

# the beaver

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Newspaper of the  
LSE Students' Union

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## LSE students file harassment complaints

Bethany Clarke

LSE student Chris Moos has filed an official complaint to the Jan Stockdale, the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, and the Students' Union claiming that he was a victim of discrimination at an anti-racism assembly chaired by Sherelle Davids, Students' Union Anti-Racism Officer, on the 1st December 2011.

Moos, a second year Employment Relations and Organisational Behaviour PhD student and a member of the Atheist, Secularist and Humanist Society described the assembly as "another shocking example of the open discrimination of atheists, apostates and non-believers."

At the event Moos, joined by Marshall Palmer, a second year International Relations student and also member of the Atheist, Secularist and Humanist Society, asked Davids a question regarding an article on Sharia law written by Mohammed Najmul Morley and published in the Beaver last term, which they both found offensive.

Palmer said "Since neither the women's officer nor the LGBT officer, took offence we concluded that the person who should champion the response and discuss the rights of apostates should be the anti-racism officer."

"We asked her what her duty was and she responded that it went beyond racism to protection of religious minorities as well; however she felt that we, as atheists, were not religious and thus not entitled to protection. We agreed that we were not religious but then asked: why should that exclude us, as an identifiable minority, from discrimination and hate speech on campus?," Palmer added.

Upon asking these questions, Moos claims that he was shouted at by another audience member, who dismissed his cause as "ridiculous" and said that he was "wasting everybody's time."

Palmer and Moos also claim that Robin Burrett, the Students' Union's Postgraduate Officer, dismissed the question as an "irrelevant white middle class issue."

Following the meeting, Davids updated her personal Facebook account with the status: "So 2 individuals from the atheist and humanist society decided to hijack the end of my anti-racism assembly because apparently it's my job to represent them as atheists. It's not."

In a comment on the status, Davids described the individuals as the "self righteous Tory from the cuts meeting and the same person who is continuously exposing his male privilege on the fem soc group by 'advising' us how to portray ourselves!"

Kimia Pezeshki, a third year Philosophy and Economics student at the LSE, commented several times on the status, writing "was one of them that idiot who hijacked the women and the cuts meeting and who also has a personal vendetta against Mohammed Najmul Morley?"

The minutes of the assembly, excluding Moos' questions and the responses, were also published on Facebook by Davids. They included plans to "Create a social media policy that states the SU have a zero tolerance to discrimination, whether that be face to face or online - there is no distinction," and to "Make it clear that if someone is racially attacking another student online then there is no difference than if they were doing it face to face."

>> 6

## Plans for Bankside extension approved >> 5



Artist's impression of Bankside extension.

## LSE hosts Reading the Riots conference

Bethany Clarke

Top politicians, journalists and policemen travelled to the LSE to participate in a conference on the findings of Reading the Riots, an investigation into the causes of the London riots last summer jointly carried out by the LSE and the Guardian, on the 14th December, 2011. High profile speakers at the

event included Ed Miliband, Theresa May and Yvette Cooper.

Other speakers included Tom Brake, a Lib Dem MP, Lynne Owens, deputy commissioner of the Metropolitan police, Tim Newburn, an LSE professor who led the university's involvement in the investigation, Alan Rusbridger, Guardian editor, and Lynne Owens, who is leading the government's response to the riots.

In his speech, Miliband focused on those young people who decided not to participate in the riots, emphasising

that personal values, not just circumstance, play an important role in their decision making. He called for a move away from the "culture of take what you can" currently prevalent in British culture.

"It is time to worry about who is setting the standards for society," Miliband added, noting, in light of the recent financial crisis and phone hacking scandals, that "If we are to take values seriously, we have to take the values of those at the top seriously because

>> 7

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email our section editors!

(addresses on page 2)

### Students weigh in on LSE100 exam

>> 3 The final examination held on Friday 6th January marked the end of the first year of the new, compulsory LSE100 course. Students have expressed a range of opinions on the course in general and the timing of the exam in particular, with some students unhappy that the timing of the exam required them to travel back to London earlier than usual. A post on the LSE100 Moodle site says that the exam timing would be reviewed for future years.

### LSE Awards Honorary Doctorates

>> 7 At award ceremonies held on the 14th and 15th December 2011, the LSE awarded Honorary Doctorates to three prominent research figures in the Social Sciences. The university awarded Rita Giacaman, Marshall Sahlins and Nora Cruz-Quebral each with a Doctor of Science (Social Sciences) in recognition for their efforts to "understand the causes of things" through their research in the fields of anthropology, public health and development.

### Quandt weighs in on Obama and Arab Springs

>> 3 William Quandt, a former staff member for the US National Security Council and Professor at the University of Virginia, lectured on the United States' role in the Arab Springs uprisings in a lecture at the LSE in December. Quandt praised Obama for the "cool and consciously realistic stance" his administration has held towards the Middle East in recent months, urging him to now "get serious about supporting the new democracies in smart ways."



## Editorial Board

### Executive Editor

Duncan McKenna  
editor@thebeaveronline.co.uk

### Managing Editor

Duncan McKenna  
managing@thebeaveronline.co.uk

### News Editors

Bethany Clarke  
John Armstrong  
Sydney Saubestre  
news@thebeaveronline.co.uk

### Comment Editor

Alice Dawson  
comment@thebeaveronline.co.uk

### Features Editor

Alex Haigh  
Gurdeep Chhina  
features@thebeaveronline.co.uk

### Design Editor

Liam Brown  
design@thebeaveronline.co.uk

### Social Editor

Laura Aumeer  
social@thebeaveronline.co.uk

### Sport Editors

Tim Poole  
Maxim Owen  
sports@thebeaveronline.co.uk

### Part B Editors

Emma Beaumont  
Aameer Patel  
partb@thebeaveronline.co.uk

### Photo Editor

Matt Worby  
photo@thebeaveronline.co.uk

### Web Editor

Liam Brown  
web@thebeaveronline.co.uk

### General Manager

Konrad Hughes  
info@thebeaveronline.co.uk

### Collective Chair

Chris Rogers  
collective@thebeaveronline.co.uk



## Union Bashō

### LSE100

EC102 discussion question  
"Employers value  
LSE100. So  
those enrolled will try."

*Bashō is the Beaver's haiku poet. He would love to see something like the above appear in section C of a future EC102 exam. Ah, frogs and assumptions...*



# The Beaver

Established in 1949

Issue No. 761

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

## A fresh start

So here we are. A new year, a new term and a new start. It's fair to say that 2011 was an eventful year. The world saw a sea change in world politics with the Arab Spring uprising toppling a seemingly constant stream of dictators, the death of Kim-Jong Il in North Korea and the implosion of the previously steadfast Eurozone. In the UK, we witnessed the demise of the News of the World amidst a whirlwind of media scandal surrounding the practise of phone-hacking, David Cameron's veto on Europe and the Queen's first visit to Ireland. On campus, we saw the resignation of Howard Davies, the Woolf report, discrediting of various alumni and a fair amount of controversy within this very newspaper.

However, we are eager to leave the problems of last term in the past. We hope, with a new staff and a refreshed ethos, that we can avoid the mistakes of the past and move forward with positivity. This does not, however, mean that we are going to be unduly influenced by any quarter. We strive for independent and balanced journalism and hope to maintain a high level of quality. We intend to praise successes and question failures.

So, we will avoid the stagnation that can accompany an organisation that has, historically, attracted many critics. We will encourage more writers, photographers and cartoonists and attempt to open up the Beaver - and its management - to as wide a

range of contributors as possible. After all, the LSE prides itself on its democratic principles and the Beaver Collective, as a democratic body, is something this publication is very proud of. Saying this, the Beaver will not be subverted by any individual, or group of individuals, that would like to see the paper as a mouthpiece for their own views.

We are proud of our 53 year long history. We have had our ups and down but with a fresh start we hope we can provide you with quality journalism and an outlet for your worries, anger or praise. We apologise for the mistakes of last term and we aim to prevent them from recurring. And hey, at least we didn't hack your phones.

## Collective

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

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

collective@thebeaveronline.co.uk

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

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The Beaver is updating its constitution on Friday 20th January.

Voting will take place online.

Further details to follow.

## Collective Meeting

The Beaver Collective will be electing two new positions on Thursday 12th January at 7:30pm.

Positions to be elected:

Online Editor x1

Managing Editor x1

Details will be emailed to Collective members shortly.

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



# First compulsory LSE100 ends

Bethany Clarke

» continued from page 1

The LSE100 final examination held on Friday 6th December marked the end of the first mandatory year of the course, following a pilot scheme run last year.

All students taking LSE100 were first informed that the exam would be taking place in week zero of Lent term in a guidebook, LSE100: A Guide for first year undergraduates, distributed in Orientation week 2010.

Many students have complained about the scheduling of the exam in week zero of Lent term, which meant students had to travel back to the LSE before the start of term.

Bernadette Chan Roy, a second year Maths and Economics student, said, "the timing of the exam was extremely inconvenient - I don't think it's fair for the school to require people to come back early, especially when people are travelling internationally."

Heather Wang, a second year History student said that she did not find the exam questions particularly hard, adding that she found it "quite similar to last year's paper."

An article uploaded to the LSE100 Moodle page stated: "I would emphasise that our decision on exam timing was not arrived at lightly. In fact, it has occupied more time in our Management Committee than any other issue over the past 18 months."

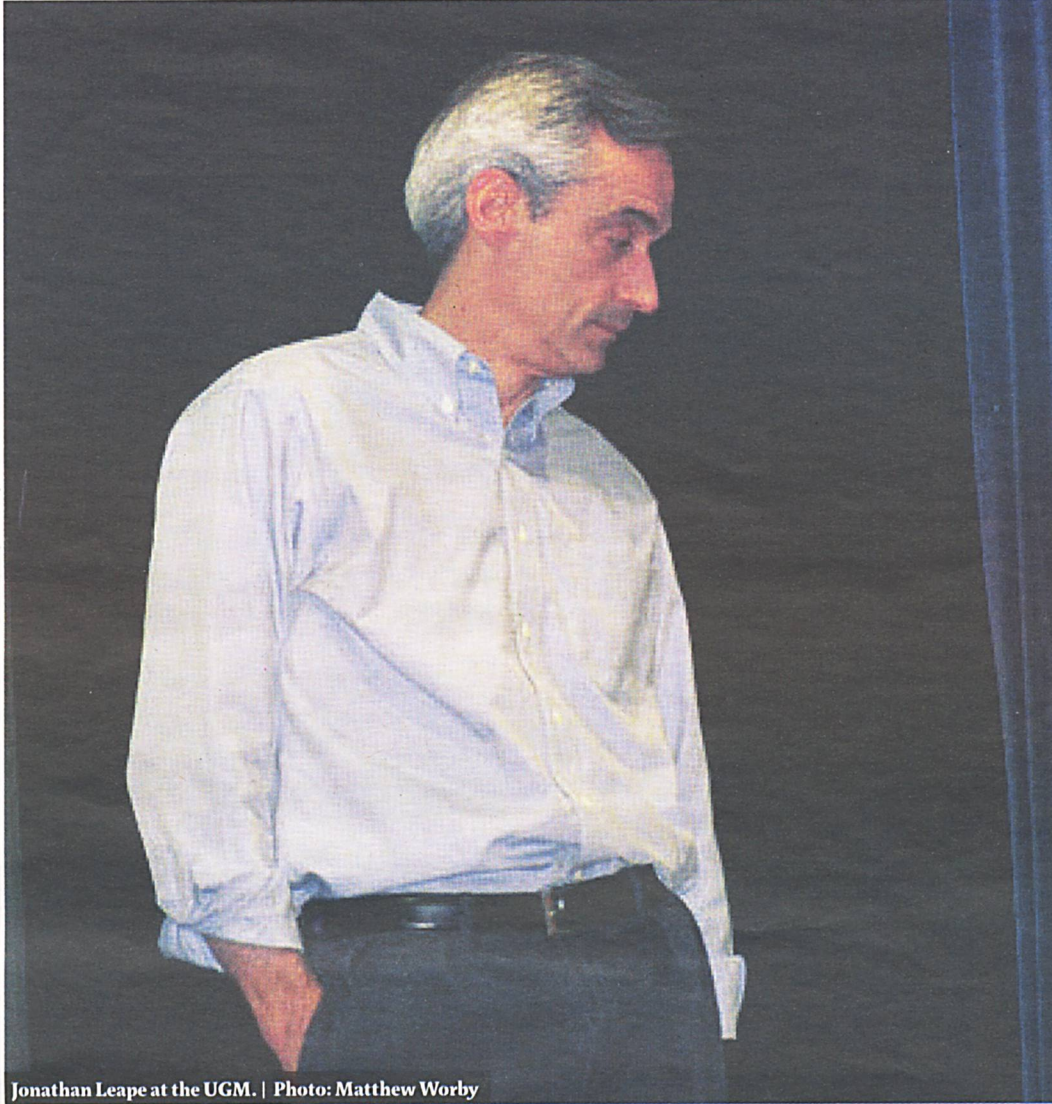
The decision to schedule the exam for the 6th January was reached after extensive consultation between the course's Management Committee, the Heads of Departments, Chair of the USSC and the Students' Union, as well as representatives from the Student Services Centre, the Registry and Timetables.

The article uploaded on Moodle notes that the timing of the exam will be reviewed for upcoming years, adding that student input in this process is "most welcome."

Students second year students have demonstrated a wide variety of opinions on the new course.

"The course content is interesting but classes are unchallenging and dull," said Roy.

Luke Garratt, a second year



Jonathan Leape at the UGM. | Photo: Matthew Worby

Maths and Economics student, said "I didn't respect the course because it was a waste of time. It didn't teach us anything applicable to any of our careers. Everybody at LSE has written good essays and done good research... It's literally pointless. Just like general studies at university. Nobody respects it."

"How's it different in any way than if we were told to take compulsory juggling? There are no consequences for getting a zero. Nobody cares," Garratt added.

"It's good to have a central course

that teaches everyone what exactly the LSE is about," said Liam Brown, a second year International Relations student.

"I enjoyed listening to the high profile lecturers, such as Lord Stern and Howard Davies," said Iain Ramsey, a second year Geography student.

The decision to make the course mandatory sparked the creation of an online Facebook group entitled "Make LSE100 optional," where students discussed actions such as boycotting the final exam and submitting a UGM motion to have the exam date changed.

"LSE100 covers an interesting array of subjects and the classes are engaging in many cases but its emphasis on teaching you to learn rather than focusing on the subjects in question and the students' ability to coast without consequences inevitably leads to student resentment and makes the course seem out-of-touch with many students who take qualitative subjects," said Alex Haigh, a second year Environmental Policy with Economics.

## A response to the "awakenings"

John Armstrong

» continued from page 1

William Quandt, Professor in the department of politics at the University of Virginia and a former senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, gave a public lecture in the Sheikh Zayed Theatre on the US and Arab revolutions.

Professor Quandt is a former staff member for the US National Security Council specialising in Middle Eastern politics. He played an "active role" in establishing the 1978 Camp David Peace Accords between Egypt and Israel.

The Chair of the lecture, Professor Fawaz Gerges, Director of the LSE Middle East Centre, describes Quandt as the "voice of sanity" in relation to

the Arab-Israeli Conflict and commends his "sense of fairness and deep knowledge in Middle Eastern politics."

Quandt emphasises the role of the US in relation to the recent Arab Spring, suggesting that Barack Obama possesses a "cool and consciously realistic stance towards the Middle East" something which previous administrations did not adhere to.

However, for those foreign policy makers in Washington, the promotion of democracy has not been such a smooth process. The re-election of Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu in 2009 and Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, has indicated that some countries are reluctant to change. Yet Quandt states that demands for reform in Morocco, Georgia and Algeria in recent times has signalled that "change is in the air" and since the fall of Egypt's Mubarak regime, countries are "dropping like flies."

For the Obama administration however, Quandt says that the most important question now is, how to effectively deal with the circumstances that have arisen. Quandt - "the dean of foreign policy in Middle Eastern affairs" according to Gerges - suggests there are three key requirements the US government need to have in their foreign policy arsenal: A deep knowledge of the region, sound strategic leadership and a cohesive team around the President.

Quandt is critical of the Obama regime and its policy towards the Arab Spring, suggesting that they coped "not very well" and were mainly "reactive" when in came to the fall of Mubarak in February last year. However, Libya proved the "most difficult and most costly" revolution for the US government. While Quandt says that Gaddafi was an "easy leader to despise," in recent times, he had a close and peaceful relationship with

the USA.

Obama's initial response to the Libyan uprisings was "more restrained and cautious than that of his British and French allies" and according to Quandt, "domestic American politics soon came in to play." He criticises US foreign policy stating that, "the US is not very good when it tries to assert itself as the global hegemon" and suggests that there needs to be a "serious rethinking of US policy in the region."

Josh Babarinde, a first year MSc Government student, said that, "Professor Quandt gives us a first-hand insight into the foreign policy of the USA and provides a interesting account of the West's response towards the Arab Spring."

In his final statement of his lecture, Quandt urged Obama to "bring in a group of new advisers" and wants Obama to "get serious about supporting the new democracies in smart ways."

## News in brief

### LSE PROFESSOR HONOURED WITH CBE

Professor Eileen Munro of the LSE's Department of Social Policy, was awarded a CBE in the New Year's honours list. Munro is an expert in the fields of child protection and social work practice. "It was unexpected but very flattering to receive this honour. If my work is seen as helping both children and those people who strive to protect them then of course I am pleased to accept the recognition," said Munro regarding her award.

### SAIF GADDAFI HELD IN ZINTAN

The failure of the National Transitional Council (NTC) to inform Saif Gaddafi, LSE alumnus and son of Muammar Gaddafi who has been held in Zintan since November, of his charge or allow him access to a lawyer has triggered a wave of criticism from human rights activists. The NTC, currently in charge of the country, has so far failed to hand Saif Gaddafi over to the International Criminal Court in the Hague, which set the NTC a 10th January deadline to announce their plans for holding his trial.

### LSE-LED SURVEY FINDS SCHOOL CHOICE IS NOT A PRIORITY FOR BRITONS

Over eight in ten people believe that parents should send their children to the nearest state school, according to the findings of the first ever survey into British citizens' attitudes towards school choice. The investigation was led by Sonia Exley of the LSE. According to Exley, "People do believe that they ought to have a 'right to choose', particularly where they are not happy with their local school. However, public feeling also seems to be that if schools were of an equal and acceptable standard then choice wouldn't be necessary."

### ACADEMICS WARN AGAINST WHITE PAPER REFORMS

In a letter published on the 7th December, concerned academics from higher education institutions across the UK warn against the reforms outlined in the government's White Paper. The letter warns the reforms could lead to a higher education private sector where for-profit companies could acquire financially struggling universities similar to that currently in place in the United States, concluding that the consequences of the reforms would likely include "crushing levels of debt."

### NUMBER OF UK APPLICANTS DROP AS FEE CAP RISES TO £9,000

The number of UK students applying to enter university in autumn 2012 has decreased dramatically since the same time last year, according to official UCAS figures published on the 4th January, 2012. Faced with fees of up to £9,000 a year, 23,000 less students have applied to university compared to a year ago. This represents a decrease of 7.6 per cent.

### GOT A SCOOP?

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# LSE launches lecture aimed at young students

**Shrina Poojara**  
Staff Reporter

The LSE has launched an online

lecture designed to introduce young people to the social sciences. Entitled "The LSE Big Questions lecture: East beats West? Is the East taking over the world?", the lecture was presented in June 2011 by LSE Professor Danny

Quah to an audience of 150 secondary school students from nine London schools.

The lecture, which was designed with elements of the Key Stage 3 (Year 9) citizenship curriculum in

mind, addressed issues such as what the economy is, how trade works, the benefits of economic development and the rising economic power of China and other Asian countries. It featured extensive audience interaction, includ-

ing "Who Wants to be a Millionaire?"-style voting clickers, tug-of-war and jumbo pound coins.

Michael-George Hemus, co-director of the electronics company Hulger, was a special guest during the lecture, explaining why companies such as his own have their products manufactured in China and what challenges this presents.

"Communicating the excitement and relevance of one of the biggest economic issues of our times to eleven- fourteen year olds was hugely enriching," said Quah.

He added, "It was completely different from talking to LSE students who, among other things, always remember they have to pass a final examination that you set!"

Quah, as well as being a Professor of Economics at the LSE, has consulted for the World Bank, the Bank of England and the Monetary Authority of Singapore, among others.

Big Questions builds upon the approach of LSE100 - The LSE course, in which first year LSE students are encouraged to utilise social science thinking when tackling the important issues of our time.

"In developing this lecture, we worked hard to identify the essential underlying economic concepts and convey them in engaging and accessible ways. Ultimately, we want to inspire young people about the power of the social sciences to help them understand the world around them," said Jonathan Leape, Director of LSE100 and Project Director of the Big Questions lecture.

The lecture is now viewable on the LSE website, and has also been uploaded onto the LSE's YouTube Channel, where it has already received in excess of 3,700 views. The Big Questions Lecture is supported by the LSE Higher Education Innovation Fund (HEIF) 4 Bid Fund.



Danny Quah | Photo: LSE Press Office

## MP criticises LSE for accepting "blood money"

**John Armstrong**

Robert Halfon, Conservative MP for Harlow has criticised the LSE for accepting "blood money for PhDs".

In a recent debate in the House of Commons, Mr Halfon asked the Higher Education Minister, David Willets to intervene in the matter and urged him to "call on the LSE to publish what really went on in this disgraceful episode of taking blood money for PhDs."

This comment comes in light of the Woolf Report, published at 4:00PM on the 30th November 2011, which was highly critical of the LSE's governing Council and the School's lack of scrutiny into the sources of its donations.

In his "damning" report, Lord Woolf raised serious concerns over the LSE's decision to accept a controversial £1.5 million donation from the Gaddafi International Charity and Development Foundation (GICDF) in June 2009. However, an article in the Telegraph published in March 2011 reported that the LSE "is not the only university that has reason to feel ashamed."

According to the Telegraph statistics, between 1995 and 2008, eight universities accepted more than £233.5 million from Muslim rulers; among them were Oxford, Cambridge and UCL.

Mr Halfon questioned the House

of Commons Leader, Sir George Young, asking for the LSE "to divulge information as to the circumstances in which Saif (al-Islam) was awarded his PhD."

On his blog, Halfon also said, "what this university has done - in taking this money - is a disgrace to common decency, especially after Lockerbie." He also went on to say that "it certainly is hard to believe that the LSE thought it a good idea to take money from mass murderers. Just because the money came from the so-called Gaddafi "International Charity and Development Foundation" (chaired by his son, Saif Al-Islam), does not make it any cleaner."

In a further statement, the Conservative MP for Harlow urged LSE to "give the money back to support those innocents in Libya, murdered and maimed in recent days. Whoever was responsible for taking this money should apologise to all the victims of the Libyan dictatorship."

Mr Halfon's feelings are also mirrored by those who represent the students at LSE. Alex Peters-Day, General Secretary of the Students' Union, said, "The Woolf Report's findings clearly lay-out severe problems in the way LSE has conducted itself. LSE took a gamble with its dealings with Saif Gaddafi, and the stakes were too high."

"We hope the Report signals a new era for meaningful student involvement in the School's decision making, so that decisions made can never

tarnish the integrity of the institution again," she added.

Lukas Slothuus, the Students' Union's Community and Welfare officer, further criticised the LSE for acting as "a front for British foreign policy, not as a university."

"We demand that LSE gives full transparency in its financial dealings.

We demand disclosure of all donations and investments every six months. The only way to prevent another Libya disaster is by opening up the books. LSE is in serious trouble and needs to act accordingly," Slothuus added.

Although Mr Halfon's comments do not come as a surprise to the LSE, they may give way to a greater sense

of transparency in relation to private donations. Sir George Young suggested that Mr Halfon should take his complaint to the Information Commissioner and said, "I can understand your deep concern about this."

### Comment...

Robert Halfon's comments in the House of Commons echo general concerns about the LSE's dealings with the Gaddafi family, but some of what he has said is misinformed and unhelpful.

The Conservative backbencher declared on his blog early last year that the act of taking the £1.5 million donation from the Gaddafi International Charity and Development Foundation - the charity headed by the late Muammar Gaddafi's son, Saif Al-Islam - "a disgrace common decency, especially after Lockerbie."

It was of gross idiocy that the LSE decided to accept the grant, particularly given the School's particularly vocal and active Student's Union and the university's high profile status. It was unlikely that they would ever have been able to get away with it.

Lukas Slothuus, the Students' Union's Community and Welfare Officer, was completely correct when he stated that the LSE was acting on be-

half of the government rather than as a university. Whether this is because of the close political links we have had with the Labour Party, due to our beginnings with the Fabian society, or simply our contemporary ideological parity with Blair at the time the action was, at the very least, not prudent.

However, Halfon's call for the "LSE to publish what really went on in this disgraceful episode of taking blood money for PhDs," shows that he has not fully understood the actions that have taken place to hold the LSE's management to account.

Not only has an independent inquiry - "the Woolf Report" - fully exposed the links that the LSE had with Libya, a University of London inquiry - independent from the LSE - has also found that Saif Gaddafi's PhD was not plagiarised.

The School should not have to drag its name through the dirt once again. Its actions were thoughtless and unjustifiable but it has also allowed a thorough and independent investigation into those wrongdoings.

Also, as the School began to

wake up to the moral inadequacies that surrounded the acceptance of the grant they stopped the transfer of the remaining £1.2 million - having only received £300,000 - and gave the money it had received to a scholarship fund for North African students.

This action, although it does not in any way show a shred of integrity on the part of the LSE's Council over the acceptance of the grant, does show - together with the two inquiries - that they were prepared to be punished once they realised they were wrong.

Other top UK universities, in particular Oxford University, accepted donations from sources of dubious morality. Halfon should focus more attention on them. The LSE's students have had to experience their university's name being tarnished because of the actions of the few in the School's upper management. We have had enough.

- Alex Haigh, Features Editor



# Bankside gets go-ahead for extension

John Armstrong

The LSE has successfully been granted planning permission for an extension to be built on Bankside Hall accommodation.

The proposals, which were passed on 21st December last year, will give the School's largest hall of residence an additional two floors, bringing the total number of rooms to 667.

In its document outlining the project, the LSE states, "the proposal is an essential component in meeting the pressing need of housing an additional 600 students."

Julian Robinson, Director of Estates, said that the scheme "not only meets our needs but, importantly, also improves the area for others in a sustainable way."

The plans presented by the LSE were fully recommended by Southwark planning officers and were passed unanimously by Southwark's Planning Committee members.

However, there have been objections to the scheme and in a recent written statement Graham Morrison, architect at the Bankside 123 development, dismissed the proposals as, "self-serving and un-neighbourly."

Morrison criticised the School in an objection letter suggesting that the extension does not fit in with the surrounding buildings, despite the Southwark council design officers saying that "the designers have sought an

architectural language that is contemporary in style but simple and crisp in its execution."

Furthermore, a recent article in London SE1 claimed that Morrison described the design by TP Bennett as a "second-rate copy of the Tate 'light box'."

In response to Morrison's objections, the Director of Estates at the LSE said, "Amidst strong support from the Tate Modern and Bankside Forum, of the three objections, only Mr Morrison chose to make subjective comments upon our contextual extension which rightly takes its cues from the surrounding buildings, both new and old. All of which are very much part of the character and history of the immediate Bankside area."

In addition to the rooftop extension, the LSE is planning a refurbishment of the basement, which is not subject to planning approval from Southwark council. The proposals include a large student lounge, TV lounge, games room and a new student laundry.

Furthermore, the refurbishment will include the addition of a music room, a quiet study room and a group study room with full Wi-Fi coverage throughout. Residents will also be able to take advantage of a range of vending and printing facilities, and 190 covered bicycle stands.

Following the successful planning approval from the council, Phil Newman, Project Manager, will now take the business case for the scheme before the relevant LSE committees in order to seek internal approval.



Computer generated image of the planned North Elevation. | Photo: LSE



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## Report says apprenticeships need better job prospects

Bethany Clarke

The Centre for Economic Performance (CEP) has found that apprentices need to develop higher skills and that few young people benefit from apprenticeship programmes.

The report, carried out by Dr Hilary Steedman, a Senior Research Fellow at the LSE, calls for a substantial reform of the government's apprenticeship model.

Steedman argues, "the coalition government should develop a simpler model that prioritises high skills and directs public funds for apprenticeships to any employer who can give young people long-duration, high-quality training."

She went on to compare the UK's apprenticeship model to that of Germany's suggesting that, "It may not be realistic to aim for apprentice numbers on the scale of Germany. But with a clear strategy, some nudging and flex-

ibility, we could realistically aim for the prize that has so far eluded us – higher skills and high youth participation."

Key findings in the report show that there is general consensus among coalition leaders that the deficit can be tackled with increasing the number of apprenticeships. According to the report, the current model "deters employers and stifles the growth of apprenticeships."

Since coming to power in 2010, the Coalition government has expanded adult apprenticeships only to reduce the funding for youth programmes. The report also found that adult apprenticeships places are now larger than that of the under nineteen's, which is unlikely to improve the "failing youth labour market."

In her concluding statement, Steedman argues that, "the government should be prepared to change an apprenticeship model" and "the aim of the new model should be to direct public funds so as to maximise incentives for employer participation and management of training."

although we may disagree on what constitutes as intolerance there is no good excuse to go beyond friendly debate into the realm of shouting and acting unprofessionally on Facebook," said Palmer.

On Sunday 8th January, Palmer noted "As far as I'm aware no final decision has been made on the issue."

This is not the first time that Atheist students have felt that they have been the victims of discrimination on campus.

Catherine Capone, an LSE graduate and Founder of the Atheist Society and President from 2009-2011, said: "I represented the LSE AHS [Atheist, Secularist and Humanist] Society for three years at the LSE Freshers' Fair. Unfortunately every year I experienced aggressive remarks from both religious and non-religious students who angrily told me that the concept of an atheist society was "ridiculous" or "pathetic" without looking into the society's constitution, events or activity - namely providing representation for non-religious LSE students and a platform for constructive debate and discussion regarding religious and secularist issues."

Moos has been in contact with both the National Federation of Atheist, Humanist and Secular Student Societies and the National Secular Society, which have encouraged and supported Moos' decision to report the incident to the Students' Union and the School.

## Students' Union brings back 'Give it a Go'

Bethany Clarke

After the success of the 'Give it a Go' sessions run at the beginning of Michaelmas term, the Students' Union has decided to repeat a concentrated version of the event during the first week of Michaelmas term.

The Give it a Go series consists of a programme of one-off taster sessions giving students the opportunity to test-run new societies before committing for the year.

Stanley Ellerby-English, the Students' Union's Activities and Develop-

ment Officer, described the feedback from the Students' Union had received from students last term as "overwhelmingly positive," adding "we hope that this success will be repeated again."

Several new societies will be hosting Give it a Go events this week, including a bee keeping session at Passfield Hall and a London cycle ride.

The Students' Union will also be running a range of Paralympic events throughout the week, including a sitting down volleyball in the Old Gym. These events are designed to tie into a series of paralympic activities that the Students' Union is planning to host throughout the rest of Lent Term.

# LSE Academic publishes research on American unions

Bethany Clarke

By the time they reach the age of forty or 41, one-third of workers in the United States have never been represented by a trade union, and are likely to remain outside the union movement, according to research conducted by Jonathan Booth of the LSE's Department of Management, and John Budd and Kristen Munday of the University of Minnesota.

Their investigation is the first analysis of this trend in the United States.

Booth's paper, which was published in the British Journal of Industrial Relations, also reveals that while less than fifteen per cent of workers in the United States are represented by unions at any given time, two-thirds

of all workers are unionised at some point in their careers.

"Analysing those who are never unionised can help researchers, union leaders, and policy makers understand why some workers do not become unionised and thereby help shape future research, union strategies and public policies," said Booth.

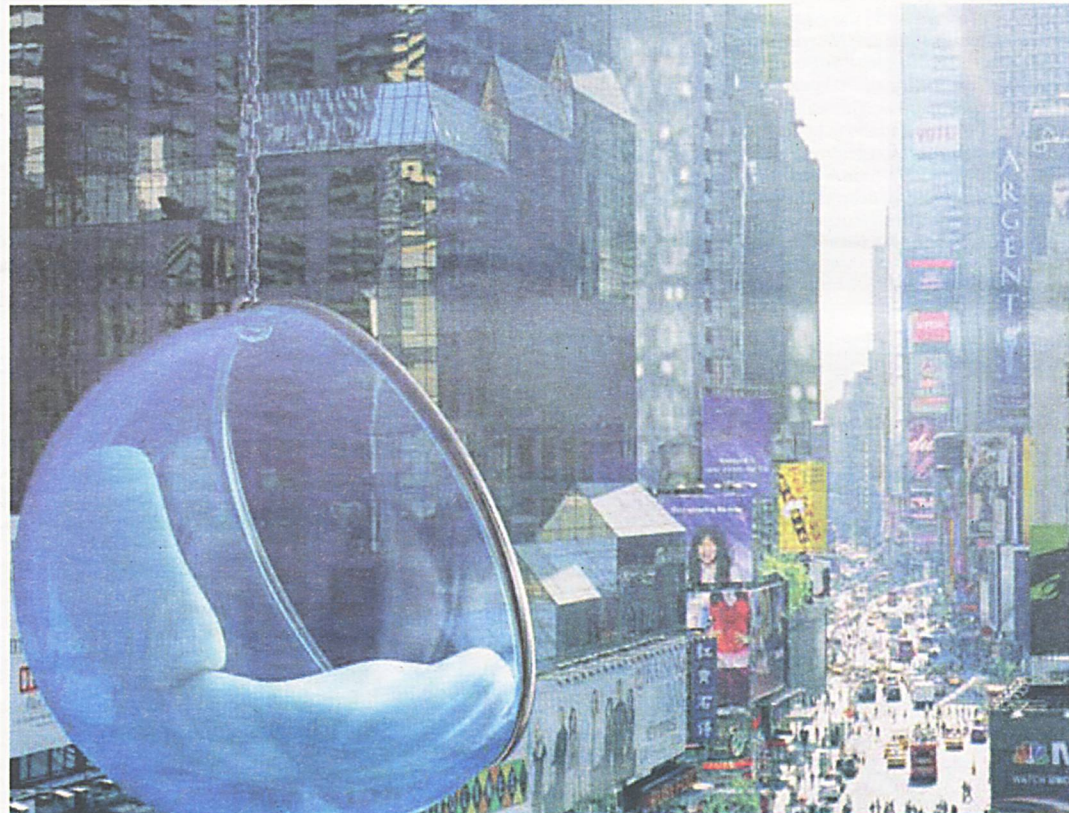
"It is important to look at those who are never unionised because if fewer workers experience unionism and see the true benefits, then fewer workers support unions and union density declines," he added.

In the conduct of their research, Booth and his colleagues tracked 1,522 people through 21 waves of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth between 1979, when they were fifteen or sixteen, until 2004 when they were aged forty or 41.

The study found that while the never unionised is a diverse group,

members are more likely to be women than men, have had fewer jobs in their lifetime, and are more likely to have a parent who had been university-education.

The report concludes that, in practice, American labour unions represent far more than the fifteen per cent of workers represented by unions at any given time. It adds that by ensuring that workers' initial experiences with unions are positive, the chances that workers will opt to stay unionised can be increased, though decreasing rates of unionisation mean that such opportunities are on the decline.



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# GIVEITAGO!



» continued from page 1

it influences the rest of society." Miliband focused on the importance of the government providing British youth with opportunity: "If we are to do right by our young people we must take opportunity seriously."

The research conducted in the Reading the Riots report demonstrates that it is the government's "responsibility to make sure that young people have more to aspire to than nicking a pair of trainers or a widescreen TV," he said.

Miliband ended his speech with a call to rebuild British economy and society based upon different values, where the "young person who works hard knows they can get on."

May vocalised her support for stop and search tactics, as well as her belief in the necessity of better community relations with the police. In response to the report's findings, she announced that she had asked for a review into the stop and search tactics employed by police forces, which is to be carried out by the Association of Chief Police Officers.

She said of the riots, "all the riots really come down to was money," "it wasn't political, it was shopping." She described the rioters as "career criminals," saying, "Frankly, I'm delighted that career criminals don't like the police, that they feel the police are always targeting them and, as one said, that the police are always 'causing them hell.'"

May added that the report made it clear that the rioters are "still blaming others" for their actions, something she rejects "because it was their choice to riot."

Cooper, the shadow home secretary, noted that the riots raised serious questions for the police about the swiftness with which rioters have been organising, noting that police forces need to be able to gather at the same speed.

In his speech, Brake called for the government "to address the root cause of the problems," saying that there is a large number of young people in Britain who feel "very disconnected" and whom "governments have failed."

The findings of the Reading the Riots report, published in early De-



Photo: Flickr user George Rex

ember, indicated that the riots were largely in response to widespread frustration and anger at the way the police engage with communities. The study pinpointed a complex mix of grievanc-

es behind people's decisions to riot, but found the driving factor to be a visceral distrust of the police. The study also investigated the demographics of the rioters, as well as the methods they

used to organise themselves.

The Guardian and the LSE will collaborate again to release a second Reading the Riots report in the next year, which will "draw on interviews

with communities, police and judges about their experience of the disturbances and their aftermath."

# Top researchers recognised with honorary doctorates

**Connor Russell**  
Staff Reporter

At presentation ceremonies held on the 14th and 15th December, the School awarded honorary doctorates to three prominent researchers in the fields of anthropology, public health and development.

Professors Rita Giacaman, Marshall Sahlins and Nora Cruz-Quebral each received a Doctor of Science (Social Sciences) from the School for their work to "understand the causes of things."

Rita Giacaman is a professor of public health at the Institute of Community and Public Health at Birzeit University in the occupied West Bank territory. The Institute, of which she is a founding member, has played an instrumental role in researching the nature of public health care needs in the region.

Through her involvement in the Institute, Giacaman has contributed

to the development of the Palestinian primary healthcare model, which places emphasis on community health workers and a pragmatic approach to local health care, rather than centralised treatment. She has also been involved in social activism through the Institute's participation in the non-violent Palestinian Social Action Resisting Occupation, which provided women's literacy programmes and basic health care to those not covered by the mainstream provision in the late 1970s.

More recently, her work documenting the effect of chronic war-like conditions on the well-being of Palestinians has been published in *The Lancet*.

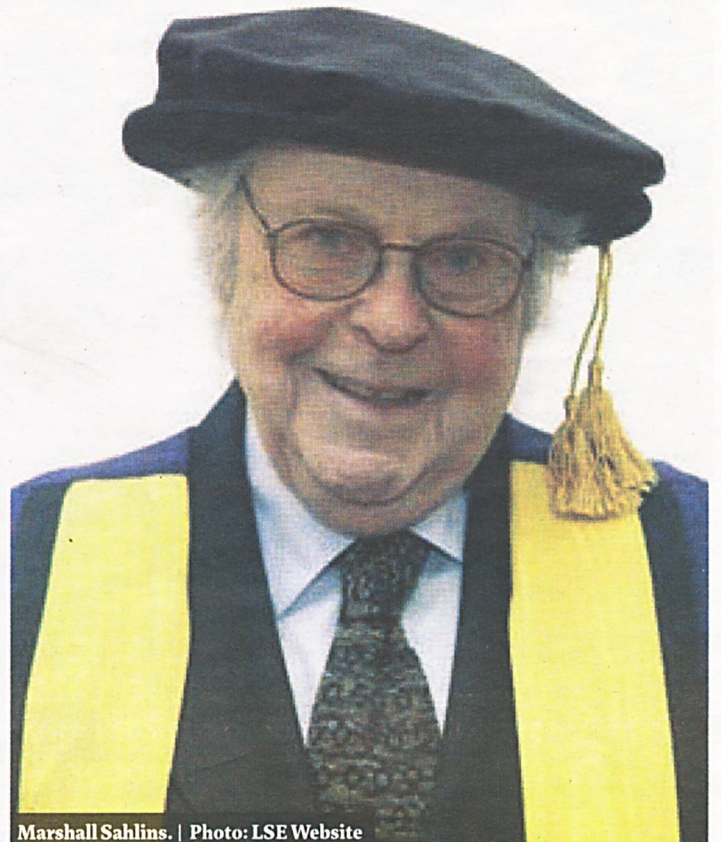
Marshall Sahlins, currently an emeritus professor at the University of Chicago, has contributed to the field of anthropology through field and archive studies in the Pacific, with a particular focus on Fiji and Hawaii. Alongside ethnographic reports, his earlier work encompassed economic anthropology in the region, criticised the assumption that economic actors were entirely

influenced by reason and sought to explain the influence that culture has on decision-making and rationality itself.

In more recent years, Sahlins' work has focused on the historical analysis of many societies in Oceania and South East Asia. He is also a fellow of the US National Academy of Sciences and the British Academy.

Nora Cruz-Quebral consults non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and research centres on development communication, a field she played a pivotal role in forming. Her work explores the effects of communication within a society on its socioeconomic development, and has been recognised as defining the field throughout the 1970s and 1980s.

In recent years, she has focused on consulting and putting her work into practice through partnerships with UNICEF, the US Academy of Educational Development and the Philippine Department of Agriculture amongst many others.



Marshall Sahlins. | Photo: LSE Website



| INTRODUCTION                                                                                                                     | CALENDAR                                                                              | USEFUL INFO                                                                                                                                    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| DATE                                                                                                                             | SESSION TITLE                                                                         | TIME & VENUE                                                                                                                                   |
| 16 JAN / MON                                                                                                                     | POETRY WORKSHOP<br>BEGINNERS' YOGA<br>WOMEN ONLY GYM SESSION                          | 1700 - 1900 / UNDERGROUND, EAST BUILDING<br>1730 - 1900 / BADMINTON COURT, OLD BUILDING<br>1800 - 1900 / SU GYM, EAST BUILDING                 |
| 17 JAN / TUE                                                                                                                     | GIVE CHESS A GO!<br>LIFE DRAWING                                                      | 1200 - 1500 / HOUGHTON STREET<br>1800 - 2000 / KGS.1.02                                                                                        |
| 18 JAN / WED                                                                                                                     | LOOSE TV FILMMAKING WORKSHOP<br>GAMES AFTERNOON<br>A TASTE OF TAI CHI<br>TIPS EVENING | 1200 - 1400 / TW1.U210<br>1200 - 1600 / UNDERGROUND, EAST BUILDING<br>1400 - 1500 / OLD GYM, OLD BUILDING<br>1900 - 2100 / QUAD, EAST BUILDING |
| 19 JAN / THUR                                                                                                                    | MODEL UN VALENTINE'S DEBATE<br>AEROBICS<br>JITSU                                      | 1500 - 1700 / CON.H105<br>1800 - 1915 / OLD GYM, OLD BUILDING<br>1800 - 2000 / BADMINTON COURT, OLD BUILDING                                   |
| 20 JAN / FRI                                                                                                                     | BEEKEEPING<br>SITTING VOLLEYBALL<br>TAE KWON DO                                       | 1100 - 1200 / PASSFIELD HALL<br>1430 - 1600 / OLD GYM, OLD BUILDING<br>1930 - 2130 / BADMINTON COURT, OLD BUILDING                             |
| 21 JAN / SAT                                                                                                                     | CAPOEIRA                                                                              | 1300 - 1600 / OLD GYM, OLD BUILDING                                                                                                            |
| 22 JAN / SUN                                                                                                                     | LONDON CYCLE RIDE                                                                     | 1400 - 1600 / MEET OUTSIDE THE GARRICK                                                                                                         |
| KEY INFORMATION                                                                                                                  |                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                |
| <p>✦ ALL SESSIONS ARE FREE OF CHARGE!</p> <p>✦ TURN UP: NO NEED TO BOOK!      DROP IN: COME ALONG WHENEVER YOU FEEL LIKE IT!</p> |                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                |

# GIVEITAGO!

# events

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Professor Judith Rees, director, LSE

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# Comment



Flickr user: Kim-Bodia

## Elections, eurozone, war and democracy

What should we expect from the year ahead?

**Tom Heyden**



For much of 2012 the world's eyes will be fixed upon the almost uniquely long American presidential race, which begins with the battle for the Republican nomination and the subsequent endorsement to challenge incumbent Obama. In this, the moderate Governor of Massachusetts, Mitt Romney, will reluctantly be embraced by the GOP only after a bitter, drawn-out struggle with the other right wing contenders. The Republican nomination has already been nicknamed the "Anyone but Romney" race in some quarters, after a succession of more colourful characters have surged into pole position only to fall away due to various sex scandals, horrendous (or hilarious, depending on your inclination) public gaffes, or justifiable concerns about having sufficient sanity to lead the nation. Romney, bankrolled by the millions he has made in the private sector, has maintained a consistent but underwhelming presence at or near the forefront throughout the whole process, failing to truly excite or engage the Republican party – with his Mormon background proving a significant turnoff for the right's substantial Evangelical support.

One thing is certain, though. The image of a divided opposition that the nomination struggle projects, with damaging intra-party mudslinging, will be a distant memory once Romney triumphs and the party unites behind him. Republicans' reluctance to embrace Romney will be trumped by the vociferous hatred directed towards the hapless Obama. The key battleground for the election will be the troubled US economy, and against this backdrop it is likely that Romney will emerge victorious, condemning Obama to the ignominious group of one-term presidents.

The malaise of the global economic crisis is set to continue throughout 2012 if you are a Western developed nation. While the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China) countries' projected growth for 2012 is 3.5%, 3.7%, 7.8%, and 8.2% respectively, the US and Japan are estimated to grow only a meagre 1.3% and 2.2%. Yet even these two nations could be forgiven for opti-

mism when set against the Eurozone's predicted -0.3% growth. The fact that the Eurozone is in crisis can no longer be considered news; just like saying the crisis will continue throughout 2012 can not be considered a true prediction.

As 2011 drew to a close, the Eurozone leaders and the wider EU (with some notable exceptions, Mr Cameron!) took belated action to towards fuller integration of the Eurozone economies, with tighter regulations. The biggest question of 2012 will be whether these agreements are sufficient to hold it together. In this, the Eurozone will prevail. For now. Yet the applause for avoiding dissolution must be muted by the failure to address the deeper structural problems that underlie a stuttering recovery. The Euro, labelled a "failed experiment" by many, may well live out its last full year due to the incapacity of the key nations to cooperate sufficiently. The strict adherence to extreme austerity, in an effort to calm the markets, will simultaneously severely hinder economic recovery and prolong the torment of the struggling nations.

Chancellor Merkel and Germany will not allow the Euro to fail, despite growing internal discontent at having to bail out the underperforming members of the Eurozone's peripheral regions. The consequences of a Eurozone breakup could be catastrophic and Merkel, along with Sarkozy, will ultimately do anything to prevent it happening. But much of this relies on Greece, which faces an incredibly dark 2012. Although 50% of Greek debt was effectively written off in the agreement, sharp austerity cuts are still necessary to bring down the budget to manageable levels. These cuts have already induced violent street riots and it remains to be seen whether the Greek people would instead rather default on their loans completely and thereby extricate themselves from the Euro – which may also mean extrication from the EU itself. Unfortunately, either option – austerity or default – promises an incredibly difficult year for Greece, which is why the population will ultimately realise that the longer-term benefits of the EU far outweigh the immediate gains of withdrawal.

Overall, the nature of the Eurozone leaders' handling of the crisis thus far has been to deliberate, procrastinate and eventually come up with a stop-gap solution that does not address the

root problems – such as the lack of sufficient penalties for errant countries, or even how to enforce them. Expect this to continue in 2012, as the European leaders attempt to balance the anger of their constituents with the necessary but unpopular decisions to be made.

2012 may well witness the West continuing its steady descent towards another Middle East war – it's been long enough since the last one, to be fair – this time over Iran's nuclear weapons program. Iran's protestations of innocence evoke haunting memories of the WMD fiasco preceding the war with Iraq, and while everyone should be wary of similar talk, this time there is at least the backing of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to provide some legitimacy to any doubt over Iran's true intentions. Moreover, a country that has previously threatened to wipe another country "off the map," is certainly not one that the rest of the world should want to gain a nuclear weapon.

In reality, despite Ahmadinejad's bellicose rhetoric towards Israel, were Iran to develop nuclear weapons it would in fact adhere to the familiar cold war doctrine of MAD (Mutually Assured Destruction) and use the nuclear program to strengthen its global bargaining position rather than to en-

**"2012 may well witness the West continuing its steady descent towards another Middle East war - it's been long enough since the last one, to be fair"**

sure its own demise through using the weapons. Nevertheless, allowing Iran to develop nuclear weapons is a risk that Israel, the US, and the EU will not accept. These positions are immovable. Israel understandably sees Iranian nuclear capacity as an existential threat, while the US remains committed to Israel's defence, as well as to the broader aim for nuclear disarmament.

It is unlikely that there will be conventional war in Iran in 2012. Aside from the fact that Obama would be mad to begin a war in an election year, the USA has been bruised enough by the disaster of Iraq to learn that other forms of prevention are required to avoid another draining regional war. Even Israel is unlikely to provoke a conventional war. Instead the majority of Western nations will tighten sanctions against Iran and increase covert and cyber warfare in the attempt to impede Iran. Ground troops will certainly not be anywhere near Iran in 2012, while it remains to be seen how well the US have learnt their lessons in the future. Obama recently announced the shift of US military focus to Asia-Pacific, indicating preoccupation with Chinese power, but he did maintain an important caveat for those "adversaries who try to prevent us access" – a clear reference to Iran's lack of transparency.

Recent US claims delineate 2011 as a year that felt momentous. One of those years that will be looked back on in future years as a defining one. The inappropriately named Arab Spring, which rumbled on throughout the whole year, is arguably the most momentous occurrence of them all. Forget Osama Bin Laden's assassination, the consequences of the Arab Spring will continue to shape 2012 and many years that follow. As all-powerful authoritarian leaders began to fall across the Arab world, as riot sparked revolt sparked revolution, it seemed that old clichés about some people just not wanting basic freedoms were obsolete and the incessant march of democracy had triumphed.

2012 will temper the utopian proclamations that followed the fall of each dictator. In the countries where the tyrants were toppled, each will now face the harsh realities of engineering a new democracy with an active civil society. Positive signs in Tunisia, with a stable election in October, were balanced by the return of riots to Egyptian streets in protest against the military's increasingly authoritarian rule following President Mubarak's fall from power. Despite this misstep, Egypt will consolidate its democratic gains in 2012, with the Islamic Brotherhood the most likely victors. Egypt, Morocco and particularly Tunisia will stand out as the main success stories of the 2011 Arab Spring.

Libya, meanwhile, faces a far more

daunting task following its more protracted civil war. Thousands of armed militia, who risked their lives for the revolution, believe that they deserve a say in the future of the country that goes beyond a vote in the ballot box. Much work needs to be done to take the arms off the streets, as well as to heal the wounds between the victors and the communities that stayed loyal to Gaddafi. Libyan progress throughout 2012 will be more faltering than in Tunisia and even Egypt, as the euphoria of the revolution meets the frustratingly glacial pace of democratic transition. As occurred in Egypt, do not be surprised to see these disparate armed militias, who united under a common enemy, turn on each other in frustration that everything is not resolved as quickly as they had hoped. It will ultimately prove quicker to kill a dictator than to build a functioning democracy.

Elsewhere in the Arab region remain the unresolved internal conflicts. At the forefront is Syria, arguably the highest-profile country that may slip into full-blown civil war in 2012. President Assad's transparent attempts to appease his people without fundamental reform, as well as attempts to obscure the nature of his regime from Arab League observers, will be transparent and doomed to failure. In the event that Assad does not perform a policy U-turn, the Syrian opposition will intensify the fight against Assad's unpopular regime. This will lead to a civil war pitting them against the regime's forces and the majority of minority groups – including Assad's own Alawite community – that see danger in a rising of the mainly Sunni opposition.

The so-called march of democracy may well be further halted in Iraq, which is already in the midst of intensifying sectarian conflict following the hurried exit of the US, as well as Yemen and Bahrain. Away from the Arab Spring, South Sudan, the world's youngest nation, could unfortunately provide the clearest case of demonstrating the difficulties of engineering a new democracy, as the one-year anniversary in June will be preceded by tribal disputes that belie the independence it has sought and fought for so long. ☘



# North Korea: the road ahead

## Predicting the future of the secretive state

**Laurence Atchison**



In the last few weeks there has been fervent debate over the potential repercussions of the death of Kim Jong-Il on 17th December. Both North and South Korea have clearly recognised the importance of the moment and the fact that many will see it a great opportunity to bring about change in the so-called secretive state. However, the dust has now settled. North Korea's state news agency KCNA announced that the world "should not expect any change from us" and there's good reason to believe it.

The Korean peninsula remains a volatile region and there's little chance of that improving in 2012. President Lee Myung-bak of South Korea may have claimed that this is a "turning-point for the two Koreas" but there's little chance of that. It'll be the same story of slow, if any, progress.

For one, North Korea appears to have consolidated Kim Jong-Un's leadership well. Of course it is notoriously difficult to accurately judge events inside the hermit state but it would appear that Kim Jong-Un has consolidated his spot as the "great successor," elevated to the positions of Supreme Commander of the Korean People's Army and Chairman of the Central Military Commission. So far there does not seem to be any visible contest for power, though this is something that will surely be monitored closely.

KCNA's insistence that there will be no change of course highlights

North Korea's own awareness of the importance attached to recent events. However, North Korea, despite not holding many cards, certainly has some strong ones and is likely to be playing the same old game well into 2012 and beyond.

So what should we expect in the coming year? What we're likely to see is more of the same, albeit driven by Kim Jong-Un's wants and needs, rather than his father's. North Korea will likely further consolidate Kim Jong-Un's position, a continuation of his father's actions before his death. This could consist of anything ranging from more blood-curdling rhetoric from KCNA to greater sabre-rattling. Some commentators are even predicting another nuclear test, though that seems unlikely. At the same time, North Korea will continue the same tactics of promising to dismantle nuclear sites and rejoin the Six Party Talks in return for aid and concessions.

North Korea is by no means as isolated as it was at the time of the last succession in 1994. Harsh conditions inside the state have led to black market toleration and ever-increasing knowledge and interaction with the outside world, particularly over the border with China. But it would be premature to expect some sort of North Korean Spring in 2012. With no internet, social media or even basic places for social gathering away from the authorities, North Korea is not a place ripe for grass roots change.

On the other side of the demilitarised zone, South Korea has of course been stressing its willingness to make the most of this momentous event, as should be expected. Nevertheless, the sinking of the Cheonan in March 2010 and the shelling of Yeonpyeong Island

in November of the same year, which have cost the lives of South Korean citizens and service personnel, have certainly hardened attitudes south of the border. Indeed, the South Korean military was put on alert as soon as news of Kim Jong-Il's death was announced. The days of the Sunshine Policy are over and, while Lee Myung-bak may try to emphasise cooperation in the hope of progress in the final year of his presidency, there is good reason to expect a more resolute South Korean position this year.

Something that may begin to become more prominent this year is the role of China. The influence of North Korea's Communist neighbour has grown recently, as that of the United States has receded. The line that China will take regarding its awkward ally could help North Korea improve its economy and relations with other members of the Six Party Talks but we should be cautious of expecting too much, too soon.

Perhaps the most predictable thing about North Korea is its unpredictability. It's still early days, with Kim Jong-Un still an untested ruler. The fact that even the US intelligence agencies appear to have been unaware of Kim Jong-Il's death until its public announcement suggests that North Korea is still capable of surprising us all. There's little reason to expect a seismic change in the Korean situation during the supposedly special anniversary year of 2012 any more than there was in 2011. As much as we hope for a resolution, there is a distinct lack of an exit strategy that doesn't involve some kind of implosion. North Korea has already survived 58 years and one succession, so it should manage another, even if conditions for the population at

large remain poor.

There's no doubt that North Korea is in a state of continual decline and degradation, and it surely can't last forever on its current trajectory. Watchers will continue to keep a close

eye on Kim Jong-Un and his rule. But we shouldn't hope too much for the great change heralded by some in December. All we and our "foolish politicians" can really do is watch, wait and expect the unexpected.



Flickr user: petersnoopy

**-Quick- COMMENT**

**What are your New Year's resolutions?**

To roll a penny from the top of the Library  
- Josh Babardine, 1st year,  
BSc Government

I want to learn a new language and also stop complaining about things!  
- Payvand Agahi, 1st year,  
LLB Law

To eat healthily, a resolution that I have already broken  
- Chris Rogers, Collective Chair,  
The Beaver

To stop being so lazy  
- John Armstrong, News Editor,  
The Beaver

To stop pestering my friends for Quick Comments  
- Matt Worby, Photo Editor,  
The Beaver

To make less whimsical Quick Comments. Trolololololol.  
- Duncan McKenna, Executive Editor,  
The Beaver

# The Big Bad Wulff

## How the German President huffs, puffs and blows his own house down

**Samira Lindner**



Over the past few weeks, the issue surrounding the German President Christian Wulff is all Germans have been talking about.

While it started as a mediocre issue surrounding his personal finances, his terrible handling of the matter and his attempt to suppress media coverage of the issue have led many to call for his resignation. While the post of President is mainly ceremonial in Germany, he or she is also supposed to act as a moral compass. Wulff's actions have clearly tarnished that post.

This issue has not only raised political issues in Germany – such as whether the post of President has become redundant due to the lack of qualified candidates – but has also raised some serious questions about political transparency and freedom of press, questions that are relevant on a global scale.

Since I assume that not everyone is an avid reader of German newspapers, let me first provide a brief overview of the matter. A few weeks ago, the shamelessly popular German newspaper, Bild, published news of a €500,000 low-interest loan Wulff had received from a friend. The loan itself was not

the issue but rather that he neglected to disclose the loan publicly. Unfortunately for Wulff, that was not the end of the matter. Not much later, details about his and his close employees' luxurious lifestyles were also revealed, giving the impression that Wulff and his friends live the good life on the German taxpayers' bill.

But that was just the tip of the iceberg. The real issue became his questionable conduct with the press. It emerged that he had made several telephone calls to a large news agency, responsible for Bild and other daily newspapers, in an attempt to prevent details of his loan from going public. One of these calls was reportedly an angry voicemail message left on the phone of Bild's Chief Editor in which he threatened legal action and "war". He finally addressed the issue in a television interview, during which I think he made things worse by continuing the dishonesty about the details of the matter and failing to apologise sincerely. Following this, Bild's Chief Editor asked for Wulff's permission to publish the transcript of the voicemail message in order to clarify all uncertainties – permission which Wulff has denied, making matters worse for himself.

It is undeniable that Wulff has not acted as a President should. He has clearly taken advantage of his special position and still remains ignorant of the gravity of his actions; behaviour very similar to the "fallen" German

politician Karl zu Guttenberg who reluctantly resigned after it was leaked that he had plagiarised the majority of his doctoral dissertation.

Most worryingly, however, is that by bullying Bild, President Wulff attempted to interfere with the freedom of the press. Regardless of the intention of his telephone call (he claims it was merely to prolong the release, not to suppress it altogether), the fact that it took place at all shows a great disrespect to the media. Bild is, surprisingly, the hero in all of this. The sensationalist paper does not always have a good reputation but its behaviour has been noteworthy. While other papers may have backed down in order to avoid a scandal with the President, Bild continues to assert its intention to uncover

the truth in the matter. It has remained strong and has gathered the respect and support of other, generally more respected newspapers.

The scandal has raised important questions about transparency and the freedom of press in one of the most stable democracies in the world. It has reminded us that, while there may be an official commitment by politicians to transparency and good governance, without a strong and independent press the underlying issues would remain hidden. The behaviour of the German media throughout the Wulff scandal is a good example of the importance of journalistic persistency, boldness and devotion to revealing the truth, no matter how inconvenient it may be.



Flickr user: The European Union



# Listen to Ken's 'Fare Deal'

Why we should vote for Ken Livingstone in London's upcoming mayoral elections

**Benjamin Butterworth**



There are few places more at the heart of the world stage than London in 2012. East London shall soon be a circus of athleticism, welcoming the world's most exceptional sportspersons for the Olympic Games.

Just up the road, the planet's most famous Briton will be marking her sixtieth year on the throne whilst her family tour the 54 Commonwealth nations. And less publicised, but of equal note, the Charles Dickens museum shall re-open for his 200th birthday.

The etchings of the coming year will illustrate for a generation why London remains the most visited city on Earth. But for those who live in the capital, times aren't as rose-tinted. Every city has its drawbacks and struggles, but for London these have come to be more acute in the past three years. The number of police on our streets has fallen by almost 2,000 since 2009 - all in a time of recession. The cost of rent has spiralled into oblivion as the capital's housing shortage grows chronic. And, hurting most of all, transport fares have risen beyond PPI year-on-year - and will rise another 8% this month.

43 months into Boris Johnson's mayoral reign, and a global survey found London to have the highest public transport charges of any city. More expensive than New York, Rome, even Tokyo - cities notorious for their very high living costs. The statistics, uncovered by the House of Commons library, reveal that a Londoner working

for the minimum wage now shells out 27% of their income just getting to and from work.

In his first year of office, Boris increased the cost of a Tube journey by as much as 10%. The cost of boarding a bus rose by almost 13% in his second. This year, my own student 'discounted' Oyster will cost the wince-worthy sum of £275.40, for Lent term alone. It can be easy to accept this as the cost of living in the big smoke. But when

**"Summer 2012 is destined to be a year full of greatness for our city. But before then we have a choice about the sort of London we want to live in"**

transport costs remain higher than other large, expensive cities, we know there's a serious neglect of responsibility going on at the top.

In fact, Transport for London has declared an operating surplus of £728,000,000. So why put the fares up? The truth is, it's about choices, and nowhere is this more true than in London's mayoralty. At every opportunity

since taking power, Johnson has made the choice to hit a tax on commuters - above inflation, every time. But Ken Livingstone, Labour's candidate for mayor, argues that there's an alternative.

The Institute for Fiscal Studies revised its economic predictions during 2011 to now forecast the biggest squeeze on household incomes for Britons in modern times. Years of stagnant pay and an unstable market are on the cards, meaning we need those in power to do all they can to help lift the burden. That's why Ken, born and raised in a low income London household himself, says it's time we had a mayor who stepped up and helped commuters. BoJo's tax on commuting is bad for inflation, bad for business, and no step to getting London working.

Ken's 'Fare Deal' pledges to cut away Tube tax of the Conservative administration, pulling fares down by 7% from this October. Subsequent to that, Ken has pledged to freeze fares in line with inflation. And this is a pledge made on his own track record: whilst mayor of London from 2000-2008, the cost of a single bus fare rose just twice, whilst TfL's income increased by £153m from the increased usage.

Summer 2012 is destined to be a year full of greatness for our city. But before then we have a choice about the sort of London we want to live in. On May 3rd all LSE students who are citizens of a UK, EU or a Commonwealth nation can vote for who becomes the next mayor of London. The choice is yours: a mayor who has ranked up the highest transport fees in the world for Londoners, or a mayor with the muscle and ambition to make this city more competitive, more responsible, and fairer for us all. I'm backing Ken on May 3rd. ☛

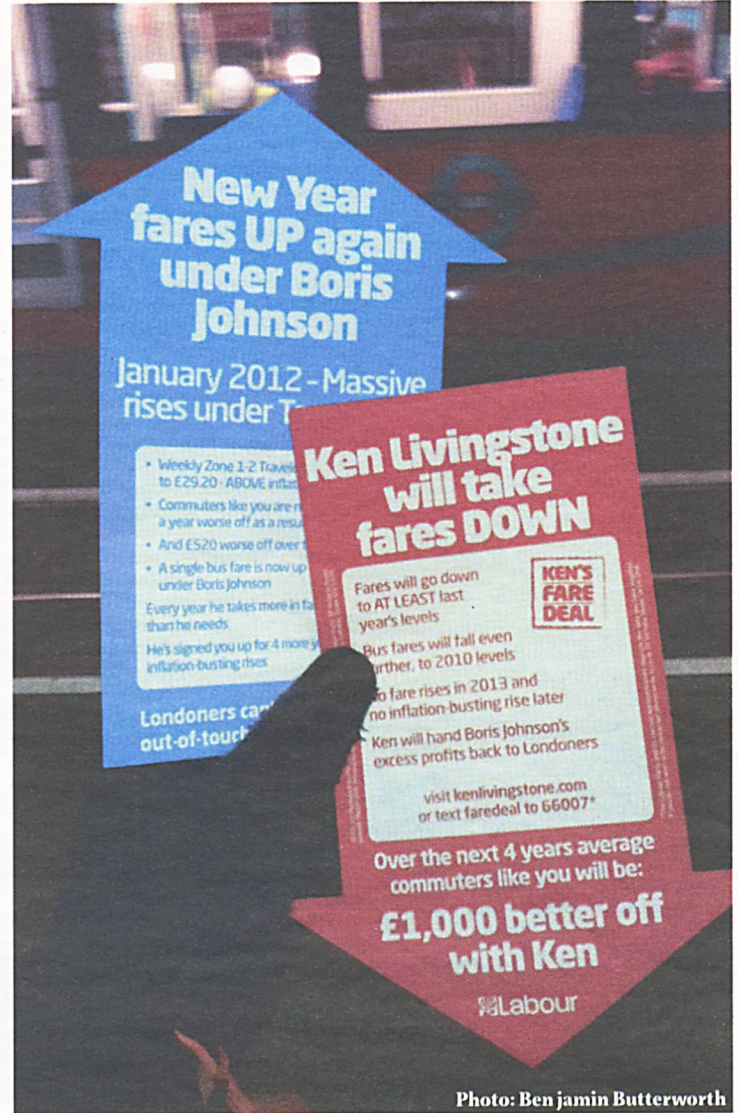


Photo: Benjamin Butterworth

# Sponsoring Pride isn't controversial

But Tesco's charitable donations don't make up for its previous unethical decisions

**Daniel Frost**



It isn't exactly usual for me to spring to the defence of massive corporations, but sometimes there is good cause. Tesco has recently been attacked by the Christian Institute for withdrawing some funding from Cancer Research UK whilst sponsoring a family area at the 2012 Pride London and World Pride event.

Apparently, pressure from hard-line Christian activists has made Tesco reconsider providing funding in 2013 for what Francis Phillips at the Catholic Herald describes as "a clearly political and highly controversial event." I genuinely hope that the readers of the Beaver need not be persuaded that providing funding for Pride London - the largest outdoor event in the UK, with such diverse sponsors as the Mayor of London, Trades Union Congress and Coca-Cola - is completely uncontroversial.

Homophobia is amongst the most awful forms of discrimination and it has not yet been completely confined to the dustbin of history. It is right that there are public events attempting to raise awareness that homosexuality

isn't a sin about which you should be ashamed. Few things can be more distressing than tales of young men and women who have committed suicide because some bigoted elements of society refuse to accept acts of love between members of the same sex.

If there are any students at LSE who hold homophobic views, then I urge you to make them clear by boycotting Morgan Stanley when you go looking for internships - after all, our LGBT Officer managed to get them to cough up for last term's Pride Week.

But I'm happy to agree with Ms Phillips' assertion that Pride is a political event, if only because everything is political or politically motivated. It is a political decision to fund an event which promotes self-esteem and combats prejudice, just as it is a political stance to believe that it is worth researching treatments for cancer. The fact that both causes are equally uncontroversial does not prevent them from also being "clearly political."

However, as much as I agree that it is a perfectly decent and uncontroversial choice to sponsor Pride, I think that it is important to be aware that this is very likely to be an example of "pinkwashing" - making statements in support of gay rights to cover up very sizeable infringements of other human rights.

Tesco shouldn't be criticised for doing something to increase accept-

ance of homosexuality, but there are a hell of a lot of other things for which they must be condemned. After all, Tesco hasn't exactly showered itself in glory over the years (Tesco, here, will be taken as an example of many large corporations' behaviour in this area). In Bangladesh, War on Want found that employees were working

**"It is right that there are public events attempting to raise awareness that homosexuality isn't a sin about which you should be ashamed"**

over eighty hours a week for less than five pence per hour. In Thailand, Tesco tried to have a critic of the company - and former MP - imprisoned for two years. The most recent nefarious activity in which they have become embroiled is participation in the government's workforce programme. This programme involves the providing of multinational companies with large

quantities of unpaid labour by threatening to withdraw welfare from those without work that refuse to undertake what is cruelly and inaccurately branded "work experience". Under this scheme, young people are forced to work up to thirty hours per week without pay. This has gone largely unreported in the media, and years of systematic disinformation regarding the benefits system has meant that the public is unlikely to present much indignation.

Job Seekers' Allowance for a 16-24 year old is a meagre £53.45 per week. This means that those young people forced to work the full thirty hour week will be effectively earning the equivalent of £1.78 per hour. That is around three times lower than the National Minimum Wage, let alone the Living Wage. Also, the scheme is entirely counter-productive. Forcing individuals to work thirty hour weeks for the luxury of receiving a pittance means that they have less time to look for jobs, which is pretty difficult when there are an average of 23 people chasing every vacancy.

Furthermore, companies are only allowed to place people in unpaid positions if the positions are considered non-essential. This means that the "work experience" is completely pointless as participants are not acquiring "essential" skills.

Finally, it is not difficult to predict

the consequences of allowing Tesco and other big supermarkets to obtain unpaid labour. Increasing numbers of positions will be classed as non-essential, resulting in fewer people being employed by the company.

Consequently, the unemployment rate will actually increase as jobs which were previously paid for by Tesco will be replaced by virtual slaves brought in by the government. The political silence on this is unsurprising as Tesco invests large amounts in keeping both the Labour and the Conservative Parties on-side.

Legal challenges are being raised as lawyers argue that the scheme contravenes Article 4(2) of the Human Rights Act: "No one shall be required to perform forced or compulsory labour." Participation in a workforce scheme, along with all the other unethical activities which Tesco have practiced, shows that it is not an organisation to be trusted. Of course it should be defended from attacks by extreme homophobes, but it certainly needs to be held to account for other actions.

Above all, it should be remembered that a charitable donation by a company accused of dodging huge levels of tax is not motivated by generosity. Instead, it is an attempt to absolve personal guilt and shift focus from all the evil that they undoubtedly do. ☛



# Are they the 99%?

## Why the Occupy movement must change its strategy

**Sam Williams**



New Year traditionally sees the Sunday papers offering glossy reviews of the year gone by. One could have guessed with reasonable success the main people and events to be featured in the 2011 versions. Osama Bin Laden, the Japan earthquake, the crisis in the Eurozone, Anders Behring Breivik, the Arab Spring, Amy Winehouse, Kim Jong Il and the phone-hacking scandal (amongst many others) all made appearances, rated by commentators as being of enduring influence and interest.

It was also unsurprising to observe large spreads devoted to the 'Occupy' movement. As a phenomenon, Occupy was born, and bloomed, in 2011. Its first 'occupation' was staged in New York in September and since then it has spread its youthful tendrils to numerous other North American and European cities. The vehemence of the protests is unquestionable; tents, banners and megaphone-wielding activists have been present on our streets and outside our public buildings for the past six months. The legal ping-pong over their right to camp on public thoroughfares has affected its own recalcitrant occupation of the news pages. The phenomenon has,

correctly, not been perceived merely as an absurd and isolated quirk. The general flavour of 2011 has been 'protest'. The August riots, the Arab Spring and discontent in southern Europe mean that the Occupy movement fits neatly into the wider pattern of unrest and civil disobedience that characterised much of world affairs in 2011.

That the Occupy movement was given column space in the reviews of the year was of no surprise; that the reports were frequently of a panegyric nature certainly was. However, the fact that it has been taken by some commentators to rank, in its current state, as a movement of profound historical importance, comparable to the exertions of pro-democracy activists in the Middle East and elsewhere, seems entirely wrong.

The first point to note is that the movement has far less support than its spokesmen would have you believe. The numbers involved aren't big and appear to be dwindling fast. The embarrassing revelation in November that the tent-city sprawled around St Paul's Cathedral was inhabited, on a typical night, by fewer than ten people, exhibited the indifference even of those who purport to participate. Attitudes are more neutral still amongst the public-at-large, ranging from cameraphone-snapping bemusement to mild distaste. It seems that the 'occupations' and 'occupiers' are neither loved nor reviled. Instead, they are en route to a far worse fate: being assigned the status of public curiosi-

ties, the continued residence of whom outside our public buildings is of no more interest than the results of a second-rate reality TV show.

But of course, no one has ever claimed that the Occupy movement has the active support of the majority of the North American and European populations. It is, instead, their message that has attracted praise: the message that the greed of the elite has

**"Until the protestors home in on a specific, systematic and plausible cause, they can be treated as little more than pipe-dreamers"**

resulted in democratic failure and the trampling of liberty, equality and opportunity; the message that ordinary people are no longer prepared to comply with a corrupt and unjust system;

the message that change is urgently required.

Such messages clearly command powerful appeal at a time when extensive and painful economic upheaval is being felt. The problem for the Occupy protestors is that their platitudes are in real danger of being exposed as exactly that; of being consigned to the unforgiving dustbin of history. There are two reasons why.

First, the sheer diversity of concerns represented means that no central core of momentum can be worked up for their cause. One might crudely (and perhaps wrongly) generalise that the Occupy movement opposes capitalism but beneath this banner stands a broad range of sub-views. The idea of the St Paul's tent-city simultaneously housing evangelical Christians, neo-communists and libertarian-anarchists is faintly comical. Nevertheless, the lack of a unifying philosophy around which political momentum can coalesce should be a source of serious concern for those people who see the Occupy movement as a plausible vehicle for effective political change.

The second reason is that even when the ultimate goal—let us suppose here that it is the abolition of capitalism or revolutionary reform of the current political system—has been expressed, the arguments adduced in support are critical without being constructive. It is all very well producing caustic slogans attacking the evils of capitalism but without an attempt to offer an alternative—any alterna-

tive—the slogans are no more valuable than the cardboard they are painted on. If the protestors wish to force genuine political change to remedy the injustices that they think the current system entrenches, they must be prepared to do more than simply amass in campsites and lament, in inchoate and self-referential terms, what is going on in the world.

To describe the Occupy movement as an eccentric side-story of 2011 would be quite wrong. It grew in response to some very real political and economic crises, and exemplified the profound unease felt by some members of our society. But to straightforwardly assume, as some commentators have, that it will have any lasting significance would also be quite wrong. Until the protestors home in on a specific, systematic and plausible cause, they can be treated as little more than pipe-dreamers—frustrated people engaging in a quixotic, emotional splurge. Occupy was a prominent feature of 2011. Caution must, however, be urged upon those who are quick to rank it alongside other protest movements worldwide, and who see comparisons with 1989, 1968 and even 1848. Unless it decides upon a core message and begins to offer constructive medicines for society's ills, it will forever be remembered as the movement that died as suddenly in 2012 as it flowered in 2011. ☘

## Commenting on your comment

### The Double Standards of Nicola Alexander

**Jakob Schafer**



A response to Nicola Alexander's "Last Laugh"

Your piece "The Last Laugh" in the Beaver from last week of Michaelmas Term illustrated fairly powerfully why it was time for you to step down. Some have taken your behaviour as proof that you do not possess a notion of veracity or if you do that you do not exercise it. I think, however, that this is not true. I think that you are just not as reflecting and open-minded as you claim. That's why your actions seem to render your political confessions to be empty rhetoric.

I grant you that you are not deliberately lying when you advocate rational debate and freedom of speech. But your actions tell a different story. Your idea of freedom of speech allows the outgoing Executive Editor of a student newspaper to publish a comment, calling people "unwashed cretins" – a term which would have rendered every plain student's piece ineligible for publication. Your idea of freedom of speech allows the publication of rape jokes, but it makes you whine about getting "fed to the wolves" when somebody tells you their opinion in honest but straightforward words. Your idea of freedom of speech supports to give some of the most prominent violators of human rights the opportunity to present their ideas at length at LSE

public lectures. And after five members of the audience have asked one question each, the answer to which they could not even follow up on, you call the whole thing a 'rational debate'. Your idea of freedom of speech and rational debate is an idea of double standards.

What constitutes the fundament of such double standards is usually the unreflecting echoing of the neoliberal mantra that we are not living in a perfect but in the best of all possible worlds in terms of power structures and power allocation. And since this world is not a perfect one, so they say, making 'compromises' with these power structures to change people's lives for the better is the lesser evil compared to sticking to your ideals and not changing anything. Or - allow me to drop out of the language of 'rational debate' just once - to climb up to the corridors of power you have to corrupt yourself and give up at least part of your ideals in return for power. Back to 'rational debate': that is why you, Nicola, respect individuals who have made this 'compromise' in order to achieve something - even if you did not approve of their actions - because you think that they have at least tried.

It is this respect that makes you also to hold double standards with regards to veracity and honesty. You would sacrifice these ideals if something more important were at stake. You've proved it yourself. When you still were Executive Editor of

The Beaver, being questioned on the publication of the infamous rape jokes, you displayed modesty, receptiveness for criticism and you never let yourself get carried away with insults. But now, that the position's been given up - you are putting the boot in. You are deceiving yourself into the belief that you have to be 'pragmatic' to change something. But the 'pragmatism' embodied in your actions will not change the world for the better. It will, however, and this is the sad part, indeed "enhance [your] prospects" to make your way high up in the society we are currently living in.

I was unsure as to whether your remarks on racism were a consequence of profound ignorance towards the beliefs of the radical left or whether you were just thinking that they held the same double standards that you seem to hold. Maybe, while you were dedicating time to study some people's washing habits, you did not realise that the radical left is largely opposed to nationalism and would thus hardly invoke your South-African citizenship as a justification for calling you racist. Personally, though, I am convinced of the latter: that you thought your political enemy would use any argument to destroy your reputation regardless of what they actually thought was just.

Now, I have to tell you, the radical left at LSE is not like that. They would not call a fellow politician racist either because he is Conservative or because they want to discriminate against him

or because they want people to laugh at him but if they thought he is a racist. To be fair, you probably thought that racism means to insult people on grounds of their race. But racism goes beyond that: it starts with the ideological construction of races and, thus, racism is already taking place when your utterances presuppose the concept of clearly distinct races. Against this background, you should reconsider saying that "it is statistically impossible for us ALL to discriminate against you on the grounds of race" to make clear that you are not making a racist statement here.

Your piece is full of complacency, hypocrisy and misunderstanding. I mean, how dare you even suggest that you have been called sexist because you are a woman when you have been the Executive Editor of a paper publishing rape jokes? I do not like psychologising but I think your problem is that although you confess to be open-minded, liberal and tolerant, you do not even try to rid yourself of thinking in the dimensions of class, gender and origin. No truly open-minded person would care about somebody's hygiene when criticising their politics. And no reflecting person would boast about their achievements in order to look down at somebody else. Nicola, your "last laugh" is full of strong and harsh reprimand, but effectively you are only reprimanding people that are very similar to you. ☘

**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:**

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art

10 January 2012



**The Ice Creamists** | **10 Best Exhibitions of 2012** | **Secret Cinema** |  
**Places: National Theatre** | **On Authenticity** | **LSEx** | **Private B**



# Contact

## PartB Editors

Aameer Patel  
Emma Beaumont  
partb@thebeaveronline.co.uk

\* \* \*

## Fashion Editor

Emma Beaumont  
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

## LSEx Editor

Callie Nordenfelt  
partb-lsex@thebeaveronline.co.uk

## Music Editor

Ankur Vora  
partb-music@thebeaveronline.co.uk

## Private B Editor

Jack Tindale  
partb-privateb@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

Roberta Cucchiaro  
partb-visualarts@thebeaveronline.co.uk

## Design Editor

Aameer Patel  
partb-design@thebeaveronline.co.uk

## Web Editor

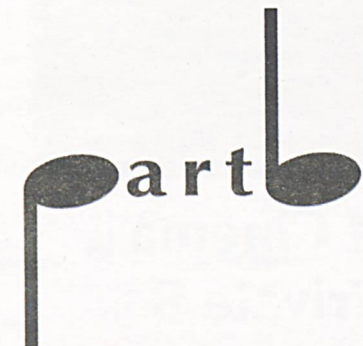
Angie Moneke  
partb-web@thebeaveronline.co.uk

\* \* \*

## Cover

Cecil Beaton, *Queen Elizabeth II*, June 1953  
Courtesy of the Victoria and Albert Museum

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# PartB Places: National Theatre

Our guide to the best places for arts and culture in London returns with our theatre editor, Hannah Payne, on why the National Theatre is at the top her list

There is something about The National. It is seeing it lit up as I turn to cross Waterloo Bridge, it is the regular live music in the bar as you wait in anticipation for the doors to open, but most of all it is the fond memories I have of past visits. The first, I recall was at the age of 11. Having just moved from Nottingham to Devon, we visited family in London. We took a day trip to the Southbank and saw the double bill of *His Dark Materials*. A matinee and evening performance adapted from Philip Pullman's trilogy of the same name, it was sublime escapism. I was transported through incredible staging and puppetry to the world that I had come to love through the novels. It was magic.

I remember little of the theatre before that occasion, although I know I must have gone - my mother cares to regale tales of my being removed due to a distinct lack of understanding of the unspoken rules on noise. Most notable, perhaps, is a performance of *The Nutcracker* from which I was carried out within minutes. But then, I have never been that keen on the ballet.

Although there were a few trips to the National between that first occasion and my arrival in London, their work was not out of reach, despite continuing life in deepest, darkest Devon. Strange as it may seem, the Theatre Royal in Plymouth rarely misses the best work that the National sends on tour. *The History Boys* for instance, and more recently *The Pitman Painters* and *One Man, Two Guvnors*.

To a degree, this sharing of work is what makes The National different. It seems to stand for something more. Encouraging new work as well as classics, the "Platforms" for artists to share



National Theatre by night, December 2009

experiences and gradually making the theatre more accessible with day tickets for just £10, as well as broadcasting to cinemas around the country through the "National Theatre Live" programme.

It is arguable that these ventures are about cash-flow as much as anything, but I would like to think that it is about widening audiences and participation, something that is often very much lack-

ing in the world of the stage.

The location itself is beautiful - the Southbank is a great part of London. It feels separate and different to the rest of the city, yet so perfectly placed. When lit up in the evening, there are few more pleasant places to stroll. The area outside the doors to the theatre is often the place to be, with events usually taking place during the summer, and with live music most evenings in the bar, you don't have to buy a ticket to soak in the atmosphere. Although I must admit I usually do.

This is not a theatre without faults of course. Despite their attempts at increasing accessibility, the top tickets are still expensive and a drink at the bar is little short of daylight robbery. Still, for me there is nothing quite like theatre, and there is nowhere quite like the national in which to enjoy it.

Hannah Payne

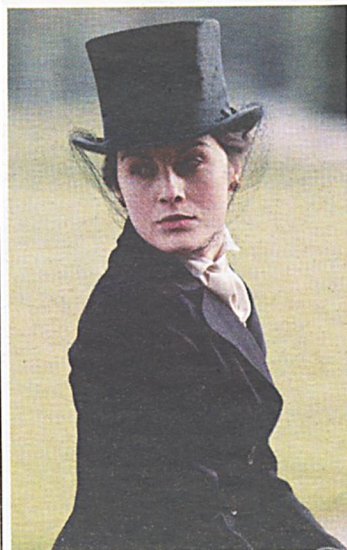


The audience at a production of *The Cherry Orchard*, Olivier: National Theatre, July 2011

## Top TV of 2011

### Best Show: *Downton Abbey*

Once again, Britain's penchant for all things period drama is reflected in our choice of top TV. Viewers are still tuning in by the million to catch the latest scandal and drama at Downton, despite it being in its second series.



Michelle Dockery as Lady Anna

### Best New Show: *Game of Thrones*

Sky Atlantic's fantasy series made medieval life look sexy and dramatic. The Emmy-winning show continues to thrill and engage a loyal audience, mainly thanks to large amounts of sex and violence. That old chestnut.



Sean Bean as Eddard Stark

### Best Remake: *The Killing*

The Swedish crime drama has silently accumulated a cult following on both sides of the Atlantic. With a strong female lead who doesn't use her sexuality as a source of power, the series was something fresh for 2011. Surprisingly, the US managed to pull off a decent remake.



Mireille Enos as Sarah Linden

## Vacancy Visual Arts Editor

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partb@thebeaveronline.co.uk

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# The new year in film



Prometheus sees Ridley Scott return to the sci-fi genre



Ian McKellen reprises his role as Gandalf in Peter Jackson's *The Hobbit*



Robert Pattinson stars in David Cronenberg's *Cosmopolis*



*The Dark Knight Rises* sees Tom Hardy portray supervillain Bane

The beginning of the year marks the steady acceleration of the publicity machines in anticipation of the Oscars next month. However, while the best films of 2011 are honoured, the first wave of film festivals will already be foreshadowing the year to come. Thus, in the spirit of all things shiny and new, here is a small introduction to film in 2012.

2011 was officially the year of sequels, so hopefully 2012 has a little more originality in store. Nevertheless, this does not prevent the fact that one of the most anticipated films of the year is Christopher Nolan's sequel to *The Dark Knight*, the unimaginatively named *The Dark Knight Rises* (July), which completes his Batman trilogy. This year's blockbuster season is chock-a-block with big budget comic book adaptations. *The Amazing Spider-Man* (July) is an unnecessary reboot, but early buzz seems positive and fans are optimistic. That hype is overshadowed by excitement for the ensemble superhero piece, *The Avengers* (27 Apr), where Nick Fury brings together Iron Man, Thor, Captain America, The Incredible Hulk and various others to save the world. This Joss Whedon vehicle will undoubtedly be an all-American extravaganza.

For those of you who consider DC and Marvel publications a little beneath your stature and prefer something a tad more literary, there are plenty of upcoming adaptations. First up is another young adult page-to-celluloid conversion, *The Hunger Games* (March). Studio heads are hoping that this is the beginning of another cash cow franchise like *Twilight*. Baz Luhrmann is timely in his examination of such contemporary themes with a quintessential critique of the American dream in *The Great Gatsby* (December). In case his performance as J. Edgar Hoover is not good enough for Academy voters, naturally Leonardo DiCaprio has more Oscar bait in the pipeline. David Cronenberg is looking to continue his

hot streak – *A History of Violence*, *Eastern Promises*, *A Dangerous Method* – with *Cosmopolis* (November), adapted from Don DeLillo's novel. Except there is a hint of scepticism after the sparkly vampire himself, Robert Pattinson, was cast in the lead role after Colin Farrell dropped out. Still, Peter Jackson's creative vision for *The Hobbit* (December) is holding out. Martin Freeman's portrayal of Bilbo Baggins is promising, Ian McKellen reprises his role as Gandalf, and the makeup department looks as skilled as ever.

Unfortunately, Tolkien's story of little people on screen is displaced as my most anticipated prequel of the year by Ridley Scott's *Prometheus* (June). Little is known about the actual plot, but judging from press photos, the gritty science fiction vision of *Alien* is still intact, decades later. Alfonso Cuarón also seems to be following up his similarly realist science fiction adaptation *Children of Men* with *Gravity* (21 Nov), featuring George Clooney and Sandra Bullock sans makeup. For a more uplifting science fiction epic, turn to *John Carter* (March) which seems to be Disney's equivalent of *Avatar*. Wait, sorry, I believe that was called *Pocahontas*. Nonetheless, the fact that Pixar superstar Andrew Stanton is directing inspires much more faith in this absurdist "Confederate soldier lands on Mars and saves a planet" tale.

Pixar and Disney have an official co-production set in the more familiar highlands of Scotland, *Brave* (August). The surprisingly authentic cast includes Kelly Macdonald, Robbie Coltrane, Kevin McKidd, Billy Connolly and Craig Ferguson. Hugh Grant's pirate brogue sure sounds weak in comparison, in *The Pirates! Band of Misfits* (28 Mar). It sees Aardman Animations making a comeback with their trademark lo-fi claymation by mixing in hi-tech 3D.

Daniel Radcliffe is mixing it up with more mature roles since Harry Potter

wrapped up last year. His newest will be in a classic gothic thriller, *The Woman in Black* (February). Hopefully the stage-to-screen adaptation will do justice to the original. Though it must be said, in terms of a theatre adaptation, Tom Hooper has a far bigger challenge with his version of *Les Misérables* (December). The rumour that Taylor Swift was offered the role of Eponine does not encourage much faith, especially since Hooper has much to live up to after the unexpected success of last year's *The King's Speech*.

Regarding surprise success, the enthusiastic reception for Nicholas Winding Refn's *Drive* has led to another collaboration with Ryan Gosling. This time it is a revenge story set in Thailand, *Only God Forgives* (late 2012), and stars Kristin Scott Thomas, through some inspired casting, as Gosling's mafia godmother. Awkwardly, the revenge film auteur, Quentin Tarantino, also has a release scheduled for late next year. *Django Unchained* (December) brings together a cast like only Tarantino can, including names such as DiCaprio, Foxx, Jackson, Waltz, and Gordon-Levitt. And when does Tarantino ever disappoint? Unlike Sacha Baron Cohen.

Thankfully, the aforementioned comedian seems to be back on form without the help of Borat, Ali G or Bruno, in *The Dictator* (May), which is a timely satire in the aftermath of many democratic revolutions. For farce less rooted in current affairs, Will Ferrell stars in the Spanish-language *Casa de mi Padre* (March) which unsurprisingly features Diego Luna and Gael García Bernal as well.

Of course, most of the films in this article are relatively big releases from Hollywood. The upcoming Sundance, Berlin and Rotterdam film festivals will yield the first of many currently unknown foreign and arthouse hits.

↳ Venessa Chan



Andrew Garfield plays the webslinger in the rebooted *Spider-Man*



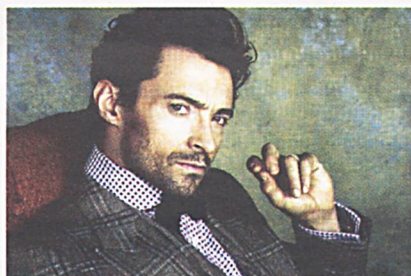
*The Dictator* is a timely release, and not just for Sacha Baron Cohen



Daniel Radcliffe begins to leave Harry Potter behind in *The Woman in Black*



Rising star Jennifer Lawrence leads the cast of *The Hunger Games*



Hugh Jackman will play Jean Valjean in Tom Hooper's *Les Misérables*



The ensemble cast of *The Avengers* includes Chris Hemsworth as Thor and Scarlett Johansson as Black Widow

## Shhh... Secret Cinema

As I exited the station whose name had been revealed just hours earlier, a peculiarly dressed man tapped me on the shoulder and gestured furtively for me to follow him. Thus began four hours of breathless entertainment.

Secret Cinema is an organisation that seeks to breathe new life into the experience of going to the pictures. This is the seventeenth incarnation and marks a new level of success for founder Fabien Riggall, as secret screenings in London will run in tandem with those in Kabul. Audience members are encouraged to write to their counterparts on the other side of the world, to create an apolitical dialogue that Riggall remarks is about "experiencing culture at the same time."

Film lovers are invited to walk through the landscape of the motion picture, to explore a dream-like reimagining of the secret movie that is officially revealed a couple of hours into the evening. The event's organisers and artists have painstakingly captured minute details in their sets and installations. Actors occupy these spaces, performing a style of immersive theatre popularised by theatre company Punchdrunk, in which they combine rehearsed scenes with improvised interaction with the audience.

The bars featured entertainment lifted from forgotten scenes in the film and even the restaurant remained startlingly true

to the theme of the evening. A quick excursion into their kitchens revealed that the delectable plates atop the hands of the Russian-speaking waiters were the meticulous work of Michelin starred restaurant St. John, which is also responsible for the catering at the street-food stalls for the duration of the event.

When the clock struck nine, actors began to usher the audience into screening rooms across the building. An absurdist short, projected up as an apéritif to the main showing, had the audience

chuckling throughout the ten minutes of the brilliantly shot satire of film noir. It was a subtle nod to Secret Cinema's partner company Future Shorts, which serves as a platform for filmmakers to exhibit and distribute their work, and for global audiences to experience them.

This refreshing alternative to half an hour of trailers gave way to what is commonly regarded as the best British film of its genre. The raucous applause that accompanied its iconic opening credits was a far cry from the silence and



Anvil perform at a Secret Cinema event in February 2009



At a Ghostbusters-themed event in November 2008

occasional stifled cough in the local multiplex cinema. As the film progressed, the audience was left to contemplate and marvel at the skill of Secret Cinema's actors and designers, and gasp in disbelief as the more esoteric clues discovered in the earlier probing of the building began to make sense.

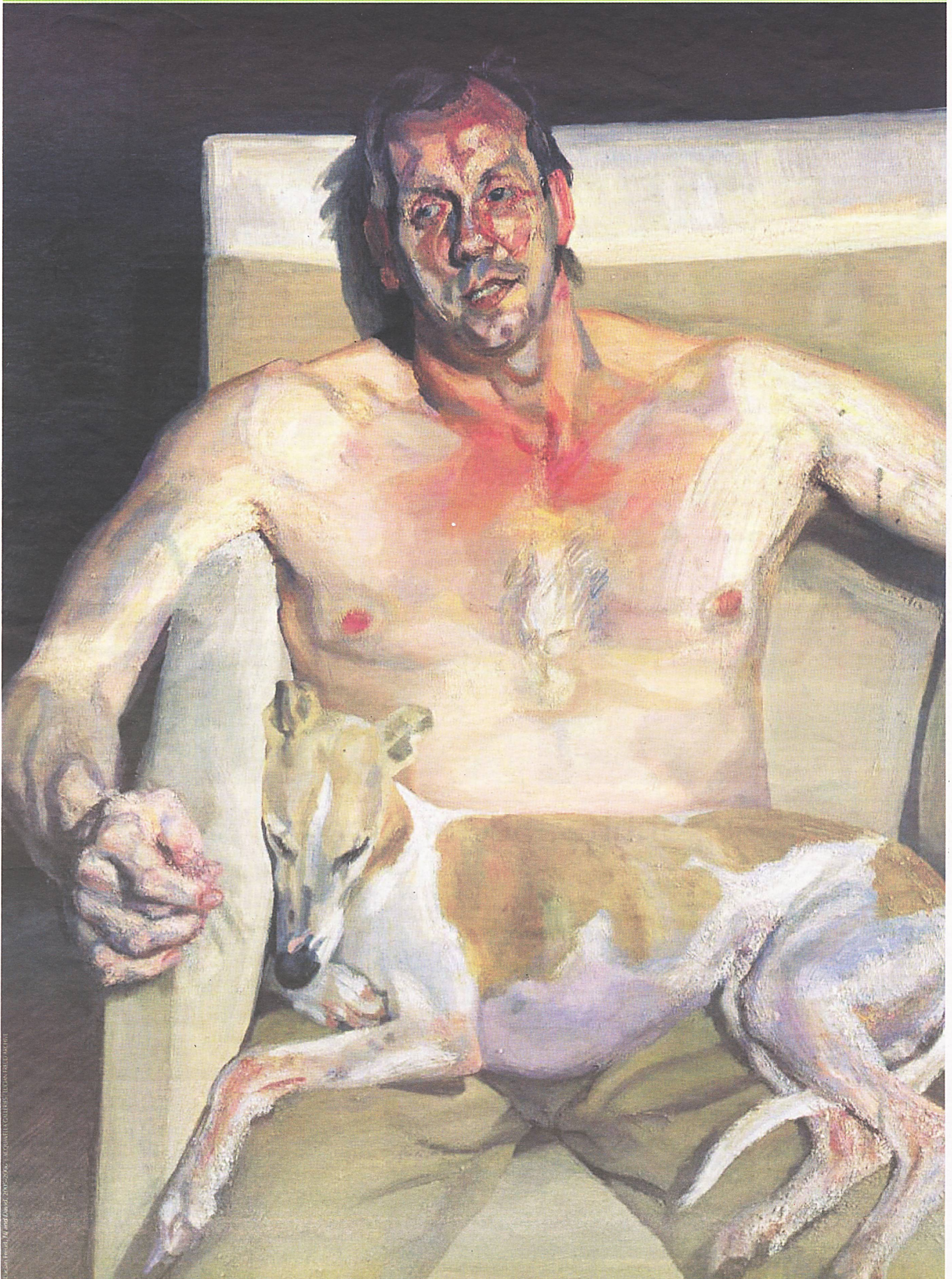
The room I was in was bitterly cold, which prompted the less patient to leave early, but this was the only teething problem on the opening night of an otherwise flawless production. Upon exiting, the guards, also dressed in

keeping with the theme of the evening, handed each audience member a flier. In it, a letter from Riggall, addressed to "Guardians, Rogues and Esteemed Visitors," states that "Secret Cinema is a celebration of artist, of cinema, people, secrets and new ideas." This celebration is a grand one, and the innovations in realising it are a landmark in modern entertainment.

↳ Shyam Desai

Secret Cinema is running until 22 January 2012





Lucian Freud, *Man and Dog*, 2005-2006. © COURTESY GALLERIES LUCIAN FREUD ARCHIVE



# The 10 most exciting exhibitions of 2012

## 1. Picasso and Modern British Art

A major new exhibition at Tate Britain, *Picasso and Modern British Art* explores Picasso's extensive legacy and influence on British art, how this played a role in the acceptance of modern art in Britain, alongside the fascinating story of his lifelong connections to and affection for this country.

Picasso remains the twentieth century's single most important artistic figure, a towering genius who changed the face of modern art, and this exhibition is able to bring together over 150 spectacular artworks, with over 60 stunning Picassos including sublime paintings from the most remarkable moments in his career, such as *Weeping Woman* (1937) and *The Three Dancers* (1925).

**Picasso and Modern British Art is at Tate Britain between 15 February and 15 July 2012**



Pablo Picasso, *The Three Dancers*, 1925

## 2. Bauhaus: Art as Life

This spring the Barbican will be home to the biggest Bauhaus exhibition in the UK in more than 40 years. The Bauhaus was a school in Germany holding an avant-garde perspective towards architecture and the fine arts, operating from 1919 to 1933 and founded by Walter Gropius in Weimar. Gropius is considered, along with Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (also in the exhibition) and Le Corbusier, to be one of the pioneering masters of modern architecture. *Bauhaus: Art as Life* explores the diverse artistic production that made up the turbulent fourteen-year history of the Bauhaus and delves into the subjects at the heart of the school: art, culture, life, politics and society, and the changing technology of the age.

The exhibition will feature a rich array of painting, sculpture, design, architecture, film, photography, textiles, ceramics, theatre and installation. Exemplary works from such Bauhaus Masters as Josef and Anni Albers, Marianne Brandt, Marcel Breuer, Walter Gropius, Johannes Iten, Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, Hannes Meyer, László Moholy-Nagy, Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Gunta Stölzl, will be presented alongside works by lesser-known artists and Bauhaus students.

**Bauhaus: Art as Life is at the Barbican between 3 May and 12 August 2012**



T. Lux Feininger, *Sport at the Bauhaus (The jump over the Bauhaus)*, c.1927

## 3. Queen Elizabeth II by Cecil Beaton

This unique exhibition is a documented reportage of Queen Elizabeth II. It features portraits of the Queen by royal photographer Sir Cecil Beaton (1904-1980), celebrating Her Majesty in her roles as princess, monarch and mother, and coincides with the 60th anniversary of her accession to the throne. The photographs of the British royal family by Sir Cecil were central to shaping the monarchy's public image in the mid-20th century. The Queen was still a young princess when she first sat for Beaton in 1942. Over the next three decades he would be invited to photograph her on many significant occasions, including her Coronation in 1953.

The most memorable of Beaton's images combine the splendour of historic royal portrait painting with an intimacy that only photography and film can convey. His detailed diary accounts reveal the complexities of each sitting, from the intense planning and excitement beforehand, to the pressures of achieving the perfect shot. Beaton bequeathed his archive of royal portraits to his devoted secretary Eileen Hose. In 1987 she, in turn, bequeathed the archive to the V&A. Photographs, diaries, personal letters and press cuttings combine to tell the fascinating story of a magnificent collaboration between crown and camera.

**Queen Elizabeth II by Cecil Beaton is at the Victoria and Albert Museum between 8 February and 22 April 2012**

## 4. Yayoi Kusama

Tate Modern will soon be hosting a spectacular exhibition of influential Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama's works in their entirety. The nine decades of Yayoi Kusama's life have taken her from rural Japan to the New York art scene to contemporary Tokyo, in a career in which she has continuously innovated and reinvented her style. Well-known for her repeating dot patterns, her art encompasses an astonishing variety of media, including painting, drawing, sculpture, film, performance and immersive installation. In this exhibition at Tate Modern there will also be a new large-scale mirrored infinity room where visitors will be surrounded by reflected kaleidoscopic repetitions of light and colour. There has never been an exhibition of this size in the UK and this is an unmissable opportunity for both Kusama fans and those who are new to her work.

**Yayoi Kusama is at Tate Modern between 9 February and 5 June 2012**

## 5. Yoko Ono

The Serpentine Gallery will present a major exhibition of the work of celebrated artist Yoko Ono for the London 2012 Festival. The exhibition will reflect upon the enormous impact that Yoko Ono has made on contemporary art, exploring her influential role in art, music, film and performance. This will be Yoko Ono's first exhibition in a London public institution for more than a decade and she will present new and existing works, some of which have rarely been shown in the UK. They will include installations, films and performances, as well as architectural alterations to the galleries.

As a part of her exhibition, Ono will also present SMILE, a large-scale project which will be exhibited at the Serpentine Gallery and online for the London 2012 Festival. Conceived as a way of connecting people across the world, the project invites people to upload and send an image of their smiles, to create a global anthology of portraits. Ono envisions that "all of the smiles ... that are collected will be kept by the Serpentine Gallery as a record for the planet Earth. When people take part in the SMILE, they will receive their own smile to take home."

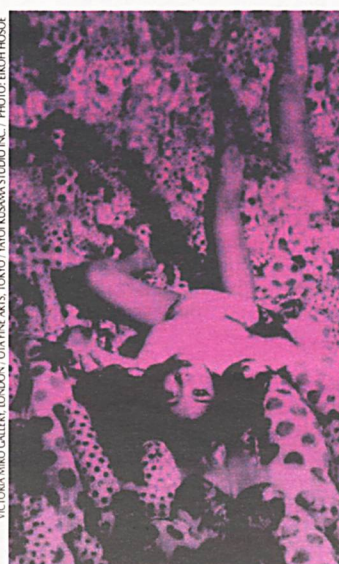
**Yoko Ono is at the Serpentine Gallery between 19 June and 9 September 2012**

## 6. David Hockney RA: A Bigger Picture

The great British artist David Hockney will showcase his first major exhibition of new landscape works in January 2012 at the Royal Academy of Arts. David Hockney himself stated that in this show "there will be no pools, tanned nudes or palm trees." Instead, the exhibition will feature vivid paintings inspired by the East Yorkshire landscape, the large-scale works having been created especially for the galleries at the Royal Academy of Arts.

*David Hockney RA: A Bigger Picture* will span a 50 year period to demonstrate Hockney's long exploration and fascination with the depiction of landscape. The exhibition will include a display of his iPad drawings and a series of new films produced using 18 cameras, which will be displayed on multiple screens to provide a spellbinding visual journey through the eyes of the artist.

**David Hockney RA: A Bigger Picture is the Royal Academy of Arts between 21 January and 8 April 2012**



Yayoi Kusama, *Self-titled*, 1965

## 7. British Design 1948-2012

The V&A's upcoming exhibition, *British Design 1948-2012: Innovation in the Modern Age*, celebrates the best of British post-war art and design from the 1948 'austerity' Games to the summer of 2012. Over 300 British design objects highlight significant moments in the history of British design and how the country continues to be a world leader in creativity and design, and in nurturing artistic talent.

The exhibition will bring together over 300 objects, including product design, fashion and textiles, furniture, ceramics and glass, graphics, photography, architecture, fine art and sculpture. It will tell the story of British design in all its forms, featuring much-loved objects such as Robin Day's Polyprop Chair, a mural by John Piper from The Festival of Britain, fine art by David Hockney and Henry Moore, fashion including an Alexander McQueen evening gown, plus the first E-type Jaguar car ever to be put on public display. Contemporary works including a model of Zaha Hadid's London Aquatics Centre will also be shown, alongside designs rediscovered for the exhibition.

**British Design 1948-2012 is at the Victoria and Albert Museum between 31 March and 12 August 2012**

## 8. Lucian Freud Portraits

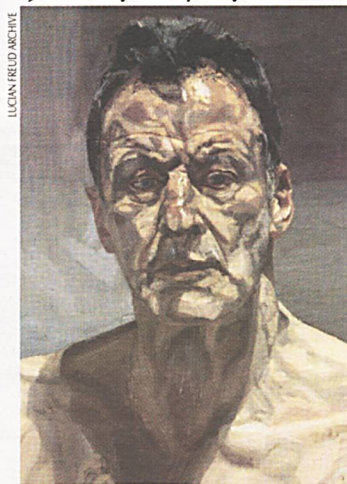
The late Lucian Freud was one of the most important and influential artists of his generation. Paintings of people were central to his work and this major exhibition, spanning over seventy years, is the first to focus on his portraiture.



David Hockney, *Woldgate Woods*, 21, 23 and 29 November 2006

This exhibition was produced in close collaboration with Freud, and it concentrates on particular periods and groups of sitters which illustrate his stylistic development and technical virtuosity. Insightful paintings of the artist's lovers, friends and family, referred to by the artist as the "people in my life," will demonstrate the psychological drama and unrelenting observational intensity of his work. The exhibition features over 100 works from museums and private collections across the world, some of which have never been seen before - this is an unmissable opportunity to experience the work of one of the world's greatest artists.

**Lucian Freud Portraits is at the National Portrait Gallery between 9 February and 27 May 2012**



Lucian Freud, *Reflection (Self-portrait)*, 1985

## 9. Terence Conran: The Way We Live Now

The Design Museum marks Sir Terence Conran's 80th birthday with a major exhibition that explores his unique impact on contemporary life in Britain. Conran is one of the world's best-known designers, as well as a restaurateur and a retailer. In 1956 he founded the Conran Design Studio, and later the influential

home furnishings chain Habitat.

Through his own design work, and also through his entrepreneurial flair, Conran has transformed the British way of life. *The Way We Live Now* explores Conran's impact and legacy, while also showing his design approach and inspirations. The exhibition traces his career from post-war austerity through to the new sensibility of the Festival of Britain in the 1950s, the birth of the Independent Group and the Pop Culture of the 1960s, to the design boom of the 1980s and on to the present day.

**Terence Conran: The Way We Live Now is at the Design Museum until 4 March 2012**

## 10. Zarina Bhimji

Zarina Bhimji was born in Mbarara, Uganda, in 1963 to Indian parents, and moved to Britain in 1974, two years after the expulsion of Uganda's Asian community during the Idi Amin era. She was nominated for the Turner Prize in 2007.

Featuring both her photographs and large-scale film installations, this is Bhimji's first major survey exhibition, tracing 25 years of her work. Her long-awaited film *Yellow Patch* (2011) will also premiere in this exhibition. The film is inspired by trade and migration across the Indian Ocean. Desolate yet beautiful close-up images of abandoned Haveli palaces and colonial offices in Mumbai harbour give way to atmospheric renditions of the desert and the sea, all accompanied by an evocative soundtrack.

Her works centre around the representation of landscapes and buildings haunted by their layered histories, particularly in India and East Africa. She is fully able to capture the traces of life in the surrounding environments, her photographs are a unique documentation of places and are definitely worth seeing.

**Zarina Bhimji is at the Whitechapel Gallery between 19 January and 9 March 2012**

↳ Roberta Cucchiaro



Zarina Bhimji, *Your Sadness is Drunk*, 2001-2006



# 5 albums we're looking forward to in early 2012



## Grimes - *Visions*

Claire Boucher has been busy refining her sound, and the strong lead singles from her third album, *Visions*, show that she's perfecting incorporating poppier elements into her atmospheric and haunting foundations. Hopefully, there'll be more of the former than the latter - her output thus far can occasionally feel inaccessible.



## Cloud Nothings - *Attack on Memory*

Unlike Grimes, Cloud Nothings haven't so much refined their sound as completely changed it. Considering that they only released their debut this time last year, that's quite an achievement. Even more so when you hear their lead singles and realise they might pull it off. Plus, it's produced by indie legend Steve Albini.



## Sleigh Bells - *Reign of Terror*

Like their debut, Sleigh Bells's lead single for sophomore album, *Reign of Terror*, is simple and yet effective, combining loud, crunching guitar hooks, half sung, half spoken female vocals, and speaker-trashing drum beats. But the trick is to bring all those elements together, and if they can do it as well as last time, then we're in for a treat.



## The Shins - *Port of Morrow*

Granted, their last album wasn't their strongest, but it still did what The Shins do best - rather than trying to change your life, they instead create a rich, deep and warm sense of the familiar. At their peak, they evoke a sense of intimacy and comfort matched by few, and we're hoping that their fourth album can provide more of the same.



## The Big Pink - *Future This*

Their debut was an uneven affair, with tracks like "Dominos" standing out as instantly memorable and anthemic without being formulaic. Yet far too often the album felt like it was reaching a bit too far - aiming for a sound beyond their grasp. But it showed plenty of potential, and we're hoping their second album can build on that.

## Perspective: The value of authenticity

I was watching a Bon Iver live performance on YouTube recently, and as usual, I couldn't help but glance through some of the comments that had been left. Aside from the typical mix of diehard fans and haters, there were several comments from someone who claimed to be from the same town as Justin Vernon, someone who had grown up with him, knew his family quite well, and now wanted to dispute his backstory.

To those fortunate enough not to care about these things, I'll fill you in: Vernon apparently broke up with his girlfriend, came down with a serious

infection, split from his band, and retreated to an isolated log cabin in the Wisconsin wilderness where he proceeded to record his debut, *For Emma, Forever Ago*, a record which felt simultaneously fresh and aged, comforting yet invigorating. Some have argued that the album's popularity has benefitted immensely from this story, as it has been mythologised, and people have come to associate their own romantic interpretations of the story to their enjoyment of the album.

The user who claimed to know Vernon was therefore a bit peeved.

He suggested that Vernon was in fact a very well-off, snobbish and uptight individual, who had retreated to his father's luxurious winter home, which was bigger than most people's main residences, and where rather than gathering firewood and hunting for food, the only work Vernon did was to select whether to have a vintage red or white wine with his prepared venison steak. The story had been twisted - spun as an elaborate marketing ploy which could be used to sell Vernon as a folksy everyday hero.

Similarly, it has been claimed that Lana Del Rey, recent internet phenomenon

(and now a model), is also a completely fictional persona, a cynical attempt by record label heads to rebrand a comparatively plain and struggling singer-songwriter, Lizzy Grant, as a 50s screen goddess.

People express outrage that this might be the case, most often citing the fact that were these rumours true, they would undermine the authenticity of the artists. But for me, the argument is quite simple: who cares whether the artist is authentic? I care whether or not the music is authentic: that has nothing to do with its author and everything to do with the way the music can make you

feel. If it captures something, if it is able to transport you somewhere, and excite and stimulate you, then whether or not the person who wrote it really did what they say they did is irrelevant. A love song isn't diminished for me if I later find out that it was actually written as a serenade to a transsexual. Music has the ability to capture our imagination and allows us to forge new identities for ourselves. We should afford its makers the same benefit.

Abu Sharmuta



Lana Del Rey has caused quite a stir ...

## This week's live highlights

- 10 Jan: **Kwes / Troumaca** - The Social
- 10/11 Jan: **Ani DiFranco** - Union Chapel
- 12 Jan: **Trailer Trash Tracys** - Lexington
- 13 Jan: **Jess Mills** - Koko
- 14 Jan: **Milagres** - Rough Trade West



Jess Mills, 2011

## PartBeat

The office playlist this week...

Fantasy

The xx: *xx* (2009)

You Can Have It All

Yo La Tengo: *And Then Nothing-Turned Itself Inside Out* (2009)

Gold Soundz

Pavement: *Crooked Rain, Crooked Rain* (1994)

Stay Useless

Cloud Nothings: *Attack on Memory* (2012)

Get Down

Nas: *God's Son* (2002)

Teenage Riot

Sonic Youth: *Daydream Nation* (1988)

Blame It On The Tetons

Modest Mouse: *Good News for People Who Like Bad News* (2004)

Sweet Virginia

The Rolling Stones: *Exile On Main St* (1972)



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## Liberating the world, one lick at a time?



### The Ice Creamists

**Location:** 23/47 The Market Building, South Piazza, Covent Garden, London WC2  
**Nearest station:** Covent Garden  
**Average price:** £5.90  
**Opening times:** 1100-2000, 7 days

The Ice Creamists claim to be "agents of cool," "liberating the world, one lick at a time." They hit the headlines when they sparked outrage at their "Baby Gaga" breast milk ice cream that was removed the day it was released, never to return. A publicity stunt that certainly created a stir. Bold, brash, black, pink and an almost cringe worthy clamour for sexy appears to be the order of the day at this establishment. Situated slap bang in the middle of Covent Garden, their flashy store certainly garners enough attention in this tourist hotspot. But beyond their marketing and "edgy" persona, is their ice cream actually any good?

The first thing that struck me (after you take in the flashy, but admittedly quite edgy interior) were the prices. You could either get a cone with 2 scoops for £3.95 or a cup with 3 scoops for £5.90. But I only wanted one scoop - I was stuffed from my visit to the Pit Cue Co. about an hour earlier. I also hate eating ice cream from a cone because it's just too messy. So I had a problem. I didn't want to spend six pounds on ice cream that I couldn't finish, but a cone would be too messy. Why the hell couldn't I get one scoop in a cup? It turns out that I could, but they'd charge me for 3 scoops all the same.

Now to choose the flavours. I realised that beyond the pathetic names such as "Vanilla Monologues" and "Priscilla, Queen of the Desserts," there lay a distinct lack of imagination in the choice of unusual flavours and it appeared rather chocolate-heavy. Less time spent thinking of puns and more on daring combinations like their "Cold Sweat" (chilli, ginger and lemongrass) would be appreciated. In the end, I had

to settle for custard, the "Cold Sweat" and pistachio.

Perhaps they could redeem themselves. Well, they do give you a huge amount in the 3 scoops - it felt like an ice cream mountain, especially when I was powering through a full stomach. The ice cream is lovely and smooth (although still not up to the smoothness found at Chin Chin over in Camden) and flavours are strong. Each individual flavour in the "Cold Sweat" came through and the custard tasted very much of fresh homemade custard. Pistachio was also good but not outstanding. There is also a sit-down menu of various ice-cream based desserts and cocktails which I'll be sure to sample if I ever return.

The ice cream was good, but nothing to write home about. The whole experience was soured by the fact that I merely wanted one scoop and ended up having to pay a lot of money for three. The Ice Creamists rides heavily on hype and bling, which I don't feel it lives up to. It's worth a visit but I won't be returning in a hurry. For those who think that ice cream doesn't get much better than a late night trip for some Belgian chocolate ice cream at the infuriating tourist trap that is the Häagen-Dazs café, this is probably the place for you. For those of you that know better, I suggest making the short walk to Gelupo in Soho.

↳ Rohit Chitkara



Front left: pistachio, Front right: custard, Back left: chilli, ginger and lemongrass

## Craving chicken? Go Caribbean



### Savannah Jerk

**Location:** 187 Wardour Street Soho, London W1  
**Nearest station:** Covent Garden  
**Average price:** £9.85-£11.95 for one main course, excluding drinks  
**Opening times:** 1100-2300 Mon-Fri, 1400-2300 Sat

Some of you may understand what I mean by a "chicken craving." For some people this manifests itself as a necessary visit Nando's on a regular basis. For others, it is their local fried chicken establishment (those that know me will know very well that KFC is my personal favourite). Regardless of its manifestation, most of us adore well-cooked chicken from time to time. I personally feel that people in the Caribbean know how to handle a chicken better than most, and that's just one of the many reasons I adore Caribbean food.

I first went to Savannah Jerk in the middle of Soho nearly two years ago and left with excellent memories of the place and their food, in particular the jerk chicken. I even asked if they sold the marinade, which unfortunately they did not. I had been intending to revisit for well over a year now so it was about time I got down there.

I went on a Saturday evening and the place was pretty packed. No surprise for a restaurant which claims on its website to have been visited by Jay-Z and Beyonce and features a video endorsement by Jessie J. The interior is simple and colourful, and the atmosphere was buzzing. Fortunately, we were able to get the last available table. By this point I couldn't wait to tuck into some more of that wonderfully spicy jerk chicken.

The menu is compact, which is usually a good sign, in my opinion, with a selection of classic chicken, meat and fish dishes. However, I only had one

thought on my mind. But I would have to wait for that because the service, while pretty friendly, seemed a bit stretched and was rather slow as a result. After about ten minutes I had to request the waitress over to our table take our order.

Our food arrived within a fairly reasonable time and with the large gleaming red hunk of chicken beckoning me, I couldn't wait to tuck in. However, my first reaction was of mild disappointment: the jerk sauce was not quite what I had remembered. It was tangy and slightly sweet but I couldn't detect much spice, if at all. But after a few more bites I did grow to enjoy it. It was well accompanied by the rice, peas and the crunch of lettuce (instead of rice you can opt for accompaniments of traditional "hard foods" such as yam, dumplings and sweet potato). My friend had ordered a chicken roti, which was a large flatbread packed with chicken curry inside and then folded over, almost like a calzone. The roti was rather different to the traditional Indian ones, but it was lovely, slightly chewy with a floury quality to it. The chicken curry inside was tender and very flavoursome. Unfortunately, the slow service continued. Clearing our plates and paying the bill took well over half an hour.

The food at Savannah Jerk is certainly tasty and reasonably priced. While the jerk chicken may not have lived up to my memories on this visit, it was still rather enjoyable. The only real downside of the meal was the frustratingly slow service, but perhaps this would be less of a problem during weekdays, when the restaurant is not as busy. All the same, the good food and big portions mean that Savannah Jerk is definitely worth a visit next time you're nearby.

↳ Rohit Chitkara

## Coitus interruptus?

Things have been interesting for me this week. Lying awake in a strange bed at 5am gave me time to consider what I wanted to write about in this week's column. So prior to being in someone else's bed, not sleeping, I was asked the age-old question...

"Can we do it just for a little bit? I promise I won't come inside you."

Dear Lord why, at 21 years old, do people at the third best university in the country still not understand the whole STI/pregnancy thing? I was really surprised last year when someone I was seeing asked me if we could try the withdrawal method.

Withdrawal was never a method of contraception taught at school (although I was only twelve at the time and the closest I'd got to having sex was touching a cucumber, so it wasn't really relevant anyway), but asking around my friends, it seems that "getting out at an earlier station" is not unusual.

For those of you who are not familiar with this method of "birth control," it refers to coitus interruptus, also known as pulling out or withdrawal, in which a man, during intercourse, withdraws his penis from the woman's vagina prior to ejaculation, and directs his semen elsewhere, in an effort to avoid insemination. Well, this is all well and good in theory. In fact, this method was widely used for at least two millennia. Societies in Ancient Greece and Rome preferred small families and references have led historians to believe that withdrawal was used as birth control (as well as the effective contraceptives of pessaries and amulets). There are even biblical references to coitus in-

terruptus. Some are rather ambiguous because they could also refer to a wet dream or masturbation, but the most well-known passage comes from the Book of Genesis and deals with the tradition of having a surviving son marry the widow of their dead brother and if she was childless to impregnate her (which is, incidentally, what happened to Henry VIII - Catherine of Aragon first married Henry's older brother and when he popped off Henry had to step up to the plate).

*"And Judah said unto Onan, Go in unto thy brother's wife, and marry her, and raise up the seed to thy brother. And Onan knew that the seed should not be his, and it came to pass when he went unto his brother's wife, that he spilled it on the ground, lest that he should give seed to his brother. And the thing which he did displeased the Lord: wherefore He slew him also."* (Genesis 38:8-10)

Ouch - it seems that God isn't a fan of coitus interruptus either.

It has been suggested that the Bible served as a source of contraceptive information for those who might not have thought of the method by themselves (not as wise as the teenage boys nowadays, eh?). Since the eighteenth century withdrawal has been widely practiced, even though it has been condemned by Christianity, Judaism and Islam as masturbation. Until the development of modern contraceptives it was one of the most popular methods of birth control, and it is still used today by many tribal and nomadic groups.

However, modern contraceptives

were invented for a reason - pulling out doesn't protect against STIs or pregnancy. The pre-ejaculate emitted by the penis prior to ejaculation contains sperm cells, either from this time around or from a previous ejaculation. Pre-ejaculate carries viral particles or bacteria which may infect the partner with an STI. Both pre-cum while the guy is inside and spillage afterwards can cause pregnancy. Of every 100 women whose partners use withdrawal, 27 will become pregnant each year. 27 people! If there are 300 people in your year and they all use withdrawal as contraception, that is 81 people who are party to a pregnancy! In comparison, condoms are 85% effective (98% if you always use them properly) and the pill has an actual use failure rate of 8% (only 0.3% if taken perfectly).

Apart from the hygienic shortcomings of withdrawal, there are other problems too. The interruption of intercourse leaves both parties sexually dissatisfied and frustrated. Pulling out requires couples to have great self-control, experience and trust. Quite frankly, I'd rather my bed-fellow was concentrating on me rather than when he was going to jizz (and I'm sure he'd rather be appreciating the view). It takes a lot of experience before a guy can be sure of knowing when he's going to come - and if they prematurely ejaculate, it's going to be in there for an even shorter amount of time.

Basically, it is a stupid method of contraception. The next time it is suggested to me I am going to be extremely displeased and will ruin the moment. Nobody wants to get an STI. Nobody wants to be impregnated by pre-ejaculate (you didn't even get to

have sex!). And quite frankly, I think if a guy has enough self-control to pull it out in the throes of passion, you're not doing it right.

Also, girls, bear in mind that when the guy is "redirecting" his sperm, he might redirect it into your eye (true story).

↳ Callie Nordenfelt



### Cut-out-and-keep guide

#### What is it?

Genital warts are small fleshy growths that appear on or around the genital or anal area. It is the second most common STI and are the result of a viral skin infection that is caused by the human papillomavirus (HPV).

#### How do you catch it?

- By skin-to-skin contact, including vaginal or anal sex.
- By sharing sex toys.
- Condoms do not provide complete protection because it is possible for the skin around your genital area to become infected.
- Most likely to be transmitted to others when warts are present, but it is still possible to pass the virus on before the warts have developed and after they have disappeared.

#### What are the symptoms?

- Genital warts usually appear within two to three months, but it can take up to a year for symptoms to develop (so

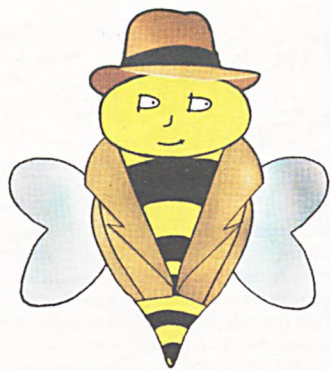
if you are in a relationship and you get genital warts, it does not necessarily mean that your partner has been having sex with other people.)

- In women, genital warts usually begin as small, gritty-feeling lumps that become larger. In men, the warts look like the warts that sometimes develop on a person's hands (firm and raised, with a rough surface).
- A person can have a single wart, or clusters of multiple warts that grow together to form a cauliflower appearance.
- Some people experience bleeding from the warts during sex.
- Warts that develop near or inside the urethra can disrupt the normal flow of urine.

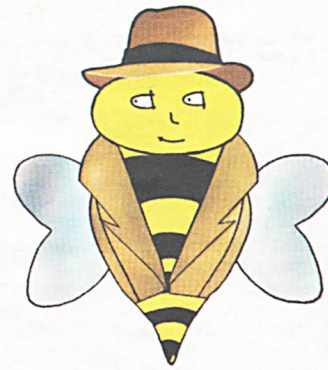
#### Treatment

- Cream or lotion applied directly to the warts.
- Physical ablation, where the wart is destroyed using lasers or electricity.





# PRIVATE B



## All Change at the Beaver: McKenna Takes Over

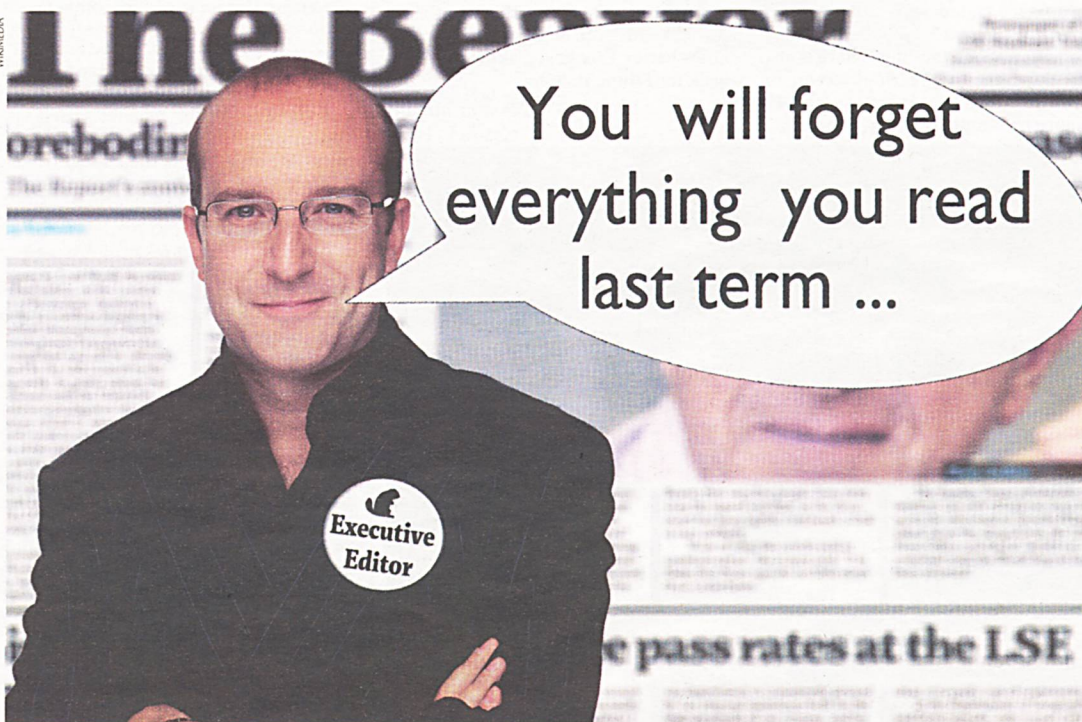
### "Don't GOP Believing"

Elections to the new Beaver executive were dominated by a list of candidates with an unprecedentedly evangelical slate. Of those standing for office, three disputed the existence of the working class, a dozen were opposed to the funding of sociology while one claimed to be running purely because the ghost of Murray Rothbard told him to.

While rumours had surrounded possible spoiler candidates for the position of executive editor, incumbent Secretary for Competency, Duncan McKain, was eventually appointed after fending off a challenge from maverick libertarian RON Paul, a supporter of the paper returning to the gold standard (correct spelling and grammar, fact-checked news stories, etc.) as well as the abolition of six editorial positions including his own.

In a crowded field for the position of news editor, preliminary hustings were successful in forcing out contenders with unpopular positions, especially those supportive of allowing people from Scottish backgrounds to write for the paper.

Controversy emerged during the question and answer session for the position of social editor. All candidates were asked to complete the phrase "I am not racist, but ..."



McKain has since distanced himself from the comments, informing the B that the person in question will be subjected to a vote of confidence once the relevant cases have been settled by the High Court.

A candidate running for the position of managing editor has since withdrawn from contention, pending three private

prosecutions brought forward by the government of Indonesia.

The Beaver executive is traditionally appointed via an anarchic electoral system in which those with the smallest contributions to the paper have the most influential votes. Recent changes to the Beaver Constitution have focussed on a perceived lack of inclusiveness in

editorial backgrounds. McKain has denounced complaints of elitism, citing that one theatre editor once went on a bus and that some are Northerners. It is also understood by this writer that a contributor to Sport has occasionally watched Channel 4.

PartB Editor, Arrears Patel, was unavailable for comment, having gaffer

The B's resident poet has had an enjoyable holiday back home in Tokyo, receiving a number of impressive gifts from the person he singularly describes as "Annual Winter Present Beard-man."

Sadly, a rhyming dictionary was not among them. As a result, do brace yourselves for the following Ode to 2012:

### Union Rubbisho

*We enter Lent Term  
And I would like to give up  
Writing these any more.*

taped his mouth shut. A known fan of Alan Moore, he later sent a long email in which he explained his actions: "I was dwelling among horrors; [it became clear to me that] a horror must I become."

The meaning of his response has confounded even the world-renowned luminaries of the LSE Experts Directory. A report into the matter is due to be commissioned, for the sake of procedure.

↳ Tanned Ale

## Affix A to B: Practical Advice

Despite the various controversies involving this column over the past few months, the mavericks at PartB still think that it has merit. As a result, they have asked your former satirist-in-chief to take the reins in offering relationship advice. Obviously, I have a wide depth and breadth of experience to draw upon, so I apologise for the frank nature of my responses. I assure you that you have no reason to feel inadequate.

Dear Auntie Tanned Ale,

My girlfriend and I have been seeing each other for the best part of three years now. We have an enjoyable time with one another, but we sometimes argue and would like to start spicing up our love life slightly more. What advice can you give us?

'Kinnock', SE1

Dear 'Kinnock',

First of all, congratulations on managing such a long-term relationship! That said, I have one important bit of advice that will have a double effect: change positions. I don't mean your sexual positions, of course.

If you find yourselves arguing rather a lot over rates of taxation or American foreign policy towards Iran, then I would suggest trying to reach the middle ground by considering joint-membership of the Liberal Democrats, if that is not too much of a humiliation. Or perhaps you should both allow yourself to be informed and persuaded by the excel-

lent analysis that can be found in The Economist, and then take its view on everything. The other benefit is that reading it in public is certain to make you sexier, and at home it can be more seductive than Marvin Gaye!

Kind regards,  
Auntie Tanned Ale

Dear Auntie Tanned Ale,

After much discussion, my boyfriend and I have decided that we would like to have a baby together. We are both mature Master's students and we already have sufficient savings to deal with a new arrival, so at least we don't have financial concerns.

Unfortunately, despite trying our best, we have both been unable to conceive. What advice can you give us?

'Confused', WC2

Dear 'Confused'

First of all, I have to ask about your name, is it Luxembourgish?

Sometimes your best isn't good enough. Have both of you had fertility tests? Depending on the results, your options include surrogacy and the old "get Andrew Marr in" method. Or you could buy-to-adopt, like a celebrity. It isn't cheap, mind. One celeb had to build a school to get in on the trend.

Kind regards,  
Auntie Tanned Ale



Dear Auntie Tanned Ale,

I have a rather embarrassing personal problem so I would appreciate it if you could keep my identity secret.

In short, I find it difficult to maintain lovemaking for any longer than five minutes before I 'finish.' As you can imagine, I find this somewhat humiliating. What advice can you give me?

[Name and address withheld]

Dear Mr James Pasqual,

I sympathise with you, I really do.

I suggest that you visit a sex doctor at once. The one my partner and I visited was very helpful and he genuinely seemed to enjoy the help he was giving us, as we practiced with him. He was so humble that even his mail wasn't addressed to a doctor.

He seems to have left the country now. I remember a poor policeman who must have had the same problem as you being very keen to speak to him, even if it meant putting him in prison.

Kind regards,  
Auntie Tanned Ale

## 2011 in Review

"I can't remember being there for any of it."

-Cami Shakrabati

\_\_\_\_\_ appointed \_\_\_\_\_ Belgian \_\_\_\_\_ watermelon \_\_\_\_\_

-Professor Candy Cinnamon

"Well, with such a difficult question with a lot of potential answers, I'll need about one hour to set up the tangentially related topic, and another one to ramble about something vaguely related to ... I'm sorry, what was the question?"

-Professor Saul Belly

"It was wonderful, I am looking forward to 2010!"

-Benjamin Buttonworth

"Disappointing. Sad to see so many former students being overthrown."

-Professor Trudy Breeze

"Lincoln is still a racist."

-Professor Alynrd Skedyrd

"2011? That is a third off our sale price for previous years, so I can offer you 35p."

-Simon from Alpha Books

"Various issues, but I can't put my finger on the worst one."

-Dr Saif al-Gebra Gaddafi

"Pleased to take over the Land Registry 'The Even Newer Academic Building'."

-LSE Estates Division

**SHERLOCK VS. LSE100**

**Sherlock Holmes is back!**

In his toughest case yet, Holmes has only a matter of years to prevent a criminal mastermind boring the next generation of war criminals to death. But what is the cause of this thing?

**Sherlock:** Benedict Cumberbatch  
**Watson:** Lukas Slothuus  
**Mycroft:** Sir Stephen Fry  
**Moriarty:** Jonathan Leper  
**Lestrade:** Lord Stern  
**Mrs. Hudson:** Prof. Judith Rees



# Features

## Ken vs. Boris round two

**Jon Allsop** examines the two horse mayoral race

**A**s London limbers up for its big Olympic year in 2012, a marathon contest of an altogether different nature enters its final furlong. Behind the bunting, bluster and building-work, a throng of runners and riders surge forward in a desperate bid to duck their head through the glass-panelled doors of City Hall before their fellow competitors. As a host of optimistic pretenders fall by the wayside, two candidates emerge from the chasing pack, wreathed in dazzling sashes of red and blue. The two old adversaries grapple ruthlessly towards a photo finish, squeezing through streets narrowed by economic constraint and national party performance, with one looking to repeat his triumph of four years ago and the other desperately trying to avenge it. As they round the final bend, they keep their eyes clamped firmly on a prize which seems increasingly threefold: their vision for London, the chance to represent it on the global stage once more and, just maybe, a critically important voice in subsequent national political debate.

**“Even if Ken is able to make hay against the weaknesses in Johnson’s record, however, he may well once again come second-best in the personality stakes.”**

Leaving the almost obligatory athletic analogies to one side, the race for the London mayoralty is shaping up to be an enthralling contest. Despite the fact that the election sees the same central candidates as in 2008 competing over practically the same issues, the political and economic climate which provides its lifeblood has changed so radically as to render it a fascinating prospect. Four years ago, Boris Johnson knocked Ken Livingstone off his City Hall perch, capitalising on the massive unpopularity of Gordon Brown’s Labour government at Westminster and his own larger-than-life personality to land London’s top job. Today, the Conservative candidate campaigns for his re-election against the altogether more substantial backdrop of his record in office, all too aware that his inimitable brand of loveable buffoonery may not this time be enough to stave off the challenge of Labour’s Livingstone, revitalised by a hiatus from office and going for Johnson’s jugular. The contest between the pair has once again taken centre-stage, despite the not unimportant interventions of the Liberal Democrat candidate Brian Paddick (himself competing in his second consecutive mayoral election) and the Greens’ prominent London Assembly member and former deputy mayor Jenny Jones. As I alluded to in my introduction, it seems to me that policy stances, personality and,

most importantly, the national political situation will frame their battle and ultimately decide whether it is Blue Boris or Red Ken back in power come May 3rd.

In concrete policy terms, the battle between the pair will undoubtedly focus on three key issues: housing, policing and, most centrally, transport. Livingstone, conscious of the fact that Boris traded largely on his personality to win last time out, has already begun to put pressure on these key areas of Johnson’s record, arguing that he has taken inadequate action to protect Londoners against Whitehall-driven cuts. Johnson seems to be particularly weak on housing, where he has failed to mitigate benefit cuts, which could see poorer London families forced out of the city altogether, despite controversially being quoted as saying that they could lead to “Kosovo-style social cleansing.” His record on transport is equally shaky, with his achievements in kickstarting Crossrail, scrapping bendy buses and implementing the successful ‘Boris-bike’ cycle-hire scheme counterbalanced by largely frustrated attempts to roll back the congestion charge and a recent significant rise in fare prices across the Transport for London Network. On policing, meanwhile, Johnson has been damaged by the fall-out from

last year’s riots which swept across the capital’s poorest districts, exposing his inability to reverse central government policing reductions amidst unfortunate allegations that he chose to stay on holiday whilst London burned.

Whilst Johnson is undoubtedly vulnerable to attack in these areas, however, it remains debatable as to whether or not Livingstone will have the political capital to exploit them. A Livingstone administration, after all, would have to operate under almost identical budgetary constraints to those suffered by Johnson and his team, a fact which, allied to the Labour party’s woeful economic credibility ratings nationally, may undermine his pledges to revert Boris’ cuts. His high-profile “Fare Deal” pledge, or the promise to cut transport fares by 7% in October and freeze them throughout 2013, for example, has been dubbed unrealistic in many quarters, with Johnson himself claiming that it would “devastate” planned service improvements. Livingstone is admittedly in a stronger position to criticise Johnson’s policing record after the Metropolitan police experienced a series of crises under his watch, although he may well be shoved off the law and order platform by Paddick, a former policeman who has counterbalanced his endorsement of tough law enforcement meas-

ures (which stretched to advocating the use of plastic bullets in a Guardian interview last August) with a more conventionally liberal focus likely to attract those communities turned upside down by last summer’s riots.

Even if Ken is able to make hay against the weaknesses in Johnson’s record, however, he may well once again come second-best in the personality stakes. Already critical in modern electoral politics, the personality factor is likely to be particularly important in May’s London election given that the winner will have the honour of representing the city to the world throughout the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee and, of course, the Olympic games. Already a magnetic politician thanks to his unconventional rhetorical flourishes and hugely popular pre-election performances in the “Have I Got News for You” hot-seat, Johnson will probably also benefit from the “Queen and country” patriotism espoused by his party leader and fellow old-Etonian David Cameron in recent months. Despite Boris’ unique personal appeal, however, Livingstone remains a formidable force himself. A larger-than-life character who has bounced back impressively from his 2008 defeat, Ken has a mercurial streak and can match Johnson for quicksilver wit, recently telling Total Politics magazine that

the impending election was “a simple choice between good and evil”. It is probable that the Labour party held this in mind when electing him as their mayoral candidate once again, fearing that his less recognisable opponents, such as the hugely-talented Oona King, may be subsumed by the media campaign surrounding the Boris road-

**“If Livingstone can inspire a credible popular campaign against central government cuts, however, and successfully brand Boris as an incompetent, out-of-touch establishment toff, then only a fool would write him off.”**

show. Livingstone may also be boosted by the uneasy memory of Johnson’s turn at the 2008 Olympic closing ceremony, with his vaguely shambolic performance perhaps reminding some Londoners of the need to project more gravitas this time around.

Ultimately, however, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that policy and personality may well become increasingly side-lined, in an election repeatedly billed as a referendum on the performance of the national government at Westminster. The theory that the unpopularity of the Brown government did for Livingstone last time around is seemingly borne out by the Labour party’s catastrophic local election performance on the same day, with the “mid-term” timing of this election likely to tempt people to once again pass judgement on the state of Britain’s political parties nationally. The implications of this “referendum” thesis on this year’s Ken-Boris tussle are difficult to analyse, with the normal expectation that a governing party presiding over a stagnating economy would see their candidate punished, challenged by the popular perception, fuelled by the Tories, that Ed Miliband’s insipid Labour party are not to be trusted with the economy. With the two candidates looking increasingly well-matched in terms of their personal appeal, their final sprint finish may be controlled by such external factors beyond their influence. With Ken labouring through the quicksand of Labour’s perceived economic incompetence, Boris may just steal ahead at the last to claim the narrowest of wins. If Livingstone can inspire a credible popular campaign against central government cuts, however, and successfully brand Boris as an incompetent, out-of-touch establishment toff, then only a fool would write him off. This master of the political comeback, after all, may just have one final trick left up his sleeve. ☛



Flickr/Matthew Worby



# Economics and the world's oldest profession

**Edward Larkin** examines prostitution in Amsterdam's Red Light District

Contrary to popular belief, Amsterdam is a civilized city. Perpendicular canals give it a sensible prettiness and a graph-paper sobriety, and the Dutch locals are frank and understated. The mornings are silent except for the slight rocking of boats; the evenings buzz with a warm charm. It is not a city of ubiquitous drugs and moral nihilism. Indeed, it's hard to imagine that only a few minutes' walk away from the hushed streets of tightly-packed homes lies one of the most famous areas of prostitution in the Western world.

The Red Light District, "De Wallen," occupies the centre canal of the horseshoe-shaped city, the throbbing heart of Amsterdam. It's a sight to behold: theatres advertise live sex shows, shops boast four digit selections of pornographic DVDs, prostitutes work in large windows along the strip. It's not exactly family fun, but there's a novelty about the whole thing that makes it faintly endearing - it seems

like a realistic, if crude, solution to the perennial problem of implacable male sex drive.

But the real action lies off the central canal in the dozens of narrow slit-like alleyways that emanate a warm pink glow (imagery that lies far enough to the left on the obvious-subtle continuum to warrant a self-conscious parenthetical *mea culpa*). Here the women are packed in tightly, performing in rectangular windows (which double as doors) about the dimensions of a mall dressing room. They wear what appears to be the least amount of fabric geometrically necessary to cover a couple strategic areas, and tempt you by rapping their hands against the glass and beckoning. Whether there's an underlying logic to who gets beckoned and who doesn't, I'm not sure. But it's an unsettlingly effective form of personalized advertising. If interested, you walk up to the window, inquire, and enter, at which point the curtain closes. The alleys are packed with onlookers, the pace slow.

You quickly learn to judge the quality of an alleyway sub-cortically, based solely on the specific hue and intensity of the light. More light signifies more choice.

One of the first things that struck me was how close the Red Light District is to the economic ideal: a perfectly competitive market. It only took a few minutes of asking some shady looking locals to figure out how it worked - typically €50 for the normal service, €100 for some extras, and €150 for the proverbial Full Monty (the specific details of which, for propriety's sake [questionable idea in a column about prostitution, but still], probably don't justify making the editorial cut). Since the price is well-known, each individual girl is a price taker. Supply is seemingly unlimited. There's almost perfect information - barring about four centimeters of skin, you know exactly what you're getting. Transaction costs are low - one can feasibly look at probably 100 windows in 10 minutes. Sure, there are some problems. For

one, you can't tell if any one's offering a discount, so bidding prices down would be tough. But still, this is pretty close to perfect.

There's also a complex, bizarre psychology about De Wallen, probably due to its status as both a tourist attraction and home of a trade which invites implicit scorn: even if you're notionally in favour of prostitution legalisation, my bet is that you're not going to view customers as the paragon of virtue. This dynamic makes it somehow easy to sort people/tourists/customers into categories.

First, there are those who appear to be intent on making a purchase. They're remarkably heterogeneous in terms of raw physical attributes: traditional sleazes, hormone-laced teenagers (who have a particularly carnal air about them), even wealthy-looking men in mock turtle-necks, frameless glasses, and wedding bands. What they share is an incredibly efficient head-swiveling ability to look at every possible window and make use of every millisecond of viewing time. They also have a weird way of lingering in front of certain windows, possibly using some unknown, experiential scoring criteria. They don't stare so much as assess. Despite their diligence during the shopping period, when entering and leaving the window-doors, they look about as comfortable as if they had woken up nude on center stage in a sold out Royal Opera.

Then there are the pure tourists (PTs). The biggest indication of a PT is to be strolling hand in hand with a significant other, which, barring something remarkable, is pretty much a giveaway that they're not planning on making any purchases. Even when alone, PTs have a sort of blissful naïveté in the way they look at the windows - they stare with a sort of shameless quality that makes it clear that they don't care if anyone is watching, the psychology of which is only reconcilable through being a pure tourist.

By far the best group, however, is the could-be-convinceds (CBCs). CBCs appear to have justified coming to the Red Light District to themselves for ostensibly PT reasons, but it's clear from the agonized over-the-shoulder gazes and inadvertent stutter-steps that they may have been plotting a purchase the entire time. These pauses are usually followed by a schizophrenic darting of the eyes towards surrounding tourists to make sure they're not being watched, which of course only self-defeatingly increases their prominence. They also have a tendency to stare occasionally into the middle distance with contorted facial muscles, apparently indicative of an all-out electrochemical war pitched along moral and philosophical lines between battling groups of neurons.

Part of the reason why the scene is so fascinating is the inherent duality in the whole thing. The women seem almost omnipotently powerful at times - affirmed by a few minutes of observing slack-jawed men basically melt at a seductive glance or seeing a CBC magnetically reorient towards an interesting window. But they're also powerless in a distressing way - rapping on their windows like cages as revelers walk by, confined to a space where it's possible to move around 360 degrees but not much more, exposed every second of the working day to a referendum on their full-body attractiveness. Not to mention the issue of having to have sex with men within the first few minutes of meeting them, some of whom they would never have sex with in "real life".

It could also be said that this is the absolute zenith of choice for men who want to dictate their own sexual lives. But again, this is a pretty simplistic analysis. The very fact that people are willing to pay sometimes a week's worth of savings for 15 minutes of sex

tends to imply an utter lack of choice or satisfaction in the outside world. Both the suppliers and customers occupy a weird purgatory of choice - they are technically free to do what they're doing, but in a sense they're also utterly unfree and thus have to reduce sex to a purely monetary transaction despite the fact that the previous few million years of evolution have taught us that it's something that results from an extended period of battle, courtship, or cunning. Hiring a prostitute is an act of both true freedom but also a kind of deep sadness.

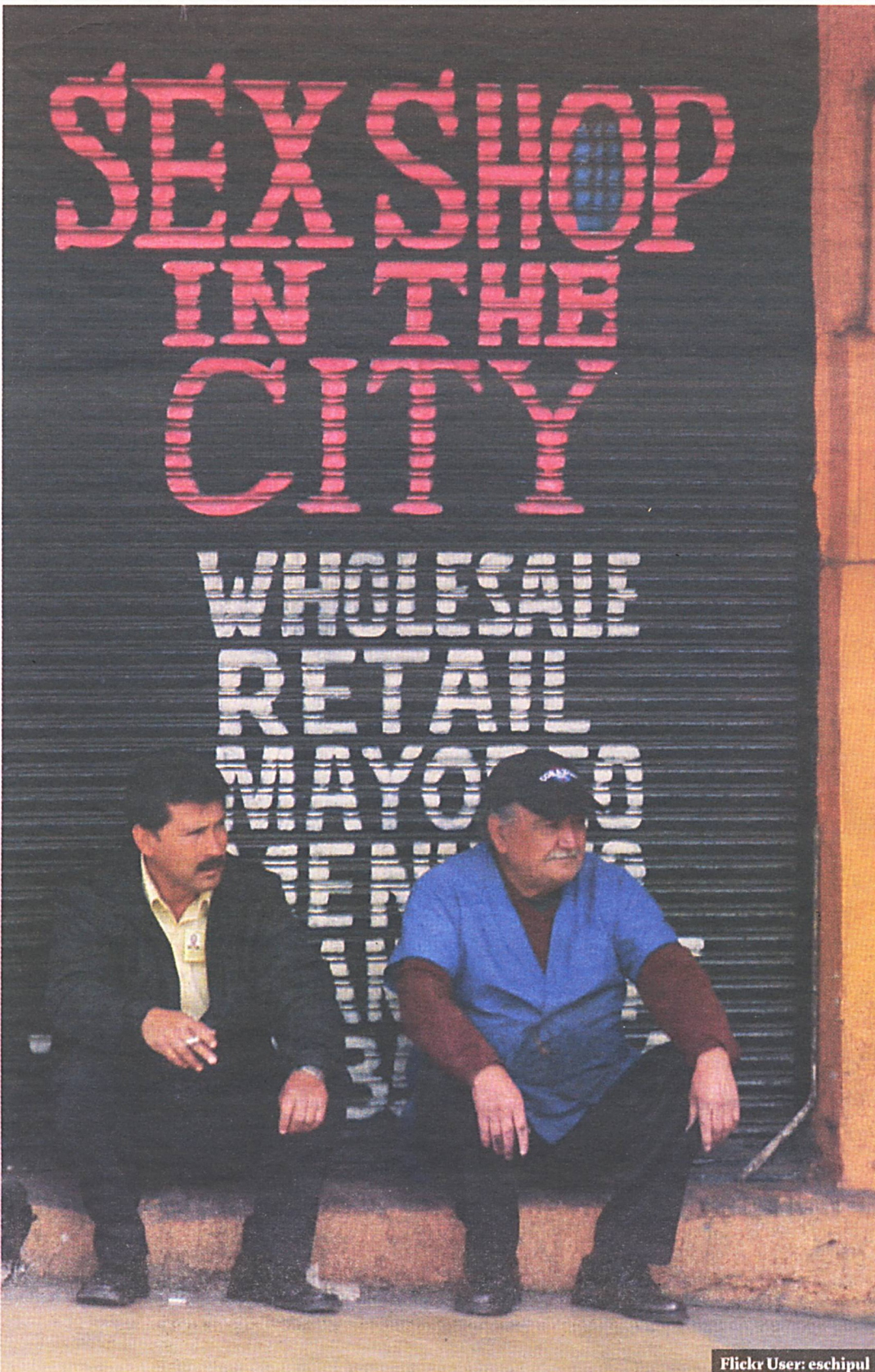
At this point in the visit the fun was over, and I found myself asking some really serious questions about some really basic philosophical premises. What exactly is freedom? Is there such a thing as pure freedom in any sort of meaningful sense; can it possibly exist in a world of quantum mechanics, genetics, and god only knows what else? Are prostitutes or their patrons free? Should prostitution markets exist, if people are freely deciding to enter the market? Could choice somehow make us less free?

If you are getting a little uncomfortable with these questions, as I am, it might be tempting to say "it's prostitution; not a big deal at the end of the day." But it relates to social organization in general. Should there be markets for things like blood and kidney donation? It's easy to think "Sure, people know what they want," but do they? Take a look at what happens in De Wallen every time a veil opens and some customer scurries away. They walk briskly and keep their heads down, with facial expressions that are worth thousands of words. These are the not sheepish smiles after having put a few hundred pounds on the ol' credit card at the mall or the glazed expressions of contentment after an expensive dinner. These are existentially pained faces that say "Why the hell did I just do that?"

We tend to see markets as fostering utility maximisation. Conduits of desire. But I would submit that there is a difference between markets helping us maximise utility and markets exploiting ancient psychological vulnerabilities that we actually try really hard to keep locked up. And I would further submit that this difference ought to be investigated more deeply, because a non-trivial amount of what we're sold may well fall into the latter category. And I would finally submit that this is more pressing now than ever, in the age of refined psychological research (we know very well how to prime the human mind), ever increasing data with which to uncover habits and liabilities, and an ever more ubiquitous media environment. Making something available - condoning it, putting it on a platter before us - changes our desires in the first place. Our environment is an outgrowth of us but it also deeply changes us. Maybe a market in prostitution fulfills some transient urge once in a while. But how does it change us?

The problem is that the natural extension of this idea - that there might need to be some mechanism to protect our more unsavoury instincts - can easily get really arbitrary and really Orwellian. Thus the idea that we should give people choices so they can construct their own meaning.

This usually works well. And if all I saw in De Wallen was lurid lighting and the sultry vixens tapping eagerly behind their windows, I might have agreed. But every once in a while a girl will be caught off-guard looking off into the distance or down at the ground. And then it ceases being the apotheosis of porn, and becomes a real person. And that's liable to induce some real vertigo, and it makes me wonder whether choices actually make us more free.



Flickr User: eschipul



# “Still need men 2 drive them 2 work, tho”

**Nona Buckley-Irvine** assesses the state of women’s rights in Saudi Arabia

**W**alk into any “La Senza” lingerie shop and you’ll be shocked to see anything other than a female serving at the till. However, Saudi Arabian women have always been confined to buying their underwear from male shop assistants, up until now. Pressure put upon the Saudi Arabian government by female campaigners has led to the announcement that this practice will now be restricted by law, something which many view as a step towards liberation for the much oppressed Saudi Arabian women.

**“Some Clerics tell horror stories where men end up in bed with women they bought underwear from”**

Sharia law has always entailed that only men can work in shopping centres. Despite the fact that women and men are forbidden to work alongside each other and women must cover themselves in the presence of other men and personal displays of affection are strictly forbidden in the country,

it seems a strange quirk of Sharia law that the hard-line religious clerics would want women to buy their intimate garments from men. So why did this law exist? Many clerics were fearful that these women will corrupt men and their relations with men: some tell of horror stories where men end up in bed with women they bought underwear from. The now famous quote of Sheikh Abdul-Aziz Al Sheikh, the most senior cleric in the country, characterises this shared fear. “The employment of women in stores that sell female apparel and a woman standing face to face with a man selling to him without modesty or shame can lead to wrongdoing, of which the burden of this will fall on the owners of the stores.”

This perhaps irrational fear does not characterise popular perceptions, however. 2006 saw the passing of the law which would see Saudi Arabian women working in shops, but it has taken until the first few days of 2012 for this law to actually be enforced. Reem Asaam, leader of a powerful female protest movement to boycott shops which only employed men, was a key individual who placed pressure on the Saudi Arabian government to enforce the law. Her, as well as other campaigners, have pointed to the humiliation that women feel when having to give men their underwear sizes, or be advised on what underwear to wear. Worse, due to the strict nature of segregation between the

sexes, women have been unable to be measured properly for bras and such-like. Even some Muslims have pointed out that it could contradict Islamic law for men and women to mix in lingerie stores in such a way. These protests undoubtedly put further pressure on the government, who are now seeking to remedy this problem in ending the male monopoly of shop assistants in the country.

**“September 2011 saw King Abdullah allow women to vote and run in future elections, previously reserved for men”**

The fact still remains that Saudi Arabia is still one of the most repressive countries in the world towards women. Yet it can not be denied that a small step has been made this month towards equal rights in Saudi Arabia for women. One person to thank for this change is King Abdullah, the 87 year old has been head of the Saudi Arabian monarchy since 2005. Abdullah is a self-pronounced reformist who has claimed to champion women’s

rights since his taking power, although there are some doubt that there is substance beneath the surface.

September 2011 saw Abdullah allow women to vote and run in future municipal elections, a right that had been strictly reserved for men. Some would consider this a major advancement for women, but sceptics pointed out that this announcement came merely days before the elections took place, meaning that most women were unregistered to vote and could not stand in the municipal elections. Only in 2015 will women be able to take advantage of this new right, a long wait for some who have been politically oppressed for such a long time.

However there are other obstacles that remain in the way of this “right”. Women currently are not allowed to drive or travel alone, they must be escorted by males at all times. Critics of Abdullah have pointed out that this new voting law is not as revolutionary as it may first seem. A woman’s ability to vote may well depend essentially on her husband who will chose whether or not to escort her to the polling station. The possibility of a woman standing for election is massively reduced when she would not even have access to her own car for campaign use. What is clear is that political rights such as these are irrelevant when women lack some of the most basic human rights.

Abdullah’s ability as a reformer is even more doubtful when, only

two days after this announcement, a woman was sentenced 10 lashes for driving a car. Saudi Arabia, even during Abdullah’s rule, has remained the only country in the world which restricts women from driving. Although there is no law explicitly banning it, each driver must obtain a local license, which women can not obtain by law. Amongst some Saudi Arabian men, females who drive are viewed as immoral and sinful. The Guardian reported in 2011 on a study conducted by Professor Kamal al-Subhi, where comments resonated similar views of female immorality expressed by clerics over the controversy concerning male shop assistants. One stated: “Girls are the key to immorality. It will ensue if they are given unrestricted freedom because of their small mindedness or if they face a problem.” Sadly for Saudi Arabian women, Abdullah has failed to be a true reformer and resolve this right to them.

This past week saw the granting of what is a small concession to very much repressed women. Abdullah is a weak figure who, yes, has started to enhance women’s rights, but this is only a start that leads in no way to liberation. Characterising the bleak mood of campaigners this week was iDiplomacy, who tweeted: “#Saudi Arabia to start enforcing law only women can work in lingerie stores. (Still need men 2 drive them 2 work, tho).”



Flickr User: LaggedOnUser



# A year at Westminster

## A rose by any other name

Jack Tindale considers Ed Miliband's progress as Leader of the Opposition



Flickr user: Debbie Abrahams

After a transformative period at the height of British politics, a long-serving party of government is finally kicked out of office. Once in Opposition, it elects a new leader pledging substantive ideological and administrative reform of the battered electoral vehicle, yet it is still racked with criticism, both internal and external.

The above paragraph is clearly relevant to Ed Miliband's Labour Party, yet it could also be applied to Hugh Gaitskell in 1955, Ted Heath in 1965, Michael Foot in 1980 and William Hague in 1997. It is often said that the worst job in British politics is that of Leader of the Opposition. In that respect, the only noteworthy issue would be if the member for Doncaster North was substantively ahead in the polls.

In many respects, Mr Miliband has soe issues to be proud of at the end of his first full year in office. Whilst opinion polls are a tedious irrelevance at this point in the electoral cycle, Labour have seen their first real lead in the polls since 2007, a trend that has re-emerged as the post-Veto bounce begins to wear off for the Conservative Party. From a purely partisan level, Miliband can point to strongly holding seats at five by-elections, returning a Labour government in Wales and gain-

ing over eight-hundred council seats in the local elections in England. The shellacking the party suffered in May at the hands of the Scottish National Party was one suffered by all Unionist parties at the hands of the seemingly unstoppable Alex Salmond, but even the most ardent critic of Mr Miliband would concede that the defeat was due to a dire performance by the Labour team at Holyrood rather than any personal failing on the overall leader. In pure arithmetic therefore, Miliband seemingly has little to worry about beyond the possible collapse of the Union. However, a more in-depth look reveals matters of genuine concern. Firstly, there is the matter of economic competence. At a time when the British economy is undergoing anaemic growth, stubbornly-high unemployment and declining consumer confidence, it is astonishing to see that the Prime Minister and Chancellor are trusted far more by the electorate than their counterparts on the Opposition Benches. This is less due to latent ability by David Cameron and George Osborne than it is to the persistent inability of Miliband and Ed Balls to shed the blame that the last government still has for fiscal mismanagement, one that is far from unwarranted.

Of a lesser importance for the time being, but still one that demands attention is the question of overall ideology. For perhaps the first time in history, Labour lacks the philosophical divisions that usually translate to a party split once in opposition. The notion that Miliband is under siege by neo-Blairites is a popular one, but is not a reality. The Leader of the Opposition is a far more original thinker than many are prepared to give him credit for and few other politicians have a program aimed at shifting the equilibrium of British politics over a

**“Labour have seen their first real lead in the polls since 2007, a trend that has re-emerged as the post-Veto bounce begins to wear off for the Conservative Party.”**

twenty-five year period. Yet as any undergraduate will be aware, it is hard to translate a flow-chart of ideas into a successful thesis. It is no fault of the average voter than they don't really know what the Labour Party stands for. Tony Blair could spin a tale to take the electorate with him, Ed needs to learn how to.

However, the kaleidoscope of ideas that have arisen from the party elite and grassroots must be embraced, not curtailed. Over the previous twelve months, the party has seen the rise of Maurice Glasman's "Blue Labour",

aimed at re-founding the party's anti-statist origins, "the Purple Book", an updating of the Blairite views of the stakeholder society, and "In the Black Labour", regaining the party's reputation for fiscal management and the promotion of industrial innovation.

This is a positive. Whilst any mesh of ideas can be difficult to diffuse to start with, it will not be until the long-awaited policy review is published next month before the electorate can make a value judgement on where Miliband is taking the Labour Party. 2011 was a time for discussion, 2012 will be time for decision.

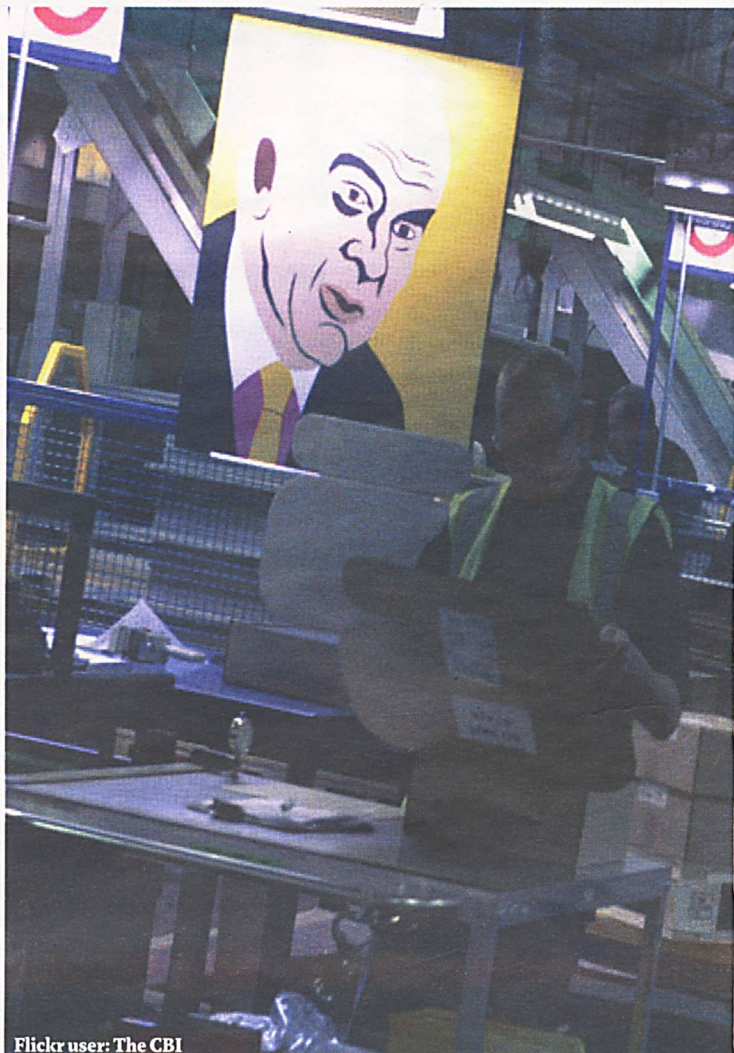
The most infuriating thing about the Leader of the Opposition is his lack of consistency. He may never give oratories like Tony Blair or evangelise like Mrs Thatcher, but his response to the phone hacking scandal was done in a way that would have been beyond the abilities of Neil Kinnock or Iain Duncan Smith.

Miliband can be decisive; his scrapping of the archaic Shadow Cabinet elections has left him with the ability to choose a far stronger team than that afforded by his predecessors and whilst derided at the time, many of the themes behind Miliband's Conference

rally against "Crony Capitalism" have quietly been adopted by the government. Scotland and poor rhetoric remain the greatest failings for 2011, but no political spectator should write off the Leader of the Opposition quite yet. time for discussion, 2012 will be time for decision.

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# Westminster

## Keep calm and Cameron

Chris Rogers sums up the happenings of Tory politics in 2011

**T**his year has been a turbulent time for the Tories. Their year in Government has resulted in some monumental decisions, and the coalition has come a long way from its happy partnership in the Number 10 Rose Garden. There have been wars, scandals, splits and economic decline, all of which have furnished the Conservatives with deep problems. One thing is sure, 2011 has been a year packed with political problems for the government to deal with.

One of the most significant challenges the Government faced - and certainly the most notable to LSE students - was the Libyan War. The Government entered into its first new armed conflict since the parties assumed office. The action proved to be successful and military intervention ended leaving the National Transitional Committee in charge of a new Libya. Though no military intervention can be said to be perfect and innocent people suffered in the intervention, Nato's mission made sure the crimes that were committed were far less than those that would have occurred if they had not intervened. A new Libya is beginning to emerge after 40 years of

despotic tyranny.

The biggest scandal that faced the Conservatives and the government

**"The biggest scandal that faced the Conservatives and the government as a whole was the relations between number 10, Andy Coulson - Cameron's Head of Communications - and Rupert Murdoch's media empire."**

as a whole was the relations between number 10, Andy Coulson - Cameron's Head of Communications - and Rupert Murdoch's media empire. Pushing aside the residue of MP's expenses, this new scandal scalped one of the most senior of Cameron's staff. Coulson was forced to resign his position

at number 10 and a sense of scandal surrounded the government and the Prime Minister personally for allowing someone involved in such heinous behaviour into the highest levels of the government. It was only after resignations, police investigations and the collapse of the UK's bestselling Sunday newspaper, the News of the World, that the scandal finally left Cameron behind.

Another challenge to the Government's policy, which was hard to miss for much of the LSE, was the tensions that arose between the Government

**"More battles with their Coalition partners surely await, but given the poor state of the Liberal Democrats in the opinion polls they are unlikely to bring down the government."**

and the Trade Union movement. The scale of the industrial action hadn't been seen since the days of Margaret Thatcher. Powerful Public sector unions angered with the Government's plans to reform public sector pensions took to the street in the biggest strike since the 1970s. Only after months of negotiations, increasingly generous offers and a huge strike have most public sector unions finally agreed to reforms to their pensions. However, the big beasts of the Trades Union movement have threatened increasing action if government cuts to bring down the

**"Thus overall this year can be said to be a success for the Conservatives, despite the setbacks they have faced they appear ready to begin the new year afresh."**

deficit are allowed to continue.

There were yet more problems for the Government as the year went on. Noticeably there was a considerable loss from the Conservative Front Bench this year in the form of the Defence Secretary Liam Fox. His resignation was precipitated by allowing his close personal friend, Adam Werritty to negotiate and set up meeting on his behalf despite holding no official governmental position. Mounting pressure from the press, and from opposition parties forced the Defence Secretary to resign, and a further feeling of scandal engulfed the



Flickr user: Foreign and Commonwealth Office

government.

Perhaps the greatest threat to the Coalition and the nation as a whole this year was the growing Euro crisis. In order to protect the interests of the City of London Cameron decided to veto the attempts by the European nations to push for deeper fiscal integration at the European summit to deal with the crisis. Nick Clegg voiced his disapproval of the act in front of television cameras, resulting in the largest split in the coalition since the AV referendum. Whilst Tory Euro-sceptics cheered Cameron to the rafters, his colleagues in yellow, and opponents in red voiced criticism that the UK was now isolated and unable to make important decisions in Europe. The public however responded favourably to Cameron's veto, and his personal popularity soured as a result.

The year began badly for the Conservatives politically. Labour was surging ahead in the opinion poll ratings, with leads of up to 7 points, enough to give Labour a clear majority at the next election. In stark contrast their coalition partners' popularity collapsed, sometimes falling into single digits. However despite the deteriorating economic forecast, scandals and infighting within the coalition, the Conservatives, have closed the gap and

started the new year with a small lead after a favourable reaction to Cameron's Veto, and Ed Milliband's poor media performances.

Thus overall this year can be said to be a success for the Conservatives, despite the setbacks they have faced they appear ready to begin the new year afresh. More battles with their Coalition partners surely await, but given the poor state of the Liberal Democrats in the opinion polls they are unlikely to bring down the government. Their main opponent Ed Milliband has yet to rejuvenate the Labour party, nor set out a definitive set of values. Being in government also gives the Conservatives considerable sway and the power to set the agenda for the coming year. Though they cannot afford to rest on their laurels, and events are as ever uncertain, for now, they still hold the political advantage. ☘

**Who did better in 2011?**



Go to [thebeaveronline.co.uk](http://thebeaveronline.co.uk) to vote!





# Seeking the truth

Heather Wang discusses the westernisation of Chinese culture



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On New Year's Day, Chinese president Hu Jintao wrote a long article on culture in the latest edition of Communist Party's magazine, Seeking the Truth. Hollow and filled with the normal bureaucratic tone, the article stressed the need to further spread and enable the flourish of Chinese culture. The article also mentioned that "hostile international powers are strengthening their efforts to Westernise and divide us [China]" and warned serious actions to prevent and deal with Westernisation must be taken.

On the same day, an order by the State Administration of Radio, Film

and Television (SARFT) to reduce the number of entertainment shows came into effect. The order, which was issued in October 2011, states that the number of entertainment programmes aired by each satellite channel during prime hours is limited to two every day, the total number of national talent shows cannot exceed ten every year and so on. Besides limitations, the order also requires broadcasters to air at least two hours of news between 06:00 and midnight, a programme related to moral education, among others. According to the government, restriction is enforced because the content of many of the shows is "vulgar," "unhealthy" and harms traditional virtues

and socialist core values.

In many ways the move could be welcomed as traditional Chinese culture continues to be sidelined and certain popular values nowadays should not be encouraged, notably the huge importance placed on material gains. However, the cutback on TV entertainment and the way the Communist Party constantly tries to disseminate and impose ideologies on its citizens, many of them outdated and obsolete, is obscene.

It is true that western culture is widespread in China with popular American TV series, the celebration of festivals like Christmas and Halloween, not to mention the significant

number of students studying abroad. Also, many people are labelled with the frequently used phrase: Chong yang mei wai, which means worship and have blind faith in foreign things. But instead of equating Chinese cultural crisis with Western infiltration, the government itself has to take most of the responsibility for the problem, and the way it tries to "correct" the society is just wrong.

Physically controlling the quantity and content of entertainment programmes is an insult to the general public's intelligence as well as an infringement of personal freedom. Most of the people watching entertainment shows are adults with at least some years of education, don't they have the ability to judge what is right and what is wrong? And don't they deserve the right to simply choose what they want to watch on TV? If certain content is truly with "low-taste," the public has plenty of channels to choose from in order to express their opinions and regardless, the viewership ratings of the programme will go down correspondingly. "If You Are The One", the most popular dating show in China, received many criticisms when it was first aired in 2010 mainly because some female guests of the show often commented that having a lot of money is the primary, if not sole, requirement when they consider possible boyfriends. As a result, the style of the show has been altered and it still remains to be the most watched TV programme today. Like the free economic market that China has adopted, the society can adjust itself as well; excessive government control could bring few positive changes.

Ironically, while stressing the importance of culture, governmental control on creativity and publications - which stifles the development of cultural influence of China both domestically and internationally - is still tight. Prominent and influential Chinese author and blogger Hanhan recently wrote an article titled "demanding freedom" on his blog. He expressed his wishes for a more liberal environment - his first magazine "Party"'s publication had to be stopped after the first issue due to censorship. He also said producing artistic work in China is like working in a minefield; those

hit by mines are wiped out and those avoiding them are advancing very slowly. Partially caused by censorship, the lack of good and more importantly original books, songs, films and ideas from Chinese people is certainly an important reason for large amount of importation from and imitation of the West.

The government itself has continued to let its people down in many other aspects. In July 2011, two high-speed trains collided in Wenzhou because of construction faults and miscommunication, killing more than 40 people. Immediately after the accident, instead of searching thoroughly for surviving passengers, government officials were eager to destroy and bury the crashed trains, possibly to hide evidence. The rapid disclosure of the full story through microblog (Chinese twitter) led to public backlash with many people expressing their anger and disappointment on Internet. Sadly, events like this happen so often that sometimes it is just "normal" to hear another bridge has collapsed as only a fraction of the money earmarked for construction has been used for building the bridge.

On top of all the problems, the Communist Party is constantly praising its own greatness through all forms of media. The self-praising slogans and propaganda are the true vulgar and unhealthy elements of the society. Last year was the 90th anniversary of China's Communist Party; the government actually launched a programme that encouraged the singing of songs that honour the party. Acclaims of the party's achievements were widely broad-casted. The foolishness of this action is rather obvious. Does our "great" Communist Party actually believe these praises enforced from the top is the way to keep it in power? Hanhan ended his article with the hope that the Communist Party could leave a glorious page in the textbook not written by the government.

It is right that traditional Chinese culture and values need to be preserved and promoted, but the government found the wrong source of the problem and resorted to the wrong solution, again. ☹

## Measured musings | Climate change and the Republican primaries

The Iowa primaries marked the beginning of the race for the Republican Presidential nomination. Unfortunately, however, the rhetoric of all candidates remains staunchly in denial about the scientific consensus on the threat of climate change.

Widely believed in the US to be a left-wing conspiracy, climate change has never been an easy sell to 'gas-loving' republicans that believe that any action to combat climate change will not only be pointless but in fact harmful to the US economy.

As the second biggest creator of carbon emissions and the World's only superpower the influence of the US's leaders over international action on climate change is strong. Not one of the Republican candidates has been fully supportive of any schemes to combat the threat of climate change. It looks increasingly like this influence will be detrimental in the future.

Rick Santorum, the unexpectedly close runner-up in last week's Iowa primary, is the most worrying force that will work against US climate change legislation. The Senator for Pennsylvania has continuously denied the importance of human activity on climate change has called climate change "junk science" and a "beauti-

fully concocted scheme" by the left to more widely control the economy. A view that Ron Paul, the second runner-up in Iowa and the most libertarian of the candidates, agrees with.

Santorum's core energy policy is "drill everywhere" a policy shared by many of the other candidates; Michelle Bachmann, who finished sixth in Iowa, even stated that she would be willing for companies to drill in the Florida Everglades. This is an affront, not just to climate change believers, but to environmentalists in almost any capacity.

Mitt Romney, the front-runner in Iowa, at least rules out the Everglades but his environmental policies are not much more enlightened than his rivals. His views have become more sceptical on the impact of humans on climate change as his campaign progresses, claiming 'we don't know what's causing climate change' and refusing to spend federal money on combating climate change.

According to LSE100, only 11% of Republican Party members believe in climate change so the candidates' strong stance against action may simply be a ploy for votes in the primaries. The eventual nominee may show a more watered-down version of their views to make themselves more

electable to the whole US electorate.

George W. Bush, during his time as president, did go to some lengths to combat the threat of climate change. He ordered the US's Environmental Protection Agency to institute curbs on the pollution created by coal power stations. He also called for developed

**"Unfortunately, the Republican primaries will produce another inconvenient truth for environmentalists: that they will not be listened to."**

countries to set a goal for reducing carbon emissions.

However, his presidency has widely been considered a failure in environmental terms. He reneged on a campaign promise to regulate carbon emissions by setting up clean-air standards. He also refused to seek ratification of the Kyoto Protocol, making

his call for developed countries to reduce carbon emissions laughable.

Similarly, Sarah Palin fell into line with John McCain on the issue of climate change during the 2008 election. Despite espousing her views that climate change was a conspiracy and that the scientific consensus was wrong, she stated that climate change is at least partly caused by Human activity during an interview with ABC's Charlie Gibson in September 2008.

This may be wishful thinking in this year's election. Sarah Palin was the Vice-Presidential nominee so her

views had to be vaguely similar to McCain's, or at least appear to. Presidential nominees have no such expectations. As fewer and fewer Republicans, and Americans as a whole, believe in Climate Change it seems unlikely that the candidates will soften their views. Unfortunately, the Republican primaries will produce another inconvenient truth for environmentalists: that they will not be listened to.

Alex Haigh  
Features Editor



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# Social

## The letdown of New Year's Eve

**Laura Aumeer on her proposal for a new approach to New Year's**

**F**irst week back at university and you can't seem to avoid the obligatory questions "how was your Christmas?" and "what did you do for New Year's Eve?" It is expected that you have a good response up your sleeve, preferably one that involved the phrase, "and I/he/she/the dog chundered everywhere." It is not enough to be curled up asleep in bed at 1am. Instead, it appears you must be out at a) a very messy house party, b) watching the fireworks, with drinks by your side, or c) in a cool, edgy, pub/club/warehouse rave, or d) be out of the country, perhaps the only excuse for not spending it with friends. Now, whilst I like to go out as much as anyone else, I am going to suggest something controversial here...why bother with New Year's Eve?

**"eleven hours wait for eight minutes of fireworks"**

Our expectations are raised on New Year's Eve. It has to be a good night - there are no excuses for going out only to decide to go home after an hour. You will have fun. Well, what if you don't? Is that really such a big deal? To be honest, whilst it is nice to be with friends again, often a balance to the week spent with family before, other nights out are probably just as likely to be good.

Firstly, there's the expense and effort of the whole night. I really don't see the point of paying five times the price to get into a club and when inside paying triple the price for a drink. Wherever you go, it is busy and even if you are just outside watching the fireworks, you have to wait for ages to get a good spot. People stood from 1pm in London to get a spot in the front row, to see the fireworks on the river: eleven hours wait for eight minutes of fireworks, in cold conditions. I know most didn't stand out there for that long, but even to get a good spot on Primrose Hill, you will expect to wait there for a few hours. I'm personally not a fan of British winter weather - I'm not sure many are - and the thought of standing outside for a prolonged period of time just to see a pretty display to music for eight minutes doesn't really appeal. The last time I went to see the London fireworks, the best bit was not the, admittedly impressive and stunning, fireworks display, but the singing of Auld Lang Syne afterwards, with everyone around us involved. Everyone coming together for a moment, without any pretence or agenda.

**"The fireworks display cost £1.9 million to put on"**

And, if you think New Year's Eve ends up being a drain on your back pocket, think about the costs involved in hosting it. The fireworks display cost £1.9 million to put on, excluding the policing costs. There are the pressures on the emergency services too: drinkers, fireworks and the sheer volume of people, causing more problems than normal to say the least. Now what are the lasting implications and what can we really take out of the fireworks? Bragging rights over France and Germany it appears, if you survived your hangover to see the news coverage the next day about France and Germany's muted displays.

There's so much emphasis on New Year's Eve now, that people don't seem to realise there are New Year's Day celebrations on in London too. There's a whole parade, which at least promotes more involvement than watching an 11 minute fireworks display does.

Now people may say that it is important to celebrate the start of a new year, a tradition that is not new nor especially Western. Indeed, it is nice to go out with everyone feeling the same celebratory feeling of a new start, a new year with new opportunities. But, after a month of parties, religious celebrations and other festivities, it's not like everyone is in dire need of an excuse to let their hair down. And perhaps if we just relaxed a bit more about it, it would be more enjoyable.

Now just before Christmas, I found myself witnessing another celebration that showed another possible side to new year's eve. I was in Brighton on the night of the Winter Solstice, where

**"people don't seem to realise there are New Year's Day celebrations on in London too"**

they hold the burning of the clocks celebration, described as an "antidote to the excesses of capitalist Christmas". I stumbled across a parade of lanterns, with enough drums and steel pans to reminisce about carnival, dancers of all ages and even people on stilts. After parading through the town, causing surprisingly little disruption it came to the beach, where they burnt the lanterns to celebrate the lengthening of the days and to hope for the best for the coming year. Yes, it was a small event in a small city, but it was so refreshing to be at a celebration with aims similar to that of new years, but so much more relaxed.

I'm not saying we should get rid of New Year's celebrations, but maybe we should just take the night down a notch in the country's psyche. Bars and clubs do very good business on this day, but that isn't a reason to charge a lot more for little extra in return. There's no need to have such a large fireworks display, and maybe there's a bit more room for dancing in the street. If we actually spent less time worrying about having a good time after all, we



Flickr user: katieharbath



# “Open Wide, Please”

**Kirsty Kenney** on the importance of looking after your teeth.

Over the holiday, I visited my family dentist for a regular check up. I've always loved the bi-annual family trip to the dentist, because I'm the lucky sibling who has always had good teeth. Unlike

my younger sister, I made it through secondary school without having to worry if my braces would get caught in someone else's (can that really happen?). I've been careful with my teeth too, I'm loyal to my electric Philips Sonicare and a keen flosser. Careful, it

seems, until I started university.

My dentist, Mr Gilmore, doesn't quite understand that some people like coffee, cigarettes, Coca Cola and all things sweet. He flinches at the mention of a strawberry bonbon or fizzy cola bottle. And don't get him started on orange squash! But credit where credit's due, he's a good dentist.

As Mr Gilmore prodded away at my teeth, I presumed everything was still fine, and then he said, “Lower left 7 cavity damage.” As my brace faced sister tutted away in the background, Mr Gilmore made it clear, just in case I hadn't understood, that my lower left 7 had some decay damage and a filling would be in order.

“Well, do you eat a lot of sweets?” he asked. Hardly!

“What about sugar in your tea or coffee?” Not guilty.

“So you're a university student, that's right isn't it, Kirsty, what do you drink then?”

I knew exactly what he was hinting at. “Well, water, juice and when I go out vodka, Diet Coke.”

Well, all the Diet Coke that I've been sipping away at has been rotting my teeth, and it could very well be rotting yours too. If your drink of choice

**“maintaining your pearly whites is surely just as important as taking care of your private parts”**

is a spirit with a fizzy mixer or some form of sugar-filled alcopop, then you're giving your teeth an express ticket to Rottsville. Tooth decay is one of the most widespread health problems in the UK, but it is becoming

more and more of a problem amongst university students. I'm by no means putting every LSE student into that bracket, but I'm told that my problem is absolutely typical of university students, particularly first years and especially girls.

A poor diet is the primary cause of tooth decay. Of course fizzy drinks are not the only things contributing to a 'poor diet', but they are one of the most significant dietary causes of tooth decay. When your mouth bacterium mixes with small food particles and saliva, it forms plaque. The acid in the plaque breaks down the enamel surface of your teeth. Acids and acidic sugar byproducts in fizzy drinks are particularly good at softening your tooth enamel, which leads to the formation of cavities. Although sugar free drinks are less harmful, they are still highly acidic and will cause damage.

All this time, the fluoride in your mouth is trying to fight the plaque, but it takes about an hour to get going. This means that if you're drinking throughout the night, the fluoride doesn't really get the chance to start fighting back. When we've finished boogieing and come home, we tend to be drunk and, dare I say it, we 'forget' to brush out teeth, or brush improperly. This again gives the plaque the upper hand. So if this happens once, twice, three times a week we really are speeding up the decay process.

Trips to the dentist turn out to be a rather expensive hangover. A regular filling will set you back £47, and that's if you're lucky enough to be signed up to an NHS dentist. If you're on a private plan it could end up costing you a lot more than that. A friend recently forked out £358 for root canal treatment. University students can get exemption certificates for some treatments, but most of the time you will find that you've got little choice but to pay up!

You may well be thinking that this all makes perfect sense - everybody knows that fizzy, sugary drinks are bad for their teeth. But it's a bit worrying

when you've only been at university for 10 weeks and your peggies are already taking the punch.

I've been asking myself if this is a somewhat under publicised problem. Mr Gilmore could certainly convince you that teenage tooth decay is practically an epidemic. Shouldn't students be more aware of this? We are bombarded with information about other health issues, in particular sexual health, but what about dental health? There is little information about the subject online, yet a quick search on 'student sexual health' and you are bombarded with results. Including, by the way, a University Sex League table. LSE ranks 25th.

This is beside the point, but maintaining your pearly whites is surely just as important as taking care of your private parts. I'm sure you will all agree that the idea of kissing someone with black rotting nashers is about as attractive as sleeping with someone with pussing herpes sores. Slight exaggeration, but it's true.

As I sit here writing, bottom left half of my face still numb from this morning's procedure, I'm wondering what can we do to save our choppers from developing cavities? Brushing with fluoride toothpaste and using mouth rinse twice a day, every day, will strengthen your tooth enamel, but we all knew that already. Mr Gilmore would also recommend cutting down on the fizzy mixers, and the alcohol that goes with them. He might suggest switching to a less sugar filled drink, beer or dry whites perhaps. Other than that, things get a bit impractical; I can't see many people rinsing their mouths' out with water after every drink to get rid of vestiges.

So, I'm afraid that I can offer nothing more than common sense, but please take this as a word of warning, and perhaps, even make it a new year's resolution. I do hope that you don't find yourself sat in the dreaded chair with a drill in your mouth any time soon, but if you do, don't tell me you weren't warned!



Flickr user: APM Alex

# New Year, New You?

**Ana Thaker** on New Year's Resolutions

Out with the biscuit tins and in with the lycra, throw away the Marlboro and slap on the nicotine patches - it must be the 1st of January, the first day of the rest of your new and pointedly improved life. That is until you're lying comatose on your sofa having gotten half way up the road before remembering there was a reason you hadn't run voluntarily since school P.E lessons... and it's only just turned February.

Allegedly after 6 weeks, 80% of



Flickr user: kharied

resolution makers have either broken their resolution or even forgotten them

always been meaning to embark on. Arguably, the failure of many

altogether - so why does the nation go through this monotonous process every year that leaves us despondent and dispirited?

Everyone has areas we want to improve in our lives. Whether its more essays completed on time, fewer kebabs, less vodka or more hours in the gym, we all have an idea what would "better us". The New Year seems the perfect time to start: symbolically, it is a new start and a chance to turn over a new leaf; and physically, the hangover is telling you to start the detox you've

resolutions lies in the gusto in which they are made - not everyone is weak-willed and lazy. Think about it - deciding on one particular day that this is your only chance to look like Kim Kardashian, when this day happens to be one that follows 7 of the most gluttonous days of the year, is setting yourself up for a not too forgiving, all-or-nothing task. When your levels of anticipation are so heightened, tiny failures will be magnified, discouraging and ultimately result in you on your sofa, gorging on a box of quality street, watching Jeremy Kyle and weeping. Behavioural economists call this 'boomerang behaviour' where disappointment causes bingeing - leaving us back to where we started or in a worse position.

I think the inherent flaw with New Year's resolutions is that it's assumed that when the clocks chime midnight, you've been possessed with a magical sense of will - power and strength that you apparently didn't have about one minute ago. You can decide to lose weight, give up smoking and spend more time with family (the top three resolutions) at any time of the year - where there's a will there's a way. So people's intentions are questionable when they feel they're only able or

willing to try at the beginning of the year.

In fact, it seems questionable that this new restraint is only achievable after the holiday period, renowned for its excess and indulgence. Recent research suggests a detox lasting one month after the festive period has no impact on your health - instead

**“after 6 weeks, 80% of resolution makers have either broken their resolution or even forgotten them altogether”**

moderating consumption of alcohol or throughout the year is more effective. Surely this is obvious? So, why do we seem to forget this practical sort of advice when January rolls around? Perhaps, because a life of moderation isn't exactly what we as students are

known for. If we really were willing to accept the lifestyle that is necessary for the celebrity body we would start before the Christmas and New Year's Eve parties, rather than making up for our guilty behaviour afterwards. Intending on doing something, with a whole new year ahead gives us a sense of self-satisfaction that can tide us over until we get bogged down with the trials and tribulations of everyday life.

January always seems to bring up boundless, albeit often expensive, assistance available for your goal: gym membership deals, charity and voluntary drives and now smart phone apps. But is investing in these really worth it when you can talk yourself out of these as quickly as you talked yourself in? An essay comes up and you may miss that zumba workout/gym session/bikram yoga class. The next week, well it's a friend's birthday... It's easy to do, and soon the dream of that celebrity body becomes once again a distant hope. Being accustomed to quick fixes and ease in our daily lives, makes the hard work behind many resolutions even more daunting. But, as long as you don't view joining the gym or watching that direct debit leave your account every month as actually exercising then you're probably onto



# A Christmas Surprise

**Philip Gallagher** on remembering the past

I would never have thought that Christmas, the First World War and sheer luck could result in anything other than a Christmas day football match. Until this year when a visit to pay our respects, brought me and my family closer to a long-lost relative, than we would have originally thought.

We weren't going to pay respects to a relative who had died fighting, but a father of five who had disobeyed orders and chosen not to go over the top in 1916. Private George Lowton was one of the hundreds of men shot for cowardice in the First World War. A barbaric practice by today's standards, it was nonetheless encouraged by Field Marshall Haig as a disciplinary measure. Many of those executed were, on reflection, found to have been suffering from shell shock, a condition not fully grasped by doctors at the time.

Meeting up with family at the National Memorial Arboretum, our conversations turned the standard talk about our Christmas experiences. So far, it seemed like it would be an unremarkable Christmas: spoke at length about the rubbish TV and the relatives who had never had any success with buying decent gifts and had finally resorted to sending gift cards. As we finished, my father reached for a nearby visitor's map. We found the right road and started down it towards the memorial with our relative's name.

The "Shot at Dawn Memorial" is marked with a tall bronze statue of a young man, his hands tied behind his back and his eyes covered with a blindfold, waiting for his send off from the firing squad. The young face of the statue struck deep as we looked for our ancestor's name. The vast majority of those executed were in their early twenties. The youngest name belonged to a boy who had lied about his age to join the army.

We found our ancestor's name; a plaque with a date for his birth and another for his execution, fixed to a modest wooden marker. There were hundreds of similar plaques around. Far more men had been shot by the order of the British than any other country that partook in the conflict. We stood in silence for a moment, left

a poppy for Private Lowton, and then made our way back to the centre.

It was just as we were about to leave that my mother called us over to the Christmas tree in the entrance hall. It was decorated with hand written messages of remembrance, some written in beautiful cursive and some that had come from the unpractised hand of some young child. It was then that my mother drew our attention to

incredible and comforting. Not only had we found evidence of a long lost relative, but the fact that someone else had been there to honour a man shot for cowardice brought a profound sense of justice.

My aunt and uncle took my grandmother the rest of the way to Nottingham. My parents and I headed home to Telford. We felt a mixture of emotions, inevitably dulled by the long car jour-



Flickr user: Mick Baker

a particular message. It was from a woman, 97 years old, honouring her father who was executed for cowardice: one Private George Lowton.

It took us a few seconds to fully take this in. His daughter? She could only have been there within a few days of us! Perhaps only a few hours! It felt

ney ahead of us, but one thing stuck with us. Of all the ways the day could have unfolded, the thousand to one discovery that had occurred seemed like a most incredible way than any to honour our ancestor; a father of five, shot for cowardice yet still loved nearly 100 years after the war's end.

# New Year's Discovery

**Hari Ramakrishnan** on the failure of humanity

New Year's Eve, Westminster, eight o'clock. There are still several hours to go before the firework finale that paradoxically acts as a harbinger of a new year. Crowds of people have gathered in what turns out to be one of England's, and especially London's, most spirited nights - people from the rest of the country, and indeed the rest of the world, arrive on the grounds home to the mother of all parliaments and welcome the oncoming three hundred and sixty five (and a quarter) days of opportunity and equally, potential misery.

Most people do not dwell on the latter half of that sentence, the upcoming abhorrent situations we find ourselves in. And how can we in such an atmosphere? We should let loose, lose ourselves in the closing moments of the year. That or preoccupy ourselves aiming towards a goal that will be conquered by year's end. Maybe reminisce over what we'd like to change about ourselves in the future.

Well, as it turns out, it is never too late to find faults with ourselves. It's never too late to come to grips with how selfish we can be. Eight o'clock in Westminster, a young lady is trying to leave the fenced-in area, pram in her hands. The baby is suffocating, and needs to be taken to the hospital. How would you know this? Because she is yelling it out, asking for someone to help, for anyone to help.

Nobody responds. And she doesn't give up; she remains persistent but is visibly distressed; my friend Praveen watches these events unfolding. He had come to England to study for his Master's degree and wanted to enjoy the famous event hosted in the capital city. I too wanted to celebrate ring in New Year's in this atmosphere of public revelry, rather than watching the display on the television. Anticipation was high. Awe-inspiring sights were

approaching within hours; people had been waiting for half a day to witness the spectacle.

And perhaps for that very reason, nobody apart from my friend Praveen decides to help this lady. And surely that's understandable. You've been waiting around, queuing for endless hours to get to an optimum position. Why would you give that up just to help a woman in need and her helpless child suffocating due to you and the rest of the tightly-packed crowd? You've earned your spot.

Praveen goes over to the lady, holds the stroller over his head as he heads towards the fence and puts it down on the other side. The lady hugs him tight, saying that he has no idea how thankful she is. But he's not concerned with the lady's gratification; he acted out of the duty to help the next man, woman or child. That caring mentality isn't present in enough of us it seems. We'd rather be a few feet in front, closer to the sparkles and the coloured smoke, a cause far worthier than a choking baby next to us.

People have complained before about how people are far more distant and private in England, closed off from others, contrasted with a country where community is far more important. He follows up with a comment that "anyone from our place would have done it." Maybe there is more truth to that than we would like to admit.

I am not saying that we are not generous or caring at all, not by any means. I've seen it before myself. When I was at a music festival, a boy had been hurt quite badly and so the festival-goers crowd-surfed him towards the front so he could receive some medical attention. There is good within us without doubt, but perhaps it takes more for us to act.

# "I've got the strongest daddy in the whole wide world"

**Anon.** on the perils of putting people on a pedestal

When I was a child, I can remember competitively boasting my parent's attributes in the playground. My family drove a battered red Landrover called Rosie, which I knowledgeable told Victoria Inness my father could balance on his little finger. It seems laughable now, yet in my five year old brain it didn't sound quite so implausible. After all, my father was incredibly strong; he never cried, except at Princess Diana's funeral, which was on all accounts, very sad; he carried me over the muddy bits when we went on walks and he never fell over; nobody called him names, and it didn't seem likely that anyone ever would. He was the pillar of my world, and he remains that way.

However, as you grow up you begin to see cracks in the façade of your parent's strength. I embarrassingly held this idealised image of my parents

until very recently, when in November I finally learnt of their lives before I arrived on the scene twenty years ago. Suddenly, I was forced to take my parents down from their thrones and regretfully place them alongside the rest of humanity. The pillars rocked.

Weaknesses inevitably lie within every individual, yet they have swum particularly close to the surface with my loved ones this winter. I have understood and identified their faults and troubles far more closely than I would have liked. My parent's issues are by no means ground-breaking, nor unique, yet this is the very point I wish to convey; nobody has the immunity to misfortune which I had once imbued upon my parents.

The undercurrents that I was made aware of were a mixture of revelations and long-suspected fears. Although these, nonetheless, shocked me to silence. The undercurrents span a wide spectrum: my mother's anorexia,

which almost crippled her to death in her early twenties, now manifests

**"My family drove a battered red Landrover called Rosie, which I knowledgeable told Victoria Inness my father could balance on his little finger"**

itself in numerous obsessive compulsive disorders whilst my father's

alcoholism seems safely in the past, his sporadic depression is a very real.

The shameful part is that I have suffered a certain resentment towards my parents since they have confided within me. I felt anger at my mother for losing that zest for life I so value within her and surrendering to such a self-destructive beast. I am disappointed that I have perhaps never known her true self who reigned before the anorexia ate away at her bones. My father has not escaped my disdain. I regarded the packet of pills with contempt as he hopefully told me they may 'solve the problem'. I failed to give the grace and kindness I should have offered to him at his most open and thus most vulnerable, and instead I haughtily stood my ground in feeling I had been betrayed by those who I had unquestioningly expected more from. Inexcusably, I had forgotten that their problems are not another battle in which I fight against them. If I feel a

pang when hearing their stories, it is incomparable to the pain they have endured. They had upbringings of twists and pulls which undoubtedly coloured who they are today.

I now know it is foolish to place anybody upon such a pedestal because they will eventually fall. It is not a case of if, but rather one of when. I apologise for the obvious nature of this statement, yet feel where your loved ones are concerned it is all too easy to forget, and build somebody an expectation which they can never meet. After all, watching someone fall in your own estimation is bad, but knowing you have fallen in somebody else's can be the most painful of all.

*This article is of an extremely personal nature and completely a-political. As such, it was accepted as an anonymous contribution to the paper.*



## Match Report

# Captain inspires shining display

Miles McAllister

Through the murky backdrop of bad organisation, institutional bias and chaotic administration, the radiant performances of Team LSE shone forth at the Sessa Athletics meet at Lee Valley. The day began with a stirring speech from the captain, and ended with the embodiment of the team spirit within Team LSE as Luke Smith ran the final leg on one leg (after a pulled hamstring with 150m to go) to win 2nd



Photo: Facebook

place for the men's relay.

Much of the day focussed on the performances of the energy that is Captain Michael Obiri-Darko. Whether it was his blistering displays in the men's 60m, or his constant presence amongst his rank and file, or his tireless work struggling against shambolic administration, Michael remained the closest he ever gets to being calm.

His route to the final was full of theatrical jeopardy. In the first round he felt his hamstring twinge 2/3 through the race but had so obliterated his competitors that he could cruise

to the finish a la you-know-who. In the semi-final he slipped at the start, but once more his competitors were left reeling as The Captain powered through and into the final. In that final, European Junior 100m silver-medallist and Team GB athlete Adam Gemili clearly false-started. NASA astronauts probably detected his false start, but farcically, and perhaps predictably, he was not disqualified and Michael had to settle for a close silver medal (time: 6.93s-60m). Consequently, enabling Michael to be ranked officially as the UK's 15th fastest sprinter for his age division in 2011.

This achievement means even more given that Michael spent most of his warm-up time with his inexperienced troops and with the organisers. Sessa had lost LSE's sign-up sheet and so at the last minute Michael and Arthur had to re-enter all our names and events. The organisation reached a nadir during the 3000m. Unbelievably the old man with the job of ringing the bell forgot the number of laps the racers were supposed to be doing and various lapped athletes did either too many or too few. Everybody could agree on the winner, but nobody could agree on how far he had run!

LSE's own Martin Holm came 6th in the same race, despite being used to races over 10 times the distance. In the women's 3000m Rebecca Tisdale overhauled less experienced athletes to win a gutsy 4th. In the women's 60m, Olga Dozortseva comfortably won her heat, but her time was marginally below what was required to progress to the finals.

Despite the lack of a field, LSE did exceptionally well in the field events too. Leela Raina won a bronze medal in

the women's Shot put and Jess Lanney won a silver medal in the women's High Jump. Furthermore, Leela Raina

competed against more experienced squads from bigger universities. In the Men's relay, the team came 2nd in their



Photo: Facebook

was 'spotted' and approached by a Team GB talent spotter, so get her autograph on Houghton Street whilst you can!

To single out some for praise is to neglect others who put in just as much effort and should be just as proud of their performances. In the opinion of this author LSE was characterised by its comradeship and team ethic. This was shown by the noise we made and the evident delight we had when a team-mate did well. Many of the other sides had trained for longer, and had some fantastic athletes, but LSE had the best 'team' and the most fun.

It is therefore appropriate that the final word should go to the relay teams, as it did in the meet itself. The women's relay team was a demonstration in strength and teamwork as they

race, thanks to four great runs. Tunde Akinboyewa handed the baton to Luke Smith in a solid second place, but with 150m of the final lap to go, Luke pulled his hamstring. With the rest of the team cheering him on, and with a very quick sprinter baring down on him, Luke produced the performance of the day as he ran through the pain and hung on for 2nd place

The less said about the performances of this author the better!

Team LSE will be competing at the London 2012 Olympic Stadium from the 4th-7th May as the BUCS annual championship has been chosen as the official test event for the London 2012 Olympic Games. If you want to be part of Team LSE Athletics for the next meeting, then contact Michael Obiri-Darko at Au.Club.Athletics@lse.ac.uk.

## The UK's quiet revolution

Matthew Worby

Over the course of the last year, athletes from this green and pleasant land have quietly been leading a revolution across the sporting landscape. There hasn't been the tearing down of the proverbial Bastille, but the significance of the UK's sporting achievement cannot be underestimated. The past year was one of unparalleled success across the spectrum, Cricket, Rugby, Cycling, Sailing, Dressage, Golf and Triathlon are all events with home nation success.

2011 saw a whitewash of the previously ranked number one test team in the world at home (in the course of which, forcing Tendulkar to search for his hundredth hundred elsewhere) and of course, the delightful Ashes victory. The biggest problem of the summer for an English cricket fan was trying to locate a personal highlight; Cook's colossal run total; watching the Broadsword tear into an overrated and past it Indian top order; or seeing Major General Strauss calmly coordinate another successful fielding session. Whilst form on the sub-continent was poor, overall, the future is bright for English cricket. The One Day performance was dire, as usual, but that seems to be par for the course for English cricket. Scottish and Irish cricket has grown significantly as well, the latter turning in a better than average performance in the world cup. It might not be the sexiest of sports, and you'll need the patience of a saint to watch an entire five days of test cricket, but it's good to be an English cricket fan right now.

Rugby was a year of peaks and troughs for all of the home nations, from the soul destroying Warburton red card to the ridiculous England world cup campaign, no sane human being could argue that this rugby year

was quiet or uninteresting. Wales and Ireland should be looking forward to glorious Six Nations campaigns, Ireland's as possibly the last of the golden generation, and Wales as the beginning of a revitalisation, harking back to the good old days of Welsh rugby. Of course English rugby should be looking to just have a sensible midget free campaign. The fewer propositions for oral sex the better, and every English fan is hoping the team isn't allowed to even look at a ferry. 2011 was an exciting year for rugby, with the potential to have an even more exciting Six Nations campaign in 2012 even the most ardent football fan should stay tuned.

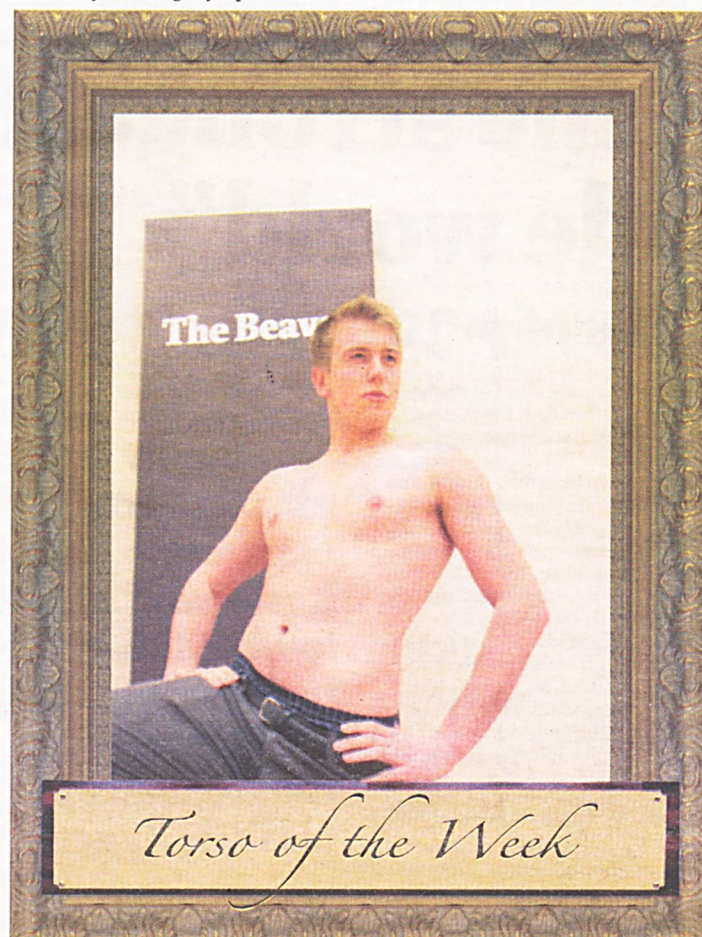
Golf saw the success of two men from Northern Ireland, building on McDowells success to win more majors than the USA over the same period. That's a population difference of over 300 million. It's a tricky sport to predict, and the one where the form guide can mean absolutely nothing, as Oousthasen can attest to, but this is just another sport where the world leaders fall under the category of team GB, and the future is just as bright as Rugby or Cricket.

Whilst not wanting to bore readers with the less mainstream sports, the Brownlee brothers were probably created in a lab deep underground somewhere in West Yorkshire, there's no other reasonable explanation for it. Cavendish, Wiggins, Froome, Swift, Thomas and Hoy are all members of both Team GBR and Sky (All road, bar Hoy), and are big names currently or will be in the near future. Just to illustrate the depth of this cohort throughout 2011: Wiggins breaks his collar bone, ending his plausible Tour de France yellow jersey hopes, Cavendish storms the sprint jersey competition and Froome was one agonising sprint short of winning the tour of Spain (like a slightly easier and marginally

less prestigious TdF). After the last Olympic performance, a good haul of track medals is expected, but this year the road performance should be equally as barnstorming. In Dressage team GB beat Germany handsomely, and Utopia (the best GB horse in the stable) wasn't sold this year. As with Three-Day eventing Olympic medals

should be expected, and won.

There's more to international sport than football, and now's the time to start exploring other teams from the home nations, you'll get at least a year of phenomenal highs before the lows start setting in.



## Football In Brief

McLaren Back at Twente

The former England manager announced a welcome return to football management at his old club, FC Twente, where he guided the club to its first ever league title in a previous spell.

Bendtner Arrested AGAIN

Nicolas Bendtner last week brought further shame to his already declining reputation following a brawl in a hotel. The incident led to a second arrest in recent weeks for the Sunderland striker.

Iker Casillas Avenue

Real Madrid's long-serving goalkeeper added to an illustrious array of awards by having a street named after him in his hometown of Mostoles.

Transfer Talk

Lampard to United? Never! - Sir Alex Ferguson responds to rumours that Manchester United are looking to give Lampard the first-team football he deserves.

Barca look to Forlan for Villa replacement - the Blaugrana are reportedly interested in signing the Inter striker on a short-term basis to cover for injured centre-forward, David Villa.

Queens Park who? - QPR have apparently had bids for strikers, Yakubu and Andy Johnson, rejected. It seems that QPR are bidding for everyone in sight - without any success.

Barclays Player of the Month: Demba Ba

Barclays Manager of the Month: Martin O'Neill



# L\*SKI does Val d'Iserre, France

**Patrick McGregor and Tom Danielsen**

On the last Friday of Michaelmas Term, we assembled on campus in avid anticipation of what was set to be the most epic ski tour to date. It did not disappoint.

The stern police warnings on the coaches not to imbibe were taken very seriously indeed on our short trip down to Dover. Despite this, a large proportion of the two hundred-strong trip had so sneakily managed to fool the drivers into thinking that curiously coloured plastic bottles were in fact to quench thirst as we began the



Photos: Tom Danielsen

infamous 'port-to-port' challenge. The results when we got back on the coaches in Calais were interesting. El Capitano was so disgusted by the sight of French soil that he decided it was appropriate to chunder all over his seat. Doing the honourable thing, of course, he promptly vacated said area leaving Doddsy to enjoy the fragrant and moist smells all the way to resort.

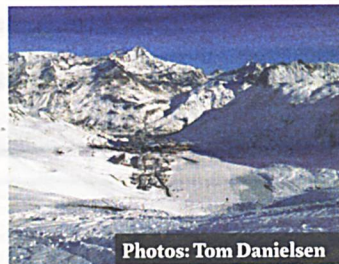
We arrived in the beautiful snow-covered Val d'Iserre feeling a little worse for wear. It was clear that the quaint hotel we were commander-

ing for the week had absolutely no idea what it was letting itself in for. This naivety wore off gradually over the week as beds were smashed, the largest suite in the hotel was completely flooded with water, Christmas trees were brought in from the street to decorate bathtubs, an automatic car barrier was ripped apart, a dishwasher was filled with washing-up liquid, and a radiator was ripped clean off a wall.

The days running up the trip were filled with anxious talk about press articles mocking the lack of snow in Val, the frantic checking of webcams and worrying about just how much skiing would actually be on offer. By the time we got to the mountains, things could not have been more different. The main problem experienced was in fact far too much snow. The heavy snowfall meant that visibility was often reduced but also made skiing in the powder incredible. Only the bold attempted the infamous Olympic run 'La Face' with zero visibility. BASI-2 qualified 'superskiier' and Race Captain Rhodri Lewis found this all a bit too much of a challenge and, instead, opted to follow Miss Collard for the entire week.

The costumes on show for first fancy dress night, 'Noah's Ark', were impressive. One Scouse gentleman was so creative that he decided to come as a game hunter, ripping off the tails of all the animals as prizes. As prophesised, the animals left in two-by-two, only to find that other animals had staked a claim on the desired breeding grounds. Hallam, always one to enjoy cunning behaviour, avoided this problem altogether by taking his young catch to the ski locker room. Everyone was also very well turned out for the 'Cops and Robbers' and 'Rave'

fancy dress nights. Except for Gary Metcalfe, who spent in excess of £70



Photos: Tom Danielsen

on the worst outfit that was practically possible to produce.

The tobogganing night turned out to be bigger than expected as we descended on the quiet and picturesque village of Tignes le Breviers. The tobogganing itself can only be described as organized chaos as everyone was let loose on a red run in pitch black with only gravity, a sled a several kilometres of piste. The instructors 'guiding' us down decided it would be fun (for them) to take us down a steep mogul field. Dom Clark successfully completed a backflip as a result. The subdued atmosphere as everyone got to the bar in le Breviers quickly turned as the €1 shots were taken advantage of. The 'spit or swallow' flavoured vodka was a favourite. Our time at the bar culminated in topless dancing on the tables and chants of "let's all go to Zoo Bar, let's all go to Zoo Bar..." Needless to say, madness ensued.

The nights out went from the sublime to the ridiculous. Rallying cries of 'Champagne!' were heard across resort. A dance floor full of #leeds-metpols loved getting a taste of the good life. One lucky female Gendarme

got snowballed and wasn't too happy about it. A poly who infiltrated the trip thought a police uniform granted him unrestrained power, so much so that he decided to urinate all over a bouncer. He still pulled. Hundreds (yes, hundreds) of bottles of toffee vodka were consumed. Some members of the trip were so dazed and hungover that they could only pronounce a variation of the words 'Sauce', 'Nosh' and 'Tour'. One lucky LSSKler enjoyed the whole experience so much she couldn't bring herself to leave.

Spontaneous romance flourished in the snowy alpine wonderland. Two trip goers decided that having the first three letters of their names in common made them a perfect match and spent the whole trip together. Altitude affected Shilpa's judgment with Cpt. Awkward. Hanson, Roderick and Kirby snared and shared Jeans. Crosbie-Taylor relations were taken to the next level. Dozza took a romantic trip into Paris. Louis tried to complete a Tri-Nations challenge, going down-under with his favourite Aussie then catching a very young South African Hooters 'model' from the street, brushing off a phonecall from her mother and managing to come away with a love bracelet from her the next day. When Miss Birt and her newly found polylove had to part ways at Dover, they gave their entire coach an awkwardly prolonged display of their love. Hirsty extended the polylove with a #leeds-metpoly. Aritra perfected his snow-plough through Millie. In a toilet.

Other than nights out, most days were spent taking extended lunches in the famous mountain restaurant/club 'La Folie Douce', although the outdoor live music was limited to a couple

of days due to the snowfall. Those who have heard the curious noises coming from some of the live performers might be thankful of this. The beginners, trudging up and down the 'Village' lift were normally left blissfully unaware of the blizzards above. Some of the beginners deserve credit for boldly attempting ski runs without the knowledge of how to stop or turn, resulting in some epic crashes. At one point, however, Claudia and Millie decided that green runs were too much of a challenge so walked down instead. Hopefully all the beginners enjoyed the new experience and weren't too overawed by the flawless ability of the rest of the trip.



Photos: Tom Danielsen

Thanks to everyone involved for such an amazing week. Keep a look out for announcements for the upcoming Reunion Night and the L\*S\*SKI Easter Ski Weekend. If Val d'Iserre is anything to go by, these are most definitely not to be missed!

## What are you laughing at?

Coffee and Smokes

**@CoffeeSmokes**

**91fadetoblack**

**New comedy writers and performers wanted.**

**E-mail [A.P.Sivanesan@lse.ac.uk](mailto:A.P.Sivanesan@lse.ac.uk) for more info.**



# Sport

## Inside

- Ski Report
- Captain inspires shining display
- The UK's quiet revolution

## How The African Nations Will Impact On Premier League Sides

Amit Singh

With the African Nations set to begin on the 21st of January 2012 and the final not being played until the 12th of February, many Premier League players will leave their sides for a minimum of about four weeks later this month. How will this affect the Premier League clubs who lose players to the tournament?

Manchester City: Yaya and Kolo Toure

The loss of Kolo will probably not be felt as badly as the loss of the far more influential Yaya Toure, however the absence of Kolo will leave City somewhat light at the back with only three other centre back options in Lescott, Kompany and the unproven Savic. On the face of it, this isn't a huge loss as Kolo rarely starts but were there to be an injury to Lescott or Kompany, Savic may find himself out of his depth, although Micah Richards could play centre back if required.

Yaya's absence will probably see increased playing time for Nigel De Jong, who has only started four times this season. In theory this is relatively like for like, but De Jong is a sideways passing midfielder destroyer whereas much of Yaya's influence this season has been exerted in the final third, with him scoring three times and getting four assists, often surging forward to support the forward players evidenced by the surging run that won City the penalty for their third goal against Liverpool. Yaya actually contributes 1.4 key passes per game, making him more of a creative attacking influence than James Milner as well as Mario Balotelli. De Jong, in

contrast, in his seven appearances has only contributed 0.3 key passes per game. Yaya Toure also has completed more passes than any other City player with an average of 78.8 per game, over 20 more passes per game than David Silva.

With Cote D'Ivoire likely to go far in the tournament, City will miss him despite having a squad that is more than adequate to cover. Another option for City could be to play the industrious James Milner in the Yaya role in games City are expected to win. Kolo, on the other hand, having only started four games, is more of a squad player who City can cover the absence of more comfortably. Chelsea: Didier Drogba, Solomon Kalou

Many observers will predict that the Afcon tournament would seriously impact on Chelsea's season; yet, Kalou has only made two starts and Didier Drogba has only contributed three Premier League goals. The major impact will be that Chelsea's squad is no longer what it once was and the loss of Drogba and Kalou, two forward players, along with the sale of Anelka, will mean that Chelsea only have five forward players for three slots, one of whom, Lukaku, has yet to start a league game. Despite this, even with the absence of Sturridge against Wolves, AVB opted to play Ramires on the right rather than recalling Anelka, Kalou or Malouda, neither of whom have found any form this season. Although with Drogba gone, Chelsea only have one other central striker option in the out of form Torres, unless

AVB wants to shift things and play Sturridge down the middle, which with Chelsea's lack of forward options is unlikely.

The only positive that could emerge out of Afcon is that Torres will be guaranteed a run of games with the absence of Drogba, which Chelsea fans will hope can reinvigorate the out of form striker. The starting 11 will thus barely be affected, as Chelsea swap one misfiring striker for another. It's worth noting that Drogba only has one more league goal than Torres and in four fewer starts, but the tournament will leave Chelsea light on options if they do not decide to buy another forward player. Newcastle United: Demba Ba and Cheick Tiote

Newcastle stand to lose a lot from the tournament as they'll lose two of their best players, Demba Ba to Senegal, as well as Cheick Tiote to Cote D'Ivoire. The side's reliance on Ba is obvious, his 15 goals are four more than the 11 scored by the rest of the outfield players combined. Leon Best is the club's next top scorer with just three and it's unlikely that he could fill the goal scoring void left by Ba who, has been one of the signings of the season so far.

Tiote, too, will be a huge loss for the club. Newcastle did cope without him earlier this season through injury, but his contribution from midfield to the club's good defensive record cannot be overstated. Tiote has intercepted more passes than any Newcastle player this season, as well as being the club's third highest tackler per game,

two stats that are key for any midfield destroyer like Tiote.

Cabaye has been a fine player for Newcastle this season, being their top tackler, and can thus continue to marshal the midfield in the absence of Tiote; yet, without a huge squad, any other midfield injuries could cause problems for Newcastle, which may prompt Alan Pardew into signing this window. Tiote is, like Yaya for City, the heartbeat of Newcastle's midfield with 62.3 passes per game, over 20 passes more per game than the club's next best passer in Cabaye. As a more defence minded player, many of these passes may be sideways but this is still of great importance to the side, who are more methodical and industrious than they are expansive.

After a huge 3-0 victory over Manchester United, Newcastle can realistically harbor ambitions to finish in the Europa League places, however, the club will be severely tested over the next month with the absence of two of their best players, especially the club's top scorer, Ba.

Arsenal: Gervinho

With RVP's goals being the focus of Arsenal this season, it's easy to forget Gervinho's contribution so far this season. Gervinho is so far the club's joint top assister with five and at times looks like the only support striker who can penetrate opposition defences, with Walcott so often flattering to deceive. His runs in behind are evidenced by him being the club's top 'dribbler' this season; as well as this, he is the club's second top scorer in the league with four.

Whether Henry still has the pace to get in behind and play the same role as Gervinho is unlikely.

A side light on attacking options would likely miss any of their players but Gervinho this season has, after RVP, been the club's most influential attacking player. With the Cote D'Ivoire likely to go far, Gervinho could miss at least five games including a home game to Manchester United, as well as potentially tricky away games to a Swansea and a resurgent Sunderland. If his side win, it will also be unrealistic to assume, with the final being on the 12th of February, that he would be able to feature away at AC Milan on the 15th.

Wigan and QPR

Wigan and QPR also lose players in Armand Traore to Senegal and Gohouri to Cote D'Ivoire, although neither player has had a particularly positive impact for their clubs this season.

Beneficiaries

The Afcon tournament could thus have a real impact at the top of the table, especially considering that Man United will not lose any players for the tournament - they must be considered its biggest beneficiary. Spurs and Liverpool could also benefit from the weakening of Chelsea and Arsenal as a result of the tournament, as they too are unaffected by it. As stated, Chelsea's squad depth will be more impacted than the first team whereas Arsenal will lose a key member of their side and statistically their second most influential attacking player.

## LET'S TALK TACTICS



## A Special Month of Sport

Timothy Poole

Alas, 2012 has come and a tantalising year of sport awaits. Happy New Year to all Beaver readers and to those of you with upcoming exams - best of luck. Though, if stress is getting the better of you, never fear; amidst the barrage of reading, problem sets and essays, there will always be world class sport for you to feast your eyes on - and this January is no exception.

On the 16th, tennis fans will turn their attention to Melbourne for the opening Grand Slam of the season - the Australian Open. In the men's draw, everyone will be out to stop the current World No. 1, Novak Djokovic, from claiming his fourth trophy in five slams. Meanwhile, British hopes may have received a boost with news of Andy Murray appointing Ivan Lendl as his new coach; Murray battled through to the final at Melbourne last year and will be keen on producing his very best this time around, too. The other men in the hunt are (and always will be) Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal, as well as Jo-Wilfried Tsonga, the 2007 beaten finalist. The women's draw is,

as ever, open to a multitude of players. With Serena Williams a doubt through injury, anyone from Maria Sharapova

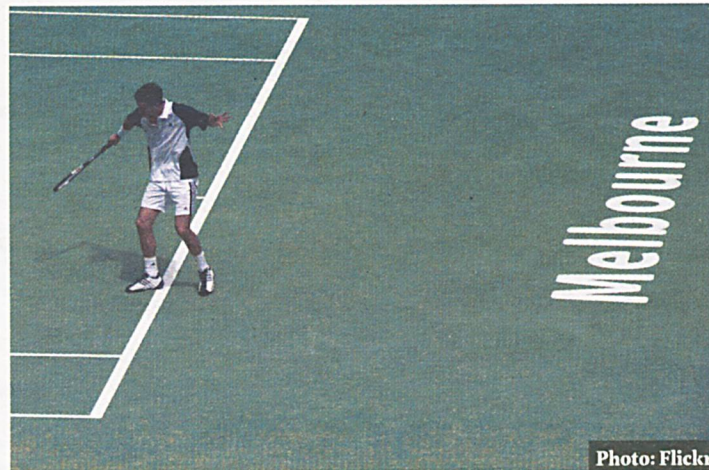


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to Li Na can be considered a genuine contender. More on the Australian Open next week.

On Saturday the 7th, the best darts players on the BDO circuit stepped onto the oche at Frimley Green to

compete in the 35th World Championships. For those of you that are sceptical over darts' sporting legitimacy, yes

most players are overweight and don't run miles during matches, but, darts is a sport - deal with it. This year's instalment at the Lakeside Country Club will see Martin Adams fight for his third successive title. His biggest competition is likely to come from last year's runner up, Dean Winstanley, and 2010 Grand Slam of Darts winner, Scott Waites. Other names with a chance are Tony O'Shea, Darryl Fitton and the legendary Ted Hankey. If you are a darts fan, expect the unexpected as the Lakeside never fails to produce high-quality drama.

Next up is the snooker Masters at Alexandra Palace. The World Championships and UK Open aside, this is the tournament to watch if you appreciate your snooker. On the 15th, the top 16 players in the world will be 'letting battle commence' for nothing other than personal pride and, of course, the £150,000 prize check (no ranking points will be available). With the game at its most competitive level yet, anyone can win, no holds barred. The key men to watch are the sport's new

megastar, Judd Trump, John Higgins and undoubtedly, the one and only Ronnie O'Sullivan. Akin to them are the three Marks (Williams, Selby and Allen). As far as cue sports go, this tournament will be an absolute classic - that much is guaranteed.

As though all of the above wasn't enough, January also sees the continuation of the Carling Cup, which has reached the semi-final stages. The UK's secondary football cup tournament will have its finalists decided by the end of the month. Four games in total will be played and two teams will progress - one from the Premier League and one from the Championship. Tuesday evening sees Manches-

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