

The Beaver

16 January 2007 Issue 655 The newspaper of the LSESU

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Week Special

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Security concerns ignored by LSE

- SCHOOL DISMISSED SU CONCERNS AS "REACTIONARY"
- SCHOOL PREFERRED ANNUAL RISK REVIEW TO "IMMEDIATE AND URGENT FOCUS"
- SU SOURCE CONFIRMS LACK OF OVER-ALL COORDINATION BY LSE SECURITY

Ali Moussavi
News Editor

The LSE Students' Union (SU) was ignored by the School when concerns were raised over security problems at LSE halls of residence, *The Beaver* can reveal.

It is understood that the issue was raised at a Residences Committee meeting by LSE SU representatives on 10 October 2006 shortly after a burglary at Rosebery Hall.

LSE SU Residences Officer Louise Robinson told *The Beaver* that at the time, members of the School administration on the Committee dismissed the claims as "reactionary". Also present at the meeting was LSE SU Education and Welfare Officer Alexandra Vincenti.

Robinson and Vincenti issued a joint statement: "We went through the terms of reference, to decide which issues the new Residences Committee would prioritise. We highlighted the importance of reviewing security risk management in relation to students at residences, particularly in light of the incident at Rosebery Hall. In spite of this, it was decided that this would just go to annual review, rather than be an immediate and urgent focus point."

This is confirmed by documents from the 10 October 2006 Committee meeting. The section outlining the Terms of Reference indicates that one of the issues was "To review risk management in relation to students at residences." A handwritten annotation on the doc-

ument clarifies that this was to be an "annual requirement".

Since then, Robinson has noted other security incidents and flagged up concerns. She commented: "The lack of urgent response after meetings is frustrating, particularly when security has such serious implications."

However, other concerns have also been raised related to halls' security. Following a recent investigation into the condition of security at LSE halls of residence by *The Beaver*, it can now be reported that security incidents at halls are not sufficiently monitored by LSE Security.

Security at residences is often handled by private sector companies.

While security incidents at halls are reported to LSE Security by halls' security, the incidents are merely "noted", but not collated and monitored effectively by a central body, an SU official told *The Beaver*.

The SU official in-question revealed that in a discussion with a senior School management official, it was accepted that this situation would have to change, but a time-frame was not officially discussed. The SU official said that the School management official "agreed and implied that sufficient changes would have to be made to the job portfolios of members of staff."

Robinson commented: "I think the recent investigation in *The Beaver* and the security incidents highlight the serious problems and failures of the current system and they need to be addressed immediately by the School."

Photograph: Liam Chambers



LSE students at Guantanamo Bay protest >>2

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Arts societies speak up about lacking provisions

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New UGM Chair elected; Chinese students protest at Taiwanese Minister's talk; Robbery at Butlers Wharf

LSE SU Amnesty joins others to protest against Guantanamo Bay

Peter Barton

The LSE Students' Union (SU) Amnesty International Society participated in a protest outside the United States Embassy in London, in opposition to the controversial detention centre at the US naval base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

The protest was held on 11 January 2007, the fifth anniversary of the detention centre's opening.

The London protest was part of a wider international effort coordinated by the global organization of Amnesty

International, with protests in New York, Tokyo, Rome, Tunis, Madrid, Tel Aviv and outside the actual detention centre in Cuba.

Several LSE students joined 300 protesters outside the US Embassy calling for the closure of the camp. The protesters attempted to re-enact conditions at Guantanamo Bay. Some dressed as prisoners, in orange boiler suits, face masks and goggles. They were shouted at, insulted and abused by other protesters acting as guards and officers.

Former Guantanamo Bay detainee Moazzam Begg was present at the protest. He noted that the main difference

between his experience and that of the protesters was that the protesters were not "getting a few punches and kicks" as they knelt and were free to go before lunch.

Sean Whittington-Roy, Secretary of the LSE SU Amnesty International Society, who attended the protest, said: "All we are calling for is that the governments of the USA and the UK comply with national and international law and treat humans with respect and dignity."

The detention centre at Guantanamo Bay does not come under US legal jurisdiction, and permits prisoners to be detained indefinitely with-



charge.

Amnesty International, along with other humanitarian organisations and the United Nations, has been calling for the closure of the camp, claiming that the detention of the suspects is illegal under international law.

Begg accused the US of perpetrating the very sort of terrorism it purports to be rooting out. He claimed that, rather than helping the war on terror, "Guantanamo Bay is producing more terrorism."

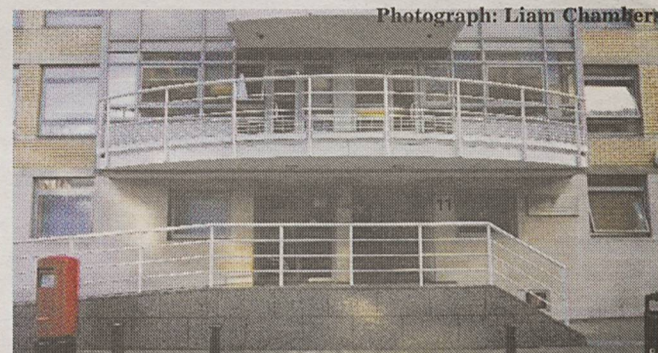
Whittington-Roy said: "Considering such short notice, we were pleased that people came along. It is an issue which LSE students are interested in with the School's firm grounding in social sciences and politics."

"All we are calling for is that the governments of the USA and UK comply with national and international law and treat humans with respect and dignity."

Sean Whittington-Roy
Secretary, LSE SU Amnesty International Society

out trial and access to legal advice. 400 detainees remain at the centre, including 6 British nationals. None have yet been proven guilty in a court of law. Some prisoners have been sent home and released without

Break-in at Butlers Wharf adds to concern over halls' security



Photograph: Liam Chambers
The burglary at Butler's Wharf comes amid other security incidents at LSE halls

Adifi Nangia

A ground floor room in the LSE's Butlers Wharf Residence was burgled last Wednesday night.

The thief stole a laptop computer from a resident's room having reached into it through an open window. Though the resident had only left the window partially open, the space was still large enough for the thief to slip his hand through the gap and obtain the laptop.

It is speculated that the thief at Butlers Wharf, like that at Bankside House last week, rode up on a bicycle, which gave him the extra height to reach the window and also an easy escape.

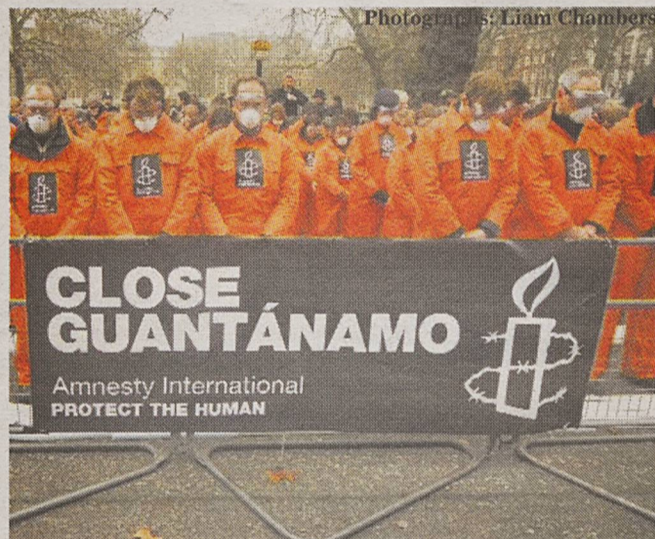
Security personnel have confirmed that the private accommodation and office buildings surrounding the hall

of residence have also been repeatedly targeted by thieves.

The robbery comes less than a week after a similar theft occurred at Bankside House, and at a time when serious concerns are being raised over LSE halls' security.

In an email sent to residents the next morning, the Butlers Wharf administration urged students, especially those on the ground floor who are the most vulnerable to theft, to be more vigilant about security.

LSE Students' Union (SU) Residences Officer Louise Robinson said: "In this case, one would think that the restrictors on the windows would be a sufficient deterrent for thieves, but residents need to be more careful. There comes a point where there is only so much that students can do; there needs to be better crime-prevention and follow-up procedures."



Photographs: Liam Chambers
Protestors attempted to recreate conditions in Guantanamo Bay by dressing as prisoners and guards

Refreshers Week sees limited success

Doug Oliver
Senior Reporter

The annual LSE Students' Union (SU) Refreshers' Fair started the new term by giving students the opportunity to join the dozens of societies in the LSE SU.

The event featured the new societies that were established after the start of the academic year. Over 20 new societies participated in the fair along with

"[The Fair] would have benefited from more publicity. I didn't see many posters."

Katherine Marrant
President, Drama Society

existing societies.

As well as offering students the opportunity to join SU societies, the event was used to encourage students to participate in campaigns including the Healthy Living campaign and the Transport for London Student Discount campaign. Volunteers also signed up to participate in the LSE SU's annual Raising and Giving (RAG) week, to be held in the sixth week of the Lent Term.

LSE SU Treasurer Joel



Photograph: Liam Chambers
Student societies manning their stalls complained that limited publicity hampered turnout

Kenrick said that around 140 students joined the societies that participated in the event, and that he was pleased with student participation in the event. A new society called Glam Rock was the most successful of the day, with over 40 new members recruited.

However, many students remarked that the event was quiet and not particularly busy. Drama Society President

Katherine Marrant said that "it would have benefited from more publicity. I didn't see many posters."

Kenrick claimed that everything possible was done to publicise the event "through the global email, Facebook bulletins and the log-in box." One student said: "Though we've signed up a few new members and had a good time, we would have liked to sign up a few

more members. I think many LSE students prefer spending time in the library than meeting new people through societies."

Meanwhile Kenrick encouraged students unable to attend Refreshers' Fair to consult the LSE SU website which offers details on how students may join societies at any time during the year.

SU Strategic Plan unveiled

Tim Root
News Editor

An open meeting was held last week to discuss the first draft of the LSE Students' Union's (SU) Strategic Plan for the next five years.

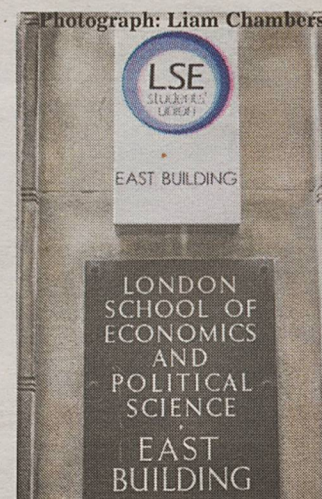
Members the LSE SU Executive Committee had hoped for student input, but only 15 people attended, calling into question the extent to which the Plan is representative of the student body.

LSE SU Education and Welfare Officer Alexandra Vincenti said, "Attendance [at the meeting] was disappointing. However, the few that came did give us useful comments and feedback. We are aware that we need to speak to more students. We are looking at alternative ways to reach the LSE population."

The plan outlines four central priorities for the next five years: "to be a model of excellence in student representation", "to provide quality, diverse and affordable services to LSE students in a safe and inclusive environment, while producing surpluses to fund

membership services", "to provide a holistic, supportive and responsive welfare service", and "to create an atmosphere of activity on campus that is vibrant, visible and relevant to the majority of students."

These priorities exist under the plan's umbrella objective of enhancing the "social experience" of all students at the School.



Photograph: Liam Chambers
The meeting was held to obtain student input on the first draft of the plan

New Chair elected as students debate motion to twin LSE SU with Palestinian university

Patrick Cullen
Senior Reporter

Controversy and disorder emerged at the first Union General Meeting (UGM) of the Lent term over the issue of twinning the LSE Students' Union (SU) with a Palestinian university and the election of a new UGM Chair and Vice-Chair.

Sean Closs, a recently-elected member of the Constitution and Steering Committee of the LSE SU (C&S) was elected UGM Chair in a close run-off election against Libby Meyer. Ruhana Ali, former UGM Vice-Chair was re-elected for her position with no competition.

The opening motion on twinning the LSE SU with a Palestinian university was proposed and seconded by Ziyaad Lunat and Naama Nagar respectively. However, four amendments were proposed which ultimately aimed to twin the LSE SU with an Israeli university as well as a Palestinian one, in the spirit of impartiality.

Lunat however spoke against the amendments on the grounds that the motion was not political, but humanitarian and so impartiality should not be a consideration. It was argued that the higher education situation was far worse in Palestinian universities, than in Israeli universities.

Closs, in his new role as the UGM Chair, was at times inaudible. There was confusion on the floor when motions to vote were heard several times before any vote was called on the amendments.

Further questions were raised over his competence when Closs maintained that a two-thirds majority was

required to pass an amendment, when actually only a simple majority is required. There was also disagreement

"The UGM was an embarrassment to myself, to the SU and I would hope also to the rest of you. We spent an hour, got nothing done and the meeting ended in confusion."

Jefferson Courtney
Chair, C&S
Committee

on whether voting should have been conducted on all four amendments individually or once for all of the amendments. On this finer point, Closs was correct in understanding that the four amendments were separate from each other.

Questions have been raised over whether Closs can continue to hold his seat on C&S and be UGM Chair at the same time in accordance with the LSE SU Constitution. In an email sent to members of C&S, committee Chair Jefferson Courtney said that it was "something which [he] thought was slightly dubious but not strictly against the Codes of Practice." Courtney argued that "C&S members may hold no other 'Office in the Union'. This is clearly open to interpretation and has in the past been taken to mean being

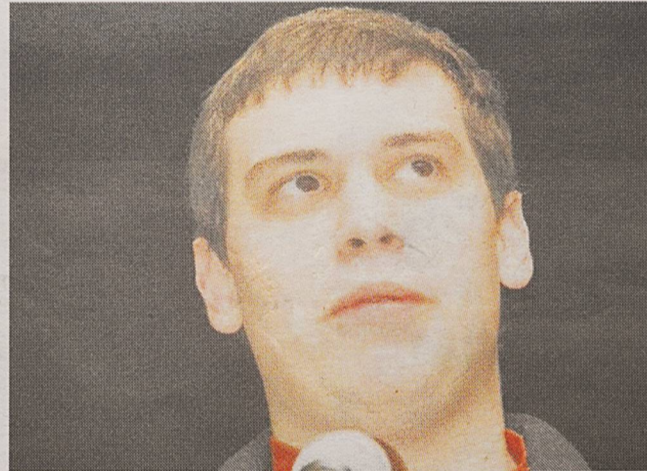


Students were divided on the motion twinning the LSE SU with a Palestinian university

either on the Executive or the Returning Officer."

Courtney also said that the UGM was "an embarrassment to myself, to the SU and I would hope also to the rest of you. We spent an hour, got nothing done and the meeting ended in confusion. It is our job to make sure the UGM runs smoothly and that it follows the standing orders set up in the Codes of Practice. This was not the case."

Debate on the motion is set to resume in next week's UGM. Since the UGM, one source in C&S has said: "I think that the discussion of the motion was so shambolic that it would be nice to start on a clean slate next week."



Sean Closs seemed uncomfortable with UGM procedure during the heated debate of the motion



Union Jack

Refreshed from a whole month of non-hackery and hardly re-freshed by the limp turnout at Joel's fair, Jack was poised to enjoy this week's lashing of UGM, and so it seems were all the other SU gimps. With mighty Brian O'Daisy's five-minute attention span exhausted, the UGM had to look elsewhere for the guiding hand of chair. And three willing souls appeared; Mr America, Libby from down under and Alex Tittleattle who tried once again to trick people into wasting a vote on him. Wisely avoiding Timewaster the UGM couldn't help but fall into another elephant trap in picking Mr America because he has a funny voice (but sadly no idea what he's doing and another job that should have made him ineligible to run-Jack loves C&S's judgements clearly).

With that out of the way we waited in anticipation to hear how well £100,000 of our money on our Fantastic Four's monthly salary had been invested - not very apparently, and as for the part-time sabb-wannabes, only Dilhole appeared to tell us about his biased Enviro-events. Mrs Dillhole (Gobinson) had a go at persuading us to reorder, but she was so ditsy, no one understood.

Then it was the Xtremist's turn. It's been some time since we last had a middle-east conflict on campus but Ziyaad and his one-track-mind band of followers were out in force hoping to get one over on the Israelis and twin LSE with some of their crack-pot cronies. And they weren't taking any prisoners. Sheldon was being less controversial than usual (he turned a few heads on Saturday night by blacking him self up with shoe polish to be Nelson Mandela for a 'Revolutionary' party at Cesspit mansion) in suggesting that we go for a middle-eastern threesome and twin twice but thanks to Mr America's extraordinary lack of clarity, he didn't get his way.

It was all turning a bit messy, (why did we trust an American to manage our UGM given their democratic record in I-raq?) with the Xtremists looking gleefully at the thought of slipping their motion through the UGM without anyone understanding it. But conceding defeat (and not suggesting a troop surge), Mr America called it a day and both sides were sent away to boil and regroup until next week's show down. And if that isn't enough to have you positively skipping to the new Old Theatre next Thursday, we'll also be discussing how we're going to wage war on Dr Evil (Peter Sutherland). If the Green's get their way we'll be sending Limpy Tam to the Ivory Tower to knock at Sir Howard's door and politely explain that we'd rather not have him to stay.

See you next week!

Davies attacks government plans to replace RAE with metrics system

Rajan Patel
Senior Reporter

LSE Director Howard Davies, criticised the Government's plans to replace the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE).

The RAE is undertaken every 5 years to evaluate the quality of research at British universities. Departments submit papers produced by academics and postgraduate students for assessment by a specialist peer-review panel, and the RAE's findings influence the amount of research money universities receive from their funding councils.

In last year's Budget, Chancellor Gordon Brown announced his intention to "radically simplify" the allocation of research funding, by removing the RAE framework after 2008. He suggested a "metrics-based" approach as a replacement. This would be based on indicators, such as the number of times a paper is referenced by other academics, quantifying the importance of

the research.

Davies' article, published in *The Independent* newspaper last Thursday, outlines univer-

Photograph: Aditi Nangia



Howard Davies has spoken out against government RAE policy

sities' opposition to the proposed changes. Davies said that

there was "little enthusiasm for an immediate switch to metrication", a system which he described as being "entirely

"The response from universities was near universal...There was little enthusiasm for an immediate switch to metrication. In the humanities and social sciences in particular, the notion seemed entirely unrealistic."

LSE Director
Howard Davies

unrealistic" when applied to research in the social sciences.

In a recent poll, commissioned by the University and

College Union (UCU), 81 per cent of the surveyed academics opposed replacement of the peer-review system with the metrics system.

Last year's Budget Report said that the 2008 RAE be scrapped if support could be found from a "clear majority" of universities. Davies expressed his surprise that the Government could conceive of such a majority existing.

However, about two-fifths of those polled by the UCU advocated the immediate scrapping of the exercise, which could call into question the strength of Davies' arguments.

The UCU officially opposes the continuance of the RAE, but it does not support the Government's faith in metrics as an alternative. Sally Hunt, the UCU's joint general secretary, said: "Academics are keen for a change from the RAE, but metrics...are a step backwards. It is incredible that the proposals were drawn up without any representation from the people who do the research."

Davies agreed, criticising

the Government's response to the consultation it had conducted in which 183 academics gave their opinions on metrics-based methods. Although 134 respondents rejected all the proposed approaches as being unsuitable and most favoured "a form of peer assessment," Davies claimed that the Government's conclusions take little account of the data obtained.

"When we get to the section entitled 'The Government's Response'," he noted, "we find that responders meant to say something quite different...that they favoured metrics, albeit perhaps in the longer term."

Davies concluded that little progress has been made over the past 12 months and that no consensus exists on how to integrate the consultation's findings into policy. "The hard work of deciding which subjects, and which measures, remains unclear," he said, but it was suggested that academics will challenge further erosion of peer assessment.

Societies complain over arts resources at the LSE

Erica Gornall
Senior Reporter

Supporters of the arts at the LSE have been forced to fight to gain a presence on campus due to a lack of investment and space at the School. Students' Union arts societies such as the Music Society and the Drama society are running out of resources.

Arts societies traditionally receive above-average funding from the Students' Union budget, which leads some to believe that financing for the arts is sufficient. While the Music and Drama societies receive £3.65 and £3.60 per person respectively, they receive no sponsorship. The £600 budget of the music society is dwarfed by the £2000 budget of the Debate society, which receives £4 per person before sponsorship.

In stark contrast, athletics, which like the arts has high expenses and low sponsorships, constitutionally receives "not less than one fifth of such income [of the whole SU grant]". While sports get one big lump sum of £18,700, the collective income of the arts societies from the Students' Union is £2676.

The Arts Advisory Council is one of many sources from which arts-related societies seek space and money. Tom Eshelby, Chair of the Arts Forum, said, "they [the arts authority] are very sympathetic to our views...but because the money's limited or not as big as it could be, they cannot give us as much as they want

to." Money is spent on some artistic events, but there appears to be a reluctance to commit money such as that for sport. Eshelby added, "From how I understand it, the LSE doesn't want to have to fund the arts all of the time."

According to Alex Barros-Curtis, President of the Music Society, constant investment is the only way that music can have a presence at the LSE. "Our biggest costs, besides concerts, will be instrument maintenance and repairs because of general wear and tear, it's going to be inevitable.

The SU has a vision that it's a waste of money because it's going to get damaged, there's no point giving the money in the first place. You could say that about books, or sports equipment."

Arts societies are also calling for resources and space, in addition to money. Barros-Curtis added, "In the music practice room, we have 2 pianos and when one person's using one piano, you're not going to be playing the other one at the same time. So it's a waste. It would be great to have another room to put one of those pianos in. But there is no space."

The lack of resources has forced musicians to forego professional repairs for expensive instruments. Barros-Curtis added, "I can't afford to buy a new drum kit, so we are having to do make-shift repairs."

Talking about the culture of the LSE in relation to the arts, SU Treasurer Joel Kenrick explained, "I think it's definitely an institutional thing, but I think there are people who are trying to improve it." When talking about the future, Kenrick was hopeful: "I think that in terms of the strategic plan, arts should definitely be in there."

Photograph: Liam Chambers



Members of the LSE Drama Society, having received £3.60 per person from the SU last term, have become concerned over their lack of resources, with only limited funds coming from outside the SU

Chinese students protest at Taiwanese Minister's public lecture at the LSE

Photograph: CNA



Timothy Root
News Editor

A group of Chinese students at the LSE disrupted a talk by Taiwanese Minister of Education Tu Cheng-sheng last Thursday.

Tu, an LSE graduate himself, was scheduled to outline his plans for educational reform in Taiwan and, according to the LSE Press Office, to "promote an interaction between local and global perspectives in education through cultivating a variety of scholarship interchange projects." He was the first Taiwanese minister to speak at the School.

The event, chaired by Professor Stephan Feuchtwang and organized as part of the Taiwan Culture Research programme at the LSE, was mired, however, as Chinese students demonstrated in the Old Theatre holding up signs. These included "Stop cultural brainwashing" and "Taiwan is a part of China".

Responding, Taiwanese students became agitated and a shouting match between LSE Chinese and Taiwanese students ultimately ensued. Event staff were forced to tell the students to sit down, a demand which was ignored by one Chinese student who stood up and brandished his sign before the speech was over.

Attacks from Chinese students continued during the question and answer session, when some asked whether Tu "acknowledged" Chinese culture, and what he meant by "Taiwan's sovereignty". One of these questions prompted shouts from Taiwanese students for the questioner to stop speaking, and the Old Theatre was reduced to shouting again.

Ultimately, Tu responded arguing that Taiwan has its own set of "values, rights and freedoms" and that despite political parties currently at odds with each other, it is a democratic country and the Taiwanese people will decide its future.

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British troops abroad a special analysis
Mark Thomas
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LSE rejects 'spying' on Muslims

GOVERNMENT ADVISES UNIVERSITIES TO GIVE AMIC SOCIETIES SPECIAL ATTENTION
CITIZENS AND THE RIGHT TO CONSIDER OPINION

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Singer's Yarn
Singer's Yarn
Singer's Yarn

New report outlines plagiarism issues on university campuses

Vishal Banerjee

Academic plagiarism is still a consistent problem, a new report issued by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority has revealed. The report's author, Professor Jean Underwood of Nottingham Trent University, claimed that "academic dishonesty is a global phenomenon."

The report focused on issues of plagiarism, cheating in examinations, and student attitudes toward cheating. It included an outside survey by the Centre for Integrity in the US, which reported that 70 percent of undergraduates admitted to some form of academic dishonesty. Underwood claimed that around 2 in every 10 pupils would prefer to cheat, rather than fail major examinations.

The report aimed to explain some of the issues raised by technological progress, and its potential for misuse in the form of cheating. Underwood said that "digital technologies have brought equity to cheating...Access is no longer there for the knowing few but for the majority."

The report offered a number of new propositions aimed at tackling mobile phone use in

exams. Measures suggested in the report include holding exams in rooms with no mobile phone reception and the installation of airport security scanners to prevent students from bringing phones into the room.

This year it was reported that 4,500 candidates were penalised for malpractice in schools, and more than 1,000 of these cases were directly linked with attempts to cheat using mobile phones.

Professor Underwood also suggested fingerprinting students to prevent them from using their friends to take tests for them.

The report further addresses the matter plagiarism, particularly in the submission of GCSE and A level coursework.

Frank Furedi, Professor of Sociology from the University of Kent, commented on the report in *The Guardian* newspaper. Furedi suggested that students were not to blame for cheating, as many are taught to collaborate on work with parents and teachers from a young age.

He also suggested that when caught by superiors, students often tended to be more disheartened by the hassle, rather than the ethics of cheating.

Government asks students to consider increased costs of higher education in UK



Simon Wang

The government is encouraging potential students to check out their financial options before making a decision about whether to go to university, with the deadline for University Student Loan applications approaching.

Last year saw a decline in student applications, which some attribute to the introduction of the integrated loan system in June of last year, and increasing the tuition fees. These changes, on top of rising living costs and accommodation fees, mean that cash-strapped students need to carefully consider the financial costs of university, unlike their parents who benefited from the grant system.

The government stressed that although the fees may be

intimidating, the new system allows peace of mind during the university course itself. The payment system covers all tuition fees and some living costs, while the students do not have to repay the money until after they start earning £15,000 or more a year.

Bill Rammell, Minister of Higher Education, said: "Going to university is an investment in the future. Over their working life, the average graduate will earn more than £100,000 more, after tax, than a similar individual who completed education with two or more A-levels."

The LSE itself has not yet had many problems finding applicants. The number of successful applicants in 2006 exceeded the LSE's yearly target.

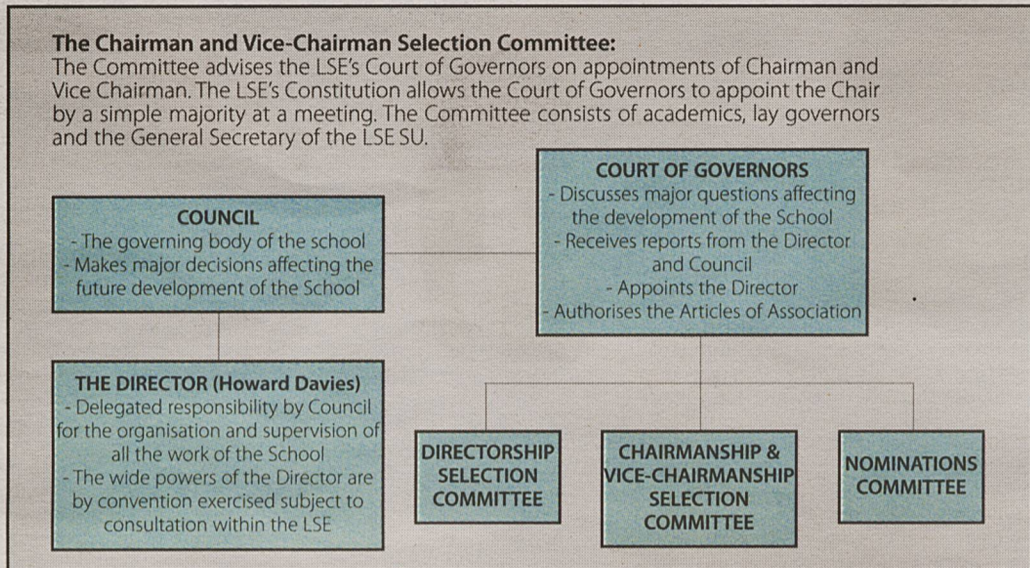
The Sutherland Affair

Ali Moussavi
News Editor

- On 22 November 2006, LSE students took part in a sit-in, in opposition to the appointment of Peter Sutherland as Chair of the LSE Council.
- The Beaver can now reveal that the morning after the protest which prevented Sutherland from delivering a public lecture, LSE Director Howard Davies expressed the possibility of disciplinary action against the protestors.
- LSE Students' Union (SU) General Secretary Jimmy Tam said to LSE Director Howard Davies that he would convey the seriousness with which the School viewed the protest to the students who took part in it.

The role of the Chair of Council:

- The Chairman leads the LSE Council and the LSE Court of Governors, by chairing the meetings of the two bodies. The Council is the governing body of the School. It is responsible for the determination of overall strategy and direction.
- The role of the Chairman is distinct from the role of the School's Chief Executive, who is the Director of the School.



"The Court of Governors approved Peter Sutherland's appointment as Chair of LSE Council from 1 January 2008 by acclamation in March 2006."
LSE spokesperson

- Chairman of British Petroleum (BP)
- Chairman of Goldman Sachs
- Attorney General of Ireland: Sutherland advised the government on introducing a constitutional ban on abortion.
- Director General of World Trade Organisation



1) When approached, Sutherland initially declined to be nominated for the position. It was decided that the search for a new Chair of Council should start again

2) Criteria for choosing a new Chair of Council: The Committee met in early 2005 and accepted a ten point criteria for deciding the suitability of candidates.

However, when the search was resumed for the second attempt, two particular criteria among the ten were stressed:
- A high profile public image;
- A proven capability as a chairman.

3) Shortlist:

A shortlist of five names were identified. Three candidates excluded themselves and one withdrew, leaving Peter Sutherland.

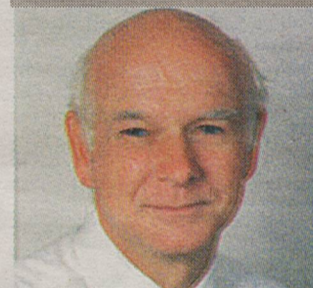
The Beaver can reveal that in a letter which Lord Gabor (the current Chair of Council) sent to Jimmy Tam, Gabor insists that former General Secretary Rishi Madlani was able to attend the meeting of committee members with Sutherland on 22 February 2006.

However, sources within the LSE SU confirm that Madlani was unable to attend the meeting where members of the committee were to meet Sutherland.

4) On 27 February 2006:
Madlani wrote to the School expressing "concern at the potential appointment of Peter Sutherland", and communicating "unease at this candidate's suitability for the role".
Gabor claims that Madlani's letter came as a surprise since Madlani and the former General Secretary Will MacFarlane were yet to have expressed any opposition to the appointment.
However sources in the LSE SU have said that Madlani had been sworn to secrecy by the Committee, and for this reason, he could not gauge the adverse reaction the appointment would face by the student body.

5) 16 March 2006:
Sutherland appointed "by acclaim" despite student representatives on the Court of Governors registering dissent after the meeting.

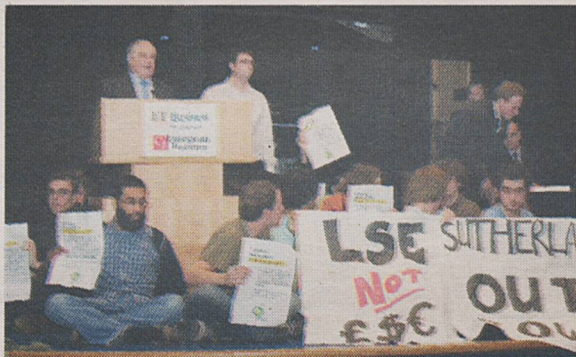
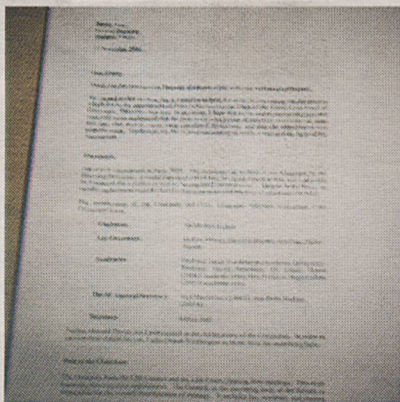
Howard Davies



"My academic colleagues and I are delighted that Peter Sutherland has agreed to join us and, in time, to take on the Chairmanship of the School. His background in public policy and his business and international interests match the LSE's profile remarkably well. We look forward to the School continuing to prosper under his leadership."

LSE Director Howard Davies

The Gabor Letter



6) 22 November 2006:
Students protested the appointment by taking part in a sit-in, intending to prevent Sutherland from delivering a public lecture at the LSE.

7 December 2006:
LSE SU Executive Officers censured in UGM for taking part in protest. Censures fail to gain two-thirds majority to pass.

7) The Davies Letter

Neither the Chairman nor I would embark on disciplinary procedures with any regret. It were the School to get into the position of having to take disciplinary action against its students on a matter of this kind. But given the importance of the principle of free speech, and the slippery slope which we could find ourselves on were we to compromise on that principle, we must all try to ensure that there is no repetition. In the events to the protestors. Having done so, I would be grateful if you could secure an assurance from them that there will be no recurrence of behaviour which effectively prevents speakers being heard.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. I look forward to your early response.

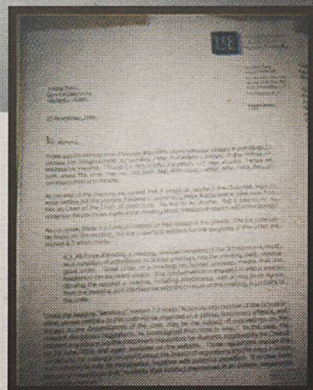
8) 11 January 2007:
LSE SU General Secretary Jimmy Tam was challenged in the UGM over the contents of the Davies letter. He categorically denied giving Davies an assurance that the protest would never happen again.



In the UGM Tam argued that it would be unreasonable for anyone to ask him to give any assurance on behalf of 8000 students.

9) Today:
A UGM motion calling for an LSE SU referendum on the chairmanship of Sutherland is on the order paper and pending debate.

- The Beaver can now reveal that the morning after the protest, Davies held a meeting with Sabbatical Officers. The content of a letter uncovered by The Beaver, revealed that Davies asked Tam to "convey the seriousness with which [the School] viewed [the protest] to the protestors."
- Davies also asked that Tam "secure an assurance from [the protestors] that there will be no recurrence of behaviour which effectively prevents speakers being heard."
- Most importantly, Davies implies the threat of disciplinary action against the protestors. He states that while action would not be embarked on "with any great enthusiasm", "given the importance of...freedom of speech...we must try to ensure that there is no repetition."



COMMENT & ANALYSIS

SU Residences Officer Louise Robinson, makes her case for introducing minimum standards for student representation in halls

Ensure we get good hall reps

Louise Robinson



Efficiency, accountability and best practice are terms used in a political diction that I wouldn't usually endorse, but I think if used effectively (there I go again) are ways to create a change that has been long awaited, and much needed.

The committees in LSE halls each have their own constitutions, practices and personalities, and so have their own unique styles and feels. This is a good thing, as no one would consider a factory-made committee as a feasible option, or even a desirable one. However, and in the most crude terms, residents deserve minimum standards of the people on their committees, after all, each resident pays a standard common room fee, and so deserves to benefit from it.

Minimum standards allow committees that already excel in particular areas the freedom to continue to do so, and spur them to brush up on slightly weaker areas.

The obvious benefit of being on a hall committee is the ease of staying in LSE accommodation, but if a committee member hasn't pulled their weight, do they deserve the same privilege as the other committee members? Should they be held to account in some way by the residents and how can this be done? Residents require an adequate mechanism to hold their officers to account (not in the harsh way of the UGM!) and LSE wardens need to be responsive to problems and successes in their residence.

For some time students have faced this dilemma, and



Butler's Wharf

Photo: Liam Chambers

because of the complexities of binding constitutions - their difficulty in accommodating change, and discrepancies between the rhetoric and reality - students end up accepting the way things are because they have been that way for a while. If minimum standards were incorporated into clear documents, residents would benefit from an enriched hall experience, and committees would be better able to support each other. Websites could be updated to better aid prospective students to make

informed choices about the atmosphere in each hall; a diverse portfolio of events would enable more residents to engage in their hall community. The roles of each committee member could easily be better defined, and, if a common electoral cycle was introduced then adequate training could be promoted to support the elected committees, making them more effective. This would set clearer guidelines about how to get things done, and make it easier to implement best practice concerning environmental, welfare and entertainment initiatives. Committees should realise that they can take the lead in lobbying for change, and see the SU as a supportive mechanism, rather than a separate entity - students should use

whatever platform they can to drive the changes they want to see in their experiences at the LSE, and for that they need committed and vocal hall committees.

Significant improvements could be made in the way budgets are managed, and like

easier to perform, it would promote safer practices to protect committee members' bank accounts from waiting for large paybacks. This is an area of change that over a short space of time would make keeping accounts easier.

Hall Committees have been left to their own devices for too long, and now they should get the support they need to help promote positive communities for all LSE residents. In incorporating minimum standards into halls, the results can only be beneficial in the long run, setting the course for improvements that will build up year on year.

Minimum standards must be integrated into existing constitutions to inject attention and pride into already pretty impressive hall structures, and improve the experience of future residents to feel welcome into an LSE community; an experience that they will treasure for future years. Small changes can make big differences, and with a new year comes the opportunity for a new direction.



Residents require a mechanism to hold their officers to account

society treasurers benefited from an information session, hall treasurers may find an easier way to keep records - a standardised template. This would not only make audits

With lots of different ways of telling the LSE what you think, Elle Dodd analyses whether it's really worthwhile

The School listens. Or not.

Elle Dodd



This year home student fees have increased nearly three times; overseas, masters and postgraduate fees are already exceeding high. Along with the obvious payments for teaching, resources and facilities we are also paying for a service from the School; we are the customers to whom they are selling education. As part of that service the School needs to work with students to provide a high quality of provision across the board and that means engaging students in important decision making, seeking meaningful feedback on all elements of student life, and being responsive to criticism and flexible to change where necessary.

There are a lot of systems already in place for this to happen, through the Students' Union Executive, hall committees, departmental liaison groups and other formal and informal methods. However the question is whether any of this makes a real difference, does the student staff relationship really work or are the school just paying lip service?

It is obvious that most of the executive officers work really hard for the benefit of students, and often this is reflected in their reports to the

UGM. However, the nature of the UGM means that the participants are not in a position to judge whether they spend their time productively, and how they engage with other members of staff. The Court of Governors and School Council are one of the best ways for students to get their voices heard at a senior level, but so far this year I have not heard anything through official reports or comment in this fine publication about how the hotly contested Court of Governors representatives are faring in their role; have they lived up to their election pledges, what have the month-



I wonder whether all these tutor surveys I filled in will make a difference

ly Council meetings produced for the benefit of students? Obviously its only week 2, but soon enough some of these representatives will want to use their performances on these committees to stand for further elections, how will the



electorate know whether they are campaigning for student rights or just smiling sweetly in the corner?

Moving onto hall committees; we have already seen a scandal at Passfield where the president was accused of working against the will of the committee. Fortunately, with the help of the Executive the situation was resolved well, however similar things may well be happening in other halls. On the bright side Residences Officer, Louise Robinson highlights that "the £50 rebate awarded to all Passfield residents was reflective of good communications, clear strategy and reasonable demands, and continued pressure from a united student front," one example of where good staff-student relations have benefited the student population. I live in Sidney Webb which the LSE has sold off to be privately run. This means that many of the decision the hall makes, such as rental costs, phone lines, and the all important bar prices

are fixed by an external company. The hall committee works very hard, puts on some great events and the staff are often helpful, but that doesn't stop the fact that our phones are excessively expensive and not even connected to the interhall network, and there's not a lot the committee can do about it.

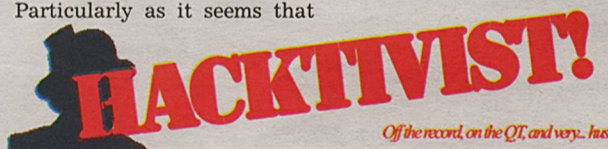
Thirdly, I wonder whether all those tutor surveys I filled in will actually make a difference. One general course student I spoke to highlighted the need for constant feedback and rapid change if tutors are not performing adequately. For those only studying at the LSE for a year it is simply not acceptable to have to wait months for tutors to improve.

On the other hand, at least departments ask us about tutor performance, not once have I been asked to give feedback on a lecturer or personal tutor, or on any other member of staff for that matter. Obviously the role of tutor is important enough to deserve its own survey, however one exec officer told me he "hoped that they work but has never seen a tangible difference." If that is the case what's the point, are they just another bit of bureaucracy there to make students feel like we are hav-

ing an input?

It seems that there are a lot of issues of accountability, both for the school accounting for its actions through proper consultation and review and for students representing and reporting back to those they were elected by. It is not unique to LSE nor is it particularly new, but that doesn't make it excusable. Particularly as it seems that

for all these committees, reports and surveys ultimately, students are still not consulted on the biggest decisions. Recent protests against actions made without proper student consultation got a lot more staff and student attention than any survey or committee minutes ever could. Perhaps it's a sign that times are about to change.



Off the record, on the QT, and why... hash-hash.

At last, Lent Term and Hacktivist's favourite time of year is ever closer. With the elections just around the corner, things are hotting up amongst the hacks; as the lies, treachery and general hack-whoring begins...

Vote-counter Smug Oliver can teach us all a thing or two about hack-whoring. In his bid for GenSec he is turning up to every party in town (invited or not) to show off his counting skills and remind everyone what a great Returning Officer he made. The Eyes of Hacktivist also spotted him "making friends with freshers" at Crush last week. Hacktivist is extending an LSE-wide warning to all first years; male and female...beware of drugs...but most of all, beware of Dougs.

Although it seems Smug Oliver's not the only one with a fondness for first years; Action man Tam has also been getting up to Shane-anigans. It's a great Shane, but Hacktivist has been forced to keep the identity of the first year under

wraps. Having already battled it out over stage sit-ins, two infamous Super-Hacks: former Miscommunication Officer Heathcock and Comrade Caspell of the Green Army are busy training up their puppets. Heathcock's got a trick or two up his sleeve - his pièce de résistance? Getting none other than our much loved ex-UGM chair Crazy nO Brain to hurl abuse at anyone who either refuses to vote for his cronies or just happens to wear a headscarf. She's not called Crazy for nothing...

Meanwhile Fake left-winger Slimeball Dan Sneldon continues attempting to worm his way into the hearts of the two Super-hacks by shouting out either 'Free Speech' or 'Direct Action' according to whichever side is winning. And if all else fails in his campaign to secure Residences, he can always get out his cringe-worthy 'little pink dress' from the wardrobe...

Email your gossip to hacktivist@tellusthegossip.com.

COMMENT & ANALYSIS

Stealing Features' thunder, this week C&A has its own version of the Left and Right columns... but one on top of the other. *Ranil Jayawardena* talks about the SU's reflection of National politics, while *Dan Sheldon* asks why the Left suddenly has no-one to fight.



In defence of Real Democracy



Ranil Jayawardena

Is our low opinion of SU democracy symptomatic of larger problems with our governance? Asks *Ranil*

In all the time that I've been here at the LSE I've seen hacks vie for position in their individual bids for Sabb. I used to take an interest in Union politics, but now it turns me off. Why? Because it seems that the hacks are in it for themselves. I say 'seems' because some of what they do may be for students - but often it just seems that they have their pre-conceived ideas and are dead set on implementing them. So, would the Man on the Clapham Omnibus say that they are already politicians? Probably. And this is the problem.

People perceive that politicians are irrelevant and don't understand the real world. They see MPs voting for pay rises and see them as self-serving folk. Perhaps this sums up thoughts about sabbos too. In truth though, MPs are relevant and do understand real world problems. Parliament is still supreme and still creates the

law of the land. MPs come from a huge range of backgrounds and the vast majority of them really want to do what (they think) is best for Britain. Still, people have no respect for them - but with their purported reputation you can see why.

This is a huge problem for democracy, especially amongst young people. Mori, the pollsters compiled statistics show-

ing that only 37% of 18-24 year-olds voted in the general election on 5th May 2005, compared with an overall turnout of 61%. This was a 2% drop from 2001. What happens if the overall turnout goes below 50%? Would we still be a democracy? At this rate, in just one decade we will have to address these questions.

The answer now? It isn't to lower the franchise. In an ICM

survey of 16 year-olds for The Guardian, 42% supported lowering the franchise to 16, but only 16% said they would be certain to vote in a general election. And simply because some sixteen year-olds pay tax it doesn't mean they have the fundamental right to vote. Are we saying that sixteen year-olds should be able to legally gamble, drink, use credit cards and buy a gun too?!

Most of us here, at the LSE, have some sort of interest in politics. So, from this, we all have a responsibility to show young people that politics matters and that they can make a difference. Only 36% of young people believed that they could influence decisions in their local communities, and even fewer felt they could influence national decisions - 16%.

I believe that important in changing this is giving young people the skills to articulate their views. An excellent article by Max Davidson in the Daily Telegraph at the end of last month contrasting our leaders to those across the

pond showed the value of debating in schools. Moreover, young people are intensely political, but they aren't party political. If young people are going to join pressure groups

should show young people how political parties are relevant to them - then they will join them - getting involved, changing party policy, making a difference to the country.

My quip about the Lib Dems was unfair, they are a political force in some areas of the country and do try and include young people. The Conservatives have always had large youth movements and though it is not quite as big as it was in the good ol' days, Conservative Future is an important part of the party and is fully represented within internal structures. However, unpopular they may be, Young Labour is a breeding ground for future Parliamentarians and is a force to be respected. We need to show young people that the way to improve the country is to "be the change" and not just talk about it.

HM Government is trying to change the situation. Organisations like the Blue Sky Foundation and the Young Britons' Foundation are working hard on this. But this problem has been a long time in the making and will take a lot of effort to finally remedy. That effort must come now otherwise, I fear, it will come too late.



We all have a responsibility to show young people that politics matters

like Amnesty, Greenpeace, People and Planet... even the Lib Dems (!)... they are being separated from the real world. In an OFSTED survey of 14-16 year-olds, nearly half did not think it is important for them to know more about what the political parties stand for. These are potential voters - how on earth can they exercise their vote without knowing what they are voting for?! We



Young LSE students taking politics seriously

Photo: Zoe Sullivan

Is the Left all that remains?



Dan Sheldon

Sutherland dominates the Union: hasn't the left got something better to worry about? Asks *Dan*

I'm very bored of Peter Sutherland. With the possible exception of Eurovision, very rarely has one rotound Irishman been lavished with so much attention. Unfortunately, not everybody is as tired of this issue as me: many good members of our Union are spending inordinate amounts of time writing motions, defending the protest and engaging in circular debates. Is this really the best thing we could be doing? In everything we do as student activists, we have to bear in mind the likely outcomes. We should resist the temptation of defeatism, but equally we shouldn't waste time fighting losing battles. Whilst the battle over Sutherland has been lost already, we should keep pressure on the School to increase student representation next time. The Living Wage campaign, on the other hand, is a fantastic opportunity for us to make a real differ-

ence to those who work for our School, supported by a wide range of students, including those involved with the Sutherland sit-in. Unfortunately, since then it seems to have lost momentum - we are pissing away our time on the appointment of one man instead of taking a stand on progressive issues like the

Living Wage, where we have a chance of changing the lives of hundreds of people.

There are some serious issues at the heart of all this that we should address - particularly what many see as the "marketisation of our education", and the shift in the traditional academic focus of LSE. However, we should always remember that we are lucky to be in higher education in the first place - many aren't so fortunate, even more if our glorious overlords succeed in jacking up tuition fees even further. I would just politely suggest that perhaps our dissatisfaction with the level of student representation within LSE isn't the greatest injustice in the world. It's no wonder that so many are turned off by student politics when the same faces make the same predictable leftist points with wholly unimaginative tactics. Take, for example, the recent motion to twin LSESU with a Palestinian University on

which I proposed some moderate amendments to ensure that it really does encourage dialogue on the right to education in conflict zones. Those who drafted the motion have been so far unwilling to make any concessions, making what could be a widely supported, good motion into just another example of the far left's moral imperialism.



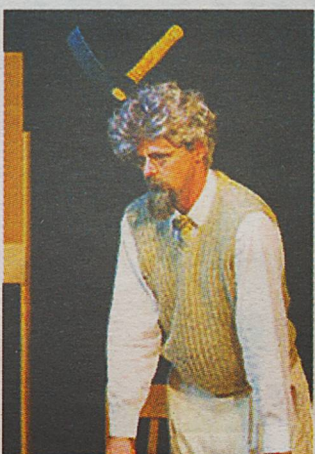
The Left are prepared to follow our words with action to fight for what we believe in

Former LSE Tory Matt Sinclair has an interesting take on student politics at LSE. Those on the left are already behaving like politi-

cians, he says - passing motions, empowering a series of "victim groups" and engaging in activism. In contrast, the right wingers quickly become skilled in defending their views in the face of the left-wing majority, thus their concentration in the Debate Society. Essentially, Tories see student politics as a futile sideshow and choose to engage intellectually rather than actively. This year, the right wingers have removed themselves from Union politics - some have stopped coming to UGMs, others have joined the Green Party and retreated to their societies. This should not be a cause for celebration for us lefties. Without their input in the political debate, the left becomes lazy. We should seek opposition and engage in constructive dialogue: only then will our ideas be perceived as legitimate and of high intellectual quality. Equally, we should never lose sight of the left's primary advantage over the right - we are passionate and are prepared to follow our words with action to fight for what we believe in.

With the increasing irrelevance of the right wing at LSE, I see a new cleavage developing between the dog-

matists and pragmatists. There is a legitimate debate to be had about the methods we employ to further our political ends. Do we continue on the path to extremist direct action, or do we want to conduct our business in a more nuanced, consultative fashion? There is no doubt that the Caspellites attempted the latter and there is also no doubt that the School simply did what it wanted to anyway. The 1960s era of riots which certain students aspire to bring about a renaissance of is not a good model to base our activism on - it really damaged our Union for a number of years and achieved very little. I think we should look back further in the history of LSE to the huge achievements of the Fabians. We would be wise to use consensual means to achieve evolutionary change, just like the Webbs. The way we win concessions like a place on the Director's Selection Committees is through dialogue with the School, not disruptive protests. It's not easy to keep pushing the School in the committee rooms in the face of what seems like insurmountable opposition, but it is the right way to build consensus and achieve our goals.



COMMENT & ANALYSIS

Lebanese student Mark Dauo vents his frustration at the Left's ineffectual campaigning on the Middle East

Think about why you fight

Mark Dauo



Coming back from Lebanon to LSE after the vacations I was greeted by a poster inviting me to a lecture entitled: " Hamas, Hezbollah and the Iraqi Resistance, Why the left should back them against US imperialism". I couldn't stop thinking how easy it is for 'leftists' on this side of the world to call for war against US Imperialism, that is till the last... well, till the last Lebanese, Palestinian or Iraqi alive. Can't we Arabs fight Imperialism the same way a socialist in LSE is doing it? Why don't they do the dying, torture, and wars for a few years and give us a break? Why is it acceptable to go to war on foreign soil but not on local soil? According to their (left) logic they should be plotting to kill Tony Blair to 'help' my people? Or they just expect us to kill while they colourfully chant and then have a beer

afterwards?

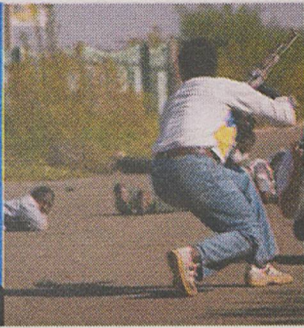
As a leftist and Lebanese I beg to differ with the ridiculousness on that poster. What the left in the developed world should be doing is finally supporting the democratic forces that are toiling to form tolerant societies that can accept political diversity and can manage a democratic competition for authority without falling into civil war, sectarian strife or despotic regimes. With such regimes that take into consideration their populations opinions can we fight Israel and "Imperialism".

That is only one side of the story; the other part is who to support: Hezbollah, Hamas, Iraqi Resistance (if you can find a group that deserves such a label)? Again as a leftist drawing on the lessons learnt the hard and blood saturated way by the Arab left, I would totally reject the call to support parties such as Hezbollah and Hamas. I don't think a legitimate military Iraqi



Resistance exists so I will disregard that fictitious claim altogether.

Looking back a few decades ago, the left in the Arab world was in alliance with similar totalitarian parties such as Hezbollah and Hamas. The names were different then; they were called the Baath and Nasserite parties. The latter allied with the left finally throwing them in jails and annihilating them from the political scene. The Baath had a similar story in Iraq, a coup against the socialist president gave the Iraqis the notorious Saddam Hussain regime. In Syria and Iran the same stories happened. Yet, some still believe that we should be supporting religious, totalitarian, anti-democratic parties that



believe that democracy is electing the president with a 99.9% of the votes, and running the state with one main party/family/cartel/religious sect is a normal procedure. The most possible scenario then is call on the left to support

Hezbollah and Hamas so that they can slaughter us (the Arab Left) later. It doesn't really matter if the Arab population ends up under despotic religious rule, like the Iranian Regime or the Baath Regimes, the most important thing is kicking the US in the ass. It doesn't matter if Lebanon is destroyed and economically crippled, if Palestine is heading towards civil war and starvation, if Iraq has the most active cemeteries in the world, as long as "Imperialism" is being beaten back or at least supposedly so. To those 'leftists' who might be unaware of the fact that Hezbollah and other religious political parties liquidated the Leftist resistance to the Israeli occupation during the 80s, probably they

would be cautious in asking us (Lebanese Left) to support Hezbollah.

Please, do the people of that region a favour and leave us alone, that is if your idea of support is pushing us to be slaughtered. If you want to help, then support us to build



Please, do the people of the Middle East a favour and leave us alone

democracies and build proper states with a possible means of living peacefully and fighting against Israel and the US-UK idiotic foreign policy in the region without destroying our countries and populations. We also deserve to live in peace and wage our wars by protesting in the streets and chanting.

Beaver

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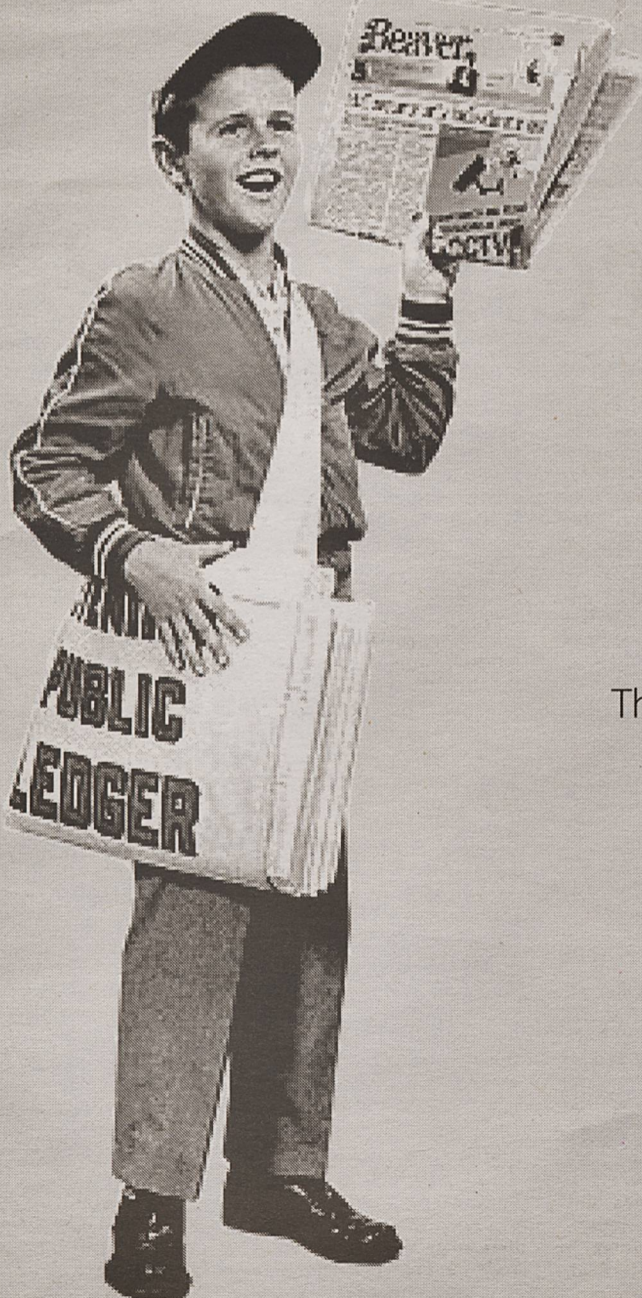
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and you will be added to the list in next week's paper.

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The views and opinions expressed in the *Beaver* are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the editors or the LSE Students' Union



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The *Beaver* is looking for three individuals to help distribute the paper on campus on Tuesdays and Thursdays every week. Distributors will be **paid £7/66/hr**

We're also looking for a student who is able to deliver the *Beaver* to LSE halls, preferably in their own vehicle on Tuesday evenings. Pay will be good!



COMMENT & ANALYSIS

The Beaver

Established 1949 - Issue 655

The Sutherland issue gets more complex...
...as a letter that requires the General Secretary to make impossible promises emerges

The recent developments on the School's reaction to the Sutherland protests show how completely confused the entire issue has become. Firstly, the School continues to avoid the real issue; that is opposition from some students to the appointment of Peter Sutherland as Chair of the Court of Governors. Instead it deliberately chooses to assume that the intention of the protestors was to deny the freedom of speech to Peter Sutherland on that particular occasion alone. By ignoring the true grievances of protestors, the School is thus fundamentally unable to engage with a view to resolving the issue. Furthermore in asking the General Secretary of the Union to ensure there is no repetition of the protests, the School is failing to understand the subtle gradation of student opinion in this matter.

Jimmy Tam is in no position to control the actions of individual students within the Union and in no circumstances can he claim to be able to prevent such a protest recurring. At the UGM last week, Tam denied allegations that he made any such assurance to the School. Yet the details of his meeting with Howard Davies remain essentially unclear. It is obvious that the protestors have managed to worry the School on this occasion.

The Sutherland issue is one that is unlikely to disappear, as the School refuses to back down on its decision and vocal students continue to express their disappointment at the fact the powers that be continue to ignore their opinion. It is at times like this, that we require a General Secretary who will take a pro-active role in negotiating between the School and the protestors. A leader of the union who is not afraid to demand a voice for students instead of limply succumbing to orders passed down from the School.

It is conflicts like these which attract and hold the attention of the School hierarchy, the wider student body as well as the outside world. Therefore it is in situations like this one for us to ensure that the famous reputation of the LSE student body as one that is always determined to ensure its voice is heard by the administration, is not allowed to crumble due to weak leadership.

The General Secretary has clearly been unable to deliver on this issue so far. He needs to remedy the situation and his own reputation before it is too late.

The farce surrounding union politics

...the Union's forum for debate becomes even more useless

This Union has been a confused body in the past few days. Last week, the Sabbaticals held an open meeting with students to discuss the five year Strategic Plan for the Union, in attempt to plan for future provision of services. Due to poor publicity, the meeting was only attended by fifteen students. Hardly, a consideration of cross-campus opinion. Students need to turn up and give the Sabbatical Officers their opinions.

And yet again we were forced to witness the UGM in complete shambles. In what seems to be a recurring situation, three quarters of the hour were wasted on electing a chair, mundane reports and the reading out of useless poetry, leaving only fifteen minutes to discuss an important motion. The issue of Palestinian universities is not only a serious matter, but also one on which the debate was clearly polarized. Issues such as these need to be debated extensively, so that students can make an informed decision. Unfortunately, this was not allowed to happen.

With regards to the issue of a member of the Constitutional & Steering Committee being the Chair of the UGM; there are not many students who can claim to fully understand the technicalities of the Union's Constitution. Given this fact, one would hope that having a member of C&S as Chair of the UGM, would be beneficial and add a degree of order and calm to the proceedings. Unfortunately this weeks UGM did not support this theory.

It has always been tradition at UGMs to incorporate a certain amount of light-hearted humour and it is this unique property that makes the experience enjoyable for students who attend, when the goings on get too dreary. Yet, if we want to maintain the credibility of this age old institution, we must retain the (also age old) tradition of being able to debate motions seriously.

Many people already pass of student politics in general and the UGM in particular as a farce. Playing into the hands of those who berate us, is really not very beneficial at all.

We at the LSE often think of ourselves as equals to Oxbridge. Yet, there has always been a major difference in the ethos of the LSE; the realisation, rather than the creation, of ideas. This can be witnessed by the majority of our degrees, which could be classified as either Arts or Sciences, inevitably being placed under the umbrella of the sciences.

LSE is first and foremost a social science institution. However this is no excuse for us to neglect the creative faculties of art, as they can play a vital role in shaping a student's education, experience and personality. Increased funding for the creative Arts would ensure that enriching extra-curricular activities are provided for and the educational experience of an LSE student is well-rounded.

Letters to the Editor

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

"specific halls"

Dear Sir

As Residences Officer of the LSE SU I have taken a keen interest in the security issues in halls since elected, and following the problems in halls last year have met with numerous LSE staff, students and even security experts. Its perfectly obvious that students should not have to worry about hall security - it should be a minimum guarantee, a stance I took following the first incidents in halls last term. Staff seemed to believe that students were unaware of the potential risks, and so I worked to raise the profile of security. Students are now, certainly, aware that they should remain vigilant, and so its up to the LSE to purchase concrete measures to improve security. The Beaver report [9th January 2007] certainly reopened opportunities for students to demand changes to improve their welfare - I thank you for this.

I am currently writing papers for Residences User Group, and will then report to Residences Committee on how this is received. I would encourage all students who have had problems, or notice areas for improvement in their specific halls, to contact me and their committees, as representatives from these also attend Residences User Group this Thursday.

Louise Robinson
LSESU Residences Officer

"new low"

Dear Sir

I found the cover page article of last week's issue "Hall security only fools dummies" shocking. However, it wasn't what The Beaver uncovered about LSE residences that shocked me. It was the new low of journalistic ethic that The Beaver achieved with this Article.

To recount some of the article, Beaver editors broke into buildings illegally, messed with students' private belongings, took pictures of these belongings, and published these pictures in the newspaper. All of this to discover that a few students are careless about locking their doors? Or that residence buildings use dummy cameras? The Beaver must be really desperate for a good story.

LSE halls have a very good record of ensuring the safety of their residents. The safety measures that have been taken have proven very effective. Once there are some statistics that show that students in LSE residences are unsafe, then the article might have a point. However, the article has no statistics and is merely sensational.

What scares me most is that the security secrets of these two halls have now been published on the front page of a paper that anyone can pick up.

Zach Seeskin
High Holborn Resident

"sex is a..."

Dear Sir

I would like to express my support to Rosamund Urwin's comment "Selling sex: a deadly trade". Especially I appreciate her focus on the customer, as this focus is generally absent in any debate on prostitution. However, I feel like Urwin is treating the



male customer unnecessarily harsh. Men who buy sex are a very diverse group. Even though there might be violent, mentally unstable men with misogyny as motive who buy sex, they represent the minority. An average "first buyer" of sex is a normal, employed man in his mid twenties, no different from the average LSE male student. Most people only buy sex a few times, but for those who continue it can become an addiction they might need help to escape from, just like gambling. By demonising the sex buyer further stigma is placed on this group, alienating them from the public debate and any help available.

The sexuality of some of these men is not from nature distorted and wicked, they are products of society. No men are uncontrollable sexual beasts. They can control desire just as well as girls. By accepting them as decent human beings, you treat the demand side of prostitution and the supply, prostitution, will no longer be profitable.

Julie Lodrup
MSc Politics and Government in the EU
Matilda von Sydow
BSc International Relations

"different ways"

Dear Sir

When I first saw the title of Gregory White's article, "Caring Conservatives?", I was expecting another criticism of the idea that Conservatives can be anything but radical marketizing Neo-Liberals. However, I was pleasantly surprised to read this well-rounded critique of Cameron's Conservatism. White very well examined the different ways of looking at this new 'compassionate conservatism' and weighed the pros and cons concisely and completely.

White first explained how Cameron has tackled the important issues of our time, such as environmentalism and social responsibility. I might add that philosophically it made no sense in the past for Conservatives not to advocate conserving our natural resources. It has been the stranglehold of big business on the Conservative Party that has caused previous Conservatives, like Republicans in the U.S., to neglect environmental responsibility. Cameron is to be applauded for taking the party in this direction, which really gets back to the core values of Conservative philosophy; which are conserving our traditions and our way of life, as opposed to marketizing them out of existence.

One of the last points made by White is that Cameron is more likely to be successful in the ballot box than with campaign contributions. That is, the big busi-

ness contributors to the Conservative Party are uncomfortable with Cameron's new direction for the Party. This is a possibility. Cameron has, so far, been able to make enough compromises to appease the Party's contributors, such as his proposal for a modest tax cut. But we can clearly see that there is growing tension here and Cameron is simply going to have to be practical when dealing with the contributors. He is going to have to explain that they can't hope to win elections with massive tax cuts, massive cuts to government spending, and neglect of the environment anymore. I suppose though, those contributors could always go Labour. Wouldn't that be ironic?

Richard Wagner
MSc Political Theory student

"Italians pretend"

Dear Sir

As a native English speaker, I am constantly shamed by my lack of knowledge of other European languages. Nick Byrne is correct to confront the philistinism which pervades the British education system. But, if progress is to be made, language teachers in schools will have to dramatically raise their game. Learning a language to GCSE level, and even A Level, is boring. I studied French for six years to GCSE standard, and came away with only the most rudimentary knowledge of how to order a croque monsieur or ask the way to the boulangerie. If English speakers are to be enthused with learning a language, they must be taught properly: with reference to French plays and other works of literature, just like learning Latin or Greek.

Part of the problem is that the English language is itself taught poorly. If a native English speaker does not know which word in an English sentence is an adverb or pronoun, how can he possibly know that in a foreign language? Another difficulty is that cultural attitudes must change amongst other European nations.

My own experience with French people is that they are rude and bad mannered when confronted with an English speaker attempting to communicate with them in French. Similarly, Italians pretend not to understand and English speaker's Italian. It must be remembered that it is very difficult for English people to learn another language, and other nations should be pleased when we at least make an effort.

John Townsend
LLM Candidate

Open letter to Howard Davies

Dear Sir

I am writing to you about the welcome extended by you to Mr Jia Qinglin, Chairman of the 10th National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, on the occasion of his unveiling of a statue of Confucius, as reported in the LSE student's newspaper the Beaver, in issue 650, in an article written by Sidhanth Kamanth. I am most concerned by the reaction to a seminar given by Leeshai Lemish on the state of Human Rights in mainland China as contrasted with the same issues in Taiwan. An article was published in the Beaver at the same time as the seminar, in which Mr Lemish addresses the issue, long ignored by world media and governments, of the seven/eight year persecution of Falun Gong in China. I was pleasantly surprised that this issue was aired in the Beaver, and that your welcome to a Chinese official who has been indicted in Spain for crimes against humanity should be given a front page article, along with an editorial comment and substantial article commenting on the significance of this occasion. I should add that I am indeed saddened and devastated that, as the head of a respected educational establishment, you appeared, in your warm welcome, to be unconcerned that Jia Qinglin is said to have the blood of many innocent men, women and children on his hands.

I was deeply impressed by Mr Lemish's demonstration of moral fortitude in not backing down, and at the same time showing tolerance, one of the virtues cultivated by Falun Gong practitioners. In the face of the mass denial of what many international bodies acknowledge as indisputable fact, (widespread human rights abuse in China), Mr Lemish demonstrated compassion for those Chinese who have been hoodwinked by their government's denial of the truth. I have witnessed many times the rage and impatience, the storming off in a huff of young Chinese who, when faced with pictures of the Tien An Men massacre victims, shout "lies" and "it's not true."

It is a matter of very grave concern that a growing number of Chinese are visiting these shores, apparently carrying poison in their minds; spreading untruths uttered on a massive scale by the ruling regime in China.

I am asking you if you will be present at a seminar, a conference at which Chinese practitioners of Falun Gong who have been persecuted in concentration camps will be able to tell their stories to an audience, where western practitioners will be able to speak about their experiences in cultivating Falun Gong. The purpose will be to dispel fantasy and falsehood, to halt the incitement to hatred which, in China has led to the torturing to death of many thousands of innocent people, (the true figures will without doubt emerge at some future date).

On a finishing note, we have been dramatically warned on the dangers to the world posed by an Eastern bloc whose methods of governance have not changed since the days of Stalinism and Maoism, the deaths of Ms Politkovskaya and Mr Litvinenko are a tiny fraction, as examples of the dangers posed by dictators on this planet. The poison ingested by Litvinenko left traces everywhere, the poison in people's minds is no less capable of spreading insidiously far and wide, please think about the issue in this letter. Lastly, Falun Gong is responsible for improving people and making society safer, as anyone taking the trouble to investigate will find, it is an unthinkable and colossal tragedy that this is not understood by some Chinese people, it is something of which China should be proud.

I hope you will take my suggestion seriously.

Anthony Archer
London Falun Gong Practitioner

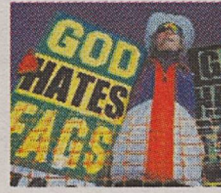
FEATURES

In this section:
Politics/Society/SU Specials

thebeaver.features@lse.ac.uk

Environment

Saving the planet
from destruction



Gay Rights

Fighting the
religious lobby



The Vladical Left



Vladimir
Unkovski
-Korica

The powerful of the world often devise ludicrous justifications for scenarios they are implicated in. Frequently, these lies are not even designed to deceive. One such occasion was when Israeli apologists asked the incredulous world to believe that Hamas, with a harebrained departure from its operational traditions, was to blame for the massacre of Huda Ghalia's family on a Gaza beach last June.

Not many believed Israel's explanation, just as few believed in the practically contemporaneous 'Lebanon War' that Israel's response to the seizure of two of its soldiers could not have been based on a simple prisoner-exchange involving hundreds of Israeli-held Lebanese prisoners, instead of the systematic military crippling of Lebanese society with the excuse that little Israel was defending itself from Goliath Iran.

By diverting attention to questions like 'did or did not Israel kill Huda Ghalia's family?' or 'can we condemn Israeli war crimes in the Lebanon War when its existence is under threat?', Commentators attempt not to provide credible explanation or excuse for Israel but to cast the whole Middle East conflict without its most basic characteristic: the fundamentally disproportionate balance of forces involved in the struggle.

The sheer ludicrousness of some of their arguments, moreover, serves to reinforce this inequality. Decades of won arguments have not changed the status quo in the Middle East. Like any other settler state established by European colonists at the expense of local populations, as in French-ruled Algeria or settler-ruled Rhodesia or apartheid South Africa, Israel remains trapped in a logic based on the struggle between oppressor and oppressed.

Since it was founded in a context where the majority across the Middle East would never accept the ethnic cleansing of 75,0000 Palestinians by the Zionist colonists and the horrific injustices perpetrated against fellow Arabs, the settler state had to seek a Faustian pact with an outside power in order to maintain its existence.

Even today, little David can always count on Uncle Sam. The US, which gives Israel a third of its overseas aid and the biggest share of its military aid in the world, vetoed calls for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire when Israel assaulted Lebanon in 2006. In 2003, Israel had been promised aid amounting to \$720 million in economic and \$2.04 billion in military terms. Is it surprising, then, that ten Lebanese were killed, most of them civilians, for every Israeli in the Lebanon war? Does US aid to Israel clearly not trump the Katyusha rocket (first seeing service in 1942) and other aid from what the ever-compliant Blair has termed the "arc of extremism", linking Iran, Syria, Hamas and Hizbollah?

If Israel has the unequivocal backing of the world's major powers, surely ordinary people around the world should stop being ambivalent in their support of Palestine? Six decades after the creation of the Zionist state, millions of Palestinian refugees are still being denied their right of return, while millions more ordinary Palestinians are being denied such basic rights as their right to life, to running water, to electricity, to education, and even their right to recognition - to statehood - itself.

The siege of the Zionist fortress begins with an assault on its fortifications in the West. The Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel, initiated in Ramallah in April 2004 by Palestinian academics and intellectuals, endorsed a strategy of comprehensive economic, cultural and academic boycott of Israel as a first step towards redressing the balance of power in the Middle East. Taking up this call internationally would be our only route to breaking the hold of Zionism on the great majority of the Israeli population, and thus opening the way for the possibility of a peaceful solution to what has been a bloody and explosive conflict affecting the whole world. ■

Editors' Blog

From the moment he announced his departure, and for many long before then, Tony Blair has been labeled a 'lame duck' in British politics. The Prime-minister elect has been chosen and the country is looking for a new toy. It is therefore ironic that last week, in this supposed period of political limbo, one of the most vital political issues has been raised kicking off a debate on the future of this country.

The first came from Mr. Blair himself. On Friday the Prime Minister was addressing a gathering of the armed forces an event which should have generated little interest. Leaders usually like to be seen speaking to men and women in uniform for a variety of reasons; firstly they are usually too disciplined to voice dissenting opinions, secondly it makes the leader in question appear statesman-like and thirdly it reminds political opponents that the man in charge still carries a big stick and might one day use it so watch out. Blair's speech should have followed a fairly generic pattern. Something along the lines of "I know Iraq and Afghanistan aren't exactly going without a hitch but there's a war on terror and I have to do something about it so stop complaining. P.S. your all very brave and I have the utmost respect for you even though my government has an appalling record on looking after you." However, Blair being Blair, the speech ended up being about much more than contrition and a reminder to keep on fighting. The Prime Minister asked his audience, and by extension the country, the broader question; how important do you want the United Kingdom to be in the world. The question was obviously not phrased so crudely. What Blair actually asked was whether Britain should continue to pursue an interventionist, assertive foreign and defence policy or limit its role to a peace-keeper as so many other nations have done. Either the UK can be an agenda setting world power - fighting for liberal values in the war on terror- or it can follow the way of other former great powers such as Japan or Italy and work solely on the behest of agencies such as UN peacekeeping forces and take a back-sea role in world affairs.

Its not hard to take Blair's side on this one (a sentence I appreciate you're not used to hearing). If we are in the middle of a global conflict for global values then being on the losing side doesn't bear thinking about and the UK should bring to bear its power to see its values enacted in the world. Furthermore see this from a domestic security point of view; Britain's future is less certain in a world plagued by the reign of terror than it is in a world governed by liberal values thus acting to entrench those values is also acting in the national interest.



However such an argument presupposes that every UK citizen is as concerned with the ideological debate on geo-politics as Blair. A member of the government, even the Prime Minister, acts on behalf of his citizens and nobody else. This argument was expressed, albeit indirectly in a post on the BBC's comments page (Blair's speech having generated a debate on the status of the UK) - "The UK is not a world power and the taxpayer cannot afford to pay for expensive make belief any more". Well Patrick form Yorkshire, you raise a good point. The decision to be an agenda setter rather than a back-seat driver is not without cost. Such a cost is born not only by the service men and women which Blair addressed last week (although their work must not be forgotten) but by every citizen of this country. The issue of the vast expense to the tax-payer of fighting wars in far off places is significant but not nearly as significant as the dangers faced by every Britain who is now considered a potential target by those on the other side of the war on terror. In fact most of the discussion in the aftermath of 7/7 was whether the invasion of Iraq had placed ordinary Britons under greater danger. At the time Blair and others in the government were insistent that every nation was under threat from global terror regardless of its foreign policy - few were convinced.

Britain's declining importance in the world is frequently bemoaned by just about everyone in government and the media. Obviously nobody likes to feel that there sliding into irrelevance but despite how much it is talked up this country matters far less to world opinion than it did fifty years ago. Clinging to memories of Churchill won't change that. The real issue is whether the general public share this desire for importance. Is keeping up the pretence really worth it when the price of making the news is also making so many enemies. One might well ask the populations of Micronesia, Switzerland Belgium and New Zealand whether they would rather trade their stability for a seat at the top table of international affairs. Politicians will always seek to increase their influence on the world's stage because at the end of the day this fulfills their function. However arguably they would be doing their populations a greater service by accepting that being a spectator rather than a player in world affairs is not necessarily a bad thing. ■

The Right Approach

Sam
Burke



What did you think about Ruth Kelly's decision to send her son to a specialist private school? I have a word for it: responsible. In a country so short of responsible parenting, it astounds me that so many commentators and politicians were quick to judge her actions made in the interest of her son.

I'm saddened, in fact, that column inches here, have to leap to the defence of the Cabinet Minister in what should have remained a private matter. If your mother was a Cabinet Minister, how would you like your details splashed around the papers in irreverent point scoring? As a mother (or father) how upset would you be to have your children's education discussed across the country? If you cannot be Education Secretary without the intrusive discussion of your children, as per our case in point, then before long we'll have a new breed of politician eager to step up to the despatch box: childless machines. And how much poorer our politics would be for it!

The bottom line is that as a mother, first and foremost, Ruth Kelly has not only a right, but a duty to act in the best interests of her child. Had Ms. Kelly been a member of another party, she would merely have been able to state this and leave it there. But as a member of the Labour Party, she tried to give some answers to her blood-thirsty critics from within her own party, setting out a justification as to why she had taken the decision she did.

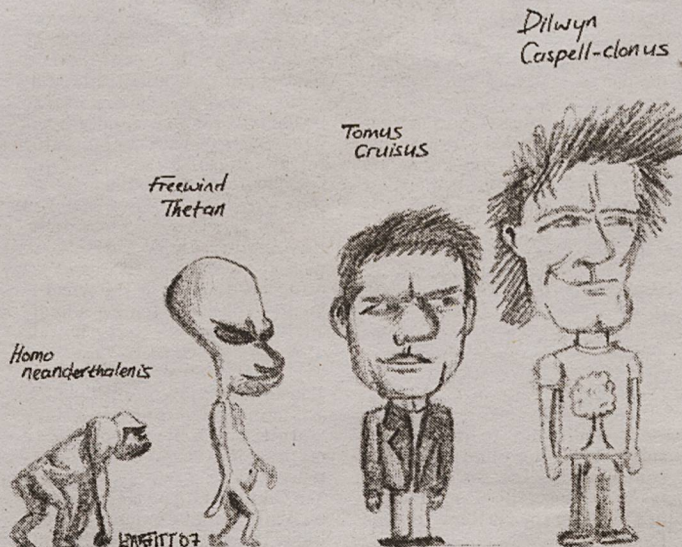
Labour backbencher Ian Gibson claims "It's wrong. You should set an example as a minister and support your local school" and called the decision "a slap in the face for the teachers and pupils in the school the child has been taken out of." What a low estimation of the teachers and pupils involved! Of course this is not the first time the Labour party have attacked their own for this 'political crime'. Before 1997; current Lord Chancellor, Charles Falconer tried to be selected as the Labour parliamentary candidate for Dudley East. He was advised by the local selection board to withdraw his four children from fee-paying schools. He refused - and rightly so. Can you believe the audacity of these provincial socialists in telling a father to disrupt his children's education for political expediency?

Parallels can also be found in Diane Abbott's faux-pas. If Ms. Kelly had been shouting from the rooftops that people are wrong to send their children to private school, like Diane Abbott, then she would be, open to the charge of hypocrisy. But she wasn't - so those criticisms are as unfounded as they are treacherous. Sanctimonious Labour MPs crying "hypocrite" would do well to remember Harold Wilson sent his children to private schools.

One esteemed daily publication known for its insight and wit; *The Sun* (!), did not disappoint: "In our view, Ruth Kelly is a fully fledged, ocean-going, two-faced hypocrite who is unfit for this or any other Cabinet." Nobody should pay any attention to the two-faced tosh it churns out, mainly written tongue-in-cheek by left-wing journalists who are only too happy to take Murdoch's money.

Far from criticising Ms. Kelly's acts, her spiteful commentators ought to appreciate the fact she is alleviating pressure on state education. In many cases the Local Education Authority would foot this bill if it was shown that there was a gap in provision. This option is therefore not the preserve of the rich as has been suggested. Ms Kelly has rightly elected to finance the fees herself rather than burden the state - she should be applauded for that.

There is a need for a general debate about the provision of state education, especially for children with disabilities. But why does it take the 'news' that Ms. Kelly intends to send her son to a private, specialist school to start the talking? Next time something like this happens, there needs to be restraint. The media, politicians and hacks need to bite their tongues - because, in the end, children matter more. ■



Evolution the Scientology way...

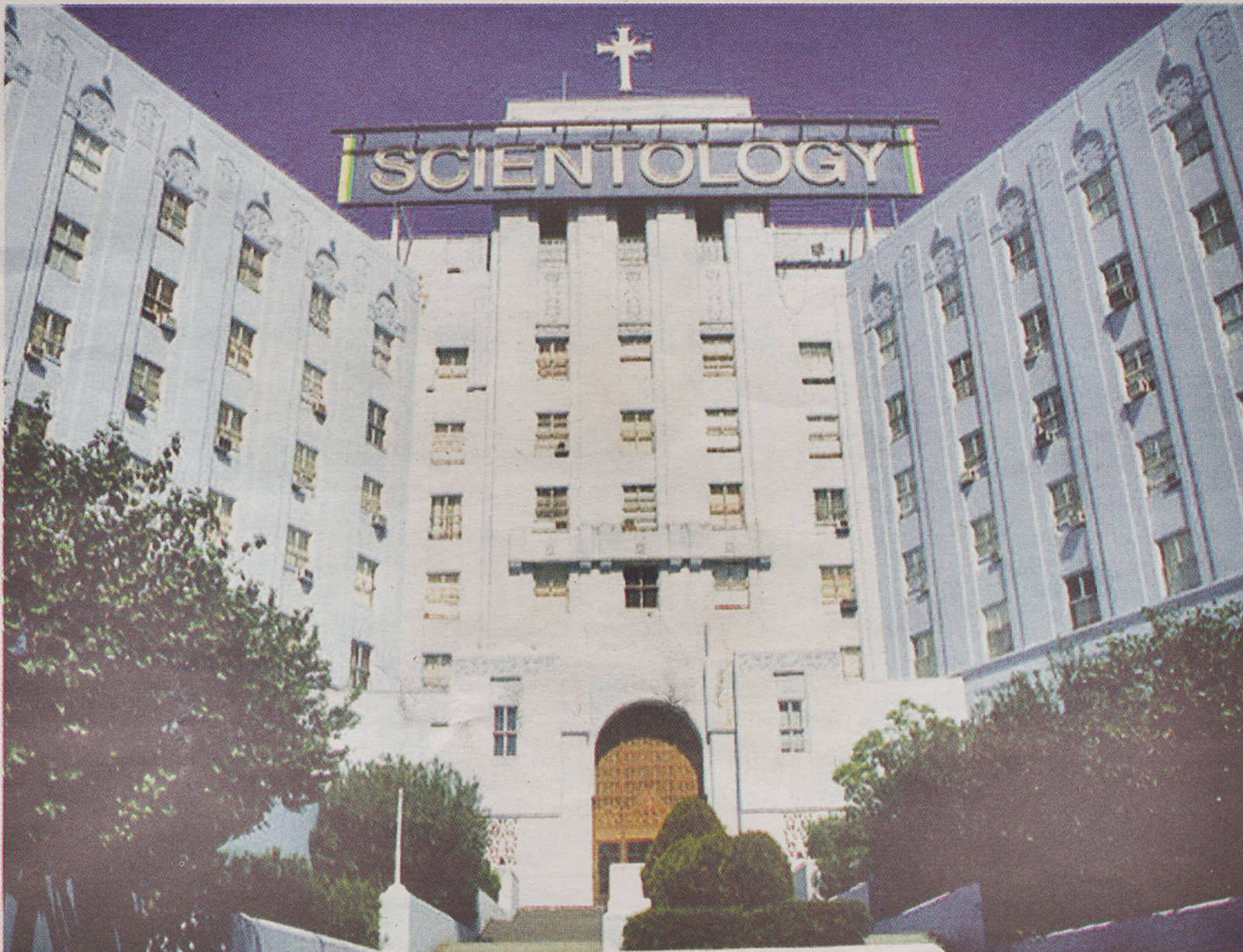
Scientology Exposed

Susan Cooke investigates the weird and wonderful world of the infamous Church

We've seen the smiling suits and the unnaturally happy Tom Cruise, heard the scandals about bribes and threats and unscrupulous goings-on. What is the truth about Scientology, the religion that one of the U.K.'s own High Court Judges, Justice Latey, dismissed as "corrupt, sinister, immoral and dangerous"? Scientology is a massive estate, built on a rotting base whose cracks come in the form of lawsuits, suicides and scandal. It is also something much more banal: a "religion" based on the glorified self-help teachings of a science-fiction writer. Without their aura of mystery, Scientologists are just weak-minded fanatics.

My meeting with a top official at their London Scientology 'Celebrity Centre' was almost entirely unintentional. After showing up for a free lecture about "living in a toxic world" I soon found myself alone in a room with only a Scientology video and my cynicism for company. My time with Mr. Scientology himself was entirely predictable. He gazed at the computer screen that held the results of my "personality test" and enumerated my mental and spiritual deficiencies, then folded his hands, looked into my eyes and said: "My diagnosis? Dianetics." *Quelle surprise.*

The big question: what is dianetics? It is the core of Scientology, and also the dull bit. The term literally means "what the soul is doing to the body through the mind." The church claims that dianetics can be used to uncover and treat "the source of



A Godless Church?



Scriptures teach that 75 million years ago, a galactic overlord named Xenu froze the people in his galaxy and sent the bodies to earth

unwanted sensations and emotions," including depression and illness. The unpleasant feelings are caused by "engrams," which are triggers lodged in a person's "reactive mind" during a traumatic incident, usually while unconscious. Thus the emphasis on "silent birth," lest the unborn child receive any engrams from its labouring mother. The example in the video was that of a man who broke up with his girlfriend because of a conversation he heard - while unconscious - between two paramedics. The man in the video learned that his mind could only be "cleared" through auditing sessions. What are auditing sessions? They are self-help sessions of a sort: a mixture of mind games, regression hypnosis and personality overhaul, they cost upwards of £20,000 a year, and that is just the beginning. Getting "cleared" is a lengthy process and church members struggle to pass the "levels" but often must repeat them -

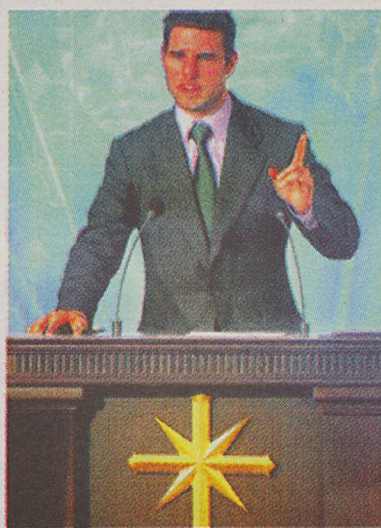
and pay again.

Scientology's aggressive sales tactics and pricey services create good profit margins but a lot of bad press. The Church of Scientology in England is not recognized as a religion or as a charity in the U.K. but has overcome its tax position by funnelling activities through a company registered in Australia. In 2004, it paid just £3114 of corporation tax on a £9.8 million income, with net assets of £18.9 million.

The government of Britain is not the only victim. The dark side of Scientology can be seen in cases like those of Patrice Vic of France, Noah Lottick of New York, and Richard Collins of Bristol. All were being pursued by the church when they committed suicide. When Collins jumped from a bridge in 1996, his family told police how Scientologists were trying to stop him from leaving by inundating him with phone calls and letters. Patrice Vic of France was also hunted to his death. The leader of his local Scientology church pressured Vic to take out loans to cover treatment, convincing him that he could not survive without it. He came to Vic's house and tried to force his wife into signing loan papers. In this case the courts recognized the role of Scientologists in his death, and the leader was convicted of manslaughter and fraud.

This is not the only legal defeat Scientology has suffered. A crushing blow to the empire was the successful £4.43 million lawsuit by Lawrence Wollersheim, a Californian member of

the church whose auditing process turned him manic-depressive and near-suicidal. Bonnie Woods of the



Scientology is dangerous because it functions in this undefined area between creed, commerce and cult

U.K. won a similar £55,000 suit against the Church of Scientology in England, in which she accused the church of brainwashing. The treatments are indeed questionable. I was given a free self-analysis session, in which we had a jolly good game and word association and false memories, though I spent half the time making things up because I honestly don't remember what it smelled like the first time I drove in a car. I felt strange and vulnerable afterwards, hypnotized by images. When I commented that the session seemed like therapy, I was faced with vehement denial. It was not surprising; Scientology is on a crusade against psychiatrists. David Cohen of the Evening Standard discovered this at a Scientology weekend retreat, where he was treated to digital images of psychiatrists being machine-gunned while Scientology top dog David Miscavige roared with laughter in front of the screen. The experience helped him understand why some countries are taking such a hard line on Scientology.

Germany is afraid of the scientologists. A huge new centre that just cropped up in Berlin has drawn criticism from parents and other locals who fear and resent their efforts at brainwashing. In Germany, the church is under surveillance by the Office for the Protection of the Constitution, which also monitors neo-Nazis and terrorist groups. The office has warned that "there is substantial evidence that the Scientology Organization is involved in activities

directed against the free democratic order." In France, parliament has officially defined Scientology as a cult.

What about the aliens? Scientologists will never comment on the intergalactic connection, but it is found in L. Ron Hubbard's "secret scriptures," which have of course been leaked onto the internet. Here it is, by my interpretation: the scriptures teach that 75 million years ago, a galactic overlord named Xenu froze the excess people in his galaxy and sent the bodies to Teegeack, or as we call it, "earth." The disembodied spirits of these defrosted aliens continue to haunt mankind today.

So what is Scientology? In practice, it is a pile of esoteric jargon and beliefs built upon L. Ron Hubbard's writings. That's all. When I asked Mr. Scientology what made Scientology a "church," he told me it was because Scientology recognizes man "as a spiritual being." Fair enough, but I have never been to a church where they pressure-sell books, classes, and vitamins to new converts as they did to me. Scientology is dangerous because it functions in this undefined area between creed, commerce and cult. We need to be more cautious in Britain. Instead of accepting gifts from an organization other members of the EU have deemed a cult, the police and the Labour party should be taking steps to inform the public about the group that Labour MP Tom Watson has dubbed "an organisation we should warn our children about."

Eco-friendly food is miles

Micheal Deas tells us why accumulating 'Food Miles' kills the earth

Whether its exotic fruit or an eight pence pack of Sainsbury's Basic Noodles, nearly all of us enjoy the range and value on offer at supermarkets. However, more and more people are now starting to argue that the true cost of the food we eat is rarely reflected in the price.

Increasing demand for cheap and out of season produce mean food is now shipped in from all over the world even when it's not available in the UK, burning huge amounts of fossil fuels along the way. What's more the rise of intensive farming is turning great lakes into ponds and leaving those downstream of big irrigation systems without water where it is at its most scarce. The UK is now a major importer of 'carbon-greedy' food and a major exporter of drought. Put simply, the cheap and never ending supply of food we are used to is causing massive environmental and human damage on a global scale.

That handy bag of mixed salad you picked up the other day may have looked healthy but it would have taken 300 litres of water to produce. Huge, usually western owned, factory farms suck huge amounts of water into their irrigation systems that cannot be replaced and the money they bring in means the resulting loss of fertile land for other farmers is ignored. Then the salad has to be processed, packaged and transported to the UK from places as far away as Kenya, Egypt or South Africa. The amount of food flown around the world has more than doubled in the last decade and campaigners argue that carbon emission targets will never be met whilst lorries drive 30 billion km per year transporting food and planes fly posh salads around the planet.

The damage done by 'food miles' is one of the most obvious problems caused by the globalisation of food markets and is receiving increasing the most

attention. Food travels further today partly because of the centralised system of food distribution. Crops can be transported many miles to be packaged at a central depot and then sent many miles back to be sold near

where they were produced in the first place. The rise of the out-of-town supermarket means consumers create more food miles themselves. An average UK adult travels about 135 miles by car to shop for food per

year.

But the main cause of excessive food miles is international transport. The price of labour in, you guessed it, China, means that some British fish is now sent there for processing, only to be sent back for sale in the UK. That's a 16,000 mile round trip to save a supplier a bit on staff costs.

Imports of food are at amazing record highs. 95% of the fruit and half of the vegetables in the UK are now imported. The high demand for strawberries from South America in January and potatoes from Egypt in August make carbon intensive food inevitable for as long as public will eat out of season produce. But it's not just Jamie Oliver who disapproves of the loss of seasonality, scientists and environmentalists agree that this extent of dependence on foreign imports hastens climate change and is simply unsustainable.

It is infuriating therefore that supermarkets, in attempt

to keep prices down and profits up, will sell imported produce even when UK grown food is available. In early September, home-grown seasonal fruit and vegetables like pears, beans and carrots were available throughout the country. But on the shelves in three central London supermarkets were Pears grown 7,000 miles away in Argentina, beans from Kenya 3,600 miles away and carrots imported from South Africa 6,000 miles away. The amounts of energy involved are staggering - it will have taken 68 calories of energy in the form of fuel for each calorie of carrot energy.

What do the countries who feed us get in return? The droughts mentioned earlier are not contained to developing countries. Intensive farming has caused a massive water shortage in the south of Spain and whilst food generation may have doubled in 50 years the amount of water used to grow it is has increased threefold.

Then there is the human



This is not just food, this is environmentally unfriendly food

Saying NO to nuclear power

Everyone's favourite environmentalist James Caspell outlines the case against nuclear power

At the last Labour Party conference of his reign, Prime Minister Tony Blair informed his Party that harnessing nuclear power should be considered as an appropriate way of tackling climate change. He has since argued that nuclear is a viable, safe and effective source of power that will both fill the gaps in energy supply that will increasingly occur as fossil fuels are depleted and, more acutely, is an environmentally sustainable form of power which can stunt the advance of global warming. It isn't - and never will be.

Upon close scrutiny, it becomes increasingly evident that to describe nuclear power as 'environmentally sustainable' is a complete misnomer. This is combined with the known quantities that people associate with harnessing nuclear energy: it is unsafe, hugely expensive and especially as a consequence of the UK's current warmongering foreign policy, serves as a patent terrorist threat to millions of British civilians. Such negative externalities are merely the tip of the iceberg.

Firstly, nuclear power does not offer substantial reductions in carbon dioxide emissions. In fact, nuclear power provides just 3.6 per cent of our current energy needs in the UK and even by doubling its maximum energy generation; this would cut carbon dioxide emissions by no

more than eight per cent.

Despite the propaganda peddled by British Nuclear Fuels (BNFL) and the Government, nuclear power is far from emissions-free. The mining, processing and transportation of uranium, the construction of nuclear power stations, the transport and storage of nuclear waste, all consume fossil fuels, and result in the carbon dioxide emissions that are to blame for increasing climatic instability across the globe. In fact, analysing the whole life-cycle of nuclear power stations, it can be seen that per kilowatt hour of electricity generated nuclear power plants still generate around 40 per cent of the carbon dioxide of a gas-fired power station. It is therefore not an 'environmentally friendly' source of power - far from it.

Meanwhile, nuclear power leaves a legacy of radioactive, teratogenic and toxic waste which poses a threat to public safety for generations as no safe solution has been found for its disposal. Management of the waste is also expensive: the clean up alone of the UK's current reactors is costing in excess of 60 billion pounds, and will take hundreds of years to deal with current waste, let alone waste potentially produced in the future.

These financial resources alone could instead immediately buy and install enough wind turbines to meet 20 percent of

the UK's electricity needs - two thirds of our current nuclear consumption. Instead, on New Labour's current trajectory, the monstrous effects of radioactive waste from nuclear sites will be present for hundreds of thousands of years. Uranium, the

To rely on nuclear power alone is the same as doing nothing about climate change for the next 15 years

fuel used to provide nuclear power, is itself an increasingly scarce resource: if 30 per cent of the world's current electricity needs were fuelled by uranium alone, then reserves of high-grade ore would be depleted within a decade. Furthermore, carbon emissions from lower grade ore are in fact significantly higher than burning fossil fuels directly - meaning nuclear energy can never be ever environmentally sustainable and has the potential to be as dirty as some existing modes of fossil power in the medium term.

Finally, to reduce global carbon dioxide emissions by the amount necessary under the Kyoto protocol, we would need 1,500 new nuclear power stations, which would be undeliverable for up to 25 years and would also result in uranium becoming scarce within just three years. Even at current rates of use, it is estimated that the world's reserves of viable uranium ore will be exhausted within 50 years. It is therefore far from 'sustainable.'

Meanwhile, nuclear energy will not even meet our short-term energy needs. If given the go-ahead, new nuclear power stations would not come on-line for an estimated 15-20 years, by which time thousands of tonnes of carbon will have been produced in both building them but also as a by-product of the continuation of the fossil fuelled status quo.

This would not be the case with a decentralised national program of renewable energy, which is the real, effective and environmentally sustainable alternative to existing fossil fuel production. To rely on nuclear alone is therefore effectively the same as doing nothing about climate change for the next 15 years; it remains a scientific fact that the UK and the rest of the Earth does not have that time if we want to prevent run-away climate change.

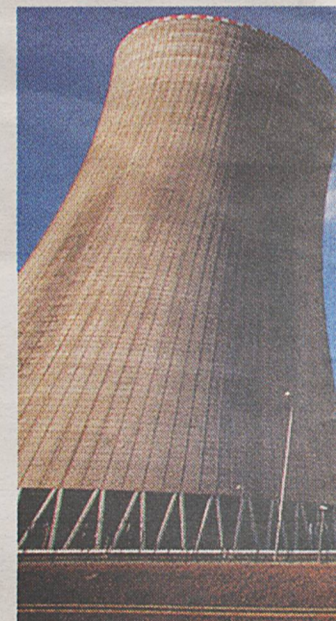
Comparative financial cost highlights another drawback.

Nuclear power is vastly more expensive per kilowatt hour than any other form of energy and has consistently proved more expensive than BNFL have claimed, which is why it always needs to be heavily subsidised by the taxpayer. It is no surprise that over 70 per cent of the UK's population opposes the renewal of a nuclear power program.

At this juncture it is perhaps poignant to cite the fact that one of the main externalities that makes nuclear power financially and politically viable, is that the processed uranium has a dual purpose, and therefore one other use aside from civilian energy - it provides the propensity to develop of a nuclear arsenal.

Using nuclear power increases nuclear weapons proliferation around the world due to the overlap between enrichment and processing of uranium and plutonium with regards to both civilian power and arms proliferation. In fact, it is often only the production of nuclear weapons that makes civilian nuclear power programs financially viable. The British nuclear power industry has created the third largest stockpile of uranium on the planet; it remains a historical fact that throughout the 1970's, for example, plutonium from the UK's civil power stations was transported to the United States for its weapons program.

The adoption of so called



Even more harmful than the straw

'civilian' nuclear power programs cannot therefore be separated from the military-industrial complex that sees New Labour consider renewing the Trident nuclear submarine contract at a cost of over £25 billion even at conservative estimates. Such financial resources could instead be used to pay for student tuition fees for the next ten years instead, along with a variety of other more tangible and beneficial public goods. Political debates

SU Environment and Ethics Officer, Aled Fisher, gives his tips regarding what you can do on the environment:

At home



- Don't use a dishwasher or a tumble dryer.
- Wash-up with your hands and let your clothes dry naturally.
- Don't leave anything on standby, including TVs, digiboxes (everyone forgets!) and laptops.
- Reduce waste, reuse and recycle.
- Turn down the thermostat, monitor radiator use and close windows.

At university



- Use double-sided printing and try not to print unless it is necessary.
- Turn-off computer monitors after use.
- Turn-off lights, particularly later in the day.
- If you're involved in a society, don't plaster Houghton Street in hundreds of unnecessary posters that no one will read.
- Use the new and constantly-improving recycling facilities.



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Interview

Laurie David is an activist, producer and wife of Larry David.

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Goodbye Planet

Multiple choice flowchart affair. can you prolong human life?



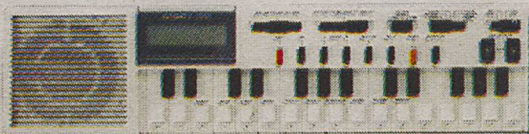
Fashion

Dress like a tree. a fashionable oak or beech.



Food & Drinking

Organic vegetables are weird and expensive.



Music

Perform. Perform. making electronica look good.



Visual Arts

Portraiture. from the academy. proper stuff. and that.

Debden

Most of the streets were named after local dignitaries, and the longest was named after local hero Thomas Willingale. The commercial centre of Debden is The Broadway, with shops, a bank, a supermarket, a BP garage, and a library.

Where: Debden

Mudchute

A locality on the Isle of Dogs in Docklands, London, England. The name of the area is in testament to the engineering overspill when Millwall Dock was being created in the 1840s. Spoil from the excavation of the Dock, and silt from its channels and waterways were dumped on nearby land, using a conveyor system.

Where: Mudchute!

Cockfosters

The name has been recorded as far back as 1524, and is thought to be either the name of a family, or that of a house which stood on Enfield Chase. One suggestion is that it was "the residence of the cock forester". Yikes.

Where: Cockfosters
From: 1524

Theydon Bois

Theydon Bois is a large London commuter belt village in the Epping Forest district of Essex located 14.7 miles (23.7 km) northeast of Charing Cross in London. Theydon Bois is within the bounds of the M25 motorway and is situated near to its junction with the M11 motorway

Where: Theydon Bois

rant comptroller
josheller

music comptroller
samashon

visual arts comptroller
daisymitchell-forster

film comptroller
angustse

literature comptroller
erinorozco

editorial assistant
bealong

theatre comptroller
mollytucker

style comptroller
abaosunsade

travel comptroller
jessicamcardle

food & drinking comptroller
kimmandeng

comedy comptroller
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alansplode

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EDITORIAL

"All Things must Pass. Decay is inherent in all things" said the Lord Buddha. It seems that as a society we may have damaged the planet so irreparably that we will be responsible for the end of human life as we know it. This is a heavy burden for anyone to bear, but I am confident that death will pardon us. On a more positive note, necessity may well drive evolution. Perhaps we will be inspired to colonise new worlds and leave this crumbling open sewer of a planet to the stories of legend, or perhaps PartB will have to grow a tail and fins. If neither of these visions of the future appeal, now is probably the time to act. In related news, we mourn this week the passing of two of the greatest assets this section of the paper has enjoyed. During his tenure, Sam Ashton defined what Music is, and for this we will be eternally grateful. Laleh Kazemi-Weisari both scared, shocked and provoked us with the images in her head set down on paper. Both will be missed.

Preparing for life on the high seas,

Kevin Perry & Daniel B Yates



global warming: good or bad?

aleddliwyfisher is warning of the end josheller is warming to this trend

At first I thought it would be really hard being funny on an issue like climate change. But now, I think "fuck it". Being a Green is really fucking hard. Today for example, I've been working on the advertising of Environment, which meant killing a lot of trees. Every photocopy I fuck up is another tree dead; even the ones I get right loosely constitute murder. Imagine Treebeard dying in Lord of the Rings. That story would've been seriously shit. No-one would've bothered reading loads of dead trees in book form just to read about more dead trees. Think about it.

Anyway, enough about the damn trees. They're dead now, and they're not coming back, so don't come up to me when I'm posturing to ask me in the snotty sarcastic tone "isn't it better to use less paper for Environment Week?" etc. Shut up. Don't talk to me in that 'outdoor voice' of yours. I know things about the environment, alright? Haven't you seen my awesome Exec tag that gets me free in Crush, even though I never go because the SU has swallowed up and shat out my 'social life'?

And it's climate change, not global

At the end of the day, the reason climate change is so frightening is that it will affect the economy, society, politics, health, education, asylum and immigration, war, foreign policy, energy, crime, transport, science and technology, food, animal welfare and many other human issues - it is an issue of social justice and human rights. And, worst of all, it will affect the poorest and most vulnerable in the world the most. In essence, climate change is a threat to the survival of the human race; a challenge to all the assumptions of the capitalist economic system and our current way of life.

Yes, I said "capitalistic economic system". People think that capitalism is some sort of eternal and 'normal' condition for humanity, like the existence of a God or the continuation of the career of Cliff Richard. But its obsession with growth, expansion (somewhat erotic concepts admittedly) and the intensive exploitation of people and resources mean that we have a choice between our planet and blind accumulation. As the highwayman said, you're money or your life. Well, almost.

I won't argue that global warming isn't happening. It looks like it might be. Even though 1998 was the hottest year on record, which means we've had 9 subsequent years where it's been colder, which suggests a trend to me. Ok though, so people smarter than me tell me that it's definitely happening. I guess I can believe them. Even though the most powerful person on the planet, who in any rational society must be the smartest, says it isn't... That's fine, I'm not going to argue. You say the sea's rising by some meters and that's going to increase and stuff. I can accept that. But how can any sane person think that is a bad thing? There are so many great things about global warming. I bloody can't wait.

First thing. Who got really excited about the Kensal Rise Tornado? Everybody did, of course they did. That thing was so fucking cool. A tornado! A tornado in London! Awesome. Just you wait my friends. If Hollywood blockbusters are any good at predicting the future, and Planet of the Apes tells us they are, then we are in for some kick-ass weather. There's going to be loads of weird weather popping up everywhere! Also, more importantly, the prophets over at 20th Century Fox tell us that global warming will produce one super big maxi-mega

Not that wall that was knocked down. No, I talk of course of the whale in the Thames. Fantastic. How bloody wonderful? Everyone in the country was enthralled by the Sky News split-screen 24-hour live whale coverage! Even their fishing correspondent (who knew?) was on hand to provide expert whale analysis. One of the most important events in our nation's history and Sky News knew it. Yet there were some people who tried to link the thing to global warming. Fine. Push your agenda if you wish to. Maybe global warming caused a whale to swim in to the Thames. Don't you dare though, don't you dare suggest that makes global warming a bad thing. The coolest thing to happen in the Thames ever, probably the coolest thing to happen in any river anywhere ever, and you try and portray it as negative. That's outrageous. Let's think more about this, if the global warming made a whale swim up the Thames, imagine what wondrous creatures we'll get turning up in the river in the next few decades. There'll be giant squid, big sharks probably, sail-fish, giant turtles and probably even some of those funky looking vampire octopuses. I can't wait.

Speaking of animals, if we again defer to a Hollywood blockbuster, think of the



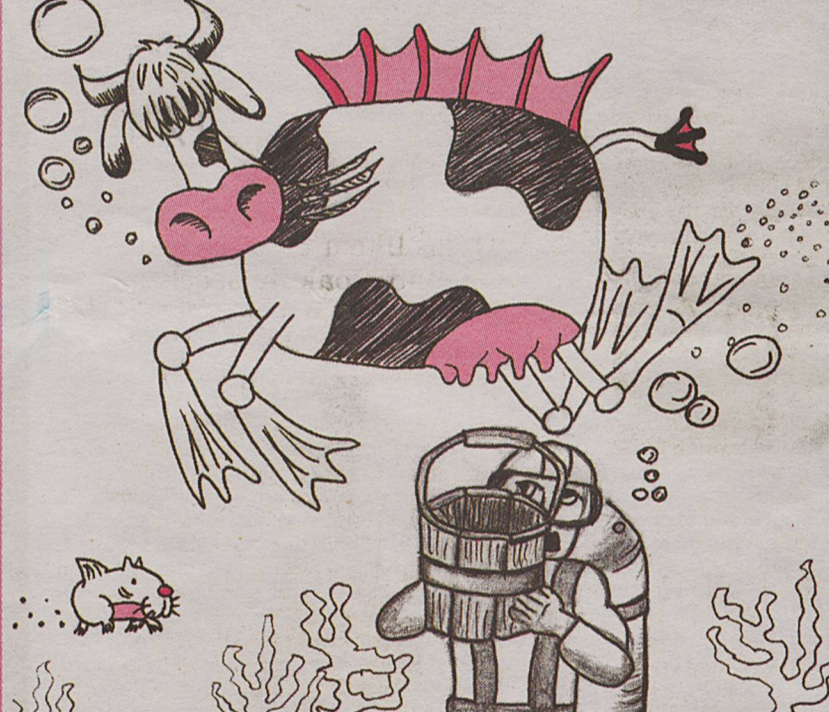
warming. Not everywhere is going to get warm. Some models suggest that, of the numerous but equally disastrous scenarios of a carbon intensive future, Britain will get colder because of interference with the Gulf Stream. While some dispute it, none now dispute the overall terrible future we face unless we act.

Temperature rises across the globe will indeed increase massively on average - the UN's figures put it at as much as an 8 degrees Celsius rise by 2100, and new research seemingly always paints a grimmer picture. This will cause the melting of the ice caps, leading to predicted sea rises that will inundate the Thames Barrage, flood East Anglia, lay waste to the low-lying countries of Europe and Bangladesh, and pretty much cover many of the major areas of global population centred on the coast. Furthermore, crop failures, desertification, species extinction, increase in airborne disease, more extreme weather events, deforestation, forest fires, an increase in respiratory disease, environmental refugees numbering an estimated 80 million, wars over resources, water shortages, poor quality of water, increase in living on marginal land, spiralling insurance costs and many more problems will be intensified or caused by climate change. As you can see, the Day After Tomorrow wasn't that far-fetched. It was, however, piss poor.

In all seriousness, we have to act now to tackle climate change. Carbon taxes are not enough; carbon rationing isn't even enough; even the brilliant Contraction and Convergence model of carbon trading and reduction is not enough on its own. We need to radically rethink our economic system and our individual way of life, before it is too late. True sustainability is about leaving not just something behind for our children and their children and so on, but about cultivating a world that they can live in and enjoy as well as we did.

The human race isn't that special - indeed Celebrity Big Brother teaches us quite the opposite. Our means of production and living cannot be separated from the laws of ecology and the interconnections of the Earth's living systems. Not for long, anyway. Ecology will eventually come calling to redress the balance.

Getting involved in environmental activism can be invigorating and even fun. It propels you up the social ladder like no other activism can. But at the fundamental level, green politics is the politics of survival. If good people lie supine in the face of the greatest challenge in human existence, then we'll fail. And, whatever happens, I'll never get to say "I told you so".



storm! That will be wonderful. I really really want to see the big mega storm. What a magical sight to see it will be. Tornadoes in LA, a lot of rain in New York and some kind of freezing storm that can be stopped by closing doors. After this storm may well be an ice age. Don't tell me you don't want to see that. You won't just be able to walk from Liberty Island to Manhattan, I reckon you'll probably be able to walk lots more places. If the Hudson Bay can freeze solid in a day then probably the English Channel will as well. Cross country skiing from Dover to St Malo. Teams of huskies taking you from Liverpool to Dublin. That will be a real treat.

Next point. "Necessity is the mother of invention." Now wait a second, I am not talking about bloody windmills on the top of my fucking house. I don't mean 10% more efficient combustion engines. I'm talking about cool things. I'm talking about big things. Big things in their proper place. Namely, big things in space. There has been talk about putting a huge pair of sunglasses in space to ward off some the sun's rays. That is fucking brilliant. That is marvelous, it is a flawless plan and I love it. If this planet is so doomed and we need to leave, we'll build big spaceships and fly to exciting places. Ever wanted to see Alpha Centauri? Global warming could get us there faster by giving those scientists the kick in the arse they need.

Another great thing about global warming, animals going weird. It was the greatest news event of the past 50 years and I am so proud that it happened in my lifetime.

evolution. If Kevin Costner can grow gills (don't get me started on how fantastic that would be), think of all the creatures that would become aquatic hybrids. Dogs diving depths down 500m, felines with flippers, swimming sheep... The list goes on. That will be fun to see.

Another thing, apparently all this global warming is increasing the volume of the sea and will eventually start to melt the ice caps. That's great right? These campaigners are always complaining how there isn't enough water for the poor. So what have they got against global warming, there'll be loads more water.

Campaigners also don't seem to want to let China and Brazil and other developing countries have cars and fly and stuff. That seems a bit mean. A car is a way to a better life. True happiness can really only be achieved with a two car garage. Or at the very least the money to afford cabs wherever and whenever. People tell us to stop using oil. That's just silly, if we run out of the crude stuff lets just use whale oil. They're literally swimming into our cities and dying.

There is a possibility; it might even be probable, that there will be some negative consequences of global warming. I think two things about that. Firstly, stop bloody whingeing, that is so like you, to just dwell on the negative. Things will be rubbish, everything is bad, and the world will end. Bloody professional moaners, get a real job. Secondly, I have described all the wonderful outcomes of global warming. It will be fantastic.

IRRAWANT

curb your emissions

partb talks to environmental activist and television producer **laurie david**, about stopping global warming, producing an inconvenient truth and marrying larry david

Laurie David is a force of nature, which is ironic seeing as she spends her life battling against them. A committed environmental campaigner, she was one of the founders of the Stop Global Warming Virtual March (www.stopglobalwarming.org) along with Robert F. Kennedy Jr, and John McCain. Last December, she was named by Glamour magazine as their Woman of the Year, and was also the first ever guest editor of Elle Magazine and one of the producers of An Inconvenient Truth.

David traces her 'Eureka' moment back to 2004, when George W. Bush won his second term. David had been a vociferous supporter of John Kerry, and his failure to defeat the incumbent for her Presidency crushed her – she had pinned her hopes on a new leader of the free world, one who would take America's responsibilities to the environment seriously. When Bush won a triumphant second election, it seemed at first that all was lost. However, Laurie David decided at that moment that she would dedicate herself to bringing climate change to the forefront of global debate.

She found herself in a unique position to use her voice, and with an enviable contact list. She had begun her working life in New York, where she had started out as a talent coordinator for the David Letterman show. It was here that she first met her husband-to-be, the co-creator of Seinfeld and the creator of Curb Your Enthusiasm, Larry David.

After working on Letterman for four years, she started a management company to cater for many of the comics she had worked with. At this point she also began to produce sitcoms for a number of American studios, and had her first experience of working in movies with Sour Grapes, written and directed by Larry. She continued to produce television shows until a chance meeting with Robert F. Kennedy turned her on to environmental activism. "Larry and I had breakfast with Bobby Kennedy and John Adams, the president of NRDC, and the way Bobby talks about the environment really inspired me. He talks about it like a civil-rights issue. Everyone should have the right to clean air and the right to clean water. It's no different to affordable health care or racial equality. One in four kids growing up in Harlem has asthma because of pollution. That's a civil-rights issue. So basically after that I said, OK, no more TV producing. I wanted to work on behalf of the NRDC and to help them do the work that needs to be done."

The NRDC, the Natural Resources Defense Council, welcomed her with open arms. Founded in 1970, it is an environmental advocacy group which has 1.2 million members and online activists across the United States. Counting the likes of Robert Redford and Green Day amongst their supporters, they were no strangers to celebrity endorsement.

However, in Laurie David they were getting something more than a few sound bites and an appearance at the occasional fundraiser; Laurie dedicated her life to environmental work, and brought her skills as a producer to aid one of the most influential pieces of environmental campaigning of the last few years, Al Gore's An Inconvenient Truth.

David is understandably proud of the achievement that is An Inconvenient Truth, and is passionate that people, especially young people, get to see it. It was with this aim in mind that she and the other producers decided get together with the documentary's backers and make 50,000 copies of the DVD available to America's National Science Teachers Association. However, the NSTA rejected the offer, citing their concern that other "special interest" may decided to distribute materials in a similar way, and that they didn't want to offer "political" endorsement to the film. David, outspoken and combative as ever, caused a stir by penning a Washington Post article in which she accused the NSTA of bowing to pressure from one of its key sponsors and supporters, Exxon Mobil Corp.

She wrote that Exxon has "for more than a decade done everything possible to muddle public understanding of global warming and stifle any serious effort to solve it. It has run ads in leading newspapers questioning the role of manmade emissions in global warming, and financed the work of a small band of scientific skeptics who have tried to challenge the consensus that heat-trapping pollution is drastically altering our atmosphere. The company spends millions to support groups such as the Competitive Enterprise Institute that aggressively pressure lawmakers to oppose emission limits."

Alongside articles such as this in the mainstream American press, David has also been making a massive impact on the blogosphere with her regular column on environmental issues for The Huffington Post. However, she says her biggest work to date is her first book, 'Stop Global Warming: The Solution is You – An Activist's Guide'. The book addresses actions that everyone can do on an individual basis, such as unplugging phone chargers when not in use and purchasing post consumer recycled waste paper products. "It's not about doing everything," she says, "it's about everyone doing something".

"So many people ask "what can I do?" and it is my hope that this book will help answer that question, and inspire a whole new set of activists to help stop global warming."

The book's foreword is written by her husband Larry, a man that she describes as a "reluctant environmentalist". However, she says that the similarities between herself and Cheryl, Larry's "wife" on Curb Your Enthusiasm, are limited – Cheryl is far too patient with him for a start. But there are a few



“

everyone should have the right to clean air and the right to clean water

environmental work is one of the most selfish things I've ever done - next to falling asleep at 9pm on my wedding night

of Laurie's attributes that have been reflected in Cheryl. "Larry made the wife on the show work for the NRDC, which was like a little gift to me. I also got him to put a Prius in the show after I'd nagged him into driving one. Every time the NRDC is mentioned on the show I'm super nice to him for that whole day. That's all he has to do – no jewellery or anything, just mention the NRDC."

Laurie has also been producing new material for television. Another environmental documentary, "Too Hot Not To Handle", was shown in the United States last year. Laurie David is determined not just to preach to the converted, but to reach everyone she possibly can. "My goal is to make it personal for everybody, because this issue of global warming is going to impact every single person. It's not a political issue, it's a moral issue: what kind of world are we all going to choose to live in?"

When asked how serious and imminent she thinks the threat is, her answer is alarming. "The scientists who are the most cautious people on the planet have now said that we have less than ten years to slow global warming down or else. And if the scientists are saying that, it's my belief that it's probably five years. So we better get going."

Now living in LA with Larry and their two daughters, family is her focus – and she admits that a big part of her inspiration for her environmental work is the desire to protect the future for her family. "In fact, environmental work is one of the most selfish things I've ever done – next to falling asleep at 9pm on my wedding night".

Less selfishly, in 2004 a donation from Laurie and Larry allowed the NRDC to set up the David Family Environmental Action Center, which features museum-style exhibits on issues like pollution, construction solutions and global warming.

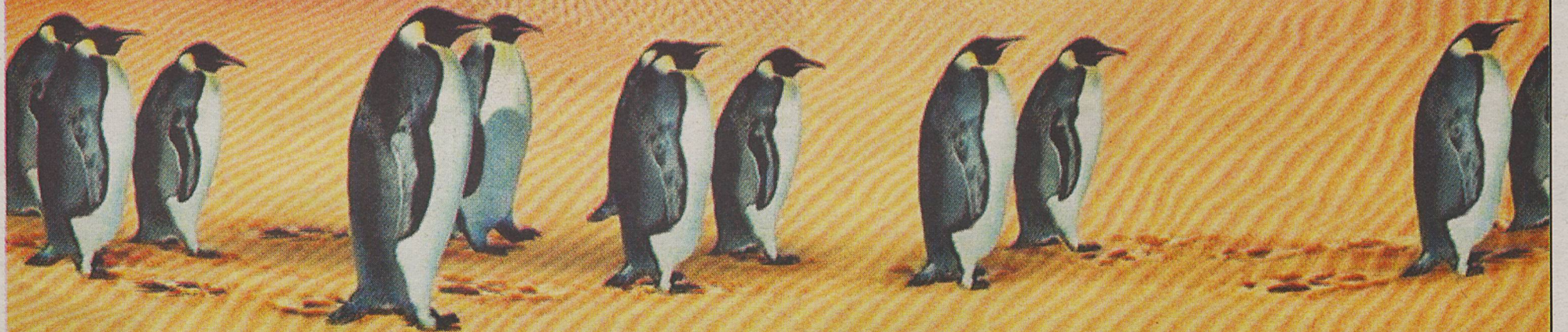
Of course, in a country as polarised as America she is not without her critics. She has been attacked as one of the Top 100 Liberals Wrecking America and criticised for her past use of private jets. She accepts this criticism, and admits to feeling extremely "guilty" about it. She defends herself simply by accepting that she is not perfect, and restating her point that it is better for everyone to do their bit than for individuals to be held up to an impossible ideal.

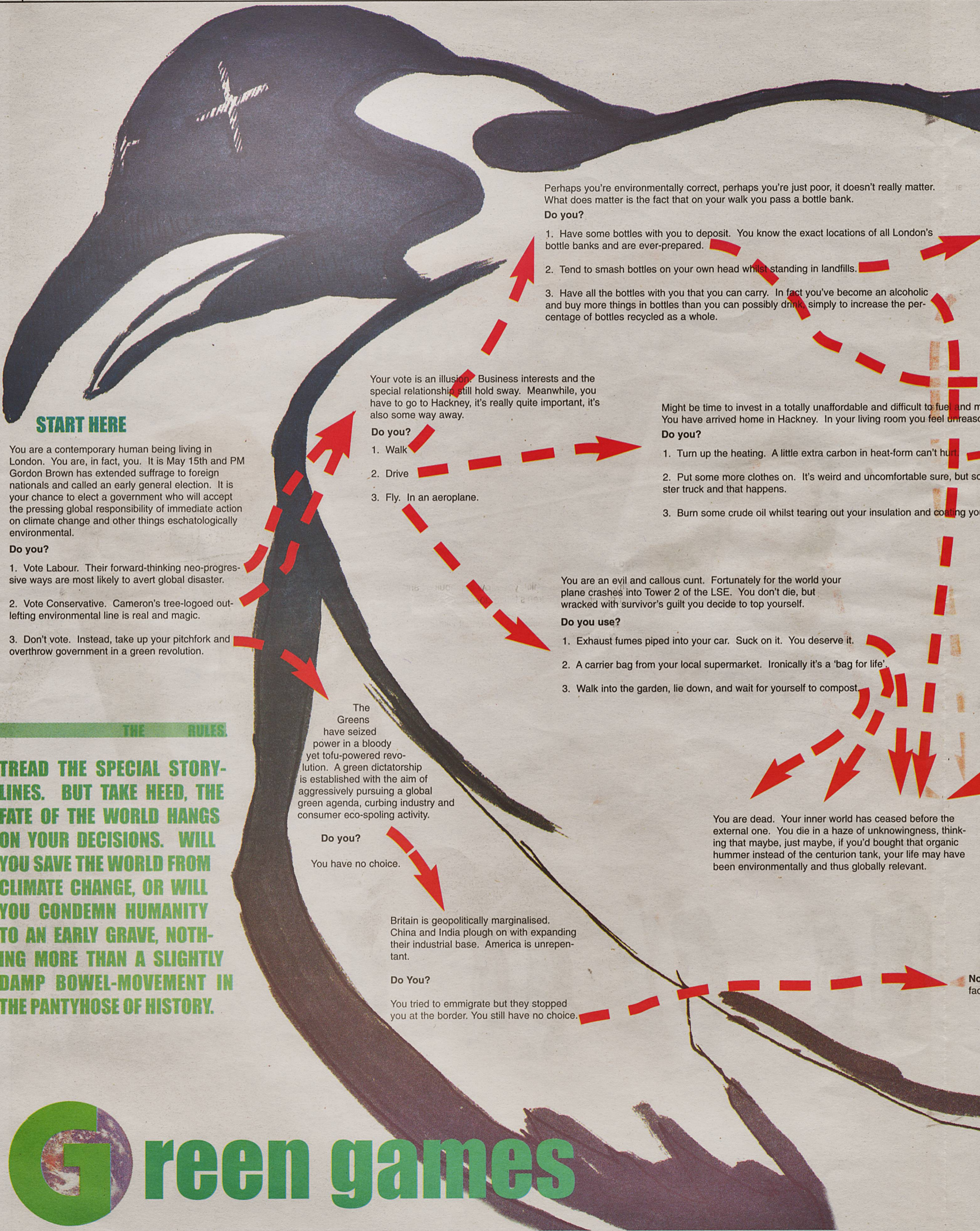
Looking to the future, you can be certain she will be vocal in the run up to the 2008 election. What isn't so certain, however, is whether the world will still be the same place by then. "Something is going to shift while Bush is in office. He is not going to be able to hold out. Some huge weather event – the next Katrina, or something this winter – is going to push this over the top."



an inconvenient truth

We're all on thin ice.





START HERE

You are a contemporary human being living in London. You are, in fact, you. It is May 15th and PM Gordon Brown has extended suffrage to foreign nationals and called an early general election. It is your chance to elect a government who will accept the pressing global responsibility of immediate action on climate change and other things eschatologically environmental.

Do you?

- 1. Vote Labour. Their forward-thinking neo-progressive ways are most likely to avert global disaster.
- 2. Vote Conservative. Cameron's tree-logoed out-lefting environmental line is real and magic.
- 3. Don't vote. Instead, take up your pitchfork and overthrow government in a green revolution.

THE RULES

TREAD THE SPECIAL STORY-LINES. BUT TAKE HEED, THE FATE OF THE WORLD HANGS ON YOUR DECISIONS. WILL YOU SAVE THE WORLD FROM CLIMATE CHANGE, OR WILL YOU CONDEMN HUMANITY TO AN EARLY GRAVE, NOTHING MORE THAN A SLIGHTLY DAMP BOWEL-MOVEMENT IN THE PANTYHOSE OF HISTORY.

Your vote is an illusion. Business interests and the special relationship still hold sway. Meanwhile, you have to go to Hackney, it's really quite important, it's also some way away.

Do you?

- 1. Walk
- 2. Drive
- 3. Fly. In an aeroplane.

Perhaps you're environmentally correct, perhaps you're just poor, it doesn't really matter. What does matter is the fact that on your walk you pass a bottle bank.

Do you?

- 1. Have some bottles with you to deposit. You know the exact locations of all London's bottle banks and are ever-prepared.
- 2. Tend to smash bottles on your own head whilst standing in landfills.
- 3. Have all the bottles with you that you can carry. In fact you've become an alcoholic and buy more things in bottles than you can possibly drink simply to increase the percentage of bottles recycled as a whole.

Might be time to invest in a totally unaffordable and difficult to fuel and m... You have arrived home in Hackney. In your living room you feel unreason...

Do you?

- 1. Turn up the heating. A little extra carbon in heat-form can't hurt.
- 2. Put some more clothes on. It's weird and uncomfortable sure, but so ster truck and that happens.
- 3. Burn some crude oil whilst tearing out your insulation and coating you...

You are an evil and callous cunt. Fortunately for the world your plane crashes into Tower 2 of the LSE. You don't die, but wracked with survivor's guilt you decide to top yourself.

Do you use?

- 1. Exhaust fumes piped into your car. Suck on it. You deserve it.
- 2. A carrier bag from your local supermarket. Ironically it's a 'bag for life'.
- 3. Walk into the garden, lie down, and wait for yourself to compost.

The Greens have seized power in a bloody yet tofu-powered revolution. A green dictatorship is established with the aim of aggressively pursuing a global green agenda, curbing industry and consumer eco-spiling activity.

Do you?

You have no choice.

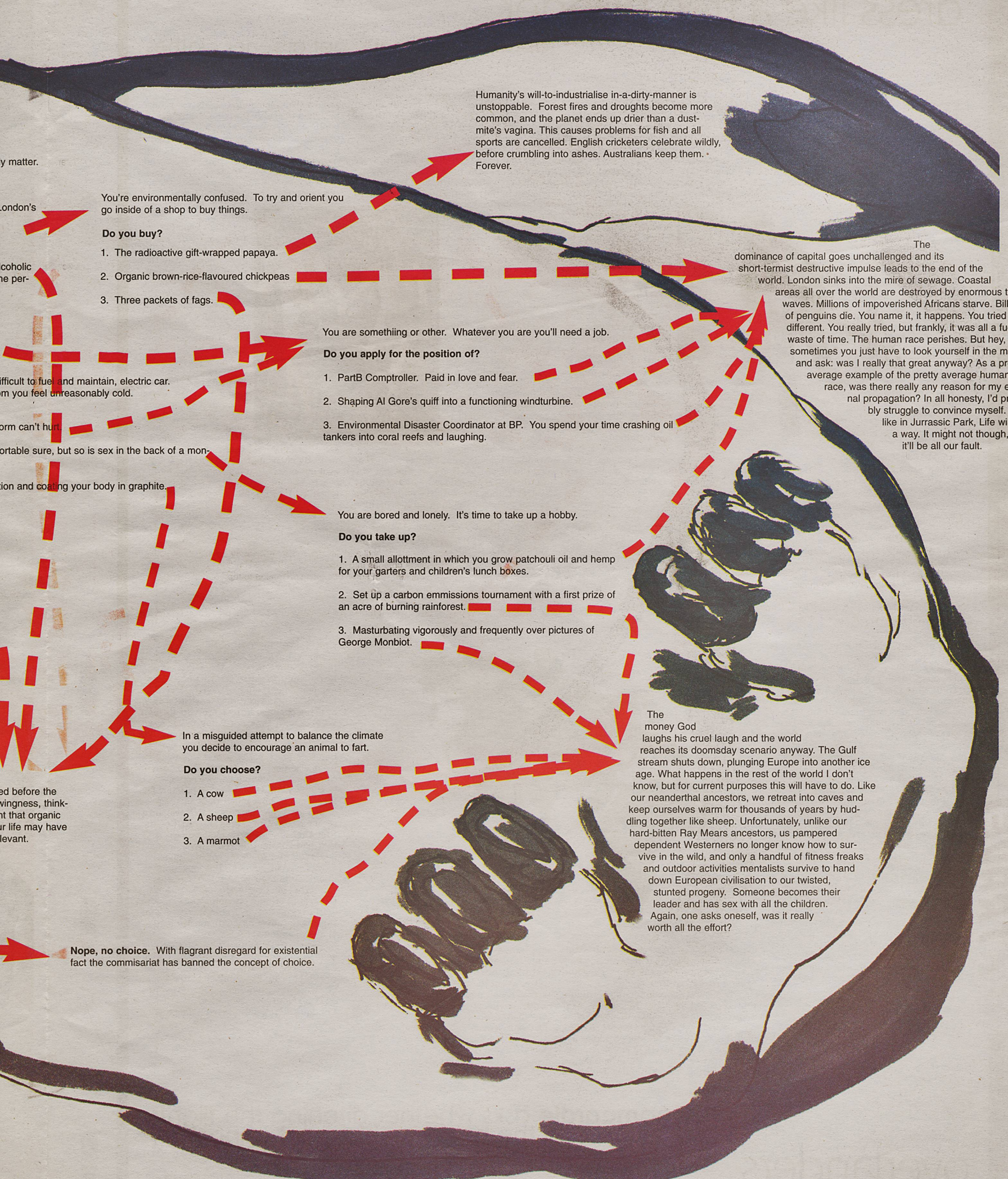
Britain is geopolitically marginalised. China and India plough on with expanding their industrial base. America is unrepentant.

Do You?

You tried to emigrate but they stopped you at the border. You still have no choice.

You are dead. Your inner world has ceased before the external one. You die in a haze of unknowingness, thinking that maybe, just maybe, if you'd bought that organic hummer instead of the centurion tank, your life may have been environmentally and thus globally relevant.

No fac



Humanity's will-to-industrialise in-a-dirty-manner is unstoppable. Forest fires and droughts become more common, and the planet ends up drier than a dust-mite's vagina. This causes problems for fish and all sports are cancelled. English cricketers celebrate wildly, before crumbling into ashes. Australians keep them. Forever.

You're environmentally confused. To try and orient you go inside of a shop to buy things.

Do you buy?

- 1. The radioactive gift-wrapped papaya.
- 2. Organic brown-rice-flavoured chickpeas
- 3. Three packets of fags.

You are something or other. Whatever you are you'll need a job.

Do you apply for the position of?

- 1. PartB Comptroller. Paid in love and fear.
- 2. Shaping Al Gore's quiff into a functioning windturbine.
- 3. Environmental Disaster Coordinator at BP. You spend your time crashing oil tankers into coral reefs and laughing.

You are bored and lonely. It's time to take up a hobby.

Do you take up?

- 1. A small allotment in which you grow patchouli oil and hemp for your garters and children's lunch boxes.
- 2. Set up a carbon emissions tournament with a first prize of an acre of burning rainforest.
- 3. Masturbating vigorously and frequently over pictures of George Monbiot.

In a misguided attempt to balance the climate you decide to encourage an animal to fart.

Do you choose?

- 1. A cow
- 2. A sheep
- 3. A marmot

Nope, no choice. With flagrant disregard for existential fact the commissariat has banned the concept of choice.

The dominance of capital goes unchallenged and its short-termist destructive impulse leads to the end of the world. London sinks into the mire of sewage. Coastal areas all over the world are destroyed by enormous tidal waves. Millions of impoverished Africans starve. Billions of penguins die. You name it, it happens. You tried to be different. You really tried, but frankly, it was all a fucking waste of time. The human race perishes. But hey, sometimes you just have to look yourself in the mirror and ask: was I really that great anyway? As a pretty average example of the pretty average human race, was there really any reason for my eternal propagation? In all honesty, I'd probably struggle to convince myself. Just like in Jurassic Park, Life will find a way. It might not though, and it'll be all our fault.

The money God laughs his cruel laugh and the world reaches its doomsday scenario anyway. The Gulf stream shuts down, plunging Europe into another ice age. What happens in the rest of the world I don't know, but for current purposes this will have to do. Like our neanderthal ancestors, we retreat into caves and keep ourselves warm for thousands of years by huddling together like sheep. Unfortunately, unlike our hard-bitten Ray Mears ancestors, us pampered dependent Westerners no longer know how to survive in the wild, and only a handful of fitness freaks and outdoor activities mentalists survive to hand down European civilisation to our twisted, stunted progeny. Someone becomes their leader and has sex with all the children. Again, one asks oneself, was it really worth all the effort?

dress like a tree hugger

abaosunsade says: get greener clothes or get them off

There are many ways in which we can "help" the environment. Reduce, reuse, recycle. Switch off the lights when we leave a room to save electricity. Hitchhike to Fiji instead of taking a long-haul flight. Bathe in our toilet bowls to save water. But how can we integrate our post-"An Inconvenient Truth" heightened eco-consciousness into our personal style agendas? Surely fashion and "sustainable living" are two phrases that don't exactly go hand in hand. Right? Wrong! Well, wrong at least, to the lovely hippies. This unique group of fun-loving frolickers whose movement took root in 1960s USA not only gave us free love, free speech and free drugs - they also gave fashion a new "Mother Nature" inspired lease on life.



Characterised by Webster's dictionary as young people who (to narrow the list) advocated spontaneity, used psychedelic drugs and often wore long hair and unconventional clothes, hippies taught us that you don't have to wear designer duds to be, like, totally cool, dude. I'm not talking about patching old jeans up and tying all your tees - the 21st century hippies have created a world of clothing that truly fits the bill of what it is to make the world a better place. And you don't have

to look like disciple of Jesus to fit into it, either. Forget what you know about hippy fashion - horrible hemp sandals? Ill-fitting jumpers made of banana leaves and bat droppings? It's all fictitious or totally passé. Hippy fashion of today is, well, hip. Take organic Kuyichi jeans for example. As they say on their website (www.kuyichi.com), they are a "style conscious jeans brand" who are also conscious of what is "fair". They aim to be "sexy and provocative". Set up in 2000 as an extension of the Fair Trade campaign, Kiyuchi collaborate with Peruvian cotton farmers (who double up as shareholders in the company) to ensure the management of the soils is sustainable, as well as the struggle against pests and plant diseases. Their only raw material? Organic cotton which is 100% biodegradable.

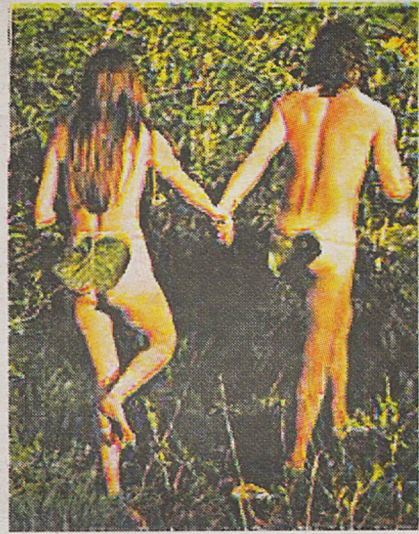
Now when I said hemp sandals were passé, I may have lied. But only a bit. What I should have said was that the hemp sandals you associate with pipe-smoking granddads who recount LSD-induced dreams in their spare time, have evolved into an array of crafty kicks. For starters, there are IPath's range of hemp sneakers. They look like your typical trainer - some are kinda like Vans, some are kinda like Converse, but ALL shoes in the range are made totally of natural hemp. Then there are

"Vegetarian Shoes" - the "original animal friendly footwear" which are claimed to be better than leather. It's come a long way from its humble beginnings in 1990 when founder Robin Webb, who needed shoes that lasted but didn't want to wear dead animal skin, made all collections by hand. Take note that although it's "animal friendly", the wonderful alternative to leather Robin discovered is a synthetic microfibre, i.e. won't decompose but remain intact in landfills for years to come. I guess nobody's perfect.

But we've got your bottom half sorted - does this mean you'll have to wear coconut shells to shield your torso in your quest to be "green"? No fear, my friends, for "Sansegal"'s Green Brand have got you covered. A range of t-shirts, shirts and tops have been launched by this innovative brand - all made from t-shirts rescued at trips to local tips. Don't let that put you off, though, Sansegal's patented blending system shreds the t-shirts and matches their shades into colour groups. According to the company, this unique system "helps in saving the 1/3 of pound (150 gm) of agricultural chemicals that are used to make a single virgin cotton t-shirt." If you thought that was clever, then check out "Voltaic System's" solar/electronic backpack. Their innovation? A backpack with

solar panels embedded to its exterior - designed to charge portable electronics. It is still in prototype stage, but using this ingenious technology, the Li Ion battery built in (which is itself rechargeable and recyclable) can charge your mobile and iPod while you head to class.

If you're still not convinced that style can be good to the Earth, don't stop reading yet. If you don't think these eco-friendly companies are ecofriendly enough, that's totally fine - don't wear the suggested hippie clothes. In fact - don't wear clothes at all! Why bother? That's right, don't just disregard hippie fashion - take it to the extreme. Take on nudist fashion instead. Not only will the thought of "biodegradability" never have to cross your mind again when you're worrying about what to wear - you'll also never have to worry about what to wear. By choosing this option, you'll only own one outfit. And it's completely harmless to Mother Nature. And, most importantly, its NEVER out of fashion.



STYLE

TRAVEL

I'm not sure when the transformation from upstanding member of society to cocky human snail, who considers themselves to be just that bit better (at travelling) than most people, takes place. The metamorphosis from human to backpacker is a tough one to pin-point but can be found loitering somewhere between "Do you have a single room?" and "Can I camp in your garden?" Looking at me now you would never believe the scummy depths into which I plunged (I carefully hide it behind a dazzling pink exterior), but scratch the surface and there it is.

Why do I mention this? Well as the story goes, a recent catch up session with friends I travelled inevitably brought nostalgia for the road and a taste of the aforementioned smug attitude ensued. Following a series of grandiose statements such as "Tasmania was our finest achievement", I raised the matter of the next big trip - there's always one. When I turned to my friend and asked "what do you think of all that carbon emissions malarkey? BS or enough to curb your flight grabbing ways?" We both agreed that our next expedition needed to take into account the effects of fuel emissions etc; as people who fly between Dublin and London regularly the hypocrisy of this eco-conscious is not lost on me.

And so grew "the overlander", no the idea was not to travel the world in a 4x4, the plan was to get where I wanted to go without the use of airplanes; the only problem is that on my last short trip (for 1yr) to Australia I kind of left a bit of my heart there - so with that to collect on my way to or from my next destination, this



overlanding was going to be hard-core... Thankfully backpacker Jess decided on the trip because her pink alter ego would never have agreed to it.

Then came the planning part, I figure that I'm essentially free from next September until a couple of days before my own funeral, so time was on my side; next the logistics - a far more troublesome quandary. A few pieces of the backpacker I once was live on, these include; an over powering superstition, a bad knee

and sensitivity to the soul of the world (one too many Paulo Coelho books). Coupling the first and the last (while still bitter about the one in the middle) I came across a link on the LSE travel facebook wall and knew that my overlander was destined to be. The link is to a site called OzBus (check it out its probably still on the wall) and as the name suggests it's a bus that goes from London to Sydney...

Now before you get all sceptical on me hear the facts, the bus runs over 12 weeks

and takes in destinations such as Transylvania (have ALWAYS wanted to go there, mainly to discover if it exists), Kathmandu (need to return some camping equipment) and of course Darwin's famous Kakado National park (the idea of being snapped at by a croc thrills me). What a wild time I'm going to have; 20 countries, approximately 36 days and 36 strangers (one for each day of the week?). Before I cross my "t"s and dot my "i"s what else do I need to know? Ok we're camping, I'm cooking and we may not get to everywhere we want to - ideal; now for the clincher, how much does this super-duper, one-way, over-land extravaganza set me back? Not taking the piss (for the first time in this article) the price isn't that bad considering your travel, accommodation and food are covered (mostly); £3750... Ask yourself this question, as quoted from their website;

"What could honestly be more fun or rewarding than participating in the world's greatest overland journey and sharing the adventure with a truck load of young likeminded souls?"

Backpacker Jess says "surely nothing could be more fun or rewarding", Irish Barbie says "honestly the only thing in the world that could possibly be better would be flying and saving just under 3 months on your journey." The next trip leaves London 18 May, will I see you onboard?

jessicamcardle asks whether ditching the flights is worth the hassle or just a lot of hot air?

overlanders

book to the future

erinorozco is saving paper, and the environment, by listening to stories on a talky box

Johannes Gutenberg's 15th century invention of the printing press marked the beginning of a cultural revolution, a vast speeding-up and widening of the spread of ideas, information and stories. Creative literature for the masses was born, gradually replacing oral traditions of storytelling. But literature today tends to be seen as a fading art - one perfected by past masters, eagerly awaiting renovation. The technological innovations of today have somehow circumvented this avenue of expression in favor of more instant forms of entertainment-gratification. Nonetheless, important advances have been made in literary technologies that simply do not receive the attention they deserve.

First and foremost, there is the audio book. Paradoxically it uses technology to revisit the method of oral traditions. This breakthrough is most significant for the visually impaired who previously had limited options when it came to literary enjoyment. Yet it also serves a wide range of other forward-looking literary enthusiasts. After all, modern bookworms aren't always able to set aside time for a nice read. The average, everyday literati is constantly on the move. The book on tape is undoubtedly meant for this sort of person. Additionally, services such as www.AudioBooksForFree.com provide books free of charge, adding to the growing ways in which information technology permits us to access art for free. Though their selection is still growing, currently available works include the Complete Sherlock Holmes collection by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle - nine

unabridged books for a total of sixty-three hours recorded reading time. These files are available to download in mp3-format for nothing at all. There's practically no need ever to print a work on paper again.

tion of the literature in question, you will have to actually read it. The upside, however, is that the text itself can be downloaded from an internet-connected, text-receiving device (like a Blackberry). So, even on a whim, a great classic can be at

country. Additionally though, some authors specifically allow Project Gutenberg to publish their copyrighted work for free, so an ever-enlarging catalogue can only be expected. Project Gutenberg is a step in the right direction, making information and literature more open and accessible to growing sections of the public.

Finally, and perhaps most nutritiously, there is the advent of the vending machine novel. Mostly found in airports and other centers of transportation, these offer a quick fix for those confronted with a long periods of imminent boredom. Some may find these novel machines somewhat offensive, putting the consumption of literature a little too close to that of Walkers, Cadbury, and Coke. Yet I prefer to view it from a broader perspective. Many other fine items have been consigned to vending machine-occupation - the list includes but is not limited to CDs, DVDs, pearls and live lobsters. The possibilities are endless, and it seems as though it was only a matter of time before novels were added to such an illustrious, albeit curious, collection.

Despite all of these innovations, the ways in which we enjoy literature haven't changed much in more than five hundred years. Unlike other art forms, literature is rather indifferent to change, yet it persists on being a pillar of human artistic endeavors. Whether we bother to keep up the cumbersome practice of printing words or not, this seems likely to stay the case as long as humans are around.



Another breakthrough in lit tech is the eBook. Project Gutenberg, the world's oldest producer of free electronic books, uploads digital texts with a view towards preserving literature and spreading its joys among a greater mass of e-citizens. More technology benefiting those of us who are constantly on the go - a step further in allowing a place for literature in the modern lifestyle. Unfortunately, due to the retextualiza-

your fingertips. As with every internet download service however, there is a catch. In this case, the issue is copyrighting. Project Gutenberg's catalogue is for the most part limited what lies in the public domain in the United States - i.e. lapsed copyrights and works whose authors have surrendered them to the public domain. Whether texts can be used in different countries depends on the status of a work in each respective

Apparently the days of saving the world by getting people to sponsor you to run for miles and miles to raise some money for that recycling project that will revolutionize the way your neighborhood handles its waste are over. Today someone will probably point out that your project is way too small to have any lasting impact on the health of the ozone layer and anyhow your running shoes were probably

Apparently the chemicals in the soil can be breathed in, which is probably not ideal for the farmer's health. So theoretically buying organic food will save the

manu-
f a c -
tured in a factory that anything but fair trade or environmentally conscious. But fear not, there may just be a way to do your bit for the environment without having to run a marathon in hemp sandals.

Organic food. Every supermarket in the country seems to be stocking up on fruits and vegetables that have been grown organically, and now the long established organic only supermarkets of the United States are expanding their grip on the UK market, with yet another Whole Foods shop opening in London this year. So what exactly are the benefits of organic foods? According to the plethora of websites out there the benefits of organic fruit and vegetables are endless, not only do the farming regulations restrict the use of pesticides on crops, which in turn results in less chemicals in the soil and hence less destruction to the countryside but further according to one organic food website these farming techniques are less harmful for the farmer.

farmer and the land and hence probably upping your saving the world quota already!

And then there is the argument that it is better for you too. However, as some studies and recent insights by officials like the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, David Miliband have shown, there is no concrete proof of the health benefits from organic foods versus traditional crops. So, if the only benefit is really to the environment why should you buy organic, especially considering the noticeably higher price of organic food? Well, apparently the key is in the taste, so I went out to test this theory.

Having successfully sought out two apples of the same type to ensure

correct results I set about my organic vs. non-organic fruit test. On first appearance the organic apple is visibly smaller than the other and much less shiny, which may be due to the absence of the chemical wax sheen that is so prominent on its non-organic cousin. Next step: the crunch factor. Sadly, I do not have an electronic crunch-o-meter to test the volume of the crunch so I had to rely on my feeling, which told me that the organic apple was definitely the winner. Moving on to the juiciness.

Well, to be honest with you I didn't really notice that much of a difference. Both seemed quite juicy and tasted pretty similar. So, where does that leave us?

I guess it really depends on your commitment to the environment and how important you find the crunch factor in apples. Personally, I do not know if I will be convinced enough to spend the extra 70 pence per bag of apples. Especially since the bag the apples are sold in does not appear to be recycled plastic making me feel a bit stupid buying them to help the environment. It does say on the bag though

that you can bring the bag to the nearest superstore to have it recycled, but really who is going to that?

My commitments to saving the world are obviously not the most sincere; maybe I should do something about that. I do love the penguins from that documentary film it would be sad to see their extinction, their icy homelands having melted away. Then again those animated ones from that other movie were very cute also. Maybe we will just have no use for the environment in the future and will have animated everything, even the food! Okay, that would be bad and probably boring, so go out and buy organic food! And maybe I will too.



Would you pay?

Non-Organic Carrots:
£0.44 per kg
Organic Carrots:
£1.60 per kg

Non-Organic Apples
£1.29 per kg
Organic Apples
£1.99 per kg

kimmandeng wants more carrot and less stick, but is unsure about the paying the price

organic food comes to the crunch



literature



food and drinking

green behind the ears

samashton fiddles with the aesthetics of electronica performance as the world burns

Purveyors of electronic music have traditionally struggled when attempting to create an engaging and entertaining live experience, forever plagued by the fact that laptops have always lacked the visceral energy of a guitar. There's something quite numbing about watching a sunken faced geek gently fondling a mouse while staring fixedly at their laptop screen.

Over the years, however, electronic musicians have evolved a variety of ways to create a live show that engages the audience on a level that organic instruments achieve with ease. Arena filling acts such as Daft Punk and Kraftwerk have gone the big budget route, creating spectacular visual accompaniments to their songs, Kraftwerk even going as far to build robots that play 'We are the Robots' for them, a move that goes some way to dispelling the myth that Germans lack a sense of humour. Others tackle the problem by removing it completely and attempt to recreate their electronic scores on organic instruments.

Then there's the 'press play and spazz out' school of artists, who quite simply find ways of entertaining us while singing along to a backing track. Notable purveyors of this technique are Gay Against You, who take their live show a step further than most with their home made costumes, plethora of props, and aggressive attempts at including the audience in their carnival of fun. Gay Against You recognise, and attempt to resolve, the main problem with electronic and, perhaps, live music in general; a lack of audience involvement in the process.

The process of breaking down the barrier between audience and performer has been taken to its logical conclusion Californian artist and musician

Luke Fischbeck. Working under the name Lucky Dragons Luke has created a system by which the music is made by both the audience and the performer. At

cable a connection is made, sending a signal to the laptop which is then converted to a sound. Thus it is the interaction between audience members that

ence at the very heart of the creative process, but also social barriers within the audience are challenged when people are forced to touch strangers.

Hence when venturing out to see live electronic music you are never quite sure what kind of show to expect, and tonight was no exception, with each performer taking a different approach to their show. The first act Jo Apps takes the traditional route, opting to stand their playing with her laptop. As such, although the music is uniformly excellent, her set of quirky dance music fails to sustain my attention, lacking, as it was, any visual element. The second band Little Paper Squares show initial promise as they appear wearing only their pink y-fronts and begin to taunt the audience; stealing drinks and bags in an attempt to lure spectators closer to the stage. Unfortunately their brand of entertainment, pressing play and screaming, fails to show any depth or, crucially, any entertainment. Aside from a silly sing a long to Tracy Chapman's ubiquitous 'Fast Car' they very quickly begin to annoy.

Techno duo Eats Tapes provide the headlining, and most interesting, set. Their approach is to recreate the intricate analogue squelches, bleeps and beats of their albums totally live on a variety of electronic hardware, guitar peddles and toy instruments. Their movements are transfixing; a blur of hands pushing buttons and twiddling knobs all the while dancing away. As well as providing visual element to the music their favouring of live recreation over pre-recorded lends the songs the sort of dynamism and energetic crackle a laptop could never hope to reproduce. If only all electronic musicians were this interesting live.



his shows Luke hands out cables to audience members, when a person holding a cable touches another holding a

creates the music, not only does this destroy the barrier between spectator and the performer by placing the audi-

It is the responsibility of everyone to help combat the growing problem of global warming, in whatever small way we can. My plan, although more unorthodox than recycling, is to go to the theatre. Theatre, when compared to every other artistic field whether it be the movies, music industry or fashion, leads the pack when it comes to being green. You think it sounds absurd? Read on.

Film is the biggest culprit by far, with its huge amounts of wasted energy (lights, cameras, action!), non-recyclable materials (film reels/old sets/past-their-peak stars) and possible ecological damage when filming on location. That's not to mention the waste involved with the distribution of the films, paper tickets, and the rubbish created by the food counters.

Music could be argued to be a real contender in the Green ring, since not a lot of energy or natural resources are wasted in its production. However, if you look at the squandering of paper, plastic and other materials in the packaging of CDs (which are generally not recyclable), not to mention promotional posters and leaflets that help fill landfills, it paints a different picture. Gigs are hardly earth-friendly either, especially open air concerts, which not only eat electricity like it's chocolate cake, but also hurt the local eco-system (just look at the grass, or lack thereof, in Hyde Park after Live 8).

Fashion is another guilty party, for even if you disregard the obvious cons of using endangered animal products like fur in their clothes, designers and models are some of the biggest abusers; not of coke, but of carbon. To be fair, film and rock stars are also notorious users

of our precious energy resources. What with the constant holidays and ferrying back and forth between New York, London and LA on their private jets, gas-guzzling cars and McMansions generally built using only the finest endangered trees, celebrities leave a carbon

footprint that resembles Bigfoot's. Food and drink can't be held to blame too much, although the amount of energy wasted on imported and exported luxury food items and fine bottles of foreign wine is staggeringly disproportionate to the net gain, what with getting them via truck, ship and plane from point of origin to your 5 star dining table. Art similarly commits relatively few environmental crimes, but many of the larger pieces squander a lot of carbon points because they are so difficult

thought was moody artistic lighting could actually be considered an energy saving device rather than a plot one. Although paper is wasted on the programs, they are so expensive that demand and therefore production is low. Theatre is live, and so distribution costs are negligible. The impact on the local eco-system is practically nothing, and once a theatre is built it can be reused for decades. Sets and costumes can also be recycled from play to play. Theatre actors are also more eco-friendly than their silver screen counterparts: they barely have time to travel because they have such unforgiving schedules, and generally have to live in the same city, for work. Since most theatre productions take place in cities, most actors and crew rely on public transport to get to work, not cars and jet planes.

What is more, the theatre has the potential for longevity that most other arts don't. As crude oil runs out, the general excess of the film, music and fashion industries will be drastically reduced, and may well even hinder their ability to create movies, pop songs and high couture. It will be also be increasingly difficult to obtain fancy imported foods, or even anything not produced locally. Theatre, on the other hand, will be able to go on as it has done for hundreds of years. Until the water starts to rise on London and New York, nothing will really change, and even then, one of the glories of theatre is its ability to transfer; look at touring companies or outdoor theatre. If theatre were an investment option, it'd be the least risky by far in the uncertain future of our environment. So give the theatre another chance, and help save our planet as you do. Sort of.



footprint that resembles Bigfoot's.

Food and drink can't be held to blame too much, although the amount of energy wasted on imported and exported luxury food items and fine bottles of foreign wine is staggeringly disproportionate to the net gain, what with getting them via truck, ship and plane from point of origin to your 5 star dining table. Art similarly commits relatively few environmental crimes, but many of the larger pieces squander a lot of carbon points because they are so difficult

to transport. Large land art pieces can also interfere with local ecological balances.

And so we come to Earth's friend, the theatre. Theatre wastes a fraction of the electricity that film does; what you

mollytucker is inciting un-civil war between the other partb sections
the grass is greener on this side



apocalypto

alex barros-curtis is underwhelmed by gibson's gory epic

When Mel Gibson declared back in 2004 that his next project was to be *Apocalypto*, it seemed an odd-ball choice. It is ironic that he experienced his own professional apocalypse through his anti-Semitic remarks back in July, making it seem that the film was destined to be a flop. Nonetheless, Gibson has risen from the ashes to make his latest epic, which seems to be doing well in the box office.

The story involves the protagonist Jaguar Paw living happily until a group of savages come and destroy his village. He is then kidnapped and taken to their city to be sacrificed, before managing to escape and trek all the way back to save his pregnant wife and child. They're hidden in a deep cave which is fast becoming a well thanks to an inconvenient monsoon. Oh, and about six pissed off captors are on his trail to avenge the killing of one of their sons by Jaguar Paw en route. All in a day's work then.

The film begins slowly, allowing us to get to know the local villagers. We are shown Jaguar Paw's deep love for his family and the lengths he will go to keep them safe. There are also other nice little touches, such as the presence of an annoying mother-in-law, demanding her son-in-law improve his sexual performance to give her the grandchild she deserves. There's even a hot-blowjob-gone-wrong scene, in which a practical joke becomes a bit too much of a mouthful for a not so grateful wife.

One of the film's more endearing qualities is the casting of indigenous Mexican people. The film is granted a greater sense of realism, as the cast cap-



tures the primal instincts and natural reactions that Hollywood actors may find difficult to perform. Their authentic indigenous background also help make the story more heartfelt and emotionally real. Through Gibson's collaboration with *Dances With Wolves* cinematographer, Dean Semler, this long-dead world comes alive with a similar tribal sensibility. Visually, *Apocalypto* is stunning. The camera rarely remains stationary, following the protagonist's foray into the jungle. The final act is a long, tense chase which lasts nearly forty-five minutes. It does resemble a jungle adventure, with the waterfalls and quicksand providing the twists and turns and the constant adrenaline rush that action fans will love.

One can tell that Gibson and his co-writer, Farhad Safina, were keen to be inventive in creating new and interesting ways for victims to meet their various ends. As much as I love a gory scene, I can't help but agree with other critics who argue that the relentless pileup of atrocities is ultimately self-defeating. Is it the jaguar tearing a man's face to shreds? Or the snakes? Perhaps it's the hundreds of rotting corpses. The harder *Apocalypto* works to shock and excite, the less shocked and excited you become, until eventually you find yourself laughing quietly in ridicule.

After two hours eighteen minutes, I couldn't help feeling somewhat deflated by the film, as though I'd been hit by one

of the numerous spears thrown throughout the thing. There is no doubt that *Apocalypto* is well-made, but beyond that, I struggle to see the real purpose in making it. Was it to uncover some of the forgotten culture of this era? Was it to inflict another foreign-language - and we are talking really foreign here, complete with 'clicks' and 'snorts' - upon cultured viewers like myself? Or was it rather that Gibson wanted to film something else truly self-indulgent, if only to prove that he has the money to? According to the production notes, Gibson wanted the audience to consider the parallels between the decadent Mayan empire and our spiritually lacking and environmentally ravaged contemporary world. Alas, two and a half years at the LSE must not have done much for me, as I completely missed all that. Rather than an exploration of the erosion and extinction of the mighty Mayan empire, we are met only with the darker aspects of Mayan culture. The repetitive scenes of bloody sacrifices held atop imposing stone pyramids are one example. Unfortunately these fail to fascinate us as much as they obviously do Gibson, becoming more boring each time around.

Apocalypto certainly looks good, but suffers from a somewhat pointless storyline which ultimately undermines the visual pleasure it provides. Whilst surpassing *The Passion of the Christ* in almost every way as a film about pain, suffering and torture, one persistently wonders 'what is the point here?' I left feeling *Apocalypto* was nothing more than a lengthy showcase for ancient, jungle-based violence.



Bigger Splash aside, there is no painting in David Hockney's vast portfolio of work which comes close to being as iconic as the celebrated double portrait of his friends, Ossie Clark and Celia Birtwell. The strangely unsettling study of a modern-day Arnolfini marriage wherein husband and wife stand strikingly far apart and appear more interested in the artist than each other, is one of over 250 works from the past fifty years that is currently being shown in what is the first ever exhibition devoted solely to Hockney's portraits. The disarmingly large Mr and Mrs Clark and Percy is accompanied by a diverse body of Hockney's work, ranging in style from his naturalistic portraits of the late 1960s, to his cubist investigations of the 1980s to his more recent and arguably less appealing oil and watercolour paintings.

It is truly a pleasure to see some of Hockney's earlier works collated together in such a cohesive collection. The first sight to greet visitors upon entering the exhibition is another large double portrait; this time a rather touching, human depiction of his elderly parents. It shares in common that certain timeless quality

that we associate with many of Hockney's other works composed in the 1960s and 1970s. Whilst the figures of his mother, dutifully looking on and his father, absorbed in a book, are richly composed and full of character, the real life surrounding them is reimagined into a few of Hockney's favourite props; a table and a vase of flowers. This minimalism, reoccurring in his portraits of David Webster and the exceedingly unsettling double portrait of Fred and Marcia Weisman, lends the work an enduring appeal which perhaps explains Hockney's legend today.

Of course, no David Hockney retrospective would be complete without gay subject matter: the pale insouciance of the bare male buttocks of his young lover on display in *Peter Getting Out of Nick's Pool* is a prime example of the product of Hockney's time spent in 1960s sunny California. The male nude continues to provide a subject in a number of his line drawings but the domesticity and the cool detachment inherent in these works means that we never feel these naked men are present out of lewd fantasy or shock value. In fact, some of these drawings are amongst the most sensitive and well-

observed works in the collection. This can be said of Hockney's drawings in general, the luminescence he achieves in his coloured crayon drawings of Celia Birtwell highlights his sensitivity to her femininity in a truly breathtaking manner.

The flow of the exhibition charts Hockney's changes in style, breaking away from naturalism to a more loosely handled kind of painting and cubistic investigations of space. Strategically branching off the main rooms of the exhibition are a number of areas dedicated to

Hockney's use of photo collage to compose portraits. Though he manages to convey quite a wonderful sense of movement in works such as *The Scrabble Game*, these works do not prove to be quite so satisfying as his studies in more traditional media. Upon reaching the area of the exhibition housing the most recent of his

portraits, the feeling that his later works have been less satisfying on the whole is reinforced. Compared with the simplicity and sensitivity of his earlier works, his garish use of brilliant colour and hot palettes during the 1990s seems crude. A series of exceptionally ugly watercolour paintings from 2002 follow, the double portrait format serving to highlight the gulf in quality between these works and those from the 1960s. These paintings possess no delicacy, the paint thick and the subjects' skin tones unpleasantly reddened. The most recent works from 2005 onwards are not much improved; his portraits of children - Isabella, Matilda and Ellie Wright - are quite frankly, horribly realised; Isabella in particular resembling a crudely rendered gremlin. More crucially, however, is that the connection between sitter and artist that characterised his earlier portraits is missing.

As it enters its last week, Hockney's *Portraits* exhibition comes highly recommended, if only to see some of his truly iconic earlier work. It is also interesting in tracing Hockney's evolution, and arguably his decline as an artist, mirrored by a succession of self-portraits in which we see him grow from the youthful, effervescent character with the bleached hair and owl glasses to the world-weary looking man he is today.

On Thursday 18 January at 7pm, Richard Cork, one of Britain's most distinguished critics of modern and contemporary art will lead a tour of the exhibition - free with an exhibition ticket.



hockney

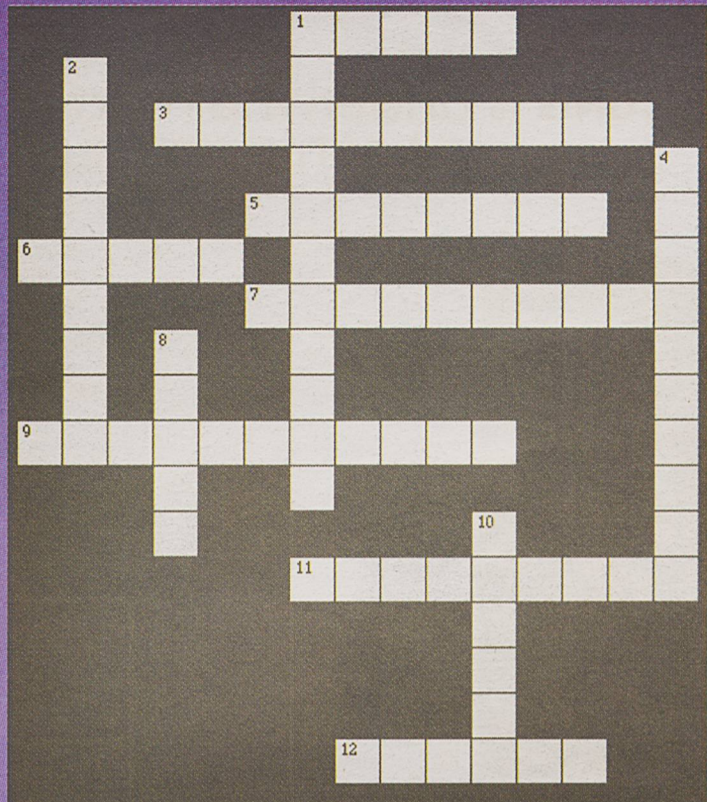
ductran visits the national portrait gallery



SET BY OBAFEMI MARTINS

the c-word

sudokus



Last week:
 1. sari, 2. petrolstation, 3. edifice, 4. posto, 5. diplomatic bag, 6. initiator, 7. fag end,
 8. benigna, 9. pier, 10. fatality, 11. cartcock, 12. above par, 13. smite, 14. hingedown, 15. forte,
 16. unitary, 17. scary, 18. retrace, 19. coil, 20. info, 21. valour, 22. plenty

Down

- 2. darwin's theory (9)
- 4. penis operation (10)
- 8. before you talk (5)
- 10. swimming award for a bird too fucked up to live (6)

Across

- 1. i'm ____, i'll never do it again (4)
- 3. over the top (11)
- 5. a lovely flyer (8)
- 6. confectionary, mistake (4)
- 7. meaningless philosophy (10)
- 9. what this issues all about (11)
- 11. hot cucumber(9)
- 12. slang for the bits that hang(6)

7				3	4	
		1				
2		7	4		5	3
	6		3		1	
5	1				8	2
		3	8			6
9	4		2	8		7
				5		
	2	3				5

Difficult

Very Difficult

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4	5	7				A	
6	C			7	8		3 4
		3 5	7		4		C
7	B		6		5	C	A 3
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		A		C			
C	3			9	5	A	6 B
2				4		B C	9
3	1			8	7		4 A
		8					7 B 9
9	4			B	3		6 8

Ask

Auntie Shaw



Just one week into term and some of you are already stressing about exams! How dare you! Examinations are very far away children so I have purposefully not included any questions regarding the dreaded 'E'. There is still a good few months of agony letters describing debauchery, shameful acts of self depreciation and activities bordering on criminal for me to cure. I will be attending the 'I Love Music' event down in the Quad later this evening should anyone care to join me for a brandy or three. I will be sure to make it worth your while (Mr Shaw is in Brighton on business next week)! Anyhoo, my dahlings, back to issues of love triangles, finance fears and of course spelling mistakes....enjoy!

Dear Auntie

What were these dams they were handing out at Refreshers fair last week? Where and when do you use them...if anyone actually does? Please kindly enlighten me, as I feel like I've been left out of the loop in the world of intercourse. Help Auntie!

Name Withheld
Pulse FM staff

Dams are one of the most important 'sexual tools' (if you will) that must be used during any form of foreplay or oral intercourse. A dam should be unfolded extremely carefully before use, making sure that either side does not come into contact with live animals, mucus or toenails. It should then be strategically placed on the part of your partner's body which you would like contact with and proceed accordingly. Once a climax has been achieved, the dam should be disposed of in an appropriate manner and is completely dishwasher safe, et voila!

Slippery side facing down
Auntie Shaw xoxo

Dear Auntie

I'm skint. Literally. Lots of students claim to be broke to get out of things but I actually have £73.41 to last me until 21st February! The bank and Student Services aren't helpful, and I think I'm writing to you as a joke to cheer me up. What really would cheer me up is advice that I can use to get me out of this mess. Please Auntie, if you could only ever offer one piece of advice that is actually relevant and useful...let it be this

3rd Year
Sociology

What an awful shame dear! Far too much indulgence in Christmas presents for others or bargains for your own wardrobe in the winter sales? The advice usually offer in these circumstances is selling and organ. A kidney alone can be worth up to £10,000 and you only need one! Rather than a drastic measure, I suggest, tactful methods to ensure you spend £1.70 a day and you well stay within your limit until the end of February: 1. Drop by a friends house just before dinner and I am sure they will insist you stay. Remember to politely and decline once. On the second time around, always accept or you will not get asked again. 2. Bag a girlfriend/boyfriend for the month and stay at theirs. This will allow you to evade rent or chasing up of rent from your real flatmates. 3. Primark, 99p Store, Tesco Value. Living on 15p tinned corn isn't easy but sometimes it is the only way forward 4. Beg, Steal AND Borrow. 5. Talk to LSE's very own Mr TV, I am sure he will have some very valuable tips! Good luck!

Wear sunscreen
Auntie Shaw xoxo

Dear Auntie

My mind is in a bit of a pickle. I have been with my girlfriend for

almost six months now and things are going close to perfect. This is my longest relationship yet and she's awesome. A close friend of mine has told me that she has been getting together with my flatmate on a few occasions. I often wonder why she is still at mine when I get home but always assume she's waiting for me. To be honest, I don't know whether to believe my friends or go with my instincts and believe she is not cheating on me. In fact, in a twisted way, I'm please not finding out anything. I'd be devastated if I lost her and can't bear to confront her. Is it wrong to just want to stay happy?

LSE '07
NAME WITHELD

Happy is not happy when someone else's tongue is playing in your lady's mouth (among other things). I suppose there is no way you can ever find out the truth. Even if you do decide to confront her, she could always lie (as is the tendency with these kind) and this would create an uncomfortable tension between you two when you are together. You give the impression that you are very much in love with this woman so it seems a shock that she would do such a thing. Have a sniff around with friends or friends of friends and if you find a few stories of dirt and dirtiness, it is probably a good idea to confront and get out of the love bubble. There are nicer bottoms and boobies in the Quad and she might give you syphilis.

Triangles can get messy
Auntie Shaw xoxo

If you want to share (or scare) me with you problems, rants and general nonsense, please do get in touch at thebeaver.partb@lse.ac.uk or through Auntie Shaw on Facebook. You are guaranteed to remain completely anonymous. Until next week my bizarre boys, girls and transgender dahlings!
Ever your Auntie xoxo

s better

cost. Aside from the unlucky farmers who suffer from the water shortages those fortunate enough to be working for supermarket contracts have no option in a global market but to sell for the lowest price possible. As globalisation increases governments are being forced into growing cash crops even when their countries are below sustenance level. The greater the share of agricultural produce in a developing country's total exports, the greater that country's malnutrition rate is likely to be, according to the UN.

Then there is the foreign farmers who don't even produce food for us to eat but instead grow food for our livestock to eat. In Thailand 44 million acres, an area the size of Ireland, is devoted to growing manioc, to be fed to British animals. The deforestation of the Amazon is largely due to the demand for soya - to be fed to US livestock. There are two of these so-called 'ghost acres' in foreign countries for every acre of farmed land in

the UK. Not only does this practice massively contribute to food miles but once a country starts converting its farmland from sustenance to cash crop farming there is seldom any going back.

A reliance on such high levels of imports is simply not compatible with a reduced carbon future. Developing world farmers deserve more than to be growing soya for our cows rather than food for themselves. Western governments must find a way to charge consumers for the excessive use of carbon and water their shopping basket creates to encourage more responsible choices. Attempts must be made to reduce the agricultural deficit by encouraging more local production. This requires a massive change in the attitudes of supermarkets. Whilst it will not be easy to take on the likes of Tesco, who now receive £1 of every £8 spent in the UK, it will be even harder to convince British consumers to stop eating strawberries in January. ■

wer



strawberries

regarding whether the renewal of Trident is itself a breach of the Non-Proliferation Treaty - the same legislation which is being used to threaten the sovereignty of Iran's right to develop nuclear power/weapons - cannot be separated from the renewal of a civilian nuclear weapons program as the issues of nuclear power and developing a nuclear arsenal are inextricably and historically linked.

There are more environmentally sustainable, cost effective

and far safer ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to counter climate change including wind, wave, tidal, hydroelectric, solar and photovoltaic power and they could be harnessed almost immediately at less financial cost and are infinitely safer. The UK has a significant potential renewable energy resources; it's time to use them. ■

An Incoherent Truth

Political correspondent **Greg White** examines the awareness of 'Green' issues in the USA

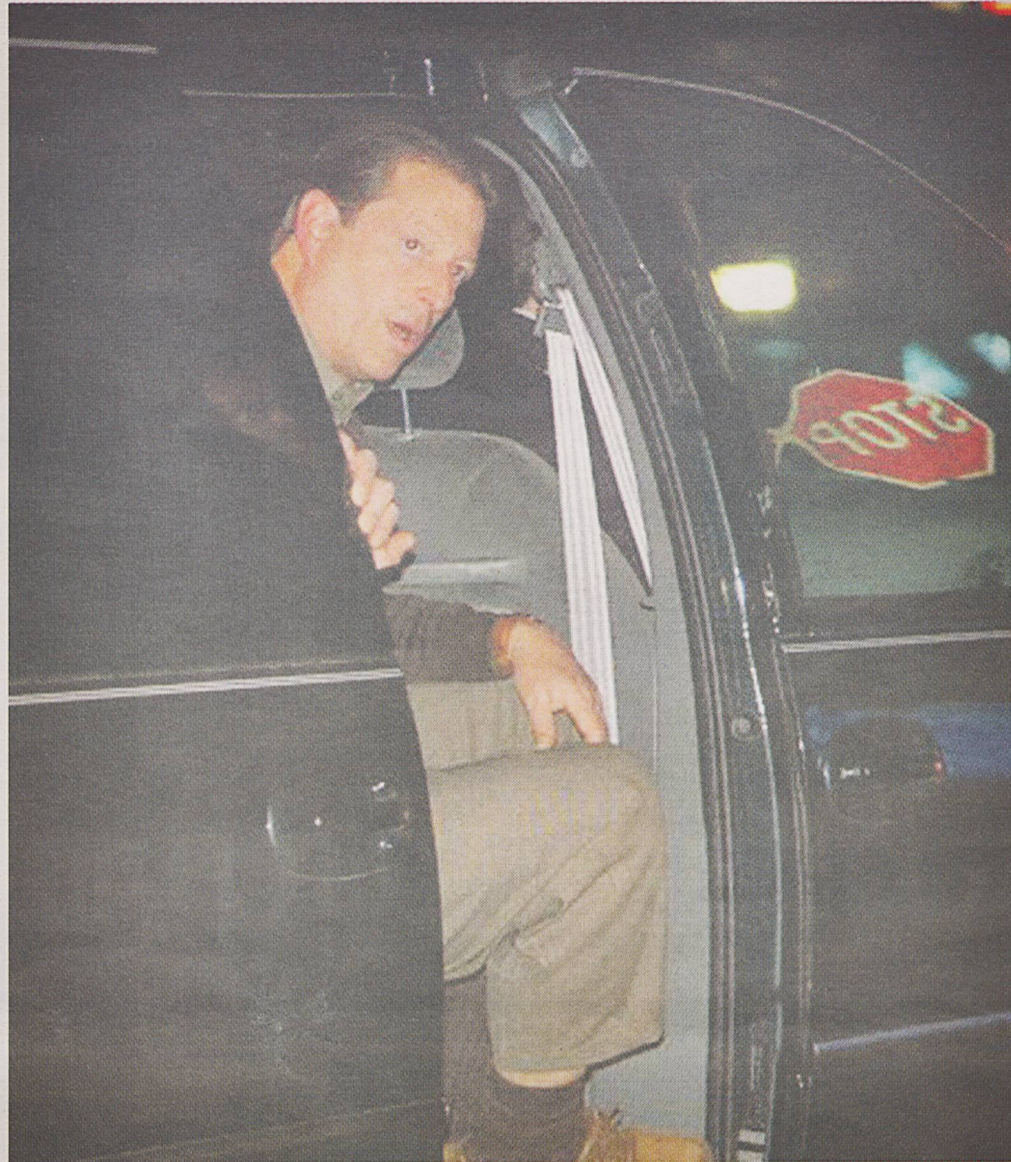
Living in Britain, London in particular, is a bit like living in biblical end times. Hanging above the city is a giant Damocles sword, a flood and environmental disaster so unprecedented in history we really have nothing to compare it to besides disasters manifested in Jerry Bruckheimer films. But while everyone in Britain is well aware this is happening, they all tend to shrug a bit and get on with eating their imported fish and drinking their foreign wine and saying, "Well nothing matters until the Americans decide to start caring about climate change."

Unfortunately, this is true. There is nothing Britain, a country of 60 million people with little to no formal global reach remaining, can do to change the grand environmental issue of the day. All they can do is stand by, read their copies of *The Guardian* about the impending doom and listen to the less than convincing rhetoric of their political leaders to "buy green." Until America cares about climate change, sees it as a threat to their way of life, or perhaps understand the faults in its way of life, the fact that you are using florescent long lasting light bulbs will not matter.

The coasts of America, places like New England through Maryland and California do not need convincing as to this threat. Say what you will about Arnold Schwarzenegger, but he does recognize, as Governor of California, the threat of climate modification to his sea front state. As for the east coast; they are relatively educated individuals who read their *New York Times* avidly, but still drive Hummers. It is perplexing, that while riding around in one of those monstrosities, these people do not wonder why it was 70 degrees, just last week in Philadelphia. People who are aware of the problem could be doing much more to address it in their daily lives, besides renting or buying Al Gore's *'An Inconvenient Truth.'* Though perhaps renting it 'On Demand' via the cable service could constitute a movement forward from the gas guzzling drive to the video shop.

However, it is not coastal educated America that needs the most convincing. Perhaps they could do a bit more to highlight the issue, but what is really of concern is those in the centre; in the heartland, the voters who couldn't care less about what they cannot see before them. If the rest of the world lacks foresight on climate change, middle-America is the confused, dim-witted kid in your science class, poking around with a paper clip and the electrical socket.

Caught within a maelstrom of economic and political issues, middle-America is less than likely to vote for a candidate, (i.e. a Democrat), who would



Nice wheels Al

pursue a policy for higher taxes on big automobiles, increasing research in alternative fuel sources, and disbanding with unnecessary research into the ironically titled 'clean coal' technologies. While this largely stems from the fact that middle-America has more important short term interests, such as manufacturing and farming related employment, to concern themselves with, it is also a lack of voice on this issue that is inhibiting any sort of voter swing.

One would expect Democrats, who think about the environment unlike Republicans who just think about building and killing things in it, to have a sound, progressive environmental program. Yet the phrase 'climate change' is not at all mentioned on their website, though several well founded ideals such as energy independence and a clean environment are. There is also the surprisingly snarky retort to Republicanism; "We reject the false choice between a healthy economy and a healthy environment." Charming and endearing, but not a real policy commitment. The actual con-

ceptualization of any sort of 'New Deal' for the environment is vacant, and instead the reader is left with a delightful set of catch phrases.

So with the leading opposition party lacking any sort of concrete, conceptualized policy on the environment, and the Green Party being nothing but a

erless people as every other state in the world.

The only real hope for American environmentalists is 2008. There is a possibility that this may be a debatable issue in 2008 capable of creating a new voting block in the election. A new group of citizens, perhaps fiscally conservative Republicans looking for a way out of foreign oil crises, or the hunting-lobbying traditional Republican, looking for an alternative party capable of preserving their domain, could shift their votes.

If the Democrats can latch onto some of these ideas, without radicalizing their agenda, they may be able to take the presidency and make global, Kyoto-like progress on the issue. But until then, environmentalist Americans should shout out their claims as loud as possible to drown the voices of confusion the Republicans deploy. Nothing makes people more interested in climate change than seeing it every day in the paper and, of course, making Jerry Bruckheimer movies where things blow up because of it. ■

With the leading opposition party lacking concrete policy on the environment where is an environmentalist American to turn?

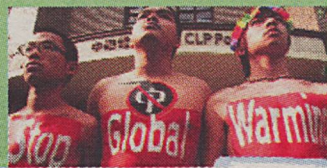
vote for the Republicans, where is an environmentalist American to turn? It's ironic; really within the only country on Earth where climate change could be halted lie the same whinging and pow-

When shopping



- Remember the acronym LOAF by trying to buy local, organic, animal-friendly and, if that fails, Fair Trade products.
- Try to buy products to last.
- Try to buy from farmers' markets.
- Buy long-lasting bags and avoid using plastic ones.
- Generally avoid products with lots of packaging

Get involved



Join the campaign for action on ecological issues like climate change, now. Even joint action on simple things like recycling schemes and car pools is a start. Action at the personal level is important but united effort is needed to make the necessary changes for society.

Poverty or Planet?

Two of our writers examine the relationship between environmental and economic forces

Dan Sheldon is sceptical of 'Green, middle-class moralists'.....

Allow me to tell you a story of two families. Alan and Lisa Middleclass own a modest semi in Kentish Town, North London. They have two young children, a nice car and promising careers. They voted Labour in 1997, but soon became disillusioned. Alan is very worried about climate change, so he now helps out at the local Green Party. Like all good middle class liberals, they read *The Independent*, pay their subs to Amnesty and send their children to The Woodcraft Folk.

Pat Workingclass votes Labour, always has (apart from that one time in 1979) and would never dream of voting otherwise: the BNP are the second largest party in her council ward. Pat is a single parent from Oldham, near Manchester. She has an 11 year old son and lives in a council house - now sold off to a housing association - on a fairly pleasant estate with a bad reputation. Because of the impracticalities of childcare, Pat had to take a few years off work to bring up her child but is now working part-time as a cleaner. Her son is now doing very well at school, thanks in part to the early start she gave him developing his reading and writing skills.

The Middleclasses were relieved to be able to send their children to a well regarded voluntary aided school after buying a house in the catchment area. Every Saturday, the whole family jump into their hybrid engine Lexus and drive to Sainsbury's. They like to fill their trolley with fresh, organic foods whenever they can, and always re-use their carrier bags. Later they visit their local farmers' market

as they feel rather guilty about all the food miles they have racked up at the supermarket! They are assiduous recyclers and have four colour-coded bins in their kitchen for this purpose. Things aren't quite so comfortable for Pat. She doesn't have a car, so has to struggle back with food shopping on the bus several times per week - sometimes she has to get her son to help out. Pat has to watch every penny, so compares prices between Aldi, Lidl and Iceland. She would like to cook the kind of meals that Nigella and Jamie do on TV, but goose fat and sun-dried tomatoes are in short supply in Oldham. On Pat's budget 'two for one' pizzas tend to go further than fresh fruit and vegetables. Pat doesn't smoke, gamble or take drugs and drinks very rarely, but still she finds it

I am proud to be a short-termist, if it means helping out poor people now rather than crossing my fingers for the next few decades.

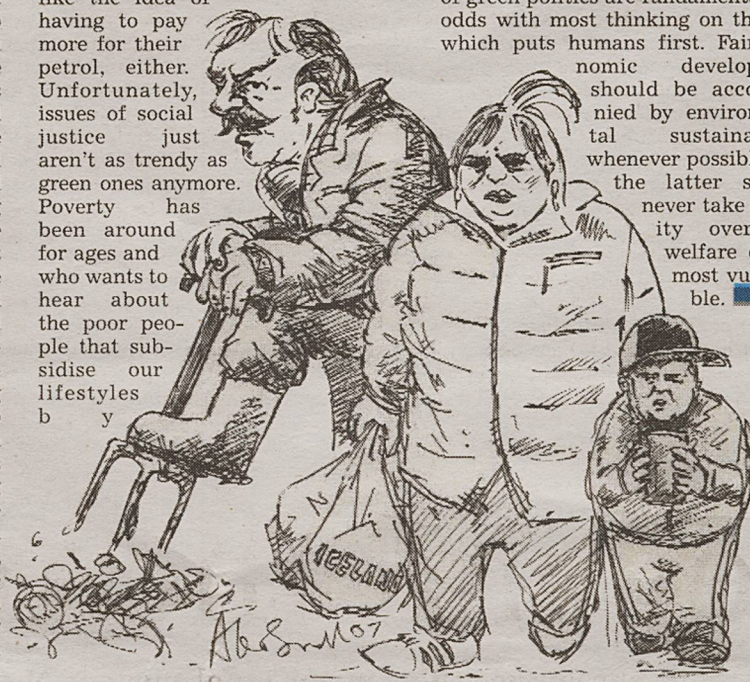
hard to make ends meet. Truth is, she'd probably be better off living on benefits alone. She has a small

amount of debt so has to budget carefully, juggling money from one account to another to make sure she doesn't get another bank charge.

Pat doesn't have the luxury of worrying about climate change, or which Organic brand has won the Observer Food Monthly award. She lives week-to-week with the sole aim of making ends meet. I have of course painted a rather crass contrast between the families, but Pat's story is a typical (yet not an extreme example) of the grim reality for far more families in Britain than we like to acknowledge. How can we live with ourselves when we spend more time moaning about carbon emissions than we do trying to tackle real poverty on our doorstep? Of course climate change exists, of course it will have a major impact on the world and of course we need to do something about it. However, the question is one of priorities and while there still exist massive inequalities, it would be scandalous for us to ignore this in favour of ineffective ecological adventures. Bjorn Lomborg's reduction of global problems to pure economics is misguided, but assessing our welfare priorities in relation to the likely results seems sensible given our limited resources. The Greens retort that focusing on reducing inequality is redundant when climate change threatens human survival. Fine. I am proud to be a short-termist, if it means helping out poor people now rather than fitting a wind farm to my rear and crossing my fingers for the next few decades. It is a truism that poor people will feel the effects

of climate change disproportionately, but surely they will be better equipped if they escape poverty?

To those versed in the realities of the world, it is clear that environmentalism is still a bourgeois issue - it mostly concerns the middle classes responsible for climate change in the first place. The dubious adoption of green rhetoric by David Cameron highlights the self-protectionist motivations of the wealthy: the middle classes are revolting, and they don't like the idea of having to pay more for their petrol, either. Unfortunately, issues of social justice just aren't as trendy as green ones anymore. Poverty has been around for ages and who wants to hear about the poor people that subsidise our lifestyles



working for pitiful wages? It is much easier to concentrate on depersonalised ecological issues. A sad situation when saving the whale and planting trees, are now more attractive political ideas than workers' rights and social justice.

It would be fantastic to think that we could have continued economic growth and reduce inequalities whilst combating climate change. Unfortunately, something has to give: the anarchist, biocentrist tendencies of green politics are fundamentally at odds with most thinking on the left, which puts humans first. Fair economic development should be accompanied by environmental sustainability whenever possible, but the latter should never take priority over the welfare of the most vulnerable. ■

...but Aled Fisher puts environmental concerns above preserving the economic status quo

According to Eathday.com If everyone in the world lived liked the average American, we would need 15 Earths. In contrast, to exist at the level of environmental impact sustaining by a Nigerian, we would need just 0.1 worlds. This disparity displays the truth of the ecological crisis - environmental and societal problems are linked and any solution to one of these issues is utterly dependent on the other.

Talk of 'the environment' is not enough; it is simply the surroundings we find ourselves in at one time. Ecology is a more important concept - an understanding of the interdependence of organisms and the planet. If Americans are engaged in '15 planet living' and Britons in '5 planet living', then something is clear - human beings are attempting to live outside of the laws of ecology, despite the fact that we cannot do so forever. It is this conceptual but not physical divorce from the laws of ecology that is a problem. We cannot be 'above' nature, unless we want to live on borrowed time.

This is the underpinning of sustainability. The test for sustainability is simple - if everyone in the world lived liked me, would we be able to exist within the limits of the planet? Nigerians can say "yes"; we can say "no way". We live in a world of social and ecological inequality - the materially rich have the wealth and privilege to pollute, whereas the materially poor are also resource and energy-impoverished. Material poverty and ecological poverty thus go hand-in-hand and can be starkly illustrated by the enclosure of land, the divorce between people and their means of production, and the loss of traditional subsistence and cooperative forms of living, as people are economically forced to sell their labour and work for the accumulation of profit by others. Here, the source of the crisis is

revealed - global capitalism itself.

Capitalism has a number of detrimental effects on society and the environment. As the commodity form grows to encompass every layer of existence, there is a divorce between use-value (an item's usefulness) and exchange-value (a product's price). As the accumulation of this exchange-value - money - is crucial, there is therefore an incentive for production to be geared to the production of exchange-value, not the development of use-value. We are left with a system that values consumerism over the provision of need.

Under market conditions, profit is the only thing that matters. If a capitalist cannot produce profit, they will cease to be a competitor. Competition forces any enterprise to focus on the production of exchange-value; any negative consequences of this process are externalised. Economic growth is therefore increased by socially and ecologically destructive activities. Additionally, growth, though usually seen as a good thing, does not indicate how wealth is spread and, in reality,

benefits a tiny minority.

The rewards for ecologically and socially abhorrent behaviour thus dwarf the risks. It is clear that capitalism is intrinsically unconcerned with society and the environment.

Many environmentalists are reluctant to term themselves anti-capitalists. However, it is arguable that environmentalists who are not anti-capitalists have not taken their beliefs to their logical extent. For example, if you believe in less consumption and building things to last, you are moving into the realm of anti-capitalism because capitalism thrives on consumption and the spending of money. If you buy more products more often, it is 'good' for the economy. However, if you spend less money buying durable goods and thus buy less frequently, the capitalist economy is weakened. If everyone in the world lived like this - the test for sustainable practice - then the world would be moving beyond capitalism.

The motivation for omitting this conceptual leap is understandable -

many believe that the proximity of environmental catastrophe, particularly through climate change, means we must try to change as quickly as possible, rather than expending massive amounts of resources dismantling a world system. Nevertheless, some of the things we can do as

It is arguable that environmentalists who are not anti-capitalists have not taken their beliefs to their logical extent

quickly as possible are the very prefigurative projects for building a post-capitalist, sustainable society.

These initiatives are screamingly simple to the point of being whimsical - but they are essential to building an ecologically in-tune and socially cooperative society. Libraries are one example - the improvement of libraries to share more books and other products that we would usually buy individually would obviously reduce consumerism-related problems and encourage cooperative behaviour. Open source software is a fantastic and creative example of providing services that are free, accessible and improvable by the majority, rather than those who own the rights to patents; indeed, as open software is free, easy to use and modify, and often technologically superior to the copyrighted and expensive

products of large corporations, the provision of such software to governments and individuals in the Global South will mean that many people can gain the benefits of computer technology that they are denied by a lack of material wealth. This example shows that ecology is not anti-modern. Modern technology has a place in a sustainable society. In fact, in an open source society, technology will develop at a greater pace because of open access to products' source codes, and diversity and creativity of software types will expand and thus improve the lives of all people.

Living sustainability is not about self-sacrifice, a drop in living standards or a loss of sensual pleasure and enjoyment. Living within the laws of nature should be fun! Crucially, sustainable living must be fun and fulfilling for the majority, not a select minority (as it is today).

What of the argument that, while all of this is fine, it is irrelevant as we need quick solutions before it is too late? This question is a greater incentive to immediately start building the global movement for change, made up of individuals who are practicing the pre-figurative steps to sustainability in their own lives. This sounds hard but tentative steps are beginning, particularly and welcomingly in the Global South. From Bolivians standing up to water privatisation to Indian farmers forming successful cooperatives, change is coming. The wake-up calls - mass flooding, extreme weather events, increased prevalence of disease, and so on - will only serve to make these small steps into giant footprints (if you ignore the ecologically destructive metaphor) on human history.

Then, maybe one day, Americans and Nigerians will achieve 1-world living. ■



American dream or global nightmare?

New kid on the bloc

Yee To Wong proclaims China as the new power in the Middle East

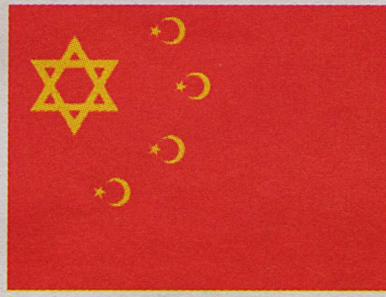
This week, China has come up a handful of times in the headlines of news stories relating to the Middle East. With regards to Iran, Beijing hit back at Washington's attack on the "inappropriateness" of plans by Chinese state-run oil firm China National Offshore Oil Corporation to invest in an Iranian gas field, demanding a stop to interference with its trade affairs with Tehran. Meanwhile the Chinese capital hosted a three-day state visit by Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert who was in town to hold talks with Chinese leaders. In an effort to seek China's support against Iran's nuclear ambitions, Mr Olmert emphasised the importance of China in Israel's approach to international affairs. Clearly, China, with its rising power in the international arena, is becoming a more prominent actor in Middle Eastern politics.

Indeed, China's ties to the Middle East have considerably deepened over the last decade or two. Since diplomatic relations were normalised 15 years ago, China and Israel have been forging close military links. China deemed Israel an important partner in its goal of military modernisation. The U.S. led arms embargo following the Tiananmen controversy merely

enhanced Israel's role as the "backdoor" to Western technology. Likewise, Israel found China to be a prime customer. The defence industry forms an important part of the Israeli economy and currently Israel is reported to be China's second largest arms supplier after Russia. In addition, business in general is booming between Israel and China, with bilateral trade worth \$700 million in 2006.

If Israel is where China looks for weapons, then the other Middle Eastern countries are where it seeks oil and gas. It is no secret that China, in fuelling its record-setting economic growth, is thirsty for oil. Currently, the Middle East provides over 45% of China's total oil imports. The figure is expected to rise to 70% by 2015. One is a hungry consumer, the other a willing supplier. Not surprisingly, China has been getting cosy with its major energy suppliers, particularly Saudi Arabia and Iran. For example, China North Industries Corporation, a Chinese military industrial firm, had a \$680 million contract for work on Tehran's subway system. On top of oil interests, China has been pursuing closer economic ties with other Arab states. Even a China-Middle East Free Trade Area has been proposed.

While China is certainly an eco-



The era of Chinese passivity in the Middle East is definitely over

omic force to be reckoned with, one must not neglect its unique historical and cultural bond with both the Jews and the Muslims. After the Russian Revolution in 1917, several thousand Russian Jews fled to create a Jewish outpost in northern China. In the 1930s, an increasing number of Jews from Europe found sanctuary in

China. At the height of the Holocaust, Shanghai turned out to be an important safe-haven for Jewish refugees, as it was one of the few 'Jews-friendly' places in the world that did not impose restrictions on immigration. This historical experience laid a rich legacy of Sino-Jewish relations that would survive the politics of the Cold War.

One may be surprised to learn that Islam has a substantial following in China, a country often perceived in the West as ethnically and religiously homogeneous, with 1%-2% of the population adhering to the Islamic faith. Most Muslims in China live in "ethnic autonomous areas", such as the Ningxia Hui and the Xinjiang-Uyghur Autonomous Regions, where the freedom to maintain their religious and cultural practices is (supposedly) guaranteed. The point here is to stress Islam's strong presence inside China and its policy implications for China's conduct of foreign affairs.

The consequences of China's growing connections with both the Jewish and the Arab states of the Middle East are twofold. The more obvious and immediate implication is an imminent collision with US interests in the region. China's activism in

the Middle East has been perceived by the US as a dangerous challenge to its hegemony. The arms deals between Israel and China have always been viewed with much suspicion by the US, and China's cordial relations with Iran, Syria, Hamas and Hezbollah only add to this tension. Sino-US rivalry over control of the Middle East appears to be inevitable in the coming years.

Perhaps a broader and less obvious implication of China's increasing power in the Middle East is its potential in helping to achieve security in the region or, as far-fetched as it may sound, resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict. Beyond straightforward petroleum considerations, Beijing is feeling a heightened sense of 'responsibility' to the region that matches its status as a global player. Recently, the Chinese Foreign Ministry appointed a special envoy to the Middle East to study the prospects for peace. A veteran diplomat was also dispatched to consult with the special envoys of the Quartet: Russia, the US, the European Union, and the United Nations. Whether China can emerge as a future mediator is too soon to tell, but one thing is for sure: the era of Chinese passivity in the Middle East is definitely over. ■

Beyond the religious divide

Doug Oliver challenges the conventional view of Northern Irish politics

The reaction last week to the death of David Ervine, leader of Northern Ireland's Progressive Unionist Party, represents an extremely rare moment of inter-communal grief and respect in a society which is the UK's most socially divided. The role he has played in recent Northern Irish history is large and his death will create a significant political vacuum in the Loyalist and working class Protestant communities of the province which he represented.

The esteem with which Ervine was held in life - demonstrated by the praise he received from all political sides on his death - reflected the crucial role he has played in moving militant Loyalism away from violence toward a certain level of engagement in the democratic process. The success

province is one of the most socio-economically divided in the UK and this subtle trend is most easily observed intuitively by a visit to Belfast. Whilst the Green & Orange (Nationalist) or Red & Blue (Loyalist) flags unequivocally mark the sectarian divisions within the city, socio-economic divisions are less explicit but almost as entrenched. These divisions are cemented early in a child's life by the continued use of '11-Plus' educational streaming, which more often divides children according to their personal background than their academic potential. Social interaction between the different sides of the "class" divide is limited. In the city's more comfortable leafy suburbs, the conflict largely centred in the terraced working class estates of East

and North Belfast seems distant.

This social conflict has been exacerbated in recent years by the decline of the traditional manufacturing sector and the evaporation of jobs it previously guaranteed the Protestant communities of East Belfast. Meanwhile, Catholics who have long looked upon education as a social escape route, are making the most of the opportunities that University and the new economy can afford - Queen's University, the region's most prestigious, now has a majority Catholic student body. Meanwhile, in ever increasing numbers, young aspirant Protestants are travelling to England and Scotland to attend University - and many do not return.

These factors have led to a festering sense of social marginalisation as

well as political dispossession in the working-class Protestant communities of Ulster. Whilst Sinn Fein and the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) have - arguably - provided effective working class representation for the interests of working class Catholics, the Democratic and Ulster Unionist parties, with their strong middle-class and conservative roots, have not. At the time of his death, the influence of the PUP was undoubtedly limited and its political strength was fading. However, it offered representation to a key demographic group which the other Unionist parties could not. Ervine's death undoubtedly strengthens this leadership vacuum.

Meanwhile, many Protestants feel increasingly disenchanted with the political process. Whilst Nationalism

has unambiguously failed to achieve its optimistic aim of a united Ireland, in the eyes of many Unionists, most of the gains from the peace process - from the dissolution of the RUC to the early release of prisoners - have served Republican rather than their own interests. Just over a year ago, I visited a friend living in East Belfast's Newtownards Road near the site of the riots. The general frustration of people in this area was summed up by an acquaintance who told me that "Protestants basically feel angry because the British Government has sold our interests down the river".

This phenomenon was spectacularly brought to wider attention during the riots of September 2005. More generally it helps to explain the stubbornly antipathetic approach it has in regard to the peace process. This political void has led to a proliferation of violence: drug wars, racist attacks and punishment beatings, and poses the greatest current challenge in the peace process.

With the British Government's threat to install indefinite direct rule from Westminster unless the key parties can resolve their political differences, there can be little doubt that 2007 will be a defining year for the Peace Process. Whilst there are some reasons to be optimistic: the economy is growing - albeit largely thanks to massive economic aid from Westminster - the 11-Plus will be phased out by 2008 and tentative steps are being toward greater integration between communities, more needs to be done. Whatever the result of the exhaustive negotiations between the DUP and Sinn Fein in coming months, a sustainable long term peace is undoubtedly dependent upon engagement with the thousands of Protestants who feel their opportunities in life are limited.

At this crucial juncture, Ulster's Unionist and Protestant leaders must be take up this challenge which Ervine and only a few others have actively sought to face up to. ■

Alongside its cultural polarisation, the province is one of the most socioeconomically divided in the UK



Communities are divided by class as much as they are by religion

of the man who began his political career in the Maze Prison for attempting to commit acts of terror, was brought about thanks to a sharp mind and eloquent turn of phrase. However, Ervine's brand of politics was so important because it represented a certain faction within Unionism: that of the Protestant working class.

The almost unfathomable nature of Northern Ireland politics to outsiders is obscured by the false perception that its social divisions are in two-dimensions: Protestant and Catholic. The reality is more complex: alongside its cultural polarisation, the

Ashley the 'Pillow Angel'

Rosamund Urwin examines the controversial 'Ashley Treatment'

The case of Ashley, the 'pillow angel,' could hardly be more controversial: severely disabled since birth, her parents decided she should undergo extensive surgery and receive a massive dose of hormones to maintain her quality of life. Ashley suffers from "static encephalopathy", the cause of which is unknown and there is no chance of recovery. The "Ashley treatment", as her parents have termed it, involves a number of operations and procedures including a hysterectomy to prevent her menstruating, growth attenuation through oestrogen therapy and the removal of her breast buds to avoid the development of breast tissue. At the start of the year, following the publication last October of an article in a medical journal about these operations, her parents decided to launch a blog about Ashley, causing a debate in which they have been both applauded and condemned. Whilst I have enormous sympathy for the parents, Ashley's surgery was entirely unnecessary and could set a dangerous precedent.

How convenient to be allowed to manipulate children to suit the wishes of their parents. Though severely disabled, Ashley was expected to reach a normal height and weight. Inevitably, there are enormous difficulties in caring for a disabled person who is heavier than their carer but Ashley was estimated only ever to reach 5'6 and her weight was unlikely to rise above 9 stone. Whilst her parents are sensible in trying to anticipate future problems associated with her size, it is entirely speculative and they may have been able to maintain her mobility. Yet I will concede there are benefits of limiting her weight:

she is spared the indignity of being hoisted into her bed, and her suffering from bedsores is minimised. But medicine's role is to alleviate pain and improve function and Ashley was not sick. Her parents have termed these operations, 'the Ashley Treatment.' But she underwent procedures, not treatments, since the doctors were not ameliorating any of her problems. The combined procedures were also untested: there are surgical risks and the effects of a major dose of oestrogen on such a young girl are still unknown.

What they claim to have corrected, required no correction. I wonder if Ashley's parents wouldn't also find it easier if their daughter did not have any arms or legs. Ashley may not suffer the social problems resulting from smallness, with no chance of working or dating yet this does not mean there is no problem with keeping her small. Disabled rights advocates have argued she has a right to develop and grow, and this is not harmed by her disability since human rights are

Every decision made on behalf of those too severely disabled to be able to give consent must always be in their best interests

absolute. Her disability does not

mean her rights should not be respected: in almost all societies, dead bodies have been respected: we wouldn't mutilate someone who is dead and she is a living, breathing person. Simply because she cannot express her autonomy, or have any concept of it, does not mean it does not exist. Moreover, we have a duty to protect especially the rights of those who cannot fight for them themselves.

I do not doubt that the parents believed they were doing what was right for Ashley and I cannot imagine how difficult it may have been at times to care for her and how many sacrifices they will have made. They emphasise that the procedures are not intended to make their lives easier, but to prevent her size stopping her from continuing the few joys she can experience now. Undoubtedly they love their daughter, but much that is evil is born out of good intentions. This is especially true in relation to the disabled: Arlene Mayerson, an expert in disability rights law, opposes Ashley's parents' decision arguing that "Many things that were done under a theory of benevolence were later seen as wrongheaded violations of human rights".

Further, there is no good reason why a hysterectomy needed to be performed and in the short-term, this operation would have caused enormous discomfort for Ashley. The decision was defended on the grounds that the prevention of menstruation was beneficial because some mentally



risk of other diseases, under this rule, perhaps they should have removed other organs at the same time.

Personally I find the parents arguments disturbing: they have stressed the operations were partly to maintain their connection with her "pure, innocent and angelic spirit" and in their blog, they constantly infantilise Ashley, even the name 'pillow angel.' They seem to see the replacement of their cuddly child with a woman with working sexual organs as something to fear, that it was not only inconvenient, but threatening. Further, not allowing children to develop prevents them from experiencing any therapeutic benefits which would come from their being viewed as an adult. In fact, preventing her from reaching her natural maturation is a kind of medical identity theft.

The real danger of this case is that it may set a precedent. Every decision made on behalf of those too severely disabled to be able to give consent must always be in their best interests. And whilst her parents did not allow these operations for their own convenience, were this to become a mainstream treatment, there may be other people who take advantage of it and put their child through it out of a desire for an easy life. What is essential is that each similar case goes through a medical ethics committee, as this one did, who can judge each one on its merits.

Ashley's parents made a brave and difficult decision; I just cannot help feeling it was the wrong one. ■

God made Adam and Steve too...

Will Joce argues religious groups blocking anti-discrimination legislation are nothing but bigots

Last Tuesday night an attempt to derail government legislation banning discrimination against gays and lesbians failed in the House of Lords. The attempt was being spearheaded by various religious groups who claimed that the legislation would infringe upon their religious freedoms. The fear is that hotel owners, printers, schools, adoption agencies and other bodies may have to compromise on their moral objections to homosexuality or else face legal action from offended gays. I can't help but think that they are missing the point somewhat. It is precisely to stop narrow minded bigots hiding their medieval prejudices behind pseudo religious dogma that the laws are being introduced. In my opinion there is no reason why religion and gay rights cannot go hand in hand, I know many religious people who accept homosexuality as a confirmation of their ideas of love rather than a threat. But that is beside the point. The simple fact is that people are born gay.

People of every race and from every culture are born gay. Animals are born gay too, which rubbishes the often quoted fallacy that homosexuality is in some way unnatural and a man-made perversion. Christians are not born Christian, Jews are not born Jews and Muslims are not born Muslim. For each it is something that they pick up from society and whatever personal need they have to make sense of the world around them. For too long the world has been organised for the benefit of these hypocrites who spread hate and discord while preaching love for your fellow man and if they have to compromise

on their pick and mix idea of morality then so much the better.

The insidious nature of the protesters outside Parliament on the night of the vote was quite well hidden. Not for them the more blunt and accurate depictions of their views used on placards by their American counterparts: 'God hates fags' and 'fags burn in hell' are just some of the juicier comments that the American protesters, who had crossed the Atlantic to add their voices, left behind. One protester had the more conciliatory 'Back the Bible' written on her placard. Aware of how naked prejudice can be frowned upon in today's society many protesters went out of their way to point out that they were not against gay people per se. 'Love the sinner hate the sin' was one of the more condescending platitudes dished out. Scratch beneath the surface, however and the truth is abundantly clear.

The protest in Parliament Square was led by 'Bishop' Michael Reid who is also the founder of the frankly terrifying sounding organisation Christian Congress for Traditional Values. According to the Bishop the new laws would lead to teachers being forced to 'promote' homosexuality as 'just another kind of love' to the youngest of school children. It is difficult to know where

to start on this point of view. Despite the obvious hatred for homosexuality it contains, it also makes as much sense as a teacher standing in front of a class of black children and 'promoting' the benefits of white skin. Needless to say the new legislation will not require teachers to promote anything but simply stop them discriminating against some of their pupils, which most people would surely think is a good thing.

I am not a particularly politically minded gay; bars and clubs are more my thing than rallies and marches, but the sight of hate filled morons flaunting their prejudice on the streets and in the House of Lords fills me with indescribable anger. Just because these protests are based on religion they are for some reason viewed as a

quaint anachronism like VHS or John Prescott. If two of the religions were protesting against the other or racial prejudice was brought into it the country would have been up in arms. Unlike with racial hatred, while the general public have largely rejected homophobia they have not yet forced it into a socially unacceptable margin and that is why these laws are still needed. A flick through any copy of *The Sun* or *Daily Mail* will bear this out.

Sitting astride this debate like some hideous personification of the hypocrisy and hardnosed venality of some involved is the Minister for Equality; Ruth Kelly.

Described variously as an active, committed or devoted Catholic, Ms Kelly has shown very little inclination to reach out to the gay community in the past and shows no sign of starting

ing now. When she was first appointed to the role of Minister for Equality eyebrows were raised by those who knew of her personal religious stance and compared the position towards gays of her ministry and the Vatican. Ms Kelly's ability to draw stark dividing lines between her political beliefs and personal practices was recently thrust back into the spotlight when she chose to send her child to a private school rather than put her trust in the Ministry of Education, for which she was responsible not so long ago. It must be said, however, that while Kelly is undoubtedly dragging her feet on first the wording of this legislation and now its presentation to Parliament, she is moving in the right direction. It just remains to be seen if the legislation can make it onto the statute book in its present form or if the protesters will work on Kelly's prejudices long enough for her to water it down into irrelevance. ■



Protests across the pond

The world's policeman

Jack Buckle speaks out against American political hegemony

Last Thursday, marked the announcements of increased troop deployment in Iraq and a statement of intent from George Bush that he's in it for the long term. If the first two weeks of the New Year are anything to go by then the likelihood of a continuation with the passing year is definitely on the cards and we are set for another season of bitter international politics and unwarranted death.

Marking the new year was the death of the 3000th US combat operative (Specialist Dustin Donika) killed in Iraq, and as the civilian death toll stretches into the abyss, dying in the shrapnel of collateral damage or the bullets of sectarian violence, things are stretching far beyond crisis point. Bush has signalled that thousands more troops, at a cost of \$5.6bn, are to be sent to Iraq and it is now that questions really must be asked - where is the logic in pouring petrol on an already uncontrollable inferno?

Yet, Iraq is but one territory on the board game of turmoil, greed and irresponsibility with which the world is savaged. In the Horn of Africa, war torn Somalia has become a new theatre of engagement in the war on terror. In one US strike, against al Qaeda suspects, an AC130 spilled its cargo of destruction upon a village killing 30 people. In response US assistant secretary of state, Jendayi Frazer informed us: "Some people would like the United States to lead on this issue of Somalia," signalling the Pentagon putting it's finger in yet another pie as

it opens up a theatre of operations highly likely to end in disaster as in the case of Mogadishu in 1994. Yet, the US, and its allies, are wading into a crisis in the face of analysis by the International Crisis Group, who have concluded that Somalia has resisted terrorism, and further that the Union of Islamic Courts (counter to the Transitional Federal Government's belief) are well supported by the general population.

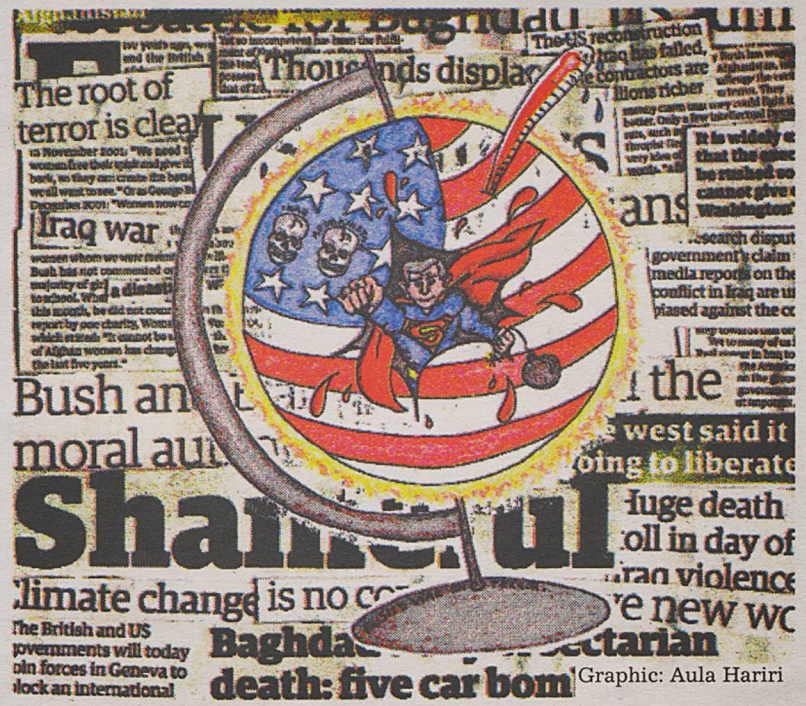
Though the US woes do not end here, this week also marked the fifth anniversary of Guantanamo Bay, where prisoners lacking any form of human rights (a situation which has seen only ten prisoners having been charged and only one tried) has cast another long, dark shadow over US ideals of equality and freedom. To accompany the present turmoil, the US, in fulfilling its own foreign and domestic policy objectives, is also jeopardising, through its usual ignorance, the safety of a planet on the verge of environmental melt down. As we enter a new year we are thus left with an image of a world swathed in the influence of the US administration. This is an administration who pays heed to no one, not even to the will of its people. Yet, while this comes as no surprise, I feel that it is not only the US who are responsible for the ravaged world we now live in.

For a start US hegemony has grown on the back of a combination of post World War Two and Cold War foreign policy, harnessed with the complacency and complicity of many international governments (enticed by

US offers of support and alliance). Further, the failure of Britain and Europe to really stand up to the US and provide stability for other regions of the world, is another contributing factor to the current situation. As regards the War on Terror, in getting into bed with US foreign policy, the British government have provided the administration with the justification required to placate the domestic (US) population, and bypass international bodies.

Though, the responsibility for the current crisis extends beyond the Western world. As we have emerged into the 20th century, the absence of China in international affairs, the greed of the House of Saud, the irresponsibility and despotic actions of many Middle Eastern governments (Israel and Iran included), are but a few examples of those who have severely exacerbated instability. And it is these instabilities which have both allowed America to shore up its self proclaimed position as 'world policemen,' and further spun the world into turmoil. However, while the US is a huge superpower with colossal economic punch and a military to match, this does not mean they should remain unaccountable.

Indeed, turning to South America, the conformation of Daniel Ortega as the new Nicaraguan president, and with Hugo Chavez looking forward to a second term in office, we might observe a proverbial two fingers at the US administration and learn a valuable lesson. We have now reached a juncture where there are few gov-



Superman saves the day

ernments and organisations who remain outside the reaches of responsibility for the current crisis. I seek not to posit the US as the lone big-bad-wolf; while they are indeed guilty of much all sides are to blame in various ways. But is it not high time that we all (international governments and individuals alike) took stock and grasped responsibility for the state of

our world. We need to set about painting the globe in the colours of all nations; a map which exudes responsibility, respect and appreciation of one another, where no one hegemony is allowed to dominate. Where we must start is in rolling back US hegemony and an initiation of fresh and open dialogue bringing all parties to the table, and holding all to account.

Where to next?



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The Week's Previews

Pitch your business plan!

Wednesday Jan 17
6pm, Old Theatre

"Pitch It!" is a unique business plan competition hosted by LSE Entrepreneurs in conjunction with the LSE Careers Service, taking place Wednesday 17th January at 6pm in the Old Theatre.

It is dedicated to the bright young minds of all LSE students and all Alumni who have graduated exafter year 2004, awarding participants for their effort and hard work with cash prizes.

Combining serious business with fun, it gives the budding entrepreneurs a chance to develop their business ideas and a spring board to fulfill their ambition of setting up a successful business. It is regarded as one of the most exciting, challenging and enjoyable experiences amongst the student scene in the UK.

The Judges:

Chris West – Co-author of *Beermat Entrepreneur*

Ellen Miller – Managing Director & Head of European Graduate Recruitment Development at Lehman Brothers

Ian Morley – Chief Executive Officer of Dawnay Day Brokers

The Prizes:

General Category - £3000

Social Category - £5000

PuLSE fm events presents....I Love Music

At a loose end tonight? Enjoy live music? If yes, then you're in luck. Tonight in the Quad, PuLSE fm events is proud to present its very first gig. For a mere £4 with your LSE card you get a chance to see Fear of Flying supported by The Jubilees. DJ Jamie (Afterskool/Candy Box/Bedrock) will be filling the gaps and making us dance with his selection of the latest and best indie and electronica releases. If all this wasn't enough, everyone who turns up gets the chance to win a free flight to one of 8 destinations in Europe.

Ealing indie boys Fear of Flying are tipped for success in 2007 with their combination of new wave and alternative rock. Their second single release on Young and Lost Records, 'Three's a Crowd' is available to buy in the shops and is well worth a listen. MTV2 is currently showing James Appleton's distinctive video for 'Three's a Crowd', and you can also see this on their MySpace. If you enjoy them tonight, they are performing in London on 27th February at KOKO NME Awards when they are supporting the Maccabees.

The Jubilees hail from Lincoln and are making good headway onto the rock/pop scene. 'Hide and Seek' really stands out and is a PuLSE favourite. With a few gigs coming up, including Dublin Castle on 21st January they are certainly one to watch.

Advance tickets available at the SU reception.

LSE UN Society Public Lecture

Wednesday January 17th, 6.30pm

Room D209 (Clement House)

With a new Secretary-General, new conflicts, never-ending tension and the age-old debate on reform, the UN enters the New Year. More often than not, the question of improving the UN to make it more effective, more accountable and more dynamic seems to be paralysed in the realm of governmental talk and bureaucracy. Breaking this cold, formal and distant image, the LSE UN Society is proud to present a public lecture on how Civil Society can -and must- play a key role in pressing for UN reform. The speaker is Mark Rusling, from the UN Association of the UK. The lecture, "Improving the UN - A Pragmatic Approach", will focus on raising awareness of the role each citizen can play in strengthening the UN. It is only through popular interest and public involvement that the UN can ever fulfil its role of more than a debating forum, but a dynamic instrument for World Peace and common progress. Come, learn and act!

India Week coming up...

Amrita Saraogi

The India Week is being organised by the Society for the Promotion of Indian Culture and Ethos (SPICE), the International Society, Indian Society and the Hindu Society, from the 22nd-26th of January, 2007.

The inaugural India Week last year was jointly organised by the Hindu Society, Krishna Consciousness Society, Indian Society and SPICE. Having organised a lecture by Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen, an Indo-Pak peace conference, an Interfaith Memorial Prayer, movie screenings, yoga classes and Indian food in the Brunch Bowl (renamed 'Bolly Bowl' for the week).

India Week was easily the largest, most visible and most enjoyed event on campus. It was quite apt then to have won the "Best Joint Society Event, 2005-'06" Award from the LSE SU.

This year, India Week promises even more -- and will include the massive cultural show 'Masti Ke Rang', as well as an inter-faith dialogue, a 'retro: Bollywood' party, and the ever popular - South Asia Fair; and many more exciting events...

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For more information on one of our regular open evenings, the next is February 1 2007, visit www.cass.city.ac.uk/masters and click on 'visit us'. Alternatively call admissions on +44 (0) 20 7040 5122.

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The Beaver Listings

www.lsesu.com/whatson



TUES 16/01

8.30 **CU prayer meeting**
Chaplaincy EVERYDAY

14:00 **Ashtanga Yoga**
Badminton Court

15:00 **CSSA Chinese Classes - B-class** *D206*

17:30 **Islamic Eid Dinner**
on a boat (ticket price 10 pounds, on sale on Houghton Street) *Temple Pier, Victoria Embankment, Westminster*

18:00 **Environment Week**
Debate: Animal Testing: Necessary Cruelty or Cruelty Unnecessary?
U8

18:15 **Yoga Intermediate**
Ashtanga Yoga D002

19:00 **Debate**
Weekly meeting *D302*

20:00 **Pulse FM 'I love Music!' Party** with 'Fear of Flying + the Jubilees' and DJ Jamie *Quad*

WED 17/01

13:00 **Catholic Mass**
Chaplaincy

Green party weekly in *H104*

Hindu Vedic lunch *D211*

Anime & Manga drawing class and gaming session *Z129*

Accounting homework help session *G107*

Student Action for Refugees Weekly meeting *A283*

Go meeting in *V101*

SU Anti-Racism Forum *A379*

14:00 **Pakistan**
Weekly meeting *U203*

Opera Weekly meeting *H104*

Yoga Intermediate Hatha Yoga *D702*

Environment Week
Spirituality, Religion and the Environment: Faith in the Planet? *G1*

15:00 **Maths and Stats**
Homework help session *Z332*

Chess meeting in *K05*

CSSA Chinese Classes - B-class *V103*

16:00 **Bridge**
Weekly meeting *G107*

Cssa Chinese class 1,
room H206

18:00 **Environment**
Week Communities of the Amazon and Environmental Protection: The Experience of the Brazilian NGO NAPRA *D202*

18:15 **Politics**
Discussion forum /

18:30 **United Nations**
Public lecture: improving the UN - a pragmatic approach. Speaker: Mark Rusling, from the UN Association of the UK *D209*

19:00 **Swing Dance**
Improvers Classes *G108*
Classes cost £2.50/£3.50 (members/non-members)

20:00 **Environment**
Week Film Showing: Al Gore's 'An Inconvenient Truth' *Quad*

THU 18/01

11:00 **Australia and New Zealand** Weekly meeting *D9*

SU Refreshers Fair
Quad Get involved this term! Come and join new and existing societies.

13:00 **SU UGM** *Old Theatre*

14:00 **China**
Development Tea & Knowledge: Banning and Investing in China, by Mr. Mark Ferguson, Vice President at JP Morgan Asset Management *U8*

15:00 **CSSA Chinese**
Classes *K05*

16:30 **Environment**
Week The Kyoto Protocol and Opportunities for Sustainable Development: Brazil's Plantar Projects *New Theatre*

17:00 **AIIESEC** Weekly meeting *S300*
EVERYDAY

17:30 **Yoga** Hatha Yoga
Badminton Court

18:00 **People and planet**
weekly meeting *H103*

Sikh-Punjab music class *S78*

Dance Intermediate hip hop class *S75*

Filipino Tagalog lessons *G107*

Environment Week
The Beaver event: How does the Media's representation of Global Warming shape public opinion?
New Theatre

Visual Arts Life drawing class *D206*

19:00 **Debate**
Workshop *D302*

Japan and Korean The Buffet Night *Quad*

19:30 **Australian and New Zealand and Irish** Pub crawl with a green theme
Meet at *Three Tuns*

20:00 **Arabic** AHLAN (Welcome) party
Underground Bar Come enjoy a mix of Arabic and RnB/HipHop beats, have a shisha and some delicious Arabic sweets

FRI 18/01

8.30 **CU prayer meeting**
Chaplaincy

13:00 **Yoga** Intermediate Acrobatic Yoga *D702*

14:00 **CSSA Chinese**
Classes - A-Class *Y115*

Environment Week
Small is Beautiful: practical solutions to global problems *S50*

15:00 **GO** Weekly meeting *K05*

16:00 **CSSA Chinese**
Classes - O-class *S221*

17:00 **Hindu Gita** Classes *D11*

19:00 **Dance** Ballet Class *S75*

20:00 - ...**Crush**
Filipino Society
Winter Soiree, free drinks, nibbles and live entertainment *Shaw Library*

MON 22/01

12:00 **Knitting** Workshop
Quad

14:30 **Russian Business**
Lecture by Mr Antohony Russel Brenton, British Ambassador to Russia
Old Theatre

17:30 **Yoga** Satnayanda
Yoga *Badminton Court*

18:00
Entrepreneurs
Entrepreneurial master classes *D702*

19:00 **Swing Dance**
Classes *D502*

QUAD OFFICE HOURS

Aled Fisher, Environment and Ethics Monday, 12PM

Anushka Shenoy, General Course Tuesday 1-2pm

Sid Kamath, Executive Editor The Beaver Tuesday, 2-3PM in E204

Fadhil Bakeer Markar, International Students Tuesday, 1-2PM

Ali Dewji, Communications Tuesday, 4-5PM

Emma Hallgren, Students with Disabilities Tuesday 1-2PM

Michail Retsinas Mature and Part Time Students, Wednesday, 4-5PM in D302

Jimmy Tam, General Secretar, Thursday, 2-3PM

Joel Kenrick, Treasurer, 2-3PM, Thursday

Alex Finnegan, LGBT Thursday, 2-3PM (in office of Alex Vincenti)

Adrian Becir, Returning officer, Thursday, 2-3PM

James Caspell, Postgraduate Officer Thursday, 3-4PM

Zoe Sullivan, Women Thursday 10-11 in D703

Louise Robinson, Residences Thursday, 12-1PM

Alexandra Vincenti, Education and Welfare Friday, 11AM-12PM

Arthur Krebbers, Societies Friday, 1-2PM

Shanela Haque, Anti-Racism, Friday, 11AM-1PM

SOC NEWS

Go to www.lsesu.com/register and speak to Ali Dewji at su.comms@lse.ac.uk for more information and advice.

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Football

Sublime 6's pass drugs test



Nathan Muruganandan

Sublime 6's 5
School of Pharmacy 2
Berrylands

For those plying our trade in the less affluent leagues of ULU, the romance of football can be seldom sweet. The non-existence of referee's on match-days, absence of much desired meal tickets and the ignominy of using old 7th team kit could have destroyed a lesser soul. But the football Gods have started to smile kindly upon us this season; blessing us with Freshers who can not only play but show up on a Wednesday evening and even transform Capt Morrow into a stud with the fairer sex. Oh and did I mention we are mounting a title challenge too!

After a dismal opening to the season in which we were handed beatings as severe as those from a 500lb dominatrix with an indulgence for leather, the 6's are in a run of six wins from eight games. The last game before Christmas is always a tester; especially with Dreia already thinking about team dinner in Berlin being

complemented with the finest "coke and whores" available whilst the rest of us wonder whether Ben and Myles will overcome fears of scuffing their Toni and Guy haircuts and actually play. Our adversaries in this crucial game were School of Pharmacy who unbelievably held top spot in the league.

Honorary 6's Rob Lowe, who took our advice from our last article and joined a winning team and San got the ball rolling by creating the first goal, with Rob surprising everyone by betraying his reputation as a resolute centre-back to swing in a cross from the right wing for left-back come centre-mid San to head home with Scholes-esque tenacity. Customary idleness allowed the Pharmaceuticals to score two devastatingly dull goals but from there on in, they had nothing else to offer attack-wise. The 6's new German-Sri Lankan attacking axis comprising of Jann and Brownie were thriving on the service from an energetic mid-field. The deficit lasted as long as Nathan Capone does from violating a distressed damsel at Walkabout. Neat interplay allowed Brownie to charge into the box and cross for Toby to apply a simple finish from barely a yard, extending his goal tally to four this term. With the 6's taking a hold over

the game tighter than many a nun, the outcome was inevitable. Jann Ewerhart illustrated his knack of finishing as well as he does on Pro Evo with an exquisite downward header. And with the half drawing to a close, Erland Falch, whose tireless wing play created many attacks during the half, calmly placed another header beyond the reach of

their keeper for a very well deserved first LSE goal.

The second half saw the 6's revert to exhibition style play whilst the opposition resorted to taking man and not ball tactics. Arguably the defence, intriguingly composed of a centre back pairing of Robs' and a full back pairing of Eddies, represented the most natural combination seen

since Paris Hilton and a video camera. As a result, goalkeeper Eduardo was left a rather forlorn figure for much of the half. Finally after, 48 something games and pathetic claims of "that goal in training" and "I feel a goal coming on today" Rich Morrow finally got his first legitimate goal for the LSE after stand-in-ref Ed Frew controversially gave a

penalty for hand ball. Despite Pharmacy's reliance upon old friend Nandrolone, they were still no match for an inspired 6's performance. We now head into the winter break four points off the lead with a game in hand and with mainly low placed opposition to play. Next term silverware may well be on the horizon.



Running

Running are better late than never...



Tom Beedell

This is obviously not a phrase normally associated with the Running Team! But I'm just hoping that it'll help my team to forgive me for sending in a report over a month after we raced. To be honest though, there wasn't really ever a chance that I was going to get it done, what with

the Carol dominating that week's plans. SHAG Crush on Friday didn't do me too many favours either. Also I reckon they've probably forgotten doing a race way back on 29th November.

Anyway this was our fourth race in the London Colleges League, which doubled up as the University of London Champs as well. This meant there were chances for medals at the end of the day. The venue of Hackney Marshes is an unusual pick as it's more

famous for having hundreds of football pitches. But luckily some clever person (probably studied one of those Poly degrees like Geography or Golf Course Management) thought it'd be better to do laps around them; the women one and men two.

The performance of the day has to go to the whole of the women's team. They narrowly missed out being crowned champions but still managed an amazing second place. New girl Tenke "I'm so

good I'm sponsored by Nike" Zoltani lead the team home and picked up individual silver in the process. Not that I'm jealous or anything! Caterina Scaramelli had a great run to come 6th, with Sarah Horn rounding off the A team in 15th. Paula "Radcliffe's protégé" Svaton was the only runner for our B team but still came 18th to maintain her steady improvements.

Helen "Women's Skipper" Sharp was on antibiotics so wasn't able to run. She still

showed her awesome commitment to the team by turning up to watch us run round the boring footie pitches. The support was much appreciated!

At the same event last year, the men came away as surprise champions, narrowly stealing the title of UL Champions from Gimperial's slimy grasp. Unfortunately there was no hope of a repeat this year because the UCL scum had recruited some speedy freshers and were dominating across the board. We're still not sure how legit it all is though with clear signs of steroid abuse: boys with breasts, women with beards, etc. Either that or they're just unfortunate enough to be incredibly ugly. LSE Runners do seem to forget that they're blessed with good looks and not everybody is as lucky!

Onto the men's race where Tom "El Capitano" Beedell was first back from this fast 8k course in 4th place. Sam "secretly in love with Christiano Ronaldo" Trowbridge has been improving all term and was rewarded with 12th place in this race. Michael "I'm too good to train with you guys" Lui was 17th, and Nathan "spelt like the trainer" Converse was only a few seconds behind in 18th.

Then came the B team with Lawrence "Mr Consistency" Leong 22nd and Tome Sandevski 31st. Charlie "sailor boy" Dougherty and Andy "the one and only" Hardman must have practically held each other's hand during the race as they were only split by two

seconds in 40th and 41st. Andy has also discovered that he performs best when he has to take a short vomit break during the race. Classy.

But LSE Runners was not finished yet. We still had our legendary diamond formation to sweep through late on. This was led by James May in 48th with his glow in the dark Millwall shorts, followed by Tim Windle and Greg Opie in 51st and 52nd.

However, the day's events were far from over as we all headed back into Central London for the Carol. Now it's worth remembering that runners are usually quite slim, which makes it pretty likely that they're lightweights. Then add the fact that only a few hours earlier they were running so hard they felt sick. The perfect end to this cocktail would be sending a team member up for fine. Enter Greg. He was ordered to down a pint of Cider, pint of Snakey-B, and a pint of Lager. Ouch! A credible effort was made with only the last pint ending up over his head. Although the other pints did have a pleasant meeting with the pavement just outside the fire exit door. Nice!

The running team's frolics were to continue as they caused a major upset at the bookies when they started the first night of the evening. Possibly even crazier was the way James Kung-fu'd this rando to the floor in one swift movement. Meanwhile the other runners did what they did best. Ran! To the bar for another drink.

Beckham Special

Perry's Pro Evolution theory



Photograph: Corbis



Kevin Perry

Imagine you were offered a large grant to go and study at a relatively prestigious University on the other side of the world. You have been headhunted due to your stunning work here, and if all goes well during your time there then there is even the twinkling possibility that you'll be given even more money to go to an even more prestigious university in a couple of years. To make things better, someone else from LSE has been offered the same deal. You accept, of course, but after just a couple of months it all starts going horribly wrong. You don't speak a word of the language and the close-knit campus community is immediately dubious of you. Everybody hates a tourist. Your work suffers as a result, but to make matters worse your teacher starts excluding you from classes. Despite this your new university's slip down the

league table is blamed on you by the local papers, at which point your teacher is replaced by a new guy who continues to ignore you. After only a few months you're as tired and overworked as this analogy.

In case you hadn't spotted it by now, I'm attempting to initiate you into the world of Carlos Tevez and Javier Mascherano. So spare a thought for the toothsome twosome because, as much as we all wish and fervently pray every night before a match day, the world is not run on ProEvo technology. More often than not the real world is a particularly depressing game of Football Manager where everyone is UNH all the time and you can never ever restart without saving (we've all been there in our darkest hours). It's not as simple as signing a few world-class players and watching them recreate their brilliant YouTube clips time and time again. One of the things that makes sport so unpredictable, and therefore so fascinating, is that it involves real people, all of whom, when the going gets tough, are capable of bottling it, losing their motivation, bursting into tears

or turning to Class A drugs.

Just ask David Beckham, who has learnt the hard way that even playing in a team almost wholly made up of World Players of the Year doesn't stop you winning absolutely nothing. When he wakes up in the LA night, sweating into the huge pile of money that he sleeps on, he will be haunted by the knowledge that in the annals of Real Madrid's illustrious history, Steve McManaman will be more fondly remembered than he will.

Beckham is not the first Brit abroad who has struggled to adapt. Ian Rush, having scored for fun at Liverpool for years, spent a single year at Juventus before being shipped back home. Possessing one of the keenest and most incisive minds of anyone who has ever played the game, Rush sublimely summed up his experiences in Italy, stating "It was like a foreign country".

But it's not just the trauma of moving to a new country that can make a talented player fail to settle in and perform. He might simply be a wanker. Bobby Robson learnt this when he took a chance on Lee

Bowyer in 2003. Gerard Houllier had pulled out of a deal to sign him, citing the fact that he didn't think "the player had either the hunger or desire to play for the club". Bobby gave him a second chance, and Newcastle fans suffered for his tolerance.

So as the January transfer window draws to a close, and the initial excitement is replaced by panic buying, don't just hope that your team signs a good player, but a good player with a good personality and a work ethic. The history of football is littered with good players who delighted fans when they signed and distressed them ever after. Perhaps David Beckham, now earning five times as much as the rest of his team-mates combined, will contemplate the fact that his greatest achievements as a player came when playing in a squad who had come through the ranks as youth players together. The difference between good teams and great teams is when players move beyond simply playing with each other and start playing for each other.

Great Debate

Major Loss Season



Sanch

The parallels you can draw between sport and relationships are uncanny. In fact I believe the correlation to be so strong that I have started looking to Spurs when making relationship choices. I have the following strategy: If Spurs win then I say yes, if they lose then I say no, and if they draw then depending on the opposition (the team they playing and whoever is asking) I go with yes and a double vodka coke.

Considering Spurs have a double legged Carling Cup semi final against some Highbury scum, FA Cup quarter finals against Welsh scum and some UEFA action against some... well Dutch scum crammed over the next few weeks, not to mention a large proportion of Premiership fixtures taking place against teams from north of Watford, I have a potentially depressing and stale month, sporting and sexually.

Anyway this whole sporting/relationship epiphany came to me on Thursday as news broke that David Beckham will be leaving our humble nation (the fact he emigrated to Spain in 2003 seems to be of no consequence) to go across the pond and play Major League Soccer. Although most like to insist soccer and football are interchangeable I would beg to differ. I think you will have to be a total idiot or American to

consider Beckham leaving as a career move. The best players of the MLS are currently playing for mid table Premiership teams (McBride at Fulham, Reyna at Man City) proving that Major League Soccer isn't all that. Although it's sad and I would love to think Beckham was at least moving due to his new found friendship with Tom "the midget" Cruise, an extramarital affair with a certain someone, he's taken up Scientology or has a desire to expand his knowledge of languages and learn American. Sadly money is the only thing and what a lot of it there is. David Beckham was at one point more in love with football than we were with him. But he appears to have lost the passion. Why? After a season of sitting on a bench at the Bernabeu (Beckham has found his first team opportunities limited since the arrival of ex-Juve coach Capello) and being dropped as England skipper post World Cup disaster, he is hardly feeling the love.

Beckham would say he is being neglected, yet we would say he hasn't performed.

Man United and Madrid were the two teams he claimed he always dreamt of playing for and swore he would never leave. He's obviously lost the passion for the beautiful game, so thought he would give soccer a try. I bet Beckham never dreamt of playing for LA Galaxy, I will also bet that until Thursday he didn't know LA was in America.

David Beckham was one of England's great sporting loves and behind every great love is a great story. We met in 1997, with his Spice Girl of a girlfriend and a stunning half way

line goal against Wimbledon. He was young and cocky, we were mature and judgmental. But then his blond locks and golden smile won us over and we looked through the temper tantrums, kicking of Argentineans, and the stupid haircuts for him to become our golden boy with the golden boot. Playing at one of the most loved teams in the country under one of the most dislikeable managers of his time in the late nineties the world was swept with Beckham fever. And like we all do with that special someone we placed all our hopes and dreams of winning that trophy on his shoulders.

But, like with that special someone, they let you down, they stand you up, miss a penalty, fall asleep straight after sex, forget your birthday, forget they're married and cop off with the nanny... They move away, the long distance relationship seems to work wonders at first but the cracks have already started to appear and however much we tune into La Liga on Sunday nights it is just not the same. Suddenly the golden boy is tarnished and the worst thing is he knows it, so he packs his bags, cuts his losses and leaves you.

The speculation surrounding Beckham's departure comes at a time where British sport is in disrepute. To put it plainly it's all gone tits up over in Australia and we will soon be jetting back with our tails between our legs; however we will not be alone. Sitting in first class between Freddy and the pathetic attempt at a cricketer otherwise known as Anderson will be a small pot

containing some burnt wood, the ashes. There has been much controversy over the years regarding the rightful home of the ashes. It sits, despite who is victorious, under lock and key at the MCC. Once again the little pot went on a tour, once again we lost and once again we, well Mr Branson, is having guilt issues about taking it away from the victors.

Britain is gripping on to one of its last pieces of sporting talent and the only trophy that we currently (although unjustly) own. What are we scared of? Not being able to replace the void left on the right hand side of our starting formation? Scared of never again being able to field a team that has a remote chance of challenging the Aussies for that little urn? This pessimism is the root of our sporting problems. Instead of holding on to false hopes that will only breed resentment we should invest in the sporting health of our nations youth, accept for the next few years sports personality will go to gymnasts, equestrians or sailors and in the not too distant future there will be another golden boy and this time he may give us all we ever wanted, that Jules Rimet trophy (and some Agent provocateur underwear).

So that's Beckham, but what about that little urn, should it stay? Or should it go? I say leave that little urn, because when it returns, and one day it will, it's going to feel fucking great.



Photograph: Corbis

The Punter

Brown to move next door?

Matthew
JCG
Partridge

I was recently asked about the difference between the various types of betting. There are essentially two types of betting, binary betting and spread betting. Binary betting covers events that have only a positive or a negative outcome. Traditionally all binary bets were made through a bookmaker, who would offer fixed odds on an event happen, risking his (or her) capital. However, a number of exchanges have sprung up in recent years who aim to match both people betting on and those betting against, an event. Although Betfair.com quotes odds in the traditional manner,

Tradesports.com quotes them on a scale of 0 to 100, with events that the market thinks are more likely to happen closer to 100. As with any exchange, there will be a difference between the price at which you can buy (bet on) and sell (bet against) an event (which is why this column usually quotes two prices).

However, spread betting is slightly more complicated. Essentially you are making a directional bet on a non-discrete event, where you are rewarded (if correct) by the difference between the expected outcome and the actual outcome. For instance, there might be an expected spread of 2-3 on the number of goals in a hypothetical football game. If you bet over the spread (i.e. that there would be more than 3 goals) at £5 a goal, you would win £15 if the match ended 3-3. Conversely, if you instead bet

under the spread at the same amount, you would lose £20. It is not difficult to see that this form of spread betting lends itself very well to bets on share and commodity prices, especially since betting is always (at least for UK residents) free of income and capital gains taxes. Although, most spread betting firms (such as IG Index) force you to wager substantial amounts on finance related bets, a few (such as FinSpreads) allow you to wager more modest amounts.

The punters on Tradesports.com seem to be 'misunderestimating' the possibility of a modest increase in the fortunes of the current occupant of the White House. Their price of (20-26) for Bush's March 2007 popularity to rise to 40% or higher is too good an opportunity to miss, especially since his recent foreign policy initiatives could

enable him to grab the agenda back from the newly elected Congress. Indeed, the fact that the bet is based on a single Gallup poll means that even a sampling error could result in a winning bet. Tradesports.com are also overestimating Gordon Brown's chances of becoming the next Prime Minister by quoting him a price of (80.6-85.3) when it seems likely that he will face a challenge from either John Reid or David Milliband. Indeed, Miliband (2-3) and Reid (4-8.5), both seem good value bets.

In terms of financial spread betting I'm also going to continue to recommend that you buy PartyGaming.com and sell Gold on FinSpreads (or IG Index). There are few genuine value bets available at the moment in the world of sport, although Rodger Federer's chances of winning the

Australian Open are definitely less than the (70-73) quoted on Tradesports, presenting a shorting opportunity.

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



Photograph: Corbis

More bad cricket

Another record-breaking loss



Photograph: Corbis

Piers
Cassidy

Wickets began to fall but not after the run rate had reached a colossal 10 an over, flintoff had Ponting caught behind by Nixon. However, Flintoff managed to bowl 11 wides in his opening over. Possible Ashes hang over one could say. Symonds and White finished the Australian innings off unbeaten but not without taking 80 more runs off the English field.

Vaughn and Strauss appeared on the pitch knowing that this match was a lost battle. They were not wrong. The tight line and good length bowled by McGrath and Co. proved too much for the English top order, with Vaughn and Pietersen only doing themselves justice. The Australian fielding was a stark contrast to that of England. Catches win matches maybe an old adage, but this modern, ruthless efficient cricketing team caught their catches and took their run out opportunities. Their determination not just to win this match but dominate was evident and they did.

From this performance the one day internationals look an easy one for the punters. I would not put it past the aussies not to lose a single game to the English in the whole tour.



Alex Small

England's dismal tour of Australia took a turn for the worst this weekend when it was confirmed that Kevin Pietersen, England's sole success story of the winter, is out of the rest of the tour. Batting in the first match of the Commonwealth Bank triangular series on Friday, Pietersen was struck in the ribs by a short ball from Glenn McGrath attempting the same advance pull shot that got him out in the fifth Test at Sydney. Pietersen top scored with 82 out of England's decent but unchallenging 242 for 8, the only two other contributions of worth coming from Collingwood and Flintoff. Once again, Australia put England's bowling attack to the sword with ruthless efficiency, scoring the runs needed with five overs and eight wickets to spare. It is England's second consecutive one-day loss to the Australians, who rampaged to a 77 run victory in the 20/20 international earlier in the week.

How different it all looks to 2005, when England con-

vincingly won the 20/20 game and shared the honours in the first one day series. The chances of a repeat occurrence are slim. If anything, England's bowlers must be glad that, unlike in the Tests, they only have to bowl ten overs each at this terrifying Australian batting line up.

The story of Pietersen vs. McGrath is a telling one in the reversal of the two teams' fortunes. In 2005, the then wild card Pietersen made McGrath, when he managed to limp onto the field, look his age. Nearly two years later, an even older McGrath has come back in fine fashion, keeping Pietersen under his thumb with a relentless off stump line and offside fields, dismissing him in each of their last three encounters. With the other batsmen failing, Pietersen, a born match winner, has been forced to play increasingly defensive innings.

Now that Pietersen has gone, it is difficult to see how England's fragile batting line

up will recover. To fill the gap comes Essex batsman Ravi Bopara, who is likely to experience little short of a baptism of fire. Where England's support players have had little more than net practice in the last few months, Australia have the home luxury of being able to pluck players from their domestic circuit. One such pick, the enormous Cameron White, bashed four sixes in a twenty ball 40 in the 20/20 game. I had the pleasure of watching White bat at Taunton in a 20/20 last season, where he scored 140 at the other end from Somerset's other Australian import Justin Langer, who scored 99. White wasn't required to bat on Friday, but the impressive start to his international career illustrates perfectly the comparative ease of bringing new players into a winning team, something England (think of Strauss or Pietersen) know all too well.

If England are to stage any

kind of recovery in this series, Michael Vaughan, who showed glimpses of his old self in both the 20/20 and Friday's 50 over game, needs to install some Australian style discipline and ruthlessness in his team. Now 32, Vaughan himself would do well to look to Australia's numerous 30-somethings for inspiration. Australia are a talented side but it is hard work and determination that have reaped them the greatest rewards this winter. While England's beleaguered young bowling attack must wonder what hard work is if it is not running in to bowl against Messrs Ponting and Hussey, the truth is that it is too late to learn on the job. Australia were by far the better prepared before the two teams walked onto the field, and it is paying dividends now. Perhaps New Zealand, who England meet on Tuesday at Hobart, will prove a less challenging prospect. To be frank, I wouldn't hedge any bets.



Photograph: Corbis

Destroyed. Yet again England were witnesses to a display of awe inspiring cricket by the Australians. Ponting and co bludgeoned England for 221-5, a record in this format. 14 of the boundaries sailed over the rope, also a record.

The only positives were that Vaughn who on his first return to captaincy in many months did impress, albeit for a short period. Of note, an exquisite cover drive and a further 3 boundaries, amassing 29 runs off 21 deliveries. Glimpses of the brilliance of old were present, however Symonds got the better of him with a well pitched inswinger into the pads.

Ponting won the toss and elected to bat and from the outset Australia laid out their intentions. A bombardment on the boundaries on blitzkrieg proportions. Glichrist, in tandem with Ponting got the scoreboard ticking over with worrying ease. Anderson was blasted for 3 boundaries in his opening over.

Flurry flourished fantasy



Ivan "The crazy Russian" Filippov

LSE MMA & Boxing 3
Everyone else in hospital
Aberdeen

Day 1
"Don't take away my AK 47" repeats Karim (The coach) to airport security.

"Gee... I need bail money" thinks Ivan (future inmate 3984005).

And so started our journey to Aberdeen and the BUSA boxing tournament. Having narrowly escaped a 9am strip-search (maybe next time Tom) and arrest in Heathrow, we boarded our flight together with future punching bags otherwise known as Oxford and Pompey Universities. Upon arrival we were greeted by many strange things, including the sun... we were amazed and confused. Deciding to exploit this climatic oddity, Tom "The Poodle" Jacques and I toured Aberdeen and tried to relax before his and the club's competitive debut.

Day 2
After a hearty fry up and much taunting on Karim's and my part we left for the morning weigh-ins at the Robert Gordon Sports Campus. Expecting to see a dodgy building in the city centre, we were amazed to the point of disbelief (and understood why in fucks sake the tournament was held so far up north) to see three massive buildings representing the sports centre. With Tom barely making the light-welterweight (64kg) division we decided to scope out the competition the ring and

generally feed him. An hour later, having gotten lost twice, we were still exploring their sports centre and wondering why their reception area alone was larger than our old gym and badminton court combined. It was only when it came time to medicals that we saw the 100 odd competitors and began to wonder how they got into university.

After much waiting and sleeping the time came for Tom's first fight! There were a total of seven boxers in his division and he was matched with a chap from Leeds Uni. The scene was set and the tension was rising. Not only was he carrying the club name and the LSE's reputation, this was the culmination of four weeks of daily training, starving, weight watching, freezing our nads off on random runs in Hyde Park and the reason why we missed the Carol and so many other good nights out.

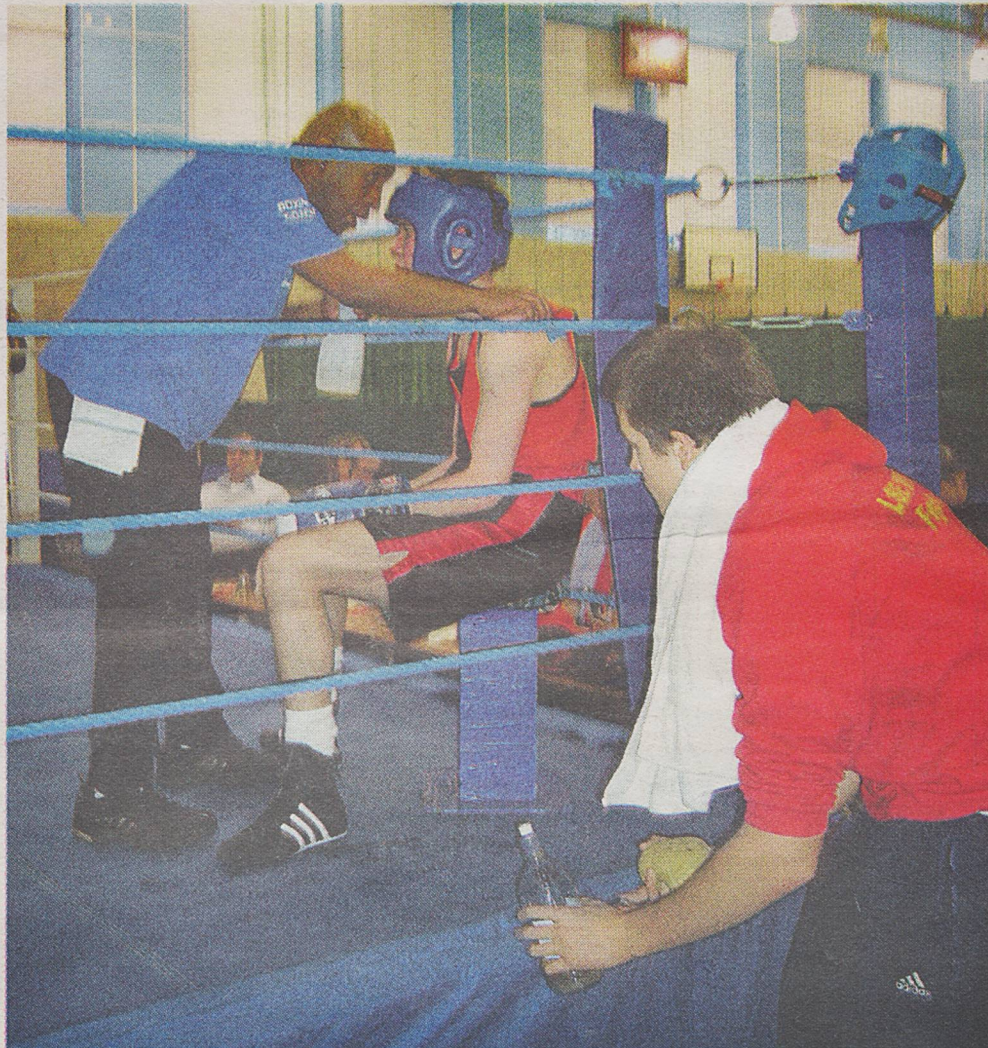
As Tom stepped into that ring we saw that despite him being lankier than an Ethiopian in Somalia the other hapless lad (K. Yu) was even skinnier. With the first flurry thrown and Yu backing up all our worries and anxieties were put to rest. Tom was throwing flurry after flurry, leaving his guard and boxing skills behind whilst chasing Yu down. Having taken Yu to two standing counts, only the bell saved the lad. The second round saw one minute of action in which Tom managed to score another two standing counts and force the Blue corner to throw in the towel and a referee stoppage, simultaneously. He was through to the semi-finals.

Following this ferociously filled, flurry flourished, fantasy fixture of a first fight we took a seat in the crowd and decided to investigate the competition, looking for any weaknesses in their attacks and defences. Having seen the second fight stopped in the third round and the third light-welterweight bout end in a judges decision, we were slightly concerned for the next day but still confident after our second round stoppage!

Having learned that another weigh-in awaits Tom the following morning we were as angry as the AU was at the UGM, too bad we had no Dewji or Tam to throw paper at... With this in mind Karim and I proceeded to aptly stuff our faces with a take-away from the local Chinese leaving Tom to scour through our leftovers and the 100 odd complementary prawn crackers.

Day 3
Another glorious fry up and pig out session greeted us in the morning and Tom sat there with a piece of toast. Having polished off our plates and arrived at the sports centre, we ran into a small problem... he was too fat. Ensued was a disappointing dump and an interesting conversation best characterised by "Ivan, how much does the average shit weigh?" (apparently 500g but his was sub-standard: only 130g) he donned a garbage bag and all manner of clothes in the successful attempt of sweating the pound off.

In his semi-final bout Tom met T. Degun. Not knowing what to expect, we prepared for the worst... and the worst it was. Both boys seemed to forget that they were in a boxing tournament and decided to turn it into a street brawl



going toe to toe for three rounds with their hands by their waists in a war of wills. Both were tagged and on the verge of a standing count numerous times throughout the bout, but ultimately Tom's superior stamina clinched it with Degun running out of steam late in the third. Tom scraped threw on a split decision. Ross Howe won his semi-final in a 40 second knockout. We were shitting ourselves. Not only did Tom have a war (and provided one of the most entertaining bouts of the tournament) as opposed to a 40 second duel, but Howe was last year's winner and boasted an unblemished record of 8-0 coming into the competition (as opposed to Tom's 0-0). Being the obvious underdog and having to face the returning champion and hometown favourite, Tom was slightly fazed to say the least.. When the final warm-up begun and he gloved up, all that went out the window. He was ready for one hell of a final.

The first round, though pertaining to a boxing match was more reminiscent of a street fight, a fight which Tom was loosing. Howe seemed to

have the stronger punch and coupled with a superior use of movement and ring control, Howe successfully eliminated Tom's large reach advantage and turned his strategy of jab and move into jab and miss. Displaying good timing and patience, Howe mainly counter-punched with most of his attacks being successful. Howe took few to no punches on the way in and once inside Tom's guard our boy was in trouble. Tom was generally out-boxed and at times on the point of what looked like a standing count. Through a mix of big stones and sheer determination he survived.

After brilliant corner work from Karim and yours truly the second round saw a different Tom and a confused Howe. Tom seemed to bide his time and punished Howe for his advances. It seemed that the lad from Dundee (Howe) couldn't take the poodle's punches and was losing his focus. There were still a few times when Howe entered Tom's guard but to no avail. Other times Howe just missed as Tom side-stepped the leaping attack. This continued on

through the third round as Tom's movement and timing seemed to be getting ever better and focused, whereas the Dundee lad often was on the verge of a standing count and became increasingly frustrated. Finally he was forced down to one knee and took an eight count late in the third. It was here that we knew the bout was ours and the judges agreed! After going for a quick curry, a drunken orgy of wrongness ensued. Can't remember what happened but we were more than relieved, and saddened, to wake up in the morning and not having re-enacted King's... the Scottish chapter.

Stay tuned for more as on the 6th February the club will be going to Oxford for another fight night. Till now some of the fights will see Kyle "the gay" Gibbons in the Female Welterweight division (69kg), Dzhakhngir "John" Makhmudov in the overweight division (91kg) and Tom "the poodle" Jacques in the J 17 light welter division (64kg).

