

The Beaver

11.10.2011
Newspaper of the
LSE Students' Union
thebeaveronline.co.uk
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RAG raids Brighton

» 4 Twelve students from the Raising and Giving (RAG) Society travelled to Brighton last Saturday, where they collected spare change for Meningitis UK. They raised £35 in notes and returned with a bucket of change. The students were met with a largely positive reaction from passers-by, receiving donations from shoppers, beach-goers and even a homeless man. This is the first time that RAG has collaborated with Meningitis UK, allowing the society to expand its network of associated charities.

The Quad's student movement

» 4 The LSE Students' Union held its inaugural Education Against Austerity event last Thursday, welcoming six figureheads from within the student movement to discuss its future. The group of panellists included an author, several professors and a member of the NUS National Executive Committee. They criticised the government on several counts, finding fault with the Schools White Paper, public sector pension cuts, the introduction of market forces and for-profit institutions into the higher education sector.

Tell me lies

» 5 Robert Trivers delivered a well-attended lecture of deceit and self-deception at the LSE last Wednesday. Trivers, who is a Professor of Anthropology and Biological Sciences at Rutgers University, claimed that deceptions starts as early as at six months of age, and that a child's IQ directly affects their ability to deceive. He explained the relationship between natural selection and deception, arguing that we are able to deter predators and attract mates by projecting an enhanced icon of ourselves.

Comment Our sexualised youth

Cassie Padget on the fetishisation of youth and our obsession with looking younger.



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Greens "not single-issue party" says Lucas

Stephanie Gale

Green Party leader, Caroline Lucas MP, was greeted by a reception of around fifty students eager to hear her take on the future of the Green Party on 6th October. Her talk was followed by 40 minutes of questions from students.

Throughout the event, Lucas reiterated her belief that the Green Party is much more than a single-issue party, and that it can play an important role in British politics as a progressive alternative to the other mainstream parties.

Lucas began with a discussion of the environment, criticising the way in which the Coalition government is handling the issue.

Stressing that the next eight to ten years are environmentally crucial, she commented on the government's scrapping of Sustainable Development Coalitions, arguing that there is now no real independent analysis of how green the government is becoming.

Lucas added that investors in green energy are not getting back the money that the government promised they would, and that the only reason the Coalition government backed down on proposals to sell off forests was due to widespread public outcry.

Moreover, Lucas went on to say that solutions to environmental crises may actually be intrinsically linked to solutions to economic ones. She criticised the Government's arguments that the cuts are necessary as fundamentally untrue and "economically illiterate", as she believes investment in times of economic austerity is crucial.

"Throwing people out of work saves very small amounts and causes social dislocation", said Lucas, who continued by arguing that if the Government put money into renewable energy not only would it be good



Caroline Lucas MP captivates an LSE audience | Photo: underclassrising.net

for the environment but it would be one of the fastest job creating schemes imaginable.

She further criticised the Coalition government's approach, saying that the cuts are having a devastating effect and even the Institute for Fiscal Stud-

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ies (IFS), an institution she thought to be "far from left-wing", is arguing that the cuts are hitting the poorest hardest.

Lucas proposed several other alternatives to the Government cuts, in particular suggesting bringing corporation tax up to the world average,

which would still leave UK rates below those of other countries such as the US and France, therefore not pricing Britain out of the market) and would save substantial sums. Other alternatives she put forward were the scrapping of Trident and measures to stop tax evasion by

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Chang talks "common-sense" economics

Vincent Wong
Senior Reporter

In his public lecture at the LSE last Tuesday, the development economist Ha-Joon Chang encouraged his listeners to educate themselves on economic issues and to voice their opinions on them to policymakers and business leaders.

"People have strong opinions on all sorts of things despite not having technical qualifications. It should be the same for economics", he said. "Economics affects us more than what Mr Kim Jong-Il does in North Korea". He added: "95 per cent of econom-

ics is common-sense made deliberately complicated".

Throughout his lecture, entitled "Making Rich People Richer Doesn't Make the Rest of Us Richer" and 22 Other Things They Don't Tell You about Capitalism", Chang stressed his belief that neoliberal economic policies have not been as beneficial as they may seem.

"We could have been richer had we had different policies", Chang said. "We could have been more evenly richer".

His lecture first addressed the idea of trickle-down economics. Stalin used a similar idea to justify Soviet collectivisation, but unlike in the Soviet Union today's policymakers' promises have not been met, he said, pointing

to falling growth and investment as a proportion of GDP in most countries.

"Our rich have become lazier - especially the American rich. They are paid two-and-a-half times what they used to be [in 1979] and they are delivering less than they used to. This is a rip-off. Why are we giving these people all this money?"

Chang also addressed the idea of a free market. As every market has some rules and boundaries that restrict freedom of choice, he said, free markets do not exist. To illustrate this claim, he criticised the textbook example of a free market: stock markets.

"You can't just go up to the London Stock Exchange with a bag of your company's shares and sell them. You have to be listed. Even when you're

listed, trading is done by certified traders".

He later criticised the idea that markets should be without regulation: "Our [lack of] ability to process information and make decisions is a fundamental constraint to rational decisions", he said, pointing to financial markets as an example where this is especially relevant.

"I agree with Greenspan - financial markets are too complex to regulate, but unlike him I argue that the solution [to crises] lies not in giving up on regulation, but in making the system simpler. For example, we should ban overly complex financial instruments that cannot be proven safe. We do this all the time with

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Editorial Board

Executive Editor
Nicola Alexander
editor@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Managing Editor
Duncan McKenna
managing@thebeaveronline.co.uk

News Editors
Alexander Young
Beth Clarke
Heather Wang
news@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Comment Editor
Rimmel Mohyidin
comment@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Features Editor
Bianca Nardi
features@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Design Editor
Ahmed Alani
design@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Social Editor
Shrina Poojara
social@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Sport Editors
Maz Fletcher
Maxim Owen
sports@thebeaveronline.co.uk

PartB Editors
Kerry-Rose O'Donnell
Aameer Patel
partb@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Photo Editor
Aisha Doherty
photo@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Web Editor
Liam Brown
web@thebeaveronline.co.uk

General Manager
Pern-Yi Quah
info@thebeaveronline.co.uk

With thanks to our
Copy Editor Kanika Singh

Union Bashō

Strange Slumber

Strange crowd
So few of those at
UGM fell asleep in
econometrics.

Bashō is the Beaver's evasive haiku poet and goes to the Union General Meeting so you don't have to.

He reckons that most of the few in attendance at UGM last year had their brains turned to mush by the econometrics lecture before. He's got no data to support that claim.



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The Beaver

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Rise and Fall

Following the most famous news event of the week, the sad and much grieved passing of Steve Jobs, this issue of the Beaver has become a strange fusion between the Beaver's usual remit of weekly LSE news and coverage of the death of this technology titan.

This tragic news occurred with serendipitous timing, as the LSE's lecture circuit has become the subject of admiration for its stellar quality this week, as evidenced by its ever climbing downloads through Apple's own iTunes service. The number of LSE lectures downloaded through podcasts rose to 3,623,769 in the month of July. Our public lectures have always been a star-studded affair and this year is no different with names such as Imran Khan and George Bizos already appearing on the roster. Our listener-base has also begun to attract names of merit as Malcolm Turnbull, an Australian politician, recently tweeted about how much he enjoyed listening

to our lecture podcasts, resulting in him receiving an invite to speak at the school. Look how self-sustaining we are! We're even zero-waste in a meta-physical sense.

Any frustrated would-be-Oxbridgers, will be please to know that our university definitely holds it own in terms of the ability to attract big names to our campus. Moreover, our public lectures are free whilst the elite clubs of the Oxford or Cambridge Union require a membership fee of £120 with no guarantee that you will even be able to get into to the hottest events. In a continuing theme for this space, we use our precious words of editorial-freedom to encourage you to make the most of the LSE. Where else in the world can you go from a class taught by a prospective Nobel-prize winning economists to a lecture by an international leader?

Clearly though, our pleas last week fell on deaf ears (please read, blind eyes). A big opportunity was wasted in the form of a somewhat tumble-weed

infested first UGM. Did we not tell you last week to go? Were we not clear? Seriously. A meagre 90 people turned up to the first UGM of this year. Whilst it looked considerably more populated than the ghost towns that punctuated last year, it was still well below the levels that we used to attract in the halcyon days of the past. Our UGM was once the keystone of our Union, a crucible of democratic intent. And paper-throwing. We don't even throw paper anymore. We'd hoped that the new year would act as a salve to ailing attendance figures, however clearly we were wrong. Perhaps it was because, given it was the first UGM, people were anticipating a slew of house-keeping logistical activity - and to be fair they would not have been overly disappointed. However, from now on, matters of real substance, which effect you and your peers will be debated and passed in your names. So we reiterate; go to the bastard UGM, get informed and go and vote. Really. You've been told twice.

Collective

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

collective@thebeaveronline.co.uk

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

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New to the LSE?

LSE is the only university to have Union General Meetings on a weekly basis.

So why not pop down this Thursday between 1-2pm in the Old theatre and see what it's all about for yourself?

Collective Meeting

This is where the whole paper - editors, contributors and fans - come together to celebrate all things Beaver. There will be updates from all the editors and as promised last week (and the week before), the Beaver will be holding elections for Editorial Board positions. Nominations are now closed, however our elections shall be held at our Collective Meeting tonight, (Tuesday 11th October 2011), in room CLM 4.02 at 6.30pm. People will be battling it out for the following positions on the Editorial Board:

- Features Editor
- Collective Chair
- General Manager

You must be a member of the Collective to vote, however whether you're running, voting or just interested in the Beaver, come one, come all and witness the wonders of democracy first hand.

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US and France, therefore not pricing Britain out of the market) and would save substantial sums. Other alternatives she put forward were the scrapping of Trident and measures to stop tax evasion by large corporations.

Lucas then answered students' questions on topics ranging from education policy to the role of the European Union. Mid-questioning, Lucas pointed out that sometimes she felt the Green Party's name could be a hindrance, as people assumed a single-issue nature to its politics.

"It never has been a single-issue party," stated Lucas, who described its current manifesto on a range of issues as similar to the party's original manifesto.

Lucas was keen to promote the Green Party as a left-wing progressive alternative, criticising Labour on several occasions – particularly in reference to tuition fees.

She argued that it was "rich" of Ed Miliband to promote the Labour Party's proposal to lower tuition fees to £6,000 a year as radical given that it was Labour who introduced student fees in the first place.

She added that the Green Party is now the only party in favour of the abolition of tuition fees, saying that tuition fees could be easily accounted for if corporation tax was to increase just a small amount for the richest companies.

In a further discussion of education, she criticised the government's scrapping of the Education Maintenance Allowance, arguing that many young people now feel that their route into a career has had the "hard door

slammed" on it.

She also claimed that the Government's Free Schools policy will lead to increasing social division and inequality, given that these schools will take away resources from existing comprehensives. She said the Green Party would bring Free Schools and Academies back under local authority control to prevent such inequalities.

Overall, it was obvious to the audience that Lucas brought with her a firm belief that the Green Party is a radical and progressive alternative with a voice on a range of issues.

Tom Maksymiw and Fionn Shiner, both first year BSc Politics and Philosophy students, described themselves as 'reluctant voters' and were pleased Lucas is offering something different

on the left, given that for them there seems to be a widening gap between an increasingly centre-ground Labour party and the Socialist Worker Party.

Rosie Coleman, a second year BSc International Relations student, said, "It's refreshing to have someone on the left coming to speak at LSE."



Photo: Harry Berdon

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Change also argued that labour market protectionism on the part of developed countries is a large contributor to wage disparities relative to the developing world.

"Most people in rich countries are paid more than they should be," he said. "But I'm not advocating full liberalisation".

He went on to criticise the perception that people in developing countries are less enterprising than those in developed countries.

"Most people [in developing coun-

tries] have to become very ingenious to survive. Most citizens in developed countries don't come close to being an entrepreneur. Most of them are realising other people's entrepreneurial visions".

In the question and answer session following his lecture, Chang was asked whether geography matters for economic development. He said that geography is important, but is not necessarily a constraint.

Responding to a question about whether government stimulus plans would be more effective if they were directed at the poor, Chang said that they were likely to be if consumption growth was poor. He also advocated attaching conditions to bank bailouts, such as promises by recipients to lend

to small and medium-sized firms.

Chang was also asked whether citizens could have too much control over policy-making.

"If you believe in democracy, you have to accept the consequences," he replied. "But we all have to strive for a better understanding of what is going on".

He was also asked whether developed countries have a duty to help the developing world.

Chang replied that it would be in the "enlightened self-interest" of developed countries to help.

A later question was addressed to both Chang and the chair, Danny Quah of the LSE's Department of Economics. An audience member wanted to know whether they felt it was "de-

pressing" that economics had become increasingly technical.

Chang replied that intellectual pluralism was necessary in economics. He added that he was disappointed that many economists had become "disinterested in the real world".

Quah said the question denied the diversity of the way economics is studied and applied, and agreed with Chang's views on intellectual pluralism in economics.

Quah added: "A global financial crisis is a terrible thing to waste. We [economists] are using [this one] to learn lessons from history and other disciplines. I think we are moving forwards in this respect".

Kanazawa sanction motion falls at UGM

Sydney Saubestre

The LSE Students' Union held its first Union General Meeting (UGM) of the academic year on Thursday. Every Thursday at one, the LSE takes a hiatus from class to gather Student Union representatives and various student groups in one open forum. Both the elected officers and any student willing can voice their opinion on immediate and long-term student concerns and proposals.

The Old Theatre held host to around ninety attendees: a disappointing turnout given the traditional packing-out of the Theatre for the first UGM of a term.

The first matter of business, put forth by the Chair of the UGM, Jack Tindale, was to elect a new vice-chair of the UGM, to "help keep time for the finest student platform in the UK."

Controversy arose as Jay Stoll, second year BSc International Relations and History undergraduate, was elected vice-chair, though a female candidate, Zoe Georgallis, third year

BA Anthropology undergraduate, had also presented herself as a candidate. Stoll's victory was won by promising "to keep order and shout sometimes."

Lucy McFadzean, Womens' Officer, seemed particularly dismayed.

"There's a history of women being passed over when trying to ask questions," McFadzean said, "so it would have been helpful to have a female vice-chair to ensure gender balance. The issue was addressed so flippantly."

The meeting proceeded as the Sabbatical Officers and Part-Time Executive gave a brief summary of the progress they had achieved during the summer break and what they still wish to accomplish during the academic year. Questions and, to some degree, heckling were welcomed from the audience.

Alex Peters-Day, Students' Union General Secretary, gave a brief synopsis of her "better School, better London" campaign. She added that she had been involved in the selection of a new Director, as well as exploring ways to ameliorate students' quality of life with City Hall. As of now, plans include cheaper student accommodation and public transportation.

Various upcoming events were advertised, including plans for Pride week, activist afternoons, and a women's assembly. Events surrounding Black History Month are well underway both on campus and at Pulse Radio.

When Stanley Ellerby-English, Activities and Development Officer, took the stage, he began by acknowledging that the Fresher's Fair was hot and unorganized, as anyone who attended gladly reported.

"We were disappointed with the venue," he said, "but it was still the most attended one-day fair we've ever held."

Ellerby-English stated that it is unlikely that the venue will be used in the future, though it did prove that it would still be well attended if held off campus.

The final issue, and by far the most lively, was a motion entitled "Too Late to Apologise", calling for the immediate dismissal of Satoshi Kanazawa. Kanazawa is a Reader in the Department of Management who studies evolutionary psychology.

Sherelle Davids, Anti-Racism Officer, spearheaded the motion

to dismiss and condemn any of Dr. Kanazawa's research. He was first noticed by Davids last year when a paper he published claimed that "black women are less attractive," among other racist remarks. The sufficiency of the internal investigation the LSE conducted into the matter was called into question, with its result of merely barring Kanazawa from publishing in non-peer reviewed journals.

"Kanazawa used false science to get to racist ends," Davids said, "he has lost his position of responsibility and neutrality."

A few students defended the LSE's internal investigation. Once they were asked to publicly defend their statements on stage, it became clear they were doing so more for the sake of argument than for their own convictions.

As classes were set to resume in a couple of minutes, students were asked to vote on the issue online and the meeting called a close. The "Too Late to Apologise" motion fell by 56 votes for it to 25 against and one undecided: the motion fell due to its total of 82 votes being cast on it being below the quorum requirement of 250 votes.

News in brief

LSE RANKS 47TH GLOBALLY

The LSE's international ranking has risen 39 places according to the Times Higher Education publication released earlier this month. The jump from 86th to 47th position was partly attributed to the change in methodology used by the compilers, THE and Thompson Reuters. Judith Rees, the Interim Director of the School, is "glad to see that the LSE is much more highly-ranked this year". California Institute of Technology tops the league table and Oxford University comes joint fourth with Princeton University.

TO RENT OR NOT TO RENT

Research published by LSE London week shows that if the private rental market is to provide an attractive alternative to home ownership, a more secure and comprehensive tenancy agreement must be made available. The paper, entitled 'Towards a sustainable private rented sector', compares the UK rental market with fifteen other industrialised countries. Kath Scanlon, Research Fellow at LSE London, explains that households are unlikely to choose privately rented houses if they face the possibility of being asked to leave at short notice.

TWEET TWEET

A guide on how to use Twitter has been released by the LSE Public Policy Group. The guide not only teaches the basics of Twitter, but also provides guidelines on how to effectively utilise this website to aid academic teaching and research. Professor Patrick Dunleavy, Chair of the LSE Public Policy group and co-author of the Guide said: "...I hope that this new Guide may help many other colleagues who are interested in this new development [Twitter] but don't know how it works to get started themselves on Twitter."

HOUSEHOLDS: WORST YET TO COME

A study, entitled 'The Great Recession and the Distribution of Household Income', predicts that as the government cuts public spending and raise taxes to tackle the deficit problem, the income of households will be negatively impacted for a long period of time. This could last for up to five or ten years if not longer. The report also suggests that household income is a better indicator of people's living standard than the wages, an aspect that is usually focused on. The study was conducted and produced by a research team led by Professor Stephen Jenkins of the LSE's Department of Social Policy.

NUT ALLERGY NOT TREATED SERIOUSLY

Many parents with children suffering from a life-threatening nut allergy often face hostility and skepticism when they try to create a safe nut-free environment, researchers from the University of Leicester, the LSE and the Children's Allergy Clinic at University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust suggest. They found that some parents feel that their friends and even family think nut allergy is "frivolous and self indulgent fad invented and maintained by attention-seeking people". Their findings is published in the journal 'Chronic Illness', pointing a need to raise awareness of the danger of nut allergy.

GOT A SCOOP?

Got a story that you think we should be printing? Send us an e-mail: news@thebeaveronline.co.uk

RAG searches "4 a Vaccine" in Brighton

Gregory Gillette

The LSE Students' Union Raising and Giving (RAG) Society travelled to Brighton to raise money for Meningitis UK's "Search 4 a Vaccine" campaign last Saturday. A dozen students from the charity group spent the afternoon collecting spare change on the streets as part of this year's first RAG Raid.

With a largely positive reaction from those donating, participants heard heartfelt stories from those affected by Meningitis, a disease which, as referenced in the campaign title, can kill in as little as four hours.

Sporting campaign t-shirts and generously donated face-paint, the LSE students cordially received donations from beach-goers, shoppers, and a slew of generous bus drivers, among others.

In one particularly touching case, a homeless man, himself collecting change, insisted preventing meningitis was something he would not pass up the chance to contribute to.

Not all, however, were supportive of the group's undertaking. On several occasions, security and establishment personnel asked RAG pairs to leave populated areas around Brighton's

mall, pier, and iconic Pavilion. Although all members of the event carried with them council-sanctioned permits arranged by Meningitis UK, the students yielded and changed locations.

Despite the difficulties encountered, by the end of the day the participants had collected enough change to fill a whole bucket, plus £35 in bills.

Meningitis UK and the RAG executive cooperated on the event as it was to take place in the first weekend of term and Brighton is relatively close to London.

As Meningitis UK was a partner RAG had not previously collaborated with, it also allowed the society to extend their network of associated charities.

Participants commented that they were given the opportunity to learn about a disease many of them thought they were immune to. Often, having received a vaccine for meningitis as children, participants were unaware that meningitis B, the most common form of the disease according to Meningitis UK's website, currently does not have a preventative medication.

The event coordinators were pleased with the turnout, particularly given that membership this year was judged as abnormally low after the Freshers' Fayre. The heat, queue, and cramped conditions of the Fayre were

suggested as possible causes for this setback.

Jen Wilkins, President of RAG, remains optimistic, however, that students will feel motivated to participate in future activities, and aid the group in its efforts to best last year's total of £30,000 raised.

With future raids as well as events ranging from sky diving to a hitch-hiking journey to Berlin planned, RAG will be focusing its internally organised efforts on three charities. The beneficiaries will be decided online by a student referendum closing this Friday 14th October. This is the first time the students are able to vote for the charities to be supported by RAG online.

Wilkins stressed that the charity selection does not mean interests of other groups will be neglected: "One focus of this year's committee will be to coordinate efforts with other student organizations or motivated individuals who can count on RAG to help with any charity-based events they wish to see happen this year at the LSE."

Ben Sutcliffe, the RAG Events Officer, encouraged more students to get involved with RAG events. "It's not all bake sales" he said, while also pointing out that RAG is free to join and commitment is on a per-event basis.



Photo: Gregory Gillette



Photo: Gregory Gillette

RAG battle of the halls raises £2,800

Gabriel Everington

The LSE Students' Union Raising and Giving (RAG) society raised £2,800 for charity last Monday, as more than 280 students flocked to Camden's Purple Turtle for the annual Battle of the Halls fundraising event.

The seventy students from Carr-Saunders Hall, representing 45 per cent of the hall's total residents, won the title of "Most Sociable Hall" for the second year running. Carr-Saunders's nearest challengers were Rosebery, with 35 per cent resident participation, and Passfield, with 24 per cent. Bankside House, the largest of the School's halls of residence, was represented by a single attendee, who did his best to represent his hall before passing out on the stage.

The poor attendance of Bankside residents has been attributed by Lizzie Ferguson, RAG Vice-President, to "confusion between residents and the hall committee" as to arrangements pertaining to the event.

Competitions took place throughout the night, with crowd support ranging from vociferous (Carr-Saunders and Rosebery) to non-existent (Bankside).

High Holborn took home the "Best Dressed" award, which surprised one onlooker who said, "I didn't think they'd be able to afford stylish clothes after paying £200 per week for accommodation".

Carr-Saunders won the dance-off, as a be-hatted Saunderite nicknamed "Big Dave" showcased criminally smooth moves as he thrilled a manic crowd.

An impressive display by Northumberland House was enough to throw off a strong challenge from a determined Rosebery and win the "Boat Race" event after a rookie error made by Saunders' President Gareth Robinson resulted to his team's disqualifica-

tion.

The staff at the Purple Turtle lived up to its name by offering very slow service, but even this didn't dampen

the party atmosphere.

Ferguson said of the event that it was "really well attended," adding that "everyone had a good time." Of the lack

of attendance on the part of Bankside residents, she said that the "difficulty with Bankside was unfortunate."

The charity for which the money

was raised will be decided by a student vote, the results of which will be announced on 14th October.

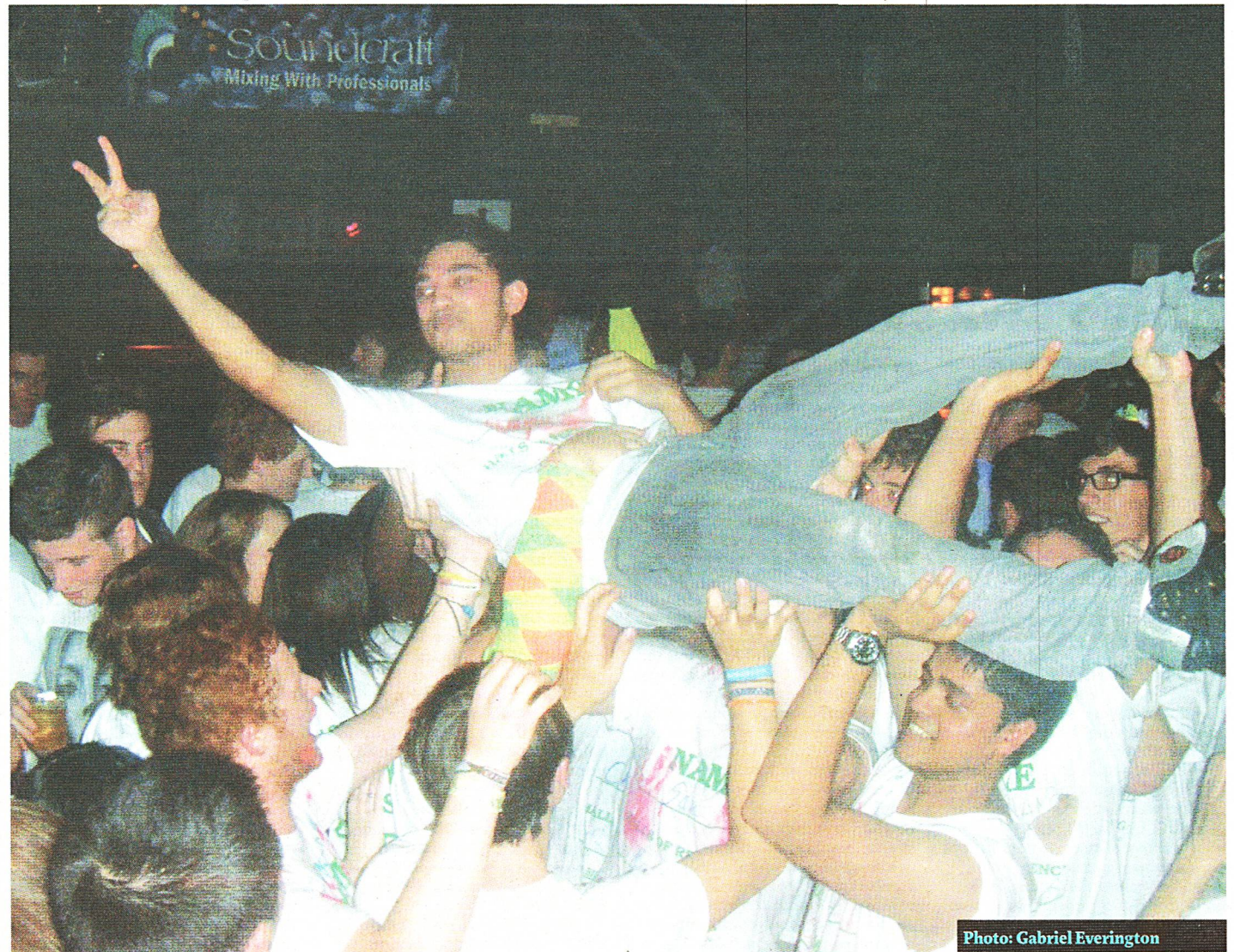


Photo: Gabriel Everington

Cole puts Arab Spring into historical perspective

Julia Wackett

The rows in the Sheikh Zayed Theatre were packed as Professor Juan Cole proceeded to the microphone to give a lecture entitled "Framing the Arab Uprisings, a historical perspective" last Thursday evening.

Cole began by marking the irony in the modern Arab Spring and the current demand for parliamentary elections. Although the Arabs are fighting for Parliamentary rule now, they did not want it during much of the 20th century, when parliaments were primarily associated with European imperialism.

"The Europeans turned land into a commodity," said Cole. Whereas before peasants had a right to be on the land and ownership was multiple, landlords became the ruling class.

Cole explained that decolonization did not bring democracy to the region after all. The military regimes that took over won wars, created land reforms, and turn towards socialism.

He referenced Egypt's economy, half of which was state-owned from 1960-1970.

However, people often spent their entire lives under the rule of a single-party-state leader with "utopian plans." For instance, Anwar Sadat promised all Bachelor Students that they would find employment.

Cole also highlighted the importance of the West in the region. The new leaders portrayed themselves as against religious fundamentalists, an argument which gained fame after 9/11.

Therefore colonial regimes unraveled only very late and what they led to, Cole highlights, was a kind of neoliberalism.

Again, Cole noted the irony, as the West was assigned to reduce the large public sector, but privatization created space for inside traders. Coles' used the examples of Mubarak and Ben Ali, who then had the power to rule all major parts of the public sector.

Cole concluded that the current unrest is a replay of the 1920's revolution. However, this time, it is driven by a generation of youth whose prospects are blocked by Mafia states, and not poor peasants against landlords.

But will there be a new liberal age in the Middle East? Cole is optimistic about Tunisia and Libya - property there is out of the hands of the old elite, which makes both political and

social change possible.

"The Tunisians want a normal political life", Cole says.

With regards to Egypt, however, Cole is more sceptical. The party is resolved, but highly positioned politicians can reapply and build a new power base.

Cole's historical outlook heated up the audience and in the question-answer session afterwards there were far more questions than the time could allow.

"It was interesting to get to know the historical impact of a day to day political topic" said Teddy Nicholson, an Msc International Relations Theory student.

Others were more critical. Brainerd Prince, a PhD student from Oxford, would have liked Cole to speak more about the the revolutionists and their alienation from their old Arab roots: "It was a very American centered speech, focused more on the political and economic, rather than cultural aspects," he said.

Cole is the Richard P Mitchell Collegiate Professor of History at the University of Michigan and author of the blog 'Informed Comment'. He also inaugurated the LSE's Fred Halliday Memorial Lecture Series.

Future of student movement mooted at Education Against Austerity event

Harry Burdon

The LSE Students' Union's inaugural Education Against Austerity meeting was held in the Quad on 6th October. Touted as a forum to "discuss what the way forward is for [the student] movement," the event was hosted by six panellists, all figureheads within the student movement.

Owen Jones is an Oxford graduate, author of "Chavs: The Demonization of the Working Class," and listed as one of the "Top 100 Most Influential People on the Left" for 2011 in the Daily Telegraph. He insisted that activists seek to "take this government down," going on to criticise the "weakness of the left" whilst "Thatcherism" is at hand.

Jones went on to argue that Conservatives wish to "divide and rule between public and private," expressing anger at the public sector pension cuts. Furthering his points on cuts, he went on to talk of the "attack on EMA," a benefit for students in Further Education from low income households. A replacement system has been slated, but carries only a third of the budget.

John Holmwood, a Cambridge graduate and Professor of Sociology at Nottingham, had a large number of criticisms for the Schools White Paper. The Education Bill 2011, presently at second reading, would allow for horrific abuse of the student loans system, claimed Holmwood: not only could the interest rate of the new student loans be brought up to commercial rates, the student loans could also be sold on to third parties.

In addition, he made criticisms of the introduction market forces into universities. While university efficiency is lauded as a goal by the Coalition, he then demonstrated evidence that the UK system was already incredibly efficient. For all universities ranked in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings Top 200,

per billion dollars spent, the UK comes second in the world.

Holmwood stated that for-profit organisations will not bring greater efficiency, only profits. A member of the audience described for-profit educational organisations such as Kaplan and Apollo as "parasites onto the university system."

Mark Campbell is a Senior Lecturer in Internet Computing at London Metropolitan University, where 70 per cent of courses are to be closed. London Metropolitan also has the highest percentage of students from working class backgrounds. With his view that the humanities will be particularly affected by cuts, Campbell sees this as being tantamount to a stand on the part of the university that "art is not really for you [the working class]." London Metropolitan has defended the decision to cut courses, claiming they have low demand, and that these closures will allow them to charge lower fees next year.

Campbell presented policy propositions such as "bringing corporation tax in line with the OECD average," claiming this would allow for the abolition of university fees and the return of grants.

A point made by a member of the audience was that it was not that the Coalition did not have the money, it was about priorities. It was also pointed out that, according to George Magnus, predictor of the sub-prime mortgage crash and senior economic advisor to UBS, the UK does not have a debt crisis, and that, therefore, these cuts in the name of debt concern political issues rather than practical necessity.

Mark Bergfield of the NUS National Executive Committee spoke of the next steps for the student movement, with a focus on the necessity of protest. He pleaded for "unity at an institutional level," referring to working with educational institutions during protest as opposed to unsanctioned walkouts.

Protests are planned on the 9th and 30th November.



Owen Jones calls to "take this government down"
Photo: Harry Burdon

Arab Spring a "wake-up call for the West"

Jon Allsop
Connor Russell

Chris Doyle, chairman of the Council for Advancement of Arab-British Understanding, claimed that the Arab Spring has been a "wake-up call for the West" at a packed George IV pub on Friday night.

Accompanied by Dutch MEP Marietje Schaake of the European Parliament Foreign Affairs Committee, he claimed the prognosis was generally good for the future of the region. Nevertheless, key doubts were raised about the relationship between the West, particularly the EU, and several states in the Arab world.

The event, organised by the LSE Benelux Society in association with members of the Dutch liberal democratic party D66, saw the two panellists reach a general consensus on issues from youth engagement in Middle Eastern politics to the regrettable impracticality of military intervention in Syria.

In regards to the role of the West in the conflicts, Doyle warned that the Middle East must no longer be seen as "a playground for (Western) interests," but rather that Arab countries were beginning to "look for their own solutions, without just turning to the West for ideas."

Schaake, meanwhile, stressed the role that the EU has to play in the unfolding situation, adding that an "everything but institution" expansionist EU policy would enable European states to build stronger cultural and economic ties with the region.

She also advocated further EU integration with Turkey, a controver-

sial topic given the latter's relationship with Cyprus, claiming that the republic has a vital role to play in any future settlement of the current conflict.

Doyle, however, warned that any Turkish intrusion in Syria would inevitably be viewed in the light of the country's Ottoman history.

Schaake insisted that she was optimistic about the region's future, though with several caveats, adding that the next 20 years would be "incredibly difficult."

Doyle added that he was also "optimistic in the long-run," but has "no real insight" into how the situation will unfold.

Both panellists did, however, strike a more downbeat note with regard to intervention in Syria, with Doyle warning that such a policy would be "more Afghanistan and Iraq, and less Libya."

Finally, social media was outlined as a contributing factor to the situation on the ground across the region. When asked about her defining memories of the uprisings, Schaake recalled her growing awareness of the emerging crisis as having derived from social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook as opposed to more conventional mainstream media. She claimed that such a trend was indicative of a "generational gap" and that social media has "changed the way in which news has been communicated."

Doyle argued that the increased prevalence of social networking was part of a wider trend of modernisation in the Middle East, including an "up-surge in Arab pride" and a "new political discourse." He added that in order for the West to play a significant and less hypocritical role in this discourse, a serious rethink of arms sales policy to the region must be undertaken.

A convenient lie

John Armstrong

Robert Trivers, Professor of Anthropology and Biological Sciences at Rutgers University and winner of the 2007 Crafoord prize, delivered a captivating lecture this week at the LSE entitled 'Deceit and Self-Deception: Fooling yourself the better to fool others'.

Professor Helena Cronin, the chair of the event and Co-Director of the Centre for Philosophy of Natural and Social Science, described his work as a "pioneering contribution for the social sciences".

In a 2006 discussion with Noam Chomsky, Trivers outlined the role of linguistics within deception, a topic developed further in this week's public lecture. He referred to speeches made by top-ranking US government officials about the Iraq War which, in comparison to other speeches made at the time, lacked the use of personal pronouns, such as "I" and "we", Trivers taking this as hinting at a desire on the part of the White House to detach itself from the deceit surrounding the invasion of Iraq.

According to Trivers, "deception starts at six months of age". It seems that a child's IQ directly affects their ability to deceive: as IQ grows, so too does the ability to lie. Trivers illustrated this observation through two video clips, which depicted children deceiving their parents in an obvious yet humorous fashion.

For Trivers, however, the real question lies in self-deception, especially in light of the fact that for centuries

philosophers have debated the question "how can we possibly deceive ourselves?" Trivers attributes this concept to the evolutionary process, whereby the unconscious mind retains things from the conscious mind, blocking the truth in order to suit personal agendas.

In his new book entitled 'Deceit', Trivers notes that "for self-deception you can hardly beat academics", with a survey suggesting that 94% of these intellectuals would put themselves in the top half of their profession. The witty way in which he delivered these anecdotes and statistics provoked whispers of "he's funny" from the audience throughout the event.

In Trivers's terms, natural selection favours self-deception as a means of promoting oneself. If we appear more confident, brighter, more dangerous or more attractive, the mind enables us to survive like an animal in its indigenous habitat, deterring predatory forces and attracting mates by projecting a false icon of ourselves.

Trivers's research also outlines the relationship between self-deception and our biological composition. His study found that law students with higher optimism levels had a stronger immune system than those with less optimistic tendencies.

Bizos suggests apartheid issues dealt in the Greek way

Alice Dawson

An audience eager to explore George Bizos' life as a distinguished human rights advocate attended his lecture entitled 'Hellenism, Apartheid and Universal Human Rights' on Wednesday, hosted by the Hellenic Observatory.

Born in Greece and raised in South Africa, Bizos campaigned heavily against apartheid in his adopted country and was instrumental in drafting its Truth and Reconciliation Bill. This granted fundamental human rights to all South African citizens for the first time. Furthermore, Bizos represented Nelson Mandela in the famous Rivonia trial of 1963-4. He is credited with helping Mandela and his fellow defendants avoid the death penalty. Bizos commented that he was the only advocate with full access to Mandela throughout his twenty-seven year imprisonment. "We had a lot of time to talk", Bizos remarked. He went on to discuss Mandela's "optimistic" attitude with regards to the democratic future of South Africa. Bizos then described Mandela's deep admiration of Greece; he proclaimed her the "mother of democracy" and hoped that South Africa would become Greece's "own worthy daughter."

Bizos' own thoughts on democracy, many of which were linked to his Greek heritage, were not absent from the lecture. He alluded to the 6th and 5th Century BC Athenian leaders

Solon and Cleisthenes, whose constitutional reforms included the granting of socio-economic rights to the poor. Bizos observed that these reforms, which included the right to sit on a jury and participate in the decision to appoint magistrates, reflect the ideals "prescribed in democratic countries in the 21st century."

Bizos also highlighted the words of Pericles as particularly important for "anyone concerned with human rights today." The democratic concept of power resting "in the hands not of the few but of the many" has been "very meaningful" in his own life and in his defence of human rights during apartheid. The spirit of Hellenism, which Bizos views as "doing things the Greek way," is clearly a motivating factor in his political philosophy.

In spite of the improvements made by Bizos and his fellow advocates, achieved by utilising the "limited space" available to them in order to "speak out against injustice", Bizos concluded that there was still a long way to go with regards to post-apartheid human rights. He warned that "much more has to be done" in order to protect future South African generations; he identifies health, education, housing and employment as priority areas for the government.

Cara Banerji-Parker, MSc International Law and Human Rights student remarked that the lecture "was a really interesting lecture with an inspiring speaker." More events connected with the Hellenic Observatory are to be held at the LSE in the near future.

LSE public lecture podcasts downloaded more than one million times

Rachel Weiler

The LSE's public lecture podcasts, which were made available on iTunes U in June, saw download figures of 826,530 in May, 1,624,810 in June and 3,623,769 in July.

Prior to July, the podcasts were available from the Events website, the Internet radio service Mixcloud, and wherever linked to by likeminded institutions or bloggers.

Numbers of downloads decreased in August and September, but Alan Revel, Events Manager for the LSE's Conference and Events Office, commenting that he was "curious" to see how the podcasts would perform in October as the academic year starts up again and more public lectures take place.

The LSE has a long history of attracting high profile speakers. When Anthony Giddens was Director of the School, prestigious New Left speak-

ers such as Bill Clinton and Tony Blair were targeted as potential guest lecturers. The high profile status of many lecturers led to increases in both demand for events and inquiries from potential speakers.

The number of lecturers has risen from 15-20 per term ten years ago to nearly 100 per term this year. The live events are well attended, with Revel estimating that lecture theatres are usually at 67 per cent capacity, with some popular events having to turn people away or refer them to live video feeds in other spaces.

The increasingly large online audience makes the LSE an especially attractive venue for lecturers, who, Revel reports, often approach the School asking to speak rather than waiting for an invitation.

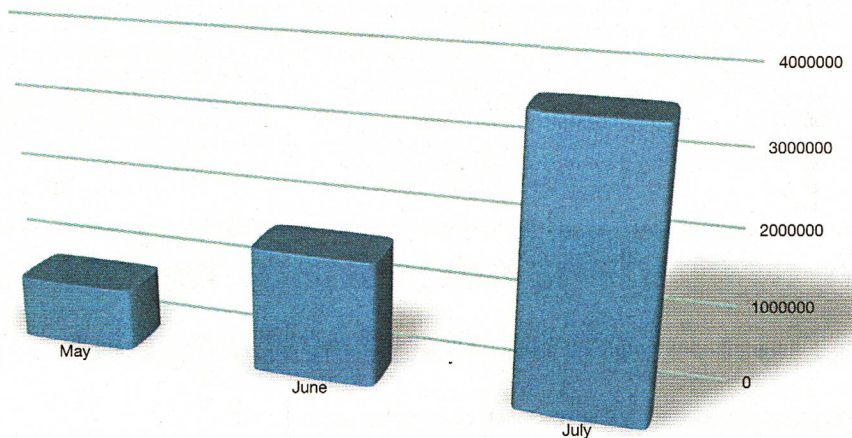
The LSE's podcasts have also helped to attract both students and future lecturers to campus. For example, Australian politician Malcolm Turnbull was invited to speak at the School this week after tweeting about how much

he enjoyed listening to LSE podcasts while cycling.

The high profile of many guests also often attracts free press coverage – for example, a debate between followers of Keynes and Hayek in July was broadcast on Radio 4, and was so popular that the station asked to produce other events with LSE. "You'd have to pay a PR agency huge sums to get into the press as often as LSE's events and lectures do", says Revel.

The LSE has one of the most comprehensive and prestigious rosters of speakers in the world. The School's location in central London, as well as its reputation for academic excellence, makes it especially appealing for speakers. According to Revel, the Events Office was recently approached by the London Business School for advice on developing an excellent events series.

The podcasts and the live events are all promoted on Facebook, Twitter, and the LSE website.



Graphic depiction of the total number of LSE public lecture podcast downloads on iTunes downloads per month

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Academics propose a safer way out for Europe

Matthew Edwards

A group of academics from across Europe, including the LSE's Professor Luis Garicano of the Department of Economics and Professor Dimitri Vayanos of the Department of Finance, have published a proposal which they believe to be the last rescue plan the Eurozone needs.

The group of academics have postulated that the Eurozone's problem lies in the fact that many countries (Greece, Portugal, Italy, Spain and Ireland) carry debts they may not be able to pay back in full and that failure to pay back these debts would land Europe in recession because much of this debt is held by European banks, which once considered it safe.

They further hold that there is enough money in Europe to pay these countries' debts – it is earned and spent in Germany by Germans, and the Germans are understandably keen to keep it this way. Previous rescue plans have fallen short because the citizens of northern Europe are unwilling to commit to a bailout of southern Europe.

For this group, a rescue plan is not elusive because the economics are hard; politics is the fundamental obstacle: a successful plan to save Europe from renewed crisis will need to leverage Europe's economic clout to shore up confidence in its riskier members in a way that does not put German taxpayers money in harm's way. Eurobonds, once mooted as a potential solution to Europe's woes, were rejected for just this reason, as they would have left Germany and other safe European countries on the line for

the risky borrowing of other European countries.

The group's rescue plan, published on the Euro-nomics website, is gaining traction with many institutions at the heart of Europe. It proposes the bundling up a portion of the debts of all Eurozone members and its splitting into a safe senior tranche and a risky junior tranche. Complex financial products got Europe into its current position and the group hopes that they may well get it out.

The senior tranche of debt would be known as European Safe Bonds (or ESBies) and would be amongst the safest financial assets in the world. They would be backed by the first 70 per cent of debt payments from all European countries. Were things to go badly wrong throughout the Eurozone, and even if many countries were to default, the ESBies would remain safe.

By the group's calculations, ESBies would only suffer losses every 600 years or so. ESBies would be dull and their rewards would be meagre – just what, according to these academics, Europe needs in these troubled times. Those in search of higher returns, hedge fund and private equity investors, could gamble on the junior tranche without the problems caused by risky bonds being held by large banks.

The group's proposals would take a few months to get up and running, but they believe that simply moving towards this solution could calm markets and help return Europe and the world to stability.

Deputy Governor of BOE guest lectures new course

Nicola Alexander
Bethany Clarke

The Department of Government has launched a third year dissertation course entitled "Politics of Money, Finance and Trade," featuring guest lectures by Andrew Bailey, Deputy CEO of the Bank of England.

The course, made available to third year students in the government department only, was the brainchild of Dr Schonhardt-Bailey and Dr Rickard, both of The Department of Government. Dr Schonhardt-Bailey said, "this course stems from my experience (of some 15 years or so) teaching the course GV227."

"Politics of Money, Finance and Trade" seeks to offer greater insight into important areas of economic policy and further intellectually challenge students by requiring them to submit a dissertation based on their own empirical research. Dr Schonhardt-Bailey commented that the course "gives undergraduate students the unique opportunity to complete a serious empirical research project, including gathering their own data, subjecting the data to empirical analysis and then presenting and writing up the results

in a formal report."

The course will be divided between one term of structured teaching, including three guest lectures by Dr Bailey, and one term of workshops to help students prepare for their research projects which will make up 100 per cent of the assessment.

In the past, the LSE has been reluctant to have a course assessed in full by an essay or research project, due to concerns about plagiarism.

Dr Schonhardt-Bailey and Dr Rickard believe they can avoid this problem through small group supervision throughout the year, as "it will become blindingly obvious to us if a student is not working through the steps (with us) to prepare his/her research project."

The main impetus behind this course was to offer students greater interaction with top-tier academic staff. Student satisfaction surveys conducted on campus often show that students would like more contact time with their lecturers. In order to achieve this level of interaction between the academic staff and the students, the course is capped at fifteen participants. According to LSE for You the course reached its cap within the first few days of week one. Dr Schonhardt-

Bailey said; "we have hit the maximum with no difficulty, which pleases me." This level of demand may encourage the government department to consider introducing similar project-based courses in the future.

According to several students enrolled in the course, a key attraction was the guest lectures by Andrew Bailey. Bailey, who also holds the posts of Deputy Head of the Prudential Business Unit and the Director of UK Banks and Building Societies, will give three lectures this term focusing mainly on monetary policy. Bailey is no stranger to the LSE having acted as a guest lecturer for GV227 over the past ten years, according to Dr Schonhardt-Bailey.

Shakira Chanrai, third year BSc Government student, said; "The chance to be taught by someone as experienced in monetary policy as Andrew Bailey is such a unique opportunity. It was definitely one of the main reasons that I opted for GV353."

Other departments have also hosted guest speakers in their smaller seminars. The law department's course "Administrative Law" invited legal professionals such as prominent barristers to guest lecture on topics of their expertise.



Andrew Bailey
Flickr user: bankofengland

LSE goes green with organic food, second-hand clothes and a party

Sam Barnett

This year's Green Day, held last Tuesday, went "brilliantly", according to Lois Clifton, the Ethics and Environment Officer.

The event included a food co-op, a ReLove second-hand clothes sale, and a roof-garden party.

Hosted in the Quad and on the roof of the East Building, the event was well attended as students arrived to sample organic food including dried fruit and quinoa, and to take part in ReLove which raised £140 pounds for the East Africa Fund.

Clifton noted that they had received enough donations to hold a second ReLove event later in the year.

Sadly, one or two more musically-minded students, such as Gabriel Everington, a first year BSc Government and History student, were misled by the event's title, expecting "more to do with the American punk-pop trio". The food co-op, however, was described as providing "an adequate substitute".

Clifton said that she organised the event because she was involved in

ReLove and the food co-op last year and wanted to do more regular events this year.

She said "The food co-op was the most popular [event] yet and the roof garden party was attended by 30 people who wanted to get involved with green projects".

"The volunteers who helped out were really great!" Clifton added.

Stanley Ellerby-English, the Activities and Development Officer, was also positive that the event had been a success.

He described the Green Day event as "an excellent example" of the emphasis the Students' Union is placing on being environmentally friendly. Ellerby-English pointed to the event being an example of "societies working together towards environmentally-friendly ends".

Green Day was well received by students and points towards a heightened commitment to environmental concerns by the Students' Union for the year ahead.

The roof garden is intended to be an asset for all students and the Students' Union is keen for volunteers to get involved in gardening activities up there.



Photo: Aisha Doherty

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INDUSTRY	IMPACT	OW	FASTER
GLOBAL	ASSIGNMENTS	OW	FASTER
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Comment

Stand, vote and elect

Our Returning Officer reminds us of the importance of and opportunities within the Michaelmas Term elections

Josh Still



This week will see the opening of nominations for the Michaelmas Term elections, something that I hope at least some of you are aware of already. As the LSE Students' Union Returning Officer for this academic year, I would like to take this opportunity to try and encourage as many of you reading this as possible to participate, either by voting (for Freshers, this is done on the Students' Union website at www.lsesu.com/vote and it is incredibly easy to do) or better yet, by standing. All you have to do to stand is fill out a nomination form on the Students' Union website.

Firstly, I think it is important to explain the positions that are being voted for. I am aware that in recent years there has been a perception that the Michaelmas elections are merely a sideshow to the election of the Sabbatical Officers and Part-Time Executive in the Lent Term. This is categorically not my belief, and there are extremely important positions available in the upcoming election. For example, the Academic Board, where the three elected students will meet seven times a year with the Director, Secretary and Director of Administration, Chief Information Officer, all teaching staff

and Students' Union General Secretary, Education Officer and Postgraduate Officer. Last year the Academic Board and its student representatives were influential in the LSE becoming the only English Russell Group University not to charge £9,000 fees. All major issues affecting teaching and learning within the School are discussed and it's vital that LSE students have a strong voice at the meeting.

Being voted onto the Court of Governors allows you not only to sit in a meeting with Shami Chakrabarti, Will Hutton and Stelios, but also to help direct the strategic direction of the LSE. Five students are elected as Governors, one of whom joins the General Secretary on the Council, the LSE's highest decision-making body. The Postgraduate Officer is the leading voice of over 6,000 postgraduate students, almost two-thirds of the LSE's student body. Although it is a part-time position, it comes with a salary and is a very demanding but rewarding role. The LSE-National Union of Students (NUS) delegates will also be elected; those elected attend the annual NUS Conference and vote on issues that will affect not only the LSE, but the British student population as a whole. You also have the opportunity to represent the University's Mature and Part-Time Students by becoming their Officer. This is a crucial role as there are almost 1,000 part-time students at the LSE and 'mature students' encompasses everybody over the age of 25. So there are a range of positions

that should suit a diverse spectrum of people, and are of major significance to not only the Union, but the running of the LSE itself.

I know that thinking about standing can be daunting, especially for those who are new here at the LSE. From personal experience, I know I didn't feel comfortable enough in my first Michaelmas here to run, even though I would have liked to. However, this year we will be running more workshops for candidates than ever before, helping you with every aspect of campaigning here at the LSE. Myself and the rest of the SU are eager to help you in any way we can. Feel free to contact me at any time at su.returningofficer@lse.ac.uk with any queries or concerns at all you may have about standing.

When I speak to people at the LSE about the Students' Union, there are those who have a distinctly negative view of it and its activities. I remain a profound believer in the Students' Union's ability to represent its students and to improve all of our experiences here at the LSE. However, whatever your view of the Students' Union, and especially if it is less positive than mine, participating in elections is the perfect way to change that. It is no coincidence that the LSE students who do vote in elections feel that the Union

represents them better than those who do not. Every single student has the power to change our University for the better simply by taking less than two minutes to go

onto the www.lsesu.com website and vote. This is something that applies to us all, whether you are my age or in the latter stages of your Ph.D. or if you are in the Government or Economics Department.

If you do not think there are any candidates standing who represent your views, then attempt to encourage someone who does to put their name forward. Or, better yet, stand yourself. By the very act of standing, you increase the choice available for

thousands of your fellow student, and enhance the democracy of our

Students' Union. Even if you're not President of a big society, or yourself the most well-known person on campus, consider standing. Because those things are irrelevant if you can get your campaign noticed and liked by fellow students. The chances are you need less votes than you think to win an election here at the LSE, and if you do you will get the chance to make a big difference. Even if you don't, by standing you benefit your Students' Union, university and, above all, fellow students enormously. And, like me, you might just enjoy yourself in the process. ☘



Raise the fees

Forget freezing, it's time we started charging home students £25,000

Mark Worby



Yes, that's right, raise the fees. I want university fees to increase, higher than the £9,000 that most universities are already going to charge. But not the LSE, because we're £500 pounds more progressive than most other higher education institutions (Booyah!). I think a far more reasonable total would be roughly £25,000, a much closer amount to our American institutional relatives.

With this money I would expect far superior teaching, both in quality and in access hours. With better paid lecturers, giving the GTAs a living wage and possibly even (gasp!) throwing in a pension for a few people we might actually get value for money from our higher education. There's a reason that Harvard, Berkeley and Stanford were all ranked higher than the LSE for Social Sciences as of 2011 (QS World University rankings, bitching about the methodology aside). In case you weren't aware, that's kinda our thing. Our only thing. I believe it's because they have money to throw around on, you know, teaching.

It's about motivation; currently we

don't pay enough to educate students in a satisfactory manner. A recent study by the BBC revealed that less than 1 in 5 privately educated students favored their university teaching over their schooling. The report goes on to say that "almost two thirds declared that the teaching they had at school had been better".

You could argue that this is because the work is easier in school, so less complicated to teach. But the fact is that our GTAs and us loved our respective courses enough to take them to a level that shows evident motivation, despite the probable Oxbridge rejection. Complication isn't an issue. I accept that we are now at a stage that we should learn independently, but that isn't an excuse for one hour of teaching in a class of about 13, plus office hours during a week.

I accept the argument under the current system, that at university everyone has their own research to complete, but with increased funds and hiring more staff you can redress this balance between research and teaching, increasing the quality of both. I'd also want gargantuanly better facilities and halls, but this would come over time; get the teaching right, the classrooms and bells and whistles will come later.

With our level of fees and endowments we're currently a top 5 institution, sure. But realistically at this

moment in time we're never going to be at the top unless we get bought by Gaddafi, an Arab oil sheikh. I don't know about you, but I don't want to study at Spurs. Like it or not, Man City is a far better prospect for future success, you've got to pay to play. We need higher fees to allow for this to occur, success breeds success.

Now, if you're human, then your response to this article is probably something along the lines of: Where in the seven hells do you think half of the student body could find that amount of money you complete and utter insensitive prick?

My answer would be to propose we use the system currently employed by Harvard and Yale, where financial assistance would be given to any student, so that there are no financial bars to entry. As long as you have a demonstrated need, you get funding. It would eventually end up being a certain percentage from the university, with the rest covered through either student loans or working.

This would allow anybody to be educated at the LSE at a reasonable price, while taking more money in the long run. You get the idea, numbers would need to be crunched and percentages calculated before you can even come close to "100 per cent assistance requires this level of income" or "10 per cent assistance requires that level of income." But the over-riding

point behind this philosophy is that whatever you demonstrate you need, you get.

So the richest people pay the full whack, and then the system has a clear gradation down to those who get 100 percent assistance. Government loans could help pick up the slack but you're expected to look into employment - perfectly reasonable. I'm fully aware that under this system paying back potentially large loans is a significant concern, but if you made the choice not to work and supplement the required shortfall with loans, you've made your bed, now you've got to lie in it.

This would be a far more progressive system than the current one, because you have much more room to play with as for the percentage cost of someone's education in relation to their parent's worth, you can make it fairer. 10% of £3,000 is much smaller than 10% of £25,000 and so forth. With flexibility in the grant system you can ease the pain of both the lower and the middle classes, and stop those people taking just over £42,875 from getting arbitrarily shafted. Looking nationally it would also give institutions much more remit to charge a proper market value for their courses, eliminating the curious situation we have now where institutions ranked up to 90 places below the LSE get away with charging more. (e.g. Liverpool John Moores)

You now also have the rich by the

short and curlies. They can dodge taxes all they want, but this is a charge they can't escape, unless they want their child to receive an inferior education from somewhere like King's. You can't try and execute tax dodges like the Double Irish arrangement or the Dutch sandwich with your children. This is the institution giving your child an education and a fighting chance in the real world. You don't quibble over your child's future.

There is always the danger of clever accounting, fiscal drag and the like, but these are facts of life, and the fees department should have the government on their side as banking becomes more and more transparent. Technical complaints aside, philosophically I believe this would be a progressive step forward for the countries education system. We simply can't afford good free education anymore, so price it fairly, and make it free for those who need their education to be free.

I don't know why the debate over university fees has been limited to just keeping the physical cost down, surely we should be arguing over how to increase assistance as well. In light of this I eagerly anticipate the inevitable support from the socialist workers for my proposals. ☘

Sexy toddlers and ageing creams

The sexualisation of young girls and our obsession with youth has reached disturbingly high levels

Cassie Padget



Right now you are getting older, which means of course that you are getting less and less beautiful. In a culture obsessed with eternal youth, our imagery of beauty is becoming more and more child like. But this obsession has produced a strange contradiction – while women are aspiring to look more like children, advertisers are telling children to ditch the playground and act like adults.

Thin women with childlike bodies perceived as sex objects is nothing new. In the 60s it was Twiggy and in the 90s Kate Moss. But one need only look at the January edition of French Vogue this year featuring 10-year-old Thylane Blondeau dressed to the nines in high heels and heavy make up to see just how unsettling our perceptions of beauty has become. There is something deeply disturbing about a society that interprets the appearance of young girls, who have no sexual desires, as sexy. It says something fundamental about what a desirable woman today is – submissive and ingenuous. The commodification of something as natural and organic as sexuality has caused the lines between what is meant for adults and what is for children to become dangerously blurred.

We are all in constant pursuit of happiness, what each of us thinks will get us there is a matter of individual taste. As young adults we have already developed a degree of self-awareness – what we like, what we don't like – could you say the same of yourself at 13 or 14 years old? What we value so much about childhood is innocence,

and in particular, sexual innocence. Sex is part of the adult world for a reason: it is emotionally complicated. Sexuality is of course an integral part of our persona but we value a time when children can develop a sense of self that is distinct and substantive.

This is probably why shows such as the TLC reality television show "Toddlers and Tiaras" featuring child beauty queens with fake teeth, tans and hair have caused public uproar. With one mother dressing up her 3-year-old daughter as Julia Roberts from *Pretty Woman* (a.k.a as a street-walker) this kind of extreme "dressing up" and focus on aesthetics creates confusion for children and their confidence. Of course, this reality series seems to be an isolated cultural phenomenon in America and at the end of the day what is or is not sexualised material is highly subjective. But what is worrying is that children are being treated as equally lucrative consumers as adults in a world where "parental guidance" for media content is an unlocked cookie jar with a "do not touch" sign. Of course, young girls have and will continue to have self-esteem issues. The effect of the media however, has been to encourage a culture in which boys have intimacy issues and girls are objectifying themselves.

While the thought of a generation of young girls who perceive their best asset as their "sex appeal" is troubling, we should pity too the grown women who treat growing older as optional rather than mandatory. Too often the phrase "aging gracefully" is associated with maintaining the appearance of youth to remain desirable rather than valuing the inner beauty that comes with life experience. As Eleanor Roosevelt once said: "Beautiful young people are accidents of nature, but beautiful old people are works of art." In Japan, there is an age hierarchy that dictates different types

of social interaction at behavioral and linguistic levels that is more polite and respectful to elders in a way that is simply non-existent in the West. At the first sign of ageing in the Western world, women are paralyzed by anxiety, literally. Figures published by the British Association of Aesthetic Plastic Surgeons show that of all the cosmetic procedures performed in the UK in 2010, 90% were performed on women. If young girls are looking to the older women in their life for guidance on healthy body image, they're hardly going to be reassured that their

is in a constant state of anxiety and competition – which if you think about

it, isn't very sexy at all.

At the first sign of ageing in the Western world, women are paralyzed by anxiety, literally

personal angst is going to subside any time soon.

At the end of the day, this infatuation with being youthful and sexy asserts to have the ultimate goal of making us happier. Once we make enough money to buy the anti-aging products that promise to make us beautiful, our insecurities will accordingly melt away. The truth is that focusing on how old or youthful we want to look is a distraction from what is really making us unhappy – our uncertainties about who we are, who people think we are and whom we should be. What our bizarre obsession with youth and sexuality really reflects is a culture that



Botox at 6?
Photo: flickr user _RiRi Trautmann

The world's most famous apple

...is much like our priorities; half chewed and now missing its core

Tania Bizoumi



On the 5th October, the world lost an influential and innovative entrepreneur; Steve Jobs, the co-founder, chairman and until recently CEO of Apple. Seven years after being diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, Steve Jobs passed away, leaving behind a great legacy and an unparalleled success story. Through hard work and perseverance, as he often stated, Jobs managed to create and run what is now the biggest technology company in the world, while at the same time staying true to a vision and an uncompromising standard of quality. After the intense public reaction to his death, eminent also among our peers, the question that arises is whether the obsession with Jobs can be justified due to his being an important aspirational leader of sorts – after all he was the pure embodiment of the American Dream – or if it comes down to something a bit more superficial that says a lot about our society and priorities.

Taking cues from the Internet, especially social networking sites like Facebook, Steve Jobs' face is currently omnipresent in pictures as cleverly and creatively designed as Apple's gadgets. And where one cannot find a picture of



Decomposing ethics?
Photo: flickr user _BinaryApe

Steve Jobs in his trademark turtleneck sweater, quotations, usually coming from his famous Stanford Graduation address, are there to represent him and pay tribute. As much as I support and appreciate tributes to influential figures, a reaction as intense as there has been to the death of Steve Jobs makes me wonder what would be the result of the death of a family member or close friend.

Without discounting Steve Jobs' legacy and work, if viewed through a more skeptical spectrum it becomes clear that the media's coverage of this tragic event, and the public's reaction to it, are not solely due to Jobs' innovation and pioneering nature, but rather are products of something more shallow: really good marketing. This reaction stems from the fact that in our society, a person becomes a well-known public figure by satisfying capitalist needs. Jobs was the face and brain behind a company that produces fashionable, impeccably designed and mostly cool gadgets. Thus, as much as we would want to think that the attention we have paid to his passing is our way of mourning the loss of an inspirational, well-spoken and creative individual, which Steve Jobs undoubtedly was, unfortunately in our society those traits are not enough to elevate someone to that status.

Steve Jobs had the traits that make an influential role model and at the same time, the backing of a company whose products were owned, or at least coveted, by the majority of the

population – thus embedding him into public consciousness. On the other hand, Fred Shuttlesworth, a man who died on the same day as Steve Jobs, may have had all the traits of a leader and pioneer and yet received a small fraction of the attention and tribute paid to Mr. Jobs. Mr. Shuttlesworth was, alongside Martin Luther King Jr., a civil rights activist who spent his life fighting racism and segregation while facing numerous obstacles, including risking his own life to support his cause and pave the way for equality.

What the media is interested in, and what in return it conditions us to be aware of, has little to do with innovation, aspirational leadership or perseverance of an individual. Instead, branding shapes our interest, moulding and governing the society we live in. In a capitalist society, the person behind a multi-billion dollar company that produces the most recognizable products, which through the years have become part of popular culture, proves more interesting to the media and more relatable to the public.

Steve Jobs and Fred Shuttlesworth will be missed as well as remembered. The world lost two pioneers who in their own ways changed society radically. As for the public, it is time we set our priorities straight and at least realize what exactly we are paying tribute to.

Quick COMMENT

Would we derive any benefit from auditing classes like we do lectures?

Definitely, because often classes have a very different dynamic to what is portrayed in lectures

– **Duncan McKenna**, Managing Editor, The Beaver

Yes, because classes represent a different challenge

– **Annie Ren**, MSc Public Policy and Administration and the Research Track

Despite it being attractive to the student, you cannot allow everyone to pick and choose their class

– **Aritra Banerjee**, 3rd year, BSc Economics

If you're interested in a subject but can't take it as part of your course, then yes

– **Abigail Carlson**, BSc International Relations

It would help and it would separate the teachers that fail miserably at teaching

– **Ronali Perera**, 2nd year BSc Mathematics and Economics

No, because then everybody would flock to the best teacher

– **Hitesh Chhaya**, 3rd year, BSc Mathematics and Economics

NEXT WEEK...

How satisfied are you with the teaching at LSE?

Send us your submissions!
comment@thebeaveronline.co.uk

A tale of two UN resolutions

Where is Syria's humanitarian intervention?

Teddy Nicholson



The last seven months have been some of the most extraordinary that many of us remember. The "Arab Spring" has woken the world up to plenty of issues, and one of these is to remind people that the morality of humanitarian intervention is something worth debating. This dormant debate has come back to life and is being played out with live ammunition in the real world. The results have been anything but consistent.

On 17th March, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 1973 authorising the use of "all necessary measures" to protect civilians. This is the first time military force has been authorised for humanitarian ends. What happened next is common knowledge: France and the UK started bombing Libyan installations that night with the US taking over soon after and the mission being passed to NATO in the subsequent weeks.

Over the next seven months the bombing continued with the Libyan rebels advancing abortively from Benghazi westwards towards Tripoli. Fierce battles raged through towns whose names we quickly learnt, such as Ras Lanuf, Ajdabiya, Brega and Misrata, until on the 21st August Tripoli fell to the rebels and Gaddafi fled. At the time of writing, the war continues and Gaddafi is still at large.

Meanwhile, another revolution has been going on roughly 1300 miles to the east. In Syria protests had gained momentum through the spring and by

the summer non-violent demonstrations were regularly occurring in towns such as Deraa, Homs, and Hama. Assad's Ba'ath Party has responded with a combination of promised reform, little of which have been enacted, and shocking violence.

A glance through YouTube reveals hours of footage taken by hidden cameras across the country and smuggled out, often into Lebanon, and put online. These show horrific scenes of protesters fleeing bullets while shouting that they are peaceful or soldiers beating men lying on the ground. What has been going on in Syria is far worse than anything that had happened in Libya by 17th March, so the question arises, where is Syria's resolution 1973? Where is Syria's humanitarian intervention?

There are a number of answers, and most are to do with the political arguments that take place in the private consultation room tucked behind the Security Council Chamber in New York. When Resolution 1973 was passed, it was with the abstentions of Russia, China, Germany, India and Brazil, none of whom were enthusiastic about the idea of military intervention in a sovereign state.

A number of these countries, particularly Russia and China, felt strongly that they had been duped by the West over Libya. They had been told that 1973 would authorise the protection of civilians, and instead it was used to justify regime change. Russia and China have a particularly restrictive interpretation of the notion of state sovereignty and tend to object strongly to humanitarian intervention and the doctrine of the Responsibility to Protect. As such, they were angry at the West for misleading them, and have been hitting back ever since.

This came to a head last Tuesday.

A resolution was introduced to the Council after months of negotiation, which would have condemned the violence against civilians in Syria, and if after thirty days the violence didn't cease, the Council would meet again to consider "other options," presumably including sanctions. This is far from the strong language of 1973, and yet even this was too much to survive a dual veto by Russia and China.

The tragic irony is that the aims have been so modest – there is little evidence to suggest that, even with

close relationship to the Ba'ath Party – Russia is planning to open a naval base in Syria at some point in 2012.

However, the US does not have clean hands when it comes to supporting protesters either. When Rice said "the people of the Middle East can now see clearly which nations have chosen to ignore their calls for democracy and instead prop up desperate, cruel dictators," the Obama administration's shocking silence regarding Bahrain comes to mind. Responses to the Arab Spring by the international community have been, at best, selective.

All that being said, double standards remain better than no standards at all, and I would rather see hypocritical support of pro-democracy movements in one country while others are ignored than see total silence across the board. It is that silence in the face of brutality that Russia and China allied themselves last week at the UN.

The extraordinary thing about Resolution 1973 back in March was that it felt for a fleeting second as if there had been real progress. It seemed that a combination of events, political will and skilled diplomacy had pushed the lines of debate and set a standard that brought the priority given to the lives of civilians a little closer to the priority given to state sovereignty.

The UN has always been an institution that specialises in disillusionment, the raising and then dashing of hopes, and yet the dream of a world in which tyrants can't hide behind borders endures. Perhaps the veto of last week's resolution was based on short-term anger, and as the dust settles it will turn out that the world has changed a little and that some progress has been made. I can only hope.

The UN has always been an institution that specialises in disillusionment

a UN resolution, NATO wants to militarily intervene in Syria as they did in Libya. One at a time is apparently enough, so the goal was unified political pressure from the UN against Syria, not military intervention.

The political situation we have, therefore, is one in which the combination of bruised egos, power politics and dysfunctional diplomacy have left the Syrian protesters politically on their own. America's UN Ambassador, Susan Rice, put it best shortly after the vote when she said that the veto was "a cheap ruse by those who would rather sell arms to the Syrian regime than stand with the Syrian people." It is true that Russia especially has a far too

Why we're atheists, humanists and secularists

The Public Relations Officer of the AHS Society gives us the basis of their beliefs

Marshall Palmer



Contrary to the popular belief, we are not atheists because we think science has, or can, disprove the existence of God. We are atheists because there is absolutely no verifiable evidence for the existence of God. None. Zero. Nil. If you, like all religions do, propose the existence of something (i.e. God) the burden of proof becomes your responsibility. As we all know (as good students and social scientists) things can be proven (like gravity or evolution) if the scientific method is followed and the initial proposition stands up to all subsequent criticism. Until the day God can be verifiably proven to exist, no scientist can genuinely be religious. Those that are, cheat.

By this we mean it is impossible to follow the religious texts to the word without also believing in incontrovertibly silly things, such as young Earth "theory", creationism, the resurrection of the dead, walking on water, etc. We are all atheist when it comes to Thor or Zeus or the Flying Spaghetti Monster. People have expressed sincere beliefs that these gods exist, yet Christians, Muslims, Jews, Hindus and others see no reason to believe in them. Some of us, those of us in the Atheist, Humanist and Secularist society for example, happen to go one god further in our disbelief. Choosing not to believe in God is just as rational as choosing not to believe in the Tooth Fairy.

There is also a second, non-scientific reason as to why we are atheists. We believe that religion is an assault upon human freedom and dignity. Religion, with its bizarre, archaic and medieval (but still somehow contemporary) rules regarding worship, sexual relationships, genital appear-

Humanism is a nice alternative, an answer to the charge that people cannot be moral without God

ance (male and female circumcision), diet, clothing, science, education, the rights of women, the rights of homosexuals, the rights of minorities and other religions (I could go on), imposes a totalitarian influence on one's entire life. Where's the attraction in that? Who would want to be forced to live for eternity in a certain way? There could be no greater hell than to spend eternity being forced to be someone you're not or act in ways you don't wish to. In sum, we are atheists because (a) we are almost certain there is no God and (b) are grateful there is

not a God as, if there was, it would be a pretty raw deal.

Humanism is a nice alternative, an answer to the charge that people cannot be moral without God and a belief in the rules outlined in ancient religious texts. As humanists, we make our ethical decisions based upon reason, empathy and a concern for human beings and all sentient animals. To quote the British Humanist Association, we believe that, "in the absence of an afterlife and any discernible purpose to the universe, human beings can act to give their own lives meaning by seeking happiness in this life and helping others to do the same." In other words, we don't need religious dogma to tell us not to kill, steal or to be charitable – those are innate human values that precede religion by thousands of years. If you're religious and are not buying into this, ask yourself this: if your religious text did not express rules forbidding certain actions would you head out into the world and commit rape, murder and theft without any guilt or hesitation?

Secularism is our political ideology. Although we resolutely believe in freedom of belief, we reject the idea that religion (not necessarily the religious, and this is an important distinction) has a place in government. If we were to put that into the law, it would be identical to the First Amendment to the US Constitution which we have reproduced here: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances." In

other words, everybody ought to be free to believe whatever they want provided they do not impose it through government. A religious person has every right to feel I should not have sex before marriage or be an atheist or eat pork but they have no right to legislate their views against me. For example, I did not particularly mind Tony Blair, a devout Roman Catholic, as he never once allowed religion to dominate his public rhetoric or politics.

Now that we've introduced ourselves and what we wish to promote we encourage you all to join the AHS society. You may not agree with

anything said here but we welcome friendly debate. As atheists, we only claim to have a great deal of ignorance about the universe. Alongside scientific progress, rational debate is the only way to learn more and more about the universe and we wholeheartedly encourage it.

Your faithless friends,

The Atheist, Humanist, and Secularist Society

A fellow non-believer

If humans, with the knowledge of other humans before them at hand, could look at their existence in as true a context as is fathomable, it is my belief that the pure luck that that existence embodies, would change the way we deal with each other.

The capacity for abstraction that humans have been naturally selected to possess over our collective species timeline, is best evidenced in our fetish for belief. This powerful method of abstraction takes something far far away, something inaccessible to man and makes it even more abstract. That "something" is what we do not know, of which there is undoubtedly plenty. A religion has the dangerous ability to reach into nothingness and bring back delusions of grandeur; not only for the "God" who claims to run that realm of uncertainty and the unknown, but also for man himself. Religion then bestows on the believer a special status for this profoundly sacred entity has chosen him as the recipient of the "knowledge" of His existence. And of course, it

doesn't hurt that the entity very often has human traits. So we've dealt with uncertainty and have empowered a clueless, irrational human being with the notion that he is special. A more dangerous concoction could scarcely be brewed in the wormhole of fire and brimstone. Hell is here.

However, if, instead of insulating man from the unknown, we accept our suspension in this vast, black, seemingly infinite cosmos, perhaps we will rid ourselves of the falsely empowered ego that has killed, tortured, destroyed and raped all in the name of one group's (a group is its own "God") dominion over another for possession of a fraction of a "pale blue dot".

Embrace the chaos and there will be none. Dive without inhibition into the infinitesimal probability of your own existence and you will see that there is more to it than the satisfaction of some primal base urge that allowed your ancestors to survive in conditions that were far removed from what we've got going on here. Please, just chill.

CARLO SUSHANT CHARI

Refining crude portrayals

Busting the myths surrounding the Alberta oil sands



Mistaken
Photo: flickr user - ItzaFineDay

Marshall Palmer



The Alberta oil sands are not as harmful as British print media (typically The Guardian), would have you believe. The oil sands are more commonly labeled the 'tar sands', a ideologically charged and scientifically false misnomer created by an ever-lachrymose 'green movement'. The oil sands currently represent one of the world's largest deposits of crude oil in the world. Known reservoirs mirror the volume discovered in Saudi Arabia while there is significant evidence to suggest that the Alberta oil sands is larger than anything ever found.

The current controversy surrounds the environmental impact of mining, refining, and transporting Albertan oil. European opinion surrounding the oil sands is nearly unanimous in its rejection of the continued mining of this resource. Opinion at the LSE is no different. Any second year student can hardly forget Nick Stern and Anthony Giddens' disparaging remarks directed towards Canada on this issue earlier this year in LSE100. In the 2010/11 year, it was difficult to remain oblivious to the Amnesty International flyers littering the campus regarding the oil sands and environmental 'crimes' of the Canadian government.

What is it that Europeans find so repugnant about the oil sands? The Guardian, for example, is fond of reporting the high carbon cost of refinement, the effect oil watersheds have on animal populations, and the effect on the local communities. This, in tandem with growing public awareness (and, in some communities, panic) regarding anthropogenic climate change and the real danger it poses, results in the mislead accusations and scapegoating directed at Canadians.

While these three criticisms are not without merit (like all oil production, there is an adverse effect on the environment) any legitimacy is lost in the hysterical and sensationalist fear-mongering. Firstly, while Alberta

crude does carry a higher carbon cost of refinement, there is a market driven incentive (driven by private and public desire to 'go green') to become more efficient and less damaging. Moreover, the Canadian government does impose strict environmental regulations on the technology and practices used by mining companies while also subsidising those who use greener technology. It is absurd to think we should stop the mining of such an important resource just because it is mildly more harmful than any other form of oil refinement. As far as the oil sands' effect on animals, it is impossible to deny that a number of birds die each year after landing in the oil slicked watersheds (a by-product of the extraction process). Organisations such as Amnesty International appeal to one's heartstrings by showing the oil-drenched bird with the caption 'Ethical Oil?' superimposed. Cheap and dishonest tactics. The number that die is nowhere near significant enough to threaten the native bird population (the Canadian Goose and duck population is unsurprisingly large given the extraordinarily low population density of Canada which leaves tracts of untouched land, most of which is protected by national parks). In fact, a greater number of birds die from flying into 'eco-friendly' windmills than do from the oil sands. Perhaps the most substantial (but seldom made) criticism of the oil sands is the effect on the First Nations populations that, not for the first time, reside near or over coveted land. It is important to remember that it is necessary to mine this oil, at least for the next few decades. It is not an Avatar scenario; oil is needed to heat houses (have you ever experienced a Canadian winter?), provide fuel to transport freight and people; and refine myriad products that sustain and comfort our lives. Proper compensation is the only factor that can justify the relocation of these populations. By and large, this is the policy and action of our government.

The question about whether it is moral to mine the oil sands now rests on a comparison with the moral implication of other sources of energy. Immediately we have to dismiss the majority of 'green' options. Wind, solar, and tidal energy are, at their

2011 level, not substantial enough to replace oil as a major source of energy (although one day they ideally will be). Ethanol-based fuel is a myth perpetrated by clueless green ideologues and sinister agricultural monopolies such as Monsanto. It is dangerous as it is impractical and inefficient. Coal, England's historically largest source of energy, is anything but carbon friendly. It is certainly no better an alternative to oil. Nuclear power requires highly enriched uranium 235; a product tainted by Fukuyama, the danger from the radioactive waste byproduct, and the ever-present terrorist threat. Oil and natural gas are the only two remaining plausible sources. Natural gas is efficient and relatively green-friendly although the infrastructure is not yet place for it become a sustainable alternative in the short term. Given the three largest suppliers of oil in the world are Saudi Arabia and other OPEC members, Russia, and Canada, there is not much of a choice in terms of where to obtain supply. Essentially, it is one between funding criminal Russian oligarchs, a brutal Saudi monarchy that commits crimes far more reprehensible than carbon emissions, other OPEC members with similar criminal records, or Canada. Canada, where the oil is mined under federal environmental watchdogs, where whistle-blowers on malpractice are federally protected, where the people who profit are hardworking and deserving, and where the people who lose are few and far between (and are properly compensated).

One day it would be nice to no longer have to depend on oil for energy. However, it is not a matter of simply 'switching over' to other resources - a physical impossibility given our energy demands. Oil needs to be made ethical and green. Firms should strive towards greater efficiency (the market is, for the most part, already doing this.) The answer does not lie in scapegoating or pretending we can subsist on alternatives when all the evidence is to the contrary. As with all things, reasoned, thought-out, and practical analysis is the only way forward. ☘

Letter to the Editor

Dear Madam,

I was disappointed to read the article; 'Tales from Tour 2011' (page 31, issue 752, published 04.10.2011). I was fortunate enough to read this article before it went to print and I can testify to the fact that there were several editorial changes made in poor taste. Whilst I respect that the section editors reserve the right to make changes as they see fit to any articles to their sections I have to take issue with editing when it comes at the cost of marginalising minorities on campus. In order to illustrate the masculine features of girls in an opposing netball team, they are referred to as "a group of poly-lesbians". Furthermore, there is a reference to these "testosterone fuelled "ladies"" suggesting that that their gender is somehow undermined by their sexuality. Whilst some people may find this sort of jab mildly amusing, this is exactly the sort of comment that propagates a hetro-normative

society and ostracises homosexuals. I really do not see the reason to offend minority groups in the pursuit of cheap laughs. The key issue is that this is an instance of casual homophobia. While most people are ignorant to its offense it is still significant in the eyes of LGBT persons.

I would highly encourage the editorial board, in particular the sports editors, to be a little classier in their editing of articles. As you said in this week's UGM; the sport section often comes close to the line and this week they downright crossed it. It is exactly these kinds of comments which gives the AU a reputation for being a close-minded and unwelcoming group. As captain of the LSE Netball Club I can testify that this is a very misleading impression. I appreciate that there is enormous pressure on the Sports editors to constantly deliver the laughs that we expect of Gossip Gollum (editorial note: this is now the column entitled 'I know what you did last

Wednesday').

As a member of the AU myself I always enjoy reading the Sports section and have in the past contributed to the section myself. My hope is that this letter will serve to show you that you do have a strong and mixed readership, and that we will hold you to account when you fail in your duties to represent the LSE student body as the diverse collection of individuals that it is.

I fully understand that this is not a regular occurrence and on the whole the Beaver has done a good job this year so far. But please remember that you are in a position of power and as such your every word, literally, is under scrutiny.

Best,

Pepita Barlow
Netball Club Captain

Three editions and
only two letters?

You can do better, guys!

Send us your letters to

comment
@thebeaveronline.co.uk

art

11 October 2011



Steve McCurry | **Cool Hand Luke** | **Mountain Goats** | **LFW SS12** |
Driving Miss Daisy | **The Ship Tavern** | **The Borgias** | **Private B**

Contact

PartB Editors

Aameer Patel
Kerry-Rose O'Donnell
partb@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Fashion

Emma Beaumont
partb-fashion@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Film

Aameer Patel
partb-film@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Food

Max Jenkins
partb-food@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Music

Alexander Young
partb-music@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Satirist-in-chief

Jack Tindale
partb-rant@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Theatre

Rory Creedon
partb-theatre@thebeaveronline.co.uk

TV

Simon Chaudhuri
partb-tv@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Visual Arts

Roberta Cucchiari
partb-visualarts@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Cover: Lucrezia Borgia by
Bartolomeo Veneziano (1502-1555)



Vacancies

Getting there.

We're still looking for:

Literature Editor
Video Games Editor
Web Editor
Cover Artist

Email:

partb@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Arts Agenda

The Shape of Things to Come: New Sculpture, Saatchi Gallery, SW3

Consisting of works in every shape, colour, material and composition, this is the first time the Saatchi Gallery has presented an exhibition comprised exclusively of three-dimensional pieces.

Established sculptors and installation artists share space with newcomers, with twenty being exhibited in total. Particularly noteworthy are Rebecca Warren's unfired sculptures of the female nude, and David Bachelor's Brick Lane Remix I, which is made of shelving units and lights units.

The Shape of Things to Come: New Sculpture closes on 16 October 2011.

Jacob Kassay, Institute of Contemporary Arts, SW1

Painter, sculptor and more, the work of American artist Jacob Kassay is particularly noteworthy for its use of light.

New in this exhibition and housed in both the ICA's upper and lower galleries, is a work that utilises canvases to create an immersive and communicative experience. In the absence of an audience, the evenly painted and silver-plated canvases are alive and connected with the others through the carefully designed installation. They are even more active in the presence of visitors, conversing in a voice that varies according to the time of day.

The Jacob Kassay exhibition is at the ICA from 12 October to 13 November 2011.

The Women, Silk Street Theatre, EC4

Clare Booth Luce's popular 1936 play, revived here by the ever-impressive Guildhall School, explores the lives of female high-society in 1930s Manhattan.

Featuring an all-female cast that is quite uncommon even today, the major events and relationships in a woman's life are put under a sharply focussed and highly critical scope, with such values as the ideal child-bearing carer wife being dissected. Evolving attitudes and the friction they cause between generations are also a major theme and continue to be resonant today, three quarters of a century later.

The Women is showing at the Silk Street Theatre from 13-18 October 2011.



Julia Jentsch as Julia Szczesna in 33 Scenes from Life

33 Scenes From Life with Q&A, Ritzy, SW2

Polish director Małgorzata Szumowska was compelled to make this award-winning film through mourning the loss of her parents. It sees a young woman's life torn apart through the death and drifting away of loved ones.

The death of her mother leads to the death of her sorrowful father shortly afterwards. With her husband failing to provide support, she turns to

another male friend, thereby driving away her husband, and thereafter her friend, leaving her completely alone. Even her dog dies.

The film is not a mournful one, however, and it is her gradual understanding and acceptance of scenes of death as merely scenes of life that is most affecting.

This special screening also features and Q&A session with the director.

The Ritzy, 18:30, 14 October 2011.



Jacob Kassay, Untitled, 2011

See/read/hear/feel/smell/know things first by writing for us.
Email: partb@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Steve McCurry's photojournalism in London

The name Steve McCurry might not ring a bell, but you have probably heard about or seen his world-acclaimed portrait of the "Afghan Girl".

Steve McCurry is an American photojournalist whose talent and photographs are universally acknowledged as incomparably vivid. One of his most recognised photographs is the "Afghan Girl", featured on the cover of National Geographic Magazine's June 1985 issue and now also in Steve McCurry's exhibition at Chris Beetles Fine Photographs, one of London's most renowned photography galleries.

Being a photojournalist is perhaps one of the toughest jobs on earth. Just as the outstanding war photographer Robert Capa once said that "if your pictures aren't good enough, you're not close enough", being too close sometimes puts the photographer's life in extreme danger. Steve McCurry began his career by covering the Soviet war in Afghanistan. By sewing rolls of film into his clothes and disguising himself into native dresses, he was able to be among the first to report the conflict. His photographs won the Robert Capa Gold Medal for Best Photographic Reporting from Abroad, an award acknowledging the exceptional courage and strength photojournalists are able to demonstrate.

It was during the coverage of this conflict that Steve McCurry was able to immortalise those strikingly vivid eyes looking straight into the lenses of the camera.

The "Afghan Girl", who until 2002 was an unidentified Afghan refugee, was later found and known as Sharbat Gula. At the time the picture was taken, Gula was about twelve years old. Ethnically Afghan, she escaped to the Nasir Bagh refugee camp in Pakistan in 1984 following an attack by a Soviet bombing on her village causing the death of her parents. The photograph became soon a symbol of the 1980s Afghan conflict and raised the concern

of the refugee situation worldwide.

It is not, however, only the history behind the photograph which makes it so intriguing – it is the photograph itself. Steve McCurry is known among photographers for his vivid contrasts and singular use of colors which are able to talk through the photographic paper. McCurry's photographs prove wrong Canadian photojournalist Ted Grant's famous words "when you photograph people in colour you photograph their clothes, but when you photograph people in black and white, you photograph their souls". It is instead the colour emerging from McCurry's photograph which not only captures Gula's soul but also speaks for her, speaks to us as world citizens sitting back and looking at the atrocities of politics taking place in far away places, most of the time places which are abandoned by the media and do not make headline news.

Photography is an intriguing art because it speaks in silence and leaves viewers free to interpret it. The most fundamental characteristic of Steve McCurry's photography is what Henri Cartier-Bresson, the father of modern photojournalism and a photographic genius, called as the 'decisive moment'. The secret behind great photography lies within this concept. Photography represents a fraction of a second in life, a moment which missed will be gone forever, never to repeat itself. The movements of a person, the look in their eyes, the wind blowing a girl's hair into the air, the light reflecting into a girl's face are all elements of life which are in continuous change. It does take a lot of looking through the camera lenses for a photographer to see the exceptional and be able to grasp that fraction of a second and turn a camera click into art.

Henri Cartier-Bresson as well as the people living their everyday lives is what inspires Steve McCurry the most. What is most represented in McCurry's photographs is in fact



Afghan Girl, Peshawar, Pakistan, 1984

the essence of everyday life among people living in conflict areas as well as remote areas. McCurry has covered international and civil conflicts in Burma, Sri Lanka, Beirut, Cambodia,

the Philippines, the Gulf War, the former Yugoslavia, and still continuing coverage of Afghanistan and Tibet. However, McCurry is not a war photographer, as his reportages of

daily life in South Asia feature some of the most vibrant and spectacular photographs he has ever taken. McCurry visited South Asia over 70 times and continues even today to be drawn to those areas. The ancient civilisation which unites the language, customs and art in those remote areas is perhaps one of the reasons explaining McCurry's attraction to the region.

During this unique exhibition in London, several pictures from around the world are being displayed. Not only the "Afghan Girl" strikes the viewer coming in the gallery, but also stunning shots taken in India throughout the 1980s, Pakistan and Afghanistan, Burma, Sri Lanka and Kashmir. Another extremely vivid photograph was taken in 2004 at the Shaolin Monastery in Zhengzhou, China. Through this picture McCurry is able to represent the incredible physical strength and dexterity in contrast to the serenity displayed by the Shaolin Monks.

Steve McCurry's exhibition is at Chris Beetles Fine Photographs (3-5 Swallow Street, just off Piccadilly) until October 15, 2011.

Very close by on Regent Street is the National Geographic Store (no coincidence), which is currently showcasing outstanding Olga Planas photographs printed on different textures such as velvet, aluminum and wood, giving a 3D sensation to her works and portraying a new way of seeing photography. The exhibition is entitled "Textures of Africa" and looks deep into raising awareness on social issues in Africa. It is definitely worth visiting.

↳ Roberta Cucchiario

Coming up...

FRIEZE ART FAIR

The Frieze Art Fair, which takes place every October in Regent's Park, is a showcase of over 170 contemporary art galleries featuring works by emerging as well as established international artists.

Frieze is one of the world's most significant art fairs, bringing to London a weekend of incredible dynamism. This year there will be a total of 33 countries represented.

The number of artists from emerging areas such as Asia and South America are balanced with many others from both Europe and America. There will also be a section of the fair called 'Frame', dedicated to galleries with less than six years' experience. All of these new galleries, most of which are also completely new to the fair, have been selected on the basis of a solo-artist exhibition which will be presented to the public. The international features of this fair are undoubtedly its key characteristic.

Throughout the four days, Frieze Art Fair also organises a series of highly engaging talks, music events and educational projects. One of the talks we recommend is "Shooting Gallery: The Problems of Photographic Representation", taking place at 13:30 on 13 October. Through the views of three artists, Adam Broomberg and Oliver Chanarin based in London, and Taryn Simon based in New York, the talk aims to look deep inside the relationship between the concept of 'art photography' and photojournalism.

The recently opened exhibition at Iniva (Institute of International Visual Arts) looks highly promising as it includes works by emerging artists working along established figures. The main themes revolve around the issue of multicultural societies and the

complexities of living in such diverse environments in the face of growing globalisation.

Curator's exhibition tour of Iniva's exhibition "Entanglement: the Ambivalence of Identity"

The curator's exhibition tour gives an insight into the main themes of the exhibition and is completely free, so

don't miss it. It takes place at 18:30 on 15 October, 2011 at Rivington Place.

And for those aged 26 or over...

The Whitechapel Gallery is organising The London Open, a triennial open submission exhibition where artists living in London can showcase their work. 2012 will be the

80th anniversary of the London Open and quite an exciting time to have your works exhibited. The Gallery is already accepting submissions and it will continue to do so until November 25, 2011. The exhibition with the selected works will then take place between July 4 and September 14 next year. If you think you have the talent and potential, we wish you the best of luck! In the meantime... we really wish we were older!



Iniva's exhibition: Dave Lewis, Contact Sheet: 45s Singles Collection 2009

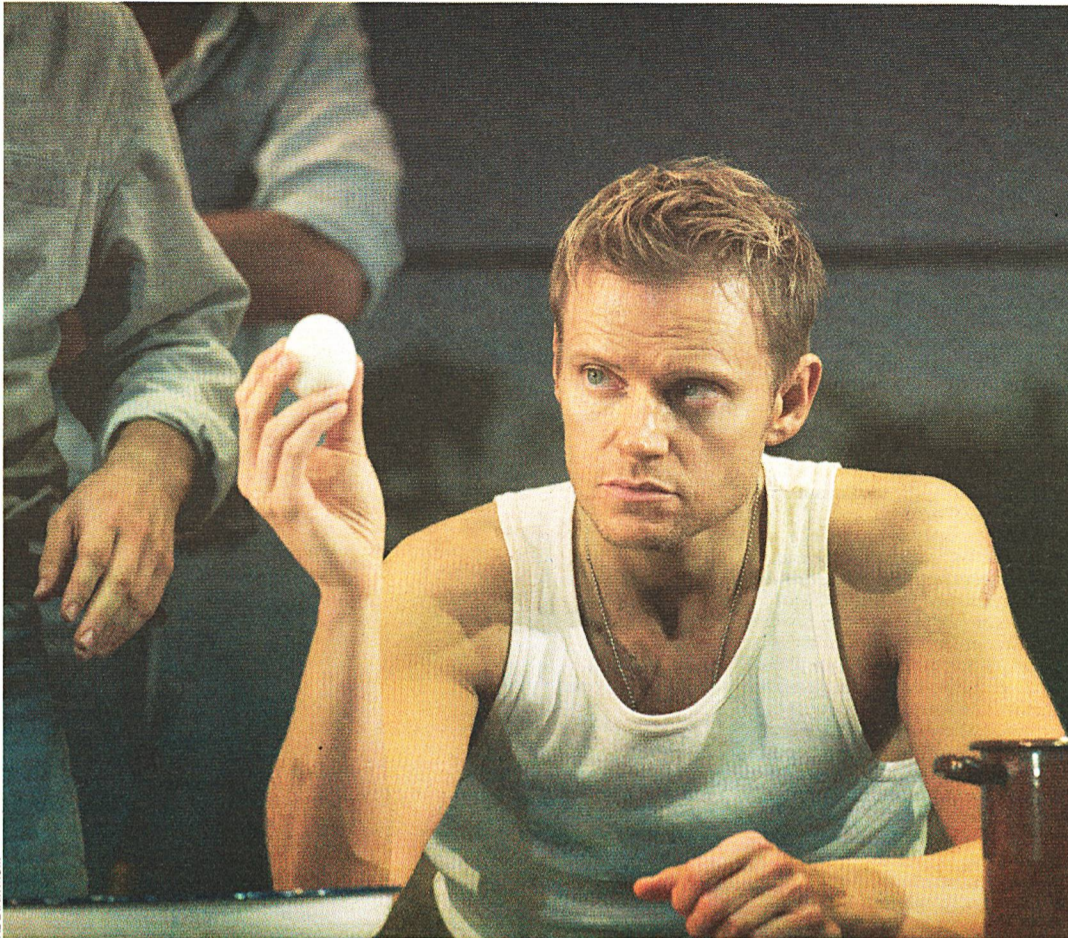
Cool Hand Luke, Aldwych Theatre

Director: Andrew Loudon
Writer: Donn Pearce
Key Cast: Marc Warren, Joshua McCord, Michael Cuckson, Julie Rogers
At Aldwych Theatre until 7 January 2012

Cool Hand Luke is a stage adaptation of Donn Pearce's novel of the same name. However, because the 1967 film is more famous than the novel, it is difficult not to view the stage adaptation against it. While it feels cruel to immediately compare the two – the programme repeatedly emphasises that the stage adaptation is based on the novel and not the film – the play fails to move far enough away from the film, and as such it is almost impossible not to make comparisons, which is unfortunate because the film is brilliant. The play is certainly enjoyable and Marc Warren is very strong as Luke, but the adaptation does suffer from an underdeveloped script and over-designed set, with both components making it difficult for the actors to create a real atmosphere of hardship.

For those that have not seen the film, the story centres around Luke, a World War II veteran arrested for the minor offences of being drunk and destroying parking meters, and given a two year sentence to work as part of a Florida chain gang. A defiant and rebellious individual with contempt for society's structures, Luke does not accept the strict guards and regimentation. His jocular spirit and brave escape attempts earn him the admiration of his fellow inmates as well as his nickname.

The play is most successful in contextualising Luke's defiant attitude. Reeve's adaptation ensures the script is subtly littered with references to his wartime experience. Loudon, the director, should also be congratulated for the particularly powerful and beautiful scene depicting Luke's battalion attempting to rape an innocent German. The emphasis on Luke's guilt over the war, in particular the said



Marc Warren as Luke Jackson

scene, helps Warren ensure that Luke engages a sense of sympathy from the audience.

Warren's performance as Luke is, on the whole, strong. Best known for his role in the TV series *Hustle*, Warren is an engaging presence and has strong charisma. He is particularly brilliant in the scene where Luke eats

fifty boiled eggs in an hour for a bet. Although the belching and flatulence could have been overdone to make the scene farcical, Warren carries off the humour with aplomb. He should also be congratulated on managing to eat fourteen eggs in the space of minutes. Warren's easy-going confidence means that he is very engaging as the

'leader of the pack' and he succeeds in making Luke a very likeable character. Despite this, the final scene, depicting Luke renouncing God from a church lectern seems unbelievably melodramatic.

It is perhaps unfair to criticise Warren for this, as the religious emphasis throughout the play seems

unnecessary and overly forced. Gospel singers hammer home a religious message between each scene, although it is unclear what it is – whether Luke has been elevated to a Christ-like stature, or that God should be blamed for his misdemeanours.

The script seems underdeveloped, which is a shame because the cast are all very strong. Lee Boardman, as Dragline, leads the ensemble of prisoners well, but perhaps the script should have allowed them not to be an ensemble, rather a collection of different, more developed, characters. Similarly, Richard Brake is at points truly menacing as the unnecessarily harsh prison guard, yet this is undermined by sections of the script where he seems friendly and almost jocular with the prisoners. Indeed, the abundance of light humour in the script makes the play easy to enjoy, but jars with the idea of the prisoner's struggle.

The main failure of the play is in creating atmosphere. Whereas the film was hugely successful in reflecting the hardship of life on a chain gang in the blistering heat of the South, the desert of Loudon's production seemed pleasant. Lipscombe's overdesigned and fake-looking set is largely responsible for this fault, the back of the stage resembling a photograph of a desert with a palm tree. The stage combat was also weak; the guards limply kicking the prisoners as one would casually kick a coke can on the street, again this undermined the idea of hardship.

The play closes with the entire cast coming on stage and singing – it was trite and unfortunately the play had not been climactic enough to warrant such an ending. However, despite this, the play is undeniably enjoyable: Warren is fantastic, as are Boardman and Brake. It is unfortunate that the story is not as engaging as it could have been.

— Jess Austin

Driving Miss Daisy, Wyndham's Theatre

Director: David Esbjornson
Playwright: Alfred Uhry
Key Cast: Vanessa Redgrave, James Earl Jones, Boyd Gaines
At Wyndham's Theatre until 17 December 2011

While lacking in action, *Driving Miss Daisy* is a deeply intimate work that while lacking in action, provides a profound exploration of the concepts of human frailty, pride, prejudice and above all, friendship. Lasting only ninety minutes, it is easy to see why Alfred Uhry's Pulitzer Prize-winning play was so successful, first as the 1989 Oscar-winning film starring Jessica Tandy and Morgan Freeman, and later on Broadway, prior to its arrival at London's Wyndham Theatre. With a cast that holds between them an impressive list of Oscar, Tony, Golden Globe and Bafta, expectations were high. If the standing ovation at the end of the performance was anything to go by, those expectations were well met.

The play opens with a gentle tinkling of the piano to set the mood, quickly followed by an endearing, laughter-filled dialogue between the proud elderly Miss Daisy Werthan (Vanessa Redgrave) and her son Boolie (Boyd Gaines). We learn that Miss Daisy has just destroyed her new Oldsmobile, together with a garage and tool shed in the process, to her son's absolute dismay. Ignoring her son's explanation that the car can only be "acted upon", she is insistent that "it was the car's fault" while stirring her cake batter with abrupt, frenzied actions. There is something endearing over the little Southern matriarch's protectiveness over her independence, as though she feels the need to prove that she is dependent upon no one,

despite her age. It is no surprise then, to see her overcome with indignation when her son insists that hiring a coloured man as a chauffeur would be the ideal solution. Thus the scene is set.

James Earl Jones (best known for being the voice of Darth Vader), who has been sitting quietly in the corner all this while, then takes the centre stage as the new chauffeur Hoke Coleburn. Sonorous and full of quiet dignity, he quickly steals the show by portraying the ideal subservient employee who is forever patient and kind to his employer, even getting through a heavy snowstorm to reach Miss Daisy and ensure that she lacks for nothing. Humble and understanding, Jones also masterfully expresses Hoke's pride as an elderly man who has learnt many of life's lessons, knows what he is worth and insists that it be recognised.

The heaviness in his ambling gait, as he heaves luggage around from the house to the car, his vivid facial expressions and vocal projections are hugely effective in drawing the audience closer to understanding and empathising with his character. His moments of fragility are perhaps the most precious. The speechless gratitude he has towards being taught to read by his employer, contrasted with his furious indignation at having to ask for permission to "make water" despite being a fully-grown man, constantly reminds us (and Miss Daisy) that he is not just something that sits in front of the wheel, but a human with very human sensitivities as well.

Black and white projections and lighting mark the decades-long friendship that lasts between the characters from 1948 to 1973. Vanessa



Vanessa Redgrave as Miss Daisy and James Earl Jones as Hoke Coleburn

Redgrave is at her absolute best as the Jewish matriarch whose frosty manner towards her unwanted employee gradually disintegrates into tenderness and concern. Most memorable is the comical scene of Redgrave thrusting a tin of salmon accusingly towards Jones, falsely thinking that he is the thief. Her unrelenting hostility toward her daughter-in-law, even at the very end, is expressively portrayed with an abrupt swivelling of the head, as she narrows her eyes at Boolie and becomes almost comically stiff.

Gaines's performance is a perfect complement to Redgrave and to Jones

as well, and is perhaps a character that City workers would be able to connect with best. He has to straddle the fine line between managing his mother and her insistence on spending time with family and doing as she pleases, social prejudices, changing times and the pressures of a demanding banking career.

This is a play that rides on the strength of the main cast's performance, while simultaneously drawing upon the broader themes of anti-Semitism and racial prejudices and the social intolerance that existed during that period. The bombing of the

Jewish temple and Boolie's refusal to attend a Martin Luther King dinner for fear of the reprisal on his banking business speak of a changing time, and time, above all, is the central theme of this play. As the decades pass and the characters grow noticeably more fragile and toothless, we the come to understand that despite all our differences, beliefs and prejudices, we are all the same. None of us can escape the hand of time and at the very end, what matters most is the friendships that we have formed throughout our lives.

— Ling Yah

The Kitchen, Olivier: National Theatre

Director: Bijan Sheibani

Playwright: Alfred Uhry

Key Cast: Stavros Demetraki, Ian Burfield, Craig Els, Jessica Regan, Rebecca Davies, Sam Swann, Ruth Gibson, Siobhan McSweeney

At Olivier, National Theatre:

Olivier until 9 November 2011

The Olivier Theatre's latest transformation for Arnold Wesker's *The Kitchen* depicts the mayhem of the fictional Tivoli Restaurant's kitchen, attempting to pose questions of identity amidst the relentless chaos of a typical day's service.

Having seen the Olivier dominated by a sprawling set of ovens, hobs, pots, pans, knives and crockery, I cannot imagine where else this production could have taken place. Giles Cadle's set design adds a character to the play as important as the actors themselves; as the pilot lights and ovens are lit, one instantly feels the kitchen begin to awaken, its heartbeat gathering pace and intensity as it fills with staff, who navigate its dangers and obstacles at a whirlwind speed.

The attention to detail in this production can be seen by the painstaking care taken by the actors to learn their respective technical culinary skills, so much so that you can almost smell and taste the ingredients as they mime the preparation. The choreography of more than twenty actors 'conducted' by the restaurant's owner creates a

scene of ordered pandemonium, with the crescendo of the first act building to a peak as the staff unify to serve fifteen hundred covers for lunch, ending the first half with so much energy that one is left gasping for breath in the interval.

To the magnificent set and enthralling tempo are added performances of immense passion and commitment. Neal Barry's Frank, who is embarking on his first day at the Tivoli Restaurant, does wonders stumbling his way through preparation and lunch service, forced to learn very quickly that it is not necessarily his culinary ability that will be his most valuable tool in surviving the kitchen. Tom Brooke's character of Peter, a feisty, spirited young German chef is likeable, irritating, malevolent and pitiful all at once, driving himself and his peers to insanity in the course of a day. The Cypriot chefs spontaneously break into song and dance, and their bravado towards Peter rings true of scenes from *West Side Story*. The familiarity between the actors feels natural to the point where you could be quite easily watching a fly-on-the-wall at a real West End kitchen, a testament to the actors' ability to maintain punchiness and harness chemistry whilst also faced with the task of 'cooking' throughout.

There are not enough positive things to say about the play. The broad range of characters, whose fiery



Tom Brooke as Peter

personalities are brilliantly embodied by a group of largely young and extremely passionate actors, combine to create an atmosphere that teeters along a fine line of volatility, with brief flashes of camaraderie offset by building tensions that threaten to

boil over. The immense production value adds volumes to a play that has powerful enough characters not to require it, leaving audiences spoilt by an experience that will be hard to imitate outside of somewhere with the National Theatre's vision.

The Kitchen transcends its 1950s setting, portraying the characteristic mayhem of a restaurant kitchen that is entertaining throughout, while adding a social commentary that is resonant for any era.

Maatin Patel

Mountain Goats, KOKO

There is no possibility of objectivity in how this is to be written, but I shall say one thing in the interests of anything approaching the disclosure of bias: I love the music of the Mountain Goats. Love, adore, exalt: synonyms stretched out through an infinity of pretence would not describe the full depths of my appreciation. This is enough empty idolisation for this review, however, and any further is to be believed to be based on merit.

Supporting were Chad Valley: a delightfully eighties medley of keyboards, synthesised drumbeats and a colourful and kinetic film accompaniment. Vocals versatile in pitch and tone punctuated the hits of bass to great effect and carried the songs through the set with great effect. Ending his set on a note of thanks directed towards the Mountain Goats for having him, an intolerably long interlude began the gentle rise of tension in the room to something that could be called by London's standard 'fever pitch': an Australian trying to get the crowd to cheer the Mountain Goats on and speed up their ascent to stage. All such attempts fell on apparently deaf ears. Welcome to London.

Given another twenty minutes of preparation time, the headliners took the stage in a somewhat unseemly flurry of introductions: unseemly, but thoroughly enjoyable. John Darnielle began his set in typical style: entering dialogue with the crowd in a once again typical warm and well-humoured manner. "1 Samuel 15:23" was to be how the set would start, in a wonderfully more full-bodied form than its album counterpart - piano replacing guitar and John's voice far more of a roar. An up-tempo version of "Old College Try" was the successor to this, and served to do nothing but blow me away: a full-band expansion with John's voice in the jubilantly aggressive range in which it excels and Peter on supporting vocals fleshes out an already amazing song with a greater musical depth than anything present on Tallahassee. "Cotton" was another song performed with far greater vehemence than that of the recorded version: full vocal exertion on the part of both vocalists and facial expressions which could only be the result of truly enjoying performing.



Mountain Goats at KOKO

The set continued with such great musicianship and such great awareness that they were performing: there was nothing static about any element of the performance. Even during the songs John performed on his own, the execution was fluid and animated.

The official set ended with "Hast Thou Considered the Tetrapod", "Going to Georgia" and "This Year": the ante was most definitely upped

by these performances - dynamic songs, all of which were incredibly popular with fans - Hast Thou and This Year had a vast majority of a large KOKO crowd singing along with great aplomb. The observation made by John soon afterward was that the crowd, despite the size of KOKO, was an incredibly intimate one was truly supported by this grouping of people together in one place and singing as

one - this one was to have nothing on the one of No Children's audience chorus, but that was to be seen.

A band who will play three encores and spend the best part of two hours on stage is not one to be sniffed at: more fan favourites crammed in right at the end. As well as that, a cover of Franklin Bruno's "Houseguest" gave John a chance to demonstrate his stage eccentricities: wonderful

interplay with the audience and great hands-free gesturing. "No Children" was prefaced by the almost standard declaration of John's that you better practice singing it before you need to: definitely enough of a proposition to get the crowd screaming along as one. For a sense of community at a venue, this gig is definitely one of the best I have ever attended.

Alexander Young

London Fashion Week Spring/Summer 2012

As the last sunny rays of this unexpected 'heatwave' fade into a dank, cloudy mist it's difficult not to yearn for the summery trends that hit the catwalks during London Fashion Week. Just as it's time to invest in a faux fur cover-up and be brace yourself for the impending snowstorms – well, not quite in London, but much colder weather than autumn's had to offer so far – bright floral creations and barely-there dresses mean Spring/Summer 2012 is going to be an exciting one.

The week of 16-21 September 2011 saw the international fashion elite descend upon London's Somerset House like a fur-lined, multi-platform-heeled swarm of fashionista bees. Spring/Summer 2012 brings together some statement trends. Trousers were printed to the extreme, with an array of ornate floral, light checks and paisley prints adorning legs at the Erdem, JW Anderson and Vivienne Westwood shows. Gone are Autumn/Winter 2011's rich colours of scarlet and plum, and in their place reigns the understated pastel – be ready to contrast and clash a range of mint, magnolia, duck-egg blue and cranberry hues. The mini skirt is yet to make its return to the catwalk, as instead the full skirt retained its fashion crown. Shapes were shiny, happy and subtly metallic at Marios Schwab and Giles Deacon. Perhaps inspired by the fresh edge Kate Middleton's arrival into the British Royal Family has brought about, prim and proper graced the shows at LFW – buttoned shirts (right to the top) and school skirts with pleats were the order of the day at Issa London and Mulberry.

Burberry

British designer Christopher Bailey really has driven Burberry to the front of the fash-pack – and beyond. Taking inspiration from the label's classic shapes, Burberry showed a reworking of the parka and trench, painted in autumnal hues of khaki and amber. Perhaps not a normal Spring collection, Burberry's classic tailoring was mixed with more directional sexy silhouettes. Overall, Burberry pulled together a collection that balanced archive-inspired pieces with a modern edge. If Burberry has any influence on the high-street next season, one thing is for certain: the mid-length skirt is here to stay.



Candy-coloured madness at Meadham Kirchoff

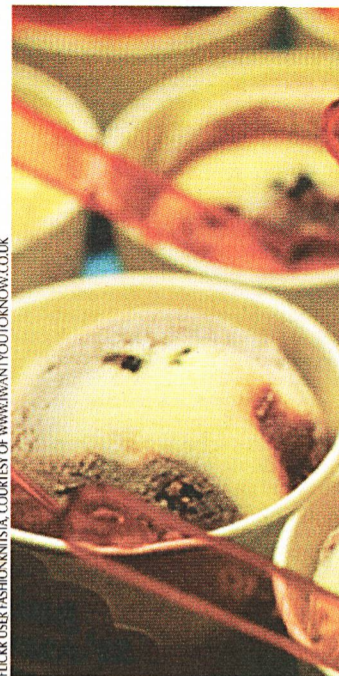
Giles Deacon

Although at Giles Deacon all eyes seemed to be on Jessie J, her bright purple blunt bob and her unlikely friendship with glamour girl Kelly Brook, extravagant feathered headpieces stole the show. Bold red cigarette trousers offset by graphic-printed tees were the order of the day. Chiffon robes and wet-look gowns complimented Deacon's strong references to the swan. The collection was given a funky edge with statement metallic trouser suits and skirts.

Matthew Williamson

A star-studded crowd (the front row was graced by the likes of Sienna Miller, Anna Della Russo and Rachel Zoe among many others) packed into the Tate Modern for Matthew Williamson's Spring/Summer collection. A fluid, open-fronted maxi dress smartened with a bold orange tailored blazer opened the show and set the standard for the return of what Mr Williamson does best – bold prints in electric pinks, yellows and blues, touched with intricate beading and

fringe embellishments. The shell-trimmed necklines are a look likely to be interpreted by the high-street as a continuance of this summer's scallop edging.



Ice creams and dogs at Mulberry's Spring Summer 2012 show

catwalk thrown into a candy pantomime fantasy of white bubble wigs, neon lips and glitter, like The Magic Roundabout meets Little Miss Muffet. Glittery rubber, an overdose of frills, ostrich feather pompom skirts, rhine-



Mulberry's SS12 aftershow, although it's certain that few of the high-calorie treats were actually eaten. The brand added a kooky edge to their pastel-coloured show with retro ice cream vans and candy coloured ice creams.



Giles Deacon pays homage to the swan with extravagant feathered headpieces

Topshop Unique

Known for bringing attention to retro details, Topshop Unique heralded an Ancient Egyptian theme to its Spring/Summer 2012 collection. A favourite with quirky celebrities – Nicola Roberts caused a stir in her graphic jumpsuit as she arrived at the show – Topshop Unique doesn't do things by halves. Last season it was 101 Dalmatians-themed monochrome looks and doggy noses galore; this season it was hieroglyphics, pyramids and beetles. Topshop Unique probably fell slightly short of its ability to mould together the past and present this time, as its sportswear shapes – running shorts and hoods – were a disconnected canvas for the elaborate pharaoh-inspired gold motifs.

Meadham Kirchoff

Designers Benjamin Kirchoff and Edward Meadham behind brainchild Meadham Kirchoff used LFW to take their eccentricity to a whole new level – think Japanese fairy princess running through a candy store on her way to join the circus. Held in the old Eurostar terminal at Waterloo station, the industrial setting was given a girly twist with towers of dusty pink and blue balloons. Dolly girls rocked the

stone granny knickers, teddy bear aprons – on paper the collection reads as a disaster, but in reality it was a merry array of perfect craziness. Little ballet girls swanned through a Katy Perry-style stage set mixed with a butterfly wonderland to create what was one of the most talked about shows of the season.

LFW Surprises

Fashion put its best paw forward. Channel 4's fashion expert, Brix Smith-Start accessorised with her pugs at Mulberry's Fashion Night Out, lucky furry friends graced the FROW at Maria Grachvogel, and even luckier pups took to the Mulberry catwalk. Woof woof!

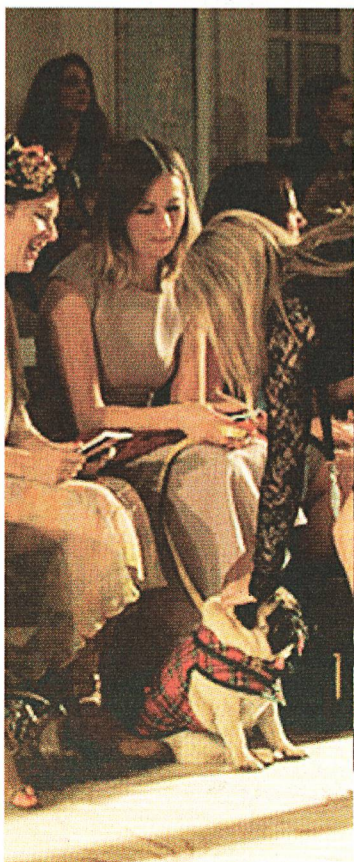
It's hard to see what goes on behind Anna Wintour's trademark sunglasses – which she kept on throughout London Fashion Week – but she was sure in for a shock during the Meadham Kirchoff show. Probably one of the most theatrical displays during LFW, Wintour was unexpectedly flashed by a can-can dancing 'Courtney Love' ballerina. Proof there is life behind those oversized shades – she smiled!

LFW favourites Mulberry brought the Great British seaside to an autumnal Somerset House. Icy treats were on hand for peckish guests at

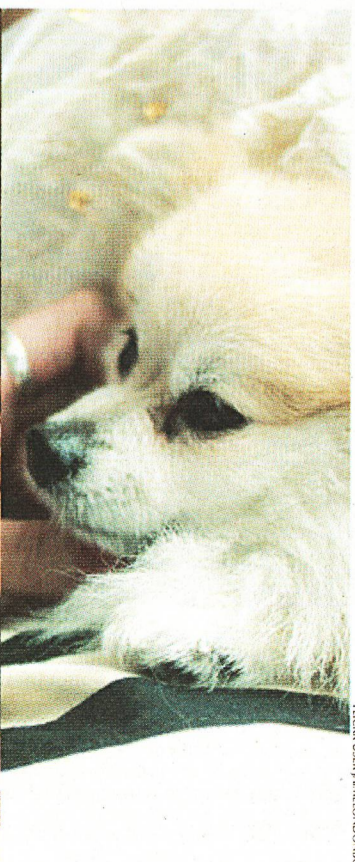
It's not often that a US rap superstar is spotted in the front row during a fashion week – add to this the fact that said rapper is none other than Kanye West and the catwalk in question is an already A-list-packed British classic, Burberry Prorsum, then add the fact that Kanye was pictured clapping the models during the show's finale and you get one huge surprise! It turns out that the rapper is more into fashion than his 'street' image would lead on. As he is about to launch his own clothing line, perhaps he was there to garner some tips from Britain's best.

Fashion royalty rubbed shoulders with actual royalty at this year's LFW – well, almost. The Duchess of Cambridge's younger sister, Pippa Middleton – arguably the more fashion-forward of the siblings – graced the front row for Alice Temperley's Temperley London show. If that wasn't a surprise in itself, the royal sister's attire caused a bit of controversy. While Peaches Geldof opted for a sensible, bandage maxi dress, two seats down, Pippa had a hard time covering her modesty in the very short satin Temperley dress she'd picked out from the designer's London store shortly before the event.

by Kerry-Rose O'Donnell



Dogs steal the show at Maria Grachvogel



The Borgias

Money, sex and power are the defining features of this show. No, it's not the latest season of *Made In Chelsea*, but rather Sky Atlantic's *The Borgias*. Although the show's setting in the papal dynasty of the House of Borgia is hardly current, the show's dealings with bribery, murder and corruption could easily be lifted from the pages of any 21st century newspaper.

If you've never heard of the Borgias before, they were an Italian papal dynasty of Spanish origin that wielded great influence in Italy through the 15th and 16th centuries. Their rise to prominence started with the election of Rodrigo Borgia (played by Jeremy Irons) as Pope in 1492. Rodrigo's children were heavily involved in politics as well as warfare, earning the family notoriety in Renaissance Italy. The Borgias' infamy has endured the ages and inspired much popular culture, including a Mario Puzo novel entitled 'The Family'.

The show has often been compared to the Tudors, which was produced by the BBC and quickly earned a reputation for its interpretation of history that was loose and yet wholly gritty. Neither show shies away from gratuitous sex and violence, with the Borgias even showing the Pope in bed with a mistress, comparing her naked leg to the contours of the yet-to-be-formed Italy.

The cast is led by Jeremy Irons as the patriarch of the family, with a host of relative unknowns supporting him. Holliday Grainger as Lucrezia Borgia comes into her own as the series progresses, and we witness her transformation from a naïve girl into a plotter worthy of her Borgia name. The two Borgia sons, played by Francois Arnaud and David Oakes, are portrayed capably but at times verge on melodrama. Luke Pasqualino and Emmanuelle Chriqui round off the cast as love interests for two of the Borgia children.

The Borgias will be appealing both to history buffs as well as those merely seeking a bit of easy viewing.

For the former, the tussling between the influential families of Medici, Sforza and Borgia makes for fascinating watching, and the fact that this has a backdrop of fantastic visuals makes it all the more appealing. The show's set and costume design has to be commended. For political scientists there are even a few appearances of that mainstay of university reading lists, Niccolò Machiavelli. For those not so interested in the intricacies of medieval Italian politics, there is plenty to keep you entertained, as the show has a goldmine of story arcs to consider. As a Spanish proverb goes, 'an ounce of blood is worth more than a pound of friendship' and at its core, the Borgias is just a story about family.

↳ Simon Chaudhuri

TV Tips for the week

House

Sky1, 00:00, Mondays

The eighth and possibly final season of the medical drama starring Hugh Laurie begins this week. The first series without Lisa Cuddy (Lisa Edelstein), it begins with Dr. House in prison awaiting his parole hearing.

Boardwalk Empire

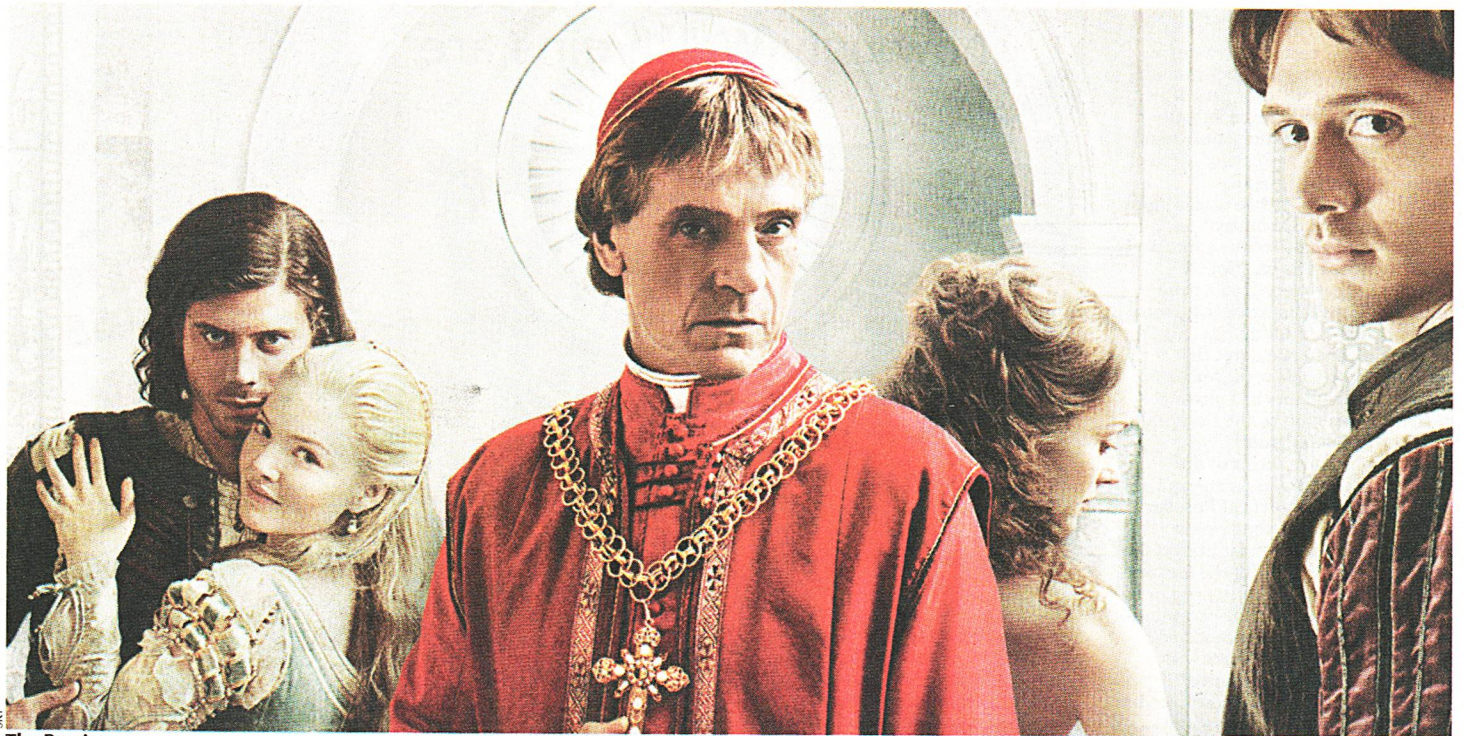
Sky Atlantic, 22:00, Wednesdays

The beginning of the second series of this top-billed Prohibition-era drama sees Nucky (Steve Buscemi) forced to deal with an attack by the KKK as well as arrest for electoral fraud.

Terra Nova

Sky1, 18:00, Sundays

One of the most anticipated new shows of the season, *Terra Nova* follows mankind's attempts to survive in a dinosaur-populated prehistoric world, having discovered time travel in a very distant and damaged future world.



The Borgias

The Ship Tavern, Holborn

The Ship Tavern is a relatively small tucked-away affair about 500 metres north of campus, just peeking out towards Lincoln's Inn Fields. It has an unassuming face and the frosted glass windows offer no real clue as to what lurks inside. Once within, your fears are laid to rest - this isn't some tawdry dive, instead it comes across as quaint, perhaps bordering on twee.

I'm unsure as to the décor; in case you missed the title, this pub is nautically themed. In fact, it's almost stifling in its approach. Haphazard bits of nautical memorabilia are strewn across the wall and almost no wall is bare. It is both too overbearing for the eye and makes no real sense beyond the name. I get that the pub is called the Ship, but it's nowhere near the Thames, nor the true nautical heartland of London which was, and always will be the East End. Guv'nor. I'd let the pub get away with it, were it tasteful, but there is too much going on - in this case, less if definitely more. To cap it off, the seating is also garishly patterned with aggressive swirls. While it makes for a visually interesting pub for ten minutes, the effect wears off rather quickly. I did, however, really enjoy the ceiling - the marvellous plaster decorations are a sight to see, if a tad repetitive. On another positive note, the mix and match lampshades were sublime. I also liked the eclectic music, which lent the atmosphere a nice note and was loud enough to give one privacy without forcing a rise in speaking volume for those engaging in conversation.

The pub boasts a long history, first

as a working man's watering hole for those field labourers working nearby, changing into a Catholic retreat under Henry VIII. Apparently, priests would give their sermons from behind the bar and retreat to hiding places when the authorities came knocking. A fair few were executed on the spot. For those of a nervous disposition, despite boastful claims as to being haunted, I didn't hear a single scream while supping at the tavern, so don't get too scared.

With regard to the business end of the pub, the beer was good to firm, but nothing particularly stellar. Boasting six award-winning ales would be good if you weren't in the centre of London; here it is par for the course. Bombardier and Speckled Hen are run of the mill; even Deuchars IPA is becoming less and less noteworthy as it becomes increasingly proliferated. The former and the latter are good brews and fine session pints, but nothing more. In terms of guest ales, my Young Tom was rather good, neither excessively bitter nor sweet, but had with good caramel flavour. If I saw it again I'd probably shell out three and a bit of my English pounds for the privilege. As for, they appeared to have some.

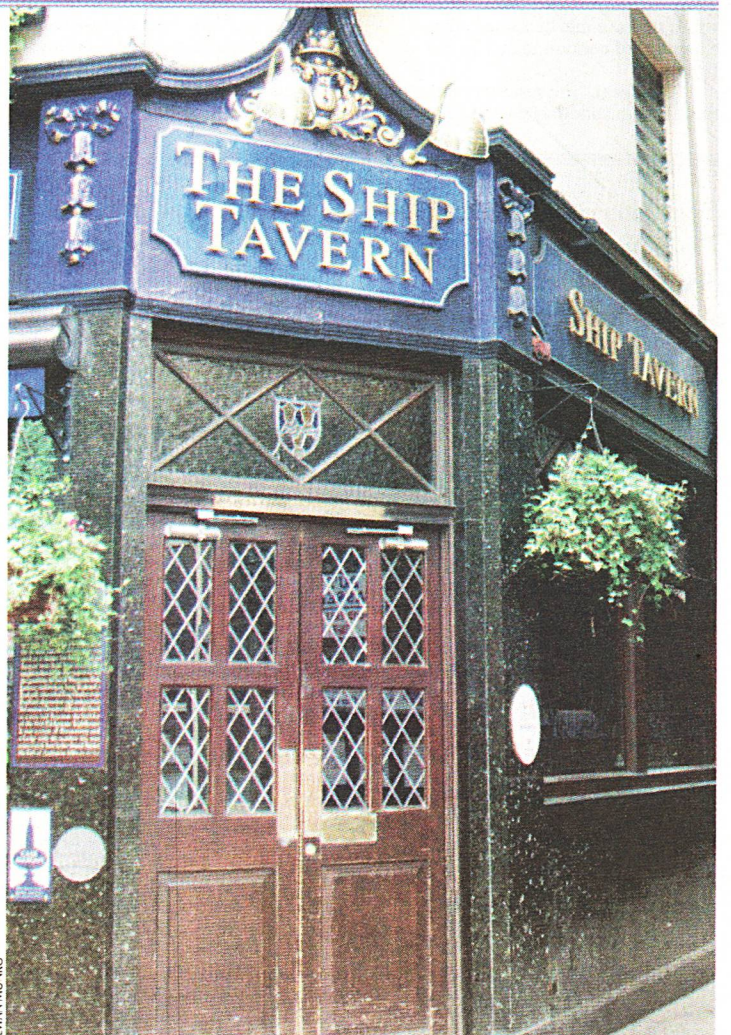
There was a wide selection of food, from old pub favourites along the slightly more avant-garde fish finger sandwich. The food served looked nice, smelled delicious and up to its sensory billing. The chips in particular were very good. Their gourmet burger, served on the obligatory plank of wood, didn't have too much greenery, just enough for you to delude yourself

into thinking you're somewhat healthy. The presentation was commendable for a pub, but I have to say for the price it's being served at you expect as much. The almost required theme nights are present here too, although having not attended one I can't really pass judgement.

This tavern has also, deplorably, given in and bought some televisions. They distract from the experience and look out of place given the scheme of things. On top of this they haven't even gone the whole hog and purchased Sky, so you're beset with various BBC News 24 anchors firmly plastered in your peripheral vision, repeating everything after 15 minutes, making you even more nauseated. Another alarming fixture present in the pub is the "mind your bags" sticker. While expected in modern London, it is disappointing that this pub, intended to be a haven is beset by such difficulties. It's just a shame that this can't be eliminated and one can't enjoy the tavern in peace. I realise the staff themselves can't do much to cure this, but nevertheless it's disappointing.

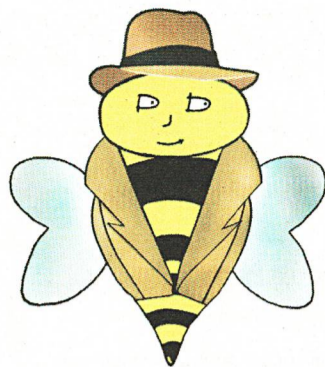
The total cost for a meal and two pints here would come to just under twenty pounds. In conjunction, the décor is overbearing and slightly touristy - despite the history this pub is only worth the occasional visit for a quality meal. Perhaps only come here regularly if you have a guaranteed internship or parents who love you.

↳ Matthew Worby

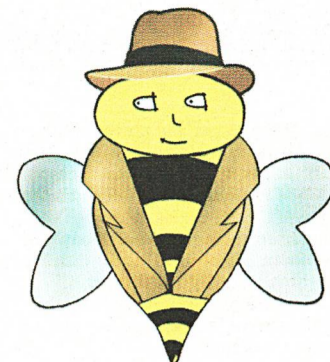


EWAN MUIRHEAD

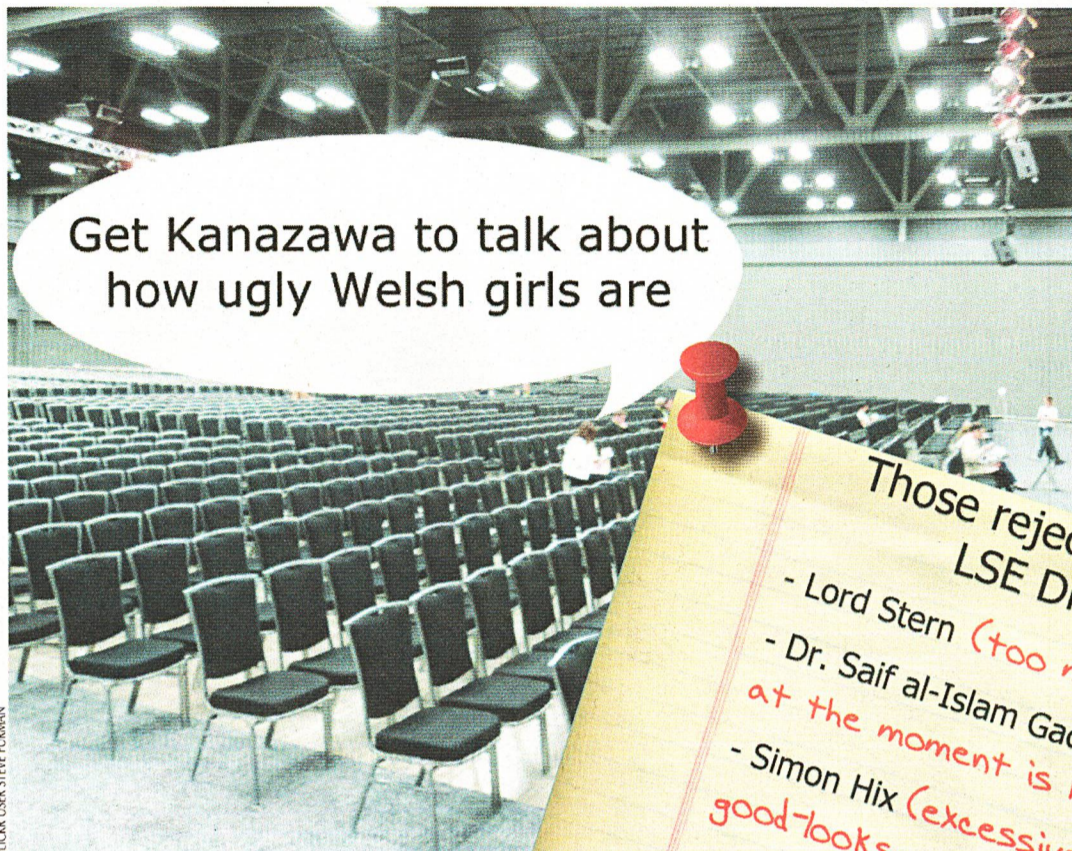
The Ship Tavern, Holborn



PRIVATE B



SU Overestimates 'Ethics' Launch Event



Get Kanazawa to talk about how ugly Welsh girls are

Flickr User: STEVE FURMAN

front-page story. I'm very disappointed in the lack of due care and attention made by Rosebery residents."

No one from the Rosebery Committee was prepared to be interviewed by the B. However, a leaked report from the Estates Division indicates that an ambitious development program will be established for the academic year 2012-2013 that will allow the LSE to physically revolve around the residence to an even greater extent than it currently does.

↳ Tanned Ale

Whither Rosebery?

The B has received news of an official complaint being made by numerous members of the Students' Union regarding the perceived lack of participation being made by students at Rosebery Hall of Residence within the LSE.

"It has been over two weeks since undergraduate move-in day!" an anonymous member of the Sabbatical Team informed this us, "Yet we have yet to hear more than a peep from Rosebery. Most residents seem content with their lot in life. This is disgraceful when one notes that at this point last year, their predecessors's bathroom complaints had already been taken up by the European Court of Human Rights."

"In addition, in terms of fire alarms, building works, crime and other important aspects of Rosebery's residential mandate, the present intake already languish far behind the expected norms. Short of the uncovering of a Satanic ritual abuse ring or an Al-Qaeda sleeper cell, it is exceptionally unlikely that the residence will be able to go into Lent Term with a sufficiently high exposure rate."

Official criticism was mirrored by residents at other halls. An anonymous Banksider recently detained by the government of Colombia stated, "Last year, I understand that money-laundering on behalf of FARC wouldn't have merited more than a handful of column inches in the Beaver."

"This year," the resident continued, "I'm suddenly forced to be a

We are delighted to welcome back our resident haikuist, Union Bashō. As with last year, we are proud to also be hosting his equally brilliant cousin:

Union Rubbishō

Though I really try
To fit my haikus on here
I always make the final line
far too long because I can't fit
in a season.

Winter.

Those rejected applicants for LSE Director in full

- Lord Stern (too much hot air)
- Dr. Saif al-Islam Gaddafi (most we can do at the moment is Head of I.R.)
- Simon Hix (excessive charisma, good looks and intelligence)
- Andy Farrell (wouldn't accept pay cut)
- Polly McKinlay (boycotting Director's Office: door fails to meet standards)
- Gordon Brown (vetoed by Students' Union)
- George Osborne (vetoed by Finance Division AND Students' Union)
- Simon from Alpha Books (actually, WHY have we rejected him?)

That Interview with the new Philippe Roman Chair in History and International Affairs in full:

Rolex Young: Do you hate Muslims?

Professor Ramachandra Guha: Most certainly not!

Rolex Young: Bollocks. Any chance you could call me a Pikey? We really need some material this term.

[Prof. Guha terminated the interview at this point]

Rolex Young: Guess we'll have to bring out the leftover Neall F***erson stuff from last year then. I suppose that's the real point of him; not that he's so pretty and so smart and so productive and so self-absorbed and so smug.

Beer and That: Pub Review

If desire could be personified as a building, then The Shipwright's Arms on Tooley Street could be firmly established as the most desirable temple to Dionysian excess in the Borough of Southwark.

Upon crossing the threshold of the establishment, fears over confronting something unexpected are thankfully put to rest. The pub looks exactly like you would expect it to. There's a bar, where you can get drinks, food and that. You are not allowed to go around to help yourself though as you actually have to tell the people on the other side what you want. I ended up having a pint of beer, which is a common alcoholic drink in the area and it was okay, although I'm told that it was more expensive than you may expect for the area.

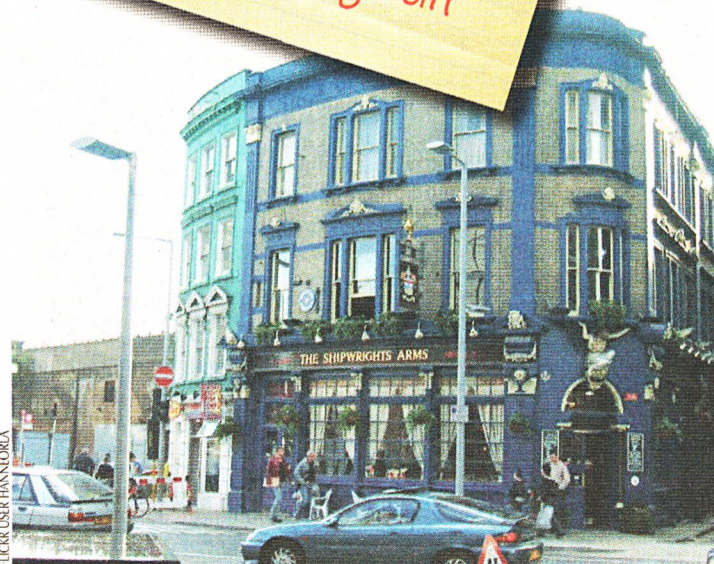
Behind the bar, there were lots of bottles full up of differently coloured liquids, but they looked a bit scary so I didn't try any of them but I'm sure they were all slightly different in taste. The crisps were alright, originally I wanted to write a review all about them, but the editor said that most pubs do them and it wasn't worth-

while putting them into the paper.

Unlike some pubs, at the the Shipwright's Arms you can actually 'order' some 'food' to eat at your 'table'. I ended up getting a burger and chips. I was unsure about most of the other stuff on the menu, most of which looked a bit better than what I ended up going with but all the other descriptions had French words in them and I didn't want to order something nasty.

I ordered my burger to come medium-rare because I wanted to appear cultured but fortunately they messed up and it came well-done. It was a better plate than you would expect to get in Burger King, but it was quite a bit more expensive as well, so I suppose it evens out. The chips were really good and it tasted like they had been made from scratch, but I guess they could have just been really good oven fries from Marks & Spencer.

To be honest, I feel a bit odd writing about food in such an in-depth way - it's a bit like describing an enjoyable toilet break. I guess I could pad this out by talking about the decor, but again, I can't really say



Flickr User: HANAKORA

anything more than it looked like a pub. There were seats and everything, so if you don't have legs then you'd be well catered for (this a pun because I already talked about food).

I've also just realised that the whole "Desire/Architecture" thing at the start didn't really work. Sorry.

↳ Ginger Whoreby

Features

#OccupyWallStreet

Alex Welsby analyses the protests in New York's financial district

Since September 17th, a week after the US commemorated the tenth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, social media has granted the American public the ability to occupy Wall Street. As the global economy crumbles, with only last week Mervyn King stating the world is facing its worst ever financial crisis, this Manhattan financial district has become a focal point for interna-

Chants throughout the demonstrations have included, "We are the 99%" in order for the protesters to set themselves apart from the 1% of wealthiest Americans whilst posters of 'Throw Me Some Crumbs' have also been evident.

tional economic frustration.

Why now though? How come this did not happen in 2008 when it was then thought the world facing its worst financial crisis ever; is this simply delayed reaction or a sign of things to come? The origins of the demonstration lie in an article entitled #OccupyWallStreet from a magazine, Adbusters, affiliated to a non-profit anti-consumer organization. Despite drawn out efforts from protest groups namely US Day of Rage, to capitalize on social media such as Twitter as a means of organization, expected numbers of around 20,000 have failed to materialize. This has left only a few hundred to set up camp in Zucutti Park and Liberty Plaza. One of the

protesters, Joel Atkinson as interviewed by the Wall Street Journal, stated that the plan is "to

basically stay here until we can build enough people. We are trying to model this after the uprising in Egypt."

The power of the hash tag on Wall Street however is proving to be more of a hindrance than it was in Tahir Square.

Now entering its fourth week, the protests appear to be slowly gaining momentum with Labor Unions now capitalizing on the occupation to achieve a result similar to the previous Wisconsin collective bargaining fight. These 2011 Wisconsin bargaining protests were a number of demonstrations starting in February, which in-

involved up to 100,000 people opposing the Wisconsin Budget Repair Bill. The Unions have stated that they will continue to support the Wall Street Protests through donating food packages and sheer manpower. Moreover, some of the union leaders have assigned liaison officers from their political action committees to coordinate efforts with the protest movement.

So far it seems to be of a peaceful nature, as although occupiers have no permit to demonstrate in the area, they are currently not being stopped. However, this is expected to change as and when needed.

There is a core group of "self-styled anarchists" who are intentionally provoking confrontations with the police during the marches. To put it into perspective, the cost of keeping the peace so far has totaled over \$2 million in overtime for the NYPD.

Yet the introduction of the Labor Unions has created an obvious confusion of grievances, and is thus yielding an increasingly fractious movement. Concerns range from a lack of jobs, Federal Reserve Action and US financial regulation. The Dodd-Frank legislation passed last year, while its notorious Volcker Rule has come under much criticism for its design to restrict US banks from making certain speculative investments that do not benefit their

austerity. It is ultimately bringing the middle class majority of the US to domestic and international attention. An argument suggested by the Associated Press last week questioned whether President Obama should adopt a more populist tone and would quell the protests faster by appealing to them as a voting block rather than as an extremist minority. Furthermore, a presenter on the NewsHub program of the Wall Street Journal proposed the idea that the Tea Party and Occupy Wall Street movements had greater similarities than differences as they both represented discontent with current institutional practices.

While a Wall Street Revolution appears a long way from the events which unfolded in Tahir Square earlier this year, it would be wrong to dismiss it completely.

As #OccupyWallStreet trends worldwide, sympathetic demonstrations are sporadically appearing across the US in Los Angeles and Seattle while in the central Henan province of China, a number of pensioners have allied in support of the US demonstrations, a move described as nostalgia for the era of Mao Zedong. Is it safe to assume that it is only a matter of time before we become accustomed to the Liverpool Street sit-in?

customers the recent Jobs Report figures published last Friday showed 6.2 million Americans have been out of work for 6 months or more, which is 44.6% of the jobless population.

Wall Street has therefore become a symbol of inequality. Chants throughout the demonstrations have included "we are the 99%" in order for the protesters to set themselves apart from the 1% of wealthiest Americans while posters of "Throw Me Some Crumbs" have also been evident. Perhaps then, rather than viewing the Occupy Wall Street demonstration on a superficial level, the movement should be treated more as a political pathway against

and Seattle while in the central Henan province of China, a number of pensioners have allied in support of the US demonstrations, a move described as nostalgia for the era of Mao Zedong. Is it safe to assume that it is only a matter of time before we become accustomed to the Liverpool Street sit-in?

Flickr user: Matthew Knott



Knox not guilty

Sofia Horta e Costa describes the mystery surrounding the trial

Twenty four year-old Amanda Knox was sensationally released on the 3rd October after her successful appeal on a murder conviction in the Perugian court. Knox had captured the fascination of the global press ever since she was named a suspect in the 2007 murder of British student Meredith Kercher. She has been transformed into something akin to a celebrity by both the overwhelming media attention on the pretty American girl and the fierce public relations campaign carried out by her family in support of her innocence.

And with celebrity comes ruthless public judgement. With the court and legal processes - in addition to almost four years of imprisonment - behind her, Amanda is now under pressure to decide whether or not to respond to the divided public opinion on her case. Her first public statement was made the very hour she landed in her home town of Seattle last Wednesday. No doubt the book deals and interview invitations will be flooding in, and per-

haps they should be.

The outrage at her release was clearly manifested in the streets outside the appeals court in Perugia last Monday as screams of 'shame' were heard from the crowd. It is puzzling that a verdict which was so indisputable in the Italian court under two years ago could undergo such a complete reversal. The prosecution's case had rested on what the defence claimed to be unprofessionally collected forensic evidence that was consequently deemed unreliable in court due to a possibility (or probability) of contamination, and therefore perhaps a manipulative "she-devil" has escaped justice on a mere technicality. Having been found guilty of lying and obstruction by blaming Patrick Lumumba for the murder, surely Knox's appeal should have been viewed with added suspicion. But suspicion is legally not enough to uphold a conviction. As a convicted suspect, the law dictates that Amanda should not have to prove herself innocent but rather disprove her guilt.

However, those sympathetic to Knox's release see an innocent young girl who has suffered at the hands of selective pre-trial reporting that vilified her and presumed her guilty before she even had a chance to defend herself in court. Analysts writing in the June 10th edition of The Economist last year focused on the significance of the clumsy handling of the privacy of criminal investigations in Italy and cited Amanda's case as an example; the article argues that "information is selectively leaked to reporters before the accused come to trial, often creating a presumption of guilt that is difficult to reverse, whether in court or in the public mind." It is because of this very public prosecution that the family's defence has had to be equally public following her conviction of the crime in December 2009 and a 26-year prison sentence.

This case saw tabloids worldwide in a lurid "Team Meredith" versus "Team Amanda" press battle. Has this frenetic media boxing-match further tainted the proceedings of a messy

criminal investigation? The extent to which this was a trial in the tabloids and not in the courtroom is debatable, but surely the sensationalism surrounding the case has all but clouded the bare facts of Knox's conviction and appeal process. The "10 factors that helped Knox's case" as laid out by Graham Johnson - an investigative journalist who has published a book on the events - focus largely on Knox's parents' successful garnishing of their daughter's public image, as well as the dissection of the quality of crime scene procedures and the lenient nature of the Italian appeals process. The "facts" presented against Knox were so circumstantial that the image of an evil, sexually motivated "Foxy Knoxy" was constructed to cover up the lack of solid evidence, the defence argued. The apparent lack of motive - the argument of a "sex game gone wrong" seems far-fetched when no proof has been produced - further instilled reasonable doubt in the courtroom.

Although Amanda Knox may have been a victim of wrongful conviction,

her celebrity status has pushed a most pressing issue to the periphery of public attention. The victim at the heart of discussions should be Meredith Kercher, yet she is more than often overlooked in headlines, this very feature bearing no exception. The horror of the crime has been gradually forgotten and at times trivialized in the midst of the bi-polar public fascination with the various personas of Amanda Knox. As Tom Geoghegan writes in the BBC News, "although four young people were at the heart of this story, it was the University of Washington student that dominated it." And with the acquittal of two of the three suspects convicted of Meredith's murder, the probability of an eventual campaign to clear Knox's name should not drown the urgent matter of finding closure for the events of November 2007. Hopefully Hollywood will be kept at bay too.

Love her or hate her. But the mystery continues, lest we forget.

In Steve

Eden Dwek ponders the future of a job-less technology industry

A day after Apple Inc. CEO Tim Cook took the stage in Cupertino, California to announce the annual update to the immensely popular iPhone, the company broke the news that founder and former CEO Steve Jobs had passed away at the age of 56.

Jobs had been battling pancreatic cancer since mid-2004, and while initially it was believed that he had fully recovered, his medical leave in January this year and resignation in August strongly suggested that this was not the case. US President Barack Obama paid tribute to Jobs as "among the greatest of American innovators," and on a more personal level, Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg wanted to "thank [him] for being a mentor and a friend." Meanwhile, people around the world continue to leave messages and flowers outside Apple's flagship stores.

Steve Jobs was born on 24th February 1955, and immediately put up for adoption by his biological parents. By the 1970s Jobs, and fellow cofounder Steve Wozniak, were seeing the beginning of Apple Inc, as they created the first commercially successful line of personal computers in the back of a garage. After visiting Xerox research and development centres, Jobs began to realise the potential of a mouse driven graphical interface, and in the 1980s, pioneered this in the Macintosh computer.

1985 saw Jobs lose a power struggle with his board of directors and then he was gone. The company he had co-founded, and been one of the main driving forces behind, had left him out to dry. Over the next few years, Steve founded Pixar, which went on to create the world's first computer animated feature film, "Toy Story". Apple's 1996 buyout of NeXT brought Steve Jobs back to the company he had spent so much of his life with, and the following 15 years saw immense success and innovation. Such a fall from grace, followed by his return to Apple after a period in the wilderness, is seen as an inspiration to many businesspeople whose careers have taken a turn for the worse.

Since 1996, Apple has revolutionized several industries, with Steve Jobs the consistent driver behind each

innovation. He repeatedly took an existing, but half-formed, idea – the mouse-driven computer, the digital music player, the smartphone and the tablet computer – and showed the rest of the industry how to do it properly. In the process, he triggered upheavals in computing, music, telecoms and the news business that were painful for incumbent firms but welcomed by millions of consumers. Jobs believed that his work did not end when Apple's products had come off the production line. This was only the beginning for him. Several times a year, he would stand in a black polo neck shirt, in front of an auditorium filled with journalists, developers and technology enthusiasts, to introduce the "revolutionary" products his company had been working on. Strict secrecy within the firm meant that this was the first time the world would see these new products, and they were presented in such a slick and fluid fashion that they became "must-have accessories." These "keynote speeches" were Steve's way of putting himself in the consumer's shoes and showing them how Apple's new products were vital for everyday life. With such a critical eye for design, ease of use, and a new style of product marketing, it is no wonder that Apple's market cap (\$343Bn) is second only to America's largest firm, ExxonMobil.

Apple's success in defining new industry categories has been a major catalyst for other firms to get their act together. Unique patents filed by the company and the innovative features this brought to their products, meant that other firms have had to work hard to keep up. With Steve Jobs no longer at the head of the company, many industry analysts fear that this may lead to stagnation in product development. While the iPhone 4S, released last Tuesday, was evolutionary, there were no game changing features that tend to be synonymous with Apple products. Apple shares will remain volatile over the coming months until analysts have time to judge whether new CEO Tim Cook has what it takes to continue Apple's successful streak. If he does not reach the unimaginably high expectations though, it is not all over for the technology firm. It is believed that Jobs has left four years worth of

blueprints for new Apple products, with his traditional attention to detail. Meanwhile, prior to his death, Steve Jobs worked closely with Joel Podolny, former Yale Business School dean, to create a training programme in which company executives will be taught to think like him, in "a forum to impact that DNA to future generations." With this in place, we can hope that the drive and vision behind Apple will continue to shape the industry, and in the end benefit us consumers with cutting edge devices centred on our daily needs.

For those who have not watched it, I would highly recommend having a look at Steve Jobs' commencement address delivered to Stanford students

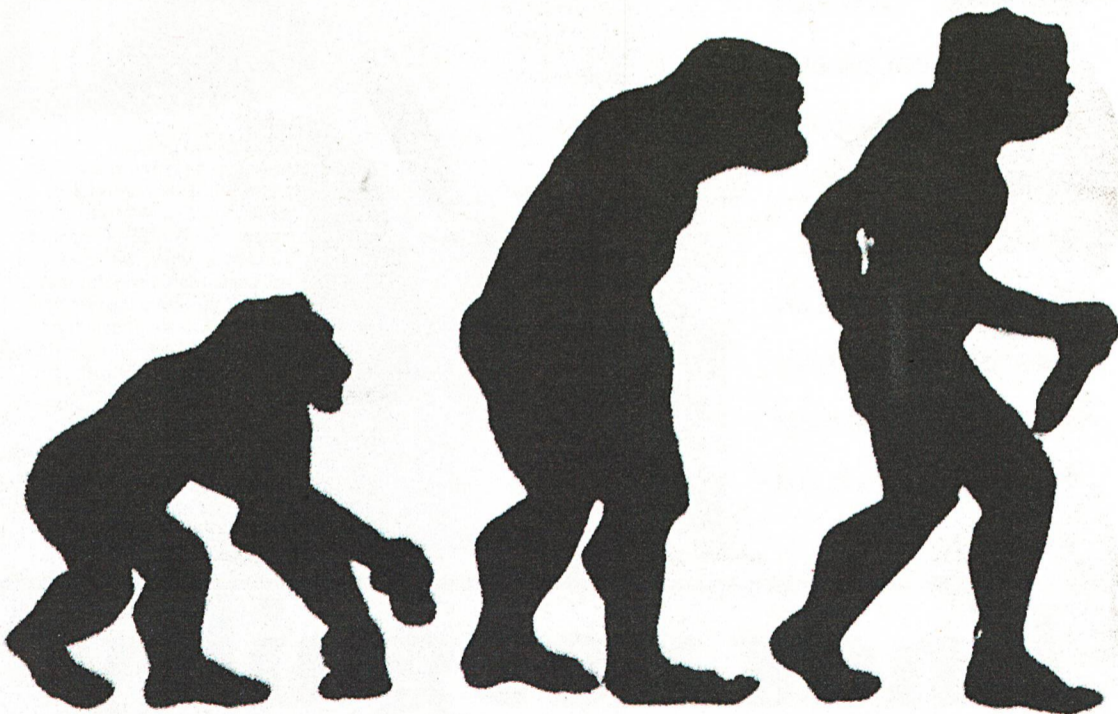
in June 2005. The themes followed in the speech are captivating food for thought and well worth reflection. The speech is finished with the following two paragraphs, thoughts that Jobs no doubt followed to his death:

"When I was young, there was an amazing publication called The Whole Earth Catalog, which was one of the bibles of my generation. It was created by a fellow named Stewart Brand not far from here in Menlo Park, and he brought it to life with his poetic touch. This was in the late 1960s, before personal computers and desktop publishing, so it was all made with typewriters, scissors and Polaroid cameras. It was sort of like Google in paperback form, 35 years before Google came

along: it was idealistic, and overflowing with neat tools and great notions.

Stewart and his team put out several issues of The Whole Earth Catalog, and then when it had run its course, they put out a final issue. It was the mid-1970s, and I was your age. On the back cover of their final issue was a photograph of an early morning country road, the kind you might find yourself hitchhiking on if you were so adventurous. Beneath it were the words: 'Stay Hungry. Stay Foolish.' It was their farewell message as they signed off. Stay Hungry. Stay Foolish. And I have always wished that for myself. And now, as you graduate to begin anew, I wish that for you.

Stay Hungry. Stay Foolish.



Azeem Sulemanji contemplates comparisons between Jobs and Edison

After the tragic passing of Steve Jobs, you will have no doubt been confronted with various pithy epithets and glib comparisons that attempt to sum up his extraordinary life and achievements. The most controversial of these handles, in my opinion, is "the Thomas Edison of the 21st century." Is it really fair to compare Jobs to the man who not only invented the first practical lightbulb, but also designed the electrical distribution system that enabled its mass use? Is it not a bit like calling Dappy from N-Dubz "the Sinatra of the 21st century?"

Before I try and answer this question, I'm going to shed light on whether this kind of direct comparison is even meaningful given the vastly different technological environments in which both men operated. Edison began experimenting and inventing while working the night shift as a telegraph operator during the 1860s – with his earliest inventions including a stock ticker and an electric vote recorder. After some commercial success, Edison set up not the first ever

industrial research lab solely dedicated to the pursuit of continued innovation and technological progress. It was here at Menlo Park, New Jersey, that the most famous inventions that are attributed to him came to fruition.

Almost a century later in 1970s San Francisco, California a young Steve Jobs – then a countercultural hippy with a predilection for LSD and Buddhism – befriends the tremendously talented nerd-king Steve Wozniak (Woz) over a mutual love of electronics. Woz was a technical genius, who had no interest in market shares or p/e ratios, but rather an overwhelming desire to meticulously improve new technology that he hoped would be of supreme use to the common man. It was Woz who single-handedly designed and built both the Apple I – Apple Computer's first product in 1976 – and the Apple II. It was Steve Jobs' shrewdness, persuasiveness and remarkable self-belief however that drove the business and profitability of Apple Computer.

So given that Woz was the one who sat in his bedroom tinkering with chips and circuit boards just as

Edison experimented with telegraphy on his nightshifts, can Jobs really be compared to Edison? Yes, because of the significantly different nature of technological innovation in the 1970s as compared with the 19th century. Edison's most prolifically inventive period was at a time when there was no easily utilisable electricity, no convenient Radio Shack-esque store where you can buy components, and not even a trustworthy source of light in that darkness! It was a time when building something single-handedly literally meant that components had to be crafted from scratch. This may look as though Edison had to work infinitely harder to invent stuff compared to his more modern counterparts, but the fact is that in a time of such relative technological simplicity each useful marginal invention will have a far more profound effect on society. This was a time when one inquisitive and resourceful man, who hadn't even gone through rigorous formal education, could shift technological paradigms – by for instance inventing the lightbulb – by tinkering away in his basement.

Compare this with innovation in

the mid 20th Century where arguably the most important invention (which gave birth to the entire computing industry) – the transistor – took over 20 years of research at multi-million dollar research centres from multiple physicists each of whom had their own specific area of expertise in solid state physics. In those 20 years, if research dollars had at anytime been pumped into a different area of electronics, the transistor may have never been invented.

When individuals are inventing based on increasingly complex studies from more and more scientists, each marginal step forward is – in the grand scheme of things – less profound. And this is essentially why I believe Steve Jobs is the Edison of the 21st century. Yes, I concede that he didn't display the same kind of technical genius as Edison (or even Woz!), but the key to modern success in technological invention is having a clear and unblemished vision. Drastic technical improvements that materially benefit normal people are no longer achieved with big overriding inventions, but a series of smaller and less outwardly

significant progressions, which are then drawn together to create something special. It is people who can bring together those smaller innovations and harness the productive and creative capacity of an ever-increasing pool of technically talented people to forge reality from vision who are the real drivers of gamechanging technological progress in the modern world.

It is no longer meaningful to measure a tech-CEO's utility based on his or her technical knowledge, but rather on their ability to spot and influence trends and subsequently direct research, dollars and manpower towards creating must-have products. Jobs' success ultimately was his ability to say "no" to the thousands of potential products that Apple could have easily made. But moreover, due to the clarity of his vision, he ignored the noise of supposed consumer demand and largely avoided pursuing useless Amstrad Emailer-like embarrassments, to bring to market that which were not only commercially successful but changed the nature of their industry, and our expectations.

we trust

Edward Larkin explores the implication of Apple's foray into AI

The consensus reaction to Apple's latest launch this past Tuesday was one of disappointment, which, regardless of whatever else transpired, seemed mostly a function of the lack of a new numeral behind "iPhone". While these headlines carried the day, the company's introduction of "Siri" a virtual personal assistant, might come to be remembered as a major event in the history of artificial intelligence. Siri responds to questions in normal spoken language, and learns about us to respond more intelligently in the future - much as a person - or actual assistant - would. Siri co-founder Norman Winarsky (who sold the technology to Apple in 2010) went so far as to call the announcement a "world-

experiment in education - allowing online students to listen to the same lectures, do the same assignments, and take the same tests and quizzes as students in Palo Alto. The professors initially presumed a couple thousand people might sign up. As of last week, 130,000 had.

Academically, however, AI is contentious as ever. Noam Chomsky, the famous MIT linguist, and Peter Norvig, senior research director at Google, attracted attention earlier this year for an unusually public dispute about the future direction of artificial intelligence. Chomsky decried modern AI's emphasis on statistical models of huge data sets as modeling devoid of understanding. Norvig battled back, emphasizing that statistical modeling

Nancy Franklin tweeted at the time "On a fun/tense scale, things on Jeopardy are leaning towards too tense, not enough fun." I remember sensing this tension at the time - here were undeniably two fantastic Jeopardy players who were simply impotent in comparison to Watson. Unlike AI's previous big breakthrough, IBM's Deep Blue defeating grand master Garry Kasparov at chess in 1997, the game of Jeopardy was a particularly visceral display of computing power. Chess is a civilized game - turns are taken, strategies are devised, "check-mate" is only proclaimed at the end. Jeopardy, in comparison, is like a UFC fight - Watson's superiority was affirmed again and again, question after question, its dominance visible on the

it leads to net gains in employment, as productivity and demand both increase, thus stimulating businesses to hire new workers. But what happens when machines are better than human beings at almost everything? Furthermore, human beings can't switch fluidly between professions. For example, the airline desk attendant disrupted by computer check-ins may have difficulty getting a job in a growing sector, such as IT management. Ford also points out that technological progress now threatens the conventional economic wisdom that low-skilled jobs will be the first replaced by machines. He contrasts radiologists and housekeepers, with the former job much easier to conceptually automate than the latter.

you think about a fact, it will just tell you the answer."

Despite the scientific revolutions spurred by the likes of Galileo and Darwin that have gently urged the contrary, we humans like to fashion ourselves as the centre of a cosmic drama. Perhaps it's the only way to deal with the vast expanse of a universe that has so far proven to be silent but for us. Artificial intelligence is profoundly

AI is profoundly shaking this human-centric worldview... perhaps for the last time.

shaking this human-centric worldview - battered so many times in the past but stubbornly rising (like a weed or a phoenix, depending on your philosophical tendencies) - perhaps for the last time.

Garry Kasparov must have felt odd sitting across from Deep Blue, the grand master marshalling every available neural circuit that had been specifically honed over the course of years to win at this single game, while the computer performed 200 millions calculation per second in electrical silence. Likewise, it must have been a strange feeling for Ken Jennings to stand powerless at a podium that he had dominated for longer than any other champion in the history of the game - not only defeated, but crushed.

And perhaps this is the most disconcerting aspect of it - the magnitude. Perhaps Jennings could have trained himself night and day and eventually overcome Watson, or at least made his IBM opponent's massively parallel processors feel the digital equivalent of pressure, the computational version of sweat. But were Jennings to do this, it wouldn't matter - Watson's performance would keep skyrocketing upwards along the exponential trajectory of Moore's Law, constantly becoming cheaper, faster, smaller.

The implications of artificial intelligence make the head spin with incredulity. Step outside, walk down the streets, and it's difficult to believe that technology really improves exponentially. But then reach into your pocket, feel the thin rectangular shape that beckons, and ask yourself how many people would have believed you if you had calmly explained the concept in 1985. What will people in 2035 have to show us?

In the mean time, we are left only to admire the astonishing slope of the curve and wonder vaguely how it works, what it means, where we're going. Perhaps these are questions to best posed to Siri. ☘

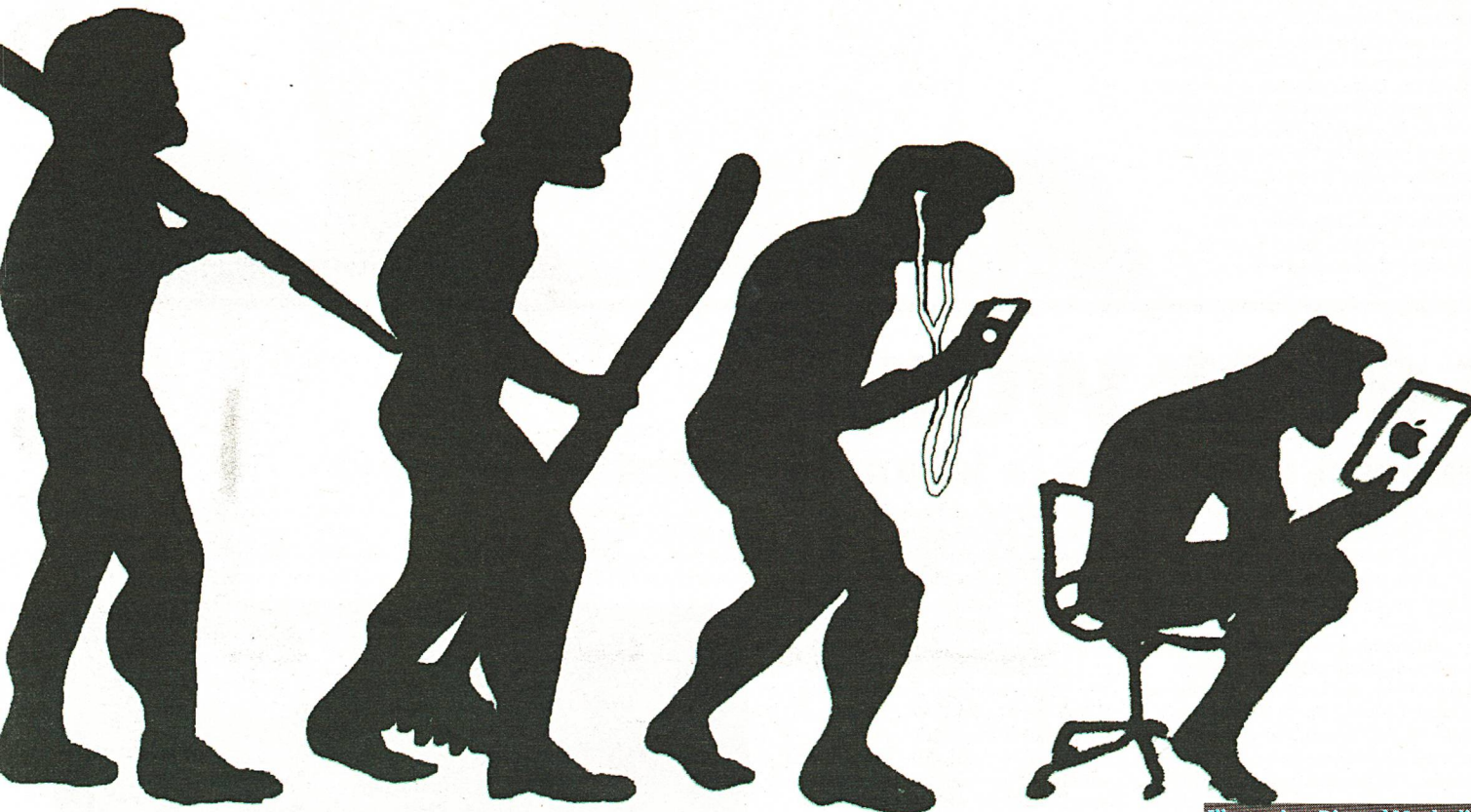


Illustration: Rimmel Moyhadin

changing event... a new computing paradigm shift."

Commercially, Siri is a continuation of what has been an incredible year for artificial intelligence. IBM's Watson machine thoroughly trounced Jeopardy champions Ken Jennings and Brad Rutter this February, prompting The New York Times to publish a 7-part series on AI titled "Smarter than You Think." The series details

Academically, however, AI is contentious as ever.

other breakthroughs, such as Google's recent deployment of self-driven cars in California that navigate themselves by borrowing aspects of human cognition. Stanford University is offering an "Introduction to Artificial Intelligence" class online this fall in a bold new

can indeed mimic incredibly complex systems like human language. If you have a cache of a trillion words, as Google does, surely there can be statistical models that can accurately reflect language.

Academics like Chomsky are justifiably hesitant in their embrace of modern AI. After all, in the 1960s, people thought that there would be human-level artificial intelligence in less than 20 years. Perhaps that dream, premature 50 years ago, is finally beginning the march towards fruition. Indeed, Peter Thiel, the famous venture capital investor in Facebook, says that many have overlooked the large gains in AI recently because they have been cultured to mistrust the hype. Public disputes over basic philosophical approaches like the one between Chomsky and Norvig usually signal fields in deep turmoil, and one would assume that AI still has a ways to go.

Which it indeed does. But its recent success (based mostly on Norvig's approach) has been impressive. Take the example of IBM's Watson. Earlier this year, the supercomputer ruthlessly dispatched the two best human Jeopardy champions ever, Ken Jennings and Brad Rutter. As New Yorker writer

money board after every turn.

But what happens when machines are better than humans at almost everything?

So what does the future hold? For one, some of the basic economic theorems about technology and employment may need to be re-examined. As Martin Ford writes in his 2011 book "Lights in the Tunnel," economists have long clung to the "Luddite Fallacy," the belief that while technology may disrupt jobs in a certain industry,

Some have suggested that we must merge with technology to make ourselves relevant in the future. Anyone who has considered our symbiosis with the Internet and smart phones in the abstract will know that this process is already well underway. Garry Kasparov points out that humans and computers playing together as partner easily defeat even advanced chess supercomputers. The provocative futurist Ray Kurzweil projects that we will begin the process of physically merging with machines by the early 2020s. Kurzweil calmly states that since technology increases exponentially, we will be able to back up our brains on a computer, stay young forever to nanorobots patrolling our bloodstream and live most of our lives in virtual reality - all before 2035. A study earlier this year in the prestigious journal Science suggests that we are already in the process of exporting our memory to Google, and Steven Levy's book "In the Plex" relates a quotation by Google co-founder Larry Page on his envisioned future of the search behemoth: "When you think about something and don't really know much about it, you will automatically get information... eventually you'll have an implant, where if

A fat lot of good

Josh Babarinde highlights the implications of the introduction of a fat tax

With David Cameron's comment that half of us will be obese by 2050, it's about time we had the weight debate...again.

Taking another leaf out of Scandinavia's book, the Prime Minister announced that he is considering following in Denmark's footsteps to combat obesity by sticking a tax on unhealthy goods. A sodium, saturated fat, monounsaturated fat and cholesterol levy, better known as a "fat tax" would bump up the price of unhealthy foods and put us all off buying them. In theory.

In principle, it sounds like a pretty smart plan. Basic economics would dictate that if fatty foods cost more, demand for them is going to fall, thus less people will probably end up buying them, meaning less people will consume them and the obesity problem will be solved. Simple.

No. Research has found that, yes, obesity issues could well be fought off somewhat, but this tax is much more than fat.

Topping up of the price of food products by a few pence per gram of fat per few hundred calories or by any other means is inevitably going to hit poorer families the hardest. Everybody buys food – it's essential. The thing is, people on lower incomes spend more on essentials, like food, as a percentage of their earnings, than those on higher incomes, who buy more luxuries. Research undertaken a few years ago as part of the National Food Survey found that the poorest households in the UK would end up paying 7 times

as much as their rich counterparts, as a proportion of income, on a "fat tax" if implemented. With prices going up across the board and VAT having been increased earlier this year, is it really necessary to put before the Great British public another regressive tax?

What does David Cameron think about this? "The problem in the past when people have looked at using the tax system in this way is the impact it can have on people from low incomes. But frankly, do we have a problem with the growing level of obesity? Yes." Catherine Tate's 'am I bovvered?' sketch springs to mind. As does Tony Blair's...

All that said, there could be a sneaky way around this tax. And if DC's heart is really in it, then this is what he'll be looking for. All it would take is for the market to work with the tax, not against it. Companies churning out fatty food products from their factory floors are going to be hit hard – a price increase will most likely mean less demand for them leading to fewer sales and smaller profits. How do they sort this out? Reduce their prices. How? Salami-slice-out fat in their products, reducing their tax burden or even disqualifying them from being fat-taxed? Bingo. Everyone's a winner. Companies carry on raking in their profits and we'll be raking less fat into our diets. Our supermarket and pantry shelves will become healthier. Great.

Further to this, it has been suggested (not yet by the Prime Minister, however) that the revenues the taxman makes from the levy, as well as the savings made from treating weight-related illnesses (assuming a fat tax would

have its desired effect), could be used to subsidise healthier foods, making them even more accessible and affordable for consumers. Fatty foods = more expensive, healthier foods = cheaper, and healthier foods in our supermarkets. Again, that's the theory.

But there a whole other set of questions to be thought about here – too controversial to discuss fully in this feature. Should government even consider embarking on this journey, using the tax system to manipulate which foods we should and shouldn't consume? Should David Cameron be sticking his rather shiny nose this far into our business? In the literal sense, I'd rather not have nose or anyone else's, that matmy face – but continuing metaphor, are we becoming a nanny state? Or maybe a move like this wouldn't be nanny-

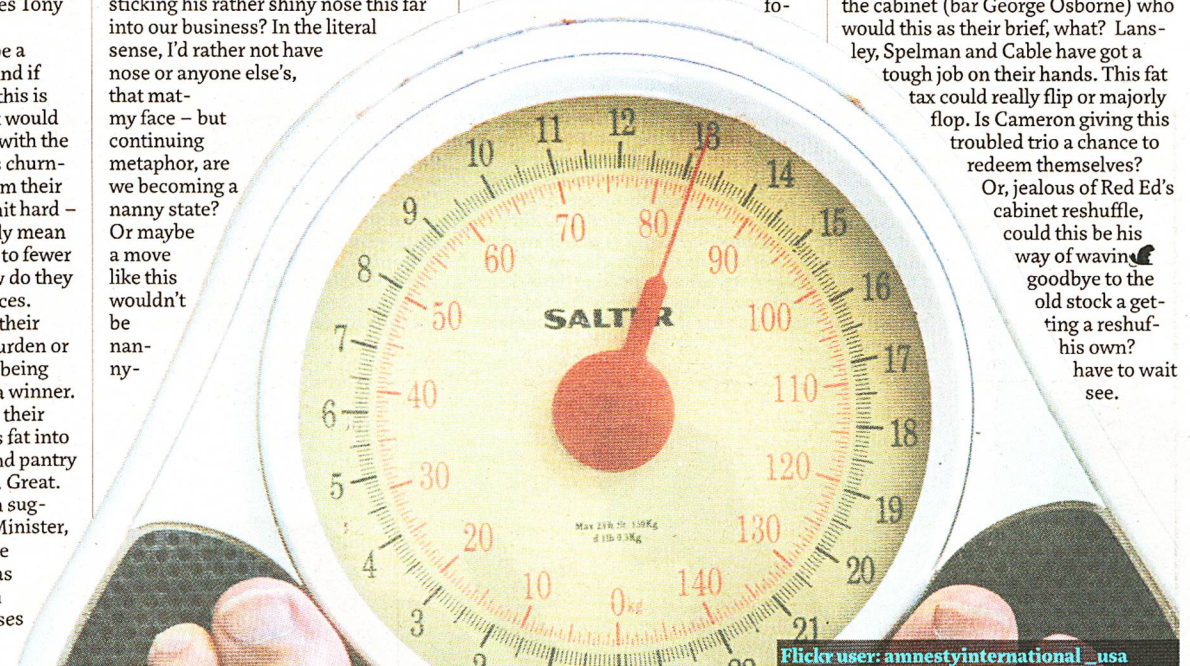
more for our food, but, at the end of the day, we'd still have the freedom to choose what we want to buy, albeit financially restricted. It's more of a 'push and shove' system than a 'cradle to grave' one. In fact you could even describe it as 'muscular liberalism'.

So maybe Cameron should stop idolizing the Danes, who have already introduced this tax, and forget about it altogether. Maybe being a little 'muscular' or authoritarian isn't the way to go about this. Maybe Westminster should put more emphasis on market-

ing a healthy focused on exercise as well as diet, and voluntarily getting people on board instead of shoehorning them coercively into the government's boot. Or maybe robust action in the form of a fat tax is needed - there's no doubt that obesity is a huge problem, so maybe we should bite the bullet and do something radical about it. Forget about ideology and values, could it be time for some pragmatism?

Already carrying their battle wounds from various cock-ups, U-turns and declarations of war against Rupert Murdoch, the big cheeses in the cabinet (bar George Osborne) who would this as their brief, what? Lansley, Spelman and Cable have got a tough job on their hands. This fat tax could really flip or majorly flop. Is Cameron giving this troubled trio a chance to redeem themselves?

Or, jealous of Red Ed's cabinet reshuffle, could this be his way of waving goodbye to the old stock a getting a reshuffle of his own? have to wait see.



Flickr user: amnestyinternational_usa

Can it ever work?

Abir Qazilbash looks at democracy in Japan, Afghanistan and Libya

Can democracy be successfully imposed through force? The subject of imposing democracy, through military means or otherwise, has long been a hotly debated topic in world politics. Often overlooked is the fact that the success of foreign military intervention in instilling "quintessential" democratic values is strongly dependent on local political, social and economic conditions.

NATO's intervention in Libya has received much speculation as to whether the country can sustain a democratic government in the long-term. While it is too early to make any concrete predictions about Libya's future, looking at the ongoing liberation of Afghanistan, there are several similarities and lessons to be drawn. With increasing pressure on finding an exit strategy from war-ridden Afghanistan, questions are raised about the degree to which the US-led coalition succeeded in its objective of supporting democracy and "advancing liberty and hope as an alternative to the enemy's ideology of repression and fear" in the words of George Bush himself (Tenet 4 of the Bush Doctrine). Although there has been some degree of success in promoting democratic institutions, there appears to be no end to the insurgency plaguing the country.

Conversely, the post-World War II Allied foreign military intervention in Japan and West Germany were relatively successful examples of democratization, transforming militarist regimes into paragons of democracy. Focusing on Imperialist Japan is an interesting comparative case, as it was

also a non-Western culture like Libya and Afghanistan. Nevertheless, it is clear that many of Japan's socio-economic conditions favoured a viable democracy unlike in the latter two countries

Economic development is one such condition. Unlike Afghanistan and Libya, Japan had been a great industrialised power prior to World War II and retained human and social capital through skilled managers and networks. Afghanistan has never attained this level of development, having had its basic infrastructure demolished after the 1979 Soviet Invasion and the ensuing civil war; leaving it dependent on foreign aid; and thus undermining any attempts towards creating a self-sufficient and sovereign democracy. To highlight this difference, Japan's Gross National Product (GNP) per capita at the time of democracy's inauguration in 1952 was \$1768, whereas Afghanistan's GNP per capita is merely \$250.

Returning to the more current situation in Libya, despite the profit from export of petroleum products, roughly half of Libyans who fall outside the oil economy have been impoverished. Unemployment is 30 per cent and youth unemployment is estimated to be as high as between 40 per cent and 50 per cent, the highest in North Africa. Roughly 20% of Libyans remain illiterate which is not only an economic impediment but also impairs the ability to make informed decisions during voting. These are all obstacles to the pursuit of a strong democracy.

Unlike the relatively ethnically homogeneous society of Post-WWII Japan, which led to a fair degree of

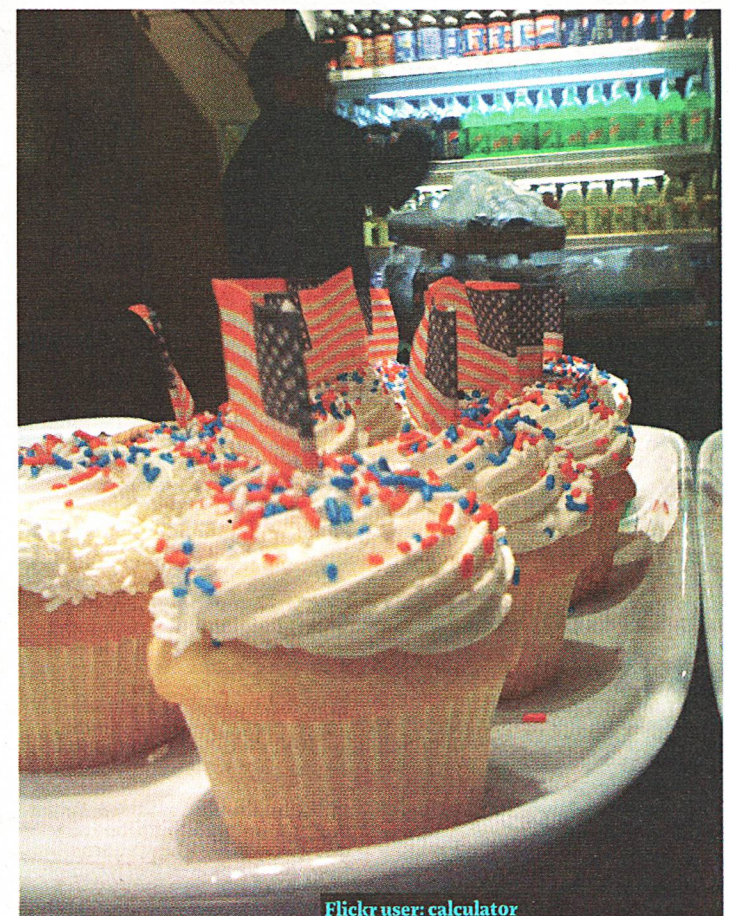
social solidarity and a significant consensus about national identity, Afghanistan is amongst the most ethnically heterogeneous societies in the world. With 14 major ethnic groups, and within them a multitude of tribal groups, there are 32 languages spoken in Afghanistan alone. As John Stuart Mill states, "among a people without fellow-feeling, especially if they read and speak different languages, the united public opinion necessary to the working of representative government" can rarely exist. Whilst Libya is largely ethnically and religiously homogeneous, there is a geographical divide with desert expanses between the two major cities of Tripoli and Benghazi, resulting in the two regions developing separate identities, which have served to perpetuate the country's tribal system.

Moreover, extensive research has revealed that democracy, imposed or otherwise has few advances in countries rich in natural resources, particularly oil, as vested interests prevail. This is a view confirmed by Professor Robert Barro of Harvard University. Conversely, Japan was notoriously poor in natural resources, giving the reformers - Americans and Japanese alike - a brief breathing space in which to push their ambitious agendas without being hammered by vested economic interests! Libya, of course, with its great oil resources, is unlikely to be spared such interference.

Finally, one can say that the current intervention in Libya has paved the way for true democracy. However, for democracy to truly thrive in the long term, intervention alone is not the remedy. One has to consider the coun-

try's conflicting ethnic demographics and its basic socio-economic conditions first, which are fundamental issues to address. It remains to be seen

whether the allied intervention will be another repeat of Afghanistan, or whether Libyans can eventually sustain stability and a sovereign, pluralistic



Flickr user: calculator

Not in vain

Kirsty Major describes what Troy Davis's execution represents

At 11.08pm on the 21st September, Troy Davis was executed. Among his last words he addressed the family of his alleged murder victim, Mark McPhail, an off-duty police officer, insisting "I was not responsible for what happened that night... I did not have a gun. I was not the one who took the life of your father, son, brother." He then turned to prison officials, "For those about to take my life, may God have mercy on your souls. May God bless your souls."

Troy had been on death row for 20 years and over that time his conviction became the flagship case for human rights and abolition organizations around the world. His case exposed all that is wrong with the American judicial system. There was no physical evidence linking him to the murder of Mark McPhail; no blood samples, no weapon, no DNA. His conviction instead relied on witness statements from nine people, seven of whom have since recanted their evidence, saying they were coerced into delivering it by police officers. One of the unchanged testimonies belonged to the alternative suspect Sylvester Coles. The case carried a particular pertinence because of the fact that Troy was a black man - in Georgia 48 per cent of death row inmates are black, while only accounting for fifteen per cent of the state's population. Supporters say Davis was all-too-hastily arrested by white police officers who suspected him of killing one of their own and charged by an institutionally racist system.

Yet despite years of campaigning by organizations, including Amnesty International, Troy was sentenced to death creating uncertainty about the future of the abolition campaign. Larry Cox, Executive Director of Amnesty International USA, said shortly after Troy was killed:

"When we look back, we will see this as the beginning of the end of the death penalty in the USA."

I asked Clare Bracey, Amnesty International United Kingdom's death penalty campaign manager, about the future of the death penalty after Troy.

"I believe Larry Cox is right - Troy Davis will become the symbol of a new stage in the abolition movement in the US. The eyes of the world were on Georgia as they carried out this horrendous injustice and in doing so, they proved what we already know - governments cannot be trusted with the awful power of life and death... His case has helped to change minds and win hearts and that will contribute to the eventual end of this horrific practice."

After the execution of Troy Davis, Amnesty USA reported a direct increase in members. Amnesty USA is currently working on a grass roots campaign encouraging more people to join, to speak out and to take action. According to Clare Bracey, "if you look at the last state to abolish - Illinois - this took years to happen, and came about because of the long time spent building up grass-roots support. Troy's case has accelerated that process of building up support on the ground all across the US and that can only be a positive thing."

In the UK, as an abolitionist country, Amnesty International UK is stepping up their campaign on the production and export of lethal injection drugs from the European Union. Disappointingly, despite several years of campaigning to strengthen current EU regulations on the exports of torture and death penalty equipment, there has been an appalling lack of progress. Shocking loopholes in current EU law still allow for EU companies to export lethal injection drugs, which means that the US authorities can continue to kill people using the drugs that are often sourced from EU countries despite the EU's policy to strongly oppose the death penalty in all circumstances.

Amnesty is lobbying the EU Commission to update Annex III of EC Regulation No 1236/2005, to include controls on those drugs currently being sourced from the EU for executions with immediate effect and to introduce a new catch-all clause into this regulation to control any item that it is known or is suspected will be used for

capital punishment, torture or cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.

The death of Troy also has global ramifications. Troy's case led to such strong debate within the US that it has given other countries pause for thought. South Korea, Mongolia and Ghana are all possibilities for gaining death penalty abolition traction.

Despite a renewed vigor and determination within the campaign, it is not without obstacles. Speaking of the greatest barriers facing the campaign, Clare Bracey refers to political pragmatism and a lack of awareness. In the US especially, capital punishment is a political issue and many politicians will pursue whatever will bring them votes in the next election. According to Bracey, what is needed is education and leadership.

"In New Mexico, both Republicans and Democrats voted to abolish the death penalty after being educated about the facts; costs, execution of innocents, unjust prosecutions etc., and particularly after finding that their constituents, when given the information, were supportive of abolition."

For Bracey and her colleagues around the world, Troy Davis' death does not mark the end of the battle against the death penalty: "ultimately, I honestly believe that the global abolition of the death penalty is inevitable. It may take a while, and a lot more effort, and there is bound to be set-backs, but the trend is so clear. The majority of the world has already turned its back on it, and it's just a minority of states that are continuing to use it."

DEATH PENALTY STATISTICS

Texas is the big state for executions - with 474 since

In 2003, 10 wrongfully convicted defendants were released from death row.

Only 12 women have been executed since 1976.

Last year, the first American in 14 years was put to death by firing squad

Lethal injection has become the most common form of death

China leads the world in executions - with thousands killed in 2010

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/datablog/2011/sep/21/death-penalty-statistics-us> and <http://www.amnestyusa.org/our-work/issues/death-penalty/us-death-penalty-facts/death-penalty-and-innocence>



Flickr user: amnestyinternational_usa

All the single ladies

Lin Yigu describes the Chinese matchmaking society

I was recently delighted to discover that, thanks to cultural gender bias plus the one-child family planning policy, China now has an unbalanced male-heavy population: 162 single men aged 27 to 34 for every 100 single women. It basically means that we Chinese girls enjoy more choices, though individual quality is not necessarily guaranteed by this demographic pressure.

Statistic aside, many women in China remain single despite this large and inviting market. These women are called "Leftover Ladies" ("sheng nv" in Chinese) or, perhaps more accurately, "3S Ladies": single, seventies (as most were born in the 70s but more and more 80s are joining this group) and stuck. They are, contrary to those deemed unpopular in the traditional marriage market, pretty, smart, and well-educated with high-flying career aspirations. While it is true that a number of Chinese women are increasingly independent, the more likely cause may be that women are too picky in selecting their lifelong partners: their men must have cars and apartments. It is preferable if the man is loaded and holds the local hukou (which is the residence permit detailed under the household registration system in mainland China) as it entails a series of privileges regarding job-hunting, social welfare and children's education. In Beijing, without local hukou, one needs to wait at least five years after commencing work before one can legally buy one's own house.

The losers in the game are definitely young Chinese men, as the competition for survival in China's super-crowded cities is fierce. Meeting all the demands to bring a beauty home requires luck and a significant input of time devoted to making oneself stand out. It doesn't take long, looking at this calculus of time management, to discover that men are left with no time and experience to get to know girls outside their office, let alone tie the knot. This trend is only growing worse and becoming entrenched in Chinese society. As a result of this phenomenon, the blind date market is booming in China.

Take, for instance, my hometown of Wenzhou, a small but quite prosperous coastal city near Hangzhou in Zhejiang province. For girls my age, the prime age at which to grab the perfect man and get married, the hottest topic is definitely not jobs. Rather, we compare and compete on how many dumb guys we have met in the past week and laugh over the strangest questions said men have asked us. Young Chinese people are propelled into attending endless number of blind dates that are organized by former teachers, schoolmates, relatives and friends of relatives. Sometimes they have to meet

random people who are on completely different tracks than they are. Many of my female friends back home who hold both a degree and a decent job are caught in this unfortunate situation. They share a common goal: try to find either a second-generation rich man (read: the man's parents are wealthy), or an overseas Wenzhouese; as overseas men are planning to come back to China with big fortunes as they see China's increasing power and development potential. It always holds true in a group gossip session: she who marries the fat cat will be envied and worshipped by other members and their moms. I once asked my friend Judy Yu, who is an English teacher at a local middle school, why she was in such a hurry to date. Her response: "If you cannot get married before 25, you will eventually lose your edge in the matchmaking market and you cannot find the best man after this period." Luckily, I can escape from this fight for men simply because I am so far away as to have dropped off the date-arranging radar manipulated by my relatives, friends and the local society as a whole.

Capitalizing on this burgeoning market, TV matchmaking shows are becoming incredibly popular in China. The most popular one is called "You Are the One" and its viewership is constantly leading all the TV entertainment shows in China. My friend Haven Wang, who works for the TV station that produces this show, told me that if every applicant to participate on the show were chosen, this daily show would last for at least 100 years with 5-6 competitors each episode. If one were to run a background check into the lives of those lucky enough to have been chosen for the show's recent recordings in Australia and the States, one would find that the male guest list is full of sparkling candidates: graduates of Stanford and Harvard, investment bankers, lawyers, CEOs and owners of several Benzs.

Now for the most recent news-flash: this salvific TV show is on its way over to the United Kingdom to save Chinese girls, like me, who are coming close to falling into the "3S Ladies" group. "You Are the One" is about to begin shooting in London, Birmingham and Manchester, where Chinese immigrants are highly concentrated. But the question is: when we single Chinese ladies are treated with an abundant array of prime male candidates, can we really find our true love? Can the spotlight in the studio really erase the pressures and traditional values to which we are bound, be they formulated thousands of miles away? ☘



Flickr user: amrufm

Measured musings | Nobel Controversies

The 2011 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to three African women last week - Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, human rights activists Leymah Gbowee of Liberia and Tawakul Karman of Yemen. According to the Nobel Committee, they were chosen "for their nonviolent struggle for the safety of women and for women's rights to full participation in peace-building work". This year's committee choice was a victory for African women.

The will of the Swedish chemist Alfred Nobel established the Nobel Prizes in 1895, and they were first awarded in 1901. Nobel wished that,

after his death, his fortune be used to award those who provided the "greatest benefit on mankind" in the areas of physics, chemistry, peace, physiology or medicine, and literature. It is ironic that the man who financed and created the Nobel Peace Prize was also the inventor of dynamite - but the irony doesn't stop there.

Henry Kissinger (1973) While serving as Secretary of State, Kissinger was awarded the Prize together with North Vietnamese Le Duc Tho for the Paris Peace Accords which attempted to bring an end to the Vietnam war. Tho refused the prize as he didn't want to share the award with Kissinger and because the war was still not over.

Kissinger accepted the prize - and American singer Tom Lehrer claimed that the award 'makes political satire obsolete', in reference to Kissinger's human-rights record.

Yasser Arafat: (1994) Arafat won the Peace Prize together with the Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres for their work on the Oslo accords which contributed towards fraternity in the Middle East. Critics condemned the award, and Arafat has been called a terrorist who has a legacy of promoting violence. Allegations of corruption and lack of commitment meant that the aims of the Oslo accords were never fully realized.

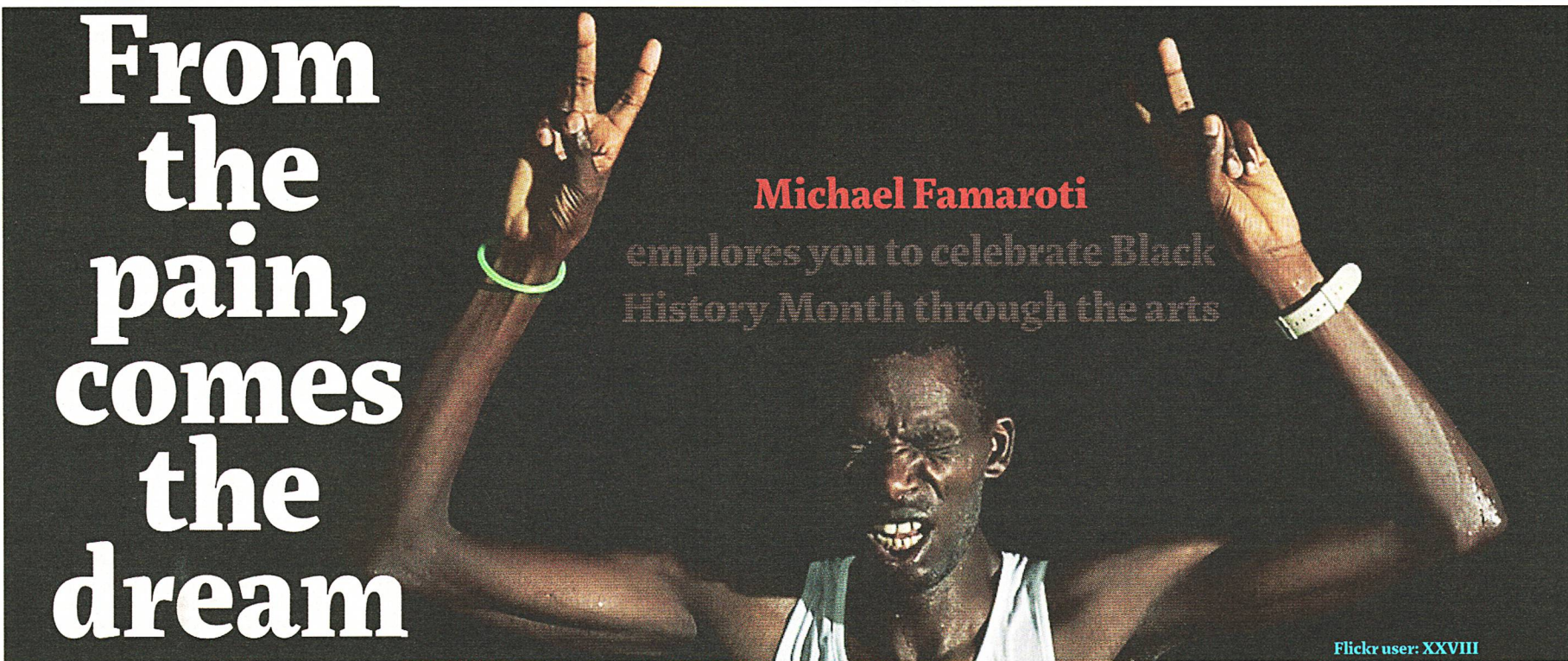
Barak Obama: (2009) Nominations had closed only eleven days after Obama took office as President, and the actual evaluation occurred over the next eight months. Obama himself stated that he did not feel deserving of the award, or worthy of the company it would place him in - Mother Theresa and Nelson Mandela among others. The President said he would accept the Peace Prize as a 'call for action' to diplomacy and peace making. While accepting the award for Peace, Obama was commander in chief of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan - the latter having now dragged on for ten years. Awarding the prize to a President who had barely stepped into the office sym-

bolized European relief towards the end of the Bush administration - there was no concrete achievement towards peace. ☘

Bianca Nardi
Features Editor

Social

From the pain, comes the dream



Michael Famaroti

emplores you to celebrate Black History Month through the arts

Flickr user: XXVIII

It is often said that the most effective form of learning occurs through experience. Assuming this logic holds true, we already start at a disadvantage when trying to learn about the past. Unless you are in possession of a time machine or, even less likely, some sweet piece of magic that can move you through time at your whim, you are restricted to memories and records in your search. The next best thing is storytelling. Sometime over the past few millennia, our brains have evolved to allow us to create vivid images from stories we hear that brings us a step closer to actual experience. This is even more effective when the stories are acted out, and perhaps most effective when we actively engage with the acting. My guess is that this is the closest we can get to actually experiencing the past itself. Well, this is exactly the experience I got this summer when I went to see "Fela!" at Sadler's Wells, a musical telling the true story of the legendary Nigerian musician, Fela Kuti, whose blend of jazz, funk and African rhythms

inspired a generation. The energy - I expected; the spine twisting dances - I expected; the feeling of being that much closer to home - I expected; an insight into the socio-political struggles that divided Nigeria in the 70s and 80s - now, that I did not expect.

Few things put me in a more philosophical mood than a good moral and a socially challenging movie. There's nothing quite like the use of film to convey a message or question the beliefs of the viewer. What I did not contemplate was that seeing this done live would perhaps be the most moving medium of all. Rather shamefully, I had never been to a musical before. I imagined posh silent crowds, balcony seats, lots of flashing images and then the token fat lady singing at a pitch I consider inhumane. Evidently I had the whole thing confused for the Opera. During the show, I was completely blown away. Yes, the dancing was great and the atmosphere was electric but, most exciting was that I found myself solemnly reflecting on what I was seeing before me. I was being taken on

a journey in the life of this great man, and through his eyes, I saw firsthand how events unfolded those many years before I was born. I wasn't just hearing a story or watching a play, I was living it. History was brought to the stage and I got to experience the past. But this is less about how much I enjoyed the experience, or what I took away from it, and more about the fact that in roughly four hours, I had gained a totally different perspective of historical events in Nigeria in a way that had been truly enjoyable and led me to want to seek even more. A way that was open to all people, whether neutral observers or die-hard activists, to hear about the tale.

That brings me to how it all relates back to Black History Month in the UK. After such a life-changing ordeal (you can't write an article nowadays without at least one hyperbolic statement), I was suddenly alive to the power of media and entertainment in our education. There are many creative and innovative ways in which UK black heritage can be promoted and celebrated

through the use of entertainment. Given the worry about the lost generation of black British youth who do not seem to be aware enough about black history in the UK, it seems to make sense to use mediums that this group is most comfortable with. Perhaps a musical around the theme of UK black history is pushing it a bit but what about a movie or even a TV series? I mean if X factor is still running then surely anything can be successful on TV. Once again, it got me thinking about whether one of the big stumbling blocks is the lack of "Hollywood appeal" in the stories of black struggles and revolutions in the UK. In an age when even "smurfs" are making appearances on the big screen, it is no surprise that there have been many productions about famous black historical figures or stories in the last few decades, but conspicuous by absence is a mainstream production of an event or figure related to black history in the UK.

Fela Kuti was a hugely charismatic figure. He was the father of Afrobeats. He had the personality, influence

and style to become a symbol of the revolution against oppressive military regimes in Nigeria. Like Nelson Mandela in South Africa, Malcolm X in the US and others, he gives a human face to Black History. As someone who likes to think he has everyone else figured out, I would say that people do respond to a human face. There's a saying that goes, "A single death is a tragedy, a thousand is a statistic." This pretty much sums up the point that people respond more readily when they have someone they can relate to as a reference point. As a young, black youth in the UK, who is your reference point? All in all, the "Fela!" show was full of surprises. Who knew it would turn me into a modern day quasi-revolutionary? And even more relevant, who knew it would inspire an idea about how to promote UK black heritage amongst youth especially? We don't want to see documentaries about the recent London riots; we want to see retrospective productions of events or influential figures in the UK's black history.

Let the games begin

Alex Haigh accompanies AU Freshers on another successful pilgrimage to Church

From the secret societies of Harvard to the rugby fields of Hull, Freshers everywhere will begin their slippery climb up the social ladder by being initiated. The key to a successful initiation are as follows; enough alcohol to change the water content of each newbie to under 50%, some less than classy venues and a list of pranks or dares that will successfully violate, if not destroy, any hint of dignity. Make it through these few hours of humiliation and you will be welcomed like family into a fraternity for life. While most LSE clubs prefer to take the high road by avoiding these primitive initiations, one institution proudly continues to respect this most ancient of rituals... of course I'm referring to the upstanding establishment of the LSE Athletics Union.

First years bold enough to apply for sports clubs at the LSE will be subject to a day of initiations before that can successfully make it onto the team. Admittedly initiates to male teams have it far worse than the female teams.

Why? Well, one might say that females are just unable to appreciate the beauty of chundering in unison after a night of drinking your body weight in tequila. But I'm sure that there are a few women reading this who could proudly out-drink any rugby man. Truth be told, women have found far more more sophisticated ways to bond. In the world of the AU rugby team initiation, you can be sure that the words sophisticated, high-brow or humane would most certainly not be used to describe it.

Rugby club initiates woke up at 7 o'clock last Sunday morning to make their way to senior players' houses, nervously clutching a large amount of alcohol. This same morning last year, I was a rugby fresher walking off towards my initiator's house, filled with dread over the ordeal that I would be subject to. That is exactly the point of initiations. Although it may sound strange: they bring the club together through the sharing of the same gruesome suffering. You may be subject to hours and hours of jumping through

hoops but at least you can grin and bare it in the knowledge that your initiator has had to go through it all himself.

For those of us on the other side, doing the initiating, we had a well thought out plan; awake at 7 o'clock to arrive at the initiator's house for 8, drinking until 11:30, then make our way to Church, a club favoured by the AU, and finally leave for some food at Temple Walkabout.

As soon as the freshers walked through the door, they were subject to tirades of LSE-style abuse, and by LSE-style I mean not a huge amount - we aren't "poly scumbags" so we don't put our freshers through anything disgusting. Its more about coming together to complete a right of passage that everyone before them and everyone after them will also have to endure. The aim is to get them to Church.

That's not to say we made it easy for those who were willing to take part. I overheard on initiate saying he had never consumed so much alcohol in all 19 years of his life as he stumbled

around the streets of Oval at 10:30 on a Sunday Morning. Success.

Drinking is drinking, so I won't bother going into too much detail about what happened at the house but needless to say the Freshers were not the most sober little fellows as we led them off to the park to continue their initiations. Initiates who do not drink alcohol have the pleasure of consuming a cocktail of a few tasty treats to ensure that they are in as much discomfort as the others.

At the park, we imbued our four drinking newbies with team spirit as they polished off another few bottles of wine. But initiations without some ridiculous tasks would just be a Wednesday night at Zoo. With this in mind, we instructed our initiates to race against one another, after tying their hands together. This didn't go quite to plan as the four of them allowed the race disintegrate into a drunken brawl. It was all in good spirits.

When we arrived at Church, a "dayclub" in Clapham open from

11:30am until 4pm, we heard stories from the other groups: one Fresher had to be attended to by a paramedic, another was escorted out of the Underground system by Transport Police for vomiting on the platform, and one poor initiate who blacked out on the bus eventually wound up in Fulham on the phone to his ex-girlfriend who was attempting to give him directions home - we didn't find that one out until a bit later. Another poor first year, who we thought had gone home after being rejected from Church, had actually been at the bookies and had won £120 on the roulette machine. The word bastard springs to mind... but it's not because I'm jealous or anything.

After topping the day off at Temple Walkabout with a beer and a burger, we then headed home for some much needed rest, happy with this year's batch of freshers and already anticipating next year's not-so-holy Sunday.

London calling to the faraway towns

Niall O'Neill, Chloe Kiliari & Veselin Karadotchev give their takes on life in the big city

As I stepped off the plane at London Heathrow, I reassured myself (for what seemed like the hundredth time) that the differences between my hometown of Ballymena in Northern Ireland and London would be minimal - it was merely a short hop across the water, so of course no massive culture shocks would ensue... Right?

Less than an hour later, upon reaching Paddington station, this illusion was shattered; the massive throngs of people - hurrying in all directions with not a moment to spare - were alien to me, having come from an area in which people always had time to talk, even to a complete stranger. My mood gradually darkened as I tried, unsuccessfully, to navigate my way to Rosebery Hall, as any attempts to ask for directions, or even to strike up a casual conversation, were either swiftly rebuffed or met with a blank stare, my worse experience occurred on a bus: as I tried to sit down, the man sitting in the next seat placed his hand upon the seat I was about to claim as my own in order to prevent me from doing so. The psychological impact was immediate: I sank into depression and homesickness only a short period after arriving. It would take much to redeem London in my eyes.

The overwhelming isolation in the air soon grasped me deeply - London does not appear welcoming to visitors. The very structure of the city - sprawling outwards and upwards in seemingly endless ways, made me feel like a rat scurrying within a maze, with no sense of orientation or purpose. In Northern Ireland, even within the larger cities, only a short journey will take you to areas of complete solitude, where the cover of nature provides a release from the pressures of everyday life - yet in London, there is no escape; even in the city's larger parks, one still cannot elude the bustle of London life, nor the all-pervading hum of traffic. I had never before been among so many people, yet paradoxically had never before felt so alone and cut-off from the world around me.

My outlook gradually improved as the days passed - I am convinced the opportunities present in London will ultimately win over even the most hardened critic. The differing perspectives of those I am fortunate enough to attend LSE with brightened my mood considerably - the English people are much more accepting and respectful of the choices and attitudes of other people. Back home, to be different was to be ostracised - yet in this multicultural city, almost anything goes. I also find the English (or perhaps mainly those at LSE) hold a much better view of learning - it is perfectly fine, and

actually approved of, to work hard and do well at school or university! My experiences at home because of this difference have actually stunted my confidence to this day - anytime someone in Northern Ireland works hard on something at school, be it a presentation or homework, or merely studies for an exam, the ridicule is often immediate, so I find it almost liberating now to be respected for working towards fulfilling my potential. A further difference between the countries is people's confidence in public situations - in England, it is much easier to casually walk up to someone, be it in the corridor or at an evening social event, extend one's hand and introduce oneself. The Irish people are much more limited in this regard in my experience - we are shy of such public interactions and often worry about taking this first step... except in the pub!

I must draw to a close with a recollection of two of my more humorous experiences involving differences between Northern Ireland and London. In the early stages of my arrival, an old friend from Cambridge drove to London to see me, and offered to take me on a tour of the city by night. Noticing that the speedometer often approached speeds in excess of 90 miles per hour, combined with his erratic driving, I asked him when he had passed his driving test. Imagine my horror when he replied, "Yesterday!" - in Northern Ireland, drivers must display so-called 'R' - plates for one year after passing their test and are forbidden from driving faster than 45 miles per hour. The second experience recurs constantly and involves a language confusion - indeed, something is lost in translation. The word 'craic' in Ireland refers to doing something fun or enjoyable or simply having a good time, but this word does not exist in the English lexicon, and so this episode typically occurs in this manner: upon being asked by someone where I am going one evening, I invariably and automatically reply, "going out for a bit of craic" - this statement is immediately met by shocked looks and stunned silences; as of course everyone envisions me engaging in quite a different kind of good time, involving a certain class-A drug!

Suffice to say I now am delighted to live in London - the pangs of homesickness still strike occasionally, yet it is now much more normal to begin each day with a feeling of excitement and anticipation - who knows what each day will bring here?

Niall O'Neill

Breakfast in a café near High Holborn Halls - my family, who helped me move in, were to fly back home in an hour. We said our good-byes. After five minutes I was smoking a cigarette alone, and each drag made me feel grand. I realized that I am finally free of all parenting authority, free to do anything I want in the one place that can cater to everyone's desires.

I had little time to contemplate my new freedoms though because, before I knew it, Freshers' Week had already started and we were off to our first welcome event - a party taking place in 'Tiger Tiger'. In the line for the entrance, I experienced my first brush with intolerance when I handed my ID to the bouncer and he, upon reading the place of birth, made a stupid crack about my country of origin as he patted me on the shoulder. Trying to disregard the idiotic remark, I gave a forced smile and made my way into the club. That is when I had my first cultural shock, as I gazed upon the chandeliers (hanging low from what seemed in the dark to be an impossibly high ceiling) illuminating two huge

During my first few days in cold and rainy London, I couldn't help but feel like a tourist. I wandered aimlessly in the streets of Central London, exploring new places and constantly meeting new people as if I had to make the most of the Big City experience as fast as possible.

I guess you could say that as an 18-year-old adult (as odd as that seems to say), I was not ready to take my chances and live life to the fullest, even at a time when opportunity was staring me straight in the eye. Convincing myself that I had no need to adapt to a new environment seemed to be - like any other illusion - irresistibly comforting. Of course, reality did strike me at last, and soon I was walking from home to LSE library and from LSE library back home every day.

My mood changed abruptly. I can't remember the exact moment when it all happened, but at some point I started experiencing the real life in London, closely observing the people that make this city such a wonder. Businessmen in suits brushing past me at 9 o'clock in the morning, always rushing, always alert. People of every colour, religion and social background crowded underground stations, cafés, fast food restaurants. The country of queues

and
hurry.
Fast

floors tightly packed with people. The vastness of the space and the number of people present came as an even bigger surprise, considering that my only prior experience of an English club was a dance-hall built as an annex to a chip-shop (in tiny Bromsgrove, where I did my A-levels). Add to that the fact that I come from a country with a population less than that of London and you might get an idea of my first impression of Tiger Tiger. The atmosphere was full of energy - at no point during the night did I see anyone sitting; it appeared that people who got tired of dancing simply went home, which meant that everyone present was in constant motion, just partying away 'til they dropped. If this is the English way - well you just gotta love it. The only nuisance was that there was no place to leave your coat, unless you were willing to part with precious pounds for a cloakroom. That fact gave the answer to a question I've always asked - how is it that English people (particularly girls) never wear jackets when they go clubbing, no matter how scant their clothing or how low the temperatures? I guess the choice between bringing a coat or having that

walking, fast talking, fast eating. London has rhythm. It is constantly throwing adventures at you, sometimes making you feel indescribably excited and sometimes inconsolably upset.

Adventures, adventures, adventures. Taking care of yourself often becomes a huge battle for countless reasons. As a typical Cypriot, I was used to driving to school, to friends' houses, shops, restaurants. Walking is often the only option here, and walking under terrible weather conditions is not my favourite activity. I stared at Londoners who were well-adapted to the rhythms and weather of this country in awe. These people have tremendous patience, I thought. After living in London for a year now, I have the following observations to make.

Firstly, in this country, everything is extremely organised and everyone takes this to be the norm. Back home, (and by home I mean Cyprus, although currently I am not so sure where my home truly is) organisation is a foreign language. Cypriots may be warm and welcoming people but they are certainly of a very impulsive nature and tend to act intuitively rather than being inclined to plan ahead.

A second observation is that here in London, people go to cafés, grab their coffee and leave. They do not go to socialise. Cypriot teenagers may love their Starbucks to such an extent that they spend their Friday evenings enjoying their coffee, but Londoners are efficient. A quick coffee accompanied by a quick sandwich-job done.

extra shot is obvious. All in all, my first night in London was a blast; needless to say, so was my hangover the morning after.

My other experience from Freshers' that made, I think, a lasting impression was the first Friday Crush. If the words "Turkish bath" were used to describe this year's Fayre then I imagine the feeling of attending Crush can only be compared to the first stages of being boiled alive. This led to groups of people congregating under the air-vents (from which there was a constant drip of what could only be condensed sweat) for some life-saving cool breeze. The intense conditions, however, did not prevent some people from turning up in suits, and it certainly did not prevent the scores of sweaty, dehydrated people (myself included) from having an amazing time. It is, after all, called 'Crush' for a reason.

Those were the immediate and most potent impressions I got from my first week at the LSE. This is certainly a place sizzling with life and vigour, and to me, right now, it somehow seems like the centre of the world.

Veselin Karadotchev

Another thing I've come to notice is that sometimes one feels like a number in a huge city. Millions of people may walk behind you or sit next to you, but no one ever knows your name and no one cares about what you are going to do on a Saturday night. What I don't miss is knowing my neighbour knows everything about me, usually against my own will.

Finally, London is a multicultural city in a most wonderful way. True that the UK's capital may lack the distinct cultural character of other small communities across the world - Cyprus being one of them - but difference is praised here in such a way that everyone can indeed be whatever they want.

The puzzle is not complete. I still fail to understand some of the details of London's system. I still feel small sometimes when I turn my head up towards the big buildings of the city, when I look around and all I see is a crowd of individuals with no name and often no purpose in life. Some other times though, I sleep smiling, knowing that I am currently living in a world of experiences, challenges and pleasant (although strange) contrasts. A world composed of unique individuals, some of whom you may also be lucky enough to meet.

A world that I have only just begun exploring.

Chloe Kiliari



The Adventures of Row Zambezi

Ollie Cook on dodging crocodiles, meeting the Lozi king and appearing on Zambian news

On the 14th August 2011, we rowed past the Livingstone Boat Club as we finished a 1,000km row in Central Africa down the Zambezi from Chavuma on the Angolan border to Victoria Falls. The row had been the first time anyone had rowed the Upper Zambezi. It had seen us dodge hippos, skirt the border of four countries, race crocodiles, be entertained by the Lozi king in Barotseland, and be on the receiving end of the immense hospitality of the Zambian people.

The expedition had begun with a reception at the Ridgeway hotel in Lusaka, jointly hosted by the deputy Zambian minister for Tourism, Mr Mwangala, and the British High Commissioner to Zambia, Carolyn Davidson. The conference was broadcast on Zambia's news channel that evening. The following day, when the expedition team was getting ready to depart, and I was busy ordering a burger from Steers, someone came up to me and said he recognized me from the T.V. I thought he had told me he was a janitor who worked on walls and streets, but turned out he was a journalist from the Wall Street Journal and had even seen our website. He told me he thought what we were doing was slightly mad, asking if I knew that the Zambezi was not the Thames, after which he more seriously (over a burger of course) said he thought what we were doing was great for Zambia. It was only then that it began to sink in, there was no going back now: we were going to have to at least put the boats on the Zambezi!

With David Livingstone's famous "I am prepared to go anywhere, provided it is forward" given new meaning, we pushed off in Chavuma on the 27th July to begin the 1,000km row backwards. We began the Row Zambezi Expedition, less than 2km from the border with Angola, with the blessing of the local District Commissioner and the rather bewildered looking local villagers. The first leg was to make it to Chinyingi Mission. Arriving at

dusk after a 6-hour, 70km row, we made camp next to the only bridge across the Zambezi for almost 800km, an Indiana Jones-esque wire suspension bridge. The next stage was a two day row to Lukulu.

After hearing the tales of local crocodile encounters, we had yet to actually see one. However, this all changed when the Zambezi suddenly

swelled after its confluence with the Kabompo. After rowing to one side of the river to avoid a pod of hippos, we caught sight

of the local "Kwena" (Lozi for crocodile). As we stopped to have a good look at him, he suddenly swung his body out of his midday sunbath and slid into the Zambezi. The immediate realization that he was somewhere in the dark water around us was not lost on any of us. I particularly felt for the Zambian rower in my boat who was wearing a life jacket because he hadn't had a chance to learn to swim yet. He went into overdrive and didn't stop rowing until we were 20km away from that first sighting. We learnt quickly that we were sharing the river with its local inhabitants, and we were definitely the newcomers. The Zambezi is truly magnificent, quietly moving as one immense handsome force pushing itself effortlessly through the Zambian bush. Apart from the groan of hippos and the flashes of brilliant blue and gold of the pygmy Kingfishers, the bush gives no hints that it hides such a beautiful river.

The next stage was the Barotse floodplain, home to the Lozi Kingdom. The Barotse is a huge floodplain, which during the rainy season can mean the Zambezi swelling up to 25km wide. Because of the vast seasonal changes in the landscape, the area has very little in the way of any enduring infrastructure. The Zambezi is notoriously difficult to navigate on the floodplain, often following seemingly erratic and sometimes contradictory directions.

Rowing through the Barotse meant a five-day continuous row, camping at night on the banks of the Zambezi. With no access point for the land support team, the rowers would have to contend with no backup if there was an emergency. There was therefore talk of driving the boats around the Barotse and missing out on the 200km section of the river altogether. Of course that would rather dampen our ambition to be the first to row the entire Upper Zambezi, and thoughts turned quickly to how we were to achieve the

row while minimizing risk. It was decided that one rowing boat would attempt the Barotse (instead of the three which made up the expedition), carrying with them tents, cooking equipment and enough rations for a week, six rowers would go, rotating between the three seats on the rowing boat every hour. The rowers would be guided by just one support boat.

On the first day of the Barotse, Row Zambezi had its closest encounter with a hippo. The engine on the support boat had developed an annoying habit of suddenly stopping and refusing to start, as if it sensed danger ahead, and would only start again with some gentle reassurances and

not so gentle pulls on the starter cord. In the middle of the river, the engine stuttered and died. While we were attempting to bring the engine back to life, we floated to one side of the river. It was then that someone noticed a trace of bubbles two meters from the boat. As if a submarine was slowly emerging from the Zambezi, water gushing off its dark head, a hippo surfaced only two meters from our oblivious engine. A minute passed while we frantically tried to jerk the engine back to life with the hippo eyeing us suspiciously. After what felt like a life time, the engine kicked and we took off leaving our inquisitive encounter in a flood of wake.

The fleeting greeting with the hippo on the first day of the mini expedition was the only anxious moment during the Barotse stage of the 1,000km row. Camping on the sandy banks of the Zambezi every evening, eating MoD issued ration packs, supplementing them with bream and tiger fish bought off the locals were some of my favourite moments of the expedition. One of the most striking things that caught us unaware was the extent to which the Zambezi is used by local Zambians. During the day, we were greeted by running children, entire villages would come out to see us and all through the night fishermen balancing on their "mokoros" would entice fish to the surface using lanterns while beating the water to ward off crocodiles. The Zambezi is truly a highway for the local communities. We were also surprised to hear music from distant villages every night we were in the Barotse; our Zambian guide was keen to point out that "every night is party night in Zambia."

While half the party was deep in the Barotse, the rest of the expedition team had an altogether more royal appointment. The Litunga (king), Lubosi II of Barotseland and head of the Lozi tribe, had heard about the expedition and wanted to meet us. His palace is situated 5 miles outside of Mongu, the capital of the Western Province. Set in a walled hamlet of colonial era buildings, we were greeted at the gates by one of the servants of the king, recognizable because all servants wear what looks like a red cotton shower cap. The immense reverence members of the Lozi held for their Litunga was immediately evident. While we were waiting for the King to arrive, we sat in a room facing the Litunga's Lubona (throne) and watched while a member of the Acuta (the Council of Elders of the Lozi tribe) painstakingly crawled up to the throne, placed a box of tissues by its side and retreated clapping and bowing his head towards the chair.

After we were invited to the Ku Kambama, meaning to "climb to a higher level," referring to the great honor of being in the presence of the Litunga, we presented our gifts, amongst which were some Ormonde Jayne perfume (for the king and his wife) and the latest Google maps of the Barotse floodplain. The Litunga addressed us in person instead of speaking through someone else, which, according to the Zambians among us, was incredibly rare. He told us that he was privileged to host us on our expedition, and how he admired the way that through rowing, we were able to enjoy the river without spoiling it. He also talked about his love of water sports and even hinted that if there was another rowing expedition he may be tempted to get involved! He then posed for photos, which shocked the Lozi Council of Elders and met us all in person. After telling him that I was a student at the LSE, he told me he had studied at UCL (he called it studying at Russell Square) and that he had attended some public lectures at

the LSE!

While we were in Mongu, we went to the headquarters of Village Water, the charity that Row Zambezi is raising money and awareness for. Lukolo village is about 70km out of Mongu along a bumpy dirt track and is Village Water's latest project. We saw the beginning of the excavation of the water well and were given a tour around the only school in the village. It was fantastic to see first hand the transformation Village Water was delivering to this remote community. Village Water was putting into place a sanitation project, which was to be run and managed by the women of the village.

It was clear that the availability of clean water was having a tremendous impact on the village. Basic crops were being prepared to plant, the first time the village would be able to grow its own sustenance, and children now had time to attend school, all because of the newly available source of fresh clean water. The statistics speak for themselves; in Nandusu village in 2008, before Village Water helped initiate a clean water program, there were 42 cases of severe diarrhea and 20 cases of malaria. By 2010, after the work of Village Water, there were just two cases of diarrhea and one case of malaria. We only hope that we can do Village Water justice, and raise the funds that they desperately need to carry on the remarkable work that they are already delivering. It served to only reinforce more the gross paradox that these village communities deal with; they live alongside one of the mightiest rivers in Africa but face a daily struggle to get clean usable water.

The final stage of the expedition was from Senanga, on the southern tip of the Barotse to Victoria Falls, our final destination. The final stage was 400km long and would take us past Katima Mulilo, the border of three countries, four major game reserves and see us contend with the tenacity of the Zambezi rapids, including Sioma Falls.

Negotiating the rapids proved to be a challenging task. The first rapid we came to proved to be quite literally the watershed. We therefore had four rowers float/lift each boat over the rocks before the opening of the channel. As we approached the channel, the depth of the water suddenly dropped and the speed of the water picked up greatly as the water was squeezed through the narrow passage. The lead boat got swept into the channel, with the rowers desperately clinging on. The sky abruptly disappeared as the overhanging trees and bushes enveloped us. With only an eerie green light coming through the canopy, the boats got stuck on roots and branches blocking the channel. Out came the machetes and knives as we hacked our way through the Zambezi. Tilly hats on, it looked like something out of a Vietnam movie as we swam the boats through the channels grinning from ear to ear. We finally made it out the other side. Once we got out, we discovered we were covered in tiny leeches and one of the support boats had been ripped. Yet, we felt we had finally tasted what it may have been like for Livingstone 150 years ago, leading an expedition without the maps and equipment that we were relying on.

After that first rapid, we were eager to jump out and swim the boats down at any sign of another rapid. But being told not too mildly that we had

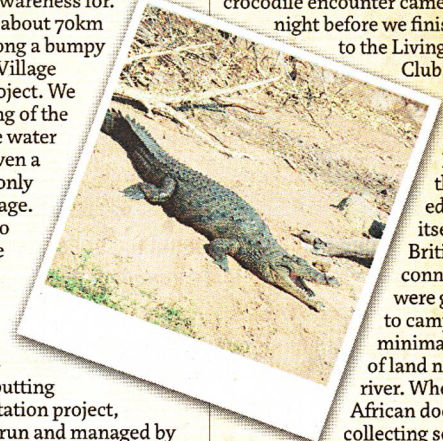
been incredibly reckless, especially with regard to potentially providing any resident crocodiles with a feast, we became a lot more careful. Our last crocodile encounter came on the last night before we finished the row to the Livingstone Boat Club. Hosted by an exclusive lodge 5km from Livingstone that supposedly prides itself on its British rowing connections, we were given a place to camp on a rather minimal rocky plot of land next to the river. When our South African doctor was collecting some water from the river, he turned

to look at the river and saw the head of the resident crocodile eyeing him up. A local told us the same crocodile was rather notorious in the area and had apparently eaten a horse only the week before. Unfortunately, the crocodile was the best hospitality we received while camping at this lodge. It was ironic that after the remarkable warmth and generosity of the Zambian people, it was an ex-British army officer who was stuck in the Colonial age that meant our last night on the expedition was spent behind an electrified fence.

We finished the row on the 14th August, my Dad's 50th birthday (the person who had spent the last two years making the expedition a reality). We arrived to a beautiful reception at the Livingstone Boat Club, rowing in to the sound of the local marimba band, fireworks and a press boat containing a Zambian film crew. The expedition finished almost as quickly as it had started; it had been 20 days since we left Lusaka and it was suddenly over. We had made it, 1000km from the border with Angola to within sight of the mighty columns of steam rising from the Mosi-oa-Tunya (which literally means "the smoke that thunders," the local name for the Victoria Falls).

I stayed in Zambia for two weeks longer than the rest of the expedition to meet the director of the Livingstone Museum to see if there was any research I could do for my dissertation, and ended up getting the chance to actually hold in my hands a real letter on a bluish grey piece of paper that David Livingstone had written on the shores of Lake Nyasa, as well as working with a kind and gently spoken researcher called Kingsley.

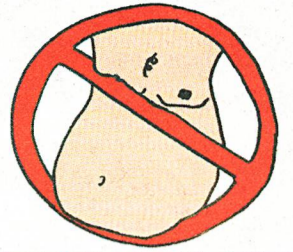
I had a truly amazing time in the five weeks I had spent in Zambia. There had been some rather edgy moments, including the encounter with the hippo in the Barotse and the swim through the Kasanga rapids. There had also been some moments that had taken my breath away: camping on the banks of the Zambezi, watching the sun go down to the groan of hippos, with the rich golden glow of the river reflecting the sinking sun while we sipped a cheeky beer or two that we had snuck into our "emergency rations." Not to mention meeting the Litunga of the Lozi tribe, seeing the work of Village Water and helping at the Livingstone museum. But above all, it was the kindness and warmth-heartedness of the Zambian people, who time and time again would go out of their way to help us, that I will most fondly remember.



Photos: Ollie Cook

WEEKLY GUTBUSTER

Piled on a few pounds over the summer? Follow our weekly food diary and watch the weight drop off.



Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Breakfast:	Breakfast:	Breakfast:	Breakfast:	Breakfast:	Breakfast:	Breakfast:
Porridge with honey and almonds	Two scrambled eggs on one slice of wholemeal toast	Bran flakes with semi-skimmed milk and banana	Fruit salad with yoghurt and sprinkled seeds	Breakfast smoothie - blend some oats, yoghurt and fruit	Two egg omelette	Two poached eggs on one slice of wholemeal toast
Lunch:	Lunch:	Lunch:	Lunch:	Lunch:	Lunch:	Lunch:
Chicken and avocado on brown rice	Tuna and salad sandwich on brown bread	Turkey and quinoa salad	Tuna Nicoise Salad	Chicken Caesar Salad (low-fat dressing, no cheese)	Wholemeal pasta salad with grilled vegetables	Brown rice salad
Dinner:	Dinner:	Dinner:	Dinner:	Dinner:	Dinner:	Dinner:
Roasted salmon, broccoli and whole-wheat linguine	Chicken stirfry	Vegetable lasagne	Chicken and vegetable kebabs	Salmon, asparagus, broccoli and sweetcorn	Quinoa with chicken, spring peas and asparagus	Grilled tuna with roasted vegetables
Snacks:	Snacks:	Snacks:	Snacks:	Snacks:	Snacks:	Snacks:
Almonds An apple	Sliced apple dipped in peanut butter	Strawberries A banana	Cottage cheese and seeds on Ryvita	Hummus and vegetable dippers	Mixed seeds and nuts	Unlimited fruit

The Ancient Art of Muay Thai and the LSE Muay Thai Club

The Beaver Sports section gets an insight into the Ancient Art of Muay Thai and what it takes to get fighting fit.

Raoul Malhotra

From flying elbows to throwing hay-maker punches, fighting is arguably the most natural human instinct. Its in your blood; you wouldn't be here reading this informative and witty article about LSE Muay Thai if your ancestors hadn't fought for their own survival all those centuries ago. But in modern 'civilised' society, fighting transcends the need for survival, and is able to become not only a sport, but also an art form.

The LSE Muay Thai club teaches the ancient art of Thai Boxing. It is a martial art that is steeped in Buddhist culture and tradition, yet is one of the most brutal striking arts on the planet. The LSE club is nonetheless extremely welcoming to all, especially beginners, where we adopt the mentality that our training partners are our best friends until the end of the session. Our Muay Thai coach, or "Khru", Richard Weir, is an extremely talented practitioner of the art, whose teaching is heavily immersed in the Buddhist and Thai traditions from whence it descended. Whilst I myself am a premier athlete, I must admit that the fitness required can be grueling; but as Khru Richard puts it "Muay Thai is battlefield art - you have to be fit enough to get to the battlefield before you can fight." His traditional approach to teaching provides a constant reminder of the balance between hard (striking) and soft (decision) elements of martial arts; how to have a fire in the belly, but a fridge in the head. Also known as the Art of Eight Limbs, due to its emphasis on elbow and knee strikes as well as punches and kicks, Muay Thai

has seen its popularity grow through being the preferred striking art of many Mixed Martial Artists, notably current UFC Middleweight Champion Anderson Silva. A quality reference point is also the 2003 film "Ong-bak: Muay Thai Warrior," starring Tony Jaa, who makes Jackie Chan look like a member of the Mickey Mouse Club.

My first foray into Muay Thai was pretty fortuitous, but one that has stuck with me ever since. Traveling to Thailand independently on my gap year, via some sort of divine intervention I decided I wanted to learn a martial art, but more so as a means to get fit rather than to fight. With very little martial arts experience, I enrolled at Tiger Muay Thai in Phuket. The first sight was intimidating, seeing professional fighters turning punching bags into mince-meat. I was more motivated than ever however, to look more like one of these muscle-clad Adonises, rather than a waddling chicken pie. Playing school-boy rugby for several years had given me a relatively strong physique, but I couldn't say it did wonders for my size! It did give me the confidence to get on with training, and not fall off the wagon. I ended up staying a month, only scratching the surface of Muay Thai, but leaving me with a new passion for a sport I would grow to love. One year and 15 kilos in the right direction later, I found myself yearning to go back to Thailand. Although I never intended to start fighting, the fitness and confidence I gained in training made me want to see how much progress I had made - if any. I am glad to say I won my first amateur fight via point decision. It was the experience of a life-time. My opponent was a great sport as well, and we spent the rest of the night buying

each other drinks.

Although the LSE Muay Thai Club has never formally competed before, it is something the Captain and Vice-Captain, Arslan Butt and Raoul Malhotra, would like to start. We are currently in negotiations with Royal Holloway and UCL to set up some inter-club matches. It is understandable that not everyone wants to fight, and if you wish to come train just for fitness and recreation you are more than welcome. I can guarantee that the physical and mental wellness you can get from training in Muay Thai is nothing short of miraculous. It will help with strength, fitness and most importantly confidence. The practicality of Muay Thai will also leave you the most dangerous breed amongst all your friends, and the speed and agility you can pick up through training is a great asset to any other sports you may do. The Muay Thai club trains Tuesdays and Thursdays 8-10pm in the Old Building Badminton Court, and is a subsidiary of the Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) club, which also includes Boxing and Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu.

HOW TO GET FIT FOR FREE IN LONDON

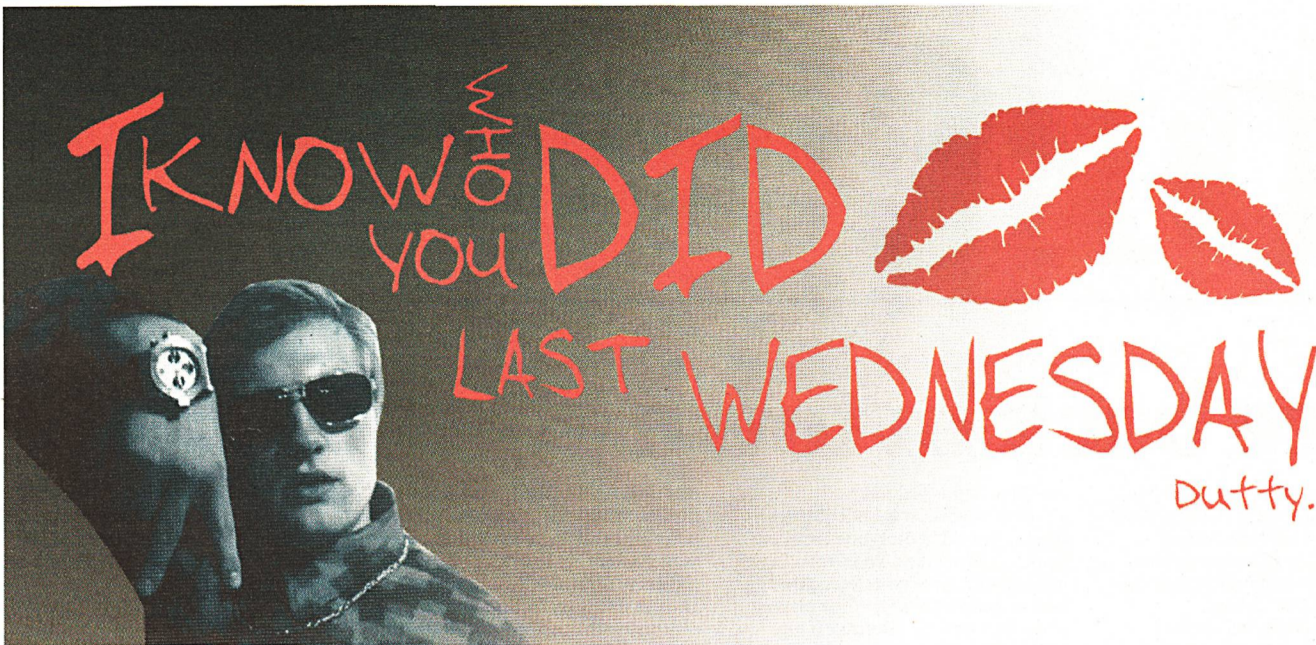
Travel, food, alcohol, taxis, clothes.. living in London is expensive! If you don't fancy paying an absurd amount for a gym membership, then follow our weekly blog on how to stay fit and healthy for free in London. Try out these ideas just one day a week and we guarantee you will notice a difference.

We are starting off with Barclays Cycle Bikes. Try out one of these bikes whilst the weather is still reasonably warm. They are a great alternative to piling into an overcrowded tube carriage and are free to use for the first half hour.

Here are a few tips to help make your first journey go smoothly:

- The nearest bike dock to LSE is located on Houghton Street. Find your local dock on the TFL website.
- Check the rear wheel on your bike spins smoothly before you leave.
- If you need to do a journey more than half an hour long, dock the bike and wait five minutes before continuing.
- Download an application for your mobile phone to find your nearest dock and see how many bikes are available.
- If you are thinking about doing this regularly, member keys cost £3 and allow you to quickly undock bikes.
- Print a receipt to check that your bike has been docked correctly.





however, the fourth team retaliated with utter vehemence; LSE's very own version of Harry Potter's Mrs Norris seemingly "let the cat out of the bag", as her continued relationship with Malibu Stacey was finally exposed. Sources say that this clandestine arrangement has been going on since last year, and if the cashiers at Burger King have anything to say, it will continue for a while.

The wife of the AU, or more often referred to as the Shlong of the AU, also proceeded to rekindle a Gaelic flame last week. Gaelic Football's most prominent member, and in fact, more likely its only member literally charmed the pants of the Shlong, though this really shouldn't be the place to air such dirty laundry. Regardless, it seems like his accent and smooth words managed to break through the tough walls of her emotional strong-hold as the pair were spotted making an early exit from Zoo Bar.

That's all for now folks, but thanks a million for giving me such a great foundation for the year. Remember, enjoy yourselves as you wish, but remember that there will always be people watching, so if you don't want it here, don't do it at Zoo.

Just remember, I know who you did last Wednesday.



From the ashes of Gossip Gollum rises the next generation of reputation-bashing. For the first two weeks of term, frigidity was the name of the game, as individuals decided to keep things time whilst first impressions were setting in. Thankfully though, you lot never fail to provide me with oodles of material to splash across these pages. And don't say you didn't receive fair warning about this.

Last Wednesday saw the whole of the AU pile into our favourite destination: the famous, the revered, the one and only Zoo Bar, for a night of sweat, chundering and debauchery. Actually, I lie, not everyone made it all the way to Zoo. Football decided to hold their

initiations on Houghton Street prior to the the mass migration to Zoo Bar and it's safe to say that there were some minor casualties.

After the Netball girls continued their tradition of belting out "Total Eclipse of the Heart," the merriment at the Tuns was marred by a tussle between the Rugby and Football Clubs. The usual chanting that takes place between the Clubs, on this occasion spiralled out of control, with Netball girls fleeing as the tussle moved down Houghton Street. Tuns stuff and your very own AU President had to intervene and so that we don't outstay our welcome at the Tuns, it's probably best to channel such energy onto the

sporting pitch rather than into public brawls.

As was to be expected, Zoo Bar did not disappoint with its usual mix of drunken dancing, flying sweat and sexual encounters. And it might even be fair to say that some of the netball girls decided to show the freshers how it was done properly. Reminiscent of a previous rendezvous with last year's long-term squeeze, the tallest member of the sixth team, the one and only Lee, was seen doing a little more than conoodling with a fresh-faced General Course student. The Yank seemed to have an ulterior motive though, having stated that he was an American "in need of a visa". She, of course,

being the lady that she is, was only too ready to oblige. Although some members of the AU are jetting off to Vegas this week, I cannot confirm or deny whether this new pairing will be amongst the entourage.

It seems the sixth Netball team did not earn their reputation by being conservative and a certain lady with a double-barrelled surname was spotted making the most of the most Scottish man on the Rugby second team. Although initially confused for the Vice-President of RAG, she made sure that all knew who she was as the face-sucking session spanned most of the night.

Never wanting to be shown up,

Fighting the flab

Your new Sports Editors are trying something new this year. No longer will the sports section be focused solely around reminiscent's of the AU's sporting successes and alcohol-filled Wednesday nights. This year we will also be providing weekly hints and tips on how to turn your fl-abs to f-abs and get you feeling great about yourselves. Everyone wants to be fit and healthy but many don't know how to go about it. If you are looking to give yourself and your body a spring clean this year, the best place to start is right here. Your resident Badminton Social Secretary and Beaver Design Editor has kindly volunteered to act as our fitness guinea-pig. He will be following our weekly diet program religiously, alongside a weekly exercise and fitness routine and we are sure he is guaranteed to see results. We'll give you weekly updates and stats so you can see for yourself how the programme works. If you want to see results like him, make sure you get yourself organised.

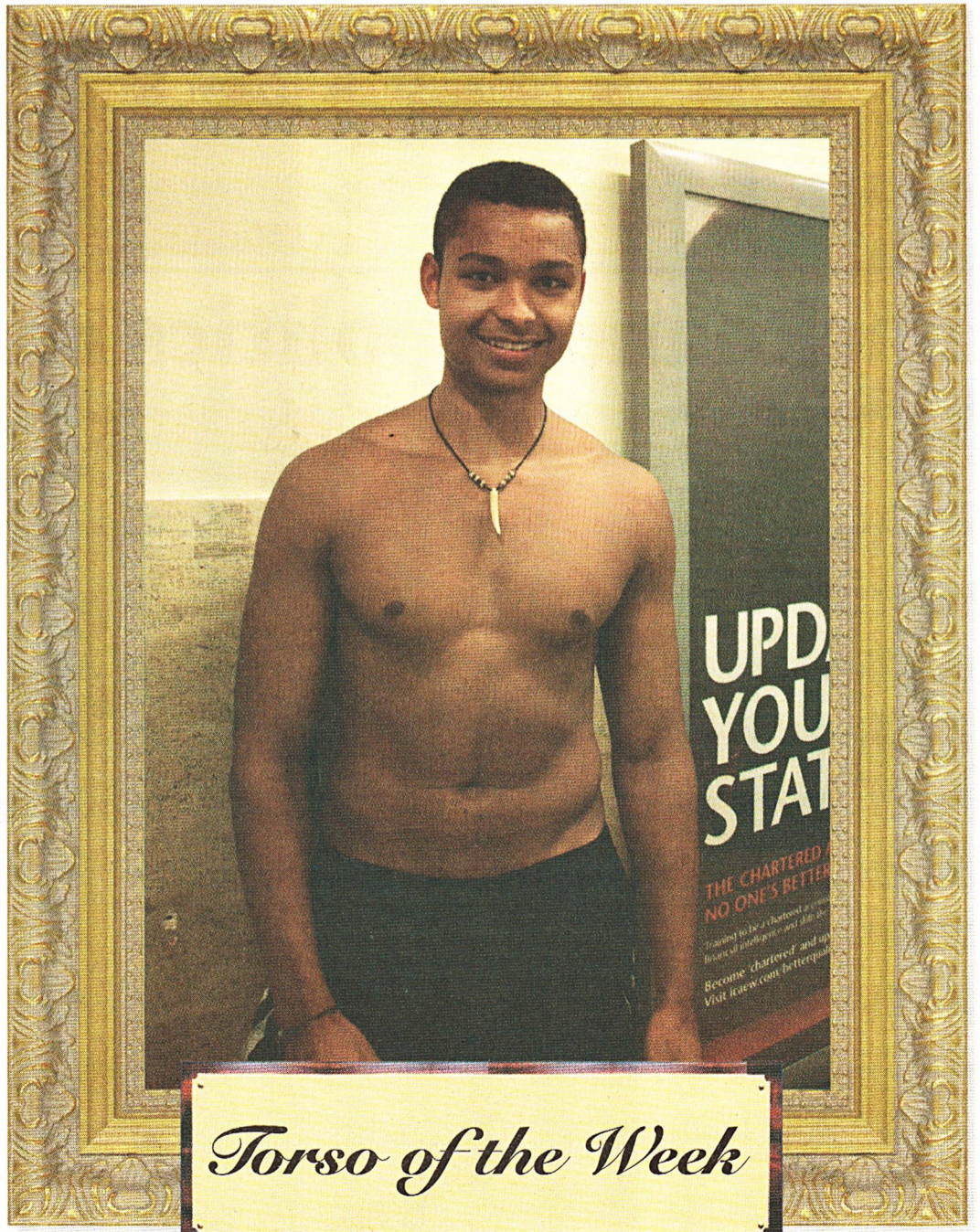
The key to keeping to a diet is being prepared. Make up your meals every evening in preparation for the next day. This not only reduces your chances of making unhealthy food choices throughout the day, it will also saves you a heck of a lot of money. Many people make the big mistake of skipping breakfast. This is the worst thing you could do for two reasons: first, by skipping breakfast you leave yourself starving by lunch time meaning you eat more than you would have with breakfast. This leaves your body will more to process and consequently more food is stored as fat because your body is unable to break it down; second, by eating breakfast first thing in the morning, you kick-start your metabolism for the day. A fast metabolism means you will actually be able to eat more without putting on weight! It is also important that you try and cut out all those naughties you allow yourself. Here are a few small changes you can make to your daily diet that will make a massive difference to your health.

Swap:

- Coffee for Green Tea
- Sugar for Honey
- Red meat for Chicken and Fish
- Beer or wine for Vodka and Soda
- White bread for Brown bread
- Pasta for Quinoa

Although many of you who read this are already budding sportsmen and women, we will also be offering weekly advice on how to stay fit and active besides sports. Gym memberships in Central London are extravagantly priced and the LSE gym, although very cheap, can be a little intimidating for some. We will therefore be providing ideas on how to get fit for free in London. These will range from this weeks boris bikes idea to detailed circuit training programs in the park.

We hope you enjoy this new section and look forward seeing the benefits it will bring. Please note though, that whilst these are health tips, we are not professional nutritionists and you should consult your doctor before attempting any significant dietary changes.



Torso of the Week

Sport

Inside

- Your Michaelmas Term AU Calendar
- Letter from your AU President
- Tales from Tour: Salou 2011

The boys are back in town

Timothy Poole

After a long summer off, the world's most talked about league is back in business. Two months in and the cloud of uncertainty of pre-season is slowly fading; managers, players and fans alike can now begin to form a rough picture of how their team will fare.

As always in life, there are two ways of categorising England's top tier: the winners and losers. Of the country's elite, some are matching or exceeding expectations, while others are falling way short. The biggest shock so far has been the performances of Arsene Wenger's "Gunners." Indeed, 8-2 jokes 4-3 weeks have turned them in 2-1 highly mocked team and surely the major talking point of the season thus far. The loss of their talisman, Cesc Fabregas, to Barcelona and the inability of deadline day signings to gel together has seen them pick up just seven points from as many games.

While Arsenal languish in 15th, the surprise package early on has been the exploits of Tony Pulis' Stoke. The key signings of Peter Crouch and Wilson Palacios (among others) have helped propel them to 8th, with notable feats being the victory over Liverpool and the draw with Manchester United. Though in terms of surprises, Stoke aren't alone; Newcastle lie in 4th after

an unbeaten start. Despite an apparent lack of goal scoring strikers, Alan Pardew has guided Newcastle to 15 points, helped by recent goals from Demba Ba and outstanding goalkeeping displays from Tim Krul.

Elsewhere, Alex Mcleish has steered Villa to a smooth start to the season after his summer switch from bitter rivals Birmingham. Villa lie in 6th, also providing fans with the rarity of an Emile Heskey goal. Meanwhile, newly promoted Norwich and Swansea have done exceptionally to muster eight points from seven games and place 9th and 10th respectively. The battle for 4th is also heating up from the offset: assuming Newcastle will drop points and Arsenal's dismal form doesn't magically transform, Liverpool and Tottenham are the chasers.

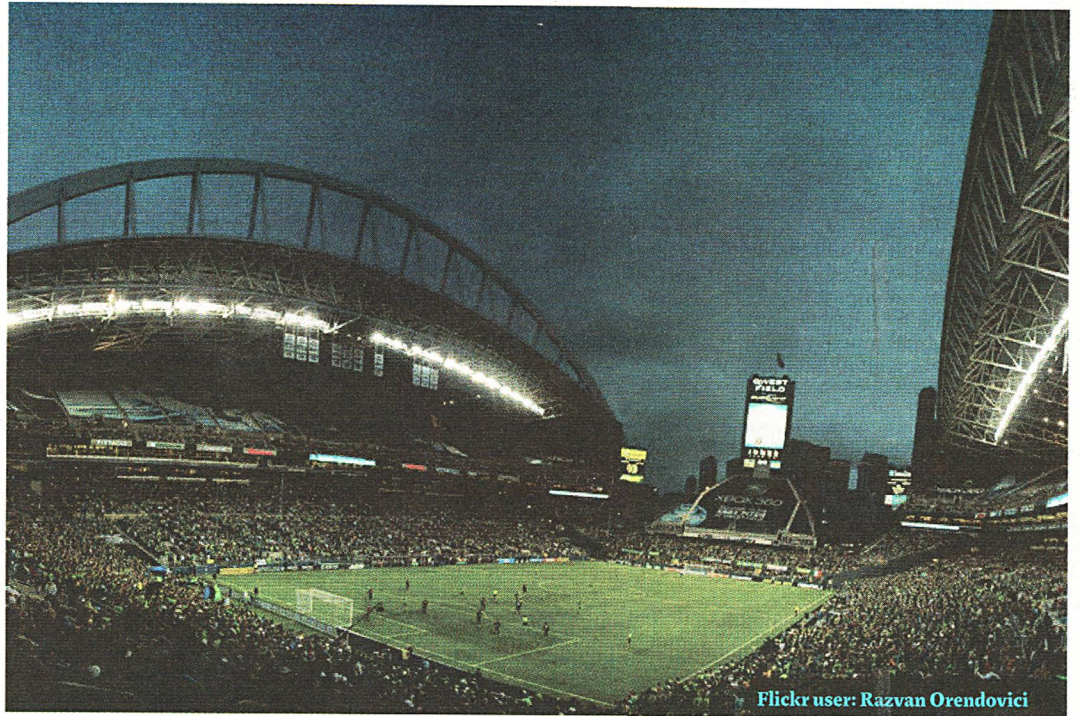
In the bottom half, some sets of fans have more reason to be worried than others. After slow starts, Everton and Fulham look as though they can push for top-half finishes, whilst QPR (11th) have fared well aside from their recent 6-0 drubbing at Craven Cottage. However, after successful campaigns last season, Sunderland (16th) and West Brom (17th) have simply failed to leave the starting blocks, while Wolves (14th) have not strengthened after only barely surviving relegation. The bottom three provide the most food for thought: Roberto Martinez may be good enough to keep Wigan (18th) up, but Steve Kean (Blackburn-19th) and Owen Coyle (Bolton-20th) will almost definitely be out of jobs if results

continue in this fashion.

Nonetheless, it is undoubtedly the top three that everyone is talking about. André Villas-Boas' rebuilding of Chelsea is underway and, although no fires have been lit by their playing style, they only lie 3 points off top. Meanwhile, Sir Alex Ferguson has

recruited Ashley Young and David De Gea to a squad already envied by every other manager in football and Manchester City have signed enough players to form several new teams. Thus, it seems an insurmountable conclusion that United will either lift their 20th league crown or City will

lift their first since 1968. Overall, the Premier League so far has delivered the breathtaking drama we have come to expect and shows no signs of stopping anytime soon.



Flickr user: Razvan Orendovici

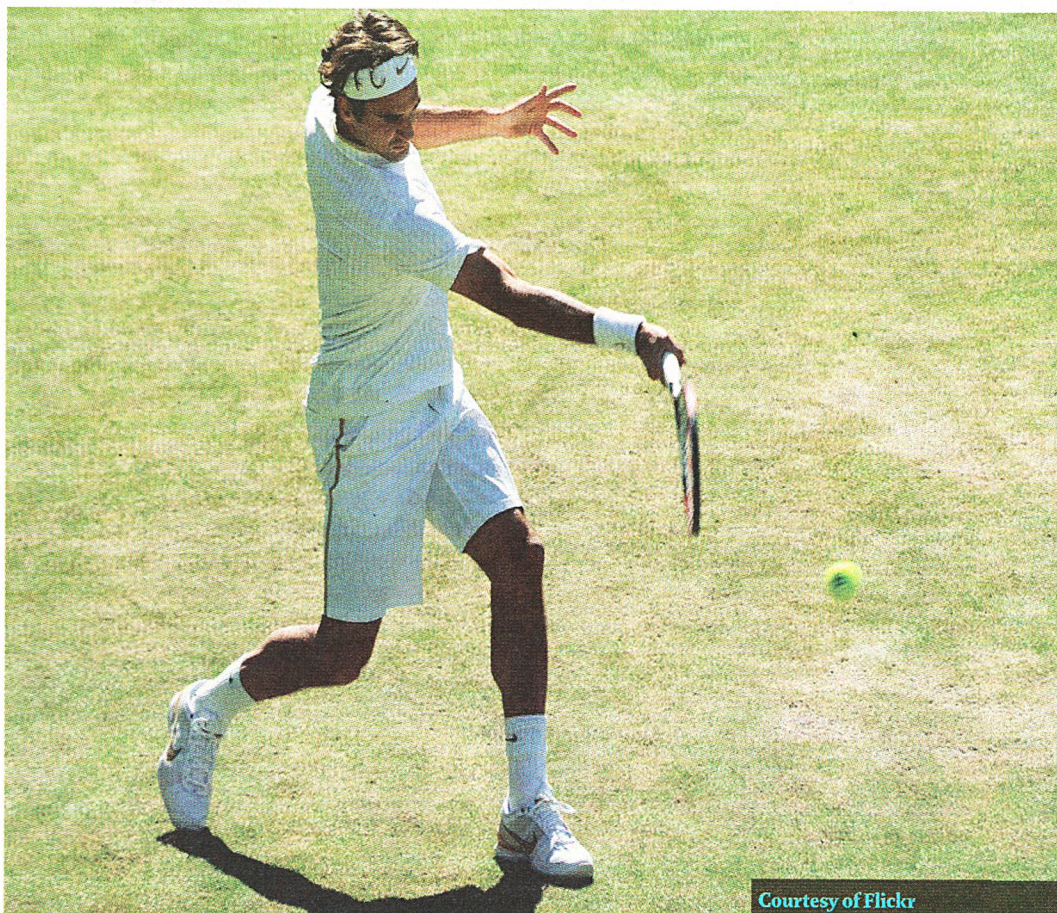
Backhanded politics ruins tennis

Dennis Mooney

Now, it is fair to say that here at the LSE we are no strangers to industrial action and the plight of the workers. However, it would be stretching the credibility of even the most hardened activist to support action that is currently threatening the world of professional tennis.

Essentially, the International Tennis Federation (ITF), the sport's main governing body, is being held to ransom by the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) which represents the interests of the men on the professional tennis tour. In turn, the ATP is being held to ransom by just a few of the world's best, and coincidentally highest paid, players, in a row over the scheduling of tournaments. Rounds of The Davis Cup, tennis contest between nations, are scheduled to take place the week after the so-called "Grand Slam" or major tournaments, the ATP's most prestigious and financially rewarding events. This makes financial and logistical sense for the majority of players, who are eliminated in the first week of the two week Grand Slam tournaments.

The top players, however, who qualify for the latter stages, have found themselves unable to give their best for their countries. While this is a shame, it might be reasonable to point out at this stage that prize money for Novak Djokovic, winner of the 2011 US Open,



Courtesy of Flickr

was \$1.8m (£1.04m), or \$300,000 for each match won, at an average of approximately 2 hours per match. Almost nowhere else in world sport are such figures earned for a single tournament, and this is before one considers the extra income from sponsorship, media coverage and other endorsements.

Djokovic, in fairness, has not been as vocal as other top players in criticising the ITF. Admittedly, the schedule is imperfect, aiming as it does to allow the greatest number of players the maximum possible recovery time, rather than the players of the highest calibre. It is an issue that may well need addressing if the Davis cup is to be taken seriously. However, one need not be a student of economics to realise that, in an economic climate where public and private sector alike are struggling, being asked to represent one's country does not seem too great a hardship.

With the players cocooned in year round, wallto wall 5-star luxury, living out every amateur tennis player's dream of earning a living, and in some cases a fortune, from their talent, the world of elite tennis is far removed from the difficulties facing the NHS, or for that matter the financial sector. Before they man the picket lines at Wimbledon, or occupy Flushing Meadows, those at the very top of tennis might do well to step off the court and into the real world.