

the Beaver

24 October 2006 Issue 647 The newspaper of the LSESU



British troops abroad
a special analysis

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LSE rejects 'spying' on Muslims

■ GOVERNMENT ADVISES UNIVERSITIES TO GIVE ISLAMIC SOCIETIES SPECIAL ATTENTION
■ SOCIETIES AND THE SU UNITE TO CONDEMN PROPOSAL

Patrick Cullen
Senior Reporter

Students at the London School of Economics (LSE) have reacted angrily to the Government's plan to ask universities to monitor the activities of "Muslim and Asian-looking" students.

First reported in last Monday's edition of *The Guardian* newspaper, the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) has produced an 18-page document in which it proposes that universities report any suspicious activity to the Special Branch of the Metropolitan Police.

The document states that Islamic Societies are worthy of special attention because of their tendency to "invite more radical speakers or preachers on to campuses."

The document is also said to note that, "they [Islamic societies] are able to fill a vacuum created by young Muslims' feelings of alienation from their parents' generation by providing greater 'clarity' from an Islamic point of view on a range of issues."

Within hours of *The Guardian's* article appearing on news-stands last week, LSE Students' Union (SU) Education and Welfare Officer Alexandra Vincenti, and SU General Secretary Jimmy Tam, proposed a motion against the government's proposals to the SU Union General Meeting (UGM).

In a joint statement to *The Beaver* they said they were sure the motion "will become Union policy when it [is passed through] the UGM. In the meantime, as usual, we will be working to counter all forms of discrimination and attacks on

particular sectors of our student body."

"We do not think the School should follow the government's directive and we have confirmation from the School that there are no current plans to do so," they continued.

In response to the document's comments on Islamic Societies, Tam and Vincenti said, "The suggestion is ludicrous. Our Islamic Society is one of the most active societies on campus, as displayed by last week's 'Can You Last A Muslim Fast?', which was a real example of how societies can bring different types of students together." They also firmly denied the presence of extremism on campus.

Meanwhile, a spokesperson for the School told *The Beaver* that it has yet to see the document.

"The LSE has always been aware of our obligations under the criminal law and ensured students have also been aware of their obligations. Free and occasionally acrimonious debate has long been a feature of student life and the LSE believes it is important to facilitate spaces for these encounters. What we do require is that all staff and students respect the rights of others to hold different beliefs or opinions," the spokesperson noted.

The School also directed *The Beaver* to comments made by Professor James Drummond Bone, President of Universities UK, who said of the document, "While this is clearly a draft document, there are dangers in targeting one particular group within our diverse communities of students and staff. Not only is this unreasonable but, crucially, it could be counterproductive."

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Photograph: Alex Teytelbovm

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PartB shortlisted

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He continued, "All of us recognise the challenges facing the UK in strengthening community cohesion and combating extremism, and our institutions are playing their part. It is not constructive for the Government to suggest universities are complacent or passive about extremism."

The Government has denied asking universities to spy on their students. Education Minister Ruth Kelly told the BBC, "This is not about picking on individual students or even spying on them. It's about sensible monitoring of activities to make sure individual students on campuses are protected."

However, SU Anti-Racism Officer Shanela Haque, expressed her anger to *The Beaver*. "After so many divisive comments from the government lately, another attack on the Muslim community does not come as a surprise. However, it still angers me. To regard people as suspicious on the basis of their religion or colour of their skin is a blatant act of discrimination," she said.

"The fact that this policy is being proposed by people in our government, people chosen to represent all of us, is shock-

ing. It goes to show that racism is still very much alive and that we must continue to fight against it."

Haque added, "If staff were forced to spy on Muslims, this would alienate a large part of our community and infringe on the rights of Muslims and, according to the Department of Education, those that are 'Asian looking'. All students deserve protection, regardless of their appearance, race, ethnicity or religion."

Mustafa Davies, Chair of the SU Islamic Society, echoed Haque's comments in urging the School not to implement the document's recommendations.

He told *The Beaver*, "I would strongly urge the School to reject the government's directives to 'spy' on Muslim students on campus. Singling out Muslim students will only serve to alienate them. Instead the School should be working together with Muslims to keep extremism off campus."

"Currently, as I understand it, the School's policy is to protect all its students regardless of race, ethnicity or religion and as the Islamic Society we would hope such a policy will continue and be enforced as the School has a duty to all its students."

"The Islamic Society



CCTV cameras around campus

engages heavily with Union life and has never been a hotbed for extremism. We have never invited any extremist speakers, and never intend to. The Society has always encouraged Muslim students to participate fully in the wider student community."

He went on to highlight the Society's role in organising joint events with other religious, faith and cultural groups, including the LSESU's Jewish Society. He said: "We plan to continue our work with other societies this year, particularly those of other faiths, to create an environment of mutual understanding at the LSE. I therefore find the government's calls to monitor Muslim students for extremist activity as preposterous, and rather insulting."

The *Daily Telegraph* newspaper last week quoted LSE student Aabid Hanif as being aware of the presence of the controversial Hitz-ub-Tahrir movement on the School's campus. In the article, Hanif said, "I have seen some of their people come to lectures to ask questions...I don't think they work by approaching individuals. If that were the case, it would be easy to curb. They use other means to hijack the name of Islam."

Rajan Patel
Senior Reporter

The pull-out magazine of *The Beaver*, *PartB*, has been shortlisted in the 'Magazine of the Year' category of *The Guardian* newspaper's 'Student Media Awards'.

It will be competing with four other student magazines from universities across the country, including Oxford University's *Isis* and Imperial College's *I Science*.

The winning publication, which will be announced at an awards ceremony on 8 November, will receive £1000 and its editor will obtain a week's work experience at *The Guardian*.

PartB, the LSE SU's sole representative at this year's awards, was edited last year by Jami Makan and Alex Teytelboym. Speaking to *The Beaver*, Makan said, "I am extremely thrilled that *PartB* has been shortlisted by *The Guardian*." He said he was honoured by the opportunity to represent the SU and its newspaper.

The LSE also expressed its pleasure at the news. Professor Sarah Worthington, Deputy Director for External Relations, congratulated the *PartB* team on their achievement and wished them "every success at the ceremony."

Hockey initiation ceremony leaves students violently ill

Tim Root
Senior Reporter

Five new members of the Athletics Union (AU) first and second hockey teams were violently sick during their 'initiation ceremony' last week, *The Beaver* has learnt.

After having won their initial games, the teams went to the Three Tuns pub on Houghton Street to celebrate and put the new team members through a rite of passage.

A few hours into steady drinking in the pub, the team gathered outside to set up its elaborate initiation. A number of hockey sticks were placed parallel to one another and balanced on empty cans of Guinness to create a makeshift hurdle course.

To start, each new team member had to consume a pint of Guinness and two shots of Baileys. Immediately after, each individual had to drink a pint of lager with an external object added to it (one had sweet corn mixed in, another chewing gum).

Following the drinking, the participating player was handed a hockey stick around which he needed to spin ten times. After spinning he would side-step through the hockey stick hurdle course, taking a shot of

vodka for every hurdle missed.

Once on the other side of the hurdles, he had to spin around a hockey stick ten more times, and then drink another pint of wine. This was followed by a ten metre sprint, another ten spins, and another cross of the hurdles.

Another concoction was

then drunk out of a pint glass before ten more spins, another cross of the hurdles, and one last drink, a bottle of J2O.

Each player was timed to create a sense of competition.

Upon completion, each participant was offered a pint of water. With only one exception, every player vomited shortly

after finishing the initiation. The one player who was not sick, was warned by the others that if he didn't force himself to be sick he could have to go to hospital.

Responding to this, about half an hour after he finished, this player stuck his fingers down his throat to forcibly make himself throw up.

Only one new player refused to take part in the initiation. Upon making that decision he was faced with pressure from some members of the

Steps for a successful initiation

Step 1 - drink pint of Guinness and two shots of Baileys

Step 2 - drink pint of lager with added object

Step 3 - spin around hockey stick ten times

Step 4 - side-step hockey stick hurdle course

Step 5 - spin around hockey stick ten times

Step 6 - drink pint of wine

Step 7 - ten metre sprint and cross of hurdles

Step 8 - drink, spin and cross hurdles some more



team, though not the captain, saying that they thought it unfair for him to continue being a part of the team having not taken part.

However, it has been speculated that no repercussions were felt largely due to the fact that this player is a valued asset to the first team.

SU General Secretary invited to sit on Deputy Directorship Selection Committee

Christine Whyte

The School has invited Jimmy Tam, the General Secretary of the LSE Students' Union (SU), to sit on the Deputy Directorship Selection Committee (DDSC).

The DDSC selects the School's Deputy Directors and will shortly be choosing the successor for Tim Murphy, the Teaching and Learning Deputy Director.

Following Tam's suggestion, the DDSC has agreed to hear students' views on appointments through a student representative.

In the past, students have not been involved in high-level appointments, but the Deputy Directors are involved in pastoral and management matters, as well as holding academic responsibilities.

It was decided that Tam, as SU General Secretary, would be the most appropriate choice to represent students on the committee.

The role involves framing and putting questions to candidates for the positions, attending the interview, voicing opinions about the roles and expressing preferences to the committee.

The representative will be

excluded from confidential assessments of the candidates' academic suitability and the final decision-making.

The committee and the SU came to this compromise when the School raised concerns that it may be inappropriate for a student to be present at these discussions.

Howard Davies, Director of LSE stated that "it would be useful for the committee to hear the way candidates respond to student concerns, and to hear the views of the General Secretary."

The change gives students more input into the appointment of the Deputy Directorship, as is already the case with appointments such as the Director, School Secretary and Director of Finance and Facilities. This should bring a greater coherence to the selection process.

Tam said, "I am pleased that the School has recognised the importance of student involvement in the selection of the Deputy Directors, whose work alongside the Director has a large influence on the student population."

I would urge the School to seriously consider have a student representative as a permanent member on the committee that selects Deputy Directors."

Paper-throwing temporarily banned

Patrick Graham
News Editor

Paper-throwing at the LSE Union General Meeting (UGM) has been temporarily banned, pending further legal advice, after a unanimous decision was made by members of the Students' Union (SU) Executive Committee.

The decision was announced at last Thursday's UGM and follows a period of consultation between the Executive and the School on the contentious issue.

In an e-mail sent to the SU's Sabbatical Officers, the School's Health and Safety Advisor, Ann O'Brien, made it clear that the Union could potentially be in breach of a number of its statutory obligations. Writing on behalf of the School's Health and Safety Committee, O'Brien informed the Sabbatical Officers that they could be held liable for personal damages in their capacity as members of an unincorporated association.

The Executive issued a statement on the matter in which it outlined its reasons for banning the practice. The statement read, "After receiving the warning from the School's Health and Safety Committee, which outlined the likely breaches of the Disability Discrimination Act and the Health and Safety at Work Act, the Executive Committee of the Students'

Union decided that we had no choice but to suspend the throwing of paper and other objects in the UGM, pending further independent legal advice."

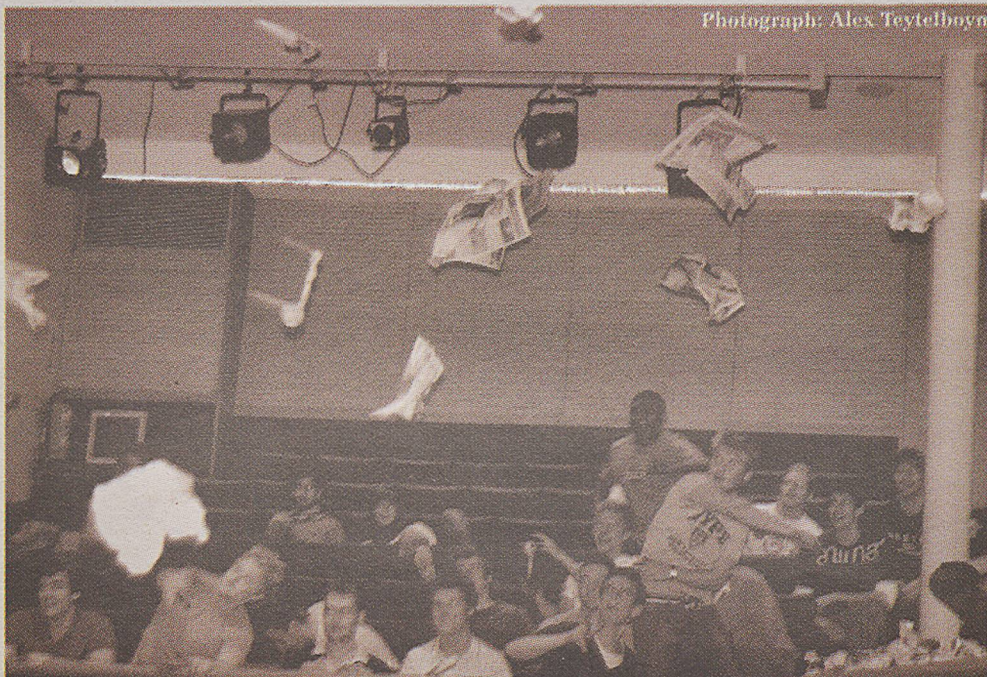
"We have explicitly asked our solicitors to consider if it is possible to maintain some form of the tradition without putting the Union's assets or trustees at risk," it continued.

The Executive also noted that, "Whatever the outcome, the trustees' overriding objective is to ensure that all students feel able to participate fully in the UGM. The Executive Committee asks that all those attending Thursday's UGM support and respect the Chair."

Paper-throwing has been a regular feature of UGM meetings for a number of years, with only first-time speakers being exempt from being targeted.

An attempt was made to censure the Executive committee following the announcement. According to the SU Codes of Practice it is not possible to censure or no-confidence the Executive Committee without having the motion on the order paper for a week and two weeks respectively.

Hence, a motion to 'suspend standing orders' was submitted in order to allow a motion of censure to be submitted. This was subsequently voted on and resulted in 94 votes in favour and 60 against. However, the required two-



Paper shower: AU bombards stage before ban is officially enforced

thirds majority was not achieved and the motion was declared to have failed.

After the ban came into force, the UGM Chair, Daisy O'Brien, suspended the meeting after paper continued to be thrown at the stage. She told *The Beaver* that she would continue to suspend future UGM's if paper-throwing continued, as she had been told to do so by the Executive.

She voiced her disapproval of the ban, calling it "political correctness gone mad", but

said that she would continue in her role as it was her job to "enforce the Executive's decisions."

However, Van Livanis told *The Beaver* that he and others would continue to throw paper during future UGM's.

He said, "Last year the UGM voted to keep paper throwing. It's a shame a couple of dicks are still trying to ruin things for the majority. Although I think the SU exec should do more to support the views of the students, to no

confidence them would be going too far as they're not really to blame. The School put them in a difficult situation following a complaint to ban paper throwing on ridiculous grounds."

"I'll continue to throw paper, as will many others. There are now more paper throwers than ever, and the UGM is being needlessly interrupted by the ban. I'm sure there will be a good turnout this Thursday."



Union Jack

The UGMs are getting better and better. And more ridiculous and pointless. This week we abandoned all pretence of a serious political meeting and ran a sketch show.

First up, weirdo election whores, then a preach and press conference by President Dewji, finished by 'ban' on paper throwing.

The Exec were even dressed ready for the panto - Tammy Girl was back to widow twanky, Vincenti and Louise Residntson wore veils (though sadly not the kind that covered their faces) and Jack's favourite Exec-ies; Krebsite and eAsily-Led covered themselves with election coloured hair dye (hopefully permanent so we can see them a mile away and avoid them).

Bozo the Barber, easily the worst returning officer ever, managed to halve the number of candidates and tried to cancel an election because of it, though he did get some excellent comedians/student politicians to share their repertoire with the UGM.

Jack always loves General Course elections, where the supposedly liberal Americans show themselves to be just as god-fearing, gun-toting, Bush-loving, French-hating, Iraq-invading, as all folks back home.

LGBT, not usually exciting after 597 years of Simon Bottomley, looks too close to call with Finnegan's pledge to make one more person easy and Yusuf's tale of his wank-bank pictures being found.

Meanwhile JCesspit follows the well-trodden path of unelectable champagne-Socialists pretending to care about post-grads, this week using Dewji's press-conference screen to hide from the paper being thrown at him.

At least he faces Nneka Chike-Obi, rumoured to be running her campaign from the comfort of Facebook (presumably that's why she didn't turn up) and Dmitri Mitrofanov (who unfortunately did turn up, but said nothing of interest/sufficient clarity to be of interest).

Then it was the death of paper throwing, kinda, sortof. Apparently a law passed 10 years ago suddenly makes paper throwing illegal and once it's banned a horde of repressed disabled people will appear to enlighten the UGM free from persecution.

In reality the Usual Suspects have worn everyone down so we're going to pretend it's been banned. And the ban worked spectacularly-this week more paper was thrown than ever before!

The Exec stood there grinning as they were pelted and booed, whilst Comical Ali enjoyed his moment of debated fame and gave us his best faux-sincere face and Tammy hid to protect his bouffant.

No one much listened and J-lo Green tried to no-confidence them, until American Idiot lied and told them it would take three weeks (suspend the Standing Orders anyone?).

In the meantime, Jack thinks we should all boycott the UGM and let the spoilsports jack-off with their fictitious disabled army.

AU attempt to overthrow SU Exec



SU Executive defend their decision on banning paper-throwing (left), students at the UGM

Ali Moussavi
Senior Reporter

The disruptions at Thursday's Union General Meeting (UGM) were part of a planned attempt to overturn the Students' Union (SU) Executive Committee's paper-throwing ban and emanated from the higher echelons of the Athletics Union (AU), *The Beaver* has learnt.

An anonymous email sent to various members of the AU revealed a pre-meditated plan to call a vote of no-confidence of the SU Executive Committee, which would have to follow the constitutional procedures of suspending standing orders and censuring the individuals concerned first.

The email called on AU members to fill the Old Theatre in order to achieve the two-thirds majority necessary to pass a vote of no-confidence.

Specifically, the email read "This censure must pass by a supermajority (so all of us need to be there)."

However, the motion to 'suspend standing orders' failed without reaching the required majority although a high AU turnout was in evidence.

Further to that, the email singled out Union officials to be the subject of no-confidence procedures.

"We need to target individual members of the Exec. The people most responsible for this bullshit are Ali Dewji (who promoted this motion as a member of C&S) and Jimmy

Tam (who chaired the meeting which made this decision)," the email read, while also describing the actions of the Executive committee as "arrogant and stupid."

The author outlined the reason for this strategy in a section of the email subtitled "Important".

It reads, "A move to censure and no-confidence the entire Exec would not work. We have to split the right and left downstairs in the UGM. Some of the members are too popular, and to be quite honest, some are not responsible."

The source of the email remains unclear. In the email, the writer acknowledged that they had no wish to reveal their identity.

They do, however, identify



Photographs: Tahiya Islam

themselves as being "a senior person within the AU and LSE SU who believes that paper throwing should not be banned."

While the action of paper-throwing is deemed a health and safety hazard by many, the language of the email reflected a degree of seriousness in maintaining paper-throwing as a fundamental right.

"Don't let us down, turn up, be counted and stand for what you believe in. This is our Union, our UGM and our right," the email stated.

The serious nature of this email reflects a growing polarisation between the AU and the SU Executive Committee.

The issue of paper-throwing has caused discontent within the AU with regard to

the conduct of Union politics.

One member of the AU, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, stated that, "The SU has become more about self absorbed hackery trying to justify their own importance and self worth..."

It's sad that they are using disability issues to push their agenda through, using the cover of a politically correct environment in which one should feel guilty to oppose it."

SU General Secretary Jimmy Tam issued a statement on behalf of the SU Executive with respect to the email.

The statement read, "We understand the frustration of some students at this time and we are working hard to come to a favourable outcome."

SU Michaelmas elections get underway

- Hustings held at UGM for General Course representative, LGBT Officer and Postgraduate Students' Officer
- Elections to be held on 25 and 26 October in the Quad

Rajan Patel
Senior Reporter

Hustings for the LSE Students' Union (SU) Michaelmas term elections took place at Thursday's Union General Meeting (UGM), with candidates addressing the UGM and responding to students' questions.

Elections will take place on 25 and 26 October, and three executive positions – General Course Representative, Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Transgender (LGBT) Officer and Postgraduate Students' Officer – are being contested.

Not all candidates for executive positions spoke at hustings. Thushare Dissanayake and Anushka Shenoy – were absent.

Huda Ghalia, the Palestinian girl whose family was killed on a beach in Gaza, is the sole candidate for the SU's Honorary Vice-President. Speaking to *The Beaver* on Friday, Ziyaad Lunat – Chair of the LSE Palestine Society – said that her election would send "a clear message to Israel that LSE students uphold the Palestinian unalienable right for self-determination."

Proposers of the two candidates for the role of Honorary President of the SU were first to speak at the UGM. Chris Turner, speaking for Jed Bartlet – the American president and LSE alumnus in the television series 'The West Wing' – acknowledged that Bartlet was "not really an issue candidate" amid cries of "he's

not real!" from the balcony. However, he stated that Bartlet was an example to LSE students of how to "change the world for the better."

Bartlet faces competition from Charles "Richard" Rickards, a cleaning supervisor at the LSE with 25 years of service who was recently fired. Sam Causton, his proposer, claimed in his speech that Rickards had "been fired for no reason apart from sticking up for the people beneath him." Speaking to *The Beaver*, he said that the election of Rickards would "make a huge statement that would affect an injustice right here on our doorstep."

Sean Closs, a candidate for the position of General Course Representative, emphasised the need to better integrate General Course students in the one year they have so that they can "make a difference" at the LSE. He suggested the idea of an online forum for General Course students and hoped to change "welcome packs that don't tell you the things that every student is wondering."

Alex Finnegan and Yusuf Osman are contesting the post of LGBT officer, vacant since the resignation of Alexandra Murphy. Finnegan described himself as "110 percent committed" and the "strong and visible presence" required to make events such as LGBT awareness week a success. Osman agreed on this point and also referred to the family problems engendered by his sexuality, hoping to assist those "who don't have liberal parents or come from cultures...that don't readily accept LGBT folk." Both can-

didates intend to combat "LGBT-phobia."

James Caspell, running for Postgraduate Officer, promised to lobby for cuts in fees and

programme called C.L.A.P! – "Communicating our problems, Linking us together and Assisting you Postgraduates!" 34 candidates are up for

meeting.

Speaking to *The Beaver*, a first-year undergraduate said, "When I came to the LSE, I thought I was coming to one of



Photograph: Aditi Nangia

Candidates in the LGBT race outline their policies

"greater financial assistance to all students." He also pledged to support the protests against the Government's regulations on visa appeals and said he would work to keep Wednesday afternoons free for sports activities.

Dmitri Mitrofanov, another candidate for Postgraduate Officer, emphasised a "lack of communication between postgraduate students and the LSE." He based his speech around a four-point pro-

election, down from 54 last year. Commenting on the fall in turnout, Wil Barber, the SU Returning Officer, said, "I feel there's been more publicity of these elections than last year...yet it seems to have resulted in a low turnout of candidates."

Students new to the LSE were perplexed and disappointed by hustings and the UGM, with the issue of paper throwing overshadowing the key business of the weekly

the most forward-looking student unions in the world. After this, I can see that's clearly not the case."

Meanwhile, representatives to the Academic Board and Court of Governors and delegates to the National Union of Students (NUS) Conference and University of London Union (ULU) will also be chosen at the elections, with a number of experienced candidates contesting the posts.

Candidates for the Academic Board intend to bring about the introduction of resits and to provide better value for money for students. Value for money is also a concern of the majority of candidates for the Court of Governors, as well as campaigning on issues of the environment and social justice.

NUS Conference delegates share the priorities of boosting national involvement in student democracy and strengthening the campaign against further rises in tuition fees. Combating racism is another key aspect of many candidates' policies.

The nominations for ULU Council delegates has been reopened, despite currently having only two candidates for three places. The SU's Constitution and Steering Committee (C&S) has demanded that the election go ahead, with a UGM by-election for the third position. Aspiring delegates are looking to obtain increased transparency in decision-making and expanded student concessions for transport from the Council.

The number of candidates has fallen from last year. Ten candidates are contesting key positions on the Court of Governors compared with nineteen last year, a disappointing statistic that raises questions about students' perceptions of the relevance of such roles to their daily lives.

Those nominated, however, come from across the LSE student body and provide a mix of backgrounds and objectives.

Honorary President and Vice-President of LSE SU felicitated



Photograph: Simon Douglas

Dr Shimon Samuels (right) with SU General Secretary, Jimmy Tam

Simon Douglas

The LSE Students' Union (SU)'s Honorary President, Simon Wiesenthal, and Vice-President, Thet Win Aung, were honoured last Thursday at a reception in the Shaw Library.

The event was made even more pertinent by Aung's death last Monday. Aung died in a Myanmar jail, following his imprisonment for peaceful

student protests calling for academic reform. He was serving a 59-year sentence.

During the ceremony, Yori Kreisberg, Wiesenthal's grandson, spoke for the first time in public about his grandfather. He also accepted a commemorative certificate on behalf of the outgoing Honorary President.

Tony Fairman, a Myanmar coordinator for Amnesty International, accepted Aung's

certificate.

Dr Shimon Samuels and Graham Norris of the Simon Wiesenthal Centre addressed students on the importance of continuing to fight prejudice in the community, and talked of the Centre's own work to this end. 'Nazi Hunter' Wiesenthal was a Jewish concentration camp victim during the Second World War and was instrumental in tracking down many war criminals.

Pass or fail: plans to overhaul current degree classifications

Josephine Tay

The existing degree classification system could be replaced with a "straightforward pass or fail model" according to *The Times* newspaper.

The Times revealed that the 'Burgess Group', formally called the Measuring and Recording Student Achievement Steering Group, has been exploring proposals to remove the existing class honours system in favour of a pass, fail or distinction model.

Chaired by Professor Robert Burgess, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Leicester, the group has spent a year consulting with the National Union of Students (NUS), universities and other higher-education agencies on the new scheme.

The universities consulted and the NUS have agreed that there is a need to replace the existing British degree classification system. However, there has not yet been agreement on the proposed replacement.

Under the pass or fail model, a detailed transcript of

each student's performance will accompany the degree. Only a small number of high-achieving students will attain a distinction.

London School of Economics (LSE) students have voiced their concerns that a pass or fail award will not give credit to their academic

'Under the pass or fail model, a detailed transcript of each student's performance will accompany the degree.'

achievements.

One student told *The Beaver*, "The honours system has been used for such a long time that employers are immediately able to gauge your calibre by looking at the class you attain. Pass or fail is too broad a category to signify anything."

Hannah Mould, a BSc Social Anthropology finalist

told *The Beaver*, "Even if they give you a detailed transcript of your performance, will employers be bothered to read through thousands of those?"

"It might also mean you would need to get on well with your tutor," she added.

A spokesperson for the School noted that while the government was in favour of replacing the present system, employers were not.

"The paper which was issued earlier this month is a consultation paper with some very open questions. It will be discussed at the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee on 8 November. There will not be a School position on it until then," they said.

The British undergraduate degree classification system is similar to the Latin honours system used in the United States, Italy and Germany. It is also widely used in many countries like Singapore, Australia, Malta and India. The Burgess Group will hear the views of vice-chancellors and registrars over the next month before giving its final recommendation by this December.

Environmentally conscious: School and students move to make LSE eco-friendly

Ali Moussavi
Senior Reporter

Environmental issues have gained prominence with both the School and the LSE Students' Union (SU) committing to policies that promote environmental consciousness.

A recent motion submitted to the Union General Meeting (UGM) calls on the SU to support the national demonstration being held on 4 November by the 'Stop Climate Chaos' campaign.

It also asks that the SU Executive "bring the SU banner along to the demonstration" and mandates the SU Environment and Ethics Officer, Aled Fisher, to hold a 'Climate Change Awareness Week'.

While the primary impetus for the overall pro-environment policies of the LSE has been emanating from the SU through societies such as the Green Party, People and

Planet, Gaia, and OIKOS, the School administration has been showing strong commitment to the student body's focus on green issues.

Since April 2005, the LSE has adopted an environmental policy that has reflected increasing student participation. Two days of workshops were held in December last year, during which 25 students dedicated time to brainstorming for roughly 60 ideas to improve sustainability at the LSE.

These proposals included the double-sided printing incentives, the fine-tuning of water temperature, a scrap paper reuse scheme in LSE residences, and lights off mechanisms.

The School's Environmental and Sustainability Coordinator, Victoria Hands, outlined the cooperation between the administration and the student body as being unique. "Other universities haven't

involved their student bodies as much as the LSE has," she said.

Another of the School's efforts is the continued co-operation with the UK Carbon Trust, in the form of LSE's 'Carbon Management Scheme'. This has been directed at calculating carbon emissions from energy usage, waste and transport, and focusing on attempts to reduce them.

The School's recent acquisition of the New Academic Building (NAB) was carried out with this in mind. The construction of the NAB was undertaken with management of energy, water and waste streams. The site includes ground water cooling and has the highest rating awarded by the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) environmental performance benchmark index.

"It's much easier when you've got a complete refurbishment, and the New Academic Building is a complete refurbishment so it offers us a lot of opportunities for energy efficiency and carbon management," explained Hands.

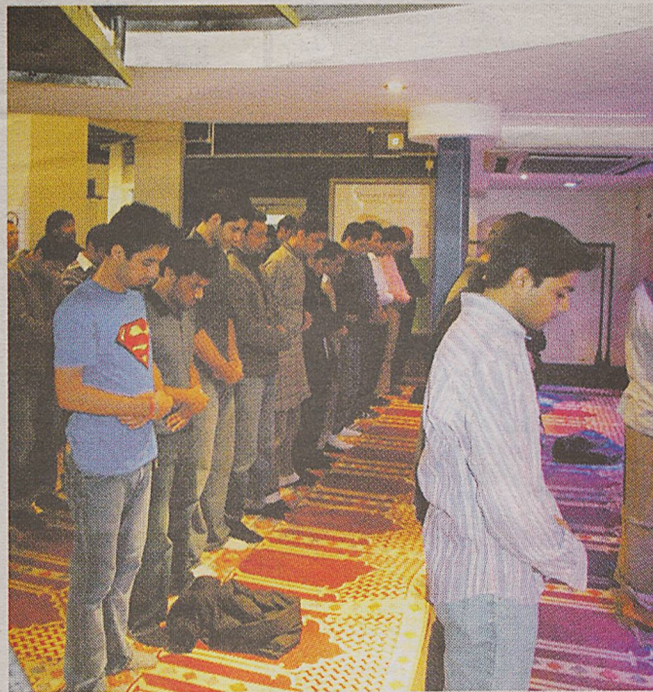
The LSE has also been shortlisted for an award from the *Times Higher Education Supplement* magazine for a scheme targeted at the reduction of unnecessary waste at halls of residence. It has done this largely through charity and redistribution of home-ware products, which are often thrown out at the end of the first year.

Fisher told *The Beaver*, "I think the school is doing a lot. It can go a lot further... So far the approach that they've taken is to integrate these carbon reduction initiatives into everything every department in every part of the school does, and they're having quite a lot of success at that and I think they're doing a really good job, so far."



The New Academic Building is still under construction

'Can you last a Muslim fast?' attracts attention across the LSE



Students in prayer (above), at the iftar dinner

Reporter

The LSE Students' Union (SU) Islamic Society's 'Can You Last a Muslim Fast?' event attracted involvement from a large number of students for the third year in succession.

The event, which took place last Thursday, challenged non-Muslims to fast for the day and was followed by a free 'iftar' dinner in the Quad.

The dinner programme was also accompanied by a call to prayer and live entertainment including poetry recitals, songs by Islamic music groups and an art auction - during which the SU Executive committee bid £350 for one painting.

The highest bid of the evening was £675, raising a total of £1,200 for charity.

Guest speakers at the dinner included Professor Danny Quah, Head of the Department of Economics, and Muslim journalist and LSE alumnus Abdul-Rahman Malik.

In his speech, Quah observed that "during the fast you are not only supposed to refrain from food and drink but also anger, greed, gossip and backbiting - all of which I have to do everyday in my department."

He also added that Ramadan was a time when Muslims tried to better the world "by doing things one step at a time - and this event is one of them."

Non-Muslims who participated also found the event to be a valuable experience.

Andy Jaegle, a third-year Management student, said he became aware of the difficulties faced by Muslims when "everyone is eating and drinking around them."

Laurence described the event as "really beautiful, especially the 'Adhaan' call to prayer."

President of the Islamic Society, Mustafa Davies, told *The Beaver* that the event was "extremely successful" and that it was "even better than two years ago, when it was nominated for event of the year."

"It definitely went a long way in spreading a sense of community on campus and exposing non-Muslims to the true spirit of Islam at a time when the religion is at the forefront of media coverage for all the wrong reasons, portraying a distorted image of Islam," he added.

Davies continued, "This was truly a unique event, in which all the misunderstandings were brushed aside, and Muslims and non-Muslims came together to enjoy a night of food and entertainment."

Members of the SU Executive committee were also encouraged by the Islamic Society to partake in sponsored activities throughout the day, which resulted in raising money for charity.

Both SU General Secretary, Jimmy Tam, and Environment and Ethics Officer, Aled Fisher, wore traditional clothing on Thursday while Education and Welfare Officer, Alexandra Vincenti, and Residences Officer, Louise Robinson, donned the hijab.

Fisher and the Societies Officer, Arthur Krebbers, also dyed their hair green and orange respectively.

Speaking about his experiences SU General Secretary Jimmy Tam said, "People have been telling me I'm looking good all day! I think these clothes are really comfortable, stylish and better than Aled's - he just looks like a choir boy."

Turkish Minister on the 'Future of Europe'

Tim Root
Senior Reporter

Ali Babacan, the Turkish Minister of State in charge of Economy, spoke at the Old Theatre last Tuesday as part of the LSE European Institute's 'Future of Europe' lecture series.

In May 2005, Babacan was appointed Turkey's chief negotiator in accession talks with the European Union (EU), and it was this issue that formed the substance of his speech.

Principally, he said that Turkey's accession potential is of "special significance" for with it, he argued, the EU will be able to expand its global role. This argument was largely based on Turkey's location, size and the religious make-up of its people.

As a "bridge between the East and the West" he argued, Turkey is ideally placed to influence the multitude of political and economic hotspots around it. With Palestine, Syria, Iraq, Iran, and the Balkans all sharing borders with Turkey, Babacan believes that an EU with Turkey can truly "enhance stability and promote welfare" in these areas.

He was careful to note, however, that the EU can potentially achieve these goals without Turkey - but with it, he said, its work will be made far easier.

According to Babacan, as a Muslim yet secular country, Turkey can act as a model for struggling democracies in the Islamic world; allowing Turkey into the EU will send the world the message that "democracy and Islam can co-

exist."

The Arab world is following this issue, he noted, and it is already inspiring them. However, he implied that should accession ultimately fail, this will send a dangerous message to Islamic countries already sceptical of the West's recent treatment of Muslims.

The third prong of Babacan's argument was to do with Turkey's individual potential, largely a product of its size and rapid modernisation.

He cited many recent political reforms, arguing that "taboos are being broken one after another." However, his principal concern was Turkey's economic potential. With a large young population, he argued, Turkey will soon provide not just a vibrant labour market, but also a huge consumption market for European goods.

He cited with particular zest Turkey's growth rate of the last four years, 7.8 percent, one of the highest in the developing world. Barring an economic disaster, he continued, Turkey will be the sixth largest economy in the EU by the end of negotiations, and almost nearing its levels of per capita income.

Babacan's words provided an appropriate occasion to celebrate the European Institute's establishment of a Chair in Contemporary Turkish Studies, the first of its kind in Europe.

The new post will reflect the topical agenda of Turkey, specifically its relationship with Europe, and will benefit from an endowment of \$4.5 million, largely provided by the Turkish government.

COMMENT & ANALYSIS

Paper throwing, UGMs and the law

Simon Douglas discusses the Students' Union Executive Committee banning of paper throwing at UGMs



Simon Douglas

If you were reading this in the UGM and you don't like what I write, you could still screw up this page into a paper rocket. But, as of last week, you most certainly couldn't throw it at the stage. Even if you don't like what I'm saying while I'm stood at the mic.

Many people who don't attend the UGM (that'd be the majority of the people reading this, then) may be wondering why this is important. To be honest, so am I. On the State of the Union show (Thursdays, 10am) on PuLSE, James Ketteringham and I played a selection of short interviews, gathering opinions on the paper throwing ban. Three people in this selection were executive officers; they all stressed the legal bind the executive was in. One was a

Beaver editor; he expressed regret that the ban was coming into effect, but was sympathetic to the situation that the Union was in. The last was an ordinary student, accosted for a comment in the quad. She said, quite simply, that she didn't see why it mattered, and that anyone who was worried about it had too much time on their hands. I see her point: I don't have much time on my hands, so hopefully this will be the last time I write anything about paper throwing.

So what are the issues? They've all been covered many times in these hallowed pages, but I feel inclined to run over them one final time. Since 1996-ish people at the UGM were able to supplement their heckling of speakers with throwing paper at them. This was a tradition adopted by the AU, and it undoubtedly resulted in a section of people attending the UGM primarily to throw paper at the stage. However, after several attempts by various parties to prohibit this practice, the executive have finally stood



If you don't like what I've written, screw up this page. If you don't like what I say at the UGM, shout me down

up to the mark and thrown their weight behind the ban. This was done on legal advice from the School that suggested they would be likely to get criminally prosecuted if the paper throwing was allowed to continue.

I have never been against paper throwing, per se, even

after I was on the receiving end of one of the fiercest hails of paper of last year. However, I am totally against the Union being in breach of the law. And every other student who benefits from the Union should take the same position.

The contention from those who still advocate paper throwing is that banning it will kill the UGM; will the meeting still meet the 150-person quorum mark when those who only go to throw paper don't turn up?

Keeping the UGM alive is important. Ours is the last weekly SU general meeting in the country, and I doubt there are many left in the world. Our UGM is a vital link between the Union's executive structure and the students it is striving to represent. Ours are the most scrutinised officers in the country. I'm proud that I can say these things about my Union.

The real key to our Union is the intelligent heckling. NUS and ULU representatives positively fear coming to the UGM - but very little paper is thrown at them. They don't

like it because our Union members are clued up, bold and outspoken about any failings we see in their organisations.

I've spoken to a member of the Union who can still remember the days before the throwing of paper was allowed. They suggested that intelligent heckling and paper throwing share an inverse relationship. That is, as people throw more paper, fewer people interrupt speakers with pertinent remarks.

There is no way heckling will be banned at the UGM. In fact, I would like to see it positively encouraged. First time speakers will still be protected by the chair, and people will still cheer speakers who speak well.

The UGM will continue to be an intellectually, not physically, imposing arena. For this reason, it will continue to draw people for its drama, as well as its democracy.

If you don't like what I've written, screw up this page. If you don't like what I say at the UGM, shout me down.

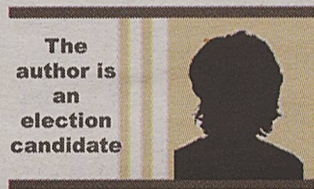
Education for sale?

Private corporations exert more power and influence in our society than ever before: over the economy, political system, media - and now increasingly over the higher education (HE) sector.

After the recent controversy concerning research grants that LSE received from arms companies and the ensuing revelation that many of the the School's investments are held in those same companies via managed funds, it is relevant to discuss not simply the ethics of arms companies, but rather the consequences of the increased corporatisation of the higher education system writ large. Such a phenomena is nowhere more pertinent than at the LSE.

In March 2006, the Merck Company Foundation - the 'philanthropic' arm of the giant pharmaceutical Merck & Co. - awarded a \$600,000 grant to LSE Health. Merck are a company who in 2004 were found guilty of suppressing evidence of heart attack risks discovered in its own trials in order to get a drug approved and maximise profits. In 2000, Merck and a number of other HIV/AIDS drug 'providers' lost a case in which they had sought to price the poorest countries out of the market by upholding extortionate prices on their patented treatments.

Akin to the arms debate - putting aside human rights and social justice issues - the industry of the corporate provider is not the sole concern. The fact that the LSE had to compete to win the grant is highly significant, as the increasing demand for funding across the HE sector inevitably places more and



The author is an election candidate

more influence in the hands of unaccountable corporations who are willing to provide capital - increasingly on their own terms.

Through advertising, sponsorship, research grants and donations, the choices that universities and students make (and are aware of) are increasingly shaped by the agendas and motivations of corporate actors who are entirely unaccountable to students, academics and wider society as they rapaciously accumulate more and more influence across our campus.

LSE, having been founded by Fabian socialists, is today a profit-making institution, and in an era of inadequate government funding, corporations are filling the vacuum - with a heavy price attached.

Meanwhile, LSE's Court of Governors, as well as LSE Council, is overwhelmingly comprised of the executives of large corporations. Howard Davies spent five years working for GKN, an arms company which makes components for military aircraft, at a time it dealt with authoritarian governments including General Suharto of Indonesia - a regime notorious for using UK-supplied weapons against innocent civilians in East Timor. More recently, the proposed recruitment of Peter Sutherland, Chairman of BP - another company with a woeful environmental and human rights record - has met student



education is increasingly becoming a corporate playground as universities embrace...the ideology of corporations but also their behaviour

opposition after being provisionally appointed as the LSE Chairman from 2008.

Meanwhile, research councils are increasingly filled with corporate players who feel they can bring their 'expertise' to the public sector, perhaps whilst alleviating a guilty conscience?

Higher education is increasingly becoming a corporate playground as universities embrace not only the ideology of corporations but also their behaviour. This corporatisation has meant that decisions concerning academic planning and employment are determined primarily on financial grounds.

Like businesses, universities today evaluate particular departments, courses and

The author analyses the increasing role of corporations in the wake of the LSE arms funding controversy

most of all students - by their ability to pay and bring the university income. At LSE, those courses which have not brought in sufficient funds have faced termination over recent years, despite filling an academic niche.

LSE even exploits its employees akin to a profit-orientated enterprise, leaving our cleaners languishing in poverty pay and subject to repeated contractual abuses.

It is fair to acknowledge that the vacuum of funding in the higher education system is primarily the fault of the government, but it has certainly not helped that our Director has publically called for the marketisation of the higher education sector and consis-

tently supported top-up fees.

How we, as students, challenge the contagion of the corporate takeover of our university will not only determine the academic integrity of our university now, but also the extent to which we can ensure that our university is always a place for all to prosper and not simply a conveyor belt to the corporate world. Students must demand greater transparency, accountability and democracy regarding how our education is funded as the status quo will have repercussions not only for ourselves, but for the viability of a just and equal society in the future.



All is not well for Louise Gobinson. The accented Weakest Link presenter and part-time residences officer has been heard complaining that she doesn't feel appreciated. Pressurised by her workload, Hacktivist has learnt that she has to field calls from whiney students at all hours of the night. Makes you wonder why she is running in this weeks elections.

Hacktivist has also learnt that all is not well in the Gobinson - Fisher household. The strain of trying to single-handedly stop climate change has meant that Caspell-clone Aled, has spent more time hugging trees than hugging Louise. As well as upsetting the wife, the clone has found himself in trouble with fellow environmentalists after his zany hair dying stunt. The clone

Off the record, on the QT, and very... hush-hush

should know better of the damage ozone depleting gases emitted from spray cans cause to the atmosphere. If it weren't for the fact that all UGM motions are produced the mean, green political machine that is Crusader Caspell he would have been censured this Thursday. But the self-proclaimed disability community-leader is too busy protecting the union from weapons of mass destruction such as politically loaded screwed-up copies of The Beaver and stopping Dictator Davies from developing nuclear weapons.

Finally as we approach Halloween Hacktivist has been passed on information of a plot to give stupid haired Kreepy Krebbers a real fright this Wednesday morning.

the Beaver

2nd Floor, East Building
LSE Students' Union
London WC2A 2AE
email: thebeaver@lse.ac.uk
Published since 1949.

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Sidhanth Kamath

MANAGING EDITOR
Alex Teytelboym

SECRETARY
Lucie Goulet

BUSINESS MANAGER
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PRINTED BY THE NORTHCLIFFE PRESS

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The *Beaver* is available in alternative formats.

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COMMENT & ANALYSIS

The Beaver

Established 1949 - Issue 647

Evil and terrorists are everywhere...

...about compromising and distorting educational values? We don't really care!

"I have here in my hand a list of two hundred and five people that were known to the Secretary of State as being members of the Communist Party and who nevertheless are still working and shaping the policy of the State Department."

With these words Senator Joseph McCarthy set in motion his infamous witch hunt against alleged Communists in the 1950s. Fifty years later and the sense of déjà vu is stifling, the only difference this time being the attempts to spread the paranoia virus onto university campuses, in a manner bird flu can only gaze at in admiration.

A government that can even contemplate asking its academics to spy on an entire section of society that is 'deemed' dangerous, has clearly lost its grasp on the fundamental values that normal society functions around.

Insinuating that anyone with Asian appearance is worthy of being classified suspicious enough to warrant special attention is ludicrous. Yet again the government is formulating an ill-thought out and misdirected policy. Spying on Asian or Muslim looking university students is unlikely to stop extremism in any form.

An effective solution needs to be sought; one that focuses on embracing Muslim communities rather than further alienating them, through classifying an entire community as tainted based only on the actions of a select bunch of individuals.

The School's instant reaction must be praised. By refusing to succumb to pressures from the government and respecting the privacy of its students, the LSE has stood up strongly in support of its age-old values; diversity, multiculturalism and freedom of speech. Such proposals would only serve to undermine these principles, by creating an atmosphere of fear and mistrust.

It is the right of every student to feel safe in their place of learning. Both the School and the Union need to continue prioritising the needs of students rather than demands made by populist politicians.

The ban on paper throwing at the UGM

...left many disappointed. More important, however, are the ramifications of the decision

The Executive Committee's decision to ban paper throwing at the UGM this week left everyone wading into murky waters. Arguments on whether it was within their remit to do so floundered. Yet, even when backed up by sound reasoning and valid arguments, the obvious unease felt by all members of the committee indicated how perilous they felt the path onto the stage could be.

Careful thought needed to (and still needs to) be given to the ramifications of the decision. And the logistics of it. Will attendance drop further at a meeting that is already scarcely representative of the entire student populace? Of greater importance and impending danger is the potential this offers for any student to filibuster motions at the UGM by throwing paper at the stage, thereby making a mockery of true democracy. Will constantly suspending the proceedings kill off (to further abuse an overused cliché) the 'last weekly students' union meeting in the country'?

A clearer understanding of duties on the part of the UGM Chair might assist matters. The Chair's duties are to conduct the proceedings in an appropriate manner, not, as declared by the Chair this week, to comply with the orders of the Executive Committee. Furthermore, solely targeting individuals on the balcony who's names are known, further reduces the respectability of the Chair.

If getting serious and technical about equal opportunities is the way forward then the fact that regardless of paper throwing, individuals suffering from vertigo will be unable to speak from a stage which has no support to hold on to, needs to be considered. Similarly students with hearing-impairments can scarcely participate in the debate given the current lack of a translator.

Citing overriding obligations as justification for such bans is setting a dangerous precedent for this Union and its future. Rational risk assessments, might easily be ran roughshod over by power-hungry or nervous Execs, culminating in situations that this paper cannot even conceptualise.

Letters to the Editor

The Beaver offers all readers the right to reply to anything that appears in the paper. Letters should be sent to thebeaver.editor@lse.ac.uk and should be no longer than 250 words. All letters must be received by 3pm on the Sunday prior to publication. The Beaver reserves the right to edit letters prior to publication.



Restricted access

Dear Sir,

One way to reduce overcrowding in the library would be to restrict access for undergraduates at other London universities and colleges. The LSE gives access to other students through the University of London and the UK Libraries Plus scheme. But the library is already too full for LSE students, which is a problem that will surely intensify with the expanding size of the school. The only solution to the problem is to dramatically restrict access for non-LSE undergraduates. It seems fair that only LSE undergraduates should be allowed to use the LSE library. In particular, the School should withdraw from the UK Libraries Plus scheme, which allows access to the library for students at other universities. Access could still be granted to Masters' level and Phd students in relevant disciplines, so that they could conduct their research on the collections of the LSE library.

Yours Sincerely,
John Townsend
LLM Postgraduate,
Law Department

Fact or fiction

Dear Sir

Unfortunately it seems that some factual mistakes were made in the article "From Russia With Fear" printed in this week's Beaver issue. Please forward the following corrections to the author, William Joce, if only to prevent future error.

1) "The Kirov and Mariinsky theatres rival anything Covent Gardend has to offer ..."

Actually the Kirov and the Mariinsky (2 "i"s) are just two names for the same theatre. It was initially called the Mariinsky during the time of the Tsarist Empire, but after the Revolution it was renamed the Kirov in honour of Segei Kirov, an assassinated Bolshevik revolutionary. After the fall of Communism the theatre reverted to its original name and so is now commonly called the Mariinsky theatre.

2) "... the Russia of Dostoevsky, Gogol or Tuganev ..."

Did the author mean Turgenyev, the Russian writer and poet?

3) "Prostitutes and street children, most of them drug-addicted, roam the backstreets at night..."

In all my experience in St. Petersburg I have never encountered either groups, so I would seriously doubt the credibility of this statement. Prostitution and drug-addiction do exist, but one would rarely encounter them on the streets. Street children are usually children of Asian (illegal)

immigrants and are often not homeless per say but forced by their parents to 'work the public', begging in crowded places and pretending to be orphans. This, of course, does not rule out the existence of true orphans who regularly run away from the authorities.

Regards,
Zhanna Makash

Missing the point

Dear Sir,

Timothy Chu, in his letter 'Final Solution', is right: men should have a say in whether or not their partners abort their baby. But the best we can hope for is that this is and will continue to be the prevailing social practice. It cannot be a legal requirement.

I lament the fact that legally, doctors have paramount say, women minimal say, and men none at all. But I hesitate at proposing that the law should allow men the right to prevent their partners from aborting. Ultimately, it is women who should have the last say after having taken into account their partners' and doctors' views because they are solely responsible for the birth of the child.

Timothy Chu's argument is contradictory. He says men's views should be taken into account but then goes on to paint a thoroughly negative view of the male sex. He assumes that men are bastards - they don't practice safe sex, they rape women... But really, safe sex is the responsibility of both man and woman. And as for rape, that's a more exceptional case and should be left out of the current debate. In most cases, men do take into account what their women want; women do take into account what their men want. Hence Timothy Chu's conclusion that if only men were to act responsibly "the entire abortion debate would disappear overnight" misses the point.

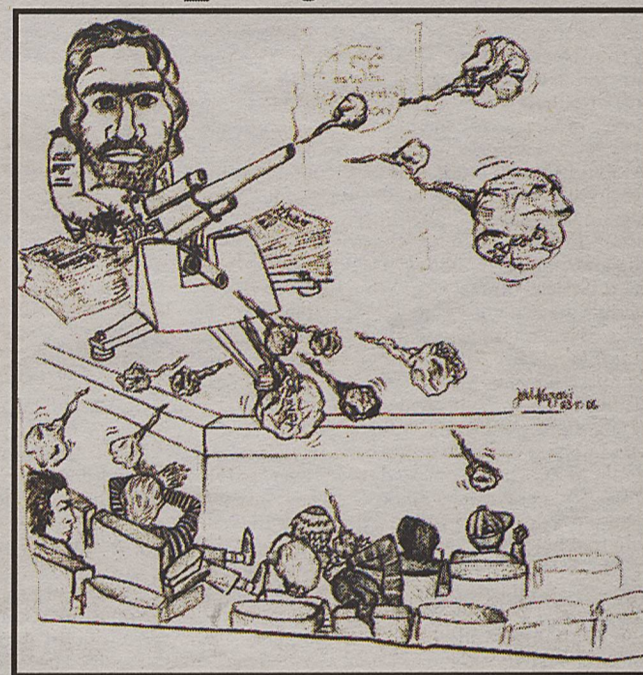
Yours,
Emily Ding
3rd year Law

Big (ID) Brother

Dear Sir,

I couldn't help but be amused by the outrage expressed by Ms Coombe at the notion of ID cards. Perhaps Ms Coombe is not aware, but approximately 100 countries today (more than half the membership of the UN) have a compulsory ID card regime or something else, serving essentially the same function. I myself originate from one such nation and can assure you that no "nuisance sales companies" have ever "bugged me incessantly at home," as she claims they will. This is of course quite unlike the United Kingdom, where despite the lack of ID cards, such companies have increasingly become the bane of

Anti-projectile fire



my life.

I certainly agree that ultimately ID cards are likely to be an expensive and ineffective way of tackling terrorism but they are certainly not quite the invasion of privacy that Ms Coombe imagines. Her argument is especially unconvincing as all it appears to amount to in the end is an unfounded fear of increased nuisance calls. Also, with almost five million CCTV cameras in the United Kingdom, I'm afraid you'll find that 'Big Brother' is unfortunately already watching you.

Sincerely,
Nitya Menon
LLM

Mind your Manga

Dear Sir,

I applaud the Otaku who unshamefully admitted he was one and made the effort to right the injustice done to anime. I challenge anyone who still thinks this to go to HMV and open their eyes at the "15" or even the "18" age rating or, if they have the guts, rent out a copy of Grave of the Fireflies or Black Jack and tell me that it was aimed at your 9 year old sibling. The other misconception, not mentioned though, is that people assume anime = porn and violence. In which case I would ask if they opened "The Sun" at page 3, do they immediately assume the whole tabloid must be porn? You'd be hard pushed to find anyone who has seen the anime "Wolf's Rain" to agree it's "porn and violence" or "for kids."

Perhaps the most amazing point about anime, and indeed manga (Japanese comics), is the wide range of genres and issues it covers allowing it to aim at a diverse audience from your 9 year old sibling to your parents!

Decent anime and manga is often subtle, avoiding drawing a definitive line between good and evil, leaves its audience thinking and the artists (yes! Artists!) shifting between styles, colours and even shading to portray different issues.

I'm not saying you have to like it. Just don't patronise those that do appreciate it based on your five minutes of Pokemon!

Best regards,
Shirley Li
Anime and Manga Society

What button?

Dear Sir

I am writing to express my anger and disappointment in response to the cartoon 'Pushing the button' published in last week's Beaver. By implying that abortion is an act as simple as pushing a button, you overlooked the personal and emotional trauma women can face when considering or going through with an abortion. While I appreciate that abortion is a contentious issue, and am respectful of the right to the different opinions that have been put forward in the Beaver over the last few weeks, with this kind of debate comes the need for sensitivity to the experiences of your readers. The simplistic portrayal of abortion as displayed in the cartoon does nothing to add to the debate, but rather is offensive towards any students who may be seeking an abortion, and disrespectful of the difficulties they face, as well as putting forward an inaccurate picture of abortion to other readers. I hope to see more constructive debate in the future.

Yours sincerely
Megan Gaventa
BSc Sociology

FEATURES

Politics/Law/Business/Careers

thebeaver.features@lse.ac.uk

Civil Rights
in 2006Was
David Kelly
murdered?Wal-Mart:
corporate
heroes

Eyes to the left

Amy
Williams

Recently I went to see the newly released film "The History Boys." Like most people I was struck by the arguments surrounding the way we teach children—to pass exams or simply to learn things? But what many have failed to notice is the play's subtle commentary on the school system in this country. The play and film are both set in the early 1980s. A time with grammar schools; for the bright kids, secondary moderns; for the next generation of secretaries and brick layers, comprehensives, for the children of middle class socialist parents and private schools, for anyone who could pay. A 'dazzling choice of education' on offer to the nation. Today we no longer have secondary moderns and grammar schools are slowly dying out but the stark contrast between comprehensives and private schools is more acute than ever.

A study published earlier this year stated this government's policy of not creating more grammar schools and indeed trying to slowly dismantle them, had instead of levelling the playing field, meant that more of the top professional jobs were taken by privately educated people than state educated than ever before. Grammar schools, it claimed were the only way in for working class kids and that their dismantling had been a disaster.

The fact is, that is not the whole story. The problem isn't the declining numbers of grammar schools, it is the continued existence of private schools which divides our society. The Comprehensive system isn't just a nice idea. The principle that everyone is taught in the same system, in a school which encompasses all walks of life is a fine one to aspire to. The principle that any advancement one makes in education is purely to do with talent is necessary. And most importantly equality of opportunity is vital.

Children should be sent to the local school. No exceptions. There are certainly no principled reasons against this and no practical reasons why this should not be the case. Our country is such that we have extreme affluence next to dire poverty—it is easy enough to draw up catchment areas that have a deliberately wide range of backgrounds. This would stop people trying to cheat the system as it is; by moving house into a catchment area for a good school.

The History Boys' premise says if you are bright you will get there in the end. But the current premise of our education system is that you need to know how to play the system. Which introduces the concept of 'choice' (merely another word for marketisation) which allows politicians to simultaneously convince a selfish middle class and an aspiring working class that they can take charge of their lives. It's an illusion that the ability to choose exists for all, it only exists for the middle classes. And when people are allowed to make choices, they inevitably make selfish, individualistic decisions. Why give people the option to choose over such a vitally important issue as education, on which the future of the nation depends?

In 1997, the government abolished the Assisted Places Scheme. It marked the end of the state subsidising people to attend private schools. But much more needs to be done and in this the politicians have failed to lead by example. It pains me to note Tony Blair carted his children half way across London so that they could attend a 'good' state school (which had once been private). Whilst Harriet Harman and Diane Abbott, those dedicated social democrats, send their children to private schools.

Until the government gets rid of state funded grammar schools, which cream off the brightest children and starts to dismantle the private system; which compounds the British class system, we will be stuck with a comprehensive system that cannot work. We have got to stop the use of education as a political tool and remove these age-old historic class divisions in our education system. The state option must be the only option.

The editor's log

The monarchy is dead. Long live the Queen

As I sat watching 'The Queen,' (the film that is not the lady herself) I was hit by the realisation; it is truly ridiculous that an institution like the monarchy exists in the supposedly democratic and meritocratic society we live in today. To think that not only the Queen but also her every distant and obscure relative such as 'Princess Michael of Kent' - who not only wine, dine and hunt animals at the expense of Mr Joe and Mrs Jane Bloggs (the ordinary taxpaying family); but also feel entitled to behave snootily towards the very public that fund them is beyond appalling.

In a society where more than three million children live in poverty, 'the free for all at the point of need' National Health Service is increasingly under strain and freezing pensioners are pining for heating - isn't it time that we abolished this ridiculous institution and ploughed the public's funds into something more worthwhile?

Before I get arrested for treason (Ben already seems to be heading towards a mysterious disappearance for his comments on Dr David Kelly's suspicious death) let me make it absolutely clear I am not advocating a French style bloody revolution to oust the monarchy, but a far more tame and sensible solution.

Removing the monarchy in its entirety would be a disaster. Like it or not, the institution attracts millions of tourists into Britain every year, thus adding to our economy. Aside of this a lack of king or queen would mean someone is required to perform the ceremonial functions for the state and the prospect of President Blair is not really that appealing.

So the Queen should in essence stay. And the numerous numbers of staff; the ladies in waiting, butlers, chefs and maids (not to mention the Jennie Bond's of this world who depend on royal gossip for their livelihoods), need not worry - their jobs might well remain intact. The only difference is the Queen and her cronies can now pay for their own luxuries, instead of expecting us - the British public - to foot the bill. The monarchy should stop receiving public funding, the Royal Family own enough land and assets personally to be able to survive on these.

The Queen should continue to perform all her current duties such as the opening of Parliament. The only difference is she will no longer be receiving a wage simply to live in luxury and tour the world. And any member of the Royals who makes offensive, colonialist or racist comments should be exiled to the Highlands of Scotland, left to fend for themselves. Given the Duke of Edinburgh's appalling record he would obviously be first in line. As would Princess Michael of Kent for telling a group of African American diners to "get back to the colonies," in May 2004. In fact by Royal Family I refer to a new and improved; streamlined version thus already excluding the likes of Princess Michael and 'Princess Alexandra, The Honourable Lady Ogilvy' - whoever she may be.

Should the Royals refuse to comply with such plans, I have no doubt there are plenty of other perfectly willing members of British society, wishing to perform the duty. In fact that might prove to be a better long term solution, before the prospect of King Charles or George (or any other name the Prince of Wales is planning on taking) emerges, an 'X Factor' style reality TV programme could be held to decide on the next King or Queen; thus opening up the possibility of a Royal Family which more accurately reflects the diversity and multiculturalism of Britain today. Perhaps the monarchy may be revived after all. ■

Note - For legal reasons I must state I am not advocating an assassination of the Queen, inciting terror or engaging in any other extremist activity that the government accuses your average Muslim of being involved in. God save the Queen.

In memory of Thet Win Aung

Rabia Afaq Khan pays tribute to LSE Student Union's Honorary Vice President, who died on Monday 16th October

Burmese prisoner of conscience, Thet Win Aung was sentenced to fifty nine years in prison in 1998 for taking part in peaceful student demonstrations. Aung began organising student protests in Burma in 1988. In 1989 he served as Vice-Secretary General of the banned Basic Education Student Union. Consequently he was first imprisoned in 1991 for nine months but continued to campaign for educational reform. In 1998 he was finally sentenced to fifty nine years in prison for organising peaceful demonstrations. He and other student leaders were sentenced in a closed trial where they had no access to judges and could not speak in their defence. Thet spent 3,555 days in prison, where he suffered from torture and health problems including malaria. His father's request for a proper funeral was turned down. His remains were forcibly cremated and his family was not allowed to take possession of the ashes. Amnesty International has been calling on the Myanmar authorities to initiate a prompt and independent investigation into Thet's death and to make the findings public.

Since an army coup overthrew Burma's last democratically elected government in 1962, the military regime has been among the world's worst violators of human rights. The result of the free elections of 1990, in which Noble Prize winner Aung San Sui Kyis party won 392 out of a total of 498 seats, were voided by the military government which refused to step down. Burma's 47 million people are denied even the most basic human rights by a military machine of 500,000 men led by General Than Shwe. The generals are accused of forcible relocation of civilians and widespread use of forced labour. Nearly half the government budget is spent on the military with less than 19p per person on health per year.

A 1966 decree dictates up to twenty years imprisonment to anyone publicly opposing government policy. Amnesty International estimates that there are at least 1300 political prisoners in Burma and that torture has become an institution in the country. No independent body is currently monitoring prison conditions since the military regime withdrew permission for the Red Cross to visit prisons in 2006.

Aung San Sui Kyis' message to the Burmese people is simple: "Only by fighting fear can you truly be free." The LSE Students' Union should thus be proud to have a fearless student like Thet as it's Honorary Vice President. However Thet's death will not be the last and we must continue to show our support for the Burmese people. ■



The right approach

Sam
Burke

The issues surrounding faith make a great political football for any failing Government: everybody has a view and most people want to express it. The ball gets kicked around while other issues; the Iraq war, distasteful internet-based attacks on the Leader of the Opposition and the impending Labour handover get ignored. But there's a worrying development here. We are seeing attempts to allow arbitrary selection quotas on new faith schools and a whole swathe of attacks from senior ministers on the facial veils worn by Muslim women. Is it any wonder faith communities feel increasingly marginalised in our country?

Let us take the Government's new Education and Inspections Bill. The Government and others, have offered something of a magician's bargain: if we go along with an amendment allowing local authorities to impose a 25% quota on new faith schools to include other faiths and those of no faith, they will not touch existing faith schools - not for now, at least. Recently a British Airways worker and a BBC newsreader have both been banned from wearing a cross on a necklace. How can anybody be surprised if people of faith are not concerned about the new intolerance that has been gathering a head of steam?

Take Catholic education as an example. 10% of this country's schools are Catholic. Those schools were established because of the generosity of previous generations of Catholics, many of whom were from poor immigrant communities. Even today, in addition to many other forms of support including taxpayers money, parishes contribute around £20 million a year towards capital costs. One in five children in Catholic secondary schools is not Catholic, so it is not true to say that such schools prevent or select against other faiths or those of no faith. If we consider the racial mix of such schools, we find that, whereas the average proportion of white children in the population is 80% - in Catholic schools it is 71%. There seems to be no case for arguing a lack of cohesion here.

And which single organisation is seeking more than any other to establish academy schools? It is the Church of England. That is part of its historic mission. Church schools were the first bodies to provide universal free education. While many have deserted our cities, Churches, through academy and foundation programmes - are moving in, putting their money where their mouths are and doing something for people.

The other great furore surrounding religious expression last week, was the case of Aishah Azmi who was sacked over her right to wear a veil in the classroom in the presence of male teachers. In this case, the facts seem less clear. I don't know if the veil is appropriate for the classroom or whether allegations of double standards are correct in this case. What I do know is this, Labour politicians; especially the Prime Minister have commented inappropriately and out of turn and are at risk of being prejudicial to the outcome of an industrial tribunal. Even if members of the Cabinet are right in their comments, their words will bring about the opposite of the desired outcome. If I was a devout Muslim girl, I too would feel impassioned by this criticism and be more likely to wear a facial veil in defiance. But this level of empathy is beyond increasing numbers of cabinet ministers who want to 'boldly speak out' (read populism).

The British tradition in such matters has long been one of tolerance and respect. We have long welcomed those from other cultures who have embraced our own culture. So when someone tells us that a harmless expression of faith is incorrect, we must fight our corner. When a few old radicals and a few confused, well-intended old hats get excited at the notion of curbs on religious education, we should point them to the proven record of faith schools. Because it is fear, nothing else, that is the Trojan Horse being used to sure up support for these retrograde measures. The only thing anyone has to fear in all of this is if these false liberals get their way. ■

Separate but unequal

Features Political Correspondent **Greg White** examines the state of the American Civil Rights Movement, fifty years after the Montgomery Bus Boycott began a series of protests to gain equality for African Americans

Contemplating the current state of the American civil rights movement is a bit like conjuring up images of the Virgin Mary on toast and selling it on e-Bay: there are plenty of examples out there, but each seems a bit tired, old, crusty and, for the most part, a weak representation of the original.

Civil rights have taken a backseat in most Americans' minds to two other issues of conflicting importance: the War on Terror and this nominal conflict's effect on domestic civil liberties. And, as a result, responses to issues concerning the rights of minority and immigrant American citizens have been left to haunt the back corners of ACLU and NAACP offices across the nation leaving Gay Rights the only issue up for debate.

Prior to 11 September, one of the most important issues on civil rights' agendas across the country was that of police discrimination in the guise of racial profiling. This mainly centered on Black and Latino Americans being stopped without any reason of suspicion other than their ethnicity. While this may seem a bit too much like the issues raised by Chamilloinaire's poignant hit "Ridin' (Dirty)" it was, in reality, a very serious debate.

Racial profiling went from being a derided tactic of police departments to a nationally endorsed tactic for combating terrorism. Which is a bit disappointing really, because the struggle to combat such police offences was finally gaining some ground. To steal a quote from, of all places, *FOX News*, "Political correctness I think is gonna' be put off to the side for a while and it should be," coming from a former FBI agent just after 11 September, in October of 2001 in response to a Supreme Court decision against individuals seeking respite from racial profiling.

Not much has changed since 2001. Last week, according to the *New York Times*, the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination League called to the attention of a US District Court issues of profiling prior to the 2004 presidential election where hundreds of Americans were called in to offices in order to question their immigration status. This would not be a major issue without the hidden nature of the project and shrouding of the actual individuals called in for questioning. Immigration in general is a no-man's land in American politics at the



Racial profiling went from being a derided tactic of police departments to a nationally endorsed tactic for combating terrorism

moment, especially on the topic of civil rights. Any attempt to view Mexican immigrants through a lens other than illegal, job-stealing, economy drainers is seen as somehow anti-American. It is difficult time when television's supposed left-wing personalities, such as CNN's Lou Dobbs, advocate a policy of border fences and armed patrols along the Mexican border.

The ACLU has a hard time finding ground to stand on with this issue, as towns like Riverside, New Jersey are designing laws, if a bit mob rule in design, intent on limiting the amount of people who can live in homes. With a large Brazilian immigrant community beginning to dominate the traditional white, working class town, residents have turned to restricting living conditions in an effort to curb the immigrant influx. At worst these policies are seen as overtly-protectionist in the US, but there is little concern for the actual rights of those forced to move without any sort of legal precedent.

If immigration is the great chasm vacant of concern for civil rights in the US, then civil rights for the gay American is the fully flooded, stocked with trout, lake of a counterpart. And

while gay rights have become a distinctive issue in American politics, so divisive that it now gets its own category in polls distant from civil rights, it is still related to the thread of equality that flows throughout American civil rights campaigns.

No event did more to spur this debate forward than the 2004 presidential election. Karl Rove, political advisor to President Bush, used the divisive issue of gay marriage to lure would be Republican voters to the polls. In key states it was the turnout of individuals who sought to prevent gay people from getting married that turned the tide for the incumbent president. In a systemic rebuttal to the judicial cases that brought about the legalisation of gay marriage in Massachusetts in 2004, voters took to the polls enacting referendums banning it.

While clearly a political ploy, the election of 2004 opened debate, but ended progress for gay rights in many states across America. Bound up in this issue of gay marriage are the same issues that complicated the original Civil Rights Movement during the 1950s and 1960s. The era was subject to an adversarial society akin to that present today, just as contemp-

tious about the possibility for blacks to vote and desegregate as people are



While clearly a political ploy, the election of 2004 opened debate but ended progress for gay rights in many states across America

now to allow gay people to get married and adopt children.

The hindrance of ignorance is

what held back progress for so long into the 1960s and the same could occur on these issues, with people failing to understand that this is not about a superiority complex over a section of society, opinions of one own preferred spiritual deity, or mental adversity to conceptualising a reality in someone else's bedroom, but about individuals rights and the laws protecting them. Once the issue of gay rights is stripped of its populist dividers and put in the hands of the judiciary, the rights of men and women will be all that is in question, not spirituality or prejudices.

While the current civil rights movement might be lacking the enthusiasm or pictorial displays of the race riots and protests of the 60s it still plays an important role in most Americans' lives. While battles over racial prejudice have taken a back seat to post 9-11 fear, the rights of gay citizens have been propelled forward in this time of religious zealotry. It is a sad era when the person buying that crusty Virgin Mary toast is dictating political policy on American civil rights. ■

British foreign policy: Afghanistan instability in Iraq - a time to

Chris Wilkins analyses the state of Afghanistan, five years after the 'Coalition of the Willing' first invaded the country as part of the 'War on Terror.'

In recent months, the situation in southern Afghanistan has gone from bad to worse. Back in April, John Reid (then defence minister) expressed a bold hope that Britain's task-force, deployed in May to the restive southern province of Helmand, would leave "without firing a single shot." In reality, the principal fighting force in the southern Helmand province has fired many more shots than that - around 450,000, in fact, and thousands more rockets and artillery shells, according to Ministry of Defence figures released last week. An agitated government, responding to allegations of under-preparedness, has since claimed (perhaps rightly) that these comments were taken out of context. It is worrying, however, that ministers considered such a benign outcome to be within the realms of possibility, while the extent of Taliban resistance has certainly come as a surprise to the government.

The most disturbing development of the current crisis concerns Afghan popular opinion. Earlier this month, NATO's commander in Afghanistan admitted that southern regions were at "tipping point," with up to 70% on the verge of switching their allegiance to the once-despised Taliban movement. General David Richards is on the right track, but much evidence from the field suggests this has happened already. Clearly the increasing ease of Taliban forces

sionment with foreign forces, who were once seen as saviours, but are now believed to care little for the local population and only about capturing Osama Bin Laden.

Why have things become so bad? Five years since they were sent running from Kabul with their tails between their legs, why are hundreds of well-trained Taliban militiamen now fighting pitched battles with foreign forces, when previous attacks were disorganised and sporadic? Most alarmingly, why have many Afghans turned their backs on the West and started supporting the regime they were so happy to see ousted in 2001? Such developments come against a backdrop of changes in command structure, with responsibility for the volatile south passing from US-led Operation Enduring Freedom to a NATO coalition. Prior to the British deployment, only a token US force of several hundred troops was posted to Helmand, so the UK claims to be challenging Taliban influence in the province for the first time. However, this claim only seeks to obscure the presence of a deep malaise, resulting from five years of flawed policies. The international community has not simply failed to win 'hearts and minds' in southern Afghanistan: it had them, and then threw them away.

Coalition efforts are undermined by a lack of local understanding. In a recent example, American planes reportedly dropped leaflets over Kandahar offering rewards for information about the whereabouts of Osama Bin Laden, written in Dari. While most rural Afghans are illiterate - a significant obstacle to reading leaflets - those in the target area who could read were Pashto speakers. If this reflects the extent of the Bush administration's commitment to Afghanistan, it is fair to say there is little hope of security and democracy taking root in the near future.

Incompetence is not the worst charge levelled at foreign forces in southern Afghanistan, however; many people feel betrayed. A much-ignored truth, UN figures suggest that poverty in Afghanistan matches the worst excesses of sub-Saharan Africa, with 70% of the population malnourished, and a male life expectancy of only 43 years. Such statistics are supported anecdotally by reports of a growing hunger crisis in the South, with children frequently dying of starvation. Compared to many other post-conflict countries, Afghanistan's development record is pitifully poor. In the eyes of locals, promises of a prosperous and stable future, offered by the US and its allies in 2001, have turned out to be false. Despite Bush and Blair's continued rhetoric about the merits of Afghan democracy, the rapid shift of popular support away from foreign forces indicates an acute sense of betrayal - while likewise explaining the

rise of the Taliban as a secure alternative. Such developments will be hard to stomach for those who believe democracy is the answer to all the world's



UN figures suggest that poverty in Afghanistan matches the worst excesses of sub-Saharan Africa, with 70% of the population malnourished

problems. However, it shouldn't be hard to understand why most Afghans value their safety and sustainability as human beings over the democratic rights offered to them by the West.

Perhaps the worst mistake of the last five years has been the policy of aggressive opium poppy eradication pursued by the US in an attempt to limit funding to insurgents and terrorists. In the arid Helmand province, few crops grow easily and opium poppies currently represent the best income for farmers struggling to feed their families - poppies constitute more than 50% of provincial income. No wonder then, that Afghan government eradication teams, openly sponsored by the US and UK, have fostered huge resentment among the local population. These policies have also failed miserably to achieve their goals, with Helmand this year experiencing a record harvest, despite five years of eradication attempts. The touchstone of UK policy has been 'alternative livelihoods' to replace poppy growing. However, only 18% of international assistance last year was offered for agricultural purposes, and a brief visit to rural Helmand would convince anyone that alternative livelihoods have not arrived where they are most needed. Many now recognise that poppy eradication feeds support for the Taliban, and UK forces in the area seem to understand the wisdom of distancing themselves from these policies. However, it will be a significant challenge to turn around resentment built up by forced eradication.

To save this article from turning into another clichéd diatribe against the failures of

Bush and Blair policy, it must be remembered that Afghanistan wasn't always so controversial. Only a minority would argue that the initial intervention in 2001 was unjustified, and those who call for the withdrawal of UK troops are failing to consider how repugnant the alternative might be, both in terms of human rights and international security. Many Afghans themselves, exhausted by years of Taliban repression, greeted the invasion with a mixture of hope and optimism, and there has been notable success in introducing security and development, particularly in the north of the country. It is not too late to set Afghanistan on a path to becoming a stable, democratic state, free of destitution and festering extremism.

Despite likely criticism from drug hardliners in the West, counter-productive eradication policies must be stopped, at least until viable alternatives are in place, because rural discontentment represents the gravest danger to stability in southern Afghanistan. A proposal put forward last year by the Senlis Council, which calls for the licensing of opium poppy growth to produce essential painkillers, rather than heroin - similar to schemes in Turkey, represents a creative solution to the problems of poverty and security, which has been doing the rounds in policy circles with mixed responses. To critics, including senior ministers in the UK government, this approach may seem overly optimistic and naive given the current security crisis. Yet after five years of failure to rein in the illicit opium economy, or introduce stability to the South, the international community would benefit from innovating its Afghan policy before it's too late.

Most importantly, Afghanistan should be given the attention it deserves after five years of neglect. The international community should recognise the dangers facing Afghanistan, strengthen its resolve and boost its financial commitment, in the form of substantial development aid to match (or surpass) military spending. Critically, better care must be taken in the provision of these funds, which should be distributed through reputable agencies rather than notoriously corrupt channels of the Afghan central government. Perhaps 'security and development' should be embraced more fully, rather than 'security, then development.' If there is any lesson of history worth considering, it must be that winning 'hearts and minds' is vital for success. Fostering good will among the local population in southern areas must be a priority, in order to undermine growing Taliban influence. Eventually, through greater commitment and better choices, the optimism of 2001 could return. ■



Michael Deas looks back at the Iraq War from

Aside from what it says about the state of British politics that it was a general, not a politician who had the courage to tell it, I welcomed the news that Army chief General Sir Richard Dannatt expressed his perception of a need to exit Iraq "sometime soon." Whether you agree or not, we should all respect General Dannatt for speaking up while others have failed and thank him for hopefully prompting a rethink of British 'policy' in Iraq.

The Prime Minister's attempt to claim that Dannatt was speaking 'on message' is symptomatic of the government's denial of the failure in Iraq. The Coalition's refusal to reconsider strategy or publicly examine the possibility that as Dannatt said; western presence in Iraq "exacerbates the security problems" has led to a continued intensification of the civil war and humanitarian crisis.

The plan to provide security through military domination was always unlikely to work against guerrilla and terrorist tactics. What is more surprising is that the coalition has continued to chase illusive military

'victory,' even as the violence continues to intensify. Hopefully Dannatt's comments are a sign that at least our military leaders have begun to understand what we are witnessing is not a complication of 'Operation Iraqi Freedom,' but a monumental manifestation of a centuries old conflict between Sunni and Shiites that has now combined with fundamentalist opportunism?

An article published in the medical journal *The Lancet* last week estimated over 650,000 more people have died since the start of the war than would have under Saddam Hussein. We are bombarded daily with tales of the latest terrorist atrocity, but it is almost as if the scale and frequency of these reports have left the public apathetic. Our leaders appear just as unable to comprehend the situation or see a way out. Like a rabbit motionless in headlights, Blair and Bush time and time again repeat the same regurgitated sound bites, while appearing unable to formulate a coherent plan for slowing the escalation of violence, let alone an exit plan.

The plan to invade Iraq was not formulated on the basis of military intelligence (or intelligence of any kind) it was formulated

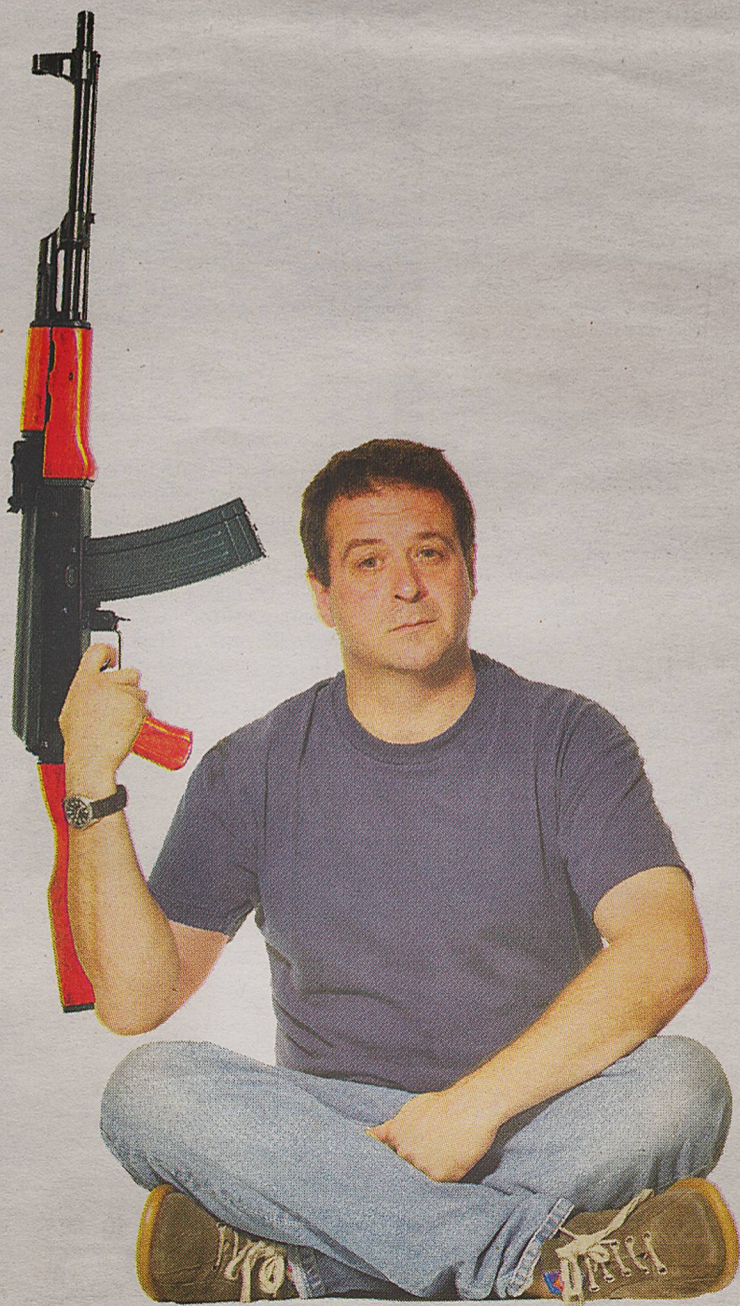


The international community has not simply failed to win 'hearts and minds' in southern Afghanistan: it had them, and then threw them away

to conduct large-scale operations deep inside Afghanistan must be reliant on local support and supplies. However, this worrying trend in opinion has also been documented by the Senlis Council, a security think tank with field offices throughout Afghanistan, who recently used a network of Afghan research teams to conduct interviews with local people. This project uncovered overwhelming and growing disillusion

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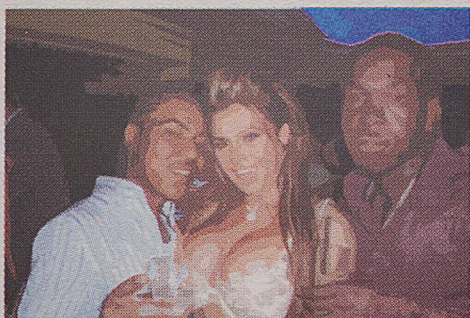
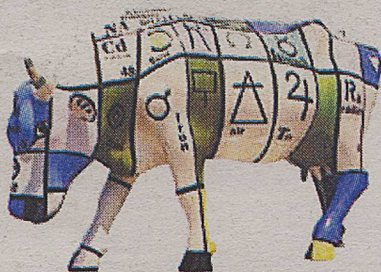


On The Cover

Campaigning comedian Mark Thomas calls for an international arms treaty

Visual Arts & Music

The Frieze Art Fair: reviewed, rated and judged

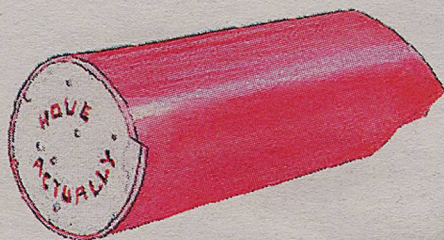


Style

Elitism on the London Club Scene

Travel

Good Olde Fashioned British Days Out: Brighton and Windsor



Film

We look forward to the London Film Festival. We do.

Theatre

The Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford-upon-Avon



London Film Festival

A heavenly multitude of awesome films. Highlights that we intend to see include the Kenneth Anger portait at the NFT on the 27th and 29th, and the Scott Walker: 30 Century Man bopic at the NFT on October 31st and November 1st.

Where: Across London
Date: Until November 2nd

China Power Station: Part 1

The monumental husk that is Battersea Power Station plays host to some chinese art. The art is apparently mediocre, the real treat here is being able to navigate the gutted halls and turrets of this fantastic post-industrial landmark.

Where: Battersea Power Station
Date: Until November 5th
Time: Thursday to Sunday, 12pm to 7pm.
Admission: £5

Game On

Indulge your closet geek with more than 120 computer games tracking the evolution of gaming from 1962 to the present. Play them all, then look at the exhibition, which examines the effects of computer games on the brain and society.

Where: Science Museum
When: Daily 10am-6pm
Price: £8.50, children & concs £6.50

Mates of State

Husband and wife keyboard combo, tour their Bring it Back album. With more twee than a forest with a speech impediment (geddit!?) they remain solidly cute and never veer into the vacuous sacharrine territory that lies waiting in the hinterlands of their chosen genre.

Where: King's College Students' Union, Surrey St.
Date: Tuesday October 24th
Tickets: £8.50

rant comptroller
joshheller

music comptroller
samashon

visual arts comptroller
daisymitchell-forster

film comptroller
angustise

literature comptroller
erinorozco

theatre comptroller
mollytucker

style comptroller
abaosunsade

travel comptroller
jessicamcardle

food & drinking comptroller
kimmandeng

comedy comptroller
christinewhyte

EDITORIAL

The cream of investigative journalism is quite literally exposing itself throughout this week's PartB. Inspired by the undercover escapades of agent provocateur Mark Thomas, our interviewee, we tackle the seedy decrepitude of pornography in this week's Rant. Your editors expunged the last vestiges of their tattered dignity to join the ranks of the flesh-wielding. Inevitably, they were left suitably shamed to scuttle home like crabs over hot stones. Kevin's penis was censored by the powers-that-be, but fortunately the LSE's coat of arms is remarkably anatomically similar. His forearms were also censored, for reasons that remain unclear. Daniel was left to convert his experiences into an argument, but inevitably loses to a sensible person.

money, guns & pornstars

Kevin Perry & Daniel B Yates



just a bit of fun?

rosamundurwin challenges pornography while danieliates challenges its opponents

“Lesbo hardaction workout!”, “College girls gone wild”, “Teens undressed - XXXtra dirty”. The emails appearing in my junk mailbox were turning my stomach. Worse than the emails though, was the notion that the pictures were tools for male masturbatory pleasure.

I am clearly a prude. Not only that, but a conservative prude wishing to deny women a form of self-expression. Or at least, this is what I am told, not only by men, but by women too. And most-horrendous of all, they say, I must be anti-sex.

But far from denying women a tool of self-expression, I want to liberate the majority of women from the tyranny of the perfectly-formed (or more likely, photo-shopped) minority. And far from being conservative, I believe the extensive regulation of pornography would create a more liberal and equal world than our porn-saturated society.

Women need to be freed, both in the bedroom and in the wider world, from the belief that they must look a certain way: false, Barbie-esque, plastic. Far from being against sex, I want women everywhere to have better sex, sex in which the focus is on mutual pleasure for them and their partner, where they won't have to worry that they don't look like the women their husband views on the internet every night: women who have their individuality - hell, their reality - airbrushed out. Some women whose partners use pornography worry that they have driven their men to it, thinking they clearly are not sexy enough for him, that they cannot satisfy him and it is somehow their failing. But how can any ordinary woman compete with the ridiculously unrealistic images of female sexual behaviour that their partners are masturbating over?

Pornography frequently portrays women as simple to arouse - in these films, a man has only to fondle a breast and the 'actresses' are writhing in orgasmic glee. Why have the patience with women who seem to take an age to orgasm, when you can just jerk off watching a video of one who comes (or appears to come) so easily? And even better, there is no danger of embarrassment with pornography - no chance that the man can't keep his erection, that he ejaculates too quickly or that he isn't able to make the woman reach orgasm. There are no funny noises, no judgments on performance or size and no risk of rejection. In fact, masturbation could be seen as the perfect sexual relationship: it requires no emotional involvement, sexual pleasure is guaranteed and in the words of one man, “It's cheaper than buying some chick dinner”. Of course, all of the best bits are also removed - no intimacy, no feeling, no love. And ultimately, there is something deeply pathetic about a man who cannot sustain a relationship with anything other than some videos and his right hand.

Robin Morgan's statement made in the 1970s, “Pornography is the theory, rape the practice” now only seems to elicit laughs; how ridiculous that she couldn't see that it is “just a bit of fun”. But consider the image of women presented in pornography. Free from complexity and sophistication, the bunny girl doesn't have any opinions, she laughs at your unfunny jokes, she strokes your ego, she is ready and available for sex any time you want her. Her

so-called sexiness stems from her willingness to pander to male desire. Sexiness apparently has nothing to do with personality, intelligence or wit, and everything to do with having a 24” waist and 32DD breasts. Most people now would consider Playboy mainstream, but what of the hardcore pornography where male promiscuity is glorified, where women are made to choke on cum and where female torture is celebrated? Portraying women in this way does more than degrade them, it dehumanises them.

Liberals were horrified at the photos of prisoners being tortured in Abu Ghraib. Yet somehow it is considered “entertainment” when women are dehumanised and degraded, but a crime when it is done to Iraqi prisoners. Of course, the obvious distinction might be that the women have chosen to feature in these pictures but there are countless cases of women being coerced into pornography. The man at home, clicking through these images, has no idea whether the woman he ogles has been abused, or taken from the streets. Yet even if every participant consented, it is still a frightening thought that there are men out there who use images depicting the degradation of another person in order to get sexual release.

Women who support pornography do it out of a desire to be hip, modern and most importantly, to fit in with the boys. These same women, of course, claim to be appalled at violence against women, but they argue they there is no link between the two. Yet there are countless rape and murder cases which suggest otherwise. In California, for example, a case went to trial in which three boys videotaped themselves having sex with a seemingly unconscious girl, even recording themselves penetrating the girl

anally with a pool cue. At the trial, defence lawyers claimed the teenagers were all just acting out a porn film, even getting female porn stars to testify that the scenes were “consistent with pornography”. It seems impossible to me to deny the dangers to women in having such a proliferation of pornography. Ironically enough though, men are also becoming unwitting victims of pornographic culture. Pornography inevitably has a corrosive effect on their relationship with women and a negative impact on male sexual satisfaction. Looking at copious amounts of pornography desensitises the viewer; in the words of one porn-addict, “Real sex has now lost much of its magic”. Just like the drug addict who needs ever more of the drug to get high, the porn addict requires ever more exciting thrills to get turned on as the addiction progresses. Even more damagingly, pornography dehumanises women to men - these women have feelings, families - they are somebody's daughter, perhaps even somebody's mother, but few men viewing these photos remembers this; they are objectified - simply a means to a sexual end. But worst of all, it creates for a small minority of men the misconception that all women are available, instilling a sense of entitlement to look at and objectify women's bodies. There are men who cannot separate what society tolerates them viewing from what they are allowed to do. For these men, Morgan's statement rings true. But why constrain other men's actions because of such a minority? Simple: because women everywhere



Masculine sexuality can be an ugly thing. Often aroused by the flickering obscenities on a screen, sated by the rutting chunks of orange flesh in cheap porn. However, the vast majority of men have one key attribute; the ability to distinguish. To distinguish reality from fantasy, the private from the social, the mediated image from the person.

The psychiatric profession has long tried to separate form from content in psychotic or schizophrenic conditions. The content of someone's thoughts must never be censured or taken as grounds for pathologisation. This is somewhat of a check on the historical tendency of the discipline that has seen people with esoteric or unpalatable constructions of reality silenced and contained by governments, without the individual having perpetrated any illegal act. Sexuality is a good example of this, often being a victim of the prescription and invasiveness of the state and, on a more informal level, of dominant discourses. The status of homosexuality has been that of sin, of illegal act, of intolerable perversion, it's difference and diverge punished by ruling institutions. To most right-thinking people this is abhorrent. We must recognize that what makes up the private morality of people, when not translated into harmful action, is a space that demands protection by a civil society. By this token, pornographic fantasy, even in its extreme forms of dominance and submission, degradation and triumph, must be allowed to exist and be played out in a safe consensual realm. Further, this space must be protected not only in its interiority but in its capacity as a human and social element to be explored by representation. The Marquis De Sade, George Batailles, Henry Miller and countless others have explored and plumbed the depths of human psychosexuality, sometimes thoughtfully, sometimes with gratuity, and often with the express desire to titillate. Whilst I'm probably not going to argue that 'Drunk Sister Strips Anal Oral Pussy.avi' is as good as Anais Nin, I would suggest in the ensuring of the existence of the latter, the former is a necessary byproduct.

My sister being a bit tipsy and deciding to strip off and show her 'anal oral pussy.avi' might sound a little gynecologically confused, however to represent her position in the production of porn as subordinate and subjugated is to do the industry, and more importantly the women involved, a serious disservice. Firstly, with regards to the industry the female actors involved are paid vastly superior sums to their male counterparts - a financial situation that many professional sports, let alone many sections of the labour market, fail to match. The hours are comparatively short and the work often relatively undemanding. Having sex for a few hours a week does not have to be hellish. Secondly, since the deregulation of the 90s, the porn industry has been able to free itself from the

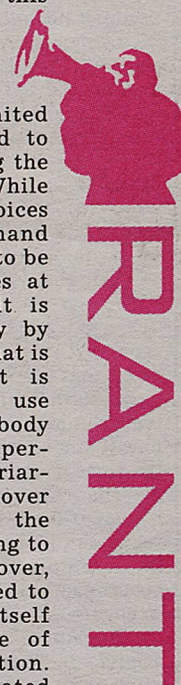


criminal sphere in which it partially operated. As we see, time and time again, when functioning markets are made illegal the demand that constitutes them doesn't just go away. No one responds by saying, 'oh, my government doesn't like me taking smack, thus I think I will hang around until diet coke comes in injectable form'. The demand remains and the supply, now an illegal activity, is necessarily handed over to criminal organizations. These organizations are subject no regulation whatsoever and are the breeding grounds for abuse and mistreatment of those involved. To ensure the basic human and labour rights of those women that choose to become sex workers, requires pornography to continue its move away from criminality and into the safety of the regulated mainstream.

It is unfortunate that many feminist critiques of pornography end up stripping women of their agency and subject-status. The woman that makes the decision to exploit their sexual presence as labour is not only exercising their freedom as defined by a capitalist system, but asserting their ability to choose what they do

with their own bodies. In rejecting this cleaning job, that dinner lady position, the woman is exercising the limited freedom afforded to us when entering the labour market. While all of these choices oblige us to hand over our bodies, to be in certain spaces at certain times, it is the use of body by the sex worker that is condemned. It is argued that this use of the woman's body should not be permitted. The patriarchal control over women's bodies, the top-down ordering to cover or uncover, cannot be allowed to introduce itself under the guise of women's protection. The emancipated woman must have sovereign control over her own body, and for this to happen it requires that women be allowed to gain power, economic or otherwise, through a use of her body in a largely simulated sexual act, if that act is chosen.

For those men whose discriminatory powers break down and that do turn fantasy and thought into illegal action, the state will legitimately act to stop them. But to suggest that the existence of this tiny minority be grounds for restricting the actions and consumption of the majority is profoundly dangerous nonsense. Just as we don't prevent all adults from playing with kids because there are paedophiles in the world, just as we don't allow farmers to gun down fleeing teenagers, just as we don't make people's heads illegal because Ted Bundy likes to put them in his fridge, we don't prohibit things that provide pleasure, stimulation, meaning to people's lives simply because, like all things, there is the potential for misuse. The worst excesses of governmental control are justified on these grounds. This is unacceptable when we want to see the basic freedoms of everyone, the subject-status for all, especially for women, guaranteed in perpetuity. I also quite like to look at hot things when I wank.



a farewell to arms

kevinperry talks to mark thomas about being censored by the bbc, good and bad arms companies and the lse's own arms funding scandal

“How can we control the arms trade? How can we stir up enough public interest? Well, if emotive pictures of destruction and child soldiers were going to work, they would have worked by now. What we need to do is thoroughly destroy all of their arguments.” Mark Thomas fires his opening salvo with the precision and intensity of one of the guns he is working to control, and throughout the interview he rattles off figures and statistics with unnerving accuracy. But then, he should be good at this by now. Mark Thomas has been Britain's foremost campaigning comedian since his show *The Mark Thomas Comedy Product* eschewed tired sketches or “celebrity guests” in favour of creating a platform from which to attack social injustice and political negligence.

He has campaigned in support of laws to ensure greater corporate responsibility, against the building of the Ilisu Dam which will displace up to 78,000 people, and for the removal of third-world debt, but in his new book *As Used On The Famous Nelson Mandela*, and on his current UK stand-up tour, which comes to London's Tricycle Theatre for a week's run beginning on October 30th, he has his sights set firmly on the arms trade.

“All the old arguments that get wheeled out, ‘If we didn't do it, someone else would’, ‘It's good for British jobs’, ‘It's good for the economy’, they're all wrong, and we need to prove that they're wrong to a wider audience. I mean, the arms industry is one of the most protected industries in Britain, these are companies that sponsor conflict, that sell weapons to the sorts of regimes and the sorts of individuals that sane people wouldn't even invite round to their house for a cup of tea, and I really think they're a cancer, a cancer in our society and a cancer at the very heart of our government. So really, my aim is to get people to engage with the arguments.”

To expose the facts and popularise the arguments, Thomas is not afraid to don a cunning disguise and, in true cloak-and-dagger style, infiltrate where many journalists, and certainly most comedians, would fear to tread. He has attended arms fairs posing as a PR expert who specialises in helping repressive regimes deal with Amnesty International and set up gun smuggling rackets in order to expose the loopholes in the current legal system. In light of his experiences, I ask him what he thinks of the UGM's recent decision to boycott donations from arms companies. His answer is less straightforward than one might expect. “Well, I would say that it depends on the companies involved, it's not as easy as saying all companies involved in the manufacture of arms should be boycotted. For example, Land Rover have been involved in arms production over the years, but if they wanted to fund research, let's say into a truck to transport large groups of displaced people, you can't say, ‘They've been involved in arms in the past, we shouldn't work with them.’”

However, when I cite BAE Systems, his answer is slightly different. “I do think there is a very real ethical issue, with anyone, especially any university, accepting money from a company that has time and time again proven itself to act unethically. I mean, this is a company which has bribed, which has hidden information from investigation, which specialises in the most secretive of deals, which supports repressive regimes and that has the Labour government in its pocket, so I would definitely support a refusal to be funded by BAE's money.”

It is a mark of Thomas's nous as a campaigner that his is not a simply dualistic worldview. He accepts, for example, that there

is such a thing as a ‘good’ arms company.

“I do know some moral people who work within the arms trade, and people within the industry who support tougher laws and international treaties. These people will tell you that you can distinguish between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ arms companies. Now, it's fairly easy to see what a ‘bad’ arms company is, I mean, everyone agrees that someone gunrunning to Zimbabwe is a ‘bad’ arms company. The confusion comes when you try to work out exactly what a ‘good’ arms company is.”

The idea of a ‘good’ arms company, I suggest, is perhaps a bitter pill for many activists to swallow. “Well, look at Liberia. The people of Liberia really deserve peace and safety. I mean, considering the things they've been through, the horrible atrocities, they really deserve some safety now. If that means that there has to be an armed police force, then arms are playing a positive role. It shouldn't be assumed that all arms are bad.”

In this context then, support for stricter arms control does not necessarily infer pacifism, and indeed Thomas refuses to sign up to what he calls “The Gandhian Perspective”. “There's no point in adopting a pacifist strategy if the people attacking you are dropping napalm on you from thousands of feet in the air. Non-violent resistance only works by eliciting shame in your attacker, but burning to death with your human dignity intact is still burning to death. Everyone has a right to life. That is the single most important human right - Article Two - It's only natural that along with that right you have a right to defend your life. That's just stunningly obvious. You have to be able to defend your own life against an aggressor.”

For Thomas, one of the failings of the arms control movement up to this point has been ignorance. “I mean, some activists just haven't done their homework. For example, you tell them that the Labour government has done good things, and they're shocked. The Labour government has brought in extra controls on the proliferation of torture equipment. That's fucking brilliant! I mean, yes, it should go further, and apply to all small arms, but it is a step in the right direction, it's better than nothing. If the Conservative government got 0/10 for arms control, then Labour is getting maybe 2/10, but that's still something.”

This mention of mainstream politics brings up one of Thomas's favourite subjects: MPs. I ask him whether he's ever been tempted to join the ranks of his traditional enemies, and also about his friend Tess Kingham, who was Labour MP for Gloucester until she retired after a single term citing disillusionment with the political process. “Tess is an incredibly passionate person, she's a friend, and she didn't fuck about when she was an MP. I mean, she used to go out and do body counts for human rights charities. But after her time as an MP she resigned because she felt her position had become untenable. She felt as if she had become part of the problem, rather than the solution. That's what puts me off conventional politics. Also, I'm not disciplined enough to be an MP. I mean, I don't think I could follow a party line!”

Parliament's loss is investigative journalism's gain. One story that Thomas details in *As Used On The Famous Nelson Mandela* is his uncovering of an illegal deal by the Hinduja's to supply military trucks to the Sudan. Thomas worked on the story for BBC2's *Newsnight*, but the show was never aired following pressure from the Hinduja's lawyers, a decision by the BBC which obviously disappointed Thomas. “I think that the moment they decided to pull the program will live on as a moment of ignomy,



the arms industry is a cancer at the heart of our government

burning to death with your dignity intact is still burning to death

really. It was a shame to see a broadcaster politically cowed, and I think that it made the corporation seem very timid. The BBC has a special role to play. It's remit is public broadcasting, and I think it has a duty to stand head and shoulders above other news broadcasters, and really hold people to account. That's really what democracy is all about, holding people to account, and I think they failed on this occasion.”

However, his work was not without reward. “A lot of very positive things did come out of it, the show I'm touring at the moment features it substantially - we've printed off copies of the final report and we distribute it at the end of each show, and of course the deal did fall through. Although a Chinese company did eventually come in and fill the order anyway, at least my actions did have some effect and proved that forcing the issue can produce results.”

Thomas's campaigns over the years have brought many successes, but, as with any campaigner, the extent to which he knows how much personal influence he has had is unclear.

“I think with anything in life you sometimes know the influence your actions have had, and sometimes you don't. There's a famous story about Kissinger advising Nixon not to nuke Vietnam with the words ‘Beware the hammer blow of the peace movement’, so while they may not have ended the war immediately, perhaps without even knowing it the peace protestors prevented nuclear bombs being dropped. To give another example, there was a strike in Colombia, and the military was called in to sort things out - it was getting very nasty, so solidarity protests were called outside the Colombian embassy in London. Now at these protests you'd get ten people, maybe twenty, maybe even thirty if you were really really lucky. However, when the Colombian government called off the military and began to negotiate, one of their non-negotiable demands was that they ‘call off the pickets in London’. So even relatively minor actions can have a major impact.”

Thomas's own campaigns have produced even more tangible changes. “I think my proudest moments have been getting changes in the law. When I investigated the fact that people were avoiding paying tax on their state-homes by declaring art, furniture, homes and land available for public viewing, I got Gordon Brown to change the tax laws. Finland also introduced a new law to restrict arm sales after one of my programs, and we've got Nestle to change their packaging and that sort of thing.”

“The next big aim is an international arms trade treaty, but really the aim before that is just to get as many people as possible engaged in the debate. It may seem complex, but, for example, back in 1992 I was talking about reducing world debt, and people were incredulous. If you told them the facts they simply wouldn't believe them. If you told them that some of the debt had been created by the Americans funding a nuclear power plant in the Philippines at the foot of an active volcano and in an earthquake zone, people wouldn't believe it, but it's true - a fucking active volcano. But now, some 14 years later, the removal of world debt is a large and popular debate, which shows that the public can get behind quite complicated arguments and movements. The same can happen with arms treaties.”

Thomas's message, like his body of work, is intended as a rallying shout, a call to arms if you will, for each of us to get informed and get engaged with the debates that will shape the world for generations to come.



FRIEZE ART

If you've been to Regent's Park during the past two weeks, you would surely have noticed a giant white marquee. It was not put up for a Royal event or for a billionaire's birthday party - it was the venue for *Frieze Art Fair*. *Frieze* is one of the major yearly art events in the world, with 150 of the most prominent art galleries in the world gathering in London to show the public what they have to offer. It's obvious that the nature of the event is rather commercial, however, through the sculpture park and projects most of the galleries state that their motivation is to make their protégés known. *Frieze* is not just a fair. It includes a wide range of events (art related and not) that involve pretty much the whole of London's increasingly impressive and prominent art scene.

Frieze is the focal point of what could be seen as 'London Art Week', a celebration of London's thriving art scene. The magazine *Art Review*, for example, tied in the launch of their fifth 'Power 100' issue with a huge celebrity party at the *Armani* store in Brompton Road - where French art lover **Francois Pinault** was elected "most powerful man in the art world". At the same time galleries had exhibition openings during the week. Just to mention a couple, *Gagosian Gallery* officially opened **Jeff Koons' Cracked Egg** installation at Davies Street and **Martin Summers** inaugurated a superb **Basquiat** exhibition in Chelsea.

As well as parties, exhibitions and art fairs, auction houses found it suitable to organise sales during the week. *Christie's* five sales of modern and contemporary art realised an outstanding combined total of 44 million pounds. Amongst the many highlights was a painting by **Andy Warhol**, *Flowers* which was sold for almost four million pounds and a *Concetto Spaziale* by Italian artist **Lucio Fontana** (better known to the public as "the one who cuts canvases") achieved the record price for a piece of its kind of over two million pounds. Auction house experts have said that the *Frieze Art Fair* has boosted Post-War and Contemporary art prices by an average of 10%. This pot-pourri of events is exactly what galleries are looking for. They want trendy London to talk about the event and rich London to purchase the artwork.

If you think that by going to *Frieze* you would get a better idea of the contemporary art world, the truth is that you come out of it more confused than you were before. This is partly because of the extremely wide range of works exhibited and partly due to insufficient explanation of the works and the artists.

Every gallery tries to impress the public as much as it can. If *Gagosian Gallery* devotes a considerable part of its booth to **Ed Ruscha** - enough to make any modern art museum jealous, then **Jay Jopling** of the *White Cube* revolutionises the art-fair concept by taking his protégés **Jake and Dinos Chapman** and giving them a room in which they painted people's portraits for the whole weekend. A wonderful and successful business concept (you could get your portrait painted by the Chapmans for £4500 before they sold out) but whether it is actually art is questionable.

Going to *Frieze* often makes you consider whether painting has become an obsolete art form for the Western World. There appears to be a general idea shared by many contemporary artists that being controversial takes you further than being creative. Under this climate, it would be better to paint an exact copy of **David Hockney's Splash**, with a splash of blood, rather than creating something new. Thus, British contemporary art can appear to be stagnating. The famous YBA (Young British Art) label that still bolsters British art is no longer all that young. Artists such as **Tracey Emin**, **Damien Hirst**, **Gavin Turk** and **Gary Hume** are getting older and arguably nobody is replacing them in the general public's conception of our art scene. Should we be concerned that major galleries overlook the emergence of talented artists in favour of safer and more commercially viable work of the 'big names'?

Excellent news does however, come from Asia. A huge variety of Chinese names, most of them new entries, many dealt by major European galleries, are now widely available to the public. Artist **Gang Zhao**, whose fabulous style of painting as well as his reminiscence of Chinese history impressed the majority of art lovers at *Frieze*. Gallerist **Tomio Koyama**, who gave the first show to **Takashi Murakami** (the artist who designed the *Louis Vuitton* multicolour collection), is constantly discovering new Japanese talents such as the young painter **Atsushi Fukui** and, despite having one of the smallest booths at *Frieze*, is showing the Western big galleries how important it is to keep a well balanced artist portfolio, and the need to fully nurture new talents.

Photography and video seemed increasingly prominent at *Frieze* this year. As well as the famous names of **Cindy Sherman**, **Andres Serrano** and **Andreas Gursky**, most of the galleries are exhibiting works of young photographers. Some of them are quite interesting, but I find it hard to understand how a printed photograph can be sold for hundreds of thousands of pounds - perhaps indicative of the creeping commercialisation of the *Frieze Art Fair*.

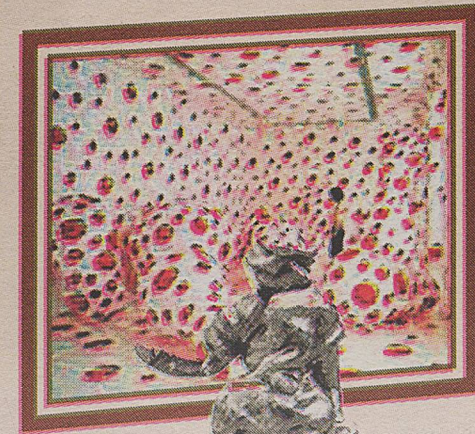
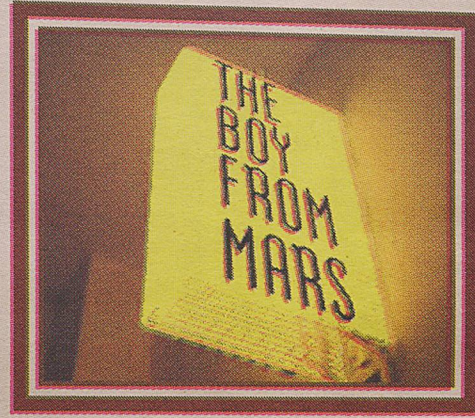
The actual art fair is accompanied by a sculpture park in which galleries have the possibility of exhibiting oversized garden sculptures. It is a well planned area and, as well as being a sort of hideaway from the trading floor, it has interesting pieces, which might go well in the gardens of a Kensington mansion.

Frieze makes you realize how market centred art has become. Sometimes walking around it, you get the same feelings you would get on a stock exchange trading floor. It therefore becomes easy to wonder whether galleries deal certain artists purely for money or because they actually love the artists' work. At the same time you wonder whether collectors buy an artwork because they love it or just as an investment. It is important to admit that people who have invested well in art in the past twenty years have seen the value of their work increase by over fifty or sixty times in certain cases. This tendency of viewing art as a pure form of investment might have actually caused a reduction in the quality of the works exhibited. According to this view a good artist is not the one who evokes emotions but the one who sells well and gets their name in every art magazine. Perhaps this is leading art to be on the same level of fashion - a process of buying a brand, for its popularity and credence rather than its aesthetic value.

However the difference between events such as *London Fashion Week* and *Frieze* is that the latter is not a bubble. In other words, London doesn't stop talking about art when *Frieze* ends. *Frieze* sets the canons of contemporary art and decides in which direction it is heading. Having been to this year's event, we can definitely see that photography and videos are becoming increasingly popular and it is easy to spot the artists that galleries are putting an effort into promoting and those we are going to see on the scene during the next year.

If by going to *Frieze* you understand which artists are going to be popular, other smaller art fairs, hosted at the same time, such as *Scope* (at the Old Truman Breweries) or *Zoo* (at London Zoo) provide you with the chance of discovering some hidden talents. These fairs tend to be followed by a crowd of young collectors (due to the budget constraints) who are eager to see their investments multiplying in the long term. Here you would have fun discovering a new artist rather than buying an established artist's overpriced work from a large gallery.

The main strength of *Frieze* is that it ends by making the public look forward to the following year's event. It is indispensable for the London art world and conspires towards producing the right atmosphere for a year of intense work. At the same time, even though the visitors might have their reservations about it, they are eager to know how the situation will evolve in the future and where art will go.



Outside the London started life... mals, hippos- the... The plebian pay... antechamber I ha... ted down by a se...

Through the middle aged art... cycling in the Al... against men in cr... David Tibet from... buffoons perform... **Anthony Gormley**

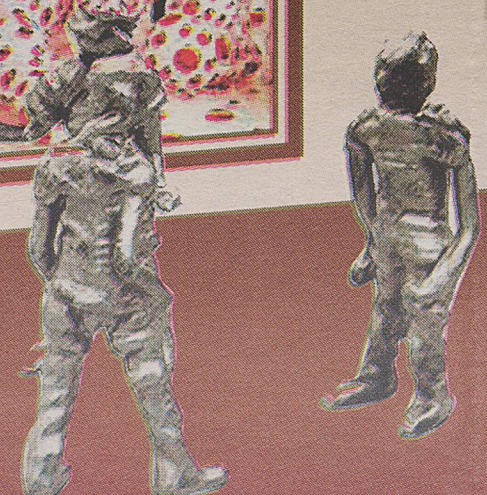
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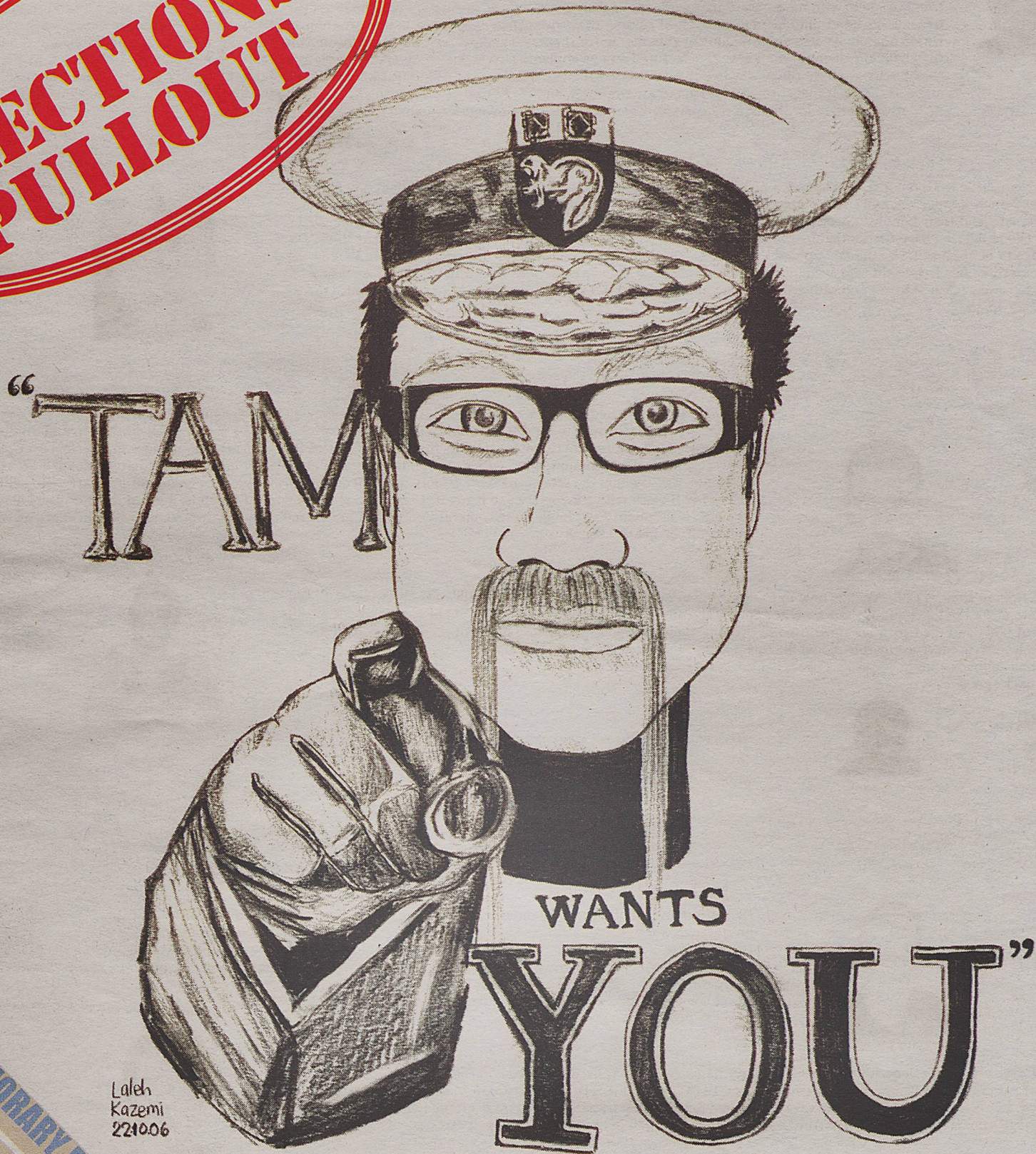
MUSIC



the Beaver

24th October 2006 Issue 647 The newspaper of the LSESU

**ELECTIONS
PULLOUT**



- HONORARY PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT
- COURT OF GOVERNORS
- GENERAL COURSE REP
- ACADEMIC BOARD
- POSTGRADUATE
- LGBT
- NUS
- ULU

when: Wednesday & Thursday
how: drop ballot in box
where: QUAD

Honorary President

Josiah Bartlet, President of the USA in the West Wing, represents, for many people, the ideal liberal president. If you've seen the West Wing you'll know he's a great guy, and a more than adequate honorary figurehead for the Students Union. However, we are not proposing Bartlet the man. We are proposing what he stands for and what he represents. Bartlet, who graduated from the LSE, is a symbol for what we can achieve. The LSE is a world renowned university and as such we need a serious Honorary President. It is accorded by LSE the most important position being contested in the Michaelmas elections. Past Honorary Presidents have included Simon Wiesenthal and Winston Churchill, people who have stood for a principled set of values and who LSE students can aspire to. Voting Bartlet as Honorary President would be a vote for hope, for what we can achieve. It may seem strange to be voting for a vision more than a person, but Bartlet as Honorary President would be best for students and best for LSE.



**Jed
bartlet**

**charles
'richard'
rickards**



Charles "Richard" Rickards has been treated disgustingly. After 25 years of loyal service to the LSE as a cleaner and later as a cleaning supervisor he was arbitrarily sacked, with no accusation or evidence of poor performance, in January of 2006. As supervisor much of the lost property returned to students passed through his hands and he made a habit of coming in extra-ordinarily on graduation days to make sure everything went smoothly for graduating students. Unfortunately he also made a habit of sticking up for those cleaners who worked under him who were the object of disreputable and often illegal treatment by the Dynamiq cleaning company. By electing Richard students have a chance to make a serious statement condemning an obvious injustice right here on campus, an injustice we have the power to put right. They will also highlight the plight of LSE's cleaning staff who receive poverty wages, minimal holiday and sick pay and endure often illegal treatment from their employer, and receive no help from the LSE administration whose buildings they maintain. Finally I'm sure Jed Bartlet would vote for Richard if he could. Thanks - LSE Living Wage Campaign

Honorary Vice President

Huda Ghalia, a 10-year-old Palestinian girl, was having a picnic in a Gaza beach when the Israeli military massacred her whole family, including her father, stepmother, and five siblings with a barrage of shells. Huda symbolizes the indiscriminate maiming of civilians by the Israelis and their impunity in relation to international law. Some 3,700 Palestinians - most of them unarmed and including over 600 children - have been killed by the Israeli army and settlers, since the year 2000. Electing her as the HVP sends a clear message to Israel that LSE students uphold the Palestinian inalienable right for self-determination and that Israel's state terror machine has to be held into account for its crimes against Humanity. Israeli withdrawal from Gaza was a sham, as illegal settlements continue to expand in the West Bank, and its Apartheid policy is being used to ethnic cleanse the Palestinians from their Land.



**huda
ghalla**

General Course Representative

**sean
cross**



As General Course Representative, I believe that we have been neglected on campus. Students across the world have a *handful* of meetings to organize ourselves around. This is disgraceful. Many of us were still settling in and aimlessly wandering around London asking where the best places to eat are. I intend to set permanent changes to the General Course program. I will work with the Communication Officer to create a forum where useful information can be uploaded by ALL General Course students. I will lobby the school to create a more user-friendly information pack sent before we arrive to explain student life here. I will work with the societies to bring international recruiters to the campus: most of the recruiters here seek graduates in the UK, what about us!? I will unite General Course and undergrad students throughout LSE. In short, as your representative, we *will* be heard. Thank you.

As students with a limited time at LSE I realize how important it is to properly represent the General Course body so that each GC student is able to make the most out of their time in London. In running for this position I seek uphold a strong relationship with the GC, student body and the executive committee so that the views, opinions, wants and needs of every GC student are expressed and met. And With Mr. T as my role model for this position I vow to pity the fool on the executive committee that dares give the GC any jibba-jabba.

'Don't give me no back talk sucka!'

**anushka
shonoy**



This candidate did not send in a manifesto.



**thusharo
dissanayake**

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender

**alex
finnegan**



As LGBT officer I would be a strong and passionate voice on the Student's Union. I would:

- * hold weekly surgeries and forums throughout the term making sure that every voice was heard and accounted for.
- * I would work with the LGBT Society in planning and holding events throughout the year including the LGBT awareness week.
- * I would like to increase the number of social events and meetings that we have including more careers events and
- * I would be a good friend to talk to and get support from.

If you want someone with real dedication and sincerity then Vote For Me.

Baggage Handler. Five years experience of dealing with heavy baggage at the LSE. Specialising in the safe handling of sexuality and religion briefcases. Want to address the problems faced by LGBT luggage, particularly those from ethnic minorities coming along the conveyor belt that is the LSE. My past experiences mean that I'm particularly good at sourcing help for anyone who has lost their luggage somewhere between departure and arrival. Looking to get promoted to Senior Package Inspector. Vote Yusuf for LGBT.



**yusuf
osman**

Postgraduate Officer

**James
caspell**



VOTE JAMES CASPELL #1 FOR POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS OFFICER

EXPERIENCE: Current Student Governor and Member of LSE Council; Co-Founder, Former Co-Chair and Treasurer, LSESU Green Party; Living Wage Campaign Committee; Beaver Collective Member; Student/Staff Liaison Committee; Former LSESU Constitution & Steering Committee Member; Young Greens National Committee

IF ELECTED I WILL:

- DEMAND more financial assistance for all postgraduate students and lower tuition fees.
- LOBBY LSE to keep Wednesday afternoons free so that postgraduates can take part in sport too.
- CAMPAIGN for cheaper summer hall rents for postgraduate students completing their dissertation.
- OPPOSE the increasing marketisation and corporatisation of LSE - our education is not for sale!
- SUPPORT the National Postgraduate Committee's campaign against the Government's attack on international students - visa appeals should be a right!

VOTE JAMES CASPELL #1

Communicating our problems, Linking us together and Assisting you Postgraduates to convert your ideas into real actions. C.L.A.P! Into actions which will help us, postgraduates, to be heard; which help us, postgraduates, have our own impact on the University's policies. Communicating, Linking and Assisting Postgraduates! C.L.A.P! These are the 4 words that are the solution; these are the words that will guide my actions!



**dmitri
mitrofanov**

Academic Board

As a third year Law student and already President of the Debate Society I am committed to fighting for students needs on academic board: (1) **better teaching provision** – by tackling overcrowding and increasing students' contact time with senior academic staff; (2) **bettering the support we receive** – for example giving greater assistance with writing dissertations for postgraduate students and finalists or addressing the particular concerns of disabled or foreign language students in using the Library or IT services; and (3) **a better approach to examinations** –with more feedback given freely to students, resits, and clearer responsibilities for both student and School.



**ross
k
allan**

**olle
dodd**



Experience
British Youth Council - Trustee
Education for All - International Campaigner

Thrice the cost, thrice the quality! Time to get your money's worth! I will demand better teaching, support and feedback so that students receive the high standard of education they deserve! Re-sits as a right not an exception! Success at LSE should be based on dedication and sustained achievement, not just one exam! Re-sits give students a second chance. Admissions favour money over merit! Cost of tuition prices out many of the brightest students; I will oppose increasing tuition fees and demand greater financial support.

We're not being listened to - vote for Hudda Khaireh and be heard!
Major policy decisions are taking place without enough consultation and major grievances are going without redress.
Vote for Hudda Khaireh and:

- Hold LSE to account over large class sizes and overcrowding on campus.
- Have increased transparency through regular reports in the Beaver and on PuLSE FM.
- Demand mandatory exam and class feedback and more academic support from personal tutors.
- Call for an affordable LSE with greater access and awareness to scholarships.

Your Voice Needs to Be Heard! Vote #1 Hudda Khaireh – Academic Board



**hudda
khairah**

**sacha
robehmed**



Academically, change needs to be affected at the LSE. I believe the focus needs to be shifted back towards its students. This would be achieved by increased student-staff contact time, better access to academics and more thorough, frequent feedback. The school needs to consider our views, and should make re-sits a widely available option, which would reduce the additional burden in terms of time and finances which students can face. I pledge to represent everyone's views, as I am an independent candidate and not just the mouthpiece of a political party. Decisions taken by the Academic Board affect all of us - make the issues that matter to you be heard. Let's make them listen!

NUS Conference Delegate

I will work to ensure the NUS progresses towards being the strong, diverse, mobile union students need. As LSE's International Students Officer, I intend to see their concerns taken seriously by the NUS, through a new, full-time NUS International Students Officer post.

I believe the NUS must prioritise campaigns against discrimination and push forcefully for an end to unreasonable visa charges and surges in rent and tuition fees. Furthermore, ethical investment, mobilisation against environmental degradation and students defending human rights, are key to my agenda. Because changes comes from within, I will work tirelessly to promote these values.

!Vote Fadhil!



**fadhil
bakoormarkar**

**benjamin
epstein**



I love the university, the people, the brand, and am passionate about my involvement in the SU, through society committees and sports. I am standing on a broad platform of inclusivity; Therefore I am against further rises in tuition fees so as to widen participation in higher education, I am Anti-racism and favour inter-faith and communal dialogue and will ultimately strive for an active and interactive SU. Highly competent, determined and passionate - and above all, new to SU politics, I will bring a fresh and energetic approach to LSE representation at this year's NUS conference.

Our education is not for sale - vote Aled to campaign for students, the environment and social justice.

I am the LSESU Environment and Ethics Officer. I campaign for the Green Party, Stop the War, Amnesty and others; here, I campaign for the Living Wage and successfully banned funding from the arms trade at the SU.

If elected, I will oppose all student fees - education is a right, not a privilege. I will bring my experience to the NUS Ethical and Environmental Campaign, and support the Anti-Racism Campaign in confronting discrimination.

Vote for passion, experience and commitment - vote for Aled!



**aled
dilwyn
fisher**

**doug
oliver**



My name is Doug Oliver and I am running for a more democratic, accountable and transparent NUS. Last year as Returning officer i sought to promote democracy at LSE. I now want to be a voice for it in the national institution. NUS has great potential to help students, but because of its unrepresentative nature, a gulf has emerged between it and students. By calling for greater direct democracy, this gulf can be at least be partly bridged and the NUS and its campaigns will be stroger. I would be grateful if you consider voting for me for NUS delegate

Britain under New Labour is plumbing new depths. This summer, Blair refused to condemn Israeli aggression against Lebanon, while the costly occupations of Palestine, Afghanistan and Iraq continue to inflict daily suffering in these countries. Moreover, the government is ready to set aside £72 billion on renewing Britain's nuclear capability alone. Such policies are necessarily accompanied by government-led bigotry against Muslims and massive cuts in public services. Top-up fees have already caused a 15000 fall in university intake. I am standing on a Student Respect platform for NUS as part of a national campaign to end war, racism and privatisation.



**vladimir
unkovski-korica**

Court of Governors

I'm Kanishka Aubeelack and I'm standing for policy which will benefit us in the short-term. By this, I mean anything from capping of international/postgraduate fees to what the school is doing to attract more world-class academics - policy which benefits students and the image of the school. The LSE is investing a lot on expansion for e.g. the new academic building on Kingsway, but many of us will probably never benefit from any of this. That's not to say it should not be done, but the school must not lose sight of its current students too. Thank you for reading this.



kanishka aubeelack

fadhil barkeer-markar



Strong from my experience as International Students Officer, I'm well aware of the concerns of International Students and guarantee to continue combating visa charges and excessive tuition fees. 600+ students attended my International Student Induction and many more approve my longstanding fight against discrimination at LSE. My priorities lie in creating an environmentally-conscious, ethical university, promoting dialogue. I am ever-present in the daily reality of the LSE community, which certainly needs to be better explained to decision-makers. Too many people have given up on having their views represented. I propose a refreshed, active, responsive Court of Governors. !Vote Fadhil!

Being a Governor last year gave me detailed insight into the workings of the School, its decision-makers and officials. I thus have a good network of recognition and reliability that will help us students bring our issues forward. I will work towards greater value for the massive amount of money we spend studying at LSE; I will work towards continuous assessment of our studies at LSE; I will work for students truly becoming the centre of attention of the School. Re-elect me to get someone truly passionate and serious about the task to represent the views of us students!



eddy fonyodi

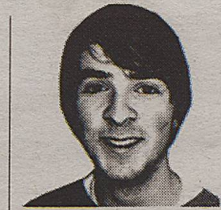
andy hallett



Make the progressive choice! I want to see an activist Court rather than the stagnant one of recent years. Voting for Andy Hallett means a Court which backs the Living Wage campaign. Which is against arms companies and the rich buying off our School. Which will set targets to reduce LSE's carbon footprint and colossal amount of waste. Which will push to make all of the School accessible to all students. Vote for a fresh face with a proven record of progressivism (Amnesty, Liberty, Oxfam). Make Andy Hallett your #1 choice for Court of Governors - make the progressive choice.

THE REAL ALTERNATIVE

The Court of Governors is where 'major questions affecting the development of the school' are discussed. VOTE HOLDEN to OPPOSE increasing fees and charges SUPPORT more bursaries so that academic merit is the only criteria for entry DEFEND the integrity and independence of the SU PROVIDE a moderate voice for you in the school against the rants of extremists PLACE the interests of LSE STUDENTS above the political desires of a vocal minority ITS DICKY 4 ME VOTE RICHAD HOLDEN #1 Court of Governors



richard holden

arthur krobbors



Your Societies Officer, Your Representative! Campaigning for... - STUDENT WELLBEING Putting YOUR interests first - ADEQUATE FACILITIES More resources for societies, halls & sport clubs - DIVERSITY Promoting a respectful campus environment, open to different cultures - AFFORDABILITY: No skyrocketing fees, more scholarships and income support My Means... RELIABILITY- track record of successful union involvement TRANSPARANCY - Reporting back to you regularly ACCOUNTABILITY - Open for comments, queries & questions Choose Experience: SU Societies Officer, Hall President, departmental representative, Active in Societies, Sport Clubs & the Media GroupE NERGY, ENTHUSIASM, EXCELLENCE

This candidate did not send in a manifesto.



carys morgan

louise robinson



Vote for Representation: *Experienced and vocal as your SU Residences Officer *Committed to universal support and representation for all students *Clarity and understanding: Listening; responding; giving feedback through the Beaver and UGM Vote for Improvement: *Improved facilities: Demanding a comfortable, secure, environmentally sustainable campus *Social Justice: Actively supporting Living Wage campaigns via media editorials and Residences committees *Promoting participation: Active state-school recruitment; 'No' to all rising fees; more financial support

Zoë Sullivan #1 for Court of Governors!

My name is Zoë and I am asking you to re-elect me to the Court of Governors. Last year I worked hard to represent you, and ensure student interests were heard by the Court on issues such as equal access to education and environmental sustainability. If re-elected this year, I want to focus on access to exam feedback and provision of set texts in the Course Collection. Do you want a voice on Court that is clear, responsive and passionate? Make Zoë Sullivan your #1 choice and I will not let you down!



zoë sullivan

ULU Council Delegate

nada mansy



ULU is supposed to co-ordinate activities and campaigning of University of London students, but few of us even know why it exists or what it does. I will work to change this by 1. Using LSE media group to achieve greater awareness of ULU facilities/campaigns 2. Maintaining and strengthening campaigns for affordable transport and against rising top up fees 3. Scrutinising ULU for greater transparency - we need to know where our money is being spent 4. Taking the initiative on environmental, social justice and ethical issues. 1st year undergraduate: inclusive, experienced and approachable! 'MAKING ULU WORK FOR LSE STUDENTS!' USE YOUR VOTE WISELY, VOTE NADA MANSY # 1

Your Societies Officer, Your Representative!

AK's 5 point plan 1. STUDENT ISSUES Putting YOUR interests first, Bringing ULU on your doorstep 2. BETTER CO-OPERATION Furthering links between universities 3. MORE DISCOUNTS for transport and recreational activities 4. IMPROVED COMMUNICATION & GOVERNANCE Making ULU more relevant and transparent 5. CAMPAIGNS Taking a stand across London His Means: RELIABILITY- Track record of successful union involvement TRANSPARANCY - Reporting back to you regularly ACCOUNTABILITY - Open for comments, queries & questions Choose Experience... SU Societies Officer, Hall President, departmental representative, Active in Societies, Sport Clubs & the



arthur krobbors

ART FAIR

Outside the London Hippodrome - which started life in the 19th century as a drome for, amongst other animals, hippos- the guest-list queue stretched all the way into Leicester Square tube station. The plebian pay queue, on the other hand, had no one in it but me. Inside the plush antechamber I had the contents of my bag roughly mauled and my inside leg roughly patted down by a security man called **Mike**.

Through the staggered series of foyers an odd crowd reveals itself. A lot of arterati, middle aged art professionals, some healthy people looking like they should be outside cycling in the Alps, pierced and irregularly-shorn metallers rub their tattooed shoulders against men in crisp white shirts. As is my graceful way I walk into and nearly knock over **David Tibet** from **Current 93**. **Jarvis Cocker**, sour-facedly watched on as three desperate buffoons performed amongst each other for his approval. Someone reported seeing **Anthony Gormley** hanging around the ladies toilets in a **Venom** t-shirt.

The auditorium is swathed in uterine red drapes. There is a neo-Weimar feel. Around the edges the intricate maze of glass and chrome stairs, leading to a myriad of vertiginous stanchions, made me think I would be having a better time were I a toddler.

Rensing Manto is there onstage and he's playing a violin, with harsh noise effects, and is bowing all up over his fingers. He is barking into two microphones, his voice panned hard left and right. Now he has two bows, he is bowing in a circular motion over the bridge and the other bow is jabbing and fossicking further up the neck. It sounds like **Arthur Russell** in pain and looks like a musical praying mantis. I make a mental note to approach him for the next series of *When Classically-Trained Musicians Go Bad*.

Next are **Haswell and Hecker**. Well it's sort of them, it's mainly three enormous pods suspended from the ceiling, looking like some kind of surveillance system from *Terminator 5*, full of speakers blaring out barren sheets of abstract noise. Described by *Frieze* as 'live multi-channel electro-acoustic diffusion concerts' they precipitate in my friend, generally sturdy of mental health, something of a nervous breakdown. But nothing compares to the sheer sonic devastation of **Sunn O)))**. Dressed from head to toe in ritualistic robes they rock and sway in grim pantomime to a sound that speaks of little else but volume. Behind so much dry-ice that even the most inveterate smokers felt polluted, they delivered their monastic rumbles for over an hour. Outside my friend could hardly flyer the queue, her hands were shaking so hard. Another friend had been sick.

danielyates [above] turns his ears, and his pen, to frieze music's opening night **samashton** [right] sonically scrutinises the second segment of frieze sounds **carloberardi** [left] has a look at the art and sees frieze as a focal point for the london art scene

With my ears still ringing from the previous night's mauling at the hands of **Sunn O)))** I weave my way through the thronging crowds of drunken Saturday night revellers towards the cavernous environs of Leicester Square's Hippodrome. After an ever so slightly invasive pat down from the burly bouncer I gain entry only to find ex-**Deerhoof** bassist **Chris Cohen's** band **The Curtains** already on stage. The mere mention of **Deerhoof** is enough to get me panting excitedly so the realisation that the **Curtains** are incredibly dull hits me along with a considerable amount of disappointment. They came across as some sort of hotel lounge act playing tepid 60s influenced songs delivered by a group of musicians as charismatic and engaging as a used condom, except without the hint of previous excitement.

Thankfully the haze of tedium induced by the previous band is soon dissipated by the witty polemics and ultra camp dance moves of **BARR. BARR** is the project of LA resident **Brendan Fowler** who half sings, half speaks, and half raps over simple drum loops, low mixed bass and the occasional piano. **Brendan** cavorts about the stage accompanied only by an ipod backing track and his own unique vocals. His energy is contagious, whether he be enthusiastically hugging people in the front row or singing from atop the speaker stack while worried looking sound technicians look on. But it is **Brendan's** lyrics that are the real draw; they vary from bizarre non-sequiturs "This is a call to arms. This is a call to dogs, arms and legs, the ones that would never break", to witty putdowns "I don't know how to say it, but your ass broke the chequebook", to strange snippets of conversation about people and places we don't know "It made sense that she was stressed, the way that motherfuck-face gave her the runaround about her mortgage on her place. It really made me mad!" As such **Brendan's** songs are both funny and bewildering, his short set leaves me wanting more.

Erase Errata are one of those bands I've always known I'd like but for reasons completely unknown I've never got around to listening to them. They trade in riot grrl styled post-punk, music that's all angles and sharp edges. The band, consisting of drummer **Bianca Sparta**, bassist **Ellie Erickson** and guitarist/singer **Jenny Hoyston**, are super tight, their jagged rhythms burst forth from the PA causing audience to explode in a fit of dancing. All the post-punk signposts are in place; propulsive bass, scratchy guitar,

and sparse funky drumming. Although the band are a cut above most post-punk revivalists there's a tendency for their songs to blur into one another, as well as twenty years of similar music. The set highlight comes on the closing song when **Jenny** leans her guitar against the amp, and as the feedback screeches she grabs a trumpet and proceeds to play a particularly dissonant solo against the super tight groove.

The wait for **Liars** is interminable, sweat trickles slowly down my back, my legs grow heavy, the crowd seem anxious and irritable, perhaps the anticipation is getting to them too. **Liars** began their career as a bass happy post-punk band, lauded by critics and fashionistas alike; everyone danced to their infectious 'tunes'. But between their first and second album something went wrong, instead of danceable riotous punk we got tales of witches and warlocks chanted over dubbed out drums and eerie guitar stabs. Most fans deserted **Liars**, dismissing *They Were Wrong, So We Drowned* as millennium equivalent of **Lou Reed's Metal Machine Music**, an exercise designed purely to alienate their fan base. But a few of us dug deeper and found something strangely compelling amongst the album's murky production, only to be vindicated this year with the release of the utterly compelling *Drum's Not Dead*.

From the opening double snare hits of 'Drum and the Uncomfortable Can' it's clear we're in for something special. Twin drummers **Aaron Hemphill** and **Julian Gross** pound their drums with incredible force, the beats ringing out from the PA like thunderclaps. The complex groove consisting of snare, floor tom, and stick clicking is kept going for a good five minutes as we await the arrival of frontman **Angus Andrew**, before he appears striding out onto the stage immaculately dressed in a gray pinstripe suit. **Angus** is a truly wonderful frontman, charisma and charm are seemingly his life force, he screams, he dances manically and maintains interest between songs with witty banter. The set list is good mix of *They Were Wrong...* and *Drum's Not Dead* material, all played with animal ferocity, every note and drum hit sending the crowd into further paroxysms of delight, arms flail as people concentrate all their energy on dancing to this weirdly ephemeral music. After rapturous applause the band return with an amazing rendition of 'Broken Witch', the whole crowd chanting along to the bizarre refrain 'I, I am the boy / She, She is the girl / He, He is the bear / We, We are the army you see through the red haze of blood'.



visual arts

getting off on getting in

elite clubber michaelbattalia checks if he's on the list

At around 10pm, little white umbrellas adorned with champagne logos pop up in front of inconspicuous black doors on small streets all over West London. Wielding their clipboards like a king's sceptre, facial-haired 20-year olds armed with Helmut Lang suits and a haughty air begin ticking off names. Tonight they will make and break the self-worth of hundreds of party hopefuls as they decide who is worthy of getting in. The physical separation between the people on either side of the velvet rope may be only a few centimetres, but a different story is told by the high-strung antics which occur every time someone is refused entry even though their "friends just went in". These precious centimetres represent the main product on offer in contemporary high-end clubs: the kick you get knowing that other people weren't worth opening the rope for, but you are.

Dance parties of yesteryear could be cool with the humble offerings of a disco ball, a decent sound system and a good-looking bartender. Today most of those 'boring' aesthetic concerns are dwarfed by the psychological merchandise of seeing a crowd desperate to get in. No special DJ or cocktail could ever replace the modern clubber's slightly sadistic need to see people sacrifice their dignity at the door only to be crisply rejected by the 'cool haircut guy'. Observe *Mo*Vida* on a Saturday night and you will find that even if *Scarlett Johansson* is dancing on the table inside, the real action happens just outside the velvet rope where the door staff are begged, threatened, insulted, and sometimes flashed by frantic would-be



patrons. Why don't they go to the pub down the street? What's in there anyway?

Well, there are tables. The table culture has by and large come to dominate high-end clubbing in major cities and resorts. The pretence of socialising sometimes seems to be only a means to the end of a good, healthy ego-boost. Why dance when you can sit and drink overpriced booze while trying unsuccessfully to communicate with your friends over *Nelly Furtado's* voice? Just like *Bungalow 8* in Manhattan, *Aura* is so defined by this culture that it has no dancefloor, only about two metres between the table areas used for momentary spasms of movement amid an evening of important private discussions about next weekend. Letting your hair down is for that pub down the street. NYC's *La Esquina* is so eager to make their customers feel above the masses that

they pretend to not exist. The opulent club is strangely downstairs from a seedy taco stand; even the most clued-in would walk right by.

It seems that our Western cult of individualism has permeated our lifestyles to such an extent that even a night out has to be riddled with social distinctions and power play. And this battle of pretensions seems to be more than Veblen-style conspicuous consumption. Clubs argue that they are open to anyone able to pay a premium for a quality service and willing to follow the protocol by booking in advance and showing up well-groomed and well-mannered. In short, their method of exclusion is really quite inclusive: even the richest will be turned away if they are drunk, rude or informally dressed.

"If there are two restaurants together," explains the founder and director of

Chinawhite, *John Stephen*, "and one is full and one is empty, you go to the one that's full because you will assume there is better food in that one." It seems simple enough, right? But when pressed further he conceded that maybe a certain "arrogance" has developed itself around the club but, "We hate that". Interestingly, he described his club as "not unlike the LSE" in the way it attracts people - with attentiveness to organisation, health and safety concerns and the best resources on offer. However, these factors are secondary. When asked what he feels draws the crowds to his establishment, the managing director of *Tantra* replied simply, "Reputation".

If you still insist that exclusive clubs could never be worth the fuss, consider the appeal. Who doesn't feel great being part of an exclusive institution? Whether it is a university, an ideology or a nightclub, our tendency as humans to exclude others is really just a mechanism that allows us to distinguish who we are. Should we condemn exclusion? Perhaps we should accept it as a tool that helps us sort out the bombardment of information we face in this society. "Let me tell you about the very rich," said F. Scott Fitzgerald, "They are different from you and me." But as pieces of the upper-class lifestyle become increasingly available to the mainstream consumer, so do their ethos. It may not be possible to reconcile the ideas that West London clubs both facilitate social mobility and rigidify social barriers, but if nothing else can be concluded, it is that the era of the exclusive club has only just begun.

Sarastro

the show after the show

Located in the heart of Theatreland, only 5 minutes walk from the LSE, Sarastro is the most exciting and extravagant restaurant in the West End and a perfect place to spend time in before and after your show.

The restaurant is flamboyantly yet unpretentiously designed as a theatre with ten 'opera boxes' based on different artistic traditions.

The menu offers a fantastic choice of delicious Mediterranean and Turkish food, fresh seafood, exquisite wines and spirits.

Set menus start at £15

Massive discounts for LSE students only!

126 Drury Lane, TheatreLand, London, WC2B 5QG. Reservations: 02078360101

Papageno

the show never ends

A beautifully designed restaurant, only 7 minutes walk from the LSE, is named after the character in Mozart's 'Magic Flute'.

Papageno's design reminds you of Alladin's cave and an old opera set, where artistic exuberance complements wonderful cuisine.

The chef boasts a variety of Mediterranean food, exceptional fish, and tempting starters, such as the cheese Borek.

Spacious 700 seat Papageno welcomes student birthday parties, graduation celebrations and evening get-togethers.

Massive discounts for LSE students, every day and night!

29-31 Wellington St., Covent Garden, WC2E 7DB. Reservations: 02078364444

Luxurious culinary pampering for all LSE students...

So you've sampled the views from the London Eye, spent all your money shopping on Oxford Street, crawled out of too many bars to remember and clocked up hundreds of miles walking around all the art galleries and museums in the city? As you know London is a great place to live but if you want a change from the capital read on.

How about the English tradition of a trip to the seaside? Brighton is one of the most vibrant towns you could find and is less than an hour train ride from Victoria.

On your walk down to the seafront, wander through the maze of narrow streets that makes up 'Brighton Lanes' with its diverse array of antique, jewellery and clothes shops, often selling unique and quirky items. Brighton's Royal Pavilion is a must for the day tripper.

You will not see a stranger or more intriguing building than the 'English Taj Mahal', once the holiday palace of the extravagant King George IV. A walk along the Pier is worthwhile, if not for the arcades and fairground rides, then for the great view out to sea. You'll find plenty of lively pubs back in the town centre to service all your student needs. Or why not simply sit by the sea and enjoy Brighton's legendary takeaway fish



and chips?

If a day out by the river sounds more to your liking, look no further than Windsor, only thirty minutes train journey from Paddington. The famous Windsor Castle is situated in the heart of the town, offering visitors a close up look at the glorious 1000 year old castle. Take a tour inside and see paintings, tapestries and suits of armour from the Royal Collection - all for £12 with a student discount! Some of the best and busiest pubs and restaurants can be found at the foot of the castle, so if you don't fancy a royal visit simply use the castle as a backdrop to a few drinks and a meal!

A stroll around 'Windsor Royal Shopping' offers an exceptional collection of restaurants, cafes, and designer clothes shops all housed in a magnificent Victorian railway station. In spring and summer boat trips take you along the Thames to the nearby Kennedy Memorial and Runnymede fields where the Magna Carta was signed in 1215. Windsor is the ideal place for walking by the river or sitting and watching the world go by.

Plan a trip out of the city and really take a break.

jameshillier [left] goes exploring outside of london on day trips to brighton and windsor, while emilyding [right] asks whether a hefty lonely planet guide is a brick, or a traveller's bible



Being a student in London usually means travelling Europe, and I am comforted upon my departure knowing I've got my *Lonely Planet* guide tucked securely in my backpack.

That sounds a bit pathetic but I dare say it's true for most of us. There are other travel guides of course, but none as indispensable as *Lonely Planet*. AA is plainly unhelpful, and the rest - *Frommer's*, *Fodor's*, *Footprint*, *Rough Guides* - are lacklustre. To be fair, I like *Time Out* (though it isn't entirely cut out for the budget traveller) and *Let's Go* runs a close second for me, but *Lonely Planet* walks the perfect line between telling you enough and telling you too much.

So, people say *Lonely Planet* isn't cool anymore because everybody's using it, but here's what I think: *Lonely Planet* is just the skeleton. It gives you an idea of what a place is like and what it offers but leaves you to figure out the how. Obviously things are more straightforward with bustling cities, like Paris, London or New York, but for places less-trodden, *Lonely Planet* is a useful starting point, especially when you speak the language like you score in exams - which for me, is not at all.

So no, I never leave home without a *Lonely Planet* guide, but I'd say this, it'll be beneficial to do some research before your trip. At the end of the day *Lonely Planet* is only updated annually so do not rely solely on it; websites, forums and travellers' blogs broaden my conception of a destination, and sometimes I get in touch with locals or individual travellers to ask them for recommendations. They're usually willing to help out.

So. *Lonely Planet*: brick or bible? Bible. And it weighs less than a brick, too.

around the lonely planet in 2 day trips



london film festival

angustse looks ahead to see what the bfi has to offer

This year is the 50th anniversary of the *London Film Festival*, with 181 features showing in the span of 3 weeks. It's the perfect time to sample delicacies from each and every genre of cinema, from avant-garde to war epics, and it would be wise to say that the best way to enjoy the Festival is to choose films that won't be on general release rather than big studio films. Here are some of my recommendations, including some films that may be overlooked.

Starting with American films, there's *Bobby*, an Altmanesque ensemble drama with a star-studded cast playing a variety of characters united by the fateful events of the day on which **Robert Kennedy** was assassinated. Another ensemble drama is *Fast Food Nation*. Adapted from author **Eric Schlosser's** indictment of the fast food industry, it starts off with a fast food company's investigation of cow shit in the meat, so it should be 'interesting'. For those looking for comedy, there's *Stranger Than Fiction*, where taxman **Will Ferrell's** life somehow interlinks with an author's novel, who is about to kill off his character. I guess the title certainly fits. How about *Spinal Tap* for the Oscars? That's *For Your Consideration*, written, directed and starring **Christopher Guest**, creator of the original landmark mockumentary. And of course there's *Borat*, which needs no further introduction. Perhaps the most intriguing American film in the Festival this year is *Shortbus*, the sex film of the year. On the surface, it's about New Yorkers engaging in real straight and gay sex. It's not porn, rather a lighthearted look at the failure of city people to open up emotionally.

Those looking for European cinema will not be disappointed. Two new British films *Mischief Night* and *This is England* touch upon social issues— one is a comedy about race relations in a Yorkshire town; the other is about skinheads, crime and Thatcherite Britain. The Italians make their own gangster movie, *Romanzo Criminale*, and it's good. What stands out is its recreation

Oscar-worthy German film shown in the Festival is *The Lives of Others*, about East German secret police spying on a famous playwright couple. Eastern European farce *12:08 East of Bucharest*, which won the Camera D'Or at Cannes this year, is worth seeing. A producer desperately tries to create a TV talk show to commemorate Romanian dictator Ceausescu's deposition by inviting

ing double feature is the relationship drama *Heart, Beating in the Dark*. The original, made in 1982, and its new 'reimagining' in 2005, both by the same director, are rarely shown overseas— a pity since they are true gems of Japanese indie cinema.

In the documentaries section, an important release is *The US v.s. John Lennon. Lennon and Yoko Ono's* pacifism during the Vietnam War worried the government so much that the FBI and Nixon started plotting against them. A tribute to the star, it also resonates deeply into our modern era— and you thought the Patriot Act was new? Another celebrity-politics piece is *Dixie Chicks: Shut Up and Sing*, showing the trials and tribulations of the country group that faced public backlash in USA for a single comment criticising Bush. Two emotionally challenging films should be highlighted here. *Beyond Hatred* is a moving portrait of a family trying to move on beyond their feelings of hatred and revenge over the killing of their son. A controversial choice in the Festival is *The Bridge*, where the director filmed the Golden Gate Bridge for a year, capturing the 23 out of 24 people who committed suicide. It's no snuff film though, touching wide issues with interviews of friends, relatives, witnesses and the one man who survived his suicide attempt. And of course there's the surreal and stomach-churning *Our Daily Bread* about food production.

So what are you waiting for? Just go online at www.lff.org.uk or get a copy of the programme at the Festival booth at Leicester Square. Don't be afraid to experiment, but most of all enjoy the experience!



of Italy's history from the 70s to the 90s, showing the links between crime, terrorism and political corruption. *Princess* is creative while remaining challenging, telling the story of a troubled priest who starts a violent crusade to destroy all pornography starring his dead sister. Mixing animation and live action, it's not cheap sensationalistic material but a complex moral film. An

locals to contribute. Hilarity ensues.

In world cinema, two very interesting musicals shown are *Opera Jawa*, a lavish Javanese opera recreated for film, and *Son of Man*, a modern recreation of the Bible. For the arthouse cinephile, *Invisible Waves*, *Syndromes and a Century*, *Still Life*, and *I Don't Want To Sleep Alone* are four major pieces showcasing the best Asian talent. An appeal-

In between the analysis of **Donne** and an introduction to **F.R. Leavis** during an Oxbridge English admissions prep class I'd tagged along to out of curiosity, our teacher reminded us of something important—there is such a thing as trying too hard. And *The History Boys*, based on the hit play by **Alan Bennett**, and directed by **Nick Hytner**, is the perfect example of this.

The play is set in the 80s, and is about a bunch of lads in a Sheffield grammar school trying to get into Oxbridge under the guidance of their quotation-spouting teacher **Hector (Richard Griffiths)** and smart-alec, Oxford-educated temp **Irwin (Stephen Campbell Moore)**. Although their teaching styles differ, both are attracted to the boys—Hector gives them 'genital massages' on the back of his motorbike, and Irwin seldom has eyes for anyone but **Dakin**, the class hunk. But, hey, the boys all get into Oxbridge, so the teachers must be doing something right. Throw in a few more com-

pound adjectives and gerunds, questions on history, a death, and some provocative thoughts about the education system, and you come close to what *The History Boys* is about. Unfortunately, it doesn't translate very well on screen.

The fundamental problem is that Bennett and the producers have followed the stage play a bit too religiously. While characters playing verbal tennis with each other using clever, quotable, lines seems acceptable in a theatre where larger-than-life characters can compensate for the distance between actor and audience, they don't quite succeed under the scrutiny of a camera.

Some characters, such as **Samuel Barnett's** **Posner**, ben-

efit from the more intimate medium. For others, you get the feeling that Hytner must have confused close-ups with character depth. But when your characters talk about "controlled explosions" while fondling in bed, and students start a spontaneous recitation of Larkin by a memorial, you're as detached from reality as you can get, and that's not something that could be remedied simply by close-ups.

The other problem is that it still feels stage-bound at times. The notable example is at the end of the movie, when another teacher, **Mrs Lintott**, tells the audience what the boys' futures holds. It feels forced and out of place, especially when juxtaposed with the more intimate scenes which successfully made the translation from stage to screen.

Despite all this, the cast shines. Credit goes to the filmmakers for keeping the original cast; they all tackle the dense script perfectly, and the camaraderie between the boys is clear. The younger actors are great, especially **Barnett** and **Jamie Parker**, who plays the self-consciously religious **Scripps**. **Frances de la Tour** gives a great turn as **Mrs Lintott**, a rather sad, 'seen-it-all' teacher stuck in a man's world. And, at the heart of the play is **Griffiths's** portrayal of **Hector**. For all his eccentricities—he made his pupils memorize all the words to 'When I'm Cleaning Windows', among other things—and those trips on the

motorbike with the boys, **Griffiths's** **Hector** still manages to be likeable, and ultimately worthy of sympathy. In the scene where he and **Posner** discuss **Hardy's Drummer Hodge** after the former had just been told to retire early, you can see the man slowly unraveling under the sense of unrealized ambitions.

And for all its flaws, *The History Boys* is an extremely funny movie. I defy anyone not to laugh out loud during the infamous 'brothel' scene or **Posner's** frustrated "I'm a Jew. I'm small. I'm homosexual. And I live in Sheffield. I'm fucked."

It's been a few years now, and all I remember from those English lessons is **Donne's** 'vegetable love', and **F.R. Leavis** being mentioned somewhere in *Bridget Jones*. And it's no wonder too, how, in the end, it's the humour and wit that stands out in *The History Boys*, rather than those self-important 'gobbets' on sexuality, history and life. Literature matters, because one can read about experiences and emotions set in those best-ordered words of others, and discover it is our own experiences and emotions—"it is as if a hand has come out and taken yours", as **Hector** tells **Posner**. Yet the film never quite manages to achieve this, being a bit too far from the realities of university admissions today, and just a bit too detached in general. *The History Boys* tries hard to work on film, but ultimately fails to impress.



serenotang is unimpressed by this 'detached' adaptation

the history boys (on film)

shakespeare's henry vi

sophiemiddlemiss visits england's premier bard -
stead and watches a play

"King Henry the Fifth, too famous to live long!" declaims the elegy to the boy king's better-known father which opens Shakespeare's *Henry VI*. Director Michael Boyd confronts the opposite conundrum: the later king and his theatrical incarnation are not particularly famous, but he did, it seems, live long enough to merit a three-part nine-hour verse drama. With its structural deficiencies and some below-par writing, this mammoth risks looking like the awkward middle child between Henry V and Richard III, or the generation that talent skipped.

But Boyd has done something remarkable. His direction commands the text, hardly letting it breathe under a pounding, warlike, anthemic soundtrack. Scene follows scene hard and fast, and characters thump on and off with fell purpose, binding the beleaguered peacemaker king in ever-heavier knots of intrigue. Forget light and shade: this production is unrelenting and as bloodily exhilarating as a knock-out.

Chuk Iwuji's *Henry VI* sensitively traces the character's transition from an overeager boy who clasps his intended as if she were an outsized toy to a man whose measured wisdom can't calm the claims and counter-claims erupting among his splintered, belligerent subjects. Whether by virtue of birth or training, he shows real wisdom when he hides his "brain-sick" lords for their "factious emulations", reminiscent of internecine civil wars bitterly familiar today. But being good doesn't cut it, and his enemies get closer to him than he

knows.

The ineffably glamorous Katy Stephens as Margaret, his queen, first appears to him framed like a life-size picture, descending from the eaves, swathed in red satin. She loses nothing of her statuesque ease as she becomes mirrored in court politics. She is controlled, elegant, and deadly, the curve of her spine and the tilt of her neck caught by the upward sweep of her dress. The electrifying charge between Margaret and Suffolk (Geoffrey Streatfield) intensifies their individual charisma.

The sheer nastiness of the court is brilliantly evoked, and the actors successfully imbue the many noble characters, whose identities can be lost in less

imaginative stagings of the history plays, with individuality. In the urgent drive for land and power, there is everything to play for. Some satisfying deaths ensue.

The mot-tled purple corpse of the throttled Protector and the extraordinary ascension of the godless Cardinal Beaufort, still clutching his eiderdown, expose the audience to the gore of war. But the inspired use of the height of the space to stage battles in mid-air allows us to also feel its pity. Bodies are left to hang, limp, helpless, and awkward.

Joan of Arc's mercilessly staged descent into the flames is perhaps Katy Stephens' finest moment (she takes on both major female parts, and it's not a decision you would fault



once you've seen her act). But the moments when God comes to Joan show the versatility of the director's approach. Simply, quietly, a few white feathers fall, recalling a gradual annunciation, a barely perceptible touch of the divine.

Only one episode in the production left me cold, even uneasy - the rebellion of rabble-rouser Jack Cade. At last, we leave the riven and corrupted court behind - only to encounter a "ragged multitude" whose ludicrous credulity drives them, herd-like and en masse, into the arms of successive political manipulators. The possibility of alternative forms of government is simply not seriously addressed: appeals to sensuality - more to eat, more to drink - are enough to elicit loyalty from this mob. Disappointingly, the actors fell into uninspired stereotyping, making their 'ordinary people' clownish and grotesque. The energy which, elsewhere, poured into the precise mould of tight choreography, results in scenes of contained passion, here became unfocused and irritating. The actors seemed to relish getting their hands dirty, gurning and grimacing, hobbling and hollering through crowd-scenes, but I felt mystified rather than caught up in the fun they were having.

Reservations aside, this stunning and dynamic production left me deeply disgruntled to be back in the real world. *Henry VI* opens the RSC's centenary cycle of all Shakespeare's plays for 2007 and holds out the promise of a very good year.

This summer in New York, feeling a long way from home and in need of some British humour and a familiar accent, I took full advantage of the exchange rate and treated myself to a ticket for Alan Bennett's *The History Boys* which, following two hugely successful runs at the National Theatre, had transferred to Broadway for a limited season. I won't lie, my motivations were not purely intellectual the boys who make up the cast are both engaging and attractive. However, as the evening progressed I came to realise that seeing this thoroughly British production as a member of an American audience would be more interesting in its own right than I could ever have expected.

Alan Bennett is an icon of British playwriting and his works are highly respected. However, his plays have repeatedly failed to transfer successfully to the American stage, which Ben Brantley of *The New York Times* attributes to their being 'obstructively English, in the manner of culinary concoctions like toad-in-the-hole.' *The History Boys* could have had the same fate as his previous works, as the style is inescapably Bennett's; however *The History Boys* was a huge success on Broadway, owing in part to its focus on the universal themes of education and ambition, themes on which, in these days of excessive competition and oversubscribed Universities, American and British students alike can find an unexpected common ground.

Moreover, it is a stellar piece of writing where serious themes nestle amongst impromptu sing-alongs around the

piano, schoolboy discussions about masturbation, video sequences, Madness songs and feminist rants, all of which was masterfully presented by the capable hands of Nicholas Hytner. The joy of *The History Boys* is to be found in the torrent of exhilarating and biting one liners, often containing references to British

piece which would remind Broadway play-goers that a play didn't have to be obscurely intellectual at one end of the scale, or a musical extravaganza at the other, it just needs to be plain good.

I was therefore fascinated as to how an American audience would respond, especially as the Playbill found it neces-



popular culture or literary quotations, managing to be both smart and incredibly funny, and so it is only right that the play was recognised by critics and judges alike and was awarded numerous accolades including six Tony awards. The response of tough New York critics was also perceived as a reaction against the state of contemporary American theatre and *The History Boys* was lauded as a

sary to explain what seem like such basics to an Englishman; like A-levels, Oxbridge and even Sheffield. Would an American audience be overwhelmed by the Britishness of it all, and would they find the same magic in the writing as I did? Even though the cultural subtleties and references did pass some by, the skill of the writing and acting in *The History Boys* kept the audience enthralled and

fully justified the glowing reviews. Some scenes were challenging, in particular one highly physical classroom sequence set in a brothel and conducted entirely in French, which provoked a sea of bemused faces and particular frustration from the woman sitting next to me, who asked me what they were saying and didn't like the fact she couldn't understand a word of it.

The History Boys is a remarkable play no matter where it is staged; however, seeing it in a foreign country highlighted in my mind the brilliance of Bennett's style. Its success on Broadway is by no means an accident, but it is clear to see that it was far from inevitable. Despite the fact our radios, televisions and film screens are dominated with American material, there is still plenty to distinguish British and American culture. The fact that *The History Boys* managed to appeal to an American audience despite requiring them to surmount formidable cultural obstacles only proves that the standard of the writing and acting of this play are more than enough to compensate for any misunderstandings. Almost. Ordering a post-show drink - in my crispest British accent, I became the target for all those New Yorkers who were ever so slightly lost in translation. Then, despite the award-winning play I had just enjoyed, it was amongst these theatre goers where I heard the best line of the night, a line that commanded both my despair and amusement - a perfectly matter-of-fact and utterly serious, 'So, like, where is Oxbridge?'

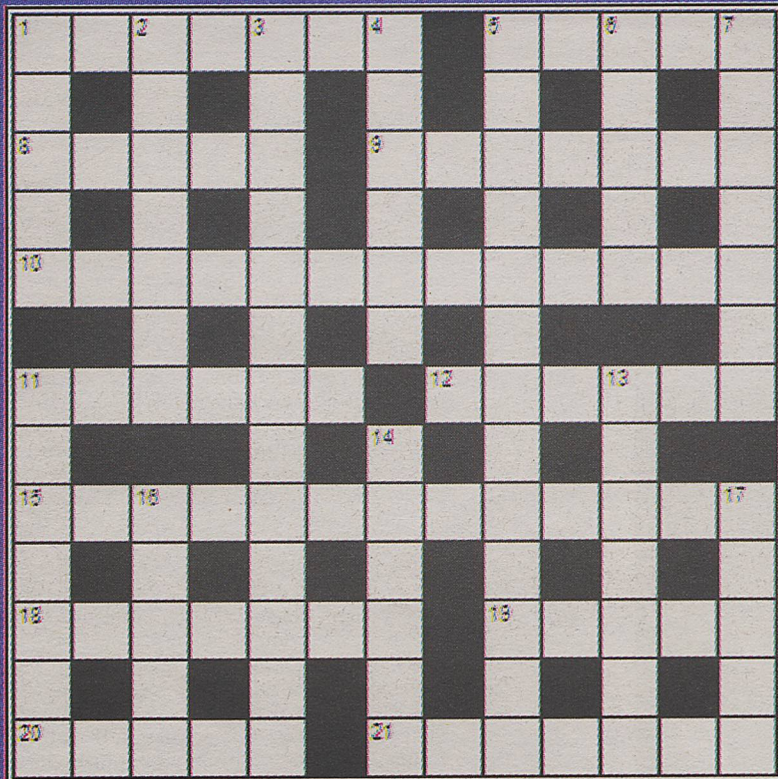
loisjeary sees bennett's boys on broadway

the history boys (on stage)

Theatre

SET BY SCOLIOSISTER

CROSSWORD

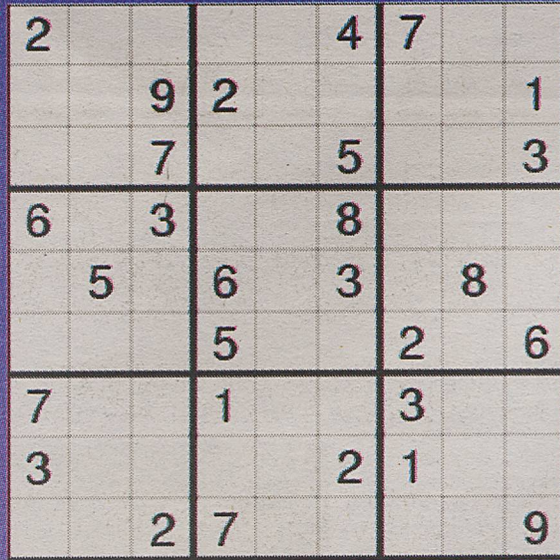


Across

- 1. Adjustable ear covering (7)
- 5. Exclude, prevent (5)
- 8. Confess (3, 2)
- 9. Give notice to (7)
- 10. e.g. TNT (4, 9)
- 11. Eccentric man, respected person (slang) (6)
- 12. Floor-covering fabric (6)
- 15. Hardly an unanimous verdict? (5, 8)
- 18. Italian dumplings (7)
- 19. Agreeable, unemotional (5)
- 20. Lumps of casein and milk (5)
- 21. Preservation of body cleanliness (7)

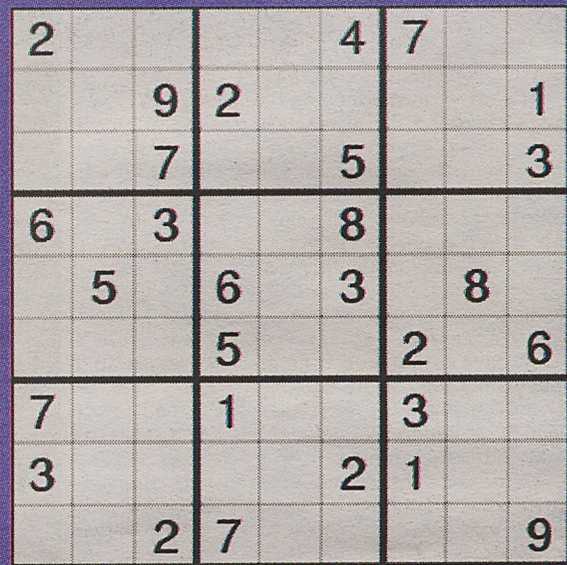
Down

- 1. A long period (of history) (5)
- 2. Fail to follow suit (in cards) (7)
- 3. Modest (13)
- 4. Ice cream milkshake (6)
- 5. Container for spies? (10, 3)
- 6. Russian pancakes (5)
- 7. Choose again (7)
- 11. Relating to the stomach (7)
- 13. Chief, ape, human (7)
- 14. Not too old (6)
- 16. One in a passionate relationship (5)



Difficult

Very Difficult



sudoku

Ask

Auntie Shaw



Boys and girls, traffic light Crush went down a treat didn't it?! Mr Shaw and I would like to thank those brave souls wearing green and yellow who came back to the Shaw library love shack to play 'perky pedestrians'. You all have one hell (do pardon my foul mouth, I put it down to too much time with you students) of a drive. Ooh how exciting!!! For those who wore red and looked quite miserable, live a little. It is far more satisfying (and legal) to jump ships now rather than once a ring is on your finger. Next week is a Halloween special so remember to send in those frightening, disturbing, meaty stories that will make your fellow academics jump out of their skin (and into my bosom).

In the meantime, young 'uns, here are some more tissues and issues for the week. This week we've got bizarre rituals, perverts and of course, spelling mistakes. Enjoy my fresh fleshed minions!

Dear Auntie

I recently started seeing a handsome brunette, male model look alike. He is witty, intelligent, almost famous and takes me to the stars night after night. A few cracks have started to appear though...he lives in a 4 bedroom with his ex girlfriend, who used to be his ex boyfriend. He also has a habit of chewing all his food before he swallows. I wouldn't mind this if he swallowed it straight away instead of regurgitating on the plate before hand. Is it worth it?

Name Withheld
3rd Year, Sociology

A good catch doesn't come

around easy madam. Try and balance out his bad habit by an equally horrendous one on your part. I'm sure you have a few skeletons in your closet that needn't be publicised. You should give him points for his revelations about the ex-madame's ladyfriend. Unless...you found this out by some stalker-like method in which case, you are the scary one and he should start running away.

Always swallow, no excuse
Auntie Shaw xoxo

Dear Auntie

I need some good ideas for a mad Halloween costume. I've been following convention for 21 years and would like something that actually scares people to the core. Suggestions?

Tom
1st Year, Commonwealth Hall

On hindsight, this may have required some forward planning but it is never too late. Simply refuse to wash (body and hair) and shave for days or weeks on end. Your hair will start to develop a cheese like texture and your face will slowly start to spawn its own breed of organisms. This method is doubly efficient. Firstly, you will make both girls and boys scream in actual horror. Secondly, you will discover who your real friends are.

Boo!
Auntie Shaw xoxo

Dear Auntie

This happened when we were at Bankside in our 1st year last year and we just wanted to share with the LSE

Scene: Bankside corridor, 4th

floor 2005/2006

This Mr. X, is notorious for always having his own door closed, because he always enjoys his privacy. One day, I just happened to be opening doors as you do around halls, only to find that his door was open, we walked in to find the shower on and the bath room door ajar! Astonished by this we decided to round up the troops (15 people) and hoping to record him come out of the shower in full glory and then 'YouTubing it' - however on this occasion we got more than we bargained for!! - Because not only was he showering but he was sitting spread eagle on the floor of the shower knocking one off to Marvin Gaye's 'Lets get it on'... This is not the end of the story because his hand was not the only thing that was moving! His eyes were closed and his tongue mimicking the movement of a snake's.....Auntie Shaw we are very worried and not sure if this is common practice, can you please help us because all of us are now scarred for life???

Anonymous
2nd Year & 3rd Year
BSc Economics (x2) , BSc AccFin (x2), BSc BMS & LLB Law

My, my, and I thought Mr. Shaw and I had seen it all in our days. Never have I heard of fifteen boys all so eager to see another naked male body, and film it. As far as this particular masturbation practice is concerned, I am more than certain you all have far more frightening fetishes than you dare to think. I suggest you all go out and get a little more drunk together.

Focus on Fanny
Auntie Shaw xoxo

Dear Auntie

The 'hot library girl' is driving me wild once again. The summer was supposed to give me time to get over her, but some brief eye contact in the course collection last week and my hormones are radiating from my burning loins. Who is she? How can I meet her? A facebook group dedication isn't good enough; I want to lick her face. Help.

3rd Year
Accounting and Finance

Ah yes, (*****) surely does have a figure that I too, would like to lick all over. She was telling me just last week how she is bashful towards you young LSE males and she feels as though she never has anything intelligent to say. Make excuses to talk to her, however silly. Ask her directions to the nearest computer or bathroom. If all else fails, pounce on her tiny tooshie However, I do not approve of these secret camera phone photos that have been cropping up - complete invasion of privacy. Frank is the best policy. Secretly, she is desperately yearning to chat to one of you so strike up a conversation and you can soon create your own facebook group: 'I made (*****) moan'

Ohhhhh
Auntie Shaw xoxo

If you want to share (or scare) me with you problems, rants and general nonsense, please do get in touch at thebeaverpartb@lse.ac.uk or through Auntie Shaw on Facebook. Ever your Auntie xoxo

anistan in turmoil, o reflect on failing policies



om the beginning, arguing the British government needs to address its failing policies in order to bring about peace for the Iraqi people

lated by neo-con politicians in



The politicians thought 'victory' would be easy. War began with the political establishment fabricating intelligence and dragging their respective armies into the conflict

vants in Whitehall. At the time they believed an easy war could be won, providing a popular victory in the war on terror against the 'most dangerous man on the planet' at the same time as providing some lucrative contracts for their friends over at Exxon and Halliburton.

The politicians thought 'victory' would be easy. War began with the political establishment fabricating intelligence and dragging their respective armies into the conflict. Because of these two facts both the military and political leadership of the coalitions' members are unwilling or unable to fight a war against either al-Qaeda fundamentalists or play referee in the conflict between Sunnis or Shias, despite continuous repetition of speeches to the contrary.

But what of that supposed neo-con dream: 'Operation Iraqi Freedom' - to free the Iraqis from torture and political violence, depose Saddam and save us all from his Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs)? I personally have not ever heard the words 'Weapons of Mass Destruction,' 'Found' and 'Iraq' in the same sentence. In fact we have not even heard the words

'Weapons of Mass Destruction' alone in some time. It is almost as if soon after it became clear we were not going to find WMDs, the public conscious forgot the 'imminent threat' we went to war to remove. The public accepted they did not exist. Bush and Blair accepted we knew they did not exist. The public in turn, accepted that the politicians knew they never existed, got on with their lives and watched the carnage uncurl.

And are the people of Iraq liberated? They may have 'democracy,' in the form of elected representatives that are as unable to make the lives of the average man better as our own, but this theoretical freedom is surely overshadowed. A United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) report this week revealed that thousands of civilians are fleeing the country daily. Tens of thousands Iraqi citizens are still without water, sanitation, adequate healthcare or reliable power supply. They face a tough struggle for survival both in the face of spiralling sectarian violence and fundamentalist terrorism. They even face the threat of death, torture, rape or summary justice from their liberators.

Thirdly, does anyone remember Saddam Hussein? That evil monster who posed a threat to the security of the world? Although now starting his second trial for the death of 180,000 people, in what must surely be one of the most horrific war crimes since World War Two, he has still managed to hijack the trial and turn it into a tragic comedy. Endless challenges to the legitimacy of the court, the sacking of the chief judge who believed Saddam was not a dictator and the continuing boycott of the trial by the defence lawyers in protest continue to make this show trial one of the most embarrassing aspects of the Iraq situation.

But what will happen when the inevitable guilty verdict is passed? Many hope that the death penalty he is expected to receive will provide closure to those who suffered under his tyrannous rein and reduce the violence of Baathist supporters expected to accept defeat. But surely the execution of a man many see as illegitimately removed by western invaders will only serve to intensify the comparatively limited Sunni insurgency?

The loss of lives as a result of

the removal of Saddam now seems pointless. A blithering old man found in a hole in the ground, now shouts and stamps his feet in a sterile, meaningless and weak courtroom as carnage continues outside. Saddam himself said this week that he believes his trial is splitting Iraq and contributing to the violence. What is needed is a quick resolution that remains as legitimate as possible in the hope that this will quell violence that continues to spiral, as the recent bombing in Sadr City claiming 60 lives, shows.

Car bomb attacks of this nature are part of the everyday reality in Iraq. Impossible as it is for us to comprehend, that is no excuse for it escaping the public eye. There cannot be many in Iraq who have not experienced the loss of a loved one. Besides the material and emotional loss this conflict brings, fear for security of family and friends can also be devastating, as we saw for ourselves during the London bombings. But how can fear be removed whilst this policy paralysis continues?

Yet for the first time since 2003, the situation looks vaguely optimistic. Dannatt's comments were followed by reports that a

US think-tank is recommending policy change, or at least an admission that policy change is needed. Although talk of splitting up Iraq and overenthusiastic trust in the strength of the new Iraqi army shows they have not yet found the solution the fact that policy makers are taking a step back to reassess can only be good news.

Dannatt's outpouring shows that there are those willing to admit that things are going badly and a new strategy needs to be found, but it must be found fast. Stressed western troops appear out of control and are inflicting misery at least as equally efficiently as Saddam was able to. The failure to adequately reconstruct Iraq's infrastructure has created a humanitarian crisis. This war claims new victims every day and as the death toll mounts, the ideological causes for which insurgents are fighting are strengthened. Iraqis must be brought welfare and security as quickly as possible to stop more people taking up arms. But the most important reason that changes in strategy are needed is so easy to forget; that is this is a war is being fought in the name of the British people. ■

Washington and obedient ser-

In defence of organised religion

Roger Lewis looks at a very English institution, arguing the Church of England is an essential part of the English way of life

England is odd in many ways. In few countries do people hide their emotions in even the most extreme circumstances (that stiff upper lip), or spontaneously utter 'sorry' at even the slightest nudge. Some would say we are indeed the strangest tribe of all. Though it is not our mannerisms that set us apart, in the world of religion it is our established church.

As one of the few 'national' churches in the world, the Church of England embodies the formal relationship between religion and state that so many other countries have

shunned. A venerable institution, approaching almost five hundred years of age, its buildings and congregations up and down the land maintain the Anglican faith and support the Church's work and mission. The Parish Church is as quintessentially English as tea or Morris Dancing. Across the world crumbling Anglican Churches in Calcutta, Cape Town or Kuala Lumpur and its 80 million members serve as a reminder to its ambitious missionary activity throughout the Empire. For you and I it may mean a distant baptism and an annual Christmas service, or a well-

recalled Confirmation and weekly Communion. But its status as England's national Church (not Wales, nor Scotland - though the Presbyterian Church of Scotland acts as that nation's state church) arouses much debate among the chattering classes and the population as a whole.

Established in 1534 when Henry VIII broke with Rome and declared his Realm a Protestant one, the Church of England's relationship with the state is extremely complex. The Queen acts as its supreme governor and Defender of the Faith (that's what the F.D. on every coin stands for) and 26 Bishops sit as Lords Spiritual in the House of Lords. Prayers are held everyday the Commons sits and the monarch is forbidden by law to marry a Catholic. But its role goes beyond the Crown and Parliament. 30% of primary and 10% of secondary schools are Church of England. Almost half of all Grade 1 listed buildings, 400,000 acres of land and £4 billion worth of stock market investments are owned by the Church.

The debate rages on both sides regarding its continued status. Some see it as an anachronism in a multiracial Britain, where Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists and, of course, the Jedi faith, co-exist side by side. Others insist its special relationship with the state is a fundamental aspect of English culture and tradition. For many of its 2.5 million Church-going members, and particularly its fundraisers and Church Council members, establishment is more burdensome than heaven-sent. Hundreds, if not thousands, of

churches are maintained with congregations so small they are far from economically viable. In the words of one commentator, 'its establishment ensures its accessibility must be even greater than the Post Office network'.

Hundreds, if not thousands, of churches are maintained with congregations so small they are far from economically viable.

A top-heavy bureaucracy dominates its structure and imposes costs that filter down to dwindling congregations already fighting with subsidising walls and leaking vicarages. A church with a congregation of 50 must contribute on average £8,000 a year. Furthermore, the presence of Anglican Bishops in the Houses of Parliament, and the informal influence the Archbishop of Canterbury exercises at the most senior levels of government, emphasises the Christianity of a nation in which 30% of people adhere to another faith or have none whatsoever.

Yet approximately half of the population adhere to the Anglican faith (though may not attend church on Sunday, Christmas, or indeed, ever), and 70% of all people claim to be Christian. Britain is a predominantly Christian nation, measured by

sheer numbers or cultural bias, and the Church's establishment merely confirms that. Indeed even leaders of other faiths are supportive of continued establishment for the very fact that it maintains a religious emphasis in government in an increasingly secular society. A Christian God is better than no God at all. And as budding economics scholars just imagine the expense of separating the two.

What of the alternative? France is probably the best example of a truly secular country. At all levels of government, and as we know in education, where the banning of the Muslim veil has been so controversial in the classroom, the teaching of any faith is forbidden. France remains a predominantly Christian (Catholic) country and every citizen is provided with the opportunity to make up their own mind in which faith, if any, they choose to believe. Government is free of dogma. Yet critics pointing to those infamous Parisian suburbs assert inter-faith relations in France are no better than in Britain, or elsewhere: the force against faiths actually alienates more than it resolves.

Whatever the case, in a nation where the Upper House of Parliament has been partially reforming for well approaching a century, we cannot expect any sudden changes. The Church of England, that ancient institution loved as much it is loathed, is not going anywhere just yet. Yet another peculiarity in this green and pleasant land. ■



If you go down to the woods today...

Our correspondent risks his life in the pursuit of justice for Dr David Kelly

Dr David Kelly, British microbiologist and biological weapons expert, was found dead in woods near his Oxfordshire home on 18 July, 2003. His death marked the pinnacle of a spectacular row over the British government's justification for a war on Saddam Hussein's Iraq. Officially, Kelly killed himself. However, many people think that the man who blew the whistle on the case for war wasn't the type of person who would commit suicide.

In late 2002, the Labour government was busy trying to convince parliament and the British public that Iraq posed a clear and immediate threat to the world through its possession of 'weapons of mass destruction.' According to the government, sanctions, bombing and endless weapons inspections had had no effect. It published two dossiers outlining the Iraqi threat. The first, in September 2002, created headlines throughout the world by claiming that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction that were deployable within 45 minutes. The second, in February 2003, described Iraq's secret network of arms programmes.

The February dossier swiftly became known as the 'dodgy dossier', when it was exposed as being largely based on an article by a postgraduate student that had been published on the Internet. Even so, the Iraq War began in March, with the UK's involvement backed by both parliament and to a much lesser extent, the public. Then the September dossier began to look suspect too. On May 29, journalist Andrew Gilligan told *BBC Radio Four's Today* programme that a senior source at the Ministry of Defence (MoD) had told him that the government had "sexed up" the

September dossier with its 45-minute claim. Gilligan went further in a newspaper article for the *Mail on Sunday* on 1 June, by saying government 'spin doctor' Alastair Campbell was responsible for the 'sexing-up.' The BBC's *Newsnight* programme also cited a senior MoD source as stating that the government had inserted the 45-minute claim.

Infuriated, the government insist-



"If Iraq is attacked, then I might be found dead in the woods"
David Kelly,
February 2003

ed that the BBC should reveal the source of this outrageous allegation. Meanwhile, Dr David Kelly told his MoD superiors that he had spoken to Gilligan. The government announced on 8th July that the source had been found; then, in a highly controversial

move, Kelly was named by the MoD to the press on 9 July. On the 15 and 16 July, Kelly was grilled by a House of Commons Foreign Affairs Select Committee and the Intelligence and Security Committee. He claimed he didn't think he was the source of the 'sexing-up' allegation. One day later, Kelly left his Oxfordshire home for an evening walk. After he failed to return, searchers found his body in the woods two miles away the next day. The BBC confirmed on 20 July that Kelly had been their source.

An autopsy led by Dr Nicholas Hunt reported that Kelly was discovered with his left wrist slashed and had also taken a large quantity of Coproxamol painkillers. The verdict: suicide. Senior judge Lord Hutton subsequently conducted an inquiry into the circumstances that led to Kelly's death and the role of the BBC and the government in the lead-up to the tragedy. In his January 2004 report, Hutton castigated the BBC and exonerated the government of plotting to expose Kelly. He drew attention to Hunt's conclusion that "I am satisfied that Dr Kelly took his own life" and that no other person was involved.

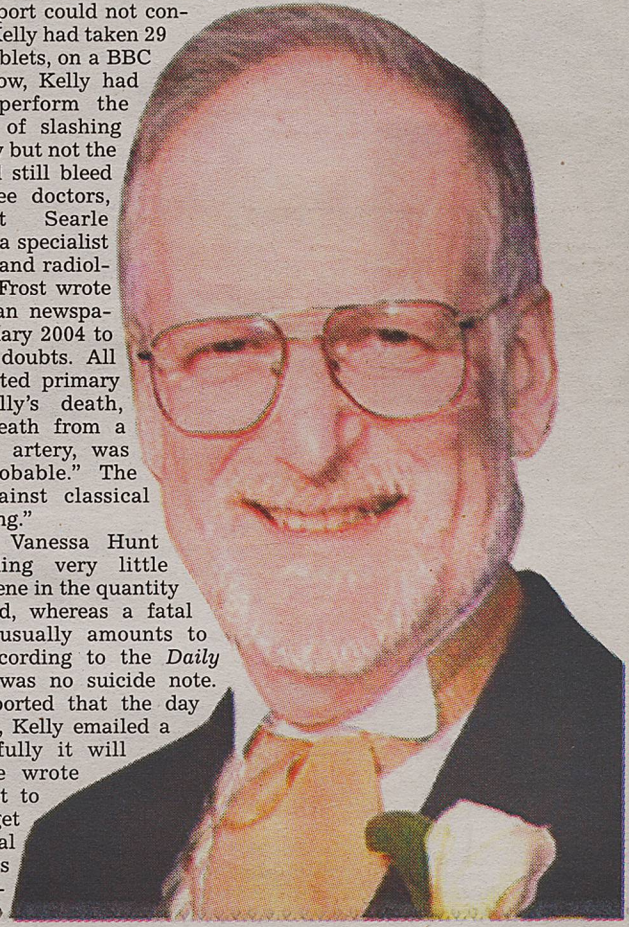
However, the verdict cited by Hutton was not that of an official inquest. Neither was Hutton's inquiry given the remit to investigate Kelly's death as such, only the actions of the government and the BBC that preceded it. The inquiry was not given tribunal powers to subpoena new witnesses or to call for new evidence. Of three hundred witness statements concerning Kelly's death, only seventy were submitted to the Hutton inquiry. The crucial point is that the inquest into Kelly's death, as opposed to the autopsy, had not delivered a final ver-

dict; the Lord Chancellor had ordered the inquest adjourned for the duration of the Hutton inquiry. And the inquest never did deliver a verdict.

Many were sceptical of the Hutton verdict. Among them was lawyer Michael Shrimpton who asked why the forensic report could not confirm whether Kelly had taken 29 Coproxamol tablets, on a BBC report. Somehow, Kelly had managed to perform the dextrous feat of slashing his ulnar artery but not the radial one and still bleed to death. Three doctors, anaesthiologist Searle Sennett, trauma specialist David Halpin, and radiologist Stephen Frost wrote to the *Guardian* newspaper on 27 January 2004 to express their doubts. All agreed the stated primary cause of Kelly's death, bleeding to death from a severed ulnar artery, was "highly improbable." The idea was "against classical medical teaching."

Paramedic Vanessa Hunt reported finding very little blood at the scene in the quantity sprayed around, whereas a fatal haemorrhage usually amounts to five pints. According to the *Daily Mirror*, there was no suicide note. *Channel 4* reported that the day before he died, Kelly emailed a friend: "Hopefully it will soon pass" he wrote "and I can get to Baghdad and get on with the real work." Hours before his suicide in another

email, this time to a journalist, Kelly mentioned "many dark actors playing games." Then there were Kelly's own alleged comments, supposedly made in February 2003, that "if Iraq is attacked, then I might be found dead in the woods." ■



Welfare Wal-Mart style

Ben Gianforti examines the rise of the so-called 'Wal-Mart voter'

Wal-Mart, with its 1.3 million 'associates', is the largest private employer in the world. The 'Wal-Mart effect' has entered common parlance to describe the colossal influence these stores have on the American economy at all levels. Due to its sheer size and impact, Wal-Mart is an easy target and it has a long list of enemies.

Topping the list is the organised labor movement and rightly so. Wal-Mart's hostility towards unions is no secret. The United Food and Commercial Workers have been trying to organise Wal-Mart for years. They succeeded at a store in Canada which was then promptly closed. The Service Employees International Union (SEIU) is a major financier of "Wal-Mart Watch", a "nationwide campaign to reveal the harmful impact of Wal-Mart on American families and demand reform of their business practices" according to their website (www.walmartwatch.com). And if one draws the ire of the unions, it's a pretty safe bet that the Democrats aren't too far behind, particularly in an election year.

In the run-up to this year's midterm elections, many Democrats have been waging a war of economic populism against the giant retailer in an effort to stir up their base, namely union members and the progressive urban elite. Leading the pack are presidential hopefuls such as



Wal-Mart employees actually have better access to health care than their equivalents working for other retailers

Senators Joe Biden of Delaware and Evan Bayh of Indiana. Their attacks are leveled primarily at Wal-Mart's perceived stinginess in wages and benefits. Thumping lecterns adorned with a frowning version of Wal-Mart's yellow, smiley face logo, they express their deep empathy for the plight of the middle class. This demonisation of Wal-Mart, though not without merit, is short-sighted. To understand why, we must first address some cold, hard facts.

Wal-Mart is a far cry from a good corporate citizen. The damage Wal-Mart has caused to local economies in terms of pushing out Mom-and-Pop stores is undeniable. The comfort and charm of localised retail, once fundamental to the American character, have been sacrificed at the altar of always low price. Always. Wal-Mart is also currently embroiled in the largest sexual discrimination class action lawsuit ever. Wal-Mart's rank-and-file workforce is disproportionately female (close to 2/3); its management is not. The women comprising this class action are alleging that Wal-

Mart imposes a glass ceiling that is nothing short of blatant sexual discrimination. As far as its wages, benefits and business practices are concerned, the story is murkier.

Wal-Mart's average hourly wage is roughly \$10/hour (£5.40/hour) which equates to \$20,800/year (£11,200/year) working full-time, 40 hours a week. Less than half of Wal-Mart's employees are covered by its health insurance plan. This has shifted much of the burden to Medicaid, a joint state-federal program that provides medical coverage for the poor. The supposed strain Wal-Mart places on state budgets has resulted in a "Fair Share" movement, spearheaded by organised labor, that advocates legislative solutions to this problem. In January 2006, Maryland became the first state to pass such a piece of legislation. The bill's main provision commands any company employing 10,000 or more people to contribute at least 8% of its payroll to medical insurance coverage. Though ostensibly a bill not targeted at any one company, Wal-Mart was the only employer in Maryland to meet its criteria at the time it was drafted.

On the face of it, Wal-Mart does look quite miserly with its wages and benefits. However, according to Jason Furman of New York University, a former Clinton administration health-care official, Wal-Mart's wages and benefits are in lockstep with other major retailers such as Target. In fact, his findings suggest that Wal-Mart employees actually have better access to health care than their equivalents working for other retailers. Against claims of Wal-Mart's stinginess one must weigh the undeniable savings of millions of American consumers generated by Wal-Mart's high-volume, low-margin price chopping. Some economists estimate the annual savings to be as high as \$200 billion/year (£108 billion/year). The harsh reality is that unionisation, Fair Share legis-

lation and increases in the minimum wage cut into the razor thin margins that allow as many as 150 million regular Wal-Mart shoppers to keep their grocery bills down and generally make life more affordable. This is where the Democrats get it wrong.

First, Wal-Mart, for all its troubles, maintains a favorable status among large swaths of the American electorate precisely because of its affordability. Alienating the so-called "Wal-Mart voter" could have dire ramifications for the Democrats in the future. Second, Wal-Mart has the potential to be the Democrats' greatest ally in finally securing universal health care. As medical costs spiral out of control, the benefits corporations offer will become increasingly untenable and may result in wholesale bankruptcy. Ironically, it may be the corporations facing extinction who ultimately bring about universal coverage.

The Wal-Mart voter, like the "national security mom" and "NASCAR dad" before it, is the latest demographic to be targeted by pollsters as the key to this year's midterm elections and future electoral success generally. Wal-Mart "big box" stores tend to pop up in rural, lower-middle

Alienating the so-called "Wal-Mart voter" could have dire ramifications for the Democrats

class areas. Regular Wal-Mart shoppers tend to be religious and socially conservative. They live in the fastest growing regions of the country, regions that vote overwhelmingly for

Republicans: the South, the Great Plains and the Sun Belt. These are exactly the kind of voters that the Democrats have lost touch with because of what is perceived as their bias towards elitist, urban liberals. Indeed, many of the people who regularly criticise Wal-Mart are the kind of people who have never stepped foot in one let alone rely on it to feed, clothe and possibly employ their families. An attack on Wal-Mart is easily misconstrued as an attack on its customers and their way of life. The Democrats would do well to tread softly on the subject of Wal-Mart if they ever want to expand the party's appeal beyond its base or introduce universal health care.

In a fascinating article in the June 2006 edition of *The Atlantic Monthly*, Joshua Green outlines the way in which Wal-Mart could create a domino effect that ends in the creation of universal health care. Medical bills are rising at an incredible rate and corporations of all sizes are struggling to keep up. Witness GM, formerly the country's biggest employer, sinking under the weight of its health care obligations. Recently, internal memos from Wal-Mart were leaked that foresee a financial crisis in the next five years because of escalating medical costs. The press seized on these memos as another indication of Wal-Mart's cruel nature as they contained suggestions for cutting these costs by weeding out unhealthy, costly employees by adding physical requirements to jobs that didn't previously have them. Further inspection of the memos reveals that even the more draconian measures would do little to check the growth in health care costs. According to Andy Stern, president of the SEIU and arguably the mastermind behind bringing Wal-Mart into the universal health care debate, Wal-Mart should reach a point in the near future where they begin to complain publicly that their health

care obligations are keeping them from being competitive (read solvent) and that some kind of national health care system is the only solution. Following suit, other large companies will begin to push on the federal government as well (the "Wal-Mart effect"). State governors will then lend their voices because of their ballooning Medicaid bills. Under the pressure of big business, state governments and organised labor, the federal government will be forced to take action.

This seemingly inevitable chain of events presents a huge opportunity for the Democrats. First, Democrats could bridge its traditional gap with big business by championing universal health care on big business terms, namely the loss of competitiveness. This will foster a sense of mutual understanding and tamp down some of the reciprocal hostility. Watch the campaign coffers swell.

Second, expansion and enlightened stewardship of the welfare state were the traditional sources of the Democrats' electoral strength. National security will not be the predominant issue in politics forever. Eventually, the fear-mongering Republicans will lose the attention of the American people. Pundits across the spectrum expect the 2008 elections to be mainly about getting back to the bread and butter issues that shape peoples' everyday lives. The Democrats could recapture the national debate with a platform of sweeping domestic reforms that level the economic playing field and promote social justice.

Third and finally, the Democrats could capture the hearts and minds of the elusive Wal-Mart voter. These are exactly the kind of people who are in need of a helping hand. The Democrats once were the party of the disadvantaged. A successful drive for universal health care would allow them to reclaim that title.

Childhood obesity: A silent killer?

Scartlett Graham is worried because those hips don't lie

By 2010, 31% of men and 28% of women will be obese (their body mass index (BMI) will be above 30). You might think, a drastic problem needs a drastic solution – and you might be right. Those with a propensity for banning rather than thinking will be very tempted to point the finger at junk food, which a growing number of people (voluntarily or not) are consuming at an increasing rate and in increasing quantities, as a result of which they are becoming obese. So, ban junk food then? No.

I believe that banning, in any given circumstance, is too radical a measure for it to be anything but a last resort. In this case however, it is a poor recourse altogether. This is because of three reasons: one, junk food is but a symptom of larger issues linked with obesity; two, junk food is not the sole cause of obesity; and three, even if it were, there are major logistical problems that would make it impossible to ban.

We all agree that obesity is bad, and that something must be done to curb its increase, and eventually reduce it. However, it is clear that junk food isn't the problem – it's over-consumption of it that is. And over-consumption is tied to a number of other issues. We need to understand *why* people eat junk food to the point of becoming obese.

Unfortunately, healthy food is more expensive than junk food. Even if some 'healthy' fast-food is available, such as Pret-a-Manger, it is not hard to understand why an individual on minimum wage would rather get more food for his money at McDonalds, rather than a small sandwich and a £2 bottle of crushed fruit at Pret. Few real alternatives to junk food exist, although this is slowly changing. Poverty is therefore an important factor in explaining obesity, and banning junk food won't solve it in any way, shape or form.

Eating habits are strongly linked to family habits: if parents habituate their children to a balanced diet, it is unlikely (though not impossible), that they will wholly and massively turn to junk food in the future, even if it is available to them. Conversely, if the KFC family bucket is all they have experienced, it would be difficult to expect them to better their diet as adults. Banning junk food would in no way solve the underlying problem.

Nevertheless, let us for a minute imagine that junk food is indeed the sole cause of obesity – how would we go about banning it? The logistical

problems are huge. What is 'junk food' anyway? The ever-reliable *Wikipedia* defines junk food as "unhealthy" food that has a "low or poor nutritional value". The immediate cause of obesity may be related to one's sugar, fat and salt intake, and junk food therefore incorporates a lot of these. This still doesn't get us very far.

Similarly, this general definition of junk food includes many things that one wouldn't normally associate as 'junk'. Go and tell a Frenchman that his 'charcuterie' and 'pâtisserie' (both of which have high levels of fat, for little nutritional value) will be banned. You will not be popular. And, interestingly enough, France has one of the lowest obesity prevalences in Europe, about 10% according to the North East Public Health, compared to 22% in Britain. This 'French paradox' surely illustrates that most definitions of junk food can encompass a wide variety of different food types, not all of which lead to obesity. Banning all of these would be nonsensical and ineffective. Not to mention incredibly frustrating.

Banning junk food is not a fitting solution. Take this analogy. If smoking has not been banned, there can hardly be a reasonable case for junk food to be banned: while it has been scientifically proven that the first cigarette has an almost irreversible harmful effect, and that it harms others around you as well as yourself, a doctor or scientist has yet to announce

that every cheeseburger you eat brings you one step closer to death, and the death of everyone in the burger's vicinity. The danger of one cigarette is clearer than that of one burger, and as a result, if governments must insist on banning something, cigarettes should take priority.

Society should also stop sending out mixed messages: obese individuals may be able to justify their diet by criticising size 0 catwalk models, who also risk being 'banned', regardless of whether their 'condition' arises from anorexia or bulimia, or simply from a small frame and a high metabolism; conversely, anorexic individuals can justify their behaviour, not irrationally, by pointing out that the 'war on fat' indicates to them that fat is a bad thing. We need to figure out a working definition of how healthy and heavy we want our population to be, before we take any action as radical as banning an entire food category, which is so ill-defined in the first place.

If Britain is really serious about tackling obesity, it might seek to change the way corporate advertising encourages consumption by hiding valuable information from the consumer; it might tax food whose nutritional value is below a certain level, it might educate parents to educate their children better, and inculcate them with better eating habits, but it won't ban junk food. Or maybe I just don't want to give up pudding. ■



Nikhil Shah is against banning junk food

Well done Disney for ridding itself of all association with junk foods. There will be no more Incredibles-themed happy meals, and all food sold at Disney theme parks will be made of lettuce. It's a remarkable achievement for the anti-junk food lobby. Banning advertising to children seems to meet with approval from just about everyone except advertisers and their clients. Parents in particular welcome the supposed freedom from pester power they will enjoy once their kids no longer know what they want. I'm not happy, though. I hate the smugness of media and parents when pointing at other people's kids and seeing the smiling, chubby faces of the obesity epidemic. In fact, almost everyone can point at other people's kids, because according to more sober research, kids aren't actually getting that much fatter. The obesity epidemic is most evident among adults. Children, while they are still at school, tend to do more exercise. Waistlines really start to balloon when they hit adulthood, stop doing the sport and start hitting the beer.

Even if children are getting fatter, the big change in their lifestyles since the 1970s has not been a worsening diet – people eat fewer calories today than they did then. It is the fact that they don't do as much exercise.

There are very good reasons for banning junk food in schools. Healthy eating habits are best instilled in childhood, and teachers report that pupils eating additive-free lunches behave better in class and learn faster. But that's not why the ban is so popular. The relentless demonisation of junk food and advertisers masks huge collective guilt and shame. Children don't exercise as much as they used to because society does not allow them to. School playing fields have been sold off, PE lessons cut down and parents have become too scared to let their children out of the house unsupervised. What's more, it doesn't matter that much whether children exercise or not, because they are not the really fat ones. We seem to have decided that it's too late for obese adults, we've got to make sure the next generation don't get fat. And that's where the problem is. Most adults have a fairly crappy diet, too. This is particularly true of the poor working class groups who are most likely to be obese. Cooking a meal from fresh ingredients is now something that only a minority of people do at least once a week. You can ban advertising

junk food, but how are you going to police the parents? Jamie Oliver can take care of their weekday lunches, but when they get home, who's doing the cooking?

Junk food advertising, then, has little to do with it. By all means, ban junk food being served in schools and ban adverts that directly target children, but the real battle is in our homes. And this is where it gets quite ugly. People's appetite for government intervention is surprisingly high. In 2004, a third of people interviewed thought that parents who fail to provide a good diet for their children should be prosecuted. Similar proportions thought that obese people should contribute to the costs of obesity-related care on the NHS.

People are increasingly willing to intervene in everyone else's lifestyles in order to make them behave 'better'. I wonder who these people are. Are they skinnies outraged that they have to pay for their fellow man's gluttony? Or are they fatties, the spiritual brothers and sisters of smokers who fought for a smoking ban so that they would be forced to change something they hate about themselves? Either way, a moment's thought ought to make it clear what the kids will be eating after their parents have been banded up for giving them too many crisps.

We don't even fully know to what extent changing diet can remedy obesity. What we do know is that exercise helps. But we're strangely reluctant to preach about the other side of this equation. As the nation's adults sink into increasingly sedentary lives, smug, macrobiotic people loudly encourage poorer folk to change their diets to match their own, while keeping quiet about the more fun way to make kids lose weight, which is to let them run around a bit.

But their motivations are subtly different from those of government. Witness the witless porkers who went on a crusade to let their children eat crap by shoving burgers and coke through the bars at a Yorkshire comprehensive. These particular parents are idiots. Allowing their kids to eat whatever they want to eat will not only make them fat and greedy, it will make them closed-minded, ill-disciplined and picky in a way that excludes, say, fresh fruit and vegetables. The basic problem with diet in this country is that few people know how to cook any more, and a reliance on ready meals and takeaways shows no signs of abating. ■

An impossible choice; but a choice nevertheless

Emily Ding argues that abortion laws are already stringent enough

Amidst all the hoo-hah over proposals to reduce the 24-week upper limit for abortions, we seem to have overlooked a bigger issue: the over-medicalisation of abortion law, which in fact, predetermines the setting of the upper time limit. The Abortion Act 1967 gave decision-making power to doctors, not women. Why is this, when ultimately it is the women seeking abortions who are responsible for the outcome of their pregnancies? It seems natural that we submit to the say-so of doctors because they have medical and scientific expertise, and I'm not denying this. Doctors do have a role to play, but only to a certain extent. The locus of decision-making power should be placed in the hands of the women seeking an abortion.

First, what determines the upper time limit for abortions, and who decides? The concept of personhood comes into play here, and doctors have decided what that means. In 1990 the 28-week upper time limit

was reduced to 24 weeks because new medical and technological advances meant that some fetuses born after 24 weeks were capable of being born alive. When the foetus is able to sustain life outside the womb, it is deemed illegal to abort. It is for the same reason that calls have been made to further reduce the 24-week upper time limit, perhaps to 20 weeks, as former Tory leader Michael Howard suggested.

There have also been calls of a more moral – as opposed to clinical – significance. Public opinion shifted in favour of reducing the upper time limit when new ultrasound technology in 2004 showed fetuses apparently walking in the womb as early as 12 weeks. There is also the familiar argument that being able to feel pain is the defining element of personhood, which could put the upper limit for abortions at about seven weeks. All this led to the increasing perception that fetuses are living human beings and that late abortions should be ille-

gal.

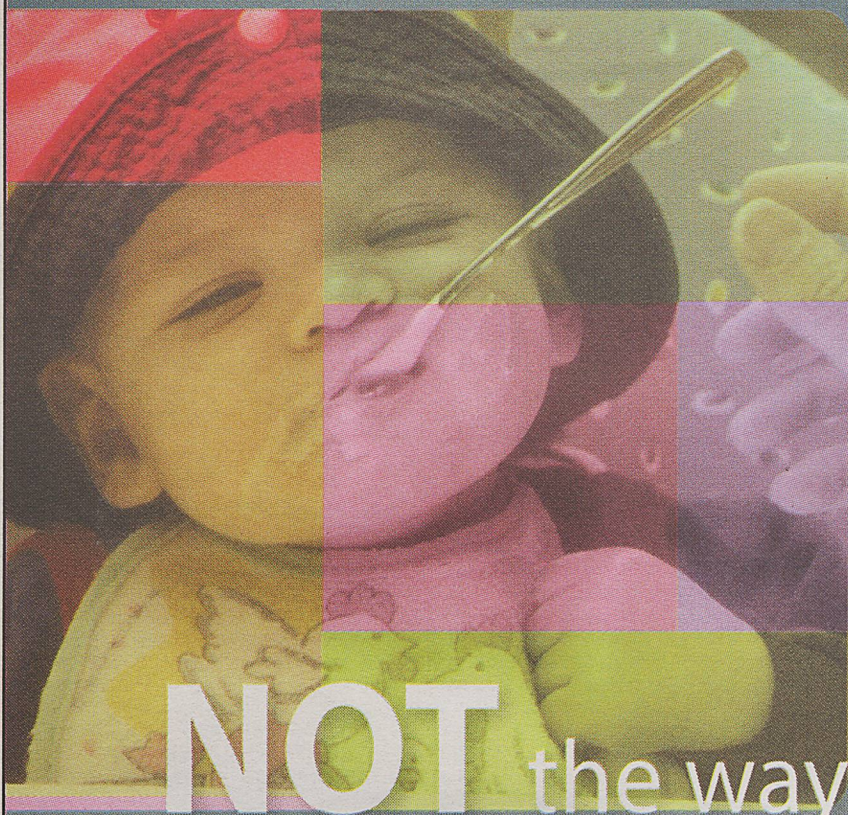
I would agree that the upper time limit should be maintained at 24 weeks, at least for the present time. If the limit were to be reduced, it would mean professional uncertainty for doctors. The Abortion Act 1967 did not make abortions legal, it only made exceptions to it. The limit should be kept at 24 weeks to allow for those exceptions. If the limit were reduced, doctors may be less inclined to go ahead with an abortion even when it is necessary in the patient's interests because if something were to go wrong, they could potentially be criminalised. It is more prudent to leave the law with some flexibility. There is no rush to change the law. We should wait until there are more concrete results in medical advancement.

The upper-time limit aside, there is a problem with giving doctors too much power. Two registered medical practitioners must give a woman the green light before she can have an abortion. This causes delays in the

process (which seems to defeat the purpose of having abortions done as early as possible, don't you think?) and allows doctor's too much arbitrary power. It is not so much that doctors will refuse patients as and when they want to (some doctors are pro-abortion); what's significant is how giving doctors so much power broadens the spectrum too much to be fair.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, there are doctors who perform abortions on demand. There is a clause in the act that says abortion is legal if "the continuance of the pregnancy would involve risk, greater than if the pregnancy were terminated, of injury to the physical or mental health of the pregnant woman". Some doctors who believe that women are the best people to make decisions about their own pregnancy interpret this liberally. This clause also provides a loophole in the law because abortion is statistically safer than carrying a pregnancy to term and giving birth.

At the same time we should think about handing back to women some of their autonomy. Sure doctors when making their decision are asked to take into account the pregnant woman's "actual or reasonably foreseeable environment", but how is the doctor a better judge of that than the woman herself? A lot of women seek abortions because of various difficult circumstances they find themselves in – lovers who left them to bring up a child on their own, perhaps? In any case, an unwanted child for whatever reason, under any circumstances, is going to cause significant problems for the woman, which could have adverse affects on the child when s/he is born. A foetus does not grow in a vacuum after all, and the mother's well-being is also of paramount, if not of equal concern. Failing to recognise this means failing to think of women as persons with serious and difficult decisions to make. ■



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QUAD OFFICE HOURS

TUESDAY

8.30
CU
Prayer meeting
Chaplaincy

18:00-19:00
AIESEC
Weekly meeting
S421

19:00-20:00
Debating
Debate workshop
D302

19.30
SPICE
Diwali
Quad
Film
The Third Man
E171

20:00 - ...
Pub Quiz
Three Tuns

WEDNESDAY

8.30
CU
Prayer meeting, Chaplaincy

13:00-14:00
Catholic Mass, Chaplaincy
Green party
Weekly Meeting H104
Hindu
Vedic lunch D211
Anime & Manga
Drawing class Z129
Accounting
Homework help session G107

14:00-15:00
Afro-Caribbean
Rare recruitment careers workshop A318

15:00-16:00
Faith groups forum meeting Chaplaincy
Chess
Weekly meeting K05

18.15
Politics
Discussion forum / meeting H103

19.00-20.00
Australia and New Zealand
Pub Quiz - 'Fall on your knees' Three tuns
Labour
Address by Emily Thornberry MP S50

20.00 - ...
AU night Quad
European
Eurotrash - 'United in Diversity' party
Underground bar

THURSDAY

8.30
CU
Prayer meeting Chaplaincy

13:00-14:00
SU
UGM Old Theatre

15:00-16:00
Singapore
Weekly meeting K05

17:00-18:00
Finance
Linklaters presentation D702

18:00-19:00
People and planet
Weekly meeting H103
Sikh-Punjab
Music class S78

19.00 - 20.00
Debate
Workshop D302

20.00 - ...
Arabic
Party Quad

SOC NEWS

The very first **Society Training day** will be taking place on Wednesday afternoon, November 8th.

Go to www.lsesu.com/societies to apply (spaces are limited, so hurry up!)

Looking for a sponsor? Make sure to download the Standard Societies Sponsorship Agreement, available on the *Societies - Documents* page

Want to be included in these listings? Send your event details to su.societies@lse.ac.uk Friday evening at the latest.

FRIDAY

8.30 CU
Prayer meeting Chaplaincy

18:00-19:00
Visual Arts
Life drawing class D702

19.00-20.00
Dance
Ballet Class S75

20:00 - ...
Halloween Crush

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Hits & Pieces: Tuesday at 12:15 - Kayt Berry and Lush Luxton serve up their cheeky selection of booze and banter. Get the giggles with 'Muck Up Your Life' and 'Face of the Space'!

Worth An Argument: Wednesday at 10:00 - Our most provocative show returns to discuss democracy within the SU. Should we scrap the UGM and replace it with online voting? Tune in and have your say.

Felix: Thursday at 17:00 - This guy is a right proper weirdo... and that's why we love him. If 'sing-a-long-madonna' floats your boat then this is the show for you.

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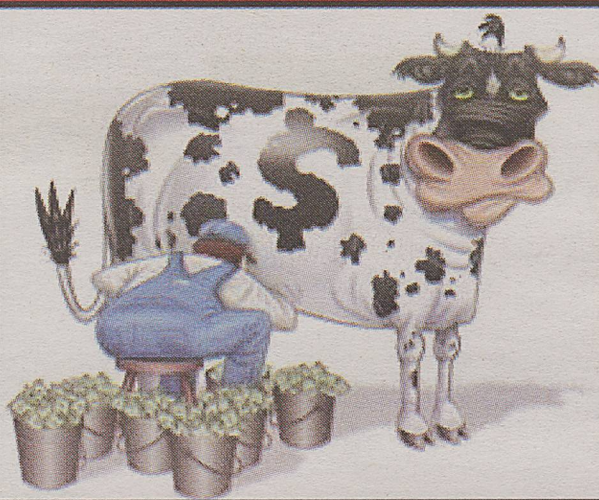
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The Punter

The punter



Matthew JCG Partridge

Provided that you don't mind taking a chance (or are willing to spread your betting enough to reduce the risk) one of the best opportunities available at the moment for turning a profit is the 97-98 offered by Tradesports on US rates remaining unchanged. As I mentioned last week, on betting exchanges like Tradesports you can bet against events happening by selling them short, which in the case mentioned above would net you a very large profit if the Federal Reserve changed interest rates in either direction.

Another interesting bet, offered by Betfair, is 0.4/1 against a Female President. With Hillary Clinton less than evens, in my estimation, to win even the Democratic nomination and Condi Rice nowhere to be seen in the Republican contest this is a pretty solid punt, if you don't mind tying up your money until November 2008. In contrast Bill Richardson seems to be the most under-priced candidate for the Democratic nomination with Tradesports quoting him at 2.5-2.7.

As someone who has lived a short journey from Greenwich most of my life I feel that betting on the location of the first super-casino license is a no-brainer. However, since Victor Chandler is offering evens I feel that even if you don't share any connection with the area it is still worth a punt.

There are also plenty of opportunities to pick up some good prices on future sporting events if you are prepared to lock up your money. I think that 2008 will be America's year with regards to the Ryder Cup and the fact that Ladbrokes are offering 6/4 on the United States winning makes such a bet worthwhile. Another good bet is Andy Murray at 20/1 to win Wimbledon in 2007. With home advantage, youth and a rising rating he has a far better chance of winning than Tim Henman ever did. I also think that next year will be Ireland's turn to win the Six Nations and at 7/2 you can't go far wrong.

Use any advice given here at your own risk and don't gamble what you cannot afford to lose. Columnist(s) may have positions in wagers mentioned. Prices quoted are correct at time of going to press.

Men's Football

Grass is always green-er on the other side



Rupert Guest

Champagne Sevenths	4
Kings' Medics	1
Berrylands	

Not since Ed Calow began his degree in the autumn of 1988 has so much been expected of LSE Sevenths. After losing such legends as Todd 'the Rod' Buchanan, Mike Hales and

Santiago 'rubbish feet, even for a big man' Chaher, the door was very much open for second years George Karaolis, Ken 'MD Hammer' Chung and Chris 'Scrumpy' Chapman to stake a claim for a regular starting berth. The squad had also been bolstered by two weeks of trials, which had separated the wheat from the chaff, the special from the special needs and the Cypriots from everyone else. A pre-season which included a victory over the Fifth team would count for nothing if the Sevenths could not take all three points in the season opener against Kings' Medics.

Fittingly, Nick Green scored the first of his tenure. Superb build-up play from LSE's very own Robin Hood (Nick Vivyan) gave George Iliopoulos ample time to strike a venomous shot which the goalkeeper could only parry into the path of El Capitan who slotted home with aplomb. As the game veered towards half-time, the Sevenths struggled to capitalise on their incessant pressure and were made to pay when King's equalised with a well worked free-kick.

With the scores tied at one a piece, it was time for the return of a Seventh team leg-

end. Enter Kamikaze. After a lazy summer sorting out Nepalese rebellions, climbing Everest and finding 6ft inflatable crocodiles to compliment FC nights, Kyriacou returned to once more rescue the Sevenths. A whipped ball in from the left was expertly cushioned into the bottom corner by the big Cypriot. 2-1, and it was time for the Sevenths to play their unique brand of champagne football. A third goal quickly followed; Kyriacou completing his brace with a crisp finish after a fine centre from Nick Vivyan. That goal put the result beyond doubt, but there was still time

for a bit of magic.

To many George Iliopoulos is an enigma. No one is too sure where he comes from, or how he learnt English but there is no doubting that he is a footballing genius and this was proven by a goal which had circus written all over it. A threaded through ball led to a collision between goalkeeper and striker, with the ball breaking to Ilio about ten yards in from the half way line. Stumbling, he managed to volley it in from a range of about forty yards. Stunning.

Men's Football

Footy 2nds experience grandads, goals and glory



Rob Low

LSE 2nd XI	2
St.Farts 1st XI	1

So, is it true that the 2nds are the best looking team in the FC? Certainly off the pitch, but are they on the pitch?

A 2-1 victory against St. Barts 1st XI suggests we are. With a handful of refereeing problems before kick off, this poor old Father Christmas

look-alike (70+) appeared from an afternoon of mayhem to take control of our game. It soon became apparent that we had to behave or face having coal in the bottom of our stockings in December. His inadequacies as a ref were highlighted from the start, as after five minutes when we had a throw in, which little Baller was about to take (bless), I gave some perfectly reasonable orders to my back line ("Lee and John, when we get this ball let's keep it on the fucking deck"), this resulted in a free kick on the edge of our box... twat.

Despite all this madness, after probing the Medics defence for a while, Jimmy "Ace of Diamonds" Hackett

scored a wondrous 25 yard left footed curler to put us 1-0 before half time, capitalizing on some slightly odd defensive work.

Following an inspirational half time team talk from the skipper (me, a.k.a. The Chief) we came out all guns blazing. Within 30 seconds of the restart we won a corner following a great ball played by Gorgeous George D to MJ. From the resulting play, Gabs whipped in a sensational cross, which was inch-perfect for man of the match Simbah "Fa Shiz" Mutasa to nod home as the defence were more concerned with the three fucking giants from the back lurking on the edge of the box.

I would love to tell you we

carried on this solid, but rather stylish play, however a few ugly incidents popped up in the last 20 minutes. A minor lapse in defensive duties allowed them to score a spawny turd-like goal with fifteen minutes left on the clock. Moving on from this, Ed, our keeper who was on delightful form, decided to chase some badman around the pitch after a right boot to the groin. A ruckus then proceeded, resulting with Ed and his mate going in the book, after Ed's dad had come onto the pitch to sort things out! It was a tense finale to a game which should have been put to rest after a couple of dodgy offside decisions, which led to a yellow card for a protesting Hackett

(the ref was being a prick), and a couple of shockingly missed one-on-ones from our number 9 (see Gabs, I promised I wouldn't tell anyone!).

A much improved performance from Saturday, but there is a lot more to come from a group of very technically gifted players who will hopefully take our BUSA league by storm and show up the 1st teams from other Universities in the ULU Premiership. It's also nice to have 9/10 players from the 2nds turning up regularly for AU night, a welcome change from last year... Let the banter commence. I am also looking forward, as I expect the whole FC is, to reading the report on how any team can lose a game 90 - 0!

Men's Rugby

Ruggered!



Jacko

LSE 3rd XV	14
Sussex 2nd XV	26
Berrylands	

After being thoroughly thrashed 15-7 by the LSE 2nds the previous Wednesday, Sussex faced an LSE third team who were battling the combined impact of an utter lack of training and the shock of losing our star winger Felix to a bout of stinking chat.

Given these impediments the game was always going to be tough, yet inspiration came in the form of experience from old-hands like Sameer "I train in the bar" Daar and the Dawson-esque kicking of Scouse, who proved the pre-match routine of a couple of fags and 400 grams of caffeine could and perhaps should be emulated at the highest echelons of the game.

Playing on a shit-soaked pitch, organisation was nowhere to be seen from the LSE boys on either attack or

defence, just plenty of spirit and plenty of mistakes. Thankfully, any Uni that provides a BA in Film Studies is never going to totally master the gentleman's game, and so it proved with Sussex. While it doesn't need mentioning that all their tries were the result of a) foul play or b) poor refereeing; LSE tries were shining examples of slick running rugby. If by slick, one means not dropping it. And if by running, one refers to trundling forward play. Repeated pick and drives allowed winger Jun to display gymnastics not seen since Nadia Comaneci in his dive for the line, while an ingenious set penalty move involving our forwards pushing back their forwards allowed Number-8-for-the-day Ussher to register a rare try. Unfortunately, heads went down five minutes from time when Sussex edged ahead and despite our tries and heroic tackling throughout, we could not prevent a big 'L' registering as our first result.

All in all, a disappointing defeat for LSE 3rds against a team we should have beaten. Nonetheless, much promise was shown and on-looking 2nds Captain Chris Barrow will have sleepless nights about our upcoming fixture...

Caption Competition - Entries on a postcard



Cricket

The sound of willow on ceiling tile



Rupert Guest

King's 137-7 (40 overs)
LSE 138-4 (32.2 overs)
Berrylands

The advent of the summer term normally places our rivalry with King's firmly on the back-burner. Indeed, the only risk of rioting is by sun-starved Economics stu-

dents who become enraged by the slightest sound of social happenings in their natural habitat of the library and form 'splinter groups' who terrorise those at the bottom of the LSE food chain- namely Geography and Environmental Policy students. It was to this backdrop that LSE Cricket played their first game of the season against Strand poly. This was meant to be a friendly but occasions between these two auld enemies are never short of acrimony; ex-Captain and pin-up boy of the 1st XI Ed Hawker reminded the side that there was 'no such thing as a

friendly' as he wielded his new bat, reputed to have been fashioned from the debris of our opponents' Strand campus.

New captain Rich Hooper won the toss and elected to field. In a bold tactical move, the skipper decided not to name a recognised wicket keeper in his starting XI; a selection decision that re-defined the concept of a team of all-rounders. Kings' innings started sluggishly. This was in no small part to the expert probing of their corridors of uncertainty by opening bowlers Ed and Sachin Trikha. However, when the dust had

cleared from their fiery opening spell, both openers remained.

Enter Shrivardhan 'Shaney' Rathi whose destructive spell brought two prized wickets and left the Kings' innings floundering. Some suspect leg before decisions enabled the opposition a stay of execution. Introduced into the attack as a second change bowler, Ali Tariq found his rhythm from the off and extracted two more wickets; the first via a spectacular flying catch from Maulik Trivedi which had the Kenyan selectors in the capacity Berrylands

crowd drooling.

Chasing 137 off forty overs was never going to be easy on a suspect early season pitch. As new opening partners Vikas Katyal and Shyman Puspaneth padded up they were warned against complacency by veteran Sach. 'We're probably going to win, but don't think that,' the opening bowler said as he reclined in a deck chair, sipping a cocktail before our innings had even commenced. Vikas helped re-live the good old days by smashing up King's once more; he sent their primary fast bowler to the boundary four times in an over to

leave the result as likely as a fight in the Underground at Crush. Rathi completed a stella debut by adding 37, before Maulik bludgeoned 42 not out to complete a six-wicket victory with eight overs to spare.

So a winning start to Rich Hooper's tenure as captain. It wasn't so much the actual victory but the manner in which it was carried out that was so encouraging. LSE 1st XI had given King's, and perhaps the world, a lesson in Sexy Cricket.

Running

Uphill climb for running



Greg Opie

Polys: Slow
LSE: Slower
Parliament Hill

After the Freshers Fair we were so optimistic. Last year we were University of London champions. This was going to be our year once again. Like Steve Maclaren's brief honeymoon period with the England team, our trainings were going well. But then last Wednesday was the first race of the season, and it was Croatia 2-0 England all over again.

Admittedly, the Parliament Hill course is the hardest one in the league, starting with a hill that has all but the future PE teachers from St Mary's College (who, just to take the piss, basically came in fancy dress) knackered by the top, and continues in much the same way. But still, that can really be no excuse for the first team being beaten by the likes of Reading, and the second team being beaten by Essex.

Captain Julia "Tom"

Beedell really led by example, coming in a terrible 20th (at least 10 places behind where he should have been finishing), behind several runners from Euston and Kensington Polys. Michael Lui came in an almost respectable 30th place, beating the ULU team captain, but being beaten by the only Goldsmiths student to turn up. Laurence "I can't run that" Leong came in at 48th, which for our third runner was quite far back in the pack. New boys Sam Trowbridge and Ali Moussavi, both of whom we had such high hopes for, finished 52nd and 64th respectively. Tome Sandesovski, the last runner for the first team, finished 73rd, behind all the runners from the Gimperial second team.

Our second team was even worse. James May came in at 80th, with token northerner Andy "not such a" Hardman finishing at 85th. Then came the Gary Neville and Paul Robinson of the team, Sam Martin (89th) and social secretary Greg Opie (90th), although comparing Greg's performance to Robinson's is grossly unfair to the England keeper. At least Robinson did well in the first half.

What makes the women's team's performance even more shameful was that we had been

boasting to all the other teams about how we were going to kick their arses in the women's league. And to be fair, we should have done. It was just unfortunate that all the other teams actually had a women's team in the end, which we weren't expecting. Our new women's captain finished 20th, with Paula Svaton coming in 30th and Sarah Horn finishing 33rd (out of 35 runners).

Still, we were fairly confident that everyone else had done as badly as us, so we wouldn't suffer too heavily in the league tables. When we got to ULU that evening though, all the other teams were waiting for us with smarmy grins on their spotty faces. They have definitely outdone themselves in ugliness this year. LSE first team came in 6th, after UCL, Brunel, IC, Strand Poly and Reading, and with Royal Holloway close on their tail. The second team are 14th overall, behind the second teams of IC, UCL, Essex and St. Georges Hospital, as well as the Kensington Poly third team. The women's team are currently 8th, behind most of the other London colleges. You get the picture.

At least we can be content in knowing we would win the prize for the best looking running team.

Netball

Netball 3rds neck it



Angela "panther" Wing

LSE Thirds 17
LSE Fourths 10

From the moment the bottle of Imperial vodka was purchased from Sainsbury's, we knew it was going to be an interesting match. With team dinners the night before, our 3rds' pre-match training had consisted of practising those essential netball skills:

Spacing between Tequila shots
Timing the downing of Snakebite, and
Getting free of various Walkabout pond life.

Conversely, having recently been promoted in the ULU league, the 4ths were looking in good form, and at least three key 4ths had passed off the opportunity to play for us.

Meanwhile the stakes were high. First match of the season: 4ths could set a precedent for following on from last season's winning streak, while we 3rds were looking to avoid last season's embarrassing 'nil points' after having not won any matches...

Even before the first whistle, the effects of the previous night on the 3rds were evident. We all looked rough, Rajal Patel fell asleep against a pole on the train, and the freshers looked on in amusement as there was some speculation as to whether previous 3rds captain (Rose Donovan) was still wasted, as she suggested we all have Tequila shots to "improve team aggression".

Despite this, 3rd team morale was at an all-time high and no doubt, it was this which propelled us through the match.

In the 1st quarter, some snappy play around the circle from Rose 'The Bodyguard' Donovan and King Khong, somehow combined with a tentative start from the 4ths, gave the 3rds a 7-4 lead. Much to the delight and surprise of the on-court 3rds, the game was littered with shouts of "Sabai! Sabai!" and other Thai words learnt from the night before, which the 3rd team just couldn't leave behind.

However, the 4ths stepped up the tempo in the 2nd and 3rd quarters, and the game was evenly matched. The 4th's shooter A-Low made her presence felt on court as she battled it out for space in the circle, while 3rds defender Saynor attempted to keep her out. Furthermore, the arrival of the 4ths skipper, G-Hunt, dominating centre court and

some strong counter-attacking link-ups between Ladwa and Van Aarons for the 4ths, meant the 3rds game play became seriously defensive. At the end of the 3rd quarter, the score was nerve-wrackingly close at 10-8.

However, in the 4th quarter, the 3rds turned on the magic and managed to mirror their performance in the 1st. With the substitution of Ladwa off-court and the return of the Donovan-Khong formation, the 3rds managed to sneak in 7 goals, while Emma Coca-Cola demonstrated some quality zone defence for the 3rds allowing the 4ths to score only 2 goals.

Result: 17-10 to the 3rds.

Promising play by the 4ths, amazing counter-attacking and on-court communication. I am sure they will do well in the BUSA League.

3rds showed signs of brilliance in the 1st and last quarters but it was erratic. Must concentrate less on Thai phrases and more on playing the game...

Man of the match went to Emma Saynor of the 3rds, and Asha Ladwa of the 4ths.

Some Thai Phrases courtesy of Siam River

Sawadee ka (f) krap (m) = Hello

Sabai Sabai = Relaxed, feeling good

Chai yo! = Cheers!



Netball

Vodka lubricates 3rd/4th derby

The Mouse

19



Breaking news

LSE have a cricket team and they're good...

One of many Guest articles

19



Caption competition

Fanny checks into the Priory, Sports Editors get desperate

18

24.10.06 thebeaver.sports@lse.ac.uk

Beaver sports

Smells like team spirit



The Baron

LSE 3rd XI
Goldsmith's

2
0

Location: Fortress Berrylands

LSE 3rd XI
Home County Scum

3
0

Location: Surrey Poly

Smell that? It's the green, green grass of home. Berrylands, a spot where the 3rd team, at this early stage in the season, can claim to have the LSEFC's only 100% record. This a team,

which has just been promoted to a supposedly more difficult league and are also debuting in BUSA. After losing several vital spine players like the Golden Boot winner and the captain, while also suffering

the ignominy of drawing with some lesser life forms known as the 4ths, the need to start on fire, if only to prove to ourselves that we could survive at this level, was essential.

The person charged with driving the troops, El Capitan, James McGurn. A man who's already been in last week's papers regarding his love for the opposite sex. It's enough to make you Snore... How he deals with the adversity should be very interesting - maybe he will turn into a Beckhamesque captain and come back to lead by example?

His first port of call was Goldsmith's; the winners of our league last year. The 3rds wanted to make a statement of intent. Who better to start a bold movement than our very own Mussolini, Oli Ursino, giving us the lead. By then, Oli, whose fitness levels are at best crap, had sweated more than a blind lesbian in a fish factory, and proceeded to trot around the pitch, waking up only when he received the ball as if someone had shouted out "Dinner!". Confusing opponents and teammates alike by

demonstrating his ability to scoop the ball, as well as his belly, past a player and then letting gravity take effect as his Pavarotti load propelled him, he played a little pass from the byline that was finished off by 'Fabs Mark II' Will Wilson, by his own admission 'an annoying cunt on the pitch.' It would therefore appear that we have a like for like replacement, and therefore this year's golden boot winner?

Unfortunately, his lethal streak did not rub off on his strike partner, Jaimal Amin, whose combination of pace and control made him practically unplayable. Unfortunately, his attempts at finishing contained the deadliness of, well, a dead koala. These attempts were marginally better than Dan Holness' 'placed' 40 yard attempts that found many adjacent fields and cow's backsides.

Our rock-solid defence, consisting of a New Delhi-loving fresher right-back Russell Banfi, the imposing 'red-eye' Pedro Abreu, Chris 'Colgate' McLean in central defence, the

Human Pogostick Andy Ong at left-back and (at last!) a keeper over 5 feet tall, Raymond Daamen held off any threat of a comeback fairly comfortably. Super-sub Victor Sonier sodomised the opposition with his skill and very nearly scored through his endeavour. Gregor Stegen and Salim Morsy also provided a much needed boost for our tiring bodies, as we ground out the last 10 minutes.

The 3rds first ever BUSA match was against the University of Surrey and Harry the Hamster turned up to deliver a rousing speech, outdoing even El Capitan, on how despite our drawbacks of being "a little bit chubby and a little bit hairy", we should "shove our fucking cocks in their mouths and up their shitters." Inspirational words indeed. We took it to heart and delivered a convincing 3-0 victory with Golden Boy Will scoring a glorious curler, McGurn popping up with the much needed second goal and Surrey themselves finishing the job for us with defending reminiscent of broccoli. Again, it may have been more, but Jaimal kept up his

impressive record of never scoring in the first three matches of any season, as well as our new addition on the right wing, the porn star Debbie Dallas, going close a few times. And yes, his ball skills are amazing, he has great stamina... he just had a few problems sticking it in. 'Pompey' Lou, with a left foot that could open a can of beans, deservedly made his debut after already showing plenty of dedication to the team by managing to resist his innate desire to thief our stuff.

As if being the best football team in LSE wasn't enough, this group of young scallywags also have (shed a tear here) beautiful and wondrous times together. Our combination of wit, good-looks, flaming sambucas and utter love for each other even managed to persuade the 4th team captain to lie to his players about being "too knackered to go out" just so he could come out and hang with the 'cool' guys. 'Nuff said.

"Laura, how do you spell resignation?" Sancha Bainton, current Sports Editor