

Collective

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

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LSE events Highlights of this week's public lectures and talks

Expanding and Aligning the EU; European Integration and Neighbourhood Policies: A Greek Overview
Dimitris Katsoudas
Tonight, Thai Theatre, 1800-1930

Why I Grew to Love America and You Should Too
Justin Webb
Tonight, SZT, 1830-2000

UN Ideas that Changed the World
Louis Emmerij and Sir Richard Jolly
Tonight, HKT, 1830-2000

Revolution 1989: what exactly happened?
Victor Sebestyen
Wednesday, HKT, 1830-2000

The Crisis of Global Capitalism: ten years on
Professor John Gray
Wednesday, OT, 1830-2000

Predictioneer: How to predict the future with game-theory
Professor Bruce Bueno de Mesquita
Wednesday, SZT, 1830-2000

Mark Pennington on "Public Choice Theory"
Mark Pennington
Thursday, L2.14 (NAB), 1800-1930

Positions of the week LSE Careers Service's pick of the best jobs

European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
Analyst and Associate Bankers

European Investment Fund
Structured Finance Monitoring Analyst and Investment Analyst

Steer Davies Gleave
Associate Consultant

Overseas Development Institute
Internship (Climate Change, Environment and Forests Programme)

LSE IT Services
Part-time positions

Tiffany & Co
Senior Analyst, International Merchandising

Markit
Singapore Summer Internship Programme 2010

SOAS, University of London
Student Associates Scheme

Geos International Consulting
Business Development Intern

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booz&co.

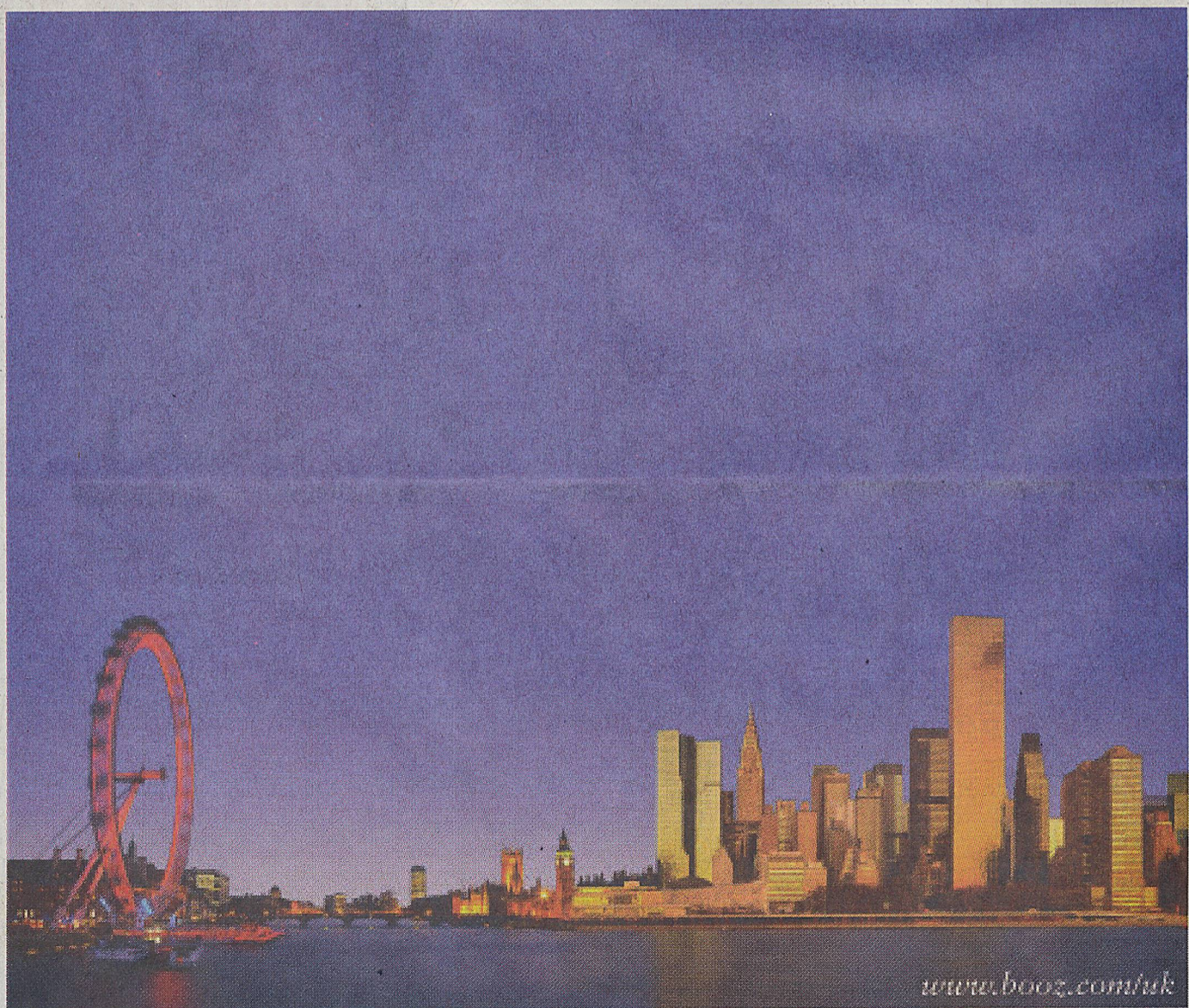
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Date: Wednesday, 4th November 2009
Time: 18.00
Location: New Academic Building, Room 2.04

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The Aled Dilwyn Show

Phyllis Lui

With only one motion tabled for last week's Union General Meeting (UGM), the last half hour was filled by LSESU General Secretary Aled Dilwyn taking questions from the attendees.

Futureproof, a motion that was proposed by the LSESU Environment and Ethics Officer Hero Austin, was passed last Thursday. LSESU Treasurer George Wetz spoke in favour of the motion, stating that he hoped the motion was "nothing too controversial" and "we wanted to do something to unite all our sustainability related campaigns".

He further explained that he felt "green issues seemed to be for green people to care about", that "the idea was to link planetary right down to individual responsibility level". The campaign will hopefully "celebrate the steps that people take" to pursue sustainability.

LSE Director Howard Davies is believed to have pledged to make 90% of his journeys in London carbon-neutral.

When questioned about what can be done to make the campus safer for bikes, Wetz replied that beyond the Dr. Bike workshop two weeks ago, students should spend £50-80 on bike-locks.

Before the motion was discussed, questions were raised about the garden that was part of the £200,000 refurbishment of the Quad, as well as students being able to consume food and drink of their own provision in the New Academic Building (NAB) cafés.

Wetz responded that the garden, which is up on the mezzanine floor of the Quad, is based upon the idea that "rather than decayed greenhouse style roof, there's now potted plants which is much nicer".

In regards to food at the NAB cafés, LSESU General Secretary Aled Dilwyn Fisher said that beyond submitting a motion to the UGM, "you are free to eat your own food at the SU". Further, he stated that the NAB cafés charged a £1 premium on everything, which is "why they are failing and our services, are not failing".

After the Futureproof motion was passed, Fisher appeared on stage to answer the audience's questions.

Whilst Fisher refused to answer questions regarding LSESU paid staff, "please raise it privately", he believed the justification for the price hike in the coffee sold at the Quad to be that it is the "best coffee you can now get on campus, they will tell you something else [in Garrick] but they are lying to you". He reiterated that the Quad had "very good quality, very best on campus, best service" and that "you might bump into me".

He was also questioned about whether the lack of motions tabled indicated the "apathy amongst students" which Fisher denied, as the "School contacts me about UGM motions...what we do here do make a material difference".

First year Law student Victoria Desmond raised the question, "why have the LSE Freshers' events been so bad this year?" She stated that one of the events had "literally only 9 people there".

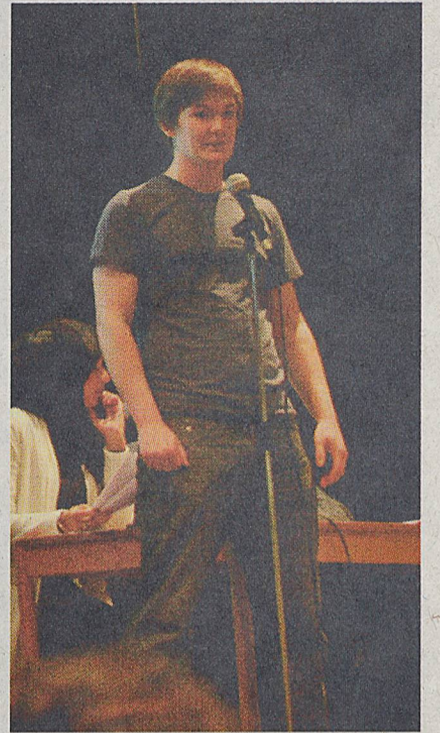
Fisher replied that the events throughout the week were "a little bit of overkill" and that beyond the Graduate and Crush, along with another night earlier in the week, the "other two nights did not go so

well". When he was further pressed by Desmond, who cited her experience at Crush where she had been kept out after she had only been there for an hour, Fisher stated that the security who had been hired by the LSESU were "in past tense as they aren't working for us now" and that "it won't happen again".

The issue of the delay with student loans was brought up, to which Fisher explained that the School has extended the deadlines for the payment of fees, as well as an increase in funding for the emergency support fund.

The closure of bars in halls, which was reported in The Beaver last year, was reiterated by a question about the Roseberry hall's bar closure. Fisher agreed that this was an issue, which was due to hall committees and students not being consulted. In Week 6, Sabbatical Officers will be going around halls to consult with students, "asking you what you want to do with your social spaces", said LSESU Education and Welfare Officer Emmanuel Akpan-Inwang.

"There are lots of issues with halls, still," Fisher emphasised.



Anti-BNP fight rages on



Eunice Ng

LSESU Education and Welfare Officer Emmanuel Akpan-Inwang took part in an event organised by Unite Against Fascism entitled 'Stop the Fascist BNP' last Thursday, which was filmed by the BBC.

Weyman Bennett who is the joint secretary of the UAF, which is an organisation with an aim to "alerting British society to the rising threat of the extreme right, in particular the British National Party (BNP), gaining an electoral foothold in this country", began by comparing the BNP, Britain's far right party, to the Nazis.

The crux of Bennett's argument was that since the BNP is an undemocratic organisation, it should not be treated as one. The fact that the BBC asked Nick Griffin, leader of the BNP to appear on Question Time, was a dangerous step in legitimising an otherwise illegitimate organisation that saw violence as a way to deal with people it disliked. We cannot debate with the BNP, because as Bennett put it, "how do you do that with someone who does not believe in your right to exist?"

Bennett concluded his speech by saying that "the challenge of the 21st Century is to make sure the 20th Century doesn't repeat itself." Above all, the BNP needs to be alienated. Yet Bennett did not articulate about how such alienation could be achieved if the BNP were not to be debated with.

Akpan-Inwang spoke next, motivated by a desire to keep elements that were sympathetic to the BNP away from the LSE. He repeated Bennett's claim that the BNP was not a legitimate party, by cit-

ing its closed membership rules which he described as "fundamentally incorrect."

"I don't wholly support that [the BNP] should be wiped out," said Akpan-Inwang, "but they shouldn't be allowed an equal platform. Our methodology should be to engage with [the BNP] directly, and to challenge and expose them for what they are."

But like Bennett, Akpan-Inwang did not elaborate on how to expose the BNP if we could not treat them as equals. It also remains to be seen what evidence will now be used to show that the BNP is not a legitimate political party, given that it was recently instructed in a court ruling to amend its membership policies.

The question and answer session began with one audience member asking if members of the public should seek to understand why the BNP were racist. Bennett answered that while this was a question worth asking, the main issue was to make the BNP alienated. Another question was raised regarding whether or not the BNP's rise was due to an identity crisis in British culture. Both speakers did not think there was such an identity crisis, citing the diversity of people who were against the BNP.

Reaction to the event from the audience was favourable, though some students disagreed with the tactics advocated by Bennett and Akpan-Inwang. "I'm not opposed to going against the BNP," said Luke Spyropoulos, a 3rd year BSc Government and History student. "But banning the BNP from the BBC would make them freedom of speech martyrs. You can only prove the BNP wrong by arguing with them, or else they'll grow like fungus in the dark."

Union Jack UGM sketch



Jack is the Beaver's anonymous mole at the Union General Meeting, every Thursday at 1pm

The summer hiatus is an unseemly time, as the saying goes; all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. So with an appetite wetter than a student politician Jack stepped in to the Old Theatre this week, ready to gobble up all the gaffes and gripes that this year's crop of self righteous simpletons have to offer.

And boy did they not disappoint. Jack had heard rumours over the recess of some kind of vichyesque collaboration with another union but cast it off as the agitating of yet another disgruntled punter upset that he couldn't get a flagon of real ale from the Tuns. But as he sauntered to the gates of our hallowed UGM he was met by an extraordinary sight. A husky young gentleman stalked the entry point, draped in some bizarre accoutrement which appeared to have the words "Can I Help You?" splattered across it. Resisting the temptation to answer his quizzical rhetoric with a forthright what

the bloody hell is going on here, Jack opted to enter surreptitiously in order to investigate this outlandish phenomena further.

Thankfully his initial fright was vitiated by some comforting familiarities: empty seats, absent motions, nervous twitching from the actors atop the stage, AU goons stroking their beavers. Joyous.

Something, however, had changed. Gimmickry. Everywhere. Jack felt like he had stepped into a production of Avenue Q rather than a plenary session of the self professed future leaders of this fine country.

A drug addled beaver mascot? Some poster which looked like it had been ripped off from the tube adverts featuring cartoons exhorting socially conscientious travel? More members of the CIHY? Mob (which Jack had now pinned down as some kind of nascent thought police)?

"Why?" chimed through the halls and passageways of Jack's mind. Why? It was not long before this question

was answered. The whispers that had filled Jack with fear during July and August were true, a silent takeover had indeed occurred. The sweet smell of sovereignty had been replaced with the suffocating odour of turpentine.

That's right, artists, the lowest of the low, had infiltrated the corridors of power. Granted Jack is slightly biased on this issue after he was once the subject of a particularly unflattering portrait when trying to earn some extra cash by posing for a life drawing class.

Jack fumed as the stewards of 'our' Union took to the stage with all the swagger of a Broadway cast seemingly unaware of the gross crime they had committed.

Gauguin Wetz painted a vivid picture of the new garden which has been instituted in the Quad. Incidentally it would appear to also be the best place to lock your particular mode of transportation given that nobody can enter this haven of tranquility. Alternatively you could fork

out £80 on a sturdy security lock.

The paucity of student activism meant that the majority of the session became little more than an opportunity for Aled Drawing-Figures to continue his "Don't panic Mr Mannering" line of reasoning. Disdain from all corners was quickly put down to some misdemeanor on the part of others. Events: "Overkill". Crush: "Security". Not being allowed food in the NAB: "Nobody has mandated us to do it" (a clear attempt to make sure there is at least one motion for next week's production). The only saving grace during this smooth exhibition of heresthetical maneuvering was watching the beaver, or Biggles as he appears to be known in some quarters, run over the meadows and fields of la-land. Whatever he was on, Jack wants some.

So the term is but two weeks old and already the lull has gripped. Perhaps the Sabbs will be excited about Jack's return for once.

What if you're not thinking?

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CONTRIBUTORS' MEETING

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Chief Justice of Hong Kong proclaims independence of judicial process

Sanjiv Nanwani

The Chief Justice of Hong Kong spoke of comparative jurisprudence as well as the appointment of judges in Hong Kong during a talk at the London School of Economics last Tuesday.

After an introduction by Professor Nicola Lacey, an expert on criminal law and legal theory at the LSE, the Honourable Chief Justice Mr Andrew Kwok-nang Li took centre-stage. Li, who will be retiring in September 2010, three years before the statutory retirement age, went on to outline the two main focuses of his talk: first, the jurisprudence of Hong Kong's Court of Final Appeal, and second, the process by which judges were appointed in Hong Kong.

Li earned an LLB and an MA from Fitzwilliam College in the University of Cambridge before commencing his practice as a barrister in Hong Kong in 1973. He was subsequently appointed as Queen's Counsel in 1988. In 1997, after the transfer of Hong Kong's sovereignty to the People's Republic of China from the UK, Li was elevated to the position of Chief Justice by then Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa.

In the lecture, Li defended the common law system used in Hong Kong, noting its superior ability to "adapt to changing times and circumstances ... and the conditions of the society."

He went on to commend the "depoliticised" judicial appointment process in the country, vis-a-vis the appointment process in the United States which he de-

scribed as being "inconsistent with Hong Kong's constitutional arrangement."

He also spoke out against the creation of professional bodies that would vet judicial appointments, recalling a Legislative Council decision made in 2002 that reaffirmed his views on the system.

When asked about the legal system practiced in mainland China, he said that "considerable progress" had been made, although it still had "some way to go".

He also revealed that a number of judges operating in mainland China were attending courses on common law at Hong Kong University, which is the oldest tertiary institution in Hong Kong and was recently ranked 24th in the THES-QS World University Rankings.

Li especially stressed the "limited influence" of the Chinese government on the judicial process, and maintained that the "one country, two systems" principle was being effectively observed thus far.

The event was part of the LSESU Hong Kong Public Affairs & Social Service (HKPASS) Society Legal Series.

Li defended the common law system used in Hong Kong, noting its superior ability to "adapt to changing times and circumstances ... and the conditions of the society."



HKPASS Society Photographers

"Great expectations" - China-EU relations in a changing new world

Nicola Alexander

Given the increasing interdependence of the 'West' and the 'East', Ambassador Ma Zhengang's speech on China-EU relations in a changing new world, promised to be highly relevant.

As LSE Professor Arne Westad pointed out, even more relevant to us at The LSE given the growing number of high profile foreign affairs advisors in the Chinese government with an LSE background, the Chinese Foreign Minister among them. Certainly the talk provided an insightful overview of the "great changes" in the global status of China and the challenges that both China and the European Union will face in the future, however those hoping for in depth analysis of the changing dynamics of China-EU relations would have been most disappointed.

Included in the brief lecture was a summary of China's current economic position. The figures were impressive, with China contributing 20% to global economic growth in the past year and 19% to international trade growth, but perhaps most interesting was Ambassador Ma's view of China's role in the international financial crisis.

Ambassador Ma gave due credit to China as an "active player" in handling the global banking crisis, acknowledging the aggressive stimulus package that both made use of China's strong fiscal circumstances and employed necessary monetary policy. Indeed, it would prove challenging to find an economist who would disagree with the Ambassador's praise of China's economic policy over the past months, even within an institution as diverse in opinion as the LSE. Yet the optimistic Ambassador was keen to recognize that international recovery will be slower if nations seek to cope alone and, echoing the endearing sentiments of European politicians, he called for countries to "join hands".

Throughout his talk, Ambassador

Ma seemed most intent on convincing the audience that China's world view and concerns paralleled those of the 'West'. In terms of the greatest changes over the past thirty years the Ambassador named both the emergence of developing countries and increasing security concerns as key developments, arguing that there was less room for those with selfish motives on the international playing field.

Though the overwhelming tone of the speech was one of confidence in the future of international relations, Ambassador Ma bluntly dismissed the challenge of peace in the Middle-East as one with "no ray of hope". Whilst this statement did detract from the endearing calls for co-operation on security matters and stronger democracy to secure peace, these are certainly valid objectives that should be valued.

The promise of developing a "harmonious" China, internally and in relation to the rest of the world was pledged by Ambassador Ma. He concluded with comments on China's endeavours to improve the quality of people's lives and move away from the Cold War 'selfish giant' stereotype. The relationship with the EU remains high on China's agenda.

In the final minute the Ambassador brought up China's need to address the issue of Tibet with a security policy that has "no room for compromise".



Natalie Wong

Davies on China and financial reform

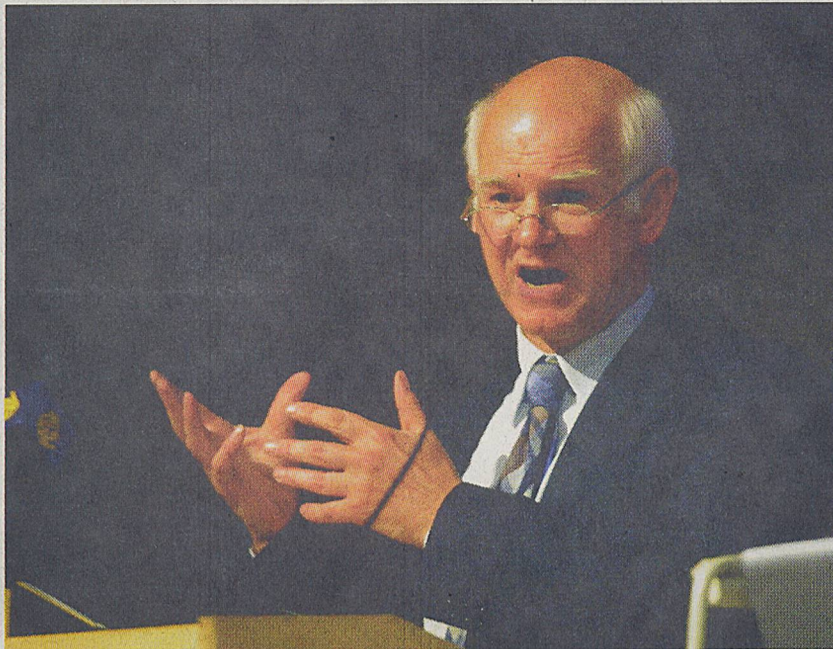
Kai Xuan Wong

LSE Director Howard Davies spoke of the inadequacy of China's financial system and the lack of appropriate social safety network to improve China's position on domestic consumption in a lecture last Tuesday.

Over the course of his talk, Davies mentioned the significance of improvement in China's banking system since the last 6 months in the aftermath of the global recession which was precipitated by a financial crisis originated from America. The financial crisis caused a slowdown in China's capital exports and imports, and also cast doubt on China's authoritative view on the viability of the future banking system model of China.

Davies succeeded in amusing the audience with the theory of 'shift in the global economy's centre of gravity to the east'. It is unsurprising for the global economy's centre to be at Iceland few years ago given the size of GDP in both America and Europe, but it has just shifted to Spitsbergen today.

Slowdown in capital exports and imports there may be, however, only China's massive growth rates of export and import have been implicated. China's trade surplus was down a measly 31% this year compared to Japan huge decrease of 59%. This was largely due to America's poor fiscal position and decreasing confidence, which undermined the demand on imports. Private consumption and its contribution to GDP declined in China as well. Nevertheless, financial markets of China are not severely affected, for



there are strong restrictions and China government's stimulus funding while in the process of writing-off of non-performing loans (NPL) of banks.

Due to fledging stage of China's financial system, credit and bond markets are relatively new instruments to the Chinese financial economy. Hence, Davies believed China's economy expansion relies heavily on bank intermediation and large bank deposits. Property rights which are essential as a catalyst to the growth of equity and bond markets are relatively undeveloped, signifying the unattractiveness of Chinese financial markets.

Although Chinese financial markets remain unappealing to foreign capital, there has been massive increment in competitiveness of China's banks. A large increment of assets and liabilities of China's banks has occurred over the past few years and the percentage of China's banks meeting capital adequacy ratio (CAR) by western standards has increased drastically from an immaterial 2% to 90% over the years from 2003 to 2008. This is mainly due to large capital injection by the Chinese government while removing NPL and bad assets into bad banks. The NPL ratio of China's banks has fallen sharply from 17% to 2% while the bad loans has

reduced significantly from RMB 2 trillion to RMB 500 billion over the course of year 2003 to 2009. According to Davies, however, this trend is unlikely to sustain given that the question of 'lending out quickly or lending out efficiently' lies around the huge capital injection. An act to lend out the huge capital quickly will severely disrupt the performance of loans again in the close future.

The amount of loans created by China's banks which rocketed in part of the encouragement of the fiscal stimulus was mainly on infrastructure and capital-building projects. Again, providing too much credit on projects that might be unsustainable and wasteful in nature would result in excess production capital in the midst of recession where foreign demand is declining is criminal and a bust is the consequence of this.

While the People's Bank of China retains stringent control on interest rate and financial regulations, mortgage financing has been on the rise due to relaxed controls on minimum deposit requirements on properties. Shanghai property prices have raised by 30% over the past few years, however, this remains a localized boom as property prices in general in China have only risen by 2%. While domestic consumption in China remains traditionally low due to huge exports, it is due to weak credit availability in funding private consumptions.

Red tapes such as banking regulations, limit on importation of foreign capital and the difficulty in erecting branches remain strong in deterring foreign banks from participating in China's financial market. Hence, foreign banks only consist of 2% of total banking assets in China. To improve China's financial market, Davies stated

that China has to work towards improving liberation on foreign banks by allowing them the underwriting and trade of RMB bonds, issuance of debit cards and the permission to invest in consumer markets.

Insurance market in China is surprisingly improving and more liberal, which is evident in the joint venture of Chinese and American banks in insurance underwriting. This is very much due to the lack of underwriting skills from the Chinese counterpart, hence the joint venture is meant to impart American insurance underwriting in Chinese banks. The tech readiness on China's banks is therefore significantly low, as compared to the market size and macroeconomic stability in which China scores highly.

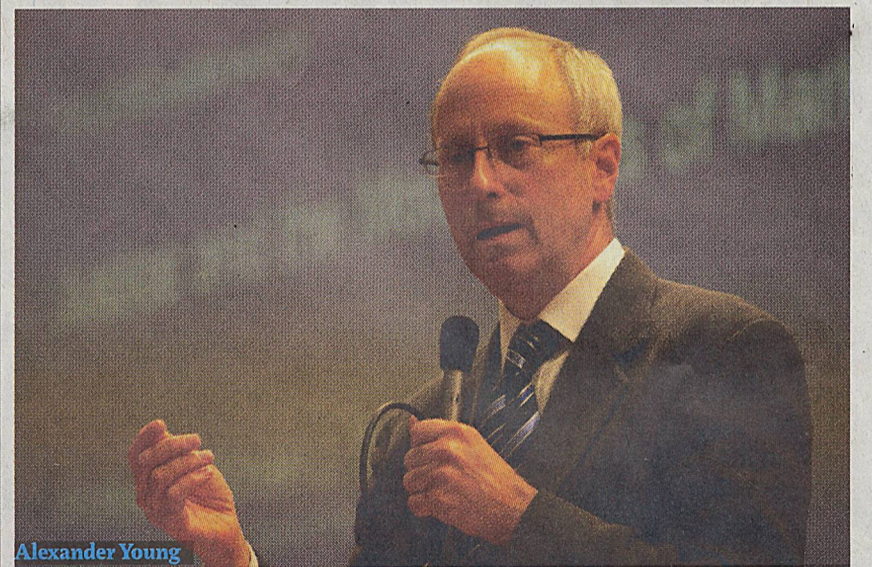
China's securities remain risky by western standards, due to a lack of corporate regulation and the underdevelopment of Chinese security market. Davies stated that the underdevelopment of Chinese security market has caused it to remain regarded as 'not fully competitive' and 'not supported on a booming financial market'.

While endeavouring to overcome the financial crisis and the resulting recession, China's authorities have acted rather decisively and drastically on providing huge amount of financial stimulus. The ultimate question on the proceeds of the huge stimulus remains on whether to 'spend more quickly' or 'spend effectively'. Currently, the bulk of loans created from financial stimulus package is invested heavily on infrastructures which might be disastrous. Howard Davies cited the need for China's authority to improve social safety net to achieve a 'rebalancing' of the economy - to improve domestic consumption and demand.



As part of the refurbishment of the Quad and surrounding areas, a garden was placed on the mezzanine roof. It was estimated to cost £190, but came to total of £357.09. However, the plants look to be in a sorry state.

Michael Sandel brings justice to the LSE



Alexander Young

Ossie Filcret

Michael Sandel gave a lecture at the LSE last Monday with a particular focus on justice.

Michael Sandel is the Bass Professor of Government at the world famous Harvard University. His course on justice has been taken by over fourteen thousand students and he is, some have suggested, the model for the most unjust character in Springfield, Montgomery Burns.

Throughout the course of the lecture, Sandel questioned the meaning of justice and took the audience on an intellectual tour, contrasting conceptions of justice which promote happiness against those which maximize freedom. Sandel and his audience found that both conceptions were lacking a human element. It was here, that he began to speak of a third way, in political philosophy. This third way is very distinct from that of former LSE Director Anthony Giddens. Sandel's theory of justice questioned the morality of markets and asked questions about virtue, morality and the 'good life'. The Third Way of Giddens, Clinton and Blair had no place in Sandel's philosophy, as it failed to place limits upon the reach of the market.

Sandel, who has won several awards

for his teaching at Harvard, led a public lecture, which at times seemed more like the engaged democratic discussions that he called for. A democracy, Sandel suggested, is only as good as its citizenry. Citizens who Sandel was training to fight the intellectual battles of the next century.

He questioned the "rampant commodification" of life, using the example of the creation of for-profit schools, prisons and hospitals, which had been experienced on both sides of the Atlantic. Where, Sandel asked, was the public consultation on the outsourcing of war. This seemed particularly pertinent when he informed the audience on number of private contractors who fought in both Iraq and Afghanistan.

Professor Sandel described justice as intrinsically judgemental and inseparable from the human experience. It cannot, he suggested, be formulated in mathematics nor could it be entirely philosophical, with no applicable use to reality. Justice is about the right way to value things, whether they are Aristotelian flutes or the bonuses awarded to bankers.



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The Beaver

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Don't mess with us

This paper has been mocked for our resemblance to The Guardian. And now, it seems that we share their problems.

Over the past week, the Guardian has been fighting to uphold their basic right to report on sensitive issues, specifically, parliamentary proceedings. We in the depths of the East Building have been fighting our own, albeit smaller, battle - our basic right to report on the activities of the Students' Union, and our editorial independence.

Various groups have repeatedly tried to use the Beaver as an extension of their own political agendas - as with every media agency, at any point in history, all over the world. This paper is placed in an odd position, though. Part of our purpose is to

hold the Union to account, but ironically, the Students' Union also publishes us. "Publishing us", however, does not mean censoring us, which is exactly what the Union officials have done over the past week.

During a pre-publication meeting that's meant to weed out anything in the paper that's libelous or illegal, the sabbatical officers pulled a news piece that was neither of these.

This paper will not stand for any unwarranted encroachment into its editorial territory. It's been a long week of hearing one dubious argument after another and unsubstantiated legal claims. We have witnessed flip-flopping on the part of the sabbatical officers, specifically General Secretary Aled Fisher

and Treasurer George Wetz, in attempts to continue to defend their untenable logic.

Even when the Union officials attempted to "compromise" by letting the Beaver print the original story, there were "conditions" attached. Some of these conditions were fair, such as allowing them a right to reply. This is something this paper will always do to maintain our journalistic principles and credibility. Laughably, one of these conditions was to not editorialise or write a news piece on the events of the past week - yet another vain attempt from the sabbatical team to hold back the steady decline of their credibility.

This paper has, predictably, witnessed a whole range of emotion from Fisher; anger to

'disappointment', frustration to 'sincerity'. None of this weighs on our determination to print what we (and media law experts) know we have the right to. Anything to the contrary would be compromising the fundamental right to our journalistic freedom.

This is not the first time the Beaver and the sabbatical officers have disagreed on potentially detrimental news pieces. Editors past have experienced, and editors to come will continue to experience, the 'obligations' that come with being constitutionally and financially tied to the Union. So long as these ties remain, we will always be subjected to subtle hints that we might lose vital financial backing should we continue to 'antago-

nise' the Union. This might just be wishful thinking, but this paper hopes that one day we will be free of the financial shackles that continue to hold our editorial independence to ransom.

We are tired of fighting battles based on the reputations of our elected officials. Alan Rusbridger, editor of the Guardian, likened their situation to being placed in a "Kafkaesque world in which we cannot tell the public anything about information which is being suppressed, nor the proceedings which suppress it." We agree, but see our case in simpler terms: The Beaver has been systematically misled in order to protect officials from exposure of their incompetencies.

Social engineering gone mad?

Are universities strangled by admissions targets, or do they have a moral obligation to accept more state school students?

To some people I will always be one of those children: one who went to boarding school and thus was given an unfair advantage in life; one who knows nothing of the real world; and one who, by not achieving the very top grades at A-level (A and 2 Bs, you see), is all but a waste of space.

To start with, I hated my school. The girls were horrid and had huge scary hair with no parting. The boys were chauvinistic hooligans who spoke of nothing but sex, rugby, sex and hockey. After doing my GCSEs, 'getting into university' became the most pressing item on the agenda. I had to write a CV - what can a 15-year old possibly put on their CV? - and begin thinking about what I wanted to do 'when I grew up'. We were gradually being groomed for The Personal Statement. Our teachers and house-parents wrote our references: "...not afraid to call a spade a spade." I definitely took this process for granted and can see how invaluable it is

to provide the largest number of students with those top grades, of course this pool is going to be drained first. Furthermore, independent schools place more emphasis on what the government consider to be 'economically important' subjects such as Modern Foreign Languages and the sciences. Getting higher grades in core subjects such as these rather than in the less important subjects such as theatre studies, media studies and I.T. does carry more weight for university admissions. And at top institutions, these disciplines should not be sacrificed. It's preposterous to put the burden on universities, even ignoring that they are businesses themselves after all. Universities should maybe consider alternative application methods; it is next to impossible task to interview all candidates and lowering grade requirements would only increase applications.

There is no easy solution here; greater institutional change is needed to allow educational social mobility, and this is something that should be on the con-

Iresent the whole idea of public schools. What I see as the principal aim for attending a public school - paying for what people perceive to be professional success, possibly and being spoon-fed to the top - are things that can be deemed so anachronistic they belong in the days of Tom Brown's Schooldays; certainly not the 21st century.

Things just don't appear to be fair here. Of course, geography could be a factor - both Westminster and Haberdashers' Aske's are within twenty miles of the centre of London, whereas students from a school in Staffordshire may not immediately think of the capital as their first destination - but such an uneven distribution should be worrying for any university, or institution for that matter.

"I am insulted that people feel that the state sector is not good enough for them."

Millions of people across the country could not dream of sending their children to public schools; Eton College's fees are just under an astronomical £30,000 per year. Having attended a comprehensive school, progressing through my education with people from varied background, was a benefit - not a hindrance. To a degree, I am insulted that people within society seem to feel that the state sector is not good enough for them. It is, and it's there for everyone.

The LSE, in terms of ethnic diversity, is unique in the UK, and this is obviously positive. However, the degree to which the LSE self-regulates and takes people from certain socio-economic backgrounds is greatly disappointing.

In some outrageous data easily available through the LSE website it is shown that in 2006, twenty-six pupils from Haberdashers' Aske's Boys' School were offered places at the university; in 2004, 30 offers were made to pupils studying at Westminster School. From my year at secondary school, only three people got offers from any constituent college of the University of London. Something's going wrong, somewhere down the line.

Something must be done about this. People from low socio-economic strata are already less likely to apply to universities, and the LSE's attempts to attract people from such groups may begin to look tokenistic if the university continues to admit independent school students in such dizzying proportions.

Even the slightest possible hint that these students are brighter than the rest of the applicants would appear to be utterly ludicrous. Although it is conceivable that students from independent schools may be afforded better opportunities through a school's infrastructure perhaps, and their applications may be better on the face of it, this must surely be acknowledged when applications are taken into hand by the university. For example, the mere thought of a school having a newspaper or magazine is something completely alien to what may have been offered in my school.

I am not illiberal on this issue; I do not wish for all public schools to shut down, though I would not support them where that choice is concerned. But our university should admit the best candidates, and at the moment it seems that these aims may be in some ways compromised.



"Just because my parents forked out a fortune for my tuition..."

to have a 'coach', Oxbridge or no. I worked hard and I am an intelligent, capable and interested student, if you'll pardon my immodesty. Just because my parents forked out a fortune for my tuition, it should not mean my application should already be tainted.

It seems that in order to compensate for the shortcomings in the education system as a whole, an impossible task is at hand for university admissions officers to give equal opportunities to all. According to the Sutton Trust's September 2007 report, independent schools made up only 7% of total schools and represented 15% of A-level candidates. In 2007, LSE admitted 43% of its incoming first years from these select few. Yes, this is a huge discrepancy, but students with high A-Level results should not be punished for their achievements by not receiving placements at good institutions. As long as universities demand the very best grades and independent schools continue

science of independent schools, for it has been said that their existence creates a two-tiered educational system. Good teachers are leached from the wider educational resources. It takes strong character to choose to teach at a school where children have lost the willingness or interest to learn and where resources are poor, rather than an institution with better services and resources and higher salaries. Attention needs to be focussed on encouraging children in state schools to continue with education and to bring that education to parity with independent schools, rather than lowering the standards for those who are disadvantaged by the education system's inadequacies.

Independent school students deserve to continue to fulfil their potential, not at the expense of state-educated students, but based on their individual merit, something for which - whether you believe it or not - they have had to work extremely hard.

Letters to the Editor

Madam - Having spent a year at the LSE we came back this year expecting more of the same from The Beaver's news coverage. Namely, an elitist, inward-looking tone, used as a forum for the playing-out of SU politics, by people on the "inside". However, we were pleasantly surprised to find that news coverage in The Beaver had progressed to a higher level.

So far, The Beaver has transcended above using its news coverage to facilitate the petty games of SU politics and has instead reported well and fairly upon important issues both inside and outside the LSE. Therefore, we would like to commend the work of your editors so far this year and express the hope that this high standard of student journalism is continued.

Yours,
Soraya Zahid, Mira Hammad, Rawan Abdulla, Mubbien Hayat, Imran Khan

Madam - Given that the *Blue Rain* "work of art" outside the library details what people are searching for on the computers, wouldn't it just have been easier and cheaper to have painted the word "Facebook" on the wall instead?

William Wormell
BSc Government, 2nd year

Madam - LSE's position in the THES league table since 2007 is a disappointment to the School. It is not, however, a reflection of the School's strengths - as even the compilers have been forced to acknowledge. Your distortion of these facts ('LSE falls from world ranks', 13 October) for the sake of a crude editorial is a further disappointment.

QS, the company who compile these rankings, changed their methodology in 2007, leading to a dramatic fall in LSE's position in the main ranking. The new method downplays LSE's exceptional strengths such as in levels of international students and staff, with a knock-on effect on our ranking.

It does not help that QS measure research strength by focusing on journal

citations, which overlooks a lot of social science research - and is, by the way, quite out of line with the far more rigorous UK Research Assessment Exercise (RAE). In RAE 2008, LSE had the highest percentage of world-leading research of any university in the country. It was equal second in the UK when universities were ranked using a grade point average; and first when universities were ranked according to the percentage of their research receiving the top 4* (world-leading) grade.

We have pointed this out many times to the Times Higher and QS. They have chosen not to alter their method. But they do now accept that the main Top 200 ranking only works properly for fully comprehensive universities and that LSE is excellent in its specialist field. Apart

from QS's quotation in your front page article (which you wrongly attribute to Professor Worthington), QS say on their website that "Critics of the rankings have claimed that they compare 'apples with oranges' by failing to distinguish between specialist and generalist universities, or making allowance for size....The rankings acknowledge specialist strengths with separate tables...This is where some of the smaller institutions without a full range of subjects come into their own. The London School of Economics, for example, although restricted to 67th in the overall ranking, is in the top five for social science."

That's in the top five of all universities in the world, note. When comparing like with like, QS say that LSE is "the best

NOBLE

100%

PRACTICAL 48%

An investigation, from four differing points of view, by Louisa Evans, Nathan Briant, Bryan Ong and Anand Bhat



Photo: flickr user Wolfiewolf



Photo: flickr user mcmorgan08

In recent history, the LSE has consistently shown a strong bias towards students from private schools when considering the proportion of the general UK student population as a whole, with privately educated students being over-represented five times over. As a (formerly) renowned and well-respected institution, the LSE has a responsibility to build and maintain an academic reputation befitting its claim to be “one of the foremost social science universities in the world”. A key factor in this equation is ensuring that only the finest students are admitted to the university, in order to breed a culture of learning and academia.

is a system whose intent is to ensure its beneficiaries are afforded the university education of their choice and, in this respect, it performs admirably. However, it would be frivolous and frankly insulting to suggest that privately-educated students perform better purely because of the inherent advantages that come with a private school, especially when considering the extremely selective nature of elite independent schools.

The government initiative to reduce the overrepresentation of independent schools at leading universities in the UK is simply a ploy to compensate for the failings of the abomination that is the state

“A ploy to compensate for the abomination that is state education.”

Thus, the LSE’s admissions policy begs the question, are students from independent schools truly superior to their state-educated counterparts?

On paper, evidence would suggest so. In terms of public examination results, independent schools have reliably dominated the league tables, occupying eight out of the top ten places in terms of A-level performance in 2009, an impressive figure considering a significant number of elite independent schools decided to boycott this year’s league tables, preferring to submit their results to the Independent Schools Council instead. The exceptional results of private schools are hardly surprising – parents do not pay up to £30,000 a year for their children to receive a substandard education.

Of course, behind the statistics lie dedicated teachers motivated by high salaries; a stable environment conducive to learning; and the well-publicised private school practice of rigorous spoon-feeding and hand-holding throughout the entirety of a student’s academic life, from exam preparation to the university application process. Does this cheapen the intrinsic value conveyed to a student by the private school system? Perhaps. It

education system. After all, why should students who choose to receive a private education be penalised for their academic success when their schools already do not take taxpayer money, whilst their families generally pay well above the national average in taxes, which, in turn, go towards the provision of state-funded education.

Rewarding mediocrity through the establishment of minimum quotas for state-educated students can only lead to a worsening of standards at the UK’s top universities. Rather, the government should take measures to improve its education system, namely, increasing free competition between schools and reducing the power of teachers’ unions that effectively make it impossible to fire incompetent teachers.

With its severely declining rankings in recent university league tables, there has been no other time when it is of the utmost importance that the LSE should reserve the right to select the students it considers best, instead of following a set of government guidelines whose only purpose is to draw attention away from an education system that has proved to be highly ineffective on a large scale in recent years.

“Elite U.S. colleges.... are perpetuating deep inequalities in American society. They equate success with serving the privileged elite and have largely abandoned talented youth from poor families... [t]his deepens the country’s growing class divisions and exacerbates the long-term decline in economic and social mobility.”

Think this statement came from Michael Moore or Noam Chomsky? Try again. It came from the president of Amherst College, a top two liberal arts college in a fascinating 2006 article in *Businessweek*. According to the article, more than half of Amherst’s students pay the entire \$42,000 tuition out of pocket without any financial aid.

As an American outsider looking in to the British higher education system, I

Outside of the northeastern United States, we take our state universities very seriously, and our local elites are educated by the likes of the University of California or the University of Texas. The University of Michigan, for example, was a Public Ivy which provided an “uncommon education for the common man.” Generous state funding and local loyalty meant that residents of the state would get the overwhelming majority of seats with a few outsiders paying an out-of-state premium price.

However, we have seen a marked abandonment of public interest and funding for state universities. Michigan is considering privatising its state university by ending the last bit of state funding for the school (6% of the budget).

One should never take seriously university chancellors’ promises to make university free for middle- and low-in-

“I see worrying levels of interest in top universities to become independent of the state.”

see worrying levels of interest among top British universities to become independent of the state and establish Ivy League-style pricing and, the hope is, an according level of “prestige” and “quality.” Though this will permit such institutions to free themselves from potentially detrimental government targets (with regards to taking under-qualified students from state schools, for instance), I must warn you of the other, even less appealing consequences.

Coming to England, the fact that Oxford and Cambridge were state institutions capped at £3,225 per annum shocked me. In the United States, they would all charge at least \$30,000 just for tuition fees. The general idea that all universities are public and affordable to the general public seemed charmingly egalitarian. But the push to privatise British universities, given the large gap in endowment compared with American universities, would lead to them charging the same as the Ivy League, but with less financial aid and scholarships.

come households if they are also given the ability to raise tuition. When the much-quoted Mark Yudof ran the University of Texas system, he proposed a “Compact with Texans” promising the above. He got his tuition fee rises, but the “Compact for Texans” was never mentioned again. Now, as the head of the University of California, he is cutting classes, maintenance, and affordability (tuition will rise to \$10,000 per annum), but sadly not his \$500,000+ compensation.

So when you hear administrators fawning over American education, remember the market values underlying that education. And when you think of prestigious private universities in America, remember that ten per cent of seats are set aside for legacy admissions (unqualified children of prominent alumni donors). Remember too that Michelle Obama’s University of Chicago’s A&E refused to repair a child’s face after a dog mauled him because he had only public health insurance. Don’t say that this American didn’t warn you.

medium-sized, research-intensive specialist university in the world.”

The School does not pretend that everything that’s reflected in league tables is rosy at LSE. Major effort – and new resources – are going into improving teaching and other aspects of the student experience, as comes through clearly in the new Strategic Plan. We want to do better there, and to see that reflected in various rankings. But you would be doing your readers more of a service if you gave them the whole picture.

Robin Hoggard
Director of External Relations

Madam – The Executive Committee of the LSE Students’ Union should expect to deal with a cantankerous and bad-tempered Beaver. The Beaver should be neither an agent nor a puppet of the Union Executive, though he may be a critical friend. He should not care a jot for the commercial sensitivities of the Committee or their contracting partners.

As publisher of the Beaver newspaper, the Union has a right to interject in editorial decisions where proposed content is potentially defamatory of any person or organisation. The Executive Committee should also act to prevent publication of content that is considered to be obscene, likely to incite hatred or violence, or otherwise unlawful. Otherwise it risks assuming liability. Wisely, this much is

reflected in paragraph 3.4 of the Media Group Protocol to the Union constitution.

That document also explains that the Union “recognises and shall uphold the intrinsic value of an independent student voice on campus”; it emphasises that – subject to the above and other minor limitations – the Beaver should enjoy full editorial and managerial autonomy from the Executive Committee of the Union. The Union’s right to interject is strictly constrained. Members of the current Committee, however, appear – perhaps conveniently – to have overlooked, misunderstood or simply ignored these constitutional expectations.

In the normal run of things, members of the Executive do not have the power to enter contracts – or do anything else –

that would require the Beaver to bowdlerise its output. They cannot cite ‘commercial sensitivities’ as a basis for censorship; they cannot pretend that actions of the Beaver could amount to breach by them of their contractual promises (unless the editor was in fact doing their bidding); they should not browbeat Beaver journalists to secure the newspaper that they would have others read, and they should never offer any implicit threat to withhold future funding in case of failure to ‘comply’.

If the Executive were so to act it would be forgetting that aside from all its fun, froth and diverting content, a primary function of the Beaver is to examine the performance of all those persons – the Executive Committee included – that exercise forms of power that affect the

LSE student body. The Sabbatical Officers should continue to facilitate and to encourage the Beaver journalists for the long-term health and benefit of the student community. In the short term, they should grin and bear the routine hassles that the Beaver causes in their performance of office. Such is – or should be – life in WC2.

Yours,
Dr. Andrew Scott
Senior Lecturer, Department of Law

Will they make the trains run on time?

Peter Manning

As I am sure you know, Nick Griffin is on Question Time next week. There has been a lot of fuss among the liberal left about the fact that the BBC is providing a platform for a far-right group to promote its agenda on a popular show that always does well in the ratings. The BNP website has, in fact, already installed a countdown clock, as if welcoming in some kind of apocalyptic final showdown; Straw and Griffin, poised to go head to head (with Dimbleby acting as some kind of burlesque referee, I assume). I don't think Griffin knows Straw has impaired hearing; I don't think Straw knows he is facing a parody of Stephen King's 'IT' (principally manifest as a clown, but sometimes also taking the form of people's deepest fears). If we accept that the limit of free speech within a democratic society is realised exactly at the propagation of wholly undemocratic ideas, then we should quite reasonably conclude that a publicly funded body should not allow this farce. But a farce is what it almost certainly will be, and, I think, it may be a useful one.

I personally can't take Nick Griffin seriously; he does actually remind me of an angry clown. For the record, I am completely aware that Griffin's rhetoric is not only offensive, but also inflammatory and potentially dangerous. The recent spats of racially motivated violence and vandalism against Muslims and Jews are enough to remind us how serious a general threat the ideas of the far right in modern Britain can be.

The other panellists on Question Time have a decision to make early on next Thursday. On the one hand, they can collectively condemn Griffin from the off, quashing his attacks wherever possible, bully style, at best letting proceedings deteriorate into a shouting match, and, at worst, potentially risking an exhibition in martyrdom. On the other, an alternative (albeit risky) approach may very well be to let Griffin enjoy the platform, abuse it even. By keeping disagreement and cor-

rection firm but mild – parental, soothingly patronising even – the panel can allow Griffin to be the only farce on show. Thinking back a year or so ago, Joe Biden's strategy in the Vice-Presidential debate showed that this can work. Biden respectfully allowed Palin to expose her own deficiencies. I am obviously not trying to compare the politics of Sarah Palin and Nick Griffin; one is an extremist power-hungry maniac, and the other is... er...

The point is that Griffin's ideas should not be taken seriously, even if they are by some groups who presently feel disenfranchised from the public sphere. Surely we should be addressing the roots of that marginalisation, rather than assuming swathes of the population are either innately racist, or too stupid to spot someone making a public fool of themselves? This is not 'Weimar Britain', despite the BNP's preference for the population transfer of all non-indigenous persons (that is essentially all of us – can the last person in Britain please turn the light out?). The fact that the BNP website seriously suggests that 'overpopulation' – a direct result of immigration – is 'the cause of the destruction of our environment' shows that Griffin can quite capably show the fallacies of the BNP attack without any help, and quite on his own terms.

The great thing about the UK is that we (generally) have an understanding of public citizenship according to secular and non-ethnic/racial/gendered criteria. That is something that – dare I say it – we can be proud of, and something that has taken many hundreds of years to establish. Yes, we live in a culture that en masse consumes Simon Cowell as entertainment, and yes, sometimes the public is not critical enough of blindingly obvious blights to our society (the Royal Family). But there is a tendency on the liberal left to err toward a rhetoric of condemnation which, in situations like the forthcoming BNP Question Time appearance, further inhibiting the collective critical conscience, rather than stimulating it. In some situations this can be helpful; crucial, even (on climate change, for example). But the public needs to be able to make its own judgement on Nick Griffin, in many ways just to illustrate what political apathy can lead to. In making that judgement, I am convinced that the public will see Griffin for what he is next Thursday: an angry (and dangerous) clown.

The BNP's forthcoming appearance on BBC's Question Time is a victory for liberal democracy, and a chance for all to learn of the party's full range of policies

Alex White

Maybe, just maybe, I was subjected to a little too much of the work of Mill and Milton in my formative years, but their effect on me is something which I will never even consider bearing to bring myself to apologise for, and it's with this background I find myself appalled by the backlash which the BBC is facing for decided to allow a political leader on a television show fundamentally concerned with the issues of the day in politics.

Yes, Nick Griffin is essentially a thug in a suit with some abhorrent values and ideals; but he is also the head of a party with a fair amount of mainstream electoral support in this country. Any complaints from those who would be impassioned to do so that his appearance on national television would somehow do anything to further 'legitimise' the party are empty. All on its own, without the support of a multinational broadcasting company, the BNP has seen electoral rises (in both numerical and percentage terms) in every general election since 1987; thus the legitimacy of the party is fairly embedded into our system of liberal democracy: if a party stands and people (en masse or not) vote for them, it's fair to say that their validity as an organisation is not in question. This is not to mention the 58 council seats, London Assembly seat and two seats on the European Parliament that the party also holds. Such is the nature of a system where people can vote freely and representatively of their views.

A second criticism of the populist outrage of the liberal intelligentsia of the Left over this matter would be the obvious hypocrisy behind the oh-so intelligent critique of the BNP that is, 'They're Nazis.' The mildly amusing thing I find here is

"The BNP is the only mainstream political party to offer anything to Northerners."

that it is the Left (generally) who would have these 'Nazis' silenced: clearly the silencing and banning of the KPD in 1933 is a speck to be regretted on the tapestry of history, but to wish the same upon the BNP is a matter of mere good conscience. I can't say: maybe old rivalries die hard and seventy-five years isn't too long to wait for a bit of revenge. Add to this the fact that the BNP is fundamentally not a party of Nazis: the Third Position ideology and embracing of them by Think-Israel (a transparently pro-Israeli, pro-Jewish publication) in 2005, after John Bean of the BNP denounced 'Judeo-obsessivism.' The only thing that can come out of continuing to call the BNP a 'Nazi' party is that there will be a massive swing in support towards them once they, somehow, manage to show the public that they are indeed not a Nazi party: 'You see these people who told you that we were Nazis? They were wrong, and you should feel bad for believing them.'

It is also somewhat galling that people seem to have no faith in what is termed the 'working-class', to whom the rhetoric, apparently, is most appealing: hearing the argument that people will be taken in because this man is on television, the poors up North (as the argument generally goes around here, anyone from north of the northernmost edge of the M25) will lap up everything he has to say. Coming from the North I previously described, I honest to any deity you may care to imagine believe

that deference to any authority which may have at some point been embodied in politicians died, as it did down here, in the 1960s with the start of the run of That Was the Week That Was. If there was any left after thirty years of satire, it was definitely finished off by Steve Milligan, thank you very much. These people aren't stupid: they're desperate and unemployed through structure in what I would think to be a majority of cases; we're out of mines to mine, ships to build and textiles to manufacture. The depressing fact is that the BNP is the only mainstream political party to offer anything to them: the Big Two and the Lib Dems are too busy felling big business, which is now pretty much all tertiary, to care about the common man who has always made a living with his hands.

The worst part of all of this for me is that the protests which are to surround this appearance are going to make the Left as a whole look intolerant and worse than the BNP. It's lovely to see the various factions of the Left getting together for a love-in of sorts in White City next week (SWP members holding hands with CPGB members, singing songs around a flaming oil barrel would be my ideal imagined outcome), but it's a bad thing to be behind: all that is going to result is arrests and PR disaster.

Fundamentally, this is an issue that needs to be debated: the BNP and Nick Griffin are now an undeniable part of our political landscape, and are likely to be immovable for a while. I see no fault with having someone who is a legitimate politician appear on a political television show in order to talk about and debate his politics, and this is the crux of the issue: the BNP's policies on race are indeed repulsive, but this will be debated on the show; it simply has to be – for this reason, the appearance of Griffin should not be prevented because of BNP party policy. Debate is the greatest method of exposing doubt for beliefs: a method which has endured from the times of Socrates to now must be effective.

Failing at Skool

The death of After Skool Klub is indicative of the Union's inability to organise student nights worth attending



Scenes like this are a distant memory
Photo: flickr user slushpup

Leon Fellas

What dominated The Beaver last week (13th October) was the alarming rate at which LSE finds itself plummeting down the THES World University Rankings. Something else should be sticking in the throat of our 'El Presidente', General Secretary Aled Fisher. While teaching is dominating the agenda of many at LSE, many are reeling at the loss of After Skool Klub and Chuckle Club to King's College. Student satisfaction is incredibly poor at LSE, and the loss of two popular nights is sure to hit hard. One of the roles of a Students Union is to help students enjoy their time at university to the greatest extent. Our SU does a poor job at giving us that 'Student Experience' and, at the same time, more and more students are questioning the ability of the LSESU to provide quality student nights.

Aled Fisher and the SU have lost what it really means to be part of an SU: to help the students have a fun time at university. The fun has gone, and it shows, in their apparent lack of care in letting After Skool and the Chuckle Club stroll off down the Strand.

It would appear that even the SU are losing some of their faith in the much-maligned Crush. It was depressing to read the Student's Union Update e-mail; the single enticing line for Crush reading, "You can't end any week at LSE without turning up to Crush. Surely the best student night around. FACT." For me, it

feels like a massive back-pedal from the headline-grabbing "Best student night in London" line we were fed repeatedly last year. I just cannot help but feel that even the SU are starting to realise that Crush is coming up short, especially without other events to pad out its roster.

The Orientation Week Crush was very close to abysmal; the organisation, downright dreadful. It was almost dangerously full, and if there had been a fire, I would not have been surprised by casualties. Tension, combined with the steamy temperature, meant the night was very close to spiralling out of control. Outside, the situation was equally stormy, with people trying to arrive as others tried to get out for much-needed air. Spending £200,000 (Beaver, 28th September 2009) on "improvements" seems good, until you are excessively sweating due to lack of air-conditioning. It felt very short-sighted not to be able to accurately predict, or be able to cope with, the number of people that turned up to the event.

This leads me to the absurd amount of money spent redecorating the Quad, which to the casual observer consists of a bit of white paint and MDF. £200,000 on a half-hearted job, wrecked after one night of Crush. They could have used that "well-spent" money on so many other things. You could have subsidised a whopping 400,000 drinks by 50p, for instance. I am sure this would be much more popular in many circles of the student population.

Although politics should be on the agenda for all student unions, it seems to dominate at LSE. A students union should be an organisation set up to serve the interests of its body; our SU just comes across like your granddad using an iPod. It feels so out of touch with the lengths that other universities go to provide entertaining events, to a worrying degree. Even

the UGM – the event they rave on about so much (because no other union in the country has one, I wonder why) – generally turns into a farce halfway through the year. When it is even remotely well-attended, it often involves debating subjects with only trivial political or bureaucratic relevance.

Despite all this, there remain many interesting events at the LSE. The School makes much of the fact that we get some great speakers. When it comes to fun, however, the closest we get is AU night on a Wednesday, which, unsurprisingly, is not organised by the SU. Getting guest speakers is great, but a talk by the Chief Justice of Hong Kong is not exactly going to be a night out to remember. Our union just comes across more and more distant as the weeks roll by, and they seem to have forgotten what is enjoyable.

Events do not have to be a black hole for funds. Many unions nationwide successfully add to their budgets with great events. Considering our Sabbatical Officers are the most generously remunerated in the country, is it not high time we see some more investment from them than the odd comment article in The Beaver? Transparency was high on the manifestos of the elected Sabbatical Officers, so it would be useful to hear of what steps our union tried to keep After Skool and the Chuckle Club at LSE. The attendance of Crush in the coming weeks and months will be a suitable referendum of how much faith the student population has in the Sabbs' abilities to organise genuinely enjoyable events.

So goodbye Afterskool, Chuckle Club and the fun; instead, we will get weeks of debate about something somebody said somewhere or other. Maybe one day we might get a Union that puts events back at the top of its priorities.

Features



Photo: flickr user cliff1066tm

Medals for massacres

Calum Young discusses the controversy surrounding the Nobel Peace Prize

When Henry Kissinger won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1973, the American comedian Tom Lehrer announced he was quitting the business, 'awarding the peace prize to Kissinger had made political satire obsolete' he said. Last week, that same prize was doled out to an American statesman of a very different sort, President Barack Obama. Uniformly the criticism was vocal, what has he done to deserve this? And they were right, Barack Obama, peerless leader of the west, the iconic image of good governance for a generation, ought not to be mentioned alongside Henry Kissinger, a war criminal. It is not the case that Barack Obama is not worthy of the Nobel Peace Prize, but rather that the Nobel Peace Prize is not worthy of Barack Obama.

The term 'war criminal' is not meant metaphorically or symbolically, nor is it hyperbole. It is a job description. From 1968 when he entered high office, until 1977 when he left it, Henry Kissinger presided over a period of the starkest immorality (euphemised as realpolitik) in diplomatic history. My suspicions were first alerted to these atrocities when reading Kissinger's 700 page tome, *Diplomacy*, a book which is bound so heavily as to suggest even his publisher knew it would be propping open doors in years to come. In it the former National Security Adviser and Secretary of State sought to prove that he was not responsible for the rise of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia or any of the other charges of genocide

which had been levelled against him. Let us just say, there was never any reason to doubt Kissinger's innocence until he tried to prove it.

Kissinger's malevolence on the global stage began before he had even entered office. In May 1968, Kissinger was asked by the incumbent administration to be an observer at the Paris peace negotiations where President Johnson was making a last effort to end the war in Vietnam as his presidency came to an end. Meanwhile the presidential race between Richard Nixon and Hubert Humphrey rolled on, it was an incredibly close contest marked throughout by Nixon's promise to win 'an honourable peace' in Vietnam. Unfortunately for him negotiations in Paris were proving successful, North and South Vietnam had come to an agreement and a peace settlement was imminent. At this point the dark side of Kissinger shone through. Knowing that peace would prove detrimental to Nixon's bid for the White House and hence his own political career, Kissinger intervened. He covertly contacted the South's leader, Nguyen Thieu, promising him a more favourable agreement if he held out for a Republican presidency.

The peace process in 1968 fell apart when the South walked away from the negotiating table, a direct response of Henry Kissinger's advice to Thieu that he hold for the incoming Republican government. For Kissinger and Nixon this was hugely advantageous footnote in cold-war history.

Nixon's electoral majority was less than 1

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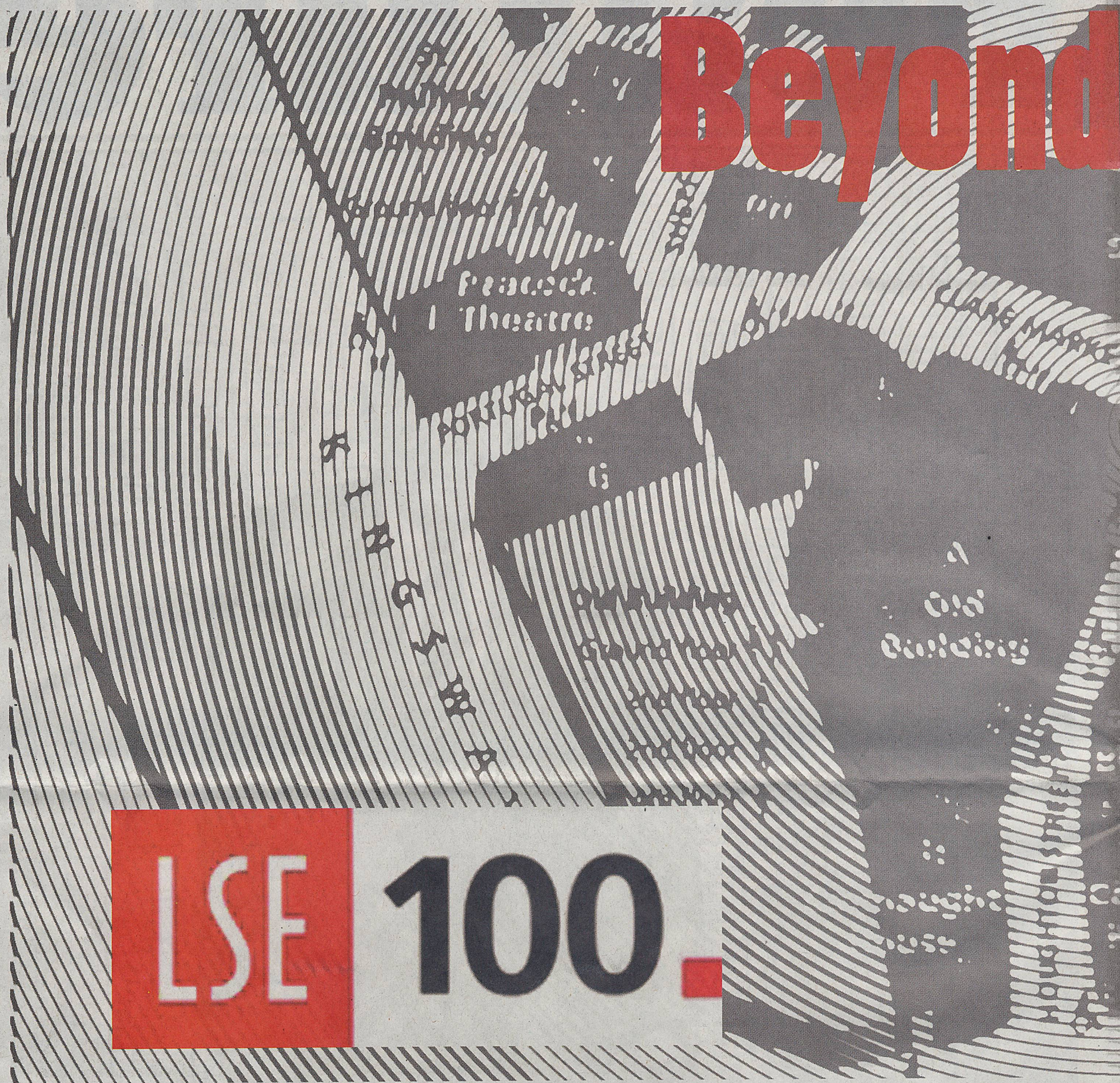
per cent of the popular vote, which was won on the promise that he would secure an 'honourable peace'. And Kissinger, having pulled the stings which kept the war going became Nixon's National Security Adviser. Of course, the human cost was massive. When peace was signed in 1973, with terms identical to those of 1968, the number of American soldiers killed in the conflict had more than doubled. Half the names on the Washington memorial were added after 1968 and it should be a relief to every American conscience that the Vietnamese killed were not recorded. Their names certainly do not live for ever more.

Kissinger started as he meant to go on. In an act which directly contradicted US law, Kissinger approved the bombing of the neutral state of Cambodia. This was done without notifying the Secretary of defence or Congress. American pilots took-off with bombing co-ordinates within North Vietnam and had them changed mid-flight, thus even those who dropped mass murder from the sky on Kissinger's behalf were unaware that they were doing so on neutral ground. The destructive effects on Cambodia were near total. Infrastructure was wiped-out, crops were extinguished causing wide-spread food shortages and civilian centres simply disappeared. Yet, Henry Kissinger did not bring about the Khmer Rouge take-over by design, but decisions he took certainly can be said to have fostered conditions in which it was made possible.

By 1975 Kissinger had reached the apogee

of his powers. Nixon had been removed by the Watergate scandal and Gerald Ford sat in the Oval Office. Kissinger was given free reign in foreign policy decision making. During this period his decisions of inaction proved as lethal his prior interventions. On December 7 1975, the Indonesian army invaded East Timor and carried out a program of genocide, where a minimum of 102,000 civilians died as a result. On the day before, Henry Kissinger and Gerald Ford had met President Suharto of Indonesia in Jakarta where they had given the green light to intervention. In retrospect it seems any non-communist government could count upon Kissinger for backing, regardless of the contravening human right's abuses.

By the same standards which the international community used to prosecute Slobodan Milosovic, General Augustus Pinochet and those at the Nuremberg trial, Henry Kissinger should too be brought to justice. The co-winner of the Peace Prize in 1973, Le Duc Tho, declined the award, aware that peace had not been achieved in Indochina and that there was nothing praiseworthy in the events that had unfolded. Kissinger, meanwhile, has been a White House advisor to every Republican administration following Nixon. Obama's decision to terminate Kissinger's involvement with politics at the highest level is just another reason why he ought not to be grouped with a war criminal.



Madeeha Ansari speaks to Dr Jonathan Leape about the new effort to expand the outlook

Dr Jonathan Leape is currently a Senior Lecturer in the Economics Department at the LSE. He is also Course Director for the innovative new course, LSE100. It will be running as a pilot project this year and will be open to registration for first year undergraduates from 26th October. Here he explains some of the features of the course and the rationale behind the initiative.

Would you like to start off by telling us a little about the reasons for introduction and what you hope to achieve?

Well, the course grew out of an effort the school began to reexamine teaching and to assess where it is that we could really be doing better than we have been.

One of the parts of that exercise was a subcommittee set up to reexamine the curriculum and see where there were opportunities in terms of better meeting students' needs. We came to the conclusion this new course could allow students to get the full benefit of the LSE, the idea being that it would provide a vehicle to do two things. The first is to give students the opportunity to learn about the full range of disciplines at the school, and the different ways of thinking that underpin those disciplines. So the first of the aims is really helping students to learn about what it is to think like a social scientist across a range of fields, from Anthropology to Law to Economics to Social Psychology. The second aim is to provide students with a further opportunity to strengthen their

research skills as well as written and oral communication skills.

So, the twin focus was on giving students more intellectual breadth by being exposed to what it's like to think like an anthropologist as well as an economist or geographer or historian; and also to give them the opportunity to strengthen their critical skills. We think both of these things are going to help them not only to get more out of their degree during their three years at the school, but also afterwards.

It's still in its initial stages though - as I understand it, it's not an assessed course?

It will be assessed, but using non-numerical assessment and - critically for the pilot - will not be on students' transcripts. For the pilot, successful completion of the course will allow them to receive the LSE100 certificate, which can be received with distinction if a student has done very well. However, the course will not affect students' progression from Year 1 to Year 2, nor will it determine or affect the classification of their degree. Once the course is fully up and running which is for next year's firstyears, then it will be on their transcript as part of their program at the LSE - though not part of their degree.

So this will not be a fourth option or fourth module?

No, always as an additional module and

The first of the aims is really helping students to learn about what it is to think like a social scientist across a range of fields, from Anthropology to Law to Economics

effectively as a fifth module. To prevent that from impinging on their workload, what we've done is to spread the course over two sessions. That is, they start in their first year but they finish it in their second year.

There was a lecture series going on last year entitled "Thinking like a Social Scientist". Is this the logical extension of that?

Well, not really the logical extension but much informed by the enthusiasm that generated, both among the faculty and students. There was a feeling that this lecture series was giving all of us access to the richness of the LSE intellectually and we thought that was part of what this course could do.

It is also very much responding to student concerns about not having an opportunity to get the best of the LSE and to some feedback from employers. LSE students are seen to be very strong in terms of their technical preparation and specialist understanding of their discipline, but not always as strong in their ability to think out of the box, their ability to think about new problems, to respond to them creatively and to communicate their thoughts about them.

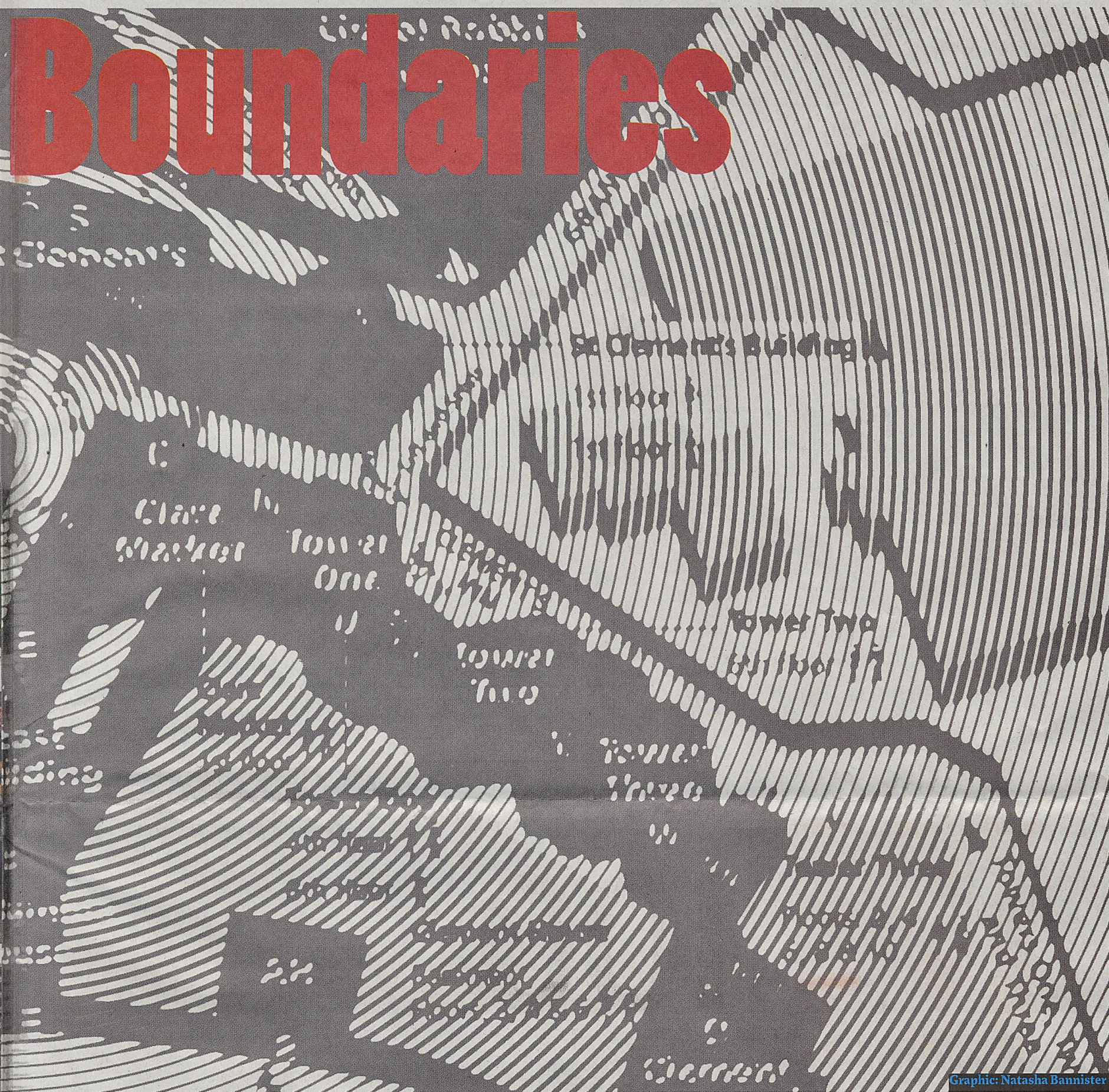
There is this lingo that is quite common in careers discussions about the need for "T-shaped" undergraduates, the idea being disciplinary depth remains crucial be-

cause that is your foundation intellectually; but equally these days that needs to be complemented by breadth across a range of disciplines. (Professor) Nick Stern will be lecturing on climate change, and it was his view that not only are most key issues deeply interdisciplinary, but if you want to engage in them you need to learn how to work with people from those disciplines. As Emmanuel [Akpan-Inwang, LSESU Education and Welfare Officer] has noted, the course brings all the diverse students at LSE under one academic umbrella, giving them the opportunity not only to learn from a range of lecturers, topics and disciplines, but from each other. For the first time, students will have an opportunity to really learn from each other in an environment where they're going to be engaging with important issues, right across the boundaries that have prevented deeper understanding.

It's a very ambitious task to seek to combine all these disciplines. Could you tell us a bit about the structure of the course?

Sure. The course won't make students into anthropologists and geographers and historians and international relations experts and the rest of it. What it will do is give students an introduction to what it's like to think as a lawyer or a geographer or anthropologist.

What we've done is to have the course structured around six three-week modules. The idea is to have enough time to



Graphic: Natasha Bannister

of first year undergraduates at this highly specialised school

engage with the issue and bring in two different disciplines. We'll have two hours of lecture a week and then one hour of class. The classes will also then have a similar structure from one module to the next. In the first class, we'll be focusing on using different forms of evidence. For example in the module on why it's so difficult to predict great events like the end of the Cold War, the first class will look at documents from the CIA and the Kremlin from the late 1980s, which indicated no sign that they thought that there was some imminent collapse within the Soviet empire. At the same time we'll be looking at economic statistics that show the steady decline of the economy. Students will be learning to assess the different forms of evidence and what it is that drives events. We will then in the second and third classes be focusing much more on how we make persuasive arguments in both written and oral form, with debates and presentations.

The three modules will be used as a way to get exposure to six different interesting questions: the Cold War; climate change; culture; the financial crisis; punishment; population growth. Each case will be approached from different disciplinary perspectives, but underpinning all of this is a class structure which will be relatively constant going from one module to the next, in a way that we hope will give the course a coherent feel. The first term of the course in Lent is going to be wholly self-contained and we'll be able to pick up

in Michaelmas term of the second year. By this time students will have all of their first year courses under their belt and we can do a more advanced approach to the same kinds of questions, finishing up before the Lent term so that there is no burden in terms of workload.

Whose brainchild was it originally? Was it just a collective decision on the part of the faculty?

It wasn't only the faculty, there was also very broad feedback from the Students Union. Ruhanna Ali, who was the previous Education and Welfare Officer of the SU was a part of the process. We were also in part stimulated by the fact that Harvard had undertaken a reassessment of their own teaching some twelve months before we did and given a lot of thought to the curriculum, so there were a lot of factors that came together.

Is this entirely voluntary? It may be a bit difficult to incentivise our goal-oriented student body if it isn't going to count towards the degree.

This year, it's run as a pilot so it's up to students to volunteer for it. From 2010-11 (next year), first year students will be required to take the course.

(For now) we have four hundred spaces and are going to impose preliminary departmental caps on that, because we want to have as broad a range of students

The feedback we have from employers is that they are going to be looking for that because they really think that this is something that will strengthen undergraduates.

as possible. We have to offer them on a first-come-first-served basis as we cannot accommodate more. Registration will open at 12:01 on the 26th of October and it's up to the students to choose it. Once they've chosen, however, we do expect them to stay through to the end because they just won't get the value of the course unless they see the full set of modules. Their feedback is also important for our understanding of how (it) should work in future.

Employers are very excited about this course and only students who successfully complete it will receive the LSE100 certificate. The feedback we have from employers is that they are going to be looking for that because they really think that this is something that will strengthen undergraduates. The other thing that I think any employer is looking for is students who take the initiative to volunteer for things.

Our section this week is based on the theme of "Prizes" and the Nobel Prize for Economics this year was awarded to individuals who really do have a broader understanding of the world. Would you have something to add about the merits of the interdisciplinary approach?

I think if we look around us, all the important issues of the day are issues that cannot be understood from the perspective of a single discipline. They are also issues that cannot be understood fully by any one person working alone. It's funda-

mentally important for students who want to make a contribution not only to have the intellectual breadth to understand the contribution of other disciplines, but also to have the tools, the communication skills and other "soft" skills to enable them to work effectively with people from different backgrounds.

The LSE provides the ideal opportunity to learn all of those skills. We are in London, we are very diverse, we are a school that represents the world and we haven't really taken advantage of that. I think what's going to happen three or four years from now is that people are going to look back and say: Why didn't we offer this course ten years ago?



Photo: Flickr user terence in virginia

Accolade Addiction

Mazida Khatun describes our materialistic obsession with prizes, awards and recognition

Awards season is meant to be between December and March, but in this society in which we seem to be addicted to accolades, awards season is stretched out to over the 365 days of a year. We have accolades for every industry, talent and experience. We even have awards that are widely known to be litmus tests for more prestigious awards, the Golden Globes being a good indicator of who might be victorious at the Academy Awards. Now we also have public awards, with shows such as X Factor and American Idol igniting a sense of justice in the public over who deserves to win and who should go.

Kanye West's outburst at the MTV Video Music Awards was fuelled by his sense of injustice at Beyonce missing out on an award. Yet what could another trophy mean for the mantelpiece of a woman adored across the globe and who earned an estimated \$87 million in the last year alone. We seem to feel a sense of entitlement in winning something that is accredited and official even when it is unclear what we have won in life. A prime example of such an empty after-thought of an award would be Martin Scorsese's Oscar for Best Director, for the film *Departed*. Having been overlooked several times before for films that were far more deserving. What did this truly add to Mr Scorsese's life, now that he is an institution of American cinema and whose films are regularly cited in people's list of favourite films?

This obsession has created an industry

The Nobel Prizes are not the people's prizes, they are the fulfilment of Alfred Nobel's final wishes

of its own and a sense of self definition by the outcomes of these awards. First, it might be lucrative for a restaurant to be able to claim that it was voted best restaurant in London by Time Out Magazine, because people will flock to it in order to experience the best. Yet I must state the obvious here, which is that my idea of what is the best may not be the same as everyone else's. Also, in this quest for only having the very best, we miss out on the quirky or endearingly terrible. Sometimes we don't want to have the finest of everything, but what is personal and to our own tastes.

Furthermore, when I feel like watching trashy TV and switch onto watch the hilarious audition process for a show like X Factor; many hopefuls explain to the camera that this means so much to them because they have never won anything before. At the risk of sounding as though I am peddling an empty platitude, I must ask, whatever happened to believing that it was the taking part that counted most? Surely it is far more important that we all contribute to society than win something that a small group of people may think that we are worthy of.

Finally we come to furore over Barack Obama's surprising Nobel Peace Prize win. It is not merely the conservative press who are accusing the Nobel Committee of awarding Obama a No-Bush Prize, but many feel that there are more deserving candidates. Yet, there are always several worthy candidates, which arguably makes the selection of just one individual for any prize eventually a little worthless. How-

Of course it makes us proud to be recognised for our work, but lack of recognition does not mean that our contribution is worth anything less

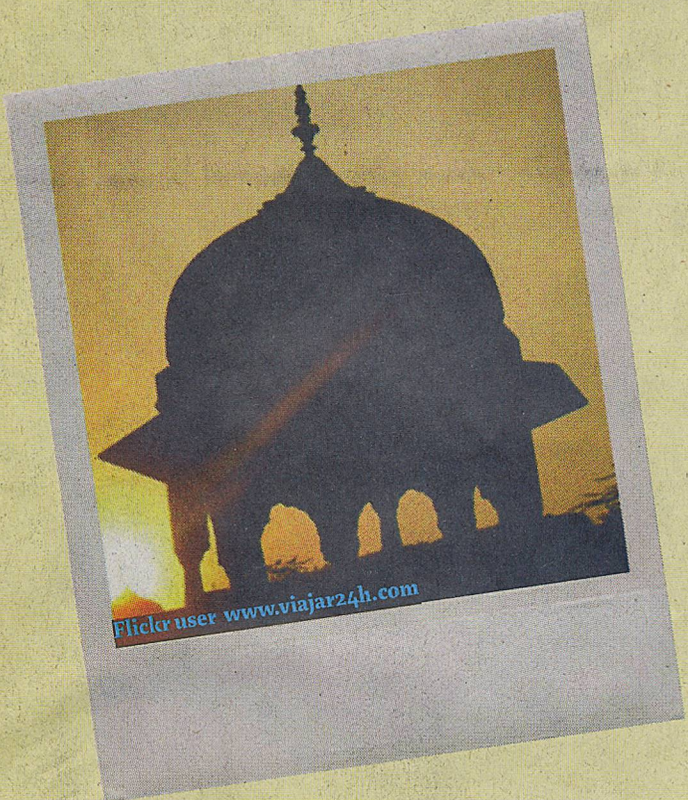
ever, the good Nobel people have decided that President Obama fulfils their criteria, even if that is just because of the peaceful overtures he has been making rather than more concrete actions. If the five member committee felt that President Obama is creating a more peaceful world then why should we question this? The Nobel Prizes are not the people's prizes, they are the fulfilment of Alfred Nobel's final wishes and ultimately they change nothing. The winners and losers of accolades will continue down whatever path they are heading down regardless of the outcomes of these awards.

Whether it is a small exclusive group voting on a list of candidates or the public electing its chosen one, someone will always be left feeling overlooked. Of course it makes us proud to be recognised for our work, but lack of recognition does not mean that our contribution is worth anything less. In such an ambitious world, let us not be defined by the trivial bits of silver people decide to bestow upon on, but instead let us decide for ourselves which measures of success we shall use. We should confidently determine what winning means and not rely on a second party to judge us, because as we all know, they do not guarantee objectivity.

LSE Diary

Travel blog - Journey through Jaipur

Simon Black continues recounting his backpacking experience through India



Leaving the sanctuary of Dharamsala, I headed south, past the undeniable splendour of the Taj Mahal and on to Jaipur.

Let's be honest, traveling can be tough. Brain-swelling long-haul flights, incomprehensible public transportation systems, narrowly missing buses because of someone else's misjudgment, or worse, your own. These are all part of roller-coaster ride you're signed up to the moment that first ticket is bought. However, challenges aren't often without reward. Learning the language, communicating with local people, bartering for essentials (and the occasional frivolity), can be more fruitful than a Malaysian market.

Communicating with locals is the solo traveler's own favoured foodstuff. Even those who actively choose to 'go it alone' are seldom that way for long. In most places worth visiting, characters both sweet and unsavoury swarm to them like moths to a foreign flame. This is one of solo travelling's great boons: being alone makes you all the more approachable, allowing you to get a better sense of place through people; the story is always more complicated and interesting than meets the eye.

It also makes you a target. Anyone and everyone encountered who isn't obviously a backpacker must therefore first meet the stern and reserved traveler, before the kind and inquisitive visitor can emerge from behind the suspicious brow and stiff upper lip. People must be pigeon-holed as either friend or foe in milliseconds. Instinct plays a part, but such tacit knowledge presupposes prior familiarity and

experience from which the subconscious can glean the signs worthy of suspicion. Being out of one's comfort zone is part of the point of backpacking.

For these reasons, when I met Jonjin in Jaipur I was less the epitome of warmth than a misanthropically rude tourist. And as logical and necessary as being 'street-smart' is, it can't always remove the twinge of guilt that is conterminous of being rude to someone who is not.

Jaipur is a town on the famed 'golden triangle' circuit - a tourist trail that includes my previous destinations of Agra and Delhi. It's known for its pink buildings, its gem scams, its diverse demography, and its huge markets.

Upon arriving at Jaipur station after an arduous and screaming-child filled train journey, Jonjin was the first auto-rickshaw driver who seemed remotely friendly. He took me to my guest house without any problems and informed me of the Muslim festival being celebrated across the city the following day. Eid is celebrated at the end of Ramadan during which Muslims have had to fast and only eat before the sun has risen or after it has set.

After some friendly exchanges he extended an invitation for me to meet his family the next day and celebrate with them. I'd been in India for less than two weeks, and I had already been privy to unwarranted levels of hospitality from Sikhs and Buddhists.

Joining a Muslim family as a guest on such a significant day would be a privilege I had yet to experience. I'd made up my mind to go for it.

Meeting his family was fun. It entailed a simple and sweet coconut-soup and

trying to converse with his kids in their broken English and my non-existent Urdu. Then, we tuk-tukked off and around the residential streets of inner-city Jaipur. In the Muslim quarter, heaving crowds were out and about, visibly elated at being able to eat (and smoke) during the daytime. Jonjin knew a lot of people, and within ten minutes I'd embraced dozens of effusive locals.

We then met his umpteenth brother, who spoke English fluently and owned a nightclub in Goa. We spoke about Islamic beliefs, multiculturalism, Islamic routine and Pakistan, where his grandfather had refused to move to after the Partition of India. He invited me to a big family dinner with promises of chicken biryani and music.

We then drove up the city's mountainous edge to the Hindu 'Monkey Temple' (2,000 monkeys + temple = monkey temple). But something wasn't right. My instincts were nagging at me. Too many factors that didn't add up: his enthusiastic yet distant manner, his brother's invisible wealth, and the alcohol-serving bar owned by a devout Muslim. I was about 80% certain that there was some sort of scam going on. But traveling without taking risks is like eating gourmet food without chewing: pointless and something you'll definitely regret later. A 20 percent chance of adventure is good enough for me any day.

So, when the sun had set, we headed to the big feast. The place he took me to looked more like a haven for drug dealers than a place to celebrate the end

of a month-long religious fast. It was a residential square with a few motorbikes parked in the middle. It was dark, dank and worse, it was empty. If there was a ever a penny to drop in this sad day-long saga, it made a loud crashing sound when he tried to gesture me into that ominous square's only shop, labeled simply "Osho Gems".

Sighing, I could feel the last throes of optimism atrophy into a pitiful puddle of naivete. I wanted so badly for him to be genuine. I did not want to believe anyone would use such an important religious holiday as the pretense for fleecing others of their money, or that such an elaborate plan that would include a fake wife and children could exist outside of bad Hollywood movies. "Surely no one is that sacrilegious, or desperate?" I had been telling myself, in vain.

Walking away, all I could do was promise myself that this wasted day would neither dampen my spirits nor sully my optimism and faith in other people. For me, it is just another example of the lengths that some are willing to go to for the sake of money. In a country that holds one third of the world's poverty, the lowest and most degrading means of obtaining money are usually the most lucrative.

Onward, not much older, probably wrinklier, and definitely wiser, I left for Southern India and the island of Sri Lanka.



What if...

Peak oil was reached in 2015?

Noah Bernstein

Earth's Black Gold, like all finite resources, will eventually run out. Perhaps a more significant tipping point than the last drip is when we will reach peak oil - the point when the maximum rate of global petroleum extraction is reached, after which the rate of production enters a terminal decline. The debate has raged and Daniel Yergin, an oil Yoda, has presented a coherent argument for the year 2030. What if, however, he were wrong and peak oil were to be reached in 2015?

The Middle Eastern petrostates like Saudi Arabia and Iran, sitting atop 30% of the world's proven reserves, will initially enjoy the high premiums their barrels fetch on the open market - in addition to significant political leverage over the salivating West. However, once the state revenues and non-diversified economies stall, autocratic rulers will find it increasingly difficult to assuage their populations. The potential convulsive change would not bode well for Kings and Ayatollahs.

Lithium-ion batteries along with other lithium byproducts will be the go-to resource once oil begins its permanent decline. Luckily for both Bolivia and Chile, the shared Atacama Desert is the globe's one-stop shop for the metal, making them the new Saudi Arabia and Iran of the post-petroleum world. However, how they resolve their border and resource dispute will determine whether they head towards newfound prosperity or lengthy conflict.

Russia, the world's second largest oil producer, will be sad to see its state-controlled oil revenues go, but will be comforted by its near instantaneous replacement export: natural gas. Having won the geographical lottery, Russia (and the quieter Canada), will be very well positioned to fill the emptying oil troughs with an abundance of natural gas, making them big winners (to the detriment of the environment and democracy).

Israel would find it more difficult to sustain its current foreign policy approach. Although the US is unlikely to completely abandon it militarily, the loss of Israeli leverage would lead to hard-to-swallow concessions for the micro state. These could either go down smoothly or cause major indigestion in the form of localized skirmishes or, quite possibly, a multi-front war. The power vacuum left by Israel's decline would spark a race to fill its shoes, Iran being the frontrunner. This could in itself lead to some fairly tense situations amongst supposed allies.

The worldwide economy would be rocked: the impact on industry, trade, and consumer behaviour would be fast and furious. Job losses would mount despite fervent cash infusions by governments worldwide. Deficits would balloon, alternative energy related job growth and sector development would be slower than desired - research and development cannot be forced. However, in the long-term, less dependence on Middle Eastern oil and cleaner alternatives to carbon will produce benefits of their own. Not unlike the Great Recession we're in now, the short-term would be particularly painful, but in the long-term, if the right actions were taken by our leaders, we would regain our economic footing - until, of course, the next energy crisis hits.

Measured musings



According to Aristotle, justice was a simple matter of flutes being given to flute players. The reason was nothing to do with the beauty of music that could be produced, but rather because it was the sole purpose of a flute's existence. According to Amartya Sen, justice is simply a matter of tackling manifest injustices (such as discrimination on the basis of race, gender and sexual orientation). As simple as this idea seems, it is very likely that Aristotle would have had bones to pick with this notion.

While we can wax lyrical on the difference between institutional trancendentalism and realisation based approaches to justice; we are all able to instinc-

tively identify what we regard as universal manifest injustices, as we witnessed when President Obama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Audible gasps were heard from the audience and outrage followed worldwide. Yet injustice and perceptions of injustice pervade our daily existence, whether we witness the awarding of a prize to a seemingly non-deserving recipient (as in Obama's case) or when elected representatives claim 'injust' expenses.

The challenge of the twenty-first century will be to identify a meaning of justice which we recognise as having a legitimacy beyond nation or continent. It will not be as simple as providing flutes to flute players. As Amartya Sen suggested, we

must be careful to ensure that the Indian concept of 'mat-sanyaya' (literally the justice of the fish; where a big fish can eat a small fish) does not begin to encroach upon our sense of justice and fairness. While we must reward success, we must not abandon the 'failed'. For it is the economically 'failed' who make up the vast majority of the world's inhabitants. Failure surely should be seen as nothing more than the path to success. In his recent Reith Lectures, Professor Michael Sandel questioned the morality of markets. He argued that slowly, through the commodification of daily life, we are eroding our sense of right and wrong. Our sense, if you will, of justice. No longer is the market a means to an end,

but an end in itself. The challenge for the next century is to define the remit for markets, and to appreciate that a just society cannot simply be achieved by maximising either utility or freedom. Justice is not simply a matter of dispensing flutes, it is a matter of placing the right value on flutes and the flute players.

Ossie Filcret
Features Editor

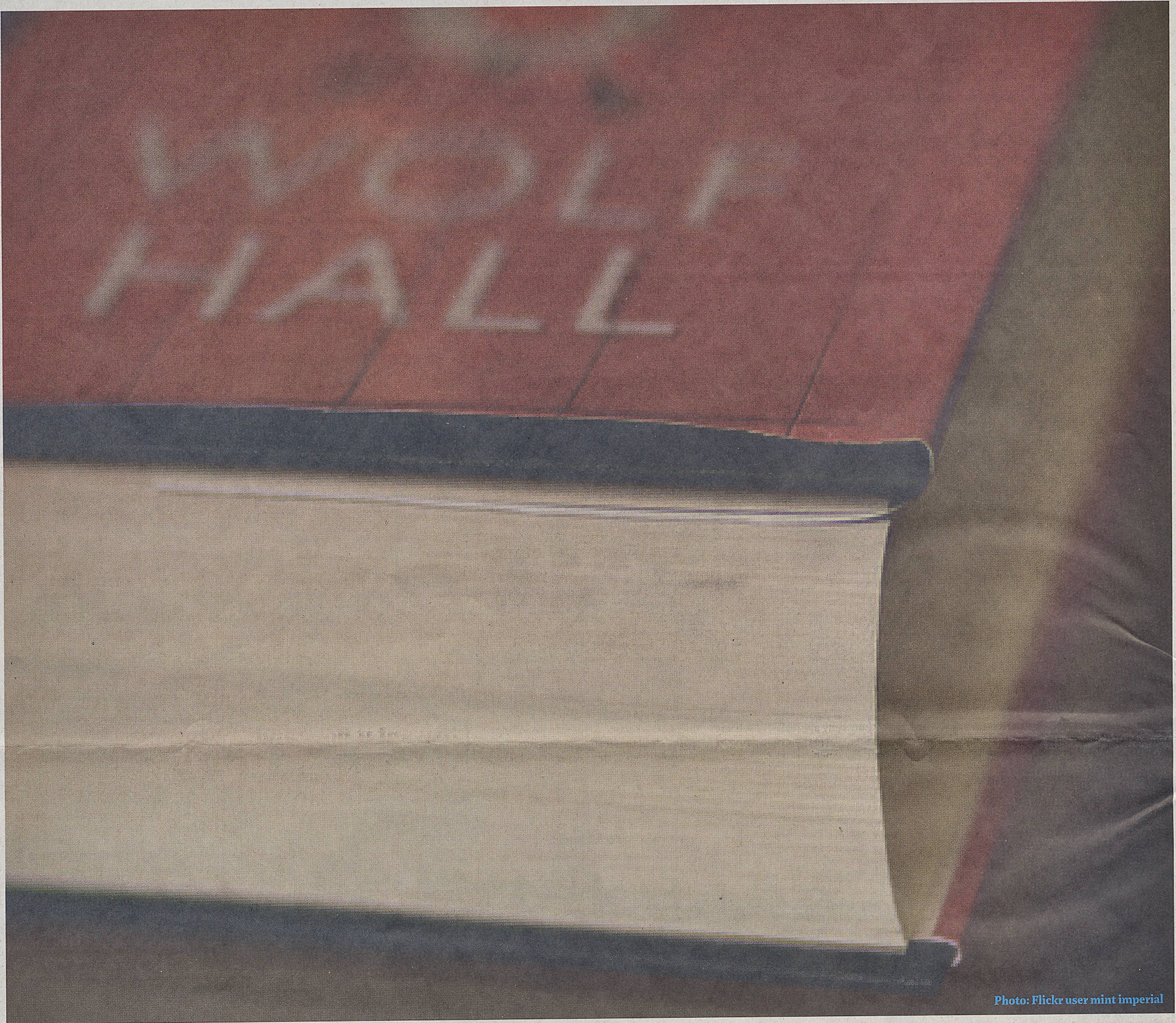


Photo: Flickr user mint imperial

Laurels in literature

Marion Koob reads meaning into literary awards like the Man Booker prize

So much has been said and written about the Man Booker Prize 2009, that I am wondering if I have anything new to offer. From the initial speculations following the publication of the longlist, to the congratulatory post-announcement reviews, the literary world and the media have exhausted all possible discussions on the matter.

Perhaps this fact is already an interesting one. After all, it is surely a healthy sign that such events generate so much interest, that literary awards do not solely remain the possession of selective circles. We do live in the electronic age, and many have been concerned that reading would be eclipsed by other preoccupations. Indeed, in other parts of the world where hours are not spent on the Tube, it may already have happened.

Apart from the attention brought by the media, however, is there really any value in ranking a novel as the "best" among a diverse range of works? For the authors, there are monetary considerations - increased sales and the handsome amount of £50,000 - as well as the ego-boosting recognition of being chosen from among other successful, talented peers. For the literary business in itself, it provides a greater exposure for fiction works. Since this genre of writing is indeed an art, we should definitely consider this in a

positive light. More importantly, however, what is in it for the greater public of readers? A guideline indicating which authors are worth dedicating a few hours a day to? An encouragement to aspiring writers?

In discussing whether giving prizes to books makes any sense at all, it is important to think about why awards exist in society in the first place. The two main reasons which come to mind are recognition, and exemplifying a success to which we should aspire. The Man Booker Prize does follow this logic.

This year's Booker prize actually went to LSE alumna Hilary Mantel, for her work "Wolf Hall". She was a law student here, but after a year moved to the University of Sheffield where her husband-to-be was studying. At the preliminary reading which took place at the Southbank Centre the day before the winner was announced, she did stand out as the liveliest among the shortlisted authors. Adam Foulds, author of the "Quickening Maze", remained for the most part behind a cloud of perceptible shyness, whilst the snazzy trainers under his suit brought the rest of the panel's footwear to shame. The audience discovered the artistic power of architecture through Simon Mawer's voice, who described the setting of "The Glass House" with amorous detail. A.S. Byatt, with all the authority which can command an experienced writer and a previous

In discussing whether giving prizes to books makes any sense at all, it is important to think about why awards exist in society

winner of the prize, spoke with confident tranquillity. Her work, "The Children's Book", is an intricate historical fresco spread over generations of characters. The two remaining authors J.M. Coetzee and Sarah Childs were not present, so both made efforts to either record a reading prior to the event, or send a representative. However, as opposed to the previous year, the atmosphere of the event had a tense awkwardness to it. Perhaps the comment in the opening speech about how the original purpose of the Booker prize was to increase book sales, that dimmed the enthusiasm to some degree.

Overall, the event was solemn - perhaps taking itself a bit too seriously. Contributions from the audience determined its direction to some extent, with one member asking the gathered writers how it felt to be celebrities. Another question was about the role of the semi-colon in the grand scheme of the literary universe; different writers accorded a different level of importance to it. As far as reading other nominees' books was concerned, Adam Foulds felt it could be compared to spending time thinking about your girl/boyfriend's ex-partners: the better they sound, the more pain generated.

Overall, the theme of this year has definitely been the historical, whether on a personal scale as regards to Coetzee's autobiography, or the grand epoch of the

Tudors, which Hilary Mantel recounts through the perspective of Thomas Cromwell. This artificial criterion reminds us that the final choice is made on an arbitrary basis. One may wonder whether it is even possible to judge what is best from an artistic perspective. Admittedly, it is conceivable to evaluate on a scale such things as quality and style. Beyond the point of mastery, however, how to choose? It is difficult, for instance, to imagine holding a contest between Jane Austen and Emily Bronte.

If we do make the conscious choice to make such a judgement, the question that remains is who would be best placed to call the final decision. The claims for a panel of professionals in the domain, or of those who would prefer to leave the choice to readers themselves, both hold strong arguments. After all, readability might be just as important as technical details in the context of books. Giving away congratulations and money is all good - but while doing so, sometimes it is worthwhile to remind ourselves of why.

Social

Banking on ambition

Shrayans Agrawal is looking for a profitable career

A new year, for most people, usually means a new beginning, a time to explore new avenues and experiment. Not at the LSE, however. As soon as October comes around, there are company presentations to attend, people to network with, and the dreaded CVs/Cover letters to prepare. Not a moment goes by during which people aren't thinking of how they could enhance themselves to get that all important summer internship at a bank.

The keen bankers get on the case since day one. If one goes on the Careers website (it seems to be the most visited part of LSE online), you will notice that there never seems to be a time when the Careers advisors are ever free to see you. There is a constant ebb and flow from Tower 3 of desperate second years, tired third years and overenthusiastic first years. The LSE, from its location, offers a perfect outlet for banks to recruit. Goldman Sachs is literally 5 minutes down the street! We are a specialized social science university which many people use as a stepping stone to enter the banking industry. The large cost, particularly for international students paying approximately four times as much as UK/EU students, is worth it only if the return is greater in the future (we have to find out if our investment is risky or safe!). This logically points to banking, as it provides the highest returns.

LSE and banks have a mutual relationship not only because students find jobs in these top places, but also because it is considered as the best place to recruit candidates. The LSE offers its students an exposure to the financial industry which is infinitely better than any other university. Platforms such as the Alternative Investments Conference or Global Platinum Securities are great opportunities for would-be bankers to explore their interests in various areas, unparalleled by any other UK university. Societies holding events with banks have an impressive turnout. Why? They are the outlet students are looking for. Essentially, if such events are organized by the LSE, it seems naïve not to make the most of them.

On the flip side, how can one know so early on in life the track they want to pursue? It seems strange that eighteen year olds entering university already know that they want to work in currency derivatives, or enter some other obscure banking

sector. There are so many other opportunities in life, so much else to experience. These occasions, after leaving university, will no longer be accessible. Yet students overlook this fact in rushing ahead into financial services. Having an open mind is the greatest asset an individual can have in university, because it allows your sponge-like mind to absorb all the neces-

sary information. People enter university with pre-conceived notions of life in banking without fully appreciating what it entails, and then waste their time going to pointless company networking events or attending lectures by company executives which don't add value - and university is all about adding value.



Photo: flickr user craig

The banking aura at the LSE pushes and shoves students into experiencing and understanding it, even if one isn't remotely interested, for several reasons. Firstly the plethora of events is daunting and one feels compelled to attend - and hence gets sucked into the depths of banking. Or, it could be through an enthused friend dragging you to an event, followed by a sense of missing out if you don't pursue the interest. Students don't consider themselves as having options; the possibility of the big bucks and of seeing your name in the Financial Times is enough for most to sell their souls to the banking industry.

I can fit perfectly into both sides of the argument, having experienced the good and the bad. Getting dragged into

which is the crux of my argument. Once you come to know what you want from life, LSE is second to none in providing a path. Until that fortunate time, you are in the doldrums of this university, which can easily be relabelled LSB - London School of Banking.

I hope everyone finds a niche which they can work towards. This allows you to maximise LSE's potential and complement your studies with extra-curricular activities. If not, it doesn't matter - you have these years in life to sort yourself out, and there is no rush. The LSE simply allows you to get ahead of the game. In sum, the only race worth running is if at the end of the race you feel like you want to run it again. I do like this cliché, as it is very true: life is not a sprint, it's a marathon and one needs to be able to pace themselves in order to succeed.

and being asked, rather bluntly, "Why are you here?"

Deficiency in teaching does not necessarily stem from lack of enthusiasm on the tutors part - the roots of the fault could lie in communication. You may have a teacher you can barely understand,

and who most certainly cannot understand you. Or else, perhaps, your teacher is one of the 'intellectually stimulating' variety, the kind who answer your every query with the classic generic question: "What do you think?" (Yes, I am afraid to say this sort does, in fact, exist at the LSE.)

I'm not asking for unattainable levels of excellence in teaching; I am quite aware that the Alwyn Youngs of this world cannot possibly teach every single class. However, studying at an institution like the LSE, I do expect, indeed, demand, a certain degree of academic excellence.

There is something almost vilifying about being content with substandard teaching from an establishment that is expected to play host to some of the greatest academics of the world. It is not enough that the LSE has some really good teachers, because these cannot possibly make up for the long list of rather terrible ones.

Teaching at the LSE is meant, at the very least, to push the borders of your understanding, to make you question, analyze and be critical of what you hear and read. Ideally, it is meant to create the future innovators, theorists and Nobel laureates of the world. Coming to grips with facts in a textbook hardly requires a

daily trip to the LSE, long hours of restating information and thousands of pounds into the bargain.

According to William Arthur Ward 'The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires, which is all well and good. Are we really ready to be satisfied with mere mediocrity?' teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires, which is all well and good. Are we really ready to be satisfied with mere mediocrity?

Photo: flickr user markhillary

Chihuahua blues

Alizeh Kohari wants to keep on dreaming

Here at the LSE, we're pretty sure we know. We want to join. Well, most of us do. Some secretly, some proudly and determinedly, wish to unite with the symphony of heels that clack their way towards the City and from thereon, all the way to the bank.

So. We want a Nice Shiny Banking Internship that we can tuck in to the nooks of our elbows (and of our CVs) like a prized Chihuahua that will (so the plan goes) stick its head out during conversation - not too often (that would be crass), but from time to time. We also want the Fringe Benefits that go along with said shiny internship: the sleek Black Suits and the glassy Black Boots, the Hefty Paycheque, and the call from Human Resources at the end of the 10 weeks inviting us to Join The Team. Fair enough, if that's what we want. But - wait, please, for just a second. Pause a little. Think a little.

Why is this what we want? Well, everyone else seems to want it, want it now, and want it ever so badly. That ought to be a good enough reason: after all, other people aren't exactly stupid - are they? And then there's also the prospect of making money, lots and lots of it. Again, fair enough. That watch, that coat, those beautiful beautiful-buckled Manolo

nity makes you feel. This is a troubling thought, for internships are, by their very nature, temporary. So are jobs, for that matter. So are most things, in the terrifyingly grand scheme of things.

Everyone else seems to want it now, and want it ever so badly.

We can choose to stave off metaphysical loneliness - thoughts about our place in the world, and our worth - by crowding our lives with concocted ambitions: the too-fast-to-stop-and-think pursuit of things that we decide, on a whim, to assign importance to. Who is to say, of course, what is important and what is not? No one, no one at all. But recessions will recur and jobs will be lost; Manolo Blahniks will, dare I blaspheme, go out of fashion and when the pursuit of all things material withers away, we will be forced to hold our ambitions up to the light and examine the chinks in the glass.

What is it that we ought to want? To be able, I think, even in the midst of the internship craze, to sprawl on the grass in Lincoln's Inns Fields and watch the clouds pouring into the great bowl of sky above and the ants scurrying about in the tootlicking blades below and to feel little and insignificant and speck-like and yet at the centre of all things - all of this, somehow, and all at the same time.

A ghost of a teacher

Mehek Zafar is searching for an inspiring academic mentor at the LSE

Lady Luck must have slammed her hand rather hard upon your fortune if you can say that your experience of teaching at the LSE has left you with no cause for complaint. If this is the (highly improbable, if not entirely impossible) case, however, then you will strongly disagree when I say that teaching at the LSE tends towards the dire.

Don't get me wrong - I am not one of those enraged campaigners demanding value for money at the LSE, while at the same time insisting that LSE itself become less of a business. Nor am I a particularly bitter second year looking to smear the blame of last years grades on to my teachers. To the contrary, I can frankly admit to having come out of lectures light with the thrill of inspiration, or having sat in the Three Tuns engaged in a somewhat animated conversation with an affable class teacher. Nor am I trying to say that this specific form of luck is hard to come by. What I am saying is that to be assigned a good teacher is just that: a matter of luck!

The problem lies in the fact that the instances of quality teaching at the LSE fail to make up for those occasions where teaching fails abysmally. There is



Photo: flickr user markhillary

Photo: flickr user markhillary

Photo: flickr user markhillary

The final act of a crumbling state

Cameron Paige recalls her childhood under the communist regime

When somewhere at the beginning of September I was asked to co-direct three plays for the Velvet Revolution event being organised by the Language Centre, I agreed because I wanted to try my hand at directing, and because I had nothing better to do at the time. I had just finished my studies, and I wasn't starting a job yet. The previous year, I had caught the drama bug. But I knew nothing of the Velvet Revolution, of how Communism was finally overthrown in Eastern Europe, and of the lasting impact those events have had on literature and music in particular. For all

For all I knew, Communism was. I was born into it. Then one day, it was all over.

I knew, Communism was. I was born into it. Then one day, it was all over.

I was young, and I had just been summarily farmed out to my grandparents by the executive decision of a recently divorced, highly capricious mother. I had too much on my plate to worry about politics. Practically overnight, I was moved to a small town five hundred miles away. I was a city-girl. I was not used to all the curtain-twitching and living on public display. Suddenly, playing truant from school, or skipping church on Sunday was no longer possible. Moreover, the supply of friends was extremely limited, so I could no longer pick and choose. And in the face of my grandmother's steadfastly appalling cuisine, Communism collapsing seemed inconsequential.

"Don't knock it before you've tried it", my Gran used to say. Unfortunately, most often than not, the things I was refusing to try were the things I discovered I didn't

like after all, and with a passion: pork jelly, woolly jumpers, local chocolate. To this day, those things remain in my memory, the only symbols of a childhood under Communism that I haven't yet managed to forget. The jelly was the worst, the famine food, something made out of loathsome

greenbacks as my pocket money. With that, I could go to Western shops and buy imported milk chocolate, or save up for brightly patterned soft cotton tops. I'd wear those to the May Day celebrations, showing off the latest fashions along with the obligatory red flag we'd in advance

pompous man with spectacular moustache, "Isn't he magnificent? He's a great, great man!"

"Looks like a complete buffoon to me," I shrugged. In the first political statement of my life, I judged the book by the cover and, apparently, got it right. But the deed was done. In one fell swoop, a regime ended, and an electrician was put in charge. At the same time, Czechoslovakia was opting for a playwright instead. The world was changing, or so they said, but all that I cared about was whether Captain Kirk would make it back onto Starship Enterprise. Still, two years later, Lech Wałęsa was shaking my hand and I was charmed. I had just won an essay competition about

Two years later, Lech Walesa was shaking my hand and I was charmed.

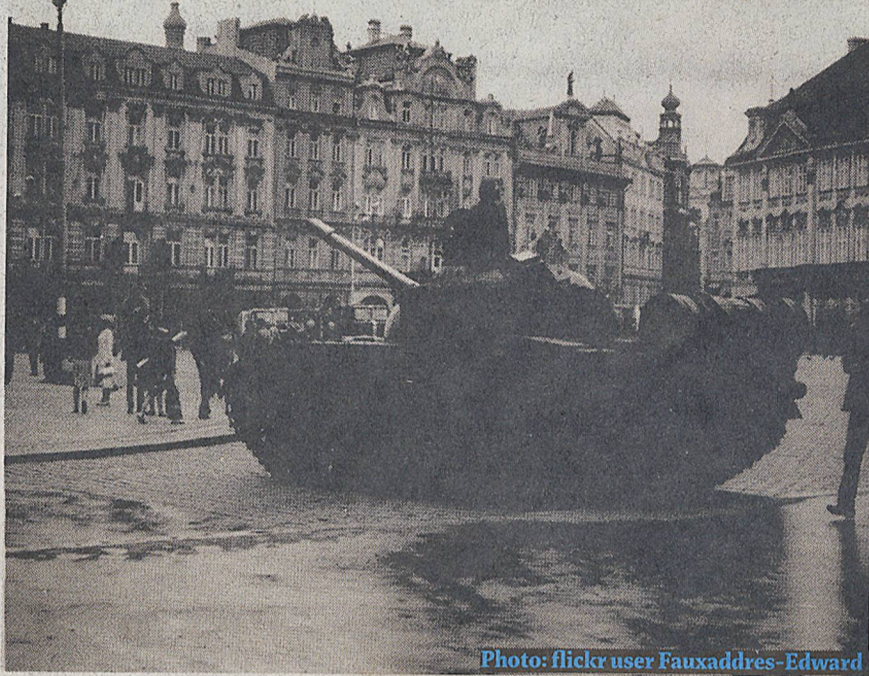


Photo: flickr user Fauxaddres-Edward

nothing: scraps of skin and gristle, leftover boiled vegetables, the translucent slice trembling on my plate in a pool of white vinegar. The jumpers my grandmother thriftily made herself, using coarse homespun wool she'd bought in the market. She had quick fingers and an artistic eye, but her creations itched so much it drove me mad, and I'd take them off as soon as I was out of the door. Finally, there was the chocolate. Or rather, the thin, hard, almost black stuff that would occasionally turn up in shops under that name. I'd tried it once, and spat it right out. I was a thoroughly spoilt child.

My mother worked for the government, so while everybody else queued for the canned peas, she was paid in dollars and would sometimes give me a few

make in class. To me, rallies were fun. There were stalls with folk crafts and I'd always get a clay bird that trilled if one blew into its tail. Between my parents' squalid little domestic quarrel and the incessant political pageantry, I sailed through Communism unawares.

The day it ended, the day our first 'democratic' president was 'elected', I was lying on my belly on my grandmother's Afghan carpet, face propped up in both hands, waiting for the next Star Trek episode to start. Behind me, both my grandparents giddily sat in their chairs, with my grandmother keeping up the commentary. "It's a historic moment!" she gasped over and over again.

"Just look at him, look," she swooned when the screen flickered to a short

the former Yugoslavia and along with about four hundred others was invited to sit for a day in the Youth Parliament and debate on issues affecting the welfare of children worldwide. Afterwards, we were given goodie bags full of local chocolate. The regime might have changed, but the confectionery was still just as bad. It was all rather absurd. Such was life.

Twenty years on, I sit in the armchair in front of the stage in the Shaw Library and do my best to bring Beckett's 'Catastrophe' and a fragment of Stoppard's 'Rock 'N' Roll' – two plays dedicated to Václav Havel, the first democratic president of the Czech Republic – to life. My co-director sweats over 'Largo Desolato', Havel's own variation on the theme. But while the actors throw themselves into what most see as the theatre of the absurd, I taste the familiar air and take a walk down the memory lane. What's absurd to them sounds plausible to me. After all,

while the rest of the world is celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the fall of Communism in the spirit of freedom and brotherly love, in Poland Wałęsa is busy being discredited by historians, refusing to participate in the jubilant back-patting, and threatening to return all his decorations and to leave the country altogether if the accusations continue. Whatever the truth may be, the grandstanding is giving me a headache. I didn't like Polish politics at ten, twenty years on I still feel the same.

Against the backdrop of my own memories, the Velvet Revolution and subsequent developments seem a breath of fresh air, and a cause worthy of celebrating. And the theatre it produced is ambitious, challenging, and insightful. It may look absurd, but then, such was life.

Date: Wednesday 21 October 2009
Time: 6.30-8pm
Venue: Shaw Library, Old Building
Speaker: George Szirtes

An evening event, including a reading by the award-winning Hungarian émigré poet George Szirtes, together with performances of one act plays by Beckett and Havel, will be presented in the Shaw Library. Samuel Beckett, who died in December 1989, served as a key inspiration for Václav Havel during his period as a dissident and political prisoner, and Catastrophe, one of his last plays, which is being presented on this evening, was dedicated to Havel. George Szirtes is a leading British poet (winner of the 2006 T S Eliot Prize) as well as prolific translator of works from his native Hungarian.

Born in Budapest he emigrated to Britain with his family as a child in 1956 as a refugee from the failed uprising against communism. A fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, he was awarded the T S Eliot Prize for his collection Reel in 2005.

This event is free and open to all with no ticket required. Entry is on a first come, first serve basis.

Articles to social@thebeaveronline.co.uk
Advertising to societies@thebeaveronline.co.uk

On an empty stomach

Isabella Hayward calls for the end of world hunger

Whether rushing in between classes, scrambling for change to buy a bacon sandwich in Wright's bar, or impatiently standing in line for stir fry in the 4th floor café at lunch time, it is easy to take food for granted and forget that millions of people do not know where their next meal is coming from. Last Friday (16th October) was World Food Day. The date marks the founding of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and now serves to heighten public awareness about hunger, malnutrition and poverty. This year, World Food Day focuses on 'achieving food security in times of crisis' and it is indeed a time of crisis – for the first time in history more than 1 billion go hungry.

World Food Day also marked the beginning of the LSE SU United Nations Society's cooperation with the World Food Programme (WFP). On Friday, the Society hosted Caroline Hurford, Senior Public Affairs Officer WFP, who gave a personal account of her work with the WFP, and spoke of the development aid coordinated by the organisation and the problems they face.

With the UN Conference on Climate Change COP15 approaching, climate change's effect on the poor ought to be paramount, but the interests of big states tend to get in the way. For 44 years the WFP has helped mitigate the impact of climate change in the developing world, providing protection against erosion, desertification, flood, drought and natural disasters in order to establish food security.

The age of the food surplus is over, however. While there is currently enough food for every man, woman and child on the planet, reserves are depleted and the cost of nourishment remains stubbornly

high in the developing world, pushing even more people into hunger. Why is it that we need to be reminded that hunger is one of the greatest threats to humanity and that for some, a meal is something

Why is it that we need to be reminded that hunger is one the greatest threats to humanity and that for some, a meal is something you might come by every three days?

Why is the issue so often disregarded in the media in favour of announcing sports scores, latest stock rates and celebrity scandals? Those who cannot feed themselves suffer in silence and it is only

when huge natural disasters strike that the naked truth becomes crystal clear.

Food is not just a human right, but is also essential to building a better future for millions. Providing food aid is not just temporary relief from a larger problem – it is a vital first step towards a long-term solution. Without proper nutrition, people with chronic diseases such as HIV/AIDS and Tuberculosis don't stand a chance. If children eat a good meal at school (one of the WFP's prime projects), they are more likely to stay in education; investing in this generation allows them the possibility of changing their countries for the better as adults.

Why has the UN Society decided to work with the WFP? When asked, UN Society President, Tomás Guilherme da Costa, commented: "next year is the revision of the Millennium Goals, of which eradicating poverty and hunger are central aims. As the largest humanitarian organisation, providing food to 100 million people in 80 countries each year, the WFP is a natural partner in raising awareness of these issues."

This week the UN Society, aided by eager ambassadors, will be out in force around the LSE campus raising awareness and funds for the 'UN's frontline agency' in the fight against hunger. They will be promoting the WFP's 'Fill the cup' campaign – featuring the red plastic cup, which is widely used to serve children hot school meals in the developing world. The WFP relies exclusively on voluntary contributions – that's where you come in! It costs WFP just 16p to provide a child with a school meal, demonstrating how little it takes to make an enormous difference.

So before you buy your lunch today, think of all those people who won't be having any!

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So we're...



WWW.PULSE.DJ

A Dummies guide to the Netball Club

Rhi Edwards

Netball Club Captain

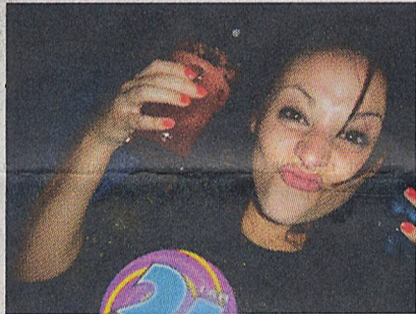
Those of the more attentive readers will have noticed the absence of one of the largest and more ahem prolific clubs from the haloed back pages of the beaver over these past few weeks. ("Can you hear the Netball sing" may be an appropriate chant at this point in time Bacon and co.) Yes, that's right folks LSE Netball Club have been pushed aside- just as Murderer would on the bus to Calella. But fear not as I promise you this is the last and only time this will happen.

The NC spans over 7 teams to cover a wide range of sporting abilities. Our competitive firsts stormed to victory in their BUCS league last season to face promotion this year, the Seconds also look set for a similar feat this season if they are pushed to achieve it.

Our lower teams however are less stressful and the emphasis here is placed on having fun whilst playing, with only one game per week this is the breeding ground for most of our more social members of the club who are the heartbeat of our karaoke representation every Wednesday night. We are of course Rudy and John's favourite club - I wonder why?

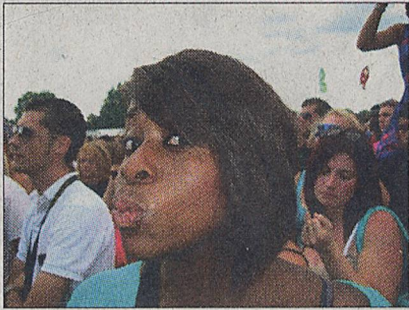
Netball Exec - "The Welsh Triad"

(Yes girls you will be wearing Daffs and Leeks come March 1st)



Club Captain

Rhiannon Edwards. The picture speaks for itself really. Some say she should have entered X-factor. "Not a girl not yet a woman."



Vice Captain and Treasurer

Effy Osoba (not Osmaba) Effy has a large heart and an equally large passion for shaking her booty by the DJ box in Zoo Bar whilst declaring her love our AU Comms Officer. This young lady is in control of the clubs finances and is not to be angered!!



Social Secretary

Megan Protheroe. This girl is "bang-a-lancing" she may not be able to catch but she sure as hell knows how to have a good time on court and off. Her debut in her role at initiations was a great success last Wednesday. Ladies it looks set to be a messy year!

The rest of our Captains....

1st Team - Hannah Davies

Best Known For... her blonde locks and her keen shooting eye.

2nd Team - Charlotte Hacker

Best Known For... being the nicest girl in the club. Officially.

3rd Team - Hanyi Lim

Best Known For...being one of the most efficient captain's ever.

4th Team- Charlie Green

Best Known For... coolly, captaining the most social team in the NC.

5th Team- Katie-Jane Peek

Best Known For...even making a cave girl outfit look fashionable.

6th Team- Charlotte Hubble

Best Known For...her preened and perfect appearance.

7th Team- Anisah Undre and Rupal Thakrar

Best Known For...being the most bubbly duo in the Club (who I didn't see in Zoo Bar last week!)

There it is, the condensed who's who in LSE Netball Club. Yet you will find there are plenty more characters who I've failed to mention this week. Trials have unfortunately already taken place and teams have been chosen but fear not, we urge you to join us every Wednesday night in The Tuns to help assert Netball Dominance! As Jerry Springer would, I'll leave you now with a few pearls of wisdom...If you have any questions or queries give me an email at r.edwards1@lse.ac.uk

10 Netball Commandments

1. Thou shalt dedicate every Wednesday night to the "Netball Cause" in the Tuns and in Zoo Bar
2. Thou shalt liase with the FC and RFC men very very closely
3. Thou shalt not be caught liasing with more than one FC or RFC in Zoo Bar on the same night
4. Thou shalt not betray the Club and hold membership with Women's Hockey, Football or Rugby
5. Thou shalt chant abuse at Women's Hockey, Football or Rugby every Wednesday night
6. Thou shalt sing like an idiot at Karaoke every Wednesday night and enjoy it.
7. Thou shalt be able to play Taps and drink snakebite
8. Thou shalt dress and act like a laaaaaaady
9. Thou shalt come to Calella and become intoxicated for four days straight
10. Thou shalt play netball!

The Whore of Football?

John Russell

The recent controversy over foreign ownership of English football clubs again came to the fore last week with the end of Sulaiman Al-Fahim's catastrophic six-week control of Portsmouth - the shortest tenure in English football history. It was revealed that the UAE-based businessman could not secure the finances to run the club, meaning that the players were left unpaid throughout September, no doubt a contributory factor to a disastrous run of form that has left the club rooted to the bottom of the Premiership. Meanwhile, the day after Al-Fahim was relieved of his controlling stake by another Middle-East businessman, Ali al-Faraj, a further top-flight club, Birmingham, announced a successful takeover by Hong Kong-based businessman Carson Yeung, a move which brings the number of Premier League clubs owned by foreigners to 11.

The furor surrounding the subject of foreign ownership of English clubs predictably aired in the national press, with Ian Winwood of The Mirror calling the Premier League 'the whore of the footballing world', for allowing over half of its clubs to be owned by foreigners. The issue was not just highlighted by tabloid polemic however. The Guardian featured several reports into the murky question of the ownership of Notts County and Leeds, with both clubs controlled by anonymous offshore companies.

This criticism of foreign ownership of Football League clubs is no new thing however. The former England manager Graham Taylor argued in 2008 that it would eventually 'kill the game', whilst the Icelandic financial meltdown of that year which inadvertently nearly bankrupted West Ham gave many commentators their sought-after justification of the folly of relying on outside interests to run an English football club. Chelsea meanwhile, and their billionaire owner Roman Abramovich, have come in for criticism

ever since the Russian tycoon bought the club in 2003, though perhaps it is criticism triggered more by the success of the club in that time than any critique of Abramovich's allegedly shadowy business history in his native country. The issue has attracted such coverage that no less a figure than FIFA President, Sepp Blatter, has expressed his 'alarm' at the influx of foreign ownership in the Premiership.

This situation has therefore been portrayed by the media is one of unrelenting gloom, an inexorable march of faceless foreign entities 'only in it for the money' eating up English football and further alienating a fanbase which already has to endure astronomical ticket prices, over-paid prima-donnas and Rupert Murdoch's SkyTV ruling the roost. This can only translate into the fans who read the papers and listen to the radio. Some Liverpool fan-groups' campaign to 'get the Yanks out!' thus reduced an argument over the competency of the club's American owners George Gillett and Tom Hicks into a jingoistic crusade.

However, critics of foreign ownership rarely point to the success stories in British football. American Randy Lerner's control of Aston Villa has seen the club post successive top-6 finishes and Lerner himself enjoy a level of popularity amongst the fans which was conspicuously lacking towards his English predecessor as owner, Doug Ellis. Meanwhile under the Glazer family, Man United have won three successive titles and the Champions League and whilst detractors argue that the success has been at the price of ballooning ticket and merchandise sales, it should be remembered that the club became an unabashed capitalist enterprise long before the Americans arrived. Furthermore, on the other side of Manchester Abu Dhabi oil money has transformed Man City from perennial also-rans into genuine title contenders.

The argument against the inherent unsuitability of foreign ownership further falls flat when one examines the multitude of bad domestic owners in English football.

Mike Ashley was not too long ago lauded as the owner who unashamedly wore his Newcastle shirt to matches, swilling lager with the fans rather than sitting in the executive box. He is now desperately trying to unload the club after a reign which has seen Newcastle slide into the Championship and go through five managers in two years - including two of the club's heroes, Kevin Keegan and Alan Shearer. Ashley reported in September last year that he would no longer be attending games as he feared for his personal safety and that of his children - so much for being a man of the people and creating a bond between fan and owner. Domestic ownership leading to failed clubs is not just limited to high profile clubs like Newcastle though - the tribulations of the likes of Wrexham, Darlington, Rotherham and Wimbledon prove that we do not need foreign owners to 'kill the game'.

The lesson FIFA, the FA, the Premier League and the Football League need to learn therefore is that competency to run a football club is not determined by nationality. By all means, the flimsy 'fit and proper persons test' should be strengthened to preclude anyone truly unsuitable - but that should include those from home as well as abroad. The massive pouring of wealth into the game, most extravagantly demonstrated at Man City this year, cannot help to create a sustainable future for English football as a whole. However, that is the same whether the influx of wealth comes from selling oil in the Middle East or replica shirts in Wigan. Finally, an owner's foreign nationality, as Randy Lerner has proved at Aston Villa, should not necessarily distance them from the fans. In any case, fans should remember that football clubs, whether domestically owned or not, have long turned away from this myth as a community institution to operate primarily as business ventures. The sooner the media recognise these truths and stop using xenophobia to blacklist any prospective foreign owner, the sooner that the really bad owners, whether from England or abroad, are found out.

Results

Men's Football

UCL 2s 2 v 5 LSE 1s

LSE 2s 0 v 1 RUMs 1s

LSE 3s 0 v 0 Kings 2s

LSE 4s 0 v 0 RUMs 2s

LSE 5s 5 v 0 RUMs 3s

Women's Football

LSE 1-2 Royal Holloway

My journey through the Beaver

As he departs from Beaver Sports, Sam Tempest Keeping talks of moving from the fringe to the forefront

Sam Tempest Keeping
Outgoing Sports Editor

I came into the Beaver, unexpectedly I might add, after I was forced to retake the third year of my undergraduate degree. While this is no uncommon occurrence for members of the AU, my particular case was unusually nuanced. At the time I was dejected at the prospect of facing another year of the school. However, this proved to be the beginning of a journey of self discovery.

My tale begins back in 2005 when I was an unsuspecting fresher more concerned with snakebite, Wright's Bar and casual sex than journalistic endeavor. Like many students, shorn of the home comforts that were so close to my heart, I struggled to adapt to the cold hard reality of living alone.

A series of personal setbacks left me hospitalised in the run up to exams, my heart bearing the signs of strain caused by the up shoot in my responsibilities. Thankfully I made a full recovery and passed the impending assessments but, alas, the mental scars healed slower than the hole in my femoral artery.

To cut a long story short I had to retake my third year after an issue related to my initial hospitalisation presented itself. At this time, AU president Sophie Hunt was in the hot seat here at Beaver Sports along with the current SU Communications Officer Robin Low. Thus the section was a rudderless ship. Determined to give my life fresh meaning I put myself forward as a candidate to replace Hunt, who was struggling to balance her myriad of commitments.

Myself and Low were instantly faced with editorial distrust and censure. Prior to my election we were chastised for claiming the Executive Editor could not dictate the direction of the sports section and the now infamous "smash her in the shower article". A meeting with Generalissimo Aled and Field Marshal Sheldon back in the days when the SU valued editorial independence managed to calm our stormy relationship with the management. But the shackles remained firmly attached.

In those days so many top quality japes were lost. After the Netball 1sts donned fancy dress we were denied the "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles" headline. The "InsideHer" column died quicker than a plant in the new Quad mezzanine garden (pop up there and marvel at what £357.09p can buy you from a garden centre). However it was not all doom and gloom. Right underneath the noses of our straight-edged editorial colleagues we managed to slip "badminton" into the paper on various occasions.

Beaver Sports was not transformed overnight but the signs of improvement were evident for all to see. Anecdotal evidence pointed towards a massive boost in both readership and satisfaction levels. Things were also improving within the office, we had found allies in the form of lovable loser Michael Deas and serial womaniser/parliamentary intern Ali Moussavi.



Riding High: (Above) One of the many times that a fellow editor had to bail out the ungovernably lazy Erik Lang. After Erik failed to get any content for his section, Sam offered to let him take some photos of him skateboarding in order to fill the empty pages. Rob Low (Below, left) co architect of the Beaver sports revolution. (Photos: Erik Lang)

Slowly we were putting the dirty rotten soul back into the most esoteric sports section in the world of student media.

Then Rob left. Thanks mate. For a moment my demons threatened to resurface. Rob and the Beaver had been a stabilising influence in my life at a time when catastrophe and appeared to be a perpetual ailment. The ensuing election was a contest between messrs Pelton and Watson with the former proving victorious in the battle of the blonds. Beaver Sports, and my sanity, were again in safe hands.

Alice brought a new type of tension in the office; of the sexual variety. Like many LSE students the Beaver Ed Board (this does not include de facto Mens Officer Ozzie Filkret) often finds itself in the clutches of unintentional celibacy. The sex starved wordsmiths seized upon the new girl like a pride of lions feasting on a gazelle in the Serengeti. One in particular is still going in for the kill on a regular basis, but to no avail.

Whoever takes over from me will love working with Alice even if she has a penchant for making ridiculous statements when in possession of a group's attention. She is a barrel full of energy and enthusiasm, a trait which can make one smile even when held in the jaws of

deepest melancholy. Ali; I love you and wish you the best of luck for the future.

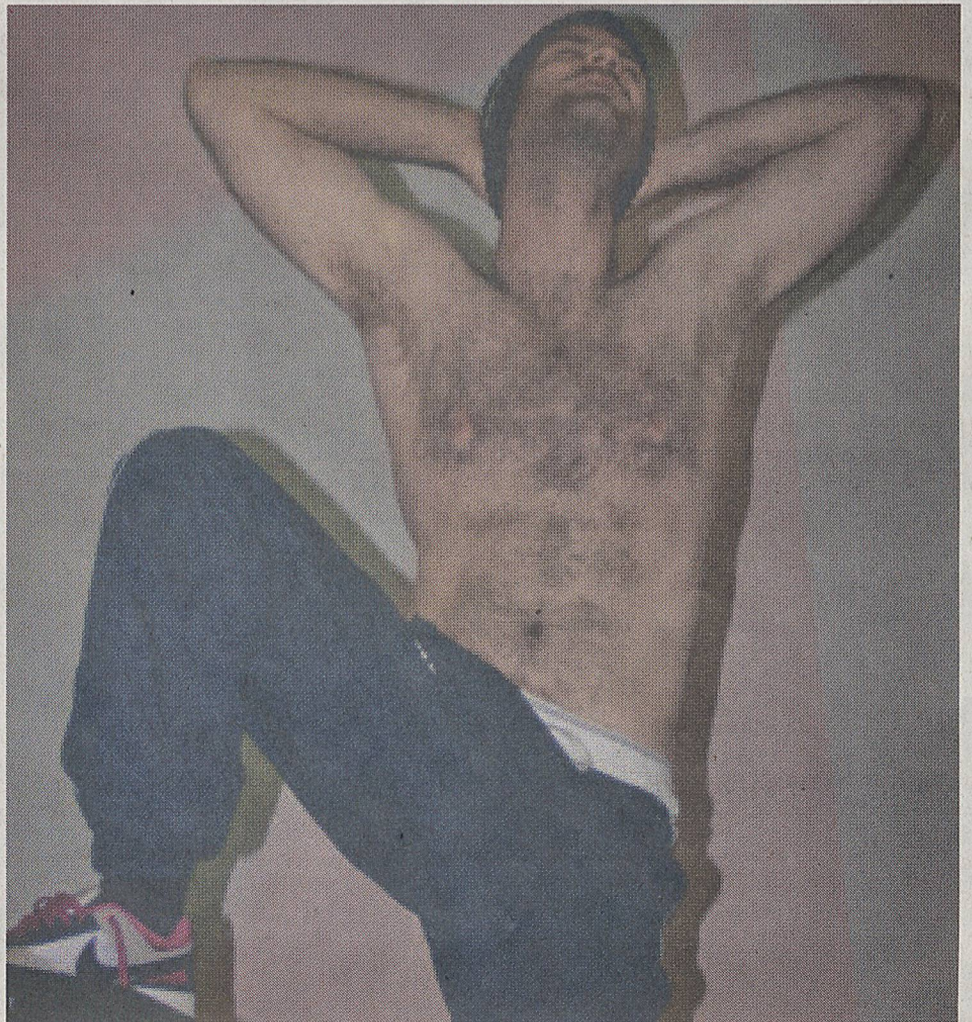
My advice for any fresher reading this is thus: succor thy name is Beaver. I fully appreciate that there is no substitute for the love of a good woman but the paper, as opposed to the pink, Beaver is as close as you can get. The good old days of free meals might be gone yet it does not diminish the magic of Sunday night in E204. I can hear you asking "what about the

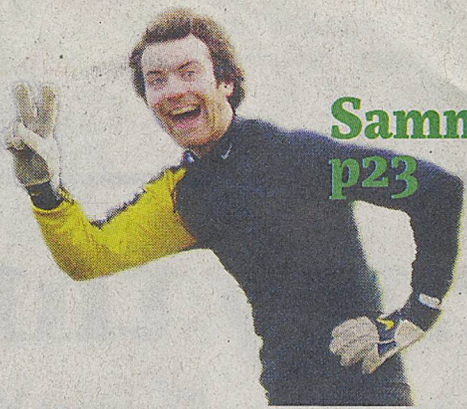
actual sport?" Such a familiar sentiment. The best thing about Beaver Sports in particular, and the AU in general, is that both adopt a holistic approach. Similar to the osteopath who seeks to understand their patient in order to treat their problems, sports at the LSE seems to treat each individual on a case by case basis. Be it social teams for those who are less gifted than others, extra sessions for those with an unflattering desire to succeed or a medium

to abuse anyone and everyone without fear of reprisal, the sporting community really has it all. Through my time as editor I have tried to continue this tradition but if anyone has felt excluded or let down then I can only offer my profuse apologies.

Goodbye Beaver. I hope you are as good to my successor as you have been to me. And to think you would have never seen my face if it hadn't been for a drunken mistake. Again, such a familiar sentiment.

TORSO OF THE WEAK





Prehistoric animals head to the Zoo

Rugby reign supreme in both boat races as the AU's first social event of term makes good behaviour extinct

Alice Pelton
Lonely Sports Editor

'Oh my god, Garry, look at that girl. She's got bruises all over her and...oh my god... look at her legs...their covered in filth.'

This was what I overheard whilst stumbling out of Zoo bar last week; it seems my dirty cave-girl look was so realistic an onlooker had mistaken me for a battered woman. I was battered, but not in that sense.

I knew it was going to be a good night when I walked past the Peacock Theatre at 8.30 to see the hockey girls wrapped in bin-bags, throwing up. 'Ahh only one year left of this...' I thought to myself. Perhaps in 10 years time will eventually designer heels and waste a ridiculous amount of money to go and pretentiously mooch around clubs like Mahiki or Movida. But for now, I'm happy paying a lot less to act like an idiot from the Jurassic Period, in a delirium of Zoo Bar.

Wednesday night started off fairly tamely; the Tuns was infiltrated by hundreds of fake furred, fake tanned girls, who mingled fairly uncomfortably around the suit-clad regulars. Leopard print was everywhere; the poor woman in John Lewis sold out of the stuff. Meanwhile the Quad quickly filled up with all things cave; the AU Exec took to the stage looking fantastic as the Flint-stones, whilst the rugby boys provided much entertainment in their dinosaur costumes.

As is tradition, the 'boat race' kicked it all off; men's rugby reigned supreme. Women's football was sadly left-out of the women's boat race, as a new member of my team struggled singled-handedly to carry 5 pints to the stage in time. I believe women's rugby won this race outright; Bacon's downing skills proving no mean feat for netball and hockey. Soon afterwards the karaoke came out, and everyone embarrassed themselves, whilst Jon and

Rudy, our resident Karaoke DJ maestros were suitably lecherous.

Then it was onto Zoo bar to spend half an hour waiting in a queue for the pleasure of spending 4 hours crammed into a room the size and temperature of a Swedish Sauna. Why do we do it? No one knows, everyone follows the crowd, too drunk to think for themselves. Trying to dance in there is a sheer fight for survival. Predictably the 'chucked-out-of-Zoo-Bar' count for last Wednesday was very high. This tells us two things; the AU was very drunk, and the bouncers were being dick heads. No surprises there then.

One good tip for Zoo bar is when you've had enough, just try and get thrown out on purpose. That way you get a nice escort to the front of the never-ending coat-queue, and a fast track out of this red-bull stained hell hole.

One of my favourite stories of the night is about my dear friend Omer, an old LSE hockey boy, who happened to stumble across the hockey boy's initiations on Houghton Street whilst walking home from a hard days work as an accountant. Apparently he thought he'd just stop and have one drink with the lads 'for old times sake'...3am rolls around and Omer bounds up to me, without his suit, shirt ripped half off 'cos his body's great!', double vodka in hand. He was absolutely loving it.

This wasn't quite as funny as a lovely nameless 2nd year footballer fresher who asked me at the end of the night if 'Mac Donald's was still open' and whether he could 'borrow \$1'. Firstly, it's Burger King love, and secondly, I'm not your mum. But I do hope he got home alright.

The best thing so far this year has been the turnout on Wednesday nights; its undoubtedly the highest and drunkest its been for a few years. This is partly due to the free cocktail jugs that all captains get in Zoo bar. All thanks go to the exec for those, and for organising one of the best welcome parties yet.



Photos: C Glyn & V Satterthwaite



Alice needs a new friend to play with.

Could it be you?

The Beaver is looking for a new **Sport Editor**

Email collective@thebeaveronline.co.uk and editor@thebeaveronline.co.uk by Tuesday if you're interested. Elections take place at 7pm on Thursday in H102.



PART B

20.10.09

ALEX WHITE - PARTB-RANT@THEBEAVERONLINE.CO.UK

3 RANT

GRETH LEWIS - PARTB-LITERATURE@THEBEAVERONLINE.CO.UK

4 LITERATURE

PARTB-VISUALARTS@THEBEAVERONLINE.CO.UK

5 VISUAL ARTS

CALUM YOUNG - PARTB-PHILOSOPHY@THEBEAVERONLINE.CO.UK

6 PHILOSOPHY

JAQUI JAMES - PARTB-FASHION@THEBEAVERONLINE.CO.UK

7 FASHION

8 KEBABJI'S OF LONDON TOWN

LIAM MCLAUGHLIN & CATHY DRUCE - PARTB-MUSIC@THEBEAVERONLINE.CO.UK

10 MUSIC

PARTB-FOOD@THEBEAVERONLINE.CO.UK

12 FOOD

AHMED PEERBUX - PARTB-FILM@THEBEAVERONLINE.CO.UK

13 FILM

ANGELA CHOW - PARTB-TV@THEBEAVERONLINE.CO.UK
NATHAN BRIANT - PARTB-RADIO@THEBEAVERONLINE.CO.UK

14 TV & RADIO

RUBY BUCKLEY - PARTB-SEXANDGENDER@THEBEAVERONLINE.CO.UK

16 SEX & GENDER

EDITORIAL

So. Farewell then Julian.

You gave us many an anonymous centrespread which was usually baffling.

This leaves a gaping hole in partB's soul so write us a letter about a red setter to tell us you're fit to be IT, the head honcho a french poncho.

Or just come to Collective on Thursday 22nd October in H102 at 7pm and do a little dance.

Aú révoíré

Julién Boys & Graeme Birrell

COVER DESIGN BY:

AMIE ROGERS

PARTB-DESIGN@

THEBEAVERONLINE.CO.UK

WATCH THIS SPACE

ALEX WHITE WON'T BE TUNING IN

We have a genuine crisis on our hands, friends. An entire generation of young, upwardly mobile, educated youths with an interest in current affairs has been reduced to the sole conversation topic 'have you seen that episode of South Park where X happens to Y...?'

No. No I bloody haven't. Or maybe I have, and I don't remember. Or maybe I have, and I do remember, but I have better conversation topics hiding up my sleeve than retelling often half-arsed, visually based jokes that everyone's already heard the punch-line to.

I'd hate to be mistaken. South Park is often funny. Or rather, South Park is sometimes funny. South Park is a bit hit and miss: there's a statement we can agree on. For example, only 'I don't trust anything that bleeds for five days and doesn't die' grasps the ludicrous nature of menstruation, in the face of science and history, 1-0, South Park. But vast swathes of it are not nearly as funny as the show has been given credit for.

Did you watch last weeks episode of South Park when the spirit of Michael Jackson possessed the body of a kid and they had to all like, go to a pageant and like, dress him up as a girl cuz that's all he ever wanted in life and stuff? How totally not particularly funny was THAT? The best thing about it was 'chipotlaway'. Just to recap, the single most humorous aspect of a half hour comedy show which enjoys cult status is a pun and a reference to terrible product naming.

To be honest with you, were it not for the fact that it is the single most dropped name in adolescent male conversation, bar maybe Megan Fox, I wouldn't have quite such an issue with South Park: at least it's topical, verging on satirical. Worse still are the dick-heads who ask me, 'have you seen that episode of Family Guy when X happens to Y...?'

Where South Park claws back some points, Family Guy absolutely lets them slip again. The show is not topical, nor is it serial. There is no running plot, so how can it possibly warrant going out of your way to watch each week? Peter fighting with a chicken? Yeah, that jokes not going anywhere is it? It'll

still be funny when I watch it accidentally on TV in eight months time.

On the other hand that joke haltingly described is really not funny. A primarily visual medium, with a long set up and a large amount of slapstick will never be one for the dinner party chat, it simply doesn't translate. To the perpetrators: that really grinds my gears.

"Looking for: other people to quote at. Actual conversation not required. Banter provided, courtesy of Parker and Stone"

What I shall dub the 'havvyawatched' culture isn't simply irksome, but it full on frightens me crapless. South Park has had an enormous, but overlooked cultural impact; the 'Chewbacca defence' used in an early episode has been used subsequently by a number of criminologists, political commentators and forensic scientists, to describe similar

deliberately confusing tactics in legal courts.

This suggests that in the legal offices of an attorney somewhere, a group of well paid professionals are sitting at a consultation table saying, 'did you watch that episode of South Park where they use the Chewbacca defence? Lets totally see if that works'. Not merely that, but the forensic scientists are saying the same thing followed with 'is that what they're doing here?'. Imagine, if you haven't already put the paper down to google the episode, an entire legal system built by our tragicomic generation who think merely in terms of past shows. I envision a terrible courtroom in which a man in a wig stands up and postulates: 'Your Honour, have you watched that episode where my defendant killed him? No? Nobody has? I rest my case'.

Our 'havvyawatched' compatriots are all intelligent, with a good sense of humour, and some grasp of current affairs: a dream singles ad, if you will. Looking for: other people to quote at. Actual conversation not required. Banter provided, courtesy of Parker and Stone. These avid watchers are more than capable of coming up with funnier concepts than 'fish sticks', but our feckless generation provides a network of laziness, so that at least once a week, they can fall back on the bad-taste jokes, and know that someone will laugh along.

If that's what you're looking for sweet-cheeks, just join the bloody AU.



BUNNY'S A PLAYBOY

GARETH LEWIS THINKS THAT IN NICK CAVE'S NEW NOVEL, AVRIL LAVIGNE'S CLITORIS FINALLY GETS THE ATTENTION IT DESERVES

It is proof, if proof was needed, of the dismal anemia of Leona Lewis's music career, that neither her nether nor her loftier-regions have made it into the pages of Nick Cave's second novel, *The Death of Bunny Munroe*. This is a book which speaks openly about Avril Lavigne's 'shiny genitalia' and hails Kylie's 'Spinning Around' as an 'orgiastic paean to buggery'. Considering Leona's first and only mega-hit was so conspicuously about menstruation (consult the lyrics if you think me perfidious here), I'm inclined to think Cave has missed a trick.

If he has, it is the only one. Followers of the gaunt man with the long face and the priapic handlebar moustache will find in this book a gluttonous serving of all his tastiest tropes. But here, the trademark gloom, guilt and desire are permeated with a strange tenderness, an unnerving compassion. The night is darkest just before the day, Cave once crooned. By the end of the novel, it's hard to tell on which side of that terrible threshold we stand.

The eponymous Bunny Munroe is a serial seducer with an alcohol problem and a more or less permanent erection. He sells beauty products door-to-door to lonely, eager women in the Brighton area and finds his *raison d'être* in the lace and lipstick conquests he racks up along the way. At home are his wife, Libby, and their young son, Bunny Jr., a budding polymath who idolizes his dad. When Libby hangs herself in a fit of hope-and-helplessness, brought on by the heady mix of Bunny's crushing lifestyle and her own manic depression, Bunny is left to look after the boy. Perhaps the earliest symptom of Bunny's own evaporating sanity is the calm and muted decision he then takes: to launch into a booze-fuelled road-trip, full of hand-soap, back-scrub and spermatozoa, with Bunny Jr. in the passenger seat.

Cave's invocation of the road as the slipstream to disaster could not have arrived at a more appropriate time. We are currently in the middle of a broader cultural regurgitation that has landed tarmac very much back on our plates and under our noses. Sam Mendes's *Revolutionary Road* sullied our cinemas earlier this year, and a screen version of Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* is due out soon. A 'cultural history of roads' was published by Joe Moran in June, about the same time as an old Burroughs and Kerouac collaboration bubbled up from somewhere (presumably Interzone).

But if Cave has anything to say about the asphalt, it's that the potholes, speed limits and tarred myths aren't really the problem. The

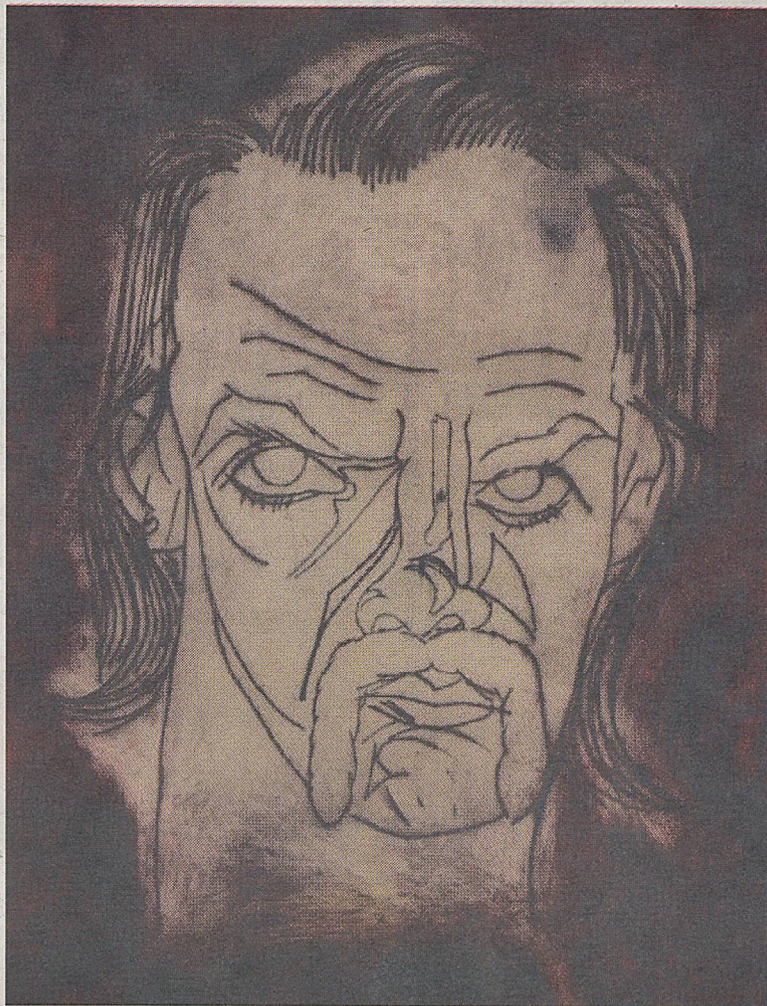
drivers are. At one point, Bunny Jr. 'feels like he's been "hitting the road" for a million years, but realises with a chilly, drizzly feeling that this is only the third day'. That shivered dripping, gloopy as a runny nose, is what happens when the highway dream comes to present-day Hove. Here, the amphetamine of choice is not Benzedrine but candy floss, and the great spin-

In the video, Cave and his band are performing on stage in what seems to be an upmarket strip joint. At one point, the camera pans away and we sink into a long crimson bar with mahogany stools and a dapper, tuxedoed bartender. A lone figure sits with his drink, tall and imposing, sombrely absorbed in a magazine crossword. It's *Will Self*, an old mate of Cave's and a deliciously underappreciated author in his own right. More people have read his *Forewords* than his fiction - Self penned the introduction to Cave's own *Complete Lyrics* in 2007.

In what is perhaps Self's finest novel, *How The Dead Live*, a rancorous lady called Lily Bloom dies an appalling death from cancer. Lily is surprised to find that, far from arriving in Heaven or Hell (or simply not arriving at all), she is instead relocated to *Crouch End*. Woven into this fascinating narrative is the uneasy question of familial connection to the passed, and the past. Once dead, is it really wise to involve yourself in the business of the sentient? What do you do when you bump into your daughter on Woodside Avenue, and she asks why you're not dead after all?

Cave's story is, in no small part, that of a child trying to come to terms with the premature demise of his mother. Bunny Jr. sees and smells her everywhere. The images and apparitions are, for him, deeply comforting. But the boy is too perspicacious, too aware of his father's volatility, to trouble him with the details of his heartache. Unsurprisingly, for Bunny himself, similar visions are guilt-ridden hauntings, spectral horrors that jump-start psychotic episodes of demented violence. Libby's gored countenance stares out through a car window. Her purple, swollen head swivels and creaks about his consciousness. The self-proclaimed Cocksman is slowly sent mad.

Of course, it is the relationship (or absence of such) between father and son that is the true kernel of this bitter love song. For this very reason, it warrants omission in this review - the reader must graft his own experience onto the page. Just as Bunny is doomed to die, it seems our relationships with our fathers are also, somehow, predestined. There's something reckless and haphazard about them, something of the drunk at the wheel. Joyous and tender, cursed and sorrowful, turbulence is part of the ride. This, above all, is what Nick Cave knows. His book spells out the harrowed, fractured angst of this event.



Portrait of Nick Cave, by Danny Wilde

ning lights of Las Vegas are actually the waning filaments of a merry-go-round. Bunny's saturated freewheeling contains little of the esotericism and poetry that Kerouac wound through his interminable narratives. Where *Sal Paradise* and *Dean Moriarty* embraced the open road, renouncing destination and conquering distance, Bunny and his son plough about in uncertain, winding spirals, tearing pages from the A to Z in an area-code assault on wanton Brighton booty. The anxiety, of course - and one Cave takes a certain pleasure in winding down to - is what happens when the list ends?

A clue to some of the thematic and stylistic concerns of this gnarled, affecting *Via Dolorosa* might be found in the music video for his recent single, *More News From Nowhere*.

REFLECTORTION

ANISH KAPOOR SHOCKS AND ASTONISHES SACHA ROBEHMED

Have you happened to walk along Piccadilly of late? Looked into the courtyard of the Royal Academy? Glimpsed a huge sculpture of piled-high metal balls that look like they were stolen from giant Newton's Cradles? If not, then you should. A fitting introduction to the major Anish Kapoor retrospective being held at the Royal Academy, The Tall Tree and the Eye is a sculpture that is, undoubtedly, there. It's obscene and outrageous! Yet, despite the 17th century architectural grandeur of its surroundings, it is somehow not out of place. In fact, you realise as you look at your reflection a hundred times, kind of like through a fly's eyes, it actually works in the space.

In this very concise, well-put together retrospective, the first room begins with Kapoor's early pigment sculptures, bold and striking in their colour and shape. The forms themselves are very precise – yet the scattered pigment on the floor surrounding the sculptures suggests they are emerging, in an organic, almost volcanic way.

In the same room is Kapoor's swollen, pregnant, belly, embedded in a wall. Subtle enough so that it goes unnoticed at first, and yet ultimately obvious, rather like any pregnant belly I suppose. When I Am Pregnant is fantastic. It blurs the boundaries between where the gallery ends and the sculpture begins, merging two as one – just as mother and fetus are bound together. Emerging from the wall, it at the same time is the wall, and is thus only noticeable because of light and the shadows created – subtle perfection.

Yellow, in the next room, is the inverse of this belly. A large yellow receding sculpture built into the wall, it exudes happiness, so in-your-face it is almost blinding and sun-like in its radiance. "This is better than therapy," the couple next to me whispered. And they were right. For if an emotion can be captured, then I think Kapoor has, and this is it.

In complete contrast, the first I saw of Shooting into the Corner was the crowds, and their apprehension. There was clearly something happening beyond the funnel of the doorway. So, moving forwards, we glimpsed the cannon, and then BAM the sound made everyone jump as a shell of red wax was fired at 50 miles an hour at the formerly pristine walls of the Royal Academy. The old, magnificent, carefully crafted room was no match for the red wax, which smashed into the wall and stuck there, gloopy, the oozing old shells merging and

gathering on the floor, the spatters, blood-like, spraying the trajectory of the canon. Violent, vivid, and captivating, we did admittedly walk back at the end of the exhibition, just to see the canon fire again, and muse at what it would be like in December, when even more shells piled up. Inexplicably, it's something you wanted to see again, whilst also realizing that it's also the kind of thing that Alex deLarge would call "real horror-show".



The room of mirrors, Kapoor's Non-Objects was like a rather intense version of the funfair classic. The concave shapes distorted reflections, and played on the space of the room – but what was even more disconcerting was the way in which seemingly flat, normal surfaces were in fact unlike normal mirrors, and so distorted your reflection in some way. Meanwhile the sculptures themselves, reflecting and transgressing space, became non-objects, the images they were distorting constantly changing as people moved through the room.

The next room was filled with writhing concrete sculptures, crowded so that you had to gingerly pick your way around them. These were bizarre initially, inspiring simultaneous reactions of awe and disgust. They

conjured up images of Medusa's hair and excretions. Yet despite these associations, they were actually made by a 3D printer; technology rather than the artist's own hands. The juxtaposition of the precision due to their mechanical creation and the oozing, curling, 'organic' shapes leant the sculptures a certain strangeness.

Apart from the canon, the other highlight of the exhibition, which was striking in terms of scale, was a massive block of wax on runners, the height and width of the doors and very long. Throughout five rooms of the Royal Academy, it moved very slowly on tracks. Svayambh, I felt, really gave the exhibition a sense of continuity and flow that might otherwise have been lacking. It was something that could be seen several times throughout the latter half of the exhibition. Apart from marveling at its vast red waxiness, it was strangely mesmerising to see this thing move from one room to another and emerge through the doorway, fitting perfectly, with the architecture of the doorway imprinting and sculpting the wax. In turn, the sculpture left its own literal mark on the doorway, trailing fragments of excess wax.

The phallic symbolism of the red, snugly-fitting yet emerging sculpture was subtle but noticeable, particularly when seen alongside the rotund, protruding sculpture Hive. Sex and art seamlessly collude in a giant mass that seems made of the sort of worn, weathered metal that could be pulled off of an old ship and bolted together. At the other side of the sculpture however, you see the inverse – the hole that the sculpture disappears into, a bleak darkness.

Slug, however is without a doubt the most sexually explicit of this collection of work. A shiny marble-like tube that seems suspended from the air curves sensuously, reminiscent of a musical instrument – a tuba perhaps. Suddenly, the pale twisting tube becomes this deep, wide, glittering red gash...and well, the obvious comparisons to female anatomy you can make for yourself. I think even the exhibition programme mentions 'vulva'. It was so unexpected it left me giggling. A fitting end to an exhibit that questioned the sculptor's role, manipulated space, and was alternately subtle and violent and crude.

Anish Kapoor at the Royal Academy is £8 for students and is on until 11th December.

Self-Service Health Service

CALUM YOUNG NEEDS IMPROVEMENT

Friedrich Nietzsche called it 'The will to power', Aristotle termed it 'Eudaimonia' and Socratic descendents know it simply as 'the considered life'. In a time before How to Make Friends and Influence People serious thinkers thought about the subject of self-help, and how we could improve our lives. Not many philosophers were able to come to conclusive answers on well-being; fewer still were able to put doctrine into practice when it came to their own affairs. The truth that those seeking happiness never seem to find it has been granted innumerable examples by the field of philosophy. Nietzsche himself, lost the love of his life in early age, spent most of his time alone and purposefully contracted syphilis during the only sexual encounter of his existence. But if Philosophy does little more than open the debate about self-improvement, it still serves a purpose. And it wouldn't be the first time the discipline asked questions without providing concrete answers.

In the quest for personal development it may be best to look to someone, who on the face of it at least, did achieve well-being and social acceptance. Marcus Aurelius Antoninus (AD 121-80) was unusually both a Philosopher and a Roman emperor, two tasks which he completed successfully throughout the course of his life. Whilst campaigning on the Empire's northern border Aurelius noted down his choicest thoughts in book which came to be known as *The Meditations*. Aurelius thought that that the human existence was one great organic order; and thus prized community and the collective. He held that the individual could only be happy and flourishing when the community he was part of was happy and flourishing. The community's interest should neither out-weigh the individual nor should the individual out-weigh the community, because as Aurelius saw it, the two were mutually dependent. A useful metaphor here is the human body, when any part of it is diseased or unwell, the entirety of the individual is considered ill. Similarly within a society if the individual isn't enjoying well-being the society

itself is failing. In short, the path to improvement lies in community.

In practice this viewpoint means finding meaning in something greater than yourself. As a means to self development it necessitates volunteering within the community or engaging in some form of public service. Alternatively it might mean spending more time with friends and family rather than alone. There can be little doubt that going for a drink or having dinner out with friends helps nourish the soul. Solace is also often found in sharing problems with friends or rejoicing in our common experiences. Alternatively falling in love can also bring a new element into our lives and encourage us to try new things. When we broaden our existence we also usually better it.

Another source of advice on self-improvement during the ancient period was Plato, who developed his view on the correct way to live in *The Symposium*. Plato felt that man's

character could sharply be divided between two aspects, reason and the appetites. Accordingly each individual's well-being could be improved if reason could come to master the sensuous pleasures and bodily appetites which govern our most basic urges. Through ignoring our short term wants and engaging our critical faculties Plato argued we would enjoy a life of inner balance and moderation, which would ultimately prove more fulfilling. Plato's enthusiasm for restraint was also exhibited famously when he argued true love should express itself intellectually rather than physically – which is where the term Platonic love comes from.

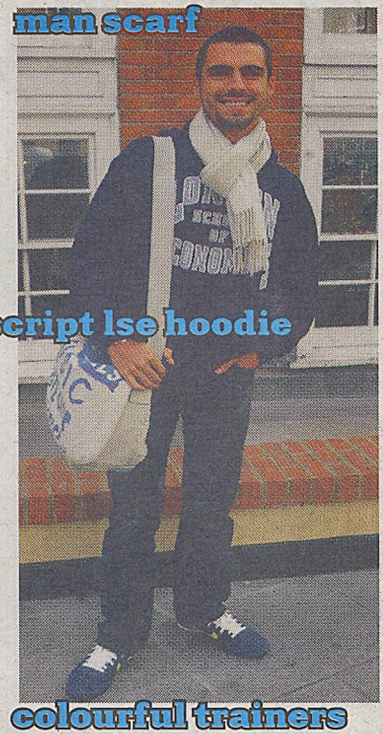
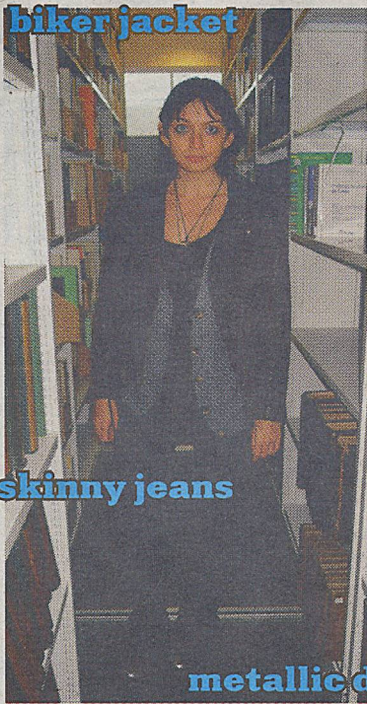
In contrast Nietzsche thought that individual self-improvement was best brought about by neglecting society and the laws that it imposes entirely. Nietzsche held that self-development essentially meant achieving greatness and rising above other humans within society. Thus he postulated that it did the individual no good to be bound by moral laws. In his book *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche advocated human existence without any morals as they only constrained the individual's ambitions. According to this view in order to develop the self, man ought to do whatever is necessary regardless of the harmful repercussions for others within society. Such was Nietzsche's belief in greatness, that the individual's awareness of truth ought also to be subordinated to it. For example, the path to political greatness might involve outstanding oratorical ability, which the individual may not have. Nietzsche would argue that rather than admitting this fact to himself the individual would do better to deny himself such truth that he might be more likely to achieve political success and greatness.

Ultimately self improvement takes time and hard work. It remains highly questionable whether reading a book or absorbing an intellectual argument can really change your life. Indeed, the business of philosophy is to find truth whatever it may be, whilst the job of the therapist is merely to find the parts of truth which concern happiness and thus energise people's lives. The truth may be that however much time we spend at the gym, or however much time we devote to honing our nature, a certain amount of self dissatisfaction may be ineradicable.

LSE STYLE

ADETOUN & JACQUI GO TRENDSPOTTING

The LSE is famous for its vibrant international community, encompassing different cultures, religions, political opinions and more. To celebrate this diversity, we have taken it upon ourselves to go into the student community to find out what LSE fashion is all about. Uncharted territory it may be, but in the same questioning tone of our school motto 'To understand the causes of Things' we have attempted to recognise an often unrecognised aspect of LSE life. After conducting this intensive, extensive AND incredibly productive piece of research, our conclusion is that fashion at the LSE rocks! Here are some of the trends we have spotted:



Kebabjis of

Arşenal Şupër Këbâb,

Bläckstöck röäd.

Possibly the best named kebab shop in North London. Unfortunately went out of business three weeks ago and is now called The Sunlight

Beirut Express, Edgware Röäd

Great atmosphere, awesome freshly squeezed juices and a mouth-watering selection of meat and humous based plates. If you want to die eating, this is the way to go.

The one op- posiitë Waitröşë in Bâtham....

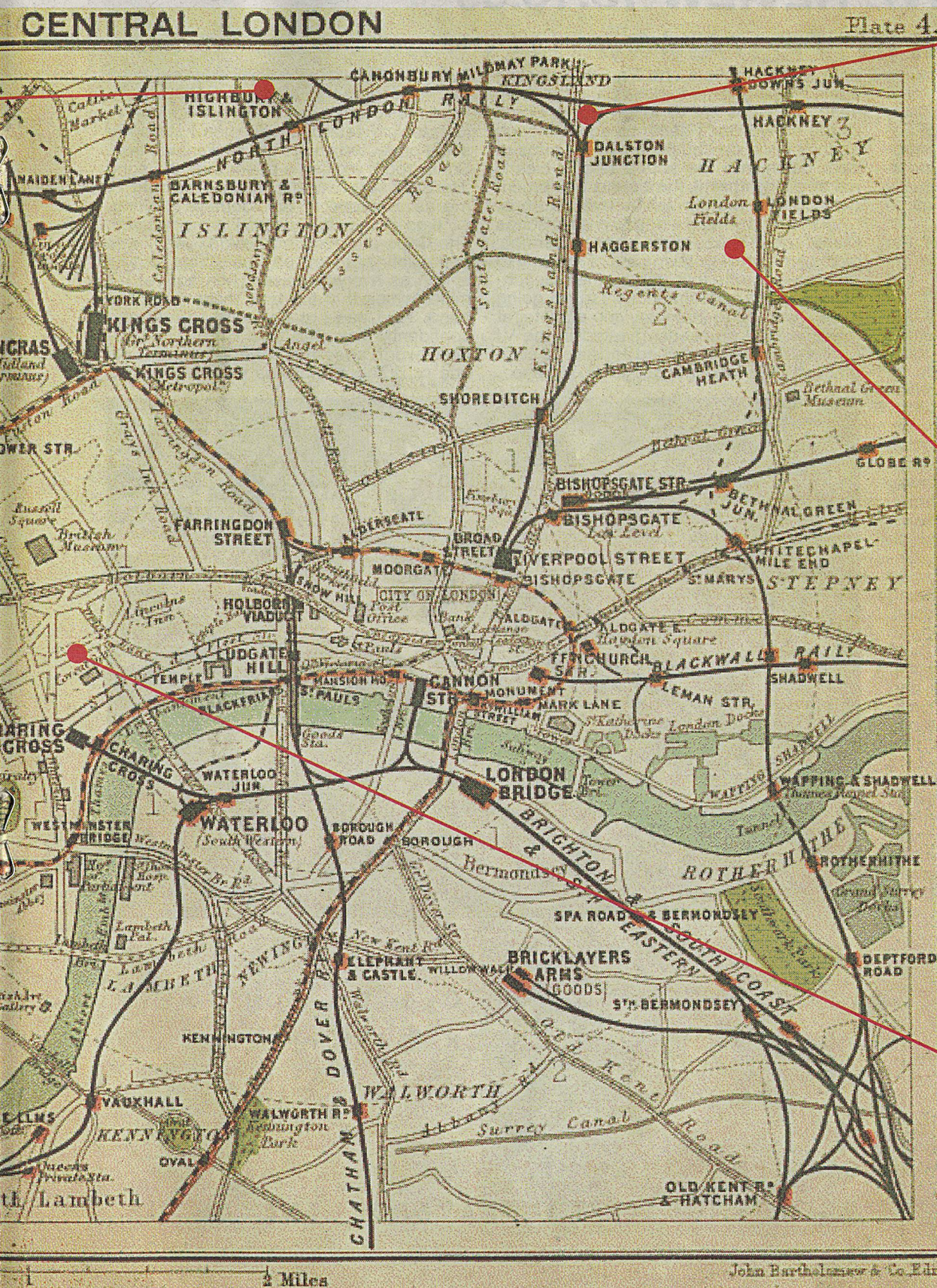
Probably the best chicken kebab I've ever tasted along with the spicy sausage and aubergine dip. Friendly staff and a cosy setting make this one a winner, not to mention the minuscule prices.

Pocket Atlas of London

MAP OF



London Town



The Ali Babā
on Northern
end of King-
sland Road.

These men understand
the intricacies of hum-
mus and chips, filling pit-
tas with them and serv-
ing with a delicate salad.
Fahkin exquisite mate.

Anatolia, Mārē
Street, Hackney

The best kebab shop in
London. The portions are
insanely large and in-
credibly cheap consider-
ing you're getting freshly
grilled meat and home-
made bread each time.
Forget that this place
is on 'murder mile' and
you'll be fine.

The one half-
way up Old
Compton Street

Amazing wraps and a
reasonable price for the
centre of London. Just
make sure you don't
eat in or you'll get over-
charged.

MUSIC

THE CRIBS LIVE REVIEW 15.10.09

LIAM MCLAUGHLIN FEELS AWKWARD

I'm an outsider at this gig. By chance I managed to nab a free ticket for it from a generous friend and now I am standing outside the Kentish Town Forum gazing around sheepishly. I probably look like a tout. Feeling more underdressed by the minute my friend eventually arrives and we go into the venue to catch the last song of one of the support acts.

It'd probably be helpful to mention that the only reason I know who The Cribs are is because frontman Ryan Jarman and new arrival Johnny Marr appeared on Something For The Weekend on BBC2 a few weeks ago. I thought Jarman seemed like a cool guy and the single was good. But now, standing amid thousands of people wearing skinny jeans and check shirts, I feel a million miles from my comfy sofa and Sunday morning TV's gentle lilt.

I hide my joy when opener 'We Were Aborted' rings out because it's off their new album and I don't feel like giving away my bandwagon ignorance just yet. Thankfully The Cribs seem to share the same disdain for the 'scene' as I do, exemplified by their song 'Hey Scenesters!'. Unfortunately the irony is lost on the crowd who shout along; fists pumping, jumping around ecstatically. I watch, confused.

I seem to always unwittingly walk into situations where I see humanity at its most despicable. For example somehow I find myself standing next to Kate Nash for part of the gig. Her face is smeared with glittery make-up and she is screaming along to the songs smugly. I later learnt that she is going out with Ryan Jarman which sort of explains her self-conscious idiocy.

Despite this, the gig continues as new material mixes with ecstatically greeted 'old school' stuff. Whilst I don't like everything they play, I really think The Cribs can write a good tune when they want to. And they're a good live band. They work the crowd up into a euphoric mess of straightened hair and

tight leather jackets and I get that feeling again niggling at me to put a band together. Yeah The Cribs are definitely good. Some of the crowd don't seem to agree though as they insist on chucking half-full cups of beer down into the sound booth, clearly not realising that if the sound equipment gets broken, the gig will be over. Morons.

As I bob my head along to a lot of songs I simply don't know, prima-donna art school girlies arrogantly push me out of the way to go for a cigarette followed by their bleach-blond haired acquaintances. I'm not going to lie, I wanted to throw my cup of water at them as they drunkenly gyrated in the V.I fucking P section and cried and kissed each other as their favourite songs were played.

I've never been to a gig like this and it got me thinking about whether I listen to awkward music because I like it, or because I'm just socially retarded. But then I suddenly see a projected image of Lee Ranaldo from Sonic Youth reciting a poem over the song 'Be Safe'. My world collapses in front of me as everyone in the room yells along.

I go home in a daze. I am confused. The Cribs are good but I didn't feel I was appreciating them on the same wavelength as everyone else. Then again I remind myself that the fans maketh not the band. So I can put my mind to rest and confidently say that The Cribs are definitely worth checking out and are certainly one of Britain's finest bands around now.



EVENTS/GIGS

ETHNOMUSICOLOGY

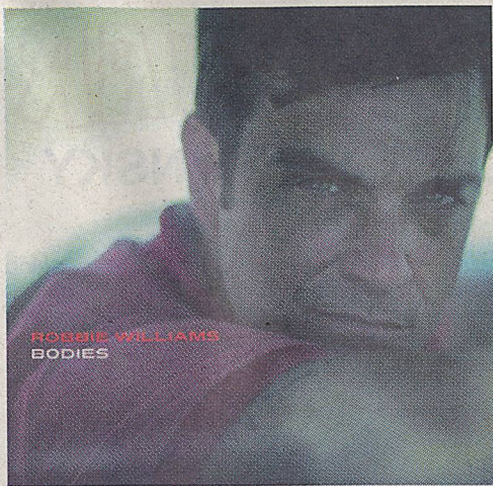
Don't forget, next Thursday ETHNOMUSICOLOGY, the anthropology soc.'s world music event comes to the LSE's underground bar.

£3 for anthro.soc members, £4 otherwise. Tickets on sale next week on Houghton st.

WE CAN GET YOU INTO GIGS FOR FREE.
YOU CAN PAY US BACK BY WRITING A
REVIEW.

GET IN TOUCH.

PARTB-MUSIC@THEBEAVERONLINE.CO.UK



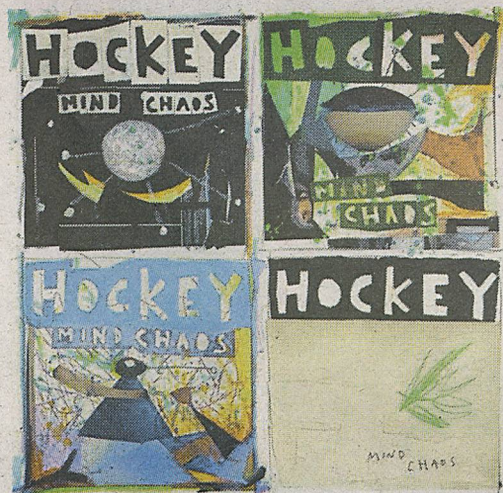
ROBBIE WILLIAMS-BODIES - BY GEORGINA BUTLER

So, Robbie Williams makes his comeback on X Factor and releases his new single 'Bodies'. As a nation we do have a tendency to love the underdog; to want people to fail so that we can commiserate them and perhaps feel better about ourselves. I am fully aware that there is this danger with Robbie Williams. He has been out of the spotlight for so long while the boys from Take That have been storming up the charts with their new-found success and so a solo single from Williams was only ever going to receive mixed-reviews.

Nonetheless, as far as I am concerned, Robbie's new single has all the ingredients for a top pop tune, with just enough grit to keep it truly Rock DJ. Chris Moyles, after the first airing of the single on radio, claimed that this Robbie track was likely to be a 'grower' - the more you hear it, the more you like it - but after having heard it only a couple of times, it's an immediate hit for me.

HOCKEY- MIND CHAOS

This particular brand of jangly electronic pop is hard to actively dislike. But haven't we heard it all before? The electronic beat and fun little tunes are pretty catchy, but I don't understand what all the superfluous fuss around this band is about.



REVIEWS

Robbie has embraced his religious side with monk-like chanting and lyrics that state "Jesus really died for me" over an electro-beat but who really needs to dissect the lyrics of a pop song? If you do you will only be disappointed; there is no insightful message to be conveyed beyond "all we ever wanted was to look good naked" (hear that Gok Wan? - you were right!).

A winning bridge with typically "Robbie" rhymes ("Bodies in the body tree, Bodies making chemistry, Bodies on my family, Bodies in the way I mean, Bodies in the cemetery, And that's the way it's got to be") provides a massive build up to the chorus and creates a song that is easy to listen to and tirelessly catchy.

An upbeat number that will brighten your mood on a typically downtrodden, wet and windy autumnal day; 'Bodies' is a confident, dignified comeback single with all of the cheekiness and entertainment that you would expect from Williams.

THE TEMPER TRAP- CONDITIONS

Strong rhythms, prominent guitars and original vocals. 'Sweet Disposition' is a great song. Some of the rest of this album strays from the atmospheric echoey sounds of that track, to more poppy slightly outdated ones. Shame.



THE SATURDAYS- WORD-SHAKER

It's been one hell of a dark week for pop music. Not only did Stephen Gately, boy band hero sadly die just last week, but apparently tragic girl group "The Saturdays" have somehow managed to release a second whole album of mind numbingly awful pop into our lives.

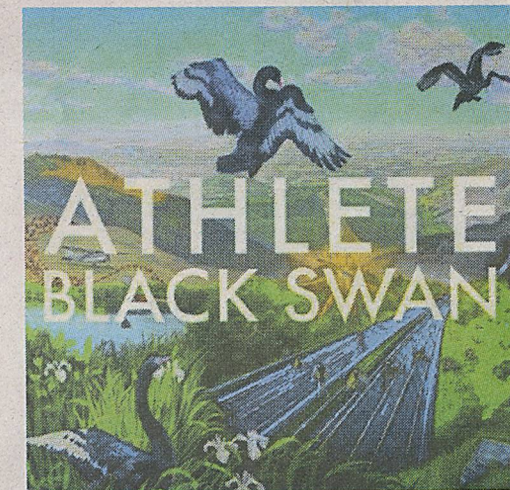
I wasn't sure if it could get much worse for The Saturdays, whose first album "Chasing Lights" saw them soullessly murder Depeche Mode's 'Just Can't Get Enough' in the name of needy children everywhere; but rest assured, the best (should that be worst?) is still to come in their new album "Wordshaker" which is almost as unbearably bad.

I won't say much more, you can see for yourselves soon; I'm sure new offence 'Forever Is Over' will be all over Radio1's daytime scheduling like white on rice in a few days. I warn you.

It represents not only a misunderstanding of the word "forever" but also of the term "music".

ATHLETE- BLACK SWAN

2004's "Vehicles and Animals" was mediocre pop/rock at best. Four achingly dull background-music filled albums later they sound even bleaker. "Black Swan" sounds like it already belongs in some desolate super-market's bargain bin.



ALL IS FAIR IN OVEN WAR

THE DISASTROUS CULINARY EXPLOISTS OF **LUKE SMOLINSKY**

Cooking. It's hard work, innit? I don't have a problem with cooking. I just can't chop, peel or open a tin.

Making food for yourself: who ever thought it'd be so difficult?! You think it'd be a hell of a lot easier for an activity designed to sustain life. If you ask me, the Lord was jolly silly making this basic activity so tricky. I mean, how are we meant to solve world hunger if it takes five minutes to open a tin of tomatoes? Africa's screwed.

You know what's the most difficult? Chopping onions. Onions were clearly not designed to be eaten. You have to hack into them while they slip all over the surfaces, unravelling themselves of their own accord - what's more - blinded by tears streaming down your face. Trying to cut into them is like doing a Bushtucker Trial in the Underworld. Onions are, essentially, the devil's testicles. They're slippery, unsavoury, and you can't make an incision of any kind without the forces of evil beckoning tears from thine eyes. What more proof do you need? They're Beelzebub's bollocks!

If chopping is hard, opening a tin is even harder. It turns out, by the way, that I had the tin-opener the wrong way round on this particular occasion. (I wasn't holding the cutting part - I'm not a complete moron.) But in any case, the bolognese was on the boil and I had no way of getting into this tin. So I decided that, to get this meal cooked, I needed help. No - I didn't ring the fire brigade. I decided to knock on the doors of my neighbours. Bearing in mind

I'd never met any of them, this was pretty daring, considering their first impression of me would be an unshaven man with a tin in his hands. But desperation had set in. And when that happens, I am liable to do anything.

Flat 1A. Knock, knock. No reply. Flat 2. I knock again. Nothing... I reach Flat 6. Exhausted. Knock, knock. Bloody nothing. I descend five flights of stairs with the tin tightly sealed. Before retiring to eat Alpen, I decided to give Flat 1A another go. Bingo! They're in! They could've answered the first time, but not to worry, 'cos I've found my man! This saviour of an apathetic student! "Alright mate?" For some reason, I turn up the posh dial to number 11: "Hello! Terribly sorry, but I can't quite open this tin of tomatoes! Do you mind awfully if I...?" He lets me in. I'm not sure why I turned unnecessarily posher there. Maybe because he was wearing a hoodie? In any case, he noticed that I was the chap with the 'Indian chicks' (he qualified it by saying 'Indian-looking chicks' so I disregarded the marginal racism) and he lent me his new spangly tin-opener. Success! I love this guy! What he thinks of me is another matter...

I would say that opening a tin without a tin-opener is probably trickier. You see, earlier in the week, we didn't have one. And I kept forgetting that we didn't have one. Leading to me having to apply five plasters to my thumb. Here's how: I was about to cook sausage and beans. What I actually cooked was burnt onions, underdone sausages, tomatoes and a hell of a lot of blood. It's a lot harder than it sounds; it was a Gor-

don Ramsay 'Fast Foods' recipe, meaning you have to make the sauce yourself. I've got a better idea for a 'Fast Foods' recipe, Gordon: buy the sausage and beans. Done.

So the bad news is that it's not fast food at all: it took me forty-five minutes. The good news is that, admittedly, I did start speaking like Gordon Ramsay (that was the part where blood was spurting all over the kitchen worktops). The problem was, how do you get into a tin, without a tin-opener? My utensil of choice was: a kitchen knife. I was merrily stabbing away, before shortly realising that I had bought a peeled tomatoes, not chopped tomatoes (when I tried to return the tins to Sainsbury's the next day, the woman refused to refund me, insisting I was trying to make a 2p profit. On four tins.) The ultimatum now was, how do I make a large enough hole in the tin? My preferred utensil of choice was: my thumb. It was at this point that I added an extra ingredient to Gordon Ramsay's meal: B-positive blood.

How did I get to the stage in my life where I could solve a differential equation but couldn't open some Sainsbury's Basics Tinned Tomatoes? Surely something's gone wrong somewhere. I find comfort in what Emil Nolde said: "Clever people master life; the wise illuminate it and create fresh difficulties." That's true, but I'm sure you never saw Solomon cut half his thumb into the tomato sauce.



up to scratch

JONATHAN STOREY REVIEWS UP



Cert: U
Runtime: 95 mins
Directors: Pete Docter
Cast: Edward Asner, Christopher Plummer

After seeing the greatness that was *WALL-E* last year, many people (myself included) thought that Pixar simply couldn't top themselves. Through the power of animation, and without having to resort to cheap tricks and gimmicks to lure punters in, the Emeryville-based production company created a futuristic world akin to the cinematic greats. Pixar simply couldn't beat this pinnacle of cinema they'd created...

...and they haven't: at least not yet. *Up* is an extremely good film, perhaps the best released this year so far, but fails to meet the extraordinarily giddy heights established by its predecessor. Never producing any 'Wow!' moments and becoming the victim of adventure film clichés, *Up* remains stranded in the 'very good' category of Pixar films.

Up tells the tale of recently widowed Carl Fredricksen (voiced by Edward Asner) and his childhood dream of moving his house to the jungle of Paradise Falls in South America. After a tussle with a construction worker over a broken mailbox, the

court orders Carl to move into a retirement home. Carl then proceeds to do what any other 80-year-old ex-balloon vendor would do: tie tens of thousands of helium balloons to his house and fly to South America! This scene produces easily the most striking images in the film. Seeing it in trailers however does take out the wow factor that it should have received on the big screen. If you're reading this without somehow seeing the blitz of *Up* advertising, you're very lucky indeed.

The problems soon start for Carl when he realises he has a stowaway in the form of Russell (newcomer Jordan Nagai), a Wilderness Explorer trying to earn his final merit badge for "Assisting the Elderly". Upon their eventual arrival in South America, more crazy antics ensue when the pair meet Dug (Pixar animator Bob Peterson), a talking dog obsessed with squirrels (Bob Peterson) and Kevin, a flightless (and female) exotic bird. It's in these characters where the film really shines.

Where the film falls slightly flat is in the final act, where an inevitable chase sequence has to occur in order to get a satisfying ending. It's done extremely well, and in any other film would be considered a triumph. However, in the tremendously original *Up*, the final act holds the film back from being considered a classic.

Still, *Up* is still an extraordinary effort from an extraordinary film studio. Come February next year, the folks at Pixar will surely have another Oscar on their very hefty awards cabinet for their latest effort.

lame

GEORGINA BUTLER ON THE FAME REMAKE



Cert: PG
Runtime: 107 mins
Directors: Kevin Tancharoen
Cast: Asher Book, Kristy Flores, Paul Iacono

"I wanna live forever, I wanna learn how to fly" - "remember" this? The remake of the classic 1980s film *Fame* follows the trials and tribulations of a new influx of students at the NYC High School of Performing Arts, and promises to deliver a slick, remixed adaptation of the original - but sadly disappoints.

The gritty script devised by Christopher Gore for the original - gaining him an Oscar nomination - is all but gone; all that remains is the shell of a once gutsy plot. The temporal action of the original is mirrored in the 2009 remake, opening with the tough audition stage, and then taking us from freshman year through to graduation. Beyond this, however, *Fame* offers little in the way of true substance and only delivers the mainstream reality-tv drivel that 'the suits' know sells.

Fans of the 80's version will remember

watching the angst-ridden years of growing up within the high-pressure confines of a performing arts school. The film tackled serious issues head-on; among them illiteracy, homophobia, interracial romance, a domineering stage mother, drugs, abortion and suicide. These issues are more than relevant now - yet the remake glosses over the importance of a powerful script and lacks any sense of change or progress as the characters advance through the school.

The little-known actors in the leading student roles portray characters that are vacuous and not particularly talented. Rather than inspiring a new generation of audiences with ambition to succeed at their chosen art form - sweating blood and tears to get to the top purely for the satisfaction of knowing that their hard work is paying off and they will be able to support themselves doing what they love - the students whinge and warble their way through a film that misses the mark.

Kherington Payne, the dance student, is the greatest talent here, contributing the best performances to the film. It's a shame however that the dance sequences don't embrace ballet and traditional theatrical styles. Instead a raunchy style (albeit a

cleaned-up version) we have grown used to in music videos is quite literally thrust upon us.

Newcomer Naturi Naughton is also a talent to watch out for - her hands glide effortlessly over the keys of a piano when she is under the guise of a classical pianist. Then, give her a microphone and she belts out the songs with the best of them. Despite this, the performance still feels a bit too Disney - a bit too clean, polished and "American Idol".

With not a legwarmer in sight and the language and content carefully monitored, the end product feels soulless. The new-fangled *Fame* will appeal to uninformed pre-teens who dream of going to a performing arts school, after having grown up on a habitual diet of reality television talent shows. Anyone who remembers the original *Fame* or has a passion for performance and an understanding of the devotion and hard work that goes into the performing arts is likely to be disappointed. Another "High School Musical" we did not need - but it would appear that that's what we have got.

A DIFFERENT KIND OF COMEDY

AARON GAMMALLIERE REMEMBERS BEING AN INBETWEENER

America; home to the world's biggest porn industry, the death penalty, and Richard Pryor. Even their politicians have filthy names: (Big)Dick Cheney, George (Lady-Garden)Bush, (Nice)rack Obama, the list goes on. Yet, given the porn, the killing, jokes about being black, and funny names, America's mainstream television is, broadly speaking, pretty tame. Sure, Saturday Night Live has its whining moments, and even the VMAs has proven that American telly can be, at a push, pretty below the belt and painful when it wants to be. However, for me, America has always failed to deliver where British telly will always excel, and that's in, well, lewd comedy. Yank shows simply don't satisfy the smut-hungry and tasteless infant that many of us, including me, have deep inside. It seems that, despite US culture being the dominant force in western lifestyles, particularly for teenagers and (I type this with repressed rage) 'young adults', America has failed to produce a fresh, original, and most importantly, funny sitcom aimed specifically to younger audiences. Sure American Pie 1 (I must stress only the first film) had some cringe-inducing and genuinely hilarious moments, but the fact that this didn't successfully resonate in either film or television shows that something is lacking in the American water. Luckily for us, however, I found the remedy to the drought of decent US teenage comedy, and it lies in E4's 'The Inbetweeners'.

I first stumbled across The Inbetweeners by accident, at about 1 in the morning, on E4, some time ago. There I was, bored, a bit tired, sort of hungry, all the while watching four losers try to woo girls with some battered old car. For those of you not in the loop, the show revolves around

four 17 year olds at an English suburban comprehensive school. They consist of Neil (lanky dope) Jay (obscene, vulgar, predatorial sex-maniac) Simon (nice-guy-who-finishes-last hopeless romantic) and the show's narrator, Will (posh boy who carries a briefcase to school and simply doesn't belong around commoners). The premise of the show is beautifully simple; each episode follows the gang's attempts at getting served at pubs, juggling school life, and getting laid. So far, so predictable, you might think. The familiarities of the show, however, end there.

First, to the characters themselves. What made the show, initially, so appealing to me, was the fraternity that the four losers have. The banter about boning the others mum in her bed last night, or the familiar exchange about being gay, are all common ground between the friends, but the believability of the characters themselves, and their particular traits, spurs me to make comparisons to my own teenage years, which is scarily close to what is depicted in the show. The show allows one to laugh at the sheer squareness of Will, for example, and still empathise with his plights, and root for the specy geek to finally lose it with Charlotte 'big tits'. The multi-faceted characters seem a world away from the one-lined and flat creations that plague a majority of shows, and so creates a plausible commentary of male teenage life.

Whereas past teenage comedies, be they British or American, rely upon cheap gags, falling over and flailing limbs around mindlessly (Fresh Price, I'm looking in your direction) with often stupid scenarios that depend on the humour spurring from the plot's sheer absurdity, The Inbetweeners rips up the doodled rule book of pubescent humour, and starts from the beginning, and what separates the show from the

fall under the rather broad 'alternative' umbrella is in its script. Don't be fooled, sex, getting laid, and losing your V are all on the list, but the script itself, and its impeccable delivery, elevates it from the depths of smut it so carefully traverses across, to the heights that make it a comedy heavyweight that gives Peep Show a run for its money. Never shying from the brutally harsh and unfair onslaught of secondary-school public opinion, the script beautifully captures the horrible reality of being the one who doesn't fit in (at this point, I try to repress dormant memories). The girls calling you a virgin or a freak, the boys constantly calling you a prick or a knob, and the younger kids knowing your just an easy target, to which the Inbetweeners' rebuttal goes nowhere beyond 'what was that about?', perfectly capturing the helplessness and confusion of the characters. In addition, the genuinely foul-mouthed and vulgar outpourings of the four accurately capture the conversational substance of boy-talk. On my count, every profanity, with the exception of the C-Bomb, has been dropped, and used none-too sparingly, adding a sense of authenticity to what could otherwise be an 'insert-rude-word-for-effect-here' situation.

As well as the believable dialogue and script, the plots which unfold in the show are nothing short of comic genius. Straying from the dramatic, or even gripping, The Inbetweeners instead prides itself on simplistic premises that would, in a lesser show, be over with before the adverts. These range from going to Thorpe Park to get girls, to work experience over two days. Clearly, the writers rely upon the mantra of less is more, the execution of which makes the half hour of viewing incredibly captivating, simple, and not once a chore to watch. This makes the show even more refreshing, given the plethora of shows around that insist on you watching every week, sometimes more than once, just to see who's dead, or which one of those guys is the dad. The Inbetweeners is truly a drop-in-drop-out show. You can pick it up any time, without Wikipedia-ing the early episodes, and this, in my worthless opinion, is a quality in shows which is not only rare, but hard to maintain. Two series in, The Inbetweeners is succeeding.

It's fair to say that the show won't be to everyone's taste. Stuck-up prudes who save the dirty talk for the bedroom may find the script a bit blue, whereas the socially ignorant (some may say fortunate) who know nothing of the horrors of comprehensive-school education may not appreciate the modest scenarios of the show. For those of that description, the humour of The Inbetweeners may be wasted on you. Having said this, if the themes of alienation, sex and vulgarity, and genuine hilarity strike a chord, and you are, like me, bored of terse and inoffensive American telly, then I suggest you make The Inbetweeners your new best friend. And while you're at it, join me in petitioning for 'clunge' to be added into the English dictionary.



BEDS, FLATUENCE AND NUCLEAR BUNKERS

NATHAN BRIANT MUSES ON HISTORY AND 'COMEDY'

Like clockwork, at the start of a new parliamentary year Prime Minister's Questions returns after the summer recess. Unfortunately the events itself in the Commons weren't the firecracker that it could have been last week. 5 Live's analysis after the event was provided by **Phil Williams**, sitting in for Simon Mayo (Wednesdays). Joined initially by 5 Live's politics bigwig John Pienaar and the Daily Telegraph's Andrew Porter, Williams' presenting was ponderous and slow, although his guests did help to liven up the agenda a little. Porter certainly stayed true to his employer's politics: Nick Clegg's question to Gordon Brown was only 'relatively interesting' – a Daily Telegraph journalist would appear to be only able to give limited praise to a Liberal Democrat, clearly – and he talked of how MPs had returned from their 'long' holidays.

Williams took an odd tone considering his next guests were three politicians. His joke that 'you know what to do when work dries up: become an MP's cleaner – there's clearly some money in that!' was clearly inappropriate.

As expected there was a noticeable change of tone when Kerry McCarthy, Norman Lamb and Mark Harper, Labour, Liberal Democrat and Tory MPs respectively, entered the studio. Lamb was particularly combative – he must have had a bag of Skittles and a sugary drink before the show, such was his incredible eagerness to butt in and chatter away. Williams' knowledge of the panellists he was interviewing was at times wanting – he knew their constituencies but not much else. Irritatingly he played on the fact that McCarthy has been unofficially termed the Labour Party's 'Twitter Tsar' three or four times in the space of the half an hour. Plus, it'd be Tsarina, Phil...

The main issue of PMQs at the House of Commons an hour earlier – Afghanistan –

"ON THE 12TH OCTOBER TWENTY YEARS AGO MARGARET THATCHER WAS STILL BRITAIN'S PRIME MINISTER, HOWEVER NOMINALLY..."

was quickly bypassed. Other issues were just as quickly skimmed over at Williams' wont and then the presenter went in for his killer point: MPs' expenses. Lamb had been asked by Sir Thomas Legg for details regarding mortgage receipts, but nothing more; McCarthy and Harper were happy to declare that they had not been pulled up on anything. Harper appeared to be so proud he even brought his letter that he'd received from Sir Thomas Legg into the studio.

But Williams had done a tiny scrap of research on McCarthy's bed-purchasing antics, most probably through a quick Google



search: since she was elected in 2005 the Labour MP had bought two beds for a one-bedroom flat: how could this be justified, asked Williams. It had a slight hint of a witch hunt. McCarthy explained: she had bought a bed from Habitat, then they couldn't deliver for twelve weeks so she brought another one forgetting that she had already brought one from Habitat and anyway she's living in an £80 hotel whilst in London so we can all imagine how luxurious that is, she said.

Reassuring evidence that the world may be a better place than it was twenty years ago was provided by BBC Radio 4's excellent **1989: Day By Day**. On the 12th October twenty years ago Margaret Thatcher was still Britain's Prime Minister, however nominally, and interest rates were at fifteen per cent. Nigel Lawson was the Iron Lady's Chancellor: 'anyone who becomes Chancellor in order to be popular has chosen the wrong job' and he was 'giving the medicine Britain needs'.

Meanwhile, Albert Brown brought the end to his money making vision: his idea of a huge nuclear bunker to protect 1,000 salvation-seeking customers from an atom bomb was ditched because Brown had decided that the world was 'too peaceful'. Ironically across Europe the Cold War was coming to an end. Even the Politburos in East Germany were getting irritated regarding communism; 70,000 East Germans marched through Leipzig.

Perhaps less historically significant is **Frank Skinner's** show on Absolute Radio (Saturdays). He seems to be the victim of a demotion campaign undertaken by the radio station: in the two-minute introduction to the podcast Absolute's newest addition, Dave Gorman, was mentioned twice; Skinner wasn't mentioned once. It appears that

there may be a real danger of the station becoming a haven for comedians that have nothing to do at weekends.

The programme consists of chatter. Just bantering with his team and harbouring some unnamed man that bursts into very loud chuckles whenever Skinner says anything that's relatively funny is actually the only entertainment on offer here. Skinner's sidekick and seemingly protégé, Gareth, possesses what must be one of the banal voices ever heard on radio. The other member of Team Skinner, the terrifically posh Emily is seemingly on the programme for no reason other than to read emails.

Whereas Skinner has documented over time that he is liable to criticism whilst doing stand up tours since he would have ploughed months of work into it, there is no way that it could be said that this show could be conceived of suffering from any extensive preparation – it's all of the cuff, and unfortunately Skinner seemed to be having an off day here. It's rambling content doesn't help the pace of the show. He saw Simon Amstell in Richmond, so he talks about that, then Richmond, and then somehow links that to how he went to the modern ballet and sat next to an elderly man with a flatulence problem.

The show, played out originally on a Saturday gives Absolute Radio roughly 45 minutes of Skinnerisms every week, lacks any real reasons for listening again. There may be a reason for why Absolute's promoting Dave Gorman about to such a degree...

MY GIRL LOLLIPOP

RALPH LAUREN WEARS DOWN MODELS AND **GEORGINA BUTLER**

For all the advances women have made in the world - breaking free of the confines of domesticity and heading to the boardroom rather than the kitchen - it seems women will always be imprisoned by their own bodies. The unrealistic images that frequent our ever-more media-saturated society are showing increasingly unachievable ideals of beauty and the enormous amount of importance placed on a woman's clothing, size, weight and shape appears unlikely to subside in the foreseeable future.

The haute-couture of the fashion world may seem a million miles away from the average woman in the street. However, the narrow confines of attractiveness paraded up and down the catwalks rapidly filters into magazines aimed at younger and younger women and into mainstream media and advertising. This is producing an epidemic of dissatisfaction - no, depression and anxiety - amongst women concerning how they feel about their appearance (particularly their size and shape). The American Psychological Association found that after three minutes spent looking at a fashion magazine, 70% of women felt 'depressed, guilty and ashamed'. Eating Disorders charity Beat states that 1-2 percent of young women are thought to be anorexic at any one time.

The "Size Zero" debate has been à la mode for some time now, making headlines across tabloids and broadsheet alike and featuring heavily in women's magazines.

(Ironically, articles about the phenomenon are generally juxtaposed with pieces about celebrities "shocking" weight gain and advice on

how to "banish" unwanted body fat.) Quite how the trend for promoting unhealthy behaviours and suggesting all women should subscribe to just one size can be classified as a 'debate' is beyond me, but the furore over the topic has yet to make any headway in promoting body acceptance.

Furthermore, it seems fashion lines and advertisers are still too slow to accept their role in the promotion of body dissatisfaction. The latest scandal involves Ralph Lauren and their part in commissioning a picture of a model for a campaign that was photoshopped to create a severely emaciated and distorted body shape. Ralph Lauren has since apologized for the image and taken responsibility for the poor retouching but the very fact that the picture was changed at all shows how ridiculous the pursuit of an unachievable ideal has become. The model in question is reportedly a size eight - why could she not have been shown in a picture that conveys her true size and shape? Most women would be pleased to be a size eight (not long ago this was the idealised size). If advertisers offered women the chance to feel an affinity with the models, perhaps the constant dissatisfaction with women's bodies would abate.

The image will leave even sufferers of eating disorders cold - the emaciated frame and lollipop-head appearance of the model may offer so-called "thinspiration" for those caught up in the nightmare of anorexia. However, perhaps more importantly, such images glamorise the occurrence of eating disorders and distort the ideas of body image held by women across society. To be bombarded every day with images depicting the ideal woman as impossibly slender (impossible even for many of the models themselves to achieve - hence the need for retouching) is only detrimental to women. Moreover, why should women be forced to feel that they will never be good enough - to feel a constant discontent resulting purely from images devised to encourage us as

consumers to buy into a certain lifestyle?

The accepted window of supposed attractiveness for women is so restrictive that even the backlash against the use of emaciated models is provoking frustration amongst women.

Men may judge women's bodies within the fashion world - designers have a vision and the model must capture that vision when the clothes are draped over their bones - I mean bodies(!) - but women too have strong criticisms for other members of the sisterhood. As women's bodies are seen

more and more as something to have an opinion on, there is an attitude advocating that one should not be afraid to voice said opinion. The media and advertising are fuelling such an occurrence with blogging and online media facilitating the behaviour across wider society. The current obsession with editorial pieces featuring "real" women in celebrity outfits (for "real" read a particular clothing size, notably size 14 or 16) and the readiness of people to throw labels around citing anorexia is alienating women on the smaller end of the bell curve for women's body size. As a young woman with "Size Zero" measurements - am I not a "real" woman? Body image dissatisfaction affects all women in society - having the size zero measurements does not make a woman immune to feeling that she does not measure up in some way to the propagated ideal.

Eliminating all airbrushed pictures; media coverage of the "Size Zero" debate and countless articles on losing weight and being a "real" woman in magazines will only go so far in rescuing women's self esteem and body image. If women themselves could stand up against the trend - embrace themselves and the women around them by accepting them as they are - perhaps the obsessive hold that society has over women's bodies will waste away. That emaciated image commissioned for Ralph Lauren depicts a model wasting away; society as a whole must allow women to take the lead and fight for body acceptance as they fought for equal rights in the work place - before women's self-esteem vanishes along with the inches from the models' frame.

