

The Beaver

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Pan-Arab editor provokes tension on campus

Nicola Alexander

Israeli and Jewish students' outrage at comments made during the Students' Union's Palestine Society's event with a Middle Eastern newspaper editor has attracted international attention from interest groups, religious leaders and media outlets.

Abdel Bari Atwan, editor of Al-Quds Al-Arabi, a pan-Arab newspaper, was scheduled to deliver a talk entitled "How much influence does the Zionist Lobby exert on US/UK foreign policy?" on Friday 3rd December.

After the Students' Union's Israel Society voiced concern over Atwan's controversial reputation - Atwan has traditionally taken a strong anti-Israel stance - the lecture was moved to Monday 7th December to accommodate Jewish students who observe Shabbat on Friday evenings.

Monday's one-hour talk and subsequent question-and-answer session, chaired by Professor Martha Mundy of the School's Department of Anthropology, was described by some audience members as heated, marked by religious and racial tension.

During his speech Atwan said that despite no perceivable common interest, America has unconditionally supported Israel. But, Atwan added, "not every Jew supports Israel... some of them actually oppose the policies".

On the issue of the Zionist lobby's influence over the U.S. Congress, Atwan said the lobby stands as the "second-most powerful lobby in the country". According to Atwan, the powerful Zionist lobby is responsible for perpetuating the "myths of Israel's existence".

With regard to freedom of speech, Atwan said he was concerned there was a growing movement to "silence people on [Israeli] university campuses". He continued, saying there was a ploy to invite Israeli speakers to [foreign] university campuses in an effort to portray that "we

are the most wicked people on earth".

LSE students in attendance said the event's atmosphere became increasingly tense during the question-and-answer session, which culminated in several students walking out in protest. One student asked Atwan to publicly denounce his more controversial comments, such as declaring that if Iran attacked Israel, he would "go to Trafalgar Square and dance with delight".

Atwan replied: "I am actually a very good dancer. It was a smear campaign against me. Who bombed Gaza? I bombed it? Who killed thousands of people? Who invaded Lebanon? Was it me? That's the problem. They should be ashamed of themselves to silence someone, who's homeless for years. That's the problem, that's the real question. Point your fingers to those massacring us."

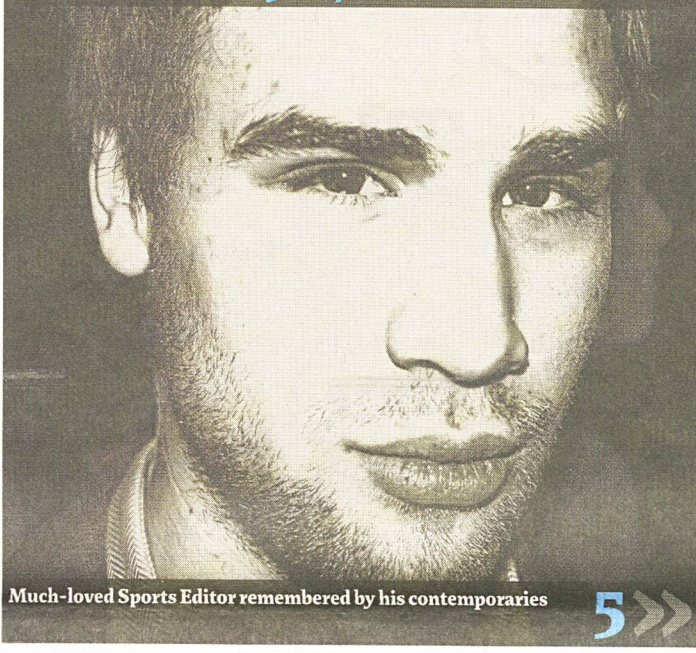
In response to a later question, Atwan retracted this statement but many students remained upset by his comments. Gabi Kobrin, president of the Israel Society, said she remained "very unsatisfied".

Kobrin said: "Atwan is a professional journalist, he knows how to articulate himself and choose his words carefully; it's what he does. It is just not good enough to make unacceptable and inflammatory claims and then apologise later."

Zach Sammour, President of the Palestine Society, said the event was held on the premise that Atwan would take the opportunity to denounce apparently inaccurate comments which appear on several news websites. In a statement released on his official website days before the scheduled event, Atwan said such controversial statements credited to him are "part of a smear campaign against me".

Sammour made continued efforts to have Professor Mundy choose students with a variety of opinions to pose questions, as to offer both sides of the issue, according to Students' Union Community and Welfare Officer, Hero Austin. However, despite these efforts to facilitate constructive debate, the audience openly heckled and jeered. Kobrin said, "My concern was not only Atwan but the way the

Ed Calow, 1984-2010



Much-loved Sports Editor remembered by his contemporaries



audience responded when I was asking questions. There was audible laughing and jeering. It was the first time on campus that I have felt threatened as a Jew."

Reports have confirmed that as several students, led by Kobrin, left the room in protest, they were confronted with hostile comments including one non-LSE audience member crying out "Nazis". Kobrin said, "the event was a disaster and so unprofessional."

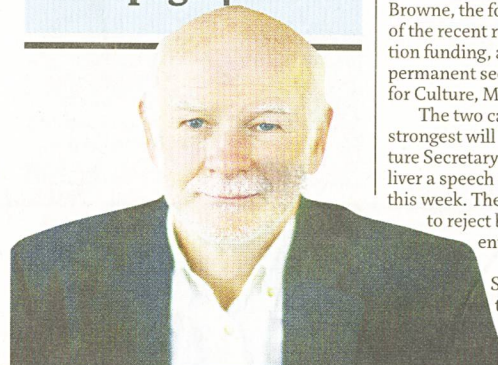
Sammour echoed Kobrin's sentiments regarding the hostile nature of the audience, saying he was "severely disappointed by the end of the event", which "degenerated into abuse being shouted between a few members of the audience".

Sammour went on to say he was "extremely pleased with the event wherein Mr Atwan unambiguously denounced indiscriminate killing and declared his support for a non-racial solution to the conflict wherein Palestinian Arabs would be able to live side by side with Israeli Jews in a democratic society."

The event attracted the attention of various international organisations. In an article published in the Wall Street Journal, one journalist suggested events, such as the Atwan talk, give the UK a reputation for fostering terrorism. UK Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, an influential

religious leader, told the Jewish Chronicle newspaper he was "deeply concerned" by the Atwan event and its deterioration. Student Rights, a student activist group, also spoke out against the event, stating "what was witnessed was intolerance, anti-Semitism and misconduct on a large scale". Student Rights has since published a video recording of the talk on its website and on YouTube.

continues on page 4



Speculation surrounds Davies' presence on BBC Trust list

Oliver Wiseman

Howard Davies' inclusion on a shortlist of six candidates to be the next chairman of the BBC Trust could lead to a premature departure for the LSE Director.

The Current BBC Chariman, Michael Lyons, will not seek reappointment after his term ends in May, leaving the post vacant more than a year before Davies' term as Director is set to expire.

In an interview last term, Davies told the Beaver of his future at the School: "In 2012, a decision will have to be made as to whether I carry on beyond that. I will have to think about it, and so will the School."

Davies, with his experience at the Bank of England and the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), a pro-business lobby, is thought to be the preferred candidate if stringent reforms are desirable at Broadcasting House, but media experts see former Governor of Hong Kong, and current Chancellor of Oxford University, Chris Patten, as the clear favourite.

Other candidates include Dame Patricia Hodgson, Principal of Newnham College, Cambridge and former BBC policy director; Richard Lambert, former editor of the Financial Times and current director-general of the CBI; and Richard Hooper, former deputy chairman of Ofcom, the broadcasting regulator.

An interview panel will quiz candidates this month. The panel includes Lord Browne, the former BP chief and author of the recent review into higher education funding, and Jonathan Stephens, permanent secretary at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

The two candidates this panel deem strongest will be chosen between by Culture Secretary Jeremy Hunt, who is to deliver a speech on media policy at the LSE this week. The minister also has the power to reject both aspirants and select an entirely different person.

A spokesperson for the School said that "the Director's role is unaffected by this media speculation."

Benefactors launch African leadership programme at LSE

Shrina Poojara

LSE graduate Firoz Lalji and his wife, Najma, have made a generous donation of almost £1 million to the LSE to help establish the Firoz and Najma Lalji Programme in African Leadership.

The programme, set to launch in the upcoming academic year, was funded through their charitable foundation.

The African Leadership programme will accept its first class in September 2011 and is set to run for five years, educating a total of 150 potential leaders. Thirty high-achievers from Africa will be offered places in the rigorous executive training course at the LSE.

Participants will benefit from high quality teaching by LSE professors and

worldwide partner universities in subject areas including economics, government, development and law.

The graduates of the programme will also be invited to an annual forum in Africa to help maintain their skills and aid them in forming leadership networks across the continent. The chief aim of the course is to help some of Africa's most dynamic and promising leaders to gain access to high quality academic thinking and policy ideas from around the world. The international element of the programme is being cited as the main benefit of the course.

"This will be a highly-competitive programme that we hope will bring a new class of African leaders to the world stage," said Mr and Mrs Lalji. They added, "We know some of the difficulties that can hold back talent from Africa and we want to unleash and support the next genera-

tion of leaders."

According to Mr and Mrs Lalji, LSE was the obvious choice to host the programme; "It is absolutely fitting that the programme should be established at the LSE, whose alumni include many of those involved in the first wave of post-independence leadership - inspirational figures such as Jomo Kenyatta and Dr Kwame Nkrumah. We hope others will join us in supporting a venture which offers such an innovative approach to globalising African talent."

Mr Lalji graduated with a BSc in Economics from the LSE in 1969. After achieving his degree, he found himself forced out of his native Uganda, along with his wife and their respective families, during Idi Amin's dictatorship in the 1970s. Now Chief Executive and owner of Zones Inc., a leading IT firm, Mr Lalji has a long-standing commitment to supporting Afri-

can students. Previous endeavours include pledging \$1 million to the LSE Centennial Fund in the USA in 2007 to establish the Firoz and Najma Lalji Foundation scholarship for Ugandan students and agreeing to make a second donation of £1.6 million to the African leadership programme for bursaries and final delivery.

The programme will become a vital part of LSE's African Initiative, which was set up in 2009 to engage with African institutions and talent to develop connections, encourage accessibility and promote knowledge exchange. Professor Thandika Mkandwire, who leads the African Initiative and holds the first Chair in African Development at LSE, commented: "The programme gives access to a new generation of African executives from different aspects of life, be it businesses, NGOs and so on." The major attraction of the course is that it will offer facilities to

ambitious students who would otherwise not have access to these resources. "It is important since it... exposes them to some of the bigger debates going on that their counterparts elsewhere probably have access to, so it provides Africans with the same opportunities. The good thing about a programme like this is it raises the profile of the LSE in the continent."

Damini Onifade, President of the LSE's African-Caribbean Society (ACS), said: "It looks like a brilliant initiative and something the ACS would be interested in backing. We are particularly happy that the program does not emphasise teaching Africans how to run Africa, but appears to focus more on providing a sort of academic "think tank" on some of the issues in Africa."

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

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The Beaver

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Give us a go

We begin the new term on a note of remembrance. Much as this newspaper enjoys beating an ambitious path into the future, we are always mindful of our past; at this moment, our thoughts turn to the family of Ed Calow, a recent Sports Editor who passed away at the end of last year. Though Ed's contemporaries have long since made their way into the real world, they felt sufficiently compelled to return to our office last week, to assemble a page of condolence (see page 5). From their reminiscences it is clear that Ed fitted perfectly into the Beaver mold – inquisitive, honest, and always seeking to derive maximum enjoyment from all that he did.

As we embark on this new term's journey, every one of us remains committed to the same set of characteristics. ☘

Apology

As you will notice, this is not Tuesday. Owing to circumstances beyond our control, we were unable to go to print on Monday night; consequently, this week's Beaver reaches you a day late. Worse mistakes have been made in newspaper history: in February 1988 the Daily Telegraph confused Wednesday for Thursday on the masthead. Nonetheless, sorry for the tardiness.

It is always important to be consistent in one's views, we believe, but it also helps to be open to change. Just as the LSE will have to revise its policies regarding fees and access in order to align with prevailing government attitudes, so must newspapers adapt to a climate that seems unavoidably gloomy. The Economist recently refuted the notion that "Britain's newspapers look doomed", using as evidence the innovations pioneered by three leading British titles. While the Beaver is not seeking to hide behind a paywall, banalise its content to serve a tabloid audience, or launch a cut-down edition suitable for bus-journey consumption, we too will soon be faced with unenviable decisions.

There is no doubt in our minds that print media in its current form is a financially unattractive proposition, thwarted at every turn by rising costs, falling advertising revenue, and logistical impracticalities. The business of running a weekly publication printed on actual newsprint is rooted in the glamorous age of the newspaperman – and perhaps it must stay there. The future of a student newspaper surely lies elsewhere, most probably in the ether, and any decision to stall a real decision-making process does a disservice to those budding journalists to come. The concept of intergenerational equity is not anathema to this newspaper, you may recall. ☘

Inflexibility is no kind of strategy at all, and so we are pleased to note the Students' Union's adoption of a 'Give it a Go' scheme, which will hopefully encourage students to reevaluate their membership of different societies at this halfway point. It is conceivable that the Students' Union eyes the venture as an opportunity to increase revenue, by persuading students that the manifold pleasures derived from taster sessions can be replicated by formally joining the societies in question. Regardless of the intention, however, we hope that all the societies involved do their best to showcase what the LSE community has to offer. The brochure for the 'Give it a Go' initiative is themed in a style that recalls the board game Monopoly – but we hope that students recognise the plurality of activities on offer within the Students' Union, which may not be promoted through the scheme. Such an attitude would in turn give rise to an expanded scheme next year, building upon the substantial efforts of the current Activities and Development Officer.

We wish our readers a fruitful Lent Term, and implore apathetic students who perceive the Beaver to be overly intellectual or tribally self-interested to 'give it a go'. They may be pleasantly surprised at the plurality within these pages too. ☘

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Get involved in The Beaver
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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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Editorial Board Elections

7PM, 20th January
G1 (20 Kingsway)

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Social Editor
Collective Chair
General Manager

Thinking of standing?

Email

managing@thebeaveronline.co.uk



TUESDAY 11TH
MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS STALL
HOUGHTON ST, 11AM-2PM

WEDNESDAY 12TH
MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS STALL
HOUGHTON ST, 11AM-2PM
STITCH AND BITCH - QUAD, 1PM-3PM

THURSDAY 13TH
MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS STALL
HOUGHTON ST, 11AM-2PM
MEDITATION SESSION - UNDERGROUND
5.30PM-6.30PM

FRIDAY 14TH
COFFEE WITH YOUR OFFICERS
SABB OFFICE, 1PM-2.30PM

MONDAY 17TH
OPEN MIC NIGHT
UNDERGROUND, 7.30PM

ESSAYS ARE DUE, IT'S THE START OF TERM, AND YOU REALLY SHOULD GO TO THE GYM, BUT LEAVE ALL THAT FOR JUST AN HOUR OR SO AND DO SOMETHING WHICH WILL RELAX YOU! YOU'LL STUDY BETTER AFTERWARDS, PROMISE!

Pissarides inspires Stockholm audience

Dana Andreicut

Professor Christopher Pissarides accepted his Nobel Prize in Economic Science last month in a ceremony at the Stockholm School of Economics. Pissarides discussed his work on the economics of unemployment, for which he was awarded the prize in October 2010.

Dale Mortensen, of Northwestern University, and Peter Diamond, of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, were also honoured.

Pissarides, Mortenson and Diamond's award-winning work began in the 1970s. At the time, the standard approach in studying unemployment involved treating labour as a commodity, with its price being the worker's wage. Little had been said about the duration of unemployment, the process of looking for a job, and the matching of the unemployed to available vacancies. This year's Nobel winners focused their research on such issues.

Pissarides told the audience in Stockholm that he first became interested in "search theory" as an undergraduate at Essex University. He later went on to pursue the topic in his PhD studies at the LSE.

By definition, an individual is unemployed if he or she is looking for a job, but unable to gain employment. Thus job search "in our intuitions" and "in the official definitions is not about looking for a good wage, but about looking for a good job match," Pissarides said.

"Each worker has many distinct features which make them suitable for different kinds of jobs," he said, whilst employers also have many different requirements. The process of matching workers to jobs also takes time, irrespective of the wage offered by each job. Pissarides said he found that "the view that the worker is confronted with a wage distribution, that she either takes or leaves wage offers, is not the best way to think about job search,

a process whereby both workers and firms search for each other and jointly either accept or reject the match seemed to be closer to reality".

A two-sided matching emerged as a more desirable alternative to the prevalent views at the time, which either argued for the idea of voluntary or of involuntary unemployment, Pissarides said, because a new model could better incorporate real work features.

"The step from a theory of search based on the acceptance of a wage offer and one based on a good match is small but has far reaching implications for the modelling of the labour market," he explained. "This is due to the fact that in the case of searching for a good match, the matching function could be brought in, as a description of the choices available to the worker. The latter captures features of frictions in the labour markets that are not made explicit."

Pissarides said the first used the matching function in 1979, "making it the main building block of an economy wide model". He also attempted a derivation of

a wage equation in a search model using ideas in bargaining theory. At the time, he was unaware Diamond and Mortensen were working on similar studies.

In his lecture, Pissarides went on to discuss such topics as the Beveridge Curve - an economic representation of the relationship between job vacancies and unemployment - as well as the importance of unemployment protection legislation.

Pissarides concluded his lecture by saying "search and matching theory has come a long way." Researchers in the field have discovered "that a theory of wages is key to understanding the functioning of labour markets", he said, adding, however, that there are many studies left to be done, among them the exploration of the role of institutions in formal models, of wage stickiness in models with frictions, and also the integration of the financial sector in the labour market.

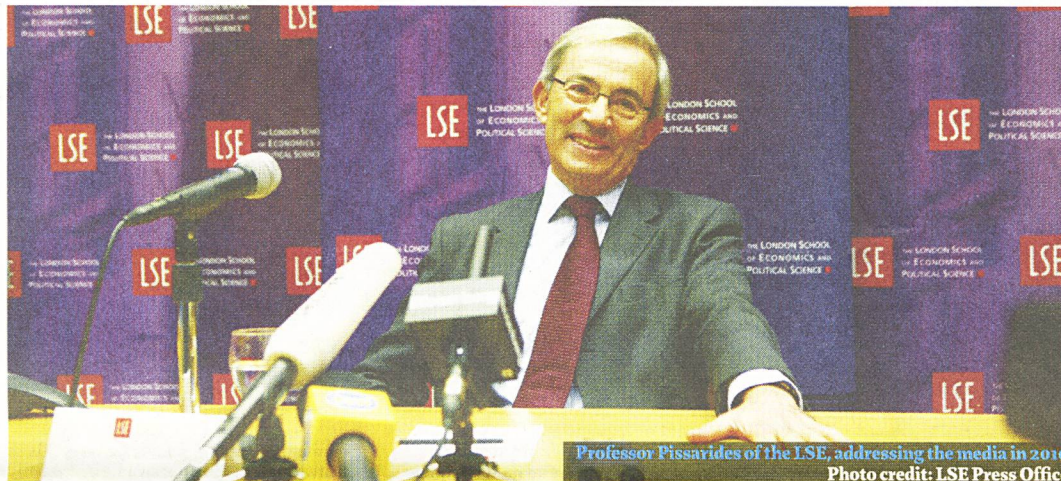
Pissarides' LSE colleagues in attendance praised the speech.

Professor Rachel Ngai told The Beaver: "It was very moving when Professor

Pissarides talked about how he got into search theory and how he didn't give up when he discovered later that other more senior economists were also working on it in the US. He just kept working on it. It is truly an inspiration for young researchers."

Alan Manning, head of the LSE Department of Economics, similarly praised Pissarides' speech: "Chris' lecture was him at his self-effacing best, talking about the genesis of his ideas 40 years ago, about how he gave us a practical way of thinking about unemployment that escaped the fatuous debates about whether unemployment was voluntary or involuntary, and about how these ideas remain as relevant today in thinking about how best to respond to the current economic crisis."

Pissarides has been a member of the LSE's faculty since completing his PhD at the School in 1973. The 13th LSE economist to be awarded the Nobel Prize, he joins the ranks of such scholars as Amartya Sen, Paul Krugman and Friedrich von Hayek.



Professor Pissarides of the LSE, addressing the media in 2010
Photo credit: LSE Press Office

News in brief

NEW YEAR, NEW LSE HONOURS

Professor Helen Wallace, Centennial Professor in the European Institute, was recognised in the New Year Honours list for 2011, having been made a Dame for her services to social science. Jane Pugh, a governance officer in LSE's Planning and Corporate Policy Division, was also recognised on the annual list, receiving an MBE for services to higher education. Fiona Steele, a former professor in the Department of Statistics, was likewise named to the list, receiving an OBE for services to social science, as were seven LSE alumni.

DEBATABLE SUCCESS

John Ashbourne and Anser Aftab of the Students' Union Debate Society reached the final of the World Universities Debating Championship (WUDC), held in Botswana over the New Year period. Ultimately losing to a team from Monash University in Australia, the LSE pair breezed through their initial rounds before coming unstuck in the motion, "This House would invade Zimbabwe". This is the second consecutive year that an LSE team have made the final.

HAKIM CONTROVERSY

A recent report by Dr Catherine Hakim, a Senior Research Fellow in the Sociology Department, has caught the interest of the national media, prompting dozens of articles, features and opinion pieces debating the role of women in the workplace. "Feminist Myths and Magic Medicine: The Flawed Thinking Behind Calls for Further Equality Legislation", published this month by the Centre for Policy Studies, explores the "flawed thinking behind calls for further equality legislation", concluding, among other things, that "despite feminist claims, men and women have different career aspirations and priorities".

ONLINE SELF-DIAGNOSIS

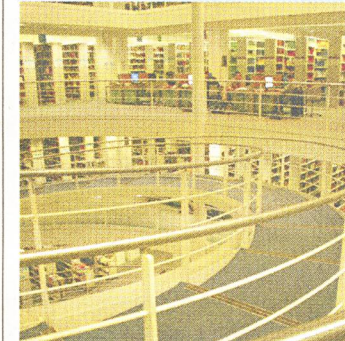
People are increasingly turning to unreliable online sources to self-diagnose their ailments, a Bupa-commissioned LSE study has revealed. The Bupa Pulse Survey, lead by Research Fellow in Health Policy and Health Economics at LSE Health and Social Care Centre, David McDavid, questioned 12,000 people from twelve countries on their attitudes towards ageing, chronic diseases, health and well-being. Among the reports more alarming findings was the revelation that of those that consult the Internet on medical matters, just a quarter check the reliability of their source.

LSE100

A second exam has been scheduled for this week after attendance was lower than expected at last week's inaugural LSE100 exam. Students were unable to attend as the exam's date, the last Friday of the holidays, was set after many had made arrangements to return to London on the weekend. Some disgruntlement was expressed by those who sat the exam. Bianca Nardi, a second-year undergraduate reading international relations said, "It was really unfair that the exam was in the holidays. To begin with, we were told there wouldn't be any work outside class to begin. I wouldn't have signed up otherwise."

LSE GRITS ITS TEETH

Passfield Hall informed their residents that, despite the 3 inches of snowfall over December, they would be unable to grit the pavement outside the residency. According to an email sent to all Passfield residents on the 6th of December, the hall was unable to salt the pavement due to "legal issues". One Passfield resident studying as part of the General Course said, "Surely there would be a greater legal issue if someone fell and cracked their head open on the pavement outside Passfield?" There has not been any health or safety issues related to the snow at Passfield hall.



Brown offers thoughts on global growth

Marion Koob

Gordon Brown, MP for Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath and former Prime Minister, renewed his calls for global cooperation during a public lecture held last month at the LSE.

Brown qualified that worldwide issues such as global warming, the regulation of the financial system and insecurity could only be solved by international co-operation, rather than individual national policy.

In arguing this, he quoted J. F. Kennedy: "Divided we will fail, but united we can achieve the abolition of poverty, of hunger, of disease, of illiteracy and of war around the world".

He added that governments should "make globalisation work for people, instead of work simply for blind forces".

This event marked the launch of Brown's new book "Beyond the Crash: overcoming the First Crisis of Globalisation", whose proceeds will be donated to PiggyBankKids, a charity devoted to mother and child health.

Supporting the charity is one of the many campaigns which Brown and his wife have undertaken since his resignation as the Labour party leader in May 2010.



Photo: LSE Press Office

During the lecture, Brown also encouraged audience members to sign the petition formulated by campaign group Avaaz. This document lobbies G20 nations for the launch "a global green jobs stimulus plan to lift millions out of poverty".

Brown also noted that the "200-year monopoly of economic activity" of Europe and the US was ending, provoking some of the West's current economic difficulties. However, he termed the change as an opportunity, highlighting that the increase in consumer demand in emerging markets, notably Asia, would be greatly beneficial for the region.

"China will be consuming more than America by 2020. We are going to add, over the next ten or fifteen years, two Americas to the consuming power of the world."

Brown further explained: "Economic orthodoxies of the present make very little sense if we are really planning for the future. If we are to benefit from these changes in the world economy. We will have to invest more in science, technology, education, and universities. This also means that we will have to resist protectionist sentiment."

Brown also discussed the importance of instating a sense of ethics in the financial system similar to those existing other professions such as medicine or education.

The audience was particularly impatient to know of Gordon Brown's position on the planned rise in university tuition fees, the proposal of which was to be voted in the House of Commons on the following Thursday. While the act in fact passed with a by a narrow vote, Brown stated that he would vote against the coalition plan, highlighting again the importance of education to Europe's economic growth.

Following the lecture, Jaynesh Patel, a third year BSc Economics student commented, "Gordon Brown spoke with the experience of a great Chancellor and Prime Minister. His views should be taken seriously. The lecture has demonstrated his knowledge of political realities and the need for global cooperation."

EU President shares his European vision

Sachin Patel

"My country is very interested in integration with Europe - you must visit my country!" observed Jerzy Buzek, former Primer Minister of Poland and the incumbent President of the European Parliament, expressing his plans for the continent over which he presides.

Mr. Buzek was speaking at the LSE on the subject of "What Europe means for me", in a conversation with Professor Norman Davies, a noted historian.

The event coincided with the opening of Europe House - the joint headquarters of the European Parliament Information Office and the European Commission - which had taken place on 6th December in Smith Square.

The President used the occasion to discuss his beliefs about the "European dream", and the influence his childhood and subsequent academic work as a scientist had on his political career.

Born in 1940 in Smilowice, a town now part of the Czech Republic, Mr. Buzek grew up behind the Iron Curtain and shared the belief of his nation that Poland would one day join the European community. He said, "We never believed we would stay in communist times forever - just as I never believed I would be a President."

Later, he studied technical sciences at the Silesian University of Technology in Gliwice, Poland, a choice he said he made on grounds of safety. Mr. Buzek's academic output in the field of chemical engineering throughout the 1970s was widely respected, and he said that the usefulness of his research combined with a childhood spent in an industrial region had given him a lifelong attachment to areas of industry. The President made reference to visits he had made to manufacturing plants in Cowley, Oxfordshire.

Mr. Buzek was also keen to highlight the support that his research had received from the European Union (EU), a fact that impacted on his vision for Europe throughout his career in politics. He said that Europe was "absolutely wonderful" for his country, and that current opinion polls suggest that the Poles would prefer

further European integration to closer ties with NATO, the intergovernmental military alliance.

Speaking of his extensive discussions with many European heads of state, Mr. Buzek emphasised the productive conversations he had held with his Russian counterpart, Dmitry Medvedev. Mr. Buzek was active in anti-communist movements during the 1980s, but he said he was confident that the Russian Federation could modernise, by reforming the judicial system, for example. Citing previous unsuccessful attempts at annexing areas of development in the USSR, he said that civil society lay at the heart of modern-



Jerzy Buzek, President of the European Parliament

sation, and that current Russian agreement in this area betrayed the country's profoundly European beliefs.

Mr. Buzek argued that modernisation in Russia would not be easy, on account of its large population and significant geographical and political relationship with China. "It must go step by step, and they have many threats ahead of them," he said, adding, "but they feel really European."

The President conceded that the current vision of the EU - to promote growth - was a harder concept to persuade Eurosceptics of, compared with the European Community's aim of preventing future wars. But, he contested, "it is important for young people to advocate solidarity and being united - it's more painful to be divided."

Mr. Buzek concluded with a parting shot at the Conservative party, which made a controversial decision to move its Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) out of the European People's Party (EPP) grouping in 2009. The President had close ties with the EPP; he said that the Conservative exit had "certainly reduced" the influence of the coalition government in the European Parliament.

"It is just not good enough to make unacceptable and inflammatory claims and then apologise later"

continued from page 1

In response, Sammour said "some media outlets and student groups attempted to gravely distort both the content and context of Mr Atwan's speech in an attempt to defame him and accuse him of anti-Semitism", but added he was "extremely pleased with the LSE Students' Union's principled and balanced statement".

The Students' Union released a press statement the next day: "We regret that the event ended the way that it did. Prior to the event, the Students' Union engaged in extensive consultation and negotiation with the Palestine Society, Israel Society and the School".

The Students' Union took steps to deal with any concerns of students by encouraging students to email their opinions and comments; Austin said. "We received several emails from both sides and responded to each email individually."

The University's 'Good Campus

Relations' Group and the Students' Union are now working together to formulate a coherent approach that allows events to go ahead, with minimal negative impact. Following concerns over Professor Mundy's chairing of the event, the briefing also addresses how to chair difficult events generally.

The LSE Events Office has previously admitted that the Atwan talk was allowed to pass through their screening process because of a "bureaucratic error". The security and admissions policy, which was "confused" on the night, will also be stricter in the future.

Both the Israel Society and the Palestine Society have since met to work towards repairing relations. Austin praised the societies for "how they have conducted themselves".

Additionally, on 13th January the Israel Society and Palestine Society are to host a joint debate on the subject of an academic boycott of Israel. The event, which will take place in the Old Theatre at 6PM, is open to all, but pre-registration via email is required for non-LSE attendees.

Students encouraged to 'Give it a Go' through Students' Union initiative

Sachin Patel

With society membership booming and a new sign-up system receiving broad praise for its efficiency, students might be forgiven for thinking that the Students' Union can do no more to increase society engagement.

But this term, following in the footsteps of Leeds University Union, Activities and Development Officer Charlie Glyn is spearheading a 'Give it a Go' scheme aimed at encouraging students to join more Students' Union societies.

Over the course of a fortnight, thirteen clubs and societies will run taster sessions and workshops, offering a chance to "meet new people and try new things", according to the scheme's brochure. The schedule kicks off on 17th January with a creative arts workshop organised by the Visual Arts Society, and a women-only gym session.

Also integrated into the scheme are a number of events not directly related to Students' Union societies, but which focus on other aspects of the student experience. The Teaching and Learning Centre (ILC) will be hosting a seminar on time management on 19th January, and the day after sees the return of Dr. Bike, the popular bicycle maintenance stall which debuted last year.

The response from societies has been generally positive. Judith Jacob, President of the Debate Society, said that the scheme would

"increase our presence and awareness of the society on campus." She added that the society would encourage attendees of their show debate to join them at a pub-based social where they might find people with "common intellectual interests".

Some students were less enthused about the initiative, however. Second-year politics and philosophy undergraduate Alexander Young said, "I don't feel compelled to go to any of these events," adding, "We were promised cross-society events, of which there are none, and

I would also have liked to see new societies being encouraged to start up in time for the

new term."

Third-year law undergraduate Craig Lambert was more critical still, saying: "This is the same trope, just dressed up in different language."

But the Debate Society chief believes that "this is the kind of scheme that the Students' Union does well."

The LSE Students' Union's 'Give it a Go' initiative is inspired by a similar scheme that has run at Leeds University for a number of years. In its most recent incarnation the Leeds scheme featured over fifty events spread out throughout their ten-week first term. Taster sessions ranged from a card-making workshop to an introductory seminar on woodland management.



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مباحثات

مباحثات مصرية سعودية لتزويد الحدود البحرية في البحر الأحمر

نظرة خاطرة على إيران

هذا الاسبوع من AL-Quds Al-Arabi، من تحرير السيد أ. أتوان

Source: <http://www.alquds.co.uk>

Charting changes at the LSE

Heather Wang

The Beaver recently obtained the latest demographic information about the LSE student population, charting the percentage of female to male students, average age of new, full-time entrants and the number of full-time UK entrants by school type, among other factors, from the 2005-06 to the 2010-11 academic year.

The most-notable change could be seen in the measurement of young, full time, UK undergraduate entrants by

school type, that is state school versus private school. In 2005-06, the percentage of students from state schools was just 10 per cent higher than the percentage for private school students, at 59.4 per cent to 40.6 per cent. In 2006-07, 65.9 per cent of UK entrants came from state schools, whilst 34.1 per cent of new English undergrads graduated from private schools. By 2008-09, nearly 71 per cent of UK undergraduate entrants were from state schools.

The data is particularly striking when considered in the comparison to other UK universities. Though just 7.2 per cent of students in England attend private

schools, private school graduates make up a quarter of the student population in the nation's 25 most-selective universities. Perhaps more notably, at Oxford, 46.6 per cent of students graduated from private schools, according to an article published last week in the Guardian.

Other surveys reported that despite slight variations, the average age of new, full-time entrants at the LSE - undergraduates, taught postgraduates and research postgraduates alike - and the percentage of female to male students remained relatively constant.

IN NEXT WEEK'S COVERAGE:

Know your Estonian from your Eritrean? Student demographics broken down by domicile and more...

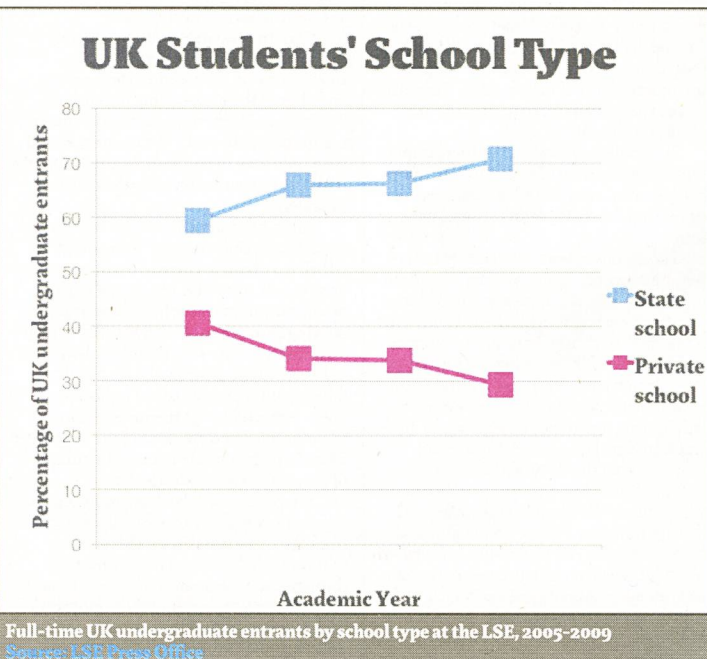
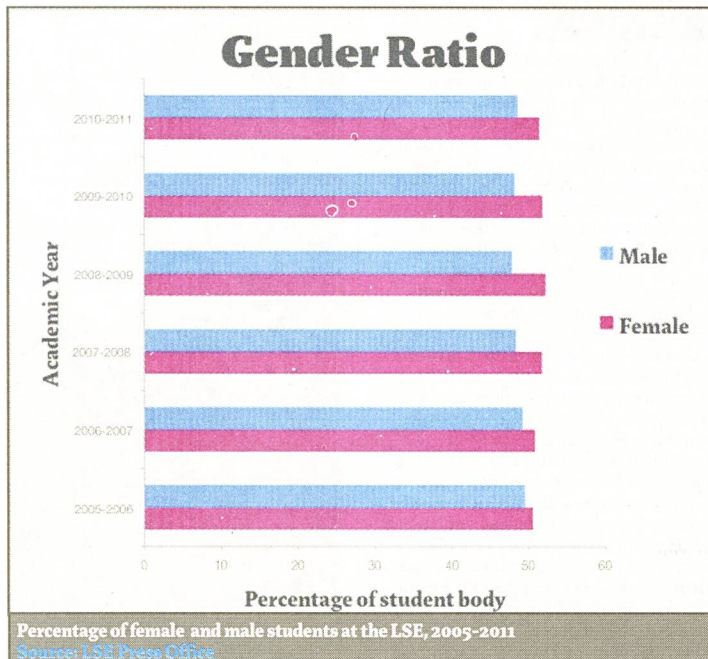
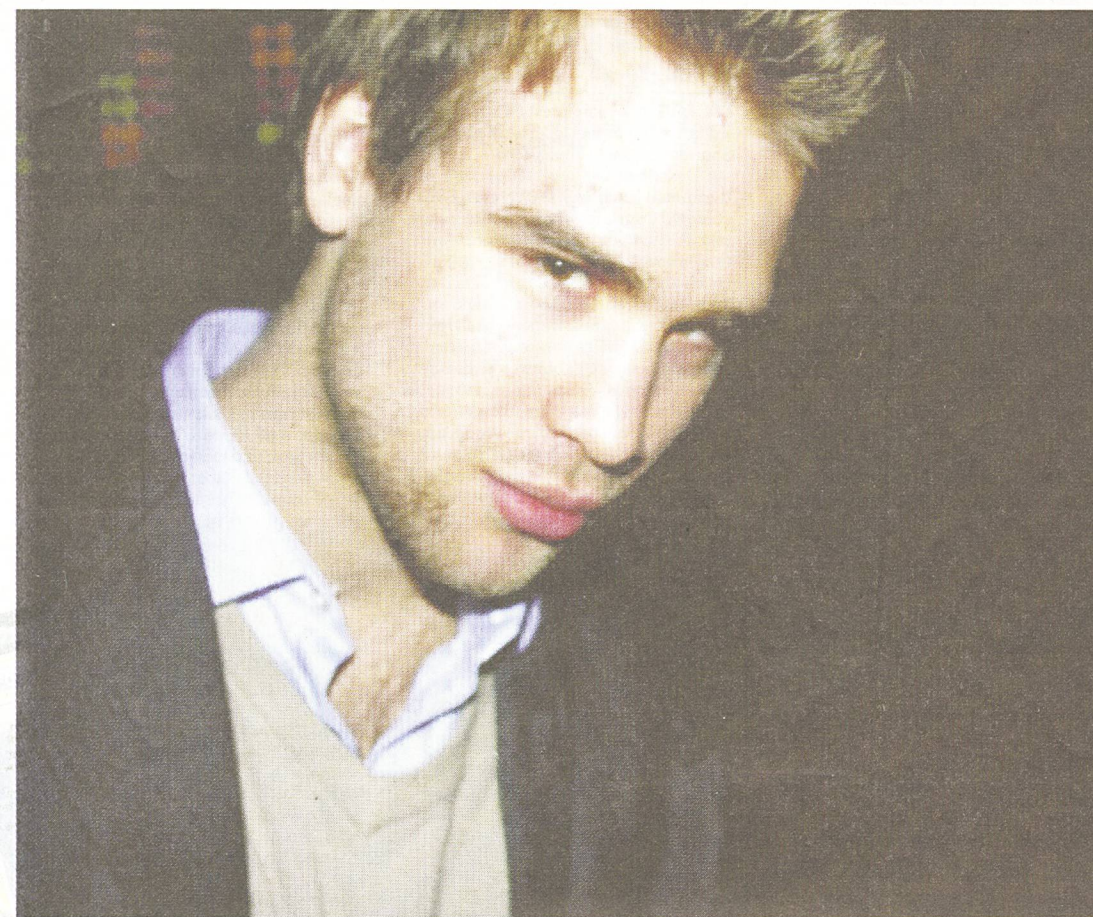


Photo: Duncan McKenna

Ed Calow, Sport Editor 1984 – 2010



Ed Calow graduated from the LSE in 2007, completing a degree in Government "the AU way". He was a comprehensive contributor to the Beaver, initially submitting individual articles before being elected as a Sports Editor in 2005.

Ed was an active member of the LSE Athletics Union and spearheaded the renaissance of the traditionally under-achieving Sevenths in the Mens' Football Club. Over the course of his time at the LSE, the team morphed into the "Champagne Sevenths", and Ed captained the team during the 2005/06 season. During his career in the team, Ed also won numerous Player of the Season and Top Goalscorer awards. An enigmatic and charming team-mate, he was an excellent footballer, who excelled wherever he played.

One of Ed's greatest performances for the Champagne Sevenths led to him writing a Beaver headline which caused a considerable number of complaints. 5-2 down at half time to a Queen Mary side packed with "ringers", Ed scored a second half hat-trick and set up another, leading to a 6-5 comeback and the headline "The Greatest Comeback since Jesus Rose from the Dead".

Ed's writing wasn't just funny, it was fluent, articulate and skillfully constructed. Ed's presence on the Beaver's Editorial Board made life so much more fun – many an issue, and needless to say many a Crush, would have been the lesser without him.

Ed is survived by his wife, Ruth, who he met at LSE.

“
We propose that there must be more to life than just the money-grabbing, soulless, selfish, vile, pitiful, craven and ultimately self-destructive pursuit of a career in the city. Yeah, we'll sell out eventually, but not just yet.
ED CALOW, 2005
”

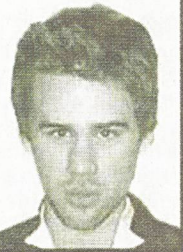
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Sports

the Beaver

Howay the Freshers!

the sports column
ed calow



Dear Freshers...

I would like to formally welcome you all to the London School of Economics. No doubt our academic reputation is what lured you here, and you have chosen well. The Times has ranked the LSE as the 11th best university in the entire freakin' world. What's more, we probably would have come higher still were it not for a combination of my atrocious exam results, a sexual intercourse/student ratio of 0.6 annually, and the fact that most of the teachers learnt all their English from some phoney correspondence course that promised them they'd 'master the language in 30 days' and then mailed them a load of Teletubbies cassettes.

You will find the intellectual needs of you and your fellow Oxbridge rejecters to be amply catered for here. Attend a lecture by a

cabinet minister in the morning. Chat about the difference between hetero and homoskedasticity over lunch in the Quad without anyone bursting into fits of giggles. And if you enjoy eye-wateringly pretentious discussions about Marx with annoying little squirts who reek of sexual frustration then lucky you because you can't avoid them, but don't try it with me or I'll punch you in the crotch. Before you say anything, I wouldn't do this to a girl; I'd punch her in the tit.

I urge you, however, to take inspiration from Mark Twain's celebrated attitude towards his studies, and resolve to yourself that the education you receive from this university will not solely be an academic one. As such, come Freshers' Fair, you should march straight past the stands for the debating society, the investment banking society and the socialist worker society with your wallet firmly in your pocket. You'll get enough of that stuff

here without having to pay for it. Instead, remember the lesson you learnt from Titanic and Muff Divers 7 – that the real fun happens below deck – and follow the sounds of revelry drifting up from the Old Building basement until you get to the gymnasium. Take a deep breath, and enter.

You'll find yourself transported to a mysterious, foul-smelling underworld populated by the kind of weird and wonderful characters you thought only existed in mass market fantasy fiction; wild-eyed men whose 'rippling torsos' are matched by an unhealthy obsession with their hair (men's rugby); the odd troll-faced women who'll turn into a ravishing beauty when the sun sets (providing you've been drinking heavily all day); giants (basketball); midgets (me); and sinister, malevolent evil in the shape of Zac Lewis (by all accounts the Harold Shipman of quasi-consensual sex).

And who's that in the distance? It can't be, surely? Lord Farquard?

You are standing among the LSE Athletics Union. Looking at this disparate, incongruous cast of thousands, you may well wonder how we ever ended up in the same society, co-existing in apparent harmony. Jose Mourinho might (or might not) be able to

resolve that petty dispute in the Middle East through the power of the beautiful game, but it is surely too much to expect sport alone to bridge the cultural chasm between the LSE football and rugby clubs, or between hockey and netball girls.

And yet that chasm is

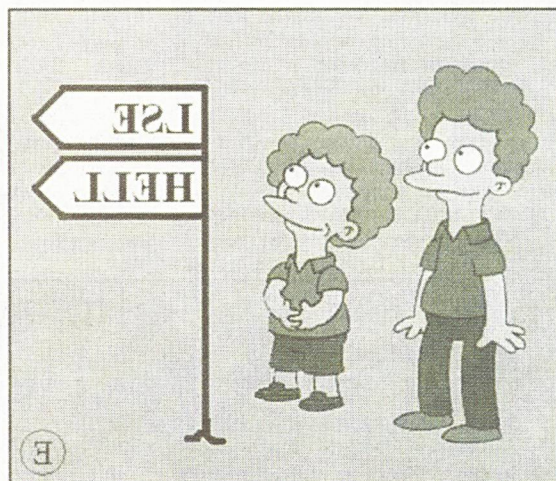
investment banking. We propose that there must be more to life than just the money-grabbing, soulless, selfish, vile, pitiful, craven and ultimately self-destructive pursuit of a career in the city. Yeah, we'll sell out eventually, but not just yet.

And so, while we are, nom-

to the AU the A-list of LSE society. Pretty much anyone worth knowing, with the possible exception of Monica Lewinsky, is a member. The characters of our members are a trichotomy of astounding intelligence, jaw-dropping recklessness and a voracity for intoxicants unmatched by all but the most unfortunate of crack babies. Think Hunter S. Thompson, Oliver Reed, Lord Byron, and you're not even close. We are the cream of an LSE that is the toast of the world.

And ultimately, this is why you need to join us. So choose the AU. Choose a 5 Vodka Red Bull at Lunchtime. Choose going to afternoon classes drunk. Choose Walkabout. Choose the wrong bus home by mistake. Choose Watford Bus Depot. Choose lying in the gutter in Watford at 4am, sobbing like a lost child and desperately trying to text your last will and testament to your family before you pass out from hypothermia. Choose life.

Yours faithfully,
Ed



A very warm welcome to our new students

breached. How? Simply, the AU is united by its life philosophy. Which is that having fun with mates is far more important than anything else you do at university.

Yes, we are the heathen outcasts who dare to fight the hegemonic orthodoxy within the LSE that demands that we gear our entire lives towards fellating the corporate world of

inally, a sporting society, our wider remit is to provide an entire world within the LSE for those who want it, a bubble in which AU members can live the life of degenerate hedonism they always dreamed university would expose them to, protected from the grating disapproval of the puritanical majority that rules the rest of the LSE. Such a raison-d'etre draws

Uncertain future for campus bookshop

Oliver Wiseman

The future of the LSE's campus bookshop is uncertain after The Economists' Bookshop's owners announced poor sales for the Christmas period and closures of twenty shops.

HMV Group, the owners of the Waterstone's chain of bookshops of which The Economists' Bookshop is part, reported a 14.1 per cent decline in like for like sales over the Christmas period. In part blaming this winter's severe weather and snowfall for keeping shoppers at home, the Group nonetheless plan on closing twenty of their 303 Waterstone's branches.

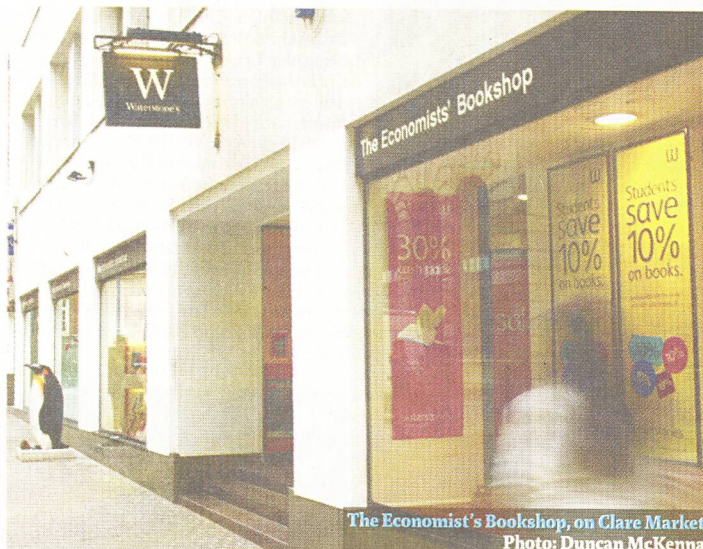
The decision is part of the company's adjustment to changing consumer habits, with more and more shunning high street shopping in favour of downloading music and, increasingly, books.

A spokeswoman for the company told the Beaver: "The closures will take place over the next twelve months, announced as and when an individual decision is made."

"There is no indication that branches catering to students are any more or less likely to close. The only indicator of likelihood of closure thus far is proximity to other stores. That said, this is certainly no rule of thumb."

With five branches within a mile of its Clare Market location, including the chain's flagship shop and two outlets that also cater to students, it would appear that The Economists' Bookshop's future is at stake.

The bookshop has had a long-standing presence on campus, originally existing as an independent shop before being bought by Waterstone's. It is a ten-



The Economist's Bookshop, on Clare Market
Photo: Duncan McKenna

ant of the School's, and its stock is bought in conjunction with department recommendations, ensuring that Students have a convenient place to purchase items on their often never-ending reading lists.

At present, Students' only campus alternative is Alpha Books, located within the Students' Union. Specialising in second-hand books, it seems unlikely that the shop would be able to meet the excess demand left by the closing of the Economists' Bookshop.

Third year government student, Scott MacDonald opined: "It would be like losing the LSE penguin all over again, The Economists' Bookshop is an institution and it would be a huge loss to the campus if it were to shut."

LOVE YOUR BOOKSHOP?

Do as the Beaver does;
petition HMV Group to keep
our Waterstone's open!

enquiries@HMVgroup.com

RAG hitchhikers get lost in Wales, raise £1,100

Ahmed Alani

LSE RAG held their latest fundraising initiative "RAG gets lost" on the final Saturday of Michaelmas Term.

Described as a 'reversed version' of the annual Hitchhike, forty-seven LSE students, in groups of two or three, were taken to an undisclosed location within the United Kingdom and told to "blag coach or train travel or beg for lifts in vans and cars" to return to LSE campus.

Students were driven by coach to Barry Island, Wales, where groups had to compete with one another to be the first back to campus. The pounding rain added to the challenge, impeding their efforts.

The Beaver spoke to one group, whose journey took them through Cardiff and Bristol. The pair said that a significant

portion of their hitchhike was undertaken in the back of a white van.

Second year anthropology undergraduate Leia Clancy said, "We were dropped off at Barry Island and had to get back to London. Wales turned out to be quite a nice place, but I can't really say the same for when we got to Bristol and the rest of England. Overall, it was quite rewarding because we raised a lot of money. The highlight, though, was definitely our pub lunch."

The event was hailed as a success by RAG President Alex Peters-Day, with suggestions that it will become a regular feature in the RAG calendar. She also congratulated the winning pair, Emir Nader and Lucy McFadzean, who completed their journey in six hours. The event was in support of one of RAG's elected charities, Refuge, and raised a total of £1,100.



RAG hitchhikers in the back of a van
Photo: Leia Clancy

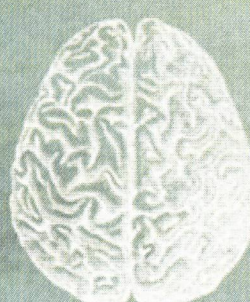
Diagram 24

Glycerol

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 \text{H}
 \end{array}$$

trihydroxyl alcohol

Human sciences: studying you, me and the world in the past, present and future.



Holiday Assignment:

Why is the sky blue?


What was the high point of the 20th century?

Do we need money to survive?

What was your teenage dream?

Illustrate the source of your greatest anxiety.

Photograph a paradox.



www.claremarketreview.com

Assignment 2 Deadline: 16th January

Assignment 3 Deadline: 15th February

Comment

Have you even read the Browne Review?

Why student protestors have lost the plot

Sam Williams



Innocent disinformation can sometimes have quite comical effects. In 1938, Orson Welles broadcast a series of news flashes on a major American radio station in which he reported a fictitious Martian invasion of New Jersey. It is said that up to six million people heard the spoof and, unable to tell fiction from fact, went into a wild panic. Homes were fled, shops were looted, and the police were inundated with frantic inquiries. Welles was slammed for his irresponsibility when it was established that the hysterical had had nothing to panic about after all; apologies abounded; the incident drew to a satisfactory conclusion.

Sometimes, though, disinformation can be less innocent, and can have more pernicious consequences. Police phone lines crashing for an afternoon is one thing; an entire generation being virulently politicised in favour of a specious and poorly-judged cause is quite another. The student protest movement has, in its public image at least, been hijacked by the vulgar and violent actions of a few of its members. This is regrettable, for it is not the destruction of private property and degradation of public monuments, unpleasant though it may be, which is the most dangerous aspects of these protests. No — the real danger is that the protests will continue to gain momentum without the grounds upon which they are based being properly challenged. It appears that the thinking behind the anti-fee rise movement is deeply flawed. As Orson

Welles whipped the residents of New Jersey up into a panicky frenzy by feeding them false information, student leaders in the UK today are doing very much the same to students. The myths and hypocrisies and dangers at the heart of the movement need urgently to be exposed.

A cursory glance at the findings of the Browne Review is enough to dispel several of the chief criticisms that its opponents have put forward. Unfortunately, even a cursory glance seems to have evaded the capabilities of a large number of these critics. Perhaps the most loudly shouted complaint has been that students from poorer backgrounds will be discriminated against if fees increase. It is claimed that higher fees will put a university education beyond the grasp of all but the most affluent school-leavers, and that as a result, the tuition fee hike will deprive a large segment of the young population of a university education. This, it is claimed, isn't fair. Such an argument might have force. However, in light of what Lord Browne actually recommended, it is utterly superfluous. The argument that fees discriminate against poorer students rests on fees being paid up front. In such cases, families would have to pay for their children to go to university. The higher the fees, the harder it would be for poor students and their families to afford a university education, and thus high fees would discriminate. But this is not the case. It isn't now, and it won't be come 2012. Fees may have risen, but families still do not have to fund the cost of their children's education up front. That the fees — whatever rate they are set at — are to be paid by the student, once they have graduated and are earning at least £21,000, and are in the first instance to be paid by government loans covering the full extent of the fees; is a fact that has been inexplicably ignored

by most anti-fees activists. However high the fees get, there will remain no financial obstacle to any student — whether prince or pauper — being able to afford them.

Funnily enough, the only conceivable barrier to students from poorer backgrounds applying to university to have emerged from the review is the continued insistence, by the protesters, that high fees will be discriminatory! Given the proposals, and the fact that the current student loan system will still exist, there is no sound financial reason why a poor student

A cursory glance at the findings of the Browne Review is enough to dispel several of the chief criticisms that its opponents have put forward

shouldn't apply to university if they are sufficiently clever. They might be deterred from applying, however, if they are consistently fed with the spurious message that they won't be able to afford the fees. This is something that should gravely concern anyone who has marched on London's streets in the name of fairness. What is fair about persuading someone not to bother applying for university simply because you have chosen to inaccurately

present the facts?

Embarking on a quixotic, but essentially harmless, campaign on the basis of a misunderstanding is a forgivable offence. But quixotic as it may be, the anti-fees campaign is not harmless.

There are two possible outcomes to the movement, both of which leave a lot to be desired. First, the demands might influence legislation, and fees will end up not increasing. The effects of such a victory would be very bad. Universities would be left with a massive funding gap between the money they need to successfully deliver a quality education, and the money they can get hold of. The government cannot reasonably be expected to continue to fund all universities and all courses at current rates. Not only does the barrenness of treasury coffers dictate this, but the argument generally used to say that it should (the idea of all graduates providing a social benefit as a result of their education) is looking increasingly vacuous and untenable. One would be hard pressed to identify the 'social benefit' associated with many third rate degrees being offered by third rate universities in the UK today. With subsidies reduced, fees represent universities' only other major source of income. By pressing for fees to be held to artificially low rates, protesters are in effect campaigning for a continuation of the decline in quality of UK universities. It is uncontroversial to say that such a decline will be inevitable if universities cannot get hold of sufficient funds.

On the other hand, the campaign might fail, and fees will increase as planned from 2012 onwards. Though our universities will have been saved, damage will still have been done. For one, the legitimacy of students as a political force will have been compromised. Though undoubtedly the work of an unrepresentative

minority, images of a smashed Millbank, a defaced Churchill, injured police officers and assaulted royals will hang like a spectre over student politics. The energy that students possess is an incredibly potent and exciting political phenomenon. Sadly, tarnishing the reputation of this potential energy by association with criminal damage and a bizarrely contradictory cause will have done the credibility of students and young people, in the eyes of policy-makers, no favours whatsoever.

The student protests against fee rises will prove to be one of the enduring features of this end of the decade. They have been well-organised, amassed astronomical support, and have been supremely effective in publicising their messages. These might have been good things. But a well-organised, popular and widespread campaign becomes a lethal danger when mechanised in favour of the wrong cause. The recent protests are an example in hand. They have criticised the Browne Review on the basis of things that it doesn't say. They have advocated the financial destruction of British universities. They have, by campaigning for 'education for all', devalued the very thing they are trying to propagate. They have failed to see that a university education is, first and foremost, a benefit to the student who walks away with the degree certificate. They have even directed their anger at the wrong party. The anti-fee rise project seems misguided. The Browne Review is not the enemy. The enemies are those people — our modern day Orson Welleses — politicising a generation of young people against it on weak and inconsistent premises. As with New Jersey's Martian scare, the sooner this episode can be drawn to a conclusion, the better. ☛

One Man, One Vote and a whole bunch of lies

Nick Clegg proves why he is just like any other politician

Jim Pomeroy



One would think that to be a 'Liberal' Democrat would require political values that are both liberal and democratic. To be the former, we can safely assume, would be to support the principles of individuality; to stand for the equality any individual is entitled to, regardless of their race, religion, gender or sexuality. This, of course, is simply stating the obvious. Indeed, we could probably assume as well that our supposed Liberal may hold some beliefs in accordance with the left, most probably a notion in supporting those less well off in society by ensuring the same opportunities are available to them regardless. Although, undoubtedly, these beliefs would be contended by some Liberals of the Right, it cannot be denied that any current Liberal Democrat MP would certainly subscribe to such generic and agreeable proposals.

Surely then it is a mere formality that a 'Liberal Democrat' would believe strongly in democracy, espouse its principles and uphold its attributes of free speech, honesty and transparency. Herein lies my quarrel with Nick Clegg and the 26 other Liberal Democrats who voted with him in support of raising tuition fees at the end of last year. Prior to last year's election, Nick Clegg and the rest of the party's parliamentary candidates signed a

pledge explicitly claiming that they would not vote in support of raising tuition fees within the next Parliament. As we well know, the pledge was broken by the turn of the year. Yet, at the time Clegg and his aides were so keen on this policy that it was made into a cornerstone policy of the campaign; the manifesto even went as far as claiming that the Lib Dems would eradicate fees altogether within five years of a majority Liberal Democrat government. Potential voters could be in no doubt as to where the party stood on fees. The issue is not however, with the potential harm that the policy will do to social mobility within this country, rather it is the lasting damage that the Liberal Democrat deception will do to the reputation of democracy within the British public.

After the expenses scandal of 2009, Clegg sought to cast himself as the face of 'new politics' in the UK. Clegg looked the nation in the eye and solemnly promised us that the era of 'broken politics' was at its end and that the time was ripe for a change. Clegg encouraged a renewed belief in politicians that the people could trust. Politicians who walked the walk instead of just talking the talk; who followed promises with policies. Unfortunately when Clegg held our gaze, he lied. For the 6.8 million members of the frustrated British public that lent their vote to Clegg and the Liberal Democrats because of their hope for new politics, he was the final straw. The student protests may well herald a coming era of political action that takes place on the streets rather than within town halls and Parliament. Indeed, to reverse the famous old adage, politicians will finally get the voters they

They were elected as Liberal Democrats and are now expected to vote, and govern as Liberal Democrats

deserve.

Some Liberal Democrats would have you believe that the rise in tuition fees was a necessary step in the face of the economic problems that face this country. Yet the reality is that the cuts taken by the coalition have far exceeded the initial cuts that were necessary to stabilise the deficit. It is almost impossible to believe that the Liberal Democrats came to such an incredible realisation of the scale of government debt once engaged in the coalition that they fundamentally changed their views on higher education funding, ceding to the idea of a market system while simultaneously acknowledging the need for extensive and expensive reform of both the NHS and the welfare system. Either the Lib Dems were never serious about funding higher education, and were merely playing for votes, or the spending on NHS reform, which will cost in the region of £20 billion, is an extremely ill advised expenditure.

Yet it is not the policy itself that is the issue, indeed the underfunding of higher education in this country is a disgrace in itself and something had to be done about it. The issue is the scandalous fraud that the Liberal Democrats have committed on the nation. If, as Clegg claims, they feel it necessary to bind themselves into this coalition for the 'good of the nation', it does not mean they must commit blindly to any right wing policy proposed by Cameron and co. Rather they should see it as their role to scrutinise Conservative policy and ensure their presence is very much felt.

After the coalition agreement had been reached in May 2010, much of the nation woke up believing that the worst

elements of the Conservatives — the socially conservative, euro-sceptic, Thatcherite factions — would be tempered by the Liberal Democrats, allowing a fiscally responsible and socially progressive government to rule. With four and a half years left of this parliamentary term, this may yet be possible. But how is it possible to believe in the moderating factor of the Liberal Democrats after they so easily caved in on a policy that was so close to the hearts of their core support.

After his promises to clean up politics, Clegg and his party achieved votes in the election. They were elected as Liberal Democrats and thus expected to vote, and now govern, as Liberal Democrats. So far they have not done so. For this reason I implore you to lend your support to the protesters as they come out in force once again in this new term. Although the Bill for tuition fee rises may have been passed in Parliament, there is still a vital debate to be won over the accountability of our public servants. A message must be sent that we will not accept a continuation of the lies and deceptions that have plagued our politics for too long. ☛

The Ed Miliband Challenge

What Labour's New Year's Resolutions need to cover

Benjamin Butterworth



The new year poses a new set of challenges for British politicians. Challenges greater than have been seen in a generation, as the UK economy sets about a painful road to reducing its structural deficit, and re-establishing stability for jobs. These aren't phrases Labour politicians have been saying too much of in recent months, least of all Ed Miliband, and mixed poll results would suggest the electorate has noticed. But if the Labour party is to pose a real alternative to the governing coalition, it is vital that 2011 sees the party birth a vision, not just back a student protest.

David Cameron used his new year's message to warn of a "tough year" for Britain, relaying the claim "we're all in this together" and that if we only stick by his deficit reduction plans, all will be fine. It seems that so far people are stomaching this. When the Office of Budget Responsibility (OBR) warned of a potential half a million public sector job losses, people flinched, but polls showed little change to the Conservative lead. The coalition has managed to effectively convince voters that their deep austerity measures aren't born of right-wing ideology, but necessity.

Ed Miliband must show this not to be the case. He may have been Miliband minor a few months back, but he's now one

half of a political barometer being swung farther to the right than it has in two decades. His response to government policies is crucial: there must not be a reactive lurch to the left, but a proactive march for the centre. The challenge Ed faces, as the leader of a new generation, is to show Labour not just to be a party of 'no minister', but instead an alive and progressive force able to understand ordinary lives.

There are a number of key areas he needs to tackle for this to happen, most notably economic competence. At the general election, Gordon Brown rightly argued the global financial crisis to be

If the Labour party is to pose a real alternative to the governing coalition, it is vital that 2011 sees the party birth a vision, not just back a student protest

a combination of irresponsible lending by banks and a sub-prime mortgage meltdown in the US. It was clear to those looking at the economic and political situation beyond our own shores, that the

crises faced in Britain were being repeated all over the developed world. The financial crisis was one triggered by an irresponsible elite, now costing the livelihoods of a responsible majority. This ought to be natural political ground for the left, and yet Labour systematically failed to convince the electorate it was on the side of workers.

Ordinary families stopped believing Labour could deliver fairness for middle England, and started believing it had spent thirteen years in bed with bankers and the work-shy.

If the party is to demonstrate a real dedication to Britain's hard-working, squeezed middle, it must pursue an economic rethink reflective of that which Blair underwent in 1994. The challenge faced is to make clear Labour isn't a party of deficit deniers, but of growth believers. That's why it's right that Labour argues against a cut in corporation tax whilst VAT is hiked, highlighting its

damaging effect on society's poorest and on small businesses. It's also right that Labour politicians endorsed student protests, and that all 257 Labour MPs voted against the higher education bill. But, and where Ed Miliband's leadership will either flourish or fail, is whether he can define not just what he doesn't believe in, but what it is that a fresh Labour party does believe in.

To tackle the electoral failings of the last year, Labour must this year look its policy restructure in the eye, suffering any

about-turn embarrassments head on if it is to seem fit for government. A cornerstone of this rethink should be welfare. The Conservatives and Liberal Democrats have revelled in lining their austerity measures with cuts to people's benefits, building on an exaggerated perception that welfare is claimed only by the work-shy and anti-social out to live off the state. This, of course, is untrue. But if the left is to regain authority on welfare – where it has all but none at present – it must define benefits as the pillar of a state supportive of personal security and aspiration, not idleness.

Indeed, like so many other policy motifs, the



Get up, stand up – with a little help from your Union

Why a mental health problem shared is a mental health problem halved

Hero Austin



The relationship between general well-being and mental health issues like depression and stress is widely recognised, yet we often polarise the solutions.

We think that to have high levels of well-being, we should be engaging with other people, with causes outside of ourselves, that we need to balance life and work and not get too engrossed in ourselves. However, when we introduce the label 'mental health' and talk about depression, we seem to switch suddenly to the idea that the solution lies solely within ourselves and that self-examination is the way forward, a theory expounded by many self-help books.

Our belief that self-assessment and examination is the sole way to resolve feeling low is often unhelpful. Peter Singer wrote about his many well-off, professional friends who spent an extraordinary amount of money on self-help guides and therapy. They did this because they felt

that something was, indefinably, just not quite right with their lives. Examining their lives closer, we see that they were people who had high stress jobs, were high-achievers, but rarely did something for the love of it and very importantly, didn't do things which engaged with or helped other people. Or, to put it more simply, they did not connect with a cause outside of themselves, and consequently reported feelings of emptiness. The belief that self-examination was the sole solution stemmed from their conviction that the thing that was wrong with their lives was themselves, and consequently it was the self that needed to be fixed. Yet no amount of self-examination would remove that feeling – here it is about lifestyle in a very fundamental sense.

To take an example from the other side, we can look to a person called Gary, who said, "I only started feeling I had a purpose in life when I did work with YoungMinds; I'm on their panel representing young people who've had mental health problems, including myself. And since I've changed my focus from helping myself to helping other people I've felt like I'm actually part of something". The idea behind engaging outside of oneself, i.e. instead of going to spa by yourself to relax go to a meditation group, or instead of reading by oneself, teach someone else to, lies in the idea that humans generally

like to feel part of a community and to feel necessary. One of the best ways to feel necessary is by doing something that extends beyond yourself – you are then important to others.

The down side to this approach is, of course, a failure to recognise mental health problems when they do arise. We explain them away by saying that these feelings occur because our life isn't quite right, and 'if so and so were different, then I would feel better'. There is, with this outlook, a danger of falling into the opposite trap of believing that mental health issues can be resolved solely through a change in lifestyle, which would happen if people only put a little more effort in. This is known as the 'pull yourself up by the bootstraps' approach, which is a profoundly unhelpful non-solution.

However, by pointing out that the way we conduct our lives and the way we engage with other people has an impact on our mental health is not to diminish the importance of counselling and therapy; they are indisputably often very effective ways to address depression. But it is to say that when you consider the impact of lifestyle on well being, and well being on mental health issues, especially stress and depression, it is obvious that we need to view potential solutions in a more fluid, holistic way.

The other thing to do to mitigate

against the failure to recognise mental health problems, particularly depression, is to inform yourself of the possible symptoms, which range from having difficulty making decisions, to being more susceptible to colds and flu, to losing your appetite. And in the spirit of engaging in matters beyond yourself, make sure to look out for your friends as well. If you notice that they develop erratic sleeping patterns, withdraw from you or are not looking after themselves (showering/eating), amongst many other things, this can also be a sign that their mental health might be in need of a little sprucing up. You can help by being ready to listen, encouraging them to do the things that are important to them, but ultimately you can ask for help.

LSEers in particular would probably do well to remember that a high stress, individualistic approach to life is probably not most conducive to general well being, and that people often feel better when they are engaged in causes outside of themselves. But this has to be coupled with an ability to recognise issues when they do arise, so inform yourself, and if at all in doubt ask for help!

Hero Austin is the LSE Students' Union Community and Welfare Officer

If you would like to discuss any of the issues contained within this piece, please contact su.advice-centre@lse.ac.uk

Conservatives have misunderstood middle England on welfare. Their abolition of the universality of child benefit, introduced by a Labour government in 1946, caused uproar among usually Tory supporting families. Child benefit worked as a real security net for families, being a guarantor-by-government that there would always be something in the pot to provide for their children. Those families, often who've paid most into the tax pot, have had this security robbed from them. What the supposed new breed of 'compassionate Conservatives' failed to understand, is that redistribution of wealth isn't only about those at the very bottom, but also those who can sometimes feel at the bottom of the pecking order: the squeezed middle. For wealth redistribution to offer genuine security, it must be available to help anybody who can fall on hard times, not just specific groups.

If Labour is to succeed in reclaiming the progressive centre ground, an economically coherent argument has to come first. Ed's message thus far has appeared to avoid recognising how worried ordinary people feel about the deficit. The fresh, Miliband argument must show that deficit answers lie not in ideological, small-state ground, but in the sort of human-minded pragmatism afforded only by the left. If he can achieve that, then Labour will once more house the aspirations and ambitions for all in our society.

Quick COMMENT

How useless are New Year's Resolutions?

The only promise you can make yourself at the start of a new year is that you will break all other promises within a week.

– Kunal Gupta, 2nd year BSc Economics

I don't think they're useless but I do think they're badly timed and highly insincere for the majority of those who make them.

– Chu Ting Ng, 2nd year LLB Laws

I broke eight on the first day.

– Katrina Mather, 1st year LLB Laws

Totally pointless, in that all my major achievements in life (very few) have been unintentional.

– Sachin Patel, Executive Editor, The Beaver

Don't spend any money on New Year's Resolutions. I just finished paying my bills from last year...I went four times.

– Bianca Nardi, 2nd year BSc International Relations

I just check-listed all 4 resolutions from 2010... Lol, JK I'm still a fat, needy smoker with no purpose in life.

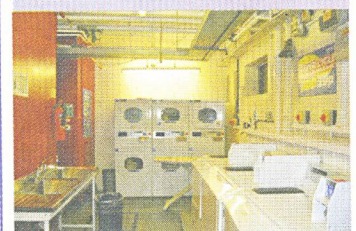
– Anonymous, BSc 3rd year Management

They're great but people shouldn't take them so seriously. Don't feel bad about breaking them.

– Angelina Castellini, 2nd year BSc International Relations

Resolutions need to be more outcome based. Hence mine are 'get a first' and 'get a job'

– Oliver Wiseman, Managing Editor, The Beaver



NEXT WEEK...

How balls is leaving halls?

Send in your submissions!

Email comment@thebeaveronline.co.uk

All I want for Christmas is You?

Why Mariah Carey lied through her teeth and everyone believed her

Priyan
Patel



Christmas is the most wonderful time of the year
Yeah right.
I'm sick of Santa. I'm sick of Rudolf's stupid red nose. I'm sick of pushing my way through a sea of mothers with push chairs, all trying to grab for that perfect Christmas present for their precious little angel. Come on, they'll grow out of it in a couple of months anyway.

Christmas should be a time for reflection, relaxation. A time when we give thanks for what has come, what is to come. But has anybody really had that perfect Christmas where we all sit in front of the open fire with chestnuts roasting?

It all starts with presents. And unfortunately, this really can be the be all and end all of the holiday. If you get the present wrong, that's it; somebody's not getting that special moment beneath the mistletoe. So we all set out with a vague idea of what we are going to buy, but always hopeful for that one, the holy grail of presents. To stumble upon it would not only save Christmas, but probably the coming months until Valentine's (and that's a different story altogether). But then you hit the shops. Shelf after shelf of those Christmas gifts which will be the funniest thing that has ever happened. For about 5 minutes. Or the jumper? Oh wait, that was last year's present. You spend hours throwing yourself from store to store, at first enjoying the hunt, thinking it's going to be lurking around each corner. Then it hits you like a wet fish in the face – that sinking feeling in the stomach. Panic sets in. Sweat comes streaming off your brow like the entire Pacific Ocean has just emptied its contents through your pores. And it's so bloody cold it'll probably freeze into icicles anyway. Give up, get safe and dry. Socks for dad. Bath salts for mum. Overly cheesy stuffed toy for the girlfriend. Job done. —

You don't care anymore. Except you do. With that feeling of regret and panic deep in your stomach, Christmas day sets in. And that brings with it a whole minefield of disasters. Gathering round the Christmas tree, avoiding the awkward stares and fake cries of pleasure as wrapping paper is strewn across the battlefield like bloody evidence of "you just didn't put enough thought into this". 'I've always wanted this' roughly translates to 'Sure, why don't you show me a cliff to jump off?' and 'Oh, you remembered!' is actu-

ally 'Yeah, I hated it the first time. Nothing's changed'.

The problem is that thanks to Hallmark and Clinton's we find that Christmas is just about the colourful boxes under the tree that have our names on it. Don't get me wrong. I love presents just as much as you do. But when getting a crappy yellow tie for Christmas makes me hate 25th December I think something's amiss. I forget about the togetherness this holiday is supposed to foster. I hate being in the room with the people who couldn't pay even the slightest attention to what my shirt size is. And the delicious eggnog just becomes a vial of nausea-inducing raw egg.

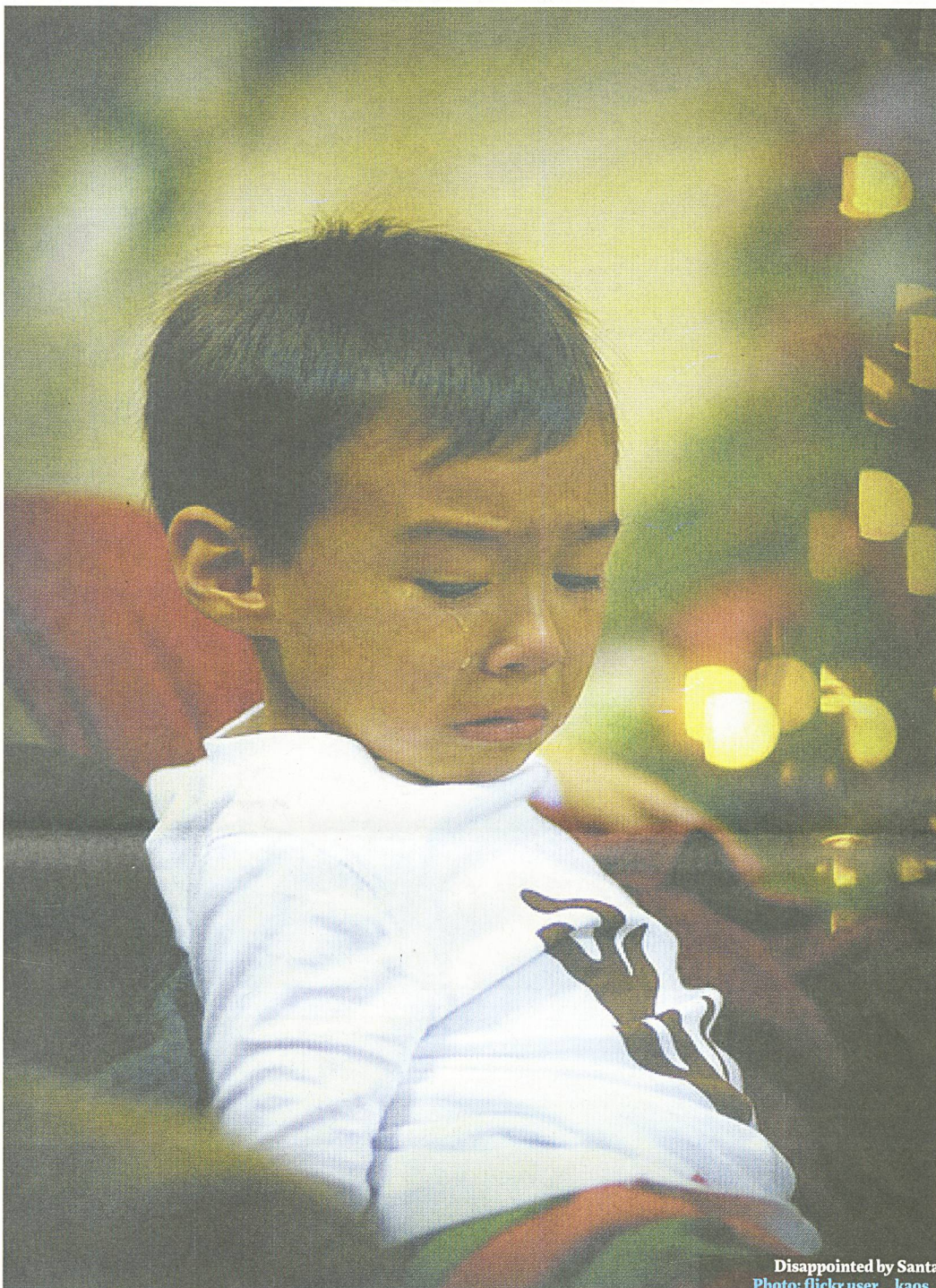
What exasperates the situation even more is just how much the media pumps in a mindset that until we don't get a diamond tiara or a platinum record, Christmas isn't Christmas. Our expectations of the presents we should get are raised to impossible heights. Heights that even the most skilled gift-givers can find dizzying. And why is that bad?

BECAUSE IT HELPS NO ONE.

You get stressed trying to find the present. You get disappointed when you get the present. Classic 'damned if you do, damned if you don't' scenario.

The point I'm trying to make is that we've become too obsessed with that perfect Christmas, which can only come from the perfect present. I don't have the stamina that Arnold Schwarzenegger had, destroying a float in 'Jingle All The Way' to get his kid a stupid action figure and I shouldn't have to have it. I like something and I think you'd appreciate it. I'm sorry, it's not an internship at Goldman Sachs but hey, it's still a present. Why does it have to be an astronomical epic version of a little box with a bow?

So here's the thing. When Louisa May Alcott said "Christmas won't be Christmas without any presents" somebody should have stuffed coal in her stocking. Everyone should stop expecting and start enjoying. ☺



Disappointed by Santa
Photo: flickr user _kaos_

Letters to the Editor

Sir – Whilst picking up and reading a copy of this week's Beaver, we came across a quote by our very own elected Educational Officer Ashok Kumar in the "Students speak out over occupation" article to encourage EGM attendance. It read: "the occupations helped bring down apartheid, and can help now".

We find it deeply offensive that Mr Kumar decided to draw parallels between the current unrest over rising tuition fees to years of legal, racial segregation.

We in this country do not have a human right to a university education, and as much as we are against the increase in fees, such a comparison is both extreme and unwarranted. A elected representa-

tive of the student body should be more concerned over the welfare and satisfaction of the students currently at LSE rather than making absurd comments.

But to equate this to the struggle of both black and white Africans and their personal struggle to obtain their basic human rights is ludicrous. The intent of this letter is neither pro or anti-occupation, but to point out that such statements are unnecessarily emotive and may discourage future participation.

Yours sincerely,

Yodit Dubale & Priscilla Nassolo

GOT SOMETHING TO RANT ABOUT?

Send your submissions, letters and gripes to

comment@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Photo

12 January 2011 | The Beaver

Want to join our photography team?
Contact us at
photography@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Snowtographs

LSE's look at our international Winter Wonderland



Ekaterina Radkovskaya



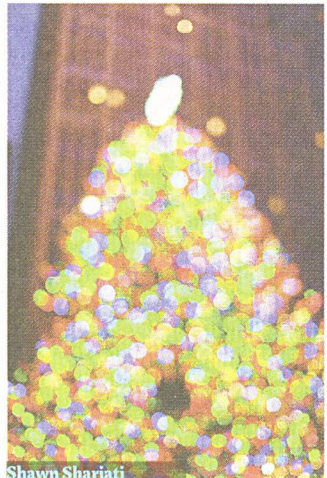
Saffaan Qadir



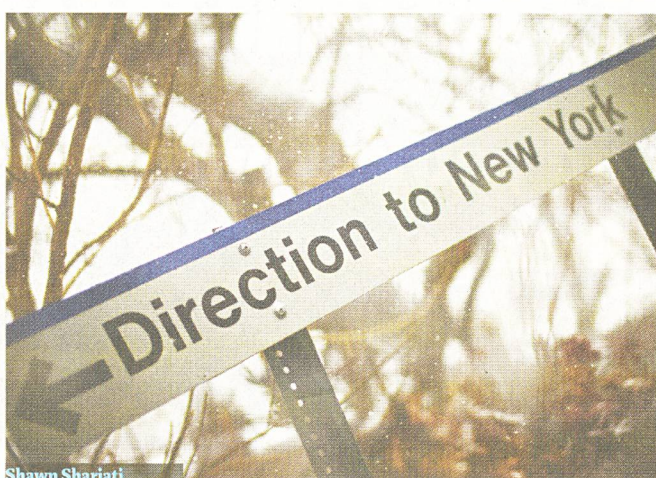
Liam Brown



Shawn Shariati



Shawn Shariati



Shawn Shariati



Saffaan Qadir

Social

Christmas at Heathrow

For **Joe Wenner**, it's terminal (1)

This past Christmas Eve, a mother and child lay huddled together on the hard linoleum floor of a giant warehouse outside London. Stretching her arm across the child's waist, the mother adjusted their heat reflective blanket — its metallic texture and sound suggesting the comfort of aluminum foil. Their belongings, enough to fit into three suitcases, lay scattered along the perimeter of their indoor campground.

Within this large room, this scene repeated every ten feet. Over 2,000 men, women and families were all spending Christmas weekend without a tree, without presents and without a home.

Yet this was no homeless shelter. This was Terminal 1 of Heathrow Airport. And as an international student needing to cross an ocean to get home, this was also an intimate element of my winter break.

The airport's delayed and waffling response to six inches of snow on 19th December has been well reported, and expressions of outrage have been prolific. And while I was fortunate enough not to take temporary residence at the airport, my own experience as a distraught passenger is one I will likely not forget.

As the snow began to fall midday on December 18th, I was actually thrilled. My girlfriend was visiting and snow seemed only to enhance the beauty of London at Christmas-time. True, our flights were relatively soon — her's on the 21st and mine on the 22nd — but both were more than three days away. To me, it seemed disruption would be minimal. A day of delays, then back to normal air traffic.

But over the next few days, it was clear that this would be something of an ordeal.

Flights from the weekend were predictably cancelled. Yet on the 20th, Heathrow announced it would continue operating at only one-third capacity the next two days. With no direct contact from either Heathrow or her airline, my



“
Until then, I hadn't realised a flight status could be similar to Nick Clegg's position on raising student fees
”

girlfriend was left manically refreshing Heathrow's list of operating flights as her departure time neared. Over the twelve hours preceding her departure, her flight was put on, taken off, then again put on the list. Until then, I hadn't realised a flight status could be similar to Nick Clegg's position on raising student fees. Still, when it was three hours prior to flight time, we decided to leave for the airport and hope for the best, capriciousness of Heathrow be damned.

When we entered Terminal 1, it was as described above: bodies everywhere, wrapped in what looked like tin foil and surrounded by luggage. Stepping over a number of sleeping passengers and missing outstretched limbs by inches, we manoeuvred my girlfriend's bags toward the check-in counter. However, we were soon stopped. Airport officials had set up a makeshift barrier in the terminal. Only those with scheduled and on-time flights could pass. We joined the line.

One by one, passengers approached the entrance guarded by tall Heathrow employees. Disturbingly similar to a weekend visit to Ministry of Sound, the

guard would scan his clipboard for each would-be entree's flight. If you're on the list, you're partying for 8 hours (flying across the Atlantic). If not, you're left waiting outside. My girlfriend's flight? On the list. With a kiss goodbye, I retraced my steps home, anxious to learn my own fate.

My relief upon making it back to Bankside turned to disappointment as I checked my email — my own flight for the next day had been cancelled. After repeated calls to British Airways, I gradually moved through the grieving stages, eventually accepting the fact I had just joined the thousands of travelers fallen victim to winter woes. But, I still needed closure. Could anyone have predicted this particular Heathrow mess?

In retrospect, one of the most prophetic statistics is the amount of money spent on the airport's winter preparation. In the past year, airport operator BAA allocated £500,000 to improving Heathrow's snow vehicles and de-icing equipment. To understand just how inadequate this number is, compare it to Gatwick, which is in the midst of a £8 million overhaul of its winter preparation system despite being a significantly smaller airport. Predictably, Gatwick was able to open all of its runways a full day before Heathrow.

So as Heathrow and its BAA owners scrambled to clear their runways with limited resources, hundreds of families did their own scrambling for a place to sleep. With nearby lodgings filled to capacity, Heathrow terminals were soon temporary Christmas campgrounds. And so, many mothers, fathers and their children, wrapped in metallic blankets, spent Christmas underneath the departures board.

Nevertheless, I hope the families that were turned away from the full hotels took comfort in the fact that, historically, they are in good company. Though the stable at least had a manger.

Queerly good fun

Pearl Wong discovers a land of outlandish costumes and cheap drinks

As an American student studying abroad at LSE this year, I have realised like many before me that London is an expensive place to live in.

Contrary to various assumptions about Americans, I am not well off enough to afford a £3.20 pint of cider or £3-£4 for a shot and mixer whenever I venture into London's nightlife.

Fortunately, this year a new club night entered the fray providing cheap drinks, central location, and great music. Surprisingly, many LSE students have yet to hear about the new club night despite its location, which is none other than the Underground Bar and Three Tuns. It is a club that offers something for everyone — whether you are gay, straight, gender-nonconformist, or just curious, QueerlyOut is sure to deliver to you early weekend fun every Thursday night.

I can still remember the spectacular Halloween-themed night at QueerlyOut. The undead, Batman's Robin, pirates, Morphsuits, and Freudian slips gathered in the Underground for the first of a four day Halloween bash around London. The taps began pouring at 10 o'clock sharp, and the fog machine rolled on throughout the night disguising some of the more frightening fancy dress outfits until they got too close. The mix of Lady Gaga, Rihanna, Katy Perry, and Cheryl Cole certainly brought out some lively moves

from the undead corpses, enhancing their various rotting wounds. The live DJs are always from some of London's hottest clubs, and spin the hottest mixes in current dance, RnB, pop and chart hits.

Packed as it was the wait for drinks never took more than 10 minutes and never cost skywards of £3 per shot and mixer. Some vampires were even generous enough to buy a girl a drink — and who could say no to the special Grindr cocktail or a 99p tequila shot? Combined with a low entry fee (usually £2 or £3 depending on the time you get in), QueerlyOut is both fun and affordable — a rare combination to be sure.

Of course, Halloween was only one of many themed nights at QueerlyOut. Perhaps some of us remember the Thanksgiving Extravaganza with American flags hung around the ceiling of the Underground, or the eighties party that featured neon tights in various colours and complimentary shutter shades from the DJ. Every Thursday brings new thirst, and QueerlyOut has a way of bringing back a dedicated crowd whilst also attracting newcomers.

But that's not all. Every week, a different charity, service provider or employer is given an area of the venue to raise awareness of themselves or a campaign, provide service referrals i.e. sexual health, counselling or fundraising. So far, the London Lesbian and Gay Switchboard,

London Friend, the Albert Kennedy Trust, the Terrence Higgins Trust and Inside & Out, among others, have all shown their support. A great element of social value only adds to the night.

With the start of a new term, QueerlyOut begins again on 13th January featuring the first live performance by Marla, a London and Los Angeles based artist, who delivers a new, catchy sound with clever lyrics and a distinctive voice. Certainly, live performances will not be the only twist to QueerlyOut as a New Year rolls in. Other surprises this year include a term membership card, more live performances, working more with employers and more of the famous themed nights, including a Valentine's Day treat in February!

QueerlyOut runs every Thursday from 10pm to 3am in The Underground, East Building, Houghton Street, Aldwych, London WC2A 2AE. Entrance is £3 for members (sign up for free at www.queerlyout.com/members), £4 with a flyer or NUS card, and £5 for others. Most drinks are 99p - £1.50. QueerlyOut is proudly media sponsored by PinkNews.co.uk and Attitude Magazine.



LSE Diary

Marion Koob's linguistic trip to Madrid

Madrid. Its most striking sight are families, whole and gathered, posing for photographs in the main square, Plaza Mayor, and treading along in small loud groups, young children in tow. There is not much room to move around in the city's pedestrian arteries; the alleys, whether in length or width, are bogged down by masses of strolling coats. And their jaunt has little purpose: contrary to London's purposeful gait, the point here is the activity itself; taking relatives out for an outing on a Saturday evening, stopping along perhaps for a few drinks or in one of the city's many snack-shops, where one can buy, for instance, a small baguette filled with deep-fried calamari. While the stomach does not sit well with this kind of delicacy, the mind agrees to it perfectly.

In this great familial splendour, the city thus escapes London's Darwinian logic. After all, Zone 1's demography reflects the principle of the survival of the fittest; few children and no aged beings tread. After months of living alongside suits and other forms of elegant dress, the sight of age group extremes in the centre of the Spanish capital was an absolute relief. Considering London as a space in which individualism and ambition are primordial, it is good to be reminded that somewhere the concept of group solidarity and attachment still exists – in whichever way it may take form.

I digress however, as this late December trip was not to reminisce on the values of familial quality time, but rather to get a feel for the country whose language I had been learning. Since the beginning of my pursuit, I had not had the chance to experience it 'for real'; most of my encounters or conversations in the tongue had been manufactured for its practice. I was

to be satisfied; Spanish is one of those languages well worth learning, given that no one within the country speaks much of anything else. I say this in contrast to experiences of fellow language students in Germany or the Netherlands, where for instance, a native speaker will switch to flawless English as soon as a trace of a foreign accent is recognised. In contrast, the Spanish expect you to understand them. All the better.

Madrid is easy to get around; the metro is in good shape, but staying around La Puerta de Sol, Grand Via or Plaza Mayor should avoid any necessity for you to even have to use it. Aside from the majestic Museo del Prado and the Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, the capital's principal asset is its atmosphere. Everything is packed and more importantly, loud. Take, for instance, the flea market south of La Latina, where packed crowds slowly stream past each stall, overflowing in neighbouring streets. People trade books and furniture, but also clothes, in much greater volumes.

Bars are a greatly informal matter and encompass a wider spectrum of social encounters that they would perhaps here. Naturally, with the tapas culture, there is a lot more eating taking place. Pleasingly, the staff seem solely anxious to serve you the stuff, accepting payment almost casually. Any sort of formal schedule, whether opening hours or meal meeting times, are pushed back approximately three hours later than what is considered normal in 'northern Europe', to the immense joy of all student tourists.

The city's forgotten secret, however, is San Lorenzo de El Escorial. The imposing construction, one of the biggest in Europe, has served as a monastery, a school, and a royal palace. The hour's drive away from Madrid perhaps discourages many visitors; yet, upon seeing

the building, the practical obstacles are quickly forgotten. The dimensions cannot be described other than, gigantic. In this it succeeds wonderfully; throughout the visit, it is impossible to feel irremediably dwarfed, whether by a staircase, courtyard columns, or its Basilica's altar. While visiting the first few rooms of its painting museum, I amused myself by comparing the space to the size of my flat – on average, these doubled the size of my modest subterranean student dwelling. As we walked on, however, I quickly gave up. On the whole, the monastery felt bereft of human presence, and the thought of all of this empty space ceased to seem so funny.

Among many other things, this travail had taught me that my language skills were not quite up to the standard that I had wished them to be. True enough, comprehension, both read and spoken is always easier than formulating the sentences independently. Nonetheless, my wounded ego took me, while I was walking around el FNAC (let us broadly describe it as a media store) to the language section. Pettily looking at French and English grammar manuals for a split second comforted my feeling that I was not alone in my 'struggle'.



Clair (market) voyance

Fahd Humayun peers into his crystal ball to find a 2011 of promise and optimism

There is safety in familiarity, they say, a comfort bred by association. 365 days is after all a significantly long time. The first days of the new year are often similar to wading into the deep blue for the first time; the mind furiously records and analyses each detail trying to make sense of unfamiliar territory. Yet New Year's Day is quite possibly the one single holiday that unites people across a plethora of cultures and time zones; a countdown to midnight followed by fireworks in the night sky reminiscent of good old unadulterated fun, the kind that harks back to everything from Hannukah sit-downs to 4th of July picnics. Throw in a couple of sangria get-togethers and a diary of new year's resolutions just for good measure and you have enough to get a decent party going.

2010 was the year that gave us Inception and The Social Network. It was also the year that flights across Europe and America were grounded for weeks after a volcanic eruption took place in Iceland back in April. Early in the year life in Haiti came to a standstill following a massive 7.0 earthquake, and later during the summer floods wreaked havoc in South Asia. Indiscreet information leaks ousted Colonel Gaddafi's Ukrainian nurse. In London students protested against the hike in university fees, and Russia and Qatar won their respective bids to host the World Cup in 2018 and 2022. Talks at the Mexico conference for climate change in December "fell woefully short of action needed".

But that was then and this is now. If we could predict what was going to happen in 2011, that would be quite something. Unfortunately that isn't (entirely) possible. Pundits could almost be forgiven for being prepared to dismiss 2011 as merely a continuation of much of the same. As undergraduates, though, our idealism is said to be incorrigible. We look towards brighter futures and greener pastures. If we were to pick up a pen and sketch a word cloud it would surely contain the words 'peace', 'breakthrough' and 'resolutions acted upon' as manifestations of our optimism as opposed to 'broken promises', 'deadlock' and 'crisis' which figured rather widely in the newspapers of the past year.

The beginning of each year is marked by a rise in popular sentiment to create those greener pastures, to be that generation to that finally made a difference, took a stand, brought the change.

We could even take the prediction game a step further without crossing over into rocket-science territory. Wild guess: at the LSE there's probably going to be a mass exodus to the library, with students ambitiously diving straight into the readings set for the first week of Lent Term with complete abandon, in keeping with newly formed resolutions. There will also be a much wider resolve (hopefully) to make the most of the year, come what may – to take the good with the bad and celebrate each day as an opportunity gained rather than time lost. Idealists through and through, the glass will forever be half full. Its going to be cold and rainy for most

of the next eleven weeks, an entire term that, for us, is equivalent to somebody else's fifty-two. But to temper the weather there will be an influx of society messages and events warming our Outlook inboxes, together with the promise of an array of engaging public lectures and flyers announcing the theme of the first Crush of term. And 29th April will be a bank holiday. As you can tell, here at the LSE we make our own sunshine.

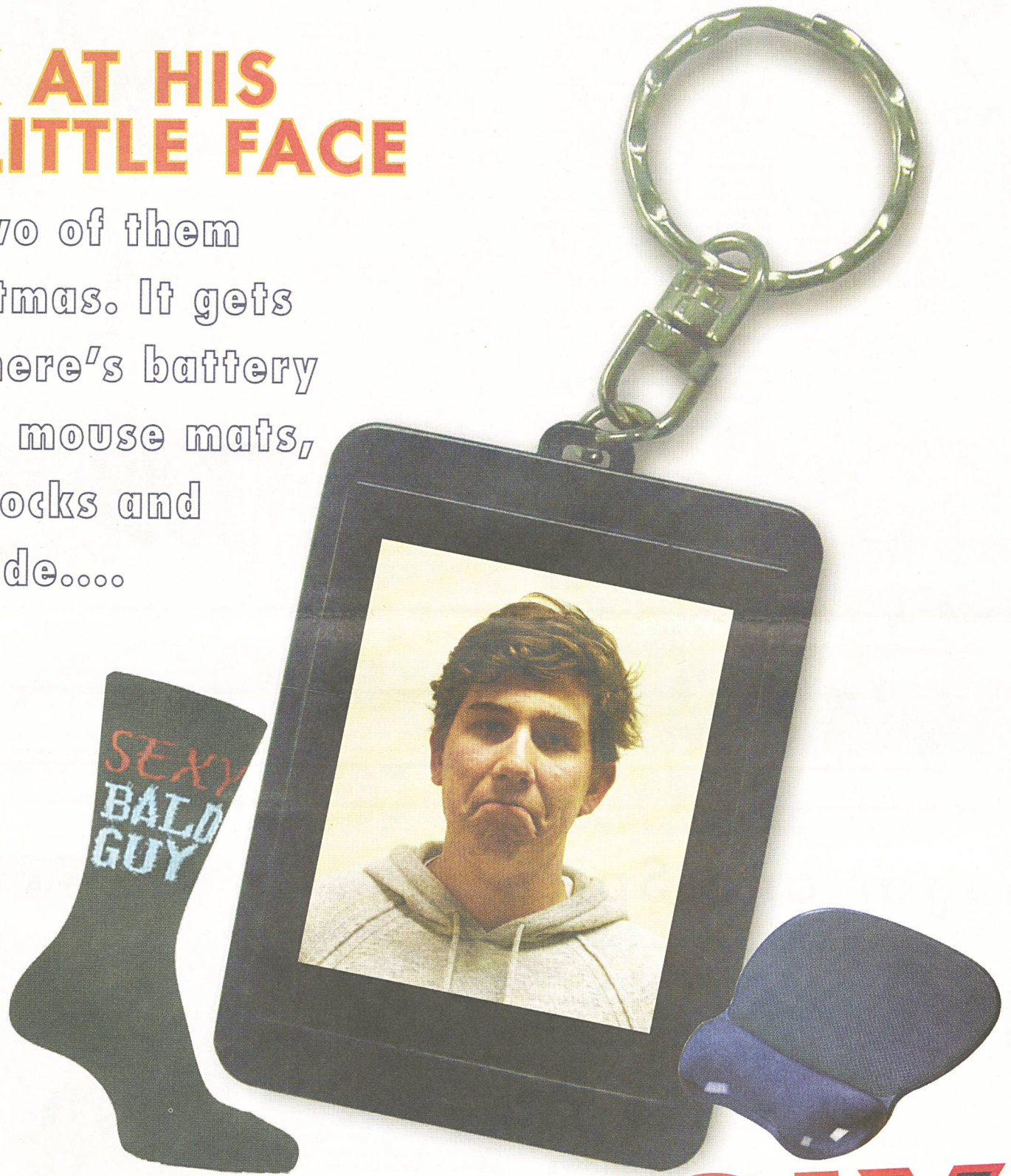
At the risk of oversimplification, the new calendar is the result of a tried and tested system. But life is as much about the variables as it is about the constants, enjoying the new without disregarding the old. So while a little prediction here and there doesn't do anybody any harm, here's to simultaneously raising the glass to embracing the uncertainty of a new year, and the deep blue uncharted waters waiting to be tested for the first time. And here's to hoping that somewhere down the line we can look back and feel we made a difference in 2011. Unflinchingly.



PART B

LOOK AT HIS SAD LITTLE FACE

He got two of them for Christmas. It gets worse: there's battery chargers, mouse mats, novelty socks and more inside....



STOCKINGLY BAD GIFTS

Closet Clearout

Alice Leah Fyfe makes a resolution

The New Year brings the excitement of the new S/S11 collections. In December, **Esthetica** held a Press and Buyers' day to showcase the fruits of the new season's innovative and ethical. **Yan Giet** went along to investigate.



Not so long ago, 'ethical fashion' used to be a redundant phrase, reserved only for the forsaken cast-away clothing belonging to your local Oxfam store.

That was clearly before **Esthetica** decided to burst into the fashion scene; revolutionising our pre-conceptions of what it means to be truly 'ethical' - as well as paving the way for eco-fashion to become a mainstay fix on the fashion calendar. **The British Fashion Council** decided to launch Esthetica in 2006, as a channel to promote and celebrate fashion designers with an ethical conscience; and it has gone from strength to strength ever since. As I arrive at the distinguished Somerset House for Esthetica S/S '11 Press Day (providing a splendid and magnificent backdrop for the day), it commences with an informal brunch which gives me time to delve into a few of the designer collections and to unmask the genius behind the brands.

Dr Noki of street fashion label, **NHS** instantly exudes an eccentric vibe that is visibly translated onto his somewhat psychedelic collection; which can only be described as the fashion vision of an hallucinatory acid trip. Indeed, the ethical aspect to Dr Noki's collection is not typical in the conventional sense; he utilises the concept of a 'DIY sustainable canvas' in which he refers to his customers as 'NHS patients' whereby, purchased garments can be taken back in-store for 'aftercare services' for example to 'add extra sleeves.' As you do. Next you'll be telling me that his store is in the style set-up of a hospital ward, which incidentally is exactly what you would find if you visited Dr Noki's NHS store on 123 Bethnal Green Road in Shoreditch. Ethical fashion clearly knows no bounds; and if this pioneering way of recycling fashion through 'aftercare services' is the way forward, then viva la revolution. Vogue has also latched onto Dr Noki's alternative flair and has given him press coverage which firmly cements his place in fashion history.

I was also delighted to meet **Ada Zanditon** who has been gaining silent notoriety for her signature pieces, especially since the success of her first graduate collection which stirred up nothing short of a critic storm during London Fashion Week. Beyond the prehistoric dinosaur allusion to her fashion masterpieces, there is a story of searing intelligence that is as subtle as it is apparent. Speaking to Ada Zanditon, I discover

Resolutions can be fun. They do not have to be painful, sweaty or without chocolate (that is, if you don't mind not losing weight). They can be exciting and creative, products of vivid imagination and ruthless decision making, a thoroughly rewarding and cathartic process.

You can feel fab in other ways, like reorganising your clothes. They are, after all, nine tenths of your appearance. I'm talking about the wardrobe overhaul.

Last week, my flatmate and I made a date with our closets; to empty out our entire wardrobe, drawers, boxes, bags, trunks - the lot - onto the floor and

how eco-fashion is going to become a permanent fixture in mainstream fashion, banishing fast-fashion into a thing of the past, forever.

Another key issue raised through the Q&A session was the concern that



the inflated costs of ethical fashion being a barrier for those on a shoe-string budget. Esthetica curator - **Orsola de Castro**, gave a readily assured answer that she 'aspires to see the day where ethical fashion is to become democratised; when it becomes a necessity rather than a luxury of the affluent few.' Even low budget stores such as Primark are beginning to understand the importance of eco-fashion with placards emblazoned across their flagship Oxford Street store; gently assuring us of their factory workers humane living conditions. The future of fashion may be as volatile as ever but only one thing is for certain - eco-fashion is here to stay.

that she combines her knowledge of mathematics, sciences and ecosystems to harness and infuse into her ethical collection, hence the angular and beautifully constructed nature of her garments.

Swiftly moving onto the next rail, new womenswear label **PARTIMI** is also one to watch - with its striking contrast between romantic resonance and its architectural approach inciting provocative emotions to the observer. **PARTIMI's** designer, having originated from an ecology-based 60's hippy sensibility background naturally gave the label its ethical grounding, and even has a previous collection donating 5% of profits to an charity for an overfishing cause. **PARTIMI S/S '11** collection is inspired by the designer grandmother's priceless costumes belonging to the Ballet Russes the French Ballet troupe who were active circa 1920's and responsible for much of the French cultural movements across the fashion, music and dance spheres. Ballet is everywhere this season - you only have to look at Natalie Portman's forthcoming ballet biopic movie 'Black Swan' for telling signs - so head over to the V&A galleries where the Ballet Russes costumes are currently being exhibited. If the V&A gallery fails to entice you for being too far, then come along to LSE's Fashion Show on the 4th February where **PARTIMI** and various other designers from Esthetica will be showcasing a truly exciting catwalk event not to be missed.

As the humdrum of chatter dies down in the Esthetica room, we are then treated to a dose of tenor singing by the renowned **David Gough** who is accompanied by a theatrical pianist, seemingly possessed. The final lingering note brings us abruptly to the Q&A session with panellists from the Daily Telegraph, Sunday Times, The Observer and the Esthetica curator to discuss the core purpose of the press day - ethical fashion. The key buzzword that came across from the panellist discussion was the concept of 'Fast Fashion' in which 'Eco-Fashion' was the clear antithesis of the former. If 'Fast Fashion' was the Big Mac of the food world, 'Eco-Fashion' was definitely portrayed to be the fairtrade banana. It appears that increasingly, the younger generation are being instilled with the notion of ethical awareness in the fashion supply chain; from sourced materials to factory workers well-being, there's no escaping the fashion conundrum. Coupled with the idea of a wardrobe becoming an almost 'time-capsule' for 'timeless pieces', we can begin to see



Dr Noki Collection



Nina Dolcetti

London Fashion Week is imminent! The stunning collections will be on show and for sale in Somerset House in late February. Get your tickets for LFW online now! They'll sell out quick and it's always a brilliant day out. londonfashionweekend.co.uk

waded through the pile. It took a good eight hours with tea (Glee) breaks but it was the most satisfying thing I had done in a long time. The New Year is a time to dust those cobwebs from the back of the wardrobe. It is a truth universally acknowledged that

So get rid of it. It will make space for so many more possibilities. Especially those ones with the tags which you were hanging onto, feeling so guilty at their neglect. And those jeans which used to fit, but for whatever reason don't anymore. Goodness gracious, you didn't slave away on the treadmill to fit into a pair of old jeans, did you? Buy some new ones!

So, Rihanna and Gaga blaring (this part is interchangeable), we embarked on the task of the year. Sorting everything into piles of keeps, maybes and throws. Keeps are the ones you wear almost everyday, the staples and the favourites. And the statement purchases you spent a fortune on because it would just be too painful to let those slip away. They should last a lifetime. Then comes the fun part. The throws. Most definitely the pieces you had forgotten existed. And the ones which trigger the "ohhh I remember this!" response. The ones that don't fit, and the ones that "just aren't you" any more. And then the maybes sit in the middle, perhaps because you've just got too many pairs of black jeans, or too many oversized jumpers. Keep one of each and get rid of the rest. It's ruthless, but so satisfying. You're aiming to reduce your wardrobe by half I reckon. Or a third, depending how much of a hoarder you have been over the years.

But when I say "throw it" I don't actually mean put it in the rubbish (unless it's irreparable). Oh no, I mean take some photos and sell sell sell on eBay. If you have the patience/inclination you can make some good cash with what you might regard as passé. Or if you don't have time for that, put them in a bag and give it to a charity shop or a swap shop. Or come to the **ReLove Fair** which is happening from **10:30AM till 4PM in the Quad on Thursday**, in which case, be quick! (There is another one in February

Now, for every two items you buy, you must get rid of one. Simple. 2 for 1.

too though.) Once you're done, DON'T clutter it up again.

Traditionally it should be one for one, but I don't see that as very reasonable at all.

Sugar and Spice

Simon Chaudhuri on the scourge of cookery shows

The greatest threat to British public health is not binge drinking, chain smoking or anything as nefarious. No, British people are killing themselves with something that has come to represent as much of a festive tradition as St. Nick slipping down the chimney with a sack full of presents. What is this scourge that politicians (well... those who read Part B) will likely combat with directives and a cabinet shake-up? **Christmas cookery shows.**

Festive cookery shows take the indulgence of Christmas food, a treat supposedly justified since we only eat the cloying stuff once a year, and stretch it out to last a gut-busting two weeks. Sceptical about it? Hear me out. Every year, the shows begin at least a week before the big day itself: a perfect excuse for some of us to 'try out the recipes'. These people are generally the unmarried, without kids type who use food as a friend during the cold winter months; festive food is just like a best mate in a Christmas jumper. Then of course there's Christmas Day itself, with the requisite butter-soaked turkey, stodgy Christmas pudding and mince pies that will stop grandpa's heart in a jiffy. To further the damage to your arteries a little innovation by celebrity chefs: combining all your leftovers on the 26th and 27th in a manner which actually manages to exacerbate their health effects, e.g. mashing up and frying your potato and veg to make a monstrous bubble and squeak.

So why do we do it to ourselves? The growing popularity of cookery shows seems a bit odd as Brits consume more and more supermarket-bought ready meals every year. Do we simply enjoy coming home from school, university or the office, microwaving a ready meal and pretending that we're eating what we see on the television? Are these shows a form

of culinary escapism? Perhaps the real reason the programmes are so popular is that the food itself is playing a diminishing role - with a few exceptions they have become more about personality. And there's a personality to suit pretty much everyone. If you want sexy, go for Nigella. If you want laid-back, try a bit of Jamie. Feeling a bit posh? Definitely Hugh. And if you're a foodie and sophisticated then there's no one better than Gordon.

Cookery shows should tread the line between entertainment and education with more care

The fact that these chefs have come to be known by only their first names indicates how much of the shows is devoted to them, rather than their food. Nigella is all about mums learning to balance life's chores while also putting a home-cooked meal on the table every night, with a bit of suggestion thrown in so the dads don't get bored watching. Jamie Oliver is all about simple, tasty cooking which is easy enough for anyone to make, all packaged up in a family-friendly and laid-back style. I imagine Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall would be Prince Charles' choice: a double-barreled name and wonderfully out of touch (remember that campaign for free range chicken?). Finally, Gordon is for

those in suburbia who take an inordinate amount of pride in throwing the most impressive dinner party, so be prepared for lots of ingredients you'll probably never use again.

In this respect, the Christmas shows are no different from the regular programming - the focus is not necessarily on the food. Last year's Christmas specials included *Jamie's Christmas Lock-In* and Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall's *River Cottage Christmas*, and both focused on the theme of community. Jamie used an old fashioned lock-in at his 'local' pub which brought all generations together with wholesome entertainment from Charlotte Church. Hugh decided to get a group of mums from the village together to start a baking group.

Cookery shows should, perhaps, tread the line between entertainment and education with a bit more care. With obesity and diabetes skyrocketing in Britain, the television networks should remember their public-service broadcasting history and do their bit in the battle against the bulge. Expecting healthy recipes at Christmas is, of course, ridiculous, but January represents an opportunity to spin healthy shows as a way to help keep to those New Year resolutions. It may be unrealistic to expect New Year detox food from the likes of Nigella Lawson, who enjoys using saturated fats a bit too much, but I have no doubt that there is a market waiting to be exploited. I await a new wave of waif-like, health-obsessed celebrity chefs who will guilt-trip us all into eating well until Easter, which is the next holiday that provides an excuse to load up on calories.

So, when December 2011 rolls around and those lovable celebrity chefs are doing their utmost to give Great Britain a coronary, do us both a favour. Make yourself a salad.



Who ate all the pies, Nigella?

Simon Chaudhuri's TV tips for the week

Episodes
BBC Two, Mondays, at 22:00

The Good Wife
More4, Thursdays, at 21:00

A new BBC sitcom starring Matt LeBlanc and created by David Crane of *Friends* fame. The sitcom explores the phenomenon of Hollywood remakes of hit British shows and what happens when they get a bit too American. The latest victim is a fictional show called *Lyman's Boys*, set in a quintessentially English boys prep school. The actor who plays the headmaster (Richard Griffiths) gets flown over to LA to audition for his part and is said to be 'too English'. The producer has his own ideas involving a down-and-out LeBlanc.

The second season of CBS' legal drama *The Good Wife* started last week on More4, following the life of embattled Chicago lawyer and political wife, Alicia Florrick. While not a significant draw for ratings, the first season garnered a dedicated fan base which was appreciative of its slightly more nuanced portrayal of relationships than is typical of most US imports. The second season returns with the excellent supporting characters Kalinda (Archie Panjabi) and Eli Gold (Alan Cumming).

Smoke Fairies – Through Low Light and Trees



From Sussex come the mellow folk-ish tunes of Katherine Blamire and Jessica Davies. As a duo that has gained much well-deserved attention for passionate live concerts, **Smoke Fairies** are just as pleasing in the studio. A talented group of musicians contributed, including Andy Newmark (David Bowie, John Lennon) on drums, Al Mobbs playing the double bass and David Coulter (Nick Cave, Tom Waits) in the producer's chair. Drawing from the best of bluegrass, indie pop and classic English folk, the record is seductive and utterly in keeping with the imaginative fantasy soundscapes their name brings to mind. Ethereal textures softly fade in on opener "Summer Fades", followed by sombre vocal harmonies and jangly guitar plucks as gentle drum work comes in later on. The album closes with acoustic strums underscoring pleasing choral passages on "After The Rain", and the songs in-between tend not to stray too far from their familiar crowd-pleasing sound: smoky guitar lines, restrained (but effective) percussion and folk-tinged vocal harmonies. Shrouded in creative and yet approachable songwriting, Smoke Fairies has woven together a masterful tapestry of gentle sounds and ghostly tones.

Haircut 100 – Pelican West Plus

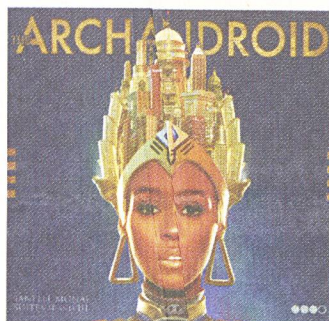


Known as "that 80s New Wave band", **Haircut 100** stole the crown from Orange Juice with their bubbly radio-pop antics. Fronted by singer Nick Heyward, these British schoolboys churned out chart-topping hits that were easily recognisable: catchy, intensely hummable and shimmering with studio-polished gloss. Though their career was short-lived, debut record 'Pelican West' was a welcome release after punk had left its angry, political scars on the music scene. Production was handled by Bob Sargeant, helping to shape and style the band's bright suburban tunes that conjure images of highway cruises at night. While Heyward sings at times of Toblerones, baked beans and building mountains out of snow, most of the lyrics are grounded in cheesy boy-meets-girl stories that make you smile. So, too, will the airy horn swells and funky disco drums.

Haircut 100 shamelessly steals from disco and pop-punk, made all the more clear from heaps of jangly guitar rakes and funk bass pops that run throughout. The happy-go-lucky vibes may be dull and unoriginal for some, but laidback retro grooves combined with naive lyrics about love and adolescence makes for a surprisingly refreshing listen – even if their sound is slightly dated. This 1992 re-issue adds five bonus tracks to the 1982 original, including a tasty 12" version of hit title "Favourite Shirts (Boy Meets Girl)". Extended by four minutes with stress-free grooves and euphoric brass licks, thicker retro drums are thrown into the mix with more of Heyward's boyish vocal hooks. Catch the band at a re-union concert where the entire album will be played in its entirety on January 28th at the O2. Visit www.haircutonehundred.net for more details.

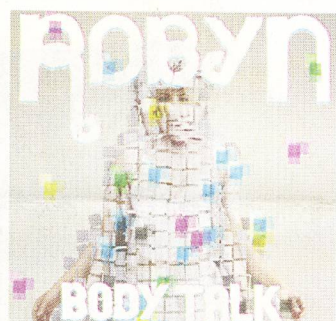
2010 Album Highlights

Quality releases from the past year, by Masya Tanikawa



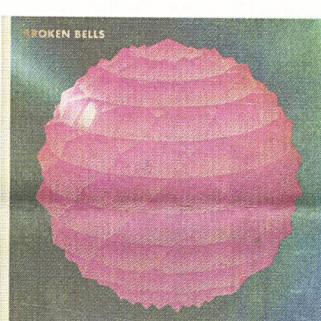
Janelle Monáe – *The ArchAndroid*

Ambitious soul-tinged R&B, flawlessly executed live. Sheer breadth of styles from English folk to James Brown-esque funk makes for a compelling listen from start to finish. Music press are obsessed with her androgynous 'uncompromising style', and rightly so. Also note her music video for "Tightrope" gained acclaim for challenging gender binaries, drawing attention away from sexuality towards heart of dance itself.



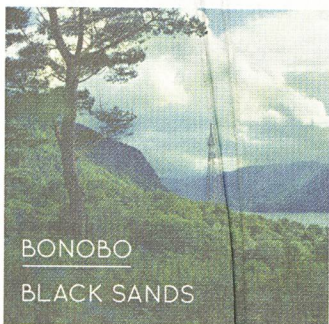
Robyn – *Body Talk*

As conveyed by the cover, Robyn is master of re-invention and delivers yet again. Inspired electro-pop flows from soft ballad to angry up-beat electro and everything in-between, all held together by her distinctive vocal work. Many songs previously released as slower ballad-type tunes are given an electro overhaul, showing her creativity and willingness to experiment.



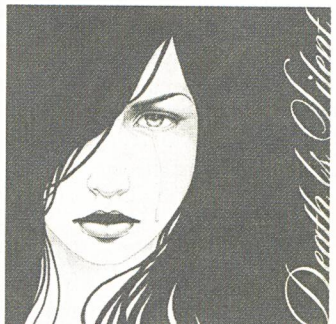
Broken Bells – *Broken Bells*

An impressive debut by Brian Burton (Danger Mouse) and James Mercer (The Shins), a match made in heaven that results in fresh pop hooks and layered electronic textures. Burton's experimental sampling work grounded in hip-hop electronica works surprisingly well with Mercer's melodic singer-songwriting skills. Filled with whirling synths, acoustic radio-pop strums and accessible vocals.



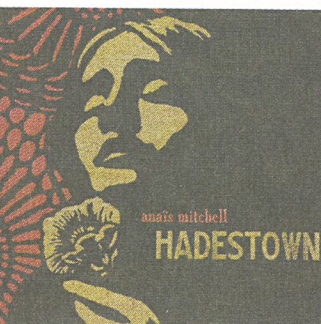
Bonobo – *Black Sands*

With so many electronic acts emerging, it becomes harder to pick out the good ones. Aply signed to Ninja Tune, Bonobo (Simon Green) presents a sophisticated, multi-layered offering complete with jazzy melodic and deep, chilled-out soundscapes. Hints of nu-jazz, downtempo electronica and glitchy hip-hop abound as Green brings in rolling bass lines, chopped vocals and airy strings that result in organic, stress-free grooves.



KNO – *Death Is Silent*

Emotional and poignant: in a completely different vein from other contemporary hip-hop artists, CunninLynguists producer KNO shows off his more serious side with sombre lyrics about loss and fragility in an unforgiving world. His sampling skills are in top form, with instruments and recordings blending in seamlessly as he verses about the inevitability of death, joined by guests Thee Tom Hardy and Tunji. Dark and mesmerising.



Anaïs Mitchell – *Hometown*

Inspired by Greek mythology, the record documents Mitchell's experiences with *Hometown*, a live folk opera inspired by Orpheus' descent into the underworld set in Depression-era America. Beautifully nuanced in its melodies and instrumentation, her expressive vocals sing tales of deceit, greed and the starkness of reality. Touches base with bits of jazz, chamber music and quirky instrumentals à la Penguin Café Orchestra; supported by the likes of Ben Knox Miller and Greg Brown, a must-listen.

The Führer's Albums of 2010



Marginally less obscure selections as chosen by Sachin Patel

5. Hot Chip – *One Life Stand*

Having released three somewhat inconsistent albums, Hot Chip knuckled down and made the album of their career. *One Life Stand* confirms that the band's two songwriters - Alexis Taylor and Joe Goddard - are writers of great pop songs with an emotional core. This is the most lush and unflappable pop to love, monogamy, and the joys of companionship, conveyed through the medium of gorgeous synth-pop.

4. Spoon – *Transference*

Spoon pulled off the Italian trick of *sprezzatura* on *Transference*, clearly spending hours in the studio perfecting an elegantly ragged and primitive sound. This is rock music stripped down to its barest constituent parts: songs end abruptly without warning, backing vocals are cut off mid-phrase, and the pocket grooves are insistent and succinct. Atop, vocalist Britt Daniel sounds like a man in turmoil, his psychoanalytical lyrics frequently warped and tampered with.

3. Caribou – *Swim*

With its feet planted firmly on the dance-floor, this electronic album eschews Dan Snaith's previous 60s affectations in favour of grooves that seem to be beamed in from the future. *Swim* is supposed to sound like dance music made out of water, and in this it succeeds: there is a fluid quality to the keys and beats alike, over which Snaith does his best Arthur Russell impression, singing about marital strife, addiction and loneliness. But don't get the wrong impression – this is a gloriously life-affirming album.

2. LCD Soundsystem – *This Is Happening*

Is there anything left unsaid about this album? Roughly four thousand words of analysis later, there are probably Trappist monks who know how much I love this album. It should suffice to say that James Murphy has provided a fitting epitaph for a musical project that began as an elaborate joke, and ended up being the restorer of faith in the emotive and physical power of art rock, punk, and dance music.

1. The National – *High Violet*

With *High Violet*, The National place themselves within the canon of American literature so concisely practised by Raymond Carver. When all you want to do is leave your dead-end job, kick back on the couch with a six-pack, tune into the football, and forget about your mortgage, The National will be there to ruin your day. Via orchestrally embellished indie rock that captures the austerity of our age.

Spotify Spotting

What Alice Leah Fyfe, Part B Fashion Editor, is listening to this week...

Edward Sharpe & the Magnetic Zeros
Carries On

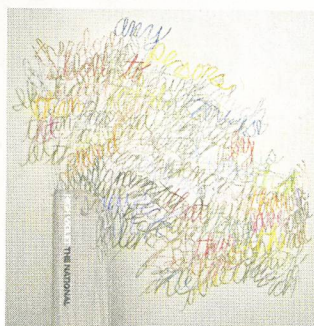
Glasser
Plane Temp

Benjamin Francis Leftwich
More Than Letters

Buraka Som Sistema
Wegue Wegue

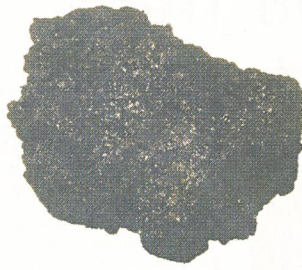
Leonard Cohen
A Thousand Kisses Deep

We don't actually have a link to Alice's Spotify. Sorry.



SANTA'S COMING!

The iPhone 4, Xbox Kinect and snazzy snowflake jumpers were conspicuously absent under the Beaver's Christmas tree this year. But it wasn't all bad. It was stockingly bad.



...OH.

DIGITAL PHOTO FRAME KEY-CHAIN

Olly Wiseman



Some things don't need modernising. One such thing is the passport photo. The conveniently sized headshot has meant generations have been able to take their loved ones (or a smaller, flatter version of them) wherever they go. Quite how this concept could be improved is not entirely clear. Some godforsaken technology start-up, presumably originating in some equally godforsaken place over which China claims dominion, has decided technology can better the humble passport photo. The output of these futurists was the 1.5 inch digital photo frame key-chain. The only way in which this appears to better a simple photograph is to make it philanderer-friendly. The wandering husband can employ 'slideshow mode', asking this pointless gadget to flick through snaps of his various women. Until some visionary artist decides to fill the Tate Modern's Turbine Hall with 10,000 of them, the only thing my tiny photo frame seems to do is encourage infidelity.

Oh, and in his infinite wisdom, Father Christmas decided to give me two of the things. I suppose that means two rather than one gigabyte's worth of mistresses. Yes!

NOVELTY MARKS & SPENCER GIFTS

Sachin Patel

A recurring theme of Christmases in my life has been receiving the very best kind of rubbish: namely novelty gifts from Marks & Spencer, already procured during the summer sales six months ago. For reasons beyond my explanatory powers, these frequently bewildering objets trouvés and bibelots are seldom featured in the M&S television advertisements that have popularised the "This is not just [x], this is M&S super-duper [x]" slogan, and reinvigorated the careers of bygone models.

Picture the scene: Fleetwood Mac is playing softly in the background, as the camera slowly pans across swathes of silk to reveal a selection of chrome-finish trinkets. Atop, the

soothing voiceover cooes, "This is not just a climatically impractical method of replenishing your phone battery, this is an organic, free-range, hand-picked M&S solar-powered battery charger" The camera zooms out further, to show the whole ensemble resting on the lithe, intertwined torsos of Twiggy and Myleene Klass. Are you feeling the Christmas spirit? This year's bumper haul included an enticing sandalwood and amber eau de toilette and shower gel combo, aforementioned phone charger, and, inexplicably, a set of UnionJack-emblazoned golfing tees.

I don't even play golf.



A MOUSE MAT

Ahmed Peerbux

Getting a mouse mat for Christmas is probably worse than getting nothing. Especially when you don't use a mouse. I'm not Moss off the IT Crowd, so why are mundane office essentials being inflicted on me? It's like getting a roll of bin bags, or a £5 Superdrug voucher. It's almost spiteful. I would've been infinitely happier getting a packet of fucking Munchies.

Besides, if I ever was going to use



a mouse mat - which is an unlikely scenario, let me tell you - I'd use the Mario one I got free in Nintendo Magazine six years ago. If anything, being given it has given me a complex - do I give off a mouse mat vibe? Might as well I don pocket protectors, a Bluetooth ear piece and a geeky "C:/ DOS RUN" t-shirt?

Maybe I'm just being too paranoid and harsh. It does have wrist support - gel wrist support, so...

PERFECT AND PERFUNCTORY

Alice Leah Fyfe

They have become synonymous with the mundane and sensible. Perhaps it's the "one size fits all" label, or their undying usefulness which ends them up amongst the Clementine's every year. Indeed socks have become an invaluable and timeless contributor to the most boring of Christmas presents.

Depending on the donor, designs may vary greatly; from stripes and polka dots to full on Christmas scenes, Rudolf and the like. Or comedy socks. Those ones with a cartoon and joke embroidered so thickly and elastic so tight that they leave an imprint round your ankle. Maybe you have foresighted practical relatives who favour the plain black or grey ribbed variety. The mother of all sock gifts is of course the multi-pack. 5 pairs in one, ferociously fused together with the tenacious plastic tag. If you're lucky you'll get a variety of grayscale hues to wear on each day of the working week. Personally, I prefer the single colour packs; easier to pair off in the laundry. There are some beautiful socks out there too and I should be very jealous if you were the lucky recipient of some fine cashmere bed socks or silk blend stockings. A good sock collection is the bedrock to any self-respecting wardrobe.

So actually, while we deem the sock as the epitome of nonchalance, those who did not receive a pair this Christmas should not count themselves lucky. On the contrary. Because

buying socks for yourself is simply the most banal way to spend a shopping spree. Time and money much better spent on infinitely more exciting things. Like tights.



This was another Christmas where Dad felt it was a good idea to buy me the novelty socks he seems to think suit me so much. The ones I've had as previous Christmas presents are

bordering on the offensive - inferring that I'm an alcoholic and a gambling and sex addict. 2010's load were just baffling.

They were clearly a pound buy from the supermarket on Christmas Eve, and as much as I hate the messages, proverbs or Naive American wisdom or whatever is written on them, I'm still glad that I've more socks post-season than before the start of it - who wouldn't be? But that's where it ends really.

They're all duded with things that are completely irrelevant: 'grey is the new blonde!' (m 20, I still have my natural hair colour); 'hairy legs are sexy' (they're not, and anyway, I don't have hairy legs); 'fat is the new thin!' (not fat, at least the Nintendo Wii says I'm a perfect weight, perfect BMI); and 'size doesn't matter!' (this might or might not be true, but as far as I can see it might be a reference to my height of 5'8", which is average anyway, rather than an overt reference to the length of my penis.

While I've no problem with wearing the socks per se, a problem could arise when I'm sitting waiting in a queue or on a train and I fold my right leg over my left: what people would think when they see "bald is gold!" on the sock of a young man boggles the mind. Definitely not one of the better presents I've received.

THE NOVELTY HAS WORN OFF

Nathan Briant

PRIVATE B

Having welcomed our brilliant haikuist to the News section, we welcome his equally superb half-cousin,
RUBBASHŌ
 Haikus are easy
 To do if they make no sense.
 David Hasselhoff

WikiLukes.

Private B Exclusive! (i.e. found on the LSE website)

After extensive journalistic research, we can exclusively reveal the letter sent by Sir Howard Duvets to The Rt Dishon. Vince Cable...

Rt Dishon. Vince Cable
 Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and
 Viennese Waltzes
 Houses of Parliament
 London
 SW1N DLE

23rd November

Dear Sir /Madam,

You may have recently read the hysteria in the papers over "LSE considering privatisation" (6 Nov), in which damaging statements which may or may not be true were made about the School. These originate from a silly article in The Beaver, which wrongly and mischievously attempted to report on the inside goings-on in the School. I still await an apology.

As you know, this has done considerable damage to the reputational standing of the School. Nothing is more important than this! (Except possibly the University League Table standing of the School. Possibly.)

Perhaps I might clarify, therefore, that we have not had a serious discussion of the prospect of "going

private". In LSE Council, nothing is ever seriously discussed! Why, last week, I bet Peter Sunderland £500 of the best that I could teabag David Willetts! (Easiest money I've ever earned! (And that's coming from a University Director! Haaa!))

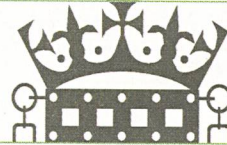
Nor have we, to my knowledge, given any indication to the government that this is an option we are considering. Or to anyone for that matter.

In any case, we are not considering it any more. (Apparently it didn't go down too well!) Which is why I can say to the press, "We are not considering privatisation". Clever ruse, eh? Haaa! Well, thank God no-one else is reading this, eh, Vince?

Yours sincerely,

H Duvets

H Duvets
 PS. Does David fancy going for lunch some time? Nandos?

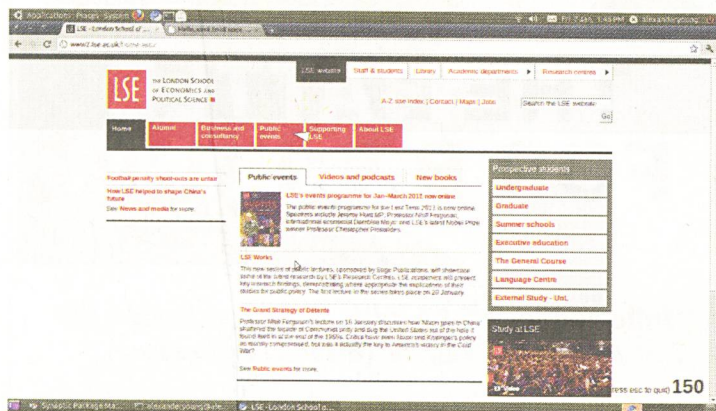


LSE budget cuts post-Browne Report in full:

- Accounting cut back to be just Counting! Syllabus remains the same.
- 40% cuts in Psychology department, to be labelled "psycho"!
- Economics sold off!
- History history!
- Archaeology in ruins!
- Philosophy non-existent! (Or is it?)
- Geography department loses half its teaching resources! Unclear which colouring pencils to be scrapped.
- New course to be re-named LSE50½
- Peter Sunderland "slimmed down" by 40%!
- Philosophy and anthropology merged to form "Philanthropy"! (Which may soon be scrapped by George Osborne.)

Web wonders

Alexander Young offers up some of the best procrastination tools the internet has to of-



Kick Ass (above) <http://erik.github.com/>

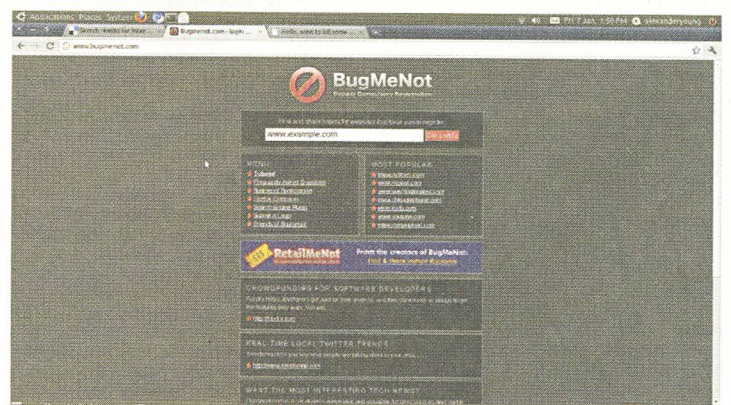
Unfortunately named, but dreadfully good fun: a little bookmarklet that allows you to convert any webpage into a game of Asteroids, with elements of the page just staying still and letting you destroy them. Bored of looking at a course's Moodle page and never, just never, achieving the level of motivation required to actually get on with some work? Sick of looking at some smug, overachieving, smarmy idiot on your Facebook feed? This the perfect tool to deal with it, short of, you know, working or getting off Facebook.

Recommended for: those whose violent tendencies can be satisfied by erasing items from a screen.

BugMeNot (right) <http://bugmenot.com>

BugMeNot is a catalogue of usernames and passwords for websites. I'm sure that everyone has come across a web search result that requires you to login to view the content: well, here is your answer to having to bother with a registration form, a confirmation email and whatever spam the site may decide to send to you. Occasionally, working subscriptions to pay sites (such as the Economist Online) are added to the database.

Recommended for: the lazy and the paranoid privacy freak.



PartB is going to be launching a Gadgets section in the coming weeks.

If you'd like to be a part of this new and exciting endeavour, e-mail us at:

partb@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Passive Aggressive Notes (below) <http://www.passiveaggressivenotes.com>

I always love having my general misanthropy validated: human beings are generally dreadful to one another, and this site offers proof after proof after proof. Having left a few such notes before, I can't help but feel a reflective guilt over the matter at hand, but mostly I just brush it aside and carry on with laughing at other people.

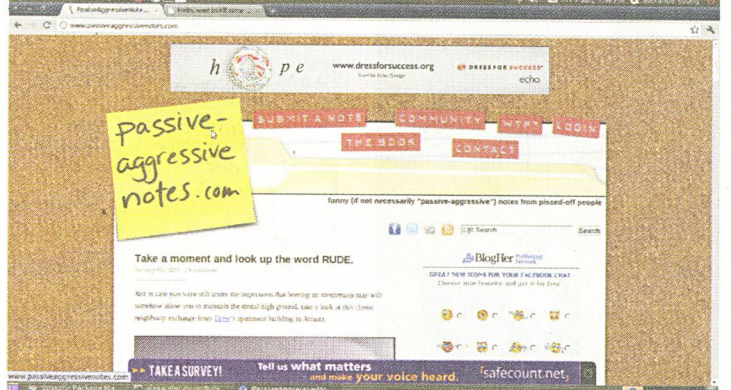
Recommended for: the discerning people watcher, the audience of *Come Dine with Me*, *Young, Dumb and Living off Mum* et al.



Fat Fingers (left) <http://fatfingers.co.uk>

People are stupid: it's an axiom known as long as any other human fact. People selling (potentially) multiple-hundred pound items really should do a better job of listing them accurately on eBay. You, however, can capitalise upon their stupidity: enter a search term into Fat Fingers and it will create an eBay search with common misspellings of words and phrases. Is it wrong to take advantage of other people's carelessness? I'd answer that with a resounding 'no'.

Recommended for: the cheap and the sociopathic.



The Secrets in Their Eyes

Aameer Patel



Director: Juan José Campanella
Screenplay: Eduardo Sacheri, Juan José Campanella
Cast: Ricardo Darín, Soledad Villamil, Pablo Rago
Runtime: 129 minutes
Cert: 18 **Year:** 2009

Relationships, like investigations, can be closed unresolved and unfulfilled. The regretful yearner who never acted on his feelings has much in common with the mourner of absent justice. **Juan José Campanella's** Oscar-winning film compellingly parallels the two.

Benjamin Esposito (Ricardo Darín) is a retired court investigator who struggles to open his novel, and turns to his former boss, Irene Menéndez Hastings (Soledad Villamil), who advises him to start at the beginning. At the forefront of his memories is the rape and homicide case of a beautiful schoolteacher, which is also their beginning.

The younger Irene is introduced as his professional superior, owing to her Ivy League education, and for the same reason, coupled with her Scottish surname, his social superior. She captivates Benjamin like a schoolboy dreaming from afar, but also uses her allure to more sinister effect in interrogating the murderer, Isidoro Gómez (Javier Godino).

Buenos Aires in the 1970s is rife with corruption and Gómez profits from this. Firstly, when innocent foreigners are beaten into a confession, and also after he is convicted, when he is freed in order to employ his ruthlessness. Utilising such a man is justified as a compromise in brutal times, but corruption is merely the rebalancing of priorities.

The film is equally a tale of love, and it is shared but never followed through by the prosecution. Irene, with her connections is invulnerable to Gómez but Benjamin must take exile. His departure sees what would usually be lazily sentimental, as they touch through a train window, but the pane of glass represents the barriers between them – their contrasting backgrounds. This, like the whole film, is shot with warmth and wonderful focus. Darín's eyes are pearls of warmth and he leads a uniformly excellent cast.

An even greater love is that of the schoolteacher's widow, Ricardo Morales (Pablo Rago). It metamorphoses into an obsessive dedication to justice, running alongside Benjamin's determination to exact the same. His retirement twenty-five years later removes the obstacles

that had previously stood in the way of resolving both this case and his relationship with Irene. In time, he fails at marriage and even Morales appears to have moved on, something that had seemed unimaginable. Benjamin, it seems, is a man with "a thousand pasts and no future" and Campanella captures the consistency of his love and desire superbly.

The film moves enthrallingly at different speeds in line with its fusion of genres. It is directed with poise and restraint, until a conclusion that none could have predicted.

Ultimately, the film is about obsession as the product of unfulfilled love. Another, humorous constant is a typewriter which is missing the letter A. On a note by his bedside is written what appears to be "temo" (I fear), and only after completing his novel, it is conquered by the letter A to become a more fulfilling declaration.

The Secrets in Their Eyes is released on DVD and Blu-ray on 10th January 2011.

You will enjoy this if...

You liked *The Pledge* or *Vicky Cristina Barcelona*.



The Tourist

Duncan McKenna



Director: Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck
Screenplay: Christopher McQuarrie, Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck
Cast: Angelina Jolie, Johnny Depp, Paul Bettany
Runtime: 103 minutes
Year: 2010

Bereft: this is not the only word that describes what I felt whilst watching *The Tourist*, but it does a better job of encompassing the full rotunda of horror than 'outright batshit fury' or 'regret' ever woul. The question is not so much a question of what is wrong with this film, but what isn't.

At the centre of the problem however, is the clear identity crisis that the film suffers from. I don't believe for a second that its creators know any more than I do what it was supposed to be. I have a horrible suspicion from the weak-kneed adoration of femme-fatal Elise (Jolie), from the stilted, sing song dialogue (which is everywhere atrocious), the Chanel-esque garbs and incessant mischievous oboe music, that this film was attempting to be something from the school of 1950s Hollywood melodramas, à la Audrey Hepburn. It attempts to be classic and chic, yet is so obscured by a hefty shellacking of Tinseltown Gruyère and schmaltz that the result is frequently laughably and nauseatingly bad (think Katie Waissel's performance of "King of the Swingers").

And yet at the same time there seems to be a thriller movie in there somewhere, battling to be heard; the film errs increasingly in this direction as it progresses, but it still suffers from the same alarming lack of directorial skill. It often plays out like the most preposterous moments of a Bond film, a comparison that is furthered by the villainous Reginald Shaw (Berkov), who comes over like a campy Blotfeld-Alan Sugar hybrid.

The plot progression too is a hapazard and flimsy mesh of McGuffins and coincidence of such absurdity, that I was frequently filled with a rage phosphorescent enough to make me fear self-combustion. There was a moment, however, during a scene where Depp is being interviewed by a police officer when I raised a smile and I thought I'd had a revelation: It must be a comedy! It simply must, there is no other feasible explanation. Not a regular comedy, but a meta-comedy in the vein of *Teeth*, which on screen appears to be awful but when watched at a distance actually becomes bizarrely hilarious. Surely it's a mockery, I thought.

As it turns out, no. It's not self-effacing, it's not whimsical, and it's not droll. It's broken. This movie is broken. Its amnesia-like disorganisation leaves it feeling something part *Burn After Reading*, part *Paris When it Sizzles* only with none of the skill, tongue-in-cheek humour or bald apathy of the former and all of the irritating incongruity of the latter.

None of this is helped of course by the calamitously bad direction (which gives the whole experience the aura of a Renault advert), the appalling script, the hackneyed character design; the list could go on. What astonished most however was the vapidness of the performances from supposedly pedigreed actors. Every single scene is pained from start to finish and Jolie's performance in particular is just awful – one constant, indefatigable, ninety minute pout. Such was its unerring nature, I am convinced she continued to gurn off-screen. Perhaps they put wires in her face.

The Tourist is in cinemas now.

You will enjoy this if...

You liked *Knight and Day*, *Salt* or *The International*.

Resident Evil: Afterlife 3D

Aameer Patel



Director: Paul W. S. Anderson
Cast: Milla Jovovich, Ali Larter, Wentworth Miller, Kim Coates
Runtime: 97 minutes
Cert: 15 **Year:** 2010

We've been here before, several times. That's more or less how I felt throughout **Paul W. S. Anderson's** vapid fourth instalment to the shamefully popular *Resident Evil* film series.

The plot is the same as the others – a virus has affected much of the population and the few survivors must fight their way through hordes of zombies to a beacon of safety and also kill the people responsible. The protagonist returns with one or two others, the rest are new faces on old characters.

It does not disappoint in the volume of action it contains, but none whatsoever is original or vaguely creative – every set piece seems to be derived either from

one of the games or another film. It is shot competently but directed without flair or vision.

Milla Jovovich is as sexy as ever and will be a gamer's wet dream for many years to come, but her performance as Alice is again drab. In this instalment, she loses her superhuman powers, yet only her speed and perhaps speech ability differentiate her or any of the other cliché-ridden characters from the legions of zombies pursuing them.

The soundtrack is poor, even by post-*Halo* game standards. In addition to bullet time, which Anderson abuses, *The Matrix* trilogy popularised the use of electronic music in this genre, but the score is something the Juno Reactor guys would have taken a dump to in the nineties.

The film ends with a shameless cliffhanger and there are indeed plans for a fifth instalment, so it is clear that these films have an audience. At best, they are gamer porn. However, compared to the games, the difference in quality is like that between the living and the living dead

– the fourth game instalment was one of the most influential of its generation, whereas this film, along with its predecessors, will be remembered as one tired series, suitable only for an evening of mindless but cool-looking entertainment.

Although it remains one of the few successful video game adaptations, it is important to remember that the standards for such films are very low and most were set by Anderson himself.

The one positive is its execution of 3D. Several set pieces are technically very impressive. If you have a new 3DTV, I would rent this. Perhaps that was the only reason it was made.

Resident Evil: Afterlife 3D is released on DVD, Blu-ray and Blu-ray 3D on 10th January 2011.

You will enjoy this if...

You liked *Doom*, *Ultraviolet* or *Equilibrium*.

Deadly Crossing Ahmed Peerbox



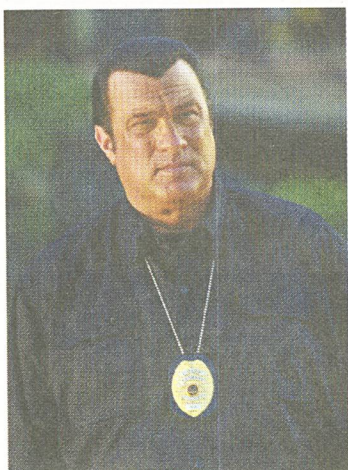
Director: Keoni Waxman
Cast: Steven Seagal, J. Anthony Pena & Kyle Cassie
Runtime: 86 minutes
Cert: 15 **Year:** 2009

Deadly Crossing isn't a film. No, that isn't an insult – those follow shortly. It's the extended pilot of the *True Justice*, the upcoming television show that Channel 5 (who else?) has bought the rights to. That goes some way in explaining why the whole thing looks and feels like an episode of *CSI*; glossed with jaunty angles, pointless repeat shots, flashcuts and some generally naff camerawork. And because this is the star of

"Driven to Kill", "Kill Switch" and "Hard to Kill" we're talking about, there's no point in going over plot or character depth. All you need to know is that this is classic Seagal, and that you can probably find it in your nearest petrol garage bargain bin.

Its simultaneously terrible and terrific nature is contained in the climactic one-liner: "how do you say ass in Russian?", Seagal quips(!) as he dispatches the one-dimensional Russian drug baron (completely interchangeable with Arab terrorist or Colombian trafficker).

Fans of the darling of straight-to-DVD won't be disappointed. *Deadly Crossing* still boasts a token black guy and Hispanic typecast. If that wasn't enough, he also sings over the opening credits, accompanied by Stevie Wonder on the harmonica.



PARTB FILM INVITES YOU TO A SPECIAL SCREENING OF



Followed by a Q&A with Margaret Hodge MP and Laura Fairrie (director/producer)

"An exemplary study in how extremist politics takes hold when ordinary people feel ignored and disenfranchised by the main parties" *The Guardian*

"A blow-by-blow, door-to-door account of the scrap between Labour's Margaret Hodge and the BNP's Nick Griffin for control of the East London borough" *Time Out*

WEDNESDAY 19TH JANUARY - NEW THEATRE
FILM STARTS AT 6:30PM



RUNNING TIME: 80 MINUTES. FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, EMAIL: A.PEERBOX@LSE.AC.UK

Features

Taken at face value

Nicola Alexander argues that Goldman Sachs makes a peculiar, but significant investment

You would be in good company if you were, at least a little, suspicious of Goldman Sachs' recent investment of \$500 million in the social pandemic, Facebook. Infamously described as a "a giant vampire squid" by Rolling Stone magazine, Goldman Sachs has blazed a trail in the world of investment banking that is as ruthlessly scrutinised as it is blindly worshipped. It will come as no surprise then that Goldman's investment of fortune and faith in Facebook, a teething dotcom, is being deemed reckless and unfounded. But is there method to the madness? Absolutely.

With the backing of Goldman Sachs and their new partner in crime, Russia's Digital Sky Technologies, Facebook is now valued at \$50 billion. A valuation that declares that Facebook trumps media giants such as News Corp and Time Warner. A valuation that has prompted industry specialists to denounce Google, the search engine that some find synonymous with the internet itself, as an innovation of the past.

The \$50 billion question that has the financial industry paging through account textbooks is where does this valuation come from? The valuation technique of trading comparables will prove futile as there are no existing companies to use as the benchmark for valuation of a social network. The only remotely similar company is Myspace, but that had its 15 minutes of fame along with The O.C. and Crocs way back in the early 2000s, and is now, nowhere near the scale or projected scale of Facebook. Intrinsic valuation methods would also find that the \$50 billion figure is out by up to a factor of twenty five given that total revenue for Facebook was \$2 billion last year.

Although on the surface this valuation looks highly suspicious, Goldman Sachs has also recognised the latent potential in Facebook that other financiers have failed

With the backing of Goldman Sachs and their new partner in crime, Russia's Digital Sky Technologies, Facebook is now valued at \$50 billion

to. Firstly, Facebook has the rare spirit that other start ups compromise within the first few years of profit. Anyone who has seen the film 'The Social Network' will remember Marc Zuckerberg (Facebook's founder) commitment to his creative integrity. So adamant was Zuckerberg that Facebook was about the idea and not how much cash the idea could be sold for, that he sabotaged meetings with potential advertisers. It is refreshing to find a management team driven by innovation rather than bottom line profit. In the technology industry, this passion and talent will take Facebook further than the profiles that we have today.

To add to this, Facebook is already using technology that is set to be 'the next big thing'. At a talk held at our own LSE last term Steve Ballmer, CEO of Microsoft, could not praise the new wave of 'cloud computing' enough. This is the technology that holds your information in cyberspace. Facebook has been using Cloud software since its earliest days. If you've ever uploaded a photo album to your Facebook profile or stalked someone else's then you'll already be familiar with the concept. The fact that Facebook is so ahead of these trends certainly makes it marketable as an investment.

From a strategic perspective, Goldman Sachs has hit the mother of all holy grails. As a major investor, Goldman will now have the inside track on an industry that is only going to gather inertia.

And, as anyone who has ever picked up 'WIRED' magazine or tried to teach a parent how to send an email will know, the technology industry doesn't jog, it sprints. Moreover, Goldman will now almost certainly be entrusted with launching the Initial Public Offering for Facebook, when the company decides to become publicly listed, as early as next year. This will inevitably be a landmark deal as Facebook will enter the league of industry heavyweights such as Google and Microsoft.

The only remotely similar company is Myspace, but that had its 15 minutes of fame along with The O.C. and Crocs way back in the early 2000s, and is now, nowhere near the scale or projected scale of Facebook

Furthermore, there is speculation over whether Facebook will be listed on the US stock exchange, given its severe regulation. In a similar dilemma, Glencore, the world's biggest commodity trader, has begun to consider a dual listing in London and Hong Kong, meaning that London would lose out as the main Headquarters of this giant. Should Facebook choose to betray its home turf, the deal would mark a certain shift of the world's power away from the Western hub. As the leader in this deal, Goldman will maintain its status as an industry pioneer. In short, Goldman will become 'cool' by association in the world of technology.

Other investors may also find that Goldman Sachs has actually done them a massive favour in fattening Facebook with investment. Goldman has invited upwards of 500 wealthy individuals to invest, a number that is very significant on Wall Street. With over 500 shareholders, Facebook will face the wrath of the SEC (the Securities and Exchange commission) who will demand the disclosure of key financial information. As a private company Facebook's books have not yet had to face the public microscope. Goldman Sachs is burdening itself with the risks of the Facebook model whilst helping other potential investors to access useful information before they choose to do the same.

Just one term ago, James Caan gave an LSE public lecture declaring that 'venture capitalism' is the way forward. Venture capitalists put up the finance for budding entrepreneurs who have brilliant ideas but shallow pockets. Were there a Goldman Sachsian in the audience, it would seem that they took these words to heart. The Goldman Sachs-Facebook relationship seems to be a new kind of investment banking, one strikingly similar to venture capitalism. Whether or not this pioneering move will pay off remains to be seen. ☛

Pakistan's identity crisis

Mehek Zafar explains what the what the assassination of Salman Taseer



Flickr user: groundreporter

The assassination of Pakistan's Governor Salman Taseer reveals a country poisoned by hatred.

When Benazir Bhutto was murdered, there was mass outrage. Protesters lined city streets. There such anguish, fear and a great sense of mourning over this brutal loss of life that Bhutto's political party sailed into power upon the tide of the population's sympathy vote.

Three years later, when the Governor of Punjab, Salman Taseer was assassinated in the middle of the afternoon, in the buzzing commercial centre of Islamabad, his entire guard stood and watched as one of their number emptied two magazines of bullets into the Governor. The killer then, with a barely concealed smile, handed himself over to the authorities. Later, two hundred lawyers showered rose petals over his head and vowed to provide him with free legal representation. It took two days before Taseer's friends and supporters organized a poorly attended vigil outside the Governor's house in Lahore, and a protest was held in the city's Liberty Market which served merely to inconvenience a few road users.

Something, somewhere has gone horribly wrong.

The media dissects the reasoning behind the murder; Taseer spoke up in defense of Aasia Bibi, the Christian lady from Sheikhpura who has been accused under Pakistan's notorious blasphemy law. More than that, he publicly proclaimed his opinion that the blasphemy law needed to be amended because it was frequently misused. Newspapers report that something about this entire debate struck his murderer, who confessed that he believed it was his religious duty to silence the politician forever.

The media picks up on a darker, more troubling aspect to the assassination; that these were not the lone ravings of a single mad man, nor the opinions of a small minority, but that of a significant proportion of the population

More importantly, the media picks up on a darker, more troubling aspect to the assassination; that these were not the lone ravings of a single mad man, nor the opinions of a small minority, but that of a significant proportion of the population. The society is divided, television anchors say. And the society is indeed divided. On the one hand there are those who condone the assassination, and hail the assassin as their hero. In their view, the blasphemy law is an essential pillar to their faith, and that anybody who says anything against it, must necessarily be an enemy of Islam. On the other, there are those who have turned Taseer into something of a hero, a singular voice of reason in the blasphemy debate. These are the elite, who under the guise of secularism seek to continue with a way of life that offers little opportunity to the rest of the population.

The stark division in the country's mindset came as a surprise to many, myself included, for we had been living with a sense of complacency at least as far as our collective personality was concerned. We were all Pakistani, and that was all that mattered. And yet little was said on what that term actually meant.

For this is a crisis of identity that runs deep into the country's tangled history with religion. A nation state built on the basis of a religion, but by a founder who was idealistically secular, was bound to have some trouble defining itself. But in its sixty-four years of existence, Pakistan has suffered through the rigorous Islamisation of Zia-ul-Haq's regime, and has been lurching into Musharraf's liberal but confused 'Enlightened Moderation' conception of religion. It is no wonder, then, that the country is facing a theoretical crisis so great that will shape the entire future of those who exist within its

It is no wonder, then, that the country is facing a theoretical crisis so great that will shape the entire future of those who exist within its boundaries

boundaries.

It seems that in all of this the population has emerged teeming with hatred, resentment and blinding rage. At one end, religious extremism has saturated through the entire social fabric of the country so that it is only recognizable occasionally, when it rears its ugly head and attacks from within. At another end it takes a murder to realize that there is a problem after all, another voice, and another side to the debate. At all extremes it has become a country that breeds intolerance.

In the midst of this great upsurge of hate, how is the country meant to resolve its crises, and finally arrive at a conclusive understanding of its own identity? The answer lies in one of Jinnah's much stressed upon principles: that of tolerance. Tolerance not only of the other faiths and religions that Pakistan's population embodies, but also of the various political opinions within the country. It is this single quality that is required in order to fairly debate a controversial law in any political system, and to allow a mass of people to co-exist without imposing their opinions upon each other.

This intolerance has escalated to such a great level, that not only did it take a man's life, but that even afterwards, few seemed to care. Hatred has blunted humanity. Whether one agrees or disagrees with the blasphemy laws is beside the point. Whether one admired or disliked Governor Taseer's politics is also beside the point. The point is that this debate did not take place on a political forum, or even through a civil movement, but through a man's death. A crisis has been identified, a crisis of identity. It is to be hoped that it is resolved without more bloodshed. ☛

The King and Thais

Thailand's democracy is threatened on two counts, writes **Marion Koob**

Considering the forces going against it, it is almost strange that Thai democracy is still in function

For the past decade, Thailand has been a model of political instability. Ranging from coups (the latest of which was staged in 2006) to violent protests, such as the ones which took place in April and May of 2010, it is often difficult to reconcile the country's economic success to its manner of government.

King Bhumibol, and the royalist elite, officially represented by an advisory entity known as the Privy Council, have been the unique constant in the turmoil of Thailand's democracy. Yet, the extent to which the monarch's power runs is vague at best; the country is known after all, for its severe lèse-majesté law which incriminates any who would dare criticise the royal family. In official terms, the King is considered to be 'above politics'; a benevolent figure with little or no role in running affairs. To the detriment of democratic proceedings, however, these terms in Thailand take on more meaning than they ought. Interventions of the King into the political realm, albeit discreet, are numerous. The monarch's birthday speech, now an institutionalised ritual, often serves to make of the country's current affairs. This has become an opportunity for the royal family to reinstate its moral authority beyond that of politicians and, in this way, create an additional source of legitimacy, superior to the electoral.

Thus, despite the royal family officially giving up power in 1932, its influence in the running of governmental affairs has been potent. For instance, the cables recently released by Wikileaks have highlighted the Queen's responsibility in the 2006 military coup which removed from power the Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra. Unsurprisingly perhaps, the tensions between the royal elite and Thaksin were apparent to Thais during the time of his mandate. The prime minister, a telecoms millionaire who was known to have dubbed himself 'Thailand's CEO' ruffled the traditional elite by his methods. Due to allegations of corruption and

tax evasion, and in addition to the vast privatisation measures which Thaksin undertook, a military coup ensued which took advantage of Thaksin's visit to the UN in New York to overtake the governmental apparatus, allegedly with the assistance of the President of the Privy Council, Prem Tinsulanonda.

Speaking in April 2007, Thitinan Pongsudhirak, a Professor at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, said: "General Prem has been compromised... People want to know who is responsible. Look at the choice of prime minister, of the National Legislative Assembly... it's not surprising people are pointing the finger at General Prem."

Yet, years onwards, the trouble is far from over. The current coalition government, headed by the Prime Minister of Abhisit Vejjajiva of the Thai Democrat party faces widespread opposition from the 'Red Shirts', backed by Thaksin. The deposed Prime Minister, despite dubious credentials- including his treatment of Muslim minorities in the South provinces of Thailand- had initiated a series of rural development programmes, notably the '30 bhat' healthcare provision plan, which sought to supply cheap medical assistance throughout the country. Many of these initiatives were so successful that they have been maintained by succeeding governments.

The Red Shirt movement (also known as the 'United Front For Democracy Against Dictatorship'), is mostly grounded in rural areas and among the policing and army forces. It protests against what is perceived as an elitist, double-standard application of the rule of law. While Thaksin is barred from returning to Thai politics by a corruption conviction dating from 2008, which would land him in prison were he to return from his self-imposed exile in Dubai, the formation to which he has lent his support, the Pheu Thai Party, is an important force. Constitutionally, the coalition government is held to hold elections in 2011, which will, according a

recent declaration of the Prime Minister take place earlier on during the year.

Many had predicted that the ruling powers would delay the occasion, in the attempt to fortify support against the Pheu Thai Party and the red shirts. However, its confidence may stream by the advantage which will be conferred by its incumbency and the official support of both army and police. To further complicate matters, the Democrat Party had been facing fraud charges in November 2010; these were given up by the court only on the grounds of a procedural mistake - the petition, the court said, was not filed by the prosecution properly within the specified time frame and therefore was not legal.

Considering the forces going against it, it is almost strange that Thai democracy is still in function. It faces two consistent threats which in turn undermines its legitimacy. On one hand, exists the omnipresence of the King and the royal institutions which have successfully created an image of authority above and beyond electoral democracy. Yet, the democratization process in Thailand has consisted in gradually removing powers from the monarchy and securing them to elected bodies; the King's 'benevolence' is misleading in that it assumes that he cannot have interests of his own yond the greater good of his country. In reality, improving Thai democracy, would by definition attribute the monarch much less power than he presently exercises; unarguably running against his interest. The second threat is simpler and more universal; that of malpractice within the system, ranging from electoral fraud to corruption. Contrary to the ailing King, these may still linger on indefinitely, of these initiatives were so successful that they have been maintained by succeeding governments.

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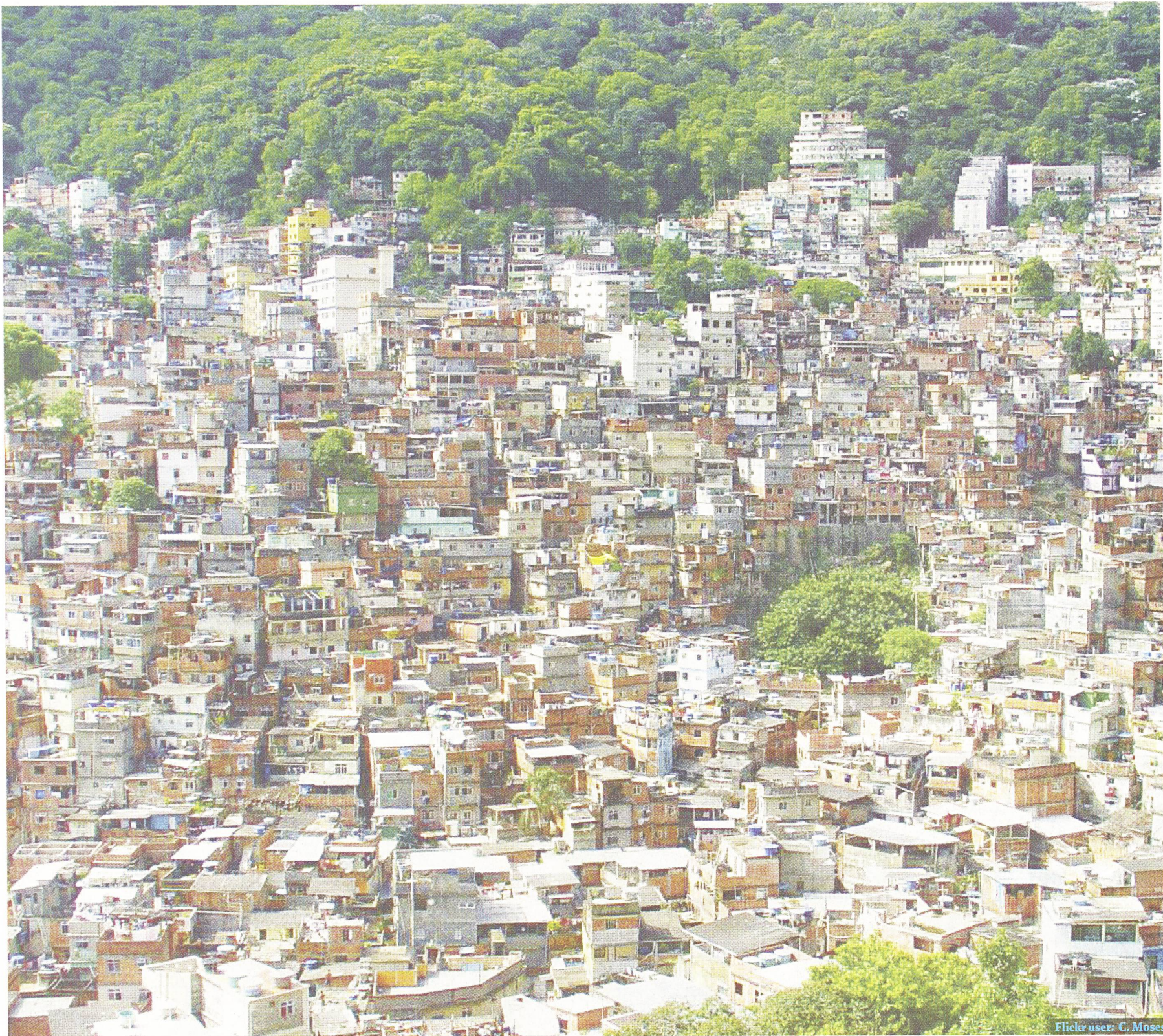
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Flickr user: LightOn Dude



Flickr user: C. Moses

Rio's fragile future

Bianca Nardi describes the war taking place in the city's favelas

It is not unusual for inhabitants of the North Zone of Rio de Janeiro to be woken up by gunfire. A wave of violence has hit the city, with the drug lords in the slums or 'favelas' rebelling against recent pacifying interventions. In 2008, Pacifying Police Units were implemented in several favelas in Rio, with the purpose of improving security for its inhabitants. More recently, buses, trucks and cars have been burnt on the streets, a police helicopter has been shot down by criminals and innocent civilians have been caught in the crossfire. The mayor Sergio Cabral has asked for the help of the Federal authorities and police from other states to increase safety in Rio. All wonder, however, how the city will be able to cope with the great inflow of tourists coming in for the 2014 World Soccer Cup and the 2016 Olympic Games.

The numbers of casualties in Rio de Janeiro per year exceed those in the Iraq War. The great majority of people who live in favelas are ordinary citizens with jobs and families, who claim that the gunfire 'was intense, and it felt like war'. At the top of a favela, a massive house with an outdoor swimming pool stands out amongst the shantytown, belonging to the controller of the drug traffic in that community. The reality is there is indeed a war – between the police and organized

drug crime. Classes have been canceled in schools and universities, and people who live in riskier areas are too frightened to leave their homes. The civil and military police have been carrying out an operation which searched all houses in the favelas, and has collected around £20,000 worth of drugs and weapons. The recent attacks have been ordered by criminals inside a maximum-security prison. This in turn causes Brazilians to question how 'secure' those actually are. The city is patrolled by helicopters, an elite police force and even by the Brazilian Navy and Army: tanks have been brought out onto the streets.

In nine days, 106 vehicles were set on fire and fifty people were killed, including a fourteen year old girl. Having lived in Rio all my life, and recognizing the beauty of this amazing city, it saddens me that the war between policemen and drug lords may be won by the latter. The drug trafficking problem in Rio de Janeiro is rooted in the great social inequality existing among inhabitants of the city. Public education and healthcare provision are precarious, and access to both these services is limited. In public schools, the grade requirements to pass the year are very low; higher demands would encourage students to drop out. There is thus little motivation to perform well academically. In addition, funding for

All wonder, how the city will be able to cope with the great inflow of tourists coming in for the 2014 World Soccer Cup and the 2016 Olympic Games

health and education is a difficult issue, as corruption in Brazil notably happens high up in the hierarchy of policy-making, and capital that is supposed to be invested in welfare finds its way into politician's pockets. Most of the drug dealers have not completed secondary education, and know that their life path will lead to either death or prison.

With nothing to lose, brutality and crime see no bound. The Alemão Complex – one of the favelas in which the wave of violence was taking place – surrounds the road that leads to the International Airport. It is known as one of the most violent and problematic areas, with frequent clashes between criminals and the police. The hostilities between police and members of the drug traffic has been going on for the past thirty years, and it is argued by some that the current crisis is just 'new scenes from an old war'. Even if the police force manages to defeat organized crime in this battle, winning the war is a different matter altogether. In 2010, the luxurious Intercontinental Hotel was invaded by drug dealers from the Rocinha favela, and held 35 tourists as hostages, who were released only after two hours of negotiations.

After the attacks on the Intercontinental Hotel, the International Olympic Committee stated that in the past, Rio,

and Brazil generally, have shown themselves capable of hosting large events in a safe manner, and that the Brazilian authorities have guaranteed that the city will provide the necessary security during the competition.

The Brazilian media has been accused of being sensationalist, and spreading a wave of terror and insecurity amongst the population of Rio. TV Globo, the largest media company in Brazil, has been heavily criticized for airing uninterrupted hours of coverage on the violence in Rio. The argument made by critics is that there is nothing extraordinary in terms of conflicts stemming from drug trafficking, and that the media is giving it an exaggerated amount of attention. Yet, cars are being burnt, civilians are being killed, a helicopter was also shot down recently, and the city is hosting the World Cup in four years' time.

Rio receives more tourists per day than any city in South America, and it is an incredible place to visit. The manifestations of violence in Rio de Janeiro are just the tip of the iceberg of problems in the Brazilian society, which stem from corruption, poor education and ignorance. Only in addressing these underlying causes will the inhabitants of Rio finally have peace. ☘

A strategy made redundant

Nathan Briant argues that changing managers mid-season is useless

Although the English football season has not yet reached its half-way point, twenty-five clubs in the Football League have already made managerial changes: there are only 92 teams competing in the League. The pressure and need for success throughout English football is now apparent. Many football administrators seem to have resolved, particularly in recent weeks, that the best way to ensure a football club's success or getting out of a dip - or even a chasm - in form is kicking out the old guard to bring in a new team.

In reality, as we might all expect this has very limited impact. Surely, it's logical to think that the players on the pitch, kicking a football around and hopefully into the back of a net, would have more impact than those managing them from a touchline. Changes to an ailing and failing playing staff, perhaps at the close of a season, would seem far more likely to mean success than sacking the manager - right?

Well, take the results of those Football League teams which rid themselves of their managers in January; staggeringly, seven of them. George Burley, sacked from Crystal Palace on New Year's Day, didn't bring on a great dawn for his former team. Palace, bottom of the Championship, the Football League's second tier, despite winning their first game without Burley 1-0, lost their next game. Walsall, bottom of League One, the third tier of league football, after sacking their manager Chris Hutchings and assistant manager, only drew in their next game; and all of Charlton, Stockport County, Ipswich and Liverpool all lost their next games. Stockport and Ipswich were thrashed 5-1 and 7-0 respectively. Only Barnet of League Two won a game after sacking their manager

the week before.

Such findings are supported by Dr Sue Bridgewater from Warwick Business School; she finds that sacking a manager will get a football team nowhere (the vast majority of the time). According to Bridgewater, changing managers 'creates an atmosphere of "damaging instability"'. The time a manager can be expected to be in a job is diminishing. In 1992/93, a manager could expect to stay in his job for an average of 2.72 years; the comparable figure was 1.72 years in 2006, Bridgewater found, and it's no doubt less than that now.

The success - although challenged by the moneyed and well-oiled owners of the upstarts Chelsea and Manchester City - is clear to see from the managerial consistency at Arsenal and Manchester United. Although Arsenal have yet to win a major trophy in nearly six seasons, and Manchester United face possible financial ruin if their debts to their owners, the Glazer family, are not properly sorted, managerial consistency has done the trick at these two very successful clubs: Arsene Wenger has been Arsenal manager since 1996. Alex Ferguson, Manchester United manager since 1986.

Typically, if a manager's club is doing badly, their neck is first on the block. Roy Keane, recently relieved of his job by Ipswich Town, commented: 'Results haven't been as good as I'd have hoped so far this season and when results aren't good the manager gets the sack, that's the game.' With the influx of hundreds of millions of pounds into English football - albeit not entirely a new concept - owners, not just fans, are pressing for great success achieved in a very short space of time. Managers may seem to be thrown out for unfathomable reasons.

For example, in the Rovers, the town of Blackburn, Lancashire, has a relatively successful football team. Although Rovers won the Premier League in 1995, funded by massive cash injections from the local steel magnate Jack Walker, their team quickly broke up and four years later the club were relegated from the top flight. Although they were promoted back after two seasons, they've sat in mid-table obscurity, with the odd relegation scrap or brief flirtations with the elite 'top six' qualifying for European competitions thrown in, since then. With massive cash

through a newly-established London subsidiary, Venky's London Limited, took over Blackburn two months ago, and have set about making their mark. Although talk of the owners of how they expect to challenge for lucrative Champions League places - for which it is necessary to finish in the top four places of the Premier League - is deeply hopeful, unrealistic if not absolutely absurd comparing their ability to spend in comparison to other rivals. This has been surely exacerbated by the sacking of their tactically defensive but respected former manager, Sam Allardyce, last month.

Blackburn's form hasn't really improved greatly. Although they lost unimpressively 7-1 to Manchester United shortly before Allardyce's was fired, under new management the team has lost to Stoke City and Sunderland, placed in the mid-table of the Premier League respectively. Though they've beaten Liverpool and West Bromwich Albion, both teams were in bad runs of form.

Since Allardyce's departure, a number of players have come out into the media to complain: Christopher Samba, the then-club captain of Blackburn and Congo international, announced his intention to leave the club after saying that he didn't want to play for Venky's; he was then, perhaps unsurprisingly, stripped of the club's captaincy. Perhaps this is the 'damaging instability' which Bridgewater describes. Either way, changing the manager at Blackburn hasn't helped greatly.

Whether or not Venky's go on to win the Premier League next season, Bridgewater's analysis is worth taking a look at as several teams too hasty to get rid of their managerial staff; and by the looks of the last few months, there are many of them.

Owners, not just fans, are pressing for great success achieved in a very short space of time

injections from abroad popular with foreign investors, most notably based at Chelsea and Manchester City, Blackburn was the next one in line to be taken over by a foreign company or billionaire. The Indian poultry giant, Venky's,

WHAT IF...

...Dewey Defeated Truman?

Jack Tindale

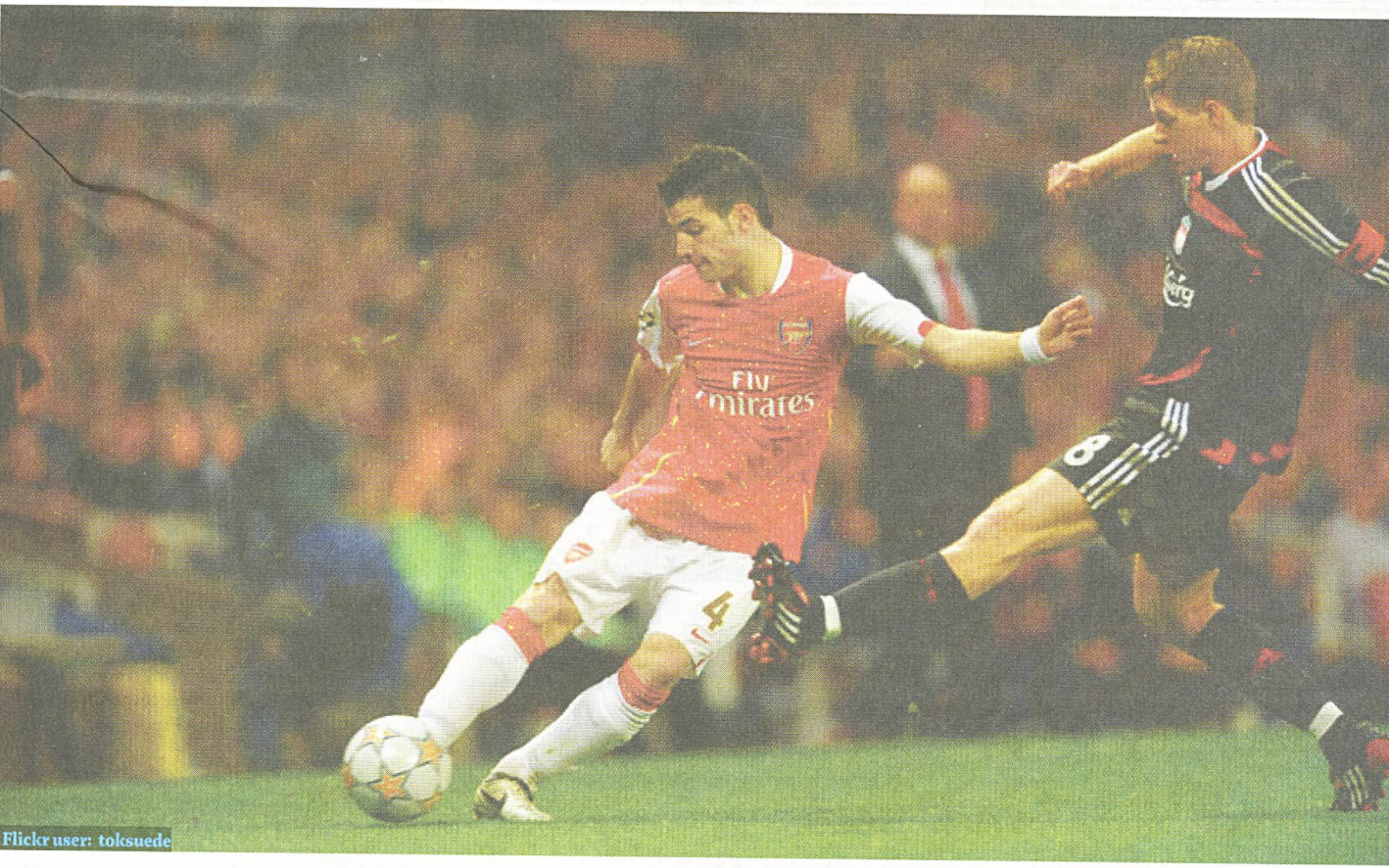
The result of the 1948 Presidential Election had been seen as inevitable well before the campaign started. The Midterm elections two years previously had robbed the Democrats of their long-entrenched majority in Congress, and the long-standing "Conservative Coalition" between Republicans and the Southern "Dixiecrats" had persisted, greatly limiting the power of the White House over domestic and foreign policy. After a tense Convention in Philadelphia, the 1944 nominee, Thomas E. Dewey, liberal former Governor of New York, emerged victorious.

For the Democrats, the re-nomination of sitting President Harry S. Truman came as little surprise, despite some attempts by the party establishment to "dump" him in favour of a more popular candidate. Truman's relief was brief however, as the news came that two break-away factions of his party would stand candidates against him. The liberal former Vice-President Henry Wallace represented the Progressive Party, whilst the segregationist "State's Rights" southerners rallied around South Carolina Governor Strom Thurmond. Despite recovering somewhat towards the latter half of the campaign, Truman suffered a heavy Electoral College defeat. This was despite winning the national popular vote by 48.9 per cent to 45.8 per cent. Historians have argued that the decision of movie theatres to not show campaign films may have caused the President's recovery in the polls to stall in the key swing states, although the true reason for Truman's defeat will never be known.

President Dewey was nevertheless chastised on inauguration day. His predecessor's accusation of a "Do Nothing Congress" had resonated with voters to the extent that the Democrats had easily regained both the House of Representatives and the Senate. Foreign policy had obviously been a major influence on this defeat for the Republicans, and Dewey pledged to retain the Berlin Airlift, the Korean War and containment against "the menace of International Communism". Such sentiments angered the conservative wing of his party, and the isolationist Senate Minority Leader Robert Taft would emerge as Dewey's most bitter critic during the first Republican Presidency in sixteen years.

Korea and the Philippines would dominate Dewey's term in office. The Korean border, previously maintained by an uneasy truce between North and South, heated up during 1948, eventually breaking into open war following repeated incursions by Pyongyang across the 38th Parallel. Swift action by the United Nations allowed for the front line to stabilise soon after the capture of Seoul, although it would take many years of hard fighting, and threat of nuclear weapons by Douglas MacArthur, before UN forces reached the Sino-Korean Border in July 1950.

However, it was the Philippines which would be Dewey's unhappy legacy. US-led actions against Communist insurgents, the Hukbalahap, propped up the shaky government of Ramon Magsaysay until the latter's assassination in March 1949. US military intervention, fed by an increasingly unpopular draft cumulated in the use of chemical weapons against civilian settlements in Luzon (readers would do well to read the report by war correspondent Kurt Vonnegut on the mustard gas attack on Settlement 5, or as he would immortalise it in his devastating political exposé, Slaughterhouse 5).



Flickr user: toksuede

Measured musings

Too often, too many LSE attendees ignore the benefits of public lectures. As a student, it is easy to; after reluctantly attending scheduled sessions, an unwillingness to take on additional hours in the evenings is understandable. As a result, many events, despite the quality of the speakers, entertain half-empty rooms. This is a pity. Whilst across the world, hundreds resort to online videos to grasp something close to an image of their favourite thinkers in the flesh, we have taken

to shunning the opportunity. Perhaps it is because there is too much choice; the visit of a President or Minister only generates a shoulder shrug, along with the much-used claim that there is too much going on, or too much work to do.

However, this is probably the most opportune time in life to learn just for it's sake (beyond even any academic requirement.) Rather grimly, the likelihood of your timetable becoming more flexible as your years add up, is slim.

Encouraging you further in this pursuit, here are lectures taking place over the next two weeks which Features think will be worth your energy.

Robert Rowland Smith will be speaking about 'The Meaning of Life'. Writer of a popular philosophy book called 'Breakfast with Socrates', Rowland Smith has followed in the footsteps of Alain de Botton in seeking out the help of great thinkers to deal with day-to-day means of living. Perhaps more entertainment than academic, but the Q&A session promises to be lively - feel free to throw in your life's pettiest dilemmas for public scrutiny.

Jeremy Hunt, Secretary of Media and Culture and sport has been invited to discuss 'The Future of Media Policy'. Granted, there is undoubtedly a journalistic bias in suggesting this. Yet the industry,

so to speak, has altered so much over the past decade that the current government's take on upcoming developments will be valuable. The thorny issue of Wikileaks is bound to be raised; should the UK have continued its protection of Julian Assange?

The final recommendation, 'The tensions of International Power Restructuring in a shifting Global Economy', by Professor Danny Quah, one of the stars of the LSE Economics department, promises an interesting mix of international economics and relations. As the US and a large part of the EU face low growth rates and unmanageable levels of debt, it is

inevitable that this economic vulnerability should translate into a political power shift.

These are only a few mentions; many other professors, politicians, lawyers and journalists take advantage of an LSE audience to present new research. Drop the TED talks, and go for the real thing.

Marion Koob
Features Editor

For your ears only

This week its Poly Profiles (Sponsored by Wasteland Ski and Liverpool John Moores Polytechnical College)

Le Retard

Who is he?

A retard. And a Wasteland Ski Rep. The two are certainly not mutually exclusive

Where is he from?

No one knows. Some say he has a Masters Degree in Organizational Psychology from UWE, some say his name is actually Jack, and some maintain that he never passed GCSE maths. All we know is: He's a retard.

Natural Wednesday Night Habitat:

Distributing glowsticks and providing students with misinformation as to the best venue to spend their night out at.

LSE Sporting Career Highlight:

Managing to get on an LSKI coach in one piece and successfully ticking off everyone's name on a register, before leaving three tourists in a car park as the coach proceeded to board the ferry.



Profile:

Essentially a well meaning and affable chap, what Le Retard lacks in basic life skills he more than makes up for with 'riding' ability and an ability to wear silly look hankerchiefs around his face at all times. He also has the highest IQ in the entire Wasteland Ski organization. (The term 'organization' is used here in the loosest possible sense of the word.)

Lush Zoe

Who is she?

A Wasteland Ski rep who was adored by 50% percent of the LSkiers, resented by the rest.

Where is she from?

Leeds. (Met)

Natural Wednesday Night Habitat:

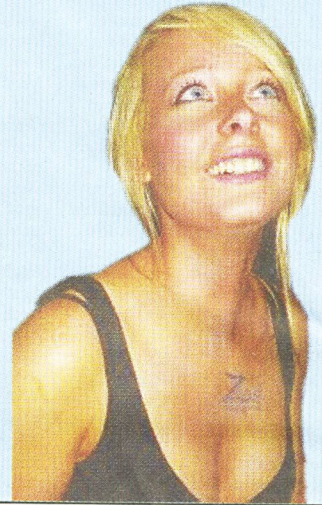
Being chatted up in a dark corner of a French Techno club by many a male LSKI hopeful. Reportedly unimpressed by those with modelling contracts.

LSE Sporting Career Highlight:

Being Spider-Pigged in Folie Duce by at least 36 over-eager male skiers.

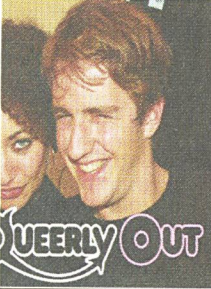
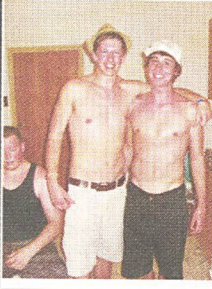
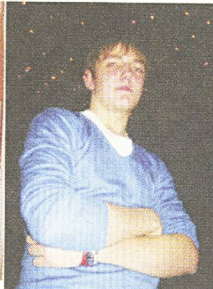

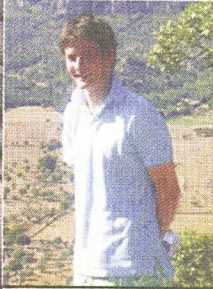

Profile:

So lush she doesn't even need a real degree, Zoe provides the much needed eyecandy for Wasteland Ski and by the end of the trip had her very own fan club, started by everyone's favourite Gindian. Always desperate to jump in and break up a fight between Greg, Rob, Brendan and Smedley, though their flat still claims she actually wasn't bothered about the damage to their hotel room and was actually seeking a fivesome.



4th Team Football Teammates

Joseph Watson

							
Most Moody – BJ Watson – Permanently dismayed at the ineptitude of his team mates on and off the field. Living with Snaville is clearly taking its toll.	Biggest Crybaby – Josh Stacey – Known for starting every fight in zoo bar history, still yet to thrown a punch. Even got BJ to hit someone for him.	Most Annoying – J Saville – Snaville has been annoying FC members with his shit chat since he sent his first e-mail. Needs to learn to beard on.	'FEC' Award – Chris A'Orange – Somehow managed to become a FC future bigwig despite the obvious handicap of being a massive ginger cunt.	Gordon Brown Award – Nadir Gohar – "Clueless" "Steve McLaren" and "Homosexual" are just some of the words used to describe the 4th team il duche.	Most Intelligent – Alex Hunt – Known to stay up 24 hours a day discussing the merits of Harts Jurisprudence arguments. Needs to have a day off.	Most Minxy – Dave McCauley – When not sleazing onto his latest wee minx can be seen practicing his own brand of Catholicism.	Least Likely to suffer eternal damnation – Irteza Jafri – Clean living Jafri brings respectability back to the 4th team backline.
							<p>If you would like to dish some dirt on your teammates with witty profiles, contact us at:</p> <p>sports@the-beaveronline.co.uk</p>
Best Looking – Rob Jefferies – A Hollywood smile and uber defined cheekbones mean Rob is rarely seen without a foxy minx by his side.	Most Hench – Norayr Mehmet Tuncay Ishmail Djerrhian – Gave Ginger Chris a run last year for Mr LSE's No 1 Turkish-Somalian..	Beckenbauer Award – Kilian Huber – Loves nothing more than to talk about European history between 1939-1945 especially when leading the defensive line.	Biggest Surfer – Ryan Connolly – A former bit part character in Orange Country 90210. Rumoured to be starting a sitcom with Hollyoaks Seth Costello.	Biggest Badman – Demola Aofolaju – Takes no shit from nobody, especially minxe. Rarely plays due to a fierce loyalty to John Lewis FC.	Worst Asian Flush – Bernie Schultzy – Loves a mazy dribble almost as much as he loves turning the colour of a beetroot after a few pale Kölsch's.	Biggest Lover of Bowers – Jason Ting – Never shuts up about the Tuns no.3 Barminge, even bases his hair style on hers.	



LS SKI - Tour is Tour!

Kate Strivens

The first week of the Christmas holidays traditionally heralds the most important event in the ski club's schedule: the first week of Christmas holidays ski trip. Unsurprisingly, given the existence of this whimsical little ditty, this year was no different.

Things started off well with Henry Adefope and Liam Goy deciding not to come.

A man (yes, a man, not a typo) wearing Ugg boots managing to defile said accoutrements after drinking a little too much sherry was the only highlight of an otherwise inauspicious journey. For those of you who haven't seen it, The Hangover is a really great movie, so great in fact that some members of coach 4 saw fit to subject the rest of the passengers to it twice within a 5 hour span. Given the physical state of most of those on board the choice of movie was not altogether impertinent and after listening to Matthew Box's 'patter' for a full 12 hours, this humble author further sympathised with the main protagonists' cerebral aches.

The troop arrived in Val Thorens early on Saturday evening, met by a scene which made the centre of Stalingrad circa 1943 seem organised. After some dithering, Chamberlainesque magnitude rooms were finally allocated, skis and boards distributed and pasta cooked in industrial quantities. This process revealed two fundamental laws of nature: tour companies are generally shit and students will always opt for a meal which costs the least time and income.

In English Val Thorens actually means Valley of Thor's End, a name which takes

its derivation from a strongly held belief that the Nordic god Thor once used the valley to abase himself of man's evil. In an ironic twist the French saw fit to build in its confines the largest ski resort in Europe, a resort which now plays host to some of the most debauched behaviour by British holiday makers this side of Magaluf. Thor; pretty laddsy god right there, I mean he's not got the craftiness of Hanuman or the whole omnipotence thing that Allah's got going on but still, beard and a hammer, all you need to scare the shit out of people isn't it? But I digress.

The mountains provided a wonderful backdrop for some high quality skiing, although the hum from the Large Hadron Collider was a constant source of woe for all. I for one cannot wait for them to bloody find that Higgs Boson and stop wasting all our time and energy. But again, I digress.

We were blessed with excellent weather meaning almost every day one witnessed an early morning rush to get up the mountain in order to suckle from its skiing teat. Some were more successful than others as sadly the trip did see some injuries, unfortunately none of which deprived Lizzie Bacon of the use of her mouth (although the magic carpet did try).

There would have been more gossip to report on if it weren't for Val Thoren's lovely combination of thinly oxygenated air and cheap supermarket booze. Such a formula meant that many a potential couple physically could not manage to pull. Yet against the odds, some LSkiers managed to pull it off.

Keenest of the keen freshers (and now actually a second year) Danielson secured himself a cheeky blozzer on the last night with a certain blonde bombshell and let

EVERYONE at Folie Duce on the last day know about it.

Everyone's favourite Brazilian Miss Cabrera displayed a most eclectic taste in men, moving seamlessly between a rather large Welshman by the name of Dan Reed and a rather small ginger by the name of... well, I'm sure you can guess.

The trip was also not without some genuine, legitimate, actual love, with Messers MacGregor and Mycock finally managing to snare the objects of their desires, Schlong and Inga respectively.

We would like to give you details of the behaviour of a Mr Alexander Smedley however we are beginning a legal proceeding to overturn an injunction which Mr Alexander Smedley has taken out against the Beaver, and we shall let you know the results of this legal battle as it happens. The current face of Linklaters' has volunteered to take the case pro bono.

We could talk about the après ski all day, but we're sure you don't really want to hear about that here given it's the sport section but suffice to say there were pegs, funnels, watering cans, jaeger bombs (big shout out to Swannyg66), broken down lifts (may have had something to do with Lizzie Bacon getting friendly with a Rep in one), Chase and Status, a cheeky blozza, cheeky bozzer, no hands fondue, Sideshow Boob, Folie Duce, minimal intercourse, spiderpigging, boobs, beard, tour, gondolas, clementines, striploin, le Retard, wastemans and a bloody cracking Social Sec. All in all a great trip.

Now the committee is busy planning for the Ski Reunion on the 21st and the Easter trip which promises to be even bolder, bigger and better than before. Don't miss out.

Extra plug for LS SKI Easter Trip...

BUSC Main Event isn't only a competition; it's not only a holiday, or even just a music festival. Main Event is all three rolled into one, topped with whipped cream, sprinkles and a juicy cherry slapped on top! It's the finale of another year of pure love of student snowsports. Like every year it will blow your mind!

It all heats as 2500-3000 eager BUSCateers, snow-addicts and all round tour lovers join in the merriment.

Night time is where it's really going to kick off. Things will be blasting things off with an opening ceremony at the start of the week with a huge open-air rave under the stars. There will be various club nights around resort, so scrap the idea of a cheesy French Discotheque and prepare yourself for some of the freshest DJ talent.

The last two nights of the week is where it really hots-up. The Thursday night party sees the opening of the BUSC exclusive super-club! And for the first time ever you get an extra night in resort, leaving Saturday!

If you think winter tour was epic... this will knock you socks off!! The Main Event attracts massive DJ acts every year (past ones have included - subfocus, Calvin Harris, urban knights), is the biggest university snowsports event, and all in all a MASSIVE TOUR!!

If your interested in competing, freestyle, cross or racing, check out detailed information on BUSC website British Universities Alpine Championships; <http://www.busc-events.com/events/> and get in touch with the Ski Committee at an.club.ski@lse.ac.uk

Dates: 2nd-9th of April

Where: Tignes part of the Espace Killy, France

Cost: £365

Includes:

- Return Coach Travel
- 6 day lift pass
- 7 nights accommodation
- 7 nights of entertainment
- BUCS Alpine Championships
- X Games Snowpack
- Exclusive Drinks Deals
- BUSC Wristband - exclusive access to all BUSC events
- Goody bag and welcome pack including Main Event t-shirt

Extras:

- Party @ the Peak
- Mountain Meal
- The "Big T" party
- BUSC Ball or gatecrasher ticket



Sport

Snow, Skis and Lash. See inside for all the LS SKI Val Thorens gossip.

England footballers: Look up the Australian meaning of the word 'pressure'

Matthew Box

If the latest Ashes tour has taught us one thing (other than the fact that the Aussies could learn a thing or two about reverse swing bowling) its that the Australian press are as cruel and as cutting as they come in the world of sports journalism.

Perhaps it was the fact that despite having lost the Ashes 18 months earlier in England, the Australian media could simply not comprehend a defeat on home soil. I mean, they haven't been beaten in the Ashes at home in twenty-four years. So its hardly suprising that after each successive Test defeat, the criticism came flooding in, seemingly becoming cumulatively worse as the series went on. From the point of view of the average 'Pom', it was marvellous to behold.

"Oh the horror!" ran the headline of Melbourne tabloid the Herald Sun, whilst splashing pictures of Ricky Ponting's face, one which even his mother wants to slap.

After their defeat in Adelaide, one particular Australian journalist commented on the prospects of a comeback: "Indeed,

the idea of Ricky Ponting and his demoralised battlers halting the English juggernaut is like putting a toothpick on the tracks in the hope of derailing a speeding bullet train." Great to see the Australian media always providing optimism and encouragement.

We all know after the football World Cup the England team came under a lot of flak. But along the way there were attempts at constructive criticism, and at least our journalists tried their best to put a positive spin on the past performances when looking forward to the next matches. It was national pride at stake and kidding yourself that the England football team had a chance was all in aid of the common cause.

Yet it seems that after decades of cricket dominance the Australian press have evolved in to a more cruel and more demanding beast than their Old World counterparts. One journalist described the current national cricket team as "The worst Australian team ever fielded for an Ashes series" and further added salt to the Australian cricketers' (numerous) wounds by reminding them that "they will today watch England celebrate a 3-1 victory at the SCG in the knowledge they are the first side wearing baggy greens to have lost three Tests by more than an innings in a single series."

But perhaps the most satisfying reading was the numerous compliments the Australians press gave to the English cricketers, especially the Herald Sun's Andrew Webster, who described the English Sydney victory as such: "As England keeper Matt Prior pranced about the SCG after scoring another century, and "Gentle" Ben Hilfenhaus bowled so poorly he must have wished he could be transported back to his former life as a bricklayer, this was torture. Actually, it was such slow, painful torture that you wondered whether this is what it must be like to be squeezed to death by a boa constrictor. On the wicket on which England made more than 600 runs, Australia managed fewer than 300. On the wicket on which England's bowlers swung the ball wildly yesterday,



The Aussie press pulls absolutely no punches

Australia produced scant or no venom. It has been the story of the series. The 3-1 result will flatter Australia."

That passage pretty much sums up the match, if not the whole Test Series, especially the way I saw it, but I didn't expect an analysis so complimentary to England whilst so disparaging to Australia, to come from an Aussie.

No doubt the astronomical levels of media criticism will continue until the Australian cricketers manage to produce some results at the Cricket World Cup, coming up this February. But conversely, the English media must be prepared to accept that the England team will be playing a different game of Cricket, of the One Day variety, to the one they have just given the Australians a drubbing at, so a guaranteed victory isn't really that guaranteed. Yet we can all be sure of one thing: what the English press lack in cruelty they more than make up for in expectation. Like an ambitious Dad on the sidelines, they will now be expecting nothing less than Cricket World Cup victory. All I can say is, good luck lads!

Here are our favourite jokes at the expense of Cricket Australia:

- Whats the Australian version of lbw?... Lost, beaten, walloped!
- What did the spectator miss when he went to the toilet?... The whole aussie innings!
- Who spends the most time on the crease of anyone in the aussie team? ... The women who ironed the cricket whites!
- Why dont aussie fielders need pre tour travel injections?...Because they never catch anything!!
- Why are there no wine parties in Australia?... They don't have any openers!
- What do you call a world class Australian?...Retired
- What do you call and Australia holding a bottle of champagne?... A waiter!
- What do you get if you cross the Australian cricket team with an Oxo cube?... Laughing stock.
- What do you call an Australian with 100 by his name?...A bowler.
- What do Aussie batsmen and drug addicts have in common?...Both spend most of their time wondering where their next score will come from.
- What is the most proficient form of footwork displayed by Australian batsmen?...The walk back to the pavilion.



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An Aussie grieves

Phyllis Lui

This is possibly the worst time to announce to the world that I am Australian. As a nation, we support all our sporting endeavours including the latest and most embarrassing one of all, the Ashes.

I won't go on about how our loss has been the worst in howmanyever years, and how for the first time in howmanyever years England won on our soil. But as a nation, we all agreed it was a humiliating defeat, i.e. "Australian cricket's summer of discontent", "For most of this series it was men against boys", so you can all stop rubbing it in our faces that we failed to grasp the basics of cricket now. Seriously.

What this defeat means to an Australian cricket fan is that the worst is still possibly yet to come with the prospect of Ponting staying on, that the selectors will screw it all up again...

On the up side, the likes of Usman Khawaja and Tim Paine mean that as ever, us Aussies can hope and cheer our team on as the underdogs, we will come back and win it the next time round. We are a sporting nation (yes, funnily enough I played cricket for my school and other sports), because let's face it, there isn't much else to do Down Under.

