Inwang; Madeeha Ansari; Hasib Baber; Fadhil Bakeer-Markar; Pria Bakshi; Vishal Banerjee; Ramsey Ben-Achour; Graeme Birrell; Alex Blance; Julian Boys; Danielle Brown; Nathan Briant; James Bull; Beth Cheryman; Angela Chow; Estelle Cooch; Oliver Courtney; Tomas Da-Costa; Jonathan Damsgaard; Richard Dewey; Cathy Druce; Marie Dunaway; Louisa Evans; Ossie Filkret; Aled Dilwyn Fisher; Katy Galbraith; Charlotte Galvin; Justin Gest; Ira Goldstein; Mira Hammad; Aula Hariri; Yisum Heneghon; Charlie Hodgson; Tahiya Islam; Harriet Jackson; Judith Jacob; Felipe Jacome; Megan Jones; Naeem Kapadia; Sam Tempest Keeping; Pooja Kesavan; Alizeh Kohari; Marion Koob; Vivek Kotecha; Anna Krausova; Ashma Kunde; Cherie Leung; Rob Low; Phyllis Lui; Affan Mohamed; Shibani Mahtani; Zeeshan Malik; Nizar Manek; Nada Mansy; Sophie Marment; Jamie Mason; James McGibney; Liam McLaughlin; Nitya Menon; Irfan Merali; Anna Mikeda; Utsa Mukherjee; Aditi Nangia; Sanjiv Nanwani; Brett Noble; Rachael O'Rourke; Ryan Ong; Nicolas Oudin; Anup Patel; Jaynesh Patel; Sachin Patel; Alice Pelton; Alex Peters-Day; Ben Phillips; Clare Pickering; Chloe Pieters; Danielle Priestley; Rahim Rahemtulla; Dominic Rampart; Anjali Raval; Ricky Ren; Joe Kennison; Katherine Ripullone; Sacha Robehmed; Joe Sammut; Thienthai Sangkhaphanthanon; Amrita Saraogi; Dan Sheldon; Andre Tartar; Su Wan Tan; Kerry Thompson; Meryem Torun; Molly Tucker; Mark Twyford; Vladimir Unkovski-Korica; Aliabbas Virani; Simon Wang; Jonathan Weir; Chris Westgarth; George Wetz; David Whitaker; Christine Whyte; Matthew Willis; Chris Wilkins; Daniel Yates; Calum Young; Sofia Zabolotskih

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

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London WC2A 2AE

## LSE events

Highlights of this week's public lectures and talks

### Bringing the Penal State Back In

Professor Loic Wacquant, Professor Nicola Lacey

Tonight, SZT, 1830-2000

### The Consolations of Economics

Tim Harford

Tonight, OT, 1830-2000 (Ticketed)

### How to be Humanitarian? UN Intervention in Post-Conflict Societies

Lisa Grande

Wednesday, HKT, 1830-2000

### Keynes and the Crisis of Capitalism

Professor Lord Skidelsky

Wednesday, OT, 1830-2000

### The current state of the economy

Professor Edward C. Prescott

Thursday, NT, 1645-1800

### Terrorism: How to Respond

Professor Richard English

Thursday, OT, 1830-2000

### The Tsar Liberates Europe? Russia against Napoleon, 1807-1814

Professor Dominic Lieven

Thursday, SZT, 1830-2000

### Hungary's approach in the economic storm

Prime Minister Gordon Bajnai

Friday, SZT, 1300-1400 (Ticketed)

## Positions of the week

LSE Careers Service's pick of the best jobs

### Deloitte

Global Universities Programme (GUP)

### Barclays Wealth

EmployAbility Graduate Programme 2010 for disabled students

### British Red Cross

International Youth Volunteers funded by the European Commission

### Cambridge Associates

Associate

### Chatham House

Conference Intern to help with the management and promotion of events

### The LSE Annual Fund

Student Callers to solicit donations from alumni

### Macquarie

Graduate opportunities in Banking and Financial Services

### Russell Group Tutors

SAT/College applications tutor

### United Nations

Research and Development intern

# The Beaver wants you!

We're having our induction on Thursday and we want you there!



- >> Web developers
- >> Graphic designers
- >> Writers
- >> Illustrators
- >> Photographers
- >> Reporters
- >> Event managers
- >> Marketeers
- >> Columnists
- >> Cartoonists
- >> ... and many more!

Thursday (8 Oct) | 7pm | D302

# LSESU Timed Out

Sam Tempest Keeping  
Phyllis Lui

LSESU officials have brushed off suggestions that the exclusion of LSESU and its collaborator SUARTs from a magazine's listings was of any significance. Both LSESU and SUARTs were noticeably absent from the listings page in the Student Guide edition of Time Out. The listings had included most of the University of London colleges as well as a special mention of AfterSkool, a previous event that was at the LSE prior to the refurbishment of the Quad, Tuns and Underground.

"I don't think it's ridiculous," said LSESU Treasurer George Wetz. "I hadn't

heard about Time Out contacting us, I would be surprised if they all pro-actively contacted Time Out."

Time Out London International Editor Marcus Webb stated, "We paid a contributor to compile and update the list of Student Unions. I know she attempted to contact every union..."

Wetz believed advertising in Time Out to be pointless as the events that were being held were focused on LSE students. He also noted that Batteries Not Included, the new event brought in to replace AfterSkool, should have been mentioned.

Although the LSESU officials have stated that they hope the new events would attract more LSE students, Wetz stated, "We cannot purely rely on LSE students to make every night successful."

Furthermore, when questioned about

the existence of two Wednesday nights held at LSE and London College of Communication respectively and whether it would pose any conflict of interests for the two collaborators and their shared staff, LSESU officials did not believe that to be the case.

"They are two different nights, we have agreements with external promoters," Wetz said. "We support what students want to do with their commercial activities here, as seen by our Wednesday night event, Where The Wild Things Are."

The organisers of Where The Wild Things Are told the Beaver that they had only received limited communication and support from the staff of LSESU.



After Skool Club  
Photo: Flickr

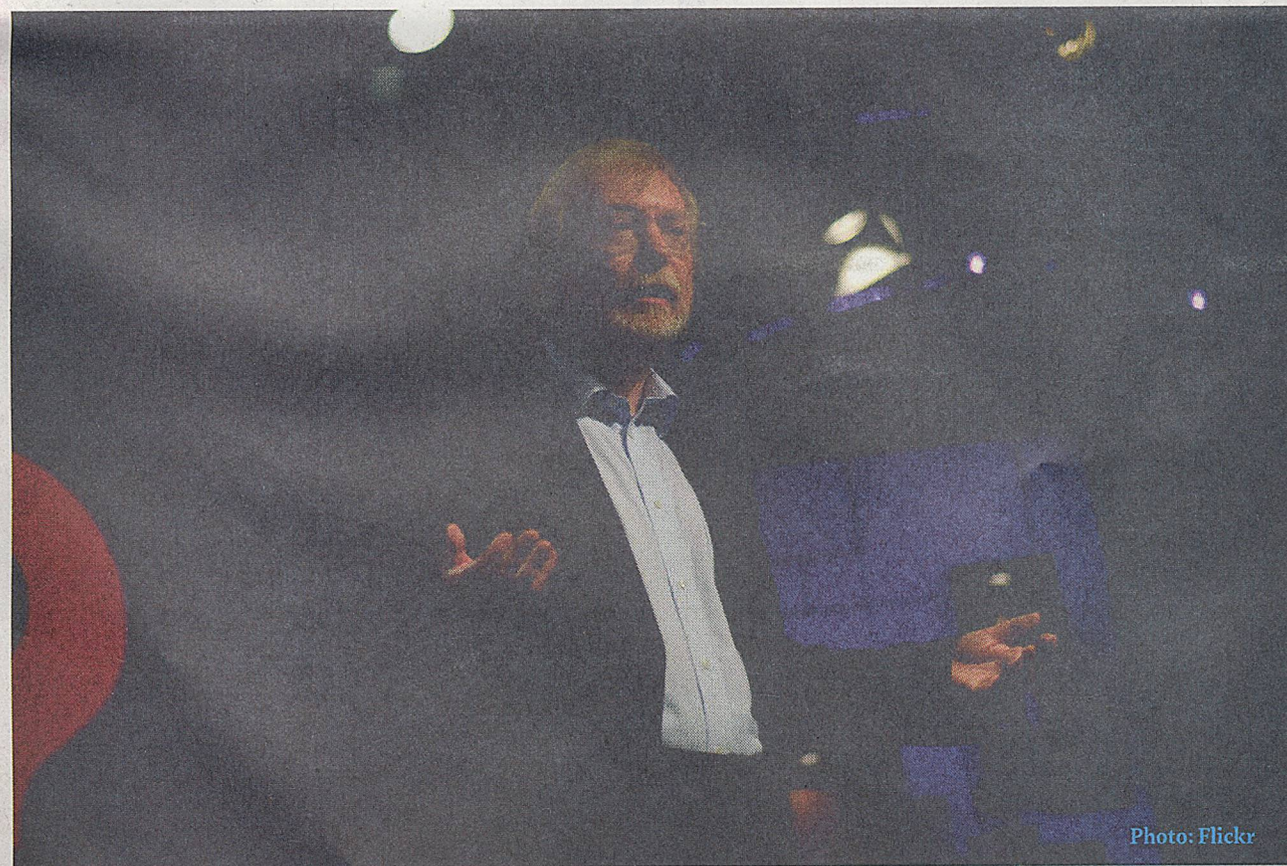


Photo: Flickr

# Thus spoke Paul Collier

Noah Bernstein

Oxford professor Paul Collier's chimerical iPowerpoint Presentation - whereby attendees were instructed to use their eyes to imagine the presentation - turned out to be a major success, kicking off the LSE public lecture series in stimulating, and amusing style.

Professor Collier, author of the Gelber winning Bottom Billion and soon to be released The Plundered Planet, delivered an eloquent allocution on natural resource management in developing countries, highlighting their potential for transformative impact.

A packed auditorium listened closely as Professor Collier outlined some of the existing natural resource management problems - externalities, scale harnessing, agency issues, asymmetric information, time/consistency - and then went on to match these problems with plausible solutions - accurate geological information,

transparent auctions, asset discovery, efficient revenue spending. In addition, the development expert made a persuasive argument for coordinated public and private domestic investment, clarifying by way of example that a government built road is of little use without the imported and privately sold truck.

Professor Collier finished his captivating lecture on a prescriptive note, suggesting that the best way to avoid the continued plunder of a developing country's natural assets is via a transparent partnership between an informed government and an equally informed civil society.

The respondent, Ghana's Ernest Aryeetey, also an International Growth Center member, the lecture's chief sponsor, was given the difficult task of rebutting Professor Collier's lecture. Professor Aryeetey chose instead to amplify his colleague's points, using examples from his professional experience to better illustrate some of the lecturer's more intricate points.

A short question and answer period followed.

## Student Unions

These sell cheaper booze, put on gigs and events, plus house your reps and advisors.

**Birbeck College**  
Malet St, WC1E 7HX (020 631 6335/www.bbkc.ac.uk/su).

**Central St Martin's College of Art and Design**  
Southampton Row, WC1B 4AP (020 7514 7022/www.csm.arts.ac.uk).

**Courtauld Institute of Art**  
Somerset House, Strand, WC2R 0RN (www.courtauld.ac.uk).

**Goldsmith's College**  
Dixon Rd, SE14 6NW (020 7919 7171/www.gscu.org.uk).

**Heythrop College**  
Kensington Square, W8 5HN (020 7795 6600/www.heythrop.ac.uk).

**International Students House**  
229 Great Portland St, W1W 5PN (020 7631 8300/www.ish.org.uk).

**Imperial College**  
South Kensington Campus, SW7 2AZ (020 7954 8060/www.su.ic.ac.uk).

**King's College Student Union**  
Surrey St, WC2R 2NS (020 7848 1588/www.kclsu.org).

**Kingston University River House**  
53-57 High St, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey, KT1 1LQ (020 8417 9000/www.kusu.co.uk).

**London Metropolitan University North Campus Rocket Complex**  
166-220 Holloway Rd, N7 8DB (020 7423 0000/www.rocket-complex.net).

**Queen Mary University**  
432 Bancroft Rd, E1 4DH (020 7882 8040/www.qmsu.org).

**School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS)**  
Thornhaugh St, WC1H 0XG (020 7898 4996/www.soasunion.org).

**University College London**  
25 Gordon St, WC1H 0AY (020 7387 3611/www.ucl.org).

**University of London Union**  
Malet St, WC1E 7HY (020 7664 2000/www.ululon.ac.uk).

**London Business School**  
Regent's Park, NW1 4SA (020 7000 7000/www.londonbsa.org).



UCLU bar

**London South Bank University**  
Thomas Doyle St, SE1 6NG (020 7815 7815/www.lsbu.org).

**London College of Fashion**  
20 John Princes St, W1G 0BJ (020 7514 7400/www.arts.ac.uk).

**Middlesex University**  
The Burroughs, NW4 4BT (020 8411 2420/www.musu.mdx.ac.uk).

**Rose Bruford College Burnt Oak Lane**  
Sidcup, Kent, DA15 9DF (020 8308 2600/www.musu.mdx.ac.uk).

**Thames Valley University**  
St Mary's Rd, W5 5RF (020 8579 5000/www.tvu.ac.uk).

**Aspect International Shoppers Building**  
Charecroft Way, W14 0EE (020 8727 3515/www.educationuk.org).

**Morley College**  
61 Westminster Bridge Rd, SE1 7HT (020 7928 8501/www.morleycollege.ac.uk).

**Westminster Adult Education Service**  
Sutherland St, SW1V 4LH (020 7297 7297/www.waes.ac.uk).



.timeout.

Student Guide 2009/2010

# LSE Student makes Top 100 list

Zeeshan Malik

An LSE Graduate has been named in the Top 100 Influential Black People in Britain list.

Former Social Policy student Amina Adewusi was cited in the list, which appeared in the Evening Standard last week.

Adewusi served on the LSESU Executive Board as Anti-Racism Officer in 2007-08.

"It's quite an achievement for someone who graduated this summer! Amina spent last summer in Nigeria doing a development project that was very successful", commented LSESU General Secretary Aled Fisher.

Women's Officer Jessie Robinson added, "It's really impressive. She was very hard-working and an inspirational campaigner. She really deserved this."



# New society sign-up system flamed

## Students complain about lack of organisation and communication

**Zeeshan Malik**  
**Ossie Fikret**

The LSESU's implementation of a new sign-up system for clubs and societies has come under much criticism despite high figures.

Under the new system, student registrations and the collection of membership fees have been centralised.

Students were given society registration cards to put their names and e-mail addresses on, as well as to place stickers of the various societies they have joined.

"The new system has been used in many student unions successfully in the past", said LSESU Treasurer George Wetz.

However, the system has received significant negative feedback from major SU societies, freshers and continuing students.

"The first half of this week has almost been laughably disorganised", said LSESU Social Policy Society Chair Gina Schlieman. "A new sign-up system was sprung on societies [at the] last minute, which wasn't very well coordinated to begin with. We were told that students who did not sign up at the fair could register online on the Societies page of the new Students' Union website. However, this website is not up yet."

LSESU General Secretary Aled Fisher defended the actions of the Union, saying "The new system was not sprung on societies and clubs - for the first time ever, we held a pre-Fair session detailing the arrangements at the Fair."

Treasurer of LSESU Food Appreciation Society Juliet Chrispin commented, "It makes it rather difficult to estimate the number of members we have. It's quite easy to cross out a sticker or stick another one over, so we could have 600 members or we could have 60." However, Chrispin said about her society, "we personally haven't really been affected by the changes. If anything, we've built on our success from last year."

The new centralised system also resulted in much longer queues at the payment desks. "I joined no societies this year because the queues were just too long", said MSc in Economics and Finance student Peter Kulka. Many students reported to have waited for as long as eighty minutes to pay for society registrations.

When asked about his reaction to the feedback, Fisher responded, "Having seen five Fairs at LSE, I believe this year's Fair was by far the best organised, although that is not to say there weren't any problems. While we accept that the tills were slow, the problem was not disorganisation, but the space given to us by LSE. Had we been given the NAB, which we asked for, we might have been able to have more tills."

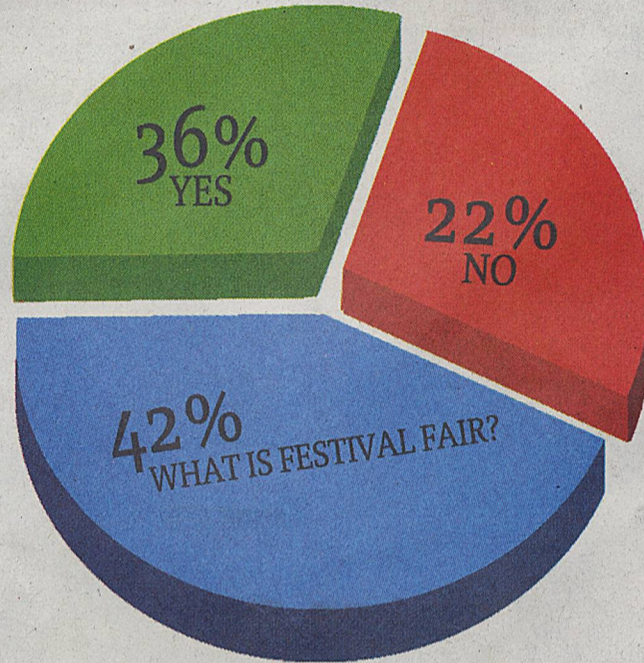
In response to many complaints concerning a lack of a map that would have otherwise enabled the convenient location and identification of societies, Fisher said, "we were operating a one-way system that would allow students to walk through and see every stall from every society and club."

Despite criticisms, LSE Athletics' Union sign-up figures have sky-rocketed as a result of the centralisation of clubs and societies in Clement House. A member of the AU commented, "Frankly I find it insulting that as a grown man, I should be expected to spend a substantial portion of my day trolling through crowded halls, when all I wish to do was join the kite-surfing society."

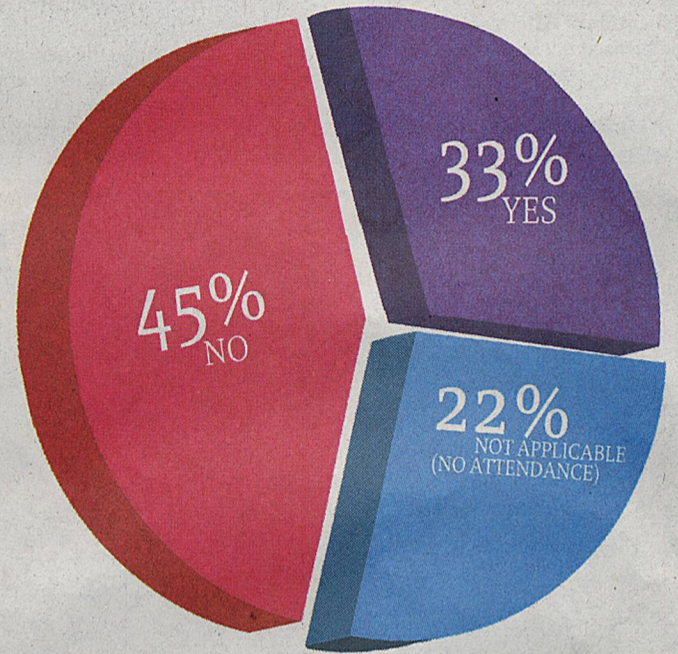
Fisher adds, "We have not received any complaints from societies or students directly. If they have problems, the best thing to do is contact us immediately so we can help."

A survey of 242 students conducted by The Beaver on Festival Fair

**Did you attend Festival Fair?**



**Did you find your way around easily?**



## Revenue and membership of top 5 societies per category

ACADEMIC SOCIETIES	NO. OF MEMBERS	REVENUE
Economics Society	843	£1,686
Grimshaw Club	352	£704
Maths and Stats	204	£204
History Society	202	£202
Anthropology Society	166	£166

ACTIVITY SOCIETIES	NO. OF MEMBERS	REVENUE
Debate Society	453	£453
Food Appreciation	433	£433
Itchy Feet	294	£294
Bacchus Friends Wine Appreciation	259	£2590
Hummous	222	£222

ARTS SOCIETIES	NO. OF MEMBERS	REVENUE
Film Society	511	£1,533
London Theatre Society	369	£369
Drama Society	240	£480
Music Society	218	£654
Literature Society	207	£207

CAREER SOCIETIES	NO. OF MEMBERS	REVENUE
Finance Society	1429	£1,429
Business Society	1178	£1,178
Consultancy Society	598	£598
Asian Careers Society	534	£534
Law Society	505	£1,515

CAMPAIGNS & CHARITABLE SOCIETIES	NO. OF MEMBERS	REVENUE
Development Society	295	£295
Palestine Society	129	£129
Environment Society	115	£115
LGBT Society	104	£104
Athiest & Humanist Society	99	£99

POLITICAL SOCIETIES	NO. OF MEMBERS	REVENUE
Politics Society	485	£485
Labour Society	105	£105
Conservative Society	101	£202
Liberal Democrats Society	70	£70
Socialist Worker Student Soc	27	£27

RELIGIOUS SOCIETIES	NO. OF MEMBERS	REVENUE
Hindu Society	130	£260
Christian Society	116	£232
Islamic Society	109	£218
Jewish Society	62	£62
Catholic Society	44	£44

NATIONAL SOCIETIES	NO. OF MEMBERS	REVENUE
CSSA Society	412	£412
China Development Society	672	£672
German Society	264	£264
SPICE Society	231	£462
Chinese Society	215	£645

**"It's more inefficient, uses more paper and more labour and there is more queueing time."**

**Chris Herford**

Govt and Economics

Student

**"Too many people, too little space."**

**Anonymous**

**"I couldn't even pay because the checkout was closed on Friday."**

**Dhiraj Nainani**

Law Student

**"Whilst I was queueing to pay, it got very stuffy and hot. It was just too packed."**

**Alice Sahba**

Law Student

**"You could pick up all the freebies and walk away without checking out at the till?"**

**Paras Sikka**

Economics Student

**"Isn't it Orientation Fair?"**

**Kacper Dzieciaszek**

Law Student

**"There was no place I could go to find out where all the societies were."**

**Graeme Smith**

Social Policy Student

**"The fact that online payment was available should have been advertised."**

**Ramona Calin**

International Relations Student

**"In theory it could work, but in practise, it doesn't seem to make things easier."**

**Raphael Schoettler**

German Soc President

# Quad laid bare

**Zeeshan Malik**

Students' Union officials have refused to claim responsibility for the presence of exotic dancers at a Union event.

The dancers were hired by promoters for Thursday night's International Student Fiesta.

"The promoters had been specifically briefed and asked to not provide us with female scantily-clad dancers", said LSESU Treasurer George Wetz.

SU Women's Officer Jessie Robinson mirrored Wetz's statement and added, "I was very disappointed that this happened. It's a shame that this happened at this sort of student event."

A student who attended the event commented, "It was incredible. One of the girls was doing the splits, then bouncing up and down with her legs spread-eagle."



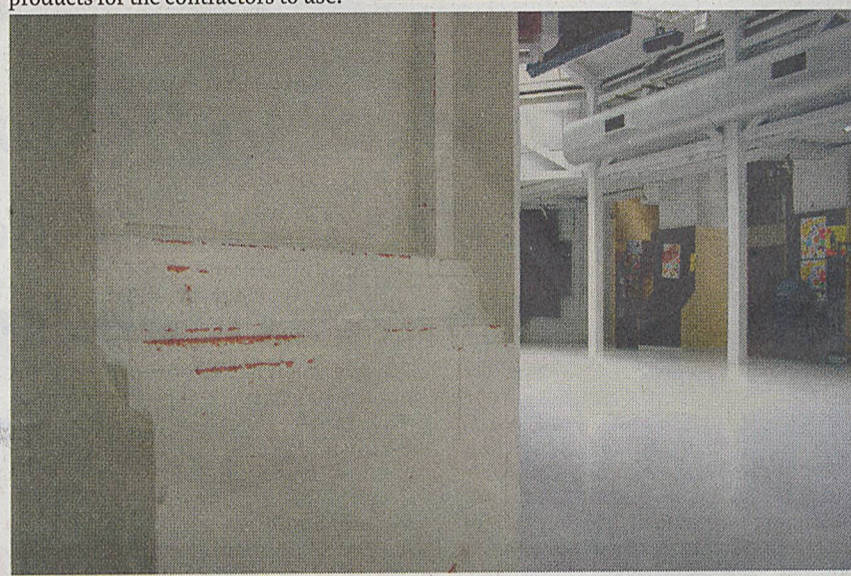
# A peeling decor

**Zeeshan Malik**

Pictures of the Quad taken on Saturday morning showing the damage done after the previous night's CRUSH.

The red marks on the walls have resulted from the only coat of paint that has peeled off less than two weeks since the Quad's inauguration. "It's common sense for anybody who's ever painted a wall that will be used as much as those in the Quad, that you never do just one coat", said a student looking at the aftermath of Friday night.

In response to the pink stains on the floors that have appeared from spilt alcoholic drinks, LSESU General Secretary Aled Fisher said, "we have met with the cleaning contractors to discuss better cleaning and have bought improved cleaning products for the contractors to use."



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## Chakrabati: torture is "poison seeping out" to bring "day of reckoning"

Vivek Kotecha

The mainstream political parties should not be "stealing the clothes" of the far-right in order to defeat them, according to Shami Chakrabati the director of human rights organisation, Liberty.

Chakrabati was speaking at one of the LSESU Alumni Lecture series which are being held as part of the 'Orientation Festival' for new students.

She expressed her worries at the "mixed messages" being sent out by the Conservative Party over human rights. In particular, the suggestion that some Conservative MPs were considering scrapping the Human Rights Act which she called the "ultimate protection" of all people in Britain.

However, she added that the Conservative Party was commendable for its efforts to scrap the government's ID card system and its opposition to certain anti-terror policies that have been proposed by an increasingly "authoritarian Labour government".

Chakrabati believed that the recession could be "dangerous for human rights and minorities" and the mainstream political parties should not try and copy the policies of parties such as the British National

Party to try and win votes, but there comes a point "where you have to take people on" by debating against them.

The allegations of torture practised by agents of the UK and US governments was also discussed, which Chakrabati believed had put both "democracies into disrepute". She added that she was absolutely against any torture and that the allegations of torture were like a "poison seeping out" which would eventually lead to a "day of reckoning" for those who authorised it.

Other topics discussed included the dilemma for companies such as Google which operate in countries like China which requires some search results to be censored.

Chakrabati said that it was important for the world not to disengage from such places but that China was proof that multinational companies bringing economic freedom did not necessarily lead to political and social freedom.

*Bon vivants? (arrogant)  
Gastronomes? (cheesey)  
Amoureux? (always on strike)*

*Peu importe... join the  
LSESU French Society*



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# Escape - to the LSE Library

Priya Bakhshi

The Library has been refurbished to include a new social space for students. After building works throughout the Summer Term and holidays, renovations to the Library have finally been completed, with the opening of Escape, its new social space, in the entrance area.

The purpose of the redesign was to provide an indoor area where students can take time away from studying. Unlike in the majority of the library, mobile phones as well as food are allowed in this space, to encourage students to take a well-needed break from studying without disturbing the rest of the library.

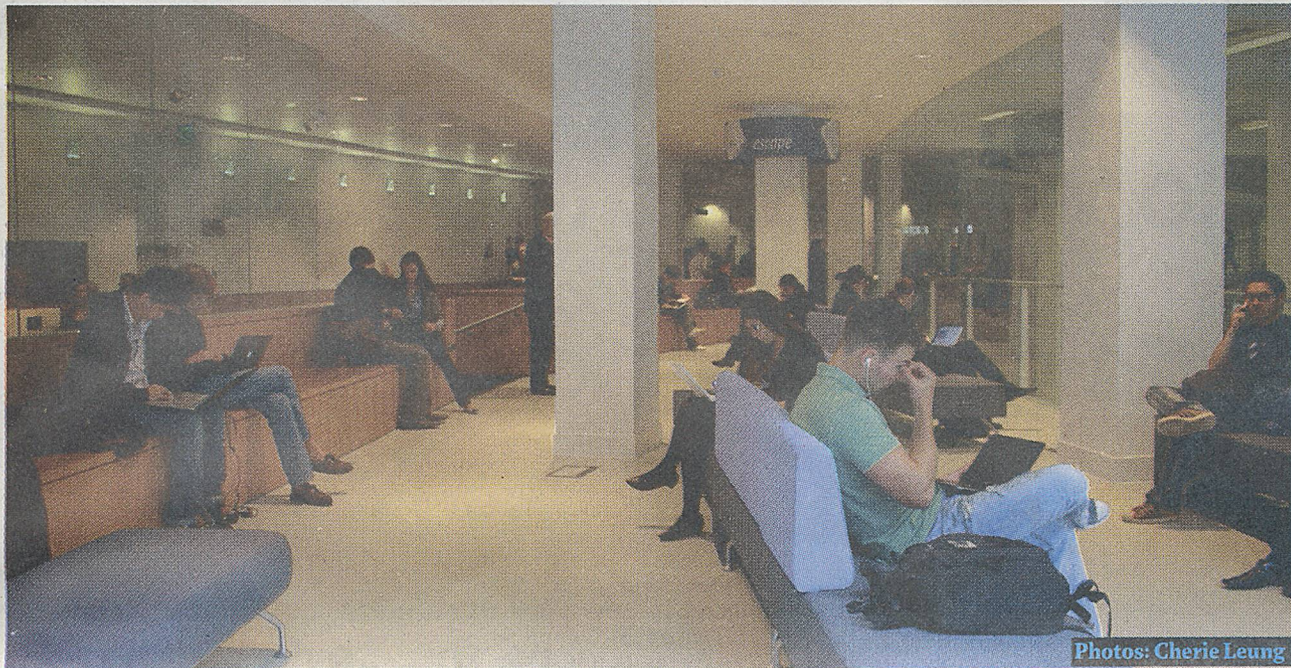
Some students questioned the need for Escape, since the pod featuring PCs, a hot drinks vending machine, and a plasma screen has been unchanged. One student said, "it's not really necessary - it's nice to have but I don't know why they bothered refurbishing it!"

However the reaction from most has been largely positive. 2nd year BSc Economics student Ameena Almezza said, "it's nice to have somewhere inside where we can talk without worrying about annoying people who are trying to work."

It's not too comfortable but I still think it's a good idea."

Another student agreed, saying, "I like it, it'll also be really useful during the Summer Term, around exam time."

The new development has been part of a wider project to refurbish the Library entrance, with changes also having been made to the lobby and to the plaza outside.



Photos: Cherie Leung



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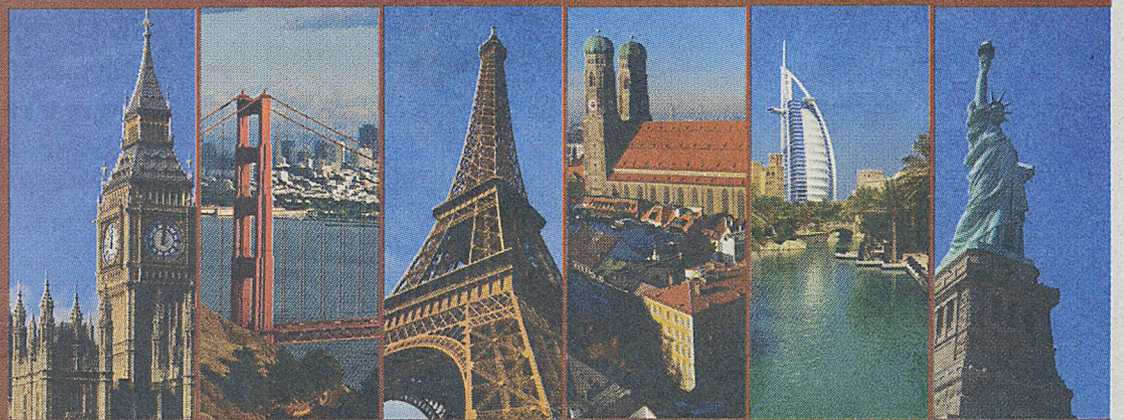
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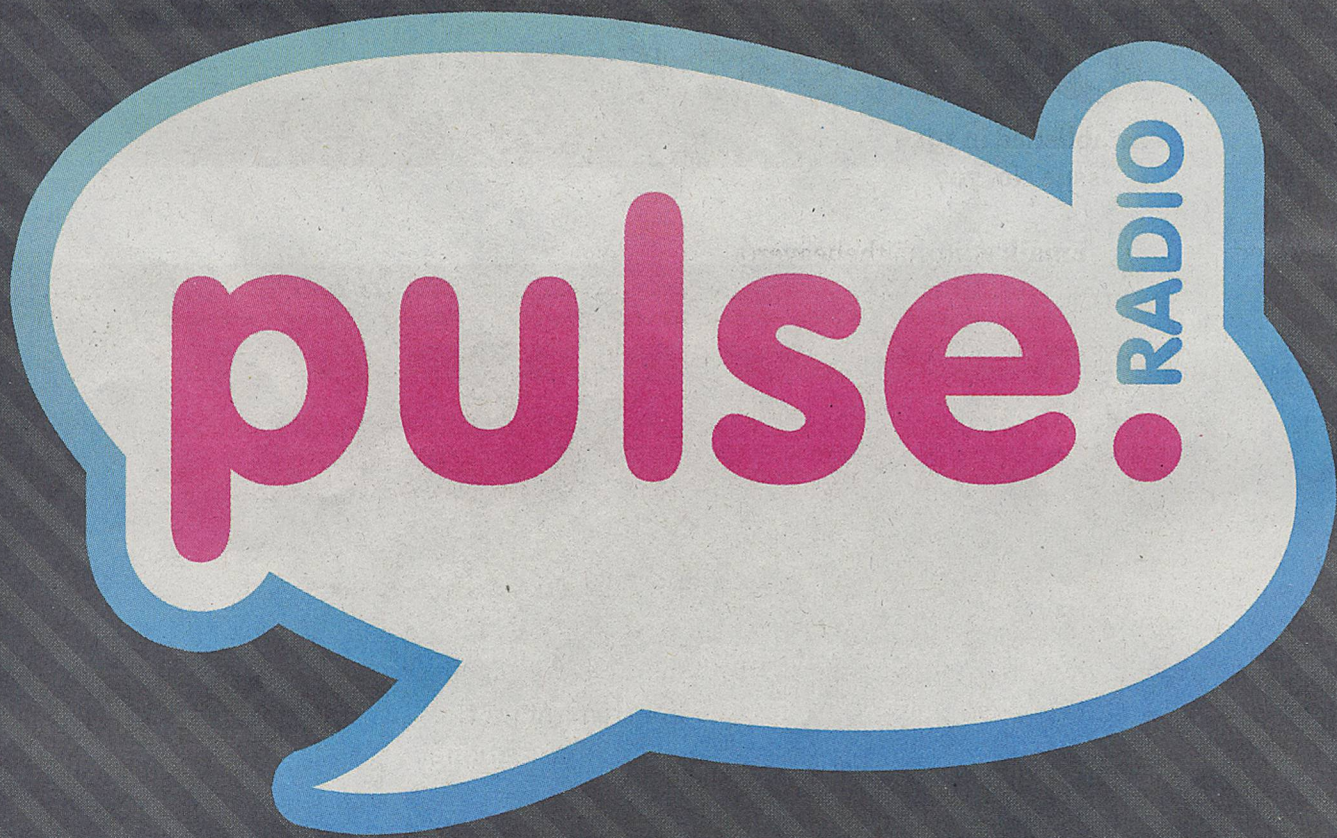
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# Comment



## The Beaver

Established in 1949  
Issue No. 707

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# Dithering in the dark

**K**aya Eldridge and Othman Sakallah are in seemingly different situations. Othman, a victim of Israel's ongoing occupation and oppression of Palestine, is unable to further his education despite being accepted to a masters programme at the LSE. Kaya, who recently graduated from LSE, was a victim of sexual assault in Ahmedabad and was humiliated in Indian courts when she was asked if she bathed, smoked or drank alcohol.

Two seemingly different situations, but a common

factor links them - they were both, or in Othman's case, potentially could be, students of the LSE. And they both, for whatever reason, have only received limited support from the higher-ups at the school.

Perhaps both Othman and Kaya have been victims of bureaucracy and the system in which we work. LSE Director Howard Davies dithered in his response to Othman, and even when he did respond to his request, he was accused by the organisers of the campaign for not doing enough or giving a meaningful enough response. When the school was asked for a comment about

Kaya, they claimed to not have enough information to comment further, or to issue a statement of support. Perhaps it is overlapping structures and a lack of clear information relay between these structures that are to blame for the school's half-hearted support for both Othman and Kaya.

The argument above would be far more convincing if the school had a consistent record of doing their utmost when it came to student welfare. Sadly, it does not. A flick through archives of this paper is somewhat disheartening; time after time the school only seems to react when their

reputation is directly on the line.

Arguably, it is not the place of the school to fight for the rights of individual students, or to act decisively in such cases. After all, is that not the role of our Union? The fact remains, however, that the Union hardly has the pull that Howard Davies, the Court of Governors, or the Deans of the LSE have. This paper strongly supports and encourages student activism, but it is almost certain that a decisive statement from our esteemed Director carries as much, or more weight than a cacophony of crazy lefties occupying

lecture theatres.

Ultimately, this paper hopes that the school will do everything in their means to keep safeguarding the welfare of LSE students. It is a sad day when victims of dire political circumstances or humiliating sexual assault cannot rely on their own institution to stand up for them, especially one as reputable as the LSE. Perhaps that will make this school feel more like a university in the true sense of the word, rather than just an institution where one receives a degree.

# Future of

## So long, Labour old and New

**Nathan Briant**



People across Britain have decided that Gordon Brown is not the right man to lead Britain. In polls released this week even the core Labour vote - the poorest working classes - are in the majority intending to vote for the Conservatives and Labour's vote was superseded by the Liberal Democrats for the first time since 1982.

Brown, where politics is concerned, has developed a ruthless streak; a trait that does not endear him to the electorate once they see it. With this thick skin he seems to have developed a Stalinist fear that the media have it in for him. At last week's Labour Party conference in Brighton, Sky News' Adam Boulton was called 'a political propagandist' by Brown after he asked a question which Brown didn't approve of. Similarly, the Labour Party's sustained media attack on Andrew Marr, which resulted in a well-publicised spat between Marr and Brown's PPS Ian Austin at a Labour Party fringe event, shows how the party feel they haven't got a problem with the electorate, but rather the media has a problem with Labour - a claim without substance, I feel.

Just as Brown had the major hand over the social policy tiller under Tony Blair from 1994 onwards and took the credit for the upturn in British fortunes, the Prime Minister must now take responsibility and be honest with the electorate. It was quite evident at this year's Budget that cuts in public services were at some point inevitable in the relatively near future. The nation of shopkeepers, even with the mechanics of the vogue PFI projects, has massively overspent on stock. And as the manager, Brown must take some responsibility.

Similarly, watching Brown's keynote speech at the Labour conference last week, it was as if the bankers were solely to blame for the financial collapse. That's

clearly a facile suggestion; government must play their part, and didn't adequately. So it was to my considerable astonishment that he said, 'Bankers had lost sight of the British values...and values we live by every day', having neglected to constrain bankers for ten years at the Treasury.

Needless political performances are not new for Brown. Hired enforcers at the Treasury, such as Ed Balls and later the disgraced Damian McBride, acted as political henchmen when he was Chancellor and the latter continued to when Brown inherited the top job. Even as Prime Minister, Brown's tactlessness went as far as to promise the Chancellor's job to the aforementioned Balls without sacking, or even communicating with, the incumbent. Alistair Darling had to hear of these rumours through the media; Brown's denial and bare-faced lying to the media after they questioned him over the plot have shown a frequent flagrant disregard for what rivals and colleagues feel.

In addition, his handling of issues other than the economic downturn (where speed, it must be said, was not always Labour's greatest asset: see the dithering over the nationalisation of the Northern Rock bank, for example) have, at times, been woeful. Brown's reaction to the expenses scandal was slow and dithering, and certainly at odds with actions taken by David Cameron. Second, the dealing with the Lockerbie bomber could have been handled immeasurably better; third, the ridiculously unpopular and seemingly pointless ID card scheme was finally dumped last week, after years attempting to push it through. These are only a few recent errors. The mistaken - and then repealed - 10p tax saga, and the on-off election only a number of months into his premiership suggest that Brown has been making major political mistakes since his earliest days in the job.

The future inside the Labour Party once Brown almost certainly departs for a highly respected academic post next year after electoral defeat isn't necessarily guaranteed to be rosy, however. Alan Johnson has regularly been touted as a replacement for Brown, typically from the party's Blairite faction, but there can

only be so many times that Johnson can say that he doesn't feel like a leader before people pushing his cause lose interest. Although he is now free of the ID card problem, his age - he will be 64 if an election is held in 2014 and 69 supposing he remains in post throughout a full term - will be a definite disincentive to vote for the current Home Secretary as Labour leader.

Other candidates, the Miliband brothers for example, are not perfect either. For David, a fault may be a lack of ruthlessness: he had the opportunity to remove Brown from his position at the start of the summer after the appalling performance in the EU and local elections but failed to; even a year prior to that, after stirring up controversy with a piece in the Guardian that cast a critical eye over Brown's leadership, he failed to elaborate openly in public for fear of being demoted. Currently, however, he may be seen as the most liked of possible contenders: a ComRes/Independent poll taken at the start of the Labour conference found that he and Lord Mandelson may be able to stem Labour's bleeding of votes and cause a hung parliament if they were made leader. Although the use of that may be questioned - people would have changed their minds after the polls - it's certainly a boost.

However, it's the other Miliband, Ed, who would appear to be the best placed to be next leader. Despite his relatively junior position among the other candidates - Harriet Harman, for instance - he has timed a possible run on the leadership perfectly. A close ally to Gordon Brown, but not as recognised as Ed Balls is, once Labour lose next year's election Miliband will not be tainted with heavy electoral failure, even though he is writing the party's losing manifesto. It is worth remembering that David Cameron wrote the Conservatives' manifesto in 2005.

New Labour, sadly, is doomed. Their electoral defeat is all but etched in stone even now. I would usually wish for a rocky, bumpy election with surprises, but it seems as if this one will be boringly tame if Labour's numerous 'fight backs' (established by Brown and company from summer 2007 onwards) are anything to go by. Alas - it was never going to last forever. Cheers for the memories, Tone and Gord.



Photo: flickr user World Economic Forum

### As Gordon Brown approaches premiership, we assess whether his own downfall, or the victim

## Think of Othman

The LSE must do all it can to support the Palestinian student's right to education

**Mira Hammad**



Othman Sakallah, living in the Gaza strip, is an offer holder for an MSc at the LSE. However, he is unable to take up this dream position which his talent and perseverance won for him. The arbitrary and draconian Israeli border controls penning civilians into the Gaza strip, coupled with the economic siege preventing Othman from raising the funds

to follow up his offer, and compounded by the recent demolition of his family's home by Israeli soldiers make taking up his offer an impossibility.

The perversity of the situation in which Othman finds himself is strikingly grotesque but not singular. The educational opportunities for Palestinian students have been demolished as effectively as their homes by the Israeli occupation. Perhaps then, it is time for directors of educational institutions, such as Howard Davies of the LSE, to speak out against this shameful abuse of Palestinian citizens' right to education and free movement. Indeed, the LSE can no longer ignore the reality of the situation for Palestinian students - as the LSE Council ob-

served, "it is not the practice of the School to take political positions, unless its own policies and practices are at issue. In the case of the UCU proposed debate about a boycott of Israeli academics, LSE's own operations would be affected, and this led to the Director making a statement on the issue." This situation seems to merit just such a response, and many students from the LSE feel, like the LSESU Palestine Society, that it is the Director's responsibility to champion Othman's right to an LSE education by issuing a statement condemning the siege which destroys his ability to attend the LSE. If the LSE will defend its purported policies of equality and access to education, such a statement is unavoidable.

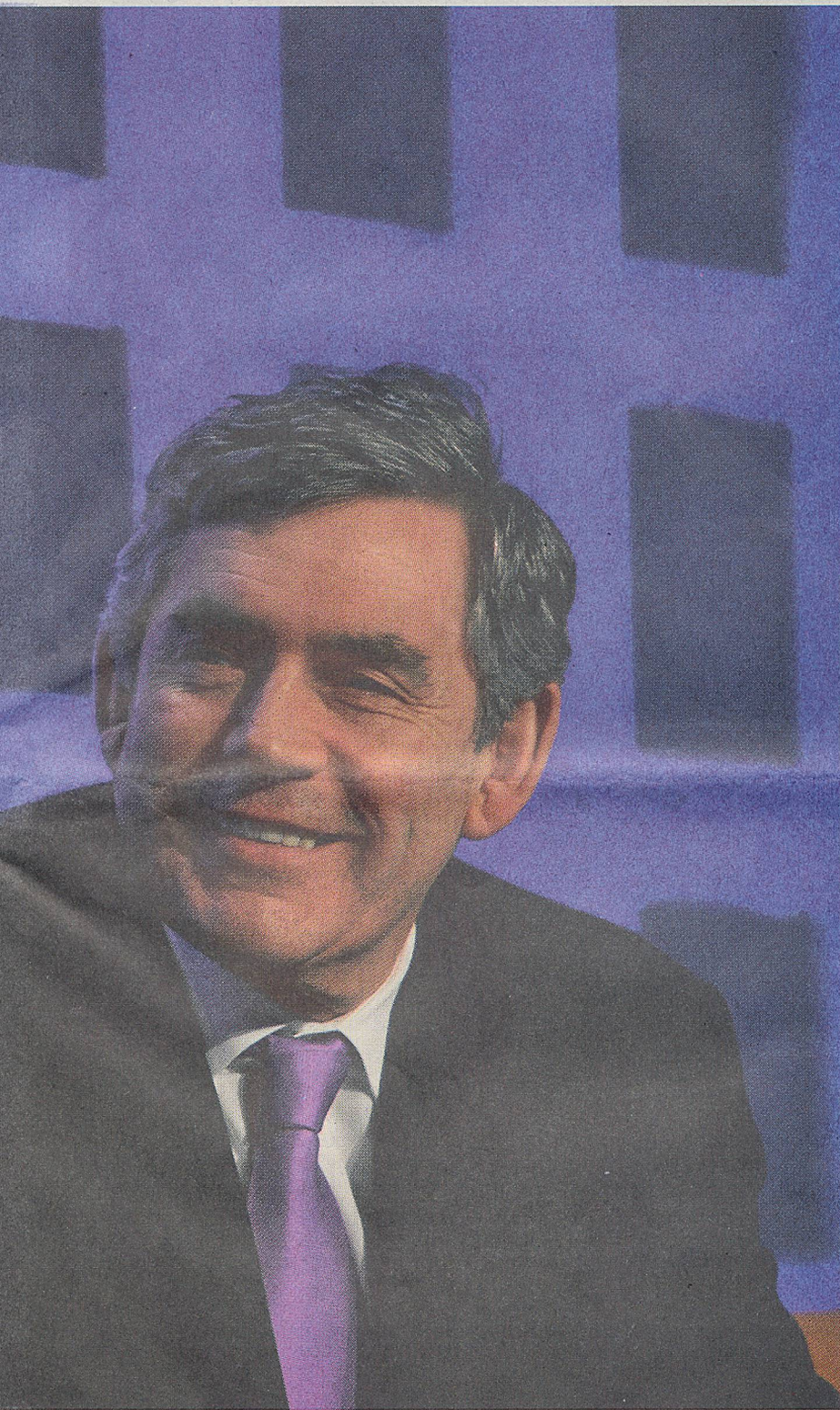
A statement alone, however, cannot secure Othman's right to take up his position at the LSE. The recent demolition of the home in which he, his wife and his two children lived means that his dire financial situation, created by the economic siege, is now intolerable. The LSE must recognise the incredible difficulty of his situation through the provision of a scholarship, without which its offer of an education is empty and meaningless. This is not the first time that the LSE's attention has been drawn to the grave need to defend Palestinians' right to education. The LSESU has been mandated to provide support for the Palestinian Right To Education Campaign by popular student vote, and last year around forty students staged an occupa-

tion of a lecture theatre, demanding that the LSE provide more scholarships for Palestinian students. There has even been an organisation established by LSE alumni, the Palestine Solidarity Initiative, which aims to help Palestinian students overcome the barriers to education set by the Israeli occupation.

Interest in Othman's case is building among LSE students and pressure is rising on the LSE to do all it can to help Othman. Othman's letter, written on the 20th September to the Director of the LSE, has now been answered, albeit with an insufficient and ambiguous response. Much now hinges on whether Othman receives a more meaningful response from Howard Davies.

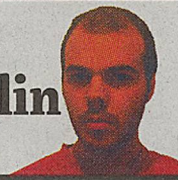
# the Left

## Massacre of the Innocent



...es the dying days of his pre-  
...he was the architect of his  
...of an abusive and profiteer-

**Liam  
McLaughlin**



**T**he continued media crucifixion of Gordon Brown is starting to sicken me. And I'm not just talking about the tabloids here; I'm talking about supposedly reliable journalists such as Andrew Marr and the Channel 4 news team. In a country as cynical as Britain, I wouldn't imagine that the kind of lurid nonsense which is now churned out every day about Brown would be taken seriously. Yet here we are, on the cusp of a new political era led by David Cameron, Rupert Murdoch having announced The Sun's support for the Conservatives. The Sun: Britain's most popular newspaper; the paper which religiously prints a picture of a topless woman every day, will be integral in deciding the future of this country.

So what is the media worth to us? I'm afraid that it doesn't even hold anyone accountable anymore; it just digs its talons into whatever story it can get to fill its pages for that day. Our 24-hour news culture is destroying the way politicians should be held accountable - fairly. Everyone is taking a piece of the Brown-bashing pie simply to fill out minutes on their TV slots and inches in their paper. This cynical style of journalism is, in my eyes, against the fundamental tenets of liberal democracy.

I am not defending Brown, but I do believe that he's merely paying for what was started in 1979 by the Conservatives. Things don't happen in isolation of each other, and accordingly all Labour's policies are causally linked to the changes instigated by the Conservatives. In brief, what Margaret Thatcher's Conservatives

did was propagate Monetarist economics which allowed the free market to expand and private businesses to flourish. On the surface this seems like a good thing, and it certainly gave Britain the new leaf it needed after the trade unions dominated the late seventies.

But any government's legacy will have wider long-term effects, and clearly Thatcherite economic policies are now making their impact. So I say to those who blame Gordon Brown and the Labour party for the problems we are now facing, that the social effects incumbent upon Labour in 1997 couldn't possibly have been turned round. If New Labour had kept Clause 4 and pandered to the 'loopy' (another mass-media aphorism) socialists, they would never have gotten into government. It's too easy to blame Brown for the problems; be wary of easy conclusions. The mess we're in is not solely his fault. Thirty years of scum has just hit the fan; the scum which resulted from policies the mainstream media initially propagated in the eighties; the championing of the free market and the subsequent unprecedented social changes which occurred.

People working in the media should know these facts intimately, yet they continue to excrete hypocritical rhetoric which never tells the full story, lazily and insidiously blaming Brown for the entire thing.

Free market capitalism dominates our culture, society and psyche, and the media is just one of the many enterprises which took up the reigns of further privatisation for profit. Thus the decisions they make and the news they break is not based on a dedication to truth and justice for all, but for increasing profit margins and shareholders' support. It is an issue of morality when a paper publishes a sleaze scandal and reports it relentlessly, not because they care about the issue, but because it sells more papers. Rupert Murdoch, the man who will no doubt put David Cameron into Downing Street and who

has owned tabloids in Britain since 1969, began his media conglomerate News Corp in the eighties by exploiting Margaret Thatcher's anti-union legislation and overhauling union-run printers in favour of smaller work-forces and computerised machinery. Murdoch was only ever interested in profits, but when you introduce the concept of profit into a field which is supposed to help provide impartial checks and balances on parliamentary accountability, you undermine the ethos of liberal democracy. How? By inserting into the job a motivation for money where the real motivation should be to serve the country's best interests.

The fundamental rules of society are being twisted here: profit shouldn't be a motivation for trying to make society better or more transparent. Supposed servants of our democracy - journalists, lawyers and politicians - are all guilty of putting career before ethics. Money matters most and Gordon Brown is taking a media beating in the name of shifting units.

Mr. Brown is an unlucky man. Yes, he hasn't done himself any favours, but wasn't it him who put together the rescue package for the global economy? With swine flu, he couldn't have controlled the hysteria the media created (again to sell papers), and with the expenses scandal it was only a matter of time before that time-bomb exploded.

The bottom line of all of this is money: as an incentive; as a tool of incredible power and as a corrupting force which the media has succumbed to. The current coverage of Gordon Brown's painful media-induced fall reminds me of when David Beckham got sent off against Argentina in the 1998 World Cup - hate-filled, sensationalist pap; its only function to sell more papers.

I am ashamed to live in a democracy as cynical, reactionary and plain greedy as this.

## An assault on humanity

**Emmanuel  
Akpan-Inwang**

A pandemic of epic proportions is spreading unabated across continents, countries and cultures. Perhaps the most pervasive human rights violation we know - sexual assault - has broken lives and fractured communities.

Unlike with other pandemics we see no international cooperation or multilateral initiatives to halt its spread. Rather, the very structures that are in place in civilised societies to protect and defend the rights of victims of crime instead collude to result in what could be termed a

'second assault'.

The case of 23-year old Kaya Eldridge, an LSE graduate who was sexually assaulted in the Indian town of Ahmedabad, is a prime example of this. When Kaya's case came to trial the defence lawyers subjected her to humiliating tactics, and asked her a series of irrelevant questions designed to question her character in front of a packed court of jeering men. She was asked whether she drank alcohol, socialised with men and how often she took a shower. All the while, the man she had accused of assaulting her sat just feet away. Ironically, Kaya was in India as part of a Women's Empowerment Project.

What do her clothes, alcohol consumption or sexual history have to do with whether she was assaulted or not?

The idea that she may have been 'asking for it' is far too prevalent in most societies including Britain, where around 47,000 women are raped or sexually assaulted every year, but only 5 per cent of reported incidents lead to a rapist being convicted. This case of misogyny and bigotry is in no way isolated to the Indian legal system.

A London Student survey in February found that one in three students in the UK thinks that a woman can be responsible for being raped if she is drunk. And nearly half of them would say she is in some way responsible if she failed to say 'no' clearly to the man. Notably, male respondents believed that a woman wearing 'sexy or revealing clothes' is even more responsible for her dignity.

There is clearly a need for greater

## Kaya Eldridge's plight must alert us to the injustices done to women around the world

focus on implementation and enforcement of legislation, and an end to laws that emphasise family reunification over the rights of women. It is little wonder that high levels of violence against women persist. Limited availability of services, stigma and fear prevent women from seeking assistance and redress - typically, women who are physically abused by their partners never contact NGOs, shelters or the police for help.

In far too many societies, the legal system and community attitudes add to the trauma that survivors of sexual assault experience. Women are often held responsible for the violence against them, and in many places laws contain loopholes, which allow the perpetrators to act with impunity. In a number of countries,

a rapist can go free under the Penal Code if he proposes to marry the victim. Sadly, crimes against women continue as an accepted part of cultural practices.

Violence against women is a particularly egregious violation of human rights that must be eradicated. But this can only happen once it is understood that sexual assault is primarily a violent crime. The assailant uses sex to inflict violence and humiliation on the victim, or to exert power and control. It is time for societies the world over to stop blaming the victims and to punish the perpetrators.

Kaya Eldridge has bravely and rightly said the assault she suffered could have taken place anywhere and she intends to remain in India to complete her internship. For this she is to be commended.

# Slow dancing with Darth Vader

The refurbishment of the Student Union is an exercise in industrial minimalism, which can only be enhanced by the presence of proper students



Inside the Underground lair of the Galactic Empire  
Photo: Ronan Haughton; Graphics: Cherie Leung

## Alice Pelton



It's evident that whoever redesigned the Quad hasn't asked many students what they wanted, or been to that many student nights. To my knowledge, there wasn't even a token attempt at a student consultation; even an ideas box or a small survey would have been appreciated. However, for a refurbishment that's only meant to last three to four years, I think they've done a pretty good job.

The first time I walked into the Quad I thought it was unfinished: the wooden panelling looks barren and clinical and

there's an absence of strong colours to break up the never-ending mass of grey. Whilst I agree minimalist décor can be effective, hospital décor cannot. The venue is still far too brightly lit; at night they insist on keeping the plasma TVs on and the only lights they use still resemble a school disco. It reminds me of being in year eight, slow-dancing with a sweaty nameless boy.

Furthermore, after a few snakebites have been spilled, you may mistake the Quad for Somerset House in December. I watched in horror as people skated and slipped all over the place. Hopefully this won't be for long; I've been told that the contractors will rectify the ice-rink effect by next week. On the upside, the sound system in the Quad has improved considerably and they've gotten rid of the ridiculous multicoloured spotty lights covering

one wall. In one sense the new Quad is refreshing and optimistic; in another, it's ever so bland.

The Tuns is no longer a student pub but rather a student bar. Some, like me, may be fond of the new chalkboard. When everyone is drunk, I feel it may become a useful medium for voicing banterous hatred. Be warned, just in case we offend one another, the staff take away the chalk sticks past a certain hour. Ask nicely, and they will begrudgingly give them back - freedom of speech, and all that. You might want to make sure you're around people who can take a joke - it seems 'LSE suck my twat' is not that hilarious to those who haven't had as many Strongbows.

One has to question how effectively they have used space in the Tuns. LSE has a habit of wasting space, and the library is a prime example - readers are encouraged

to join the Facebook group 'Yarr! I Feel Like A One-Legged Pirate When I Climb the LSE Library Stairs'. Seating in the Tuns is considerably reduced; people don't dance in the Tuns so there's no need for all the floor space, and I will miss the massive Chesterfields. The quotations adorning the walls of the Tuns and the Quad seem to hang around listlessly to protest that LSE was/is a reputable institution, churning out fantastic academics/powerful people/political skills. When asked what they thought of the new layout, a certain LSE student responded, 'Someone's been watching too many episodes of Hollyoaks'. On the other hand, the Darth Vader table in the underground is coming up trumps, and sitting in the egg chairs has been likened to inhaling valium.

The sad truth is that the Quad will always be 'the Quad': yes, that place where

you were, only six hours before, drinking tea and munching on a panini. When one goes to the Quad one gets that awkward 'drinking on a school night' feeling, which is probably the reason why Wednesday night's 'Where the Wild Things Are' resembled Where the Wild Things Aren't. This night has huge potential, and the acts were fantastic - if only everyone hadn't gone to bed at 1am.

But I've decided it's not just the colour of the walls, or the size of the furniture that matters. LSE students are what will make these three rooms what they are. All we need now is for this space to be filled with students that don't stare at you as if you are quite literally out of your mind for dancing with friends, consuming alcoholic beverages, and even kissing members of the opposite/same sex. After all, this is a university for god's sake.

## Letters to the Editor

**Madam** - It is fantastic to see a lively debate on issues of quality at LSE conducted in the pages of The Beaver.

While I concur with Nathan Briant's caution regarding league tables, there is no doubt that quality has become an issue at LSE. And while I take his point on the attractions of London, internal surveys and the National Student Survey (NSS) are very clear in asking about criteria within a department or on a course/programme, so it is difficult to suggest that a distracting urban environment would affect one's answer to a question on, say, the timeliness of feedback, or the enthusiasm of a class teacher. Clearly, something is consistently going wrong and needs to be tackled.

There are a number of issues that need to be addressed in order to improve the quality of education at LSE. The perceived gap between research and teaching needs to be bridged; teachers need to be taught how to teach, and encouraged to teach (as well as research) well; new learning technologies need to be continuously explored; and feedback needs to be of a high quality and suitable quantity, as well as timely.

But, ultimately, what education is waking up to around the world is that different people learn in different ways - and therefore teaching must teach to different

learning styles. A one-size-fits-all model of teaching and learning will never work. This means LSE needs to confront more than just how teaching is delivered, but how learning is developed and assessed. The rigidity of the near-100% exam system at LSE has rarely been called into question - and any talk of exam feedback or, god forbid, summer resits has usually been hurriedly hushed up.

These are the issues that students now have to put on the agenda and must highlight when we write our Student Written Submission to the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) auditors next year. We will find a receptive figure in Prof. Janet Hartley, but I hope other departments and academics will engage seriously and urgently with these problems.

Yours,

**Aled Dilwyn-Fisher**  
General Secretary of the  
LSE Students' Union

**Madam** - As a recent LSE graduate and parliamentary employee, I have become accustomed to sifting through vast quantities of nonsensical, self-indulgent drivel.

It is with this in mind I would congratulate you on so gracefully repositioning your paper out of the realm of hollow, wannabe journalism. I praise the ambitious moves of your editorial board into the world of cutting, engaging and earnest student media. Moreover, I am of the sincere opinion that under your leadership, The Beaver has reached heights only achievable beneath the whip-crack of a hardened journalistic mind, not to mention a truly beautiful face.

Regards,

**Seph Brown**  
LSE Graduate 2009  
LSESU Anti-Racism Officer 08-09

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# Features



Photo: flickr user cadbury\_dairy\_milk

## What's fair about trade?

**Campbell McDade** explains why fairtrade chocolate is just the beginning

**T**he pledge by Cadbury to use Fairtrade cocoa in Cadbury Dairy Milk came to fruition last month. Keen eyed students will notice that the Students' Union's non-Fairtrade stocks are being depleted and their labelled counterparts taking over. This is good news for producers and consumers. Cadburys certification has meant that Fairtrade cocoa coming from Ghana has tripled and, with extensions to the Australian, Canadian and New Zealand markets next year, it will increase to 20,000 tonnes. Additionally, this step brings Fairtrade further into the mainstream, meaning that Fairtrade chocolate will be readily available in supermarkets, underground kiosks and of course, student unions. However, this announcement is not without its critics. Some question Cadbury's motives. Others ask why they are only using Fairtrade cocoa in one (albeit popular) product.

Fairtrade certification means a premium for producers of \$150 per tonne of cocoa as well as guaranteeing a price of \$1600 per tonne regardless of market fluctuations. However, looking at the International Cocoa Organizations (ICCO) data for cocoa prices, the current price is around \$3000 per tonne and has not dropped below the \$1600 market since 2006. This has led some to say that Cadbury's decision is a fairly riskless venture. Further, Cadbury is only using Fairtrade cocoa in one of its multiple products. There is a long held view that

companies can enhance the image of their entire brand by publicising ethical choices on a limited section of their products, a process known as greenwashing. At an LSE public lecture, Pauline Tiffen (founder of Cafedirect and Divine Chocolate) highlighted this 'halo effect', citing Green and Blacks chocolate (a brand Cadburys acquired in 2005) who have come to be seen as an ethical brand but who only have one Fairtrade product in their broad range. This raises the argument that Cadbury and others are merely using Fairtrade certification to increase their image whilst not fully committing to the principles. Fairtrade itself is also brought into question. With suggestions that it encourages backward technologies and that the real problem is developing world governments not first world buyers. Fairtrade, it is said, is market distorting and that the guaranteed price encourages overproduction that in turn causes the lowering of market prices.

It may seem that Cadbury's decision is opportunistic, given that market prices are reasonably high for cocoa at the moment. However, this misses a fundamental point about the guarantee. It is the stability that comes with such deals that is important. Certainly cocoa prices are high, but, cocoa like other raw commodities, are in a volatile sector and it is not inconceivable that prices will fall below the minimum. Indeed, the ICCO's report for August 2009 states that whilst prices are high, they fluctuated a great deal that month. By guaranteeing both the price and the pre-

**By guaranteeing both the price and the premium, farmers in Africa are able to invest in their businesses, their communities and their families.**

mium, farmers in Africa are able to invest in their businesses, their communities and their families. The European Union used to have a programme named STABEX that was a similar statist approach whereby by the Union would guarantee prices to the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of developing States. That has since been abolished and the Fairtrade project creates a market based partnership in the era of globalisation and less formal state level agreements.

The question of one product rather than many certainly has credence. People should want more but Cadbury's commitment and the scale of this achievement for Fairtrade should not be belittled. Cadbury Dairy Milk is the most popular chocolate bar in the UK. Cadbury may get some 'halo effect' here but what of the publicity this will also bring to Fairtrade? Apparently 70 per cent of British consumers now recognise the Fairtrade label and this move will no doubt help increase that. Further, whilst Fairtrade may be more recognised now, the organisation is committed to education of the need for ethical trading practices and exposure of this level is important for that goal.

On the critics of the brand, certainly arguments between fair and free traders will continue. In volatile markets such as raw food stuffs, lack of protection can lead to catastrophe should prices fall too far and it makes long-term investment risky. Investors who know that producers will receive guaranteed incomes are also more likely to lend at more favourable

rates because of this. At the very least, the undoubted contention on free trade as a panacea for poverty means that alternatives offering protection from the adverse effects of globalisation should not be dismissed. There is a plethora of standards out there that business requires for access to markets, the vast majority of which are much worse for the producers and much harder to achieve. In a world of lower trade barriers and global interconnectedness, standards are needed to coordinate supply chains and provide information to buyers and consumers.

Cadbury's move and the achievement by the Fairtrade foundation in securing their support is unreservedly positive. That is not to argue that there is not more work to be done. Getting larger confectionary firms is essential as is getting Cadbury to extend its commitment across its products. However, creating stability for raw commodities is essential for developing world producers and the engagement with the big players is necessary. Globalisation has meant great opportunities for the developing world. However, without an insurance policy such as that offered by Fairtrade, there is the constant threat that globalised trading markets will not provide the stability required for long term investment. Getting more from corporations in terms of commitment should be a target but Cadbury should be commended for acting as a conduit for Fairtrade breaking into the mainstream.

# What makes a woman

**JESSIE ROBINSON AND  
GEORGINA BUTLER  
DISCUSS THE IMPLICA-  
TIONS OF AN INTERNA-  
TIONAL SPORT SCANDAL**



## Jessie Robinson provides the feminist's take on gender conformity

**T**he treatment of Caster Semenya by the International Association of Athletics Federations was shocking in itself but what was most surprising was the willingness of the media to jump on the bullying bandwagon. The unthinking homophobic response of most news outlets to Caster Semenya's situation was a sad indictment of how far we have to go in overcoming mainstream gender and sexuality discrimination.

Female athletes never fail to be a group causing the media great discomfort. They challenge the belief that men and women are born with distinct skills, body shapes, and hormones; and prove that these aspects of difference are fluid. Athletes shape their bodies into what they want them to be and this is uncomfortable since it means we are not so biologically differentiated after all. It means that the social aspects of sexuality have a lot more to answer for than is often admitted. The media is perplexed by women who cannot be straightforwardly sexualised or patronised; newspapers are relieved to fill their pages with photos of Kelly Holmes in a dress or recount the tale of Rebecca

Adlington's love for Jimmy Choos. Semenya in heels, rather than tracksuit, may have been easier for the media to accept.

The desire to categorise – man or woman, 'straight' or gay, attractive or unattractive; continues to create the illusion that the human race can be divided into neat binaries. If anyone challenges these fixed conceptions or blurs these lines, they are ostracized and humiliated. The media responded to Semenya's case in a tone which was almost indignant at the prospect of someone challenging their narrow world view. A woman should act like one, and never outshine men at sport.

Whilst we are not all subjected to the medical examinations Semenya had to endure, we are all constantly faced with the crude tests of one another. The questions asked of Semenya are consistent with the questions asked of each of us, that fail to acknowledge the fact that our behaviour and experiences are not two dimensional. Are we married? What do we wear? Who do we have sex with? We are all measured up against a dream of heterosexuality and gender conformity as

**The media is perplexed by women who cannot be straightforwardly sexualised or patronised**

the norm, when in fact most of us either miss the mark or spend our time striving for these unattainable expectations. The roles we adopt are socially moulded and we should not do ourselves a disservice by continuing to assume that we all fit into neat little biological tick boxes.

The treatment of Caster Semenya was not simply a politically incorrect joke. It was a shocking reflection upon the extreme vilification that continues to be experienced by trans people across the world. Data from the Transgender EuroStudy (April 2008), indicates that in the UK 67 per cent of trans women and 57 per cent of trans men experience crimes of harassment. With 24 per cent of trans women and 20 per cent of trans men also experiencing verbal abuse. Caster Semenya has reportedly been placed on suicide watch, and is receiving trauma counselling.

Semenya, while uniting the bigoted also divided the 'progressive', as Germaine Greer illustrated. This produced some of the worst transphobia, when she commented on "ghastly parodies", in the context of Semenya's gender. Feminists who stick to closed shop sisterhood

are refusing the power of feminism to those who are most in need – the most persecuted. Sexuality is an integral chapter of any feminist ideology. Feminism provides a lens through which gender socialization can be challenged and through which we can be critical of what is 'natural'. As such, to remove LGBT identities from this discussion is incorrect and misguided.



Photo: Flickr user Jose Goulao  
Image: Natasha Bannister

## Georgina Butler discusses gender as a biological and sociological construct

**F**ashions change - what was a la mode a decade ago is now so passé as to leave a woman out of touch and missing that je ne sais quoi. Fashion aside, however, what makes a woman from a social standpoint is also subject to change. From the demure housewife that was the epitome of the fifties to the bad girl "ladette" culture of the nineties - what makes a woman is not cast in stone. While femininity slips and slides through a variety of guises, the maxim "biology is destiny" is heralded as a compelling contention.

In biology, sex chromosomes determine gender. Chromosome XX indicates a woman, chromosome XY results in a male zygote. Via sexually dimorphic features, biology offers a binary - man or woman - to which it is necessary to subscribe for acceptance and functionality in society. However, it is not just biology that offers such a binaried approach to the individual - there is a great deal of social construction associated with sex and gender. It is through interactions with others that a sense of self is built and sustained. The

behaviours learnt through socialisation shape the gendered individuals we become.

Hence, there is a belief held by feminist fundamentalists that biology is a cultural creation. Biology has traditionally studied the male and extrapolated the female as a set of reproductive organs, so the female is seen as less than the male. How we as social beings approach each other and interact hinges immediately on various visual perceptions and gender identification is arguably the strongest. Ambiguity then is unnerving in such a clearly binaried terrain.

The topical example of 18 year old South African runner Caster Semenya is a case in point. Her sporting prowess in the women's 800 metres in the 2009 World Championships in Berlin has not been sincerely celebrated. Instead, her achievement has seen her hounded by sports officials and put to trial by the media, as her physical characteristics and masculine build are questioned.

Her "non-gender conforming" appearance triggered a chain of events forcing her to prove whether she is entirely female. Post-race tests ordered by the

International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) resulted in Caster Semenya facing the great humiliation of leaked news reports publicising that she has a chromosomal abnormality - she lacks ovaries and a uterus. Instead, she has internal testes producing testosterone. This sparks outcries of her being abnormal - a freak. However, is she any more a freak than a 6 foot tall supermodel? Such individuals are not the norm but they are accepted. There must be more to sex and gender than just biology.

Sex typing itself is problematic and uncertain. Professor of Biology and Gender Studies, Anne Fausto-Sterling examines how science and gender are inextricably linked and influence each other. She advocates that there is a good deal of human variation and considers the idea of many gradations running from female to male.

If such uncertainty surrounds sex typing itself then the abnormalities raised concerning Caster Semenya are not so significant in the battle for acceptance of all individuals. The abnormalities cited are to do with internal androgens. The average man has more androgens

than the average woman, but the average female athlete is not the average woman. If she succeeds in some sports, the female athlete is in any case likely to have more androgens.

Thus, is it justified to argue that it is not "fair" for Caster Semenya to compete as a woman against other women due to her androgen levels? Consider for a moment the suggestion that it would not be "fair" for a woman to be forbidden from competing due to her greater than "normal" height. Athletes at the top of their game reach there as a result of their highly sought-after physiques, which although honed by rigorous training are also to some extent the result of a happy coincidence - "good genes" resulting in a naturally strong, tall body frame. Are androgen levels not a natural advantage akin to height?

Historically, there has been a problematic tradition of gender testing in sport. Female athletes were once subjected to "nude parades" to ensure that all competitors were women and not men in disguise. Now we have moved on to the seemingly sophisticated sex tests of today which consider hormones and internal

biology. Nonetheless, one test cannot rule whether an individual is definitively male or female enough to be deemed a man or woman. It is up to sporting bodies to decide which of the many characteristics of sex matter to them so that competitors do not have to face public humiliation - they can ensure they meet the requirements before competing.

Ultimately, the example of Caster Semenya serves to remind us of our need to categorise the world around us and our reliance on binaries and labels. Something as complex and personal as gender abnormality becomes open to public scrutiny purely because it pushes against what we feel comfortable with. The fate of Caster Semenya seems to be that "biology is destiny" - but could this ever be surpassed? It seems unlikely as gender as a visual cue is so deeply embedded within our collective consciousness.

What makes a woman? An answer evades me. Fundamentally, a woman is not a man. Furthermore, the goalposts are forever shifting. As science and technology make more tests possible, our obsession with our own gendered truth will only grow more complex.



Photo: flickr user tripu

# Politicising religion

**Mazida Khatun** discusses what is seen as the rise of 'Political Islam' in Britain

As the Iranian Revolution swept through a nation far away from the United Kingdom, a small group of Muslims were also attempting to combine politics and religion in London. You may never have heard of the Muslim Institute and its attempts to persuade British Muslims that their religion is not only a private faith, but a political force that could be used to fight imperialism and the enemies of Islam. The reason for their relative anonymity is that no one took them seriously, including most British Muslims. Yet recently, we have heard a lot about Islamic politics, from Osama bin Laden in his cave, to Muslim groups who want to implement Shariah Family Law in the UK and the banned group Hizb-ut-Tahrir who want to establish an Islamic or Khilafah State.

Every now and again, right wing newspapers cause controversy by vilifying British Muslims who want to live their lives according to some aspects of Shariah Law. They regale their readership with tales of Saudi Arabian girls that have been flogged for being raped or men that have been hanged for committing adultery. However these articles never ask British Muslims what they think about such verdicts. If they did, I am sure that the majority of us would recoil in horror at the thought that we should replace our laws with such

draconian ones.

When Muslims have been asked about their judicial preferences, they have replied in a far less controversial way than the press would have us believe. Indeed, Channel 4 issued a survey which found that 30 per cent of Muslims in the UK would like to live under Shariah Law, whereas 50 per cent preferred British Law. The caveat to this is that this 30 per cent is just a third of those who said that 'religion is important' to them. Thus proving the old adage that there are lies, damn lies and statistics.

So what do all of these statistics actually mean? They mean that for even most of those who regard their faith as "very important", adhering to Shariah Law is not a necessary or desirable addition to their lives in the UK. Most of those who would prefer Shariah are already probably living according to it. There are many Muslim couples in the UK and all over the world who only have an Islamic marriage ceremony and never bother with a civil marriage. Then in turn, these people will have an Islamic divorce rather than go through British courts.

This is not an attempt to subvert British Laws or even to isolate themselves. Rather these Muslims truly believe that Islamic laws are much more healthy for families and communities. They deny that these arrangements leave either side

**Most of those who would prefer Shariah are already probably living according to it.**

unjustly treated, as some may suggest, if the Islamic laws are adhered to correctly. Shariah in the UK, as executed by British Imams is not the same as the Shariah one may read about in the aforementioned newspapers. British Muslims have not all been brainwashed and we hardly have a desire to be beheaded or stoned for our misdemeanours. Indeed we read these stories and shudder for the most part.

There are some radical Muslims who do believe that such brutal rulings are just and right, but these are very much in the minority. Even the extreme Hizb ut-Tahrir group has no desire to pursue establishing a Khilafah state in the UK, and this is probably because there are only a handful of people that will ever support such a thing. Most Muslims do not feel that they need such a state to represent them, but they are asking for some of the differences between them and the wider British society to be recognised. This includes serving halal food in schools or wearing the hijab headscarf without being treated as any less of a Briton. Thankfully we have been granted these things and we see no need to change the status quo dramatically. Islamic rule has usually been a response to bad and corrupt governments; Shariah law has been seen to provide a semblance of peace and order where secular or status quo governments have failed. As we do not have this problem in the UK, there is

no need for such a revolution.

This is true, with one exception as I have mentioned previously. Many people in Britain have become disillusioned with family law, with 'Fathers 4 Justice' being the most prominent example of this dissatisfaction. Despite their superhero antics, there was a lot of sympathy for their cause and many agreed that reforms should be made. Moreover, we are always horrified at British divorce rates, whereas those for British Muslims are lower. This is not all because there may be a cultural pressure to remain married, but also because there is community involvement to keep families together, with the option of a divorce if the couple decides that they have exhausted all other possibilities. This is why some Muslims disregard British law and choose Shariah; they believe wholeheartedly that there is greater wisdom and a more personal approach in it.

British Muslims are asking for little more than the wider British public ask for: reform, representation and respect. It may be problematic to have dual systems of laws operating in Britain, but the most important thing to remember is that these Muslims are not advocating such changes with a greater revolution in mind. They are seeking to reconcile the personal and public, just as we all have to at times - and this is nothing to fear or reject.



# From Right to Left: the political columns

## Hayek



David Whitaker

## The freedom to offend

When the BBC recently announced that the British National Party (BNP) could be invited onto its long-running topical debate show Question Time, immediately a myriad of political groups voiced their support or disgust over the decision, and questions were asked: Would the other main political parties agree to share a platform with the far-right party? Did the BBC have an obligation to give prime-time publicity to the BNP in the interests of free speech? It would seem that the BBC is in the position of 'damned if they do, damned if they don't' - if the BNP are represented on Question Time, the BBC will be seen to be giving a platform to an openly racist, prejudiced party. However, if the BNP are denied participation, an electorally-recognised, legitimate party will be seen to be discriminated against, almost certainly resulting in even greater media attention. The subsequent furore has also brought the spotlight back onto

the current Labour government's record on free speech.

Freedom of speech is included in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and recognized in international human rights law in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which the UK adheres to. The Labour Party can point out that the UK Human Rights Act (1998), which was introduced early in its current tenure, guaranteeing freedom of expression. In addition, Labour's commitment to getting Britain onto the 'information superhighway' has also been lauded as a promotion of free expression in the world. Thus, Labour seems to have a good record in allowing Britain to express its opinions.

Despite these creditable measures to protect free speech, Labour has frequently come under attack for its insistence on introducing repressive terror measures and its pursuit of legislature banning attacks on characteristics such as religion and gender. A common belief is that Labour

relies on the votes of those groups who might be openly criticised through free speech: immigrants, religious and ethnic minorities. Votes must therefore be protected by supporting anti-incitement law and promoting a culture of political correctness. A case in point: Geert Wilders, the Dutch politician and producer of the anti-Islamic film *Fitna*, has been prevented from entering the UK, despite his film being freely available on the internet and his ability to enter nearby European nations. His views may indeed be inflammatory and prejudiced, but freedom of speech has been sacrificed. In addition, it is now illegal to protest within one kilometre of Parliament Square without police permission (otherwise resulting in 51 weeks in jail and/or a £2,500 fine), and groups may now be dispersed under antisocial-behaviour laws.

The Labour government, regardless of its failure to promote freedom of speech or to promote civil liberties, is not to blame for the Question Time controversy. It

should be remembered that not inviting the BNP onto any television or radio broadcast does not constitute restricting free speech. They simply have not been invited, like many other minority political parties. Furthermore, Britain remains high in worldwide rankings for freedom of expression, such as the 'Reporters Without Borders' measure. Consequently, the BNP should be allowed on Question Time. Give them a platform. Let them be ridiculed for their warped opinions on society, the economy and what Britain should be like. Even better, invite the other political parties to make mincemeat of Nick Griffin; free speech will then expose the BNP.

## Laski



Estelle Cooch

## Never again

Is AIDS 'a friendly disease' because blacks, drug users and gays have it? Is raping women simply like 'force-feeding them chocolate cake'; because they enjoy sex, they must therefore enjoy rape? Absolutely, according to senior members of Britain's most successful fascist party: the British National Party (BNP).

On the 22nd of October for the first time in history, "Question Time", a political debate programme on the BBC, will feature leader of the British National Party - Nick Griffin. In recent months the media has clamoured to welcome the BNP's most senior Fuhrer with open arms. Newspapers and television programmes have been awash with so called 'defenders of free-speech' standing up for Griffin's rights and denouncing those who opposed his invitation to the programme as anti-democratic. Yet this shows a misunderstanding not only the role of the media, but also the fundamental nature of fascism.

The arguments that supporters of Griffin's appearance on "Question Time" proffer are two-fold. Firstly, they suggest that the BNP are no longer a fringe political party and deserve the legitimacy of

mainstream media coverage. Secondly, they argue that to not invite him would curtail his 'freedom of speech'.

To deal with the first argument, it is worth remembering that the BNP actually got fewer votes in this election than 4 years ago. In reality the only reason they succeeded in winning two seats was due to the complete collapse of the Labour Party vote. Jack Straw, the likely Labour Party candidate for debating Griffin, is a man who refuses to speak to Muslim women wearing the burka in his constituency. The hypocrisy is unbelievable. Bearing this in mind, however, is it really probable that those who consider voting BNP are about to be swayed by the arguments of whoever represents the three main parties? Unlikely. Nonetheless they have certainly not made a breakthrough in terms of numerical support.

Furthermore, the BBC is a public place and is indirectly publicly-owned. The BBC has a responsibility to represent everyone. It has no responsibility to represent those who attack sections of the population and demand that they leave the country. Griffin will be given the right - by us as indirect owners of the BBC - to say that a percentage of us shouldn't be living here.

That is not to say the BBC shouldn't report on the BNP in other ways and expose them through investigative journalism. For instance, the BBC reports crime and muggings without giving the criminals a platform to explain why they think that is an acceptable way of life.

Giving Griffin the platform to peddle lies and myths about immigration and Islam (to name but a few) will not convert the entirety of the British population into card-carrying Nazis. We will not go to sleep in a relatively tolerant multicultural country like Britain and wake up in an intolerant assimilationist country - dare I say it - not unlike France. For the record, having French relatives gives me license to say that.

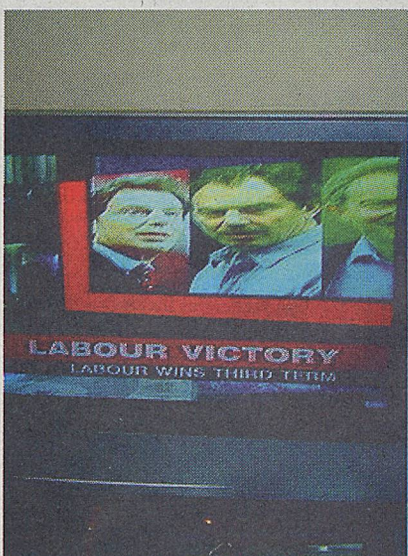
What Griffins appearance will do, is give confidence to soft-BNP supporters; many of whom may not even normally watch "Question Time", but will do with Griffin's appearance. Statistically whenever the BNP are given a platform racist attacks increase. In Barking when BNP councillors were elected, racist attacks soared at a time when they were at a record low in the rest of London.

The BNP are not a normal political party. They aim to use democratic

freedoms today, in order to deny them to their opponents tomorrow. In 1996 Nick Griffin wrote 'I am well aware that orthodox opinion is that six million Jews were gassed and cremated or turned into soup and lampshades. I have reached the conclusion that the 'extermination' tale is a mixture of Allied wartime propaganda, extremely profitable lie, and latter witch-hysteria'. Lets make no bones about it. The logical conclusion of BNP arguments is concentration camps for millions and millions of people.

The Holocaust led to the murder of over 11 million people; Jews, socialists, homosexuals, Roma and the disabled. In light of that we are not obliged to give a platform to the BNP. We should remember Auschwitz and say quite simply: never again.

## Measured musings



Brighton has been the scene of many political tragedies. The IRA bombing and the trip taken by former Labour Party leader Neil Kinnock, straight into the sea being the most notable. With this in mind, I attended this autumn's Labour Party conference, the last before the next General Election. The mood of the conference was, perhaps surprisingly, positive. Positive about the future, despite what is presumed to be the first Conservative election victory since 1992. Thus the positivity of the future is offset by the defeatism of the present.

No one debated how to overturn the Conservative majority in almost every poll published since November 2007. Delegates, hacks and the Labour faithful discussed how to unite the left and progressives forces in British politics. They discussed proportional representation and increasing representation of women

## I miss Tony Blair

and ethnic minorities. They discussed everything, except the election which now must take place in 2010.

Grandiose plans for reforming the electoral system sound empty and meaningless when they come from a party which, it is reported, have lost the will to live. They sound like grandstanding when calls for a more representative politics come from a cabinet full of peerages and where women's role has (as claimed by Caroline Flint, former Minister for Europe) been reduced to 'window dressing'. The time for change is not 2014. It is not post a Cameron Government. It is now.

Labour needs to abandon not only its partisan past, but also its self-centred self belief. This means moving beyond the superficial plans for a 'Government of all the talents'. It means learning from both the successes and mistakes of 1997. It means finding common ground with the Liberal Democrats. Consensus on issues must be

built, not declared by a suited Whitehall lackey. Labour must build new bridges and repair old ones.

Yet this will not happen, for a very simple reason - the conference is indicative of a far wider problem. The Labour Party is a club. And people like clubs and so they accept (and blindly follow) the party lines or club rules. Conference is a celebration of the club, a symbolic pat on the back. A chance to regale the faithful congregation with your stories from the campaign trail.

Delegates who sing the praises of the party have little support for the politics of change, because they thrive on the politics of continuation. The politics of the career ladder, where every young member knows that one day, he or she (predominantly he) will be the PM. Or at the very least they'll sit on the green leather chairs of the house. Change is a by-product. A good by-product, but nonetheless peripheral to

the whole process. Thus the only change that conference could ever make, would be if it was cancelled.



# facebook

## The end of Facebook?

**Poorna Harjani** links the success of Facebook to the human need for self-projection

**H**ave you ever viewed photos from a party you attended, in which you appear to be having more fun than you actually did? That is exactly what the handiwork of personalisation can do. Using Photoshop, one can crop out unwanted scenery, change the tones and lighting of a photograph for a superior ambience, or add further flattering touches. This profile enhancement is complemented by album names, captions, networks, stated interests and so forth.

Profile pages have become a way of self-marketing – so much so that without changing privacy settings, one's Facebook account will automatically come up as a link on a Google search. One can choose what information to disclose according to what one thinks will pique interests in others. This is among Facebook's biggest strengths, while being the key to its downfall. Deceit lies in the concealment or distortion of the truth with intentional misleading.

However, most of us are avid Facebook users and have incorporated it into our daily routines. For example, a 'Facebook add' is often more convenient than awkwardly asking for someone's number during Fresher's, and instead of posting invitations one can just create them online and receive instantaneous RSVP-s.

During my summer school experience at Harvard, a handful of students inspired by the birth of Facebook from their very own campus sat secluded with multiple harddrives and direct telephone lines, to fund managers in Silicon Valley. The competition to become the next big social networking site is real and intensely fuelled. So, the question is: is Facebook

here to stay?

Its primary selling point is its role in 'networking'. Recently a good friend of mine celebrated her one year anniversary with her boyfriend, who she met via the 'People You May Know' section on Facebook. Another friend became better acquainted with some Libyan friends over 'Facebook chat', which led us on to partying at Tramp with royalty. I used Facebook during my year at Central St Martins to help secure votes for an election campaign. The voting took place just months after I had started my course, therefore it would have been impossible to reach out to all 20,000 students in the University. Facebook was a key mechanism in helping me send a message to the "masses" and facilitating my success.

Being Facebook-savvy has many practical uses on the business networking side too. It creates avenues to raise familiarity to clubs, comedians and fashion brands – even our favourite brand at the LSE, the Economist, has its very own Facebook page. Facebook has birthday reminders which can be added straight into Blackberry calendars, a phonebook in case of losing contact lists, and profile pictures transferrable for Caller ID. Facebook applications are available on iPhones and Nokias too.

Friends can virtually share each other's lives through photographs, status updates and wall posts. Additional friends are free, and with a contest of popularity overbearing any social scene, many people share a clichéd view of 'the more (being) the merrier'.

One of my favourite groups that aptly supports this is called "Do I know you Facebook Whore?" The description

**With its practicalities, virtual life can have a negative impact on real-life relationships through the unnecessary drama of tagging.**

reads: "For those of us who have had the infamous 'Facebook friend catchers' try to (be) friend us...the facebookers who religiously tally up their friend list, and are quite capable of trying to friend you if they saw you in the grocery store yesterday! No we will not accept your friend request...no matter how many times you try, because we realise that you are only sitting back in front of your computer chanting "Gotta catch em 'all!!Gotta catch em' all!! This ain't Pokemon b\*\*\*\*!"

With its practicalities, virtual life can have a negative impact on real-life relationships through the unnecessary drama of tagging. Then, the Facebook statuses of globe trotters or the pointless statuses such as 'Mary can't sleeep' end up clogging up homepages. Apparently recruiters now Google potential employees before taking them on and depending on one's privacy settings and networks, professors or interviewers may be able to view student's photos. There are also very real stories of fraud and false accounts.

What could go wrong in future? A reduction in technology investment could make users critical of the site, although this is hard to imagine with Facebook's exceeding profits. There is a possible increase of Facebook restriction from workplaces and schools because of its distracting nature. Syria and China have banned it entirely and this could influence other countries known to limit free speech. There have also been several instances of Facebook-outages, although far less than any other social networking site. In 2007 the site had a security hole allowing users to read others' mail and recently this year it encountered an attack by scammers to gain users' log-informa-

tion and passwords.

Overall, Facebook is the anti-MySpace. It is one of the best ways to organise and share photos, search for friends, and open up one's personal life with more security filters. Unlike Myspace, Facebook is not cluttered with graphics and advertisements. It appeals to those looking to reconnect with old friends, sustain current friendships and make new friends. A newer site that has experienced high levels of popularity is Twitter, where one 'tweets' a bite-size status offering information of events, thoughts, or current activities. It is almost like a process of micro-blogging and suited towards the professional world as platform from which to be heard. To me, Twitter represents the Facebook-nightmare of the globetrotter and insomniac statuses, along with celebrity updates. Would I necessarily want to keep track of Tom Cruise's new Scientology beliefs?

Facebook helps bridge the distances the modern age brings, in an efficient way. Its further innovation of pairing up with mobile phones has cemented its position at the top of the social networking spectrum. It makes the world seem smaller by making networking simple, practical and more enjoyable. Applications like Twitter are aimed at solely statuses and lack what Facebook has achieved. It will be hard to sway people to a futuristic version of Facebook if one of a similar standard does come along. People will always have a desire for popularity, and wish to portray a certain image to the world. It is this niche of self-projection Facebook so perfectly fills. As misleading as certain profiles can be, this for now seems to be what 300 million users want.

# Social

## A Love for Reason

**Siddarth George** makes a case for the practice of arranged marriage

**N**ext Sunday, I am off on official family business. I must execute a covert plan, carefully designed by my grandmother two months ago; to attend mass at a Pentecostal church in a London suburb, and report how different their exotic style of worship – which supposedly involves speaking in tongues – is from our own staid, institutional way of practicing Christianity. You see, my cousin from Toronto turns 27 next year, and my grandmother has decided that it is high time that she begun snooping around for a suitable bride. He is a good-looking, sociable engineer, and seems relatively unperturbed: he trusts my grandmother's judgement, but knows the final decision rests with him, and doesn't feel compelled to accept her choice. This is arranged marriage in the modern sense.

Variants of arranged marriage are practiced around the world. The art of introducing prospective partners to each other is called *khashtegari* in Tehran, *miai* in Tokyo. Sometimes a professional matchmaker is hired to find and assess prospective spouses. Indeed, it has become a lucrative profession – Janis Spindel, the self-prescribed queen of New York's matchmaking world, charges fees in the region of \$20,000 per client. Usually, though, parents and eager relatives happily take on the role of marriage brokers; searching for, and thoroughly vetting, suitable matches. In fact, in some cultures marrying off one's children is seen as a parental duty.

Two developments are now transforming how arranged marriages are conducted. The advent of the internet brought with it a gamut of matrimonial sites which are slowly taking over the grunt work of traditional matchmakers – portly, moustached men and heavily perfumed women with huge diaries of tucked-in photographs. Shaadi.com, for instance, markets itself as the world's largest matrimonial service; its searchable database contains roughly 1 million people, most of them Indian.

Dating sites and matchmaking services are rumoured to face problems of adverse selection. On this view, such services are used disproportionately by people who have difficulty finding a partner on their own. High quality matches – attractive, intelligent, charming, good-natured folk – in theory have little need for such services. This reasoning is coherent but for two exceptions: for some ultra-successful people, time is too costly to spend it patiently searching for a suit-

able spouse. Hence, they employ a Janis Spindel to hook them up. Another group might not regularly interact with the kind of person they hope to marry. New immigrants may prefer someone from their country of origin; people living or working in small, isolated communities – like oil rigs – may dream of a partner and a life beyond their immediate horizons.

The second phenomenon is encouraging. It appears that increasingly the individual getting married – the horse being traded in the marital market – has more say in the final decision. In urban communities, the "introduction only" system is gaining popularity. Parents choose several possible candidates, and may arrange a meeting with the family of the prospective mate. From then on, however, they become mere well-wishers; it is up to their children to manage the relationship and make a choice.

This is in contrast with my grandfather's marriage in 1950. He met my grandmother for the first time at his wedding, having travelled the previous day from Assam, a state 3,500 kilometres away in north-east India, where he was working. Such arrangements, commonplace then, are now thankfully less frequent. My grandfather's marriage was, I wish to emphasise, not forced; it was arranged, the difference being that the marriage only proceeded with his consent.

Whilst the means of arranged marriage have changed, its ends have remained largely the same: to bring together compatible people so that a promising family unit may blossom from their union; admittedly, economic reasons have sometimes taken precedence over the goal of selecting a well-matched couple. Thus many aristocratic families in Europe arranged marriages within their cloistered circles to maintain their reputation and protect their wealth.

Why have nearly all the world's developed societies moved away from arranged marriage? Is it because arranged marriage is generally unhealthy, or because social interaction in the West has altered with development? An theory would be that arranged marriage is popular in communities where male and female members have little opportunity to interact, such as agricultural contexts where children spend much of their free time helping on the farm. As the West industrialised and modernised, people had more time to socialise, and so this type of matching became obsolete. This reasoning might also explain why arranged marriage is still common in farming communities in the

American South.

If love marriages result in more satisfaction, then why are divorce rates in Western societies so much higher than those in, say, India? (warning: what you are about to read are unverified figures, but corroborate with other online information and with anecdotal evidence; proceed carefully). The divorce rate for first marriages in the US ranges between 40–50 per cent; in India it is some 1.3 per cent. Does this suggest that arranged marriage lowers divorce rates? And is that good?

I begin by conceding the following: first, the figures, particularly the Indian figure, are likely to be inexact, not least because rural censuses are inaccurate, and India is still mostly rural; meanwhile, the American figure is skewed upwards by serial divorcees. Second, there is a selection bias problem. Communities

### This is arranged marriage in the modern sense.

which practice arranged marriage tend to be more conservative, and thus to frown on divorce. When divorce carries a social stigma, couples, though unhappily married, feel pressured to stick it out. Third, women in conservative communities are often expected to be submissive toward their husbands. They are willing to tolerate much more, and do not divorce till pushed beyond breaking point. Both these factors are unhealthy, but no doubt explain some of the difference in these rates.

Generally, western women are more financially independent than Indian women – and this is empowering. When a woman no longer relies on her husband to support her, she becomes an equal broker in the relationship. Indeed, Ranjana Kumari, a sociologist and author of *Brides are not for Burning*, says rising divorce rates are an indicator of women's empowerment. So it seems that on the basis of this argument, that India's divorce rate are unhealthily low. They have been, however, rising, tripling in Bangalore, India's iconic IT capital, between 1988 and 2002.

But are Western divorce rates uncomfortably high? Is there something dysfunctional in a society where a marriage has only a 50 per cent chance of success?

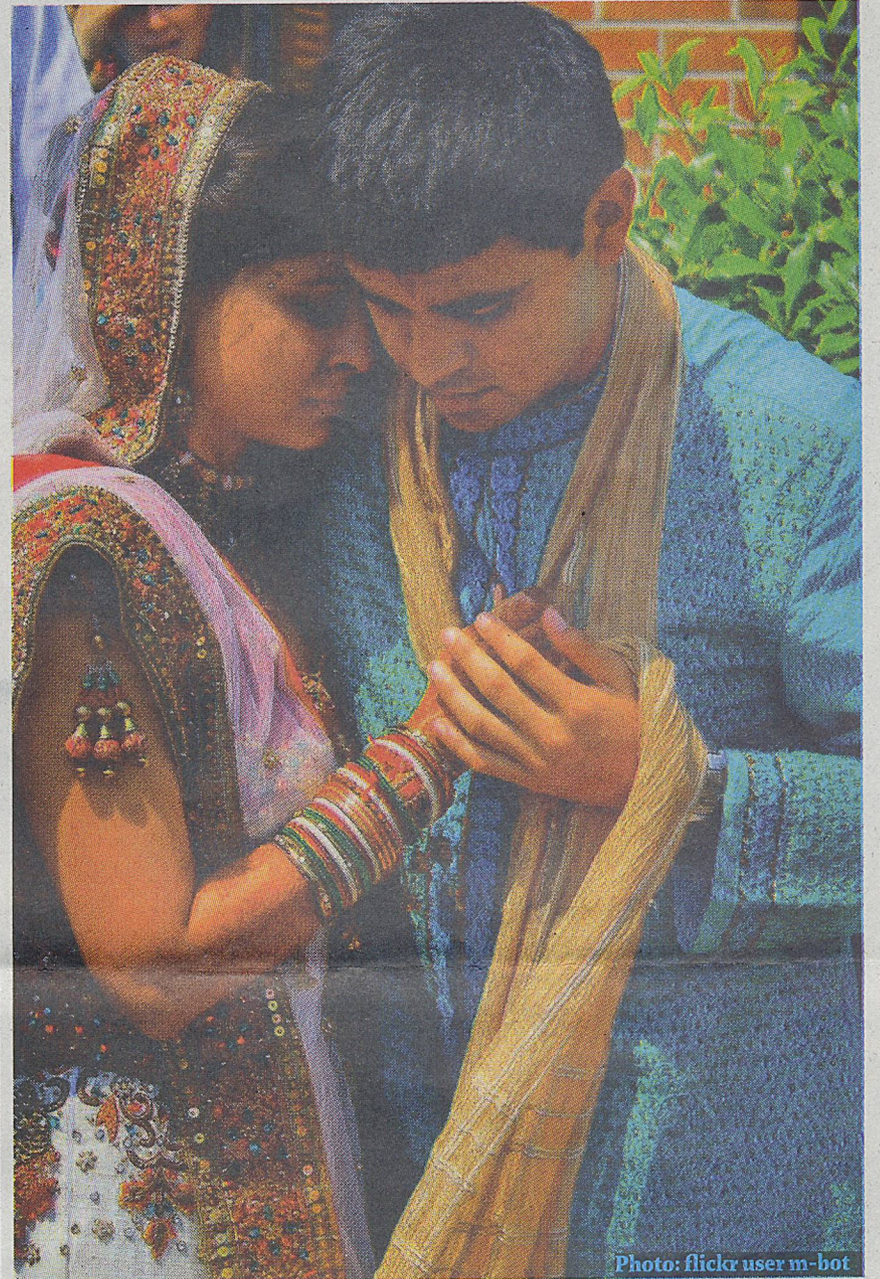


Photo: flickr user m-bot

Is India destined to have, in a century's time, a similar rate of divorce?

I hope not. And I wonder if the institution of arranged marriage, in its modern, and indeed, modernising form, can make the crucial difference. By uniting two families rather than two individuals, arranged marriage provides a better support network to deal with marital problems. By injecting generational wisdom and dispassionate, level-headed analysis into romance, could arranged marriage

give lasting love a better statistical chance of success? Furthermore, technology is helping arranged marriage: while the grapevine has always extended far and wide, fibre optic cables run yet further.

I hope that as developing societies modernise, we do not seek to simply emulate the West's successes, but also to learn from its failures. One of those has been to assume that the family is not an important social institution. We do that to society's peril.

## Dawning on reality

**Alizeh Kohari** spends a summer pondering the ethics of journalism

**I** spent summer interning for a newspaper back home. Dawn. It is the country's oldest publication, and one of its largest. I thought I was going to change the world, one pen stroke at a time.

On my first day, I was told to decorate the notice board.

'Make it look 'eye-catching', drawled my boss, a middle-aged lady with a penchant for painting her nails while at work. My other boss (I had two), stopped me a moment and handed me two black-and-white printouts of Colin Firth. 'Make sure you put these right in the centre.'

Quipped Shaw: 'Newspapers are unable, seemingly, to distinguish between a bicycle accident and the collapse of a civilization'. At Dawn, all events are reported in an oddly level tone that you might adopt to describe a tumble witnessed on the street – not your own, though, and not a particularly exciting one either. There is certainly plenty to report: in Pakistan, we live, as the Chinese curse goes, in interesting times. On any given day, news of murders and robberies, of terrorist attacks and military excursions, of justice denied

and politicians reconciled, will jostle for space on the front and back of the broadsheet. But to peruse Dawn is to experience a strange, deadening sensation: reading of the bombing of Swat, living, laugh-

ing civilians transformed into a confetti of flesh and blood, one feels – nothing. Something, surely, is amiss.

'But it's not our job to sensationalize,' stresses Mr. P. resident feature writer, to

whose cubicle I escape whenever there's nothing to do – which is often. He lifts to his lips a cup of chai that promptly fogs his glasses. 'We exist to inform and – well, that's it.'

I cup palms around my own mug and make a face. 'So you're saying that if a high-level politician – one that's currently in government, mind you – was involved in fraud and you knew, you'd expose him? For the sake of 'informing' the public?'

Mr. P sighs. 'Don't be a fool, you know how things work. At the end of the day, we're working-class people, us journalists, and we have families to feed. It doesn't take much to lose your job these days.' He pauses thoughtfully. 'Or your head, for that matter.'

No, it really doesn't take much to lose your job these days.

Major US newspapers have buckled in the past year. 'For Sale' signs can be seen plastered on to skyscrapers that once hummed with the bustle of reporters and editors; now, cubicles appear deserted, corridors bare and silent. At Dawn too, the effects of the economic downturn are obvious. The paper has shrunk a little

this year: it has fewer pages, the paper stock is thinner, the stories shorter. Many of its magazines – one almost every day – have been squashed into a single weekly publication, all things unnecessary meticulously weeded out. It doesn't seem right that such a measure should be taken when there is so much taking place in the country: economically, politically, socially.

'People or pages,' shrugs Mr. P. 'The administration had to choose. They decided to be humanitarian.'

The economist in me balks at the idea. 'So you sacrifice the product and keep jobs even when there's no longer a demand for them?'

He leans forward. 'Put your economics aside for a moment. There are livelihoods, lives at stake. These are people that we're talking about, actual people.'

'Fair enough,' I shoot back. 'But so was the infant girl whose botched-up eye operation you refused to report on because the hospital threatened a lawsuit.'

Silence, save for the sipping of tea. In the room next door, my bosses discuss Colin Firth's upcoming flick.

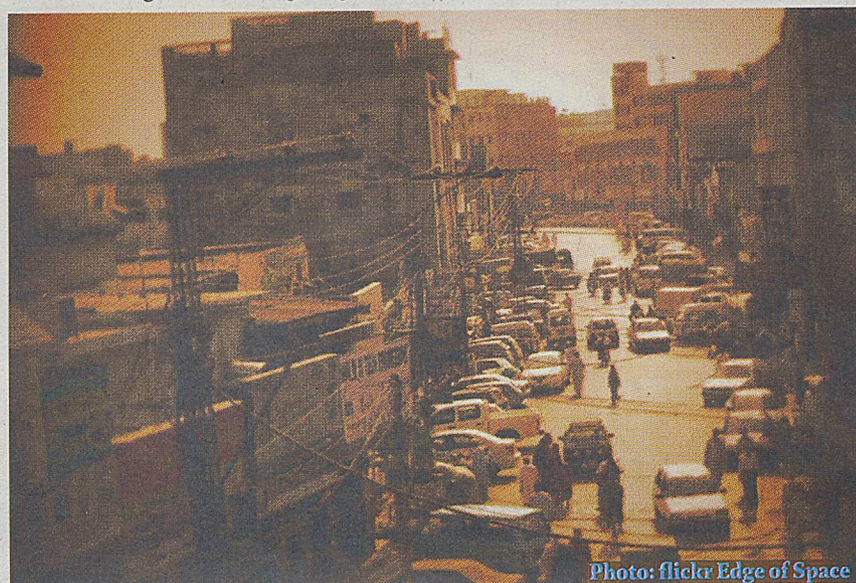


Photo: flickr Edge of Space

# Why we drink

**Jonathan Couturier** explains our ever-lasting attraction to the green bottle

Its mellow warmth trickles down your throat. You find it reassuringly soothing. As you progress through the pints, talking comes with increasing ease and freedom. At one point, you engage in a spontaneous flirtation, despite your earlier fears of failure. Eventually, your head begins to spin faster and faster until the world is but a blur. The sounds resonate and fuse together; it could be a dream. You find yourself floating aimlessly between scenes loosely strung together. And then, the dream becomes a nightmare. The dizziness brings you to your knees; it has hit you on the head. Chances are you will spend the rest of the night in the up-chuck.

**It is an emotional liberator: the coward in us becomes too drunk for inhibition.**

A majority of us drink. Yet, what brings us to the bottle?

The most obvious explanation would be to attribute it to the taste. The comforting, sweet aroma can indeed charm your buds, sometimes even to the point of abuse. Yet there are times at which you find yourself drinking something that could only be described as rubbing alcohol or white spirit. There is no pleasure in cringing at each sip, feeling the roof of your mouth being torn apart. That is probably why taste plays a minor role in our decision to drink. We would not occasionally risk annihilating our pallet if there were no other advantages to be gained.

Perhaps we drink because we consider it to be useful. It is a form of social confor-

mity: we drink because others drink, and this symmetry hence helps us to be part of a congregation. Furthermore, the alcohol allows us to relax, and breaks down our inhibitions: the shy become talkative, the talkative loud, and the loud unbearable. Thus by removing barriers such as shyness, self-consciousness and embarrassment, interaction becomes easier;

Of course, scores of us don't need an extroversion boost because we may be outgoing in the first place. Indeed, singing, dancing or simply running down the street naked comes naturally to many. But therein lays another use for alcohol: as an emotional enhancer. When we drink in a state of joviality, it becomes euphoria; in a state of activity it becomes hyper-activity;

of faces we share a drink with, there is perhaps that special person, whether the attractive stranger, or the fixation of our more amorous passions. Whether it is the fear of failure, of rejection, of embarrassment, of ridicule, of ineptitude, or of our overpowering self-consciousness, there are numerous stumbling blocks to the expression of our more intimate feelings.

touches, charms and emotions, which form a thrilling and necessary part of a meaningful courtship, reducing the interest between two beings to a crude, naked expression of desire.

Going beyond the boosting effect of alcohol, there is also the drink to get drunk. Getting drunk is a process that unravels wonders and miseries to an embattled brain. The talkativeness, followed by the mild tingling sensation and the onset of joyful dizziness are a tormenting wonder to the mind, a mind that thoroughly enjoys this state of loose existence where so little seems to matter. We are quite happy to float between the realisation that we are not quite sober, and yet not fully committed to oblivion, because it is pleasurable. We actively seek this juncture not only because do we realise that it can be obtained through the means of a simple self-inflicted chemical reaction, but also because we find ourselves living for the moment. It is a state some pursue because it offers a necessary escape from their thoughts, from the past and from the future. Others may find it a compulsive counter-action to boredom. However, there comes a moment where the pleasure stops, quite brutally, and all becomes a worrying blur, where both physical and mental capacities decide to leave us without warning. We do not drink for that; rather, we accept it as a consequence of alcoholic abuse. Some consider the pleasure to be worth the pain, others consider the pain to be worth the attention, and the remainder are too drunk to consider their drunkenness.

All in all, it seems that drinking has become a tool to deal with difficult situations, situations in which we no longer rely on our wits alone because we lack confidence. As thinking beings, we created a substance which substantially numbs our ability to think in situations in which we need it the most. That being said, we also drink for pleasure, whether it is for the chemical reaction, or the delight of escape. The trick is to stop before pleasure becomes pain.



Photo: flickr user Frederic Poirot

virtually a compulsion. We then become accepted as a member of a group because we artificially stimulated the courage to make a lasting impression, or take part in a memorable experience. That is why we turn to alcohol in these situations: as a temporary boost to our outgoingness so as to gain social recognition and acceptance.

and likewise, sadness becomes melancholy and anger becomes violence. Therefore, those of us who wish to intensify their experiences or a passing humour, use alcohol as a means to accentuate their emotions.

At other times, we drink to liberate more hidden emotions. In the crowd

Alcohol on the other hand, overcomes these fears. It is an emotional liberator: the coward in us becomes too drunk to be an inhibition. However, our charm may also drown in the drink. Even if alcohol does take away the shyness, the hesitation, the rambling and the self-doubt, it also often wipes out more personal

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## Humanitarian Cuisine

**Jen Lowthrop** from the Volunteer Centre

It is a new school year at LSE. Whether it be your first time here, or your return for another term, you are no doubt filled with enthusiasm for the times ahead. Well, if you are looking for something that is rewarding both professionally and personally, whilst also giving back to the wider London community which you are now a part of, then look no further... volunteering is the answer!

The LSE Volunteer Centre, based within the Careers Service, offers a wide range of volunteering opportunities which you can get involved in. No matter the amount of time you wish to commit, we can find a placement for you, ranging from just one hour a week, two days a week, or even one day a month. There are a wide variety of opportunities available. For instance, you could find yourself taking elderly people to art galleries, or helping to write fundraising proposals for a charity or work to support refugees. Whether you want to volunteer to increase your skills in a certain area, learn something completely new and unrelated to your current area of interest, or just meet new people within the London community, the Volunteer Centre can find a place for you.

We interviewed Chrysa Moysiadou, a volunteer from LSE, who was a Project Leader throughout last year and asked her about her experiences of volunteering for the association Foodworks.

**What did your role volunteering for Foodworks involve?**

CM: Well, I was one of the four project leaders in Foodworks, and that means a lot of work considering that we were the ones to start the project with the LSE. However, it was an amazing experience! We devoted a lot of our time as we had to

find a kitchen space, contact organisations to donate food, charities to serve our meals, and of course, more volunteers! We also had some training and workshops, and all received a food certificate. For the general volunteers, it is a commitment of two to three hours per week (either cooking or delivering) whenever they are available. For the project leaders, it has been a much more! However, I believe that the new leadership team will not need to devote as much time as we established a lot of the ground work. The routine was to distribute tasks among volunteers, to gather the food, bring it to the kitchen, cook the meals and then deliver to the charity.

**What did you enjoy most about volunteering?**

CM: I loved every bit of it. I met a lot of new people and made new friends. I also had a great time during the cooking sessions! You can't imagine how entertaining cooking can be. It is also a wonderful feeling to be helping someone. The first time that I delivered the meals to the charity and saw people happy for getting that food was very rewarding. They were also curious about the ingredients and the way the meals were cooked.

**What skills have you gained through volunteering?**

CM: For a start, I have put Foodworks in the section "working experience" in my CV! This aside, I have learnt to organise, to solve problems, and to always have a back-up plan. Also the level of communicational skills, my English has improved and I gained in self-confidence. We ran presentations, participated in fairs, had to negotiate with merchants, and led a team. These all are valuable skills to include

in your CV. Oh, and not to mention my newfound cooking skills!

**What is your favourite memory from volunteering?**

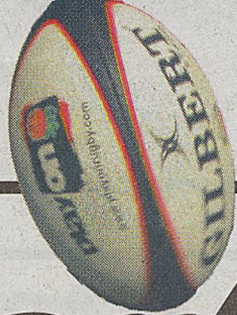
CM: I have many good memories... I loved the volunteer's training phase, when it felt that the project was finally taking shape. Also, the first cooking and the first delivery that I've previously mentioned. But above all, I think it must be the time, during one of the cooking sessions, that my friend Lottie made a surprise cake for my birthday. You see, it is a great feeling that it is not just about the volunteering hours for some time every week, but also developing bonds with other people.

**Foodworks are currently recruiting for this year's Project Leaders.**

If you are interested in learning more than you can find the advertisement on our Vacancy Board at <http://careers.lse.ac.uk> or visit [www.foodworksuk.org.uk](http://www.foodworksuk.org.uk). If you are interested in other volunteering opportunities do get in touch with the Volunteer Centre. We also offer certificates and awards for those doing regular volunteering.

Visit [www.lse.ac.uk/volunteercenre](http://www.lse.ac.uk/volunteercenre) or contact Jen the Volunteer Coordinator at [volunteer@lse.ac.uk](mailto:volunteer@lse.ac.uk)





# Party in the Park



On Wednesday Afternoons...  
I ♥ playing sport  
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Photos: Rob Low

## Freshers' Blood for the Athletics Union

**Alice Pelton**  
Sports Editor

LSE's Athletics Union had a shock this week when it experienced a veritable avalanche of sign-ups for its renowned sports teams. At the Freshers Fair in previous years the AU has been exiled to the shabby Gym in the depths of the Old Building, but this year the Students' Union were kind enough to let us set up stalls in a real room and in a location that students might have heard of.

Hundreds of freshers passed through D504; admittedly some were looking for the Finance society, but the majority knew that they had come to that special place where they could get that all-important LSE sporting experience. All the sports teams benefited from being in Clement house, but we cannot rule out the effect of a decent drive in AU self-promotion. The figures are outstanding; the Yoga club was less chilled out than usual as 155 people rampaged towards them. Tennis signed up 186 and Rowing clinched 63 new recruits to bash against their ever-refined pectorals.

With all this action for smaller clubs

one wonders how they will cope with so many newbies. Most astonishingly, the horse riding club has found itself with 54 new members - where on earth you find 54 horses in central London is anyone's guess.

The big hitters remained strong; Men's football saw another 238 hotties join its ranks - although how many of them will survive the cut-throat trials at Berrylands over the weekend remains to be seen. Netball netted 133, and Rugby tackled 85. The best news for all is that the AU secured a £24,260 budget this year; an increase of over 30% on last year's takings of £17,800. This will all mean better teams, better facilities, and better nights out for the Athletics Union.

If you didn't sign up, it's not too late, just contact the captains below for details:

**Men's Hockey**

Luke Davies: l.e.davies@lse.ac.uk

**Women's Hockey**

Clare Pickering: c.r.pickering@lse.ac.uk

**Taekwondo**

Kooyeon Kim: k.kim@lse.ac.uk

**Tennis**

Tanya Anandan: t.m.anandan@lse.ac.uk

**Ladies Squash**

Roshni Gudka: r.p.gudka@lse.ac.uk

**Men's Football**

Rob Fenton: r.j.fenton@lse.ac.uk

**Women's Football**

Laura Ellis: l.ellis@lse.ac.uk

**Running Team**

Harriet Jackson: h.f.jackson@lse.ac.uk

**Rowing**

Dan Fountain: d.m.fountain@lse.ac.uk

**Men's Basketball**

Robert Dagger: daggzy@hotmail.com

**Women's Basketball**

Jules Radojcin: j.m.radojcin@lse.ac.uk

**Women's Rugby**

lsewomensrugby@hotmail.com

**Men's Rugby**

Arun Kalra: a.kalra@lse.ac.uk

**Mixed Martial Arts team**

Tom Massarella: t.massarella@lse.ac.uk

**Jitsu Club**

Jiang Yue: y.jiang3@lse.ac.uk

**Sailing**

Gareth Williams: g.j.williams@lse.ac.uk

**Badminton Club**

Andy Cao: A.C.Cao@lse.ac.uk

**Table Tennis Club**

Nimit Shah: n.shah5@lse.ac.uk

**Pool Club**

Martin Rydland: m.rydland@lse.ac.uk

**Snooker**

Alpesh Varsani: a.varsani@lse.ac.uk

**LSE Women's Basketball Tryouts**

2pm Wed 7th Oct

Queensbridge Leisure Centre,

E8 2XW

Any Questions, Contact Jules

[j.m.radojcin@lse.ac.uk](mailto:j.m.radojcin@lse.ac.uk)

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# Worth A Poke

Alice Pelton talks to LSE's finest fencer, **Marcus Mepstead**

**1. So how did you get into fencing?**

Basically when I was younger my mum put my older brother and I in every after-school sports activity at our prep school. I don't think she found our cheeky behaviour quite as funny as we did, but we ended up doing everything from football and rugby to karate and fencing. After a few sessions of fencing my brother got picked out and asked to compete around the country, while another friend and I just ran around stabbing people and causing the standard problems eight year-olds with swords usually cause. It wasn't until I travelled around the country from Plymouth to Edinburgh watching my brother that the standard sibling rivalry began to flare up and I wanted to join in and do better than him.

**2. For those that don't know much about it, could you tell us a little more about how fencing works?**

With the 'weapon' I do, foil, the target area is the torso, back and the neck. The match goes up to 15 minutes and there are 3 bouts of 3 minutes with a break in between each bout. If the scores ties at the end it goes to a sudden death, last-hit-wins fight, in an extra minute. I guess people's perception of the sport is that there's just a lot of poking involved, but you have to second guess your opponent whilst trying to draw out a reaction from them, as well as having to get your timing and speed right so you can finish the hit. You can have an idea of what you need to do, but putting it into practice in the match, when your opponent has their own ideas, makes it a lot more difficult than just simply poking your opponent.

**3. What's the proudest achievement so far, in your fencing career?**

Every year this answer changes, which I guess is a good thing. Winning a silver medal at the junior commonwealth games, and following that up the year after by becoming the youngest British fencer ever to win an Under20 World Cup competition, are still pretty special achievements. More recently, coming second at the Senior British Championships has eclipsed all my other accomplishments. Along the way, I had to beat the world number 3 who had been to two Olympics and is the current European silver medalist as well as another former double-Olympian. I think just beating the first guy pretty much made my year as it was such a close fight, but also as it boosted my 2012 Olympic bid so much more than I could have hoped.

**4. What do you like about fencing?**

It's really hard to answer this question, as I really like fencing because of the feeling I get when I'm doing it; it beats any other sport I do, so much so that even after a decade of endless training sessions, I can't wait to do it again. The fact it's an individual sport, which allows me to be totally in control, is something that really appeals to me. More specifically, I think just the intricacy in the tactics and movements you have to make can be really amazing to watch and perform.

**5. What do you hate about fencing?**

Firstly, I have problems with the kit. I don't mind the top part, but I'm not a huge fan of the skin tight breeches we have to wear. It's a bit too old school, like 19th century old school. Also the perception of it over here isn't that great. It's annoying

because in Italy it's the second biggest sport and so many European countries, from Germany to Russia, have massive fencing schools, the size of two or three football pitches, with the top fencers having massive followings. The thing is, I didn't even realise this until I got to the top senior level, where finals are in fancy venues with huge turn outs. In Shanghai the final for the major competition held every year over there, has been in the same venue as the ATP masters venue or in the biggest shopping centre in the city, with the match being broadcast on several channels to millions of viewers.

**6. Do you have to have to wear a little protective thing over your genitals?**

I don't really know. I'm pretty sure a lot of people don't. Although in training the other day some guy got a blade through his nads, so I'm guessing he's definitely wearing one now. Personally I don't, the breeches normally protect us and I'm not too fond of the chafeage.

**7. If not, have you ever been poked in the genitals?**

Yeah I've had the blade flick off and hit my balls, which bloody hurts. Everything still works fine though, just brought a few tears to the eyes!

**8. Where do you train, and how often?**

I train with the national squad Monday to Friday at the Lansdowne Club in Green Park, with a fitness session at the English Institute of Sport. A lot of other athletes train at the EIS as well; Usain Bolt was practising his start there before he got 9.58, so it's pretty cool to train in that environment. I also train Tuesday evenings



at Sussex House School in London.

**9. Where do you see yourself in 10 years?**

Obviously I would love to win gold at the 2012 Olympics, and as hard as it is, it's something I can actually see myself achieving. If I could mix it with a reasonable degree at LSE then would that would be pretty good too, although I'm finding that much harder. After that, if all was still going to plan, the 2016 Olympics in Rio wouldn't be bad, before I pack it all in and do LSE proud by becoming a banker.

**10. Tell us a story from your travels abroad with fencing.**

I'm not going to lie; the fencing trips are pretty tame in comparison with other sporting trips abroad like Calella. I've never got a black eye from a girl on any of my fencing trips, or been taken advantage of by women, or walked in on my room-mate doing the dirty, or had vodka burn splashed in my face. We do get some people who can't seem to handle their drink after competitions and trash hotels,

steal golf buggies at holiday resorts and get chased by the Sicilian police along the beach. There have been arrests in Turkey, with one guy from another team ending up in prison for 18 months, and some pretty tense moments when another team got in trouble with pimps and prostitutes in Cuba and blamed us. There has been a serious scandal as well, but I don't think I'm allowed to talk about it. It probably isn't the best thing to talk about in terms of good publicity for my sport, so to bring about a better image; I was once 11-2 down and won 15-14, and I once met Kelly Holmes who said I looked great while fencing...

**11. Which international team has the hottest ladies?**

Despite the German team generally being an angry bunch, their best fencer posed naked for German playboy so she definitely brings their average up a bit. The Swedish team are probably the fittest team; blonde hair, big boobs, long legs and a nice arse, can't complain really.

FOOD AND DRINK



AT LSE

*LSE's Catering Services provide a diverse range of great food and drinks for all tastes and budgets so you never need to leave LSE to eat and drink well and the savings you make will leave money to spare for the other exciting things that London has to offer!*

**4th Floor Restaurant**

Location: 4th Floor, Old Building, Houghton Street. Open Monday - Friday 9am - 7pm

Trying to keep to a budget or simply want to avoid doing the washing up? The fourth floor restaurant provides breakfast, lunch, dinner and snacks with a diverse menu at the lowest possible prices. Offering traditional dishes, recipes from around the world, imaginative vegetarian alternatives and healthy options including both fresh salad and stir fry bars, you're guaranteed to find something good.

**Café 54**

Location: Ground Floor, New Academic Building. Open: Monday - Friday 8.30am - 5.30pm

Hungry, but don't have the time to eat? Café 54's selection of light meals, hot snacks and wraps, sandwiches and salads are ready to pick up and go. With its indoor and outdoor seating areas at the base of the New Academic Building it is a perfect place to grab a bite and catch up with friends.

**Mezzanine Café**

Location: Mezzanine Floor, New Academic Building. Open: Monday -

Friday 10.30am - 4pm

Fancy a smoothie, barista coffee or cha latte, then the Mezzanine café is the place for you. Based in the New Academic Building overlooking the ground floor, take a break there between lectures.

**Café Pepe**

Location: 3rd Floor, Clement House. Open: Monday - Friday 9.30am - 5pm

Need some downtime between lectures? Friendly staff are happy to toast you a Panini or offer you a snack from the range of freshly baked pastries and croissants or enjoy a hot soup and sandwich.

**The Plaza Café**

Location: John Watkins Plaza Open: Monday - Friday 9am - 9pm, Saturday and Sunday 12pm - 6pm

Located right outside the Library, you can grab a quick bite to eat and drink here if you are keeping your head down or, unwind in the large outside seating area - a popular meeting place and busy throughout the day.

**4th Floor Café Bar**

Location: 4th Floor, Old Building, Houghton Street. Open: Monday - Friday 11am - 9pm

Time for a treat - this new café bar is the place for a great deli sandwich made specially for you or try one of the great cakes with a cappuccino or a 'to die for' espresso hot chocolate. Open

till late so at the end of a long day relax with a cool beer or glass of wine and share the imaginative bar snacks with friends.

**The Garrick**

Location: Corner of Houghton St / Aldwych. Open: Monday - Friday 8am - 7pm

The Garrick is on two levels. The ground floor coffee bar has a great variety of speciality hot and cold drinks, sandwiches, freshly baked pastries. In the restaurant on the lower level the chef prepares super quality home cooked meals at lunch time plus great salads and desserts.

**The George IV**

Location: Corner of Portugal St/Portsmouth Street. Open: Monday - Friday, 12 noon till 11pm

The LSE's very own traditional 19th Century pub with distinctive Victorian architecture. Serving 'real' ales, cool beers, wines, spirits and bar snacks, the George IV is perfect for a quiet pub lunch or alternatively with its lively atmosphere in the evenings it's 'the' spot to begin your night's activities or just stay till late.

**Orientation Special Offer - 50% Discount**

Pick up a Loyalty Card, collect a stamp at each of LSE's cafes and restaurants to get a massive 50% discount at your favourite venue (see loyalty card for details)

# Sport

## Justice For Sammy

Sam Tempest Keeping  
Sports Editor

A Students Union competition to "Name Your Beaver" has led to outcry from students who claim it already has one. The furore is mainly concentrated among members of the Tennis and Men's Basketball teams, the former of which claim to be the original owners of the costume at the centre of the campaign.

When questioned about the naming of the Beaver, LSEU Communications Officer Rob Low said "The point of it was to do something fun and get people used to the voting process".

However Samir Kukar in particular has failed to see the funny side. Back in 2007 Samir, a member of the Tennis team, entered into a caveat with his fellow teammates. It stated that should they make the final of the BUSA First Division Championships he would don fancy dress in a bid to inspire them to victory.

After defeating Leeds Metropolitan in a closely fought semi-final, Samir opted to wear a beaver costume in reference to the school's crest. The costume was purchased by himself and Luke Pollard who were both subsequently reimbursed by the Athletics Union (AU).

Talking about the tournament Samir commented "the day trip to Sheffield itself saw myself pull a 15-hour stint in the beaver costume."

The Tennis club proved to be all conquering at the championships, dominating a highly fancied Aberdeen side. Afterward the team showed their gratitude by naming the beaver "Sammy" in honour of Kukar.

Needless to say celebrations were raucous, "I spent a full 6 hours in a very hot Crush rocking out to a U2 tribute band. His tail was causing havoc and I was called everything from a squirrel to a monkey."

However the tale (no pun intended) does not end there. Last year Sammy made two further appearances in the public. Firstly he visited the Carol but unfortunately came down with the Mumps after certain "promiscuous activities".

Samir was unequivocal about the powers of the suit, "The beaver is an ass magnet with the ladies especially when busting some moves on the dance floor. Of course the beautiful face under the costume helps."

Last Easter, on hearing of Sammy's exploits, the Men's Basketball team requested that he accompany them to their BUCS Championship match against Manchester Metropolitan University. On his second



The Tale of Sammy: (Above, clockwise from top left) Enjoying some female attention, celebrating the Tennis Club's BUSA victory back in 2008, with the Men's Basketball team after their BUCS Championship triumph, taking in all the carol has to offer, showing off his well earned gold medal at Crush. (Photos: Samir Kukar)



Photo: Cherie Leung

**Renaming the beaver:** (Left) A Students Union official photographed wearing the Sammy suit at the Name Your Beaver stand

trip to Sheffield Sammy proved no less lucky as LSE again took home the trophy.

"I brought home a second title, a second trophy, another 16 gold medals. All after a second 15 hour shift in the confines of that suit. So to come back this year and see the mascot being renamed really made me sick."

When asked what he thought of Kukar's concerns Low refused to comment.

Revelations that the Mascot already has a name will only add to the voices of those who are alleging that the current sabbatical team has lost touch with the students they serve since the collaboration with SUARTS.

"This is just another outrageous example of students not being consulted regarding changes being made to the Students Union" said Oliver Townsend, a third year Economics student.

Kukar closed by saying "you have no idea how hard toilet breaks are. Getting that suit on and off is tough work, especially after a five hour coach ride!"

"It should be known as Sammy the beaver after all that sweat and hard work." Justice for Sammy.

# Beaver

the home of petty slander

SPORTS

Supports the campaign to have the beaver mascot named Sammy. Come to the the UGM (1pm Old Theatre) this Thursday if you feel the same as we do.

**JUSTICE FOR SAMMY!**

For more info contact  
sports@thebeaveronline.co.uk





**06.10.09**

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## **EDITORIAL**

PartB rolls over in bed and blearily squints at the alarm clock. It considers getting up for lectures, classes, catching up with old friends and going to housewarming parties. It turns over and falls back to sleep.

Help us get it up! We need YOU to write, design, draw, edit, think, laugh, cry and die for us. Vacancies remain for the sub-editorship positions for Rant, Visual Arts, Literature and Food. Drop us a line if you're interested...

**partb@thebeaveronline.co.uk**

We anxiously await your response like a cat stuck up a tree in autumn.

Eternally yours,

**Julian Boys & Graeme Birrell**

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## **SECTION EDITORS**

PHILOSOPHY - CALUM YOUNG

IDENTITY - LOUISA EVANS

MUSIC - LIAM MCLAUGHLIN AND CATHY DRUCE

THEATRE - SOPHIE MARMENT

FILM - AHMED PEERBUX

TV - ANGELA CHOW

# THE SPIRIT OF REBELLION

MARION KOOB QUESTIONS THE NEED FOR ACTION

Rebellion is a rite of passage. As the human being ages, he discovers and accustoms with his environment, and this inevitably leads to disillusionment. The dreams of an ideal world so carefully nurtured in childhood through his education are brought to an arid standstill. Gone are the happy endings of the much-loved Disney movies, the easy solutions which always reward the worthy and punish the evil, the puzzle-perfect denouements. We realize that our lives lack the steady narrative of fiction, and are rather a series of disconnected and confused actions, emotions and encounters. There are no happy endings because, simply put, our sole ending is death. We discover what Mr. Walt Disney had failed to account for: the morning after happily ever after.

The reactions stemming from these rips in our naivety express themselves in diverse ways, but follow a similar progression. We begin to question authorities which once seemed invincible- first attacking the closest at heart, our parents, our teachers, perhaps even our religion. By witnessing the fall of perfection, we come to see that the figures which we had once seen are authorities are just as questionable as we find ourselves. Error is not solely a symptom of youth, but rather, a characteristic of human nature.

The ageing process pursues its course, and as most of our predecessors, we emerge from this phase-but not unscathed. University students move away from this first stage of bewildered anger, yet the root of idealism still remains. We simply have moved our frustrations towards bigger, greater aims. End world hunger, freedom of speech, bringing about peace- or simply make a stand to improve our adored abstract concept of "the world". This is where the volunteering, the protests, pledges, petitions, angry manifestos, and lyrical prose all comes to play a part in our drive to change things.

That is what is particularly inter-

esting. The young are usually the most open to change—but this too often disproved by their love of protest. A small example of this are the chronic lock-downs which have been taking place over the past few years in France's secondary education institutions. Whether about creating more flexibility in the labour market (introduction of a new contract called 'C.P.E.' ) or giving universities more independence from the government, students have taken to the streets, paralysing the course of their studies. One cannot help but feel that this is more out of an impulse to protest-against anything, anyone, just as long as it represents 'the system'. Any opportunity to express common anger is seized with fervour, with little consideration towards the effectiveness of the actions taken themselves.

There is definitely something noble, however, in this will to pit all of one's energy to one cause. And history has proven that many of these student movements- Sophie Scholl's White Rose, May 1968, Tiananmen 1989, or the current situation in Iran, for instance - were far from futile, in their symbolic value at the very least.

Why is it that idealism- and this desperate urge to make a stand- is so often lost in the mature adult population? Why for instance, were there not virulent manifests of anger after the financial crisis? It would be of course unfair- and widely inaccurate- to say that the collapse of the markets stimulated no reaction whatsoever. However, they pale in comparison to our potential for movement, as our antecedent crises show.

Hence, perhaps for most, realism and resignation hits home, and the hope of a majestic change for the better are dispelled with the gain of experience. Others find that fending for themselves requires all of their energies. Naturally, the idealism doesn't die away in all of us- and if it does, it fades in varying degrees.

Recently, it has been said that even many of us have lost the will to pick up the fight in the name of ideas. A satiation with our lifestyle, some suggest. After all, it makes sense

to say that burning issues, such as basic freedoms and needs will inevitably result in more dramatic responses. And after all, most of these historical demands are now guaranteed to us from birth. On the other hand, although they are perhaps not as geographically tangible, many of these problems remain. That surely should be no excuse for apathy. Flicking through the Socialist Worker Student Society (SWSS)'s guide to occupation (an either frightening or amusing experience), one can find the Independent quoted as such: "They are the iPod generation of students: politically apathetic, absorbed by selfish consumerism, dedicated to a few years of hedonism before they land a lucrative job in the City." Although the statement is clearly exaggerated by political bias, it is worth asking ourselves the question- have we become our parents, the 'system' before our own age?

The SWSS, with its own particular brand of idealism, seems to think not. "A seismic change is taking place in British universities", the quote follows. In their description of their own student movement, they attribute the ease of mobilizing students with their relatively free schedules. This would allow for a greater friction of ideas. However, the argument also (unwillingly) suggests that the art of the rebellion is a luxury which only those who do not have a full-time job can afford to spend time on.

In the end, the essence of rebellion may to provide a means to escape the way in which we envisage our future. In our desire for an exit away from the routine life to which we seem destined, it is easy to slip into the belief that after our fight for (whichever) cause, we will not have to trail down a similar path. The novel Revolutionary Road, by Richard Yates charts an example of such a revolt. The film V for Vendetta fascinates because of the passionate willingness of its protagonists to put everything on the line for a wish of a better, richer life. A symptom of psychological youth, rebellion is an expression of frustration with reality characterized by an irremediable lack of compromise- and that is what makes it beautiful.



# A LOGICAL EXIT

CALUM YOUNG CONTEMPLATES ENDING IT ALL



Suicide, these days, gets a very bad press. Governments and institutions alike keep the figures under wraps; it is, for example, almost impossible to investigate past suicides amongst LSE students. When a young and physically healthy individual decides to terminate their own existence, friends, family and the media naturally reach for adjectives like 'tragic' and 'inexplicable'. A great deal of this outpouring amounts to no more than self-pity, yet it is also a product of the sincere belief that the individual was mistaken in their decision. Most agree that despite what the person concerned may have felt about their own existence, it would have been far better for it to have continued. The grieving few left behind are expressing several philosophical points, albeit tacitly, which explain their actions. Such reasoning is invalid; suicide should not lead to widespread grief over the person concerned. Rather it is a perfectly rational decision which many very unhappy people choose to make each day.

Suicide is not tragic because an unhappy life is better terminated than maintained. There is no worth in simply continuing to be if your current state and probable future consists of depression, existence is not a virtue in itself. To the contrary life only becomes good if the individual can fill it with purpose and happiness, which regrettably not all of us can. Indeed, happiness is the only value which is inherently of worth, a truth first noticed by the philosopher Aristotle. In the nineteenth century Utilitarian philosophers took this viewpoint a step further, they proclaimed that throughout life we should all try to maximise our happiness and minimise our suffering. According to this logic those who are in a state of consistent unhappiness which shows no sign of abating take the perfectly reasonable decision to commit suicide, thereby minimising their pain.

Religious observers might have a problem with this. According to the Judaeo-Christian view life is sacred; each human existence is given an importance above and beyond that which its owner assigns to it. Because religion argues human existence is of significance in some realm beyond this one, experiences within our own lives do not solely determine what we do with them. In short, the believer has an unchosen obligation to maintain themselves, even in extreme displeasure. The countervailing humanist position, which is by-the-way correct, holds that the individual is sovereign. What happens to

our existence or to it is freely chosen by each individual. The secular position grants people greater autonomy over their life, and thus the freedom to end it.

It is concomitant of atheism that any meaning in life has to be found or imposed by humans. This was the judgement of Existentialism, an intellectually dramatic movement which enjoyed widespread support in the years following the Second World War. For most of its adherents, if not all of its contributors, the years 1939-45 were of primary importance to their interest in it. The central figures in the movement, John Paul Sartre and Albert Camus both expressed the view that man finds himself on earth without imposed purpose, confronted only by the brute fact of existence. Thus the individual is without an

objective reason to be. Some existentialists went on to ask, if we have no reason to be, why should we continue with life? Camus captured the desperation brought about by this position in his essay *The Myth of Sisyphus* by saying at the outset that the great philosophical question is: shall I commit suicide?

Now if we may return to practicalities. It has been stated that humans should not commit suicide on the grounds that those they leave behind them are deeply hurt by the decision. Their pain is great and real, that is indisputable. But it is nothing compared to that of the individual who wants to die. The individual who chooses to commit suicide experiences pain and suffering which is so acute and all consuming as to make feeling nothing at all preferable. On utilitarian grounds then, we may say that the man who chooses to commit suicide suffers far more prior to his death than those of his friends and family after it. Happiness is maximised, pain is minimised.

Another argument runs that the individual who commits suicide is often wrong. Wrong in their appraisal of their own life and, hence, wrong in their decision to end it. This is where the belief that suicide is tragic stems from – things would have got better had they been given time to. This argument runs against the nature of every progressive and free society which holds that each individual is best placed to make decisions about their own life. Only the person who chooses to commit suicide knows what he is experiencing, no other individual can claim that. Thus, no other individual can say with any authority that it was the wrong decision. Further, a rational individual's interest in their own life is constant and total, whilst the onlooker's interest is transient and fleeting. Nobody knows more about an individual's life than the person living it, thus they are best placed to make the major decisions about it.

An expanding national suicide rate is also indicative of a free country rather than an unhappy one. Just as an increase in divorce rates advertises the freedom citizens enjoy within a society to act as they find most desirable. Saudi Arabia has a dramatically lower suicide rate than Britain or America, but it is not because its people are happier. A high suicide rate within a society suggests it to be composed of individuals who have the freedom to act as they wish, free from stifling social conventions, rather than a nation of depressives.

# THE FORGOTTEN HALF OF 'THE FOUR'

MEGAN JONES REMEMBERS FRANCES AND MARGARET

Frances and Margaret MacDonald along with their respective husbands; James Herbert MacNair and Charles Rennie Mackintosh, created the loose collective of the Glasgow School known as "The Four". "The Four" were crucial figures in the development and increasing popularity of the Glasgow Style, which had at its heart The Glasgow School of Art, during the 1890s. However it is only the work of Charles Rennie Mackintosh which remains widely appreciated, and widely recognised. The work of both MacDonald sisters is very rarely exhibited, and has not enjoyed critical or popular longevity.

The lack of recognition today for the talent of the MacDonald sisters would be a surprise for their contemporaries, who saw their work appear in leading periodicals, such as the *Studio*, *The Yellow Book* and *Dekorative Kunst*, and exhibited in London, Paris, Venice and Turin. During their lifetimes artists and critics realized that

they were very promising artists, and understood the influence their work had on major artists of the period. Margaret and Frances exhibited with Mackintosh at the 1900 Vienna Secession, where they were an influence on the Secessionists Gustav Klimt and Josef Hoffmann. The Vienna Secessionists preferred the rectilinear designs and muted colours of the Glasgow Style, rather than the Continental Art Nouveau Style, and there is evidence that shows that Klimt incorporated aspects of the Glasgow Style into his own paintings, for example "Poetry" from the Beethoven Frieze shows a group of women painted in a very similar style to that of Frances MacDonald.

Margaret MacDonald's contribution to the work of "The Four" and the development of the "Glasgow Style" is often underestimated and underappreciated because she often worked in collaboration with Mackintosh. In Mackintosh's designs for Mrs Cranston's Tea Rooms, one of his most famous commissions, Margaret was responsible for most of the interior design, as well as the famous panelling including "O ye that Walk in the Willow Wood". The room exhibited by Frances, Margaret and Mackintosh at the Vienna Secession in 1900, is now referred to as the Mackintosh Room, even though one of Margaret's most famous

panels, "The May Queen" is the most prominent feature in the room. However Margaret received criticism from those who recognised her collaboration with Mackintosh and her influence on his work. In 1933 the architectural critic, P. Morton Strand wrote to the organisers of the "Mackintosh Memorial Exhibition" in Glasgow:

"I hope that the exhibition may not be so arranged or announced as to give the impression that Mrs Mackintosh was in any sense considered her husband's equal or alter ego. Outside of circles of loyal friends in Glasgow and Chelsea her work is either unknown, or long since forgotten."

Whilst in the late 1960s when Mackintosh's work was beginning to be recognised and appreciated in Britain, Margaret MacDonald's role and talent was continuously undermined, and remains so.

However, Margaret's immense talent was not wholly ignored; Charles Rennie Mackintosh described the difference between himself and his wife as: "Margaret has genius, I have only talent". Furthermore, an article from *Dekorative Kunst* says of Margaret's work that, "Mrs Mackintosh is outstanding for her illustrations of mystic poetry...her hand creates drawings, paintings and reliefs whose unusually meticulous and delicate execution never hampers their spiritual clarity. I know no plaster relief by any living artist which can be compared with hers."

The work of Frances MacDonald is even less well-known and less appreciated than that of her sister, Margaret. This is in no small part due to her departure from Glasgow, but also because her husband, James Herbert MacNair, destroyed much of her work following her death. However Frances's work was created across an impressive range of media, published and exhibited extensively internationally, and provided an important stimulus for the emergence of a distinctive "Glasgow Style". Although the amount of work produced by Frances during her lifetime was relatively small, the quality of the work; especially the interiors for her home at Oxford Street, Liverpool and The Lady's Writing Room exhibited in Turin, along with her later watercolours should be seen as among the most consistently inventive and individual artist-designer of that period in Britain. The series of later watercolours meditated on a woman's spiritual and physical being, expressing ideas which had preoccupied Frances since the 1890s, and which had become part of her own personal experience. These works have few, if any parallels in British painting in the early twentieth century.

Therefore, although Charles Rennie Mackintosh remains the most well-regarded and successful of the "The Four" there may come a time when the talents of the MacDonald sisters are finally taken into account and given, both the critical and popular recognition they deserve.



# CITY DWELLERS

## LOUISA EVANS ACCEPTS THE STEREOTYPES

**L**ocation, location, location. So very true. While we may have a few years left yet before choosing the correct catchment area based on schooling, right now it's fun to watch the walking the stereotypes lurking in each area. London also has a bizarre magical power for transporting an aimless wanderer from a rather nice, well to-do avenue to a you-better-run-for-your-life street. I'm sure no other city in the world has a looser 'Good To Dodgy' grid than the Big Smoke.

Please be unstanding for the raging London stereotypes, the try-hard, the hippie and the just plain ugly:

Angel: probably houses the most eclectic mix of Londoners it has truly 'upped and comed' and can provide for just about any individual, and the evidence to support such a statement? Its Supermarkets: it has an Iceland *and* a Waitrose. Thus bringing us onto...

The greater Islington area: home to our dear mayor, solicitors, bankers, students, and yummy mummies. To be honest it's really quite similar to the Royal Borough except the toffs are interspersed with a few more talented tradesmen. Islington can be quite 'boho chic' and has lots of simply fabulous vintage clothing stores. A darling treat is 'Screen on the Green', an independent and intimate little cinema that's particularly good 'round the holidays as it shows old seasonal movies. Beware of some areas, don't go too far East (see Hackney) and King's Cross still

holds proudly to its 'lady of the night' past. Cue awful jokes from your father about standing too close to red traffic lights. Guffaw guffaw.

Kensington and Chelsea: swarming with posh twats. See top left hand picture for a vague idea. (It's OK for me to say that 'cos I'm sort of halfway there, I used to live in Fulham you know.) If you live here,

you're likely to be called Hugo, Humphrey or Venetia and have a pretty sizeable trust fund. you're also probably pretty bitter about 'the Crisis' as it's limited your weekly blow-dry/tennis-lesson/ability to have an illicit affair. Some redeeming qualities: the V&A, Hyde Park and Stamford Bridge, though if you're a Chelsea fan it merely adds insult to injury.

Edgware Road: if you live here you probably like a bit of hustle and bustle...

and couldn't afford Marble Arch or Oxford Street. 'Little Cairo' or 'Little Beirut' is famous for its varied and numerous ethnic food shops; Iranian comic, Omid Djalili d e -

scribed it as 'after Damascus, Medina and Mecca, is probably the most Islamic place on the planet' and consequently couldn't get his head round the agenda of the July 7th bombers.

Haringey: leave. Right now. Your council is appalling. You'll probably have to pay council tax. Twice.

Hampstead: You probably prefer the quiet life and consider entering central London an unwelcome trek. Hampstead is a little village within London; all quaint cafes and neat shops and home of the Heath. Horse-y people live round these here parts and the yummy mummy reaches perilous heights.

Hackney: quite a diverse space, with one of the largest Turkish populations in London and really quite an anti-social distance from just about anything. parts of it are great for that 'I'm gonna slice you quality'. I'm told though that some areas are quite charming and 'really quite safe' and is probably tipped as yet another up and coming area. I wouldn't believe it.

Peckham: cash-flow problems? I don't know many people who have the stomach for living here, what with the bars on the windows, so if you do dwell here you are either a bit mental or enjoy living with the taste of fear in your mouth. This joyous neighbourhood hasn't really come very far from the days of Del Boy and Rodney. Apparently shattered glass on the floor (from the likes of car windows etc) is affectionately referred to as Peckham Diamonds.

Westminster: if you're not a politician what are you doing here? Possibly the dullest place in London; nothing is open after 10pm as the area caters only for wandering, eager-eyed tourists and business professionals. Although it's good to know that Robert Dyas is open as late as 7 on Thursdays.

Willesden Junction: to be honest I don't really know that much about this locale but the one person I do know who lives there affectionately calls it 'Willy J', which is just too fabulous. and it has strong ties to Ireland apparently. Obviously the place to head for St Paddy's Day then.

Notting Hill: its pretty mews, colourful houses and excellent shopping make it one of the most desired places to live by the riche, nouveau riche and Bohemians alike. Portobello Market is a London institution and the charity shops here can yield amazing treasures. Imperial have halls of residences here, lucky buggers.

# EMBRACE YOUR STYLE

ADETOUN & JACQUI DISCUSS THE WORLD OF FASHION

The art of fashion needs no introduction: it speaks for itself. Not only is it an established industry, its influence stretches beyond the mundane of clothes, shoes and bags. From the expected to the unexpected mediums of expression; fashion can be found amongst the Madonna's and Lady gaga's of music, not to mention the Thatcher's and Clinton's of modern day politics. An unusual quartet, don't you think? The common denominator, their own personal takes on style!

Music may be an obvious instrument of fashion, but politics? Well... ever noticed the focus on a particular female candidate in recent presidential elections? Most of the media attention highlighted the importance of her appearance. Bringing it closer to home... take a little look at the man in charge and his predecessor, one exudes style and charisma, the other doesn't.

Not to give it all away, the basic gist of this article is to introduce to you a minute section of a very broad subject.

Fashion like everything else has many faces. From haute couture to high street, London to Tokyo, it encompasses a variety of styles, cultures and histories, yet remains true to itself. It proceeds us nevertheless will continue to exist after us, for one reason only. Its recyclability. Whilst appearing to have evolved, its undeniable that certain trends keep making a come back in grand style.

Plates-formes chaussures. Wondering what that is? The platform heels in your closet, of course!

The re-emergence of power dressing in the 1980's is manifested in today's fashion in the shape of boyfriend blazers and shoulder pad dresses. And that's just the tip of the iceberg. Shift dresses and psychedelic floral prints both circa 1970, leggings from the 80's and stone washed jeans from the 90's have all come back better than ever, and with a twist.

Let's analyse leggings; couture and high street has given us a collaboration of prints textures and materials, giving birth to jeggings, sequin leggings, rubber leggings, PVC leggings... need i say more?

"Fashion is a form of imitation... it differentiates one time from another and one social stratum from another." - Georg Simmel

Although written in the 50's, Simmel's point still resonates with us today. This monkey see, monkey do, behaviour we so unconsciously project is at the very heart of the fashion industry. Negative some may say, because it emanates patterns of conformity, however, the very notion of style itself allows fashion to have an element of individuality. While fashion may be collective, style permits your own unique experience within fashion. Fashion gives you options; your style makes your choice.

Is a fashion faux pas really a mistake? Or just the individuals take on style? Who

says you can't team up a pair of Dr. Martins with neon netted tutus? Or skinny jeans and UGG boots, for men? In this day and age, fashion has become more of a pick and mix sweets stall, the average shopper can combine designer and high street wear and achieve a flawless finish.

Lets get to the good stuff! Like many of the worlds leading cities, London's unique take on fashion offers us as students the exciting opportunity to sample, take in and enjoy its delights and wonders.

From shopping in Harrods to browsing in Camden market, London is bursting at the seams, but perhaps taking a walk off the well-trodden path and who knows what

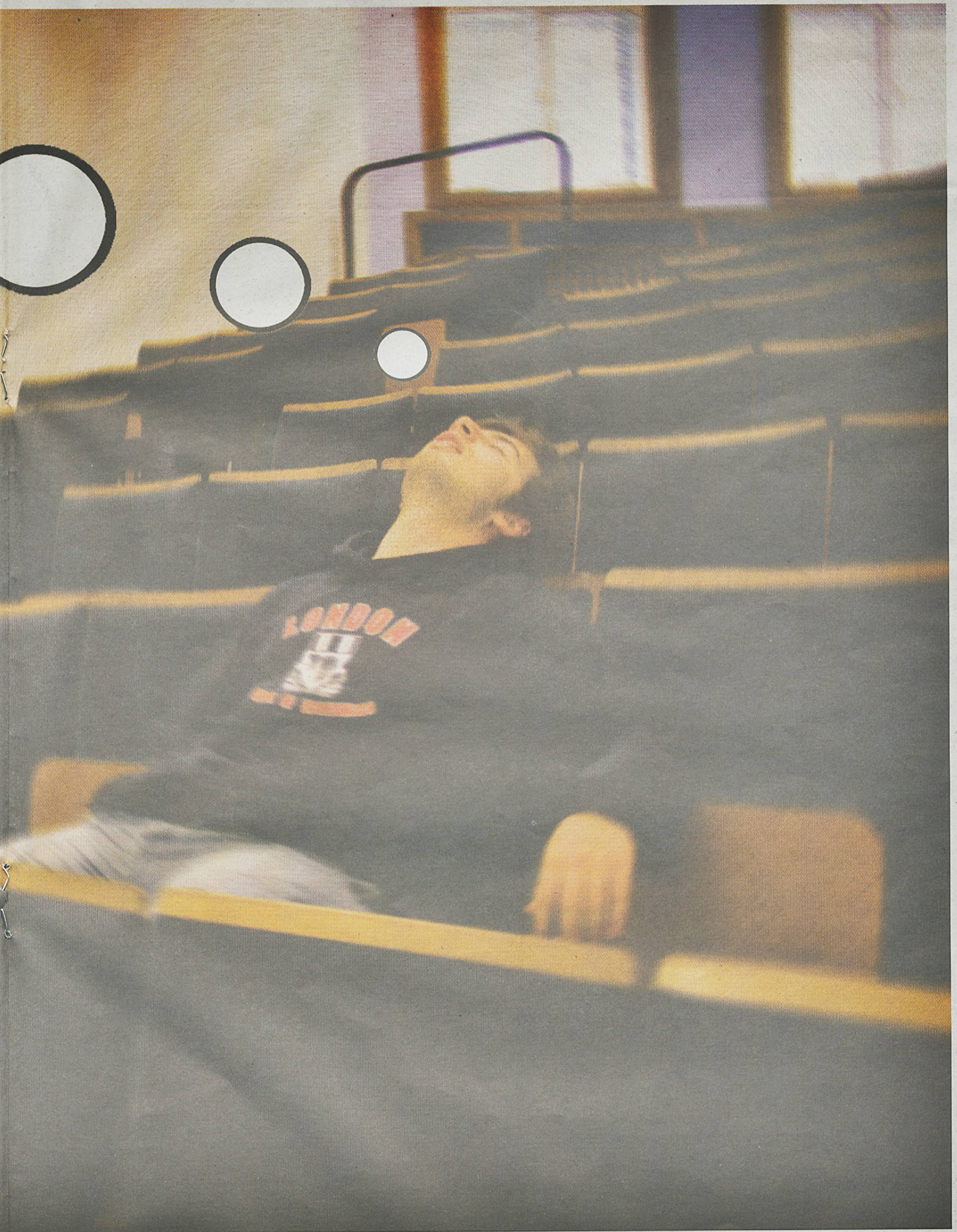
you'll discover. East street market, Brick lane, even in your local charity shop (if you live in Mayfair), the possibilities are endless.

So, how about it? You have the opportunity, why not take advantage and who knows? You might enjoy it. You can't deny it, fashion affects us all, embrace it!









# REVIEWIEWS

## CHRIS MAYNE REVIEWS SONAR

2009 - JULY 18, 19, 20



Sonar's greatest asset is its location, as compared to the average festival, spent in a field somewhere miles from civilisation or in a city park with oppressive sound restrictions, Sonar is in a class of its own, spreading its influence across Barcelona for over a week. Over 150 live acts and DJs from the world of electronic music combine with a host of art, multi-media installations, exhibitions and demonstrations by painters, sculptors and visual artists- the festival really lives up to its billing as an 'advanced music festival'.

The festival however spreads its fingers throughout the city- there are a huge number of 'off-Sonar' events- indeed many people go to Barcelona during Sonar week simply to go to these events in the city- ranging from beach parties, boat parties and club nights starting at almost any time of the day or night. Personal highlights were 'Secretsundaze' (fea-

turing Wbeeza) at La Terrazza and 'Cocoon' at Kanna beach club- nights which are frequently in London and should be checked out.

The festival itself consists of Sonar de Dia, held at the MACBA, and Sonar de Noche, set in Fira Gran Via L'Hospitalet, a vast conference centre in an industrial wasteland on the city limits. The line up at sonar never fails to impress, you'll always find impressive headliners; Animal Collective, Orbital, Crystal Castles, Grace Jones, Fever Ray and Late of the Pier; as well as less well known acts from the worlds of techno, dubstep and drum and bass (as well as everything inbetween) and the unexpected; Mulutu Astake, an Ethiopian Jazz composer, and Omar Souleyman, one of the Middle East's most successful musicians.

Personal highlights included Lars Hornthveth, Moderat and Dorian Concept whose performance encapsulated Sonar itself, it was an intellectual master class demonstrating the fam-

ily relations between electronic music genres seamlessly and with so much enthusiasm the crowd were dancing in minutes- despite the 4pm billing. Moderat illustrated that art and music needn't be considered separate disciplines, the whole performance visually and aurally was so well orchestrated it had the crowd almost in a communal trance, it really was incredible.

In summary Sonar is a festival that has an unrivalled line up, is based in Barcelona, doesn't involve camping and doesn't actually end up costing all that much. On top of this it's at the end of June, just after exams, and is the perfect way to mark both this occasion and the start of summer. I wouldn't miss it.

## MOUNT KIMBIE - MAYBES EP

*A good review for an artist so elusive we couldn't find a picture*

The reviewer who writes about music he loves feels a certain weight of responsibility on his shoulders, as he tries to express the many emotions already experienced alongside the record as well as doing justice to the record itself. The itinerant pen pusher criticises new releases without relating their own experience to the music, for better or for worse. Mount Kimbie's stunning and timeless EP was released in February of this year and has accompanied your interlocutor since then - although its atmosphere is perhaps best suited to winter, it has transcended seasons and retains its effect as these words are written, in summer.

The record consists of four tracks which cling together cohesively but still have distinct individual characters. The first, 'Maybes', introduces us faithfully to the record, greeting the lis-

tener with reverberating, overpoweringly simple bass, hauntingly repeating voices and transfixing percussion. The first impression of the sound is confusing - although Mount Kimbie have been most enthusiastically received by the Dubstep community, the noise they make has just as much in common with post-rock as that genre. Guitar textures nestle comfortably alongside perfectly produced beats and any allusion to genre is more misleading than enlightening.

'William' is the next song. Its cavernous shape echoes an urban environment, distant sounds reflecting the listener's day. A refreshingly simple melody is half talked by a gently bitter voice, until a breathtakingly sublime, meditative climax is reached which is to my mind best appreciated in the dark! 'Vertical' follows next, again seeming to reflect the natural percussion we occasionally notice in our environ-

ment, but amplified as if we were imbued with extraordinary sensory perception. This leads subtly into a rolling, reliable beat backed by guitar tones, yet rarely does dance music induce such reverence in the listener. The last track, 'Taps' is the natural realisation of all that came before - the almost-found percussion is explicitly made to sound like an orchestra of dripping taps, while an eerie sonic landscape develops behind it. The low end vibrations hold our hands, leading us into a serene climax.

# PRICKFORK'S NEW LIST

## LIAM MCLAUGHLIN AND CATHY DRUCE

ARE A BIT FORKED OFF WITH PITCHFORK'S  
TOP 200 OF THE 00s

**P**itchfork media, online music comment and review site, recently published their top two thousand albums of the 2000s- it seems with the sole aim of making our future children think we listened to pretentious whiney shit for the best part of the decade. Here in the Beaver office, we've taken offence to some of Pitchfork's more reckless ratings.

Why are there 200 when they've only ever done 100 till now? Record company pressure or am I missing something and the 00s was amazing?

How did Andrew WK get to 144 when on initial release his album was given a scathing 0.6. And indeed he came one place higher than Fiery Furnaces' Blueberry Boat which on initial release got the incredibly high and rare score of 9.6.

Why don't p4k appreciate Talib Kweli, at least the album Quality, yet put in so much other platitudinous rap?

What is the big deal with Animal Collective?!

How did Bon Iver get higher than the Fleet Foxes? No, how did the Fleet Foxes not get into the top 10 and the Strokes, Panda Bear and Modest Mouse did?

Yankee Hotel Foxtrot is the most disappointingly overhyped album I've ever heard, Summerteeth is better.

The Arcade Fire, whilst good, are also horrendously overrated.



## A MORE REALISTIC SUGGESTION

**I**t's pretty ridiculous to attempt to compile a top twenty out of trillions of albums released in the last decade. You're bound to leave out some gems, so we are by no means claiming this to be a top 20 of the last ten years- we've just made a list of some good ones. Having said that, admittedly it might be marginally more believable that the crap that ended up in the Pitchfork rankings.

Radiohead – Kid A. (Pitchfork's No.1) Fair enough Bitchfork, we agree with you.

Mars Volta – Frances The Mute. Cavernous prog punk insanity.

Broken Social Scene- You Forgot It In People. Y'know: poppy, synthy.

Deerhunter – Microcastle. Psychedelic indie

Deftones – White Pony. Thinking man's metal.

Radiohead – In Rainbows.

Verdena – Requiem. Unknown Italian titans' grunge masterpiece

Sonic Youth – Murray Street. As good as their 80s stuff.

Interpol – Turn On The Bright Lights. Shades of grey

Fleet Foxes – Fleet Foxes. Pastoral mountain folk from a city.

Sparklehorse - Dreamt For Light Years In The Belly Of A Mountain. Decent dusty chilled out sound.

The Dodos – Visiter. Rhythmic, poppy, good.

Explosions In The Sky – The Earth Is Not A Cold Dead Place. Life-affirming beauty,

Hauschka – Ferndorf. Minimalist modern classical about a German village. Fuckin' A.

The Notwist – Neon Golden. Like Radiohead but not derivative.

Radiohead – Amnesiac. Not as good as Kid A but still quite good.

The Tough Alliance - Escaping Your Ambitions. Pretentious ambience.

Avishai Cohen – Unity. Jazzy, worldly, exciting.

Talib Kweli - Quality. Best rapper around.

# BREAKFAST AT TIFFANY'S

SOPHIE MARMENT IS CHARMED BY A WHITE PERSIAN CAT

**B**reakfast at Tiffany's: perhaps Audrey Hepburn's best-remembered cinematic performance and ever immortalised in the 1993 song of the same title by the Deep Blue Somethings. Now to be seen on stage at the Royal Theatre Haymarket starring Anna Friel and Joseph Cross. This new production of 'Breakfast at Tiffany's' is refreshing in that the stage adaptation by Samuel Adamson ignores the calls of the Deep Blue Somethings to 'remember the film' and instead remembers Truman Capote's original short story.

And so we see the vivacious and elusive, good-time girl, Holly Golightly tripping her way through 1943 New York pursued by her neighbour, and good friend William 'Fred' Parsons. 'Fred' (Joseph Cross), is out of luck as not only do all the men in Holly's life fall in love with her, but Holly is only interested in riches and older men, "I can't get excited by a man until he's forty-two. I simply trained myself to like older men and it was the smartest thing I ever did," she quips.

The production is sponsored by Chambord and it seems that they've done a pretty good job - one cannot but notice their fabulously flashy posters on the underground. The company have clearly splashed out on the publicity front, making recent headlines with their £22,000 breakfast, specially created for the show's opening night, or should that be morning? The breakfast features a croissant coated in edible gold and dia-

monds as well as a Chambord and Champagne cocktail poured from a Chambord bottle encrusted with gold, diamonds and pearls worth a whopping \$2.4 million by itself.

The adherence to Capote's original story is evident from the moment Miss Holiday Golightly (Anna Friel) steps out onto the stage. With her short, curly, blond bob, Friel immediately cuts the strings with Audrey Hepburn's character in the film and allows the audience to view a different and more self-assured Holly. Friel brings a modern and more gutsy side to the character, punctuated with moments of real fragility - not dissimilar to her stunning performance in the BBC series 'The Street' over the summer. Her transformation in Act 2 from blond bob to short pixie cut lent itself to her portrayal of a frightened and, at times, child-like woman who struggles to see herself feeling at home in any place. This inability to stay put is best shown in her determination not to name her cat until she has found a place to settle down - a place which makes her feel like Tiffany's jewellery store.

Friel's performance overshadows the rest of the cast but there are some other highlights including Suzanne Bertish's, Madame Spanella, with her early-morning operatic performances and her invitations to Fred to come in and sample her 'fillet mignon'! David Phelan also put in a moving performance as Sid Arbut, beautifully illustrating the grief of a crushed man. However the undoubted star of the show was the nameless moggy, a fluffy white Persian cat, who upstaged Friel in their parting scene as he padded off into the wings, taking one forlorn look backwards before exiting.

The performance was slick and polished, the only real chink in this being the less-than-seamless integration of the musical numbers into the drama. Whilst Friel had learnt the guitar specifically for the part and crooned her way sweetly

through a number of short ditties they

failed to add anything to the piece and temporarily interrupted the audience's sense of suspended reality. Nevertheless the mood lighting and frequent costume changes made it easy to gloss over. Perhaps, too, the appearance of both Friel and Cross naked on stage did much to up the audience's enjoyment as well as overshadowing any critical thoughts a few days later!

Those loyal to the film will no doubt be disappointed by the exclusion of 'Moon River' and may question the ending but without a doubt, director Sean Matthias has triumphed in producing a play that is both gutsy and poignant where the film was glossily Hollywood and saccharine sweet.

## PICK OF THE WEEK

### Othello

Starring Lenny Henry in the title role. So wrong and yet somehow, so, so right. Trafalgar Studios until 12 December  
Box Office 0870 0606632

### The Power of Yes

David Hare's new piece on the financial crisis. An exposition of the financial sector and what caused the crash. Look out for the portrayal of our own Howard Davies. The National until 23 November  
Box Office 020 7452 3000

### James Thierree's Raoul

Actor, clown, poet, magician, James Thierree plays Raoul, a man who tumbles through a series of Utopian fantasies. Get your tickets now before they're all snapped up. Barbican opens 13 October  
Box Office 0844 8717624

## LSE THEATRE

Drama Society AGM  
Mon 5th October  
6-7pm H421  
su.soc.drama@lse.ac.uk

LooSE TV:  
Guerilla Film Making Competition  
Sat 10th October  
2pm around LSE  
loose.tv@lse.ac.uk for rules and details



# THE REAL ARTICLE

AHMED PEERBUX ON JOHN CANDY; 1950-1994



“I’m the real article.

What you see is what you get”

*John Candy as Del Griffith, shower curtain ring salesman*

Somewhere in Mexico, John Candy turned in for a good night's sleep after a triumphant day's work on the set of *Wagons East*. At the age of 43, he never woke up, having suffered a massive heart attack.

John Candy often played characters we probably wouldn't want anywhere near us. In *Planes, Trains and Automobiles*, Del Griffith (Candy) is that overzealous salesman we've all had the misfortune of dealing with. He has a habit of breaking and/or incinerating anything he touches. He leaves the bathroom in a colossal state. As Uncle Buck, he keeps an axe in his boot and microwaves his laundry dry. Yet still, through John Candy's unrivalled comic genius and ineffable charm, we find in this seemingly slobbish, overbearing archetype a likeable, or rather loveable, on-screen persona.

His sheer decency and all-round 'nice guy' manner under the buffoonery effort-

lessly transcends the screen, and nestles in our hearts. Indeed the lines between fact and fiction are blurred where John Candy is involved, considering many of his more enduring characters' traits were taken from his own. It was the late John Hughes who remarked 'you will never meet a sweeter person'. Bret Gallagher, a close friend of Candy said 'it didn't matter if he had to meet heads of state, he'd be as nice or nicer to the waiter.'

He also imported from his own life a primal vulnerability on his characters. In *Planes, Trains and Automobiles*, perhaps his finest hour, he reminds us that we aren't alone in feeling lonely, broken and dejected. Better still, his uncompromising optimism and refusal to be a 'cold-hearted cynic' is inspiring. When Candy was only five, his father died of a heart attack at thirty-five, leaving him to be brought up by aunts, uncles and grandparents. Later on in life he was conscious of his

serious weight problem, and consequently had a fairly fatalistic outlook on life, as if he was on borrowed time.

John Candy will be remembered as one of the all-time great comics. His work will stand the test of time because unlike trends in humour, unvarnished, uncomfortable human emotion has a timeless appeal. He wasn't always sweet with the critics, enduring somewhat of a hit and miss career, but in his better moments he showed a true understanding of what makes a great comedy: it isn't just something that makes you consistently giggle, it's something more profound than that; something that clings to you afterwards, something that takes you all the way to the other end of the emotional spectrum, enabling you to truly appreciate the healing powers of laughter.

## THE ONES TO WATCH JOHN CANDY'S FILMOGRAPHY

**BLUES BROTHERS (1980)**

**STRIPES (1981)**

**NATIONAL LAMPOON'S VACATION (1983)**

**BREWSTER'S MILLIONS (1985)**

**SUMMER RENTAL (1985)**

**LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS (1986)**

**SPACEBALLS (1987)**

**PLANES, TRAINS, AND AUTOMOBILES (1987)**

**THE GREAT OUTDOORS (1988)**

**WHO'S HARRY CRUMB (1989)**

**UNCLE BUCK (1989)**

**HOME ALONE (1990)**

**COOL RUNNINGS (1993)**

**CANADIAN BACON (1995)**

# HAVE I GOT TV NEWS FOR YOU

ANGELA CHOW CATCHES UP ON SUMMER TV

The new term has now started. For some of us, we will be reunited with friends whom we have not seen for as long as four months. For others, namely freshers, you will be meeting more new faces in the space of a few weeks than you have ever met before in your lives. After the polite exchanges of summer stories or summaries of your life respectively, there is only so much more that you can talk about before conversations run dry and those dreaded awkward silences creep in.

Therefore, to avoid the aforementioned uncomfortable fractures in our daily chit-chats, which usually happens directly after a weird comment is made by those who are socially unskilled and where all threads of conversations die because all parties feel that someone else should be talking, yet no one does, here are the essential updates on what has been happening on our shiny silver screens which will undoubtedly save any social situation.

Although the summer has come and gone, a lot can happen in four months in the TV world: characters come and go; TV shows can begin and end. So sit back and inform your out-of-touch brains with the current affairs of the skin-deep world of television, in no particular order.

For those of you lucky enough to have stayed in sunny England over the summer, you may be familiar with a certain Sophie Reade. About five of you will have watched her walk through some double doors and emerge £71,320 richer, 93 days later. This is a globally familiar concept which is adopted in almost 70 countries. Unfortunately, it was announced last month that due to declining ratings, *Big Brother 2010* (UK) will be the last. What a shame. Now let's move on.

We welcome back good old Saturday night TV with the return of *Strictly Come Dancing* and *The X-Factor*. Now, these two shows really are conversation starters, sparking random debates amongst total strangers on buses to being topics of countless Facebook groups and Twitter statuses. It is totally up to you whether you think that the creepy twins should have gone through to the live shows or whether they deserve to have their heads slapped together numerous times for being obnoxious twits. The reality of it is, that with 10 million viewers every Saturday night for the next 4 months, *X Factor* and *Strictly Come Dancing*, arguably to a lesser extent, are here to stay. So having an opinion on these shows, even if negative, will stand you in good stead every Monday morning, equipping you with useless knowledge to handle even the most socially inept and awkward counter person.

I really don't care about soaps but if you really want to know, *Eastenders* won 'Best British Soap' at the British Soap Awards, although that's not really too hard as only two soaps have ever won this title since its inception in 1999, with the other being *Coronation Street*.

Crossing over the Atlantic, Fall (Autumn) always marks the return of many of our favourite American guilty pleasures. The start of season 4 saw Claire Bennett go to college and Peter Petrelli return to being a nurse, abandoning their 'Heroes' lifestyles. Although it is still only the beginning of the season, fans are advised that they should not be holding their breath for another one as despite the good-intentioned attempts at jazzing up the now preposterous storylines, for example, the weird Nathan/Sylar plot along with Hiro Nakamura's on/off powers, it appears to have fallen from the dizzy heights of grace and tossed aside by viewers to make way for television's equivalent of shiny new toys.

Moving on, the beginning of season 6 saw *Dr Gregory House* waking up in a psychiatric hospital in solitary confinement due to Vicodin withdrawal. Although House fans will get to enjoy another 22 episodes of medical Sherlock Holmes, it was recently hinted that this season may be the last from Hugh Laurie, and naturally, House, since stepping into the character of the infamous limping doctor has actually given him a limp in real life, possibly forcing him to stop filming.

As pointed out last week, one of the most anticipated returns to our plasma screens was that of Serena and her shallow, egotistical gang in the Upper East Side, where the start of the new term at NYU saw Queen B being pushed aside to make way for the evil that is Georgina. These *Gossip Girls* and boys have returned with a bang and will undoubtedly be keeping their legions of loyal fans happy each week by strutting in front of our eyes with quirky and eccentric, designer-clad wardrobes. However, someone needs to tell *Gossip Girl*, whoever she is, to write something bad and get rid of Vanessa.

I have often been told that no one would be interested if I wrote about *The Hills* but I want to, so if you are indifferent or you don't care, just skip this paragraph and move on. The last time we visited the Hollywood Hills, we saw the official union of Speidi. The *Urban Dictionary* defines a 'prat' as 'basically someone who is a major idiot'. I have always wanted to point this out: does anyone else think that Spencer Pratt could not have been more aptly named? Anyway, every Hills fan should be sad that we will no longer be able to follow Lauren Conrad to FIDM or *People's Revolution*. Her departure will probably lead to the premature decline of MTV's biggest ever series since her shockingly foul and unpleasant replacement, Kristin Cavallari, will without question single-handedly kill the show. We should, however, be to some extent excited at the return of the City, although Olivia is in desperate need of a slap.

Hand in hand with seasoned favourites, also come brand spanking new pilots and premieres of new shows based on recycled themes and ideas. Whilst Season 2 of *True Blood* has come and gone, last month saw the emergence of *The Vampire Diaries*, exploiting our currently post-Twilight, vampire-obsessed state. I was also introduced to a new High-School-Musical-type series called *Glee* which has fast become my favourite shiny new toy (thanks Kay).

Meanwhile, in line with the saying of out with the old and in with the new, the past few months also saw a few tragedies. *Dirty Sexy Money* and *Privileged* have been shelved as well as the much publicised *The Beautiful Life* which was supposed to mark the return of Mischa Barton since her OC heyday. Unfortunately the Life was just not that Beautiful with only about 1 million viewers tuning in for the pilot resulting in it becoming this autumn's first cancelled show after just 2 episodes.

Anyway, now that we have filled and updated our brains with mindless plots, storylines and other similarly useless knowledge from the superficial world of our small screens, we can safely go out into our equally superficial LSE world equipped with many a conversation starter and filler to remedy any uneasy tongue-tied moment.



# PLUG, PLUG, PLUG AWAY!

## NATHAN BRIANT LISTENS TO THE STEREOGRAM

Seemingly everybody's got something to plug except me and my monkey. Ricky Gervais' video podcast (iTunes and rickygervais.com) features this week his other, less-known fellow partner in podcast fun, the Mancunian former XFM producer Karl Pilkington in order to promote his film, *The Invention of Lying*. It's in the typical mould of the Gervais podcast, (albeit minus the other musceteer, Steve Merchant) in that it involves Pilkington doing the majority of the talking whilst Gervais sits there occasionally, waiting for one of Pilkington's uniquely trite statements on what he thinks that particular day; usually it involves brains and other planets. Here he suggests that Gervais and his production company don't bother promoting their new blockbuster. Too much work, he says. Instead Universal should hope that the film's competitors all sell out, and that cinema-goers will be enticed into going to see Gervais' film on the basis that watching something would be better than going home filmless. That said, Pilkington tells Gervais it's better than the box office flop *King Ralph*. But he's got a way to becoming the next Barry Norman, it must be said.

Another plugger was to be found on (the interviewee-from-the-previous-week-sits-in-for-the-next-week-as presenter interview show) *Chain Reaction* (BBC R4, Wednesday) in the shape of Alistair McGowan. Unfortunately for McGowan since the conversation with ex-Number 10 spin doctor Alastair Campbell was recorded a few months ago, the only noticeable reason for him being on the show at time of recording - in order to advertise his

Edinburgh Festival show - seems to have been broadcast about two months too late. As with many comedians or impressionists, he is freely giving with his observations; but if anything he takes them to excess. He cares passionately about the environment, we're told in the introduction by Campbell - McGowan adds he delivered leaflets for the Green Party in the late 1980s and early 1990s - but sadly when Campbell gives him a rare opportunity to explain his opinions he gives one fact on Britain's recent successes on recycling and lapses into a good but albeit unnecessary impression of Gordon Brown. He's one of the best impressionists in the country but having described himself first and foremost 'a writer' at the start of the show it is a shame that McGowan constantly sees the need to move away from his own persona, particularly since he is clearly a warm and witty man in his own right. Campbell doesn't help by casually reminding the audience of his interviewee's talent: 'Do Tony [Blair]!...Because you can't do Alex Ferguson, can you?'

Despite the fact that in *Answer Me This!* (iTunes/answermethis.wordpress.com) self-promotion isn't necessarily the primary aim it's in spades throughout the half-hour chat-a-thon. Unfortunately, the hosts of the podcast, Olly and Helen (in whose front room the podcast is recorded) refer to themselves so frequently it starts to grate severely once you pick up on it, so much is its relentlessness. The tediousness of the podcast is swelled, to greater degrees since the questions asked are questions that literally no-one - except the goons that have phoned or emailed in hoping to be mentioned

- would take the time to care about; one topic of conversation was: 'why is it a commonly held belief that if we're abducted by aliens humans would be subject to anal probing?'

Other than Gillian McKeith I can't recall off hand the name of someone that they didn't know being given the briefest mention throughout the thirty minutes, and let's face it, if you're going to mention anyone lest it be McKeith. The chatter went thus for a few minutes: early into the half-hour (Olly) 'My girlfriend was a pantomime horse once!'. At most two minutes later: (Helen this time) 'when I was nine I went to Brownies'...a few minutes pass, then Olly's boarding school masturbation issues, and how he would dispose of the said tissue in early adolescence was mentioned... and then this was hilarious, right, because Olly used to ride a girl's bike - THEN! Helen's brother used to have a girl's bike at university! AND IT WASN'T EVEN STOLEN EVEN THOUGH HE LEFT IT OUTSIDE THE TRAIN STATION FOR FIVE - (YES, FIVE!) - WEEKS OVER CHRISTMAS!



# DON'T HATE ME BECAUSE I'M BEAUTIFUL

REAGAN PERSAUD FIGHTS BRAINS WITH EYELINER

**W**e all study at a university where people pride themselves (quite self-righteously) on being intelligent, logical and capable of independent thinking. We are part of society's new generation of philosophers who go about our lives with critical reasoning and prudential analysis. And yet, in such a diverse and dangerously knowledgeable niche as the LSE, the pretty suffer; the beautiful are persecuted and undervalued.

The likes of Baywatch's pride (Pamela Anderson), and the Hilton sisters have caused the world to think differently of the 'pretty ones'. Those who make that bit more effort to always look perfect, the Edie Britts of our generation, are seen as idiots. Striking faces with nothing behind the surface. Furiously objectified and harshly judged, these people unfortunately start to think little of themselves. After all, if everyone thinks you're nothing but a pretty face, aren't you?

In interviews they are immediately thought of differently from those candidates with glasses and tied back hair. If you show up in nice but formal shoes, wearing a slim fit suit which causes the opposite (or same) sex to do exorcist head turns, you are seen as 'not serious', disinterested, and unsuitable for any sort of role. If you do the same at private functions which aren't seen as 'pulling spots', you are adversely thought of and very few people give you a fair chance to show your potential.

The result is simple: 90 per cent of these people become the stereotype idiot. The blonde 'bimbo' who only has the body to offer. The girlfriend but not the wife. The bad boy but not the guy you take home to meet the parents.

Occasionally, however, a few of us don't listen to everyone else. We step up and be ourselves...our true selves. We study hard whilst filing our nails and drying our hair, we get up 2 hours early to read and cross-train at the same time, and we party hard after the 5 hours of re-writing revision cards. Our dream is simple, to escape the cruel world that views us as little more than the sexual satisfyer. Instead of placing us next to a man's right hand, or a woman's middle finger, we will one day be placed next to Einstein, Plato, or even Marx. And then we succeed... our painful efforts place us at the LSE.

And what is there in this new society that, in theory, values individuals based on their wit, sarcasm, and general knowledge?

We get bigots who still see us as idiots. Bigots who undermine our capabilities and always think that we are the stupid ones whom they are certain to overcome and surpass...but not before sleeping with.

Of course what I've said so far has been said before; in *Legally Blonde*. What Reese Witherspoon fails to show us is the truth behind the lives of the pretty. Instead of finding a close group of friends who inevitably support us and keep our chins up, the pretty ones at the LSE are forever looked upon with disgust and thought of (perhaps envied) with severe hatred. Even the staff avoid speaking to us and treat us with a 'I couldn't care less' attitude when approached for help. Finding support in our studies becomes that much more difficult where every tiny step that should just be part of university life becomes another huge hurdle for self-improvement.

But if Cinderella and Snow White have taught us anything, it's that every story has a happy ending. The diversely intelligent LSE niche are in for a shock. Ironically, this intelligent lot has forgotten that the pretty have in fact earned the right to study here too. We have shown to the higher levels that we match the others' abilities, and perhaps surpass them in many ways. As such, we are not to be undermined and underestimated, but to be feared. Given all of the difficulties we face, we have still managed to achieve the same levels as every other person here and done so in style.

The world is filled with pretty leaders. Tony Blair was loved, Gordon Brown is hated.

On average, beautiful people are paid 10 per cent more than other people. In EVERY customer related job (i.e. 95 per cent of jobs) employers will prefer someone beautiful to represent the brand. As such, the pretty have the potential to go much further than LSE's 'average' looking. Though we may now be seen as little more than sex toys, there will come a day in the lives of the LSE pretty where our intelligence will be weighed against that of the 'others' and the 'pretty' gene will be the deciding factor that tips the scale. Then it will be the others who seek our help, our support, and our condolences.

So dear LSE, don't hate the beautiful for being that much better in looks whilst challenging your brains, but embrace them and sweeten them now, because the greatest skill

