

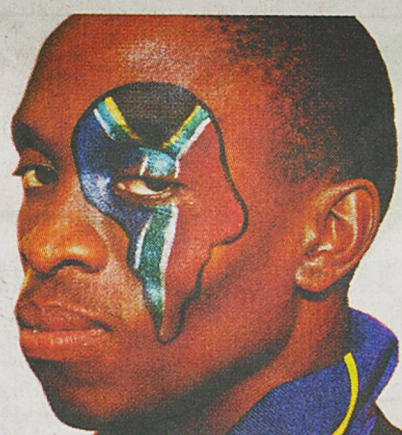


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The Beaver

28 September 2010
Newspaper of the
London School of Economics
Students' Union
thebeaveronline.co.uk

LSE rankings reveal a mixed picture

- **86th best university in the world**
- **4th best in social sciences and management**

Vivek Kotecha

The LSE has dropped to 86th in the Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings from a position of 67th in 2009. The fall in the world rankings, for the 5th year in a row, is the result of a change in methodology in 2007 and 2010, according to the LSE.

LSE's fall is not reflected across all the league tables with the QS World University Rankings rating LSE's social science

and management departments as 4th best in the world. While the Sunday Times UK university league table ranked LSE as 5th best in the country an improvement from last year.

Since the change in methodology in 2007 the LSE has fallen dramatically in the THE world rankings which it claims is systematically biased against specialist social sciences institutions. The THE editors accepted in 2009 that their methods penalised specialised institutions such as the LSE. This year THE aimed for a fairer comparison using their new data provid-

ers, Thomson Reuters.

Despite the change in methodology, LSE dropped in the rankings along with many other UK universities after Thomson Reuters corrected a perceived bias in favour of them.

Robin Hoggard, Director of External Relations stating the LSE's response to the recent results: "None of the rankings designed to list the top universities in the world - Shanghai Jiaotong University, Times Higher/Thomson Reuters or QS - properly reflects LSE's position at the forefront of teaching and research in the

» continues on pages 4 and 5

SO, JUST HOW GOOD IS THE LSE?

- ❖ Student Satisfaction
- ❖ Graduate prospects
- ❖ Admissions criteria

Students' Union sets alight fees-freezing campaign

Sachin Patel

The LSE Students' Union has announced that its flagship campaign for the coming year will be to secure the freezing of all tuition fees at the School for the next three years.

With the findings of the Browne Review imminently expected to recommend raising the cap on undergraduate fees to £7,000 for home students, the Students' Union's Sabbatical Officers (Sabbs) are to lobby the School to keep all fees - for home and overseas students, on both undergraduate and postgraduate courses - at their current level.

The campaign, which is being planned and supported by all four of the present Sabbs, is said to have been the brainchild of Education Officer Ashok Kumar, who co-ordinated a similar campaign while studying at the University of Madison-Wisconsin.

The provision of such a campaign was alluded to in several of the Sabbatical Officers' election manifestos, published in week seven of Lent Term. Charlotte Gerada, General Secretary, stated that she would "campaign against tuition fee hikes" and "protect services from cuts", while Kumar suggested that he would "build, organise and mobilise students to fight for change".

The Sabbs hope to develop a broad-based campaign that they believe will reflect the views of the majority of students at the School. Though all four admitted that there was likely to be a range of

opinions on the issue within the student body, and that they did not wish to appear paternalistic, they see the campaign as an opportunity to adopt an educative approach, and to encourage more students to engage with the Students' Union. This is reflected in the far-reaching scope of the campaign, which claims that the School's "massive" surplus leaves it in sufficiently comfortable finances to be able to freeze fees for all students.

They stated: "Our international and postgraduate fees are some of the highest in the country," which had led them to take "the principled position to run a united campaign".

At present, home undergraduate students make up 27 per cent of the student population, but contribute only 8 per cent of the total fee income. If the policy proposed by the "Freeze the Fees" campaign is enacted, this discrepancy would not disappear, but the School would be unable to increase the extent to which overseas students are said to "subsidise" home students.

With regard to the financial justification for the proposed policy, the Sabbatical Officers claim that even in the worst possible scenario in terms of government funding, if fees were frozen for the next ten years, the School would still maintain a 3-4 per cent surplus.

» continues on page 3



Above: Student demonstrations in London's West End, against fee hikes.

Left: Campaign literature, printed in advance of the start of term.



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The Beaver

Established in 1949
Issue No. 728

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

Place your expectations in the bins provided

Whether this is the first time you've opened the Beaver, or you've binned it many a time, welcome. The newspaper of the LSE Students' Union exists to inform, educate and entertain. We aim to serve the needs and wants of the School's student body, but we are not the mouthpiece of the Students' Union.

There is a penguin on Houghton Street; this year's Sabbatical Officers intend to use it not only as an emblem, but as a weapon. A weapon in the war against fee hikes, student debt and Lord Browne. It proposes to cap all course fees at LSE at their current level, for the next three years. As a world-leading university, at

least in its own eyes, this would be a bold and unprecedented decision. The Sabbs' justification for the campaign is that the LSE's "massive" surplus would be well spent subsidising future students. It may not be as simple as that.

At this early stage in the year, this newspaper's concerns lie not with the campaign's substance, but with the process associated with it. Student activism should be led by students, not by those who purport to represent them. No opinions on campus have been sought - this campaign rests on the assumption that "it's what students will want".

The leaflets have been printed, the arguments have been made, now the campaign awaits supporters.

This issue also deals with the LSE's position within national and international league tables. The results are a mixed bag (details of which can be found on page 4), which has led the School's Senior Management to jump to its own defence. While this newspaper takes league tables with a pinch of salt, there are undeniably areas for improvement, not least student satisfaction and teaching quality.

We look to a year of greater engagement with all parts of the LSE community, and a new openness towards all contributors, be they first-time writers or seasoned hacks.

Enjoy a year of sex and scholarship - the Beaver can help with both.

Collective

Ajay Agarwal; Shrayans Agarwal; Raidev Akoi; Ahmed Alani; Hasib Baber; Fadhil Bakeer-Markar; Sean Graham Baker; Pria Bakhshi; Vishal Banerjee; Ramsey Ben-Achour; Alex Blance; Julian Boys; Nathan Briant; Ruby Buckley; James Bull; Georgina Butler; Bobby Cee; Beth Cherryman; Maitiu Corbett; Oliver Courtney; Tomas Da-Costa; Louis Dailencourt; George de-Ste-Croix; Richard Dewey; Sara Downes; Cathy Druce; Hannah Dyson; Leon Fellas; Katy Galbraith; Ben Grabiner; Siddharth George; Justin Gest; Ira Goldstein; Mira Hammad; Aula Hariri; Poorna Harjani; Yisum Heneghon; Charlie Hodgson; Tahiya Islam; Harriet Jackson; Judith Jacob; Felipe Jacome; Alex Jones; Megan Jones; Naeem Kapadia; Sam Tempest Keeping; Pooja Kesavan; Mazida Khatun; Alizeh Kohari; Marion Koob; Vivek Kotecha; Anna Krausova; Ashma Kunde; Dominic Lam; Phyllis Lui; Nizar Manek; Filipe Henriques Martins; Jamie Mason; Duncan McKenna; Nitya Menon; Anna Mikeda; Utsa Mukherjee; Aditi Nangia; Brett Noble; Ryan Ong; Kyle Packer; Anup Patel; Jaynesh Patel; Rajan Patel; Sachin Patel; Ahmed Peerbux; Alex Peters-Day; Ben Anthony Phillips; Ben Phillips; Chloe Pieters; Danielle Priestley; Rahim Rahemtulla; Anjali Raval; Ricky Ren; Joe Sammut; Thienthai Sangkhaphanthanon; Amrita Saraogi; Katerina Soukeras; Jonathan Storey; Andre Tartar; Su Wan Tan; Kerry Thompson; Molly Tucker; Mark Twyford; Vladimir Unkovski-Korica; Aliabbas Virani; Simon Wang; Joseph Watson; Jonathan Weir; Chris Westgarth; Matthew Willis; Chris Wilkins; Oliver Wiseman; Natalie Wong; David Woodbridge; Daniel Yates; Alex Young; Calum Young; Sofia Zabolotskih; Mehek Zafar; Sadir Zayadine

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

Collective Chair

collective@thebeaveronline.co.uk

ED MILIBAND

The Beaver notes with an approving nod that an LSE alumnus now leads the Labour Party. We wish him the best of luck in this fresh challenge.

The Beaver uses pictures from flickr.com which have been issued under a Creative Commons license.

A THOUGHT FOR FRESHERS' WEEK

"A original idea. That can't be hard. The Library must be full of them."

If you are interested in teaching, have a commitment to social equality and a passion for your degree subject.....then LSE Students Union would love to hear from you! This year, LSESU is running a Widening Participation Program; aiming to help socioeconomically less advantaged young people discover more about educational opportunities.

We are looking for a team of committed volunteers to create and deliver interactive workshops, on subjects taught here at LSE, to pupils in local secondary schools. Please email su.communitywelfare@lse.ac.uk for more information or if you would like to get involved.



"build, organise and mobilise students to fight for change"

continued from page 1

Citing the £1m efficiency savings the School has already made in teaching and learning, the Sabbs have argued that "we are in strong financial position", and that the reduction in revenue in real terms would have a "negligible impact" on the LSE's surplus.

The organisers of the campaign also wish it to be seen as a model for student activism. The Education Officer has stated that this is to be run in a grassroots manner, although this has been called into question owing to the lack of student consultation. Informational leaflets have already been printed, and a YouTube video created, prior to its first airing in a demo-

cratic arena such as the Union General Meeting (UGM). Further, the Sabbs admitted that this proposal would not be "applicable as a template" in most other universities, which have substantially different financial models. Instead, they hope that if their proposals are enacted, LSE will be seen as "rediscovering its progressive roots" and setting "responsible" fee levels.

Responding to claims that undercutting the fees of other similarly prestigious institutions would tarnish the perception of the LSE brand, Activities & Development Officer Charlie Glyn stated: "Lower fees might change people's expectations of the course", but that this would be outweighed by the "better value-for-money" the LSE would represent.

The School declined to offer a substantive comment regarding the campaign, stating that "it would not be

sensible" to do so before the findings of the Browne Review are published. The official statement received by the Beaver referred to the "sharply reduced Government financial support" against which the review is set to announce its recommendations.

Responding to the School's statement, the Education Officer said: "Even in our worst-case scenario the School will continue to have a 3-4 per cent surplus," and that it would be a "red herring" for the Senior Management to suggest that teaching quality would be compromised in such a situation.

Furthermore, Glyn asserted: "Higher fees do not necessarily translate to a better student experience," and that, as such, any improvements made have been due to changes in the structure of the Students' Union. Restructuring of the back-office facilities and logistics had "not required

additional funding" but had contributed to better student engagement.

Moving forward, the Sabbs hope to present the campaign to students at the first Union General Meeting,



Stills from a promotional video for the "Freeze the Fees" campaign, produced by the Sabbatical Officers in advance of the start of Michaelmas Term. The full video can be viewed online on YouTube.

FREEZE THE FEES - CAMPAIGN DIARY

November 4th-10th: Freeze Festival
November 10: Mass Campus Rally and NUS/UCU National Demo

Houghton Street Direct...



Keep an eye out for your four new Sabbatical Officers: from left, Charlie Glyn (Activities & Development), Ashok Kumar (Education), Charlotte Gerada (General Secretary) and Hero Austin (Community & Welfare). The team hope to engage students "in the fight of a lifetime", and pledge to "echo the student voice on important decision-making bodies." We'll be monitoring their progress throughout the year.

SU website relaunched at last

Nicola Alexander

The LSE Website relaunch, a work in progress since 2008, has finally been launched in time for Freshers' 2010.

Dan Sheldon was responsible for the initial redesign as the Communication Officer in 2008; however, complications in securing a reliable website design company have prolonged the process. Despite the two year delays, the SU have said that no additional costs were incurred. According to the new website, the entire overhaul was sponsored by the LSE Annual Grant.

Thus far the website has been given mixed reviews by students, old and new alike. It seems that the core problem for the incoming LSE class has been that the website has not been updated regularly.

Neeraj Mashru, a first year, has commented that: "The website was updated too late, especially the orientation events section". For Freshers' looking to book 'Freshers' Festival' events this week, the delay has been "inconvenient".

In addition to the site maintenance problems, several features of the website are not functioning. On the main page, one white box in the top left hand corner is labelled both 'login' and 'search' however, cannot be used to search the site. Furthermore, unlike the SU website last year, there is no 'comment' facility so students are unable to air their remarks. Several societies have also raised concern over their society write-ups on the 'activities' page.

The Beaver's Design Editor has criticised the design of the website, arguing that there is "a confusion of fonts, with four or five different ones on the same page."

In spite of these teething problems with the website, several students have commented on the positive aspects of the website. The efficiency of the website has been praised. Indeed, Mashru said "Once I found the events, booking was easy". The new feature on the 'activities' page that enables visitors to search societies in specific categories such as 'careers', 'academic' and 'charity and campaigns' has helped students to better search their interests. One second year student has said: "The website is much more user friendly. A massive improvement on the last one. There is in fact more information on the website."



News in brief

FERGIE ON CAMPUS

Niall Ferguson, world renowned historian, will be a visiting Professor at the LSE this academic year. Previously a Tisch Professor of Harvard University, Ferguson will hold the Philippe Roman Chair in International History at the LSE. Professor Ferguson will be lecturing an unexamined course on Western Ascendancy for postgraduate students and he will not be teaching any classes on the subject. According to the LSE website, Professor Ferguson is scheduled to give a public lecture on October 18th.

OLD BUILDING - STILL OLD

The Old Building has undergone refurbishment since mid-August and is not set to be fully completed until the first few weeks of October. The main architect has delayed the process by changing the initial plans several times throughout the refurbishment. One project assistant has said that the construction work is largely "aesthetic" with floors and ceiling being redone on the ground, first and third floors. The team are also working on improving the electrical wiring of the building.

LOST? IT'S THE SIGNS

In conjunction with the ongoing refurbishment, LSE has updated all room labelling and signage in the Old Building. The Mezzanine part of the Old Building, formally known as the A block, has been relabelled entirely and is now the M block. Students studying Accounting and Finance modules will be most affected by the changes. In response to general confusion over room location, all rooms are now labelled with both building abbreviation and room reference. D202 in Clement House, for example, is now be CHD202.

I-ROOM IN THE LIBRARY

The LSE Library have launched the I-room scheme this week whereby students and staff can lend laptops whilst they are in the Library. The 60 laptops available for use are in addition to approximately 500 computers in the library. The laptops will be stationed in large blue charging boxes on the first, second and third floors. Security already in place to prevent book theft will be employed to keep the laptops safe, according to the Library. At time of print, the library was awaiting delivery of the laptops.

SU FIRM ON FOOD

The SU is taking a strong stance against non-SU purchased food in The Three Tuns pub. This follows UGM motions in previous years, such as last years 'I want to eat my kebab in the NAB', that campaigned for students to be able to eat their own food in public places on campus. The poster outside The Three Tuns states simply 'No non SU food in the Tuns' with red crosses through logos of popular LSE student eateries including Starbucks and Wasabi, in an effort to encourage students to buy any food from the Tuns instead.

SIMON SCHAMA-ING AS EVER

Simon Schama dropped into campus last Wednesday to promote his new book, *Scribble, Scribble*. His talk ranged across a variety of subjects, from William Hazlitt to his Cambridge professor J.H Plumb. According to one member of the audience "Simon is always an entertaining speaker and was at his charismatic best, and while he chose to conduct his talk seated he let his arms to do the work his legs would have done had he been standing."

SOCIETY BUDGET CHANGES

Societies have seen their budgetary processes change this year, leading to some committees being provisionally allocated less money than last year. The Students' Union has said that this is not a result of lack of funding; in fact, they have been keen to stress that the same pool of funds is available in total. The Activities & Development Officer, Charlie Glyn, explained that the discrepancies between budget submissions and allocations were due to premature submissions that were "not detailed enough", or because some societies had not used their entire budget allocation last year.

So, just how good

Welcome to the LSE, the 86th best university in the world.

“LSE is at the forefront of teaching and research”

» continued from page 1

social sciences. The details differ, but all are biased in one way or another in favour of the so-called STEM subjects: the natural sciences, medicine, engineering and so on. None fairly reflects the strengths of small, specialist, non-STEM institutions such as LSE - or for that matter a number of other specialist social science universi-

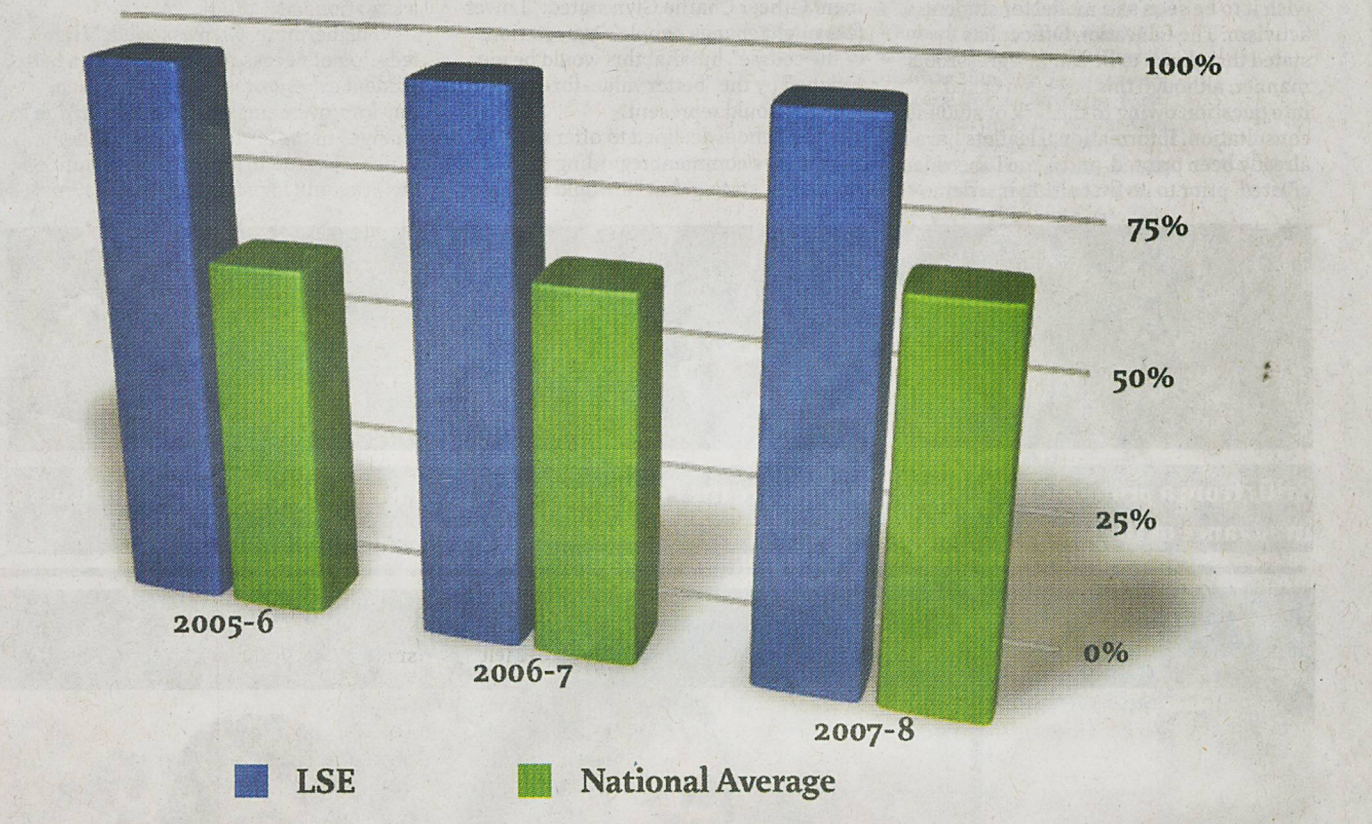
ties around the world. It is a great disappointment that while the Times Higher and Thomson Reuters acknowledged this bias earlier this year and undertook to correct it, their new table has signally failed to do so. We will continue to work with them to encourage them to do better.”
LSE has fared badly in other league tables unrelated to the THE, such as the Guardian and QS World University Rankings. Whether the fall in rankings will impact admissions remains to be seen.

“
We have narrowed the gap but we still need to do more
- Janet Hartley, Pro Director of Teaching and Learning
”

2010 Rank	2009 Rank	Institution
1	2	University of Cambridge
2	1	Harvard University
3	3	Yale University
4	4	UCL
5	9	MIT
6	5=	University of Oxford
7	5=	Imperial College London
8	7	University of Chicago
9	10	CalTech
10	8	Princeton University
80	67=	LSE

2010 Rank	Institution
1	Harvard University
2	CalTech
3	MIT
4	Stanford University
5	Princeton University
6	University of Cambridge
7	University of Oxford
8	UC-Berkeley
9	Imperial College London
10	Yale University
86	LSE

Top: QS World University Rankings - LSE drops thirteen places and is ranked 80th
Above: Times Higher Education Supplement World University



Percentage of LSE students going into graduate status employment, compared with the national average (Source: LSE Press Office)

Are you worthy?

• LSE introduces A* admission criteria for entry in 2011

Nicola Alexander

LSE is only one of six universities to add the new A* grade to A-level Admissions Criteria for entry in 2011. Following the lead of Cambridge, UCL, Warwick and Imperial who made conditional offers that included the A* grade this year, LSE and Bristol have introduced A* into admissions criteria for several courses.
The A* grade, awarded to students who achieve over 90% in a given subject, was introduced in 2010 to help better distinguish between top scoring students. This reform, considered by some to be the landmark educational policy in a decade, was floated after criticism from University Admission directors that the A-level system made it difficult to select students who displayed the most academic potential.

The universities of Cambridge and Oxford have already introduced their own entrance exams. As a university with the vast majority of applicants studying A-levels, it is hoped that the new A* criteria

will filter demand for the most competitive courses.

So far LSE has added A* to the standard offer for Economics, Maths and Law programmes for 2011 entry. The LSE website now states that the standard offer for students applying for BSc Economics will be A*AA, with an A* in maths. Similarly the standard LLB Law degree offer will be A*AA. It is unclear as to whether the LSE will introduce A* criteria to other degree programmes in the future.

LSE's decision to include A* in criteria has come under criticism as early statistics suggest that the new grade favours private school students. Indeed, the Independent Schools Council (ISC) have released figures that show that over one third of all A* grades were awarded to private school pupils whilst private schools count for only one sixth.

There is concern that the launch of the A* grade will favour more privileged students, perhaps widening the gap between private school and state school intake. In previous years LSE has had to defend its state schools intake. In the face of this

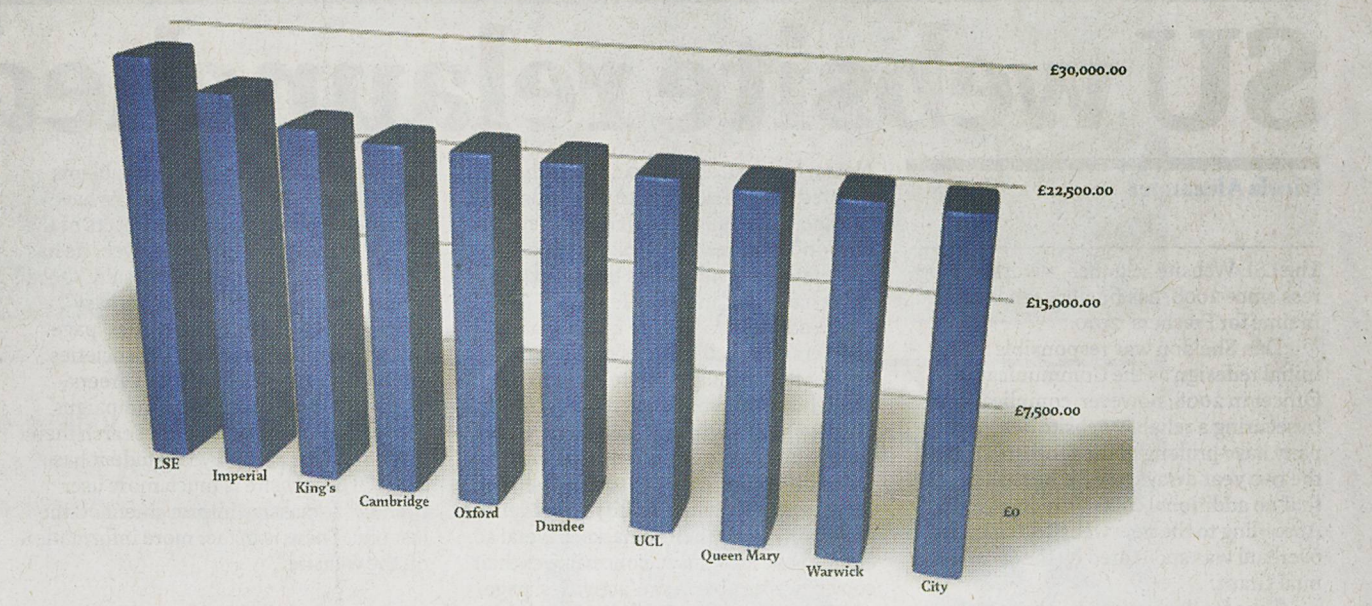
have commented that the background of each student will be taken into consideration before offers are extended.

Leading academic institutions, such as Oxford, have also suggested that the additional pressure of A* conditional offers may act as a disincentive for bright students. Whilst the very top performing students in each school may still apply for places that have A* admission criteria, intelligent students expecting straight As at A-level may choose not to apply.

However, the structure of the modular A-level system is such that students can take units for some subjects, such as Maths, in June of Year 12. This will allow these pupils to re-take modules in January of year 13, essentially meaning that achieving the A* will not come down to performance on one exam at the end of the year but rather exams taken over two years. This may alleviate the perceived anxiety.

Selina Palmer, accepted for Economics at LSE in 2010 said; "I'm pleased that my offer came before the introduction of the A*. Even though I achieved A*s at A-level, I would not like to have had the pressure of scoring at least 90% in any subject."

The implications of the change in admission criteria will soon be felt, as an entire generation of LSE-hopefuls prepare UCAS forms this month.



Average starting salary for graduates at LSE and other leading universities - for comparison, LSE gradu-

Is it the LSE?

Surprise rise in student satisfaction

• School still lags behind other Russell Group universities

Vivek Kotecha

Student satisfaction at the LSE rose to 80% this year halting the downward slide in scores since 2007. The rise has contributed to LSE's improvement in certain university rankings such as the Sunday Times. However the gap in student satisfaction between LSE and its main rivals the Russell Group universities (for example: UCL, Cambridge, Oxford) remains large with many scoring extremely highly in the 90th percentile.

The satisfaction scores were from the National Student Survey (NSS), a survey of all final year degree students studying at institutions in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The survey asks for students' opinions on the quality of their degree programmes across seven different categories. The press use the results to compare institutions and the results have an impact on LSE's position in league tables. This year 56% of eligible LSE students completed the survey.

Historically the LSE has performed poorly in the NSS with overall satisfaction scores of 76% (2008) and 77% (2007) in previous years far below the UK average of 83% and low enough to place the LSE at the bottom of the Russell Group.

Furthermore students have poorly rated areas such as Teaching and Academic Support in the past with scores of 76% and 66% respectively. This year Teaching and Academic Support have improved scores of 81% and 71% respectively but still far below the UK averages of 84% and 75%.

The poor performance in these areas in previous years was one of the reasons why LSE established the Teaching Task Force (TTF) in 2007 aiming to improve the educational experience of all LSE students. Many of the TTF's recommendations were introduced in 2009 however the students surveyed may not have felt many of their effects given their recent introduction.

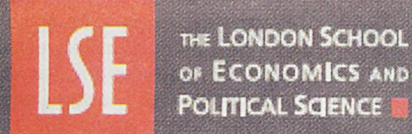
Professor Janet Hartley, LSE's Pro Director of Teaching and Learning said: "I am very pleased that the NSS results have

improved, and in particular I am pleased about the improvement in the sections on 'teaching on my course' and 'academic support'. I think the Teaching Task Force has led to a greater focus on teaching throughout the School and that is beginning to have an impact. We have narrowed the gap between us and our competitors but we still need to do more. The Academic Board agreed a set of proposals concerning feedback and assessment in June, and my main priority this year is to oversee their implementation."

The LSESU General Secretary's, Charlotte Gerada, response to the results was: "After years of dropping in rates of overall student satisfaction, LSE has finally seen an improvement in 2010 which has definitely plastered smiles around campus. Despite our 4% increase, I'd say we have little to celebrate or be smug about. LSE's institutional brand boasts our role in the global arena as a world-renown, world-class institution, providing an educational experience of the highest class. Yet, repeatedly, the LSE desperately attempts to scramble and claw

its way up the NSS ladder – ending up at a miserable position, wallowing below our institutional counterparts. The areas that the LSE has improved on substantially – namely teaching – is something that I'd like to highlight that our SU lobbied and campaigned for – evidence that the student voice can and should be heard. So, I do wholeheartedly commemorate the outcomes of the Teaching Taskforce, headed by Janet Hartley in response to the severe issues that the SU brought to light. Safe to say, if the School wants to improve overall satisfaction, core areas – like teaching and feedback - definitely need additional investment, resource and focus."

“
I'd say we have little to celebrate or be smug about
- Charlotte Gerada, General Secretary
”



events

“I encourage you to attend LSE's public events – your chance to hear lectures by prestigious speakers from across the world”

Howard Davies, director, LSE

LSE events are free to attend. To make sure you don't miss out on the next big public lecture follow 'LSEpublicevents' on Twitter or visit lse.ac.uk/events to sign up to our newsletter.

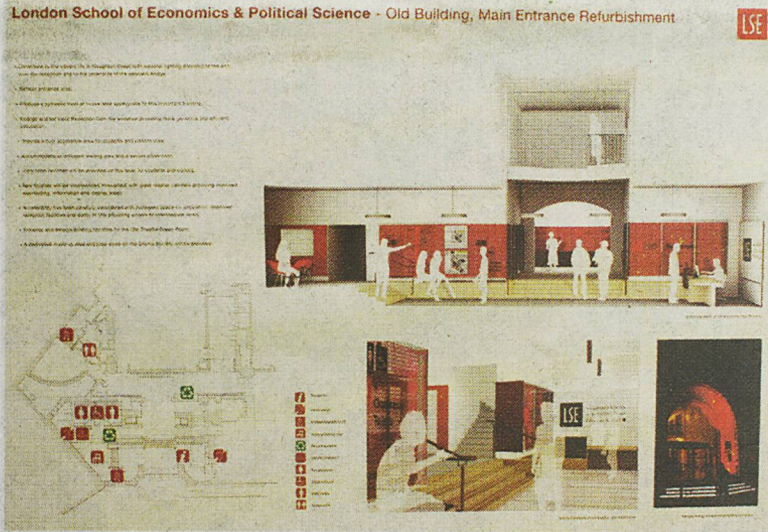


Not the welcome you were expecting...



These were the scenes in the Old Building reception on Monday. The changes are said to be "mainly aesthetic", but we found exposed wiring, boarded-up panelling and construction equipment still on display

London School of Economics & Political Science - Old Building, Main Entrance Refurbishment



LSE packs summer with public lectures

Shrina Poojara

As part of **Growth Week 2010**, the International Growth Centre's (IGC) largest conference to date, the LSE hosted a series of six talks. The IGC promotes sustainable economic growth in developing countries by providing advice on demand-led policy based on frontier research.

The series opened with a lecture entitled **Managing Natural Resource Rents: China and Africa**, presented by Professor Paul Collier, focusing on China's strategy of negotiating deals in which resources are exchanged for infrastructure. He raised the core issue of whether these trades are mutually beneficial or a new variant of African exploitation.

Other highlights of the series included the talk by Professor Chang-Tai Hsieh, Professor of Economics at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business, entitled **Industrial Productivity**. He was joined by a distinguished panel to discuss the sources of industrial productivity growth, drawing on the experience of several developing countries.

The series concluded with the discussion entitled **Domestic Resource Mobilisation and Growth**, led by a panel of policymakers and Joel Slemrod, one of Michigan University's leading economists. The panel members considered the importance of and challenges to domestic resource mobilisation, each presenting a different perspective on the key issues.

Professor Costas Markides presented the first talk of the series entitled **Business Strategy in a Global Age**, focusing on the concept of business strategy and how it has been challenged by an increasingly interconnected world. Professor Markides discussed the increasing importance of "creativity and innovation" to achieving success and the value of "thinking strategically" in times of high-pressure and how to gain the emotional commitment of one's employees.

Michael Cox, professor of International Relations at the LSE, gave a talk entitled **Barack Obama and the End of the American Empire**. Professor Cox presented the connection between Obama's election and the economic situation in the United States. The core insights of the lecture was the impact of the "turbulent times" in which President Obama was elected on his presidency and comparing the state of the US economy to that of emerging economies such as China.

The series concluded with **Contemporary Developments in International Law and the Role of the International Court of Justice**, given by Sir Christopher Greenwood, member of the International Court of Justice. The lecture discussed the role of the International Court of Justice in international law, referring to the Court's latest cases, such as the International Court of Justice's advisory opinion on the legality of the 2008 Kosovo declaration of independence.

Boris peddles bike scheme on campus

Poorna Harjani

The recently launched public bicycle sharing scheme, Barclays Cycle Hire has arrived at the LSE campus.

The scheme is accessible for a fee of either £1 a day, £5 for a week or an annual access charge of £45, excluding user charges to hire bicycles. Over 5,000 bicycles are available from 315 docking stations. Whilst the scheme offers convenience to the on-the-go student life, it is possible that the wave of LSE students will change the nature of demand for these bicycles once the academic year begins.

One can pick up a bicycle at one docking station, and return it at any other docking station around London. However, if a station is already up to its capacity in parked bicycles, a terminal map can be consulted to find the nearest docking station. In light of this, an extra 15 minutes is granted *gratis* by the scheme. As the Beaver reported last year, the LSE campus already has a shortage of space to park personal cycles. Therefore, to find free spaces for Barclays docks in LSE's already full campus is a key concern for students. The scheme allows one to hire a bicycle at ease, but this causes a real issue in that we cannot estimate the number of cycle us-

ages each day. Demand for Barclays cycles is susceptible to bad weather conditions, other transport delays, and even one's university timetabling schedule.

According to Transport for London, the peak age for cycling is the 16-19 age group, at 25% being regular cyclists. Universities such as the LSE are key in encouraging cyclists to continue this mode of transport and providing the convenience for them to do so. But the LSE students will be competing with cyclists working near Holborn or tourists. According to the National Travel Survey, commuting for business makes up 42% of all journeys and with the LSE's central location, this can actually disadvantage many students who find docking stations full from work commuters. Indeed, over 500,000 bicycle trips were made within the first six weeks of the scheme's launch, well before the academic year commenced.

"We want nothing short of a cycling transformation in London," said the Mayor, Boris Johnson. The Barclays hire scheme is designed to promote the constant circulation of bicycles, based on 'Bixi', Montreal's bicycle rental system. Barclays also have new blue Cycle Superhighways into central London from outer London. These provide cyclists with safer, faster and more direct journeys into the

city. These networks will link residential areas to schools, train and bus stations, parks and shops. For many students who live on the peripheries of Holborn and Russell Square, journeys would have no cost if under thirty minutes. However, costs rise sharply after thirty minutes. There is also a late return charge of £150 and a damage charge of up to £300.

Every bike features dynamo powered flashing front and rear lights, a bell on the left handlebar, and three gears operated by a wheel on the right handlebar. Bicycles come with added basket, saddle with adjustable height, a mud guard and a chain protector. The well equipped bicycles provide a ready-made solution to transport, and will be especially useful to exchange students who won't necessarily have to invest in a bicycle around London. There is also a number to call if a cycle breaks down and a fault button to press to take a different bicycle out.

Students will find it frustrating risking being late for classes if docking stations are full and if they are forced to spend the next fifteen minutes cycling towards another docking station, and returning back to campus. Cycling is now associated with a modern cosmopolitan city, with the LSE being in the epicentre location, making space on campus for students will be crucial to the scheme's success.



Comment

Your Sabbs look ahead for the year

Charlotte Gerada, Ashok Kumar, Hero Austin and Charlie Glyn

This year is going to be remembered as the year that the Students' Union engaged more people than ever before in campaigns. From Freeze the Fees to Wednesday Afternoons Free we want to unify our incredibly diverse student body and Students' Union activity.

Proudly, our Students' Union heritage is recognised nationally by universities and unions, it was one of the first to be established in 1897. Since then, LSE's Students' Union has been a political hub for student-led campaigns - taking a stand on local, national and global issues. Today, much is the same - with the LSESU acting as a catalyst for student activity.

But we are students involved with politics, not student politicians - as Sabbatical Officers ('Sabbs') we've come from every corner of the student body. Here's the facts: three-women majority Sabbatical team; one international and post-graduate lefty; the queen of the AU jocks; the RAG girl that would do anything for charity; and our ultimate Environmental Hero. Whoever you are you'll find a common voice in the Kingsley Rooms, the Sabbs' Office.

We're at the dawn of savage public sector cuts which will inevitably cast darkness over future students' hopes of entering higher education. Though the cuts spell trouble for many institutions, there is light at the end of the tunnel for LSE. Our exorbitant corporate activity has served to provide us with a staggering surplus for nearly a decade - and will continue to do so for decades to come. So luckily for LSE, we won't be seeing redundancies, departmental closures and deficits like other universities.

Despite all of this, we may still see an absolutely unnecessary rise in EU, UK, international and postgraduate tuition fees. Why?

In just over a few weeks' time Lord Browne's Independent Review of Higher Education Funding will release its recommendations to the UK government. It is expected that he will call for a massive rise in fees for UK undergraduates doubling, tripling or may even do away with a cap altogether.

On top of this, LSE has some of the highest international and postgraduate fees in the EU. Moreover, each time home and EU undergraduate fees have increased, international and postgraduate

We're at the dawn of savage public sector cuts, but there is light at the end of the tunnel for LSE

fees have inflated disproportionately.

Considering that even with a potential 30 per cent increase in government research grants, a 35 per cent increase in real terms from government funding, a 4 per cent rise in wages annually, £250,000 extra budget for potential capital expansion and continuing to fund the development of the New Student Centre, we can maintain a 3-4 per cent Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE)-recommended surplus until 2020. And all that at current fee levels accounting for inflation.

That's why we want to: **FREEZE THE FEES TO KEEP LSE PROGRESSIVE.**

We are asking Howard Davies to sign a pledge to freeze fees for all students for the coming three years.

In addition, we stipulate that the next Director (expected in 2013) should be chosen with the condition that s/he will act responsibly with respect to fee-levels, and will continue to support the LSESU's

stance on fees.

Our School motto is translated as "to understand the causes of things". Understanding comes with responsibility. LSE was founded on the principle as long as we research and investigate the causes of social injustice, we equally endeavour to remedy them. Increasing fees to ever higher levels will only serve to maintain inequality, potentially discouraging students from lower socio-economic backgrounds from applying and perpetuating wealth disparity at graduation with the burden of higher debt-levels. LSE - of all institutions - should be at the forefront of standing up for students as an investment to society.

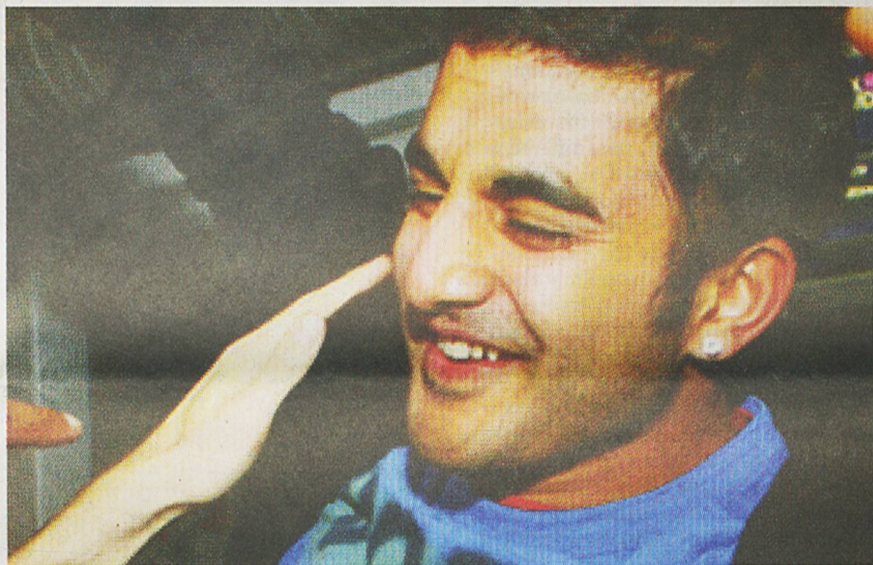
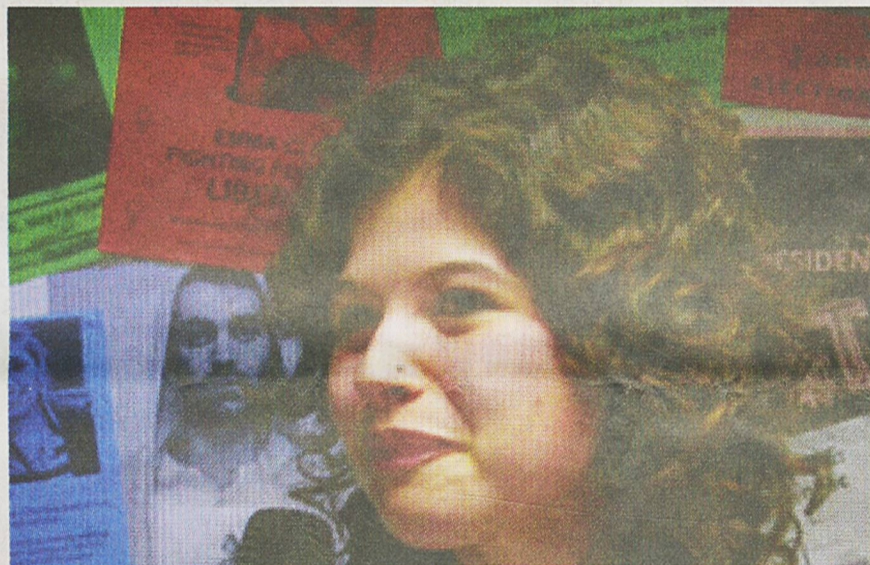
Since LSE is in such a safe financial position, we can be a leader for students' unions nationally. It is essential that we take a united stand and demand that our education remain public, accessible and that there is protection for the entire

student body whether they be domestic or international, undergraduate or postgraduate. So, LSE can afford to set responsible fee-levels, and even conservative financial projections make our demands feasible. We should enforce change locally, and support movements nationally.

LSE is the stomping-ground of many influential leaders, now it's time for LSE to live up to its brand and be a leader.

Please get involved! Please contact su.education@lse.ac.uk

Charlotte Gerada is the LSESU General Secretary; Ashok Kumar is the LSESU Education Officer; Hero Austin is the LSESU Community and Welfare Officer; and Charlie Glyn is the LSESU Activities and Development Officer



LSE Campus Life: a short guide

A crash course on what politically-minded Freshers can expect to find on Houghton Street and beyond this year

Zachariah Sammour

Houghton Street is the hub of student life. It's where you'll find the LSESU bar, cafeteria, and, on most days, a bunch of crazy guys shouting through a microphone about something nobody really cares about. They're wannabe activists, a quarrelsome lot with too much time on their hands and who have read far too many Guardians over a Quorn Burger and Fairtrade coffee.

A large proportion of the student body has become disconnected with the political and social movements that once defined our Students' Union, and many hold student activists in mild contempt, wondering how long it will take before

they cut their long hair and throw away their placards in exchange for a suit and a job at Goldman Sachs.

Perhaps even more worryingly this perception of student activism has become partly endorsed by students who are heavily involved within student politics. Several candidates during last term's elections spoke of their desire to see a Students' Union free from activism and debate on international 'divisive' issues - with one candidate going so far as to say that he would refuse to work on such an issue even if mandated to do so by the Union.

So it appears that student activism and involvement in political and social issues is welcome on campus so long as it fits within accepted parameters. Firstly, the issue must directly influence us; secondly, the issue must not cause controversy; and finally the issue must not divide students. These three provide a framework through which LSE students can carry out socially acceptable activ-

ism - but certainly not the 'radical' issues our long-haired, mega-phone-bashing brethren seem so keen on.

These are based on a series of false assumptions, primarily that activism must always be a uniting force. When one recognises the fact that activism would not exist if there was not both the need for social change and resistance to it, it becomes clear that the opposite is in fact true. Activism is the process of overcoming reactionary or conservative forces, often through confrontational means; thus if there are aspects of resistance to a particular type of social change on our campus there will inevitably be divided opinion. This does not mean that students will turn against fellow students in a fit of blood-lust and reinstate witch burning, rather that students will be forced to take part in mature discussion. If students are able to passionately disagree in a seminar or a lecture without disrupting the harmony of our campus there is no reason why they will not be able to do the same

on Houghton Street or in a Union General Meeting.

The second false assumption is that 'controversy' is a synonym for 'radical' and therefore students should not take part in activism on a controversial issue lest they gain that most undesirable of titles. Again, the exact opposite is true: deep social change is always controversial but this does not equate with it being radical. The ability to empathise with other people and to strive to improve their situation is an entirely normal human reaction; it is indifference to the same knowledge of the suffering of others that is truly radical.

The final false assumption upon which the parameters of 'acceptable activism' are built is the belief that only those issues that directly affect us are of sufficient importance to be discussed at our UGMs or written about in the Beaver. This argument needs only to be exposed for what it is: an appeal to self-interest which runs contrary to the very spirit of activism and the desire to help others. The proximity of

a problem to us should not be a determining factor when we ask whether an issue is one which we should concern ourselves. Our only concern should be for the gravity and severity of the problem concerned.

One need only look at our university to see the legacy this institution has for activism. From its birth at the hands of Fabian idealists it has been the centre of movements fighting over issues from gay rights to apartheid. Whether we concern ourselves with fighting for the rights of women in the Magic Circle or in Saudi Arabia, for the right to education in the UK or in Gaza, any struggle to remove discrimination, inequality and injustice is worthy of the time and effort of our student body.

Marching on with 'Red Ed'

Mercifully, the Labour leadership contest is over. Now the party can move on from its stifling recent history led united by Ed Miliband

Sean Kippin

After tens of hustings meetings and surely thousands of mentions of Andy Burnham's pet 'National Care Service', the Labour Party's leadership contest is, mercifully, over and done with. We activists were told that having a long campaign was to allow the party to have an honest and vigorous debate about its future direction, avoiding a similar coronation of a leader as Gordon Brown enjoyed in 2007.

If the idea was to cast light on the differences of opinion on policies that have festered under successive leaders, then it hasn't worked. The main contenders – minus, of course, Diane Abbott – were in broad agreement throughout the contest, particularly about the shortcomings of the new government's deficit reduction programme.

Each of the candidates – albeit to varying degrees – shared a basic analysis that Labour in government appealed too much to centralized state solutions, was too cavalier with individual liberties and too reticent in taming the financial services industry. Where they differed was relatively small beer: the timing of spending cuts, the internal structure of the party and the intensity of remorse that should be displayed over joining America to invade Iraq, for example. But mainly absent was the profound ideological differences that typified the party leadership in the second half of the 20th century.

The press, dominated by the right, has taken Ed Miliband's surprise victory as irrefutable proof that Labour has decided to extinguish the New Labour torch carried by his brother, David, and has resorted once more to the socialist ways of yesterday. Inevitably, the reality is a mite more subtle than the Daily Mail and Sun would have you believe.

Take the new Leader of the Labour Party, 'Red Ed', first. His analysis is that the party was at its strongest pursuing policies most consistent with its social democratic values. It is often forgotten that in 1997, New Labour was rather left-wing. It imposed a levy on energy companies, devolved power to Scotland and Wales, instituted the minimum wage, pushed through gay rights legislation and made the case for higher public spending. The government only coasted rightwards after 2001, preoccupied with market solutions until the financial crisis of 2008 put a halt to that.

Nonetheless, plenty of progressive policies slipped through during this time – mainly from Gordon Brown's Treasury-like winter fuel payments, tax credits, the Child Trust Fund, increased funding for international development, public subsidy for the arts and a higher top rate of income tax. All showed, and continue to show,

high levels of public support.

Ed's position is that Labour was unpopular, when it accepted the dominant neoliberal orthodoxy. The Iraq War, the introduction of university tuition fees and the further deregulation of the City of London did the party damage in the long run. Traditional voters and normally sympathetic swing voters deserted the party in their droves. In the chase for 'Middle England', Ed's argument goes, Labour forgot who it was there to represent, and what it was there to do; and that the fatal disconnect between the party and its core vote is what lost the party the 2010 election.

David, however, has a more favourable view of the latter stages of Tony Blair's leadership. He is vague but unrepentant about his support for the Iraq war, critical of Gordon Brown for not pushing harder on the public sector reform process that proved so divisive within the party and is reluctant to move an inch from former Labour Chancellor Alastair Darling's pledge for £44 billion of cuts in public expenditure before 2015. Other leadership candidates – Ed Balls and Diane Abbott – made clear their objection to this plan.

Despite these subtle differences, with regards to issues of substance the two disagree little. The excellent Left Foot Forward blog recently posted a Question

and Answer session with both Miliband brothers. Each was asked whether they would pursue particular left-wing policies; the differences were almost infinitesimal, David showing a willingness to take bold positions on taxation and redistribution, public spending and the role of the state.

The press have portrayed the victory of younger Brother Ed as a victory for socialist dogma over New Labour centrism. This is a stupefying over-simplification. Even a victory for David would have represented a leftward shift from the days of Blair and Brown. The chief reason for this is generational. Blair and Brown were petrified that recognisable Labour policies were so voter-repellent that any remotely progressive policy nuggets had to be smuggled in under a rug of right-wing populism lest the press get them like they got Neil Kinnock. Blair and Brown were scared by the four successive electoral defeats that Margaret Thatcher and John Major inflicted, and were mindful of the trauma caused by eighteen long years in opposition.

In contrast, the Milibands cut their political teeth when Labour was in its political ascendancy, and they are more candid about their beliefs and less reluctant to resort to social democratic argu-

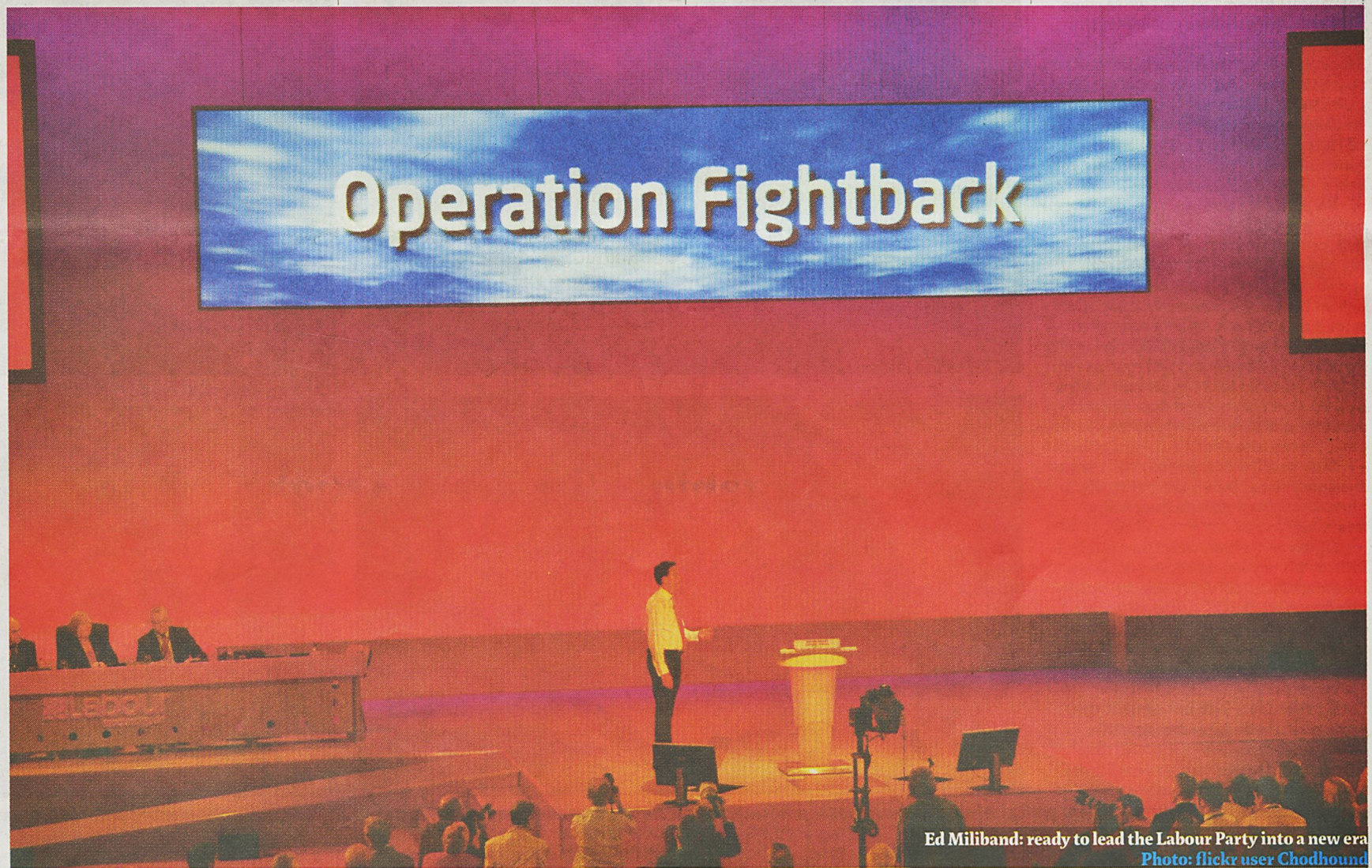
ments. The caution of New Labour and the incessant pandering to a right-wing press frustrate their generation of Labour politicians. They are less repentant about describing themselves as socialists, more comfortable talking about taxing the wealthy and, all said, perhaps more ideologically left-wing.

Yet there are other factors. The financial crisis opened up a whole new debate about the viability of neoliberalism as a socio-economic model for the organisation of society. Labour as a whole became more receptive to populist 'banker-bashing' and redistributive taxation. It opened up a vibrant debate about notions of 'ownership', particularly in the financial sector. This was best typified by the long campaign waged by the Co-operative Party – Labour's sister party – to re-mutualise Northern Rock. A pledge to do just that appeared in the 2010 election manifesto and found support amongst all five leadership contenders.

Finally, the policy agenda of the new government must be considered. As Julian Glover, the Guardian's conservative columnist, approvingly pointed out, the government is ideologically cutting the state down to size with a 'Maoist' ferocity. Although the government may dress it up in technocratic management-speak

about cutting the deficit, this is actually an intensely neoliberal project, unseen since the heyday of Margaret Thatcher – although even she wouldn't have gone quite so far as to prepare cuts of up to 40 per cent in public services. There is no ground from which to attack such monstrous cuts in public expenditure – particularly for a social democratic party – than from the Keynesian left. There is a good chance, that when most people know a friend of a family member who has been pushed onto benefits or beneath the poverty line, that the public will be in broad agreement.

Add to this the need to win an internal leadership contest and the debate will naturally gravitate leftwards. The combination of Ed's own political beliefs, the slow disappearance of the '1987 generation', the financial crisis, the government's ferociously anti-poor agenda and the pressures on candidates seeking to win an internal party election have all combined to nudge the entire Labour Party leftwards, and back onto the centre-left, social democratic turf that it occupied with such great success between 1993 and 1997. To describe it as a 'lurch' is to exaggerate, but Ed's victory represents the beginning of a period when Labour will at least be unafraid to say what it really thinks.



Ed Miliband: ready to lead the Labour Party into a new era
Photo: flickr user Chadhound

The strange death of contented Liberals

Liberal Democrat voters seem to have surpassed Daily Mail readers as Britain's prize grumps since May

Luke Smolinski

You would think Liberal Democrats would be happier. When your main concerns in life are that cobblestoned streets may sprain your sandal-clad ankles, that the wind might tousle your fine locks, or that they might run out of muesli at Waitrose, it's clear you don't have much to worry about. Yet moaning has become a popular pastime for Lib Dem voters.

Only in Britain could a party be rewarded with political power after a century out of it, only for its members to grumble. In America liberals would be in fits of flag-waving elation; continental liberals would be rejoicing. Welcome to

Britain: the nation where even the Liberal Democrats are grumpy.

Just what are Lib Dem voters' problems? The Tories – for one – and those spending cuts. But more importantly, it is the idea they have been swindled, that they have been conned by Nick Clegg. Clegg promised so much, but as yet has failed to deliver. He was unafraid to chuck Lib Dem principles onto the bonfire to grasp the keys to power to share with those nasty Tories. At heart, the Lib Dems fear, it is Clegg – not Cameron – who is the true "heir to Blair": power-hungry, unprincipled, and right-wing. This is their nightmare.

These fears have no substance: Clegg is no Tony Blair. It is fantastical to aver that prior to the election, there was no talk of forming coalitions with other parties. Nick Clegg made it perfectly clear that, in the case of a hung parliament, there would be four criteria which would underpin any deal: a 'fairer' voting system and 'fairer'

taxes, a pupil premium and a 'rebalanced, green economy'. The Tories were not ruled out as a potential partner, nor should they have been.

It is folly to be a Lib Dem and resist making a deal with another party whose views you disagree with. For – whisper it quietly – this is the only route the Lib Dems have to power. If the Lib Dems had refused to co-operate with Tory overtures, it's hard to see how they could have been anything but an political irrelevance. Yes, coalition involves sacrificing some principles and compromise and it involves holding some power. But Nick Clegg's will show that coalition government works. This is the long game. You never know, by putting party politics aside and establishing his party as a credible one, he might just get a few more votes for it.

Don't Lib Dems really understand that this is the best thing to have happened? A Lib Dem-Labour pact was impossible and undesirable – arithmetic meant reliance

on the acceptance of concessions to the nationalist parties, the Scottish National Party and Plaid Cymru. Any pact would have been labelled a 'coalition of the losers'. And after 13 years in power, Labour needed some time in opposition. The only possible route was a pact with the Tories.

Now ask a Lib Dem voter about this. Surely a Tory government reined in by Lib Dem conscience is better than a government driven by Tory excesses and ideological fervor. Is it better for the nation for the Lib Dems to put party politics aside and work with the Tories in the national interest. But Lib Dems have expectations that are far too high; they are too dogged in the pursuit of enacting their ideals. This means that rather than overcoming tribalism and embracing compromise, as they ought to, they grumble.

There are two reasons why Lib Dems should be happy. First, Britain is on its first steps to true democracy. We live in a country where the votes people cast are

scored away from being representative of the seats eventually allocated in the House of Commons. And in the House of Lords, not one politician has received a vote from the people. But with the Lib Dems in government, this could change.

Secondly, Britain is now a liberal nation. All major parties wrestle each other for the mantle of 'liberalism'. Even David Cameron has called himself a 'liberal conservative' after years of illiberal Tory leaders. But social change has occurred in Britain.

So we are a liberal nation that is getting more democratic – surely this is what the Lib Dems want. Yet, for as long as the coalition remains, the grumbling will continue.

Sarkozy is (popular) no more

The French President, once elected on a wave of approval, has seen his popularity plummet after a number of ill-thought policies

Marion Koob

We are at a point in time at which, rather bizarrely, most of France agrees with me. The oddity of the fact is that this consensus lies in the field of politics - one, that as a citizen of the very same nation, I all too often find myself in a minority. But, today, finally, the voice of sanity has at last prevailed. Sarkozy is (popular) no more.

In such a glorious moment, it is worthwhile to remember why the air now feels so sweet. President Nicolas Sarkozy once led a wave of optimism - which even I, on the night of May 6th 2007, was willing to ride. Sarkozy wasn't, by far, my preferred choice, but given the conditions, there was room to give him some leeway. Despite our disagreements on policy, his character had come across via numerous political shows and debates as somewhat endearing. His concern for the issues which the average citizen voiced had a breeze of honesty. He would be, anyhow, a distinct change from Chirac's near-paralytic tenure.

Such expectations were speedily disappointed. After denouncing the woes of the poor, Sarkozy went off to celebrate victory in one of Paris' most luxurious restaurants, in the company of the show

business strata. This was followed by a holiday on a yacht owned by one of France's leading businessmen. Unsurprisingly, this was thought to be of rather bad taste.

Despite the image record, which could have been excusable (with apologies, and a modest style wherewith), there are two faults as to why Sarkozy merits his fate.

The first lies in his dealings with the media. It is difficult to find a mainstream newspaper or news channel genuinely critical of his persona - and for a reason. A recent incident reveals the extent of this gentle, coordinated muffling. A weekly political magazine, *Marianne*, bared their cover with 'Sarkozy, voyou de la Republique?' [Sarkozy, the Republic's hoodlum?]. A headline that would awaken debate within the United Kingdom became a full-blown scandal in France, with demands that the statement be retracted. Some members of Sarkozy's UMP party went as far as to claim that to treat the president with such disrespect was unconstitutional.

His second Achilles' heel is immigration. Both to distract attention from pension reform, and to snatch the votes of the far-right Front National (and even Sarkozy deserved better than them - until now), several thousand Roma illegal immigrants have been expelled out of French borders. The fear for economic security - that raging beast of irrationality - has again been stirred, but this time, to little effect. Thankfully, the measure resulted in national and international outcry - and support for Sarkozy's policies at the polls

has been non-existent.

The rational solution would have resembled something along the following. The Roma are, for the most part, of Romanian or Bulgarian origin. It would seem fit to agree on a solution to the immigration issue with these two EU member states, especially if the long-term plan is to open all borders to a near-total freedom of movement. Needless to say, the accusations of deportation flying about from various MEPs, and the EU Commission's attempts at commandeering have brought everything to a sulky standstill. A policy of irrationality has been met by irrational responses.

Instead of putting up a fight to regain now long-lost votes, Sarkozy ought to make himself useful and take advantage of his current lacklustre. Very necessary pension reform is on its way (to bring up the retirement age from 60 to 62 across France by 2018). Happily for the unions, this has provided a theme for the annual September strikes and grumbling across France. The government should push this reform through whilst there is no longer any popularity left to lose. In addition, the minister in charge of the reform, Eric Woerth, is currently under suspicion of having condoned fiscal fraud committed by the heiress and L'Oréal shareholder Liliane Bettencourt. What better conditions to whoosh the whole thing through?

2012 is the root of all hesitation. The majority of those polled do not wish Sarkozy to run again for the Presidency. Added to this encouraging outlook, Sarkozy has many opponents to fear,

from both sides of the political spectrum. Dominique de Villepin, once a Prime Minister, has now spurned the UMP and created his own centre-right party. The left, consumed by petty in-fighting among its heavyweights (too many notorious figures is synonymous with too many notorious egos) is shadowed by the imposing Dominique Strauss-Kahn (DSK), currently head of the International Monetary Fund. It is rumoured that he is preparing his re-entry into French politics via the presidential race. Yet, despite books arguing the inevitability of his return (such as DSK written by the pseudonymous 'Cassandra') Strauss-Kahn would have to terminate his term as Managing Director early in order to participate in the campaign, something which his close advisers claim he will not do.

Such are the ruins Sarkozy now contemplates. Yet most of the damage is of his own making. His opportunity to reconstruct is slim as time is limited and his political appetite has dwindled. In the field of constructive criticism, I would advise, first of all, to push the pension reform through. To apologize to the Roma. To adopt a modest profile. To incite mainstream newspapers and mainstream television channels to be more critical (as is the mark of a healthy democracy). The panicked, however, tend not to be the most reasonable strategists. It is likely that Sarkozy will continue to kick the rubble.

I want to ride my bicycle, I want to ride it where I like. Just not in London.

Poorna Harjani

The thought of cycling on London's congested roads terrifies me. Given the option of driving a car - designed to withstand a collision - or to cycle with nothing more than a plastic helmet for protection, the car is an automatic choice every time.

London has the highest proportion of cycling accidents in the UK - clearly a cyclist's space is not respected as much as it needs to be. Drivers are carefree and use cycle lanes to overtake others, and rarely are fines imposed for drivers using cycle lane to race ahead.

There is no doubt that cycling is a valuable addition to the capital's transport network. The Barclays cycle hire scheme is targeting a 400 per cent increase in cycling by 2026 - the potential for widening cycling participation in London is huge.

According to London mayor, Boris Johnson, cycling has an important role to play in the future of the city because of its social, environmental, health and financial benefits. But he also claims that this is the best way to get around our city; I disagree.

By law drivers are told to stay out of the new-blue cycling lanes, but London's roads sometimes leave no room to go anywhere else. Conversely, in Copenhagen, Denmark, bike lanes are often 3 to 4 metres wide. Here in London the only guarantee is that these lanes will be 1.5 metres wide, which isn't nearly enough to ensure harmonious driving. Traffic is clearly dangerous in London: cyclists are 14 times more likely to suffer a serious or fatal accident than car drivers.

Indeed, not all cyclists follow the recommended, simple instructions of wearing a helmet, waiting for vehicles to pull into the kerb and making eye contact with other road users.

But, alternatively, vehicles - lorries, for example - have significant blind spots in which cyclists are invisible. Such a blind spot can extend to the full length of the vehicle so drivers are unable to see anyone cycling beside them on the left. Even Johnson himself, the man who pushed for the bike-hire scheme, had a cycling accident at Canary Wharf.

If a licence is needed to drive a car on the road then there should surely be some form of compulsory training for all cyclists. The reality is that most people, including the foreigners allowed to use Barclays' cycle hire scheme, are not going to read safety manuals devised by Johnson's enthusiastic team of cyclists. Sure, people can now pick up a bike at their convenience, but it is worth questioning how will we ensure they use the right helmets, the correct signalling on the roads and the appropriate routes.

And one must take issue with the subliminal advertising. Barclays' part in the cycle hire's branding must be questioned. London has sold its soul to corporate mastery - £25 million is a small price to pay for the exposure Barclays has enjoyed. And then there's the Barclays Cycle Superhighways - two new dedicated cycle lanes, with another ten to come before the Olympics, all painted in blue. This branding is invasive to public spaces and a reminder of the domination the banking world has on modern Britain. I'd rather have my old grey roads, thank you very much.

Before this city develops into a further deep sea of blue bikes and blue roads, it needs to put forward a safety-action plan, one that demands compulsory tests for cyclists to pass. Only this way, just like any other vehicle driver on the road, will ensure road safety for all and make people such as myself join in with London's cycling revolution.

The Case of the Pope

Investigating Vatican Accountability for Human Rights Abuse

Kyle Packer

Geoffrey Robertson QC spoke at the LSE this month on the topic of his new book, 'The Case of the Pope'. The lecture, delivered on the eve of the Pope's expensive state visit to the UK, provoked both cautious laughter and resentment. Overall, the atmosphere was charged with calm electricity, the kind one feels as part of an audience that is silently satisfied with a speaker who articulates what they all know to be right.

Robertson describes the endemic sexual abuse as an international problem stemming from a sub-society of deeply lonely, sexually-frustrated men; who are responsible for the religious indoctrination of children as young as seven-years-old. This 'schooling' trains the young mind to believe that a priest is an indisputable agent of God. It is little wonder that 76 per cent of the many thousands of molestation victims never report their ordeal to anyone. What makes Robertson's enquiry unique is his focus as a legal expert upon 'canon law' - the Vatican's own obscure, secretive legal system; effectively an above-board jurisdiction that enables the Church to harbor paedophiles and to protect them from international justice.

Inside the medieval world of canon law, trials are conducted in a complete vacuum with no cross-examination, medical testing, or even punishment in the rare instance of a conviction.

According to a BBC News survey, a record number of Catholics believe the recent scandals to have damaged the Church irreparably. The implicit assumption they make is that the Church was once untarnished by abuse and corruption, when its very power structure actually derives from a dark historical legacy. In fact, the first documented child sex scandal in the Catholic Church occurred in AD153, while the most shocking account (albeit fictional) of sexually abusive priests, in the Marquis de Sade's *Justine*, was published - and subsequently censored - in the eighteenth century.

Lest I should be offending any devout religious readers, I should clarify that I welcome the traditions, faith and comfort experienced by devout and pious members of the Catholic Church. Discovering the form of one's own salvation is very important. Such discovery is exactly what the Enlightenment entailed. However, the Vatican attacked Enlightenment thought just as it attacks any brand of salvation beyond its realm of influence - Galileo was tortured for trying to explain the Copernican theory of the universe. History is key to understanding the Vatican's indifference towards the human rights abuses committed by some of its members.

Control and domination are the central tenets of Catholicism. The Church is founded on the principle of interces-

sion. In other words, only through its own apostolic succession of male leaders can the Vatican retain its supposed powers of absolution. Aside from the literal ability to turn wine into blood, and bread into flesh, these powers include the facility to forgive the 'sins' of the poor whom are routinely exploited around the world.

'Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus' - 'Outside the Church there is no salvation'

This is the dogma, unique to the church, that has allowed it to justify its missionary imperialism, the torture and rape of the Aztec and the Incas, all of the terrors of South America and Africa, and now destruction of the innocence of thousands of children.

One cannot exclusively blame Catholicism for the ills of humanity, but the Vatican's attempts to hold the monopoly on salvation are riddled with an almost boasting hypocrisy. In the previous century Thomas Moore was made a saint, and in the year 2000 was named 'Patron Saint of Politicians' by former Pope John Paul II. Moore was also the main figure behind the torture and burning of thousands of people who dared to read the bible in English. The Catholic Church never existed to disseminate the word of the lord, it exists to be the one owner of the truth for its billions of poor and uneducated followers.

Before Joseph Ratzinger became Pope, he was 'Prefect of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith'. In short, his duty was to deal with child abuse scandals. His first act was to write a letter to catholic bishops, ordering them on pain of excommunication not to talk to police or anyone

else. He declared that investigations were to be handled "in the most secretive way, restrained by perpetual silence". It is consequently of little shock that the Mexican founder of the Legion of Christ movement was protected from his own horrific catalogue of child abuse under Ratzinger, who wrote that "one cannot put on trial so close a friend of the Pope".

Stephen Fry put it best when he declared the Catholic Church to be obsessed with sex in the same way that the anorexic and the morbidly obese are obsessed with food. The systematic child rape that has been going on for so long cannot be investigated as separate from the context of the Vatican's deformed makeup and the warped, neurotic and hysterical way in which its leaders are chosen. Everything from the subordination of nuns to the celibacy of the priesthood is unnatural: those who exhibit such sexually dysfunctional behaviour surely have no place in declaring others evil and perverted based upon sexual preference or the use of contraception. In fact, the Pope has openly spread the lie that condoms increase the instance of AIDS as opposed to limiting it, a true test of the man's desire for control, despite the consequence of mass human suffering.

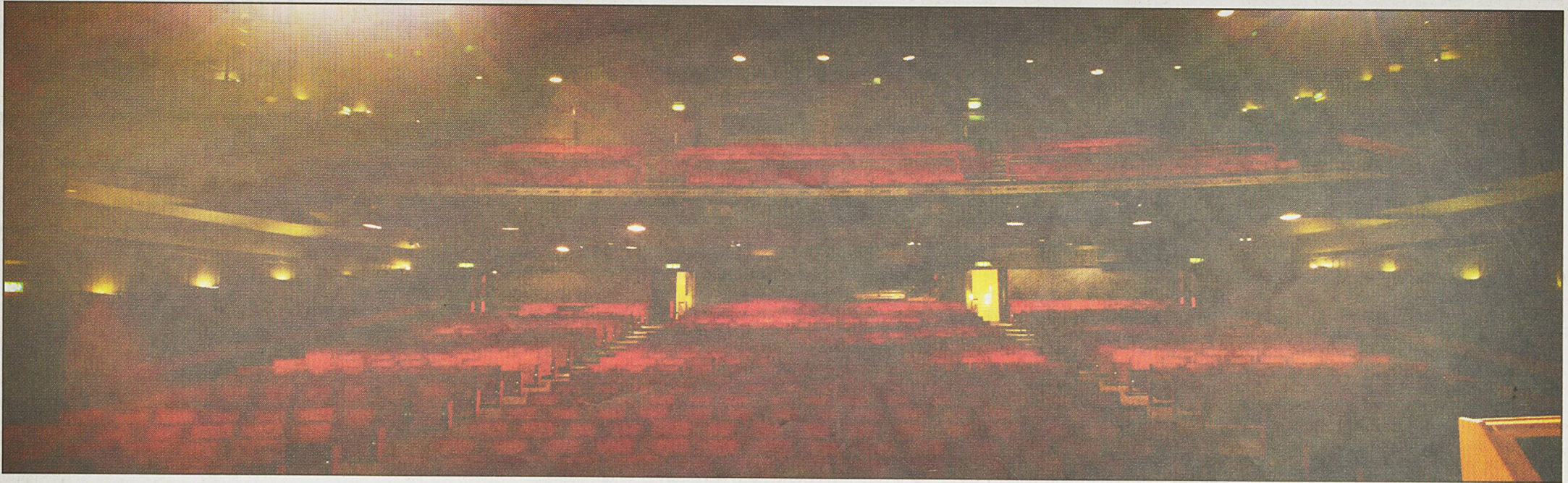
In Robertson's words: "tens of thousands of children were bewitched, bugged and bewildered by Catholic priests whilst attention was fixated on 'evil' homosexuals, sinful divorcees, deviate liberation theologians, planners of families and wearers of condoms".

Here (usually) lie emails and letters from you lot about the LSE (our inbox is empty at the moment). Please feel free to send yours to: comment@thebeaveronline.co.uk or n.briant@lse.ac.uk

Photo

28 September 2010 | The Beaver

Secret LSE



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Social

Blues to Beaver

Nathan Briant's journey from a bored fresher to Beaver editor



Flickr user striatic

It must have been a cloudy day in the middle of February last year. Hungover, in my colourless halls of residence, I decided I had better make something – however small and insignificant – of the year. Since I'd arrived the previous September, I had been to a few interesting lessons and attended a few interesting public lectures, but the major contribution that university had brought to my life was an affliction for watching Come Dine With Me every day – alone – and wolfing down copious amounts of Wheat Crunchies which I had bought at ridiculous central London prices from a corner shop down the road. For a middle-class boy with no previous history of substance (nor Wheat Crunchie) abuse, I was in a bit of a bad way.

I picked up my laptop and wrote what, now that I look back, was an utterly hopeless article on XTC – the band from Swindon which seemingly no-one below the age of 40 has heard – and sent it off to the music editor of The Beaver. Without

much hope of it going in the paper, I heard nothing and expected the worst: that it was so rambling and incoherent that it didn't deserve even an email of rejection. Still, I waited for the next Tuesday to come round, when I would get to see my name in a newspaper for the first time since I was five, when I'd posed with a policeman for the Express and Star. I was proud – minus the blatant punctuation and grammatical errors, obviously.

And since then I've never stopped writing for the Beaver. As far as I know I've written for every issue in some capacity, and although I basically just fell into it, it was the best thing I could have done, the thing I was most suited to. During my teenage years – and pre-teenage years, come to think of it – I'd spent most of my lunchtimes in the school library reading a couple of newspapers, as my friends trundled down to the local supermarket to buy cookies and zop cola. Sometimes I still think of those copies of the Times, the Telegraph, the Indie and the Guardian just

sitting there now in that dusty library, unloved, untouched, ultimately destined for the recycling box come home time. Unless some other swot's reading them now.

Before I started my piece for Part B all those many moons ago I looked upon The Beaver office as an impenetrable fortress, a I'd never get near, and the Editorial Board a mysterious species of people with Alan Rusbridger's number on speed dial. I was wrong (though the last part might have a modicum of truth); it's not.

To be involved in it, you must involve yourself; and, at the cost of echoing the words of my parents, who have extremely limited confidence in my ability to cope with most facets of life, nothing will come naturally to you, as I'm sure everyone knows. I went to all the Collective meetings that were held and gradually got to know more people. I'm not using 'know' as a term of endearment, or to indicate that any actual conversation was held, I am merely implying that people at the Beaver meetings started to recognize my

podgy face. But that was still better than nothing.

But remember things are never easy. Computers in the Beaver office break down all the time and have to be slowly pieced back together again by computer-whizzes. Other times people like me accidentally kick plugs out of their sockets, causing hours of pain-staking work to be lost in some digital vacuum. Inevitably errors are made; and some people get angrier and more inconsolable than a sleep-deprived Giles Coren when their work is altered.

But if that's what you like and enjoy then please get involved with the Beaver over the next few weeks and months. Dealing with a person angrier than a sleep-deprived Giles Coren might be fun, you never know. You won't regret it; I certainly haven't. (And if you're wondering, I haven't had a packet of Wheat Crunchies in months.)

OVERHEARD AT LSE

Boy: "I did something cultural, I went for a picnic today."

Girl: "Err... I don't think that a picnic counts as 'cultural'!"

Boy: "It does when it was in Hyde Park and it was overcast and windy. Doing things in British weather counts as British culture."

Guy to girl: "I wondered if you could help me. You see I have seven extra yachts which I'm selling at discount. Do you know if there's a market for yachts?"

Overheard in LSE Library lift. Comparing to her school's library: LSE Visitor: "Wow... this place [Library] feels much more alive."

Invigilator (during an LSE exam): "I want all phones off. And that means off. O-R-F. I mean... O-F-F."

Overheard in the library: "I invented hubris long before the Greeks. That statement itself reveals my hubris."

In a talk about 'soft power' Prof. Joseph Nye: "...and it's like a young man wearing a nice T-shirt, he wears it to attract members of the opposite sex."

Prof. X (chair): "...and the same sex." Prof. Nye: "Oh yes! And the same sex as well. Sorry about that."

two girls in the NAB elevator.

Girl 1: "I really wanted to see 'Hair', but Ricardo won't see it with me because there's a naked man in it."

Girl 2: "Oooh! I'll see it with you!"

Flatmate says to me: "By the way man, cba doesn't stand for 'can't be arsed' anymore, it now stands for 'cost-benefit analysis.'"

Second Floor of the NAB: "I didn't come here to learn!"

Flatmate, while preparing a bowl of Cornflakes, says: "You know what would be sick? If they made Cornflakes with the sugar already on it." Me: "I think those are called Frosties."

Anonymous Canadian: "Who's Milton Keynes?"

Me: "It's just a place."

Anonymous Canadian: *Googles it*, "ahh yeah, you're right."

Me: "I told you so."

Anonymous Canadian: "See I went past it on the train and I thought it must be a combination of Milton Friedman and John Maynard Keynes, but then I was thinking... wtf those guys are polar opposites."

A New Year's To Do List

Jenny Hewitt's words of wisdom for all new students

Top Five Things a wise old third year would tell a fresher – how to make the most of the Freshers' Fayre and the first term:

Number One: Join as many societies during Freshers' Fayre as possible. You can't possibly join all the societies, but do try to keep an eye open for societies that interest you! Yes, you will have spent a small fortune by the end of the two days, and perhaps you will find that many societies don't even contact you over the year, there will always be those gems of societies (look out for lots of free-

bies and large corporate sponsorships) that can essentially solve your careers woes. However, you should make sure that you join a diverse range of societies. Don't make them all career minded. Come week 6 or 7, you will need a break from it all – so look at cultural, dance or sports societies – maybe even the knitting society!

Number Two: You can often get the most out of your society membership when you actually join the committee. Firms will love to see this on your CV! Don't be discouraged from running for positions such as President or Vice

President, even as a first year, because you'll find that this teaches you to handle responsibility early on and is a great way of developing more professional relationships.

Number Three: Do go out clubbing or for a couple of drinks! This is really important, especially because it allows you to forge friendships, the importance of which cannot be undervalued. Moreover, these kind of events are frequent in the City – so if you have your sights set slightly east of the LSE to Canary Wharf – then this can be vital. Oh, and of course,

drink responsibly.

Number Four: Spring Week! A phenomenon that I certainly didn't know about before I came to LSE, (I found out about it much too late to take advantage of it) and one that you should definitely keep in mind. Spring Weeks are a short introduction into a particular company that usually consists of presentations, group activities and networking events that are great for being fast tracked into that hyped up second year internship. While not vital in the slightest, it can make your years ahead slightly easier.

Number Five: Enjoy your degree – remember why you came to LSE in the first place? A lot of my friends adore their degrees. A thirst for knowledge and a passion for their subjects make for happy and content LSErs. Do go to lectures (no matter how useless they seem, they somehow have a significant impact on your grades). And do make use of office hours. A good relationship with your teacher can do wonders when applying for that masters or PhD!

Party like it's 1939

Or, Why **Rhiannon Parkinson** dances, and why you should too

A year ago, on a whim, I joined the LSE's Swing Dance Society. At first I was terrified: Complete strangers holding my hand, dancing in front of people, and the very real sense of public humiliation. But I quickly learnt to enjoy the experience, and soon one lesson a week was not enough. I became involved in the Swing Dance Society's performance group (I cannot recommend it enough), met some great friends, improved my technique no end, danced in some amazing places (including Sadler's Wells Theatre as part of the LSE Timeless show), and increased my confidence more than I thought was possible.

In the eight months since then my friends would tell you that I have become a woman obsessed. This shit is addictive, and living in one of the only cities in the world where you can go swing dancing every single night of the week does not help to stem that addiction. Pretty soon I was social dancing (no lesson, just dancing) four or five times a week, with weekend workshops often on top of that. Though perhaps detrimental to my school work, every other aspect of my life improved including my social life, fitness, and confidence.

Swing dancing also presents rich pickings for would-be suitors. Without wishing to put too fine a point on it, it is very, very easy to meet girls by taking up swing dancing. On the social dancefloor we almost always outnumber boys. If you're a guy and you learn a couple of steps you are guaranteed as many dances as you want. The whole dancing business all looks very impressive.

Despite the mathematical asymmetry, there's a wealth of possible encounters for girls too. Although they generally outnumber boys on the dancefloor, the emphasis on partner rotation means that you will always meet tons of new men



Flickr user Danifeb

every time you go out dancing. Yes, some may be in their seventies, but the majority aren't. I know many couples who met on the swing dance scene, initially attracted by that spark of the first dance.

Much is made of the advantageous networking opportunities that arise through societies. However, with so many choices of societies, events, and activities, it can sometimes be tricky to get to know people amongst the throng. I found that the Swing Dance Society gave me the opportunity to get to know lots of people on a one-to-one basis, within the context of a friendly group. Many of the people that I first met in the society are still good friends. It's also nice to have a few familiar faces when you finally start going from class to more public social events.

More importantly, however, swing dancing also got me acquainted with people outside the LSE. Once you take your first steps out from the society and into the big wide world of swing dance you will meet a lot of people, and you will make a lot of friends. It's impossible not to. It can be extremely refreshing to make friends outside of the university bubble, and get to know people of all ages, backgrounds, cultures, occupations with the same interest as you.

LSE doesn't have a particularly extensive campus, as you may have noticed, but it is slap bang in the middle of the world's capital. When you get bored of treading the stretch of pavement between the Peacock Theatre and Clement House, there is a plethora of swing dance events going on around London. In addition to being great fun, going to such events make for a quick and painless way of getting to learn all the nooks and crannies of the city, without feeling like you're going too far out of your way. Nothing makes you feel at home like knowing the directions to any number of venues in all areas of the city.

One place you won't need to frequent

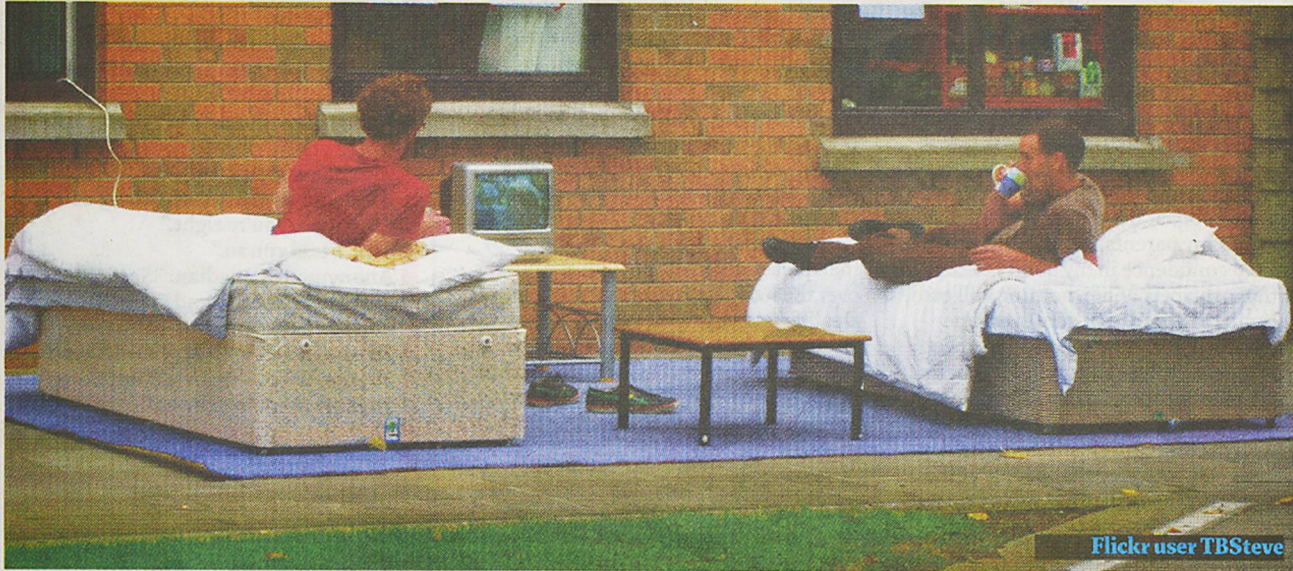
once you're hooked on swing dancing is the gym. Once you've got the basics down and you're ready to bust some moves, swing dancing can be a serious workout. The difference here is that it's a workout where you get to rock out your best dresses rather than tracksuits, and (if you're feeling brave) heels rather than trainers. You don't need to worry about looking a state in your favourite dress either, with the general philosophy being, if you don't look a mess by the end of the night you have not been dancing hard enough. This is also a fun and sociable way to lose the dreaded 'Fresher's Fifteen' in style.

By far the most important aspect is of course the dancing itself. The dancing and music vary tremendously, incorporating aspects of lindy hop, blues, balboa, Charleston Jazz, big band and rock 'n roll. If some of these sound unfamiliar it's easy to see the whole scene as one big musical inculcation. I didn't listen to any jazz until I started dancing and it's opened me up to a whole new, brilliant world of music to get involved with. As dancing often involves live music I've also had the opportunity to watch and dance to many amazing bands in fancy ballrooms. Sometimes when the mood is right and everyone is dolled up in vintage dresses and hair pins it feels like I've stepped back into a simpler time.

If any of this appeals to you, there really is no excuse not to get involved. If you're unfortunate enough to miss us Lindy Hopping through Freshers' Fair, do come along to classes - beginners on Mondays and Intermediates on Tuesdays, starting in week two or email Su.Soc.Swingers with any questions.

A Fresher's Education

Mehek Zafar on memorable first weeks



Flickr user TBSteve

You are walking the corridors of a 'higher education', and yet all you feel is a little lost, a little bewildered, a little alone. The paved expanse of Houghton Street is busy, milling with footsteps walking one way and another, brimming with voices that speak of enticing new things, and you hesitate, in the very centre of that street, because you don't have a clue where you are meant to be.

A storm, a whirlwind, a forest fire just hit you; of information, of faces, of things you've done and need to do. But you were so prepared, you'd dreamt of this day so many times, of what you'd say, and do, and the person that you would be. So then you were you feeling as though you needed to freeze time, just to let Freshers' Week sink in.

The truth is, this seeming cataclysm

of events is exactly what Freshers' Week is all about. Yes, to an extent it exists so that you stumble your way to a sense of belonging before lectures and classes actually begin. But it is also a deluge of experiences. New experiences. First time experiences.

It is the week that you will find yourself, late at night, standing outside much too afraid to make the long trek home on your own, and much too cheap to hail a cab. The week you will roll over one morning in a new friends sordid hall accommodation, and be grateful they took you in. The first time someone will ask you, past 1 am, whether you'd prefer to stop for a Big Mac or test out that dodgy looking Chinese take-away. The week you will rise every day at 8 am and pile your plate with a healthy breakfast, because your hall of residence is giving it out for free. And the week when, seeking refuge from the

rain, you give a watery smile to the person squeezing in beside you, and earn yourself a life long friend.

They will always be a blur, these first few days, but an oddly vivid blur; you'll remember, at odd moments, the first time you swung your eyes up to see the top of St. Paul's peering back down at you, and you'll see the girl in the Garrick, that girl who you couldn't stop talking to on your first day. You will feel something akin to affection, some ghostly memory of that chill of excitement, and you will think to yourself, maybe that was when I fell in love with the LSE.

Over your next few years at the university, you will witness Freshers' Week all over again, and you will remember, and perhaps you will feel a twinge of regret or break into a grin of embarrassment. And everywhere you will see this new batch of Fresher's, looking a little lost, a little

Usually there's an Ad for an LSE society here.

The Beaver reaches all parts of the student community and we like to tell ourselves it's widely read. So if you want to advertise your society with us, free of charge, get in touch.

Email;

Managing@thebeaveronline.co.uk

PART B

Seneca:
"Travel
imparts new
vigour to
the mind"

...Karl?
"China:
dreadful"

**VISUAL
ARTS**

what to see
this autumn

**KARL
PILKINGTON**

what not to say
this autumn

**FRESHERS'
FASHION**

what to wear
this autumn

Karl Pilkington always thought the Seven Wonders of the World were "a bit shit". So what happened when Ricky Gervais sent him packing? Ahmed Peerbux talks to...

An Idiot Abroad



We have five signed copies of Karl's latest book to give away! All you have to do is tell us the name of Karl's girlfriend. Send in your answers to: a.peerbux@lse.ac.uk

According to Ricky Gervais, Karl Pilkington is "I don't know the politically correct term - a moron", but also "the funniest man alive". Now a household name, Karl was originally a producer on Gervais and Stephen Merchant's XFM radio show, only to be eventually integrated into the show as a fully-fledged co-host, thanks to his bizarre theories, curiosities and observations. He once posed the question "could the world fall?", and insists that "you'll never see an old person eating a Twix".

The trio went on to record the enormously popular 'Ricky Gervais Show' (now a HBO animated series on Channel 4) and 'The Ricky Gervais Guide to...', a series of irreverent, alternative guides to abstract concepts such as art, society and the future. Through all of this, Karl's rise has been meteoric, with his Mancunian drawl now recognisable to millions. He's even released his own books, demonstrating his stand-alone appeal outside of Gervais and Merchant's bullying thrall. A quick Google search will throw up dedicated t-shirts, fan art, dance remixes (the infamous "I could eat a knob at night") and more. And thanks to a relentless campaign by Gervais to have Karl's round, spherical head recognised the world over, it can even be found graffitied onto a garage door in Augusta, Georgia.

Now, he's been given his own eight-part travel series - Sky 1's autumn showcase, in fact - in what Gervais calls "the most expensive and funniest practical joke I have ever played". In *An Idiot Abroad*, Karl is sent packing on an adventure to see the Seven Wonders of the World. So, was it a once in a lifetime experience? "That's what Suzanne my girlfriend said, that I should do it cos it's a once in a lifetime experience. She was right, I won't be doing it again."

Being a typical little-Englander, Karl would rather rent a caravan in

Wales, or, at a push, go on a package holiday to Majorca. So how did he even get himself into this in the first place? "I can't remember. It all happened so quick, which was a good thing cos' the more time I have to think about something the more time I have to back out of it. Ricky was always calling up with ideas he wanted to do and I'd always just say "yeah it'll never happen". I think it might have been after Steve had gone somewhere odd on holiday. He said to Ricky he'd have loved to know what I'd have made of the place".

I called the director offering to give Sky the money back. I didn't want to do anymore

But did it not occur to Karl that he would have to face a series of vaccines before setting off? He once, after all, (in a tirade against the invention of the aeroplane) said that we shouldn't be going places where an injection is needed beforehand. "I didn't really know I would be needing them. I agreed to do the programme even though I had no idea what I would be doing. By the time I was told I'd be needing injections I couldn't back out. I tried to get out of it three times during filming. I called the director during trip two offering to give the money back to Sky as I didn't want to do anymore."

Travel has always sat uncomfortably with Karl. While common wisdom

has it that that travelling makes one a richer, well-rounded, more fulfilled human being, Karl reckons we can learn about other cultures "by watching the telly". Did he take away anything, then, from his travels? "I learnt not to let Ricky or Steve sort anything out for you to do, and that dog tastes like cheap meat. We were in China (obviously) and we stopped off at a little cafe in the middle of nowhere. I ate it by accident. They weren't even filming so it wasn't a trick. I didn't know it was dog until a local woman came back from the toilet and pointed it out. I'd had three mouthfuls by then. Tasted like cheap meat. They didn't even know what sort of dog it was. So I wouldn't go to China again. It wasn't very nice."

Of course, answers like that might make readers cringe a little; but according to Gervais, he's got child rights because "he says the most awful things so naively and sweetly". Immediately springing to mind is his much-made-of insistence that 'Chinese people don't age well'. Having now been there, and marvelled at Beijing's sprawl and the Great Wall, is he still convinced? "That's something I said years ago. To be honest I didn't look at that many Chinese people in the face, as I was walking round with me head down most of the time, making sure I didn't walk into any gob. They spit all the time over there. The streets are paved in spit. Mind you, the place is so grey, the green stuff they're coughing up adds a bit of colour to the place."

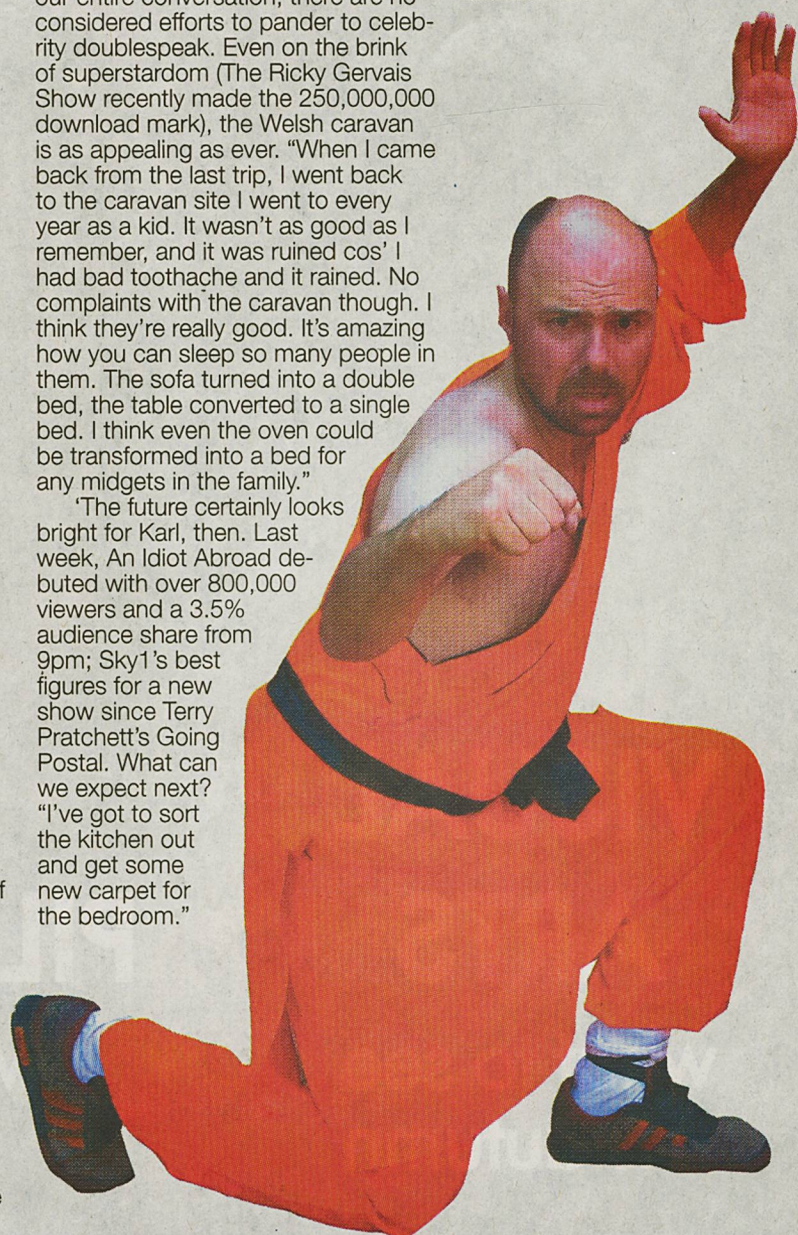
Clearly, then, Karl's frank wisdom doesn't take its cues from Michael Palin or a Lonely Planet Guide, which makes *An Idiot Abroad* such original and refreshing television. "I've never read a guide. I wouldn't normally go to places where you need a guide book. I just get to where we are going and see what the rep tells us. In Majorca the rep tried to make us go and visit a sausage factory. Is that the sort of information the Lonely Planet

guide has?"

It's this down to earth quality, so free of pretensions, that makes Karl so charming and affable. Throughout our entire conversation, there are no considered efforts to pander to celebrity doublespeak. Even on the brink of superstardom (The Ricky Gervais Show recently made the 250,000,000 download mark), the Welsh caravan is as appealing as ever. "When I came back from the last trip, I went back to the caravan site I went to every year as a kid. It wasn't as good as I remember, and it was ruined cos' I had bad toothache and it rained. No complaints with the caravan though. I think they're really good. It's amazing how you can sleep so many people in them. The sofa turned into a double bed, the table converted to a single bed. I think even the oven could be transformed into a bed for any midgets in the family."

The future certainly looks bright for Karl, then. Last week, *An Idiot Abroad* debuted with over 800,000 viewers and a 3.5% audience share from 9pm; Sky 1's best figures for a new show since Terry Pratchett's *Going Postal*. What can we expect next? "I've got to sort the kitchen out and get some new carpet for the bedroom."

An Idiot Abroad is showing on Sky1 & Sky1 HD at 9pm on Thursdays. The accompanying travelogue, 'An Idiot Abroad: The Travel Diaries of Karl Pilkington' is available now.



FRESHERS' FASHION

Ladies, Georgia Riley shows you how to keep cool this winter!

As the days begin to get colder, the nights roll in earlier and you once again find yourself slumped in a lecture hall, it all means only one thing – summer is over and autumn is here. But it's not all doom and gloom. This year's a/w trends are the hottest we've seen in years and catwalk copies are already pouring into the high street, so there's a lot to get excited about! Here's a guide to this season's biggest looks and how you should be wearing them now.

Rule number one: retro is cool. Styles from nearly every decade can be found on the catwalk. Louis Vuitton are channelling 1950s chic into their collection and Hannah MacGibbon infused Chloé's designs with camel colours and long, lean silhouettes harking back to the 1970s.

A new take on 90s grunge has also emerged on the high street this season. Think grunge grown-up. Lace, check and pretty floral patterns, similar to those we were swamped with

through the summer, are here in dusty hues. Contrast with chunky knits and clumpy boots to create a dishevelled but pretty look. Tough but nice, 'soft grunge' is oh-so-cool at the moment.

When it comes to evening wear, anything 80s is still in. The look is sexy but classy, the colours; black, purples and reds. The LBD has always been a staple, but this winter it's a definite favourite. In fact, any dress, whether sequined, leopard-

print or lace, is ideal for the evening. Not a dress person? Have no fear. An alternative can be found in the jumpsuit. Simple black or burgundy looks effortlessly sexy, especially with a pair of heels. A cheap but elegant buy is the Rachael Halterneck jumpsuit from boohoo.com at £20.

Whichever look you choose, add some edge to your style and cover up with an on trend blazer. Key tip: keep warm and stay sexy! There's nothing more unattractive than goose bumps on a pale winter body.

For the day, silk blouses are a must, and are the perfect trans-seasonal buy. If you need to look smart, try going for the sophisticated, feminine look. A 1970s pussy-bow neck works well with long flared trousers, nipped in at the waist. And although this trend looks best on those gifted with height and long legs, a simple pair of heeled boots can do the trick for the rest of us.

For a more relaxed look to wear around campus, try a large, loose-fitting silk shirt. My favourite is found at Topshop, coming in navy, camel and tobacco (on trend colours this autumn), and is perfect to wear over chinos or skinny jeans. It costs £40 (below), but Topshop offer a 10% student discount.

The classic Breton top is still a favourite this season and it too works well with a pair of chinos. Emulate Grace Kelly or Audrey Hepburn with silk scarf and keep warm with a cream knit cardigan.

The good news is that staying warm this winter is cool (and after last year's winter you can see why). Those Fairisle cardies and jumpers that your granny knits you for Christmas have finally come into fashion; from chunky cable knit cardies (below, Topshop, £00) to oversized boyfriend jumpers, knitwear should be the staple of your wardrobe this winter.



save on the heating bill!

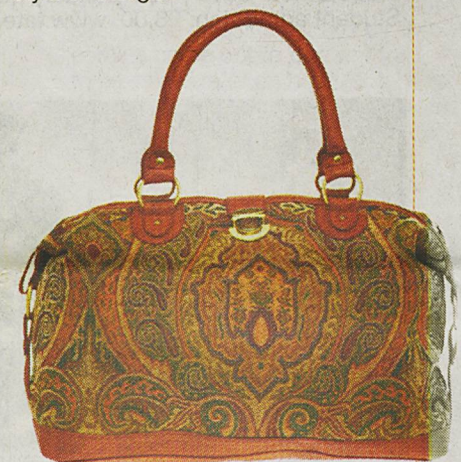


Anything along the lines of English Heritage is exactly what this winter asks for. Tweeds, plaids, leather, wool and sheepskin are going to be big once winter really hits. An essential buy for winter is the sheepskin aviator jacket. To buy one on the cheap, head to H&M where you can find a fantastic one, in black imitation leather, for only £24.99 (above). The even better news is you can now shop online at their new website www.shop.hm.com.

Fancy taking a stroll around Lincoln's Inn Fields? Wrap up warm in a trusty parka. Stand out from the crowd in a fashionable cape. Or pick any coat in the shade of camel (above, right, H&M Camel coat, £59.99). Student style tip: save money and update your existing winter coat by nipping it in at the waist with a leather belt or tie.

The perfect accessory with this look is a carpet bag. Not only is it an absolute must-have this season, but it's also ideal for carrying around those heavy books to and from the library. You can find a lovely one on ASOS.com for only £36 (right). Sheepskin lined boots are also big this winter especially with a cream, fleecy lining to keep your tootsies warm!

With so many different looks to play around with this winter, there's plenty of fun to be had. Don't be afraid to experiment with a few key pieces to find a look that's right for you. As I said there's a lot to get excited about. This winter, fashion offers something to suit everyone, no matter what your style or budget.



Boys, Alice Fyfe hopes your taking notes...

Teddyboy to Punk, Gentleman to Rockstar, this season as ever merges iconic fashion trends in an eclectic signature look which London is so famous for. We're thinking James Dean, Sherlock Holmes, Andy Warhol meets Edward Scissorhands. That Jeff Buckley Jacket. You get the picture. Stars of Hollywood and fiction across the ages have donned it, now we shall wear it all.

Autumn is a transition from balmy sunshine to breezy, and is the perfect opportunity to mix a plethora of styles in layers. This season, the staple jacket takes a flavour from the 70s; velvet and moleskin blazers in wine gum shades can accompany almost anything, providing easy and elegant warmth for those breezy days in Lincoln Inn and those frosty nights in Soho. Favourite colours include Midnight Blue (below, Uniqlo £59.99) and Claret Red. If you're feeling this 70s vibe, couple it with a candy shirt, in cotton or

silk. Paul Smith has paved the way for such typical English eccentricities, but similar styles can be found on the high street for a fraction of the price. Massimo Dutti and Uniqlo have some excellent styles.

For nights out in Hoxton and Soho, don this season's dark horse. The sequined jacket. Jeff Buckley wore it effortlessly and with drainpipe cords or moleskin skinnies, this item can be dressed up or down, providing an extra layer of glam to an urban ensemble. The likes of Beyond Retro or Rokit will sort you out in no time.

The Brogue is still in town, particularly in chocolate suede, or if you're feeling jazzy, a dazzling patent dress shoe. To be worn, of course, with contrasting socks (cue Billy Jean). The classic is still Church's (left) but less wallet crunching styles can be found at Office and Topman. Doctor Martins are also here to stay, and can punk up practically any outfit. Heavy Biker and Army styles keep toes warm and dry for rainy days. The Chelsea also resurfaces this autumn for smart 50s simplicity.

80s flavour tshirts are still out there. Lazy Oaf in Kingly Court and Slam City Skates in Neal's Yard do some fun and original designs. Plain Ts and Vs can of course be found everywhere on the High street. AmAp and Uniqlo happen to be my favourite for these staples.

The classic fairisle knits and chunky cardigans from vintage hotspots remain on trend, and for under a jacket or library lounging, a simple cashmere crew neck is always a hit. Uniqlo have an array of shades starting from £24.99. Following on from the Breton

stripe of the summer, the nautical look goes rustic and Nordic with thick felt duffle coats and fisherman jumpers. These will definitely keep you snug on those snow days.

And for the casual amble along the Southbank or a trip to Portobello Road, what could be more comfy than the snug varsity jacket? Variations include thick denim lined with sheepskin or a splash of vintage print. Vintage stores are worth a rummage as new styles can be pricey. This is a favourite of mine, if your wallet can stretch. (below, True Religion Denim Jacket from Selfridges £279)



It's always advisable to invest in some crisp classic shirts at the start of each season. There is a growing trend for structured starched simplicity. Japanese styles can be seen in Muji and Uniqlo. Cos does this look well too, using natural fibres and clean, fresh colours. Sharp modest dressing needs confidence and deserves good investment. Carhartt have some classic Oxfords at £55.

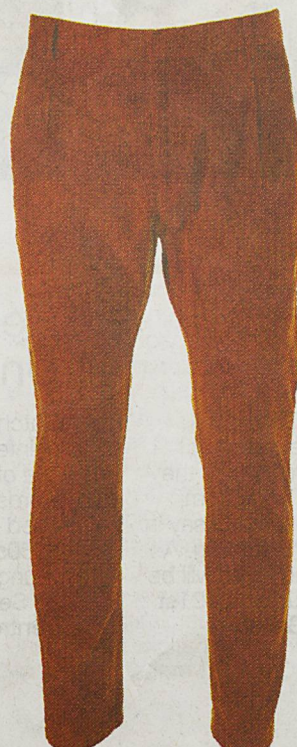
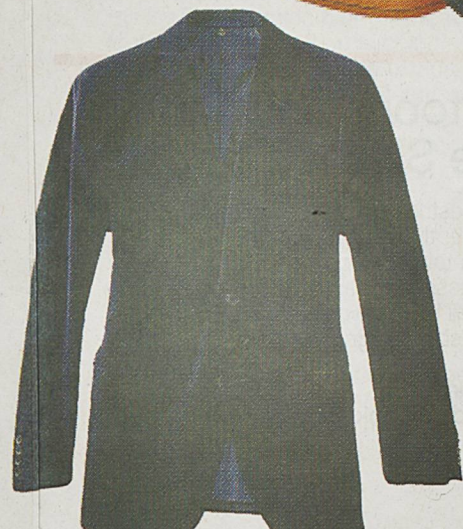
Drizzling? Pick up an army mac to match those boots from last season. The waxed Harrington or Barbour

(right, £200) will do the job. Just be sure to mix them with some high top trainers or graphic T-shirt, else you might look like a farmer!

If you're a slender chap, jeans are still skin tight. Tighter than tight, in fact. We can measure your dedication to fashion by the Lycra content of your trousers. If you're not willing to go to such measures, camel "cuffed carrot" chinos and cords can be jazzed up with the right footwear. These (below) are from Topman at a very reasonable £36.



These outfits are all very well, but you must invest in one of the following to carry those heavy library books. The Gladstone bag has been slowly surfacing for a few seasons now, but now is the time to invest. Durable and versatile in tan or black, these historic holdalls will last a lifetime, ideal for library binges and weekends away. Alternatively the retro rucksack provides an easy way to transport textbooks. This one at ASOS does the trick! (£35)



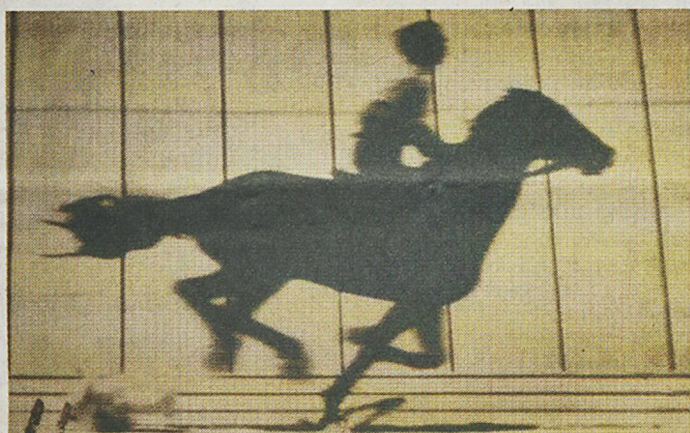
Part B takes a look at the best art exhibitions coming to London this autumn



Photo credit: Moniker International Art Fair

Eadweard Muybridge at the Tate Britain

The pioneer of photography as a form of art is the focus of this major new exhibition at the Tate Britain. Works are included dating from 1870 to 1904, with panoramic landscape shots of America featured alongside Muybridge's famous motion capture images of people and animals.
8 September 2010 - 16th January 2011, Tate Britain
Student admission: £8.00. www.tate.org.uk/britain/exhibitions/



The Turner Prize 2010 at Tate Britain

The Turner Prize shortlist returns to London with Dexter Dalwood, Angela de la Cruz, Susan Philipsz and The Otolith Group vying for the top prize. This year's contenders, including two painters, are looking decidedly less controversial than in previous years, but the exhibition is still worth a look. The winner of the Turner Prize 2010 will be announced in December 2010.
5 October 2010 - 2 January 2011. Tickets are £6 for students. www.tate.org.uk/britain/exhibitions/future/



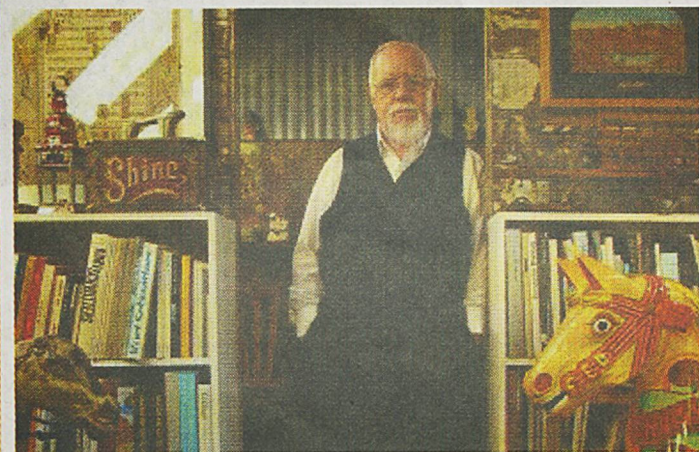
The Frieze Art Fair

The Frieze Art Fair showcases films, talks, music and art from over 170 galleries around the world and promises to be the most important art fair in London this Autumn. With a temporary bespoke cinema and a programme of lectures from art experts and philosophers, there is enough to make you forget about that looming essay deadline. And for those feeling a bit lost there is a guided tour to explain. Regent's Park, London.
Tickets from £10 at www.frieze.com



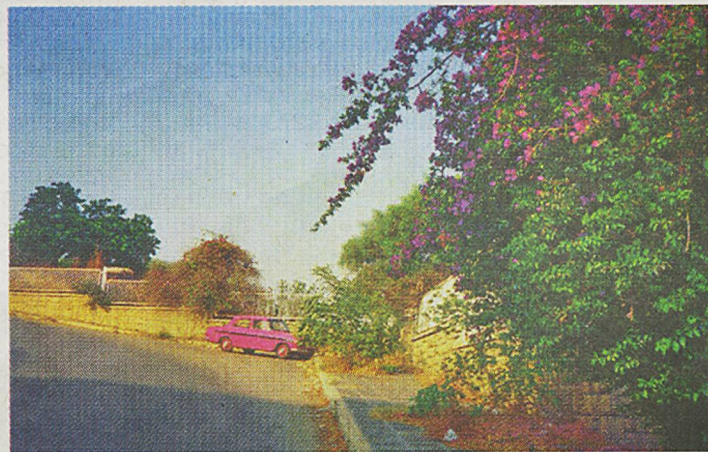
Sir Peter Blake, Exhibition #3

The museum dedicated to showcasing artists outside of modern society will feature the legendary pop artist Sir Peter Blake for exhibition no.3 to run alongside the Frieze art fair. Instead of Blake's usual iconic images, expect to see his lifetime collection of found objects, from taxidermy to fairground curiosities and even memorabilia such as an Elvis branded condom. 13 October 2010 - 24 December 2010. Museum of Everything, Primrose Hill. www.musevery.com



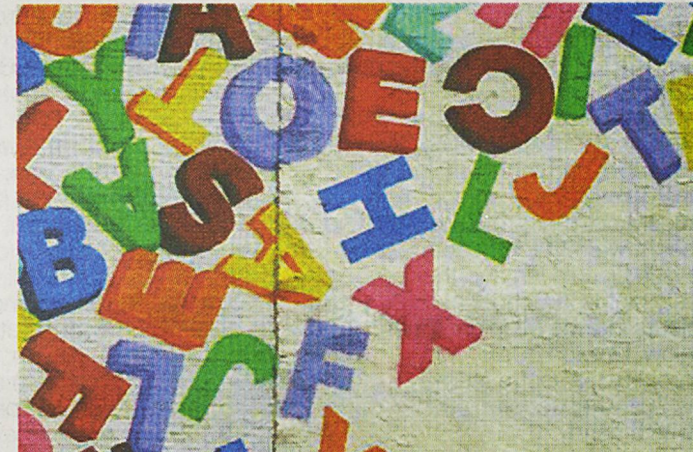
Walid Raad: Miraculous Beginnings

A look at the last 20 years of works from one of the most important artists in the Middle East. Walid Raad's work is largely centred on the wars in Lebanon and considers the effects of conflict not only on body and mind, but also on art itself. There will be photographic and video works on display including a series of negatives found in the rubble in war-torn Beirut.
14th October 2010 - 2nd January 2011 Whitechapel Gallery
Admission: Free. www.whitechapelgallery.org/exhibitions



Moniker International Art Fair

If street art is more your thing then ditch Frieze for this ultra-contemporary art fair which provides a more 'cutting-edge' alternative, with artists that are often overlooked by the British mainstream. Participating artists include Banksy, Barry McGee, Cheryl Dunn, Nate Frizzel and Polly Morgan. All artwork is for sale, and best of all, entry is free.
14th - 17th October, The Village Underground, 54 Holywell Lane, Shoreditch. www.monikerartfair.com/site/



Cézanne's Card Players

Just across the road from LSE, the Courtauld Gallery will be host to a major exhibition featuring Cézanne's famous series of paintings of peasants playing cards. Alongside the gallery's own masterpieces will be exceptional loans from the Metropolitan Museum in New York, the Musée d'Orsay in Paris and the State Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg. A series of talks will accompany the exhibition and there will be free tours on Sunday's. Admission is £5 for students. 21st October until 16th January 2011, Courtauld Gallery

René Daniëls: Painting on Unknown Languages

Dutch artist René Daniëls was one of the most innovative painters around through the 1970s and 80s. His menagerie of forms and constantly mutating images - trees full of words, architecture as both bow tie and butterfly - developed in a career cut short by a tragic accident in the late 1980s. A painter's painter, Daniëls continues to influence younger artists with his enquiring approach to the medium.
23 September 2010 - 28 November 2010 Camden Arts Centre, London. www.camdenartscentre.org

Raphael: Cartoons and Tapestries for the Sistine Chapel

Four of the ten original tapestries designed by Raphael for the Sistine Chapel are currently on display at the V&A to coincide with the visit to Britain of Pope Benedict XVI. Over 500 years old, these Renaissance masterpieces are the only surviving tapestries, and will be showcased with the famous Raphael Cartoons; the full size designs for them.
On until 17th October.
Victoria and Albert Museum
Tickets are free but limited so book early. www.vam.ac.uk/

TV: The year ahead

Comedy: Dara O Briain
Hammersmith Apollo
22.09.10

Oh TV, every summer you leave us to fend for ourselves with repeats, too much reality television and too many films by Michael Bay. Every September we come crawling back to you begging for television nourishment and every year you provide. Here's a look at what you're providing for us this coming year.

Of all of the new shows to hit the box this autumn, the one with the highest pedigree is most definitely Boardwalk Empire (HBO). Created by Terrence Winter – the number two man on The Sopranos – and having its first episode directed by film legend Martin Scorsese, Boardwalk Empire focuses on the introduction of prohibition in America and how it was exploited by the criminal underground for their own gains. Headed up by Steve Buscemi and featuring a cast as eclectic as Michael Shannon (Revolutionary Road), Kelly Macdonald (No Country for Old Men), Michael Stuhlbarg (A Serious Man) and Michael K. Williams (Omar from The Wire), it comes as no surprise to say that this will probably be the show of the year for many people.

For those of you who like your crime dramas, *Terriers* (FX) should be right up your alley. Two unlicensed private detectives set about trying to uncover corporate corruption while navigating their own murky personal lives. If you liked *Chinatown* but thought it contained too much nose slicing and incest and not enough comedy, this is the show for you. Alternatively, if you like detective dramas such as *Monk* and *Veronica Mars*, then this is also worth a look.

One of the most heralded pilots of this season is that of

Lone Star (Fox). TV newcomer James Wolk plays a con-man who finally decides to go straight and become a legitimate citizen. The problems start when he has to decide whether to stay with his fake girlfriend (Eloise Mumford) in small-town Texas or his fake wife (Friday Night Lights' Adrienne Palicki) in big-town Texas. It's an intriguing premise, but an unreceptive US audience means it is unlikely to reach British soil any time soon.

If you're not looking for quality television, but for something pretty to look at to avoid studying for classes and seminars, look no further than the CW's new duopoly of *Nikita* and *Hellcats*. *Nikita* is another remake of the film *La Femme Nikita* and is an excuse for Maggie Q to shoot guns at a load of bad guys. *Hellcats* sees High School Musical's Ashley Tisdale as head cheerleader of a university cheerleading team competing to restore their funding.

As for returning shows, *Glee* (Fox) is going to be pretty much more of the same. Murphy has said that while he wants to focus on the emotional side of the show and reduce the number of songs in each episode. Is *Glee* going to be the consistent show it could never claim to be last year? No. Are die-hard *Glee* fans going to care at all about any of this? Of course not.

How I Met Your Mother (CBS) was one show that met with a backlash. Speaking to critics over the summer, the cast and creators seemed to agree that the most recent season – season 5 – was an off-season and have pledged to return to the storytelling that made HIMYM such a delight. The return of Rachel Bilson implies that more of the eponymous 'mother' will reveal itself as the season progresses – for the people who are still hung up about it.

Another show that came under fire last year for repetitiveness was

The Office (NBC). However, with the departure of Steve Carrell at the end of this year, season 7 promises to provide some sort of shake-up that the show increasingly seems to need. Ricky Gervais is famous for bailing after 12 episodes for fear of treading into the familiar and stale; while the economics of US broadcast television usually quash such thinking, this season really does need something to give it the edge it had in the beginning. Hopefully Carrell's departure can provide some sort of stimulus for reviving the show to its glory days.

On a final note, I'd like to draw people's attention to what was probably the best show of last season: *Community* (NBC). Critically acclaimed but commercially ignored, its second season has already started in the US; its first season starts airing in the UK on October 5th on VIVA. If you only watch one piece of television this academic year, I implore you to watch this. It is literally the funniest show currently on TV. The very high praise includes gems such as **Jonathan Storey**

In a 3,000-seat theatre like the Hammersmith Apollo, anyone on stage or speaking needs a microphone. A basic point, I know. That's why Dara O Briain had one – he was, in a decent gag, at pains to point out that it wasn't a wart growing on the side of his face. It's a shame, then, that he didn't seem to realise that people in the audience don't have one too because they're going to listen to what he's going to say, and that three thousand people with microphones might make proceedings a bit anarchistic and very noisy.

The first half was mostly O Briain picking random people from the front row of the stalls and having a chat: remember each audience member is sans microphone. The conversation each time was: 'What do you do? Where are you from? The first time O Briain relayed back to the audience that he was talking to a water engineer from Hendon it wasn't funny. The second time, post-banter with a German chef, I was wondering what on earth was going on and whether I'd wandered into some sort of chat show by mistake.

And, then, after the third interviewee, a lawyer from Sevenoaks, it had grated so much that I was staring at the wall, 15 minutes in. Not the most gripping start.

He persisted still, asking 'has anyone ever saved anyone's life?' 'Yes,' a woman hollered to the stage downstairs, 'I saved a man's life for a couple of hours', something I again only heard after O Briain repeated it back. On one level

I'm glad she'd saved someone's life (but sad it was only for a couple of hours. Why? Why? Why?), but I'm still not sure as to why it was either funny or worth knowing. As O Briain asked more and more people about their lives this random rigmarole got increasingly tedious. I wasn't staring at the wall any more – even that had got boring by then. Finger nails were being munched on.

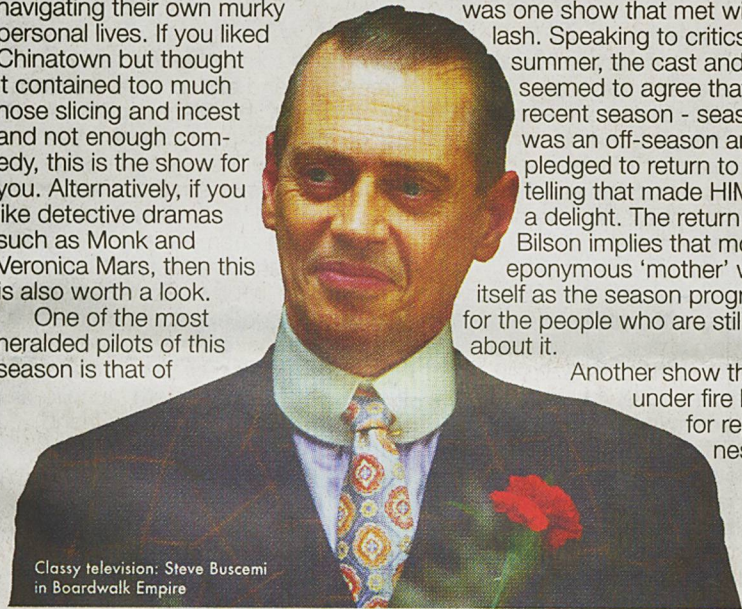
And then, at the end of the first half, the audience O Briain told the audience to 'go and have a tequila'. I didn't and remained stone-cold sober but, still, from then on it was better – hardly a laugh-a-minute-funfest but an immeasurable improvement after he'd tried and failed to be comedy's version of Parkinson for an hour.

But it's clear that O Briain is a good comic. A piece about his love for video gaming was original enough to get the loudest round of applause of the night. Similarly, the tale of a trip with his wife to a pre-natal class – with a man who was keen to make it clear that if there was an embarrassing problem, his partner had had it during her pregnancy – wasn't bad at all. A piece pointing out the Hollywood compositing of the film 2012 was also good.

Also, whatever the content of the show, it's worth pointing out that he was on stage for two hours – there was no support act to pad out the show for an hour before the big star showed up. This – contrary to what seems the norm nowadays as TV comics come out to perform for three-quarters of an hour for tens of thousands of pounds a night before waltzing off into a haze of self-satisfaction – was refreshing to see.

But with a joke told during the doomed first half about how he'd bought an expensive bike to (try to) emulate the Irish Tour de France winner, Stephen Roche – albeit O Briain was riding around Richmond Park and probably isn't going to be doing the Tour any time soon – and how he'd only fall off when he lost momentum, I couldn't stop thinking that with that analogy he'd just nailed the main fault of his show.

Nathan Briant



Classy television: Steve Buscemi in Boardwalk Empire



Retrospective: Arcade Fire, The Suburbs

Live Music:
Mount Kimbie @ XOYO,
21.09.10

While spending my summer doing my best to ensure that this time next year I won't be drawing on the dole, I also managed to devote considerable time to the appreciation of a particular north-American album of rock music, getting to know and love its context just as much as the songs themselves. Yawn...

Arcade Fire's *The Suburbs* is the group's third long-player, and it sees the Texan-cum-Haitian-via-Montreal troupe propelled into arenas, fully realising the power of the righteous steam they've been conjuring through their surprisingly short career.

The Suburbs sets out its stall with minimum circumlocution – I mean, look at the title, it's hardly going to be an album about space exploration. Via a chugging interpretation of Springsteen overlaid with spare, unsettling theremin, the multinational collective invite us into the kind of infinitely repeatable childhood that I and many others will know well. Theirs was in Texas; mine was in Harrow – the geographical location, frontman Win Butler would argue, is irrelevant in comparison to the shareable experiences. The longing for the open road ("Let's take a drive," Butler whispers); the identikit shopping malls sprawling "like mountains beyond mountains": the icons of suburbia are laid out

song-by-song. Unsurprisingly, lyrical themes are revisited on numerous occasions; a friend recommended we play a drinking game involving every mention of certain phrases.

After two albums of throwing the kitchen sink at the speakers, here Arcade Fire favour a more streamlined, economical sound. Laid back, even, which is apt, given the way that our memories of childhood can seem infinite. When the tempo increased, and the vocals became more frenzied, I felt on the verge of radical new discoveries. The frantic strings of "Empty Room" were set against more impressionistic lyrics; later, "Sprawl II (Mountains Beyond Mountains)" channelled a surrealist metaphor through Blondie's "Heart of Glass". For the most part, however, *The Suburbs* evokes Springsteen, Neil Young, and the undercurrent of dread that your whole life is devoid of meaning thanks to the homogeneity of technology and town-planning.

Upon first listening to "Deep Blue" I was perplexed: why, amidst all the "suburban war" and "streets we grew up in", was there a song about chess? Next time round, it made perfect sense. Kasparov losing to Deep Blue in May 1997 would have been a momentous loss of confidence in the reign of humanity. Our narrator "was only a child then", but was gripped all the same by what seemed like "the



end of a century, compressed on a tiny screen". Battling against rumbles of brass and a mournful organ, Butler laments the victory of the glorified adding machine.

The Suburbs is relentlessly... solid and, while it did not dramatically reinvent my understanding of alternative music, it did give me a loving crash course in the culture it represents. Sometimes I get bored of hearing wired Brooklynites coaxing a tropical cocktail of sounds from a collection of electronic devices; if you feel the same, on occasion, I encourage you to get in touch with your (probably unfulfilled) childhood and immerse yourself in Arcade Fire's career-best.

Sachin Patel

If you smoked inside Xoyo, Old Street's newest, hippest venue, no one would know. Dry ice hangs everywhere; the entrance, the cloakroom, and the stairwell; making it look like a typical descent into London by plane. Inside, the flashing lights flare up the smoke, and your whole vision is unnervingly tinted from blue, to red to black. Sweat drips and beer swills (mostly onto my shoes) whilst the check-shirted crowd waits for arguably one of London's best electronic groups.

I'm loathe to call Mount Kimbie 'dubstep', but whatever they are, they're great. Having built up significant acclaim and hype since the release of their 'Maybes' EP last year, their debut album 'Crooks and Lovers' was hotly received by the electronic cognoscenti earlier this year. Consisting of Dominic Maker and Kai Campos, they mounted the stage, obscured by a thick blanket of dry ice, and unleashed their vibrant mash of twittering electronics and breeze-block percussion. The crowd didn't skank-out, but swayed in a baked haze; immersed in the swell of Mount Kimbie's short but gorgeous electronic nuggets. The addition of a real cymbal and snare on top of the synth percussion lent the music a deep dynamic push, with tangible energy and excitement, whilst the vocals on 'Before I Move Off' gave

astounding life to chopped up scraps of vocal samples. The impression I get from Mount Kimbie is that they're heading up a humanist revolution in electronic music. Organic sounds impose onto synthetic ones, and the poppy warmth of the compositions melds it into a wash of tactile and aesthetic timbres. At times during the gig I was even reminded of shoegaze and post-rock bands, such were the textures and atmospheres created. One thing Mount Kimbie are certainly not is small minded.

Though the gig was short, it was

**Mount Kimbie
are heading up
a revolution in
electronic music**

fantastic to see artists so talented showing off their skills, with or without the comfort of air conditioning. The UK underground is continuing to go from strength to strength, and Mount Kimbie could easily be the best example of this. Get on the bandwagon while there's still space.

Liam McLaughlin

Made in Dagenham



Director: Nigel Cole **Screenplay:** Billy Ivory
Cast: Sally Hawkins, Bob Hoskins, Miranda Richardson, Geraldine James
Runtime: 113 min **Cert:** 15. **Year:** 2010

Made in Dagenham is exactly what it says on the tin: a nice film of a true story of nice people doing nice things. But anyone going in and expecting a cinematic revolution will leave feeling short-changed. MID is simply a nice film: nothing more, nothing less.

Sally Hawkins stars as Rita O'Grady, a machinist working at Ford's plant in Dagenham in 1968. A union dispute over pay-grading leads to strike action, and Rita is chosen to be the face of the campaign, which quickly branches out to include another cause - that of equal pay for all workers regardless of gender, an extremely progressive idea in the late '60s.

The cast is headed by Bob Hoskins as a union representative, Miranda Richardson as Employment Minister Barbara Castle, and a bevy of up-and-coming British actresses in Jaime Winstone, Andrea Riseborough and Rosamund Pike, who round off the rest of the factory workers and an impressive cast.

Hawkins is a compelling lead, and since the film's showing at the Toronto

Film Festival last month, it has been touted for a number of Oscar nomination.

Sadly, MID doesn't rise above the standard biopics usually relegated to television or straight-to-DVD releases. Several events feel tacked on to force an emotional response - one character arc in particular feels like director Nigel Cole has used every trick in the proverbial book in order to get the audience to cry at their plight. There is virtually no tension either since everyone knows the ending. This wouldn't be so much of a problem if the journey to the destination was filled with intrigue and suspense, but the filmmakers are content to play on the aforementioned nostalgia instead of creating a compelling narrative. At the screening, I must have been the only person under 40, and while everyone was laughing at the film's in-jokes about living in the '60s, I sat blank-faced wondering why no-one could see that this was uninteresting.

Like Cole's previous film, *Calendar Girls*, MID is pleasant enough. It is not a brilliant film; but it qualifies as a good film despite its flaws. Ultimately, if you can be swept away by the period-setting and winning performances and forget the blandness of the narrative, you will probably enjoy yourself a lot more than I did.

Jonathan Storey

Made in Dagenham is released 1st October



Made in Dagenham: like a Ford Fiesta: good, not great

MacGruber



Director: Jorma Taccone **Screenplay:** Jorma Taccone, Will Forte, John Solomon **Cast:** Will Forte, Kristen Wiig, Ryan Phillippe **Runtime:** 99 mins **Cert:** 15. **Year:** 2010

Based on the popular Saturday Night Live sketch, which has had everyone from Josh Brolin to Seth Rogen taking part, MacGruber (Will Forte) of 80s TV actioner MacGyver, who you may know - courtesy of Patty and Selma's unhealthy obsession - as having a penchant for getting out of sticky situations with some toothpaste and a sock. A former Green Beret, Navy Seal and Army Ranger (is that even possible?), MacGruber has been forced out of self-imposed exile to retrieve a stolen nuclear warhead from the dastardly Dieter von Cunth.

Corn is certainly in abundance in MacGruber. In fact, all the ingredients for a cheese-fest are. There are preposterous names that ooze all-American testosterone: 'Tut Beemer', 'Dixon Piper', 'Hoss Bender', 'Tanker Lutz' and 'Vernon Freedom'. There's the classic attempt to squeeze a third dimension out of a generic action lead: our first encounter with MacGruber is in an Ecuadorian spiritual retreat, where he's leading a life of solitude. And, of course, there's the all-important montage.

Steven Segal may not be around for the straight flush, but a bloated, ponytailed Val Kilmer is the next best thing as von Cunth. Kilmer's straight-talking villainy along with Kristin Wiig's hapless schtick as sidekick Vicki St.

Elmo go some way in offsetting Will Forte's lead performance, which is disappointing when held up against other SNL graduates such as Will Ferrell.

Of course, a great deal is made of Cunth's naughty name; the overriding objective is to 'pound some Cunth'. While this teeters on testing after the thousandth slog, MacGruber's saving grace is its stellar support and occasional payloads of hysterical laughter, in particular the send-up sex scene, which is probably the best since Team America.

It may not quite scale the impossible heights of SNL-cum-Hollywood classics like *Wayne's World* and *Blues Brothers*, but Jorma Taccone's turning of a sixty second skit into a ninety minute feature is a fine effort that develops beyond its MacGyver-spoofing roots into a keen-eyed action genre piss-take.

Ahmed Peerbux

MacGruber is released on DVD 11th October

We have three blu-ray copies of MacGruber to shift. Just tell us what MacGruber once changed his name to. Send in your answers to: a.peerbux@lse.ac.uk

Greenberg



Director: Noah Baumbach **Screenplay:** Noah Baumbach, Jennifer Jason Leigh **Cast:** Ben Stiller, Greta Gerwig, Rhys Ifans, Jennifer Jason Leigh **Runtime:** 99 mins. **Cert:** 15. **Year:** 2010

Greenberg forces situations upon the audience that we're supposed to find funny, but come across as mean-spirited. We'd laugh if we didn't care about these characters, but writer and director Noah Baumbach makes us, so that it just comes across as tragic, not tragicomic as intended.

The film follows Roger Greenberg (Ben Stiller), a 40-year-old man who has recently suffered a nervous breakdown, now struggling to do nothing. He returns to Los Angeles where he grew up and had a semi-successful rock band and housesits for his brother while he and his family are away on an extended vacation. Greenberg meets his brother's assistant, Florence (Greta Gerwig) and begins an awkward romance with her. He also reconnects with his old band mates - including Ivan (Rhys Ifans) - who are still bitter about a record deal ruined by Roger 15 years ago. To all of these people and more, Roger is a complete dick.

While there are problems with Greenberg's plot, it exhibits some of the finest acting in film this year. Stiller manages to make Roger a narcissistic arsehole, but relatable nevertheless. Ifans plays the jilted best friend so well that we feel every insult Roger makes about his son and his new life. The real revelation, however, is Gerwig

as the put-upon personal assistant. Florence manages to appear so ordinary that it really feels like we are not watching a drama, but a documentary. Her scenes with Stiller are most heartbreaking due to the way Roger treats her most of all; they are also the most troubling in the film.

There is nothing wrong with cinematic empathy; but there is also nothing wrong with narcissistic pricks being the main characters in entertainment: the anti-hero is a staple in many good films. Even combining the two doesn't always lead to disaster: the original *Office* is a perfect blend of building relatable, human characters, wrecking their dreams and laughing about it. Where *The Office* worked was that it was funny in the midst of all of this desperation. Greenberg, on the other hand, unleashes a self-in-

involved shitstorm in the form of Roger Greenberg and expects the results in themselves to be hilarious. But there are no staplers in jelly; there are no funny dances. The misery, the sarcasm and the nihilism are all expected to be the joke.

But when attempts at comedy are made, they are often amusing: one running joke involves Roger's fascination with writing letters of complaint to businesses that have wronged him. There are also nicely comic touches from his ex-girlfriend Beth (Jennifer Jason Leigh) and Florence's friend Gina (Nurse Jackie's Merritt Weaver). The film would have been much better if it had focused on these characters.

Jonathan Storey

Greenberg is released on DVD 4th October



Ben Stiller in *Greenberg*

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Still from *The Orchestra*, courtesy Veera Lehtola

Features



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After the vuvuzelas

Kwaku Awuku-Asabre and Sayo Folawiyo discuss post-World Cup Africa

Side by side, arm in arm, united by a common theme, a common love; the inhabitants of Mbombela Stadium seemed to breathe as one. Uplifted by the elation of their neighbours, South Africa cheered with one voice, as one people. It was a time of great celebration, deafening vuvuzelas and the blinding shades of dancing bafana bafana. Fears of violence and of unpreparedness, were forgotten in the festivities and replaced with pride as all stood up, hand on heart to sing their nation's anthem. Moments after kick off, the crowd erupts as Tshabalala's strike hits the roof of the net - GOAL - the crowd roars, chanting ensues and fans frenetically embrace. One cannot help but feel a sense of optimism not just among South Africans but all Africans alike. 'Ke Nako!' (Its time) a phrase that rung through every school corridor, on the lips of every South African watching could not have been more apt. It was time. Time that a continent stood up and was proud. Time that the world sat up and paid attention.

Months later, the vuvuzelas' blast is an echo of past joys. Silence now fills the hollow stadium; the once great Soccer City is no more. We are left asking - did the world cup achieve all we expected of it - for equality, for prosperity, for Africa? Or was 'ke nako', uttered with such expectation, an empty statement, in vogue but out of touch?

On the face of it, this seems prematurely pessimistic. Africa has been gifted a real opportunity for growth. In South Africa the world cup provided the opportunity for a \$1.7 billion injection into the economy, helping to boost economic growth of the "Rainbow Nation" some 0.5 percent. There was progress against unemployment as, for example, FIFA trained 5,500 community staff and 6,000 unskilled workers as service staff, each

of whom received a certificate to help them to find qualified jobs. Overall, more than R33bn (\$4bn) was spent on roads and public transport. Tourism blossomed also; foreign visitors to South Africa rose by more than 350 000 for the first four months of this year as compared to the same period in 2009.

The resulting boost in confidence has served to unify neighbouring nations and empower trade. Before the world cup only 12 per cent of African trade was done within the continent. South Africa's trade ministry is now promoting an African trade zone which will stretch from Cape Town to Cairo, with the goal of knitting together three different regional trade groups over the next year. Empowered, the Johannesburg Stock Exchange, by far the largest in Africa, is targeting company listings from other African countries rather than those from Europe and the U.S. Africans are investing in their future.

Most importantly, South Africa welcomed the world united as one people. A nation once torn apart by a malevolent prejudice, now open-armed, welcomed all who were willing to come and share in their culture, to be a part of their history as they celebrated an equality they had come to cherish so dearly.

Delving deeper into the World Cup story, it is difficult to remain so cheery. Prior to the tournament, Sep Blatter outlined the 'legacy' of the World Cup explaining that it was to provide 'the tools and the incentive to fight against poverty and disease'. But was this achieved? FIFA did make efforts to provide condoms, and sex education pamphlets at fan fests. Most notably, they funded a mobile clinic to test for HIV in Soweto. Yet, the TV and Radio exposure was kept to a minimum, preferring instead to appease their sponsors. Consequently, their efforts seemed half-hearted and frankly impotent.

The issue of superficial improvement doesn't end at efforts to combat AIDS. Many have become disillusioned at South Africa's apparent post-World Cup decline. Just recently, strikes have crippled essential services and have led to levels of violence typical of a pre-World Cup South Africa. The recent wage strike emptied teachers from public schools, nurses from state hospitals and civil servants from government offices. Peering closer, we can question the transparency of the democracy Jacob Zuma leads with such gusto. The African National Congress' plans to create a media watchdog empowered to punish transgressing journalists with undefined penalties which will be overseen by a parliament controlled by the party. Such blatant disregard for basic freedoms cannot be allowed to continue. Yet this rot spreads further as the Department of Mineral Resources seems to have been diverting mineral and prospecting rights into the hands of senior ANC figures, including family members and friends of President Zuma.

In addition to this, the economic picture is bleak at best. In its report, the OECD zooms in on the biggest structural challenges facing South Africa; its failing schools, its over-regulated economy and its highly unionized labour market. Not to mention sustained unemployment, now exceeding 50 per cent for black youths. These problems are worsened by the large number of under-skilled workers searching for jobs in an economy that is moving away from them.

To be sure, the World Cup hasn't swept South Africa's problems away. But what of Africa? After all, the World Cup was supposed to be a great milestone for the continent, a recognition of its progress, and an appreciation of its potential. The festival was said to beckon a new dawn, yet its possible enthusiasts have jumped

the gun.

For a start, one must challenge how unifying the event really was. Just look at attendance, who was actually there? Records show that African visitors had come predominantly from southern African states such as Lesotho, Zimbabwe and Mozambique - hardly a continental gathering. There were "Poor People's World Cup" protests, fuelled by the anguish of poor communities who felt excluded from the FIFA tournament, and rightly so. Simply from the fact that tickets could only be bought online, a picture of a World Cup reserved to the fortunate quickly takes form. The problems of the continent have survived the football furore; for centuries they have plagued Africa and they won't easily be removed. A tournament won't restore a nation, let alone a continent. The attack on the Togo national team is a jarring reminder of unresolved ills.

Yet, perhaps this conclusion is hastily made. Why are we so quick to treat Africa as a collective? Surely the effects of the tournament on Ethiopia, Sudan, Nigeria or Ghana were as innocuous as the effects of Paris '98 on England or Germany? Africa lacks the infrastructure between states to be treated as a united bloc. To do so is to grossly misrepresent the wealth of culture, of ideologies and identities of which it is so proud. Each nation contributes personally the flagrant tapestry that is Africa. Let us not make the mistake of

clumsily tarnishing it with one brush. It is for this reason that it is difficult to point to concrete changes in Africa as each nation faces its own struggles. There is no silver bullet and there are too many targets.

Its what the World Cup represents that we should look to. Bad press was sure to come, corruption was likely to continue, but Africa did not have to host the World Cup. Hosting the event denotes a change of view towards the continent. The World Cup was never meant to fix Africa. Its role was more catalytic - it forced people to do necessary things - like upgrading airports and fixing roads - years faster than they would otherwise have done. It has begun a long yearned-for metamorphosis. South Africa, the most developed African nation, the only one with its own stock market, was given the honour and other nations now know what it takes to be next in line. The vote of confidence that brought the World Cup was an invitation onto the world stage. For too long, thinking towards the continent has been straight-jacketed by oppressing themes of poverty and corruption. The World Cup moved the lens and we were given the opportunity to look clearly upon the wonders this rich and vibrant continent displays.

Sayo Folawiyo is of Nigerian descent and attended the World Cup. Kwaku Awuku-Asabre is from a Ghanaian family.

WORLD CUP IN NUMBERS

6 African teams qualified for the final tournament

0.5 per cent extra growth in GDP thanks to the World Cup

2.2 million extra visitors predicted to visit South Africa between 2010 and 2015 as a result of the World Cup

40,000 extra policemen hired because of the tournament

25 per cent unemployment rate in South Africa



Flickr user MaggieHannan

Mullin' over New Labour

Nathan Briant speaks to Labour diarist Chris Mullin

After the publication of his second volume of diaries this summer, it is safe to say that Chris Mullin is the Labour Party's 'Alan Clark'. Minus the late Clark's infidelity and debauched lifestyle, (as far as the writer is aware at least) Mullin is very much New Labour's diarist-in-chief, just as Clark's diaries act as the ultimate chronicle of life as a Tory politician under Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s.

Luck did not always shine on Mullin's political career, especially with regards to possible promotion in the three New Labour governments - he served as a Parliamentary Under-Secretary in the Transport, International Development and Foreign offices, but never progressed any further up the ministerial ladder than those relatively junior positions. However, illuminatingly Mullin is told by an insider that, had he not voted against the Iraq war and opposed Tony Blair - 'The Man' - he could well have been on course for a promotion to the position of International Development Secretary. Similarly, at the resignation of the former House of Commons' Speaker, Michael Martin, last spring Mullin ponders whether he would have stood as Martin's replacement had he not announced to Sunderland South Labour Party bigwigs his intention to retire as an MP at the next general election a year before. With a split between both sides of the House - the eventual winner, John Bercow, was not a universally popular choice - Mullin could have stood a good chance of victory. Yet again, an episode of him being in the right place but just at the wrong time.

Both diaries serve as an antidote to the frothy tell-tales which have been recently brought out by more senior New Labour figures over the summer, which excavate old rivalries which the public at large had long moved on from-if it had bothered

anyone in the least in the first place. But the 'TB-GBs' set a precedent amongst Labour politicians for straight talking and verbal battles: MPs are far more candid with Mullin when he reveals he is writing a diary than he believes they would have been otherwise. A senior cabinet figure - perhaps Jack Straw, a friend and former ministerial colleague of Mullin's (but equally perhaps not) - chats to Mullin fairly regularly, and is not shy in making it clear that from his view inside the bunker that Gordon Brown's premiership and possible re-election bid, even from an early stage, is 'fucked'.

The MP commented this spring, 'Only a handful of those who strut the corridors of parliament will still be remembered 20 or 30 years from now and I do not expect to be one of them'. Yet, whatever his general disenchantment over possible ministerial positions, ministers come and go - and they certainly did with New Labour, a gripe Mullin frequently revisits at those regular disorganised government reshuffles. Instead, it is surely worth remembering that arguably the most celebrated parliamentary diarist of the last century, Chips Channon, a serial-diner and socialite Tory MP, held no ministerial office at all. Mullin's contribution to history - though albeit probably an indirect one - will be one which will no doubt live on further than he imagines.

After so many years involved in politics, did you and are you finding it difficult to take a step back from a political life? Are you missing Westminster in any way?

No. A small industry has developed around the publication of my diaries and I am flooded with requests to speak at literary festivals and other events.

Are there any politicians you know of that you could say have the talent and/or the self-confidence for perhaps greater things in the future?

Brown's flaws are well known, but he is likely to be remembered for the part he played in the autumn of 2008 in preventing a meltdown of the global economy. Most foreigners are aware of this, but in this country it seems to be a secret

There's plenty of talent among the new intake, but it is too early yet to say who will be the stars of the future. **What do you make of the Labour leadership campaign so far? Although David Miliband is your favourite from those running, what would you make of a possible Ed Miliband victory?**

Both the Milibands are potential leaders, but David is the more experienced. My personal favourite is Alan Johnson, but regrettably he is not standing. **Other than Iraq and more minor gripes from time to time, were there any other perhaps seismic events that you felt could have greatly contributed to New Labour's eventual electoral loss?**

I think the economy had something to do with it, don't you? Although it is a global crisis, which began in America, the Tories have spent a couple of years pretending that it was all Gordon Brown's fault (they are still at it) - and regrettably some people fell for it. **Are you still keeping diaries today? Or, like Alastair Campbell's diaries, were they kept primarily to be published? When did you start them?**

I started keeping a diary on the night John Smith died - May 12, 1994 - and I stopped on the day Gordon Brown left Downing Street (May 11, 2010). There is one more volume to come.

What or who was your inspiration to take a career in politics, if there was one?

The Vietnam War. Even in the isolation of my Catholic boarding school, with only The Times and the Daily Telegraph to rely upon for information about the world outside, I realised there was something wrong with the official version of events. **For what reason did you take a seat in Sunderland? And did you start your career as a journalist with the vision that you'd become a politician?**

From an early age I wanted to go into politics. I went to Sunderland because I

was invited by some local Labour Party members in Sunderland to apply for the nomination. There were a number of local candidates, but I came out on top. I have lived in Sunderland since 1985. **What would you consider to be your greatest achievement in politics?**

My part in the campaigns to free the Birmingham Six and the Guildford Four which resulted in some long-lasting reforms to the criminal justice system. **What do you regard as Gordon Brown's greatest flaw? His temper? And, conversely, his greatest asset?**

Brown's flaws are well known, but he is likely to be remembered for the part he played in the autumn of 2008 in preventing a meltdown of the global economy. Most foreigners are aware of this, but in this country it seems to be a secret. **Equally, the same about Tony Blair?**

Peace in Northern Ireland was probably Blair's greatest achievement - aside from leading Labour to three successive general election victories - a feat unmatched by any previous Labour leader. His mistake was to ally us umbilically to the worst American president of my lifetime.

What do you regard as the greatest threat to the world in the future?

Climate change - and our failure to live sustainably.

Who was the most talented person you worked with during your time as an MP?

The most able ministers I worked with were Jack Straw and Clare Short; I also thought Alistair Darling was an excellent Chancellor.

Chris Mullin's second volume of diaries, Decline and Fall: Diaries 2005-10, are out now; his first volume of diaries, A View From the Foothills was released in March 2009.

Brothers In Arms

Ashwin Desai analyses the consequences of a family feud



Flickr user: Unisonpix

The Labour Party's electoral masochism is a well-documented phenomenon. Its problem is a simple one: more often than not, it trusts its heart over its head. You'd have thought that despite the thirteen years of what slowly came to be seen as slightly-less-than-glorious 'socialist' government, its rank-and-file might have learnt a thing or two about what has to be compromised for a stab at power (read 'actually changing things'). But no, as the affable young Waj reminded us in this year's funniest film, *Four Lions*, it doesn't take a complete and utter moron to mistake one's heart for one's head. Oh no, hang on a second...

So, in the end we had a nail-biting finish to what had been, for most of the public at least, an altogether unenthralling, overly drawn-out contest. Only after four gruelling long, teasingly-slowly related rounds of counted votes at a leadership conference in Manchester, as a result of the redistributed votes of the three knocked-out contenders, Abbott, Burnham and Balls (in that order), Ed Miliband finally snatched sweet victory from his brother's grasp, by the slender margin of 1.3 per cent of the total vote. After two months packed with speeches, hustings and debates, the rather strange and abstrusely-structured beast that is the Labour Party decided to go with its heart not its head, favouring the young (said to be charismatic?) left-winger over his more experienced, qualified and battle-hardy elder sibling.

Labour Party members among you, jump not out of your seats just yet! After all, you'll say, David, the elder of the two brothers, did win significant majorities among both Labour MPs and grassroots activists, falling to defeat only as a result of his younger brother's stronger union backing. Or, more likely, given the demographic you represent, you'll probably want to brush that one under the carpet. Others, however, will be less forgiving, and the nature of Ed Miliband's victory on Saturday evening will most likely face scrutiny (overt and tacit) across the House. As the Tories have been quick to point out, an electoral system which brings to victory a man who was neither the first choice of his MPs, nor that of his party members, but depended on a rather rickety, ramshackle coalition buttressed by union support seems anachronistic. We can expect David Cameron and his minions to have furiously penned reams of PMQuips by the time this paper hits the stalls. And if media reports are to be believed, this sentiment of weak mandate may have support across party lines. Indeed, it is important to remember that this is the first time under Labour's post-

1980 electoral college system that a party leader has not achieved a majority among both MPs and ordinary party members. But if you, like me, are hoping for some grand coup de résistance, don't hold your breath. If there's one thing the Labour Party has shown in the past few years, it's a willingness to stick by the man they've got. After all, this is the party that rather unnervingly 'grinned and beared' the much (though in this writer's estimation, unfairly) maligned and unelected Gordon Brown to the very end.

And this was never going to be as fractious contest as that of Benn and Healey, despite some rather hopeful, spirited interventions from several quarters of the media. Every mild whisper off-stage was treated as poison, every slight criticism judged to be a mark of perfidy, no less. So it was only fitting that in victory, Miliband the Younger was modest, telling his closest rival that he loved him "so much as a brother" and has "so much extraordinary respect" for his campaign, strength and eloquence. Whatever wedges have been driven between the two in recent months, it's hard to believe that David will shirk a return to frontline politics in a significant capacity.

His fellow contenders too received their fair share of the honours: every Tory minister, Ed Miliband said, would quake in their boots at the prospect of the belligerent Mr. Balls shadowing them, while Mr. Burnham was lauded for reaching out to "people who felt Labour had forgotten them." For her part, last-placed (unhopeful) Diane Abbott was thanked for "speaking distinct truths to this party that needed to be said." His abiding message in his rather short, subdued speech was that he 'got it'. Unlike the party who fought the general election, he understood the concerns of those Labour had left behind in its thirteen years of government. He recognised that the party had forfeited the people's trust and lost touch with their hopes, their dreams, and their aspirations. He wanted to move on from the conflicts of personality and factionalism that weakened it in government. The general theme, as his campaign manager, Sadiq Khan, assured us later, was that he is a change maker. One second, where have we heard that one before?

The caricatures of Miliband the Younger have already begun to take shape, with the Tories and their chums in the right wing press eager to portray this as a lurch back to the loony left, the days when Labour were seen to be inept, extreme to the point of dangerous, and in thrall to the far left and the trade unions. These claims don't wash and probably won't stick. Let's not forget that this is a man who served in New Labour's inner circle for nearly two

We can expect the lure of power combined with the force and experience of his shadow cabinet colleagues to haul him back to the centre ground

decades, first as one of Harriet Harman and then Gordon Brown's special advisers and later in the Cabinet, even penning the Party's latest election manifesto. Even if he harbours some latent, radical left-wing intent, we can expect the lure of power combined with the force and experience of his shadow cabinet colleagues to haul him back to the centre ground. His past shows him to be more than capable of turning from red to pink to orange faster than a sanguinello with an identity crisis. And let's not forget that five years is a long time in politics: keen gamblers among you should expect Ladbrokes recently lengthened odds on Labour to beat the Conservatives in 2015 (from 6/4 to 13/8) to shorten once the new opposition gets into its stride.

The far more pressing danger that the party faces is that it may come to be seen as economically incompetent, as it was in the aftermath of the governments of Wilson and Callaghan, marked by punitively high levels of taxation, inflation, interest rates and minimal welfare improvements. This is a line that the coalition may choose to press upon the electorate, and one that the new leader will have to deconstruct from the off. Echoes of Thatcher and then Blair/Brown's 'there is no economic alternative' must be rebutted forcefully. At the moment, as several of the Labour Party's elder statesmen have acknowledged, the public are simply not buying their cuts argument: filling in the gaping holes between his suggestions that Alistair Darling's slowly-slowly proposal is 'a good starting point' must be Ed Miliband's first priority. After that, he faces the tricky tasks of healing bitter wounds from a bygone era within his own party; wooing (though not overtly, as he has already attempted to no avail) disaffected Lib Dems; appealing his trade union paymasters, and winning back the millions of working and middle class voters Labour alienated over thirteen long years of government. While I won't lull you into the politically active man's fantasy of life at the cusp of history, we can't deny that the new opposition leader has his work cut out for him in the weeks to come.

Yet there is a greater challenge that faces the new Labour leader and one that he would be rash to discount in the near term: the task of making a party that has, to all intents and purposes, become the party of the establishment again the party of radicalism, while avoiding a repeat of the socialist-driven 'glorious opposition' of years gone by. There will be a temptation to take the easy way out, to find convenient excuses for the shortcomings of the Blair/Brown era in conflicts of personality, the Iraq war or concerns over immigration. Labour legend will

soon have it that it was one of the above 'wot done it'. A more politically astute and historically sensitive approach would involve launching a sustained critique of the party's most successful era in government and acknowledging that to some extent, the entire modus vivendi of the New Labour project, driven as it was by marketisation and media manipulation, was unsustainable and, quite simply, wrong. History tells us that all party modernisers, whether on the blue, the red or the yellow team, have similarly had to engage with both past and present, constructing fragmentary narratives around which to unite their followers, and Mr. Miliband must follow suit. Whether or not he will is, of course, still an uncertainty. 'The past,' Miliband told Andrew Marr on Sunday, 'is another country' to him. If he shows little respect to the legacies of Butler and Macmillan, Thatcher and Joseph, Blair and Brown, and even Cameron and Osborne, then history will show this little Miliband little in return.

LABOUR LEADER JOB APPLICATION

Name
Ed Miliband

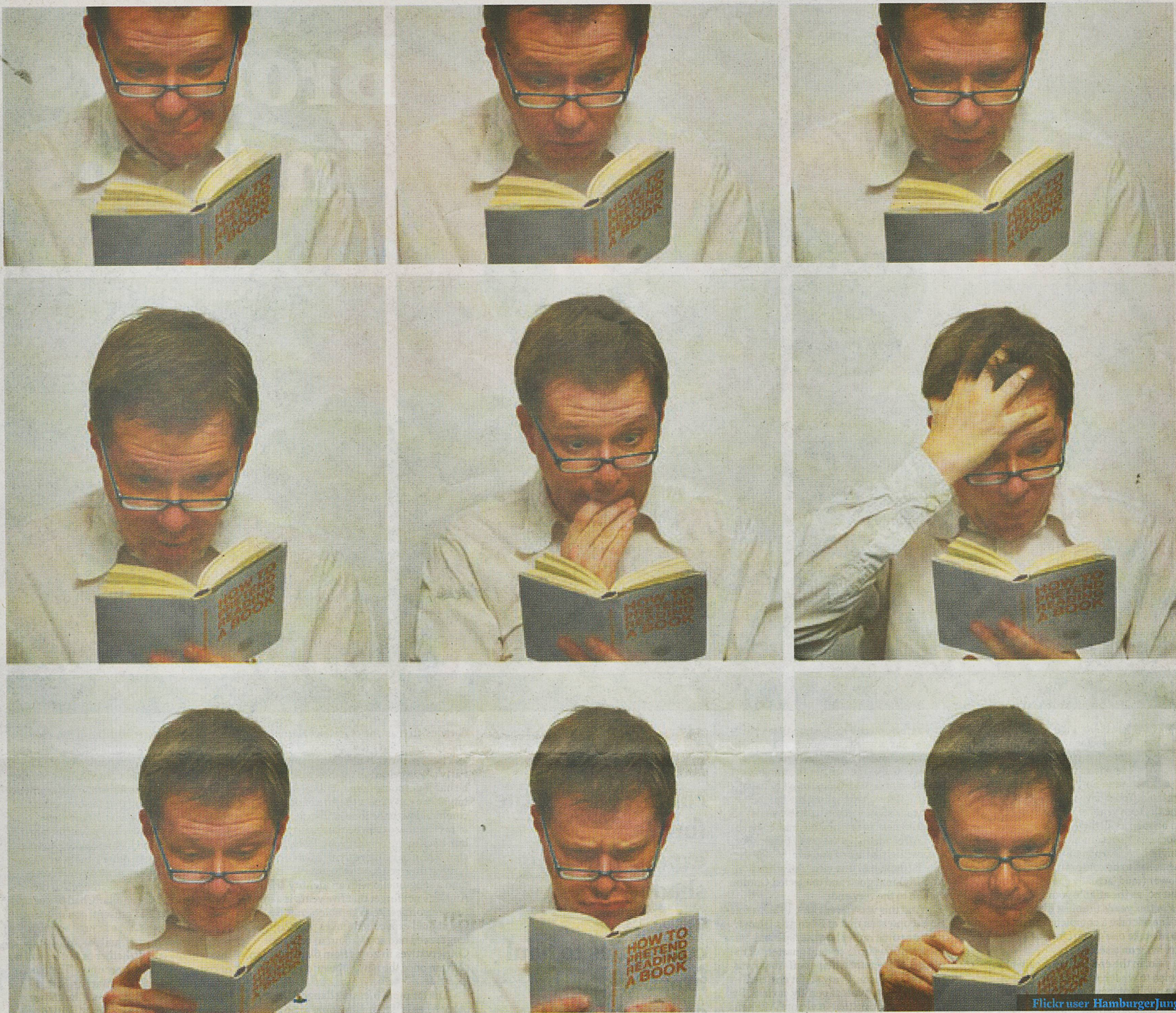
Age
40

Education
PPE, Corpus Christi College, Oxford; MSc Economics, LSE

Attributes
Robot-like appearance, perplexed facial expressions

Previous Experience:
Speechwriter for Harriet Harman; special advisor to Gordon Brown Member of Parliament for Doncaster North; Minister for the Cabinet Office; Secretary of State for the Environment and Climate Change

References
Baron Kinnock: 'Ed has the X Factor'
Sadiq Khan: 'What a breath of fresh air'



A curious language

Jonathan Couturier thinks academics and journalists speak contradicting dialects

It's strange to dislike people we've never met, yet spend an hour reading a scholarly text filled with words unknown to the Oxford dictionary, sprinkled with prefixes and suffixes hitherto unseen to man, you'll be sure to hate the author. Indeed, some academic vocabulary seems to come from randomly assembled letters, probably chosen in a raffle by insane and grizzly-haired professors, having a jolly good laugh about it. For students these texts are nightmares: going through them takes hours and buckets of aspirin – sentences come and go without us noticing, our brains more concerned with planning dinner.

As students, we might eventually come to understand this vocabulary; after all we are here to study. However for those who are outside this scholarly loop, acquiring and diffusing academic research becomes torture due to its obscure dialect. Here I refer specifically to the media: written and televised, published or uploaded. For learning to reach a wider audience, it has to be transmitted by these networks in a language which is clear to viewers and listeners. However the information the media transmits originates in academia, whose choice of vocabulary seems mind-numbing to the general public. As a result, journalists and publishers simplify; crucial but complex issues are reduced to diagrams or simplistic statements. Academia

Some academic vocabulary seems to come from randomly assembled letters, probably chosen in a raffle by insane and grizzly-haired professors, having a jolly good laugh about it

then accuses the media of perverting its work, and tailoring it to fit dominant outlooks; whereas publishers lash out at the incomprehensibility of scholars.

Thus there is a rift between knowledge producers and diffusers. Education and research become closed circles, unable to benefit the public because the transmission of information is hindered by word choice. The mystical vocabulary of scholars seems to be at fault, because it isn't understood by anyone outside academia. Although every new word is defined (often in obscure terms), they are then used in subsequent works with barely a passing reference to their origin; authors take it for granted that they should be understood. As a result, students have to plough through masses of texts just to define a single concept. As for the media, it doesn't even bother; faced with high and quasi-instant demand, they do not have the time to indulge in scholarly readings – instead they dumb-down their content.

It seems strange that in the digital age, where most things are instantly accessible, vocabulary should be a barrier to knowledge-diffusion. We have made considerable progress in making information available, and yet to many it is still incomprehensible.

Tempting though it is, academia cannot carry all the blame. Why shouldn't it create new words for new concepts? When

It is students who hold the solution to the stalemate: we are at the junction of information-production and diffusion

a new animal or plant is discovered, it is given a new name; such reasoning should indeed apply to new findings. We would still be talking in grunts, had we never created new vocabulary for novel concepts. And while such practice may seem (and occasionally is) a tool to exclude non-academics, it is principally a way for scholars to distinguish themselves and their work, as well as to prevent the simplification of their work by the media.

The fact remains though: novel and complex vocabulary hinders circulation of information. Academia remains locked in a world which the media cannot relate to; nor can its readership. Neither side seems to be willing to make an effort to remedy the situation, and instead lock themselves in written and verbal tirades. Progress could be made if academia stopped assuming its vocabulary was a given to all, even students. The media should respect the complexity and subtleties of research, in order to regain the trust of scholars. But it is students who hold the solution to the stalemate: we are at the junction of information-production and diffusion. We understand the frustration of publishers, and we understand academia. Trapped in neither world, we can still transmit and receive ideas from both sides because we understand their languages. Our position means we are indispensable intermediaries to the circulation of knowledge.

The audacity of dope

Calum Young gets high-minded

Coming at me across the carpet limped an 8ft spider. Unsteady on its feet, its head bobbling uncontrollably from left to right, its torso's tergiversations finally bubbled-over, and it skidded leftwards into a skirting board. I wasn't afraid of the spider partly because it wasn't very frightening, and partly because the arm-chair I was sitting formed a protective shield. By collapsing inwards, it cusped me to its fuzzy bosom. Face buried between the chair's velvet pincers, there was no chance that spider could get at me. I need not have been so worried. It turned-out the Spider was diabetic. In its sugar-starved stupor it really posed no threat. And as I look back on it, the arachnid's pancreatic disorder goes a long way to explaining its desperate collapse.

Politics without pot would be shorn of its soundites, and this would denote a decline in the moral standards of public life in this country

Just after this, I started thinking about dope and politics. What really binds the new Lib-Con cabinet isn't an Oxbridge education, it's not a middle-class upbringing, it's not being white, it's not attending a private school, it's not a penchant for Paul Smith suits, nor, surprisingly, is it a unified ideology. It's a commitment to marijuana. David Cameron was almost thrown-out of Eton for 'drug abuse'. Nick Clegg is on the record as having 'inhaled', as is Chris Huhme and Theresa May, and George Osborne would be better a politician had he spent more time breaking out a blunt.

The boundary between the drug habits of British politicians and their global counter-parts is hazy too. Barack Obama's dutiful commitment to 'Mary Jane' rightly earns him the sobriquet all young people aspire to, 'pot-head'. Bill Clinton famously didn't inhale, although contemporaries and detractors alike have written about his fondness for cake-based narcotics. That champion of ethnic diversity, Nicolas Sarkozy, is probably too highbrow for plebeian weed. Were drug classiications to

be revised, I would recommend him Ketamine. And that brings us to the current German Chancellor, Angela Merkel. She might be the staunch guardian of European fiscal-policy, but as a young physicist in East Germany, she may have had access to some fairly out-there chemicals. In fact, I don't think it's going too far to say, most communists were high, most of the time.

So we have established that Cannabis is a gateway drug - a gateway to power. But what is it about weed which makes such excellent statesmen? Is it the mental serenity which it inspires? Is it the networking opportunities which social smoking offers? Or, is it that, after honing your listening skills on nonsensical, high friends, dealing with the inane calumnies of a Question Time audience, starts to resemble symphonic erudition?

In my analysis, it's a combination of factors. Foremost though, is Marijuana's most profound quality, the escapism which it provides. Now, escapism has a bad rep. But it can actually play an incredibly useful role in the lives of highly motivated and ambitious young people. At the highest level, there is no more challenging job than politics. Despite the media-coverage, the armies of advisors and the PPE degrees, those that do it are merely men. Balancing the art of the possible, when the lives of millions are dependent on your judgement is no easy task. It's no surprise that after a day's politicking, a large glass of red wine and Newsnight (which you're probably featured in) isn't enough to help you unwind. Having dealt with the constant growl of back-benchers, the sexual threats of some of the whips and the ever-present threat of being physically fucked by Jeremy Paxman on national television, who wouldn't want to spend the evening being set-upon by a giant spider.

Marijuana also helps cultivate a spirit of subversion in its users, a quality which is readily employed by modern politicians. It may have escaped your attention, but weed is actually illegal, and this means that those who use it have to adopt covert and highly-organized behaviour. What better initiation could there be to the world of secret briefings and leaking than being an enemy of the state in your youth. Using marijuana provides an ideal training ground for politics at the highest level.

Then there's the language. The grammar of modern politics is the prose of the stoned. Helicopter vision, blue-sky thinking, endogenous growth theory, press the flesh, synergy, think-tank, quantitative easing, the big-society, the hand of history on my shoulder, put-up or shut-up, the quiet man, third-way, British jobs for British workers, hug a hoodie, the compassionate society, it's the economy stupid, and Ed Miliband as Labour leader. These ideas could only come from the spring of lyrical buoyancy and intellectual agility which is the stoned mind. Politics without pot would be shorn of its soundbites and, this would denote a decline in the moral standards of public life in this country. Take the pot out of politics and it loses all clarity.



Flickr user Troy Holden

"Oh! just, subtle, and mighty opium! that to the hearts of poor and rich alike, for the wounds that will never heal, and for 'the pangs that tempt the spirit to rebel,' bringest an assuaging balm; eloquent opium! that with thy potent rhetoric stealest away the purposes of wrath; and to the guilty man, for one night givest back the hopes of his youth, and hands washed pure of blood...."
- Thomas de Quincey, *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*

WHAT IF...

the Blair-Brown deal had never happened?

Oliver Wiseman

The relationship between Blair and Brown and its eventual capitulation came to define the New Labour era. If there were a time and place where the dynamics and destiny of this relationship were set in motion, it was 1994 in Granita, a chi-chi Islington restaurant where the two cut their infamous deal. Though much speculation surrounds the intricacies of this conversation, it seems well-established that Brown agreed to give Blair a clear run at leader in return for a promise to step down after two terms and leave Brown autonomy over economic affairs.

The two New Labour giants were forced into this awkward conversation somewhat prematurely by the sudden death of then Labour leader John Smith. Both were talented, popular and well-established Shadow Cabinet figures; each capable of making sincere bids to run the party. So without the Islington non-aggression pact, what would have become of the then Labour hotshots?

There was a time, believe it or not, when Blair and Brown were friends and allies, albeit unlikely and rather awkward ones. As new MPs, the two had shared a cramped, windowless Commons office, no doubt teaching each other important lessons of politicking and floating the ideas that would later crystallise as New Labour. But this interaction was never smooth. Brown was incontrovertibly a Labour man: a Scotsman and student activist. Blair was cut from an entirely different cloth. While Brown was treading his firebrand path at Edinburgh University, Blair was nearby, inhaling on the playing fields of the Fettes. Many wondered why the young barrister had joined Labour instead of the Conservatives, speculating that it might have been for the girl.

In his own eyes and many others, Brown was the natural heir to Smith. Sure, Blair was impressive but he was, to Brown, naïve - at most, suitable successor. In this sense, the party's need for a new leader could not have come at a worse time. On the back of a series of speeches laying out an electorally potent combination of compassion and stringency on home affairs, Blair had momentum. In agreeing to the deal, Brown was conceding that Blair was a stronger force, across the electorate and within the party.

Without such a deal, it appears clear that Blair would still have won the race to become leader. What becomes less certain is the unity of the party from then on in. The mollification of Brown and his allies enabled the changes (Clause IV etc) that the party undertook in preparation for office. The price of this disunity would probably not have been the 1997 general election - the ghost of John Smith would have managed that. Rather, a first term afflicted by terminal levels of disagreement. The deal was crucial to the longevity of New Labour - it meant that, however intractable the rift in the party, both sides had a stake in the success of their government. Were only half the party stakeholders in the success of the Labour government, recent British political history would have been a much more turbulent time.

Measured musings



Flickr user: Que Comunismo

If there is anything Hugo Chavez is good at, it's talking. Not solely about inequality, crime, and the United States, but also of his country's prospects for well-being in the future. In other words, he has been skillful in understanding the concerns of the dispossessed whilst making them dream of the 'Utopia' Venezuela could become. Since his win in the presidential elections of 1999, only this lively, colourful rhetoric could have maintained him in power. Little else explains his still solid popularity in the face of a shaky economy, a rising crime rate, and an increase in poverty.

Despite his failures in policy-making, it is his anti-American discourse that often clouds analysis of his presidency. Almost automatically, he is depicted as power-hungry, devoid of scruples and a near-dictator. It is probably fairer to say that his controversial attitude is driven by a staunch ideological conviction (inspired by the revolutionary Simon Bolivar's

El Presidente's challenge

ideals), backed by the fact that as the world's fifth largest supplier of oil, he can well afford it. His vision is one of a Latin America standing united against what he would denote as US dependency - a goal with which I cannot inherently find fault.

Yet, whilst seeming to have all of the best intentions for his country, Chavez thoroughly invests himself in putting them into practice in all of the wrong ways. His centralization of many previously privately owned sectors of the economy, funded by oil money, is unsustainable - and his foreign policy strategy is only as effective as his generous petrol deals will go. During the Bush administration years, other Latin American countries sympathized with his anti-Americanism, but not with his model of government, which has consisted in removing, one by one, constitutional checks on his power as president. The media, for instance has been subject to bouts of censorship - a Caracas-based newspaper faced such

prospects after publishing a picture of a morgue on its front-page, as a protest against the rising death rates due to crime.

However, Chavez has consolidated his grip on power by regular referendums throughout his years in power, with much success. In this case, then, the too-instinctive feeling that an incompetent leader ought to be deposed must be tempered by the fact of his popular election. The US endorsement of the 2002 attempted coup against him have done nothing to help their case. Attempting to demote elected officials doesn't help if your argument is that they're being undemocratic.

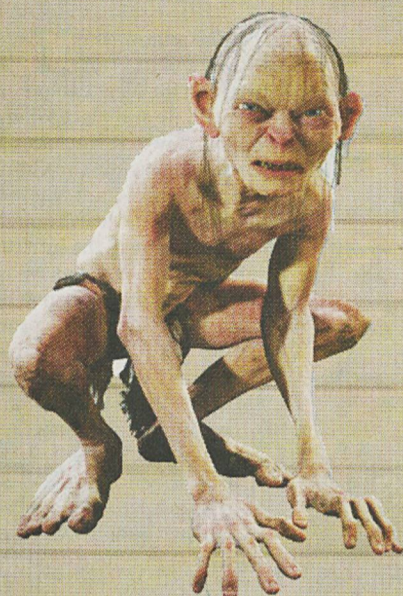
This previous week-end, the Venezuelan president will have once again submitted himself to approval via the ongoing legislative elections, for which he has campaigned heavily. Due to changes in the electoral system which he has enacted, it will require more votes for the opposition to gain a majority than for his own party. It is unlikely that the result will change

much of the substance of Venezuela's current governing-style. Yet, if such a hope was to be conceived, a change in economic policy, based on a diversification of the country's exports, and a reinstating of a 'healthy' democratic practice would be the two most urgent reforms at hand. Leave him his foreign policy - it is the internal prolongation of poverty that is most worrying about Chavez's rule.

Marion Koob
Features Editor

How to shag and get by: the Freshers' Guide to the AU

Introducing the new Gossip Gollum - this issue: stripping the AU bare.



Wednesday nights > Wednesday is dedicated solely to sport; you play it, and then you drink to it. All clubs meet in The Tuns for pre-lash before heading on to Zoo bar, where LSE has a private room, free pitchers for captains, and a DJ with a playlist you'll have memorised by the end of the year. Taps is the order of the night, a drinking game freshers must get the hang of before the number of times 'Get it down, you Zulu warrior' is directed at you gets embarrassing. And when you've downed enough snakebite to kill a small child, there's karaoke with the resident DJs John and Rudy. No prizes for guessing that football will sing 'Stand By Me', netball girls will sing 'Single Ladies' even though they never put out, and rugby girls...who cares? A few words of advice; pick a good spot near the rugby boys when the first bars of Baywatch are heard. Just be sure to leave before the 'Father' arrives, unless the sight of 35 flaccid penises is up your alley. Don't tell anyone it's your birthday, don't turn up late, and watch the vom in the toilets. Or on the bar, courtesy of Pres Ben Robinson.

Crush > The Friday equivalent of a Wednesday night, except with non-AUers too (sorry). Plenty of cheap drinks, the student version of a 'table' (upstairs by Alpha books) with a bottle of vodka for any club booking a guest list, and a guarantee you won't get chucked out for doing baywatch along with the rugby boys. Just ask Jaz Bradfield.

AU Relations > The competitiveness between clubs within the AU is long-held and something of a tradition. Common rivalries include that of rugby and football, and of netball and women's rugby, where the limited pool of possible sexual partners renders each club in constant competition. Apparently there's not enough minge to go around. And with more and more AU marriages taking place every Wednesday, the chances you'll get a fresh pull (ie your mate hasn't shagged her) are slim. Famously married members of the AU include; Exec members Matthew Box, Ben Robinson (cue laughter), and Johnny Snaville. But while relations between rugby and football remain antagonistic, and those between netball and women's rugby are positively venomous, rest assured these are Wednesday night trends. I wouldn't dream of calling a rugby girl fat and ugly on any other day. At least not to her face.

Chants > An essential component of any Wednesday night, and as you'll soon find, every other night within and without the AU. Inter-club chants dominate The Tuns on AU nights, popular favourites including 'same old rugby, fat and ugly' [netball to women's rugby] and 'can you hear the football sing?' [men's rugby to football], while elitist inter-university chants can be heard all the way from LSE to Zoo wherever it is we come across poly scum. KCL (read: Poly on the Strand) gets a fair amount of abuse, and since insider information confirms we will be trampling their traditional Temple Walkabout AU night some Wednesdays, expect the return of such favourites as 'Your dad works for my dad', 'What's that coming over the hill? It's unemployment', and 'Feed the Poly, let them know it's Christmas time'. Replies generally stick to the same theme: 'I'd rather be a poly than a c***'. Doubtful.

Events > You'll no doubt have been advised that joining the AU is essential if you want to get through your three years at LSE without having to learn Mandarin, or jumping off the fourth floor of the library. And aside from epic Wednesdays to celebrate or commiserate sporting achievement or failure, it's the AU events that make life at LSE worthwhile.

The Carol > The Carol is the Michaelmas Term week 9 blow-out; an all day, fancy dress drinking event, during which TC's are compulsory and the last man standing is rewarded with a (completely unwanted) array of shots. Memorable dress-ups have included Gary Glitter complete with set of Thai schoolboys, and a group of netballers with dicks that would make any footballer proud. Don't think bad behaviour will go unnoticed; past incidents at the carol are in front of the whole AU, and have included gimp suits, drinking urine, and threesomes re-enacted.

AU Ball > Don't be misled by the title; there's nothing classy about sick in wine glasses, blow jobs in elevators and vicious food fights. Held in the penultimate week of Lent term, it's as much a prefix to Salou (RIP Galella) as it is a suffix to a year of zoo bar. There's colours awards and Exec speeches somewhere too, but if you hear them you've not had enough vino.

Club dinners > Held in week 10 of Michaelmas and Lent term, think team dinners times ten. It's where the whole club gets together ostensibly to celebrate the successes of the past term, but actually just to fine its most outrageous members and get everyone else f*cked too. Most notoriously, men's rugby hold extremely messy Brick Lane nights; strippers have made appearances.

Team dinners > Relatively low key affair, a cosy meal with your new team-mates, maybe some ice-breakers and charades. Joke, we reckon you've got the picture. Lash.

Ski Trip (aka Salou on Snow) > Christmas trip with more Apres-ski than Actual-ski. Last year's trip reached a record 200 skiers. Didn't think there were that many people in LSE? We didn't either. Expect happy gas and as much free alcohol as you can handle. Prizes are awarded for pulling reps - begun and continued by our Ski President - and bedding students from other universities (a concept too difficult to fathom for LSE inbreeders). Absolutely the best way to meet other AU-ers and get to know the ones you've already shagged - highly recommended for any fresher. The skiing's good too, just don't get stuck with Uncle Hamdi.

Salou > Annual sports tour. Little to no sport involved. We'd love to tell you it's sun, sea and sand but you'll be too hungover to notice. Pre-lash is sorted with a £4 bottle of 86% absinthe, while drinks in LSE haunt Christy's are only taken one way - poured over your face as you lie on the bar. Shirt-swapping, drink throwing, slutty R&B - while Galella is revered, Salou more than takes its place. Lower your standards, get used to being pissed on, and get yourself checked out when you get home; I heard you can catch chlamydia in the air.

A final warning: Beware the AU degree > We say beware, but almost all AU greats were awarded an AU degree. Nope, not a sought after medal, just a four-year degree. Yep, these die-hard sportsmen and women loved the AU so much they stayed another year. Famous veterans include Murderer (now an alcoholic), Tom Davies (loveable c***), Gabriel Butu (yeh, we don't remember him either), and our very own Hannah Dyson. Alternatively, change course - we hear geography regularly recruits AU dropouts (Jacquesy); or become a sab, and "make a difference" (Charlie Glyn and Rob Lowe). If you're always last out of zoo bar, spend your Thursdays in The Tuns revelling in the glow of a hangover and tales from the night before, and your Fridays doing it all over again at Crush, you will probably fail your first year. And possibly your second.

Are you in possession of salacious gossip? Want to embarrass your mate? Or just promote your shag-count? Contact Gossip Gollum now at lsegossipgollum@gmail.com

L*S*Ski & the AU present...
The official apres freshers week event:

Boat Party

Tuesday 5th October

Come to our Pre-lash in the Underground bar from 7.30pm for free shots, drinks deals & games before setting sail on the Thames...

Setting sail at 8.45pm from Temple Pier
(opposite Temple tube station)
Tickets £5

For more details
www.lse-ski.co.uk

LSE SKI

Introducing your Sports Editors...

Hannah Dyson (TM)

Who is she?

Beaver Sports Editor, LSki President, Tuns Barmaid and Key player of the Netball 7ths.

Where is she from?

Swansea (A poor man's Cardiff, but not as shit as Newport)

Natural Wednesday Night Habitat:

Doing her best to ply Rugby/Football captains from their hard-earned cocktail jugs, using her renowned Sports Editor 'communication' skills.

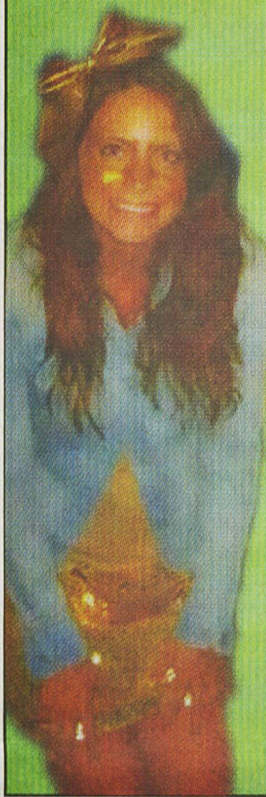
LSE Sporting Career Highlight:

Making First Reserve for the Mr LSE judging panel.

Profile:

An AU stalwart since day one, Hannah Dyson (Tm) now lodges with four 1st Team netballers in the the hope that they'll take pity on her and put in a good word to the 6th team captain.

Hannah Dyson (TM) brings a lot to the AU. She will clean up in the Tuns, clean up on the netball court and clean up in Zoo Bar. No Bags. No Loss of Suction. You'll only find this in a Dyson Sports Editor.



Matthew Box (Sponsored by Maximuscle)

Who is he?

Beaver Sports Editor, AU Exec- Events, Tuns barrell lifter/LGBT night cash cow and womens' rugby coach.

Where is he from?

Newcastle - you can hear his incomprehensible accent resonating throughout the 3 Tuns bar on any given night.

Natural Wednesday Night Habitat:

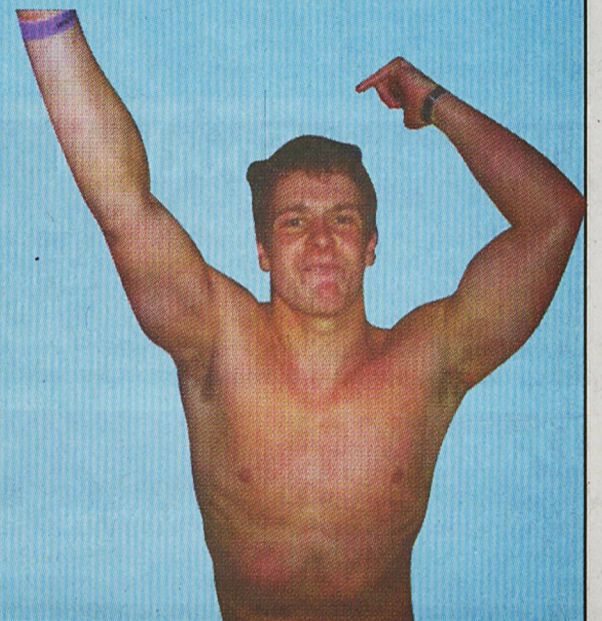
Corner of Zoo bar, without a shirt on. Standard.

LSE Sporting Career Highlight:

Losing the plank off; first to a round-baller and then to two netball girls.

Profile:

Boca can usually be found with life partner -the LSE gym, here he pursues his long-term goal: to appear on the cover of Mens Health. Unfortunately he still has a way to go, with abs nowhere near former Mr LSE winner, Reesys' standard and only marginally better than Ben Pres (see below).



The decline of sporting heroes

Tom Lennon

So another summer is over before it ever felt like it began, and whilst some of you have been battling internships and Euro-trips, its been business as usual for the sporting world, where there's been no end to the daily lashings of controversy and drama. F1 teams have competing less to see who can win the most races than who can come up with the most cunning and devious methods of cheating; the Pakistani cricket team has lost several million rupees in unclaimed winnings as they struggle to collect from a jail cell. But despite a plethora of Muppets to choose from, the award for the Worst Sporting Summer must go to the man who, before you left the library for the last time, was carrying England's destiny on his shoulders.

Yes it's Wayne Rooney ladies and gents.

Leading up to the World Cup Rooney seemed to feature in every TV advert directed at that titular tournament and was even named as the PFA Player's Player of the Year in April, but what a difference 320 minutes can make. After performing poorly in a lacklustre England campaign and compounding his misery with his remarks that it was nice to see his home fans booing him, "that's what loyal support is, for fuck's sake", many thought that life for the former Boy Wonder could only get better. Well they're not singing anymore. Mr. Rooney was revealed to have paid up to £1200 for sex with a hooker who was actually worth no less than £120 plus expenses. However, the media ignored the fact that young Wayne had been over-charged and instead pointed out that he had severely let down his wife and child.

Fortunately for Rooney this whole bloody scandal doesn't look like it will ruin his career. He's not going to split with Coleen who is going to let him sleep on their £1m sofa, though he may lose his yearly supply of Coke Zero. This is more than can be said for that other colossal clunge tease Tiger Woods, who has lost around \$400 million in lost sponsorship and divorce settlements. Woods did manage to place 4th in the Masters upon his initial return, before slumping to some of the worst rounds of his career over the

proceeding summer months. Allegations over his fidelity may have surfaced back in November, but the truth of Tiger's decline is now all too visually apparent. Credit to Rooney as in the first game following his raging media orgy he managed to score against Switzerland.

This brings us to a point. I agree that Rooney and Tiger's behaviour is totally indefensible. But is it right that such intense public focus on their private lives should exacerbate the effects of their misdeeds to the point where their performances are severely reduced, leaving real sports fans in sorrow? Society's celebrity culture argues yes, that Rooney and Woods are role models to our youth and must act accordingly, though it seems that sportsmen are more susceptible to sleaze as a superstar than if they are mediocre or just a has-been. No one would bat an eye if Michael Owen was caught masturbating into the Manchester Ship Canal. But he too was once a boy wonder.

Don't get me wrong. I'm a Liverpool supporter and I usually hate Ronaldo, yet every now and again I'm left with no choice but to respect his brilliance as a fan of the sport. What I find I hate more than my chosen sporting enemies though is the gossip fuelled entertainment media that lives and dies on celebrity couple's trajectories, and feels it right to drag Wayne and Coleen's mess out from behind the mansion doors. Granted the Rooney's haven't been shy to let photographers invade their home and pay for the privilege. And yes I'm being naïve if I think it's not actually about safeguarding children's sporting role models, but actually about selling newspapers. But hopefully in the future the part of society that appreciates sporting greatness can continue to resist those who seek to make a quick headline when that greatness briefly falters.

If only everybody could follow the example of Rooney's gaffer Sir Alex Ferguson, who made it known he feels the media should separate business from pleasure, calling for a shift of focus onto Rooney's football. "Let's put this to bed straightaway." Well maybe not the best choice of words, but he's quite right.

TORSO OF THE WEEK



Welcome to the AU!
Hopefully the sight of me topless isn't enough to scare you away. If you want to play sport, the AU is the place to be. Keep your eyes peeled for our upcoming events. Sign up in room D402 on Tuesday and Wednesday. I look forward to welcoming you all!
Ben Robinson, AU President.

Sport



Inside:
Gossip Gollum - a legend is born.

Your guide to the AU Sports Clubs

Read up, make your mind up, then come and sign up in room D402 at Freshers Fair.

Football

Once upon a time at some shit-hole public school in Warwickshire a man name Billybob Webb-Ellis was forced into playing footy for a joke. Having being driven to tears by constant bullying about his weight and lack of technical ability. Ellis proceeded to

ruin a lovely the game for his peers by picking up the ball, followed by charging around the pitch like a mephedrone fuelled rhinoceros. In this heinous act of wanton pussman-ery the poly game of rug-gash was born. Yes! That thing that looks like Buck Angel's last picture is actually a sport. I'm writing to tell you that you could BE

the bully. Join the LSEFC and you can expect the best bant, pick of the billionaires daughters and maybe even snatch a glimpse of Avlonitis's tat. So don't while away your golden university years in the libash or investment banking society (you won't get to meet Lloyd Blankfein). Sign up for football at freshers fair have the three ladsiest years of your life.

Women's Basketball

Last year Women's basketball came out of the darkness and into Zoo bar, while still maintaining our hardcore athletic reputation outside of the social world. We love and are committed to the game, and we look forward to giving Kings a 5th consecutive thrashing, along with other London universities who we have just as equally torn to pieces in the past. This year we have two teams for women's basketball: a competitive first team and a recreational second team. So whether you're a WNBA superstar or new to the game, come check out women's basketball at the Freshers Fair in Clement's House from 10am till 5pm on Tuesday the 28th of September and Wednesday the 29th! We look forward to meeting you all soon!

Women's Football

"We play hard on the pitch and party hard off it. I never looked back after joining the WFC, I love every minute. Every game, every training session, every run and of course every Zoo bar, party and team dinner. But the best thing about the WFC are the girls; the laughs, the gossip, the banter... The only thing missing is YOU! Whether an England international, an ice hockey player or a girl with no experience with balls, there is a place in our team, and I know that you will love it."

Ultimate Frisbee

Ultimate Frisbee is a fast, competitive and skillful team-sport played with a disc. The 'LSE Beavers' welcome players of all calibres: from beginners to seasoned pros. In recent years we have twice won University Regionals and placed sixth nationally. Whatever sports you've played before, none will compare to Ultimate Frisbee's fantastic spirit, speed

Gaelic Football

Never heard of Gaelic football? Gaelic football is the national sport and official pastime of Ireland. It's a fast-paced, highly skilful and hard-hitting ball game consisting of 15 players per team. Described as a cross between soccer and rugby, Gaelic football actually predates both of these games. If you are interested and want to learn more come to the training sessions, where you will soon pick up the basic rules and skills. For those who have experience or have played the game before there is no excuse for you not to join the club - your local Gaelic club needs you!! We organise a series of friendly's throughout the year in preparation for the British championships held in February. Last year's trip was legendary to say the least and this year i can guarantee you a weekend of serious craic. The LSE team boasts men of passion, stamina, speed and forwards who know how to take a shot... And that's only in the pub! Sign-up at our stall at the fresher's fair and it will be the best decision you make at LSE. David McCauley (for enquiries email: d.mccauley@lse.ac.uk)

Dance

"Ready to shake it? The Dance Club offers the opportunity for all you dance lovers, whether expert or a beginner, to break it down! Our range of weekly classes includes Ballet, Hip-hop, Contemporary, Jazz, Ballroom and Belly dance. Most classes are separated to beginner and advanced, catering to all abilities. We also have the Dance Club's hip-hop dance group, "HIP-FLOP", which perform in various events and add their dynamic energy to the club. We have also recently begun taking place in inter-university dance competitions, including the country's biggest University Dance Competition in Loughborough. Last year our Club won First place in Contemporary and Third place in Jazz, out of almost thirty universities from all around the U.K. Let us not forget our awesome annual Dance Show, which gives us the opportunity to most definitely show what we are made off! If you have a LOVE FOR DANCE, just like us, or have always wanted just to have a go and HAVE FUN, the Dance Club is for you! Don't be shy, come along and get ready to shake your stuff!"

Tennis

There are many reasons to join LSE Tennis:

1. Ease into the 'swing' of things by joining a club of Gentlemen and Highly 'Strung' Ladies
2. Learn the way to the first 'baseline': Wednesday night specials.
3. Create a 'racket' about being one of the most successful teams at LSE
4. You'll hear lots of 'backhanded' compliments.
5. Learn how to 'rally' back: A Guide to Surviving Thursday Mornings.

Pool

The Pool and Snooker Team are having a Freshers Tournament on Sunday the 3rd October at 1 o'clock in the afternoon at Rileys Victoria. Members of LSE Pool and Snooker are welcome to join in with free entry and free pool tables for the whole afternoon. Any potential members are welcome and hopefully there will be cheap drinks and a handicap drinking pool competition where you will have to pot one less ball than your opponent for every pint you have drunk more than them! Email w.t.dee@lse.ac.uk to join in.

Netball

There is a reason that Netball is the largest female club in the AU. We not only genuinely enjoy and encourage sport, playing teams all over the South East and in London, but we attend and dominate AU events with our SEVEN teams, which cater for all standards and commitment levels. Come to trials Sunday 3rd October, witness the fitness and never look back. And if in doubt whilst you stumble among the various stalls at Freshers Fair, let us remind you that it is statistically proven that being part of netball increases your chances of getting laid.

The 'ball' is in your 'court'.

Rugby

Join the Men's Rugby Club: your antidote to the antipathy some at our esteemed establishment hold for lash, gash and rugby stash. Bringing absolute dedication to the pitch and commanding a total domination of every Wednesday night, embracing seasoned-pros and determined new-comers alike, the boys of the LSE Rugby Club define camaraderie, chivalry and sharp suits. We can assure you it will be the finest decision you'll make in your years at university.

Capoeira

Most people have seen a few seconds in an advert or movie, the Capoeiristas cartwheeling, kicking and flipping with that characteristic fluidity, but what is it, and where did it come from?

Some say it's a Brazilian folk dance, others that it's a martial art brought over from Africa with the slaves. What's sure is that it's a vibrant and unique art style that combines some soulful singing and percussion with acrobatic moves that later went on to form the foundation of the 1970s break dance movement. All together a great way to get fit, flexible, and meet some new people.

We're a friendly bunch (and throw the best parties), so even if you've never heard of it before, come along and give it a try, all you need is some loose clothing and a smile!

Contact: Pedro: 07780 552 176; Shyam: 07920 512 453; pedropaulocapoeira@gmail.com; shyam.desai1@gmail.com

Ski

Welcome to the LSE snow club, otherwise known as L*S*Ski. Since our birth in 2005, we've rapidly grown to become one of the largest sports clubs at LSE, with a bursting social schedule, race team and of course the main events of the year - our legendary Winter & Easter trips. All beginners, pro's and anyone old (for our vice pres Tom) join now! Either to come on one of our epic trips or just to get involved with socials - starting off the year with our massive boat party on the Thames. For more information check out www.lse-ski.co.uk.

Think you have a better command of the English language the Dyso and Boca? Then show off your literary talents and write for the Beaver Sports Section! Contact: sports@thebeaveronline.co.uk

