

the beaver



06.03.2012
Newspaper of the
LSE Students' Union
FREE

Elections herald new Students' Union



Winning candidates for Full-Time Sabbatical Officer. From left to right: Jack Tindale (Community and Welfare), Matthew De Jesus (Activities and Development), Duncan McKenna (Education), and Alex Peters-Day (General Secretary)

Nona Buckley-Irvine
Staff Reporter

The Lent Term Students' Union elections ended tensely as Alex Peters-Day secured a second term as General Secretary this week after beating Mohammed Morley by a small margin of votes.

In the first round, Peters-Day won 834 votes against Morley's 810, and after votes to Re-Open Nominations (RON) were distributed in the second round, Peters-Day strode ahead of Morley with 902 votes to his 874.

"I am so happy, and so completely overwhelmed," said Peters-Day of her re-election as General Secretary. "Our tactic was to win vote by vote, and I have been supported by great campaigners and great friends. I love this place, I love this university and I love this Union."

Peters-Day had led a campaign based on continuing her work with the new Director, overseeing the new students building and continuing her work on her brainchild, the Only Way is Ethics campaign, by establishing a new permanent Ethics Code and "leading the fight for the education you deserve."

Jay Stoll, newly elected to the Democracy Committee, said, "there are no words to describe how I feel about [Alex Peters-Day]."

Morley, who was campaigning to make the Students' Union a "political union" was distraught after having lost the elections.

Following the results, Morley said on his Facebook: "it was a good campaign and I'm so grateful for the support I received. I hope the elected

representatives will listen to the students and hopefully move the union on to bigger and better things."

Meanwhile, Jack Tindale, chair of the Union General Meeting, won the post of Community and Welfare Officer surpassing both Pallavi Bansal and Rosina St James.

The voting required two rounds; in the first round, Bansal received 246 votes, against St James' 547 and Tindale's 789, eliminating Bansal. In the second round Tindale was declared the winner after storming ahead with 862 votes, against St James' 547.

Tindale described himself as "relieved more than anything," and mostly concerned with "just getting a result."

A pirate-themed campaign based on "Making Your Union Ship-Shape" saw Tindale's campaign team take to Houghton Street wearing pirate hats. Jack Curtis, a key individual in his campaign, said, prior to the results announcement, "I think his memorable campaign videos and slogans will contribute to his success."

Results for other key positions remained extremely close. Only a handful of votes determined Matt De Jesus's succession as the new Activities and Development. De Jesus stood against Damini Onifade, who came in second despite receiving more endorsements from societies than De Jesus.

There was only one vote between the two in the first round of voting, with De Jesus edging ahead with 775 votes, against 774 for Onifade. Spectators were tensely silent as RON votes were redistributed in the second round, where De Jesus won by six votes.

Describing his win as "amaz-

ing," De Jesus said he "always knew it would be close" and that he "believed in himself all the way."

De Jesus is eager to get working "straight away," highlighting the enacting the LSE Equality training as his immediate priority, something he described as being "needed to be done" for a "long-time coming." De Jesus praised his opponent, describing him as a "great competitor" that would have been "perfect" for the job.

Good spirits were not amongst all rivaling candidates. Lois Clifton, who lost to Duncan McKenna in the race for Education Officer, promised to continue to "challenge Duncan McKenna on campus," and predicted a "movement" to do so.

McKenna's campaign, which garnered 848 votes against Clifton's 689 votes was focused on tangible improvements to the daily education of LSE students, such as better teaching feedback and reforming LSE100.

McKenna stood out on Houghton Street for several days with a board asking people to offer their thoughts on how to improve education at LSE and promised to incorporate such feedback into his aims if he were elected.

Clifton, known to be a member of the Socialist Workers Party, led a more politically driven campaign, 'Education for the 99%', in response to the recent government cuts to education.

Upon winning, McKenna said the "Education Officer is about LSE" and he wants to "make education better at LSE." He refuted Clifton's claim of a movement to challenge him, claiming that his "entire campaign was based on what students wanted."

Results remained close for the post of Athletics Union President,

contested by three candidates, Nicole Mateer, Matt Stimson and Ben Johnson.

Stimson was eliminated in the first round of voting, and Mateer won by seven votes against Johnson, receiving 593 to 586.

Johnson offered his congratulations to the winner: "Nicole had a solid campaign, and I'm sure she will do a cracking good job."

Apprehension was less palpable during the part time officers results announcements, since more than half of them only had a single candidate. Josh Still, Returning Officer and the Master of Ceremony for the evening, reminded everyone that "RON will be running in all the elections."

The posts of Anti-Racism Officer, Ethics and Environment Officer, LGBT Officer and Women's Officer were secured by each candidate with RON receiving a few votes in each case. Mohamed Harrath, Naomi Russell, John Peart and Alice Stott won each of the respective posts.

Jay Stoll won in the first round of the Democracy Committee elections, followed by Joe Anderson, Hassan Arif, Sherrille Davids, and Rachel Quah. The five Athletic's Union Executive positions were won by Steph Mofat, Robert Martin, Jack Curtis, George Melhuish and Hannah Richmond.

Sophie Newman became the newly-elected Disabled Officer by a fair margin of 644 votes to 461 against Jade Symonds.

On her plans for the year ahead as Disabled Students Officer she said she wants to "campaign for people to gain awareness of disabilities on campus" and "to improve conditions for disabled students, and fight against cuts, since that will eventually affect

negatively the conditions for these students."

Diana Yu won International Student's Officer against Jan Ladzinski, a source of celebration for some. Ladzinski was another member of the Socialist Workers Party who failed to be elected.

There was a visible lapse in the jovial atmosphere as Jason Wong entered the Quad. After being disqualified from the Trustee elections, he ran a RON campaign against the remaining candidates.

Lukas Slothuus, Diva Vaish and Mehak Adil all won positions on the Student Trustee Board, but the fourth position went to RON, beating Raymond Ratansha Gilder.

This means that there will be another election for the fourth place on the Board, which Wong plans on running in.

Still said "I received complaints from people regarding anti-semitism, and referred these to the Students' Union Executive. I had no choice but to recommend expulsion."

Wong consequently wrote on Twitter that "Josh Still will make an excellent returning officer for the Zimbabwe pretend elections."

Although the date for the next election is unknown, Still said "I'm thinking of standing myself, or if not, I will campaign for the moderate with the best chance of beating Wong."

Additional reporting done by Jon Allsop, Nona Buckley-Irvine, Goreti Faria, Arisa Manawapat, and Connor Russell



visit us online at thebeaveronline.co.uk
and at facebook.com/thebeaveronline

Editorial Board

Acting Executive Editor

Alex Haigh
editor@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Design Editor

Liam Brown
design@thebeaveronline.co.uk

News Editors

Sydney Saubestre
John Armstrong
Shu Hang Low
news@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Comment Editor

Alice Dawson
comment@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Features Editor

Gurdeep Chhina
Chris Rogers
features@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Social Editor

Laura Aumeer
social@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Sport Editors

Tim Poole
sports@thebeaveronline.co.uk

PartB Editor

Aameer Patel
partb@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Photo Editor

Matthew Worby
photography@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Online Editor

Liam Brown
web@thebeaveronline.co.uk

General Manager

Konrad Hughes
info@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Collective Chair

Alexander Young
collective@thebeaveronline.co.uk

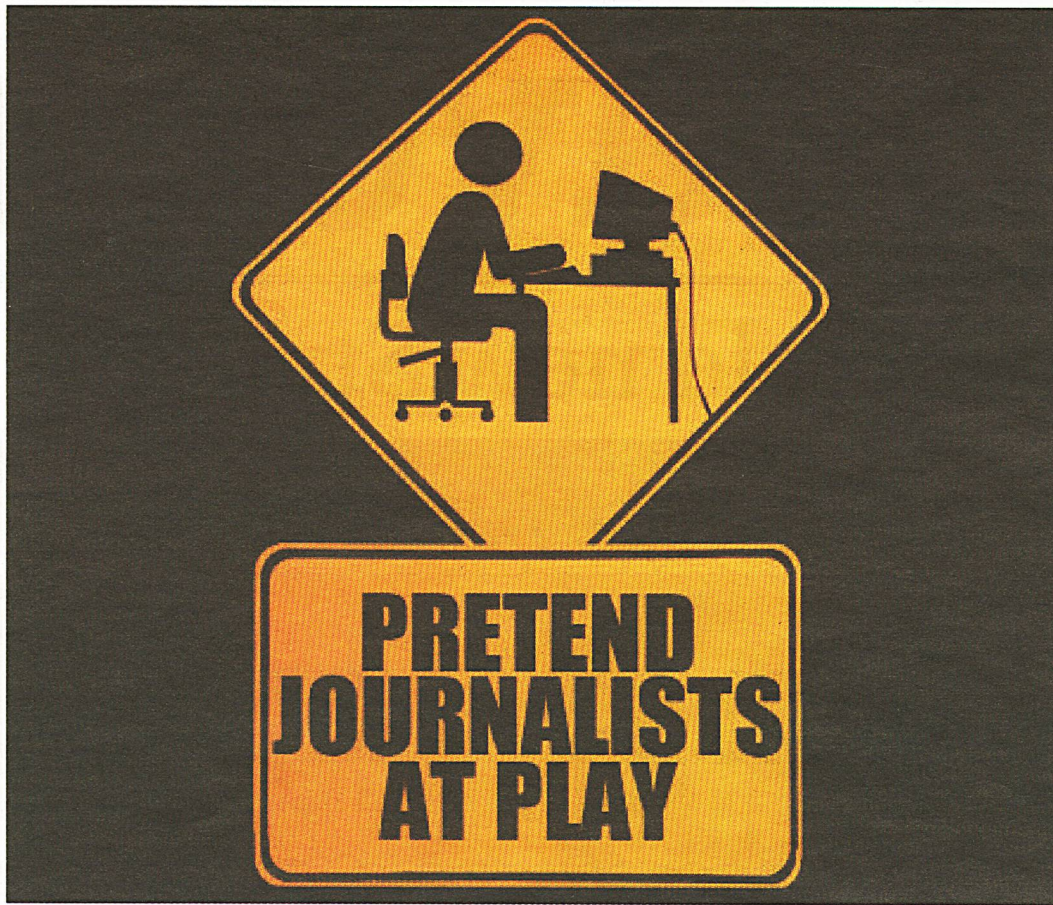


Union Bashō

Pseudo-statistics

The Beaver has pulled up some stats just to get one-up with the Penguin.

Bashō is the Beaver's elusive haiku poet. If our poll data looks odd, it's because he convinced many of those we surveyed to pretend to care about the elections.



thebeaver

Established in 1949

Issue No. 769

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

The Fourth Estate

Well Students' Union elections have passed, and much of the student body is in a state of afterglow, while others are disappointed at what appears to be a one-sided victory. Commentators in this newspaper have claimed that this election represented the victory of the moderates over the "left-wing." No matter the result, the editorial board of the Beaver would like to make it clear that we support no side and will continue to hold the SU Executive to account.

Although one disgruntled former candidate may consider our writers, photographers, and editors "pretend journalists," we will do our best to represent the students of the LSE and investigate their concerns, no matter who is involved. We are also aware that two of the elected Full-Time Sabbatical Officers, Jack Tindale and

Duncan McKenna, have been involved in the production of this paper - with McKenna being a former Executive Editor of the Beaver. Despite their connection, and the effort they no doubt put into this paper, no special treatment will be afforded to them. We will maintain our independent editorial stance throughout their tenure as Student's Union Sabbatical Officers.

Before the new Sabbs take power, however, this year must come to a close. And while we are sure many are ready to head-off into the Easter Break, there is still one Union General Meeting (and an Annual General Meeting in Week 10) left in Lent Term. This week, a relatively controversial motion is to be voted on at UGM. The Community Voting motion, forwarded by Alec Webley,

attempts to ensure that "liberation officers" (LGBT and Women's Officer among others) are only voted-in by members of the SU who self-identify as part of a particular group. The post of LGBT Officer, for example, will only be voted-on by students who self-identify as LGBT.

This motion will fundamentally reshape the SU so it is important that students attend this week's UGM to fully understand the issue and, subsequently, vote. We on the editorial board recognise the importance of this vote and strongly encourage our readers to attend UGM on Thursday and vote on the motion. No matter how you feel about this change, please vote and have a say on the future of our SU.

Collective

A Alani, R Al-Dabagh, J Allsop, N M Alexander, N Antoniou, J V Armstrong, L Atchison, J Attueyi, L Aumeer, H Austin, N J Buckley-Irvine, H Burdon, A Burk, B Arslan, E Beaumont, L Brown, B Butterworth, V Chan, R J Charnock, S Chaudhuri, G K Chhina, B Clarke, L J Clifton, R A Coleman, R A Creedon, R Cucchiaro, A L Cunningham, J Curtis, H Dar, A E Dawson, E Delahaye, S Desai, A Doherty, E S Dwek, E Firth, M Fletcher, A Fyfe, S Gale, P Geder, R Gudka, A L Gunn, A C B Haigh, R Hamer, M C Heffernan, R Holmes, K C Hughes, R Illingworth, N Jaroszek, M Jenkins, J Jones, A Kane, K V Kenney, A Krechetova, S Langton, E A Larkin, S W Leung, S H Low, D McKenna, R Mohyidin, A Moneke, B Nardi, C T Ng, W O'Brien, K O'Donnell, M Owen, N Mashru, N Mateer, S Newman, S Nissila, Marshall Palmer, A X Patel, C Pearson, J R Peart, A Peters-Day, K Pezeshki, S Poojara, T Poole, A Qazilbash, A Riese, K Rogers, C S Russell, N Russell, B Sarhangian, S Saubestre, S Sammour, H Shepherd, I M Silver, K Singh, L Slothuus, J M Still, J Stoll, A Sulemanji, J Tindale, I Vardaxoglou, M Veale, A Vora, X T Wang, A Webley, S R Williams, V A Wong, M Worby, A Yang, J Yarde, A Young, D Yu

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

collective@thebeaveronline.co.uk

The Beaver would like to thank the LSE students who contributed to this issue. Above photo by Flickr user Lisa Padilla.

The Beaver is published by the LSE Students' Union, East Building, Houghton Street, WC2A 2AE. Printed at Mortons Printing.

The Beaver uses pictures from flickr.com which have been issued under a Creative Commons license.

Thank You!

The Beaver would like to thank the following writers who reported for our live Election Blog on Thursday: Jon Allsop, Nona Buckley-Irvine, Goretí Faria, Arisa Manawapat, Connor Russell and commentator Alec Webley.

All election photos were taken by Niovi Antoniou, Harry Burdon, Wanda O'Brien and Li Yang.

Beaver Elections

The term is coming to a close and some of our editors are leaving us. Applications have opened for the following positions:

PartB Editor x2
Sport Editor x1
Online Editor x1

Election hustings will take place in Week 10. Collective Chair will email those on Collective with more information.

Those not on Collective can email collective@thebeaveronline.co.uk for more information.

Loose correlation between personal politics and voting

Vincent Wong
Staff Reporter

A few claims about the Students' Union elections are heard every year. This election season, the Beaver has tried to investigate four of these. One is that there is never much difference politically between candidates - often an excuse not to vote. Another is that those who vote are usually those of left-wing persuasion - often another excuse not to vote. A third is that voters' personal political stance plays only a small role in their choices - that, as one candidate commented, "It's really about who you know". Lastly, there is the claim that many voters will tend to vote for Sabbatical Officers, but ignore or vote RON in the ballot for other positions. Our analysis of the election results and data from our polls finds evidence to debunk the first two and find support for the latter two.

Where the Sabbatical Officer candidates are concerned, there seems to be some variety in the political stance of their manifestos. Ten Union commentators, including both Beaver writers and active members of the Union, who were not running for Sabbatical positions, were asked to give a score for the political stance of the candidates and their manifestos. Responses for both ranged from centrist - or even apathetic - to identifying firmly with the Left (with apologies to anyone who favours the political compass or alternative measures, the Left-Right metric was chosen for its simplicity).

For each Sabbatical position, it was found that there were expressly centrist and expressly left manifestos, unlike last year's elections, where the political stances of manifestos tended to be closer politically and, usually, more leftist. Interestingly, no candidate was judged to have a personal stance right of centre, and manifestos tended to be closer to the centre than

the candidate's perceived stance were. This suggests these candidates, clearly tuned in to the finer art of politicking, deliberately trying to widen their appeal.

Those who classify themselves as right-wing vote too; The Beaver conducted a poll of the Sabbatical votes and political stances of LSE students passing through Houghton Street on Election Day. More people classified themselves as between 0 and -1; however, some people rated themselves between 0 and 1, far right, and still stipulated that they had voted.

The distribution of political preferences observed is shown in figure 1. We recorded 80 complete responses. 39 came from those who identified with the Left (a score less than 0), 23 from centrists/the apathetic (a score of 0) and 18 from those who identified with the Right (a score more than 0). The median and modal scores were 0 and the mean score was -0.11. Our results suggest it isn't mostly those who have leftist sympathies who bother to vote. Moreover, if the distribution of the political stances of LSE students is roughly bell-shaped with a median, mean and modal of 0 (the centre), our results suggest that perhaps proportionately more on the Left than the Right vote. See Figure 1.

Our poll, of course, is far from perfect. For one thing, a sample of 80 may not be representative of the voter body. Moreover, the Left-Right metric we have used to gauge political preferences has some theoretical flaws. If it is considered an acceptable measure, we should also question whether the distribution of political stances in the student body is bell-shaped as figure 2 projects.

Voters can be fickle, the Beaver used data from our polls to examine the relationship between voters' political stances and their chosen Sabbatical portfolio. The stance of a portfolio was taken to be the average of the candidates' manifesto political stance scores, which assumes that each Sab-

batical Officer has the same influence on the overall political stance of the Students' Union.

Regression analysis suggests there is a small positive relationship between a voter's political stance and their portfolio stance - all possible Sabbatical portfolios were, to varying degrees, left of centre. This relationship is significant at the 95 per cent level. However, the regression lacks explanatory power, indicating one should be cautious about drawing conclusions from it.

It is interesting to note that many portfolios were popular with voters on both sides of the political spectrum. One would be hard-pressed to explain this simply by referring to the voters' political stances. Perhaps the very scientific surveys we conducted on election night are enlightening here. The surveys suggested that flyers do work. The most common response given by late night Houghton Street strollers was "I don't remember who I voted for."

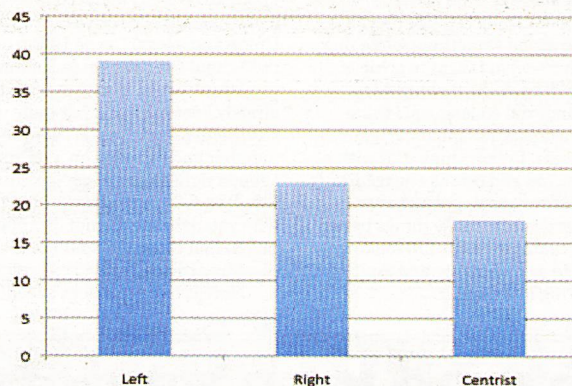
I just followed the flyer."

Another student said: "I'm not voting for anyone with an annoying slogan!" We suspect they did. Perhaps there is something to the idea that candidate choices are "really about who you know".

Overall, voting for some positions was considered more important than voting for others

If voters considered their vote for each position equally important, then we would expect the vote shares of each position to be equal. Votes for Sabbatical candidates made up almost half the total number of votes. Interestingly, contested Part Time Officer positions, with the exception of the AU president position, claimed a relatively larger share of the total vote than uncontested positions. Although we have not been able to look at individual voting data, our collected data shows that some people voted for contested positions and ignored (or voted RON) for the others.

VOTERS' POLITICAL POSITIONS



A score of -1 represents identifying with the extreme left, 0 the centre (also apathy), and 1 with the extreme right. Apparently, you're more likely to be a socialist than a fascist on campus. The ethics campaign must be working.

Comment...

There is nothing as deceptive as an obvious fact, and this is trebly true of elections. Distrust anyone who tells you that "moderate" candidates beat "leftist" candidates. The only candidates were of the left - except possibly for Jason Wong, since "stupid" is not on a political spectrum - and the wins were narrow. Peters-Day won by RON transfers, and by a margin of less than 50 votes; De Jesus won by less than 10. More people voted against Jack Tindale than for him. Conclusion: had the wind changed even slightly, we would be talking of a win by the far left.

Yet the winds were as they were, and chance is set to blow through the Kingsley Rooms. Let's take a look at what that will mean in practice.

Start at the top with Alex Peters-Day, the General Secretary (of my heart - full disclosure). She was of course the Left candidate when first elected, only to be callously dumped by her former allies over her refusal to take a more determinedly pro-Palestinian stance in recent inter-campus disputes on the topic, among other things. But there is much to tidy up in what remains of her first term, as the School rushes through new ethics rules to get everything in place for the new Director arriving in the autumn.

Expect a second Peters-Day term, however, to focus more determinedly on services. Her top priority will be to ensure the Union keeps control of the catering and other services in the New Students Centre; a total School monopoly on beer is too horrifying to contemplate. The LSE has very little non-AU, non-Society campus life, and her new entertainments proposals (including possibly a brand new

branch of the Union modeled on RAG with a large budget dedicated to planning cross-school social events) will likely take up a good part of her time.

This is in marked contrast to her opponent, Mohammed Morley. Morley promised a more radical General Secretaryship focused primarily on campaigns, demonstrations, and liberation. His actual views on these subjects were uniformly hazy. On liberation, for instance, he repeatedly promised better training for liberation officers but did not specify exactly how the present liberation training was inadequate. It was unclear how another National Demonstration against fees would, in fact, have any more impact than the previous two (including one run by his opponent).

The argument in favor of Morley's election was that he could revive LSE's campaigning spirit, but since two years of campaigning candidates have failed to bring this about, this argument again failed to persuade. It may have been this that led to Peters-Day's substantial lead in endorsements and her come-from-behind victory as she rallied an entirely new base to narrowly re-elect her.

Education Officer promises an even starker departure, as Lois Clifton lost quite substantially to Duncan McKenna. Here, it appears that Clifton's commendably honest campaigning on her political activism did her some harm; "Education for the 99%" is a dangerous line to run in a school full of students who crave nothing more than income inequality - with them as the beneficiaries.

McKenna's platform centres around returning the remit of Education Officer to its roots, focusing on the School's provision of education rather than broader questions of

education writ large. He campaigned on a shopworn list of grievances: re-sits, LSE100 improvement, feedback, GTAs, and mixed assessment. As a current student rep on the Academic Board, I can tell him the mountain ahead of him is steep if he hopes to achieve just one of these goals. He will have to take a radically different approach to either the "sit on committees" strategy or the "occupy" method if he hopes to be successful.

Community and Welfare's election came down, in the eyes of many, to a choice between Community (Jack Tindale) and Welfare (Rosina St James).

Digression: I would add here that Pallavi Bansal's campaign could be summed up by her manifesto pledge to the "Protection of interests of LGBT society members" (a society she showed no interest in whatsoever prior to the campaign). Honey, we're not "members" of some exclusive club. We're gay. We have sex with people of the same gender - or challenge gender norms entirely. You don't need to be a member of a Society to do that (though you can join now at www.lsesu.com!)

But the serious candidates presented an intriguing, somewhat apolitical choice for students. St James rightly directed attention to widening participation and mental health (a growing crisis at the LSE), while Tindale emphasized institutional ways for the Community and Welfare officer to bring different existing communities together while strengthening various housing and financial services.

With Tindale's election, expect a strong focus on Halls in the first part of his term as he works to implement his laundry list of housing projects and complete his predecessor's work

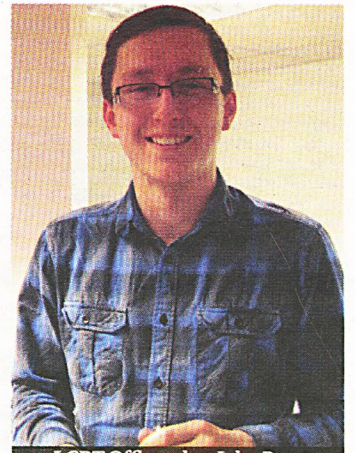
in bringing Halls committees further into the SU family. The challenge for Tindale will be reaching out to the liberation groups on campus to make his Liberation Alliance proposal more than just a talking-shop but a vehicle for progress. And hopefully he'll take a leaf from his opponent's manifesto and spend some time working on mental health issues, as our current Counselling services are almost comically understaffed and overburdened.

The Activities and Development race pitted AU Treasurer Matt de Jesus against Activities Executive member Damini Onifade in another election that divided the campus's political blocs. While the AU is Matt's strength, Damini won many plaudits by focusing on ways to help Societies beyond mere resources, and Matt would be wise to keep this in mind as he implements his agenda.

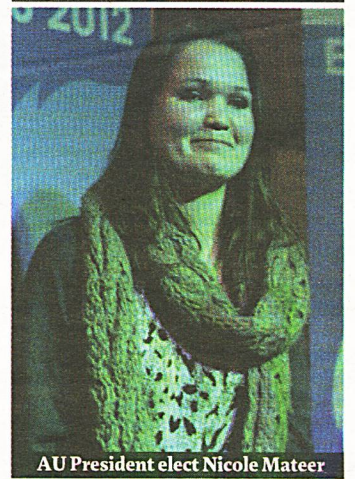
De Jesus promises a variety of new cross-society initiatives that will require extremely careful design to work. Societies are unbelievably diverse: they range from performing arts groups like Timeless to gigantic pre-professional operations like the Law Society to conference planners to liberation groups to the Knitting Society.

It is not easy to design "common" systems for this kind of diversity. Yet de Jesus has promised a common calendar, common handover tools, and common criteria for developmental budgets. More intriguingly, he promised mandatory diversity training for society leaders, which should be tough to implement. If he is successful, de Jesus just might prove to be the Sabb who creates the most lasting change from the next academic year.

By: Alec Webley



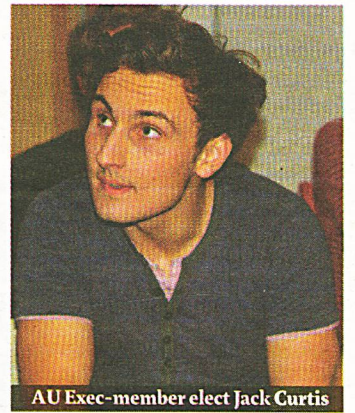
LGBT Officer elect John Peart



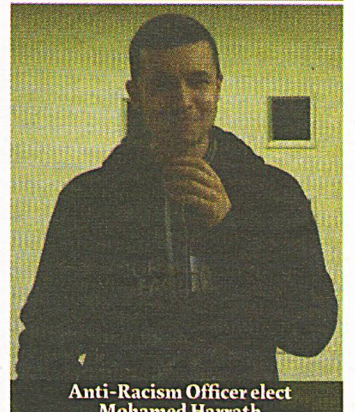
AU President elect Nicole Mateer



Women's Officer elect Alice Stott



AU Exec-member elect Jack Curtis

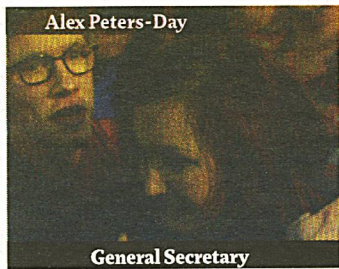


Anti-Racism Officer elect Mohamed Harrath

GOT A SCOOP?

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

First words from the Sabbaticals



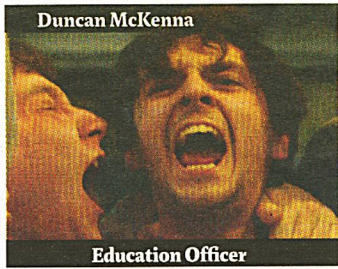
Alex Peters-Day

General Secretary

"I am very happy to be reelected, I think there's a lot of genuine change that can be enacted within the Union and the School. I've already started working in the new Ethics Code, which will be ground breaking in establishing the direction the LSE will pursue over the next couple of years - students have never had as much of a say as they do now and I really want to build on the fact that the School is finally putting students at the forefront of their policy.

I believe that the Students' Union needs to be relevant and target first year students so that they immediately get involved student politics and known to come to the Union General Meeting. I'm going to look into incorporating the UGM in everyone's personal time table to further publicise it and ensure that there is no confusion as to when it's happening and where to go.

As far as policy for next year, I will be overseeing the building of the new Student Center, fighting the new fee levels, and ensure that bursaries and financial aid are more accessible to all students. This is the first time in the history of LSE that there has simultaneously been a new Director and a returning General Secretary and I'm greatly looking forward to the sustainable change that will be enacted."



Duncan McKenna

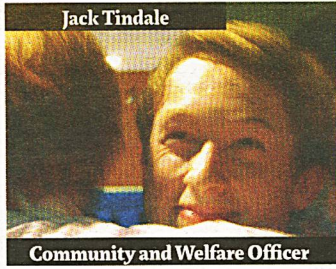
Education Officer

"I think I got elected because there is a real desire around the School to fix things for students on campus, and to make real, pragmatic changes to improve the educational experience at LSE. That's what I want to focus on.

Firstly, we need to improve conditions for graduate teaching assistants. They carry out a large proportion of the teaching for undergraduates at the LSE, and we need to ensure that they are paid enough so that teaching is worth their time and they remain motivated. We also need to ensure that they are trained properly because teaching is an art, not an occupation, and it needs to be treated as such.

We also need to make sure that students feel engaged in their university experience. We need more feedback and face time with tutors so that students really feel like they're really discovering something while they learn. That's what I want to achieve.

And I'll be doing it alongside three wonderful colleagues; I think we have a fantastic sabbatical team for next year. I really think that with a new Director, and one as engaged as Craig Calhoun, we've got a chance to get things done, to make things better for everyone at the LSE. I'm looking forward to a challenging and exciting year getting this done."



Jack Tindale

Community and Welfare Officer

"I feel that name recognition played a part, but I would hope that people voted for me based on my manifesto, which was fundamentally policy-centric, as opposed to my personality.

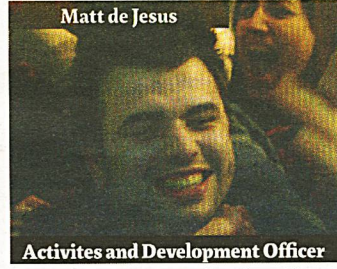
My program was rooted in the student experience and as such, the chief ambitions are to reform the quality of accommodation services and improve the right to rent for international students.

I also want to tackle discrimination from the grassroots level, working with de Jesus' transient, but worthwhile LSE Equality Campaign. I'm also going to establish a Liberation Alliance and ensure that minorities are properly represented.

There is also an agenda for change with regards to management as well. I hope to be well advanced in forming a partnership between the Students' Union and a local Credit Union before the School opens again in September.

I think we have a great team that already known each other quite well, so we will be able to start working together and focusing on a reformist agenda right from the get-go. In short, I shall be fighting to ensure that those who voted for me are not disappointed and to that those who did not are not disenfranchised.

Here is to a great year ahead!"



Matt de Jesus

Activities and Development Officer

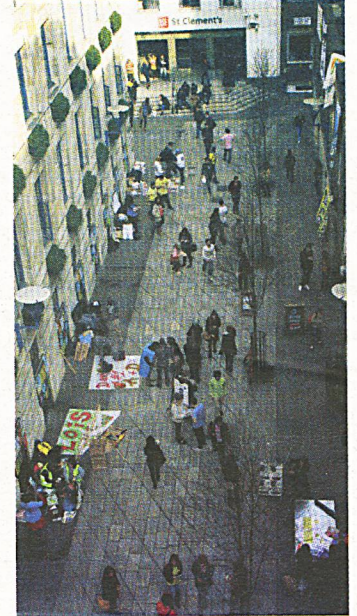
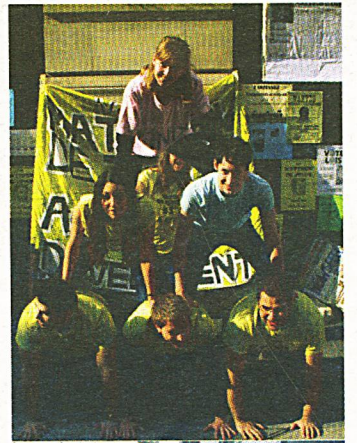
"I was not expecting to be elected but I feel confident that I will do a great job. One of my first orders of business will be to set up the LSE Equality movement, which will ensure compulsory equality and diversity training for all executive members of clubs and societies. We will be working with the counselling center to combat any issues of discrimination.

There will be a sub-committee of all part time officers to make certain that all issues of discrimination get reporters to the Students' Union so that there is an external body that can help to deal with them. We will be working with societies to further resolve issues; I realise that I will have to be incredibly more pro-active about approaching societies so that they know that they can approach me should any issues should arise.

I will be meeting with the many societies that exist on campus and let them know that I am always hear to help.

I will be ensuring that I uphold the platform that I ran on and I'm sure that everyone will eventually come to see that I have the best interest of the Students' Union and the wider student body at the LSE at heart."

By: Sydney Saubestre



Elections marred by a variety of illegitimate tactics

Shu Hang

The Beaver has received complaints, from three students at the London School of Economics (LSE), of unfair electoral tactics by supporters of Mohammed Morley, a candidate for the General Secretary elections last week.

The incident occurred in the Fourth Floor Restaurant, where the students were approached by two male students who were campaigning on Morley's behalf.

"They [the male students] asked whether we had cast our votes for the LSESU elections and when one of my friends told them that we hadn't, they immediately told us to vote," claimed one of the students.

The students were then advised to vote for Morley and one of the campaigners offered to let them do so on their phone, saying, "it's an easy process."

"One of my friends agreed and logged in to her voting account using his phone," one of the students said. "She was trying to cast the vote when the other guy offered to help since he didn't want to 'waste' our time. He took the phone away and said he would do it on her behalf."

The other two students were urged by the campaigners to also use their log-in credentials, and the "same thing happened" as to their other friend.

Later in the day, the students saw that the campaigners had cast their votes in all the other elections, "something [they] had not agreed to."

Josh Still, Returning Officer said that while the incident "broke many

rules", it is "not worth investigating" due to the fact that the elections are already over and that Morley did not win the election.

The incident has left the students feeling "bad - I guess we were easy targets since we were [international] students," one student said. "I wished I had gathered up enough courage to say no. Right now, I don't even know who I voted for!"

There is no evidence indicating that the campaigners were officially involved in Morley's campaign.

The Students' Union election has seen a total of twenty complaints being formally investigated by the Returning Officer, compared to only seven last year. Out of them, eleven of the complaints were upheld. Seven of the complaints were covered by the Beaver last week.

The tenth complaint alleged that Morley used his twitter to announce support from someone holding a position in the Students' Union Media Group. Following the investigation, the candidate and the person in the Media Group were reminded that the latter "should not be using their position within the student Media Group to campaign for anyone in the elections."

The next complaint was directed at the Beaver for "expressing support for one particular candidate in the Education Officer election" through its Twitter account. The Executive Editor of the Beaver has since informed the Returning Officer that "the account had been inappropriately used by someone with access to it, and that he had deleted the relevant tweets within twenty minutes of it happening and changed the password." It was resolved that the Beaver would reaffirm its

editorial independence in the election using the same account.

The thirteenth complaint was directed to Morley for sending an unsolicited email to LSE students. After investigating, the Returning Officer decided that the emails were "sent to contacts who had emailed the candidate throughout their time at LSE, and it did not appear to be a list that was generated for a specific reason to do with elections." No actions were taken.

The fourteenth complaint concerned a post on a Northumberland House's Facebook group which suggested that a "hall was endorsing a particular group of candidates." After an investigation, it was determined that the post would be removed, and that a clarification would be issued stating that the post was a mistake. A similar complaint was issued against Rosebery Hall, and has been resolved in the same way.

The next complaint accused one of the campaigners of Morley for "misrepresenting the views of a particular society on a Facebook society wall." The complaint was upheld, and given it was the second sanction upheld against the candidate, "a half hour street ban - where no campaigning was allowed to take place - and a one hour Internet and email ban" was issued. The bans expired at 4:30pm and 5:00pm on Thursday, respectively.

The sixteenth complaint expressed concern over a racist word written on Morley's poster in a hall of residence. After an investigation, "an email was written to the staff of the hall demanding an investigation and further action be taken to find the perpetrator." No evidence has yet been found on the perpetrator.

Let's talk vaginas

Laura Aumeer

The London School of Economics (LSE) Students' Union Drama Society raised £1226 last week through ticket sales to The Vagina Monologues, in which nineteen female students were involved.

The Vagina Monologues is made up of a series of unlinked monologues performed by a varying numbers of girls. These monologues are based on a interviews conducted by Eve Ensler, in which she asked women about their vaginas, their sexuality and their past sexual experiences.

Questions ranged from asking women what they call their vagina, when did they last look at their vagina and "what would your vagina wear." The resulting monologues ranged from the humorous to the very sombre and moving, covering issues such as attitudes to the female body, sex, marriage, rape, transgender experiences, birth and masturbation.

The show has been performed internationally and this was not the first time it has been put on at the LSE. The production was organised and directed by Kate Hayes, a third year BSc Social Policy and Criminology student, and Katherine Everitt, a General Course student, who also acted in it.

Work on the production started on the 23rd January when auditions were held. From then on working on the monologues was a collaborative effort between the students involved.

"One of the highlights of this experience was sitting in the Tuns with ten other girls discussing and making different orgasm noises - necessary for

one of the monologues," said Hayes. "As much as I enjoyed organising and directing, my favourite part was performing and seeing people's reactions."

Although Hayes described selling tickets on Houghton Street as "one of the toughest tasks as some people are disgusted when you say vagina to them at half eleven on a Tuesday morning" the show performed to large crowds in the Old Theatre. There were long queues to buy tickets on the door on both days and the Old Theatre was at full capacity on both Tuesday and Wednesday night.

The production itself was very stripped back to focus attention on the monologues; the only prop was an armchair and all the girls were dressed in red and black. The monologues were interspersed with brief information about the women who were interviewed and a couple of facts about vaginas.

The show was very well received, both by those who had seen the production before and those who knew little about it.

Adam Thompson, 3rd Year Law student, who had not seen the show before, said, "the girls were all fantastic and it was great to see such candid talk about sex. For women the show must have been both empowering and liberating and I'm happy so much was raised for charity."

All the money from ticket sales went to Eaves Charity, a London charity that provides housing and support for vulnerable women.

Both of the organisers said they were proud of all the girls involved and were glad they were able to raise "an amazing amount of money and have some great fun in the process."

Development Society host Peoples Auction

Ahmed Alani

Last Monday saw an alliance between the London School of Economics Students' Union Development Society and RAG, as the two organisations teamed up to raise money in aid of Lifeline Energy through the "People's Auction". The event was organised as part of the annual Development Society Fortnight, which has received popular support last year.

As buyers and sellers gathered in the Quad, words of thanks were spoken by the organisers and a representative from the charity explained to those present how the proceeds of the evening would go towards providing access to free education to underprivileged children in Zambia.

Among those being auctioned to the buyers were the current President of RAG, Sabbatical Officers and a host of academics and various well-known to students at the LSE. The format of the evening involved several rounds of four or five individuals on offer during which people were given the chance to bid for a date with the individual of their choice.

Those who have volunteered themselves for the auction were first introduced on stage together. They then briefly described the dates that they were offering. Alongside these short speeches, volunteers were also

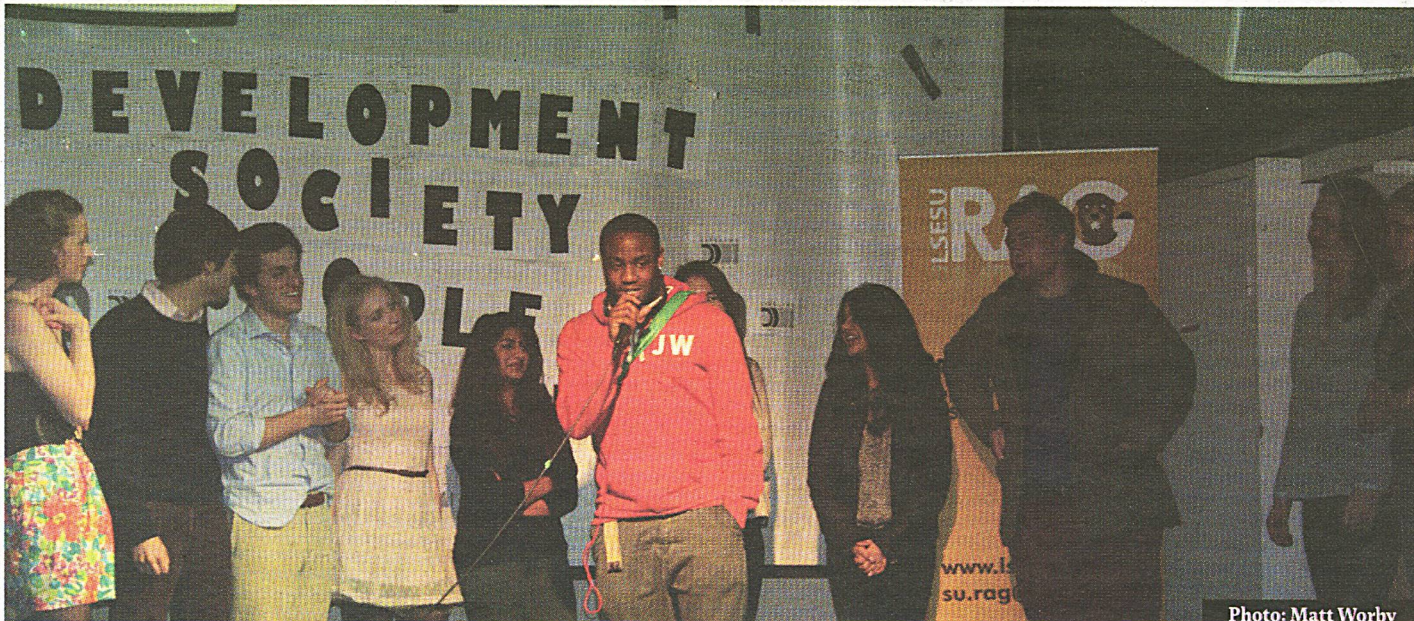


Photo: Matt Worby

given the chance to perform a talent in order to boost potential bids. Included in the range of talents on show was a custom-made rap by Damini Onifade, a member of the Activities Committee, and a short re-worked version of 'Fly Me To The Moon' performed by Matt Stimson, a member of the Athletics Union.

As bidding commenced, it became clear that some sellers would far outbid

the rest. Although caution prevailed at the start of the evening, with most bids ending at the £35 mark, bidding was rapidly sparked up, pushing up the value of certain individuals, such as the newly elected LSE Students' Union Community and Welfare Officer, Jack Tindale, who was bought by Professor Paul Kelly, Head of the Department of Government, for a £115.

LSE academics also proved to be

as popular as ever, with four out of five members of staff selling for around £100 each. The highest winning bid was attributed to Byamba Enkh, President of the Development Society, who was bought for an impressive £120.

The Development Society and RAG expressed their gratitude to all those who took part in the auction, and announced that a total of £1748.75 was raised for Lifeline Energy.

Francesca Washtell, Former President of the Development Society and coordinator of this year's night said, "the event went brilliantly, it had a really great atmosphere and turnout this year, making an event that is always fun even better and very enjoyable to host." Washtell also added, "Paul Kelly stood out as the best sport of the night for buying Jack Tindale as well as putting himself up for auction."

Pakistani flash mob on Houghton Street

Shu Hang

Last Week, the LSESU Pakistan Society brought their annual flagship event, Pakistan Week, to campus. Held in conjunction with the Pakistani High Commission, the week was touted as "one of the biggest South Asian events in the country."

Kazim Raza, President of the Pakistan Society said that the aim of this week is to "enlighten cultural values and morals of the Pakistan community within LSE as well as providing entertainment, while highlighting the rich and colourful heritage of the country."

"We sought to encourage people from different nationalities to learn and experience what Pakistan is all about by shedding light on a Pakistan different from the one ordinarily portrayed," he added.

Pakistan Week kicked off with a bang on Monday with a flashmob on Houghton Street. Members of the society busted a choreographed move to funky Pakistani Music while donning colourful traditional costumes as a huge crowd circled around them.

The segment was immediately followed by the Bhangra Run, which saw more than twenty men dressed in green dancing and chanting to Pakistani folklore and energising dhol drum beats that vibrated through most of campus, bringing an undeniable festive mood to an unexpectedly warm day.

In the meantime, a Karachi's bus, a colourful minibus common in Pakistan, was parked on campus to bring Pakistani students in LSE a little closer to home.

The celebration of music continued the next day with the Ghazal

Night, which drew 200 guests from all over London to the Quad. The night featured ghazal - a Sufi poetic form consisting of rhyming couplets originated in 6th century - and Urdu poetry from eminent poets based in Britain.

The Biryani eating competition on Monday witnessed 65 participants going head-to-head with each other to show who can finish the spicy rice dish in the least amount of time.

Wednesday evening saw the screening of the infamous 2010 British comedy drama film "West Is West", a sequel to the 1999 comedy hit "East Is East." The movie depicted a father taking his youngest son to Pakistan so that the son would not turn his back on his heritage.

Pakistan Week took a more serious tone towards the end of the week, when various talks were held to address the challenges Pakistan faces in foreign relations and higher education.

On Thursday, four prominent authors were invited to discuss literature in India and Pakistan. The panelists talked about how one can understand the effects social and structural trends have on individuals' life through the lens of literature. They also examined the role English-language novels based in Pakistan play in Indo-Pak relations.

Later in the day, Dr. Ishtiaq Ahmed and Dr. Yunus Samad shared their views on Pakistan's sometimes strained Foreign Policy with the United States, the impact of the war on terror and the various paths available to the two countries.

On Friday, Professor Dr. Atta Ur Rehman delivered a talk entitled 'Higher Education, Science and Technology - Imperatives for Socio-economic Development.' The lecture discussed the unprecedented advances Pakistan has made in terms

of higher education and research and development in the past few years, whilst also addressing the challenges the nation would need to overcome to continue on this path of progress.

Sundas Hoorain, a Msc Human Rights student described Pakistan Week as "good fun", though she was critical of the talk on Pakistan-US relations.

"The talk was an extreme right wing take on what's been going on,

saying ridiculous stuff like its only natural that the military has as much say in Pakistan because we're surrounded by danger from all corners," she said.

Various sport tournaments were also held throughout the week, where the spirit of patriotism was tangible throughout as members cheered and rooted for the Pakistani team as they took on an Indian cricket team at St. John's Woods.

Stanley Ellerby-English, Activities & Development Officer was very happy with Pakistan week, saying that it was a "massive success."

"Everyone involved should be incredibly proud of themselves. The Bhangra run on Monday was a taste of the great things to come," Ellerby-English added. "From biryani to serious academic discussion to cricket, this week had it all."



Photo: Pakistan Society

Technion Professor speaks at the LSE

John Armstrong

Professor Boaz Golany, Vice President for External Relations and Resource Development at the Technion last Monday, addressed a small audience in the Lionel Robbins building at the London School of Economics (LSE).

In his speech entitled 'Technion - The Gateway to Israeli Technology,' Golany focused specifically on innovation and entrepreneurship within Israel's growing economy.

Prior to the event, Professor Golany spoke exclusively to the Beaver in an interview where he discussed LSE's links with the Israeli institute, as well as Technion's role in military research and advances in technology.

On his three day visit to London, the former Dean of the Faculty of Industrial Engineering and Management, wanted to gain support for the Technion abroad, upholding its "policy to seek international corroboration with leading institutes and research universities worldwide."

When questioned about Technion's controversial involvement and recent criticism about its creation and design of military technology, Golany responded, "I would brush it aside as nonsense."

Furthermore, he wanted to emphasise the "normal" relationship Technion have with the government in Israel. Golany used the examples of other universities such as the Mas-

sachusetts Institute of Technology and Stanford in the United States as institutions who have "very similar" relations with their respective governments and engage in "research that has potential for military capabilities".

In January this year, Lois Clifton, LSE Students' Union Environment and Ethics Officer, chaired a meeting addressing the issue of the LSE's collaborative role in the Policy Incentives for the Creation of Knowledge: Methods and Evidence (PICK-ME) project, with Technion. The aim of the meeting was to decide whether action should be taken to boycott the scheme.

However, Professor Golany wanted to further develop the relationship between the LSE and Technion stating, "I for one would be very happy to collaborate with professors and students from the LSE."

"Singling the Technion out and the state of Israel is either simple bias or has some other hidden agenda" added Golany. Technion "is in the business of creating knowledge and disseminating knowledge" and Golany wanted to emphasise the other ground-breaking research that has emerged out of the Israeli institute.

In his lecture, Golany spoke of the three Nobel Laureates that have emerged from the Technion in the past three years. Moreover, there has been monumental advancements in medicine with the development of Azilect, a drug that fights the symptoms of Parkinson's disease. In addition, Technion alumni have also been responsible for the construction of a tiny camera used

in virtual colonoscopy procedures along with data compression algorithm found in most smart phones.

The Chair of the meeting, Professor Gwyn Prins is a research professor at the LSE and currently a member of the Chief of Defence Staff's Strategy Advisory Panel. In response to the recent criticism of Technion at the School, Prins stated "some of the more muddled members of this institution have called for a boycott" and dismissed allegations of Technion's involvement in any direct oppressive measures.

Professor Golany also discussed Israel's growing research and development sector and looked at how Jewish culture has helped inspire a new generation of entrepreneurs. While in the US, research and developments accounts for three per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), in Israel, the figure is 4.7 per cent. Similarly, Israel is the global leader in start-up companies even in absolute terms and Intel is the largest foreign investor with the design centre in Haifa boasting around ninety to ninety-five per cent Technion alumni. Professor Golany even suggested that the sticker should read "Israel inside" rather than "Intel inside."

At the end of his talk, Jay Stoll, President of the Jewish Society questioned Golany on Technion's links with Elbit Systems, the Israeli military giant. While Golany stated "I have no moral qualms about that," there are still those who question Technion's involvement in the research and de-

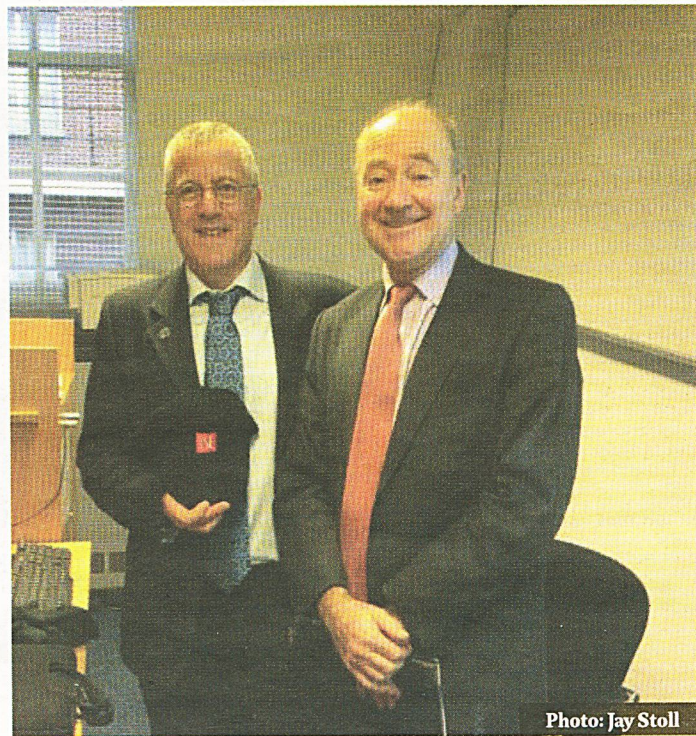


Photo: Jay Stoll

velopment of technology with military capabilities.

Aimee Riese, President of the Israel Society said, "the Israel Society was delighted to host Professor Golany, who demonstrated just how much we rely and benefit from innovations developed from the Technion."

"The Society believes strongly in the rights of academic freedom and against the dangerous agendas of those within our Students' Union advocating academic boycotts. Professor Golany showed how the Technion is a model for coexistence in Israel!" added Riese.

Tomalin explores the life of Dickens

Michael Smithers

As part of last week's Literary Festival, Claire Tomalin, a journalist, and John Carey, Oxford Professor Emeritus, gave a talk entitled 'Charles Dickens: The Best of Men, The Worst of Men' to a crowded lecture hall in honor of the bicentenary year of the author's birth.

The lecture, which was presented by the Royal Society of Literature, explored many aspects of Dickens' life.

Tomalin, the author of the biography "Charles Dickens: A Life," was challenged by Carey who critically analysed the biography, which he described as a "deeply sentimental portrayal" of the author.

According to Tomalin, the "secrets hanging in the air" allowed Dickens to become an unprecedentedly gifted novelist. Tomalin elaborated on the how "the idea that there are these things that are there and not there inspired his writing the most" allowing him to craft complex plot lines and multifaceted characters.

Commenting on Dickens' secretive nature, Tomalin said that Dickens had "only ever confided his secrets in one friend," making it hard to obtain deeply personal information on the writer.

Throughout the lecture, Tomalin often showed a degree of sympathy towards Dickens and tried to give some validation to his mistreatment of his wife and the mother of his children, Catherine Hogarth.

"He wanted the docile wife, one that was safe, one that wouldn't jilt him," Tomalin responded.

To give a better portrayal of his character, Tomalin and Carey turned the discussion to some lesser known facts about Dickens' life.

"Dickens raised money for the street children of London, for the working men and women, just so they could have a chance in life," said Tomalin, who further mentioned Dickens' difficult childhood and the impact it had on his personal beliefs and life's work.

"He stood up for the weak," Carey added, citing both philanthropic evidence and the omnipresent concern with social justice in his novels.

"He did not have the freedom to write without hypocrisy," said Tomalin, referencing the dichotomy between his personal and public persona.

A member of the audience asked whether "Dickens' secretive adult life could be explained by his chaotic childhood?"

Believing that it was too simple an explanation, Tomalin responded saying that, "although his childhood was terrible, it did not explain all of his actions as an adult."

The lecture ended with a reading from the prologue of Tomalin's biography of the author, in which she hoped to capture the "liveliness of Dickens." She highlighted the importance of focusing on the bigger picture when exploring the life of Charles Dickens. Tomalin argued that the weaknesses which Dickens presented when dealing with his wife and family can be better understood when seen within the larger context of his life.

After the applause, Tomalin summed up Dickens into what she assumed to be on of his most repeated mantras: "People must be amused" More than anything, she believes, this was the core of Dickens' character, as evidenced by the timeliness of his work and his ability to pack out an auditorium more than a century after his death.

LSESU
SOCIAL
POLICY
SOCIETY

"A unique series of lectures presenting the finest research and political debates in the social policy domain."

UPCOMING EVENTS

"CRAP JOBS, DISABILITY AND THE WELFARE STATE"

Wednesday 29 February 2012 - 2-3 pm - CON 1.03
Speaker: Dr Ben Baumberg (University of Kent)
Chair: John Macnicol (LSE)

"WHY ARE CHILD CARE WORKERS LOW PAID?"

Tuesday 6 March 2012 - 1-2 pm - TW1 U203
Speaker: Ms Ludovica Gambaro (LSE)
Chair: Dr Kitty Stewart (LSE)

"HAS RISING INCOME INEQUALITIES GHETTOISED THE POOR IN BRITAIN?"

Monday 12 March 2012 - 6.30-8 pm - NAB 2.16
Speaker: Mr Alex Fenton (LSE) and Dr Ruth Lupton (LSE)
Chair: Dr Steve Gibbons (LSE)

"THE LSE SOCIAL POLICY DEPARTMENT: REFLECTIONS AND THOUGHTS FOR THE FUTURE"

Monday 14 March 2012 - 6.30-8 pm - NAB 2.06
Speaker: Professor David Piachaud (LSE)

"YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN THE EUROPEAN UNION: AN OPTIMISTIC FUTURE?"

Thursday 15 March 2012 - 12.00-1 pm - KWS 1.04
Speaker: Mr Luca Scarpello (European Youth Forum)
Chair: Dr Steen Mangan (LSE)

EVENTS OPEN FOR EVERYONE - NO TICKET OR RESERVATION NEEDED

MORE INFORMATION: FIND US ON FACEBOOK - LSESU SOCIAL POLICY SOCIETY OR LSE EVENTS WEBSITE

SOCIAL POLICY MONTH 2012

Wong disqualified from Trustee elections

Sydney Saubestre

Jason Wong was officially disqualified from running for Student Trustee in the Lent Term elections on 27th February. The decision was made in response to a complaint that Wong had posted an antisemitic picture on his 'Jason for LSE Trustee' Facebook group.

Josh Still, the Students' Union Returning Officer, recommended to the Democracy Committee that Wong be disqualified from running in the Lent Term elections for breaching the Students' Union's policy on antisemitism.

The Democracy Committee was inquisitive as several of its members were partaking in the election and the decision was delegated to the four current Trustees, as stipulated by the bylaws. The Trustees "agreed that antisemitic postings such as Jason Wong's have no place in student elections - and that he would be immediately disqualified from the elections."

After breaching two other election rules, Wong was informed that he would be banned from all online campaigning for 48 hours from 9:00pm Friday 24th February and that "any further sanctions would take into account previous persistent rule breaking."

In response, at 9:01pm, Wong posted a photo of the book burnings by the Nazi in Opera Square in 1933. The photo was accompanied by the caption: "the student union has suspended me from campaigning for a 48 hour period effective from 9pm tonight. However, they could not point to a specific rule I have broken from the election guidelines. They are making up the rules as they go along. Campaigning against the sabbatical

officers and the far left, who are the most powerful people in the student union was never going to be easy. But I expected it to be fair at least. I was wrong. Perhaps they are just 'protecting students from the truth'? Book burning by the Nazis in Opera Square, Berlin, 10th May, 1933."

The statement on the Students' Union's website states that "the image likened the actions of the Union and the Returning Officer to book burning by Nazis in the 1930s. It was agreed that the image trivialised the holocaust, something contrary to the Union's antisemitism policy."

Wong's campaign for Trustee, with the slogan "courage to fight," was largely based on "taking the SU back." His campaign included a demand for more transparency in the Students' Union's "£2m budget" and suggested that sabbatical officers should be a voluntary part-time role, saying, "with the £106,000 saved from not having to pay the Sabbs, each undergraduate can receive a £30 credit on their sQuid card." Wong claimed that the Sabbatical Officers have not done anything beyond providing students with "a very expensive microwave," adding that "most students can't name a single thing they've done."

Wong's first manifesto made disparaging comments about "Alex Peters-Day and her buddies," which was in violation of the Students' Union's policy on negative campaigning. The official complaint stated that Wong was "misrepresenting the views of another candidate;" he was asked to amend his manifesto, but further changes were required.

Wong was barred from campaigning for 48 hours when he breached official election rules for the second time by publishing "information about their candidacy to a pre-existing Facebook group."

Wong was previously barred from

running in the Bankside Hall Committee elections due to his "classist and sexist views." Much of Wong's campaigning was done on Facebook, where he posted all of his campaign posters. One poster shows a provocative image of a scantily clad woman in a maid's outfit with the caption "she can clean my toilet for £12, but not the Bankside cleaners." Another poster featured a picture of toast with the caption "Free toasters. Bankside girls for Jason," as well as statements such as "girls love cooking and being in the kitchen," and "girls and toasters - because the bread isn't going to toast itself."

Several students on campus contacted the Beaver raising their concerns over whether he should be allowed to run in the Lent Term elections due to his earlier campaign as well as Facebook comments such as "night before the hardest exam: feel like a Jew waiting to be sent off to the gas chamber."

When asked what disciplinary measures would bar a student from declaring themselves a candidate in the election, Still said, "on the question of the relevance of previous School disciplinary on the eligibility of election candidates - all I could say is that it depends on a case by case basis."

Sherelle Davids, Anti-Racism Officer, is one of the many students who argued that this incident goes beyond student politics: "Jason Wong has made remarks that are sexist, racist and classist this year and it is absolutely correct that he be disqualified from SU elections - however this does not go far enough. This should now be a matter for the school to deal with."

Others pointed out the erroneous facts stated in Wong's campaign. Alex Webley, Vice-President and Secretary of the LGBT Society, said, "he has

also already eloquently demonstrated his incapacity to serve competently as Trustee. His manifesto proposes eliminating Sabbatical Officers and taking the money saved and distributing it back to students. This proposal is not only illegal (owing to the Charities Act), illogical given the Union's debt, and deeply damaging for student control of union affairs - it is also subject to not one, not two, but three errors in basic arithmetic. The role of the Trustee is to act as a steward of our finances and a guardian of our values. On both counts, he fails."

"I believe he should not only be removed from the election process immediately, but should face the severest of Student Union disciplinary sanctions" state Jay Stoll, President of the Students' Union Jewish Society. "It is only until the Student's Union officially stands against this that we can say our Student's Union, as an institution, once again stands with us."

Wong released a statement on his campaign, saying, "I took a strong and unapologetic stance against our massively overpaid Sabbatical Officers, who abuse their positions and student union funding to promote far-left political campaigns. The Students' Union did not like what I was saying and made a decision to shut my campaign down."

Wong further reiterated that he had not breached any campaign rules. However, Still maintained that Wong had not familiarised himself with the rules, such as policies against negative campaigning towards anyone running in the current election and using previously established email list or Facebook groups to campaign, all rules that other candidates adhered to.

The former Trustee candidate said that there was a larger conspiracy at hand: "it was clear that the Student Union was using their powers to un-

dermine my campaign as they didn't like what I had to say. As such, I made a post on my Facebook campaign page to inform supporters of the absurd campaign suspension. I attached a photo of book burning by the Nazis to highlight the sort of dangerous, illiberal and undemocratic behaviour our Student Union is engaging in, by censoring voices of opposition."

At the beginning of the elections, Still mentioned that "RON [Re-Open Nominations] will also be running" in all the elections.

Wong was present at the Elections Results on 1st March, stating that he was running a RON campaign in the Trustee elections, saying "RON will have a very positive result tonight."

Wong was met with dismay from a variety of candidates who were running in the election. Jay Stoll, who was elected to the Democracy Committee and had previously suspended his campaign as long as Wong was allowed to run in the election, confronted Wong, saying, "on behalf of my family, I hope you don't get a single vote in support of your RON campaign."

Joe Anderson, who was also elected to the Democracy Committee in the final round, said that "a vote for RON is not a vote for Wong. I sincerely hope [that] LSE students will continue to reject anti-semitism and misogyny."

After Wong's disqualification there were four students and RON running for four positions. Lukas Slothuus, Diva Vaish and Mehak Adil were elected to be of the three new student Trustees while the final candidate, Rayomand Gilder, was surpassed by RON, which received 212 votes. The election for the final Student Trustee position will take place at an undetermined date.

Czech Prime Minister on Eurozone growth

Zoe Yu Tung Law

Prior to this week's European Union (EU) summit, Czech Prime Minister RNDr Petr Nečas gave a public lecture on "Growth for Europe: Resuscitating the Single Market" at the London School of Economics (LSE), outlining his vision for growth in Europe. The event, part of the European Institute's "APCO Worldwide Perspectives on Europe" series, not only attracted a packed audience, but also international media such as Dow Jones, Reuters and China's First Financial Daily covered the talk.

At the event, Prime Minister Petr Nečas said that the austerity measures in the Eurozone were necessary, but not enough. Having observed a rise of autarky and isolationist policies against the flood of cheap imported goods across Europe, he warned that this could lead to Europe's decline.

Instead, the Czech Prime Minister sees Europe's stability and growth as being dependent on its trade interactions with other major world economies. Therefore, he advocates free trade, increasing competitiveness and diversifying European exports, with particular attention to high quality and high technology industries. Pointing out that successful deals with all leading economies could bring ninety billion euros of annual trade to Europe and also the increasing lack of participation of events such as the Association of Southeast Asian

Nations (ASEAN) summit, he insists that Europe must do more to diversify its industries and trading partners by signing trade agreements with countries such as China, India, Eastern Europe, Canada, Australia and Japan.

"We cannot boost our exports if our goods are not competitive", Nečas stated, condemning the 'tons of EU legislation' that Czech Republic has had to adopt since joining the EU. Nečas called for "radical cuts in bureaucracy" highlighting failed schemes such as the Common Agricultural

Policy that is "subsidising inefficient farms." This includes introducing flexible labour markets and more labour mobility within the EU to increase employment opportunities, and not social security systems or anti-discrimination directives that rigidify labour markets. With the reality of a 'multi-speed Europe', 'a la carte' flexible policies instead of 'one-size fits all' policies and different levels of integration is needed to suit different countries' needs. He also added that copyright regimes regulated and enforced across borders,

with a simplification of licensing procedures, to boost the development of a digital single market.

In addition to liberalisation, Nečas proposes a greater focus on the research and development (R and D) sector, both on a domestic and EU level to increase employment and innovation. More specifically, he spoke of a need to diversify education in line with labour market needs for an R and D based economy. However, reforms to improve education would need to be privately financed by research activi-

ties or students' tuition fees.

Along with David Cameron, Petr Nečas was the only EU Prime Minister that did not sign the fiscal compact. Nečas explained that whilst a fiscal union is necessary for the monetary union's survival, the next step after fiscal union is the formation of a tax union, which he finds "too strange." As it is necessary to sign up the fiscal compact to join the monetary union, he does not see the Czech Republic joining the single currency in the near future.



Flickr User: European Council

DAVID LAWS, MP
12 MARCH 2012
TW1. U8. 7-9PM

LSE STUDENTS'
UNION



**LIBERAL
 DEMOCRATS**

LSE THE LONDON SCHOOL
 OF ECONOMICS AND
 POLITICAL SCIENCE ■

events

“I encourage you to attend LSE’s public events – your chance to hear lectures by prestigious speakers from across the world”

Professor Judith Rees, director, LSE

LSE events are free to attend. To make sure you don't miss out on the next big public lecture follow 'LSEpublicevents' on Twitter, like us on Facebook [facebook.com/lseps](https://www.facebook.com/lseps) or visit lse.ac.uk/events to sign up to our newsletter.



Comment

The politics of genocide

What France's bill on the Armenian genocide reveals about the appalling hypocrisy of international justice

Samira
Lindner



The word "genocide" is not and should not be thrown around carelessly. When we think of genocide, haunting images of the Holocaust, Rwanda or other horrendous atrocities painfully come to mind. Our reaction to this word is an instinctive one of revolt and disdain. As the 1948 United Nations Convention on Genocide defines it, genocide is a series of acts "committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, as such."

However, this word is not only a descriptive term characterising a war crime, it is also a legal term, one that carries with it an international responsibility. A genocide is seen as a crime against all of humanity and thus the UN Convention imposes a duty on its signatory states to "prevent and punish" it. And this is where it gets tricky. The topic of genocide is clearly not a pleasant one to write about. Nevertheless, the use of the term "genocide" is a highly political debate and of great importance for the legitimacy of international community.

The controversial debate in French politics regarding the Armenian genocide is an example of this sensitive debate. In the Armenian genocide, up to 1.5 million Armenians are said to have died in the forced deportation of 1915-1916 from eastern Anatolia to the Syrian

Desert by the Ottoman Turks. A French Bill that makes it a crime to deny that genocide was committed against Armenians was recently passed by Parliament. However, it was surprisingly referred to the French constitutional court. This Bill has had a long history and been the source of major contention both internally and externally as it describes Turkey as "racist" and rules that anyone who denies the Armenian genocide can face incarceration or a fine of nearly £30,000.

The Bill was only a small step away from being signed into law by President Sarkozy when a group of senators suddenly asked the bill to be examined by the constitutional court, which was welcomed by Turkey. Turkey has condemned this Bill for years. Now, with its revival, it has led Turkey to freeze political visits and joint military projects with France. Turkey reacted in a similar way against the USA in 2010 after a congressional committee approved a resolution recognising the atrocities as genocide. President Obama has since then called on the Congress not to act upon this resolution.

Clearly, Turkey is very defensive on this matter. Its position is threefold. Firstly, it claims that the atrocities were not premeditated as they not only killed Christian Armenians but also Muslim Turks. Secondly, the post-Ottoman Turkish republic does not consider itself responsible for the actions of the previous regime. Thirdly, it does not accept such an accusation based on facts it deems questionable.

In my opinion, these are not sustainable points. As a member

of a Kurdish family in Turkey, I am well aware of how the Turkish state treats those that question its strict nationalist narrative. Acknowledging the Armenian genocide would undoubtedly put the actions of the early Turkish republic into question, which is a retrospective gaze

There are around twenty countries that have formally recognised the Armenian case as genocide. The European Parliament and a UN sub-commission have also done so; the recognition of genocide is even a condition for Turkey to enter the EU.

The word "genocide" is not and should not be thrown around carelessly. When we think of genocide, haunting images of the Holocaust, Rwanda or other horrendous atrocities painstakingly come to mind.

that could undermine its nationalist pride. Indeed, Turkey's penal code prosecutes those who "insult Turkishness." Furthermore, the argument that there is no degree of responsibility for actions of past regimes is not an excuse. Just look at how Germany has dealt with its past. I would even argue that handling criticism and negative chapters in history is a key feature of a stable democracy.

Lastly, the accusation of false statistics is also unhelpful as the International Association of Genocide Scholars, a global, non-partisan research organisation, has repeatedly stressed that "it is not just Armenians who are affirming the Armenian Genocide but also the opinion of scholars who study genocide."

The international community is divided on this issue and has been unable to reach a conclusive result.

However, the UK, US, Israel and the UN as a whole have still not done so. The fear is, of course, that key strategic, economic, military and political ties to Turkey will be lost. There is also a general hesitancy towards using the term "genocide" as it may soon become too commonplace. Excessive use could lead to the term losing its legal and symbolic weight.

The international community is, in general, not very homogenous when it comes to the topic of genocide. The Holocaust and Rwanda seem to be the only two cases that are agreed upon. There are some cases that are recognised by certain international bodies. The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) recognises the 1995 massacre at Srebrenica as genocide, while the International Criminal Court has issued an arrest warrant for the President of Sudan

on genocide charges. Then there are less mainstream cases such as the Indonesian invasion of East Timor and the Khmer Rouge killings in Cambodia in the 1970s.

However, there are also those cases that are completely under the radar. As the UN Convention on Genocide catalogue also includes inflicting detrimental life conditions or forcibly transferring children, one could consider Ethiopia's recent state-induced famines or Australia's Stolen Generation (in which children of Aboriginal descent were removed from their families by the state and church missions) as evidence of a premeditated attempt to wipe out parts of the population.

One can also make the case that the UN Convention itself is a source of the problem by being both too narrow and too vague on the matter. On the one hand, it is too specific about what it deems to be genocide. On the other hand, it does not clearly stipulate how to measure intent, how many deaths equal genocide or how and when states are to intervene.

However, I would argue that problem goes beyond the UN Convention itself. I think the true issue is actually that the international community does not abide by the institutionalised, universal rules. Instead, as cynical as this may sound, it abides by the rules of power politics and strategic concerns. No matter how precise or inclusive the Convention could be, states would still pursue their own interests. After all, as we have seen, the decision to label something genocide is essentially not a moral decision but a political one. ☞

Changing focus

Long term austerity plans are not the best solution to the Greek financial crisis

Georgios
Barzoukas



The vibe on Houghton Street this week was fresh, passionate, rhythmic and exotic. As Latin America Week took over campus, the Brazilian, Chilean, Colombian, Mexican and Venezuelan Societies stands replaced the boring, flyer and pen giving JoinUsIfYouWantAJob societies. While listening to live batucada and munching on some mouth-watering Venezuelan arepas, I wondered whether the Hellenic Society should participate in next year's Latin American Week. While the Greek peninsula and its numerous islands have not suddenly moved somewhere off the coast of Guyana, current conditions within Greece resemble that of, say, Argentina in the late 1990s. The nexus of trust between the government and the people has been all but completely lost, people protest in large num-

bers daily rattling empty pots and kettles, while those who are not responsible for the current crisis are the ones who are suffering the consequences of unprecedented austerity measures.

Long-term austerity is not the sane response to fix the Greek economy, it is the appropriate campaigning tool for Angela Merkel and Nicolas Sarkozy to get re-elected.

However, some may feel offended by this comparison. It only took three years for Argentina to return to growth, while Greece is expected to go through the longest recession ever recorded in the 20th century. Colombia, according to the 2011 Corruption Perceptions Index, is considered to be less corrupt than Greece, although surviving a late-night walk through the historic centre of Athens will adequately prepare you for what you might endure and witness in a Rio de Janeiro Favela. While Greeks managed to

avoid the Medieval Dark Ages by being shielded by a prosperous and flourishing Byzantine Empire, it seems that Greece is entering a socio-economic abyss in the 21st century.

Many neoliberalist future-financiers, will argue how austerity is the medicine and how the stubborn-child that is Greece is refusing to take it. However, Greece has so far undergone the most demanding austerity programme ever implemented by a country in the global capitalist era. Greeks have actually taken the medicine, but it is either a placebo, or failing to treat the underlying problem. While hundreds of young Greek primary students are suffering from malnutrition, hundreds of pensioners who

managed to survive both the brutal Nazi occupation and the Greek Civil War, are now homeless and starving. During my last visit to Greece, I could not recognize the country in which I grew up.

The inherent problem in the way that the 'Troika' has tried to address the Greek Crisis stems from the lack of a dual approach in restructuring the Greek economy during this difficult time. While emphasis has been given to implementing horizontal and vertical budget cuts, no attention has been paid in pursuing growth related policies to address the lack of a primary surplus. For the situation to be fixed, Greek and EU policy makers need to take both of these measures into account. Long-term austerity is not the sane response to fix the Greek economy, it is the appropriate campaigning tool for Angela Merkel and Nicolas Sarkozy to get re-elected. I doubt however, whether Merkel and Sarkozy will get re-elected if they have to bail-out French and German Banks, whose cumulative exposure to Greek sovereign debt is just over \$80 billion, should an

unorderly Greek default occur.

With an overall unemployment rate above 20 per cent, youth unemployment soaring over 50 per cent, 20 per cent of Greeks living below the poverty line and no end to the country's current financial mess, Greek society is in for a violent shock, the effects of which will surely be long lasting. Germany followed an equally brutal austerity path during the Weimar Republic; it accepted the medicine that was deemed necessary for Germany to repay its huge World War One debt. The clever among you will probably make the connection between the socio-economic conditions that existed during the interwar period, and the rise of Hitler. This risk is not in any way to be understated given that the extreme far-right party, Golden Dawn, received 2.7 per cent of the voting preferences in the latest election poll in Greece.

There is still time to fix the structural problems with the Greek and Eurozone economies and, hopefully, prevent a global financial meltdown. ☞

Lent Term election results

Reflecting on Results Night and its impact upon our Students' Union

Alec

Webley



Setting the scene

This year, many of the Part Time Officer elections had only one candidate. Only the positions of International Officer and Disabled Officer were contested (the LGBT, Women's, Environment and Ethics, and Anti-Racism were all uncontested). This led to a marked decline in Part-Time Executive campaigns and a stronger focus on Sabbatical positions.

Racism - or accusations of racism - has been a theme of the campaign. Whether it was Jason Wong's singularly unfortunate choice of campaign images, racial epithets scrawled on Mohammad Morley's poster or the focus on racial liberation in many candidates' manifestos, the question of race has been posed again and again over the past two weeks. What's interesting, however, is how few candidates advanced tangible plans to tackle racism beyond firmer enforcement. In light of the racially charged incidents happening this past year (leading to the Interim Director's "granny moment" in the past UGM), this issue isn't going away.

There has been a record number of complaints (twenty) surrounding campaign rules - leading to the disqualification of one candidate and numerous restrictions on candidate's campaigning. Yet, by all accounts, the level of personal animosity has declined markedly compared to last year - campaigning on Houghton Street was more or less respectful even if the Facebook campaigns were slightly less so.

Disqualification of Jason Wong

Perhaps the most controversial event in this election has been the decision to disqualify Jason Wong, a Student Trustee candidate. Wong has been a notorious figure in the LSE Students' Union this year - his candidacy for Treasurer of Bankside House Committee in Michaelmas

Term was ended when he used sexist posters to campaign, a scandal that saw the Students' Union dramatically increase its involvement in Halls elections. Undeterred, Wong ran for Trustee of the Union on a platform that was directly targeted at Alex Peters-Day and "her cronies" (his words), promising to eliminate paid Sabbatical positions altogether.

Unfortunately for Wong, his campaign maintained both the same confrontational publicity style that marred his earlier campaigns and his unfortunate penchant for responding to sanctions for unacceptable behaviour by behaving even more unacceptably.

Thus, when he pledged to campaign against Peters-Day, he was sanctioned for personal attacks; upon being sanctioned for personal attacks he produced a poster that compared his "censorship" to book burnings undertaken by the Nazis. After a recommendation from Returning Officer Josh Still, the Board of Trustees eliminated Jason from the race.

Interestingly, the elimination might not have mattered. Under the Students' Union's rules, the Board of Trustees can do almost anything except eliminating the Sabbs or cutting (or raising, for that matter) their pay. But had Wong remained on the ballot he would almost certainly have been elected, since only four candidates were running for four positions on the Board. With his disqualification, the Board must hold elections for another Trustee in the next academic year.

First tranche of candidates

Mohammad Harrath was the winner of the Anti-Racism election, though with an unusually high number of RON votes. Harrath was something of a surprisingly uncontested candidate since, until right before nominations closed, all signs indicated that Jewish Society President Jay Stoll would have run as well. Jay withdrew from the race owing to personal illness, leaving Harrath uncontested for the position.

Harrath has a substantial year ahead of him - his position is proposed to be transformed into an "Anti-Racism and Anti-Facism Of-

ficer" accompanied by a new "Black Minority Ethnic Officer" in a motion that will be considered next week. He'll need all the help he can get: with a large number of racial incidents in the past year (which, rumour has it, enraged the incoming Director of the School, Craig Calhoun), anti-racism campaigning is going to be central to the LSE Students' Union next year.

Another curiously uncontested election, given the centrality of ethics to the Students' Union's campaigning, but Naomi Russell was, it seems, a consensus choice for the job. I wonder if she knows that, if all goes according to plan, she'll be stuck on the School's ethics committee all of next year?

John Peart won the election uncontested, though with a large number of RON votes. This is quite a comeback for John, who received the lowest number of votes in last year's LGBT Officer elections (though his second preference votes were instrumental in the election of the eventual winner, Benjamin Butterworth). He will also inherit a portfolio in considerable flux, as the LGBT campaign at the LSE is due to be substantially revised as of Week 9!

Alice Stott is the elected Women's Officer. She also ran uncontested and a low number of RON votes were cast. Stott was another consensus choice; the absence of contest in her election has made her not subject to much scrutiny. That said, based on the sexist attacks on Alex Peters-Day this election and the Beaver's Rape-JokeGate affair, she clearly has a big job ahead of her this coming year.

Democracy Committee, Student Trustees, AU

Jay Stoll, Sherelle Davids, Hassan Arif, Rachel Quah, Joe Anderson were all elected for the Democracy Committee. Jay Stoll is the UGM chair.

This is an interesting outcome for the Democracy Committee - in many ways, it shows STV at its finest as candidates with very different bases of electoral support were each elected. But almost no candidates actively campaigned in this election except Joe Anderson, probably because most of the candidates were campus notables.

Jay Stoll has been a former UGM Vice-Chair, and will become the UGM Chair under the Union by-laws. Stoll has very firm views on DC's most controversial decision to disqualify Jason Wong from the Trustee election, so the Union's stance on illegitimate campaigning is unlikely to change.

Lukas Slothuus, Diva Vaish, and Mehak Adil were elected as Student Trustees, but RON won the remaining seat (accompanied by lots of boos). The RON campaign came from Jason Wong, who had been disqualified from the Trustee race, and will trigger a special election at an "unspecified time." As is the nature of special elections, it is likely to be far more stuffed with candidates than this unusually uncompetitive Student Trustee race. Slothuus comes with considerable experience as a Trustee - he served as the Community and Welfare Officer, a member of the Board, this past year.

AU Executive

It's important to remember that this is the only election which is decided by community voting - only AU members are able to vote.

Jack Curtis, Steph Moffat, Rob Martin, Hannah Richmond and George Melhuish were all successful in their bids for AU Exec. Notably, the two LGBT Society endorsees were the most successful AU Exec candidates. This is a fairly diverse committee - three men and two women - but the real question in an AU Exec election is who gets what portfolio, and that will only be decided once the President is elected.

International Officer and Community and Welfare Officer

The winner of the race for International Officer was Diana Yu with 671 votes, while her opponent Jan Ladzinski received 585 votes.

Few elections presented as stark a contrast as this one. Diana Yu promised to be an International Officer much along the lines of incumbent Hannah Geis, focused on providing intercultural programming while focusing advocacy on School-relevant policy. Jan Ladzinski, a charter member of the Student Socialist Worker Society, has promised an

exclusive focus on broader political campaigns, especially on the Israel-Palestine Question (though he has also promised a few things to do with timetables).

The election of Diana promises to keep the International Students Officer working largely on the same lines.

The winner of the race for Community and Welfare Officer was Jack Tindale with 832 votes, while his opponent Rosina St James received 637 votes. Unusually in this cycle, there were three candidates in this election and each mounted at least a nominal campaign.

Pallavi Bansal, by all accounts, was the least active campaigner and is an unsurprising third place finisher. A perennial candidate, Bansal ran on a campaign of vague slogans and skipped more than one of the hustings. However, later in the election, many supporters of Rosina St James endorsed Bansal as their number two, suggesting that the combined votes of the two candidates could overturn Tindale.

Rosina St James, current President of the African-Caribbean Society, ran a campaign emphasising her work in welfare promotion for young people and stressed the need to improve the quality of mental health resources. She ran a large, assertive campaign with a gimmick of "Roses" and, while being the candidate of the Left faction, she attracted support from societies across the political spectrum.

Jack Tindale, an extremely experienced DC member and three-time UGM Chair, ran a campaign that emphasised minority protection and non-discrimination, as well as substantial improvement to conditions in Halls. Tindale has promised firm support for community voting, an initiative in which he participated, and had an unusually leftist platform while attracting strong support from the Centre faction. His campaign used the tagline, "Keeping your Union Ship-shape" with a vaguely nautical-cum-piratical theme.

AU President and Activities and Development Officer

The winner of the race was Matt



Photo: Harry Burdon

De Jesus with 802 votes, while his opponent Damini Onifade received 796 votes (very, very close!)

This was a two-candidate race between Damini Onifade and Matt de Jesus (after Carola Precht withdrew owing to personal illness), two very different candidates with very different resumes and sources of support.

Onifade was an Activity Executive member and a former member of Timeless, the major student theatrical production, as well as a previous African Caribbean Society President who focused on providing more diverse kinds of support (beyond "just money") to societies.

By contrast, de Jesus focused on his AU constituency, promising closer integration of sport with the Students' Union at large. He also pledged to fight against homophobia and discrimination within the Students' Union and particularly the AU. De Jesus ran an especially strong campaign by all accounts and his election could be telling as to the AU's voting turnout in this election.

However, what this election lacked was politics - while De Jesus identified with the Centre faction and Onifade with the Left, both candidates received strong support from the "opposition," if you will. Many society leaders, while expressing a preference for one candidate or another, were of the opinion that either would make a fine Activities and Development Officer.

The winner of the race for AU President was Nicole Matteer with 593 votes. One of the most competitive elections of the year, the AU Presidency was a race between three very different candidates, each with different visions for the Athletics Union.

Nicole Matteer ran on a platform that emphasised the ability of the AU President to engage in progressive campaigning work to improve the climate of the AU while further integrating the AU into the wider Students' Union.

Matt Stimson ("There's a Matt for That"), by contrast, focused on internal AU resources, promising a

full-time AU director and improvement of media relations on the part of the AU. His equality platform empathised a "buddy system" for first-year athletes. Matt seemed to be the underdog in this race.

Ben Johnson ("Give your AU a BJ") represented something of a balance between the views of his two fellow candidates and, with Nicole, was seen as one of the two front-runners.

Most notably, all three candidates have made quite a bit of noise about the AU-LGBT pledge and similar diversity initiatives; the Nazi Ski Trip Incident has clearly taken its toll on the race. This was also, by and large, an "apolitical" election, but this reporter thinks it's not a bad thing that a woman is leading the AU after many, many years of male Presidents.

Disabled Students Officer

Sophie Newman was elected. This has been a contested race, but has largely existed outside the political discourse surrounding the other elections. It was general opinion that either candidate would be acceptable ("Ah, she's all right," said my colleague).

Education Officer and General Secretary

The winner of Education Officer was Duncan McKenna with 845 votes. A deeply political election pitted current Environment and Ethics Officer Lois Clifton with the Beaver's ex-Executive Editor Duncan McKenna (full disclosure: in case you haven't noticed, this is a Beaver article. Rest assured that any institutional bias in favour of McKenna has been balanced, in the case of this writer, by the same persistent inability to put this writer's name on the Collective list).

Lois Clifton has long expressed interest in the Education portfolio, but Duncan was something of a surprise candidate. Here, more than any other election, voters were presented with the fundamental question of our Students' Union: should it be a campaigning entity focused on social

progress, pro-Palestine activism, and demonstrations? Or should it be a local government, focused on school-specific policies that directly affect the lives of students?

Lois' campaign attempted to bridge this divide, emphasising the connection between social justice campaigning work and improving the student educational experience. Duncan, by contrast, emphasised "ordinary students" in his election campaign.

While this election was politically polarised, Lois attracted substantial cross-over support on the strength of her past work as Environment and Ethics Officer. She may have lost support, however, owing to her expressly leftist campaigning slogan. In general, the student body at LSE is fairly conservative - we are the School that produced Hayek, after all - but these more conservative students are less likely to vote. Both candidates worked hard on Houghton Street, though Lois had a stronger online campaign. Duncan is something of a surprise winner, and what a surprise it was.

The winner of General Secretary was Alexandra Peters-Day with 902 votes. Easily the most contested election of the evening, this was a race between the clear Centre nominee, Alex Peters-Day (the incumbent) and the Left nominee Mohammed Morley.

Alex Peters-Day was running for re-election, largely on the premise that her major projects (the New Students Centre, the unpaid internships campaign, the new Director and similar hires, and other initiatives) required two years to be completed. Her hustings emphasised the unusually delicate state of the School's transition to new leadership and (predictably) the need for steady leadership at this time. In other words, the classic "don't change horses in the middle of the stream" platform.

Her run as an incumbent was severely complicated, however, by political developments in the early Lent Term. In particular, her standing

with the Left Faction (which uniformly endorsed her in her first run for General Secretary) sustained severe damage when she chose to take a more moderate stance on the Nazi Drinking Game incident (largely on due process grounds) and condemn both sides in the latest Israel-Palestine clash on Houghton street.

This led to a remarkable situation where a General Secretary went into a re-election campaign without the public support of the faction which was instrumental in her election. In particular Sabbatical Officers Lukas Slothuus and Robin Burrett worked very hard for her opponent, the challenger Mohammad Morley, leading, in the views of some, to paralysis in the Sabb office during the campaign.

Morley, a former candidate for Activities and Development Officer who narrowly lost his election last year, emphasised in his platform a desire to use the General Secretaryship to campaign against racism, sexism, and homophobia, as well as to promote tolerance and intercultural dialogue. The need for this kind of work was highlighted as the campaign was rocked by various discriminatory posters circulated about both candidates. In the case of Morley, a poster in High Holborn was defaced by a racial epithet; in the case of Peters-Day, a number of sexist "LSE Memes" circulated in a campaign alleged by some to originate from Jason Wong, the disqualified Trustee candidate.

Remarkably for such a divided election, both candidates had broadly similar platforms, differing largely in emphasis. As policies converged, questions of character and emphasis became critical. Typically, General Secretaries running for re-election are successful in their bid. However, Peters-Day had to rely on entirely new bases of support (both politically and demographically, as her class has graduated this year). She does possess a much stronger name recognition than in her first bid but the fact that her opponent mobilised supporters from an old campaign, caused this election to be totally up

in the air. Peters-Day's last election is also unhelpful as her opponent, former Postgraduate Officer Daniel Kroop, drew support mostly from Masters students who voted solely according to his presence in the race. Incumbents also traditionally receive less of an advantage in student elections than might be supposed as many voters choose to "give someone else a turn."

Closing thoughts

This was an extraordinary election - extraordinary by any measure. This is a re-aligning election in which not one, but four centrist candidates have won positions. To external observers, it has previously been a truth universally acknowledged that the candidates of the Left Faction almost always win - especially for the top Sabbatical positions. Today, that logic has been turned on its head as all centre candidates take office for the next year. We ought not read too much into this result, however. Each victory was fairly narrow, often by a matter of five votes. RON transfers decided two different elections. However, the results of this election show that the left faction's star has begun to set, and the centre's star has begun to rise.

The four new Sabbs come to a campus riven by severe divisions: Israel-Palestine disputes continue to percolate; racism is widespread; student satisfaction ratings for teaching have been low; and ethics reform has yet to be completed. It is also likely that the losing faction will not take its exile into the wilderness lightly - Clifton has already promised to "challenge" elected officer McKenna as the year progresses. Most worryingly of all, student engagement with the Students' Union has continued to be anaemic. Voting turnout remained low and the UGM has been desolate. Most students simply do not care about their Students' Union. This must change if the realignment we saw tonight is to be sustained. Will our Sabbs be successful in meeting these challenges? Only time will tell. ☘

The triumph of reason

Why we should look forward to "a year of real promise ahead"

Sam Barnett



chance of making a lasting difference for us because of an ideological shift made possible by this result. Quite simply, they will put campus first. They will apply common sense and elbow grease to LSE issues, and deal

the inevitable dictatorship of the proletariat. As I see it, anti-cuts rhetoric means more when it isn't simply a vehicle for bashing capitalism, but a reflection of the pain and damage being done to normal people.

academic year have been the work of people acting stupidly. Check the facts: even the antisemitic assault at Val D'Issere was more dumb than sinister. Honestly, the pressure cooker/controversy-of-the-day atmosphere at LSE, and the desire some people have to use daft incidents to make themselves look good, may well be far more part of the problem than the solution. Scaling back this culture will be a step in the right direction.

Bringing together our fractured community is possibly the biggest challenge any Sabb team faces and has been beyond most. Whether this year will be different I hesitate to say, but what I will say is that moderates have a distinct advantage here. Unlike far-leftists, they do not thrive on controversy and adversarial politics, but on consensus. The AU will be brought back into the fold, instead of dismissed as a bunch of reactionaries who play racist games.

Students will be reached out to about more than just sticking it to the man. We will not be treated to the spectacle of an International Students Officer prepared to alienate and campaign against sections of the student body simply because their native governments go against "solidarity." In short, we just may learn to get along a little better. There is a year of real promise ahead, and I for one am proud to have been involved in the triumph of reason. ☘

They will apply common sense and elbow grease to LSE issues, and deal with national issues as and when they arise, not the other way around. Unbound by dogma, they will not blame each and every difficulty on cuts and David-bastard-Willetts.

with national issues as and when they arise, not the other way around. Unbound by dogma, they will not blame each and every difficulty on cuts and David-bastard-Willetts. Moderate Sabbs will apply practical solutions first and protest only when they have to. They will Occupy the Kingsley Rooms and the Quad, instead of MPs offices. When they march, it will be up and down Houghton Street to ask what students want to be done. This will not only mean that more can be achieved in and around the LSE, but crucially that when they strike, demonstrate or campaign, it will have weight to it. Furthermore, students beside the usual suspects will come out when a moderate SU calls them to the barricades, because they will know the protest is for them and their interests, rather than a step towards

The racism question seems to come back every few weeks here (and indeed will be back soon, if the rumours from High Holborn are true). It needs addressing. In this field, too, I believe we will benefit from a change of emphasis in the Students' Union. Officers of the broad left tend to meet this issue with much sound and fury, and treat these incidents as symptomatic of a deep, thoroughgoing general racism on campus. This is simply not a fair reflection of one of the single most diverse and tolerant Universities on the planet. I expect our new officers to be swift and stern in punishing LSE students found to have acted like bigots, but I also expect a lighter touch and a reduction in the degree of hysteria surrounding these incidents.

Most of the controversies this

As the final SU election results were announced, the mood in some quarters bordered on euphoric. Alex Peters-Day's re-election as General Secretary, by the narrowest of margins, capped off the surprise sweep of the Sabbatical positions by broadly moderate candidates. This is a rare occurrence indeed, and provides the LSE with a practically unparalleled opportunity.

This year's Sabb team of P-Day, Duncan McKenna, Jack Tindale and Matthew De Jesus will all be singing from broadly the same hymn sheet. They have a mandate to support each other in making our Students' Union work. Once the euphoria has worn off and they take their desks, it will be incumbent on them to use their collective weight to bring our community closer together, improve the student experience and deal once and for all with campus racism. While they will no doubt be ably assisted by the Part-Time Executive, the buck will most definitely start and stop with them. After all, they will be getting money that could be on our sQuid cards.

This SU team has a realistic

Want to send us a comment?

Are you outraged by something you've seen in this paper and interested in responding?

You can write about anything, from happenings at LSE, to events further afield.

Contact us by email:

comment@thebeaveronline.co.uk

OILgarch in exile or defender of democracy?

Discussing the current political situation in Russia in light of Berezovsky's lecture at the LSE

**Ekaterina
Daminova**



Boris Berezovsky, a Russian businessman, mathematician, member of Russian Academy of Sciences and a former government official in the Duma kindly accepted the invitation of LSE Students' Union Russian Business Society to deliver a lecture in which he expressed his views on a current political situation in Russia. I will outline his speech and analyse his view of Putin and the state of Russian democracy.

To put this into context, Boris Berezovsky supported Vladimir Putin in the elections in 2000 but, as soon as Putin became President, their political views clashed and Berezovsky sought political asylum in the UK. Berezovsky explained his emigration: "I did not want to be involved in the country's ruin and the restoration of an authoritarian regime." From his new home in London, Berezovsky has become a highly influential person among the émigré Russians (mainly those who have fled "Putin's repressions" and criminal prosecutions). In the press, Berezovsky has been regularly mentioned as a "Russian-Jewish oligarch" fleeing "the Mafia state." For his supporters, he is a defender of Russian democracy. His anti-Putin propaganda is highly relevant now due to Putin's participation in the presidential elections for the third term.

In sum, Berezovsky's speech was a critique of Putin's regime. In 2000, a Berezovsky-owned TV channel heavily criticized Putin after the tragedy of submarine Kursk. When Berezovsky first made claims that Russia made a step back when Putin took power, nobody took his warnings into consideration. Putin's image

of a saviour helped him to gain huge influence. Now, Berezovsky's claims receive more solidarity as it is clear that, in Russia, there is no chance for the opposition to survive because Putin wipes out anybody who tries to resist him. Even one of the most powerful candidates for this week's elections, and Berezovsky's favourite candidate, billionaire Mr Prohorov, whose agenda is modernisation and transition to market economy, is in fact another Kremlin puppet, a powerless surrogate.

When people argue that they chose to vote for Putin on March 4th because he is the only decent candidate, they forget that it is Putin who created such a situation. Putin frightens people by saying that the country is on the brink of an abyss and, if he leaves, there is no chance of escape. However, he is the one responsible for the collapse. A transition to democracy is inevitable and no doubt it is going to be painful. It will be even bloodier if Putin stays in power longer.

The collapse of the USSR was sudden and unexpected and it gave people freedom they never dreamed of. That freedom was cheap and largely unappreciated because the system destroyed itself without any external influence. Freedom only has value when you fight for it. During the years of Putin's rule, people started recognising that their liberties were stolen. A new generation of Russians who are free of prejudice has been born, and they will not tolerate the hypocrisy of the regime. This new generation is impossible to stop and they have already started their fight. Kremlin was peaceful and dormant until demonstrations roared through Moscow in December and January. Berezovsky describes recent events in Moscow as a revolution: a change to a more effective society, which is self-organised rather than controlled from the top.

Berezovsky also admitted that he has supported the Orange Revolution

in Ukraine and wants to see all post-Soviet countries become true liberal democracies. Sadly, all his attempts are ineffective against the system. Russia is the heart, the core, the most dominant of those countries and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) cannot achieve success unless changes take place in Russia.

His speech was indeed very emotionally charged and full of accusations towards the Russian current Prime Minister with claims that Russia is a "great country." He put the emphasis of his argument on ideology as the main factor that will lead Russia to a bright, democratic future. Without any doubt, Russia is a "great country, with a lot of potential" and Russians have their "own unique mentality and character" and they will fight their way to freedom and happiness, but haven't we already heard those clichés?

Berezovsky was questioned whether it was Russia's gigantic income inequality that prevents the emergence of a large middle class, which could perhaps assist the transition towards a more democratic state. According to his answer, the small group of oligarchs who have acquired their fortunes through criminal activity has nothing to do with the current political situation in Russia. It is a "question of the chicken and the egg" whether the economic prosperity of the average citizen leads to democracy or whether democracy leads to prosperity and adequate standards of living. Berezovsky advised Russian citizens that we should forget the mistakes of the past (should we also forgive the billions stolen from Russia?) and fight against Putin to enjoy the freedom of a democratic society.

When the words "Russian oil

exports" were mentioned in the discussion, Mr Berezovsky replied, "I don't know anything about that." That was an unexpected answer, given Mr Berezovsky's expertise in the industry. He used to have shares in oil company Sibneft, which he and Mr Abramovich purchased below the market price at what some believe to have been an illegally conducted auction. Later Abramovich "betrayed" and "intimidated" Berezovsky into selling shares in Sibneft for a "mere \$1.3bn," when Abramovich received \$13 billion for the deal.

It is very hard to point out the culprit of Russia's miseries. According to Putin, the corrupt bureaucrats and greedy oligarchs are the source of the evil. However, Berezovsky, the "oligarch in exile," blames Putin. Let God be true, and every man a liar. ☹



Flickr user: Gaeser

Blind trials and sensitive information

Why we should fear the Justice and Security Green Paper

**Adam
Thompson**



Government proposals to dramatically increase the number of trials held in secret, in which parties can see only minimal evidence being relied upon by the Court, have been fiercely criticised by Special Advocates – the solicitors and barristers who would be at the heart of the new procedure. In this article, I argue that the Justice and Security Green Paper should be a cause of concern for all in a liberal democracy as an attack on liberty and foundational principles of open justice.

A brief background to these proposals sheds some light on the government's motivation. Last year, the British government agreed to settle the case of Binyamen Mohamed (and fifteen others) amid claims that it was complicit in the rendition, torture and detention of British citizen Mohamed at Guantánamo Bay. Justice Secretary, Ken Clarke, said that the claimants had to be paid off because the only way of defending the case would have

been to disclose intelligence-related material to the claimants, which would have jeopardised the arrangements under which such material is shared with the US. Then, in July last year, the Supreme Court ruled that in the absence of clear statutory authority, the government could not withhold evidence in a civil trial. This statutory authority is what the government now seeks, in the nascent form of the Justice and Security Green Paper.

These proposals threaten to undermine the justice system because they run counter to our understanding of a common law, adversarial trial which looks for facts on the balance of probabilities.

The crucial concern in this paper is the proposal to make closed material procedures (CMPs) available in all civil proceedings, not just those involving national security. Under this procedure, sensitive evidence is withheld from both the party whom it concerns and their legal team. The court and a Special Advocate will then see the evidence, with the latter given the unenviable task of representing the other side's interests without

revealing what the evidence says.

By opening up the availability of CMPs to all civil proceedings, the Secretary of State would be delegated the responsibility of certifying whether "certain relevant sensitive material would cause damage to the public interest." This term is left vague, and seemingly could range from international relations through to the commercial sphere in which the government has no direct interest.

These proposals threaten to undermine the justice system because they run counter to our understanding of a common law, adversarial trial which looks for facts on the balance of probabilities. Indeed, by withholding evidence at the behest of the Secretary of State, one loses the key probative aspect of a trial: that is to show the value of evidence by proving that it can withstand challenge. Without any scrutiny, damning evidence

could be easily misled. Dinah Rose QC, who acted for Mohamed, has also expressed her concern over the potential law: "It troubles me that the government can propose in this way, without any controversy and little fear of contradiction, to legislate for a secret process so alien to our judicial system."

What this potential legislation amounts to is the claim that a government minister is better placed to strike the balance between material which would cause damage to the public interest and the need to ensure fairness through open justice. Indeed, this is currently a judicial task and through over fifty years of case law the principles of public interest immunity have been eked out, most recently reflected in Lord Rodger's commentary in the Guardian News and Media Ltd [2010] that such principles should be departed from "only in the most compelling circumstances." The 90-page Green Paper exemplifies no such example, preferring such vagaries as withholding "certain relevant sensitive material would cause damage to the public interest."

As highlighted above, the Green Paper was drafted following allegations of British complicity in torture and rendition of its own citizens.

Torture is an international crime and it is essential therefore that any evidence of this is subject to scrutiny, not merely thrown out through fear of costly claims.

Indeed, in 2009, a report of the Special Rapporteur on counter-terrorism and human rights cited the United Kingdom as one of the states in which the "increasing use of State secrecy provisions and public interest immunities... to conceal illegal acts from oversight bodies or judicial authorities, or to protect itself from criticism, embarrassment and - most importantly - liability" gave cause for concern.

It is imperative, therefore, that our liberal democracy refrains from using the guise of "sensitive material" to protect it from concealing wrongdoing. To be sure, it is hard to imagine how, under the current proposals, we (and, of course, the media) would have known about British collusion in torture, such as in Mohamed's case - knowledge of which, I think everyone would agree, is most certainly in the public interest. ☹

art

6 March 2012



letlive. | **Alighiero Boetti** | **WikiLeaks** | John Carter | **Made in Chelsea** |
Open City | Azealia Banks | **What Would Helen Mirren Do?** | **Wanderlust**

Contact

PartB Editor

Aameer Patel

partb@thebeaveronline.co.uk

* * *

Fashion Editor

Louise Kang

partb-fashion@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Film Editor

Venessa Chan

partb-film@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Food Editor

Max Jenkins

partb-food@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Literature Editor

Rachel Holmes

partb-literature@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Music Editor

Ankur Vora

partb-music@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Theatre Editors

Rory Creedon

Hannah Payne

partb-theatre@thebeaveronline.co.uk

TV Editor

Rasha Al-Dabagh

partb-tv@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Video Games Editor

Hassan Dar

partb-videogames@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Visual Arts Editor

Shyam Desai

partb-visualarts@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Design Editor

Aameer Patel

partb-design@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Web Editor

Angie Moneke

partb-web@thebeaveronline.co.uk

* * *

Cover

Summer Storm 2012

By Camilla Hayselden-Ashby

of the LSESU Visual Arts Society

PartB uses pictures from Flickr that have been issued under a Creative Commons license.



Rock star: the greatest but very different

We talk to Jason Aalon Butler, frontman of post-hardcore LA band letlive., about history, histrionics and highest states of enjoyment.

Rock stars – they're all groupie-loving, drug-snorting, overtly arrogant supernovas with spray-on trousers and sunglasses so permanent they probably no longer own a pair of actual eyes, right? Wrong.

On first impressions, if one bright pink Hawaiian garland, a dropped box of cookies, and a very unassuming greeting are anything to go by, you'd be forgiven for wondering exactly why letlive. (not a grammatical error, although there is a huge amount of pedantry surrounding the styling-of the band's name) vocalist Jason Aalon Butler topped Kerrang! Magazine's recent countdown of "The 50 Greatest Rockstars in the World Today."

On second impressions however, there's something extremely endearing about Butler, distinguishing him from so many of his image-driven counterparts. The 26-year-old's excitement to be part of 2012's Kerrang! Tour alongside pop-punk giants New Found Glory, Welsh rockers The Blackout and UK newcomers While She Sleeps is infectious.

"It's been highly enjoyable," he says. "I love the UK! We've been with a group of people – bands, crew and people we've come into contact with throughout the tour – that are delightful," he beams. "It seems as though everyone's got the right idea about what it means to be in a band and why we're here."

Talking to the West Hollywood-native is like taking a crash course in linguistics, and it becomes immediately clear why he has been heralded as post-hardcore's saviour. In one remarkably articulate breath, Butler swiftly moves from commending me on my soon-to-be-completed degree in history to hover confidently on the edge of postmodernism and shed light on the meaning behind the band's latest album, *Fake History*.

"*Fake History* was my own effort to elucidate alternative realities – not so much in a psychosomatic or in metaphysical weird realms," he explains. "But more just in the ideas that are imparted to a culture and then what has really happened."

"This spans a very large diagram," he continues in a tone reminiscent of Black Flag legend Henry Rollins, "from history itself, there's a lot of contradiction and a lot of alternate realities that we haven't been told or haven't been privy to – yet."

The son of 70s soul rock artist Aalon Butler – who backed British singer-songwriter Eric Burdon among other worthy endeavours – Jason Aalon Butler clearly isn't today's typical post-hardcore frontman. Mostly in the form of Glassjaw and Refused-style flattery, numerous comparisons are thrown at letlive. but such bids to pigeon-hole the LA troupe fall short at their subtle jazz and soul-inspired undertones.

"I think most influential for me would be the idea of soul in music," says Butler. "I grew up with soul, hip-hop, R&B, rock soul – my father played music and that was his genre of choice. I think anything that sort of provides a sentience (that's what I like to call it) or feeling – anything with soul inspires me."

Upon mention of his relationship with his father, Butler is quick to dispel any inferred animosity between the two and displays an unexpectedly cautious approach for someone fronting one of America's hottest progressive hardcore outfits. "Before, I was a little in the dark on how he felt about it all, simply because I know that his experience with it [music] wasn't the most ideal – in the end at least," he recalls.

"Recently we've spoken and I'd like to dispel the notion that I have this grudging feeling towards my father, which is not the case. I want to thank him and any mistakes he's made will actually help me with what I'm doing now."

Since forming in 2002, letlive. have already undergone an exceptionally irregular amount of line-up reshuf-



letlive. in concert, July 2011

fles, leaving Butler the only remaining founding member of the band. Despite this, the band is by no means simply The Jason Aalon Butler Show. Completing the line-up, drummer Anthony Rivera, guitarists Jeff Sahyoun and Jean Nascimento, and bassist Ryan Jay Johnson bring equal measures of originality to the table.

After a year of non-stop touring throughout mainland Europe and across the US, it seems the five-piece have finally found a set-up which creatively, works extremely well. "We all play various instruments," says Butler. "We all grew up with music so we always bring different parts into the sessions, and we've been doing that since we dropped *Fake History*."

A quality that comes to life during tonight's performance, when Butler leaves the stage mid-set only to return like some seasoned guitar god, strumming a slaughterous air rifle like he's caught in the middle of a warzone.

During tonight's set, it becomes clear how letlive. are single-handedly saving the post-hardcore scene from the clutches of a social-media driven, over-manipulated industry. letlive. as a collective effort is not just confined to the band itself, but transcends to its listeners – a complex Butler actively pursues through his writing process.

"Your best bet is to draw from experience and then with that you become a forum, or you become – it sounds clichéd – a vessel for others, if you're lucky," he explains.

"With that, if you do it right and you're honest about it, consequently you evoke these things and the provocation is inevitable in others, and I guess that's kind of what we hope to do – make people feel something before they focus on what they're listening to."

The letlive. experience is very much an emotional one. Known on the music circuit for their raucous live shows, like a modern-day Jekyll and Hyde, tonight brings to life both sides of Jason Aalon Butler: the intellectual versus the visceral. Passion in fact ran so high during an earlier appearance during the Southampton leg of the tour, that Butler found himself completing the band's set hanging from the balcony – an incident which saw letlive. virtually kicked off the circuit by angered promoters SJM Concerts.

"I guess we sort of gave the people what was expected, but for some reason there was a breach in the confines that were implied," he explains. "I didn't know that we had any sort of rules to abide by, so we got some static but we worked it out and we're back on the tour."

Regardless, letlive. refuse to hold back during tonight's set, which sees Butler continue to use the sound system as a climbing frame, savagely gallivanting across the stage with what looks like an empty bin, to emerge just short of an hour later blood-soaked and drained.

US independent label Epitaph Records rarely get it wrong when it comes to poaching new talent – and their 2011 signings certainly prove no exception. It is a relationship Butler feels indebted to be a part of. "It was very ambitious for a band like us to think we could sign to a label like that, simply because the integrity they hold, and the history they hold and the reverence that they have, it's just almost overwhelming – it's something that is so ideal and so perfect, it's almost too good to be true," he grins. "That pipe dream has been realised, we have signed and we're very happy, lucky and grateful to be a part of that team, that family."

Credibility plays a central role in the band's music, and such a vow to stay true to their art is evident in both their studio recordings and live performances. It is refreshing to see a band so genuinely grateful to be gaining such ardent recognition amongst both critics and peers.

"In the end, the sort of gratification that we get is that people care and so my pride and satisfaction comes from knowing that it does something for someone, so thank you for that compliment, and thank anyone that watches it and cares."

Butler is both sweetly astounded and again, extremely taken aback at the sight of a huddle of overly eager, sleeping bag-laden teenage fans propping up the front of a rapidly-growing queue, an impressive three whole hours before the start of tonight's show. "A lot of the bands I grew up seeing played really small venues," says Butler, "so I never had to queue or do that whole thing – I just turned up."

Following a year of relentless touring, which saw the band make appearances at 2011's Download and Reading and Leeds festivals, quickly followed by

a European tour supporting Your Demise and Enter Shikari, letlive. are noticeably delighted to be back on UK soil.

"It may seem biased, simply because we do have some sort of strange abundance of fervour from friends and fans, if you will," Butler explains, "but that aside, from humour to style, art and etiquette, we get a lot of it from the UK so it's cool to see where the derivation really lies."

Unlike bands caught at the more corporate end of the music spectrum, letlive. bring a refreshing sense of exploration back to overseas touring. "Even within England itself, the people are just so different," he observes. "It's very interesting to observe that and not be as ignorant as I once was, maybe five years ago before we came over here."

Although they would love to return to the UK festival circuit this summer, Butler and his bandmates are cautious not to outstay their welcome on European shores. "We really want to, but we don't want to wear out our welcome here so we'll wait a little bit and we'll come back on a smaller headline run hopefully, and just have fun."

Such restraint together with an intrinsic need to attain the highest state of enjoyment are at the core of what makes letlive. so exciting. It also goes without saying that he is thrilled to be "understood" by UK crowds – Butler takes a breath during tonight's set to thank the astounding numbers who seem to "get" what they're all about. "I can say that we've felt a very high sense of reciprocity as far as the energy and the involvement. We put ourselves out there as much as we can, and we seem to get a considerable amount back from the people so we're very grateful."

The fact that letlive. attempt to open avenues for as many people as possible is commendable. Change is never easy – the endless hassle and a never-ending backlash of kicks to the face. For letlive. however, the pursuit of "change" is fast becoming somewhat accessible.

"A change. That's what we all would hope for," concludes Butler. "As hyperbolic or delusional as it may sound, I think that's the one effort we want to make – some sort of change."

— Kerry-Rose O'Donnell

Fake History is available now from Epitaph Europe

Scuba – Personality

Over countless albums and other releases, producer and Berlin transplant Paul Rose, better known as Scuba, has been making his mark on the more esoteric side of dubstep, going for a more Burial-esque gritty and menacing approach, and finding time as his alter ego SCB to indulge his love of Berlin techno. There was a slight move last year on Scuba's *DJ-Kicks* compilation to merge his two loves together, even throwing in nods to house and other forms of bass music. Indeed, Scuba even provided his polarising "trance" single "Adrenalin" as a focus of the compilation, and strangely it all seemed to work.

Such genre hopping usually throws up some red flags, but in Scuba's case, it shows a mutual love for all strains of EDM, and this restlessness pushes his music and his sound. Honestly, it is difficult to predict what the man is going to do next, and that is something to get excited about. Based on his last

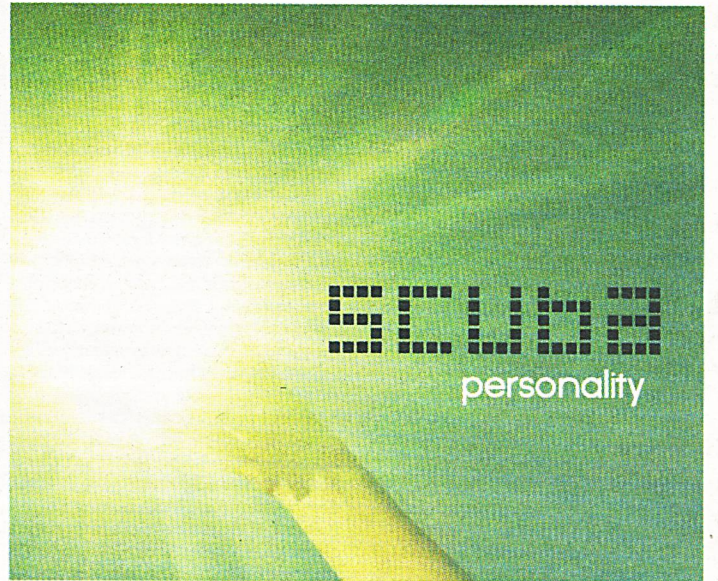
full-length, *Triangulation*, I expected more atmospheric takes on dubstep, but on *Personality*, Scuba again confounds expectations and releases a stunningly varied array of techno tracks filtered through almost every genre imaginable. For such an eclectic array of sounds, the album is remarkably cohesive.

Immediately you know you are in for something interesting with the first track "Ignition Key," which is an electrifying slice of techno. Crisp drums propel a burbling bed of electronics, broken up by icy stabs of synths. There are nods to 90s big-beat techno, as on first single "The Hope," with a build that is tremendous in its execution. Laser pointed synth blasts, snatches of diva vocal samples, and a creepy, deep-voiced refrain of "Got the style/ Got the moves/ Got the money/ Got the groove" move this track and the bodies onto the dance floor. Brittle drum programming underpins the slamming track "Neibetu," which builds into a fierce storm of house pianos. "Action"

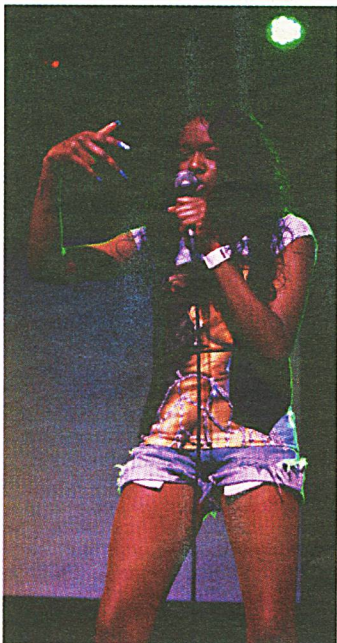
moves to a cold, relentless electro-house beat, which gets twitchier and twitchier as it progresses. And final track "If U Want" is a cold slab of deep house, with duelling female and male vocal samples doing a haunted call and response, which slowly reaches a lovely, almost ambient midsection, before brightening with sparkling synth lines.

Some might be put off by the restless genre hopping going on over the course of *Personality*. Scuba has such a wonderful grasp on each one that in no way could be said to be pandering or slumming it; you can understand and feel his love and appreciation for them all. When you have broad tastes in music or anything for that matter, it can be quite maddening. *Personality* is, well, almost too full of personality, but it is never overwhelming or too watered down. Scuba knows what he is doing, and his restlessness is infectious.

↳ Russell Beets



Live: Azealia Banks



PHOTOGRAPH BY PHILIPPE

If there's one thing the music industry can't seem to get enough of, it's a female rapper with a filthy mouth. Enter Azealia Banks, the singer/rapper from Harlem taking the game by storm at the tender age of 20. Being no carbon copy female rapper, this is the time to put all Nicki Minaj references aside.

For the uninitiated, Banks is a former LaGuardia High School of Performing Arts student, currently living in London while recording her debut album, *Broke with Expensive Taste*, with producer Paul Epworth of Adele and Florence + the Machine fame. And she's topping everyone's list while she does so, whether it is coming third in the BBC Sound of 2012 shortlist or 1st in NME's Cool List last year. Not satisfied with captivating the music industry, she's also become somewhat of a fashion industry darling, with designers Karl Lagerfeld and Thierry Mugler booking her to perform at their shows.

The New York rapper caused a stir with song "212," containing provocative lyrics like "I guess that cunt getting eaten" (available on T-shirts, if you're

interested), and has become notorious for her confrontational bars and excessive use of expletives. Fresh off the NME Tour with the likes of Two Door Cinema Club and Metronomy, Banks bounces on stage to her sold out show at Heaven, Charing Cross in a Chinese-style dress, long hair swinging. The famed gay club was the perfect venue for her to perform in, with both the dark, smoky room and the intimacy provided by the closeness of stage and crowd creating the feel of an underground rave. The complimentary candyfloss handed out at the entrance didn't hurt either, adding to the, party vibe of the event.

At the beginning, it is mostly impressive quick-fire MCing backed up by fast beats from her DJ, Cosmo. But she still shows us her soulful side as a singer by including a cover of Amy Winehouse and Mark Ronson's "Valerie," briefly dismissing the beats of DJ Cosmo in favour of the clapping provided by the crowd. Whilst admittedly feeling a bit like acapella karaoke, it serves to show the strength and brilliance of her voice.

The fit inducing strobe lighting lends well to songs like the catty "Barbie Shit" and fiery "Runnin'," achieving its purpose in escalating the atmosphere in the room to that of excited frenzy. At the end of her set, she teases the crowd into "212," building up the anticipation until it peaks in a progressive, anthemic explosion, the whole room jumping with her, before rounding up with popular freestyle "L8R" in all her foul-mouthed glory.

Banks's likability lies mainly in the contrasting aspects of her personality. She has an abundance of Harlem sass – at one point drawing attention to the line in "The Chills," "I'm not a gold digger, I'm a fucking opportunist. Do you like that?" – but it's coming out of a sweet-looking face with a butter wouldn't melt in her mouth expression. Further proof? Her music video for "212" sees her rapping about cunninglingus while dancing along with pigtailed in a Mickey Mouse jumper. Written during a "two-week-long lonesome rave in my apartment on Dyckman Street, a month before getting evicted," it's so

far, so Azealia.

The only disappointing element of her show was its brevity – Banks was certainly sticking to the well-known dictum "leave the people wanting more," cutting her show short at little over half an hour. Admittedly, with the debut album still in production and without a string of pre-debut EPs most hip-hop artists seem to come with these days, she didn't have much material to go on. Making up for this, she kept the crowd on their toes throughout, with the occasional confetti shower, a flood of candy-coloured balloons and even managing to fit in a cheeky outfit change during "Bambi." You're left with the feeling that as she grows as an artist, she'll be putting on shows of even more animated and epic heights. This potential is definitely there – this was just a taster.

Banks will be back in the summer and autumn to play a number of our very own festivals and to embark on her first solo UK Tour. Be sure to catch her – she definitely deserves the hype.

↳ Angie Moneke

This week's live highlights

6 Mar: **Youth Lagoon** – Electrowerkz

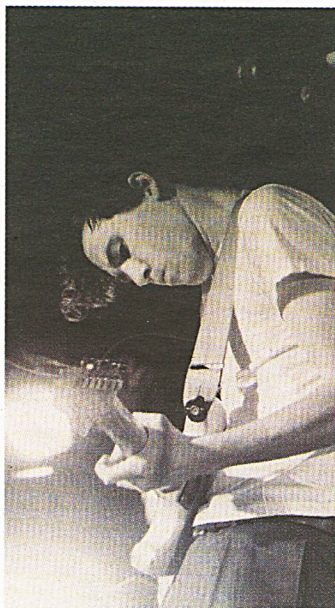
6 Mar: **Future Islands** – Scala

7 Mar: **Laura Marling** – HMV Hammersmith

7 Mar: **Olivia Tremor Control** – Cargo

9 Mar: **Cass McCombs** – Union Chapel

11 Mar: **Souls of Mischief** – Jazz Café



Cass McCombs, Live in Camber Sands

PartBeat

The office playlist this week...

Rocky Ground
Bruce Springsteen: *Wrecking Ball* (2012)

NEEDSUMLUV
Azealia Banks: *NEEDSUMLUV* (2012)

Rhubarb
Aphex Twin: *Selected Ambient Works, Vol. II* (1994)

Grindin'
Clipse: *Lord Willin'* (2002)

Six Blade Knife
Dire Straits: *Dire Straits* (1978)



Follow us: @partbmusic

John Carter



Director: Andrew Stanton
Screenplay: Andrew Stanton, Mark Andrews, Michael Chabon
Key cast: Taylor Kitsch, Lynn Collins, Samantha Morton, Willem Dafoe, Thomas Haden Church, Mark Strong
Year: 2012
Runtime: 132 minutes
In cinemas 9 March 2012

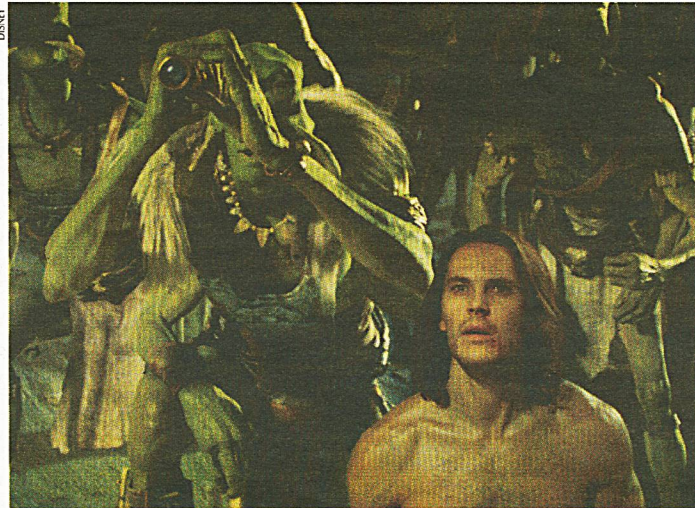
Having languished in development hell for eighty years, Edgar Rice Burroughs's classic pulp fiction has finally been brought to fruition by Disney, under the deft guidance of Pixar's Andrew Stanton. This adaptation is not the usual Disney offering, rather more in the vein of the *Pirates of the Caribbean* franchise, but a little less playful and with a lot more heart, which is unsurprising considering Stanton's previous Oscar-winning directorial efforts, *Finding Nemo* and *WALL-E*.

The eponymous John Carter (Taylor Kitsch) is an American Civil War ex-cavalryman who is unwittingly transported to Mars where he is taken prisoner by a tribe of Tharks – eight-foot tall, four-armed, barbaric green Martians. A chance encounter with a princess of Mars, Dejah Thoris (Lynn Collins), embroils him in the planetary civil war between the cities of Helium and Zodanga. She had escaped after her father, Tardos Mors of Helium (Ciarán Hinds), promised her hand in marriage to the brutish Sab Than of Zodanga (Dominic West) in order to spare his city from annihilation. Sab Than was previously given a weapon of total destruction by the mysterious Matai Shang (Mark Strong). The brief plot description may seem slightly daunt-

ing due to the many strands of action, but it simply serves as an indicator of the film's impressive scope.

To the detriment of the finished product, a superb feature is badly served by Disney's atrocious marketing campaign. The trailers fail to convey the complexities of the plot and any footage of the film viewed on a screen less than twenty feet wide does not do it justice. On first impressions *John Carter* definitely appears to be a rehash of every science fiction film out there, but it must be noted that *A Princess of Mars* – the novel it was based on – was written a century ago. Stanton's greatest success was perhaps creating a plausible Martian world. The Tharks are not the typical extra-terrestrial caricatures, which would have immediately sunk the film, but believable and creatively designed. Filmed against the backdrop of the Utah deserts, home to NASA testing ranges, instead of relying on green screens, gives the film a sense of reality. Mars is stunningly captured in grand, sweeping cinematography reminiscent of David Lean's epic *Lawrence of Arabia* but with additional 3D beautifully enhancing the picture. *John Carter*'s restrained 3D is probably the best post-production conversion to date.

Disney had taken a definite risk in financing a reputedly \$250 million vehicle without any A-list names, although this does make for a refreshing change. For such a large role, Taylor Kitsch carries it well. Carter's brooding demeanour coupled with an arid setting is evocative of old Westerns. The chemistry with Lynn Collins is palpable and effective. Dejah Thoris is capable of defending herself without Carter's help and – what is particularly commendable – portrayed



John Carter (Taylor Kitsch) with Thark cheftain Tars Tarkas (Willem Dafoe)

with hardly any male gaze, especially for a film likely to be seen by hordes of male geeks. I daresay she is the most kickass Disney princess since *Mulan*. It also seems as though Mark Strong is the only British actor in Hollywood available for villain parts. Yet, despite his ubiquity as the baddie, Strong continues to deliver and his Matai Shang is effortlessly menacing.

As much as *John Carter* was highly enjoyable, it was not without its niggling flaws. For a blockbuster, there are a notably small number of action scenes, although Stanton somehow did manage to include a decapitation in a Disney film. The humanoid Martians of Helium and Zodanga are called "red men" for an obvious reason, yet their colouring

sometimes sways dangerously close to Beverly Hills spray tan. Although *John Carter* is absolutely engrossing overall, the pacing falters at times, mostly due to all the necessary exposition for the complicated back-story.

It was an immense gamble, and Disney deserves credit for taking such a plunge. Stanton, aided by Burroughs, has created a captivating world populated by intriguing characters. *John Carter* is equal parts science fiction, heartfelt drama, Western and historical epic. It is a delightful throwback to the pure escapism of old school Hollywood storytelling, while using the latest technology to create a truly immersive experience.

↳ Venessa Chan

Events

Cat on a Hot Tin Roof

8 Mar at Hackney Picturehouse
 Adapted from Tennessee Williams's Pulitzer-winning play. Starring Elizabeth Taylor and Paul Newman, who both contributed electrifying performances, both earning Oscar nominations. An ex-football player turns to alcohol after a friend's suicide, while resisting his wife's affections. Things are complicated when his father is revealed to be dying from cancer.

Sparrows – Mary Pickford Revived by Birds Eye View

11 Mar at Hackney Picturehouse
 Birds Eye View is a festival that celebrates international women filmmakers. This year, the spotlight is on female film pioneer Mary Pickford. *Sparrows* will be screened with a new live score from Aristazabel Hawkes. Pickford stars as the eldest in a baby farm who decides to rescue all the other children from the squalor.

Ordet

From 9 Mar at BFI Southbank
 Winner of the Golden Lion at the 1955 Venice Film Festival, it was not Carl Theodor Dreyer's greatest film, but definitely the most successful financially and critically. An exploration of faith based on the play by Kaj Munk expressed through the tensions within a Jutland farming family.

Requiem for a Dream

11 Mar at The Yard – Rooftop Film Club
 Darren Aronofsky's harrowing chronicle of four drug addicts and their downward spiral into failure. A hauntingly brutal and visceral drama. Half the emotional impact is also in the film's iconic score.

The Raven



Director: James McTeigue
Screenplay: Ben Livingston, Hannah Shakespeare
Key cast: John Cusack, Alice Eve, Luke Evans, Brendan Gleeson
Year: 2012
Runtime: 111 minutes
In cinemas 9 March 2012

In a novel, fiction and reality seem sometimes to blur into one another. Popular for his gory murder mystery stories, Edgar Allen Poe (John Cusack) finds himself dragged into a brutal real-life mystery when Detective Fields (Luke Evans) realises that it a serial killer has decided to bring his stories to life. Confronted with murders that emulate his literary works, Poe is soon caught in a perilous game when the murderer kidnaps his lover Emily (Alice Eve).

Poe and Fields are typical antagonistic personalities forced to co-operate by overwhelming circumstances. The wicked artist on the one hand, with his passionate and unpredictable mood, is at first suspicious of the cold and rational personality of the man of law. The detective on the other hand, duty-bound and proud, is irritated by Poe's fickleness and absurdity. However, the two end up – of course – forming a strong bond under the pressure of the circumstances, recognising each other's talent in their respective fields and ending up with mutual respect and empathy.

The dramatic and gloomy atmosphere of the film owes much to the dreary set. The streets of night-time Baltimore are always mantled in fog, its inhabitants taking shelter in baroque balls and smoky taverns.

Even if the film is mainly about action – mystery and corpses – it contains

some reflection on the role of art and inspiration. The mysterious murderer seems to have no regard for life while holding art in great esteem, psychologically torturing his beloved artist to make him give birth to a new masterpiece. Only through suffering comes inspiration. The character of the wicked artist is scrutinised and the nature of inspiration is questioned.

Were it not for it playing with the story of such a great literary figure, *The Raven* would not stand out in the mediocre action-mystery-murder movie crowd. But bringing the father of every murder mystery story to the screen gives it an interesting twist, enriching each scene with a quote from the novelist. Every fan of Poe should probably watch it, if only to be torn between despicability and excitement.

↳ Alessandro Allegra



Detective Fields (Luke Evans) and Edgar Allen Poe (John Cusack)

Wanderlust



Director: David Wain
Screenplay: David Wain, Ken Marino
Key cast: Jennifer Aniston, Paul Rudd, Malin Akerman, Justin Theroux
Year: 2012
Runtime: 98 minutes
In cinemas now

A hippie commune, a nudist, Judd Apatow producing, Jennifer Aniston waving her breasts around, Paul Rudd just being Paul Rudd: *Wanderlust* contains all the ingredients for an amusing romp about a couple of jaded city-slickers throwing it all in for the simple life. But unlike all the other Apatow-produced "comedies with heart" that have come before – *The 40-Year Old Virgin*, *Knocked Up*, *Role Models*, *I Love You, Man*, *Superbad*, etc. – *Wanderlust* falls short.

The reason is simple. For a "comedy with heart" there sort of needs to be, well, a heart. Although the Apatow formula has become rather a tedious norm of late, most of these films work because – despite the usually awful or moronic nature of the protagonists – the audience connects with them and is on their side. This heart is an immeasurable, elusive ingredient, but when it goes right the result is often much more rewarding than the usual gross-out comedy. *Wanderlust* tries – and in doing so manages to be very, very funny – but ultimately fails to capture this soul.

It is difficult to pinpoint where it goes wrong because the concept had the potential to be hilarious. An urban couple, Linda (Jennifer Aniston) and George (Paul Rudd), lose their dream New York apartment and have to move to Atlanta to stay with the George's hugely obnoxious brother. Rather than put up with the suburban banality, they decide instead to live on a commune – or "intentional community," as they call it – where free love, veganism and nudity run amok. The film is inundated with excellent comic actors – mostly taken from the director's previous film,

Role Models. Ken Marino in particular shines in his uncomfortably funny role as Paul Rudd's insufferable brother, as does Michaela Watkins as his alcoholic, depressed wife. Alan Alda is even in it. Most of the film's humour comes from the bizarre and hilarious characters that populate it – the nudist, the pregnant hippie, the porn star turned earth mother, and the eccentric head guru. The film's bold style captures them and the absurd comedy they generate.

Yet, although these fantastic character actors are making you laugh, and the dialogue is funny, and the film is enjoyable, there is something hollow in the laughter; something missing. The problem is perhaps with the two leads, Aniston and Rudd. Yes, they are both solid, dependable comedy actors, and they do their best with the material. Admittedly, Aniston has aged since *Friends* and Rudd's constant, affable charm starts to wear at times, but the fault is not with the actors – it's the characters. As the film progressed, I found myself becoming more and more despairing. George became increasingly victimised, amusing and sympathetic. Meanwhile, Linda dissolves into humourlessness, predictability and tedium. Neither character was particularly developed, but Linda's dry, unfunny dialogue – her resolute lack of even a modicum of likeability – was just depressing. Watching the film, you cannot help but feel bad for Aniston and Rudd, conforming to such overused stereotypes: the former is trapped by a dour and lifeless character, while the latter is hemmed in by dialogue that obviously restricts his comic talent. The protagonists, supposed to be the heart of the film, merely succeeded in making me feel sad and uncomfortable.

Wanderlust has everything a heart-felt comedy ought to: an interesting plotline, an array of bizarre, wonderful characters, and a fun little caper. What a pity that it ends up less than the sum of its parts.

↳ Isabella Silver

What Would Helen Mirren Do? Waterloo East Theatre

●●●○○○
Director: Peter Ellis
Playwright: Josie Melia
Key cast: Anita Parry
At Waterloo East Theatre until 25 March 2012

For Susan (Anita Parry), a supermarket worker from Oldham, the choice of Helen Mirren as a role-model is the turning over a new leaf. This one woman show is funny, convivial and endearing.

Susan has been plugging away part-time in a supermarket for thirty years while bringing up two children alone. But with the pair of them having just left home and offered a promotion at work, she is sent on a management training course. The course makes a mockery of team building and training. It is more "if you were an animal" and "who is

your role model" than the dealing with customer complaints Susan is expecting. It is ironically just these questions that make a vast positive impact on her life.

This is where Helen Mirren fits in. As the ways in which Susan acts like newfound role model Helen Mirren increase, so does her self-confidence and empowerment. An excellent impersonation of Detective Jane Tennison from *Prime Suspect* puts her in complete control of her colleagues and leaves her finally able to confront her unsavoury and inappropriate boss. It is nothing short of life changing as the takeover of the supermarket by a Spanish company offers the chance for a real and dramatic change of direction.

Susan is well-meaning, good-natured and hard-working and easily wins over the audience. Throughout the play we are willing for her to succeed, to

overcome the hurdles and defeat those who stand in her way.

While this is a one-woman show, Anita Parry offers up fantastic caricatures of those she encounters, chauvinistic boss Steve, stick-in-the-mud colleague Big Jean and the brash training course leader Austin Towers provide plenty of laughs, and her awkward mother and absent children give an insight into what would otherwise be a serious case of empty-nest syndrome. All are played well, with Parry flicking the switch between them with ease.

The show is enjoyable, gently offering up the idea that life can really begin in middle age and that children leaving home provides freedom rather than misery – something that is perhaps a little hard to swallow for one whose move away from parents is relatively recent.

↳ Hannah Payne



Anita Parry

The Vagina Monologues, Old Theatre

●●●●○○○
Directors: Kate Hayes and Katherine Everitt
Playwright: Eve Ensler
Cast: Members of the LSE student community
All proceeds have been donated to Eaves, a charity committed to supporting vulnerable women in London

I would never count myself as much of a feminist; quite frankly, I often find myself enraged with some of the articles I read in *The Beaver* suggesting that there is a gaping inequality between the sexes. Most media attention about the inequality of women seems to make me ask: why bask in the pessimistic facts of gender inequality? And the moan-

ing and groaning is hardly something to stimulate my inner confident, independent woman.

What *The Vagina Monologues* did for me was to turn this negative attitude towards the difficulties of women on its head. Expecting to experience two hours of preaching about how difficult it is to be a woman in today's day and age, I was inspired and felt empowered and alive. Above all, it filled me with a sense of ownership and identity over what was mine. I left with the knowledge that the vagina was the pinnacle of creation – all should bow down and worship my vagina.

Ensler's monologues are based on interviews with women of different ages and nationalities. They are honest, mature and uncensored, stimulating

the audience as it breaks the taboos surrounding sex. The range of interviews is extraordinary, from talking openly with sex workers to probing the depths of memory of a 72-year-old woman who has never had an orgasm, and more seriously, to Bolivian genital mutilation victims. In effect, these monologues reach the core of what it is to be a woman, while alternately warming and saddening the heart. They are not preachy or condescending and most enjoyably, they do not seek out men to be the "enemy." Rather they demand that the sexual being be proud and dignified, highlighting that sex is both your identity and your happiness.

The cast, made up of LSE students, brilliantly executed these sensitive, spellbinding and funny issues surround-

ing the vagina, and they even managed to skilfully break the fourth wall of theatre, making the audience shout "suck my cunt." This was definitely both energising and liberating (and obviously a much more stimulating phrase than "darling, can you touch my vagina." Watching a whole chorus of orgasms on stage was hilarious, especially when it came to the special "Oh! Oh! I should be studying!" moan that we all know so well. Yet the aim of the monologues was not just to amuse the audience but also to draw attention to serious issues surrounding the vagina.

The "vagina is a shell, a round pink tender shell opening and closing, moist and opening..." It is tender and delicate, yet it can be "mutilated, swollen and torn." This I emphasise is not only a

result of childbirth, but caused by violence. Over 130 million young girls and women in over 28 countries will see a knife, a razor or a shard of glass slice through and remove their clitoris. Other women are threatened with guns being pushed into their vaginas and are victims of rape, domestic violence and more.

In our society, women are made to feel ashamed and dirty for being "wrong down there." "You don't want to go down there. Trust me. You'd get sick. Suffocating. Very nauseating. The smell of the clamminess and the mildew and everything. Whew! The smell's unbearable." We should not be subjected to this. My vagina is angry about this.

↳ Emma Brassington

One and a half years opening jars

We talk to Alex Horne, a comedian who is currently at 2,973,956,63 in the world's oldest person rankings

Alex Horne is definitely unique among comedians, filling eccentric yet fascinating niches with shows such as "Making Fish Laugh," which saw him receive a nomination the Perrier Best Newcomer Award. It was thus with a sense of misguided optimism about this term's timetable, as well as genuine interest of course, that I made out to interview him.

Horne's most recent project follows his decision to focus on a subject holding particular appeal for LSE students who need a good laugh: statistics. Taking figures from the internet, Mr Horne is taking the average human life and condensing it into a one hour show. It is a wonderful concept, and constitutes what he describes as the "luxury of writing a comedy show: being able to bend facts."

"The average man apparently spends one and a half years opening jars. I very rarely open jars – perhaps one every six months. A few anomalies prop up – some people spend a lot of time on the internet doing things which I perhaps don't do as much. Part of the fun of it is that we treat certain statistics entirely seriously!"

Like a lot of comedians, Mr Horne has made a great name for himself at Edinburgh Fringe, and as a much loved home of unique comedy his show seems very well suited to it. "I love Edinburgh more than anything, really. It's a late night culture and you want to do as much as possible. I think in Edinburgh you can try things out which you can't with other places. Other comedy clubs might not take kindly to someone representing sleep for most of the show."

It goes without saying that other places are perhaps more notorious for comedians. "I'm going back to Glasgow. It's one of those places that's supposed to be scary. The first time I was quite alarmed but it's actually one of the friendliest places I've ever been and probably has some of the best comedy clubs in the country. I don't think I'm going anywhere particularly scary – I tend to go to cosy art centres."

Cosy art centres and, it would appear, academic conferences. Mr Horne has done several independent studies on the science of laughter. The idea that such a thing can be quantifiable certainly seems strange for a comedian to suggest, yet Mr Horne's experience of it doesn't seem to have dampened his sense of humour.

"I've been to conferences they hold in Poland and Hong Kong, and you're right: I'm always the only comedian in attendance. I'm kind of addicted to the study of laughter even though it's completely useless as a comedian. I hope what we find funny is completely intangible: once jokes become formulaic they stop being funny. I just think it's hilarious how seriously people take it. You often stumble upon funny things within them. It's a rather perverse hobby."

Further evidence of his light-hearted attitude to such things is evidenced in his personal campaign to become the world's oldest man. Thankfully, his efforts are still on-going. "I've got a slight cold, but I should survive it. I've got about 80 years to go, but in the short term it's looking good. I've got a new personal best – got to 33, as high as I've ever been."

The campaign has received a surprising amount of attention. "I was sponsored by Innocent Smoothies



The Horne Section Christmas Bash, December 2010

for 6 months. They sent me a load of smoothies each week. That's kind of my dream: it was funny being sponsored just to not die."

With his optimistic outlook on his approach to death, Horne proved to

have some other interesting plans for the future. "I've got a show planned with a jazz band, called "The Horn Section." The idea is mixing comedy and music in a new way. We're doing a radio series. We're recording it soon and it should

come out in April. I'm also planning an instant messaging project. I'm sending out messages in bottles, balloons, rubber ducks, that kind of thing. It's kind of an antithesis to Twitter. I'm doing the opposite to instant messaging: seeing what snail mail I get back."

And then came the token questions. Horne had done a lot of comedy during his university days, and it was interesting to find out what he thought of his experiences. "I think it's a good proving ground. University audiences tend to be tough and doing it in front of your peers is particularly testing. If you do it and it goes well you'll have a hobby for life, but I'm equally embarrassed by what I considered comedy back then. I was modelling after people I liked: nothing original."

Comedy may well have changed since then, though Horne has a history of adapting to this. Despite being the first comedian to give a performance in the online world of *Second Life*, he still prefers the classic methods of stand up. "I found it very strange. I was persuaded to do it for a TV program: it was so unreal. People do gigs on Twitter now, and I think comedy dies if you don't have the actual interaction. Live entertainment will always exist."

With time running short, I asked Horne if there was anything he wanted to say to readers. "Go out and watch live events: comedy and music. This is the best time of your life to do it. Catch some comedy that isn't in an arena or stadium. The best way to watch comedy is to be within reach of the comic."

↳ Philip Gallagher

Alex Horne will be performing his show *Seven Years in a Bathroom* at the Soho Theatre between 12 and 17 March 2012

Alighiero Boetti: Game Plan, Tate Modern

The 1960s were characterised by a wave of revolutionary ideas that became not only impregnated in the civil rights movement, but crossed borders to influence the minds of European artists. Likewise, Alighiero Boetti was struck by revolutionary and provocative ideas, and in the 1960s began to play with art, questioning the very institutions, concepts and categories that have influenced humankind.

It is the mere play of concepts regarding the role of authority against the submissive player that makes this exhibition contentious, innovative and central to our own ideas of art; it questions the quick-minded, categorical mentality that characterised the world in the 1950s. The artist uses the interaction of his own direction as the creator with collaborators as co-creators of his artistic pieces. He invites the audience to experience the splintering of art, as he records himself writing on a paper simultaneously to the left and right, demonstrating multiplicity, symbolically showing that every action has an opposite yet equal reaction.

Boetti's remarkable understanding of the world's simplification of categories nourished his impatience into purposefully reflecting inefficiency by allowing the work to be inefficient itself. His art was a response to societal dependence on time, order and progress. One piece highlights this theme particularly well: *I sei sensi* (*The Six Senses*), a set of six blue panels that cover a whole wall, drawn entirely in ballpoint pen. The mirage of dots made from blue pen leaves white commas

drawn in negative space, placed strategically on the canvas.

The point of this very time-intensive task is to play with the ideas of control and authority by granting his students the power to help him make the pieces themselves, and place them within his structure in their own ways. The result is a set of panels, each with a slightly different set of lines, performing a theatrical hidden message that explores the individualities of each student who helped Boetti. He empowered his students with a sense of freedom showing that through tiny disparities, the viewer is invited to explore the subtleties within the obvious array of blue.

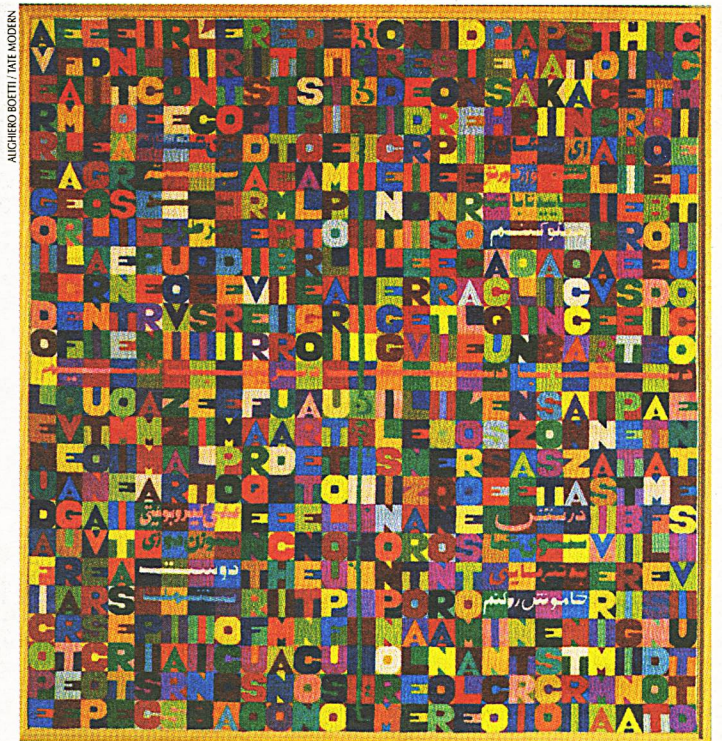
This individuality of each student or collaborator is hidden in the piece, because the audience rarely knows the process through which it was developed. This theme of unawareness is the very purpose of the exposition. It invites us to take a closer look at each piece and discover the purposeful inefficiency that pokes fun at a system's dependency on time, structure, and rules. Each canvas displays the human behind its creation, while hiding them at the same time. The commas are placed in specific spots to represent the six senses, spelling out messages for the audience. At first glance, all these subtle messages and provocative methodologies are hidden. As such, it is highly recommended to view the display with an audio explanation to grasp the underlying narratives of these cryptic pieces.

His work embellishes the interplay between order and disorder. Which one of these affects the other? Are they

mutually exclusive? Can they coexist in harmony? These questions follow the viewer from room to room, as the artist explores humanity's need for categories, rules and specialisations that are random and chosen depending on authority. The answer is simple – order brings disorder, while disorder reaps the benefits of order.

Another piece that may seem odd at first glance is *The Hour Tree*, a clock inside a black box that lights up for 11 seconds each year. When will it light up? Nobody knows. Again, Boetti is playing with the viewer – it seeks to question the their embrace of art, and what is remembered after leaving the exposition; the magical and special ideas that permeate after the exposure is what he wants us to retain. Again, it exemplifies the insignificance of efficiency and order, while inviting us into the piece itself as a means of creating new meanings.

Boetti believes in "giving birth to the world" by using things in the world to create his own version of it. His idea finds rather than buys materials – postcards, stamps, wood, industrial leftovers, leftover paint, cardboard – and allows him to redefine order, question it, and nag at efficiency as unnecessary and burdensome. Boetti's inclusion of outsiders into his work by inviting children, Afghan women, students and whomever to participate, is also central to this exposition, allowing individuality within the artist's own signature creativity. The exhibition represents a rebirth of the world into the world itself, and tackles black and white with notions of multiplicity, colour and playfulness.



Alighiero Boetti, *Venticinque per Venticinque Seicentoventicinque*, 1988

Boetti's exposition will surely bring back ideas of a postmodern world: splitting, multiplying and playing with the many institutions, concepts, and formulated ideas on which humanity depends in order to function and progress. Visit the exposition

and your own ideas may just shift into a malleable reality that collaborates with the artist's imagination and ethereal world.

↳ Mabe Garcia

Alighiero Boetti: Game Plan is at Tate Modern until 9 April 2012

The Ruins of Detroit, Wilmotte Gallery

Fast-moving consumer goods. That is a term most people are familiar with. Is there a faster-moving good than cars? But moving fast can be dangerous, as Detroit found out. Once the ephemeral car industry collapsed, the once greatest and richest industrial town in America slowly mirrored its decline. Dotted with the relics of once magnificent buildings, an almost desert landscape reminiscent of the ghost towns in the great American West welcomes visitors today.

This gloomy and nostalgic feeling is conveyed in the pictures of Yves Marchand and Romain Meffre, two young French photographers who explored the wastelands of Detroit between 2005 and 2009. Armed with a custom made camera designed for long-exposure panoramic shots, the two intrepid urban explorers waited, sometimes for weeks, for the chance to sneak into some of the once magnificent buildings of Detroit's golden age. Elevating what has become a popular hobby in many post-industrial societies to the level of art, the two photographers gave a creative twist to urban exploration.

Shooting inside abandoned libraries, banks and offices, Marchand and Meffre give the impression of a suddenly

abandoned town, a sort of creepy still life where everyday objects are left behind by a fleeing population. Piles of books in the public library, cracked test tubes in a school's lab and open drawers in bank's vault populate their pictorials.

The portrait of the vast emptiness of Detroit Central Station's departure hall is among the finest in the collection, conveying a powerful sense of void and magnificence at the same time. Framed with massively decorated arches and domes, the hall resembles some sort of indoor wasteland with its intricate rock pillars. Only the presence of graffiti on the walls reminds us of the mundane nature of what would have otherwise been a ghostly cathedral.

All of this contributes to a post-apocalyptic feeling typical of science fiction movies. However, even if this fascination for ruins and abandonment could at first thought seem a novelty of our post-modern aesthetics, so concerned with meta-representation and deconstruction, the ghost of past glory has haunted western art for a long time. It is difficult not to recall the inspiring and profoundly romantic ruins depicted by Caspar David Friedrich in such works as *The Abbey in the Oakwood*.



Detroit Public Schools Book Depository, 2007



Melted Clock, Cass Technical High School, 2008

Ruins, together perhaps with shipwrecks, form one of the most intriguing themes in western figurative art. They represent a fascination for the rise and fall that accompany any human endeavour. Staring at the ruins of what once constituted a great achievement of mankind, the artist cannot help but feel nostalgic for a lost golden age they can never belong to. If once the golden age was ancient Greece, with its temples and columns, vineyards and crops, we now have the postmodern artist's pipes and parking lots, both of them remind-

ing us of an age of abundance we have left behind.

The exhibition, touring for the first time in the UK, is housed in the Wilmotte Gallery at Lichfield Studios, a spacious converted warehouse in north-west London. The large format photos are well spaced and optimally lit, the warehouse providing the perfect location for a post-industrial exhibition. It is a pity that not all of the many shots taken by Marchand and Meffre have been printed in large format for the exhibition, but it is still possible to

browse through the entire photo book at the entrance desk, with signed copies available for purchase. On a related note, when you pass the entrance desk don't miss the *Melted Clock*, one of the better pieces in the exhibition located in an unfortunate spot.

↳ Alessandro Allegra

The Ruins of Detroit by Yves Marchand & Romain Meffre is at the Wilmotte Gallery until 5 April 2012

More than a whistle-blower?

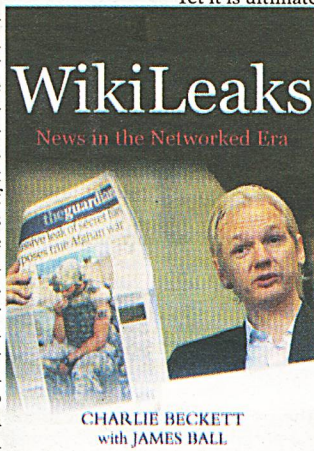
Despite standing at a mere 164 pages, Charlie Beckett (Director of POLIS at LSE) and James Ball (a former WikiLeaks employee, now an investigative journalist at *The Guardian*) have managed to provide a detailed analysis of the complex role and impact of the whistle-blowing organisation in *WikiLeaks: News in the Networked Era*. It is a terrific read, easy to follow and thorough in its examination of the intricate issues surrounding WikiLeaks.

The book is divided into four sections, exploring the unique nature of WikiLeaks: the landmark release of the Afghanistan and Iraq war logs, the embassy cables, the future of journalism and social media as disruptive journalism. WikiLeaks is not an easy subject to tackle, and even now there are arguments surrounding exactly how the organisation has managed to change the face of modern day journalism, and its role as a watchdog media outlet, among many other issues still being raised. It is impossible to summarise all the different angles and arguments raised, but what remains clear is that WikiLeaks continues to stir up debate on the role and importance of whistle-blowing in this day and age.

The book is well-researched and aptly charts the history behind WikiLeaks, the personal and professional conflicts between the key figures (the most prominent figure being that of Julian Assange) and its struggle against some of the most powerful nations in the world. When major US companies such as Amazon and MasterCard withdrew their services, a cyber-hacking group of vigilantes known as Anonymous led a

series of distributed denial of service (DDoS) attacks against major government and corporate websites. This cyber battle was held on a previously unprecedented scale, prompting John Perry Barlow to comment on how "The first serious infowar is now engaged. The field of battle is WikiLeaks. You are the troops." It would appear that WikiLeaks had succeeded in challenging the status quo despite being a relatively small editorial outfit, and in the process gaining both the respect and wrath of many major governments, companies and media organisations.

The main focus of the book is journalism and the breakdown of the traditional media, authority and citizen relationship. Tremendous hype surrounds WikiLeaks's success in becoming the first outlet for suppressed information that traditional journalistic outlets were unable to publish themselves. Yet WikiLeaks's claim to being a journalistic entity itself, or at least a new form of modern journalism, is dubious. On the one hand, it is seen to play some editorial function, as seen with the release of the collateral damage videos, which is a fundamental aspect of any such entity. Yet it is ultimately defeated by its own trump card: its leaks.



The sheer scale and complexity of the data that WikiLeaks possesses render any attempts to comb through them ineffectual (for instance, the Iraq war logs consisted of 391,000 documents totalling over 37 million words). As noted by Beckett and Ball, WikiLeaks did not and could not realistically function as a mainstream media reporter as they could not observe normal editorial pro-



Rally to Free Julian Assange and support the WikiLeaks website from government persecution, Melbourne, December 2010

cedures such as fact-checking for each specific leak. This subsequently raises issues concerning the organisation as a responsible and transparent entity, especially given the mass release of "unredacted" diplomatic cables. It claimed to fulfil a watchdog role, yet possessed no accountability system or governance structure. The irony of a non-transparent organisation claiming to expose others leaves WikiLeaks open to criticism.

Furthermore, the struggle within WikiLeaks and publicity surrounding Assange's criminal charges and fight against extradition has eclipsed the true purpose of WikiLeaks, and has contributed to its current bedraggled state, with some former enthusiasts now writing it off. It has certainly left an indelible impact on the global political and journalistic scenes, but the questions about its sustainability remain unresolved. This book will prove informative in

grasping the fundamental issues behind and resulting from WikiLeaks's actions, but it is up to the reader to determine whether the organisation really is as big a journalistic phenomenon as it claims to be.

↳ Ling Yah

WikiLeaks: News in the Networked Era (2012), Charlie Beckett with James Ball, Polity Press, Paperback, £12.99

Open City by Teju Cole

Open City doesn't have much in terms of plot. It centres on Julius, a Nigerian-German doctor in psychiatry, his walks across New York and for a brief interlude, Brussels. Apart from encounters with strangers, a mugging, a picnic, casual sex with a middle-aged Czech woman, a trip to Belgium to find his grandmother, nothing much seems to happen. Rather, the book's interesting idea is one of "spatial stories", where the slightest thing can spark a range of allusions to Yoruba mythology, the erasure of native American culture, slaveholding, Mahler's symphonies, *The Last King of Scotland*, Brewster's portraits, Anthony de Hooges, *Moby Dick*, Freud and others.

There is one huge secret from the past which is disclosed at the end of the book. It gradually becomes apparent to the reader that far from Julius's professed motive for his walks as "a release from the tightly regulated mental environment of work," is a sense that he is actually writing to stave off solitude and walking to escape his past. It is this secret that provides the invisible momentum of the book. But, in case I raise any expectations, the secret doesn't figure much in the storyline. The book should not be read for its plot, anyway.

The language itself is alluring and continually spurs you on, making the book an effortless read. Cole is

a master of his form, laying on plain descriptions, one after another, until they cumulatively achieve their intended effect. It is clear that Cole certainly possesses the ability to deliver entrancing full-blown, hyperbolic descriptions, nonetheless, placid prose is acutely employed and diminishes nothing. The same may be said for minimally recurring motifs such as insight and blindness, the migration of birds, and the symbol of water versus land, which he deftly conjures and then dispels.

While Cole is conceptually indebted to Sebald's idea of psychogeography and the Baudelairean idea of the flâneur (the walker who takes everything in), stylistically he is quite redolent of Joyce. From the detached, plain style to the stream of consciousness or the innovative omission of quotation marks, it is an influence that is visible but restrained. He utilises these mechanisms to good effect. Each person Julius encounters imparts a life story, which in turn is threaded seamlessly into the book. There are no segregating quotation marks, and Cole's use of stream of consciousness melds these stories further together.

We have a patchwork of voices: a disgruntled Moroccan student, a Haitian shoeshiner, a Belgian doctor and a Liberian refugee, all distinctly interjecting the stories of Julius's own patients, resulting in

the narrative of an entire cosmopolitan community as opposed to a singular stream of consciousness.

This book has variously been seen as dealing with post-colonialism in New York, or has been dubbed a post-melting-pot novel. Indeed, *Open City* constantly seems to be underlining the idea of commonality. He closes the first part of the book with that ancient symbol, the rain:

The weather report was right: in ever widening circles from where I stood, rain was lashing the land. It fell heavily all over the Portuguese district, on the shrine to Pessoa and on Casa Botelho. It fell on Khalil's phone shop, where Farouq had perhaps just begun his shift. It fell on the bronze head of Leopold II at his monument, on Claudel at his, on the flagstones of the Palais Royal. The rain kept coming down...

All of this is reminiscent (to the point of pastiche) of those last few lines in James Joyce's short story *The Dead*:

... Snow was general all over Ireland. It was falling on every part of the dark central plain, on the treeless hills, falling softly upon the Bog of Allen and, farther westward, softly falling into the dark mutinous Shannon waves... His soul swooned slowly as he heard the snow falling faintly through the universe and faintly falling, like the descent of their last end, upon all the living and the dead.

Cole uses the rain as the great equaliser, a reminder that the natural elements, the rain and the snow, like death, fall on everyone. The novel persistently diminishes differences, both racial and cultural. However, in its second part *Open*

City alerts us to some of the problems inherent in such an outlook.

In one of the great scenes of the book, Julius meets Farouq, a Moroccan student who works in an internet cafe in Brussels. Farouq is immensely erudite and ideological. He spouts out Walter Benjamin, Norman Finkelstein, Francis Fukuyama and Giles Deleuze, whilst muttering his support in the next few breaths for Hezbollah, Al Qaeda and the extremes of Sharia. He is all for maximising differences. He professes his support for multiculturalism where "people can live together but still keep their own values intact," and decries how in Europe "difference as orientalist entertainment is allowed, but difference with its own intrinsic value" is not, recounting how in class he chose Malcolm X over Martin Luther King, because the former "recognised that difference contains its own value, and that the struggle must be to advance that value." Cole's genius is to then juxtapose this against Dr Maillote's view, a Belgian doctor dismayed by multiculturalism. She says "why would you want to move somewhere only to prove how different you are?" Both arguments are presented because Julius, as always, does not know which side to take.

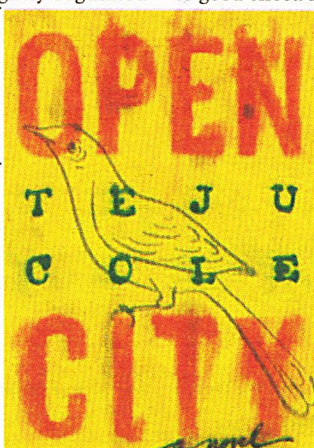
Julius is a paradox, and it is through him that Cole wants to flag up the danger of such large scale cultural profusion. He has a heavy historical and cultural anchor, yet allows himself to be pulled and tugged wherever, to whatever. Similarly, though he is brimming full of memories, he remains opaque to himself. He is apolitical and indecisive. All he does is adapt, partaking in "this constant struggle to modulate the internal environment" in response to events outside him.

The name of the book refers to cities, which opened themselves up to invaders during war, in order to safeguard landmarks and monuments from bombardment. It was in virtue of this that Brussels did not become another Dresden. There is a sense that this is reflected in New York – vulnerable to the quiet invasion of other cultures. The open city is also symbolic of Julius: perpetually open-minded and open-hearted to the stories around him. But as G.K. Chesterton remarks, "Merely having an open mind is nothing. The object of opening the mind, as of opening the mouth, is to shut it again on something solid." Julius never resolves this problem. He refuses to latch onto one thing, or assimilate among his African brothers. Each African American that he meets, a security guard or the cab driver, wants him to acknowledge them and their shared, painful journey, but Julius resists people who want to "make claims" on him.

Ultimately, Julius is never fully rooted. He is estranged from his mother, and the quest to seek out his grandmother in Belgium and reclaim the genealogical connection reduces into another aimless ramble. The novel itself ends with Julius on a boat headed for Ellis Island, floating on an element representative of journeys, caprice and fluidity, carrying him further away from the fixity of land. Indeed, Julius recounts one last story, of 175 birds found dead around the Statue of Liberty one morning, drawn to but disoriented by its torch fire. One can't help but feel that Julius too has lost his bearings.

↳ Wafi Abd-Manan

Open City (2012), Teju Cole, Faber and Faber, Paperback, £7.99



Dramality is more boring than reality

Let me sum up my thoughts on Channel 4's "dramality" show *Made in Chelsea* in one fell swoop: it is by far the worst television programme I have ever seen.

Understand that I do not approach this review as a highbrow *New Yorker*-ish cultural critic intent on deploring the state of modern mass entertainment with obscure references to Kafka and Wittgenstein. I give this designation to *Made in Chelsea* as a grizzled veteran of *The OC*, *Laguna Beach*, *Newport Harbor Rome*, (full disclosure) half a season of *Gossip Girl*, a couple of bizarre MTV dating shows, two seasons of the *Real World*, and admittedly (self-justified for its anthropological research value) every last episode of *Jersey Shore*.

Countless neurons have been ruthlessly culled on these battlefields; a non-trivial slice of my life's pie chart has been spent hunched in front of a screen analysing love triangles and following painfully drawn-out teenage romances. And I have never seen anything as bad as *Made in Chelsea*.

I stumbled upon an article about *Made in Chelsea* in a newspaper last Thursday night. It discussed how the show follows the lives of unfathomably wealthy early-20s socialites from Chelsea (one of the "most exclusive postcodes" in London) and how its techniques are quite experimental, as far as reality television goes. The aforementioned "dramality" means that some expressly fictional scenes are interspersed among the more traditional reality fare (and who said TV couldn't be sophisticated?). As an American predictably beguiled by British high culture and interested in avant-garde television, I decided it would be fun to watch an episode or two.

Big mistake. Twenty-four hours and eighteen episodes later (plus the post-season two after show), I felt both exhausted and violated. The entire arc of a drug addiction had been compressed into a daylong extravaganza - *Made in Chelsea* had that toxic combination of being both addictive and absolutely terrible.

What accounts for its atrocity? A simple explanation would be that cultural routines always seem a bit more fake viewed from the outside looking in (for example, how people talking animatedly on their cell phones in foreign languages inevitably sound like they are angry about a drug deal gone bad). The mating rituals that undergird all reality shows seemed hollow when acted through a British paradigm, as if they

had been sapped of some vital force. The romances just did not seem as real with people "fancying" each other.

But if we as a species could tire of thinly veiled mating rituals, reality television would have long ago bitten the dust. The fact is that we love this stuff. The real problem with *Made in Chelsea* is that nothing ever happens. This realisation dawned on me in the middle of season 1 and became painfully evident as season 2 limped to a close. The novelty of young people with incredible amounts of money could only delay this horrible truth for a short time, and it soon became the dominant recurring thought as I watched: *absolutely nothing is happening right now*.

This statement is both absolute and relative to other television programmes, certainly not known as paragons of progress - literally half of the 14.5 hours of film consist of intentional awkward pauses. Which raises the ultimate question: why? The producers explicitly tell us that some scenes are going to be fake, so presumably they have considerably more range than the average reality show, which has to be coy about the are-they-or-aren't-they question of scripting. How could a dramality possibly be more boring than a reality? This is one of life's great mysteries.

Due to its stasis, any summary of *Made in Chelsea* is automatically a spoiler. Basically, (jocular) Spencer is in love with his long-time best friend, the doe-eyed Caggie. Spencer's best friend Hugo and Caggie's best friend (the languorous) Millie also develop a liking for each other. These four form the closest thing to a core the show has. As per usual, there are other centres of focus as well. The flamboyant Ollie (notice how everyone can be described with a single adjective) and his two girlfriends Binky and Cheska get significant attention. They do not interact much with the rest of the group - Spencer, Caggie et. al. - but they do attend all the same parties (perhaps this the staged part of the "dramality").

Francis Boule, a diamond mining heir and (self-styled) entrepreneur, is another major focus, and his leonine model friend Fredrik drifts in and out every once in a while. A few others litter the landscape - Rosie, Mark-Francis, Amber - but this is basically the extent of the remarkably insular group. Cameras document the cast gallivanting around the European subcontinent in style - yachts and villas in Cannes, 5 star hotels in Paris, skiing in the Alps and hunting lodges in the English countryside.



The stars of *Made in Chelsea*

So why is *Made in Chelsea* so boring? My thesis is that unlike some of their American counterparts, the characters on *Made in Chelsea* really are elites. One always gets the sense in American reality shows that despite the fact that the subjects are young and beautiful and wealthy, being on TV is probably the coolest thing that has ever happened to them. Not so with *Made in Chelsea*. This cast actually seems to live a life that is much cooler than the TV show. The cameras thus seem to be a minor annoyance.

This so far stunningly negative review glosses over the bright spots - for example, trying to figure out if Mark-Francis is a real human or someone's conception of the Greek god Apollo. But the most rewarding part is undoubtedly Francis Boule, who doesn't even pretend to act realistic - he is in on the joke. When an artist painting Francis's portrait inquires as to why he is holding a globe, he says, "I think in the future it will be quite clear why I am holding a globe." He refers to David Cameron as an "übermensch" and exhorts a clueless male intern not to "touch" the attractive girls that come to his office.

Also, the 30 second previews of the upcoming episodes at the end of each show were exquisitely crafted. If it wasn't clear before, it is now: the best minds in cinematography are currently producing trailers and these clips. The economic logic is obvious: as long as there is a good hook, the viewer will watch the next episode, regardless of how dreadfully produced the previous one was. Right at the end of each show, when the viewer has finally resolved to kick the habit, the masters swoop in again and give us a 30 second taste of heaven.

I must also give the producers credit for their portrayal of the cast's wealth - they manage to do so in a way that evokes not jealousy or longing but pure fascination. The characters are not grotesque about their wealth (although Mark-Francis straddles the line at times), and they do not exhibit a bratty sense of entitlement. It fits them well - simply a reality of life. And this dovetails with perhaps the greatest irony of reality or dramality shows: they are all purely fictional for anyone interested enough to tune in. Much more fictional than fiction. Most of us will never be young

and incredibly wealthy; it is simply a permutation that is off-limits. Even if we were to somehow gain as much wealth as the cast members, we would have the battle scars and wrinkles to prove it. These characters, having presumably benefitted from previous generations of toil, have never had to deal with this chase, and their wealth is thus effortless and elegant. There is no such thing as a free lunch, but if someone else picks up the tab, it's as good as free for you.

The fact that I watched every single episode of *Made in Chelsea* raises some large questions about human nature that are probably too expansive for this review. To put it simply, we are social animals, to borrow the title of David Brooks's 2011 book. And as long as we are still fascinated by other humans and there is a profit to be made, programmes like *Made in Chelsea* will exist, and people will watch them. As for me - hopefully I have finally kicked the habit.

Edward Larkin

The third season of *Made in Chelsea* begins on 26 March 2012 on E4

A bloody, romantic horror

I am not much of a horror fan and I usually do everything I can to avoid them, so you might wonder what demons possessed me as I snuggled up, all alone, on a Friday night to watch *Eden Lake*. I can tell you this was never the plan and the title suggested more romantic hoopla and dreamy scenery than anything else. However, as I tuned in to the neglected ITV4, from the very first scene this film captured my attention as I realised that it is not American but British! Hooray to me because I knew this meant no cheesy happy ending or an over-excited director experimenting with special effects in every scene, nor would I be confronted with a poor storyline that makes you think the movie was written with only business in mind.

From that perspective this movie definitely delivers. We're presented with a first-rate British horror film that taps into our deepest fears and offers a thought-provoking insight into such topical subjects as knife crime and gang culture. Though nightmarish and visceral, it's the most intelligent horror film to have been made by a British director since Jack Clayton's *The Innocents* in 1960. It fulfils the two purposes of horror: it involves

you emotionally and it is frightening.

The astuteness of the film is in the simple idea used for a premise: a couple (Michael Fassbender and Kelly Reilly) take a vacation to a lake area, hoping to enjoy themselves in a romantically, but find themselves fighting for their lives when they learn of the area's inhabitants. In this case, they are a group of hoodies; violent, savage, and abusive from the moment they first come into view. The couple mind their own business but the hoodies do not. Eventually, the villainous kids take their reckless acts to the next level, forcing the heroes to turn to the only choice they have left: fighting back.

The movie is incredibly violent, lugubrious and deeply disturbing. Violence involving children is not new or feared in horror, but when given the context of reality - real people, real situations, and real fears, all wrapped up in the guise of "What if this actually happened?" - it is elevated to an entirely new level. The children in this film are sadistic and for the majority of the film devoid of anything resembling that which makes us civilised human beings. One incredibly vicious scene has one of the children forcing all the others to take turns stabbing, slicing, and

cutting into Steve while the lone female films the gruesome events. People being set on fire, more stabbings, and minor impalements follow, but the most gruesome scene features no blood and only your imagination.

This is not, however, a rant about feral chavs. Instead, as the director and writer, James Watkins uses stomach-knotting tension and tongue-slicing horror to explore the complex dynamics of anti-social violence. We identify with the victims throughout, but Watkins also depicts the complex peer-group pressures within the gang and the pain and confusion behind its leader's eyes. The brilliance of the movie is really in the ending as we discover the roots of the youths's contempt towards society: their parents. The fact that the shattering, realistic and downbeat ending places the final round of bloodshed on the parents' hands is a terrific denotation to the film's ultimate message. You will be left with a well-earned and genuinely brutal end that you will be sure to provoke much thought.

Rasha Al-Dabagh

Eden Lake (2006) is available to view on ITV Player

TV Picks of the Week

Dirk Gently

BBC Four, 21:00, Mondays

New comedy drama built on Douglas Adams's books about a self-styled holistic detective who takes a stab at unravelling the most puzzling of mysteries. In the first episode Dirk Gently investigates two cases simultaneously with initially little connection between the two, only to find out that they are much more related than what appears on the surface. Starring Stephen Mangan and Darren Boyd, with Miranda Raison and Paul Ritter.

Obese: A Year to Save My Life USA

Sky1, 21:00, Mondays

Chris Powell comes to the rescue of the obese contestants, beginning with a PE teacher who weighs almost 400lbs. With hopeless, reluctant individuals at ages as young as twenty-one, this show is thoroughly entertaining and very useful for those who need to reflect on their eating habits.

One Tree Hill

E4, 21:00, Mondays

Season 9 is upon us and it feels like we're growing up with the characters of One Tree Hill, as careers and parenting become a part of the characters' lives, just when we are heading in the same direction. However, unlike our lives, the show wouldn't be the same without problems interrupting Haley and Nathan's plans for the future. For devoted fans, this show still very much provides you with the satisfying feeling that we're so far from a life like that.

The Secrets of Everything

BBC Three, 20:00, Sundays

New series that attempts to answer some of life's most frequently asked questions by conducting extreme experiments. Greg Foot starts off by finding out why what people taste like and whether the human race could shift the Earth by jumping at exactly the same time, as well as examining the dangers of a belly-flop.

Features

What happened to the women?

Laura Aameer examines the exclusion of women from the Egyptian revolution



Flickr: Nick Bygon

The process of change in Egypt is going to be long, but a parliament has been democratically elected and in the last week dates for the presidential elections were announced. Impressively for a country so often tarred with gender inequality, the last week saw the second woman to announce her candidacy for the presidential elections as Mona al-Brince announced on facebook that she was running. Yet hidden behind these good news stories, the revolution has not been as liberating for women as it might first appear.

In the last week a long-running case against the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) has been postponed yet again. In a situation more similar to a country under authoritarian rule, witnesses were not heard and time meant to be spent listening to the case against the authorities was devoted to their defence. The case in question is not that widely known about outside the country, yet it is a significant case in the struggle for women's rights in Egypt. It centres on Samira Ibrahim, a woman who during the protests last year was arrested and forced to undergo "virginity tests". These amounted to her being forced to strip and undergo a physical examination in front of soldiers, which she claimed amounted to sexual harassment and torture. Although she has become somewhat of an icon of a growing women's movement for more fair treatment, many within Egypt have tried to push it to the side, as it blights the image of change they are so proud of.

This has not been an isolated incident of harassment in the protests. Images of Lara Logan, a CBS reporter were beamed across screens when she was assaulted as she tried to report on the protests last year. However, most accounts of violence within these protests have not reached the general public's consciousness. On the anniversary protests at the beginning of this year, a Swedish female friend of mine and her two friends were all sexually harassed in Tahrir Square, which has otherwise been a symbol of liberation. She describes the incident as such: "ten to fifteen men took my American friend, then suddenly ten to fifteen men took my Spanish friend and then it was my turn; men pulled me away and gathered around me, pulling my hair, touching my breast and bum, but they never managed to pull my clothes off. I started to scream allah u akhbar and that was my salvation". The men in these incidents were not the authorities, whom it would be rather easier to rally against, but the same men whose protests and defiance helped to pull down the regime. Tahrir square means liberation square. Yet whilst the destiny of men seems to be taking their rightful position in society after repression by a dictatorship, for women their liberation is still forthcoming.

As the political process has become more inclusive, women still find themselves outside the system. They were excluded from the committee that enacted reforms to the constitution last March and female candidates secured only around one percent of the 508 seats in the new assembly. This is a step back from under Mubarak when

64 seats were reserved for women. Excluding women from political changes does not bring much hope that the position of women across Egypt can be advanced. Although it would be wrong to tar all men in Egypt with the same brush, if those clamouring for justice have stood by as women have been assaulted, why should we expect those who have then gone on to take office to do anything to address the awful position of women of the status quo?

Egypt has always had longstanding problems of gender inequality. The World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap report 2010 ranked Egypt 125 out of 134 countries in respect to gender inequality. Some of the indicators showed the legal system has played a role in perpetuating the position of women - Egypt did very badly on the existence of legislation punishing acts of violence against women. Others showed that problems remain more cultural. Female genital mutilation was outlawed in 2008, but is still practised, particularly in more rural areas. A week ago, the city of Alexandria hit the news as two "honour" killings occurred. Both women - in separate incidents - were killed by their brothers, one of whom justified his actions because of her "bad morals". Egypt may not be the only country to experience "honour" killings, but they are an extreme example of the pressure women are often under to conform.

There is undeniably a culture of liberation in the country at the moment; it just is not reaching women. Partly this liberation is political as the revolution has brought promises of more popular participation. Women's role in this though is yet to be confirmed and the current situation is not promising. Culturally too, Egypt is undergoing a transformation. Music videos, fashion and films are all addressing the conservative culture, but the position of women still appears unchanged. As the incidents of the honour killings demonstrate, whilst it is becoming more acceptable for men to have sex outside marriage, it can destroy the reputation - and life - of the woman involved. As women go onto the streets to demand the change their brothers are they face assault not just from the authorities, but from the very men they are protesting alongside.

Why does Egypt face these problems? Many are quick to blame religion. Yet countries, such as Tunisia fair much better in terms of gender equality. In their most recent elections, half of every party's candidates had to be women, and as a result the assembly is much more equal in representation. From 1957 women's rights have been enshrined in law in Tunisia. Young Egyptian couples often go to neighbouring countries, such as Lebanon or Jordan, to get a break from the restrictive confines of their own country. Religion itself is not the cause it appears, but rather the justification of a restrictive culture. In the process of change and upheaval Egypt is going through, it would appear to be the perfect chance to address some of these issues. In reality, not only have they not been addressed, but women have actually found themselves more at risk as they have tried to participate in transformation the country is going under. ☘

Reflections on the world's truths

Edward Larkin reflects on what experience has taught him

There are certain truths you eventually come to realize. Some are obvious a priori, others can only be dredged up with considerable effort. Some are learned only through experience, and among these some are learned immediately after the experience, while others become apparent only years later. A few examples:

That grade school dances are a particularly pure form of Social Darwinism.

That being genuinely nice and genuinely greedy is somehow worse than being genuinely mean and genuinely greedy just because of the cognitive dissonance involved.

That there is a certain moment during an airplane flight – when the ground is close enough to seem real and not to be an abstraction but far enough for you to understand just how high you are – that is truly terrifying.

That happiness due to a win for your candidate/party in a political race is sullied by the knowledge that about 50 per cent of people think the country will be materially worse off because they won.

That everyone's really afraid of death.

That there is a certain moment during an airplane flight – when the ground is close enough to seem real and not to be an abstraction but far enough for you to understand just how high you are – that is truly terrifying.

That all it takes to see a TV ad as an affront to our intelligence is to hit the mute button.

That great literature is dependent on being able to "identify" with the characters, despite the unpopularity of this idea in academia.

That this is why we enjoy stories about humans more than stories about cattle or geese, no matter how eloquent they may be.

That "genitalia" is a word we could do without.

That some people respond curtly to emails because they're very busy.

That some people respond curtly to emails because they want it to look like they're very busy.

That academics tend to fall in the latter group.

That there are words in the English language that are never necessary and are used almost exclusively to convey pretentiousness.

That such words include: ontological, heuristic, and epistemology.

That you can guess the personality type of a person with 95 per cent accuracy based on their LinkedIn.

That way more people would believe in evolution if we killed animals ourselves and didn't groom ourselves or wear clothes.

That this is perhaps too high a price to pay for greater belief in evolution.

That there's rarely a good vs. evil situation in the world.

That we all think there are a lot of good vs. evil situations in the world.

That we never think we are on the evil side of any of these.

That for some reason this doesn't make us wonder if the evil guy is thinking the same thing.

That sacrificing the time between ages 20-30 is a high price to pay for a comfortable retirement.

That we should cherish cultural differences.

That the difference between electrical outlets in the US, the UK, and Europe is not one of these differences.

That noble rationality is at its core dependent on emotion, and that rationality devoid of an emotional foundation is unfathomably repugnant.

That even though some people think sports are trivial or just games, they can give rise to some of the most unadulterated transcendent pleasure experienced in the world.

That we don't actually like thinking that much.

That, viewed in a certain (admittedly reductive) light, all mathematics is an attempt to reduce the amount of thinking we have to do.

That one of the most bizarre practices in the world is seeing someone you know then pretending like you didn't see them just to avoid saying "hey."

That Facebook stalking is ubiquitous, and that we should thus consider a less pejorative term to reflect the reality of the situation.

That cover letters are perhaps the most unironic genre of communication ever invented.

That if someone makes an incredibly dogmatic religious comment you will never look at them quite the same, at best seeing them as an elaborately programmed machine rather than a real human being.

That Wikipedia is at the end of the day, despite the protestations of librarians worldwide, the final authority.

That there are few situations as awkward as a person crying in an elevator.

That one of these situations is a loud, vulgar cell phone fight in an elevator.

That there are few situations as embarrassing as falling off the back of a treadmill in a gym on account of not being able to keep up with the set speed you set for yourself.

That everyone likes how they look in a mirror way more than they do in a camera.

That certain groups of people will often go out of their way to show they have power over you.

That these same groups of people will often go disproportionately out of their way to help you if you treat them with a modicum of respect and dignity.

That a great indication of general ineptitude is someone having the same university listed like eight times on their Facebook info page.

That most of us can't answer the question: "How would you have figured out what the exchange rate between pounds and dollars before Google?"

That happiness and producing great art often have an antagonistic relationship.

That if you are over 22, it's really disconcerting to think that before this decade is out, you will be 30.

That despite the fact that they are the inevitable whirlpool conclusion of all nights out, about 5 per cent of people in your typical dance club are having fun.

That homeless people elicit the most human sympathy (if value of bucket donations is a function of human sympathy, which you kind of have to assume it is) when they dress up as statues and stand still for

hours on end, thus making themselves more object than human, and that this should make us ask some really fundamental questions.

That the purpose of airplane snacks is unclear.

That the greatest wine connoisseurs in the world can't tell the difference between a £15 and a £1,500 bottle if the labels are switched.

That after you've witnessed a connoisseur pontificate about wine with the sort of unabashed fundamentalism that would make a fifth-generation born-again evangelical deep in the southern swampland of the U.S.A. look like Ruth Benedict, you realise there is a sort of cosmic justice to this.

That passing on one's genes is a somewhat Sisyphean goal.

That one of the most cruel tortures in the world is to open one's Facebook and see a little red "1" on the messages icon, all engorged with hope, and find that it is a chain message or event rescheduling.

That people in London who wait for the green pedestrian light to walk across a street even when there is no chance of a car coming are tourists.

That people in London that confidently walk across a street when the red hand light is on are natives.

That people in London that make kamikaze runs across a street during heavy traffic while the red hand light is on then realize halfway they were a bit overzealous thus provoking a mid-road crisis of faith that leads to either the consummation of the crossing or a desperate dive back to the original side, are tourists.

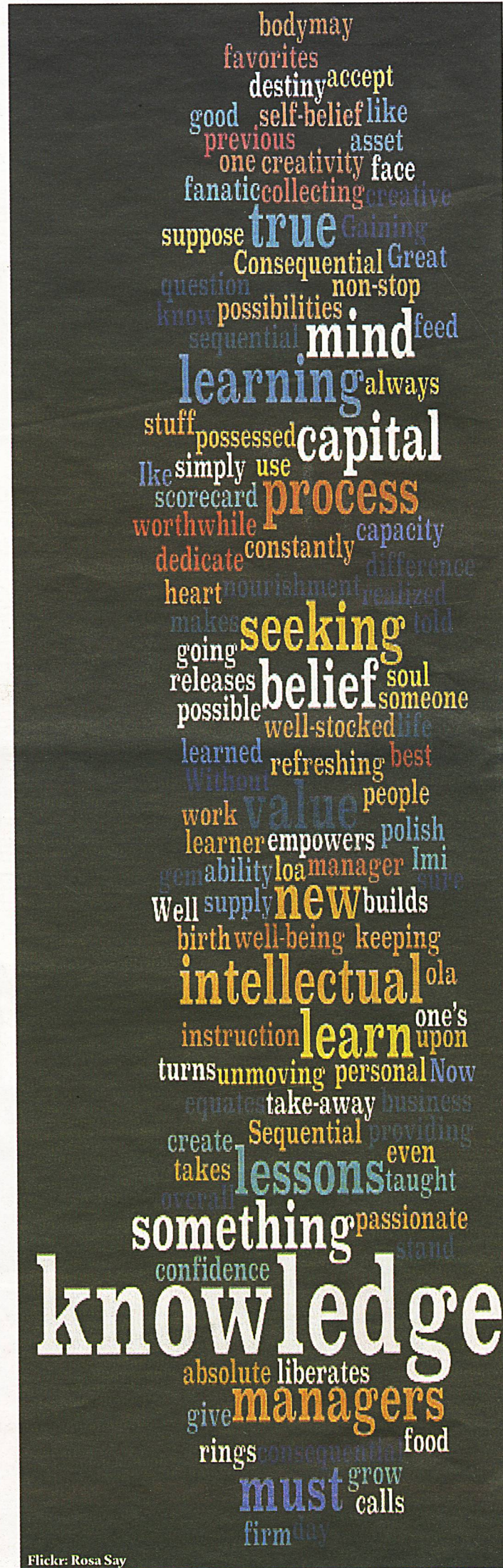
That there are few situations as embarrassing as falling off the back of a treadmill in a gym on account of not being able to keep up with the set speed you set for yourself.

That if a person you're romantically interested in recommends a song, you can engage in literary criticism and deconstruction as impressive as any of the French philosophers.

That food seems weird when you consider that there's actually no inherent taste to it at all, it's simply a neural reaction to the molecules that activate our taste receptors – if they indicate nutritious elements that help our cells function effectively, it tastes good, if not, it tastes bad.

That one problem with movies is that whenever a character is required to do something strenuous or challenging – raising money, studying for an incredibly important test, preparing for a big fight, etc – these scenes tend to be filmed with an upbeat song in the background and quick images of success after success, never showing the grinding unpleasantness, boredom, and concentrated work necessary to truly accomplish something difficult in life.

There are still a lot more things to learn.



Flickr: Rosa Say

Hanging in the balance

Elli Palaologou asks: should Greece leave the Eurozone?

In early February the website of the Greek Ministry of Justice was hacked. A man disguised as Guy Fawkes sent a threatening message to the incumbent government through a two-minute video, accusing it of having destroyed democracy. Visibly influenced by the heroic freedom fighter of the film "V

In periods of economic and social decline it is to be expected that people will tend to identify with the revolutionary spirit expressed through this video, considering it a window of hope in an otherwise bleak environment.

for Vendetta", the Anonymous internet group declared itself ready to punish those who have violated the principles of social fairness. In contrast to the movie in question though, Greece is not under the governance of a totalitarian regime and its prime minister is not a ruthless dictator aspiring to exploit its citizens.

In periods of economic and social decline it is to be expected that people will tend to identify with the revolutionary spirit expressed through this video, considering it a window of hope in an otherwise bleak environment. After four years of recession and a total absence of confidence in future prospects, the population's frustration is evident across all ages and social classes. The escalating public distress generates the inevitable question whether Greece should continue struggling to maintain its euro membership, or whether it should leave the common currency and independently pursue its economic revival.

In a debate organised by "Intelligence Squared" in cooperation with the BBC World Service, Nouriel Roubini argued in favour of the country's exit from the Eurozone. He claimed that in the best case scenario Greece's debt will fall to 120.5 per cent of G.D.P. by 2020, at the cost of a decade of harsh austerity and ever-deepening recession. Even though the measures mandated by the EU are necessary, he said, they constitute a non-viable strategy for a country already so profoundly in crisis.

According to Eurostat, Greek unemployment has reached a staggering 20.9 per cent while 48 per cent of people aged between 16-25 are currently unable to find a job. Moreover, the new bailout approved in Brussels on the 21st February entails further cuts in wages and pensions and additional reductions in public expenditure, contributing to the mounting uncertainty over what will follow. Despite the considerable costs incurred by Greek citizens in 2011, the country's G.D.P. shrank by nearly 7 per cent and

it is expected to fall by another 4-5 per cent in 2012. This makes meeting fiscal targets even harder. People are increasingly concerned that their sacrifices are to no avail. Under such circumstances, Roubini argues that a return to the drachma, combined with a significant depreciation of the currency, is the optimal alternative, as it will quickly boost the country's competitiveness. Should Greece therefore default and leave the Eurozone?

According to Eurostat, Greek unemployment has reached a staggering 20.9 per cent while 48 per cent of people aged between 16-25 are currently unable to find a job.

Not necessarily. A Greek exit may have devastating effects, creating a dangerous precedent in Europe and exposing the country to the risk of a prolonged economic depression. Denis MacShane, a British politician who served as Minister of Europe between 2002-2005, responded to Mr. Roubini by arguing that a default would lead to an outburst of panic, condemning Greece to extreme

poverty and undermining its road to recovery. In contrast to what a segment of Greek citizens may believe, leaving the Eurozone will not ease the pressure on their incomes, while the country's deficient productivity will mean that any gains in competitiveness from a devalued drachma will only be temporary. Most of the harsh measures imposed by the EU are essential if the country wishes to abandon the wildly inefficient ways of its past. The over sized public sector, the excessive public borrowing and spending, the toleration of substantial tax evasion, as well as the heavily politicised university institutions, have badly hurt the country's productive capacity and will continue to undermine any attempt at reform.

The €130 billion bailout (£108 billion), complemented with a 53.5 per cent haircut of the nominal value of private-sector bonds are not sufficient for placing the country on an upward trajectory. The European Union, the International Monetary Fund and the European Central Bank warned that the Greek debt would remain close to its current level (171 per cent of G.D.P.) if Athens fails to apply the measures. The reform of the tax system, the opening of the country's highly regulated markets and the efficient operation of the public sector are necessary conditions for the country's return to growth.

The economic downturn can be seen as a unique opportunity to finally establish a strong and competitive Greek economy that will provide its citizens with equal opportunities to achieve high standards of living. While the majority of the population feels aggrieved, forced to bear the burden

of an economic crisis it did not cause; the truth is not all of them are free of blame. Widespread corruption in politics is not the sole contributor to the current social and economic decay. The population's mass engagement in tax evasion and willing participation in the clientelismat play in the public sector, are also largely responsible.

Greece does not need freedom fighters. It needs conscious citizens who will efficiently carry out their duties.

Greece does not need freedom fighters. It needs conscious citizens who will efficiently carry out their duties and will not look away in instances of fraud. It needs new political representatives who will inspire the people and encourage their concern over the achievement of the common good. It needs institutions that will not undermine morality as a Utopian notion, but will instead restore its significance. And it needs a population conscious of the bankruptcy of the ways of the past and determined to support painful measures that will reestablish social justice and restore economic prosperity. ☛



Political déjà-vu in London

Tim Poole looks at a second round of Ken vs. Boris in 2012's mayoral elections



Flickr: Overseas Development Institute



Flickr: BackBoris2012

Ahead of this year's London Mayoral race, residents of England's capital are experiencing political déjà-vu. The elections (to be held May 3rd) boil down, as ever in British politics, to a two-horse race. Though, for voters, this race is not new; in fact, it's exactly the same race as last time. As if rallying calls for wholesale changes to the monotonous, repetitive landscape of modern politics were not enough, the candidates for London Mayor are actually identical to who they were four years ago. Yes, it's Ken v Boris round two (and Brian Paddick is lurking somewhere in the shadows - you may not have noticed, but he was also there four years ago).

They say that, with Ken and Boris, it comes down to policy vs. personality. Johnson provides the charisma, charm and bumbling buffoonery that we all love; meanwhile, Livingstone provides the stability, continuity and integrity that many voters long for. Well, that's supposedly the case. Although this year's contest is providing new twists and turns to entertain the electorate, the tumultuous journey towards results day is, in fact, revealing a rather boring conclusion: both candidates have equally lively personalities and both are equally hit and miss with their policies.

According to a poll, Boris Johnson would be most Londoners' top choice of whom to have breakfast with. Last time out at the polling stations, Johnson was also Londoners' top choice to run their city. His Boris Bikes (although not a profitable scheme) have further increased his popularity

and confirmed his reputation as every chap's best friend. Meanwhile, his latest rhetoric suggests that he "knows what he needs to do... just give him four more years".

Livingstone eats, drinks and breathes politics. The former mayor has said that, even during gardening, he talks through political issues with himself. He has long-term plans that go beyond the next four years - he wants his throne back and he wants it badly.

According to a poll, Boris Johnson would be most Londoners' top choice of whom to have breakfast with.

In the news this week, Livingstone was accused of "hypocrisy" for using a loophole that allows him to avoid £50,000 in tax per year. The loophole is based on earnings from speeches and radio appearances that are paid into a private company, allowing him to utilise corporate tax rates that are lower than income tax. This news does much to undermine Livingstone's accusations aimed at Johnson's £250,000 salary as a columnist for the Daily Telegraph. The criticism intensifies when one takes into consideration Livingstone's calls for those who do

not pay full tax to be stopped from voting in elections. Johnson has similarly made headlines with his vow to curb the power of tube unions by introducing trains without drivers. Also not going unnoticed are his claims that he's saved every individual Londoner £500 over the past four years. Johnson wants to be the Mayor who delivers an automated tube network with a reduced risk of strikes, claiming that he is the only politician that could do so. However, only 24 hours after the claims, Tube union bosses threatened to strike during the Olympics to force up bonus payments - somewhat of retaliation to the mayor's supposed authority. Indeed, Johnson's focus on tube union power has more or less centralised the issue in the run up to Election Day. Livingstone has been criticised for his close links to union officials; however, these ties may serve him well as RMT leader, Bob Crow, has told him that if he pledges to keep a driver in every train, he will win the election outright. Like Livingstone, Johnson also appears to have long-term plans, refusing to rule out running for a third term. Thus, if Londoners are sick of the sight of Ken and Boris, they may still have to put up with the two of them for quite some time; surely, no commentator would be willing to bet against Ken vs. Boris round three in four year's time. However, it is this election is will arguably matter most, as the winner will be taking control of the host city of the Olympics. Indeed, Londoners may well base their vote on who they would rather see on their TV screens throughout the two-week period in

August.

Another consideration is how loyal Boris will be to City Hall when many believe him to be planning a bid for Tory Party leadership within the next few years. It will not be utterly straightforward if Livingstone is victorious either, however; will the labour through-and-through veteran be able to work alongside a central Tory government? Many believe that this may be a step too far and a potential cause of demise. Polls have been up and down - the contest is a close one and isn't showing signs of going too far either way anytime soon. Johnson held a considerable lead but was pegged back; however, Livingstone's resurgence came to a halt and Johnson retook the lead by around two points. In the near future, expect the political tug of war to displace the rope to the left and right, with varying velocities.

Overall, the contest will depend on a select handful of major issues. The Tube unions and the Olympics are two of them and personality (as well as moral judgement of any extra pay received) will always remain a factor. A popular conception (as stated by Professor Tony Travers) is that it's a fight between Livingstone's belief in government spending and Johnson's belief in efficiency and saving. Johnson may well win voters with his pledge to create 200,000 new jobs and plant 20,000 street trees. According to his plans, he will be able to pay for this by cutting enough waste at City Hall to free up £3.5 billion for services. Though, this is perhaps matched by Livingstone's promise to cut tube fares, approved of by 68% of London-

ers; this promise has been pivotal for Livingstone's campaign and has really captured the mood of the capital. Conversely, where putting words into practice is concerned, 46% of voters believe that Livingstone would not fulfil this particular pledge. The same can be said for Johnson's declaration that he will cut Tube union power - this can easily be expressed in words, but can it or will it be done in reality?

Eventually, one may not receive blame for concluding, quite simply, that both candidates have their merits and pitfalls and to choose between them proves a tough decision. Unusually, this election will be a very tight encounter that presents two rather competent candidates. There is not a 'hero' or 'villain' and the perception is that underlying political bias (i.e. naturally left or right wing) may not be that influential, with it being more of a case of a straightforward choice between Ken or Boris. As mentioned, Brian Paddick, is also in the picture, but that picture is not one that features the finishing line.

It may come down to something small but significant: a startling blunder or act of heroism, something that wows or disgusts the electorate. But remember, whatever twists and turns occur, it's all happened before. Four years ago, opinion polls suggested incongruous statistics all the way up until the final votes were registered. The Ken vs. Boris saga always has and always will bring with it uncertainty. Hence, before the results are released, no one will really have a clue who the winner is - this year's Mayoral race is by far the closest yet. ☞

Elections, promises and tuition fees

Chris Rogers interviews Simon Hughes MP

Simon Hughes is MP for Bermondsey and Old Southwark, containing Bankside and Butlers Wharf Halls of Residence. He is Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrats.

Hello, thanks for the opportunity to have this interview. Firstly, given everything that has happened over the last two years, what is the Lib Dem's official policy on Tuition Fees?

Our official policy is still to get rid of them, it was always our plan to get rid of them over 6 years because of the budgetary implications, obviously we didn't win that argument in government. I didn't vote for the increase, I decided given the government did decide to increase fees from next autumn and the threshold of 6000 before requiring better access, the best thing I could do was lead the charge in the country to make sure people from disadvantaged backgrounds weren't put off.

We are very pleased with the result, if you compare the numbers of 18-19 year olds this year with the numbers from last year there is only a 1% drop in applications, and if you compare the socio-economic backgrounds there is only a 0.2% drop from those from non-traditional families, strangely there is a 2.5% drop from those from better off families. The largest drop of all is actually in Scotland where there are no Tuition fees at all, which is a bit of a paradox. The most worrying drop is among older students, whose numbers have tailed off.

The message is, though you may not have been persuaded of it yet, do think of it as loans or grants, think of it as a graduate contribution. You pay nothing up front you pay nothing while you are there, you only start paying when you earn 21 Grand, you will be paying less than you are a month now, you won't pay if you are out of work, and at the end of 30 years, it stops being paid at all. The government took the Brown Report and made it much more progressive.

P.S. to that, the Office of Fair Access it a key player, they have to sign off on what the LSE is doing to allow

the LSE to go over the £6000 a year, the leader is Lez Ebdon, and he is a progressive, he's not going to not try hard to make sure places don't deliver.

You oppose tuition fees but abstained from the tuition fees vote, was that simply because it was in the coalition agreement?

Yes, it was in essence that, I campaigned to abolish tuition fees, we didn't anticipate a coalition government, we negotiated in the coalition agreement, we got as much as we could. We agreed when we didn't agree with Government policy we could abstain.

I was clear that if I the deputy leader broke the coalition agreement, our bargain for the Tories to keep it would be entirely weakened. The typical examples are, we made a commitment to overseas aid not being cut, if I'd said I was going to vote against tuition fees, what's to stop the Tories coming back saying we are not going to deliver, that's not a priority.

Secondly we are committed to raising the tax threshold so that anyone who earns under 10 grand a year, pays not tax. This disproportionately helps young people, and people on low incomes. If I voted the wrong way, why should the Tories say, we were bound by that.

Support for the Liberal Democrats has dropped significantly among students, do you think you can win them back?

I'll give you an answer I wouldn't have thought I could have given you a year ago. If we'd of had this discussion a year ago, I was really worried there was no way back. I was on doorsteps the other day in Leeds, I don't think the student view is as hard-line and ungenerous as it was a year ago. I think we have to be judged after 5 years. If after 5 years we've shown we are going to be a government where Liberal Democrats are seen as putting conflict prevention at the top of the agenda and are working with the UN, not doing things like Labour did, which was to go to war illegally against Iraq. To stop genocides like

we did in Libya. And if at home we're seen to be for example to make sure cycling is being given a bigger role in transport, and pedestrians and cyclists are much more the centre of policy as well as helping young people to have better chances at apprentices, for work experience. Then I may think that students at the next election may think, all right, we were let down by these guys, we are suspicious, but we will judge them by their merits.

On that note, there was the very public pledge made to students to vote against any increase in tuition fees that you didn't uphold. Do you think it was in a sense a betrayal?

Yes, we let people down dreadfully, we did make a promise and we couldn't deliver it. We hadn't thought through, and there is a lesson for us; there hasn't been a coalition government since the war so we didn't have the pledge, which has a little asterisk, which said "we won't be able to deliver this if we are not in the majority". So in that sense it was an honorable pledge made in the best of intentions, but we negotiated for the whole of our manifesto with the Tories, but that was one of the immovable on the Tories side. The important thing we did was to make sure we have a Liberal Democrat in the department that looks after universities who is a progressive. Vince Cable, who is a progressive, and is leading that department which is a guarantee and a reassurance that it wasn't given to the Tories who would have been much more fast and furious about wanting to privatize or put the prices up or whatever.

The London Mayoral Elections are approaching, why do you think we should vote for Brian Paddick, given his poor showing in the last election?

Well, may I just remind everyone people have votes for the mayor and the assembly, and they are the people who can hold the mayor to account, and are a proportionately representative.

The answer is very simple, Brian Paddick is one of London's most senior police officers, a Londoner born

and bred, is I think the most qualified to deal with one of the issues which are most important to Londoners today, and that is safely crime, law and order, engaging young people. He was a highly successful borough commander in Lambeth, he has an uncriticised career as one of the top cops in Scotland yard, and I think one of the big issues for London is how to deliver a city where crime is down, where young people feel safe and where young people feel more engaged, and I think he is one of the best qualified to do that.

And then you have to say how does he rate next to the other candidates, we knew about Ken, but Boris was the new kid on the block, so there was an attraction in voting for him. I have nothing against him personally, but his record of delivery is small. I can only normally think of about five.

But also going back to Ken would be a backwards step, he has some merits, but I think we need to focus on other things, we need to use the river more, for goods and services and people, a fantastic highway we don't use much, and we need to focus on making the roads safer.

In the Mayoral election you have a second transferable vote, given the likelihood it is going to be between Boris and Ken, would you recommend to Liberal Democrat voters to choose Boris or Ken?

We have always taken a view that it is absolutely a view for people to choose and it is absolutely wrong for us to guide them. Some people will come to a different view some people might say Green, or a Tory or Ken, so we never proscribe that, Brian won't be suggesting a view.

So you don't prefer Boris to Ken or Ken to Boris, you think they are the same?

It is not for me to pronounce, as enticing as the choice is. Can I add another point?

Of course.

The more vote the Liberal Demo-

crats get, they better chance the BNP won't get a seat, and so if people want more moderate, conciliatory progressive polices, there is a danger if we lose votes the more extreme parties will gain them.

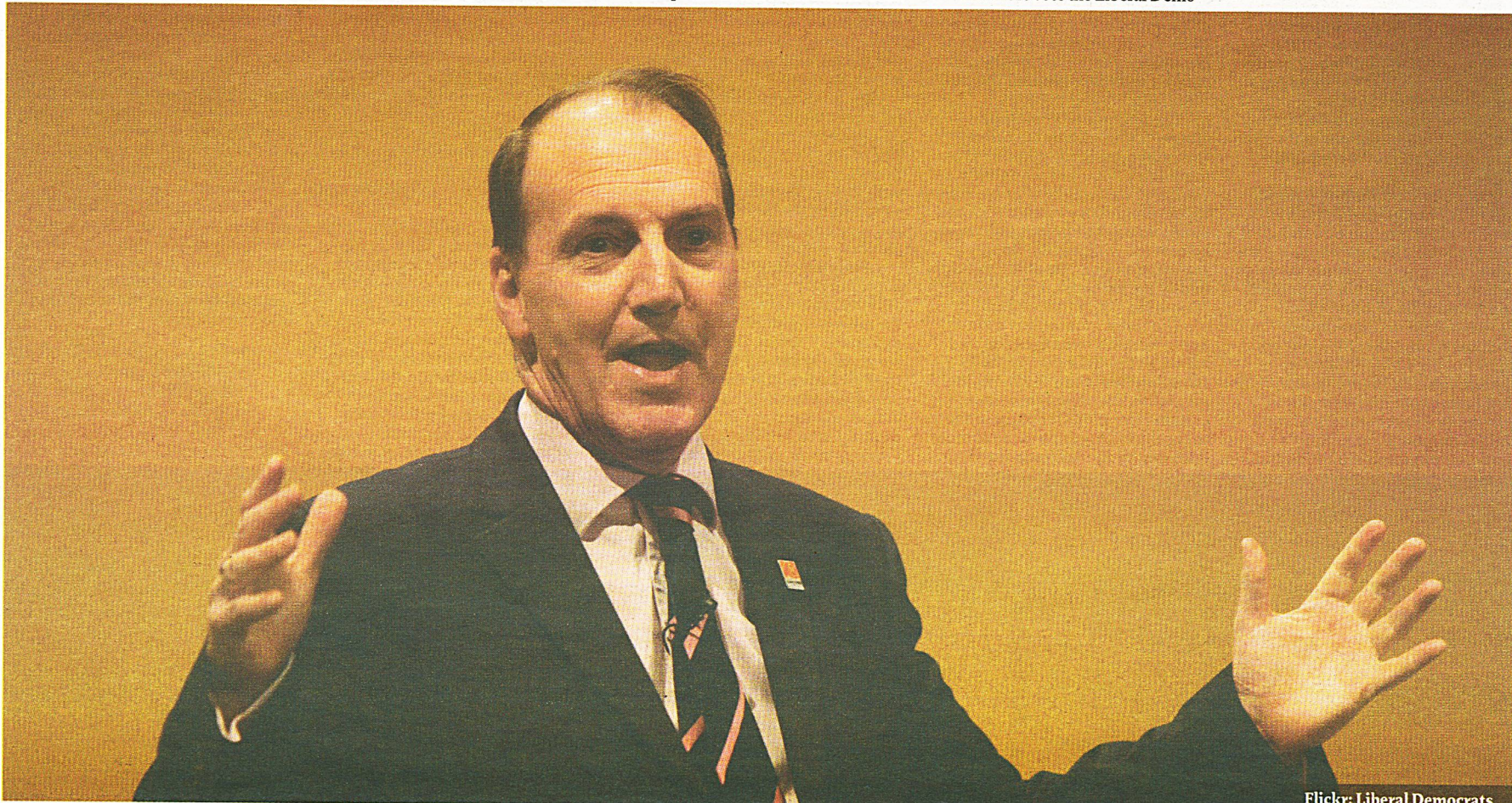
The next general election is going to be interesting, where do you see the Liberal Democrats? In another coalition or keep their seats?

I was looking back at my speech to our conference in 2006 predicting after this election there would be a balanced parliament. I never anticipated we would do a deal with the Tories but the reason we did that was Tories plus us made a majority. Labour plus us didn't. Labour had lost the election and therefore keeping a party in power that had lost would be difficult politically, people would have said this was the coalition of the losers. And in the end the Tories were hugely accommodating, they accepted two thirds of our policy manifestos. You could argue because they were so desperate to get back into office, but they were unexpectedly accommodating.

It is entirely possible if the economy is back on its way and improving, that we will be seen for getting the UK out of a hole financially.

I think we have already been seen as being more fair than the Tories, requiring people to pay more capital gains tax, we insisted on the bankers levy. Vince Cable's been leading the battle against obscene executive pay, and ridiculous bonuses. We have yanked the government round into a more progressive place.

So the answer is that our objective is to keep our numbers in Parliament, which obviously will be difficult. We will be attacked for being in government, but if we can be distinctive we beat the one objection people always gave to us, why should we vote for you, you will never be in office. Therefore what we stand for is something that is a good thing that we can deliver, and on those areas where we didn't deliver, like tuition fees I hope people can understand we did a lot to mitigate a policy that we didn't want. ☘



The Turing machine

Tom Besley ponders the philosophical and creative implications of Turing's work

Alan Turing seeded a technological revolution. Computers everywhere broadcast this fact around the clock. Less discussed - though just as intrinsic - are the philosophical and creative revolutions associated with his work. By creating a simple system whereby symbols - which can represent anything in the world - can be manipulated by a computer according to a given set of rules, Turing ushered in a new perspective on how the human mind might function. Here's how.

A Turing machine is able to affect very simple changes to a string of symbols according to the rules of the programme it is running. If the symbols represent words and the rules of the programme are those of a natural language, say English, then a Turing machine in theory, is able to produce outputs (new arrangement of symbols) which resemble the English language.

For years since Turing's proposal, leaders in artificial intelligence held the view that this kind of computation was at the heart of human cognition.

This invited a raft of new speculations about the human mind and whether one day such computational systems would become sophisticated enough to be called "intelligent". These kinds of ideas have been popular in science fiction for a long time but it took Turing to breathe the necessary practical wisdom into them. Turing's great idea is enshrined in the Loebner Prize. Each year it sets the challenge of building a piece of software according to Turing's conditions that is capable of convincingly conversing with a human judge in a way indistinguishable from a human being. Chat bots like these are deployed in various guises, sometimes with hilarious (or tragic) consequences. One in particular was so convincing that an eminent Psychology professor who believed he was speaking to a Russian woman from a singles website embarked on a six month correspondence before realising he was talking to a machine. Astonishingly he reported developing an emotional attachment to the bot. What this says about him, the software and the science of psychology is left to the reader to surmise. Whatever the conclusion, it is clear that Turing triggered an approach to thinking about the mind in an environment beyond the philosophers armchair.

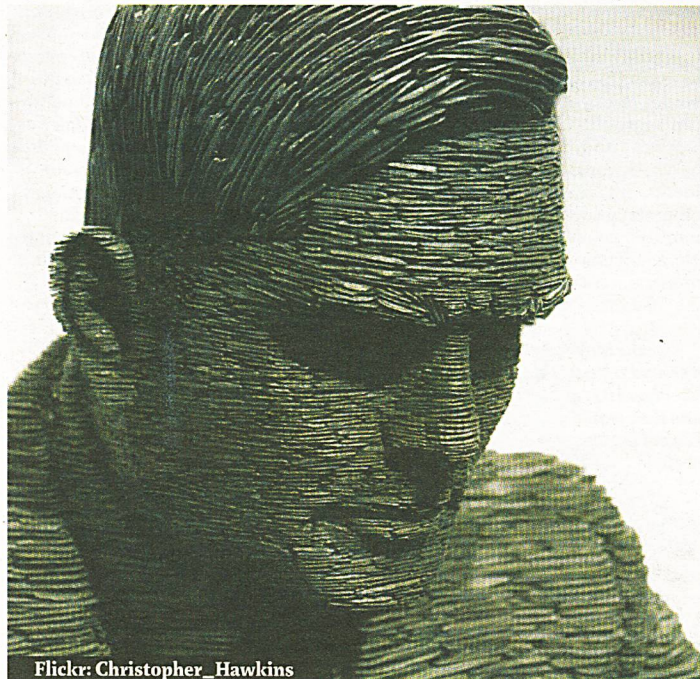
In his centenary year, Turing's interdisciplinary impact is being celebrated by artists as well as philosophers, scientists, biologists, system theorists, novelists, film makers - the list goes on. Computer art is an emerging discipline providing radical augmentation to artistic practice. Dr. Nick Lambert, lecturer in contemporary digital art at Birkbeck, provides this precise account of what Turing

has afforded artists: "the computer operates simultaneously as medium, tool and context, in addition to its organisational and interactive elements. The image-space described using software frees artists from the restrictions of physical media by providing a dynamic non-material environment, whose potentials may be realized in the resulting artwork." Making in the Metaverse means entirely new kinds of art works are possible. Physics does not frame the artist's imagination and conceptual projects can be realised in increasingly higher degrees of fidelity. Roy Ascot's "La Plissure Du Texte" is a good example of how computers render artists' ideas. In 1983 Ascot had the idea of opening up a shared text file which participants from across the globe could log into, and write their own improvised narratives based around a set of fairytale characters that he suggested - a prince or a witch. The end result was a constantly evolving text which told a story, co-authored by anyone and everyone, a global game of "Exquisite Corpse". Move forward to 2010 and Ascot revives the project, except now he uses Second Life as the canvas. LPDT2 is a Second Life environment in which text explodes and shimmers, traversing impossible architecture and physically moving through space. Avatars interact with the text, embodying it and performing its narrative. The same concept is executed in fundamentally different ways, thanks to the computer.

With specific reference to Turing's work the Lighthouse Gallery in Brighton recently put together a show entitled "Intuition and Ingenuity". Curators Anna Dumitriu, Sue Gollifer and Nick Lambert sought out "works

that embodied certain concepts that Turing either directly invented (such as the foundations of computation and the Turing Test for Artificial Intelligence) or was influential upon (like cellular automata and morphogenesis)" and in doing so responded to the challenge of embodying Turing's work in an artwork. These include algorithmically-plotted prints and etchings, simulations of Turing Machines and two functioning robots, one of which projects the viewer's face onto its own face mask in an attempt to "overcome the widespread fear of androids" (see image). According to Lambert, works inspired by Turing - especially interactive artworks - are eliciting new aesthetic responses from audiences and re-characterizing this relationship. The creative application of Turing's ideas are spawning new aesthetic categories, posing more problems for philosophers and further exemplifying the significance of his thinking.

Turing's great idea was a simple one. And like all great ideas, it is hard to imagine a world without it being the kind of place we would like to inhabit. Tragically, the society from within which Turing worked was not ready to accept him, and electroshock therapy administered as a "cure" for homosexuality threw him into a depression that brought on suicide. In a fitting tribute in his centenary year there is now an online petition to have the charges against him dropped. One can only hope that Turing will have the last laugh by setting in motion a chain of events that lead to his recognition not only as a mathematician but also as a citizen.



Flickr: Christopher_Hawkins

Measured musings | Student elections - an introduction

We have just witnessed Student elections this past week all across the country, and it is clear to see student elections have very different ethos than any other election. There is considerable overlap of course, but the general discourse is framed in very different ways. Last week demonstrated a perfect case study of the campaigns found within the LSESU.

The most noticeable difference found within the confines of the LSE is the political slant of the candidates.

While in Westminster, Labour and the Conservatives wrestle for control of the levers of power. In the LSE Students' Union, these societies often band together against the more radical elements within the political spectrum of the student body.

Each university has its own political spread, the LSE's in recent years has seen a battle between the radicals, and the moderates. Two camps have emerged: the first, whose members seek to make the Union more politically active, participate in demonstrations and

focus on international solidarity; the other, whose members focus more inwardly, upon the Union itself, aiming to produce localised changes.

The divide between student politics and wider politics is clear. The Students' Union is fascinating to those not immediately turned-off by politics. This election saw a sharp divide between two groups of candidates, those endorsed by the radicals and those endorsed by the moderates.

The political slant of these groups can be seen by the collective campaigning techniques of the candidates in each of the Sabbatical elections. One was typified by 'vote for the progressive candidates' with voting recommendations organized by how left wing the candidate's manifestos were. The other was typified by the Facebook event entitled "Restoring sanity to the LSE."

The fact that there was little if any overlap between the endorsements given by the groups shows a strong level of identification to the respective sides that it became in certain races more about personality than politics. Arguably some of those endorsed by one side were perhaps

closer to the other, politically speaking.

Recent years have seen a strong showing for the more activist wing of LSE students, this was noticeable with students such as Ashok Kumar being elected to Sabbatical positions. Likewise candidates supported by the far left groups won three quarters of the Sabbatical positions last year and the remaining position was only lost by four votes.

There is however a transience of political feelings at the LSE, which is perhaps best shown by the re-election of Alex Peters-Day as General Secretary of the SU last week. Last year, Peters-Day was the candidate endorsed by the far left, yet this year she was the champion of the more moderate group.

Nevertheless, groupings do appear to play a significant role. This year saw a sharp swing to the moderate groups, with all four candidates endorsed by the moderate groups achieving office. This was due to a variety of reasons, but most probably because the centrist candidates managed to combine their campaigns more effectively than in previous years, and votes were thus

distributed among them all.

The drawback of this is that it produces an almost clique view of the Union. Unless one carries particularly strong feelings for or against the relevant political issues there is not a place for you in either campaign. Emotions can run particularly high within each campaign depending on the numbers won and lost, but this interest doesn't appear to reach the wider political community. The fact that only around twenty per cent of students voted in this election seems to typify the lack of interest in the LSE in general. The turnout was better than most university elections, but there is a lot more that needs to be done.

Those walking down Houghton Street could not help but have noticed that student politics also has a surprisingly bizarre collection of campaign themes. National campaigns are generally characterised by catchy slogans, portraying authority, calm, and a coherent message about their plans for the future. Student campaigns are, generally, the opposite. Last week we witnessed a campaign built around Facebook, and Captain Jack Tindale, memora-

ble for his election video where he was dressed as a pirate wielding a poorly designed sword to the Pirates of the Caribbean theme music. Last year we even saw a candidate build his campaign around a Lucozade bottle.

These seem irrelevant to how they intended to run the Union, but they all share one thing in common: they won.

We simply do not take ourselves too seriously, perhaps this is a fault with the student population in general, but one we seem to enjoy.

What can we say from student politics? Perhaps it is a good introduction to real world politics. Candidates form groups as in national politics, and try to invent catchy campaigns tailored to their audience. What appears different is the location of candidates on the political spectrum and the style of their campaigns.

Chris Rogers
Features Editor



Photo: Matt Worby

Social

Make mine a Latté



Flickr: Roberto Garcia Fadaan

Timothy Poole on LSE's obsession with coffee shops

It is fair to say that many of us have become inebriated by one thing or another since joining the LSE.

It is fair to say that many of us have become inebriated by one thing or another since joining the LSE. However -before you take that opening statement far too seriously- I am not actually talking about illegal substances or alcohol. No, by far the most addictive drug we have all thoroughly consumed throughout the course of this year is caffeine - mainly in the form of lattés, espressos, caramel macchiatos, frap-puchinos and what have you. Don't worry though, this is not a science essay designed to convince you that going to Costa or Pret will make your insides rot. What I want to examine -feel free to consider me weird for doing so- is why the trend of the coffee shop has become so fascinating, and why it is so immensely popular on LSE campus.

Take a walk down Kingsway and you cannot fail to notice the presence

of more than one Starbucks, Caffé Nero, Pret à Manger or Costa, ready to serve your preferred hot beverage. Holborn has been taken over by the corporate armies of the cappuccino machine- and so has the rest of London and the rest of the world, for that matter. It is not a new development, but it is striking nonetheless. I was at an Entrepreneur Society event earlier this year and the guest speaker aptly described this modern phenomenon; his point went roughly like this: "if you told me thirty years ago that your business plan involved making customers a drink they can easily make themselves at home and charge them a ridiculous amount of money for it, I'd have laughed. Yet, exactly this business model has taken the market by storm".

From that perspective, the rise and rise of the coffee shop actually defies logic. A fierce debate rages over which brand the best is: many are with Nero, some with Costa, I am with Starbucks. Yet, whichever camp you reside in, you cannot deny that

each and every one of them is operating at an astonishingly successful rate. In the midst of an economic slowdown and a Eurozone crisis, it appears that the average consumer is still more than willing to dish out a few quid on a caffeine-inhibited

The most addictive drug we have all thoroughly consumed is caffeine

drink of their choice. Starbucks announced a ten percent rise in profits at the beginning of 2012 and declared plans to create 5,000 jobs in the UK over the next five years. Meanwhile,

Costa announced last October that underlying profits had risen by nearly 42 percent.

Drinking coffee just seems to be part of the LSE culture. Central London and the city are posh places and so its students have responded. Fanta Orange? KA Pineapple? Of course not, mate, make mine a caramel hot chocolate with cream on top! I guess it is not a big deal, but its worth noting that every time we need anything - coffee has become our main medium. Got a free hour between lectures? Time for a coffee. Fancy someone? You will no doubt ask them out for a coffee. There are even employer coffee drop-in sessions.

Perhaps it is an annoying part of the LSE culture; something seems to perturb me about those that walk into class with a massive coffee cup as if to say "hey guys, without this, I won't be able to stay awake during this lesson!" Don't worry, buddy, we all got up at 7am too but we don't need a Starbucks to keep us

from snoring in the corner. Admittedly, I am being harsh - in practice, even the teachers do it. Nevertheless, caffeine gets addictive and my favourite drink (the irresistible white caffè mocha - Grande - of course) contains 471 calories. As I said, however, this is not a science essay and these things do not really bother me.

In the end, if this article has done anything, it is to draw your attention to just how much coffee we drink. Arguably, it isn't necessarily a bad thing. What can beat the taste and comfort of a hot drink on a Monday morning? And who can blame us LSE students for playing into the monopolist's hands when the rest of the city is doing the same thing? We job-hunting undergraduates and post-graduates alike all have something in common: we love coffee shops.

Right, now that that is sorted, I think I will get and up and go for a refill: make mine a latté, please.

Sex, Love and the Human Race

Cleo Pearson on the social construct of dating

The human race, it cannot be a bad place for an article to start. Well, we are pretty complex I would say. We have defied gravity and learnt to fly as Buzzlightyear intended, "to infinity and beyond". We have had philosophers and prophets who have challenged our very purpose and existence. We have stock markets and high

streets where this concept of "currency" is transferred daily, and we all feel some obligation to buy, buy, buy. We are measuring the gas in the air to try and work out how long we can let this world carry on spinning. So many achievements, so many intricacies and yet at times I feel that all this is just a childish charade disguising our most basic human needs.

Why do we bother complicating our existence with what essentially is fluff? In simple terms our lives can be stripped down to birth, growth, reproduction and death, the life cycle of an animal. I was born nineteen years ago, I have grown all of 5" 5in and think it is unlikely that I will grow any taller (unless aided by a five inch stiletto) and so now what? Society and my hormones have decided that I must find a partner in order to one day settle down and have a family. Undoubtedly I get a rush from meeting someone I like but, it is only now that I've taken my first roll of the die that I realise what a game dating is dressed up to be in an attempt to disguise one of our primal human needs.

My lifecoach (aka older sister) recently told me that I need to stop creating casual and inevitably ill-fated relationships with my friends or their friends for that matter. I thought thought that was one of the benefits of having lots of male friends? I have to hear enough about taking dumps, masturbation and football that surely there has to be something good in it for me? She did not buy my argument. But what's the alternative?

I am certainly not going to touch

the online dating scene for at least ten years. There is nothing wrong with it, in fact three out of four members of my nuclear family met their current partners that way. However, while I am still meeting lots of new people I would hope that things could happen more organically than that. My life-guru then asked, "Well have you ever asked a guy out then?"

"No, of course not, I'm a " I stopped.

I felt I could not play the "I'm a girl" card. It struck me how hypocritical I've been. In many respects I would say I support the feminist cause. However, although the gender pay gap is outrageous and strip joints are degrading, I like it when a man opens a door for me or at least offers to pay for my drink - even if I do decline or buy him one. I decided that instead of fearing rejection and spending my evening's Facebook stalking dreamy boys, I was going to ask someone out.

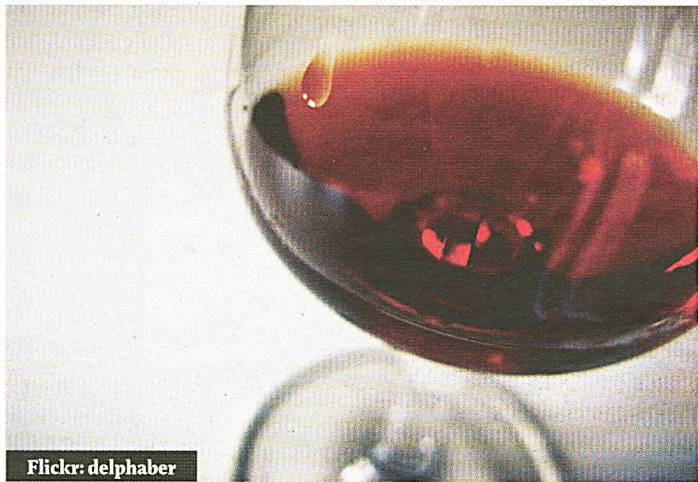
I messaged a guy I had recently met, suggesting we went for drinks. There was not an Armageddon; he simply said "yeah, that'd be cool".

Perhaps to you I'm making a mountain out of a mole hill, but to me I'm doing the exact opposite. I am not

the one over complicating things, the rules of dating are.

I always made friends and slightly-more-than-friends naturally, almost without realising that it was happening. It is bizarre to me that people should meet up for the sole purpose that they are in one way or another attracted to one another. You dress up nicely to look your best. Almost to be presented as goods, as traders at a market look to get the best deal. In simple terms, you are going to meet this guy for a date so that you can potentially continue the rest of the human race with him.

I feel that sometimes if one takes a step back from our daily lives and examines them in the grand scheme of things, our social customs look pretty silly. That is why maybe it is best to look closer. For it's when you look closest at the most private and intimate of moments between two people that nothing else in the world seems to matter at all, just you and them. Maybe we are just pawns in a game, but perhaps the only way to enjoy the game is to be aware that you are in it, laugh at how ridiculous it is and let it move you.



Flickr: delphaber

Emanuela Russo on today should be as good as Valentine's Day

Three weeks ago. Class is over and I really should go home and finish my essay... but I don't feel like it. Instead, I decide to take a walk to Trafalgar. I put my earphones on and start pacing. Before I know it, I find myself in those small alleys between LSE and Covent Garden, wondering where I am. I let myself go on, randomly. I pass a shop that sells make-your-perfect-boyfriend/girl-friend kits and I see girls with flowers and boys rushing with bouquets.

One positive thing that can be noted on this day is: people actually look into each other's eyes... even if they are busy, even if they are rushing somewhere. Interesting. I wonder why we don't do that every day. Valentine's day wants to make love fashionable... but why commodify such a sentiment, a feeling which should be given freely? Why make it a festive holiday, full of things to buy and of gifts to give? Love is not exclusive...you cannot schedule it on your calendar, on one particular day. For this reason, Valentine's day is a contradiction in itself. Still, people buy into it because if you don't, it means you don't care about the other person as much as you should.

Here now is Piccadilly, with its tourists, its lights and of course, its Cupid. I wander around Cupid for a little while... take out my camera... try to take a picture. Funnily enough, my camera cannot seem to focus on the unlit statue: rather, it clearly shows the big advertisements screens at the back of it. We care so much about selling and buying as a society that even the symbols are now less visible than the ads. I get tired of trying desperately to capture Mr. Cupid and I move on.

I get to Trafalgar, and here people seem to pause a bit longer than usual. They enjoy the company of others, they don't mind sitting down. For some reason all I can see in front of me is red: red flowers, red dresses, red shoes, red balloons... red streetlights, red buses... oh wait, the last two are always red. Maybe that's it... the city has its own language. Buses and streetlights are trying to tell us something. They are telling us to "shut up, stop buying roses, flowers, chocolates and stop acting cheesy". Valentine's Day can be whenever you offer a nice gesture, a smile, a kind word, not just the 14th February. But there is just a small thing stopping you... you are too busy.



Flickr: jmscottlmd

Laura Aumeer on finding love in a hopeless place

Love is very much clearly on the mind of our writers this week. Indeed, finding the perfect boy/girl may be on your mind as well. It is often said you meet your future long-term partner at university. Around fifteen to twenty percent of couples apparently meet their partner at school and work, take Kate and Wills as the idyllic example. This even happens at the LSE; I have spoken to several alumni who met their husband/wife/partner at LSE. Indeed, I was told recently by an alumnus of the LSE that they were going to a wedding reception in the Tuns over the summer, for two friends who had met there. Let us all have a collective "Aww..." and pray they are getting their own catering in.

Yet, with just a week and a bit of term left to go and the end of classes/lectures/nights out as exams loom, it may seem like a lost cause, especially for those leaving university soon. For those students who have only just

A recent LSE alumnus told me they were going to a wedding reception in the Tuns over the summer, for two friends who had met there

started at LSE, be warned next term is nothing - the scraps of a social life you manage at LSE during Michaelmas and Lent terms disappear as the pressure of exams build up. Expect nights out in Tiger Tiger to be swapped for nights, literally, in the library and chat to be focused around past papers. So here follows, for those who have not had much luck in their classes, some often much aligned ways of meeting your partner at university so you can make the most of these last few days.

Firstly, often ignored but clearly full of romantic opportunities: the library. There is no need to distract other people in the vicinity with your heavy petting, especially if they are trying to study. However, who can deny that the quiet atmosphere is rather romantic and there are plenty of hidden spots. For one friend of mine, some glances and a few stolen words led to some interesting action in the naval history section. Enough said.

On the subject of bookish love,

find a themed speed-dating event. The literature society recently hosted a book-themed one; you took along a favourite book and got to discuss it. Ignoring the man who brought along the book he wrote himself - too self-centred - and the one who bought along "How to be a Woman" - where do you even begin - there must have been someone there, who was normal and had similar tastes to you... hopefully. Likewise, there have been iPod speed-dating events in London - take your favourite song along. These events are becoming popular, as people often prefer trying to impress in a way that is not based on what you look like in the dark, after a few drinks and on your ability to "dance".

Join a society. Okay, it is perhaps a little late in the year for this one, but tag along with a friend when they go to an event. Not to mention, as it is getting close to the end of the year a lot of societies have pretty fancy events, think champagne and nibbles or drinks

at least. Like the above it involves trying to find someone with something in common. Just try and remember what society's event you are at, if you have had a few too many.

For someone a bit closer to home, why not try your halls of residence? Any worries about causing arguments or tension with people you have to see almost daily can be put to one side now. You will not have to see them for long, if it all goes wrong. And looking on the bright side if it does not, you do not need to travel far to see each other and the walk of shame is never going to be that long.

So there you are, some suggestions of where to find love in a hopeless place. If those do not take your fancy, there are always nights in the Tuns/Crush/Zoo/Cheapskates to fall back on. You never know, give it a few years and you may be holding your wedding reception in the Tuns.

One for the bucket list

Gareth Robinson on an American road trip with his father

Taking a road trip should be on every father and son's bucket list. It is a bonding experience that has it all: adventure and misadventure, with the man who taught you how to ride a bike. My Dad spent most of my early childhood working away, in London, Croatia, and Ecuador to name a few places. So, in the summer before I started at the LSE, after my Dad had just finished a long stint away, he suggested we take a road trip. The plan was to drive somewhere far away and to spend some time together. This is a man who in his youth, decided during a week off work, to drive as far as he could and back again. He ended up in Zagreb. I could not have picked a better person to take a road trip with.

We flirted with several ideas, possibly driving to Norway, down through France and Spain to see Gibraltar or around Germany. Then my Dad suggested America. I thought such a distant destination would have been out of the question, but after finding a "fly and drive" deal with Virgin, we decided to fly to Boston, Massachusetts. From there we would take our rental car down the East Coast of the U.S, stopping off in Cape Cod, Rhode Island, New York City and ending our trip in Washington D.C.

We set off to try and find our hotel in Boston, in a black Cadillac town car that looked like something out of the Godfather. Boston's roads are notoriously difficult to navigate, especially for newcomers. Conveniently, we had forgotten to bring a sat-nav and so spent two hours going around in

circles before we eventually found our hotel. After taking a nap, we headed out to Legal Sea Foods where I ordered the biggest pile of seafood possible. The lobster was literally staring back at me.

Reminiscent of a small European city, Boston is nowhere near as intimidating as New York. We took in the sights by following the Freedom Trail, which takes you past all the famous landmarks, dating back to the Revolution. This was exhausting, but very interesting, at least for me anyway - my Dad is not much of a fan of museums and old buildings. On our second day we decided to visit Harvard. Having spent all my studies in the UK, for me the campus looks and feels like every college campus you see portrayed in American movies: redbrick, grandiose buildings and lots and lots of greenery. We were warned against indulging in a tourist tradition of kissing the boot on the statue of John Harvard. This was a tradition, even though it turned out it was not actually a statue of John Harvard, the university's first benefactor. Students at Harvard had taken to doing "unsavoury" things to the boot, knowing that thousands of tourists will then put their lips to it.

Still unequipped with a sat-nav, the journey to our next destination, Provincetown, took about three times longer than it should have. We soon learned the disadvantages of having a car that would not have looked out of place in a funeral march. "P-town" has long been famous as a gay and lesbian holiday destination and so as you walk through the streets you see rainbow

flags flying. It was obviously a tourist destination, but in spite of this my Dad and myself were thoroughly impressed with "P-town". It reminded us of Cornwall, and we were glad to have visited somewhere quaint and peaceful, compared to the great cities we were next headed towards on our journey.

After a short stay overnight with some friends in Bonnet Shore, Rhode Island, we started towards New York City. Driving into Manhattan was a unique experience. We were trying to take in the sights while also trying to navigate our way around the confusing one-way system of streets. In spite of the confusion it caused us, this was an amazing way to take in the sights of Manhattan.

We opted for a hostel in Greenwich Village, a short walk from Washington Square Park and its marble arch. The square is littered with buskers and tourists and even witnessed a group of men gathered around a full size piano, jamming to an old blues song. Greenwich Village is definitely a must-visit part of New York City and it offers an escape from the hustle of Times Square and Broadway. Having mostly managed to escape the grid plan that orders the rest of the city's streets, it has a much more haphazard and unplanned feel to it. As such, it is harder to navigate, but more fun to explore.

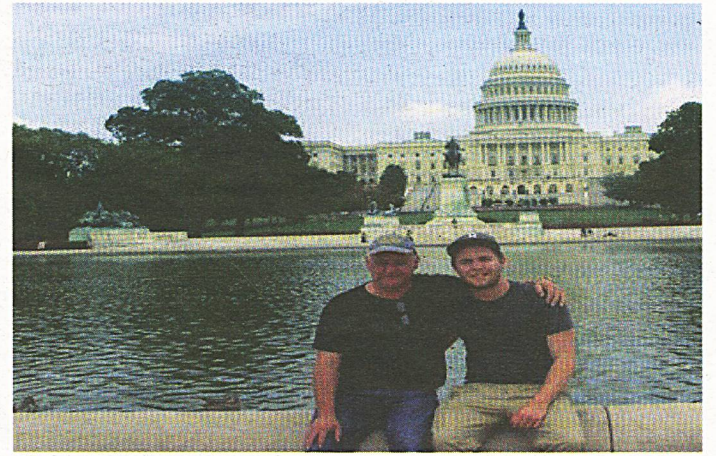
The rest of our time in New York was spent following the more conventional tourist route, including a tour of the UN Headquarters. The General Assembly chamber was rather characterless and I had to keep

reminding myself of all the speeches and declarations that had been given there.

After our whistle-stop tour of New York City, we started upon the final leg of our road trip, heading south towards Washington D.C. It had been a pretty hectic few days until now, and this, combined with the swamp heat of D.C. meant we were flagging a little bit by now. My Dad's knee had packed in, so I had to half carry him around the Smithsonian, Capitol Building and Library of Congress. There is too much to see in D.C. for me to describe it all here, but the highlight for me was the Lincoln Memorial. It is awe-inspiring, and one of the few things that look better than it does in photographs. From the memorial, you can see the Washington Memorial and beyond it the Capitol Building, Placing

all these monuments to America's history in such a way, really hits home the importance of the capital.

As our road trip came to an end, I reflected on the week we had. Despite several set backs - getting lost absolutely everywhere, the sometimes unbearable heat of the East Coast summer and my dad's gammy knee - we probably could not have packed more into the trip if we had tried. You could spend an entire summer exploring the small portion of the East Coast that we decided to tour, but with only a week we made the most of it. As for the father-son bonding aspect of the trip, I came back feeling much more comfortable around my Dad, and felt like I had taken a road trip, with a friend and not just a parent. It is definitely an experience I would recommend.



Travel Diary: Ometempe, Nicaragua

Sorcha Pollak on a welcome break for a weary, worn-out traveller

We were in one of the most sparsely populated parts of the world. Speeding along the gravel road on a scorching December morning, the greenery of the Etosha plains gave way to mellow I felt the straps of the heavy rucksack digging into my bare, sunburnt shoulders yet muttered restrained optimism to my fellow backpackers. Their heavy footsteps filled the silent dusk while they continued to curse the never-ending dusty path which stretched out before us. Our taxi driver had assured us that the small, dark road up which we were huffing and puffing, led to overnight lodgings. We were hungry, we were tired and to be perfectly honest we had run out of options, so we took him at his word. Forty-five minutes later, dragging our feet through the dark shrubbery and stones beneath us, there was still nothing.

Suddenly a beam of light emerged

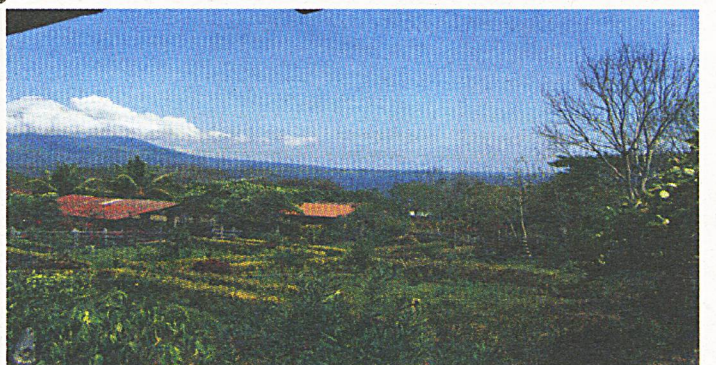
from between the dark trees ahead. Our beacon of hope flickered uncertainly and then began to steadily grow. Before I knew it, the faint sound of voices and plates clattering reached my ears. The bright lights and laughter were initially a shock. It took a few seconds before my eyes became accustomed to the smells and sounds surrounding me. I dropped my bag and mustered up my final reserves of energy. "A bed please".

My arrival on Ometempe Island, situated right in the centre of Lake Nicaragua, was not exactly as I had planned. Fleeing the crowds and noise of Semana Santa, Holy Week, my Argentine travel companion and I had decided to seek refuge on a volcanic island, distancing ourselves from the late night parties and revelry of the festival. It may come as a surprise, but not all young backpackers have the stamina to continue the party lifestyle without pause for months on end. I had been travelling for four months.

We needed respite and we needed it now.

After a long trudge down the dusty roads of Ometempe in search of shelter for the night, we ended up in the idyllic settings of Finca Magdalena. A small farm cooperative which specialises in coffee and chocolate, it is situated at the base of the dormant volcano, Maderas. I awoke the morning after our late night hike, to find myself in a huge wooden barn situated amongst the trees and flowers of a beautiful farm complex.

There is something undeniably exhilarating about falling asleep in utter darkness, blissfully unaware of the countryside and scenery around you. Waking up to the sound of birds chirping and the smell of hot coffee wafting through the wooden slates was just what a weary, worn-out, young Irishwoman needed. As I stepped outdoors, I was greeted with a spectacular view. Straight ahead lay the active volcano, Concepcion, spewing clouds of smoke



into the blue sky above. Below me, the hills rolled down to the waters edge where a light breeze gently rippled the surface of the lake.

I had not been quite sure what to expect from my stay on the island - in fact my decision to go there was based on a spur-of-the-moment change of plans. Ometempe provided an exhausted young Irish backpacker with exactly what she needed - serenity and peace. I have never had much interest in yoga retreats set in hidden enclaves in the mountains, yet practising meditation at dusk while overlooking the expanse of Lake Nicaragua, was definitely a lesson in how to attain peace of mind.

Ometempe is like a little piece of history. It is almost as if the rest of the world has forgotten it exists. Very few cars travel down its winding roads and a rickety old bus trundles through the streets transporting men, women, children and chickens from one town to the next. It smells of tropical flowers and ash, mixed together in a cocktail of foreign perfumes. It is very easy to switch yourself off from the outside world of bankruptcy, austerity and pain in this Nicaraguan hideaway.

Finca Magdalena is run by the local cooperative, Cooperativa Carlos Diaz Cajina, which consists of 25 asso-

ciates and their families. The farm lies on 350 hectares of organic farmland at the foothills of the dormant Maderas volcano. Coffee, plantains, milk, honey, corn, beans, rice and vegetables are grown and produced on this land. With the support of partnerships such as Amigos de la Tierra España and the Bainbridge-Ometempe Sister Islands Association based in Seattle, America this Nicaraguan cooperative is able to continue its organic farming and small tourism business.

It is hard to believe that such a sleepy island has witnessed earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and revolution in recent decades. The people of Nicaragua have experienced lives of true hardship and strife. Yet somehow, the families who run the Finca Magdalena seem to maintain an appreciation for living. We come from a world so plagued by constant debate about the dire state of our economies that it has become almost impossible to imagine a place so very different in ethos from the capitalist world we live in. Sometimes we should just stop, breathe and realise that Louis Armstrong did get it right: there may be recession, there may be war, but in the end, it is a wonderful world.



Photos: Sorcha Pollak

The evolution of the Premier League striker

Amit Singh

Over the course of the Premier League era, the league and its players have developed and evolved in several ways, normally in accordance with international tactical trends. Recently, one trend that has been adopted in La Liga is the use of nimble, technically gifted and small centre-forwards. Examples of such are Messi or Villa at Barca, who are as capable of scoring great goals as they are at contributing to fine build-up play. This is a trend that is arguably being picked up in the Premier League, a league where traditionally centre-forwards have been less technically gifted, but strong in the air.

Traditionally, it was often felt that smaller and less physical strikers would struggle to cope with the demands of the Premier League, but recently we have seen a number of players in this role flourish. Aguero is a good example: only 175cm and slight in build, his season so far can be deemed successful.

A comparison of some of the league's top strikers, as well as looking at Carroll, who is close to the quintessential England striker in build and style of play, is indicative of this recent trend.

The comparison of target men Carroll and Dzeko with the other forwards, who are all significantly smaller and more mobile, shows that the smaller forwards have scored more goals and appear to be more technically gifted.

The look at passes per game indicates that the bigger forwards perhaps influence the game less, as does their lower pass success rate. Carroll, for

example, has only 20 passes per game, compared to 50 for Rooney and 28 for Van Persie. Even in terms of pass accuracy, Carroll's completion is 20 per cent worse than Aguero's and Dzeko's is 10 per cent worse than Van Persie's.

The emphasis on using taller strikers is definitely decreasing in England; of the top ten goal scorers, only four are above 183cm. An average of the top five Premier League goal scorers' passes is also about 665, with only one of the top ten Premier League goal scorers having less than 70 per cent pass completion, and only three of those players having less than 75 per cent. This shows a wider trend of how the modern Premier League striker is as technically gifted as they are proficient in scoring goals. Adebayor, for example, has contributed an astonishing 11 assists for his side this season, more than any other Premier League player.

One of the main reasons is due to changes in rules and harsher penalties for tough tackles that we once associated with the English game. Tactically speaking, we have seen an increased emphasis placed on ball retention and increased short passing. Other than Stoke, few teams use long ball tactics to the same degree anymore. The days of hitting the ball up top for a big number nine are arguably long gone. The average number of long balls played by Premier League teams this season is 65.75, which is only marginally higher than that played by La Liga teams, 61.2.

Teams also play far fewer crosses, which has led to a massive decline in headed goals in both England and the continental game. The decreased emphasis on aerial balls arguably makes some target men somewhat redundant in the modern game. For example, in

last year's Champions League, strikers contributed 103 goals, of which only three were headed. In the same season, of the 355 goals scored, only 57 were from crosses, most of which were deemed 'low crosses' rather than high aerial balls.

The trend is more than the end of target men, but also an evolution of the striker into someone who contributes to all round play, rather than just goal scoring. The most famous example of a striker being marginalized for these reasons is Ruud Van Nistelrooy. His role as a goal poacher was based around lurking in the opposition box and playing off the last shoulder. His role did not include coming deep to collect possession as someone like Rooney does. Despite his obvious quality, his overall impact on games could arguably be limited, which essentially sealed his fate at United, as Saha was elevated to the first team above him. One could go as far as to say that scoring goals is one of the minimum requirements for a striker in an age where midfielders and defenders contribute much more to attacking play.

A further tactical consideration is the effective end of strike partnerships. Few teams in the Premier League regularly play with a conventional 4-4-2, which means that strikers are forced to do a lot more work than was once the case. Again, this relates to an increased emphasis on ball retention, which is not as easily done in a 4-4-2 as the game is increasingly won in midfield. Even a side like Spurs usually operate as more of a 4-4-1-1; the same can be said for Manchester United when Rooney operated as a lone striker, he would sometimes leave too big a gap between

himself and the midfield. Rooney or Van Persie, however, are more adept at dropping deeper to help aid attacking transitions from midfield.

Van Persie is not a traditional forward as he started his career operating from out wide or just behind the striker, yet he is the most in form striker in the Premier League. Van Persie's contribution to Arsenal's all round play is unquestionable - his through-ball for Chamberlain's first goal against Blackburn a few weeks ago was as fine a ball as you will see all season. The role of this type of forward, who often play as a lone striker, is essentially to play the role of support striker and goal poacher. Both players score a wide array of goals; for example, Van Persie's hat-trick of poacher's goals against Blackburn is in stark contrast to his long range curler against Tottenham at the weekend. Van Nistelrooy, on the other hand, was at times criticized for only scoring once outside the box for United.

This trend is why players like Darren Bent, despite his goal scoring ability, plays for Aston Villa and not United or City. He simply does not have enough of an overall impact on gameplay in terms of ball retention, which is vital in the modern game. Javier Hernandez is one of the few genuine goal poachers left in the game and this could explain why he has only started 12 games this season. He does not have the same impact as Rooney on the overall performance of the team. Hernandez, like Van Nistelrooy, has yet to score from outside the box for United. We can thus expect more strikers like Aguero to be signed from continental leagues: smaller in build and technically gifted. The traditional goal-poaching target man is a dying breed in the Premier League.

Sport In Brief

Chelsea in crisis: Boas sacked

Andre Villas-Boas was sacked as Chelsea manager after a 1-0 defeat away to West Bromwich Albion, having been on the precipice for several weeks. Chelsea owner, Abramovich, finally pulled the trigger of AVB's rebuilding project. Roberto Di Matteo has been given the job of caretaker boss until the end of the season.

Wrong Gerrard wins Liverpool trophy

Liverpool were victorious in the Carling Cup final on Sunday 26th February after a 3-2 win on penalties over Cardiff. The result came after a 2-2 draw in normal time, where many commentators felt Cardiff were the better side. In the end, Anthony Gerrard missed the deciding penalty, allowing his cousin, Steven, to lift the trophy as Liverpool captain.

Murray's revenge

Andy Murray defeated Novak Djokovic at the semi-final stage in Dubai. The victory served up the reverse of the result at the Australian Open, where Djokovic defeated Murray in five sets. While this seemed to have finally been the turning point in Murray's career, any progress made in this tournament was swiftly undone by Federer's brutal straight set dispatching of him in the final.



As expected, LSEAU's fight night went down an absolute storm this week. After several introductory rounds of the Boxing Club showing others how to properly take part in a match, the heavyweight faux-celebrities of the AU descended upon the rings. The crème de la crème of the FC, Malibu and Noz, decided to finally settle the age-old question of who was the better man at life. That question was answered with affirmative in Armenian as Noz scrappy-doo'd his way to victory. The subsequent match saw Lush smash through Gaelic Dave and this victory paved the way for the match of the heavyweights. Russian Greg's standoff with Lennon would always go down in history, and the crowd escalated as Greg went for a series of early smashes; although he tired during subsequent rounds, it seems those initial blows knocked Lennon off center, and the Clash of the Titans ended up in success for the Russian. Huzzah!

Action Street was also active as usual. Although 'too many men' reined herself in, it seems the other 'ladies' on her street were more than happy to keep up their street's reputation. The Creeper was on top form on Wednesday, as rumour has it she was seen dabbling with three different men. We can confirm that the Swimming Poole was once again involved, but alas the fresh-faced rugby lad was unsuccessful, as she was seen taking home her very own blonde Bowlesing ball. The Essex chap clearly couldn't believe his luck and the pair oddly decided to pick up chain-smoking before getting down and dirty.

The same evening saw fellow housemate Keith take home Ball-Bag-Tea-Bag-Brou. After his stellar performance in the ring for Fight Night, it seems the damsel just couldn't keep her hands off him, though. There was no sealing of the deal though, as he was spotted storming through the house in a huff with evidence tactical chunder all down his front - night to remember indeed. Yourcock and Tatum-pole also finally got it on, after many weeks of near-misses. Sadly, she was seen necking on with someone else the following Saturday - with none other than one of Ski-Rhod's mates as well. Awkward.

Friday night saw an eventful Law Ball, and as the copious alcohol began to flow, it was evident shit was gonna go down. Indeed, it wasn't long until the first casualty was spotted, and a girl passed out onto her main course - she didn't even get to have the triple chocolate mousse. More eventfulness ensued as many a man-on-man kiss was shared and the end of the night saw one member wrapped up in a tablecloth outside, having stripped off all his clothes. Quick shout out to Posh Sot Paddy who allegedly dump-tackled Keith to the pavement - whether or not the exact words of "SUCK ON THAT MOTH-AFUCCA. THIS IS MY HOUSE" ensued, I cannot confirm.

Other antics also ensued that night, during the rugby lads' wine-tasting. After lost phones, it seems action street was once again the hub for eventfulness of the night. Voices were raised between Peter Pavement and Rugby 2nd's Daniel Gomorra until a second round of fight night ensued on Saturday night. Pavement won convincingly (see left). Cockbar was indeed Cockbarred from getting into a certain house, and the phrase "don't be jel be reem" was indeed yelled out as the pitiful man was seeing with his tail between his legs getting into a cab. In addition, the aforementioned Pooleboy will now be publicly rebranded "McDonald's bitchboy." It seems he's developed a habit of nipping out to go grab the food for BNOCS, as he made the journey from Russell Square to Kings Cross on Friday to provide the unhealthy snack to the ladies of Action Street. He was also spotted doing the same on Saturday for a fellow rugby member. Sad times mate.

So this week is AU Ball and it means that next week will indeed be an action-packed column. It also sadly means that next week will also be the last column of the year, and as a keepsake, look out for a nice page-full of photos you can tear out and frame to remind you of all the sordid stories of this past year. UNTIL NEXT TIME BITCHES.

Cricket first team profile

	<p>Gilani, Asher</p> <p>Role: RH Batsman; Does Not Bowl</p> <p>Likes: ULU Cricket; LSE Tennis</p> <p>Dislikes: LSE Cricket</p>		<p>Ghori, Bilal</p> <p>Role: RH Fast Bowler RH Batsman</p> <p>Likes: Pakistan; Hare & Tortoise</p> <p>Dislikes: Punctuality</p>		<p>Mooney, Dennis</p> <p>Role: RH Fast Bowler RH Batsman</p> <p>Likes: White Ace; 2nd Year Netball Girls</p> <p>Dislikes: More than a 5/10</p>
	<p>Zaki</p> <p>Role: RH Leg-Spin Third Man</p> <p>Likes: The Maldives; Movember</p> <p>Dislikes: Opposition</p>		<p>Makwana, Bhavin</p> <p>Role: RH Batsman Club Treasurer</p> <p>Likes: Taking Your Money; Fielding Bats</p> <p>Dislikes: Bowling On Target</p>		<p>Gregoriou, Andy</p> <p>Role: RH Batsman Wicket-Keeper</p> <p>Likes: Poker; Takeout with Roo-Beh</p> <p>Dislikes: Turkey</p>
	<p>Lynch, Ali</p> <p>Role: RH Batsman RH Off-Spin</p> <p>Likes: Nicki Minaj Hits; Ricky Uppal</p> <p>Dislikes: Baggies</p>		<p>Bishnoi, Bhavya</p> <p>Role: RH Batsman RH Fast Bowler</p> <p>Likes: £50 Notes; Facebook Friends</p> <p>Dislikes: Nothing</p>		<p>Elders, Ben</p> <p>Role: LH Fast(?) Bowler Slipper</p> <p>Likes: The North; Freedom</p> <p>Dislikes: The South</p>
	<p>Kumar, Vish</p> <p>Role: RH Fast Bowler Sledging Specialist</p> <p>Likes: The Casino; Emmanuel Boyce</p> <p>Dislikes: Trains/Buses to Notts</p>		<p>Deegan, Rob</p> <p>Role: RH Fast Bowler RH Batsman</p> <p>Likes: White Ace; Brunch in Chelsea</p> <p>Disliked By: Zoo Bar</p>		<p>Shirgaokar, Karan (c)</p> <p>Role: RH Batsman RH Off-Spin</p> <p>Likes: Tesco Value Pinot Grigio; Bringing Out The Dragon</p> <p>Dislikes: Dysfunctional Legs</p>
	<p>Walia, Kunal</p> <p>Role: RH Batsman RH Off-Spin</p> <p>Likes: Working Hard; Playing Hard</p> <p>Dislikes: Partying Hard</p>		<p>Allender, Sam</p> <p>Role: RH Batsman Slipper</p> <p>Likes: Everything Australian; Maths & Econ</p> <p>Dislikes: Training</p>		<p>Kheriwala, Murtaza</p> <p>Role: RH Fast Bowler Club Social Secretary</p> <p>Likes: Zoo Bar Toilets; Dudes</p> <p>Dislikes: Mixed Grill Naga Curry</p>

Chessnuts Phaaling from the Wycombe Tree

James Foley

The British University Chess Championships is the prestigious dénouement of the LSE chess calendar – mainly because it's our only competitive team event. This year saw five diligent LSE chess-players embarking on a great challenge in the 'highly-sought-after' area of High Wycombe; on the agenda: avenging the damage done at the tournament last year to the famous reputation of LSE chess. Our seeding: 14th (of 19). Our past record: joint last. Our ambition: to conquer British chess (or, at least to outdo our seeding).

And thus, Siddharth 'The Guru' Gopakumar, Jakob 'Shaven' Schaefer, James 'No Way!' Wei, Anup 'Dawg' Desai and James 'The Captain' Foley journeyed forth from Mary 'The' Bone station. Of course, the other teams quivered anxiously as we strutted into the hotel and The Guru was swamped by fans impatient for his prized signature, but aside from that – it was nice being the underdog. The Guru was pleased to discover our first-round enemy to have changed from the expected BPP (dubious uni status...) to Oxford because it meant avoiding UK number eight (by rating [ECF: 245]) Ameet Ghasi. The battle was hard against the title-holders, and great wins from Wei and Schaefer brought LSE to draw in this initial encounter, a fantastic headline result from Round One.

The second round pitted us

against Swansea, the team with the most annoying players in the tournament (no mean feat). A monumental result ensued as The Guru tied with an individual who not only possesses the first name 'Gerasimos' but also drew with Ghasi in Round One. With Anup and Wei beating players 'Bell' and 'Wang' respectively, it was only the might of Jakob who crumbled under the irritating playing-style of his opponent. Nevertheless, taking the role of elder, Jakob gave a piece of his mind to his loquacious opponent along with an accusatory finger leaving irreparable psychological damage. The tensions had been fiery, with a nuclear war narrowly avoided after a dispute over writing down moves on Board 1. Swansea were sent swimming and LSE progressed into the final round of the first day, performing marvelously well.

As the sun went down, LSE felt the energy it bestowed upon them being sapped. No other explanation could be provided for the disappointment of the third round, losing all games to York, admittedly one of the strongest teams at the event (finished 3rd). While LSE students busy themselves with internship applications, memes and modern life, those inhabiting the ancient settlement of York gather around the fire to play chess and keep warm; during this time, they learn the necessary secrets to conquer the surrounding heathen villages, and unfortunately get good enough to triumph over us.

Our evening mission to find the prestigious 'Chutneys' restaurant

was thwarted by the insistence of Mr Taxi that a Thai restaurant was Chutneys, and that no supermarkets in town would be open at such a time (21:30). Having been denied sustenance and enduring complaints from Wei throughout the day (based upon the premise that it is impossible to play chess when hungry) we marched

ourselves intimidated by the rudeboi staff, and left clutching a 9p baguette, a pack of sausage rolls (despite some vegetarian sentiments) and beer.

Dinner was served in a rival restaurant to Chutneys after an eon expansive enough to have played another full game of chess in. While 'The Very Hungry Captain' polished

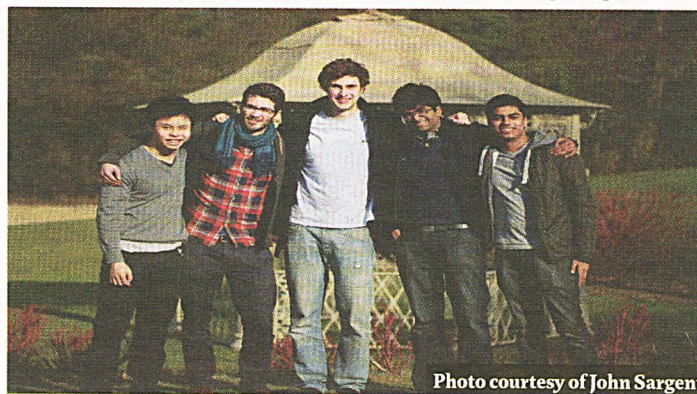


Photo courtesy of John Sargent

through town, passing several supermarkets and one shopping complex which all closed at 18:00. Realising that not only would we starve the next day at the isolated lodgings, but that we might also be unable to buy beer, thoughts flooded into our minds of humanitarian disasters such as the day the Hare Krishna guy never showed. In the distance, a Sainsbury's was sighted. In jubilation at seeing it to be open, we rushed across the dual-carriageway and into the deserted shop to find

off four dishes and four beers after blagging free poppadoms for the table, Wei reached a 'No Wei Out' dead-end with his Phaal. Despite yoghurt being rushed to the table, and mocking sniggers from the grinning waiter, Wei failed at the table for the second time in a row. This time though, the opposition was significantly tougher than invasion by York settlers; Wikipedia claims his dish to be "the hottest generally available dish from Indian restaurants".

When Southampton sat opposite us in the morning, glaring malevolently at those before them, there was one man missing. The Phaal had followed the 'Wei Out' signs and took the beginning of Round Four as its opportunity. Nevertheless, despite missing the start of the match, James achieved a draw (having been the exchange up) – which was better than anyone else in that round. In the end, he would also have scored more points than anybody else on the team, although Siddharth faced the fiercest opposition, delivering an awe-inspiring performance of 179.

We were left with only UCL to face, and a wonderful opportunity for a rematch against a rival side. As Jakob (LSE) played Jacob (UCL) and The Guru faced 'Makepeace', the onlookers gathered and the audience applauded because a score was marked next to the names of all LSE players in Round Five. A great victory over a supposedly stronger UCL side ended our performance with a spectacular checkmate. UCL bowed down before us and kissed our feet, and were sent back to Gower Street in shame. LSE ended up with five matchpoints from a possible ten and above our initial seeding in the tournament, which had ultimately been our realistic ambition. As a bonus, we finished top of the London gang. While it may take High Wycombe some time to unblock its sewer system, LSE will be back next year to wreak more havoc without polluting international headlines. On a side-note, Edinburgh won...

Sport

Inside

- Chessnuts Phaaling from the Wycombe
- The evolution of the Premier League striker
- Cricket team profile

Match Report

Women's Rugby: LSE 76-0 Goldsmiths

Jessica Galletley

After a tense Saturday of international rugby and a feeling of determination after watching the not-so-beautiful women's match, LSE Women's Rugby 1st XV were resolute to show that you can be both vixens and victors on the pitch. A season of vast improvement for both freshers and old girls had left them hungry for success and hopes were high for a win against our rival social scientists, Goldsmiths. Their 1sts needed to prove themselves against our own undefeatable and infamous '2nds team' and this they most definitely did, proving to everyone they are worth their weight in gold, and that's a lot!

Missing a number of our significant players (with many still recovering from the previous weeks battering both on and off the pitch) LSE upped the intensity of pre-match practice (abandoning 'dominator' due to the lack of mud) by playing rugby-volley

and getting in some all-important kicking practice for our newly appointed French converter. The remarkably well-named 'Leopards' (aka an animal known for its stumpy legs), sat watching us with concerned looks, thinking that just maybe they had underestimated the Beavers.

Receiving the ball, LSE were off to a fantastic start. With a superb run from our unsuspecting Charlie's Angel prop, we were at their five-metre line in no time at all, allowing Miss Low Low to score the first try of the match and leaving the opposition to wonder what they had got themselves in for. Converting, however, was not as easy, as the pussycats failed to even provide a kicking tee; shocker - allowing Miss Grundy to impress us all with her difficult drop-kicks.

The match continued in much the same way, with the only fight being put up by their number 9 American footballer. Though, Miss Soukeras made sure she put in her place - into touch and off the pitch. Encouraged by their first sight of the try line, LSE were

determined not to stray too far from it. Faced blindingly into the sun, the opposition evidently could not see any of our players; tries were literally being

allowing Miss Trizio to use that second row leg power and storm over the try line, scoring for LSE again! Our speedy team captain, THE Miss AU, put in

in total. In a clear case of clairvoyance, Miss Keable brought a team of her own to cheer her across the try line, making the score 44-0! In the second half, it was our turn to be the 'blind school'; yet, even this could not stop LSE's success. Taking advantage of our second row/flanker turned winger, Miss Windemer outran any opposition that dared to approach her, also becoming our top try scorer of the day. There were smiles all round, just how the team likes it!!!

With our newly found 'netballer' turned scrum-half, Miss Tayler, the last two minutes of the game went equally well. She might not be able to finish a pizza, but she can certainly finish a game. She duly produced one last try and left the opposition with a feeling of complete and utter failure, one that they'll remember for years to come. Final score: 76-0!! A new record for the LSE Women's Rugby 1st XV and one that they without doubt will beat again, hopefully against the Vets next week. Watch this space!!



Photo courtesy of Jessica Galletley

scored left, right and centre. Our Belgian beauties dominated the pitch with Miss Bochu there at every breakdown, whipping the forwards into shape and

some brilliant runs, even with an ankle injury that left both teams cringing as they watched her hop down the pitch; she scored a well-deserved three tries

LET'S TALK TACTICS



Wembley: a first time experience

Tim 'our man on the ground' Poole

In writing this predominately football-based column, I have a confession to make: I live about five minutes away from Wembley Stadium, yet, prior to last Wednesday night, I had never been inside the magnificent ground. Recently, I decided that this had to change.

Tickets: £45. 1st-class delivery: £2.50 (optional). The experience: absolutely priceless. What a game, what a night; nothing can compare to 90 minutes of national unity, scintillating football and thrilling drama. Admittedly, I was watching a transitional England side with a makeshift back four, meaning it was always going to end in defeat. Nevertheless, the experience was one I would recommend to all readers, whether you are a football fan or not.

Around 76,000 fans joined my dad and I in cheering on their home nation that night. After entering the stadium and progressing past the turnstiles, I caught a glimpse of the pitch and was attacked by a wave of disbelief and excitement. This was Wembley and those were some of the best players in the world... a moment was taken to pinch myself and on we proceeded to our places. For seats allocated at random via the FA website, we struck lucky: we were sitting 20 yards behind the goal - incredible!

As we took to our seats, the Holland players were warming up at our end, the first of which I recognised was Arjen Robben. Little was I to know (though I could have mustered an educated guess) that Robben was the man

who would decide the match, whilst his pre-game target practice would enable his shooting to be nothing short of lethal.

The first half was uneventful; England dominated possession but didn't do much with it - it looked as though we were heading for a routine friendly. My personal highlight was Van Persie's misplaced shot that went sky-high after half an hour. In reaction, I shouted 'that's Arsenal's best player' and a supporter in front of me (clearly a Gooner) turned, gave me an ironic smile and punched his chest with pride.



Photo courtesy of Timothy Poole

As the second half began, I was much too busy concentrating on my large coke to notice the first ten minutes disappear quietly. However, after 57 minutes, Holland decided to up the pace and it suddenly became clear that they had the superior quality to win the game at will. That man, Robben, opened the scoring with a fantastic in-

dividual effort - the goal coming right at my end. Minutes later, Huntelaar headed in from Kuyt's cross to make it two Dutch goals in quick succession. Where was the England defence? Who knows - but it's a question we're quite used to asking.

Robben smugly celebrated his opener with the away fans, who were camped in the stand to my left. Huntelaar wasn't as lucky as his celebrations were marred by a collision with Chris Smalling. From then on, England were typically disappointing. However, Gary Cahill soon produced

Jones (I couldn't make out who at the time), Ashley Young found himself unmarked in the opposition penalty area. He duly proceeded to finish remarkably and slot the ball into the Netherlands net with complete calm. Scenes of sheer jubilation followed. It was unbelievable.

Nonetheless, I am English, so I knew we would concede almost immediately afterward. I won't pretend to be 'Mystic Meg', but I did have a feeling that our inexperienced defence would be carved up once again by (you guessed it) Arjen Robben. At full time, my feelings were ambivalent. A spirited fight back was counterbalanced by a classic lack of concentration from the English. No one seemed to know quite what to make of it.

If we are to talk tactics (as is the point of this column) we must acknowledge that Pearce made some crucial errors. He got the starting line-up wrong and he didn't seem to do enough from the touchline throughout. Moreover, I disagreed with the decision to install Scott Parker as captain when the undeniably more experienced and better suited Steven Gerrard was available for the role. Meanwhile, Adam Johnson was ineffective throughout the first half. On the positive side, Micah Richards was excellent and goal scorer, Ashley Young, had a solid game. Yet, the defending (Richards aside) was poor, and we were too easily outclassed at the back by a Dutch team who received criticism from their media for a below-par performance.

Danny Welbeck looked lost up front on his own and, when Daniel Sturridge was introduced after half an

hour, Pearce should have switched to 4-4-2 to exploit the abundant space Holland were leaving down the middle. I was also puzzled as to why Sturridge was named man of the match, when he produced nothing of value and effectively missed an open goal in the second half. Furthermore, where was Theo Walcott? His pace was badly needed, especially after the rarity of him actually turning up against Tottenham the previous Sunday - it was the best time to give him an England run out. And where was Ashley Cole? He knew Robben from his Chelsea days and surely wouldn't have let him cut inside in the last minute as Leighton Baines had so naively done.

However, on the face of it, one cannot criticise Stuart Pearce for experimenting, especially in the absence of Wayne Rooney, Frank Lampard and John Terry. At the end of the day (to use a football cliché) the game was amazing. Yes, we lost, but at least we did it in style, whilst those memorable celebrations after Young's equalizer made it feel like a victory.

To sum up, my first experience at Wembley was mesmerising; if you can, I would urge you to do what I did: get some tickets and get behind the team - your country needs you! If we stand together and provide the Three Lions with all the support we can, England will be all the better for it. What's more, at full-time, you'll hold your ticket aloft with pride and you certainly won't regret buying it.

Let's Talk Tactics is going on air! Tune in to Pulse Radio at 1pm on Tuesdays to hear the only LSE radio show exclusively dedicated to sport.