

**LORD SAATCHI:  
CONSERVATIVE PEER,  
AN EXEC, & LSE ALUM**  
INTERVIEW p18



**INDIA & ISLAM  
AWARENESS WEEK**

COVERAGE OF EVENTS  
FROM AROUND LSE pp6-7

Inside:  
**PART B**  
16 page  
cultural pullout

# The Beaver

17 February 2009  
Newspaper of the  
London School of Economics  
Students' Union  
thebeaveronline.co.uk

## Director: penalty paid for school expansion strategy

**Growth in student numbers to be halted**  
**Student disquiet over 'impersonal' LSE**

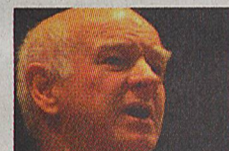
Joseph Cotterill

LSE will halt the growth in student numbers of recent years to repair the quality of life on campus, the school's director Howard Davies announced at his termly address to the Students' Union General Meeting last Thursday.

Davies told an audience of students in the Old Theatre that expansion of the LSE student population would be "paused for the foreseeable future".

The school had "paid some penalty" for its rapid growth, he said.

LSE's current population of nine thousand students is two and a half times



**Howard Davies said that LSE would refocus on teaching quality**

the size of the school in 1980. The student populations of Oxford and Cambridge expanded by fifty per cent in the same period.

Davies' announcement came days before news that a record 465,000 people have applied for degree courses in UK universities starting in September.

The applications service Ucas said applications had risen 7.8 per cent on last year. Interest in economics degrees rose 15.7 per cent.

Ucas officials said many applications had been made at the last minute in a bid to escape the impact of the recession on the jobs market.

Competition for places will be especially fierce because the government is expected to maintain its cap on the overall number of students in UK universities.

Davies said that the school's move to halt growth had been motivated by concerns about the quality of teaching. "The school does risk becoming more impersonal as a place," he said.

Davies later faced accusations from students that staff were too distant from students and that the school's "fundamental direction" had gone awry.

Amar Shanghavi, a postgraduate student, said that school staff had failed to treat concerns about a spate of crime and mugging outside the Sidney Webb hall of residence sufficiently seriously.

Staff had not been helpful in a recent meeting, Shanghavi added. "The attitude of staff to making us feel safe is lacking," he said.

Shanghavi drew the loudest applause of the meeting after further alleging that staff at the Fourth Floor restaurant in the Old Building were sometimes rude in asking students who brought their own food into the restaurant to leave.

The director said he would feed back to staff on the handling of security concerns

>> Continued on page 6



The LSE library will begin opening twenty-four hours a day from the end of February, a month earlier than planned, Howard Davies announced at Thursday's UGM.  
Beaver archive

## Disagreement over Old Theatre occupation final agreement

Ali Moussavi

Students who occupied the Old Theatre for a week in January in protest against the Gaza war remained in disagreement with the LSE last week on the final implementation of the demands of the occupation.

It is understood that School officials are concerned that substantive new points were being raised by the protesters beyond the original agreement.

An occupation representative complained, ten days after the original implementation statement ending the occupation was released, that the document was "significantly different" to what had been agreed.

Pro-Palestinian activists handed out leaflets on Houghton Street last week which read: 'our demands, agreed but not implemented.'

The protesters said that the School had not extended a waiver of LSE application fees for students from the occupied territories to the Golan Heights, where many Palestinians study.

"We are pleased that the School appears to be working to implement the agreement. We are still working with the School to ensure that the fee waiver covers students from the Golan Heights, as per the spirit of the agreement," a spokesperson from the Students' Union Palestine Society told the Beaver.

The protesters said they were concerned that the fees waiver ended in 2010, and not until the end of the Israeli occupation as a whole.

"While we appreciate the School's desire to get it right, we believed that the spirit of the agreement was that these activities would continue for as long as Palestine is occupied," the spokesperson added.

It is also understood that School officials have disputed occupier demands to promote last Thursday's fundraising day for Medical Aid for Palestinians inside classrooms and lectures, as it was not part of the original implementation agreement.

The spokesperson said: "It was disappointing that the LSE did not allow us to fundraise inside lecture theatres or ask staff to make announcements. We had thought that they had agreed to help the fundraising day in this way."

## Union Jack UGM sketch



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

**F**rom crazy to boring." How unkind! How undignified! How unlike LSE students, like the one overheard making this comment at last week's UGM, to besmirch our director!

Oh wait. Jack remembers. The last time Howard Davies presented himself to the Union's invariably inquisitive and irrelevant get-together, LSE students machine-gunned the grin off his face in a volley of uncomfortable questions.

Where was LSE's nursery going? Why did LSE athletes get so many classes scheduled on Wednesday afternoons? Why the hell was the New Academic Building so empty?

Jack had seen the coming of age of the licentious, litigious, post-tuition fee student body that wanted its money's worth and was prepared to trample all over Howard Davies to get it. And Jack was proud.

But Howard hadn't been proud, back

then. Howard had gone round the twist. Howard had said most of the students in the meeting were loss-making to the school. Not the best way to win friends and influence fee-payers, if you ask Jack. Not great timing either. Beaver editors helpfully reminded those loss-making students that their parents had recently been sent Annual Fund begging letters to pop their loss-making cash in. Crazy? Not half.

This term's meeting - well, things were a little different. It was a different world. Howard had recently been on holiday to the World Economic Forum in Davos. Nasty BBC anchormen had started asking him why he had started the credit crunch. Howard was a changed, sombre man, a new homo economicus for recessionary times. And also rather boring.

Jack couldn't quite believe his ears as he listened to Davos Davies' dulcet deconstruction of why LSE econ geeks wouldn't

be getting their hands on pinstripe and Perrier-Jouet in the fat cat jobs of their dreams. Crazy ol' Howard was talking - choke - boring ol' sense as LSE's prim and precious student community were told to check their own crazy career ambitions at the door. Well, Howard actually told everyone to look on the careers service database. But it is much the same to the crazed Goldman-chasers.

And Jack was a little miffed at the choke - absolute drivel that passed for questioning from the supposedly fearless audience. Where are our free hole-punchers, students mewled. Will you go to bed with me, another oleaginated. Call this getting tough? Howard presides a regime where only 0.9 per cent of governors come from an ethnic minority. Not a whisper came from our brave bevy of Students' Union election candidates as Howard slinked out the door, his half-hour at the UGM freakshow up. That's truly crazy.

## Collective

Raidev Akoi; Emmanuel Akpan-Inwang; Hasib Baber; Fadhil Bakeer-Markar; Vishal Banerjee; Wil Barber; Peter Barton; Ramsey Ben-Achour; Graeme Birrel; Julian Boys; James Bull; Mike Carlson; Jess Cartwright; Beth Cherryman; Elizabeth Cheesbrough; Angela Chow; Joseph Cotterill; Jonathan Damsgaard; Elle Dodd; Cathy Druce; Marie Dunaway; Holli Eastman; Louisa Evans; Ossi Filkret; Aled Dilwyn Fisher; Charlotte Galvin; Justin Gest; Erica Gornall; Lucie Goulet; Aula Hariri; Yisum Heneghon; Charlie Hodgson; Tahiya Islam; Felipe Jacome; Daniel Jason; Lois Jeary; Megan Jones; Yisum Heneghon; Naeem Kapadia; Pooja Kesavan; Sadia Kidwai; Marion Koob; Helen Roberts; Phyllis Lui; Zeeshan Malik; Nizar Manek; Nada Mansy; Sophie Marment; Jamie Mason; Trent Maynard; James McGibney; Liam McLaughlin; Nitya Menon; Irfan Merali; Anna Mikedra; Ravi Mistry; Ali Moussavi; Deotima Mukherjee; Utsa Mukherjee; Aditi Nangia; Rachael O'Rourke; Aba Osunsade; Anup Patel; Rajan Patel; Sachin Patel; Will Perry; Chloe Pieters; Danielle Priestley; Rahim Rahemtulla; Dominic Rampat; Anjali Raval; Helen Reeves; Ricky Ren; Joe Rennison; Sacha Robehmed; Joe Sammut; Charlie Samuda; Thienthai Sangkhaphanthanon; Amrita Saraogi; Christina Schimdt Zur Nedden; Dan Sheldon; Andre Tartar; Sam Tempest-Keeping; Kerry Thompson; Meryem Torun; Molly Tucker; Vladimir Unkovski-Korica; Subash Viroomal; Simon Wang; Jonathan Weir; Chris Westgarth; Sean Whittington Roy; Christine Whyte; Chris Wilkins; Chun Han Wong; Calum Young

The Collective is The Beaver's governing body. You must have three articles or photos published in the paper to qualify for membership. If you believe you are a Collective member but your name is not on the list above, please email

### Collective Chair

Lucie Goulet  
collective@thebeaveronline.co.uk

## Editorial Board

### Executive Editor

Joseph Cotterill  
editor@thebeaveronline.co.uk

### Managing Editor

Chun Han Wong  
managing@thebeaveronline.co.uk

### News Editors

Ali Moussavi  
Zeeshan Malik  
Joe Rennison  
news@thebeaveronline.co.uk

### Comment Editor

Sean Whittington Roy  
comment@thebeaveronline.co.uk

### Features Editor

Shibani Mahtani  
features@thebeaveronline.co.uk

### Social Editor

Madeeha Ansari  
social@thebeaveronline.co.uk

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

The Beaver is published by the London School of Economics' Students' Union, East Building, Houghton Street, WC2A 2AE. Printed at Guardian Print Centre, Rick Roberts Way, Stratford, London E15 2GN.

The Beaver is printed on 100% recycled paper. In 2006, recycled paper made up 79% of UK newspaper raw materials. Please recycle your copy

### Sports Editors

Sam Tempest Keeping  
Alice Pelton  
sports@thebeaveronline.co.uk

### Part B Editors

Julian Boys  
Sachin Patel  
partb@thebeaveronline.co.uk

### Design Editor

Mike Carlson  
design@thebeaveronline.co.uk

### Photo Editor

Cherie Leung  
photo@thebeaveronline.co.uk

### General Manager

Sanjiv Nanwani  
info@thebeaveronline.co.uk

### Web Editor

Srikanth Narayanamohan  
web@thebeaveronline.co.uk

The Beaver uses pictures from flickr.com which have been issued under a Creative Commons license. We would like to distribute the Beaver under a similar license - we'll keep you posted. You can browse through the pictures we post to flickr at: [flickr.com/photos/beaveronline](http://flickr.com/photos/beaveronline).

Contact the Beaver  
info@thebeaveronline.co.uk  
0207 955 6705

East Building  
LSE Students' Union  
London WC2A 2AE

## LSE events

### Highlights of this week's public lectures and talks

"Russian Railways" as the locomotive of the Russian Economy  
Russian Railways president  
Vladimir I. Yakunin  
Today, OT, 1500 (Ticketed)

The Global Economic Crisis - Meeting the Challenge  
Professor Tim Besley, Professor Francesco Caselli, Professor Chris Pissarides, Professor Danny Quah  
Tonight, OT, 1830

Can International Law Change the World?  
Professor Christopher Greenwood  
Wednesday, Venue TBC, 1830 (Ticketed)

Putin and Medvedev: Russia's Duumvirate?  
Nikolai Petrov  
Wednesday, SZT, 1800

Lessons from the credit crisis  
Deputy Governor of the Bank of England Sir John Gieve  
Thursday, SZT, 1700

Individual and Corporate Social Responsibility  
Professor Jean Tirole  
Thursday, OT, 1830

## Positions of the week

### LSE careers service's pick of the best jobs

United Nations World Food Programme  
Internships at London Office

ConocoPhillips  
Commercial graduate development programme in international, integrated energy company

Cappgemini  
Aspire graduate programme

The Mercator Fund  
Tax Law Project Consultant

Fleishman-Hillard  
Account Executive in Public Affairs

Mandate Communications  
Consultant, Graduate Fast Track Programme

PricewaterhouseCoopers  
Government and Public Sector Practice consulting opportunities

Detica  
Graduate Technology /Business Consultant, in a fast growing specialist business and technology consultancy.

British Asian Trust Manager  
Build links with the Pakistani community in the UK and organisations in Pakistan that can be supported by the fund

Partners for Euro-African Green Energy (PANGEA)  
Internship - expand database of bio-fuel projects in Africa, expand the list of potential members, compile draft and existing biofuel policies from African countries

IBM  
Various IT consulting and finance positions

Computer Science Corporation  
Graduate opportunities in consulting, HR, finance

Lexis Public Relations  
PR Graduate trainee - large, full service agency which still thinks and acts like a small, cutting-edge boutique

E.On  
Graduate opportunities in finance, HR... with one of the UK's leading integrated power and gas companies

BNP Paribas  
Strategic marketing assistant and translation assistant internships in Paris

Nomura  
Internship opportunities - summer analysts, summer associates, all over Asia

Standard and Poor's  
Research Intern, Sovereign Ratings

Oxera  
Internships - Full time

Interested?  
For details of these posts and over three hundred more, log in to My Careers Service and click on 'search for opportunities' at [www.lse.ac.uk/careers](http://www.lse.ac.uk/careers)

# Cybernetically enhanced Beaver.



The Beaver's digital revolution continues.

Now on twitter!

[twitter.com/beaveronline](http://twitter.com/beaveronline)

Let us know where to go next:  
[info@thebeaveronline.co.uk](mailto:info@thebeaveronline.co.uk)

The Beaver  
[thebeaveronline.co.uk](http://thebeaveronline.co.uk)

# Donations roll in for Palestine charity



Union General Secretary encouraging donations to MAP at the UGM.  
Photo: Ben Phillips

James McGibney

Over £1,600 was raised during Friday's Fundraising Day for the charity Medical Aid for Palestinians.

Ninety volunteers collected money across the campus for the charity, which aims to provide health care to Palestinians and establish a permanent medical infrastructure in Palestinian communities. The fundraising effort was jointly organised by the Palestine Society, RAG, the Student Union and the School itself. The LSE had agreed to co-sponsor the event in response to one of the demands of the Palestine Society's occupation of the Old Theatre last month.

One fundraiser on Houghton Street, Meryem Torun, said, "The reaction has been overwhelmingly positive and it's great that we can all come together to do this. Several people gave over £20 each. The cause has been seen as legitimate because its aim is charitable, not political – people are suffering and they need help."

The money collected was enough to cover the cost of psychological and social support for ten children in Gaza, and to buy 80 hygiene kits for displaced Gazan families. A spokesman from MAP was delighted with the proceeds: "Efforts like those taken by LSE's students show that people are rejecting apathy and acceptance of the banality of evil and speaking out to show their support... Money raised by these events has gone directly to MAP's emergency response helping thousands of women, the elderly, people with disabilities and children."

A spokesperson for the school said: "Early indications are that the collections were well-organised and successful and it is good to know that staff and students at LSE have combined to bring aid to some of the people in the world who need it most."

However, the School has been criticised for preventing fundraisers from collecting in lecture theatres and for interfering in the promotion of the event. In an email sent by LSE's Secretary & Director of Administration, Adrian Hall, staff were told that "permission to make collections inside lectures and classes has been refused". He went on to advise that "those taking lectures and classes are not expected to make any kind of announcement about the Fundraising Day".

Palestine Society sponsorship secretary Mira Hammad, who led the organisation of the day, said, "I thought the agreement was that we could collect in lecture theatres – and they banned us".

She added: "We hoped that lecturers would advertise the event, but we hadn't even contacted staff when they sent the email".

When asked about their intervention,

**"Although you may have some people who automatically assume a political subtext, the charity in question is frankly a brilliant one who have been providing crucial support in and around Gaza for almost twenty years."**

**RAG President Ben Jones**

a spokesman from the School said, "It was not possible to hold the collections inside lectures because we did not want to risk any possible disruption to teaching. For the same reason, there was no obligation on teachers and lecturers to mention the collections at the start of lectures".

Staff in the Three Tuns pub refused to put a collection bucket on the bar in order to "remain impartial", whilst Students' Union Communications Officer Dan Sheldon reportedly wouldn't wear a MAP bracelet because the issue was "too politicised".

Some students objected for rather more partisan reasons. When asked to donate, one shouted, "What, so you can fire more rockets at my country?"

RAG President Ben Jones was undeterred by such reactions. "Although you may have some people who automatically assume a political subtext, the charity in question is frankly a brilliant one who have been providing crucial support in and around Gaza for almost twenty years. The majority of the student body has reacted thoughtfully and generously to this day and congratulations are owed to the organisers and collectors".

Many from outside the Palestine Society also helped raised money. One charity collector, Felix Lee, a third-year Human Resource Management and Employment Relations student, got involved when he saw the event advertised on Facebook: "The war is a game between politicians – the civilians are innocent. I felt sorry for the people of Gaza and decided to help out".



Photo: Arian a Gonzalez

## Anti-CCTV poster appears at LSE Residence Hall

Posters have appeared in Butler's Wharf Hall which criticise the presence of CCTV cameras and surveillance on the LSE campus. The source of the posters is still unclear. The images also include an image of Howard Davies with the slogan 'Big Brother is watching you' from the George Orwell novel 1984.


Any questions? Contact [su.returningofficer@lse.ac.uk](mailto:su.returningofficer@lse.ac.uk)  
[www.lsesu.com](http://www.lsesu.com)

# Elections

## 2009

Make a difference.

Get involved.

LSE STUDENTS'  
 UNION 

## Positions

General Secretary, Treasurer, Communications, Education & Welfare, Womens, Environment and Ethics, LGBT, International, Societies, Anti-Racism, Mature & Part-Time, Students with Disabilities, Residences, Returning Officer, Constitution and Steering Committee (7 positions), Finance and Services Committee (4 positions).

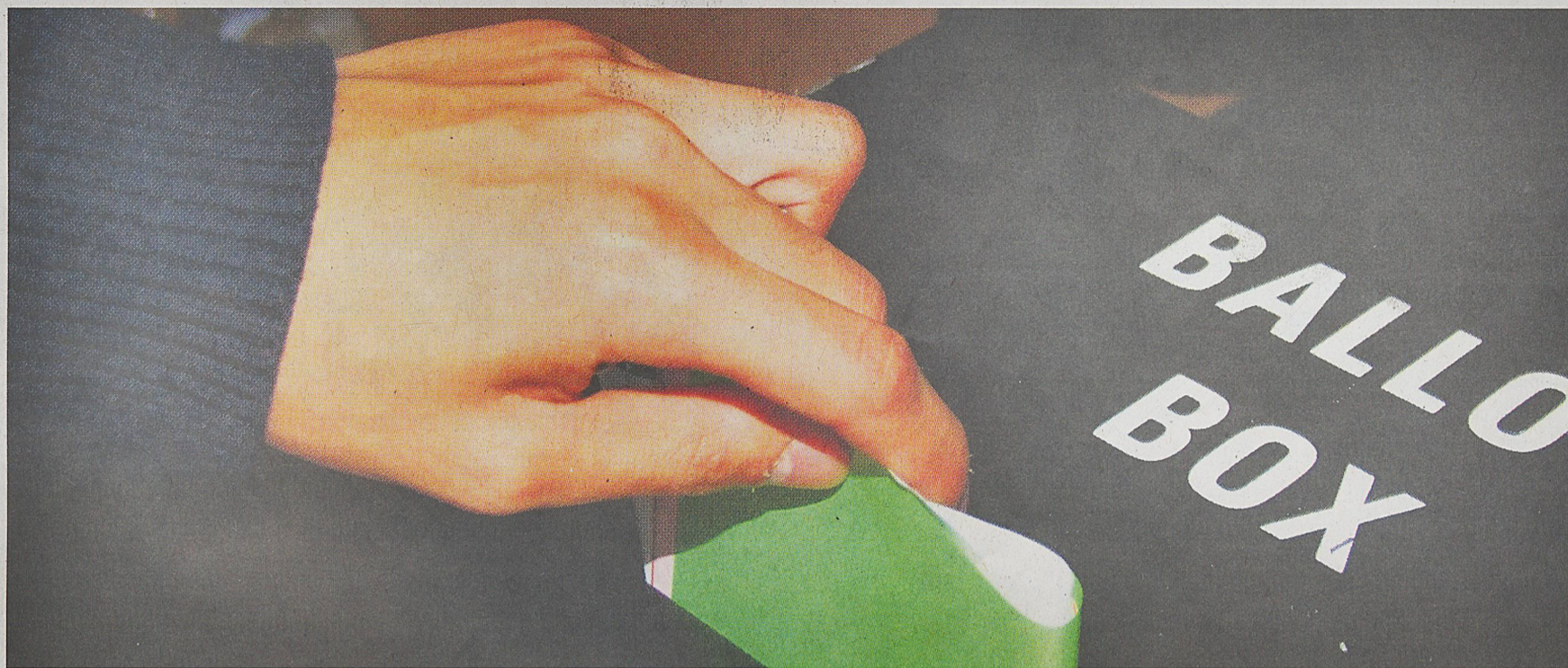
## Nominations

Open 10AM Monday 16th February  
 Close 5PM Monday 23rd February

## Voting

Opens 10AM Wednesday 4th March  
 Closes 6.30PM Thursday 5th March

# Union election season nears after third time lucky for internet reform



Joe Rennison

Greater freedom to report on Students' Union elections has been granted to the Union's media group after an electoral reform motion passed at last week's Union General Meeting.

Similar attempts to pass an amendment to the Union's codes of practice on elections had been opposed for two consecutive weeks after opposition to proposals to liberalise campaigning on the internet and websites.

The internet proposals were dropped last week as supporters of the motion concentrated on pushing through the reforms for the media group days before election season began on campus.

Nominations for candidacy in the elec-

tions opened yesterday.

The motion was relaunched after the Union's returning officer Ossie Fikret - who oversees elections - held a series of meetings with opponents to reframe the proposals.

James Bacon, a former returning officer who announced his candidacy for General Secretary last week, proposed the amended codes of practice amendment unopposed. He said: "Due to the short time we had to pass these reforms we had to make sure they would get through the UGM and thus dropped all controversial aspects to ensure our amendment would pass."

Bacon said that "strong opposition from a few voices" forced the reformers to "capitulate to their demands." Bacon continued: "This reform will mean a clarification of all electoral rules. For the first time

in five years we've actually restructured the codes of practice hopefully making an easier read than previously.

Vladimir Unkovski-Korica, who opposed the motion when it ran previously, said: "Popular opinion has blocked the adoption of the worst aspects of on-line campaigning. The ease with which suggestions of a union-run website that would provide extra election materials from candidates was dismissed, however, does make you wonder if someone as a vested interest in obviating existing rules that ensure equality of opportunity for all those standing."

A second codes of practice amendment passed at the UGM allowing Facebook only to be used in election campaigns, so long as it is not used to send "unsolicited emails" - which refers to emails sent from people who are not part of the group or

event that is sending the email on.

Peter Barton, who proposed the amendment, said: "this is just a small change to bring codes of practice up to date with reality and help move the Union into the twenty-first century."

Bacon said that "We should not be putting into the codes of practice a named social utility but we did so because we were forced into that position."

He continued: "I think it is a good thing because it will enable far more people to be aware of student politics and who is standing in the elections. In the longer term I feel embedding Facebook into our codes of practice is the wrong move and hopefully next year we can get round to producing a broader website provision with regard to election campaigning."

## Friends on facebook ↑

How many friends do the declared candidates for Students' Union sabbatical office have in the LSE network?

The Beaver collates their LSE friend counts

### General Secretary

Aled Fisher	605
James Bacon	345

### Treasurer

Joseph Brown	372
George Wetz	292

### Education and Welfare

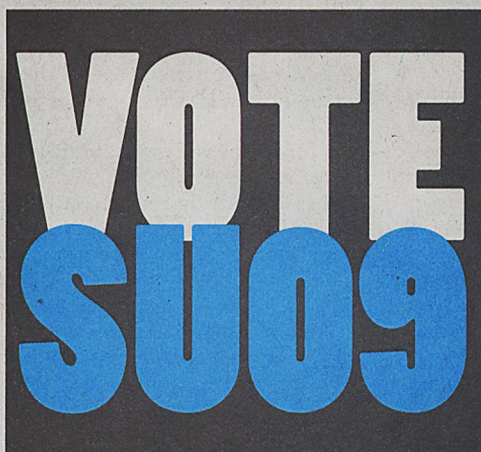
Emmanuel Akpan-Inwang	576
Helen Roberts	570
Sadia Kidwai	194
Ruby Buckley	146

### Communications

Dan Sheldon	593
Rob Low	289
Michael Deas	234



## Nominations are open. Candidates are declaring. The Media Group is watching.



Get involved in the biggest Media Group event of the year, as the Beaver, Pulse and LooSE TV cover the Students' Union Lent term elections. This year we'll be forging ahead into the world of new media further than ever before, with twittering, blog posting and broadcasting.

VOTESU09.COM  
TWITTER.COM/VOTESU09



## LSE Public Lectures and Events

### A Good Childhood: Searching for Values in a Competitive Age

Professor Lord Richard Layard, director of the Well-being Programme in the LSE Centre for Economic Performance, presented a report of the Good Childhood enquiry at a public lecture last Wednesday.

The presentation cited love to be, on average, the most important thing to a child and arguments to be the worst. The presentation also spoke of the destructive effects of parental separation, alcohol abuse and individualism on a child and that our view towards such things must be altered for the well-being of our children.

To buy the Good Childhood report visit: [http://www.amazon.co.uk/Good-Childhood-Searching-Values-Competitive/dp/0141039434/ref=sr\\_1\\_5?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1228393633&sr=1-5](http://www.amazon.co.uk/Good-Childhood-Searching-Values-Competitive/dp/0141039434/ref=sr_1_5?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1228393633&sr=1-5)

### aMap causes debate

A new online debate forum, aMap, has been developed by the New Economics Foundation, LSE and online consultation experts Delib. The forum allows users to begin a topic of debate that can be commented on and added to by any other user across the globe. After three days 50,000 people visited the aMap website creating arguments in 120 countries around in the world.

To start your own argument visit: <http://www.amap.org.uk/>

### 2008 Lakatos Award Winner

Richard Healey, from the University of Arizona, has been awarded the 2008 Lakatos award for his contribution to the Philosophy of Science.

Healey's book, Gauging What's Real: the conceptual foundations of contemporary gauge theories, has received critical acclaim and earned him the 10,000 LSE award. Healey will visit the LSE in the Summer term to collect the award and present a public lecture.

Healey told the Beaver: "Receiving this award is an unexpected honour. Work in my branch of the philosophy of science can get lonely, so it is especially gratifying when its significance is recognized and acknowledged within a wider intellectual community. I welcome my fifteen minutes of fame in the hope that the attention it focuses briefly on contemporary physics will encourage others to venture beyond narrow disciplinary boundaries to explore the regions of natural philosophy it has opened up for us."

## Indian culture on campus

Marie Dunaway

India week offered a range of activities across campus last week, as the five-day celebration enters its fourth year.

This year's colourful event was organised by the Society for Promotion of Indian Culture and Ethos (SPICE) and the Hindu Society, as well as other societies on campus. The week involved over 1,000 students.

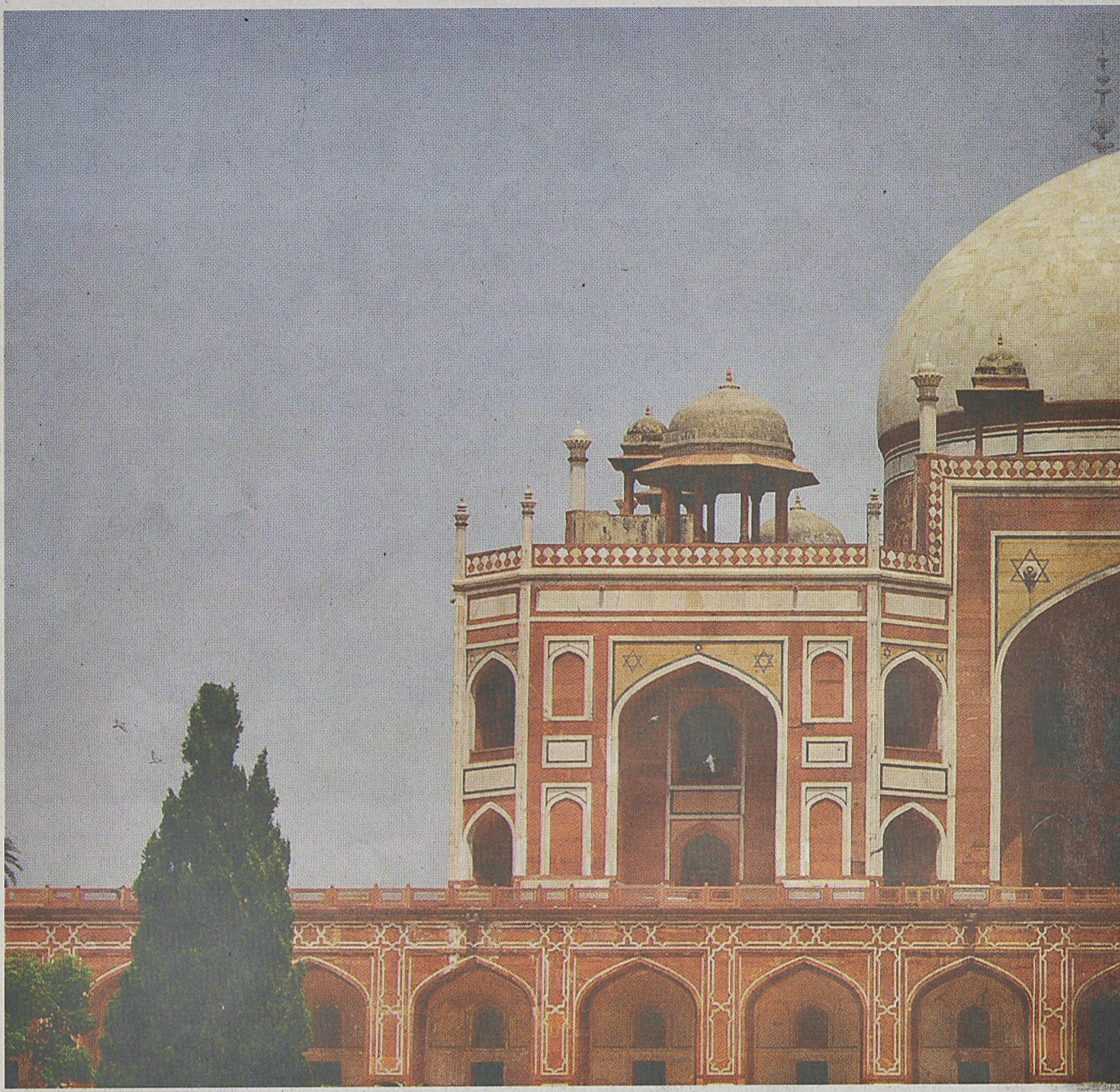
International Officer of the Students Union Ayushman Sen said: "India Week 2009 included a diverse range of events, managing to capture the essence of India and bring it all the way here on campus. Like every year, the highlight was undoubtedly 'Bollywood Crush' which was the perfect way to end the week's worth of activities. Well done to everybody on the India Week 2009 taskforce!"

One attendee said, "I had a great time at Bollywood Crush. We got to dance to something that wasn't pop music!"

The week included a variety of cultural activities including Bollywood dance classes, Sari tying and Mehendi decorating and Hindi and Tamil classes. Talks also took place on the "Sino-Indian Interface and the Road ahead" and "The State of the Indian Tiger Economy."

Tuesday night saw an Indian Food Festival held in conjunction with the LSESU Food Appreciation Society. After there was "Lamhe" - an Indian Musical Evening and Antakshari, where there was live music and dance.

The week culminated with a Retro Bollywood Crush including music and dance from 1949 to the present.



## Pro-life stall makes tumultuous campus return

Phyllis Lui

A controversial pro-life group returned to Houghton Street last Thursday two weeks after provoking outrage and debate on campus.

Created4Life, an organisation set up to "encourage women and men not to choose abortion" set up a stall on Houghton street for the second time. The organisers said they had been scheduled to come back.

Education and Welfare officer Emmanuel Akpan-Inwang once again engaged in a heated discussion with Created4Life Director Alan Thorne. Speaking to Thorne, Akpan Inwang said: "I don't want you coming back to LSE and offending students."

A female student who also took part in the discussion said that she found the material offensive and that she felt

distressed by it.

Thorne had written on his organisation's blog earlier in the week that Akpan-Inwang had issued an invitation for a debate on this issue and after a meeting with a Students' Union Executive was disinvited.

Akpan-Inwang said that he had not invited Thorne but had said that he would get back to him after discussing it with the Executive.

The Executive decided that they "did not want discussion with the organisation because of the literature" Akpan-Inwang said.

Akpan-Inwang said Thorne had misrepresented information about abortion.

He added that it would be logical to derive from their literature that people who choose abortion are Nazis since abortions are referred to as "Britain's Holocaust".

### "I don't want you coming back to LSE and offending students"

Emmanuel Akpan-Inwang  
Education and Welfare officer

Asked whether it would be infringing on freedom of speech by not inviting Thorne to the debate due to the possibility of offending students, Akpan-Inwang said he did not believe so.

Thorne declined to comment. LSE director Howard Davies was questioned at the UGM later on Thursday about whether it would be possible to deny pro-life organisations the right to set up stalls on Houghton Street. Davies said it would not be possible due to the street in question being a public highway under the jurisdiction of Westminster City Council.

## Howard Davies: LSE has paid some penalty for growth

>> Continued from page 1

at Sidney Webb, and that the Fourth Floor restaurant became very busy at lunchtimes.

'LSE Not for Profit' campaigners also continued their attack on the alleged 'pro-business' orientation of the director, a former head of the Finance Services Authority, at the meeting.

Spokesperson Michael Deas asked Davies to respond to claims that LSE had lost its social direction, and said that 450 staff and students had signed a petition to him on the issue.

Davies said that he had already addressed the activists' concerns in a Beaver comment piece.

The school would not agree to the campaign's demand for students to be represented on LSE's unofficial development committee, he added.

Representation would prove "not particularly helpful" to the committee's mission of oversight on donations and development of the LSE campus, Davies said.

Davies added that students could already make decisions on the school's sources of funding through LSE's council.

Deas told the Beaver that he did not believe it was actually clear that council approved the school's funding and pointed to the example of the Sheikh Zayed Theatre in the New Academic Building.

"The theatre was approved by the development committee, but not approved by council," he said.

The opening of the theatre last term provoked controversy because of the human rights record of Sheikh Zayed, the late ruler of the United Arab Emirates.

Davies told the Beaver at the time that no member of council had objected to the naming of the theatre during two years of planning.

Earlier in his speech Davies commented on the current global recession's impact on the school and students.

Davies said LSE was in "a good financial position" to ride out the recession, and the school remained able to support extra

spending such as increased hours at the library.

Full twenty-four hour opening will be introduced at the end of February, a month earlier than planned.

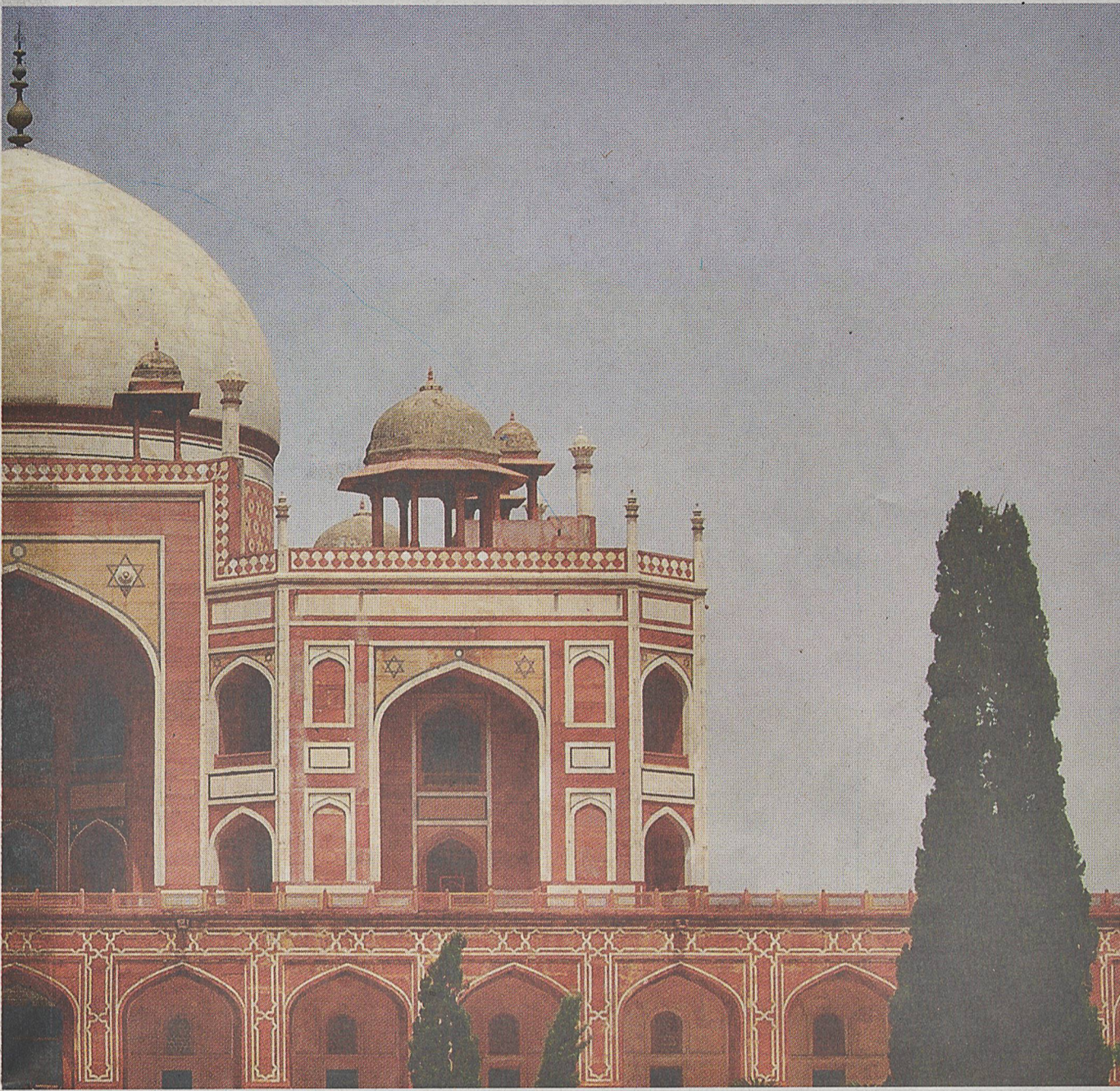
Davies added that LSE was the only institution in the elite Russell Group of UK universities to have increased the size of its careers service in the wake of the recession.

This year's LSE graduates face the disappearance of traditional job destinations in the City, with the recessionary eclipse of investment banks and hedge funds.

The LSE careers service has advised economics students to seek out positions in boutique firms, insurance, and finance in industry among other sectors traditionally overlooked by LSE graduates.

"We need to work harder to find the opportunities you want," Davies said. There were as many jobs on the LSE careers database as there were last year, he added, as recruiters from nontraditional sectors filled the gaps left by banks.





## A week to Discover Islam

Ali Moussavi

Last week, the Students' Union Islamic Society held their annual Discover Islam Week.

The Islamic Society, supported by the Students' Union held two lectures with discussions, and two cultural events.

The cultural events were well-attended among non-Muslim students with 15 of 30 students attending a tour of Regent's Park Mosque and a meal, in addition to Islamic calligraphy workshops on campus.

One of the speakers which attended was Ajmal Masroor, the Liberal Democrat candidate for the Bethnal Green and Bow constituency at the next General Election.

Masroor, who is also a qualified imam, and a prominent British Muslim in the media, gave an introductory address which outlined the basic principles and theological origins of Islam at the start of the awareness week.

The organizers of the week had publicized the events through a Youtube promotional video and a stall on Houghton Street. The organizers also constructed a model Ka'aba for the stage of the Quad.

The Ka'aba is the cube structure at the heart of Islam's holy city of Mecca.

The organizers also planned a speech by Idris Tawfiq, a Roman Catholic priest who converted to Islam. Tawfiq tackled some of the more controversial issues revolving around contemporary Islam, such as women rights, terrorism and the application of Shariah Law.

One of organizers of the week said: "Discover Islam Week is a week dedicated to inviting the entire LSE student population to learn more about this much-discussed religion - about its teachings and its history - and in doing so, we hope to strip away the misconceptions and stereotypes surrounding Islam."

## Higher Education & Research LSE and sector news

### Clements Inn Passage Closed

LSE Estates division have alerted students to the fact that Clements Inn Passage will be closed for another week or so. The passage closed last week due to Morrisons Utility Firm carrying out maintenance work on behalf of Thames Water. Access to and from the Towers will be restricted, and at times closed, during this period. The school have apologised for any inconvenience which this may cause.

### Student Loans Company Respond To Bursary Complaints

Last week the Beaver reported that students' bursary's are yet to appear in their bank accounts. The student loans company released this statement to The Beaver last week:

"The Student Loans Company and the London School of Economics deeply regret any inconvenience encountered by students awaiting payment of their bursary. Both SLC and LSE acted quickly when we became aware of a delay in payment and LSE have advised any students affected by the issue that they can obtain a short-term hardship loan to cover their expenses. We will both work together to ensure any affected student is paid as quickly as possible."

LSE have said that the expected date of payment for Bursary's is the 18th February.

**LSE emergency loans can be obtained within one to two days or can be an open cheque and cashed the same day, despite comment printed last week in The Beaver suggesting otherwise.**

# Low attendance at Your Union meeting

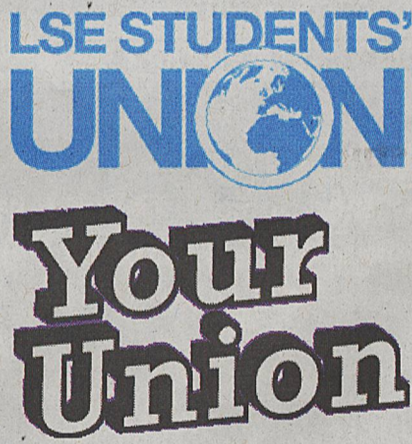
Joe Rennison

Last Thursday a total of six people attended an open meeting designed to get student input on the direction the LSE Student Union should be taking.

Your Union is a campaign being run by the SU which intends to get student views on changes that should be made to the SU, ideas for what the new SU building should include and anything else that students feel should be part of the SU but isn't.

SU Treasurer Will Barber said: "Attendance at today's meeting was low but with open meetings with societies, the media group and the Athletics Union already having been held this is perhaps not surprising."

"Also, with over 500 students having responded to our survey most people who wanted to contribute have already done so. These last two meetings were just to cap-



ture those who have not yet been involved in any qualitative stage."

Peter Barton, an LSE student who attended the meeting, said: "I feel there is a large section of LSE students that finds LSE a very isolating experience and hard to integrate into."

He continued: "The need to make people aware of what the student union offers and ways in which it can reform is vital to people feeling part of it, and engaging with it. You can't care about something you don't understand or know about."

Barton suggested that, "a page of *The Beaver* could be used for this purpose, it would be a good way of letting people know of things that are going well, what the union does as well as things they may want to get involved in."

Barber added: "The information we have received from these meetings has been extremely useful, repeatedly highlighting the need for us to provide greater training opportunities for our members as

well as a variety of ways to ensure the institutional memory of societies."

"The research into the new building has highlighted the need to create more common space on campus and a multi-purpose event space."

For more information:

To fill out the Your Union survey and have your opinions heard visit: <http://changeyourunion.co.uk>

### Pub Quiz in Aid of RAG Skydive

Last Tuesday Sakine Koc and Fim Kryt held a pub quiz in the Tuns raising a total of £50 for a RAG skydive. On 21 February they, and ten others, will jump out of a plane in aid of Cancer Research UK.

Around 30 people took part in the quiz which cost £1 per person. Donations were then made after the quiz on top of the entrance fee. Koc added: "Despite the fun in a pub quiz I'd say baking and selling cakes in Houghton Street is a better method to raise money since you come across many more people and everyone likes cakes as opposed to pubs! During these sales we made about £100 a day."

To donate to Sakine, visit: <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=43775054454&ref=share>

To donate to Roger Lewis, another Skydiver, visit: <http://www.justgiving.com/rogeroliverlewis>

None of the other skydivers have online donation accounts.

# 'Ageing' not a demographic crisis

Chun Han Wong

There is no one "best pensions system" and different countries will and should pursue different pensions policies, said LSE academic Nicholas Barr at a public lecture last Wednesday.

The Professor of Public Economics at the LSE European Institute was outlining possible pensions policy reform measures in a public lecture at the Sheikh Zayed theatre last Wednesday.

Barr said that differing needs will affect the policy objectives of various governments, who will have to balance between the aims of consumption smoothing, insurance, poverty relief, and wealth redistribution.

In order to tackle long-term trends of

declining mortality and fertility rates and earlier retirement, governments might adopt into their pensions systems higher contribution rates, lower benefits, later and flexible retirement and policies designed to increase gross domestic product.

Professor Barr was also adamant that there is no "ageing problem" in developed countries. Warnings of a mounting crisis due to ageing populations ignores the positive aspect of the issue - that people are living longer.

Financial Services Authority chairman Lord Adair Turner, who arrived halfway through the lecture to discuss pension reforms in the British context, agreed.

"There is not a crisis of ageing," said the visiting professor at the LSE, who chaired the Pensions Commission from 2003 to 2006.

He continued: "What we face in

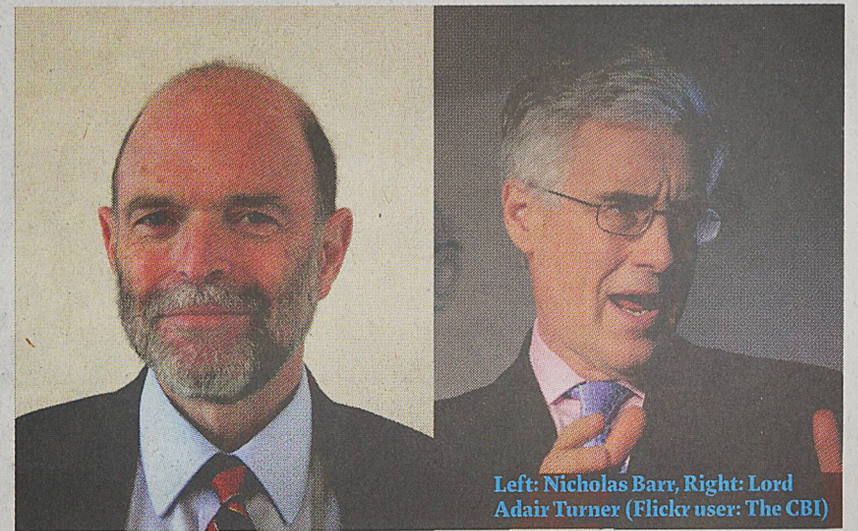
the Western world is not a crisis, but a manageable set of problems, to which we have to adjust with sensible policy."

On pensions policies, Lord Turner also advocated increasing the retirement age "in a flexible fashion that allows people to make their own specific choices".

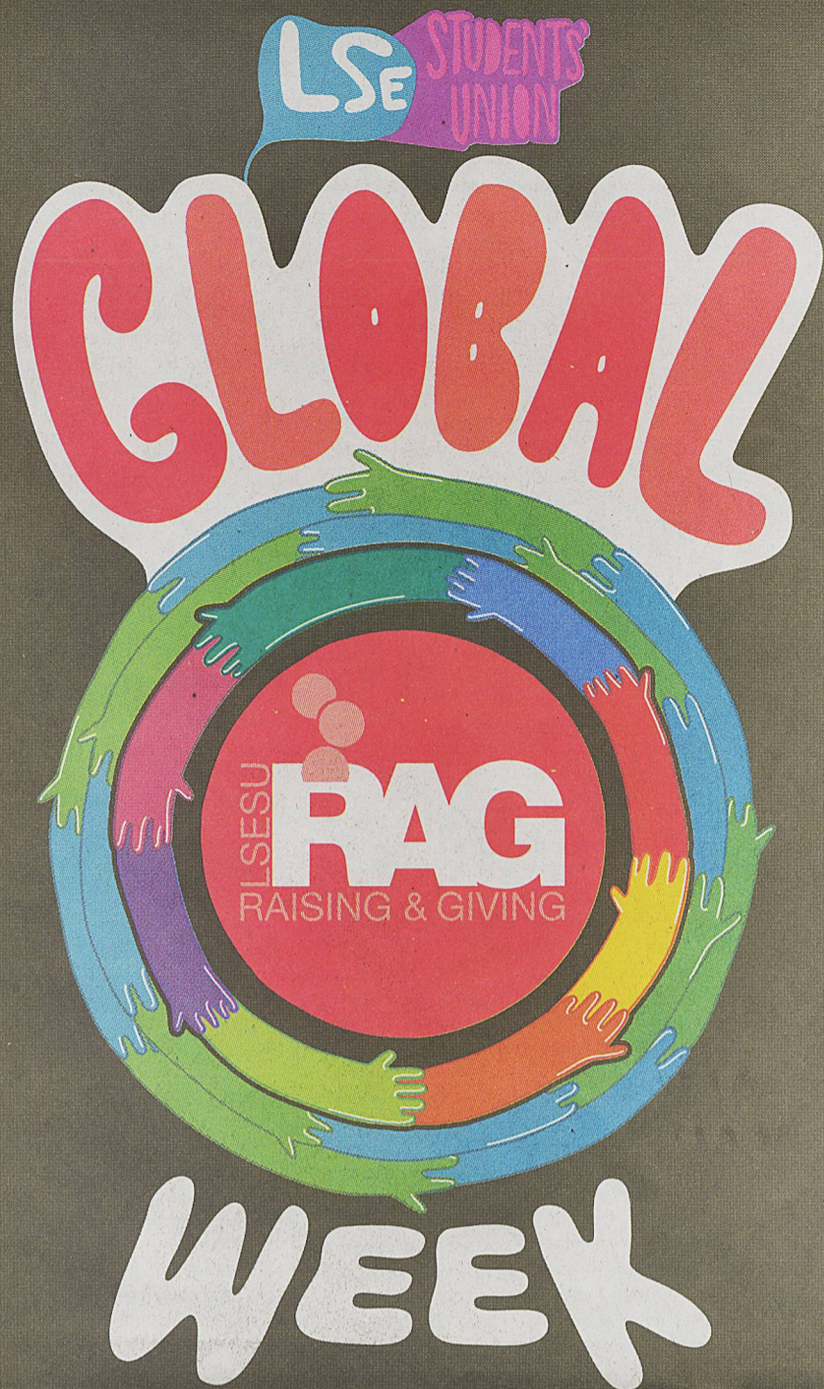
Adding that: "We don't have to be mechanistic, but we have to accept that it's highly likely that the average [retirement age] will have to go up."

The current government target, as advocated by the Pensions Commission in 2005, is to increase retirement age to 68 by 2050.

"If I regret any that we said in the Pensions Commission, I think we should have been more radical," Lord Turner admitted. "I think, if anything, that we should be increasing it faster."



Left: Nicholas Barr, Right: Lord Adair Turner (Flickr user: The CBI)



LSE STUDENTS'  
**UNION**

16th - 22nd February  
[www.lsesu.com](http://www.lsesu.com)

In support of...



**FREE**  
SILENT DISCO  
7PM TONIGHT  
THE QUAD  
WITH DJ UTTING

DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY  
**CHARITY  
PEOPLE  
AUCTION**



**TEES & THONGS!**

**Inter-Hall  
Sports Day**  
2PM, Sunday 22nd Feb  
Berrylands

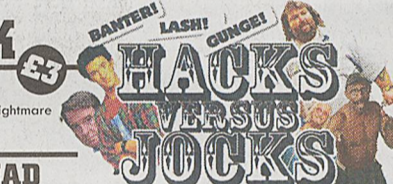
Live Music Society & Global RAG Week Present...

**RAISE 'N ROCK**

**JOEY NIGHTMARE**

**& SUPPORT**

**THURSDAY 8PM, THE QUAD**



## ALL WEEK

Pay your library fines to RAG  
Buy RAG merchandise on Houghton Street  
Pulse RAGathon broadcasting live from The Quad  
LooSE TV RAG Reels Film Making Competition  
Global Menus in the 4th Floor Restaurant

## MONDAY

**3PM** Italian Society Film: Consequences of Love, Underground  
**7PM** Silent Disco Launch Party, The Quad

## TUESDAY

**9AM-9PM** Rowing Club: London to Calais, Houghton St.  
**12PM** Geography Society: GAP talk & raffle  
**3PM** Israel Society Film: Someone to Run With, Underground  
**7PM** Pro-Evo Tournament, Carr Saunders Hall  
**7.30PM** LARA City of London Pub Crawl, Liverpool St.  
**8PM** Itchy Feet Society: Pub Quiz, Three Tuns

## WEDNESDAY

**9AM-1PM** RAG RAID for Barnardo's  
**6PM** Chilean Society Film: Play, Z225  
**7.30PM** Development Society People Auction, The Quad  
**8.30PM** Student Comedy Hub, Underground

## THURSDAY

**10AM-10AM** Knitting Society: 24 Knit-a-thon, The Quad  
**10AM-7PM** Dignitas Society: Race for Dignity, The Quad  
**1PM** UGM: Remixed, Old Theatre  
**2.30PM** International Students' Forum, S75  
**3PM** Japan Society Film: The Magic Hour  
**6PM** International Food Fair, The Quad  
**8PM** Rosebery Soakathon, Rosebery Hall  
**8PM** Live Music Society: Raise 'n Rock, The Quad

## FRIDAY

**3.30PM** Northerners Society: Tug of War, The Quad  
**4PM** Biryani Eating Contest, The Quad  
**5PM** Hacks vs Jocks, The Quad  
**6PM** RAG Reels, The Underground  
**6.30PM** Olympic Pub Crawl, Outside Three Tuns  
**8PM** Global RAG Crush, The Quad

## SUNDAY

**2PM** Inter-halls Sports Day, Berrylands

...plus many more events throughout the week. Please get involved and give generously!

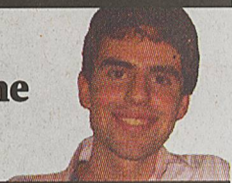


# Comment

## Why economic models can be bad for your health

Trust in maths over logic can be dangerous: it's time for a cost-benefit analysis of my degree

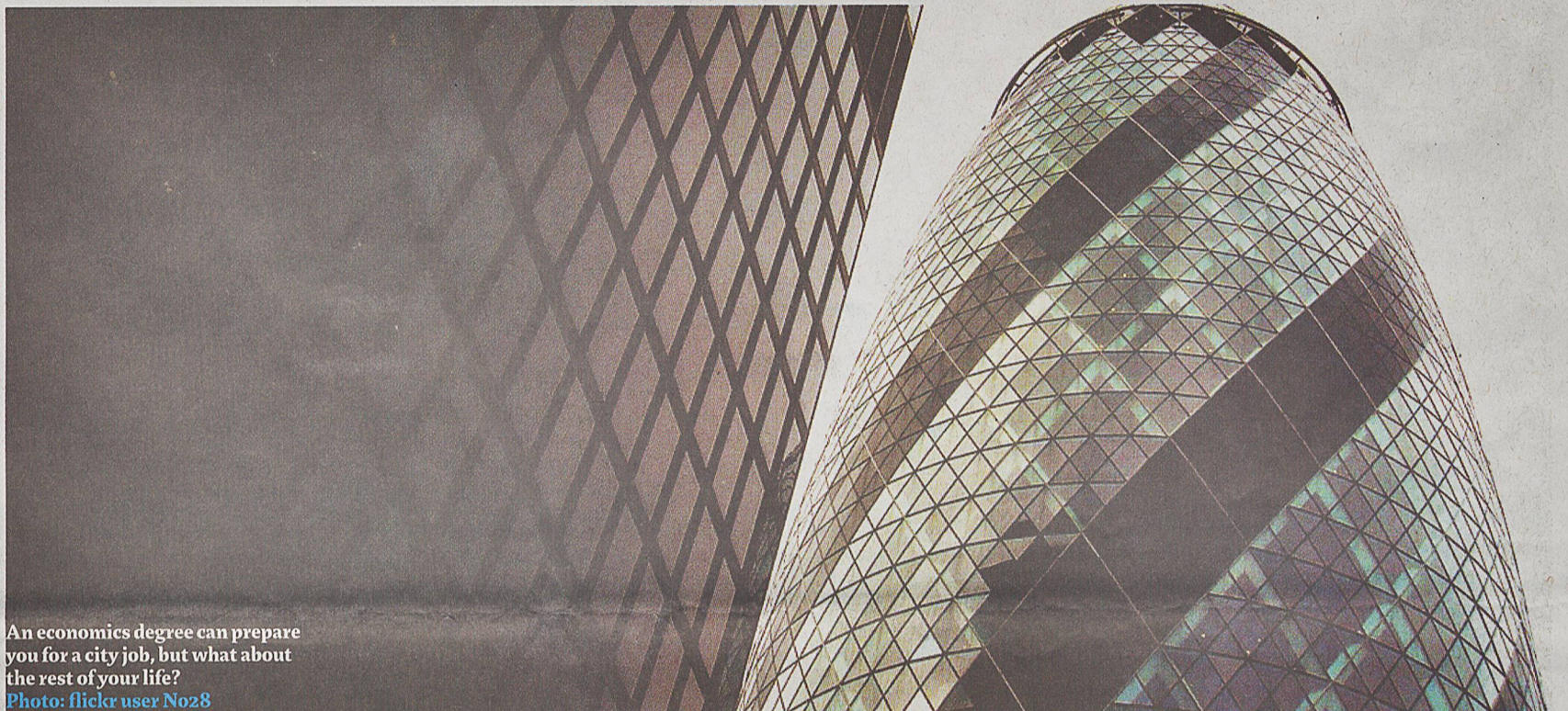
**Tomás  
Guilherme  
da Costa**



Is economics good for you? The job prospects seem to suggest it is. For a moment, however, I would like to ask you to join me in the painful process of distancing ourselves from the endless pursuit of material wealth and status that society, the LSE or the nice banker at that careers fair last Tuesday have inculcated us with. Let us think about the purely academic benefits to our education: does studying a particular subject at university help us understand it, and gain insights on life? Or does it just make it more likely that we will completely miss the point – about the subject, and ourselves?

In a place like the LSE, it is easy to forget the parallels that can exist between the social and natural sciences. I promise: physics can help you understand economics, and students of other subjects will also find the following thought exercise relevant. In fact, by the end of the article, you may find that you know more economics than most of us economics students do. Take light – we've all looked at it in science class, sooner or later during our high school careers. What is light? By this I mean – is it a wave or is it a particle? This question vexed physicists in the early decades of the twentieth century. This is because light, as you will remember, is a wave: it can be described through its frequency and its speed. Many experiments can be set up in which you can observe the diffraction and refraction of light, like any other wave. Yet light is also a particle; those solar panels that you see in countless locations, powering cities, cars, light posts or little fans on baseball caps all generate electricity through the photoelectric effect. This is where a photon (particle) of light 'bumps' into electrons in the thin layer of silicon in the panel; the movement of these dislodged electrons generates a useful electric current. Indeed, the concept of light as photons is one of the bases of quantum theory, the most accurate description of our physical world, earning Albert Einstein a Nobel Prize in the process. So I ask you the question again: is light a wave or a particle?

The answer, of course, is that it is neither. Light is light, and we all have a very good idea of what it is and how it behaves in an everyday context. The wave and



An economics degree can prepare you for a city job, but what about the rest of your life?

Photo: flickr user Noz8

particle models are just that – models. They help us understand light's behaviour, but cannot ever describe it exactly in all situations. Evidently, you do not need to be Einstein to arrive at this conclusion – he himself took some time to get his head round it at first.

Economics, in many aspects, is similar. It has models, it tries to make predictions, and its academics are always very concerned with verifiable experiments. I am by no means trying to say that economics is more accurate and scientific than any other subject – but it tries to be, and this is what makes it a useful point for comparison. When we learn about growth, or unemployment, we are often taught several different models, often leading to different conclusions and results, faced with the same inputs. Deciding which model is 'right' – or which one can we choose, in different situations – always seems like a very important practical question, but it may not always be a reasonable one. *Rerum cognoscere causas*, we are told: so looking at patterns, and trying to find a model to fit them, is a dangerous approach. The 'causas' can unexpectedly throw the model, the Western financial system and just about everything else right back at us if we do not get them right.

Finance is about prediction: if you

want to make a profitable investment, you have to predict it will be so, preferably before others do. This is where models can come in handy, or even deceptively handy. Predictions that consistently generate millions of pounds have a tendency to be trusted, particularly by those that they benefit. In absorbing the current news, the reader may have noticed that reporting on the financial crisis has acquired a tinge of inevitability lately. We have been overwhelmed with the story of how sub-prime loans in the United States and their subsequent payment difficulties led to the collapse of lending and the ensuing financial armageddon that we know only too well. How obvious it all seems. Yet it was not obvious at all at the time: our failure to learn from our experiences means that we have been given to trust models more than our caution and common sense.

How strange it is then, that caution and common sense are at the very heart of economics. I wonder therefore, why concepts such as the cost-benefit analysis get so little attention, even in economics courses. It is true; cost-benefit analyses seem very simple in comparison to heavy mathematical or spatial models that form the basis of modern economics, which places a high value

on formal mathematical proof. Whether all this maths actually helps us to understand the real world is an entirely different question. In fact, we may be gradually starting to head in the right direction again: Paul Krugman, winner of the Nobel Prize for Economics last year, is known for his simple and intuitive explanations. The popularity of pop-economics literature just shows that people are as interested in understanding their environment – be it natural or social – as they always were. Science is supposed to help in this pursuit, not confuse us.

Unfortunately, confusion is widespread, particularly amongst economists. Paul Ferraro and Laura Taylor from Georgia State University surveyed economics students' level of knowledge in a study entitled 'Do Economists Recognise an Opportunity Cost When They See One? A Dismal Performance from the Dismal Science'. They posed a question about opportunity cost to 270 economics undergraduates, and 88 undergraduates from other subjects. The economics students scored on average 7.4 per cent correctly, whereas the other students scored 17.2 per cent: better, but both pretty dismal considering the probability of a right guess is 25 per cent. Most strikingly, they surveyed professional economists, and only 21.6 per cent came up with the right

answer. Maybe it is just because I also got this question wrong, whereas hopefully my colleagues will have answered it rightly, but I cannot help thinking that even a rather average student, in the fourth term of economic education at the London School of Economics, really ought to know this before going on to anything more complicated. It seems studying economics is not so good for you!

Hopefully, I have not put anyone off economics in this article – personally, I see it as a fascinating concept, as a way of thinking about the world, not only a collection of models. The reader should not take me, or themselves, too seriously when it comes to conclusions, especially any involving the financial crisis and its causation. After all, critics of modern economics claim it is the science of stating the obvious – but there is a lot that escapes it. After all, the obvious is never so obvious without hindsight. At the LSE, we enjoy complaining about our own career-oriented focus, our one-mindedness, our often unrewarding work. Those who do not identify themselves with this may have noticed it even more clearly – or not at all. Essentially, nothing is ever obvious, be it in economics or in our own lives; so knowing the costs and benefits of our decisions is not easy, especially for economists.

**FACTS ARE FREE**  
**COMMENT IS SACRED**  
**WRITE FOR THIS SECTION**

**UNION POLITICS BEAUTY**  
**PAGEANTS CAREERS**  
**BICYCLE LANES BAILOUTS**  
**BUSINESS SOCIETIES**  
**TEACHING STANDARDS**  
**ORGAN DONORS**

sign up and contribute  
comment@thebeaveronline.co.uk



# The Beaver

Established in 1949  
Issue No. 702

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

## Use your vote

**I**t is very easy to get very discouraged very quickly about student politics. That is to say nothing of student elections, the grubby conduit through which student politics is renewed at the LSE every year, and which will be turning Houghton Street into a gutter of multi-coloured paper and campaign promises just weeks from now. Election season is here.

Many students this year will feel that student politics at the LSE is really not worth renewing. As student newspaper editorials from the Harvard Crimson to the Glasgow University Guardian have recited countless times, Henry Kissinger once said that student politics is so vicious because the stakes are so low.

On the contrary. More than a few students will feel this term's stakes - as the Students' Union lurched from students occupying the Old Theatre to an unexpected explosion in campus ten-

sions to simmering anger on the Israel-Palestine debate - have been far too high to be left in the hands of any student politician looking to make a name for herself on campus.

Even more students will just not care or notice that elections are going on at all, apart from ducking candidates on Houghton Street in week eight. It has been very rare in elections going back almost a decade now to have had more than two thousand LSE students voting. That is not much indication of the LSE's supposed proud tradition of political participation; it is a tiny electorate that is too beholden to capture by interest groups and clientele politics. Even most current student politicians at the LSE would admit that there is an uncomfortable democratic deficit emerging in the LSE Students' Union.

So what is to be done? The Beaver doesn't think student politics should go out of business. Howard Davies said in his appearance at the Union

General Meeting last Thursday that he had always supported the "political aspirations" of LSE Students' Union politicians and hacks - which is high praise indeed from the director, who has so often been in the firing line of those same hacks, often on issues that have nothing to do with him.

He had a point. LSE students do have a long history of involvement in politics. And not just grandstanding on foreign political issues that seem to have little relevance to our corner of WC2. Grubby conduit though it is, this coming election season will be the only way LSE students will gain a proper voice on a range of issues from the future of tuition fees, the provision of welfare and services for mature and part-time students, and access to public transport: boring stuff, we can agree, but things which affect our short time as students a very great deal.

This is all a very long way of saying that as many students

should stand - and vote - in the upcoming elections as possible. The Beaver tells students to use their vote every year - students don't always listen. But the message needs to get through.



## An end to expansion?

**I**s it the end of an era? Howard Davies has said at the Union General Meeting that the growth in LSE student numbers will now be halted, in view of concerns about teaching quality and space on campus.

Hallelujah, is all this paper can say, really. School officials have been working a long time on changing the School's environment - both material and educational - to make room for the yearly additional influx of students. Both this year's opening of the New Academic Building and the ongoing Teaching Task Force are reflections of this.

But a stop had to be declared somewhere, and we are glad that the School has chosen this time to give our small Holborn campus a breather. Ultimately it is right that the LSE should expand its influence outward in London - so many students are attracted to it for a reason. But continuing the rise in students would threaten the LSE brand too far.

# Obama's strong leadership is an example our Union must follow

We need a bold spending plan for the Union to continue providing essential services

**Seph Brown**

LSESU Anti-Racism Officer



This week sees President Barack Obama's economic stimulus package signed into law. At US\$787 billion, it's enough to make your eyes water, especially when you take into account that it is being funded entirely out of borrowed money - bringing the US national debt cap to a mind-boggling US\$11 trillion. Broken down into 36 per cent supply-side tax cuts and 64 per cent in increased government expenditure, it has been a hard fought victory for the neonatal democratic administration.

"It's socialism!" wailed Fox News commentator Glenn Beck as he berated Obama's plan; somehow managing to overlook the US\$240 billion tax-relief gift to wealthier areas of American society. The right wing of American politics has battled zealously to strangle the quasi-Keynesian proposal at birth: only three of the forty one Republican Senators voted to pass the Bill while not one Republican member of the House backed the scheme.

Increasing the already record-high national deficit is a risky strategy. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates that by 2019 the Senate legislation could reduce GDP by 0.1 per cent to 0.3 per cent on net. "Our country does not need just another spending bill, particularly not one that will load future generations with the burden of massive debt" said defeated presidential candidate John McCain.

However, to see the intrinsic value of what the Obama administration is trying to do we mustn't focus solely on the mathematics, but also the philosophy upon which the numbers are based. The recession slowly creeping to engulf all four corners of the globe is not just something weakening economies and curtailing the wage packets of the highrolling elite. Nor is it something simply undermining the relative ability of states to assert themselves internationally. The primary concern at play here is that it is affecting ordinary people: it is crippling the ability of families to sustain themselves and it is decimating the standard of living for mil-



Is there any hope for LSESU? Photo: flickr user Steve Rhodes

lions in the United States and around the world. By reviving demand-side economic policy and by taking bold moves to direct government funds directly to the people, rather than relying on the inequitable, feeble and unproven right-wing 'trickle down' policy, Obama has shown he understands that the issue is not just about financial well-being but also about the very nature of people's lives.

So it should be at the London School of Economics Students' Union. It takes a substantial leap of faith to compare the nature of a US\$14 trillion dollar national economy to our 9,000 member, one million pound charity; but in these desperate times our Union can - and must - take a number of lessons from the Obama administration's audacious spending plans.

We need to realise and reaffirm our Student Union's founding principle - this is a service, not a business. We operate to benefit students at the LSE and make their experience here as productive, safe and (most importantly, in my opinion) as entertaining as possible. The Union does not exist to make a profit and it should be ready to prioritise the experiences of students at LSE over the balance of our budget. Right now our Union is taking a sound beating from the economic downturn, with investment down almost 60 per cent and the School's annual grant down at the time of the last budget in Mich-

aelmas Term. Thankfully, I have worked alongside a Treasurer this year who was not afraid of the dreaded term 'deficit' and vowed to continue spending to ensure student welfare was not compromised. However, this year's Union deficit has been covered by the £120,000 surplus from the year before.

With the elections looming and the downturn showing no signs of faltering, the question we need to ask now is whether the next Union will be willing to take the necessary, if rare, step of delving into our substantial reserves in order to sustain the welfare of the student body at LSE. Is the next Union going to be courageous enough to accept the criticism of sceptical students and say, in no uncertain terms, that they are not there to look out for the budget surplus or even to babysit the jealously-guarded £1million we have sat in the bank, but to sustain a positive student experience at the LSE? Like the Obama administration, our Union should stare down the recession and not allow it to endanger the support we offer our constituents.

Beyond dealing with the current external pressures on our Union, Obama's approach can help us deal with a much larger internal dilemma. Well before the beginning of the 'credit crunch', our Union began to suffer from a much worse impediment, as yet unhindered or confront-

## Drawing on the Obama strategy, our Union needs to be ready to take painful steps now in order to make long term gains

ed on any real scale by the Union. This ailment disables the very nature of what the Union exists to do in representing student views. We are wracked by a distinct and unwavering disinterest amongst the student body; we suffer an affliction which can only be called an 'activism crunch'. The fact that our Union General Meetings rarely reach a quorate number, that societies complain of a lack of support and that the Union seems ostensibly irrelevant to everyday student life is an existential threat that the next Executive Committee will need to tackle in earnest. Drawing on the Obama strategy, the Union needs to be ready to take painful steps now in order to make long term gains: the standing of the United States depends on the revival of its economy; the very existence of our Union depends on the revival of an engaged and active student body - and even at this difficult time we should be ready, if necessary, to financially invest our way out of this crisis.

In the coming weeks Houghton Street will engage in its bi-yearly ego circus as the student body moves to elect its next Executive Committee. There will be T-shirts, posters and rhetoric of the highest calibre. We should avoid those nauseating and meaningless regurgitation of Obama's "Yes we can" and instead be following his example, looking to those saying "I know how we can - and I'm willing to do it."

## The myth of widespread student apathy

The new Listening Commission will help to strengthen the campaigns of our Union

**Sadia Kidwai**

'Apathy' is a derogatory word. 'Student apathy' is verging on the obscene, depending on your social circle: veterans of '68 will wax lyrical about the halcyon era of student activism, 'back when people cared'. Now students don't care - they're apathetic.

The problem here is just how misused the word 'apathy' is by those who try to further their own political agendas. If a student disagrees, or is indifferent, to your particular agenda, we assume they're apathetic - that they have no interests, no issues, no concerns, and are in actual fact a little bit self-centred. We see it in the LSE all the time - the perennial problems of Union General Meeting attendance and

low voter turnout in SU elections all get swept under the rug of 'student apathy'. Why, oh why, wouldn't students want to give up their Thursday lunchtime to debate amendments to a constitution they've never even read? Because LSE students, we're told, only care about three things; getting a first, getting a job, and getting a social life.

The truth is student apathy is a myth. To say students don't care is to grossly misrepresent them, and glosses over the fact that most students do care about the Middle East, and the Congo, and the gender pay gap. And, if pushed, most students might say the UGM is important (shock horror). But when your student loan is down to its last few pennies, and your landlord is demanding that you pay for a door you didn't break, and your tutor wants to know why your essay is one month late (and 3000 words too short), and you know that you will have at least £18,000 of debt welcoming you home after graduation then, frankly, you can't always afford to be an activist.

When university education was free,

it liberated students to act on the bigger issues - but now, as our generation bear the burden of a progressively more costly education, it becomes increasingly difficult to campaign on the issues that concern us the most. In that sense, the role of Student Unions has become even more important as we depend on them to run our campaigns for us.

So perhaps the root of the 'apathy' problem is not that students 'don't care anymore' - it's that we're campaigning on the wrong things. Rather than asking students what they want to campaign on, we seem to just tell them what they should campaign on. The LSE Listening Campaign, hosted by the LSESU Citizens for Social Justice Society, looks to address that problem; over the next few weeks, we want to run a massive consultation with students. We want to have up to 100 in-depth conversations with students from across LSE before term ends, to find out what concerns LSE students the most, and what issues they want to campaign on - whether it be problems with housing and nightmare landlords, personal safety

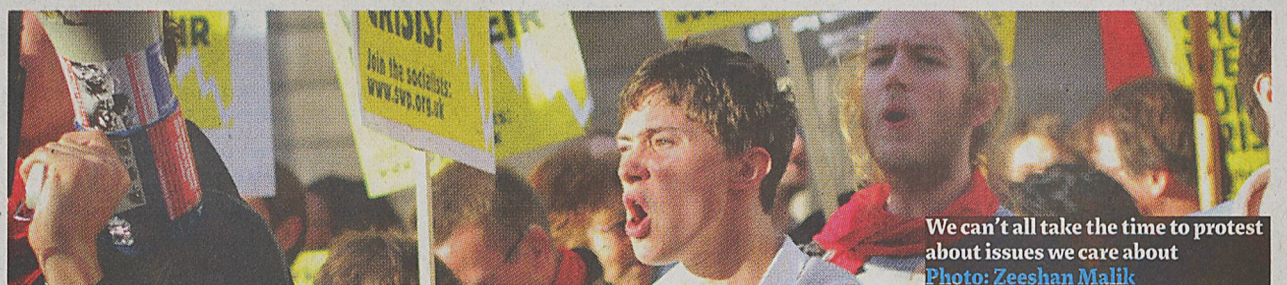
## When your student loan is down to its last few pennies, you can't always afford to be an activist

in London, or the skyrocketing cost of education. In March, a delegation of LSE students will attend a meeting with Boris Johnson and various Cabinet ministers, where we can demand, first hand, that

they address the issues that affect students most.

Listening Campaigns are nothing new, and they have a proven track record - all it means is consulting before campaigning. This happened with both the 24-hour library campaign and this year's nursery campaign, which were both successes. There was also widespread consultation with the LSE Not for Profit campaign which has been going from strength to strength all year.

The Citizens for Social Justice Society works with London Citizens to help build powerful communities - a Listening Campaign will not only identify the most pressing concerns of LSE students, but will also give power back to the LSE community by helping us to campaign on these issues at a national level. And by finding out what day-to-day issues affect LSE students the most, the Students Union can get on with its job of making student life that little bit easier, leaving students free to solve global warming, bring peace to the Middle East, and hey - maybe even get that first.



We can't all take the time to protest about issues we care about Photo: Zeeshan Malik

# It's time to pad out your CV

Hoping to land a **job**,  
**summer internship**,  
or a place for **postgraduate study**?

**Become a Beaver. Be one of us.**

**News.**

**Comment.**

**Features.**

**Social.**

**PartB.**

**Sport.**

**Photography.**

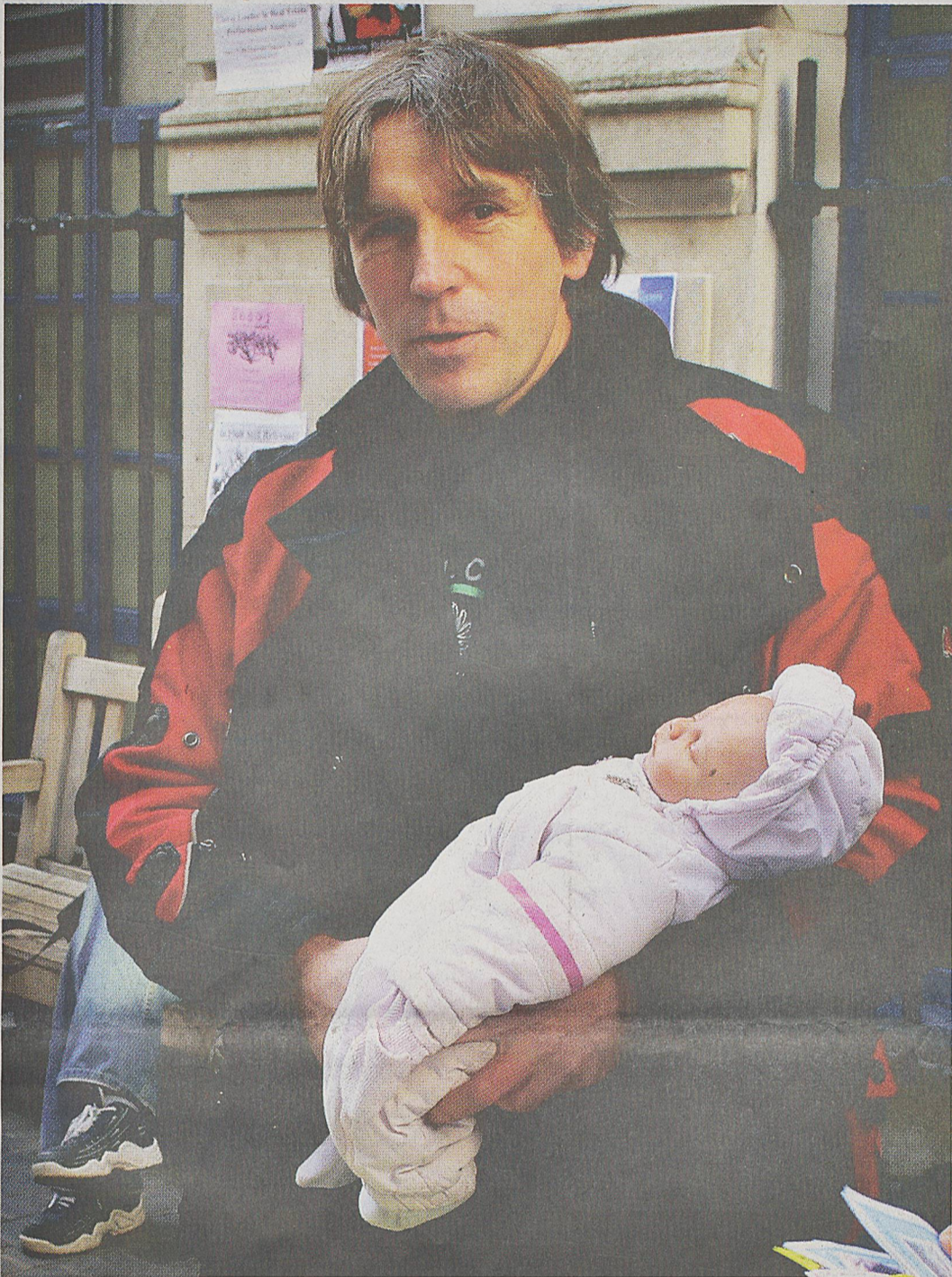
**Design.**

**Blog.**



[getinvolved@thebeaveronline.co.uk](mailto:getinvolved@thebeaveronline.co.uk)

# Features



A pro-life campaigner from Created4Life and his stall on Houghton Street  
Photo: Beaver archive

## Preying on the vulnerable

**Alex Peters-Day** highlights the counter-productive scare tactics used by pro-life campaigners

Twice in the past few weeks, a stall was set up on Houghton Street handing out leaflets with the words "abortion - worse than rape" emblazoned across them. These campaigners, from a group known as Created4Life, had models of foetuses at different stages of growth and encouraged students who had undergone abortions to "work through their guilt". Education and Welfare Officer Emmanuel Akpan-Inwang along with women's Officer Ruby Buckley started a petition to remove them - seen by some students as a violation of free speech and the right to campaign. They believe that the removal of the stall and quietening the pro-life voice at the LSE would inhibit students from receiving both sides of the argument and being fully informed on the issue.

Similarly, the issue of informed consent with regards to abortion is at the forefront of certain policies in America. Eleven states are currently considering whether to pass a bill establishing mandatory ultrasound scans for women choosing to have an abortion. Three of these states, namely Nebraska, Indiana and Texas, would then require the woman to look at the ultrasound of the foetus she is due to abort. If she chooses to look away, the doctor would be obliged to show her the ultrasound and describe the foetus. Florida and Arizona would only take this step if the woman is after her first trimester but in Oklahoma, this bill has already been implemented.

While these bills might be implemented in just short of a dozen states, it is still appalling. The decision should have

an abortion should be given extremely serious thought and making an informed decision is crucial, but these new bills go beyond the necessary precautions. They seem like methods that are not only extreme, but also highly invasive and even cruel.

Unsurprisingly, the pro-life voice seems to favour such methods. A quick glance at Created4Life's website shows a "Diary of an Unborn Child", created to give a foetus a "voice". This reads like your average diary - for example, "5 weeks, 3 days: Tiny fingers are beginning to form on my hands. Funny how small they are! I'll be able to stroke my mother's hair with them" and "11 weeks, 3 days: I wonder if mum hears the beating of my heart? It sounds like this: dub-dub, dub-dub, dub-dub... you'll have a lovely little daughter, mum!". It ends off dramatically with, "12 weeks. Today I was aborted".

One does not have to be pregnant or have undergone an abortion or even be a woman to find campaigning materials such as that distressing and disturbing. There are many complicated issues surrounding abortion, but it is at its heart a legal procedure. In promoting such literature, Created4Life undermines any argument for abortion. It also suggests that they are willing to stoop to new moral lows, and this discredits any further arguments that they might have.

A woman who is pregnant does not need visual reminders in the form of an ultrasound; she is well aware of the fact that she is carrying a baby. It is precisely this awareness that forms the basis of a woman's decision when it comes to hav-

ing an abortion. As rewarding as giving birth and raising a child may be, it involves commitments that a woman may not be ready for.

Similarly, it is not as if women are cavalier and unaware of the emotional upset that may be caused by abortion - Created4Life's "testimonials" describing the emotional "ordeals" of abortion as being worse than rape do nothing to support the women facing this difficult decision. It is not unfair to say that it is demeaning to suggest that a pregnant woman has not spent a large amount of time contemplating her options before making such a decision. It is also insulting to suggest that a woman who chooses to have an abortion does not realise the emotional and physical implications and repercussions of her choice. It is unnecessary to have a pro-life extremist waving a life-sized baby doll in her face to come to terms with that fact. This bill not only offends any pro-choice sentiments but also has a nasty implication that a woman cannot make a difficult decision - especially when a woman willingly refuses pictorial descriptions of her foetus and it is described to her in detail anyway.

Scare tactics employed by Created4Life and soon, by the ultrasound bill, will put vulnerable women in even more of a difficult situation. The graphic displays and leaflets are not even veiled attempts at preying on a woman when she is in a delicate state. Such tactics reveal the lengths at which some would go in the name of their beliefs. Obama has made his liberal views on abortion clear, which has undoubtedly made the pro-life voice

**It is insulting to suggest that a woman who chooses to have an abortion does not realise the emotional and physical implications**

in America much more eager to be heard. Desperation sometimes brings out the worst in people, and these tactics used by pro-life groups seem to prove this.

Informed consent is necessary before making a decision as permanent and as important as that of having an abortion. But this does not entail seeing an ultrasound of a foetus, or photos of every stage of foetal development. The Nebraska State Senator Tony Fulton, who introduced the US bill, stated many times that women seeking abortions are young, vulnerable and need to be informed - a fair statement, and one that is often true. The bill, however, concerns women who have already chosen to have an abortion, are at the doctor's office and are due to have an abortion in one hour. This does not help women in making choices in early stages, and is a last-ditch attempt at using scare tactics to shock these "young and vulnerable" women out of a decision they have already made.

Despite what some pro-life organisation may spout, abortions are not seen as a viable form of child birth, nor are they taken without serious thought. We should be supporting women having abortions, not subjecting them to mental abuse. We should not attempt to silence the pro-life voice, because having access to information to make a fair and balanced decision is imperative. But to be taken seriously it needs to stop stooping to such low measures and using such graphic promotional material to make its voice heard.

Twitter / Home

http://twitter.com/home

Home Profile Find People Settings Help Sign out

What are you doing? 140

Latest: @sesu OMG STOP THE PRESS LSE Students' Union does something online 2 days ago update

**bbcworld** Zimbabwe's central bank is at the heart of the nation's economic decay, new Finance Minister Tendai Biti says. <http://tinyurl.com/df8fst>  
6 minutes ago from twitterfeed

**bbcworld** A marine census finds that at least 235 species live in both polar regions, despite being 12,000km apart. <http://tinyurl.com/cjkr19>  
6 minutes ago from twitterfeed

**bbcworld** A British man held at Guantanamo Bay – Binyam Mohamed – is fit enough to return to the UK, the Foreign Office .. <http://tinyurl.com/cqnbqk>  
25 minutes ago from twitterfeed

**tsuei** the funniest thing about the website is the recall notice for their plush uteruses near the top of the front page.  
about 1 hour ago from web

**tsuei** is very, very amused by <http://iheartguts.com>  
about 1 hour ago from web

**mg** **media\_guardian** ITV puts Friends Reunited website up for sale <http://tinyurl.com/awbwr5>  
about 1 hour ago from twitterfeed

**s\_m\_i** Appalled by lack of beach time.  
about 1 hour ago from web

**s\_m\_i** Delayed at VC Bird International. Not that I'm in a hurry to get back to sub-zero NY.  
about 1 hour ago from web

**tsuei** stutters.  
about 1 hour ago from web

Home Profile Find People Settings Help Sign out

33 following 34 followers 27 updates

Home

@Replies

Direct Messages 0

Favorites

Everyone

Following add

Device Updates  
Set up SMS updates

RSS feed

Screen capture of the Beaver's Twitter account  
Photo: Mike Carlson

# Making the youth connections

**Katie Rose LaPotin** ponders the utility and popularity of the online social network Twitter

If there are images in this attachment, they will not be displayed. Download the original attachment.

I'll admit, I'm quite a techie. I brought over my Blackberry from the states, carry my Macbook with me wherever I go, and even have a drawer in my nightstand completely designated to mains and adapters. I have used social networking sites in the past, and I was one of the first people in my immediate group of friends to join Facebook over four years ago, when its membership was still restricted to users with a university email address.

So when I decided to download Twitter (and, subsequently TwitterBerry for my Blackberry) three weeks ago, I spent quite a lot of time pondering the positive and negative aspects of the programme. Would it be worth my time, or is it just another Facebook wannabe? How different is this than Facebook and MySpace? Will it become as popular as those programmes in due course?

You may be wondering as you read this email what Twitter exactly is. Twitter is essentially a continuous status update where users can post up to 140 characters regarding their emotions, announcements, diary posts, or whatever they would like. Other Twitter members need to become your 'follower' in order to read your posts (unless they're public), and you can send messages or replies to your chaps' messages as well.

While 2008 was the year of Facebook as far as politics is concerned, 2009 is the

year of Twitter. In the United States, for example, over fifty Republican members of Congress are Twitter users. Representatives have been known to Twitter during committee meetings and floor votes to connect with their constituencies.

On the Democratic side, newly-elected President Barack Obama was one of the first major politicians to start using Twitter to connect with the tech-savvy youth voters of the United States. He is currently world's most subscribed member with over 260,000 followers, and plans on using the site as a way to continue a dialogue with voters throughout his presidency.

Although the programme is most popular currently in the United States, international politicians and governments have also joined the micro-blogging service. In the United Kingdom, for example, Westminster and 10 Downing Street both have official sites, as does David Cameron through the Conservative Party webpage. Unofficial pages do exist as well for other European leaders, such as French President Nicolas Sarkozy and German Chancellor Angela Merkel. Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd is an active Twitter user; not only does he have a strong base of followers worldwide but also requests to follow his followers as a way of staying in touch.

Yet it is not just politicians who are logging hours on Twitter today—Britney Spears is a constant figure on the website, and just this other weekend rumours floated around Hollywood of a possible engagement between actress Jennifer

## In the United States, over fifty Republican members of Congress are Twitter users

Aniston and musician John Mayer after the latter left posts on his Twitter feed suggesting that he was ring shopping. And seven of the ten most followed members of the site aren't even celebs at all! This group of members includes Twitter itself, Mr Tweet—who gives suggestions to members on who they should follow, and micro-blogger Veronica.

The rapid growth of the site has led to questioning about whether it is just another youth-centered social network. For example, both the Facebook events application and evite.com allow you to invite and manage your guest list, post event details, and send out reminders. The only catch, of course, is that you have to have a valid Facebook account or email address.

Yet it does not seem as if Twitter will follow the same path of its predecessors. Although it is currently more popular with a younger crowd, it did not start out as a social network for younger individuals, or restricted to current University students as Facebook did. Its features are much simpler—the member can only post tweets, direct messages, replies, or update their profile, settings, or followers list compared to the plethora of options Facebook offers. Breaking news can even be posted through Twitter, as CNN and Sky News, among others, post their leading stories when they are published on their websites. Thus, not only is Twitter becoming a cross between a social network and an RSS feed, it is actually the most friendly site to technologically illiterate and older individuals. It also makes sense that Twitter would

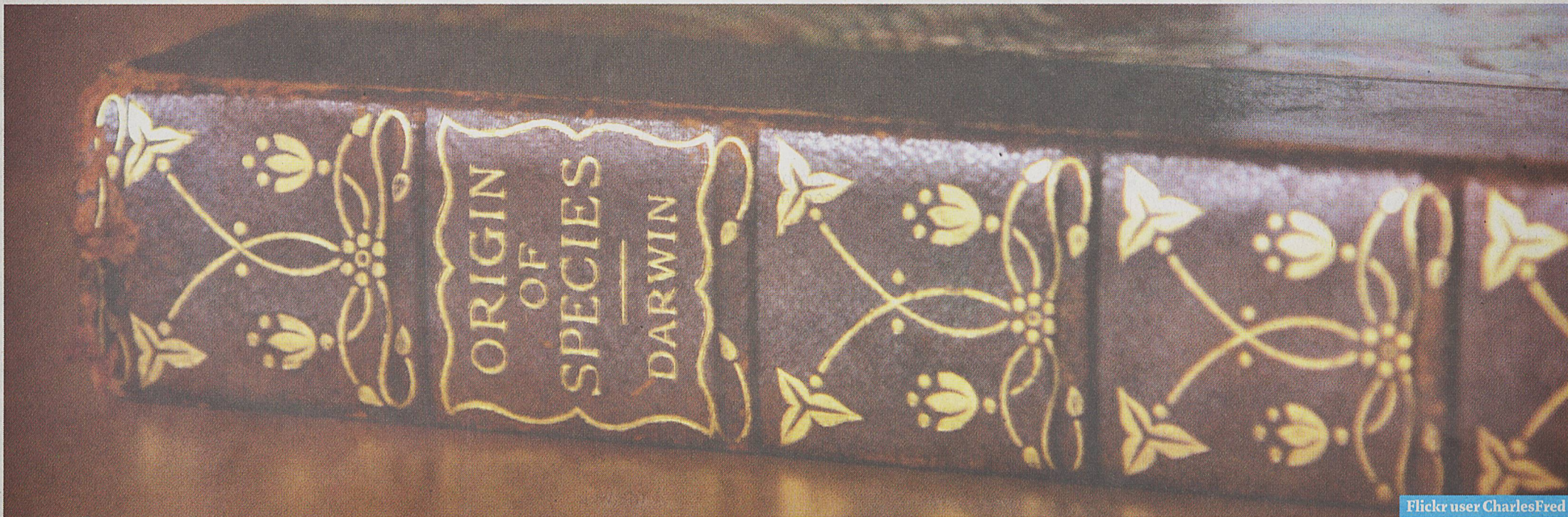
become a popular site to connect between politicians and their constituents. Voters can follow the actions of their representatives and even send them messages suggesting or commenting on their vote. The ease of using the site also makes it a better way of connecting than Facebook or MySpace.

In the short time that Twitter has been a mainstream social network, several prominent members have had their pages hacked. An unknown party hacked into the accounts of President Obama, Britney Spears, and American cable news network Fox News programme host Bill O'Reilly, among others—in total, over 33 accounts.

While this has since been corrected, it furthers the debate of where public and private domains begin and end on the web. This hacking incident did not cause major problems, but the risk of national security breaches is always a problem. Last month, a House representative from the state of Michigan, Peter Hoekstra, inadvertently breached security by sending a twitter message to followers saying, "Just landed in Baghdad" while on a secret delegation visit to Iraq. The Dalai Lama was also recently the subject of a Twitter controversy, as an account had been established with over 20,000 followers claiming to be his official site.

The controversy behind Twitter will not be resolved in the near future. Yet it is only increasing in popularity, and unlike its predecessors, could be the solution to connecting the old with the young, and the celebrity with the relatively unknown.

# DARWIN AT 200



Flickr user CharlesFred

## The slow descent of Social Darwinism

Louisa Clare Evans looks back at natural selection 150 years after *The Origins of Species*

This year marks the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of Charles Darwin's 'On The Origin of Species', one of the 'most incendiary books of all time', as described by the National Geographic. Darwin himself didn't actually come up with the idea of evolution, but he did develop a theory for evolution that was so powerful, it is still relevant and of importance for scientists today. He proposed the commonality of all life - that all living things share a common ancestor and thus are inter-connected.

However, the extent to which Darwin actually knew this to be true is limited, and much of his work was essentially enlightened guess-work. The specifics of his theory, that all of life evolves and develops through the processes of natural selection and sexual selection, did not triumph until 1940. The theory of natural selection became successfully integrated with genetics.

In fact, it wasn't even Darwin who first defined natural selection as 'the survival of the fittest' but a man from Derbyshire, Herbert Smith. It was him who developed the theory of Social Darwinism: the belief that the strongest and fittest should flourish in society and conversely, the weak and unfit should be allowed to die.

This view was widely accepted in the Victorian era when it seemed obvious that the richer and more powerful were better adapted to the social and economic pressures of the time. More than that, it seemed like the natural way of thinking at the time. However, with the remarkable strides made by modern medicine and the increasing persistence and survival of welfare states, the concept of Social

Darwinism seems totally defunct.

Take for example, the increasing awareness and diagnosis of allergies. In one of his stand-up routines, Alan Carr complained about the inconvenience of having to prepare meals when one or more of your friends have an allergy or intolerance. "It wasn't like this in the olden days", he said, "they would have just died".

This is certainly true for those unfortunate to have an anaphylactic allergic reaction to something (the kind that can kill you can through asphyxiation). But, those of us with food intolerances demonstrate the fascinating evolution of human beings in relatively recent history. Approximately 8,000 years ago, a mutation cropped up that allowed humans to drink milk past childhood. This mutation occurred after cows, sheep and goats had been domesticated and those humans who could drink milk developed a nutritional advantage, allowing them to propagate their genes. This random adaptation was so important, it occurred at least five times. Today more than 95 per cent of the population of Northern European descent carry the gene that allows them to digest lactose. However, thanks to technological advances, the remaining five per cent of the population who do not carry this gene can survive, using soya alternatives and even taking the enzyme required in tablet form before a meal.

Human geneticist Noah Rosenberg explained that such advances have made natural selection 'a much less potent force on us in the present than it was in the past'. Modern medicine is making sure that those who have a disadvantage aren't being taken out of the running, suggesting that Social Darwinism has no place in the

twenty-first century.

Similarly, there have been amazing developments in the field of emergency medicine. Thousands of years ago, if you fell and broke your leg whilst out in search of your mid-morning snack, you would most probably have been left behind - it was just in your tribe's best interest. Nowadays, however, breaking a leg, whilst still dangerous and potentially life threatening, can be relatively easy to fix and allow you to live a full and economically beneficial life. The accident prone, while becoming more common, are being given a second chance.

So if natural selection is the survival of the fittest, then sexual selection is the reproduction of the sexiest. As Matt Ridley explains, sexual selection 'has the delightful effect of generating weapons, ornaments, songs, and colours, especially on male animals'. Stags have antlers to fight one another to prove their dominance and thus 'win' the women, and male peacocks have bright colours to attract and charm their females. In fact, the peacock theory goes further. Because the most brightly coloured feathers were exhausting and dangerous things to grow, only the healthiest males could do it well and was thus an 'honest indicator of fitness' - meaning the females were drawn to their promise of survival. Females may also choose an 'ornamental male' to follow fashion. If one female chooses a gorgeous male, other females must follow suit or risk having sons that do not attract females. This sounds surprisingly familiar; although it might be worth waiting until after the first few dates to mention progeny to a good-looking chap for fear of sending him running for the nearest tube station.

To Victorians, when this theory was first proposed, the thought of women, of any species, choosing their mate rather than succumbing to the advances of the male was frankly shocking. And it is interesting that these ornamental traits were given 'functions', as the idea of useless beauty was too disturbing to scientists who believed in the ruthlessly practical workings of natural selection.

This is particularly relevant to the case of the blondes. Blondes supposedly have more fun and have higher libidos. They are stereotypically more beautiful, but they are also stereotypically stupid and rumour has it that natural blondes are an endangered species. Are these stereotypes necessarily true? Were Darwin and Spencer right? Would a blonde's useless beauty mean that her genes won't be propagated for the sake of human nature? Only time will tell.

Now seems like a good time to bring up that age-old saying: "beauty is in the eye of the beholder". It would seem that this is something Spencer forgot to consider in his theory of the survival of the strongest and fittest. If, as the peacocks demonstrate, only the good looking people are mating then the expansion of the population really wouldn't be as drastic as it is. And, in the special case of the human race, Spencer seems to have forgotten as well that personality plays a role in reproduction. That and money. Thanks to these assets (and sometimes the odd sprinkling of alcohol), 'not-so-good-looking' people too are reproducing. As are the poor - heaven forbid.

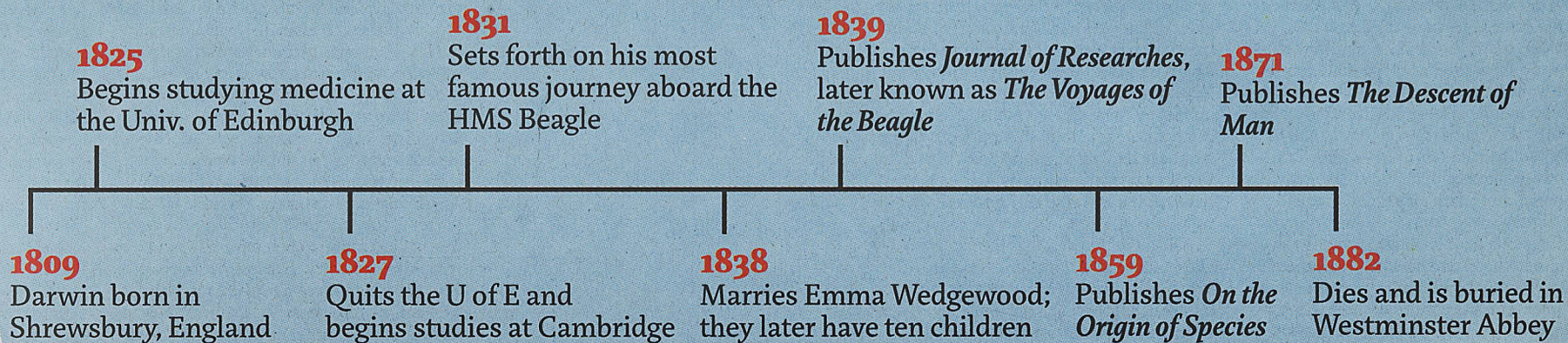
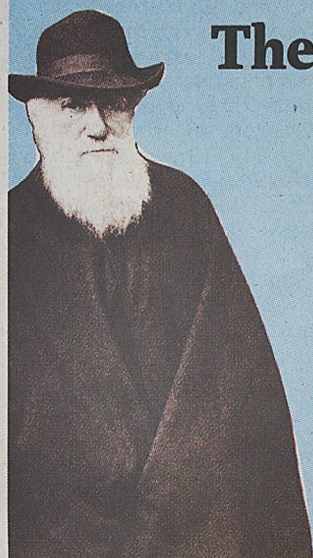
The case for traditional Social Darwinism in Britain, that the poor and unfit should die, is becoming increasingly

irrelevant. Despite its flaws, the National Health Service is providing medicinal support. People are living long into retirement and the number of births outweighs the number of deaths. However, this is saying nothing of Social Darwinism on an international society level where distortions in the distribution of resources demonstrate that relatively "poor and unfit" countries are in a way, left to die.

Scientists still cannot agree on why sexual selection as a matter of preference occurs. Or where these preferences come from. It is no longer the case that only those capable of running for dinner or those who swing most appealingly from trees are contributing to the human gene pool. Somewhere along our evolutionary timeline, it became advantageous for humans to develop larger brains. The very brains that allow us to choose our mate, decide what to eat for dinner and whether we want to die our hair blonde. Did it become imperative to be able to deceive and manipulate the competition? Robert Trivers has argued this might be why we developed a subconscious and a larger brain. But Matt Ridley believes it was much simpler than that. As our brains grew and allowed us to demonstrate our sparkling wit and humour, it became increasingly advantageous to mate with the more intelligent in the tribe.

So today's high societal standards for finding the perfect mate isn't an illusion created by the likes of Carrie Bradshaw. It was down to random genetic mutations that occurred thousands of years ago, perfected through the processes of natural and sexual selection.

### The life of an English naturalist, Charles Darwin





Robert Mugabe (right, flickr user malcolm m); Morgan Tsvangirai's election poster (left, flickr user frontlineblogger)

# A prudent path to recovery

**Philip Rushworth** thinks that Tsvangirai's political pragmatism is a decision for the best

**"M**ugabe has no option but to go," declared Morgan Tsvangirai triumphantly after his March 2008 electoral victory. Yet just under a year later, with this memory still fresh in the mind, the spokesperson and battle-scarred figure of the Zimbabwean Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) hunched over the microphone and pledged allegiance to President Robert Mugabe.

Last Wednesday's swearing-in ceremony, in which Tsvangirai took up his new role as Prime Minister, perhaps embodied the future of this beleaguered state – Mugabe's manic restlessness and some unpleasant gun-toting loyalists not far behind him confronting the lonely figure of Tsvangirai, the only man who had stood up to the President and now has to profess loyalty to him. Many analysts are critical of Tsvangirai's cooperation with Mugabe and are already counting the days on this power-sharing agreement.

However, had they seen the relief that swept through the Zimbabwean people, the thousands of youth, full of aspiration and tired of suffering, who gathered at Harare Stadium with a rare cry of hope to welcome their new Prime Minister, they might not have been so pessimistic.

For the MDC, the sight of their leader on the stage is perhaps tantamount to disaster; many feel that Tsvangirai has given up the fight and caved under pressure from the pro-Mugabe South African Development Community (SADC), taking up a position subordinate to the man he defeated in an election and without any guarantees of political power. Tsvangirai's responsible and inspiring conduct had provided a sharp contrast to the Mugabe regime and people had believed the day he joined the Zimbabwean government would be the day he took power. But these people were disappointed. Behind the scenes the party is split and suspicious. As one MDC minister lamented, "a lot of us do not know if this is right or wrong".

Nearly three decades have passed

since the last time that Mugabe shared power. The year was 1980 and Zimbabwe had just gained independence. The uneasy coalition between two freedom movements – Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) and Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) – did not last long. ZANU's vocal accusations against ZAPU leader Joshua Nkomo were followed by the massacre of over 20,000 of his supporters.

Mugabe, now 85, has not changed; a fact the MDC party workers, who have been tortured in high-security prisons, can certainly testify to. Since the MDC's first-round election victory last March, every measure has been taken to remove them. Mugabe's cronies in the police and secret services proceeded to systematically kill 140 MDC supporters and forced the party to pull-out of the next round of elections. SADC, led by former South African president Thabo Mbeki, managed to negotiate a power-sharing agreement last September but it was one fraught with interference and manipulation by Mugabe.

The Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) made the agreement unacceptable for both Tsvangirai and his party. As soon as the media spotlight faded, Mugabe gave all the ten available governor positions to loyalists, renewed a five-year term for the chief of banks – a figure instrumental in the Zimbabwe economic collapse – and secured the major cabinet positions for his party. "I have been left with crumbs," lamented Tsvangirai, who had been forced into exile as the political campaign against his party had become personal. While this impasse has come to an end, the stubborn tricks of the Mugabe regime certainly have not.

There were fears that the swearing-in ceremony might not even go ahead. MDC officials had claimed that the accord was changed by ZANU-PF on Tuesday evening, a claim dismissed as a 'typological error', and the deal to release sixteen MDC party members from incarceration has yet to materialise. The controversy over cabi-

**For Zimbabweans, the power-sharing agreement is the only thing left for them to hold on to**

net positions has also not been resolved.

The country is on the brink of a humanitarian catastrophe unparalleled in its history. The Zimbabwean dollar is next to worthless, unemployment levels remain above 90 per cent while 94 per cent of all schools and hospitals are closed. Between 7 and 9 million Zimbabweans are thought by the United Nations to be in desperate need of food aid. The situation is set to become even worse with the spreading of cholera epidemic; 3,300 people have died while 70,000 others remain infected.

For Zimbabweans, the power-sharing agreement is the only thing left for them to hold on to. Should it fail, the fate for most is one of starvation, emigration or even war. This sense of desperation took Tsvangirai's choices away; the value of the agreement will depend on if he can change the situation in Zimbabwe.

He promised the crowds "to get this country working again". For the optimistic ones, his first 24 hours have done nothing to harm their confidence. Tsvangirai has promised to pay all government employees in foreign currency, to tackle head-on the cholera epidemic that ZANU-PF dismissed as a Western fabrication and to open all schools and hospitals as of yesterday. In an open act of defiance against Mugabe, Tsvangirai met with tortured prisoners were due to be released as part of the agreement. The head of political science at Harare University was moved enough to proclaim that "change is coming to Zimbabwe; they will have to work together because they both need each other". However, even if the political agreement does not break-down, Tsvangirai is still faced with an unenviable task.

Acquiring Western aid remains a challenge; Tsvangirai believes that the country needs \$100 million each month in aid to rebuild the country. However, donors, with the support of NGOs, are waiting to see if the regime can actually change. Cynics are aplenty. An American spokesperson speculated that Mugabe might be waiting for a flow of foreign aid to arrive before removing Tsvangirai. The demands

of the power-sharing agreement have called for an international rapprochement; if Tsvangirai can launch a diplomatic initiative without Mugabe's interference, re-development can begin.

Tsvangirai's decision is also an opportunity to fight the system from within. Most critics have concluded that these two political opposites have little chance of working together in a sustained government. This measure of power-sharing can only be temporary; the future of Zimbabwe depends on who will be victorious in this political challenge. History suggests that Mugabe will not remain benevolent for long in power-sharing coalitions. However, there are important differences between now and 1980. Tsvangirai has become a highly visible and respected political character, both internationally and in Zimbabwe; popular support for him would make his removal extremely difficult. Mugabe is also dependent on the international appeal of Tsvangirai for any chance to bring improvements to the country. Meanwhile the MDC will take all peaceful means necessary for the liberation of the people. There is also a chance that the man 'who only God can remove', may remove himself, being 85 years old, and allow Tsvangirai to inherit his powers.

The power-sharing agreement appears to be a defeat for everyone who followed Tsvangirai's political fortunes. But change, even a flicker of hope that this power-sharing deal represents, is needed for Zimbabwe. While Tsvangirai and the MDC may have their decisions blocked, economy recovery efforts stifled and aspirations for a truly democratic governance process hampered, there could just as well be some opportunities to be exploited. The agreement provides the MDC a voice; by being in the government they are more likely to effect change than by remaining excluded from the political process. Pragmatism ruled the day for Tsvangirai, and since becoming Prime Minister, he has been conciliatory. "Mugabe is perhaps part of the problem," he said. "But he is also the solution."



## From Right to Left: the political columns

### Hayek

Alex  
Blance



### Shortchanged on our liberties

The other day I took the time out to watch the short film *Fitna* by the Dutch MP Geert Wilders, in which he depicts 'extremist Islam'. The elected politician had been invited by a member of the Lords to show the film in Westminster, but was banned from the entering the UK last week and was turned away at Heathrow on orders from the Home Office. Home Secretary Jacqui Smith said Mr Wilders would not be let in as his opinions "would threaten community security and therefore public security" here.

Having watched the film, it is my opinion that the substance of it is very poor; it makes a most tenuous link between a number of unpleasant verses in the Qur'an and various examples of Islamist extremism around the world, though anyone with half a brain can see that there are equally perturbing statements in the Bible and plenty of examples of Christian brutality through the ages. The complete lack of any sensible message makes it even more ridiculous that the parliamentarian was banned from the UK, on the basis that his film showing

would promote hate and violence. Any fool can see that the film makes no good points, and even if they thought it did, more people will have been prompted to find the film online and see it than would they would have done if Wilder had been allowed into the UK and showed it to some lords, and no further fuss was made.

The case is a perfect example of the paranoia that I have previously described our government as suffering from. As Mr Wilders said himself on his flight to London, "[the British Government] are the biggest bunch of cowards in Europe". He added that he was "coming because I am invited by one of your Members of Parliament. I'm not provocative. I am an elected political representative. I am a democrat. I use my freedom of speech. I am using all the democratic means I have."

While I may be unenthusiastic about the message of banning the Qur'an that Wilders spreads, I am far more disgusted at the idea that the government are prepared to take such restrictive measures against freedom of speech, especially given that the Lords who invited the MP planned to continue to show the film

without him there. The only victory that is gained through this ridiculous move is for 'far right' politicians in our own country who will cite the move of the Home Secretary as 'evidence' that 'Islamisation' is occurring in the UK and that Muslim groups are pulling the strings in Whitehall. This is quite clearly ridiculous; but I feel certain we will see this assertion in BNP election literature come the elections June.

The UK was, and probably continues to be, a beacon of free speech around the world; the freedom to say what we want, be it right, wrong or completely ridiculous, was one we fought hard for and must protect endlessly. Jacqui Smith has shown herself up again, and the Labour government have again demonstrated their complete lack of understanding of our constitutional heritage.

The sooner Gordon Brown allows us to exercise our other civil liberty, our right to vote for our government, then the sooner we can throw out this tired, illiberal administration.

### Laski

Vlad  
Unkovski-  
Korica



### Mass action, not the ballot box

Can the left hope to create a genuine political alternative via the ballot box? This is a question that has plagued generations of activists.

Lenin famously saw elections 'primarily as a means for the political enlightenment of the people'. Yet, it is also true that most left wing organisations that opted for change through the ballot box ultimately moved to become reliable defenders of the status quo. The German Social Democratic Party of 1889 to 1914 stands out in this respect.

One of its leaders, Eduard Bernstein, famously formulated the theoretical underpinning for this reformist version of anti-capitalism: 'The movement is everything, the final goal is nothing'. He meant that constant reforms of the system would one day transform it in the interests of the majority, without the need for a sudden rupture with capitalism.

Reformism has, however, failed: we still live in a world of alienation, uncertainty and conflict. If Britain's Brown or Brazil's Lula are the best that reformism can offer, reformism is in a dire state indeed.

Yet, many groups and organisations of the radical left continue to seek an electoral model as a vehicle for change.

Such projects have varied. Most examples fall into three categories. The first is the survival and restructuring to various degrees of radical left organisations from the times of the Cold War. A famous instance is Rifondazione Comunista in Italy, which was central to the anti-G8 mobilisation in Genoa in 2001. The party was deeply damaged, however, by its participation in a centre-left government from 2006 to 2008.

A second type of new left party involves radical breaks from existing mass organisations in the working class and its fusion with more radical extra-parliamentary elements. Die Linke in Germany is probably the best known. It was formed when neo-Keynesian Oskar Lafontaine quit the Social Democratic Party (SPD), joined an earlier trade union-based split from the SPD and united with the former East German communists and other smaller revolutionary organisations to form a new party.

The dangers inherent in such projects become clear when the more moderate elements in the coalition face electoral temptations of one kind or another. Respect in Britain split in 2007 precisely when the reformist wing felt that defending existing strongholds was more important in the face of an early general

election than spreading the base of the organisation for future contests.

A third variety of new left organisations involves enlarged coalitions of revolutionary groups. These frequently fall victim to the sectarianism for which the left is internationally renowned. The Scottish Socialist Party in Scotland is a recent example, having collapsed when one faction in the leadership turned on its most renowned Member of Scottish Parliament, Tommy Sheridan, who was embroiled in controversy over a News of the World story on his personal life.

Even as the tremendously exciting news reached us in Britain of the foundation of the Nouveau Parti Anti-Capitaliste (New Anti-Capitalist Party) last weekend in France, we must remain cautious: no single model provides the silver bullet with which to kill the reformist vampire.

Tensions always emerge in any organisation when the opportunity arises to use political office to effect change. Winning elections may help our voices carry further but we should not forget that real change comes from outside the structures of power – which is why the weight of our activity should remain independent of the electoral mechanism.

### Viridian

### A vegetarian's guide to environmentalism

Justus Rollin

Environment and Ethics officer

Vegetarianism, the abstinence from the consumption of meat, fish and poultry, or even veganism, a diet and lifestyle that excludes the use of animal products altogether, often appears to be an option for people who are obsessed with healthy living or concerned about animal welfare. But there is much more to vegetarianism than pure health reasons.

The link between environmental disasters and meat consumption often appear to be indirect, even far-fetched. But it actually isn't. Take the Amazon for instance – the largest ancient rainforest, vital for local livelihoods as well as for global climate regulation. Millions of indigenous people in the Amazon rely on its resources for survival. And especially in times of global climate change, ancient rainforests provide a "carbon sink" – a reservoir that accumulates and stores carbon-containing chemical compounds.

However, our meat consumption is actually destroying the Amazon. In the forest region of Mato Grosso alone there are more than 25 million cattle grazing on lands that used to be forested. Mato Grosso is also the region with the highest deforestation rate in Brazil. Altogether, deforestation in Brazil is mindblowing: The mean annual deforestation rate from 2000 to 2005 (22,392 square kilometres per year) was 18 per cent higher than in the five years before (19,018 square kilometres per year). Greenpeace's report at the World Social Forum in Belem earlier this year clearly showed that deforestation in the Amazon is still mainly driven by large scale cattle ranching. A recent UN report summarised the devastation caused by the meat industry by calling it "one of the top two or three most significant contributors to the most serious environmental problems, at every scale from local to global."

Waste of water is another serious issue that needs to be addressed in an increasingly drought-prone world. It takes 5,000 gallons of water to produce 1 pound of meat, while only 25 gallons are needed to grow 1 pound of wheat. A totally vegetarian diet requires only 300 gallons of water per day, while a meat-eating diet requires more than 4,000 gallons of water per day. You save more water by not eating a pound of beef than you do by not showering for an entire year. While the numbers are clear, entrenched habits often stop us from taking action.

Even though many of the issues arising from meat production – deforestation and waste of water being two examples amongst many – are generally out of sight, we have no choice but to acknowledge these links with our lifestyles.

By acting now, we can have an influence over these problems, and prevent harm to the environment and ultimately to humanity. Maybe personal action can be a start, a beginning to our transformation from passive consumers to active subjects intervening and making our voice heard.

### Measured musings



Ten years on, and after some of the most undiplomatic comments from any politician imaginable, it looks like Hugo Chavez might just be in office for that much longer. Over the weekend, Venezuelans voted to lift term limits on elected political offices, meaning that Chavez is allowed to stand for re-election for president in 2012.

Despite having the highest inflation in Latin America and being plagued by violence and deep-seated social problems, Venezuelans have given a strong mandate to the socialist direction which the country is heading under Chavez's leadership.

Without any tangible positive results from the past years of his presidency, it is natural to wonder where the base of this support originates. Ordinary Venezuelans have claimed that his "victory" would "save the socialist revolution" that their country is experiencing under Chavez's

Bolivarian, Castro-influenced policies and leadership style.

Chavez does have some grand plans of social spending; providing free education and healthcare in some of the poorest areas in the country, despite the ailing economy and state run companies running severe losses. Given the global economy, it would be foolish to depend on oil revenue to save the economy and ensure that more is done for the poor in Venezuela.

With the absence of any concrete positives that can arise from more years of Chavez's presidency, and his obvious disregard for human rights, media freedom and even democracy, we must look outside the rational to see the basis of his support.

Cries of "Uh-Ah, Chavez no se va" (Chavez is going nowhere) are testament to the levels of public emotion when it comes to voting on such issues. Chavez's appeal is grounded in his ability to stir an emotional reaction from his supporters,

by using unbridled language in criticizing "enemies" of the Venezuelan people like George W. Bush and promising support and help for the most marginalised sectors of the populace. It is not too much to believe that stunts and pointed references to Bush as the "devil" made at the United Nations General Assembly and other instances of him calling Bush a "donkey" incites an emotional response in Venezuelans, tired of Western domination and scarred by years of colonial rule. They would then see him as a saviour of sorts, able to redeem the country and be outwardly critical to Western rulers, however crazed and undiplomatic these may be.

Emotionalism is still an important part of politics, not just in developing countries plagued by a myriad of social and economic problems. It is naive to believe that President Obama's victory was based purely on his merits and pragmatic voting. If people from far flung corners

all over the world could be inspired by Obama's words and slogans of hope and change, then surely these words played on the emotions of many in America itself and had much to do with determining the vote.

While we may have moved away from voting purely based on social class, religion, race, or any other defining trait, and while we as humans are allegedly more rational than we were in previous centuries, the Venezuelans still prove what an important force emotionalism is in decisions as important as this one. As much as we attempt to use rationality to govern decisions from the personal to the political, perhaps sometimes there is a force in us that is hard to be silenced.

Shibani Mahtani  
Features Editor



Photo: Richard Dewey

# Alumni interviews: Lord Saatchi

**Richard Dewey** talks to Conservative peer Maurice Saatchi about his LSE and career experiences

**L**ord Maurice Saatchi graduated from the LSE in 1967 with a First Class degree in Economics. He co-founded in 1970, with his brother Charles, the advertising agency Saatchi and Saatchi. They were credited with a number of successful advertising campaigns, most notably the famous "Labour isn't working" posters for the Conservative Party in the 1979 British general election.

After a shareholder revolt ousted them from the firm in 1994, Lord Saatchi and his brother successfully formed a new company, M&C Saatchi, the following year.

He was made a life peer in 1996 and his political career includes terms as Shadow minister in the House of Lords for the Treasury and Cabinet Office, and co-chairing the Conservative Party from November 2003 to May 2005.

Lord Saatchi was awarded the Mac-Millan Prize for sociology whilst a student at the LSE and has been a Governor of the School since 1986.

## What brought you to the LSE?

I was at Muswell Hill Grammar School in London and for reasons which now seem prophetic, I only wanted to go to LSE, so I only applied to LSE – it's quite a strange story, now that I think about it. I received two A's – in History and English, and failed French. I got offers from other university's with my two A's, but incredibly I decided to go back to school and retake French. Three days into the term the headmaster at my school informed me that an overseas student couldn't make it to LSE and that they were offering the place to me. Going to LSE meant a great deal to me and I think that is the first time that I've told the story of how I arrived there.

## What professor, advisor or classmate had the greatest impact on you?

My tutor was Professor Percy Cohen, who was the head of the sociology

department and he taught me a tremendous amount. I think what he taught me that is so important, is how to organize and present thoughts in a logical way. The particular thing I remember about his training was his habit of illustrating an assertion with an example. I thought this was a brilliant method of convincing students of a point.

All the subjects that I studied at LSE have had a dominant impact on my life. Everything I've done in politics and business has been a manifestation of what I learned at LSE. Graham Greene wrote a book 'England Made Me', my version would be 'LSE Made Me'.

## Were you involved in student politics or the student newspaper at the LSE?

I wasn't involved in student politics or writing at the time, as I was a very intense student. My time at LSE was marked by major political unrest in the student body and one of the major riots of the era took place while I was at LSE. Unfortunately the porter at the front of the main building died from a heart attack during the event. It was a very tragic event, a demonstration that got out of hand. It was those riots that cemented LSE's reputation as a hot bed for left wing liberal thought. The event received national coverage and stamped LSE's name on the public's mind. It was a very interesting time to be at the LSE.

## Looking back, what particular aspects of the LSE have helped in your career?

When you're a student at LSE, you're very conscious that you're at an elite institution and that it's a tremendous privilege to be there. If you emerge from LSE with all the training of the mind that I spoke of earlier, it is a marvellous thing for your confidence. It is very important in the first few years after leaving university. It is a calling card of the highest degree and means that you will be taken seriously by serious people. It sets you on the right path in life.

**"Going to LSE meant a great deal to me and I think that is the first time that I've told the story of how I arrived there"**

## What was your mindset after graduating from the LSE, what was your first job?

I applied for a job at Haymarket Publishing and became the editor of a directory, but I was more of a space salesman. Haymarket was owned by Michael Heseltine (Conservative politician Lord Heseltine) and I went on to be his assistant. I worked there for a couple of years and learned a great deal. When I was 24, my brother said, "we could start an advertising agency," and so I joined him.

## Could describe the entrepreneurial process of starting Saatchi & Saatchi at such a young age?

Starting a new company in your early twenties is very frightening. We had some support, but only about £10,000 and we spent all of the £10,000 on a full page advertisement in The Sunday Times. The advertisement said "Why I think it's time for a new kind of advertising" and it set out our credo. It was a bizarre thing to do because then we had no money left at all, but it worked, people came to see us, we won some revenue and never looked back.

## While you were at the LSE studying economics and sociology did you have any sense that you would enter a career in advertising? Was it a career that you had thought about?

No, not at all. I was very happy in publishing and would have been happy to stay there. At that time my brother was becoming a well-known figure in advertising and I thought it was possible to start our own firm. My opinion was that advertising firms at the time were not all that dynamic and that we could do quite a bit better. The whole process was hard work and very stressful as you might imagine, but after six months we knew we were going to make it.

## Describe your shift from advertising into politics.

Well going back to just before the 1979

election, Mrs Thatcher had a communications adviser who came to see us. He wanted to organise volunteers from the advertising world to advise Mrs. Thatcher on the election. We said that this was not a good idea – this was probably a crucial moment – but we said that what they needed was a firm that was on the line with them. We told them that they needed people whose reputations were on the line with Mrs. Thatcher, people who would rise up if successful or be smashed if they failed. They came back after a while and took on Saatchi and Saatchi and that was the beginning of a thirty year relationship between our firm and the Conservative party.

## As a Governor of the LSE what do you see on the horizon for the school? Is there anything you would like to see changed?

I think Howard Davies is a superb director. I've seen what he has done in internal meetings, in terms of fund raising and in putting LSE at the centre of politics and he is very impressive. I don't think you could ask to have a better director. In particular what I think is so good about LSE right now is that it is going to make itself the central place for thought about the implications of the current crisis. \*The incredible change in the world with regard to how we think about socialism, capitalism, nationalization, state regulation, public expenditure as a means of saving jobs – this is a total revolution in political thought and somebody has to map that and see where it will take us. It is a sudden departure and complete reversal from what everybody believed were the conventional wisdoms of our age and it's all happened in the span of a month. LSE is already getting great speakers to talk about the subject and undoubtedly this will be the main subject of political and economic debate for our generation.

LSE has a wonderful opportunity to be at the centre of that debate and I'm sure it will be.

## Multi-mono-culturalism at LSE?

Filipe Martins looks at what should be a melting-pot of cultures, but sometimes isn't

Did someone say multicultural? Are you sure? Or did you mean multi-mono-cultural, just many mono-cultures laid side by side in a bowl?

Walk into the Quad. What do you see? You don't need a primary school teacher to help you distinguish between colours. Black with black, white with white, brown with brown, etc. And yes, occasionally there I'll be to mix things up a little, myself and the comparatively few who do. And before you ask, I'm not a racist. So don't get me wrong when I use colours to distinguish between ethnicities.

I love the LSE. I am proud to say I am in what is very likely the most ethnically diverse university on this planet. LSE thrives on the different cultures present here. It's great. But unfortunately, the panoply of cultures does not necessarily translate into multiculturalism. Because surely, multiculturalism involves the blurring of boundaries between different cultures and that – and to my initial disappointment – does not seem to happen. What does tend to happen is that those of similar ethnic, social, economic, or even linguistic backgrounds are likely to stick together.

But do not be alarmed by my seeming pessimism; it is not bad as it may initially seem. In fact, one comes to understand the rationale behind segregation by ethnicity. Before coming here, I used to think that it was a voluntary choice – Pakistanis consciously did not mingle with Europeans, and vice-versa. Wrong. Very wrong, actually. Think about it this way: you move to live in another country, where people speak another language, have other customs. Would you not rather be around people who understand where you come from? That way, on some level, you can feel more at home. I myself am hardly a saint in my social meanderings. Let me catch a Portuguese-speaker and watch me start rambling in Portuguese – I don't really care if you're Brazilian or Angolan! After all, language is an inherent part of a person's identity. Suppressing it because others don't understand it could actually be a barrier to feeling like one belongs.

This tendency to group around one's



The Quad at lunch-time. Where would you sit?

Photo: Filipe Martins

cultural kin, to which I am definitely not immune, made me reconsider the reason behind cliques. It is a natural phenomenon. It is always comforting to feel someone else understands you, to whatever extent. It is always nice to be able to share elements of your life with people who have been through similar situations. To classify this as racism or classism would, in fact, be blind to the facts of life.

What we have to watch out for, however, is being oblivious of the LSE's wonderful cultural diversity (notice how I'm not necessarily calling it multicultural-

### LSE thrives on the different cultures present here

alism). It would not do to spend years at the LSE mingling only among one's own kin, speaking only one's own language. That would be closing the doors on the finest educational – and life – opportunity that this university provides. On my part, I am glad to say that my friends are English, Chinese, Indian, Bhutanese, Portuguese, and what not. I am grateful for it when I enter campus every day; I know it's going to shape me.

I don't seek these cultural opportunities deterministically, to "enrich my cultural awareness" and stick it on my CV.

But peering outside one's "bubble", and understanding that there is more to the world than one has seen is the spirit of our university.

So next time you walk into the Quad or the lecture theatre, look around. OK, there will be a multitude of groups who seem to all have something in common. Don't be alarmed. Make an effort. Break in. It will be worth it.

As U2 would say, "We're one / But we're not the same / We've got to carry each other / Carry each other".

## Being a citizen of the world

Rahul Agarwal celebrates life in the colourful microcosm that is our city of London

London is a world class city – a World City, if you will. And it hasn't got that name because it has great history, business and prestige alone, but because it is so culturally diverse. Out of the city's seven million inhabitants, there are 50 non-indigenous communities in London, with a population of over 10,000. It doesn't really feel like I'm part of a minority group anymore, but rather part of the growing international and cosmopolitan feeling of living in London.

I come from the largest community of British Indians and am proud of that identity. There was a time when it meant staying in the enclaves of one's own community and becoming isolated from the rest of the population. However, this is the twenty-first century and we have created our own culture that is neither Indian nor British – it's both. From British Asian Bhangra music to British Indian movies; from BBC Asian network radio to art and literature to slang, this community has truly embedded itself in London.

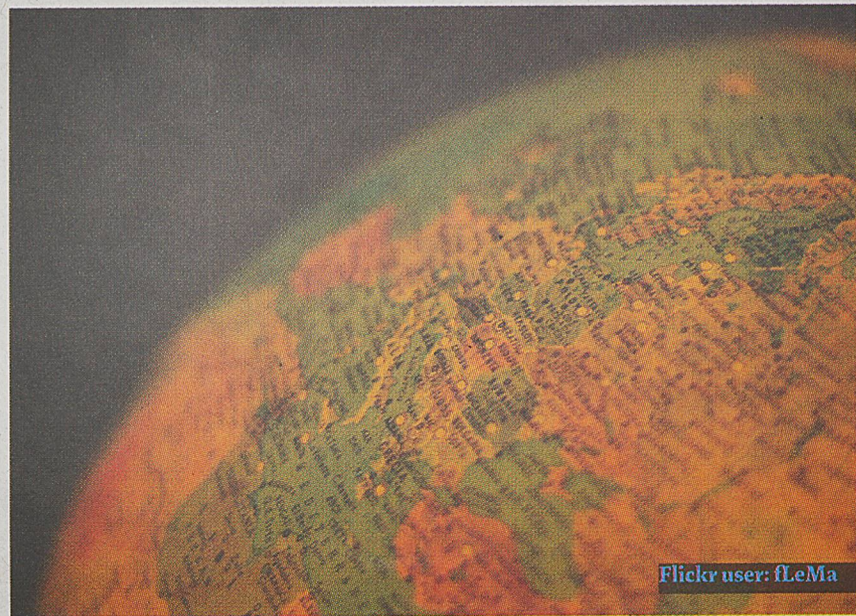
Many people say that minorities are still not integrated and are still discriminated against. That is very rare, as I think London is one city which accepts, not resists, different cultures, embraces different religions and adapts to different languages. It is now perfectly normal to get on a bus driven by a Brazilian, get your coffee at Starbucks from an Australian and then dash to an appointment with your Malaysian doctor. Nowhere else in the world will you have such variety – except perhaps the United States – making London such a hot place to live.

Its multiculturalism is so dynamic in that you can get exactly the identity that you want from it. If you are a Londoner,

that means you are a citizen of the world. You don't have to compromise on your indigenous culture but you don't have to feel isolated by it either. I can go to the Hindu temple in Neasden and preserve that part of myself. At the same time there are so many crazy, unmissable opportunities to taste other cultures – to eat Mongolian food, shop at a Bengali Supermarket, learn Swahili at the School of Oriental and African Studies or take Argentinean Tango lessons. The LSE is but one of the many institutions where all these cultures meet and interact with each other. Everywhere you look in London there is the variety and multiplicity that makes it unique. For a tourist, it is great going to Paris or Madrid and seeing French or Spanish tourist at-

tractions. Here, you do not just see tourist attractions but experience of an atmosphere of globalism and internationalism. In fact, I am convinced the one factor that got the IOC convinced that London instead of Paris or Madrid should hold the greatest sporting event in the world, is the beating heart of its multiculturalism.

Sociologists and historians are amazed by the range of sub-cultures that make London justifiably "a world in one city". Never have so many people from other nations come together in one place. Indeed, London is the perfect example of how the world can have harmony and peace; where civilisations aren't clashing but living together. Free to express their own cultures, free to feel part of an international culture.



Flickr user: fLeMa

## Internationalism

Marion Koob speaks of belonging

Over many years, philosophers, anthropologists and politicians alike have been struggling with one of the most basic introductory questions: Where do you come from?

It seems ostensibly simple. For many, the places where you were born and live, and where your parents came from are one and the same, or may be separated by only relative degrees of proximity. However, examples going against this standard model are becoming increasingly recurrent, and still remain difficult to categorise. There are so many existing ways as to how an individual can be categorised. What will then determine where you belong, both on the personal and official level?

These are the questions one comes to face during the process of expatriation, or upon entering a multicultural community such as, for instance, the LSE. It is true that by experiencing different means of living, being exposed to radically diverging modes of thoughts and integrating portions of these within one's own self, it can be impossible to decide upon a single, definite nationality. What ought it to be, and how does one feel the sentiment of belonging to a certain region, identifying with a certain group? Is it just enough to categorize someone as European? Asian? African? English? Scot? Italian-American – or simply American? And how does being part of a diverse community buzzing with opportunities for cultural exchange affect our perception of the world?

Being born in France and having moved to Belgium in my early years, I had no idea what internationalism translated into in real terms meant as I entered an international school. In my years there, I went through an extraordinary evolution in my way of thinking. Soon, however, I noticed that in Belgium

I tended to be perceived as 'French' while in France, perceived as Belgian, yet while in English-speaking countries my accent put me down as American. These labels, while sometimes amusing, can lead to a feeling of alienation. What if, in the end, no nationality fits me at all? Even now, I remain at a loss for words when prodded further about my feelings about what we could call "regional identity". Although I have never experienced a particularly nomadic life, interacting for years among individuals who shared the backdrop of the 'international' culture has left me with a hint of an identity crisis.

Coming to the LSE was of no help with this matter. However, it brought me much, much more than anything that could have been gained from a distinct sentiment of patriotism. Here is a community composed of not just diplomats and other expats, but of individuals who – for the most part – have lived their lives in their own country. Being rich in the cultural knowledge this entails makes them no less open-minded. The explosion of different cultural activities and interests calls for a further investigation of what being from somewhere truly means, and if, in the end, it really matters anyway.

Perhaps it is just a matter of choice and chance, whether your nationality has an impact on who you are. You can argue that it becomes more pronounced when abroad, in order to mark your differences and express the traditions and habits which you miss from home. On the other hand, these sentiments can also be dulled as a result of exposure to other cultures, leaving the disorienting sense of a 'nationality-void'. Feeling proud of your cultural identity and being open to others are certainly not two mutually exclusive qualities, and thankfully so. But being integrated in a multicultural community is not always the easiest personal decision.

# The truth about documentaries

**Annika Maya** exposes the role of film in a dramatic world

I love documentaries. I watch tons of them. I am even trying to write my dissertation about their ability to increase awareness, so I thought this would be an easy task. But as I began to brainstorm this piece, I inevitably kept hitting the same walls I have been coming up against in the preliminary stages of my dissertation planning. Can a documentary do anything, other than spin you an alternative truth not reported in the news? And once the film has imparted all its wisdom on to you, where can you go from there?

John Grierson, considered to be one of the pioneers of the modern documentary, saw the medium as a 'creative interpretation of reality'. He defined the filmmaker's role as 'dramatising issues and their implications in a meaningful way', with the goal of 'lead(ing) the citizen through the wilderness'. Essentially, this means that documentaries depict a convincingly subjective truth. Well, I suppose that is better than pretending to present the objective truth, as in mainstream journalism.

In James McEnteer's book 'Shooting the Truth: The Rise of American Political Documentaries', he notes that eight of the top ten grossing documentaries of all time have only been released in the past six years. This recent desire to turn to alternative forms of truth comes precisely from the homogenised, un-critical news that we are habitually presented with. He says: "These films help feed that need. Much of that hunger has to do with the concentrated ownership of news media, the corporatisation and trivialisation of the news, and the decreasing spectrum of information." If I've learnt anything so far as a media student at the LSE, it's that

McEnteer is definitely on to something. The great thing about documentaries is that they provide in-depth accounts of issues that are often ignored, and can circumvent newsroom filters by releasing their work in a cinematic setting.

To this effect, it is fitting that apart from the happy-go-lucky *March of the Penguins* (which comes in at number two), the top five grossing documentaries include all of Michael Moore's recent films (*Fahrenheit 9/11*, *Sicko*, and *Bowling for Columbine*), and Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth*. The last four deal with issues that sit at the periphery of our conscience, and that are swept under the rug by the big businesses that are profiting from the continuation of the status quo. What they have in common, besides big budgets and big names, is that they are filled with conspiracy theories and adventure narratives which grab your attention. In a similar vein, *Zeitgeist* was at one point the most watched film on the internet with an estimated 100 million viewers. These films tell you to be critical of the government, the media, the brands that you were raised on and the companies that trick you into worshipping them. But the problem with Moore's films, *Zeitgeist* and the majority of documentaries out there is that after they grab your attention and spark your outrage, the credits roll and you are just left dangling with no soft mediated landing. These documentaries rarely provide you with the tools to do anything.

Very rarely will a documentary move you past the doom and gloom and show you how to do something. Awareness is great and all, but there's something about the cinematic narrative of a documentary that tugs at your heartstrings more than a



Photo: Flickr user ccdohi

typical newscast ever could, and you want to do something after watching one. Save a dying child, stop a war, protest loudly. But like everything else, it seems that you or I are too little to make any kind of difference. Inevitably, after years of being a regular attendee of the great documentary series *Cinema Politica* (check them out at [cinemapolitica.org](http://cinemapolitica.org)), I found that I often felt more disenfranchised, helpless, bad global citizen than before.

For example, I would always grab my non-fat latte before the film and, despite knowing about Starbucks' evil ways, I'd still sometimes end up there. Then, one fateful evening I was subjected to the horrors of the coffee industry in the superb film *Black Gold*. Sliding into my seat, I loathed myself for having just contributed to the evils that I suddenly understood even better than I had 90 minutes before. But what was I to do? Not go back to Starbucks? Okay, maybe that one's easy. But

most people find it exhausting to fight the 'evil corporations' day in and day out. And what about issues that you really cannot do anything about, such as the continuing hostilities in Iraq (*No End in Sight*), or the harrowing truth in Darfur (*The Devil Came on Horseback*)? Clearly many around the world know what good their protests against invading Iraq did. It seems that even if you want to help, it is impossible.

To its credit, films like *An Inconvenient Truth* really have started to respond to this feeling of helplessness. A piece from *The Economist* last month noted that most of the documentaries featured at Sundance in January were emulating the style of Gore's movie. Sundance's founder Robert Redford was quoted as saying that now, "Just explaining the problem isn't enough. You have to show what people can do about the problem." Now, getting the message out needs to be coupled with action. I am curious though, if the masses can

even be bothered to act after all the years of apathy.

For me personally, the verdict is still out but I think that this new trend is promising. For my part, if all I can do is stay on top of the issues and tell others to check out more documentaries, I think that's a small step in the right direction. Share your discoveries with your friends, because at the end of the day a good documentary is just like school without the mandatory homework. And if the voluntary homework involves writing to a Member of Parliament or getting someone else to watch a film, you're on the way to making some kind of difference.

If you don't know where to look, for starters check out: [www.freedocumentaries.org](http://www.freedocumentaries.org); [www.freedocumentaries.net](http://www.freedocumentaries.net) or [www.moviesfoundonline.com](http://www.moviesfoundonline.com).

## Listings: This week around campus

Global week. RAG week. Pulse RAGathon - 24.7

Tuesday 17 February

LSESU German Society presents:  
Georg Boomgaard - German Ambassador to the Court of St. James's  
Lecture: *Germany and the International Financial and Economic Crisis*  
S78, 2.15 pm to 3.15 pm

Christian Schmidt - Parliamentary State Secretary to the Federal Minister of Defence  
Lecture: *German Security Policy - Tour d'Horizon*  
D702, 5 pm to 6 pm

Development Society presents

Field Research Panel: Developing Countries  
NAB 214, 5:30-6:30

LSE SU Politics Society  
Film screening - 'Peace One Day'  
NAB 2.14, 7-9 pm

Wednesday 18 February

Development Society People Auction, featuring Howard Davies, Miss LSE and more  
The Quad, 7.30 pm

The Albanian Society presents:  
*Kosovo Independence: One Year On*  
Speaker: Ambassador Muhamet Hamiti from the Republic of Kosovo  
Student Comedy Hub presents:  
Comedy Equation - 8 Comics, one night

Thursday 19 February

Development Society lecture:  
Fragile Finance, Fragmented Governance, Changing World  
S78, 4:30-6:00

Berthold Kohler - Editor Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ)  
Lecture: *Newspapers: Is the End near?*  
D702, 2.15 pm to 3.15 pm

Friday 20 February

LSESU Albanian Society presents:  
Dr Gezim Alpion  
Lecture: 'The Albanian Nun Who was not considered 'European' Enough: Why did Mother Teresa leave the Loreto Order?'  
Hong Kong theatre, 6:30-8pm

German Society presents:  
Professor Norbert Walter - Chief Economist Deutsche Bank  
Lecture: *The Financial Crisis - Causes, Consequences, Cures*  
D202, 2 pm to 3 pm

Oktoberfest Party  
8pm to 2am, Underground Bar.

Saturday 21 February 2009

The UK Fabian Society presents:  
Beatrice Webb - Fighting Poverty & Inequality in an Age of Affluence Centenary Conference  
Speakers: Lord Roy Hattersley, Professor Peter Townsend, Dr. Dianne Hayter and others  
Further information at <http://fabians.org.uk/events/events-news>

## Humour across campus

The British have always had their own brand of humour. The Americans believe they have had theirs. In the globalised world of today, though, no culture can stay undiluted. The LSE is the perfect place to test that theory. To celebrate multiculturalism in all aspects of life, the Beaver picked random representatives from each undergraduate level to see what the modern student finds entertaining. The question posed to them was: **What was the last thing you found hilariously funny? Answers ranged from highbrow, to sadistic, to simply bizarre. This is diversity at its best.**

**Year 1: The politically conscious**  
**Ashwin Desai - BSc Government and Economics**

It was on Snow Day Number One. The Happy One, where the weather was still exciting and everything. I decided to go on a walk around town, hoping to engage in mischief and knavery, fun and frolicage, in the white stuff. Turns out that my shoes are rubbish and have tiny little holes in them, so that every time I step outside my socks get drenched and my toes turn to ice. But that isn't the point.

They're also properly slippery.

So there I was in my vagabond shoes (to quote Frank Sinatra), strolling (sliding sliding sliding) around the city, generally keeping a smile on my face to give people the impression that I was enjoying falling all over the place in the freezing cold. Then, all of a sudden, it was if the Divine beheld my plight and opted to send me some (metaphorical) manna. A bunch of thieving capitalist dogs unconscious of the irony marched out of this post-Stalinist monolith. Believing themselves to be External (and superior) to the forces of Nature (as they all do), they were subjected

to a rude awakening of the highest order when it struck them that those pristine, new, oppression-rendered leather boots were just as prone to hazard as mine own vagabond shoes. In those capitalism-eclipsing weather conditions, they crashed in a heap by the roadside. Vagabondism - 1. Capitalism - 0.

**Year 2: Delight in destruction**  
**Falak Ghorri - BSc Management**

A cheerful "Goo"-ing egg enters the screen. Very matter-of-factly and deftly ties an elastic band around two nails; sheds its shiny, purple foil skin and catapults itself onto the screen; splattering white, yellow and chocolate everywhere. The Result - two hysterical, spastic, stomach-clutching viewers laughing manically; and two others, perturbed slightly nauseated and shocked not just at the video, but at the other two's reaction. The YouTube playlist progresses and the suicidal eggs become wilder and frankly quite ingenious in their methods to off themselves, whilst the strong divide on "to laugh or not" ends as even the most disgusted scrunched-up nose crumples into a smile.

Trust me; these videos are sick.

The congregational mass suicide mousetrap is a personal favourite, complete with classical music in the background and the Kamikaze-like devotion of the eggs. Sweet.

**Year 3: The random**  
**Simon Wang - BSc Accounting and Finance**

I was in Rough Trade in Portobello Market with some friends and I was looking at some CDs in a corner of the shop. All of a sudden I heard a scream from another corner of the shop,

'SIMON! THIS ISN'T WORKING!'

I wandered over, and one of my housemates was standing over an old vinyl player, headphones plugged in. She then started complaining about the fact that she could only hear scratching on the disc, still screaming away. I casually looked over and realised that there was no disc on the vinyl player. I showed her. Her embarrassment was quite funny.

I also tell this story whenever we meet new people and it really pisses her off.



Discover Islam Week Calligraphy Session. Photo: Affan Mohamed

## THIS WEEK AROUND **CAMPUS**



Discover Islam Week Launch. Photo: Cherie Leung

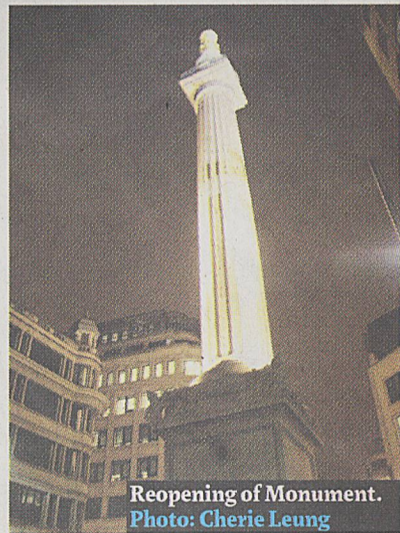


India Week Sari Tying. Photo: Affan Mohamed

**Cherie Leung, Affan Mohamed, and Jaynesh Patel** brings you the best sights from Houghton Street and beyond



Lone Protestor. Photo: Cherie Leung



Reopening of Monument. Photo: Cherie Leung



Fireworks on Valentine's Day. Photo: Cherie Leung



Library at Night. Photo: Jaynesh Patel

# Netball firsts are singing in the rain

Hannah Dyson

After a few close and disappointing losses, the netball 1<sup>st</sup> team began week five with a steadfast determination to prove how well we can actually play. With the optimism of our head sensei that the rain would surely subside, we were the only team to make an appearance at our home ground this Monday night past. This further proving the point that we take our sport seriously, at least compared to the Boy's Rugby Firsts who cancel their training at the slightest hint of drizzle.

Unfortunately, instead of subsiding, the downpour continued and we mentally prepared ourselves for a battle against the elements and King's Medics Firsts. Our warm up gave us little encouragement as we found it hard to get to grips with ball control and keeping steady balance on court. We were also aware, with certain player's absence, a lack of subs meant that we could afford no injuries. With our most

ferocious defender Bruce stuck indoors forced to meet deadlines, our multitallented Captain took over the role of defence ably assisted by our star keeper Effalange.

Both worked well as a new double defensive team managing to turn-over the majority of balls that came their way, Effy having the added determination of winning to ensure nothing could dampen her birthday celebrations that night.

The conditions created quite an interesting game, with a high rate of ball dropping and foot-faults from both sides. Unfortunately, even though overall we appeared to adapt quite well, the early part of the game went the way of our opposition, who led 6-1 after two quarters.

No sentiment was spared in the half time dressing down (more was to come later on that evening) from our Captain as we were reminded that our pride and dignity was at stake. Straight away our playing picked up and we steadily managed to convert our positive play into scores.

Some outstanding interceptions came from my fellow sheep-lover Rhiannon as

**"I just can't wait till I get home and I can hold my boobs because right now they are frozen"**

well as some well-placed shots from our shooters. Just as our luck was changing, however, one of our foremost players Hannah took a horrific slam to the ground.

Tripped up by her defender, Hannah proved heroic by not shedding a tear even though clearly in severe pain. Fortunately shortly before, another hero in the form of Pui had arrived and managed unknowingly to save the day and maintain our full team. With a quick adjusting of positions,

Charlie picking up shooting duty and Pui taking over defensive duties, we battled on.

Some artful dodging came from my turtle twin Natello created some promising plays while Babybell, continued her fine form on, and off, the court by draining some difficult shots. However the author was letting the team down by letting the ball slip between my fingers and without wanting to get called up for re-playing, attempting to guard the ball while shrieking inaudibly to try and notify one of my team mates they needed to pick it up. Guarding the ball however, not strictly being allowed, created uproar from the opposition but was ignored by the umpire who maintained we should regain possession. Carrying on, we held out for a heroic victory finishing the game at an unsurprisingly overall low score of 10-8.

However happy we were to win, the realisation that we were completely soaked through, cold and worn out took hold. Changing room time was spent admiring the bruises Hannah had gained,

utilising amusing drying techniques and explaining to the amazement of our Captain the score had actually ended in our advantage.

Some more delirious chat followed on the train ride home and even though most of us had sufficiently warmed up some clearly hadn't, quoting from a certain dark horse: "I just can't wait till I get home and I can hold my boobs because right now they are frozen". Moving on to the topic of Valentine preparations that were underway, a certain player expressed dismay at her boyfriend's refusal to wear a nurses costume.

Happy that we could now celebrate Effy's departure from teenage years and our victory, the majority of the team managed to make it to the notorious Cheap-skates. Without wanting to dish out the dirt on my fellow team members publicly, some lucky few managed to not only score with a different set of balls to normal, however if interested look for facebook pictures that may be appearing shortly...

## Get Ready, Set...Exec

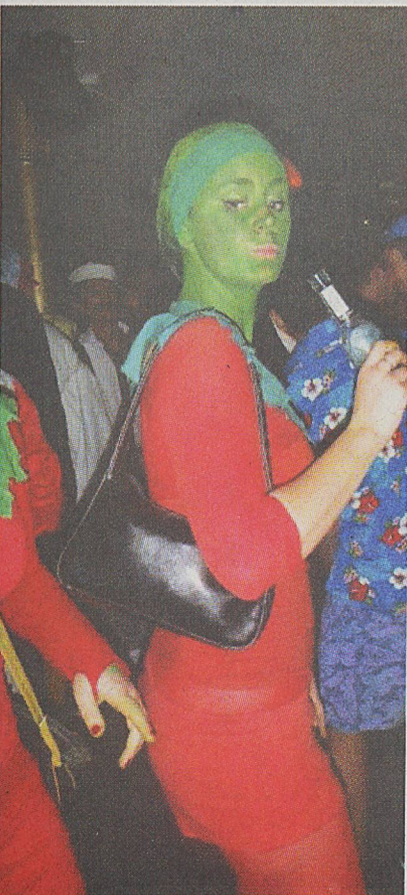
Change is taking place all around us; Obama is the President of the United States, Pelton is the sports editor, and Mr LSE has brought gender equality back to the LSE. In the spirit of all things new, it's time for the AU exec to stand down and be replaced by those with competent, imaginative and fresher livers.

In other words, the AU needs you. What does it take to be a good exec member? Anything and everything. All you really need is the desire to make the AU more inclusive and more accessible. Our main aim is to increase participation in all things sporting and social. Most people see the exec as just organising the events (that's the best bit) but it is also about liaising with the school, the Student's Union and with the 'quieter' clubs about the needs of all sports clubs.

Whatever role you run for, being on the exec is so much fun, extremely entertaining and by looking at this years bunch, a sure fire way of dating a first year.

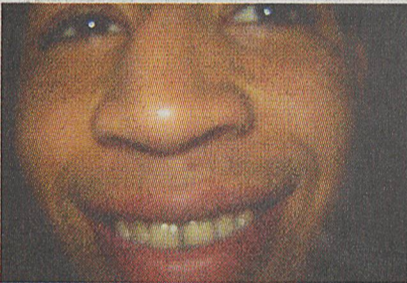
### President

Best title, most work. Certainly a bigger commitment than the other roles - at the end of the day you are responsible for ensuring everything gets done. It helps if you are a big fan of emails, as these come and go in abundance. The President also sits on the SU exec, attends the BUCS conference and BUCS and ULU meetings. It's incredibly interesting and enjoyable, also probably the most rewarding, but don't expect to have huge amounts of free time or pull unobserved in walkabout.



### Treasurer

Lots of work at the beginning of the year deciding on club budgets, but this allows you to meet all the captains and treasurers and see how the money works. Ideal if you want to perfect your signature, as you will be signing cheques until the cows come home. Makes it seem you have done something 'financy' on your CV, even if most of your calculations involved how much free wine could be distributed at the AU ball.



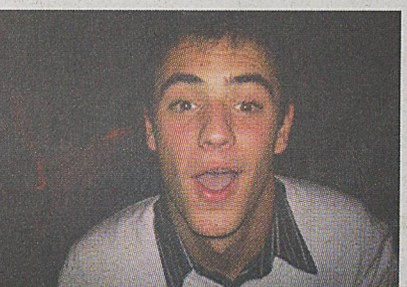
### Events Officer

Best opportunity for creativity and you can screw members of the AU over with disgusting fines at the Carol. Can be very time consuming around big events, but a great sense of pride when all works out. Being organised is definitely a plus for this job, but Jacko has been brilliant and will readily confess to not being suited to a role involving logistics.



### Communications

The comms officer's role is to make sure the AU is represented on Pulse and in the Beaver. Captains will be very aware this role involves gathering the sports results each week for the Beaver. When necessary, assists the president and events officer.



### Secretary

Takes notes in AU exec meetings and emails them around afterwards. Like all roles, helps organise events and promote the work of the exec.



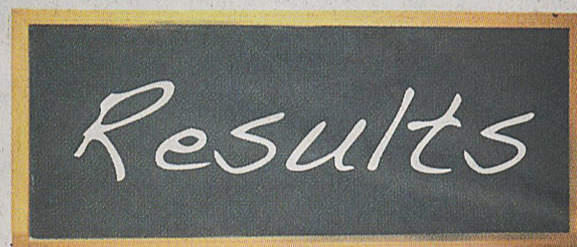
### Club Liasons

After two years on the AU exec I still cant tell you what someone in this position is meant to do. I don't think Charlie could tell you either. However this also means that anything can fall under the liaisons remit, so you will be as heavily involved in everything the exec does as all other positions. Open to endless jokes about your personal liaisons with members of other clubs.



Please email me at [su.aupresident@lse.ac.uk](mailto:su.aupresident@lse.ac.uk)

or any of the AU exec stating the role you wish to run for by Tuesday 24 February so you can be sent more information. Although lateness is rudeness, nominations will be accepted up until the start of hustings. These will take place at 8.30pm in the Quad on the Wednesday of week seven (25 Feb), with all candidates giving short speeches. Please note, fancy dress for candidates is compulsory. Any questions on any of the above just get in touch. **Words by Sophie Hunt**



### Squash

Jonathan Weir 9 - 0 Geoff Dinneen

### Badmington

LSE AU Girls 4-1 Business society

### Mongolian Mud Wrestling

LSE 3 - 9 University of Ulaan Batar

### CRUSH brawling

LSE nutheads 4 - 1 Strange outsiders

### Scuba javelin fighting

Clownfish 12 - 3 Hammerheads

### Sabbatical officer

### brownnosing

Fisher 10 - 5 Sheldon

### Beaver chanting

Beaver office 1 - 0 Pulse

**AU does Crush this Friday! Military Uniform fancy dress: Prizes for best dressed team Free before 10 - £3 for all AU members**

# Academic All Stars swap books for boots



## Philosophical Barry

This week, during one of my weekly youtube sessions I found myself chucking while looking back at some vintage Monty Python sketches. Call me old-fashioned but none of today's comedians, especially

comedy's equivalent of Claire Sweeney - the talentless, willy joke extraordinaire Alan Carr - even come close to the Flying Circus. The 'Ministry of Silly Walks' remains my personal favourite of the group's creations, but a close second is the faceoff between Germany and Greece's finest philosophers.

The finest minds of yesteryear find themselves in a situation normally graced by those with the average mental capacity of Archimedes' left bum cheek - a game of football. "Fool" I hear you cry, but let's be honest for a moment. Graeme Le Saux, Petr Cech and Robbie Fowler (alright probably not intelligent, just savvy in the property market) are not typical examples of the masters of the art.

I began to ruminate on what an LSE all-star XI would look like on paper. With this in mind I began to research our more illustrious alumni and began to construct a team of the finest minds our fair university has ever produced.

All good teams are built on a solid foundation, a reliable pair of hands between the goal posts. England had Banks, Man United had Schmeichel and Bristol

City have Basso (the best keeper outside the Premiership). For the LSE, I have gone for the unflappable R. H. Tawney. A man whose abilities of concentration and attention for the finest of details are only rivaled by Carr's gift for cringey jokes, making him the perfect choice for our goalkeeper.

At full-back, I have gone for athleticism in the form of Walter Adams and Kwame Nkrumah. The former having a penchant for putting people on the ground (just ask the 1967 LSE student protestors), and the latter being vested with the passion and drive that is needed for perhaps the most energy sapping position on the field. Although, in truth, he only intended to come and didn't actually make it, a situation many AU members find themselves in with regards to lectures and classes.

In the modern game, leadership is essential through the spine of your team. That is why John Fitzgerald Kennedy partners Michael Oakeshott at centre-half. JFK would have been a fine AU member considering he allegedly had to leave the school early after contracting gonorrhoea. Oakeshott, a pillar of a man apparently,

would complement the flighty Kennedy with size and strength, also describe as a 'lonely nihilist' he would also fit the ranks of some of our more avant garde AU members.

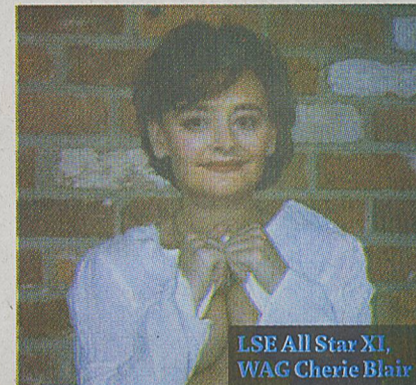
Our right wing boasts Friedrich von Hayek with the left occupied by Harold Laski. If that gag was lost on you, then consult the columns in the features section (the ones written by the fat bloke with the funny voice and the boring Tory guy).

The central midfield positions see Bertrand Russell and Amartya Sen partnered in a frightening combination of fire and foresight. Sen, an open critic of the market, and Russell, a vocal proponent of free trade, would've probably had their fair share of bust ups. But it is this passion and commitment to the cause that has driven this selection. Dear old Bertrand also cites 'sex' as one of his main interests in his autobiography, saucy bugger.

Finally up front sees the indomitable Karl Popper as the main target man. In the mould of a good old-fashioned English centre forward, Popper would hopefully falsify claims that the LSE is 66th best university in the world, in theoretical

football matches at least. Our final spot goes to current academic and Taekwondo master Danny Quah. The perfect foil for Popper, Quah's speed and mobility would surely give opposition defences existential nightmares, while he would also be pretty handy in any brawls.

The Bench: Robert Kilroy-Silk, Mick Jagger, Lloyd Grossman, Lawrence Rugeroni, Val Venis. WAGs: Cherie Blair, Monica Lewinsky, Edwina Curry, Valerie Plame.



LSE All Star XI, WAG Cherie Blair

# Not a bridge too far for the LSE

## Deep Heat onboard with the LSE 2nd VIII as they crush Cambridge

In their second race of the season, LSE's 2nd VIII took on 98 other boats including crews from Cambridge, Imperial, Bristol and London. All were competing in the four-kilometre Quintin Head course on Tideway. Taking out 'Black Beaver' - a boat predominantly held together with duct tape - the LSE Seconds felt supremely confident. But after a great row to the start line, fuelled by Mr Sean 'Bang Bang' Baker's singing, things started to go amiss.

As the LSE opened up an early lead, Bristol decided that they felt somewhat enamored by bowman Pete Yu's lycra, and started encroaching upon his rear end. After bravely holding off Bristol's advances, the LSE crew got into a good rhythm as they headed under Hammersmith Bridge. Deciding generously that other crews should have a chance, Alexis 'Massive Crab' Morcette pushed his blade into the water to let other boats catch up. Alexis' plan worked so well that the boat simulated an emergency stop, causing massive confusion within Pete Yu's Bristol boat.

In the main body of the race, LSE got into the zone, coming out only to pay tribute at the position of the fateful women's quad's capsize earlier this year. However Dan Marcus came out of the zone only to take a protein shake and buy Tesco value condoms.

After the rest of the boat acknowledged Alexis' charitable gesture, LSE swung back into their stride to keep up a three-abreast battle with Emmanuel School and University of London. Around two-thirds of the way through the race, and well into this epic battle, the crew simultaneously glanced sideways to be confronted with the sight of midget coxing. Post-race, after ruling out a mass hallucination, Hawaiian Ryan curtly pronounced use of such a being illegal.

After some confident coxing from Ms Hamilton, the boat recognised their fortune when an Imperial boat member was threatened with 'number six, I'll f\*\*\*ing hit you in the f\*\*\*ing face if you don't f\*\*\*ing catch in time, you f\*\*\*ing \*\*\*\*'. The LSE crew held on to the UoL boat until a few hundred metres from the final, when the LSE team realised that they weren't 6'4". And UoL were.

A good result all in all, coming in halfway through the field and, importantly, beating boats in the categories above and a pony Imperial boat. We headed to the pub for post-match analysis, where it was generally decided that Alexis was a dick, and midgets shouldn't be allowed to cox. We presume that we beat Cambridge to the pub.

Next on LSERC's calendar is the Hammersmith Head in week eight, in which two boats will be entered. The main focus of this season is Head of the River race in week ten, in which 500 boats play destruction derby. Lets hope Brizzle doesn't catch sight of Pete Yu.

The rowers are also doing a sponsored row from London to Calais on the 17 February in the Quad/Houghton St and the Tuns so please give generously.



Photos: Nancy Lu. What was that about midget coxes?



# Gamblers Anon

The normal format of this column is thus: I talk about last week's bets, tell you how badly we failed, then try and make some, at times bad, jokes about this week's raft of disastrous punts. However two major barriers are in place preventing us from regurgitating this highly successful layout.

Firstly, being a bunch of total luddites, we can't quite work out the result of our greyhound racing bets. And secondly, it's 2am as I write this so the only jokes I can come up with involve stuffed hamsters, peanut butter and sanitary towels. Need sleep.

This week I am going to focus our funds from the kind people at Betfair on events in the West Indies. After the humiliation of the first test and the drama of the abandoned second, there is plenty of room for interesting wagers. Also the LSE cricket season is getting into gear, so hopefully this little plug will get them to write some articles for our lovely editorial team.

Ten of our finest pounds are being placed on Stuart Broad to score a half century in the first innings at 4/1. While he hasn't been showing such good form with the bat of late, Broad has shown to be a class act at the crease in his burgeoning test career. Although judging by his complexion he is about as well suited to spending long periods in the sun as a loosely credible news story, we think Broad is gonna block out the ball, and the heat, and build himself a tidy little score.

A wild two bets of £4.50 each will go on West Indies Captain Chris Gayle to smash a first innings hundred at 9/2 and on the match to reach a conclusion in the evening session of the fifth day at 30/100.

Finally an outrageous £1 will be placed on the match being tied at a pretty reasonable 129/1. The same odds as anyone finding something in this article funny.



betfair sports casino poker

18+ Please gamble responsibly. Visit www.gambleaware.co.uk

# Sport



Not an oar-ful performance

<< page 23

## Firsts fall victim to medical malpractise

**Robin Low** recounts an extraordinary week for the FC's finest footballing specimens

A strange cup schedule was thrust upon the LSE's 1st XI last week. With the threat of a cup tie being decided by the toss of a coin, the David Beckham Academy was promptly booked for an extraordinary Monday night match, with the winner playing St. Mary's on the Wednesday.

Some have questioned Captain Ed Healy's punishing training regime and collective showering policy but the justification was all along to make sure the team would be prepared should such a bizarre situation as this arise. There was much anticipation preceding this game, and some small talk of Beckham himself coming to officiate, although this unfortunately did not present itself to be true.

The game itself was tough. The pitch was a lot bigger than our home pitches at Fortress Berrylands, and coupled with playing on a harder astro-turf surface, serious adjustment was required. The game started in LSE's favour, going into half time 1-0 up following a rare Dicky Roberts header from a Rob 'Rory Delap' Low throw.

Even tougher than the first, the second half was subject to some mistakes at set pieces which allowed Chichester to go 2-1 with 10 minutes to go. Time for plan B then. The skipper changed the formation to an unconventional 2-4-4, and a goal soon followed courtesy of Monty Ismail. To the distress of everyone on the pitch this meant 30 minutes of extra time were to follow. Given the majority of both teams were suffering from cramp at this point another half an hour of football seemed like a punishment for not being able to win the game in normal time.

Monty popped up again and managed to bag the winner in extra time, though celebrations were fairly mute come the final whistle as the team barely had the energy to drag themselves to the dressing rooms,

and eventually Cheapskates later on.

Following a day's rest we had another cup game to attend, with the winner progressing to the semi-final of the BUCS competition. With half the team absent still suffering cramp, those who did turn up were clearly wishing they had composed some elaborate excuse to stay at home, as LSE this time went into half time a goal down.

An Ed Healy 'hairdryer' special brought some life into the Firsts, alongside new acquisition Teddy Todorov, as erudite off the pitch as he is elegant on it. An own goal, followed by a Rick Roberts finish gave

**"An Ed Healy 'hairdryer' special brought some life into the 1s"**

the lead early on in the second half. Then ensued some chaotic goal mouth incidents at both ends, with Healy pulling off a good save to keep the lead in our hands. Knoertzer then coolly slotted home to stretch the lead to 3-1.

Then came the moment of the afternoon with what some have been calling the best goal seen at Berrylands for a generation. Rob Low sent the fourth goal into the net with great aplomb, putting the result out of Chichester's reach.

Saturday then came, and a chance for revenge against a RUMs side that put an early dent into LSE's title hopes. A place in the ULU Cup semi-final was at stake,



LSE football 1st team  
Photo: Robin Low

and tempers were flared from the start. At the end of 90 minutes the game was 0-0. Early into extra time RUMs scored twice following errors, so a move to plan B was required, 2-4-4.

Knoertzer scored to make it 2-1 and provide some hope, yet it was all in vain. Of note in this game were four straight red cards. A RUMs player was sent off for a

tackle that would have seen him banned for a month in the Premiership. A spectator who gave the name 'Howard Davies' was also sent off, as well as Tom Jacques and Rob Low, who let their frustrations get the better of them. All that can be said, for the sake of the future of the medical service, is that these 'doctors' in waiting will all hopefully fail their exams, as the majority of

their attitudes wouldn't even be acceptable on the terraces of Millwall Football Club.

There is still plenty to play for, a BUCS semi-final against Portsmouth awaits, as does a chance to win the league. If we cannot find success here, then at least we all know we will be bringing silverware back from the annual sports trip to Spain, where LSE has a fine tradition of success.

## Snooker team leave Imperial in a hole



The LSE snooker team  
Photo: Lee Mager

Lee Mager

The Midlands Universities Snooker Championships, an annual invitation-only event prior to the national BUCS Championships, were held at Rileys in Coventry on 7 and 8 February 2009. Incorporating four competitions in total: Senior Team (1st teams), Junior Team (2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> teams), and Individual Senior and Junior level championships. Each year a trophy is also awarded to the player with the highest break.

Teams from Warwick, York, Cardiff, Nottingham, Southampton and Imperial attended, all of whom have been regulars at this event unlike the LSE who had hitherto never competed at snooker. Although according to BUCS regulations a new team

can only play at Shield Level (i.e. with 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> teams), for some reason the Warwick organisers decided to put us in the Senior Team championship, facing a frankly terrifying line-up of snooker legends.

Of course we had our own legendary snooker wizard, Robert Li, a BUCS quarter finalist last year. But given that prior to the event we had only had one snooker tournament and one team practice session, we knew we were going for experience purposes only. Before leaving we foolishly checked out Warwick's snooker web page, only to be met with a dizzyingly impressive high breaks board, with 90+ breaks towards the top and even their worst 3<sup>rd</sup> team players having had breaks of over 40 in competition, higher than anything we had managed in the past few weeks even in practice. With opponents such as Mike

Walsh (England snooker team), Matt Tugby (highest break trophy last year), Matt Bradley (nine-ball champion with a 129 high break) and James Hill (BUCS national snooker individual champion 2006), we decided that anything other than utter humiliation would count as a victory.

As luck would have it, Robert and Lee drew Bradley and Tugby in the first cocking round of the twatting individual championship. Lee was about to start cutting himself with despair, but decided to watch Robert's match against the vaunted Bradley first. A fantastic best-of-three match ensued, with Robert winning the first frame, which was decided on the final black and resulted in easily the loudest shout of the entire weekend, thanks to the nearby LSE audience. Sadly, the volume diminished as Matt scraped both of the following close-

run frames to knock Robert out.

Lee was sufficiently inspired by Robert's battle that he decided to postpone suicide until after his match against Tugby at least. Matt is arguably one of the best university cueists in England and a jolly nice chap as well. He's also calmer under pressure than a monk on valium, which can be pretty unnerving to play against. Tugby won the first frame but it was a close one, which made Lee think he might actually have a chance. That chance came in the second frame, when Lee potted a long red, gaining perfect position on the black. After sinking that one, he then potted another 3 reds, all with subsequent blacks, and suddenly people from other tables started coming over to watch, with one person mentioning that the 147 was on. Lee left himself a perfect angle to break open the pack off his next red. A Warwick guy said "man, if this works...", at which point Lee went back to normal and missed, and the small audience offered a collective 'meh' and walked away.

Lee decided not to give away the fact that this 32 was his highest ever break in competition (which also resulted in his name being shown on the high breaks board for the championship), and tried his best to look disappointed, rather than delighted, with what he had just done. Another 18 break in the frame and some good safety resulted in Matt needing snookers, thus giving Lee the ridiculously unlikely accolade of taking a frame off Tugby. Chuffed to bits, but the chuffedness was short-lived as Matt won the deciding frame.

Alpesh and Will both had similarly tough first round draws and got knocked out, leaving only Dan Steene who managed to win an epic deciding frame in his match against one of the Nottingham boys. Unfortunately for Dan his next round match

was against the eventual finalist from Cardiff, and as Dan commented, "destroyed is not a strong enough word for what just happened to me".

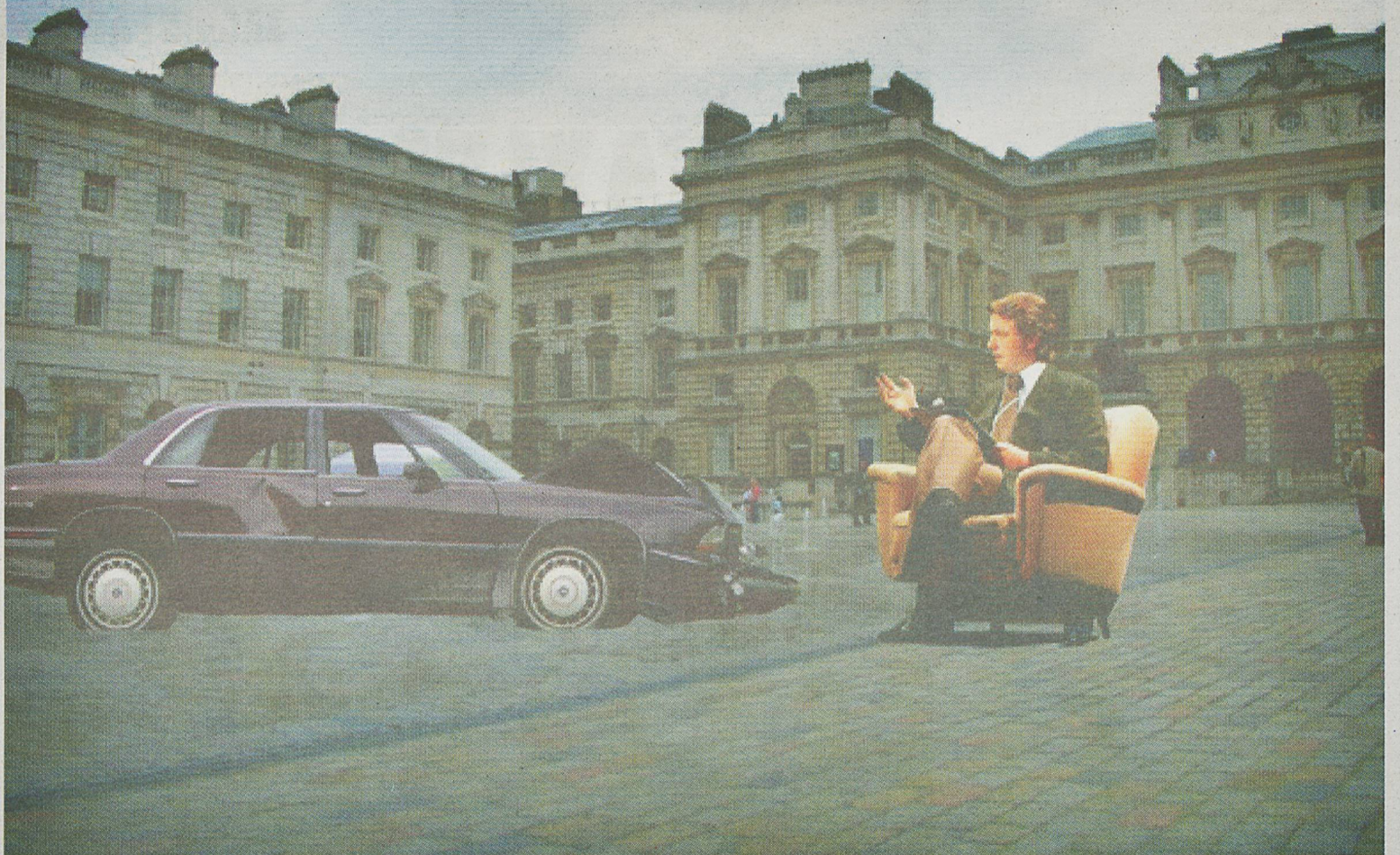
The team championship began in the afternoon, with the LSE drawing the Imperial 1<sup>st</sup> team in their first match for an all-London affair among what was otherwise a bunch of northern monkeys. To put things into perspective, Imperial have been regular contenders at national university snooker events, and in fact reached the semi-final of the BUCS National Snooker Trophy in 2008. They also have their very own snooker room on campus with four snooker tables. We, on the other hand, have no snooker tables, no experience (apart from Robert of course) and only one practice session under our belt. So it was several different kinds of awesome that we ended up beating them 6 frames to 4.. Oh yes. We beat the Imperial 1<sup>st</sup> team. Their Hard Science style was no match for our Investment Banker's swagger.

Sadly that was our only team victory over the weekend, with Robert being the only outstanding player, winning 6 frames, which included breaks of 33 and 35 (Alpesh won 3 team frames, Lee 2, Dan 1 and none for Will or Ken) but the ability to secure gloating rights in London made the whole thing worthwhile.

At the BUCS Shield in Leeds in March, none of the teams we will face will be as strong as the Imperial 1<sup>st</sup> team, so this means we have a great chance not only of getting past the quarter finals and being promoted to the full championship next year, but we also have a chance at actually winning it. And if we win the BUCS pool shield in a couple of weeks as well, I think a strongly worded letter to Howard Davies, demanding our very own snooker and pool room, will be in order.



# PARTO



## 17.02.09

## 3 RANT

**lizcheesbrough**  
is stuck on a desert island

## 4 BRAKES

**julianboys**  
interviews the resurgent  
brighton rockers

## 6 FILM

**trentmaynard**  
*frost/nixon* and *zohan* reviewed

## 7 VISUAL ARTS

**christinaschmidt zur nedden**  
a stroll down to the courtauld  
gallery at somerset house

## ≠ 8 CENTRE ≠

a psychopath's guide to being  
normal

## 10 MUSIC

**liammclaughlin & cathydruce**  
why you need gang of four in  
your life and lily allen's new  
single

## 12 JOURNEYS

**graemebirrel**  
on living in azerbaijan

## 13 THEATRE

**loisjeary**  
be near me!

## 14 TV

**angelachow**  
come dine with me!

## 15 FOOD

**sophiemarment**  
the hare and tortoise

## 16 SEX &amp; GENDER

**helenreeves**  
abercrombie & fitch's  
misogyny

## EDITORIAL

12»



Yes, it's true. Life at the Beaver has finally rotted my brain. The results are clearly evident in this week's cover, which suggests a car didn't **brake** in time to avoid an accident involving  **david frost**, in the middle of **somerset house**. Don't worry, my medication's in the post. In other news, we found a foaming killer squatting in the office, so we forced him into a cage and made him give us advice on how to be normal.

**JULIAN BOYS &  
SACHIN PATEL**

## FAQ! FAX! FACTS!

Cher Julian,  
Pendant que je mangeasse mon porridge d'escargots, je me suis presque étouffé. Pourquoi? Votre article dégueulasse au sujet des sucettes, que j'ai trouvé crasseux, et plein d'allusions grivoises. Je ne laisserais jamais ma tortue jeune près de vous.

Avec colère,  
Gustave Flaubert

Querido Juan,  
He perdido los zapatos que me regalaste, y ahora no sé que hago con los limones. Debo comerlos con queso? Creo que los ratones verdes van a llegar el 29 de febrero, pero llámame si es más temprano. Hasta luego,  
Orly

FOR A REGULAR DOSE OF CULTURAL MUSINGS AND ORIGINAL ARTICLES, SHIMMY DOWN TO  
**PARTBONLINE.BLOGSPOT.COM**  
RELAX: WE'RE ONLY TWO YEARS BEHIND THE TIMES.

# STONE MY WORDS AND ROLL MY SOUL



**lizchezbroro** writes creatively on a desert island

**W**hat would be your Desert Island Disc? People who know haven't thought about it enough, and people who don't haven't heard enough yet. Suffice to say, it's the only company you're going to have for a damn long time - so you need to get it right. It has to be a truly meaningful relic of all your experiences; something that reflects a little of what you are, a little of what you like and a little of what you want to be. The Desert Island Disc question has been bothering me for about a week and a half, but I think I've got it. I want the Rolling Stones.

Now before you throw up your hands in horror (or delight. Please let some of you be delighted) consider the true meaning of Desert Island Discs. Don't say it's too old, too irrelevant, too uncool compared to the plethora of modern music on offer. The materialism of fashionable music taste avoids the point of the challenge altogether - there will be nobody there to be fashionable in front of, and the palm trees don't give a shit if you listen to techno, opera, baroque or gabba. The competition we make in comparing each other's music tastes creates a boundary between what we think we should like and what we genuinely enjoy; to the extent that we can't even tell the difference between the two. The role of Desert Island Discs has to be getting rid of the petty insecurities about our own status that we throw around by creating hierarchies of taste. By nature, taste is individual - and there is no 'good' taste beyond your own.

Your song needs to be something that covers all angles - past, present and future, internal and external. The stones bring back a turbulent wave of a thousand memories for me - some good and some bad. It covers all aspects of my life, even though I rarely remember playing them on purpose. If we can stop liking music because it's cool according to some arbitrary website we currently agree with then we can actually enjoy things on our own terms. Music isn't about 'new' or 'classic', it's about whatever truly turns you on - your Desert Island Disc has to be your personal best. These songs are more than music; they are literature, images, tangible shapes. They are a lifestyle. They are the stories in your mind, your codes and behaviours wrapped in fantasy. The story in my mind I share with you here, so when you know your Desert Island Disc, perhaps write your own. It is indeed not even about just one disc, it is about many; their words quoted within mine. If it really is your choice, then both your words and theirs are one and the same. The words you write are not about you, they are about how you see, feel and breathe the music - after all, you wouldn't want to take a record of yourself talking now, would you.

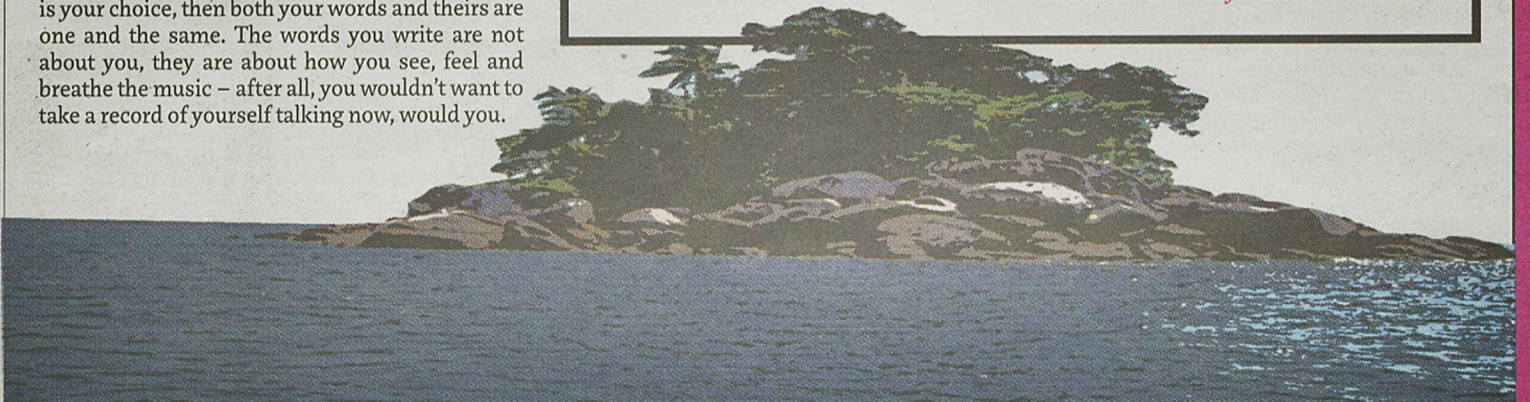


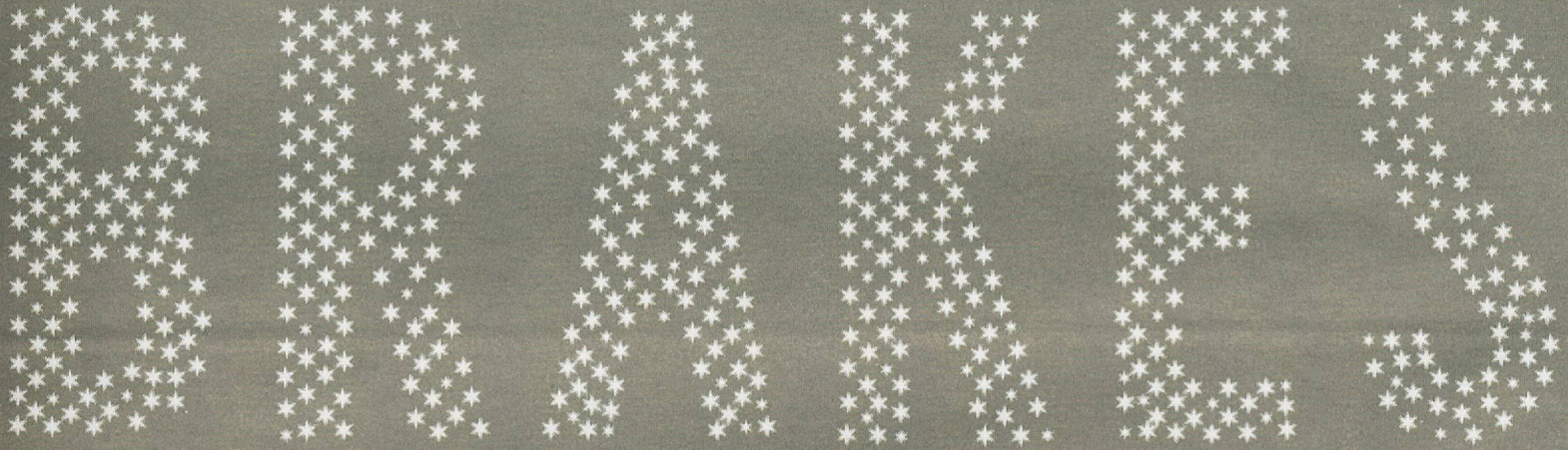
**a storm is threatening my very life today**

She groaned, stretched, pulled away. 'I look inside myself and see my heart is black' she whispered, her words sticking to her throat as they choked her soul. The intimacy bound her chest, wrapping around her lungs as the smoke filled them. She loved every minute of their destruction. The thin plume of grey gently rolled from between her lips, words tumbling in their trail. 'Imagining the world has stopped.' He too felt his heart stop as the word clipped. Suffocated, he searched for something, anything that would bring her back to him. He needed her to bring his pulse pounding back to his ears. 'It's three a.m., there's too much noise, don't you people ever want to go to bed?' His lack of foresight scratched her; he knew she expected eloquence that she knew he no longer possessed. 'Here comes your nineteen thirties breakdown' she laughed, the words tumbling over his sentence without thought. She knew to mock the nerves that wracked him inside. 'You're a fool to cry.'

He burrowed himself deeper, subordinating to the darkness of their too casual embrace. His heart was still to return, desperate for her to draw him in to their obscurity, wrap him in the sticky darkness of her world. 'Still I'm going to miss you' he offered, trying to coax her reaction. He meant every word. He wasn't ready to lose her; he never was. Motionless, her lips slowly moved as if separate from her face. She told him his fate. 'I'm going to tell you how it's going to be, you're going to give your love to me.' The blood rushed to his cheeks, his chest; his groin. He had known what it had meant to love her, but knew the signs of her parting call. She had collected what she wanted. A breeze swept over the covers, reality awakening their haze. She lifted herself from the bed as if she were levitating, floating above and away beyond his grasp. He watched with avid fascination as she carelessly dressed, stepping through the open door as she finally slid her shirt over her head. 'She comes and goes,' he repeated in his mind, restraining the mantra as it peaked to topple in to speech. He felt the beating grow within him, burning like a red coal carpet. He loved her secrets, the eternal inequality that drew him in and let her thrive.

'She would never say where she came from.'





## discuss artistic integrity and whether dick cheney still is a dick with **julianboys**

There was a time when good bands made money. The Rock 'n' Roll archives abound with tired clichés about over-indulgence as bands found themselves wallowing in mountains of money and drugs off the back of a half decent album. Admittedly, that's one end of the spectrum, and more recently the image of bands scratching a living by touring constantly has become more common. Still, you'd expect a band as critically acclaimed as Brakes to have gone up in the world a bit, perhaps from the back of their van to a bedsit in Stockwell. After all, in 2005 Steve Lamacq gave them 5 stars out of 5 for their first album, *Give Blood*, in the then influential Observer Music Monthly, and Rough Trade made it their album of the year. This was followed in 2006 by *The Beatific Visions*, given 9/10 by Drowned in Sound. Both albums were brilliant mish-mashes of countless influences, from country to punk, but all with an accessible pop sheen which makes it surprising they aren't better known. When partB chatted to lead singer Eamon Hamilton just before they started touring for their third record, he explained how the music industry's ongoing crisis at the hands of the internet is being compounded by the wider recession to make life difficult for four-piece indie bands.

"We came to an end of our Rough Trade contract, and they couldn't offer us another record because of the credit crunch basically," he said.

Fat Cat records snapped them up after Rough Trade dropped them, a label based in Brakes' hometown of Brighton, which has recently re-

leased records by Frightened Rabbit and Hauschka.

"Fat Cat really surprised us, we love their output so when they offered us a deal we were like, 'hell yeah!'"

The result is Brakes' new album, *Touchdown*, to be released in April this year. From the tracks leaked on the internet it will please old fans, with new song 'Hey Hey' echoing the big riffs and sin-

### **"We've never really tried to forge a sound, or be defined by a sound."**

galong chorus of 'Cease and Desist'. But Brakes' appeal lies in the variety of their songwriting, and new song 'Oh Forever' sees the band taking a Jesus and Mary Chain-esque turn into fuzzy, distorted territory.

"I wanted to write a romantic song about staying under the duvet. I recorded it in Garage-Band first and put echo and reverb on the vocals, it sounded awesome. You couldn't make out what the hell I was saying!"

For better or worse, the album as a whole isn't a Magnetic Fields style homage to JAMC though.

"Every song on the album sounds quite different, which we're really pleased about, it's really

diverse. We've never really tried to forge a sound, or be defined by a sound"

Although a lot of bands might make such claims, its rarely as obviously true as with Brakes. On their first album, a cover of Johnny Cash and June Carter's 'Jackson' sits comfortably alongside an 8 second thrashy punk interlude with lyrics "Cheney, Cheney, stop being such a Dick!"

"Songs like 'Cheney' aren't really appropriate any more. He's still alive and I'm sure he still is a dick, but he's not got any influence, y'know?"

George W Bush's presidency, despite the many controversies, drew little response in the world of pop music. Bands tended to shy away from addressing political issues, and Brakes' calling Dick Cheney a dick is hardly a rousing protest song - more aimed at raising a laugh than awareness. The question on everyone's lips of course, is what effect will Obama's time in office have on indie music?

"I hope it'll up the ante in terms of songwriting - having someone inspirational in power who can write and speak better than I can is bound to be positive. With Bush it was like, y'know, I could do better than this!"

Whereas politics was a lyrical theme on previous records, economics seems to have come to the fore on their new album.

"We were recording as the banks were collapsing", proclaimed Eamon dramatically, "So I think that influenced us a lot.

"I went £4 over my overdraft at Lloyds and they charged me £75! I was fucking angry, so I



wrote a song about it, called 'Why Tell The Truth When It's Easier To Lie'. Then, a few days later, they were nationalised so I practically own them! I was laughing my arse off."

A band writing about such matters might have seemed contrived a few years ago, but the current crisis is forcing people who usually have better things to do to engage with our dismal science. Since before it all kicked off though, small

**"You can't fucking eat critical acclaim! Five stars? I can't taste that!"**

bands were already having to think of innovative ways of making their passion for music financially sustainable, with record sales bringing virtually no income and legal downloads not making up the difference. Allowing a song be used for a TV program or an advert would at one time have led to an artist being seen as money grabbing sell-outs. But Eamon was unrepentant about letting Brakes' song 'All Night Disco Party' be used in US TV show 'Ugly Betty'.

"For the last 3 years I earned so little that I didn't pay any tax. I'm quite pleased, y'know, tax free! But it's difficult to survive on that amount of money. So if someone says, 'Here, you can have

some money for your music', fuck yeah, bring it on! You can't fucking eat critical acclaim! Five stars? I can't taste that!"

Does this mean that artistic integrity is an outdated concept?

"Yes, because people download stuff for free. If you want to keep an artist going to high morals then buy records and never download anything. If you download music for free, you've lost the right to criticise bands..."

This is an unusual standpoint and seems at first glance like a very cynical one. However the idea of artistic integrity involves sticking to guiding principles, so unless an artist clearly states that they disapprove of the use of their work for commercial purposes, fans shouldn't have a problem.

Thankfully such lofty concerns were a distant memory when Brakes took to the stage later that evening, with Eamon bizarrely kitted out in a shiny silver space-suit and appropriately introduced by the guitarist as a 'metallic bald alien'. They launched into 'All Night Disco Party' to ease people into the set with a familiar tune, but also perhaps to get their best known song out of the way to allow the audience to enjoy the new material without a dizzy anticipation of the Hit. It is just that, a breathy electro build up to a crashing chorus with typically nonsensical lyrics of "croque monsieur, croque madame". Their shouty punk classic "Porcupine or Pineapple" stood out, lines like "Who won the war, what the fuck was it for" managing to avoid coming across as cringewor-

thy by the utter ridiculousness of the other lyrics -political comment for the Mighty Boosh generation. Only four new songs made it into what was a weirdly short set for a 'comeback' show, by far the highlight being 'Oh Forever', which built up tenderly to a heartfelt crescendo. The sincerity displayed on that song was short-lived, with 'Cheney' getting played twice, though 'stop being such a Dick!' was replaced by 'Good Bye!'. The

**"We were recording as the banks were collapsing, so I think that influenced us a lot."**

time limit to their set, presumably imposed by the venue, prevented them playing some of the brilliant songs off their second album like 'Hold me in the River' or 'Cease and Desist', but it was nonetheless a raucously entertaining mix demonstrating their versatility and wit. When their album comes out in April I'll be first in line, waving a crisp tenner, to swell their deserving but hollow coffers.

*Brakes' forthcoming album, Touchdown, is released on 20 April, on Fat Cat Records.*

# JUST P TO BE A PSYCHOP



Tip 1: Obsess over something.  
Don't collect p

Tip 2: People whose voices  
they're singing, and  
then down with

Tip 3: Manufacture  
appearance. Keep  
bathroom and

Tip 4: Have an opinion  
don't care  
Who's your favor

Tip 5: Pretend  
peoples problems,  
and hum sitar s  
someone sta

Tip 6: If you feel an  
under no circumst  
all locked up ins  
then go to t

# RETEND NORMAL... PATH'S GUIDE:

Acceptable like football or clothes.  
Photos of bus exhausts.

Stimulate strangely are not in pain,  
don't appreciate you calming  
lorazepam in their tea.

concern for your personal  
rats of the stuff in the  
tub in after showering.

on everything, even though you  
are about anything.  
elite golfer, for example?

to care about other  
don't block your ears  
colos to yourself when  
lets talking to you.

emotion in a public space,  
ances display it. Keep it  
side until the weekend,  
the country and hunt.



# THE SHIT AWARDS

they call her **cathy**druce (that is her name)

What more relevant theme for this article than tomorrow's award show specifically designed to celebrate the best of British music? I thought my job was pretty much done for me, but it turns out the Brit Awards nominees this year are a not much of a reflection of "the best of British" and to be quite honest, in some cases, an even worse representation of the word "music".

I thought the "British Breakthrough Act" would surely be one of the most exciting awards of the night. I was going to review the bands and take the Brit awards' prompt to celebrate the talent of a whole load of really great new British music. Alas, **The Ting Tings** seem to have made the cut. And so have **Scouting for Girls**. I object. These bands may nestle perfectly between the other abrasive one-hit-wonders on Radio 1, but I just can't see them as serious contenders for the best new British music of 2008/2009.

*"Keane? Don't get me started. They just need to leave the music industry, immediately, and become accountants. They're the kind of band who think a cocaine addiction is an interesting lifestyle choice to brag about to their Jack Wills-wearing chums."*

I have to affirm, I haven't read whatever rules are in place that may have let The Ting Tings slip through the net and I'm not really sure what counts as relevant for this category in 2008/2009, the rules seem unclear (after all in 1999 **Belle and Sebastian** did win this category for 'new' music having already released three albums). But I do still wonder whether the nomination for **Friendly Fires**, **Laura Marling** and **Foals** got lost in the post. There's such a varied field of new and mainstream British music around, I think we could do better than the God-awful Ting Tings.

Does anyone really like this sort-of forced poppy crap? I feel a bit disappointed that the nominators seem to have just tuned into an average daytime radio show to find out what the kids are listening to nowadays instead of having a good rummage around and recognising some great new British acts.

Thank goodness, maybe one of these nomi-

nations are in the right place; **Adele's** genre of heartbroken soul shows one of Britain's most promising new talents for song-writing with complicated and beautiful arrangements, (that jar somewhat with The Ting Tings' neanderthal-simpleton tracks) all packed into an album that I thought was, surprisingly, truly good. I would really like to redeem my Ting Tings related negativity by praising the other nominees, but I just can't think of anything to say; **Duffy** and the **Last Shadow Puppets** are just monotonous middling average; nothing special.

It's a real shame that the Brit Awards have missed the boat on celebrating some fantastic new British talent. They have once again just picked the unspectacular and unremarkable rubbish that's lining HMV stores across the country instead of recognizing the sort of "oh-I-love-this-song, who's-this-by-again?" band that truly deserve it.

## SHE'S GOT THE FEAR

sachinpatel reviews lily's new single

Is it a cover of Ian Brown's most famous post-Stone Roses song? Is it instead a re-imagining of the notoriously chilling opener from Pulp's *This Is Hardcore* LP? No, it's Lily Allen's return to the world of pop, following what seems like an eternity of lounging in the middle pages of *The London Paper* and almost every page of gossip magazines. From the perspective of a relative outsider to Ms. Allen's oeuvre, the first thing I notice about "The Fear" is that it takes only ten seconds for her to utter the first expletive - "I want fuck loads of diamonds" - before the heart-melting guitar intro gives way to echoey stabs of icy synths and a fairly elastic bass-line. Musically, the song sounds like a cross between *Arular*-era M.I.A. and a Goldfrapp off-cut, which isn't terrible, but is considerably less exciting than either of these influences' individual material.

Lyricaly, meanwhile, it seems that everyone's favourite teenage tearaway is on some sort of health crusade, rallying against the press hounds who have criticised her for her well-publicised battles with dieting - "I'll take my clothes off and it will be shameless / 'Cuz everyone knows that's how you get famous" and "I am a weapon of massive consumption" are pretty much the only vaguely meaningful lines in the entire song. Quite what the abstract Fear has to do with her body issues is left unclear, washed away by oblique references to illegal wars and men fighting.

I thought her music was supposed to sound like the love-child of The Specials and The Streets, no? Ah, it appears that she's "matured". Thanks, love, but I'll leave her on the shelf to mature a bit longer.





# GANG OF WHO?

nathanbriant tells you

The post-punk era of music (the bit between the late 1970s and early 1980s) was the most fruitful era for pop music in the 20th century, and only second in influence to the 1960s. Seriously. Extraordinary albums, such as Magazine's *Real Life*, Elvis Costello & The Attractions' *This Year's Model* and Wire's *Pink Flag* were all spawned during this era in the UK alone. Punk had kind of boiled over, and people were getting into more sophisticated stuff than merely shouting, moaning and groaning; unsung legends, such as Wilko Johnson, were back in vogue. Alleluia!

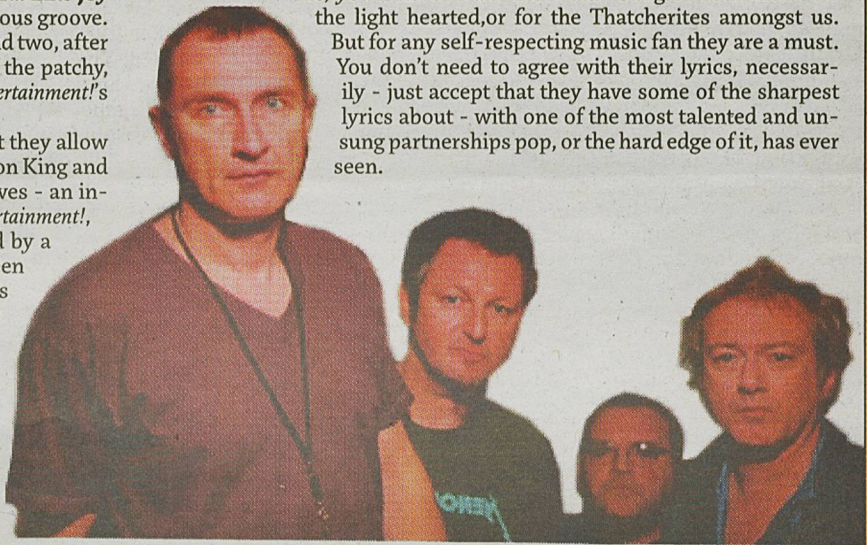
Gang of Four released their debut album (and true masterpiece) *Entertainment!* in 1979, and were one of the brightest stars of this era. Like Joy Division - but without the depressed front man - they had serious groove. Although they released three albums after this in the 1980s, (and two, after a long hiatus, in the 1990s) only 1981's *Solid Gold* and parts of the patchy, shoulder-pad influenced *Songs of the Free* vaguely live up to *Entertainment!*'s brilliance.

One of the best things about Gang of Four is the space that they allow their instruments. It was facilitated by the band's lead singer, Jon King and guitarist, Andy Gill, choosing to produce their album themselves - an inspired move. The chief example of this is the last song on *Entertainment!*, 'Anthrax'. One and a half minutes of guitar feedback followed by a ridiculously simple bass line and spoken lyrics have never been so stirring. ('Love will catch you like a case of Anthrax/and that's something I don't want to catch'). The epitome of much of the post-punk era, sparseness was the key to a truly unique and exceptional sound; Gang of Four were the true architects and masters of this.

But one thing that truly draws them away from their contemporaries is their lyrics. The band weren't scared of taking risks: many of their lyrics are based around highly politicised situations; King was deeply interested in Marxism so this is unsurprising (that said, the political influence on their songs,

according to recent interviews, has probably been overplayed a little). 'It's Her Factory' - "suffering from suffrage" and 'Natural's Not In It' - "the problem of leisure/what to do for pleasure/I do love a new purchase/a market of the senses" are just two exceptionally thoughtful examples. Certainly an undoubted progression on 'God Save The Queen's opening gambit. Plus, 'I Love a Man in Uniform' was banned during the Falklands War. (That may have said something about the questionable legitimacy of the war and the war's subsequent course, but there we go.)

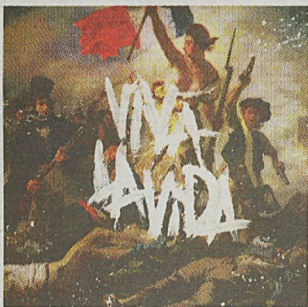
That was merely a whistle-stop tour, but if you let this band into your life, you'll never want them out. Gang of Four aren't for the light hearted, or for the Thatcherites amongst us. But for any self-respecting music fan they are a must. You don't need to agree with their lyrics, necessarily - just accept that they have some of the sharpest lyrics about - with one of the most talented and unsung partnerships pop, or the hard edge of it, has ever seen.



## GENRE-AL;

\zhän-r, zhā"-; zhā"; jän-r \ noun.

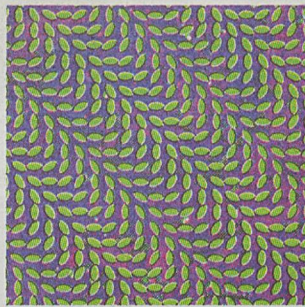
In a themeless, general issue partB thought it'd be a laugh to pretentiously genre-classify this load of common or garden bands (no house or garage though).



**COLDPLAY** Post Tuesday afternoon wine whine WHSmith music



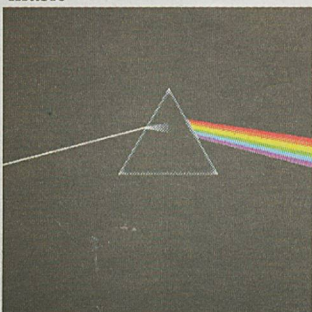
**FLEET FOXES** Sunset-drunk nostalgic rusty revival folk-rock



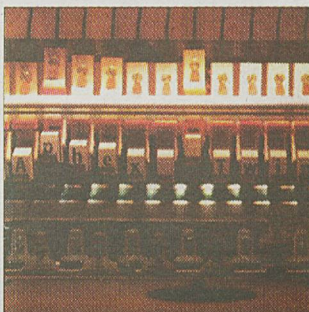
**ANIMAL COLLECTIVE** Too many Indian sweets freak-folk



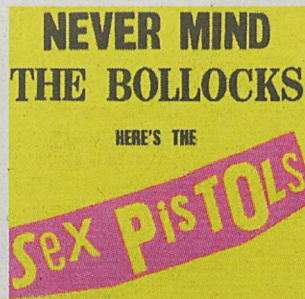
**BEATLES** Post-Elvis fallout pop



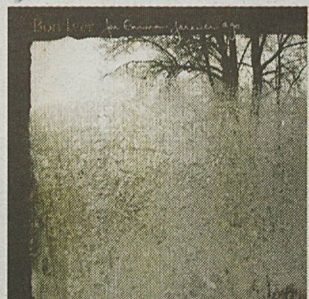
**PINK FLOYD** Astronomicalism



**APEX TWIN** Plugging psychopaths into synths torturelectro



**SEX PISTOLS** Tweenybop throwing-toys-outta-the-pram post Iggy anger



**BON IVER** Nouveau snow-falling-off-trees in-midwinter-night folk

# AZERBAIJ-WHERE?

graemebirrell goes mad for the caspian sea

There's only really one reason most people go to Azerbaijan. Oil. It's a pretty poor country, with little in the way of any formal tourist infrastructure, living standards, or much to do. As a Westerner, you can't really walk the streets very safely, nor can you find basics like processed cheese or meat very easily, and there is only one hotel and one restaurant in the country that you could reasonably consider as worth going out for. But that's not to say it's a bad place to be. Like most places in the world – and especially countries with economies "in transition" – if you're willing to spend a little time and effort looking around with an open mind, Azerbaijan does have a lot of history, countryside, and hidden gems to offer those fortunate/unlucky enough to have parents working for BP or Schlumberger who get sent here.

When my family first arrived in Baku – the sprawling and dusty capital on the Caspian Sea – it was a bit corrupt. Gambling and casinos had recently been outlawed in Baku when I got there in 1999, reportedly because the President's son had been squandering a bit too much money. And bars in the city had a predetermined length of bar set by law – conveniently coinciding with the exact and obscure length of the bars the furniture company owned by the President's brother ran and monopolistically produced. But this was to be expected from a country that had only regained its independence after the collapse of the Soviet Union about a decade earlier. The hangover from the years of USSR occupation really did show in Azerbaijan – during the '80s it had become one of the real centres for biochemical and petroleum production for Moscow, and the remnants of giant hollow chemical plants now litter the coast of the Caspian. They are entirely responsible for the city of Sumgayit frequently being listed as one of the most polluted places in the world today.

However, since leaving the country a couple of years ago, it has begun to seriously improve, mainly under the guidance of the highly influential and driven democratic mayor of Baku – infrastructure and roads have had huge amounts of funding pushed upon them, and the historic centre of the city – which dates back to Persian times – has seen serious steps towards high levels of protection and development into a tourist zone.

But what's it actually like to be there, living as a British ex-patriate? Well, life was surprisingly superficial and a little obscure. The majority of expats were Americans and as such, Americans had built the community they inhabited on the outskirts of Baku. Sometime during the nineties a Canadian company had been hired by the Western oil companies to go to Azerbaijan and build a whole town for all the oil workers living there. What was built turned out to be a 'mock US suburb' where rows of pristine white homes sat side by side with perfect trimmed grass, flowerbeds, and driveways with basketball hoops in them. The school built

down the road was a perfect representation of any American middle school and was filled with American teachers to match. This entire town was completely encircled by a tall metal fence, and patrolled by security guards with pistols, very clearly separating 'us' from 'them', the crumbling grey city only a few hundred yards away. I often looked out of my bedroom window to see wild dogs chasing poor children scavenging through rubbish and scraps in the barren land between the city and us. Some people who lived here never left, except to be driven by their personal drivers in SUVs to the oil companies' offices – everyone had maids to do their shopping, US cable TV and the internet to keep them amused. And I always thought this was quite sad – luckily my family has something of a sense of adventure, and loved being taken into the wilderness of the country by our driver, Vasif.

A really patriotic and knowledgeable Azeri, Vasif used to tell us that he had no plans for the weekend, and ask if he could take us somewhere exciting, perhaps? My dad usually said 'yes' to ev-

tom of the hill – metres away from the fire and not even paying it the slightest attention. One of them tried to tell me that it was the original 'burning bush' that Moses saw in the Bible, but I think he was bullshitting.

Another amazing natural feature was unceremoniously called the 'mud volcanoes'. This place is where the same natural gas from the burning hill seeps out a bit deeper under ground and, as it occurs, manages to bubble through a pool of molten mud and earth just before hitting the surface. The result is a series of what look like anthills in a big dried lake-bed, which spray mud at you and constantly 'erupt' this mud like a volcano. In America this place would have a million tourists swarming the place with cameras, and a thousand gift shops selling plastic models of the volcanoes, but here in the nothingness of the ex-Soviet Union, I never saw another person. Except for the small table with a couple Azeri dudes drinking tea.

Baku, the capital was a pretty crazy place too. Not somewhere you'd want to go without an Azeri

friend or two, it was a bit mad. Like most good third-world countries you could buy all sorts of fake Gucci and D&G crap for a fiver. But you could also buy absolutely any CD or DVD ever, made to order, in a shop that specialised in burning illegal entertainment, or a small glass of Coca Cola for 2p from some lady with a bottle in the town centre. The McDonald's there claimed it would accept any currency for a burger – so we used to get overly

delighted at trying to pay simultaneously in US and Canadian Dollars, and Pounds to see if they could handle it. But the best thing of all was that fresh caviar cost about a quid for a jam jar. Because sturgeon (from which caviar is extracted) is native to the Caspian, caviar has little value to the locals, who spread it on toast for breakfast. This is what kind of mad and wonderful place Azerbaijan was to live.

And yet I always found it a bit strange and sad when other ex-pats living around me would describe their weekends as sitting in front of the TV or playing N64 for twenty-four hours straight. I loved Azerbaijan and everything it had to offer – amazing places, people, and things to do, and I wouldn't change my experiences there for anything. I couldn't believe that other people from the West would come to such an amazing place and simply disregard it as boring and dusty, preferring to live their lives in faux-comfort and closed-mindedness. In truth, it probably sparked my love for travelling, exploring, and generally getting excited about the world, and thus is probably the reason I am sitting here as Journeys Editor. So thanks Azerbaijan!



ery opportunity, and as such most weekends would consist of waking up at 5am to be whisked off to some remote part of the country to see something ridiculous. One time Vasif took us to Iran (which shares Azerbaijan's southern border) but we weren't allowed in, so we bought a carpet instead. And one time he took us on a two-hour walk up a hill where there wasn't much except a man trying (unsuccessfully) to tame a snake by hitting it with a stick whilst in a box. This is the kind of crazy stuff I got up to in Azerbaijan, and every minute was a ridiculous adventure.

Of all the cool shit I've seen in my life, a lot of it was in Azerbaijan. One of the most amazing things was a hill that is permanently on fire. This is because the rock that contains all the gas and oil that makes Azerbaijan so attractive to oil companies extends from under the Caspian Sea to the coast near Baku, specifically at the tip of the Absheron Peninsula. Here, the rock has been lifted by earthquakes so that it is visible. And since it contains natural gases that seep gently out of its pores, it's constantly on fire. It looks amazing – sort of like a normal hill, but on fire. But what got me the most was the group of Azeri men drinking tea at the bot-

# FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES

sachinpatel witnesses a troubled man in troubled times

Last week I was fortunate enough to visit the Donmar Warehouse in Covent Garden, to catch a performance of *Be Near Me*, adapted for the stage by, and starring, Ian McDiarmid from the 2006 novel by Andrew O'Hagan. Though I have yet to read the original work, there was a keenly-felt impression that McDiarmid's adaptation, which sees the Oxford-educated Father David pitted against the desperate population of a small Ayrshire parish, is faithful to the dual concerns of the novel - the predictably tense conflict between a snobbish aesthete and a predominantly unemployed and broken community, and the internal torture of a soul still haunted by the past, and tempted in the present by vulnerable prey.

The unsettling undercurrent of the play - offset on occasion by strangely stilted, chilling humour - is intensely apparent from the very off, as a quasi-chorus takes the stage to the sound of dissonant, atonal wailing before breaking into various IRA and Orange anthems, lending the piece a far-reaching social and political angst.

Against this bleak, hostile and almost-abandoned landscape emerges David Anderton, formerly a student of Balliol College, Oxford, and seemingly more interested in French wine and classical music than in his parishioners. Understandably, there is a gulf of culture and experience between the Father and the community - he feels they are too naive to grasp and enjoy his cultural palette (with the exception of his highly literate and cultured housekeeper, Mrs. Poole); they feel that he lacks real-world experience, and that his sheltered life has left him unprepared for the hardships faced by the community in which he now finds himself.

*Be Near Me* consists of a series of volatile encounters between its constituent characters, and the fractuous atmosphere in its key scenes are all the more anxiety-ridden due to the staging of the play. Unconstrained by the proscenium or even an elevated stage, characters instead intrude upon the audience with uneasy steps, or are bound up in old school-room chairs. When they are unleashed from these chairs, their pent-up frustration is manifested in violent outbursts in the local dialect. The recurring repositioning of a Persian rug emphasises the barrier between Father David and the locals, while the continual presence of an elaborate chandelier, hanging overbearingly over the proceedings, reminds us of the protagonist's inability to forget the past. When, halfway through the play, it is finally sent crashing onto the rug, the audience must surely share Father David's considerable sadness at the eventual corruption of all beauty.



Amidst this façade of aesthetic passion on his part, and puzzled abandonment on that of the local community, Father David finds solace in two unlikely figures - a pair of fifteen-year old tearaways, sent down to the difficult-children class that he takes at the local secondary school. In particular, his relationship with the boy, Mark, quickly takes on a suggestively unnatural significance. Through the careful use of props and timing, we feel as if Father David and Mark are almost touching each other through the invisible barriers of parallel worlds. As the Father becomes increasingly removed from the concerns of the locals - which culminates in a fractuous dinner party where his political allegiances and beliefs are questioned and found wanting in the eyes of the Lord - his relationship with Mark takes on a distinctly hedonistic facet, which is depicted in an uncomfortable style at the close of the first act. His reputation soiled, Father David's past now catches up with him, and, whilst being tugged by the emotional coaxing of his mother, a populist author, and the raw anger and sadness of his housekeeper, the play reaches a thoroughly uncertain ending that leads the audience to question our own allegiances, and to question the true emotional currency of the scenes we have witnessed.

As the play progresses, we gain an understanding of this corrupted beauty; of emotional and cultural concerns that are best left uncovered; of familial ties that are tested by the harshness of the environment and the prevailing societal situation. Again, the parallels with the Troubles add great emotional depth to the play, suggesting that our wider concerns are often internalised too.

Throughout, both lead and peripheral roles alike are played out in a convincing style. McDiarmid reflects just the right proportion of pretension, intelligence, foolhardiness and creepiness to remain a confusing character throughout the duration. Richard Madden, who plays Mark, the 15-year old victim-cum-hair-raiser, is equally unsettling: his taste for alcohol and narcotics is juxtaposed with a curious interest for social issues and deeper concerns, which does well to confuse the audience again - how much is he the victim; and how much is he the perpetrator of the crimes levelled against Father David?

It was a masterful achievement of dramatic tension and frosty emotional secrets: *Be Near Me* is a serious play tackling serious emotional and social themes, and, far from lending its events a sense of ridicule or melodrama, the piece is understated to good effect. Catch it at the Donmar Warehouse before the 14 March, when it will be subsumed into the Atlantic just like the broken community of the parish.

Image credit: M. Harlan

# COME DINE WITH ME?

**willmcmahon** invites you to a visual feast

Over the years, I've invested myself in a number of TV shows and while most of them were a decent watch, I've never really felt that I would be comfortable settling down with any of them. But this all changed the day I found *Come Dine With Me*. *Come Dine With Me* is simply the perfect show. If ever you were looking for a TV show that had everything, then look no further.

The premise of the show is simple; four random people who have never met before volunteer to hold dinner parties for each other during the course of one week. Each night after the party, in their taxis home, the guests secretly rate the dinner with a score out of ten. After each night the scores are combined to get a total for each person. The host with the highest score at the end of the week wins the prize of £1000. Simple right?

Wrong. Each show offers us a host (get it?) of human emotions to feast (I can't stop myself) upon. In almost every one of the shows we see guests trading saccharin pleasantries but as soon as they are away from the other diners they bare their teeth. It's almost surprising not to see the guests bitching about each other as soon as they get a moment to themselves. The people selected each week aren't even that odd either. It doesn't feel like Channel 4 has done a *Wife Swap* on us here and just stuck absolute freaks in a house. These are normal people; but more often than not they manage to fall out. Put £1000 into the mix and watch everyone show their true colours.

The scores they give at the end of each night generally sum up how meretricious the guests are - more than often are the words, "A great night, couldn't fault it. I award them a 7" uttered. What always puzzles me though is how they don't want the others to know what they think of them yet they are willing to voice their opinions on television. This show possesses the drama of *Big Brother* but with regular people, without the social stigma.

Dave Lamb narrates the show, adding sarcastic jibes whenever necessary (which is all too often). When someone makes fried shrimp with "Marie Rose" sauce (a subtle blend of ketchup and mayonnaise) then I think I'd feel quite hard done by if I didn't have Dave Lamb there to criticise them in front of the nation.

This show is actually incredibly educational. It's not just the cooking. This show critically examines human psychology and even goes so far

as to explore the different cultures present within the British Isles. In terms of cooking, this show is better than any other; there are recipes which are simple, recipes which are complex and recipes which are just right. On top of that, the diners actually give decent reviews instead of us having to assume that everything that Jamie Oliver cooks tastes good (it doesn't). So within the programme you can find recipes which suit any occasion; be it braised pork belly with gnocchi, crushed peas with mint and a madeira sauce (that's actually one of my own, I'm saving it for if I ever go on the show) or tuna, kidney beans and mayo mixed in a bowl with some chopped onion (recipes are available on the Channel 4 website).

it's much funnier when they serve a banana sliced lengthwise and give each guest tableside UHT whipped cream out of a can (classy) or when one of the guests serves raw food and makes some of the others throw up.

The four dinner parties are set over four episodes, an episode for each party. With the first episode you feel just as new to the whole situation as the four diners do. By the fourth episode I promise you'll feel as if you were there. In short, each episode is an emotional rollercoaster. You'll laugh, you'll cry and at times I've found myself screaming at the telly "what do you mean you've never eaten scallops?! You're a fucking professional chef! Your mother should have had an abortion!"... I sometimes get a bit too involved.

Once in a while the show hosts a *Celebrity Come Dine With Me* which is educational in its own right; you discover several new celebrities that you didn't realise existed (Helen Lederer, David Quantick and Rowland Rivron to name a few). Aside from this the celebrity specials are essentially the same as the regular episodes except you might be slightly more interested in seeing Peter Stringfellow's apartment than Steve Clift from Doncaster's.

I know the show has a predominantly female following and I know what most men reading this article are thinking, "My mum watches this show while doing the ironing, I'm watching *Top Gear*". Well think about it this way lads; when (aside from doing the ironing) does your mum watch the TV? She doesn't right (perhaps except for the news at breakfast)? So why is *Come Dine With Me* the only show she watches? The answer is simple; it's the best. Between cooking for you, cleaning, ironing and doing the washing, her only real relief is watching this show. So not only should you watch this show but thank it for the sanity of your mother. For those of you whose mothers don't watch this show, then your mother's next birthday present is sorted... and your dad's.

Before *Come Dine With Me* came into my life the only thing that could cheer me up after a long day was *Spongebob Squarepants*, or maybe *High School Musical* at a push, but at 19 I felt I was perhaps getting too old for that. The response that I give to someone when they say they've never seen it is comparable to one I might give to someone that had just told me they were dying or came from Leeds; a look of pure pity. Just go watch the show, 'nuff said.

It's quite nice to watch TV cooks that don't say, "pukka" in a stupid Essex boy accent before smothering their food in olive oil, too.

Other than the cooking, you can pick up some good tips about dinner parties from watching the show too (not assuming your guests have taste being a key concept). Sometimes it's just funny to watch them mess up - I often find myself going "tsk, you don't use extra virgin olive oil in a pistachio and olive oil cake, rookie mistake". Of course



# SLOW & STEADY WINS THE RACE

**rahulagarwal** reviews the bloomsbury hare & tortoise

**L**ocated in the newly regenerated *Brunswick Centre* in the middle of the expensive but also university-hall ridden area of Bloomsbury, the *Hare and Tortoise* restaurant is at the heart of this bustling, modern and trendy shopping centre.

In fact the *Hare and Tortoise* is a perfect representation of the area of Bloomsbury. With its mix of wealthy professionals and not-so wealthy students, both of whom value their food, this restaurant offers high quality grub combined with economical prices and unique flavours, no-nonsense dishes and great service which is as quick and efficient as a fast food joint.

From the outside the *Hare and Tortoise* just oozes appeal with its modern and utilitarian glass frontage, suggesting that it has no problem in showing off how happy its customers are. Even with its long queues at peak lunch hours, you'll want to go and see what is so great about the aptly named *Hare and Tortoise*. Its name suggests that if you are just a slow hungry tourist taking your time to see the surroundings or a fast-paced student who

only has one hour until his next lecture, this restaurant will pull you in and promises to satisfy on both speed and satisfaction.

Now of course apart from its handy location within walking distance of several University of London halls, the obvious thing that pulls in the clientele is the food. Predominantly Japanese, it still has classic East and South East Asian dishes as well as its own Asian fusion dishes to add to its personality and charm. The starters are predictable with Wagamama style menu choices such as gyoza dumplings or Chinese greens and salads. The definite prize, therefore, and what people generally dive into straight away, are the main courses. The great thing about this place is the affordable fresh sushi, which comes in modern California roll styles or more traditional variants. The list is extensive and holds up to any *Yo Sushi* (also in the Brunswick, but less popular) and is made by the visible sushi chefs chopping away at the side of the restaurant.

Other good sections on the menu are the ramen noodle and miso soup dishes, which come in overly generous portions and with surprisingly fresh

vegetable ingredients considering the speed at which they are served and the quantities that are dished out day in, day out. A favourite among the regular patrons is the Malaysian curry, which is warming, with its authentic blend of spice and coconut; filling, with its large sticky rice portions, and genuine, with the on-the-bone chicken, something not seen in many restaurants serving curries.

With regards to drinks, there is the usual selection of teas and juices and of particular note is the jasmine tea, a nice accompaniment to any main dish. The wine list is comparatively short, but there is always the Asahi Japanese beer that comes in a hefty 2 litre serving, which you can also take away with you as it comes with a screw top.

Okay, so it's not the most romantic place to go to with its hustle and bustle and noisy atmosphere but for most of us students who just want a good quality affordable lunch with mates, it is the perfect spot, and this is reflected by the number of UCL and SOAS hoodies that can be viewed at all the tables during the afternoon. No doubt if it was on Kingsway, you would also see LSE hoodies too.



## partB recipe

### Tuna & Ginger Stirfry

easiness - 10/10  
tastiness - 8/10  
cheapness - 3/10

stuff that goes in it:  
1 tin of tuna in brine  
2 cm square piece of ginger  
green chilli  
2 spring onions  
dark soy sauce to taste  
1 portion dried egg noodles



1. This is one of my absolute favourites and is quick to make when you've been out late.
2. Start by putting on a saucepan of water on to boil, add the noodles and cook according to the instructions on the packet. Drain and leave to stand.
3. In the meantime take a frying pan and heat some olive oil, make sure the pan is hot.
4. Add the chopped or grated ginger (make sure you remove the skin) and the chopped green chilli (as much as you like), this should sizzle as it hits the pan.
5. Move quickly around the hot pan and add the spring onion and the drained tuna, keep moving - this only needs a couple of minutes maximum.
6. Add the drained noodles and toss in.
7. Pour in soy sauce to taste and season. Serve piping hot.
8. This can be varied depending on what vegetables you like - try adding green pepper. You can also use rice or rice noodles as a substitute for the egg noodles.

# FUCKING SLOGANS

**aliciafry** abercrombie & fitch are sexist swats

**F**uck Abercrombie & Fitch because a fuck is all Abercrombie & Fitch thinks I am good for. In August of last year the American brand was forced to pull a line of T-shirts because of blatant gender bashing. One shirt read, "Who needs brains when you have these?" and another read "All Men Like Tig Old Bitties." Of all the messages to spread to women, they are retreating to the oh-so-common belief that educating women is a profligate act rendering no rewards, and it is only through our bodies that we can gain recognition in this world. It is all in humour though, right?

Of course it is a joke, but why is it OK to target women? A&F, a major retail chain, would not sell T-shirts with swastikas or a Saartjie Baartman caricature, yet felt no issue with casting woman as a spectacle and a servant.

Women are constantly subjected to marginalisation based on appearance. Sure men have become victims of image conscious advertising that has in turn led to an increase in male anorexia, bulimia and low self esteem, but the extent is marginal in comparison to what is heaped upon womankind. We are faced with constant badgering when it comes to marginalisation and subjectification and it is undoubtedly tolerated in our societies.

I saw a baby in a stroller wearing a T-shirt that read "Future Trophy Wife." Yes, a baby! Why these parents choose to already turn their child into a sexual object, and demean her to an item of exchange is beyond me. I can only see the acceptance of such notions as widespread and solely targeted at women; they don't humiliate or demean any other set of humans based on religious or race bigotry. A woman would be considered a despicable slag if she proudly wore a T-Shirt that said, "If it isn't bigger than 7 inches, then don't bother" but a pre-pubescent girl can unquestionably walk around in public wearing a pink T-Shirt with a playboy bunny plastered on the front. As long as she casts her-

self the spectacle, it is acceptable.

It is through clothes and fashion that we can portray an image of ourselves to outsiders. Slogans and obvious branding on clothes are probably quite convenient for the person lacking creative and unique style, and they can make a statement of power.



Those of us deigning to publicly criticise such widely accepted woman-bashing slogans are met with chastisement, labelled as prudish and as having the inability to 'take a joke'. It is humour I see as very one-sided. The ironic part is that women buy these products; they wear

these shirts, and demonstrate a desire to adorn themselves in these self-deprecating catchphrases that perpetuate and reinforce their marginalisation. Our society has become so saturated with these anti-woman messages that even the target, or butt of the joke, seems blinded by the problems created.

In light of the credit crunch there has been a series of articles written about the lack of diversity on Wall Street having a major influence on the competitive and ego-driven work that drove the world's economy into the shitter. The consideration that white men - the untouchable - are responsible for this catastrophe is barely present. Can you imagine the public defamation had it been black women who were blamed for the crisis? The crisis would become irrelevant, and gender and race would have become the central issue. It becomes

clear that the media only deems it necessary to call out people's cultural background, gender, race and religion when it is not of the majority or not the norm. The media has now called up the motivations of this subset - white upper-middle class males - such as greed and power, yet it is this privilege to hold so much power that is bestowed upon them that is not recognised or questioned. Women are reminded even through the medium of a T-shirt slogan that going to university is a privilege, yet there is no message transmitted about the imbalance of privilege granted to the top of the hierarchy.

Granted, A&F doesn't just remind women of their opaque presence in the world, through "Who needs brains when you have these?" and the like: it demonstrates their exclusion and lack of acknowledgment of men who could not care less. Hey Abercrombie, don't be such homophobes, and acknowledge that Some Men Like Dig Old Bicks, and couldn't be bothered with Tig Bitties!