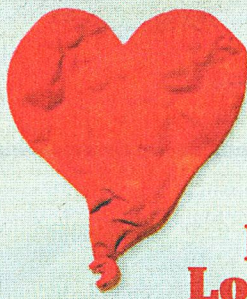


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The Beaver

15 February 2011
Newspaper of the
LSE Students' Union
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German Society ignores Students' Union advice, moves event off-campus

Controversial event shunted to luxury hotel after School issues security concerns

Lauren Fedor
Sachin Patel
Oliver Wiseman

A debate organised by the LSE Students' Union German Society was moved off-campus on Monday evening, against Students' Union recommendations to postpone the event, after at least fifty demonstrators gathered outside the original venue in protest of one of the invited panelists.

The decision to move the debate from the Hong Kong Theatre to the Waldorf Hilton on Aldwych, made minutes before the event's originally-scheduled start time of 6PM, came after LSE Security, the Students' Union, and the Free Speech Group expressed concerns about security.

The event eventually began at 7:20PM. In an email sent to the German Society on Monday evening at 7PM, Students' Union General Secretary Charlotte Gerada made clear the Students' Union's position.

"The School and the LSE Students' Union has advised that the German Society uphold the decision to postpone tonight's event, and that you do not relocate off campus this evening", Gerada wrote, adding the Students' Union was concerned the event could "compromise the safety and security of LSE students and staff".

"Despite this advice, you and your committee colleagues have chosen to ignore possible implications of relocation this evening", Gerada wrote.

Gerada reminded society members that as a Students' Union organisation, they were responsible for upholding the Students' Union Constitution and Activities By-Laws.

The event first attracted controversy

last week, when more than 100 German university students in the UK signed an open letter criticising the German Society's decision to invite Dr. Thilo Sarrazin – an economist and writer who has been criticised for allegedly making both Islamophobic and anti-Semitic comments – to participate in a debate on integration in the West. The debate was part of the society's annual symposium.

"We are vehemently opposed to the integration debate ... it draws on these provocateurs instead of on acknowledged experts", the students said in the letter, adding a debate on such a topic must be "future-oriented" and "conducted rationally, us[ing] the findings of scientific research".

Sarrazin, who previously served as a board member of the German central bank, attracted considerable ire last year when, in his best-selling book *Deutschland schafft sich ab* (Germany does away with itself), he claimed Germany's immigrant Muslim population is reluctant to integrate and has a lower level of intelligence than native Germans have. Sarrazin has also been quoted as suggesting "Eastern European Jews" are 15 per cent more intelligent than native Germans – a comment that was quickly decried by the head of the country's Central Council of Jews.

Hero Austin, Community and Welfare Officer at the LSE Students' Union, told the Beaver on Monday night that though the event was set to go ahead as of Friday, the situation "changed over the weekend".

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In solidarity, they strike



Students hand over a petition to the Democracy Committee calling for a student strike in solidarity with lecturers and academics

Full story, page 3
Photo: Phyllis Lui

Students suffer after bursary delays

Lauren Fedor

Administrative errors have left more than 150 LSE students without their bursary payments for the Lent Term.

At least 800 students at the LSE are awarded bursaries based on financial need each year. The bursaries are paid in instalments at the start of each term by the Student Loans Company (SLC), a public sector organisation that provides financial services, in terms of loans and grants, to students at colleges and universities in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Sue Plater, financial support manager at the School, said LSE Student Services only learned the Lent Term instalments had not yet been paid last Wednesday, 9th February, after students voiced concerns and the LSE contacted the SLC.

"The SLC has confirmed that it was their system at fault, relating to the 'confirmation of attendance'", Plater said.

A the end of January, students approached the financial support team, saying their bursaries had not yet been paid, Plater said, adding the School received a report on the status of all bursaries on Monday, 7th February, at which point the "status of all bursaries and the scale of the non-payments became apparent".

Plater said the LSE contacted the SLC on Tuesday, 8th February. The SLC confirmed that "there was a technical problem in their system", Plater said, telling the School they would take "action to deal with it the following day".

In an email sent last Wednesday, 9th February, to students still awaiting their bursaries, LSE Registry, which is part of the Student Services Centre and is responsible for creating and maintaining the student record, told students the problem in payments affects students with surnames beginning with letters "s" through to "z".

The Financial Support and Registry teams are working with the Fees Office to resolve the problem, according to the email.

The email said students should receive their payments by the end of the month, noting, "We have been informed by Student Finance that your Lent Term Bursary payment will be in your bank account by 21st February, 2011".

Plater told the Beaver though the LSE expects the bursaries will be paid by the 21st, the School plans to continue to check with the SLC, and will update its website accordingly if the date changes.

The email encouraged students who are "experiencing financial hardship" as a result of the delay in their bursary to contact the Financial Support Office, which is a part of the LSE's Student Services Centre and responsible for administering School funds, as well as scholarships, student-ships, prizes and awards.

And while residence fees for the Lent Term were due by the end of Week 2, Plater said that if any students needs to delay rent payments, they can contact Financial Support, who will work with LSE Accommodation to ensure students' housing.

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page 4

Crime on campus lowest in a decade

Shrina Poojara
Senior Reporter

The number of reported crimes at the LSE is at a thirteen-year low, according to statistics released last week by LSE Security, Reception and Porters. The crime rate at the School is at its lowest since 1998, the first year the LSE published such statistics.

132 crimes were reported at the School in 2010, down from 151 in 2009, according to LSE Security.

The crime statistics include, but are not limited to, assault, theft and criminal damage.

Campus locations with the highest level of crime are the Old Building, the Three Tuns, the Garrick and the British Library of Political and Economic Science, according to the statistics. OTHER – sort tomorrow

Postgraduates account for the highest proportion of crime victims, making up 42 per cent of those who have fallen victim to crime. 29 per cent of the victims were

undergraduates, followed by staff, School employees and visitors, at 14, 7 and 7 per cent respectively.

There were two reported assaults on the LSE campus in 2010, compared to five assaults in 2009, according to the statistics. There were no on-campus robberies in either 2010 or 2009.

LSE Security said the most-prevalent crime at the School is theft of personal property from communal areas. There were thirty-six such reported crimes in 2010, on par with the figure from 2009.

The LSE's Head of Security Paul Thornbury said the prevalence of theft in communal areas is the result of the LSE being "one of the few inner-city higher education institutions that retains an 'open access' policy across much of the campus". Though he said this is important to maintain the "collegiate atmosphere" of the School, Thornbury added, "This does mean that we are more vulnerable to opportunistic criminal activity than other institutions with stricter access control."

"The open access feel at the LSE is great because you don't feel like there are any restrictions", Palomie Patel, a second-

year economics undergraduate, told the Beaver, adding, "However, it is worrying to think that just by one person being careless with their possessions in once incidence, a criminal is likely to return for the prospect of other opportunities."

Thornbury agreed, saying, "We are all responsible for ensuring we aren't increasing criminal opportunity on campus. In particular, staff and students should be conscious not to leave high value electronic items unsecured in campus cafes, public areas or offices".

Bicycle theft also accounts for much of the reported crime at the School, though the number of reported bicycle thefts has decreased substantially, from forty-six incidents in 2009 to thirty-five in 2010.

LSE Security began working with neighbourhood police following a surge of bicycle thefts in the Michaelmas Term of 2009. The estimated cash loss from the theft of bicycles in 2010 was £12,544, compared with £14,673 in 2009, indicating students are bringing more valuable bicycles to campus than in previous years.

The estimated cash loss from the theft of personal property, excluding bicycles, in

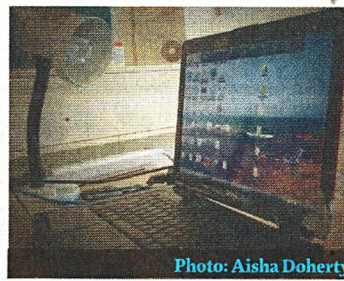


Photo: Aisha Doherty

2010 was £35,234, compared with £36,807 in 2009. A spokesperson for LSE Security told the Beaver the figure suggests a marked decrease in theft of personal property, considering the expected value of personal property brought onto campus increases year on year.

While the estimated cash loss from theft of personal property, school property, school information technology equipment, and bicycles declined from 2009 to 2010, the estimated cash loss from criminal damage increased, from £1,870 in 2009 to £10,450 in 2010.

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The Beaver

Established in 1949

Issue No. 744

Telephone: 0207 955 6705 Email: editor@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Middle East Centre – right to print

This newspaper prints a large number of stories regarding actions, opinions and campaigns that we support neither tacitly nor vocally. Where a conclusive stance is located, it exists solely within the confines of an editorial, such as this one. As readers will doubtless have noticed, innumerable column inches last term were devoted to the Students' Union's 'Freeze the Fees' campaign, the endeavours of which we successfully predicted would be predominantly fruitless. Clearly, however, our hounding of the campaigners' every movement did not obfuscate our editorial position or give greater credence to their arguments. Nowhere in our news coverage could a judgement regarding the plausibility of different parties' sentiments have been inferred.

Last week, we published an objective and overwhelmingly fact-based article ("Report raises questions over Middle East Centre management", 8th February), which wrote of the publication of a report from the organisation Student Rights, who aim to counter extremism on campus. We did not pass judgement on the merits of this report – mainly because we believe such merits are hard to find – but we believed it was in the interests of our readers to learn of the facts, and independently arrive at a conclusion (unlike some of our comrade-chums, we do not relish ramming beliefs down people's throats). This was a decision we stand by, even though the article's misinterpretation has necessitated this clarification.

We do not wish to write off Student Rights as a "partisan" and "narrow"-minded organisation, as Mr. Cushman of

the University College Union suggests we should, and we also believe the valuation of the Middle East Centre should be based primarily on the research it conducts. Consequently, we welcome the inclusive comments made by Dr. John Chalcraft and Professor John Sidel, both of whom sit on the centre's management committee, and we look forward to reporting on the centre's output in the years to come. But to suggest that our previous editorial decision makes us even partly culpable for bullying tactics and a culture of intimidation is to play us, and more importantly our readers, for fools. As evidenced before, we believe in a plurality of opinion, in the hope that the right opinion will be drawn in the final analysis.

We hope the majority of our readers took the article for what it was: the conveying of facts in a logical and impartial manner. If you wish to learn of our stance, if you can call it that, on the Israel-Palestine debate, you would be advised to read an earlier editorial of ours ("This is the only way we can participate", 18th January).

Union Bashō

Don't blame the tech

Last week's recordings show us that the best part of UGM's the end.

Bashō is committed to attending UGM. He usually makes an appearance just before it ends, but was caught out last week when it ended even earlier than usual.

Get involved in The Beaver

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Think you can write like Bernard Levin?

lsesu.com/BLA

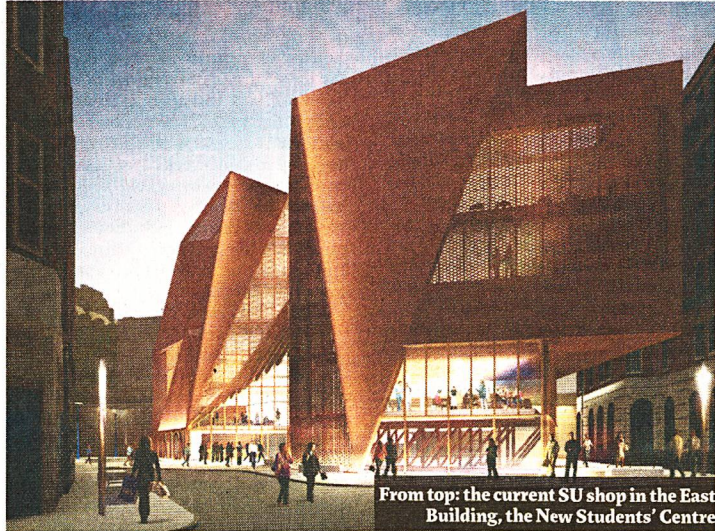
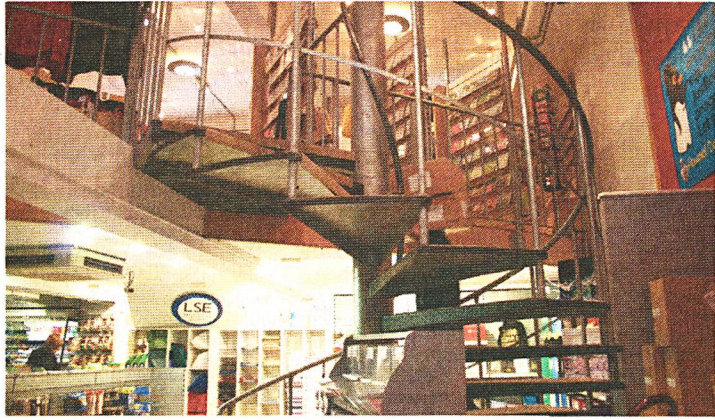


20e11ect

Home of the Media Group's Students' Union election coverage

<http://e11ect.wordpress.com>

Where to SU shop?



From top: the current SU shop in the East Building, the New Students' Centre

Mehek Zafar

The future of the LSE Students' Union Shop, which is currently located in the East Building, has been called into question after the School announced plans to redevelop the East Building and Clare Market after the opening of the New Students' Centre in 2013.

"It is highly likely that the current location of the shop on Houghton Street will change due to the opening of the New Student Centre and the redevelopment of the East Building", Martin Laws, the Students' Union head of commercial services, told the Beaver.

Students' Union General Secretary Charlotte Gerada also said the shop on Houghton Street will be relocated, but said she is unable to give a definite answer as to the exact location of the move.

During the 2009-10 academic year, the shop generated £148,000 in revenue. This revenue funds Students' Union activities, such as societies, the Athletics Union and campaigning.

The shop provides a significant source of funding for the Students' Union, impacting many of its activities. Any changes in the revenue generated will

affect the Union's capacity to source the Students' Union activities.

And some students are concerned a change in the shop's location could affect revenue. Houghton Street is a centre of student activity at the LSE. A move to another location, where foot traffic may be less frequent, could negatively impact the shop's income.

Representatives from the Students' Union and LSE Estates are currently negotiating with Andy Farrell, the School's finance director, to determine the best possible location for the shop. Such a decision includes various commercial considerations, as well as addressing issues about accessibility, and student convenience.

But Gerada said she is hopeful about any potential move. She told the Beaver that with the opening of the New Students' Centre, the "orientation of campus is likely to change substantially, and the current shop location might not be the most convenient place for students".

Laws said he is similarly optimistic about a move.

"I would expect that a change of location could only improve the revenue generated by the shop as we will be able to tailor our offer to current needs", he said.

Union officials sit down with Border Agency head

Oliver Wiseman

LSE and Students' Union cooperation against government proposals to restrict the availability of post-study visas continued last week, with participation in government consultations on the proposal.

The LSE and the Students' Union continued to cooperate against the government's proposed changes to post-study work visas last week, meeting with government officials and submitting their feedback on the proposals.

School and Students' Union officials raised concerns over the implications of a change to post-study visa policy in a meeting with Matthew Coats, head of immigration at the United Kingdom Borders Agency (UKBA) and LSE alumnus. Coats first met with LSE Director Howard Davies and Academic Registrar Simeon Underwood, among other members of the LSE's management, talking to Students' Union International Officer, Michael Lok, International Officer Daniel Kroop and seven students selected to represent the student body's demographics.

Speaking to the Beaver, Kroop described a meeting in which Coats "took a lot on board".

"Whether or not that translates in to policy is another matter. Ultimately the minister decides which policy to adopt", Kroop said. "Nonetheless, [Coats] admitted he couldn't argue with some of what we said".

Kroop said Coats was particularly receptive to the students' assertion of the value of international students to the British economy, estimated by the Guardian to be £8 billion.

Coats also told the students that consultations with City firms, who employ significant numbers of LSE graduates, have revealed the firms echo the School's concerns on the post study work visas. The firms emphasised the importance of employing an international and flexible workforce, Coats said.

The School's participation in the government's consultation also took written form. Julie Allen, who is responsible for visas in the Academic Registrar's office, submitted a consultation response to

the UKBA, on behalf of the School. The submission highlights the importance the School places on the current post study work visa system.

"The School strongly opposes the proposal to close off the Post Study Work route entirely" Allen wrote. "It is clear to us that the possibility of a post study work visa is a strong factor in the choice many of our students make to come to the UK, rather than going, for example, to the United States or Australia".

The submission referenced the School's survey of students from earlier this term, which underlined the importance of post study work visas for LSE students, as the School is the UK's most international university.

Allen noted that 38 per cent of students that responded as high for a survey of this kind. Of the respondents, 61 per cent described post study visas as a factor in their decision to study at the LSE.

Kroop told the Beaver he was pleased by the Students' Union's cooperation with the school.

"As a left-of-centre activist, I am happy to say the School and I are on the same page", Kroop said.

But the Postgraduate Officer also said there are differences between the School and the Students' Union's approaches.

Kroop said the Students' Union is making a broader argument, not only about issues directly affecting the school, but also about the wider debate about "multiculturalism and opposing a government belittling people by appealing to the worst in people".

He said he understood the School's more campus-specific approach, focusing on a "more explicitly rational argument", given their more "limited resources".

Kroop and Lok, who cooperate regularly on the Students' Union Defending Global Education campaign, plan to keep the issue on the agenda with a number of forthcoming projects. Possible events include an "I Am International" stall, emphasising the merits of a diverse student body and a debate on immigration held in collaboration with the Goldsmith Students' Union.

RAG WEEK CHARITIES PROFILED

St. Mungo's is a charity primarily concerned with aiding the homeless in London. The charity takes a holistic approach by dealing not only with those currently homeless, but also those who are likely to become so. Their skills and employment services complement emergency shelters and the like in aiding recovery from homelessness.

Women for Women International works with socially excluded women in eight countries where war and conflict are rife. Women are enrolled in a twelve-month programme and taught job-based skills (such as numeracy and literacy) in order to overcome their exclusion.

African Street Children Organisation works with disadvantaged children between the ages of six and sixteen in the Ugandan town of Jinja, providing twenty-three them with accommodation as well as education in literacy, numeracy and traditional arts and crafts.

Emergency General Meeting to decide on solidarity strike

Sachin Patel

Over 300 students have signed a petition calling for an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) to debate whether the LSE Students' Union should back a strike in solidarity with the University and College Union (UCU).

At a meeting of the Students' Union's Democracy Committee on Monday afternoon, the petition's organisers handed over their emergency motion, which also calls upon the Students' Union to "support industrial action by campus unions against austerity measures". The EGM is slated to take place this Thursday, 17th February, during the hour before the Union General Meeting (UGM), at which LSE Director Howard Davies is set to speak.

UCU members are expected to vote on a strike later on this month, ostensibly in response to proposed changes that could allegedly "threaten the jobs, pensions and working conditions of university staff", according to the emergency motion's authors. Critics of such changes say they will make it easier for higher education

institutions to cut jobs and services.

Robin Burrett, a PhD candidate in the LSE's sociology department, told the Beaver the proposed solidarity strike was "not about the professors who we never see - it's about young academics who churn out research and are just used and used by universities".

The emergency motion notes 114 senior management staff members at the LSE earn over £100,000 per annum.

Burrett said the academics' position was "already precarious", but acknowledged the true purpose of the strike was to protest against austerity cuts.

"But that would break trade union laws," he added.

Students' Union Education Officer Ashok Kumar agreed, telling the Beaver the lecturers "fight for job security is actually a fight back against cuts".

"This is something that all students should feel passionately about. If the proposed cuts to teaching staff go through, generations of students will be forced to pay more for less", he added.

The proposed students' strike is intended to reciprocate the support UCU members gave students during demonstrations throughout the Michaelmas

Term, Kumar added.

"When students marched, occupied and confronted our government against fee rises, the lecturers stood firmly by our side," Kumar said, adding, "Now, we should stand with them when they are fighting for the future of higher education funding".

A student-led occupation of the Vera Anstey suite, which took place last December, garnered the support of four LSE departments and 130 faculty members. Among the faculty members, nineteen staff members from the Department of Philosophy, Logic and Scientific Method signed a letter "credit[ing] the students of the occupation for their proactive organising and continued dedication to forestalling [changes to higher education funding]".

Now, proposers of the motion want the Students' Union to call for a student strike on the day of any UCU-balloted industrial action. Moreover, they are asking the Students' Union to organise "the maximum possible mobilisation" among students on a march led by the Trades Union Congress (TUC), set to take place on 26th March.

Student reaction to the petition has

been generally positive.

Second-year history undergraduate Emma Kelly told the Beaver it was "important for students to show solidarity" with lecturers.

Other students said it was important to encourage debate about the issue.

Third-year law undergraduate Phyllis Lui told the Beaver, "Although I am uncertain about the motion itself, I believe the call for the EGM is right".

"Both sides should be allowed to voice their concerns so that when people vote, they are able to make an informed decision", Lui added.

In the run-up to the EGM, campaigners are holding a "Teach Out" on Tuesday, 15th February, wherein students and lecturers will deliver five-to-ten-minute lectures on their areas of interest. At time of going to press, highlights include international relations undergraduate Gaelan Ash lecturing on anarchism, philosophy and economics undergraduate Kimia Pezeshki providing an introduction to behavioural economics, and Robin Burrett talking about network theory.

News in brief

TIP-PED FOR SUCCESS

TIPS, the postgraduate and finalist mentoring scheme for initiated by Daniel Kroop in his role as Postgraduate Officer, was successfully launched last Wednesday with its first 'mixer'. Potential postgraduates mingled with current postgraduates over food and drinks in the Underground. Dr. Jan Stockdale, Dean of Undergraduate Studies, also attended the event to help "lend her advice and support to TIPS". Kroop continued, "There was a palpable sense of camaraderie between the mentors - they're fantastic for outgoing students. I'm excited to keep this programme running strong."

LSE'S OWN JULIET

An LSE student who, while in Verona, joined in with the tradition of writing a love letter and placing it in the wall that is believed to have been underneath Juliet's window in Shakespeare's play, Romeo and Juliet, has won the annual prize for her letter. Sarah Alexandra George, a Philosophy finalist, wrote her letter on her disillusionment with with love. The award was given by Club di Guilietta, an organisation dedicated to answering the thousands of letters written to Juliet. Sarah is receiving her prize in Verona this week.

HOWIE'S SIT DOWN

Carsten Kengeter, Chief Executive Officer of UBS investment banking division, joined Howard Davies for an informal talk on his career and his perceptions of the financial industry. Kengeter spoke of the divide within the banking world which he said was a direct result of the competitive nature of the industry. According to Kengeter this industry needs to overcome these differences to develop a universal banking model that will place banking in a much stronger position. On the topic of further regulation on banks, Kengeter bluntly stated that the return on equity will decline and that "people have to expect 10 per cent to 15 per cent returns versus 20 per cent to 25 per cent".

SHOW ME THE MONEY

John Paulson, a Hedge Fund manager at one of the largest hedge funds in the world, this week donated £2.5 million to the LSE to fund research on the topic of recovery in Europe post-financial crisis. It is hoped that the donation will provide the funds to offer scholarships to research students in the fields of finance, policy and the European Union. This topic is important to investors internationally as the debate over the future of the euro has financiers split. It is hoped that the research that is produced with the assistance of Paulson's grant will be used by financiers, politicians and regulators equally.

HOPE OF AFRICA

Following the recent developments in Egypt which saw President Mubarak ousted after serious protest, renewed emphasis is being placed on the findings of an LSE report published in April 2009, 'Beyond BRIC'. The study found a high proportion of the country's 330,000 university graduates each year specialise in science, technology or engineering which should improve Egypt's production possibility over the next few years. Professor Wilcocks said, "The present political unrest points to lessons both for those responsible for the Egyptian economy in the next few years and also for clients of offshore outsourcing."

SOMEBODY CALL 911

A fire alarm at Bankside Hall, the residence located in Southwalk, was set off by a student last Wednesday at 4.15am. Banksiders were left waiting at the designated shelter point for half an hour as the situation was resolved. The perpetrator, who set the fire alarm off on the first floor by punching through the glass fire alarm case, is currently under scrutiny of the Bankside warden. The rabble-rouser will be issued a penalty fine and it is said that expulsion from Bankside is also under consideration at present. No fire brigade came to the hall in response to the alarm.

GOT A SCOOP?

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

Departing Pulse station manager praises "fantastic slave bitches"

Vincent Wong
Senior Reporter

Stuart McColl, the station manager of Pulse Radio, paid tribute to his colleagues at the Student Union's radio station during his final report at last Thursday's Union General Meeting (UGM).

McColl, whose reports have been a source of both amusement and controversy at past UGMs, praised colleagues for "their ability to take initiative and be creative", and jokingly referred to them as "fantastic slave bitches".

"I wouldn't be the man I am today without them," he added.

A post on Pulse's website said the radio station "completely disapproves of slavery".

McColl, who has now been replaced as station manager by Kimia Pezeshi, will continue to host a Pulse program on Monday evenings, while making appearances on Friday nights at Crush as "Disco Stu".

Elsewhere, during the Media Group reports at last week's UGM, an audience member raised concerns about the content of the Beaver's "Agony Uncle" column.

The questioner John Peart said the anonymous author of last week's column—which contained a line reading, "When I masturbate all I think about is penises"—"trivialised" people struggling with their sexuality. Peart said that the paper should be above such "ridiculousness".

Sachin Patel, executive editor of the Beaver, apologised for any offence the piece may have caused, and said that sexuality merited "serious discussion". He reassured the questioner that his concerns would be passed on to the author.

"I realise that we should not stray over the lines of taste," Patel said.

Patel also said the Editorial Board had "qualms" about printing last week's content, adding the author was a member of the LGBT community and had not intended to "poke fun" at the issue of

sexuality.

The Students' Union Sabbatical Officers and Part-Time Officers also reported during the UGM.

Education Officer Ashok Kumar announced the Students' Union had submitted a paper on fees, bursaries and widening participation to LSE Director Howard Davies and his management team.

Kumar also said the Students' Union would continue trying to gather support for its campaigns against cuts from academic departments at the LSE. He said the Department of Anthropology and Department of Sociology departments had already pledged support.

Community and Welfare Officer Hero Austin announced she would be submitting a report to the Residences Committee containing recommendations from "Your Hall, Your Call", an initiative to address student concerns in halls of residence.

During the Part-Time Officers' reports, Disabled Students' Officer Polly McKinlay said she would continue her campaign to improve the quality doors at the LSE. She added she had already found some success, and cited plans to automate the main doors of the St Clement's Building.

International Students' Officer Michael Lok told attendees he and Post-graduate Officer Daniel Kroop had met with officials from the UK Border Agency to discuss proposed limitations to student visas, but their talks had been largely unproductive.

Athletics Union President Ben Robinson was asked whether he thought there was a correlation between interest in UGMs and AU attendance. In response, Robinson said he believed AU members had previously been attracted to UGMs because of the opportunity to throw newspapers at speakers on stage. He said the strong opposition of General Secretary Charlotte Gerada meant this was no longer an option, hence the low turn-out among LSE's athletes.

No motions were fielded at last week's

Union Jack

Union Jack got to the UGM early this week, as his train to Euston was early. But he walked through the rain—and not just light rain, but bloody torrents of rain—in order to write this. So it was very frustrating when he got there to find the UGM was a waste of his time—not to mention the fact that he had to sit through it completely sodden. Anyway, Jack's dry now. But he's still frustrated. Someone needs to propose the Internet campaigning again, because at the moment, it's a pretty simple fact that the UGM isn't working.

At the UGM, for a second, Jack thought a dishevelled, part-time Debbie Harry look-alike had turned up to give the UGM a rendition of Atomic or one of Blondie's later, less-satisfying hits, just to spruce up the wilting spectacle. She hadn't—it was our Hero, accompanied Ashok Kumar and Charlie Glyn this week.

Charlie G's speech to the UGM was the most notable, the reason being that it mentioned the Beaver—and in a positive way! When she talked of things "obviously" happening again, she noted the Beaver had picked that habit of hers up and that she was trying to kick the habit, taking on too many obviously. Jack takes from this that this column has influence, and it is a force for good.

As per the first paragraph, not much beyond that.

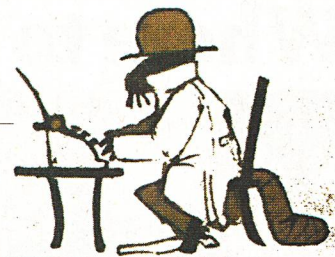
Union Jack saw Hannah-Polly Williams promote her stuff for Valentine's Day. I hope you all got off with each other yesterday as a result of her herbal Viagra—Is that really what she was promoting?

No. Oh well, Jack'll keep it in—or that you enjoyed the cress—Was it cress?—grown on the LSE roof.

The AU President Ben Robinson turned up this week. (A round of applause, please, or a blast of a football horn). And all he had to promote was the AU's Mr LSE—something Jack won't be going to. He'll be at home with his pipe and the herbal stuff he's got from the LSE roof during Green Week. Still, they raised £1,000, on a spoon of Take Me Out, so well done to them, even if Take Me Out is ITV's grossest example of "entertainment" after co-commentary on England football matches from (former Irish) footballer Andy Townsend.

Still, since Robinson's not likely to be at the UGM for some time (last Thursday was his first appearance in a long while), Jack had better make the most of him this week. He seems to care less, or about the same, about democracy in the SU, as Hosni Mubarak did about democracy in Egypt for the last however-many years.

Asked about his role and the possibility of trying to get people from the AU to come to the UGM, Robinson said he felt people "Don't care about what's going on", but that they just "wanted to throw papers". Great attitude from a part-time Sabb, there—and a great example of what the LSE seems to have become, or is becoming. Historically a hub of rational debate, now it's a place where some people would rather think they were in central London's finest Wacky Warehouse instead of talk. It's a shame, and one reason for why the UGM is in such a predicament at the moment.



Then Michael Lok—a UGM stalwart with Polly McKinlay, the Sabbs and Hannah-Polly Williams talked about how he and Daniel 'eating snacks at an Ivy League institution that shall not be named' Kroop went to see the UK Border Agency earlier on Thursday. Not because their visas had run out, but in order to try to get international students a better deal in years to come. On a serious note, good luck to them.

Meanwhile, Pulse's Station Manager Stuart McColl has gone now into the Pulse annals, filed away as 2010-11. He tediously talked the UGM through his "high and lows" the highest high seemingly a "brief tiff" with this newspaper, and lowest low meeting the Naked Cowboy feller who came to see what was going on in their studio some weeks ago. Jack found the mentioning of being told "to [go to] your shelter" from a guy from Glasgow a bit too much, though. Jack's home is like going spending my life in Centre Parcs (or Butlins...one of the two) in comparison to a week in Glasgow.

Still, Alex Peters-Day came along and told us that it was RAG WEEK NEXT (so this) WEEK. Donate.

Then came the most depressing news. Whatever the motion was trying to achieve last week, in pushing the UGM chair Professor Dr Sir Lord Lady Dame Tindale OBE MBE to LSE deity or overlord, whether or not it was supposed to be a piss-take, fourteen people voted for it. Yep, fourteen. From a possible, what, 10,000? Dear, dear, dear.

"The School's blasé attitude"

» continued from
page 1

Plater added Financial Support is offering students short-term loans, if needed.

Students have told the Beaver they are frustrated by the delays.

Alexander Young, a second-year politics and philosophy student still without his bursary told the Beaver he was "unsurprised" and "angered" by the delay.

"For the School to just send a completely impersonal email is to undermine the importance of bursary funds to the students that receive them", Young said. "The School's blasé attitude to the matter is typical of attitudes I have experienced

from the Fees Office upon the three occasions this has occurred previously".

"The simple fact is that these payments should be made on the dates that they are scheduled to be so", Young added. James Wyse, a third-year government and economics undergraduate who likewise has yet to receive his bursary, told the Beaver he too was "annoyed" by the e-mail from Registry.

"It didn't sound very convincing",

Wyse said of the email.

"It said something like, 'let us know if this causes any financial hardship'", Wyse said, "Given that it's a financial aid bursary, I think it's pretty clear this is causing financial hardship".

This is not the first time students have experienced delays in receiving their bursary payments. Students have reported receiving bursaries until at least halfway

through the Michaelmas Term of this academic year, as well the Michaelmas and Lent Terms of the 2009-10 academic year. Moreover, the Beaver reported in February 2009, during the Lent Term of the 2008-09 academic year, that students had yet to receive the second installments of their bursaries.

Plater confirmed there was a problem with bursary payments in the Lent Term 2009, at the fault of the SLC. In Michaelmas Term 2010, there was also a country-wide problem with SLC processing, she said, though it did not affect many LSE students.

"We are unhappy that the SLC did not notice that their system was not working", Plater said, adding, "Indeed they told us that the confirmation of attendance had all gone through fine. We will be taking this further with them."

"We are vehemently opposed to the integration debate..."

» continued from
page 1

"There were very offensive comments on Facebook", Austin said, adding, "From a campus relations perspective it got much worse."

One Facebook user posted a photograph of someone putting a flame to the Qu'ran on the wall of the Facebook event associated with the protest. The same person wrote, below the picture, "Damn Camelfucker. Racists have a right to free speech too."

"We saw reporting of the event in the national media, on the front page of the Independent website, and in the Evening Standard", Austin said.

"It soon became an event attracting a lot more negative attention than had been arranged for—only five security staff were supposed to be there", she said. "We also found out Sarrazin was bringing his own security".

"When this happens, there is a higher risk to students because we don't know their training or orders", Austin said. "Our position didn't change, but the circumstances did. The harms now outweighed the immediate facilitation of free speech on campus."

Austin said the new information was passed on to the LSE's Free Speech Group. Its head, Stuart Corbridge, a Pro-Director at the School and a Professor of Development Studies, subsequently decided the event could not be held on campus on the intended evening, and advised it should be postponed.

But the German Society's committee decided not to follow Corbridge's advice, instead moving the event off-campus.

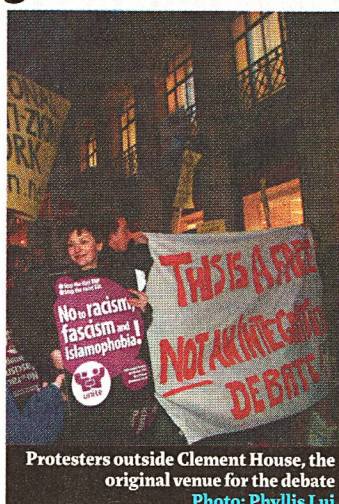
A representative from the German Society could not be reached for comment on the decision to move the event off-campus.

On Monday morning, however, a spokesperson for the symposium told the Beaver the society "were not aware that the invitation of Dr. Sarrazin would attract this much protest".

"We avouch the right of every lecturer, disputant and guest to voice their opinions in all the symposium's events", the spokesperson added.

The spokesperson defended the decision to invite Sarrazin, saying, "The purpose of the German Symposium has always been and still is to bring current debates from German society to the LSE. It is our goal to thereby contribute to the international exchange of ideas."

Speaking after the protest, Lukas Slothus, a second-year government undergraduate who created the Facebook



Protesters outside Clement House, the original venue for the debate
Photo: Phyllis Lui

event last week, told the Beaver, "I don't think it's up to me, as a student, to decide as to whether he has a right to speak on campus".

"But as a student, I feel I have a right and a duty to come out against speakers who are potentially problematic, people who are going to stir up controversy and upset community relations", he added.

Islam week separates "fact from fiction"

Aman Sahni

The LSE Students' Union Islamic Society presented its annual Islam Week, aimed at increasing students' understanding of the world's fastest-growing religion, last week at the LSE.

On Monday, the society welcomed writer and researcher Hamza Tzortis, who delivered a talk on human rights, feminism and Islam. The talk traced the history of human rights in Islam, with a focus on women's issues. It also looked at the applicability and use of Sharia Law in Islamic nations, and reflected on its future.

On Wednesday, the Islamic Society organised a trip to the Islamic Cultural Centre and London Central Mosque in Regent's Park. The event aimed to promote accessibility to information regarding Islam and saw good attendance, according to event organisers.

On Thursday, an event entitled "Can You Last A Muslim's Fast?" saw many students, both Muslims and non-Muslims, observe a day-long fast like those observed during Ramadan. A group of enthusiasts broke the fast after sunset.

"Bringing in someone like him to an event on immigration—frankly I don't see the point of it", he said. "The German Society should distance themselves from this".

Second-year sociology undergraduate Emma Clewer, another creator of the Facebook event, told the Beaver on Monday morning that the debate was "by its nature one-sided", because the panel included two critics of Islam and only one Muslim.

"The debate has not been set up to question whether white people can integrate successfully", she said.

Clewer concluded, "Sarrazin has said horrific things, and if people want to see him, they can do that elsewhere."

"Even Angela Merkel said his views are appalling", she added.

Also on Thursday, women on Houghton Street were invited to try donning the hijab in an effort to help them understand the experience associated with it. The Islamic Society advertised the campaign with such questions as: "What is Hijab? Aren't you oppressed? Are you forced to wear it? Is it hot under there? What is freedom?"

The week's concluding event, a panel discussion with famous converts to Islam, was held on Friday. Speakers at the event included journalist Lauren Booth, actress Myriam Cerrah and Canadian wrestler Abu Hafsa. The speakers shared their personal experiences of conversions, stressing that to adopt one religion is not to denounce another. At least 150 students attended, making the talk one of the well-attended Islamic Society events ever.

Throughout the week, the Islamic Society maintained a stall on Houghton Street. Non-Muslims were encouraged to attend all events, in line with the week's efforts to separate "fact from fiction".

Student Mohammed Sarodia, one of the week's organisers, said the week's inclusiveness was important "in light of the negative image of Islam which some national newspapers and other forms of media portray".

An updated version of this story will appear on our website in due course.

At time of going to press, the lecture itself had not finished, so was not fully reported on in the article.

<http://www.thebeaveronline.co.uk>

Marion Koob and Phyllis Lui contributed additional reporting from the Waldorf Hilton hotel.

Departmental statistics show gender matters

Kareem Elsayi

Figures released by the LSE show a gender ratio among students which has slightly favoured women over the last five years.

The figures show the overall gender ratio of the School's students, giving a departmental breakdown, by gender, for the 2009-10 academic year.

The statistics provide concrete evidence for the oft-quoted notion that anthropology is predominantly studied by women, and reveal the LSE does not suffer to such an extent from the so-called "finals gap" found at other top-ranked universities, whereby a significantly-greater proportion of firsts are attained by male students.

At present, the student body is 51.4 per cent female, indicating a more-balanced make-up than many other higher education institutions. At Imperial College London, which specialises in business and the natural sciences, men account for 64 per cent of all students, while at the Royal Veterinary College, women make up 74 per cent of the student population.

The largest gender disparity at the School was found during the 2008-09 academic year, when women made up 52.2 per cent of the student body.

Within specific LSE departments, however, there is considerable variation. For undergraduates, the Department of Anthropology is the most extreme example: 81 per cent of the department's 2010 graduates were female, providing credence for the argument that the discipline is preferred by women.

The School refused to provide the Beaver with data for earlier cohorts, and, when contacted, the anthropology department declined to comment on the causes of this imbalance, citing an inability to give concrete information.

Less widely-recognised is the subject with the second-largest gender imbalance at the LSE—of economic history students

graduating in 2010, 79 per cent were male.

When considering those enrolled on master's courses, there are some further surprising results. The anthropology department's ratio became more even, with women making up 58 per cent, and in the economic history department, female students combined constituted a majority, at 52 per cent of those enrolled.

In the Gender Institute, which offers no undergraduate courses, women accounted for 91 per cent of the students.

Overall, male and female undergraduates secured virtually identical numbers of first-class degrees in 2010, with 146 received by women and 147 by men.

But because women make up a greater percentage of the student population, men outperformed them in percentage terms, with 24 per cent of men achieving firsts, compared with 22.5 per cent of women.

Even so, in certain departments, there are significant differences between genders in the percentage of firsts achieved. Of the seventeen departments whose degree classification breakdowns are published, ten displayed a gap of more than 5 per cent.

In the Department of Government, for example, 26.7 per cent of male students received firsts in 2010, compared with 10.4 per cent of female students; a similar gap was present in the accounting department. Women outperformed men in both economics and statistics: in both departments, the difference was around 8 per cent.

A spokesperson for the Department of Government told the Beaver, "The department takes exam performance very seriously and monitors exam performance on a course, not programme level", adding the department would collect information on exam performance, in terms of gender profile, as of this academic year as part of their commitment to equality and diversity. The department would not comment further as to the trends noted by the Beaver.

Changes in Library to increase access to computers

Alex Haigh

The British Library of Political & Economic Science has launched a number of initiatives in recent weeks to create a better studying environment for students, including new study zones, food and drink policies and a laptop lending programme.

A new "quick access zone" on the ground floor allows students to use computers for no more than 15 minutes.

John Sorrell, a master's student studying the philosophy of science, told the Beaver he is pleased with the new computer system.

"It's a good idea, freeing up computers quickly so a computer is available all the time" he said.

The remaining areas of the library have now been separated into three, colour-coded zones, marked "silent", "quiet", and "group".

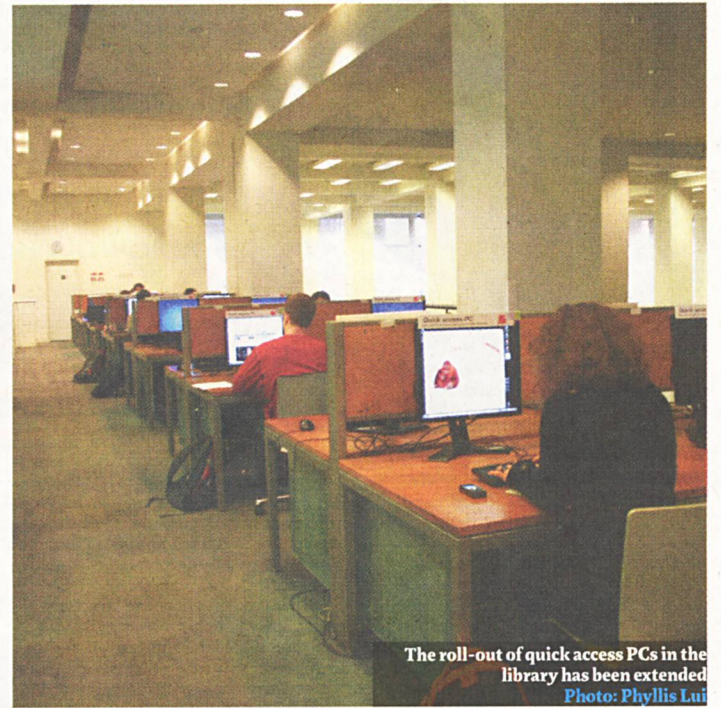
These zones "give students the option to work in different ways, while maintaining a positive study environment", a spokesperson for the library told the Beaver.

Each zone carries its own rules governing group work and mobile phone use. In "silent" zones, marked in red, group work and mobile phone use is not allowed. In "quiet" and "group" areas, marked yellow and green, respectively, "quiet, non-disruptive mobile phone usage" is allowed. Group work and discussion is only permitted in the "group" zones.

In other policy changes, students are now permitted to drink soft and hot drinks within the library. According to the library spokesperson, this new policy has reduced the problem of food in the library.

The library has also instituted 'i-room', a laptop borrowing system, to lend out the library's sixty laptops for staff and student use, and doubled the number of bean bags on the lower ground floor, after receiving funding from the LSE Annual Fund.

While most students say they are



The roll-out of quick access PCs in the library has been extended
Photo: Phyllis Lui

pleased with the new policies at the library, many say a lack of publicity has made it difficult for them to learn about the changes.

David Schwab, a General Course student, told the Beaver the quick access computers "seem useful and convenient", but he "never knew where they were".

The library spokesperson said the staff encourages students to provide feedback on the library's service, in the form of both printed and online forms.

Eco-warriors offer £10,000 for sustainable projects



Students have recently secured funding for a roof garden through a similar scheme
Photo: Phyllis Lui

Marion Koob
Senior Reporter

The LSE Students' Union Sustainable Futures Society launched the Sustainability Projects Fund (SPF), a project aimed at financing up to £10,000 of staff and student environmental projects, last Monday, 7th February, as part of the Students' Union Go Green Week.

Revenue for the fund has been generated by the LSE's water bottle tax, which has levied a ten pence tax on each plastic bottle sold at the School since 2008.

According to the project's website, approximately £9,000 has been raised each year from the water bottle tax.

Proceeds from other environment-related fundraising events, such as "Re-love", which collects reusable items from halls and campus at the end of each term, will also support the fund.

Applications are open to a wide variety of projects, provided they relate to the theme of sustainability. To highlight the fund's aims, however, the fund has selected six areas which will serve as criteria for the project's evaluation: carbon management, biodiversity, waste reduction, energy, water use, and education and awareness.

"Though the projects are directly aimed at environmental sustainability, the Fund recognises the value of social and economic sustainability as well".

"It is expected that a variety of applications will be made, ranging from individuals to societies. Reports will be given at the Environmental Management Review Group (EMRG) and the Cater Services User Group (CSUG) as to how the funds have been spent," Hannah Polly Williams, the LSE Students' Union's ethics and environment officer, told the Beaver.

Mindsbridge, the School's student-run management consultancy, will perform cost-benefit analyses of each proposal. However, a judging panel will make the final decision. Julian Robinson, director of estates, Dr Victoria Hands, environmental and sustainability manager, three additional professors and three outside experts will join the decision-making body.

"Sustainable futures is an integral part of the School's initiative to be a leader in the climate change and environmental agenda", Robinson said. "In order for us to be successful in reducing our carbon footprint we need buy-in at every level of the LSE. The imagination and commitment of our students never fails to impress me".

LSE students represent Far East at London MUN



The London Model United Nations (LIMUN), held over Friday, Saturday and Sunday last week, hosted 1,000 students from universities across the United Kingdom and beyond. The LSE Students' Union MUN Society sent nineteen delegates, who represented China or Japan in the various committees of the conference. Ed Longinotti, Head Delegate for the LSE delegation, said the day was successful for the team. Longinotti said, "It was pleasing to see four of our delegates attain individual awards". The conference was praised for its efficiency and the LSE delegates were particularly impressed with the level of engagement with the core issues. Neeraj Mashru, one of the LSE delegates, said, "It was a great conference". The MUN Society has grown from strength to strength this year; Longinotti said, "LSE MUN aims to go from good to great".

Photos: Valentine Chua for the LSE Students' Union MUN Society

HK PASS raises £700 for charity

Heather Wang
Senior Reporter

The LSE Students' Union Hong Kong Public Affairs and Social Service Society (HKPASS) hosted a charity fair last Wednesday, 9th February, in the Quad to raise money for Nepalese children.

The event took the form of a fashion show and fair, including a range of professional acts and various stalls, selling food, drinks and clothing.

Around fifty students planned the fair, and at least 150 students attended the evening's events. The society extended an invitation to three other main universities in London, and as such, students from

King's College London, University College London and Imperial College were all in attendance.

The money raised from the charity fair will be donated to the Esther Benjamins Trust (EBT), a charity organisation which aims to tackle the problem of juvenile trafficking by rescuing, and providing rehabilitation services for, Nepalese children who have been trafficked or displaced.

According to Richard Ko, president of HKPASS, the fair raised an estimated £700 for the EBT.

HKPASS also aimed to raise awareness of the issue of human-trafficking through Wednesday's event, which Ko said "has a more long-term and solid impact than simply raising support in the

form of money".

Students' Union International Students Officer Michael Lok, who was President of HKPASS last year, said the event was a success.

"Overall it was certainly a success", Lok told the Beaver. "The event was smoothly run and was certainly one of the top society events I have witnessed at the LSE so far".

Other students likewise said they enjoyed the fair.

"It was a great effort for a wonderful cause", Lisa Lee, an international history undergraduate, told the Beaver. "It was entertaining, and I bet it did a fair bit to help the Nepalese victims, too".

How to rule the world – according to Professor Kaldor



Photo: Shawn Shariati

Aman Sahni

Professor Mary Kaldor, co-director of LSE Global Governance, delivered a talk entitled "How to Rule the World: Global Security" at the LSE last Tuesday, 8th February. The public lecture, focusing on global security, marked the first of three talks on global governance, organised by the LSE Students' Union Global Society.

Addressing recent developments in global security, Kaldor summarised her argument in three, sequential parts: dispersion of power, new emerging security gaps and the role of global civil society for the future.

Kaldor began her talk by emphasizing linguistic changes, such as the departure from using the word "rulers", and instead the adoption of the term "governance" to describe power agencies. Kaldor said

power is increasingly hard to locate, and has reached a near-Foucauldian design, where one cannot pinpoint the centres of regulation. She added this power dispersion is increasing, despite more regulation in the world than ever before.

These changes in power structures then impact notions of security, Kaldor said. She argued the nature of warfare has changed, and we are now witnessing "new wars". Central to the "new wars" premise is the notion people face insecurities other than those encountered during classical warfare. Kaldor said such transformations have created human security gaps, since current global governance lacks enforcement capacity to counter such changes.

According to Kaldor, the emergence of a global civil society is the way forward in dealing with power changes. She refuted common assertions of global civil society as only a Western concept, by pointing out there is something similar to the concept

of civil society in all cultures, including classical Islam.

Kaldor concluded the lecture by highlighting the role of global civil society at the end of the Cold War, calling it a "key facilitator" at "opportune times".

During the question-and-answer session, audience members expressed a variety of views through their questions. While most agreed with Professor's Kaldor's affirmation of global civil society as a possible course to modernisation, not all were convinced that it is the best solution.

Farsan Ghassim, president of the Global Society, told the Beaver he was happy to see "so many fellow citizens of the world" participating in key areas of interest for the future. The next talk in the "How to Rule the World" series, focusing on building global democracy, will be delivered by Professor Jan Scholte of the University of Warwick on 22nd February.

Grimshaw club hosts Albanian Ambassador

Liam Brown

Albanian Ambassador to the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland Zef Mazi delivered a public lecture at the LSE Monday, 7th February, at the invitation of the Students' Union's Grimshaw International Relations Club. The event, part of the Students' Union Ambassador Series, was chaired by Dr John Gledhill, an LSE fellow in government and international relations.

Entitled "Conflicts in South Eastern Europe: Albania's Role in the Region and the Independence of the Kosovo", Mazi's lecture provided a history of Albania's struggles as a small state in a troubled area of Europe. Mazi stressed the need for "striking a balance between political correctness and accurate history" in any study of South Eastern Europe. He also defended his country's diplomatic record, saying "Albanians have never been aggressor or attackers" and have instead been subject to attack by others.

Mazi also talked about Albania's ongoing difference of opinion with Serbia over the self-declared independence of Kosovo. Mazi told Monday's audience that Albania believes "of all options, independence is the only one that will secure peace, equality, and freedom for the peoples of Kosovo".

In a question-and-answer session following Mazi's lecture, the Minister-Counsellor from the Serbian Embassy asked about Albania's effort to increase dialogue between officials in Kosovo and Belgrade. Ambassador Mazi, speaking to the Serbian official, said Albania will only stop pressing for international support for Kosovo's independence when Serbia ceases its international campaign to convince countries not to recognize the

fledgling state.

Mazi also fielded a question from an Albanian journalist, who asked about the recent civil strife in Albania. Mazi responded by condemning the violence, and quoted a speech by Albanian President Bamir Topi.

Another audience member asked Mazi asked about recent comments by the presenters of the BBC's Top Gear. It has been reported that on the show, Jeremy Clarkson said "what happens is Albanians go to England, get a job, buy a car and then bring it back with them", while Richard Hammond added, "and it is quite traditional when you bring a car back like that, that you drive it around with the door locks pulled out and sometimes little marks along the back of the door."

Previously published media reports had suggested Mazi was not pleased by the presenters' comments. But Mazi told the LSE audience, "It is what it is. Let's not forget it is three-year-old Jeremy Clarkson".

"The show is based around this humour and I don't take it as an insult", Mazi said. "It was good for tourism with the picturesque landscapes of our country."

"Albanians have Mercedes because Jaguars have failed them", he added.

The audience at the LSE seemed receptive to the talk, though some students in attendance said they disagreed with some of the more contentious issues raised by Mazi.

Jamie Wright, a first-year sociology student, said he found the event "an interesting glimpse into an area of Europe that, for the most part, is relatively unknown to many in the UK".

"I am glad I came", he added. "I can now see that Kosovo really is a major international sticking point for many nations".

World Bank Economist discusses global inequality

Chris Rogers
Senior Reporter

Branko Milanovic, a Lead Economist in the World Bank's research division, a visiting fellow at Johns Hopkins University, and the author of "The Haves and Have Nots: A Brief and Idiosyncratic History of Global Inequality" discussed poverty and income inequality a public lecture at the LSE last Tuesday, 8th February. Danny Quah, a professor in the LSE Department of Economics and co-director of LSE Global Governance, chaired the lecture.

Milanovic told Tuesday's audience the study of inequality is a relatively new academic topic, as before the era of globalisation and the dawn of household surveys, scholars could do little empirical work with the subject.

Milanovic then sketched out the topics of his book, including inequality both within and between countries, as well as global inequality among citizens of the world. He said he aimed to illustrate each type of inequality with anecdotal stories, as to make the material more accessible and easier to read.

He then talked about how we measure inequality, a topic he called the "mother of all inequality disputes". He said scholars can pass a judgement on whether globalisation has increased in equalities or reduced them by examining such various measures of inequality.

The economist offered at least two sorts of measures. The first measure is simply the difference in gross domestic product between countries, he said.

Second is the GDP between countries, but with extra importance placed on pop-

ulation size. During the question-and-answer session following the lecture, Robert Wade, a professor in the Department of International Development at the LSE, asked what Milanovic's response was to the view that inequality, as a concept, does not matter. Milanovic answered by saying people who are against studying inequality generally argue it is controlled by the market—and for them the market takes the role of "a God". For them, he said, inequality "results in an idea of redistribution that the rich dislike".

Alex Jack, a SOAS student, asked how reliable data on equality are. Milanovic said the data have many problems because definitions of income vary from country to country, but added academics are making huge efforts to harmonize the data.

Cameron's 'nudge' advisor tells all

Luke Smolinski

Paul Dolan promised attendees a "whistle-stop tour" of behavioural economics and human well-being at an LSE public lecture, held last Tuesday, 8th February. Dolan, a professor of Social Policy at the LSE, is a member of the Prime Minister David Cameron's recently-founded Behavioural Insight Team.

Inspired by Cass Sunstein and Richard Thaler's 2008 book "Nudge: Improving Decisions about Health, Wealth, and Happiness", Cameron's Behavioural Insight Team aims to change people's behaviour, not through legislation or regulation, but by using insights on the subconscious to "nudge" them into making better decisions. In so doing, it strives to subtly prompt people to achieve what is in their best interests.

The Team has been described by media commentators as everything from "sinister and Orwellian" to "libertarian paternalism".

In Tuesday's lecture at the LSE, Dolan set out to introduce this new area of research, commonly called behavioural economics. He described it as "economics grounded in psychology", adding the discipline showed that human beings are not as logical as classical economic models insist.

Dolan provided Tuesday's audience with three examples to support his argument.

First, he said, humans prefer to avoid losses, rather than to acquire gains. Losses are more powerful psychologically, he said: contrary to economic theory, people prefer to earn no money than to lose ten quid before finding it again.

Second, he said, recent events have greater effects on the individual than do past events. For instance, though September 11th greatly affected the nation's recorded well-being in its immediate aftermath, it had no effect on Britons' well-being by October.

Thirdly, framing effects are important, Dolan said. For example, loan companies that place pictures of women on their advertisements charge 1 per cent more interest on average than those that do not

feature women, the implication being that consumers can be motivated just as much by unconscious forces as conscious ones. A stranger example: If one is holding a warm drink, he or she is more likely to become attached to someone than if he or she is holding a cold drink.

More bizarrely, a recent study showed that if, instead of making people sign their tax returns at the end, they sign at the beginning—or better, on every page—to verify what they have written is true, then it emerges people are more honest. As a result of this small "nudge", the trade-off between honesty and dishonesty became completely different, Dolan said.

Dolan linked these findings to questions on how to measure well-being. He told Tuesday's audience that simply asking people their opinions is not the best method of survey. Attempts to tap into the conscious mind—by asking people how they intended to behave—removes the subconscious, even though this is often the part that lies behind the decision-making process, he said. As a result, there are some things surveys, customer insight and focus groups can never really uncover. In short, Dolan said if we are to forecast happiness correctly, we should recognise the role of the subconscious.

After the lecture, Bobur Ashurov, a third-year studying economic history, told the Beaver, "I have grave reservations about the whole project. The idea that the government is prescribing 'acceptable' ways of behaving and enforcing them through the manipulation of our subconscious is utterly barney".

"It could come directly out of an Orwellian dystopia!" Ashurov added.

Fabian Schrey, a third-year geography student, told the Beaver Dolan's ideas were "nothing new".

"Companies have been using them for over a century", Schrey said. "They are the foundations of advertising itself. I see no moral justification why democratically accountable governments should not use them too, so long as everything is transparent. The only difference I can see between the state using these techniques and companies using them is that the incentive will be to further the common good, rather than to offload a new version of Daz on us."



Photo: Shawn Shariati

Comment

Sam Vimes

FREE SCHOOLS

Educational excellence or scholastic suicide?



LANGTON

The free schools policy put forward by Cameron is yet another idea to be put straight in the 'shit policy' filing cabinet, along with most of the ideas Dave comes up with on a whim.

Free schools are essentially schools set up by parents, and funded by the government. The idea is that they're set up in areas where the state schools are no more civilised than Egypt and the independent schools charge so much it makes you nauseous just thinking about it.

Of course, the neo-liberals among us will be drooling over the thought of greater independence and freedom for the public, while perhaps slipping a hand down their trousers over the image of the public having great autonomy from the state. Wonderful, you might say, but not when you consider the real cost to the taxpayer, and, of course, my favourite criticism, of Dave trying to maintain as little responsibility as possible.

First off, the question you should all be asking is: how can the government cut spending on current state schools while at the same time promising to fund free schools? Don't expect me to answer that question, as it makes no sense to me based on the fact that, free schools are going to cost more. Free schools involve the process of buying a pre-existing building and turning it into a school, or building a brand new school – all of which will be funded by the government but set up by the people. Apparently, in an age of cuts, this is a better option than improving our current state schools.

To me, this just seems like yet another one of Dave's ideas aimed to distance

himself from responsibility by creating a policy that has the facade of genius but the reality of idiocy. If he threw money at failing state schools with limited effect, the blood would be on his hands. By throwing money at public initiated free schools he gets the credit if they succeed, and the public are to blame if they fail.

Currently, 86 per cent of schools are rated at 'good or outstanding' by Ofsted, so instead of cutting their funding and giving it to more costly free schools, why are we not concentrating on improving the 14 per cent and maintaining the 86 per cent? The vast majority of British people are fully supportive of state schools and want nothing more than to see them improved, but that actually requires planning, thought and risk from the government, and they are clearly not willing to do that. Instead they are shifting this responsibility, once again, to the people – but not for the right reasons. They are walking away from struggling state schools that have been let down by poor funding and planning, and justifying it by claiming they are giving the public greater choice.

There is a severe lack of transparency in the cost of free schools and their funding. Dave's move to cut funding to state schools, whilst having already promised to hand out cash to nine free schools, is not a move to be trusted. One only has to listen to Francis Gilbert, a parent-cum-teacher-cum-author, blubbing and hesitating about the cost of free schools in the BBC Radio 4 interview to realise this is a move made to benefit the government, as well as already well-off children and their parents. Any rational person would agree that investing in our state schools is a more worthwhile and long term choice than to throw money at new free schools. Dave, my dearest, you cannot run away from this one. ☹

How can the government cut spending on current state schools while at the same time promising to fund free schools?

Our state schools wallow near the bottom of OECD education league tables: are we content to acquiesce in a status quo that is clearly failing?

Toby Young, associate editor of the Spectator, leader of a group of parents and teachers setting up the West London Free School, sleeps with prostitutes. Or at least, this is what some opponents would have you believe. The debate surrounding free schools has come to a premature end. It's a shame, because it had all the ingredients of a classic. It really looked as though we were going to have a good, old-fashioned, teleological ding-dong over the true essence and purpose of education. It fills me with great sadness, however, to have to report that we have reached that inevitable moment in an argument like this when one of the parties resorts to spreading a scurrilous fable, relating to some form of colourful and acrobatic sexual deviance, about the other. It's no surprise that the rumour was about, rather than from, Young. The debate is over.

It is a shame, because the 'free schools' issue should be taken seriously. Embedded within it is the question: are we content to acquiesce in a status quo that is clearly failing? Our state schools wallow near the bottom of OECD education standard league tables, apparently propping up the likes of Estonia and Latvia. Our pupils leave school with a body of knowledge derived largely from some facile, centrally-dictated and politically-correct teaching agenda. The number of students taking subjects with 'studies' in the title is evokes profound concern. Our schools are plagued by legendarily poor discipline, yet almost every reasonable control mechanism is withheld from teachers, on the most wishy-washy of grounds. In short, there is a lot to be desired.

Whether we are happy to bask in collective pusillanimity – to sit contentedly back as we watch the standards of our schools plunge downwards – is a question that needs to be asked as Michael Gove, the education secretary, has done. And unlike the National Union of Teachers (NUT), the vapid, self-important institution, rooted in the 'hard left', from whose email accounts the rumours apparently



WILLIAMS

initially spread, Gove has concluded that such failure is unacceptable. I tend to agree.

It's ironic that the people who want to see the state maintain its monopoly over the provision of state-funded education (with the results described earlier) tend to also be those who claim to represent the interests of the working class. Free schools are bad, they say, because only rich parents will bother to set them up, and thus only rich kids will get the benefits of the ambitious and serious educations that they will provide. In formulating such a fatuous critique, they do a couple of things. They affirm their expectation that free schools will be better than state-run comprehensives. If there is an injustice, it is only founded on the fact that not all children will be able to attend them and reap their rewards. Thus they seem to be saying that free schools, with their superior discipline and more accountable teaching, will provide higher standards than current state schools; yet at the same time, that we must do everything in our power to combat their establishment! Why? My conjecture is that they are content to crush the nascent free schools movement because it is detrimental to their implausibly purist egalitarian project. Why have some good schools and some bad schools when we can have all our schools as bad schools, they seem to ask? The objections to this view are patent to all but the most ardent socialists.

There is an important debate to be had, with sound arguments on either side. I could reel some more off, but what's the point? Toby Young sleeps with prostitutes. Our question has been answered. ☹



Toby Young – losing friends and alienating people?
Photo: flickr user dynamist

Why we should (still) heart the LSE library

The library staff respond to the criticism levied against some of its policies

Helen Cocker



In response to the article 'Our library, ourselves' in last week's edition of the Beaver we would like the opportunity to provide some insight into the very important issues mentioned.

With regards to the issue of the doors, one set of the outer doors and one set of the inner doors to the Library are currently closed to ensure that the temperature remains at reasonable levels on the Ground Floor for both staff and users. This action was agreed with the School's Health and Safety Adviser as the temperature had been dropping to below the minimum working temperature resulting in services at the counter having to be closed. The Estates department are aware of the problem and this is an interim action. We acknowledge the disruption this is causing and are pursuing a resolution.

The Library does give access to members of the public as part of the conditions agreed between the School and the Heritage Lottery Fund for a grant towards the cost of redeveloping the Library in 2001. LSE is also part of a national reciprocal university library access scheme. However the vast majority of usage is by LSE students, not external users and the scheme is very beneficial to some of our students. The reciprocal agreement very importantly ensures that LSE students can gain access to other libraries in subject areas in which this library is not so strong, and helps part-time LSE students who

may need access to a library nearer to where they live.

We are aware that the period leading up to and during exams is the busiest of the year and it can become increasingly difficult for students to find a seat. For this

The 'I love the Library' initiatives within the Library focus on mutual respect between the Library and its users

reason the Library is planning to restrict access for external users this year during the period Monday 18th April to Sunday 12th June 2011. Data on active users during the 2009/10 year indicate that this could reduce the number of eligible users by considerably. Additionally, the study rooms on the ground and first floors of the Library have been fitted with swipe card access which will only allow LSE students into these spaces.

The Library regularly monitors occupancy levels of study spaces and the weekly average of samples show that although the Library is heavily used there

are study spaces available at most times. It would therefore seem that the issue can be in locating this space rather than lack of space. To overcome this we encourage the use of online seat booking for LSE students through LSEForYou. Also on occasions the Library just seems full as users reserve seats by leaving belongings on study desks and then leaving the Library. To try and combat this inconsiderate behaviour we operate our yellow and red card system which first asks students to either fully vacate or use their space, and then if ignored allows other users to push the belongings to one side and occupy the seat. The 'I love the Library' initiatives within the Library focus on mutual respect between the Library and its users, but also amongst users themselves. We encourage users not to 'unofficially' reserve study spaces, allowing the space to be used by someone who would like to study at that time, creating a more fluid and efficient use of space.

We are constantly trying our best to utilise our limited space as efficiently as possible through the introduction of beanbags, zoning, online booking, numbering of reader desks and delineated study spaces. However the Library does need support from students to make sure these initiatives are effective through efficient utilisation and consideration for others. The Library is discussing with the School the possibility of getting more study space in the Lionel Robbins Building and we encourage students to support us to build a stronger case by helping us prove we are making the most efficient use of our existing space.

The article also mentioned the need for us to employ "real IT technicians"; however the issues raised were not due lack of ability. Since the start of Lent Term

there have been around four instances where problems with the print server meant that no printing was available. Two of these occasions occurred overnight and as IT Services are not able to offer 24/7 support these could not be resolved until the next day. On the occasions this issue occurred during the day the printing service was restored within 30 minutes of detection and notification. IT Services aim for 100 per cent availability and to reduce these occasional problems are working on deploying a new replacement print server very shortly.

The Quick Comment section discussed whether the Library should reduce the set text fines. We do try our best to make borrowers aware of loan periods and fine rates through deployment of floor walkers in self issue areas who remind users of the loan arrangements, clear and colour coded borrowing boards and information on the web and in guides. We try to be as reasonable as possible with our charging policy and waive the first set text fines during Orientation to allow new users to get used to the arrangements, have reduced the hourly fine to 50p from a £1, do not charge for closed periods, clear fines if lateness is due to an exceptional circumstance and in cases where a user has accrued a large fine consider payment plans. However, the most important reason behind fines is that these books are in very heavy demand so it is important they are returned on time to ensure other users can get hold of copies. ☘

Helen Cocker is the User Services Manager

Quick COMMENT

Should non-Law students get a reading week as well?

Yes, without time to review, we can feel overwhelmed with the amount of information available to us.

– Julia Henderson, 2nd year, BSc International Relations

Yes, we don't have enough time to have questions and go to office hours, and after Easter teachers hold only one or two office hours.

– Achilles Chrystosomou, 2nd year, BSc Economics

If other subjects were as difficult as Law then maybe. But they're not.

– Oliver Wiseman, Managing Editor, The Beaver (LLB Laws)

Yes because we have just as much work and need just as much as a break as law students.

– Ahmed Elgohary, 1st year, BSc Philosophy and Economics

YES THEY SHOULD! Slacking off for one week would increase productivity in the following 5!

– Angelina Castellina 2nd year, BSc International Relations

It should be decided on a course-by-course basis.

– Mehek Zafar, 3rd year, LLB Laws

Of course we should! Especially since Law students piss around reading week anyway.

– Lorna Lee, 1st year, BA History

It's like asking Howie if he thinks some degrees are more demanding than others.

– Beth Andrews, 2nd year, BSc Mathematics and Economics

Yes, because this is so elitist. STOP favouring the Law kids.

– Nicola Alexander, News Editor, The Beaver

I'm not going to lectures next week in protest.

– Sheri Demple, General Course, Government



NEXT WEEK...

Why have you stopped going to Crush?

Send in your submissions! Email comment@thebeaveronline.com.

the Tunisian and Egyptian protesters, get ready to get disappointed. Now, how is that helpful to anyone?

Laverne comes out of it badly because she's clearly far more intelligent than that; the programme suffers; the audience don't laugh that much (or those on E probably do – and the way people laugh on that programme it wouldn't surprise me if some pills had been popped, to be honest); and if people know nothing, little or a lot about politics their knowledge hasn't been enhanced – possibly reduced, definitely not enhanced.

As I say, it's not necessarily that I find both of these programmes, flying the flag for politics, a bit bland (but certainly incomparable to programmes written by writers who genuinely hated the political classes with venom, like Chris Morris on The Day Today in the early-to-mid-1990s) – it's that that's basically yer lot if you're interested in politics. BBC Parliament's great if you like The Record, a decent evaluation of what's going on in Brussels, and re-runs of Select Committees, but there's more to British – and European – politics than just that. And if there was more effort put into creating such programmes, and better programmes, more people might – just might – be more interested in politics. ☘

Switching off

Television coverage of British politics needs a channel change



BORING!

Photo: flickr user joncitzten

Nathan Briant



65 per cent of people voted in the UK's general election last year, which was better than previous elections – 59 per cent had voted in the 2001 election – but it's still disappointing that there's that significant minority of people who don't vote at all. Although there's reasons, to whatever degree of sensibleness – people believe all politicians are good-for-nothing-expenses-thieves, etc. – sat at home on Thursday night, I started to sympathise with that 35 per cent: television coverage of politics in the UK could be a telling reason.

Of course people read about politics in newspapers but television is the most decisive way that politicians can connect – but why does Thursday night need to be Politics Night? Why can't every weekday be Politics Night, like it is, for some reason, for The One Show? On Thursdays at the moment, the disappointing 10 O'Clock Live on Channel 4 and Question Time on BBC One clash for half an hour,

from 10:35 to 11:05, when 10 O'Clock Live finishes. Obviously Channel 4 have tried to capitalise on the people waiting around for Question Time to start, which in some ways is perfectly understandable, but not doing so and putting it on at another time would be good for people's interaction with and understanding of politics, if not their viewing figures. If there's a dip in the quality of 10 O'Clock Live – and there are many – off people go to watch Newsnight or Question Time. If they had it on another day, and if people are encouraged and able to watch two politics-based programmes a week, then good.

That neither Question Time and 10 O'Clock Live are particularly good is another issue. Although Question Time is marshalled well by David Dimbleby, it's often not that entertaining even if it can be quite a good barometer for politicians as to what policies are popular and not. Since Francis Maude was loudly booed in Bristol when he peddled the familiar line that the coalition's tidying up what the last Labour government left us all with, you can bet that that line won't be used for much longer, at least not handled by Maude.

It's 10 O'Clock Live which sets a dangerous precedent, though. Its cynicism (which isn't wholly misplaced; but that seems to be all it has) in all things is not

really helpful on any level and can start to become a Party Political Broadcast for the Anti-Government Party. And before

Although Question Time is marshalled well by David Dimbleby, it's often not that entertaining even if it can be quite a good barometer for

I'm cast aside as someone from the Dark Ages, they're my political views too, but I don't think anyone needs any opinions rammed down their throats, especially on a TV programme which is supposed to inform and encourage debate. And 10 O'Clock Live doesn't inform and encourage debate; it, at times, does completely

the opposite.

Take last week's edition. Other than an appearance from Simon Hughes (the rent-a-quote Liberal Democrat Deputy Leader who is obviously so personally devastated that he abstained on the vote on tuition fees while his coalition colleagues didn't means he has to be in every newspaper, radio programme and every TV programme as much as possible putting across his opinion), where David Mitchell barely got a word in edgeways (as has also been the case with his previous piss-poor 'interviews' with David Willetts and Alastair Campbell; they would have been more pressed had they been interviewed by CBBC), Lauren Laverne performed a bad skit about the possible onset of democracy in Egypt and Tunisia. In it she compared the British government to Egypt and Tunisia, which, predictably, backfired badly. I'd hear a lot of things about the government, but to say that it is a 'lunatic' one, which has a 'puppet' Chancellor, with a 'lapdog Eurocrat Deputy Prime Minister, who sits idly by as the government gives two fingers to freedom', and the cabinet are 'unattractive dunderheads' is the language I'd use in a petty squabble about not being able to play on the Wii. It goes on for a while: Ed Miliband's better, but he's still crap, is Laverne's final conclusion; so,

Of design disasters, awkward showers and spiral staircases

How we need to be equipped with GPS and Iron Man muscles to get to class

Eden
Dwek



Following Coren Lass's letter two weeks ago regarding the 'heavy doors on campus', I think the question to be asked is this: has LSE Estates ever heard of architects and engineers?

Living at Rosebery, I am full of opinions on this issue. As many of you may be aware, the showers have been designed with the intention that nobody over one metre in height will be using them. The doors finish at neck level, allowing you to have a very strange and awkward conversation with somebody who's having a shower next door. Furthermore, a variety of engineering failures have meant that showers will last around 20 seconds, unless you have perfected the art of waving your hands in such an obscure fashion that it will trigger the sensors to come back on: something I am yet to master. It is also very odd how LSE Estates is unable to find "appropriate locks" for the shower doors, when the toilet doors next to them have perfectly sufficient ones. So to start off with, I can't have a normal shower in what is supposedly my home.

This would be fine if it was an isolated incident, but as I walk up to the Tuns from the Quad, I see people having a one-on-one battle with the stiff doors. I know that only a few LSE students spend all their

time in the gym (namely a certain Mr. Coppin); however, you shouldn't need to have a rigorous training routine under your belt to get around campus. I, and am sure many of you, are very grateful that Polly McKinlay, the Students' Union's Disabilities Officer, has taken up the battle

The culmination of these issues has led me to believe that LSE Estates do not in fact hire engineers and architects, but nominate a team of social scientists to make design issues.

to improve the issue of doors on campus, but it's a recurring issue that will take time to rectify. So now, not only can I not have



Seriously? These are stairs?
Photo: Beaver archives

a shower, but I can't even get a drink in which to drown my sorrows.

How about going to the library to do some work? The LSE, being such a

prestigious institution, would have you think that a lot of money and planning went into the design of the library. Whilst it is a great building, it too has bizarre

inadequacies. The people who planned it took it upon themselves to create stairs for people with very short legs. Either this, or they have a plan to make us all walk like dinosaurs. The stairs have been made in such a way that the people using them look very odd, using the same foot to walk up and down them. Or, maybe they want us to all walk like penguins; a chance to spot LSE students once we've left, by their 'swagger' (or lack thereof). A great way of networking – look for the man or woman who walks like an arctic bird.

The culmination of these issues has led me to believe that LSE Estates do not in fact hire engineers and architects, but nominate a team of social scientists to make design issues. Social scientists who are probably unaware of ergonomics, or just people in general. I am aware that this piece might seem quite harsh, but with everyone protesting on fees, I think we have more important issues on our own campus where money is being wasted because the right people are not being consulted during planning stages. Either this, or the engineers and architects should move to a different part of the world (or universe?) where 'people' fit the ridiculous body proportions they plan their buildings according to. ☹

Letters to the Editor

Our Middle East Centre coverage...

Sir – We write in response to your article published on 8th February. The article gives undue weight to claims made by an allegedly "non-partisan group", Students Rights, that two highly respected LSE faculty members are not fit to serve on the management committee of the Middle East Centre because they are critical of Israel. Such claims are an attempt to tarnish these scholars' reputations. The implicit assumption being made – that critique of Israeli policies is unacceptable within academia – runs counter to the LSE's strong tradition of open debate and analytical rigour. Smear campaigns such as this have deeply damaged the research community in universities in the United States, and we are concerned that they may do the same here. Faculty members and students alike should be entitled to express varying critical perspectives without being maligned or having their positions within the university questioned.

Sincerely yours,

Gustavo Barbosa, Irene Calis, Elizabeth Frantz, Cathrine Furberg Moe, Sarah Grosso, Luca Pes, Philip Proudfoot (all LSE Department of Anthropology)

Amélie Barras, Michael Farquhar, Neil Ketchley, Reza Pankhurst (all LSE Department of Government)

Sir – As a member of the Management Committee of the LSE Middle East Centre, I find it highly disturbing that the Beaver has, wittingly or unwittingly, participated in a campaign of harassment and intimidation against academics critical of Israeli government policies working here at the School.

The point of departure for the article is a "report" by Student Rights, an organisation which is described as "non-partisan" and devoted to "working to oppose extremism on university campuses." In point of fact, the so-called "report" consists of a cutting-and-pasting of publicly avail-

able information about the Middle East Centre, combined with a set of insinuations, assertions and recommendations, rather than any substantive research whatsoever into the activities of the LSE Middle East Centre or the members of the Centre's Management Committee. This is hardly a "report." Judging from its website, moreover, "Student Rights" might be more accurately described as an organisation devoted to attacking academics, students, and guest speakers on university campuses whose views – especially on Islam and on Israel – differ from those of Student Rights. This group bears comparison with the notorious US-based "Campus Watch," which engages in monitoring and attacking academics critical of Israeli government policies.

The Beaver article ends by quoting the Students' Union Anti-Racism Officer Ben Grabiner, who expresses doubt as to the possibility for an "unbiased" or "impartial" Middle East Centre at the LSE. But there is nothing in the Student Rights report or the article to suggest that there is any evidence whatsoever of 'bias' or 'partiality' in the research, publications, or teachings of my colleagues Dr. Chalcraft and Professor Mundy. Instead, support for policies critical of the Israeli government is deemed sufficient evidence of "bias" and "partiality," and somehow deserving of concern and comment by a Students' Union officer responsible for anti-racism policy.

In short, it is abundantly clear that there is a campaign of harassment and intimidation under way to vilify my colleagues Dr. Chalcraft and Professor Mundy because of their critical stance vis-à-vis Israeli government policies. This should be recognised for what it is and condemned as such, and neither the Beaver nor the Students' Union should allow themselves to be drawn into this campaign. There have been many campaigns against academics in American universities along similar lines in the United States over the years, and it is very worrying to see that this kind of bullying

tactic is now extending to British universities as well, with British student organisations and publications playing an active role in the process.

Yours Sincerely,

Professor John Sidel
Sir Patrick Gillam Professor of International and Comparative Politics

Sir – As students of the LSE, we are fortunate to be surrounded by some of the most intelligent and forward thinking people of our generation. Whether it's a Nobel Prize winner or the next G8 head of state, our university has continuously attracted only the best. Calling this tradition of excellence a "tough act to follow" is an understatement! The question really is, "how do we keep this going?"

I think the key element is support. Asking, more actively, for advice from peers, seniors and colleagues has played a big part in many a success story. But there seems to be a distinct lack of willingness shown by certain elements in our university to offer support! Recently, I was involved as a committee member in a charitable event at the LSE and I was left bemused by members of the previous committee who spent more time trying to bring the event down than helping us improve on the previous venture. Their motives are unknown and, really, they are irrelevant. But this is a dangerous precedent to set. If we extended this thought process to our researchers and students, we could be stifling development and denying many a future Noble Prize winner or world leader their rightful opportunity to succeed. One person's success needn't be another's downfall; there is enough room for everyone.

Yours Sincerely,

Siddharth Viswanath

Defending global education

The proposed immigration cuts shake the LSE to its core

Daniel
Kroop



On January 31st, the government closed its consultation on a proposal that will slash the rights of international students to live and study as equals in Britain. The new law would eliminate the Post Study Work (PSW) visa, cut the number of Tier 1 and 2 migrants, make it impossible to reapply for a visa from within the UK, restrict non-school-based work and internships, and curb the ability of mature students to bring dependents.

If this proposal passes, LSE will see a sharp decline in its quality and number of international students. As the most international university in the world's most international city, our Students' Union must be at the centre of defending global education. Over the next month, our goal is to forge a successful campaign that builds awareness of the proposed cuts, lobbies governmental actors directly, and engages students in direct action that makes a difference.

There is no shortage of reasons why the proposed immigration cuts are dangerous. An overwhelming majority of economic scholarship indicates that migrants entering on a student visa do not take jobs away from Britons. Quite the opposite, they pump £8 billion annually into the national economy, as well as expand Britain's trade footprint and global soft power once they return home.

The true germ of the cuts is, sadly, a general sense that "Britishness" is being lost to a new round of multiculturalism. Prime Minister David Cameron has said as much, including a speech with the sound bite "multiculturalism has failed." While this may appease many of the worst elements of xenophobia on his party's right, it is simply untrue.

A Britain with many cultures brings enormous benefits and opportunities. International students return home and forge political, social, and economic ties with Britain over the long haul. But that says nothing of the innovation and churning challenge of ideas that a diverse culture provokes. In a globalised world—and we know this so well at the LSE—knowledge of what's outside our borders is as valuable as what's within. If the proposed

immigration cuts go through, there will be fewer international students and lecturers to share their perspectives at the LSE.

According to a consultation conducted with the administration and SU working together, 56% of current international students said that when they applied to study in the UK, the entitlement to a PSW visa was a factor in their decision. Additional comments suggested that for a significant minority, it was the decisive factor. Entitlement to PSW means that students from developing countries can pay off their fees. Without PSW, these high calibre students are likely to see the British international rate as simply too high, and head elsewhere.

If the proposed immigration cuts go through, there will be fewer international students and lecturers to share their perspectives at the LSE

In my European Social Policy seminar, we represent 15 nations, including non-EU countries Japan, Turkey, Canada, Kazakhstan, and the US. The most valuable element of the course by far is the inspirational diversity each person brings to our discussions. At no other university would that be the case—not Oxford, not Cambridge, not Harvard. It's a tribute to the international sensibility that is uniquely ours. Let's not lose it.

Get involved at www.lsesu.org/campaigns/dge

Daniel Kroop is the Postgraduate Part-Time Sabbatical Officer

Question- How angry are you?

A) Really angry

B) Really, really angry

C) Really, really, REALLY ANGRY

Eitherway, please limit your letters to 150 words

Features

Hollywouldn't happen

David Dalrymple-Pryde analyses film's distorted realities

I saw the sublime Aronofsky/Portman unsettle-fest *Black Swan* recently, and it got me thinking: what resemblance does the experience of genuine multiple personality disorder have to its on-screen counterpart? Do actual sufferers of the disorder spend all day trying to orgasm in spite of the very real possibility that they might suddenly be confronted by a menacing doppelgänger? One that drips blood all over their timid attempt at onanism and thus thoroughly throws them off their

game? Do their off-screen counterparts find, as Brad Pitt/Edward Norton found in *Fight Club*, that their otherwise debilitating mental condition actually increases their self-esteem, allows them to build a complex anti-capitalist terror network and to go indefinitely without sleep? I rather doubt it.

And those with chronic mental health problems aren't the only group among us that Hollywood lets down. Let us imagine that you are a Nazi soldier in almost any post-World War II Anglo-American film

that calls for at least a smattering of guilt-free bullet fodder. Leaving aside the deeply troubling question of why you joined Hitler's Wehrmacht in the first place, it is safe to assume that, having joined, you and your fellow troops underwent a rigorous and prolonged training regimen and were issued with some of the most technologically advanced armour, equipment and weaponry that the Third Reich had to offer. So, imagine your displeasure when, whilst serving in sunny Cairo, two ungainly American archaeologists (one

of whom is in his mid-seventies) are able to dispatch you and your entire battalion armed only with a whip and an old, half loaded service revolver.

The above scenario (from *Raiders of the Lost Ark*) is a textbook instance of the 'Principle of Evil Marksmanship' (also known as 'The Stormtrooper Effect') which states that, 'any 'enemy' marksman is almost certain to be a terrible shot and, in general, is only able to hit targets that have no bearing on the plot, or targets whose death is actually a part of the plot'. Critic Roger Ebert of the *Chicago Sun-Times* has written about several of these laws of cinema-only reality. For instance, consider the bizarre etiquette of the 'One-at-a-time Attack Rule', which governs the behaviour of multiple assailants when facing down a sole antagonist. The rule states that, having confronted the antagonist, the group will encircle him/her (almost always him) and, rather than use their superior numbers to overpower him, will proceed to take it in turns to engage in one-on-one combat with him, despite their vast and unexplained physical inferiority.

The thing is, cinema's inability to imitate life goes well beyond its mountains of dead or unconscious henchmen; nothing in the movies is ever quite like real life. Take money: rich people are hugely overrepresented in films, with the median income of conventional movie characters somewhere in the region of 'shit-tons' and 'lots'. However, paradoxically, when Hollywood does depict poverty, it caricatures it, and portrays those forced to exist in its ridiculous hyper-real squalor as physically and emotionally destitute. The problem is that cinema is terrible at imitating life and

so, when life begins to imitate cinema, we take on a sort of vain, ridiculous alter-ego; the warped reflection of the silver screen, if you will. It's like movies split our personality so that, while one half of us knows that most violent crime occurs in the home, the other half is watching out for Italian-Americans and serial killers. While one half of us knows that the boy/girlfriend that we loved and that left us is never coming back, the other half, the half that watches the occasional rom-com, is just whiling away the hours before their inevitable return. And, even as one half of us is fully aware that Russia's victory over Nazism came at the price of anywhere between 20 and 25 million of their own citizens, the other half assumes that Stalin must have just pointed Harrison Ford and Sean Connery in the direction of Berlin, and sat there awaiting news of the inevitable German surrender.

Yes, it seems that movies have given us all multiple personality disorder. Well, not real multiple personality disorder, just the pretend cinematic type, where you end up hanging out with Yourself and Irene and where, not only do the voices in your head have a physical manifestation, but it actually looks like Brad Pitt. ☘

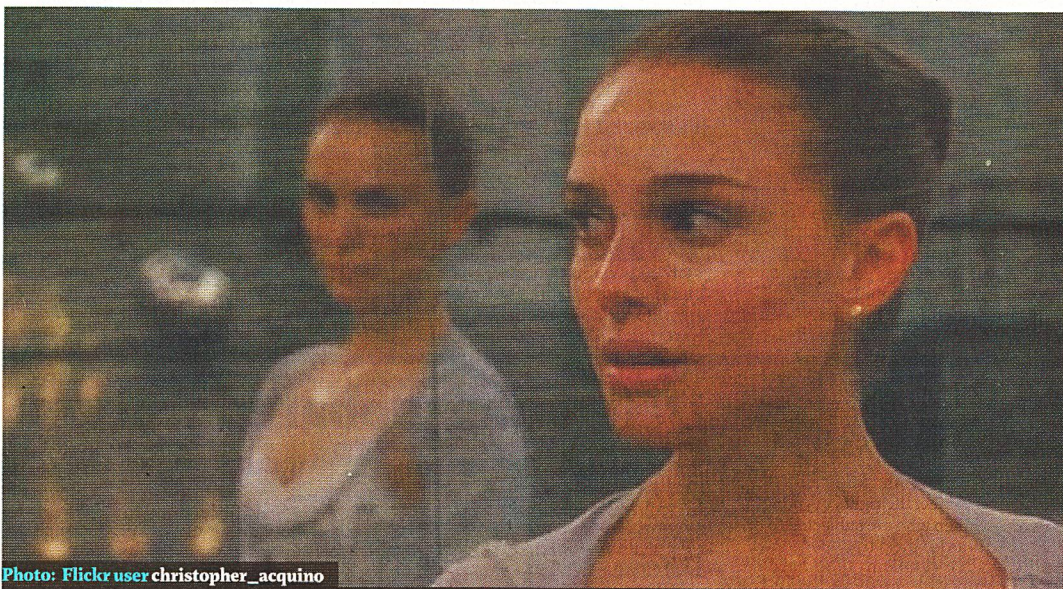


Photo: Flickr user christopher_acquino

Eat, Pray, Get a life

Zoe Leung criticises Gilbert's message on freedom and forgiveness

Long-haul flights are good occasions to catch up on films that you wouldn't bother to pay to watch. On the flight back to London, I had watched some better ones and eventually left with five versions of *Eat, Pray, Love* (original soundtrack without subtitles; with English subtitles; with Chinese titles; with Chinese dubbing; with Japanese dubbing), a memoir/fiction-turned-movie about "sophisticated", New Age, middle-class divorcee Elizabeth Gilbert, going on tour in Italy, India and Indonesia for some "self-redemption" (which predictably ends with her finding a new love). Usually a boycotter of chic lit, I was reluctant to succumb to it. Since a female friend of mine claimed that it had more depth than it appeared, however, and since I really had too much time left on the plane, I decided to give Gilbert a chance to prove herself.

And prove herself she did: as overly self-conscious. The audience gets a panoramic view of Gilbert's world which revolves around her from the film. Some defend Gilbert by claiming she is an "independent woman" that frees herself from social conventions and a humanitarian that gives a hand to the poor. If Gilbert had so much love for the rest of the world, though, it is rather incongruous the way she treats her (numerous) lovers. She can lobby for donations to build a house for the family of a hospitable and witty witchdoctor. Yet she can also overlook the pain brought to her husband by walking away to seek a life of a traveller and having an affair with another man while the legal process of the divorce is still going on. Is she being condescending to the people in the third world; or does she get influx of inspiration from charity shows professed by celebrities and rich people? Gilbert attempts to bring out various words of wisdom through her odyssey around the world. She has succeeded in some, of course, because those require one to forget other people. For those that require

interactions with people, she simply does not get it. For example, the concept of forgiveness she promotes is probably most bizarre of all conventions and palpably self-contradictory. She first receives her "enlightenment" on forgiveness in India, when Richard (who thankfully has not become another one of her lovers) confides in her his life story. To avoid giving the story away, Richard in short has inflicted immense pain on his family during his young and wild life, and is now soul-searching in the Krishna sanctuary. In tears, he recounts how his inability to forgive himself for the incident has led to his prolonged stay.

Before the fallacy is discussed, another famous yet seemingly unrelated quote of Richard must be drawn up to show Gilbert's inconsistency. Regarding Gilbert's remaining affection for her ex-husband, Richard instructs, "so miss him. Send him some love and light every time you think about him, then drop it... If you clear out all that space in your mind that you're using right now to obsess about this guy, you'll have a vacuum there... [and you could be filled] with more love than you ever dreamed. So stop using David (her ex-husband) to block that door. Let it go."

Many have found this the golden rule of letting go. Indeed, in different phases in our lives we need to be resigned to futility. It touches the heart only because it is easy and does not demand any self-denial for another person: it is entirely internal. It lacks the need for interaction or true care for other people. It would make sense in both Gilbert's life and his own if they were the subservient victim of their previous relationship. They were not. In fact, they were the one who imposed pain on the other party. Gilbert divorces her ex-husband because she no longer thinks he fits with her lifestyle. Gilbert wants to travel around the world while ex-husband wants to settle and finish a Master's. So they split, although the only "compensation" her husband asks for on the negotiation table of the law firm is Gilbert herself.

Everyone has the experience of regretting a misstep. Therefore, some feel the need to forgive themselves for the unwise decision they have made. 'Forgiveness', however, has a meaning distinct from "coming to terms" with something. Forgiveness, by definition, means asking for pardon for wrongs done against another person. The authority to grant forgiveness rests on the other party, not the wrongdoer, and cannot be taken for granted. The seeker of forgiveness is completely helpless and fragile before the victim and fears a refusal of the granting of clemency.

Coming back to the 'letting go' formula, what Gilbert and Richard are doing is merely coming to terms with mistakes they have made. Nonetheless, the formula fails to cover one whole dimension of the mess they are in respectively. They need to be forgiven, not just internalise the guilt. In fact, guilt cannot be internalised. For Richard, this haunting sense of guilt stems from the fear of non-forgiveness, that his family would disown him forever. It appears that he still loves his family, since the motivation for forgiveness is to heal the wounds. No attempts to seek forgiveness on his part are mentioned in the film. As wise as he usually is, he would probably never be released from his guilt if he only tries to extract forgiveness from within, as it has to be given from without.

The formula is even more absurd if applied to Gilbert. She only sounds like a baby yelling for sweets because she has broken the jar and they are taken away. Ungrateful for her ex-husband's love and care for her, as least as portrayed in the film, she is not even bothered to return the affection by compromising her life plan in order to save her marriage. Now, when she is on this mega-expensive self-help journey, she is shoveling him completely out of her memory and emotions. Either naïve or ignorant, it is unbelievable that she struggles to dispose him by "dropping it" and does not even feel the need to apologise for her selfishness. How does that back up her philanthropic commit-

ments towards poor people, if she treats herself like the captain of the dream team to bestow upon herself happiness and ticks people out when they no longer live up to her expectations? So, after all, Gilbert probably needs another trip to reflect on her egoism. Even her fellow New Age followers would suggest her to love the

earth a bit more and stop taking the plane so much. Furthermore, constant travelling from place to place shies one away from building long-term relationships and commitment of any sort, which is what Gilbert really needs to learn. ☘



Photo: Flickr user coolinsights

A painful procedure

Alexandra Welsby describes the battle against FGM

Last Sunday was the International Day Against Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Despite this initiative to raise awareness of such a prolifically violent practice, with countless menstrual and emotional consequences, the day passed by relatively unnoticed. The World Health Organization estimates that between 100 to 140 million girls and women worldwide are currently living with the repercussions of FGM: is it then naive to think that there is a possibility of preventing this international violation of women's rights when it appears as an entrenched social convention?

Female Genital Mutilation encompasses any procedure which involves the partial or total removal of the external female genitalia. The WHO categorises this as anything from clitoridectomy, infibulation, and even genital piercings. Despite being sporadically used in Asia and the Middle East, FGM is predominantly seen in Western, Eastern and North Eastern Africa, in countries such as Somalia and Egypt. Within the African continent itself it is thought that around 92 million girls aged ten and older have undergone FGM, with another 3 million at risk each year. Why, then, are infants and adolescents continually being subjected to such a physically and emotionally violent practice? The deduced reality therefore suggests that Western international disapproval is doing little to dissuade this inherent practice.

One of the biggest challenges facing the prevention of FGM is that it is increasingly associated with what is deemed acceptable sexual behaviour. It links the procedures to premarital virginity and marital fidelity; in many communities where FGM is practiced it is believed that

it reduces a women's libido to further suppress any illicit actions. Accordingly, it is inadequately argued as a cleansing practice, utilised to enhance the ideals of femininity and modesty. What transpires, however, is each young girl's modesty being laid bare to adhere to this unnecessary cultural norm. Senegalese urban musician Sister Fa, she herself having been 'cut', recently gave an insight into the mindset which resides within the practice; "It is when you are alone you think how can I not 'cut' my child? She will be marginalized, pushed in a corner. When the cutting ceremony is organized for the whole village, and she is not there, everyone will know she has not been 'cut'. Then she will be treated like an animal, you can't get married, you can't cook, or even give water to others to drink."

How then is it possible to give victims of FGM a voice? This is exactly what Sister Fa aims to do. She is lending her talents to a new initiative targeting the twelve countries on the African continent where FGM is most commonly practiced. It is offering a grass roots approach to infiltrate and persuade the local context; it is domestic Education against Mutilation. Indeed, Nafissatou Dopp, co-ordinator for the 2008 joint initiative operated by the United Nations Population Fund and UNICEF, has since stated that African women reliving their own experiences and consequences they have faced as a result of FGM to the younger generations, is perhaps the only way to reduce this practice: "We have learned from twelve years of mistakes by well-meaning Non-Governmental Organisations". This is certainly true in Sister Fa's case as her hometown of Thionck Essyl, where she was subjected to FGM, has completely abandoned the practice. It is obvious then that in order to

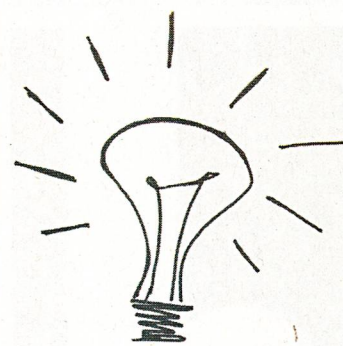
quell a further rise in FGM, change needs to be perceived within these communities as internal and voluntary and not as unwarranted foreign interference. Seemingly, an initial decline in the prevalence rate of FGM is a tentative step in the right direction. Within Ethiopia for example, it has fallen 7 per cent to 74 per cent but Egypt has only seen a reduction to 91 per cent from 97 per cent. Reducing FGM will not be an overnight success story.

More worrying, however, is that despite the clamour that FGM primarily resides on the African continent, it is increasingly becoming a concern within the Europe. Here in the UK especially it has seen a dramatic increase. A study conducted by the Foundation for Women's Health Research and Development found that approximately 66,000 women living in England and Wales had been circumcised. Last August, there was a record rise of FGM in London. The Metropolitan Police stated that they had intervened in 122 cases since 2008 but had had to intervene twenty-five times already by August 2010. Dr. Comfort Momah, who runs a women's reproductive health clinic at Guy's and St. Thomas' Hospital, says she sees about 350 women and children with FGM-related problems each year: "We have people calling me or calling other clinics saying I know a circumciser in Leytonstone, I know a doctor who is practicing FGM in the community". This is all in spite of the 2003 Female Genital Mutilation Act, intended to protect the rights of young girls and women who are subjected to or taken overseas for the purpose of genital mutilation. It is surprising then that there have been no prosecutions under this law to date.

In January 2010, the European Parliament hosted an event entitled 'Abandon-

ment of Social Norms Harmful to Girls and Women', in order to draw attention to the growing problem of FGM in Europe. Since 2008, the European Network for the Prevention of Female Genital Mutilation (EuroNet-FGM) has seen the development of National Action Plans for the elimination of FGM in fifteen European countries. Furthermore, the Daphne programme which is assisted financially by the EU has been the main source of monetary contributions in raising awareness, prevention and protection of victims of FGM.

Amnesty International is currently running a campaign to launch a European Strategy targeting FGM. The key dimensions they are calling for include collection of data on prevalence of FGM in Europe, clearer asylum guidelines for those under threat of FGM as well as mainstreaming of FGM in the EU's dialogue on co-operation with Third World countries where FGM is predominantly practiced. They have so far collected 25,912 signatures, surpassing their target of 24,000. They are calling for more people to get involved as a 'strong voice' against FGM by applying online. There is no easy way to prevent FGM, but with campaigns such as this, there is an opportunity to continue to speak out against FGM. Just as Sister Fa is doing in Africa, it is time the prevalence of FGM in Europe was not only prevented but recognised too. ☞



LONDON LUDDITE
...a layman's look at science

Wiki-Terminator? Let's hope not.

Oliver Wiseman

"History is a race between education and catastrophe", wrote H.G. Wells. RoboEarth, a scheme to develop a way of Robots sharing what they learn about the world, threatens to upend Wells's axiom and pit education (albeit of robots) against the future flourishing of mankind.

Before you get too despondent about the future of civilization, allow me to explain what RoboEarth will try to do. At present, the great challenge of the electronic engineers that work on robots is, put simply, teaching them. While we are actually quite good at the mechanical bit - building the robot's muscles, its their brains we struggle with. Robots, like humans, begin life clueless about the world they inhabit. The difference, though, is that robots have to learn everything for themselves, meaning their development is really rather slow.

Funded by the European Union, a team of thirty-five researchers will spend the next four years on the project, dubbed a Wikipedia for robots. As imbecilic and far-fetched as science can be (see your correspondent's previous column entries for evidence of this), the results of this project could be revolutionary. At present, robotics is the art of teaching machines with mind-bending potential the most inane of tasks. Take the Honda ASIMO. Who could watch footage of these technological masterpieces kicking a football to and fro and avoid thinking that they could be doing something more worthwhile?

This is the facilitating power of RoboEarth - if it works. And leave your cynicism at the door. There are, as we speak, robots sharing information with one another, downloading descriptions of basic tasks and coauthoring maps of the rooms they wheel around in. How this can fail to excite or horrify you, I do not know. Success would mean that robots might actually do something worthwhile, or dreadful, depending on your dystopian proclivities.

There are, however, challenges for the RoboEarth team; the biggest being how to construct a system accessible to robots of all kinds. The technical term, I am reliably informed, is 'open standards'. So, fellow Luddites, if the boffins get their heads around open standards, it appears robots will have their day. To the optimist, RoboEarth is the next step on the path towards a leisure-filled world where we sit in the sun while little automatons serve us Daiquiris. To the pessimist, the future is a Terminator-inspired hell. ☞

Information about the EU's project against FGM can be found at:

<http://www.endfgm.eu>

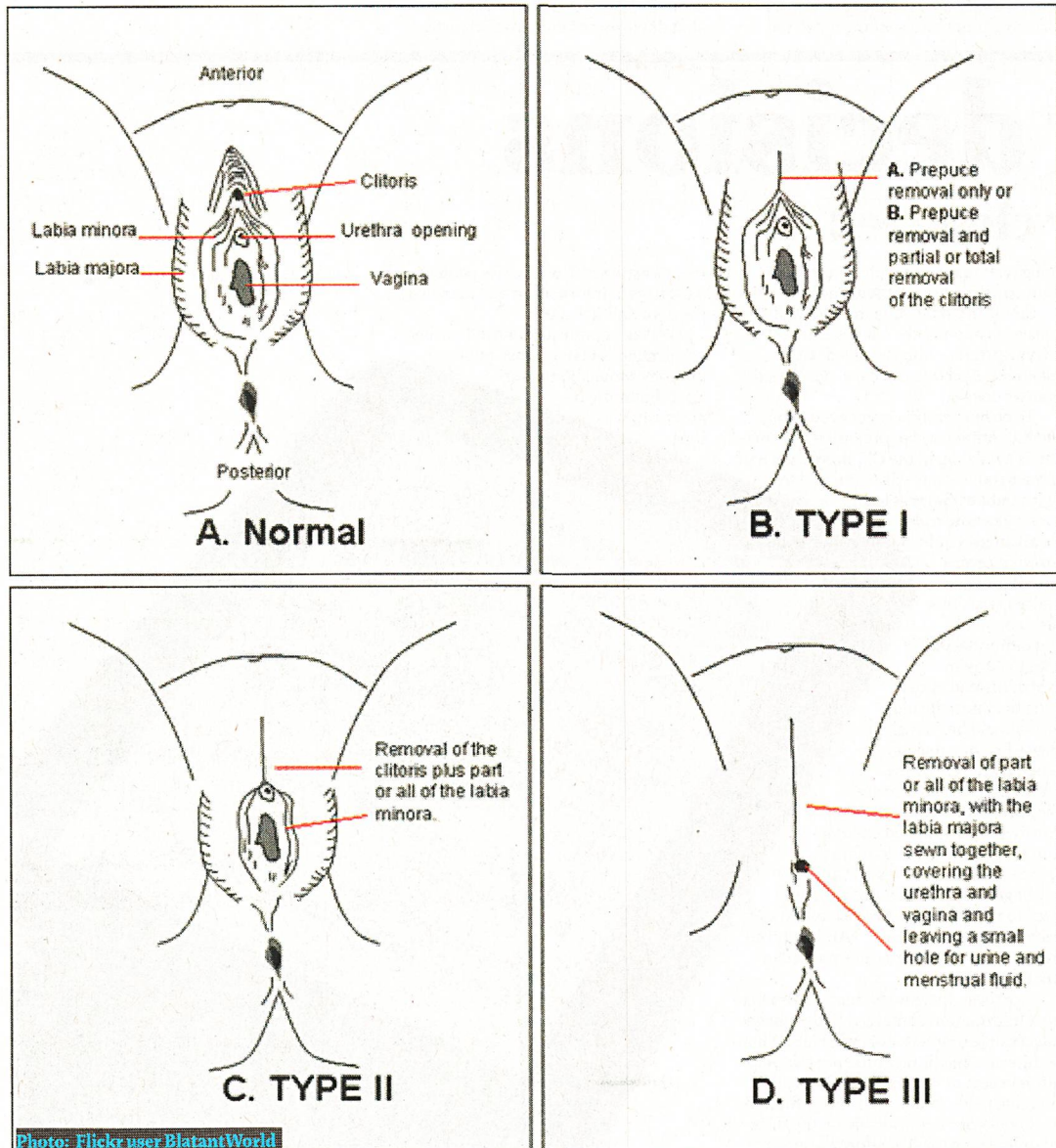


Photo: Flickr user BlatantWorld

feature story
noun

1 a newspaper or magazine article or report of a person, event, an aspect of a major event, or the like, often having a personal slant and written in an individual style.

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London's lagging literacy

Nathan Briant explores London's libraries under threat



Flickr user: tompagenet

Since I came to the LSE, the number of times I've used a public library is still in single figures; it's not really that necessary when everything is (usually) provided at university. I still, however, treasure the odd visit to the local library, and I still visit my local library at home, even if it is usually for the book sales which Staffordshire County Council host to flog books they don't want anymore. So when I heard a library relatively close to my flat, Kensal Rise Library, was holding a protest against its proposed closure, as well as that of five of the twelve libraries in Brent, I went along to find out what was going on and whether it was representative of what was going on across the country.

So Saturday, designated National Libraries' Day, I traipsed with my flatmate to Kensal Rise Library for the first time – I knew it was there having run past it a few times, I'd just never needed to use it, but I'd heard of its possibly imminent closure from the local paper a few months before. Walking past Queen's Park, it was overcast and very windy. We arrived at about 10.30am and the small library was packed full, the vast majority of the parents accompanying their children white middle-class professionals, who felt they would go along and admirably do their bit for the local community before going off to Pilates in the afternoon. I looked around for someone to ask about the library's closure, but the only person I could identify as a library worker, a grey-haired middle-aged woman, was keener for me to sign a petition against the library's closure and then move on to allow more people to sign it than to talk.

I looked around, and I gravitated to my favourite section in any library, the biographies. For some reason they had Roy 'Chubby' Brown's autobiography: that tour de force of modern English writing had been lent out four times over several years. Amongst other books: unsurprisingly, a prominent left-wing British Labour Party politician's diaries had been taken out tens of times. I moved around to the DVDs – they had hundreds of them, placed in four racks and a couple of shelves in a corner of the library. Moving on around the library, I squeezed past a packed computer area: a

boy was watching a Genoa vs. someone-else-from-Serie-A match on YouTube. Kensal Rise's children obviously have eclectic tastes.

I was disappointed in the adult fiction section. I didn't take a great long look at it – my path was blocked by tens of children and their parents singing songs about keeping the library open – so there could have been more of it, I suppose, dotted around. My impression of Kensal Rise library was that I'd been to far better ones, but that it wasn't bad; it was serving a definite and valuable purpose in the community: Roy 'Chubby' Brown's book aside, it didn't deserve closure. As I was walking out of the door, a small man was standing by, marshalling people in and out. I hadn't noticed him when I walked in, but he looked strikingly like a less tidy, smaller Steve Pemberton. Luckily, I'd found a good person to talk to: Carl was the manager of Kensal Rise Library, and also Kilburn Library down the road.

Does it look like the end of Kensal Rise library to him? Very frankly, he says, "It would look very close to me – there's a consultation period which ends in March," and the council will decide at a council meeting on 11th April whether the libraries in Brent earmarked for closure get shut down. Brent Council wants to save £1 million – that it's apparently costing them £4 for a person to take out a book no longer makes the library a viable proposition according to them, although there's fierce debate over the figures and they're variable from library to library since all the figures are collated together: some have car parks, which make loaning cumulatively cheaper, some don't.

I ask him about the people there supporting the library. He says that the Council could be seen as taking an attitude of 'inverted snobbery' – because these white, middle-class people in Kensal Rise have enough money to buy books for themselves and their kids, the Council are treating it that's not as bad as taking away libraries than in less affluent areas of Brent. Yes, of course, they would miss them more in the less affluent areas, but Carl expects that there would be less protestation from other areas where people, unlike some of those in Kensal Rise, might not be as willing to tell the

council to stick their proposals "where the sun don't shine."

Predictably, it goes deeper than that and gets murky and political. Several years ago, Carl tells me, the Labour council wanted to shut down four libraries in Brent – but when Labour lost in the 2004, the next Liberal Democrat-Tory coalition scrapped the proposals. Now Labour are back and are citing cuts in budget handed down from central government, by the Communities and Local Government Secretary and cutter extraordinaire Eric Pickles, as the trigger that means that the libraries have to go.

I walk away, but want to see if that's the general consensus around (north) London. I got the Overground to Haringey, and walked up and down Crouch Hill to Hornsey Library. I'd heard there was to be a read-a-thon with local authors. Although it is not earmarked for closure by Haringey council, the library was holding events to show their support for other libraries in need around London.

When I got there, there was no noise, few people around: I'd missed it. I arrived at 1.30pm, and it had finished more than an hour before. But I took a chair and looked and milled about for an hour or two. A much bigger library than Kensal Rise, they had a vast CD collection which rivalled and beat Kensal Rise's DVD collection hands down. In it were records as cult – take that however you want to – as The Cranberries' Treasure Box, The Fall's Complete Peel Sessions and huge box set of Messiaen. In their different ways, I liked both libraries I visited. I went home saddened – not thinking of the economic rules that might do it, just on purely sentimental grounds, which these days is probably deeply flawed logic in itself – that one of the two I'd seen that day might not see to the end of the year.

According to the Guardian, there are 350 libraries which are threatened with closure this year around Britain but the degree to which libraries are threatened from county to county varies greatly. Obviously Brent is one case; in Oxfordshire just under half – twenty out of forty-three – are threatened with closure; in Dorset, fourteen of their thirty-four are for the chop. But some counties won't need to shut down any of their local libraries at

all. Greater localisation has resulted once again in a kind of hideously unfair postcode lottery.

A broadside against the government and his local council was launched by the author Philip Pullman, who has thrown his weight behind the campaign to save local libraries in Oxfordshire: "The government, in the Dickensian person of Mr. Eric Pickles, has cut the money it gives to local government and passed on the responsibility for making the savings to local authorities. Some of them have responded enthusiastically, some less so; some have decided to protect their library service, others have hacked into theirs... and its hundreds of thousands of books of learning and scholarship."

Pullman goes onto spot a contrast between the Conservative Party's pledge to introduce a Big Society to Britain and its policy and actions: "The council is hoping that the youth service, which is also going to lose twenty centres, will be staffed by volunteers. Are these the same volunteers, or a different lot of volunteers?"

At least there are proposals that there are volunteers in libraries that stay open, however patronising that might seem to some librarians who would have to have their jobs picked up by people doing it for a lark or out of civic duty; it's clear that some libraries won't be so lucky.

The coalition have been relatively lucky so far with the degree to which the public perceive them to be responsible for the £1.1 billion cuts in local government and responsible for other cuts. Local government is so feeble in Britain people often don't know where the blame lies anyway. Partly it's because people think some of the blame lies with the bankers, some of the blame lies with the previous government, some of the blame lies with the tax evaders, but recently groups, like UK Uncut, who station themselves outside Arcadia shops to protest against the owner's apparent tax evasion, have challenged them one by one. There will be an ominous time for the government when it becomes the principal target for these attacks and, with their Big Society plan flagging week by week, it might be sooner than they expect. ☹

Shhh-ocking decisions

Heather Wang decries library closures

First the school fee, and then the libraries, the Tories really are losing their minds.

The government's plan to close more than 450 libraries had recently caused indignation and protests across the country. Indeed, this decision is utterly outrageous and disgraceful. Series of events and campaigns against the proposal took place. Library Workers for a Brighter Future organised a mass 'shhh-in' at Sheffield Central Library, where protesters joined in a chorus of 'shhh' then cheered for their library. They also took out the maximum fifteen books allowed with their library cards to prevent the closure with the theory that a library cannot be shut down while most of the books are still on loan. Shelves were emptied by protesters in many other libraries around the UK as well.

In Gloucestershire, campaigning group Friends of Gloucestershire libraries, by 18th January had already collected 10,000 names in a petition against the county's plans to cut library services by 43 per cent.

In Suffolk, children and adults gathered outside Ipswich County Library to voice their concerns over the Suffolk County Council's plan to slash 30 per cent of the library budget.

The planned closures around Oxford is particularly ironic, as the city is bidding to become UNESCO's World Book Capital in 2014. Colin Dexter, who was at the forefront of Oxford's bid, had previously expressed confidence in the bidding. But if the libraries are to be closed, when the committee come to Oxford, they will only see libraries with boarded-up windows. Merely imagining the scene is truly depressing.

The UK Government is trying to close libraries filled with resources. And this is what a 'developed' country does?

What the government uses to justify its controversial plan is again the over-used line – it saves money. 'Coincidentally', the government's plan often 'happens' to hit the poor particularly hard. The claim that in an age of Internet, people can access information needed at home anyway is groundless. Some people even tried to back up the government's proposal by saying libraries will be or are replaced by the Amazon Kindle. How about those who can't afford having a computer? And since when did the Kindle become a product owned by everyone? So those have the least now don't even have to right to access the most precious public goods – knowledge?

How ironic is this? While my mother,

along with many other philanthropists, were donating tens of thousands of books to schools in rural China that can't afford to have any books, the UK government is trying to close libraries filled with resources. And this is what a 'developed' country does?

To be honest, this is not even about whether other ways of obtaining information is available. In the UK, more than half of the population is still estimated to visit a public library at least once a year and there are about 288 million visits every year. When new choices arise, this does not mean the traditional ones need to be abandoned. Instead, more often than not, the old ways should be cherished. They exist for a reason. Benefits brought by the libraries are not hard to see. They bring the society together. Don't we already spend enough hours hiding in our little rooms? At the end of the day, it's just another way of getting information, another place to read, to work, to relax, to browse websites, to meet friends... And many do prefer to use the libraries as opposed to other facilities.

Moreover, the government's claim that most information contained in the library is accessible online is not even true. What the Internet and library offer are two very different sets of material. While the fast changing news can be read online for free, most books are not available on the Internet unless paid for. Therefore the govern-

ment's action is depriving its people's right to gain information and knowledge, the poor and rich alike.

Waves of protests followed by the government's plan to close public libraries should be encouraged. But more importantly, it's time

the government starts to listen. ☹



The future of information? Flickr user: gillyberlin

Judicious immunity

Rimmel Mohydin ponders US diplomatic exceptionalism

Over the past decade we have seen Lady America lay the law of the land, and to hell with whose land it is in the first place. Did we hear you say WMDs, Saddam? Never mind finding any evidence, let's just rip your country apart to shambles. A few scattered militants in the mountains in Pakistan? Well, what a good time to see what this button does and fire drones from the White House Common Room and indiscriminately attack all the civilians there. And what's that Afghanistan? We told you we'd be out by now? No, we kinda like keeping you here right under our feet.

Bruce Cummings said, "Hegemony means never having to say you're sorry". I didn't realise how true that was until the beginning of this month. A journalist's heaven, Pakistan is a country which is currently leaving newspapers spoilt for choice for the next headline. You would have to be pretty outrageous to get the

express route to be the next big news piece that gets everyone talking. And that's exactly what Raymond Davis did. Allegedly, if two ordinary men on a motorcycle are next to your car in traffic in broad daylight, you lose all reason, take out your illegal weapon and gun them down not once, not twice but seven times. You then not only try to flee the scene but radio call your colleagues from the consulate to come and save you from the big, bad cops because obviously, you are the victim here. Who cares about the two men who you so brutally murdered just there? They're dead anyway.

Alright, so you have to be ever so slightly politically correct so you agree to be taken into custody because obviously, Pakistani law is entirely on your terms. But before that you ensure that by virtue of holding an American passport you deserve extra tight security because you fear for your life. Surely, some other Pakistani will get so excited at the prospect of seeing

He isn't even a diplomat but an employee at the US consulate and what's more is that his job description didn't say anything about him being able to legally carry firearms

a foreigner that they too would want to play around with the big guns (No, Ray, that's just you).

One of the benefits of being a diplomat in a foreign country is that you enjoy immunity and, was Davis to have it, Pakistan would be unable to try him. Even though this protection is a bit vague on murders (diplomats aren't usually paranoid homicidal maniacs), it is protection nonetheless. Where this gets interesting is that lucky Mr. Davis was in the country on a business visa thus very neatly placing him outside the shade of the diplomatic immunity umbrella. Funnily enough, he isn't even a diplomat but an employee at the US consulate and what's more is that his job description didn't say anything about him being able to legally carry firearms. Given how many factors are playing against him, you'd think the Pakistani courts would have a lot to work with to punish the man exactly like he deserves.

Too bad he's American.

Once again Uncle Sam proves why he is every one's favourite uncle where he goes on to demonstrate that the rules will never apply to him. Had a Pakistani 'diplomat' done something remotely similar on American soil, I'm thinking no one would ever hear from him again. But now, Mrs. Clinton herself is involved and pressuring President Zardari to release Davis. Throwing in the Vienna Convention of Diplomatic Relations when convenient, Clinton insists he was acting in self-defence. Sure he had just been to the cash point and was driving around in his snazzy four-wheeler but what about the fact that the city police chief found that the forensic evidence did not support his claim that one of the men approached his car window, cocked his gun and pointed it at him? And even if it were the case, why did he have to shoot the other one down when he tried to run away? Was the

second shooting simply a case of 'One for Sorrow, Two for Joy'?

A comment I found online read said something like, "Pakistan should save everyone's time and energy and just release him. Does Pakistan still want the food that American money buys?". This provocative sentiment is very reflective of the mentality towards the country that has lost more civilians and soldiers to America's War on Terror. Sovereignty can go take a hike when it comes to those stars and stripes. Respecting the laws of any other country besides their own is a joke. Justice turns a blind eye to their conduct because that's just the American way. And of course it gets away with all this because it waves the big bucks and turns all developing countries into its little bitches.

To add a touch of Shakespeare into this, the wife of one of the victims recently killed herself, unable to deal with the inevitable truth that as long as Washington was in charge, justice would not be served. I, for one have had it with the arrogance that generates this mindset. It has reached the point where America doesn't even pretend otherwise. No, Hillary Clinton, you cannot suddenly decide that a consulate employee gains diplomatic immunity after he has committed a crime. No, Raymond Davis, you do not deserve to go back to your home country and have your case quietly filed away. And no, this time Pakistan will not be your whore and do exactly as you say. This time, America will have to swallow its pride, prove Cummings wrong and say sorry.



Image: WikiCommons

Political societies are to be constructed upon a thin conception of the 'human being' and the good in order that a reasonable pluralism be ensured in the society. The veil of ignorance behind which negotiators in the original position come to decisions about their society is put in place in order that biases and preferences do not come to shape the political outcomes: this is a necessity if a well-ordered political community is to be formed in which the members are capable of agreeing upon a public conception of justice. The process of reflective equilibrium between considered moral judgement and comprehensive doctrines permits people to create an overlapping consensus

pertaining to their collective conceptions of the good when compared to their own differing views. As people do not know, in this position, their class position, social status, strength or intelligence, it is purely upon the basis of morality that overlapping consensus is formed. Reasonable pluralism is ensured by the role played by the collectivisation of considered moral judgements: this constellation of moral judgements may well vary from place to place, and so it should.

The praxis of female genital mutilation falls perfectly into this framework: the practice of FGM is a settled cultural norm in certain parts of the world - to the point of its acceptability being a considered moral judgement, with 82

per cent of Egyptian women supporting the continuation of the practice in one survey - and with some women seeing it as a necessity to become a 'true woman.' To forbid an act which has such cultural significance and is clearly associated with many people's conceptions of the good would have no legitimate basis. The cause for a lack of legislation is furthered by the fact that FGM does not serve to remove the capacity of women to utilise primary goods and exercise their moral rights: as the lexically primary concern of any political society is to ensure the exercise of such rights, once again no legitimate basis could be cited to prohibit the practice.

As people are to consider themselves only as people at the time of the negotiation over the basic structure of

society: gender is not to be considered by the political society as important at any juncture. The consideration of such a gender-specific fact on a legislative agenda is to make such an attribute relevant in a matter in which it should not be.

Alexander Young is... RAWLS



Can female genital mutilation be justified?



Bianca Nardi is...

MILL

Liberal feminism asserts the equality of men and women through political and legal reform. It is a branch of feminism, which uses the language of liberty, rights and legal equality. As stated in his book 'The Subjection of Women', Mill believed that the oppression of women was one of the few remaining relics from ancient times, a set of prejudices that severely impeded the progress of humanity. He defended the emancipation and education of women on utilitarian grounds - that the emancipation of women should be justified on the immediate greater good, the enrichment of society and individual development. Women's progression in society will benefit society as a whole, as they prove to be useful assets in its development. Additionally, the role of

women in marriage needed to be changed - as society, gender construction and education are three aspects of women's lives that are hindering them.

Female genital mutilation is an affront to women's human rights, and should be eradicated. It is also a horrific practice in terms of health and hygiene - as it is argued that women to undergo the practice have a greater chance of having HIV/AIDS, scarring, infertility or infections. Not only it is a painful and humiliating practice, but also it is usually performed without the consent of the patient. It has psychological and sexual side effects on the women who go through it - depriving them of a full sexual experience and sometimes creating a mental aversion to sex.

When a family refuses to submit their

daughters to the ceremony of genital mutilation, they are isolated by the community - often being refused marriage, social inclusion and access to resources. Hence, it is evident that the problem lies in the mentality and culture of the populations that inflict this practice - and the reforms necessary should stem from this cultural core. FGM as a social convention includes the pressure to prepare a young girl for marriage, and is considered part of raising a daughter in a proper manner. The groups involved should be educated in learning how this practice is a grave infringement and disrespect towards women's rights. If the important aspect were the religious background and ceremony surrounding the practice, an alternative would be to come up with a symbolic ritual to replace it. Tribes which

approve the practice should be educated the physiological effects on girls and on how alternative means can be used to promote post-marital sex.

Careful giving

More care should be taken for charities, writes **Ed Longinotti**

As RAG week approaches again at LSE, there will soon be even more competition on Houghton Street for a small donation of your money. The constant exposure to the numerous genuinely very good causes at LSE and indeed as we go about daily life - posters on the tube, advertisements in newspapers and on television - can leave many feeling jaded about charitable giving. However, I believe that it is very important we do give to charity for two broad reasons.

Firstly, as LSE students we are all very privileged: indeed simply to be at university is very rare in a global context. Whilst many of us will not have significant amounts of spare money all of us can spare some change. I doubt any of us can genuinely claim to not be able to donate something at all. Consider this: next time you go out, buy one less drink and donate

the money saved to a charity in RAG week. This simple act won't change your life at all but could make a real difference to another person. Many of us are rightly concerned about poverty and inequality and charitable giving is fantastic way to directly combat many of these issues. As a community it is important to 'put our money where our mouth is'.

Secondly, it is important to remember that charities do make a very real difference to people's lives. It seems strange in modern Britain to incur a cost and not receive a good or service in return but it is important to remember that any money donated will have a very real impact on a person's life. This lack of apparent connection between donation and effect can reduce the incentive to give and it is important to remember that a donation isn't simply 'money out' but is actually buying a real difference for another per-

son. All charities make a serious effort to minimise administration costs and invest as little as possible in overheads and so you can be confident that your donation will make a difference. Perhaps cliché, but ultimately true in many cases.

Last year RAG week raised a brilliant £40,000 and in light of this figure it is fair to say that charitable giving is very well supported at LSE. On a national level it is interesting to note that 40% of us, sixteen to twenty-four year-olds do give to charity - although the girls are more than twice as generous as the boys giving an average of £16 compared to £7 per donation. However, it is too easy to see giving as an onerous social necessity and we should remind ourselves that we are in position to give generously and we should do so happily, knowing that such giving improves lives for the better.

Finally, I have a vested interest to

declare; on the 17th April this year I will be running the 26.2 miles of the London Marathon for the anti-bullying charity Kidscape. Kidscape is the first charity in the UK dedicated to preventing bullying and combating its effects. I decided to run for the charity after being involved in the mentoring programme at my school which helped me realise the importance of anti-bullying work. If you would like to help take action against bullying then you can make a donation online and take a break from the Facebook stalking and sponsor me. ☛

Ed can be sponsored at: <http://www.just-giving.com/edward-longinotti>

WHAT IF...

...Japan was divided? (Pt. 2)

Jack Tindale

Growing animosity between North and South Japan, already very pronounced by the mid-1950s, became even more intense in 1956 following the re-election of President Howard Stassen in the United States and the victory of the pro-military coalition of Aiichiro Fujiyama in Tokyo. Fujiyama, leader of the Reform Party which had arisen in a response to the disintegration of the Democrats, adopted a far more hard-line response to the Communist regime in Sapporo following several anti-American riots by various left-wing groups on the mainland.

The Tsugaru Strait Crisis would bring the world to the brink of nuclear war. Under the growing militarism of the Fujiyama government, a domestic nuclear programme had commenced in June 1958 with American aid. The details of the atomic programme were kept hidden even from senior ministers, with the "Marduk Institute" established by the Ministry of National Defence as a front organisation for the domestic development of fission material. Despite the plodding nature of the project forced by the intense secrecy, a working prototype bomb was developed by the end of the decade.

The Japanese People's Republic, as the name implied, was not the most hospitable nation for Aniu and Koreans, who naturally caused the weakening of the spirit of the Japanese proletariat and defensive spirit by not being Japanese. Fortunate minorities within the increasingly homogeneous population managed to slip away to either the slowly democratising South Korea of Chang Myon or the rapidly democratising South Japan. The North's highly pro-Kremlin Premier, Sanzo Nosaka, had replaced the independently minded Tokuda Kyuichi in 1951 and instigated a far more repressive regime on the snowy island, although regular grain shipments and a vast standing military had managed to ensure stability for the regime there.

On 5th February 1961, the South Japanese Foreign Ministry announced that Tokyo had developed domestic nuclear weapons. Instantly the two nations came to the brink of war with Premier Nosaka forced to reveal, after a flustered series of communiques with General-Secretary Bulganin, that the JPR also possessed the A-Bomb. The fact that the northern versions had simply been shipped covertly from Sakhalin the previous winter did not feature in the propaganda released by the Commissar for Information.

With both nations on the brink of nuclear war, the Soviet Far East Navy and US Seventh Fleet began an uneasy patrol of the freezing waters between the Japanese islands. Newly-elected President Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., never a man to be accused of being soft on communism, ordered both Nosaka and his "corrupt, godless puppet-master Bulganin" to order their militaries down before an invasion of Hokkaido by the US-backed military was launched.

Whilst historians may never know the full details of the flurry of hurried telephone exchanges between Moscow, Tokyo, Sapporo and Washington over the following fortnight, it was clear by the end of March that a resolution had been reached with a public Soviet withdrawal from the JPR and Aiichiro Fujiyama's surprise resignation as Prime Minister. It will never be known exactly what prompted the Socialist sweep of the Diet at the subsequent general election, but regardless, Inejiro Asanuma found himself leading a very uneasy country indeed: a situation he soon found himself mandated to solve. ☛

India Week 2011

Anushka Shah elaborates on what is to come in India Week

India Week 2011 is not about bringing together the Indian community at LSE, and neither is it just a week of colourful song and dance. It is one week dedicated to making the world more knowledgeable about this beautiful nation of over 1 billion people. It's about celebrating what makes it unique - why do its people dress the way they do, why do they dance the way they do, why is cricket religion here, how do the raucous politics match up to the incredible growth rate - what makes this country, teeming with life, pulsate with heart beats so thunderous that the whole world reverberates in response. What is the India story?

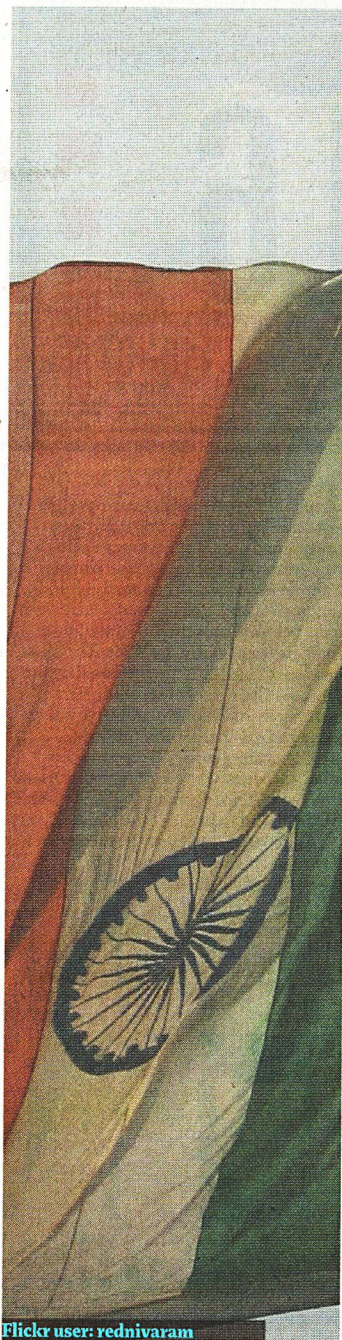
Come and discover India as we take this one week to unravel the story. The week consists of various events including an India-Pakistan cricket match at Lord's, a lecture by eminent politician Shashi Tharoor, Bollywood dance courses, Hindi language taster sessions, and a subsidised dinner at Masala Zone in Covent Garden. There will also be a very unusual and interesting panel discussion on India, China, Pakistan, Afghanistan where LSE students will play the panellists; a Fashion Show on Friday during Crush in aid of RAG's charities; Antakshari, a talent show; yoga sessions; a movie screening of Patiala House and a lot more. With many of these events being run in collaboration with other societies, India Week promises to represent a crowd true to the extraordinarily diverse nature of the LSE. From the traditional to the modern, from the arcane to the recognised, from the forgotten to the hyped, we aim to unveil many uncovered facets of the world's largest and fastest growing democracy.

LSE students for the panel discussion include Sukriti Yadava, Srinjoy Banerjee, Sulaiman Hakemy, Lamees Tanveer, and Liang Yu. The Antakshari is to be held by Medha Krishna; the Hindi language taster, by Sanam Arora; and the Bollywood dance course, by extraordinary dancer Karu Raj. Watch your favourite LSE students like Lizzie Bacon, Nadine Marshman, Stanley Ellerby-English, Alex Peters-Day, Jack Fellows, Sanjay Dave, Neel Malde, as well as various other members of RAG, SPICE, the Women's rugby team walk down the catwalk and move to Bollywood tunes at the SPICE/RAG Fashion Show during Crush. Look out for extraordinary performances by Medha Krishna, Sanaa Bidhuraaja, and the incredible Nainani brothers Paras and Dhiraj during the show. Tickets for the show and Crush are combined, and this time Crush promises a

twist of Fusion Bollywood! The screening of Patiala House, a movie based on the Indian community at Southall with legendary actors like Akshay Kumar and Anushka Sharma is being held on Thursday with a live Question and Answer session with one of the movie actors after the screening! Tickets for all events during India Week may be bought at the stalls on Houghton Street through the week.

It's a hard balance to maintain between academics and yet discovering that oh-so-cultural side of LSE

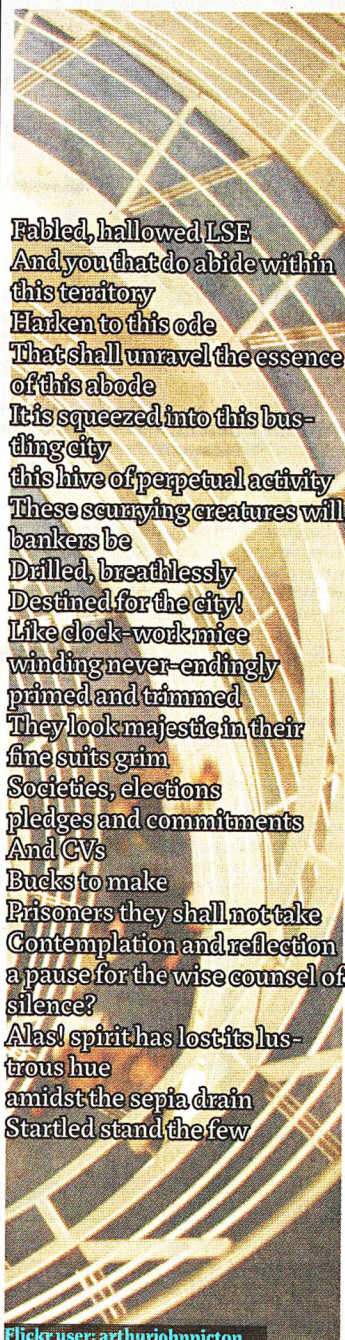
Society and academic events at the LSE run in abundance, and an overdose ironically always makes ignorance easier. We walk down Houghton Street everyday rushing to a class or away from a teacher, hardly ever stopping to smell the flowers and pick up a leaflet. Free drinks by the Polish society one night, while Bhangra in the Underground on another. Public lecture by the President of Xjyrfjgthstan or that play about Nazi literature. Where do we go? It's a hard balance to maintain between academics and yet discovering that oh-so-cultural side of LSE, especially this time around Lent term. But it's a balance that must be achieved, for studying at the LSE means experiencing the rare phenomenon of being surrounded by people of every type. Cultural societies are not just meant for people of that culture, but in fact for people of all the other cultures. In a world where distance no longer determines who your neighbour is, it's time to push your boundaries of colour and race and change the look of your comfort zone. Working in a city as international as London, every job requires a complete cognisance of the term globalisation. Understanding rising powers like China and India have become the new prerogative, and working with an understanding of their cultures a revered skill. Come join us celebrate India Week in true Indian style from 14th to 18th February - for it is the 21st century, and India has arrived. ☛



Flickr user: rednivaram

An ode to the LSE

Tabassam Hamid



Flickr user: arthurjohnpicton

Fabled, hallowed LSE
And you that do abide within
this territory
Harken to this ode
That shall unravel the essence
of this abode
It is squeezed into this bustling
city
this hive of perpetual activity
These scurrying creatures will
bankers be
Drilled, breathlessly
Destined for the city!
Like clock-work mice
winding never-endingly
primed and trimmed
They look majestic in their
fine suits grim
Societies, elections
pledges and commitments
And CVs
Bucks to make
Prisoners they shall not take
Contemplation and reflection
a pause for the wise counsel of
silence?
Alas! spirit has lost its lustrous
hue
amidst the sepia drain
Startled stand the few

Measured musings

In the chapter of Genesis, the Bible claims that marriage required a "man to leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife, and the two shall become one". According to Roman Catholicism, marriage is followed by several duties including the obligation to bear children, with Catholics claiming that not doing so is 'more than

likely grounds for an annulment'. A highly controversial aspect surrounding this traditional celebration includes whether religious institutions should accept homosexual marriages.

Liberal Democrat Equalities Minister Lynne Featherstone is expected to announce later this week that a ban on civil unions being conducted on religious venues is to be lifted. This would allow hymns or bible readings to be included in ceremonies, and provide gay couples with spiritual and religious depth in their celebration of unity.

Since 2001, gay marriage has been legalised and performed by several jurisdictions, including in the predominantly catholic countries of Portugal, Spain and Argentina. Gay marriage is not legal in Britain, but couples are allowed to become civil partners in order to have the same legal rights as married couples.

Marriage was never just about sharing assets or being legally responsible for your husband's debts. For anyone who has been to a religious marriage ceremony, it is clear that marriage isn't just a legal contract. Religious marriage offers a per-

manent dimension to the bond between the partners, which is compared to the one between God and humankind.

Religious groups such as Unitarians, Liberal Jews and Quakers already carry out ceremonies for gay couples. However, this move is likely to be met with opposition from conservatives within the Church of England and the Conservative Party. The Catholic Church, and Pope Benedict XVI in particular, has regularly condemned same-sex marriage and relationships calling them a 'destruction of God's work'.

Regardless of the religion followed by the couple, the word marriage (as opposed to civil union) often implies religious and social obligations. With the heavy weight of conventions, history and tradition, one forgets that marriage is about love. Providing a spiritual element to civil unions is one step towards the legalisation of gay marriage. ☛

Bianca Nardi
Features Editor

DANCE YRSELF CLEAN

JSTOR: Last week, the background picture was that of the outside of the Beaver office wall; thematic but a bit stale. This week, we've gone with a picture of two lovesick pigeons opposite the office. It could be construed as a metaphor for the fleeting nature of the beauty of art or of doomed romance or any other crap like that. Truth be told, I just thought it'd be a good idea to have a picture of a fat pigeon on the cover; imagine my surprise when its mate came and snuggled up beside it. I imagine there's a Valentine's Day analogy in there somewhere... I was never good at English!

K-RO'D: Darling Jonathan, My sweetheart, my inamorato, the smiling Storey to my Part B life: The moment you formally announced your Part B resignation (for those of you who didn't know, the wonderful JSTOR is withdrawing his graceful presence from the pages of Part B to concentrate on spreading a whole load of "yay!"-based loving to the British legal system), it felt as though an angry Beaver had sunk its tangerine-tinged teeth into my chest and ripped out my bleeding heart. In the words of Socrates, "the hottest love has the coldest end", and so I will spend the rest of my Fridays without you in a blistering Beaver blizzard. Roses are red, violets are in fact lilac, I will be waiting here woefully for you to come back...

Fashion – Alice Leah Fyfe | Film – Aameer Patel | Literature – Presca Ahn | Music – Masaya Tanikawa | Satire – Luke Smolinski

PART B

Sex and Gender – Alexander Young | Technology – Eden Dwek | Theatre – Chris Finnigan | TV – Simon Chaudhuri

Untangling the web of UK crime

Eden Dwek asks whether the Internet is really making us safer

The Internet: what would we do without it? Ranging from social networking to academic research and shopping, we spend the majority of our days in cyberspace. We can already access it from our phones, computers and games consoles, and manufacturers are figuring out how they can bring it to more of our household items.

Our generation experiences an information overload, with close to four billion pages on the Internet. Statistics are at the end of a mouse click, and people are all too ready to Google anything they see fit. The attempted revolution in Egypt has shown the power of social networking sights, such as Twitter, in bringing people together. Only a decade into the twenty-first century, and the web is playing an increasing role in the development of society.

Uncensored, unregulated and unaccountable, the Internet is a powerful tool that can be used for a variety of agenda. In a post-Wikileaks world, "accountability" is a term that is banded around by many. We vote our governments in, and therefore have a right to hold them to their word. However, if accountability causes harm to

others, who are connected indirectly, should we pursue these actions to their full extent? Last week, a new website (www.police.uk) was launched, which allows people to look up postcodes and view crime figures, subdivided into types of crimes. Whilst it must be understood that prevention is only one aspect of policing, it allows residents to hold their borough's police to account for increases and decreases in crime. This is perfect: transparent crime maps and pressure on police forces to show real reductions in crime. Or so it would seem.

There has been a backlash by many residents following the website's launch. Some argue that their small, low crime street has been lumped into a category with larger, high crime streets, thus giving a false representation of the actual situation. Others argue that it is not truly representative of crime, as much of it goes unreported.

Alwyn Young has taught me to see everything through an economic perspective, so we'll start here. How will crime maps influence house prices? Roads with high crime, whether they are correctly represented by the maps or a consequence of being lumped in with crime hotspots, can now be

identified by everyone. Real house prices will drop and the total value of residents' assets (their wealth) will decrease. Economists reading this, of which there are very many at LSE, will argue that this is how the real estate market should work: complete transparency, allowing consumers to make informed decisions. However, this is not necessarily applicable here. Crime maps have never been so easily available and therefore their recent publication will cause an immediate jolt in the housing market. If we take a step back, there will also be economic impacts on shops and services. People will start to think twice before going out or doing their shopping in an area that has very high crime rates. This is especially true with more vulnerable people, such as older men and women living alone, who are often victims of crime. Is this going to impact revenue for businesses located in crime hotspots? While it can be argued that market forces will push down rental prices in these areas, therefore giving firms a better chance of survival in this new environment, the loss of business is likely to outweigh this.

On the other hand, have we been protecting ourselves against the harsh

reality all these years? People are more than aware of areas that are labelled as "high crime" and make subconscious decisions to avoid going there if they can. The only difference now is that technology and the Internet have allowed this information to be distributed to all those that want it. These people will say that complete transparency will not impact pricing, as people's decisions have already created a pricing structure centred on crime. Arguments on this can continually go back and forth, and facts and figures in the long run will be what measure the actual impacts. By only considering the economic implications, it could be argued that accountability of policing far outweighs the influence the crime maps will have on pricing.

There is, however, another factor that has further reaching consequences, and this refers to areas of low crime. Making crime maps publicly available benefits those committing the crimes. While this is not relevant for the likes of criminal damage and public order offences, which the website classifies under "Other Offences," it is pivotal with regards to burglary, car crime and other targeted crimes. Perpetrators are able to research areas that are not

affected by crime and target them for their next "job". In this sense, we are helping the very people we are trying to stop. This is completely counter-productive and has the potential for major repercussions. Could this lead to a more equal distribution of crime across the UK, as criminals "diversify" in their operating locations? And is this going to be solely a result of requesting accountability from police? Don't get me wrong, I am in favour of holding politicians, public service workers and other representatives in society to account for their actions, however in this case, I think we may be tackling the issue in the wrong way. This could make issues worse and significantly complicate policing.

The Internet is an influential device that can be used for both good and bad. It agglomerates ideas, entertainment and information, and is often a major benefit to society. However, we need to be more aware of the consequences this freedom of information will have on the wider public, and evaluate who will be impacted, before we publish things that cannot easily be withdrawn.

Fashion. Theatre.

Blue Jean Baby

Alice Leah Fyfe shares denim delights

Last weekend, the king of department stores, Selfridges, hosted an event to top all shopping experiences in the world-wide wardrobe's most favoured department: denim. The event brought designers, fashion writers and experts from top brands like J Brand to provide customers with a free consultation service, with expert advice about cut, colour and fabric available in the exclusive surroundings of the Denim lab. Stocking hundreds of styles, many exclusive to Selfridges, the department has established itself as the number one denim destination in the UK. It stocks timeless classics as well as a vast variety of seasonal trends to suit any pair of legs.

But how difficult can it be to buy a pair of jeans? Are Selfridges over-complicating an item of clothing which for most is a wardrobe staple not even to be considered twice? Denim has come a long way. Proving its versatility in WWII, its adoption by American icons in the 50s catapulted it into mainstream fashion to become the most universally loved and worn (and I mean *worn*) piece in anyone's wardrobe.

The word "denim" comes from the origin of the fabric, first made in the French town of Nîmes, the fabric adopted the name *serge de Nîmes*, which was soon shortened to Denim. The fabric was usually dyed indigo blue which faded with wear and wash, especially in the saline, sunny environment of sailors and fishermen who wore the fabric most. The word "jeans" stems from Genoa in Italy (Gênes in French) where the denim fabric was first used to make trousers. They were first issued in 1901 to factory workers and naval cadets. The shape morphed from straight cut to bootleg to allow for ventilation and movement in hot working conditions. Sailors also had to be able to take the heavy trousers off easily if they fell overboard. Levi Strauss saw the lucrative potential for this new fabric and collaborated with Jacob Davis who thought to use copper rivets to reinforce the seams of the garments to make them even more durable. Together, they sold their first overalls to gold miners and their jeans to the lumberjacks and cowboys of Western America.

In the 50s, James Dean popularised denim and jeans in the iconic film *Rebel Without a Cause* and pretty soon, they became synonymous with teenage rebellion and were often banned in public buildings! During the 60s, the wearing of jeans became slightly less frowned upon and filtered through to mainstream youth culture. Each decade saw new dyeing techniques and shapes characterised by leg shape, waistline, and colour.

Now, jeans are ubiquitous, and it is difficult to pinpoint exactly what the

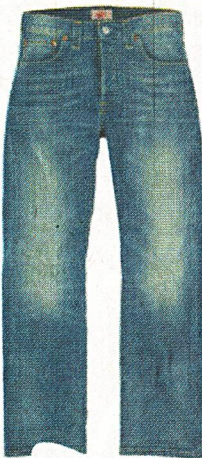
"newest" style of jeans is. Perhaps it is the skinny jean, or the "jeggings", but each style that comes back into vogue every year harkens back to a past decade. After years of mid-riff bearing hipster styles, the high waist has finally returned, paying tribute to the "retro years" of mod fashion. Recently too, this season in particular, the flare is resurfacing, injecting some 70s flounce into our skin tight obsession.

80s, 90s; these see acid wash and crazy colours. The whole denim story has come together now and how better to celebrate its journey than with a department store like Selfridges. Originally with only a few designers, most high street and high-end brands will now have a denim range. The technology of the fabric has rocketed as well: thinner, lighter and much easier to work with in terms of design and shaping. I don't think many of us could handle the traditional kind of denim anymore; a good quality denim jacket is about the closest thing we come to these days. From pure utility and modest workforces, denim jeans have grown into the most coveted garment in the fashion market, appealing to millions worldwide from all backgrounds, cultures, genders and ages. Designers shape them, scientists create them, artists tear them, pop stars flaunt them. Everyone wears them.

No wonder Levi's alone makes over \$4 billion a year.



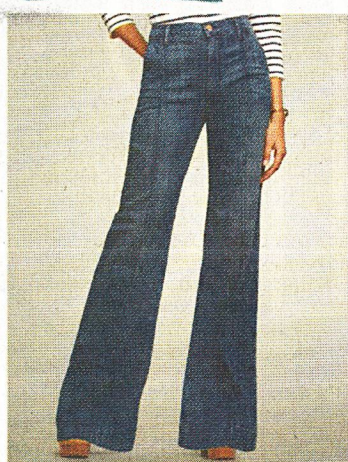
Denim shirt, Levi's, £70



Classic 50s, Levi's, £95



Laquer paint skinnies, Diesel, £110



70s Pintuck flares, GAP, £45.95



Dr Denim, available at Urban Outfitters, £45



501 cut offs, Levi's



Denim dress, ASOS, £40



Maaïke Mossel scouts Houghton Street's best dressed

Hasani, second year, BSc Actuarial Science

Hasani, from Barbados, embodies the true laid-back philosophy from his home country: he claims to have no particular style secrets or to have any knowledge of fashion at all for that matter. Frankly, I find it refreshing. This guy clearly has a distinct taste in clothing, without copying from magazines or trying to recreate some style icon's look. He is uninfluenced by anything, and effortlessly manages to look amazingly put together. To mention some of the good aspects of this outfit: the right balance of colours, the accessories that give just enough of an accent and the quality of the materials he is wearing. But most of all it is the attitude he projects of simply not trying too hard. Overthinking an outfit is definitely a fashion faux-pas.



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The International Mime Festival 2011, London

Rory Creedon reflects on this year's International Mime Festival

"The freedom to use one's imagination and the chance not to be fettered by the limitation of language", is what makes visual theatre so appealing according to Joseph Seelig, a co-director of the **London International Mime Festival**. Over the course of the last two weeks of January I saw several festival productions that bore witness to the truth of his words. In some ways, the association of the festival with 'mime' is an unfortunate one. That theatrical discipline has become so totally associated with the playful silence of genius Marcel Marceau that the mere utterance of the word inspires images of men with white faces pretending to go up and down in elevators, or polishing

imaginary silver. The overriding theme of the festival however, is not mime in this sense, but 'visual theatre': a catch-all term that covers theatre not reliant on text: circus, puppetry, object theatre, physical theatre and live art. I first got the bug for visual theatre when I saw Krzysztof Kieslowski's cinematic masterpiece *La Double Vie de Véronique*. Some of the great centerpiece of the film feature puppetry and anyone that has had seen it will be able to testify to power of that art form. 'La Maldiccion de Poe', which I reviewed extensively in this publication was a real powerhouse of raw feeling, puppetry at some of its staggering best. A performance by Les Anticlastes, a French company of puppeteers was an altogether more surreal

experience. The show, *Hilum*, was based largely

The overriding theme of the fest is 'visual theatre': a catch-all term

around the spin cycles of an ageing washing machine – if that sounds outright bizarre, then you won't be far away from accurately imagining the show. Puppets made from skeletal hands, giant thumbs and old rags were manipulated in a world redolent of a disused curiosity shop. A throbbing and insistent electronic soundtrack had me on edge as we creaked through the twisted world created in the ICA theatre.

Ultimately less plot driven than the Poe piece, it was a tour through the mind of creator Patrick Sims; disquieting, at times disturbing, but fantastical and compelling. Objects came to life and I could relate to them even though the bizarre logic of their existence folded into nothingness when the lights came up at the end of the show. Clowning was the centerpiece of *La Porta (The Door)*, as imagined by Kai Leclerc, Bernard Stockli and Andreas Manz, three Swiss Italian clowns who make up a company called *Compagnia 2+1*. The heart of the show was a red door that stood centre stage, over which they were all fighting for ownership rights.

Each time the door opened, a different world could be seen on the other side, and their characters were struggling

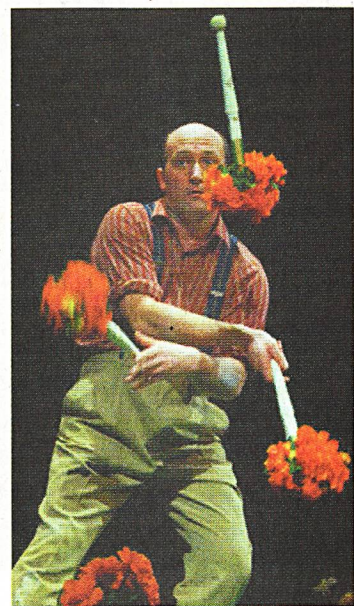
to deal with the unforeseen elements those worlds would throw at them. Sadly the execution was weak, and production values simply too low for the piece take me to the other imaginative realms the clowns so clearly wanted to create. The production felt like a mere setting for clowning set pieces, juggling, low level illusion and slapstick.

What was fascinating was the question and answers session after the performance. What is perhaps generally not realised about clowns is exactly how seriously they take their work, and how philosophically they see their craft. In full makeup and still in character they attempted to answer ridiculous questions posed by adults trying to understand the art of clowning. One plucky young girl asked, "is that your real hair", and she was invited to get her response by tugging. Then she asked, "are you real clowns?" which had all three rather lost for words, and of course went direct to an issue the adults could not even begin to truly tease out. "We are trying, every day we are trying" was the response that seemed to me to be given with a twinge of sadness.

The highlight of the festival for me was *Le Jardin (The Garden)* by Atelier Lefevre & André. The circus skills based show was set around the intriguing relationship between two gardeners, one of whom seemed to be in a position of total dominance over the other. They improvised feats of skill using hose, a wheel barrow, and oranges, presented with a combination of music and lighting that gave the piece a truly cinematic scope. The physical skills are of course possessed by many who have worked in circus, but the genius of this show was their ability to keep us guessing at the true nature of their wordless union, and to seamlessly flow from the garden setting

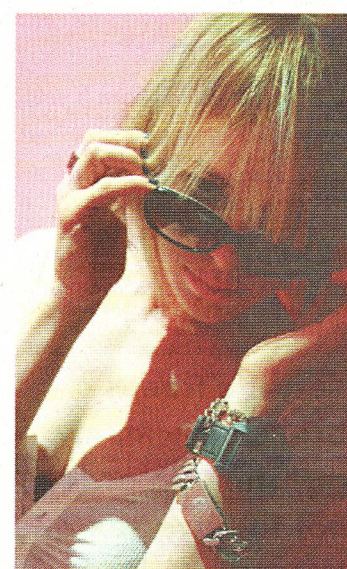
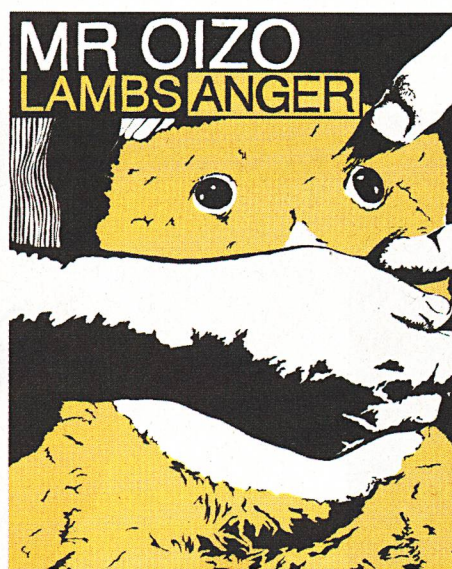
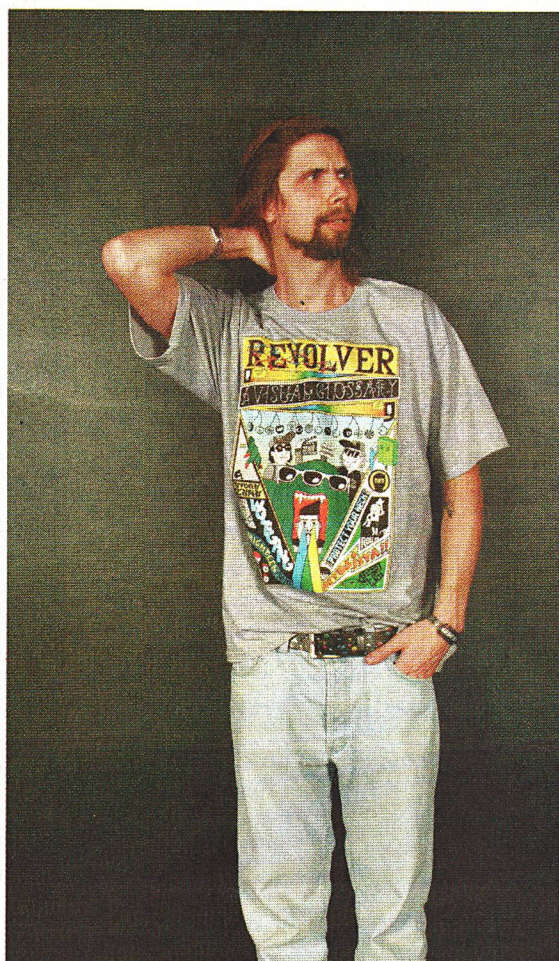
to the physical performance. "Language is very important," said Joseph, "but visual theatre capitalises on theatrical possibilities such as movement and space", possibilities that are often underrealised in theatre based on powerful oratory.

The shows I saw without exception sought to transport audiences to places we are not accustomed to see on the London stage. The sheer inventiveness of the minds at work as well as the physical capabilities of the performers should be enough to animate and excite even the most rational and theory-weary LSE student. I am already excited for 2012.



Ed Banger Records: Teaching the kids to rock again

'King of electro' Pedro Winter talks with Masaya Tanikawa about Parisian raves, Daft Punk and Justice



It's not often someone can say, "My career in music has made me who I am today," and mean it. Rarer still is someone whose "career" encompasses both the musical and managerial aspects of the dance music scene. But for **Pedro 'Busy P' Winter**, it is not just his time as a club promoter for Parisian rave nights, starting up fashion label Cool Cats or even the twelve years of managing French house legends Daft Punk that allows him to speak with seasoned experience on the future direction of contemporary electro music.

It's also the fact that he founded electronic dance label Ed Banger Records in 2002, which would later sign on SebastiAn, Mr. Oizo (of Flat Eric fame) and Justice. Pedro himself is on the label roster under alias 'Busy P', proving his skills behind the production desk are as respectable as his entrepreneurial ones.

As a DJ, producer, fashion designer and label boss, Pedro has been in the electro game for the past nineteen years with a remarkable amalgamation of talents. "I've always been in love with music, particularly from France. There's nothing quite like that French true spirit," he says. "So when I went to a rave for the first time in Paris in '92, I realized I wanted to get involved somehow. The rave was great, it was like oh yeah, I'm dancing, oh, rave is wonderful, but I didn't want to just dance. I wanted to become the provider of the music people were swinging to."

For Pedro, drugs were never an important part of the club experience – he

claims to have been drunk only a handful of times. "I was much more interested in electronic dance music. By the time it was '95, I had started doing these night parties in Paris. They were small, but intimate and well-organised," he says. "I used to organise nights for a club called Palais. Believe it or not, David Guetta used to run the whole thing and he wanted me to handle the second floor, so I scouted out local French DJs."

I started managing Daft Punk during 'Homework'... I jumped on that train and never looked back

Many of the DJs he recruited – Dimitri from Paris, Motorbass, DJ Gregory – are now world-famous artists. Among them was also an electronic music duo consisting of Thomas Bangalter and Guy-Manuel de Homem-Christo. They called themselves Daft Punk. "Paris is a small town, so I would bump into them every so often. After meeting them at one of my club nights, we started talking and we became friends," Pedro recalls. "I think it was about a year later when they proposed that I work with them. Around that time

they were working on Homework, and I thought it was just amazing."

Daft Punk brought together the best elements of many popular music styles. Encompassing warehouse raves, fresh dancefloor disco, 80s-influenced rock and plugging the gaps between, their music re-defined what is now known as French house. Homework came to be loved by many as an accessible dance LP gleaming with jangly guitar rakes, vocoder-processed vocals and tasty compressed beats.

"I think I was about twenty-years old then. As soon as I heard the music they were making, I immediately jumped on the train," says Pedro. "And I didn't look back since. I wasn't thinking about anything else. I just knew at that moment it was what I wanted to do. We were all around the same age and shared that passion for electronic music."

"Managing the duo was a sort of perfect school, for teaching me things about life. I dropped out of university so I could focus completely on music business. My parents were surprised, but they stood behind me and said they supported me," he recalls. "I didn't have any proper education in music business or management, but I think I learned more with Daft Punk than I ever could from some school."

For Pedro, his time with the duo had taught him two important life lessons. "Be patient. Be passionate. Those are, I think, the two key things that I took away from being with them. If you want to enjoy life, you have to remember those things."

We had to turn down a lot of offers after Homework, it really taught me to be patient. Things started moving after that when they got signed to Virgin, and from there everything was a blur."

Over a decade of tough negotiations and promotion work had taken its toll, however. In 2003, electro artist Mr Flash approached Pedro for manager work – not long afterwards, Ed Banger Records was born. "I was a bit fed up with managing, so I proposed that we

The electro scene was taking itself too seriously... I wanted to inject energy and fun back into the dance scene...

should do things differently. I wanted to start a label and release his music," says Pedro. "I didn't really have a specific idea in mind, I didn't think that it would strictly become an electro label. I just wanted to release my friends' music and share it with the world."

"And at the time, the electronic music scene was starting to take itself too seriously. I wanted to inject energy and fun back into the dance scene. I really wanted to bring back that French spirit from those 90s rave nights."

Though Ed Banger garnered little attention from its first hip-hop release, the label broke through to international stardom after the arrival of Justice. Pedro met them through a network of friends, and immediately took to their abrasive brand of electro that went on to sell 250,000 records worldwide. "I was so surprised by their success. All the clubs in Paris went crazy for their songs, especially 'We Are Your Friends'. I was just happy that I could share my tastes with so many people."

Pedro describes Ed Banger Records as one big family. "And I'm the father I guess," he says, laughing. "The dynamic between everyone on the label is very big. A real family spirit is there, with healthy competition between them sometimes. Everyone is real friendly with each other, and it's a beautiful thing."

Ed Banger Records is set to release an upcoming compilation from friends and 'family'. "I hope that when everyone listens to the compilation, people will change their minds about electronic music. When we made the compilation, we didn't have any goals or ideas. We just did it all naturally. I'm pretty happy with what we've all achieved so far, and I think the future is going to be very exciting."

The compilation captures that playful Ed Banger spirit with a selection of tracks compiled by DJ Mehdi and Busy P himself. Slinky beats and abrasive electro stabs keep the energy high, with appearances from many French favourites.

Haircut 100 - IndigO2

Reunion 'Pelican West' concert 28.1.11

Loved by many during the late 80s for their crisp, quirky disco-tinged tunes, **Haircut 100** reunited for the first time since the 90s. Playing their debut LP Pelican West in its entirety. Played to a completely filled audience, Nick Heyward kept the energy high throughout with surreal musings and heart-felt laughter.

Flanked by a percussionist and a three-piece brass section, Nick kicked off the night with global hit 'Love Plus One'. "Yes, yes, yes! It's been thirty years and it feels great," he said as he caught his breath. "What's next, anyone know?"

Haircut 100's music was always surreal, and Nick didn't disappoint. At one point he began talking about actual pelicans and feeling like a hummingbird. Before playing Lemon Firebrigade, Nick told the audience that Haircut 100 was once described as elevator music – which was met with hissing boos by the fans. "You can't change the elevator or the music, but you can change the way you

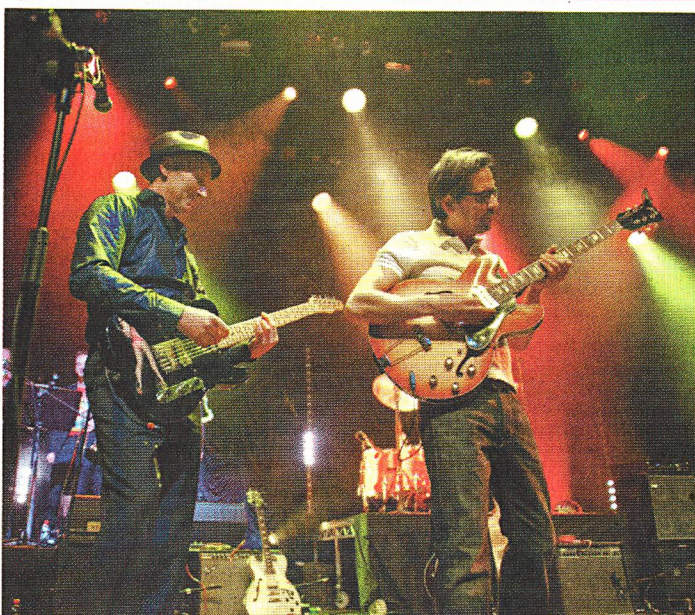
think about it!" he said, in a cheery tone.

Another memorable moment was when he described the band as 'vintage'. Les, the bass player, was described as having 'quite an engine'.

Against all odds – including having to re-do just the ending of a song multiple times – the band managed to recreate their fantastic euphoria-in-suburbia sound. Haircut 100 churned out chart-topping hits with their trademark sound, and the night did not disappoint. Nick kept up his immaculate rhythm work with jangly guitar rakes, supported by bright brass swells and catchy bass hooks.

The crowd was particularly lively, with many shouting amusing lines to Nick. "You want to... You want to dye my hair? I'm 50. It's hard enough putting on a t-shirt, mate," he said. "Oh, there's something wrong with my g-string."

For their encore, he joked they had run out of songs to play. And they literally did, playing an extended version of 'Favourite T-shirts' and 'Love Plus One'.



Spotify Spotting

What Jeremiah Favara, post-graduate student at the Gender Institute is listening to this week:

MNDR
I Go Away

The Decemberists
This Is Why We Fight

Active Child
When Your Love Is Safe

The Hundred in the Hands
Last City

Sufjan Stevens
I Want To Be Well

What's love got to do with it?

Alexander Young displays typical misanthropy towards Valentine's Day

As a rule, I don't fuck on Valentine's Day. This is, it must be said, one of few tenets within my ever-loosening list of 'things I will never do'. This is not just an instance of my being typically contrarian: it is the closest I will ever come to making a principled stand about anything to do with sexual morality.

This isn't, of course, to say that I wouldn't enjoy intercourse on the day: I am male, and yes, I will take what I can get. It is far more a case of just being far too willing to play games with people I've been with at that time of year. On the two instances I've been in whatever I am capable of calling a 'serious relationship',

Yes, it's true: I broke up with my girlfriend in order not to have sex on Valentine's Day

I have made every point of either avoiding them completely or withdrawing any sort of affection from them for the day: this was a project far more viable when I was seeing someone who lived in Hereford and I lived in Birmingham; it took far more effort when I was seeing someone merely a forty minute train journey away who also had a car. It should also be noted that she was incredibly romantic, much to my general distaste.

As much as my moving on from the woman who had the facial features of the common Shetland pony was a definite boon to my life, proximity served to make my life as intolerably difficult as it was to be for the best part of thirteen months. Naggings of 'please come over' and the most hollow of 'I love you's' to be responded to with the most cavernously

empty reiterations of the statement could never be met with 'sorry, I don't want to's or 'leave me alone, I have better things to

ness of perpetual nagging: the whitest of white lies: 'I don't think it's working out.'

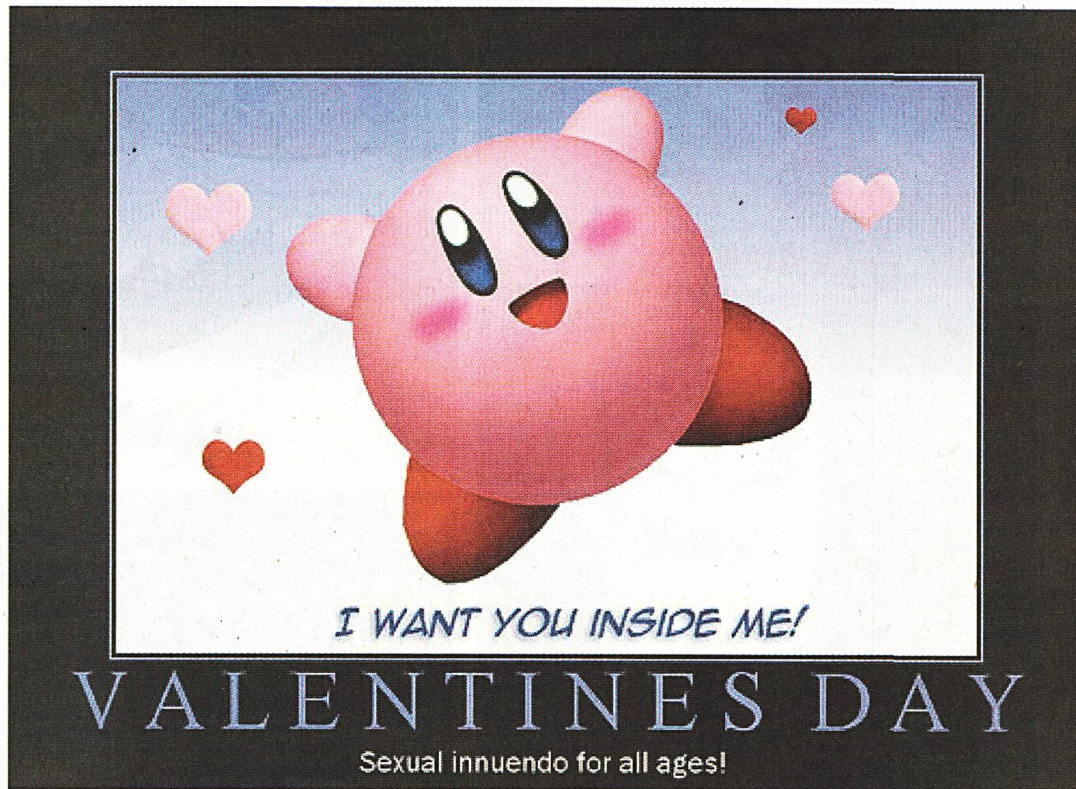
make sure that I didn't violate my single sexual pledge, I broke the heart of a soul who was devoted to me. The strange

As for the reason for my reticence to engage in sexual intercourse on the fateful date that is the 14th February: this is simply evidence of my aversion to tradition. Everybody engages in some practice of whatever they will term 'love' on this day. Be it self-love, meaningless sex or the intolerable, insipid Judeo-Christian, 'normal' 'making love': it's all so mainstream. The archetypal sexual practice. The boring, the mundane, the everyday: everything that should be avoided in any conceptualisation of 'good sex.' Having a day specifically laid out for the act takes away any spontaneity; any passion to be found in the act. Dull, dull, dull.

I strongly urge anyone to avoid the

Having a day specifically laid out for sex takes away any spontaneity or passion

rigours of tradition and forge a new sexual path for themselves: have inappropriate sex in a disabled bathroom (all sorts of leverage opportunities await you, especially if you make the journey to Waterloo mainline station); find somewhere public to demonstrate your affection (I hear Hampstead Heath is a popular resort for such deviance); fuck someone like you hate them. Please, just find a way not to be slaves to custom and have some fun rather than do what is expected. It's what two-hundred years of battles of civil liberties logically culminates in: the ultimate expression of intimacy in freeform. Don't let the heteroscedasticity between volume and local annoyance stop you either: fuck and be fucked.



do's without reflecting badly upon myself on a day that I knew meant so much to her. Of course, a certain level of initiative showed its face in the midst of this dark-

Yes, it's true: I broke up with my girlfriend in order that I didn't have to spend Valentine's Day partaking in the expected pleasures of the flesh. In an attempt to

thing was that this didn't bother me at all: appealing to this higher principle seemed to justify any emotional damage that I could have caused.

Glee Series Blog

Shrina Poojara previews 'The Substitute'

The stars of next week's installment of *Glee*? Gwyneth Paltrow and Tater Tots. "The Substitute" follows the outbreak of monkey flu at McKinley High, leaving Principal Figgins and Mr. Schue off sick and making Sue Sylvester interim principal of the school. (You may ask in what universe a high school, apparently with no vice-principal, would allow the cheerleading captain to become principal, but hey, *Glee*'s Season 2 storylines are thus far no more realistic than Santana's breast implants.) Sue immediately takes the "pal" straight out of principal as she begins to terrorise the school culminating in her decision to take Tater Tots off the school lunch menu, a decision which doesn't sit well with some of the students in particular.

Meanwhile, Will "Come on! There's gotta be a Journey song we haven't done yet" Schuster is replaced by fun-loving, substitute teacher Holly Holiday (Gwyneth Paltrow). I know there's an "Apple for the teacher" joke there somewhere... The laidback Ms. Holiday proceeds to win over the glee club with her awesome rendition of Cee-Lo Green's "Forget You". It is, of course, unlikely that bad-ass Puck would choose to sing the radio-friendly version of the song over the version we all know and love but it is a family show after all, and Ms. Coldplay and the *Glee* team definitely do a great job of it. Cue another opportunity for Brittany (Heather Morris) to show off her dance moves.

Back at home, who's taking care of Mr. Schue? Why, it's none other than his crazy, zombie-like biatch of an ex-wife

Terri! (DAMN! Why won't she just take the hint and forget fuck off?!) In true Season 2 Schuster style, Will finds himself (yet again) deciding whether to act with his head or his... You get the idea.

The episode sees Kurt's friendship with Blaine developing, but at the expense of his friendship with Mercedes. It seems to Kurt that honesty is a dish best served cold but, without a side of Tater Tots, which all seems too much for Mercedes to bear as she channels her frustration towards ending Sue's tyrannous reign. Best scene? Mercedes third-wheels it at dinner with Blaine and Kurt, and begins to daydream when all they talk about is "gay stuff" (line of the episode: Kurt's "Oh my God, I opened my mouth and a little purse fell out!" Hilarious).

All in all, as far as furthering the plot goes, this episode does very little to do so but it still is wholly entertaining. Look out for Brittany's comical take on broccoli, a student who apparently looks like "an attractive Biggie Smalls" and a phenomenal "Singing In The Rain/Umbrella" mash-up, complete with puddle-jumping. Verdict? Next week's episode may not be the most boundary-breaking yet but it does prove that when it comes to *Glee*, there is no substitute.



California Loving

Why Isabella Silver loves 90210

90210 is, in a word, terrible. It was terrible in the 80s, with Tori Spelling and Shannon Doherty, and it's terrible now, with... all those skinny pretty girls and muscled guys with names no-one knows. I am telling you this now so I can let you know that I am aware how appalling it is. I am not a complete moron. This fact, however, does not stop me from watching the show every week without fail. It's like I'm addicted - I can't help but click that "PLAY" button on 4oD, week in week out, no matter that I have essays to write and reading to do for the following day. I can't help but get sucked in to the meaningless and superficial lives of these badly written, fictional characters. No matter how much I try to deny it, how many documentaries and serious dramas I watch to compensate it, I have to admit - my name is Isabella Silver and I am a 90210 addict.

Yes, the plotlines are ridiculous, far-fetched and unbelievable. This doesn't make the show any less entertaining - if anything, these incomprehensibly confusing and dramatic stories are what make the show so addictive. I'll give you an example of this: so far this series (bearing in mind we are only on episode six) there has been an earthquake, an estranged sibling, a birth, a divorce, a car crash, a homosexual encounter, an offer for egg donation and a sexually predatory teacher, not to mention the usual infidelity, hard partying and relationship dramas.

It is as though the writers are so panicked that our short attention spans will wander, so afraid that we might be bored and change the channel that they feel the need to constantly bombard us with hugely dramatic and complex plotlines. While some would dismiss this blatant sacrifice of reality for pure entertain as puerile and vacuous, I can only respect a show that works so hard to keep me interested.

And yes, OK, the acting isn't exactly stellar, either - but that's yet another reason I love 90210. The actors could just as easily be models, and the effect of the golden lighting and beautiful clothes is to make it feel as though you are flicking through a fashion catalogue rather than watching TV. So what if the acting is, at best, mediocre? So what if it doesn't star Hugh Laurie or Steve Buscemi or Laura Linney? 90210 is the antithesis to *Mad Men*, to *The Wire*, to *Breaking Bad*, to all those shows that depict "real life" in all its horror and stark misery, those shows that leave you feeling exhausted, hopeless and deploring humanity. For me personally, there is enough real life in real life - when I watch TV I don't want to be reminded of all the terrible stuff in the world. I want to watch something sparkly and distracting and completely unrealistic. 90210, with all its honey-coloured sunshine and beautiful, physically perfect actors is just that.

But the true beauty of the show is not in the good looks of the actors - it's

in the feel of the show, the atmosphere that ignites that exquisite consumerist yearning in my soul. It's the sun, sea and sand; it's the blonde highlighted hair and the surfboards; it's the parties in hotel rooms - it's the American Dream. These "kids" (all of the actors play about five years younger than their real ages) live in a fantasy high school of money, sex and petty drama, a far cry from anything most of us remember from our school days. 90210 is the reason so many people hate the West - it's sterile, empty and shallow, focused on the superficial and material, the epitome of consumerism. And yet it's impossible not to get sucked in, not to want that perfect hair and make-up, not to long to be in that shiny new convertible, cruising in the sunshine.

That's why I love it - it's why I'm addicted. It's the same feeling I get when I walk past the Zara sale - a sort of buzzing craving, only satisfied by a swipe of my card and that sweet, guilty rush as I hurry out of the shop with my new dress. I know I'm going to regret it when I see my bank balance - or when I look at my clock and see I have wasted an hour that I could have spent working - but I find it hard to care when I am watching *Ivy* find out that the boy she just lost her virginity to is also sleeping with her mother, who also slept with the guy's dad twenty years ago. I bet you don't get that in *Mad Men*, do you now?

Simon Chaudhuri's TV Tips for the week

30 Rock
Comedy Central, Thursdays, at 22:30

Tina Fey returns to our screens in the hilarious sitcom that restarted Alec Baldwin's career. More precisely, **30 Rock** redefined Baldwin's career as a respectable comedic actor - and as with previous seasons, he continues to steal the limelight in many of the scenes. Matt Damon recurs as Liz Lemon's love interest.

Treme
Sky Atlantic, Fridays, at 22:15

David Simon's latest creation after *The Wire*, widely said to be the best show on television. **Treme** (pronounced 'Truh-may') follows post-hurricane Katrina New Orleans and immerses the viewer in the city itself. Don't expect a rehash of *The Wire* in a different setting, *Treme* has very little structure to it in that the immersion in the Big Easy's culture is the main attraction. As the show's creator says himself, don't expect to be spoon-fed either.

4TH BFI FUTURE FILM FESTIVAL

Angie Jude Moneke and Duoyi Zhao look to the future of filmmaking

There is a long-established trend for discovering new talent and this is no different in the film industry. With countless artists trying to stand out and film giants constantly on the lookout for the next generation of stars in this industry, the 4th BFI Future Film Festival is functioning as a bridge between the two. Currently in its fourth year, it aims to attract young people between the ages of 15 and 25 and give them a chance to interact with insiders and learn from the experts.

"No one's got an excuse anymore – even if you can't buy a camcorder, you can borrow one. Just get one and start making your movie", says Marc Price, director of the successful independent zombie film *Colin*, which was made on a £45 budget and shot on a handheld camcorder. In order to sustain life in London, Price kept his part-time job, filming during the day and editing at night in-between answering phone calls. In order to retain full control over his work and maintain authenticity, he made the brave decision to work independently from a film studio. "I don't much like the idea of someone deciding whether an idea is any good or

not because films are subjective". What made *Colin* possible was the dedication of passionate volunteers, like makeup artists and actors, who were recruited through social networks like Facebook and MySpace.

This is all indicative of the increasing rise of independent films. While a large

Cinema's this amazing thing that evolves and changes

proportion of today's film audiences have their eyes firmly fixed on big-budget Hollywood productions, there are other alternative film industries that encourage low-budget films such as Nollywood. The typical Nollywood film production is shot within 7-9 days with a budget of as little as \$10,000. The domination over the past year of arthouse films like

Monsters, directed by Gareth Edwards, is also evidence of the increasing popularity of alternative films. This has led to even greater success for the thirty-six-year-old director, who is now shooting the Hollywood reboot of *Godzilla*.

Meanwhile, a recent revolution of 3D technology in film has also stepped onto the scene. Back in 2009, James Cameron's *Avatar* displayed brand new technology and awakened an excitement in audiences of what cinema can bring. One of the key players in the 3D market, Prime Focus, who have worked on films such as *The Chronicles of Narnia* and *TRON: Legacy*, were present at the Future Film Festival and their head of production, Matt Bristo, gave an insight into the role that they play. "Within this company we do CGI and stereoscopic conversion", which involves converting 2D into 3D. Giving his view on the new 3D trend, Bristo felt that rather than replacing traditional films, 3D movies are welcomed by the market as another format. "There is a revolution, there's no doubt. But is it the future of cinema? No. Cinema's this amazing thing that evolves and changes. There's room for a bit of everything within

the film industry". Animator and director Martyn Pick, who directed the upcoming CGI film *Ultramarines*, gave a similar view, saying, "I think it's good for some things but I don't think it's going to change the whole way films are made. I don't think it's like sound coming in the 1920s, I don't think it's as radical as that".

New technology and awakened an excitement in audiences of what cinema can bring

On the topic of 3D, Price presented the notion of there being a continuing evolution in cinema from silent films, to sound, to colour, and now 3D. This 3D revolution is not as ground-breaking as the stages before it, but is a welcome development in film industry and enter-

taining addition. "3D has gone and come back in and now I think they've kind of cracked it and it's an interesting way to view movies", said Price. With the prominence of the Internet and file-sharing in today's society, 3D can be seen as an incentive to bring audiences back to the cinema.

Organisers report that the key goal of the festival is to encourage young people to get involved in the industry. Bristo from Prime Focus demonstrated his intention in hiring aspiring animators, saying that "the industry we're in moves along and sometimes we need to look at the next artists and directors and connect with them so they can see what's going on and become a part of it".

This is an exciting creative era for people with ambition because of the increased accessibility to film-making tools as handy as the iPhone, off-the-shelf editing software and YouTube. Inspired artists no longer need to worry about budget the way they used to, only thinking up an idea and putting it into action.



New Release

Directors: Ethan Coen, Joel Coen
Screenplay: Ethan Coen, Joel Coen
Cast: Jeff Bridges, Matt Damon, Hailee Steinfeld
Runtime: 110 minutes **Cert:** 15 **Year:** 2010

That my favourite Western is *Blazing Saddles* says a lot about my ignorance of the genre. Truth be told, it was the only Western I had even seen in its entirety until my viewing of *True Grit* for review purposes. Even then, it was more the idea of the Coen brothers 'doing' a Western rather than the concept itself that piqued my interest. (For the record, I don't consider *No Country for Old Men* a proper Western; despite the array of West Texan desert, anything involving Javier Bardem wielding a captive bolt pistol is not a Western). Maybe it's my lack of interest in the genre, maybe it's the unwieldy expectations it had to live up to, (10 Oscar nominations!) maybe it's that the film is a very un-Coenesque film for the directorial siblings to make, but I just couldn't find myself falling as head over heels in love with it as I was eagerly expecting to.

True Grit is based on the Charles Portis novel of the same name and not, as many people are assuming, a remake of the John Wayne film of 1969. It has been stressed in countless interviews by the Coens that there was no desire to replicate that film, and they took only Portis's novel as inspiration when writing the script. The film focuses on the plight of fourteen-year-old Mattie Ross (Hailee Steinfeld) as she attempts to go after the man who killed her father. Upon hearing that the murderer (Josh Brolin) has fled into Native American territory, she hires US Marshal Reuben "Rooster" Cogburn (Jeff Bridges) and Texas Ranger LaBoeuf (Matt Damon) to find the fugitive. Being

a headstrong teenager, Mattie herself insists on joining the pair in their hunt, which they are not pleased with, to say the least.

The star attraction, despite what you may see littered on bus posters or on the Tube, is not Jeff Bridges, but Hailee Steinfeld. Already nominated for an Oscar for her film debut (wrongly for Best Supporting Actress, despite being a clear lead performance), she showcases the poise and steeliness necessary to play headstrong Mattie and holds her own

More faithful, but also unevenly structured

easily against Bridges, Damon et al. The best sequences in the film all concern Steinfeld, whether it's watching her bargain over the legalities of a contract for ponies or verbally out-maneuvring Matt Damon after a mishap in the plains. Each time Mattie is left to her own devices, the film lights up as a result.

This isn't to say the star-studded members of the cast aren't bad; they're just boring. Bridges manages the almost enviable feat of chewing so much scenery with his jowly, alcoholic performance and with his slurred speech and Deadwood-esque vocabulary (minus the profanity) while remaining incredibly bland as a result. Damon fares little better: as a cocky-yet-slightly-dim-witted Ranger, he lacks the charisma to make his character heroic, and the timing to be comedic – which the script often demands of him.

Out of the headliners, Brolin is easily the best. Despite having the least screen time of the three, he manages to make Cheney a darkly comic, almost tragic villain; plagued by stupidity and animosity, it's little wonder he's wanted for crimes



across multiple state lines.

The film's reliance on Bridges and Damon means that it suffers as a result. Long sequences of horseback riding and campfire sitting become staid as they inevitably develop into scenes where Cogburn and LaBoeuf end up arguing about the most trivial of matters. Far from being amusing, as the Coens would love for us to believe, they distract from the main thrust of the story and end up making the film duller as a result. Apart from

a sequence towards the end involving a shoot-out on horseback, the action scenes also feel like they belong to a different film entirely. All of this creates a weird disconnect which cannot be overcome by Roger Deakins's miraculous cinematography or the editing of 'Roderick Jaymes'.

True Grit may be more faithful to its source material than its cinematic predecessor, but in keeping to the novel with such rigidity, the Coen brothers have

created an unevenly structured coming-of-age story set in nineteenth-century Arkansas. When *True Grit* focuses on Mattie and her struggles, it's a roaring success; when Rooster Cogburn starts stealing all of the thunder, it loses its footing somewhat. Go and see it, but if you have slightly lower expectations, you'll enjoy it a whole lot more.

True Grit is in cinemas now.

Day for Night Ashma Kunde

Classics

Directors: François Truffaut
Cast: Jacqueline Bisset, Jean-Pierre Léaud
Runtime: 115 minutes **Cert:** PG
Year: 1973

Simply put, *Day for Night* (*La nuit américaine*) is a movie about making a movie. The title itself refers to the technical term for a night scene shot during the daytime, with the use of a filter. Considered one of François Truffaut's greatest works, it attempts to capture his own mad love for filmmaking, as well as for all the people involved in the process.

Against the backdrop of lovely sunny Nice, the film follows the shooting of *Meet Pamela*, a movie with classic combination of a star cast but a uninspired storyline (where the heroine runs away with her lover's father). The cast and crew comprise of several fascinating characters, and the film chronicles their very soap operatic storylines, accented by hook-ups, heartbreaks, and meltdowns. So naturally, the goings-on during the shooting often formed a rich source of inspiration for the script itself, which was being written simultaneously.

The lead in *Meet Pamela* is played by

the very beautiful British Julie (Jacqueline Bisset), whose French is nonetheless impeccable. She was an actress with a Hollywood lineage and a history of breakdowns, calmed by a marriage to a much older doctor who gave up everything for her. Opposite her is Alphonse (Jean-Pierre Léaud), the spoilt brat actor, utterly besotted by his fiancée (who unfortunately doesn't return the same ardour). One of my favourite characters is Joelle (Nathalie Baye), the assiduous assistant, who constantly runs around dealing with everyone else's complicated lives. Another comical character is the producer's distrustful wife, who reappears with her knitting needles several times, convinced her husband is having an affair. She holds the sordid belief that people in the film industry just sleep around with each other. Which isn't entirely untrue.

I very much enjoyed the fact that Truffaut himself plays the role of the director, Ferrand, as we are very much seeing the film from his viewpoint; we're reminded of his long-lived passion for the silver screen during the black-and-white childhood flashbacks that come to him at night. This film really does capture the magic and excitement of filmmaking, which rendered Truffaut so hopelessly devoted to it. Not a glittery, glamorous sort of magic, but

rather a much deeper enchantment – the endless trials and tribulations all part and parcel of it. In fact, his character experiences no personal drama, but is inevitably tangled into the web of everyone else's joys and sorrows. Everyone is. The film brings to life the closeness of the relationships formed on set, how all members of the cast and crew, regardless of their role, are practically family by the closing scenes.

Overall, I found the film to be a very observant insight, elucidating certain tricks of the trade. A major work of the French *nouvelle vague*, it highlights the frivolities of human spirit. The characters are often unable to disentangle themselves from their overwhelming real-life drama whilst shooting for the scripted one. Which brings me to the most intriguing aspect about *Day for Night*: whilst cinema is often considered a hyper-reality, a magnified, kaleidoscopic exaggeration of life, this film explores the fact that sometimes the two aren't really that different.

Day for Night is released at the BFI Southbank and selected cinemas nationwide on 18th February 2011.



PRIVATE B

This used to be satirical, you know.

Fashun.

Yun Git

Howdy partners! Yun Git here, givin' you all the hoe-down low-down on Houghton Street's finest! And have I got news for you! Yes, that's right: fashun's very own Yun Git has been speaking to Sucha Petal!

Now as all you fashionista folk know, the Git - or as I occasionally call myself, Gok Yun - does like a man with power. Woof, woof! As some ol' geezer once said, absolute power erupts ABSOLUTELY. And did I erupt when I saw this feisty feline! I erupted like Mont le Blanc, whenever it erupted last.

He is one tasty tomato! If I were Lloyd Grossman, I'd add him to my pasta sauce! If I were in Pizza Express, I'd cover him in mozzarella! If he were trapped in a Heinz ketchup bottle, I'd squeeze him all over my chips! (If you catch my drifts!)

As he walked over with his lil' feet, I felt like pouncin' on him! I said, my oh my, they is one small steps for a man but one GIANT LEAP for women's boots! (That just came off the top of me head!) I can't remember what he said: I think he corrected my grammar or sumfink.

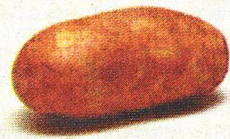
The boots come from Karen Millen, the overcoat comes from Zara Man, the jeans come from Baby Gap and the jumper comes from Mothercare.

Konnichiwa! (as they say in Chinese.)



Petal.

Food.



Bankers' boners up by 6%!

George Osborne is to give many of Britain's top bankers bigger boners than last year, by droning on endlessly about how great they are.

"So far as I can see, there was no financial crash last year", he said. "That was, like, over two years ago! We need to get over it, guys! Forgive and forget. It can't be too hard. Why, I've forgotten half of the things on our manifesto!"

Bankers' boners rose more than last year, as he said this.

Bank boners deal.

Trying to calm Lib Dem anger, he said, "Some of these bankers' packages are clearly huge. Which is why we decided to take action."

"Last night, Dave and I rolled up our sleeves and hammered out something substantial with them. Yes, it took all night. Yes, it was hard to swallow. Yes, it left a nasty taste in the mouth. But finally we have an agreement. The banks have

Editor circumnavigates use of inappropriate verbs

News editor Lauren Feedback has slammed news reporters for superutilising too many inappropriate verbs.

"There are definitely too many," she enunciated.

"The worst ones are 'saying' verbs," she conjectured, "Reporters just run out

of words for 'said'", she vocalised, "And so they end up putting in the most ridiculous verbs", she spied, "Which you'd never say in real life", she opined.

Quoteth Lauren, "The trouble is, too many writers want to sound clever", she contrafibulated, "But they often don't make sense", she happy-slapped.



promised to never ever let this happen again in the next ten years.

"The time for beating off bankers has

passed. We need to make them strong enough so they don't rely on our help again."

By Nightfall

Presca Ahn on how Michael Cunningham's latest novel doesn't quite live up to expectations

In *By Nightfall*, Peter and Rebecca Harris are married forty-somethings who skate just above mediocrity in the New York art scene. He is an art dealer of minor importance, she the editor of a near-insolvent culture magazine. They are attractive, but ageing; privileged, but ordinary; self-conscious, but not good. These distinctions don't bother them too much, and at the novel's beginning, they believe themselves to be happy. This complacency is disrupted by the arrival of the wayward, charming Mizzy, Rebecca's much younger brother, with whom Peter (the book's central character) quickly becomes obsessed.

By Nightfall is Michael Cunningham's sixth novel, and while it has some of the heart and cleverness of earlier works like *The Hours* and *A Home At The End Of The World*, it lacks the modest diligence that made those books worth noticing. There is a compelling story caught inside this novel, a story about vanity and family relationships and thwarted desire. Peter's pained memories of his older brother (dead from AIDS at a young age) and his childhood crush (living unromantically in Milwaukee, which makes her dead to Peter) are finely drawn. And there is a lot of acuity in Cunningham's social observations, most memorably in his handling of the tense, awkward scenes between Peter and Mizzy. But these merits don't mitigate the sense that *By Nightfall* is a peculiarly problematic work from this mature and intelligent writer—a work that's more than a little showy, and more than a little hollow.

Much of *By Nightfall* is written in a slick, self-regarding prose more reminiscent of contemporary chick-lit than of the high modernism to which Cunningham seeks comparison (more on this aspiration later). All the hallmarks of chick-lit are here: the insincere mocking of a milieu that the author in fact worships (in most chick-lit, it's the fashion industry, while here it's the art world); frantic name-dropping and cultural references ("Blue Light, Rebecca's arts and culture magazine, is not a heavy-hitter among people like these, I mean it's no *Artforum* or *Art in America*"); and, more than anything, the blow-by-blow of the main character's inner monologue ("No, he's still only forty-three. Why does he keep wanting to add a year?... No, wait, he

turned forty-four last month"). In rendering Peter's consciousness, which bounds the entire narrative, Cunningham commits a very basic error: he conflates the idioms of spoken speech and the idioms of thought. Thus Peter's inner voice utters

The book is written in a self-regarding prose more reminiscent of chick-lit than high art

sentences like "What's up with that?" and "Where the hell is Rebecca?" He might as well be talking on the phone. When Peter feels strong emotions, curse words are the favoured adjectives of his conscious-

ness. At one point he notes with fury that his wife "has not been with the god-damned program."

Early in the book, Peter characterises himself as a "less-than-fluent speaker of Peter-ese." The phrase "Peter-ese" demonstrates the character's anxiety about his identity. But here it also comes across as a nervous admission on Cunningham's part - an acknowledgment that "Peter-ese" may not be the right vehicle for the themes that this novel takes on.

Chief among these themes is bourgeois guilt about distant suffering - a subject worth considering, but possibly not in the casual, faux-knowing register of Peter-ese. Peter appreciates his own life by imagining "someone in Darfur" dying of a machete wound, or tastelessly counting himself lucky "because no one has put a tire over [his] shoulders and set it on fire, at least not today" (as if tomorrow might plausibly bring such a fate to a Manhattan art dealer). It is not so much that these sentiments are unrealistic - as we know, people voice sentiments like

this every day - as that we suspect that fiction should tell us something more.

Another big question for Cunningham's hero is how to feel about the violence of urban life. This, too, is considered from a safe distance: the occasion for most of

The trouble with By Nightfall: it has sophistication in spades but no awareness at all

Peter's meditations on the subject are the several cab rides he takes throughout the novel. On one such ride, he refers to "the bitter pleasure" of New York: "It's a mess, like Courbet's Paris was. It's squalid and

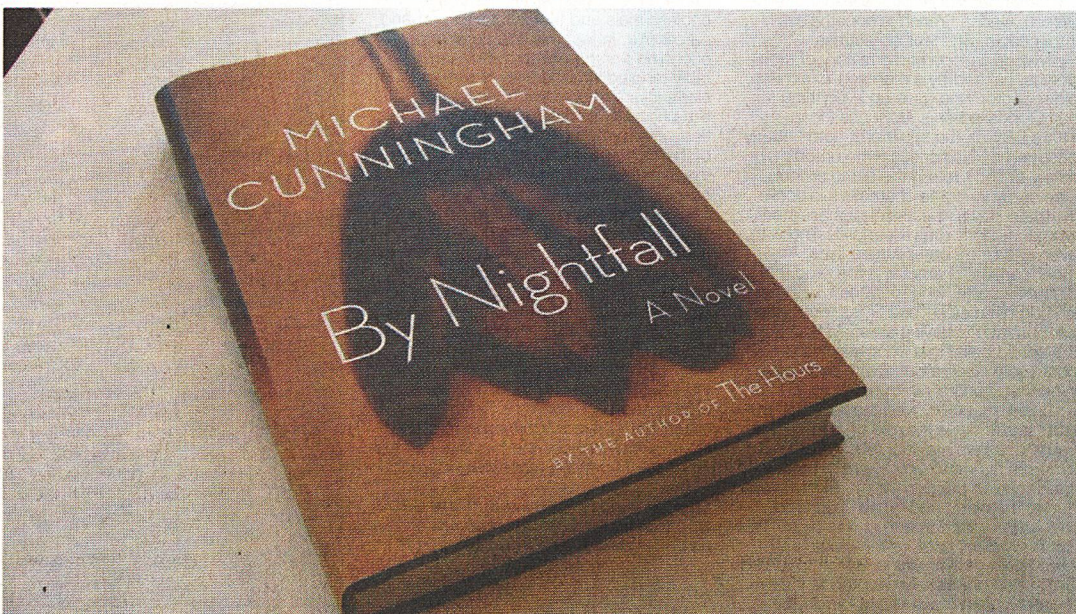
smelly; it's harmful. It stinks of mortality." From the safe confines of a cab, he revels in a vague sense of the city's squalor.

This aesthetic indulgence is inappropriate, and, to a certain degree, Cunningham means for us to see it that way. The story of *By Nightfall* turns on Peter's infatuation with Mizzy. Peter objectifies Mizzy, sexually and aesthetically, and is badly punished for doing so. In this sense, *By Nightfall* is a parable about the dangers of confusing the beautiful with the good. Peter's persistent shallowness is meant to be seen as a crucial failing. But as with Peter's criticism of the art world, Cunningham's representation of his hero contains more love than judgement.

By Nightfall makes conspicuous and frequent reference to other writers, from James Joyce to Virginia Woolf to Thomas Mann. Cunningham has Peter articulate thoughts like, "We are in fact made of the same material as Isabel Archer, as Dorothea Brooke" and, "This is my life, it's not Death in Goddamned Venice..." If these references are meant to be indices of Peter's self-delusion, the narrative fails to contest them.

The only way in which Cunningham's writing does resemble Henry James' - its tendency towards a universalising compassion - also leads him down the path of an un-Jamesian sentimentality. At one point, Peter thinks, "The ability to care for another being, to imagine what it's like to be another person, is part of the tumble... it's only one aspect of a life, a big ambiguous motherfucking heart-breaking life." Elsewhere, he reflects that, "There are, of course, desperate people out there, some of them refugees, some of them criminals; we do as well as we can with these impossible contradictions, these endless snarls of loveliness and murder." These are fatuous sentiments dressed up as hard-earned insights. Yet Cunningham gives no sign that he is aware of the disguise. And really, that's the trouble with *By Nightfall*: it has sophistication in spades, but no awareness at all.

Fourth Estate, £16.99, 248 pages



Social

From democracy to domesticity: at home with UGM Tindale

Jack Tindale reveals he's more than just a democracy god



Jack Tindale was elected to the high office of Union General Meeting vice-chair on his very first week at the School, swiftly moving up the ranks, he is now in his third term as chair. To many, he is the eccentric, joke-a-minute chair of LSE's unique weekly UGM; to others, he's the dedicated head of the history society. And, to some, he has now been immortalised to the high stature of 'democracy god'.

But few go beyond that. What lies behind the bubbly, charming exterior of Mr Chair, I wondered? Last week I met with Jack, in his humble Bankside abode, to find out what he really thinks to UGM, what he'd change about the School, and what makes this jack-of-all-trades tick.

I started by talking to him about his role in the UGM.

Why do you think UGM attendance has been falling?

I think people feel turned off in general. That's not an LSE thing specifically, but across SU's. When people have in fact been active, it's been clustered around a small number of issues - many of which were launched outside of the UGM.

What would you say to the accusation UGM is cliquey?

When people say 'cliquey', what they really mean is there are people who come every week. Anyone could be in the 'clique' if they came every week. If you don't attend, then your views aren't going to be represented. In fact I reckon the LSE, as a whole, is slightly right of centre; but

those people don't tend to turn up, so their views don't get heard.

Do you think UGM is far-left?

No. I think you'll find most motions debated this year haven't even been overtly political. Take Students Not Suspects, for example, that wasn't left or right.

Why are motions failing?

Online voting. It's become incredibly depersonalised and people don't feel the same connection; things that should pass aren't passing. More people are in fact voting this year than last, but because of the quoracy nothing gets done.

Do you like online voting?

I didn't support online voting from the start. I agree with the ethos of it - to get more people voting - but the fact motions are failing proves it isn't working. Online voting is just impractical. When people have to go to the UGM and listen to the arguments, then they can make an informed decision rather than just blankly clicking a button their friend had sent them.

Are you a 'democracy god'?

I didn't like that motion, which is why I spoke against it. It's flattering for someone to say I'm doing a good job, and I wouldn't do it if it wasn't fun. But the motion looked self-congratulatory - not of me, but of the small group of regulars at UGM. You want it to look open to everyone and encourage people to come along, not like it's about just a few people.

What do you dislike about UGM?

There's not a great deal I dislike. It takes up only a couple of hours of my week. I'm just chairing a debate.

Jack clearly has a passion for UGM, and believes that there have been a great number of factors that have led to its recent demise. But he was also keen to discuss life beyond the Union. Perched on one of his decorated seats, I tried to get to know the real Jack Tindale. He told me, "This room's seen a lot of action, you know. All sorts of dusting."

What feel were you going for in your room?

I don't think it's easy to personify rooms. There's no particular over-arching style, it's just a collection of little souvenirs - if it doesn't cost too much, then why not buy it? It makes my room look nicer. If you care about where you live, rooms take on a bit of a persona of their own. That's why I've got lots of books, anime, that sort of thing.

What is it you like about anime so much?

It's a bit geeky, and I'm a bit geeky. I always say to people, "no, no, I liked this before it was popular!" I don't like many things that are popular.

What's your favourite film?

That's a very difficult question. I'd have to say, probably, Goodbye Lenin. There are lots of films I do like, but Goodbye Lenin is very funny.

What's your favourite music?

I'm not a good one to talk to about pop. I have very eclectic tastes, not much of it is modern music. I mean, I do like a bit of J-pop. That's Japanese pop, by the way. But it's mainly classical music.

What's your favourite country?

Britain, obviously. I like it's values

Are you a master of the birds? Secret society reveals more

There are whispers all over campus - one can often hear snippets of bizarre conversation outside Wright's Bar, catch secretive glances in the gents, observe clandestine meetings in the labyrinthine corridors of the Old Building. You must have asked yourselves - who are those mysterious suited chaps who roam the third floor of the library, exchanging weird handshakes in the Statistics section? Why does the beaver in our crest not look much like a Beaver? Why are those damned 'socialists' always dressed in tracksuits? (Oh wait, scratch that last one).

I was in a cold street, late at night. A statue of a penguin stood resplendent in front of me, wings by its side. The Grand Master was frustrated. Despite being dressed as a bird, he had caught none. Moreover, his beaverly lower half had failed to attract even the widest of tails. He closed his polyester wings around him and exhaled.

Before the night's end my shanks too would be furry. The lifts in the library had stopped that day, and the second in a series of Ralph Miliband memorial lectures had taken place earlier. The society had chosen this day of almost mystical conjunction to conduct its ritual magiks.

What can only be described as an imperial purple velvet jonny (or sock, if you prefer) was presented. One by one, the gathered members held the sheath in their hands, and firmly placed it over the beak of the penguin statue. A comment on the repression of free speech? An allusion to good sexual practice? I could not tell.

"A novice must be careful - especially when dealing with an old bird such as this. Feel the beak. As Ramsay says, "don't fuck it, make love to it" - intellectually, that is."

"As you touch the beak, try to become one with the penguin. Transfer your consciousness to the astral plane. If you see Hayek while you're in there, tell him we said hi."

I wondered what they were talking about as I remembered the old 'condom on a banana' trick from biology class. Finally, a use for a New Labour education policy.

I did as instructed, with a motion akin to that of a snooker player aiming a shot, but reflected in X. Next, I was to turn the penguin's head. I adopted the secret grasp - second and fourth fingers of the left hand upon the bird's head. I pushed. The head turned with ease - my fingers are strong through repeated use. Even the fourth. One must be supple yet firm.

The Master had noticed how easily the head had yielded.

"You too must be a master of the birds", he said.

"This room's seen a lot of action, you know. All sorts of dusting"

What are your politics?

I would say economically, I'm probably left of centre. But then on social issues I'm very much a libertarian. I mean, I'm a member of the Labour party - and I did choose the Labour party, it didn't choose me. I have natural Labour parents, but I really do agree with the party. Some people have said I'm naturally a Lib Dem at heart - but I'm not.

If you were Prime Minister for the day, what one thing would you change?

Oh, that's very tough. It's hard when you're asked a question like that. I'd say, hmmm, I'd say take the gates down from in front of Downing Street. Have all the security checks and stuff, but I just think it's very sad we can't walk down the most famous street in the world anymore.

What's your favourite quotation?

"Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?" - Who watches the watchmen?

AGONY UNCLE: MY CRUSH SEX SHOCK

I was wondering whether you'd be able to help with something that I have got on my mind at the moment, but would rather you kept it anonymous because I have many friends in Catholic circles to whom my actions would be anathema.

I went to Crush at the start of the year and I ended up sleeping with a girl who I have liked for sometime; I am a second-year and she a third-year. She is in my Social Anthropology class and I see her every week - we're quite keen SA-goers!

Unfortunately the sex wasn't that good, to be honest, but she text me a week ago to tell me that she is now with fetus. My parents would go spare if they knew - they are both devout Catholics - and I myself am ashamed at my debauchery and

carelessness. I thought I wore a condom but can't remember - but that's not for now.

She is not keen on abortions - she's had 2 already and she's 20, and her parents are also not too keen on abortions. But I can't be a father. I am expected to do exceedingly well in this year's exams and want to become a teacher, but I am worried that this is completely the wrong way I want to go in life. Please help.

I think the first question to ask is: why were you at Crush? Cheap drinks is no excuse for cheap sex. You claim you "can't remember" whether a condom was used; but this just isn't good enough. Sex may be undertaken casually, but the necessary precautions should always be taken - to avoid, if you

will, situations like this. Condoms are a bargain from The Tuns' toilets. In fact, I suspect if you just hit the machine hard enough a bunch will come out for free, considering noone - other, evidently, than you - has ever had sex at LSE.

However, I'm a firm believer you have to make the most of a situation. Therefore, here's a few facts about babies: they scream a lot; they cost a lot; they live for longer than a dog and, crucially, they shit in their own pants.

But that's all easy enough for an outsider to say. Whether or not a foetus should in fact be considered human life is a very contentious and nuanced debate. What I do know, though, is that the usual limit for abortions is three.

As Madonna sang, "You're like a virgin, ooh; touched for the very first time."

Now these lyrics, whilst poignant, do not apply to your Crush love. You say she has already aborted two potential pregnancies which means, I deduce, that this is the final call. She can either abort the product of your semen, or someone else's in the future.

Now it's difficult to take sides on the abortion debate. Indeed, it can often be very situation-dependent. If the carrier is in her third year, then at least she could complete her exams prior to birthing. However, if neither of you are ready to guide the little 'un through life, but instead would rather continue your Crush-based sex raves, then it's possibly best not to pursue the whole kid thing.

What's very important to remember, though, is that this isn't ultimately your decision. If she decides to pursue the child

then - more importantly than anything - you need to support her decision. It might seem tough, but it's the female prerogative whether the pregnancy goes ahead. And if you don't like that, then try visiting dures.com. They even do JLS condoms these days, with a different colour for each band member and everything - what more could you wish for?

But if, for some inexplicable reason, you don't don Marvin, Aston, Jonathon or Orisit on your cockerel, then there is also the morning after pill. You should try recommending it to her in future.

In the end, the mistake has already been made. You can't turn the clock back now. You need to tell her that, whilst you don't feel ready to parent a child, you're there for her. Oh, and use some fucking protection next time.



Love is alive in an LSE student's Valentine dedication

One anonymous student gives her heart-felt dedication to a far away love as this Valentine's day passes by alone

T rue love is talked about in historical accounts and legends of old and indeed when we think of the term most of our heads are filled with heroic knights and rosy cheeked princesses. I myself used to dreamily dwell on stars lighting the pitch black sky as I walked hand in hand with my Greek God, laughing and dancing to the melodious wind. In recent times, though, my thoughts seem to have changed – love, I think, is reflected much more in our tears than in our laughter.

This might have you think of me as a sadistic beast but that isn't the case. I fancy myself to be a veteran on this subject being married and in love with the same man for what can be easily described as aeons. Love isn't something that can be grasped or defined; it has to be felt, and believe me, butterflies and light headedness are not symptoms. When I recall the moments of my life where love literally drowned me, it is never in times where we

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Love, I think,
is reflected
much more
in our tears
than in our
laughter
”

were drunk on each other or the romance of our surroundings. It is during times when I found myself scarred by the world and he held me close and comforted me despite his own pain, it was when my tears flowed so much for him that they hurt, it is in the kiss on my cheek, the squeeze of my hand and its is in the sudden quiet after a vicious fight when we realise that nothing should be important enough to get between us. It is during these tragic times that I feel love surround and shelter us. To me that is the closest I can come to defining love, a power, a gift between two people that can take them through anything.

Sometimes when I read the way love is conveyed to the world it maddens me. We are made to believe in love at first sight, magic and overwhelming happiness. To be forever happy is an impossible task and to find a perfect person is even more impossible. I always remind myself that my love is as human as I am though I hold him in

a pedestal in my mind. He has every right to make mistakes as I do and there is no detailed guideline or requirements that he has to fill to be a suitable partner. In the end he is an essential part of my life, someone I know I will never stop loving no matter what. So in the end petty things like forgotten anniversaries don't matter and believe me when I say my dear one is thankful for that.

This Valentine's Day my 'true love' isn't here in person to share it with me; he is off someplace on important business while I sit here waiting for him. If there is anything I hate it is waiting for him to return but when my thoughts turn blue and my days cold I close my eyes and rifle through my memories, often feeling guilty for my choice from them. For I will choose a memory that cannot be classified as happy but one that always bring me a rush of gratitude for him. True love may be a myth by definition but it certainly exists in some form for me.

Everything I loathe about love

Alexander Young explains his disdain for Valentine's Day

F ebruary has to be the most disappointing month of the year: aside from having the fewest days in it, this number fluctuates every four years and causes headaches for determined Gregorians everywhere. Aside from its logistical deficiencies, it also holds host to the most objectionable holiday of the year based upon the most shaky of emotional grounds: a celebration based upon the implacable idea of 'love'.

Nozick defines love as the desire to form a 'we', a 'joint identity', with another human being: a pooling of well-being to a mutually selfless yet beneficial end; Stendhal offers a definition in terms of the 'crystallisation' of sentiments over time through stages of admiration of one to be loved, acknowledgement of the pleasantness of having gained the interest of the loved one, hope of gaining the love of the loved one and the final delight of overrating the beauty and merit of the loved one. Taylor defines it in algebraic terms of x loving y when x wants to benefit and be with y, and he has these wants (or at least some of them) because he believes y has some determinate characteristics in virtue of which he thinks it worthwhile to benefit and be with y. Despite the sopping mass of romanticism latent in Taylor's explanation, none of these really seem adequate to me. They all idealise to an

implausible extent and seem to ignore some very real and very obvious pitfalls in the realms of love, and thus imply an incredible myopia of anyone considering themselves to be in love.

To start with the excruciatingly obvious, the fact is that any of these conceptions of love are going to imply a certain handing over of power to another party. Nozick's model bears the most transparent case of this: by joining your identity with that of another you necessarily confer the ability to destroy an element of your identity to the other. Equally, Stendhal opens up the potential of the pleasantness of mind games to the beloved: the 'pleasantness' stage has the scope to be exploited by the more sadistic of those who could be loved for the extension of 'are-they-aren't-they-interested' thought patterns in the mind of the lover until the beloved gets bored. If these terrible sadists are anything like myself this may well be over the course of years without the lover catching on to their being toyed with. Taylor's conception of love, as any good LSE student would be able to tell you, has the threat of the withdrawal of things that confer utility onto the recipient: those 'characteristics' that make being with y worthwhile could well be stripped away at any point. Love becomes a concerted effort to make sure not to do anything to annoy the beloved so that they can't take

anything away from you. Love makes the individual less of individual: personal volitions become stunted for the sake of the preservation of a relationship.

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The most
objectionable
holiday of the
year
”

The three models refuse to accept any conception of an unrequited love. Whilst Nozick talks about the 'desire' to form a shared identity as the indicator of love, he fails to account for the possibility of the one-sided 'joint' identity being formed. It's completely plausible that one side could decide to make the other,

uninterested party part of their own identity. That, for the lover, could constitute enough to be 'love' for them. The crystallisation thesis is based upon a subjective experience of 'gaining the love' of the beloved and suffers from similar pitfalls: the overrating of beauty (and borderline obsession) could come without the actual love of the beloved – what he considers to be an affirmation of love may well be part of the games that are oh-so easily played under this conception. Taylor's orgy of algebraic symbols has much the same scope for one party just assuming the benefits of the characteristics of the beloved for their own benefit and calling it love: lying to themselves, maybe, but this has to be the most selfish interpretation of a traditional 'love' possible.

This all leaves Valentine's Day as a celebration of these conceptions of love riddled with holes. Valentine's Day is the ultimate in celebrations of heteronormativity and Judeo-Christian inherited sexual morality. For one day a year, we aim to emulate the happiness of monogamous relationships we've witnessed as children, which were, fittingly enough, probably facades to keep the children in a 'stable' environment throughout their formative years. In the words of a deceased and notable misanthropist: 'they fuck you up, your mum and dad.'

Jackie O's Ugandan Prose

Jackline O. Amaguru in her new column

Why I'll be marrying influence, power and lots of money

I am still recovering from celebrating the Chinese New Year. One highlight of the celebrations was eating "hot pot" with some Chinese friends, most of them ladies. Anywhere in the world, when girls are talking and eating at the same time, we can't help talk about men. Guys, just so you know, it's not always good things that we talk about you.

One girl asked me if I have a boyfriend. I said that I wouldn't mind hooking up with Chinese president Hu Jintao's son. "Does he have a son who is single?" I asked, trying hard to keep a straight face.

Jaws literally dropped all over the room and it went silent. What was the cause of alarm? Was it the fact that a Ugandan girl wants to infiltrate the party Chairmanship at the highest level? I know that there is heavy censorship of so much in China but surely, they haven't also censored the ability to dream big and aim high in terms of men, have they?

Well, in Africa, we dream big baby! Look at Graca Machel who was first lady in Mozambique and after being widowed went on to be first lady in South Africa when she married Nelson Mandela. In Uganda Winnie Byanyima - wife of the opposition leader and former MP - believes she can live in Uganda's State House either as first lady or President. "I can beat Museveni in elections hands down," she once said, referring to our President Museveni.

Well, unfortunately for me, our president only has one 'official' son who was already married when I was too young to know left from right. However, that didn't stop Ugandan girls from looking next door and lamenting when we found out the young and cute president of the mineral-rich country next door - Congo - got married.

Ladies, isn't it good to think big? Consider Kate Middleton. If she hadn't entertained the idea of dating royalty, she would have been just another statistic. Now, the whole UK and probably the world, will come to a standstill when she walks down the aisle this April with a real Prince. So, if the world is truly a global village, why should it raise eyebrows if an LSE-educated foreign girl is aspiring to marry in the corridors of power in China? Besides, China is the incoming hegemony and I can already say Nihau and use chop sticks.

Think of the tremendous economic opportunities that could come out of such a union! That would literally cement Sino-Africa relations. That's why I would have to marry 'high enough' for it to matter. Marriage alliances worked in the past all over Africa and Europe; why not in the 21st century?

I can hear you calling me a gold-digger. Well, I actually think China is gold-digging in her current relationship with Africa so why is the reverse reviled? I'd have got me a fine Ugandan man with a back yard as big as a district but the whole point here is to diversify our economy and attract foreign investors. So, if the worst comes to the worst and I can't hook me a Chinese leader, I'll settle for Prince Harry. He's charming. With that, my friends were left speechless and my ribs cracking. I'm just joking girls, I assured them, but I couldn't get them out of the clinical state of shock. LOL.

Got a story?
Write for
Social!

social@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Verve - do one.



What started out as a quiet Wednesday for GG ended up becoming one of the most eventful nights ever, perhaps spurred on by the odd team dinner and pub crawl here and there. However GG observed that the RFC, deserted by their regular foes the FC, were left in the Tuns all by themselves this Wednesday with no one in sight to sing against, boat race or fist fight. Yet thanks to a few teams of marauding Imperial rugby players, the RFC had some challengers to occupy themselves with in various battles of pint-downing.

LONELY

Speaking of team dinners, GG heard the cat was finally let out of the bag for Ms Oddity as 'The Fine', that everyone has been talking about revealed her dirty deeds with Scouse. According to Ms Fletcher, Oddity required a lot more than a glass of water to quench her thirst on 'that' night.

FINES

In addition to this revelation at Netball team dinners, the tallest member of the 6th team piped up and announced the fact that "apparently she is amazing at giving blowjobs." Unfortunately James Gerard was unavailable for comment.

EVACUATION

The AU's finest left their individual pre-drinking establishments to congregate at this Wednesday's pre-determined club in the form of Verve. Records were set for the biggest evacuation of of century, however, as the AU's finest promptly ditched the Zoo

alternative. GG discovered that, despite prices being agreed upon in advance by the AU Exec, it seems that on the night, faced with the prospect of 300 plus students coming to their venue, Verve management got very greedy and decided to renege on their previous promise and charge astronomical prices in the hope of making some fast cash. GG wonders whether the management of Verve would benefit from a few EC100 lectures on price elasticity of demand. One thing's certain though - never has a place been so overjoyed at the arrival of 300 angry students as Zoo Bar was. It's true love when a place empties out its VIP area just for us.

SUBSTITUTES

We are not students who suffer from the woes of asymmetric information, especially when it comes to the London clubbing scene. The AU's elite led the way in the biggest evacuation since Dunkirk. In a mobilisation manoeuvre that Ashok Kumar would base an entire manifesto on, the AU saw their drinks off, told their mates to do the same and marched out in a boycott that would put the Freeze the Fees campaign to shame. GG tagged along to where else but Zoo Bar and was greeted with open arms by the most legendary of door staff, who proceeded to perform an evacuation of their own by removing every single person who had pre-booked the VIP room and allowing all the LSE students in, pitchers included. Verve management, if you're not already on the dole, take note: Verve Bar take = £500. Zoo Bar take = £5,000. Look on Verve manager's face as 300 students leaver his club = Priceless.

IMPRESSONABLE

With normal service resumed, GG noticed the usual suspects resuming their own services, with everyone's 242nd Armenian, shock horror, pulling yet another impressive netballer who goes by the name Mims, for their 365th 'first kiss'. GG honestly couldn't write this stuff.

COURTNEY COX

Speaking of impressive young types, GG couldn't help but notice the most promiscuous Welsh Cougar of the AU and loveable alcoholic Jordan Emery copping off in Zoo, and GG has heard that this was the beginning of a dalliance that extended further than Wednesday night...

HEY MONA!

GG also spied a certain Vampire 'showing her fangs' and maybe more to the FC's most esteemed Club Captain since Rob Fenton. Word on the street is that he returned the favour with his own neck-sucking.

CALIFORNIA, HERE WE COME

There is a girl in the AU that many of you will simply know as 'California', despite the fact that shes from Maine, New England. There is also a boy in the AU that many know as simply 'Katerina's Ex-Boyfriend'. A most unlikely couple you may think, but GG can confirm that copious amounts of pulling took place in 'The Corner' of Zoo Bar. Well at least until the lights shone upon the face of the Gentleman in question. Even California was forced to question her action and then do a runner, employing her teammate Bradfield to create a distraction. Whether or not Hallam followed California around for the rest of the night like a Thunderbird puppet on smack, GG can only speculate.

WORLD PEACE

This week sees the 3rd Annual Mr LSE, and testosterone levels will be high, as the AU's finest males compete to appear more talented than Fola, better at the plank than Boca and less fat than Ben Robinson. Easy, right?

See you there kids... you know I'm watching.

LUSH SAM SHAT HIMSELF ON THE WAY HOME ON WEDNESDAY

Women's tennis serve up success

Sarah Llanwarne

The lack of tennis news in the Beaver this year has left readers with little choice but to read about all seventy-seven of the football teams (I lose count) and we thought it was about time that we gave a heads up about what's been happening on our side of the court. We may not have as many teams as the netballers, or be as "blue" as the hockey girls but we're still out every Wednesday night.

With the shame of relegation last year compared to the men's triumphs of "AU's most successful team", this year women's tennis knew we had a fight on our hands if we were to restore our reputation, and boy have we done it in style. Undeafated thus far we have won all of our matches except one (a closely fought draw against Canterbury). Currently top of the league and in prime position to get promoted back to our rightful place, only four games stand in our way, including a crucial match versus Essex who are second in the league. But we won't be resting on our laurels and are working hard to show them that the only way isn't Essex.

Last week's match saw an 8-4 victory over UCL RUMS out in Highgate. After arriving in what appeared to be a country clubhouse in London, LSE tennis did what came naturally to us and got down to business. Special mention goes out to Brit who managed to fight back from 0-5 down in the first set to a 7-5, 6-3 victory, as well as to our graceful captain Masha, who won

easily 6-0, 6-2 despite reducing us all to a nervous wreck with over 10 deuces in the first game!

With the medics dissected, it was time to get ready for team dinners. Despite being one of the largest clubs in the AU (210 members when I last checked), LSE tennis is not well known for their Wednesday night turnout (possibly because there are only three teams in total). The men and women's tennis have always had a traditional rivalry at LSE, both on and off the pitch, and with the men's matches all but finished for the year, it seemed only fair that they are doing their bit for our social reputation in the AU. With our first ever entry at Mr LSE next week, I'd like to remind the judges that tennis players hit all the right spots, have enough endurance to go three hours or longer, and that even when we're not scoring we're in love.

As for women's tennis, the cup this week brings a chance for revenge against Canterbury, and with a home match this time we're determined to show them who's boss. Watch this space.

Want to see your team's success published here?

Email us at: sport@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Meet the Hockey Girls...

 Caroline - Our loveable Club Captain who won't let her dodgy knee get in the way of hockey...or pub crawls. Not often seen without Stan.	 Haugh - Captain Haugh loves kinky shorts and downing wine! After LSE she plans to take another ten gap years.	 Kathryn - Blatantly doing a Masters so she can continue being a Cougar. Irish charmer off the pitch... BEAST on the pitch.	 Christina "Ivaneva missed a Zoo bar" - This eternal Social Sec takes her fancy dress VERY seriously. Never seen without a drink in hand.	 Fiona - Scottish lass seeking Sugar Daddy- Apply within (N.B. Will not sign pre-nuptial)
 Olga - Reformed netballer yet still has the shortest skirt on the pitch!	 Sabrina - Officially a WAG! This Vice Captain enjoys vandalising fine dining establishments in Brick Lane. Tut tut.	 Hannah Sheppard - Our superstar keeper is almost as good at saving goals as she is at scoring with the 5th team footballers	 Ali - Looks like an all-American girl but could drink any rugby guy under the table (challenge?!)	 Rianne - Star defender from Loughborough... SENT FROM HER IPAD.
 Megan - You can take the girl out of Essex... Megan's hint of sarcasm always has us in stitches	 Nat - On her to do list: Save Africa. This Geordie gem tells it like it is... with hilarious results	 Mel - So dedicated she'll drop anything for some extra hockey, even a Sunday lie-in. Lau or Hau... who knows?		
 Chelle - Claims to be "un-fit" but runs rings around the opposition. Also causes confusion with her almost namesake...	 Becky - Proud owner of every item of LSE branded clothing in the SU shop, just don't ask her to find it on a map.	 Izzy - Little Miss Giggles. Looks like butter wouldn't melt but always has plenty of stories to tell!	 Virginia - A drunken Crush recruit, this little redhead loves burritos more than life.	 Hannah Richmond - Loves dancing on tables, when she can make it past the Tuns that is!
 Angie - Another Wednesday night regular, this hockey girl has a secret tongue piercing.	 Rose - "A gymnast, not just a hockey player" with a fitness fetish.	 Zaza - Goal-scoring machine and apparently a "sensible" Masters student...but has been known to spike drinks at team dinners.		

Sport

The Beaver | 15 February 2011



There's only one Zoo Bar... read inside to find out why

The eagle has landed – in Croydon

Dhruv Ghulati

After the success of Brendan Hamill's captaincy, LSE also still finds itself in the cold and melancholy recesses of the South Eastern conference's last division, 2B. That said, results this year have been a mixed bag, and the structure of the society itself has gone from strength to strength under the leadership of its two captains, Messrs Dhruv Ghulati esq. and Shivam Shah esq. For the first time in the Golf Society's history, due to a more focused budget, training sessions have been provided every Thursday at London's foremost indoor golf centre, Metrogolf, situated in Paddington. This innocuous little place has impressed all visitors as a well-lit underground bar fitted with TV screens and pint-pullers, but a series of bays which are reserved every Thursday evening from 06:30-08:30.

Students hit range balls onto a screen that spreads out an image of a particular hole, and from then on the computer takes over in simulating the flight, ball path, spin, curvature and distance, where wind and sky conditions are all adjusted and pre-set. Many an LSE golfer has trudged along the links of Torrey Pines or St. Andrew's and felt the full arduousness of a round albeit in high definition pixels.

LSE's home course has improved by a mile compared to last year's set-up, from a public course just off the Central Line (and signal failures) to a course cited as a 'hidden gem' in the top 100 courses in Great Britain, the Addington Golf Club. Every other Wednesday, the university's vanguard 6, consisting of John Moore (MA Government), Edward Shahnasarian (MA Accounting), Soham Gupte (General Course), Oliver Ricketts (BSc. Geography & Environment), Meheryar Khan (BSc.

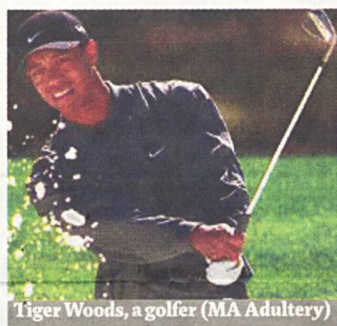
Accounting), Christian Halsted (MA Sociology), Shivam Shah (BSc. Mathematics, Co-Captain), and Dhruv Ghulati (BSc. Economics, Captain) get to play on the beautifully serene turf of this expanse (albeit in mainly dewy, freezing conditions) through pine and birch trees and falling leaves in saffron yellows and iridescent greens all perfectly cut and maintained.

The most enjoyable aspect of the course is the rich, woodland atmosphere of burnt umbers and foxes and air right in the heart of London where one can drive onto a view of the NatWest Tower, Canary Wharf and the incongruous Swiss Re building. On the Par 4 6th, P.G. Wodehouse allegedly penned "anyone wishing to write to the author should address all correspondence to: P.G. Wodehouse, c/o the 6th bunker, The Addington Golf Club, Croydon, Surrey". The ravines very unique to this course make one feel like an Indiana Jones. After matches the team enjoy the odd Guinness on the 19th, usually entertaining opposition with tales of investment banking and discussions of career opportunities. Mr. Rickett's tells us tales of his 'paralysis' in Rosebery Hall, the older scabbie loving postgraduate players nodding on with bovine faces. Often this has been waiting for the heroic Shivam Shah to finish his battles on the 18th green (3 of his matches this year have gone down to the wire), with the nonchalant Moore, a scratch golfer and ex-member of the US Naval College golf team striding in resplendent tweed garb, buying his opponent many mugs of beer in fine spirit of commiseration. Another classic highlight was our game against King's College at Royal Blackheath, which has the spurious claim of being the 'oldest golf course in the world' of the time of James IV of Scotland. Most members of the team remember having a golf ball missile at some point whizzing at their legs or arms or head due to the ill-guided and catatonic nature of

Mr. Soham Gupte esq. that day staring anxiously from the adjacent fairway. Of course, Mr. Gupte's alacrity proved to be all too much for the two captains this year as he has taken over the role of practice organiser.

Who could forget the unwieldy cricket stump figure of Shahnasarian, known to hit a few extraordinary fade shots through the autumn leaves. Then, of course, there is the recent addition of Ollie Ricketts, the prodigal son of the team who has been one of the stalwarts of the neophyte team. That is despite his recent string of losses against the fairer sex, one of whom surprised us with her golf talent despite quite visible rotundity. That was despite the smouldering glances between the two the more sagacious team members were able to pick up on. However as the great John Daly once said, 'if you ain't fat, you ain't all that'.

We encourage people to get involved in the society which has grown from strength to strength. Email su.soc.golf@lse.ac.uk to get involved in an atmosphere of tartan trousers, flat Harris tweed caps, large quantities of alcoholic beverages and extremely occasional but very memorable visits to AU nights.



Tiger Woods, a golfer (MA Adultery)

Letters to the Sports Editor

The sports editors are not that used to getting comment letters in; this may be because no-one in the AU gives enough of a crap to write in and comment about it. However, in the last couple of weeks we have received a couple of comment letters from an illusive duo, who call themselves J&W

Their last letter was printed in the comment section, but as we know a number of you find it difficult to get beyond the back two pages we thought we'd bring this week's letter to you:

Dear Editors

The title of this week's back page piece was a little concerning. Surely, far from the event 'miracles happen' being a summation of a netball team and the event '5 wins in a row', the number of wins should be represented by a bivariate function of the quality of the team, and some miracle variable. We would suggest that $5\text{wins} = F(\text{Quality}, \text{Miracles})$. Correct us if we're wrong - we are no polymaths, though we do enjoy a bit of MA100 on the side.

PS - that dash in the last sentence is not a minus sign. Just a heads up. Probability 1/2. Assumption: fair coin.

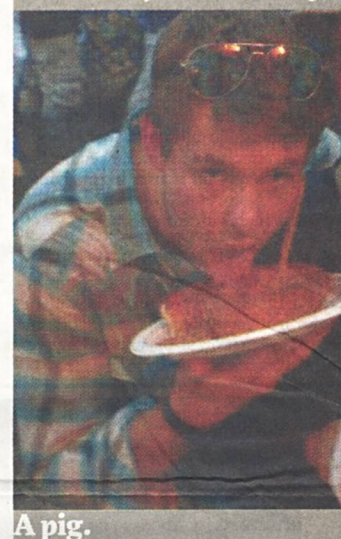
INDUCE TO THE MAXXXX (global, not local, no constraints)

J&W

LSE Lookalikes No. 37



Alexander James Smedley.



A pig.

AU Elections 2011: Important information and changes

It is the time of year again to elect a new AU President and AU Exec to see the AU through the next 12 months. After a comprehensive review, the current AU Exec has taken the decision to change the structure of the committee and the way it is elected. If you are interested in running for AU President or being a member of the AU Exec, or think you know someone who would do well then please pay careful attention to the following information and changes.

Nominations for all positions open on Monday 14th February 2011 and close on Monday 21st February 2011. An individual can nominate themselves by collecting a nomination from the SU reception or by visiting: <http://www.lsesu.com/studentvoice/elections/nominatinform/>.

If you want to run for a position you must submit a nomination form. No nominations will be accepted after the closing deadline (Monday, Week 7).

AU President will still be elected through an open vote of the whole SU body. As

such the new AU President will be elected as a 'Part-time Officer' to the SU and will be required to participate in SU wide hustings as well as AU Hustings to be held on Wednesday 23rd February 2011 (Week 7).

AU Exec - Going forward there will be no defined roles for those wishing to stand for the AU Exec. Instead all nominees will be entered into the same ballot and the 5 candidates that receive the most votes will be elected as 'AU Executives'.

Only paid-up members of the AU will be allowed to vote in the AU Exec elections. All AU Exec candidates will be required to attend AU Hustings to be held on Wednesday 23rd February 2011 (Week 7).

For any further information on the new structure of the AU Exec or to find out more information on the role of the AU President and AU Exec, please feel free to contact Ben Robinson, AU President (su.aupresident@lse.ac.uk) or Rhiannon Edwards, AU Secretary (su.ausecretary@lse.ac.uk).

Smedley's Corner

Stuart Smedley

Cricket may be a sport that depicts itself as embodying gentlemanly characteristics so much so that the document outlining its laws begins with a section outlining 'The Spirit of Cricket'. However, it has had to endure its fair share of embarrassing controversies over the past couple of decades.

Whether it be players ball tampering (not a euphemism) or refusing to walk when quite obviously out, discussion has been aroused about this 'spirit' being brought into disrepute.

However there have also been plenty of cases where the long arm of the law has decided to get itself involved in response to allegations of match fixing. Giants of the game such as Shane Warne have found themselves accused, yet able to walk away with their innocence intact. For others though, this has not been the case, the most notable guilty partner being former South African captain Hansie Cronje, who received a life ban from the game shortly before his death in 2002 having admitted to throwing matches.

Last weekend, three more players - Salman Butt, Mohammad Asif and Mohammad Amir - received lengthy suspensions from the International Cricket Council (ICC) for delivering on promises made to a dodgy bookmaker during the fourth test of Pakistan's tour of England last summer. Their crime, rather than being fixing the outcome of the test, was the bowling of no-balls at previously arranged points during the match - or spot fixing.

For their part in the scam, Butt - the captain of the Pakistan team at the time - received a five year ban and Asif received a five year suspensions. Amir, the 18 year old fast bowler who delivered the no-balls, was left to contemplate his actions for five years. Furthermore, the trio face criminal charges along with the fixer

Mazhar Majeed.

Although the punishments may appear unduly severe to some due to the fact they conspired to fix what would occur in a tiny portion of the five day match, it is without doubt correct that they have been banned for a substantial period of time.

However, one thing seems to be missing from the outcome of the ICC's investigation. And that is an attempt to clamp down on the ease with which certain spots in matches can be rigged.

That requires not just a war on the cheats, but a battle against the bookmakers too.

It surely takes a high level of ingenuity, and luck, for anybody to fix the final result of a match in any team contest unless the whole side are in on the swindle, at which point it would appear obvious what is transpiring.

Yet, fixing spots is far, far easier. Amir's biggest mistake - other than getting himself involved - was arguably that he stepped so far over the line when delivering the no-balls. A marginal infraction may have aroused little suspicion.

It is not just cricket though where

spots appear capable of being easily manipulated.

Before and at half-time of most televised football games, fans are usually confronted with Ray Winstone offering up live odds in his gruff cockney patter, whilst advertising a trip to Bet365.com where 'over 50 in-play markets' are offered. These allow punters to bet on more 'traditional' things such as the identity of the next goalscorer as well as on more inconspicuous markets like the number of throw-ins in the next ten minutes or the time of the first corner. The latter two are undoubtedly far easier for an individual or small group of players to attempt to determine, yet difficult to detect by the authorities.

As a student whose bank statements typically contain more minus signs than the winter weather forecasts for Outer Siberia, it may seem surprising that I'm criticising the gambling industry given how potentially easy it is to win a few quid and get back into the black.

But with the integrity of sport potentially on the line, it is time these companies took some responsibility.



Salman Butt playing cricket and clearly not earning enough money for the pleasure of doing so. Image courtesy of Creative Commons.