

YEAR'S LAST ISSUE

The Beaver

Final Part B
Hip Hop

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

Dialogue in doubt in Israel-Palestine antisemitism row

Palestine activists leave talks in protest at Israeli claims

Ali Moussavi,
Marie Dunaway & Rajan Patel



The dialogue commission will host religious mediators from the region in the Old Theatre this afternoon

The Palestine society has withdrawn from LSE's dialogue commission after a dispute with the Israel society over how far to include Holocaust denial in a UGM motion against antisemitism, leaving a fragile campus truce on the Middle East issue in the balance.

Students set up the dialogue commission at the beginning of this year in order to help solve politically tense divides on campus, working with the Students' Union and LSE's campus relations tsar Professor Janet Hartley.

In an email to Professor Hartley on Monday, Joseph Brown, the Union's Antiracism Officer, said he had been advised that Palestine activists "would no longer feel comfortable dealing with the Israel society" after an alleged breach of confidentiality brought the dispute to light.

The withdrawal comes days after a first attempt to pass the motion faltered at the Union General Meeting on Thursday, amid calls to redraft the definition of antisemitism that was adopted.

Calling for public opposition to antisemitic actions on campus, the motion would mandate the Students' Union's antiracism officer to publish a regular report on racist and antisemitic incidents at LSE.

Reports of antisemitic assaults on LSE's campus, including spitting, tripping and snatching of religious clothing, spiked earlier this term in the wake of the war in Gaza and the protest occupation of the Old Theatre, which included Palestine society members.

Negotiations between the two societies on the wording of the motion now lie in tatters, with society members trading vituperative allegations before the withdrawal was announced.

The Israel society's Secretary Patrick Jones claimed that Palestinian representatives had said to him that Holocaust denial was wrong but not necessarily antisemitic,

during a meeting unconnected with the Dialogue Commission.

Jones said that the alleged argument crossed the line beyond free speech. "The Holocaust, where six million Jews were systematically massacred for no reason except their Jewish identity, is a painful moment in Jewish history," he said.

Students' Union Communications Officer Dan Sheldon supported Jones' claim. "Palestine Society's stance on this would be shocking if it was an isolated incident," he said.

"Sadly, it is typical of their behaviour this year. Palestine Society seem to exist purely to agitate, cause offence and derail good campus relations, rather than engage in any positive action for the Palestinian people."

The Palestine society's acting Chair Mira Hammad said that Jones' allegations were "completely false". The Palestine society had been "working very hard to help the Israel society propose a motion to effectively combat antisemitism," she said.

"Constructive dialogue, aimed at protecting the welfare of Jewish students, has been hijacked by elements keen to use the issue to outlaw criticisms of Zionism and the Israeli state," Hammad added.

Hammad announced on Monday that the Palestine society would only rejoin the dialogue commission if Jones apologised.

The dispute looks to overshadow controversy earlier in the week over the abortive first passage of the motion at last Thursday's UGM.

Speaking for the motion, Daniel Bear said that not enough was being done to combat illegitimate criticism of Jewish people.

"While I support political speech in its

entirety, once that speech becomes hate speech, actions need to be taken to make sure it doesn't happen and students feel safe on campus," he said.

Extraordinary scenes then ensued as the meeting's chair, Azan Marwah, stepped down from his position to speak against the motion.

Criticising the motion for being too broad, Marwah said that the Union would face legal consequences from adopting the proposed definition, even if he personally approved of it.

Former General Secretary candidate Peter Barton joined the chorus, adding that he had a "few quibbles" with the motion and that it would hit problems later on. Barton pressed for a redrafting of the motion for the next meeting.

Union General Secretary Aled Dilwyn Fisher used his speech for the motion to argue that Marwah's concerns were misplaced. The dialogue commission's meetings on the motion had made the definition "very, very clear," he said.

The meeting ended with confusion as time ran out before calls to vote were approved by the chair, with Marwah's actions criticised by Bear and Fisher.

Fisher was unhappy at the meeting's result. "We spent a whole week discussing it to get it right so the vast majority would support. It is the best motion against antisemitism proposed anywhere in the country. The National Union of Students' definition is ambiguous, particularly towards the issue of Israel. This was clear."

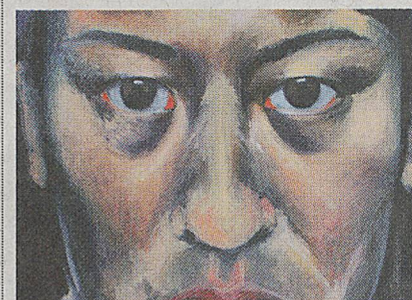
Fisher added that he hope the dialogue commission's work would resume soon, and that consensus between the Israel and Palestine societies would be reached before the second attempt to pass the motion this Thursday.

"The fact that there are even negotiations and discussions over the motion and the issues it raises shows that relations between different groups have massively improved," he said. "It is a shame that breaches of trust have occurred and I hope that the dialogue commission can help rebuild faith in the process," he added.

Dude, where's our penguin? LSE landmark still missing

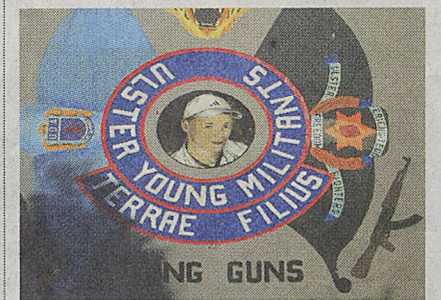


Photo



LSE Arts Week
page 10

Features



Tensions in Northern
Ireland
page 15

Week on from theft, search for penguin still fruitless

Joseph Cotterill
& Zeeshan Malik

The flippers look no less forlorn one week on. Psychological closure unattainable for want of culprits, or, indeed, the body of their loved one, hundreds of students have expressed their grief at the theft of LSE's penguin in vigils, facebook groups - and an abortive raid on prime suspects Kings College London.

Three unidentified and very drunk white males tore the penguin off its base two Saturday nights ago, leaving just two flippers behind. The penguin, part of a donation of public art to the school by a

Canadian alumnus, has graced LSE since 2006.

The statue's mutilated base has lain outside the Waterstone's in Clare Market while LSE security inquiries continue. Stunned students began to take matters into their own hands this week, however.

A vigil at the site on Monday attracted over fifty students. The Students' Union's General Secretary Aled Dilwyn Fisher read out a hastily-drafted poem as mourners looked on.

Come Thursday, students had unanimously, if sombrely, approved a special penguin motion at the Union General Meeting last Thursday, authorising a posse to secure the mascot's release from

its presumptive Kings captors.

An unofficial Beaver search and rescue operation conducted on KCL's Strand campus had found no sign of the penguin last Tuesday.

Yesterday's posse, composed of two Union sabbatical officers, a Beaver reporter and a student, returned similarly empty-handed in its bid to push LSE students' case to the sabbatical officers of KCL students' union.

"We'll go down and say hello to the King's Sabbs, look them straight in the eye and say, 'have you got our penguin?'" Fisher said before embarking on his mission. "I expect them to tremble in fear, and hopefully to grovel and give back the

penguin. If they don't have it, they'll look for it," he added.

But it was not to be. "There was no one there because they obviously knew we were coming," Fisher told the Beaver, raid over. "If you can't even stand up to your accusers you have got to have some guilt," he ventured, hopefully.

All was not lost, however. The depth of students' feelings on the issue were made starkly clear. "I think



we've sent a powerful message in the form of a small, scribbled note, left with blu-tac on the front of their door," Fisher said.

Fisher said that it was only a matter of time before the penguin returned to its Clare Market home. "I think we should hopefully see a penguin in its rightful place, and if we don't, we'll have to find another way to get it back," he said.

Occupation protest in the dumps

S. Wild Honkaboob

A toilet in the Vera Anstey Suite has been occupied for the past eight weeks in an unofficial protest at the LSE's waste disposal policy or lack thereof.

The protest's main protagonist has been affectionately christened 'Tony Turd' by LSE Estates staff. Sources close to 'Tony' suggest he is upset that the School continues to remain at loggerheads with the Students' Union over a proposed joint venture to implement an ethically-driven refuse system.

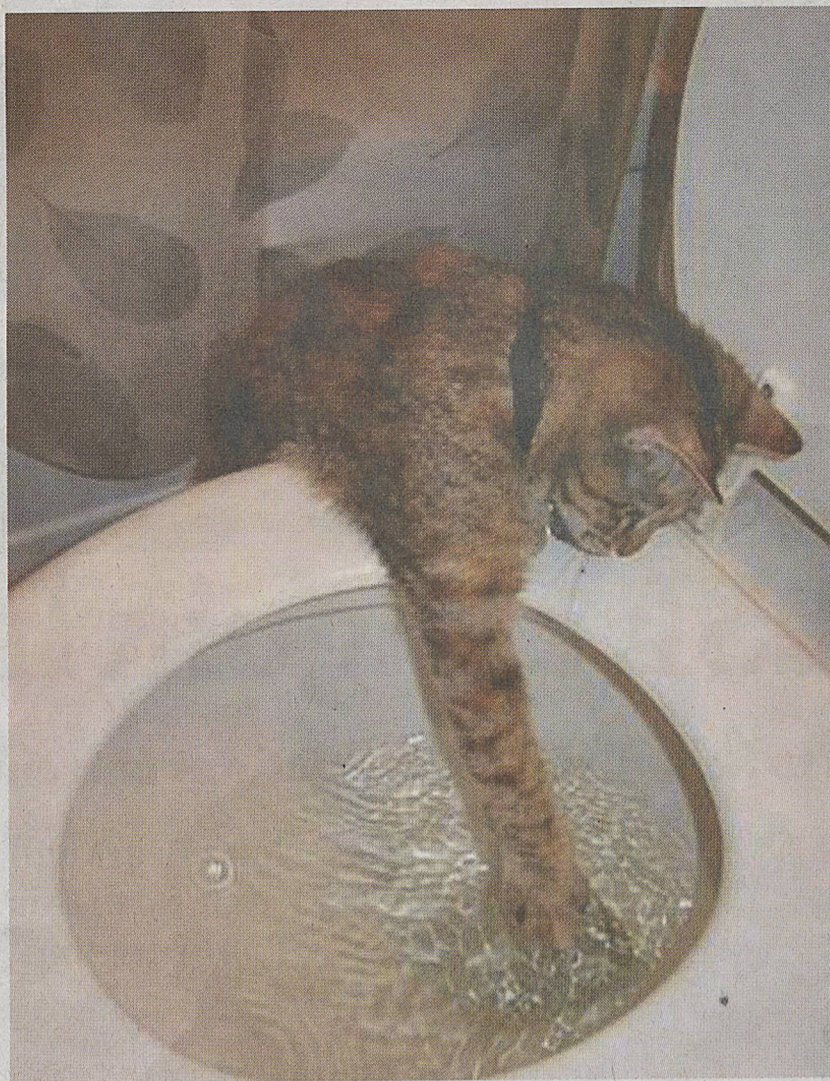
Negotiations have stalled over the issue of sending the contents of the School's giant septic tank each month to Palestine. The underlying rationale is that this could then be used as a fertiliser to grow much-needed crops.

A spokesman for LSE: Not for Profit, the campaign behind the proposed policy, said: "We've really caught the School with their pants down on this one. While they talk about making the School more green they won't even entertain the idea that a good way to do this would be proper use of the brown."

"They really need to stop being so shitty about all this," he added.

In response, a senior member of the School responded: "The average diet of an LSE student means that even if we did ship the whole lot out it wouldn't do much good. Wright's Bar is not renowned for its nutritional content."

Allegations of foul play have been around since last week, when it was alleged that staff tried "to break up the protest." 'Tony' has not been seen since that day but rumours suggest he has switched tactics from a focused to a floating agenda.



LSE staff trains for a possible eviction operation against 'Tony'. Flickr user dmansouri.

National

Campus events

Chinese students in lecture confusion

Over 200 Chinese students unknowingly stumbled into the Union General Meeting last Thursday, raising health and safety concerns by their sudden overcrowding of the venue.

The students had mistakenly believed that their Econ 102 Econ B lecture had been relocated to the Old Theatre. In a stunning display of herd mentality, all of them stayed behind even after learning of their error, pretending that they had meant to come to the meeting.

According to a student who wished to be identified as Comrade Lei Feng, the Chinese students had been sent a prank email informing them of the supposed venue change. Unconfirmed reports state that the prank message had originated from the email address l.dalai@lse.ac.uk.

War on Terror

'Extra students' whisked off campus

A special investigation has been launched after claims surfaced that Students' Union bouncers at Crush practiced 'extraordinary rendition' against rowdy students during Bhangra Crush.

It has been alleged that the CIA had been complicit with the bouncers' efforts in arranging thousands of secret transportation flights for detainees across the world.

LSE director Howard Davies issued a statement in support of 'extraordinary rendition'. He said: "The mysterious vanishing of significant chunks of our student body eases pressure on our overcrowded facilities on campus."

"However, rendition as a tactic needs to be targeted at specific groups, such as LSE: Not for Profit campaigners."

LSE Students' Union

Union Communications officer-elect accused of losing his "debauched roots"

The Athletics Union executive have asked Communications officer-elect Robin Low to hand in his AU Card after "demonstrating a worrying commitment to Students Union politics".

Since his election two weeks ago, Low has been spotted spending an inordinate amount of time with the incumbent Dan Sheldon and re-elected General Secretary Aled Dilwyn-Fisher. It has been suggested that Low will now desert his debauched roots and pursue a left-wing agenda during his tenure in the Hub.

An AU spokesman said: "When Rob got elected, we had thought he was going to add some normality to the circus of deluded individuals who currently run the Union."

"However it appears that the old phrase

'power corrupts' has once again held true".

Although after Low revealed his short term goals yesterday it seems that these allegations may be somewhat premature.

"My first move will be to try and get a hotdog venter stationed in the Hub operating at all times," said Low. "This will not only appeal to our large American contingent but will make sure that the Sabbs are well-fed and watered during their quest to engender positive changes for you all, that is the student body."

When questioned about whether himself, Dilwyn-Fisher and Emmanuel Akpan Inwang could ill afford any more opportunities for gluttony, Low responded: "But didn't Napoleon say that an Army marches on its stomach? So unless we fatten Wetzy up we're all fucked."

Public Relations

Brown-Nose PR established

After a controversial year as Anti-Racism officer, Joseph Brown has set up his own public relations firm.

Brown-Nose Public Relations specialises in damage control and alienation of markets. Its client base includes disgraced Third World dictators, corrupt financiers and religious fanatics.

Recent rumours suggest a possible multi-million dollar contract between Brown-Nose and Robert Mugabe. This comes amid speculation that CEO Joseph Brown was unhappy with the firm's contract with Bernie Madoff.

Brown, recently crowned 'PR Douchebag of the Year', said: "I have the political instincts of Atilla the Hun. I search for similar qualities in my clients."



Media Group watch

Editors quit to run Labour campaign

Beaverian editors Alistair "Campbell" Moosourcey and Samurai Tempura Keeping have ended their journalism careers after being picked by No. 10 Downing Street to run Labour's 2010 General Election campaign.

The duo had impressed with a string of successes in the recent Students' Union elections, getting several feckless candidates elected into top offices.

Sources close to the Prime Minister have leaked a secret strategy memo in which Moosourcey and Keeping have advised the PM to increase his public appearances at the Tuns on Wednesday nights, suggested that he enters the Mr LSE competition. The ISoc endorsement can also be secured, they claim, if the PM spends RAG week with a Medical Aid for Palestine bucket.

Clare's Pulsating Beavers on the Loose

LSE student journalists have gone into shock after surprise announcements of a possible merger of the various media group outlets.

Members of the media group reportedly went into spasms and epileptic fits after learning of plans for a combined news-gathering structure for the Beaverian, Pulse, LooSE TV and Clare Market Review, which would create a team known as Clare's LooSE Pulsating Beavers.

According to an anonymous source, membership for this new elite group will only be attainable after reaching an undetermined number of flirious encounters. The Beaverian understands that only one member of its staff qualifies for membership at present. Unconfirmed reports stated that the member of staff is fond of leather jackets and Blackberry phones.

LSESU Albanian Society
Best Overall Society 07-08
proudly presents

KOVACI'S SPECTRE ACT

The Albanian Society brings to you a night of magic!

Showcasing Alfred Kovaci's famous disappearing act! Watch him attempt to make Aled Dilwyn Fisher disappear, just as he turned his entire street team invisible! Magic never dies.

Free goulash!
Venue: Squash Court No.1
Entry: 50p

孔子研究联合会与中国经济发展社团协办
The Confucian Research Association and Chinese Economic Development Society present

'我♥西藏' 特别联欢会

'I Love Tibet' Special Party

3月21日(星期六) 傍晚6点30分 旧剧场
21 March (Saturday) 6.30pm Old Theatre

免费入场 提供食品和酒精
中文和粤语卡拉OK (严禁藏语)
Free entry Food and alcohol provided
Mandarin and Cantonese karaoke (Tibetan banned)

Collective

Ajay Agarwal; Raidev Akoi; Emmanuel Akpan-Inwang; Madeeha Ansari; Hasib Baber; Fadhil Baker-Markar; Vishal Banerjee; Wil Barber; Peter Barton; Ramsey Ben-Achour; Graeme Birrel; Julian Boys; Danielle Brown; James Bull; Mike Carlson; Jess Cartwright; Beth Cherryman; Elizabeth Cheesbrough; Angela Chow; Estelle Cooch; Joseph Cotterill; Oliver Courtney; Jonathan Damsgaard; Richard Dewey; Elle Dodd; Cathy Druce; Marie Dunaway; Holli Eastman; Louisa Evans; Ossie Fikret; Aled Dilwyn Fisher; Charlotte Galvin; Justin Gest; Ira Goldstein; Erica Gornall; Lucie Goulet; Aula Hariri; Yisum Heneghon; Charlie Hodgson; Tahiya Islam; Felipe Jacome; Daniel Jason; Lois Jeary; Megan Jones; Yisum Heneghon; Naem Kapadia; Sam Tempest Keeping; Pooja Kesavan; Sadia Kidwai; Alizeh Kohari; Marion Koob; Vivek Kotecha; Anna Krausova; Cherie Leung; Phyllis Lui; Affan Mohamed; Shibani Mahtani; Zeeshan Malik; Nizar Manek; Nada Mansy; Sophie Marment; Jamie Mason; Trent Maynard; James McGibney; Liam McLaughlin; Nitya Menon; Irfan Merali; Anna Mikeda; Ravi Mistry; Ali Moussavi; Deotima Mukherjee; Utsa Mukherjee; Aditi Nangia; Brett Noble; Rachael O'Rourke; Ryan Ong; Aba Osunsade; Nick Oudin; Anup Patel; Jaynesh Patel; Rajan Patel; Sachin Patel; Alice Pelton; Will Perry; Clare Pickering; Chloe Pieters; Danielle Priestley; Rahim Rahemtulla; Dominic Rampat; Anjali Raval; Rosalie Ray; Helen Reeves; Ricky Ren; Joe Rennison; Katherine Ripullone; Sacha Robehmed; Helen Roberts; Joe Sammut; Charlie Samuda; Thienthai Sangkhaphanthanon; Amrita Saraogi; Christina Schimdt Zur Nedden; Dan Sheldon; Andre Tartar; Sam Tempest Keeping; Su Wan Tan; Kerry Thompson; Meryem Torun; Molly Tucker; Vladimir Unkovski-Korica; Subash Viroomal; Simon Wang; Jonathan Weir; Chris Westgarth; David Whittaker; Sean Whittington Roy; Christine Whyte; Matthew Willis; Chris Wilkins; Chun Han Wong; Calum Young

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

Collective Chair

Lucie Goulet
collective@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Editorial Board

Executive Editor
Joseph Cotterill
editor@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Managing Editor
Chun Han Wong
managing@thebeaveronline.co.uk

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

Comment Editor
Sean Whittington Roy
comment@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Features Editor
Shibani Mahtani
features@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Social Editor
Madeeha Ansari
social@thebeaveronline.co.uk

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

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

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

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

Part B Editors
Julian Boys
Sachin Patel
partb@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Design Editor
Mike Carlson
design@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Photo Editor
Cherie Leung
photo@thebeaveronline.co.uk

General Manager
Sanjiv Nanwani
info@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Web Editor
Srikanth Narayanamohan
web@thebeaveronline.co.uk

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

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

East Building
LSE Students' Union
London WC2A 2AE

LSE events Highlights of this week's public lectures and talks

The Brain That Changes Itself: The Neuroplasticity Revolution and its implications
Norman Doidge
Tonight, SZT, 1830

Howard Davies in Conversation with Lord Goldsmith QC
Lord Goldsmith QC and Howard Davies
Tonight, HKT, 1830

The Significance of 1949 in Chinese History
Professor Chen Jian
Tonight, OT, 1830

Eastern DRC: what should the international community be doing?
David Leonard, General Olusegun Obasanjo, Professor James Putzel, Clare Short
Wednesday, SZT, 1830
(Ticketed, LSE staff and students only)

Social Justice and Sustainability: arguments from political theory
Professor Simon Caney, Professor Paul Kelly, Baroness Onora O'Neill
Thursday, HKT, 1830

Positions of the week LSE Careers Service's pick of the best jobs

Investec
Capital Markets Graduate Programme 2009

United National Development Programme, International Policy Centre for Inclusive Growth
IPC-IG Internship Programme 2009

KPMG Spain
Opportunities with Financial Risk Management

Europa Partners Limited
Summer Internship - Corporate Finance/M&A

Global Polio Eradication Initiative/ World Health Organization
Summer internship 2009

Adam Smith International
Graduate Internship

MiCandidate
Intern opportunities

Morgan Stanley
Treasury - Banking / Liquidity Specialist, Corporate Treasury - Liquidity Management and Funding Specialist

The Syria Trust for Development
Debate Programme Manager and Senior Research Analyst

UNAIDS Country Office in Cambodia
Intern (Partnerships)

United Nations Volunteers
Intern in Research and Development

Tesco China
International Graduate Opportunities

OECD
Junior Expert in Competition Law and Policy

Which?
Policy Research Intern

Allianz Capital Partners Ltd.
Executive Assistant to the Chief Executive

National Audit Office
Senior Analysts & Researchers - Value for Money Audit (Defence)

St Mungo's
Activity Volunteer

The Food Chain
Various volunteering positions, including navigator, driver, supervisor

LSE Residential Services
Sales and Marketing Office - Sales Advisor (part-time)

Philosophy Financial
Marketing Assistant / Trainee Advisor

PDD
Marketing Internship, in a leading design and innovation consultancy (exclusive to LSE)

CognoLink
Research Associate Intern, in a primary research firm (exclusive to LSE)

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

Cybernetically enhanced Beaver.



The Beaver's digital revolution continues.
Now on twitter!
twitter.com/beaveronline

Let us know where to go next:
info@thebeaveronline.co.uk

The Beaver
thebeaveronline.co.uk



Photo: Joe Rennison

Another student beauty pageant? Must be time for a protest

Joseph Cotterill

Miss LSE was named first runner-up in the Miss University London (Miss UL) final held last Tuesday, amid stink bombs and feminist protest. Keelin Gavaghan, a first-year Accounting and Finance student came just behind Kings law student Susheed Bal for the top prize. Miss Heythrop College was second runner-up.

Winners from student beauty pageants at University College London, King's, SOAS, Regents and Queen Mary, and cross University of London colleges took part in the contest as protesters gathered outside - and infiltrated in.

This year's round of pageants provoked a storm of debate around feminism and misogyny on campuses and in national media.

Stink bombs were let off soon after the opening of the pageant at the Crystal Club in Marylebone, while a



hidden device on the dance floor emitted a loud beeping noise until its discovery towards the end of the competition.

However the majority of the audience seemed not to notice these attempts, as they mainly affected those near the stage and the contestants, and so the contest progressed with minimal disruption.

Just before the overall winner of the pageant was announced, a small group of protesters stormed the stage, throwing into the crowd at least 30 sheets of paper with a photocopied message explaining their reasons for interrupting the night.

Armani Bennett, one of the presenters of the competition, reacted by announcing to the crowd "Thank you to the girls who tried to ruin the show - you failed. Thanks for making my job look better."

Karen Sharon, her co-presenter, later added that she "thought it [the stage protest] was really, really disrespectful - people put so much time and effort into this and they come and deface the whole thing. But in a way it's good as it causes

controversy and gives us more publicity."

Shiva Jasseb, one of the judges and also an organiser of the show, said, "people who are making comments have never been to a show or watched one of our shows. Their judgements are based on what they see on Miss World - but [Miss UL] isn't cheesy or superficial. I took part last year and it's harmless - there are no bikini tops, the girls are in evening gowns.

"As much as the girls are beautiful, they are judged on so much more than just superficial looks. They are judged on how they walk and hold themselves, but also how they answer the random questions [asked by the presenters] - we're looking for wittiness."

She added that the contest was "mainly a bit of fun. The protesters are ridiculous; what's more civilised - the protest or the contest? They should see what it's about before they protest."

The majority of the contestants agreed with this, with a number of them also stating that they thought of themselves as feminists and disagreed with the protests, arguing that female liberation should be about giving women the right to make their own choices. Gavaghan added to this, voicing her disappointment with the protests. "Everyone's entitled to their own opinion, but this is just meant to be a fun charity event. The protesters are taking the fun out of it. We're all at university, we're all intelligent, why shouldn't we take part?"

For and against the contest

"Detractors have never been to a show or watched one of our shows. Their judgements are based on what they see on Miss World - but it isn't cheesy or superficial. I took part last year and it's harmless - there are no bikini tops, the girls are in evening gowns"

Shiva Jasseb
Judge

"We're willing to be arrested to raise awareness of this kind of objectification of women, even if the media want to portray feminists as duffle-coated lesbians. They are using the University of London name, which we don't want to be associated with"
Protester

London student feminists and cross-dresser join picket

Joe Rennison

Students from across the colleges of the University of London joined the picket against last Tuesday's pageant. Despite plans to take part in the protests, LSE were absent on the night.

LSE Students' Union women's officer Ruby Buckley had originally planned to hold a talk by a Guardian columnist before leading a group of LSE students down to the competition to join the protests. But the speaker cancelled at the last minute due to a viral infection and Buckley eventually arrived at the protest at around 11:30pm, alone and also complaining of

sickness. The Womens officer-elect Jessie Robinson also turned up shortly after.

Buckley said there had been little Union support for the protest, despite a commitment to campaigning on behalf of women. "There was enough warning about the protests, there was enough discussion about them. Throughout the year it's been one of the Students' Union's main campaigns that's been publicised."

She added: "It's indicative of the problems with the Students' Union that none of the sabbatical team came down to the protests. Emmanuel came down to the LSE protest, but none of them came down for the protest on Tuesday."

"I think the sabbs should have leapt on the bandwagon and really supported what we were doing," Buckley said.

Buckley had made plans for protest. "We had our banner, we were hoping to go and just add our voices and add our presence to the protest. Our main objective was to just make a really strong presence of ourselves. It makes the people going to the event really think about what they are doing," she said.

Goldsmiths students were the first to start protesting when they arrived early to the event to chain themselves to the entrance of Crystal Club and lock the doors using bike locks.

Police arrived quickly and tried to reason with the protesters before warning that their persistence to barricade the entrance to the club would lead to their arrest for 'obstruction of the highway' and a night in a jail-cell.

One of the protesters said: "We're willing to be arrested to raise awareness of this kind of objectification of women, however way the media want to portray feminists as duffle-coated lesbians."

She continued: "They are using the name of the University of London, we don't want to be associated with this."

The protesters were soon dragged from their position in front of the doors to the club and taken away from the scene in a police van. Goldsmiths communications officer Jen Jones and member of the blockade later told The Beaver that the police decided to drop the girls off at London bridge because, "they couldn't be bothered to process the arrest."

Shortly after the arrest of the Goldsmiths protesters SOAS misogynist cam-

piagn arrived and began picketing outside the venue with banners and chants.

Buckley commented on the activities of other colleges, saying: "All credit to them. Student activism is at an age where it should be alive and well... All credit to them."

Miss Jessica Sparkle, a professional transvestite from Manchester who attends Heythrop College, had her application to compete in the final declined, despite winning the unofficial Miss Heythrop competition. She was later offered guest list entrance to the event but was turned away on the night for being "inappropriately dressed".

Sparkle told the Beaver that the organisers' attitude "shows how discriminatory this whole competition is."

Around LSE LSESU and Societies news

'Free Tibet' motion narrowly passes UGM

by Marie Dunaway

The controversial "Free Tibet" motion narrowly passed at Thursday's packed-out UGM after several weeks of continual debate.

The motion, which calls for the Students Union to "support the people of Tibet in their struggle to regain full autonomy," passed by a mere four votes.

Arthur Lo, who spoke for the motion asked for people "to use their voice to speak up for people who don't have a voice." He spoke of the one party government of China and Tibet's right to be recognised by international law.

The proposal, originally submitted by Michael McGhee, has been criticised for being divisive and alienating many Chinese students.

Will Shear, who spoke against the motion, said that the motion was splitting the UGM and "causing chaos and is asking the Student Union to stand on a political stance which clearly excludes quite a large minority group."

However, Charlie Dougherty who stood as a second proposer said that this should be a matter of debate at the UGM, not just for debate society as the second opposer had suggested. The motion has gone past the words of the motion, he said.

"Tibet was invaded. The motion asks for the autonomy of Tibet, not independence" he continued. Dougherty said "after hearing the speech discussing fee paying and how people should be grateful to the government of China I thought that someone ought to go up there and not necessarily support the motion as it stood but support the idea of an autonomous Tibet."

After questions from the floor, there was a call for a move to vote. Due to an initial close vote, the Constitution and Steering committee called for a second count and the motion passed with just a few votes.

LSE Literature Society's Fourth "The Muse" launched



Photo: Simon Wang

by Madeeha Ansari

The launch reception of the fourth issue of the LSE Literature Society publication, "The Muse", was held with great success at the Parish Hall on Friday. "The Muse" is the only publication of its kind on campus, dedicated solely to creative writing by students, staff and alumni.

About a hundred people drifted in and out of the hall during the course of the evening, including student-writers, editors and sympathetic patrons of the arts. Most notable among these were Dr. Angus Wrenn and Dr. Olga Sobolev, coordinators of the Literature modules at the LSE.

It was Professor Wrenn who inaugurated the event, with an interesting introduction to the Muse, its contents, and the "post-modernist lollipop" featured on the cover. This was followed by readings of a selection of works by the authors, and much conversation over champagne and chocolate. In fact, several guests lingered well beyond 8 o'clock, when the event was officially scheduled to end.

Editor Cameron Paige, who organised the launch, had much to be proud of. The success of the event proved that an ever widening circle here has come to appreciate the institution's link with the world beyond the parameters of Economics.

Comms Officer: Brown "beyond belief"

Ali Moussavi

A senior Students' Union official has criticised the conduct of the Union's Anti-Racism Officer because of comments he made which allegedly intimidated a Jewish student.

Union Communications Officer Dan Sheldon said that Anti-Racism Officer Joseph Brown's behaviour during the occupation of the Old Theatre, when Brown referred to having "shot down a Zionist", was "unacceptable", "foolish" and "beyond belief".

The incident, which occurred in the first week of Lent Term immediately before the UGM on Thursday, was documented in a complaint email which the student in question sent regarding Brown's behaviour.

In the email, the student described the incident saying: "He even went so far as to pretend to hold a machine gun and said 'I loaded the bullets in, aimed, fired, and shot down that Zionist' (including the motions that go along with all those actions - and a huge smug smile on his face, searching for approval from the group). Needless to say, as a Jewish person and a Zionist, I felt extremely uncomfortable. Regardless of my faith or political beliefs, I strongly believe that anyone would have been extremely offended by those actions."

The student said that she felt unable to report the incident to Brown in his capacity as Anti-Racism Officer.

According to the student, Brown later

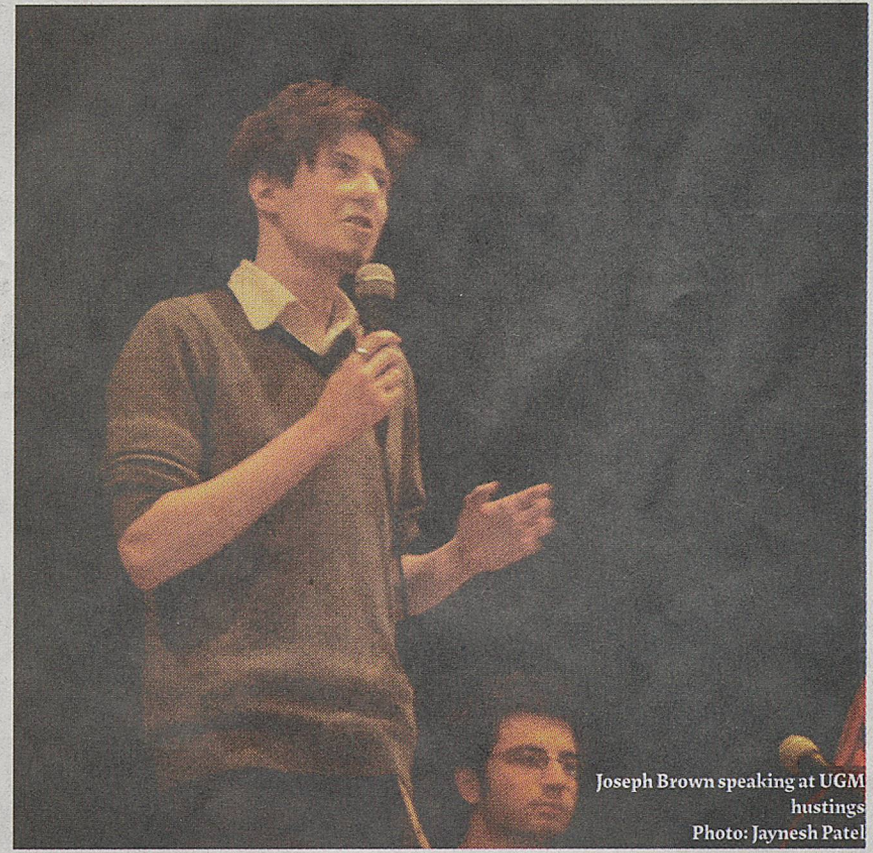
"I am glad that [Joseph Brown] will not be leading the Students' Union next year"

**- Dan Sheldon
Communications Officer**

explained and apologised for his comments. Brown also claimed that his role as Anti-Racism Officer has nothing to do with political opinions as they are not racial issues, and that he "would pretend to shoot down a Tory too."

The student added: "I told him that I still felt it was discrimination, and he shot back with 'well, I am not the Anti-Discrimination Officer, I am the Anti-Racism Officer.'"

Brown denied this. He had told the student that he was not the anti-political discrimination officer, he said. He said that the incident "was resolved privately



Joseph Brown speaking at UGM hustings
Photo: Jaynesh Patel

between myself and the student who overheard my comments."

Sheldon said: "This is not about Israel-Palestine, freedom of speech nor any petty student politics battles. It's about basic hu-

man civility, something Joseph Brown has failed to consider on more than one occasion. I am glad that he will not be leading the Students' Union next year, after being defeated in his sabbatical ambitions by

Around campus



The LSE Students' Union University Challenge effort has begun first round trials to begin finding the next team.

Time is now for Europe reform, says Miliband

Sanjiv Nanwani

David Miliband has spoke out strongly in favour of economic and energy reform in the European Union.

Speaking at a public lecture at LSE, the UK Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs praised the EU's successes to date, including its regulated markets and cooperative policies.

But Miliband said that more needed to be done to preserve the gains that had been achieved.

Besides coordinated macroeconomic action by European governments, Miliband lobbied for the consolidation of national financial regulation, and a European budget dedicated to the development of human capital in the EU.

Miliband also insisted on the need for energy reform, stressing that the current economic crisis "had its roots in \$147 oil

as much as it does in systematic risk in the financial markets." Energy reform is especially in Britain's interests, given that it will "transform from a net exporter to a net importer of energy in the next 15 years," he added.

Miliband further called for regional cooperation between EU member states and its neighbours both "in the south and the east," referring to Mediterranean and Soviet satellite states. This involved the development of partnerships with such states, without compromising their delicate relationships with Russia.

His comments were greeted with concern by a member of the audience, a lecturer at the University of Westminster, which maintains an exchange programme with Moscow State University. She asked about whether a common European energy policy would strain relations with Russia, as Europe positioned itself as a giant bloc with bargaining clout.

Miliband was quick to defend his words, stressing that he was not arguing

for a policy that is reminiscent of Europe's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). The CAP, which began operating in 1962, is regarded by some as one of the EU's most successful policies, and by others as a scandalous waste of money.

Miliband suggested that the energy policy would instead serve to identify a common strategy for the diversification of energy use across European states, as well as the research and development of alternative energy sources.

Speaking at the event were also Sir Stephen Wall (UK Permanent Representative to the EU) and Frans Timmermans (Dutch Minister for European Affairs), amongst others. Together, they presented the findings of an interdisciplinary, cross-party investigation of policy options for the EU, as it reforms itself to meet multifaceted global challenges post-2009.

The final report will be presented to national governments and EU institutions in spring 2009.

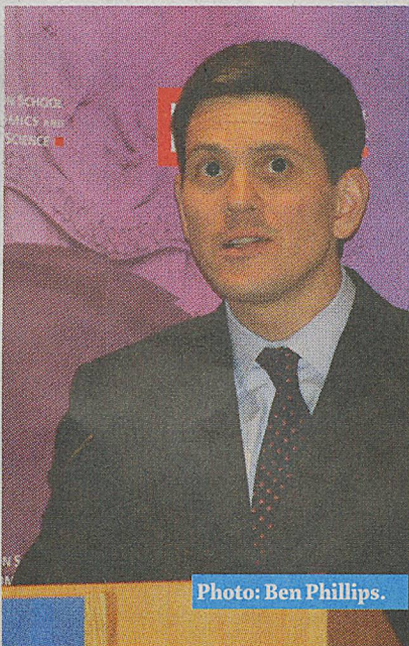


Photo: Ben Phillips.

LSE reuse scheme sends fake charity to recycling bin after investigation

News Feature

Beaver reveals financial malpractice in book recycling company network

Banned charity uses legitimate cover

Nizar Manek



LSE environment officials have thrown a company pretending to be a charity out of the school's book reuse scheme, after the Beaver discovered serious financial irregularities in the company's practices.

Two organisations affiliated with the controversial Humana People-to-People 'charity' network, the UK branch of which was closed in 1998 after Charity Commission findings of 'serious financial irregularity', took part in LSE's recycling of old books to Africa until officials were alerted to the Beaver's findings.

Planet Aid-UK – the direct successor to the Humana-UK clothes recycling enterprise – has profited from the LSE Reuse Scheme and LSE Halls of Residence Reuse Scheme. Incorporated as a limited company in October 1998 upon Humana-UK's closure, Planet Aid-UK claims that it provides aid for Africa. It is not subject to Charity Commission regulations.

Planet Aid-UK donates its LSE Reuse collection material to a recently formed organisation internal to Humana People-to-People: Development Aid from People-to-People-UK (DAPP-UK), registered with the Charity Commission in March 2007.

Between late 2007 and early 2008, DAPP-UK received books from LSE through its 'Books for Malawi' scheme: the approach came via Planet Aid-UK, operating under the guise of DAPP-UK.

The Beaver suspects that the company Planet Aid-UK retains disproportionate 'administrative costs' for its intermediary work, donating incomplete proceeds to the charity DAPP-UK. Among purposes for such covert activity are tax evasion and reduction in declared profits.

On 20 January of this year, Poul Jørgensen, a senior leader and spokesperson for the worldwide Humana People-to-People organisation was convicted by the Danish Western Appeals Court (Vestre Landsret) for profits of Danish kroner 18 million in embezzled funds and a further 22 million in untaxed income. According to the allegations aired in court, money was channelled to private businesses through a trust and left undeclared for tax purposes.

In Britain, DAPP-UK's General Manager Csaba Szeremley told The Beaver:

'When we came to LSE to collect the books, our Vauxhall Vivaro van was overloaded. Over a period of four months, we collected 2.5 tonnes: 2,500 books. To be honest, I felt we just cleared departments of outdated books consigned to the dustbin of history: the political sciences of the seventies.'

'Since the last occasion proved so fruitful, we have plans to run this project again in the near future', he added.

Szeremley, who became DAPP-UK's General Manager earlier this year, having unsuccessfully applied to LSE in 2007 to read for an MSc in Development Studies, said it was volunteers at the Planet Aid Academy who had the task of sending the proposals to educational institutes and libraries.

A Charity Commission spokesperson said that though neither Planet Aid-UK nor Humana People-to-People fall into their jurisdiction, the Commission would be interested if the organisations were claiming to be registered charities and operating in England and Wales.

Companies House confirmed the status of Planet Aid-UK as 'an active company, listing its activities as 'other business activities'. Any company claiming to be a charity but not so registered can face investigation by Trading Standards.

Shortly after LSE cooperation, a BBC investigation into Planet Aid-UK's accounts for the tax year 2006/2007 revealed £400,000 of their turnover exceeding £1 million went to what Planet Aid-UK Director Birgit Soe described as 'staffing and administration costs'. A mere £120,000 – 10 percent – went to what Soe described as 'good causes'.

By contrast, Textile Recycling for Aid and International Development (TRAID) – also a beneficiary of the LSE Reuse Scheme – successfully diverts 97 percent of all donations from landfill to serve its development aid projects.

Planet Aid-UK Director Birgit Soe told The Beaver: 'Since DAPP-UK did not at that time have any storage space themselves, Planet Aid-UK helped them store the books collected from LSE. However, the books Planet Aid-UK donated, DAPP-UK could not send to Malawi because DAPP-Malawi asked specifically for educational books: they were instead sold in DAPP-UK's charity shops.'

Szeremley was contradictory: 'The books donated from LSE and other educational establishments – the Institute of Education, the University of St. Andrews and the University of Nottingham – were

all sent to Malawi'.

'But unfortunately the books got stuck in Durban, South Africa, and DAPP-Malawi received a bill for using the warehouse there', he added.

The Beaver requested details on the proportion of 'administrative costs' retained by Planet Aid-UK from DAPP-UK after collection and storage of the books from LSE. Planet Aid-UK Director Birgit Soe said: 'Planet Aid-UK did not get anything in return for donating the books from LSE to DAPP-UK. Planet Aid-UK is a not-for-profit company: all our profit is used for development work. There are no shareholders – that's very important'.

Other instances confirm this to be the classic Humana People-to-People modus operandi: the merging of charitable and commercial activity, the extent to which the lines between are made obscure.

In September 2006, Asda evicted Planet Aid-UK clothes donation bins from its car parks, following its dispatch of a cease-and-desist letter to the company. The BBC revealed further instances of Planet Aid-UK placing charity collection bins on private land without obtaining permission and with no licence to do so.

Planet Aid-UK has since overcome this difficulty by deploying bins bearing the name of the registered charity DAPP-UK.

Szeremley told The Beaver, 'We have a contract with Planet Aid-UK since 2008, given negative press coverage and the allegations against Planet Aid-UK's aid work. The contract establishes Planet Aid-UK pay royalties to use the DAPP-UK charity name on their containers, and then transfer the money to DAPP-UK'.

'It's all for the greater good: DAPP-UK is perceived as more transparent. It's a charity, subject to stricter regulations', he added.

Journalists and researchers have identified more than 250 such interdependent companies and charities, many of whose accounts are located in offshore tax havens. Danish police, who have been investigating since 2000, put Humana People-to-People's worldwide assets at £420 million.

Mike Durham, a journalist who has studied Humana People-to-People since 1999, said, 'This kind of activity is absolutely typical of the way Humana operate all over the world: shunting assets between different companies and charities so that at the end of the day as much money as possible goes into private hands, and hardly anything is left for

charity'

'There is powerful evidence that well-meaning people are being exploited, and unwittingly helping fund an extravagant lifestyle in faraway places for a few clever individuals. Their activities are bringing recycling and the development aid world into disrepute'.

Author of the Danish language book on Humana People-to-People, Jes Fabricius Møller, said: 'The problem is that since the beginning more than 30 years ago, they have failed to comply with simple rules of transparency and auditing. They consistently mix up their commercial with their beneficiary activities in a way that makes it impossible for outsiders and even high ranking insiders to find out how and to what extent they actually help poor Africans'.

Only on 20 February last month, the German Bundestag Federal Department for Economical Development declared Humana People-to-People Deutschland not to be a legitimate non-governmental organisation. 193 NGOs applied to be considered for the German Weltwärts programme for young people volunteering in the developing world: of the 192 recognised, Humana People-to-People – of which Planet Aid-UK and DAPP-UK profess membership – was the sole NGO to meet with non-recognition.

LSE Environmental & Sustainability Manager Victoria Hands, who pioneered the LSE Reuse Scheme and London-wide Reuse project said: 'As LSE provides leadership in the sector for sustainable development and moving towards zero waste in particular, it welcomes the diligent research and helpful presentation of findings on Planet Aid-UK and DAPP-UK'.

'LSE received a free collection service for old departmental books that would otherwise have gone to landfill. Although Planet Aid-UK met LSE requests to feedback on tonnages, it did not meet LSE requests for information on recipients and confirmation of reuse of materials. LSE has therefore decided not to work with Planet Aid-UK again'.

DAPP-UK General Manager Szeremley expressed his dismay: 'If I find that the organisation is corrupt, then I will surely leave. I am definitely disconnected from those people at the top, and I do benefit from information coming from the outside. But, you know, the Royal Bank of Scotland executive who refused to return his millions pension fund – he's just as bad'.

Higher Education & Research

LSE and sector news

Liberal Democrats call for more strategic expansion of higher education

The Liberal Democrats have opposed the government's target of including 50% of under-30's in higher education at their spring conference. The party's shadow chancellor Vince Cable said: "How much longer can we pretend that it is sensible or affordable to chase the Government's target?" In addition, the party reiterated that it opposes tuition fees for undergraduate students, adding that they would extend free education to part-time students as well.

For more information visit: <http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=26&storycode=405761&c=1>

Tories claim that students aren't repaying their loans

Higher Education minister David Lammy has denied claims that students are not repaying their student loans. The Conservative party have warned that 70% of European students, who are eligible for loans on the same basis as UK students, are not making payments, are not contactable, or are falling into arrears. Lammy denied that the statistic was correct on the grounds that many of the students were below the repayment threshold, had changed course, or dropped out. Lammy added: "The Student Loans Company is putting in place everything it can to ensure that we chase down those students when they graduate."

For more information visit: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2009/mar/12/student-loan-scandal>

UCU demands for a pay rise could leave higher education in a "mess"

The Universities and Colleges Union (UCU) has agreed not to ballot for industrial action over pay disputes after further talks were agreed with the Universities and Colleges employers association (UCEA). The UCU are demanding a pay rise of 8% despite receiving a pay increase of 13.5% over the past three years. They say that the increase is required to make up for the underfunding from the previous government. Ministers warned last week that such pay increases could leave universities in a "mess" because of the current recession.

Reuse schemes guides will be released for halls of residence

LSE is set to release its new reuse guide into halls of residence on 17 March. 'Moving Towards Zero Waste: reuse guide for halls of residence' will give details for hall managers, accommodation officers and environmental managers on how to 'implement, improve and extend' reuse schemes in halls of residence as well as giving information on how to introduce reuse schemes on campus. A workshop on reuse schemes and how they can be implemented in halls of residence will be held for London universities to mark the guide's launch.

For more informations visit: <http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/pressAndInformationOffice/newsAndEvents/archives/2009/ReuseGuide.htm>

Trains ain't what they used to be

According to research from LSE, some major commuter train journeys took less time in 1930 than they do now. The study compared pre-war train timetables with those of today and found that often the modern network has longer waiting times and slower journey speeds. For example, it now takes three minutes longer to commute from Wimbledon to London that it did in 1930. Dr Tim Leunig, a lecturer in the economic history department of LSE, said: "People care about every minute. You could be waiting up to 29 hours a year, which would work out as four bank holidays being taken away."

Australian Treasurer promotes crisis action

Sanjiv Nanwani

The time has come for concerted international action in countering the global economic crisis, Wayne Swan, the Australian Treasurer has said in an LSE speech.

In the speech at LSE on Friday, Swan also called for a sweeping reform agenda for the G20 group of countries, as he outlined the Australian government's response to the global economic crisis. Swan, a Labor Party politician, has been serving as Treasurer since December 2007 under Prime Minister Kevin Rudd.

Swan is in the UK to attend a summit of finance ministers from the G20 group of countries, who will be discussing the global financial crisis. The two-day summit took place in Sussex over the weekend.

In his speech, Swan criticised the G7 group – a group of seven industrialised nations – for being unrepresentative of



Flickr user James TCA

today's defining elements of the global economy. He believed that the larger and more inclusive G20 group served as a more effective platform for discussing solutions to the financial crisis.

Swan played down the systematic risk and impact of the economic crisis

on the Australian economy, noting that it had "been hit hard but still remained upright, battling, and fairing better" than its economic competitors. He hailed the performance of Australian banks, noting that the country had "four of the AA-rated banks left in the world, out of, I think,

eleven."

He credited Australia's resilience to the competence of its financial services regulator, the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority (APRA). APRA is chaired by Dr. John Laker, who coincidentally earned his doctorate at the LSE, with a thesis that focused on modelling unemployment in Australia.

Swan's speech comes as the Financial Times reported on a leaked UK Foreign Office document which apparently relegated Australia to a "B list" of countries which the British government did not believe to warrant "intensive diplomatic lobbying and engagement" for the purposes of global economic reform. "High priority states" on the list were led by the US, Japan, France and Germany. The Australian government hopes that its recently announced \$42 billion fiscal stimulus package, including cash handouts and infrastructure spending, will help the economy weather the global downturn.

Beaver survey results revealed

Sanjiv Nanwani
General Manager

Over the course of last week a newly created team of Beavers aimed to survey the LSE student population on their views toward the paper.

This was the final task of the marketing team, which was created in Week 4 of Lent Term and had earlier launched a sizable marketing campaign that served to raise the newspaper's profile amongst members of the LSE student and staff population.

Multiple mediums were adopted in publicising the survey, including Facebook, SU societies' emails, advertisements in the paper and announcements by the Press Office on the computer login boxes. The team also approached students physically to receive their feedback. A total of 450 respondents were surveyed, the results of which are displayed adjacent.

The survey looked for a broad cross-section of LSE students. For this reason each surveyor was given a general quota of 50% non-EU, 25% British and 25% EU students (which generally reflects the diversity of the LSE student body). Surveyors were not instructed to strictly observe the quotas but rather to ensure no particular group was over-sampled relative to other groups.

The results show that over 50% of LSE students believed that The Beaver caters towards their interests. A comparatively smaller group of 17% of LSE students believes that it does not.

Similarly, more than 50% of the respondents believed that The Beaver covered stories appropriately. Just 15% believed that The Beaver failed to do so but almost 30% were non-committal.

Our readers also generally asked for more investigative stories, reporting to be less biased and for a wider coverage, particularly of society events and social activities.

Following the paper's redesign into a Berliner format last summer, approximately 75% of all respondents found its layout and design to be attractive.

Finally, there were requests for academic debates, entertainment stories and career information.

The team also received a wide array of miscellaneous comments, each of which will be carefully evaluated by members of The Beaver Editorial Board.

The marketing campaign which preceded the survey adopted a wide range of strategies. Besides streamlining the paper distribution process and expanding it to include more collection checkpoints, the team also conscientiously handed out copies of the paper every Tuesday morning, when the Beaver is published.

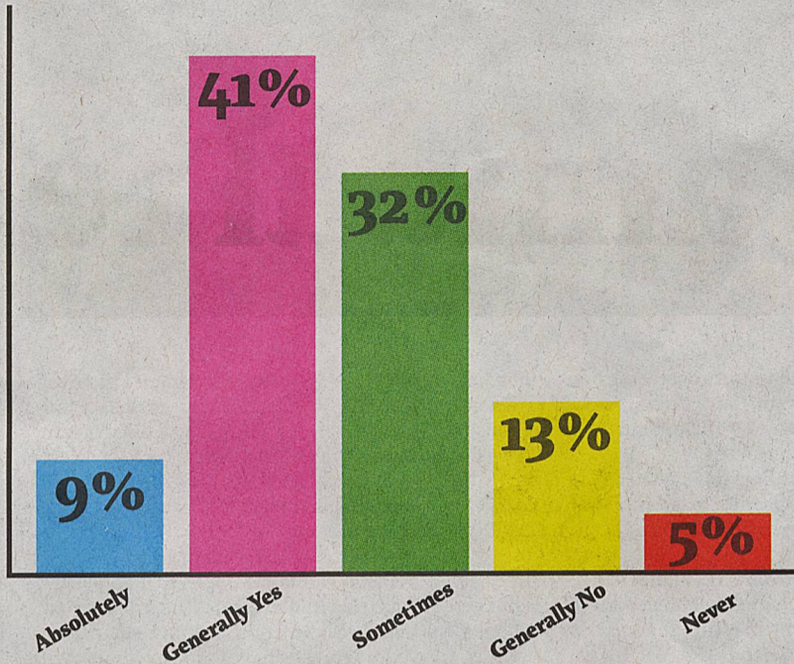
The team also leveraged the school's IT infrastructure by publishing ads through the LSESU's weekly global email, SubTV, and other means.

In a year buoyed by turbulent news and forces of tension, The Beaver has worked extremely hard towards producing carefully-calibrated and objective stories that would educate and inform LSE student population.

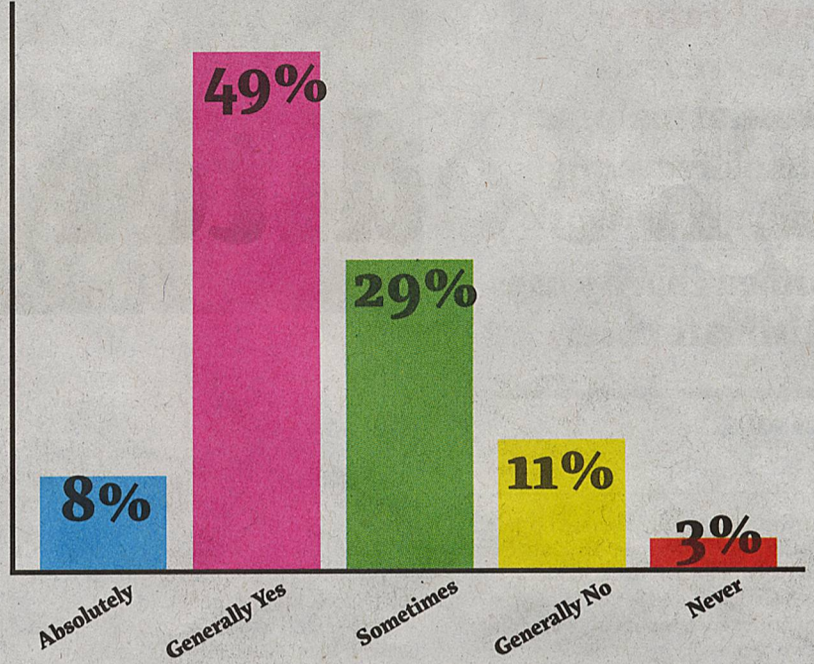
Going forward, the survey has produced results that will be further considered by the Editorial Board, as it plans for the 2009/10 academic year.

The Beaver sincerely thanks all survey respondents for their valuable time and commitment towards this paper. Whether you may wish to contribute to the paper, or simply drop us a line of feedback, we remain contactable throughout the year; simply email info@thebeaveronline.co.uk.

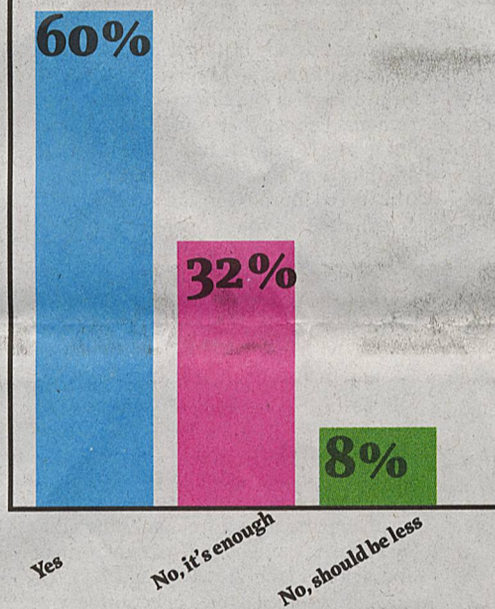
Do you find The Beaver generally caters to your interests as an LSE student?



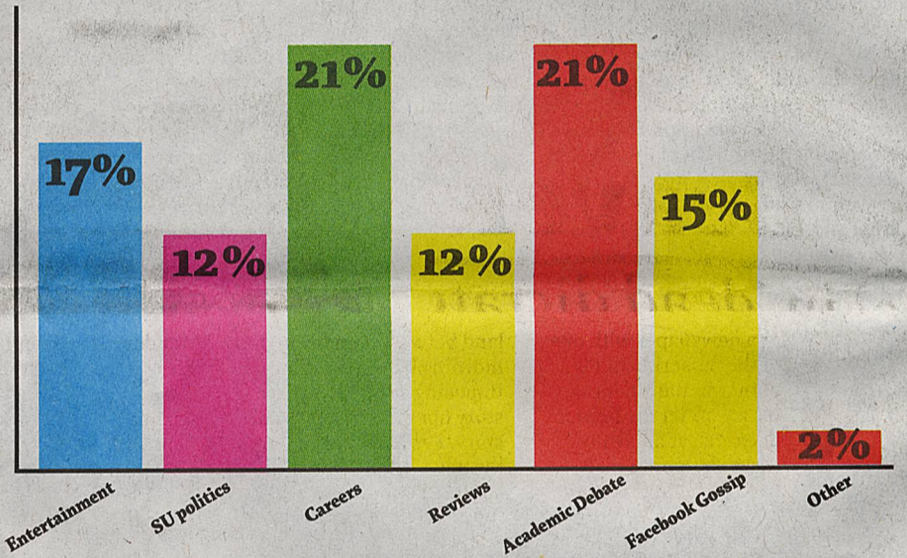
Do you think The Beaver covers LSE news stories appropriately?



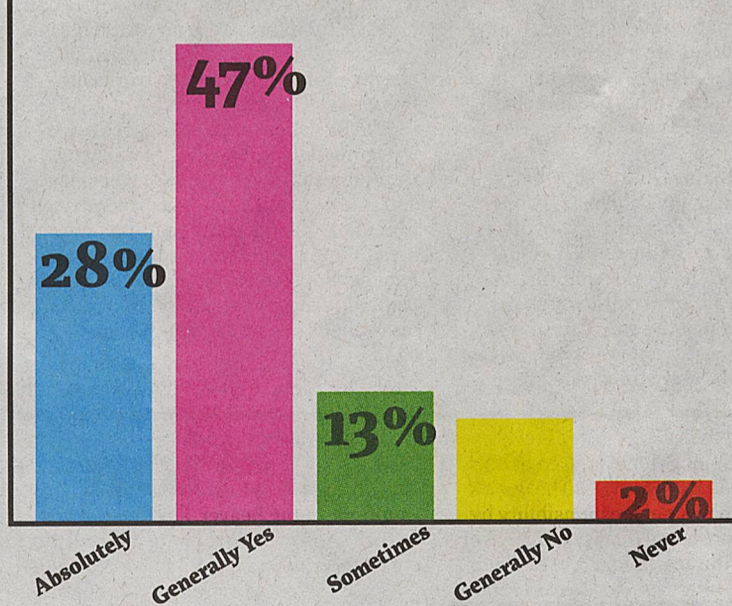
Should The Beaver cover more social events and societies' activities?



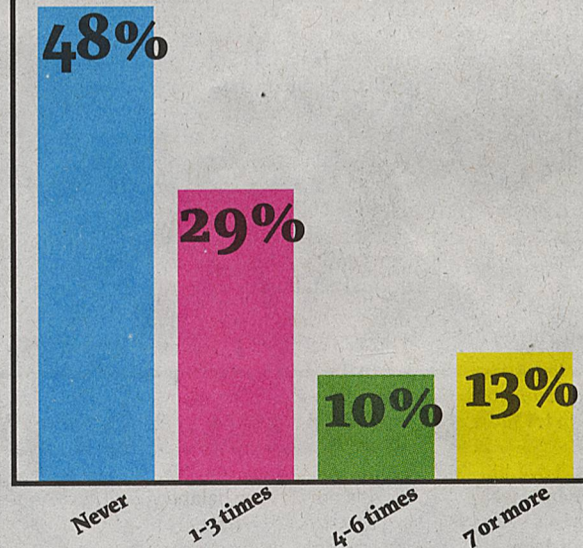
Which of these would you most like to see added to The Beaver?



Do you find The Beaver layout to be reader-friendly and attractive?



How many times have you visited The Beaver website so far this academic year?



**NEEDED:
OUR (ED)
BOARD OF
BEAVERS**

It's not that our graduates don't love you, they just want paying jobs. Come take over and make The Beaver yours!

Beaver Collective: Thursday 19 March
Graham Wallas Room 1700-1900

Open to all LSE students: News • Comment • Features (x2)
Open to Collective Members: Managing Editor

Comment

Beaver monologues: The editor's annual report

Your student paper's performance has justified this year's golden jubilee - mostly



For a newspaper with one of the most ridiculous names in the business, it's a wonder the Beaver does well at all, really. As the outgoing executive editor for this year, I'm pleased to report that this year has been an even more pleasant surprise than usual. The Beaver is back, after a long period of decline, and I hope readers have liked what this year's editorial staff have done with their campus newspaper.

Having (hopefully) read the Beaver through the year, I expect you have a good idea already of how the Beaver has adapted to what has been a challenging environment on campus. You don't need an overlong comment piece from an editor soon to be thrown on the scrapheap to tell you about what's been done on the other twenty-three pages of the Beaver (not to forget the sixteen pages of PartB).

But it is customary for outgoing editors to justify the changes they've made during their year on the paper. I was also elected last March on a promise of fairly sweeping change - so bear with me.

I should go into our news reporting first. The survey opposite indicates that it's the most important section for most of you, and it's certainly the foundation for the Beaver's reputation overall. After a veritable revolution in how we've approached news on campus this year, I would say that reputation has been restored after a ropery few years. Though it's a yearly complaint that the Beaver's news coverage is disproportionate, insular, and habitually inaccurate, those voices seem to be quieter this year.

Beaver news reporters have made several lapses and errors of judgement, which have probably annoyed me more than anyone else on campus. Almost all of them have been frustratingly minor cases of misquotes, misspelled names, and mistakes of fact. Even though I cannot be everywhere and check every fact, confirm every source, correct every sentence, I am in the final resort responsible for all the paper's errors.

Still, our readers should be aware that a persistent (sometimes Sisyphean) effort was made to improve basic standards in news style and spelling and grammar throughout the year.

Throughout my twenty-one editions of the Beaver, I've averaged about one thousand words of copy in the no man's

land between Sunday night and Monday morning before deadline day, ruthlessly imposing simple sentence structure and story openings that actually tell you the story. I've had many a long argument with the news editors about the integrity of the sources behind their stories, and whether the latest Students' Union mini-scandal really is that newsworthy.

Dedicated postgraduate courses and national media, replete with professional training and stylebooks, find it difficult to inculcate these things. So please forgive the limited progress I've made this academic year while navigating my other responsibilities on the paper, and my undergraduate degree. But it has been getting through. And I think wider change in the Beaver's values has been achieved.

Look at the types of story the Beaver has covered this year, for example. We have been more ruthless in covering the big issues of public interest around the School, and indeed making many of them issues in the first place. This is a rather large change from last year, when the Beaver was in danger of becoming a 'viewpaper' more interested in ideological amour propre than the basics of accurate reporting, or covering actual events on campus.

It's not an easy balance to achieve. You are a particularly diverse lot to write for. We don't always have our fingers on the pulse of what LSE students are doing, and what they care about.

Still, in the recent Students' Union elections for instance, almost all the candidates had something to say on teaching quality - often quoting facts and figures straight out of the many Beaver articles that were written on the subject this year. Teaching is a huge concern for the silent majority of LSE students, and I am glad we covered it in detail.

It has all been part of a wider strategic shift from the more attention-grabbing aspects of life at LSE, such as the Union General Meeting's weekly political zoo, to the things that take place in the background of the school's administration, or which reflect broader trends at LSE.

This is precisely where the other sections of the Beaver have really come into their own. Comment has served as an excellent forum for lively LSE-style debate this year. I rather regret not inviting more academics to take part, given the con-

sistent quality of the research done here and the way in which it has an immediate impact on society.

Features has by contrast maintained a fairly even balance between affairs on campus and current events in the wider world, which I think is what most LSE students want to read.

Social was the newcomer in the main paper this year. I am pleased that about two-thirds of the students we surveyed said that they want to see more of LSE's social life and society events. I designed the Social section with this demand in mind, taking a brave gamble against the stereotype of LSE students as library-obsessed study junkies. The section did have a slow start, but it has blossomed this term, with students writing about everything from student nights to their love of literature.

Turning to sport - well, sport. I set out to drain the back pages of the Beaver of a lot of the sleaze and naughty words that used to grace the section. It's mostly been achieved, and best of all I think its anarchic flavour has been maintained. Again, LSE never used to be a sports university, but I think this is changing. This year the Beaver joined the trend as well.

PartB has also had a year of revolution. For one thing, it never used to be a supplement in its own right. The editors have taken to this new responsibility by producing consistent quality coverage of London's cultural calendar and students' avant-garde interests - again confounding the stereotype of LSE students as dour economics monks.

In this quick tour of the Beaver's bits and pieces, I should also leave room for the Photo and Design sections - two new additions to the paper, which have hopefully left it far more aesthetically pleasing and easier to follow than ever before.

Overall, student participation in the Beaver underwent something of an explosion this year. We signed up more students in Freshers' Fair than in the whole of the previous academic year. The size of the regular staff has doubled to about fifty contributors, and we now boast one of the greatest ranges of skills under that one roof on campus, from photography to marketing to design to writing.

The Beaver's staff has been a lot more international and balanced in terms of

gender and sexuality this year than many student societies, and also compared to the Students' Union overall. The occasional claims from these quarters that we are somehow an isolated clique have rung more hollow than ever this year. It certainly doesn't square with the survey's finding that over eighty per cent of the students who took part felt that the Beaver's attitude did represent LSE.

Problems remain, however. Diversity is still not up to scratch. Compared to our engagement of British or Singaporean students, for example, too few South Asians take part, and LSE's large and vibrant Chinese community tends to stay away from the Beaver altogether. We also have structural problems with engaging general course and postgraduate students, who prefer to spend their year here on their busy academic schedules. I did aim at one point at creating an ombudsman, or diversity or readers' editor position in order to keep us on our toes in this area and make sure we serve students. It might be an idea for next year.

We should also have had more resources in play last term to encourage more students to write and take part, and to increase distribution - particularly in halls of residence. Unfortunately, resources were scant, despite the very generous doubling of the Students' Union's financial support for the Beaver. For those of you worried that this could have affected our editorial independence - I think the number of negative stories we ran about the Union this year roughly doubled as well, so everything has been kept in proportion.

Bundles of Beavers did begin to land on halls floors this term for the first time in years, and we have overall sustained a much larger pool of students compared to last year. Fifty per cent of the students who took part in our survey read the Beaver every week, which is in fact excellent compared to almost all other student newspapers in this country, and especially relative to the seemingly unstoppable decline in the readership of national newspapers.

But it is not as if the Beaver has any serious competitors on campus to compete for the loyalty of students. There have been too many missed opportunities in getting the Beaver out on campus, for which I apologise.

That includes the Beaver's online performance this year, which has been one of my biggest failures as editor. Of course, we do have a functioning website this

time. It's more than we had last year.

But it is a far too basic structure, with limited rolling news updates during the week. It is stonkingly, embarrassingly abysmal that half of the students we surveyed had never visited us online, despite a considerable promotion effort. And given the opportunities of the new wave of social media moreover, we have just not done enough.

I think this calls for a complete overhaul of the Beaver's editorial structure. At least half of the editorial board should be dedicated to making use of new media, and expanding the Beaver out into audio and video once we have our basis in text sorted. That implies another huge expansion in the paper's personnel. In terms of the buzz we created this year, however, I think this is achievable next year.

It's very difficult to decide how newspapers in general, but especially small campus newspapers, should adapt to the internet. I'm not sure they should bother adapting at all. As advertising revenues plummet, journalists are put out of work, and information becomes ever more free, we are living through the biggest information revolution since Johannes Gutenberg started fiddling about with movable type. Few of today's newspapers will survive to the middle of the century. That might include the Beaver - it has survived sixty years already. But the next sixty will be a challenge.

I should finish with a broad vote of thanks. The editorial staff has expanded so much this year, I am literally unable to thank everyone by name who has dedicated so much time, skill and effort to the paper over these twenty-one issues. My special thanks to the Beaver's growing managerial staff, who are making the paper more efficient by the day.

I'd also like to help the people in the Students' Union and LSE itself who have helped the Beaver get the message out to students this year. I'm especially grateful to our publishers, the union's sabbatical officers, for their apparently infinite patience. Thanks also to the hard-working team at LSE's Press Office. Special thanks is due to Howard Davies for keeping the news section so well fertilised with unfortunate gaffes - "loss-making", indeed.

However, my most heartfelt thanks, as ever, is to our readers. I wish you all - and the Beaver - the best of luck for next year.



The Beaver

Established in 1949
Issue No. 706

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

The year in review

Occupations and protests, 'tyrannical rampages' on the part of the Union General Secretary, governors investigated for fraud and bribery and misrepresented arms holdings. A cursory glimpse at the front pages of the Beaver over the past academic year is telling: it has been a long, news-filled, hectic year at the LSE.

Global recessions and continued conflicts on an interna-

tional level have certainly made their presence felt at the LSE. Particularly over the past few months, the school's (perhaps waning) reputation for being a hotbed of student activism has not failed us, with the student occupation of the Old Theatre and movements such as the LSE Not For Profit campaign. Similarly, its reputation for being an impersonal institution with less than desirable standards of teaching and governors who see students as not much more than

economic units has also proven true based on the Beaver's news coverage.

This year, the Beaver has managed to tread touchy territory time and time again, be it at the upper levels of the school's administration or when covering controversial international issues plaguing our campus. We hope that despite the challenges that have perhaps made our quest for fair, unbiased and relevant coverage slightly more difficult, that we have consistently

produced an issue on Houghton Street that is worth picking up. We have also worked hard at improving other sections of the paper for those less inclined to LSE news, and hope that be it in the Sports section, Comment or Part B, we have pushed the limits of student journalism time and time again.

The simple fact remains though that we simply would not have a paper, or stories, or a purpose really without the students and staff who read us week after

week. For this, the Beaver sincerely thanks you for your contributions, effort and for caring enough to pick up the paper. As the Summer term looms closer, we would like to wish students the best of luck for the exams, as well as the teaching staff who, after a year of being criticised for poor teaching, now have to mark mountains of essays and exam scripts.

A self-righteous crusade

Holocaust denial is bad. Antisemitism is bad. Does the Beaver really have to spend the next two hundred words of this editorial spelling these two facts out? Why has the non-existent difference between the two now become an issue preventing accord between the Israel and Palestine societies on campus?

Students have a right to know

about the latest developments in what has been a massive issue at LSE, which affected us all when the Old Theatre was occupied for six days at the beginning of this term in protest at the Gaza war.

But permit the Beaver one more rhetorical question, which has probably run through the minds of many students and staff: hasn't the "Israel-Palestine debate" on campus gotten just a little pompous, self-righteous

and plain out of hand?

Politicians tend to swan out in a huff of Middle East peace negotiations in East Jerusalem or Cairo, not Houghton Street. We are all fairly intelligent and moderate people. Or we are supposed to be. These latest events put this in doubt, to be frank. And to be franker still, it reflects far more poorly on the Palestine Society than their Israeli counterparts.

It is massively disproportionate to pull out of the dialogue commission, which was one of the most promising developments on campus this year. After having tried almost all students' patience with the occupation, flinging mud at the Beaver's integrity and chopping and changing the occupation "demands" along the way, the Palestine Society are really starting to push it.

The Society's ridiculous and shrill "Israeli Apartheid Week" recently passed unnoticed on campus. It was a something of a relief not to have the Palestine Society ramming their views down everyone's throats. Perhaps a period of quiet engagement is in order, on both sides.

Comment

Letters to the editor

Change for Beaver

Dear Sir,

When I saw a link to a survey on how to improve the Beaver, I felt compelled to write in. Most of the space in the Beaver is taken up with coverage of Students' Union politics, which to be honest is not interesting or even educational. Sometimes the Beaver has a few informative articles - there was one a few weeks back, about Congo. You covered Gaza a lot during the war, which, incidentally, was biased first towards one side, then towards the other, and in the process you managed to undermine the real issues.

But what about coverage of things that you seem to tend to gloss over - like international human rights issues? What about Pakistan, where the Women's Action Forum found that 72 per cent of women held in police custody are sexually or physically assaulted? Or perhaps you could mention the Pakistani Taliban (which demolishes schools in order to stop girls going to school) which has been given power over the Swat Valley by the government, or Saudi Arabia, or in Jordan, where women at risk of honour killings are put in jail because "they're in the wrong"? Or what about Darfur and Somalia, where because of the conflicts between the men folk, the women and children are dying of hunger and disease? Or what about the Sri Lankan conflict, which has been raging for over 30 years and because of the incredible brutality of both the government and the rebels (who are, incidentally, supported and funded by an ethnic minority who claim to want their own home-land and peace, but instead have led to their own downfall), a solution will never be at hand?

If the Beaver so prides itself on news coverage and social issues, why does it never cover social injustice and stories that are outside the norm? Is the Beaver really so frightened of controversy that it panders to specific ethnic and religious groups, focusing on mostly trivial matters, and prefers not to focus on real social issues?

Yours,

Rosa Rajendran
BSc '11

Accommodation not homophobic

Dear Sir,

I was quoted in the Beaver two weeks ago as describing the Accommodation Office as "institutionally homophobic". I would like to make it clear that I do not believe this at all and never meant to give this impression.

While concerns have been raised about procedures for LGBTQ students in halls, and I feel that certain procedures governing delicate issues that affect one's sexuality could, on occasion, be dealt with better - and require institutional measures such as better training and guidance for staff - I am also fully aware that this is not within the remit of the Accommodation Office.

I apologise unreservedly for any offence caused to Accommodation Office staff, whom I know take issues of equality

very seriously. I look forward to working with them again next year, and I am excited at the prospect of us possibly sharing the redeveloped St. Phillips Building.

I would also like to personally thank Paul Trivett, Head of the Accommodation Office, and Ian Spencer, Director of Residential Services, for proactively meeting with Union officials to discuss LGBTQ issues in halls, which was extremely positive and I hope will lead to any issues being resolved.

Yours,

Aled Dilwyn Fisher
LSE Students' Union General Secretary

Shambles at UGM

Dear Sir,

The week 9 UGM demonstrates once again that the lack of order and organisation within the UGM is disenfranchising the students of LSE. Instead of following proper parliamentary procedures and etiquette, we have a meeting that is run by organisers who make up the rules as they go. While UGM Chair Azan Marwa is free to have political opinions as a student, he must realize that he forfeits the ability to be an advocate when he takes on the role of chair of the UGM. He cannot simply abandon his post as he sees fit, causing total disarray in the meeting, and injecting his political beliefs into a supposedly neutral position.

The Stop Anti-Semitism Now motion was hammered out in cooperation with both the Israel Society and the Palestine Society in order to ensure protection for free speech and the safety of students. It is a strong motion that ensures that political speech against the state of Israel is treated differently than hate speech and attacks against Jews. We are proud of the unity that was achieved from across the political spectrum. However, we are sorely disappointed that the clearly intentioned will of the students at the UGM was thwarted not by political opposition, but by the inability of C&S and the vice chair to orderly bring the motion to a vote. Next week, let's pass this important legislation for the protection of students on campus. Let's show that whilst we support free speech, we are also united against anti-Semitism.

Sincerely,

Alexandre Berdah MSc '09
Alex Rodin BSc '11
Alisa Brem MSc '09
Ashley Challinor MSc '09
Aylin Berenti BSc '09
Ben Grabiner BSc '11
Charlie Gluckman MSc '08
Daniel Bear MSc '09
Daniel Jaffe BSc '10
Daniel Zawacki BSc '09
David Benmayer BSc '10
Debra Freedman BSc '10
Eli Lipmen MSc '10
Gabriella Fine BSc
Helen Roberts SU Residences Officer
Jamie Tankel BSc '09
Katie LaPotin MSc '09
Lish Lee Avner MSc '09
Lizzie Bacon BSc '09
Miguel Herschberg MSc '09
Olivier Gergely BSc '11
Patrick Jones BSc '09
Rachel Finkelstein MSc '09
Sofia Levine BSc '10
Sophia Sleight BA '11
Stewart Bevan BSc, '11
Susanne Linhardt MSc '09
Tal-Anna Szlenski MSc '09
Yael Misrahi BSc '10

China: not the kind ruler of a free Tibet

Myths around the Tibet debate must be addressed

Arthur Lo

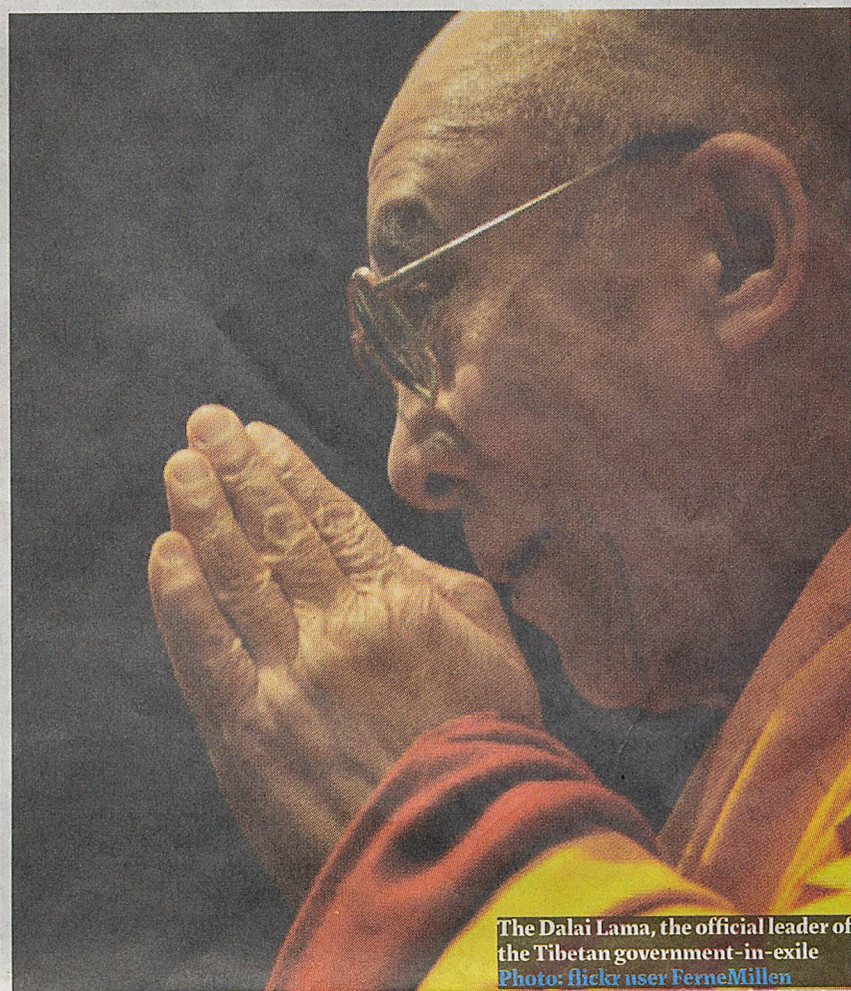
In last week's Union General Meeting, I spoke for the 'Free Tibet' motion. Two minute speeches were really not adequate to make sufficient arguments, and there are several claims which need to be addressed.

Firstly, many say that Tibet is a part of China, looking at a complicated history that has stretched over 700 years. Tibet had its own unique history. Historians, both Chinese and foreign, agree that Tibetan rulers were granted titles by the Chinese emperor. They disagreed, however, on whether this conferred the Imperial government of the day sovereignty over the realm of Tibet, or merely made Tibet into a vassal of China. While the Qing dynasty emperors garrisoned Tibet with troops and installed a commissioner, they never annexed the country properly.

As Chinese power waned, British influence over Tibet from colonial India grew. Despite the Chinese government's claim that no country has ever recognised Tibet as an independent nation, the British treated Tibet as sovereign. A convention was signed between the two in 1904 which required Tibet to grant access to British traders. Chinese troops were expelled from Tibet by a local revolt in 1913, the Dalai Lama of the day issuing a proclamation condemning 'Chinese colonial rule' and stating that 'We are a small, religious, and independent nation'. The Simla Convention of 1913 involved trilateral negotiations between the governments of the UK, the Republic of China and the recognised Chinese suzerainty over Tibet. However, it reaffirmed the earlier promise of non-annexation. With China distracted by various civil wars and World War Two, Tibet enjoyed de facto independence in the first half of last century. It was only after the Communist revolution of 1949 that China attempted to reassert its authority.

A lot of now independent countries, such as Korea, Mongolia and Vietnam have also been vassals of the Chinese empire at various points in history. The same 'historically part of China' logic could have been applied to all of them.

A second claim that is often made is that life in Tibet is much better now than it was before, since Chinese rule abolished serfdom. This claim is not disputed. The same, however, could be said of China, with the pre-revolution Communist Party gathering support from poor peasants oppressed by landlords. China outgrew this phase in history through independent development, unaided by other countries. It is hard to see why the same would not happen to Tibet if Beijing did not invade. Bringing 'development' and 'freedom' to another nationality has been the classic



The Dalai Lama, the official leader of the Tibetan government-in-exile
Photo: flickr user FerneMillen

justification used by imperialists throughout history, from Rudyard Kipling's praise to British colonialism in 'The White Man's Burden' to George Bush's 'bring democracy to the Middle-East'. It is ironic that with Beijing's abhorrence of 'western imperialists' 'meddling in Chinese affairs' it has appropriated their arguments to justify its own ventures.

Tibet is nominally an 'autonomous region' of China, run by an indigenous group. However, it is also subject to the de facto authority of the local head of the Communist Party and definitely not Tibetan. Autonomous Regions even less autonomous than 'normal' provinces, as they cannot legislate without prior approval of Beijing. Poor race-relations between the indigenous Tibetans and the influx of Chinese settlers led to the riots of 2008.

Progress for rapprochement between the Chinese government and the Dalai Lama has been made, however. The Chinese premier has offered to negotiate with the Dalai Lama if he dropped his demands for independence, who in turn stated that he demands autonomy, not independence, provided that the Tibetan culture and way of life is protected. Neither side, however, seem to have consulted the Tibetan people, whose UN Charter right to national self-determination has still not

been realised. It will not be, I believe, unless they have a chance to democratically decide their own future in a referendum, as Quebecois were allowed to do so in 1980 and 1995, and the Scottish National Party is planning to in the future.

The final damaging claim made by some is that while we can discuss this issue in the Debate Society, the UGM is not the right forum. This argument, I believe, is linked to the Chinese government's stance on criticisms of the regime: foreign critics of human rights in China are 'meddling in Chinese internal affairs' while domestic dissenters are 'endangering stability and "social harmony"'. While this argument may run under so-called 'Asian values', which prioritise the safety of the status quo over individual opinions, the values of this Student Union are the diversity of opinions, the freedom of expression and the freedom of conscience. We, either the Students' Union or foreign governments, have every right to formulate our opinions on conditions in China and Tibet.

Our Union has taken a commendable stance for various oppressed peoples before and I am very glad that we added Tibet to the list. Unlike the brave students of Beijing 20 years ago, we do not need to face tanks to defend our freedom. Let us make good use of it.

UGM has no right to question sovereignty

The issue of Tibet, and others like it, are too complex to be dealt with in short speeches

Hui Hua & Max Guo

Never has it been in the Union General Meeting's history that a single motion could have troubled all of us for a continuous four weeks! Last Thursday, after some heated speeches and debates, the 'Free Tibet' motion was passed with an astonishingly close 136 votes to 132. This

itself speaks for the unusual complexity of the issue and its ability to cause extensive controversy on campus.

The Student Union, as a student representative body responsible for looking after students' interests, should duly consider the fact that no matter how democratic the Union depicts itself to be, there are always extremely sensitive and highly explosive topics which it shouldn't venture into. The question over other countries' territory and state sovereignty is just one of them. Where an issue is highly controversial, an official stance by the SU could be counter productive in

that it can aggravate conflict and discourage both sides from participating in open minded discussions.

It is all very exciting, making speeches and shouting out words such as 'freedom' and 'rights', but maybe we should pause for a second and ask ourselves: are we supporting something because we really understand what is at stake, or because saying words such as 'freedom' and 'rights' seems to automatically give one righteousness? This sense of satisfaction, however, may not always be rational. Every one should enjoy the right to free speech. But a more responsible person and someone who genuinely cares about the issue would choose to study the subject in greater depth before voicing his or her opinions.

Take the Tibet issue as an example. It is no exaggeration to say that the majority of the students at the UGM did not know much about that region or its history at all. The two speakers for the motion last Thursday went up stage without even reading the

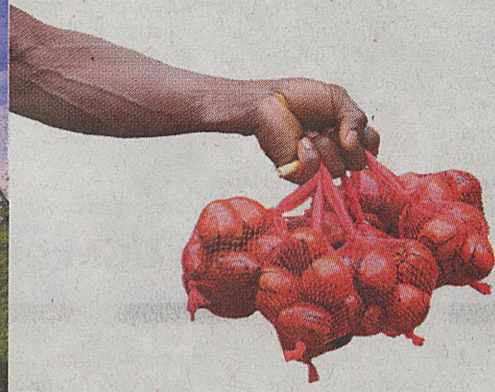
motion properly. One spoke so passionately about 'Tibetans' rights to voice themselves', the other made general comments on human rights issues. For whatever reasons, they have not noticed words such as 'independence government' and 'full autonomy' written in the minutes. The speakers for the motion and many of the audience unfortunately confused themselves - they never realised that the issue of fundamental rights, such as freedom of expression and religious freedoms, is distinct and separate from that of state sovereignty and territorial integrity. They were championing fundamental rights, but the motion was on territory and sovereignty.

The Tibetan issue, as an academic area, is highly fascinating. Indeed we encourage all students to actively engage themselves in discussion and voice their opinions. However, one must question the suitability of the SU to take a stance over such a highly charged issue, an issue that carries with it a history spanning across eight centuries, an issue that affects approximately one fifth of the world's

population, an issue that touches on the international legal concept of territory and sovereignty.

The format of the UGM, which mainly consists of two-minute speeches in front of a mere 3 per cent of the students, in no way provides itself with any basis to claim that it is a capable, suitable and legitimate institution to pass a so-called 'motion' (which supposedly represents the whole of the LSE students) on an issue that has troubled the members of the international community for more than six decades. Such a process does nothing to promote LSE's democratic image, but only succeeded in alienating a substantial group of the student body, distressing others unnecessarily, setting out a dangerous precedent for the future and threatening the harmony on campus.

Democracy must prevail, but every enjoyment of freedom comes with it a certain duty. Nothing is unqualified, nothing is completely beyond restriction. The LSE Students' Union, being clearly incapable of dealing with the issue of Tibet, should offer to take no stance on such matters.



LSE Arts Week

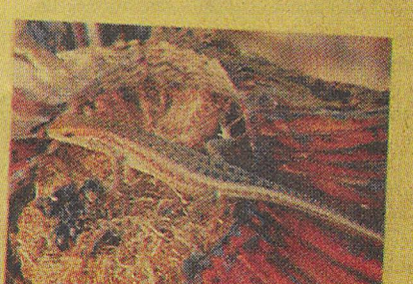
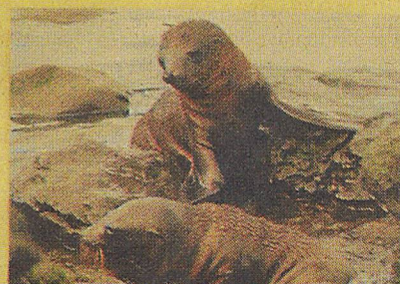
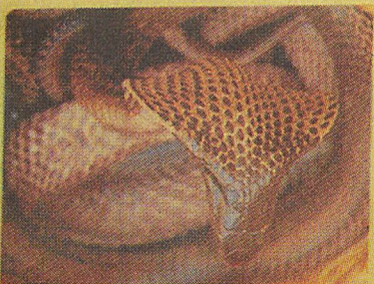
The Beaver uncovers the artistic side of London School of Economics



The last Photo Section of the year brings you the most underrated side of LSE: The Arts. The Photo Section this week departs from the usual photojournalism and embraces the the more artistic face of LSE. We are therefore showcasing extracts from the photography exhibition presented by the LSESU Colombian Society and the Visual Arts Society, as well as paintings from the LSE Arts Week display in Parish Hall last week.

The Columbian Society photography exhibition told the account of BBC reporters who walked the streets of Bogota, Colombia in 2007 and asked approximately 1000 people if they were happy; every single person answered "yes". Colombia is a country full of contrasts: violence and poverty co-exist with abundant natural resources and human capital. The purpose of the exhibition was to invite all LSE students to witness and appreciate the perspective of five young talented Colombian photographers of this dichotomy through the exhibition "Wealth." The selected artists are Max-steven Grossman, Santiago Escobar, Federico Ruiz, Daniel Tovar and Juan Felipe Rubio.

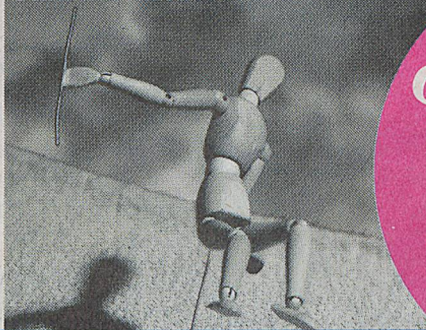
Photographs of Parish Hall Exhibition by Lorilee Evans and Ryan Ong.



Blowing my red nose

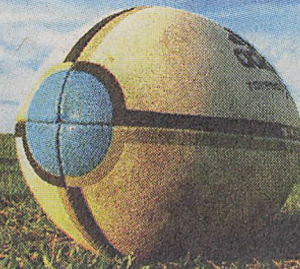
>>SNEEZIN' B2

SURREALIST PHOTOGRAPHY
BEAVERIAN ARTS



ABSOLUTELY
ONE HUNDRED
PER CENT
MADE-UP

INSIDE: A GUIDE TO THE
GENTLEMEN'S GAME
FOR DUMMIES



do you rugby?

£0.80
Tuesday 17.03.09
Published on
Houghton Street
and nowhere else
beaverian.co.uk

The flawed, fraudulent
and fact-free paper

the beaverian

Students hold LSE penguin hostage

● Mysterious group makes 5 demands to School

● Negotiations currently deadlocked

CH Melchett

A group of students have claimed responsibility for the disappearance of the LSE penguin, claiming that the statue is being held hostage in protest against the School.

In a three-minute video released online yesterday morning, the group, which called themselves 'The Polar Bears', claim to be holding the statue in a secret location in Eastern Europe.

The stunning revelation came just over a week after the penguin's disappearance from its Houghton Street perch.

The release and return of the penguin is made conditional upon the LSE's meeting of the group's demands, which include the resolution of the on-campus Israel-Palestine conflict, easier exam papers, more

water fountains on campus, renaming the Fourth Floor Restaurant with something "more tasteful", and the provision of year-round 24-hour library services.

The demands were read out by Polar Bear leader Seth Brown, who appeared in grainy video brandishing an AK-47 assault rifle. He said: "Until the School meets all of our demands, this fair feathered friend of yours shall not see the light of day."

"We Polar Bears will make a meal of this penguin," Brown added.

The video ended with a short sequence showing two masked figures, clad in black, flanking the penguin with knives to its neck.

Little still is known of the hostage takers, although the LSE believes that its members are drawn from various left-wing activist groups on campus.

Negotiations between the LSE and the

Polar Bears have begun, and is being conducted over Facebook chat.

An LSE spokesperson said: "We've conditionally accepted some of their demands, and offered an amnesty if they choose to return the penguin immediately."

"They also seem ignorant of the fact that polar bears don't eat penguins. These two species inhabit opposite poles," he added.

Despite the efforts, sources from within the negotiating team indicated that the talks have ground to a halt late last night. The major point of contention is believed to be the demand for the resolution of the Israel-Palestine conflict on campus.

"I have been trying to do just that for years. Now they are asking for a miracle on Houghton Street," said LSE academic and Pro-Director Janet Hartley.

"Tony Blair might put the real crisis

"We Polar Bears will make a meal of this penguin."

Seth Brown
Leader of
'The Polar Bears'

in the Middle East to bed before I'm done with this one here," she said.

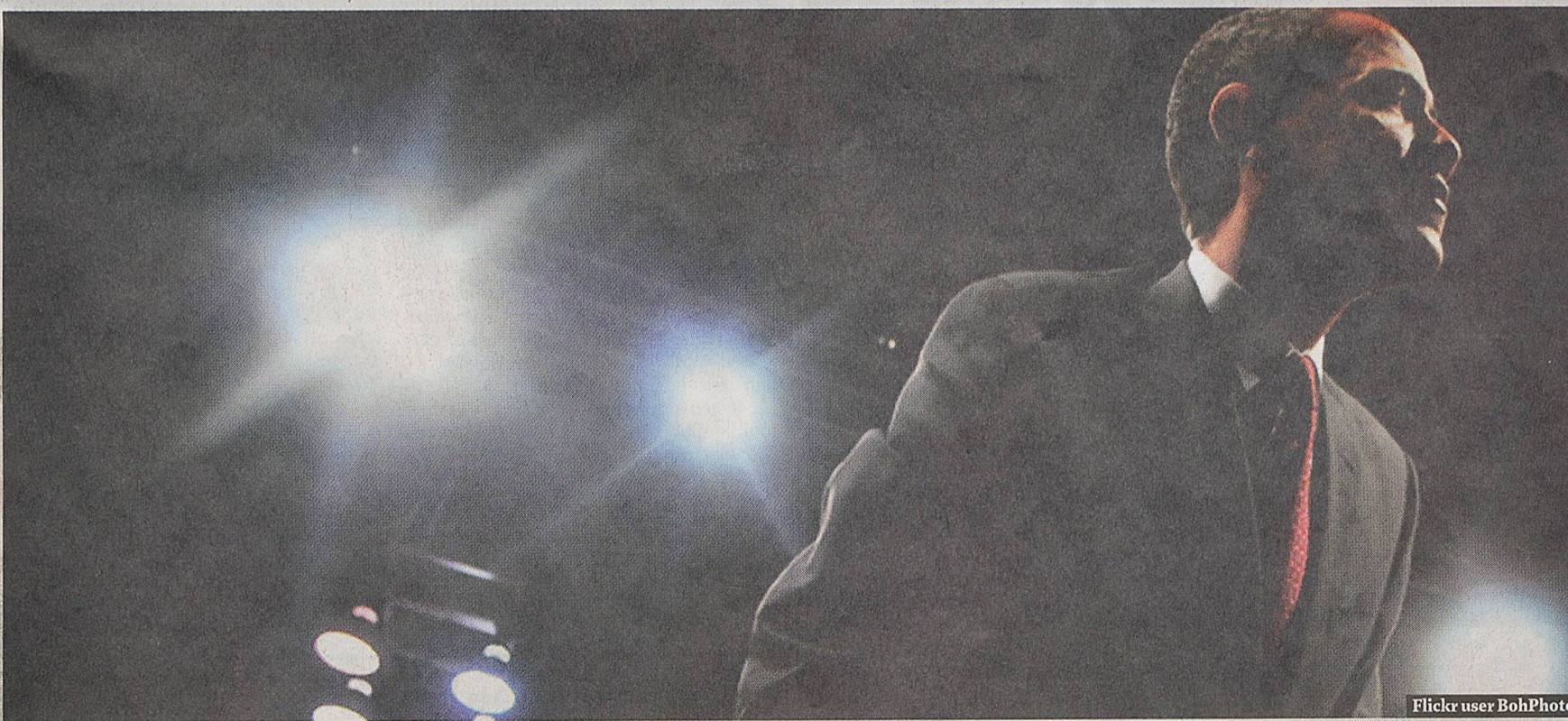
Contingency plans have been put in place by the School, to be executed should negotiations collapse. A elite team of crack Beavers stand ready to conduct a rescue in the event of an emergency.

LSE director Howard Davies said: "Ideally, we'd prefer to resolve this unfortunate incident in a peaceful manner. But the honour of LSE public art is at stake and we have to be prepared to defend it."

"Just to be clear, I did not create this situation in an attempt to divert attention away from my alleged role in causing the financial crisis," he added.

Meanwhile, students harbour hopes that the penguin will be returned safely. First-year student Oswald Chesterfield Cobblepot said: "Pingu is made of the right stuff. He's aluminium. He'll survive."

The Audacity of Nope: United States President Barack Obama turned away from LSE stage



Flickr user BohPhoto

UGM to train United Nations peacekeepers

CH Melchett

Starting next academic year, United Nations peacekeepers will attend sessions of the LSE Students' Union General Meeting as part of their conflict resolution training package.

Under the new training initiative, about 50 peacekeeping personnel, both civilian and military, will observe the weekly UGMs for educational purposes.

Announced by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon at an emergency session of the UN General Assembly yesterday, this unprecedented move has caught both UN and Union officials by surprise.

"It's great to see that we've started taking personnel training so seriously," said US ambassador to the UN Susan Rice. She added: "But I'm worried that our young peacekeepers might be overwhelmed by the raucous hostility at the UGM."

Union General Secretary Aled Dilwyn Fisher expressed similar sentiments. He said: "I'm delighted that our good work on conflict resolution has been recognised, but also keenly aware that the level of violence may shock some of the less experienced UN personnel."

"I will ensure that the UN trainees are given adequate protection from the Athletics Union," he added.

A UN spokesperson revealed that the aspects of particular interest to the peacekeepers are the UGM chairperson's proactive role of diplomacy and the hailstorm of violence that is paper-throwing.

The peacekeeping personnel, said the spokesperson, would benefit greatly from emulating the measured and composed diplomacy on display, while adapting to the dangerous environments they will face in future missions.

UGM chair Azan Marwah was pleased that he would be able to contribute indirectly to enhancing the UN's work for world peace. He said: "I have tackled the great disputes over Palestine, Darfur and Tibet with consummate professionalism. This experience deserves to be passed on."

LSE rejects Obama lecture proposal

● US President talk a "non-LSE event" ● Students upset with decision

CH Melchett

The LSE Conferences and Events office has turned down a proposal for a public lecture by US President Barack Obama, due to its incompatibility with LSE room booking policy.

Obama's planned talk on the Anglo-American 'special relationship' was deemed by School officials as a "non-LSE event" and hence not eligible for free room booking.

The lecture was then canceled, as the White House was unable to raise sufficient funds for the use of the Old Theatre. Free use of the venue had become a necessary

prerequisite for the event following the emptying of the US Treasury coffers in massive economic bailouts.

An LSE spokesperson said: "We regret that fact that we have had to turn President Obama away, but rules are rules."

"The White House failed to demonstrate any substantial link between the president and the LSE. Even John F. Kennedy would have qualified with his one week of attendance as a student," he added.

The School's room booking policy however is not very specific on what constitutes an 'LSE event'. The spokesperson revealed that it was made "deliberately nebulous" and operated along 'don't ask, don't tell' guidelines.

White House press secretary Rob-

ert Gibbs was disappointed by snub. At a press briefing held after the announcement of LSE Conferences' decision, he lamented: "All the things I could do, if I had a little money."

"Money, money, money. It's so sunny, in a rich man's world," he added.

Obama is not first high profile speaker to be snubbed by the LSE. Football manager Jose Mourinho, North Korean leader Kim Jung-il and actor Tom Cruise have all been turned away in recent months.

Students were unimpressed that they had missed out on yet another talk by a famous personality.

Second-year law student Malia Sasha was especially disappointed. She said: "Can't believe that I'm the fool again."

"Should have seen it coming, should have read the signs. Anyway, I guess it's over," she added.

Besides denting student morale, the snub is also likely to have severe repercussions on the LSE's standing within the public lecture circuit.

A White House aide, speaking on condition of anonymity, told the Beaverian that the CIA has been authorised to conduct a propaganda campaign against the LSE.

The campaign is believed to be focused on the alleged unsavoury aspects of the School, including the high likelihood of student occupations, a spike in public artwork theft rates and nauseating odours on lecture theatre seats.

PalSoc run out of body parts for self-mutilation

- Society members complain of incapacitation
- Students feel alienated by extreme measures

Sean Conneroy

After a full two terms of public relations disasters, members of the Palestine Society were last night desperately searching for more limbs in which to shoot themselves.

"The first time we shot ourselves in the foot, it didn't seem that bad. I mean, we've got such a good cause, losing one foot isn't that big a deal. But then things got out of hand," said one disaffected member of the committee.

"Now we're incapacitated. It's becoming increasingly hard to find anyone to take us seriously," the member claimed.

Other members of the committee were less willing to admit defeat. "Just as Palestine has courageously resisted the inhuman occupation by Israel, we will resist

our own inability to make an argument that many people can agree with," said one, who was determined to go on fighting.

"Palestinians manage to resist and fight despite being under blockade. We will equally resist our extraordinary ability to alienate well-meaning students from a cause they would otherwise support."

Denying to the death that winning the overall argument was more important than making sure details insignificant to most LSE students were absolutely correct, the Palestine Society managed to alienate the last right-on student who was not already involved in the group.

"Palestine and its people deserve freedom," the student said. "I have always supported the cause. I thought the Palestine Society at LSE must be good: their case is too easy to make."

"But then I saw what they were actually doing. I thought: What the fuck?"



Flickr user Grey Area

LSE Careers Service: Panic, now. Please.

In a striking reversal of policy, LSE Careers Services are now officially recommending that students "Panic, and panic now."

Up until last week, the Careers Service had continued to encourage students to 'diversify' their experiences and academic studies. The continued economic downturn, however, had made such optimism impossible.

Fiona Sandford, Director of the Careers Service, said in a statement to the Beaverian: "We could hardly continue to tell students they had any chance of getting gainful employment after graduation. We think our new policy is more realistic, and will help students think about possible future career paths as vegabonds, tube singers, and Labour MPs."

"Big" Mickey Carlson



LSE to become double entendre?

- Merger of London School of Economics and London Stock Exchange proposed
- Corporate administrative style expected to improve student employability

Ali Moosourcey & CH Melchett

Student activists from the campaign group LSE: Not for Education submitted a petition to LSE director Sir Howard Davies yesterday, calling for a merger between the School and the London Stock Exchange.

Established amidst recent fears of the global economic downturn, which has affected job prospects of business-minded students, the campaign desires a corporate approach to the running of the School.

The campaign was also designed to counter the rival group of students who have launched the LSE: Not for Profit campaign. NfP supporters espoused socialist Fabian ideals as ideological signposts for the running of the School.

LSE: Not for Education founder Michael Pees III said: "The harking back to some obscure concept of Fabianism is not on really. Our precious tuition fees are being wasted on things like teaching, library

services and pastoral care."

"In such times of grave economic peril, we need visionary leadership to take the helm and steer our floundering institution in to safer waters," he added.

The petition was well-received in the upper echelons of the School administration. Davies said: "This is a monumentally important landmark in establishing the confidence of the student body in my leadership of the School."

He also referred glowingly to the signers of the petition as "high-margin products".

On the proposal to merge the School with the stock exchange, Davies couldn't agree more.

He said: "I've been longing for the day when I could wash my hands off my pesky loss-making liabilities in quick, snappy deals on the trading floor."

"And if the merger goes through, the Careers Service won't need to give any advice no more. They'd just run indoctrination programmes to fill the stock exchange with fresh new traders every graduation,"

he added.

Many students also expressed delight at the emergence of a campaign that places the market value of their degree as the top priority.

A third-year student, who wished to remain anonymous, said: "Who cared about George Wallas and Graham Bernard Shaw? They mean nothing to me. My degree and its weight in starting salaries counts for far more than some long-buried fogies."

"The Not for Education campaign strikes a chord; its goals resonate. The Not for Profit nutters want me to co-ord my activities and go on strikes," he added.

Meanwhile, CNBC host Jim Cramer also found time from his ongoing feud with Daily Show host Jon Stewart to weigh in with his stock picks.

"Go long on the LSE and the LSE," said the financial pundit on his show Mad Money with Jim Cramer. "And both LSEs are just fine. The School is fine, the stock exchange is fine. Don't take your money out from them."

Students' Union saves world but destroys itself



World peace crusaders celebrate another UGM motion success
Photo: Beaverian archives

Sean Conneroy

After a mammoth session of attempting global conflict resolution, the LSE student body has exhausted its supply of humanitarian causes to propose motions for.

At press time on Monday, no motions regarding international or internal conflict have been submitted for this week's UGM.

"There just aren't any left," said one enthusiastic if slightly misguided peace activist. "I think we've done our job now. We can sit back and watch the world's wounds heal over in the next few weeks. I'm really proud."

But it seems the LSE student community will have to pay a price for its role in world peace. Tensions have never been higher on campus, with everybody who cares about anything hating somebody else.

A student, who wished to remain anonymous, said: "Just weeks ago, I didn't even know Singapore existed. Now, I hate it for producing so many smart Econ stu-

dents who make me feel so inferior."

Union officials were once again heavily involved. Women's officer Emerald Buckley recently dismissed criticism over her stance on the use of sexual violence in a distant conflict.

"You have to look at what's going on in that distant land. Other injustices there are more important than the potential upset my personal opinion will cause. Any woman affected by sexual violence can still come and talk to me with confidence," she said.

The LGBT officer also faced criticism for condoning the imprisonment of sexual minorities abroad. He said: "They have a culture of social cohesion there. We shouldn't be trying to tell them what to do. I may be here to look after student welfare, but I can't sit still when I see the cohesion of another society threatened. I think LGBT students who have faced discrimination in the past will still have confidence in my ability to help them."

Average students usually completely unaware of the UGM suddenly found themselves once again sucked into conflicts they thought they had escaped.

LSE Teaching Quality Index (LTQI)	Economic History Department	International Relations Dept	Finance Department	International History Dept	Law Department	Centre for the Study of Human Rights	Methodology Institute	Gender Institute	Government Department
-----------------------------------	-----------------------------	------------------------------	--------------------	----------------------------	----------------	--------------------------------------	-----------------------	------------------	-----------------------

Davies accused of multi-million dollar Ponzi fraud

- 9,000 LSE students defrauded in biggest Ponzi scheme in UK higher education history
- Davies indicted but defiant; will continue punditry and acting career over trial period

Shibby Mutiny

LSE director Howard Davies was indicted in court last Friday on allegations that he had been running a fraudulent investment scheme under the guises of his position at the school.

Davies is facing twelve counts of felonies and allegations of operating the largest investment fraud ever committed by an individual in the past decade. The largest of these crimes is hoodwinking students into applying to the LSE, particularly what he classifies as "high-marginal products" or international students, and then using these fees to service fraudulent investments.

The operation is similar to a giant Ponzi scheme, with students tricked into paying such high fees because they anticipate high short-term returns such as a high-quality education with respectable teaching standards.

According to Davies' lawyers, he contest the accusations vehemently and "fight on till the bitter end".

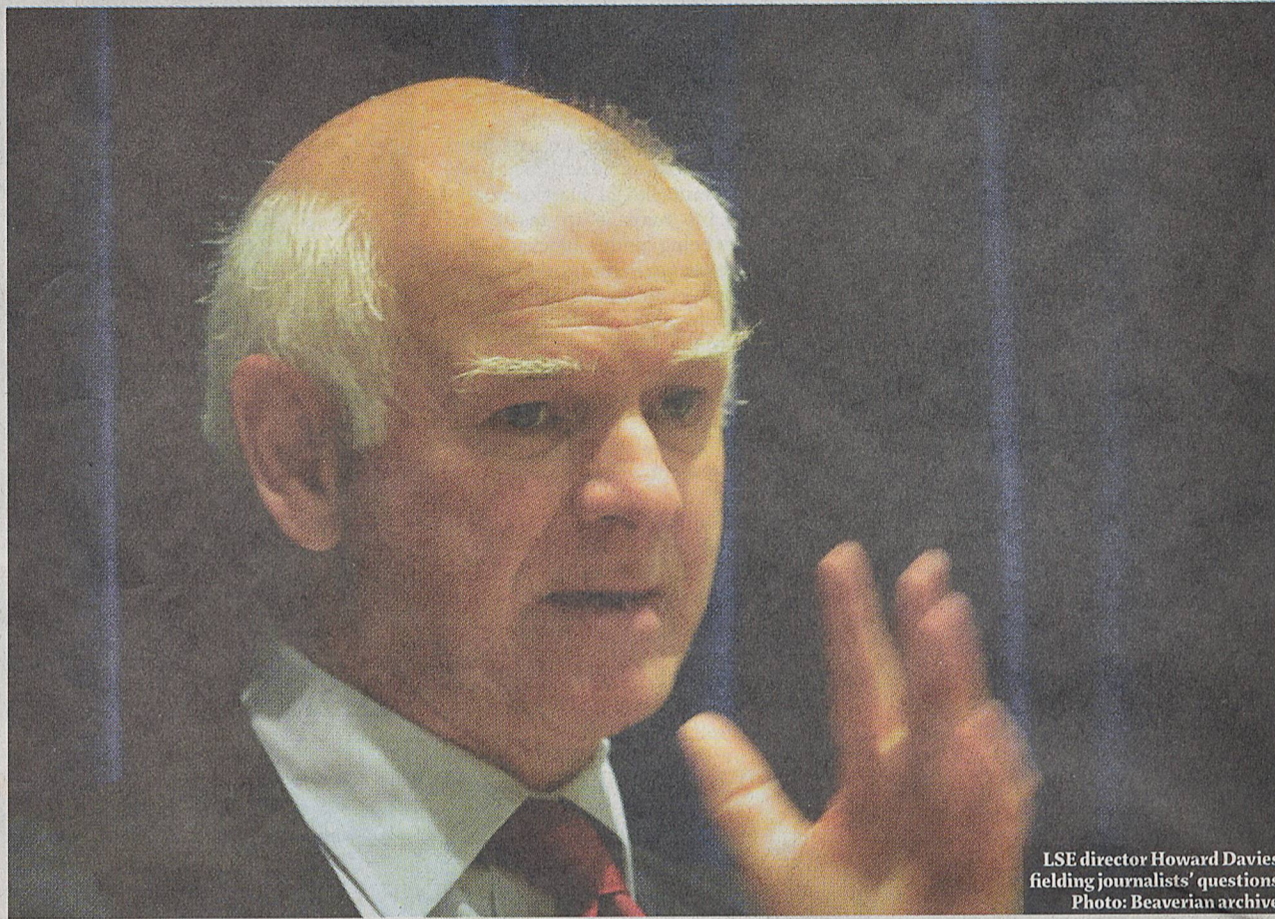
First-year LSE student Bernice Madoff has expressed great disbelief at the news. He called it "a great tragedy" and referred to this as a time when Davies has "lost control and got no soul".

It was also revealed that as Executive Chairman of the Financial Services Authority, the single financial regulator for the UK financial sector, Davies may have had played a "significant role" in causing the financial crisis.

Investigators believe that Davies pre-empted the crisis with his LSE admissions scheme, having seen it as the only way to safeguard his own financial security in uncertain times.

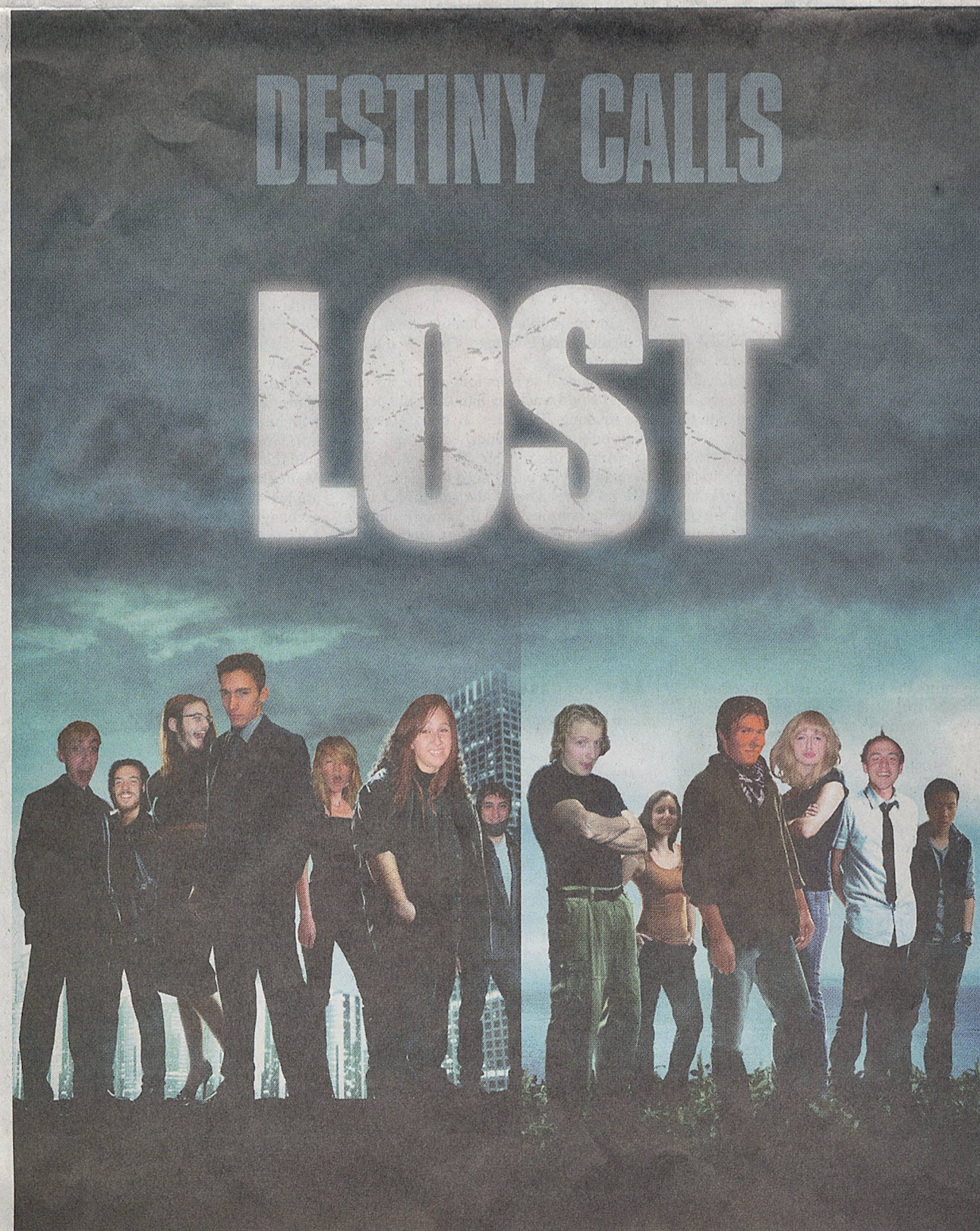
Despite the allegations, the director insists on his innocence and has stated that he will continue to pursue his current work in economic punditry and theatre.

"Millions have been taken in by my charms, if you know what I mean," he said.



LSE director Howard Davies fielding journalists' questions
 Photo: Beaverian archive

Coming soon to a SubTV screen near you, a brand-new season of...



Davies to duel Steuer in 'Have I Got Econ, Or You?'

CH Melchett

LSE director Howard Davies will pit his financial nous and quantitative prowess against critic and academic Max Steuer in a special edition of popular economics quiz show 'Have I Got Econ, Or You?'

Following public accusations by Steuer on Davies' lack of proper credentials to act as an economic commentator, quiz show organisers have hastily arranged the contest as a public attempt at dialogue and mediation between the two.

The special LSE edition of the half-hour quiz programme will be recorded next Monday and broadcast on television a week later. The School is expected to organise a screening of the show on campus.

Davies, who has had no formal educational training in economics, is ambivalent about the upcoming televised duel. The veteran of over 1,000 television interviews

and discussions on the financial matters remains calm and "quietly confident" ahead of the much-hyped showdown.

He reportedly said to Steuer after learning of the contest: "I can take anything you dish out. I am twice the man you are."

Steuer did not take Davies' taunt lying down. With reference to the former Financial Services Authority chairman's attempts to save capitalism, he retorted: "What difference do you think you can make, one man in all this madness?"

"In this world, a man, himself, is nothing. And there ain't no world but this one," he added.

Steuer, whose extensive contributions in economic academic research includes a groundbreaking 1999 report on 'Miracles and Alien Abduction', is confident of victory and eagerly anticipates the contest.

He told the Beaverian: "I've waited all my life for this. I've worked, slaved, eaten untold buckets of shit to have this opportunity and I don't intend to give it up now."

Howie D to take lead role on West End stage

LSE Patel

LSE director Howard Davies has announced that he would be taking a sabbatical to appear on the West End stage as Fagin in the new production of Oliver! at a hastily-called press conference yesterday.

Davies was invited to consider the role after the unexpected withdrawal of Rowan Atkinson. It is believed that Atkinson was unable to cope with the stress of playing the role of an outrageous villain.

Davies claimed that his experience of performing in several Drama Society mu-

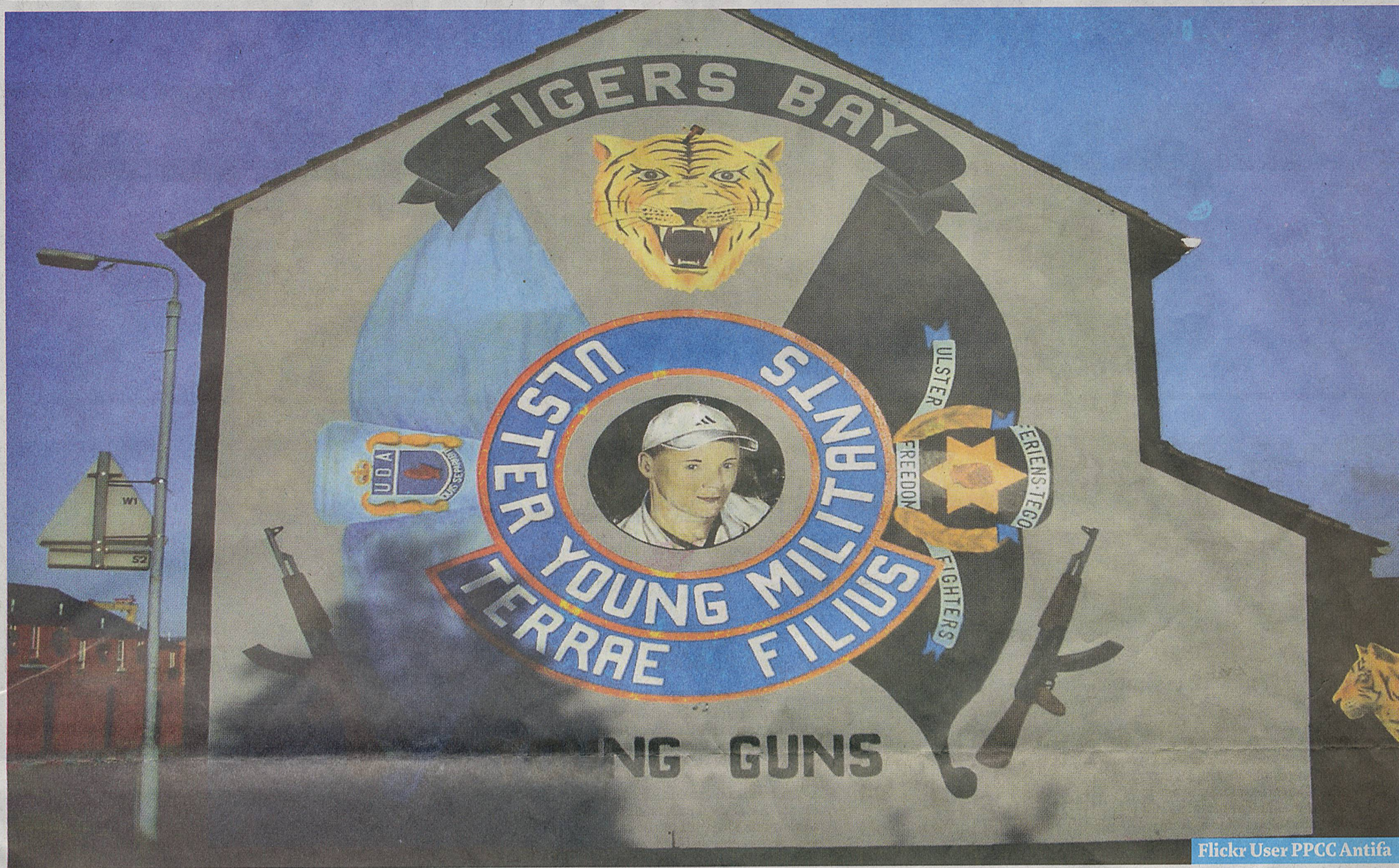
sicals made him the best man for the job.

He said: "No-one who saw my performance as the Wizard of Oz last year can reasonably dispute either my natural ability, or my readiness to look like a fool in the interests of self-promotion. Both qualities should serve me well in my new role."

Other commentators agreed. Mervyn King, current chairman of the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee, said: "I have first hand knowledge of Howard's love of theatrics and I can't think of a better man for the job."

When asked if his familiarity with a light-touch approach to financial market intervention would help him "pick a pocket or two", Davies refused to comment.

Features



Solidarity against violence

David McCauley and Niall Quinn discuss the hurdles in Northern Ireland's peace process

On Saturday 7 March, Northern Ireland's dark and troublesome history came back to haunt the people of the long fought-over province. Two British soldiers, Mark Quinsey, 23, and Patrick Azimkar, 21, were gunned down and four other men were seriously injured in an attack on an army barracks carried out by the so called "Real IRA".

Fast forward 48 hours and a policeman is brutally murdered as he responds to an emergency call in Craigavon, County Armagh. This time another splinter republican group who call themselves the Continuity IRA claimed responsibility. Three men are currently being held in questioning by police in relation to the soldier killings, including top republican Colin Duffy. Two other men aged 17 and 37 have been arrested in connection to the murder of Constable Stephen Paul Carroll. With all the bloodshed, we can only hope that whoever carried out these atrocities will be brought to justice and the efforts of the dissidents will be quashed once and for all.

Both attacks represent a direct challenge to the peace process and law and order in Northern Ireland. As three families try to come to terms with the tragic loss of a loved one, a whole nation is in disbelief. The people of Northern Ireland are shocked and disgusted to learn that the violence of a tumultuous past has again caught up with the present.

In 1969, in response to the Catholic civil rights movement, the IRA formed with the aim of securing a united Ireland. Thirty years of fierce fighting with the British army and loyalist paramilitaries ensued. Their cause stems from the 1916 rising, when today's Republic of Ireland began to push for independence from Britain. Unfortunately for the Irish, Britain

still held control of the northeastern six counties, which we today call Northern Ireland.

Since then IRA has pursued the route of violence in order for the British government to give back the north. Two communities, the unionists and nationalists, were divided through sectarianism and hatred throughout. Although 'the Troubles' were never actually acknowledged as a war by Westminster, it was very much a bloody war for the family and friends of the 3600 casualties.

Back to modern day Northern Ireland and we have a power sharing, devolved government. Sinn Féin and the DUP, once bitter foes, work side by side in Stormont for the good of the Northern Irish people. We have a people who have put the pain and grief of the past behind them and look with determination and hope to the future.

Until last week, that is. There are a lot of questions surrounding this flurry of deadly activity. Why now? What do these groups want to achieve? Will the attacks continue? It seems that these dissidents are always looking for ways to disrupt the politics of peace. In response, people have lined the streets in Belfast and other towns around Northern Ireland in protest to the violence. Despite what this civil activity may suggest, there are challenging times ahead. The reaction of the politicians will hold the key to the lasting effect of these attacks and whether the violence will escalate.

What is at the forefront of everybody's minds is whether these attacks signal a return to the bad old days or, whether this is merely a blip in the peace process. One thing which draws comfort is that loyalist paramilitaries state that there will be no retaliation.

Signs however, show that the peace

process is likely to endure. It will not, as happened in the early years of devolution, result in the deadlock of Stormont politics and the reinstatement of direct rule. But it will lead to a rocky few months for the Stormont executive.

Peter Robinson, the First Minister and the leader of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), which is the largest unionist party, gave a resounding speech at Stormont in which he said, "On Saturday night the challenge was issued. Today in this house and outside of it, let the answer be loud and clear. We are not turning back."

There was no mention of party politics from Robinson. Indeed, he didn't even mention the DUP. This is the direction that Northern Ireland politicians need to take, they need to surround themselves in the power sharing process and allow it to protect them and the people of Northern Ireland from such attacks. This is a far cry from years gone by when in the face of an attack, unionist politicians would cite Sinn Féin, a party historically associated with the IRA, to be involved. It seems that these scaremongering days have passed and the acceptance of the power sharing process by both Sinn Féin and the DUP is genuine and deep-rooted.

While the Sinn Féin strongly condemn the attacks, theirs has not been the same as the DUP in that their response has been wrapped less in power sharing, and more in an Irish tri-colour. Condemnation of the attacks by Martin McGuinness has been phrased along the lines that these attacks are counter-productive the Nationalist cause. It is clear that Nationalism in Ireland has moved on, Sinn Féin have accepted the peace process and see it as their best, and only means of achieving a united Ireland.

The issue of British army bases in Northern Ireland however is still bitter.

In response, people have lined the streets in Belfast and the other towns around Northern Ireland in protest to the violence

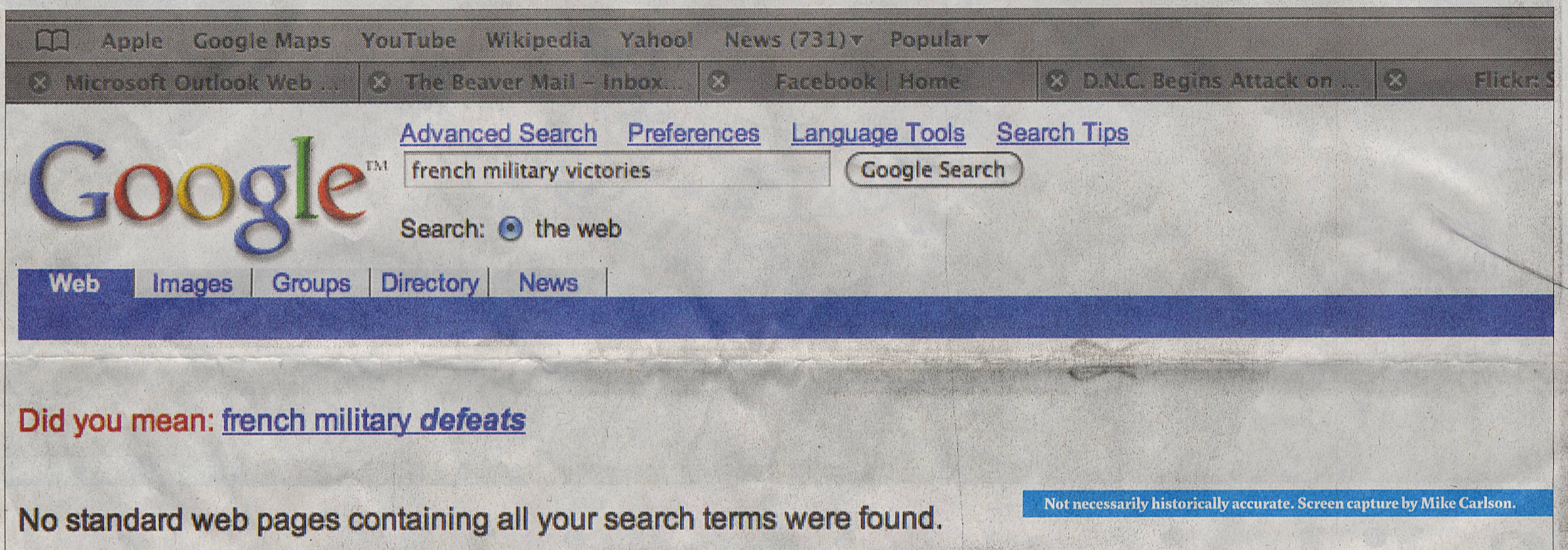
This is probably why condemnation of the attack on the two British soldiers only came 14 hours after the attack. This is in stark contrast to the attack on the police officer, a member of the new inclusive police service for Northern Ireland, an attack which Sinn Féin were quick to condemn. It must be remembered however that Sinn Féin and its leader, Gerry Adams, must proceed in this way so as to ensure that much of the nationalist movement is kept on board keep on board, and convinced that the ballot box and not the armalite is the best means of achieving a united Ireland.

It remains the case that Northern Irish politics has come a long way from the early nineties, when the Good Friday Agreement was first being thrashed out. No one expected plain sailing when the agreement came to pass in 1998, but giant steps toward peace have been made by the politicians. It is crucial that all that work will not be thrown away, the people will not stand for it. Power-sharing is here to stay in Northern Ireland. The dreadful happenings of the last week have provoked an unprecedented show of unity in Northern Ireland.

The question of the reunification of the island of Ireland versus the Union is one that still looms over the 'wee country'. Now the Stormont executive must continue to work tirelessly with the Irish and British governments in allowing it to be answered. As Mary McAleese, the President of Ireland, so eloquently pointed out in her lecture at the LSE in November, "long before you have a united Ireland in a political sense, you have to have a reconciliation of hearts and minds... I hope someday that that day might dawn".

ARE WE INTERNET STUPID?

OLIVER COURTNEY
DISCUSS HOW THE INTERNET
DECEPTIVELY DUMBS US
DOWN



Paralysed and overloaded by th

5.36pm Sit down to research article. Google "Google makes you stupid" (ironic?)
5.41pm Scan blogs and comments.
5.44pm Skim half of Nicholas Carr's article.
5.49pm Outlook pops message. Read email. Click on link in mail.
5.54pm Scan through linked article. Delete mail.
6pm Return to search. Read blogs and comments.
6.04pm Scribble half-notes.
6.07pm Return to Google search...

And so it continues. Sound familiar? This is what happened when I tried to look up information for this piece. It's a fairly typical episode. Admittedly, natural impatience plays its part; my aversion to proper planning and structuring my thoughts would no doubt prove troublesome in any media age. But the internet makes it so easy to waste time. I mean, you do not even know you are doing it. I feel increasingly overwhelmed, my mind all clumsy and overfed with semi-useful, semi-processed information that I constantly swear to return to and analyse in-depth.

My bite-sized attention span has found a soul mate in the seductive abundance of the internet. This is quickly reducing me to a twittering, fidgeting, bloated muddle of pseudo-academic trivia that I cannot really call work, but can just about kid myself into believing is productive. I am like a human pub quiz, all knowledge and no connections or context.

From the comments on the comments on the comments on those blogs, it seems

I am not alone. Others are worried about their powers of retention; they are worried they can no longer concentrate properly; they are even worried the Internet is actually making them think differently. So says Carr (I did get to the end eventually):

"Over the past few years I've had an uncomfortable sense that someone, or something, has been tinkering with my brain, remapping the neural circuitry, reprogramming the memory. My mind isn't going—so far as I can tell—but it's changing. I'm not thinking the way I used to think. I can feel it most strongly when I'm reading. Immersing myself in a book or a lengthy article used to be easy. My mind would get caught up in the narrative or the turns of the argument, and I'd spend hours strolling through long stretches of prose. That's rarely the case anymore. Now my concentration often starts to drift after two or three pages."

These words have real resonance – for me too, there's a tipping point where the fact that most of my reading is done on the internet means it's hard to go back to the old ways. With time, don't becomes can't. Carr's article doesn't necessarily lament this change – he views it as the normal process of adjustment we make in our encounter with any new media. Taking a far more thorough and rounded approach than I'm generally capable of these days, he goes on to incorporate the work of University College London scientists. Their work points out that reading, and the form of applied concentration that goes with it, was always an acquired skill. As opposed to speech, our natural medium, we developed reading as a response to available media, an extension of our communicative abilities. So we should not treasure

reading's current form for its own sake, but look upon these shifts as the appropriate evolution of literacy and research in its relationship with technological developments. After all, successful communication ultimately boils down to consensus and majority at the time. Their analysis is stirring stuff – the scientists talk of "power browsing" and "decoding", of the efficient extraction of relevant information from a mass of material. They too voice concerns, however, that this comes at expense of the old approach, of 'deep' knowledge and grounded, contextual learnings.

This is precisely why I'm worried. I welcome these developments in the abstract, but I'm sacrificing the old for a poor command of the new. Every revolution has its casualties, and so I'm falling through the cracks of this adaptation process. I'm all mismatched. My ideals lie in the old school poring of thorough research but my habits are a horrible parody of the power browse, link substituting link with precious little being retained.

I think I know why it troubles me. Resistance to new technology has historically always been more about self-preservation by those weaned and therefore dependent on it. The early printing press was feared by the guardians of the status quo precisely because it debunked their mythic authority over learning and knowledge. Many of today's journalists fear what Polis director Charlie Beckett calls 'networked journalism', precisely because it breaks open the opaque world of journalism and its forms of expertise, and means citizens can almost as easily ply the trade journalists have trained in. For me, the switch to digital diminishes my old skill set and replaces it with some-

Resistance to new technology has historically always been more about self-preservation

thing I'm less good at. So naturally I'm not saying the internet is "a bad thing" – how can it be? But I am saying it leaves behind a class of newly illiterate people who can't make the transfer effectively. And I'm a reluctant member of that group.

There are, of course, tools and applications to counter precisely these problems, proliferating at the warp speed characteristic of all things Internet. Digg, Reddit, Delicious, Stumble Upon, there's loads of the seductive little buggers. Again this is partly a symptomatic of being a bit of a Luddite and an ability to use it selectively, but for me this just seems to compound the problem. Start Digg-ing and you are immediately confronted by a torrent of themes and discussions and ABSOLUTELY EVERYTHING. I mean, it sells itself as "All news, videos and images" – so what else is left? You can't not be distracted by some offbeat curiosity like "A guided tour of Bernie Madoff's prison home for the next 150 years." Well, obviously you can if you have bulletproof self-discipline and purpose, but for those of us who don't this format invites the great academic weakness – distraction. Too bad it's cleverly disguised itself as the future of information.

I think, after all, that this syndrome preys on a particular mindset, a kind of intellectual aspirationalism that lends itself to superficial knowledge. I'm constantly grabbing in different directions, my eye caught and held by a shiny new idea. I don't want it all, I just want whatever's next. It's like that silly pang of jealousy you get when the friend who has single-mindedly dedicated themselves to a chosen career gets their break and deserved reward, and you suddenly



Photo Illustration Mike Carlson

The information superhighway

The internet, then, is a beautiful and infinitely useful thing, but not automatically so

wish you'd done the same and could be there too, or instead even. There's little understanding of the amount of time and work and stuff that lies behind that finished object, just a vague aspirational excitement by it. And then once you dig, it gets duller and needs substantiating and picking through technicalities and suddenly there's a new sparkly thing to play with and you're off again. Intellectual window shopping; that's what the internet means for me.

The best ideas I've had have been those that have had time to breathe, to settle and then I come back and build upon them. They are built on sound foundations, an accumulation of knowledge and perspectives rather than mere acquisition for its own sake, like Fred the Shred in a library with a big tub of Ritalin in his pencil case. Of course, the grounding you need can be achieved on the Internet, but I think it needs one of two distinct approaches – or a combination of them that's more than my confused mess. Either you bring a resolutely offline approach to online activity, and use it selectively to find stuff you know is there, or you school yourself in best practice in internet research. As I'm sure I've mentioned by now, I don't do either so well these days.

The internet, then, is a beautiful and infinitely useful thing, but not automatically so. Like the authors of the UCL report I believe it promises a positive and plentiful future, with practitioners well-adjusted to the new demands it places on our minds. But I might not be much of a participant in it. Finally, skimming back, I'm conscious that this piece reads a little breathless, confused even. And for this I blame poor research.

Fun Internet Facts Revealed

Top 7 Website for University Students, collected from www.nextstudent.com:

Bookfinder.com: A tool that lets you compare prices from thousands of online book sellers.

MyNoteIt.com: For 'real organisation freaks,' this tool can help you schedule classes, meeting, calendars, and notes.

OttoBib.com: An online bibliography creator; just type in ISBNs and collect your finished citations in APA, MLA, or Chicago format.

GoogleDocs: Perfect for group projects, Docs allows access by more than one user. Also lets Mac users instantly access MS Office files.

TadaList.com: This site lets you create multiple lists, accessible from any computer. Track items via RSS as well as store data and media.

Meebo.com: Meebo is an online chat device that accesses AIM, GTalk, and MSN Messenger, without having to install any software. Perfect for access from public computers.

Wikipedia.com: Much maligned, and never to be officially cited, Wiki is a great starting point for research or just curiosity.

Did you know?

The average computer user blinks 7 times a minute (less than half the normal rate of 20).

One of the top reasons for college drop-outs in the US is online gaming addiction - such as World of Warcraft - which is played by 11 million individuals worldwide.

The Internet is roughly 35% English, 65% Non-English with the Chinese at 14%. Yet only 13% of world's population, 812 million, are Internet users as of Dec. '04. North America has the highest continental concentration with 70% of the people using the Internet.

Country with the highest percentage of net users? Sweden at 75%.

Life online: The average 21 year old has spent 5,000 hours playing video games, has exchanged 250,000 e-mails, instant and text messages and has spent 10,000

hours on a mobile phone.

Texting the World: The number of text messages sent and received in a given day is greater than the world's population.

If Myspace was a country it would be the 11th largest.

Yahoo stands for Yet Another 'Hierarchical Organizational Oracle.'

Someone is a victim of a cyber-crime every 10 seconds, and it is on the rise.

The phrase 'World Wide Web' was coined in 1990 by Tim Berners-Lee.

It took 38 years for radio to reach 50 million users, 13 years for TV, and only 5 years for the Internet. Source: CyberAtlas.com

www.thebeaveronline.co.uk is the best site for LSE students looking for LSE news, events, and information.



Geoffrey Bell (Right); Photo Courtesy of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System

Alumni interviews: Geoffrey Bell

Richard Dewey discusses the LSE experience, the G30 and the financial crisis with Geoffrey Bell

Geoffrey Bell is an economist, banker and founder of the influential Group of Thirty. He currently serves as the executive secretary of the Group of Thirty and is President of Geoffrey Bell & Co. Mr. Bell is also the author of *The Euro-Dollar Market and the International Financial System*. He earned a BSc in Economics from the LSE.

How did you end up at the LSE, what attracted you?

I came from Grimsby in the north of England. I attended a technical school and was the first boy from the town to finish the sixth form and the first boy to apply to university. I had failed my 11 plus – probably the only person at the LSE to do so – but the LSE decided to take a chance and offer me a place. It was a real risk on their part, but it worked out and I was very pleased to go to the LSE.

Describe the atmosphere at the LSE when you arrived?

I was there in the 1950's so it was still fairly quiet; the political tensions had not yet surfaced. What really impressed me about the LSE was the quality of the education and access to instructors. I had a Prof R. S. Sayers as an instructor and I thought it was fantastic to have a full professor teaching me. The other aspect that I liked was that there always seemed to be someone doing a Ph.D on a topic that interested me. It was very open and welcoming. I felt as though I could knock on anyone's door and discuss their research or a particular problem I was thinking about. I was also very happy that the teachers took the undergraduates seriously. I loved living in London – it was a long way from Grimsby!

What did you do after graduating from the LSE? What was your first job?

My career started at the British Treasury as an economist and then through a bit of luck I ended up at the US Federal Reserve as a visiting scholar. It started when I wanted to move from the Treasury to the Bank of England in order to learn more about monetary policy, which I was very interested in at the time. The deputy of the Bank at the time said it was impossible to have a young man from the Treasury at the BOE – there was a large degree of separation at the time. My boss at the Treasury was Sir Alec Cairncross, a famous economist at the time, was having lunch and with McChesney Martin and mentioned

my situation to him. Martin offered the scholar position at the Fed, which came with a salary, desk and title. That's how I found myself at the Fed.

How did you find your path as an economist?

When I arrived at the Fed I was very interested in monetary policy at just the time Milton Friedman was becoming the guru. St. Louis was the head of the Federal Reserve and as it happened the head of research in St. Louis was Homer Jones, who had been Friedman's teacher at Rutgers and had a very close relationship with Friedman. That is when I really started to learn something about monetary economics. When I arrived back in London I was asked to be a lecturer at the LSE and was able to split my time between LSE and the Treasury. I was fortunate to have that situation and enjoyed it very much.

I was then offered the job of economic advisor in Washington. I realized that my predecessors had spent weeks working on economic forecasts, which I didn't think was very smart, because they didn't know more about the American economy than the man on the moon. So I got to know the higher echelon American economic forecasters and put together a social register of their ideas. Gathering their opinions saved me a lot of work and the forecasts were more accurate.

When I finished I had the option of going back to the Treasury or lecturing at the LSE. During that time I was approached by Lord Richardson who was head of Schroders Bank who said, "why don't you join Schroders?" Well I knew next nothing about merchant banking, so I asked a friend of mine, Sir Eric Roll – a famous economic historian – what I should do and he suggested that I meet Sir Sigmund Warburg, who offered me a job as his assistant. Simultaneously a friend asked me to write a column for the London Times. Sigmund Warburg said it was impossible and that I would have to work exclusively for him. On that basis I choose to join Schroders Bank. That's how I became a banker

How did the Group of Thirty come about?

It was 1977 and the Rockefeller Foundation was exploring ways of spending money and I was invited to submit ideas. My idea, because I had written quite a bit about the Euro-Dollar market and inter-

“What really impressed me about the LSE was the quality of the education and the access to instructors”

national finance, was that the world had changed after the dollar began floating. It was a very different economic system than in the previous three or four decades. We had gone to a floating exchange rate and had huge international capital flows. I thought it was important that some thinking was undertaken that included central bankers, academics and business people or investment bankers. The concept for the Group of Thirty was a body that would include members from the three branches and formulate ideas that incorporated perspectives from each group. I liked prime numbers, so my original idea was to have the group of 29, but they kept pushing the notion of thirty as a nice, round number and eventually prevailed.

The Rockefeller Foundation liked my ideas and asked me to put together a group. It is one thing to have an idea; it is another thing to create this group. I began calling on friends and had two pieces of good fortune. The first was when I called on the number two man of the Bundesbank a man called Karl Otto Pohl. He agreed to join the group, but said I should ask his boss, Otmar Emminger, who I had already arranged to meet a few days later. To my surprise, he also agreed to join and everything moved up five notches with the head of the Bundesbank on board. Bit by bit we found eminent people who were very, very interested in joining the tripartite schema we were developing. Another important development occurred when Ed Deagle, who was from the Rockefeller foundation and helping me with the project, thought to call the retiring director of the IMF, Dr. Johannes Witteveen. Dr. Witteveen also agreed to join and then we had to repel borders – everyone wanted to be a part of it.

Can you speak about the progression of the G30?

Our early work reflected a good deal of the things Dr. Witteveen was interested in such as oil facilities for SDR's and things that the IMF had worked on. After three years I was told that our money from the Rockefeller foundation was coming to an end. A little time later Dr. Witteveen decided to move on and I asked my old boss Lord Richardson from Schroders to become the new Chairman of our group. He shifted the focus to more practical topics, things bankers were interested in and would pay for. For example, one of the first studies under Lord Richardson was on

clearance and settlements. That was followed by a study on derivatives which had a tremendous amount of demand. As the leadership changed we went from more macro subjects to examining questions that were more pertinent to bankers and the business community.

What role do you see the G30 playing in this financial crisis?

We just published a report by on the future of financial regulation that was written in large part by Paul Volcker. We had 20,000 requests for that report, which for us is not like the Da Vinci Code, it is like the Da Vinci Code times N. We normally think a success is 700 requests, so this was quite an accomplishment for us. One of the questions posed in this report is whether commercial and investment banks should be divided. The idea is if an institution is "too big to fail" than it should also be highly regulated. In a dynamic environment like we are in, I think there are many questions that group can discuss.

The G30 is at its core an idea group; we are not a lobby group. Our role is to propose ideas, but ultimately it is up to others to decide what to do with those suggestions. One idea that Gordon Brown is keen on and that Obama is getting more interested in is that of international financial regulation. No American Bank is going to want a foreign institution telling is what to do and the same thing goes for the banks in England or anywhere. No sovereign country wants to be told how to implement monetary policy and the regulatory bodies are not going to want to give up control. The question becomes how to get these regulatory bodies – the SEC, the FSA, the OCC – to coordinate and that's not easy. I think this is an area where the G30 can come up with some ideas toward a solution

Could we see a Geoffrey Bell return to teach at the LSE?

I really love giving lectures and I am now much more interested in economics than in banking. It's an absolutely fascinating time right now as we don't know what the aftermath will be – I love that aspect of economics. At this point I have been away from teaching for too long, maybe I could give a lecture, but I couldn't teach a full course.

From Right to Left: the political columns

Hayek

Alex
Blance



Sorry seems to be the hardest word

The noises coming from the Conservative Party calling for an apology from the Prime Minister about our economic dire straits are continuing to grow. Whether or not Gordon Brown is responsible for the collapse of banking and the shadow deals that were going on, the argument is that, as the steward of the economy since 1997, he must accept his fair proportion of the blame. Naturally, the PM is unwilling to hear anything of it. He reportedly got very heated with journalists on his recent trip to America, telling them that they were all stupid if they did not understand it was not his fault.

Now the Conservative Leader, David Cameron, seems to be taking a different tactic: he is apologising himself. While it has been almost twelve years since the Conservatives were last in government, and was only three and a half years ago that Cameron took the helm of the opposition, he has decided there is still a need to fess up.

On Friday evening in a speech to the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce, David Cameron said that all parties fell into a

"cosy economic consensus" in which they assumed growth would always continue. Famously elected as party leader on a promise to "share the proceeds of growth", a mantra he continued to use until the economic bad weather really started to hit, Cameron acknowledged that "while we warned that it was wrong and complacent to claim that boom had been abolished... we based our plans on the hope that economic growth would continue." In a real bit of introspection he asked: "Do I believe we did enough to warn about the rising levels of corporate debt, banking debt and borrowing from abroad? No".

For some time the message of the Conservative Party had seemed messy and lost, as Gordon Brown came out with policy after policy and claims of 'saving the world'. For a while the polls reflected the public's unease with the opposition's alternative. However, since then things have changed and the message has been refined. Far from being the 'do nothing' party the PM often accuses the Conservatives of being, Cameron's party have made strong proposals for a banking deposit scheme and help for people struggling

with their mortgage payments. Similar schemes were proposed by the PM, but the fact is, as William Hague dragged out when taking Prime Minister's Questions a couple of weeks ago, none of these schemes have actually come to fruition.

Now it appears that we have a 'talk a lot, do little' Prime Minister and a Leader of the Opposition who has not been flustered by the frantic behaviour of a government that has does not know what to do. Cameron brought back to the front line the former Chancellor of the Exchequer, Ken Clarke, to add huge weight and experience to the party's economic team. With the consideration and honesty shown in this speech, however, Cameron has shown that the Conservatives are realistic about the causes of this mess, but also that they are the party with a fresh outlook to try to solve the problems.

Cameron said Gordon Brown is unable to make the "clean break with the past" needed as he is in denial about the nature of the problems facing the economy. This might just be the final nail in the PM's electoral coffin.

Viridian

Civil solutions for climate change

Justus Rollin

Environment and Ethics Officer

Climate change represents the archetypal "issue" of our time because it has the qualities of combining everything you would look for in a hot topic: environmental justice in times of environmental refugees, global market failure according to Lord Stern, the link between economic growth and increased energy use, and well, there are also lots of alternatives.

However, in the months leading up to Copenhagen, where a post-Kyoto agreement will be negotiated, the failure of government to deal with climate change is likely to become part of the climate change discourse. Government, business and NGO representatives are starting to give more and more negative predictions of possible outcomes of the Copenhagen conference.

Surely this should come as no surprise when examining the dominant discourse of the causes of climate change and solutions to mitigate the effects of climate change. The "industrialised world" is in favour of so-called "market-based instruments" (which have so far always been hybrid systems).

The European Trading Scheme (ETS) of CO equivalents and the so-called Clean Development Mechanism (CDMs) are well-known examples. Both of these instruments have been successful in actually achieving nothing in terms of effective climate change mitigation and adaptation. CDMs have become famous for controversial projects, such as deforesting old-growth forest in order to plant palm oil plantations. So far, market-regulation hybrid systems are good in combining the worst of both. While climate change is a market and government failure, leaving it to civil society to actually sort it out, it is those instruments that governments would like to employ in order to avoid changing anything "too radical".

A slightly different perspective on the interpretation of climate change comes from the alter-globalisation activist Walden Bello: "Global warming is the privatisation of global commons by capitalism which now involves the expropriation of ecological spaces in the South. Progressive climate strategy must reduce economic growth and energy use, while raising the quality of life of the broad masses of people."

Clearly, using the same instruments and economic framework that led to climate change in the first place is simply insane.

It will be interesting to see whether civil society will distance itself from mainstream approaches of climate change mitigation. The climate camp movement in the UK is probably one of the more famous clearly anti-capitalistic climate change pressure groups. They will be around for you to join on 1 April - while the self-proclaimed "world leaders" will discuss "world issues" at the G20 summit in London. This time the climate camp movement will meet at the European Climate Exchange in London to camp in the City.

Laski

Estelle
Cooch



The plight of the loss-makers

A spectre is haunting Europe - the spectre of Howard Davies. I can't be the only one to have noticed the increasing frequency with which the dimpled face and boyish grin of our dear Director is gracing our television screens. Whether offering his 'expert' advice or lecturing at the Davos Economic Forum last month, Howard is beginning to appear in my daily life like a bad bout of acne.

It was no surprise to me that last week, after beginning to grovel in front of a cashpoint, all that appeared was a large flashing sign declaring 'INSUFFICIENT FUNDS'. For a brief moment I was tempted to go into the bank and ask if by insufficient funds, they meant them or me, but after remembering my last bank statement I decided it was probably me. I half expected Howard's roguish face to pop up on the screen, to inform me that not only was I loss-making, but I was also poor and of course, as ever, he did not, under any circumstances cause the credit crunch.

From the top of the administration to the lowliest student, discussion about the recession at the LSE is intense and pervades every area of our university. Yet simultaneously for a whole host of reasons the average LSE student is, undoubtedly wealthier than most students

at other British universities. While many students are all too happy to muse over the advantages of quantitative easing or collateralised debt obligation, few will understand what it is like to truly panic about buying the next meal or what it is like to be on first-name terms with those at Natwest and the Student Loans Company.

This same contradiction exists within the G20 leaders. These are the same leaders who, through a combination of neoliberal economics and free-market capitalism have caused this crisis, met this week in West Sussex to reaffirm their commitment to free trade. On the same day, Gordon Brown announced jubilantly that the rate of inflation was down. While for the richest fifth of households this means inflation currently stands at minus 1 per cent, for the poorest fifth it is 5.3 per cent. Ordinary people are hit far harder by rising fuel and food costs, while the rich gain from cuts in mortgage rates and falling petrol bills. Household fuel inflation in January alone was 35.1 per cent.

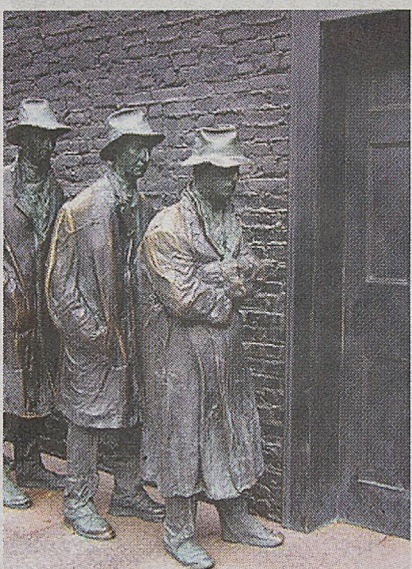
The past week has only confirmed the hypocrisy that pervades the banking world. After the takeover of HBOS by Lloyds TSB, Alistair Darling pledged another £260 billion after realising that combining two sets of enormous debts has, lo and behold, only produced a greater

one. After wrecking the HBOS banking group, disgraced bank boss Andy Hornby pocketed £1.3 million in bonuses, left the bank with a £2.4 million pension pot and is now a 'consultant' for Lloyds TSB scraping by on £66,000 a month. In the same week the British Chamber of Commerce announced it expects unemployment to hit 3.2 million by the end of the year, with 10 percent of the workforce expected to lose their jobs.

If ever there were a time where the inequalities within the global system were being exposed on a daily basis and in such a crude fashion, it is now. If ever there were a time when world leaders could fight recession and fight climate change by creating jobs in renewable energy industries, it is now. Instead they are more interested in preserving the profits and bonuses of the few.

The G20 will meet in London on 1 April. Already student, trade union groups and NGO's are part of organising mass protests. I hope Howard Davies will join us. As a socialist I have always been proud to stand in solidarity with the unemployed. Yet I won't deny I chuckled at a joke circling in my economics lecture last week - 'What do you call 12 investment bankers at the bottom of the ocean? A good start!'

Measured musings



Flickr User aprilrandy

Finding a way out of Depression

It seems like the only profitable thing to do in this (to put it mildly) less than pleasant economic climate is to open a job agency. Instead of the snaking queues of jobless drones in shabby clothes that have become synonymous with the Great Depression, job agencies and job fairs have often become the first point of call for the young and hopeless, and similarly the old and re-trenched. However unlikely a solution this may be, there is no other alternative.

Perhaps surprisingly, the recession has hit hardest in the developed, industrial world which is capable for starting the mess that the rest of the world is facing in the first place. In America, where the crisis began, the labour market has lost 4.4 million jobs since the downturn began in December 2007, including 600,000 jobs in each of the past three months. Considering the comfortable middle-class lifestyle that most of the developed world enjoys, and the commonality of having two working, earning adults in a household, there

has been a significant amount of psychological damage done. The sinking feeling that the system is being unfair to those in the middle and the dim prospects ahead have dampened the economic climate and affected sentiment even more than when the recession first hit.

Similar to the Depression, there has been a move towards extremism. Perhaps not political extremism, though, except for the odd call of "British Jobs for British workers" and more hard-line immigration policies, which can hardly be classified in the same league as post-Depression political extremism. Instead, this era is witnessing the rise of extreme Darwinism.

This works twofold. On one hand, the jobless are learning to better control their emotions, and are turning to meditation as an outlet to deal with the hardship. An of course, there is the other kind of Darwinism that perhaps we are all too familiar with, the quintessential Social Darwinist logic of getting ahead through intense competition. The "everything

for my CV" mentality is something that plagues us at the LSE, and assuredly at all levels of employment, and something that is felt more poignantly during times like these.

With the recent spate of elections around campus, from the Students' Union to the Media Group and societies in general, we may sometimes get the feeling that we again live in a microcosm of that corporate world and the same issues that plague the lost, former-bankers of the world plague the lost, former-banker wannabes of the LSE.

Perhaps in tune with the first solution to such problems, along the lines of meditation and emotional control, it is still my opinion that idealism is what makes success. Idealism is perhaps the only thing that can carry a weary soul forward in bleak times, when the prospect of a job in any industry and no matter the school seems shaky. Perhaps now is the best time for us to fully decide what we want to do with our lives, regardless of what may be

best or most pragmatic, for our own sense of personal satisfaction and happiness. Besides government policy and solutions of experts, perhaps this is the only thing to get us out of the (almost) Depression we are slipping into.

Shibani Mahtani
Features Editor

Why so serious?



Dhiraj Nainani celebrates the widespread recognition of super-hero films by girls and geeks alike

Is it just me, or did "The Dark Knight" deserve more Oscar awards than it got?

Heath Ledger deserved his Best Supporting Actor award and not just for sympathetic reasons: YouTube has videos of thousands of young men swaggering around, aping his walk and hissing out his trademark lines in classic hero (villain?) worship. And I don't have to remind you of Halloween last year: never have I seen guys so eager to put on makeup and dye their hair a sickly green. Ledger instantly turned an iconic comic book character into, well, an icon.

But perhaps I'm jumping the proverbial gun. Perhaps the first question I should be asking is how on earth did a 'superhero film' even become an Oscar contender in the first place?

Historically, the superhero films that were nominated never received any non-technical awards. Of course, you wouldn't have to be a critic to suggest that the reason they don't win 'big' is that they are associated with one key word: escapism. Sure, all of us (men) love the idea of waltzing around in capes and having secret identities, but at the end of the day we're all just cheating reality. Who would expect a fight between two costumed men to represent hard-hitting drama and real-world allegories?

I beg to differ. I believe that superhero films have become successful over the years because not only are they mature, they act as micro-cosms of the cultural zeitgeist and can even act as cathartic conduits. Sounds silly? Bear

with me.

Let's take an example from "Iron Man", one of 2008's biggest hits. As far as metaphors go, the story of an American weapons-manufacturer turning into 'the ultimate-weapon' and beating up evil Afghanistan-based terrorists is pretty clear. A possible reason why the film did as well as it did: elections were in the air, and both candidates were waxing rhetorical about American victory. The United States needed a confidence boost, and you could say that the audience received it from Mr. Downey Jr.

"V for Vendetta" looked at a futuristic Britain turning fascist, the same year that saw academics expressing anger at court decisions that were giving the Home Office the power to detain suspects on flimsy grounds. Recently, "Watchmen" analysed mankind's obsession with chaos amidst a re-imagined Cold War backdrop.

Perhaps the most potent example of this would be (of course) "The Dark Knight". Chris Nolan's Knight tackled a rich, multi-dimensional world where real choices mimicked those we face in everyday life, and nothing was black and white. It was an armchair philosopher's playground, with names like Foucault, Derrida, Nietzsche and Kierkegaard being bandied about in analyses worldwide. Be it blog or mainstream news, everyone seemed suddenly preoccupied at analysing why it was relevant to modern times, and why it taught a multitude of lessons.

Themes like chaos, order, morals and choices were no longer reconciled in the domain of highbrow intellectualism: this was pop psychology at its best form. And the best part is that not everyone had to

understand all of them to enjoy the film. And I don't know about you, but I know a lot of girls who bucked the trend and raved about "The Dark Knight" almost as much as we fanboys did.

But are they cathartic?

Dolf Zillman is a pioneering psychoanalyst who has put forward his theory of the Excitation Transfer Effect. He argues that we watch horror movies in order to release psychological tension that builds up within us when we try and cope with the world. Building it up can cause subconscious stress within the corridors of our mind, according to Freud. So, Zillman says, we go to the movies in order to reconstruct our realities and make sense of the world around us. Not escapism, but a subconscious plan of action instead.

Zillman's theory, however ludicrous, has led to not only more studies (i.e. by Slavoj Zizek) but has garnered both academic and mainstream attention. And if a horror movie can have a profound effect on the subconscious, then why can't modern superhero films, with their pop-psychological zeitgeist explosions?

Perhaps I'm over-thinking things, like LSE students are trained to. Or maybe I'm just the only LSE geeky comic-book fan who feels this way (but definitely NOT the only LSE geeky comic-book fan), pulling a hypothetical rabbit out when there is no hat to begin with? Whatever the case may be, the success of "The Dark Knight" has sent out a clear message: complex superhero films have arrived with the intent to stay. So fanboys, be prepared, because you may just land up seeing Wolverine growl a warning against global warming. I can't wait.

Flickr user: Nijoker

Listings: This week around campus

Tuesday 17th March

Student Comedy Hub presents: "The Traffic Light Comedy Gong Show"

14 Comedians, 1 winner

Special guest acts: Patrick Monahan (top Irish-Iranian comedian); Janice Phayre (top Irish comedian)

Tickets £5, available on Houghton St. LSE Quad, 7-45 pm

Wednesday 18th March

LSESU Columbian Society collaborate with LSE Annual Fund and Save the Children to present:

An Analytical Look at Childhood in Colombia: Policies, Needs and Challenges

Room U8, 2-7 pm

LSESU Swing Dance Society presents: 'Springtime Swingtime'

Intro swing class, DJ sets and free food!

Tickets: £3 LSE, £4.50 non-LSE The Quad, 7-11pm

Thursday 19th March

'Buzz! The Nation' Clash of the Uni's

The ultimate trivia night

Prizes include £200 cash, PlayStation

Portables, copies of the Buzz Master

Quiz

Union Bar, 8 pm

Friday 20th March

LSESU Colombian Society presents:

Panel Discussion -

Colombia in a Regional Perspective: its Place in 21st Century Latin

America

Speakers: Arlene Tickner (Professor of Political Science at the Universidad de los Andes); Diana Raby (Professor of Contemporary History of Latin America at Liverpool University); and Orazio Attanasio, (Professor of Economics at UCL)

U8 and E171, 2 - 4, 4:30 - 7PM

LSESU Drama Society presents:

"The Over-ambitious Project"

Week 10 - Monday, Wednesday, Friday,

Time: 7:30 pm

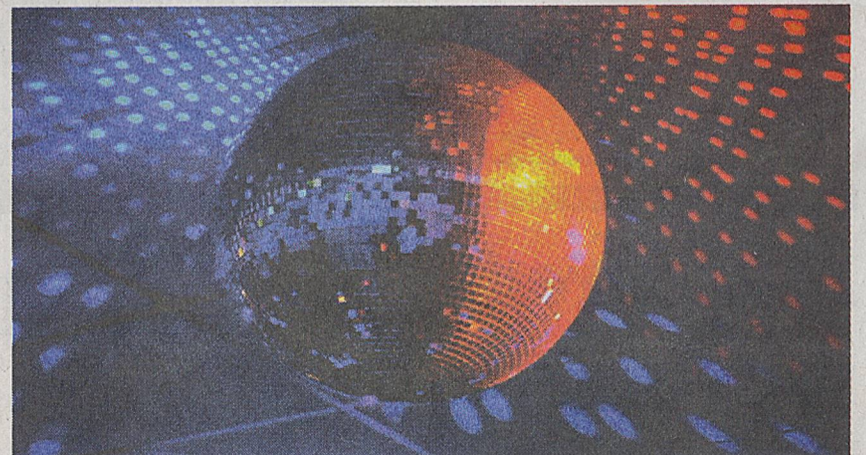
Venue: LSE. Best turn up at the Old Building!

From Movida to Ministry

Poorna Harjani thinks student nights are a winner

I see myself as a reformed party-goer. In these economic times spending frivolously is not looked upon favourably. As students we need to enjoy our 'prime years', but dually, have a shrewd eye for cost-cutting deals. This by no means hinders the amount of fun one has. I've been sticking to a self-imposed budget and had an extremely memorable first term at LSE, managing to catch fresher's flu three times. I lost my voice and still managed to navigate my way to Ministry of Sound. However, the 'me' last year would never have predicted I would be so pro-student nights. So, let's rewind to the foundational reasons as to why we love clubbing: for one night we can escape the realities of life; things are so loud we can't possibly think of work; we're with friends and listening to great music. We form closer bonds, drama sometimes erupts which fuels a bit of gossip and we create cherished memories.

So after years of West End clubs, what has brought this change upon me? I've been put off by conceited, judgmental bouncers on a power-trip. They often give the 'head-to-toe' look to catch glimpses of designer-labels. Once my friend was having trouble being admitted into Movida, so she 'accidentally' dropped her fifty pound notes out of her Dior bag. Voila, the rope opened for her and the bouncers forgot why they wouldn't let her into the club in the first place. Then, there's the hassle of booking a club table and guaranteeing friends won't ditch at the last-minute. Spending daddy's money or student loans on table clubbing for bottles of Dom Perignon and Belvedere with sparklers is nothing to be proud of. 'Big spenders' have



a sudden temporary confidence boost and their money equates respect. But when they leave that club after a hefty bill, often over-charged but too drunk to notice, they are still the same people they were upon entering. When the ego-boost subsides, they return to the realities of a shrunken bank balance, hectic studies and looming exams.

To my mind, the average party-goers are the smarter, shrewder ones of the lot. My weeks now consist of Tiger Tiger or Mahiki Mondays, Ministry of Sound on Tuesdays, Zoo bar on Wednesdays, and Fridays - the odd appearance at Crush. Thursdays are my Sabbath. I have an AU card which I proudly whip out at the Zoo bar on Wednesdays, whereby I am admitted for fifty pence. This is just one of the venues offering student discounts, where there is the elimination of selective entry, table bookings, table bills, and fuss

concerning attire. I can even make my clothes transit from day to night without changing.

Student clubbing enables one to make spontaneous outings as well as branch out to different groups who congregate at the same places on specific days. After all, isn't this partly what University is all about - to come out of the 'bubble' and diversify our social networks? The foundational reasons as to why we love clubbing still hold. I've come to the endorsement that all you need is a fun-loving crowd and a decent DJ to dance the night away. So for now, I've swapped Movida for Ministry of Sound, Tramp for Tiger Tiger, and my four-inch stilettos for ballet pumps. Student nights are a through and through winner for me. Oh, and by the way now that I don't wear heels I can walk to clubs and save on taxi fares too. Clubbing has never felt so guilt-free!

Sometimes, just switch off

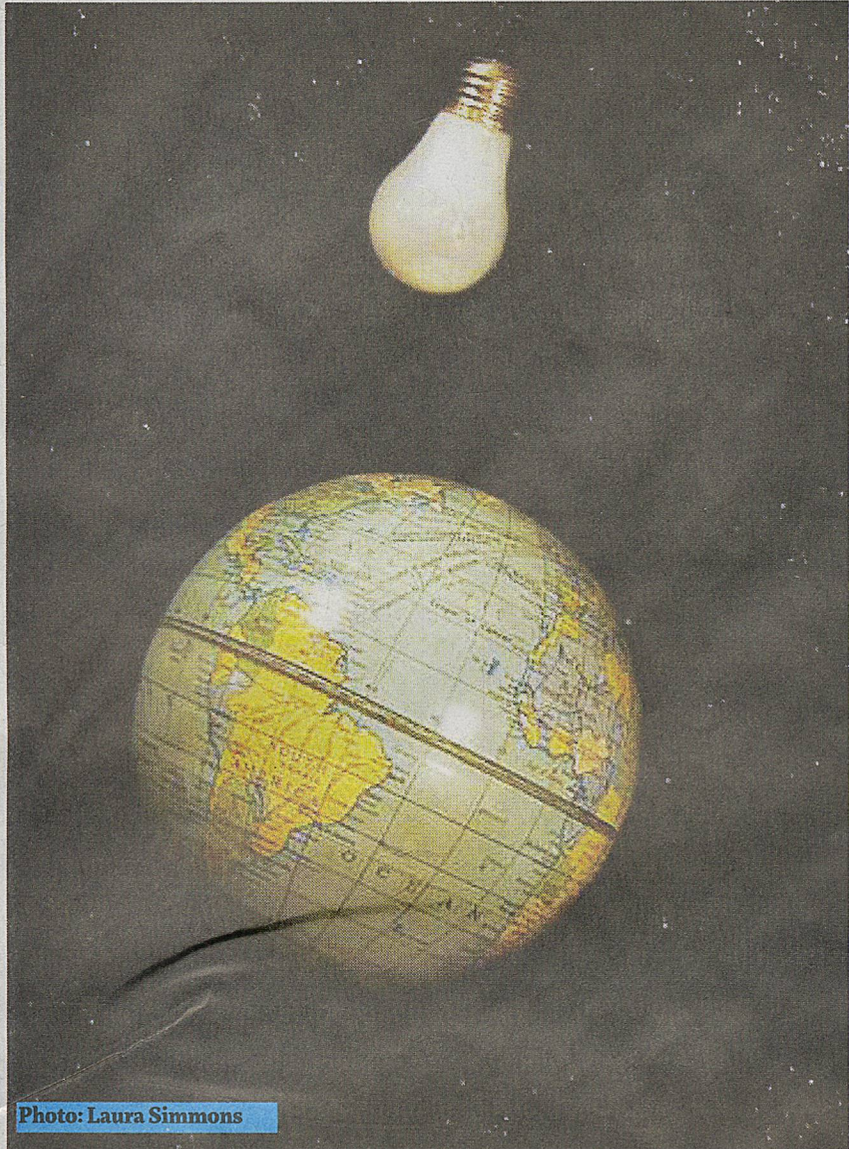


Photo: Laura Simmons

Marion Koob wants to bring Earth Hour to the LSE

Sometimes we just need to switch off. Not just mentally, but in the electrical sense as well. This is the concept which the WWF project Earth Hour is attempting to pass on to the general public for the third consecutive year. Simply put, it involves having the whole world cut their electrical consumption for an hour, making a strong statement that concerns about global warming are concrete and need to be addressed.

This year, a motivated group spearheaded by Amedeo Fasanella d'Amore, Sophie Loup and Nathalie Laine has been campaigning for the LSE to take part in this ecological stand for the first time on March 28th, 8:30 to 9:30 pm - the first week-end of our upcoming vacation. A letter has been sent to Howard Davies requesting for the active participation of the school, but a reply is still being awaited. Contact have also been made with shops around campus including Starbucks, Wright's Bar and Nosh.

The idea of Earth Hour originated two years ago in Sydney. Since then, the success of the movement has convinced the WWF to push for the event to be carried out worldwide. When the campaign went global for the first time, an estimated 50 million individuals turned off their lights. This is an awe-inspiring record for a concept that began on such a small scale. This year, the mayor of London has taken up the idea and buildings such as the London Eye, Buckingham Palace and the BT Tower shall be deprived of their electric charms for the set sixty minutes. Other landmarks worldwide include the Eiffel tower, Hong-Kong's symphony of lights, Christ the Redeemer statue in Rio de Janeiro, and Table Mountain in Cape Town. The LSE can

also pride itself on the support extended by famous academic Lord Nicholas Stern, author of the Stern report which uncovered many of the economic issues related to climate change. "Governments will not take decisions of this kind unless people insist that they do," he has commented in a YouTube video designed to spread the message of Earth Hour. "World leaders need to have a clear understanding of the importance the people of the world attach to this problem." Lord Stern also states that emissions in rich countries would have to be cut by at least 80% from their 1990 levels by the year 2050.

It is true that with the Kyoto protocol approaching its deadline in the year 2012, politicians need to comprehend that not only are people becoming increasingly aware of the natural problems we face, but also that these issues have been worsening and require radical measures. After all, much ink has been spilt on the problem of the environment since its initial appearance on the foreground of media concerns. Yet if the political and economic will existed and put in place only a fraction of what is urged by environmental groups such as Greenpeace and the WWF, we would find ourselves on a more reassuring path. By now, we do all know that the figures are terrifying and permanent apathy even more so. This apathy can be attributed, in part, to our discounting of the future. Future generations will exist, and in all likelihood cite our case as an example of the perfectly absurd dimension of human society.

Hence the necessity of making a forceful gesture to stimulate those who potentially have the power to counteract climate change. "The aim of this global hour is to raise awareness regarding the

Copenhagen conference taking place in December 2009, where the agreements replacing the ones from Kyoto will be discussed," commented Amedeo Fasanella d'Amore. Expectations for this new conference are high, as this time Western Europe will attempt to bring economic superpowers such as the US, China and India into the agreement. Since Kyoto was ratified, there has been a growing awareness of the human responsibility in global warming in these countries, as shown by the newly elected Barack Obama in the US and recent declarations in China. It is difficult to convince developing nations, however, that they ought not to industrialize like the 'Western world' has done. The argument often stands that if we had the right to pollution all these years, why should they not have their turn? In all fairness, the answer ought to be yes, there is the existence of such a right, but it is not possible to sustain economic progress in such a direction. The effects are already backfiring in our case, with the loss in ecological diversity, the health problems, and the increasing frequency and seriousness of 'natural disasters'. Countries expanding economically must be convinced that a more successful take on development would be to skip the step of 'dirty production', and move straight away towards green energies. Such a way of approaching growth may, in fact, give them a long-run advantage against their established competitors.

The target of the Earth Hour this year is to involve a billion individuals in the movement. In many different aspects of our lives, switching off occasionally is a must; this time should be no exception, especially to 'turn on' our politician to the grave problem of climate change.

Plus ça change

Tomas da Costa considers the costs of consumption

At this time of year, it is customary to look back, laugh, and finally remark that not much has changed. Considering that this happens every year, we may be led to think that nothing ever changes - but that can hardly be true.

Change, according to such profound insights on the nature of Man such as *Who Moved My Cheese*, is a brutish concept. Why should we change when the status quo is so comfortable and familiar or, as the Dutch would poignantly put it, *gezellig*? The fallacy we should avoid falling into is thinking that something which seems to have no solution cannot be defined as a problem.

Modern life is very different from what we would have expected fifty years ago. Where are our spaceships, robots, quantum computers, clean reactors, meal pills? The role of technology in changing our lives has been the object of much contention. Marx, for instance, would argue that improvements in technology allow capitalists to extract ever larger profits from production, without having to pay higher wages. Later, especially in the West, such ideas lost favour: technology, we argued, makes life easier. The improvements in production technology translate into both higher consumption and leisure. After all, what sort of leisure did people have before the vacuum cleaner, the computer and the electric whisk (to name just a few of my favourite household examples) drastically cut back the number of hours spent in performing necessary tasks? What sort of life was possible before we had the disposable income to buy such products?

We are taught that consumption does not bring happiness. However, had you tried to separate me from a newly-obtained Lego set at Christmas about 10 years ago, we would see that it is not quite so simple. Life is littered with small objects and pleasures that can be purchased and that serve, in individual-specific ways, to make us happy. The feelings they evoke at specific times cannot be replicated by a different set of objects in an earlier age.

Thinking about earlier ages is interesting. By questioning someone who has lived in them (e.g. grandparents), we find that it is easy to overestimate the effects of technology. Is it really true that people had less leisure 50 years ago?

Considering the leisure time of the average, stereotypical LSE student now, and that which he will have for the rest of his life if he pursues the career paths with the average, stereotypical LSE student likes to pursue, I am tempted to wonder whether the technological character of the modern economy really does provide us with the leisure of our predecessors. You may argue that LSE students are famous for deformed preferences in what economists call the 'consumption-leisure decision' - they value consumption inordinately highly. So we spend our lives working ourselves out of strength, sanity, and righteousness, only to discover that the fundamental hormonal pleasure derive d from our new Ferrari is the same that our great-great-grandfathers would have obtained from an Arabian horse. With five generations between us, one would have thought things would have changed.

You may accuse me of comparing apples with pears - clearly, life now is quite different from life 100 years ago. The very fact that nearly all of us can reasonably expect to survive our childhood would not have been taken for granted back then.

Furthermore I will cautiously agree with the claim that the pursuit of progress for the sole purpose of allowing more leisure can be dangerous. 'Observe,' we are ordered, 'how the decline and fall of Rome was brought about by the complacency and moral corruption of the Roman people, who, after years of crafting the world's most powerful state around their originally peripheral and swamp-infested city, decided that it had had enough of work and warfare and gave itself up to its own vices and vainglory.' So if the increase in productive capacity brought about by technology did not go into increasing leisure (as in the Roman experience), then they must go into increasing our consumption.

It can hardly be argued, however, that more consumption corrupts us any less

than more leisure. Here we are, the inhabitants of the West, living in houses we cannot afford, ridden with debt, obsessed with spending, and without time for ourselves, our children or for introspective thought. Crime still exists and is painfully obvious, freedom and democracy are far from universal, and war is endemic, even while we know that these are things we would all be better off without. Is this really what 5000 years of civilisation were meant to achieve?

Clearly, changing the status quo is not easy. After all, a situation in which all people consume the very same products, year after year throughout the centuries, is not one that any of us can easily imagine. Nor, with the exception of a few particularly dedicated environmentalists, is it one that we particularly desire. Yet it is tempting to put forward an equally environmentalist argument: if we are living in more or less the same form (with the same happiness) as our ancestors, but our inexplicably increased consumption puts an overwhelming strain on our planet's resources and thereby threatens our own existence, then the status quo hardly seems so attractive.

What is the relevance of all this to us, and why on earth is this in the Beaver in the first place? Well, because LSE is part of our own lives, which are in turn inseparable from society in general. The problem is not the fact that we can see ourselves as enshrining society's tendency towards unsustainable consumerism. We do like to be ahead of everyone else, if we can. The problem is that we do not question the origins of this tendency that is thrust upon us.

Debate, thought and discussion are the key words here. Universities, after all, were never designed as repositories of tacit acceptance of the status quo, but as the places of origin of the questions that lead to the examination of our persons and our societies. Until we are able to do that, until we are able to say that what we intend for ourselves is justifiable, we can hardly talk about changes (or lack thereof) that we never bothered to think about - myself included.

I ♥ MY TUTOR

LSE STUDENTS' UNION

Teaching Excellence AWARDS

If you Love your Teacher, Lecturer or Tutor, nominate them for a Teaching Excellence Award.

There are 5 awards of £2000 each, so pick up a nominations form from the Student's Union reception.

The closing date for nominations is the 20th March

Revenge for the penguin

Football 3rds put the scum from Kings to the sword with two classy goals

Jon Nolan

This weekend the LSEFC third team were in action against the most hated of enemies - Strand Poly. The disappearance of the penguin really motivated the lads. At least it motivated ten of us to actually get out of bed. After some begging, we persuaded mystery LSE old boy 'Deano' to line up for us.

As a mark of respect to the missing LSE penguin, known affectionately by the 3rd team as 'Alfonso', we decided to wear

black armbands. Gabs put in the request to the referee for a minute's silence. So we duly stood around the centre circle and paid our respects.

The end of an even first half saw Strand Poly begin to assert some pressure but the back four stood strong. Our best chance fell to Gabs Butu who smashed a left foot shot onto the angle of the post and bar. At half time another two squad members managed to drag themselves to Berrylands, whilst Ben Prommawin departed as he had an urgent meeting with the Thai Prime minister and Finance minister.

Our pressure began to tell. Slick passing moves down both flanks and

Deano's presence up front pinned Kings back. Within ten minutes of the restart we struck. The ball falling to Gabs Butu who pulled the ball back to edge of the eighteen-yard box, only to realise halfway through it had fallen to the most unlikely of scorers, Russ Banfi. To the great surprise and delight of the 3rd team, Russ curled the ball beautifully into the bottom corner with all the accuracy and power he has never demonstrated before, and probably will never do again.

We were visibly buoyed by getting the first goal and our second goal was the result of some quick thinking from Louis De-Ste-Croix. 'Yogi' Yogananother

had carried the ball scything through the King's midfield before being ruthlessly brought down before he could get the chance to shoot. From the resulting free kick, Louis asked the referee if he could take it quickly. The referee agreed. Quick as a flash Louis whipped the ball to the open side of the goal whilst Strand Poly's goalkeeper was left clutching at air as he clamoured desperately across his line. Kings protested, but the goal was allowed to stand.

Kings' desperation grew. They resorted to a long ball game, which suited the superb centre back pairing of Russ and

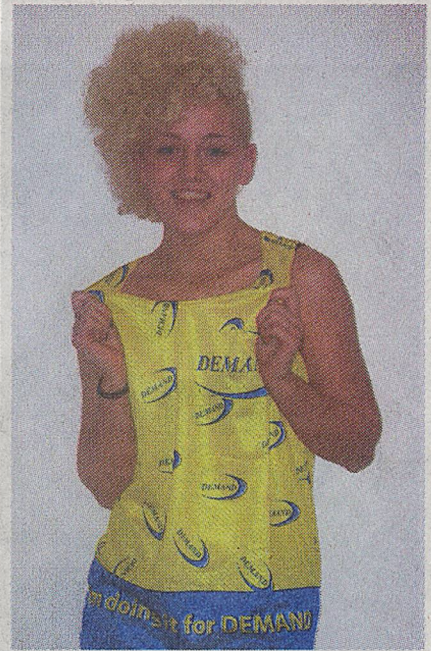


Photo: Gabriel Butu

As a mark of respect to the missing LSE penguin...we decided to wear black armbands

Sach. Every high ball was comprehensively dealt with. Their only chance came from a corner which wasn't dealt with, and had to be eventually headed off the line by Pearcey. Kings had totally run out of ideas by the final whistle. LSE had seen off the threat of the Strand Poly 2nds. Man of the match goes to the deserving Russ Banfi, scorer of a superb goal and all-round rock at the back.

Amber-ling along for charity



Come the 25th of May I, Amber Coleman will be donning my sportswear. This a) doesn't happen as often as it should and b) will definitely turns heads-see sexy running vest. I will be running the BUPA 10,000 which starts and finishes in St. James's Park. I will be running on behalf of Demand (Design & Manufacture for Disability) a charity that supplies solutions when no other help is available, designing and manufacturing personalized equipment for disabled individuals.

But Demand needs more than just my support. If you want to be involved in any way please contact me; it's an ideal event to exhaust some extra exam driven nervous energy. After all you too, could be the proud owner of a fluorescent yellow running vest.

Demand: www.demand.org.uk/
01484 666261

Amber: a.t.coleman@lse.ac.uk
www.justgiving.com/ambertcoleman

Serving up hope for the future

LSE tennis recaps their season's exploits on the lawn

Richard Fay

Having been absent from The Beaver all year, therefore leaving its readers no choice but to read articles about all 77 netball teams, we thought its about time we gave a heads up on what's been going on. We might not be as big as the rugby team, as loud as the football team, or as weird as the hockey team, but hey, we're still out every Wednesday.

After last year's most successful LSE sports team parted, we knew repeating the standard of our treble-winning achievement this year would be tough, and so we haven't. That said, we have strongly consolidated on our two promotions, and with a much younger squad this time around, I'm proud to say we have consistently met the challenges of our opposition.

From the very outset, I knew both teams could get close to promotion this year. We were lucky to be blessed with depth, a necessity if we wished to be competitive given the fixture list of the first term. The season began, for the 2nd team at least. With the 1st team's first fixture rained off, the 2nds locked horns with our neighbours Kings, in a match the significance of which was clear immediately.

Last year we were able to pip KCL to promotion, and with a much unchanged side, they were going to be tough competition for our 2nds who still had to gel. Having made my way over to watch the 2nds, it was looking good as we won the first set in three of the four singles. Winning all these would ultimately be enough to secure victory. Unfortunately only Alex Alias was able to battle through in the downpours, showing great composure as the tie slipped away from our other guys. We went on to lose 6-4, and knew we had it all to do to turn things around and keep in touch as the season progressed.

The 1st team started strongly with three comprehensive wins. Consequently, our meeting with UCL 1st team who had recorded four 10-0 wins in their opening four matches was going to play a large part in dictating the outcome of our league

season. After a valiant performance by Luke House and Cory Harris in our 2nd doubles team, we were 1-1 going into the singles. We lost closely at numbers 1,3 and 4 but came through another tightly contested match at no. 2 7-5 7-5. The 7-3 loss was in fairness to a stronger team on the day, and to close the gap at the top of the table was always going to be tough. Wins followed wins as both seasons progressed, with the exception of the loss of our 2nd team from the BUCS cup.

The reverse fixture against Kings quickly came around for the 2nds, with all hopes of promotion certain to disappear if we came away with anything but a win. This same week saw the 1sts play Brighton, and decisions had to be made regarding where we thought our best chances of success lay. The 1sts had to win 10-0 to keep UCL in sight, and the 2nds just had to win. Achieving both these goals was a massive ask, and decisions taken saw the 2nds strengthened.

A 5-5 draw with Brighton drew a line under the 1sts league season earlier that day, something we had to take on the chin, and so all responsibility and justification fell onto the 2nds. Could this be the worst captain's decision this year in the LSE AU? To the relief of us all, they did duly win in the most acrimonious match I've had the pleasure of being involved in, albeit from the sidelines, during my time at LSE. Luke House pulled out a close 3 setter 6-0 2-6 6-4 at no. 3, Samir Kukar lost at no. 2 in a well contested 7-5 6-1 defeat. Cory Harris found it tough at no. 1 and so we were 4-2 down. Things were getting close, and the season was hanging by a thread.

Samir and Luke started the fightback with a stunning doubles win, and so it was left to Johnny Gunn, playing no. 4 in front of his team, the girls' team, and some of the firsts to come through. What unfolded under the lights of Highams Park was something special. Having shaved the first set in a tie-breaker, the second set slipped away and Johnny found himself 5-3 down in the third. The Kings guys, to our disgust, were loving it, but then their hearts were broken. Winning 7-5 in the 3rd set, Johnny took us to 5-4 up in the tie with a doubles to play, which was postponed due

to time constraints. We took this match 6-4 consequence of the lateness with which two of their players arrived that day. We were going into Lent Term all square with Kings, exactly.

The 1sts did finish 2nd behind UCL in division 1, and their attention turned to the cup. A first round bye put us into the last 16 where we faced University West of England, Bristol. Winning rubbers at 3 and 4 singles and the 2nd doubles we entered into a tie-break shootout. 3 breakers, thats all, to separate an otherwise inseparable tie. The first breaker saw the two no. 1s go head to head again. Having already lost in the singles, turning this around to score the first point was a difficult ask.

But it happened. We got an 11-9 tie-break win in which we saw the best tennis of the day, and that saw the opposing no.1 exit the court in tears with cuts and bruises, literally. Cory Harris was then able to step in and repeat his victory over their no. 4 as we marched on into the quarter finals of the cup, only to have the unenviable task of competing against London Metropolitan 2nds. These guys are the 2nd best team in the UK behind their 1st team who are European University champions. Our cup run was swiftly ended then the following week; we were only able to push them in one singles rubber. A solid season with only two defeats came to an end, with a foundation firmly set for success next year, and perhaps a push for the premiership.

The 2nds have won all three of their league ties this term and enter their final game against Queen Marys level on points with Kings, just two 'rubbers' down out of 90. It would be unfair to miss out on promotion by the finest of margins, but we must strive to get a win on Wednesday to at least ask the question of Kings. We shall wait and see.

This year has seen many more ups than downs, with a combined team record of some 16 wins, 2 draws and just 4 losses. As we lose John Muth and Cory Harris this year, I'd like to thank them for their efforts, and at the same time say how excited I am about the opportunities ahead of us next year with the team retaining so many guys from this year.

Results

We only have Netball results because Communications officer Ed Healy is incompetent and President-elect Charlie Glyn is as efficient as her German roots would suggest.

Netball

1sts 44 - 24 London South Bank
1sts 56 - 26 Herts 3rds
2nds 33 - 21 Bucks 2nds
3rds 7 - 37 Imperial Medics 2nds
3rds 17 - 35 St Georges 3rds
6ths 0 - 45 Imperial 3rds
7ths 2 - 35 Kings 4ths

Philosophical Barry's Beaver Sports Awards



Ashley Cole-mittment award:

Joseph Knoertzer has done little alter the stereotypical view of the French being infuriatingly lazy with a poor tolerance for alcohol. However he has been pipped to the title by another tricky winger of continental origin, Teodor Todorov. In his illustrious career for the FC Teddy has played for the seconds. Then saw the light and moved to the firsts. Got bored so dropped to the thirds. Then realised they were going nowhere so jumped ship to the title chasing firsts. Clearly he has taken his native Bulgaria's pro-immigration policy a little too seriously.



Adolf Hitler award for excessive desire for control:

While Ed Healy's unbelievable approach to university football nearly pushed him over the threshold, he just couldn't quite overhaul Sophie De-La-Hunt. To be fair our outgoing President has copped a fair bit of abuse in these pages, however, I feel it has all been perfectly warranted.



Jeremy Clarkson award for being a total cunt:

Take a bow, Tom Davies. Despite efforts repair his damaged reputation the man can still do nothing right, it seems.



The Church-Henson award for most Welsh couple:

The blossoming romance between Carrig Ryan and Katy Strivens. Love's young dream. Or is it nightmare?



The Ross-Rachel will-they-won't-they award:

Rogers and Bacon came so close at the Carol. Oh, how things could've been.



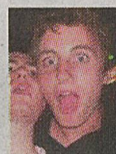
The Schwarzenegger award for muscles and mental mediocrity:

No awards show would be complete without some token eye candy and this comes in the form of Daniel Fountain (pronounced fown-tayne, come on mate, who are you fooling?). In a vain attempt to dispel the myth that there is no more to him than a rippling six pack, Dan looked to prove his intellectual credentials with a rousing speech at the exec hustings. Sadly by taking his top off at every imaginable opportunity he had managed to incur the wrath of the entire AU leading to him being dispatched from the stage without so much as word entering the air and bimbo status rightly intact.



Robin Low award for egregious incompetence and error:

The whole LSE student body for electing him into office.



Nicklas Bendtner award for most grossly inflated ego without proper foundation:

B.J. Watson. He's done it all before, ten times better, with fitter birds, finer banter and didn't even feel shit the next day.



Shane Warne award for most unathletic looking sportsman:

Russell the happy camel Banfi proved during Mr LSE that his rotund physique actually belies a physiological prowess that few can lay claim to, and his recent boxing training has erased those love handles edgewise. Obviously Robin Low has to be up there, the chubby cherub retaining his place in the first team only by virtue of his gargantuan throw and 'special relationship' with first team director of football; Brian Healy. But the winner of this prestigious gong goes to Chris Cattermole. When he went on stage for his Liaisons hustings speech he looked more like a snorting ketamine oaf who had got lost on his way to a Bang Face rave, rather than a top level sportsman battling it out week in week out in the ULU hockey leagues. Yet hockey really isn't the most demanding of sports, is it?



Harry Redknapp award for non-communication with the media:

Winston Ong. The editorial team have been obsessed with the Ultimate Frisbee Club Captain for nigh-on twenty weeks now but, much like Andy Rogers experiences every Wednesday night, all of our overtures have been repeatedly rebuffed. One day, Winston, one day.



Kathryn Nixon award for loose morals:

Another fiercely contested race but this time there was no clear winner. The the main competitors being formed of; Janine Phillips, Alan-from-Kings, Lawrence Cockin, Kirsty "good time girl" Rice, Tom Jackson (pre girlfriend), Henry Adefope and Emma Heap but definitely not Rob Fenton. Never one to take advantage of a drunk scantily clad young lady, Mrs Fenton must be so proud of her little trooper. If only he wasn't so shit at everything.



Rob Fenton award for least memorable performance:

A difficult one to judge as there have been so many. The 2nd and 3rd football team's have both had games in which they have conceded ten goals. Women's rugby have found themselves, actually, who really cares? This one has to go to Effy Osoba for her disastrous showing in the exec hustings.



philosophicalbarry@thebeaveronline.co.uk

See you next year - B xx

Come rain or shine our athletes are still sublime



Photo: Vikram Balachandar

Vikram Balachandar

A packed-out Parliament Hill played host to the ULU Athletics Championship on Sunday 8 March. Though hit by some last-minute illnesses and Frisbee-related injuries, and lacking some of the stars of last year, the LSE gathering still represented one of the bigger turnouts in recent years. With not a cloud in the sky, the signs were good, except for the 30 km/h wind down the home straight.

First up were Peter Thomson and Alex Boyce in the 110m hurdles, in the opening event of their personal "man challenge". Helped no doubt by Eastwoodian advice from the starter - "When faced with a hurdle, you have two choices: jump, or hurt yourself. I can guarantee you will jump" - they finished in 5th and 6th place respectively. The man with a gun is always right.

In the 5k, Phil Armour, Jane Luxner and Hua-Yu Chung battled the wind, while Thomson and David McCauley were

contesting the triple jump. Armour ran straight from the finish line over to the shot put to join Boyce and Charlie Dougherty. Courtesy of some "helpful" measurement, Boyce finished 3rd with a herculean effort of 9.40m.

In the women's 100m, Yung Yung Chang eased through qualification. McCauley and Dan Steene teamed up in the heats of the men's 100m. Steene recovered from a poor start to finish 3rd in his heat, but we weren't sure if it would be enough to take him to the final as fastest loser.

While we were debating this, Harriet Jackson was busy grabbing silver in the women's 2k steeplechase, displaying excellent technique over the barriers. Then the good news; the first four athletes in Steene's 100m heat were all faster than the previous heat - he was through to the final. But at that moment, the heavens opened.

The rain meant that the high jump, the next event in the Thomson-Boyce showdown, was cancelled, but no matter since they could do discus and javelin instead. The running events resumed, beginning with the men's 800m. Team captain Vikram Balachandar plodded

round after suffering from food poisoning the previous day, but Saji Girvan managed 4th place coming back from injury. Jake Greenland shook off a groin niggle to run a stylish 3k steeplechase. Deborah Schneider-Luftman did well to complete the 800m and 1500m double.

Taking a break from the long jump competition, where he had previously managed only two no-jumps, Steene was back in action for the 100m final, and snatched silver in a photo finish. He must have rediscovered his self-belief on his return to the sandpit, where his final jump earned him gold. Steene later anchored the men's 4x100 relay team to a creditable 5th place, alongside Thomson, McCauley and Balachandar.

Overall, LSE finished 3rd behind Imperial and UCL, matching our performance of last year. Most importantly, we beat Kings. Though missing some of our distance-running stars, the diversity of this year's team was more impressive, and it would be great to see that improve. There's no real reason why we can't give the UCLosers and Gimperials a better run for their money. If you missed out this time, be sure to keep an eye out next year.

Too many cock ups prove costly

Emma Heap and Dani Priestley

The penultimate match of the LSE WHC took place in the beautiful surroundings of the Bank of England ground. Shame we had to battle with 26 Year 9 girls for the pitch before the real battle for the league even began.

Cock-up number two was Roehampton's inability to realise that two blonde bimbos, sporting pyjamas and who'd never played a game of hockey in their lives, were incapable of umpiring our match.

Cock-up number three: we found ourselves one nil down by half time. Let's not dwell on a generally poor performance from every single person on the pitch. It's fair to say the half time whistle couldn't come soon enough. It came from the single umpire who thought bringing a whistle might actually be useful.

Spurred on by a peeved Dani, Heap brought up the shambolic umpiring situation and the "foul as you like" arrangement down one side of the pitch with the opposition. They promised an improvement but the mothers' meeting continued; their "improvement" was simply to add a wolf-whistling bimbo to the mix.

We enjoyed watching Roehampton play so much that we stood, watched and admired as they scored two quick fire goals, much to Serene's and Captain Heap's disgust, which she voiced in a

Hitler-esque manner, threatening an "alcohol ban at the ball for anyone who doesn't want to win the league". She said something else too, but she got so shrill only the dogs could hear her.

Nevertheless, we buckled down and began to show why we'd thrashed them at home. Man of the match Azra penetrated the D repeatedly with some well practised ball skills, and her high speed ejaculations were eventually capitalised on by Haugh who once again showed why she's odds on favourite for the golden stick. Finally, hope of alcohol at the Ball.

On the right wing, TJ showed us what we'll miss next season, with some cracking runs and crosses and a solid performance from Betty, Colin and Kathryn at the back meant that we could continue to push up.

In the dying minutes Azra finished off the game, and her LSE hockey career, with a late second goal, beautifully struck from the edge of the D after a sleek attacking move. Unfortunately it proved too late for us to chase a much deserved equaliser, but it gave the very competitive Heaps enough of a smile to allow us booze at the ball. Saying that, a ban may have been better for Niyants; maybe then she'd have made it to the main course.

A great night was had by all, except Niyants. On behalf of the WHC, massive thanks go to the AU Exec for a fabulous Ball, twenty great Wednesday nights and generally for all the effort they've made this year.



Sport



The Beaver Sports Awards 2009
p23

Crowning glory of a dynasty

LSE Basketball dominates Manchester Met to win second National Championship in 3 years

Justin Gest

The LSE Basketball team capped a breathtaking comeback this season and spectacular run since 2006 with a hard-earned victory against Manchester Metropolitan University last Saturday afternoon in Sheffield, to win the 2009 Division I British Basketball National Championship.

Spurred by a dominating 19-1 second quarter run highlighted by suffocating defence and a string of three-pointers by Sheffield native Jonny Wright, the Beavers never looked back - capping a brilliant run through the Men's Trophy tournament, during which they outscored opponents by an average of 28 points a game.

Wright's 15-point outburst was complemented by an industrious 20-point effort from Ignazio De Ferrari and a solid 10 points from forward Sean Sosnovec in the balanced Beaver attack.

Defensively, LSE was led by lycra-tight coverage by fresher Rob "Tayshaun" Dagger on the perimeter, and vicious rebounding from power forwards Matt Caverly and Joe Allen.

The victory concluded an unfathomable 10-week stretch for the Beavers, who began their season mired in a lacklustre 3-5 start through December.

Regrouping after the New Year, the team huddled at Brixton Recreation Centre to begin their training session on a frigid 7 January afternoon. Without working baskets at the deteriorating Third World facility, the team was left to actually talk to one another.

The result of the anomalous powwow was an absurd promise to go undefeated for the remainder of their season.

In the end, the improbable was achieved. The Beavers won their final two regular season matches versus Brighton and Hertfordshire to clinch second place in the Southeastern Division, swept through three games to claim their third consecutive London Cup title, and dominated all comers in the national competition. The final tally was a 9-game winning streak and glory on the court in Sheffield.

Captains Nick Broadway and Justin Gest raised the team's newest piece of silverware in front of hundreds gathered at the English Institute for Sport, as team-

mates swarmed them and chanted "Cazzo! Cazzo!" an Italian expletive—ruining any chance for a future sponsorship from Kappa.

In a joint statement put released by Francesco Rinaldi and Giovanni Graglia, the two tricolore said: "Se le nostre madri sapessero la metà delle merde che facciamo, probabilmente ci abbandonerebbero e passerebbero il resto della loro esistenza nel confessionale."

The statement loosely translates into, "Too bad about the Kappa deal, we were really looking to improve our appeal among chavs."

While the lads jumped all over each other before the emotional awards ceremony, seasoned Head Coach Ronnie Baker celebrated by vomiting—leaving the gymnasium resembling the dining room of the AU Ball.

"Who knew I was going to get all that attention from so many 14-year-old fitties?"

Press conferences after the match were touching.

"The difference this year was our camaraderie," said glowing second-year Andreas Ferstad. "I think we were most inspired by the teamwork and chemistry of LSE's Jujitsu team. Their coordination and cohesion during their individual matches was exemplary for all of us."

After no one actually took Ferstad's comments seriously, members of the media got comfortable as they prepared to record postgame reactions from Sean Sosnovec.

Asked if he might be able to offer a verbose recapitulation of the team's season and his analysis of the progress of Portland sports in the past 30 years, Sosnovec said: "No comment."

Joe Allen subsequently dedicated his performance to a man he danced with at the Hoxton Square Bar and Kitchen. "You should have seen his moves," Allen said nostalgically. "I just hope that one day we



Photo: Monika Hargitai

can be in the same room again without him screaming for security."

In other dedications, Moritz Schneider dedicated the win to ill teammate Mike Hall, while point guard Paul DiStephano dedicated his season to Mrs. Garrett from the 1980s television sitcom, "The Facts of Life."

Sam the Beaver, LSE's mascot—thanks to a £90 budget expenditure by the Men's Tennis Team—also made the trip up North to support the university's most successful club.

"At first, I was just making the trip to back the lads," Sam said, behind the buckteeth of the fuzzy brown suit. "But who knew I was going to get all that attention from so many 14-year-old fitties. I swear, the last time me bum was touched so much, I was playing doubles."

All the team's trophies will soon be placed in public view inside a display case in the Old Building Atrium—to validate LSE's new re-branding as a "sport uni."

The Golden Era

2006-2007

Undefeated 21-0 season
Southeastern Division Title
London Cup Championship
Division II National Championship

2007-2008

14-2 record
Southeastern Division Title
London Cup Championship

2008-2009

14-5 record
London Cup Championship
Division I National Championship

Bracketology

First Round

LSE 89
Exeter 60

Quarterfinal

LSE 81
Brunel 52

Semifinal

LSE 78
De Montfort 42

Trophy Final

LSE 70
Manchester Met 53

Cricketers show valour but no maidens

Karthik Menon

11 March - The day of revival for LSE cricket. The LSE cricket team a.k.a. The Tippy Beavers have won the Playon sports cricket league. Three days earlier we beat seven other teams to take the Super Sunday trophy as well. What does the future hold for this near invincible bunch of eight undergrads and three graduate students?

Well for starters, none of us are getting laid—judging by the number of women that have ever watched us play. Secondly, one of our opening batsman might be arrested for drug possession and then finally, the only bit of certainty, we will all be receiving a framed photo of the bunch of us for which we paid twelve pounds. Was the ten odd week journey of history rewriting and fame worth it? Hell, yeah! In fact, if we had to do it all over again, we'd all probably be saying "When do we get started?" Well most of us would.

So to put things in perspective, here's a bulletin of what transpired over the last twenty weeks. On a mild November morning last year, skipper Abhishek Singh decided to invite a bunch of enthusiastic individuals to try out for the cricket

team at Lincon's Inn Fields. The selection process was stringent and everyone that eventually turned up on the day, including a few that couldn't, were placed on the list of probabilities for the indoor cricket tournament at Canary Wharf in January. As the tournament approached, we were informed by the Captain's trusted aide Dhruwil that all the selected members are required to pay a small fee for entry into the tournament and the LSE Cricket Hoodie. Numbers began to dwindle and then fell drastically to ten - by the hand of fate, the elite bunch picked itself.

First game and we arrived late at Canary Wharf and not even knowing each other's names. No one except for Rishabh read the rules and what followed was a pasting from a well prepared bunch of bankers who might or might not still have jobs: every cloud and all that. Well anyway, the team morale was terribly low and the only logical follow up to the loss was dinner at Nando's. The team remained dejected until Rishabh ordered a vegetarian dish at which the entire team burst out into laughter. And just like that, our season was kick started and everyone just like that became fondly known to each other as 'bhenchod'.

A couple of reinforcements were

drafted into the side the following week and the beavers hammered the top team in the contest all thanks to some splendid middle over and end skin batting coupled with a top class bowling performance. To cut a long story short, what followed were eight weeks of flawless cricket and a whole lot of binge drinking.

So come the 11th of March we stood on the brink of history. One game away from winning the league and being crowned champions. The support for the beavers on the day of the final is overwhelming - the author's roommate and a dude from the eighth floor of the same building, joined by some pretty lasses and the Goldman Sachs team formed the crowd that would witness this clash of the titans - The Village People VS The Tippy Beavers.

Our batting was clinical and decent contributions from all eight of us ensured that we set the opposition a daunting target to chase down. Arjun 'Abbaye Siddhu' (coach and opening bowler) completed his spell along with Dhruwil and together they helped make the remainder of the contest interesting. What followed was pure magic from the two LSE spinners (Gaylord and Westi) which sucked the life out of the opposition's faint hopes.



Photo: Abhishek Singh

The rest of the lads played out the final formalities and the cup was ours, and more importantly a £50 bar tab leading to a night of unabashed drinking and debauchery. All of which constitutes a true underdog story; a tale of rags to

riches. This day has hopefully signaled the beginning of an era of dominance of LSE cricket. As long as some of us get visa's to stay on for a little longer- Jacqui Smith take note.



PART B

17.03.09

3 Rant

LIZ CHEESBROUGH

4 Julian & the Dream of Horses

JULIAN BOYS & SACHIN PATEL

6 Visual Arts

CHRISTINA SCHMIDT ZUR NEDDEN

7 Identity

LOUISA EVANS

8 Centre

DANIEL B. YATES' TYPOLOGY OF HIP HOP

10 Music

LIAM MCLOUGHLIN & CATHY DRUCE

12 Journeys

GRAEME BIRRELL

13 Theatre

LOIS JEARY

14 EB

ANGELA CHOW

15 Film

TRENT MAYNARD

16 Sex & Gender

HELEN REEVES

Editorial

I promised myself I wouldn't get sentimental. So, for our final issue of the year, I've re-acquainted myself with the hippity hop idols of my youth. On reflection, it appears that I got my priorities in life totally wrong, up until now. Instead of fanning about at the Cheltenham races, which is how I spent part of this week, I should really have spent quality time getting to know my local tattoo artist, gun dealer and pimp. Now I've seen the error of my ways, I'm off to start a totally superfluous turf war in my 'hood; get myself shot by a childhood friend; and plant the seeds of a misogynistic revolutionary cultural movement. But it won't be anywhere near as awesome as hip hop. See you in the next life, homies.

S. Pizzle
&

Julian Boyz in
da Hood

Letters

Dear Sachin & Julian

I totally dug your minimalism issue last week, it was just like so totally enlightening. I used to live by Sloane Square in the south-west wing of Daddy's arsehole. Now though, thanks to you visionary legends, I currently reside under a bridge in Wapping and meditate 23 hours a day, hovering serenely over broken glass and rat piss.

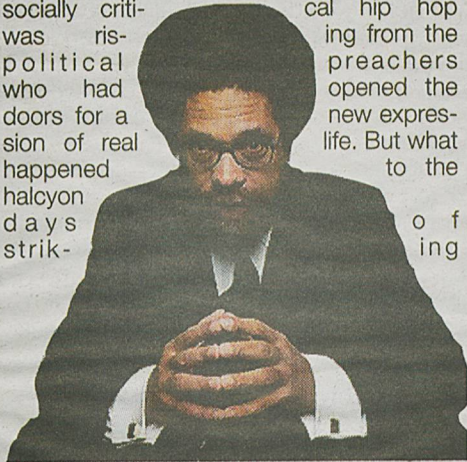
Ta

Jemimah Grooby-Molotov,
via email

Got Beef?

LIZ CHEESBROUGH FIGHTS THE POWER ONE LAST TIME

Back in a time when most of us were just popping out into the world, there was a Revolution going down on the other side of the Atlantic – a revolution with a capital R. It promised the imminence of the timely breakdown of barriers that had subdued the civil rights, black nationalism, poverty and inequality at the heart of everyday life for so many Americans for so long. It built upon sprawling roots from Marxism to religion, and would be immortalised by symbols from military gear to raising fists. The new breed of socially conscious, socially critical hip hop was rising from the political preachers who had opened the doors for a vision of real life. But what happened to the halcyon days of striking



down capitalism and imperialism that left us with the 'gangsta' sexism, big-money-bling-bling and violence promotion of today? What happened to the promise that "it will take a nation of millions to hold us back"?

Addressing social and political issues through hip hop hasn't sunk beneath the hundred dollar-bill waves of P Diddy and 50 Cent, but it has had to adjust to the realities of music capitalism. As the likes of Public Enemy continue to stand up and shout about Hurricane Katrina with "Hell No We Ain't All Right!"; they do so in a world where their news coverage is subdued beneath Britney Spears flashing her lady parts. Socially conscious hip hop has had to compete within the very system that it previously wanted to take down – it's had to play 'the game'. This challenge proved insurmountable for a number of politically conscious critics – the notion of preaching rights and freedoms while cashing in on white college students was an irony too far; the wealth of success inadvertently but definitively diluting their message. The artists may be criticised for selling out, but criticised too are the Afrocentric scholars who continued to dismiss the four pillar art forms altogether. In between the politics of hip hop – who is it for? what does it mean? where does it belong? – we seem to miss the point of their message.

What matters is change.

Hip hop is tarnished by the double blind the genre rests upon – which is the true face of the sound? Is it fighting for rights or fighting with AK47s? Indeed, if "Hip Hop Is Dead" (thanks Nas), then who killed it? As the genre has seen the ideology of wealth become a derogatory central tenet, the acts of the politically aware have become distinct in comparison. Mos Def and Cornel West, a Princeton professor and leader on racial injustice, took on 9/11, the racist legal systems, Islam, Iraq and the electoral college system on an American chat show – receiving criticism and praise alike. From describing the American presidential families as "passing round power like a party joint" to believing in Big Foot, academia and hip hop showed how 'the game' could be won with comedy, intelligence and action. They enacted a message about music capitalism that touched millions. It is not just about beats and bitches, it's about how "truth lies prostrate", and using music to reveal reality – even if it seems politically powerless and marred by the shine of bling. Hip hop is not dead, and nor are the values it stood for, but it mirrors the call for action as the rights leaders did so many years before. As West prophesised, "no individual can save a nation. If a nation is sleep walking, and doesn't wake up - then it will never be saved."

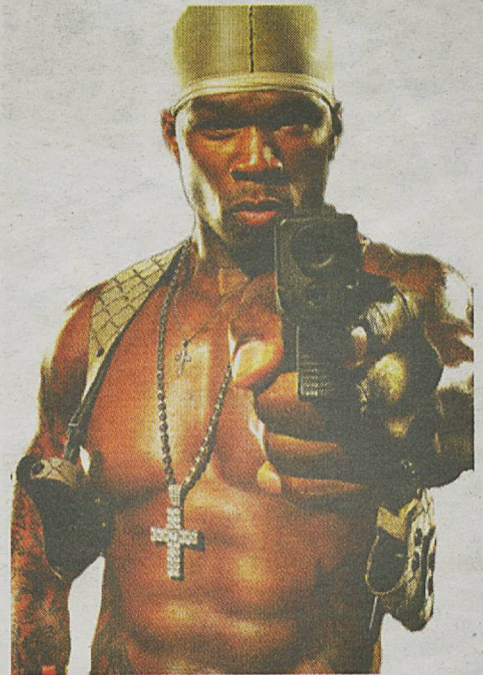
JOHN DEGRAFT-JOHNSON IS A HATER

Hip hop is the biggest practical joke in music culture. The music industry is conning the public and running off into the sunset with your money, and here is how it works. A blinged-up, cribbed-up, strippers on tap and a gun in his back pocket rapper tells you about his blinged-up, cribbed-up, strippers on tap and a gun in his back pocket lifestyle. Proceed to add a beat which involves music stolen from somebody else, masquerading as a 'sample'; a drum beat created on a drum machine and a video with 'dancing (gyrating) girls'. Cue multi-million sales, critical derision and a huge profit wedge. Hip hop's very goal is to see how bad they can make the music and still have millions buying it. I'm not sure what is worse: the music/lifestyle/culture itself, or the absolute idiots who get suckered by the music companies.

Let's talk about the lyrics too, because they are diabolical. Rhyming couplets are not hard to create, this sentence is great! See what I mean? But even that is too hard for some artists who require the adding of -izzle to the end of other words in order to make them rhyme. "Fo' shizzle, dizzle, rizzle" is not English - will someone please tell Snoop Doggy Dogg? The constant stream of expletives permeating every line is not clever, dangerous or impressive. It just shows artists who cannot express themselves eloquently, and have to resort to [Stream of

expletives removed for fear young children may become corrupted.] Mindless moronic content like how many drugs they sold and how hard their life was on the street only compounds the situation. Firstly, most of these rappers were born to suburban parents. Secondly, even if you used to be on the street, now your mansion could qualify for its own postcode why are you still talking about your 'hard knock life'? Even the 'mainstream' rappers like Jay-Z or Tupac focus exclusively on gun culture, drug running or how many girls they have. "99 problems but a bitch ain't one" is a ridiculous lyric that manages to be self-aggrandising, misogynistic and grammatically incorrect in one go.

Hip hop doesn't only discriminate against women; it's racist too. Eminem created a huge buzz due to his skin colour, but usually it's an African-American-only situation. Let's not even approach their use of the n-word as some kind of black empowerment: it's a slave term; a racist term, and you can never change that. It just plays into the whole false machismo attitude in hip hop. 'Beef' is the stupidest facet of hip hop, which consists of a simple progression. Artist 1 disses Artist 2; Artists 2 references his higher record sales/better 'flow'/hotter girlfriend; Artist 1 says he could kill Artist 2; Artist 2 and friends kill Artist 1; Artist 1's friends kill Artist 2. Replace Artist 1 with Notorious B.I.G and Artist 2 with Tupac. Two of the most loved figures in this culture, and they kill each other? What




a waste of life through a moronic 'beef'. But the music industry is laughing again - artists are appreciated far more after they are dead, as proved by stratospheric posthumous sales in both cases.


Nas said hip-hop is dead, but he was wrong: it's not nearly dead enough.

Fear & Loathing in Cheltenham


JULIAN BOYS



Grotesque leering faces lurch into my field of vision, snub noses and button eyes peer hollowly, unseeing. An acrid stench fills the air as inbred tweed suited monsters puff on pipes, fingering betting slips and murmuring odds under their breath. A day at Cheltenham races, it turns out, is a bizarre parody of Raoul Duke and Dr. Gonzo's wholesome excursion to the desert. While Hunter S. Thompson's characters in *Fear and Loathing* needed LSD to perceive rooms full of distorted monsters in casinos and hotel lobbies, a clear head alone will cause the onlooker to recoil at the grotesque sights on offer at the races.



Thousands of men who look like Roald Dahl's most grotesque creations circulate, their gambling addictions worn like badges of acceptance. Every face has been chewed up and spat out viciously by life; a nasty curl lies at the corner of every mouth and an ugliness born of cruelty overwhelms the senses. They convene here every year to pour money into bookmakers' pockets and beer down their throats, whilst watching stunted Irishmen thrash the life out of terrified creatures. The attraction of such an event is hard to divine, yet clearly there must be one. Somewhere among the stony faces and cold wind of a March morning, pleasure was being derived, and I intended to find out where.



The search started at the parade ground, where hundreds of people stared gormlessly down onto horses being led by their mouths, to try to guess which might win in a race. They of course all looked identical but for differences in shade of brown, and our less than informed eyes discerned nothing but the certainty that yes, indeed, these were horses. Perhaps unsurprisingly, no joy was to be found in the urinals either. Hordes of toffs reluctantly rubbed shoulders with the nouveau-riche Essex pretenders, who held equal disdain for the lower, gamblers' anonymous echelons of the race day hierarchy. All were united by a burning sensation in their bladders, and cheek by


jowl they mechanically drew forth their reluctant members into the urine spattered air to relieve themselves before shuffling away from the stench with satisfaction. No-one washed their hands.

I followed the crowd down to the track and joined the scrum at the feet of the elevated men holding wads of cash at boards displaying unintelligible combinations of odds. Maybe this was where the fun was to be had. I correctly guessed which horse would win a race, earning a meagre but thrilling financial reward. Hurrah! This was it! A fleeting sense of fraternity developed with my fellow punters as the anticipation built for the next race. The rush as the horses ran was intense and not dissimilar to nearly being hit by a bus, but as failure followed failure over several more races it dissipated, and a brief love of gambling reverted back to bafflement at the whole affair.

Perhaps redemption could be found at one of the many Guinness bars. Further slabs of uninvited misanthropy imposed themselves upon my now weak shoulders as obscene caricatures slurped on great vats of the black syrup. All that was left was to stagger back to the cosy confines of the coach and reflect on the tragedy of my extreme social embeddedness and complete failure to integrate into a different culture.

If you want to experience a truly British day at the races, prepare for a culture shock; a fascinating chance to re-evaluate your system of values and probably affirm them. This is a side to life on our sceptred isle which someone who's only lived in London cannot conceive of, a scarred relic of the past. Plus, horse lovers and people with burgeoning gambling problems will have a whale of a time. The good people of Pumpkin tours will entertain and look after you, transporting you in luxury halfway across the country and back in a single day. Seize the opportunity.

For more information or reservations, visit www.pumpkintours.co.uk or call 0845 52733 85.



There Will Be Horse

SACHIN PATEL

As a student, my day rarely begins at half past six: rarer still does the champagne start flowing at half past eight. Nonetheless, a posh trip to the Cheltenham races falls outside of even my varied social pursuits, so accepting such an invitation seemed like an unmissable opportunity. The purpose of this fact-finding mission was to gain a first-hand account of the range of diverting excursions and tours offered by Pumpkin Tours, a brand new venture from record label owner, photo-journalist and all-round raconteur, Eugene Bari. That I had no prior interest nor knowledge of horse racing did not seem like too much of an obstacle: after all, how alien a sport could it be?

The answer, it would appear, is very, very alien. Thrust headfirst into a maelstrom of betting slips, comedy Irish accents and an awful lot of tweed, I quickly observed that of all the outmoded and prehistoric pastimes not to have died out, that of horse racing is perhaps the most dizzying of all. Prior to stepping foot into the Cheltenham Racecourse, I had imagined the world of racing to be one of glamour, gentillesse and thoroughly respectable merriment. About a minute later, these idyllic thoughts were swiftly replaced by the reality: thousands of fat, balding, middle-aged men consuming their own weight in Guinness, before yelling at gruff bookies in hilariously violent regional accents. Hundreds of severely inbred tweed-sporting toffs, amusing themselves by pointing at a succession of dazzlingly bedecked horses, doubtless remarking "Yes, this one's definitely a horse." Scores of equally inbred youngsters, delightfully fop-pish attire sliding off their slender shoulders. Thus were the polar opposites of society tangled up in one cold, windy and cheerless environment, compelled ever to cheer, jeer and yell as ordinary graceful, mighty creatures were tormented round the course in various states of emotional abandon.

To better adjust in this strange, out-of-step universe, I joined my companions in the ludicrously commercialised Guinness Village, where we quaffed pints served at temper-

tures even colder than the spring air, and munched on greasy, overpriced fish and chips. While confined in this stuffy, airless village, I clutched at the perfect moment to learn more of Pumpkin Tours' intentions, straight from the horse's mouth. "Life is for living - get away from the humdrum," says Eugene Bari, MD of the company, which offers a surprisingly diverse range of experiences at surprisingly affordable price points. "Whether it is going to see Lewis Hamilton's last race at Silverstone, or firing a machine gun in Cambodia, it is all about the experience being both humbling and life enhancing," he adds.

The corporate line out of the way, Bari begins to reminisce about his days spent at the heart of the Manchester cultural explosion, alternately working with the band James or frequenting the city's alternatives to the notorious Hacienda. "The Hacienda was overrated," proclaims Bari, as our conversation turns to a subject more amenable to my own interests. Having examined the real Tony Wilson and the brilliance of Joy Division, Bari's anecdotes segue neatly into talk of Eastern European music festivals, which, he claims, are the perfect antidote to the increasingly corporate, predictable British festival circuit. This is where Pumpkin's services are most likely to appeal to a younger audience, I suggest to him, because the prospect of a fully organised trip to Serbia's Exit Festival, or Budapest's Sziget are substantially more student-y than a day at the races amidst the gathered pond life.

My acquaintances may still insist that my social pursuits frequently fail to fit into student norms but, having returned from my day at the races somewhat mentally scarred, and a tad repulsed by the numerous targets for anthropological studies, I hope that they think a little better of me. Pumpkin Tours did a fine job of putting lipstick on a thrashed, whipped and beaten race-horse, but beneath the dressage, there's still a mightily rotten core to the sport that no amount of champagne, Guinness, bangers and mash can ever mask.



The home is a machine in which to live," said the man born Charles Edouard Jeanneret, eventually known as the architect Le Corbusier.

Born in Switzerland in 1887, growing up in France in the midst of Fordism and industrial efficiency, Le Corbusier embraced his philosophy with a fervour that revolutionised how architecture was conceived and executed. Equal parts artist and charismatic visionary, Le Corbusier was beacon of modernist idealism; in the face of Art Nouveau and curvy indulgence, he championed breaking down design into its most basic forms and then building it back up block by block like the machines he so admired.

This is not to say that his architecture was simply functional. The results of his experimentation ended with design that is light, pretty, and distinctly his. He came up with the five points of architecture, ranging from raising his buildings on stilts (to create the sense of lightness), to the development of load-bearing columns (in order that the walls could be separate from the support of the building). He championed roof gardens and large, horizontal windows to bring light inside a structure. Le Corbusier was also a gifted painter and sculptor, and eventually embraced interior design as a vital component of his architecture; his later buildings also used light, colourful, and simple furniture that he built to complement his structures.

Like Coco Chanel and Andy Warhol, part of

Le Corbusier's mystique lay in his ideology, and the eccentricity of his personality and life. For example, he expanded the scope of his architecture to encompass urban design and a way of life. Le Corbusier was faced with the growing problem of slums in Paris, and felt that architecture, more so than economic stimulus and policy, could solve social ills. His manifestation of an ideal city is a utopian marriage of industry and efficiency – he envisioned tall, uniform, concrete skyscrapers incorporated with gardens and industrial spaces, which he called the "linear city." The chaos and darkness of the city could be replaced by light and standardisation – a social equaliser.

He drew his plan for Paris. It involved l'Arc de Triomphe standing in the shadow of one-hundred-floor residential giants that stood proudly in precise, military lines. He drew plans for Stockholm, Geneva, and other cities that he lectured at. He believed that urban centres, much like architecture, could be re-invented. He gave himself the moniker, Le Corbusier, because he believed anyone could re-invent themselves.

He was famous for his zealous preaching of these ideals, and approached city council members multiple times to adopt his design. He wrote several books on the subject, including one called *The Radiant City*. He was repeatedly turned down, but Le Corbusier simply applied his designs anywhere he could. The housing units in Marseille were a testimony to his resolve. Even after his death in 1965, his ideals lived on in the form of public housing units.

The backstory is necessary to explain why the Barbican is an ideal place for a Le Corbusier exhibition. Designed by Chamberlin, Powell and Bon, the behemoth Barbican Centre was inspired by Le Corbusier-like ideals of function and integration, becoming a geometric structuring of self-contained community. The exhibition itself also is a testament to Le Corbusierian design: black and white with bold geometric design, lit by intense and wide beams of colour, it is itself an exercise in streamlined modernism.

The exhibition is a well-rounded retrospective of Le Corbusier's work. Patrons are encouraged to start on the top floor of the two-floor space, where small, consecutive blocks are dedicated to the early, middle, than later parts of his career. The exhibition is also punctuated with models of his incredible structures, encompassing his more famous works (La Ville Savoie) and unique conceptual designs (a council building resembling a space ship). And, of course, because the art cannot be separated from the artist's life, the exhibition is interspersed with his writings, a personal collection of furniture and art pieces, and impressively, a diorama of his linear ideal city design.

Despite any misgivings that anybody has about the merits of his ideals, Le Corbusier was a stylistic force of nature; surrounded by the gardens and block boldness of the Barbican and seeing the workings of a driven man combine into an excellent emotional and intellectual experience. Just as Le Corbusier would have liked it.

Light For The Suburbs

ESTHER YOUNG ON LE CORBUSIER'S URBAN PHILOSOPHY



Culturally Bemused

LOUISA EVANS IS NOT THE HIP HOP GO-TO-GIRL

I do love a good challenge. I pride myself on my ability to talk the hind legs off a donkey, I genuinely enjoy socially awkward moments and I delight in the small things in life (the easy-tear bit on a bag of Skittles. Wow.) But besides some of the more bizarre and physically demanding things that have happened to me in my short but fantasmagorical life, this may be the one time I am truly outside of my comfort zone: hip hop and I are like oil and water.

I recently found out, much to my dismay, that the majority of my friends think I'm posh. Yes I am a 'Navy Brat', but unlike so many of the poor buggers I know, I managed to hold off boarding school until the last possible moment. Happily, this meant I have had the privilege of actually living in and experiencing life in several different countries. Instead of staying in the military bubble that was all too readily available, my parents insisted on us getting to know the real culture of the cities we lived in, and I am truly grateful.

It's fascinating wandering around a city for the first time; listening to all the different noises, the language, getting a whiff of its odour and spying the sights. You compare it to places you've been before, your home and work out where it fits with how you pictured it in your mind. I always look at London differently after I've been on holiday and usually end up spotting something new about the place. I am now loathe to let myself take for granted the amazing view of London that you get when crossing Waterloo Bridge. But still, I can't quite fathom how visitors might understand London's 'culture'. To the eyes

of most Europeans we Brits are the embarrassing relative; the one we only invite to weddings because we absolutely have to. We drink and eat too much (with none of the finesse of the French and Italians), we avoid eye contact, and complain endlessly about the weather. And Londoners are an even more bizarre species.

But culture is a bit of an odd word, and I think, more often than not, the term encourages exclusivity. London is a fabulously multi-cultural city and I would argue that in that we are unparalleled. It may also explain why I feel more at home in London than I have anywhere else I've ever lived – it attracts nutters like flies to ultra-violet light. Now while those who have the honour of my acquaintance know I would love to bake a cake full of smiles and rainbows, I am not so silly that I have lost all touch with reality. Multiculturalism for all its qualities is quite a burden to bear: labelling different cultures can actually be counter-productive and even intolerant. I think it's inherent in human nature to be wildly xenophobic and nothing is more intimidating than seeing things being done in a totally different way to how you have been previously shown. (For someone who had the Macarena and Saturday Night down to an art, this 'booty-shaking' thing was quite distressing.) On the other hand, it takes courage to stand out from the crowd, and what is a new trend if not an exception or at the very least, a variation of the norm?

And this is where I was stupendously misinformed. When R 'n' B first made it's way onto my unassuming radar, (RUN DMC's 'It's Like That'-I so wanted to be their new-

est member, until I nearly cracked a rib) it wasn't, as I suspected just a phase in music. After much internet based research and talking to anyone more clued up than myself, it is quite glaringly obvious that hip hop isn't just about music, rapping and break dancing, it's an expression of a way of life. Hip hop is it's own culture. So of course it isn't going to disappear in the same way as the 90s boy bands I so loved and cherished. In a wild statement of the obvious, I really can't relate to hip hop culture.

I read an interview a while back that Eminem gave, explaining why he would no longer be rapping and so paraphrased this in a recent conversation inspired by this week's theme: 'I actually quite respect Eminem. Did you know he decided to stop rapping because the point of it is to tell the story of the streets and he's already said his bit?' My fellow conversationalists ('friends' would be too generous) laughed so hard they cried/fell off their seats/choked on their food.

I am clearly not the go-to-girl for hip hop. However, I do appreciate it and would like to think I may have moved on from my 90's choreographed dance moves phase to something a little more exciting. It must be quite inspiring to have hip hop as an influential movement and soap-box for your personality, upbringing and ultimately your culture. I admit to a certain, healthy dose of morbid fascination here.

But what do I have to represent my culture? A bizarre hybrid of the Drum and Bugle Corps and the Spice Girls.



nerd rap

Middle class whiteboys who are united in their belief that hip hop requires a progressive touch, which is a bit like scrawling 'PIECEMEAL CONSERVATISM' in massive letters on the cover of the library's copy of Marx's Capital, or telling a survivor of the Gulags that 'Steely Joe' Stalin was too touchy-feely. Less likely to prefer a flute sample to something accurately mimicking the sound of a thousand deflating eardrums being pierced by a pick axe, these pasty denizens of ivy league and redbrick universities employ irony, avant gardism and profound lack of fuckability in their flaky-scalped mission to patronise an entire genre.

See: Tigerbeat 6, Anticon, Why?, Alias, Big Dada

gang

Guerilla capitalism and gorilla se like a Courvoisier-based bouillab rancid essence of everything that gleaming Neo-liberals of the hip trated so hard on becoming living forgotten most of Judeo Christian replacing it with a 10 second clip he drunkenly confuses weed with many believe gangster rap to be Perhaps, but so was Slobodan Mil and you wouldn't want your kids

See: Puff, B.I.G., Snoop Dogg, J

the old skool

Mythical creatures, wearing large pieces of cars around their necks, strutting those beatified Bronx streets of the 1980s and sounding like an ambient recording of Spike Lee's wet dreams. Afrika Bambaataa was engaged in looking for the perfect beat, Kool Herc was just looking for something to eat, everyone was showered in the golden light of the Golden Age and drinking deep from the yellowed cup of nostalgia. If you look hard enough the whole thing is enhanced by The Clash hovering in the background like embarrassed geography teachers.

See: Sugar Hill Gang, Erik B & Rakim, Run DMC

A Tribe Cal

Hip-hop has become such a multi to know your arsizzle from your ebo ner with which PartB moves serious provide you with this handy cut-out and genres of what NWA once calle said sh

brithop

The genre was historically climbed all over by ska, dub and reggae and consequently is extremely coy. Mostly coy about selling records. Anyone into it is likely to be involved in voluntary youth group work as well, principally to be more than the music.

See: The Roots, The Roots, Rodney P, Jehst

disposable her

Hip pop. The shiny plastic entrails shop of the studio system. This gen tency of lipgloss, combined with the Hempstead local council meeting detailing protocol for the correct d peacetime. The only people who ac heels and the cretinous robot who ping centres.

See: Black Eyed Peas, Fiddy, The F

Staz

Sexual politics simmer together
passe, finally reducing to a
s wrong with the world. These
hop fraternity have concen-
g pornography that they've
n morality, inadvertently
of a Snoop promo in which
someone's breasts. That said
onest and 'self-representing'.
losovic at his warcrimes trial
miming along to him.

NWA, Death Row Records

the haters

The middle aged, the irredeemably white, those who see it as a shorthand graffito scrawl for 'there goes the neighbourhood', who hear an uzi going off in their child's face with every staccato hit of the 808, the rape of the Virgin Mary with every cowbell. Here hip hop is something to talk past, a canvas of social penumbra upon which people can merrily project their own fearful concerns. You can find these people in all good newspapers, on all good conservative streets and in every good Klan meeting this side of Cape Prince of Wales.

led What..?

farious genre that it's often hard
onics. In the lax typological man-
weight round here, we're going to
t-and-destroy guide to the people
ed 'Don't quote me boy, cuz I aint
hit.'

DANIEL B. YATES

oes of hip pop

s of hip hop in the toy butchers
are displays all the lyrical po-
e political urgency of a Hemel
called to discuss an ancient bylaw
disposal of bubblegum during
actually like it are embryos in high
puts together playlists for shop-

resh Prince, Dr Dre

grime kids

Inexplicably chart-ascendant after years of decline, Grime's defining feature is its having rendered musical the sound of people talking on a bus. Be it discussions of teenage pregnancy, wages, KFC, or how good you are in comparison to someone else who isn't as good as you, every track is straight out of the back seats of the N8. Grime kids can be recognised by their unique Londonist style, nods to ravewear and their weekly bus passes.

See: Dizze, Wiley, JME, Lady Sovereign, Lethal Bizzle

the politically conscious

As a vehicle for protest songs, hip hop kicks the acoustic guitar into the camp fire and makes a proper noise. While some cling to the stark atrocity that was Blunt's 'No Bravery', this genre has De La Soul's 'Held Down', Afrika Bambaataa's 'World Destruction', and Public Enemy's 'Black Steel in the Hour of Chaos'. You choose.

See: Soweto Kinch, Tribe Called Quest, KRS-One

Grime Wave

JACK WATKINS GIVES A LARGE-UP TO A VERY BRITISH INVENTION

Born in the ghetto and I don't give a D
 Understand check out the dangarganay
 Man this any man in my gang get banged in the jaw
 Forehand backhand, lyrics them are flowin
 As if they were quicksand
 Rockin wannabies like the Wu-Tang Clan man
 Them wanna playa - hate us 'cos we're nang
 Monitor our lyrics and runnin bare scam
 See man on road and you wanna get prang

When Wiley asked in his 2003 major label debut, "What Do U Call It?", he wasn't being evasive or rhetorical; he honestly didn't know. And no one else who had experienced the rabid soundclash of horns, claps, clicks, pops and genuine animosity that constituted the new sound of London could have had a better guess. Even today, as Wiley and his one-time protégé Dizzee Rascal adorn the weaker recesses of indie-hop with tired bravado, the jury is still out on the true name of the UK's most explosive new movement. Sublow, eski, half-step - just a handful of options. But 'grime', in its monosyllabic glory, seems to best get across the message that this sound just ain't clean. Grime and all its mess; all the layers and all the noise - it isn't just a meaningless collage but an encyclopædia of thirty years or more of soundsystem culture; stretching from ska and dub through jungle and garage. It's the story of modern Britain, it's a voice for the voiceless; but to the kids spinnin' vinyl, fighting for the mic and thrusting lighters in the air in warehouses across the country week in week out, it's simply the most hype sound to come out of the speakers in a decade.

If Wiley wasn't able to say what it was, he was clear as crystal as to what it wasn't: garage. Some of you might remember garage; for a brief moment at the turn of the century it skittered its way into our hearts, equal parts Chicago funk and UK junglist rumble. But it got shit - fast. Remember Lonyo? Backyard Dog? Remember how Artful Dodger just kept on trying? The white suits, champagne and uneasy platinum glaze spoke to the great moneyed hope of the 90s. But in a new era of ASBOs, fear and violence, garage was a pristine slap in the screw-face of kids in hoods and trainers, buzzing off zoots in the stairwell, the torchbearers of true rave culture.

They wanted the heavy hardware

of drum and bass. They wanted the abstract soundclash of early 2-step. But crucially, they wanted a chance to speak out, in a voice that reflected their own lives; not the syrup of love or the drawl of US hip hop idols. Grime isn't politics; MCs are mostly concerned with slewing their rivals, expounding their strengths and telling it like it is. Its lyrics are witty, delivered at a machine-gun pace that leaves Lil' Wayne in the shade, and is able to entrance even the most cynical of listeners with its lack of pretension. Some of it - as in many artistic movements - borders on tasteless, offensive and wrong. But the tragedy thus far has been the inability of many to appreciate the boundaries between life and art. Thus Boris Johnson, Kim Howells, David Blunkett, Dianne Abbott and elements of the Met have decided that grime is, in fact, crime. So a furore is raised, raves are shut down, and FM transmitters are confiscated from their rightful homes on the roofs of the UK's tower blocks.

While the causality debate rages on, and kids in London, Bristol, Manchester, Liverpool and Nottingham seek solace in the gangs of their peers, the excessive creative and ingenuity of grime and everything it represents continues. Wiley and Dizzee may now stray, but along with Kano, Durrty Goodz, Frisco, Skepta, Ghettos, Ras Kwame, Logan Sama and hundreds more, they have left a powerful legacy as DJs, producer and truly British MCs.

This is perhaps the best thing about grime: unlike garage, it has been able to befriend its post-2-Step siblings, dubstep and bassline house, and it has given those scenes more than many would care to admit. So now, as 'UK funky' launches its assault on our FM dials, a new fusion within the ongoing dance music continuum is born. Young grime artists are forcing their way in - the MOBO-winning Chipmunk, the party-starting Tinchy Stryder, the polemical Dot Rotten and virtuoso producers Bless Beats and Rudekid. We may not even know what to call it, but grime has kicked down the door - and it's not going to fade out.



- A is for ay blad which is how you answer when you ring us
- B is for bo-cat when you perform cunnilingus
- C is for cotch when you're bein' bare passive
- D is for dutty; that girl ain't attractive
- E is for endz, which is your home-town
- F is for feds who try lock us down
- G is for gash, another word for cunt
- H is for hype-hype, which we shout when we front
- I is for iiiiiiiidiot giving you a hug
- J is for jacked when you get mugged
- K is for KFC man i love dat whiff
- L is for lean after you blazed a spliff

Alpha Beta Kappa

- M is for merked when you get smacked
- N is for nang, when suttin's cool - fact
- O is for an oz. which I sell to public school boys
- P is for poooosy'ole which brings me bare joys
- Q is for Q-Tip, so much love its absurd
- R is for rasclat, a rude patois word
- S is for shanked, which means you got stabbed
- T is for tonk; that guy is big and bad
- U is for the ugly tree where your mum fell from
- V is for virgin and I definitely ain't one
- W is for wagwan when yo greetin' yo mans
- X is for xzibit, who pimps rusty vans
- Y is for yard where you live wit yo mum
- Z is for zoot that you bill up and bun'

Talking Real Hip Hop

WHY SAM TEMPEST KEEPING CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT IT

Hip hop ignites the fires of my soul

On Christmas day during the twelfth year of my fledgling existence, I received a pair of gifts that would change the course of my life forever. The first was a clapped-out second-hand CD player which I'm pretty sure had been left for dead in a skip but was resurrected by the hands of my father. The second was a copy of Nas' Street Dreams LP.

When I listened to the title track I didn't know what "a drug dealer's destiny is reaching a ki" really meant but I didn't care one bit. That tune awakened something inside of me that has never closed its eyes to this very day. Pumped, hype, focus, passion, drive, fire - whatever you want to call it. Whenever a bass line rips, chorus smacks or melody floats, I feel that same invincibility which descended upon me that day as my head bopped and heart pounded.

Listening to hip hop has saved me in my darkest days. Real hip hop that is. I am not here going to condone the glorification of gun crime, abuse of women or the total rejection of societal values but hip hop is, in essence, a call to arms.

Tupac saw a world around him, beset by poverty with no realistic avenues for escape, and decided to rebel against the system which created it. Having no education he did this in the only way he knew how; with violence and music. A documentary on the east-west rap wars in 1980s once astutely commented that if the man had been born white, considering there were still few prominent black members of the upper echelons of society, and in more affluent surroundings he may have been one of the finest political leaders of our time.

One of the key goals of hip hop has always been social change. Most of the finest proponents of the art come from backgrounds where they face major challenges to their existence on a regular basis. Music is one of the only ways that they can inform people around the world of their struggle and that is why I detest those that have tried to hijack the industry to serve their own selfish ends.

But the reason people like 50 Cent are able to do this is because of changes wrought not by the slinger on the street corner but by the politician in the town hall. It is interesting how this new selfish attitude prevalent in new rappers is surprisingly similar to that which we have seen adopted among many other groups in society after the Thatcher and Regan years.

As a means of reaching the aims which have been at the movement's core, hip hop has relied on tapping into the anger and passion of the young and disaffected in the hope that revolution may come. Unfortunately this has been manipulated by some very savvy operators, their garish attire and attitude betraying a more cool and calculating manner, who have recognised the implication of a world where greed is perfectly acceptable.


With their massive marketing teams in tow, they have used this knowledge to utilise the art form, which has done so much good, to actually perpetuate the societal structure that it sought to fight against in the first place. With the beneficiaries of free market capitalism evoking irksome jealousy among the poor, rappers like Ja Rule, T Pain and Soulja Boy have their followers "brain-washed with cash that won't last" where nothing remains sacred except personal gain.

The preceding argument is expressed in a far more eloquent and succinct manner by Binary Star in their track entitled 'Honest Expression'. To quote One Be Lo's verse "How many cats you know, speak the illegit rhyme after rhyme diligent, 85 per cent represent ignorance." However, as Nas himself has said, real hip hop is by no means on its last legs. In the sea of Avirex and bling some real gems still remain, their value disguised by ignorance of their existence.

I challenge anyone to listen to 'Uncommon Valour' by Jedi Mind Tricks and not be blown away by the flow and lyrical content of RA Rugged Man talking about his father's experiences in Vietnam. Not be made to think by Brother Ali's 'Uncle Sam God-damn' or jump by Atmosphere's 'Trying to Find a Balance'. Or to not feel elated after the first twelve bars of Rhymefest's 'Devil's Pie'.

The first sunny day in June always makes me turn my system to full and blast out Inner City Folk, Roots Manuva preparing me for the impending arrival of the happy months. Much of hip hop might have deserted its roots, the allure of money and riches proving too much as the quality of the message and music itself is made to suffer. Yet some warriors have stayed true, their names by no means household, making sure that people like me haven't had to do without the power that comes from inspiration.

Thank you hip hop, without you I'm nothing, what else sends me where you do, a place where, ironically in the words of a hip hop themed advertising campaign, impossible is nothing.



HIP HOP
SUCKS
BECAUSE OF
YOU!



The Granite City

GRAEME BIRRELL ASKS QUESTIONS OF HIS HOMETOWN

Aberdeen generally gets a pretty bad rap, as far as cities go. And why shouldn't it? It generally beats out most other British places for a multitude of negative connotations. Think you've seen teenage pregnancy just because you've been to Blackpool? You haven't been to Aberdeen. Think you've seen violence in Manchester? You haven't been to Aberdeen. Think you've seen crystal meth addiction in East London? You haven't been to Aberdeen. Scotland as a country instantaneously induces all sorts of perceived images of smoking, binge drinking, and deep fried food as social stereotypes. But when you consider that the deep-fried Mars bar was invented in Aberdeenshire, and that even stereotypical Glaswegian hard-men count themselves scared of Aberdonian 'heidbangers', you know you've gone wrong somewhere.

And it's a damn strange place to live, too. As you come into the city from the south you emerge in the only 'nice' area of the city – Rubislaw. Here, the average house sells for somewhere around £800,000 (well, it did in 2007), gardens are neatly manicured, and Land Rovers sit in driveways everywhere. The main road into the city centre is lined with offices in converted sparkling granite houses, flanked by expensive restaurants and overpriced private schools. The city calls itself 'the oil capital of Europe', and this is the extent of its spoils – a few middle class oil-company managers who can afford to bring the tone of the city up just a touch. But venture off this central artery of the middle-classes and you instantly descend into dreary nothingness. Garish 1970s architecture is responsible for the multitude of high rise ex-council flats that litter the landscape in general disarray, and most houses try to recreate the granite buildings in the historic old town to poor effect – the result simply giving most of the city a kind of lifeless grey dullness about it. This might not even be such a bad way to describe other Scottish cities: Dundee, for instance, parallels Aberdeen in being dull, lifeless and grey, but seems to retain something of a charm about it, as its historical workings as a manufacturing town seem boldly and proudly reflected in this

type of practical, 'no frills' architecture. But what has Aberdeen got to show? It began life as a North Sea fishing town, before declining fish stocks forced it to become dominated by the shipping industry, and eventually oil. And not in the romantic way that places like Liverpool and Glasgow were major shipbuilding centres of the British Empire – Aberdeen came along late to the game and attempted to pick up the scraps of a dying industry in a lame attempt to sustain its economy. Arguably, this is what is reflected in its history today.

Not surprisingly, since the oil boom of the 1970s and beyond, the wealth gap in Aberdeen has been somewhat startling. Yes, the city may have a higher national income than the nation on average, and yes, it may have a marginally higher average house price. But how much of this accrues to the deep bias imposed by a gap in earnings and wealth? Quite a lot actually. You need only drive through some of the more prominent areas of deprivation around the place to get some sort of feeling of what life is like for the majority of Aberdonians – places like Torry, Tillydrone and the Harbour look decrepit, rundown, and drug addicted. This may be a pretty standard analysis of most cities in the world – even Hawaii has its shitty areas. But when you consider that fifty-nine areas of Aberdeen are considered the most deprived areas in the entire country in terms of violent crime, unemployment, homelessness, and drug problems, you start to get some idea of just how bad Aberdeen can be.

I know it sounds like I hate the place with a passion. But the truth is that in all the ten years or so that I spent living there I came to realise that there are really nice people and places that have just been caught up in the city's decline. It can be a beautiful place – its parks and historic city centre are all lovely in the summer, and its proximity to Braemar and the Highlands makes it a wicked base to start any adventure into the 'real Scotland'. It's just a bit sad that the city has managed to descend into such misery. While other Scottish cities like Edinburgh and

Glasgow have managed to begin to transform their run-down areas by means of attracting tourism, high class shopping, and new high technology business, Aberdeen continues its dependence on oil to turn a profit. Granted, American investor Donald Trump's proposals to build a multi-million pound golf resort and hotel in Aberdeenshire may provide something of a tourist industry and job opportunities for some, but it's hardly going to make the kind of inroads that the attractions of Edinburgh Castle and Glasgow's shopping centres can offer. And the high cost of getting to Aberdeen and of importing goods means that business success is minimal – all the skilled labour that comes out of Aberdeen either gets sucked up by the oil industry or flees to Edinburgh. And considering that the oil will run out in the next few years, how do you save Aberdeen, which is so heavily reliant on one industry? Of course you can apply all your economic models of how to generate investment, and pump money into education, but at the end of the day, is any of this really going to be the sweeping and influential fix that Aberdeen needs to survive? Probably not.

Aberdeen is hardly the first, second, or even fifteenth place on most people's list of places to visit in the UK, and probably even less so if you've read this. But I think that my pride and love for where I'm from has helped me turn a blind eye to the city's failings. At the end of the day, Aberdeen is where I spent most of my childhood, and where I generally tell people I'm from. I hate to think that it may one day decline into a much more deprived and problematic city than it is right now. When I was younger I always had a kind of romanticised version of Aberdeen in my head, as I suppose everyone does of their childhood home. And I think that it is for this reason that I feel so passionately sad about the realisation that the city I perhaps identify with most in Scotland is in such a terrible condition.



Credit Crunch Chortles

HOLLI EASTMAN IS LAUGHING ALL THE WAY TO THE BANK

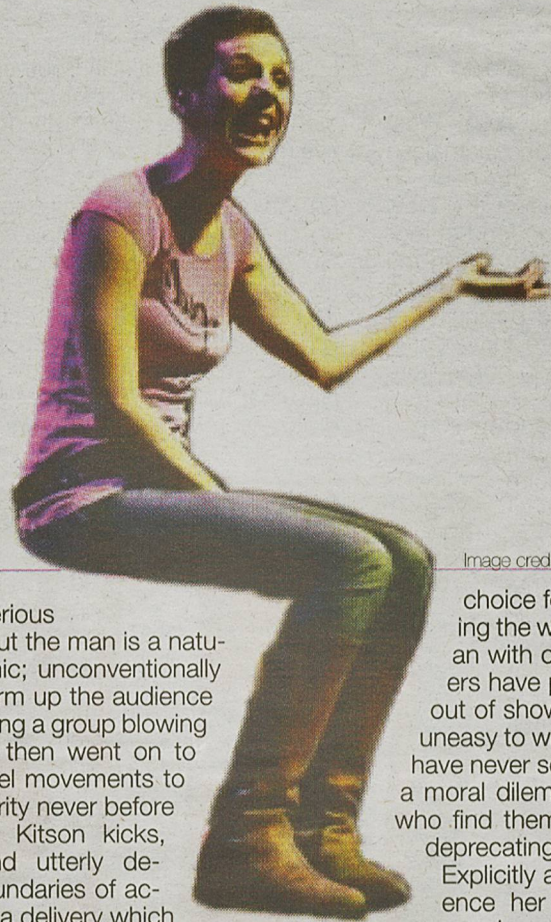


Image credit: CCFHOTOART.biz

In the current economic climate you could be excused for thinking that there isn't very much to laugh about. With the exception of the one credit crunch joke that is doing the rounds, ("What's the difference between a banker and a pizza – a pizza can feed a family of four"), there are definitely more tears of despair being shed at the moment than tears of joy.

Stand up to Corporate Power proved that there is still plenty to laugh about. The event, organised by anti-poverty charity War on Want, highlighted that not only is it possible to laugh these days, but you can do it for a charitable cause. Nine comedians took to the stage to show their support for the cause, and to bring some much needed laughter to west London on a dreary Thursday evening.

Ethical and comedy aren't two words which you would ideally associate with each other. Like ethical consumerism, it makes you feel that what you are about to witness, while being good for your conscience, is going to be a bit uncomfortable (try wearing an organic hemp bra and you'll know the true meaning of the word), and probably won't be as fun as if you had taken the capitalist option.

Held at The Shepherd's Bush Empire, the night proved that charity and comedy can be bedfellows. It was an interesting choice of venue, with the Empire located in the shadow of the new glacial home of capitalism: Westfields shopping centre. All those audience members who popped in for some retail therapy before the show had to carefully conceal their purchases upon entry.

When Dan Kitson first stumbled onto centre stage many audience members could easily have mistaken him for a tramp. Dawdling on with his NHS glasses, haystack hair, hand-me-down clothing and clutching a mug of tea, Kitson hardly has the appear-

ance of a serious comedian. But the man is a natural born comic; unconventionally opting to warm up the audience by encouraging a group blowing exercise, he then went on to discuss bowel movements to a level of hilarity never before experienced. Kitson kicks, smashes and utterly destroys all boundaries of acceptability in a delivery which is not marred by a sense of arrogance, but gives the impression of an utterly normal bloke (well, 'normal' in a figurative sense; he frequently loses his train of thought by becoming distracted by the mug of tea he constantly lugs about on stage with him). His directionless and dazed rambles caused the show to overrun by half an hour. Not that the audience minded: they would have been happy to listen to him all night.

Tim Vine's performance served as a reminder of the difficult nature of stand-up comedy. His one line deliveries were out of place and out of touch in comparison to the witty and winding narratives of the acts which preceded him. Instead of taking the hint from the silence of the audience before him, Vine continued to churn out gags, many of which would have been deemed not funny enough to make it into a Christmas cracker.

Paul Sinha came to comedy on a diversion, after training to become a GP. His medical experience, coupled with his homosexuality and frequent alarm at the liberal approach his parents take to his life choices, has armed him with a wide range of subject matter. He manages to switch irreverently between the controversial (appearing on a BBC panel show next to an Islamic fundamentalist) and the trivial, reeling the audience in along the way.

Francesca Martinez was a controversial

choice for the line-up. Famed for being the world's only stand-up comedian with cerebral palsy, some organisers have previously opted to leave her out of shows, finding her performances uneasy to watch. Obviously these people have never seen her live. Her act provides a moral dilemma for many liberal viewers who find themselves laughing at her self-deprecating accounts of her disability. Explicitly aware of the 'awkward' presence her disability has on audience members, Martinez exploits her unique experiences to her comedic advantage.

Jack Whitehall dashed around the stage like a child in need of Adderall more than any third year student at finals. Drawing upon his privileged upbringing, the nineteen year old isn't afraid to play on class tensions and stereotypes to generate laughs. With exaggerated accents and jibes at those who criticize his beloved consumer culture, Whitehall amazingly manages to be hilarious despite the fact that much of his material appears to have been sourced straight from the pages of the Daily Mail.

Mark Thomas was no doubt the crowd pulling act on the line-up. Yet Thomas went down a more political route than one full of puns, his observational comedy lying mainly in witnessing and holding to account the greedy corporate institutions around him. Addressing the audience as comrades, he brought the ethical vibe back to the evening. For many, the star act would have been a disappointment, but thankfully the other acts on the bill more than compensated for Thomas' short appearance.

In short, laughter has now proved to be not only good for your soul, but also for humanity. Workers of the world unite; you have nothing to lose and a sense of humor to gain.

Video killed the hip hop star

SU YING IS WRAPPED UP IN STYLISTIC HEGEMONY

We were fortunate to have hip hop brought to us from Kingston to NYC's West Bronx, by one Jamaican DJ Kool Herc, back in the 1970s. If it wasn't for the fact that New Yorkers at the time weren't too fond of reggae, we wouldn't have had hip hop in the first place. It wasn't just the beginning of a new era, but it was also the beginning of a highly debated music genre that people worldwide have embraced. Hip hop culture is expressed through the tunes in mass media; glamourised by videos, and reinforced by peers and society. But with the recent revival of pop, electro and indie, hip hop is slowly losing its shine and starting to appear weak alongside other music genres. So bold is it an issue that Nas named his 2006 album *Hip Hop Is Dead*. I however would hope that it's too soon for hip hop to fade. Rather, maybe it is its dominance on television that is likely to deteriorate much more quickly than one might think.

Hip hop has become a catch-all term for an urban lifestyle. It requires a complete package: not just the DJing, MCing, beatboxing, breakdancing, it has merged into clothing trends, slang, religion and wider culture. To some extent, the commercial appeal carried by hip hop has remained unchallenged since it sparked off. It sells concert tickets, sportswear, cornflakes, video-games (think about *Grand Theft Auto*), P Diddy's perfumes, and even presidential elections. And it feels like the more controversy the music generates, the more its halo effect explodes. Just look at NWA back in the early 1990s, when their hardcore 'gangsta' lyrics and explicit references to drugs, sex and violence seemed perfect bedfellows with respectable capitalism.

Hip hop has been constantly evolving: more eccentric; more daring; more welcoming to other genres like soul, jazz and rock, with notable artists like De La Soul, A Tribe Called Quest, Jay-Z, Linkin Park and Kanye West making substantial inroads. Hip hop has also crossed international boundaries, spreading across continents and crossbreeding to become a truly global innovation. And this is largely down to television networks and their broadcasting into previously unreachable regions of the world. As a result, world hip hop has taken many shapes and forms such as Trip hop, Kwaito, Merenrap and Bongo Flava. Hip hop is equally well received in

Latin America as it is in Southeast Asia, with Japanese, Korean and Chinese hip hop capturing almost the entirety of their respective music industries.

On the other hand, TV has also helped bring about the demise of hip hop popularisation. Gone are the days of musical experimentation - our music channels have instead been flooded with indoctrinating, stereotype-defining videos that narrow people's perceptions of what hip hop truly is. The stereotype that hip hop is all about guns, money, drugs, women and flash cars is fuelled by



this stylistic hegemony. We have become accustomed to gangsta culture and misogynistic attitudes, not to mention the growing emphasis on racism, homophobia and violence. Television has helped us forget that hip hop is far more than that. We're missing out on the social commentary, the power, the politics and the most intriguing relationships between the artist and the producer. The complete lack of objectivity is what most followers of hip hop previously admired; now, their views are increasingly pigeonholed.

The more pressing concern to many is the harmful effects of hip hop on youth culture, with many pointing to its wilfully different perceptions of society as to our youth's subsequent alienation from society. It is inevitable that the hip hop lifestyle, stereotypical or not, has affected youth around the world in both positive and negative ways. Youth

identity is so multi-faceted that we have also to look at other factors like parenting, peers, school, religion and life experiences. Those who blame hip hop often come from academia and government, and are frequently misguided by their research and have no real connection to youth today whatsoever.

Rap was initially aimed to offer people a chance to freely express themselves, to show the unique side of their personality. It also offers unlimited challenges. The visualisation and depiction of violence, sex and drug use later on brought forward a challenge to international broadcasting, it was probably because of this that well-known mainstream music channels like VH1 and MTV decided to popularise the genre, to offer a fresh breeze to their audiences, in direct competition to already established hip hop specialist channels like BET. However, many broadcasts were made in censored form, depending on the relevant country. Despite the millions poured into making the music videos, as soon as the artists on TV are no longer rapping about the things you can relate to, I don't think you'll have any more incentive to watch it. Moreover, people have quickly figured out that apart from being an accessible form of self expression, rapping does not offer a quick escape from real life. The lyrics seemed to be more about getting rich and making enemies than issues concerning peer pressure and social injustice. As Common put it "it is more difficult to try and make the masses buy it".

Very soon, alternative forms of media took over. With the rise of the internet and most importantly, Youtube and Myspace, it transformed the way people in which people choose their music and the way they wish to express themselves. Yes, you can feel the impact of rappers by watching a music show or a flashy video, but it is nowhere near as fulfilling as seeing them live on stage. To quote the words of KRS-One, "hip-hop is something you live, rap is something you do", so maybe the general mindset of hip hop seems that it is more difficult to capture on TV. And clips of live performances of rap artists, for instance, placed on Youtube, represent more closely, that "live" element of hip hop to audiences than music videos it seems. And unless the broadcasters can think of a clever way to compete, a return of hip hop to television dominance has a long way to come.

Rachel Getting Married

TRENT MAYNARD PONDERES THE LATEST JONATHAN DEMME FILM

Jonathan Demme's *Rachel Getting Married* is a film that reveals itself slowly. Watching it is like attending a wedding with strangers: you glance around the room and make surface judgements, but as the food is served, the drinks are poured, and the sleeves are rolled back, the guests begin to open up and tell their stories; and you realize just how off-base your first impressions truly were.

Kym, played skillfully by Anne Hathaway, is a recovering addict who checks out of rehab to attend her sister Rachel's (Rosemarie DeWitt) wedding at the family's breezy white Connecticut home. Nervous smiles, hesitant glances and whispers make it obvious that she's not entirely welcome. Her erratic behaviour soon confirms why.

As the film progresses we aren't quite sure what to think of the desperately self-cen-

tered and militantly troubled Kym. At times we wonder why we are following the journey of someone who seems so terrible, so unlovable. But we need to travel this road to understand where her head is. We need to watch her fall apart to understand why and how she was broken; to know where she's been and where she must go. Her story, after all, is also the story of her sister Rachel, and of her father and mother and their respective new partners, and of her deceased younger brother. The wedding brings all of these characters - and many, many more - together for good reason: they are all connected, and sometimes it takes such an event to make people realise why.

Rachel Getting Married is fully aware of the narrative power a wedding holds; and it exercises it with skill and sophistication. It mediates on the beauty of the ceremony itself - a ceremony that combines the elegance of Audrey Hepburn with the colorful exoticism

of a Baz Luhrmann film - and envelops us gently in the world of the characters. And by the time the party comes to an end, and the characters begin parting ways, we realize that we've witnessed something special.

There is something unique, after all, about weddings that make them perfect venues to explore a character's psyche; to delve into past, present, and future. We are surrounded by the people that have known us forever, that know all of our mistakes and all of our triumphs. Seeing these people forces us to confront where we've come from, assess where we stand in the moment, and just as the bride and groom face their future together, we must also look forward toward our own future and find our own path. This is the realization that Kym comes to in the end, and we are lucky to follow her in her learning process.

Watchmen

AHMED PEERBUX ON THE SNYDERMAN'S COMIC BOOK FILM

The 'unfilmable' is here. It all started when I saw the poster: 'Zack Snyder' - I knew it wasn't going to get any better from there.

The film opens with a really cool montage, priming us with Alan Moore's alternative vision of the twentieth century. Nixon is still president, the cold war is a helluva lot worse, masked superheroes are doing the crime fighting, and Dr. Manhattan is blowing up Vietcong in the war, simply by looking at them.

The backdrop to this is Bob Dylan: "The times they are a changin'" - quite clever, innit? Because the times are different in the montage and that... Or perhaps you'll feel like me and cringe slightly at the use of the folk song in a film of stylised uber-violence. The score gets better though, don't worry. For the Snyderiffic cowgirl sex scene, our ears are graced with "Hallelujah". "99 Luftballoons" for an evening dinner scene (I always imagined this to be a sunny, outdoorsy

song). Bizarre.

When it comes to the cast, it's a mixed picture. Jeffery Dean Morgan as The Comedian is fantastic, it's a shame there aren't more flashbacks of him grinning at things he's killing. All he does is rape and murder, and constantly chomp on a fat donkey-dick cigar, but he's dead cool.

Billy Crudup really does well with Dr Manhattan too. His back-story is one of the most memorable and emotional in the film. There's a soullessness about him that clings to you; an elevation of a man closer to a god than his former human self.

But then there's Matthew Goode, one of our own - from Devon in fact - who takes on Adrian Veidt, the 'smartest man in the world'. Which works about as well as Adrian (from *Rocky I* when she was really lame and frail) taking on *Rocky IV* (which is I reckon when he's fittest, lifting those Siberian logs in the montage to end all montages).

To be fair though, Snyder probably was the only one who could put *Watchmen* to the screen. For a two and three quarter hour film we are kept firmly in our seats (having said that, four people left early in my screening); there is after all a lot to plough through. And this really does feel like a comic book - whether it's Rorschach's powerful narration (and performance in general), Nixon's ridiculously fake nose, or the brutal yet ultra-real violence, it captures the dark fiction of Alan Moore's frames. Arms are snapped, heads are cleaved, and faces are cooking-oiled. Though we can't let Snyder completely off for being trigger-happy with the slo-mo and all of the other effects that he laced *300* with.

Very loyal to the comic - a comic book film in the true sense of the word. It'll definitely go down more of a treat with the fans - for example, when New York goes up, we see a black kid and an old man hug. In the actual graphic novel, they're a regular feature - an Easter egg for the fans or Snyder being lazy? Perhaps that's the problem; 'visionary director' Snyder doesn't get the balance right.

Boothlascivious

LIZ CHEESBROUGH GIVES MAD PROPS TO TILA TEQUILA

"The way you shake it, I can't believe it, I ain't never seen an - ass like that. The way you move it, you make my pee-pee go D-DOING DOING DOING ! I don't believe it, it's almost to good to be true I ain't never seen a - ass like that. The way you move it, you make my pee-pee go D-DOING DOING DOING!"

Eminem, 'Ass Like That'

"Smack that, all on the floor. Smack that, give me some more. Smack that, 'till you get sore."

Akon, 'Smack That'

"Hey, bitch, wait'll you see my dick. Wait'll you see my dick. Hey, bitch. I'm 'a beat that pussy up."

Ying Yang Twins, 'Wait (The Whisper Song)'

What' right, it's all bitches and ho's getting up in yo face, shakin dem asses and seeing dicks, and so on. It really is going off. Fantastic. Why are they 'seeing' dicks? Is everybody pantless?

There really is nothing like a derogatory comment to set off the tone, but is it really as bad as anorexic pop stars and pussycat strippers? The notion of sexism being a presence in hip hop and rap is one thing, but placing it as their sole reserve while the rest of popular culture rides a high horse of ethical awareness is blatantly untrue. If it's big bootie bashing in the club or rakish coke fiends in the News of the World, wherever you look it's setting a bad example to humanity.

Hell, who doesn't think that the champagne sippin', booty trippin' world of excess and celebrity looks fun, everything airbrushed to perfection and glowing gold. The 'beating that pussy up' is not so appealing, granted - but the women are a lot more realistic. Rather than strapping women down in to the shape of pre-pubescent boys, they take the natural parts of femininity to their furthest extension. It's all about tits 'n' ass, curves and flesh - the body shape paradox of male attraction. They don't know what they want, but they know they want it to its ultimate extreme - and boy, can it get big.

On the Internet (which, by the way, has got SO much stuff on it) there are directories whereby you can get your real rap video girl of your own. Yes, you can hire - for magazine or video purposes, it's not a cyber brothel - a booty boppin' video babe who will have the best name you could ever think of. Pick from 'Buffie The Body' or 'Tila Tequila'; or the more sedate 'Safaa Superstar' - it really is like visiting a Candy Shop with 50 Cent. You have seen these girls shaking and smacking it with everyone from OutKast to Simon Webbe - they are all over the screens and earning good money. They are fit n foxy and have the most tremendous female attributes you have ever seen - the extreme end of the scale from the catwalk shows that have been all over the media recently. But these bootylicious girls are always affiliated with sexism as the rakish models are linked to beauty. Why is it that one end of the scale is deemed seedy and immoral, while the other is deemed stunning and perfect?

Big versus little, curves versus angles - each end of the scale attracts negative press, but

it is the sexualized extreme of fleshy femininity that attracts the most moral outrage. Perhaps due to the overtly sexist overtones that shine through in some hip hop and rap, the girls who dance in the videos become embroiled in the derogatory imagery. Perhaps it is true that it is an abusive business that embodies a culture with a currently very prominent sexist and violent overtone. But perhaps, just perhaps, it is something to do with seeing the precocious and proud blossoming of femininity in the form of momentous attributes of the chesty kind. Are women supposed to be ashamed of their tits? True, the majority of men see nothing but pleasure in busty babes, but women seem to write off video girls as somehow victimised and suppressed.

There is some innate connection between female sexuality - the existence of having those female features that the women's fashion industry long dismissed as unattractive - and sexism; an irony that serves only to suppress women further. Perhaps it is because it has long been regarded as a male pleasure, one that in order to be emancipated we must dislike or hide. To be concerned about sexism in hip hop and rap is as legitimate as it would be for any art form, and does need to be tackled so that boys don't grow into men seeing 'I'm 'a beat that pussy up' as a chat up line. But why do we maintain the other extreme of anorexic impossibility and a dramatic height, age and racial imbalance as the more 'moral' of the two? Are we afraid of female curves? Lets not get heavy on the video babes, may they shake that ass as they see fit - and enjoy their female nature as they see fit.

