

**Features**  
**Icelandic Financial**  
**Crisis >> Page 16**



**Comment**  
**Teaching**  
 >> Page 11

**part B**  
**The Androgyny**  
**Issue**



28th October 2008  
 Newspaper of the  
 London School of Economics  
 Students' Union

# The Beaver

**Can it be saved?** Parents begin fight to keep LSE nursery open



Zeeshan Malik

## Union launches campaign to save nursery

>> School consultation begins this week  
 >> Union official says closure "unthinkable"

Ali Moussavi

The Students' Union campaign to stop the closure of the LSE nursery was launched last Thursday in a meeting attended by parents and union officials.

The LSE has announced over the summer that it would hold a consultation on the future of childcare provision for students and staff at the School.

At the campaign meeting, the group discussed how to make their case at the consultation.

Shortly after a motion was passed by the Union General Meeting two weeks ago mandating the union to campaign against the nursery's closure, Professor George Gaskell, the Pro-Director for Planning and Resources invited the union's Education and Welfare Officer Emmanuel Akpan-Inwang to sit on the consultation committee.

At the meeting Union General Secretary Aled Fisher made clear his opposition to the School's view that the nursery is under-used by parents at the LSE and under-equipped.

Fisher pointed out that the nursery had received an impressive rating in the Ofsted

survey of its performance.

The LSE nursery currently provides care for over 60 children and is based in the same building as the Grosvenor House halls of residence in Drury Lane.

Union officials said that the campaign was a high priority and that they would consistently push the issue throughout the year until the consultation reports back to the Academic Planning and Resources Committee (APRC) in the Lent Term.

The Students' Union Communications Officer pointed out the broad support the campaign would have among the student body. He said: "The nursery is an excellent facility and we share the concerns of many student parents over the potential closure of this essential welfare service. A world class university should have a world class nursery. It is unthinkable that the LSE is even considering shut it down."

He also said that the campaign intended to reach out to student parents, staff, academics and alumni.

The campaign was also discussed at the Union's women's forums organized by Women's Officer Ruby Buckley. Students at the forum were concerned that cuts on childcare facilities would affect female students with children to care for.

Sources in the Students' Union are optimistic about the campaign and the involvement of mature students and parents

### Nursery consultation How you can get involved



- Email written submissions to [nursery.consultation@lse.ac.uk](mailto:nursery.consultation@lse.ac.uk) until 5 December
- Attend focus groups organised by Union for students, within departments for staff, throughout term

is seen as strong advantage.

The consultations will report its findings in the Lent Term, However, Gaskell, who chairs the APRC has not been specific as to when the consultation's findings would be presented to the APRC.

In early 2006, student representatives

had raised similar concerns about childcare provision at the LSE after the School decided to close down the Silverwalk halls of residence in South London.

The decision was opposed by some members of the School's highest governing body - the LSE Council since Silver Walk was the only halls of residence to provide childcare to LSE students.

At the time, similar concerns to those raised about the nursery, were raised about Silver Walk hall.

A record of a Council meeting in February 2006 says that the Finance and General Purposes Committee (FGPC) reported the selling of the halls because the properties were "unpopular with students and costly to maintain and a profit on disposal was anticipated" and the "location and size of the properties had made them unpopular for families with children."

The FGPC also raised concerns over the location and size of the properties and argued that childcare facilities were available for LSE students in the intercollegiate halls of the University of London.

It was concluded that if the School was unable to obtain a sale price of at least £5 million for Silver Walk, the problem would be referred back to Council.

## Michaelmas election hopefuls "drop like flies" out of races

Victoria Boggiano

As candidates begin campaigning in the Students' Union Michaelmas Term elections, many Freshers are dropping out of races for fear of losing to well-known competitors and established student politicians.

Two sabbatical officers are running for four positions. Although this has not happened at the LSE in recent years, Students' Union General Secretary Aled Fisher claimed that it is common practice in many universities.

According to Returning Officer Ossie Fikret, the Union had achieved unprecedented student participation with this year's Michaelmas Term elections before students began dropping out.

Students began removing themselves from the race around Wednesday. Fikret said that they have been "dropping like flies". By Thursday afternoon, the number of candidates had fallen from 59 to 44, including four candidates for honorary president and vice-president.

Fikret has said that the high drop-out rates reflect students feeling alienated from the Students' Union.

He expected voter turnout to be between 500 and 1000 students.

Campaigning officially began last Wednesday and voting will take place online - via the Students' Union website, [www.lsesu.com](http://www.lsesu.com) - and in the Quad Cafe on Wednesday and Thursday this week.

Students running for Postgraduate Students Officer, Residences Officer and General Course Representative gave hustings speeches at Thursday's Union General Meeting.

Candidates are allowed to contact societies for their endorsements and may send up to 20 emails about their campaigns. Other forms of online campaigning are prohibited.

Fikret pointed out that the strict rules on campaigning may be discouraging some students from staying in the race, claiming that students are worried about breaking them.

### Inside

**Comment**  
 Teaching debate

**Features**  
 Icelandic terrorists at LSE  
**Social**  
 Postgrads in America  
**Sport**  
 Kitesurfing

**Plus: 16 pages of Part B:**  
**Androgyny!**  
**Chris Garneau!**  
**Mighty Boosh!**  
**Genderised food!**

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The Collective is The Beaver's governing body. You must have three articles or photos published in the paper to qualify for membership. If you believe you are a Collective member but your name is not on the list above, please email editor@thebeaveronline.co.uk

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# Students to advise LSE on sustainability

Malvika Saraogi

A student group has been included in the 'Sustainable LSE Partnership', a group which reports to the LSE Director Howard Davies on how the School's environmental policy is implemented.

The Sustainable Future Student Consulting Group was established four years ago. Consisting of around 30 undergraduate and Masters students, it is supported by Victoria Hands, the School's Environmental and Sustainability Manager, and Andy Farrell, the Director of Finance and Facilities.

The group has been involved in initiatives such as double-sided printing for all campus computers and reuse and recycle programmes in halls of residence.

After piloting durable mugs in the Garrick last year, the group plans to launch the re-useable mug campaign and get rid of plastic water bottles.

Through its inclusion in the Sustainable LSE Partnership - chaired by Howard Davies - the group will sit alongside School representatives from Estates, Catering and other divisions to develop environmental policy.

Olivier Darmouni, President of the Students' Union OIKOS Society and the student group's co-ordinator, believes that students must lobby for action and get their departments to commit to sustainability.

He said that this would be a "win-win" situation as the School may benefit from the passion, skills and ideas of students whilst giving students a valuable learning experience.

Justus Rollin, the Students' Union Environment and Ethics Officer, agreed.

"The Future Student Consulting Group has always been working closely with the School," he said. "It is absolutely positive that they are part of the new environmental management system. Only the fresh voice and input of students can help making the LSE truly green."

The LSE has made progress on green issues in recent years and was ranked the greenest campus in London in 2007 and 2008, thanks mainly to its waste management and recycling initiatives.

However, Darmouni argued that the LSE has a long way to go before it can be called a truly sustainable campus. The LSE's environmental policy claims that "the School will endeavour to provide a more social and convivial built environment to its community, so as to favour a more social use of space" which Darmouni believes has yet to be achieved, echoing many students and staff.

Any student can apply to join the Student Future Consulting Group. Applications open next week and run until 10 November, with all information available from Olivier Darmouni at su.soc.oikoslondon@lse.ac.uk.

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Tuition fees



# Pressure for tuition fee hike increases

• Union to decide its stance at this week's Union General Meeting

Victoria Boggiano

A growing number of university leaders are calling for the £3145 tuition fee cap for UK and EU undergraduates to rise next year.

Last month, Chris Patten – vice chancellor of Oxford University – described universities as “local social security offices” and said that fees were “intolerably” low.

Malcolm Grant – provost of University College London – has also said he is in favour of an increase in the cap.

LSE Director Howard Davies has yet to declare his view.

A report published earlier this year by the Higher Education Policy Institute, a UK think tank, suggested that the cap may rise to £5000 or £7000.

It is unlikely the government will increase its loan subsidies if the cap is raised,

the report said. Instead, the government may require universities to contribute to offset loan subsidies or require students to use commercial loans or money from their families to pay the higher costs.

The report suggested that the government, which spends £1.4 billion annually on subsidized loans, may choose to offer more loans at higher interest rates.

Home students said they already find the cap high. Some feel that raising it may prevent students from lower income brackets from attending university.

“It might price some people out of the university itself,” LSE student Dan Owen said. “If you nearly double tuition fees... that might be too much to justify doing it in the first place.”

A motion will be proposed at next week's Union General Meeting to establish the Students' Union's position on the fee cap.

The Students' Union Education and Welfare Officer said that if the cap for

home students is raised or removed, fees for postgraduate and international students may also rise.

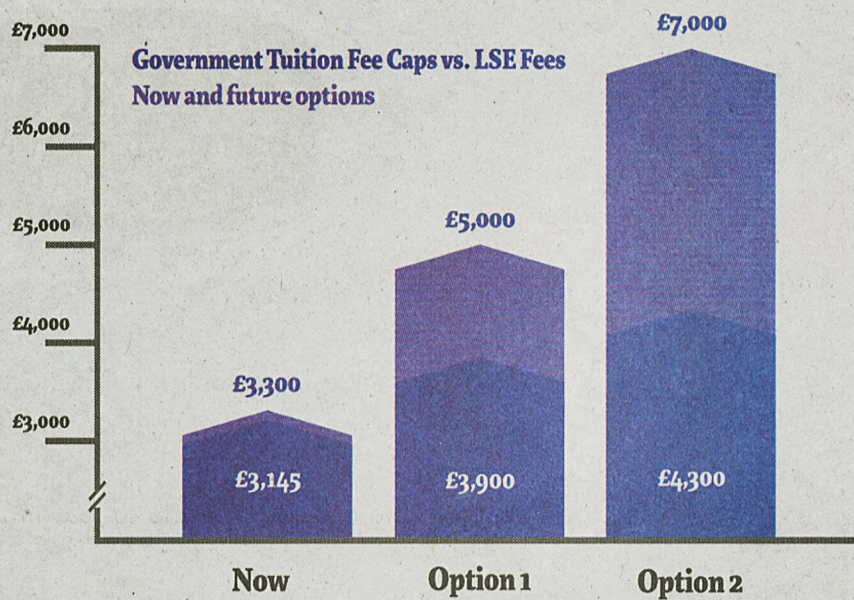
Aled Fisher, the Students' Union General Secretary, said, “I think we should be demanding an end to tuition fees completely.”

He argued that this was a realistic goal as most adults in the UK attended university free of charge. Top-up fees of £3000 were only introduced in the 2006-2007 academic year, rising annually with inflation.

“In terms of the review on top-up fees next year, it's going to be a big fight,” Fisher said. “We should be setting the agenda; we should be saying, ‘Look, education should be funded publicly and should be open to all regardless of their financial circumstances.’”

Fisher expects next week's UGM to support an end to top-up fees. If the cap is raised, he said, the LSE is likely to continue charging the maximum annual fee.

## Analysis Where fees fail



Rajan Patel

the fee cap, Barr said that the government's current subsidisation of student loans is also a problem.

It costs the government £1.2 billion per year to hold the interest rate on student loans below its cost of borrowing.

Equating the interest payable on loans to the government's cost of borrowing could save £800 million per year. This money could widen access to university if used to improve the GCSE results of students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Student opinion on higher education finance has varied over the years. Initially, the National Union of Students (NUS) claimed that tuition fees would block access to higher education. The NUS then dropped its opposition to fees and now campaigns against a rise in the cap.

NUS President Wes Streeting called the policy change a victory for “pragmatism”, but some see it as a sell-out. National student representatives have not got a clear strategy to promote students' interests on the question of tuition fees. The NUS has less than a year to apply pressure before the review begins.

As university heads declare their support for raising the fee cap at next year's government review, an LSE authority on student finance has called for student loans to rise with any increase in fees.

Professor of Public Economics Nicholas Barr said: “If the government increases fees without increasing the loan I'll have to resist shooting someone.”

The Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) suggests that universities might stop charging fees for poorer students under this system, but this could increase inequalities between universities as those with richer students would benefit disproportionately.

The system may also force students to rely more on commercial loans. Barr noted that even the current maintenance loans are insufficient, forcing students to use credit card debt or paid work to cover living costs.

Though the upcoming review is about

## In quotes The tuition fees debate

**“I think we should be demanding an end to tuition fees completely.”**

**Aled Fisher**  
Union General Secretary

**“The government has yet to announce its future position on tuition fees and it would not be sensible to try and predict the future at this point.”**

**LSE spokesperson**

**“If the government increases fees without increasing the loan I'll have to resist shooting someone.”**

**Nicholas Barr**  
LSE Professor of Public Economics

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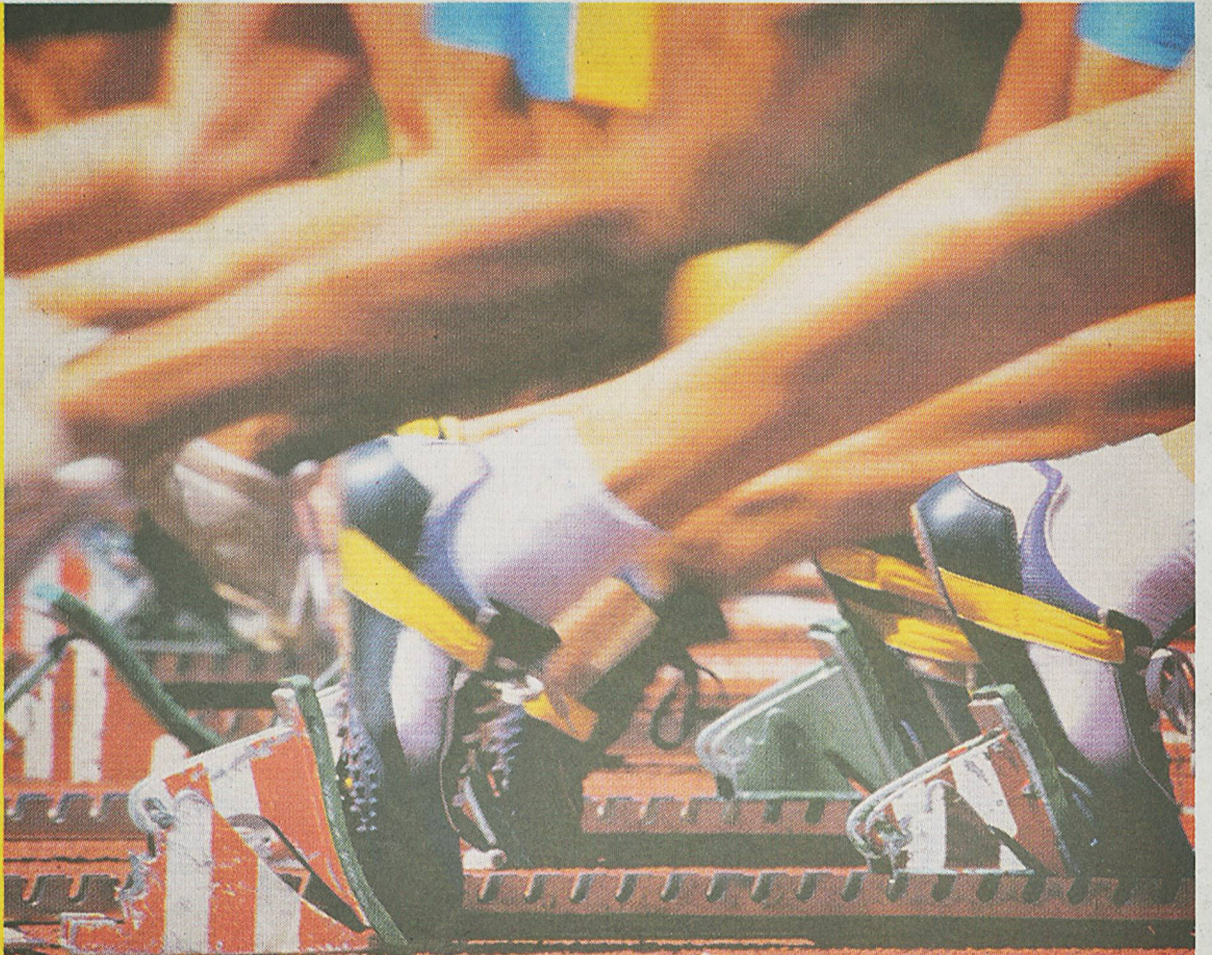
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**Time:** 18.30  
**Location:** Room NAB 1.04, New Academic Building, Lincoln's Inn Fields

Followed by drinks reception. This event is open to students seeking Full-Time positions and summer 2009 Internships.

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**TIME:** 13:00-14:00  
 You do not have to register to attend this event.



# School conciliation move splits Palestine society

Ali Moussavi

The Students' Union's Palestine Society has agreed to meet with the Israeli Society and members of the international non-governmental organization (NGO) OneVoice, at an event held at LSE in early November.

The OneVoice movement describes its aims as opposing extremism on both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and strengthening moderates through grassroots activism in favour of a two-state solution.

The group has been promoting its activities and aims around the world since its creation in 2002. Their event at the LSE is part of their larger UK tour.

The LSE has endorsed the event. It will be attended by Professor Janet Hartley, the Pro-Director for Teaching and Learning.

The School has pursued a hands-on policy towards campus relations between pro-Palestinian and pro-Israeli students since a rise in tensions earlier this year, when a UGM motion was passed calling for the Students' Union and the LSE to divest from Israel.

However, the School came under criticism from both pro-Israeli and pro-Palestinian students when it attempted to host a joint meeting of the Israeli, Palestine, Jewish and Islamic societies. Some felt that it was inappropriate to include the Islamic

and Jewish societies at the event.

The School also came under fire for trivialising the issue by planning to hold the event in a Bedouin tent, which was also seen by some as stereotyping pro-Palestinian students.

At a Students' Union executive meeting early last week, there was broad support for the OneVoice event. Students' Union Anti-Racism Officer Joseph Brown said that the the Palestine Society's decision was a "massive leap in the right direction for both the Israel and Palestine Societies on campus". Brown, a Palestine Society committee member, voted in favour of meeting One Voice at the society's committee meeting.

However, sources said that there was some opposition to attending the event and that the final vote showed a 7-5 split in the committee in favour of meeting.

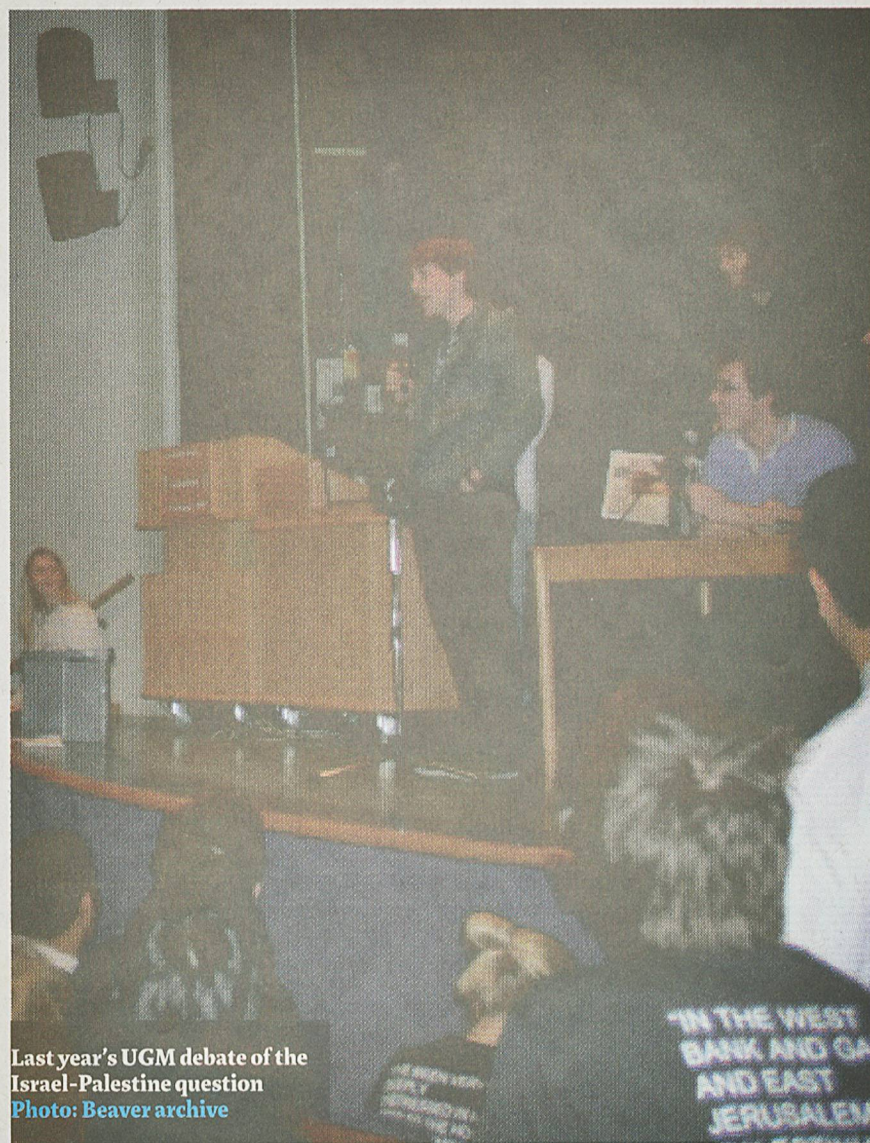
Palestine Society Chair Faisal Irshaid, who voted against the motion, said that the vote in no way endorses One Voice and that the society's attendance of the event will aim to raise awareness of the group's biases in favour of Israel.

Groups on both sides of the conflict have criticised OneVoice, claiming that their objectives ignore realities and try to suggest both sides are morally equivalent.

The Israeli Society have expressed their approval of the decision: "Attitudes are changed by people, who care [and] talk with a common purpose, with a goal to come together with different ideas, plans, proposals, opinions and feelings with the same end in mind."

**"A massive leap in the right direction for both the Israel and Palestine Societies on campus"**

**Joseph Brown**  
Students' Union  
Anti-Racism Officer



Last year's UGM debate of the Israel-Palestine question  
Photo: Beaver archive

# Philosophy department backtracks on dissertation option

Daniel Ridler

The Philosophy Department was forced to backtrack after controversial comments made last week to students who wanted to do dissertations suggested that the department could not accommodate them.

A student said that at the meeting held to "discover why so many people wanted to do a thesis", the department said they "did not see how this [module] was going to work".

The student added that they were told that "if [they] are concerned about their grade point average [they] should not do a thesis" and that the head of department, Dr. Roman Frigg, would be "pretty flexible" in allowing them to take an alternative module outside of the department.

"This seems ridiculous," said one student. "If someone wants to do a thesis they should be allowed to do it." Students said that they were discouraged by the comments, which prompted them to raise their concerns with the department.

Frigg later sent an email to all third year students to allegedly clarify the remarks, claiming that some "misunderstandings [had] arisen" during the meeting.

Frigg later told The Beaver that the department could accommodate all students on the program of their choice: "I should emphasise that there is no issue about resources; we can handle all students who subscribed without a problem."

Frigg said that the aim of the meeting was to make clear that the dissertation is not necessarily an easy option to take, since last year a number of students felt that this was the case. This view led to them achieving below average grades in the dissertation option.

**"If someone wants to do a thesis they should be allowed to do it."**

Philosophy student



Photos: Erik Lang

## Careers and the credit crunch at LSE

# Don't panic, diversify, Careers Service tells wary students



Goldman Sachs at the LSE Banking Fair earlier this month  
Photo: Erik Lang

Antonia Strachey

The LSE Careers Service remains upbeat about graduate recruitment in financial services, despite last Thursday's news that Goldman Sachs is cutting ten per cent of its global workforce.

A study by the Independent newspaper found that one in eight LSE students, around 1000 in total, applied for a graduate position with Goldman Sachs two years ago.

LSE students' focus on investment banking careers has prompted many to worry about their future job prospects in the financial crisis.

However, Fiona Sandford, the Director of the LSE Careers Service, said that the current downturn was different from the previous two she had worked through.

In past recessions recruitment cuts by banks had led to a lack of skilled employees. Sandford said that this experience will encourage employers to keep recruiting through the current downturn.

Sanjiv Nanwani, Vice President of the Students' Union Finance Society, agreed that past hiring freezes by banks were "very

silly moves".

He suggested that some banks may view their middle and higher level executives as a "liability" and will seek out new graduates to "keep it fresh".

However, conditions are increasingly competitive. In particular, employers are becoming more strict over academic standards.

Sandford said that one recent LSE graduate had already been placed on a graduate training scheme in New York before his exam results were published. After he missed his required grade, he was promptly put on a plane home.

Despite this, she said that LSE graduates are among the few who possess the skills required for a career in banking, which is what drives banks' heavy advertising on campus.

Nanwani said that the Finance Society received more money in sponsorship this year compared with last year, suggesting that financial services firms remain interested in the LSE.

However, the Society is diversifying the range of companies it works with to offer students more opportunities.

He suggested that students should consider smaller, 'boutique' banks and financial consultancies over the big investment banks.

Representatives of other student societies are less convinced of the merit of the campus focus on financial services.

Adrian Rogstad, the former Chairman of the Students' Union Amnesty International Society, said that more representation of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and international organisations would be a positive step.

The LSE's International Organisations Fair, attended by supranational organisations such as the World Bank, took place last Saturday and was heavily oversubscribed.

Sandford dismissed the suggestion that the Careers Service may have focused too heavily on the financial services sector, arguing that their focus is based on responding to the demand from a large part of the student body.

She claimed that in NGO-related sectors, the supply of skills may be larger and more widely distributed. Furthermore, the smaller recruitment budgets of these sectors limit their outreach to LSE graduates.

This often pushes students interested in these areas to find work experience through their own initiative.

She encouraged students to apply to a spectrum of high, medium and low risk positions. "There are the jobs out there," she said, "so don't panic, but diversify."

## Comment Interning at a falling giant

# In Lehman's terms

Ravi Mistry

Thank God for the credit crunch. I'm not rejoicing at the bankers' comeuppance, as I'm one of them – well, at least during this summer I was. Instead, I'm glad it reminded me of some home truths I'd forgotten in the LSE careers hysteria.

The revelation came during my internship at Lehman Brothers (RIP). From day one we were told that banking is a tough but fair profession that rewards excellence, with opportunities to further your career (and deepen your pockets).

Compared to the five pounds an hour retail jobs I've suffered where all effort is in

vain and everyone is expendable, I couldn't wait to sign up.

Much of the job relies on intuition, gut feeling and forecasting rather than evil backstabbing, politics and deals with the devil. We were told that banking is a "cyclical industry" and that if Lehman were to stop trading today, they would have enough money to keep the firm going for 2 years. In reality, they would manage two months.

Halfway through the summer our share price took a battering. It was put down to vicious rumours and galvanised the firm; everybody felt they were in this together. As employees exchanged jokes about who would take us over, our CEO scrambled behind the scenes to prop the company up.

However, when a rescue deal fell through it became clear that nobody would touch us with a bargepole. Alarm bells

rang and work-rates fell as many took an early lunch to hear the quarterly results, which were forced forward to contain market speculation.

Huddled round computer screens we heard our CEO announce a \$5bn loss and his "plan" to save the company. The problem was it was just a plan, little more than a few Powerpoint slides – no actual action had been taken.

On 'Good Friday', the last working day before the demise of Lehman, the mood was sombre. Demoralised workers swapped stories: "It's no point asking anyone to do something for you, as they aren't sure if they'll be here come Monday," I overheard.

Many refused to acknowledge the possibility of bankruptcy, arguing that though jobs may go, the firm was sure to survive.



The market thought otherwise. Lehman shares fell to the price of a slice of pizza and we reached the point of no return.

On Monday, Lehman went bankrupt. Traders packed their boxes, executives wept and the media swarmed. How could people with over 30 years experience in the industry let this happen to a global, multi-billion dollar firm? I still couldn't believe what had happened and probably won't for quite some time.

I think a remark from a fellow intern that "this will make a great chapter in our autobiographies" best sums up the experience. Still, I remained loyal to the company whilst the ship was sinking and despite witnessing the biggest financial collapse in history I still hadn't had my revelation.

It arrived a week later with a small headline on Bloomberg News: 'Lehman

pulls \$8bn from London business to protect senior pay'. The American firm had taken money from the profitable London branch to pay the US seniors who let the firm go bust in the first place.

As New York bled London dry, the penny dropped.

On the trading floor it's every man for himself – we leave notions of fairness at the firm's revolving door.

The colossal downturn has shattered the career aspirations of many, and as the government clamps down on the City's bonus culture, I wonder whether people will be less willing to jump into banking. The problem is, beyond banking and finance, what other careers has the LSE really exposed us to?



Lehman Brothers' Canary Wharf headquarters  
Flickr user conorwithonen

**Financial support: hardship funds**

# Hardship fund to rise as students feel the pinch

• 13 per cent of UK students “extremely concerned” by their finances

Rajan Patel

As concern grows about the impact of the credit crunch on student welfare, the LSE has confirmed that its financial support to students will rise by up to £1 million this academic year.

The School is budgeting to spend between £10.5 million and £11 million on its Hardship Fund, bursaries and other grants. £8 million of this will come from tuition fee revenue, with the rest donated by foundations, individuals and corporations.

The Students' Union also provides general financial support and a range of targeted funds, including the Disabled Students' Fund and the Childcare Fund.

Sue Plater, the School's Financial Support Manager, said that as the bulk of School funding for student support came from fee revenue unaffected by the financial crisis, “there is no sense that there is a money problem at the LSE”.

This follows a report by the National Union of Students (NUS) released earlier

this month which reveals that UK students systematically underestimate their living costs whilst at university.

A survey of 2393 students showed that prospective students underestimate the expected weekly expenditure of current students by an average of 10 per cent.

The report also commented on some prospective students' “almost blind faith that if they need anything, it can be obtained”.

13 per cent of current undergraduates surveyed described themselves as “extremely worried” about their financial situation, with 24 per cent very concerned about their level of debt.

Plater observed that the credit crunch might make students' financial position even more precarious, as squeezed employers may offer fewer part-time opportunities.

She suggested that “changes in parents' circumstances” might also affect students who rely on financial support from their parents.

The School's Hardship Fund, which budgets to provide £470,000 this year to assist students experiencing unexpected financial difficulties, could help many stu-

dents avoid reliance on alternative finance or excessive part-time work.

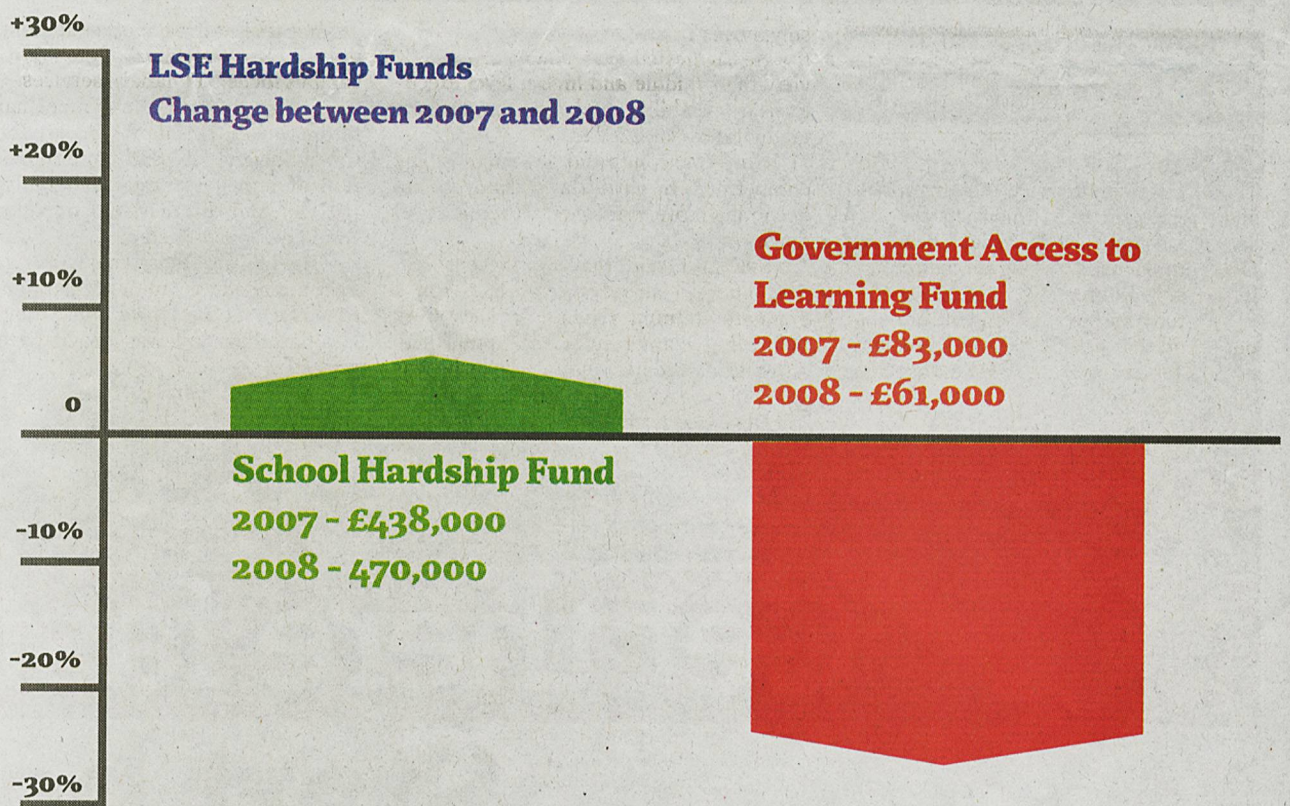
The budget for the Hardship Fund has increased from £430,000 last year, compensating for a reduction in government funded support. The government offered LSE students £83,000 last year through its Access to Learning Fund, but has only provided £61,000 for the current academic year.

The LSE advises no more than 15 hours of part time work per week. However, the NUS found that 29 per cent of students nationally work for more than 17 hours each week.

Plater said that the School would prefer to support students if they could no longer get by on earnings from 15 hours of work through schemes such as the Hardship Fund.

However, she said that there has so far been no increase in applications for hardship support.

Students are encouraged to contact Sue Plater or the Students' Union Education and Welfare Officer for more information on financial support.



**Financial support: donations and the credit crunch**

# Donors pause for thought

Rajan Patel

Almost one fifth of the financial support provided by the School is funded by donations and gifts.

The Office of Development and Alumni Relations (ODAR) manages fundraising.

Bill Abraham, ODAR's Individual Giving Officer responsible for fund raising from alumni, said that financial uncertainty is making donors adopt a “wait and see” approach to giving.

He said that this would have no impact on financial support for the current academic year as funding has already been

locked in, but might affect the amount of funding available from 2010.

Funds raised by ODAR principally finance scholarship programmes, research grants and academic prizes.

Abraham suggested that corporate donations may be the most sensitive to financial conditions, but observed that as corporations are responsible for only ten per cent of donations, total funds are unlikely to drop dramatically.

The strong ties linking alumni to the School should prevent a significant fall in donations over coming years.

High postgraduate fees mean that donors are encouraged to give money to postgraduate programmes to widen access.

The School's recently expanded 'PhD Partnership Scheme' – in which the School

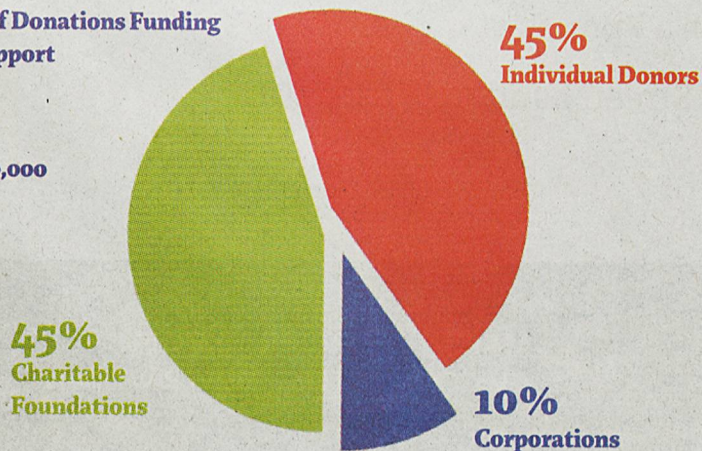
matches each donation of £7000 with an equal contribution and a waiver of the PhD candidate's fees – is an example of this.

Some departments, such as Finance and Economics, have a wider range of privately funded schemes. Abraham acknowledged that disparities between departments reflected the interests of wealthy donors.

He echoed the Careers Service's statement that students should not panic about their job prospects or financial situation in the current climate. Observing that no donors had yet defaulted on their commitments and that professionals in the financial services sector continued to donate money, he concluded that banking and related fields remained a good industry for LSE students to target.

Provenance of Donations Funding Academic Support 2007/2008

● = £2,000,000



## Dalrymple laments the Last Mughal

Matthew Willis

Last Thursday in the Sheikh Zayed Theatre, William Dalrymple spoke on one of British colonialism's most "amazingly under-studied" chapters: the Indian Mutiny of 1857 or, as it is known in India and Pakistan, the first war of independence.

Promoting his new book – *The Last Mughal* – Dalrymple argued that the world's "largest anti-colonial revolt" did not just bring about demise of the East India Company and the Mughal dynasty. It was also the death knell of a unique and harmonious cultural fusion.

Under the Mughals, the British had adopted Indian dress, diet, beliefs and habits. In 1800, one-third of British men in India were leaving their possessions to their (sometimes numerous) Indian wives.

Indeed, Mughal India was an astonishingly liberal centre of literature, poetry, art and thought.

Its Emperor Akbar had convened "multi-faith discussion groups" while the English were still persecuting Catholics.

How, Dalrymple asked, could a society so pluralistic and tolerant descend so fast into religion-infused mass-murder?

He identified the aggressive expansionism of the East India Company and the arrogance of Victorian missionary zeal as primary factors.

Combined, they found expression in a continental agenda of economic and religious conversion, designed to "shed the light of Truth" on the "poor benighted heathen".



Professor David Held (left) and William Dalrymple  
Photo: Zeeshan Malik

## Giddens demands climate change action

Caspar Gerleve

Former LSE Director Professor Lord Anthony Giddens has called for governments to focus on their means of reducing greenhouse gas emissions rather than on achieving globally agreed targets.

Giddens, Director of the LSE from 1997 until 2003, is famous for his principle of the "Third Way". His recent work has focused on modernity, globalisation and politics.

Speaking at the LSE in the run up to the launch of his new book *The Politics of Climate Change*, Giddens argued that the Kyoto Protocol has failed to achieve emissions reductions and that future treaties would only set modest targets.

Explaining the 'Giddens' Paradox', he argued that the determined preventive action needed to prevent future catastrophe is difficult to achieve as future hazards seem too abstract to most people.

National and international politics should therefore focus on short term engagements rather than over-ambitious long term targets, because "the means are more important than the ends. Far-away targets for emission reductions tend to discourage people from starting to act now".

Giddens also stressed the importance of developing a positive attitude towards climate change in the general population.

"We need to stop scaring people into switching off the light when they leave a room," he said. "Saving energy is important, too, but what we really need is ingenuity and a creative approach to the matter. People need to view the fight against climate change as an opportunity and not as an uncomfortable necessity."

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# Comment

## Student campaigning needs to be more effective

Why do most student campaigns fail, despite the best intentions of their participants?

Ira Goldstein



What determines the success or failure of a student-led initiative? We all have our opinions on the various pamphlets and petitions offered up on Houghton Street on a regular basis.

Free Hare Krishna vegetarian gruel? Get me a flowing robe and sign me up for the mailing list. The anti-fur brigade? An enviable and ambitious cause, I suppose. Join the class struggle? Maybe this is the wrong school to call capitalism into question. Spare change to save orphans? Now that's a contribution that I can feel good about.

These are familiar causes fraught with incentives (some of them tasty) to join a fight. But try to measure the effectiveness of these campaigns, and you'll find that the results are often disappointing.

It seems as if all student-led initiatives share a common thread – the vigorous passion to fight for a cause. However ridiculous or unobtainable that cause may be, there never seems to be a lack of enthusiasm. Endless dedication to manning the tables of change or braving a blustery afternoon in the name of reform is common on university campuses around the world. Some may see this unwavering loyalty as strengthening any cause. But it's clear that the overall credibility of student initiatives is hurt by the growing number of cockeyed plans to save the world, dreamt up in the five by six foot cell you call home in an LSE hall.

"Save the whales!" "The world is ending!" Many of those ideas began with a protest or a march. Some ended in tragedy, while others changed the course of history. What differentiated glorious success from abject failure?

Many political observers believe that condemnation of the Apartheid regime in South Africa began with students. A global movement was spurred on by a small group of idealistic kids banging their drum as loud as they could. A few years later, it was a Chinese student that stood in front of a column of tanks in Tiananmen



Square, leading the protest for political reform in China. Maybe you've read about the protest against nuclear weapons in Trafalgar Square. It was the beginning of a revolutionary decade; 1960 saw one of the biggest public protests London has seen this century, which thousands of students joined. Certainly you've heard about Kent State University in Ohio, better known as a political battleground than an institution of higher learning. The year was 1970, and students protesting America's invasion of Cambodia were dispersed with bullets; four of them were killed.

These events marked the beginning of social movements, some more successful than others. But that was then – the

revolutionary decades of the latter half of the 20th century. When did the measured and enlightened student-led movements of the past become the wild and ineffective campaigns we see today? It's difficult to track, but this much is true: they just don't make 'em like they used to.

Take the recent Socialist Student Worker Society's march on the City. It made for a great photo-op, and the students' revolutionary spirit was certainly satiated by their attempted infiltration of the Bank of England. But at the end of the day, what did they really accomplish? Their opposition to the British bank

'bailout' was voiced. No viable solutions were suggested; 'ban City bonuses' was one interesting petition circulated. They also discussed a follow-up 'dance on the grave of capitalism' Halloween protest. The entire debacle has now been recorded in history as another pointless student temper tantrum that contributed nothing to the public debate and wasted taxpayer pounds on a police skirmish. Bravo!

On the other end of the spectrum are the back-room student-led campaigns, thought up by the brightest student minds, those dedicated society leaders or our beloved Student Union officials. These are the campaigns that often garner support from a majority of students or catch the

eye of the LSE administration.

Successful initiatives, such as the admirable Sustainable Futures Student Consulting Group, become integrated into the governance structure of the university. Students have been given a stake in the creation, reform and implementation of LSE environmental policy. Unsuccessful initiatives, such as the Student Union's failed attempts to bring the issues of responsible investing and money management to the fore, are a drain on student resources and an embarrassment for their advocates.

Making a stink over Sheikh Zayed's donation to the LSE was a noble cause that didn't pass student muster at the UGM and, as a result, was not pursued. Democracy prevails. Thankfully, 'Sheikgate' did not become another one of the poorly thought-out priorities of the Student Union, like their counterintuitive investment policy. Last week, Union Treasurer Will Barber was paraphrased saying that the Union categorically does not invest in Sudan or Israel, and will develop its own Socially Responsible Investment (SRI) policy this year. I'm sure the Darfuris driven from their homes in Sudan are rejoicing over the fact that the Union will not invest in Sudan.

Like the anti-fur campaigners and the socialist petitioners, the Student Union's current investment policy will wilt away and be replaced by a fresh cause or a new aggressor to target over time. Student credibility is tarnished, and new campaigns must work harder to gain it back. Such is the fate of all student-led initiatives fuelled by the passion for a cause but not accompanied with measured tactics and well thought out solutions.

So what will be the historic student-led initiative of the 21st century? Will it be an environmental campaign that produces a revolutionary policy idea? Or will it be an anti-capitalist forum that suggests a new way forward in the international monetary system? Probably neither. There is no formula for producing the revolutionary idea or movement that will change the course of human history.

It's evident, though, that Members of Parliament are influenced by letters from their constituents – it moulds their opinion on important matters. As well, the university administration is accountable to its stakeholders – students and alumni are a significant part of that group. If you really want to affect change in this world, you need to do so within the democratic framework at our disposal. And if you've done your research, maybe someone will listen.

### Union

### Jack



The pander parade returns. For forty minutes, the Michaelmas edition of hack charades displaced the usual fare of shouting matches. Coliseum manager [Jack-can't-bloody-say-his-name-because-of-some-inane-constitutional-election-regulation] was constitutionally forced to relinquish his powers to Ossie "Crazy" Thickwit, the unsung Union slave.

Thickwit went on the prowl. With microphone in hand, he herded his posse of feckless gladiators into the arena. The first fight would be a galactic five-sided clash for the postgraduate crown. Or supposed to be anyway.

Jack might as well have been sleeping. Toothless verbosity was a common virtue. The unfortunate fact that three of them were American did not help. Ideological zealots with bellies full of hot air, not satisfied with poisoning democracy in the New World, coming back over here to the Old Country to spread new concepts of liberal panderocracy.

The choice, to be made this later

this week, would not be an easy. Much alike playing Russian roulette with .357 Magnum hollowpoints in all six chambers (RON, for all its neutral voidness, makes a poor SU exec). Picking your poison was never less appealing.

Mercifully, the subsequent parades were nowhere as dreary. Just as well, they did not leave much of an impression on Jack's dysfunctional mind. Curiously, Jack does recall odd interjections from an elitist closet terrorist vaguely named Osama, and the pitiful attempts at wisecracks from an androgynous Tina Fey-wannabe. Wasn't even wearing the right glasses. And, oh gosh, he or she certainly ain't got no lipstick.

Time in the Coliseum passed inexorably onward. The Milf and hockey mom insults turned rapidly stale in the increasingly putrid air. The Coliseum was on edge. Thickwit could sense it. Not only that, a looming lethargy had begun creeping up his spineless back. He needed an exit now.

The minute hand soon edged uneasily close to Thickwit's nap o'clock. Unlike his notorious 10pm hour of deathly silence, few Union insiders know of Thickwit's secret lunchtime wink-hour. But Jack is not your common rumourmonger. Thickwit could hide nothing from prying Jack. Certainly not his sloppy dozing in the Union nests of iniquity. Ah, the joys of omniscience.

Thickwit reined the last of his gladiators in and restored Coliseum manager [it's-Thickwit's-bloody-bureaucratic-filibustering-legislation-that-denies-Jack-the-right-to-state-the-names-of-victims-of-his-vicious-slander] to his seat of power. As the Union slave retreated to his shelter of broken dreams, Coliseum manager [a-bloody-election-candidate-whose-name-Jack-still-can't-mention] conducted his business to restore normal service – passing motions.

Time was slipping away though. Mere minutes remain after Thickwit's withdrawal from the arena. But was there

a man dismayed? Certainly not Gorgeous Wets-himself. Leaping up front and centre to lap up the dying limelight, Wets-himself delivered an impassioned indictment of the School's abject inability to christen its physical assets with half-decent names. The horrors of the Towers 1 through 3, NAB and the mindblowingly inane 4th Floor Restaurant had to be stopped.

A flurry (and majority) of hands answered the call. Wets-himself did good. But the next intrepid orator, Shah "Jahan" the Vegan faced a sterner test. His noble quest for vegan booze and vegetarian debauchery met a spirit-ed challenge from Doughboy "Tomb Raider" Charlie. Real ale, not some washed-up vegan liquor, was the answer.

But for all his overwhelming protein superiority, Doughboy's verbal assault crumbled quickly against the Jahan the Vegan. A cowardly retreat into oblivion, Jack witnessed, as real ale died a pitiful death at the hands of vegan vodka. Pity.



# The Beaver

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## Nursing the School's future

**I**t will make a major difference to LSE's reputation." "It goes against everything a social sciences institution says about gender." "A limited commercial analysis of the situation." At the Students' Union meeting last week to launch the campaign against closing the LSE nursery, parents' and students' voices were loud and clear.

They were joined a few weeks ago by hundreds of students voting to authorise the campaign at the first Union General Meeting of the term. It was a massive turnout. That is why we strongly encourage students and staff to take part in the nursery consultation exercise that starts this week. Whether you make a written submission to the email address on our front page, or whether you go to one of the focus groups that will be held this term, please make your feelings known. The School must be reminded of the depth and breadth of our concerns.

The nursery must not be closed. It must stay near to LSE. It must offer the same level

of excellent care, and it must do this at an affordable price for students and staff. Those must be the red lines for this campaign.

Cost is not the issue in this debate. Given LSE's enormous £26 million surplus last year, it could not possibly be. For what it is worth, the financial arguments for closure, based on the nursery's large deficit, do not stand up. Key questions are unanswered. What regression analysis has the School done on the nursery's cost and output? Where else does the School need the resources that would be made available by closing the nursery?

It is a complete non sequitur that because some parents find a long commute to the nursery difficult, the nursery must be shut down for everyone. That is a patent overreaction. It is not the way to achieve a high standard of care for the children of LSE parents. Children will spend more hours of the day in expensive commercial nurseries in the suburbs (for that is the alternative for most parents) than they would at the nursery. If parents are driven to

these nurseries by a "virtual voucher" scheme, so much the worse. There is no guarantee it will not end up costing both the School and parents more than if we continued to maintain a central nursery. Overall, it is curious that this summer's proposal for closure is based so strongly on cost, when we have little evidence of proper costing to back up its claims.

No, this is not about cost; this is about what we value in the LSE name and the quality that guarantees for parents who use the nursery. For a start, LSE needs its own nursery because there is no other childcare centre in London that is as adapted to the School's international clientele of students. If officials in the School wish to press ahead with closure of the nursery, then they must accept that the clock may start to turn back on our international diversity. It also makes no sense for a university with one of the largest and most prestigious Social Policy departments anywhere - and a Gender Institute to boot - to abandon its nursery.

Indeed, once we start counting them, the

ways in which the nursery's closure would threaten our core values simple pile up and up. LSE has made written commitments to instituting gender equality which closing the nursery would place in danger. Does the School not want to attract more female academics to its faculty? The appeal of the LSE campus for mature students is diminished already. Does the School not care about stopping this decline? The Library is kept open at a far greater loss than the nursery will ever be, because it is critical to the School's maintenance as an academic community. Has the School not worked out that shutting down the nursery will shut off some of our most diverse students from that community?

Inclusion; diversity; social excellence: these words will all mean nothing as values of the London School of Economics if its nursery is carelessly thrown away like this. That must not be allowed to happen.

## Democratise our Union

**A**t long last - as sure as the leaves on the ground are turning red and brown, it's the time of the year again for breaking out that old warhorse Henry Kissinger quote on student politics. It is so vicious, he said, because the stakes are so small.

Indeed, the stakes in the current Michaelmas Students' Union elections seem to have suddenly become too small for an appreciable number of the original candidates to continue with the enterprise. As the Beaver reports this week, many have dropped out of the race before campaigning even begins in earnest on Houghton Street this week. Candidates were in some cases overwhelmed by the sheer numbers of the competition, with a particularly

packed Court of Governors race. Others simply found the arcane rules imposed by the Union's codes of practice on campaigning to be too restrictive to be worth persevering with.

This is all a bit disappointing for LSE student politics. The political scene here is supposedly the most vibrant and serious of all the universities in the country. There's been a big worry in recent years that fewer and fewer students were continuing this legacy by standing for election, leaving behind a fairly vicious substrate of professional 'hacks' prepared to sacrifice their degrees in order to campaign and build political capital all year round. Now we have the first chink of light that things are changing. Some of the hacks of the ancien regime are still hanging round some

paces, like Court, or the bid to be the Union's delegate to the National Union of Students conference. But in these elections, supposedly the backwater of the political calendar compared to the Lent term race for sabbatical positions, new blood is catching up with the hacks fast.

So it is extremely important that the Returning Officer respond to this high drop-out rate and think seriously about reforming the whole way student politicians are allowed to campaign on campus. Bluntly, students must be set free. It is increasingly untenable and impractical for the internet to be a no-go area for candidates in particular. Electoral politics in the Union could be on the brink of a new dawn, in a (still) new academic year.

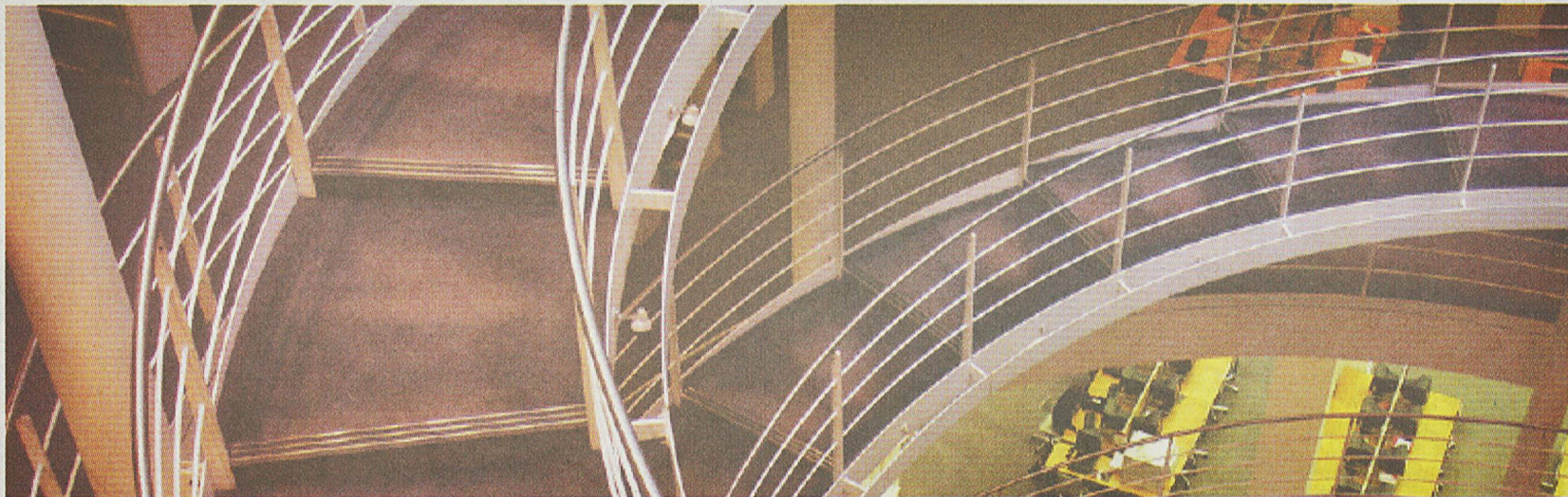
## Correction

Last week, the Beaver reported in its front-page story on Socially Responsible Investment and the School (**'Report blasts School on ethical investments policy'**, Tuesday 21 October) that "When asked to outline the LSE's position on SRI in Michaelmas term of 2007," Andy Farrell, the School's Director of Finance and Facilities, "said that he was not prepared to comment as a policy would be in place by September 2008." Mr Farrell says that he is very clear he never said this in conversation with the Beaver. We wish to make clear that we have no written record of this conversation and we offer our unreserved apologies to Mr Farrell.

# Who's to say how a social scientist thinks?

LSE should be more careful in its response to surveys on teaching standards

David Woodbridge



Continuity is a wonderful thing. I couldn't help but smile when reading Rajan Patel's report on the lack of student satisfaction at LSE in the 14<sup>th</sup> October 2008 Beaver, and comparing it to his report on the lack of student satisfaction at LSE in the 30<sup>th</sup> October 2007 Beaver. Who knows what an October 2009 Beaver will report? Perhaps, after the unanimously accepted recommendations of last year's Teaching Task Force are implemented, happiness on Houghton Street will soar. Perhaps it won't. Opinion polls – and the National Student Survey (NSS) is nothing more than one – taken at face value are intrinsically unreliable, as Neil Postman pointed out in *Technopoly*. I wouldn't be at all surprised if next year's results are much the same.

After all, is it truly a shock that students opting to take modules with titles like 'Managerial Accounting' or 'Corporate Finance, Investments and Financial Markets' are not overwhelmed by euphoria every time they head to class to discuss managerial accounting or corporate finance? No amount of dynamic teaching is going to make them interesting, but then you didn't come to LSE for that. You came to get a degree with 'LSE' on it so you could get a job after graduation in the financial sector, in order to join the ranks of people such as the hedge fund manager quoted recently in the *Wall Street Journal* as saying "what I have learned about the hedge fund business is that I hate it".

It's probably fair to say that at, for example, Leicester University, which has consistently been near the top of the NSS over the last few years, students are more likely to have opted to attend university in order to study a subject they enjoy, drink a great deal, have sex, and not worry about the real world for three years. I wouldn't know what the statistics are, but would unhesitatingly wager that the percentage of students at Leicester applying for and worrying about summer internships is significantly lower than at LSE and so I ask again: is it truly a surprise that LSE scores much lower than Leicester? The problem, however, lies with the student body and not with the LSE itself.

With that conclusion in mind, I would urge the School's leadership not to be too hasty in uprooting everything in order to chase after a higher NSS ranking, because it's not achievable. Whilst some of the recommendations, such as moving GTA's onto 'fractional contracts', are fine, some are most certainly not. The potential introduction of a compulsory 'Thinking Like A Social Scientist' module is particularly alarming, and I'm surprised that it's being talked of as a positive step by, for example, Jonathan Damsgaard's Comment piece last week or the Beaver's leader two weeks ago.

Putting aside the fact that there are a fair number of students at LSE who wouldn't consider themselves 'social scientists' (those studying History or Philosophy spring to mind) and who certainly wouldn't appreciate being taught to think like one, it's worth asking what, exactly, such a course could possibly entail? Who is to decide how a social scientist thinks? The very nature of the discipline makes it remarkably difficult to find two who even agree with each other, or 'think' in the same way, and whatever content is decided on will no doubt be controversial (and rightly so). What would students of subjects as diverse as Anthropology and Economics get from sitting in a lecture essentially being told that what they are doing is applying empirical methods to social situations, and that this is 'social science'? They should already know this, assuming their main subjects are being taught properly.

And what impact would the introduction of this module have on the outside option? Some students, such as those on the LLB, only get one in their three years; will this new module replace it? What effect would this have on the handful of truly excellent Literature & Society modules, currently only available as

**Is it truly a shock that students are not overwhelmed by euphoria every time they head to class to discuss managerial accounting or corporate finance?**

outside options? I get the impression that the possible introduction of this module is a knee-jerk reaction to a problem that doesn't even lie within the School's power to change, and is a slippery slope towards what Damsgaard calls an "Americanised" system of term-based papers" and this paper's editorial describes as a "liberal arts education". Modules will become condensed into semester-long units, will be constantly assessed, and will have no connection to each other. An LSE student's education will become an increasingly larger and more random selection of options, rather than an overarching narrative. We will no longer be 'economists' or 'historians', but 'econ majors' or 'history majors'. It will be deeply sad.

A far better route might be the introduction of an optional course along the lines of the Associate of King's College award. This is a three-year course which students at King's College, London, can take alongside their degree, and which is concerned with matters of ethics, philosophy and theology. I wonder how many former LSE students were amongst the mass of bankers which was responsible for the predatory lending practices, poor judgement and morally dubious decisions which resulted in the grim economic climate in which we now find ourselves? I can't think of a more appropriate time to be proposing teaching matters of ethics to the future leaders of the financial world. It might be just the counter needed to the increasingly contemptible so-called 'iGeneration', concerned with nothing more than amassing material wealth at any cost and without regard to the possible consequences, and which seems to populate the School in such high numbers. Rather than learning to think like a social scientist, it would not be a bad thing at all if LSE students could learn to think like human beings.

## A great opportunity for cooperation

The cooperation between the Israel and Palestine societies is the start of something great

Alex Rodin

Last week both the Israel and Palestine Societies chose to participate in bringing the One Voice Movement to LSE. Israeli and Palestinian speakers on behalf of One Voice will discuss their efforts in Israel and the West Bank to achieve peace and a two-state solution. The Palestine Society has come together

with the Israel Society in supporting this One Voice event in a magnificent show of cooperation between LSE societies.

Between Israelis and Palestinians the conflict, the pain and the perennial hardship on both sides has gone on long enough. Detailed strategy must come, and it will, but first a consensus must be reached. A consensus that we all want the same thing. A consensus that there must be a clear voice; a unanimous, unpretentious voice; a voice that unites feelings, emotions and desires – one voice for peace between peoples.

At LSE we have moved slightly closer to achieving that consensus. The Palestine Society has agreed with the Israel Society to host the One Voice Movement. The Movement provides 'a platform for individuals to engage in a constructive process to achieve a more promising



vision for the future' with aspirations of peace and a two-state solution heading the agenda. This beautiful notion of cooperation starts here. We are extremely grateful to the school administration, and in particular Janet Hartley, the LSE pro-director, for their wonderful support in our efforts here. Every bridge we build at the LSE, every relationship we forge has the potential to flourish and grow. Attitudes towards problems are not changed by the aloof politician drenched in the stink of failed diplomacy. Attitudes are changed by people, people who care; by people who have different opinions getting together, getting to know each other and talking. But to talk with a common purpose, with a goal – to come together with different ideas, plans, proposals, opinions and feelings with the same desired end in mind – the possibilities are

fantastic.

The agreement of the Palestine Society to join the Israel Society in backing One Voice event can be the beginning of something bigger. The Israel Society hopes to use this platform of a shared goal as a stepping stone for greater cooperation and understanding between students at the LSE; furthermore, thanks must be extended to Seph Brown, the Anti-Racism Officer and the SU for their support to help make this a reality. This is the platform for a pragmatic forward-thinking debate. This is the platform for developing friendships. We both want peace. We both want security within defined borders. We are delighted that the Palestine Society has joined with us to find a way forward and we hope this mutual sense of objective cooperation between our societies continues to prosper.

The agreement to work together this way could be the start of something great. This is the start of two groups at the LSE working together to find a solution. Together we might ask and answer some questions in a meaningful way. Alone we may only repeat the same old catechisms that satisfy ourselves and yet change nothing, catechisms that leave us in a rut, leave us repeating the same old lines, and leave us accepting a regressive stalemate. Alone we go backwards. Together we go forwards. It seems very simple and it probably won't be, but this is our chance. We have a shared ambition, now is our chance to share ideas, now is our chance to work together to move forward, now more than ever is our chance to develop new friendships at the LSE. Let's seize this chance with both hands and let's not let go.

# Letters to the editor

## I miss the Brunch Bowl

Dear Sir,

I think we've all forgotten the charm of the Brunch Bowl a little too quickly. We all know it had faults, but at the same time it had something of an understated dignity, a certain homely atmosphere where you can take a break from all your worries and most of all a genuine nostalgic canteen feel. The generic brown colour of the Brunch Bowl walls was welcoming, you felt that everyone could just be themselves and not be judged. A man could feel comfortable in socks, sandals and a corduroy jacket in the Brunch Bowl, but now I feel I have to dress sort of fashionably, as if I was eating in some sort of fine food restaurant like the Garrick.

I do have to admit that the food is of a higher quality. But it leaves a gap in the LSE food market. In bygone days there was a progression: Wright's bar for those who were a bit strapped for cash, the Garrick for those in preparation for investment banking lifestyles and finally the Brunch Bowl for those who felt the middle was right for them. I enjoyed the fact that the composition of the Brunch Bowl stews was ambiguous and that their sausages seemed to be half sawdust, half mystery meat. Now when I eat the sausages I can taste pork and leek - is nothing sacred? It's not that I mind the better food; it's just that I miss that generic canteen feel where you were never quite sure what you were eating.

Ultimately I feel that something old and dear has been snatched from the LSE's clutches and all that we have to fill that gap is some sort of garish neon mess. To me the 4th Floor Restaurant is just a rebound lunch, I miss the Brunch Bowl and I'm certain there are others that feel the same way.

Will McMahon

## Bankers are to blame

Dear Sir,

In last week's article by Mohsen Amiri city bankers were described as "unintentionally" contributing to the current financial and economic crisis. While some of those on the left take the extreme and unhelpful position that the bankers represent a modern evil which should be expunged and punished - it is equally unhelpful to paint them simply as bystanders rather than the active agents they are who



Photo: Liam Chambers



Photo: Erik Lang

endowed with a degree of responsibility. An important contributory factor to many of the recent banking problems was the consistent action of banks to underestimate the riskiness of their investments in assets such as subprime mortgages. In addition it must be noted that lax banking regulations reinforced this atmosphere of complacency, but let's not be similarly lax in our arguments over the resulting banking crisis. Those who agree to play the game and roll the dice have a responsibility for the result whether that result was "unintentional" or not.

Antonia Strachey

## Marriage is not for everyone

Dear Sir,

Last week marriage was described as a 'just fits' category, ('Marriage and study-

ing don't need a divorce', 21st October) which makes me ask, 'just fits for whom?' I would argue that there is a large leap between wanting to share our lives with people and the ultimate goal of marriage to achieve these ends.

It's true that divorce rates have risen dramatically in the past four decades, but there are some activists who are not so upset with this trend. Women who were sexually and physically assaulted by their partners have found support to finally extricate themselves from toxic relationships.

Others argue that marriage has been used for centuries to regulate control of property, finances, and women. While I strongly endorse any partnership based on love, it doesn't mean these partnerships need to be blessed and legitimised by the state - as if they weren't quite as real until then - no matter what benefits are accumulated as a result. There's also a significant number of relationships that are not recognized by the state. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and trans people are prohibited from marrying and receiving the same

benefits that heterosexual couples often take for granted (except for in a handful of countries which have expanded their definition of marriage).

Marriage can be a lovely experience. I just see long term relationships and the negotiation around the question of marriage to be part of a larger discourse that can't be ignored in exchange for the warm and fuzzy feelings of belonging and supposed emotional security.

Adam D. Morrison

## Theatre name is not important

Dear Sir,

I notice there has been some misunderstanding of my remarks about human rights in Hong Kong in your last issue. Your front page article ('Skeikh Zayed campaign ends in defeat at UGM vote')

and the incomprehensible 'Union Jack' used the words "oppressive regime" and "gulag". Neither of these comments is true, neither to my speech, nor to the government of Hong Kong.

What I attempted to communicate to the UGM is that in naming a lecture theater after a place or person we do not automatically countenance all of their actions and facets. Our 'western bias', if that makes any sense at all, is not in asserting the importance or universality of human rights (which I believe are universal) but in our selective condemnation of others.

I confess that I do not belong to this paradigm of anti-semitism and zionism, but I do think that human rights are often hauled out or ignored in the service of these bankrupt ideologies.

Maybe Sheikh Zayed didn't deserve a theater named after him... and maybe we didn't deserve a new theater, but we've got one now and that's all that matters.

Sincerely,

Azan Marwah (aka Tarzan)

# Top mathematician was not a plagiarist

## Popular misconceptions remain about Lobachevsky's work



Anna Reshetnikova

"Nikolay Lobachevsky was a thief!" - an extremely provocative statement to make about one of Russia's most notary mathematicians. I couldn't believe my ears; there I was at the postgraduate induction meeting at the London School of Economics and someone accused Lobachevsky of plagiarism. An outrage! Nikolay Lobachevsky was the most outstanding Russian mathematician of the 19th century. There

is even a crater on the Moon named in his honour! How could anyone here, at LSE of all places, accuse this Russian master of such a heinous act?

About a month ago, several hundred LSE students attending the postgraduate induction meeting were misled. The misconception was created about fifty years ago by Tom Lehrer, the author of the satirical song "Lobachevsky". The song presents Lobachevsky as a plagiarist: "I am never forget the day I first meet the great Lobachevsky/In one word he told me secret of success in mathematics/Plagiarise!"

In the course of his address to those attending the induction meeting, Dr Julian Fulbrook, the Dean of Postgraduate studies at LSE, spoke about the school policy regarding plagiarism. In order to illustrate what plagiarism is he quoted the song and said that Lobachevsky was a "thief".

As a member of the Russian so-

ciety I couldn't let it go. I remember Lobachevsky's portrait in my school's mathematics textbook. Was this man a plagiarist? I have done some research and decided: definitely not. The claims are not true.

However, Dr Fulbrook didn't deliberately mean to mislead anyone. When I came to his office to talk about this matter on the behalf of the Russian society, he simply confessed: "I don't know anything about Lobachevsky. Maybe you could tell me about him?"

So who was Lobachevsky? Lobachevsky's primary achievement was the creation of new, non-euclidean geometry. Similar ideas were developed at the same time by two other mathematicians: Gauss and Bolyai. They all worked independently and didn't have any knowledge of each other.

Lobachevsky was the first of them

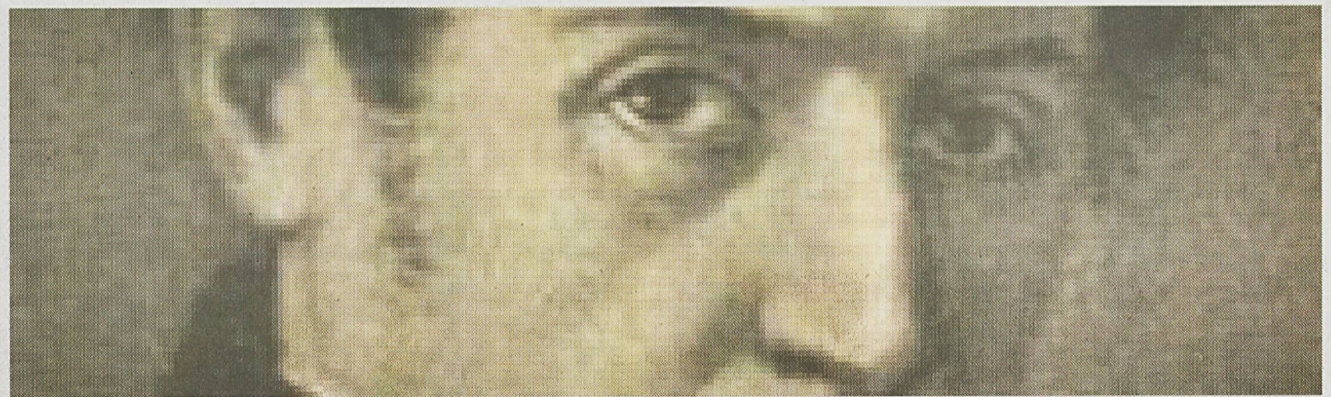
to publish his work in 1829 (in Russian), three years before Bolyai did the same. Gauss, who was the 'king of mathematics' at the time, developed ideas of non-euclidean geometry secretly and never published them as he feared his contemporaries would not understand them.

In 1840 Lobachevsky published his work in German. Gauss read it and was so delighted that he learned Russian in order to be able to read Lobachevsky's other works. However, most contemporaries could not accept the ideas of this new geometry, and Lobachevsky gained recognition only after his death. In 1848 Bolyai got acquainted with Lobachevsky's publications, and decided that it was Gauss who used the name Lobachevsky as a pseudonym and accused Gauss of plagiarism. Lobachevsky himself was never actually accused of plagiarism; so it seems that the only person who did accuse him was Tom Lehrer.

Tom Lehrer's song "Lobachevsky" was very popular in the intellectual circles in the 1950s. It's quite a witty satire of 'research', oh sorry, plagiarism:

"Plagiarise/Let no one else's work evade your eyes/Remember why the good Lord made your eyes/So don't shade your eyes/But plagiarise, plagiarise, plagiarise/Only be sure always to call it please 'research'."

I couldn't find any interview with Tom Lehrer where he would explain why he picked Lobachevsky as a hero of his song. Apparently, Mr Lehrer admitted he chose the name randomly. Unfortunately, for many people the song is the only source of information about the Russian mathematician and, despite the presumption of innocence, many would believe that Lobachevsky was guilty. In this article, I've tried to prove the negative and restore the honour of one of the best scientists of my country.



# ELECTIONS GUIDE

# Elections 2008

Make a difference.

Get involved.

## YOUR GUIDE TO ALL THE CANDIDATES IN THE 2008 MICHAELMAS TERM ELECTIONS

### POST-GRADUATE OFFICER

The post grad officer will be the voice of LSE postgraduate students to the Union Executive and a trustee of the Students' Union. The Officer communicates with the National Postgraduate Committee and receives a budget as the Chair of the Postgraduate Forum.



#### Youssef Bessa

Hello,  
My name is Youssef, I am running for the post of Postgraduate officer and for the Academic board. I am studying a 2 year Master in Management. I

am committed to improve and answer all the postgraduate issues and concerns. The policies I am campaigning for are:

- \* Accommodation: Remember the waiting period for the accommodation? I want to improve the allocation process and ensure more PostGrad have places in halls.
- \* Library: No computer, No casual study group, Books all in loan. These are some of the issues I want to solve.
- \* Supervisor: I will try to have a supervisor for every PostGrad student at LSE.
- \* Senate House Library and the Nursery: I will campaign to keep both facilities open.
- \* Funding: Get more funding and scholarships for PostGrad students.

So, for an effective representation of PostGrad, Vote for Youssef, and for my hat.



#### Aristidis Giannopoulos

This is a multicultural environment and is really difficult to combine the voice of so many people around the world. But I am really motivated to participate in OUR student union and improve it. And I will do it.

The main idea of my representation will be participative politics. Everyone will be part of OUR student union. Everyone's ideas will be valued.

I do not want to be elected as your representative and apply my thesis. I will be YOUR voice. I want to CRITICALLY hear YOUR opinion which will be considered in the decision making.

I want to know YOUR ideas. I will be available anytime to hear you. I want you to contact me, and tell me what you think is right for the politics WE will follow.

Let the democracy of Ancient Greece to be expressed in my face.

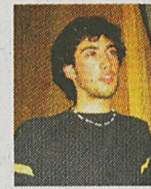
Let ONE common voice represent all of US.



#### Marta Luczynska

My goal is to improve the postgraduate student experience by first, fighting for issues that matter to you, such as Save the LSE Nursery and the 24-Hour

Library throughout the summer, so you have a place for your children to stay while you study and a place to work after exam period while you're finishing your dissertation. Second, I will work on creating an online one-stop-shop for students' LSE needs. This means integrating tools such as Moodle and LSE4You with the library and careers services so you have all the important information in one place. Finally, I will work on developing an underground course guide made by students for students to provide you with honest information on optional courses to help you make your choices and to improve courses via feedback to course staff. Vote for me and you'll know more and stress less (and have more time too!).



#### Cole Ryan

My name is Cole Ryan and I want to be your next Post-Grad Rep. This position works closely with the LSESU and the LSE administration, while sitting on a number of important committees. My

experience in student unions is extensive: from expanding student space on campus to managing a \$5.2 million dollar budget to representing 6,000 students at McGill University, I've got the experience to represent you. This year, I want to create an environmental and economical incentive to print double-sided by reducing the costs of two-sided printing (to 6p) and requiring professors to accept double-sided essays. I want to work with the administration to ensure that Wednesday afternoons are free, that the Nursery is kept open, and that we place more bike racks on campus. Finally, I want to work to develop more Post-Grad events, to create an Ethical Investing Policy, and to make the LSESU relevant to students.



#### Casey Pond

KEEP WEDNESDAY AFTERNOONS FREE!  
Hello, My name is Casey Pond and I believe that I am uniquely suited for the position of Postgraduate Officer due to two main

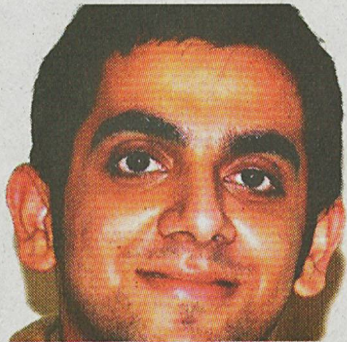
factors: my experience and my program. During my time in my undergraduate institution, I was deeply involved with the Student Association, serving as a vice president as well as the director of an auxiliary service. Like the LSESU, the Student Association was about Advocacy, NOT Authority. I learned to serve students and their interests, not to simply play politics. As a student in a two-year program, I have the opportunity to assure you that if elected I will use the knowledge I gain this year to further advocate next year. If elected, I will make freeing Wednesday afternoons for all students a top priority. I hope that as you weigh your options you find that you, too, are Fond of Pond.

# MICHAELMAS TERM ELECTIONS

## RESIDENCES OFFICER

Your first point of contact regarding accommodation. The officer's job is to offer advice and listen to your complaints. In addition, the student elected for this role will also liaise with Hall committees.

### Usman Mansoor



VOTE USMAN MANSOOR  
#1 FOR RESIDENCES!!

Let's take LSE's Residences to new heights! Vote for Usman to bring Activism back to the Halls. As President of Northumberland House Committee, I have ensured that student concerns are heard, actions are taken and results are achieved. Vote for passion, experience, and commitment. As your Residence Officer, I will:

1) Work with the school to start planning towards opening new centrally located Halls of Residence with good transport links to ensure that there is ample availability for students to get LSE accommodation.

2) Launch a refurbishment and renovation campaign for the Halls of Residence to ensure that the Halls are fully equipped with the items students need.

3) Promote activism amongst residents about LSESU and its Campaigns and maintain a proactive communication chain with residents of Halls of Residence.

4) Campaign to freeze rising accommodation fees

USMAN YOUR MAN FOR RESIDENCE OFFICER!!

### Helen Roberts



SOME OF MY POLICIES...

The school screwing students over needs to stop - Grosvenor hall contracts being changed, Bankside kitchens costing £7 a week. Let's lower rent and charges. Not just freezing them - bringing them down!

>> Welfare packs to highlight LSE support networks and issues like drink-spiking and illegal mini-cabs.

>> Distribute free panic alarms.

>> Talks in halls on local safety from police officers.  
>> Promote the reuse and recycle scheme.  
>> Welcome packs, halls representatives and a football team for intercollegiate halls.  
>> RAG Hall representatives coordinating fund-raising events.  
>> Keep bars open and improve common space use.  
>> More fridge storage and improving kitchen facilities.  
>> Halal and Kosher food options.

MY EXPERIENCE...

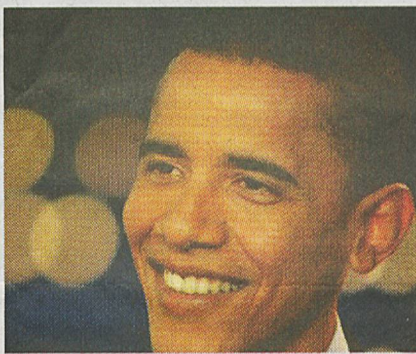
>> My 4th year in halls.  
>> Live and work in LSE halls  
>> Lived in intercollegiate halls  
>> RAG executive  
>> Save the Nursery campaign  
>> Attended conference on sustainability in halls  
>> Met with Estates Division, Facilities Managers and Wardens.

VOTE HELEN #1 FOR RESIDENCES  
EXPERIENCE DEDICATION RESULTS

## HONORARY PRESIDENT

The Honorary President is a nominated position. The President is the symbolic head of the Union.

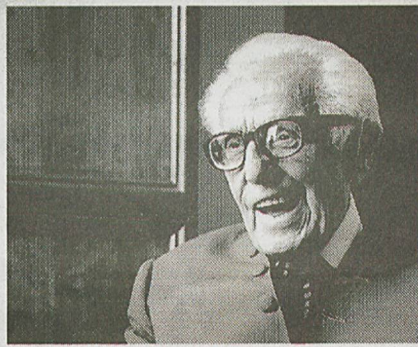
### Barack Obama



Barack Obama was raised by a single mother and his grandparents. They didn't have much

money, but they taught him values from the Kansas heartland where they grew up. He took out loans to put himself through school. After college, he worked for Christian churches in Chicago, helping communities devastated when steel plants closed. Obama turned down lucrative job offers after law school to return to Chicago, leading a successful voter registration drive. He joined a small law firm, taught constitutional law and, guided by his Christian faith, stayed active in his community. Whether it's the poverty exposed by Katrina, the genocide in Darfur, or the role of faith in our politics, Barack Obama continues to speak out on the issues that will define America in the 21st century.

### Leo Abse



Leo Abse embodies much of what is great about the LSE, a true campaigner of liberty for

all. It is partly due to him that many in Britain enjoy the freedoms they do now. In 1963 as a Welsh member of Parliament, Abse was selected in third place in the ballot for Private members bills and introduced the Matrimonial Causes Bill, which simplified and made easier the legal process of divorce.

When the Government took no action on the findings of the Wolfenden Report that recommended that the Law be changed to make male homosexuality legal it was Abse who pressed the issue and became its main sponsor.

Leo Abse was a man with an independent spirit, he fearlessly campaigned on controversial issues in a way that few well known politicians were prepared to given the time.

Vote Leo Abse #1 for Honorary President

## HONORARY VICE-PRESIDENT

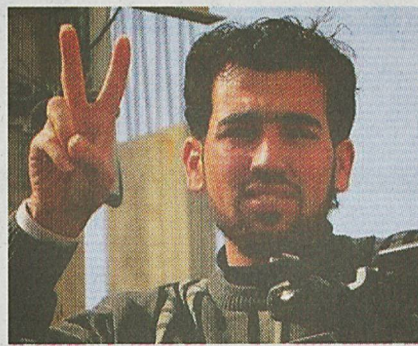
The Honorary Vice-President is another nominated position. In the past it has been someone who has shown the capacity to represent what best symbolises the best attributes of the Union.

### Sarah Palin



This candidate did not submit a manifesto.

### Fadel Shana



Fadel Shana was a 23-year old Palestinian cameraman working for the British news agency Reuters in Gaza. On April 16th 2008, Shana was killed by Israeli soldiers when they opened fire whilst he filmed Israeli military operations just a few hundred yards away. Shana was wearing a jacket emblazoned with a fluorescent "Press" sign. Human Rights Watch provided

evidence that the Israeli Forces deliberately targeted him.

This is not the first time journalists reporting on the Occupation have been deliberately targeted. Since 2000 nine journalists have been killed in the Occupied Palestinian Territories - the ITV cameraman James Miller and Tom Hurdall are case examples.

Israel was listed 149th in the Paris based Reporters Without Borders' World Press Freedom Index, out of a total of 160 countries. The killing of Fadel was condemned by various organisations, including the National Union of Journalists, Reporters Without Borders and other human rights organisations.

By endorsing Fadel you will be supporting the fundamental rights of the British public to be informed about the realities of the illegal Israeli occupation. Journalists such as Fadel put their lives at risk and are the eyes of the world by monitoring the extent of human suffering in conflicts.

## GENERAL COURSE REPRESENTATIVE

This is the primary representative for all General Course students to the Executive Committee and the School.

### Keerat Pannu



Hi! My name is Keerat Pannu. I am a junior at Georgetown University, and I'm from Virginia. I am running for General Course Representative because I have had such an amazing experience here at LSE these past three weeks, and I want to help other General Course students make the most out of their year here. One of my ideas is to create a General Course list serve, where General Course students can exchange details about travel deals and arrange trips together, create study groups, share advice, and talk about their experiences at LSE. As your representative, I want to make sure that I understand your concerns and help you all improve your time here at LSE. So vote for me, Keerat Pannu, for General Course Representative!

## THE VOTING SYSTEM: SINGLE TRANSFERABLE VOTE

The Single Transferable Vote system (STV) is a complex system designed to minimize wasted votes and provide proportional representation. Voters rank candidates in order of preference. STV initially allocates an elector's vote to his or her most preferred candidate and then, after candidates have been either elected or eliminated, transfers surplus or unused votes according to the voter's stated preferences.





Photo: Erik lang

Photographs

Above: Students voting at the UGM

Left: Ballot papers are counted at last years' Lent Term elections.



## CONSTITUTION AND STEERING

A group of seven who interpret/advise on the Codes of Practice and Constitution of the Union. Two positions are up for election.



### Suraj Girijashanker

Why Vote For Me?

>> Impartiality: I'm a member of SPICE, Pak Soc and Amnesty International. I am a team player and have had experience dealing with constitutional disputes in an unbiased fashion.  
 >> Communication: Only a small minority of students know that C&S exists, let alone know what they do. I will lobby for a column in the beaver to effectively connect C&S to students and promote greater transparency.  
 >> Restore Confidence through a review of the codes of practice, especially on issues such as online campaigning  
 >> Vote for Unity, Greater Awareness and Integrity, Vote for Suraj Girijashanker.



### Zarish Rasheed

A new student but with strong principles who is capable of being UR STRENGTH, and the GUIDING LIGHT to bring about a CHANGE which is needed. As part of the C & S I will ensure that:

>> UGMs are properly conducted  
 >> Most serious and current issues are brought to light  
 >> Constitution is upheld in its true manner at all times  
 >> Propose practical and most required amendments to the Constitution of the Union  
 >> Ensure that positive relations exist amongst all governing bodies, especially during decision making

Cast your vote and select UR VOICE!!!

P.S: Actions speak louder than words..



### Arthur Lo

>> Upholding the spirit of the constitution: direct democracy and student participation in the country's most active forum of students

>> Reforming the Codes of Practice: This obsolete document presents freshers who wish to get involved with a solid wall of arcane rules. Vote for me and help smash the red tape.  
 >> Iron impartiality: politics should be debated by you in the UGM. Any repeat of last year's invasion of partisanship into the body should be rigorously resisted.  
 >> Interpreting the rules flexibly and reasonably

Add your voice to mine!! Vote ARTHUR for C&S!



### Priscilla Anushka Abishegam

Voters I lend you my ears. I will let your clarion call for better representation, transparency and accountability ring throughout the ranks of OUR Students Union. I think that we should recognize that this is OUR UNION. WE ARE ITS LIFE BLOOD. I am passionate to work with you all towards improving our constitution and increasing awareness about the importance of having a say in what GOVERNS YOU. I challenge you not to be puppets on a string! I am the candidate who will raise your voice by ensuring that our constitution is fair and free of unrepresentative jargon.



### Estelle Cooch

In C&S I would represent students who want a union that is at the heart of building a wider student movement across Britain opposed to a government that puts profit before people.

I will oppose all forms of discrimination and the attacks on democracy by the New Labour NUS leadership.

In the midst of a recession Gordon Brown now wants to raise fees to £10,000 per year by 2010. I am involved in the anti-war movement and Unite Against Fascism. It is time the spirit of these movements was channelled into campaigns against fees and the marketisation of our education.

## ACADEMIC BOARD

Three students will be elected to sit on the academic board, the highest committee within LSE. Its members meet to discuss issues regarding the academic standards of LSE. Sir Howard Davies is the chair of the board.



### Lore Hayek

REDUCE FEES, IMPROVE SERVICES, FOR A GREENER CAMPUS!

Being a postgraduate at LSE is a question of money. Fees of up to 18,000 pounds are not justified and do not contribute to the internationally diverse picture the school likes to draw. Then, coming to LSE means spending your first weeks finding the way out of the jungle. More than one "offer pack" as advance information wouldn't be too much, would it?

I also will keep at further pursuing environmental issues on campus. There's always more to be done!

I have only become a member of this university a couple of weeks ago, just as so many of you have. Nevertheless, I want to use my previous experience to be a voice for all of us on these issues, and therefore I humbly ask for your vote. :-)



### Khadijah Asari

KHADIJAH ASARIA # 1 FOR ACADEMIC BOARD

It's about time you got world class standards from a 'world class institution'. Is the teaching you receive worth the extortionate fees you pay? Are you getting the education you deserve? Let's see the changes you want in action.

1. Ensure last years promises are implemented  
 >> £2 million pounds devoted to improving teaching standards?  
 >> Change from the bottom up, not the top down
2. Demand more individual attention, more tutor support and more regular feedback  
 >> Work towards getting collective feedback  
 >> Don't be 'just another number'
3. Campaign for your needs to be met  
 >> Increased transparency with reports at the UGM when needed  
 >> Say NO! to overcrowding of students

This is your education, your future, your voice, so be heard! Use your vote wisely - Vote Khadijah to voice Academic change.



### Adrian Rogstad

I want to change the Academic Board's rubber-stamping reputation, making it a place where student concerns are taken seriously and important changes are carried through.

As your Academic Board representative, I will work closely with the Education and Welfare Officer and other student representatives to campaign efficiently on:

- >> Teaching: LSE needs to improve its feedback on coursework and exams and make it consistent across departments. The soon-to-be-established Teaching Committee must become a real forum for students' concerns through real student representation.
- >> Fees: There must be no lifting of the cap on domestic tuition fees, and lower fees for international and postgraduate students.
- >> Academic relations: Staff-student liaison committees are largely ineffectual, and many tutors don't even know their tutees' names. A complete review of LSE's staff-student liaisons and tutorial system is needed.

For experience, commitment, and to make students' voices heard, vote Adrian Rogstad #1 for Academic Board.



### Youssef Bessa

My name is Youssef, I am running for the post of Postgraduate officer and for the Academic board. I am studying a 2 year Master in Management. I am committed

to improve and answer all the postgraduate issues and concerns. The policies I am campaigning for are:

- >> Accommodation: Remember the waiting period for the accommodation?? I want to improve the allocation process and ensure more PostGrad have places in halls.
- >> Library: No computer, No casual study group, Books all in loan. These are some of the issues I want to solve.
- >> Supervisor: I will try to have a supervisor for every PostGrad student at LSE.
- >> Senate House Library and the Nursery: I will campaign to keep both facilities open.
- >> Funding: Get more funding and scholarships for PostGrad students.

So, for an effective representation of PostGrad, Vote for Youssef, and for my hat.



### Helen Roberts

The LSE is supposed to be one of the greatest institutions in the world but recently we have plummeted down the league tables in terms of academia. Let's spruce it up...

- >> Compulsory core teaching training for all new staff to ensure strong subject knowledge and improved class structure.
- >> Increased English Language support - provide training to non-native speaking teachers before they start work and support for students who's first language isn't English.
- >> We should have smaller class sizes.
- >> Let's ensure that graduate students are taught by professors instead of PHD students.
- >> Graduate students should get personal timetables and class feedback on LSE for You.
- >> All courses should be on Moodle.
- >> Increased information on educational resources outside classes.
- >> The library should be open 24 hours to facilitate for graduate dissertation writing.
- >> Minimum technology standards in classrooms.
- >> Extra drop in sessions and office hours.

Vote Helen #1 for Academic Board Experience Dedication Results



### Kevin Holder

WHY \*KEVIN\* FOR ACADEMIC BOARD?

\*SMALLER CLASS GROUPS\* - More discursive, more time to clarify key points, more engaging

\*FEEDBACK ON EXAMS\* - In order to learn how to improve for future years, it is important to ascertain weaknesses. Feedback will assist students in identifying areas for improvement, and understanding any errors. Denying students exam feedback is a wasted opportunity.

\*MORE CONTACT TIME WITH TEACHERS\* - Private study is central, but it is important to be able to approach teachers on areas of difficulty - more class time and a more structured approach to speaking with teachers individually, to assist understanding and identify progress.

\*ADDITIONAL REVISION CLASSES\* - Revision often seems rushed and inadequate. A revision session at the end of Michaelmas term, and before as well as after Easter. Master classes on specific topics - Many teachers do this informally - let's make it more universal



### Kenk van Klaveren

Hi, I'm Kenk and I've recently begun my MA History of IR here. LSE is a great place but I've already come across some serious flaws in the way they teach us here. If elected to the Academic Board, I will:

- >> Campaign for at least 40% continuous assessment (essays, etc.) as this reflects your achievements better. 100% exams merely test your ability to sit exams.
- >> Campaign for better class hours, one or two hours per week (in some departments) with a GTA are too few to get everything out of your time here.
- >> Campaign for a better range of course choice at the undergraduate level.
- >> Campaign for better class, presentation, essay and exam feedback. You are here to learn and that also means finding out how you can improve your performance.

So if you want a better quality education, vote me onto the Academic Board!

# MICHAELMAS TERM ELECTIONS

## COURT OF GOVERNORS

Five students are elected to represent student views to the second highest decision making body at the LSE. The Court discusses major decisions that will affect the LSE's future development.



### Dan Sheldon

I'm Dan, the Communications Sabbatical of the Students' Union, and I'm asking you to choose me for NUS and Court of Governors. During my time at LSE, I've rebranded Pulse Radio and the Students' Union, transformed our the way we publicise our activities and put on the best Freshers' Week ever. I have a proven track record of campaigning and winning for students on facilities, transport discounts and the living wage. Crap teachers? Not enough computers? Choose someone with the experience to make a real difference to LSE and the NUS. Choose Dan (again).



### James Bacon

3 Questions. What is Court of Governors? Court of Governors is the 2nd highest decision making body within LSE discussing major questions affecting the future of the school. Where do I come in? 2 promises. The first, to listen. LSE is a myriad of cultures and opinions and no one person can represent such a diverse population without listening to others, discussing the issues and gathering their opinions. The second, to speak on your behalf. No longer will a student representative sit in silence whilst important decisions are being debated. I've spent my two years working to enhance the student experience via both the Students' Union and my departmental SSLC. In addition I strove to promote student representation in the role of Returning Officer. In short, I'm the messenger, but one with the experience and determination to deliver. Where do you come in? 1 vote. Back Bacon.



### Aliabbas Virani

We need a court of governors committed towards implementing socially responsible change. LSE cannot continue to be run by elitist bureaucrats. Priorities: Affordability - LSE is not a business; I will stand for affordable education and fight fee hikes. The Government is reviewing the tuition fees policies in 2009; I will fight to make sure it does not increase for either home or international students. >> Facilities - Saving the nursery, Getting room booking for societies in the NAB, >> Exam Feedback and Transparency - because you have every right to know. >> Lobbying the school to have a Socially Responsible Investment policy and making sure the multimillion pound profits are invested towards improving the student experience. Experience: Vice Chair of LSESU Palestine Society, Elected Member of C&S, organised "help rebuild a nation" campaign helping Lebanese refugees, former editor of Misbah Magazine. Vote for me, Aliabbas, I'll be your Representative in Court and guide the school towards our concerns.



### Ashley Tan

Campaigning and running for wrong reasons is like a headless chicken aimlessly mucking about. Getting elected with well meaning but misguided agenda: Worse. While I strongly advocate principles of equity and democracy - this must be tempered with a steady dose of reality to achieve practical, pertinent change. A balance between form and function- Start with what matters to students rather than on a high horse with romanticised inclinations. BrunchBowl prices that? Large classroom sizes? Indifferent tutors? Ancient infrastructure that needs maintenance- heavy unwieldy doors, toilets that need upgrades? Sticky issues like plummeting rankings should be tackled but let's first handle everyday needs. Listen hard. To both sides. Be sensible. I don't believe in banging fists on tables- authorities also face constraints and policy concerns. Having been in both the CoG and NUS delegate from 2007-2008, I think I've gained a good insight into not just what students want but also how to set about getting it.



### Zarish Rasheed

A new student but with strong principles who is capable of being UR STRENGTH, and the GUIDING LIGHT to bring about a CHANGE which is needed. As part of the C & S I will ensure that:

- \* UGMs are properly conducted
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- \* Propose practical and most required amendments to the Constitution of the Union
- \* Ensure that positive relations exist amongst all governing bodies, especially during decision making
- Cast your vote and select UR VOICE!!!
- P.S: Actions speak louder than words..



### Zach Landes

GINGE WE CAN BELIEVE IN. MY MISSION. >> Make LSE a world leader in the use of technology  
PROBLEM: LSE is behind other leading universities in the use of sophisticated information technology  
SOLUTION: I want the School to create a permanent Technology Taskforce of students, faculty, and IT professionals. This will revolutionize the use of technology in all LSE facilities.  
>> Wireless Internet EVERYWHERE  
>> Library computers WORKING  
>> Combining Moodle, LSE for You, and MyCareers Service into a SINGLE SITE  
>> A more ENERGY EFFICIENT campus  
>> Lecture PODCASTS  
>> IMPROVED IT staff  
>> OPEN Forums to draft motions  
QUALIFICATIONS: I directed IT for a group of free clinics and worked in IT with a leading international firm. As a postgrad, LSE is my third university. I bring a fresh perspective and the experience to get the job done.



### Emmanuel Akpan-Inwang

For too long our Governors have resided in their ivory towers barely conscious of the reality of the day to day lives of the students below them. We have come to a crucial point in the history of the LSE. With a New Union Building planned for 2012, fundamental changes to teaching and a rapid expansion of student numbers to 9,000 now more than ever is the time for the student voice to be heard. I have clear idea of how the LSE works and how we can truly affect change at the highest level to the benefit of all students. I will use this knowledge to raise the issues that you want me to raise so as to deliver the vision of LSE students. It is time to raise your voice and deliver your vision. Vote Emmanuel #1 for Court of Governors



### Kevin Holder

\*\*\*IN SHORT KEVIN (#1) FOR COURT\*\*\*  
OBJECTIVES: \*Justice for students\*  
>> \*FAIR FEES\*- Resist 2009 UK fee increases, resist increased charges for international students  
>> \*BETTER FACILITIES\*- Fight for NAB to be available to societies, fight for ALL of NAB to be open to students, Support new SU and Sports developments. Sustain Nursery.  
>> \*HIGHEST QUALITY TEACHING\*- Greater contact, more feedback on work and exams  
HOW: >> \*MORE INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE\*- Last year no reports from Court Student Representatives- no means of contacting them-We were not kept informed of vital developments. If elected I will report, and be contactable- You have the right to influence your educational experience.  
>> \*GREATER PROCEDURAL TRANSPARENCY\*- ensure meaningful consultation of Court and of students directly on key issues  
>> \*VIGOROUS SCRUTINY\*- thorough examination of proposals- Are they good for students, are they fair and ethical, can they be improved to benefit students?



### Helen Roberts

The priority for the LSE is to look out for students' best interests. The following is what I will stand for on your behalf... I support the living wage and an ethical investment programme. More investment into improving halls of residence and investigate acquiring new halls to deal with the extra intake due to the NAB. The library should be open 24 hours to facilitate for graduate dissertation writing. I support the Save the Nursery campaign and want to focus on this issue if elected. I believe that more money should be given by the school to the Students' Union for better facilities including a better gym. I believe money should be invested in a better sports ground for the Athletics Union. Oh...and lets name buildings better! The fourth floor restaurant? Tower one, two and three?! NAB?! Oh please... :op  
Vote Helen #1 for Court of Governors  
Experience Dedication Results



### Elle Dodd

I've got some things to say and I'm not afraid to say them. Unsurprisingly you might think, for an election candidate, but think again. Too many students are elected to positions where they have no relevant experience, fail to consult and remain silent throughout their meetings. I have the experience, commitment and confidence to advocate for our issues.

- >> Academic Board; secured the continuing student discount and teaching review.
  - >> SSLC and Undergraduate Student Forum
  - >> Vice Chair British Youth Council; national umbrella body for youth councils and organisations. I will campaign on:
    - >> Keeping the cap on home fees; reducing the masters and international fee level.
    - >> Increased student services: Longer library hours, keep the nursery, better media group facilities.
    - >> Ethical Investment and Procurement policies.
- But I also want your views, and will hold monthly consultations to gather student opinion on the latest issues. Vote ELLE DODD #1



### Sophie De-La-Hunt

There are signs in the library toilets banning us eating lunch there. If this isn't evidence enough that the social side of LSE is a little lacking;

- \* Hall bars are being systematically closed down, draughts taken out and opening hours reduced
- \* Wednesday afternoon timetabling is increasing, an even larger number of students are unable to take part in sport
- \* Societies are struggling to get rooms for meetings, the media group has no space, while the Tuns is getting emptier

Teaching quality is important, so are IT issues and the environment, but so is having a good time. As AU President, a Beaver section editor, a Pulse DJ and an enthusiastic email receiver of all those societies I can't even remember giving £1 to, I understand the social side of LSE and know what it needs. Vote for me and help stop the LSE killing fun.



### Daniel Bear

Dear LSE voters, I'm Daniel Bear, and you know me already. You know me, because when the Administration tried to overcharge the students in my residence hall, I took the lead and organized an opposition that brought both sides to a successful resolution. The Beaver already devoted two stories to the problem. I'm here for my Msc in Social Policy (Research), and I spent the last three years at the American Civil Liberties Union. Working there, I fought hard against the Bush administration on everything from Guantanamo Bay detentions to unjust drug laws in the US. Before coming here I also volunteered with the Obama campaign. I'm working hard for you whether I get your vote or not, but electing me means a strong voice for you. Thanks.



### Peter Barton

Running to effectively represent Student views on the top body in the school, to make changes to your everyday lives! I will add the students perspective on all the issues they discuss, and raise those that matter to you.  
1)-Better student experience not more students - Change school Priority so you get your money's worth!  
2)-Holding school to promises to improve teaching - £2m has been given, lets make sure it is well spent.  
3)-Putting student issues on the agenda: Increase Library access and facilities, New lockers, Keeping the Nursery, Sustainable Investment Strategy for the future, Making the New Union building for Students!  
Experience: President of Grimshaw IR Club, Vice-President Debate Society, Vice-President People&Planet, Lead Library 24hr campaign. I will speak up on issues that matter and have the experience to do it so the school listens. If you want your case argued well in court, Vote Peter Barton#1



### Andrew Wright

LSE is what WE make it. As students, we represent the most important piece of the jigsaw; members of every nation, culture, background and language - generating the unique environment we experience and embrace. Collectively this voice is louder and more powerful than any other - I am acutely aware these diverse and cooperative expressions need to be promoted. Whilst focussed on the development and progression of the School; maintaining its world class status and striving to higher goals, we need to push forward fundamental issues - better teaching; enhanced facilities for study, sport and leisure; ethical, understandable investment, and a sense our key campaigns do not meet deaf ears. "To understand the causes of things" is applicable at the highest levels - I want to build bridges, making the Court a robust and transparent body to all. I offer the commitment to lobby and campaign, strengthening students' say; building our voice.

## NUS DELEGATES

Five students will be elected as representatives to the National Union of Students' annual conference. They will vote on issues that affect students nationally.



### Talha Ghannam

YOUR VOICE - OUR RIGHTS - MY CONCERN. Since I was 13, I have been involved in local, national and international campaigns to get young peoples' voices heard. By electing me as your NUS delegate you will have someone who is experienced, well connected and gets things done. I want to make education fair for all people regardless of wealth, race or background. My greatest concern is that of the environment. I hope to achieve a national commitment from all universities towards "eco-friendly" education. As your Delegate, I will use my links with government and NGOs to get your voices heard.



### Brian Duggan

Experience Counts  
"The NUS is one of the largest membership organisations in the UK and the largest national union of students in Europe. However, it is structurally inadequate, financially impoverished and punches below its political weight. It is time to change it."

I've led national campaigns for a new kind of NUS; one which wins on the important issues affecting students. From student politics to front line politics I have the experience to work for LSE students in our national union. I hope you will lend me your support so that together we can build the National Union we deserve."



### Fadhil Bakeer-Markar

As your delegate to the NUS, I will:  
ü Work for affordable education for all - against visa charges, further rent rises & increases in fees - Constructively engage in the NUS reform process!  
ü Represent key interests of the and fight for a fulltime International Students' Office  
ü Lobby for an environmental, ethical, just NUS  
ü Support campaigns for social justice & human rights in Britain, the Middle East & across the world  
ü Counter all racism & actively oppose all forms of discrimination; supporting action for equality at LSE & nationally Leading the Union towards Continued Success! Fadhil #1 for NUS



### Emmanuel Akpan-Inwang

No to an Undemocratic Governance Review - The NUS continues to attempted to introduce reforms that attack the democratic nature of the Union, and remove guaranteed representation from minority groups. This goes against the very principles of the NUS. I intend to stand against anything that endangers democracy and representation. Integrate the NPC - The National Postgraduates Committee often fails to act a national voice for postgraduate students due to its distance from the NUS. I believe that the NPC should be integrated with the NUS so that the postgraduates campaign can have the support that it truly deserves.



### Vladimir Unkovski-Korica

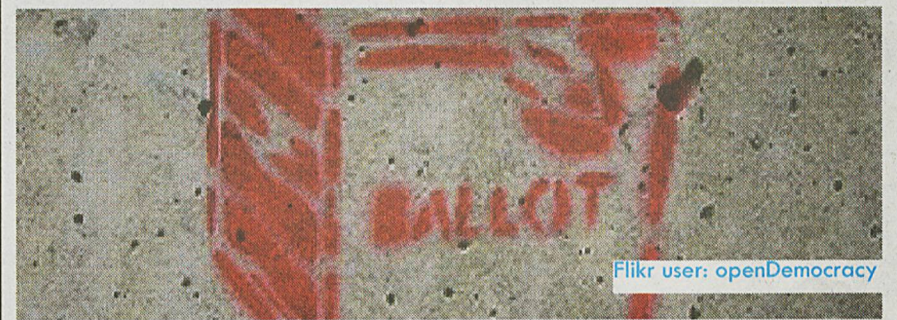
The National Union of Students is so far out of touch that it refuses to campaign against cut backs in higher education at a time of economic crisis. Its right wing leadership has sought to transform the NUS from a campaigning organisation into a service provider and a lobby group. Elect me as delegate to join other radical student activists who stand united for free education for all, against war and all forms of discrimination, and for a democratic and campaigning union. I have a long record in the struggle for defence of student rights: Socialist Worker - People before Profit!



### Dan Sheldon

I'm Dan, the Communications Sabbatical of the Students' Union, and I'm asking you to choose me for NUS and Court of Governors. During my time at LSE, I've rebranded Pulse Radio and the Students' Union, transformed our the way we publicise our activities and put on the best Freshers' Week ever. I have a proven track record of campaigning and winning for students on facilities, transport discounts and the living wage. Crap teachers? Not enough computers? Choose someone with the experience to make a real difference to LSE and the NUS. Choose Dan (again).

## HOW TO VOTE



Flickr user: openDemocracy

### Vote between 10am - 6.30pm, Wednesday 29th and Thursday 30th October in The Quad

### Vote online between 10am - 6.30pm on Wednesday 29th October at [www.lsesu.com](http://www.lsesu.com)



# Features



Photo: Flickr user nicasaurusrex

## Is Boris backing out?

**Katie LaPotin** delves into the new Mayor's reign and delivers a intermediate report card

One hundred and seventy-seven days. It has been that long since Boris Johnson moved from his office in the antiquated Palace of Westminster to the classy gherkin-shaped City Hall. The heavily-contested mayoral election saw a flurry of promises made by former mayor Ken Livingstone, of Labour, and the Conservatives' Johnson. Yet for all the Tory reform promises made in the build-up to the Mayday contest, only a precious few have come to fruition.

On the transport front at least, Johnson has put some of his mettle to the test.

Many of the early changes Johnson implemented have involved transport, including the Congestion Charge. Johnson has thus far fulfilled his campaign promise to stop a proposed hike by Livingstone that would raise the daily charge rates to £25. The proposed extension to the congestion charge into London suburbs was also scrapped. Johnson said then: "I am delighted that we have been able to scrap the £25 charge, which would have hit families and small businesses hardest."

Phasing out single-level 'bendy' buses and replacing them with hybrid Route-

masters was another prominent campaign promise. Just recently, the Guardian published a feature on the winning design, the MK2 Routemaster, complete with transparent roof and an open rear platform. While this switch will decrease the city's carbon footprint and possibly increase tourist usage of public transport, its projected cost is close to £100 million.

Britain's largest bus manufacturer Alexander Dennis hopes that the winning design will be implemented in time for the 2012 Olympics. About 700 to 800 buses will be introduced over a three-year period. While this number far exceeds the 350 currently operating on routes with bendy buses, it is believed that having the stock of hybrid Routemasters will prove to be cost-effective in the long haul for many central London routes.

Perhaps less welcome is the alcohol-free Underground initiative. Alcohol consumption on the Underground, Docklands Light Railway and Croydon trams became illegal with effect from 1 June. The rowdy "Last Orders" on the Circle Line on 31 May resulted in several incidents of public disturbance and caused the temporary closure of several central London stations.

**For all the Tory reform promises made in the build-up to the Mayday contest, only a precious few have come to fruition**

Yet it ought to be noted that there have been problems with the ban since.

"I'm determined to improve the safety and security of public transport in London," said Johnson, "and create a better environment for the millions of Londoners who rely on it. I firmly believe that if we drive out so called minor crime then we will be able to get a firm grip on more serious crime."

By that Johnson refers to the steep increase in nightclub murders in London throughout the past year. Already this year, over 25 teenagers have died outside or at nightclubs. With the Labour government coming under increasing fire for the apparent spike in violent crime, the new Mayor stepped up to capture the precious political capital on offer.

Johnson's response includes several programmes to curb crime, such as the creation of a Mayor's Fund to pay for handheld scanners and neighbourhood crime maps to help fight youth crime. Police presence on the Underground will also be increased, stripping TfL's marketing budget of £16.5 million per annum to pay for the salaries of the additional policing. While costs appear to count for less in

the interest of public safety, the financial blackhole which Olympic preparations threaten to create seems to be a matter for greater concern for Johnson.

In the wake of a visually spectacular and apparently costly Beijing extravaganza, much of the attention at City Hall has been focused on preparations for the 2012 edition here in London. On this count, some of Johnson's proposals have come under fire. Concerned about the viability of certain venues after the Games, especially the main stadium and aquatics centre, the Mayor has suggested cost-cutting measures like selling the stadium to a football club. However, these plans have been criticised by some prominent figures, including Olympic organising committee chairman Lord Sebastian Coe.

City Hall has even resorted to playing the blame game to deflect criticism. David Ross, the Mayor's top Olympic official, has also questioned the £10 million legacy plan developed by former Mayor Ken Livingstone's London Development Agency. Despite the controversy, lottery funds will

>> Continued on page 14



Photo: Flickr user flashboy

>> Continued from page 13

be launched next year in a bid to fund the Olympics construction project.

Such concerns come as no surprise given the recent global financial crisis. Consequently, fiscal prudence and, to a certain extent, social justice (in light of anti-bailout protests) have become prominent issues for City Hall to deal with.

The economy has been a major focus for Johnson. For his part, Johnson has announced a freeze on the tax created by the General London Authority, as taxes in the capital have risen by over 152 per cent since 2001. The freeze would remain in place through at least 2010 or 2011 and could also be lowered in future years. Another positive step has included raising the London Living Wage from £7.20 to £7.45 per hour.

But despite putting in some winning

moves, all is not well with the new Tory administration. Deputy Mayor for Young People Ray Lewis resigned his post amidst allegations of financial impropriety, dishonesty, and sinister accusations on behalf of the Church of England in July. Inappropriate comments on immigration matters meant senior advisor James McGrath had to fall on his sword soon after. TfL chairman and First Deputy Mayor Tim Johnson also left City Hall citing a conflict of interests, leaving Johnson solely in charge of TfL.

Johnson was dealt a further blow as reports surfaced of his premeditated political coup to oust Police Commissioner Sir Ian Blair. Despite unhappiness from certain quarters of the Metropolitan Police over the permeation of party politics into the running of the civil service, Johnson offered some defence for his actions: "I thought with the position London policing

was in, I thought it was the right thing to do and I think that the vast majority of people will agree with us."

Certain election promises have also bit the dust. One such pledge is that of ensuring Visit London would only feature during the 2012 Olympics hotels that pay the London Living Wage. Johnson has also pledged to cut former Mayor Livingstone's target of making 50 per cent of new homes affordable, and instead build 50,000 more homes. In a city where the housing market is already outrageously expensive, this does not appear a beneficial move for Londoners.

And of course, Boris will always be Boris. Amongst the latest of his erratic remarks, Johnson has suggested shutting down Heathrow Airport and moving it to a landfill-made island near the Isle of Sheppey in Kent. Regardless of whether this plan takes hold, changes are certainly

## And of course, Boris will always be Boris

needed for Heathrow. Despite the recent completion of Terminal 5, a controversial third runway is in demand, although local residents would not be sad to have the noise disappear. Nonetheless, Deputy Mayor Kit Malthouse, who oversees the project, seemed optimistic: "If we can build St Paul's, the Gherkin, the Channel tunnel and all the rest of it, we can do this."

One hundred and seventy-seven days is perhaps not long enough for us to produce a fair critique of a new administration starting from scratch. Yet it seems that while a lot of pledges have been made to Londoners, the administration has yet to reach the stage where it can fulfil them. Only time will tell if Boris can live up to the great expectations or flounder in the Thames under the weight of his promises.

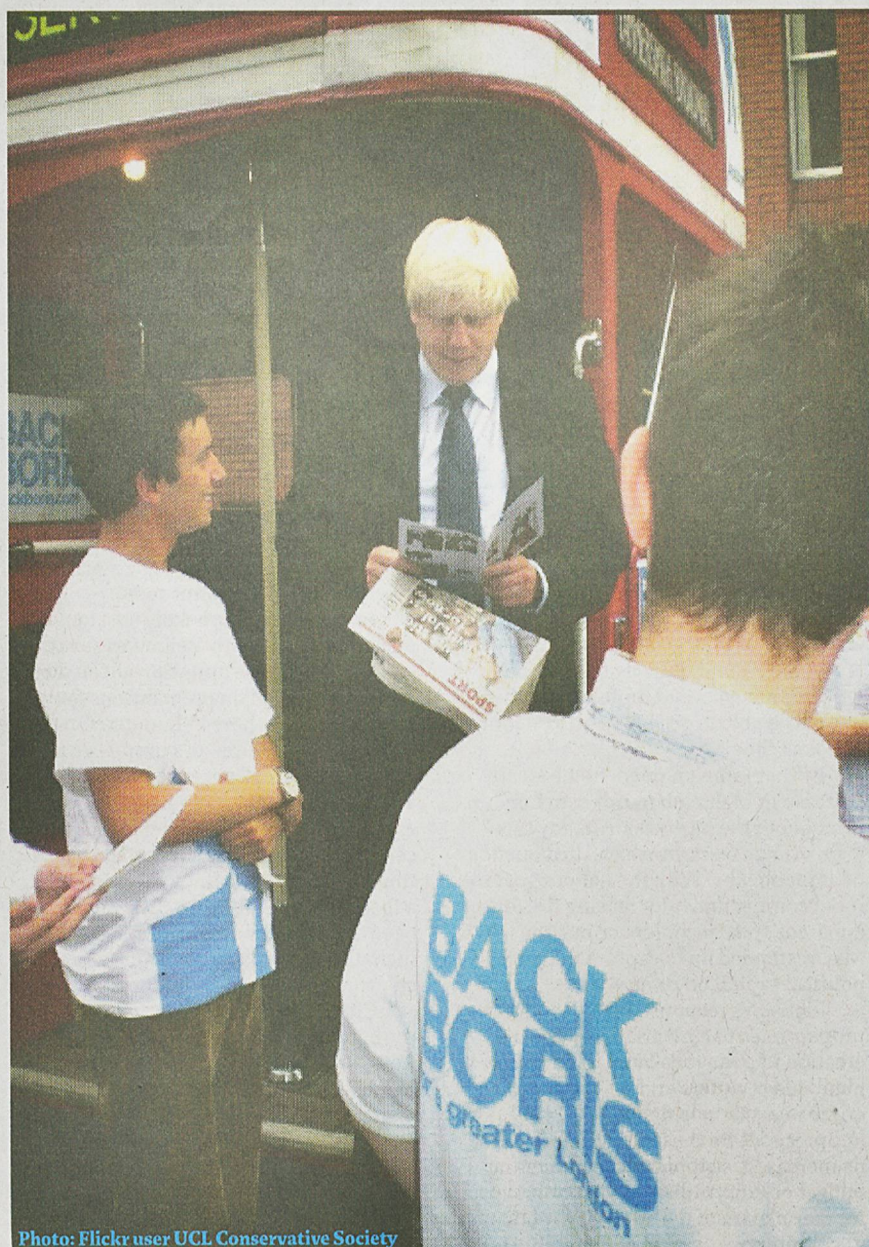


Photo: Flickr user UCL Conservative Society

## The pick of Boris' promises and deeds

### CITY HALL

- Promised not to stand for more than two mayoral terms and to lobby for a change in legislation.
- Publish the biographies, responsibilities and contact details of mayoral advisers online for public consumption.

### CRIME

- Will chair the Metropolitan Police Authority. Pledges to "tear up red tape" and hold the MPA to account. Has already forced the resignation of Met Commissioner Sir Ian Blair.
- Would make the transport network safer with 440 more Police Community Support Officers and 50 more British Transport Police.
- Banned alcohol on the Underground (with effect from 1 June 2008), in order to reduce anti-social behaviour and cut down on alcohol-related crime.
- Mayor's Fund to use private sector monies to pay for crime-reduction schemes, including fighting youth crime, introducing handheld scanners and neighbourhood crime maps.

### ENVIRONMENT

- Protect the green belt and invest £6 million in making open spaces cleaner and safer.
- Work to help reduce London's carbon emissions by 60 per cent by 2025 (from 1990 levels).
- Opposes a third runway at Heathrow, suggesting instead a new airport in the Thames Estuary.

### HOUSING

- Will drop Livingstone's target of 50 per cent of all new homes in London to be affordable, to instead build 50,000 more new homes.
- Would release GLA-owned land and £130 million from the Regional Housing Pot to launch a new First Steps Housing Scheme.
- Invest £60 million from the Regional Housing Pot to renovate the capital's 84,205 empty properties.

### TRANSPORT

- Will phase out 'bendy' buses and introduce a fleet of hybrid Routemasters. Costs may run up to £100 million.

Source: The Evening Standard

## Hayek

Alex  
Blance



## Inspiring minds, over bodies

Sex. 'The' word to attract the attention of a reader and, rather conveniently, it is also the subject of this piece. Last week, the government announced, in their eternal wisdom, their plan for extending compulsory sex education to five-year-olds, in an effort to better inform young people on sexual health matters. I have gauged the outcry from conservatives to this proposal and can think of many at the School who would share in their disgust. Could the government really be proposing that Year Ones need to have an understanding of reproduction, sexual diseases and homosexual relationships? Are they really proposing that children who are only just learning to read should be taught about these matters?

Displeasure and distaste for this proposal is understandable, and I am certainly less than satisfied with it. Ideally, we would not be addressing such issues so early, and in a more ideal world they would be dealt with in the home with parents, rather than at school by the state. However we must be pragmatic and accept the facts - we don't live in an ideal world. The

UK has the highest teenage pregnancy rate in Europe; young people are having sex, and no one is educating them about the dangers. It seems that the threat posed by this is far greater than the discomforts of teaching sex to those so young.

I come from a town that is particularly plagued with the problem of teenage pregnancy. I imagine that many international students would be horrified to know that dozens of girls I went to school with are now mothers and supporting new lives, while we still in education perhaps don't feel that we've fully embarked upon our own. To me it seems plain that something needs to be done to halt this worrying social menace; it's not good for the individuals concerned, and often provides less than perfect circumstances for children to be raised in. We can be even more cynical and consider the social security costs of assisting young mothers to bring up the children they have as a result of lacking education.

But, calling from my knowledge of several teenage mums, I also know that poor sex education is not the only problem. The greater evil is a lack of aspira-

tion among young people. In my area and similarly, I'm sure, all over Britain, mediocre state schools do not instil in their young a desire and determination to work hard, to achieve, and to do good and interesting things with their lives. Many I went to school with were delighted with their teenage pregnancies as it finally gave their lives some essential purpose.

However one recognises that inspiring children in this way cannot only be the job of schools; it is also the job of parents. But we must then consider that if such a large number of teenage pregnancies persist we will have a huge number of children being brought up in an environment where inspiration for aspiration will be hard to come by as their parents did not understand or have such desires themselves.

While I don't want the government in this area, for the sake of so many children, I think it may have to be the place to start. Education must be our tool.

## Viridian

### A revaluation of the essence of life

Justus Rollin  
Environment & Ethics Officer

Water is ubiquitous. It covers about 71 per cent of the surface of our planet. Our bodies are made largely out of water. We need water to survive. Water, surely, is gold. It is a precious resource that too many lack. But where does it come from? How do we consume it?

I tend not to buy bottled water because it comes in plastic bottles - non-biodegradable and environmental-unfriendly material. But when I do, I always try to reuse or recycle the bottle, or better, find other uses for it, like as a vase.

But the main problem with bottled water is that, for the most part, its production and distribution controlled by a few powerful corporations. Increasingly, ground water is being privatised and controlled by powerful conglomerates. Even oil companies are starting to invest in the gold of the future.

The wholesale extraction of water has become a major environmental and social problem. The water table has fallen dramatically in many parts of India as a result of Coca Cola's insatiable thirst. Local communities in India have been powerless to prevent their water wells from drying up and often see little of the profits made off their water.

It is so easy for us to forget these problems as we take our own plentiful supply for granted. But we can help. Don't contribute to the problem. The next time you find yourself reaching for bottled water, try instead to get water from the tap. They might not always be clearly labelled, but at the LSE there are many water fountains. And try the tap water! Yes, it can be hard to fill a bottle from some of the sinks but it is possible. I'm doing it, and so can you. Also, certain toilets have drinking water taps, and the water in the library hasn't killed me yet either.

I think it is time to acknowledge an important fact about water without promoting the ultimate water cult. It is free, for us! The last time I heard, students like free stuff... Moreover, water is healthy; it enhances concentration and it is great for the skin. But there is an important proviso to add: we should not wantonly waste this seemingly plentiful resource.

Let us all start using water from taps. By the way, if you want to get involved in lobbying for more water fountains and make sure they are all labelled properly: come to the next Environment & Ethics forum on Thursday, 6pm in D209!

## Laski

The writer is  
an election  
candidate



## Civic protests for civic duties

I will be marching with hundreds, perhaps thousands, of others on the City of London this Friday. We are looking to exorcise the ghosts of Lehman Brothers on the day of Halloween. Though millions have protested on the streets for progressive causes over the past decade, it is not universally accepted that demonstrations work. For many, it is all too easy to withdraw from activism because of the perceived inertness of 'the masses'.

Some take to the idea that working with an NGO or a charity will provide more concrete results and takes more dedication than a nebulous one-off protest. Others will join lobby groups or mainstream political parties to try to deliver the goods on the ground. Others still try to carve out autonomous spaces in the system and declare they are living the revolution here and now. All three responses imply a clear separation from those whom one is trying to help/represent/abandon.

Such responses are undoubtedly well-meant to begin with, but they rarely achieve the lofty ideals they set out to attain. The reasons for this are undoubtedly complex but they all boil down to the question of whether you believe you can abolish the gap between the elite and non-elite.

Of course, demonstrating in and of itself is not going to change the world. But I shall offer three good reasons why demonstrating is worthwhile. The underlying assumption I make is one I that share with Antonio Gramsci: we are all philosophers.

Gramsci argued that popular consciousness is contradictory, that it: "contains Stone Age elements and principles of a more advanced science, prejudices from all the past phases of history at the local-level and intuitions of a future philosophy which will be that of a human race united the world over." He continued: "Every revolution has been preceded by a long process of intense critical activity, of new cultural insight and the spread of ideas through groups of men [and we can be sure he meant women too] initially resistant to them."

However, there is nothing automatic about contradictory ideas working out their contradictions in a vastly contradictory world. Nor is this a task exclusive to the most eminent of intellectuals on a classic enlightenment drive.

It is up to us to 'radicalise the Enlightenment', as Habermas in his younger days used to say. Demonstrations can play an important part in this process.

First, demonstrations involve a peaceful form of civic protest that can appeal to vast numbers of people because it is

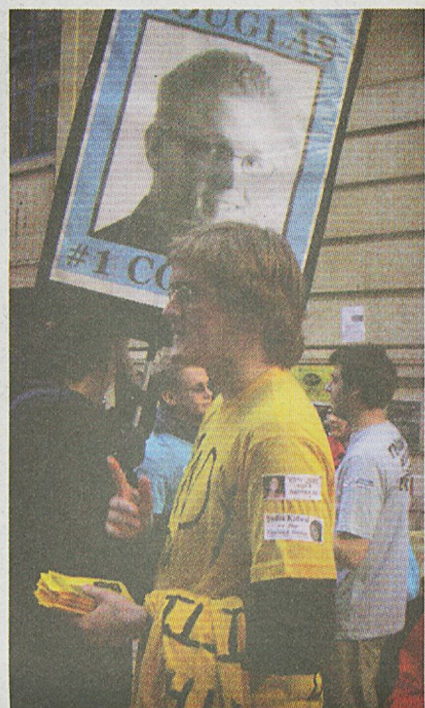
non-threatening, simple and tangible. Demonstrating is a method of the liberal democratic canon and demands consistency from liberal democracy.

Second, successful mobilisations of public opinion can strengthen the self-confidence and self-organising capacity of people. Seeing a demonstration on television that expresses views which they identify with encourages people to be more confident in their own beliefs and, crucially, to act upon them.

Third, demonstrating can expose the gap between the promise and reality of liberal democracy. Blair went to war in defiance of popular opinion. Like Shadow Chancellor George Osborne today, he was answerable to special interests removed from the democratic arena.

Most people will agree that the system we live in has inhumane priorities. Lending your voice to the protest on the streets outside Lehman Brothers is a first step in shifting the active consensus in society towards fulfilling human needs and strengthening democracy.

## Measured musings



Henry Kissinger knows a thing or two about student politics.

Small stakes do bode well for vicious clashes of ideals and egos. Students' unions are but stepping boards towards greater things. Ideologies and egomaniacs of tomorrow have to start from somewhere. And some of them will blood themselves upon this minor stage of the LSE Students' Union over the next two days.

Naiveté might come to grief and idealism could meet a sorry end. A rite of passage for political juveniles.

This year however, the political fiesta stands to lose much of its lustre - if it had any to speak of in the first place - with the climax of that other election across the pond just days away.

And as if us mere mortals need any more reminders of the gravity of America's imminent day of indecision, some intrepid crusaders of hope had to bring their politics "over here". Into our collective faces.

Only seven days to go. I have enough

## The lords of fellow flies

on my plate just trying to follow the real McCoy, and the Union still demands that I make an informed judgement on the suitability of an Illinois senator and the Governor of Alaska as representatives of our international student body and our collective values.

These aspiring leaders of the nebulously-labelled 'free world' have become just that little bit too pervasive in our lives. Just as we insatiable nousey-parkers cannot get enough of the latest inside stories on them.

Twenty months of an arduous electoral process. Seven weeks of attempted media scrutiny. And we still "don't know" who they really are.

Fifteen minutes of hustings, 150 printed words of shameless self-promotion and two days of incessant street canvassing will have to suffice in our beginners' model of democracy.

It is upon such shaky ground that we choose our representatives and entrust with them our collective interests and reputation. No real vetting process. Clever use of rabble-raising rhetoric and some

choice slogans will yield electoral success. Vacuousness of policy never stopped anyone from trying.

Even our constitutional safeguards against electoral fiascos are decidedly unwieldy. It takes a minimum of four weeks to remove an offending official, and another week to elect a replacement - a quarter of a school term could potentially be wasted in a democratic debacle.

All that scorn we heap on the apparent idiosyncracies of the American electoral process might have been better directed at our own inadequate system.

Perhaps it is fortunate that this Union still conducts its business around a weekly meeting. A regular opportunity to hold our elected representatives' feet to the fire. A chance to question policies and personnel. The only way to make sure our democracy works.

But maybe some perspective is in order. This Union is certainly no United Nations. Our stated concerns may venture into the monumental, but in truth, the stakes are largely miniscule. The fate of the free world, despite our best efforts, is

out of our hands.

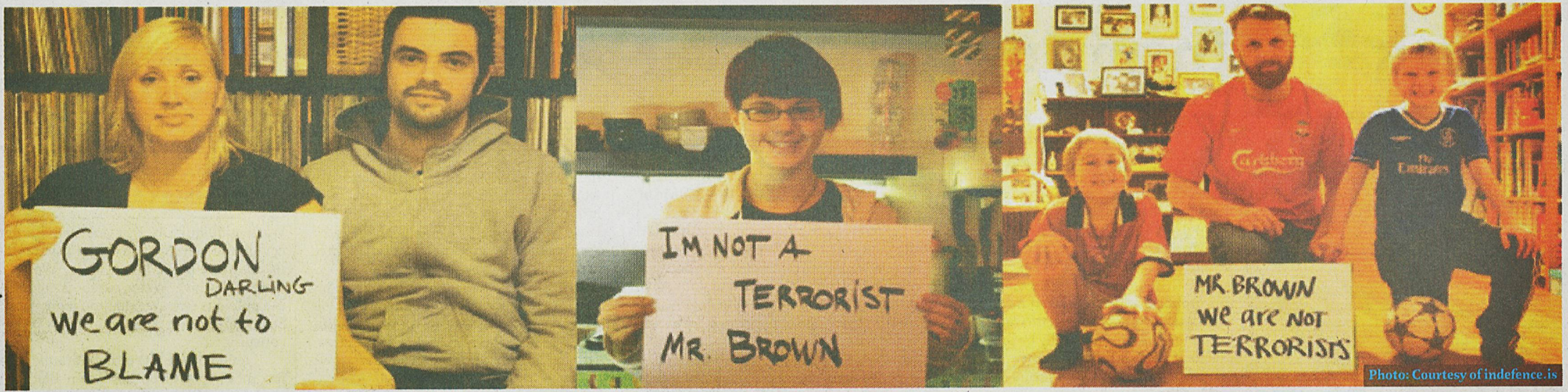
Yet at the same time, our own fates are well within their powers to mould. Whether or not one takes interest in the political world beyond the walls of our School and Union, one perhaps should care enough to protect their personal stakes from official iniquity.

Our shaky democracy demands it. Our vigilance can preserve it.

"Small" as they are, these stakes resonant personally. These are our stakes. Our education, our monies, our welfare, our lives.

The diplomat in Henry dismisses the small. But the small is not meaningless.

Chun Han Wong  
Features Editor



# A cunning plan, Darling...

**Birgir Thorgeirsson** picks past political skulduggery to restore the bridges Brown burnt

A few days ago, I was stopped by a charity worker on my way to the LSE. After noticing my accent, she asked, "Where are you from?" The once-obvious answer didn't seem so straightforward anymore.

"I am Scandinavian", I said after a moment's hesitation. I was deliberately hiding the fact that I am actually Icelandic. After all, it is a country full of terrorists.

Why is that the case? It all began with the much-reported-on financial crisis. Only cavemen could have missed the recent headlines involving Icelandic banks. The credit crunch claimed first Icelandic scalp when the bank Glitnir was, controversially, nationalised with the Icelandic government taking a 75 per cent stake. In a financial world stricken with mistrust and doubt, this raised more questions than answers about the fiscal health of the remaining Icelandic banks Landsbanki and Kaupthing.

Fearing a total collapse, Large numbers of people withdrew their money from the Landsbanki-owned Icesave internet bank. All eyes were upon the small island nation. Struggling to maintain public confidence and secure any kind of funding in a dried-up money market, Landsbanki was nationalised. This left Kaupthing, the biggest company in Iceland, as the last bank standing. The intention was not to nationalise Kaupthing, but to support the bank through the financial maelstrom by giving them a €500 million loan. This could be the lifeline Kaupthing needed.

As Landsbanki was nationalised, there were immediate concerns about British deposits in the now-infamous Icesave accounts. Iceland, a tiny nation of 320,000 people, entered a state of shock as the second of Iceland's banks collapsed dramatically. The total liabilities of the banks had grown to vastly outsize the country's gross national product, and the króna went into a freefall. Many lost their savings while others became gravely worried about their jobs, pensions and, in all honesty, the future of the country.

Enter the dynamic duo of Alistair Darling and Gordon Brown. Darling drew first blood with an outrageous statement on BBC radio: "The Icelandic government

believe it or not, have told me yesterday they have no intention of honouring their obligations here." However, there had been in fact no statement suggesting anything of the kind.

The Financial Times recently got hold of a transcript of the conversation between Darling and his Icelandic counterpart Árni Mathiesen. The relevant excerpt from the transcript is as follows:

*Alistair Darling: "What about the depositors you've got who've got deposits in London branches?"*

*Árni Mathiesen: "We have the [deposit] insurance fund according to the Directive and how that works is explained in this letter [to the UK] and the pledge of support from the government to the fund."*

*AD: "So the entitlements the people have which I think is about £16,000, they will be paid that?"*

*AM: "Well, I hope that will be the case. I cannot state that or guarantee that now but we are certainly working to solve this issue. This is something we really don't want to have hanging over us."*

It is much alike having the taxman at your door asking for money while you're having a stroke. The Icelandic minister clearly stated that everything was being done to ensure that obligations will be filled. This does not support Darling's claim that Iceland had no intention of fulfilling its obligations in the UK.

Yet all hell broke loose following Darling's bombshell. Iceland became front page news across Britain for all the wrong reasons. We became the convenient scapegoats of the credit crunch's making. Icelanders, driving expensive jeeps and Mercedes-Benz, holders of the largest hedge fund in Europe, have used money from Britons to finance their extravaganzas and now they had the nerve to ignore international obligations.

However, things ought to be put into perspective. Cheap money was everywhere. Icelanders were not in the exception when it came to making use of that. Many went about remortgaging their houses to buy new cars or go on holidays, since it was written the laws of physics that housing prices would only go up (what goes up, keeps going up). Such behaviour was commonplace across the western world, and beyond.

What Brown and Darling did next was even more outrageous, if not unlawful. They sent their Nato ally a most unwelcome treat while it was most vulnerable. Anti-terrorism laws were used to seize Icelandic assets associated with Landsbanki. Expecting help from friends, Iceland was instead kicked while it was down. Brown and Darling were now on a roll, turning next towards the UK branch of the still-operational and only-surviving Icelandic bank, Kaupthing. Again, this was done using the anti-terrorism law.

The reasoning, as given by the HM Treasury: "Acting on the advice of the Bank and FSA, and in light of announcements made by the Icelandic authorities in recent days, the Chancellor has taken action today to protect the retail depositors in Kaupthing Singer & Friedlander, a UK-based banking subsidiary of Kaupthing Bank. He has taken this action to ensure the stability of the UK financial system. Savers' money is safe and secure."

Still they continue make the unfounded claim that Iceland had no intention of fulfilling their financial obligations. The lifeline thrown Kaupthing's way by the Icelandic government never had a chance to succeed. Brown and Darling had pulled the plug. On what was Iceland's largest company, our equivalent to America's Ford or General Motors.

I wonder if this was truly the best option to ensure the stability of the UK financial system. The induction of the collapse of an international bank can hardly be seen as the method of first choice to ensure stability for UK depositors, or any other customer of Kaupthing for that matter. While banks across the world received bailouts, Icelanders are left wondering if Kaupthing could have survived if they had been given similar support. I am not defending the reckless behaviour of the banks, Kaupthing included. However, for the sake of public interest both in the UK and Iceland, an attempt to save Kaupthing would have been appreciated.

But what truly hurt Icelanders was the use of anti-terrorism laws. Terrorists! To call it an insult would be an understatement. Was Gordon Brown in search of cheap political gain? Did he make use of a small defenceless country to prove

## Terrorists! To call it an insult would be an understatement

a point? Would he have done this if it was Germany, France or even the United States? Of course not. Can you picture Brown using this piece of legislation against a large US bank? Now imagine the response of the American government. Needless to say, it is extremely unlikely and would have had grave political and diplomatic consequences.

Perhaps if Iceland had been a more influential player, Darling might have had the decency to get his facts straight before delivering that catastrophic statement. Why was a delegation not sent to Iceland if he truly felt that they were not going to fulfil their obligations? Did he not realise the impact of such a statement and the use of the anti-terrorism law? With friends like these, Iceland would not need enemies.

Icelanders understand full well that there are obligations to be fulfilled. They are angry with the government and financial regulators for allowing the banks to grow out of control and do business in ways that were beyond the means of a small nation. They are angry with the few high-flying billionaires who, as it turned out, did not have a clue. Icelanders also feel for the foreign depositors and wish for the good name of their country to be restored. They are also furious with the British government for putting them into the league of Al-Qaeda, Taliban and North Korea.

The average Icelander is not to blame for the crisis, just as I understand that my friends from Britain are not to blame for the irresponsible and improper branding of Iceland. We call for cooperation and end of diplomatic hostilities between the two countries. Icelanders cherish their friendship with Britain and do not want bankers or diplomats to ruin this. I encourage you to log on to [www.indefence.is](http://www.indefence.is) and sign the petition against the abuse of anti-terrorism laws and for the restoration of friendship between our countries.

The banks are gone, the billionaires nowhere to be seen. But the common people remain to pay the price in lieu of the rich. As for myself, I just hope that I will not have to provide a hesitant answer the next time someone asks me where I am from.





# The credit crunch and Unis

**Anna Greene** assesses the financial fallout for universities and their economic dependents

**T**op universities with many of the top academics in the world may not be able to figure a way out of this one. Universities around the globe have been adversely affected by the financial crisis, but what does this mean for their students?

While many people are scrambling to come to terms with the fallout of the global financial crisis, refreshing BBC web-pages and scanning headlines for banks going under or a plunge in global stock markets, most have not considered the impact on universities. Sure, maybe prices will go up here and it will be harder to find a job there, but more importantly, students, prospective and current alike, from around the world are wondering what this will mean for their schools.

In Britain, the Icelandic bank collapse and freeze of funds has swept 12 UK universities into the folds of the financial crisis. Oxford and Cambridge, which sit atop the list of British universities with investments in the Icelandic banks, stand to lose £30 million and £11 million respectively. Fortunately for them, this does not represent a substantial portion of either university's cash holdings or budgets and will therefore not affect their daily opera-

tions. Both universities are also working to recover their cash and could very well get at least a part of it back.

In general, the British banks are looking more solid when compared to the American students studying here in the UK and American universities. Those who will really feel the squeeze from this crisis are current and future American students at the LSE, which constitutes a sizeable portion of the student population.

The financial crisis started off in the US, leaving in its wake global financial turmoil. But perhaps because that was where it began, American students and universities therefore have likely suffered the most.

As of 26 September, there have been 111 American financial institutions that have "suspended" their lending of Federal Family Education Loan Program loans, according to the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators. The programme is the federal financial aid program upon which many Americans rely to pay for their university education. In addition to these 111, another 34 private lending institutions have exited or suspended their student loan programs. Sadly, these 135 suspensions or exits from

the student loan industry are countered by a mere 11 institutions expanding their lending. In an indication of the size of the problem in the United States, Wachovia Bank froze the accounts of nearly 1,000 colleges and universities, denying them access to the billions of dollars and leaving them with problems in making their payrolls.

However, this is not to say that the higher education system in the United States is going under. Many universities will be fine, but the situation has revealed deeper issues in the American higher education system. It is not looking too bright for many prospective American students next year, and it certainly has already caused big problems for a few unlucky ones this year.

While the financial crisis has contributed to the uncertainty in which many US universities find themselves, it reminds us of the many problems already plaguing the American education system. American universities charge exorbitantly-high tuition rates just as state assistance has declined. Many have over-extended themselves construction and expansion projects. Those who will be hit hardest by the looming troubles are middle-class

**Universities do not suffer alone. The local and state economies will be affected as a direct result**

families, colleges that use donor money for financial aid packages, tuition-dependent private colleges and universities and states that are badly hit by the housing crisis. Many students will not only have these issues to consider, but also the fact they cannot get funding from many universities or private lenders at the moment.

Only adding to this whole debacle is the fact that the universities do not suffer alone. The local and state economies will be affected as a direct result. Universities are huge sources of revenue for states; they bring in residents, hire large numbers of staff, execute major construction projects and are a main contributor to the economy of the local communities in which they reside. If the universities suffer, the economic future of the towns and states in which they are located could only see more rainy days ahead, even after the fallout from the decline of the housing and stock markets.

It all seems rather gloom and doom at the moment, but to end on a somewhat happy note, at least we students have the next few months to bury ourselves in the library and hope the job market and the financial system reverse their current declines.

## Interview Charlie Beckett



Photo: Flickr user Nico MacDonald

# The state of the new media

POLIS director Charlie Beckett gives Joseph Cotterill his thoughts and predictions on the prospects of journalism

Journalism definitely does exist at the LSE. A few weeks ago, I wrote in the Beaver that journalism did not have the profile at the School it deserves for its contribution to society and the social sciences. Stupidly, I forgot to write about POLIS, the School's very own institute for studying journalism and society. The think-tank is headed by former broadcast journalist Charlie Beckett, who understandably thinks that journalism's star is rising at the LSE, and is rather keen to set the record straight in an interview with the Beaver.

When I meet him, Beckett tells me POLIS is as active as ever. The institute has a full programme of lectures and events this term, attracting some extremely talented journalists as speakers. Around twenty students currently intern for POLIS: a quite impressive number by the standards of LSE departments and institutes. In short, a lot more journalism goes on at this School than I had thought.

But POLIS is no school of journalism. Beckett is clear on that. This is in part why I didn't write about the institute - I was arguing that the School should consider offering a technical postgraduate programme in journalism like those offered at Westminster University here in London, or Columbia University in New York - which administers the Pulitzer Prize. I still think LSE's values make a journalism school here more useful than, say, a business school.

Beckett, on the other hand, is positively evangelical that journalism schools can simply impose too much of a structure on the amorphous new media revolution he thinks is underway. One which he has documented on his blog and in a book, titled "Supermedia". "It's all about initiative, about enterprise, about intellectual graft," he says. "It's about learning how to package information in an accessible, accurate way" for a media world that changes completely year by year. "You can be taught it to a degree, but really you need to engage with it."

Students who intern at POLIS will be in a perfect position to engage with the rise of networked media. Beckett adds that

just about any LSE student can begin forging a career in new media here on campus as well, through blogging individually, or by joining Pulse radio, the Clare Market Review, or the Beaver within the Students' Union. So long as students keep innovating, he says, they will be doing journalism without even thinking about it. "You have to learn how to justify yourself and be accurate, and be entertaining and interesting."

It sounds very bracing. With the newspaper and broadcast media transforming into one huge internet-based networked structure, most graduates who enter the media now will face unconventional career paths. In that case, I wondered how Beckett's own career started out, imagining he'd come into the hierarchical world of old media with much more of a plan than graduates today. To my surprise, he hadn't at all.

"I walked off the street and joined a local free newspaper, because I'd run out of things to do," Beckett had edited his student newspaper, but "I was pretty stupid actually. I didn't realise I wanted to be a journalist." From that "crappy free newspaper in South London", Beckett says "it was all through me selling stories to bigger newspapers and then moving on to TV." His path then took him onto a broadcasting career that culminated in him producing Channel Four News.

To a great extent, then, Beckett is right that his initial career in journalism foreshadowed "much what would confront graduates leaving university now." He offered some advice to students looking for a career in journalism: "With the cleverness and knowledge you've got from an LSE education, put that with some drive and you can do it. And get some new media skills."

But I can't help suspecting there is something missing here. There are very few people who can combine all of those skills. I have no doubt that LSE graduates in general and POLIS interns in particular stand a good chance of doing it. But the dedication and specialisation required is intense. Overall, isn't journalism always going to remain a niche occupation? "It's a small to medium industry," but

it's one in the midst of a revolution. "Journalism is leaving its niche. The kind of skills you acquire are helpful throughout public relations, management - information management, either within your organisation or externally. The skills aren't terribly niche."

My ears prick up at the innocuous words 'information management'. It sounds just a bit too Orwellian to me. I put it to Beckett that, though it is great these skills are percolating out into the rest of society, this will pose problems for preserving the public purpose and commitment to truth which we value in journalism. Some organisations can only survive by suppressing information. And I'm not sure many of the bloggers, information managers and other sub-journalists now emerging are the sort who conscientiously attend POLIS lectures.

Beckett focuses instead on the decline of trusted "gatekeepers" such as national newspapers as "a genuine danger" that may make it harder to maintain the public's trust in journalism, letting mountebanks and media mercenaries carve up the system. "It wasn't necessarily safe to trust the mass media in the past," Beckett notes. "The new media environment means they have lost their monopoly over controlling the information flow." But he concedes that many consumers will just see a "mess" where he sees a work that is still in progress. "The trusted brands do best in that situation. The BBC and many of the main newspapers are doing incredibly well online."

Maybe too well. These trusted brands have sufficient funds to tide them through the recession intact, but many of the smaller new media start-up companies do not. Having got to the top, brands like the Financial Times or Google are basically conservative when it comes to developing new ideas, especially because they know their audiences very well. I wonder if it worries Beckett that the recession may have put the new media revolution back by years or even decades of innovation. After all, we were speaking just a day after the final collapse of Channel Four's attempt to build an empire of its own in the brave new world of digital radio broadcasting.

**With the cleverness and knowledge you've got from an LSE education, put that with some drive and you can do [journalism]**

One which has been "completely dominated" by the BBC thus far, says Beckett.

This wasn't necessarily because of the recession. But it shows how easily the networked media movement could be rolled back if the economy continues to get worse. "The hope for digital radio was that it was so cheap and easy. The BBC does quite a good job, but we were all hoping that new media would bring even more diversity. The recession means there is a severe danger not of an oligopoly, but that the bigger beasts will take over." So the new media will have a job to survive the recession in the first place. But are they up to reporting it?

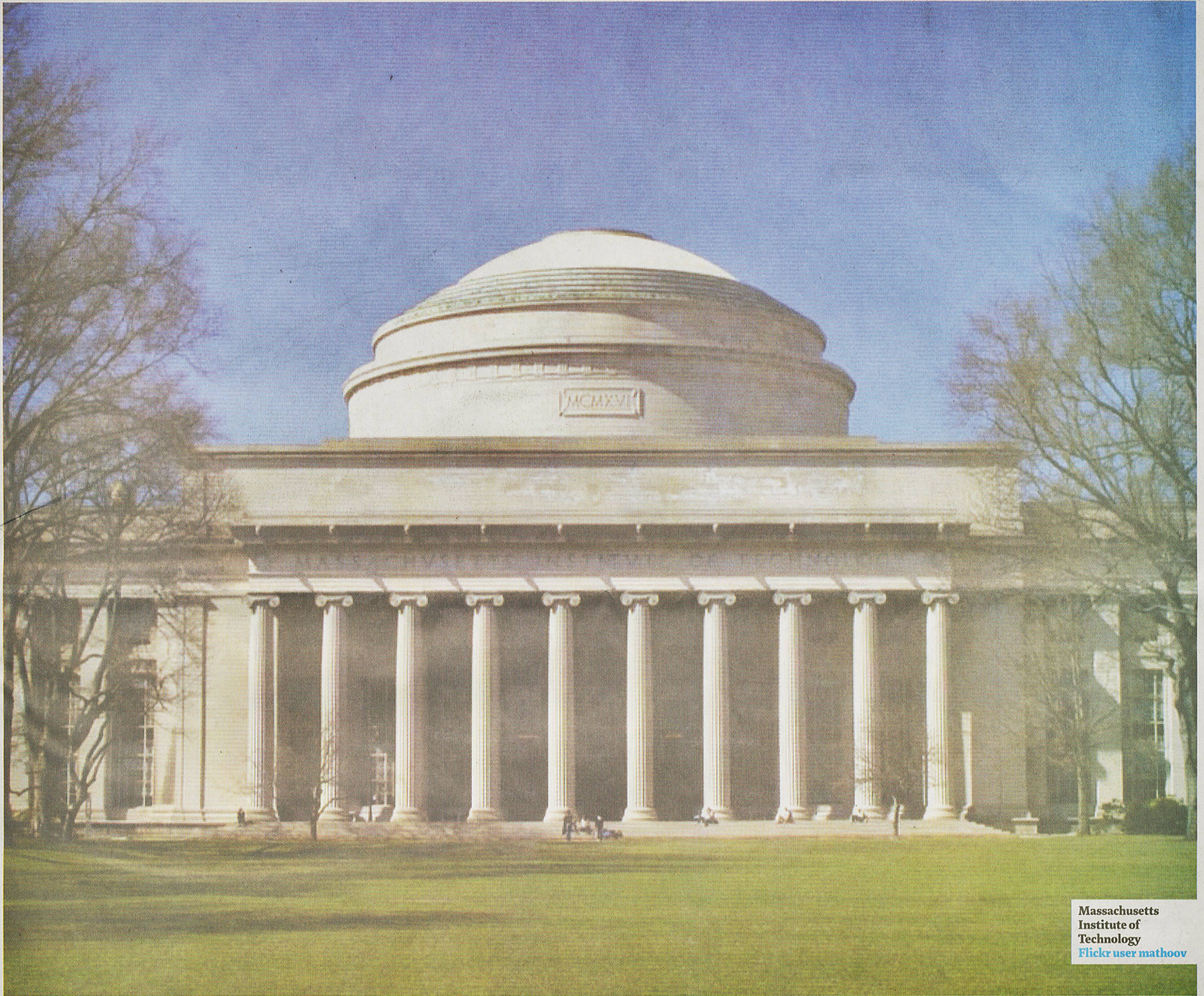
Beckett had written an article in the Guardian the day before our interview on about a rally in print newspaper sales during September. A major plank of the new media philosophy is that older forms such as print newspapers can no longer cover the issues. In a month dripping with news, international instability and economic crises, the "dead tree press" had scored a surprise victory. Didn't this show that the new media ecology is still at far too early a stage in its life cycle?

Better not to read too much into the statistics, Beckett says. Newspaper sales always increase in September as people return from holiday. Generally, "some did go up, and it was partly because when there's a war or whatever, people read newspapers." But a rising news tide floats all boats. "I don't think they stopped going online. I would imagine blogs were even more popular than ever."

Beckett points to public distrust in official bodies dealing with the recession for the continuing popularity of new media. "They turn to newspapers because they want details on their mortgage." But for the crisis overall, people turn to blogs and online broadcasting just to keep up with who has spent the latest billions of bailout money each morning. "When has an economic story moved so quickly?", Beckett asks. Well, in the rise of new media, for one thing. Here's hoping it's still a story on campus ten years from now.

# Social

## Postgraduate study in the United States



Massachusetts  
Institute of  
Technology  
Flickr user mathoov

# Go west, young social sciences graduate!

Romy Fawehinmi is going  
to America

Few can dispute that there is somewhat a cloud hanging over Houghton street. During the last few weeks, we have seen all the usual suspects: Merrill Lynch, Ernst and Young and Watson Wyatt selling themselves to the LSE population. This frenzy has made me think about my future plans. Do I want to begin a slavish life as an analyst at some investment bank or do I continue studying and enjoy the perks of student life? The latter sounds much better.

Postgraduate study is an idea that has always appealed to me. The notion that one can have more than one degree is very attractive for an egotistical personality

like myself. The first question that comes to mind is where I should go for extension of my studies. Oxbridge perhaps? No Nah, I don't do those dodgy boats. What about staying in London? Too stressful. The States? Eureka!

Postgraduate study in America is definitely an appealing option. There are numerous renowned institutions in the US. The best are referred to as the Ivy-league colleges and are Princeton, Harvard, Columbia, Yale, Penn, Brown, Cornell and Dartmouth. In early 2007, I flirted with three of these school but like many of my dates they ended in rejection. Applying to the states at undergraduate level appeared

**The admission process in the US is more complex than applying in the UK**

pretty straight forward or so I thought.

The admission process for grad school in the US is more complex and more expensive than applying in the UK. One is required to complete the school's application form and applicants must supply additional materials such as an Official transcript, letters of recommendation and a personal statement. But the clear distinction between an undergrad and a graduate application is the test you take. Applicants must sit the GRE or the GMAT. The GRE or Graduate Records Examination is a test that comprises of three main sections - verbal reasoning, quantitative reasoning and analytical writing. The test

can be done by hand or on a computer. The test costs \$170 dollars for students in the UK and takes three hours. Applicants also have to pay a fee when applying; Yale charge \$90. The GMAT is aimed at business students, takes four hours and costs \$250.

If you yearn for the American dream, or simply want to miss out the letter U in words like color, favor, then visit [www.ets.org](http://www.ets.org) for more detail about getting into an American college.

## Society report Debate Society success

# Debaters take top spot after Bristol triumph

Having enjoyed some success of late, the **Debate Society** tells us just how well it has been doing

The LSE Students' Union Debating Team remains top of the Inter Varsity debate competition league table after both teams made it to the final round at Bristol on the weekend.

Rushabh Ranavat was declared the best speaker in the first round and the team as a whole finished top of the round robin. Christophe Lamy has now made the final in all three of the competitions at which he has represented LSE.

The LSE had taken top place in the league after successes in the first of two weekly debate meets.

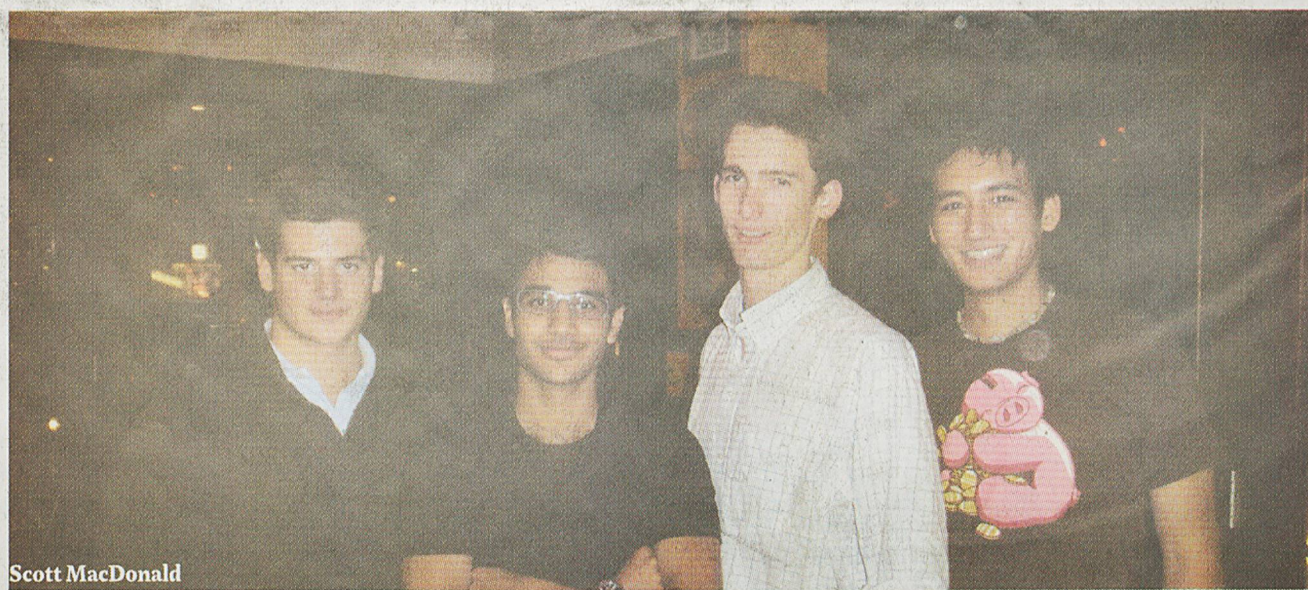
The year started with the President's cup held at UCL, a Novice competition. Christophe Lamy and Woon Lee took the

prize for LSE, both having never done any British style debating before. Another LSE team came 11th out of almost 60 teams, contributing to the LSE's ranking.

The second weekend of the year saw the team travel to Russell Square for the SOAS IV, where 65 teams from all over the country competed. One LSE team came 1 point short of breaking into the semi finals, whilst Christophe Lamy again managed to make it into the final. The judges were split on who won the debate but in the end awarded it to a ULU team. However, an LSE student was awarded the best speaker prize.



Scott MacDonald



Scott MacDonald

## Careers Specialist help for ethnic minorities

# Diversity recruitment well done by RARE

**Eno Alfred** is impressed by the service

Happy memories of summer may not yet be a distant memory, but like it or not, internships and graduate job deadlines are fast approaching. For two consecutive years, I've fallen into the complex trap where the juggling of revision with job applications must be mastered. So it gives me great pleasure to announce that I've officially broken free and can offer a remedy for those that have or are likely to

fall into the same mess.

Rare Recruitment is a diversity recruitment specialist dedicated to connecting people from ethnic minority backgrounds with jobs in top organisations. Of London's university students, 44% are from an ethnic minority background.

Rare has so far got students jobs at The Guardian, Merrill Lynch Technology, KPMG, and Slaughter and May. Rare can

find you full-time graduate positions and help you get an exciting internship.

Joining Rare is completely free and really will maximise your chances of getting hired. Help with CVs, application forms, competency questions, interviews, numerical, verbal and diagrammatic reasoning tests, group tasks and networking will all be at hand.

Unlike most of the crummy recruit-

ment agencies that flood our inbox at all hours, Rare will not bombard you with information about jobs you have no interest in doing.

When I joined Rare, they spent time getting to know me so that they could tailor to my personal interests. Now I can feel confident that my job search is being competently managed - a huge improvement on casual searches in between lectures and classes.

Interested? Visit [www.rarerecruitment.co.uk](http://www.rarerecruitment.co.uk) and complete the online application form.

Once its assessed, if they think they can help you then they will invite you to join. The sooner you apply, the sooner they can bring you fantastic opportunities so get moving!



Flickr user Márcio Cabral



**WAIT.**

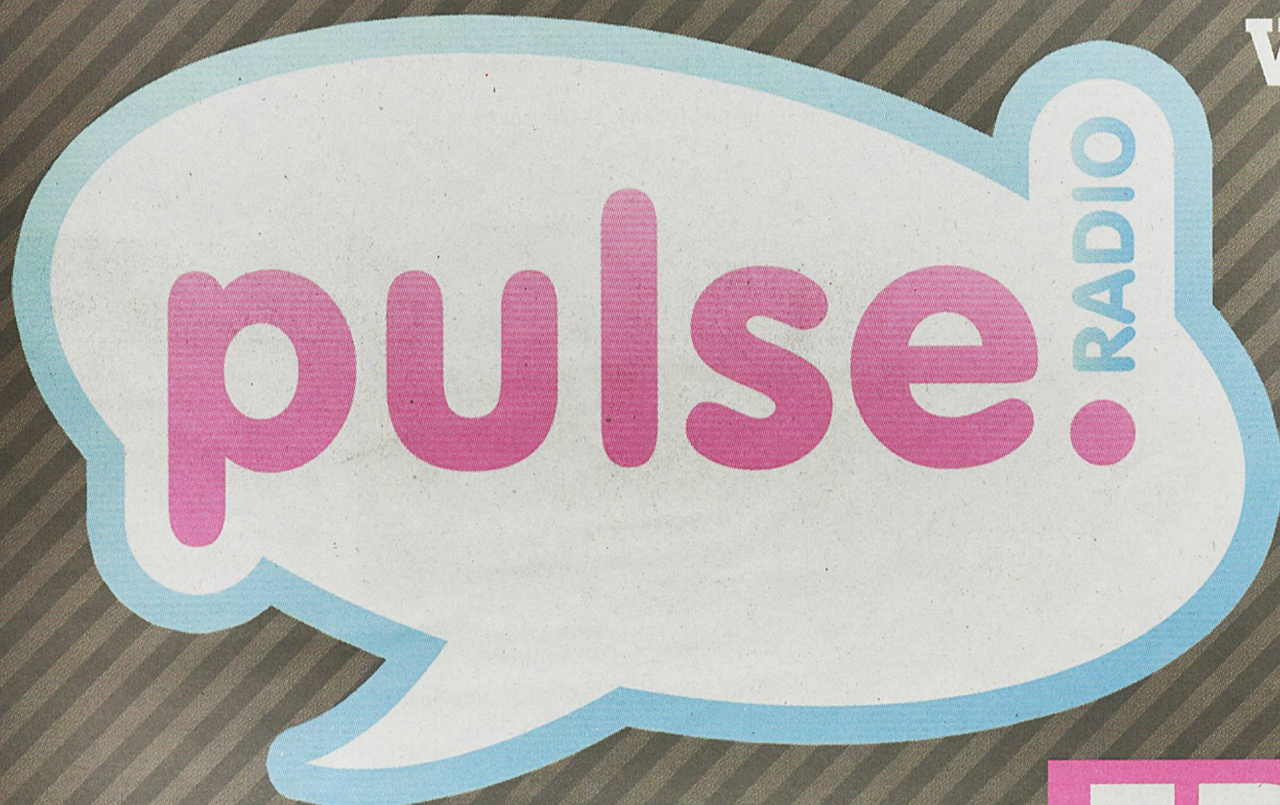
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# Team mates

## Netball Firsts

Netball floozy **Charlotte Glyn** explores the nooks and crannies of the netball 1sts



### Most Loveable...

Men seem to be falling at Dyson a.k.a. Hannah's feet without her even noticing – her angelic eyes and melodic Welsh accent can melt even the coldest heart. We have reason to suspect the same goes for Natalie Davis but her suitor remains to be discovered...we will find you!



### Most likely to steal a Calella tour shirt...

Notorious in Calella last year for her clothes swapping antics (ok so only on 1 night) Babybel has the capacity to reduce a man to his underwear in one look. With the FC having a cheese-off in her honour all I can say is bring on Calella...



### Best Player...

This has to be Hannah-Montana Davies with shooting stats in the high 90's matching her Wednesday night appearances. You can't miss this blondie, and another one to look out for making a big tour appearance!

### Most likely to request Dutty Wind at Zoo...

A frequent booty shaker, Effy Osoba wins this hands down with every drunken attempt at the back breaking dance. Quite the joker, don't jibe her without expecting 'your mum' to come right back at you.



### Best taps player...

Another newbie on the team, this title goes to Anouk – having never played netball before let alone taps she has picked both up quicker than you can say 'spit-gun' (an early interpretation of number 5)

## Comment

# Initiation rights



## Claire Pickering

Everyone must have seen the coverage of 'initiations' in the news, there having been reports of a silly poly where people dressed as Nazis and made freshers get into sacks and then vomit in a bag and put it over their head. 'A university spokesman said a formal inquiry was being launched into alleged "bullying and intimidation" during initiation ceremonies', the BBC reported. Hang on, isn't that the point of initiations?! I'm not entirely sure of the stance that LSE takes on this long-lived university tradition. The AU teams initiations seem to take place all over London. The rugby girls held theirs in The Church while a number of the boys teams held theirs at Berrylands. We (the hockey girls) held ours outside the legendary Peacock Theatre, even though it was raining slightly, because we thought it was illegal to do it inside. However, we later found out that the netballers did theirs in the Underground Bar – me thinks because they are too tame to even call them 'initiations'...

Initiations vary greatly but how do we rate them? Which are successful and which

aren't? In my opinion it should be how many people you get to 'vom' (this is the new street name for throw up, I quite like it). On Wednesday we had 7 young ladies initiating and we managed to make at least 5 of them vom – this is technically a first if you think percentage wise (at least I can get a first in something) but is this initiation success?

Some might say that we should rate the event on the amount of drink consumed, well let me give you a snap shot of our initiations. We had snakebite, reef, strongbow, vodka, whisky, guinness with whipped cream, sambuca etc. and the best part of our initiations was the fineage for any spillage, cheating or losing a race – this was the mighty 'Pickles Brew', a fine mixture of milk, sambuca, apple sours and vodka. But this isn't to just drink, this is to go Satsuma bobbing in – think Halloween for over eighteens!! I highly recommend this cocktail of drinks, perfect to be swilling around in your beer belly before a big night in Zoo Bar.

Have we got to the bottom of initiations though? Maybe my favourite way to measure the success is how the freshers act and follow the night through after they have been initiated into our grand university. So now let me introduce you to our 'fresher of the night', Gine. This fresher was a champ.

Our initiations managed to make her actually projectile vomit outside the Peacock Theatre (please look out for dirty drains) but did she finish there? Of course not, don't confuse us with the netballers. Later, while dancing away in the Quad to some of the amazingly cheesy music, a question suddenly floated around: 'Where's Gine?' No one knew. Even a shout out on the microphone didn't give any results. Then, to our amusement and surprise, Gine suddenly popped up with one precariously fastened toga, two more snakebites and three confused-looking men! All AU members please pay attention to this fine figure of a hockey player, this is the kind of member you want to be! Projectile vomiting is just the transition from one stage of drunkenness to another!

So I will let you decide yourself how we should rate LSE initiations but frankly, due to all the criteria I believe our initiations were a success and I hope that yours were too. First job as Social Sec done, now onto Halloween fancy dress and then the long awaited Carol.....BE READY!

## Results

### Football

LSE 1s 2 5 St Mary's 3s  
LSE 1s 5 2 Holloway 1s

LSE 2s 3 3 University of the Arts  
LSE 2s 2 3 Queen Mary's 1s

LSE 3s 3 3 King's 2s  
LSE 3s 1 4 RUMs 1s

LSE 4s 1 2 UCL 6s

LSE 5s 1 1 RVC 1s

LSE 6s 0 3 RUMs 2s

LSE 7s 1 1 Poly

### Tennis

Mens 1s 10 0 Portsmouth 1s  
Mens 2s 7 3 Greenwich 1s  
Womens 1s 0 10 Brighton 1s

### Women's Squash

LSE 1 3 UCL

### Men's Squash

LSE 1s 3 2 Middlesex 1s  
LSE 1s 4 1 Royal Holloway  
LSE 2s 4 1 Imperial Medics  
LSE 2s 9 8 King's 1s

### Women's hockey:

LSE 1 3 0 Roehampton.

### Men's Hockey

LSE 1s 3 7 RUMs

### Men's Badminton

Lost 8-0 twice

### Women's Badminton

LSE 4 4 UCL

### Golf

LSE 0 6 Portsmouth

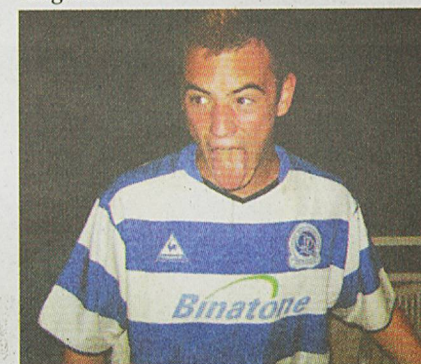
### Women's Rugby

LSE lost 5 0 to King's

### Women's netball

LSE 1s 31 19 Hertfordshire 3s  
LSE 2s 24 35 KCL 3s  
LSE 3s 19 27 Uni Medway 1s  
LSE 4s 18 9 St. Fart's 3s

This results service is brought to you by AU communications officer Edward Methusala Healy. Please do not hesitate to contact Ed, on e.m.healy@lse.ac.uk, should you have any queries on how to communicate with other human beings. But please, for the love of God, don't crack any jokes, Healy can't stand the sound of laughter.



## Kitesurfing

# Forty-nine go mad in Cornwall

**Tania Barnes**

A cold, wet weekend in mid-October should ring bells of joy in the minds of all kitesurfers. Yes, AussieKiss Kite returns! No, AussieKiss is not in Australia, in fact there wasn't even much kissing....but who cares about the name? AussieKiss just means a few feeble attempts at hungover kitesurfing, a lot of drinking, and complete carnage in a campsite in Bude.

This is the second time LSE Kitesurfing Society has run the trip, and there were a few noticeable differences from last year, i.e. no crazy Trinidadians, no singing of 'I like boobs...'. And our notorious fisherman James Heath found himself without any tackle - but who cares? Apparently he's in love! Nonetheless the overall result was the same, a phenomenal weekend of mayhem which will live in everyone's hearts forevermore.

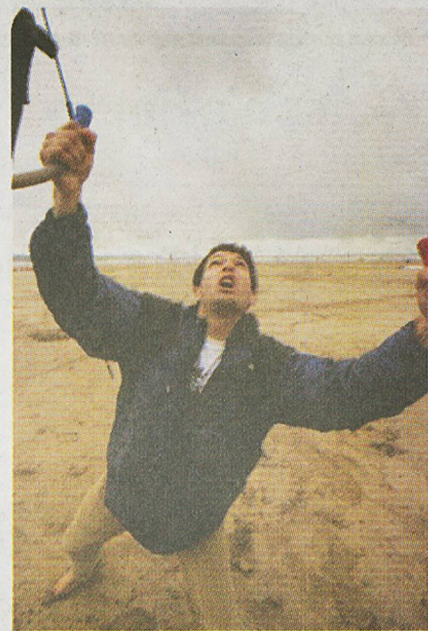
AussieKiss is the ultimate escapist adventure for LSE students. Not only is Cornwall just about as far west from London as possible, there are also no copies of the FT in the county, just lots of sheep, and we mean LOTS of sheep! Not only is the air

fresh, everyone thinks Goldman Sachs is a pasty manufacturer. However, some of our members, and by some I mean Shaz, demonstrated through the wearing of a sparkly black dress to the beach that you can take the girl out of the city, but you can't take the city out of the girl.

The trip was undoubtedly a success. Not only did all our beginners leave as confident kitesurfers ready for the next step, we also unveiled a number of secret party animals who you would never expect had it in them. They must be recruited as regular AU'ers and unleashed into Zoo bar! Whoever said members of the Malaysian society cannot drink is mistaken, and Roman should go on Strictly Come Dancing. Dance Soc take note this boy has serious skills!

On Friday night we left LSE for an epic 8 hour journey west. (Yes, the bus driver got lost!). Time however went relatively quickly as our 49 travellers were entertained by Jack and Piers, Baby Russ and Flacid Fresher, as well as Tom and Chris (The Jack boys), all of whom got ridiculously drunk. When we finally arrived at Bude celebrations erupted and Russ lead a confessions meeting in caravan 59.

The next day we were all awoken at an unearthly 8am to scurry down to the beach and attempt to kill one another with kites.



The day consisted of a lot of squealing, mostly from Hazel, and attempts by Scott (Flacid Fresher) to knock out our token haggis eater - Brrrrrendaaaaan! We then rushed back to our cosy caravans in time for X-Factor and prepare our outfits. Well, actually not all of us rushed back - on the way back we noticed Travis and Jann we missing. Apparently hooked on Kiting, they attempted an all-nighter at the beach.

Everyone demonstrated creative flare in their interpretations of 'War and Peace', except Brendan who simply painted a Scottish flag on his chest. And Hendrik who confused the peace sign, instead dressing as a head to toe advert for Mercedes!

Heavy fines were distributed, Zulu Warriors were made, and the notorious game of taps made everyone extremely drunk. We then stormed into the party of 400 fellow kitesurfers and made our mark!

The rest of the night is somewhat a blur. Brendan turned into a thug and was found pinned against the wall by several bouncers. Tash entered a romantic engagement in a caravan - but later sobered up and escaped Mission Impossible-style out of the window, to leave her poor lover confused. Piers taught everyone how to rave whilst making a stand against the injustice of nuclear war. Charlie threw banana all around

## We were all awoken at 8am to scurry down to the beach and attempt to kill each other with kites

the place forming some very suspect stains on Miss Mok's Gillet. Shaz threw Doritos all over her body - 'eat me!'. Roman kept the party going by dancing to Madonna in caravan 56 until the early hours, and even grumpy Dave cheered up and had a good time.

Sunday morning found everyone a little disorientated - note Russ (you remember the blonde boy pictured naked last week in the Toga Party article) naked again in the lounge of Caravan 58. But it was back to the beach and in to the water for some more surfing. Others however were lured into the surf shack by soup to nurse their hangovers. Faz showed off his land board skills to make up for his very uncool wipeout the day before. Muzzy chilled, while Andy snapped away with his camera and others got very distressed untangling lines. And congratulations as always to Ben Leith, our only member who can actually kitesurf!

Overall the weekend was just awesome. If anyone is interested in joining us (believe me - no experience necessary!) please email us [au.club.kitesurf@lse.ac.uk](mailto:au.club.kitesurf@lse.ac.uk) - remember we love kitesurfing, but we're very fond of the silliness!

# Go on, you know you want to...

Scores of new writers have already joined The Beaver and we love them all dearly. But don't worry if you haven't got around to writing for us yet, it's never to late! Drop us an email at [getinvolved@thebeaveronline.co.uk](mailto:getinvolved@thebeaveronline.co.uk)

We also need a variety of other staff including:

- Photographers
- Copy editors
- Business team members
- Competitions coordinators
- Interview coordinators
- Events team members
- Marketing coordinators

[getinvolved@thebeaveronline.co.uk](mailto:getinvolved@thebeaveronline.co.uk)

# The Beaver

## Hockey stick it to 'em at Imperial game

Nick Rushton

2nd's Hockey 4  
Imperial Medics 0

Second Team Hockey is a transcendental experience, couched somewhere between the lines of genius and madness. If there had been spectators for the 2nd's match against Imperial Medics, they would have been confused, but, on some deeper level, understand they were watching the dawn of something profound.

It was the kind of hockey that knew no boundaries... no positions... no previously discovered strategy. The team, consumed with a different level of understanding for the game than could be scrawled on any chalk board, beat Imperial back.

There had been issues early on (with the lack of a goalkeeper straws had to be drawn to decide who would take the plunge) and after watching Priyank Parikh peering at the goalkeeping kit with a mixture of scepticism and dread few did not feel guilty. However Priyank proved to have a natural intuition for the position-keeping a clean slate. This was helped by some superb defending at the back by Neel Popat and Felix Neusser who succeeded in making sure that the ball hardly ever ended up near the 2nd's goal.

However there was a price to pay for the lucid defending, Shaz Huq's tackle of his opposite number was rewarded with a yellow card and ten minutes off the pitch and Saurabh Bikram creative use of his stick was greeted with a green card.

Offensively the team struggled in the first half as creative differences upfront proved hard to recompense. However under the guidance of Raul Shah and Jasper Welch the spheres aligned in the second and goals poured in. Overall it was a solid first performance by the seconds- who in difficult circumstances pulled off an impressive victory.

## The AU Insider

### Mark Question

'Flacid fresher' beat the FC's head boy in the much anticipated battle for the 'lady of the week'. When questioned the head boy could only remark that the better man had won, and assured us he will move on to his next target with haste.

In a shock development Andrew Sebastian Rogers did not convert on Wednesday night. The Inside-her will inform you immediately should said footballer's ping pong dance ever prove successful.

A leading sports retailer has informed the inside-her that it recently had over 100 frisbees stolen from a lorry en route to re-stock it's flagship Basildon store. On inspecting Ultimate Frisbee's store cupboard the inside-her found 117 brand new frisbees. No accusations have been made, but there is no smoke without fire...

## Gamblers Anon

### Keeping & Low

### Like the punter, but better and for real

This week Gamblers Anon will be focusing on three sports. Firstly we will be betting £5 on AO Milon to beat PAOK 3-2 in the Greek Men's Volleyball Championship on 27th October. This is following a hot tip from a source who wishes to remain anonymous in-case he is pestered for such accurate forecasts in the future. Our second bet will take place on the same day, but for a tenner. The LSE's American contingent assure us that it is safe to bet that there will be more than 10.5 points in the first quarter when Indianapolis visit Tennessee. We're not 100% sure on this, which is why

we've put only a tenner on this forecast. Finally some minge will be coming out on Halloween to take part in the Women's Handball Champion's League, where we are certain Kometal will dick on, although anatomically inaccurate, Gyori ETO quite comfortably. I recommend disregarding our advice as we really are just picking what looks interesting. If you see STK and Lowster walking around in flash new leather jackets, it is safe to assume our bets were successful, or our drug importing enterprise has finally kicked off.

18+ Please gamble responsibly. Visit [www.gambleaware.co.uk](http://www.gambleaware.co.uk)

# Sport

## Women's Rugby

### Strand poly suffer as female firsts charge back into action

Hannah Riches

Sitting in the Tuns at the start of freshers' week, there was a feeling of mild panic. With not even enough players to switch to Ultimate Frisbee, the women's rugby first team were genuinely considering starting a cheerleading society, or stealing some of the less masculine players on the men's rugby teams (that being most of them) and forcing them to don wigs and padded bras. However, after a week of shameless self-promotion and a few white lies, we managed to get together an awesome group of ladies, signalling the return of LSE's glorious women's rugby team.

Our first match of the season was against the University of Surrey, who were clearly a bit bitter about being a poly in the middle of nowhere. After much debate over kick-off times and how many players were on a rugby team, we set off on our first of many banter buses of the season. However, being lovely ladies that we are, it wasn't just a banter bus; nope, it came complete with a guided tour of London especially for Emily, Becca and Danielle, our new General Course recruits. Trafalgar Square, check; The Ritz, check; Fuller's Brewery, check; changing on the bus, check; time for a warm up, not a chance!!!

Having just ticked off the Natural History Museum we established the clear winner of our Tw\*t of the Match award. After waiting for half an hour in the Tuns, Nina realised that she might have missed the bus, so ended up catching the slow train to Guildford. Compounding her victory, she then proceeded to change on the touchline (albeit with a strategically placed umbrella) much to the delight of the men's teams on the next pitch who, judging by our opponents, had been missing out on this sort of thing for quite some time.

And so to the 80 minutes that stood between us, togas and lash. Mini-Chi led by example in her first match as captain, with excellent handling and her standard fearless tackling. And even though we were down at half time, for a team that in the large part had not held a rugby ball until a couple of weeks ago, it had been an amazing effort. There was ferocious tackling throughout, especially from our man of the match, Vanessa, - "the born 7." The second half continued in a similar fashion, with more monster tackling from Payal

and great kicking from Franki, something women's rugby hasn't seen in an eternity. In the end, even though Surrey's experience told, the scoreline did not reflect the fantastic performance of everyone both as individuals and as a team, and there was enormous amounts of potential for giving them a thrashing on their visit to Fortress Berrylands later in the season.

On our return to LSE it was time to get Toga-tastic!!! Who knew with a bedsheet and a few cans of glitter spray we could transform into glamorous Roman goddesses. Though "y marched cymraeg" clearly spent too much time maintaining that "Welsh really isn't a dying language" to notice that her toga was shrinking before her eyes into something that vaguely resembled a loin cloth. Our new second row partnership of Olivia and Kat, with their toga-esque ball gowns, did us proud in the boat race by dispelling yet another women's rugby stereotype: we are quick drinkers. Good work girls!!!

The feeling of optimism and excitement for the season ahead, which inevitably emerged after such an impressive effort and hangovers induced by pints of wine subsided, was soon replaced with abject fear and terror. It emerged that our dear neighbours (and next opponents) Strand Poly had given up all hopes of ever becoming a respectable institution and instead had apparently focused their attentions on crafting a half-decent women's rugby side. The evidence was beyond worrying: Strand Poly 47 - Surrey Poly 5. But never ones to be deterred by a challenge, or the prospect of a three-figure defeat, we set off to the Fortress that is Berrylands.

Ten minutes in, and oh, how wrong we were!!! Expert hooking from Kirsty led to turnovers, Poly embarrassment, and the referee demanding uncontested scrums! Being the sporting team that we are, and unable to resist the flirtatious powers of said ref, we agreed; even though this ended up changing the nature of the game into something resembling more of a women's rugby cliché at times. The forwards managed to reassert themselves by commanding the lineouts, with Alex, Lizzie and Nadine revelling in being able to release their inner cheerleaders. The improvement from the Surrey match was incredible, with



Communication was our strong point, with team members shouting loudly between and during play

fierce forward play at the break down and backs moves that were leaving the opposition (and our forwards) utterly bewildered. Strand Poly were fortunate to score on the breakaway, but it was the look of exhaustion on their faces at half-time that told the real story rather than their narrow lead.

The second half started with the unimportant one sacrificing herself in a try saving tackle, but I won't expand on that because she's unimportant, and overexposed elsewhere. Moving swiftly on, the amazing team performance continued in the second half with everyone putting in enormous tackles and great handling. With Mini-Chi out, Judith stepped up superbly as scrum-half putting in a man of the match performance - linking well with the back line and repeatedly bringing down 'girls' at least three times her size. Our other man of the match was Jess, who lead the backs with her driving runs and did us proud in the drinking ceremony afterwards, not bad for a Masters student!

Throughout the match we also realised that communication was our strong point, with Becky, Lia and Nil shouting loudly between and during play. This further supports our claims that we can be both cheerleaders and rugby players. The sidelines were also graced by the support

	Played	Points
1	University of Reading Women's 1st	1 6
2	University of Portsmouth Women's 1st	2 6
3	King's College, London Women's 1st	2 6
4	KCL Medical Schools Women's 1st	2 3
5	University of Surrey Women's 1st	3 3
6	University of Sussex Women's 1st	1 0
7	London School of Economics Women's 1st	2 0
8	Roehampton University Women's 1st	1 -3



and aggression of Bag-a-man, who thankfully hasn't quite managed to let go but did manage to live up to her name later in the evening. It was sad not to see our mascot there, but rumour has it he has a day job in the FC - clearly an error on his part.

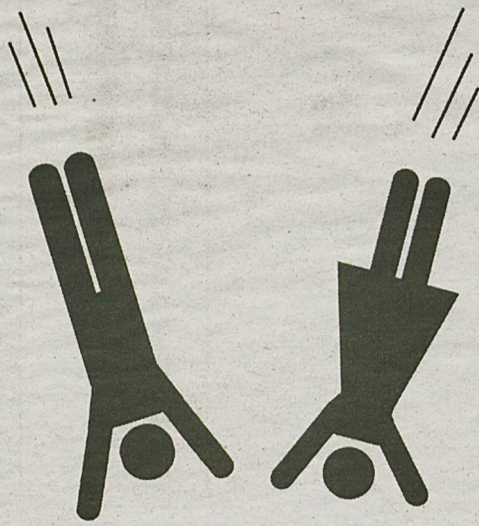
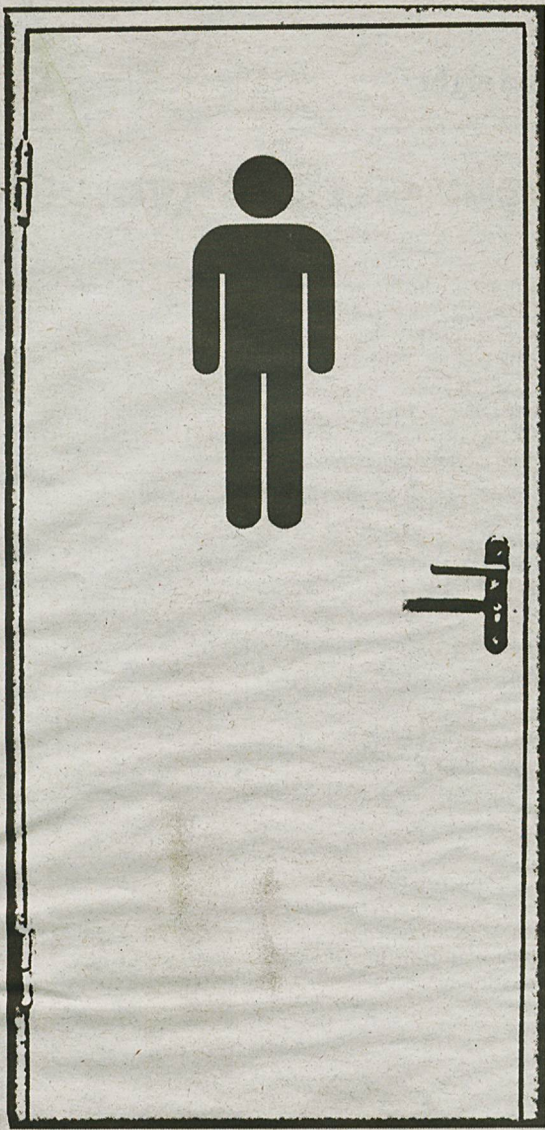
During the return to civilisation, Kate and Kirsty, obviously inspired by the "revolutionary" words in last week's Beaver Sport, began plotting of a coup d'état against the iron fist currently ruling women's rugby's social scene. However, this was halted by news of the LSE women's rugby second team continuing their unbeaten run... but we all know it's all about the first team!

The performance in the Tuns was just as impressive, with some devious chair-stealing from Sarah and Ally and a few gentle polite reminders to netball that they are in fact a hobby, not a sport. Karaoke was as ever orchestrated by Little Miss Bloomberg, who finally put her Friday night SingStar sessions to good use, and Marment, who may have to become the new women's rugby liaison's officer! It was good to see other women's teams out this week, and I hope they manage to keep their numbers up throughout the rest of the year. It would be great to have some more variety in the Tuns on a Wednesday night,

as the FC's one (anatomically accurate) song is beginning to tire.

So it was on to Zoo bar with Double Trouble - half the work, twice the fun - leading the "dancing" with their amazing soon-to-be-patented grooves sweeping the AU as we speak. For those of you riot in the know, the one to watch is the "Sophie Shuffle" - you're probably better off not knowing the exact logistics but it does have a high pulling success rate. At the time of writing, Wednesday night moved us into double figures in the count towards men's rugby's rather conservative sweepstake target for the year. Previous accounts of this in The Beaver have been slightly inaccurate; if you want to know uncensored truth you should have joined women's rugby.

All in all, it's been an amazing couple of Wednesdays, and a sign of great things to come over the course of the year both on and off the pitch. The memories, photographic evidence and email spam have helped us through the first of many rather fragile Thursdays. It's all about the rugby... It's all about the first team... We're kind of a big deal...!!!



# inside

<b>rant</b>	----->	3	- liz cheesborough
battle of the anti-sexes			
<b>film</b>	----->	6	- trent maynard
max payne + shapeless actors			
<b>visual arts</b>	----->	7	- c. schmidt-zur-medden
lichtenstein + laing			
<b>centrespread</b>	----->	8 + 9	- ravi mistry
gender guessing			
<b>music</b>	----->	10 + 11	- j. boys + l. mcLaughlin
holy fuck + bowie + reviews			
<b>thearte</b>	----->	12	- lois jeary
pantomime dames + mighty boosh's			
<b>foodie</b>	----->	13	- sophie marment
feminine food + yummy cake recipes			
<b>identity</b>	----->	14	- hodge an
defying definitions			
<b>telly</b>	----->	15	- angela chow
great british giggles			
<b>literature</b>	----->	15	- tom simpson
middlesex			
<b>sex &amp; gender</b>	----->	16	- helen reeves
sexual restrictions			

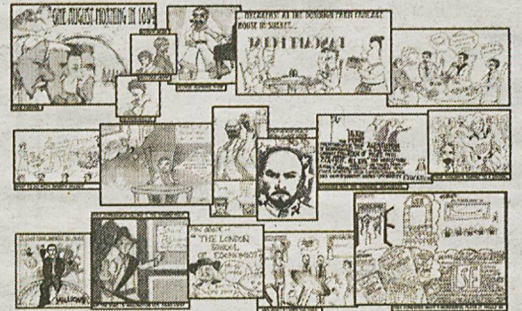
# captains

partB converses with - **chris gameau** - 4 + 5  
we heard a voice which transcends all boundaries

# belated thankyous

Last week we made a comic and it was beautiful. However, we were bad and didn't credit all of the amazing cartoonists who donated their time and thier talents to the issue.

Thank you to; Antonia Strachey, Kaan Dikmen, Insun Her, Chun Hun Wang, Frances Auyeung, Lillian Tam, Mark Twyford, Cherie Leung and Ester Young, for your work on the centrespread story of how LSE was founded one fateful August morning.



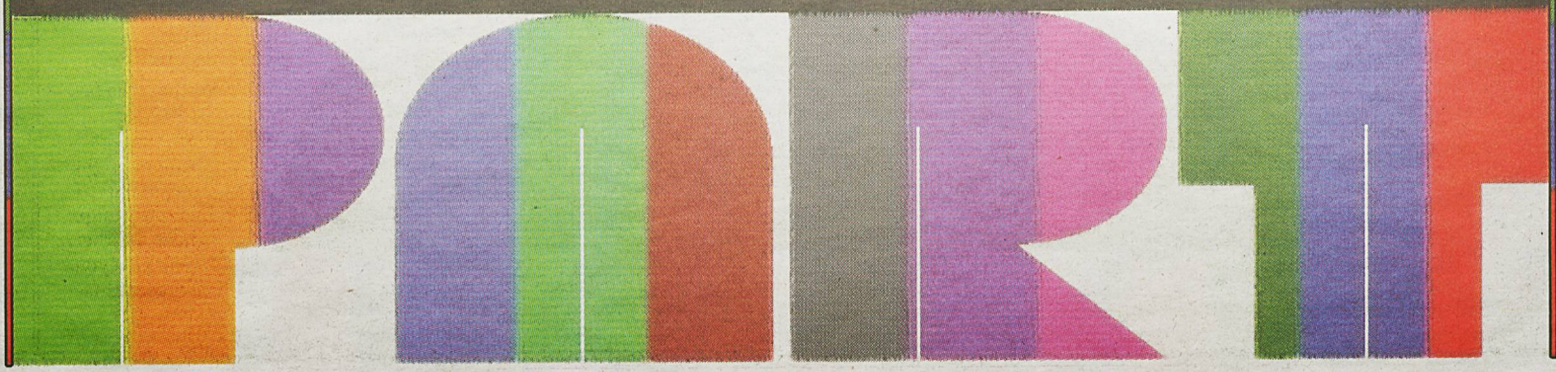
Thank you also to Utsa Mukherjee, for her Sex and Gender cartoon, which depicted the woes of female hair growth. You are all fantastic and we love you.



# holli eastman josh heller

Hi there! This week partB threw itself down the rather dangerous gauntlet of gender. Be male, female, or otherwise we have enough over the next sixteen pages to keep you all happy. Josh and I got up close and personal with the Mighty Boosh, and rubbed shoulders with the androgyny king Noel Fielding. His sequined micro skirt has been resonating in my brain ever since....

we did an androgynous B. It wasn't as beautiful or nicely lovely as the comic, but there are still delightful morsels of witty truthy elegance. Ruby Buckley did Bowie and it was very very good, as usual I'm telling you to head to page 10 first. jumping off the theme a bit, Julian Boys interviewed Holy Fuck, it's a fucking fantastic interview of a fucking fabulous band. Electronic post rock has never sounded as good, nor as profane. Also we have a lovely interview with Chris Gameau as a main feature, this Trent Maynard is one of the many up and coming stars here at the house of partB, watch out for this kid! man dem got skillz. Also. Next week is food theme, I suspect it will be the greatest B ever, and I don't mean to make you pass out with excitement, but I interviewed Nigel Fucking Slater!!!!



What is fashion? Is it a way of representing your identity and your gender? By looking at a person's wardrobe you should be able to identify them as a man or a woman. However in the past century, traditionally men's clothes have crossed over to women's fashion. Obvious example: trousers. But it didn't just stop at trousers did it? We took their shirts and turned them into shirt dresses, Avril Lavigne stole the tie (no one else did, I apologise on her behalf) and we've even taken boxers and changed them into girl's boy-pants. What do guys have left? Is there any item of clothing that only guys would get away with? Looking at my male housemates today, I feel confident I could wear their clothes and yet still look like a girl. But why is it that as soon as a guy wears anything slightly feminine, the other guys respond with "ugh he's sooo gay". Yes some of my friends still say that, and no they're not 6 years old.

So could someone explain to me where the hell the V-necks came from? They kinda appeared out of thin air! And what use are they to guys - to enhance your non-existent cleavage? Or to show off you hairy chest and prove you're all man? I just don't get it, especially the ones that reach the midriff... in which case, there's only one question that can be asked. Aren't you cold?

While women's fashion changes so quickly, we fail to notice that men's fashion is changing too. Maybe the boys are trying to take their clothes back, or maybe they're trying to steal some feminine fashion themselves, but I'm noticing more and more guys wearing girl gear. Men's fashion isn't just changing, it's taken a strange turn into let's-borrow-girls-clothes-and-make-them-manly alley.

The biggest change came when the emos arrived. Surely I would have noticed men wearing skinny jeans and tons of black eye make-up before - I'm pretty sure it's a recent occurrence. It's now officially acceptable for all straight men to have long hair that's straightened and dyed AND wear eye liner and mascara. Is there anything left for women? Anything that girls can wear that men still can't? It took me a while to think, but here: Skirts, bras and tampons; and two of those are due to biology!

So what is it that sparked this revolution? What happened for guys to change their attitude from not caring about what they look like, to obsessing, buying loads of products and spending more time in front of the mirror than I do? I blame footballers. Beckham is famous for his sarong antics - although he looked like a complete and utter twat. His ever changing hairstyles were splattered all over the gossip mags, and ever since then men's products have exploded all over the market with scores of different scents, face creams, styling gels...

Wouldn't we be better off if we just followed the example of the WC signs with girls in skirts and boys in trousers? After all, "men and women are fundamentally and irreconcilably different" - courtesy of LSE's very own S. Kanazawa. Instead of mixing both gender roles, maybe we should just stick to our own and avoid confusion for poor souls like me?

lizchezboro and alexwolynski

the inbetweeners



Boys like boys. Girls like girls. Many like both, even more enjoy only the other - while some don't seem interested in either. It's not as if this phenomenon has sprung up overnight and poured out on to humanity, it's merely that it has been constrained by society over time - and has now reached an age of ever increasing acceptance, especially here in London. The first male couple in recorded history were Khnumhotep and Niankhkhnum, royal confidantes in Egypt, who lived around 2400 BC. Back then the sight of two men embracing wasn't simply acceptable, it was fit for pharaohs and immortalized on the walls of a Prince's tomb. After 4408 years, isn't it about time that we accept that some people don't exactly fit in to their typical gendered roles within society?

Androgyny is not only about social image and pop culture; true most people will think of David Bowie, Prince or Suzi Quatro before psychoanalytic theory any day. They even shape the world (and wardrobes, films, TV, news and record collections) of people who seem to disapprove of this freedom of sexuality - if only they didn't love celebrities just so damn much. They are so beautiful! And thin! And sexually ambiguous! How can anybody not be happy to bask in the glory of Bowie's slinky leggings, and perv over Jagger's lovely ladylike hips? It's not that I have a fixation on famous crotches, but Marilyn Manson has the best bits ever - the smooth milky curve, neither lady parts nor man tackle...

The problem isn't that people don't like androgyny - it's that they don't see it as part of real life, just part of the fantasyland of celebrity. If you're Lindsay Lohan being gay is the height of fashion, if you're Jodie Harsh androgyny is the whole reason you became famous in the first place. People who really are androgynous don't have the pleasure of fame as a barrier to stop social judgment, as Sun readers tuck in to articles charmingly entitled 'gender bender likes girly shoes'. Simultaneously glorifying celebrity and taking the piss out of anybody who doesn't fit in to the social norm is a media norm; even Student Direct asked whether concessions for transgender students were 'political correctness gone mad' - but then again that is for real androgyny, not just dressing up.

Nowadays fashion is all about androgyny - boys in leggings and blouses can look amazing, and where I live most of the girls' style themselves like boys now anyway. It's modern femininity - beauty in rebellion to the plastic, pumped up sexuality of page 3 blondes and WAG iconography. The new metro-acceptance is a flexible identity that allows boys to indulge in hair products, jewelry and make up while simultaneously maintaining masculinity - or go to town by preening with the girls. A friend used to take 3 hours to stick individual coloured diamante on to his scalp in preparation for a big night out, where he could be Prince Charming and Cinderella at the same time! You can find a social realm where ambiguity is worth celebrating, even if you're not a celebrity. Here, you don't have to do what people expect you to do determined by your gender - you can do whatever the fuck you want, free from the tyranny of what we should be.

All we need is a society where that freedom is everywhere, not just in niches of a city that was famously accepting to begin with. Anybody who isn't a white, healthy, working man is by definition a marginalised group - and even these conformers might not relate to the social identity they are meant to represent. So if nearly everybody is a vulnerable group, then why are we so vulnerable? Now that's another rant altogether. Just do what you want, wear what you want, be whomever you want - and fuck those transphobic wankers who don't like it.

RANT

# chris garneau

talks to **trent maynard** to bring him back to the music

The audience that night in the small theatre in Camden Town were sitting cross-legged on the floor as they sipped beers and chatted enthusiastically. They were undoubtedly there to see the main act, Adrian Crowley, so when a tiny man in a low-cut tee, suspenders, and skinny jeans walked out on stage and sat at a piano, people didn't take much notice. And then he started to sing.

Complete silence fell upon the audience, and faces turned toward the stage in exclamations of surprise and nods of epiphanic under-





standing. Chris Garneau will do that to you the first time you hear him. His voice defies gender in the way it flutters gracefully between notes and meanders its way through gender-neutral love songs. Sight unseen, the listener would have a hell of a time deciphering whether Garneau was male or female. That voice gives nothing away, but it goes straight for your heart.

Garneau grew up in Boston but spent several years of his childhood living in Paris with his family. After graduating high school he began studying at the Berklee Music School in Boston, but dropped out after a few months to begin pursuing his music career in New York City. Duncan Sheik, the award-winning singer-songwriter and composer, began producing his debut album "Music For Tourists" when Garneau was still a teenager. It was released in 2006, with a follow-up EP entitled "C-Sides" coming out the following year.

Since the release of his records, Garneau has been grabbing headlines as his presence picked up on the indie circuit. In many regards, he's been the media's dream, publicly discussing everything from molestation and drug abuse, to his sexuality and love life.

Such honesty seems to stem not from a desire for media attention, but from a quiet authenticity that Garneau radiates. When asked if anything was off limits or too personal, Garneau responded, "there's nothing that I won't really discuss specifically. I don't really like delving into sexuality issues or child abuse issues. Besides being honest about the facts, I don't really find there to be too much to discuss otherwise. And I find it to be distracting to what I'm trying to do in general, which is to play music."

But Garneau's authenticity carries over into his music, which is why these questions keep popping up. "Baby's Romance" deals with molestation, "Saturday" references sodomy, and "Island Song" hints at alcohol abuse and wrestling with personal demons.

His songs, -sometimes cutesy - often euphonious, are lyrically raw and vulnerable. It's this vulnerability that catches listeners off guard and wins them over.

On performing

songs about such intensely personal struggles, Garneau says that there "are some times - and not very often - where a song will sort of make me personally emote, like to myself, where I realise that I've sort of gone through something again suddenly. But that's pretty rare. Each of these songs are sort of in me, and they just come out and then they're gone. I perform them - and they are just performances in a way. They're pieces I've written, and they were cathartic to write then, and now they serve as art that I show to people."

The fact is, however, that Garneau has been showing a lot of the same art to people for some five years. In the midst of his second European tour this year on the same album platforms, I couldn't help but ask what it was like to be singing these same tragic songs so many years later. He responded that "it sort of just makes the anticipation for playing new material higher and higher. It's not that I don't still have attachments to a lot of these songs, but in a sense because the majority of them were written so long ago, I sort of see how my songwriting has changed. And I just become very excited to play new material for people. So it's not dramatically keeping me in the past, but it just makes me anxious to play new material."

While his old material has served him well, being sold to the hit shows Grey's Anatomy and Private Practice, and establishing him firmly in the North American and European indie music scenes, Garneau's fans have long been awaiting something new. The artist himself has been longing for the same, and with a new album now recorded and set to be released in the new year under the tentative title "Eleanor The Cats And Kids," it seems all parties will be pleased.

"I'm very anxious to put it out," says Garneau. "I think it sort of has some strings attached to

**'That voice gives nothing away, but goes straight for your heart'**

my first collection of songs, but it takes a bit of a different direction in the end. And as a whole, it's a bit more of a conceptual record, and it's more organized, and slightly less random. And there's just a giant group effort on the whole record; there's a lot of people that played on it."

For Garneau, who usually performs solo on a piano and occasionally with a cellist, this won't be the the only departure on the new record. "There's percussion on most of it, which is sort of a big leap into the future for me," he explains. "Lyrically speaking, it's different in such a way that it's a bit less of a self-focused record. There's songs about other people besides myself, if you can imagine that."

It seems fair that Garneau be able to turn the microscope off himself for a while to tell stories beside his own. And perhaps it's a timely break, as everything seems to be going well for the musician. His audience is growing, he's sold songs to Grey's Anatomy, one of the hottest shows on television, and he seems to have successfully exorcised the demons behind 'Music For Tourists'. And perhaps most importantly, Garneau has found love with polaroid photographer and filmmaker Grant Worth.

The couple recently collaborated on a polaroid photography project based on the Choose Your Own Adventure series, which is being displayed on Worth's website. "It started with doing a birthday set at home," says Garneau. "So we baked a big ugly cake and made a whole birthday scene. And then after we shot that first one, we decided that it would be kind of cool to make a few different settings. It was really fun, and now we're selling some of our favourite ones."

With so much lined up in Garneau's court - both professionally and personally - I couldn't help but ask him what his idea of success was. The quiet-voiced musician straightened his trendy frames and gazed up at the ceiling thoughtfully. He began to speak about driving his tour bus in the mountains of southwestern France earlier in the tour, when a heavy storm hit and lashed the car with pelting rain and debris. "A really comfortable place for me to be in my career, would be to be doing well enough to not have to be the one to drive through hurricanes and storms in the mountains," he says with a big smile on his face. "That would be kind of a nice place. I don't need to have a big crazy Mariah Carey tour bus."

All jokes aside, however, it's safe to say that Chris Garneau is aware how far he's come since releasing his debut album in 2006. He's humble and self-conscious about his success, but also passionate about his music and proud of his accomplishments. And while much of the media attention surrounding him tends to concentrate on his dramatic life story, he emphatically brings it back to his music. Behind a piano, after all, is where he finds his voice and is most willing to tell his story. And like the audience in Camden Town discovered earlier this month, that's the most interesting place to hear it.



## payne or pleasure?

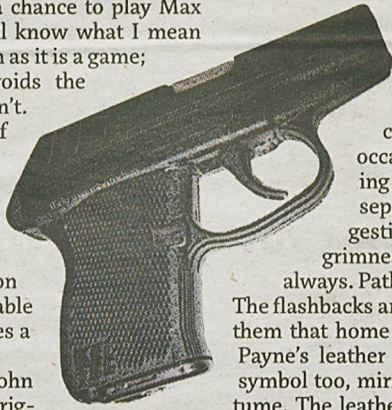
### ahmedpeerbux reviews Max Payne

This is a treat: an incarnation of one of my favourite videogames on the big screen. But I'm wary. I sit in the press screening, red pen primed, thinking of all those duff adaptations; Mortal Kombat, stinking of the Nineties, and Doom, stinking of shit. But this is different, I'm ten minutes in and I'm not writhing in my seat.

Those of you who got a chance to play Max Payne a few years back will know what I mean when I say it's as much a film as it is a game; that's why Max Payne avoids the pitfall where others haven't. Payne is the embodiment of a bum deal. A beautiful wife and daughter shot dead in cold blood. He has nothing. Throw in a vast conspiracy, underlying political commentary on the war on terror, and a few predictable twists, and we have ourselves a movie, good and proper.

The film - directed by John Moore - boldly salutes the original game's patented bullet time sequences, some of which the Wachowski's could take a few notes from. Though towards the end of

the film, the sequences do feel somewhat exhausted. I enjoyed the complete absurdity of some of it, the way in a game you get shot to fuck, consume some sort of restorative heal-all, make a full recovery and carry on dishing out hard justice. Payne takes a shotgun to the chest at one point. A shotgun. It's all here, an ode to our super-real gaming pursuits.



Visually we're catapulted into Max Payne's world. The film has a clinical, dead tint to it which contrasted rather well against the occasional sepia flashback, showing us the world as it once was. The sepia is almost sickly sweet, suggesting a naive departure from the grimness of reality. Snow and rain, as always. Pathetic fallacy stretched to its limit.

The flashbacks are as grainy as you can get, giving them that home video of an old birthday effect. Payne's leather jacket proved quite a powerful symbol too, mirroring that of a superhero's costume. The leathery crunch it makes as he walks down quiet corridors oozes tension.

I liked the way Max Payne also makes a gun a weapon again. All too often today we see guns

in films making that lame generic whisper that's supposed to be a shot fired. Remember the way Dirty Harry's Magnum almost deafened you? All hail the return of the hand cannon!

The cast pulled off their roles to an extent. I'm pleased to see Mark Wahlberg in a leading role, my only qualm being the fact that director John Moore has him dramatically scream a couple of times, forcing the whole audience to cringe. His voice alone carries so much weight, is there really a need for him to wail like some period drama wuss? I mentioned predictable twists; we can see from early on who the villains are, though I just can't help feeling this compounds our sympathy for Max Payne's pain. I don't want to offer a comparison to a Shakespearean situation of tragic dramatic irony, but the premise is pretty much the same: we have to watch him find out the hard way. And it hurts.

Watch it. If you don't enjoy it I can promise you'll at least enjoy the credits. They have got to be the best way I've ever seen names listed. They're shamelessly crammed with gun shots, cocking gun sounds and pyro-displays. Enough to tease the Die Hard out of us all. If this doesn't impress you, you're either a dirty liar or an art house prude. Possibly both.

## unnatural laws of attraction

### trentmaynard doesn't shop at american apparel

Long ago are the days of the curvaceous and firm-breasted film starlet, or the tall, mustached and hairy-chested leading man. Since the loosening of gender roles and the virtual abolition of gender absolutes sparked by the feminist movement, genderised beauty ideals have been changing, and so has the representation of males and females in cinema.

In the 21st century - and more specifically in an age where the term "metrosexual" has become more of a cliché than a social insight - beauty ideals have become less clearly delineated along gender lines. All you need to do is browse through an American Apparel store to see just how unisex fashion has become. And when clothes start hugging male and female models in the same way, it seems to be signalling some sort of trend that goes beyond fashion. Clothes, after all, are just one aesthetic tool we use to attract



mates. And if fashion is becoming androgynous, does that mean we are starting to find androgyny attractive?

The cinema has always preserved insights into the contemporary notions of beauty in which films find their context. Looking back to 1930s cinema, we find the striking angular faces of actresses like Greta Garbo and Jean Harlow, with their high cheekbones and sharp features. The 1950s saw the curvy figures and glowing complexions of Marilyn Monroe and Kim Novak.

Male beauty remained somewhat static, as actors changed from the broad-shouldered masculinity of Clark Gable in the 1930s to the slightly more youthful broad-shouldered masculinity of James Dean and Marlon Brando in the 1950s. Given the social contexts of classic Hollywood cinema, however, it is no wonder that beauty relied heavily on gender binaries.

Society, however, no longer clings to the same

reservoir of assumptions that were responsible for constructing notions of gender-specific beauty. This has resulted in some kind of an equilibrium effect, in which gender representations have moved closer together to fill the divergence that once existed. Cinema today has embraced the changing notions of gender and gender beauty.

Androgyny is no longer just confined to Chris Tucker in "The Fifth Element" or Tilda Swinton in everything. In reality, it has become much less explicit, but much more mainstream. The representation of male and female beauty has followed the gender equilibrium effect, resulting in an androgenisation of actors and actresses.

Actors have become increasingly thin, pale and hairless, with delicate frames and feminine facial features. Just think of Orlando Boom, Zac Efron, and Jonathan Rhys Meyers.

Actresses have lost their curvy physiques, with breasts and hips being marginalised to pornography while flat-chested waifs parade around on screen looking like malnourished teenage boys. Think Keira Knightley, Nicole Kidman and Ellen Page.

And where does that leave the cinema? With boys that look like girls kissing girls that look like boys. Somehow, accidentally, Hollywood really has come a long way.



## reprographic rehab

### stephanieharris makes amy art

In today's world we take for granted a mass borrowing of items from popular culture in art - from the cheap crucifixes and store-bought razor blades on Damien Hirst's canvases to Jeff Koon's giant balloons - but it wasn't always this way. The pioneers of the Pop Art movement in the 1950s were the first to challenge the artistic elite and assert that the use of mass-produced visual commodities for us to contemplate in art was acceptable and valuable. Drawing heavily on advertising, comic books and mundane cultural objects, Pop artists challenged the viewer with irony and emphasised the banality of life.

In Britain, one of the original members of the movement was Gerald Laing, who pioneered in painting photographic images of models, astronauts and film stars taken from newspapers on enormous canvases and subsequently produced

some of the most iconic works of the age, such as his 1962 portrait of French beauty Brigitte Bardot.

Laing was always interested in fragility and femininity, and was also politically engaged. After meeting Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein and Robert Indiana in New York in 1963, he produced one of the most controversial paintings of his career, Lincoln Convertible, which is the only painting of the Kennedy assassination from that time.

It was the assassination of both Kennedys and Martin Luther King and the ongoing violence in Vietnam that led Laing to become disillusioned with the American dream. In 1969, he decamped to the Scottish Highlands and turned his back on painting, concentrating on sculpture for the next 35 years.

However in 2003, images from the Abu Ghraib prison torture scandal started to appear



in the press, and Laing, himself a former British army officer, was stirred enough to pick up his paintbrushes for the first time in decades. Once again he used Pop Art imagery to communicate poignant and powerful images of the conflict as well as critical images of Tony Blair and his role in the debate.

Laing has also recently returned to the theme of the female muse and in the context of the twenty first century it is nobody else but Amy Winehouse that has most captivated his imagination. "What interests me is the combination of the wonderful graphic power of her visual image and the extraordinary and almost mythical events of her life. The latter are always misunderstood, misinformed and misrepresented by the media; but they are the stuff from which a mythology is created," says Laing.

Laing has created numerous depictions of Winehouse for his first UK exhibition in decades, including The Kiss II, depicting the singer in a passionate embrace with her now-incarcerated husband Blake Fielder-Civil, and Belshazzar's Feast, which depicts her reaching for more wine on a table laden with food and drink, mimicking Rembrandt's masterpiece at the National Gallery.

*If you want to check out one of Pop Art's luminaries, head to Ocontemporary gallery, 193 Wardour Street, London, W1F where New Paintings for Modern Times runs until November 15th.*

## the pop father

### suying sees more than just dots

Mention Ben-day dots and comic strips and most people would instantly recognise the Pop Art movement, but only a surprisingly few would remember the name of the master behind all these works. Roy Lichtenstein can be found everywhere: postcards, adverts, album covers and even recycling bags to name a few. We believe that his work is certainly over-commercialised, but we can't blame him!

Lichtenstein was one of the foremost members of the Pop Art movement which challenged traditional definitions of art in the 1960s. He was ranked amongst the legends of Pop Art, alongside Warhol and Pollock, and was considered the "purest, most definitive popist" alongside his rival Warhol, as they simplified everything to lines and dots, and made the modern world seem extremely flat. His objects drew direct reference to American popular culture, much like the work of Tom Wesselmann and Robert Rauschenberg.

Lichtenstein did not start out with the modern typographic and printing techniques we are so familiar with, but was known more as an Abstract Expressionist earlier on in his career. Later, in his late 30s, he made thrilling interpretations of contemporary mass media images. Rumour has it that the reason behind this transition was that his son showed him a picture of Mickey Mouse and said that his daddy would never be able to paint something that beautiful. The pressure was on and Lichtenstein started to paint in the form of a comic-strip frame by 1962. Most of the cartoon elements within his work were

characterised by their 'imperfection', reflecting how he attempted to copy out a cartoon without alteration.

Who said that actions speak louder than words? Linguistics are arguably the most important components of Lichtenstein's work. However, the Whaam!'s, the Blam!'s and the Bratatata!'s brushed in blood-red paint have a deeper meaning. They represent explosions, battles and bullets - visualise the special effects of Pearl Har-



bour combined with the comedic effects of the Dirty Dozen. Most of these works usually deliver strong messages about war and violence, one of the main categories (others include love and hate and science fiction) that Lichtenstein constantly reprised.

However, the great artist also encountered difficulties in his career. When a famous magazine headlined their Lichtenstein special "Is he the Worst Artist in the US?" it reflected the public uncertainty about the validity of Lichtenstein's work. Lichtenstein himself practised self-criticism by saying "Picasso himself would probably have thrown up looking at my pictures". The biggest irony of his work is that, his creation of art from familiar comics has now been commercialised and spread across the globe.

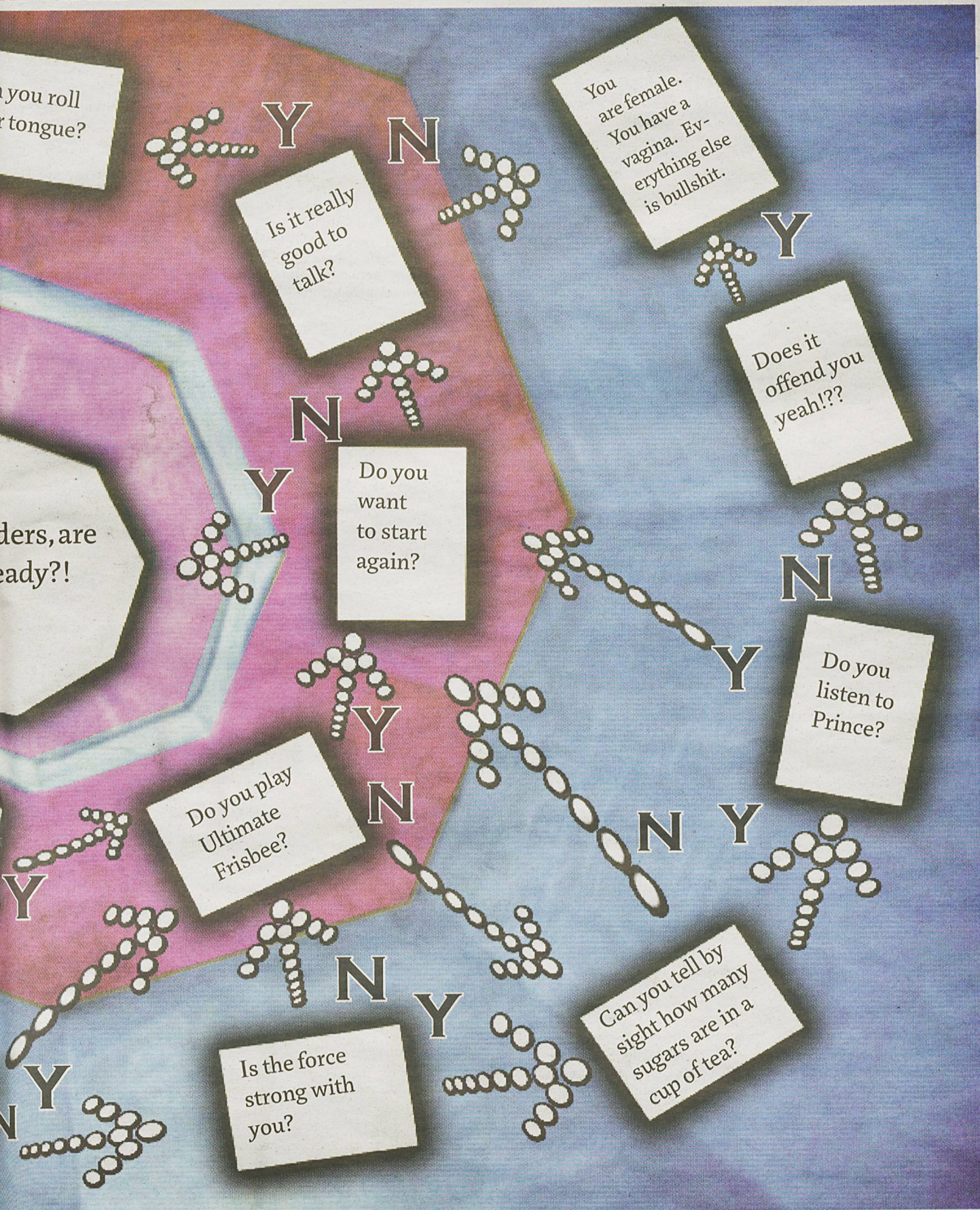
Most people who have actually seen Lichtenstein's real work in galleries would disagree with sceptics who believe that he simply magnified frames from published comics, or that his work lacked originality. Most of his work stun gallery-goers by their gigantic size, and the Ben-day dots were deliberately painted in such an abstract pattern that they weren't overlooked, unlike the mechanical dot-shading used in comic strips. In a nutshell, instead of taking the lazy option of spray - painting the dots, he applied each dot individually and used overlaid dots to produce different tones. So if you think that with a few oil colours and Magna acrylic in the cupboard you can give it a go, you are most probably wrong. Don't try this at home kids!



# A IS FOR A



# ANDROGYNY ...



## queer as a bloke?

### ruby buckley explores Bowie's Labyrinthine sexuality

**M**y dad has a huge record collection. It practically looms over us in the living room. When I was younger I used to enjoy looking at the pines of the CDs, picking out the brightly coloured ones and trying to guess what kind of music was on t. One particular cover would always catch my eye. A beautiful, blue-eyed blonde, her hands embracing her head as she gazed into the distance. Finding out many years later that this was the Hunky Dory album cover was a big shock.



I've always been a Bowie fan. Along with Liverpool FC, he filled the god-shaped hole in our household. It never clicked that this seductress on the Hunky Dory cover was the same person as the junky pirate who sang "Rebel Rebel", the coked-up Thin White Duke and the yellow haired crooner of "Let's Dance" fame. Damn, David Bowie makes a beautiful woman!

Glam rock was terribly camp and terribly kitsch but it saved a huge wave of music fans from the heavy metal of Black Sabbath and the tedium of hippiedom. Bands like Slade, Mud and the Sweet donned the staple uniform of big trousers.

Big shoes and big hair, but despite their posturing and glitter they were definitely heterosexual in their laddish lyrics. Bowie led the Glam Rock parade with Marc Bolan, his main competition at that time and together with the rest of the gang they swamped the charts of the early seventies.

John Lennon said of Bowie's glam act that it was just "rock and roll with lipstick." This is perhaps true of Bolan, who slapped on a bit of liploss and didn't cut his curly locks. But Bowie took things to a completely different level. Not only was he sexually ambiguous, but one could wonder whether he came from this planet at all! Little Richard, the flamboyant, make-up-wearing, gay (but not openly so) rock star must surely have made an impact on Bowie and

helped to create immortal characters such as Ziggy Stardust. Unlike Little Richard however, Bowie took a very different approach to his sexuality. In 1970 he gave an interview to gay magazine 'Jeremy' which signalled that he was at least sympathetic to the gay community. In fact, he appropriated a lot of his look from the gay subculture he saw when going out in London clubs. In 1972 he even told Melody Maker "I'm gay and I always have been, even when I was David Jones". We mustn't forget that homosexuality was only legalised in 1967. A married man with a child, gay? Definitely bisexual, or trisexual. Bowie was also extremely perceptive, and tapped into the huge gay following which was drawn to his weird and wonderful characters and songs about Queen Bitches. Bowie would continue to mess around with gender roles most notably in his promo video for the 1979 single "Boys Keep Swinging", which offered a stark contrast to the YMCA esque, albeit ironic, lyrics and macho delivery of the song on record. The video showed a suited Bowie and three backing vocalists, all of whom turned out to be Bowie himself in drag. Bowie had come from the long-haired, dress-wearing blonde via an impish, short-haired alien creation to drag, with many other fascinating characters in between. Bowie has 'queered' pop, and as the song goes, we're still "not sure if you're a boy or a girl".

### pop has eaten itself

**O**f Montreal gripped us last year with their 2007 album *Hissing Fauna, Are You The Destroyer?* It was gorgeous. It was intricate, I didn't understand half of what was actually going on in any given track, but I was hooked. And their live show in support followed suit. A Willy Wonka-style melee of mind candy with costumes, glitter, and a bird-man in the corner. But in all that dancing, leaping spectacle there was the that sharp licorice-flavored misery that front man Kevin Barnes had put into the album underlying it all. He was a very sad man, and his songs made you cringe with how much he hated himself. We danced to his ode to chemicals, because it's a damn catchy song, but there was always the irony in this fact that we erupt with the excitement to never have to feel anymore. His agony costumed by the live show was exactly what we wanted because it was 10,000 degrees more intense than that which we feel ourselves.

Which is why I left last week's London gig in support of the fresh-out-the-box new album, *Skeletal Lamping*, unable to repeat any other thought but one: I'm sorry. I'm sorry, Kevin, that I so hungrily gulped down the feast that was the most recent year of your career. It left me sick for days, unable to fully digest what was going on, only to demand more when I was finally able to crawl out of bed. I was certainly shocked with the reception of nothing but leftovers to consume. This new album and tour feel just like that; leftovers. A regurgitation of the one-liners, weird tones, and of course, elaborate costumes and imagery that drew us in the last time. Except this time

once you get to the table, it's all a little cold and mushy, not as hearty as the last time. We're microwaving *Hissing Fauna* in an attempt to keep it warm. *Skeletal Lamping* is the nuked result and, as any college student knows, nuking something is not real cooking, and the results are just not the same.

And these new Of Montreal productions are just not the same. It all sounds much like the last, but where's the music, Kevin? Where's that grinding irony that gripped us into the outright disturbance of the last one? This new character you've got, the man dancing and singing like everyone wants him to dance and sing, where's his pain? He's a figment of an imagination, a story. He's not real, but you're trying to sell him as if he is. If I wanted to dance to pop songs, I would go to every other club in London and bounce up and down to Katy Perry. Why have I arrived at your amazingly anticipated show only to see the same unbearably homogenous crowd dressed exactly like you,

### emily kaiser reviews a gig-funeral Of Montreal

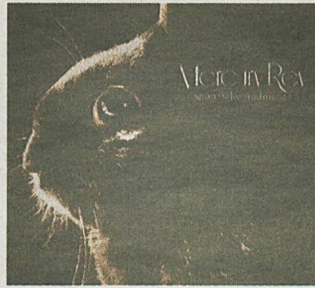


bouncing up and down in the same repetitive manner to every single song? Before it was a cover up of something substantive. Now it's strictly mindless consumption. Let them eat cake.

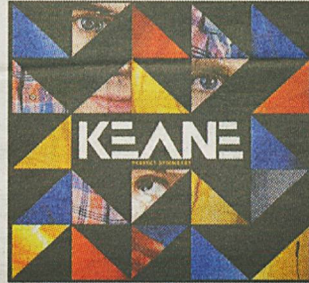
The show felt like a funeral. Let's gather for a moment, and remember the highlights of something we once loved. This review feels like a eulogy. How sad that we don't have what we once did. But unfortunately it's not that way. We still cling to Barnes as our demi-God, Of Montreal as the soundtrack to our hipness. We don't see the devolvement into buying albums for the shit that we're sold instead of the music, the going to shows to bounce up and down instead of experiencing the performance. So, in the end, I'm sorry. I'm sorry our gluttony made Of Montreal into midnight munchies, and I'm sorry that our continuing hunger lets us settle for just any taste.

snowflake midnight - mercury rev  
helencharles

In the decade since NME and Mojo tapped the breakthrough classic *Deserter Songs* as album of the year, Mercury Rev have come through a host of archetypal troubles, record label bankruptcies and petty ego squabbles. Refreshingly 'Snowflake Midnight' is a reinvention of sorts for the Buffalo, NY band who, some fans felt, delved a little too deep into "dad-rock" territory on their last studio outing. The new sound is based in layered electronics, with all the melodramatic punch of M83 or - on 'Senses on Fire' for example - Brian Eno. Still, long-time fans will recognise a classic Mercury Rev epic in 'People are So Unpredictable' with its soaring peaks, dramatic interludes and ruminations on life's fleeting moments. Lyrically the album doesn't always stand up, but, as always, producer (and former band member) Dave Fridmann does the band proud. An enlivening addition to the Mercury Rev discography especially with the free download companion album featuring remixes by Fujiya and Miyagi and Holden.



album reviews



Keane's new album *Perfect Symmetry* kicks off with the upbeat single release. Spiralling - which, like parts of the album, although hinging on their original sound, now incorporates some 80s influence. This is due to, the band say, the eclectic range of instruments they found in their recording studios. Similarly upbeat songs, (without, thank God a semi-rap as in *Spiralling*) are *Better Than This* and *Again and Again*. However, it's worth listening to the subtler tracks to appreciate the whole album; Keane return back to their roots with the simple yet sweet piano ballad *Love is The End*, and also *Black Burning Heart*. Singer Tom Chaplin's soaring voice is still on top form, and the 3rd album is a variety of high-tempo pop with softer relaxing songs. Despite a few dud tracks, their two years' absence from the music scene have been well spent, allowing the band to evolve and hone their song-writing skills, whilst still keeping in line with the Keane Theme.

perfect symmetry - keane  
catherinecapone

holy fuck it's holy fuck!

fucking julianboys fucks around with Holy Fuck

Bands with profanity in their names tend to be very good (see *Fucked Up* and *Fuck Buttons*), but the wacky nomenclature scares off the taste making squares in mainstream media and limits them to underground success. When you add to this Holy Fuck's habit of seeking out obsolete machinery to make music instead of 'normal' instruments, you have a recipe for an inaccessible racket. However they create a style of drum-driven music laden with pop hooks which everyone can dance to, and when Part B chatted to the Toronto group they explained how their idiosyncratic brilliance came about.

"We started out in guitar bands, but this started as a side project as a way of experimenting and having fun. When you sit around playing guitar and you're trying to nail something, inevitably there's going to be a moment when you put it down and try something else. It's only a matter of time before you just start fucking around!"

This I can accept, as anyone who doggedly wrestled with electric guitars in their teens will understand. However on realising that I wasn't going to be a new middle class Hendrix my first instinct was not to swap my Stratocaster for 35mm film run through old film editing equipment and out under a record player's needle, or to mutate the sounds of children's keyboards with guitar pedals, as the Holy Fuckers did.

"Some of the keyboards we find, they might not be traditionally considered hi-tech or whatever, but there's a lot of options on some of them. Something we found in Brighton in a second hand shop, you'd think it was the opposite of hi-tech because it looks like its from the Eighties and it runs on batteries, but there's like a hundred beats on it!"

The desire for home-made electronic sounds which can be reproduced in a live setting is admirable in an age when any dweeb with a laptop can at the press of

a button splurge out a smorgasbord of bleeps and tones, though it does have its drawbacks.

"The instruments we're using can break, or get lost by customs when we fly. That happened in Glasgow on this tour when we didn't have all our equipment. And until we find a replacement there are some songs we can't play, just because the tone of that loop or that preset, that really exciting beat was only on that one keyboard."

When I suggested they record the sounds from the keyboards onto computer so they don't lose them, they seemed surprised and slightly appalled, like when an LSE student is told there might be more to life than investment banking. Because their unusual methods might be inhibiting pragmatically, musically the effects are entirely liberating - during live shows the songs may sound completely different to on record, while other sections are improvised.

"Most of our songs are at least half-conceived on the stage. There's a song we play every set that we just made up at a festival in Greece because we didn't have any songs left and they wanted a second encore."

This kind of attitude makes for exciting gigs, and when they played later that evening at the packed out King's College Students' Union the audience was expectant. The drummer and bassist arranged themselves at the back while the two frontmen faced each other over desks full of tangled gadgetry, which throughout would be constantly adjusted and re-connected as instruments were changed for each song. A few of the pop-piersongs which on record were like 'Lovely Alien' with its euphoric vibrations, but

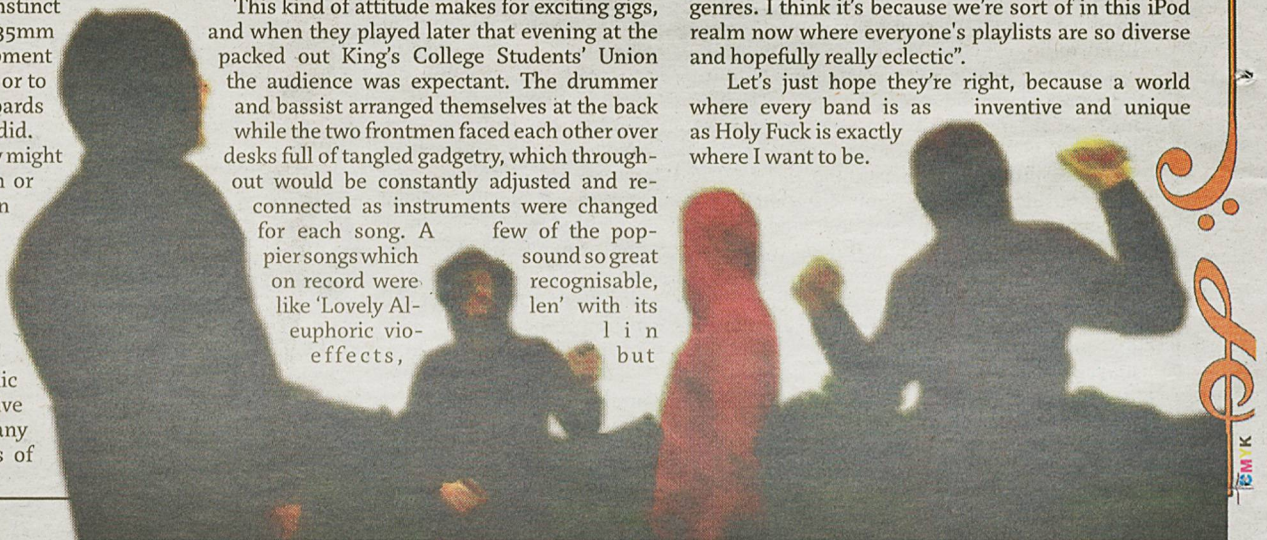
they excelled when they looked like they were having the most fun: weird noises and indescribable sounds would emanate from the crazily bouncing men with machines while pounding drums and throbbing bass structured it all. The effect is much like electronic music, though the prominence of the live drums makes them difficult to classify, as they had mentioned earlier.

"I think we're gonna hire a marketing person to come up with a genre title that's really catchy, and we'll brand it and then we'll be the champions of it! We came up with *Skrunk*, but other people have said *Organic Electronica*, that's all right. Hopefully there isn't a genre which we fit into".

This sort of coyness about self-classification is common, and understandable for any self-respecting musician, but rarely is it so justified as in the band's case.

"Maybe ten years ago that would have come across pretentious, saying 'we don't wanna be labelled man!' or at least it could be conceived that way. But honestly, now, almost every band is beyond genres. I think it's because we're sort of in this iPod realm now where everyone's playlists are so diverse and hopefully really eclectic".

Let's just hope they're right, because a world where every band is as inventive and unique as Holy Fuck is exactly where I want to be.



music

EMK

## calm a llama down

### holliestman thinks the boosh have lost their might

Somewhat dubiously, I stood outside the Brixton academy gazing at the sea of what appeared to be little fifteen year olds swarming towards me. Had I come to the wrong place? I thought I was coming to see the Mighty Boosh live tour, but surely the audience gathering outside weren't actually old enough to stay up past the watershed?

The Mighty Boosh has become a cult classic, attracting an army of Boosh followers, many imitating the androgynous Camden-chic style adopted by one of the show's main characters Vince Noir, the alter ego of Noel Fielding.

The show follows the escapades of Vince Noir and his jazz-obsessed, nut-megwearing companion Howard Moon, played by Julian Barratt. The two main characters are supported by a plethora of other weird and wonderful individuals ranging from Bollo (a giant gorilla) and the Hitcher (a green cockney zombie with a Polo packet taped to his face)



to the more surreal, namely the Crack Fox (a fox puppet with syringes for fingers).

The eclectic nature of the TV show made me question just how successful a stage version could be. Would it be possible to achieve the same range of general weirdness so effectively executed on the small screen on a big stage in front of a live audience? The answer proved to be: not really.

The show kicked off with the sort of conversation between Howard and Vince, consisting of general insults regarding Howard's dull psyche in comparison to Vince's sparkle, which anyone who has seen the show would know to expect. This appeared to set the tone for the rest of the show - sure, it was funny, but it wasn't groundbreaking cult-classic stuff, I wasn't about to wet my knickers with laughter, or hyperventilate due to sheer hilarity. As the show progressed I found myself laughing because I felt I

had to, out of politeness, and moreover, because I felt that, surrounded by a mass of Boosh fanatics, it was the most socially acceptable thing to do.

The amateur vibe which is eminent and endearing in the TV show was also a highlight of the live version. At one point Tony Harrison's (a pink, tentacled, testicle-esque shaman) microphone ceased to function, followed by an equally amusing prop malfunction. Vince's hijacking of Howard's 'serious play' about the plight of global warming was the high point. Vince stormed on stage in a giant space orb, emerging from the shuttle wearing a sequined, and extremely skimpy, Trojan outfit, leaving both genders in the audience in awe at the beauty of the man before them. Cross-dressing was also prevalent in the finale as all the characters took to the stage wearing granny style florals, blue rinses and handbags, and formed a rock band to sing a ballad about soup.

The Mighty Boosh, although still worthy of its mighty adjective, does appear to have reached a crossroads. Its cult status and rise to the mainstream, while being its saving grace, may also be the cause of its downfall. Original humour is extremely difficult to maintain, and with the encore consisting of a song with the lyric "I took a shit", it seems to be waning already.

## she's behind you!

### meganjones explores gender ambiguity in pantomime

The term pantomime originates from the Greek panto (all) and mimos (mimic); so it is apt that in modern productions men get their oversized knickers in a twist and girls squeeze themselves into tight breeches in a riot of gender ambiguity. The pantomime is not only an inescapable feature of the festive season, it is also part of a rich history of androgyny, and downright gender confusion, being employed for theatrical effect.

The practice of cross-dressing within drama dates back to the mystic bacchanalia festivals of the Romans, and gender role swapping can also be traced back to the old festival of the Twelfth Night, when it was customary for the natural order of things to be reversed. The theatrical tradition of men playing female roles was advanced during the Renaissance and was a common occurrence during Shakespeare's lifetime when women were banned from taking to the stage.

The pantomime dame is a staple of theatrical tradition, and during pantomime season theatres are awash with minor celebrities and ex-East-enders actors in wigs. Even 'serious' actors such as Sir Ian McKellen have been known to get out the blue eye shadow, pull on some flowery pink bloomers and camp it up for the sake of entertainment.

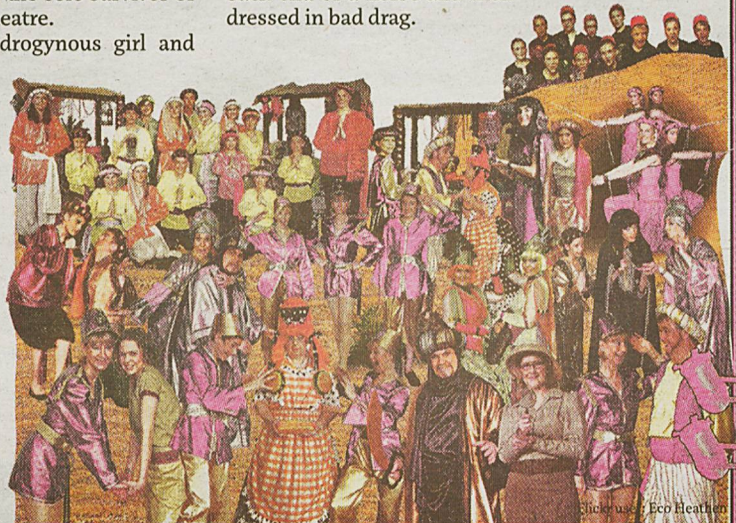
Women have played male roles since the 1800s, but the first time a woman took the role of the principal boy - the male protagonist of a pantomime, usually played by a young actress in boy's

clothes - was in Jack and the Beanstalk in 1815. In austere Victorian society, when female attire went down to the ankles, and very little flesh was on display, men would have craved the sight of a shapely calf or ankle. For theatre producers concerned with ticket sales for their next production the idea of a (relatively) scantily clad principal boy was an opportunity not to be missed. The tradition of the principal boy held sway in pantomime throughout the World Wars, and despite a decline in the practice during the 1950s and '60s, the role of the principal boy remains the sole survivor of male impersonation in the theatre.

The presence of an androgynous girl and overly-effeminate man is crucial to the chaotic comedy and sense of confusion that characterises pantomime. Pantomime is about escaping into a fantasy world - reality is not important and we are not supposed to believe that the curvaceous woman on stage is in fact a teenage boy with a pocket full of magic beans. In a form of entertainment aimed at all ages, the presence of an unthreatening woman in the lead role ensures that any romance between the

principal boy and the fair maiden remains sexually innocent and is also likely to elicit shrieks of laughter from young children. Likewise, the pantomime dame is funny precisely because she is a caricature of the real-life bustling, over-bearing and highly dramatic woman.

Without the sexes swapping roles and playing an extreme, stereotyped form of the other, pantomime wouldn't be funny because it wouldn't be unreal. So, the next time you watch a pantomime, remember that there is more to it than merely the back end of a horse and men dressed in bad drag.





# a woman's place is in the ....

## Paula Swaton tenderises genderising food

Here's some food for thought. Most of you have certainly at some point considered what the food you are consuming is doing to your body. It is a universal truth that chip butties unquestionably pay deviance to your waistline, chocolate makes you happy due to its heady emporium of endorphins, calorie-clear celery is the ultimate dieting food while aphrodisiacs such as chillies boost libido and oysters are for seduction.

Since food affects our mind as well, then it follows that it plays a role in what we are. Food is in a multitude of ways linked to identity. Since our gender is part of our identity then the question arises whether food can be



genderised. Food consumption indeed denotes gender and sexuality cross-culturally. In some cultures such as the Hua of Papua New Guinea, foods are classified according to male and female. By eating each others food Hua men and women can attenuate some of the traits from the other sex.

The genderisation of food goes back to the age of hunter-gatherers when the division of labour left females to gather wild plants, while males hunted. In fact this genderisation of food on a practical level is still evident today and shows the archaic forces behind men's and women's differing attitudes to food. It is

no fallacy that the one time of the year when your average male kitchen novice puts on his apron is for the summer barbecue. After a year long itch the annual ritual finally presents him with the opportunity to legally play with fire. No wonder that Argentina, a notoriously macho society has parillas (steakhouses) as its national symbol.

In the age of capitalism, women's role in food production is mostly confined to the domestic sphere. This has given the role ruthless undercurrents of female subordination. Therefore seeing a man in the kitchen temporarily offers a hope of salvation that women are not doomed to the kitchen. Moreover it shows some creation and evolution on behalf of the man who has progressed beyond playing with fire in the bushes. His cave-like power-hungry image becomes subdued when we place him in front of the kitchen sink, holding shiny stainless steel cutlery and not a big bow and arrow. Man becomes less intimidating and more accessible. Or is it simply that after years of ridicule about women's place being in the kitchen, we can laugh because look who is now cooking up a storm in the kitchen? Whichever may be the case, there is indeed something vaguely sexy about a man cooking. Chew on that.

## fantasy food

### Jonathan Weir seeks a girl who eats like the cookie monster

Is there something wrong with me? It's my fantasy to be the lone bloke in the Sofia Coppola film Marie Antoinette, you know the one with cakes? Little cakes dripping with icing and cream... See, apparently I'm not supposed to like cake being a bloke; now if it was steak and chunky chips, a T-bone at that, or a kebab; something big, bruising and meaty. At least that's what the stereotype would predict. But why can't a girly night in kick off with a bacon fry up and an 'it's not for girls' Yorkie bar? It's the usual disgusting type-casting, aimed at trapping girls and guys in 'food brackets', it's enough to put you off your lunch...

Not wanting to sound like a corporate basher, the 'genderisation' of food is the crime, or swag bag, of advertising. The image of a sweet and innocent girl goes hand in hand with the sugary treats of cakes and chocolate, but an action man needs his carbs and protein. Hence the t-bone. So while Nigella Lawson displays her cupcakes, George Forman is busy with his grill; both of them are part of a regime of food fascism.

Ok, so all this is thoroughly depressing, especially when you see the stick insects on show at London Fashion Week. But it's pretty serious. It has dire consequences as cake eating means poor nutrition. But it's not just about genderised food; girls are all together encour-

aged to eat as little as possible, and what they do eat should be disgusting 'light' versions of the real deal. This thoroughly pisses me off, and sadly my anger is usually directed at the poor girl who's really the victim. I once took a girl to a fancy Italian restaurant. Three courses and a few bottles of red shared with a gorgeous lady is my idea of heaven, and yet she chose to order a salad without dressing, and water. She claimed she was 'watching her calories'. She was a size 8. There was no second date.

It's not that I like the bigger girl, or someone who eats like the Cookie Monster, it's just it seems that social pressures have turned a love of food into a female taboo. The same thing is happening to guys, who are increasingly encouraged to drink hideous protein shakes in order to 'buff up' when really they could just enjoy a few fried eggs...

My plea to everyone? Eat. Eat the foods you most enjoy, screw whether its 'girly' or 'guyish', and screw your carbs plan. Okay, you might need to spend a little extra time in the gym, but it's worth it for the absolute pleasure of enjoying food with friends, a huge bowl of spag bol, a delicious piece of smoked haddock, or even just a few pink iced cupcakes.



### part B recipe

#### Nigella's Cupcakes

easiness - 9/10  
tastiness - 10/10  
cheapness - 7/10

stuff that goes in it:

- 125g butter
- 125g caster sugar
- 125g self-raising flour
- 2 large eggs, beaten
- 1/2 tsp vanilla essence
- 2-3 tsp milk

1. Whack everything except the milk in a bowl and mix together till smooth.
2. Gradually stir in the milk until the mixture has a soft, dropping consistency (so it drops off the spoon).
3. Spoon into cases and bake for 15-20 mins in a pre-heated oven (200C, gas mark 6).
4. Remove from the oven and leave to cool.
5. Decorate with icing. (If you don't know how to make icing: icing sugar + boiling water, mix). Use food colouring if you want really pretty ones!



Part

When I hear the word androgyny, clichéd as it sounds, I can't help but think of Michael Jackson, who is ambiguous not on of gender but of (skin) colour. Today androgyny has become so embedded in our world that we don't give it a second thought. Men are encouraged to get in touch with their feminine side and saying gingerbread man is no longer politically correct. Yes, as you would have already guessed, it is now called gingerbread person. Offices have unisex toilets, and recently the new trend has developed into having female, male, disabled and transgender toilets. Beauty products and perfumes for men are ubiquitous, and it's hard to distinguish between male and female trainers and watches.

Some women's fondness for a gay male best friend can be seen as a form of androgyny. Women want the best friend who understands and listens to them embodying female characteristics but at the same time not being overtly emotional or malicious (allegedly male traits). High street retailer River Island have started selling 'grow your own gay best friend'.

Androgyny is everywhere. It can be seen in today's career patterns. There has been an increase in male air hosts and make up artists, and there are more women City traders than ever before. Women are actively encouraged to consider traditionally male-dominated fields such as construction and hedge funds.

Is there increasing pressure for men to be androgynous and get in 'touch' with their hidden femininity? The sudden increase in men wearing trousers so tight that they can be mistaken for leggings, and cardigans which remind us of our granny doesn't seem top be a coincidence. Conversely, Yves Saint Laurent brought to women the first 'power suits'. Famous for putting a woman into a man's tuxedo and reworking the rules of women's fashion, he gave women the confidence to do what men do - but better (think Samantha from Sex and the City). Are women unconsciously told by society that masculinity and power is the only way to succeed in their career?

So why is there this trend towards blurring gender difference? Do men and women want to understand each other better? Is it just a 'one size fits all' marketing gimmick?

This last questions deserves further thought. In the financial environment, it isn't surprising to find that marketers use single campaigns to target both sexes in order to cut down the budget. As companies become more money hungry, it only makes sense to increase the potential consumer pool. Pink Nintendo Wiis were developed to appeal to female gamers when at the same time men are increasingly wearing pink shirts.

Another interesting case to consider is that of unisex salons. Women with extremely short hair. Men waxing their chest. Gone are the days when you had separate salons for each sex. Perhaps now it's more cost-effective to have a common area to cater for all sexes as so many of the services offered are common.

Whatever the reason, if divorce rates soar, children will surely appreciate a dummy (mixture of mummy and daddy), eh?

## gender blurring

johndegraff-johnson  
is an alpha male



malvikasaraogi  
isn't a dummy

Androgyny isn't a weird sexual position only found in the dungeons of Camden or Hoxton; it's far more widespread and subtle than that. Don't let the word scare you into images of cross-dressing or homosexual stereotypes, it's not about diving headfirst into the other sex (although that could be fun).

Androgyny permeates throughout fashion, from catwalk shows to Topshop. The biggest trend in men's fashion recently has been jeans clad so tightly to calves and ankles it's a surprise circulation can continue. Skinny jeans were first womens territory and they give a more effeminate figure, but masculine men wear them. Jackets and blazers sit proud in many a female wardrobe, traditionally a masculine item giving a strong silhouette and personality. You wouldn't bat an eyelid at either of those because we all accept androgyny without even realising. Even top models can be androgynous to the point of confusion. I won't lie, the first time I saw Agnès B she did cross my mind as to exactly where in the gender spectrum she sat. What strikes me is that either way, I still thought she was beautiful. Should we be okay with this idea within fashion of androgyny being beautiful?

It certainly seems we have accepted it by buying into the styles handed down. Size quadruple-zero models with so few curves they could be tables scare me slightly, but then again I pretty much live in my skinnies. In the mainstream of style it certainly seems androgyny is here to stay, and I don't see anything wrong with it.

Being a more androgynous man is completely different to coming from the female perspective. You don't have to lose your identity, respect or friends to throw in a dash of the feminine. Metrosexuals started popping up everywhere a few years ago, the men who preen and pamper, but invariably look all the better for it. Sometimes maybe they went too far. Men's cosmetics is a giant industry now, so it can't just be the metros who tipped the balance. I can pretty much guarantee you walk into a rugby dressing room and moisturiser is being applied, not derided. Men can take care of themselves, there's nothing wrong with it, embrace it and let the secret out!

I stumbled across a study that described men as "strong male - weak female" and women as vice versa. Androgyny is strong male AND female. Cross-dressing isn't what I'm getting at. Your identity is more than how you look; it's about everything you give out publicly. Androgyny lives in how we talk, what sports we play and even what music we listen to. Let's not fence ourselves in with traditional gender stereotypes, do whatever you want. Most of all, don't be scared you're the only one. Everyone has a bit of the other sex in them, let it out.



# jeffrey you genius

jenbarton reckons middlesex is more than just a county

literature

The concept of androgyny has long been an intriguing one; a curvy model stomping down the runway in a tuxedo subverts your standard ideas of gender dress codes. As does cult musical character Hedwig, with his angry inch and enviable wigs, whose androgyny and sexual confusion are due in part to a botched surgery to transform him from male to female so that he can escape from Berlin Wall-era East Germany.

Calliope Stephanides, the Greek-American hero(ine) of Jeffrey Eugenides' thrilling novel *Middlesex*, is yet another androgynous character who overthrows traditional expectations. In an ancient world, Calliope was muse of epic poetry; in this one, she's the protagonist of an epic, a hermaphroditic girl who leads us on a journey from a tiny village on Mt. Olympus, where her grandmother loved her brother a little too much and set in place a series of events which would eventually lead to the birth of a child in Detroit with a rare genetic disorder, 5-alpha-reductase deficiency syndrome.

Callie's peculiarities about her identity as a female are especially awakened during adolescence; in addition to her failure to develop the trademark female sexual characteristics, she begins to lust after the Obscure Object, another girl. 'Imagine me then, at unlucky thirteen, as I entered the eighth grade.

Five feet ten inches tall, weighing one hundred and thirty one pounds. Black hair hanging like drapes on either side of my nose. People knocking on the air in front of my face and calling out, "Anybody in there?" I was in there all right. Where else could I go?' an exasperated Callie laments. After a traumatising encounter with a genetics specialist keen on keeping Callie "female," she flees to California at age 14 and becomes Cal, a boy who makes a living by showing off his genetic "gifts" in a peep-show club.

While there has long been a precedent for androgyny in literature – Ovid's Tiresias, who lives as both a man and woman, Woolf's Orlando, who easily morphs from female to male, Balzac's *La Zambinella*, a castrato mistaken for a female and worshipped by an adoring fan – Eugenides has created more than just a mythic hermaphroditic protagonist. He created someone real, that all readers can identify with – because Callie's wit and strength are qualities readers recognise and appreciate, whether or not they can relate to her particular crisis. The incredible popularity that *Middlesex* has attained (it won Eugenides the Pulitzer and Oprah has been touting it in her book club and on TV) has introduced this compelling character into the lives of millions and taken the taboo into the mainstream. Callie's story also calls to mind another classical reference: Aristophanes' speech (from Plato's *Symposium*) concerning the origin of love, and how once upon a time, before Zeus' lightning bolt pierced them apart, man and woman were one and the same.



# half a world away

sarahsahagian feels restricted

I don't like privileging sex or gender as the aspect of one's identity that drives one's life more than other factors like race, class, or religion. However, as a Gender Studies student, I often found myself wondering, if all these aspects of identity intersect, then why is my field called Gender Studies? What specifically am I studying? And what is its significance?

Then, last week in a seminar group, it occurred why I study gender. Gender is not necessarily the most important way we categorise people, but in the Western World, it is the very first. The first thing a baby hears when it is born is not what race, religion, size, class, intelligence-level or degree of attractiveness it embodies; the first thing a baby hears is - "it's a boy", or "it's a girl". Then, its first outfit is either a blue or pink baby-grow. It is a gendered subject from birth - gendered in the gender binary, at that. What this means is that we are not necessarily born with the gender we later embody.

A baby, sitting in its baby-grow, is an androgynous entity, which as yet has no idea why we are putting it in pink or blue. The colour is not given, but one that adults impose upon the child. Many people argue this training in how to be an "aggressive" male or a "passive" female is what creates gender, a concept that refers to the way human beings represent and perform sex-roles. What we must acknowledge is that we do not have to do this. It is a social construction, a choice we make new each time a baby is born. We could potentially raise children as androgynous until they decide their gender, but we don't.

There is a tremendous violence done to us as the genitals that manifest themselves openly at birth (which, in the case of inter-sexed people, does not even necessarily indicate their actual sex) begin a script which determines how we will be treated for the rest of our lives. In the Western gender-binary, where girls get to take ballet and wear dresses while boys get to join cub scouts and play aggressive contact sports, one loses more than he or she will likely ever lose again at the moment of birth; the chance to participate in half of the world's experiences.

Our realm of opportunities is diminished simply because of our genitalia. What is worse is that we do not even know this is happening.

We aren't fully thinking human beings yet, and so by the time we are conscious of being a boy or a girl, it is too late. We can't remember that violence that was done to us when we were assigned our gender at birth just because of our genitalia. We can't recall the possibility that we could have been something else, that there could be more than two genders in this world. But we are simply too brainwashed to see.

While different cultures have different experiences of gender, it is important to note that within cultures, different genders also have different experiences from one another. In my native Canada, aboriginal women are more likely than both aboriginal men and white women to be victims of domestic abuse, while working-class black women in Canada are more likely to be single parents than both black men and upper-class white women.

There is a metaphorical severing of ourselves from a possible part of our identities that occurs at birth. The part of our identity that, if allowed to choose, may have had a vagina but liked to try to pee standing up. Our opportunities for "gender play" and androgyny are restricted from the beginning, and so too are

our possibilities for play and pleasure in life. Women are taught that the pleasures of nurturing children are theirs, while men are taught that a love of sex, porn and the flesh, is theirs. There is little crossing over between pleasures that is allowed. And so, unless we are somehow lucky enough to be everything our side of the gender-binary is supposed to be, our lives are less pleasurable, because our opportunities and spaces for pleasure are cut in half.

In the end, any woman who has ever considered even for a moment that she might like to have casual sex while watching porn but would hate being a mother if she got impregnated by this experience, has already failed at being a woman. It does not matter if, after much introspection, she decides she really does like the idea of being a nurturer. The fact that we question whether our gender is natural and right for us is already a subversive act in a society that decided your gender before you could even speak or smile.

In the end, gender makes failures of us all. In any class, any culture, or any race in most of the Western world, the deployment of gender to decrease one's opportunities for pleasure is the baby's first encounter with the world. The baby, which will invariably have at least one moment in its life where part of it wonders if this is right, is therefore set up for failure from the beginning. Ironic? Seemingly, most parents insist they want their children to succeed...



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