

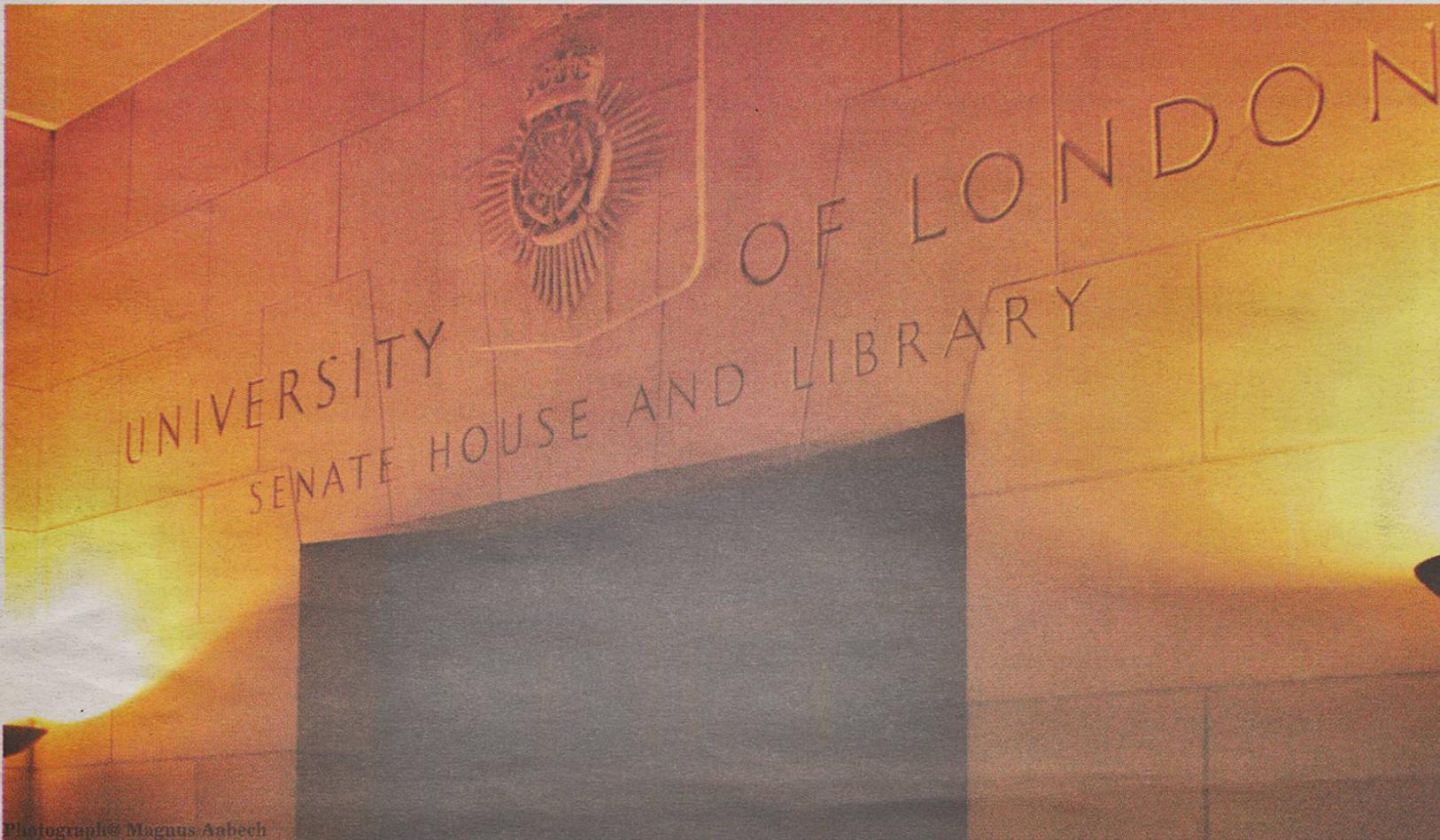
The Beaver

The newspaper of the London School of Economics Students' Union since 1949 • 15 January 2008 • Issue 677



Part B

www.thebeaveronline.co.uk



Photograph © Magnus Anbech

ULU budget to be slashed in half

» *London Student* newspaper threatened by £500,000 budget cut
» Popular societies and facilities face closure

MICHAEL DEAS
NEWS EDITOR

University of London is to slash funding for University of London Union (ULU) by 50%, endangering the survival of sports clubs, societies and campaigns. It is widely expected that *London Student*, the ULU newspaper, will be forced to close as a result of the funding cut.

The committee appointed to find a way out of the financial troubles faced by both University of London and ULU has also decided to reduce the number of sabbatical officers from four to two.

ULU's relevance has declined in recent years as a result of the University of London's 19 colleges' increasing independence, with many successful colleges such as LSE now offering students the option to receive a degree from the college rather than the University of London. *London Student* is seen as a link between the dispersed colleges and concerns have been raised that the University of London student population will become even further fragmented if the newspaper is closed.

Elinor Zuke, *London Student* editor, told *The Times*, "For many [the newspaper] is the only benefit of ULU membership."

"It's not our fault that ULU has made a loss in nine of the last 10 years, and we probably wouldn't be defending our position if it hadn't," she added.

ULU also provides space and funding for societies and sports that are not catered for within the colleges such as Fencing, Water Polo and the Rifle and Pistol Club. Such facilities are likely to be hit hard and LSE students are concerned that their societies and sports clubs may not survive the budget cuts.

Philip Pacanowski, who writes for the *London Student*, told *The Beaver* that ULU's paper has "...been an essential part of the ULU for many years. It has uncovered many things which have proved uncomfortable for the universities within ULU, and for the University of London itself. And that is a good thing. Its editorial independence has allowed it to dig deeper, to ask questions that most other UL newspapers cannot, with the exception of *The Beaver*. It provides an invaluable source of experience for those who wish to enter journalism and offers

many opportunities to do so - remember that some University of London student newspapers are limited in their remit."

Pacanowski added that while he was "not qualified to comment" on the details of the ULU budget, he believed that "ULU is committing a grave error by shutting down the *London Student*," which is the largest student newspaper in Europe.

ULU runs campaigns on a variety of student welfare issues such as discount travel and access to financial assistance but Aled Fisher, LSE Students' Union (LSESU) Environment and Ethics officer, worries that the budget cutbacks and downsizing of the sabbatical team will affect the Union's campaigning clout.

"The University of London is lashing out like a dying animal and attacking the students of all its 19 colleges. Despite reforms to ULU that have made it undemocratic and ineffective, it still had potential to be a fighting force for students. These cuts, particularly to *London Student*, makes the job of creating a truly effective ULU almost impossible, so we have to fight these cuts every step of the way," he

said.

These financial cuts come on the back of constitutional reforms that significantly altered the structure of ULU, disbanding the elected Executive Committee for a centralised Board of Trustees which is comprised of indirectly elected students and four non-student Trustees who are from an outside organisation.

In response to the changes, ULU President Jenifer Huseman said, "I'm quite upset about what's going on, not just in the Union, but within the University of London itself. One of the things I've been especially unhappy with is that they're cutting student representation from the main governing body."

Despite the serious implications of the budget cut, ULU officials have repeatedly refused to comment on the report, claiming that it is not in the public interest to do so. Zuke told *The Times* that "this is secrecy for secrecy's sake and that is manifestly against the public interest." The report itself is published on 18 January.
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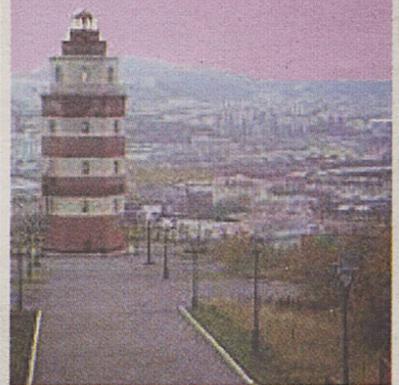
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Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws



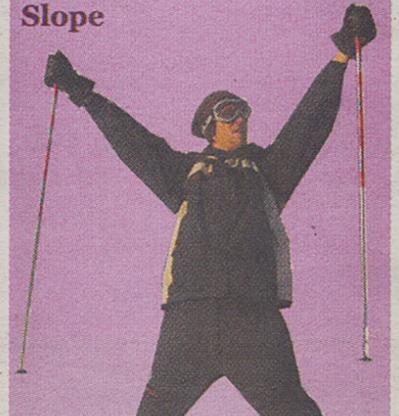
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From Russia with tough love



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Higher Education
News

EducationGuardian.co.uk

Less British
Students in UK
universities

THE number of British students enrolled in UK universities has dropped by 2%, partly due to the introduction of variable tuition fees.

More overseas and EU students are getting into UK institutions.

A spokesperson for University UK said the trend "demonstrated the UK to be one of the leading international destinations for students looking for a quality higher education experience".

BBC
NEWSTeachers'
Oxbridge misconceptions

TEACHERS do not encourage their pupils to apply to Oxbridge due to misconceptions about the universities, a poll for the Sutton Trust suggested.

Sir Peter Lamp, the charity's chairman, believes that "more needs to be done to dispel the myths about Oxbridge and other leading universities".

Oxford university has increased their "resources regarding school liaison and widening participation", according to its director of undergraduate admissions.

EPIGRAM

24hours Library
Campaign in
Bristol

THE University of Bristol Students' Union has launched a campaign for a 24 hours opening of their Library.

Other claims made by the campaign regard the "pitifully low" number of core texts available as well as computer and study space facilities.

ONLINE
SCENEStudents Russian
Roulette

STUDENTS are easy prey for gambling websites. As the cost of students' life keeps increasing, websites promising to "make you rich quickly" are more and more appealing.

Professor of Psychology George Meldrum warned that gambling was potentially as dangerous as alcoholism or drugs use though less easy to spot for family and friends.

THE

Teaching Research
Methods

STUDENTS should be taught about research rather than about what their lecturers study.

New research found that students should be evaluated in a way which mirrors peers evaluation in journals.

the Beaver
Archive

23 April 1974

Houghton Street -
excitement mounts.

HOUGHTON Street is becoming dangerously close to being closed to vehicular traffic. The Secretary of State for the Environment proposes to "make an order" under S.212 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1971. When such an order is made the closure of the street becomes operative, it usually being physically closed upon the publication of the "order" some two or three weeks after the "order" has been made.

What the Secretary of State has done is to publish a draft of the "order". This he did on March 29th, 1974. Twenty-eight days are allowed for the inspection of "this draft order" in which time, people may object to it. If no objection is received, the "draft order" becomes an "order" and the long boring battle will be over as from the end of April.

But, if an objection is made, a local enquiry will have to be held to decide if the objection is valid.

LSESU
RAG
RAISING & GIVING

Total raised so far:

£9,649.70

including:

£4,300

for

Great Ormond Street Hospital
Children's Charity

and

£2,600

for

Marie Curie
Cancer Care

But we're not finished yet!
How will you get involved?
RAG Raids? Hitch to Paris?
Or do it your way!
Find out more at:

www.lsesurag.com

Speaker's Corner

Could you cure Alzheimer's disease with your screensaver?

A potential tool for curing Alzheimer's disease may sound like an audacious claim to make on behalf of the humble screensaver, but in the case of Folding@Home, that's exactly what it is.

You see, Alzheimer's disease, like cystic fibrosis, Huntington's disease and BSE, is caused by proteins 'misfolding'. Proteins 'fold' when they are assembling themselves to carry out important biological functions. If they fold incorrectly, things start going wrong - and eventually you end up with the aforementioned diseases.

Confused? Don't worry if you are. Nobody really understands protein folding - and that's exactly where your screensaver comes in.

In order to get a better understanding of how proteins fold and why misfolding occurs, it is necessary for scientists to simulate protein folding on a computer.

However, in order to perform the millions of calculations required, you'd need an absolutely huge computer - or lots of little ones.

So that's why the clever people at Stanford developed Folding@Home. By downloading a small piece of software, your computer can run the processes in background, or as a screensaver, utilising the ordinarily unused CPU cycles on your machine. It's easy to pause the program if you want to use your computer for something particularly intensive, and you can set it to stop running automatically if your laptop switches to battery power.

So what are you waiting for? You can help further the advancement of science, not by donating money, but by donating idle computer time. While you procrastinate in front of your laptop, you can be happy in the knowledge that at least one of you is getting some productive work done. <http://folding.stanford.edu/>

Got a cause or campaign for Speaker's Corner?
Email thebeaver.editor@lse.ac.uk

London News

Guantanamo Bay
protest

HUMAN rights campaigners held an all-night vigil outside the US embassy to call for an end of illegal detention practices at Guantanamo to mark the sixth anniversary of the centre's creation.

The protesters wore Orange jump suits and spent the night in a mock-up prison cell.

Similar actions took place across the world in countries including UK, Japan, Israel, Bahrain and Germany.

"Today is not a day of passive remembrance but one for action: governments and citizens across the world should call on the US authorities to bring their detention policies and practices into line with international law" read a statement on the Amnesty International website.

Ten stabbings in
first eight days of
January

TWO men have been remanded in custody after appearing in court charged with the murder of an 18-year old. Faridon Alizada was killed after being stabbed twice in the chest in South East London on January 5. Two of his friends were also wounded in the attack.

The incident was one of a spate of stabbings in London that marred the beginning of the new year.

Three men were stabbed in a Brixton market place following a row between two groups of men last week.

London revellers
behave "like
apes"

GENETICIST Steve Jones, of UCL, has likened the behaviour of late-night drinkers to that of Cro-magnon man, who lived in Europe 40,000 years ago.

"I walk through Camden Town of an evening and often think I'm surrounded by Cro-Magnons rather than modern humans. They behave in exactly the same way. They behave in an entirely irresponsible and repellent way which no doubt they did 50,000 years ago" he told a radio show.

Cro-Magnons were similar to present-day man in physique but lived in huts and hunted for food. They survived Neanderthals, who were more backward than homo sapiens.

Labour attack
Boris' crime plan

CONSERVATIVE mayoral candidate Boris Johnson has launched a five-point plan to cut gang crime last week. He promised to take action including "designing out crime a key priority in the London Plan so we don't make the mistakes of the past."

But the Labour Party attacked the plans and said that current gang violence had been caused by "Tory cuts in Police numbers in the 1990s"

Green Party Mayoral candidate Siân Berry said Johnson's proposals carried "an implication that he will increase the targeting of young black Londoners."

LSE Alum Kibaki pushes on as violence continues in Kenya

DAVID
WOODBRIDGE

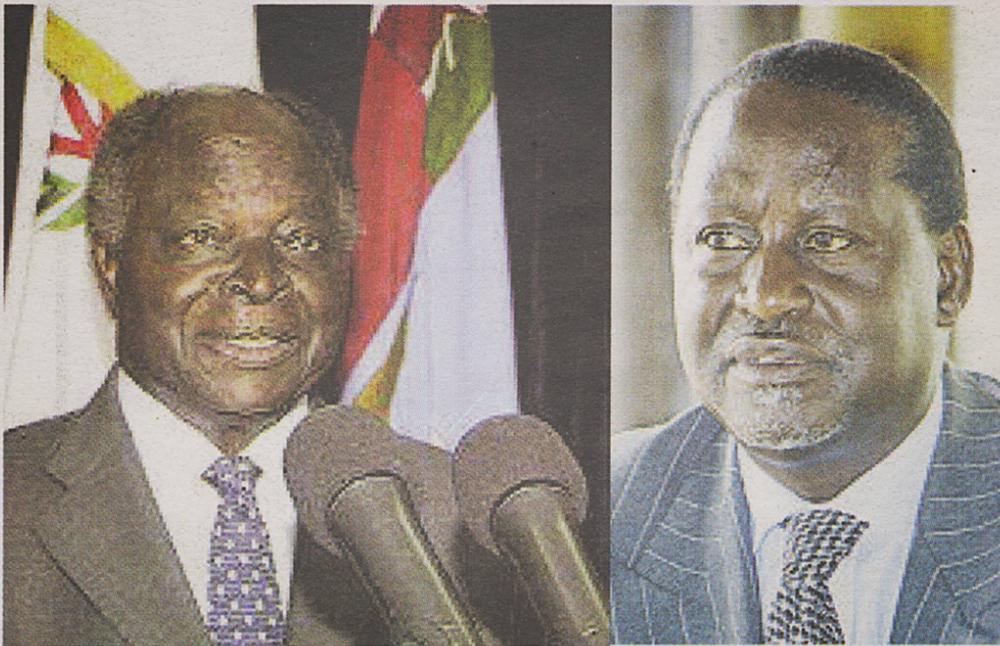
Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki has been accused of rigging last month's Presidential by a range of international observers, including both the UN and the EU.

Kibaki, an LSE alumnus who graduated in 1959 with a BSc in Economics, won the election by just 230,000 votes out of a total electorate of over 10 million and it is believed that the alleged malpractices could easily have manufactured the victory. Some officers of the Kenyan Electoral Commission, who recorded turnout in one province as 115%, are believed to be complicit in the fraud.

Kibaki, however, has remained defiant and swore in new members of his Cabinet last Thursday.

John Kufuor, the Ghanaian President, met with Kibaki and opposition leader Raila Odinga on separate occasions last week to discuss a solution to the ongoing violence sparked by the allegations of electoral fraud. So far these clashes have claimed more than 600 lives. Odinga and his party, the Orange Democratic Movement, threatened to resume protests following the apparent failure of Kufuor's mediation attempt.

Originally elected on an anti-corruption ticket in 2002, ousting Daniel Arap Moi's



Mwai Kibaki, right, and leader of the opposition orange party, Raila Odinga, left

kleptocratic regime, Mwai Kibaki has since become embroiled in countless corruption scandals of his own. In 2005, the UK High Commissioner to Kenya, Sir Edward Clay, claimed that 'massive looting' had continued under Kibaki.

Kibaki is not the first LSE alumnus to attract notoriety.

Perhaps the most well-known of these is Ilich Ramirez Sanchez, better known as Carlos the Jackal. The Venezuelan-born terrorist caused the deaths of three people during a 1975 raid on the OPEC headquarters in Vienna.

Sanchez enrolled at the University of London and took several courses at the LSE in the 1970s. He is currently serving a life sentence at Clairvaux Prison in France.

The school can also claim another terrorist, Omar Sheikh, amongst its alumni. The Islamic militant came to international attention with his alleged role in the 2002 kidnapping and murder of Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl. Sheikh studied Mathematics and Statistics, and is currently on death row in Pakistan pending judicial appeal.

However, Will Mears, a first-year Business Mathematics and Statistics undergraduate, stated that he "didn't believe he was in any danger" of following in Sheikh's footsteps, implying there is not necessarily a connection between School curricula and future careers involving kidnapping and murder. Six months after graduation, the class of 2006 remained largely uninvolved with international terrorism, with the largest grouping (32.3%) preferring instead to work in banking, financial services and accountancy.

The school refused to issue a statement regarding the actions of Kibaki, with a spokesperson claiming that "we don't comment about individual staff or students without their knowledge and consent". Unlike Messrs Sanchez and Sheikh he is, however, mentioned on the school website's list of notable figures with a connection to the LSE.

Profile: Mwai Kibaki

- Born 1931 in Nyeri, 180km north of Nairobi into the Kikuyu tribe.
- Graduated in 1955 with a degree in Economics, History and Political Science at Makerere University College, Kampala.
- Graduated with a BSc in Public Finance from LSE in 1959
- Joined Moi's KANU party in 1960, becoming an MP in 1963
- Served in various ministerial positions between 1963-78.
- Made Vice President in 1978, dropped by Moi in 1988
- Left KANU in 1991, forming the Democratic Party
- Elected President of Kenya 2002



Union Jack

With alcohol-laced perspiration still oozing from his clammy hands and laboured body, Jack stumbled into the Convention. His watch had led him to believe that he was late, forcing Jack into an ill-advised sprint to the finish from the gutter he found himself in earlier in the day. Despite having gone ten days into the New Year, Jack remained under the influence - his ailing constitution unable to purge the immense amounts of booze he had diluted his blood with over the holiday season.

Swinging the doors open wildly and narrowly failing to kill two innocent observers in his way, Jack could not hide his surprise at the swathes of blue before his eyes. The Union was absent. The Convention bereft of its members. The Union Fuehrer Baker Maker, alone on his perch, cut a forlorn figure praying for a miracle. The order papers shoved into Jack's face revealed the extent of the malaise. A mere two motions, vaguely worded and ideologically bland, left even the most loyal of Convention goers bitterly disappointed with the prospect of a uninspired debate.

Jack settled into his corner quietly and cried. If he had known that the first Convention of the year would be such an inane affair, he wouldn't have stabbed that innocuous teenage cyclist just for a timesaving ride to school. Even as tears rolled down his face, Jack couldn't help but notice that his eye fluids looked a tad yellow, with a faint scent of Fosters. Damn that three-week binge drinking spree.

But before Jack could drown himself in his teary cesspool by wallowing in an ocean of self-pity, Baker Maker declared the proceedings open. The Union needed to decide on its commissar; a new fascist for the New Year. Yid Tittybum threw himself forth from the get-go. Boasting a progressive programme of reform and efficiency, Tittybum was a sprightly candidate of change. And he did not run just on a promise of change. His amazing attendance boosted his electoral credentials; he was running on fifty-one weeks of change. But trust the old guard to spoil his efforts. Tarzan Marwah swung quickly into contention by rehashing his ten weeks of Spartan discipline and ruthless skulduggery; his slogan in summary was a gut-wrenching cadence of "9/11."

Even as the heavyweights dealt blows across the Convention floor, Jack espied the rising star of GI Joe Midway. His refreshing gait rode on a wave of grassroots popularity. His lack of politicking and diplomatic know-how could not shroud his aura of change and the audacity of his hope.

Voting began at the behest of the Fuehrer. The Committee of Union Safety stretched their lamentable quantitative skills to the limit, trying to pass arbitrary judgement on the fate of the Union. Amidst a hail of fanfare, the results were revealed to anxious ears; the Union put its future on the ticket of Midway'08.

LSE publishes 'soft' A-level list

ERICA GORNALL

LSE has become one of the first universities to publish a list of 'soft' A levels that could prevent some students gaining a place.

Pupils taking A-Levels in subjects such as Media Studies or Music Technology may find their application turned down in favour of applicants taking more "rigorous" A-Levels. The LSE has also warned that students applying taking more than one soft subject will not normally be considered.

The 14 'Non-preferred' subjects also include A levels such as Tourism Studies and Sports Studies.

However, there has been some confusion over the choice of subjects that are deemed softer. Students taking A level Law, which is specific to a future degree and profession has been designated a 'non-preferred' subject. Catherine Baldwin, Head of Admissions at LSE, said that "the LLB at LSE is a rigorous and demanding programme which covers the foundations of legal knowledge. Traditional academic A levels (in the sciences, humanities, arts and social sciences) provide a more effective preparation for the programme than vocational A levels [such as A level Law]."

Other subjects which appear relevant to study at the LSE such as Business Studies and Accounting have also been blacklisted.

The move follows years of growing numbers of pupils being awarded A grades which has made it harder for univer-

'Non-preferred subjects':

- Media Studies
- Business Studies
- Photography
- Drama & Theatre Studies
- Design & Technology
- Travel & Tourism

sities to distinguish between candidates on grades alone. Wendy Piatt, the director-general of the Russell Group of elite UK universities, has revealed that most top institutions are likely to introduce similar practice in "providing a steer on preferred combinations of A levels".

Cambridge university recently has published a list of 20 A levels that it deems to be easier than 'traditional' subjects.

LSE students are divided over whether the trend to blacklist certain A levels is the best way to distinguish between students. Fadhil Baker Markar, LSE Students' Union (LSESU) General Secretary, points out that whilst such a move makes it more clear to prospective students, it also means that people may not choose the subjects that interest them.

"It gives a clear message to students saying to them that these are the subjects that are valid," said Baker Markar, "but it can effect the negative way that it lets down students as they will not be able to do what they actually like."

Kristin Heivoll, a second year International Relations student feels that such distinctions between subjects is unfair on students that don't know what they want to do at 16. "An A level is an A level," she said. "You don't always know what you want to do when you pick your A levels"

The LSE points out that preferring subjects to others is not new; in 1999, the prospectus warned that 'vocational' subjects were 'non-preferred.' Like Markar, many students feel that making clear exactly

what subjects are non-preferred is 'fairer to prospective students making A level choices.

Alex, now a student at Bristol studying Economics, was a student who found that studying A level Business Studies prevented him from applying for Economics at the LSE. He was told at an Open day that they would not accept Business Studies as an A level.

The LSE insists that they make it clear to prospective students what subjects are suitable for their courses and which ones are not. Baldwin asserts, "Flyers advertising this website were sent to all schools in the UK and distributed at exhibitions, fairs and open days".

However, pressure for schools to perform in A Level league tables has led students such as Alex to fear that teachers are not always being honest about which A levels are acceptable to universities. "I feel that if my school been open about which courses it believes to be acceptable, especially when choosing which subjects to continue to A2 level, it would have been possible for me to make a fair application," he said.

The director-general of the Russell Group Universities has also raised concern that state school pupils "are increasingly taking a combination of sub-

jects which put them at a disadvantage". Research from the Russell Group has revealed that private schools study a much higher proportion of 'traditional' subjects than state schools.

With applications per place reaching record levels at the LSE, it is feared that having even one 'non-preferred' subject may rule some students out of the running altogether.

However, the LSE denies that this list will disadvantage pupils from state schools and lower income groups. Instead, it argues, the clear list means that students themselves can be aware of their choices more easily.

"The clarity of our position has been greatly appreciated by teachers and prospective applicants since it gives them the guidance they need to make appropriate decisions regarding subject choices," said Baldwin from LSE Admissions.

Other students have agreed. Speaking to Pulse Radio earlier in the week, one Second year Government student said that it was "fair enough."

"There are some subjects that won't prepare you for the rigour that the LSE requires so to say that we don't accept some subjects is fair enough," she said.

Osborne blames Brown for credit crunch fall

MICHAEL DEAS
NEWS EDITOR

Shadow Chancellor George Osborne has used a speech at the LSE to attack Gordon Brown's reputation for economic prudence. Speaking to business leaders on Friday, Osborne accused the Prime Minister of failing to "fix the roof when the sun was shining" and said Brown was personally responsible for leaving "Britain more exposed than any other developed economy to the current financial crisis."

Excessive borrowing, higher taxes and more regulation have left Britain ill-prepared to cope with financial turbulence, he argued.

Osborne used the speech to repeatedly lay the blame for the fall-out from the credit crisis, such as the collapse of Northern Rock, at the door of Gordon Brown. "We've got used to Gordon Brown boasting about his reputation for economic competence but his actions betray him. Let's be clear: the trigger may have been pulled by American sub-prime lenders - but the gun was loaded in

Downing Street."

After the talk, Osborne was interviewed by Pulse reporter Rob Charnock.

Osborne told Charnock that he did not see students as a separate constituency but that Conservative policy would benefit them. "Our proposal to abolish stamp duty for first time buyers will be a great help to students leaving and wanting to get on the housing ladder."

"Plans to make sure that Britain is the most competitive economy in the world to ensure that when you leave the LSE there are great jobs for you to go to and you don't have to go overseas," he added.

However, Osborne said that he believed the debate on tuition fees was over. "In order to have well funded higher education we need variable tuition fees. But what we've got to do is make sure that those who can't afford tuition fees get the help they need and that people from low-income backgrounds are not deterred from going to university by tuition fees and explain to them what a benefit university is."

Osborne also argued that

students don't necessarily have to sew up a top job whilst at university, "Just pause and think. There are so many jobs out there and so many things you can do in life that aren't always immediately apparent to you and don't always have a stall at a careers fair."

He also spoke about the Conservatives' climate change policy. "It is thanks to our pressure that we now have a climate change bill passing through parliament. What we want is binding targets. We want it to be clear that the 60% reduction in greenhouse emissions by 2050 isn't just some target which politicians talk about but there is actually an independent body which monitors it."

Rob Charnock told *The Beaver* "George Osborn is just another sleazy Tory - it could have been a great talk, had he discussed more than just Gordon Brown's shortcomings." The talk had supposed to be about the British response to the credit crisis.

Osborne has recently come under scrutiny for his failure to declare £487,000 he received from donors.



Shadow Chancellor George Osborne with Pulse Radio reporter Rob Charnock

LSE student monitors Georgian elections

PHILIP PACANOWSKI

A Second Year Economic History student was part of a delegation monitoring the conduct of Georgian presidential elections which took place earlier this month.

Antonia Strachey visited the village of Marneuli and the capital Tbilisi, and met with the Central Election Commission. Speaking to *The Beaver*, Antonia said that the elections were largely fair, although there were signs of incompetence and confusion, judging them "flawed, not fraudulent."

Strachey first visited Marneuli, a village 90 minutes outside of Tbilisi, with an Azerbaijani majority. Some of its population were unaware of the elections taking place: "We asked two old ladies for directions to the nearest polling station, and they replied, 'elections? What elections?'"

The officials at the polling station seemed not to understand the electoral procedure; there was "a pervading sense of chaos." Another polling station reportedly took place in "basically a corridor," which led to overcrowded conditions in which some voters were being turned away. Antonia believes the mismanagement in these circumstances was "not conducive to a normal election process."



Pro Europe incumbent Mikhail Saakashvili was re-elected with fifty-two percent of the vote

During a visit to the Central Election Commission, she discovered that the officials were failing to publish the earliest election counts faxed from polling stations on the internet, despite promises to do so.

Strachey observed that in Tbilisi the process was better organised. There, the electoral procedure was observed and carried out "consistently" she said.

The elections were important to those involved: various debates regarding the ballot papers became quite heated, which meant that the counting took "much longer than would

have been reasonable."

The ubiquitous presence of the International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy (ISFED), a respected international NGO, gave the elections greater credibility.

Despite the police presence at some polling stations - illegal according to the electoral code - there were also domestic observers, both neutral and partisan.

Strachey stressed that Georgia is "just such a wonderful place", and is confident that tourists will continue to visit. The President of the Georgian Society Ia Gabunia told *The*

Beaver that Georgia is still a popular tourist location, in particular for its food and culture. Ia says that the people of Georgia are "intelligent", and have had a "lively democratic history".

Both Antonia and Ia agreed that the politics of Georgia, particularly the more autocratic government practices, arose from the country's resistance to "bullying" by neighbouring Russia, a state which has had tense relations with Georgia since the collapse of the Communist bloc.

SEE FEATURES P16

Grimshaw visits to Morocco and Oslo

TOMAS GUILHERME da COSTA

Eager to escape the London weather and to learn more about the economics of a fast developing North African country, 9 members of the Grimshaw International Relations Club went to Morocco during the holidays. The theme of the trip was tourism and its effect on Moroccan society; this was one of the two trips the Grimshaw Club offered its members during the holidays, the other one being to Oslo on the topic of environmental sustainability. The schedule was extremely packed, including meetings with the CGEM (General Confederation of Moroccan Business), the British Consulate, 2 Universities, the OCP (Phosphate Office, largest company in Morocco), the ONMT (National Tourism Office) and the Rabat Regional Investment Centre. The trip took the group from the bustling metropolis of Casablanca to the peaceful and organised city of Rabat, ending in the centre of the famous Jemaa El Fna square in Marrakech.

Through the economical, political and developmental capitals respectively, the party received as much of an overview of the Kingdom as we could get in 5 days. Contentious issues, such as the social implications of the new Bouregreg Development Project between Rabat and Salé, were the focus

of many questions and discussions.

On the first evening Grimshaw hosted an alumni dinner in Casablanca, in which they met Dr. Mahdi Elmandjra, who graduated from LSE in 1957 and is now one of the leading academics in Morocco.

A selection of his books, which he kindly donated, will be available in the library soon.

On the second evening the LSE students were invited to a dinner hosted by the Vice-President of the Moroccan British Society, who was helpful in arranging meetings for our and guided tours to several monuments.

Antonia Strachey, who took part in the Oslo trip, told *The Beaver* she enjoyed her visit, "When we were talking to the wide array of politicians, NGOs, and public servants they talked seriously about 'duty'. Duty to those who have missed out in their own country, and an international duty to other countries who are less well off than them, which is, let's face it, pretty much everyone."

"Somehow the Norwegians have framed their own self interest in a way that includes the well-being of the world. Of course this does not apply to everyone there, nor to every organisation but there was a subtle atmosphere of that kind of outward looking, long term outlook which I found deeply admirable especially in contrast to our increasingly apathetic and short termist trans-Atlantic culture."

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'Red' Ken Livingstone backed by LSE Students' Union General Secretary

PATRICK CULLEN
NEWS EDITOR

Fadhil Bakeer-Markar, LSE Students' Union (LSESU) General Secretary and Ruhana Ali, LSESU Education and Welfare Officer, signed a letter printed in *The Guardian* on 5 January calling for "Ken Livingstone to be re-elected mayor of London on May 1", which appeared to be on behalf of the LSESU.

The letter was also signed by Diane Abbot MP, and members of the students unions of London Metropolitan University, University of East London and SOAS. It attacked Boris Johnson, the Conservative Party candidate for Mayor, saying that he "... has insulted many of London's communities" and that Johnson would "undermine" London's community spirit.

Ken Livingstone has been criticised in the past for supporting the cleric Dr Al-Qaradawi, who holds "homophobic and misogynist" views,

according to Peter Tatchell of OutRage! Other controversies include Livingstone's infamous outburst attacking Oliver Finegold, an *Evening Standard* journalist for being "just like a concentration camp guard".

Livingstone is also, famously, the man behind the congestion charge and the defeat of the government's proposal for the introduction of public-private partnership on the London Underground.

Rachael O'Rourke, a Second Year economics student, told *The Beaver* that "this is ridiculous. Not everyone in the Labour party supports Ken, and there's no way that a majority of the Students' Union supports him."

Without a mandate from the Union General Meeting (UGM), neither Bakeer-Markar or Ali can sign such a letter other than in their personal capacity as students without breaching the LSESU's constitution. The published letter strongly implies that this is not the case, and that Bakeer-Markar and Ali signed on

behalf of the LSESU.

Following the controversial An-Najah letter, which called on students to oppose the Israeli occupation of Palestine, also signed by Bakeer-Markar, the fact that the General Secretary has signed a second contentious letter without being mandated to do so has come under fire from Daisy Mitchell-Forster, the LSESU Women's Officer.

"To give unequivocal backing to Livingstone without consultation is certainly unfortunate, especially when he is yet to deliver board transport discounts for London's students. Boris Johnson may well be a bigot, but Ken is far from the ideal choice for voters who demand social and environmental justice," she said.

However, Bakeer-Markar told *The Beaver* that "The word 'we' implies [that] the above individuals have signed in their own capacities."

"This letter was signed by me as Fadhil Bakeer-Markar, a student at the LSE and as a member of the LSE Students

Union, I have not signed as General Secretary nor on behalf of LSESU students union. Therefore I don't think that there is anything that is unconstitutional about this at all."

Ruhana Ali also defended the letter, telling *The Beaver* that it "was signed in my personal capacity as an individual of the Students' Union. The letter we sent to *The Guardian* expressly said that we were signing in our personal capacity, which is why our officer titles were not included. To suggest that we are signing on behalf of the Students' Union is misleading, given the facts."

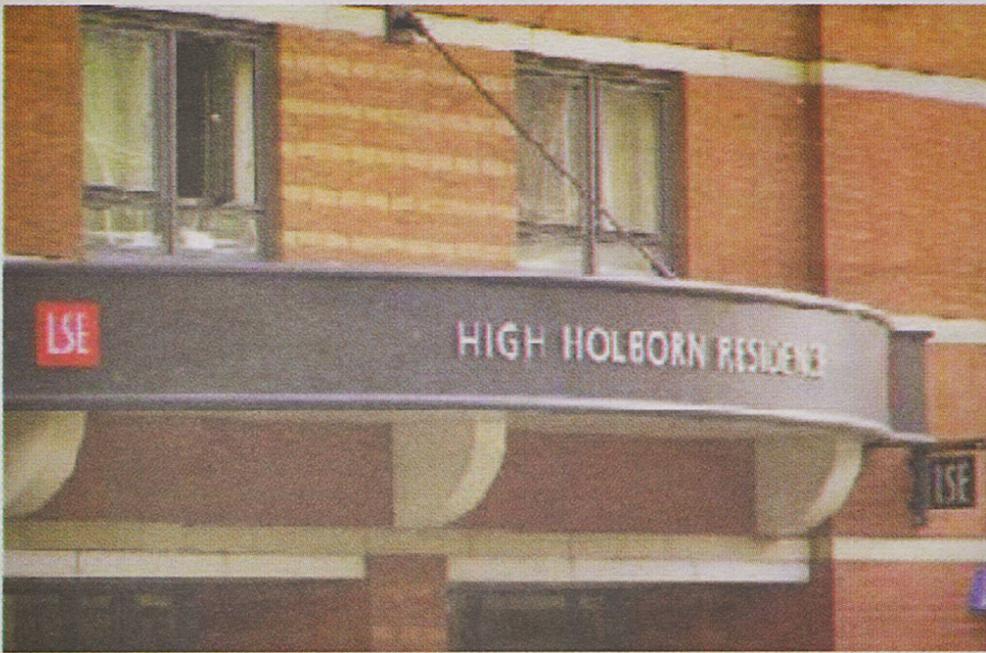
"I don't think there is anything unconstitutional about this at all."

Bakeer-Markar
General Secretary



Ken Livingstone, London Mayor, who is running against Boris Johnson, Brian Paddick, Brian Haw and Sian Berry

High Holborn Hall - broken lifts and cockroach infestation



The expensive High Holborn Hall of Residence is located near Covent Garden

HENRY LODGE
NEWS EDITOR

High Holborn Hall of Residence has been undergoing a series of maintenance problems, from lifts being out of service to water cuts. One of the two main lifts has been out of service since last term.

A sign up advises students to take the adjacent lift, or the service lift in the rear of the building, apologises for the inconvenience and is signed 'Hall Maintenance Team 13th December 2003'. Perhaps revealing the general frustration, one student has pencilled 'WTF' beneath.

On Monday 7 January, the start of term, High Holborn was without running water for several hours. There were few complaints, however, as by the time most students noticed, repairs were already underway. Located near Covent

Garden with fees ranging from £135 to £150 per week, the High Holborn residence is one of the most expensive of LSE halls. Some residents are a little surprised at the living standards. Ali Bustami, a first year undergraduate and tenant told *The Beaver* that "Our kitchen has no windows, but plenty of cockroaches. They have tried to exterminate them, but it was unsuccessful."

James Pugh, a Masters student living at High Holborn told *The Beaver* that the cockroaches "come up through the sink ... I put the plug in the sink at night. You have to clear them out every day." In addition, Pugh said that the Hall has "never sent any message saying there's a problem when there patently is," although he admits that he has not yet "actually complained."

The Hall has been infested with cockroaches since last year, when the decision was made not to fumigate due to

the Hall being used as a hotel over the summer holidays. Instead, traps and poison were laid, although they do not appear to have been successful.

Dani Barley, another first year undergraduate, commented "I suppose with High Holborn you are really going for the location. The lifts are a bit frustrating, but in general they are pretty good about getting things fixed." At least one resident, Alok Parekh, is without a shower in his flat until the end of January as it undergoes 'repair work'.

The management has had to cope with a number of unruly residents, including clamping down on late night parties during the week, and has in addition proposed a blanket charge to all residents on four occasions following two separate incidents of graffiti and two of vomiting in the lifts.

Preparation begins for Miss University of London 2008

HENRY LODGE
NEWS EDITOR

One - 2 - One Entertainment, the organisers of a series of beauty pageants which included Miss LSE 2007, are preparing for Miss University of London 2008. This latest pageant is to be held in central London at Crystal on 26 February. A Facebook group has been set up to promote the event, calling it "an innovative beauty pageant open to students [sic] from all the major London colleges". The winner is to receive a £250 cash prize and the whole event is to be filmed by Fashion TV.

Miss LSE 2007 drew a group of protestors from LSE Student Union's Feminist Society bearing signs accusing organisers and guests of misogyny. Some students at the LSE were reportedly "shocked that a beauty pageant could take place at what was otherwise such a progressive institution."

Rodolfo Graziani, organiser of the Miss LSE 2007 event, does not expect a large protest at the combined pageant. Speaking to *The Beaver*, he explained: "There were no protests at the UCL or King's events, it seems to be more generally accepted outside of LSE, and since we will be drawing on a wider number of people for participants and guests, we won't have to advertise as much within LSE."

When asked about whether the event would be associated with a charity, he said: "Following the £1250 contribution we made to Breast Cancer Research UK from the earnings of Miss LSE 2007, we will continue to support them." Breast Cancer Research UK told Daisy Mitchell-Forster, LSESU Women's Officer, that they "understood people's con-



Natalie Hiong, Miss LSE 2007, and *The Beaver's* coverage of the event

cerns" and that they had asked the organisers to emphasise that the events were run in aid of Breast Cancer Research, rather than in association with the charity, and that they would not refuse money from individuals. Graziani expects Miss University of London to be more lucrative than the individual college pageants.

Rachel O'Rourke, chair of the Feminist Society, warned organisers not to be so sure. "Just because there weren't

protests at the Miss UCL and Miss King's events doesn't mean there won't be protestors from their universities at Miss University of London. We are in discussions over how to respond at the moment."

Natasha Jones, a first year undergraduate student at LSE commented: "I don't think that beauty pageants should be associated with universities - these are places of learning, not looks-based discrimination."

UGM: Elections, student rebellion and “cool” lockers

ESTEE FRESCO
SENIOR REPORTER

The weekly LSE Union General Meeting (UGM) kicked off the term with elections for Chair and Vice Chair of the UGM. Joe Meadway beat two other candidates to become Chair of the UGM. In his speech for the position, he promised to try not to let the UGM get bogged down by “petty petticrois [sic]” and to make the UGM more lively and entertaining. Kevin Holder won the election for Vice Chair unopposed. In response to his win, Holder joked, “It was a big relief.” Holder was pleased by the fact that his appointment won him a large cheer from the audience.

The position of Keeper of the UGM remains empty the election was uncontested. The Keeper is responsible for maintaining order during the meeting.

Plans to increase attendance to the UGM were also discussed. One student suggested, “can we potentially get UGM on the teaching timetable, so everyone thinks they’re supposed to turn up here?” The LSESU, in agreement with the LSE, attempts to ensure that students never have class at 1pm on Thursdays, when the weekly meetings are held. Fadhil

Bakeer Markar, LSE Students’ Union (LSESU) General Secretary, agreed to look into the suggestion.

Despite the fact that the UGM is open to all students, some students remain oblivious to its purpose or content. One student who wished to be anonymous said, “I know the UGM goes on, but I don’t know what happens at the meetings.” Other students are too intimidated to attend the UGM. Postgraduate student Ashlee Bledsoe said, “I’ve wanted to go [to a UGM] for a while, but I’ve never gone.” When she joined the Labor Society, she was told that students who are politically left leaning traditionally sit on the left side of the room when they attend a UGM and vice versa for right leaning students. However, Bledsoe said “I don’t want to go and sit on the wrong side, politically.” Other students have told The Beaver they are afraid to ask a question for fear of being heckled or having paper thrown at them.

The LSESU remains the only Students’ Union in the country to hold weekly meetings. Other Unions who hold termly or monthly meetings often struggle to meet quoracy.

Another topic that was discussed at the meeting was the LSESU’s ongoing campaign to keep the library open twenty-four hours a day. The LSESU General Secretary encouraged students to sign an online peti-

UGM Election Results
10 January 2008

Chair of the UGM:
Joe Meadway
Vice Chair of the UGM:
Kevin Holder

UGM Motions

✓ **Commemoration of 1968 Anniversary**

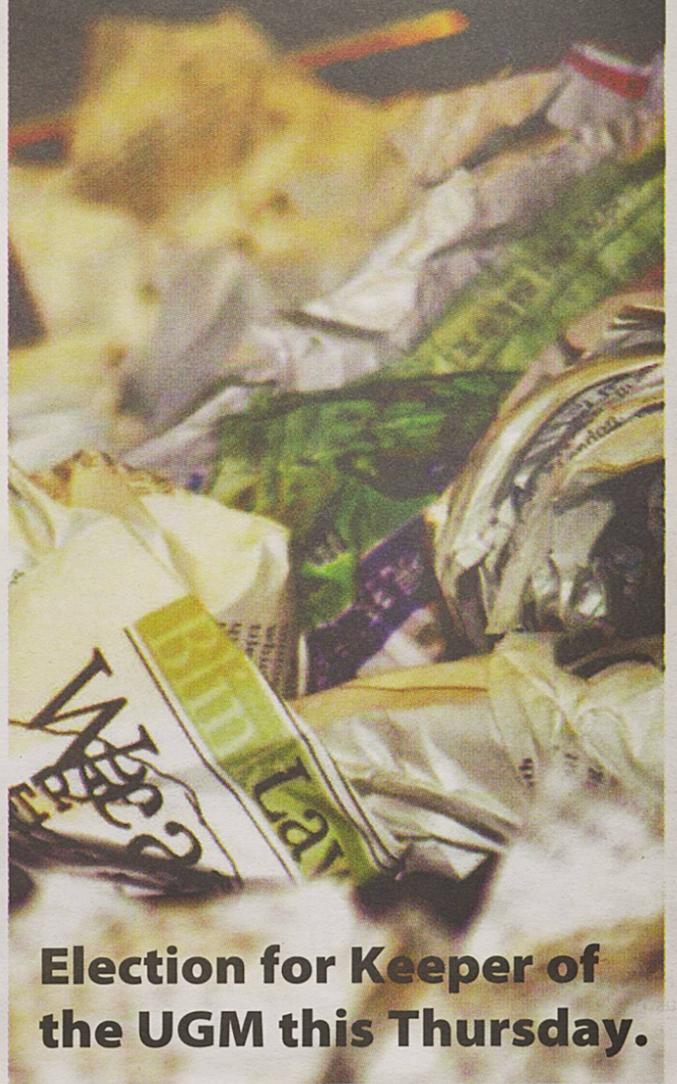
tion advocating for the extended library hours.

Additionally, it was announced that new lockers will be installed across campus in the coming months; according to Bakeer Markar “brand new cool lockers.” Special lockers for laptops will also be available to students.

Finally, Aled Fisher,

LSESU Ethics and Environment Officer, proposed a motion for the LSESU to commemorate the anniversary of 1968. The motion noted that 1968 “is widely remembered as the year of student rebellion” as LSE students widely participated in protests and other forms of rebellion in 1968. The motion passed.

Have you got what it takes?



Election for Keeper of the UGM this Thursday.

the Beaver

Got a story you think The Beaver should be covering?

Email thebeaver.news@lse.ac.uk or phone 02079556705

Want to get involved in producing the News section?

Come along to our Journalism Information and Training Session
Featuring a talk by former Beaver editor and FT journalist Sam Jones
Wednesday, 16th January 2pm A283

email thebeaver.news@lse.ac.uk for details

COMMENT & ANALYSIS

Our saviour from Big Brother



Andre Tartar

Everyone is surely aware that Gordon Brown is sailing treacherous waters in naught but a dinghy. Lambasted for his backdoor entry into Number 10 Downing Street, his suspiciously self-serving decision to delay elections (suspicious given his abysmal poll performances), and his unilateral decision to avoid a much-wanted referendum on the EU Lisbon Treaty, Gordon Brown is facing a near mutiny not only from an increasingly ram-bunctious Conservative opposition, but also from within his own party. But yet another criticism laid at Mr. Brown's feet; the data-loss scandals, is wholly unfair in my opinion.

True, the loss of every child benefit record for the UK by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HRMC) and then the loss of 3 million UK driver's license records by an IT sub-contractor is serious business. But how exactly is Mr. Brown to blame? At fault here are perhaps a bloated bureaucracy that even its own internal red tape cannot contain and the continued digitisation of our lives. Now, more than ever,

The recent data loss scandals expose the inherent dangers of centrally storing individuals' data in any format, and should act as a wake up call

governments see citizens as little more than data files to be updated and protected. Identity markers, health information, criminal record, benefits claims; that is who we are. When every important detail needed to keep the legal, welfare, and health systems operational can be downloaded to a simple CD, the possibility of national security and public safety breaches is staggering.

Always in politics and governments, a gaffe requires a scapegoat to take the fall. Here, I fear, it will be a series of proposed centralised data registers. Known as the National Identity Scheme, the government plans to consolidate over 49 identification items, such as retinal scans and electronic fingerprints, into a master National Identity Register. Though this will remain separate from the National DNA Database, already the largest in the world with over 3 million entries, it is meant as a universal identity check for government agencies and businesses. Parallel to the National Identity Scheme, the government is in the process of con-

solidating all NHS records into a single master database, known colloquially as the "NHS spine". Gains in efficiency are obvious, but who will have access leaves much to worry about.



a single server or database with each individual's most important information could be our worst nightmare or a criminal's dream

Doubtless such centralisation is a consolation to the more absent-minded among us, and those who believe in the paternalistic state. But for the rest of the population,

these data-loss scandals have eroded any faith in the government's ability to safeguard and control the sensitive information it holds on them. In this age of rampant identity theft and fraud; the estimated 135,000 annual cases are estimated to cost the UK over £1.7 billion, having a single server or database with each individual's most important information could be our worst nightmare and a criminal's dream. Agreeing that information is power, another cogent criti-

cism is that putting so much personal information in the hands of a few administrators may bring about Big Brother.

Now we must wait and see what the government's reaction will be to the public outcry and press vilification in the wake of the data-loss scandals. Taking into account Brown's stolid assurances that he will make the difficult decisions necessary for the nation's future, even if the nation itself disagrees, I would not be surprised if the government

moved ahead with the National Identity Scheme. But now that the forces opposed to the scheme, including the LSE's own Identity Project, have some extra ammunition in these scandals, perhaps there will be a shift. Or at the very least, the opposition in Parliament will see its chance to side with popular opinion. So maybe this will, after all, be the political obstacle that ultimately spells the end for Brown; even if he can't be blamed for it.



A law today of no relevance



Jennie Whiteman

With MPs last week debating repealing the blasphemy laws, a seemingly obvious question needs to be asked; why does a country, which espouses the principle of secularism (at least in rhetoric), still even have blasphemy laws in the 21st century?

Originally part of the canon laws, blasphemy was made illegal by common law in the 17th century, and in theory, laws against blasphemy against beliefs held by the Church of England exist to this day. While in practice,

Blasphemy laws seek only to protect beliefs, not people, and so their relevance in today's supposed secular society is very questionable

nobody has been prosecuted by these laws in recent times, that does not stop much time and public money being wasted by groups and individuals attempting to prosecute others for blasphemy under these laws. The most recent case of Christian Voice attempting to prosecute the BBC for broadcasting Jerry Spring: The Opera exemplifies this point.

The notion of blasphemy laws today may seem incomprehensible to those that value freedom of expression, but such values are not held by all

in society. Indeed, serious debate followed the publication in 1989 of Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*, for blasphemy laws to be extended to cover all religions and not only Anglicanism. While some may argue that blasphemy laws are needed to protect the faithful from offence, others argue that the present blasphemy laws are needed to protect the Judeo-Christian nature of Britain.

To tackle the first claim, blasphemy laws protect beliefs not people. Individuals are free to believe as they want, and in an open society, every individual's beliefs are liable to be challenged, even if it is claimed that some beliefs are part of a divine universal truth. This principle to challenge is applied to social, scientific and political beliefs, and thus by principle, should also include religious beliefs. One person cannot claim arbitrary righteousness of their beliefs over others, and given the numerous variation of arbitrary righteous beliefs, which are often at odds against one another, then a universal blasphemy law to

protect all beliefs is impossible. Secondly, the calls by those who claim a need to preserve the Judeo-Christian nature of Britain clearly do not appreciate that Britain's present nature is in fact secular in principle (though not completely in practice), and thus this is not a matter of preserving Judeo-Christian nature, but returning it to the nation.



Individuals are free to believe as they want, and in an open society, every individual's beliefs are liable to be challenged

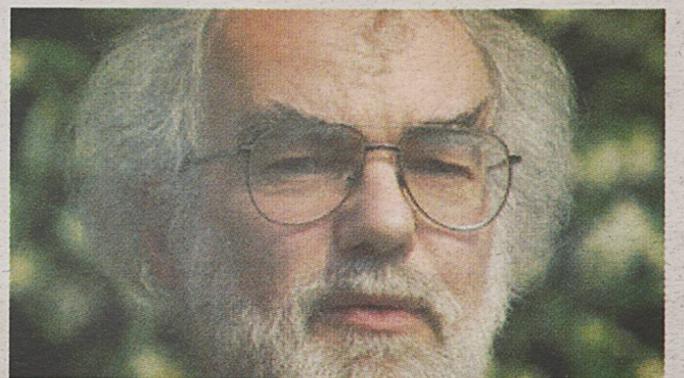
This is compounded by existence of people of other faiths and none in Britain, inherently meaning that having one "nature" for the nation on a religious level (in this case, Judeo-Christian) is at odds against the rights of those people not subscribing to Judeo-

Christian beliefs.

While these may be tired arguments to many, they are as relevant today as they were in the past. While specific claims of blasphemy are not always eluded to, "not causing offence" often is. This was demonstrated in recent times by the case of the Bezhti play in Birmingham, the Danish cartoons, and Christmas postage stamp depicting Hindus in front of Jesus. While objectors to these did not always cite blasphemy as their concern, the principle of blasphemy, not causing offence, is indeed the same. The continued existence of Christian specific blasphemy laws adds to a perceived grievance by those of other faiths, since on paper,

the Christian faith is protected, while others are not. The solution is not to extend the blasphemy laws to cover all faiths, but to remove the blasphemy laws altogether.

It was after a number of figures, including the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Carey raised the issue recently that this debate was brought once again into the house of commons. With the ideological principles for retaining such laws in a secular society indefensible, coupled with the impractical nature of their design and implementation, their lack of place in a secular society has been demonstrated. Indeed, even the Church of England supports their repeal.



Church of England agrees need to repeal blasphemy law

COMMENT & ANALYSIS

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Digital society



David Woodhouse

The literary equivalent of a Big Mac and Fries he may be, but true words are true even if they did come from Stephen King. "You can write to me if you want," pens Peter Riley's lost love Carol Gerber in her final letter to him in *Hearts In Atlantis* "but I sort of wish you wouldn't. It might not be good for either of us. This doesn't mean I don't care or remember, but that I do".

To we who live in the hyper-connected 21st Century, such a concept barely seems plausible. To voluntarily lose contact with someone we will never see again is surely not desirable and, moreover, it's probably not even possible to do so today. A 2008 *Hearts* may instead have seen Peter and Carol going from "in a relationship" to "single" and leaving each other wall posts ("hey haven't seen u for ages what u bin up 2?? xxx") every couple of months, whilst a news feed detailing their entire lives' events renders even those small messages superfluous. Dare I suggest that such an interpersonal relationship is dreadfully insincere? Carol

While the internet used to provide a space for the socially-inept to be social, today the majority of us rely on the internet for basic social functioning

shows remarkable perception for a seventeen year old in her suggestion; this in the 1960s when the only realistic way to keep in touch would have been through letters, which it seems had rather more time and effort spent on them than talking on social networking sites



I get accused of being a Luddite on a semi-regular basis; the last time was, ironically enough, via email

entails. The poor girl would be adrift today in the innumerable channels of communication that now exist (like I suspect many of us are adrift though we don't admit it,

being as we are, part of the outwardly-confident 'fuck-it' generation), unable to act on her proposition because it would be nigh impossible.

I get accused of being a Luddite on a semi-regular basis (the last time was, ironically enough, via email) for relaying views like this. This is totally untrue; part of my bile towards what has collectively been termed by morons as 'Web 2.0', is the way it has rapidly changed the social nature of, and displaced the 'old' internet. Once, the web was an outlet for socially-inept people to talk to others about topics; the video game Pokemon for example, that they would have been beaten up at school for discussing in public. It brought together like-minded souls from across the globe, clustered around bulletin boards and chat rooms, in a way previously unimaginable in the history of human society.

However, from about 2002 onwards, instead of forming such virtual communities, we increasingly began to go online to interact almost exclusively with people we already know

in real life. Priorities went awry as such a reconstitution of the net was somehow hailed as a good thing; this time last year YouTube was named by Time magazine as the best invention of 2006, whilst coming in at second place was a vaccination to prevent cervical cancer. People who in real life were solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short, began to gather 200 plus friends on their MySpace accounts (ludicrous to anyone familiar with Dunbar's number), whilst blogging, especially political blogging, reached epic proportions of dullness with none except a handful being read by any significant numbers of people, and most only by the writer's friends or family. Kurt Vonnegut once said that the internet "is the habitat of the newest creatures to evolve in our part of the Milky Way - as enchanting and nobly bizarre as any giant manta or moray eel, say. They are recorded thoughts and feelings about what it is like to be a living thing". I like to imagine that Kurt reconsidered this in his final years, which coincided

with the explosion of the 'blogosphere' as the vast majority of these recorded thoughts became about as interesting as a Flickr photo album entitled 'New Year's Eve 2007 Pt 3'. Go and try out LiveJournal's 'Random Journal' feature if you don't believe me.

Last term, still distraught at the loss of my beloved 'old' internet and fickle bowing to immense peer pressure, I did actually create a Facebook account; I lasted just over two days on it before recoiling from the avalanche of incoming friend requests from people I didn't want to speak to and realising "holy robot Jesus. I am an idiot." Deactivation; and later, with great difficulty, deletion followed. I wouldn't dream of suggesting you do the same dear readers - let's face it, you're too addicted - but devoid of any method of updating my close friends on my 'current status', I disregarded Carol's advice and wrote to them instead. Some even responded. Surely that's better and more personal than a news-feed update detailing that 'David is grumpy'?



New editorship at C&A



James Pugh

While sparing the usual gratuities of being "honoured" and "grateful" that usually accompany the event of attaining an elected position (which seems rather hollow in this case, since I stood unopposed), I'd like to put forward my vision for how I'd like to see the C&A section of *The Beaver* to become. I give a forewarning that there is much idealism and dreaming contained within these lines, which may send many readers into fits of gig-

While the Beaver's much loved C&A editor Chun takes a break, his replacement James is taking on the new role with some optimism and idealism

gles or rolling of eyeballs.

It seems in recent times, participation within the C&A section has fallen back somewhat. Rather than students actively volunteering their views and opinions to be expressed, it seems that the role of the C&A editor has become one of having to pester friends and previous contributors to fill the pages within the section. This is not to belittle the efforts of a number of students that give a great deal of time and effort in providing

highly appreciated material without which these pages would be empty. But given the great diversity of student thought at LSE, and the passion with which many on campus hold to their views, it strikes me as rather odd that the C&A editor's inbox remains so quiet. Maybe C&A has come to be seen by some as a little predictable and formulaic; a bit like C&A the clothing store.

As C&A editor, I can't force people to contribute, and in

fact I'd feel very disappointed if that was how my role was to evolve. I don't want to be scared to open my inbox because of a fear of finding only one or two spontaneously written articles, and then having to beg the loyal cadre of contributors to write at least something for the next edition. I want to be scared to open my inbox because of a fear being overwhelmed with original and creative articles, such that I am forced to make painful choices as to what to include; that may be a bit ambitious, but you understand the point.

Maybe I am being too idealistic. Maybe I am dreaming of a time when LSE was a place of student intellectualism, and not "cool new lockers". Maybe people are becoming more interested in careers fairs than student politics. Maybe all those hours spent trying to get those four As at A-Level and then now trying to get that 70 percent in some irrelevant essay has left many of us mentally exhausted and apathetic. Maybe there are students who've spent longer at LSE and heard all this before. Probably, I am not the first person to voice these same opinions. Maybe I am sounding like a ranting Daily Mail reader, though instead of complaining about the decline of moral standards of the country, I am complaining about the decline in student participation in the University.

I've long felt that student participation in campus media is a vital aspect in fostering a community feeling at university. Student newspapers offer individuals the opportunity to express themselves in print when they may not be able to later in life. While a pub discussion provides a space to form and develop ideas amongst friends and acquaintances, student newspapers expand that concept of space to allow individuals that would unlikely cross paths in daily life, to put forward and exchange views. In this way, ideas from within one's own peer group can be shared with a wider student population, and in turn, such ideas can be challenged and debated, thus enriching oneself and the student community. Again I repeat, maybe I am being too idealistic.

I'm hoping to see greater participation and contribution of hard-hitting and diverse views that we do regularly get on the pages of C&A. I'd also hope to see more opinionated letters coming in; no doubt complaining about how the new C&A editor is such a dreadful bore, whose own dry contributions are hardly the definition of creativity. Most of all, I'd like students to feel that the C&A section can publish their views, and that readers can subsequently challenge those views. Idealism isn't all bad you know.

the Beaver

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COMMENT & ANALYSIS

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The Beaver

Established 1949 - Issue 677

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.

ULU's fate is in the balance...

...and our own interests are at stake

An archery and gun shooting club. Where are we London students going to find such exotic societies in the nation's capital, run by students for students? Thankfully, we need not look any further than beyond the University of London Union (ULU). The sorts of opportunities that students on large, out of town campuses take for granted, but that a relatively small institution like the LSE could never support. By bringing the diverse scholastic enterprises of this city together, we have been able to enjoy benefits which will be unavailable to future LSE students, and their worlds will be a much smaller place if they cannot enjoy the eclectic societies that ULU offers.

Furthermore, ULU unites London's students and gives them a clear, single voice. Campaigns to extend Transport for London student discounts and expand financial assistance have real momentum and have achieved real results. ULU provides a platform to bring together campaigners from across London, as last year's Climate and Stop the War marches showed. The University of London's attack on ULU, including its decision to reduce the size of the sabbatical team - could even be viewed as an attempt to divide and conquer: without ULU, students of the University of London have no means to hold the central University authority to account. It is easy to forget that apart from being students of the LSE, we are also students of the University of London. We must not lose our ability to have an input into the way it affects our student experience.

UGM will fall to ignominy...

...unless revitalising action is taken

If the Union General Meeting, the sovereign body of the Students' Union, is inoperative, its decisions carry no weight and, constitutionally speaking, should not be held up. Without quoracy, the UGM is nothing more than a self-referential, in-joke filled, squabbling, talking shop. The same people appear, time and time again, to - it seems - do nothing more than provide Union Jack with crate fulls of satirical ammunition to pound Union executives with. Motions are proposed with worthy aims, only to be ignored because the latest trendy-lefty issue has overrun due to three weeks' of argument about the content of the second clause.

Worse still, the publicity efforts designed to bring people to the UGM are woefully lacking. The combination of irrelevant, navel-gazing on the part of the LSE's political chattering classes, and the arcane procedures necessary to get a motion through the Constitution and Steering Committee serves only to discourage attendance to what should be the most important, busy, and liveliest event of the week.

The LSE is the only university whose Students' Union still meets on a weekly basis - we should be proud of this. Instead, we have let the one place where Union democracy could be relevant to all students, regardless of their age, gender, sexuality, or hair colour, fall into disrepute. Quoracy is now in doubt almost on a weekly basis, and motions are continuously brought that do nothing for the students of the School; instead attempting to resolve the Israel-Palestine conflict by letter-writing.

Surely we should be attempting to deal with issues affecting students - cockroaches at High Holborn Hall of Residence and broken lifts, or the lack of water fountains, for example - rather than engaging in petty squabbling amongst a tiny group of students whose eyes are set on Westminster and not Houghton Street.

"noise rules"

Dear Sir,

I wholeheartedly agree with Michael Lui's letter last week about the intolerable level of noise in the library caused by student chat and mobile phone use. Recently, I had to interrupt a student who was enjoying a live video conference in a no-phone zone. As she wasn't even bothering to use headphones, students nearby were privy to both sides of the conversation. This sort of inconsiderate behaviour has become routine, mostly because there is no enforcement of noise rules. I have raised the issue of enforcement with the library staff and was assured that security staff do challenge those using mobiles. But try counting the number of students on mobiles as you walk up the spiral staircase at any time during the day to see how hopelessly inadequate the enforcement is.

The library website describes a system of warnings and sanctions against students who ignore library noise rules. Could Maureen Wade tell us how many of these have been issued in this academic year? I would guess the number is close to zero. If the security staff took the simple step of making routine noise patrols, handing out warnings where appropriate, I believe noise levels would be significantly reduced.

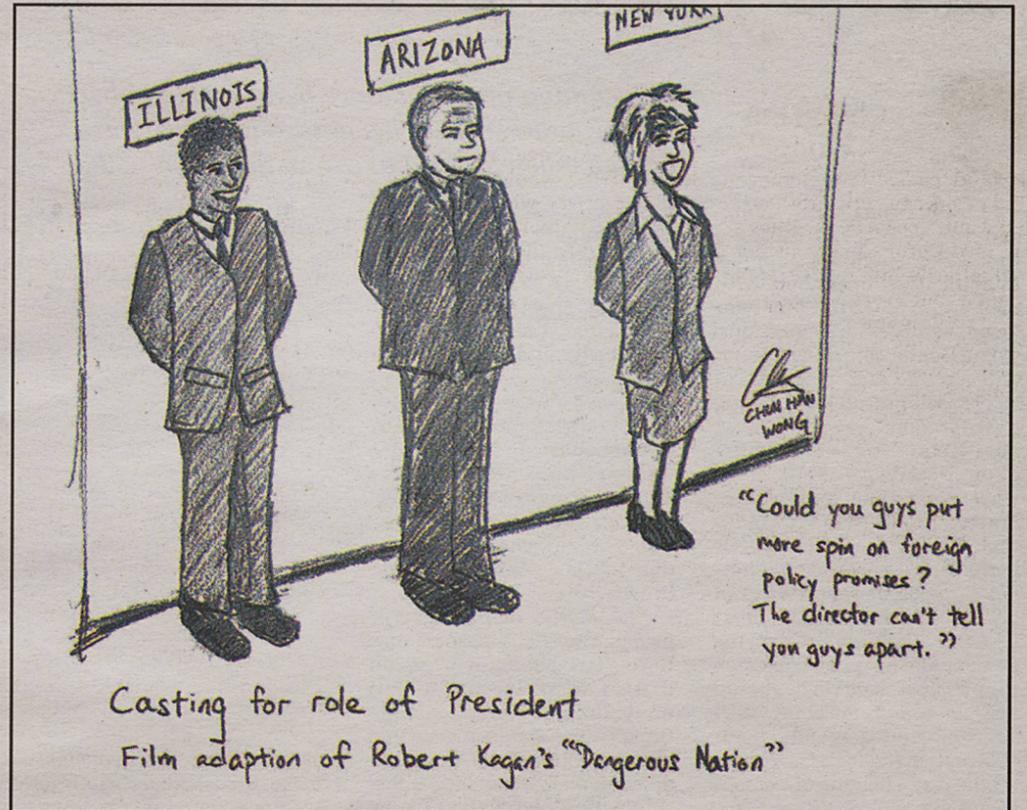
The Students' Union should also do more by raising awareness of the problem among students and questioning the library's lax enforcement. Reducing Library noise would do more to ameliorate overcrowding than the campaign for 24-hour opening, which would benefit only a tiny minority of users at best.

Annette Pacey

"well-worn"

Dear Sir,

A new year and a new debate, or so one might hope. Having suffered through successive weeks of back and forth argument last term on the question of a whether there is such a thing as a 'just war' and the intractable debates on the efficacy or legitimacy of an academic boycott of Israel, this reader naively hopes that some new discussions will take place in *The Beaver's* opinion and letters pages this year. Perhaps our amateur pundits can now focus their attention on the US primaries or even build a toe-hold into the genuinely interesting discussion on consumerism and middle-class guilt introduced by Chloe Pieters. Maybe, and I've gathered that this is a heretical thought at this institution, they could even contribute opinions on subjects that are directly related to issues that impact the daily lives of the average student. Let us broaden the discussion beyond the



well-worn arguments that have already dominated *The Beaver's* pages over the Michaelmas term. I hope that I speak for many other readers when I say that I'm tired of it.

Richard Nevins

"highly unlikely"

Dear Sir,

I find the candidacy and potential presidency of Barack Obama anything but a "historic and hopeful moment," as Molly Tucker wrote last week, and I can think of several reasons why electing Obama would not be "the most appropriate statement" for America "to make to the rest of the world and to itself," as Timothy Root opined last issue.

A 2001 survey found that the top 20 percent of American households owned over 80 percent of privately held wealth and over 90 percent of financial wealth. Indeed, among high-income OECD countries, the US is, according to the Gini index, the most unequal in income and wealth distributions. It seems highly unlikely that Obama will champion change in these matters, given his belief that the "work" of NASDAQ is central to the realisation of "a more just America" and his dismissal, in his disingenuously named *The Audacity of Hope*, of "morally absolutist [...] zealots" who denounce the inequitable and anti-social consequences of capitalism in America.

On foreign policy, Obama promises much of the decidedly offensive same. He has stated that the US must preserve its "total commitment" to the "defense" of Israel by "fully funding military assistance." Regarding the question of how to use force to protect America's "vital interests," Obama favours the "burden-

sharing" approach of the First Gulf War - a conflict that led to the death of up to 200,000 Iraqi civilians. Like most other politicians, Obama frames many international-justice issues - poverty, hunger, disease - within a calculus for their relevance to American "security" and, in so doing, merely promotes the continued objectification of the Other.

Javier Sethness

"to liberate"

Dear Sir,

I felt I had to respond to Chun Han Wong's criticisms of my defence of the Falklands War in *The Beaver* last week. I did not elaborate on why I thought the Falklands War did not have a bloody aftermath because I thought it was blatantly obvious that there was none. After the Argentine surrender, there were no massacres or executions; there was no further bloodshed or resumption of conflict. Casualties that occurred during the war, though regrettable, do not constitute its aftermath. The aftermath is what comes afterwards, which, as I pointed out, was a period of peace, prosperity and security for the Falkland Islands. The downfall of the Argentine military junta was indeed not a British war aim, nor was it a condition for the resolution of the war to be just. It is simply another instance where the aftermath of the war was a positive.

I do not claim that 'the victor is necessarily just'. I argue that in this specific case the victor clearly was. Britain was liberating British islands that had been invaded in an act of unprovoked aggression by another country. The history of the Falkland Islands is more complex than Wong suggests.

A British captain was the first to land on the islands, and the original British claim to sovereignty dates back to 1765, although control of the islands was lost to Spain, and later claimed by Argentina. Argentina had effectively lost control of the Falklands before the 1833 British landing as a result of a naval conflict with the United States and a mutiny on the islands.

Wong's suggestion of 'poetic justice' is not only inappropriate but also contemptuous of the people living there, who would have to pay the price for this aggressive and piratical act of 'justice' that was forced upon them. The Argentine head of security on the islands at the time said in conversation that his preferred method for dealing with the 'islander problem' would be to kill them. Wong accuses me of ignoring the dead, but he conspicuously ignores the living. Not once does he mention the Falkland Islanders themselves. They did not welcome the Argentine forces as liberators, but they did for the British. For Britain not to have acted in defence of its own people would have been a monstrous betrayal, as well as a national humiliation.

It is true that the war could have gone the other way. But that does not alter the justice of the cause itself: to retake territory that was forcefully invaded and taken over in an act of unprovoked aggression, and to liberate a population that was put under foreign occupation. How it would have been morally better for Britain to have not responded to this aggression, to have turned its back on its own people on the Falklands in this hour of crisis, and to have simply left them to their fate under Argentine occupation, I will never see.

Peter John Cannon

COMMENT & ANALYSIS

c&a@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Health

They're mine!



Chun Han Wong

Graduating with pomp and a blaze of glory, totting a first-class honours degree. Landing the dream job with the most exploitative and two-faced capitalist corporations. Going for a salacious dinner date with the hottest of Hollywood pin-up girls. Living a scandalous jet-set life in uber-luxury and mind-boggling decadence. Call them what you'd like, pipedreams, fantasy, flights of fancy. Things that I'll give an arm for. Or perhaps, a leg. Throw in a kidney for good measure. Why not my blood marrow while I'm at it? After all, doesn't the saying go "no pain, no gain"? Aversion to physical sacrifice should neither compromise my self-aggrandising agenda nor obstruct my relentless charge up the dizzy heights of personal success.

Given my vainglorious and self-indulgent demeanour, I find no better way to spend a splendid Saturday morning than languishing in a good bout of relaxation exercise. As

In weighing up the balance between civil liberties and broader societal benefits, a level head is needed when looking at organ donation policy

I perused explorer window after explorer window laced with consumerist crack, deeply engaged in the mentally-draining spectator sport of net-surfing, I slinked my way seamlessly into 'the zone'. I turned on my cerebral faucet to unleash a torrent of creative juices, daydreaming of a fantastical alternate universe. But the good times were cut brutally short by a stunning bulletin on the BBC news website. The newsmaker in question - Prime Minister Gordon Brown.

As if the debilitation of income taxes and despair of a Euro 2008 bereft of overpaid British (and Irish) football pretenders weren't enough, Brown now wants the people of Britain to pay for shattered dreams and bungled leadership with blood. To be fair, it's not quite a blood tax; one needs to become a memory early in his or her life to fulfil the Prime Minister's outrageous demands. But nonetheless, he wishes to enslave the

proud people of this country in a militaristic and authoritarian organ donation regime. Oh the gall! How dare he suggest



1,200 extra transplants every year could save the NHS about £500 million over ten years

adding such a intrusive clause to the British social contract? Britain, a fountain of liberty and individual freedoms (notwithstanding America, fuck yeah!) cannot demand that its people give up the essence of their physical constitution at the whim of pesky

doctors.

I was incensed. This ghastly scheme would become an onerous threat to our personal freedoms, making people get off their lazy arses to choose not to donate their organs to some undeserving stranger! Brown is trying to force righteous and freedom-loving citizens to work against their physical and mental inertia just to remain the heartless, self-interested, money-grubbing, capitalist bastards that they are! I felt sympathetic towards fellow freedom fighters whose passionate rhetoric I read on the Telegraph online speakers' corner. I wasn't going to just hand out my precious innards to some random sickly guy who couldn't take good care of himself. Not even over my dead body.

I quickly sensed a kindred spirit in the advocacy group Patient Concern, whose powerful convictions and incontrovertible logic seemed to stand tall against the Prime Minister's moralistic arguments. Their website details their heroic campaign, lauding their opposition against the newly-mooted policy by saying "organ donation is a generous gift. It is not an obligation." Indeed! So what if it could save more lives? Death before dishonour, I say (translation: let them die for our honour). If I want to save dying patients, I will save them by my own

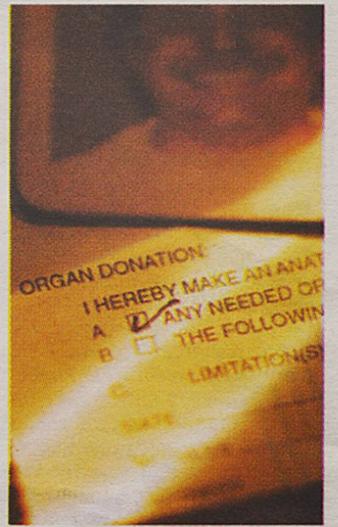
accord, by going through the cathartic and soul-cleansing process of getting an organ donor card. Saving lives should be an glorious act of self-sacrifice, not a bureaucratic obligation. No way am I letting the government steal my thunder! Not that I am actually going to do it.

Delighted with the new moral high-ground I acquired for myself, I proceed to scour the relevant data, hoping to sound a statistical death knell on the donation scheme. But the search quickly degenerated into a numerical quagmire. Every single statistic tore at my hardcore consumerist, capitalist, heart. The potential 1,200 extra transplants every year could save the NHS about £500 million over ten years; extra money could easily finance tax cuts! Over 8,000 patients currently await transplants, with more than a thousand dying annually. If they were restored to health, the economy would have more underpaid labour to exploit! I was defeated. The cold, hard numbers made their case.

I acted quickly to reformulate my stand on the issue; never place your bets on the faction that argues against the universal arbitrator that is economics. A simple cost-benefit analysis soon helped put my mind at ease. If this policy is enacted, I'll find some insurance in the increased organ

availability should I ever need it, yet still be able to hold true to my inner yearnings for liberty by making a worthy effort in opting out. The best of both worlds indeed. Why give an arm for anything when you can get others to give them for you?

Despite the hideous rant above, the writer is actually Singaporean. More controversially, his name can be found on the NHS Organ Donor Register. His home country has an opt-out organ donation system, which he wholeheartedly supports. He hereby shamelessly plugs the website, www.uktransplant.org.uk



Educating doctors



James Pugh

Even with the annual debate over medical education and training, a key problem is not and never is addressed

With February approaching, the annual row over medical education and training is likely to rear its head before long. The scramble for jobs, the application process, and the quality of training the nation's doctors will again be part of national discussion, primarily because very little of the system has changed since last year. The chronic uncertainty and confusion that is annually demonstrated only adds to the crumbling faith and trust that the public hold in the medical profession.

Last week, Radio 4 got a head start with their investiga-

tive programme *Where's the femur?*, which attacked (not for the first time) the new methods to teaching undergraduate medical students, particularly the Problem Based Learning (PBL) approach used as the teaching framework in some medical schools. While the quality of the investigation was not particularly robust, relying almost solely on anecdotes from individuals, it did raise pertinent questions as to the way we train future doctors, which has a direct impact on the health-care the nation receives. The main claim of the programme was that using PBL approach-

es resulted in a substantially lower knowledge base of medical graduates, particularly in the areas of anatomy, physiology, biochemistry, and pharmacology. This was blamed on the lack of direction that PBL is claimed to give medical students, such that large gaps in knowledge are present in the areas mentioned. While the system of undergraduate medical education is indeed resulting in a lower knowledge base, jumping the gun on PBL may be a somewhat premature reaction.

During my own experience as a medical undergraduate, the teaching side of the equation was not what was lacking, but rather the learning side. While both traditional and PBL approaches offer an excellent environment and opportunities to learn if motivated, the incentive for medical students to learn is actually quite low. To begin with, the selection of students at admissions, where high A-Level grades are a determining factor, and where high A-Level grades are primarily achieved through exam technique skills and "learning for the exam", inevitably results in a cohort of students who are driven to pass exams first, and learning on a more general level second-

Thus for any education system for medical students to work optimally, an appreciation is required that the motivation for students to learn is inherently biased towards passing exams against other possible motivations. It would thus seem logical that in this situation, for learning to be optimal, a sound system of examining medical students should be in place that incentivises learning to a level considered acceptable. At present this does not seem to be the case.

Firstly, in many medical schools, exam questions are repeated year after year, in some cases, the exact same paper being set. Thus the incentive to acquire a wide knowledge base is minimal, with time better spent asking students from the year above what came up in the exam. Secondly, pass rates of exams are not particularly high (varying, but can be as low as 55%), thus students can happily ignore learning particularly difficult or uninteresting areas of the curriculum with the knowledge that a large number of questions can be answered incorrectly. Thirdly, exams in most medical schools seem to assess knowledge not actually required to be a good doctor. Instead of assessing knowledge of common diseases, exam papers will be filled with questions about rare diseases that most students will never encounter in

their professional lives. While these rare diseases do make a good framework for questions to test rational and lateral thinking, they do not necessarily test knowledge required to be a good doctor. With the improvement of diagnostic facilities, the rise of litigation, and the desire to standardise medical practice, doctors these days find themselves working

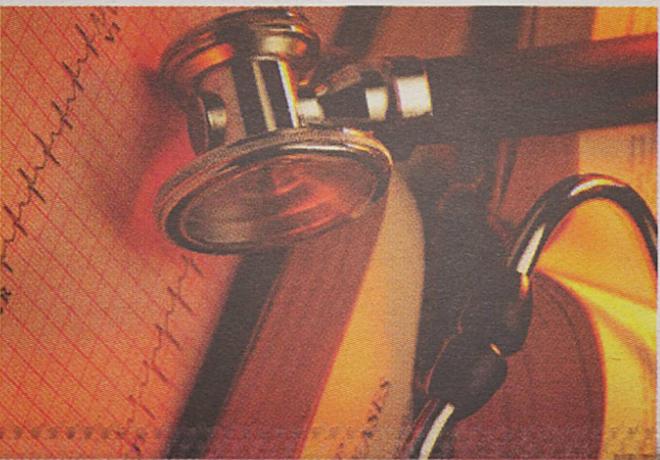


The chronic uncertainty and confusion that is annually demonstrated only adds to the crumbling faith and trust that the public hold in the medical profession

more as technicians, rather than as professionals with wide clinical freedom. The requirement for rational thinking has declined, to be replaced with a more systems and pathways framework of clinical practice, meaning that medical graduates need a firm knowledge in how to manage patients. Unfortunately, learning such knowledge is not rewarded within the current exam system in many medical

schools, such that it is neglected by those medical students that focus their learning to pass their exams rather than to be good doctors. Finally, much of the useful knowledge an undergraduate acquires occurs from time on the ward. However, in many cases, this activity is poorly supervised or monitored, meaning that it can be very easy for a medical student to sleep off a hangover from the night before rather than attend an eight o'clock ward round. Overall, the current situation highlights the pertinence of looking at the ways in which medical students are assessed and examined and introducing reform if this is shown to be inadequate in achieving the goal of being well equipped and knowledgeable once graduated.

Why is all of this relevant? The previous decade of medical scandals, such Harold Shipman and Alder Hay Hospital, have rocked the trust placed in the medical profession. However, even though the trust society places in doctors has markedly declined, doctors are still in principle valued. Coupled with the fact that doctors' training and salaries are primarily financed through taxation, and with the high level of responsibility they hold while at work, it is vitally important that their training and subsequent performance is to the highest possible standard and accountable to the public; without whom they would not be in the employment position they privileged to be in today. It is after all possible for trust to be re-earned.



Features

The US Presidential Elections

Red isn't Dead

Barack Obama: change we can't believe in

Vladimir Unkovski-Korica



You can't have capitalism without racism.' I start with this quotation from Malcolm X. The issue at hand, of course, is the fight between Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama to become the Democrats' official candidate for President of the United States. After Iowa, it was looking like the US would have its first serious African-American presidential candidate. 'Obamania' promptly swept the left liberal media in the UK. It appeared as if America's history of racism, centuries-long denial of civil rights and the disgrace of New Orleans in 2005 could finally be swept under the carpet. For Mr Obama is the sort of politician even a white conservative in the US would probably not mind inviting for dinner. That is the problem: he has remained at all times the candidate of the status quo. Even after his election, America's racist structure beneath the surface would remain fundamentally unaltered.

Indeed, let's not forget Barack Obama has accrued an election war chest exceeding \$100 million (as has Hillary Clinton). Taken together, all of the candidates running for the presidency will spend \$1 billion before 4 November 2008 - enough to feed for the coming four years the one in six malnourished children living in the richest country in the world. The Democrats are also a party of big business, though a junior partner compared to the Republicans. Contrary to left liberal media distortions in Britain, the Democrats are not a cuddly coalition of the progressive campaigners, trade unionists, and women's groups. While it is true that around ninety-three per cent of trade unions' political contributions are made to the Democrats, this amounts to a puny fourteen per cent of the party's funding. Sixty-seven per cent comes from big business. A candidate of the Democratic Party cannot be a champion of the poor.

It is also interesting to note why Mr Obama lost to Mrs Clinton in New Hampshire. Again, the liberal left media made much of Hillary Clinton's emotional moment the night before. But the polls tell us something different. The Obama campaign lost thirty-six to thirty-nine. In fact, it appears Mrs Clinton benefited from her ability to present herself, however disingenuously, as the tribune of working class voters worried about the state of the US economy. Mrs Clinton was the only Democratic candidate to raise the prospect of recession in the televised debate just before the election, while ninety-eight per cent of Democrat voters in the primary claimed to be 'very' or 'somewhat' worried about the state of the economy. Families with incomes less than US \$100 000 per annum, single working women, trade unionists, and those without a college degree were all more likely to vote Clinton by a significant margin. By contrast, she only received a ratio of thirty-one to forty-eight for Obama among families who felt they were 'getting ahead'. It's not just a question of Obama's message not getting across. For anyone who's seen Michael Moore's 'Sicko', it should be painfully obvious that a candidate who thinks the insurance companies can help provide a more equitable health care plan is truly in the pocket of big business. His views on how to sort out Pakistan are not exactly anti-war either. Of course, Hillary Clinton is not in any way a preferable candidate. During her husband's administration, to which she often refers as the good times, the gap between rich and poor in America increased by a factor of ten. Federal prisoner numbers almost doubled. More worryingly, Bill Clinton sent the US army into conflict spots as many times as his four previous predecessors combined - including the illegal aerial war on Yugoslavia in 1999.

Iraq will lie in ruins, but America will stay an inequitable and racist society - whoever wins the Democrat nomination, and whoever is in the White House by the end of the year. Two years ago, seventy per cent of all white Americans were owner-occupiers. For African Americans the figure was forty-six per cent, while for Hispanics it was less than forty per cent. According to the federal government, over twenty per cent of black households are below the poverty line. America needs real change - and here's to Cynthia McKinney, the Green Party candidate, as a first step towards a radical alternative in the US. To finish with another Malcolm X quotation: 'the future belongs to those who prepare for it today.'

Blue is True

Going nuclear on fiscal responsibility

Annette Pacey



On 10 January, the government formally gave its backing for a new generation of nuclear power stations to be built in Britain. This marks a major comeback for a technology which seemed not so long ago, in Britain at least, to have been consigned to history. According to industry analysts, three factors have brought about this change of heart: the high price of fossil fuels; fears for future energy security; and of course climate change. Anti-nuclear arguments have traditionally been made on environmental and financial grounds. Are they valid any longer?

The pro-nuclear argument has tipped the environmental scales in its favour at least: the process itself produces zero carbon emissions. Building the plants and mining their uranium fuel do create emissions, but these are minimal compared to other forms of power generation (excluding renewables). Greenpeace points to research which suggests that under the current nuclear plans, carbon emissions would only be reduced by around 4%, and not until 2025. Still, on green grounds alone, we should give nuclear another chance.

The financial objections are more complex, but they also are more damning. The government insists that, unlike past state-funded nuclear plants, the whole cost of the new generation of nuclear reactors will be paid for by private companies, including construction and waste disposal. Indeed, the companies themselves seem very keen to get started. EDF, a French company, says it plans to build four nuclear plants in the UK before 2017 - all without subsidies. E.On, a German firm, and Centrica, which owns British gas, have also expressed an interest.

However, claims that these stations will not require subsidies need careful scrutiny. It's worth remembering that no nuclear power plant anywhere in the world has ever been built without assistance from public funds. The energy companies seem to have gone ahead and made their financial calculations lacking some vital information about costs. The government has yet to decide how much the companies should contribute to building permanent underground storage for Britain's nuclear waste, which is currently in temporary storage above ground at the Sellafield site in Cumbria. Careful wording by the government about companies making a contribution "towards the cost" or "paying their full share", as has been reported, suggests that public money will be required to meet at least some of the cost of permanent nuclear waste disposal.

Although the government insists that subsidies will not be provided, the nuclear industry will get some special treatment. The government has conceded that private energy companies will enjoy "tax advantages." The companies have also asked for a guaranteed minimum price for carbon emissions because if the price were to fall too low, nuclear power would cease to be profitable. No guarantees have yet been made, though talks continue at the European level.

The financial viability of nuclear power depends on the price of oil remaining relatively high, which it is by no means guaranteed to do across the 60-year lifespan of the new generation of reactors. The government has insisted that a taxpayer bailout would only occur in the case of emergency, but it is not clear if a significant drop in the oil price would count as such or not.

Unfortunately, when it comes to nuclear energy, taxpayer bailouts have tended to be the rule rather than the exception. In 2003 British Energy, which operates Britain's more modern reactors, had to be rescued with £3 billion of public money. Reactors are complicated to build and cost overruns are common: the new Finnish reactor being built in Olkiluoto is two years behind schedule and 50% over budget.

The energy gap faced by Britain in the next 20 years is a reality, as the old coal-fired plants putter out and North Sea oil runs dry. The government is sensibly reluctant to rely on imports from politically unstable parts of the world. The threat of climate change may also be prompting us to look at nuclear power in a new light, but for now, too many problems with the economics of nuclear remain for the government's case to be convincing.

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Notes on Nothing

The Baghdad Primary

Whoever wins in November, they are going to inherit a badly broken Iraq

This year's US presidential election has personal drama, stunning comebacks, and plenty of campaign mudslinging. So far, however, the media have been so caught up in the great Obama-Clinton struggle for the Democrat nomination that they have neglected the likely deciding issue in this contest, Iraq. True, the country is (relatively) quiet now. But it is a little too quiet. On all the most important indicators - such as the "surge" of increased American forces in and around Baghdad, the "Anbar awakening" of Sunni tribes against their former Al Qaeda allies, and reconciliation across the fractured sectarian divide - Iraq is in fact going from bad to worse, and the candidates badly need to tell us what they intend to do about it.

The "surge" will, after all, be long gone by the time the contest's winner takes office in January 2009. The candidates should still have much greater ambitions for quelling Iraq's chaos than its architects, who have only been able to point to a reversion to 2006's levels of violence as justification for their experiment. Iraq's government has not used the breathing space to set its house in order, either. In choosing who to vote for this autumn, Americans should bear in mind those who lauded this missed opportunity as a silver bullet, and those who wisely hedged on other options.

The new broom in 2009's White House will hopefully not place his or her faith in quixotisms like the current Anbar Awakening, either. Seemingly heedless of Afghanistan's ominous precedent in using ideologically suspect militias to fight your battles, the US army sets much store by the use of parallel Sunni tribal irregulars - or, in the Pentagon's bizarre euphemism, "concerned citizens' groups" - to turn against the terrorists and supplement Iraqi security. They are obviously not supplementing enough so far, since this weekend American warplanes dropped forty thousand pounds of bombs on Al Qaeda positions south of Baghdad at a time when we are supposed to be fighting a deft counterinsurgency. Nor should much trust be loaded onto any of Iraq's so-called tribes, a fading socio-economic structure in much of the country. British forces in Basra turned to local tribes for security from 2003, but the influence they promised proved elusive.

Above all, however, it is telling that American forces have had to corral their former Sunni enemies into militias outside government oversight. Few elected local governments in Iraq exist to take their concerns into account. Abdul-Qadi al-Obaidi, the Iraqi defence minister, has said that no formal Sunni security force will be created on his government's watch. Indeed, not even the smallest chinks of light in Iraq's darkened politics are what they seem. That is certainly true of this weekend's repeal of the 2003 de-Baathification law by the Iraqi parliament. The coalition's inept planners have always protested that their chances of rebuilding a strong central government after the war were hamstrung by the turfing out of thousands of Saddam-era bureaucrats who had little to do with the regime's crimes, so this new law sounds like a correction of the balance. It is decidedly not. The institutions that would have most benefited from the turnaround, such as the old Iraqi army, were ground into political dust long ago. Suspicions should also be raised by the fact that none of the ex-Baathists in the Iraqi parliament itself voted for the repeal. The actual text of the new law forbids the Baath party from "returning to power ideologically, administratively, politically or in practice, and under any other name." That provides more than enough vague flummery for the law to be used by the government's Shia strongmen to brand useful secularists, like former prime minister Iyad Allawi's Iraqi National Front, pseudo-Baathists. Iraq's political scene is finally moderating, but more through inertia than any real will on the part of the government.

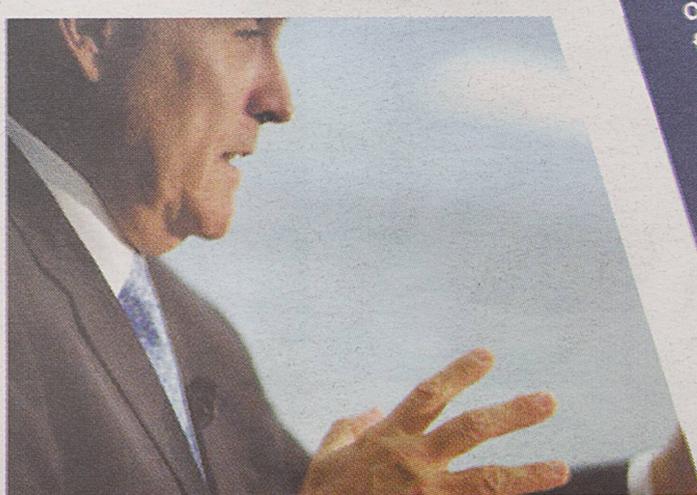
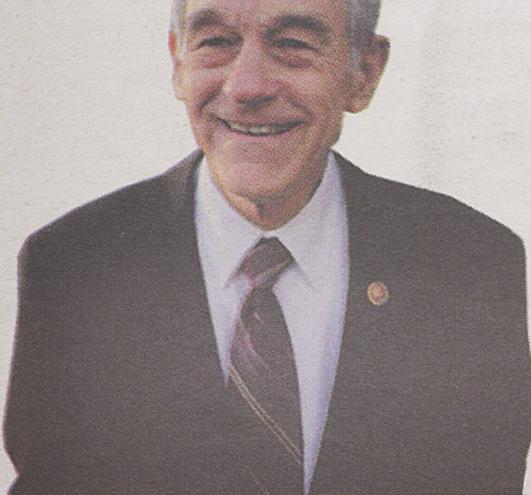
The American ambassador to Iraq, Ryan Crocker, nevertheless has the nerve to insist that Iraqis "are at the point where they are able to fashion their own approaches and desired outcomes," and that this year will increasingly be one of "Iraqi solutions." We were supposed to have these solutions in place six months after the overthrow of Saddam. Instead, Iraq has had almost five years of violence and at times complete anarchy. Whatever other policies the candidates set out, it is time to end the charade of pretending that we only have to hang on for another few months for Iraq to right itself. Many siren voices in America are arguing that now; they will surely still be doing so a year later, in January, 2009.

Joseph Cotterill
Features Editor

US2008



From top: Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama, Bill Richardson and John Edwards; Mike Huckabee briefs reporters on his campaign plane; John Edwards mulls his prospects; Ron Paul (l) and Rudy Giuliani (r)



Democracy in America

Greg White catches up with the most uncertain - and world-shaking - US presidential election in decades

What once seemed certain is now indefinitely uncertain. The American Presidential Primary season, now two states through, is more clouded and more confusing than it has ever been. Both Republicans and Democrats move onto the next primaries and where this election is headed. As the American public sways, so do the polls, with the media struggling to keep pace.

The Iowa caucus was a revelation. Huckabee courted the evangelical conservative base of the state with adept skill and honesty. Barack Obama tapped into the financial unrest and disloyalty of the post-Bush victory. From the nation's historic news conglomerates of NBC and The New York Times to its newer forms such as CNN and the bevy of blogs, all seemed certain of Barack Obama's ascendancy. As the New Hampshire primary showed just a few days later, never has the media been so wrong.

Senator Clinton's passionate tears of purpose in a small coffee shop and Senator John McCain's sweeping comeback, impossible according to everyone in the country but New Hampshire residents, have changed everything. After crushing disappointment at Iowa, the Clinton dynasty suddenly seems revived with vigour. Hillary full of energy, less attack dog, they say, than before. By contrast, Senator McCain, who has been emotionally propped up by the media, is wavering at the polls. Mr McCain, who has been a dominant force in New Hampshire for nearly a decade, is also wavering. George W. Bush, who launched his campaign in 2000, is also wavering. He has set of less reliable than ever. What makes the election so volatile is certain. For quite some time, the media has always seemed to be in a political maelstrom. The Clinton dynasty suddenly seems revived with vigour.

hear from the honchos here

film honcho -----> page 4
bernardkeenan

Angus reviews the best film of the year when there's no country for you when your old. No hummus for Bernard today which isn't fair because he's the greatest mind of his generation bar Daniel B Yates.

theatre honcho -----> page 5
tomwhittaker

The history of boys is what Tom reviewed this week. It was the longest play ever written and there was fighting and being mean and aggression everywhere. Our esteemed and regal editor descended from his palace of broken dreams to explain his conquering of Kafka.

editorial assistant -----> pages 6 and 7
ravimistry

Soulja Boy Off In This Hoe Watch me Crank It, Watch me Roll, Watch me Crank Dat Soulja Boy, Then Super Man Dat Hoe Now, Watch me You... this week's issue is about bringing back good music... I wonder why?

music honchos -----> pages 8 and 9
adamjohn & rahimrahemtulla

This week is the maiden voyage of our partner-ship. We plumbed the depths of our brains to come up with something fresh and exciting, which would combine Adam's years of experience as a lumberjack with Rahim's experience as an astronaut. Chopping down trees on the moon is important because there's not enough houses in space.

travel honcho -----> page 10
willjoce

This week's article is a nostalgic reminiscence of drunken violence in a small Russian town in the Arctic Circle. 'Nuff said. Our intrepid explorer's liver still hurts.

identity honcho -----> page 11
hollieastman

There always has to be a new something. Aquamarine/Emerald/Chestnut are the new Black. Nu-grave the new Nu-rave. It is January first and thus there must now be a new you. Resolve your vices with a resolution we are told. But why? I was rather fond of the old you...

gaming & tech honcho -----> page 11
simonwang

"I haven't been following macworld or CES." But he wrote about them anyway. This is for the hardcore tech heads out there. If you plan to cry with excitement at 5pm on Tuesday then you know exactly what we are talking about and you are our people come join us.

sex & gender honcho -----> page 12
alicepfeiffer

More chicks, more flicks, more Swayze, less bras.

general secretary
ericlundquist

We went on a journey discovering the metaphysical nature of secretariasm but the search goes on. The truth like, Chris Carter said, is out there. Maybe.

visual art honcho
fionamackay

There is no art this week. All the art has already been painted or drawn and Fiona can't comment on it anymore. Like the sequels and comebacks all art is derivative and originality died with feudalism.

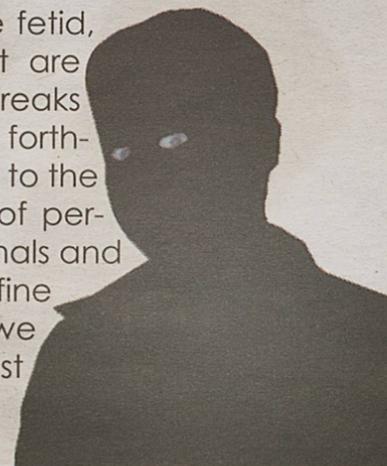
photography honcho
utsamukherjee

Utsa is the new photographer but didn't take any photos this week. She tried but the batteries blew up. So she made a pinhole camera but the images are so dark it means we will become silhouettes.

editors - we know everything from the editorials

thomas warren

PartB has seen a regime change this week. The esteemed Master Daniel B Yates, brigand, apostate and buccaneer has moved on. Master Yates' work here has been fine and I can attest to his skill in running this paper. I can also testify to the calibre of this good man. He has an insatiable thirst that can ne'er be slaked and a prediliction for adventure of all sorts. He is also a fierce and coarse man, and I once saw him flay a man half to death for impudence. I fear for the good of society with such a giant of a man such as Yates thrust upon it. So these, my friends, are mighty boots to fill. We intend to maintain the high standards set by the cur Yates in all things, and also to bring you all manner of content to satiate your desire for all things PartB. Further, we would like to invite you to join us in the fetid, cramped conditions that are our office. All manner of freaks and weirdos need apply forthwith. We are accustomed to the company of all manner of perverts and hardened criminals and wish to remain in such fine company. As such we extend to you our warmest invitation.



josh heller

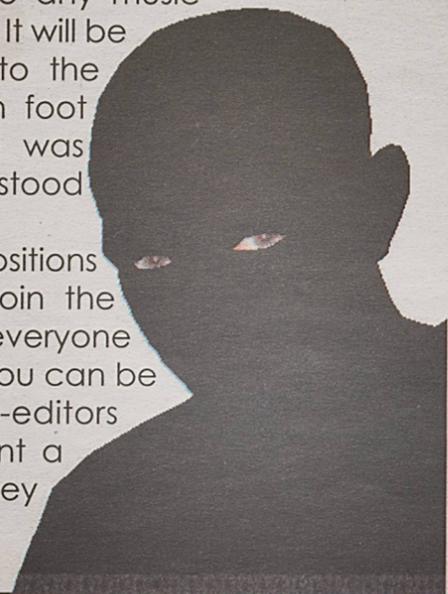
Crikey this coup d'etat was a terrible mess. Everything is deleted and re-written forever and ever in a comeback sequel style of death. Nothing is original we just re-do and re-think and re-idea. Everything we do is derivative of Daniel B Yates who stole everything from Kevin Perry who has a gonzo journalism tattoo which makes sense because the beat enjoyed long sentences like I do. All I can see is shadows and silhouettes because that's everything there is. No light reflects from the darkness of my thieved images.

Should we listen to new music or is it all bad re-hashes? Or should we listen to the comebacks and the re-issues because that is where the interesting stuff is.

I've been thinking a lot about music. If I listened to my entire music collection for two hours a day then it would take me two and half years to listen to it all. That's madness and for the next two weeks I am not allowed to listen to any music

I've ever heard before. It will be difficult but I will rise to the challenge like a seven foot tall yoga master who was lying down but then stood up.

There are loads of positions available come and join the partBevolution. I want everyone to write for us always. You can be one of them sub-editors because we don't want a sub-editor crisis like they talk about in the news.



bring back pandora's box

the music genome project is dead, joshheller wants it opened

The music genome project was one of the most exciting and original ideas that the internet's probably ever had. A vast team of musicians has been analysing all of the music. Every track and artist is assigned "tags," meta-data that describes in detail things like the different styles, instrument and harmonies of each. The idea was that you then went to the Pandora website, typed in an artist that you liked and then a series of similar songs were streamed to you on your own personal radio station.

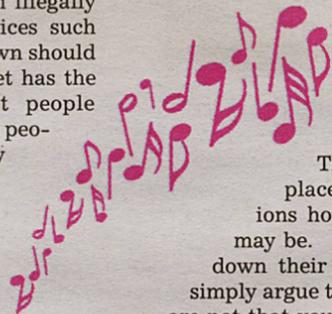
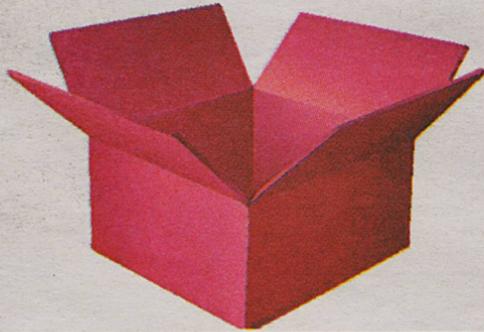
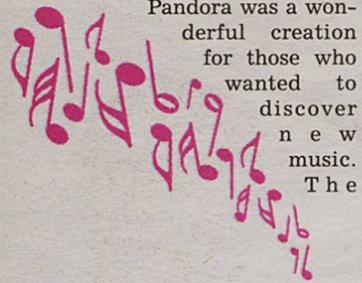
Pandora was a wonderful creation for those who wanted to discover new music. The

risk was that you were then only listening to new music that was similar to your old music. But as one way to explore new stuff it was fantastic. The music wasn't downloaded to your computer, it was only streamed. Links were provided to buy the music from Amazon or iTunes. Yet, the labels and publishers have demanded extraordinary and crushing fees for each song, such that Pandora is now unavailable to UK IP addresses. There has been an outcry from artists and listeners alike, nothing short of direct government intervention will allow Pandora to re-open. It is likely the same thing will soon happen in the US, forcing Pandora to close altogether.

Even if you disagree with illegally downloading music, services such as Pandora being shut down should be troubling. The internet has the potential to really let people explore music and engage people who didn't previously care. Charging absurdly high fees for

internet radio will only lead to greater piracy and illegal streaming. Deligitimising professional organisations whose passion is based on a love of music, and whose staff is made up almost entirely of musicians, is totally counterproductive.

If we think copyright is bullshit and it's only labels not artists that suffer from piracy, then Pandora's box should be re-opened. If we think copyright needs to be protected then organisations that legitimately allow users to discover music online, and do it brilliantly, need to be encouraged. Pandora's box needs to be re-opened.



Not all opinions are valid but if you can write a few hundred words explaining what you think and why then you should be encouraged to rant at every opportunity.

fighting talk

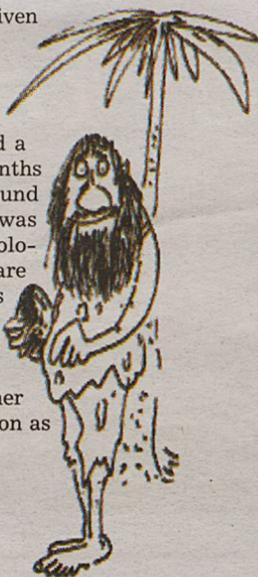
Barrack Obama talks about bi-partisanship a lot. Some kind of third way let's all come together and agree and stuff. Let's all just shed our differences and think about how much we have in common. What shit. Clinton, dynastic as her winning would be, is far less afraid to say that other people are wrong. Aiming for reconciliation and co-operation with heinous individuals is neither productive nor right. What is the problem with decrying the Republicans. To paraphrase Bruno, instead of shying away we should step up and say "I disagree with you, you homophobic, anti-women, anti-choice, anti-muslim, covertly racist, war-mongering borderline facists." This is the spirit of true democracy; disagreeing. It should be encouraged in all aspects of life. Belligerent and aggressive arguing isn't a very helpful nor a very nice way to go about it, but not being afraid to disagree is one of the worlds most valuable personality traits. An untold amount of shit has been spouted and re-iterated due to people just blindly and dumbly accepting the present orthodox. It seems to usually happen in hostels but other notable locations of ludicrous circles of people agreeing are halls and posh people's dinner parties. Everyone sits around and just nods, regardless of what the other person says. They nod and they say "hmmm... yeah... totally." As if the aim in a conversation is to move as fast as possible towards consensus. Even people who don't really agree with what is being said will either nod or just keep their mouths shut, meaning people who aren't sure will assume this insane troll logic is correct. This is one of the reasons ridiculous ideas like astrology, James Blunt and most shockingly and deceptively of all homeopathy, have achieved not just national recognition indeed but a dangerous and entirely ignorant acceptance.

This section has always tried to be a place where people can spout their opinions however ill-informed or unusual they may be. If only more people would write down their opinions for people to read, or simply argue them. The requisites for doing so are not that you know everything about which you are talking, nor that you have thought through each of your arguments to exhaustion.

Not all opinions are valid but if you can write a few hundred words explaining what you think and why then you should be encouraged to rant at every opportunity.

Desert Island Risks...

The high seas have been a dangerous place for some time, and for sailors of antiquity chief amongst their fears was to be marooned on a desert island, either by the result of a shipwreck or intentional marooning. To maroon someone was a favoured punishment for pirates who were found guilty of cheating their fellow pirates, and the marooned man would be left with a small amount of food, a flagon of water and a loaded pistol to hasten his end if he so wished. Castaways often died, though some did survive or fashion escapes from their condition. Alexander Selkirk was a notable survivor of marooning, and formed the inspiration for Robinson Crusoe. Selkirk requested to be left on an island as he was so unconscionably afraid of sea monsters. He survived four years on the island, now known as Ascension Island, before his former captain returned and named him the governor of the island in jest. During his stay on the island he had been the sole inhabitant, surviving by hunting and consoling himself by reading the Bible. Two Spanish ships had reached the island before his rescue, but being a Scotsman he faced possible torture and further misery if he appealed to them for aid. Another fortunate castaway was Captain Edward England, a pirate and rough diamond who formed the inspiration for Captain Jack Sparrow of the Pirates of the Caribbean films. England was loathe to kill unnecessarily and made many daring escapes from the authorities. His downfall however was at the hands of his crew, who mutinied and marooned him in the Mauritius. Ever the adventurer, England fashioned a raft and sailed hundreds of miles to Madagascar across open water. He later however was said to have died a pauper, his bibulous habits having driven him finally to the gutter. Another fascinating castaway with a tragic end was the Dutch Leendert Hasenboch. Found guilty of sodomy and marooned, it is imagined that he died a terrible death of thirst some six months later. He did however leave a diary, found by English sailors and his story was shared with the world. Today's technologies have ensured that castaways are soon rescued, though some hermits have marooned themselves to escape the pressure of the modern world. Regardless, the stories of castaways are a compelling reminder of a tougher age when adventure was a career option as opposed to an amusement



MR. WLEFT'S TOP RECIPE

Arrright kiddies, Wlefty here for your very own personal edification. Had a tough week I have, been rubbing Mrs. Wlefty's bunions you fuckers better be glad you don't have to be doing that. I got a hard life I have between working the kitchen and stealing veterinary medicines to sell to drug addicts, and I don't get much time for meself. So when I gets a break I likes to live it up in style I does. I goes out for pies and mash, hit the tracks then get mad drunk and gambles on tramp fights down the Old Kent Road. I bin bettin' on one tramp, Old Nasty McSkank, for the last 10 years and always delivers. He's got fine pedigree as a fighter. I once saw him bite an opponents nose off and he kept it in his pocket for the next three months. Savage. So, you kiddies want some fun, give your old uncle Wlefty a bell.



LSE in LOVE

I gotta wait baby. We just aren't where we need to be right now. When you hit sixteen give me a bell.

You met at the AU. You look like a gorilla and wanted to gang bang my firend. I find you strangely attractive.

I are over you sick freak. You stole my pony's ketamine and took a shit in my mum's chest of drawers. You need help.

You are a wanton brigand and a cad. You are of such ill repute that even women of easy virtue do not consent to your company. I am yours to take. Ravish me.

I see you in my GN 101 class. You smell repulsive, but I am strangely attracted to you.

I am a lonely academic, you need a first. Its a simple case of pro quid pro. Don't my scared my little muffin, I do this all the time.

I follow you through the library and have strange dreams about you. I want to lick your boots.

I live above you. I drilled a hole in my floor and watch you cutting your toenails. Oh, by the very beard of Lucifer I want some friends.

COUNTRY - (WESTERN)

angus tse reviews *No Country For Old Men*, the storming return to form from the brothers Coen

'You can't stop what's coming...'

Based on the novel by Cormac McCarthy, *No Country For Old Men* is the new film by the Coen Brothers, directors of the cult classics *Fargo* and the insanely quotable *The Big Lebowski*. They are America's beloved director duo, their films packed with witty and ironic dialogue, pitch-black humour, film noir trimmings and splashes of violence. Their last two films (*Intolerable Cruelty*, *The Ladykillers*) were duds, but this is a major comeback.

Llewelyn Moss (Josh Brolin, *American Gangster*) is an ordinary hunter who, for some strange luck, picks up a suitcase of cash from the messy remains of a Mexican drug deal gone bad. The assassin Anton Chigurh pursues him. Llewelyn's wife Carla (Kelly McDonald, *Trainspotting*) and the world weary Sheriff Bell (Tommy Lee Jones, *Men in Black*) are caught in the crossfire.

Javier Bardem (*The Sea Inside*) gives an unforgettable performance as Chigurh, a character destined to be one of greatest screen villains of all time. What an inventive presence: a stone-faced killer, with a haircut resembling the Jewish legend Golem, dispatching victims with a pneumatic stun gun (it has to be seen to be believed), and occasionally giving a smirk that is part-oafish bloke, part-gleeful sadist. Simply, he steals the movie.

All the elements of a cat and mouse chase are here: the innocent man caught up in something he doesn't belong in, the killer around the corner, and scenes bursting with brooding Hitchcockian suspense. Same with the usual Coen Brothers' devices: the kinetic scenes of bloodshed; and the conversations Chigurh has with bystanders are both threatening and absurd. (It's interesting that Javier has expressed his distaste for gratuitous cinematic violence. But the blood spilled gives an adrenaline rush, hitting the gross factor while

making us squirm and laugh. Perhaps with a bizarro hitman, everything is in character? Nor is the film a torture porn extravaganza like *Hostel*- it's only rated '15').

With the stakes so high, and the buildup to the inevitable final showdown...the film unexpectedly veers into a different direction in the last 20 minutes. Not with a shitty surprise cop-out that most half-baked thrillers collapse into, but a real shift in themat-



ic tone. Some bloggers complain the film peaked too soon and the third act being seriously flat. I thought so too in my first viewing during the London Film Festival. The rapturous warmth from the audience dissipated, the scattered applause at the end even more apparent.

Having a chance to revisit the film, it was soon apparent how dense it really is. The dynamics between the three male leads suggests something more than the typical good guy-bad guy conflict. Chigurh kills without hesitation, kills in style. Seemingly omniscient and even omnipotent, he somehow subjects himself to a coin toss quirk. Llewelyn, a man who loves his wife and presumably the moral centre, is after all motivated by the money. And Sheriff Bell, whose narration

opens the film and appears intermittently until the third act, gradually develops into someone beyond the stoic old man we presume. And the film's setting in the early Eighties, with the absence of computers and mobile phones. And the gorgeous shots of the Texan deserts...

And it all makes sense: the film is a contemporary western. It's not the cowboys-and-bandits archetype that sadly many cinemagoers of our age still associate with the genre. Like the Old West cowboys struggling in the modern civilised world, we find the old timers trying to come into terms with the new evils, 'money and drugs', but also the sudden, almost capricious, acts of violence that we expect from serial killers (indeed, is Chigurh one himself?). The machismo of Llewelyn and Chigurh is a façade, instead more of the desperation and enjoyment of wiping the other out of existence. Besides the western themes, there are philosophical musings of fate, coincidence and time. The film is certainly bleak, pessimistic and borderline nihilistic, but even this is debatable if you think about a particular nasty scene near the end. In short, those willing to immerse themselves will find plenty to talk about.

It's acceptable that *No Country* didn't win the Palme D'Or in Cannes: that went to the Romanian abortion drama *4 Months, 3 Weeks, 2 Days* (a must-see currently in cinemas). Reading the film politically, as a parallel to our world facing Islamic terrorism, seems to be too austere (and perhaps too right-wing, if one treats the terrorist threat as evil of Biblical proportions). But with its accomplished craft and construction, the film provides pleasures that few genuinely achieve. It's undeniably a great thriller, but it also doubles as a great western, standing on its own cinematically and more than just an escapist attraction good for a night out.

No Country For Old Men is out on January 18th. It's easily one of the best of the year.

FILM

partB positions

have loads of power, be creative and have mega-trega fun. lots of help if you're not confident and do whatever you want if you are. join the partBevolution and partB a partB of something special.

email: thebeaver.partb@lse.ac.uk

additional: we are ALWAYS looking for writers who want to write about all of the things. drop us an internet mail or an old fashioned letter and we will immortalise you in print.

counter culture editor

responsible for organising the hippies and freaks. go to squat parties and fesitivals and demos and report them because culture isn't culture without counter. this is a new section. make it your own.

read and then write or review everything you can with a team of eager regular reader reviewers. loads of free books everywhere to read and review and love. not as much of a workload as other positions but definitely really brilliant come and be it.

RANT

EDITOR



responsible for stimulating styles and belligerently badgering writers to rant. opinions are yours to control and manipulate. with consultation you can take rant into any different or difficult direction you want. aligning alliteration with arguments.

tv editor

the new tv section is being introduced. don't fear it embrace it. all these stupid pretentious people who pretend loads and say they don't watch tv. their time is over it is our time now. you watch big brother and hollyoaks and want to write about it so do. or you downloaded every episode of the wire and think the sopranos isn't just the best tv show ever it's actually the best thing ever. bring your excellent oretention to the world of partB.



mighty morphin' kafka stranger

go go kevinperry

The *Metamorphosis*, returning for another season at the Lyric Theatre in Hammersmith, is a play that more than lives up to its lofty source material. While there are a number of necessary changes from Franz Kafka's novella, this production holds its own as a work of relevant, contemporary art. Its first major strength is the

requires no costume or other props, and relies simply on the sheer physicality of his performance. It is a grueling role. Gardarsson spends most of the hour and twenty minutes of the show hanging from the wall, or from the ceiling, arching about like a contortionist.

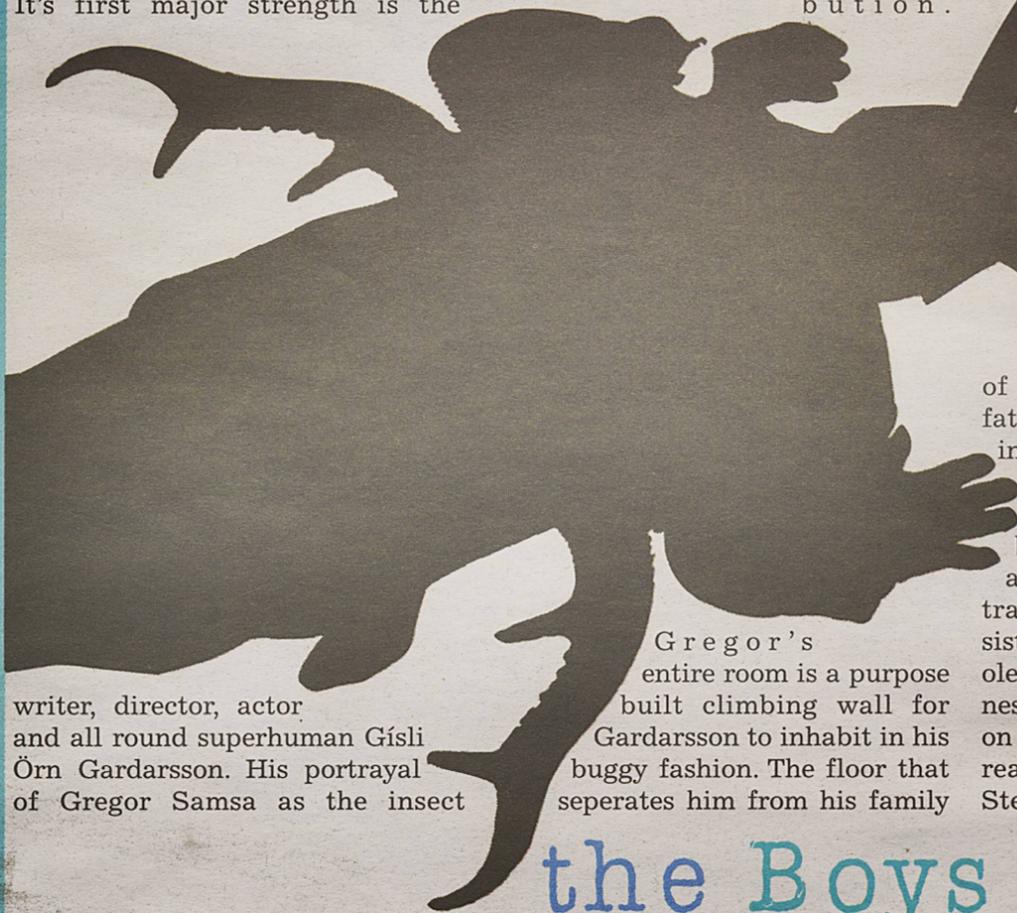
The set itself makes its own contribution.

is at various times a trampoline, a tunnel and the hard floor where Gregor's most brutal beatings are handed out, as the plot moves from shifts shape from farce to tragedy.

All three of the Samsa family manage the difficult task of balancing comic relief with the edginess of the situation. Gregor's mother is played with neurotic fervor by Elva Osk Olafsdottir, eventually collapsing into giggles as the stress of their situation increases, yet somehow hope remains. There is a touch of the manic John Cleese about Tom Mannion's

portrayal of Gregor's father. He is an absurd man, sleeping in his uniform and delighted by any tiny act of recognition granted him by his employers, but while he is initially the most antagonistic to Gregor, it is the transformation of Gregor's sister Greta from thoughtful benevolence and performing acts of kindness to frustrated acts of violence on which the play's emotional edge really plays out. Unnur Osp Stefansdottir measures this per-

formance perfectly, creating ripples of laughter with her wooing of her co-worker, and halting them with the sharp tone of her angry shouts. The allegories to the holocaust are perhaps underplayed, although it is does come through in Greta's co-worker's uncompromising rebuttal of her family and indeed her affections. The only real criticism of the performance is that the highly caricatured and stylistic nature of the scenes when the family is happy can lapse towards the cartoonish. However, this is a minor criticism, especially considering that these scenes are also used to showcase Nick Cave and Warren Ellis' beautiful score. It is positively cinematic in scale, from the euphoric, sun kissed opening instrumental which washes over the waking family to the nervy, frantic pieces which accompany the discovery of Gregor's condition, the music captures the shifting moods of the play perfectly. By the play's climax, when Cave's voice finally comes breaking through on a wave of strings, and Gregor's lifeless body hangs suspended in mid-stage, one feels that he has finally found peace. The "vermin" may be dead, but the *Metamorphosis* is complete.



writer, director, actor and all round superhuman Gísli Örn Gardarsson. His portrayal of Gregor Samsa as the insect

Gregor's entire room is a purpose built climbing wall for Gardarsson to inhabit in his buggy fashion. The floor that separates him from his family

the Boys are back in town

thomaswhittaker knows his History Boy

Mr Irwin is brought in to prepare the potential Oxbridge students of a Grammar school in Sheffield. His particular trick is to discover a new angle on a point in History and find evidence to support it. A tad ironic, one might think, considering that this particular method seems to have spread into the reviews of the play itself in which every piece I read alludes to some new aspect of the play or pursues a different line of thought. As Irwing would no doubt point out though, this is no bad thing. As Michael Billington observed in the *Guardian* it was a measure of Bennet's success that just when you think you have finally understood his play it cunningly eludes your grasp.

Trying to find some consistent and singular theme, therefore, is practically impossible with characters and plots which, like real life, are often much more complicated than one first thinks. Take Hector for example; the inspiring and eccentric English teacher whose cause at first seems highly noble in competing with the league table obsessed headmaster to ensure the boys

become well rounded individuals, ready to take on the world beyond the lecture hall. We see a battle between the desire to teach for the real world and the pressure of modern exam orientated teaching techniques and in many ways it would be easy to take this at face value but there is more to Hector than this.

It is only when his indiscretion (occasionally groping the boys he kindly gives a ride home on his motorbike) is discovered by the Headmaster, resulting in him being summarily asked to retire early, that we find a further layer to his character. We discover that he is that greatest kind of egoist - one who hides behind his own misconceptions in order to create a myth of himself which he hopes will outlive him, just as with the Hardy's drummer Hodge to whom he identifies; buried ignobly in an unmarked grave but at least with a name that will live on after he is gone.

And in such a way his character does live on in Posner, our future Hector; a touch effeminate and suffering from a confused and unrequited affection for fellow student Dakin he finds himself in later life trapped in the romanticized world created by his past teacher - deflecting the harsh world around him in the comfort of poetry and reminiscences about his past school days in contrast to his contemporaries who have gone onto 'higher' executive standings in society.

Much of the play's complexity is due to Bennett's writing but the actors themselves really deliver on the goods (especially when compared

with the rather inadequate movie production). Daniel Fine's Posner is superb. It must be extremely hard to play the young man with a penchant for show tunes and female roles without falling prey to easy stereotyping and failing to find any further character development. But Fines manages to negotiate between this whilst also allowing the truly crystal-delicate heart and soul of Posner to come through.

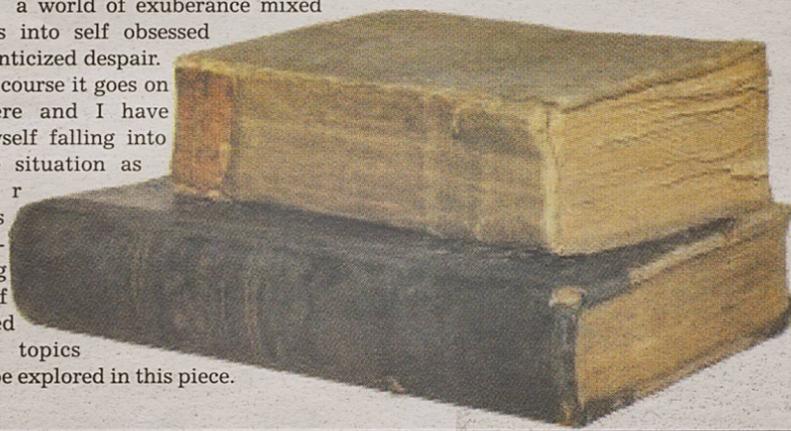
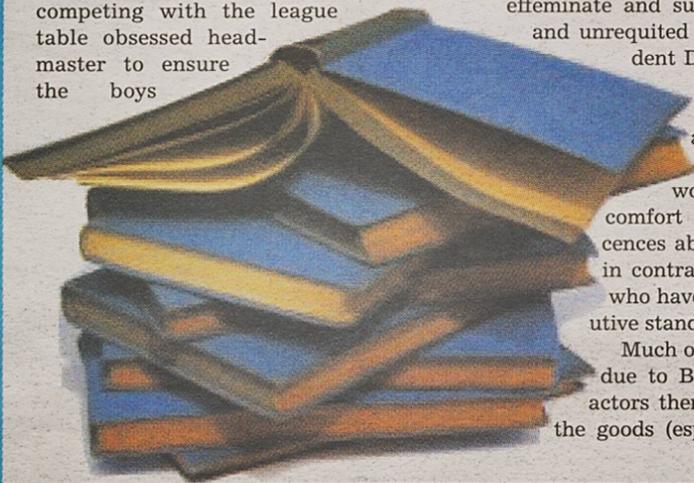
Of course it is Barrit's Hector who really steals the show; at times inspirational and eccentrically unpredictable he can also turn the audience's high emotions in a second to ones of pity. When Hectors' little indiscretions are finally revealed to the teaching staff we see this once proud and exuberant character fold in front of us; becoming quieter and more reflective, more concerned about the legacy he will be leaving to his students. This allows the audience to see a little of what Posner will later be forced to confront (it's interesting to note that it is only Posner who goes to comfort him while the other students look on in uncomfortable silence when he finally breaks down in front of them); a world of exuberance mixed with falls into self obsessed and romanticized despair.

But of course it goes on from there and I have found myself falling into the same situation as other reviewers in concentrating on one of a hundred different topics that can be explored in this piece.

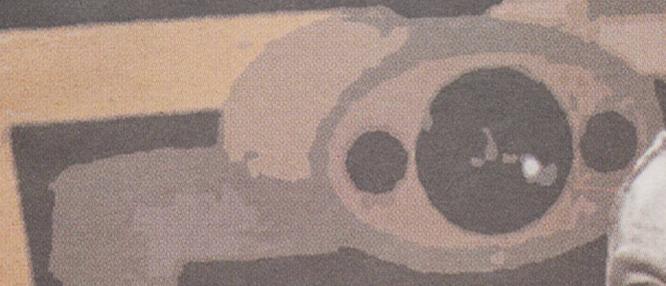
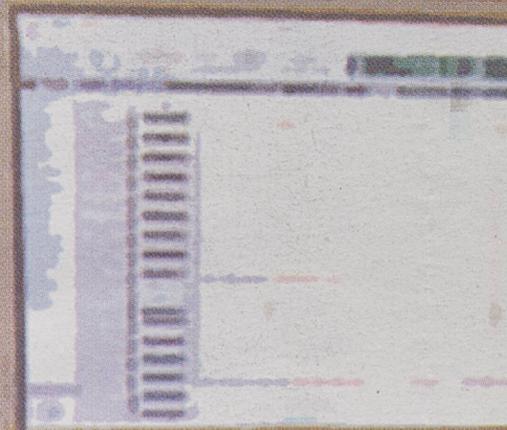
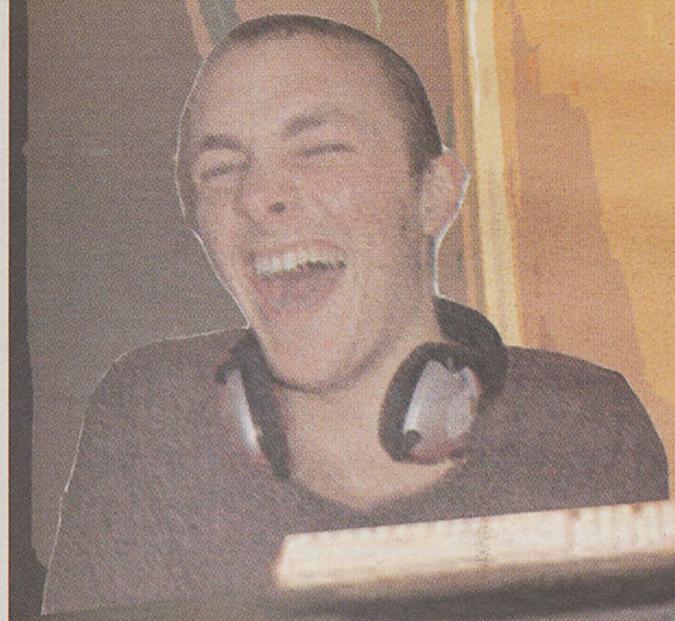
I haven't even touched on Dakin's unrealized affair with Irwin, or to take this further, the interesting comparisons between Irwin and Hector - which is incredibly unfair considering Tim Delap's obvious abilities in the part.

This is obviously the problem with such an intricate and involving piece and it is probably better not to try and explore it in too much depth with the amount of words I have at my disposal as I could just not do it justice. Suffice to say that I understand that this will be the plays last outing for sometime so please go along and see what you think. No doubt you will pick out something I missed but then maybe that just goes to prove we are all potential Oxbridge candidates in Irwin's, and more importantly Alan Bennet's, eyes.

Where: Wyndham Theatre, Charing Cross Road, London WC2
When: Monday to Saturday 7.30pm + matinee performances on Thursday and Saturday 2.30 pm



Fly me to the
loon... rock come-
backs you really want
to see



news

How to succeed at interviews

Student Loan Repayment Gender Gap Extensive

New figures, based on government projections for students who entered university in 2006/07, show that women take 16 years to pay off student loan debts, compared to men, who take 11 years. Reasons for this are a pay gap of up to 20%, and because women are more likely to suspend working in order to look after children. The figures are calculated based on assumptions about graduate lifetime earnings drawn from the British Household Panel Survey and Labour Force Survey. **Employment Prospects High in 2008**

According to the 17th Annual UPS Europe Business Monitor, 38% of UK employers plan to hire more workers within the next 12 months. This is the highest reported figure in 14 years, since the report first began. 46% of employers aim to keep their workforce at the same level.

Majority of Graduates Find Favour with Employers

A survey by the Institute of Directors shows that 80% of members find graduate recruits to be honest, reliable, and able to work in a team. Over 75% added that recent graduates have a positive attitude to work, good work ethics and are punctual. However, employers face difficulties hiring graduates with good literacy and communication skills. While 25% of members thought young recruits were well-prepared for the world of work, 90% of the members thought that universities should do more to prepare graduates.

Assessment Companies Find Graduates have few Workplace Survival Skills

Talent Q, a people assessment company, found that graduates are anxious, communicate poorly and suffer from a lack of confidence. They lack resilience to criticism and have little power to influence decisions. Graduates also have unrealistic expectations of their employer and role, while not recognising their own lack of workplace survival skills.

Polish Workers Winning Jobs Ahead of British Graduates

The Director-General of the CBI has noted that highly skilled, motivated Polish workers are gaining greater employment than British university graduates, who frequently struggle with basic maths and English skills. He observed that if businesses are unable to find the right skilled workers at home, they are more able and willing to look for workers elsewhere.

Lying on CV Widespread

Research shows that one in four submitted CVs include at least one lie. Common lies include exaggerating qualifications, salary, length of service and job titles. More extreme applicants have claimed to be graduates of fictional foreign universities. However, employers who uncover even small lies are likely to fire the employee in question.

Private Sector Payment Rises

Data from Income Data Services shows that graduate jobs in the private sector are experiencing pay rises which average at four per cent, an increase of 0.6% since last month. This rise is triggered by a rise in inflation rates. It is widely hoped that the reported pay rises will result in the government increasing pay for public sector employees as well.

Types of interviews

One-to-one: this is the most common type of interview. You are face to face with one person, answering their questions

Panel: you are interviewed by more than one person. They will alternately ask questions about defined areas. This is common within the public sector.

Telephone interviews are becoming increasingly common, and should be prepared for as if they were face-to-face interviews. It's especially important to listen carefully for verbal cues.

How to be prepared...do your research

You can never be too prepared! Read and re-read the organisation's website and mission statement, and keep an eye on current events, particularly those relating to your chosen industry.

But don't limit research to your organisation. Silly as it sounds, you also have to brush up on yourself! Check over your CV and cover letter and re-read the answers you wrote on your application form. If you mention a special area of interest anywhere, your interviewer is almost certain to ask you about it, so read up on those areas.

Assess yourself from an employer's perspective. Are there any areas of concern which you would raise in their position? **For example,** is there a gap of several years in your CV? Emphasise how productively you spent this time (whether it involved travelling, writing a novel or raising a family). Is your degree not directly related to the field you're applying for? In this case, emphasising transferable skills and the freshness of perspective you can bring is key. If you take a long hard look at yourself before the interview, any questions on these points won't come as a shock, and you will be able to answer them competently and swiftly.

Grab any opportunity to talk to anyone working in your industry, whether this means contacting alumni or attending recruitment events.

If you're attending a lunchtime interview...

Brush up on your table manners...and practice them!

Don't order an alcoholic beverage. Some employers are put off by staff who drink in a business context, and it's better to be safe than sorry at this point. It's almost always safe to order coffee or water.

If you do spill, excuse yourself to clean up, but don't spend the rest of the interview apologising! It's not the end of the world, and your interviewer will understand that you're nervous.



Don't smoke or drink before or during your interview...some potential employers may be put off

interviews

Source: Corbis



A panel interview involves being asked questions by two or more people, usually from different divisions within the organisation

What interviewers are looking for

What employers are looking for can be summed up by the three Cs.

Competencies: whether you are competent to do the job

Commitment: how much you want the job, and how much time and effort you will put into it

Cultural fit: whether you will fit in with the office culture

If you're applying for a job, it's likely that you have the right qualifications. Employers use the interview process to evaluate your commitment to and enthusiasm for the position offered...and more importantly, the work involved.

Interviewers will use the opportunity to judge whether you as a person will fit in well with the company and the current team. This means it's important to sound co-operative.

Be confident and direct, but also humble: no one wants to hire someone who appears arrogant and close-minded.

Interviews are also used to assess your **critical and analytical abilities**, so it's important to give well-considered, logical answers.

Making first impressions work for you

Double check when and where your interview takes place.

Aim to arrive about 15 minutes early. Any earlier will inconvenience your interviewers, who may feel obliged to rearrange their schedules for you. Any later than that, and you risk being late.

Never arrive late! If you're running late, definitely call your interviewer beforehand, apologise profusely, explain (briefly) why you're running late and estimate your time of arrival.

Dress neatly. While it might not be necessary to wear a suit in your line of work, business attire. Cover any visible tattoos. Men are generally advised not to wear jewellery (apart from a wedding band) as this may put off more conservative employers. Women are advised to wear light, neutral make-up. The most important thing is to be well-groomed.

Don't smoke just before your interview. The smell of smoke may be off-putting for your interviewers.

Don't underestimate the power of body language. When you meet your interviewer, smile warmly and offer a firm handshake (not too firm). If you are facing a panel interview, shake hands with the women first, then the men. During the interview, sit straight and don't fidget - doing so will only make you look nervous and defeated.

Answering the questions

Maintain eye contact while speaking

Enunciate clearly and speak at a reasonable volume. Don't mumble - make sure that what you say can be heard! It's important to appear confident about what you have to say.

Give some thought to your answers. It's important to demonstrate your analytical skills, and your interviewer will appreciate your taking time to answer the question fully.

Avoid using extra-grammatical words and phrases, e.g. 'yeah', 'you know'. Answer as concisely as possible, but don't compromise on answering the question. Don't ramble!

If you find yourself getting flustered and are blanking on the question, stop for a moment and take a few breaths. Take some time to re-orient yourself and then continue to answer the question. It's better to take some time to answer a question than to give a quick, incoherent reply if you're feeling nervous.

Give concrete examples. Refer to specific projects, giving dates and referring to specific tasks you carried out. **For example,** instead of saying 'I had a wide range of responsibilities, particularly managing my team', say 'My main role was to lead a team of fifteen people to present a project to a client. We had a deadline of fourteen days. I carried out logistics, co-ordinated between team members and delegated tasks'. Also list any of your reasons for wanting this job, or leaving your current employer, as specifically as possible.

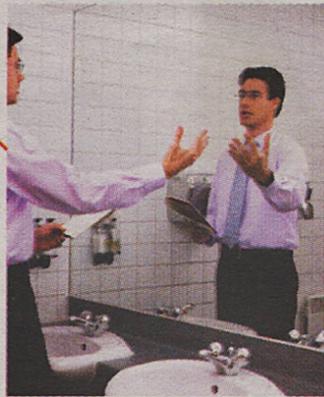
Practice makes perfect

Rope in a willing, or even unwilling, friend to play the role of interviewer.

Prepare your answers and practice saying them smoothly and concisely.

Speak in front of a mirror to monitor your facial expressions.

Make note of any areas that need improvement and work on them the hardest.



Before your interview, practice saying your answers out loud in front of a mirror and monitor your facial expressions

Over to you

Interviews are a two-way process. At some point, usually towards the end, you will be invited to put forward any questions you have. This is an opportunity for your potential employer to reassure you on any points...but it's also an additional opportunity for your interviewer to find out more about you. The questions you ask - or indeed don't ask - can still influence your interviewer's decision of whether or not to offer you the job.

It's important to prepare at least one or two questions. If you don't have any, you run the strong risk of appearing unenthusiastic and uninterested.

At this point in the process, it's inappropriate to ask questions about your salary and holiday entitlements. Instead, you should ask about those areas which your interviewer hasn't covered in order to demonstrate your eagerness for the job.

For example:

'Do you usually carry out internal promotions?'

This question indicates your willingness to do well and advance.

'What opportunities to gain extra qualifications are offered?'

This shows that you're eager to improve your value to the organisation. A particularly helpful question to ask in the legal, financial or human resource fields.

'Do you have any reservations about my ability to do this job?'

This gives you the opportunity to hear any concerns your interviewer may have and to reassure them. If they're concerned that you're inexperienced, emphasise your eagerness to learn quickly and point out any transferable skills you have acquired during former jobs, university life and extra-curricular activities.

Things to avoid

Never complain long and hard about your current boss or colleagues. After all, you never know who knows who! More than that, **company loyalty** is something highly sought after by employers, so any whining - even about a competitor - will make them think twice about hiring you. If you're asked your opinion about your current work situation, keep your criticism short and constructive. **For example:** "If I were in my manager's position, I'd delegate tasks more. I understand the need to make sure projects are presented perfectly to clients, but she creates a heavy burden for herself. A lot of staff are eager to help and skilled, and I would take advantage of this."

It makes a very poor impression if you ask questions about salary, holiday and lunch hour entitlements, or whether or not you'll get your own office. You need to ask questions demonstrating your eagerness to get the job and do the work well, not indicate how eager you are to leave!

Avoid sarcasm or making any sensitive jokes. Keep your communication open and professional, and make sure any humour is strictly PC. The last thing you want to do at this point is offend anyone.

How to answer tough questions

Why are you leaving your current employer?

I want to take on more responsibilities / challenges but the opportunities aren't available with my current employer right now

I had anticipated that my current position would largely involve design, but instead, dealing directly with clients is taking up most of my time. I appreciate the need for clients to have personal contact with designers and enjoy giving and receiving feedback. However, I'd really like to return to a point where I'm focusing mainly on design and can improve on the skills that I already have. I certainly don't want to lose them through lack of use!

When I saw this position advertised, I knew it was an opportunity I couldn't miss. The opportunity to carry out independent research is extremely attractive, and it's a position I've been waiting and looking out for, so I had to jump at the chance.

How do you respond when colleagues criticise your work?

This question is an attempt to assess how difficult you are to work with. Make sure you emphasise your co-operativeness and openness to criticism.

I try and take any feedback I receive on board and always strive to work on my weak areas. I pay particular attention if I receive similar comments from several people. I think it's important to share ideas and suggestions within a team. However, if I feel the criticism is unwarranted, I always try and explain my position calmly to the colleague in question. There are some issues I feel strongly about, and in these cases I think it's important to outline my point of view.

What kind of salary are you expecting?

I'm currently making £_____. The job description indicates that this job involves greater responsibilities, which I'm eager to take on, but I would hope that this is reflected in what you are prepared to pay me.

I've done research on current market rates for this kind of job, and as I'm well-qualified, I'd expect at least £_____.

For emergency use...

If somebody asks the question you've dreaded, and you draw a complete blank and have nothing to say, you don't need to bluff your way out! Simply say: 'that's an interesting / important question, and I'd like some more time to consider my answer. Would you mind if we come back to it at the end?' This gives you a little time to reflect on what to say, and hopefully by the end of the process you'll be warmed up enough to answer the question competently.

jobs

Internship Opportunity with Low Carbon Investors UK

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Jane's Information Group
Sentinel House, 163 Brighton Road

Coulsdon, Surrey

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Deadline: 15th February 2008

To apply, please email Shazia Hussain at shazia.hussain@eopps.org to request an application form. The form should be sent to:

28-30 Worship Street

London

EC2A 2AH

Success on your own terms

Chloe Pieters interviews Merrill Lynch's LSE Recruitment Captain Piers Butler

Understand you're an LSE alumnus yourself. What were your experiences at the LSE when you attended?

I attended the LSE from 1976 through to 1979 so it was a while ago! Nevertheless I think similar to today it was a real melting pot of different cultures and ideas because of the high proportion of overseas students. Indeed I remember taking part in (peaceful) protests to reduce tuition fees for overseas students.

What kind of activities and societies were you involved in?

I was Captain of the Judo club and remember being knocked out by a Japanese student who turned out to be a champion of one of the islands! There was a lot of political debate at the time and I used to take part in a lot of them. The Three Tuns was a favourite meeting place!

In what ways do you perceive the School has changed?

I get a very strong sense that the School has become much more proactive in ensuring its future through active fund raising and has an ambi-

“ A first is clearly impressive but if that is all you have to say for yourself that may not be enough to get the job ”

tion vision to be pre-eminent in social sciences and related subjects. I also think it is very aware that the competition for bright students is extremely high and increasingly global with the mobility of qualifications such as the International Baccalaureate.

What makes LSE students

in particular so attractive to recruiters? What do they, as a collective, contribute?

In simple terms it produces very high quality graduates with a strong academic background. The international mix of students and its cosmopolitan campus is also appealing for a business with an international outlook.

What are some of the skills that LSE students should improve in order to appeal more to recruiters?

I am not sure there are specific skills that I would want to highlight, but students have to be realistic that most prospective employers get hundreds if not thousands of applications so students need to think hard about what differentiates them, and make sure that stands out in any CV or online application.

What do you look for in an ideal candidate?

The initial online application basically screens for academic qualifications, numeracy and competencies, so when we get to meet a student for the first time we tend to focus on

his/her personality, ability to be a team player and passion for what he/she believes in and wants to achieve.

Are language skills becoming more important?

Language skills are increasingly important given the globalisation of business in

general and Investment Banking in particular. Of late the Middle East has been a fast expanding area for financial markets so Arabic is going to come in handy, but then again so is Russian, Mandarin etc.

What's more important: a first, or a long list of extra-curriculars?

I would say neither, it's really a question of balance. A first is clearly impressive but if that is all you have to say for yourself, that may not be enough to get you the job.

What opportunities in your industry are there for students not taking the classic Economics/Accounting and Finance/Actuarial/etc degrees? Are these students at a disadvantage?

I wouldn't say so, we recruit from almost every degree type so I don't believe such students would be at a disadvantage, although they clearly need to do a little more due diligence to get a sense of what a career in financial markets entails. Then again we are always available to answer questions and provide addi-

tional information. For example the book clubs we have been running are a good opportunity to develop your financial knowledge in a more informal context.

One significant controversy that's been cropping up during internship applications is that of students who ask for other people's help to complete some of the online tests. For example, they may ask a fellow student with better linguistic skills to finish a language assessment test. Is it possible to identify these students during the process? How does it impact on your decision-making? Do you have any plans to change how tests are administered?

I'm not sure it is, but the application is only the first step in the process and I would like to think that if there were any real weaknesses which had been "air brushed" out at that stage they would be picked up during the interviewing process. Also I really wouldn't recommend it because ultimately if you are not true to yourself you are unlikely to succeed.



Walking into a career in publishing

Lucie Marie Goulet writes about her work with leading children's books publisher Walker Books

The UK publishing industry is the second biggest in Europe, generating £18.5 billion in sales annually. It covers books, magazines, newspapers as well as more and more electronic resources. I had wanted to get some experience in the field for a while, and when I needed a get a new job at the start of the year decided that it would be a time as good as any to start.

After a quick search on the Internet, I sent my CV to a bunch of temp agencies specialised in the field. They are numerous, and even though there is no comprehensive list of them, the website www.bookcareers.com is a pretty good way to get started. It also has job vacancies and the usual interview and CV

advice.

The first problem was that as a student I could only work part-time and that none of the agencies I contacted did such a thing. The second problem was that I had experience in newspapers and radio but not in books publishing as such. I did however end up with a one day a week assistant position in the marketing department of Walker Books, a leading publishing company for children's books. To be absolutely fair, I had never heard of them before the night prior to my interview. I understood how big they are a week in the job when I went to Waterstone's children books department and realised that roughly every other book was a Walker Book. The same day, while waiting for my bus, I saw

“ I see marketing strategy being shaped, events organised. ”

a double-decker pass by with a poster for the new Anthony Horowitz book on it. The funny thing was, I had seen the

campaign being fine-tuned and the frenzy in the office prior to *Snakehead's* release.

The job itself is not overly exciting, even though I'm apparently doing a key task in the department, namely photocopying press reviews, sending them to the books' authors/illustrators before filing them. It does not require specific skills either, apart from a capacity to do the exact same thing over and over again. I have however learnt how to master the art of photocopying pretty much anything, no matter how weird, double sided or whatever else the document can be.

The tasks I got assigned are far from being the best part of my job. I sit in an open space, 7 hours a week, in the middle of

the marketing/sales department. I see marketing strategy being shaped, events organised. I have a better understanding of what happens between the moment a manuscript is acquired and the moment I get the book off the shelves. I've seen pages being laid out, dummies created. Since I haven't been around for long, I still find amazing the idea that I get to see books and even sometimes get a chance to read them before they are out. There also is the slight pride of opening a newspaper and finding a good review, or seeing *Snakehead* listed in the paperback best-sellers lists for the sixth week in a row or so.

I have also acquired a pretty good knowledge of the Walker Books catalogue. I'm

not sure how useful this can be when I'm going to be looking for another job. It has however given me a glimpse of what British children can read. One of the things I enjoyed most when I'm in France is this feeling that I have a common culture with people which partly comes from the fact that as kids we've all read the same books or so. As a foreigner, no matter how well you might speak the language, it's something you are bound to miss.

It's generally a good experience because it does not only pay the rent, add lines on my CV but has also widened my horizons and given me a better idea of the publishing industry. And that's all I would like my student jobs to be.

GET IN BETWEEN THE SHEETS WITH PARTC

the Beaver

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This is the season of shoddy comebacks. From cinema to music, we're taking the past and making it shit. This is a selection of the people who have gone away and we want back, restored either to life or to their former glory. Who really gives a fuck about the Spice Girls? We want the godfather of soul. We want Elvis and we want Frank. And, lets be honest, Ozzy never really went away, he just got crap. Really fucking crap. The drugs don't work? They worked for Ozzy. Fuckin' MTV ruined the poor dumb fuck. So do us all a favour. Next time you get offered overpriced tickets to see your heroes, have the integrity you respected them for and pass them over. Change the channel next time you see Pink Floyd on TV. Because they aren't what they were. Some comebacks work, but through craft not hype. Good ol' Clapton did unplugged, and it was the bomb. But think what many of these fuckers would be like if they came back. Elvis would weigh 500 lbs and get moved about by freight. Jacko? Thank fuck that he's gone away. Or maybe not. People with his predilictions should be monitored at all times...



Return of the Golden Gods

richarddewey experiences the momentous reunion of Led Zeppelin at the O2 Arena

Seven years after original construction and following a host of financial and management issues, the O2 Arena in South East London is finally open for business. The arena began as the Millennium Dome and housed a major exposition that celebrated the start of the third millennium. The exposition's conclusion in December of 2000 left the facility's future uncertain. Eventually the original interior of the structure was demolished and the facility was rebuilt as a multi-purpose entertainment complex. The redevelopment was completed last summer with the new venue formally reopening as the O2 Arena on June 24th 2007.

The O2, only open for the last seven months of 2007, still managed to come in at third place on the list of most popular music venues, selling 1.2 million tickets. It trailed only the Manchester Evening News Arena and Madison Square Garden. Those impressive numbers can largely be attributed to extended stays by two prominent artists; Prince and The Spice Girls. Prince rocked the O2 for 21 nights late last summer and The Spice Girls countered with a 17 gig stand. The O2 also saw performances by Linkin Park, The Rolling Stones, Keane, Foo Fighters, Smashing Pumpkins, My Chemical Romance, Kanye West, and Bruce Springsteen. Fans and promoters alike appear to be very pleased with the O2 as a venue and early indications are that it will easily ascend to the top position of most popular arenas in 2008. Linkin Park and the Smashing Pumpkins have already scheduled return trips to the O2 and extended residencies by Michael Jackson and Whitney Houston are also rumored for 2008.

The indisputable highlight of the O2's brief history was the highly anticipated return of Led Zeppelin. The eyes and ears of the music world were firmly focused on the O2 last December 10th, as a Zeppelin reunion had aroused specula-

tion and hopes for twenty seven years. Over twenty million people entered a lottery for 16,000 available tickets. The lottery entitled a successful entrant to purchase two tickets at a price of £125 each. Harvey Goldsmith, who handled the ticketing for the event, enacted many policies to prevent ticket touts from profiting on the charity concert. The restrictions led to controversy as many deemed the process unfair and ultimately failed to prevent crafty brokers from reselling tickets and lottery pass-codes. A recent article in The Guardian found that the average resale price of a Zeppelin ticket in secondary markets, such as ebay or Seatwave, to be a staggering £7,425. The price underscores the magnitude of the Zeppelin reunion and the lengths desperate fans were willing to reach for a chance to see the band. The reunion turned out to be well worth the wait and perhaps even the price as fans and critics hailed the superb comeback.

It would not be fair to compare Led Zeppelin's reunion at London's O2 Arena on December 10th with their concerts of the seventies. During their twelve year run, Led Zeppelin enraptured audiences and laid claim to being the preeminent live music act in the world. As great as Zeppelin were on many nights, it is worth noting that they also turned in quite a few drug-addled, disappointing performances. Many wondered how a mature Zeppelin, twenty seven years removed from a full gig, would reconcile their crushing style with the limitations of age.

Sadly, the impetus for this historic reunion was the death of one of music's brightest personalities, Ahmet Ertegun, the co-founder of Atlantic Records and paternal figure to scores of young musicians, including Zeppelin. The evening served as a tribute to Ertegun with proceeds benefiting his eponymous educational charity and opening performances by close friends Paul Rogers, Paolo Nutini, Foreigner and Bill

Wyman.

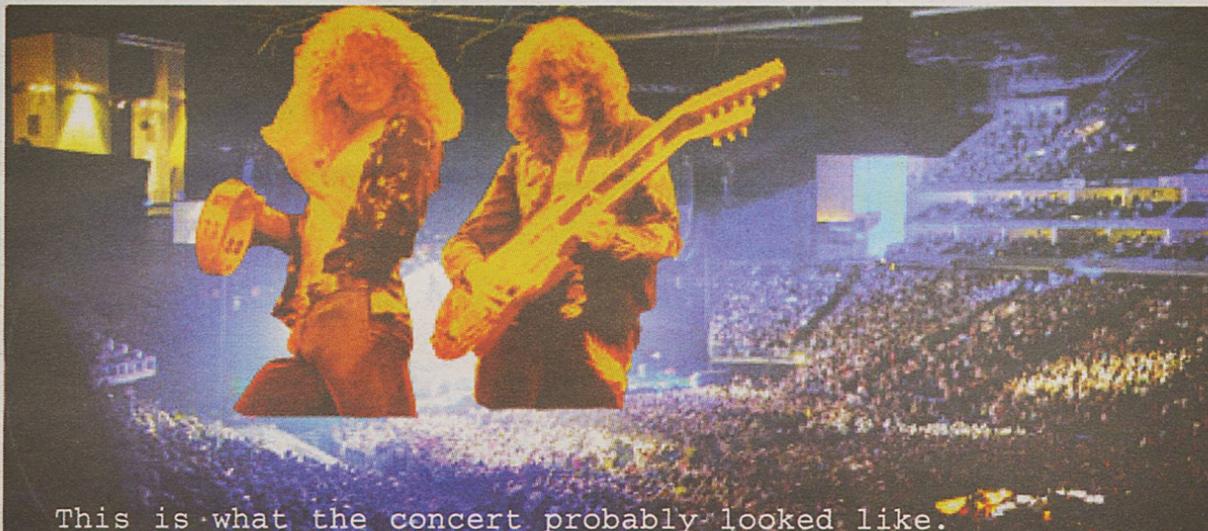
Zeppelin were originally asked to perform for forty minutes and last June met for a series of secret rehearsals in London. The band, who built their reputation on excess and perfection, quickly determined that a proper reunion would require a full two hour set. The three surviving members, Robert Plant, Jimmy Page and John Paul Jones were joined by Jason Bonham, the son of original drummer John Bonham, whose death in 1980 on the eve of a North American tour prompted the band's dissolution.

The corridors of the O2 Arena offered scant indication that Led Zeppelin, often associated with the counter culture, were the attraction of the night. The rebellious youth who partied for hours prior to Zeppelin shows in the seventies were replaced with well dressed professionals bound for corporate hospitality suites. The long, wild manes of hair that Zeppelin has traded in, were equally absent in the crowd. Parents who came of age with Zeppelin brought their children, and the many young faces confirmed Zeppelin's continued relevance. Rock & Roll elite such as Sir Paul McCartney, Eric Clapton, David Gilmour and Mick Jagger all filed in, creating a buzz that escalated as show time neared.

To remind the audience of Led Zeppelin's barnstorming style, vintage newsreel footage of the band on tour in the seventies played on a massive digital screen behind the stage for five minutes prior to the bands emergence. Without warning, lights illuminated the crowd, power chords thundered and Robert Plant belted the familiar lyrics "In the days of my Youth/I was taught what it means to be a man." Led Zeppelin had finally returned, and the crowd's response was deafening.

The reunion was refreshing as Zeppelin played without additional support or altered versions of their classic hits. Sure, Robert Plant wasn't a golden god bounding about the stage. His voice however was surprisingly spry and the notes that are now out of reach he didn't attempt. Jimmy Page clearly benefited from the years of sobriety and time removed from touring; playing with exacting precision and even resurrecting his violin bow solo on "Dazed and Confused." No one could fill the massive shoes of John Bonham, but his progeny proved a more than adequate replacement by replicating the thundering drum solos that exemplified the band's sound and cemented the elder Bonham's iconic status.

The concert united people from over fifty countries and spanned generations of music lovers. Each member of Zeppelin appeared energized throughout the evening as this was no longer their job or obligation, but as Jimmy Page noted "a chance to let the genie out of the bottle." Zeppelin made no mention during the evening of any future performances, but that couldn't stop speculation among fans exiting the arena who were in universal agreement that Led Zeppelin had turned in an extraordinary performance.



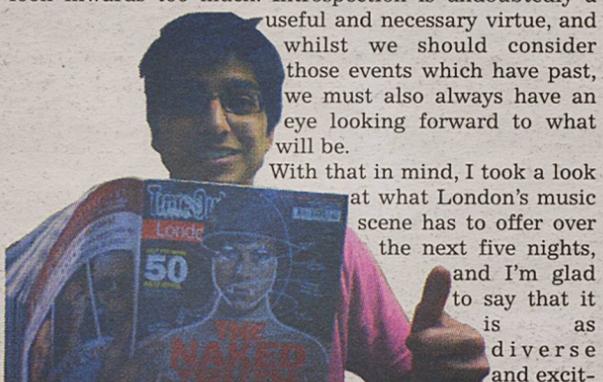
This is what the concert probably looked like.

MUSIC

FIVE DAYS OF CAPITAL MUSIC

rahimrahemtulla looks at what London has to offer over the next five days

You've been back at LSE for about a week now. You might be feeling like you never left and Christmas never happened, or you might have spent the last seven days in bed, refusing to accept that essays and books are back on the agenda. Either way, now is a good time to do two things. One of those things is to reflect. Reflect on what has been; on how many drunken nights have been had, on what progress has been made toward your ultimate goal of world domination, and on how those new years resolutions are coming along. But it is dangerous to look inwards too much. Introspection is undoubtedly a



useful and necessary virtue, and whilst we should consider those events which have past, we must also always have an eye looking forward to what will be. With that in mind, I took a look at what London's music scene has to offer over the next five nights, and I'm glad to say that it is as diverse and excit-

ing as ever. However to start, and perhaps to get a hold on knowing what you don't like, you could satisfy your commercial cravings by checking out the man who no one admits to liking, (but someone out there must be buying the albums), **James Blunt**. Playing tonight at the Hammersmith Apollo, the focus is likely to be on showcasing tracks from his latest album, 'All the Lost Souls', but there can be little doubt that the major tracks from his first record, which need no mentioning by name here, will also be on the set list. Let's hope that he is at his girly, sappy best. (Or vomit-inducing worst, depending on your point of view).

For Wednesday night, you might want something a little more under the radar, and so you could take in the Hungarian surf guitar outfit that is **Agaskodo Teliverék**. Performing at Westbourne Studios over in W10, their mash-up of guitar riffs, beats and acid-house blips will certainly provide the antidote to an overdose of mainstream culture. They are a recommended pick by that other London cultural criticism mag, *Timeout*.

Thursday night sees a host of jazz acts in the capital and a visit to any of the established venues such as Charlie Wright's at Old Street, the 606 Club in SW10 or Dalston's Vortex will provide high quality acts.

Moving into the weekend, Friday offers up an interesting contrast. On the one hand, you could go see the **Spice Girls**

at the O2 Arena in Greenwich, or on the other you could get down to **Asian Dub Foundation** over at east London's Cargo nightclub. It's like a choice between stale white bread you never really liked when it was fresh and something more exotic and challenging, like say, aubergine curry. Where the power-pop, all girl five-some have a giggle about men and relationships, A.D.F. engage with weighty political issues such as immigration and religion, all to the backing of a furious hybrid of ragga, bhangra, jungle and even punk.

Finally, come Saturday, you might just want to go in for some good 'ole indie-rock. The term seems to be bandied about these days fairly freely, but you'll find some of the best of the current crop at the Islington Academy's 'Artrocker' night. Bands on show include **Good Shoes**, **These New Puritans** and **Bombay Bicycle Club** among others.

If none of the aforementioned acts are to your liking you're in luck, for this is London. From cutting-edge Hungarian surf rock to desperate career revivals, this city has it all. More importantly, if you can dream it, then there is a space for it and most likely an audience too. If you didn't fill your first week with exciting cultural and musical excursions, reflect upon that, and don't let your second week pass by in the same manner.

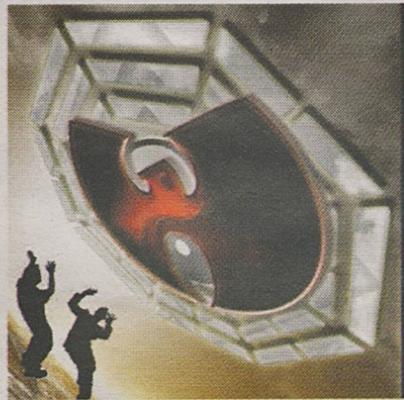
WU Tang Forever?

adamjohns on the Wu-Tang Clan's "8 Diagrams"

It is a dark time for rap music. In today's climate, where sales are continually slipping, lyrical standards are rapidly devolving, and some of the most successful artists are making up dances and generally behaving in ways that would have once led Suge Night to rough them up at the Source awards, there is not much to look forward to. Certain fans are turning away from Rap and towards other genres, while others are simply giving up on life in general. Amidst this climate the **Wu-Tang** have rekindled hope with a stunning return to form on their new album, 8 Diagrams.

The album harkens back to the Wu-Tang heyday of the mid-90's. Rather than mimicking the sonic template of early Wu, with its dusty kung-fu horns and ghostly sampled drums, the album takes the classic sound in a more polished direction. The influence of RZA's work on film scores (most notably that of Quentin Tarantino's Kill Bill) can be clearly felt in the cinematic sheen present on a number of tracks. New-to-Wu elements like freaky guitar noodling (courtesy of John Frusciante, the original 90s guitar wank) and Spaghetti western horns make frequent appearances. Refreshingly, the production manages to once again sound completely outside the mainstream rap climate, which is a hallmark of all the best Wu releases.

Lyrical, the clan's remaining 8 members (the 9th, Old Dirty Bastard, passed away in 2004), sound reinvigorated and enthusiastic. Lesser-known members like U-God come to the fore, contributing impressive verses such as "I do the honour, shaolin bomber/ sharkskin armour, I bring the drama". Raekwon and Method Man, both of whom who have recently released unimpressive albums, redeem themselves on "Campfire" and "Rushing Elephants" respectively. RZA "strangles cold bottles of becks like a vexed German". All and all, the album demonstrates maturity growth while retaining the inventiveness and fire of the Clan's best releases.



While this positive view of "8 Diagrams" is shared by many, it is not pervasive, and this division of opinion is particularly evident in the clan itself. Ghostface and Raekwon have publicly criticized RZA for ignoring the input of the other members, and the group is currently on tour without RZA, performing no songs from 8 Diagrams. Despite the album's critical success it has largely been a commercial flop, selling only 130 000 copies in its first four weeks (in comparison to 1997's Wu Tang Forever, which sold 600 000 in its first week). While some of this dissention likely stems from financial disputes, the unwillingness of the Clan to embrace 8 Diagrams is disappointing. Unlike recent Wu-Tang solo releases such as Ghostface's Big Doe Rehab, which largely eschew innovation in favour of settling into a comfortable niche, 8 Diagrams represents a step forward. With rap's mainstream relevancy fading, capitulating to the traditional sensibilities of a narrow fanbase will only hasten this decline. 8 Diagrams may not catapult the Wu-Tang clan back to its former mainstream prominence, but it is an impressive, innovative piece of music.

Spice Up Your Life. Or Else.

holliestman experiences the reunited Spice Girls

Imagine the scene: Five near-middle aged women, none of them with their original faces, a tad too-skinny, their skin marred by child rearing. It all looks so familiar, like remembering a dream, or being back in 1997. And yet it is real.

A decade after their split, Sporty, Ginger, Baby, Posh, and Scary have once again returned to the stage.

When I heard that the Spice Girls were doing a reunion tour, to say that I was a bit excited would be like saying those Tesco adverts are a bit shit. I was literally willing to sell a kidney to get a ticket. Though the Spice Girls may have failed as ambassadors of Girl Power, for myself and countless other twenty-somethings they hold a very special place in our hearts.

Arriving at the concert, the O2 arena was filled to bursting with twenty something ex-Spice Girl wannabes, their unwilling partners, and their mothers, many clutching at overpriced merchandise and donning t-shirts splattered with the "Girl Power" and "Zigga Zig Ahh" slogans of a decade ago.

Despite rumours of Bewitched and Cleopatra coming along to open the show, there was no supporting band. After all, who could prepare an audience for what they were about to see?

Rising from the floor of the stage, to the eternal strains of "Spice up your life", they began. In a moment, I forgot the past, the tears of Geri's departure, the trauma of the break up, all those Spice-free years. It was as if they had never split up, dancing and strutting as if it were

1997 all over again.

Another song, another outfit. For "Who Do You Think You Are" the girls recreated their legendary Brit awards appearance, Geri donning a replica of her infamous Union Jack dress. Every time Posh Spice sang there was a huge cheer and a round of applause.

The music slowed. The lights dimmed. The girls began to sing "Mama", with a new-



found sentiment given that all but one Spice has now embarked down the road to motherhood. On the chime of the last chorus the stage was swamped by the bands' offspring. The terrified-looking baby of Baby Spice was thrown into her mothers' arms after having a neon pair of earphones chucked on it. The irritatingly named Brooklyn Beckham, cradled in his mother's arms, did his best imitation of

the famous Posh pout.

Next, each Spice was given some alone time on the stage, an opportunity to show off the successes of their solo careers. Posh, as the only Spice to have failed absolutely in her post-Spice pop career, used her moment in the spotlight to show off her so-called fashion career. Turning the stage into a cat walk, she strutted around, chased by a group of photographers. Geri, umbrella in hand, leapt around the stage half-naked to "It's Raining Men". Scary lived up to her name by taking advantage of a poor audience member, dragging him onstage, locking him in a cage and grinding up on him for the next five minutes. Good thing the bulk of the audience has reached adulthood.

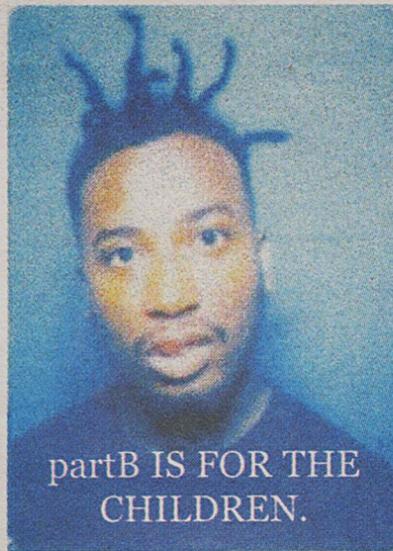
In keeping with the adult theme, "Two Become One" was given a raunchy onstage remix, with the band swinging around poles like they were doing it to pay the rent.

The tabloids said they only did it only for the money, but I am unconvinced. During their rendition of "We Are Family", the band genuinely appeared to be enjoying themselves, happy to be reunited under the banner of Spice.

The show concluded with the awesome "Wannabe". It was as if we were all ten years old again, singing into our hairbrushes in our bedrooms, "Zigga Zig Ahh" echoing from every mouth in the stadium. In one word, Spicetastic. A childhood dream had been realised, and to be honest, if I had died tomorrow I would have been quite content.

Robyn - Be Mine
Released: 14.01.08
by adamjohns

Robyn's follow-up to her first UK number one "With Every Heartbeat" plays down a bit of the freakiness of some of her recent releases, keeping it relatively straight. Instead we get a heartfelt "Sixteen Candles Prom" sound with lots of whooshy strings and, dare I say it, pathos. It's smooth yet jittery, hyper-melodic and, as is Robyn's wont, roughly 900 times smarter than most pop music. She even does this little spoken-word interlude where she sounds really Swedish. And with that, I swoon.



Hot Chip - Ready for the Floor
Released: 28.01.08
by gregorulm

It is not easy to point to a single cause when looking for a reason why this track is the musical equivalent of a hit in the balls. Is it the utterly silly lyrics, Alexis Taylor's feeble voice, or the uninspired hum-drum melody which completely ruin this track? This is the exact order of annoying factors you will encounter when listening to it, and repeatedly you will ask yourself how much worse it can get. Not even a good remix would make it suitable for clubs. On the other hand, Aphex Twin, when asked by Nine Inch Nails' Trent Reznor to remix one of his tracks, produced a completely new piece, without even bothering to listen to the source material. Such an insult might very well be the only way to make something good out of "Ready for the Floor".

The Kills - URA Fever
Released: 07.01.08
by adamjohns

I want to automatically dislike the Kills, not only because one of them is dating Kate Moss but also because this obliges me to write that he is dating Kate Moss, and also because anyone who is in a band should automatically realize that dating Kate Moss will overshadow any possible musical accomplishments that band could make, lumping said band into London Lite territory for the foreseeable future. That said, I just found out that they are working with Spank Rock producer XXXChange on their new album and this intrigues me. A musical fusion of XXXchange's proficient American booty music with whatever type of music the Kills do (do they sound like the Libertines?) has the potential to entertain. So I listened to the new single URA Fever which is good and sounds sort of like disco space blues and now instead of disliking them I am simply indifferent. Which is refreshing, like a summer breeze.

Supergrass - Diamond Hoo Ha Man
Released: 14.01.08
by gregorulm

Some bands never recover from the dreaded "sophomore slump", others just get better and better. Supergrass firmly belong to the latter category. Now already in their second decade, they are at an absolute peak. "Diamond Hoo Ha Man" has a raw, stomping sound that is almost too appealing. In combination with Gaz Coombes undeniably sexy voice, and lyrics that make only a weak attempt of disguising what I perceive to be rather raunchy double-entendres, it makes a song that is hard to resist. If this single is an indication for their sixth studio album "Diamond Hoo Ha", then we can expect a real gem.

One Cold Night in Murmansk

Willjoce explores deep in the arctic circle

The sun barely shows itself in Murmansk during the winter. It rises late in the morning and apathetically crosses the sky before setting in the early afternoon. The city is dark, gloomy and very, very cold. We had been drawn there by the lure of seeing the northern lights and spent several chilly hours on our first night up on the hills above the city. The lights had been magical, one of the moving experiences that you know you will never forget, but that left us six nights in Murmansk to kill and very little to do.

Often we would stroll through the snowy and deserted streets, stopping every so often to buy more beer from the kiosks along the way. One evening we came upon a group of people stood about outside a bar. The group were obviously very drunk already and deferred all our questions to a squat but very solid looking man who seemed to be in charge. The party going on inside was being held in honour of a wedding and although it was a private party the squat man insisted that we come in as honoured guests. We were not going to turn down this unique chance to witness up close a Russian social ritual and, besides that, the vodka would be free.

When we got inside we realised just how honoured guests we were to be. Or at least, I was to be. The squat man who had invited us in seemed to think that Harry was only my translator so took him off to one side and sat me at the top table next to the bride. She kept beaming at me, clearly honoured by the presence of a foreigner at her wedding. She didn't speak any English though, and my Russian didn't extend to eloquent well-wishing so I smiled at her and raised the glass I had been handed. In addition to the vodka in my hand there was a glass of evil

looking wine placed on the table and several plates of food set out before me. I could see Harry far over in the distant part of the room talking merrily with the squat man so I could see nothing for it but to tuck in. I soon realised that this was a mistake as the food was awful and washing it down with the disgusting wine just made it worse. Unfortunately the people around me took my hesitation to mean that I wanted more vodka so my glass was refilled and we all drank again. I was desperate to avoid eating any more of the food so I began trying to chat with the people around me. Thankfully the large shots of vodka were taking effect at this point as I always find it easier to speak in foreign languages when I am slightly merry and soon I was chatting away with the bride and the guest on my other side, who turned out to be her father. I must have seemed an eccentric character to say the least. I had removed my coat, which was a sober colour to fit in with the Russian style of clothing. Unfortunately underneath that I was wearing a loud red fleece, which was by far the brightest item in the room and made me very conspicuous. When I removed my large fur hat I had revealed an exceedingly scruffy mop of hair that was now sticking up at alarming angles no matter how much I tried to surreptitiously pat it down into place. I also had the wire of my head torch wrapped around my torso and draped over my shoulders so that the torch part swayed in front of me, a movement that grew more exaggerated as the vodka flowed until it was nearly throttling the people on either side of me. Thankfully they were intrigued more than offended, and I made sev-

e r a l

demonstrations of just how bright my head torch was. After a little while I noticed that people were coming into the room just to look at me with curious expressions on their faces. They would stare at me for a little while, quite openly, and then retreat in obvious amazement at this peculiar westerner sat merrily in the midst of their party.

Just then everyone at the table started standing up and there was commotion everywhere. It took me several moments to realise that the tables were being cleared away so that dancing could begin. But not before someone had forced yet another glass of vodka into my hand. The bride's father at this point excitedly decided that rather than the bride and groom having the first dance, as is tradition, I should further honour his daughter by taking to the floor with her. I was by this point quite drunk and was having trouble walking in straight lines, let alone trying to coordinate a dance with an over-exuberant Russian woman. On top of these objections I could see the groom giving me nasty looks that I didn't like. There was no arguing with the father and in my drunken state everything very quickly became a disorientating blur. Soon I was confused, off balance and nauseous. When the dance finished the bride grabbed me in an all-enveloping hug, which was useful as it stopped me keeling over right there in front of the entire crowd but I could still see the husband glowering at me from a few feet away.

I decided that I had had enough. Speaking very loudly in English I took the hand of the squat man and began shaking it, explaining that

although we were very sad to leave we were grateful for his hospitality. Once my slurry speech was over I made to move towards the door but found I couldn't. The squat man had my hand in a vice like grip and was not letting go. In fact, he now had Harry in one hand and me in the other and neither of us could move. I decided to act as if this was of no matter, and we decided on balance to stay for another drink. As ever, someone was ready and waiting and another glass of vodka was propelled into my hand. Once I had a drink in my hand he seemed to think I was less of a flight risk and he let go. I saw a chance. I proposed a toast and Harry was therefore furnished with a glass immediately. While I was gushing something about the friendship that existed between Britain and Russia that we must all work to maintain I motioned Harry towards the door. We downed the toast and then sharply made our way towards the exit, careful to keep smiling at the assembled guests while pushing through them at a speed that only just passed for dignified.

Once we were on the street and trying to put on our hats, coats and gloves the squat man came barrelling out of the door fuming. Feeling that the status of honoured foreigner had brought me so far this evening and must still have some resonance I stepped forward towards him with a smile on my face and attempts to pacify him on my lips. I was cut short in this, however, when he delivered a very swift and painful knee to my groin and I collapsed onto the snowy pavement. As I lay groaning and trying to clamber to my feet I just about made out the clunk and cry of Harry being given a jab in the face before I was on my feet and running down the street as fast as I could.



So we over did it a tad over the Christmas break, ate a few too many mince pies, drank a few mulled wines to the excess. Christmas is the season of overindulgence, the day just is not complete unless you have passed out in a turkey induced coma nursing your food baby in front of the **Queens** speech – the time of year is sponsored by an obese elderly man in a red suit- obviously you're going to put on a few pounds here and there... but for some reason we don't really seem to mind, we sit back and eat a few more mince pies, our yule tide buldge is accepted.

But then, all of a sudden, it's January the first. Crap. A new year is upon us and that means that we have to make new resolutions to lose those recently acquired love handles.

magazine has its own lose weight fast plan of action smeared across its front page. **The Times** have their own health club and the **Independent** released its "revolutionary" guide to dieting, aptly and originally named the "no diet diet", promising the opportunity to eat yourself thin. The internet is also here to lend a helping hand, **Fatloss4idiots.com** promises a lovely supporting role in your new health kick.

Diets turn normal rational human beings into crazed angry calorie counting psychos. I know I've been there, I vividly remember the day that I allowed myself half a walnut instead of a whole one, because the other half would have pushed my calorie

emphatically stating that the phrase "how is it going" should be avoided at all costs, the demise of all conversation with said dieter would quickly follow.

We are weight obsessed which considering we are as a nation thought to be pretty podgy is rather interesting. The obesity rate in the Britain amongst adults has doubled in the last decade. Our televisions are infiltrated by shows such as **Can Fat Teens Hunt?** on BBC three and a new channel three programme about some guy called **Charlie Walduck** and his quest to lose thirty stone in order to avoid an early and oversized grave.

It is a New year so apparently society requires a new you. But why? I was quite fond of the old you... why are we defined by

change we can get that all desired sense of satisfaction that we have achieved something.

There are dozens of websites designated to helping us stick to our resolutions by making step by step plans and setting attainable goals, blah. A resolution is after all for a year not just for a week. But where is the fun in that? If we must make these promises to ourselves should they not at least be interesting, sure getting yourself organised would be practical, but something like

screw the new

holliestman reacts against resolutions

Our TV screens are swamped with exercise DVDs from **Strictly Come Dancercise** to some Z list celebrity's second cousin twice removed demanding that we at all look at them and bask in the glory of the fact that they have lost half their body weight with great ease by only wating lettuce leaves and drinking the urine of virgin goats which can only be found in the upper mountains of Mongolia. Gosh, its so simple anyone can do it.

Every single vaguely lifestyle orientated

The Times last week dished out guides about how to live with someone who is on a diet,

intake into the 600's a most unwanted event for someone on a diet.

our size and our infinite need for change? Do we

really need to change our lives on the first of January every year? Were they really that bad two weeks ago that we need to overhaul our daily routines and cleanse our calendars. If they were that bad last year, why did you wait until now for the excuse that is a kick up the arse of the start of the new year to make the change?

Resolutions are pointless, rules after all are made to be broken. Boots have a change one thing campaign, as a result of acknowledging that we are all incapable of sticking to our resolutions. They advise that we pick just one little thing to change in our daily routine, therefore if we stick to our little

climbing

Mount Everest, now that would be an awesome way to enrich your life in 2008. Why spend a small fortune on a gym membership that is only to be discarded behind your sofa after two weeks. Life is supposed to be fun – existing on a diet of boiled spinach leaves is not.

Embrace your vices, they make you human. So what if you smoke a bit, have a few pints too many, get the bus instead of walking to university, if we were all perfect **Jeremy Kyle** would be out of a job.

CES 2008

simonwang looks at what you could be looking/reading/watching/wanking off to in 2008

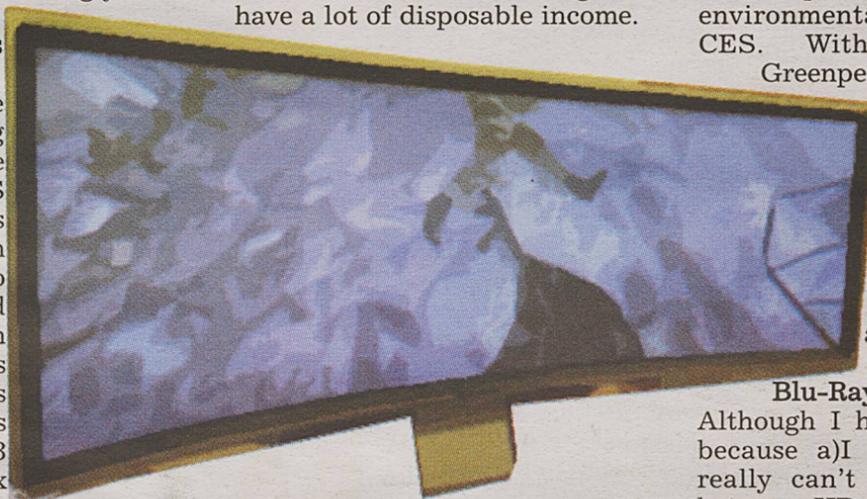
At time of writing, the biggest electronics show in the world, the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas, is finishing, leaving behind it some some of weirdest gadgets to be concieved by man - but also what seems to be some hard facts over trends in the coming year ->

The Wireless Revolution

More and more people are making their homes wore wireless, and CES this year echoes this fact - from wireless USB to RF earbuds and WiFi integrated in every TV, as well as new Wireless streaming formats beyond WiFi and 3 - such as WiMax which tries to increase the range and speed of Wireless connections, as well as WirelessHD, which also uses those wireless TVs to distribute wireless content straight to the user.

Gamers have a lot of money Big PC gaming hardware companies are really targetting PC

gamers this year - from super powerful gaming graphics cards costing in excess of the price of all three gaming consoles combined (and several hundred pounds to spare), stupidly wide (about a 3:1 ratio length to width, pictured) monitors and expensive custom PC cases. It seems that PC gamers have a lot of disposable income.



or carry a hand sized computer which allows you to access the internet absolutely fucking anywhere, without need of a wifi connection.

Environmentalism

There was a (relatively, in comparison to previous years) stress on environmentalism this year at CES. With pressure from Greenpeace and other pressure groups, there has been an increase in environmentally friendly products with lower power consumption and being made from 'safer' materials.

Blu-Ray

Although I hate to say it partly because a)I hate Sony and b)I really can't tell the difference between HD and DVD even on a 40 inch HDTV with my eyes being clamped open, HD-DVD is clearly falling behind Sony's Blu-ray in the HD format wars, which became more than obvious at CES this year, with more support for the Blu-Ray disc format. However, I would recommend waiting. And not buying either. Ever.

Mobile Internet Devices

Clearly not satisfied with having the internet at home on their PC/Mac/TV/PS3/Wii or on the move on their laptop/DS/PSP/Mobile/Palm, this year devices actually called 'Mobile Internet Devices' means that you can install tiny computers in your car

And as for Macworld...

By the time you are reading this, Macworld, Apple's big, big show for Apple geeks will have either commenced or will be commencing in a few hours. Stuff on the (predicted list) include a tiny **Macbook Nano** which will be



super fast because of a completely flash based hard drive (which has never been done on a commercial laptop before), new updates to **Lepoard** to deal with some of its security flaws and adding new features onto it. On top of that, it's expected that Apple will release the **iPhone SDK**, the mechanics of how the iPhone works, to allow third parties to mess around with the iPhone and create new features for it, and finally **HD & renting to iTunes** which will allow you to rent high definition movies off iTunes and watch them for a limited time. However, this is all still speculation at the time of writing, and no one really has any idea of what will be announced.

And there have also been rumours of Apple's 'new platform', which could be anything from an iFarm to an iFuck.

IDENTITY

TECH AND GAMING

VOULEZ-VOUS?

CHICK FLICKS - PART III

alicepfeiffer takes off her bra

Welcome to chick flicks- deuxième partie
Last week discussed the evil business of chick flicks and how it perverts youthful females' romantic expectations.

This week, we'll have a look at the portrayal of sex and what kind of preparation, of warning it gives to teenagering maiden minds- how does it format desire, what kind of expectations does it set?

As mentioned last week, chick flicks -for chicks about a chick (chick= girl in Hollywoodish) - revolve around a love story ie: around a guy. The film follows the relationship, seen from the girl's point of view. The story is practically identical from one film to the other, the only difference is a slight change of scenery- why? Because from the minute the girl meets the boy, the story, her life becomes exclusively, obsessively about that boy.

Sex is present but not central- much more emphasis is placed on kissing under the rain/in the middle of fields/ on the Eiffel tower.

Think of sex scenes in films such as *Dirty Dancing*, *Meet Joe Black*, *How To Lose a Guy in 10 Days* etc. These is the grown-up version of the kissing scene in the younger version (teen chick flicks, the crème de la crème of all wicked film forms) *Ten Things I Hate About You*, *She's all That*, *Clueless*.

Sex first appears as a ghost, it is presented as a mystique within the story, an unmentionable decision to do 'it'. The sex scene usually happens at the end- it is the final outcome (often, but not always; if it happens earlier, it is a 'mistake', an 'accident', followed by a blushing, shameful girl who can't look the guy in the eye- poor Bridget Jones went through a diary-long of being tortured by Hugh Grant, the non-love her life, for sleeping with him too early.)

Depicted from the girl's point of view, it is never spontaneous but a



thought-out decision. It is rarely immediate, or something that happens within the first few dates but rather, a build-up towards -not sex, God forbid, no Love-Making. It is an emotional performance, not an acting out of animal libido.

No desire is shown on the girl's part, she makes the decision to 'show' her love to the patient boy. The waiting is a form of man-testing: A 'good' man waits, h i s waiting/patience is a proof of caring. If it is something a man 'deserves' for having fulfilled his chivalrous duties, it means the girl is doing him a favour- in other words, giving something, performing something out of generosity/duty.

Don't get me wrong, I am not saying girls should, out of hetero-liberation, jump into bed with every frog-next-door, but shouldn't desire be a mutual thing? Instead, it is often shown as a reward, something the girl gives to the boy - in other words, it is a currency, it is in the girl's power to give or retrieve.

Hollywood formats relationships to the point that it dictates the 'wrong' or 'right' length of time to wait.

The issue is, why is this self-restriction, self-denial only expected from girls? Why isn't a similar self-control equally as expected from boys?

Rather, this is representing as a sexual taming of the other. It inscribes arbitrary 'relation rules' into everyday life, as if girls needed to 'trick' boys into caring about

them beyond the bedding opportunity.

This outlines a strict frame of sexual freedom, of possibilities and unspoken 'rights'.

(This is often created through the use of a 'villain'- the 'other girl', often brunette, who doesn't wait and who, by the end, bitterly regrets it. *Grease's* Sandy- blonde, virginal- cries about mean busty brunette competition, but wins, naturally. To situate the sexual act, chick flicks often portray two extremes of femininity- the virgin and the whore- that is, male-created characters of course.)

The act itself is also full of conventions.

There are very few reminders of what is actually going on. It is always presented as steamy, professional yet natural rendezvous. There is no sense of pace, little notion of beginning and end- it is an encounter rather than an activity; the girl goes through a continuous slow-motion orgasm.

Yet it is never explicitly suggested, a performance of feelings rather than acting out desire- love, never lust. The man is shown as lascivious; the woman as sexual but not conscious of it (or at least unable to distinguish emotions and sexual desire). The nudity (or lack off) is unsuggestive, prudish- the bra stays on and the film often skips to 'the morning after'.

Gender is performed in signs, each reinforcing a patriarchal male/female model: the woman is slowly stripping, 'giving' her body to the man, she is her own reward to him.

He approaches, initiates, dominates, she allows.

The everyday realities of the act are also ignored: no sweat, no funny noises, no mention of contraception (one doesn't get pregnant in

Hollywood, that happens in the 'happily ever after' that no one is interested in seeing on screen.)

Sex itself is desexualized; penetration is virtually ignored (I'm not suggesting that it should go natural geographic, but it is like a dark secret the film tiptoes around...yes, Hollywood has invented phallus-free sex)

What preparation/warning does this give to young girls? (What kind of complex does it give to not so young girls?)

And what kind of pressure does this put on young boys?

While girls watch chick flicks, teenage boys watch porn (yes I'm generalizing...but, stereotypically speaking, this happens more than the other way round)

What hope for understanding and satisfaction does this leave?

I have to confess, I've seen all the films I discuss and shhh, I've enjoyed a lot of them. Guilty as charged. For

all the girls who have caught themselves watching them...don't feel guilty, that's what they were designed for: they are enjoyable if one identifies with the main character; girls feel indirectly gratified by the heroin's man-catching success. By identifying with her 'journey', one is unconsciously absorbing her version of 'femininity', accepting her idea of sexuality.

By recreating a fake female gaze, the movie perpetuates male-dominated hegemony: a female narrator leaves no choice but to follow her choices in order to follow the film.

Sex, no sex, too much sex- air-brushed humping only exists on-screen. So...voulez- vous coucher avec moi ce soir?

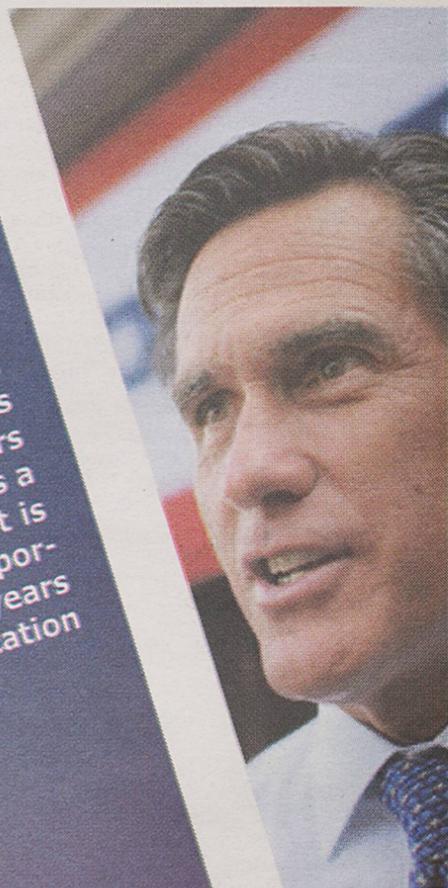
SEX & GENDER

... full of emotion and Bill her tire-
 dog, they now seem a force yet
 contrast, Senator Obama is now vis-
 ibly propped up by his energetic wife.
 in, who had been considered irrele-
 nearly a year, scoured the state of
 mpshire for votes better than anyone
 relessly conquering a state he had sim-
 won in 2000 against the then heir appar-
 George W. Bush. Within hours, McCain
 ched his local insurgency into a national
 paign. Huckabee was left in the dust by a
 of less religious voters while Mitt Romney
 t again came in second, this time in a state
 ose to the one he governed, Massachusetts.
 What makes this Presidential Primary sea-
 son so volatile is difficult to ascertain, but what
 is certain is the United States has not seen this
 for quite some time. The sheer volume of
 media coverage is deafening, their bias almost
 always apparent, and their ability to predict
 seemingly rarely lends itself to this sort of polit-
 ical chaos in America, but they were primarily
 tied to momentous periods such as prior to the
 Civil War (with four major Presidential candi-
 dates in the running), and when former Presi-
 dent Theodore Roosevelt ran as a third party
 candidate in 1912. Confusion like we are see-
 ing now, particularly in the primary season, is
 not normal, particularly for Republicans. The
 characteristics of this race hark back to the
 1970s, and not to anything of the last two
 decades. The lack of an incumbent candidate
 certainly has a role, but there are other issues
 as well.

This primary season, unlike years past,
 could very well run into the two party conven-
 tions, which will be held in late August for the
 Democrats, and early September for the Re-
 publicans. There may be a fight for the Re-
 stretching throughout this time. What this
 means for who will win the election is uncer-
 tain. But this primary season, with 24 states
 holding primaries on 5 February the so-called
 'Super-Tuesday', will force a battle for dele-
 gates to the forefront of the American national
 consciousness. Not for some time has the
 count mattered so much, and each state, in-
 cluding every single one of 5 February's 24, is
 vitally important. The campaigns with the
 most financial clout, such as the Obama, Clin-
 ton, Romney, and Giuliani efforts, will be more
 capable of handling the glut of states on Super
 Tuesday. By that time, however, with two
 states up for grabs by both parties prior, Michi-
 gan for the Republicans, Nevada for the De-
 mocrats, and South Carolina for both, early
 momentum could still be generated give a can-
 didate the push they need to conquer on the
 fifth.

The competition, particularly between the
 Obama and Clinton campaigns, could go on
 long after this as they continue to scramble for
 delegates across the country, emptying their
 war chests. What this does mean is that Re-
 publicans, with a two horse Democrat race
 near certain unless John Edwards wins South
 Carolina, will probably have to pick a candi-
 date capable of competing against both. John
 McCain, with his experience and likeability, as
 well as appeal to Southerners and Northerners
 alike, seems to fit, but Mitt Romney still has a
 chance in his birth state of Michigan. What is
 certain is this is the most exciting, and impor-
 tant, US Presidential Primary season for years
 and you are unlikely to pick up any publication
 without being bombarded. ■

The audacity of hype?
 Barack Obama's
 foreign policy p. 14 >>



Top: Obama
 mobbed by
 crowd;
 Above, Mitt
 Romney



Warning: cape does not allow user to fly

Matthew Partridge sets Barack Obama's foreign policy credentials against those of Hillary Clinton

Part from John McCain's role as the 'comeback adult', the emergence of Barack Obama on the national stage - from well-received speechmaker at the Democratic convention in 2004 to temporary frontrunner four years later - has been the most compelling story of this election. Although 'Obama-mania' may have cooled with his shock defeat in New Hampshire, the Senator from Illinois still commands worldwide attention. However, very few people have compared him with Clinton on anything other than a superficial level. Choosing between the two candidates is an important decision for the Democrats, and one which could potentially determine who inhabits the White House. Given the international nature of much of the election coverage, it is only appropriate that these comparisons should focus on what the two could bring to the table in terms of foreign policy, both in terms of the Middle East and the wider world.

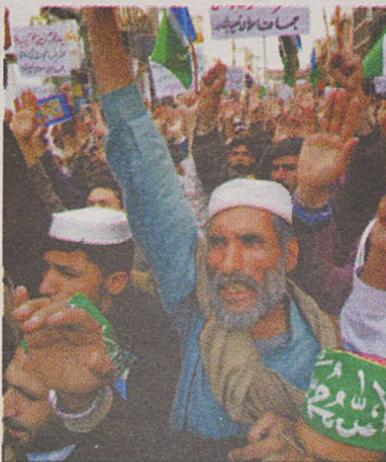
Barack Obama's foreign policy platform is based on two main arguments: that he can pioneer a new approach to foreign policy based on hope, and that the act of electing someone with his background would in itself send a signal to the Muslim world. In his speeches he has hammered these two points home, stating "if you think that America must offer the world a new and hopeful face, then I offer a different choice in this race and a different vision for our future." He also insists that "I've lived in Muslim countries, even while I'm Christian, so I know how they're there thinking about issues" and having someone who lived in Indonesia in his

childhood occupying the White House "could not be a more effective message that we are breaking from Bush and Cheney policies. And it will make us more safe. It will give me more credibility on the world stage than any other candidate that is running."

By contrast, Hillary Clinton emphasises her experience, both in the Senate and in the White House. In her campaign speeches she has said that "experience in foreign affairs is critical for ending the war in Iraq, averting war in Iran, negotiating a Middle East peace and dealing with North Korea." Clinton has also attempted to combine commitments to end the war in Iraq with an assertion that "U.S. policy must be unequivocal: Iran must not build or acquire nuclear weapons...a nuclear Iran poses a direct threat to its neighbours in the region, with Israel as its chief target." Indeed, Hillary Clinton took a lot of criticism for supporting legislation that designated the Iranian Revolutionary Guard as a terrorist organisation.

It is clear that on the issue of foreign affairs Hillary Clinton is much stronger. Still, many have criticised the New York Senator for her assertion that her time as First Lady can be counted as experience (although many of the same people portrayed her as a Lady Macbeth while her husband was in office). To the contrary, even Dick Morris, a former adviser to her husband turned sharp critic of the Clintons, (and now consulting Mike Huckabee's campaign) has admitted that she was deeply involved in the administration's political strategy, even after she formally withdrew from such a role in 1995. As First

Lady, Hillary Clinton visited eighty countries and acted as an ambassador for women's rights. Clinton's refusal to buck the antiwar line that has taken over the Democratic party shows that she may still precipitously withdraw from Iraq and drop the broader idea of spreading democracy.



Obama's rash comments about military operations to hunt Al Qaeda in Pakistan without Pakistani consent do not exactly inspire confidence

However, her need to be perceived as somewhat hawkish will mean that she will at least attempt a strong foreign policy.

With only three years in the Senate (and one of them spent on the campaign trail) Obama's inexperience is simply frightening. If he had ever led, run or held anything to do with foreign affairs it would be a different matter, but the ship of state cannot be left to someone whose license is provisional. Even when he was given a chance to shine on the Foreign Relations Committee (a privilege granted to few first-time Senators) he missed many meetings and achieved little. Although his supporters assume that he can surround himself with advisers, it is ultimately the President who has to make the final decisions, sometimes in situations where the advisers are divided or have their own agendas. His rash comments about unconditional negotiations with Iran and launching military operations, to hunt Al Qaeda inside Pakistan regardless of Pakistani consent do not exactly inspire confidence, especially since the latter remarks were made in an insecure effort to compensate for the former.

Even Barack Obama's talk about the 'politics of hope' is dubious. After all, Republicans Ron Paul and Mike Huckabee are definitely 'mavericks' in the same way that Obama is the 'candidate of hope', but that doesn't make their extreme views or his optimism any more valid. Hope without substance is just desperation. The election of a "skinny kid with a funny name who believes that America has a place for him, too," would definitely be a great symbol of how American

society has changed. It is naive in the extreme, however, to believe that it could have any effect on stopping Bin Laden or even building the international coalitions America needs to ensure its security. If the American electorate want to send a symbol to the rest of the world, electing a female President might be more powerful. Although Hillary Clinton's policies are disappointing, she is the best of the remaining Democrats. Unfortunately, the inexperienced Barack Obama would (for this cycle) be too much of a risk for America. ■

OBAMA ON PAKISTAN WHAT HE SAID

"There are terrorists holed up in those mountains who murdered 3,000 Americans. They are plotting to strike again... If we have actionable intelligence about high-value terrorist targets and President Musharraf won't act, we will."



KOSOVO'S FORK IN THE ROAD

Independence should be the path not taken - for now, argues **Massimo Ungaro**

Four months of negotiations between Russia, the European Union, Serbia and Kosovo's Albanians have failed to break the stalemate between Belgrade and Pristina over the destiny of Kosovo. While few Kosovars want little less than complete independence, Serbia, backed by Moscow, refuses to give anything more than autonomy. The UN Security Council mandate, which administered Kosovo for the past 10 years, formally expired on the 10th December 2007 and this seems to cast a shadow of uncertainty over the future of the province, even though judicial and policing duties will be guaranteed in the short run by an EU mission. Many attempts to find a final agreement have failed, such as the "independence with international supervision" plan proposed by the UN's special envoy, Marti Ahtisaari. (Serbia rejected it because it granted independence to Kosovo and Albanians because it offered too much autonomy to Kosovo's Serbs). Any action through the UN Security Council itself is blocked by Russia's threat to use its veto for any resolution opposed by Serbia. However, it looks like Kosovo's Albanians will anyway declare independence unilaterally with the support of the EU and the US. But the West would commit a mistake in supporting Kosovo's independence in these circumstances. It is still not the time for an independent Kosovo.

In fact, if unilaterally declared, Kosovo's independence will have dangerous consequences at all levels - international, regional, and internal. It would not only further alienate Serbia and exacerbate relations with Russia; the United Nations system would also be deeply delegitimised. Such a hazardous move would also create a dangerous precedent in international law. Who will then be able to oppose Serbian claims to annex the

Republika Srpska from Bosnia, it being one of two republics in the Bosnian federation inhabited by a majority of ethnic Serbs? Who will then be able to stop Macedonia's Albanians from claiming independence? The sizeable (25 per cent) Albanian minority living in Macedonia already rebelled in 2001 against the central government, and might be galvanised by an Albanian-led and independent Kosovo.

But a hasty declaration of independence will play firstly against the Kosovars themselves: an independent Kosovo remains economically and politically unviable. Kosovo would become a landlocked state with a huge trade deficit and a rate of unemployment of 20%. Energy dependence, primitive infrastructure, an average monthly salary of 200 euros and reliance on foreign aid entail a scenario quite different from what Kosovars expect from self-determination. Moreover, Kosovo's civil society and political institutions remain underdeveloped and two main dangers threaten their healthy development.

The first is the relationship with the Serbian minority. How will it be possible to foster mature governance and an inclusive concept of citizenship if most of Kosovo's political factions maintain strong anti-Serbian feelings? Who will be then the guarantor of Kosovo's Serbs? Secondly, criminality. Kosovo is already a drug-smuggling hub and Albanian mafia groups are heavily implanted in the province. How would the fragile and young state of Kosovo cope with the issue? The Italian intelligence agency, for one, is not optimistic, if the extracts from its report on the province quoted by the Belgrade daily *Vecernji Novosti* are to be believed. "If Kosovo becomes independent, Europe will get a new state hosting 80 per cent of heroine trafficking, a state

whose economy is fully based on international assistance and money of criminal organizations." Kosovo has turned into a zone of free criminality, where criminal gangs are closely connected with political elites. According to military intelligence sources in the NATO-led peacekeeping force in Kosovo (KFOR), 80 per cent of gross income in the province is made by criminal activities. It is then possible to compare Kosovo with Moldova, a country where the economy remains vulnerable to higher fuel prices, poor

agricultural weather, and sceptical foreign investors; and where 30% of population lives below the poverty line. Europe definitively does not need another Moldova.

Kosovo's independence would also bolster the case for radicalism and impunity in Serbia. The sudden frustration of Serbia's campaign will translate in a rise of the Serbian Radical party (a party which still denies any wrongdoing in Kosovo during the era of deposed President Slobodan Milosevic). Hostility to the International Criminal Tribunal set up for judging the war crimes committed during the Yugoslav wars will also only increase, damaging its chances of indicting key Serbian suspects. Taken together, all of this would hinder the democratic transition of Serbia, which would in that case refuse any further negotiation with the EU and NATO and rally even closer to Russia.

Almost ten years ago, NATO forces intervened against Milosevic's Serbia in order to stop the horrific atrocities that his regime was perpetrating against ethnic Albanians - not in order to give independence to Kosovo. Milosevic has been since prosecuted and Serbia is now a democracy, albeit a fragile one. After all the sufferings they have endured, the Kosovar people surely do deserve their own state, in the sense of a sovereign public entity which acts for the welfare of the people. But in the delicate economic and political situation of 2008, that sovereignty would be fictive. One day, with a less hostile Serbia, with stronger political institutions and a more developed economic base and culture of legality, Kosovo will be ready. For the moment, however, independence without Serbian consent would be a dangerous move. ■



Kosovo can be compared with Moldova, a country with a vulnerable economy and 30 per cent of its population living below the poverty line. Europe definitively does not need another Moldova

CHRONICLE OF A SECESSION FORETOLD: HOW COULD KOSOVO GAIN INDEPENDENCE IN 2008?

Hashim Thaci, Kosovo's new premier and a former leader of the Kosovo Liberation Army, was elected in **November 2007** on a promise to deliver the province's independence within weeks. Plans to declare independence on **10 December**, after talks with Serbia broke down, were shelved in response to international pressure.

However, Thaci remains committed to a formal declaration of independence early this year - probably after Serbian presidential elections in **February**. A declaration before then would likely instead sweep the Radical Party politician Tomislav Nikolic into power.

This is an important calculation for the Kosovars, because the Serbian government has already threatened to assert sovereignty over the Republika Srpska in the event of Kosovan independence. The uncertain fate of Kosovo's Serb minority could also lead to violence.

Because of this danger, Mr Ahtisaari envisages a "supervision" period of **120 days** after the formal declaration, during which a new constitution to enshrine Serb minority rights is planned. EU peacekeepers will be in position by **June**, by which point the Ahtisaari period will have come to an end and Kosovo's career as a new state begun in earnest. That, at any rate, is the plan.

Joseph Cotterill





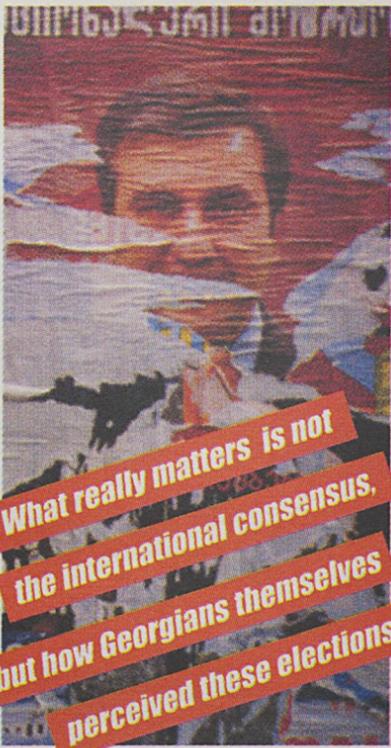
As Georgia went to the presidential polls on January 5, Antonia Strachey was there with NGO The National Democratic Institute to observe the election

In the fertile lands of the Caucasus, there is a long tradition of feast making. When a group of friends gather around a table, a leader of the evening is chosen by consensus. This person has the title of 'tamadar' or toast-maker, and for that night the toast maker will lead the draining of glasses in the recognition and celebration of friendship, victory and good food. If anyone else around the table wishes to make a toast, they nod in the tamadar's direction and the floor is theirs. So, the position of tamadar is not autocratic and, since it lasts for just one evening, it is not permanent. This kind of tradition of rotating power and the recognition of different views gives one hope that democratic principles may flourish in Georgia. At the moment, however the future is not clear.

The elections that took place on 5 January came at a potentially pivotal time for Georgia. Mikhail Saakashvili was returned to the presidency for a second time. He first came to power on the back of the West-leaning Rose Revolution in 2003, replacing the Soviet-era incumbent Edvard Shevardnadze. Mr Saakashvili has since lost swathes of supporters through disillusionment with the slow pace of economic change and his authoritarian response to riots in the capital, Tbilisi, in November 2007. The international consensus is neverthe-

less that these recent elections were broadly democratic, and that he has a legitimate mandate for his second term.

However there is a far more serious problem with these recent elections which is, paradoxically, more ephemeral: the tone in which they were conducted and how that tone was perceived by Georgians them-



selves. During the campaign period politicians of almost all parties dug in the political garden and enthusiastically threw mud in all directions. The tone was often one of aggressive political wrestling rather than a discussion of issues on their merits. This is a great shame. When politicians adopt arbitrary positions in a fledgling

democracy, voters cannot help but feel that their real needs are being ignored. In a place where the democratic system is so new, and faced with challenges from many sides, from both within and without, maintaining trust in the system of government is imperative. So what really matters is not the favourable international consensus that gave the presidential contest its seal of approval, but how Georgians themselves perceived the conduct of these elections. That the common motivation of voting was to protest against options that seemed even worse suggests that the Georgian people were not impressed.

There is an old saying in Georgia that goes like this. One day God was dividing up the world. He put up posters and had angels hand out leaflets telling all the earth's peoples to come to him to get their own country. On the day God had just finished handing over the last country, he heard singing and irregular footsteps coming in his direction. It was the Georgians. Striding merrily up to God, they said they were there to get a country. "But you are late," God replied. The Georgians were unabashed. "Yes, well, you know how it is, with a little wine and good food, before you know it you are toasting all night!" "I am sorry but there are no countries left," God said, "except the garden I was keeping for myself ...but you are such a happy bunch - it's yours."

Few predictions on the future of Georgia's politics are worth much - it is too complex. But for many who live in or visit Georgia that old saying speaks some truth - its democracy is a garden that they wish those in the political establishment would be more careful where they dug. ■



President Mikhail Saakashvili looks out from election advertising on a Tbilisi bus, December 2007

ROSES, ORANGES AND TULIPS: WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE COLOUR REVOLUTIONS?

Georgia set the tone for other challenges to the post-Soviet ancien regime in Europe and Central Asia with the 2003 Rose Revolution. The accession of a Westernising technocrat, Mikhail Saakashvili, to the presidency gave the Russian Federation further provocation - or pretext - to ratchet up tensions in a longstanding dispute between the two countries over the status of South Ossetia, a secessionist Georgian province.

Mr Saakashvili called this month's snap presidential election in response to civil disobedience two months ago. The fallout from the contested 5 January poll continued last weekend, with opposition rallies in the capital demanding a second round of voting.

Ukraine's Orange coalition formed a new government in November 2007 after years of fractious infighting.

These emerged soon after its 2004 overthrow of former President Viktor Yanukovich following protests at fraudulent elections. Mr Yanukovich briefly returned to government as the Prime Minister of his hated rival President Viktor Yushchenko as the coalition entered a period of disintegration. Although corruption remains rife, press freedoms have been consolidated, and the influence of Mr Yanukovich's ally, Russian President Vladimir Putin, has faded.

The 2005 Tulip revolution in Central Asian republic Kyrgyzstan was both bloodier and less successful than its European counterparts. Although the country's aging Soviet-era elite, typified by former President Askar Akayev, was removed in the wake of rigged elections, corruption has returned to haunt the new government of President Kurmanbek Bakiyev - himself a former Prime Minister under Mr Akayev. As in Ukraine, however, press freedoms have rallied.

Joseph Cotterill



President Viktor Yushchenko of Ukraine celebrates the first anniversary of the Orange revolution, November 2005



WHAT HE SAYS:

"We have won in almost every part of the country. I was planning my first statement today in the Georgian media to address our voters, but I was blocked by these three governmental channels, which means that the media terror has started against us"

Opposition candidate Levan Gachechiladze, January 8

Listings

www.lsesu.com

TUESDAY, 15TH JANUARY	THURSDAY, 17TH JANUARY
<p>12:00 Knitting Knitting Society, Quad</p>	<p>13:00 Union General Meeting LSE SU, Old Theatre</p>
<p>14:30 Lecture: Banking on the Future Corporate Social Responsibility E171</p>	<p>19:00 Life Drawing Visual Arts</p>
<p>19:00 UN Debate UN Society, S75</p>	<p>19:30 Movie: The interpreter UN Society, D302</p>
WEDNESDAY, 16TH JANUARY	FRIDAY, 18TH JANUARY
<p>13:15 Mass Chaplaincy</p>	<p>Hip Hop (Beginner) Dance Society, Parish Hall</p>
<p>17:45 The Kite Runner Cinema Trip Literature Society Cineworld, Haymarket</p>	<p>20:30 Hip Hop (Advanced) Dance Society, Parish Hall</p>
<p>18:30 "Peace in Our Time: Plausible, or a Pipe Dream?" Grimshaw Society, Old Theatre</p>	<p>19:30 Play: Golden Ass Drama Society, Old Theatre</p>
<p>19:00 Swing Dance (Beginners) Dance Society, Parish Hall</p>	<p>21:00 Crush! LSE SU, Underground Bar, Quad, Tuns</p>
<p>20:30 Drama: Golden Ass Drama Society, Old Theatre</p>	SUNDAY, 20TH JANUARY
	<p>19:30 Timeless, The LSE SU Cultural Show Her Majesty's Theatre</p>

SU EXECUTIVE OFFICE HOURS

General Secretary,
Fadhil Bakeer Markar
Thursdays 2.30PM, Quad

Treasurer,
Libby Meyer
Thursdays 2.30PM, Quad

Communications Officer,
Kayt Berry
Thursdays 2.30PM, Quad

Education and Welfare,
Ruhana Ali
Thursdays 2.30PM, Quad

Women's Officer,
Daisy Mitchell-Forster
Thursdays 12PM, Quad

Environment and Ethics,
Aled Dilwyn Fisher
Thursdays 12PM, Quad

LGBT Officer,
Dominic Rampat
Wednesdays 10AM, N3
Societies Officer,
Carys Morgan
Thursdays 2PM, Quad



What: Crush
Where: Underground Bar, Tuns, Quad
When: Every Friday

Price Crash on drinks from 8 - 10pm!

We've got a whole load of surprises lined up for you this term... from naked and wild RAG CRUSH! to a bit of Bollywood and Bhangra! Not to mention a Latin Invasion! Expect plenty of giveaways, amazing drinks deals, some of the best new DJ talent! AND of course, Students from all over the world as well as the odd alumni too! So if ur looking to get out, have a hassle free night out and come to Crush!

AU Card Holders get in for £3 all night long
If it's your Bday in the week, email

su.ents@lse.ac.uk before 7.30pm on Friday and you will get in for free.

MEXICO AND HUMAN RIGHTS

What: Talk, Mexico and Human Rights: The Role of Mexico in the new Multilateral Human Rights Institutions
Where: D302
When: Monday, January 21st at 7:30 PM

Ambassador Gómez Robledo is the current Deputy Secretary of Foreign Affairs for Multilateral Affairs and Human Rights. His lecture will focus on the leading role of Mexico in the creation of international institutions that address human rights violations, such as the new United Nations Council of Human Rights.

THE VISUAL ARTS SOCIETY PRESENTS FREESTYLE ART WORKSHOP

Where: Z132
When: Every Tuesday, starting 15th January, 6-8pm

Last term many of you wanted a creative space where you can draw, paint, sculpt, make installations, montage or whatever art activity you wish to do in a fun workshop (without having to worry about flatmates, fitted carpets and so on). So, here it is! In the workshops you can work individually or team up with other people for a common project - it is all up to you. The pieces prepared in the workshop could also be presented in the annual exhibition. This workshop has no formal organization. Please bring along the materials you wish to use. The LSE provided a storage room that we can use, so you can even store your materials and work between sessions. Once we have an idea of what materials you need we will start to supply them.

VISIT TO THE PAUL MELLON COLLECTION

Where: meeting: Old Building.
When: Wednesday, January 16th, meeting at 3:30

WHAT WOULD YOU DO WITH 100 MILLION DOLLARS?

Paul Mellon was an American multi-millionaire who got bored with being a businessman—and began amassing a huge collection of British art!

MORE THAN 150 WORKS BY THE GREATS:

Reynolds, Gainsborough, Stubbs, Constable, Turner and Blake. MUST SEE!

LAST CHANCE! THE SHOW IS ENDING THIS MONTH!

Please confirm your attendance.

FT MEET DANIEL BOGLER

Who: Frontiers Society
Where: D502
When: Monday, 21st of January, 7:15pm

Daniel Bogler is Managing Editor of the paper, and has been an ex-speechwriter with Goldman Sachs and an editor for the Asia Section of the FT.

Daniel Bogler will be explaining how to intrepert the Financial Times.

He will then describe a day in the life of an FT journalist.

Followed by a Q&A session.

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23:59:59?

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ENVIRONMENT WEEK



TUESDAY 15TH

Peak Oil: Can Energy Go Beyond Oil?
 7pm, D202

 Speaker: **Paul Mobbs**, Author of *Energy Beyond Oil* and Peak Oil Expert

 Paul Mobbs, author of *Energy Beyond Oil* and expert on the dangers we face from reaching the peak of world oil supplies, will talk about the implications of peak oil for economics, society and politics, and suggest ways we can prepare for energy beyond oil.

WEDNESDAY 16TH

Putting Ecology Before Economy.
 1-3pm, A316

 Speaker: **Satish Kumar** (Editor of *Resurgence Magazine*, Director of Programs at Schumacher College)

Chair: David Kingsley OBE
 Satish Kumar, the Director of Programs at Schumacher College, is the guiding spirit behind a number of ecological, spiritual and educational ventures in Britain. A former Jain monk, his lifelong mission has been to help the world realise that there is more to life than being rich, worldly and technologically advanced, he is also a passionate advocate of nuclear disarmament. He is the editor of *Resurgence*, described by *The Guardian* newspaper as 'the artistic and spiritual flagship of the Green Movement' and the author of several books including 'The Buddha and the Terrorist', 'Images of Earth and Spirit' and 'You Are Therefore I Am - A Declaration of Dependence.'

Banking on the Future: Risk Management, Investment Banks, Sustainable Economy
 2:30pm, New Theatre

Speakers: **Leo Johnson** (Sustainable Finance Ltd), **Meg Brown** (Citigroup), **Chris Wright** (LSE/Alcoa Fellow)
 Chair: Robert Faulkner (LSE International Relations)
 The influence of Environment and Ethics on the world of banking and finance.
 Hosted by the LSESU Business Society, LSESU Finance Society, LSESU Investment Society, LSESU Corporate Responsibility Society and LSESU Oikos London.

Debate on the Academic Boycott of Israel
 7pm, D202

 Speakers: **Prof. Rosenhead** (Professor Emeritus of Operational Research, LSE) and **Prof. Stephan Feuchtwang** (Professor of

Anthropology, LSE)
 Debates on the academic boycott of Israeli institutions in opposition to the policies of the Israeli government have been discussed in Britain among academic institutions and unions. This controversial and important debate will take place at LSE between two academics on either side, who will discuss whether or not a boycott is a viable option or a distraction from the issues.

FRIDAY 18th

Islam and the Environment
 4.30-6pm, D306

Speaker: **Mizan Chowdry** (Islamic Foundation for Ecology and the Environmental Sciences, IFEES)
 Mizan Chowdry will examine the ecological nature of the Islamic faith and why environmental and ethical issues are central to Muslims.

ALL WEEK ON HOUGHTON STREET - STALL, PETITIONS AND MORE

SPECIAL OFFERS SHOP



The Student Union Shop is proud to announce a number of special offers to help you get equipped for the new year. Some offers include:

Eday Lever Arch files: £1.99 each or buy two and get the third free!

Z Grip ballpens: 59p each or buy 1 and get another one free!

Muffins: were 65p; now 55p!
Flapjacks: were 69p; now 59p!

Many clothes lines are also reduced to clear. Most clothes ranges sold in the shop are Fairtrade.

Opening hours:
 Monday - Friday 9:30 to 5:30

Come and visit the Quad Café for a range of great tasting food and drinks. We even have a juice bar where you can create your perfect juice from a selection of fruits and vegetables.

SPECIAL OFFER FOR THIS WEEK ONLY

When you show this ad, you will receive a complimentary cup of tea with any purchase before midday!!*

Opening hours:

Monday - Friday 9am 6pm
 To support environment week, don't forget to clear the rubbish from your tables after you have eaten in the Quad. Also, don't forget to check out 3TK in the Underground.

*Not to be used in conjunction with any other offer or discount. Photocopies are not accepted. Limited to one offer per customer, per visit. The Quad Café have the right to retain the coupon. This coupon has no cash value and is not for sale. Valid until 18th January 2008.

the Beaver

GET IN BETWEEN THE SHEETS WITH US.

FEATURES EDITOR

Commissions content, edits and lays out pages, maintains a team of writers. Interviews politicians.

GRAPHICS EDITOR

Plays a key role in shaping the way *the Beaver* looks. Works closely with the Managing Editor, the Photography Sub Editor and all sections in ensuring the visual quality of the paper, using standard industry softwares such as Quark and Photoshop.

LISTINGS SUB-EDITOR

Plays a key role in informing the student body of what is going on at the LSE. Lays out the Listings pages using standard industry softwares.

COMMISSIONING SUB-EDITOR

Sources interviews for the whole paper. Works cross sections and ensures the quality of interviews published by *the Beaver*.

PARTIC EDITOR

Edits the career pull out. Sources content, lays out pages. Meets big City names.

WEB EDITOR

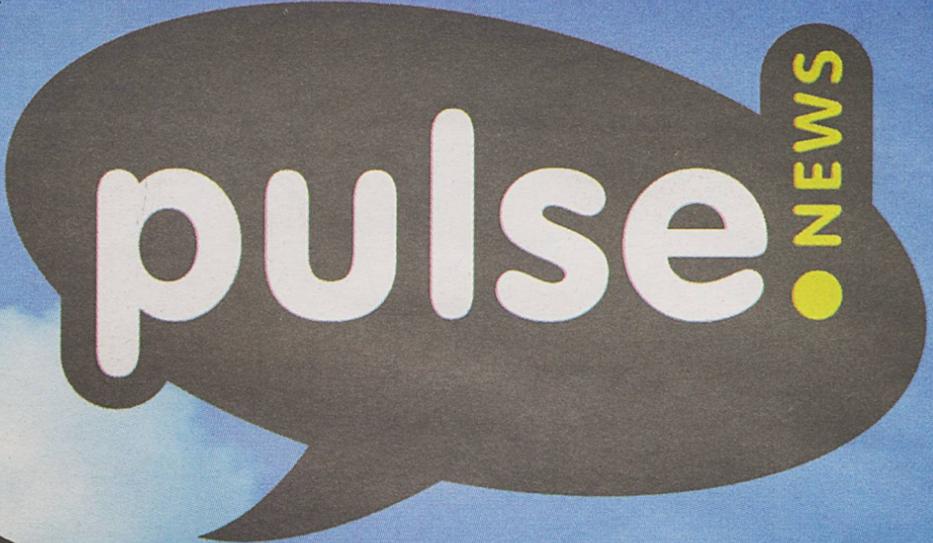
Manages the website. Works across sections to ensure the web exposure of *the Beaver*

PHOTOGRAPHY SUB-EDITOR

Manages photographers. Ensures the quality of photography. Uses high quality equipment and industry softwares.

Requirements:

No previous experience, only enthusiasm necessary. For further information email thebeaver.editor@lse.ac.uk



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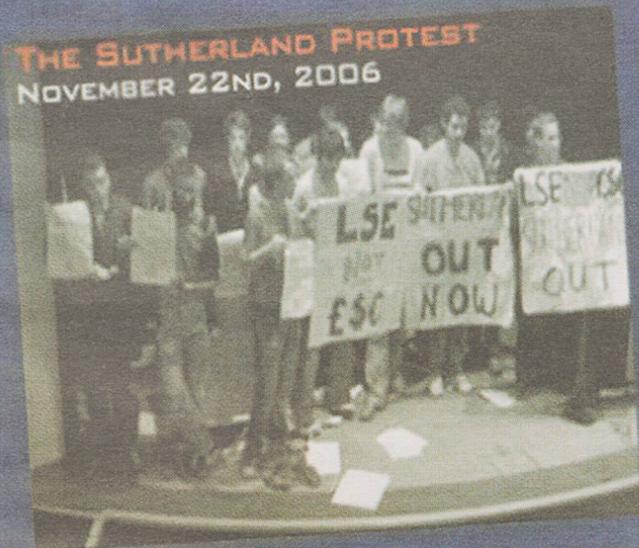
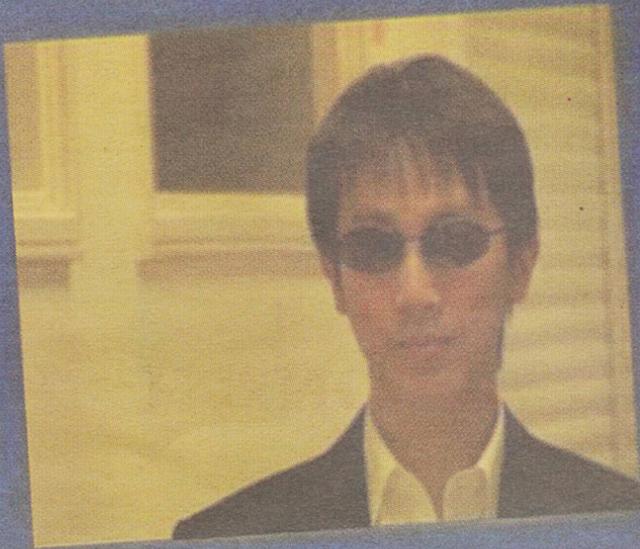
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Any style.

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Josh
Tendeter

Amid rumours that Jose Mourinho is set to take over at Anfield next season, it is clear that all is not well at Liverpool. The club's owners George Gillett and Tom Hicks have several differences of opinion with manager Rafa Benitez and are therefore starving him of transfer funds during this January window. Good. The man is delusional. Benitez has been in the job since the 2004-2005 season, a year which ended with the Reds lifting the Champions League Trophy. They rode their luck on the way to this title but nobody would deny that it is a considerable achievement. However, they also finished in 5th place in the Premiership behind Merseyside rivals Everton. Not good enough for a club of Liverpool's history. Since then, Rafa has spent ridiculous sums of money on (barring a few) average players in attempts to improve his side. This is the first sign of his delusional nature. The strike pair Peter Crouch and Dirk Kuyt who set him back a costly £18 million are perhaps the best example. He also spent £6.3 million on Fernando Morientes and was happy to sell England's best goalscorer Michael Owen for just £8 million, they also got a player with absolutely no talent in Antonio Nunez as part of the deal.

Benitez has in total spent approximately £120 million in his 3 and a half years in the job, a big outlay for a team that has never looked like mounting a serious title challenge

during his tenure. Rafa stated "There's a misunderstanding when people speak of the money Liverpool have spent" The misunderstanding being that he feels it is money well spent. Along with the money spent, he has come under constant attack for his rotation policy, a system which starts different players every week alongside his "untouchables" It

is with these "untouchables" (barring Steven Gerrard) that I have a major issue. Firstly, goalkeeper Pepe Reina is massively overrated. I distrust all Spanish goalkeepers due to their tendency to punch and their questionable decision-making. Reina isn't even the Spanish number 1. It also seems that people are all too quick to forget his absolutely

shocking performance against rivals Everton in which he gifted Andrew Johnson a goal. (I accept that as a Spurs fan, I can't say that we are doing any better in the goalkeeping department!) The other "untouchable" is Jamie Carragher, a man who retired from international football in protest that he wasn't first choice; only to realise that no

one gives a shit. Carragher has many plaudits, most crediting him for his amazing last ditch tackles. Its true, he does make goal-saving challenges, however he does this because he gets himself into positions where these kind of tackles are necessary through his poor positional sense, lack of pace and tendency to give the ball away. So overrated.

I'm not anti-Liverpool in any way, and just hope that a new manager will come in who can spend money wisely, doesn't underrate quality players or overrate average players. Only then, can Liverpool challenge for that increasingly elusive Premiership title.



The Punter

Time to bet against Boris!



Matthew
JCG
Partridge

Although I am going to focus more on sports this term, the 500 pound elephants (and donkeys) on the betting exchanges are clearly the Democratic and Republican nominations. Barring a major collapse by Clinton I believe that she'll win the nomination on the Democratic side simply because Barack Obama is too inexperienced. I would therefore suggest that you put some money on her to win at (56.5-57). The Republican contest is slightly more complex but my guess is that if John McCain wins Monday's Michigan primary he will almost certainly become the Republican nominee. If, however he loses to

Mitt Romney, the contest will become wide open once again and his chances will fall to about 55%. His price is currently (43.6-43.7) which represents value. However, the results of the primary in Michigan (which will have finished by the time you read this column) will mean that his price will move McCain's price substantially. My guess is that if McCain wins the primary anything below 80% represents value and if he loses anything lower than 30% is fair.

Back in London, the market on the contest for the mayor of London is hotting up. I am still going to go with my prediction that Ken Livingstone should win this contest comfortably, though not by a landslide. Frankly, I just cannot see Boris Johnson winning. My view is that Betfair's 1.66 on Livingstone is reasonable value.

There is quite a bit of football action on Betfair this

week. For the FA Cup I am going to advise you to bet on Deby to beat Sheffield Wednesday (2.68), Swindon to beat Barnet (2.5), Fulham to beat Bristol Rovers (2.04), Norwich to beat Bury (1.94), Swansea to beat Havant (1.6), Tramore to beat Hereford (2.64), Luton to beat Liverpool (34), Man City to beat West Ham (2) and Millwall to beat Wallsall (2.44) and Newcastle to beat Stoke (1.75). In the Tennents Cup I am going to tip Dundee to beat Clyde (1.72), Cowdenbeath to draw with Livingstone (3.95) and Raith Rovers to beat St Johnstone (6.4).

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.



Football

When The Fourths Met The Fifths



Josh Tendeter
and Sam
Tempest-
Keeping

LSE 5ths 0
LSE 4ths 0

Josh Tendeter caught up with Wednesday's Man of the Match; Keeper Sam Tempest-Keeping.

JT: Hi Sam! (waves)

STK: Hi Josh, thanks for the accolade of Man of the Match mate, I'd just to take this opportunity to thank first and foremost the Committee, without you none of this would have been possible and Rupert Guest would still be filling the e-mails with sub par banter.

JT: Before discussing the match, would you be willing to comment on the fitness of the 5th team? It seems that many have gained weight over the festive period, most notably Luke Thompson. Was this part of Captain Peter Greenall's tactics?

STK: Personally I'm in the shape of my life, the other day someone actually mistook me for Marius Pudzianowski, yet it would appear that yes; not all of the fifth team have followed such a course over the Christmas break. Rumour has it that Lion King looky-likey Mr Thompson was so distraught at the spectre of having his wisdom teeth removed that he went on a bender which included, several snakebites, a 36 mega multipack of McCoys, a wheel of edam and a Ginsters Sausage roll. Heir Greenall talked about maintaining our promotion push by showing temperance over the holidays but alas he failed to lead by example. The only food related element of the game plan which seemed

to pay off was Pumba's astute recognition of Al O'Brien's penchant for a Banter sandwich, being separated from his beloved filthies for a full three weeks has clearly taken its toll on dear old Alex and he became the focal point for our attack even playing alongside the notoriously shaky Andy Rogers.

JT: Ok then, on to the match. What were your expectations going into the game? Some feel that you really needed all three points, would you agree?

STK: Obviously with the table as it is three points would've really put us back in the thick of the title race. However with interview season drawing to a close, Knuckles off remand for allegedly attacking a group of fourteen year old girls with the mop he used to clean Chelmsford prison and myself once again proving to be perhaps the most underrated goal keeper in the FC, I feel we can beat anyone in this league. Yet if I am honest we would've taken a point before the game.

JT: Surely you are more appropriately rated than Mr Saville...I understand that someone in the 5th team leaked Pete Greenall's game-plan to opposition captain Alex 'Henry' O'Brien, do you think that you succeeded in your pre-match plan to mark vik Nayar and Josh Tendeter out of the game?

STK: Surreptitious gamesmanship has been endemic in our season thus far, we have been cheated by medic referees on numerous occasions, failed to be informed that we were actually making the trip to hell when we visited the Linford Christie sports ground and also been the victim of many of grounds man Steve's rain dance. If information was indeed leaked and I'm currently unaware of any rumours to this effect, then despite having

400 A-levels Alex O'Brizzle was unable to exploit his illicit information. I think we did a good job on Vic, who seemed disillusioned at the lack of punches being thrown but frankly Josh, you were pants. **JT: On behalf of the Committee, I would now like to remove your Man of the Match award and hand it to the first person I see, congratulations Mr Wright's Bar. It wasn't my greatest game Sam but I think average to poor would be more appropriate than "pants" Anyway, in the 1st half I felt that whilst the 5th team lacked cutting edge they were no doubt on top. Their style of play reminded me of a strikerless Wimbledon side under Joe Kinnear; with long-ball aplenty but no threat in front of goal. Would you agree?**

STK: This is a tactic that Greenall has unceremoniously christened, 'Holocaust football', derived from his well known love of the Nazis. While not being as easy on the eye as a certain Nick Hammond, it has proved very effective at putting the lesser teams to bed in our division where at times, artistry and craft goes out the window faster than a woman trying to escape the clutches of Andy Rogers. Yet we often revert to our more attacking style with quick wingers and industry in the middle when playing the top four, very much in the mould of Bristol City currently dominating the Championship. Although we are only usually able to produce this for thirty to forty-five minutes hence the need for plan B, or Plan H as the case may be.

JT: In the early minutes of the game, Josh Tendeter picked up a loose ball and went on a surging run towards goal. He was tackled illegally and maliciously from behind by Irish dynamo Jimmy Conran, do you

feel that he got away lightly with no booking for what could easily be a red-card offence? Do you think that maybe the nature of the occasion got to the referee and former 5th team player Sam Lehman and old allegiances returned?

STK: In big games, big players come to the fore. Although replays showed the challenge to be in the horror bracket, I think Jimmy made a genuine attempt to play the ball, one has to remember that he grew up in the UCD Super league, a place not for the faint hearted or clean shaven. On the refereeing issue I think Mr Lehman had an exemplary game.

JT: Zameer had a great chance to break the deadlock after bringing the ball under control in the 4th team six yard box, only to wait an eternity to strike the ball. Do you feel that playing up front with Clockwork Saph has rubbed off on him?

STK: The board have been questioning the 8 million shelled out on Benkreira but myself and the rest of the management have faith that the goals will come, its just a matter of finding more dwarfs to wind the clock during games. Zamo has lost his scoring touch of late but I may have to shoulder the blame as I did subject him to an over zealous stamp during the warm up a few weeks back, he's never been the same, I feel bad.

JT: Liang 'Convict' Zhang had lots of long distance shots early on, did you think that he would at some point trouble the keeper? Or like me did you fear for the Berrylands wildlife behind the goal, in the sky and most importantly around the corner flags?

STK: The fifth team mantra is never have a go at someone for having a dig, yet if this results in the digging of a grave, hold

fire.

JT: You must have been bored in goal for that first half.

STK: So bored I resorted to imagining Greenall in speedo, swimming cap and goggles, a dream which may be realised in Calella.

JT: I think that he once went swimming at the Cally Pool before realising the pace was too quick, I look forward to seeing him practicing his breaststroke in a pool of vodka-burn in Avenue! If you describe Peter Greenall's half-time team talk, I will enlighten you as to what Big Gay Al O'Brizzle had to say.

STK: Punish arrogance, no mistakes, has anyone got any deep heat my arse is killing me.

JT: An interesting one! Al went for the "Sit down lads, that was the fucking shittiest half of fucking football we have fucking played all year lads, come on lads that was shit. We need to get a fucking grip of this fucking game, we can not lose this fucking match. Seriously lads, look how fucking fat they are, we should be running rings round them lads. Look at Thompson, he is bigger than Greenall. We have to win those fucking headers boys, Al's up!" approach. Following those talks, there is no doubt the 4ths came out the stronger side in the 2nd half. Were you surprised to finally get a touch of the ball?

STK: Not really, I'm accustomed to playing my role at the beginning of the second half where we usually try our hardest to throw games away. One just has to grin and bare in the same way the Second's do all game every game.

JT: Poor old Lerner! George 'write the theme-tune, sing the theme-tune' De-Ste-Croix was largely disappointing but his set-pieces were threatening. The one that sticks out in my mind most was his devilish

free-kick delivery which Zhang headed towards his own goal's top corner, only to be palmed away by Sam Tempest Keeping. Personally I think he should have caught the ball and avoided conceding the corner. What do you think?

STK: Fuck off.

JT: Fuck you, you inbred Bristol bastard. Although chances were few and far between in this game, with the ball spending most of its time in a separate game of volleyball between inbred bristolians Tempest-Keeping and Broom, it was an unlikely man who came closest. Former 5th team fringe player and now leader among men in the 4th team Andy 'Convert Roj!' Rogers with a looping header was denied by the crossbar after having Keeping in all kinds of trouble. I know you would never make a decision on your own life rashly, but surely if Rogers had scored the winner, suicide would have been the only option?

STK: Yes, I have to agree whole heartedly there, when that ball was drifting over my head my life flashed before my eyes, losing my virginity on a toilet floor, waking up in hospital to the news I had lost the blood flow to my heart, seeing Al get undressed in 1.8 seconds.

JT: In the end, the 0-0 scoreline flattered both sides. Luke Thompson commented "what an anti-climax. True enough. It was however a fair result, with neither side deserving the win. Where does this leave the 5th team and what are your hopes and aspirations for the remainder of the season?"

STK: Every game is a must win now, we have set ourselves high standards unlike Sir Guest, and have to stick to them. Like my beloved Bristol City promotion is a minimum target, with the championship firmly in our sights.
JT: Bullshit.

Don on your gym knickers for old skool frivolities and drinks prices...

ReAU Union Party

30th January 2008

The Three Tuns

N.B. £30 Lateness is Rudeness

7:00 onwards



Rafa off!
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15.01.08 thebeaver.sports@lse.ac.uk

Beaver sports

“I’m Not Gonna Lie”



Charlie Wheeler

We were blessed with some really great snow considering it was so early in the season, which managed to last really well for most of the week only getting a little icy in the last couple of days, but who am I kidding, nobody wants to know about the snow conditions. Suffice it to say that the snow was excellent.

So now let us move on to some more interesting news, all of which I might add is entirely unconfirmed, but almost certainly all happened despite whatever alternative claims those involved may make. I like to work with the theory that if you have heard it on the grapevine then it is always and without exception a fact. Mr ‘let’s-take-this-to-the-toilet’ Charlie is worthy of mention in this section for several reasons but the incident I would most like to draw attention to is him having sex with an anonymous SOAS girl (maybe Charlie knows her name but I doubt it), over the sink in their bathroom while the Gentlemanly Tom was vomiting into the toilet less than a metre away. Tom in fact was so ill that he failed to make it out on the last night and missed his numerous fines, a fact that I feel needs to be corrected.

Also worthy of note in this section is the thier Ginger roommate who sprayed vomit all over the aforementioned bathroom before trying to hose it away with the showerhead. Unfortunately for her the



bathroom had no drain to speak of resulting in an inch deep layer of watery vomit, which she denies any knowledge of. She was also good enough to accompany Gabs home one evening and escorted him all the way to his apartment. This is an incident which Jamcaster experienced first hand, as he was forced to listen to the subsequent sounds of backs rubbing against the bathtub. Unfortunately, she didn’t have the good sense to leave that evening but instead stayed the night in order to enjoy the walk-of-shame to its full potential the next morning.

Gabs is worthy of note also for the one night that he failed to make it out, choosing

instead to pass out in the room of Coker, Kinneir, Boshnakova et al. Anna was woken by the sounds of Gabs stumbling around and then urinating. Reasonably, she asked Gabs where he was relieving himself, to which his slurred response was “everywhere”.

Dan P is also worthy of note for his attempted peace-keeping during an altercation between LSE and Bournemouth Polytechnic for which he received two punches to the face from a sovereign sporting Neanderthal. The result was several stitches the next day, but don’t worry Dan, the ladies love scars.

Unfortunately, having recovered from his assault Dan then took a massive fall while

skiing during which his ski failed to release and his knee was officially ruined.

And the injuries didn’t stop there: Jack E, slightly short of change, tried to liberate a can of coke from Le Kebab, but was rapidly apprehended by the owner who retrieved the coke and restored Karma by kicking Jack in the head. Wheel Barrow took Charlie on in a ‘game’ of knuckles which turned a bit bloody the same night as he burnt his hand doing Sambuca shots. Marina’s wrist got contorted, Heath’s pride got smashed, Tom’s forehead was used as an ash tray. Frew’s liver was perforated, Gaby dribbled her dignity down her top and Ed H’s girlfriend Francesca got

a face full when trying to help an inebriated and belligerent Ed down a pitch black slope. At the same time a blood wagon had to rescue Danny after he got drunk on Raclette and passed out on the side of the mountain.

Jamcaster, the wannabe alpha of the trip was a mess from the beginning. He took to throwing ski poles at windows, claiming every poor unsuspecting girl fancied him, and trying to push people over all in the vain attempt to look more macho. However, he was exposed as the anti-alpha when he made a habit out of rescuing damsels in distress (namely a crying Hazel, off-piste and on precipice in an avalanche haven). What he should have done, as Tom would frequently encourage was, ‘I’m not gonna lie mate, I’d just leave them ski-less, pole-less, off-piste at the side of a cliff. With both their legs broken. Yeah. Fucking awesome. Kill it.’

Raph deserves a mention for being, well, generally alpha. Voted the most ‘man-crushed’, he fought off (literally) the boys (good one Heath – “you’re like a ninety pound guy”). He also introduced some manly linguistics, deigned favoured boys with excessive high-fiving, became the man judge and authority on all fights and romances, and generally raised the men’s Man Game. That is, until he felt compelled to move into a girl’s apartment by his obsessive-

compulsive need for hygiene. And so, ‘Ralpha’ was surpassed by the real Alpha of the trip – Bennett.

Rumour has it, Tom shagged a different girl every night of the week in public, in private, in ditches, in toilettes, in clubs, against car doors, sometimes whilst eating his daily crepe, sometimes while talking about the footie to the lads – “Bendover!” Bennett did it everywhere. On top of that he beat up numerous infidels, beat his chest, roared a lot, and generally scared the shit out of everyone. This all culminated in an ‘Alpha-Off’ on the tamest night of the week at the bowling alley which saw Raph’s title snatched by King Pin Bennett. The night also saw in some Davies Rainbow Vom (again).

Asbo displayed all the characteristics necessary in a president and true leader of men. His finest moment was having just left London, lecturing everybody who would listen on the importance of looking after your buddy and not vomiting on the coach, rapidly followed by him vomiting and then realising that Tom B, his buddy, had been left on the ferry while our coaches departed. Asbo and Aleks are also guilty of having had sex in a bubble lift, as are Russ and Mel, although it should be noted, not all at the same time.

That just about sums it up really.



“If you heard it on the grapevine then it is always and without exception a fact”