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The Beaver

26 October 2010
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LSE Council moots privatisation

Vivek Kotecha

The LSE's highest decision-making body has recently considered privatising the School, the Beaver has learned.

The benefits and costs of privatisation were discussed at a recent meeting of the LSE Council. The discussion formed part of a wider consideration on the financial strategy on the School's future, which is taking place at present.

Comparisons have been made between the financial strategy of the LSE remaining as a charity in receipt of government funding, and its financial strategy were it to become a private university.

The details are not yet public, but if the School became a for-profit private university, it could charge unlimited tuition fees and decline to accept government quotas on accepting students from poorer backgrounds. Furthermore, those choosing to study at a private university are not automatically eligible for government loans or bursaries to help cover their fees.

At present, public status protects many of the School's services, including several operating below market prices and sometimes even below cost: widening participation schemes, the provision of scholarships, residences, and the nursery are four such examples. Public events and the Library are highlighted as being costly

services which the School is obliged to provide as part of its remit as a government-funded charity.

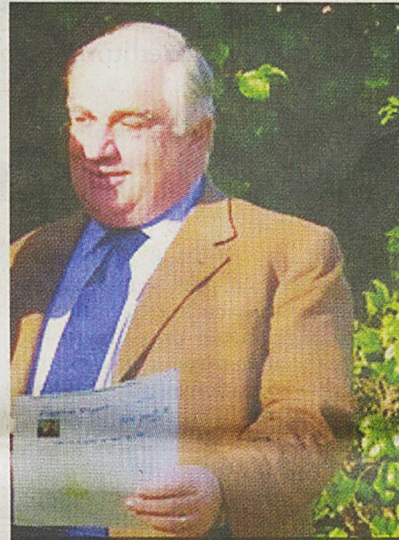
It is public information that in its current state none of the surpluses (profits) of the LSE are distributed; instead, they must be reinvested back into the School's operations. As a private institution the LSE would have more freedom to use its profits as desired and would not be obliged to invest any surpluses back into teaching and other educational services. This would be particularly relevant to the LSE given that it has for many years been running surpluses unlike those of its competitors.

A privatised LSE could also lift current caps on student enrolment numbers and expand its campus at a much faster rate, the review suggests. Currently, the School is at the upper limit of its quota after many years of growth.

A newly privatised LSE would be able to expand its population and this could explain the recent purchases of new buildings around Lincoln's Inn Fields by the School. The Review notes that the current nature of universities means that take-overs or mergers are difficult, and how in its current state there is not much benefit to growth. In previous years there has been discontent among students about the rapid expansion of the LSE, with some complaining that it has lowered teaching standards. At his appearance at UGM last Michaelmas Term, the Director, Sir

Howard Davies, admitted that the School had now reached the limits of its possible expansion, and that this growth had come at the expense of optimum classroom environments.

The main drawback to privatisation would be the loss of direct government



Peter Sutherland, Chair of the LSE Council

funding for UK and EU students, the document adds. Even with the proposals of the Browne Review, many elite UK universities fear that the rise in tuition fees

proposed by Lord Browne would not be enough to compensate for the 40% cut in the university teaching budget announced in the coalition government's Comprehensive Spending Review last Wednesday. As a private university these predicted losses could be averted at the expense of students with higher tuition fees and fewer bursaries.

At present, the University of Buckingham, which is one of the only privately funded universities in the UK, still participates in important ratings such as the QAA, NSS and HESA. Currently home undergraduate fees for the university are around £17,000 for the whole course. In addition, students are eligible for student loans and bursaries from the government.

An arrangement similar to that of the University of Buckingham would remove some of the School's own fears around privatisation. David Willetts, the Universities Minister, has previously signalled his desire for more private universities in the UK with the recent granting of "University College" status to BPP business and law colleges.

LSE Director Howard Davies has sought to discount the possibility of privatisation, commenting: "I have so far seen no arguments which convince me that the School and its students would be better off as a result of 'going private.'" The School has separately released a statement, which asserts: "It is sensible to survey the financial landscape in its entirety to understand

the position of the sector as a whole. But it would be entirely wrong to isolate any part of that survey and portray what is background information as a preferred course of action."

Attempts at privatisation have met with opposition from the University and College Union (UCU) which found that 96% of professors are against private universities and many believe that they are a threat to academic standards. The head of the UCU, Sally Hunt, said: "In a world where young people are being locked out of the higher education system by slashes to government funding, our legitimate concern is that UK students will fall prey to the kind of mis-selling and profiteering scandals currently rocking the for-profit university sector in the United States."

The LSE is not the only university thought to be considering privatisation, with reports this month that the University of Cambridge may pursue this course of action. Remarks were made last year by the previous Rector of Imperial College London, Sir Roy Anderson, who advocated that five of the most elite UK universities (LSE, Oxford, Cambridge, Imperial and UCL) go private to compete with the US Ivy League universities. Sheerman's remarks prompted a backlash against him from many Higher Education stakeholders.

Comprehensively fuming...



Students march on Lincoln's Inn Fields in protest at the cuts announced in the Comprehensive Spending Review last Wednesday

Full story: page 4

Photo: Jaynesh Patel

Annual Fund rosy in spite of cuts threat

Lauren Fedor
Nicola Alexander

The LSE Annual Fund has announced that it is adequately prepared for the severe cuts expected to hit Higher Education funding.

The Annual Fund, which raises unrestricted funding via private donations, delivered a glowing bill of health regarding the School's finances, which are expected to face a 33 per cent reduction in government funding from next year.

According to the latest report released by the School's Office of Development and Alumni Relations (ODAR), the Annual Fund raised £782,511 in donations for the most recent financial year with 2,944 individual contributions. This record sum provides "support projects that would otherwise not receive financial backing", according to the report. As such, that total climbed to £1,043,348 with support from a government-led matched funding scheme, which is set to end next year. The three-year, £200 million initiative, conceived by the Blair Government in August 2008, supports all Higher Education institutions and directly-funded Further Education colleges in England. The project pledged to match every £3 pf private donations made to the LSE with £1 of government funding, and it has in general dramatically boosted the financial support available to universities.

The LSE has greatly benefited from the scheme and is estimated to have earned over £600,000 in the past two years. If previous gains are sustained, in the long-term the LSE could have earned up to £1 million in extra funding from the

scheme. However, these additional government contributions will end when the three-year programme expires with the financial year ending 31 July 2011.

Last week, Joanna Motion, Vice-President of International Operations at the Council for Advancement and Support of Education Europe, stated that the recently-announced slashes in public spending, as well as the recommendations of the Browne Review, will "mean unprecedented challenges for universities' finances." Ms Motion urged the government to "deliver clarity" on whether the matched-funding scheme could continue beyond 2011 - neither the Treasury's spending review nor Lord Browne's findings mention the scheme.

But LSE leaders said they have long understood that the matched funding scheme was a three-year initiative. A statement from the LSE's Press Office commented: "We have long known that matched funding will end in 2011 and, like other charitable bodies, will have to develop other ways of appealing for this type of support. We are certainly stressing to supporters that this is the final year in which we can take advantage of matched funding." The LSE Annual Fund website, as well as other ODAR materials, remind donors that the 2010-2011 year marks their last opportunity to take advantage of the matched funding scheme.

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Privately worried

This week, the Beaver has learnt of secret discussions that have taken place between individuals belonging to the highest echelons of the School, regarding a possible privatisation of this institution. That these murmurings occurred over a month ago is doubly worrying – first, because this paper has already seen the dire side-effects of proposing policy well before the facts are in place (see our previous analysis of the Freeze the Fees campaign); second, because we do not know the full consequences of the discussion in question, viz., what mechanisms have been set in motion in the intervening period of time.

Though the School is right to pursue a number of different options following the publication of the Browne Review's findings, this paper strongly urges caution in the case of privatisation. Our feelings on fees-freezing are well-known; additionally, the deleterious consequences of the Comprehensive Spending Review and government funding cuts are plain to see (see News, page 4). However, we do not believe that privatisation is the solution to these problems. There are two promi-

nent examples of private universities in this country: the first, the University of Buckingham, is in our estimation an insignificant dust-speck on the surface of Higher Education institutions, while the second, the BPP, intends to use its newly-awarded powers to focus on professional qualification-centric degree programmes, such as Law, Accounting, and Business Studies.

The LSE is not the University of Buckingham, and it is certainly not the BPP. It is a constituent member of the Russell Group, and as such, it must continue to function as a research-led institution. This newspaper does not see private universities as suitable vehicles for such a focus, and consequently, would have serious doubts over the merits of the School privatising. Of course, we understand that the discussion in question was merely an initial foray into the dark: the strategy document we refer to simply laid out the facts, and described the financial situation at the aforementioned private institutions. Nonetheless, we would sleep easier if this possibility was nipped in the bud without attracting further interest or support.

If the LSE were to privatise, virtu-

ally every shred of belief that we have in the School's progressive intentions would disintegrate. In our interview with Sir Howard Davies in last week's issue, the Director made telling admissions as to the realities of access and widening participation, and suggested that reform over fees would occur *pari passu* with an open debate on how best to target those who dare not even apply to the LSE, for fear of financial endangerment. At a stroke, we fear privatisation would remove any impetus to see such a holistic overhaul through to fruition.

We learn of the possibility of privatisation over a month after the discussion occurred – the importance of transparency cannot be understated. We hope that further news on this matter brings more cause for optimism, and sense that banner drops and similar stunts somewhat skirt the issue.

Drop it like it's cold

"How many can see, rippling in the autumn wind, the white against grey?"

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Get involved in The Beaver!

www.tinyurl.com/2010beaver

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Marketing Team!
Help get fresh Beaver on Houghton Street – join Mustafa and his Marketing Team.

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BEAVER'S OUT THE WOODS AND INTO THE NET
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DEFINITELY BACK!

Fill in the LSE Orientation Week Survey and be in with a chance of winning a range of amazing prizes!

An electronic survey has been sent out to all LSE students asking them to rate their experience of this year's Orientation. Please take this opportunity to provide us with your views on how we could improve Orientation 2011 and you will be in with a chance of winning cash prizes of £100 and £50, as well as a £50 tab in the Three Tuns plus three runner up prizes of a year's free entry to CRUSH!

Your views are very important to us, and we will do our utmost to implement your feedback and suggestions so that we can make Orientation Week 2011 an even better experience for our students.

To fill in the survey and enter the competition please visit our website www.lsesu.com/survey

Hare Krishna backpedals

Conor Rushby

A queue to nowhere formed down Houghton Street at midday last Monday. With the unexpected move of the Hare Krishna food stall to a position adjacent to Waterstone's on Clare Market, regulars were left confused, disorientated and hungry.

The move has been instigated by LSE Environmental Services, who have argued that Houghton Street has become too congested during weekdays. Due to the move not being publicised, however, some students took until Friday to realise that the stall had changed place.

The LSE's obligation, explained Victoria Hands of Environmental Services, to keep the way of access clear as a public

highway, was becoming difficult with a cash point, Barclays bikes, Wright's Bar, and Hare Krishna competing for space. An email was sent to the Food for Life organisation on Saturday, calling for a "trial period," in order to test it out. Ragik, who has distributed food at the LSE for three years, has expressed concern at the move. "My priority is to feed as many people as possible," he said, adding "and this street seems a lot quieter." Ragik, who ran a similar stall at SOAS in the three years prior to his arrival on Houghton Street, did however say that there had appeared to be "more demand for food" than in previous terms.

The stall's patrons have not been wholly convinced by the move. David, a third-year economics undergraduate said, "It just feels really strange," while student

Claudia Feather praised the move as "finally giving enough room to Wright's Bar."

The Hare Krishna Food for Life Scheme has been operating since 1974, and is the world's largest vegetarian and vegan food distribution programme. The UK operation is run from a farm in Watford attached to a temple belonging to the Hare Krishna movement. The premises, which is named Bhaktivedanta Manor, was donated to the movement by George Harrison in 1973.

Ragik has faced difficulty in the past from various parties on his food distributing mission, explaining, "Some people really just don't like what I do." In February this year, Health and Safety officials repeatedly visited the stall, in spite of him holding all required health and safety certificates. There has also been friction

with a café close to the SOAS campus, which ultimately led to SOAS security staff asking the stall to move. Moreover, Ragik claims he was told by the Houghton Street Natwest Branch Manager to move last year as he reflected badly upon the bank. Additionally, Ragik has faced accusations from Wright's Bar employees, one of whom has claimed that he "was ruining their business."

When asked, Victoria Hands of LSE Environmental Services described the initiative as a "fantastic organisation," and said that special bins will soon be provided for the biodegradable plates and spoons used by the stall.

News in brief

CLEGG UNCLEAR ON FEES CAP

In a controversial move, Nick Clegg has revealed that the UK government will certainly consider removing the tuition fee cap for universities. The Deputy Prime Minister stated that the current financial status of the UK merited cuts in spending. In the interview with the BBC's Andrew Marr, Clegg said that the government will use the "best" aspects of the Browne review, which recommended abolishing the student fee cap. However, Clegg added that "we are looking at something less drastic."

HOSPITAL DRAMA

According to a report published in the Economist, John Van Reenan, a Professor of Economics at the LSE, in conjunction with Stephen Dorgan, has worked on research regarding the factors that differentiate the top performing hospitals from those that are far less successful. In research that is tipped to revolutionise the medical field, it has been discovered that there are five factors, including competition, that will improve the status of hospitals. Interestingly, smaller hospitals, of less than 100 staff, are generally worst managed. The research was conducted by assessing 1200 hospitals.

I-ROAM ON ITS WAY

The new I-roam laptop loan service will be launched over the next few weeks at the LSE library. The service provides 60 laptops for staff and students. The computers are meant for use only inside the library, and can be picked from the charging cabinets on the ground, 1st, 2nd and 3rd floors. They come with internet access, personal file space and Microsoft Office applications. Users do not have to check out the laptops, but can pick them up from the cabinets and return them for charging once they have finished their work. IT assistance is also provided at the IT helpdesk.

MASON TIPPED TO JOIN LSE

The Economics Editor of BBC's Newsnight, Paul Mason, is rumoured to be joining the LSE. Reports remain unclear, however, it is supposed that Mr Mason, who has been in his current role since late 2006, will take on an advisory position within the School's hierarchy. Despite being asked to comment, the BBC refused to discuss the future of one of its leading presenters. Paul Mason's own publicist was also unavailable. Bringing Mr Mason to the LSE would be an enormous coup for the school; he has been one of the chief public intellectuals charged with analysing the recent economic crisis and he regularly writes for the Guardian.

THIS IS NOT A DRILL

This week a spate of fire alarms have caused anxiety amongst LSE students. The East Building was evacuated at 11AM on Monday 18th of October. Confused students were herded out of classes, lectures and seminars and told to gather outside the Library at the School's fire assembly point. A second fire alarm sounded in the NAB at 2PM on Tuesday which had a similar affect on those studying. These multiple alarms have caused a great deal of concern amongst the student body coming in the midst of widespread strikes among the Fire Service.

Hustings hit UGM

Liam Brown

Campaigning is now fully underway as candidates in the upcoming Michaelmas Term Students' Union Elections seek votes from fellow students.

The positions up for grabs in this term's elections include General Course President and Mature & Part Time Students' Officer, as well as the selection of three Student Trustees, three students for the Academic Board (one of which must be a Postgraduate Student), two students for the Court of Governors, and two NUS Delegates.

A new part-time paid position, that of Postgraduate Sabbatical Officer, has been added this year; the job has an £11,000 salary attached to it, along with a highly-prized desk in the Kingsley Rooms.

According to the LSE Students' Union, the Postgraduate Sabbatical Officer will represent "the views and interests of LSE's sizeable postgraduate student base in the School and the Union." Charlotte Gerada, General Secretary of the Student's Union, has noted that there are thirteen candidates for the new sabbatical position, adding, "It's been very popular and we have some really able candidates."

Although campaigning has just begun, the electoral process began two weeks ago for the candidates. Nominations opened on 11th October and prospective candidates had one week to submit a nomination form and manifesto, outlining why they wished to run for their chosen

position.

In all there are thirty-two candidates vying for positions in these elections: three for the Academic Board, four for the Court of Governors, four for the role of General Course President, three for NUS Delegate, thirteen for Postgraduate Sabbatical Officer, five for student trustee, and one for Mature & Part Time Students' Officer. In addition to these candidates, students can also vote to Re-open Nominations (RON), if they do not believe that any of the standing candidates are suitable.

As in previous years, candidates are campaigning on a wide variety of issues, with demands for a microwave to be installed at LSE for student use, more bean bags in the library, and a vote on whether beer is too expensive on campus illustrating the plethora of pledges.

Rhea Ranjan, a first year undergraduate student said although she knew the election was just around the corner she is still undecided, adding, "I think I am going to decide on my picks this weekend." Ranjan says she intends to vote, and is excited about the beginning of campaigning. "Elections on the smaller level are great," Ranjan says, adding, "You feel even more involved than you would for more general elections."

Although most students are not likely to have their minds made yet, like Ranjan, there is no need to worry: campaigning continues until voting ends at 7PM on Thursday. Voting begins at 10AM on Wednesday 27th October, via an online ballot on the Students' Union website.

Union Bashō

Electioneering

Politicians should be like flags. How many of these rely on wind?

Bashō is the Beaver's evasive haiku poet. Look out for more of his work, veiled in anonymity, in future issues.



Photo: Vincent Mok

"matched funding will end in 2011" - Annual Fund

» continued from page 1

Nationally, students anxiously await a decisive move from the government regarding the future of the scheme. For LSE students, the Annual Fund provides invaluable support for students who need financial assistance. The cut in government funding will surely affect these student grants. Extra-curricular activities are also likely to suffer. The Athletics Union, Pulse Radio and several society initiatives such as the Grimshaw Club's Politeia International Conference, have all benefited from grants of thousands of pounds. Cuts made to any of these initiatives are sure to cause outcry amongst students.

In recent years the LSE Annual Fund has attracted media attention regarding the donors themselves. Each January, the LSE publishes a list of "major donors," highlighting individuals or organisations contributing at least £5,000 to the School. According to the Press Office, most contributions in this category are given to a specific project or purpose, such as an endowed Chair or research initiative.

According to the most recent list, published in January 2010, five organiza-

tions - Emirates Foundation, Gaddafi International Charity and Development and Foundation, The Grantham Foundation for the Environment, Open Society Institute and John Templeton Foundation - donated more than £1 million to the LSE between 1 August 2007 and 31 July 2009. An additional seven donors - Yayasan Alkubkhar Foundation, EFG Eurobank Ergasias SA, ICAP, Samuely Isaly (MSc Economics 1968), Nuffield Foundation, Paul Wooley and one anonymous individual - contributed between £500,000 and £999,999.

An updated list of major donors will be published in January 2011, according to the Press Office.

According to its website, the Emirates Foundation is an "independent, philanthropic organisation set up by the Government of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi to facilitate new public-private funded initiatives to improve the welfare of all people across the UAE."

Chaired by Saif Al-Islam Al Gaddafi, the Gaddafi International Charity and Development Foundation (GICDF) is an international non-governmental organisation that "carries out developmental and humanitarian activities in the social, economic, cultural and human rights fields." Mr Gaddafi is the son of the controversial Libyan leader Muammar al-Gaddafi, and is an alumnus of the

LSE. He received a PhD from the school in 2009, and, as the Beaver reported last year, donated £1.5 million to LSE Global Governance in July of the same year. This donation is one in a series of links between the LSE and Libya. Further, Howard Davies acted as Economic Advisor as part of the UK Envoy to Libya in 2007, and several LSE Professors are world experts on the region.

In 2009, the Centre for Social Cohesion, a non-partisan, London-based think tank, published a report examining the impact of foreign donors at UK universities. The report concluded that many universities, including Oxford, Cambridge, SOAS and Edinburgh, among others, lacked transparency in identifying its foreign benefactors - including those associated with Arabic, Islamic and Chinese political regimes accused of human rights abuses. In an article published in the Daily Telegraph in March 2009, Robin Simcox, a CSC research fellow and author of the report, said UK universities had "a real problem" that needed to be addressed: "Universities across the UK are taking huge amounts of cash from regimes with appalling records on human rights... The country's finest universities are in bed with some of the world's worst human rights abusers."

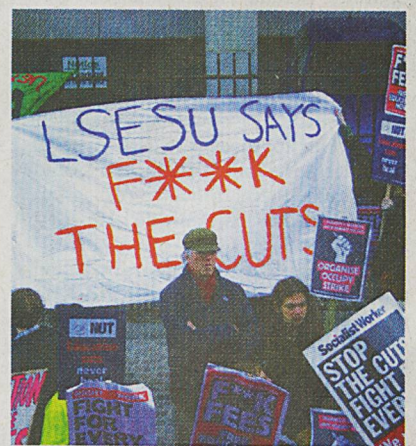
In response to queries regarding the vetting process of donors to the LSE,

the Press Office have commented that "Potential major donations to LSE are scrutinised by senior staff in the Office for Development and Alumni Relations and notification is also given to the Development Committee, a sub-committee of Council which is composed of both senior LSE staff and friends and alumni of the School who are all significant donors themselves."

According to the Press Office, in certain cases, the LSE's governing body, the LSE Council, also reviews potential donations. "All offers of support are welcome but care is taken to ensure that donations come from reputable and transparent sources," the Press Office said, adding that offers are "occasionally" declined.

» "the end of public funding in universities..."

Comment page 8



GOT A SCOOP? BRIEF US...

The Beaver welcomes all students to contribute to the News in Brief section of the paper. If you feel that there is anything noteworthy on campus please contact us at news@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Student anger at CSR

Chris Rogers

On Wednesday 20th of October, a coalition of trade unions and London student demonstrators descended upon Lincoln's Inn Fields protesting against the government cuts revealed in the Comprehensive Spending Review, released earlier that day. The Review proposed heavy cuts to Higher Education along with many other public services.

The protesters criticised the "Cabinet of millionaires" and claimed the cuts will destroy jobs, services and worsen the recession. Officials hope the rally will encourage further such protests and promote the anti-cuts campaigns throughout the country.

The rally was called by the Holborn & St Pancras Constituency Labour Party, Camden NUT and Camden Trades Councils. However united with them at Lincoln's Inn Fields were diverse groups including the Right to Work Campaign, the Socialist Workers, RMT, Tower Hamlets Unison, Camden Keep our NHS Public and hundreds of Students from across London, including a contingent from the LSE.

Initial estimates by those police who were present at the event put the numbers at over 1000 people at Lincoln's Inn Field, whilst the protesters put the numbers at around 2500, with more joining the rally along the way.

Following the gathering, demonstrators marched to drum beats, past Parliament and joined hundreds of other protesters, organised by the Coalition of Resistance, at Downing Street.

On route to Downing Street, Protesters chanted anti-cuts, and Anti-Conservative rhetoric: 'David Cameron, get

out, we know what you're all about - cuts, job losses, money for the bosses'. Others Shouted: "Unite, Fight, General Strike".

The student sections of the rally focused on education, with chants of "no ifs, no buts, no education cuts" and "Education for the masses, not just the ruling classes" interspersed with shouts of "Tory Scum".

Many of the protesters carried provocative signs, some declaring "Vince Cable - Nazi" and others decrying Nick Clegg as a "Liar, traitor, Judas".

One charity worker in the demonstration argued that it was "not true that there was no alternative" and that "the poorest and most vulnerable will have to pay" for these cuts, while Terry a retired teacher argued that the cuts were "disgraceful" and that the government clearly "doesn't know about education".

Hesham Yafai, was one of the many students from Kings who had joined the march stated: "I hope this rally will act as a launch pad against Tory cuts, which are just part of an ideological warfare by the Tories".

The leaders of the demonstration included the chair of the Right to Work campaign, Paul Brandon who hoped that the rally, in addition to other protests like that on the 3rd October at the Tory Conference, will inspire further action to the point "the government is brought down and replaced with a government with the views of the people rather than the financial elite". Brandon declared "we are not gonna pay for a crisis we haven't created".

Lukas Slothuus, one of the LSE Students on the march argued "the cuts are going to cripple public services". And that the LSE students at the march were there to express "solidarity with those losing their jobs because of the Tory Cuts and it is a great way for Freeze the Fees to get

involved with the larger campaign".

Once the protest reached Downing Street speeches were given by leading figures, damming the cuts. One such speaker was former MP Tony Benn, who proclaimed "We've got to make it clear that these cuts are not acceptable" and that the job of the protest was "to carry our message out to a wider audience" in order to influence public opinion and so put pressure on the government.

LSE Students' Union Education Officer, Ashok Kumar, who also attended the rally insisted the march was "to show the government that they will not institute their crippling cuts without a fight", and was encouraged by the 50-60 LSE students who took part in the demonstration and "such a massive turnout bodes well for the November 10 rally and national demo".



Photo: Jaynesh Patel

Israeli minister welcomes Arabs

Aimee Riese

"Equality and partnership for Israeli Arabs" was how the Israeli Minister of Minorities, Avishay Braverman, defined his role in a talk at the LSE last Thursday. Braverman spoke on the topic of "Israeli Democracy: Integration of Minorities" at an event hosted by the LSE Department of International Relations.

Braverman discussed his proposals for Israeli Arabs, describing the last ten years as a "lost decade" for the Arab population. He voiced plans for subsidising employment for Israeli Arabs, particularly in the hi-tech sector, further participation of Arab women in the labour force and aims to increase entry of Arab students to top universities in Israel.

A member of the Labour Party in Israel, Braverman expressed his desire to transform his party whilst explaining his dissatisfaction about the way that Israel is developing. For example he spoke about his opposition to the controversial new loyalty oath which would require all non Jews taking Israeli citizenship to swear loyalty to Israel as a "Jewish and democratic state". He claimed that the proposals hurt the Arab population of Israel and damage Israel's international reputation. Furthermore he described Lieberman, Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs, who proposed the loyalty oath, as "endangering Israeli democracy".

Regarding the peace process Braverman's aims are for an extension of the settlement freeze for a further 4-6 months

and the establishment of a Palestinian-Israeli committee to discuss the core issues of borders and security. He expressed his desire for an alliance between the moderates and his hope that the current leadership would be able to rise to the challenge stating, "justice means partition".

In addition Braverman emphasised the refugee problem, both in terms of the Palestinian leadership's understanding of the impossibility of the Palestinian Right of Return, as well as the existence of Jewish refugees in the Arab world.

At the end of his talk, Braverman encouraged LSE students to pursue political careers urging young leaders not only to comment on history, but also to participate. He claimed that he decided to enter politics because of his belief in "economic development and social justice".

The talk was well received by the audience. Hannah Geis, a first-year International Relations and History undergraduate told the Beaver, "I was extremely interested by the policies being implemented by Braverman to ameliorate the situation of Israeli Arabs, in particular, the new effort to increase and facilitate Israeli Arab attendance of universities. This is a big step towards the integration and (further economic) development of the Arab population."

There were a handful of pro-Palestine protesters outside the New Academic Building where the talk was being given. Some of those who attended the seminar were bewildered at the small protest, having just heard a moderate politician who spoke with high hopes for peace and normalisation.

Freeze the fees drops it like it's hot

Shrina Poojara

Last Thursday at 2PM the Students' Union sought to escalate the 'Freeze the Fees' campaign by dropping a 6-storey length banner from the top of St Clement's Building. This action followed the release of the Browne Review of Higher Education two weeks ago, which recommended that the Government eliminate the current cap of £3,290 per annum on Higher Education tuition fees.

The Students' Union emphasised that campaign supporters spent hours designing, painting and stitching the banner together. Hero Austin, the Community & Welfare Officer, described it as "the result of a huge collective effort... an eye-catching display and a feat of engineering that nobody on campus would be able to miss." Though the unveiling of the banner was unpublicised due to fears that LSE security would not allow it to go ahead, an agreement was reached with security and the banner was displayed for a full hour before it was taken down.

In response to queries raised by students regarding the purpose of the banner, Charlotte Gerada, the Students' Union General Secretary, commented: "It was an important action, not just because it visually raises awareness about our campaign and our demands, but also because it is a strong message straight from the student body... Our approach is two-pronged: at the officer level through committees and at the student level through direct action. And we can most certainly do both effectively."

Students, staff and visitors on Houghton Street were evidently taken aback by the Students' Union's effort. Many were seen using cameras and mobile phones to take pictures of the huge banner. Amena Amer, a postgraduate student and the chief architect of the banner drop, commented, "It's incredible how the Students' Union have managed to mobilise so many students through the campaign."

The unveiling of the 'Freeze the Fees' banner was the latest manifestation in an active campaign that has also witnessed the release of helium balloons outside Sir Howard Davies' office Damini Onifade, President of the Students' Union African-

Caribbean Society, expressed his admiration for the campaign and remarked, "The Students' Union have done a great job in the sense that you can't have come to LSE and not heard about the Freeze the Fees campaign."

Some students have expressed reservations about the campaign strategy; Robert Okpuru, a second-year undergraduate, stated: "I believe LSE needs better funding if it wants to compete against other international universities, which is perhaps impossible if the fees are kept at their current level. I think students need to be made more aware of the implications of freezing the fees so they can make an informed decision rather than just blindly following the campaign."

Other students have also questioned the effectiveness of the campaign in attracting the attention of the LSE's senior management. Jaynesh Patel, a third-year economist, observed: "The Students' Union has had some good ideas for campaign publicity but Howard Davies has made it pretty obvious he's not going to listen to the student body on this matter." This was made clear in an interview published in the Beaver last week. Amena Amer, however, made it apparent that the Students' Union are not willing to take 'no' for an answer, saying; "Today's action is massive, but only the beginning. Our demands are at the LSE as well as the national government. This is only the beginning."

In an impressive feat for the Students' Union, news of the 'Freeze the Fees' campaign has reached other campuses. Students at other London universities were impressed by the LSE's campaigning efforts and its evidently radical spirit; Ruhi Kanani, a second-year student at King's College London, commented: "The King's campaign definitely doesn't have the 'in-your-face' promotion that the LSE campaign does as most students at King's aren't even aware that it exists." Rhea Tuli, a second-year international student at University College London, stated, "I am not certain if the UCL campaign is on the same scale as LSE's, but what should be valued is that students, regardless of which University they are from, are collectively fighting to create a better university experience for themselves and for future Higher Education applicants."



Photo: Jaynesh Patel

Pissarides issues stern warning

Calum Young

LSE's new Nobel laureate in economics, Christopher Pissarides, has delivered a stern warning to the Chancellor that cuts to social security benefits in this week's Comprehensive Spending Review risk consigning an entire category of jobless workers to a spiral of poverty, disillusionment and long-term unemployment.

Pissarides, a globally renowned expert in the jobs market who received his Nobel prize in Stockholm earlier in the month, is urging George Osborne to avoid the temptation to penalise the jobless. He also wants the Chancellor to be as clear as possible about the way he intends to make public sector savings, to avoid provoking a loss of market confidence in Britain's public finances.

Pissarides' comments fit into a wider debate which is currently rocking the Economics faculty at the LSE, to cut or not to cut. The timing of government cut-backs and their scale remain highly contentious issues.



The LSE's Professor Christopher Pissarides

Powell channels Machiavelli through Number 10

Neeraj Mashru

Jonathan Powell, Chief of Staff under Prime Minister Tony Blair, gave a lecture at the LSE last Tuesday on the subject of his book, *The New Machiavelli: How to Wield Power in the Modern World*. Powell asserted that the theories of Fifteenth Century politician Niccolò Machiavelli are still relevant today, relating the notorious teachings of 'The Dark Prince' to his decade of experience as Blair's closest aide.

Powell served as Chief of Staff from the Labour election victory in 1997 until Blair's resignation some ten years later. His unique vantage point from the top echelon of government decision-making has allowed him to fill his book with telling and, at times, amusing anecdotes of involving many prominent politicians.

Powell discussed Machiavelli's reputation as one of the founders of modern political science, his most famous work being *The Prince*. This explores the acquisition, perpetuation and use of political power in medieval Europe. Its scientific and cutting perspective on both politics and the nature of man in general has seen it condemned and censored as immoral. However, Powell rejected this as unfair, arguing that Machiavelli never advocated evil or brutality but merely analysed the politics that he observed around him. This approach led him to break free from the constraints of Augustinian thinking and develop the belief that personal morality cannot be successfully applied to ruling because others would not have the same qualms. Powell noted, wryly, that while Machiavelli's advice on raising sieges had few modern applications, his writings in general are unrivalled even today as a handbook on power.

Machiavelli differentiated between

two different structures of government; a country where all men owed their loyalty to the prince was a firm and tightly bound one, whereas one with conflicting layers of loyalty was disorderly. Powell related this thinking to the workings of our government today. He asserted that power being spread over dozens of departments led to the problems Machiavelli predicted. Powell identified that while loyalty to our 'prince' is less of a priority nowadays, Number 10 still needs the strength to rule executively without conflict. He quoted Blair calling Prime ministerial power; "a shiny Rolls Royce I'm not allowed to drive." Margaret Thatcher, on the other hand, was used to showing how a strong leader might deal with the civil service. On one particular topic a 300 page document was written for her detailing why her intentions were not practical. After sacking the Head of the Civil Service, she was handed 30 pages detailing how it was practical. In a typical example of the complexities of dealing with the British Civil Service, Powell recalled one meeting where civil servants predicted a rise in crime if the economic boom ended as there may be; "more people who needed to nick stuff". When asked what would happen if the boom continued, they replied that crime would still go up as there would be "more stuff to nick!"

Powell picked up on Machiavelli's belief that courage and intelligence were the two qualities vital in a prince. Courage gives him the ability to take firm action. Of course boldness can be folly, but "It is better to be bold than timid and cautious, because Fortuna is a woman, and the man who wants to control her must treat her roughly." Powell explained that this, rather chauvinistic, metaphor explains why Brown's indecision over whether or not to call the election in 2007, essentially cost him the vote in 2010. Blair was touted as

the opposite - Powell quoted the parliamentarian Roy Jenkins who said that Blair had a "second class intellect but first class temperament".

Powell gave an admittedly Blairite perspective on Brown, using him to illustrate Machiavelli's descriptions of a poor leader. Most notable was Powell's description of a meeting in an Edinburgh castle where he suggested the 1994 leadership contest was thrashed out between Blair and Brown, which had the audience laughing for some time. Powell described how Brown wordlessly stalked out of the room while Blair awaited his return anxiously. Eventually Blair received a phone call from Brown, trapped in a bathroom, begging for a rescue. Powell says that a natural tension between the Prime Minister and his Chancellor could be constructive but that under Blair it was detrimental. In another unique insight, Powell commented that when he asked Blair why he spent so long talking to someone who made his life so miserable, Blair replied "Jonathan, have you ever been in love?"

An audience member commented that "the speech was confidently and professionally delivered - exactly what one would expect from someone who had spent so long at the right hand of a Prime Minister famous for his charisma and rhetoric".

» Interview with Jonathan Powell
Features page 13

History department looks to the future

Benedict Sarhangian

Professor Dominic Lieven, Head of the International History department, this week issued his manifesto for the current academic year. In it, he listed the main grievances expressed by students within the department, referring to issues discussed at the Staff-Student Liaison Committee (SSLC). Amongst the biggest concerns were quality of teaching, exam and essay feedback and access to senior members of the department.

Lieven committed to tackle these issues, introducing a rule that all teachers must see students individually to discuss their first essays and that subsequent essays will be subjected to a new more detailed feedback form.

The International History department's pioneering approach was also taken with regards to the area of exam feedback, which has previously been amongst the most opaque and impenetrable aspects of the LSE. Whereas students in other departments can only get their transcripts via a lengthy Data Protection Request system, all 2nd and 3rd Year Academic Advisers in the International History department are obliged to collate their advisee's transcripts and talk them over with the student during their first meeting of the year. This is a pilot scheme that LSE is planning to roll out should it prove successful.

Perhaps the most novel and admirable part of Professor Lieven's manifesto is concerning teaching standards. He notes that some students expressed dissatisfaction at being taught by Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) but came to their defence, stating that the GTAs in the International History department are amongst the best at The LSE. The department's training booklet is now used

by most LSE faculty and their mentoring scheme has provided a model for the rest of the School.

Professor Lieven then went on to say that while, most third year classes are taught by senior faculty, due to the large number of undergraduate courses and a vast Masters programme, this was not possible all the way through the course. He noted that in order to retain its position in the 'Research Excellence Framework' the workload of permanent members of the department had to be divided up between teaching and individual research and publication.

Rather than just accepting this unavoidable fact, however, the Professor then went on to introduce 'roundtable discussions' - a series of panel based talks hosted by the International History department's most expert professors. The topics will be closely matched to the key issues of the courses, but Lieven stressed that they will not just be a repeat of regular classes. The first one will be on the First World War, and the panel will comprise Niall Ferguson, former head of department David Stevenson, the superlative Heather Jones and Dominic Lieven himself. If any further incentives were required, he also promised enough alcohol to keep the informal discussion going.

The International History department has proven to be an example to the rest of the school and highlights the value that a good SSLC can have. Current IH SSLC Boss Astrid Barsk noted that 'any feedback you seriously voice they take into account and try to redress. The IH professors genuinely want to hear what their undergraduate students have to say!'

Chilean President digs way to development

Heather Wang

On Monday 18th, LSE welcomed Sebastián Piñera Echenique, the president of the Republic of Chile. The president talked about Chile's economic, political and social situation in the past decades and stated his plans to solve the problems the country now faces.

President Piñera started off by stating that, 'it is a privilege and an honour to have the opportunity to address you at the London School of Economics'. President Piñera then went on to give a summary of the political and economic situation in Chile over the past three decades: 'During the twelve years from 1986 up until 1997, Chile's economy was able to grow on average of 8% a year, so we were able to double our per capita income every ten years'.

However he added that from 1998 to 2010: 'we went through another twelve year period, but this time it was economic downturn. As you see, GDP went down by half, productivity which was rising stagnated, our creation of jobs was much weaker than the previous period.' The president then went on to express his desire to 'change [this situation] but in the opposite direction'.

Piñera outlined his ambition aims for the remainder of his presidency, including creating economic opportunities, ensuring social justices, achieving better management and efficiency, having better quality of health care and education, lowering crime rate, improving quality of democratic system and defeating poverty.

One particularly important aim is to recover damages caused by natural disasters such as earthquake and tsunamis with Piñera stating that 'we [Chile] were hit by the fifth worst earthquake in the long history of mankind. And that earthquake

was devastating and destroyed good parts of [our] infrastructure in terms of schools, hospitals and many other parts of our infrastructure'. The cost of the reconstruction plan is estimated to be \$8.5 billion.

Discussion then turned to the recently rescued Chilean miners and the situation as seen from the President's point of view. Piñera told his audience: 'Believe me, it has been an emotional story from the beginning to the end... Without a second, we decided to take the full responsibility to search and rescue every miner... We never lost our faith and we kept looking and looking... and after seventeen days, we were able to contact them... That day, a real explosion of tears, joy and emotions went through every corner of my country... and so many people around the world.'

At the end of the lecture, the audience asked the president questions on topics such as the ethnic conflict in the south of Chile, the voting system and on his political objectives. The President answered the questions in great detail and reiterated his determination of promoting democracy and equality.

Throughout the lecture, Piñera showed a lot confidence in the future of Chile and concluded by stating that: 'Chile is a united country, a strong country and its able to face these challenges.'

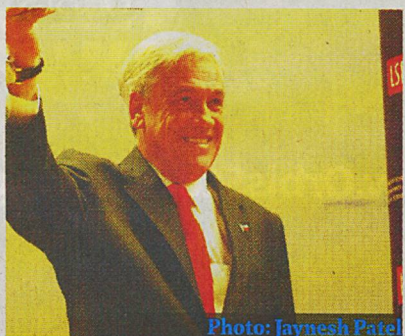


Photo: Jaynesh Patel

Ferguson hot on the Cold War

Benedict Sarhangian

Last Monday saw Niall Ferguson take to the Old Theatre stage to deliver the first in a series of lectures on behalf of LSE IDEAS. The lecture focused on, what some may consider, one of the less glamorous aspects of Cold War, its political economy. Professor Arne Westad, himself an award winning expert on the subject, chaired Professor Ferguson's talk.

The newly appointed Philippe Roman Chair began the lecture by thanking his benefactor and the LSE for such a warm welcome, and then, in his inimitable style, delivered a presentation that included an array of graphs and charts on the economic status of the Cold War. Ferguson responded with aplomb to critical analysis from both the Chair and the floor, though one student commented that he "left at least some of the audience a little confused about his overall argument."

He rested his conclusion - that rather than economic determinism, it was the rapid expansion and relative robustness of the East Asian economies that shaped the Cold War - on examples that disproved his rule. Similarly, he stated that there were no flashpoints of the Cold War in the East Asian region, except Vietnam and Korea.

Speaking to two students as they left they left the theatre, they felt that the lecture had tried to cover too much ground in too short a time-frame, and that while they had enjoyed the evening, they were not convinced by Ferguson's conclusion.

Regardless of the particular merits of the argument, the consensus was that Professor Ferguson delivered an enticing speech that invited the audience back for more. During the lecture, he also admitted to having written several articles for the Daily Mail under the pseudonym of Alec Campbell, in which he had apparently predicted the result of the Cold

War and the falling of the Berlin Wall at a time when that view was notably avant-garde. With a blend of humour and cynicism, he also pointed to rampant corruption and alcoholism as serious contributors to the Soviet Union's demise.

Professor Ferguson is due to deliver a follow-up speech for IDEAS on 24th November. This event will be ticketed and, if the last event is anything to go by, exceptionally popular.



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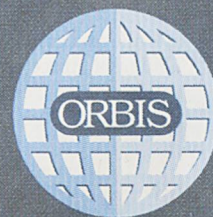
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Comment

Time to change

Austere times should cause a radical rethink of Britain's approach to drug control

John Collins



Albert Einstein defined insanity as "doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results." How right he was. He also, less famously, observed that "the prestige of government has...been lowered considerably by the prohibition law," and that "nothing is more destructive of respect for the government and the law...than passing laws which cannot be enforced." The result of this, he correctly noted, was "the dangerous increase of crime in this country." Although he was speaking about his experience of alcohol prohibition in the 1920s, his observation still rings true for that other great experiment in state led insanity: drug prohibition.

We have now entered the second century of this disastrous experiment which continues to destroy countless lives, tear apart families and communities, and propagate human rights abuses across the globe. But there are signs of change around the world. Even the traditionally hard-line United States has seen politicians from both the right and left slowly begin to form an unlikely consensus about the failures of this trillion dollar war of choice.

With Britain in the midst of swingeing budget cuts, the luxury of throwing £12 million a year of scarce money after these bad policies has disappeared. The fiscal squeeze choking at all levels of society is set to get far worse before it gets better. It will leave almost all aspects of British life worse off for decades. The field of drugs, however, provides a bizarre case where a well managed fiscally conservative approach could bring about a far better social outcome than the status quo.

Traditionally we have been presented with a choice between either militant prohibition, or unregulated legalisation as the only available options. The reality is

somewhat different. We need just look to some pioneering states that departed from the status quo and pursued better and more creative solutions than the simple extremes mentioned above. If there is any overarching lesson to be gleaned from their experiences, it is that there is no single solution, no silver bullet. There is instead a full spectrum of workable policies that can contribute to a successful and multifaceted approach to this complex problem. For example, two immediate and pragmatic steps that the government can and should take are the following:

Firstly, it should decriminalise the simple possession of all drugs. Criminalising use has never provided a successful deterrent, while ending it would save significant amounts of police time and resources, which could then be refocused on crimes like theft and assault. The recent evidence from Portugal, which decriminalised all drugs a decade ago, suggests that drug use has stayed more or less flat

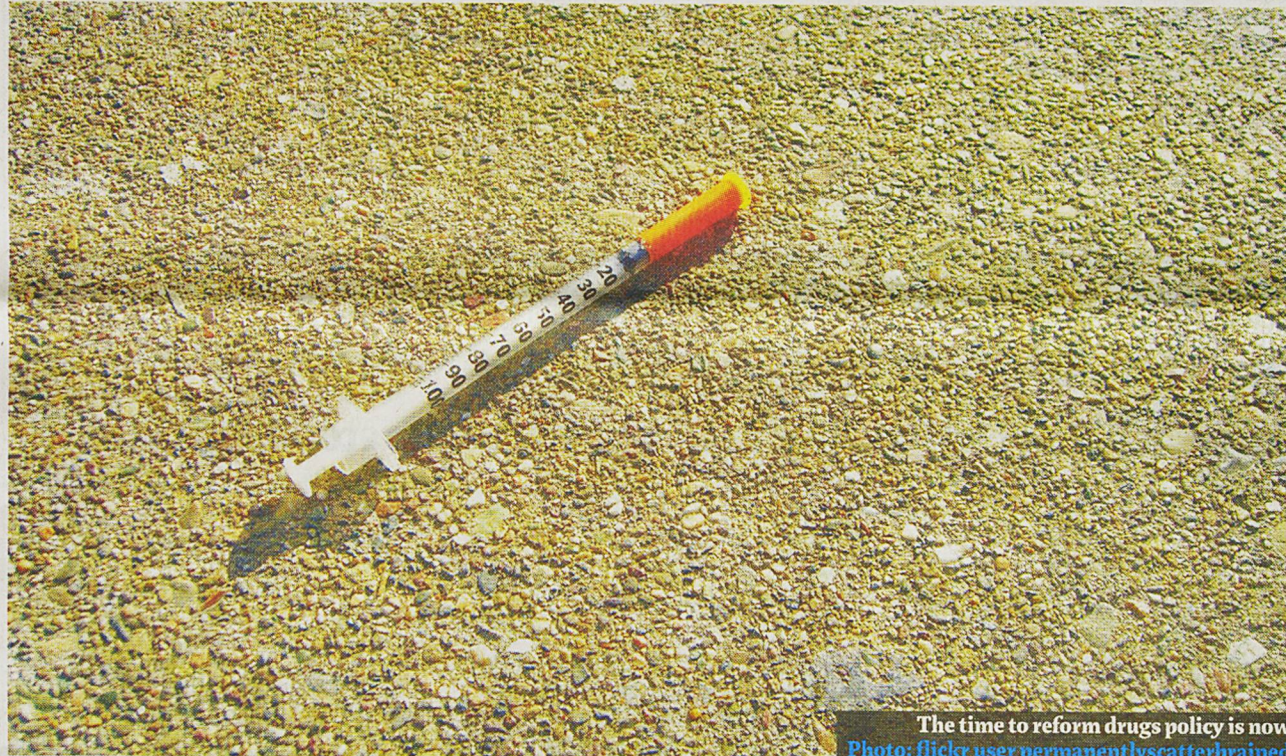
(even falling amongst younger people), while the negative aspects of drug use decreased markedly as users have developed a trust for, and greater access to, state-run treatment and healthcare programmes.

Secondly, there should be a widespread roll out of Heroin Assisted Treatment. This is already taking place in parts of Britain, and is established government policy in Denmark, the Netherlands, Germany and Switzerland. All have witnessed significant decreases in crime, disease and cost to the taxpayer, as a direct result. The programme has the additional benefit of bringing users into contact with trained medical professionals who can then shepherd them into life saving treatment and help them gain control of their addiction while building stable lives.

As a student and historian of international drug control, I view the notion that prohibition is the result of informed science and rational debate as an insipid lie. Prohibition is instead the product of

a century's international legal sausage-making whereby professional moralisers and self-serving bureaucrats set the terms of the debate. When the failures of their approach became apparent during the ensuing decades, the response of the control bureaucracies was, time and again, to batten down the hatches and push on with the same approach regardless.

Now, with the daily tit for tat of the drug war still playing out on our streets, a growing number of countries are willing to break from the failing status quo. British also has a serious opportunity to fundamentally reshape its failed approach to drugs and effect significant savings and social improvements in the process. The tragedy, however, is that our leaders seem more comfortable with repeating the same mistakes over and over, knowing full well that they will achieve the same failing results. Doing this in the face of our enormous economic crisis really is the definition of insanity.



The time to reform drugs policy is now
Photo: flickr user permanentlyscatterbrained

Why so controversial?

Why stem cell research is vital to the future of human kind

Hannah Payne



Stem cell research has long been discussed in scientific discovery - the argument that the unborn should have the same rights as the living is one fuelled by faith against science to the detriment of good research. Happily, with the beginning of the first trials of stem cells on patients in the United States, it seems that the welfare of the living is beginning to win out.

The benefits of such research are not difficult to see; embryonic stem cells could have the potential to help patients suffering with long-term and genetic diseases such as Parkinson's, Alzheimer's and paralysis. The science behind the work is easily understandable: an embryonic stem cell is one that does not have the chance to take on a specific role in the human body, and can take up any role for the benefit of the patient. The cells could thus become a sort of 'repair kit' for the body - though this dream is some way off realisation.

It is specifically paralysis at which the new trials are aimed and treatments will not become available to patients for many years. It has been suggested, however,

that this could become the biggest step forward in medical treatment since the introduction of antibiotics with Alexander Fleming's discovery of penicillin in 1928. So why is it that with the possibility of more of such revolutionary work there is so much controversy surrounding it?

The core argument against the use of embryonic stem cells is not dissimilar to that of anti-abortionists: the idea that any existence may have the potential to become a fully-formed human life should not have that potential taken away by human hands as it is morally wrong. The fundamental flaw here with regard to stem cell research is that those embryos being used are lab created and less than a week old. Such embryos would have no chance of a fully fledged life as they were never intended to do so. The moral argument, as I see it, is as to whether testing on a potentially human life is more or less immoral than abandoning the fate of all those individuals who have lost at least some of their well being through illness that we have as yet been unable to find a solution. Surely the well being of the living is what we ought to protect.

It is from the US that the most contentious opinions come - where there is a greater fundamentalist Christian community there is sure to be more extreme opinions on the value of human life in embryo form. Indeed, Jonathan Imbody of the Christian Medical Association

reinforces his ideas by comparing current stem cell research to Nazi experiments, an example that cannot be related with any ease to the current trials taking place. Indeed, no one could deny that enforcing medical experiments on prisoners is an unethical practice but here it is free and rational adult volunteers that are making the choice and taking the opportunity to be part of crucial work. We must agree that the only ethics-based dispute with regard to the trials and indeed all work done with embryonic stem cells is down to when we believe an embryo becomes a human.

It has been suggested that this is the biggest step forward in medicine since the discovery of penicillin

This is one of the more difficult questions that is prominent in both science and politics today. The rules on abortion have been relatively recently contested in the UK but when considered rationally, the decisions made tend to be based on when

a child could survive out of the womb. If we are to use similar analytical techniques then we must surely reach a similar conclusion with regard to stem cells. Indeed, this is a less complex problem for whilst we are continually improving infant mortality for premature babies, the point in the 'life' (I use this for lack of a more appropriate word) of an embryo when the researchers begin their work is when it is little more than a small cluster of cells.

The controversy surrounding the work is little more than an argument about human potential, indeed, a five-day-old embryo may have the potential to become a human life but even given the best chance of this success is not certain. But if potential life is what we are aiming for then surely we must encourage research and trials of this nature as the potential to live a life to the full is just as important and the opportunity to make that happen for those who cannot is within grasp. The brilliance of the human brain and particularly in those working in science ought to be celebrated and not discouraged by backwards-thinking individuals who cannot accept rationality and ideas that will be of great benefit to society.

So, having made the first positive step forward all that remains to be seen is where this work may lead us in ten or twenty years time when, with some luck, we may well be reaping the benefits.

Mad Hatter Tea Party candidate

Jav Ghuman



After saying that she disagreed with judicial activism, she could not name a single Supreme Court decision to prove her point. She had to make a campaign advert denying the fact that she was a witch and, just recently, she was unable to state which amendment in the US Constitution separated the state and church. No, this is not Sarah Palin that we are talking about (although her blunders are oddly reminiscent of a Vice Presidential candidate), her name is Christine O'Donnell and she is the Republican Senate special election candidate for Delaware.

Even within her own party she is not popular. Karl Rove, one of the key members of the Bush administration, is quoted as having stated that the woman said "nutty things" and that he was left unimpressed with her abilities as a candidate. Hardly the encouraging words that she needs to hear as she battles against her Democrat counterpart. Sarah Palin, who has had her fair share of the spotlight, told O'Connell that the best thing for her to do was to speak through Fox News. Her advice is to continue communicating with the American people. Her campaign manager, on the other hand, has other ideas. With a week to go before Americans take to the polls, it is taking O'Connell's campaign strategists everything they have to limit the damage their candidate is doing to her own campaign. Whenever she is in the spotlight, O'Connell makes mistake after mistake whilst Democrats sit back and enjoy the show.

Although she is trailing her Democratic rival Chris Coons by a fair margin, her nomination has wider implications for American politics overall. She is not the only Republican candidate backed by the Tea Party movement to challenge the status quo of the more moderate Republicans. There can be no denying that there has been a swing to the right in America but this is not necessarily good news for the Republicans. The Tea Party movement is doing a very good job of splitting the core GOP vote - O'Connell's nomination is proof enough of that.

However, these midterm elections are a referendum on the Obama Administration. Two years ago candidate Obama promised 'change' to a disenchanted country and today he is failing to reignite that faith in change as the American people struggle with a new kind of disenchantment. Hope has turned to apathy as Democrats fear that voters will stay at home on Tuesday.

Polls suggest that the Democrats may well retain a majority (of two) in the Senate with the House becoming Republican. Regardless, the Obama Administration is going to have an even tougher time of passing the rest of their legislative agenda. Just last week the administration heard how 'Don't ask, don't tell' will remain when it comes to homosexuals in the military and the administration is at a loss as to how close they are to closing Guantanamo Bay. The latest employment figures only increase the woes of an increasingly desperate administration. What the results of the midterm elections should do is spur Obama on to prove to those people who continue to question him that he is still up for the job and that he has no intention of becoming a lame duck President. After all, both Presidents Reagan and Clinton faced a hostile Congress during their presidencies and they have gone down in the national memory as popular Presidents. Democrats and Obama should not lose hope - the real test will come in 2012 if a Mrs Palin takes to the stage once more!

The Dearing Compact is dead

The coalition government has sentenced students to a lifetime of debt and signalled the end of public funding of higher education. It is wrong to do so.

John Peart



Back in 1997, when tuition fees were first on the agenda of the then Labour government, Lord Dearing's report on higher education funding argued that those who benefit from higher education could reasonably be expected to pay a fraction of the cost of that course. The since cherished 'Dearing Compact' saw higher education as a funding coalition of sorts, between the state, the student, and the employer, with each expected to pony up their fair share in line with the benefits derived from the system.

Only 13 years later, the Browne Review, released earlier this month, fired a warning shot at this compact. The entire report was based on an assumption that there would be severe cuts in the higher education budget in the near future, totalling 80 per cent of the teaching grant awarded to universities annually by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and a targeting of funding toward subjects deemed to be more economically viable.

Lo and behold, in a chicken-and-egg style scenario, George Osborne, Chancellor of the Exchequer, stood at the dispatch box in the House of Commons on Wednesday announcing the very same figures, with 7 per cent cuts to the budget for Department for Business, Innovation and

Skills every year for the next 4 years and real terms cuts to science funding. In other words, the Coalition has declared the end of public funding of higher education and a destruction of the Dearing Compact.

And so we see, born from the ashes of the last fortnight's disaster zone, the creation of the "Browne Compact". No longer is there a mutual balance between the student, the state and the employer, instead the Government sees fit to agree that the sole contributor to higher education should be the graduate and edge towards a true market in education.

Whatever way you try and look at this, it is a total disaster for students, and for higher education as a whole.

The sector was braced for cuts, but not on this scale. The inevitable outcome of the demolition of the higher education budget is that fees, at the most cash strapped institutions at least, will have to rise to at least double their current levels in order to sustain the same level of student experience. Of course, realistically, this will not happen in the way envisioned. The market in fees will not be based on sustaining quality and competition of course outcomes, but instead prices will be weighted based on league tables and prestige.

The reality of this new Browne Compact is that elite universities will charge the highest fees because of their league table positions, and other less prestigious, but arguably better universities, will be forced to charge lower fees in order to remain competitive in the market. Of course this is wrong in two respects. Firstly, because league tables are heavily

skewed towards research output - no fair way to set a fee level when the research has very little impact on your teaching - and secondly, it creates a widening gap between elite institutions that don't need the money - both because of their large reliance on private funding, and large cash reserves. That does not benefit students in terms of their debt burden, and it doesn't benefit students who could be herded like cattle into their lectures, have even less access to good resources than they do now and ultimately receive a terrible student experience.

Of course the principles that form this new model are deeply flawed in themselves.

Lord Browne and the Government believe higher fees will mean quality is driven upwards in universities because students will have freedom to move funding around the system. In fact the opposite can be illustrated even at the LSE. Fees for virtually every course have increased at rates equal to or above inflation for the last 6 years, and yet student satisfaction rates have fallen. And this is from an institution that already charges some of the highest fees in the world for postgraduate and international students. It proves that the market is inefficient at correcting these problems and justifying cuts and fees increases on the basis of improved choice and competition is flawed.

Student debt already stands at an average £24,000 on graduation. Under these proposals, debt would virtually double to around £40,000 and would not carry any additional benefit. Rather it would merely prop up universities that are having the

funding cut from the other end. Students should not be expected to pay more for less.

The true argument for higher fees however, is to support deficit reduction. In fact that was the reason that the truly progressive option of a graduate contribution, like that put forward by the National Union of Students in its Blueprint for Higher Education, was dismissed as unworkable. The argument is that the substitution of funding from government to student will mean the Government can reduce the deficit meaning a better future for that same generation of undergraduates. Of course what they conveniently forget is that increased fees mean that they have to loan out more money via Student Finance England. The overall impact is that the government is back to square one for the duration of the Parliament because they will have to spend the money upfront anyway.

And that poses the real question. Where should the debt burden fall? Given that student satisfaction across the sector has stagnated for the last 6 years despite increased funding and the trebling of fees and that graduate employment prospects are the worst they have been in a generation, is it fair to burden students with at least double the amount of debt that we will graduate with when the only real justification, when you wipe away the smokescreen, is deficit reduction?

You can't expect students to pay more for the same, or worse, to pay more for less. That's not how the market works, and it would have Lord Dearing spinning in his grave.

Fears for the future

Shahana Begum



As I flick through news channels, I am bombarded with the grumbings of 40-somethings in their Sunday-best ranting about the spending review, though the impact of imminent spending restraints on their lives will surely be minimal.

The impacts of imminent spending restraints are far-reaching. The Students' Union is very conscious of possible impacts: the Freeze the Fees campaign has broken university records with staggering numbers signing up for the cause, but let us not forget that the coalition's Spending Review will have huge impacts.

The Shadow Chancellor, Alan Johnson, has already deemed the plans as more damaging than those introduced by Margaret Thatcher - but she only made cuts of around 10 per cent across several public sector departments. Now David Cameron alongside his very own band of not so merry men are proposing cuts of between 25 to 40 per cent to the Home Office, Transport and Industry departments, amongst others. These possible cuts are to the detriment to every LSE student.

One of the greatest concerns for many students is safety - London is not the friendliest of places and cuts to the Metropolitan Police's budget aren't welcome as crime inevitably increases. One accepts that some cuts must be made, but surely when a country is suffering from worrying rates of gun crime and is at threat from possible terrorist attacks, cuts to the Met should be avoided - especially when such cuts are being made on a whim driven by ideology.

The dying notion of the social good

The LSE's founding fathers were socialists, but at least they understood one idea

Luke Smolinski



"If you have an apple and I have an apple and we exchange these apples, then you and I will still each have one apple. But if you have an idea and I have an idea and we exchange these ideas, then each of us will have two ideas."

So said George Bernard Shaw, a founder of the LSE. In the century that has passed since he said those words, we have forgotten one idea, one of central importance in the first half of the century; now it is rarely mentioned in public discourse. A wave of individualism and economic liberty, which gathered most pace in the 1960s and 1980s, has eroded it away. It is the idea of the social good.

The idea is simple. It is as follows: there are some things which are not just good for the individual; they are good for society as a whole. Most things are not like this. An apple is good for me alone. If I eat an apple, only I benefit. There is no overflow. Education is different. An

educated society is good for everyone. If I am educated, not only do I benefit - that can't be denied - but we also benefit as a whole. There is an overflow. Education is one example of a social good.

Economists do not like this idea very much. It is simpler for their economic models to assume that we are all individuals. Consuming a 'good' benefits only the individual. Overflow is complicated, so all goods are apples. This simplification is harmless, but it has developed as a political idea.

People who lived through the 1960s, who believed fervently and idealistically in individual liberty, who saw their dreams crushed in the bleak 1970s, came to vote in the 1980s. Politicians, who saw widespread disaffection and electoral disillusionment, offered a simplified vision of freedom to voters. This freedom was far from the liberties and rights that were demanded in the 1960s. It was economic freedom, freedom from government, the freedom to spend your money on what you wanted, not what the government wanted. Voters were drawn to this vision of freedom, and these politicians came to power.

Then something odd happened. Politicians stopped talking about the social good. Politicians on the right and the left found that they could stop debating what

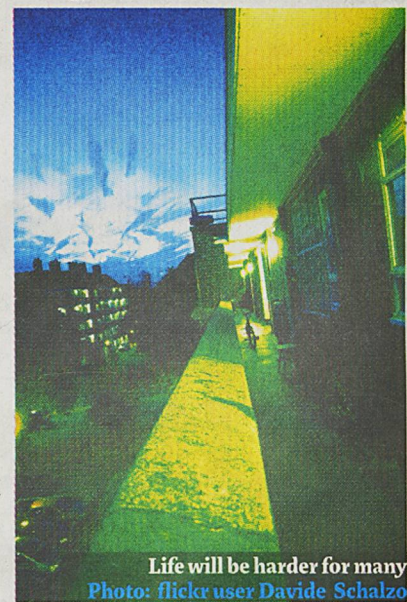
was for the good of the nation, because there was a far easier way of being elected: by lowering taxes. Those on the right found that they could stay in power, so long as they professed that individuals - not the government - knew what was best for them. Those on the left became unpopular. Then they started to believe that the only way to get back into power was to start talking about lowering taxes. The social good could not be mentioned.

Strangely, it is as if this idea - so beloved of socialists like Shaw and the Webbs - has vanished altogether from public discourse. Take the recent debate on higher education.

Lately, a report came out which advised that, as universities are poorly funded, as there is no money in the kitty, students should be saddled with £4,000 extra debt every year. You may have heard of the Browne Report. When it came out, there was a furore. Yet the odd thing is that in editorials, in newspaper columns, in political magazines, the idea of the social good was rarely discussed. (Some columnists thought rich students should pay more; some editors thought the prospect of £40,000 debt wouldn't affect a poor students' decision-making; some threw about the notion of a graduate tax; everyone agreed foreigners should pay more.) The entire debate

centred on the goods of individuals and how they should be balanced.

The premise of the Browne report - namely, that all of the extra funding should be paid by the student - went unquestioned. I found this startling. Here is how an editorial could have looked: "Who benefits from a university education? Cui bono? The student certainly benefits. Those who are university-educated earn 40 per cent more on average than those who aren't. Is it good for anybody else? Every time you visit a doctor, every time you flick on the BBC, every time you pick up a paper, every time a scientist discovers a new drug, a new force, a new idea, who benefits? Documentary-makers, playwrights, thinkers, hacks, MPs: who educates them? Are we not more culturally enriched as a nation, a stronger, more informed, more deliberative democracy as a result? Is an educated society good for us all...?" And so on. The question isn't who should pay: the taxpayer or the student? It is a question of proportion. To what degree is higher education a social good? The heartbreak comes not from Browne's answer, but from the fact this was never asked.



Life will be harder for many
Photo: flickr user Davide Schalzo

As David Cameron and his pals get comfy in Number 10, safe and secure in their positions for four to five years enjoying coalition bliss - or at least until the Prime Minister can no longer bare to share with Nick Clegg and the Liberal Democrats.

As Cameron and Clegg ponder about their own job prospects, it's only fair that graduates do too. Latest reports suggest that an additional 2,700 people across Britain claimed Job Seekers' Allowance last month, after a similar rise earlier on in the year. This problem will not be remedied by the Prime Minister's 'Big Society' idea. Though it is positive to support a culture of volunteerism, creating job opportunities is obviously more important and it seems that the Prime Minister is using this feeble initiative to attempt to provide a different agenda 'to the day by day litany of cuts, cuts and more cuts' as suggested by the BBC's Chief Political Correspondent, Norman Smith.

It seems that some of the Tory old boys are still not convinced with Cameron's 'Big Society' plans - after a Conservative veteran was asked what the new initiative meant to him he replied 'not much', which is probably what the LSE graduates and the rest of the country have to look forward to from the coalition: not very much at all!

Letters to the Editor

Sir - Re: Nicola Alexander's call for a secret society in LSE, may I suggest the Hummous Society?

Liam Crowley Reidy, PSPE '11

Letters and emails to the resurrected Comment email address - comment@thebeaveronline.co.uk - now our website's back up at long last, please!

A meeting for any writers for the Comment and Features sections will be held in the Beaver office from midday until 2PM on Tuesday afternoon again this week. Please come along to discuss any queries with the sections' editors.

Replying to last week's interview

The Sabbatical Officers respond to the Beaver's article on them and their campaigns last week

Charlotte Gerada, Ashok Kumar, Hero Austin, Charlie Glyn

Whilst we all might enjoy a cheeky, brief insight into the mind of the Director from time to time, upon reading last week's interview confusion, frustration and antagonism were widely felt by members of the Freeze the Fees campaign team - oh, and not to mention us. Many found the comments made by Howard Davies about the campaign and our chosen actions to be disempowering, belittling and factually incorrect.

So we felt like it was only right that we answered some questions about the campaign ourselves... Here we go:

1) Why Target Howard Davies?

MYTH: It was suggested that our sabbaticals were 'ignorant' to the LSE committee system if we were to aim the campaign at him, instead of submitting papers and arguing our points in relevant meetings.

REALITY: The reason why we've targeted Howie D is because the campaign involves a political decision, and it's a pretty big one at that. In fact so big that the big cheese himself must agree to it! That's why strategically it's right to target the person in the School who has powerful, political decision-making ability. Howard also sits in all the important committees like us, so it's safe to say that if he voices an opinion, or supports a view, then it's highly likely that others will follow suit. His is a powerful player in the decision-making process, and we're pretty surprised that he underestimates that!

Moreover, we will, and do discuss fees in the committee meetings we attend, and we have already submitted an 'Interim SU Fees Paper' to the Finance Committee, where our initial thoughts were discussed. Although we were not given sufficient air time, we got our opinion out and it was largely welcomed.

And for those of you who enjoy fine detail about bureaucratic committee channels, the relevant committees to fee-setting and the order they precede are: firstly, the Student Numbers and Fees Committee, which reports to the

Academic Planning and Resources Committee, which then seeks approval by the Academic Board, to finally get approval from the LSE Council and Finance Committee...and breathe!

2) Why Freeze the Fees?

MYTH: Apparently the campaign is 'pointless' and no-one in the relevant committees is likely to support the idea.

REALITY: Firstly, let us just state the obvious: Of course the Director will claim that our position is wrong and that it will be unsupported - after all, he must represent the (fairly narrow) interests of the School. However, we would like to remind all that your Students' Union is a historically progressive institution which exists to engage and represent you.

And, we believe that a freeze on fees for all students is the fairest option for all - especially as the School can afford it. With 2,400 students signed up to the campaign, we're pretty sure we have a strong mandate to say that we will not tolerate elitism at our LSE. Freezing the fees keeps LSE progressive, accessible and true to our principles of social justice and equality. Simple as.

3) Why do we involve students in fun, engaging campaign actions?

MYTH: Howard Davies claimed that we had to decide "whether [the SU] wants to take part in the School's decision-making processes, or if it wants to blow-up balloons." (In which he makes reference to our surprise balloon action outside his office, where students wrote messages to him about fees and floated them up to his window). Somehow he's suggesting that we have to decide about taking top-down formal channels to get a win, or to involve grass-roots campaign action that includes students in the process.

REALITY: Well we say we can and should have both! Yep, we like to have our cake and eat it. It is critically important that the Students' Union has a seat at the table in university committees, but let us not have any illusions about it - these committees are not as democratic as we'd like. Discussions (maybe sometimes decisions) would have been made well before we receive our agendas. Nonetheless, whilst acknowledging this reality, we aggressively engage in our committees and will always continue to do so.

Also, we strongly believe that whilst we are the mouthpiece of students on committees, we also need to spend time empowering the students themselves, and

giving them their own air-time. Momentum comes from the wider movement, it adds legitimacy, and engaging students in direct campaign action is central to our position as a democratic, campaigning Union. We go to committees with a mandate which is strengthened by organising and action on the ground by students.

4) Why does the next Director feature in our demands?

MYTH: Howard Davies thinks we're trying to fire him.

REALITY: Oh dear, we feel as if there's been a little bit of crossed-wires here. We know that in 2013 Howard's term officially ends and we're not sure if his intentions are to try and extend his stay. Fear not lovely Howard-loving fans!... We're not suggesting to oust the Director! However, we think it is critically important to make a secondary demand that irrespective of whether he is allowed to stay or not, the next Director be chosen on the basis that their decisions regarding fees are made responsibly, with respect for the SU position on fees. This demand is a proactive one, with future defence in mind.

5) Does asking for a freeze on fees really add up?

MYTH: Howard Davies stated that in light of the Browne Review, our campaign "belongs in another age."

REALITY: It is precisely because of the Browne Review that our campaign belongs in this age. Although the Browne Review was brimming full of shocking, ill-thought out and sector-destroying suggestions, there is still time for the government to make decisions about which bits it'll adopt and which bits it'll ditch. Let's not forget the huge national NUS and UCU Demo on November 10th with thousands of angry students that MPs have to contend with before they make that vote.

Whilst at the moment it has been suggested that Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths, Medicine and some selected foreign language Teaching Grants will be ring-fenced from cuts, and Arts, Humanities and Social Science will not, we still don't know how cuts will be instigated. The suggestion has been made that it will be towards the end of the cutting period (which is a couple of years from now). But LSE does have a Maths department which will still see Teaching Grants supporting it, and even with a total loss of the Teaching Grants across the board, the cost (at worst) would amount to around £7 million, which LSE could comfortably

afford with millions leftover.

A Freeze on Fees, we would like to add, is economically viable as LSE has DOUBLE the recommended surplus for a public institution of over 8 per cent. In fact, we have the largest annual surplus of any institution in the country.

So, the question really is: What does LSE prioritise in these more difficult than expected times?

LSE's Current Perspective:

Continue to buy up the entire neighbourhood, despite no further planned expansion of the student body in the near future. Capital Projects (which include things like future refurbishment, upgrading of buildings and facilities and the New Student Centre) are already planned and budgeted for. So, these 'capital commitments' which will do up our 'semi-crumbling' campus would not be compromised by a freeze on fees.

OR:

An equitable, accessible institution staying true to its core principles.

Which do you prefer?!

6) Is it OK to increase fees, as long as we increase Widening Participation (WP) activity?

MYTH: Howard Davies claimed that WP activity, including providing bursaries and scholarships is enough to counter tuition fee hikes.

REALITY: Sadly, bursaries and scholarships are not enough.

Howard's example about London South Bank and Oxford universities reinforces our point about the limitations surrounding bursaries. Although South Bank doesn't offer many bursaries, it gets a higher percentage of students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds applying, unlike LSE. Obviously, simply offering more bursaries is not going to do enough to encourage more students to apply when students from poorer backgrounds are already more likely to attend institutions that don't provide generous support. Howard is right that the LSE should do more with WP (the SU is doing this too for the first time, which shows we are focusing on 'real issues'). But he neglects the other contributing factors: people are put off because LSE appears elitist and inaccessible. Raising fees would only serve to exacerbate that perception. So when Howard asks: "What would make it more likely that bright and ambitious students apply here?" we can say: freeze fees. If we make fees affordable and undercut the

market that Lord Browne would love to see, then students will definitely come.

7) Why should the SU spend its time on campaigns?

MYTH: It seems like Howard was alluding to the point that the SU is wasting its time on campaigning activities and that the only valuable action we can take is through bureaucratic channels.

REALITY: Quite obviously, the success of our campaign doesn't sit comfortably with the School; they're not used to the SU running broad-based, campus-wide campaigns that challenge the School or their decisions. But we're not elected to get into bed with the Director or hold hands with the senior management... If you expected that, better go to Imperial. We are elected to defend students' rights and echo students' voices. Simple.

The Browne Review, the Comprehensive Spending Review, the current government and some university Vice Chancellors (Directors) are all making deep-cutting attempts to destroy our Higher Education system and all it stands for. This is a big year for HE and its future, which is why we must fight, in unity with other Unions, students, staff, workers and the public, to stand-up for HE and defend it with all our might.

We welcome discussion and debate about the future of LSE with Howard, with staff members, with any of you reading this, because ultimately, we just want what's right: an accessible, socially just, public institution.

Campaigning is at the heart of LSE's Students' Union, and will always remain so. We have signed up around 25 per cent of the student body to the campaign, met with nearly all the Academic Department Heads, got full backing from LSE's UCU (Universities and Colleges Union), received letters of support from academics, staff, alumni and governors alike. Be under no illusion - we're not running a negotiating campaign that potentially compromises the future of our LSE. We have to take a radical stance for students because who else will?

Charlotte Gerada, General Secretary, LSE Students' Union;
Ashok Kumar, Education Officer, LSE Students' Union;
Hero Austin, Community & Welfare Officer, LSE Students' Union;
Charlie Glyn, Activities & Development Officer, LSE Students' Union

Union's campaigns need improving

Why the Freeze the Fees campaign continues to be fundamentally misplaced

Leon Fellas



There are very few things in the world that I can say with absolute certainty. One is that cider is better than lager; another is that baseball is really boring.

I don't know why Americans love it so much. However, we can learn a lot from the baseball in a discussion of the rights and wrongs of tuition fees.

A quick question: what do baseball fans and UK students have in common? At first glance it seems rather a random question, yes, but the answer is that is potentially key to illustrating the fees debate. When baseball fans threatened to walk from the sport after a series of labour disputes and lockouts, what did they actually do? They came back for more. Whilst fees have continued to increase, students haven't ditched higher education - more keep applying. Our threats are empty.

The study into the effects of lockout seasons in American sport was compiled by Professor David Berri, a prominent sports economist. The study of supply and demand of tuition fees was explored by none other than the now infamous Lord Browne. Whilst tuition fees have increased year on year, demand for places

at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) has steadily increased. Demand still outstrips supply with many students having to reassess plans after not landing places at those chosen university and even with the threat of large increases in fees on the horizon we are still experiencing record numbers of applicants for the forthcoming academic year. So what does the economist do when he is faced with excess demand? He raises the price to detriment of the consumer - and this is the dividing ground - where the Dark Side, Lord Vader (Browne), Darth Sidious (Sir Howard Davies) and the Republic (LSESU) clash.

The LSESU maintains that students will refuse to accept higher tuition fees (something we don't see empirically) whilst the Dark Side want to levy more money for their respective interests. In turn the Sabbs have thus decided to run their Freeze the Fees campaign; with the intended outcome of...well, I don't actually know (given that Howard Davies froze their arguments in Features last week). Certainly they have achieved one thing: Howard Davies is playing a damn good game of hide and seek to the point that it appears only Sachin Patel (Beaver, 731) can find him. Unfortunately for Freeze the Fees it needs to get the backing of Howard Davies and it appears this campaign does not, even if they have a lovely little banner.

As we saw in last week's Beaver and at the UGM, if you asked 100 students on the merits of Freeze the Fees you would get 100 different views - this is where the

problem lies. This campaign does not get the unequivocal backing of the student body, and that should ring alarm bells for the Sabbs. The core strength of a strong student campaign is a unanimous voice, and that is not what we as a body can deliver on this issue. However, there is one issue all students agree on: improving student satisfaction.

Even though the LSE has made some strides forward in teaching quality, it still finds itself near the bottom of the Russell Group. This is a black eye not only for the School itself, but for us students. Not overlooking the negatives of an unsatisfactory student experience during our education here it hurts LSE where it counts. Whilst league tables are hardly flawless, they are the best way to compare universities' performance. However, the Browne Review offers a possible resolution. It lies in a rarely mentioned but significant conclusion of the Browne Review. In it is a reference to the relationship between alumni and their HEI. As a country we just don't give enough to our universities as our contemporaries in other countries do. Browne argues that this puts us at a disadvantage to our rivals and proposes a streamlined system for making voluntary contributions far easier. This, I feel, is the innovative part of the review - in effect this gives the university the incentive to improve satisfaction, students to make financial contributions that count for their university and a real quantitative measure of how well a university is satisfying their

Whilst fees have continued to increase, students have not ditched higher education

students. It gives a natural coalescing of the aims of the Student body, and the director of the School.

Whilst Freeze the Fees maybe an agreeable short-term aim, improving teaching quality and the student experience is the long-term aim that will improve student welfare. This is where our Sabbs can really deliver; this is what we should be campaigning for. I have been fortunate to have been taught by award-winning teachers, and the difference it makes to your course is immeasurable. And whilst blowing up balloons might give a strong public show, in the end it is results that count and the previous Sabbs - and I fear incumbent also - are falling into the same old rhetoric-filled and campaigns predestined to fail.

A strong Union will stand by a well-backed, compelling campaign. Whilst ground was covered in the results campaign it has been left at the back of the cupboard, and endeavors to improve teaching quality seem to have taken a back seat. The forefront of any Students' Union should be the happiness and welfare of its students. I implore the SU to rid itself of fruitless campaigns, posturing and catchy slogans. We need an SU that campaigns not to shave a few pounds off fees but to drive to the heart of what all students want.

Photo

Photos by Jaynesh Patel and Duncan McKenna

FUCK FEES

The Comprehensive Spending Review rally



Want to join our photography team?
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Social

On tour in the back of a van

Rhiannon Parkinson talks about her summer nights in mountain-side garages

This year I had the kind of summer that films are made of. Instead of being stuck behind a desk, making bullshit conversation at the watercooler and pen pushing in a stuffy office, I went on tour with my band. While I still can't pinpoint exactly whether I had a "good time" (that doesn't quite cover it in either direction), I did have five weeks of constant adventure.

Five weeks of driving along the motorways of Europe in an old van, five weeks of laborious sound checks, five weeks of supermarket picnics and searching for the cheese knife somewhere on the floor of the car. Here, I must add the 'DIY disclaimer'. We didn't make any money, using the money we were paid at shows to fund the petrol. We also didn't pay for accommodation once, staying on people's floors/chairs/mattresses/sofas (or occasionally the venue we'd just played in - we had nowhere to go in Paris). The tour was entirely self-organised and self-executed.

After flying to Zurich and driving to Liechtenstein (our assembly point) we looped through Europe over the next five weeks, staying at some places for one night only, and at others for almost a week. This took us to our shows from Liechtenstein through to Feldkirch (Austria), Dornbirn (Austria), Vienna (Austria), Brno (Czech Republic), Prague (Czech Republic), Berlin (Germany), Ghent (Belgium), Brussels (Belgium), Paris (France), Besancon (France) and Zurich (Switzerland). We had a short break in Liechtenstein, where we lived in a garage on the side of a mountain, making our



meals in a public park and washing up in the nicest public toilet I've ever seen in my life. Liechtenstein is classy like that! We then travelled to Feldkirch again, from where we took a monster drive (4am to 5pm) back to our beloved Berlin. Phew. Unfortunately we had to miss our show in Hamburg, since the key to the van was lost after the Prague show, and after spending some of the night and most of the day looking for it, we were saved by an ex-police locksmith. We were on our way again, but it was too late for Hamburg. We missed our show in Rennes too because our driver had a breakdown outside Paris. He refused to drive West even though we had nowhere to go in Paris, or in the South or East of France.

In every city people would ask us where we were from. There was no easy answer to this, and with the added language barriers we eventually gave up trying to explain. There were seven of us in all: My band was made up of me, my brother Nic (both British), his girlfriend Irina (American, but originally from Spain), our friend Morgan Orion (USA), and lastly Moreats and the Council of Love, consisting of Moe (Liechtenstein), Alexis (Liechtenstein) and Alex (our driver and drummer, from Austria).

You'll perhaps be surprised to hear that not everything went according to plan. Aside from losing the key in Prague, the tour became a catalogue of bad events

including; the time when the van got broken into in Brussels (the thieves took all our bags and left all our equipment); some rather dubious driving in France and Austria (the less said about that the better); the week we spent in a windowless garage with no toilet and long-distance breakups. At my lowest ebb I went to three countries without taking a shower, but some of the other members of the band were definitely worse off, vomiting at Berlin airport and while getting on and off the plane.

It wasn't all bad though. I met some wonderful people (a lot of weird ones too), saw some beautiful places (Switzerland and Liechtenstein particularly), had some fantastic long drives, played some really fun shows in a lot of interesting places (an allotment in Besancon, a theatre in Prague, a magnificent squat in Zurich), and I got to ride in the front of a tow truck!

I've learnt a lot from this experience: Prague has amazing cars, Berlin has amazing bikes, Ghent has amazing roofs, and Paris is full to the brim with hipsters. Most people are very kind and will let you sleep on their floor and some people will steal your things. I also learnt to be spontaneous and remember that it's okay not to do internships like everyone else. My summer may not have been typical, but it was certainly memorable. Next stop: the United States of America.

You are what you eat

Rimmel Mohydin complains about the abysmal student diet



Flickr user katiew

You've heard what they say about food. It's glorious. But you also know what they say about British food. The words 'barely' and 'edible' are usually used in conjunction.

And I'm assuming you know what they say about British university food. I'm not really sure if it even counts as food. Oh food!

For a university student, breakfast tends to comprise of a half empty can of flat coke that you grab as you dash off to that all too early 9 am class. On the rare occasion that you wake up reasonably early, it is most likely that you eat from an aired out bag of cereal (because who uses bag clips for God's sake?) which makes Coco Pops taste like old grapes. If one can be bothered with the effort, who knows, one may feast on eggs and toast. Perhaps

one may come across Orange Juice that is still fit for human consumption, or is that just me hoping for too much.

Hit lunch-time and the rich, overseas kid heads to Pret (to 'reconnect' with the commoners, of course. Alternatively, how do you get to Harrods from here?). The student loan kid queues up for Hare Krishna (a perfect illustration for why I'm not a vegetarian), and the hung-over kid who'll 'drink' his sandwich and 'eat' his Coke before stumbling his way back into the Tuns. Standard, really.

Dinner is ever so slightly more tricky because most students either don't make it back from the twenty four pubs between the LSE and Russell Square in time to grab any food or just can't be bothered! Furthermore, catered halls serve food when the sun is still up and call it dinner (I have never understood the schedule British

mealtimes operate upon).

A very wise 5 foot wonder told me last year that, as a student, we are expected to not have standards when it comes to sustenance and the like. So what if that milk has expired? Why bother using a plate? What three-second rule? And you can just pretend that green stuff on the cheese is pesto.

I had always been aware of the fantastically (un)healthy lifestyle of London students but I really didn't realize just how abysmal my own eating habits had become until last weekend. It was one of those nights when even pushing buttons on a remote control is asking too much. When I finally rediscovered the mobility of my limbs, I decided to fix myself a snack. You know, nothing too fancy, just a little nibble of something or the other. All I had to work with, however, was a bag of Sainsbury's Basic Grated cheddar cheese and a questionable orange. The moment I considered melting some over the fruit, I knew I needed help.

I get that LSE timetables pretty much guarantee that we have no time to do anything but run about between lectures. I get that not cooking is our way of appreciating our mums all the more. I get that we are all on some kind of budget and I'm assuming with the unfrozen fees next year it will only get tighter. I even get that for some of us even being in the kitchen is a potential fire hazard. But here's the thing; there are very few pleasures in life that are as quaint and marvelous as that first warm chip in the rain or the first bite into a really good piece of meat. Studying at the LSE has already proved to be quite detrimental to having a life but this is food, people. It's glorious, it's beautiful and no Kate Moss, the taste is worth the extra calories.

So tonight, go and treat yourself to something that doesn't taste like cardboard, will not land you in the hospital and make you break out in hives. It doesn't have to be something that has the waiter snipping your card in half, or that's a cooking disaster from the seventh circle of hell. Just make a little effort, throw out that expired crap and (at the risk of sounding excessively maternal) look after yourself. Bon appétit? I think so.



LSE SU Chinese Students and Scholars Association

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- ***You may put your published article on your CV for future references.**
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LSE Diary

Angelina Castellini has mezcal in Mexico

They say in Oaxaca you drink coffee with mezcal. Actually in Oaxaca everything seems to be accompanied by mezcal, especially during my month long stay. Mezcal is the Oaxacan Tequila and is made from the maguey plant, which once it has been cut looks a lot like a pineapple the size of an exercise ball. Although available in various flavours and colours of "cremas", many of which tasted much like Baileys, mezcal is usually drunk straight and has a smokey flavour.

My first visit to Oaxaca was also my first visit to Mexico, and hopefully, in both cases, not my last, for it was not just the mezcal that enriched my senses. The city of Oaxaca shares its name with the state it lies in. Much of its culture is deeply rooted in ancient Zapotec and Mixtec culture, mixed with the customs and language of the Spanish. Although one can get by quite well with English, a basic knowledge of Spanish makes the people and places even more accessible and more welcoming than they already are, and one is less likely to have to pay tourist prices.

I am a notorious market shopper and Oaxaca's numerous markets did not disappoint. Items on sale included colourful handicrafts, traditional clothes, bags, handmade jewellery and pottery, bags full of chilli, chapulines (grasshoppers), and much more. Curiosity forced me to put my vegetarian eating habits aside and try the chapulines which to me tasted like crunchy, extra salty sun dried tomatoes. Another 'must-try' within the Oaxacan cuisine is mole, a bean paste which comes in various colours and flavours.

As I was in Oaxaca for a month I had plenty of time to go sight-seeing at my

leisure. Aside from a handful of museums I visited the gorgeous town of Etla, the monster of a tree "el Tule", the carpet market in Tlacolula, the church and tombs of Mitla, the actually cold "hot springs" of Hierve el Agua, and the breathtaking ruins of Monte Albán, an ancient Zapotec socio-political and economic centre which rests on top of a hill. During the day I spent most of my time wandering around the streets of the centre of Oaxaca, admiring the different coloured houses. The centre is neatly divided into square blocks with an occasional park breaking the pattern. There is no bus schedule but buses run during the day with the frequency of London's buses and they can be hailed down at every intersection. While most of them would definitely not pass the safety tests in Europe – some of them are missing basic items such as doors – the 30p fare meant I never had to question their cost-benefit value. Since exploring a new city can be very tiresome, I adapted quickly to the stereotypical Mexican habit of sitting on a bench and just enjoying the day as time goes by.

The annual two week long festival of the Guelaguetza ensured that I was never bored while I was out on the street. The word Guelaguetza means "offering" in the Zapotec language and it has its roots in the traditional Oaxacan villages. When there is an occasion for celebration, the people attending the party will bring items necessary for the celebration. This traditional pot-luck allows the party to turn into a big event and the people become part of a reciprocal exchange. The Guelaguetza celebrates the diversity of the eight regions of Oaxaca. Dancers from all regions perform traditional dances and

rituals in their traditional outfits in the big stadium of Oaxaca and in the main squares of the surrounding villages.

Because the Mexicans know how to party, the traditional dances are also performed during parades and processions which end with massive hand-made fireworks which made European fireworks seem like children's toys. And of course the festival was accompanied by plenty of free mezcal because as the saying goes: "para todo mal mezcal y para todo bien también" (for everything bad mezcal and for everything good also).



A page from the diary of a corporate slave...

Zarish Rasheed breaks down misconceptions

Coming to the LSE, a leading business-oriented institute with a long history of producing people who are at the forefront of the business sector, was for me the result of a life-long pursuit to join the corporate world. Indeed, the LSE is often known as the 'investment bank nursery' as 30% of its graduates go into banking, financial services and accountancy.

As a child, I would slip into suits and formal business clothes, and stare at myself for hours with quite the feeling of elation as I imagined myself to be the CEO of a leading firm. The corporate look mesmerized me, intrigued me and appealed to me. The business apparel emanated an aura that commanded respect.

Having experienced a diverse range of avenues, such as art, literature and history, I initially planned to pursue my higher education in one of these disciplines. However, deep within I was certain that I wanted to pursue a career in the 'corporate world' and this influenced my decision to apply to the LSE.

My two years at the university have taught me that there is a general misconception with regard to the corporate profession. It is considered selfish, and the motivation to opt for the field is seen to comprise entirely of monetary incentives, bonuses and financial greed. Therefore, it is not rare for people to attach terms such as 'Corporate Slave' to those who want to pursue this career. As someone who is all set to embark on a career at Assurance, I would like to clarify that this profession gives me a sense of fulfillment and completion (and not just on material grounds). Imagine for a second if there were no auditing firms. The entire modern world would come to a halt. Shareholders

This profession gives me a sense of fulfillment and completion (and not just on material grounds)

would not be able to verify firms' accounts and hence would fail to make wise investment decisions. The world would experience a great depression every year, with frequent market crashes and wiped out saving accounts. We would probably witness an Enron and Satyam every month, until the foundation of the world economy would be completely shaken up.

After having numerous arguments I realised that majority of the people who hold a negative view about the financial services industry are not even aware of

what goes on behind the scenes. They cannot even differentiate among the different roles of service the corporate world has to offer. Under these circumstances, and with a lack of sufficient knowledge, it is harsh to formulate an opinion based on the general notion. From my own experience working at an auditing firm I can safely say that auditors spend countless hours and sleepless nights crunching numbers and studying every financial and non financial statement they can get their hands on, so the world can sleep in peace, knowing their invested funds are in safe hands after being verified by auditors. That too, for an average salary. As far as the banking sector is concerned, it is true that investment bank employees 'mint money' but they also work hard for it!

I did not choose this career because this was the mob mentality I encountered at LSE or because I was forced to take it up. Every time I walk through the office doors, the child in me smiles with every step I take, reassuring me that this is where I belong. The work ethic, the client meetings, the countless hours spent deciphering flaws and issues, the three-cups-a-day coffee intake, the never ending calculations lead to an inner happiness which cannot be put in mere words.

There are always a few exceptions. students who apply for jobs to earn the big bucks, but then the whole profession should not be looked down upon because of the select few. In fact people like me have kept a major element of the LSE spirit alive – these are people who love this sector and along with the faculty make this institute what it is, a leading institute for economics and finance!

If that makes me a corporate slave, so be it.

OVERHEARD AT LSE

Guy 1: "Are you doing the maths homework?"

Guy 2: "No, I'm doing PR247: Advanced Methods in Procrastination. It's a really interesting module, and all the course material is on iPlayer and Facebook"

Question at the James Caan talk: "So James, you've CLEARLY reached the peak of your career."

Girl walking through the British Library of Political and Economic Science: "Do you think they have any books on Marxism here?"

Notice at Grosvenor House, ground floor: "Help shut the door quietly in the evening, as it is very loud to those living beside it."

"Comedic vigilante justice!" –USA Today

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PART B



Biba is Back.

Carrots and couture

Following House of Fraser's Biba relaunch, Barbara Hulanicki is bringing the real Biba back...
to your local supermarket.

FILM

Vampires Suck
...they do here

MUSIC

Showcasing East
London talent

FOOD

Making the perfect
cup of coffee

Going beyond Costa

Edwin Loo, London, and the 'Third Wave' of coffee

Fernandez & Wells
16a St Annes Court, Soho, London W1
Nearest Tube: Leicester Square

A gorgeous little espresso bar and cafe that serves up drinks made with Hasbean Espresso; lovely tones of banana liqueur and chocolate in the blend. Order a 'Stumpy' - two shots of Hasbean espresso pulled from a very (very) expensive Synesso machine and topped with two parts steamed milk and prepare to be utterly amazed. Also open until 10pm Wednesday to Saturday, which is very useful!
[\(http://www.fernandezandwells.com/\)](http://www.fernandezandwells.com/)

The Espresso Room
31 Great Ormond Street,
Bloomsbury, London WC1
Nearest Tube: Russell Square

A small place run by my mentor and trainer, Ben Townsend, and recently voted Best New Coffee in London, the Espresso Room is a welcoming abode directly opposite the Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital. Try out their flat whites - made with an espresso blend sourced from Square Mile Coffee in Bethnal Green, an independent roastery owned by two World Coffee Champions.
[\(http://www.theespresso.com/\)](http://www.theespresso.com/)

Federation Coffee
Brixton Village Market, Off Coldharbour Lane, Brixton, London SW2
Nearest Tube: Brixton

George and Nick are an ex-accountant and ex-investment banker respectively who decided to hang up their 9 to 5 jobs in order to open a fantastic espresso bar in the now very fashionable Brixton Village Market. Pop by for a Luxury Flat White (made with extra creamy Jersey Cow's Milk and chocolate, malty Nude Espresso blend) and amusing banter before checking out the vintage shops, pop-up galleries and small restaurants in the Market.
[\(http://www.federationcoffee.com/\)](http://www.federationcoffee.com/)

Lantana
13 Charlotte Place, Fitzrovia,
London W1 Nearest Tube: Goodge Street

Winner of Time Out's Best Café in London 2010 and a brilliant little place with a gorgeous vibe. Food is top notch, and the coffee is supplied by Monmouth (I personally think they execute Monmouth with better nous than the actual Monmouth) and is worthy of the highest praise. Very easy to access if you live in Intercollegiate Halls or Passfield.
[\(http://www.lantanacafe.co.uk/\)](http://www.lantanacafe.co.uk/)

Flat Cap Coffee
Strutton Ground Market (Opposite New Scotland Yard), Victoria, London SW1
Nearest Tube: St. James Park

It may be a humble coffee cart, but Flat Cap is owned and run by a former Brazilian Barista Champion (Fabio) with a knack for doing the impossible and an ex-LSE boy (Rob). Attracts a huge following from the nearby offices, Parliament and Scotland Yard. Coffee sourced from Square Mile Roasters.
<http://twitter.com/flatcapcoffeeco>

Your typical chain coffee shop is almost the same as the other. It sits on a prime high-street location, and my money is on the distinct possibility that you could probably find another five within spitting distance. You enter to the same familiar scene: the smells of coffee (usually stale) and milk (usually burnt) being combined to form drinks of ambiguous definition by staff, usually grumpy and frumpy. This is the rather pitiful reality of the coffee experience in London. Coffee to us is a commodity - we want it cheap, and we'll take it, even if it's made with stale six-month old beans in a machine that's never been cleaned, by a company that likes to claim they could train monkeys to do MY job. But honestly- it doesn't need to be like this. If you're willing to look-you'll find exceptional coffee at very affordable prices. Coffee made by people like me: passionate people focused on quality who suddenly find themselves caffeinated to near death at 4PM trying to 'tune' the perfect shot of espresso. Welcome to the 'Third Wave' of coffee. A strange, geeky and wacky world- but one where you, as the customer, get what I will guarantee is the best coffee known to man (and woman).

To us who work on the cutting edge

of the 'quality revolution' in London foodie scene, coffee isn't a commodity. The difference between our coffee and the coffee you get from the scowling lady at your local Nero is the same difference you will find between a block of Tesco Value Cheddar and a finely crafted artisan cheese tended to by a loving farmer. It's the difference between White Lightning and a lovely bottle of Thatcher's Katy. It tastes different - in fact, it tastes so much better, and in some cases, it doesn't taste like coffee at all! Coffee is not just a uniform flavour masked by a round body of bitterness- it has more discernable tastes, flavours and textures than wine. A Kenyan coffee grown at high altitude will have acidic notes of currants, limes and fruits. A Nicaraguan will have undertones of dark chocolate and berries soaked in liqueur. Sumatran coffees tend to have a strong earthy taste, with the slightest tinge of bananas depending on the exact variety. Coffee is also a very delicate thing to work with; so is the milk we pour onto espresso to make drinks such as, but not limited to, cappuccinos, flat whites and lattes. Preserving these delicate flavours requires almost OCD levels of cleanliness and attention to detail - something which chains simply can't and won't do

- keeping the espresso machine and coffee grinder free of old coffee grinds (which eventually go rancid) and ensuring you don't abuse milk by burning it or re-steaming it multiple times. So why do I think coffee from Starbucks tastes dreadful? Apart from the fact that the coffee is probably the cheapest available, they simply don't care as much as we do.

So what is the 'Third Wave'? It refers to the rise of quality-focused, independent cafés and espresso bars in London and other major cities. It originates from Australia and New Zealand, where people began to do things to 'Italian' espresso that still causes controversy today. More importantly, it focuses on getting perfection when it comes to both taste and presentation. This means quality: quality working practices, quality coffee and well-trained baristas. The places I go to (and work at) focus on being the best. We churn out beautifully crafted flat whites and lattes served at the right temperature in the right size- drinks in which you actually taste coffee and its multitude of different flavours and aromas, not dirty machine or scalding milk. Drinks served with pleasing latte art - yes, those pretty hearts and trees that Costa puts on their adver-

tising but not on their drinks. Coffee beans that aren't just 'fair-trade' but even better. London-based speciality coffee roasters like Nude Espresso, Monmouth and Square Mile usually pay up to seven times the market price for fantastic beans sourced from the best coffee farmers around the world. Why drink at our cafés and bars? Because, unlike the chains, we add diversity to your high streets and are genuinely local businesses. And unlike the chains, we're focused on ensuring you feel utterly pampered with every sip of your drink. You deserve the best possible value for money. Why on earth should you be hoodwinked at Costa for a 'flat white' that tastes bitter and burns your tongue when we could whip up a silky, velvety drink with undertones of chocolate, liquorice and berries, which goes down a treat and would cost you the same if not less?

So, are you ready to take the plunge? To the left is a small selection of the best places - surprisingly enough, many are in fact cheaper than the big chains. Why pay more for rubbish?



Dave Robson of Fernandez & Wells (Twitter & Flickr: RobsonBarista)

Quick tips for a great coffee at home

1. Don't bother with Espresso.

Good espresso at home is near impossible without shelling out thousands for the right equipment. Espresso is the extraction of coffee under high and stable pressure and temperature - and most cheap home machines you'll find at Argos simply can't do it.

The best coffee in terms of flavour that you can viably make at home as a student is with a French Press - so we'll work with that. You should be able to steal one off your parents, or get one without much financial bleed from your local supermarket.

2. Get decent coffee.

Coffee is a delicate little darling. Once roasted, it goes off within three weeks. Once ground, it begins to go stale within hours. Stale coffee beans or stale ground coffee means a very bitter and unpleasant cup. You ought to avoid supermarket shelf stuff - chances are it's been sitting ground-up in a warehouse for months before hitting the shelves.

It's best to source your beans from a reputable roaster - Has Bean (hasbean.co.uk) and Square Mile (squaremilecoffee.com) do amazing filter coffees.

3. Grind beans to order.

Once coffee is ground up, it begins to die. If you want the fantastic fruity (or chocolate) undertones bouncing around in your cup, you ought to grind your coffee beans right before you intend to brew.

It's worth investing in a proper grinder with burrs - blade grinders give you an uneven consistency, which means an uneven extraction and again, a bitter, nasty cup of coffee. Both the Hario Mini and Hario Skerton (available online at coffeehit.co.uk) are cheap, entry-level hand grinders under £30 that will easily last you a lifetime and produce fantastic results.

4. Filter your water.

Water in London is exceptionally hard, and hard water is very, very bad news for coffee. Most cafés and espresso bars worth their salt take water hardness seriously- you'll find a lean, mean filtration machine underneath their counters.

For good home brews, you will need a decent water filter: Brita, or something similar, to deal with hardness. A kettle for boiling the filtered water is also a good idea!

5. Follow some good instructions.

And finally, you can find lots of decent instructions online. I heartily recommend brewmethods.com which is choc-a-bloc full of instructions, videos and other DIY guides to making that perfect cup of coffee at home!

Edwin Loo is a third-year Government & History undergraduate and 'Third Wave' Barista working in and around London. He blogs about coffee and food at coffeeteaother.com and you can find him on Twitter @theposhbarista

Another re-Biba-1?

Alice Leah Fyfe follows Biba from Kensington to Asda

Biba. A name to typify the 60s, a brand born from post-war revolution, founded on British rock music and fantasy aesthetics.

Forty-six years since Barbara Hulanicki started a small mail-order business with husband Steven Fitz-Simon, the Polish designer and founder of the Biba brand will re-launch her vision for the fourth time this November in stores nationwide. To our surprise, however, this superbrand will not be found anywhere near Selfridges, Harvey Nichols or even Debenhams. In fact, you will be lucky to find it within five miles of central London. Yes, you heard right, Barbara Hulanicki's latest creations will be lining the aisles of Asda. My first thoughts on hearing the news? Pure scandal: how did such a prestigious high fashion label become associated with a value supermarket brand?

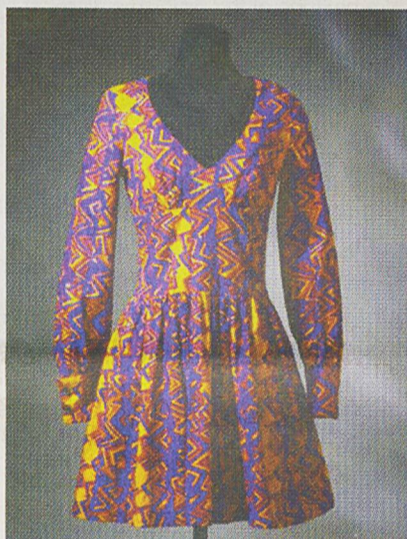
It's 1964. This is the year of eponymous debut albums from The Rolling Stones and The Kinks; a year of countless Beatles hits and the year Jackson 5 formed. This is the year of the first Ford Mustang, the year of the first pirate radio station. It is the year Mandela was sent to Robben Island, the year Martin Luther King won the Nobel Peace Prize. 1964. This is the birth of Biba.



The Mod look Biba invented can be found all over the place at the moment. In particular, Topshop have these adorable "Peter Pan" smocks in loads of "Auntie Colours" for a very reasonable £28

A momentous year worldwide, and indeed for Polish fashion illustrator Hulanicki and her husband, it was to mark the start of a lifetime of trendsetting which took the country by storm and became synonymous with Britain's transition from the 60s to the 70s

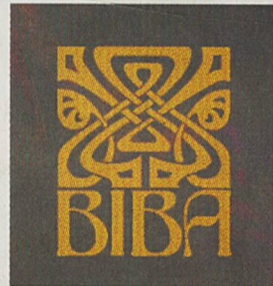
Biba began as a mail-order company. Copying the looks of celebrities of the time and marketing through the Daily Mail, Biba established itself as the 1960s' ASOS. It was an instant success, the first pink gingham style bringing in 17,000 orders, rendering Hulanicki's Cromwell Road flat a cramped storeroom for her booming business. They decided to open shop on Abingdon Road in Kensington. Hordes of young girls, including a young Anna Wintour frequently flocked to West London, queuing for hours to try on one style of garment, a brown pinstriped suit. This was the start of androgyny, men coveting pink suede boots, girls wearing masculine suits and short haircuts. This store not only provided a new look for young fashionistas, but a new way of shopping and a new way of life. Prior to the store's opening, girls in their early twenties felt awkward and frowned upon in stuffy, conservative department stores across the country. They yearned for glamour. The Biba store became the epitome of this. The phenomenon rocketed and became the most covetable and afford-



able label on the street; their tight-sleeved smocks became synonymous with the style of the time and despite their uncomfortable restricting shape, young mod women would not dream of wearing anything else. They were also responsible for making Mary Quant's miniskirt mainstream. Every week hemlines got shorter and shorter, revealing fawn-like legs covered with thick block colour tights and suede boots.

The Biba style germinated from and gave direction to an alien silhouette, born from a generation of post-war babies; malnourished and waif-like, their willowy figures were the perfect shape for all modern designers. Colours were dark and mournful, a palette Hulanicki always describes as "auntie colours". Purples, Mauves, browns and greys were not colours previously associated with innocent youth, but the new and daring styles Biba used created a new kind of vibrancy tainted with rock'n'roll and amphetamines circulating round this hedonistic underground youth culture. The expansion of the company saw the move of the store to larger premises on Kensington Church Street in 1969, the decadent art nouveau interior palpitating with music from The Who and The Animals.

In 1974 Big Biba was born on the site which is now Barkers of Kensington. It was a vast store of fashion, cosmetics, home ware, food, books, much like Selfridges now, but with each department themed and branded with the Biba name. They were the first high street store to set a standard for brand marketing, the first store to create a unique and immediately recognisable atmosphere. But the escalating popularity of Biba was too good to be true. By 1974, the responsibility associated with such an influential brand became too much for the young entrepreneurs to keep track of and they had to be bought up by Dorothy Perkins. After a few years of managerial disagreements, the couple decided to split from the group and set up another business. Hulanicki's absence and the new management could not understand the vision. In 1978 Biba closed its doors for the last time.



Or so we thought. Since its collapse, Biba has had several re-launches, much to the disdain of Hulanicki, who was not consulted in any way during the process. Most recently, the Biba brand was bought by House of Fraser in 2009, revealing their new creations to a very disappointed generation of eager retro-philes. They claim to have "reworked the clothes for the fashion savvy of today" but really I can't see any

discouraging. Given that part of Biba's original ethos was affordability, how is House of Fraser planning to revive this label with, at best, mediocre items averaging between £100 and £400?

Today, House of Fraser has revived Biba with Daisy Lowe as its new face. The set-up in House of Fraser is glossy, dark and opulent: clearly attempting, but not quite succeeding, to channel the original boutique's dark mahogany screens and anti-establishment rock music. Racks were spaced generously with ample room in the fitting area, where gowns seemed to be the primary attraction.

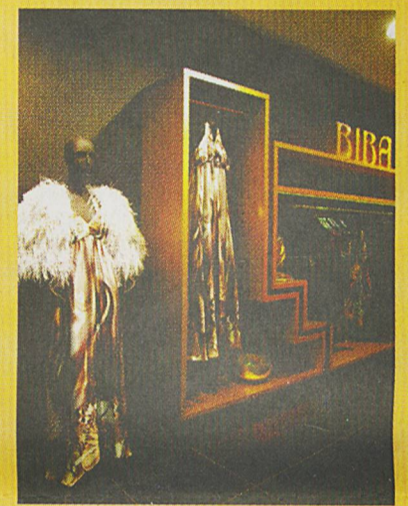


From a label that boasted glamour and high fashion, this particular revival seemed to lack the range and spunk that the original aesthetic boasted. Glamour, rebellion and expression were key themes that were half-heartedly framed by the odd interesting piece or two. The full-length tiger and leopard print coats were eye-catching, but beyond feathered capes there was nothing particularly awe-inspiring or evocative of the sixties' daring. Prices were uninspiring as well. For garments that probably, at some point, swept through the likes of Topshop's rapid and formidable design threshold, simple separates starting at £65 were

This view has been regarded by many in the fashion world, including Hulanicki herself. She says, "The thing I didn't like about the new Biba relaunch was the prices - it is too expensive," she says. "With Asda it's the total opposite - it's like the old days in the Sixties. I love seeing people happily shopping without feeling guilty because they've spent too much. I want to do what I always have done - make clothes for young people living in bedsits. What was different about designing for Asda was creating pieces that go up to size 20. I had to do

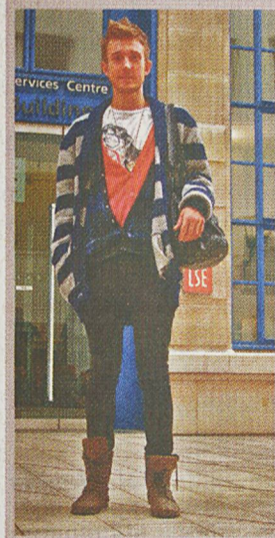
things in a different way - it was exciting."

Following her Breast Cancer Awareness "Tickled Pink" Collection, the new range will be launched early November in selected stores and on the internet. She describes it as "a reflection of all my favorite silhouettes, prints and signature wardrobe essentials" I hope it shows trademark ingenuity and freshness, but after all, how easy can it be to beat the ubiquitous Primark and Topshop at what Biba started, but they have turned into a global enterprise.



these gangs had a rep and were feared by society. The Mods and Rockers of the sixties received a lot of media attention: they were seen as a threat to law and order. But as the term 'moral panic' suggests, this was an overreaction and hysteria by society, as social desires were being disapproved by these youths. The youths created and used their own sense of fashion to express themselves. They were growing up in a society that had expectations but the Mods and Rockers rebelled: they moved away from cultural aspirations and took a stance - freedom of self-expression through fashion.

Sam, 1st year Philosophy student



For Sam from East London, fashion is first and foremost a form of self-expression. Where most people simply stock up on high street, Sam has a very distinct taste when it comes to which designers and fashions he tries to embed in his own personal style. He mentions All Saints and Vivienne Westwood in one breath, adding that he does not continually go for one single type of outfit: "One day I can be indie,

Kate, 2nd year, Criminology & Social Policy student.



anything to go by - Fashion was quite specifically found in LSE's very own unsuspecting Clement's Inn! This is precisely where I scouted Kate and her magnificent Camel Cape this

and the next you'll see me in harem trousers!" In London, the main trend as Sam describes it is a combination of "old and new"; with London being a Valhalla of vintage shops he thinks Londoners have a knack for bringing back styles from a different era and making them modern. Sam himself is also a fond vintage shopper, though from time to time he does love to indulge in high-quality clothes. Looking to magazines such as GQ Style, Love and 10 for inspiration, he tries to have as much fun as he can in putting outfits together. Jokingly he admits: "I bought a special outfit for LSE! I was going for a little geek chic... Going to university means so many new styles to try out!"



Maaïke Mossel & Yan Giet scout Houghton Street's best dressed

week - a garment whose sheer volume and brilliance justifies its own Capitalised Status. Now, I understand that the mere mention of the word 'cape' often conjures images of Superman and Batman in one's child-like nostalgic mind - but do not fear; I assure you that The Camel Cape is a staple must-have for any serious fashionista this winter! Take advice from Kate and team your cape with skinny jeans to balance out the upper volume and add high heels for that touch of elegance. Her outfit ensemble is a mixture of high-street affordable fashion from the likes of Topshop, New Look and American Apparel with a high-end Vivienne Westwood bag. However, Kate also champions student's favourite, Primark. Kate's final say on the fickle world of fashion is: "Bring back the LSE backpack!"

Mods v. Rockers

The 60s was also a time of friction between differing youth cultures. Notoriously, this era was associated with street violence, drug crime and "hedonism" which took the country by storm. Of course, today, these antics seem somewhat tame.



Annika Ranga takes a look into the eye of the Mod and Rocker Storm

The 60s was an era that signified liberation and experimentation: it meant sex, drugs, rock 'n' roll - an "anything-goes" attitude. And for fashion, it meant a decade where all the rules were broken, beginning with Mods and Rockers setting a new trend.

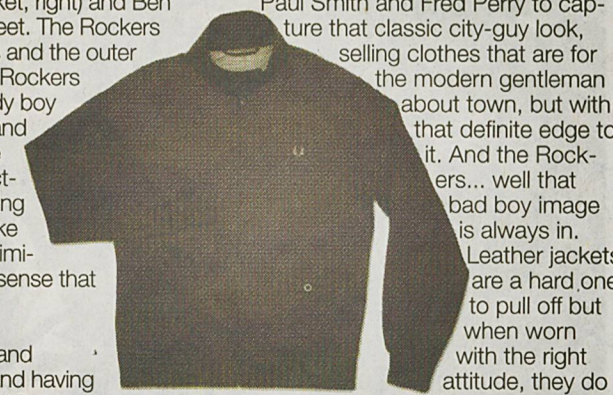
These were the first youths out of post-war Britain, and society got more than it bargained for: with two conflicting subcultures that set the style in the sixties with what has come to be known as alternative fashion in the post 1945 period. They believed in different values and fashion ideals, with each gang having opposite tastes in grooming, music and, more importantly, clothing. The Mods paid attention to detail and these snappy dressers were obsessed with being fashionable. This contrasted against the Rockers' and their love for leather and motor cycles. The Mods were experimental with clothing, wearing clean-cut suits and pointed shoes, which were later nicknamed winklepickers: think of The Beatles and that traditional Paul Smith look. They portrayed an image of being stuck up and snobbish. But let's not exclude the girls, who displayed a boyish image with darkened eyes and

wore their hair short to fit a unisex type of culture. Twiggy and Peggy Moffitt (left) fast became the faces of Mod style in 1966, their slender physiques and large eyes perfect for the styles du jour. The Rockers were too cool for that and made the leather jacket look 'neat' with a macho biker gang image finished with black jeans: inspired by Hollywood icons such as bad boys James Dean in Rebel without a Cause, and Marlon Brando in The Wild One.

These two fashion tribes saw a regional split where the Mods mainly frequented central London or the centre of large cities in Britain. Carnaby Street was the hub of all Mod culture and even today, contemporary Mod brands like Fred Perry (Harrington Jacket, right) and Ben Sherman lined the street. The Rockers occupied other towns and the outer skirts of London. The Rockers evolved from the Teddy boy gangs from the 50s, and like them used grease in their hair. They rejected all things surrounding fashion and style, unlike the Mods who were similar to the Teds, in the sense that they were dandies.

Being a Social Policy and Criminology student and having learnt about Mods and Rockers, this is an area that is definitely interesting, not only in terms of academics but fashion too. The Mods and Rockers were studied by Stan Cohen, who coined the term 'moral panics'. They were seen in terms of being detrimental to society and delinquents who misbehaved. Both of

What's the most impressive issue concerning Mods and Rockers? The answer is what they are known for today. They are remembered for their fashion sense and still remain a big influence on today's fashion industry. The Mods have remained fashionable and inspired high street designers like Paul Smith and Fred Perry to capture that classic city-guy look, selling clothes that are for the modern gentleman about town, but with that definite edge to it. And the Rockers... well that bad boy image is always in. Leather jackets are a hard one to pull off but when worn with the right attitude, they do finish off a look well. With high street brands like Diesel and All Saints, these are favourites for leather jackets and jeans, proving that the Rocker is a rebel that fashion has a soft spot for. Today we have chavs and emos, but honestly, they don't have nothing on the Mods and Rockers.



BBC or NBC?

BBC bigwig Ben Stephenson recently denounced the "myth" that US television is better than Britain's. But is he right to do so?

Simon Chaudhuri

A quick glance around the rooms of my fellow freshers speaks volumes about the media on which we've been raised. DVD box-sets from across the pond litter the shelves, a comforting memento from home to which you can escape if freshers' flu strikes or as an indulgent form of procrastination. However, does this tell us something interesting about the future of the consumption of television programming in Britain? Are we part of a generation that shows contempt for our own homegrown shows? Are we obsessed with US TV, much like everything else American? The spread of cable and satellite services combined with fast broadband connections mean that viewers are more spoiled than ever with programming. They are also increasingly looking Stateside to spend their precious hours. They are doing this with good reason, because at the moment the US industry is producing some of the most dynamic drama out there. How can Britain regain the edge that it has lost in the last 15 years?

The BBC's Controller of Drama Commissioning, Ben Stephenson, perhaps mindful of this apparent trend, has criticised BSkyB's alleged underinvestment in British-made programming in a recent edition of *Radio Times*. Stephenson draws attention to the relatively small figures that Sky spends on UK programming in comparison to the sums it spends on acquiring hit US shows such as *Lost*, and more recently, the fourth season of *Mad Men* (a former BBC asset). Does Sky deserve this criticism or, as a commercial enterprise, is it merely responding to the voracious demand in the UK for the imports of American shows? Stephenson has also claimed that it is purely a "myth" that the US produces better drama than the UK, a statement which many of Sky's customers may disagree with.

What is most telling about the state of affairs at the BBC is that one of its own, Stephen Fry, the actor, journalist and TV personality, famously criticised the corporation for producing "childish" television. He contrasted this with the US, which creates material that provides "surprise and shock and adulthood". Fry's comments may have some justification since the BBC's history of public service broadcasting does produce much family-friendly programming. This may explain the Corporation's lack of "shock and adulthood" in the line up. Another slap in the face of British television is that Fry's former co-star, Hugh Laurie is a Brit making waves in America. In August

2010 Laurie was named the highest paid actor in US TV drama. If we fail to stem the flow of British talent abroad in the footsteps of Stephen Moyer (*True Blood*); Dominic West (*The Wire*) and Hugh Laurie (*House*) then the BBC may have very little left to work with. Our brightest talents are likely leaving for mixed reasons: the pursuit of fame and fortune and simply because some of the most exciting work is to be found in the States.

It is difficult to judge whether Stephenson has any weight behind his judgement. Britain does have the edge in some areas of television, such as documentary and comedy. Consider Sir David Attenborough's contributions to this area of TV which have been

The media is, as always, obsessed with making foolish US-UK comparisons

viewed by millions around the world. British comedy is also becoming a fashionable new export: US versions of favourites such as *Little Britain*, *The Office* and *Outnumbered* - are proving to be popular. However, Mr. Stephenson is referring exclusively to drama in his comments. His argument is that when a writer produces a script, the differences between the US and UK industries are as follows: in the US, the writer's material will be stretched to reach 13, or even 26 parts to stand a chance of being commercially viable. In the UK, the material will last as long as the material wants to last - which could be as short as a one-off show.

Although Stephenson is clearly implying that 13- and 26-part shows from the US are thin on substance, the sheer duration of American seasons is arguably the US industry's greatest asset. Hits such as *Lost*, *Mad Men* and much of HBO's back catalogue became successes with help from the slow-cooking nature of their plots. *Lost* had the buffer of 20 episodes per season to intrigue and confuse its viewers without having to worry about resolving the narrative in a couple of hours. *Mad Men* luxuriates in its slow pace so that viewers can stop, look and enjoy the show's fantastic representation of the 1960s. And HBO? I don't think even Mr. Stephenson can deny that the

network that brought us *The Sopranos*, *The Wire* and *True Blood* knows a thing or two about storytelling.

According to Stephenson, recent British success stories such as the Sherlock Holmes novels would not have been possible in America because the networks are too committed to producing long-run shows. While the BBC does produce mature and engaging programming such as *Sherlock* and *Luther* (starring Idris Elba, pictured below), the criticism from audiences is too often that they enjoyed what they saw, but that there was not enough of it. The BBC is not alone in the UK in producing engaging drama, other networks such as ITV and Channel 4 are also succeeding. For example, Channel 4's unrelenting take on the modern slave trade, *I Am Slave* and its exploration of skinhead culture in the 1980s, *This Is England '86*. Similarly, ITV is looking at revitalising old classics, such as the 1976 adaptation of the novel *Bouquet of Barbud Wire* - a drama with great cinematography with a plot as gripping as the original in the 1970s.

While the media is, as always, obsessed with making comparisons between the UK and the US, we should realise that it is foolish to try to mark out one system as wholly better than the other, the truth is that both systems are striving for different things. We may think of ourselves as the cultural Greece to America's powerful Rome, but British culture does have much to learn from America, and vice-versa. The ideal combination is more of the British creativity and risk-taking as shown over the past few years, such as the BBC's *Small Island*, *Criminal Justice* and *Being Human*, mixed with some American longevity and commitment. However, take heart, my compatriots, for we will always be better than our American cousins at some things. Just have a look at *American Top Gear* if you don't believe me.

Serena Collins

It is a statement I have heard many times, surprisingly much more from fellow Britons than our American compatriots. The comments made by the BBC's Drama head have vehemently denied that US drama is better than that produced in the UK. Perhaps he has a point; there are a number of good and successful British dramas out there - *Doctor Who*, *Sharpe*, and *Spooks* are all named as examples. And yet if I challenged you to name your favourite TV shows, how many would be British? Would it even be half?

In recent years amongst young and old the buzz seems to be all about America. Shows like *Heroes*, *Glee*, *Gossip Girl*, *True Blood*, *The O.C.*, *Sex and the City*, *Dexter*, *Desperate Housewives*, and *Mad Men* have captured the public's imagination on both sides of the Atlantic. Most of the viewing public will have heard of, if not watched these shows. If I name a few of the supposedly great British dramas in the last few years, *Bonkers*, *Sold*, *Honest*, *Bonekickers* or *Mobile* I wonder how many out here have heard of these programmes? A few maybe. How many have actually watched them? Fewer still I'd imagine, and yet believe it or not these were all highly hyped British drama. One of the problems with British TV is that it can be seen as rather cliquey, with producers commissioning the work of their friends regardless of whether it is any good or not. No wonder all our best actors are seeking better roles and stories across the pond.

It is of course true that not all British drama is bad, however it is also true that a lot of American drama is more innovative and entertaining than its British counterpart. Think *Dexter* (the serial killer who only kills serial killers), or *Lost* (*Robinson Crusoe*, a love triangle and time travel all rolled into one). It is for this reason that American drama is more successful around the globe. British drama has even sought its inspiration in American shows. Some examples that spring readily to mind include *Spooks* (24), *The Uninvited* (X-

Files), *Wokenwell* (*Twin Peaks*), *New Street Law* (*L.A. Law*), *Demons* (*Buffy/Angel*). Yet most of the time these shows only come a poor second best. I find it hard to believe anyone would argue *Mistresses* is better than *Sex and the City* or *Britannia High* is superior to *Glee*. If imitation is a form of flattery, it's also a tacit admission that the subject being imitated is unquestionably superior. After all, who copies or apes an inferior product? To this end British drama has 'flattered' the life out of US drama in the last fifteen or so years.

I believe part of the reason American drama is better is that Americans are more commercially minded, they are more driven by ratings, they want to make programmes that are successful, they are not afraid to entertain. By contrast too often many of the leading British writers wish to lecture their audiences and in the process can often end up patronising if not boring them.

Britain has highly talented people, just not enough

Waterloo Road, *The Street* and *The Trial of Tony Blair* are examples of programmes which all seem to put more emphasis on 'lesson for the day' rather than entertainment.

American writers think with their hearts; they are not afraid to entertain or engage with emotions and through that 'entertainment' they arrive at the truth. British writers think with their heads, they want to show off, to push an intellectual argument that ultimately fails to engage emotionally. They try too hard to hit their targets - as the old saying has it "the only way to definitely ensure you miss a target is to aim squarely at it".

On the whole it seems that American drama is better written, better acted and better directed than a lot of British drama at the moment. Britain does have some highly talented writers, directors and actors, just not enough. Of course it was not always like this. Fifty years ago it was British television that was highly innovative, influential and entertaining. Think of shows like *The Prisoner*, *The Avengers*, and *I, Claudius* that were highly popular on both sides of the Atlantic. The balance of creativity is always shifting and I'm sure that sometime soon the Americans will be once more looking to Britain for inspiration.



Straddling continents: Idris Elba of *The Wire* and *Luther*

Book Review: Nemesis - Philip Roth

Presca Ahn

Like Albert Camus's *The Plague*, that other great novel about a disease-stricken city, Philip Roth's *Nemesis* begins with unsettling simplicity: "The first case of polio that summer came early in June, right after Memorial Day, in a poor Italian neighborhood cross-town from where we lived."

Here, "we" are the inhabitants of a Jewish neighborhood in Newark, New Jersey, where the story is set (we learn later that the narrator's name is Arnie

Mesnikoff, and that he was a child when the epidemic came to town). It is the summer of 1944, and polio is spreading. No one knows what causes polio, or how it spreads. What is known is that it is a virus that can paralyze or kill with great rapidity and that, overwhelmingly, it strikes children.

As a panic sets in among the townspeople—a panic that manifests in frantic measures like obsessive hand-washing and the systematic extermination of alley cats— one man keeps

his head: Eugene "Bucky" Cantor, the neighborhood's 23-year old playground director. Bucky is introduced to us as a paragon of moral and physical strength, someone whose muscular build and clean-cut profile are in tune with his spiritual stability: "His was the cast-iron, wear-resistant, strikingly bold face of a sturdy young man you could rely on."

Unable to fight in the war (his poor eyesight led to a 4-F classification), Bucky makes his playground job the theatre of his actions. He teaches sportsmanship to the neighborhood boys, who worship him. And as polio begins to claim his boys' lives, Bucky works to remain stoic, despite his growing anger with God for permitting children to die. When his concerned girlfriend Marcia entreats him to join her at Indian Hill, a summer camp where she is working, Bucky firmly declines, citing his duties to the community.

Soon after, however, he asks Marcia to marry him, and agrees to join her there. His change of heart surprises even himself, and he immediately self-censures—but doesn't change course.

After Newark, Indian Hill is paradise: cool air and healthy children, an enclave free of the epidemic. Bucky works as a waterfront instructor by day and makes love to Marcia by night. But he hasn't escaped. When Bucky's favorite camper becomes the first case of polio at Indian Hill, Bucky begins to

suspect that he himself has been the unwitting bearer of disease—an outwardly healthy carrier of the virus.

Nemesis is a suspenseful book, but it derives its urgency from ethical sources, not from conventional thrills. The question of who falls ill is so arbitrary that the polio itself, and whether Bucky or anyone else gets it, is no longer the "point"; what matters are the choices that people make when facing fear. In Bucky's case—and contrary to his principles, and his instincts, and everything that we the reader know to

Nemesis derives its urgency from ethical sources, and not from conventional thrills

be true of him—that choice is flight.

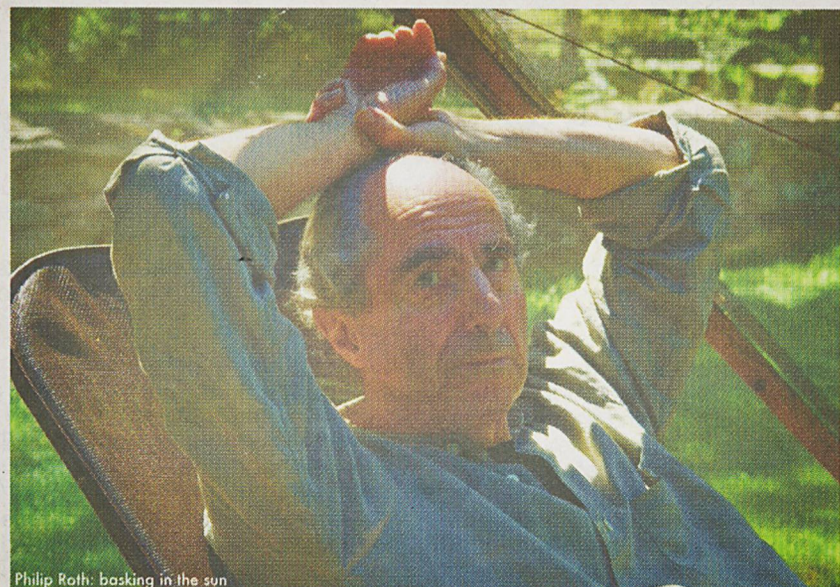
There is a particularly ugly moment when Bucky is on the phone with his playground boss, O'Gara (who consistently and unnervingly misspeaks Bucky's last name as "Cancer"). When Bucky gets defensive about quitting, saying he has no choice, O'Gara replies, "What you're doing is called making a choice. You're making your

escape from the polio. You sign up for a job, and then there's the polio, and the hell with the job, the hell with the commitment, you run like hell as fast as you can. All you're doing is running away, Cancer, a world-champion musclemann like you. You're an opportunist, Cancer." It is a humiliation for Bucky, whose self-worth is bound up in doing the decent, manly thing. But it does not dissuade him. And the book does not forgive him for this error.

Despite the novel's great compassion for its characters, and its admirable narratorial restraint—a welcome surprise after the desperate flippancy of Roth's last novel *The Humbling*—*Nemesis* doesn't indulge its hero. Bucky is not excused. His choice to leave Newark dogs him for the rest of his life, and he is guilt-ridden until the end.

In the novel's transcendently beautiful final passage, the narrator Arnie remembers an afternoon before the epidemic came, when the neighborhood boys watched in rapture as Bucky practised his javelin throws. "[H]e seemed to us invincible," Arnie says. But to determine whether *Nemesis* is an elegy or an accusation, we must answer this question: what is Arnie yearning for? An idyllic time before polio struck the town? Or a time when Bucky was blameless, and full of certainty?

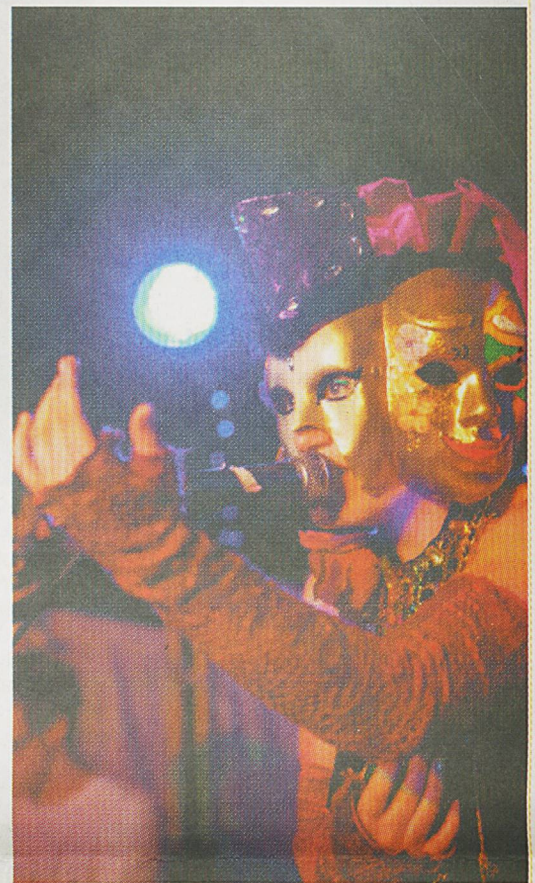
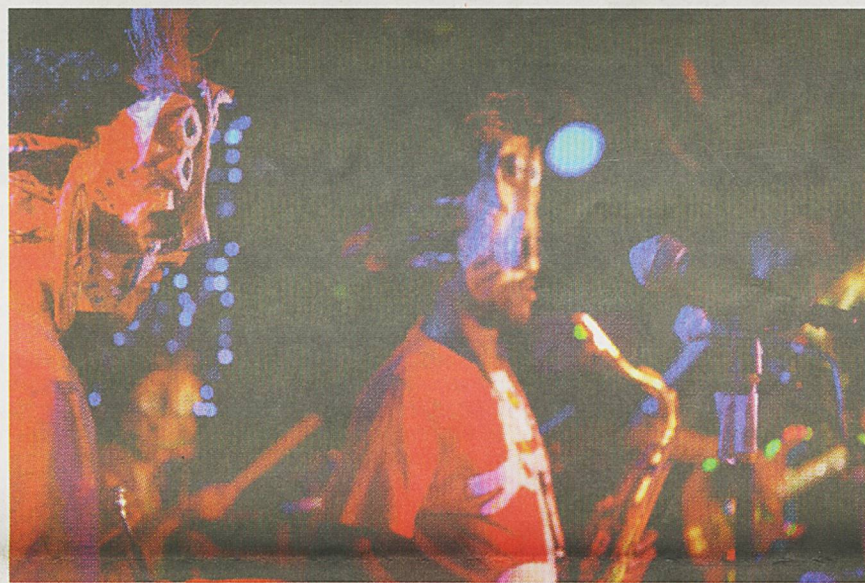
Jonathan Cape, 280 pages, £16.99



Philip Roth: basking in the sun



Featuring ESKA, United Vibrations, Katy & The Elders, Angela Luzi, Conrad The Scoundral, Abimaro & The Free, Angela Luzi, The Insomniac and The Quiet Days hosted by Kai Gama.



Look At Me SE15

Look At Me London is a spangly new project specialising in showcasing SE London artists. Masaya Tanikawa speaks to its founder and director, Marie-Claire Denyer

Look At Me London is a music TV production and online promotion company that works with South East London-based artists, occasionally hosting 'Look At Me SE1' nights free of charge in partnership with Southwark Arts Forum with different styles of music each night.

The latest, hosted at New Cross's The Montague Arms on 29th June, encapsulated all flavours of modern music including rowdy jazz-infused rock from United Vibrations, mellow ballads from Katy & The Elders and gentle soul from headlining ESKA's solo acoustic set.

Marie-Claire Denyer, 29, is the multi-talented power behind the project. She produces, directs and edits music videos for upcoming bands and artists under her company, Look At Me London, providing backing vocals on-stage for trip-hop soul singer Stac on the side.

Drawing inspiration and advice from previous colleagues like Jonathan Glazer (Jamiroquai, Radiohead), Marie-Claire shoots honest, intimate footage without the 'tasteless' mass-manufactured sheen of more commercial offerings. Once the production is complete, the artist is in complete control with full copyright ownership to do, as Marie-Claire says, 'whatever they please with it.'

Just over a year has passed since its inception, but Look At Me London has already built an impressive roster of artists - Stac, hip-hop outfit Hadouken, rock band Sound of Guns - with a diverse range of production styles. Performance footage is also a part of their domain, including Little Dragon and Gabriella Cilmi amongst many others. The young company also covers live music events.

"There's so much talent that doesn't have much exposure. It would be fantastic if nights like SE15 increased the quality of the local music scene. I remember being in the midst of it all thinking 'I've finally done this!', but I couldn't really enjoy it since there was so much work."

Look At Me London works with different partners on each project. Certain jobs are delegated to students and friends to involve as many people as possible, but much of the workload ultimately rests on Marie-Claire's shoulders.

"There were only two of us doing everything on ESKA's night, and we barely had time to do a proper sound check so it was quite hectic. It was worth all the trouble though," she says. "Over 250 people showed up so the turnout was wild, which is great considering it was our first event for over 18s."

Marie-Claire shoots honest, intimate footage without the 'tasteless' mass-manufactured sheen

Previous nights were geared towards younger teenagers. Last November, the very first 'Look At Me' was hosted in Camberwell with funding from MusicLeader and the Newcomen Collet Foundation, in partnership with Southwark Arts Forum.

"They did similar things to Look At Me London in trying to facilitate meetings between industry professionals and artists in a laidback manner where young people could also have a good time. We did a live music night together when I worked there voluntarily and it went very well, but it was a one off."

Having worked at Sky TV's independent music channel 'MusFlash' as a producer, Marie-Claire had the resources and contacts to take it a step further. "I approached them after I left, and they helped draw up proposals and kindly gave me the support I needed."

"I asked the young people what was in demand and they wanted hip-hop artists. I did initially pay for security, though I wasn't expecting anything to happen. And nothing did," she says.

"I was very impressed and encouraged by how polite and supportive the young people were in Camberwell, particularly the pub that hosted us, The Sun and Doves, since they were the only ones that would allow under-18s."

Judging from the success of the first night, she thought funding could be secured just as easily for the second. "It's actually quite hard as an individual. I'm not eligible for a lot of what's available out there since, according to one funder, I'm apparently not serving the public, which is outrageous," says Marie-Claire.

"It's fair enough if they don't have the funding, but these events are all about benefiting the public and communities so to claim they're not shows that some funding organisations don't even read the application forms properly."

Determined to host the second night, she decided to fund the event herself. "I brought in ska this time, but there weren't as many people

as I'd hoped for. I made quite a loss. There was a lot of hiring to be done, The Albany was quite expensive, and the marketing fell down. It just didn't work out, so at that point I thought 'I can't do these anymore'." Luckily for Marie-Claire, Southwark Arts Forum approached her in early spring with funding to host SE14 night with UK soul-singer ESKA headlining. "I knew her through the Goldsmiths Ensemble, which I sang in for a while.

All this cheap Sony R&B bikini crap is getting coverage but the talented progressive ones aren't

She bumped into me, expressed interest in playing, and even waived her fee since it was such a good concert. It was an absolute privilege, and it might also be why the place was so packed."

Indeed, the venue was at full capacity with queues spilling out onto the streets and beyond the curb. Expectations are mounting as Marie-Claire's hard work over the past year is starting to pay off. "It's a bit of an idealistic dream but if Look At Me London really takes off, I'm hoping it could expand to other countries. Imagine if there was a Look At Me Paris! It all depends on funding really."

The next 'Look At Me SE15' night is planned for January next year in partnership with The Lab, hosted in

time for the launch of Look At Me London's new spangly website.

Featuring an online channel where video footage of all the events will be posted, the artist whose video receives the most user visits within a certain time frame will receive a free mixing and mastering session at The Lab Studios. Managed by Mercury-nominated producers, the lucky artist will walk away with a professionally treated CD of their music.

"We're also going to have a competition page where anyone can send in home-made videos of their musical performances. The competition entry with the most views will have an opportunity to perform at the next Look At Me London event," says Marie-Claire.

"The winner will also get professional audio and video recording treatments of their performances. Once viewers have watched the videos online, they will also have the option of having the artist's track e-mailed to them for free!"

She plans to continue with music video production on the side, driven by the current state of the music television industry. "It's really infuriating to see cheap American knock-offs on UK music channels. All this cheap Sony R&B bikini crap is getting coverage, but the talented progressive ones aren't," she muses.

"Established artists are spending lots of money to produce awful videos, so I'm sure there's cheaper ways to do it better."

Marie-Claire is always on the lookout for upcoming talent. If you or anyone you know is seeking professional promotion, visit the official website at www.lookatmelondon.co.uk for further information including location and date details for the next SE15 night.

Mary and Max

Jonathan Storey



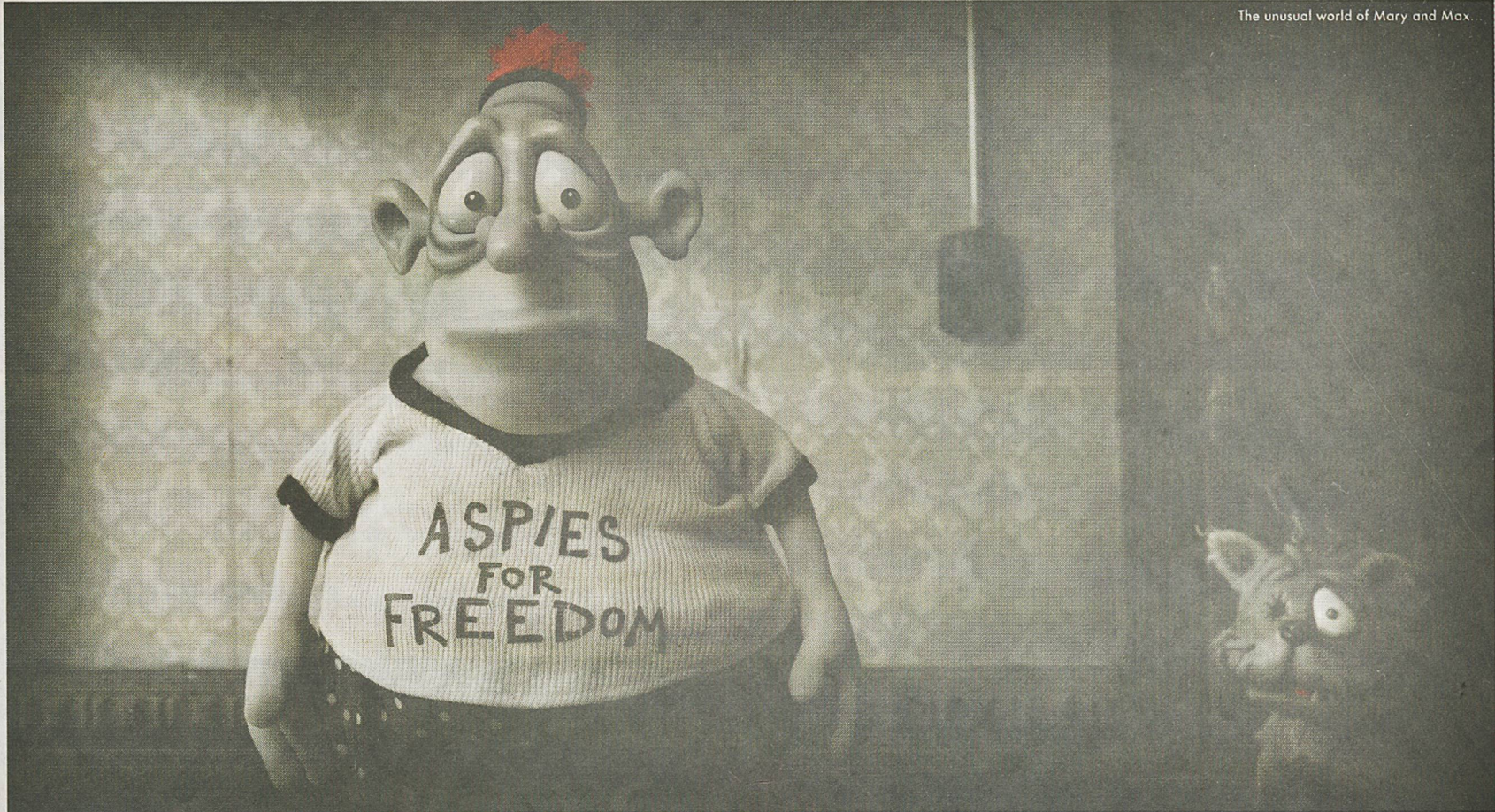
Director: Adam Elliot **Screenplay:** Adam Elliot
Cast: Philip Seymour Hoffman, Toni Collette, Eric Bana **Runtime:** 90 minutes **Cert:** 12A
Year: 2010

Mary and Max is certainly not for everyone. Its first line of dialogue should be the litmus test for any would-be viewers: 'Mary Dinkle's eyes were the colour of muddy puddles. Her birthmark, the colour of poo.' Like that line? You'll love Mary and Max. Hate that line? You'll probably enjoy the film less, but it has a depth and heart to it devoid of many films released in modern times, and has a lot to recommend outside of its quirky dialogue.

Mary Dinkle (Toni Collette) is an 8-year-old Australian girl with an alcoholic mother and an amateur taxidermist father. Wanting to find out where

Mary and Max induces both riotous laughter and contemplative thought

babies come from in America - in Australia, they are found in the bottom of beer glasses, according to her father - she decides to write to an American to find out. The recipient of her letter, Max Horowitz (Philip Seymour Hoffman), is a 44-year-old New Yorker with severe Asperger's syndrome whose only socialising comes from his Overeaters Anonymous meetings. While not



The unusual world of Mary and Max.

exactly the most conventional way to start a life-long friendship, or the most compatible of people to eventually become friends, the bond forged between them continues for many years over the course of the film.

Initially luring people in with its quirky dialogue, stop-motion animation and part-sepia-part-black-and-white cinematography, Mary and Max comes

into its own upon its delving into the emotional trauma of mental illness, feelings of loneliness. It is a testament to the power of the film that it can induce riotous laughter involving non-sequiturs and contemplative thought about the treatment of Asperger's syndrome in the same scene.

While inordinately good, Mary and Max is not a perfect film. The narration

by Barry Humphries (a.k.a. Dame Edna Everage), at first adding to the narrative and tone of the film, becomes overpowering and slightly unnecessary by the end. In a medium that normally emphasises the dictum: 'show, don't tell', it would have been nice if writer/director Adam Elliot showed more of the gorgeous animation and didn't fall back on non-sequiturs to keep the

audience entertained.

However, that is a minor quibble to an otherwise brilliant film. The quirky dialogue and one-liners may not be for everyone, but it has more richness, soul and humanity in its stop-motion animation than many other films released this year.

Mary and Max is in cinemas now.

BFI 54th **BFI LONDON FILM FESTIVAL**
 13 - 28 October 2010 In Partnership With **AMERICAN EXPRESS**

BFI London Festival: week two

Jonathan Storey

Week two of the LFF puts us right in the heat of Oscar season, with directorial efforts from Mike Leigh (Secrets and Lies) and Tom Hooper (The Damned United). If these names sound unfamiliar to you now, they certainly won't be when Oscar season starts rolling around in January. Expect to keep hearing these people mentioned in passing on light entertainment shows like BBC Breakfast or Daybreak. As for whether they're any good or not... well, read on and find out.

Of the two films this week, **Another Year** is probably the most disappointing. While not bad on any level, the sheer amount of hype leading up to the screening meant that it needed to meet or exceed such lofty expectations in order for it to qualify as the success so many people made it out to be. Jim Broadbent and Ruth Sheen star as married couple Tom and Gerri (the inherent humour not ignored by the cast), who have to deal with the emotional traumas of their friends and family.

While it is, in typical Mike Leigh fashion, a truly ensemble production, it is Lesley Manville's Mary that shines through. Delving into previous work by Brenda Blethyn and Imelda Staunton in Leigh films, Mary at first appears the standard 'drunk friend' character, but evolves during the film (set over the course of a year, given the film its title) in such nuanced levels that the final shot of her and a glass of wine manages to be extraordinarily gut-wrenching.

However, a brilliant performance does not a film make. While not bad in any way, I left the cinema wanting more from everyone involved. It is big

on thematic issues and emotional beats, yet still manages to feel incomplete. Maybe this is just the weight of inordinately high expectations weighing down on my viewing; maybe it's Leigh's best work since Secrets and Lies and I haven't realised it... maybe. **(Rating: ****)**

A film that certainly lived up to expectations was **The King's Speech**. The historical drama about the friendship between King George VI (Colin Firth) and his Australian speech therapist, Lionel Logue (Geoffrey Rush), the film is as flaccid and generic as many a historical drama that have come before it. Elevated out of mediocrity by a magnificent performance from Colin Firth, **The King's Speech** should, but won't, be forgotten quite quickly.

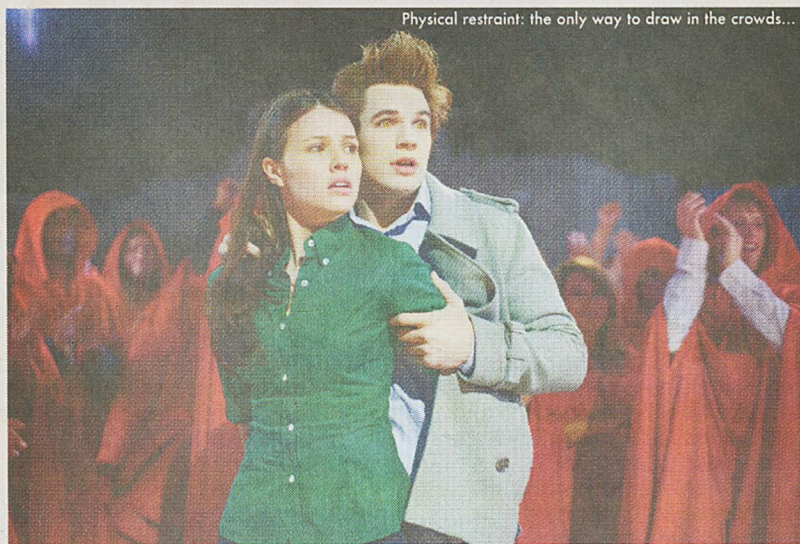
Set just before the onslaught of the Second World War, **The King's Speech** focuses on the unusual tactics used by Lionel to try and cure the future King of his speech impediment. Originally designed as a play, if the film had only focused on this aspect of the story, it would have been a qualified success. Firth and Rush work wonderfully together and certain scenes are a real delight to watch (my favourite being one where the King has to utter profanities at an alarming speed). However, its focus on the broader issues such as the Abdication Crisis, while inherently relevant to the narrative, ends up dragging the entire film down. Its reductiveness of the issues involved in the film also doesn't do any favours.

Still, the performances are admirable and the film is gorgeous to look at. It just never steps out of the historical biopic box and becomes something more than a stodgy, self-important drama. **(Rating: ****)**

Vampires Suck



Director: Jason Friedberg, Aaron Seltzer
Screenplay: Jason Friedberg, Aaron Seltzer
Cast: Jenn Proske, Matt Lanter **Runtime:** 82 mins **Cert:** 12A **Year:** 2010



Physical restraint: the only way to draw in the crowds...

Ahmed Peerbux

This movie sucks. It mercilessly drains you of your life force. It's like an 82 minute splintered stake through the heart, though it feels like a lot longer. Jason Friedberg and Aaron Seltzer, the scourge of cinema behind Epic(ally bad) Movie, Date Movie, Meet the Spartans and Disaster Movie, have somehow turned out more twaddle.

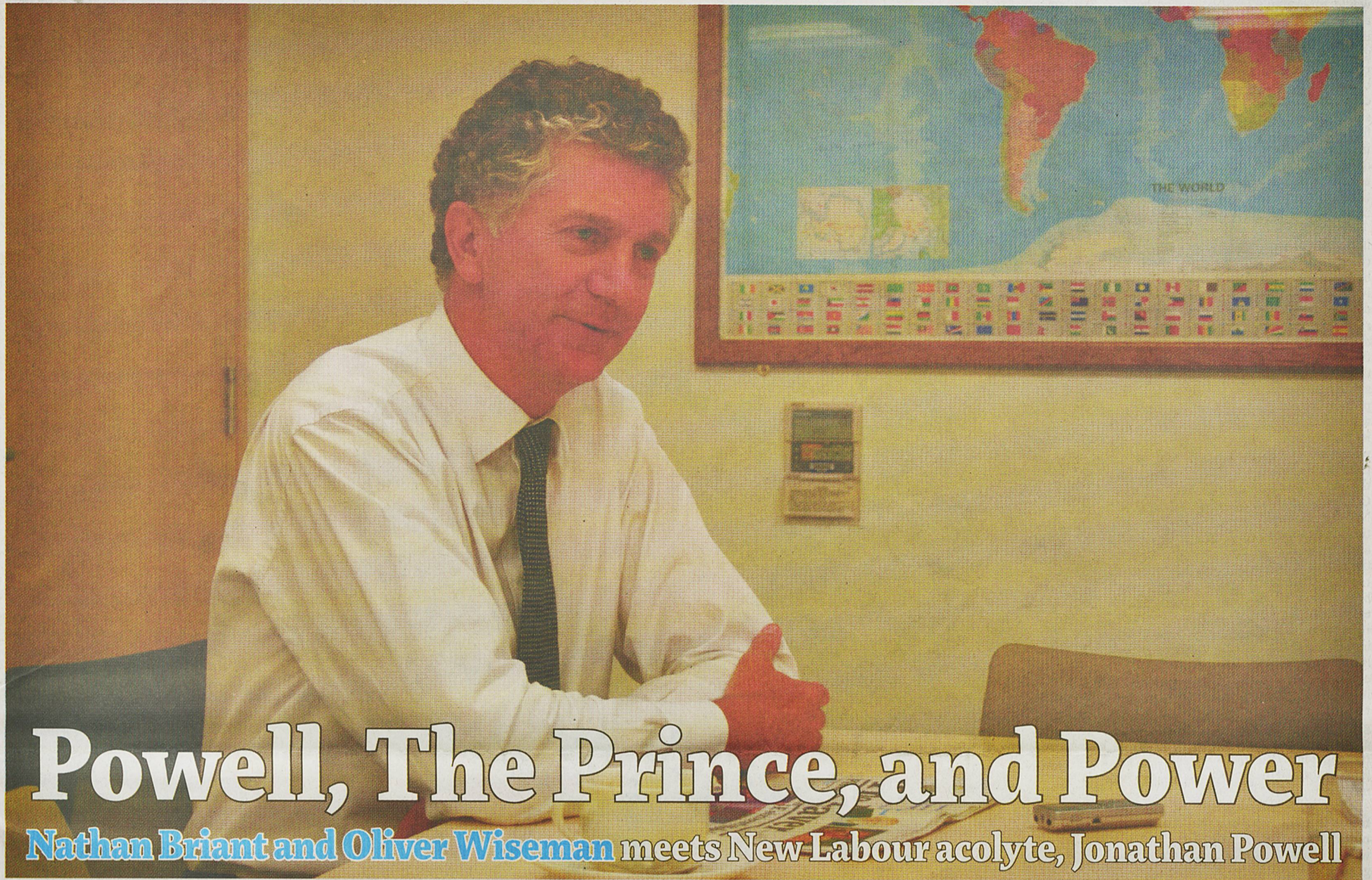
Their latest effort sinks its blunt, rotten fangs into the contemporary adolescent phenomenon of vampires and werewolves (Twilight, basically). And so it would like to think it skewers teen angst and the like in a smart send up. But every poke at pop-culture is about a year off: jokes about Tiger Woods, Lindsay Lohan and Chris Brown are devoid of any punch. Old news. It's ironic that the tagline is 'Some sagas just won't die'; why can't this stale succession of spoofs just drop off quietly in some piss-ridden corner?

Vampires Suck is in cinemas now. Unfortunately.



Colin Firth in The King's Speech

Features



Powell, The Prince, and Power

Nathan Briant and Oliver Wiseman meets New Labour acolyte, Jonathan Powell

While the majority of Tony Blair's trusted acolytes left his side one by one during his time in Downing Street, Jonathan Powell remained to the end. He held the position of Chief of Staff shortly after Blair's election as Labour leader in 1994 until Blair stepped down in the summer of 2007.

Like most of those who were at the top during Blair's time as Prime Minister, Powell has recently put pen to paper, recounting the monumental goings-on of the past decade. His memoirs, 'The New Machiavelli', apply the ideas and axioms of the master of political maneuvering to the New Labour era.

On Blair

Having spent his time guarding the door to Blair's office, Powell is a man with unparalleled insight into the premiership. We begin by asking how highly Machiavelli would have scored Blair as a prince. 'Machiavelli would have given him marks for courage - it's hard to say he didn't have courage. It took courage to decide to run for leader of the party and you can't say he wasn't courageous over Iraq - there was no political capital to be gained there. He'd also score highly for what Machiavelli would call intelligence and what we would call political instincts - he knew the feeling of the country without looking at opinion polls.' Was there not an over-emphasis on populism, we ask. 'Well that's the funny thing,' he responds, defending his old boss, 'he started as Bambi and ended up being Stalin.'

On Blair's management of his adversary at number eleven, Powell is clear that sacking Gordon Brown was a realistic possibility - and one supported by many of those in Blair's inner sanctum. Powell doesn't feel it would have been particularly politically divisive for Blair had it been handled well: 'The interesting thing is that I don't think Gordon had that much support in the PLP [Parliamentary Labour Party]. I think he had a small cadre of support on the backbenches so in itself you wouldn't have been creating a political problem for yourself. But if it had looked like an act of spite, if we hadn't made the reasons clear and he would have got a lot

of more support; he would have become a colonel of opposition against Tony among the backbenchers and everyone who was pissed off with him for all sorts of different reasons would have gravitated towards his cause.'

'Machiavelli is very clear in his advice to Tony; but he's also clear in his advice to Gordon. He says, if you don't have the force to take over the leadership you should bide your time. You should be ubiquitous to the leader, and you should take pleasure in everything he takes pleasure in because that will keep you alive and you can profit from any popularity the leader obtains. So either Tony should have followed Machiavelli's advice or Gordon should have followed Machiavelli's advice,

"So either Tony should have followed Machiavelli's advice or Gordon should have followed Machiavelli's advice, but neither of them did and we ended up in a right mess"

but neither of them did and we ended up in a right mess.'

On the art of government

Powell's role in number 10, Chief of Staff, was a novelty for the British system. Thatcher had attempted to instigate businessman David Wolfson in such a position but failed. This modern, casual and presidential job makes Powell an obvious target for attacks on how Blair and his allies viewed the art of government. The charge of castrating cabinet and the emergence of sofa politics are, to many, critical indictments of the New Labour project.

Powell defends the way they went about things: 'I think it's really misplaced to think there ever was cabinet government in the way top mandarins try to tell you there was. It certainly didn't exist from the time Margaret Thatcher came into power. The only time we saw it was in the seventies when a deep-seated ideological rift in the Labour Party was played out over the cabinet table. To say Tony came in, ended cabinet government and replaced it with sofa government is wrong.' Would cabinet not have been a useful place for proper discussion of momentous issues such as Iraq, we ask. 'The claim that over decisions like Iraq, we weren't challenged properly is another misunderstanding of how the process works. There was plenty of challenge to ideas, it wasn't that we were excluding challenge. Its just Tony didn't agree with those challenges.'

When discussion moves onto the civil service, the influence of Powell's place as a political advisor on his views is hard to miss. Things, to Powell, seem a lot like the caricature of the senior civil service that is Hacker, Sir Humphrey and the rest of 'Yes, Minister'. He recalls Robin Butler, Cabinet Secretary and Head of the Home Civil Service at the time, presenting Blair with options for the event of nuclear attack immediately after walking in the front door as an attempt to 'overwhelm the new boy with the gravity of his decisions and put him in awe of his responsibilities so that he comes to look to the mandarin as his guide.'

'This was an internal battle for power, whether conscious or not. Machiavelli tells us this is what politics is all about.' Pointing to their distaste for the Blair

approach, he tells us that 'the mandarins didn't like the notion of sitting comfortably in a normal room, they didn't like the exclusion of people with long titles from decision-making. But I don't think these were problems at all. There is a tendency for these people to prioritise form over substance.'

Powell also refutes the claim that policy was lead by spin. 'It would have been a problem if Alastair Campbell was formulating policy but he wasn't. In fact, I think Alastair was probably against the war in Iraq.' The cynic might view the notion of such a strict line between policy and presentation with considerable scepticism.

On Gordon Brown

Powell tells us it was clear to him that Gordon Brown would be an unsuitable leader for the Labour Party, and Prime Minister, 'pretty early on'. This suspicion was confirmed by an event in 2001 when Powell was 'put through by the Number 10 switchboard by mistake to a conversation between [Brown] and Nick Brown [the then Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, and later Chief Whip in the Brown government] in which they were busy plotting against Tony. And that gave me an insight as to how he saw his relationship with Tony and I felt that a person with this type of behaviour was disloyal and not up to being a leader.'

On New Labour, past and present

Although he feels personal pride towards areas of the New Labour project - particularly the completion of the peace process in Northern Ireland - there are policies where he feels the party generally succeeded, but failed to assert total authority. Powell says, 'We got Britain back to a leading place in Europe. We've still got Euroscepticism - even if I think it's shallow, even if it is wide - and I wish we'd managed to do more of that and cared less of what Rupert Murdoch and others thought, but we didn't.'

Although he credits himself with the famous 'education, education, education' line which resonated for so many years, he feels things could have been better still: '[Education] should have been the top priority and we didn't focus on that as

much I would have liked'. Powell seems to regret Labour's pace of reform during their first term - and he seems to possess begrudging respect for the way in which the coalition has been able to implement policy so quickly.

Powell says on the future of the Labour Party that 'it's a new chapter now', even if the most senior members of the Labour hierarchy are Brownites, as he notes in his book. This must grate, especially when other senior figures primed by Blair, such as David Miliband, James Purnell and Pat McFadden have either fallen by the wayside or quit front line politics altogether. The possibility of him, a former member of Blair's backroom working with future Labour leaders as Alastair Campbell did with Gordon Brown in May's general election seems very unlikely judging by his tone towards the new leadership.

He says, as any key member of the New Labour vanguard surely would, that Labour needs to win the election from the centre ground, not from the left since 'the Labour Party has demonstrated comprehensively that it can't win from the left'. At the mention of one of the interviewers voting for David Miliband in the recent Labour leadership election Powell remarked, 'Quite right.'

Powell seems uncertain as to whether it is realistic that Ed Miliband will be a genuinely centrist leader and follow Blair's political legacy, something he accredits as 'moving the whole of British politics a bit to the left in the same way that Mrs Thatcher moved the whole of British politics a little to the right'.

The roots of this ambivalence towards Ed Miliband could lie in Miliband's position in the Brownite cabal in the Labour civil war from 1994 onwards - Andrew Rawnsley says that Powell and other members of the Blairite group referred to Labour's current leader as the 'emissary from Planet Fuck' - but, careful not to want to write him off too quickly, he makes clear that Miliband has taken three moves which were both necessary and Machiavellian: 'First, he has rid himself of Nick Brown; second, he stopped the Balls family running economic policy which is very sensible and a challenge for him; and he has had a very good Prime Minister's Questions.' ☛

Much of the debate about the Coalition's proposed cuts in defence spending have, understandably, focused on the impact of the new budget on Britain. The fact that the budget would, for example, leave Britain without an aircraft carrier certainly ought to be of interest to the British public. However, given the current state of and global politics more broadly, Britain is unlikely to be directly threatened by inter-European conventional military power in the foreseeable future. Rather, British military force today is more likely to be deployed in pursuit of some non-conventional objective, such as the uprooting of a terrorist network in Afghanistan, than in a war with a conventional military like China or Russia.

Perhaps one of the most important of such non-conventional missions is humanitarian military intervention. Though discussion about related issues has been a feature of Western thought since at least the 19th, the debate about fighting to prevent crimes against humanity has become particularly prominent since the end of the Cold War and the NATO interventions in Bosnia and Kosovo in the 1990s. More recently, there has been a major effort to enshrine the right to intervene into international law. Whether such efforts can result in effective international action against genocide may depend crucially on what the recent defence cuts mean for the future of the British military.

To see why this might be true, it is firstly important to note that very few countries are willing or able to fight wars to stop genocide. Two of the world's largest powers, Russia and China, publicly espouse a hard theory of national sovereignty that almost categorically forbids interference in a state's internal affairs, in large part because of their own patterns of egregious human rights abuses. Japan has almost no military to speak of. India intervened in Bangladesh (then East Pakistan) in 1971 to stop mass slaughter, but has relatively little capacity to project power outside of South Asia. Israel might be technically capable, but is politically constrained. And smaller military powers in the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and Latin America are often incapable of conducting interventions, even in the (rare) event that they choose to.

This leaves the United States and Europe. Though the United States is certainly able to conduct humanitarian interventions unilaterally, it remains an open question whether the American public could be persuaded to accept another commitment while 50,000 U.S. troops remain in Iraq and the war in Afghanistan continues to heat up. Even if U.S. troops are withdrawn from these two countries sometime soon (which seems unlikely), Americans might be too worn out from these wars to take on another military commitment. After the botched Somalia operation in 1993, American public opinion swung so strongly against the use of troops overseas that President Clinton felt it politically impossible to intervene to stop the Rwandan genocide. Whether Afghanistan and Iraq will produce a long-term anti-interventionist climate remains to be seen, but given recent American history, there's good reason to believe the U.S. is unlikely to be getting involved in any more wars that require the commitment of

ground troops in the short term.

This potential lack of American willingness to intervene would come at a crucial time for the concept of humanitarian military intervention. In 2009, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon produced a report called *Implementing the Responsibility to Protect*, arguing that all states have a

result, the General Assembly passed its first resolution on the responsibility to protect. Admittedly, the resolution only commits

genocide.

But this acceptance of the idea of intervention does not translate into desire or capacity to actually be the state conducting that intervention. Thus, were some of the World's near-conflicts to escalate into ethnic cleansing or genocide, the first test of the

The first test of the responsibility to protect doctrine would, if it came to it, still fall to the Europeans or Americans



Capacity to intervene?

An election candidate envisages international ramifications of defence cuts

"the responsibility to protect its populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity" and that the international community has an obligation to enforce this responsibility if the state is incapable or unwilling. As

GA to further debate on the issue, but even this degree of consideration would have been improbably even ten years ago. Such a development suggests it states are becoming increasingly comfortable with international intervention to prevent

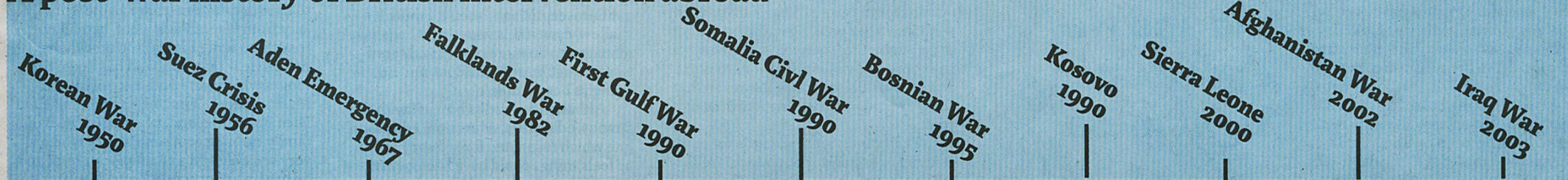
responsibility to protect doctrine would, if it came to it, still fall to the Europeans or Americans. Given America's reticence, it looks like European states might be forced to take the lead. However, the character of the Brit-

ish defence cuts suggests Britain, Europe's strongest military power, is moving away from the sort of military that could conduct such an intervention. Britain's capacity to deploy ground forces abroad is severely limited by the cuts (to about 30,000 troops), and humanitarian intervention centrally requires large deployments of ground troops to stabilize a country after the initial intervention. Even though NATO's intervention in Kosovo succeeded in halting the genocide of the Kosovars principally through air power, the air campaign was successful in part because the Kosovars had a military organization (the Kosovo Liberation Army) that could complement the NATO air assault – which not all victims of genocide have. Further, the lack of NATO ground troops resulted in chaos after the war, as well as "revenge" murders of Serbian civilians – an unfortunately common occurrence in the aftermath of genocide and ethnic cleansing.

One might think that 30,000 troops is still enough to allow Britain to successfully intervene in many conflicts. However, securing Baghdad alone during the Surge in Iraq took over 6 times that many soldiers. Given that a number of conflicts that could become genocide involve substantially more people and territory than the city of Baghdad, 30,000 troops is an extremely limited number in the context of an extended humanitarian deployment.

Given Britain's prominence among European militaries, limiting British capacity in this fashion seriously hampers the ability of Europe as a whole. Britain is not only the strongest military power in Europe, but also the one most inclined both ideologically and in recent history to engage in extended military operations, making it essential for bringing other European states on board with intervention. If the recent defence cuts portend a Britain whose attitudes towards the use of force closer resemble the rest of Europe, then Europe will be unlikely to be able to do anything military but act as a minor complement to the U.S. – bad news for believers in the concept of humanitarian military intervention. ☞

A post-war history of British intervention abroad





A feminine touch

Flickr user: The US Army

Alex Welsby looks into the introduction of Women into the Afghan army

Afghanistan is perhaps now a word synonymous with the previous decade, alongside others such as 'war on terror', Taliban, Iraq, 9/11 and Al Qaeda. These words and phrases are ingrained in British history and will carry a constant connotation of warfare and oppression for centuries to come. But what if it could symbolize something else, stepping out of its morbid shadow to allow a success story to briefly subdue its critics?

For the first time in over twenty years, women are now able to join the Afghan army as officers. The Afghan National Army is expected to double in size by 2014. Strengthening both military and policing ranks, twenty-nine women 'passed out' late last month to join 300 other recruits. Women originally served during Afghanistan's communist-backed regime in the 1980's but were not permitted to under the Taliban.

The recruitment drive began in February this year, inviting women aged between 19 and 35 years old with a minimum of nine years of education to enlist. However demand did not amount to supply; there were only 100 applications and 45 successful candidates. One woman, Laila Ibrahimy replied to the advertisement after encouragement from her husband who is currently an officer himself. She attributed her reasons for joining as building strength of character as well as serving her country. Indeed, as a married woman in her early thirties with three children, surely pursuing an army career would be problematic; childcare however is not a problem as she insists 'My husband's first wife will look after them'.

In the new programme, the women were trained by both coalition and Afghan

"I hope that the girls who have graduated from here do not forget their lessons and show for the people that Afghan girls can serve in the military."

army personnel, with each participating in identical training as the male officer candidates. Yet according to US Army First Sergeant Kristin Norton the greatest challenge was improving physical fitness as well as understanding the concept of time management and implementing leadership skills- perhaps we aren't as good at multitasking as originally thought. General David Peterson, the British commander of the Afghan Army Training Centre insisted that the ladies were all 'keen as mustard', citing their consistent professional manner and performance. Afghan Major Fahmima, one of the female candidate course instructors also expressed pride and confidence in the programme when stating 'I hope that these girls who have graduated from here do not forget their lessons and show for the people that Afghan girls can serve in the military'.

The programme has however been under a constant veil of secrecy with many candidates refusing to reveal their current career path outside close family and friends. Threats from the Taliban and insurgent groups still abound but there is a deeper problem with social acceptance, many are unable to view women in a military capacity. One recruit stated 'My male relations believe this to be shameful, but I always try to do the opposite of what they tell me.'

But how are we to perceive this announcement? As First Sergeant Norton stated, it granted the women a military structure, a framework of forces almost, to adopt to their daily life- but surely such a suggestion has been the mainstay of Afghan daily life for the past nine years? With the women initially stationed in financial and logistics positions, how can it be considered a move towards gender equality when these women's capabilities are confined to a defence back office?

One recruit stated 'My male relations believe this to be shameful, but I always try to do the opposite of what they tell me.'

With President Obama's deadline for US troops to begin withdrawing from the region only nine months away, can this women's initiative be regarded as a quantitative need rather than the gender equality it initially suggests. Officer training has only been granted to women in a bid to secure a 10 per cent female contingent. The BBC reports that military commanders in Kabul are utilising the ability of this training programme to provide a smooth transition to Afghan led forces. Afghanistan's current military clout is estimated to only be around 136,000 soldiers, leading the Afghan National Army's chief of staff General Shir Mohammed Kharimi to reveal 'We must work harder to increase the size and quality of the army in the coming years.'

A quantitative measure is therefore not the only solution. Perhaps it is a naïve assumption to grant solely Western forces the responsibility to devolve skill and expertise to the Afghan National Army. With the recent rise in insurgence in Helmand province and the 346th British casualty this week, this rate being four times that of their American counterparts, our involvement in Afghanistan is playing out to a constant audience of public concern.

Have these Afghan women therefore, simply provided a convenient exit, the back door out of a conflict we cannot solve? With military expenditure slashed last week, military as well as socio-political defeats are looming on the horizon. An element of gender equality deserves to be acknowledged, but this sole triumph is obviously disproportionate to the amount of fatalities and casualties. It is by no means the success story we have all been waiting for; the feminine touch has therefore proved futile. ☘

The Medium-Paced Lane

Our columnist **Calum Young** lives the high life as Tyler Crème Brûlée

There are no walls in my life. Boundaries social and physical mean nothing to me. Whenever I plump my pampered arse down in one of the cities I call home, Milan, Paris, Saint-Tropez, Monaco, there's a collective intake of breath in the vicinity. Why? Because the inhabitants know that it will not be long before the orgy of hedonism which is my life moves on to rest in yet another exotic location. I am just a couple of Martinis and one first class BA seat away from being somewhere else. This threat, the threat of a city without the presence of Europe's premier Raconteur, gives a nervous tension to every society event I attend. Paris, for example, without Tyler Crème Brûlée would hardly be Paris at all. So (on with my column, which isn't really a column - it's just me being paid to relate

I am just a couple of Martinis and one first class BA seat away from being somewhere else

the extravagant eccentricities of my existence to the less fortunate). Last Friday I was sitting in Annabelle's chewing the fat with a couple of hedge fund supremos. Dinner, eight courses of Beluga based bacchanalia lay at the pit of my stomach, and I was rounding things off with a couple of flat whites. The chat turned to wealth and I eased back into my leather

recliner knowing that in this conversation, as in all conversations, I could be at my smug, arrogant, hated best. I glanced over at my personal assistant Alexander who was carefully decanting some Chateau Petrus (I won't finish any meal without it) when our eyes met across the dining room. Instinctively I knew what he was

Unless a restaurant is run by an old Etonian I won't go in it

thinking. And he thought 'Tyler, we could distill some of the sweaty moist mulch from beneath your glistening arm-pits and sell it as an amuse-bouche at the next restaurant we open together'.

Cut to somewhere in Asia, our 747 sharked out of the sky on Thursday morning. The Annabelle's sweat selling idea had been capital. I had already found six well-heeled backers and we were going into production on the next business day. I laced-up my Italian brogues and poured over my schedule for the next 24 hours. Sitting playfully next to me, Alexander was riding shot-gun, his effeminate hands pouring my morning tea into Premier First's best china. (n.b since turning 32 I have made it a policy not to let anyone other than the pilot sit in front of me on the plane).

A flash of my black AMEX and we were through customs as I starred down the barrel of a day spent schmoozing with assorted government big wigs and assembled business leaders. I have given up on passports, anything given to the

population of an entire country doesn't belong anywhere near my breast-pocket. Alexander, ever ready to lend a hand, promptly reminded me of the state we were in, and the day buzzed on.

Come nightfall, my business over, we retired to an old-school friend's joint just out of the city centre. Octavius' restaurant commands the best views of the skyline, you simply must look him up the next time you're in Asia. In fact unless a restaurant is run by an old Etonian I actually won't go in it (that's another one of my rules, one which caused mummy undue duress on our family trip to Kenya, there aren't many old Etonians in Kenya, I was positively anorexic for the three weeks - great larks).

And when you're chatting with Octavius, do enquire as to how his polo career is going. He's sensitive about it but

since his family's money went kaput some time back in the 17th century, Octavius has fallen into that dreadfully unfortunate sector of humanity which actually has to buy their own furniture. On reflection it's a Godless world.

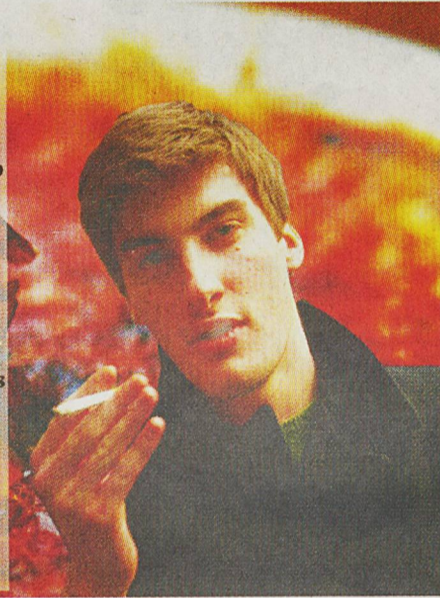
Of course my own financial history isn't unblemished. In 1970 when Daddy's shares in Rhodesia tanked we lost over 20 million. And remember, 20 million was a lot of money back then.

I'll keep you posted on how branding my sweat goes. At the moment we are think of calling it 'The Oozings of Crème Brûlée'. How I didn't think of it before is a great mystery, an enigma for all mankind equivalent to how I ended up writing for the FT. Ta-ra until next week - Tyler babes. xxxx

TYLER CRÈME BRÛLÉE IN NUMBERS

7 years old - joined the mile high club
12 alcohol units consumed daily
18 illegitimate children fathered
217 cocaine lines snorted
480 ft length of yacht
£34,000 amount paid to write this column
100,000,000 weekly air miles

This column bears no resemblance to the FT Weekend columnist, Monocle editor, and cosmopolitan metrosexual Tyler Brûlé



A Greasy deal

Pern-Yi Quah evaluates the breadth of Venezuela's oil diplomacy

Hugo Chavez has done it again. Last week, Venezuela signed an agreement with Russia on co-operation in the atomic sphere, with Russia agreeing to build a nuclear power plant in Venezuela in the near future. In return, Russian companies will receive ownership of some oil companies in Venezuela, as well as access to the country's vast oil reserves. This is bound to infuriate the United States, because it is a break in the comfortable status quo that it currently enjoys. The influence that it has over the Latin American continent will soon be diluted and fall into Russian hands.

Ever since becoming president in 1999, Chavez has gained international recognition for his antagonistic stance towards the United States because of its "intrusive" foreign policy around the world, especially, Latin America. This brand of criticism has led him to enact his own so-called "oil diplomacy", which consists of using Venezuela's oil wealth to impose his own vision of Latin American integration and autonomy, all the while reducing American influence on the continent.

Venezuela has had close ties with Russia for some time now, and Chavez's recent trip to Russia to conclude this recent

nuclear deal is his 9th time in the country. Previous deals have included military and technological sales in the region of a few billion dollars, but the true cornerstone of the Venezuela-Russia co-operation is this nuclear deal. It required huge amounts of political will to be enacted because it was bound to "provoke different emotions" in countries such as the United States and will bind the two nations for at least five to ten years. The agreement thus reinforces their desire for co-operation and the win-win situation that this deal brings about.

But Venezuela is not alone in wishing to create a "multi-polar" world. Russia has long been pursuing this end-goal as well. Apart from agreeing to build nuclear power plants in Venezuela, Russia has also agreed to do so in places such as Iran and China - attempts to project its influence in these key nascent world and regional powers. Simultaneously, these nuclear deals will also serve to strengthen the dominance of Iran and China by providing them access to nuclear energy technology, as well as allowing them the possibility to be free from being overly oil-dependent. The growth of influence that Russia, Iran and China are experiencing is being achieved at the expense of the United States'. This is because influence

is really a zero-sum game. Therefore this recent nuclear deal is truly a convergence of the two countries' vision for a different tomorrow - one that does not include the continued hegemony of the United States.

Aside from its ideological motivations, Venezuela also has some practical reasons for wanting to invite Russian nuclear technology into its borders. Chavez's Venezuela is currently too dependent on oil - it is the Western hemisphere's largest oil exporter and more than 90% of its total export revenue comes from oil sales - making it particularly vulnerable to oil prices. And so, nuclear power plants in the country will help diversify its energy sector and therefore to wean itself off its export economy's dependence on oil sales. Some decidedly witty critics have made the analogy that Venezuela importing a new energy source is like "Alaska importing more snow". But this particular display of wit is just that - an analogy, and no more. Because the potential threats from the fluctuation of oil prices will have a huge impact on the economy of the country, and consequently the lives of many Venezuelans. Even Russia, which derives 60% of its export revenues from oil sales, is actively diversifying its export economy in order to make it less vulnerable to such

fluctuations.

This recent nuclear deal should noticeably dilute American influence in the Latin American continent. Previously, only United States and European companies have had stakes in the building and ownership of nuclear power plants in Latin America, courtesy of Brazil and Argentina, but they have now got company. By allowing Russia into its country, Venezuela has also ceded a certain influence to it within the region. Russian companies now control various oil companies and reserves which supply the energy for much of the Western hemisphere. Venezuela and Russia have truly taken quite a step in creating a "multi-polar" world order indeed.

Upon conclusion of this deal, and true to his flamboyant style, Chavez praised Russia and presented the Russian president with several bars of dark chocolate, cans of banana jam and cocoa powder. Oh, and there was ample mention of the "Yankee empire".

Measured musings



Features would like to apologise for two mis-spellings in last week's issue: Moses Lemuel and Daniel Lahey respectively wrote 'A love for the tragic' and 'The Stuxnet stop'.

What is most striking about Wednesday's Comprehensive Spending Review announcement is not the amount of protest emerging from the usually combative British media, but rather the breadth of its criticism. Some, for instance, claim that the NHS, despite its ring-fenced budget and the promise to continued real increases in spending, is 'a volcano ready to explode'. Others argue in earnest that the trimming isn't yet ambitious enough: according to this line of comment, a further rollback of the state is imperative to safeguarding the UK away from financial collapse. All will at least agree that the judge of these claims will be the national level of

Reviewing fairness

growth a few quarters after the measures begin kicking in. Yet, in considering this, speculations resume; if, as many predict, the government's gamble does come to fruition, what will be its response? Naturally, it seems to make sense that the cuts should hold. The current political climate which allows to credibly commit to such measures is rare, and taking as given that reducing the budget deficit is a matter of necessity, there is no reason why swallowing the pill should be deferred to a later, improbable date. That seems like too easy an argument to make, and it is. Popular pressure married to the complaints of the private sector will be difficult to resist in the light of a ruling coalition divided in numerous ideological strands. And it is unlikely that the prob-

lem will lie between the Prime Minister and his deputy, who hold close views on the matter, and will rather occur within each party. A parallel battle is being fought over the conception of fairness. This week, the Institute for Fiscal Studies and Nick Clegg have had a head-off over the definition of the concept, the latter claiming that reducing fairness down to an analysis of initial losers and gainers is too simplistic. In this respect, he is right - if only because the notion of what is 'fair' has no value unless tied to a benchmark. For instance, the decrease in public sector jobs is in part justified by the rationale that civil servants were enjoying 'unfair advantages'. Yet it is easy to counter-argue that perhaps the unfairness lies in that

WHAT IF...

...England held on?

Election Candidate

Labour's electoral victory at the 1970 General Election did not come as a surprise to many commentators. Harold Wilson's decision to call the poll for the middle of the World Cup campaign was a risky one, but England's victory against West Germany the day before the ballot boxes opened proved a boon for the government. Labour were returned for a record third term in office, albeit with a substantially reduced majority of 16. As the Prime Minister relaxed in his Liverpool hotel room, the Leader of the Opposition was forced to endure even more rumblings from his disappointed backbenchers. Ted Heath had never enjoyed a firm base of support from his party and despite his original intention to remain as leader, pressure from the 1922 Committee forced him to resign and stand again in the leadership ballot which was held the following January. The man who was to beat him in the contest shocked many commentators.

Keith Joseph had been an anathema for many moderate Conservative MPs since the early 1960's owing to his unrepentant right-wing political views. Despite this, the effects of a struggling economy and a new found desire for radical policies allowed the Shadow Secretary of State for Social Services to win on the second ballot, easily defeating the former Chancellor Reginald Maudling. Joseph's views on race relations had proved highly controversial in the media but they were ones that were also shared by his new Shadow Chancellor, Enoch Powell.

Despite welcoming the election of such right-wing opposition, the Labour Party's victory honeymoon was short-lived. Strike action by the Union of Communication Workers and NUT coupled with the government's decision to join the EEC resulted in a period of deep unpopularity for the government. The issue of European Community membership also caused splits to develop within the Labour Party, culminating in the resignation of the Health Secretary Peter Shore after the government was forced into using the Parliament Act to force through the legislation. Beseated by election defeats, industrial action and a growing party schism, it was surprising that the defeat in the 1974 election, prompted by a confidence motion, was not greater. The Joseph Ministry would prove to be one of the most controversial in British history. A tough Immigration Bill, measures to privatise British Leyland and the first wave of radical trade union reform were just some of the measures in the 1974 Queen's Speech, as was a far more hard-line policy towards Northern Ireland. The Labour opposition, beset by ideological splits, was forced into a divisive leadership election, eventually choosing Roy Jenkins over Michael Foot by the narrowest of margins. An upswing in industrial action by the Trade Unions only increased the Prime Minister's resolve in seeing out the crisis, an area he was ably assisted in by Chancellor Powell and the Industry Secretary, Julian Amery. The trade union reforms passed the Commons with only token opposition from the government benches, although leading figures of the moderate faction of the party, notably Ian Gilmour, abstained. Keith Joseph's next challenge, the issue of sectarian violence in Northern Ireland, would prove to be far harder to deal with...

To be Continued Next Week.

MICHAELMAS TERM ELECTIONS

MANIFESTOS

ACADEMIC BOARD

Adam Zafar

Each year we are given a choice between establishment candidates representing various interest groups. It doesn't have to be that way. I am running for Academic Board because its time to move beyond the divisive politics of the past. Our Union is diverse: we are made up of women and men, gays and straights, blacks and whites, latinos and asians, and believers and non-believers. But make no mistake, we are one Union. I will fight everyday for our common values: better teaching quality. As LSE continues to slide in the rankings, it is clear that merely checking boxes for teaching evaluations isn't working. I propose to supplement this with interviewing a sample of students for each class teacher at the end of each term to find out what's wrong and what works. Now's the time to turn the page on the past. Vote ZaFAR and we'll go FAR together.

Christopher Wilford

COMMITTED TO SEARCH FOR CAUSES! **I'm a smooth operator and will ensure YOUR voice is HEARD** I have been on staff- student liaison committees in the past and am active in campus life** I will be an effective conduit for your academic concerns and will be transparent, accountable and APPROACHABLE**Any problems with teaching/ course content? You can come to me, I will raise them!** I came to the LSE to complete my post graduate degree because, as the motto of the School states, I wish to know the causes of things. LSE has an international reputation in the social sciences: both in the consolidation of existing knowledge and in innovation. We need to ensure this reputation is maintained and enhanced to guarantee that we get value for OUR MONEY; to rest assured that by investing in OUR EDUCATION we are contributing to OUR SOCIETY!

Philip Kenworthy

Choice of Assessment Type - Too many courses at LSE are 100% examination assessment. This anachronistic system victimises students who don't suit the examination format. There should be more options to conduct extended studies/essays as units. *Free Course Packs* - LSE can afford to subsidise the cost of course packs. Where are your fees going? *Course Reps* - Raising profiles of course reps who are supposed to liaise with the department to help address student concerns. Who is your course rep? Most people don't know. Course reps need to be easier to contact and communicate with. *Rigorous Teacher Training* - Being an expert in a subject doesn't make you an expert teacher. More rigorous training for phd students teaching classes would benefit both students and teachers. *Personal Tutors* - Many people barely know their personal tutor. The effectiveness of this pastoral role relies on increasing contact time between students and tutors.

MATURE AND PART TIME STUDENTS OFFICER

John Kenny

I am John Kenny and I am standing for election as the Mature and Part Time Students' Officer, because I believe I can bring experience of both circumstances to the benefit of students. Had I been a student here at the time, I would have fully supported previous campaigns such as The Living Wage Campaign, and Protect our Nursery. I am well aware of the problems that the spending cuts and possible tuition fee rises will bring to mature and part time students and I would if elected vigorously defend your interests. I would also actively support the Unions current campaigns on issues like Resits, Wednesday Afternoons Free, Futureproof Planet and Students not Suspects. I hope you will elect me to this role.

GENERAL COURSE PRESIDENT

Adam Talbot

Adam Talbot has been tested before. As Speaker of Georgetown University's Student Association Senate, he faced down rogue bureaucracies, obstinate administrators, and powerful special interests in a relentless campaign to ensure that the voice of the everyday student was heard. During Adam's tenure, the Senate successfully expanded the scope of student activities at Georgetown University, laid the groundwork for a further doubling of student activities money this year, and brought new and exciting events to the student body. This is the track record that Adam will bring to the presidency, and in that capacity he will fight hard to expand the scope of events that cater to General Course students. While we may feel outnumbered, his dauntless attitude will ensure that our small corner of the LSE is heard loud and clear. It's time to embrace proven leadership for the General Course - it's time to make Adam Talbot our president.

Graham Brookie

As General Course President, I will focus on three things - events, speakers and advocacy. I pledge to plan and facilitate events to keep GC students engaged with the campus community. Ideas include a super bowl party and a competitive beer pong tournament. General Course students are also paying substantially more than UK students to go to LSE. As such, we should have access to more speakers like the recent Howard Davies lecture, given the abundance of luminaries on campus. Lastly, we are here for one year. During that time particular students are bound to have issues arise, and I will be more than willing to advocate on your behalf with the GC Dean and other campus bodies in whatever ways that are helpful. I hope to have a great year here at LSE and wish the same for my fellow General Coursers. Remember to VOTE BROOKIE...Specific Guy, General Course.

Monisha Kumar

Fellow General Course students, We are looking ahead to a year brimming with potential, and I believe that I have the passion and the commitment to realize this potential. If I am elected, I will strive to not only increase interaction within the General Course, but also with British students and the LSE international community. Besides Super Bowl parties and Thanksgiving dinners, I want us to try our skills at cricket, the national sport of England, experience London's alternative culture, and celebrate our internationalism with pot-luck feasts. I have the vision, experience and support to make this, and your ideas, reality. As Programming Chair and Vice-governor of my residential community at my home university, I organized events for over 400 students, every week. I promise to use my dedication, and my knowledge of London, having completed high school here, to enhance your General Course experience.

Rohan Batra

"As your General Course President my main goal will be to create a GC Yearbook. However, such a goal can only be possible after a years' worth of fun-filled activities for the 300 of us. As such, it is my hope to plan a Lent term party, end of year social, and much more throughout our course here. This is in addition to voicing your concerns at SU meetings and working to improve LSE as a whole (aka more beanbags and hole punchers in the library). I will also work with Dean Hoffman to plan events for the General Course. I promise to inform everyone of upcoming GC events through a packed social calendar on Facebook as well as on a General Course website. Together we will have an amazing year in London. The fun has just begun! VOTE for ROHAN BATRA: GENERAL COURSE REPRESENTATIVE. www.rohanbatra.com

COURT OF GOVERNORS

Arsen Fazlovic

Imagine LSE in 10 years

A thriving place of thought and analysis...or...training camp for preaching tools and cases? An inclusive and open environment for pioneers...or... exclusive club of legacies? A distinguished university and academic brand...or...JUST ANOTHER GRADUATE SCHOOL?

Now imagine your vote can change the course taken

Decisions in the Court of Governors will affect the QUALITY OF YOUR EDUCATION and the LONG-TERM VALUE OF YOUR DEGREE!

What is to be done

I advocate quality in teaching and service delivery, sustainability of school policies and collaboration between students, staff and alumni TO PROTECT LSE's STANDING against rushed government actions and international academic competition.

How I can contribute

I am a 25 years old postgraduate student of Public Management and Governance. I have worked in public sector consulting and served as class representative and Senator back at university. Furthermore, I am an active and passionate social democrat.

Jack Tindale

Dear student. I will keep my manifesto brief as you clearly have a great deal of them to get through. I'm a Second Year Government and History student. In my time as an LSE student, I have served as UGM Chair and been on the executive for several societies. In the former, I have promoted fairness and freedom of speech for the entire student body at our main union assembly. I'm aware to the concerns and issues facing the entire student body, not just the loudest. If elected to the Board of Governors, I will continue to act as an open and impartial voice for the Student Body here, especially as we move into uncertain time with regards to university funding. Vote for me and vote for fairness, accountability and representation for the student body at the LSE. These are not just meaningless terms, I will act upon them

Genius Garnett

My campaign, LSE Moving Forward, is about improving the experience for LSE students in concrete and realistic ways. I will work with the university to improve the usability of LSE For You, Moodle, and LSE Wallet and to create one web-portal where students can access all of this information (plus email) without multiple logins. I will work to expand the number of printers and computer workstations and dramatically increase the number of Sofa-Bean-Bags in the library.

I would also like to see the university set up and facilitate a voluntary mentorship program between upper year students or recent graduates and incoming students. This would help new students by connecting them with opportunities in the community and providing them with social and personal support.

These are practical proposals which can be implemented in the course of a year and which will keep LSE Moving Forward

Ashok Kumar

Last year you elected me to hold fire to the feet of power. Since then I have been working tirelessly to build the freeze on fees campaign to make LSE what it once was; a progressive institution open to all. Last week the biggest cuts in peacetime history were announced and higher education was one of its victims. The review of higher education funding declared that students should leave university with almost £40,000 worth of debt. LSE students are some of the most dissatisfied with their education. Many leave feeling dejected and disappointed. This is not what the student experience should be. I have already sat on council for a few months (which is made up of a few member of court and makes executive decisions) for the last few months and have seen the way in which it tries to disenfranchise students. As the Education Sabbatical I am perfectly placed to go to court and go to the council and give students your voice back.

NUS DELEGATE

Eden Sweden Deck

I'm Eden (yes, like the paradise garden!) and I'm a fresher running to be one of the LSE delegates for the NUS conference. LSE is a small university. We must be represented FAIRLY amongst bigger student institutions. So it's vital that we have strong representatives who ensure our needs are not ignored. I want to campaign for ** A STOP to the rise in fees as recommended in the Browne Report. Our LSESU campaign shows YOU want this. ** Subsidised membership for London students for the Barclays Cycle Hire Scheme (£10 annual membership - reduced from £45). This makes our travel easier, cheaper and greener. ** Cheaper international money transfers for international students. ** My previous experience includes being Head Boy, organising a literary festival critically acclaimed by Time Out, organising charity events and working for the International Red Cross. VOTE FOR EDEN AND LET ME TAKE YOU TO PARADISE.

Jason Brown

Hi, my name is Jason Brown from Hong Kong and I'm looking to become LSE's representative to the NUS. Your experience with the acronym NUS probably extends no further than pulling out a discount card to purchase goods. Relating this card to the 7 million students represented by the NUS may be hard to grapple, but I am up for the task to incorporate your concerns to the NUS. What I've taken to so far includes; supporting freeze the fees; upholding students not suspects; integrating LSE's international students (streamlining visa applications would be a good start!); pushing for community volunteer societies and consolidating the post-graduate undergraduate divide. I am enthusiastic to discuss your matters and formulate motions to bring to the attention of the NUS at their annual conference next year. Towards this, allow me to ask for your support.

Asif Hussain

Reasons to vote ASIF HUSSAIN #1:

- Post graduates make up more than half the student population at LSE. We need to do more to get them actively involved in student life. I will do this by increasing participation at all levels
 - International students make LSE what it is. I will campaign against extortionate fees and for less exploitation/more services for our international students
 - I will continue unabated the campaign against the rise in tuition fees, and also tackle issues of spying on students on campus.
 - I will restore sanity to an increasingly mad world
- Don't be Insane- Vote HUSSAIN!"

MANIFESTOS CONTINUED OVERLEAF

POSTGRADUATE SABBATICAL OFFICER

Abhishek Amal Sanyal

"This is the first time that LSE is going to have a PGSO and therefore YOU need to choose wisely. This is my third postgraduate degree and I have eight years of work experience, which means that I can immediately start working towards improving YOUR postgraduate experience at LSE. Wouldn't YOU like postgraduate-focused Careers Fairs where YOUR Advanced Degree and work experience are given importance? Wouldn't YOU like to get career counselling from the Careers Service that is best suited for a postgraduate? If YOU are here at the LSE to pursue a "fast-paced" Masters Degree then why don't YOU have an enhanced book-borrowing capability on YOUR Library Card, and access to course materials, careers information and IT Services in advance? How about postgraduate-focused Social Events, and Societies & Clubs that have a healthy postgraduate membership? 55% students at LSE are postgraduates so wouldn't it be great for YOU to interact more with the remaining 45%? My final question therefore is: Why are YOU still in the shadows? If YOU have read this completely, then most probably YOU are a postgraduate at LSE and YOU need to vote for Abhishek so that I can move YOU out of the shadows!

Ambreen Malik

My name is Ambreen Malik & I hail from Pakistan. I am the first female from my family to go to a school, college, university & eventually have a career. I have been a banker for last 8 years before starting my year at LSE. Why I think I am worthy of your vote is because my work experience has imparted certain skills to my personality which are needed for this position. Be it the science of convincing the decision makers, the art of negotiation, meeting the deadlines, working under pressure or getting the job done on time. Also being an international student I have better understanding of the issues associated with the PGT students after experiencing the issues myself. From the struggle to get a student visa on time to hike in the tuition fees, funding & scholarship related issues, the lack of student accommodation for PGT students or simply being new to the system. Every story is my story. My background has imparted me with the fighting spirit. Giving up is not an option & breaking the glass ceiling is mandatory. I strongly believe that when right minds & the right ideas come together, impossible things become possible.

Brandon Patty

Brandon Patty—For an Equal Voice. As the Postgraduate Sabbatical Officer, I will improve the LSE experience so you can focus more on your studies and less on navigating the school's bureaucracy. Agenda: ALL: Increase the IT resources on campus through more printers, scanners and computers plus better information on availability and issues** Improve visa application information and guidance** Increase LSE alumni and employment networking worldwide** Establish an Events Planning Committee to develop and promote events on campus. POSTGRADUATES: Push for exam scores notification as soon as marked from all departments** To aid students in applying for jobs before graduation, create a new classification that will reflect completion of all degree requirements. UNDERGRADUATES: Review alumni postgraduate study fees discount** Call for a guarantee that any fees increase only affect incoming students. Together, we can accomplish this agenda and ensure LSE remains a leading university in the world.

Daniel Kroop

Hello! My name is Daniel Kroop and I would be honored to represent you as the Postgraduate Officer. I grew up in Los Angeles and served for three years as a Harvard University student government executive, where I worked to deliver real improvements in student life. My proudest achievement was coordinating a taxi-sharing program for transportation to the airport before Spring Break. We saved students over \$4500! I'm currently the course rep for the MSc in Public Policy, and I also lead society outreach for Freeze the Fees and serve on the International Taskforce to improve the student visa process. I will work to: *Reduce printing costs by adding coordinated printing labs *Create a Postgraduate-Undergraduate Advising Programme *Bring career recruiters to campus *Improve advising on dissertations and programme-switching *Publish a weekly newsletter with free tickets to society events *Arrange mock exams in Lent term *Pilot an LSE April Activities Programme for enrichment sessions in sport, drama, art, and career development *Stand up for women and the LGBT community *Build a united student life with more use of hall bars and karaoke and trivia nights. I ask for your vote and promise that I'll get real things done for all students!

Griffin Carpenter

"Dear voter, if you've made it to this manifesto I won't waste your time with campaign promises or the standard election buzzwords. The simple fact is that no one knows what this year will hold – either you believe a candidate's character or you don't. I'm opinionated, I'm outspoken, and my campaign is based on what I care about most: student issues. You may not always agree with me on every issue and the truth is that in my previous experience as a student representative I've often found myself in the minority on most decisions. Yet these characteristics are the very reason this position was created; to give a voice to graduate students who are a consistent and silent minority in the students' union. With your vote I can be that voice. Democratically yours,***Griffin Carpenter: Building student life, not a CV***"

Hardi Shahadu

Why Me? I have been active student leader and advocate from the primary to the university levels, always willing to ask the questions mostly avoided, and ever ready to take the risk of challenging the status quo, if the need to do so arises and no one wants to rise to the occasion. Please join me lets change the poor representation of postgrads in LSESU.

If Elected? I will initiate the process of transforming the Postgrad Sabb position to a post-study full time post to allow for greater attention and effectiveness.

Advocate for increment of postgrad representatives to reflect proportion and equality.

Initiate a plan to create an independent postgrad student representative body to work for the interest of postgrads within the LSESU framework. Create LSE postgrad-Alumni network to organise functions for the benefit of postgrads.

Your Role? Share the ideas, convince friends, and VOTE with all your friends for me, for change, and for LSESU diversity! If it has been thought of, it's possible; if it's possible, it's worth trying; and if it's worth trying, it's worth trying it now! Yes, we can! And we shall!

Ivaylo Vasilev

HEY JUDE – Three Key Things: 1 (a guarantee) You will get weekly reports in my personal blog studrep.blogspot.com since I take accountability about my work seriously; 2 (activity-wise) I will meet informally postgrad course reps from various departments on a weekly basis to know, discuss and try to help their problems and ideas since they matter; 3 (future dev.) lobby for more postgrad representatives than just the postgrad sabb. officer – DON'T MAKE IT BAD – relentless hammering on students' say in policy-making on matters pertaining to their lives, aka freeze the fees, since nobody seems to ask and they have to see why they should – TAKE A SAD SONG – the status quo – AND MAKE IT BETTER – I've sat on a range of committees as studrep, once introducing on the agenda and pushing through completion the construction of a coffee lounge in my previous university's library. I'm quite opinionated, have published many op-eds in my time, and for six years debated and have also coached as president of a debating society. I take much pride in graduating from the American University in Bulgaria and the Plovdiv English Language School in my home town. Thanks for your time!

Nour Birouti

"NOUR BIROUTI for Post-Grad Sabbatical! There's only a short time to make friends, learn, and explore, and as post-grad representative I'll dedicate myself to help you do that. Here's what I'll fight for: (1) Let's start a post-grad LSE tradition! : An event like "Silly Sports Day", because nothing brings out better camaraderie than obstacle races and tugs of war. Perhaps even undergrads vs post-grads! (2) Allow groups of students to apply for SUBSIDIES FOR ACTIVITIES! (e.g. if you'd like to see a show, send an email to your classmates. If 10 are interested, tickets can be subsidized.) (3) POST-GRAD SOCIAL SPACE – we need a place to nap/chill! ** I promise efficiency, dedication and democracy: *I'll make sure a good idea is an implemented idea. *I'll LISTEN to what YOU need. *Different people have different concerns and desires. I'll do all I can for everyone to get the most out of their LSE experience. *I'll bring tonnes of experience (I ran housing communities in university, and was president of several non-profit chapters in graduate school). *WE'VE GOT A GREAT SCHOOL, A GREAT CITY, AND GREAT PEOPLE – LET'S BRING THEM ALL TOGETHER! NOUR – YOUR FRIEND IN THE STUDENTS' UNION!

VOTE ONLINE AT: <https://elections.lse.ac.uk/elections/>

Voting opens: 27th October, 10AM

Closes: 28th October, 7PM

STUDENT MEMBERS ON THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Gabi Kobrin

My skills: team worker, good coordinator, passionate and dedicated. My promise investments fair for all Student interest' always put first Accessible/Transparent Easy access/operation for all societies. I am a second year BA Geography student with a strong commitment to our Students Union. I have the determination, strength and skills to keep our executive in check and I will work tirelessly to ensure SU funds are used wisely and for worthwhile causes. Being able to look at the bigger picture and thinking about the future is essential when deciding what the SU should be spending money on!

Gaurav Srivastava

In short: TRUST me for Trustee! A trustee must have a strong track record of protecting and advocating student interests. This is what I did during my first year on the Students' Union Constitution and Steering Committee. I helped to make the SU more transparent, more helpful and more democratic, by creating assemblies to empower EVERY student, particularly under-represented groups, to campaign for change. For this work, I was one of only 6 students to receive the SU's Outstanding Contribution Award. This year, however, with the School in unprecedented financial difficulty, our student experience is at risk, through the fees we pay, the teaching we receive, and the halls we live in. The SU needs Trustees who are in touch with the mainstream of the student body, and are passionate about devoting their time and energy to improve the lives of students at LSE. This is what I will do this year.

Khaled Shahin

"Change for the better! Make your choice the right choice for the Trustee board. Dedicated, Driven and Passionate, trust Khaled Shahin as YOUR Trustee!!

My agenda as a member of the board is as follows:-

- The students' are what matter, their voice needs to be heard! I will make sure they can speak up and be counted;
- Make sure there is a greater student understanding and awareness of the SU's engagements and activities;
- The students must be at the forefront of the SU's policies and strategy;
- To gage student feeling towards SU decisions and hence increase student involvement and say in these decisions- decisions which affect the students directly!
- The SU is there for the students, I want to make sure the students are being heard and involved where it matters!

For dedication and enthusiasm, make sure you vote Khaled Shahin for the Trustee Board, the ONLY choice to make!

Mariya Osadchy

A Leader, For a Change:

Outspoken: I say what needs to be said. As a student representative on the Board of Trustees I will not waver to speak for the student interest. I am passionate about what I believe and representing what you think: as member of the Board I will push forward progressive consensus.

Audacious: I speak out whenever I see inconsistency – unafraid of the consequences of inconvenient truths. I ardently believe in economically sustainable and progressive projects. Responsible for overseeing LSESU finance, I will ensure that long-term sustainability and student interest coincide.

Engaged: I care about the student – present and future – and will remain approachable and accessible. I will represent the student voice in both public forums – like the UGM and The Beaver – and in private forums – as member of the Board of Trustees. Transparency is key to keeping the Union accountable to the students of the LSE.

POSTGRADUATE SABBATICAL OFFICER CONTD

Mir Rahimi

"Mir For You!!! Why me? Because I believe in you! I believe you have the power to actualise your potential and achieve your goals. I believe you are the most talented and hardworking individuals who can change the world for the better. Some of you have travelled thousands of miles and have paid tens of thousands of pounds to study here. Also, some of you have put yourselves in huge debt (like me) in a hope that this experience would enable you to achieve and fulfil your dreams. But do we get the right support and attention? Despite that LSE is a world class institution; I believe the majority of us get forgotten and neglected. Therefore, I am promising to fight for the following, so we all get the right value for our time, effort and money, NOW!!! THIS YEAR. What we plan? Improved teaching quality i.e. smaller class sizes; Free text books; Free printing materials; Better Career Service; Departmental Common Room. How we do? Strong team of postgraduates; Monthly open meeting. My Experience: Former Student Union President; Student Ambassador for national students; Activity Leader/ Tutor for international students.

Seba Sio

I'm Seba Wali Sio, an MSc Student in Law and Accounting. Like so many of you, I come from a multicultural background. I'm from Kenya but I've lived in the US (NY state), Paris as well as Madrid. I've worked with an NGO called Success for Africa, which deals with development and empowerment of the youth and I've worked with UNWTO (United Nations World Tourism Organisation). I believe this experience has taught me diverse inter-personal communication skills and I consider myself very approachable.

I believe I'm best suited to be your post-graduate representative because I have an international background and experience with working for people from all over the world. I work well with a diverse crowd, but more importantly, it is also something I enjoy. What I can offer is someone to come to if you ever have a problem and if you want to chat about anything. I'll be your "go to person". Since this is a new position I want to make the most of it, not only to deal with queries you maybe be facing at LSE, but also rely on your input to shape the position into something truly useful for future generations to come.

Zack Beauchamp

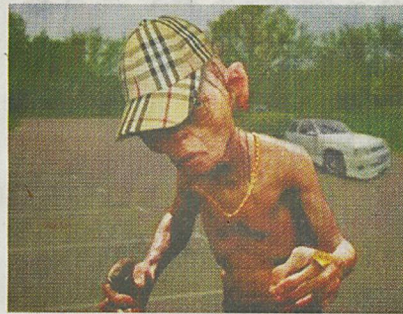
Let's be honest: there really aren't very many events where postgraduate students can meet each other. Sure, there was that one party at the beginning of the year, but...seriously? One party? Where the music was impossibly loud in the *talking* room? Sure, there's class, but that way you only really meet people in your program. And just sitting down at George IV, while fun, can get old. So as your postgraduate representative, I'll fix that. I'll work with the SU and the Administration to ensure that postgraduates will have new opportunities to socialize with each other (and, of course, drink cheaply). Everyone likes fun things (with cheap alcohol), so I'll get them to you. Also, postgrads tend to like cheap things, which would imply we would like the LSE gym. Unfortunately, the LSE gym is so cheap as to be a borderline safety habit. We need new equipment. I'll work to increase funding, so those of us who don't want to pay for a private gym (and the AU kids) can get our money's worth. I'll also work on the main SU campaigns, like the other candidates. But only I bring the party and the sports.

Asif Hussain

See manifesto from NUS Delegate

Va va vroom at Verve

One ring to rule them all, and in the darkness (of a Verve cavern) bind them



Perhaps the most comedic moment of last Wednesday was the was-it-wasn't-it fight between the rugby club and FC in the Tuns. Forming a human barricade around the karaoke machine just as FC's 'Stand By Me' was being played, rugby managed through sheer brute force and superior weight to stop any footballers reaching the microphone. Drinks were thrown, shirts were torn and just as, symbolically enough, each club captain was squaring up to each-other, resident DJ John muted the song. Apparently his glasses had been broken. Add to this screaming netball girls, and the picture is complete. But, true to LSE form, no actual battle took place.

These bitter relations were made manifest again on Friday night at Crush, albeit through different protagonists, namely a Geordie gym monkey and a quasi-American lacrosse player. Preceded by claims of (again) shirt ripping, drink throwing and arguments over Prince Main of Orange, scrappy comments about each-other's girlfriends led to a fracas on the 91 bus. Hero Olamulleryoghurt almost managed to keep the (vastly stronger) rugby representative at bay, but though he had control of the latter's hands, his teeth were still free. Lacrosse's key player now has patches of hair missing and a much deflated ego.

One would be too quick to assume, however, that the 'Lad' FC is quickly becoming 'the most hated club in the AU' (direct netball quote). Seemingly, we love to hate them, since afore-mentioned club captain managed to rack up an impressive four pulls a few Wednesdays ago. GG would propose these are mere innocent

freshers, however, and the shine of the FC is rapidly diminishing.

Speaking of crannies, a certain netball fresher straight out of the OC shamed herself last Wednesday on that same sofa. If babies could be made fully clothed, a Russo-American AU baby would most certainly be on the way. Not content with these PDAs, they proceeded back to his, where she chundered everywhere and was then carted off home in a cab. Further attempts on her part to bed this Russian porn star on Friday were similarly ill-fated. Since libel have disallowed the print of the photographic evidence from Wednesday, GG can simply recommend you stalk facebook until you see it before she reports it for her knickers being on show.

It has come to GG's attention the existence of a love triangle worthy of a place in Albert Square. The points of the triangle consisting of certain 4th team football player with an GNVQ in hair-dressing entirely funded by GHD straightening irons, and two Caledonian Road residents and 6th team Netball BFFs. His attempts to sneak into the bedroom of a well known Scouse footballer's wet-dream were rebuked. But ever the optimist, after failing to woo the first future-Hollyoaks starlet, he valiantly attempted to strut his way into the adjacent bedroom, a territory he had already animalistically marked in a previous week. GG hears the words "piss off" were uttered, and Sri Lanka's own aspiring Rusell Brand was sleeping alone.

GG overheard Edward Scissorhand's explanation for his lack of any sort of conversion, "I was juggling too many balls and managed to drop them all". Hopefully his ball skills are not so bad on the pitch.

GG suspects that this Wednesday at Temple Walkabout could provide a welcome distraction to the current tensions and unite the AU against a common enemy - the Poly. No doubt the Netball club will do what they do best: dress up themselves colourfully and provocatively. Yet no matter how suggestively the LSE girls will look in fancy-dress, they're positively angels in comparison to the Poly skets. The choice is yours boys...

Five things I hate about people who play FIFA too much...

J. Fellas

1. Well done you've scored. Now can you stop celebrating in an annoyingly obnoxious way? No cartwheels and back-flips. Most of all no running up to the half-way line, and back... and then back again. It is not only stupid; but you deserve to win a medal in the poo-poo Olympics for being a moron, and the medal is made of turd.

2. Didn't know we had Andy Townsend in the room. You are not a commentator; you don't know the players in real life so stop calling Woodgate, "Woody" and Kewell, "Harry". I will shove the controller in your pie hole and we won't hear a peep out of you again.

3. The "I haven't played in a while so I might be rubbish" line, is wearing thin. Once a player always a player. It might make you think you look good when you are thumping me as Burnley but I know you practice secretly at night.

4. I don't care if PES is better than Fifa. I enjoy being able to get Liam Lawrence to bring it down the wing. Playing as Bibier Bogba is boring. I have bought Fifa now and will continue to play it even if it sucks away at my soul.

Finally... 5. It's injury time. 93rd minute. Goal kick, you quickly pass the ball out. The goalkeeper messes it up. Darren Bent scores. We've all been there, you look like a plank, your housemate is cheering in your face and even Bento is pointing out at the screen laughing at you. What's worse, it's your own fault.

What a waste of time, I could have been in C120 pretending to do work this whole bleeding time.

LSE SPORT RESULTS

Attach:

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Athl
Unic

LSE Athletics Union Running:
London Colleges League race 1 men's (5miles):1st R.Axe (Brunell) 25.56, 16th.R.Anderson 27.38, 48thLDazon 30.55, 52nd N.Converse 31.08
a few seconds ago · Comment · Like · Promote

Athl
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LSE Athletics Union Men's Rugby
LSE Rugby 1st XV 15-17 Essex 1st XV
about a minute ago · Comment · Like · Promote

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LSE Athletics Union Football:
LSE 1st XI 6-1 LSE 2s XI
LSE 4th XI 2-1 KCLMS 3rd XI
LSE 5th XI 2-2 RUMS 2nd XI
LSE 6th XI 4-1 Goldsmiths 2nd XI
LSE 7th XI 2-7 Kings 5th XI
about a minute ago · Comment · Like · Promote

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LSE Athletics Union Mixed Lacrosse:
LSE 7 - 0 Royal Holloway
2 minutes ago · Comment · Like · Promote

Athl
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LSE Athletics Union Women's Basketball
LSE 1st 31-46 Royal Holloway
3 minutes ago · Comment · Like · Promote

Athl
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LSE Athletics Union Netball
LSE Netball 1st 37-29 Imperial 1st
LSE Netball 6th 42-6 LSE Netball 1st
LSE Netball 2nd 42-17 Buckinghamshire 2nd
3 minutes ago · Comment · Like · Promote

Athl
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LSE Athletics Union Mixed Lacrosse:LSE 7 - 0 Royal Holloway
4 minutes ago · Comment · Like · Promote

If you dont see your results here, email every-one's favourite Communication Officer, Mrs Megan Smedley-Protheroe to ensure publication. She is so good at communicating, she forgot to mention that Men's Tennis 1sts beat the 2nds 8-2

TORSO OF THE WEEK



Halloween

Meet in the 3 Tuns @
7:30pm for an evening of AU
revelry in fancy dress

Followed by a ghostly trip to
Temple Walkabout

£3 entry on the door
with AU card

Sport

The Beaver | 26 October 2010



**Inside: Gossip
Gollum and a plethora
of sporting results**

Yet another joke about cocks...

Alex Avolonitis

The dawn of a new era as Nobel Prize winning Snavonalapopalpalides takes over the badminton club. For the first time in years, a multi-cultural and multi-talented committee has taken its reign on the badminton club, and soon, the AU.



Our resident big boy, Matthew De Jesus, rolling under the preferred name of Zeus in recent years has once again joined the team, using his exemplary racquet skills as well as intimidating posture to scare away the multitude of poly opponents that LSE Badminton face each season, especially the archetypal poly opponent of St Tarts. There are rumours in the mix of this unconventional badminton player/rugby player to be' is training for Mrs LSE.



The committee, including Neil '92% in Econ B' Shah has had an absolute tour this year with a record 107 people at the AU Welcome Party - impressive, I must say. Guiding initiations, Shah attempted to comply with the ever hilarious Alcohol Policy on the teams' fresher's - of which, there are only two. Though, they do too, deserve a special mention, if not for their ASBO antics, mooning in front of the NAB, or press-up races in the street, then for their half decent racquet expertise, which will most probably win the league this year.

“ Our resident big boy, Matthew De Jesus...has once again joined the team, using his exemplary racquet skills as well as intimidating posture to scare away the multitude of poly-opponents that LSE Badminton face each season ”

A new dawn for the club has seen a strong ladies team, once again. With the loss of our International Malaysian Champion, we have been graced with the presence of a Czech Model - with whom the rugby team were no less than impressed on Wednesday. Maz Fletcher... watch out!

On to serious business now... With a minor demise of the men's team last year, they are back with vengeance. Playing

Queen 'Poly' Mary this week, with success, they are set to continue on into Division One next year. With two fantastic ad-



ditions to the team, in the form of Belgian International (who knew they were good at badminton? He's actually Indian, don't worry), and a First Class county player, in the form of Dom Winter

The Ladies team, championing the Ladies Division One SE Conference for the past two years, is set for another great season. With UCL and Gimperial posing the biggest challenge, there's been a thorough training schedule for all those involved. Our first match against Kings will prove a proud victory!

Despite names that most of us can't pronounce, and skills that most of us can't compare, this niche sport welcomes an impeccable year of social events, games, and a reasonable amount of banter. Pictures, no doubt, speak louder than words...

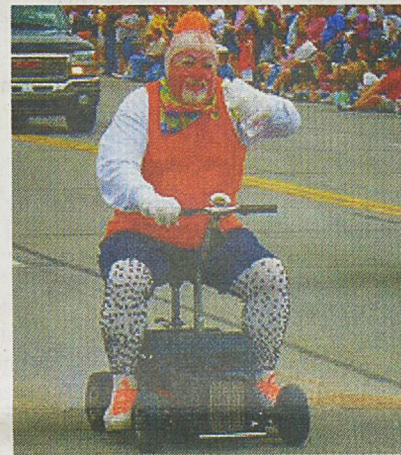


LSE Go-Karting off to a fast start

Joe Harris

Wednesday afternoon was a day for the LSE history books. It was the first time a Go-Karting team had competed under the joyous banner of "The Beaver". Four heroic figures stepped up to the mark and decided to risk everything for Howard Davies' fine institution.

We took part in the academic year's first British University Karting Championship test day on a sunny Wednesday afternoon at Rye House Raceway in Hertfordshire. After being publically humiliated by being named and shamed as the 'new team on the block' we got off



A go-karting enthusiast, having the time of his life

to a good start. The Go-Karts the BUKC uses are direct drive two stroke racing karts which accelerate from 5 - 60 mph in 4.6 seconds - they take a bit of getting

used to! Everyone in the team had some magnificent spins - Zbigniew Janic won the award for the best off when he went careering off into the grass at the hairpin - twice!

Naturally, the 'cold tires' were wholly responsible for the various spins. During the second session there were no offs and the team managed to set some fast times. Zibi, the club's esteemed 'Health and Safety' officer managed to put his earlier off roading experience behind him and set LSE's fastest lap time by a whisker - he will not be so fortunate next time!

LSE Karting is setting its sights on becoming the BUKC's best novice team this academic year - and with times similar to Wednesday's it is a feasible task! LSE's BUKC heroes will be returning to do some more testing with the racing karts in mid-November. LSE Karting also organises friendly 'arrive and drive' sessions with other London universities in the metropolis - anyone is more than welcome to join and have a good time. A big thankyou to Harriette Rothwell who was a lynchpin in getting the society up and running.



Other go-karting enthusiasts, also having the time of their lives.

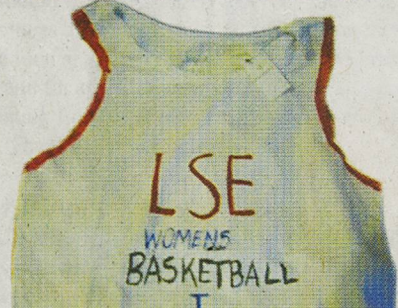
Blood, sweat and...balls

Joanna Hirst

It has been an eventful first three weeks for women's basketball. Getting to know the new team, trying to drag our postgrads out of the caves they live in, showing our General Course kiddies what sambuca is and how to abuse it... its all too easy to forget about the sport itself.

We haven't started off the season that well, but that being said we have seen some serious drama! First game saw Israeli ball-chaser Efi suffer the loss of a tooth, and stitches in the chin at the hands of a pesky art student. That same match my pathetic excuse for an injury (a cut finger), decided to bleed profusely, causing my white shorts to look like aunty flow had come for a serious visit.

The second game saw some impressive skills - Kelly showed us her aggressive side with a mean 2nd half comeback, and



Mel pulled an awesome 3 pointer. At the game on Saturday we were expecting full frontal rape at the hands of Royal Holloway, but we managed to come out unhurt, and with a surprisingly good score! We saw Nabila tear up the court with her streetball style, and newcomer pro Nat's calm attitude and wisdom proved to be a great addition to the team.

Speaking of Mel's pulls, she is also a great player off the court. Incest between the men's and women's team is rife once



again, as she was spotted locking lips with newly arrived first team Yank Mr Payne. Of course resident paparazzo Michele was there to get plenty of photo evidence, including some quite incriminating photos of a certain 4th team footballer...

Then there came Baywatch, the perfect excuse for us to walk down Kingsway dressed like absolute slags. Fun. I saw three people doing the walk of shame in Baywatch gear - that's how you know it was a good one! Jen celebrated her 20th that night by doing triple sambuca shots and sporting an awesome Asian flush.

The permanent marker also decided to come out to play! Last year Michele and I made it a basketball tradition to bring one out to Zoo bar, and this year it is back. We managed to tattoo 'I love penis' on a couple of lucky rugby and netball girls. We sincerely hope they enjoyed going to class on Thursday with that on their arm/back/chest! Halloween next week, I wonder who I'll see walking around campus dressed as Cat in the Hat when I go to my 10AM class...

LSE 1st XI still first class

Tom Gay (Besty)

The second ULU Premier League weekend of the season saw a derby match-up as the 1s faced the 2s at Berrylands. With 1st team Captain Casimo hailing the 2s as the best 2nd squad he'd seen in his time at LSE, and rumours of a 2nd team meeting to prepare for the fixture, no-one was taking this lightly.

Heavy hail during the warm-ups left the 2s soaking wet, although the 1st's kit ended up cleaner and drier than goalkeeper Vik had left it after his lacklustre job at the launderette. The weather also made the pitch slick, and the opening half hour saw 1s dominate possession before letting the 2s back into it, who had numerous shots from the edge of the box. But a composed finish from Besty after

good play from Harry Licence and Matt Roderick down the left ten minutes from half time left the 1s with a deserved lead at the break.

The 2s came out fighting in the second half and it was a matter of minutes before a burst of pace and one-on-one slotted finish from Bach levelled the scores. However, the 2s' jubilation was as short-lived as the 1s' anxiety as Sean Farrar tapped in from close range after a scramble from a corner moments later to make it 2-1 to the 1s.

Despite their best efforts the 2s never recovered from this instant reply and fans and players alike were left bewildered when Sean Farrar scored again, with an accidental header to double his season's tally. Sean himself was not surprised - "I used to be a striker for a top Northern club", he claimed.

The final 30 minutes saw the tackles

fly in from both sides and it was easy to forget that we were all from the same university. Several debateable decisions from various stand-in referees caused controversy, but three more goals from the 1s put the result beyond doubt. The first a cool finish from Licence after a defence-splitting ball from Matt Roderick, then a drilled finish from super-sub Hendrik Sundvik (who came close to a sending off minutes later for concealing a weapon in his shorts - it turned out to be his door handle from halls), and finally a Jack Roberts goal from short range with the use of a one-two off the 2s goalkeeper.

So a 6-1 victory for a dominant 1s, but the potential shown by the 2s despite the score line stands them in good stead for their own ULU campaign.

POPSCENE

HALLOWEEN SPECIAL

Saturday 30th October 10:30pm - 3am

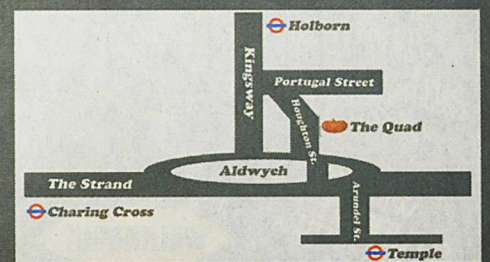
Join Us for a Terrifyingly Good night of...
Indie, Alternative, Electro, Pop.
Be Aghast at Our Unfeasibly Cheap Drinks
and Murderously Compete for Our
Special Halloween Costume Prize

£3 All Night for those of you
in Fancy Dress

£4 with a Flyer/ NUS Before Midnight
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