

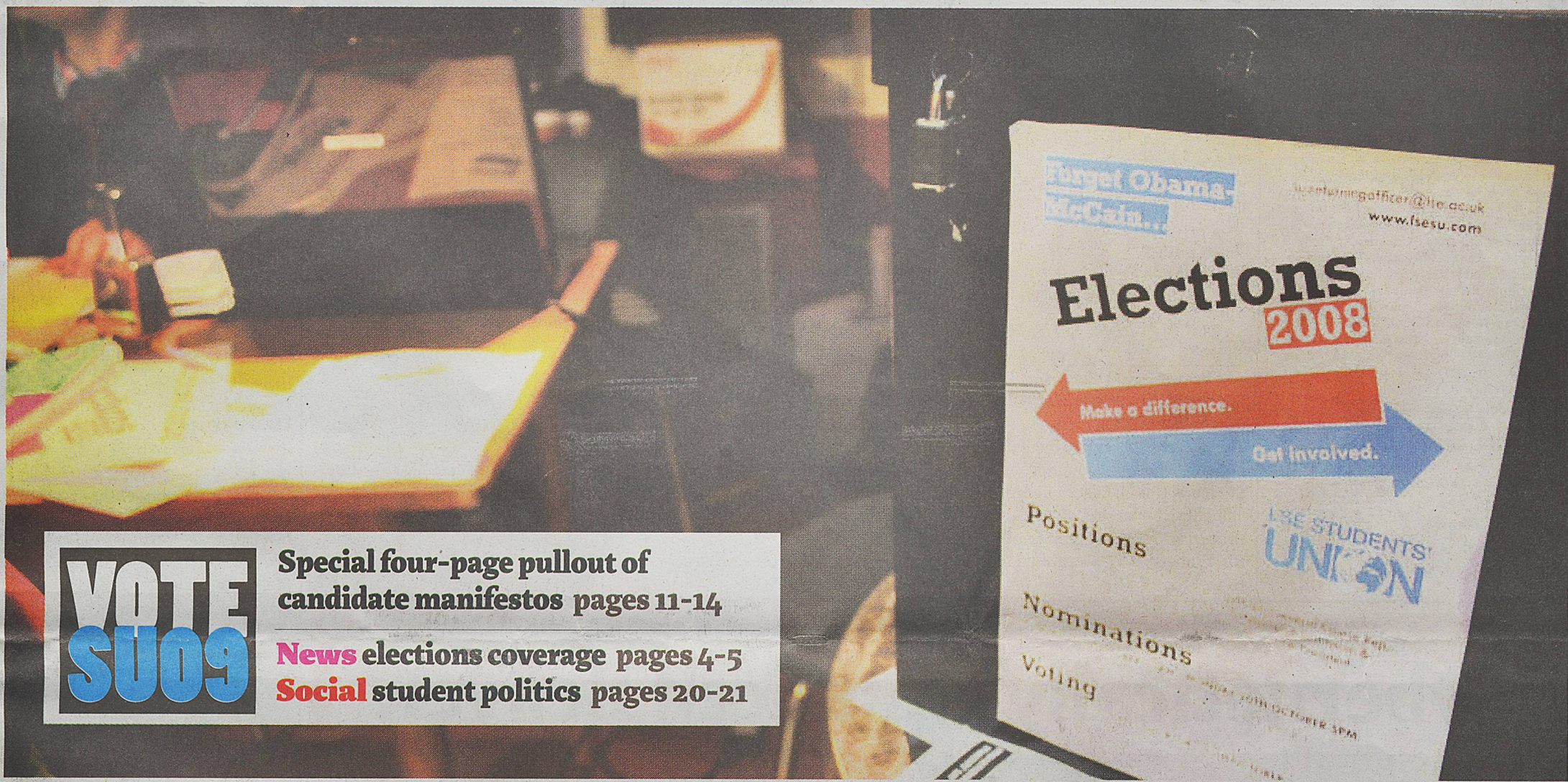
ELECTION SPECIAL

The Beaver



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

Moment of truth for Union Candidates vie to represent students in Lent term elections



VOTE
SU09

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LSE academic: economists frozen out of credit crunch debate

Joseph Cotterill

Economic amateurs, including LSE director Howard Davies, are dominating the discussion on the response to the recession to the detriment of professional expertise, a veteran School academic has claimed.

Dr Max Steuer, based in the LSE Economics department and the LSE Cities Programme, has sent an open letter to Davies comparing the low profile of economics academics in the credit crunch to his prominent public appearances as director.

Davies is a frequent commentator in the media on banking failures and regulatory reform in the wake of the crisis. The director attended the Davos World Economic Forum last month to discuss the recession.

"Being Director of the London School of Economics does not in itself imply economic knowledge. It is an administrative post, and clearly carries no academic certification," Steuer writes to Davies.

"Your past roles have provided you with experience. This is different from formal education," he adds.

Davies, an Oxford history and modern languages graduate, had served as a Treasury special adviser, Deputy Governor of the Bank of England, and as Chair of the Financial Services Authority before arriving at LSE in 2003. The director continues to sit on commissions dealing with reform of the Chinese banking sector.

"Do you think that your understanding of current economic events would be better than it is if you had undertaken a serious education in economics?" the letter con-

cludes.

Steuer told the Beaver that he hoped the open letter would initiate an interesting debate on priorities in responding to the recession.

The letter comes amid intense public debate on responsibility for the sudden economic crisis. It emerged last month that many bankers whose risky lending meant their institutions had to be bailed out by the government lacked formal banking qualifications, including Sir Fred Goodwin of RBS.

"What we're teaching and researching here at LSE is important to what's going on," he said. "More attention should be given to the research and knowledge of experts," Steuer added.

An LSE spokesperson said that Davies had ample experience for commenting on the economic crisis.

"While Howard would have liked to have studied economics further - he did study some as part of his Masters degree at Stanford - he has served in heavyweight roles in some of the top financial institutions in the country," the spokesperson said.

Steuer countered that the unprecedented nature of the crisis meant that past experience of the economy counted for very little.

"Northern Rock was looming up and it was his job to see if anything was untoward," Steuer said of Davies' time at the FSA.

"Did he? No. He kept it pretty quiet," he added.

Davies has always insisted that he had been warning about the lack of regulation of risky investment vehicles since 2002.

Particular umbrage was taken at a Guardian article last year identifying Davies as one of the top twenty-five archi-

itects of the credit crunch, among the ranks of disgraced Lehman Brothers boss Richard Fuld and former Federal Reserve chairman Alan Greenspan.

Steuer also turned his fire on government leaders blagging their way through the crisis without a professional economics background.

Politicians have been thrown into snap decisions on the running of the economy in the wake of the rapid onset of the recession, and a massive banking meltdown last autumn.

Steuer said the balance had now shifted too much to politicians over economists. The new experts' council set up by Lord Mandelson in the Department for

Business, Regulation and Reform had no professional economic expertise at all, he said.

It was therefore time for "a plea for a bigger role" for economists, he said.

The plea fell on deaf ears elsewhere in LSE's Economics department. Professor Danny Quah, the department's head, rallied to Howard Davies' defence.

"As far as the current economic crisis goes, Howard Davies has as strong a sense of the economics, as keen an eye and understanding for the things that matter, and as sound an experience and background anyone could wish for in a commentator on the economy," Quah said.

"Anyone who disagrees with Howard

or any other observer should so engage on substance and issues," he added. "For me it is the worst kind of intellectual protectionism to cast aspersions based on academic certification or formal training or, specifically here, to insinuate that an economist's cumulated refinement of analysis would do better."

Steuer denied that he was in favour of economic elitism. "I'm not advocating a technocratic society," he said. "Everyone's entitled to their view."

Few economists had predicted the crisis either, Steuer added. The debate on restarting the economy also remained locked between pro-stimulus Keynesians and monetarists. "Let's debate that," he said.

Comment



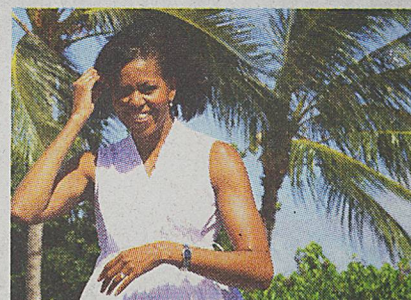
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Collective

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

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LSE events

Highlights of this week's public lectures and talks

A Lecture by Jack Straw MP
Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice Jack Straw
Tonight, SZT, 1745

What should the next G20 meeting do?
Professor Michael Cox, Will Hutton, Professor Danny Quah
Tonight, OT, 1830

European Leadership in a Post-Crisis Age?
Lord Malloch Brown
Minister of State in the FCO
Wednesday, OT, 1830

The Future of Banking in a Global Economy
Vikram Pandit
CEO of Citi
Thursday, SZT, 1300 (Ticketed)

Can the EU make a difference in the Middle East?
Professor Jean-Pierre Filiu
Thursday, SZT, 1830

Unjust Rewards: Exposing Greed and Inequality in Britain Today
Polly Toynbee, David Walker
Thursday, OT, 1830

Positions of the week

LSE careers service's pick of the best jobs

Kae: Marketing intelligence
Research consultant

Standard Chartered Bank
Various graduate positions
Across all functions, in the Middle East, South East Asia, Africa

Momentum Partners
Business Analyst

The Mercator Fund
Development Programme Fellow

Open Europe
Research Intern

Banco Santander
Santander Executive Training Programme (STEP)

Moody's
Financial Data Analyst
(Full time and internship opportunities)

ZS Associates
Business Analysts

International Corporate Governance Network
Internship opportunity

Meltwater Drive
International Management Trainee

Management Systems International
Various full time positions

Nordic World Heritage Foundation
Programme Officer

CNC Communications & Network Consulting
Internship opportunity

Martineau
Trainee solicitor positions

Centre for International Relations
Various positions

IBM
Various full time positions

Lovells
Trainee solicitor opportunities

Centre for Economic Performance
Spring analysts

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Photo: Cherie Leung

Bhangra run stirs Pakistan Week alive

Students perform in the Bhangra Run on Houghton Street last Monday in honour of the inauguration of Pakistan Week.

The cultural week which included Mehndi stalls, film screenings, free Lassi on campus (a local yoghurt-based drink) and the closing Boat Party was organised entirely by the Pakistan Society.

It was the first event of its kind to be organised within the UK.

"Pakistan Week was a major challenge, being the first of its kind ever held on any university campus in the UK. We were determined to not let that fact bog us down. The result was a great success in which students from all across the country came and participated", said Coordinator for Pakistan Week Sarah Khan.

Zeeshan Malik

Higher Education & Research

LSE and sector news

Niall Ferguson may come to the LSE

The prolific academic Niall Ferguson is in negotiations to spend 2010-11 as a visiting professor at the London School of Economics.

Ferguson currently splits his time between the UK, where he is a research fellow at Oxford University and the US, where he is a Professor of History at Harvard University.

Ferguson said: "It's not yet a done deal, but there are various reasons for my wanting to do this, not least my eagerness to advance the writing of the biography that I am doing of Dr Henry Kissinger... The LSE's Cold War Studies Centre has much to recommend it as a base for that work."

£6 million for LSE Centre for Economic Performance

John Van Reenen has been awarded £6.08 million by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) on behalf of the London School of Economics Centre for Economic Performance. The ESRC recently awarded £16.5 million of funding over five years to three centres.

Times higher education (THE) reported that, "These centres will help support the decision-making process of organisations by providing data on future growth and development... The LSE's Centre for Economic Performance will conduct policy-related research into globalisation and the new technologies that affect growth and inequality. Looking at themes surrounding education, innovation and labour markets, it will also examine the skills base of communities and how global forces can affect it."

LSE assess Labour Reforms

An independent analysis led by LSE's Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion looks at a decade of Labour Party reforms to complete the challenge made by Peter Mandelson in 1997 to, "judge us after ten years of success in office. For one of the fruits of that success will be that Britain has become a more equal society."

Money doesn't make us happy

Although our wealth has increased over the past 50 years, so has crime, deprivation, depression and addiction says Richard Layard of the London School of Economics.

People are constantly forced to compete in the modern rat race and for what they perceive to be a sufficient income which is in fact far higher than it was before. We are investing more time in working than is good for our health, Layard says.



Photo: Ben Phillips

Students converge on London for fees protest

Joseph Cotterill

A sea of red and purple banners snaked through central London's campus quarter last Wednesday as student activists from around the country took to the streets to protest against university fees.

Eight hundred students held aloft banners reading "The student experience - bankrupting a generation" and "Generation debt - free education now" on their route from the SOAS campus in Bloomsbury to Kings College on the Strand, passing by LSE.

The protest comes amid a resurgence of left-wing student organisations seeking to capitalise on the recession's effect on student finances and the alleged "pro-business orientation" of many university

administrations.

Bemused workers leaned out of office windows and Holborn residents stopped in the streets to watch the demonstration pass by, accompanied by a heavy police presence.

Fifteen police vans followed slowly behind the march, with motorbike outriders up front. An impromptu sit-down on the busy junction of Southampton Row and Holborn raised tensions halfway through the route, but moved on after fifteen minutes.

Chants of "Free, Free LSE," were heard as the protesters passed the Peacock Theatre on Kingsway. Fluorescent-suited policemen lined up outside the shop window of the Starbucks on Aldwych as protesters marched past, apparently in anticipation of trouble.

Twenty-five LSE students joined the

march. Estelle Cooch, a spokesperson for the LSE Not For Profit campaign, said its members had marched against government plans to end the cap on top-up fees.

The cap currently stands at just over three thousand pounds. University vice-chancellors have urged the government to raise the amount to £6000 or even £10000 pounds. LSE's director Howard Davies has said he will not take a view on raising the cap until government policy is confirmed.

Most protesters on the demonstration called for top-up fees to be scrapped completely. "Students shouldn't have to pay for an education that is theirs by right," Cooch said.

"Most students in Europe don't have to pay for their education. Students in Britain never used to have to pay either," she added.

The protesters' flags and banners

curved around Aldwych as the march approached its climax at Kings College London's Strand campus, where a meeting to discuss strategy for further action against top-up fees.

Cooch added that Kings College had been chosen as the terminus of the demonstration because the longest-lasting of the recent student occupations against the war in Gaza had taken place there.

Not for Profit movements in universities across the country are strongly linked to the Palestinian cause.

Kings students occupied a lecture theatre for twelve days in protest at the university's award of an honorary doctorate to Shimon Peres, a former prime minister and the current president of Israel.

Hazel Blears speaks at the LSE

Last Wednesday Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government Hazel Blears spoke at the LSE and spoke for less "squeamishness" among the nation when it comes to causing religious offence. Blears thinks that we must challenge "unacceptable" religious beliefs that insist forced marriage and homophobia.

Blears said: "The pendulum has swung too far. The quality of debate about religion in contemporary life - and by religion, I mean all faiths - is being sapped by a creeping over-sensitivity." In the same speech Blears called for government engagement with Islamic groups that do not advocate violence.



Faiths meet over hip-hop

LSE does Interfaith through Hip Hop Muslim-Jewish collective hip hop artists perform at the LSE Chaplaincy last Tuesday.

The event, which was part of an interfaith week at the LSE, was the first of a series which included a debate on relations between Islamic, Christian and Jewish faiths and "Experience Ash Wednesday Mass".

The week was organised jointly by the Students' Union, the Three Faith Forum, the LSE Chaplaincy as well as the Students' Union societies representing the three faiths.



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Election candidates stake claims to Union office



Photo: Cherie Leung

Phyllis Lui

Damning indictments of School and the Students' Union inadequacies and lofty campaign promises were a dime a dozen at the Lent term elections hustings.

Problems such as the irrelevance of the Union to the average student and the poor LSE student experience were on tip of most candidates' tongues as they delivered their campaign speeches and answered audience questions last Thursday.

Candidates for sabbatical offices kicked off the verbal jousting before a well-attended Union General Meeting. Each were given two minutes for a campaign speech, followed by questions from the audience.

Change was the singular theme for General Secretary candidates. Incumbent Aled Dilwyn Fisher responded to recent claims of him being too "inward-looking" in his speech, arguing that "we needed to get our own house in order before we could make [changes] happen". He also promised, in response to a question, a restructuring of the Union executive as he "did not want to see part-time Executive slave" and "give away their Firsts and 2:1s".

Christopher Gully, a third-year economic history student, spoke of moving "away from politics...focus on the people at LSE" and the "communication has broken down at the Students' Union".

When questioned about his experience and involvement with the Union, he replied that he is less politically involved but has experience of communication and organisation through his employment within the Union. He also criticised the current Union Executive, saying that they "pretend to know what people want".

Third-year International Relations student Peter Barton believed the Union and the School to be failing students, many of whom leave the LSE disappointed. He also called for a "move away from the UGM being seen as decisive...alienating people".

The fourth candidate, Alfred Kovaci, was absent.

Treasurer candidates George Wetz, James Bacon and current Anti-Racism of-

ficer Joseph Brown were the next to speak. Bacon, who has since pulled out of the race, was asked about his switch of candidacy for General Secretary to Treasurer. He responded saying that he opted for the position he felt he was more suited to, given that he felt Fisher would not be able to win with Barton running against him.

Candidates for the Education and Welfare office, Residences Officer Helen Roberts, incumbent Emmanuel Akpan-Inwang and Women's Officer Ruby Buckley delivered different policies to improve student welfare. Buckley proposed admission to Erasmus scheme for undergraduate students, provision of English language training and creating a more accessible website. Roberts commented on a need for diversifying the career paths advertised by the LSE Careers Service.

Communications officer candidates Daniel Jason, Robin Low and Michael Deas, all former editors with the Beaver, were in agreement over the importance of maintaining the paper's editorial independence, and promised to do so if they were elected.

When Deas, a political active campaigner, was asked if his personal politics would impair his fulfilment of role as a Union official, he replied that a "Comms officer should not be paid twenty-six grand to fiddle with a website".

At the part-time Executive hustings, which followed in the Quad, the Women's officer candidates were questioned as to their views on Miss LSE and Mr LSE. Anna Krausova, Annais Noury and Jessie Robinson agreed that both competitions were about objectification and that further discussions should be encouraged.

Two of the three Anti-Racism candidates, Benedict Sarhangian and Ben Jones spoke of the recent tensions on campus and the need to foster the Dialogue Commission as a forum for discussion.

Sarhangian also criticised the fact that a lot of the Sabbatical candidates were white. On being questioned as to whether he endorsed the incumbent's political activities, Jones replied that he believed "Seph did a shit job as the Anti-Racism officer".

SU'09 Elections for Du

So elections are looming, and the usual three-quarters of the LSE student body are still thinking "Aled what, Sabb who?"

The Beaver provides here a little crash course on SU elections and, hopefully, make enough of a difference for you to know at least how your Union is run.

The following are the positions up for grabs in this years Lent Term Elections.

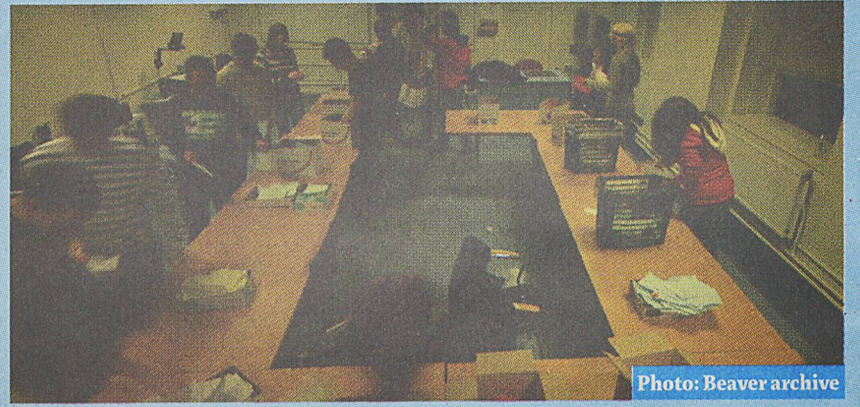


Photo: Beaver archive

Sabbatical Positions

A sabbatical officer is one of four paid positions on the Students' Union Executive Committee. They spend one year as full-time student representatives.

General Secretary

The person who takes the minutes... No really! The General Secretary chairs the Executive Committee meetings and sits on all the major strategic boards within the school and represents the Students' Union to external organisations i.e. NUS, ULU etc. The 'Gen Sec' also introduces the Students' Union to new students.

Education and Welfare

Charged with looking after the Advice and Counselling Centre and representing students on a range of education and welfare matters. The 'EdWelfare' Officer also oversees and co-ordinates welfare campaigns of the union.

Treasurer

Has overall responsibility for running all the Students' Union services and allocating budgets to societies and sports. The Treasurer annually announces the unions' budget before the UGM and more recently has had to make tough calls such as whether to introduce real ale into the Three Tuns.

Communications

The Communications Officer oversees the Media Group (The Beaver, PuLSE! & LooSE) as well as publications, the Students' Union website (recently granted £30,000 by the LSE Annual Fund), advertising, marketing and branding. The 'Comms' Officer also produces branding and logos for a range of LSESU Campaigns, including the union elections.

Online campaigners quick off the blocks

James McGibney

Facebook war has been declared in the Students' Union elections last Thursday, after the lifting of a ban on internet electioneering.

Group and event invitations streamed out, deals were struck, statuses were regularly updated and messages sent to potential voters.

In the first 36 hours of campaigning, incumbent sabbatical officers have found themselves overwhelmed by rival groups.

Membership numbers in incumbent General Secretary Aled Dilwyn Fisher's electioneering facebook group was overtaken by that of relative unknown Christopher Gully, while Helen Roberts stormed ahead of Emmanuel Akpan-Inwang in their respective electioneering groups for Education and Welfare Officer.

As of Monday morning, Gully maintained his lead with 139 members over Fisher's 132, while Roberts reached 130 members against Akpan-Inwang's 120.

One of the first campaigns to get off the ground was that of Treasurer candidate George Wetz. Beth Harrison, an administrator of the Wetz's group said, "The aim of using Facebook and creating the Facebook group is to publicise the candidate's campaign to the optimum."

"People spend a lot of time on Facebook, and it's another platform to enable people see campaign images/slogans, send them information and persuade them

Facebook tally

No. of members in electioneering groups (correct as of press time)

General Secretary	No. of members
Christopher Gully	139
Peter Barton	135
Aled Dilwyn Fisher	132
Alfred Kovaci	No group

Treasurer	No. of members
Seph Brown	144
George Wetz	140

Education and Welfare	No. of members
Helen Roberts	130
Emmanuel Akpan-Inwang	120
Ruby Buckley	99

Communications	No. of members
Robin Low	200
Michael Deas	152
Daniel Jason	No group

to vote," she added.

Rivals in the Communications race took rather different approaches to their campaigns. Robin Low had a group set up an hour after campaigning began, and had the largest group of all the election candidates at the start of the weekend.

Michael Deas, on the other hand, set up his group on Friday afternoon. Deas said: "What's important is that the Communications Officer hits the right note and gets the message across well and doesn't just rush something messy and incoherent out

just for the sake of being quick."

Some seemed not to care at all. General Secretary candidate Alfred Kovaci and Anti-Racism Officer candidate Priscilla Abishegam all shunned online campaigning.

At the opposite end of the scale were the true self-promoters. Several candidates for the Constitutional and Steering (C&S) committee and the Finance and Services (F&S) committee set up both groups and events in order to maximise membership.

F&S candidate Arjun Madhavan, who has both a group and an event on Facebook, said that "each time we create, upload, or edit each of them, there's an update on the news feed. The more we reach onto our friends' news feeds the better."

Others, like C&S candidate Natalie Osafo, increased their visibility via multiple status updates each day and posted campaign details on others' walls and group spaces.

Administrators of the most successful groups emphasised the need for a combination of sound policies, good people and sheers numbers of friends.

Harrison explained: "It is about mobilising your friends to add people that you have never known or met. In other words it is about the quality of the people involved in the group rather than the quantity."

Nonetheless, the means are not a substitute for the messages they carry. Sam Tempest Keeping, who is campaigning for Low, said: "A Facebook group is only as good as the quality of one's policy. They are vessels for a message, rather than a part of it themselves."

Timetables for the week:

Tuesday 3rd March

6 - 7:30pm Debate Soc. Hustings, D311

8pm Rosebery Hustings

Wednesday 4th March

10am - 5pm Polling: Quad & Online

Thursday 5th March

10am - 5pm Polling: Quad & Online

7pm Online polling closes.

8pm Count night. Quad. Live Media coverage from www.votesu09.com

Immies

The Part-time Exec

Are all students who act as part-time representatives each with their own area of responsibility. All are trustees of the union and are charged with overseeing the general direction the LSESU takes.

Anti-Racism Officer

Campaigns against discrimination based on race, religion or nationality and supports students who have been victims of racism.

International Students' Officer

Advises and aids international students. Represents the views of international students to the Students' Union Executive and the School. Coordinates Global Week (this year: Global RAG week).

LGBT Officer

Coordinates the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) campaign to tackle homophobia and defend, extend and deepen the rights of LGBT students.

Other positions

Other elected members of the Students' Union who do not sit on the Executive Committee

The Returning Officer

(su.returningofficer@lse.ac.uk)
Charged with overseeing the unions' elections in Michaelmas and Lent term, as well as any by-election that may occur. The Returning Officer chairs all hustings events and oversees that all races are fair and equitable.

Environment and Ethics Officer

Campaigns on issues of ecology, social justice, peace and solidarity. Works with LSE's sustainability initiatives in Students' Union and LSE premises.

Mature and Part-time Officer

Ensures the welfare and representation of Mature and Part-time students. Liaises with the EdWelfare Officer on academic and welfare issues.

Residences Officer

Represents the welfare of all of the 3,000 LSE students at LSE and university of London Intercollegiate Halls. Also supports students in private accommodation.

Societies Officer

Provides support and guidance to help societies work more effectively and make the most of the Students' Union. Runs society inductions and training.

Disability and Well Being Officer

Represents students with disability, well-being issues or illness. Works with LSE Disability & Wellbeing Office and Circles (the staff-student disabilities network).

Women's Officer

(su.womens@lse.ac.uk)
Represents female students within the union to ensure equality. Runs campaigns on issues that are important to female students and builds links of solidarity.

Constitution and Steering Committee

The seven dwarves of the constitution meet to ensure that the Executive and the weekly Union General Meeting (UGM) abide by the law of the land, the Codes of Practice and the Equal Opportunities document. A keen eye for detail and an unwillingness to be pressurised into a position will serve you well on C&S.

Finance and Services Committee

The Committee generally oversees the work of the Treasurer. A penchant for efficiency is necessary, as you receive reports on and manage all Union services, ranging from the Three Tuns to the Advice and Counselling Centre. The Committee also decides on all society budget applications.

Please refer to ANNEX C of the Codes of Practice for further information on the job descriptions of each position above.

LGBTQ Society backs Barton for Gen-Sec

Vivek Kotecha

Peter Barton snatched the LGBTQ Society's endorsement for General Secretary in the first society hustings of the election season, amid poor attendance from LGBTQ students.

The third-year International Relations student did not particularly impress his audience last Thursday, but the society was sufficiently moved to put their weight behind his bid for Union leadership.

"Although we felt that none of the candidates were ideal, Peter Barton presented more convincing solutions to the problems that were raised at the hustings," said the society in a statement to the Beaver.

Incumbent General Secretary Aled Dilwyn Fisher, who is seeking re-election, failed to win the favour of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual and queer students, despite blasting the LSE accommodation office as "institutionally homophobic" and "one of the worst parts" of the School.

Fisher raised the issue in light of LGBTQ students' complaints against halls wardens and staff on their lack of sensitivity and training on dealing with their problems, including homophobic roommates.

"While Aled had very clear ideas about what LGBTQ identity

means to people, we were not convinced he would put his ideas into practice after being slow to act in his first term," the society statement said.

All the Education and Welfare officer candidates pledged to increase counseling support for LGBTQ students.

Residences officer Helen Roberts, one of three students seeking the office, added to Fisher's attack on LSE's LGBTQ halls policy. LGBTQ students felt "ostracised" by their wardens, she said.

Emmanuel Akpan-Inwang, the incumbent seeking re-election, promised to increase staff training. "Staff know how to deal with racism but

they don't have any LGBTQ awareness training," he said.

Akpan-Inwang's performance was enough to secure him the endorsement of the society.

Other key endorsements of the society included George Wetz for Treasurer, Daniel Jason for Communications, and Scott Macdonald for LGBTQ Officer.

Passions were raised in the Women's officer debate on the issue of creating a new men's officer position. Candidate Annais Nourry said that the proposal was "mocking the role of the women's officer" and misrepresented continuing gender inequalities at the LSE.

Lizzie Merrow, the current Union LGBTQ officer, said it was "good to see that the candidates made an effort to research issues affecting LGBTQ students," but that the audience was not as diverse as she would have liked.

No more than ten LGBT students attended the hustings. A larger turnout would have made candidates more responsive to LGBTQ students' concerns, Merrow said.

LGBTQ Society chair Sean Whittington Roy said: "I was pleased to see that most of the candidates had given serious thought to how their policies will affect LGBTQ students."

"I hope that whoever gets elected continues to take account of how their various policies will affect the very broad and diverse LGBTQ community at the LSE," he added.



LGBT Officer Candidates Scott MacDonald and Kimia Pezeshki. Photo Cherie Leung.

Union Jack Election sketch



Alas, poor Hack Attack

Stop all the hacks, cut off the internet. Prevent Pal Soc from barking like crazy old Seph,

Silence the UGM and with muffled drum Bring out the coffin, let the mourners come.

Let Ossie Fikret circle moaning overhead Scribbling in the sky the message Hack Attack is Dead,

Put crêpe bows round the white necks of Pulse DJs,

Let the Beaver's editors wear black cotton gloves.

Hack Attack was George Proudfoot, Dan Sheldon, George Wetz,

Jack's furtive read and his Sunday rest. Better than Hack Attack Two, oh trash-talking blog;

Jack thought that love would last forever. Jack was wrong.

Gobbets of foul-mouthed "satire" are not wanted now; put out every one,

Pack up the in-jokes and dismantle the c***s.

Pour away the ocean and sweep up the woods;

For nothing now can ever come to any good.

Jack wishes to dedicate this column to

the memory of LSE Hack Attack. What's that, you say? You're one of the thousands of LSE students who didn't know and cared even less about LSE's premier student politics blog?

Not even particularly aware that 'hack' is the vernacular for 'student politician' at this fine university?

Amazed, in fact, to discover on picking up your copy of this week's Beaver that said hacks were climbing the greasy pole in some sort of "election" around about now?

Well, this column does exist to enlighten you, after all. So suffer Jack a while to shed a tear for his late "competitor" in the satire business.

Oh, Jack knows very well that this is a tale of electronic skulduggery in the deepest nooks and crannies of the ongoing election. Jack knows that returning officer Ossie Fikret has gagged Hack Attack's "anonymous" contributors because of their rampant abuse of the electoral process.

But let Jack not pass over Hack Attack's cruel end in silence. That hard-won election reporting reform remains vulnerable. And that is why, amidst the candidate baby-kissing, negative campaigning, and mass student apathy, (and with the help of W H Auden) Jack can only spend this election season ululating his lament.

Gen-Sec candidate accused of policy inconsistency

Zeeshan Malik & Phyllis Lui

A Students' Union elections candidate has been criticised for an alleged inconsistency in policies presented during hustings.

General Secretary candidate Peter Barton failed to disclose his "strong support" for the recent occupation of the Old Theatre during the LSE Students' Union Israel Society hustings disappointed society members, said society president Patrick Jones.

According to Jones, Barton "used his support for the occupation as a key point in his hustings speech to the LSE SU Palestine Society", but neglected to mirror this in Israel Society hustings, which was a "cause for concern".

Barton had declared at the Palestine Society hustings last Friday: "I'm a pro-Palestinian and I've always been a pro-Palestinian." He told the society that he "supported the occupation" and had "argued [their] case" at the Beaver collective meeting when the topic was discussed.

During the Israel Society hustings last Thursday, he did not indicate any overt partiality to the Palestine Society.

He told the Israel Society that "when we had the debates on Israel and Palestine, [the Palestine Society] go 'it's really bad for the Palestinians' and [the Israel Society] go 'Students' Union shouldn't take a stance', between this...no one come away any better, alienating people".

While Barton "sincerely knew and

sincerely cared about the issues that the Israel Society faced", Jones said that "this change in message for the change in audience raises serious questions regarding the candidates' trustworthiness."

In an interview with the Beaver, Barton denied the suggestions of inconsistency, saying that he had simply touched on "different areas".

He added that he understood that "IsraelSoc had issues with the intimidation of Jewish students on campus" but that he felt the occupation "did not cause direct harm".

Barton also sent a clarification letter to the Jewish and Israel Societies by e-mail on Saturday.

In the email, Barton insisted that his "view is that the the attacks on Gaza were not justified" and that he sympathised with their suffering. In this respect, he considered himself "pro-palestinian but am also pro-peace and [supports] a realistic solution to the problem".

He also denied that he had argued on behalf of the Palestine Society as a whole at the Beaver collective meeting, countering that he only spoke up for the specific student who had been accused of being anti-Semitic in a letter published in the paper.

"I feel I am being deliberately misrepresented by certain individuals involved with my opponents' campaigns," he said.

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LSE STUDENT ELECTIONS 2009

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Comment

Stop pricing international students out of education

Universities see international students as revenue generators - but they have more to offer

Justin
Lam



Prior to my first year at UCLA, I pictured university as a place where I would receive my education not just in the classroom, but also via meeting people from across the country and the world. Disappointed that the student body was only 2 per cent international and 3 per cent out-of-state, with the remaining 95 per cent consisting of other Californians like me, I next set my sights on the LSE, and found some hope in a university's ability to cultivate a 60 per cent international student body.

LSE is, of course, the exception to the norm. The highest percentage of international students at an American university is 20 per cent at the University of Southern California; Harvard is at 12 per cent. The UK and other schools worldwide fare a tad better in this regard. Oxford and Imperial College are nearly at 40 per cent; Australian National University and McGill University (Toronto, Canada) come in at 20 per cent.

Yet the lack of parity between international and home students in some of these numbers, along with the disproportionate costs of international student fees and barriers set up by governments and universities, still point to a constant trend: exchange years may be promoted, but pursuing full degree courses abroad remains espoused in principle but difficult in practice.

Universities perceive international students as cash cows, to be recruited not just to promote the school's diversity rankings but to also generate extra revenue. While the European Union took a commendable step forward by harmonising fees for EU citizens, the fees to come to LSE from outside of the EU - a whopping £13,870 for General Course students, a sizeable £12,800 for an undergraduate education and between £12,500 to £18,000 for a master's programme - point to a consistent sectoral practice of charging the most for those who travel the most to study.

US universities are not any better, charging as much as \$45,000 (which, at UCLA, is double a California resident's tuition and living expenses of \$25,000)



LSE's diverse student body provides for a unique learning environment
Photo: Erik Lang

for international students. Last week, the Regents of the University of California decided to increase international and out-of-state student recruitment in order to close a system-wide budget deficit. Similarly, anecdotes pervade LSE's student body of students who may have dual EU and non-EU citizenship or residency, but are forced to pay international rather than EU student fees.

In recruiting international students for money as much as merit, universities have scrapped the opportunity for diverse student bodies to reflect the experiences of different socioeconomic conditions within a country as well as different countries themselves. Financial aid and scholarship programmes seek to rectify this, but are often too narrow in their focus. US grants may help if your family can only contribute less than \$4,000, but not if your family cannot contribute more than \$20,000. Scholarships address hardships, but focus so much on specific conditions - ranging from being a Scot living in London to having studied at a particular college in East Sussex - that many students are still left without additional sources of funding. Worse, several scholarships limit their eligibility to students attending universi-

ties in their home countries, discounting the value that top-ranking schools abroad have to offer.

On top of practices among universities and grant-making bodies, governments have securitised access to higher education, putting policies in place that welcome international students only under restrictive conditions. The UK's new identity card scheme, charging those who renew student visas for identity cards that must be carried on top of one's existing identification cards, adds extra costs for new and continuing students alike in the UK. Though the goal of preventing falsified student visas is an important one for the Government, the scheme adds to the logistical barriers and fees inherent in simply getting a student visa. Plus, the ideas of quotas of UK students, in-state students in the US or reserved spaces for 'other backwards classes' (OBCs) in India can concentrate so much on residents that the intellectual contributions of international students are reduced to tokenism.

Indeed, a country's universities should be training grounds for its own citizens

and universities should also offer opportunities for traditionally disadvantaged socioeconomic groups. Yet if the prevailing opinion of elite universities is that they "should not be treated like social security offices", as Oxford University Chancellor Lord Patten stated ("The London School of Exclusion", *The Beaver*, 10 February 2009), and if they want to charge in manners competitive to American universities, then the balance between resident and international students should be dictated by merit rather than by nationality.

This is not just a case for building goodwill between countries, as exchange programmes are often viewed. It is a case, rather, for orienting classroom composition towards a twenty-first century global economy that thrives upon building, exchanging and refining innovative ideas that are much harder to cultivate in a classroom with nationally or regionally homogenous student bodies. These ideas advance the pace of everything from business to public policy, whether these students stay and work in foreign countries or return to their home countries. If universities and governments tout the benefits that can be garnered from studying abroad for one year, it is logical to take

steps to make full degree courses abroad more accessible too.

My parents came to the US in the 1970s from Hong Kong to pursue their undergraduate degree courses. Neither side in my family had a great deal of money, but they had intellect and desire - as cliché as that may sound. Had they not been able to pursue bachelors and masters degrees in the US, and stay afterwards working in the growing information technology sector, I would not be a US citizen today. Just as economic protectionism may endanger the global economic network, educational protectionism may risk nationalising the education of future students in a world becoming more globalised by the millisecond.

The educational system of universities and governments needs to lower international student fees, increase financial aid and scholarship opportunities that fund foreign degrees and ease the student visa process and fees. While this may appear an insurmountable set of tasks, especially as education costs rise for home students, tackling this challenge will endow current and future students with the classroom, student society, workplace and even pub diversity needed in every country.

Topped-up inequality

Large debts for those who take a loan prevent talented people from going to university

Megan
Jones

When I graduate, I will not merely leave the LSE with a supposedly highly regarded degree. More importantly, I will be burdened with a debt of £25,000. This is in no small part due to the government's insistence on allowing universities to charge top-up fees of up to £3,145 a year.

My personal problem with top-up fees is that they are not fit for their supposed purpose. The government claimed that top-up fees would create a fairer funding system, by scrapping fees paid up front and allowing fees to be paid back after graduation. The policy has failed dismally in creating a fairer system; in fact it has had a detrimental effect on social diversity at many universities. Top-up fees allow those affluent enough to pay their fees to leave university debt-free, whilst creating a system where those too poor to pay their fees leave university with huge debts. This perpetuates inequality and unfairness; the poorest students will already be on the back foot when leaving university

regardless of how hard they have worked. Is it not ironic, that after graduation, the poorest students will be paying more in tax than their richer contemporaries?

Top-up fees should be scrapped immediately and education must be free to all. The high cost of university education does act as a barrier stopping many from fulfilling their potential. I personally know of individuals with the talent and intellect to enter university who decided not to for purely financial reasons. This is not good enough. No individual who wants to go to university and has the required grades to do so should be put off due to future debt. Education is a right that all must be free to benefit and enjoy, and no one should be denied access to learning because they cannot afford it.

Universities - and the LSE is a prime example - are bastions of the middle class, where privilege is passed from one generation to the next, based on money as much as on merit. This must change, but will be unlikely to do so until the government radically rethinks its policy on the

funding of university education.

Top-up fees have not only effected the decision of whether to go to university, but also the decision of where to go and what to study. Many students with the required grades to go to high-ranking universities decide to stay at their lower-ranking local universities because they cannot afford to go into debt gained from top-up fees and the costs incurred whilst living away from home. This is especially true of students from Wales, where students are currently charged £1,250 in fees rather than the full £3,145. The vast majority of my friends at university have decided to stay in Wales solely because of this financial incentive. This may benefit the Welsh universities who now have an endless supply of well qualified students. However, it does not necessarily benefit the students. Yes, they will have a smaller amount of debt when they graduate, but is this enough of a justification to go to a university which in reality you do not truly want to go to.

Increasingly students are choosing their universities on financial consider-

ations, rather than on that university's merit. Due to the high cost of a university education students are now choosing to study a subject not because it actually interests them, but rather because they believe it will lead to a well paid job after graduation. This is a worrying development. Each individual should be free to follow their own passion, regardless of what that may be, without having to compromise themselves due to financial constraints.

Rather than tackle the problem of widening participation in higher education, the government has decided to destroy any last vestiges of hope for poorer students, by appearing to agree wholeheartedly with the greedy universities' pleas to raise the cap on top-up fees. If the government does bow to the pressure of university vice-chancellors, students could be paying anything between £6,000 and £10,000 in fees per year. If this does not deter students from poorer backgrounds from applying for universities, I do not know what will.

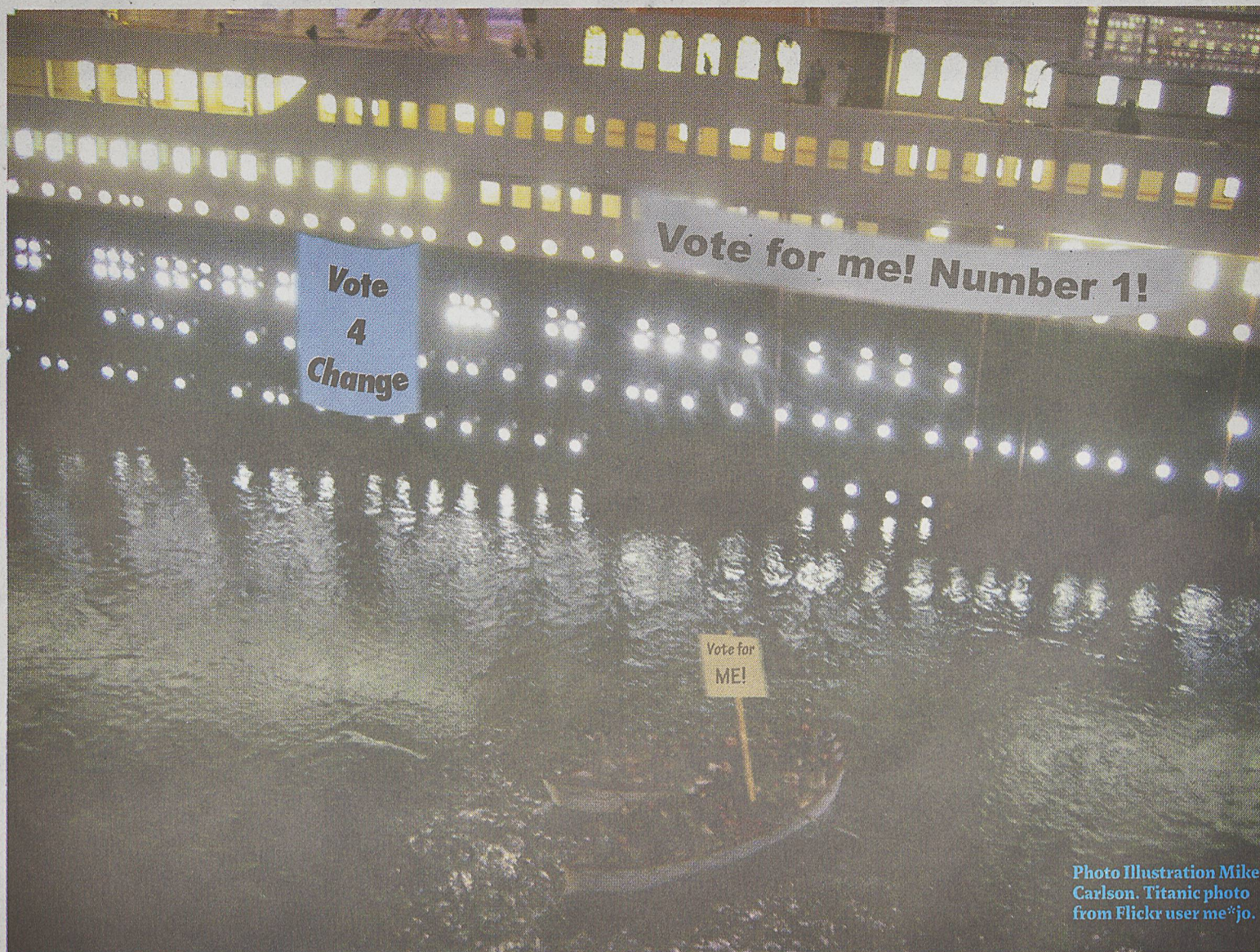


Photo Illustration Mike Carlson. Titanic photo from Flickr user me²jo.

The Beaver

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A vicious electoral cycle

Ah, apathy. The temptation will grow strong this week as we weave through the election candidates on the stump out on Houghton Street. That is, if students are even aware that there is an election going on, for positions in a Students' Union that means nothing to them.

The Beaver thought twice about its elections coverage this week. We are often told by students that we focus far too much on the minutiae of LSE student politics, rather than on the issues that really matter.

We hope we have redressed the balance in our reporting throughout this academic year. But come election season, we still feel it is in students' public interest that their newspaper informs them about who is bidding to represent them in the coming year.

At the same time, the temptations of apathy are pulling stronger than ever. In a gruesomely literal manifestation of

the Students' Union's problems, the candidates in this year's races were left talking to themselves at the first hustings events of the elections last week - the numbers of normal, non-electioneering students defiantly remaining in the single digits.

Not only that, but in one of the most international and progressive universities in the world, the key sabbatical posts are dominated by white British males.

Ironically enough, these elections see the greatest involvement of students in the workings of the Union for the year, as they queue up to cast their votes. That hardly says much about the Union's engagement of students the rest of the time.

Seemingly all candidates are talking a good fight this year about ending LSE's atmosphere of social isolation and its poor teaching culture. Finally - issues that most students would agree make a big difference to their lives, which is shown not least by the coverage of them in the Beaver this year.

But before they lambast the LSE administration, the election hopefuls would do well to clear out the beam in their own eye. For these elections are a moment of truth for the students' union, and the truth is that LSE's student culture is failing to renew itself - and in the meantime is mattering to ever fewer students during their time at the school.

Elections are increasingly part of the problem rather than the solution. This year's race, more than ever before, seems trapped in a vicious circle. With no incentive to appeal to a large, engaged electorate, candidates can safely retreat to cultivating the right combination of narrow interest groups and clients to sweep them into office.

Vicious personal attacks on opponents, and above all many candidates' own lack of experience for the roles they are pursuing, go unnoticed. This corrupt system in turn lowers turnout even further. And so the cycle goes on, at a university that was renowned, long ago, for its political participation and debate.



Photo: Beaver archive

Candidates should think twice about making their street campaigns this week anything other than a clean fight. Anything less will only negate the relevance and change so many of them promise to provide to their fellow students. For nothing is more revealing of the vacuousness of a candidate's words than the selfishness that is evident in his or her deeds.

This week's Union General Meeting will also be the acid test of the candidates' promises to renew student engagement at the LSE. The UGM is the backbone of student democracy here, but ever fewer seats in the Old Theatre have been filled as this academic year has gone on. It is probably worth noting how many of our self-professed harbingers of change would wean an hour off campaigning to partake in the Union political process. If nothing else, it might suggest they possess some overt commitment to the revival and reform of the Union they have waxed lyrical so extensively about.

Letters to the editor

Sorry state of our sports facilities



Flickr user shutupyourface

Dear Sir,

I recently had the embarrassment of showing our squash facilities to friends visiting the LSE. There is a hole in the front wall of Court 1 the size of Dan Sheldon's head. There is a newspaper, a Maltesers chocolate wrapper, and enough dirt, dust and fallen plaster laying about in the court that I am not certain it is safe to play on. That is just the state of Court 1. Courts 2 and 3 are in an almost equal state of disrepair.

Many of the candidates at the hustings for the coming elections spoke of more facilities in the future, and doing something about the state of facilities at Berrylands. However, none of them chose to examine the state of our facilities, and there are few, closer to home. Moreover, this newspaper has chosen not to address the issue despite its apparent importance to students, judging from questions raised at the hustings.

To the candidates I ask this: If we had more facilities, we would do this bad a job of taking care of them?

To this newspaper I ask this: When are you going to start reporting on these kinds of important issues, after the elections?

Yours sincerely,

Azan Marwah
BSc

Email: editor@thebeaveronline.co.uk

Fax: 0207 852 3733

Letters must be received by midnight on the Sunday prior to publication.

They must state your full name and be no longer than 250 words. Letters may be edited.

Politicians vs economists: action vs thought?

Politicians are grabbing the headlines, but how sound is their knowledge?

David Whittaker

Given the tumultuous events of the past few months, you may well be asking yourself some of important questions. Where have all the economists gone? Why haven't the great minds of economics come to our rescue in the global recession? Since when did politicians seemingly understand the economy and its problems so well, and should they continue to talk as though they do? Surely the world's foremost and best economists should be guiding us out of recession, despite all of the energetic efforts of our political leaders? So why do we see headlines such as 'Brown plans crackdown on world markets' or 'Barack Obama's Plan for Financial Markets Reform'?

To appraise the apparent ability of politicians to 'save the world', as one certain politician described it, let us assume for a moment that politicians do know what is going on in the financial world and the economy. Politicians fully understand the effects of their actions to influence markets and sectors, hold perfect information, and display that rare (and perhaps impossible) ability to restore confidence to even the most troubled areas of the economy. Politicians are indifferent to aspects of region or class, and are fully able to harness the financial power of the state. Furthermore, we might also assume that politicians are fully aware of each other's actions, coordinating their efforts for a mutually beneficial economic recovery. In which case, if the aforementioned assumptions hold, politicians will be fully capable of successfully intervening in failing markets through rhetoric and action.

Clearly this 'perfect politicians' model is ludicrous. Politicians certainly don't have access to perfect information and often cannot agree domestically or internationally on the best course of action, or even the ideology or theory behind such action. A case in point: President Sarkozy's uncoincidental criticism of Gordon Brown's fiscal management of the UK economy. Politicians are also influenced by other factors, such as social objectives, regional bias, voting concerns and (dare I



The Chancellor Alastair Darling with other Treasury ministers
Photo: flickr user HM Treasury

say it) downright self interest - to name a few. However, it might well be pointed out that economists are similarly constrained by information limitations. But if economists know the causes of past downturns and can employ the rigorous discipline of the dismal science, why are politicians the most vocal in current economic debate over policy?

One reason why politicians are at the forefront in the fight against recession lies in the responsiveness of economists and politicians to changes in economic conditions. When President Franklin D Roosevelt took over a depressed US economy in 1933, he quickly delivered unemployment relief, deposit insurance and the launch of numerous public works projects. His assessment of the causes of the depression sounds familiar; in his inaugural speech, Roosevelt linked the economic crisis to the greed of bankers and the self-interested quest for profit, promising a return to social and not simply monetary values. Thirty years later, in *A Monetary History of the United States*, Milton Friedman argued that the Great Depression was primarily caused by the poor policymaking of the Federal Reserve and the continuous crises in the US banking system. Other economists might cite the collapse in world trade through protectionism or government failure prior to the Wall Street Crash.

The answer is surely a culmination of all of these factors. Ultimately however, there may be no absolute and final ex-

planation for the Great Depression, even many years after the event. Therein lies the difference between economists and politicians - politicians are not faced with the expectation of a definitive rationale. Roosevelt was simply expected to reinvigorate the US economy quickly through whatever means the government could utilise, just as President Obama is now. In this situation, the politician's blessing lies in his or her ability to provide an immediate, seemingly knowledgeable assessment and solution; their curse lies in the long term implications of their swift action and possible mistakes - assuming they are still around to face the music. The recession of today is considerably different to that of the 1930s; economists will take time to analyse the current causes and determine the best response. Economists today must find solace in the ability to prevent similar crises in the future.

It may also be that the recessions experienced in countries such as the UK, France and Germany have given their respective leaders and governments a fresh purpose and aura of credibility, both in financial markets and on the international stage. Gordon Brown has frequently belittled the Conservative opposition as a do-nothing party, citing his own stimulus policies as being in tandem with those of other world leaders. In contrast to the 1930s, when politicians across the globe took somewhat different courses of action in response to the

Depression, politicians now seem to be presenting more of a united front in spite of criticism.

Economists seem to be far more divided on the issue. Economists such as Olivier Blanchard of the IMF have criticised the UK's VAT cut, citing Ricardian Equivalence; whilst prominent economist and stimulus critic Thomas Sowell has emphasised worrying government disregard for budget constraints and the enduring maxim that there is no such thing as a free lunch. On the other hand, 387 economists - including Nobel Laureate George Akerlof - signed a petition to Congress in November 2008 in support of a stimulus package for the US. Thus economists seem greatly divided over a suitable level of government intervention, whilst politicians generally seem to be more united in striding ahead with action and attempting to avoid the spectre of protectionism. Whether this new-found greater cooperation is just cosmetic remains to be seen, but this may well be why they are on the front page of your newspaper, and not the economists.

The following quote by Russell Roberts sums up the 'politicians versus economists' debate succinctly: 'Good politics requires action - constant proof that the politician is working tirelessly. Good economics requires quiet consistency so people can plan for the future. The times we live in are the greatest example in my lifetime of the tension between these two goals.'

Economists will not get us out of this mess

Reliance on economists got us into the financial crisis: now we need alternatives

Emile Parrotta

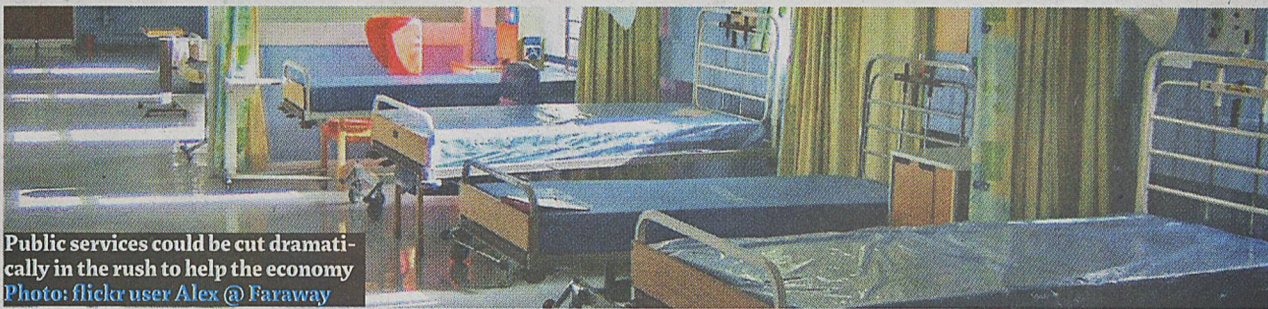


Economists are making their long-overdue grand entrance into the Hall of Despised Public Figures, until now an exclusive club composed mainly of politicians and lawyers. Before you get indignant over my simplistic, inciting words, let me explain. It started with a consideration of who, in the present financial turmoil, is to be trusted to save us: economists (including academics, bankers, financial executives, etcetera), or politicians, our elected representatives.

The onus has always rightly been on the Prime Minister and MPs, for the contract that put them there demands that they serve the interests of the people or else risk being thrown out in an election. The situation of economists differs.

By definition they represent private, unpopular interests - at least according to the general usage of the term. (Unless you subscribe to trickle-down economics, in which case I apologise with utmost insincerity.) I do not blame them for this, of course, as much as I would blame the owner of a pub for charging £4 a pint in order to make a profit. What bothers me is the couching of fiscal-speak in terms of inevitability.

Steve Bundred, Chief Executive of the Audit Commission, manages an independent body whose self-described job is to drive "economy, efficiency and effectiveness in local public services to deliver better outcomes for everyone." He has said that the government will have to severely cut public spending as the UK emerges from the recession. Tax rises will probably not be sufficient to restore the country's budget to its near-mythical formerly balanced glory. While public debt is painted as a disaster, little is said of what spending cuts will actually mean. Bundred mentions "public services", which includes



Public services could be cut dramatically in the rush to help the economy
Photo: flickr user Alex @ Faraway

hospitals and local councils, as being affected. Why is the government not telling us what we will be made to sacrifice in the coming months and years? Maybe we should just take for granted what the head of an appointed body tells an elected government to do with our taxes, and hope it doesn't mean underfunded hospitals and schools. After all, the Audit Commission was formerly headed by LSE's own director, Howard Davies. (Also, I do not recall hearing any complaints from the Commission when the banks were saved with public funds.)

My belief that, short of revolution, our politicians are our last hope is tempered by the sober realisation that they too are self-interested creatures. In times like these, it is useful to side with the people in discourse, by resorting to a moralistic, almost outraged vocabulary. And the Prime Minister, like the US President, seems to know this. Gordon Brown says, "you need fair rules, rules that reward those that play by them and punish those who don't." What's the word I'm looking

Perhaps it is time to reconceptualise the economy, to recognise that it is a social construction, nothing more than we make it. What we need is creativity.

for? Is it tautology? The method employed here of stating common sense and then doing nothing is a common tactic, almost a function of politicians. It is ironic that Tory shadow chancellor George Osborne was the one to point this out, aptly describing it as "synthetic outrage."

Perhaps it is time to reconceptualise the economy, to recognise that it is a social construction, nothing more than we make it. What we need is creativity. The economy is not a natural science or phenomenon, like the weather. It is a product of a particular history, enforced today by the authoritative word of the WTO and Alistair Darling. While it serves some of us in the best of times, many more fall victim to it in the worst, and will continue to do so as long as the current cyclical model prevails. I will not pretend to have a solution: that is the job of the politicians. All I am saying is that economists should not be blindly relied upon to provide the socially just (yes, "fair") solution, the one LSE students should be striving, and sometimes fighting, for.



National student demonstration against fees Photo: Ben Phillips

YOUR LONDON EYECATCH

Cherie Leung, Ben Phillips and Jaynesh Patel bring you images of passion, anger and faith from this week in the capital.



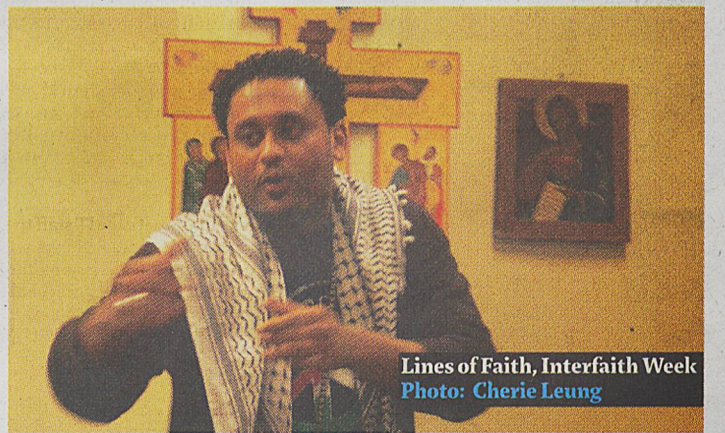
Bhangra Run, Pakistan Week Photo: Cherie Leung



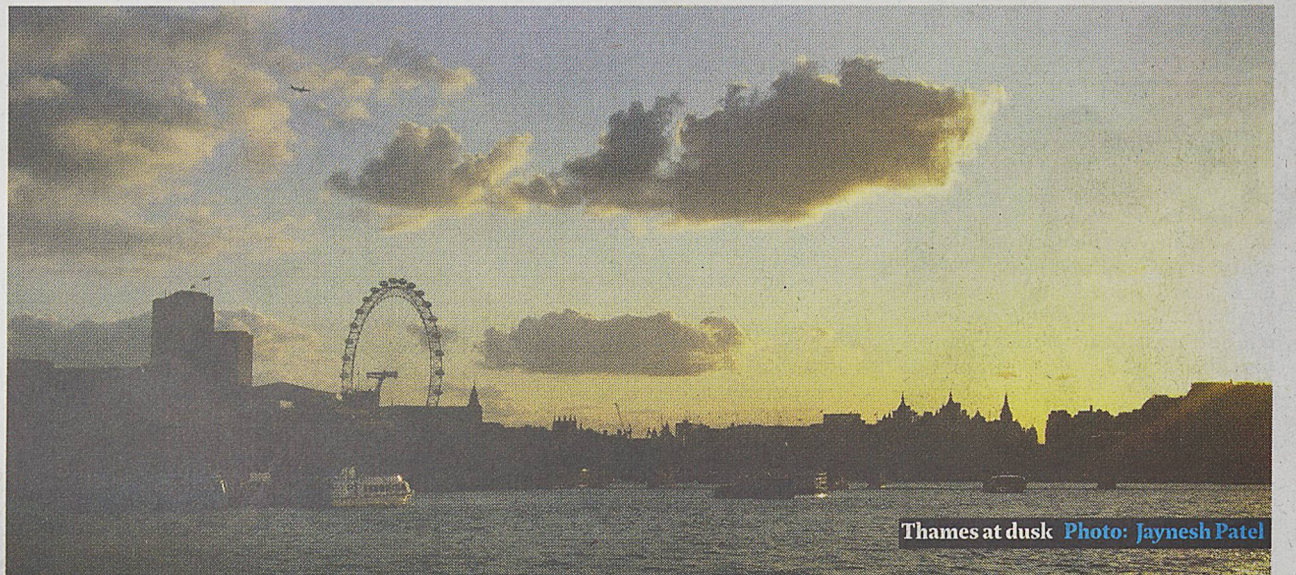
National student demonstration against fees Photo: Jaynesh Patel



National student demonstration against fees Photo: Jaynesh Patel



Lines of Faith, Interfaith Week Photo: Cherie Leung



Thames at dusk Photo: Jaynesh Patel

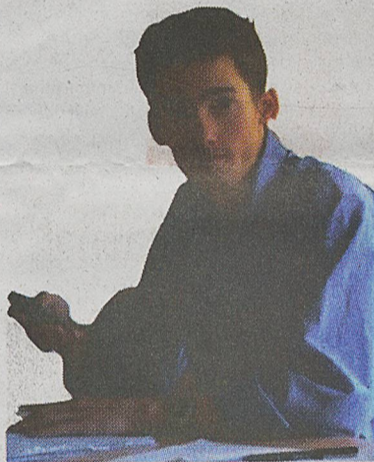
VOTE SU09

ELECTIONS GUIDE

YOUR GUIDE TO ALL THE
CANDIDATES IN THE 2009
LENT TERM ELECTIONS

GENERAL SECRETARY

Peter Barton



Actually making your union improve your degree & time at LSE

CAMPAIGN TO PUT TEACHING 1ST! Preserve the value of your degree.

Teaching isn't good enough: falling in league tables, companies complaining about LSE graduates skills, and dissatisfied students.

This is one of the most important issues to students so we need to hold the school to account. We need a powerful campaign to ensure that teaching is prioritised by academics.

INTEGRATION

The Union currently doesn't represent the majority of students, with lots feeling excluded.

Foster community-spirit by:

- 1) Ensuring students feel connected from day 1: overhaul the induction process,
- 2) Creating collegiate atmosphere through halls of residence, Societies, AU and by creating departmental student-social committees,
- 3) Connecting these groups to the Union through personalised contact, competitive events and an accessible union with a website that works.

Expanding the Unions image beyond political theatre: reform UGM, create alternative forum for debating issues, & running relevant campaigns: Wednesdays afternoons (12pm) free, fighting fee increases, exam feedback,

library resources-etc

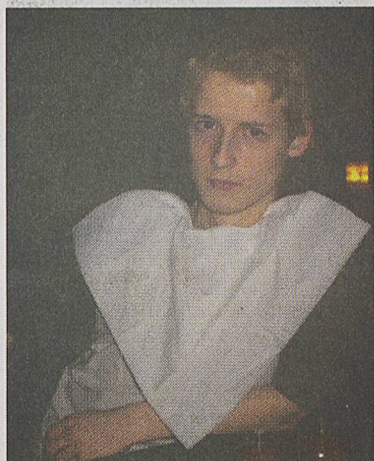
SERVICES FOR STUDENTS NOT FOR PROFIT

Providing basic facilities that work: lockers, gym, water-fountains, catering for societies, recycling,

DESIGNING THE NEW STUDENT UNION BUILDING FOR STUDENTS!

EXPERIENCE: LSE Governor, Led Successful 24hr Library Campaign, President Grimshaw-Club,

Christopher Gully



I am campaigning for General Secretary in order to re-establish the LSESU at the heart of student lives. I aim to better communication between the SU, students and staff, improve facilities and the use of the students union to support the needs of all LSE students. The LSESU has lost sight of the people it is here to serve first, the students, and it is time this was reversed and people were put ahead of politics. The LSESU should be used in order to improve the quality of the LSE and give support to its students, not an organisation who's primary focus is away from campus. I believe that with straight forward and practical policies people's experience of LSE can be greatly enhanced.

Improved communication between the SU, students and staff.

Increased support for societies which need classroom space for meetings and events.

Work closely with the IT staff to ensure that computers work far more with problems sorted quickly.

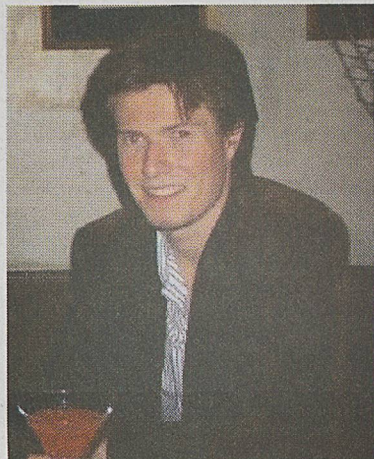
Moderate political decisions, the SU should be a place for discussion and progress rather than political agendas.

No classes for post-graduates, after 12 on a Wednesday.

Creating links between LSESU and local sports facilities.

TREASURER

Seph Brown



Our Union is not living up to its potential. Having experience - sat on the Constitution and Steering Committee and the Executive of the Union - I see where our Union needs to be improved, changed and built upon.

* Sabbatical Officers do not currently have the time to do their job of representing students. Following every other Union in the country, I will employ a team to manage the day-to-day administration of our Union so Officers can work more effectively for students.

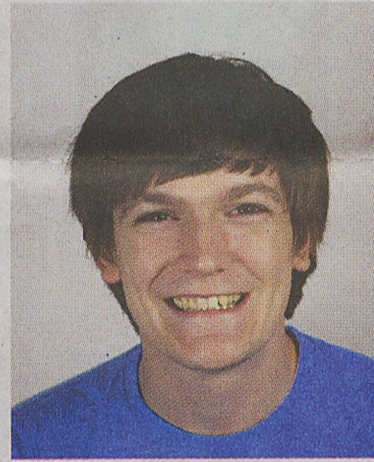
* At present, larger societies demand more support, while last year smaller societies returned £25,000 in unspent budgets to the Union. This makes no sense - we should not punish societies who want to do more. I will establish a new Activities and Engagement budget for societies to apply to throughout the year to put on bigger, better and vibrant events.

* Our Union should lead the way on ethical investment. We sell fair-trade, we are the greenest union in London and we need to codify these good practises into a single Socially Responsible Policy.

Investing Boldly, Investing Wisely, Investing Ethically.

For more information and to join the campaign please sign up to my facebook group "Seph Brown for Treasurer!"

Aled Dilwyn Fisher



RE-ELECT Aled - Releasing our Union's potential - for a campaigning, effective, relevant Union

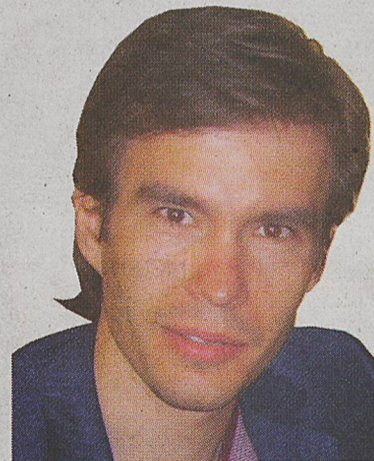
I've laid the groundwork - now let's build on our success:

No excuses, improve teaching - rewarding teaching as well as research, better monitoring of standards, skills development * Extend library term/vacation opening * Make Wednesday afternoons free * Fight for feedback/resits * Make LSE a community - common rooms for all; overhaul induction, making LSE fun and welcoming * Stand up for postgrads - improve journal access and departmental support; make Union more relevant * Fight undergrad, postgrad and international fees * Promote integration - expand Dialogue Commission * Unity with LSE academics and unions * Design amazing New Union Building * Continue reform - refocusing resources on societies, sports, media * Improve UGM - discussion groups before debates; make UGM Chair responsible for increasing participation * Developing and training halls committees/course reps * Create Volunteer Force * Expand awards for student activities * Campaign on ID cards, internationalism, environmentalism, social justice * Pioneer peer-led counselling

4 years Union experience and achievement:

Extended Library opening * Saved Nursery * LSE Not for Profit campaign * Progress on ethical investment * Led LSE Festival and New Union Building Project * Ex-Environment and Ethics Officer

Alfred Kovaci



VOTE ALFRED KOVACI for LSESU GENERAL SECRETARY

"Leading by Example for a Transformative Leadership for Our Union"

My pledge to You, fellow students, is that if you entrust me with the duties of LSE SU General Secretary, I as your chosen will be transparent, accessible, democratic, impartial, honest and always ready to serve - with devotion - you, the people I represent.

I promise to work with all I can - wholeheartedly - to make our Union become a place like home for people of all races, nationalities, religions, orientations and cultures - that we so luckily have them here.

Gen Sec's Fund

I pledge to establish the 'Gen Sec's Fund' to help societies and students turn their ideas into practice. And I will donate 5000 pounds from my salary to the Fund and kindly ask other potential donors to contribute as well

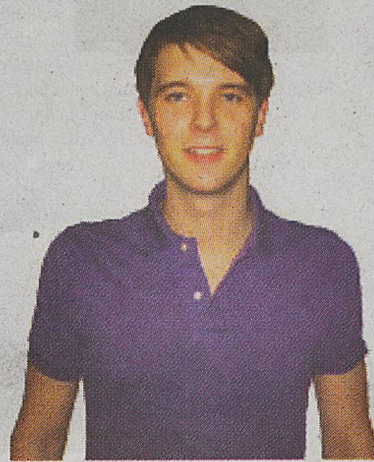
Leadership Experience.

I led and transformed the LSESU Albanian Society from a modest society into one that under my leadership won the 'Best Overall Society' award in LSE for 2007-2008. I held leadership positions in 'Globalb Foundation' and 'Young Enterprise'

Lobbied effectively in the UK institutions for the freedom of repressed people of the Balkans.

For more information, or to find out more on how to get involved with my campaign please e-mail a.kovaci@lse.ac.uk

George Wetz



We're rightly proud of our 150 societies.

But we only have one staff member for all of them. I'll develop societies, campaigns and the AU, not just administer them. Let's encourage them to work together and cut bureaucracy, letting societies do what they want to do.

Let's stop policing them, and start developing them.

There are not enough places to hang out at LSE.

Common rooms are closing and the Library has turned into the world's largest Starbucks. However, let's sort out our own house first. The Quad is dirty and uncomfortable. I'll revamp the Quad, and get some new furniture. Let's not do a botched in-house job.

The Students' Union is lagging behind the School on green issues.

So let's agree on an Environment Policy, setting an example to the School. Let's get our act together on Socially Responsible Investment and start recycling across our Union.

These are just some of my 57 policies, found on the "George Wetz for Treasurer" Facebook group. I've got the commitment, motivation and experience to achieve all this, shown through long nights inside The Beaver, rebranding Pulse and work on society committees.

Let's take these ideas,

Let's make it happen,

Let's vote Wetz.

EDUCATION & WELFARE

Emmanuel Akpan-Inwang



When the school tried to close the bars in Residences, we stood firm and we won. When the school tried to close our Nursery, cutting off a vital resource to students, we stood firm and we won. When the school refused to listen to students, we stood firm and revolutionized the way the school interacted with students. This year, I have actively expanded the non-academic life and well-being of students by creating UnWind and bringing new initiatives like Mind-and-Body Week. For the first time, the Education and Welfare Officer played an integral role in planning Freshers' Festival, ensuring it was more inclusive and better reflected LSE's diverse nature.

This year, we have taken real action and made real progress.

Next year, I pledge to create better support structures for student representatives so that they can benefit from our staff, our ideas, and our resources. I will improve library services and hours, expand and diversify career services, and work to increase training for lecturers. I will create more opportunities for more students to take part in more sports while professionalizing the academic advice and support services so that they can get better information and counseling.

RE-ELECT Emmanuel. Your Voice. Your Vision.

Ruby Buckley



In an institution where so much emphasis is put on careers, ambition and achievement, your LSE is still neglecting fundamental student welfare issues, and it's not acceptable.

- * Improve our teaching! *
- postgrad teachers need more preparation and more English language training
- handouts mandatory for every class
- drastically improve the feedback system for classes
- more books in the library and readings on moodle
- lecturers to write introductions for all the readings explaining their background and content

allowing us to better engage with the subject

- * Update Education and Welfare on our website! *
- showcase the services your Union provides
- a comprehensive Q and A on welfare
- * Change our mentoring scheme to a group format *
- let's get this year's freshers involved from the start
- * ERASMUS at LSE! *
- more opportunities for undergraduates to study at other top class institutions abroad
- * Support our volunteers! *
- facilitate welfare officers to run campaigns with relevant contacts
- regular meetings to maintain momentum
- foster a system of support, encouragement and recognition
- weekly welfare team emails

Elect Ruby for EdWelfare! Realistic policies for a huge difference to the LSE experience!

Helen Roberts



I'm happy to work seven days a week and will put my all into helping students. I'm friendly and approachable and my door's always open. EDUCATION

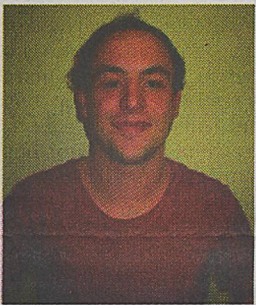
- Compulsory training for teachers to ensure teaching quality and improved class structure.
- Smaller class sizes.
- ALL courses on Moodle.
- Postgrads should be taught by professors not PHD students and get feedback on LSE4you.
- Reform the role of personal tutors so they maintain consistent support on academic and personal issues.
- More funding for language courses.

Library open 24 hours to facilitate graduate dissertation writing.

- WELFARE/CAMPAIGNS
- Rebrand the SU Advice centre as an accessible drop-in centre.
- Campaigning against ID cards
- Wednesday afterNOON's free
- Cross campus "Stay safe" campaign
- Welfare packs in LSE and intercollegiate halls.
- "bEAT" campaign on eating disorders.
- Campaign against domestic violence.
- Support hall committees on welfare issues
- Self defence course ALL year
- CAREERS
- LSE has for too long focused on 'city' jobs. Let's diversify the careers service.
- *SOME* OF MY EXPERIENCE...
- SU Residences Officer
- Academic Board Representative
- RAG week coordinator
- 'Play' (well drink!) with Netball 8ths!
- Save the Nursery
- Safety in Halls guide
- Vote HELEN #1 FOR EDWELFARE for experience and dedication to students and a promise to deliver results you deserve

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER

Michael Deas



Our Union needs to be more relevant to students. It needs to listen, it needs to be inclusive. Among other things I will:

- Make sure our Union engages, listens to and is run by its members - us! Two-way communication, a more accessible UGM, Union inductions for freshers
- Develop a Union that campaigns for students - better teaching, 24/7 library, value for postgrads
- Break down barriers within the student body and build a Union that represents all students
- Create a new website as the hub of student

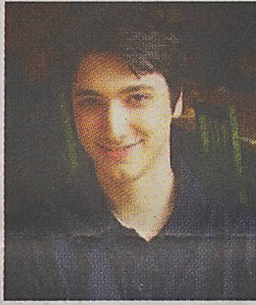
activity - I am a competent HTML and CSS programmer

- Use my experience as Managing Editor of The Beaver to ensure the media group is open to all students and improves further
- Greater society training, marketing and support. Assist RAG
- Improve entertainments and East Building space. Top DJs, involve societies and beer 'n' burger for a fiver!

I've had a great time at LSE, but I know our School and our Union needs to be better. I have the ideas, the experience and skills to achieve this.

We know things need to change, let's work together to make sure it happens. Full manifesto online: www.votedeas.org.

Daniel Jason



The basic role description of the Communications Officer is to oversee the media group and market the union. You need to be sure your next Communications Officer has the experience to do this:

- I've worked for commercial magazines
- Helped co-edit and found Britain's first interfaith magazine
- Was Press and Campaigns officer of the Jewish Society
- Was Features editor of The Beaver last term
- Work as a marketing officer for environmental charity Healthy Planet
- I will aim to be a Comms Officer for all students.

Some policies:

- Set up a top-of-the-range, cost effective Union website to showcase societies and their events
- Repair LSE's fractured community by encouraging more joint society events
- Increase attendance to the UGM through a money off rewards system for use in all SU shops
- Publicise and act on all motions passed at the UGM
- Stream AU match highlights on a new SU website, giving a greater role to Loo-SEtv
- Set up a peer-led review of SU Entertainments to direct their futures
- Give a greater role to Pulse through interviews with new artists and by showcasing their work
- Ensure the media group retains independence and its members get paid for working
- Vote Daniel Jason your first preference.

Rob Lowe



Having recently departed the Beaver, it gives me great pleasure to write again for these pages. Working on the Sports section is one of the best experiences I've had, alongside being Football Club Captain, and the tears and smiles with my teammates.

The reason I am running for Communications officer is that student groups remain divided. LSE sees such a breadth of peoples, all with their own story. Alas, too often these voices are silenced by the choke of misconception. AU members only care about cheap drinks? 'Hacks' are as self-interested as their governmental counterparts? Postgrads can't party? Our school only offers an

education, the social opportunities seen at other universities absent. This silence engulfs us all.

At the Beaver I met students who I had hitherto never had a chance to converse with, due to perceived differences. Differences which were nothing but a nefarious illusion. These communitarian divisions are indicative of the state of OUR Union and my solutions are thus:

- A vibrant civil society relies on communication: our website must facilitate this.
- Holding multi-cultural events, not just Israel-Palestine but AU-LGBT-SPICE etc.
- Unify the student body through common issues, firstly by reinvigorating the UGM.

IN ROB WE TRUST

ENVIRONMENT & ETHICS OFFICER

Hero Austin



This position is a campaigning position, and I have been an activist for environmental and ethical issues for years. I have, amongst other things, done work experience for fair trade organisations, been press correspondent for my local peace group/an active member of my college environmental group and represented young people at a civil liberties conference.

More importantly, these are my ideas for what we need to do at LSE:

- *Switch to green electricity
- *Replace plastic cups in the Tuns
- *Work closely with halls committees to ensure green residences
- *Set up a task force to go to London schools and run workshops on environmental and ethical issues, thereby extending LSE's positive impact

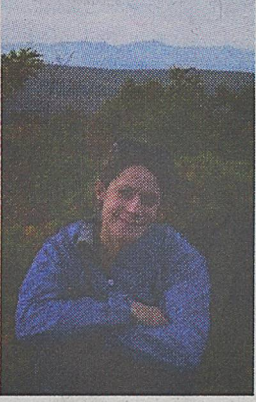
and promoting awareness in future generations

*Emphasise the need for active ethical investment in socially responsible companies, as opposed to just divestment

*Put recycling bins on Houghton Street

If you agree with these policies, vote #1 for HERO

Katherin Ripullone



I will integrate Environmental and Ethical Issues into students' daily lives by raising Awareness, increasing Participation, and taking Action. I will have a year-long calendar of accessible, informative and relevant events-reaching a larger proportion of students. I will improve advertisement and reporting on events, organize an Ethical job fair, and work to introduce E&E issues to our academic program.

I will introduce an SU Environmental and Ethical Investment policy; Increase the role of Social justice societies in decision making bodies; Coordinate and Support campaigns and societies, and increase student involvement in the local London community. Improved SU Sustainable-Infrastructure: ethical purchasing guides for students and the SU; coordinated waste manage-

ment; technology recycling; water fountains—new SU building.*

My experience: Co-Chair Dialogue Commission; E&E Forum; Social justice and environmental activist (HIV/AIDs, social development, and conservation worker); LSE sustainable Consultant—I have the experience—Give me the opportunity to use it.

Joe Sammut



Vote JOE #1 to bring back the campaigning role of the Environment and Ethics Officer. I will:

- Develop a cutting edge, comprehensive ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY for the union and implement it
- Continue the campaign for LSE to adopt a SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE INVESTMENT policy
- Fight against ID cards, for CIVIL LIBERTIES
- High-profile awareness weeks

I will make the Environment and Ethics forum a RELEVANT and CAMPAIGNING body:

- Encourage joint campaigns between relevant societies
- Better advertising and coordination
- Proactively encourage societies to send delegates

I will fight for more:

- Recycling (Quad, reusable mugs, halls)
- Fairtrade and ethical goods
- Energy efficiency measures

My experience:

- Volunteered in an organic co-operative farm, studied the environment in the Bolivian Amazon
- Anti-war and Palestine solidarity activism
- Founding member of LSE: NOT for PROFIT campaign
- LSESU Listening Campaign & An-Najah Twinning Taskforce

Vote JOE #1

ANTI-RACISM OFFICER

Ben Jones



I will work tirelessly to ensure that every organization, society and individual enjoys their freedom of speech, freedom to campaign while making sure than not a single student or group of students

feels isolated. This year, too many students have done so. Through open and fair debate, sensitive issues will receive the respect and attention they deserve while their discussion on campus educates and informs the student body. I will use the new dialogue commission to deal with conflict before it hits the stage of the UGM, a sordid world of quoracy, time constraints and James Bacon... As president of RAG I watched as Global RAG Week profits were doubled as I helped to organize events from Freshers' Ball to hitchhiking to Paris. I have worked with countless societies, I have worked with the Union, impassioned, impartial, I am

Ben Jones, your next Anti-Racism officer.

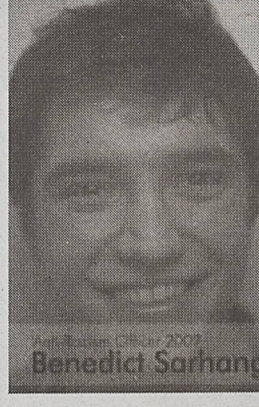
Leon Matthias



If elected I promise to do everything I can to fight racism at LSE; both within the academic environment, and on campus. Racism at LSE has two main motive components: discrimination and exoticism, it can be active and explicit, or

more subtle and implicit. Education can promote understanding and achieve gains in multicultural and multiethnic dialogue, but we must affect values as much as disseminate information. It is important to me that the protections we have built up over time, that prohibit mocking and ridiculing minorities and vulnerable sections of society are not subverted by 'irony' or broken down by concerns about being too 'PC': I would argue that there is nothing wrong trying not to offend people. I aim to create an inter-subjective debate on the way the content of our degrees perpetuates and challenges racism. I am actively neutral on the Middle East due to insufficient information.

Benedict Sarhangian



I aim not to be a defensive Anti-Racism officer, effectively waiting for it to happen, I intend to take pro-active preventative measures to ensure that it doesn't. I aim to work with other Execs under an

umbrella 'pro-equality' initiative
My policies for this will include
- Further inter-society events; following in the footsteps of 'One Voice'
- Monitoring the LSE media, and the media at large, checking for inaccuracies that could lead to instances of misrepresentation or unfairly prejudicial views.
- Try and prevent the idea that, during your first moments at LSE, you are not coerced into 'self-segregating.'
- Lobby for greater student powers when dealing with racism, stopping students leapfrogging the Exec, going straight to staff
On a personal note, I am a pro-Palestine supporter that has toned his views down over this year, and realised that on campus nothing can be achieved by screaming at each other.

LGBT

Scott MacDonald



VOTE SCOTT MACDONALD
ENDORSED BY LGBT SOCIETY
RAISING THE PROFILE OF LSE STUDENTS ON CAMPUS
LSE PRIDE - I will found the first ever LSE Pride, with a Queer Crush, awareness events, stalls on Houghton St and sexual health education.
EDUCATE HALLS STAFF - To end the discrimination and homophobia found in LSE halls.
SUPPORT GENDER NEUTRAL TOILETS - In the new SU building.
END THE BLOOD BAN - Force the SU to campaign on this.
WORKING WITH SOCIETIES - ENCOURAGING INTEGRATION
NATIONAL SOCIETIES - The current SU does nothing to give support and information about LGBT issues.
MORE WOMEN - Correct our gender balance by encouraging societies to hold events for Lesbian, Bi, Trans and all Queer

students.
EXPERIENCE TO LEAD
I am secretary of LGBT Society Co-chair of Youth & Students at Pride London last year & have proven my ability to campaign effectively.
I have the experience to make my campaign ideas a reality.

Kimia Pezeshki



I'm full of passion to stand up for LGBT rights within and beyond LSE, eager to represent the voices of our students to other institutions.
More importantly, I can relate to the needs of LGBT students and anyone questioning their sexuality.
I promise to ensure:
- Neutral sexual health information, available to all
- Funding for students who are rejected by their families for coming out
- Open discussion of LGBT issues in Part B, Pulse and other student media
- A bigger and better LGBT history month!
And promises that were once made to us without follow-up:
- Residences: welfare officers to create a stronger link with the LGBT officer to avoid unfair homophobia-related housing allocations
- Students/staff in positions of pastoral care to be trained about

dealing with LGBT-related issues
Our students deserve equality; let's make sure it happens...
...because there's more to love than a label.

WOMEN'S

Anna Krausova



VOTE ANNA #1 for a CAMPAIGNING and ACTIVIST WOMEN'S OFFICER

I will:
- Reinvent the WOMEN'S FORUM, making it a RELEVANT CAMPAIGNING BODY and giving voice to all previously excluded groups and individuals.
Raise AWARENESS about:
- Constraining gender roles that affect MEN AS WELL AS WOMEN through AWARENESS WEEK, FRESHER'S STALL and RELEVANT WEBSITE.
- The damaging effects of beauty pageants and anti-abortion groups.
Propose an ONLINE LISTENING CAMPAIGN to work on REAL STUDENT'S CONCERNS rather than impose agendas.
Better PRACTICAL help:
- MORE RELEVANT SEXUAL HEALTH services and DROP-IN SURGERIES for all regardless of sexual orientation.
- Put STUDENT WELFARE BEFORE PROFIT, keeping essential services open.
- Coordinate with London, national and international groups.
My experience:
- Feminist Society Treasurer
- Beaver Collective
- Listening Campaign

- Founding member of LSE: Not for Profit
- Palestine Society and Stop the War
FOR WOMEN BEFORE PROFIT - VOTE ANNA

Anais Nourry



As women's officer I will increase visibility, awareness and involvement amongst the student body. Education surrounding women's health, must be addressed. Information with regards to violence against women is inadequate, how do you recognise when a friend is in danger? Who do you turn to and what help is available? I will address these issues through a wide range of activities such as self defence classes for women and discussion. If we do not talk about women's issues, we will not learn from them and improve the lives of women on and off campus.
I will liaise and work directly with societies and involve more students and ensure that women's issues are relevant and visible throughout the year. I will take advantage of the LSE's diversity and allow a range of cultural backgrounds to inform the ideas of how women's experiences at the LSE can be improved.

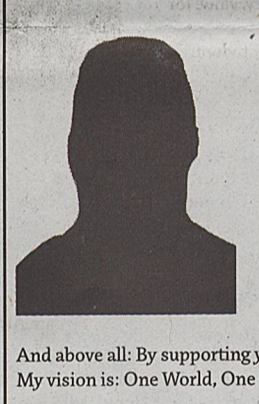
Jessie Robinson



-WOMENS SURGERIES: To raise health and pregnancy issues.
-WOMENS WORKOUT sessions: To make the gym accessible to women regardless of religion or culture.
- AU TASTER sessions: For the sports that attract less women, so that students get the chance to play games they may have never tried in a fun and relaxed environment.
-Continue PRO-CHOICE awareness raising and increase the right to chose fund.
- WOMENS FORUMS and discussions with various societies rather than setting all the agendas for others to follow.
-An open approach to help REMOVE THE BINARIES of Feminists verses 'anti-feminists' and attract students who have felt excluded from women's debates.
-Encourage DEBATE without loosing sight of our position as a union, and without removing the PASSION AND POLITICS behind what we believe in.
-A continuation of campaigns which CHALLENGE LOCAL and GLOBAL GENDER inequalities
Your voice for EQUALITY.
Vote JESSIE ROBINSON Number 1!

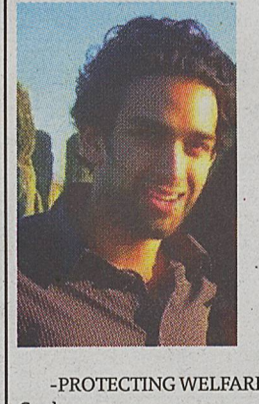
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

Farsan Ghassim



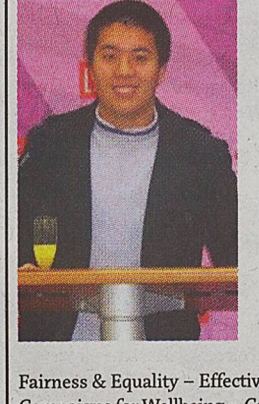
You think it's exiting to study at a university with people from all around the world but you also believe that we could use this unique chance much better?
As International Officer I will give you the opportunity to make the most out of your multicultural experience at the LSE.
How?
By organizing the LSE World Cup 2010 to celebrate the first-ever Football World Cup in Africa.
By re-inventing "Global Week" and designing it as a week full of themed days with events, parties and lectures surrounding issues which truly matter to the whole world (from environmental issues to crisis regions).
By building a functioning network with the International Officers in the halls.
By cooperating with my opponents to realize their ideas as well.
And above all: By supporting you and representing your views to the School and the Union.
My vision is: One World, One Campus, One Community.

Suraj Girijashanker



Internationally Yours. Here is what I stand for:
-DIVERSE EVENTS- A year-long international experience which is not confined to Freshers' and Global Week. I will celebrate and promote diversity through innovative events such as an International Food Crawl and World Cup Championships as well as encourage more inter-society events on a larger scale.
-AWARENESS about the services on campus is crucial. I will work with the Sabbatical team to promote and improve existing services for international students. Through liaising with the Career Services as well as through CO-ORDINATION with banks and mobile phone companies etc, I will ensure you have the latest information at your finger tips.
-ORIENTATION process which starts prior to students' arrival in London through the creation of an exclusive guidebook for International Students, answering important pre-arrival questions.
-PROTECTING WELFARE- Lobbying for Halal and Kosher food and AGAINST rising fees and ID Cards.

Michael Lok



Michael LOK - UnLOKing Barriers - Your Key To Support
1st Year Law Student from Hong Kong, China
English, French, Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese Speaker
PRE-DEPARTURE & ARRIVAL
Better Pre-departure Events - Funding, welcome packs
Entertainments for early arrivals - tours, trips
'Meet & Greet'
SETTLING IN
Settling-down workshops - cooking, housework, laundry
Info Session per term
Visa, health, bank, phone (MT)
Internships, exams, private housing (LT)
Online LSE International Guide
CONTINUING SUPPORT
International Exchange - Wider calendar of events

Fairness & Equality - Effective complaint mechanisms
Campaigns for Wellbeing - Careers, discounts, health
YOUR Officer, YOUR Voice, YOUR Ideas
Weekly Office Hour, Direct Contact
International Students' Forum per term
Alumni Relations Officer, Law Society
Project Manager, Global RAG Week
Member, SU C&S Committee
Head Prefect, Island School Hong Kong

VOTESU09

RESIDENCES

Joseph Coney



I will improve welfare, create communities and increase the representation for those in intercollegiate accommodation.

Welfare

Welfare workshops and training for all committee members and wardens

Workshops for all students moving into private accommodation.

Community

Creating communities in halls - Ongoing interhalls, competitions throughout the year.

More culturally diverse halls events during freshers week - integration of all cultures from the start.

Halls reps in intercollegiate halls.

Information pack for new students and standard web-site design for all halls - To include and inform students.

Fight bar closures by encouraging societies to use the

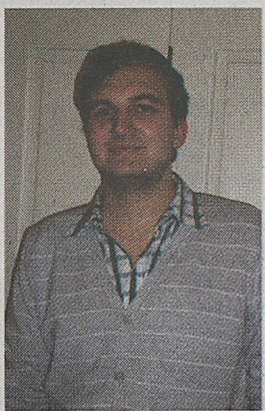
bars for non drinking events. Example: yoga classes.

Allow societies to bid for more budget.

Safety

Safer halls by pushing for turnstiles for all hall's entrances.

Andrew Wright



MAKE THE WRIGHT VOTE!

*Integrate intercollegiate residents through a new committee, activities and sports

*Tackling apparent disengagement and disconnection

*Enrichment of sport and activities throughout the year - a new sense of identity and competitiveness through tournaments, RAG and events

*An induction suited to ALL - not just alcohol, but practical meetings, induction packs, activities and excursions to bring people together

*Training to wardens, hall committees and students on welfare issues, including disability, health, LGBT issues, safety and racism

*Fight to keep bars and common rooms open for social interaction and community spirit

*Build new environmental campaigns and expand successes of current ones

*Lobby to expand catering options - vegetarian, Halal and Kosher

*Supporting students in private accommodation - summer housing, advice on rent, bills etc.

WHY ME?

*Experience in halls, engaged in LSESU, Global RAG Week Officer

MATURE AND PART TIME STUDENTS

Vladimir Unkovski-Korica



Mature and part-time students are getting a harder and harder deal. They pay astronomical fees for just a few contact hours a week. They receive far too little help to support

themselves and their families through the degree. And they have to work to make ends meet in the wake of the recession.

The government's ELQ reforms - massive funding cuts for students taking second degrees - are just another example of how the marketisation of education often hits mature and part-time students the hardest.

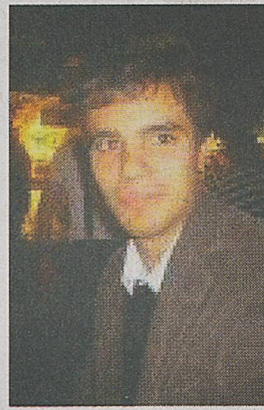
LSE is run like a business, not a university. That means the School places profit before students.

The occupation of the Old Theatre in solidarity with Gaza shows how we can effectively campaign for student rights and a free education. We need to harness the creative energy of the social movements to effect positive change.

I will work for an SU that puts students' welfare before profit.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Luke Moore



I am committed to making LSE a better place for students with disabilities. LSE is one of the greatest educational institutions in the world and should be a place where

everyone can get the best out of their education. If elected I promise to listen to the concerns of students. I will work closely with the school to ensure accessibility to facilities and also with the academic departments so that the greatest possible provisions can be provided for students with dyslexia/dyspraxia. As a student with dyspraxia I am sympathetic to these concerns. Disability awareness is an area where the Student Union needs to improve. The disability awareness weeks have been very poorly attended. Next year I plan to organise more and better disability awareness events to engage a larger audience and to campaign rigorously on all disability-related matters. Vote for me because if you vote Moore you get more.

SOCIETIES

Chris Westgarth



Hi, I'm Chris Westgarth and I'm running for societies officer:

I want to help create a new societies section on the SU website - for 9 months the societies page has been 'under

construction'. This is unacceptable. I want to see a website where students can access information about the different societies and their events. This centralised database will enable far greater inter-society cooperation as well as giving students a focal point for their involvement.

Additionally I want a review of the budgeting process. Currently societies can appeal against their budget - effectively they are asked to 'steal' money from other societies - this system is unfair and divisive and if a society organises their members to come to the UGM they can reallocate any amount of money. This has to stop. We need a fairer system that doesn't pit societies against one another and isn't open to abuse.

CONSTITUTION & STEERING

Mubbien Hayat

I am a committed team player who is involved in The Beaver's Marketing Team, Debate Society, Amnesty International and various other things.

I will make C&S more efficient and transparent in its dealings, by publishing the minutes of the weekly C&S meetings so that they are widely available to all members of the SU.

The insights I have gained by attending C&S meetings and reading the Codes of Practice and Constitution will allow me to ensure that YOUR voice is heard around campus and at the UGM.

Steering Our Union Back Into Place. VOTE MUBBIEN #1 FOR C&S.

Natalie Osafo

"If the constitution goes, I go". This is how much I care.

Goals:
*An accessible, modern student-friendly version of the constitution that empowers

the student body.

*Revive webpage with a forum for ideas/complaints and updated 'blog' to improve efficacy.

*An open 'forum' for members to have greater input.

*A Liaison Committee meeting holding the executive to account.

I am: committed, attentive to detail and passionate about the Constitution.

I have: leadership, international forum and consultation experience and sound constitutional/legal knowledge.

VOTE FOR A STRONGER CONSTITUTION. VOTE FOR A STRONGER STUDENT VOICE. VOTE FOR NATALIE OSAFO.

Zarish Rasheed

I will ensure that the Union stays a united force, and makes fair amendments to the constitution. Bring forward issues that represent each one of you! Being a part of you, I know the plight of the students, and have the zest to make the university experience the best for all of you.

I will press for more ways that will increase interaction between the SU Exec and the Student Body. The UGM's will be fair, impartial and transparent for all of us.

So come forward...Make the right choice...
Vote # 1 for ZARISH RASHEED...
And Bring a Change!

Kate Strivens

I love constitutions and I love steering and as a fun bubbly person I intend to make C&S less dry. On top of that...

I believe in a transparent and accountable C&S.

If elected I will be committed to working with C&S and the students to help improve your union.

C&S should be totally unbiased. I do not have a political agenda; it is about doing the job correctly.

I might be from the AU, but I can take stuff seriously - we are not all from the Zoo! ;op
Vote Kate Strivens for C&S; the fun but sensible choice!

Sofia Zabolotskih

Vote Sofia #1 for an efficient, accountable and transparent C&S
As C&S Officer I will:
- Uphold the constitution and help the Your Union reforms

- Improve the running of the UGM and the vetting of motions

Raising awareness:
- Publicise C&S meetings open to all
- Publish meeting minutes
- Publicise instructions on how to put in motions to increase involvement with the UGM and Union.

As your C&S Officer I will take my position seriously and attend every meeting and UGM, be knowledgeable on constitutional matters and always approachable for advice and concerns!

F & S

Sachin Kakkar

Vote Sachin Kakkar #1 for F&S Committee
Priorities
-Ensuring transparency by publishing F&S Committee reports.
-Advertising F&S

Committee meetings so more students are involved and more views are taken on board.

-Helping develop and coordinate the Students Union facilities and services.

-Developing alternative sources of revenue for the Students Union.

-Implementing societies' feedback every term on F&S Committee and using this feedback so continuous improvement takes place.

-Efficiently allocating union resources to societies so students benefit from their societies.
-Creating packages, such as budget making guides, to help society treasurers and in return benefiting all the students.

Valerie Khoo

What I will do for you:

Facilitate the budget allocation process:
- Provide clear and definitive guidelines for society budget applications.
- Increase efficiency in

decision-making process.

Ensure transparency and accountability in fund allocations:

- Give thorough feedback on budget applications.

- Establish a straightforward appeal mechanism.

Execute practical and effective fiscal measures:
- Review existing measures continuously to ensure effectiveness.

- Research alternative sources of revenue for the Union.

Develop student facilities:

- Lobby for increased funding and resources to improve the fitness centre.

- Seek to improve Union services: bars, catering outlets, bookstore, welfare

Arjun Madhavan

ARJUN MADHAVAN for FINANCE AND SERVICES (F&S)

Bringing Finesse to the Finances
Empowering the Student Community with opportunities to create

innovative and productive projects.

Promising complete accountability, integrity and transparency.

*Efficient utilisation and allocation of SU Funds to Societies.

*Smooth running of inter and intra university transactions for a proficient monetary system.

*Reviewing the parameters of Budget Allocation, with equitable distribution and fair representation for ALL societies. This includes environmental, social and cultural costs in budget proportions apart from academic and career oriented events/societies.

*Maximise the benefit of OUR money to be spent

Hinal Shah

HINAL SHAH for F & S Manifesto

"COMMITTED towards EXCELLENCE with INTEGRITY"

I am COMMITTED to helping students get the most

out of the budget. We deserve to get the best! I will emphasize that the allocation of funds is optimised to facilitate all round EXCELLENCE on campus. With a fair allocation to all societies, I believe I can help realise and maximise the immense potential at LSE.

I will act with INTEGRITY and ensure responsible and open management of funds. This will bring about efficient results for you!

Let's get the best out of our money!

Aliabbas Virani

Vote Aliabbas Virani #1 for F&S
2nd Sachin Priorities

1. Ensuring transparent, efficient and rational allocation of union resources.
2. Making sure the society treasurers have a comprehensive guide to making budget applications.

3. Implement an appeal/feedback system for societies in their budget and general applications.

4. Using my experience as Chair of C&S to make the F&S constitutionally responsible for hearing general society and budget appeals.

5. Making sure Union services are up-to date and providing the maximum benefit to the all students

Experience
-LSE Governor 2008/2009
-Chair of C&S
-Vice Chair of LSESU

Features



Flickr User Dey

The pornography of poverty

Umeer Thasneem questions whether *Slumdog Millionaire* does more than just sell misery

As the world gloats over the success of the *Slumdog Millionaire* and the glitz of its Oscar hauls, I was jolted out of the tinsel world into the real world. Having studied literature and spent a considerable part of my life poring over the black and white patterns that make the literary world, I often live in a fantasy world of my own making.

But watching *Slumdog* was a different experience.

Indeed watching poverty pornography is a pleasure we all indulge in. As Nietzsche said, we all take a perverse pleasure in seeing others' sufferings even while appearing to be sympathetic; but like many Indians, I was a bit offended. What right does a British director have to sell my country's poverty to a voyeuristic international audience? It was the British that plundered my country's riches once; now they are busy selling its poverty. My moral anguish seemed perfectly justified.

However, my wrath at the British was short-lived; as usual, I was not successful at being a professional 'angry young man.' After all, why should I blame Danny Boyle for selling my nation's much-prized poverty when my own countrymen like Satyajit Ray, who was crowned with a special Oscar, have done it with lesser or greater success? After all, poverty in India and the third world is so real and palpable. We can't be ostriches and slip our heads into the sands pretending that those millions are not part of our national ecosystem. In fact, there is enough poverty in India to for a thousand Boyles to make a million *Slumdogs*. But the more important question is, whether there is anybody out

there to make a real change? Anyone for whose eyes that rich poverty proved a real feast?

My vote goes to one or two great souls, but regretfully admit that they too are from the West. The first is perhaps too obvious, Agnes Bojaxhiu, known by the familiar name Mother Teresa, who spent a whole life ministering to the poor and the sick in thick slums of Calcutta; and a model whom Danny Boyle should emulate: Dominique Lapierre, if you can't guess, whose 1985 novel *City of Joy* provided the stuff for Roland Joff's blockbuster by the same title.

Joff may not have won an Oscar like Boyle. But his *City* has more to offer than Boyle's *Slumdog*. Lapierre's story narrates the experiences of an Indian peasant called Hasari Pal. Driven by poverty, Pal is forced to abandon his farmland and aged parents; he migrates to Calcutta, the huge human cauldron, where even in twenty-first century, you can see the inhumane sight of humans pulling more privileged humans in unmechanized cycle-rickshaws. But don't be cynical: for decades, Calcutta has been ruled by a progressive leftist government sworn to uphold the rights of the working class!

Hasari Pal becomes a rickshaw-puller in Calcutta. Within a few years, like all rickshaw-pullers, he turns consumptive dragging those fat miserly ladies who never missed a chance to haggle over the fares all through and around the massive Calcutta. Like everybody else belonging to his unfortunate lot, death hovers around Hasari Pal even before he is on the threshold of old age. But Pal can't simply die like you and me. He has a daughter to

be married off; the would-be groom wants a 'huge' dowry: one thousand Indian rupees (almost one hundred and twenty pounds) and a brand new bicycle! Poor Pal has only one choice, to sell his skeleton before he dies; in Calcutta, there thrives a big business specialising in the export of 'quality' human skeletons to first world universities (have my first world friends ever wondered or pondered to whom the skeletons in their biology laboratories belong? They may be part of my country's legacy).

Hasari Pal makes a contract to sell his skeleton for the 'princely' sum of 1200 rupees and gets five hundred in advance. The agent promises that the balance will be paid before his daughter's wedding and on its eve, as preparations are in full swing in Pal's house, he goes to the agent to collect his due. The agent casts a true merchant's practiced eyes at him and declares, "Looking at you, I don't feel like you are going to kick the bucket any time soon. I just can't pay the balance now!"

A distraught Hasari Pal reaches home unable to face his daughter and would-be son in law. But fate was not too "unkind": a heartbroken Pal dies on that very night and the agent's men come with the promised money to claim his corpse. The next day his daughter's wedding takes place in a house that was denied the luxury of Pal's funeral. Lapierre's *City of Joy* is a fiction crowded with real-life characters like Pal, who live in Calcutta's slum called Anand Nagar, literally meaning 'city of joy'. Maimoona, who decides to sell her nine month embryo to feed her husband and children, is just one among them. The destination of the embryo is, unsurpris-

Indeed, watching poverty pornography is a pleasure we all indulge in

ingly, North America. Maimoona dies in the surgery that was performed by a quack whose only concern was removing the embryo without any damage.

Perhaps *City of Joy* might be a kind of poverty pornography too. But unlike *Slumdog*, it is less masala and more stuff. But this is not what makes Lapierre a model for Boyle. The French writer was instrumental in setting up a body called 'City of Joy Foundation'. A major chunk of the royalty from his book goes to this foundation. Its mission is to help the children in the slums of Calcutta. The question remains, is Boyle bold enough to set apart a portion of his income from the movie to help the poor kids of Mumbai's slums that afforded him such a sumptuous artistic stuff? If he and his co-producers, both Indian and British, do so it will be more than an artistic gesture.

It will be surprising that India, the country of such dehumanising poverty, is home to the largest number of millionaires after the US. They include such figures like Lakshmi Mittal, Mukesh and Anil Ambhanis who have made to the top ten of the Forbes' list. These millionaires do not seem to realise that 'charity begins at home'.

Sometimes at the LSE, I walk past the long queue of students waiting for the free lunch that the Hare Krishna Group gives out on some weekdays. Hare Krishna is an organisation founded and managed largely by Indians. I wonder whether this group would be better off serving food in one of India's teeming slums with starving millions, rather than this elite university.



Making the square peg round

Oliver Courtney reads much into US societal attitudes in the media portrayal of the First Lady

It's official: the US media has forsaken Barack Obama and run off with his wife. As the infatuation with America's new First Lady/mother-in-chief/cerebral temptress/fashion icon intensifies, we need not worry for her sake. She seems wise to the whimsical nature of the press, dealing with the incessant quizzing about her appearance with the distanced amusement it merits. "I'm not going to pretend I don't care about it," she says. Or, if you read the clear insinuation behind that, she is not going to charge around screeching obsessively about it like the media, either.

Essentially, I'm not sure the preoccupation with her body and its accessories has that much to do with Michelle Obama herself. Conveniently for the type-casters, she's a good-looking woman. However, it is likely this fascination has more to do with the American cultural psyche adjusting to her, representing what she does, being in her position as First Lady. This adjustment does not just come from those belonging to the Fox News school who so strongly resisted the ubiquitous drive for change, but also those who ushered it in with such relief and breathlessly eulogise her in a nod to their own sense of progression. Michelle Obama is making liberal America feel good about itself - but that hasn't stopped it from stereotyping her.

Because her identity straddles two of America's thorniest historical narratives - race and gender - Obama's representation in the media is more revealing than her husband's. Media reaction to her shows how the race narrative has a clearer trajectory of reparation than sexism. Sexism

lurks unmentioned, intimated or denied, while race is acknowledged and confronted, with most of America relieved to be set on a path aimed toward redress. This stage is some way off for the gender issue. Which is why in its breathless scramble to lionise its first African-American First Lady (phew!), a well-intentioned media resorts to crude fixations with her body and social function, and a faint but resonant disbelief that she might be smart and successful without that being tacitly qualified with "for a woman." I don't believe that the majority of the American press have yet developed the tools for representing her outside the traditional stereotypes of women as wives and mothers, and so this is how they frame their endorsement.

Importantly, Michelle Obama's professional success is largely silenced, or mentioned as a stick to beat her maternal or wifely credentials with. Maureen Dowd accused her in the New York Times of emasculating President Obama by talking of him as her equal and detailing his domestic inadequacies (he can't make beds, he forgets to put the butter away). This narrative of the outspoken wife jars today, and is a misrepresentation only Barack Obama himself has been firm in denouncing. There was outrage recently in the same paper when the Obama team let slip that she had delegated her wardrobe duties to a hired guru, an apparent failure to fulfil her prescribed role as the saviour and patron saint of US fashion. This function seemingly works to the exclusion of any potential intrusions into her husband's policy-making, a possibility the paper later baldly warned against as her

"too much like a politician and not enough like a wife." The two, apparently, are mutually exclusive. In noting the preoccupation with Obama's height and stature (she is often described as "statuesque" or "commanding") as damned-with-faint-praise criticism of a perceived lack of femininity, a Newsweek editorial commented earlier this year, "We don't know what to do with this model. We can't file Michelle Obama under WAG; she's no Carla Bruni, but she's not frumpy either." It's true - Obama is too complex for current understandings of the public female. Bring back Sarah Palin, and we can happily retreat into the gendered camps of wanting to sleep with her or wanting to be her.

This underlying disbelief at her ability to combine roles without disrupting her essential functions points to the full force and complexity of what Hillary was up against in running for commander-in-chief. The suspicion that she wouldn't be in the running without her husband - famously put to her explicitly by ABC News anchor Charles Gibson - coupled a basic suspicion of female success with the more specific and tacit claim that in remaining with Bill after his infidelities, Clinton cashed in on her role as a wife for the sake of her ambitions. Such double standards (he cheats on her, she stands by him, and she's in the wrong) litter the media history of Clinton's career, from MSNBC talk show host Chris Matthews' consistent description of her as an "uppity woman" with excessively masculine characteristics to the persistent suggestion that she lacked the "balls" for the top job.

It's claimed her overcompensation in

Michelle Obama's professional success is largely silenced, or mentioned as a stick to beat her maternal or wifely credentials with

this regard - she tried to play hardball to counter accusations of softness - led to her demise, but the reality is she chose one of two options. She was destined to be an over-aggressive "bitch" (another term levelled at her often by the conservative press) or a weak, irrational woman with ideas above her station. There was a fixation with Hillary's body too, although less of the ambivalence we see in the Obama representation because she was generally perceived as frumpy or unattractive, again a violation of established notions of womanhood. Hillary was more easily pigeonholed in this respect, because she didn't confuse the "jumped-up female" idea by also ticking to the "model wife" box, like Mrs Obama does. And Mrs Obama, of course, is First Lady rather than President - the media is more comfortable allowing her more leeway in her extension of her husband's role, than it would be allowing the wholesale shift that a female head would represent.

Underneath the backslaps and the titillated sense of progress resonates a deep unease about how to relate to Michelle Obama. She's speaking to too many big issues and on too many levels for a media that trades in crude essentialisms. In the shift from Hillary to Obama change is evident, but there remains a long way to go. Myth clings to both of the Obamas, and regardless of their successes they have already embedded on their country's cultural history forever. Keep watching the Michelle Obama "space" for further developments and adjustments in the US cultural attitudes on the race/gender axis.



Obama campaigners in North Carolina sit down for meeting
Photo: Teddy Nicholson

Barack's virtual omnipresence

Teddy Nicholson reveals the intricate workings of the Obama's online political outreach

Barack Obama's election as President on 4 November 2008 represented many different things to many different people. I had worked for seven months on his campaign, and for me it was the strongest possible vindication of the political power of grassroots organising.

Grassroots politics is nothing new, and often refers to a politician just being accountable to their base, but the idea of organising is relatively new. If grassroots politics is power flowing from the people up to the politician, then organising is the politician effectively harnessing that power in collaboration with the people. The Obama campaign was built from the ground up on the principle that there was widespread dissatisfaction with the status quo and a strong, untapped, desire for something different. If these people could be persuaded to talk to each other about they wanted, under the umbrella of campaigning, then they would most likely vote for Obama.

The entire campaign infrastructure was therefore designed to recruit, manage and coordinate volunteers. Volunteers were the lifeblood of everything that Obama did from when he announced his candidacy until the decisive moment he won the presidency and beyond (more on that development later). He is often seen as a charismatic politician; using the media to his advantage and giving fantastically staged speeches to thousands, but what was visible on television was only ever a fraction of the story.

I worked in Charlotte, North Carolina up to the Primary on 6 May, and on 1 May we were informed that Obama would be giving a speech there a few days before the Primary. In North Carolina, citizens could vote early up to two weeks before election day, and we were very keen to get as many people as possible to do this. We announced that we would be handing out tickets to the speech at polling venues, and once people arrived to pick up a ticket, we asked them to vote.

As everyone came into the arena, a volunteer at the door handed them a slip of paper with three names, each with a phone number. When Obama made his appearance to give his speech, he asked the 17,000 people in front of him to get out their cell phones and call the three people, politely ask them who they were voting for, and suggest they vote for him.

In the space of five minutes the campaign had just contacted 51,000 people in a county where 145,000 votes were cast on Primary day. Not only that but as a result, another few thousand people decided to volunteer before the election. They would then be asked to go out and talk to their neighbours, friends and family about the campaign and report back with the results.

This way, through a highly efficient organisation, the campaign was able to get its message out to every person in every county they wanted to talk to, not by Obama or his staff telling them, but by their neighbour or cousin or colleague or friend telling them. That was what was so powerful about the campaign, it allowed

people to organise themselves by giving them the tools and the direction to do so.

There is an interesting argument that says Mark Zuckerberg is responsible for Obama's victory, since he is the creator of the greatest organising tool the world has ever seen: Facebook. To be able to instantly create groups of like-minded people and coordinate their actions online is unbelievably powerful. The campaign knew this, and employed Chris Hughes, one of the co-founders of Facebook, to build them a version of it. This was my.barackobama.com, known as MYBO; taking Facebook and giving it a political direction. People could make their own groups, comment on each others' activities, write on their walls, but all with the broad, indirect guidance of the campaign.

Everything in MYBO could be coordinated with everything else the campaign did, and furthermore a tool was built into it that would give a MYBO user a list of voters in their neighbourhood to call or go and talk to. This meant that in areas of the country that the campaign itself couldn't reach, anyone with an internet connection and some spare time could act independently. This allowed the campaign to grow exponentially, and by 4 November there were roughly 8 million active volunteers, and 10 million people on the email list nationwide.

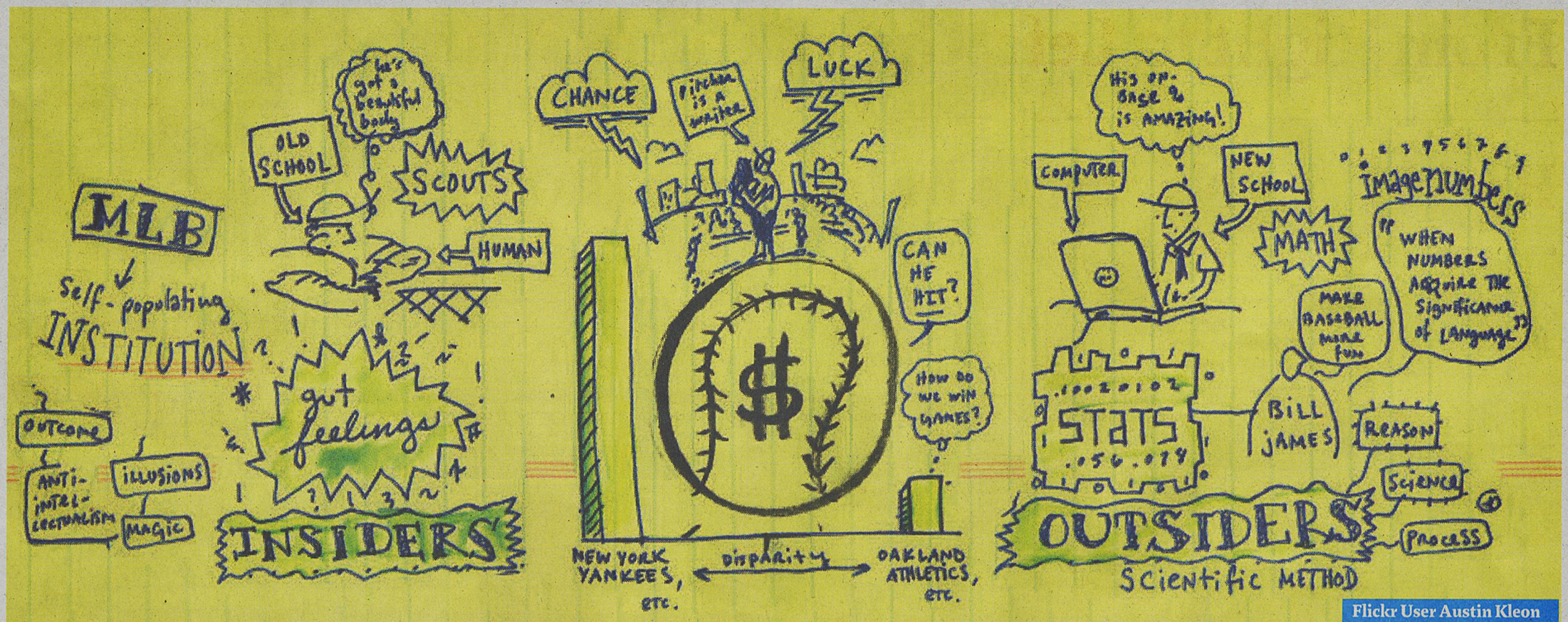
So what now? The email list is still there, MYBO is still online, and many campaign volunteers want to stay active. The day after the inauguration President Obama announced the creation of "Or-

Obama can instantly email 10 million people about a policy he is proposing; nearly ten times the number of people who watch CNN every night

ganising for America" - if the campaign was Obama for America, or OFA, this is known as OFA 2.0. This is the first real attempt at grassroots organising to govern, rather than to campaign, and its potential is huge.

Obama can instantly email 10 million people about a policy he is proposing; that is 15 per cent of the people who voted for him and nearly ten times the number of people who watch CNN every night. Also the tools developed in the campaign are still there, but are used differently: during the debate over the economic stimulus an email went out to everyone in a state that had a congressman or senator who was wavering asking people to call them to tell them to vote for the bill. After it passed, another email went out asking people to give them another call to thank them. In the first few weeks of Obama's Presidency OFA asked people to have their own meetings to talk about the economic crisis and what the government should do. Nearly 4,000 meetings were held over one weekend with more than 25,000 people attending. Their ideas then went back to OFA, and became political ammunition in Congress.

It is early days for OFA 2.0, but it is an ambitious idea, and one that is genuinely new. We don't know how well it will work, but it does show that the new philosophy that has taken root in American politics, and one that is likely to change the face of politics henceforth.



Alumni interviews: Michael Lewis

Richard Dewey discusses the LSE experience and Wall Street literature with author Michael Lewis

Michael Lewis is the bestselling author of *Liar's Poker*, *The New New Thing*, *Moneyball* and *The Blind Side*. His most recent book *Panic: The History of Modern Financial Insanity* was just released in December. He is a contributing writer to *New York Times Magazine* & *Slate Magazine* and authors a column for *Bloomberg News*.

When did you attend the LSE and what subject did you read?

I earned an MSc in the two year economics program during the 1983/1984 & 1984/1985 academic years.

What was your motivation or reason for attending the LSE?

I had a girlfriend that was going there, so that was probably the biggest motivating factor – I always tend to do things for the wrong reasons. I had also developed a real interest in economics during my senior year at Princeton and somehow got it in my head that the world was a conspiracy of people who understood economics. The LSE was one of the only places that offered a program for someone like me, someone who wanted to study it further, but hadn't studied much of it yet. It was a combination of a girl and an opportunity.

Who was your favorite professor or advisor or a person who had a substantial impact on you?

I had two teachers that had a substantial impact on me. Mervyn King was my advisor during my second year and he was great. I also had a professor by the name of Morris Pearlman, in my first year who I really adored.

What was your educational experience like at the LSE?

It was a little unconventional, because it's such a loose structure compared to the American system. What I really did, was engage in a reading program parallel to the course and spent a lot of time in the library.

What is your fondest memory of the LSE and your time there?

Believe it or not my fondest memory is probably playing basketball. Somehow I got wind that there was this LSE basketball team and that graduate students could play on it. I went to a meeting and there were 20-25 guys there, probably 2/3 were American. At the meeting it came out that there was a substantial athletic budget that really wasn't being used. Someone from the school basically said "this thing is financed if you want to do it." So we travelled not only around the United Kingdom, but also to France to play the Sorbonne and to Holland to play semi-pro teams. We played in two leagues: a British university league and also a semi-pro league where some of the players were paid.

The first year our best player got hurt and we lost in the national semi final game. In my second year we reached the national finals and lost by 5 or 6 points. The great thing about it was that we were self run, coaching ourselves and traveling without supervision. So my most memorable experience at the LSE was probably playing basketball and roaming all over Europe like carnies, paid for by the British government. It was like a rouge battalion from the military roaming around the country.

Did you do any writing at the LSE on the side or for the Beaver?

Well, my literary career began at the LSE when I started writing for the *Economist*. Right before I got to the LSE I had sort of randomly and amateurishly started submitting pieces to magazines back in the states and thought it might be something I'd like to do. When I arrived in London I discovered the *Economist* and found an ad in the Science & Technology section advertising a contest that awarded the winner a job at the magazine. When I returned home to New Orleans over break I visited a hospital and they showed me the latest medical gizmo (a breast cancer detection device). So I wrote an article about it and submitted it to the contest. I made the shortlist of three people for the job, but when I went in for the interview they said "You're American and you don't know anything about science." On my transcript the only science course I had taken was *Physics for Poets* at Princeton and I'd flunked it. The other two that had made the list were both PhD candidates – one at Oxford, one at Cambridge. They ended up running the piece and

"My literary career began at the LSE when I started writing for the *Economist*"

Matt Ridley, who was the science editor for the *Economist* at the time allowed me to submit other pieces. Word got around LSE that this American was writing for the *Economist* and at the time there was a quarterly literary magazine at the LSE. I wrote one of two pieces for this literary magazine, but I don't think I ever wrote for the *Beaver*.

What was the process like for writing *Liar's Poker*? Since many consider it the seminal book about 1980's Wall Street culture I'm wondering how it came about?

I started keeping a journal while I was at Salomon Brothers, not because I was going to write a book, but just to keep a journal. My initial proposal to the publisher (the book I sold) did not even mention my experiences at Salomon, it was just a dry history of Wall Street. Between the time I sold the book and the time I sat down to write it, I began taking more detailed notes about what was going on. That said, for most of the time I was there, I was a genuine participant. I didn't have one eye on the computer and one eye on the door, thinking "oh this is all just material."

Leaving Salomon was a combination of getting bored with the work and also knowing that to become wealthy to the point of not having to work any more that I would have to work another 10-15 years and probably be a different person at the end of it. I loved the idea of risk, I loved the idea of betting on myself to be a writer. But when I left, I was basically leaving a lot of money for nothing – I had no idea I was going to write *Liar's Poker*.

Did you have a sense while you were writing *Liar's Poker* that "This is good stuff, this is something special?" Did you have any idea that it would be such an enduring piece of work?

I remember being vastly amused by myself as I was writing it, so I thought that other people would probably be amused too. I didn't have anything but blind confidence – I didn't think it was going to fail. I handed it in to the publishers a couple of chapters at a time and they really liked it as well, so I didn't have any reason to think that it wouldn't be a success.

What was the transition like going from bond salesman to best selling author?

Weird. I think three weeks after it came out *Liar's Poker* was the best selling book in America. I wasn't quite prepared for that. The truth is, I'm never quite prepared to be taken seriously and I certainly wasn't prepared to be taken seriously then. So in a funny way I was reliving my experience at Salomon where I couldn't believe people were listening to me over the telephone about what they should do with their money. So *Liar's Poker* was the same

way in that I couldn't believe people cared that much about what I had written.

And then as you learn quickly as a writer, I had no control over how people interpret what you write. The audience I envisioned was someone thinking about going into Wall Street, someone who was kind of like, but five years younger and I thought I had written something that would dissuade them from entering Wall Street. I thought people would see how it all worked and decide not to follow the pot of gold, but to do something that they really liked. Instead I must have received over a thousand letters from people asking how to make it on Wall Street.

What was it like figuring out how to follow up *Liar's Poker*?

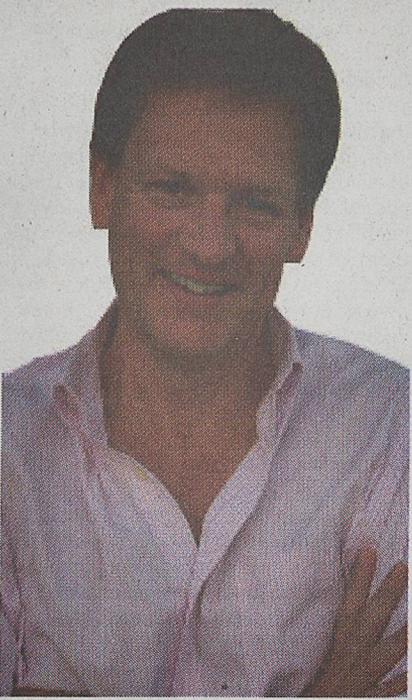
Well, I always had interests outside of the book life and wrote for magazines and newspapers, so I never thought I was going to live and die on how a book was received. I think writing should be judged like Olympic diving with one score for the difficulty of the dive and one score for the execution. *Liar's Poker* was a fairly simple dive that was executed very well and most of the praise came from the execution. My follow up was the *New New Thing* which I thought was a much more difficult dive and a better execution. I was very proud of it and for the first time felt like I was on the line again as an author.

Describe the difference in writing an online column for Bloomberg vs. the lengthy process of researching and writing a book.

My favorite thing to write is long form narrative, story telling, but I love the interaction with the column because it is basically Wall Street all around the world and it keeps me in touch with that world. The columns only take a few hours to write and then all the feedback comes in the first two hours after it's published. Then they go away as though they were never written. The books and magazine pieces have a lasting quality and that's very gratifying. With the longer stuff, you have to really craft it which is painful, but also very rewarding.

What projects or book are you currently working on and when can we expect them to be released?

I'm working on a book about fatherhood that will be released in April which is a collection of articles I have done for *Slate Magazine*. The big thing I'm working on now is a book about New Orleans which is where I'm from and Katrina. It is an extension of the *New York Times* piece "In Nature's Casino" and with any luck should be out sometime in the fall.



From Right to Left: the political columns

Hayek

Alex
Blance



Not quite holier than thou

I don't remember Jesus saying anything about being horrible to the Jews. Which is not that surprising, really, considering that he was Jewish himself. So it's probably fair to assume that he would have been less than chuffed to see his representative on Earth extend the warm hand of friendship to a Holocaust-denying priest.

Yet that is precisely what Pope Benedict did last month, when he rescinded the excommunication of Richard Williamson from the Catholic Church. Williamson seems to think that the Nazis were pretty decent chaps who have been given a bit of a bum deal by history; in actual fact, they didn't kill anything like six million Jews, and they never once murdered a Jew in a gas chamber. He also believes 9/11 was carried out by the US government and that Freemasons are conspiring against the Catholic Church. Mind you, as a priest, I suppose he is used to believing in stories with a less than certain base of evidence.

Once the Vatican realised the scale of the public relations disaster they had unleashed, they did rather belatedly demand that Williamson retract his comments - but stopped short of cancelling his return to the priesthood. Last week, he

issued a decidedly half-hearted apology for causing offence, while still refusing to back down from his original comments. He's now back in the UK, where the British Catholic Church have failed to condemn him. They're so forgiving, these Christians. Of course, Williamson's comments have to be understood in the context of at least eight hundred years of Christian antisemitism, which saw Jews placed into ghettos in the Papal States of Italy and expelled from England and Spain.

This sorry tale of religious unpleasantness, of course, is just the latest in a seemingly unending stream from religious leaders of all stripes. The Pope approvingly quoted a Byzantine emperor who called Islam "evil and inhuman", while extremist Islamic clerics themselves rarely hold back in their criticism of Jews. Judaism, meanwhile, is abused as religious backing for the worst excesses of militant Zionism in the Middle East. Islam is abused to justify the judicial murder of homosexuals in many countries around the world, while even the famously moderate Church of England seems to say very little these days except how much it hates gay people.

We are living through a time of great social upheaval and enormous economic

uncertainty, when people are questioning the consumerist values of the last few decades. Surely this is a golden opportunity for religions to give us a sense of their alternative vision of what the world should look like. Religious leaders love harping on about how superior they are to the rest of us - Christians are oh-so-loving, while Islam, we are constantly reminded, means 'peace'. If there is anything worth saving about these defunct belief systems, let them tell us what it is: this is the time for them to proclaim loud and clear what a society based on love, forgiveness and peace, rather than greed and self-interest, should look like. But if they want us to pay them any attention at all, they'll have to stop throwing insults at each other and everyone else first. God knows, we're good enough at that without their help.

If religious leaders want to lead, they'll have to stop acting like playground bullies, pushing around anyone they don't like the look of, and start providing a model of love and tolerance that the rest of us can aspire to. Even Jesus would probably agree with that.

Laski

This writer is an
election candidate

Britain's political awakening

It is rare to feel vindicated by a police report on the political situation in any country, but I felt a little prophetic when I read the Guardian article on the situation in Britain on 23 February. According to the article, Superintendent David Hartshorn, head of the Met's public order branch, fears that the victims of the recession will become 'footsoldiers' of a mass civil unrest. The banking sector, which has continuously dished out millions, is now 'a viable target' of protesters.

'Known activists' will find plenty of combustible material to ignite as formerly apathetic working class and 'middle class' people discover that their jobs, mortgages and savings are at risk, and take action to remedy the situation.

Hartshorn explained: 'History shows that some of those disputes - Wapping, the miners' strike - have caused great tensions in the community and the police have had difficult times policing and maintaining law and order.'

It's a shame the Met is prepared to take on the angry taxpayer but never thought it their job to maintain law and order in the banking sector before

it squandered hundreds of billions of pounds in its artificial attempt to prop up the ailing 'real' economy. A shame, but not a surprise.

After a year of denials, the British government has admitted last week to having handed over terror suspects to the US for a secret rendition flight to US prisons in Afghanistan. I shudder to think how 'known activists' will be treated in this country for daring to question a system that places profit ahead of people.

That is not the only reason I am worried about my predictions being shared by the police. We all know that in times of prolonged economic downturn, there can be cataclysmic changes to established networks of civil society.

We recently saw wild-cat strikes spread across oil refineries in this country with many workers identifying with the slogan 'British jobs for British workers'. That had been Brown's promise several years ago, and it was also the slogan of Mosley's Blackshirts in the 1930s.

The dual threat of government cuts and repression, alongside the rise of the far right, should make the kind of mass demonstrations seen recently in Greece,

France, Italy, Ireland and Iceland appear very much as a rational political response to the recession.

It should be heartening that the political awakening on the European continent has not left Britain behind. The 'People's Charter' being launched next week by seven trade unions, several Labour MPs, the Communist Party of Britain (Morning Star), Respect and the Socialist Workers Party is a significant initiative aimed at kick-starting a national resistance movement against the effects of the recession.

The Charter aims to collect a million signatures to back measures such as nationalisation of banks, an emergency action plan to build three million new council houses, more jobs, better public services, justice and fairness for all groups that are discriminated against, restoration of union rights, action on climate change and troops home.

That level of support would undermine police claims that 'the direct interference of the masses in historical events', as Trotsky put it, is all about manipulation, irrationality and fanaticism. It is, in fact, about time that the beguiled and the dispossessed rose up in Britain too.

Viridian

Enjoying the simple things in life

Justus Rollin

Environment and Ethics Officer



What do you get when you put together seven LSE students, passion for the environment and train tickets? A trip to Snowdonia!

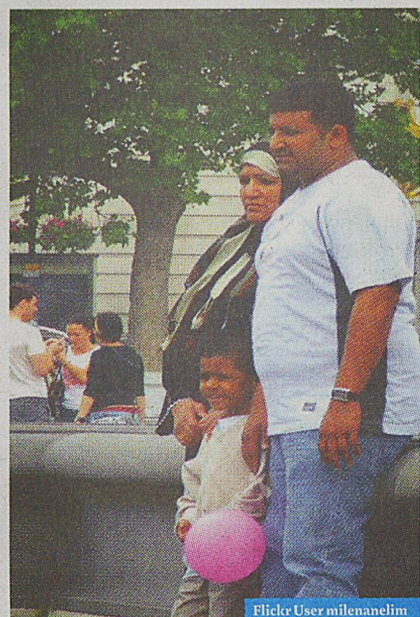
Not least because it's good to escape the London buzz, the trip is also for a visit to CAT - the Centre for Alternative Technology.

"Founded in 1974 the Centre for Alternative Technology is a display and education centre offering practical ideas and information on environmentally sound practices to everyone from the casual visitor to the postgraduate student," reads the prospectus. However, CAT is so much more. It's a place where people live and work on technological solutions that are needed to handle the environmental challenges of our time. It is a place of learning and exchange through many short courses, such as building a windmill or organic gardening, as well as further learning through the opportunity to do one's MSc at CAT. It is this unique combination of information, learning, exchange and working on the forefront of social change that fascinates me.

Moreover, it is the simplicity of organic gardening, compost toilets and clever insulation with natural materials - technology and knowledge that can be applied everywhere, by almost everyone without much financial capital and expert knowledge. Maybe it's pure romanticism, but it is precisely this simplicity that I find attractive - being able to build your own house, to make your own toilet and to grow your own food. Sure, it takes time to learn and to put into practise, time that we may not have in our busy modern lives. We have technical devices and wealth unprecedented in human history, but we are left more busy and more stressed. No one can find nuts when walking through the wood, or herbs for a delicious tea. This sounds like the ultimate alienation (sometimes referred to as progress) to me.

The trip to Wales, the visit to CAT and a hike on a hill with a lie-down in my sleeping bag made it clear to me that there is so much more to LSE than writing essays and just living in London.

Measured musings



Amongst election fever and fervent campaigning, I decided to escape the madding crowd for a couple of days this week and flew to Oslo for a brief breather.

Having been to Sweden slightly more than a month ago, I expected the similar Scandinavian stereotype of tall, blond-haired, Nordic-types. Once I started to get over the high concentration of H&M stores and McDonalds littering the city, I realised that the Scandinavian stereotype was harder to find compared to skin colours more similar to mine, and the trusty Lonely Planet guide informed me that 25 per cent of Oslo's inhabitants were made up of immigrants.

There should not be, however, an assumption that a high number of immigrants translates into a more tolerant society or the absence of racism. Perhaps this might be reading too much into nu-

anced gestures, but there was certainly a tinge of racism in the air towards my Asian travel companions. After learning that Norway only allowed Muslims to call for prayers in 2000, and at a maximum of 60 decibels which is what Muslims consider to be a "whisper", perhaps this feeling was not too far off.

Bringing this issue closer to home, an article in the most recent Economist highlighted Britain's difficulties in dealing with the country's Muslims. There has been a debate in the cabinet on whether to prioritise the war over ideas and values or the one against terrorism, and it is hard to find a cohesive policy that combats the social, economic and cultural gap between the Muslims, particularly in poorer areas in Britain, and the rest of society. The shadows hanging over from the bomb attacks in London in 2005 are hard to shake off and complicate matters when it comes to policy making.

The recent calls for "British jobs for British workers" and the current economic conditions do not bode well for the future of immigrants in general in the United Kingdom. Jacqui Smith, Home Secretary, outlined plans to bar tens of thousands of foreign workers from outside Europe from coming to work in Britain last week. This includes allowing skilled migrants to only take jobs in the event of shortages within certain occupations. According to The Guardian, these initiatives will affect those from India, Pakistan and parts of Africa in particular. According to Smith, more needs to be done "to put British workers first".

These initiatives are similar to immigration policies that have been implemented in Australia, and are a manifestation of the fears of economic nationalism and the increasingly extremist forms of nationalism that experts are warning against.

In such an economic climate and with the growing feeling that we need to protect what is rightfully ours (which is contentious in itself), perhaps we need to do more to quell our worst instincts. The temptation to curb the trend of immigration and economic globalisation is perhaps irresistible, but never at the expense of giving equal opportunities to all and avoiding social barriers to integration in any society or country.

Shibani Mahtani
Features Editor

PERSPECTIVES ON POLITICS

Speaking with style and substance

Dhiraj Nainani presents rhetoric as a formal art and welcomes its potential revival

I like Barack Obama. I think he speaks well.

Amongst the politically-minded crowds of LSE students, making a statement of this sort can either lead to appreciation, debate, or outright hostility. But this is understandable. After all, the LSE prides itself on being a hotbed of student revolution and political acumen, and by making statements such as the one above you are bound to encounter some sort of opposition.

Despite this, I'll maintain what I said earlier: I like Barack Obama; in particular, I like the way he speaks.

Hold off any potential argument that may rise in your head for the moment, and allow me to elaborate. Please do not think that I would have voted for Obama purely for his ability to speak. I'm also not suggesting that Obama's speeches are written solely by him – far from it. Nor am I proposing that the decorated John McCain could not speak well; or that Obama is the best-spoken President I have encountered (although George W. Bush has a track record unto his own). However, Obama does know something about the art of rhetoric, and knows how to deliver a pre-written, hackneyed speech with style.

Simply put, rhetoric is the art of persuasion. Aristotle laid claim to the title of "the grandfather of rhetoric", when he wrote *Ars Rhetorica* (The Art of Rhetoric) in the fourth century BC. This book is the primer on the subject: every single book that has commented on it since (and there have been many) owe their roots to this.

But how did this art impact the world? Historically, the greatest orator of all time employed rhetoric in Roman courts. Cicero was a man respected far and wide for his ability to make Roman audiences fall under his sway: he could make them scream, cry and cheer at his whim. The Founding Fathers of America were aware of its power. Abraham Lincoln used it to lower his audience's expectations and then deliver powerful speeches; Martin Luther King Jr. employed it dexterously when he uttered the words 'I have a dream'. Churchill, Wilde, Shakespeare, Locke, all were masters of rhetoric.

But the art in its true form began to wane in the 1800s, when the classics fell out of fashion and liberal arts were not seen to be a productive usage of time. Barring the towering figures of Churchill and King, the status of the art was brought down to mere rabble-rousing.

Cicero was a man respected far and wide for his ability to make Roman audiences fall under his sway

Which brings us to Obama. Simply put, Barack Obama has put the art of rhetoric back in the political speech. For example, he uses a variety of techniques that Cicero made famous – such as the tricola (using a series of three to emphasise points: "Tonight, we gather to affirm the greatness of our nation, not because of the height of our skyscrapers, or the power of our military, or the size of our economy..."). He also uses praeteritio (drawing attention to a subject by not discussing it) and antonomasia (connecting to the audience without explicitly suggesting how).

The tools that made him arguably famous, however, are the anaphora and epiphora. The former relates to repeating a phrase at the start of every sentence ("It's the answer told by lines that stretched around schools... It's the answer spoken by young and old... It's the answer..."); the latter is the same, but at the end of every sentence ("Yes we can").

And these formal techniques are yielding results. For example, The New Yorker featured an article by Professor James Wood, a literary scholar from Harvard who analysed the merits of Obama's victory speech. Commentators have commended the way Obama makes the audience feel

more intelligent, putting him at 'college reading level' as opposed to his predecessor's '8th-grade reading level'. His own speechwriters have gleefully admitted that although they help by writing the speech, he is the one who brings it to life.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, rhetoric itself has begun to find a greater appreciation. Ivy League universities have now been joined by others across America to offer courses in the art. The Rhetoric Society of America also seems to be attracting higher-than-average applications for membership. Back home, Kings offers the option, while LSE doesn't seem to – yet.

I'll be the first to admit that Obama cannot be credited with bringing rhetoric back to life single-handedly. But he did do something right in delivering the speeches the way he did, because at the end of the day all your policies and opinions come to naught if you cannot communicate them well enough to your audience.

So I'll end by repeating what I said at the beginning (my own anaphora and epiphora, if you will): I think he speaks well. For that, if for nothing else, he should be respected.

Political Personae

Madeeha Ansari

"Politician", strictly speaking, is meant to be synonymous with "law-maker", "official", and "representative". Where I come from, it is a dirty word. There is a vaguely disreputable aura clinging to its edges, suggesting empty slogans, pot-bellied corruption and ruthless exploitation. After age ten, kids are ridiculed when they say they want to grow up to be Prime Minister. Perhaps it is of necessity that they go about their plans in a rather sneaky way.

One of the wonders of the First World is that the path to Parliament seems quite respectable in the eyes of the public. Students here have fewer qualms about openly planning future careers in politics. At the same time, no matter what one's geographical location may be, there is a broad stereotype for those who actually attain success in the field. This became glaringly evident the first time I hung 'round the Beaver office. The newbie editors, for lack of productive things to do, decided to look busy by flipping through the Beaver archives. Our pretext: getting the "feel" of the paper. In reality we ended up playing a unique kind of guessing game. Looking at Week 8 manifestos over the decades, Sri and I would place bets on who won, then simply flip over to the next issue. It was uncanny how we could predict most results through simple scrutiny of candidates' photographs. The

size of the smile is a clichéd but very real indicator.

Therefore, it may be safe to assert that it takes a certain kind of individual to woo a nation or a student body. Given the overwhelmingly male nature of the Sabbatical team in the past few years, we shall refer to said individual as "he". He, then, is characterised by boundless energy, patience and (unsurprisingly), ambition. By extension, that encapsulates much of what it takes to win endorsements; circumnavigate the wrong controversies; and be suitably vocal about the right ones. In all, it cultivates a very specific, glib kind of charm. While he will always be popular among the ladies, one can never tell what the good politician really believes. Perhaps that is why it is a good idea to enter that persona as a student, so as to be comfortable in it when it is time to enter the MP race.

However, that might have been too brutal a generalisation. There will always be those who are carried to the pinnacle of power on waves of real passion. Not everyone can be Nelson Mandela, but then not everyone can share a similar context. Even stable societies can breed people who genuinely care about the welfare of the populace and end up making some kind of difference. Even where I come from, somebody has to take on the stigma attached to the word "politician". We can only hope to identify those whose smiles are truly sincere.

The Great Silent Majority

Marion Koob ponders the general air of apathy at LSE

The average student only has a vague idea of the political events which will be taking place next week on campus and know little of its potential ramifications. By this, I of course mean the Students' Union elections. To really comprehend how this process affects the random student plucked from Houghton Street, however, requires an observation of how the Students' Union itself affects his or her life on a day to day basis. And although the Union's presence and role is kept in a state of blissful ignorance, the conclusion of this endeavour would undoubtedly be: a lot.

The Union, is after all, what makes life on campus so exciting; the campaigns, the protests, the events, the heated debates and, yes, even the occupations. Also, the media group undoubtedly plays an important role in student life, although my claims in this may be slightly biased. The low level of awareness towards LSE's main student organisation would therefore disconcerting to any outsider. Why is there so little marked interest, and how can more attentive audiences be generated?

Feeling compelled to listen to at least the sabbatical hustings by my sense of 'citizen' duty as a Union member, I attended last Thursday's Union General Meeting. Several elements of the happenings struck me immediately as I listened in to the speeches. The Old Theatre was far from being full, even for such an important

I believe that asking an average student to give up three hours, especially in the middle of the day, is expecting rather too much

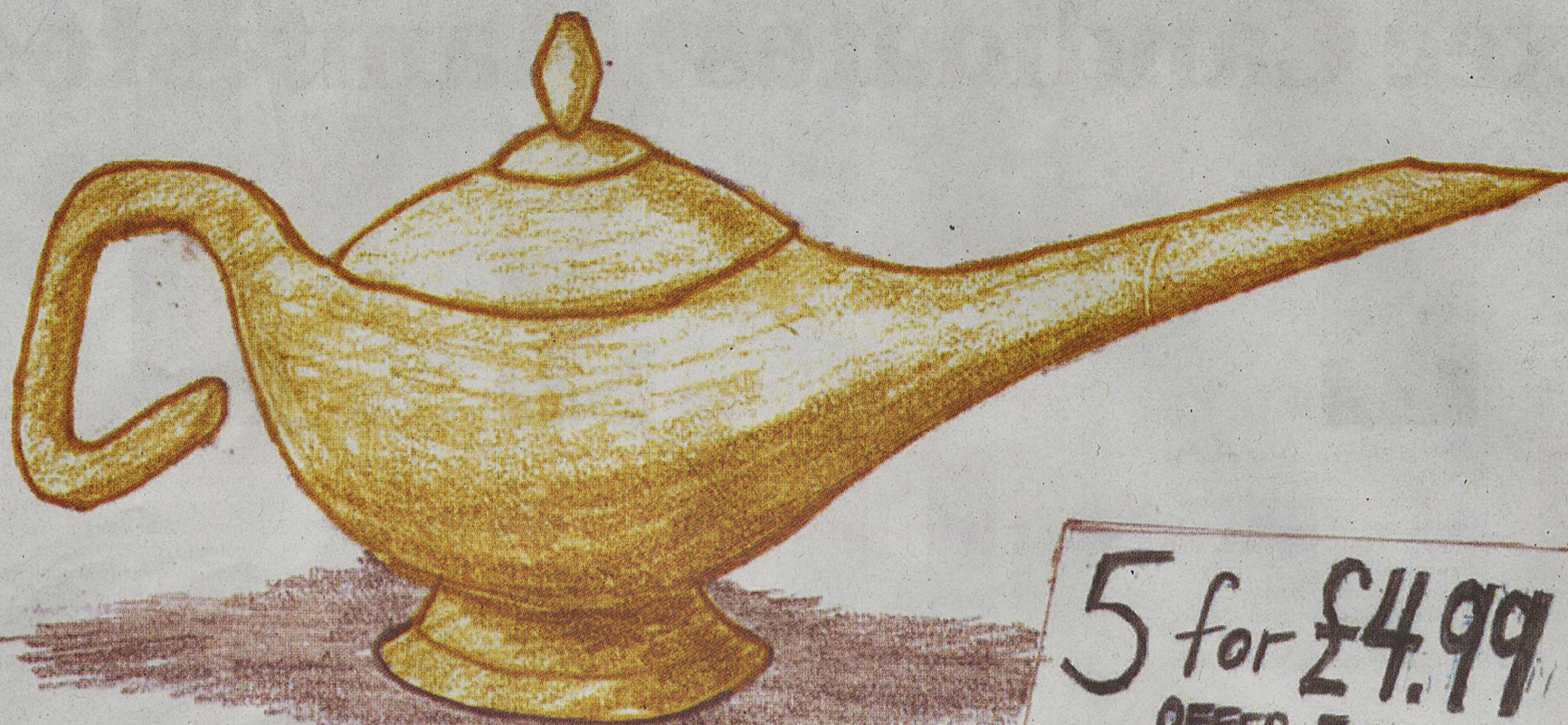
occasion.

True, many of my acquaintances were surprised when I told them that I was going to see the candidate's speeches: they had no idea that they were going on. To notice an array of familiar faces in the room, however, was quite disheartening. In this light, the Students' Union appears as a complacent body of students, all seeking to fuel their political ambitions against each other, while the media group, pretending that everyone else thinks this is important, watches on, playing journalist. Although I despise this perspective, I was unable to obstruct it from my thoughts. And yet another fact

comes to my mind as the meeting unfolds. There are only two women in the run for the much prized sabbatical positions, and are both competing against each other for the same position. Why is there a bizarre offsetting in the gender ratio among these positions?

The speeches were the typical political routine: blaming the previous holder of the position for how awful the state of things are, and promising to revolutionise the world by the flick of a magic wand, swearing solemnly to improve teaching. One candidate even went as far to threaten to turn the SU into the AU. The speeches for the non-sabbatical officers went on for two more hours in the Quad, but I believe that asking an average student to give up three hours, especially in the middle of the day, is expecting rather too much.

The general feeling that Students' Union politics is somewhat exclusive along with the lack of neutral advertisement on the matter may be why UGM attendance has been so low in the past few weeks. The opportunity to participate in a direct way in the working of the union and hold the officers directly to account is only given at the LSE; after all, we are the only university in the UK which holds weekly meetings. There is no reason to be intimidated by it. The Students' Union's sole purpose of existence is to help and make life more agreeable for the average student. It is an interesting paradox that the subject of its concern does not exhibit similar concern about its workings.



Cartoon: Chun Han Wong

Commercial campaigning

Katie LaPotin takes a swing at the modern day marketing of popular political products

Election campaigns are arguably the most important component of election frenzy. However, once the excitement dies down, one can afford to be pensive and think: do campaigns really give a good indication of the leader behind them?

A frequently mentioned term in my political communications class is "Americanism," or the affect that American-style campaigning has had on the political campaigns of other nations. Growing up in the US where elections are candidate-centred, much of the focus was on the candidate and not the issues or platforms of the parties. Newspapers printed stories about the personal lives of the candidates and families; television adverts would often include shots with the candidate's children; and sex scandals often led to resignation or presidential censure. In the UK, which has always been more party-centred, this is mostly restricted to party

leaders. In fact, while it is a badge of honour for an American congressman to have been born and raised in the constituency they represent, the vast majority of MPs in the UK did not live in their constituencies before applying for the seat with the party.

Historically, the focus on the candidates did represent why they, as individuals, would or would not be good leaders. Candidates who are too young or too old are often criticised for these traits; experience, trust, and honesty are often considered to be positives in political candidates. Or at least this was the case when Margaret Thatcher and John F. Kennedy ruled their respective nations.

Parties today, however, will go after what they think will win elections (or what polling and focus groups tell them will!) So, candidates often shape themselves according to what they think the voters want - not who they truly are. It is no longer about the person, but a product

that can be manipulated to the consumer's taste. The growth of advertising in the field of political campaigning has only helped to accelerate this.

Sure, there are the notable exceptions: the Saatchi adverts printed in UK newspapers were designed in anticipation of Brown's decision to call an election in 2007, and demonstrate the Prime Minister's "seriousness," among other character traits. But voters, especially in the United States, do not want a stereotypical lawyer-figure running their government, they want a man or woman who they could go to the pub with for a beer and a chat (or at least that's how they claim George W. Bush was elected!)

Some of the most potent television adverts in the United States were effective not because they represented the candidate as a leader but they made a case (true or not) for why the opponent should not be elected. These would include the

"Daisy ad" run by Democratic President Lyndon B. Johnson against Republican Barry Goldwater in 1964, focusing on a little girl essentially being blown up by a nuclear bomb, and the military spoof ads President George H.W. Bush ran in 1988 against Democrat Michael Dukakis, effectively painting him as unfit to lead a war.

Of course no modern-day article on election strategy can neglect to feature a tidbit on the recent Obama campaign. Along with this theme, it can be claimed that the product "sold" by the campaign was not Obama himself but actually the ideas of hope and change. And regardless of whether Obama becomes one of America's best or worst presidents, he will inevitably let people down not because he himself failed to govern, but because he failed to deliver the product his campaign advertised. And that's the fault of marketing, not Obama himself.

Fortunately for us here at the LSE, one

of the next major elections of a global power will take place just two tube stops away from campus! For those of us who follow Westminster politics regularly, we've already seen the groundwork being laid for Conservative leader David Cameron and Prime Minister Brown's political duel next spring. Cameron, even more so than former Prime Minister Tony Blair, has become a singular force for his party. Thus, whether the Tories choose to market Cameron himself or the idea of change in government as their product will likely shape the marketing strategy for both parties.

Political campaigning is, well, no longer political—it should really be called "marketing campaigning." It truly makes you question what you are voting for on Election Day, and what the product will truly deliver on your behalf in government.

The elder stakesmen speak

Rahul Agarwal hopes for an outreach to postgrads

With the upcoming LSE Students' Union elections, this will be most Masters students' fourth or fifth experience with university union democracy. It's interesting to see how perceptions of what are truly important and relevant in our university life have changed from our undergraduate days.

The Students' Union is there for the students as our united voice in university, and run by students with different agendas and interests, so it is important to choose representatives who reflect one's point of view. The School of Oriental and African Studies, my previous university, was incredibly active, so I know how student democracies work; they are interestingly subject to the same push and pull factors as governmental democracies. Every candidate appeals to some interest group, and the LSE, like SOAS, will be segmented in the same way. Whether it is by course, year, political leaning, ethnicity, or social circle, everyone has a natural bias. The most successful candidate is the one with the broadest appeal and thus one who bag the huge prize of the postgraduate vote. We are segmented as well, but generally have similar wants

and needs and look more towards actual details of manifestos as opposed to the glitz and glamour of the candidates. Since we haven't experienced an "LSE election" before and probably won't again, peer pressure isn't really as much of a factor either.

Students' unions have two functions: to provide services to students vis a vis the administration, such as bars, media arms and socials; and to take a stance on campaigns and issues in our world today.

When I was a fresher, I saw our university union as being hugely important and influential when it came to prioritising issues such as denouncing the Iraq war, promoting fair trade products and emphasizing the anti-racist nature of the institution. On the other side, I also wanted better Christmas parties, a more comfy common room and regular Friday night socials, which were promised by practically all the candidates.

Now in university once more, I look back and see how the maturity of a postgrad has altered my priorities. Talking to fellow Masters students, many of us are aloof from university campaigns about global issues, maybe as we have realised that students' unions can make a very marginal change in the real world and can

generally just take a public stand.

Now, our newfound practicality ensures that we are focusing all our effort on our future careers. This is not to say that we do not support student objectives, but those that are realistically achievable and closer to our lives, such as opposition to variable tuition fees. Postgraduates also prioritize the less "sexy" things such as extended library hours, more student department representative meetings, cheaper photocopying or making sure student halls are safer. I do not claim to speak for all postgraduates, but it's fair to say that because of our short time here and our inundation of work, we focus on the practical short-term benefits that the union can offer us.

My advice to those who are running for election is that they should refocus their attention on the postgraduate population and realise that while most of us do not bother to participate, we are a significant bank of potential votes. Candidates' campaigns do need to be clever, professional and broadly based to appeal to undergrads. However, by also emphasising and highlighting postgrads' interests to get our attention to vote, they could have a significant advantage over their rivals that could make numbers in a tight election.

Listings: This week around campus

Thurs 5th March - 5 pm End of LSE SU elections

Tuesday 3rd March

LSE Debate and African and Caribbean societies present:
This House believes that England would never elect a Black Prime Minister
Chair: Lewis Iwu - former world champion and current Oxford Union President
D202, 7 pm

LSE Hindu Society Sewa Week event:
Buffet Dinner and Quiz on Sewa/Slum-dog Millionaire
Chowki restaurant, 7 pm

Wednesday 4th March

LSE Hindu Society presents:
Movie screening-LAGAAN
Drinks/snacks to be served
NAB213, 6 pm

Thursday 5th March

Sewa Week Penny trail
Houghton Street

Sewa Week Soup Kitchen
(Volunteering details with Hindu Society)

Friday 6th March

The LSESU Environment Society presents: GREEN FORUM FRIDAY

- "Perspectives on Green Careers"
Talk by LEAD International, Global Action Plan and LSE Careers Services
G108, 3-4 pm

- "What is the Role of Carbon Markets in the Global Economy?"
Panel discussion with representatives from Merrill Lynch, SustainAbility etc.
Wolfson Theatre (NAB), 4-6 pm

- "Green Networking Fair" with information and opportunities from leaders of the environmental field in London
NAB, 6-8 pm

LSE SU Albanian Society presents:
Doing Business in South East Europe: What Albania Offers?
Public lecture (and free drinks reception)
Speaker: Gjoke Uldedaj, President of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Tirana, Albania.
Hong Kong Theatre, 6.30 - 8 pm

AU Exec Candidates' Manifestos

PRESIDENT



Charlie Glyn

The AU has made my uni experience incredible, and being on the Exec this year as Club Liaisons Officer

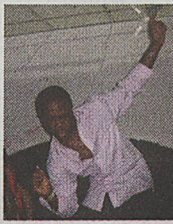
has given me an even greater insight to how it works. I want to build on this by:

- *A termly newsletter to raise awareness of clubs' achievements
- *Improvement on the travel reimbursement scheme

*Increased communication across the AU with Club Captains

*Making sports at LSE even more accessible to all

With 3 years of sport at LSE and an 'AU degree' already under my belt, there is no better candidate for AU President than Charlie Glyn!



Josh Olomolaiye

"Rosa Parks sat so Martin Luther could walk,

Martin Luther walked so Barack Obama could run, Barack Obama ran so all the children could fly

So I'ma spread my wings, U can meet me in the sky." - JayZ

Josh for President, the AU needs me.

Vote in the Quad on Wednesday, 10-5 and Thursday 10-7!

SECRETARY



Nadir Gohar

Hi, I'm Nadir, the penguin last Wednesday.

This is why I should be your AU secretary:

In Swahili, Nadir Gohar roughly translates to 'AU secretary' - FACT I am fluent in 10 languages including English and FC chat. The other 8 I have made up myself. (Shows creativity and resourcefulness - attributes essential for the stressful nature of the job) I turned down the position of 'King' in Turkmenistan to pursue my lifelong ambition of being AU secretary.

Even in the most traumatic circumstances, I can type 1000 words a second. Without hands and blindfolded.

Vote Nadir Gohar - It could be aaaaariteeee!



Effy Osoba

If you didn't get it from (or you were unable to see) my escapades on stage on the night of AU hustings, I am a

very passionate person...ahem. Those that know me can tell you I have been a dedicated member of the AU on and off the court for two years (and more to come).

Hopefully, as a member of the exec I promise you my fellow Auers I will try my best and use the "passion" I have to give you a greater AU next year (and not just by typing minutes and handling administrative affairs).

TREASURER



Matthew Box

Qualifications: I have an A Grade at GCSE Mathematics and a lovely signature for cheques...

The AU exec will have even more money next year so...

Aims:

The AU should cover the costs of minibuses to obscure fixtures where LSE teams have to rely on getting a tube to somewhere ridiculous like zone 6;

The AU to fund rail expenses for all training to Berrylands, not just matches - cos' £3.50, 2/3 times a week is bloody expensive!;

Let the AU cover your expenses to play and train, so you can keep your overdraft free for the night out afterwards!



Dan Fountain

Did not submit a manifesto.



Kate Henry

There once was a girl called Henry, Who admittedly liked to drink plenty, She was a netball athlete And at school was a mathlete So please for Treasurer vote Henry!



Tom Jacques

It doesn't take long at LSE to realise that the AU is a total result, giving the chance to make friends, play sports

and get involved in some quality banter, and it's for this reason I want to get involved in the Exec.

As treasurer I promise that ALL clubs from Aerobics to Yoga will receive the funding they require to fulfil their potential both on and off the field.

Funds for increased AU events as well as pursuing improvements to our facilities are key aims, so vote Tom Jacques for treasurer!



Clare Pickering

Vote Clare Pickering for AU Treasurer. While studying Accounting and Finance, all through my lectures

I daydream of how to raise extra drinking money for Wednesday nights, like subsidized reefs and vodka redbulls.

I will also fight to have free condoms for everyone on AU nights, increased funding for training equipment at Berrylands and those sports played elsewhere and to bring the Barrel back to LSE.

I've been fined at the last two Carols so obviously there is no one better to take your AU experience to the next level?!

COMMUNICATIONS



Rob Fenton

Ladies and Gents, vote for me for AU communication officer!! I love the AU and I believe it is an integral part

of the university experience.

I will make it my aim to encourage more teams to get involved in the Athletics Union. By doing so we will bring in fresh faces to achieve a bigger and better AU!

I promise to communicate events earlier and in greater force by setting up facebook groups and creating a global email list for all the AU. I am out every Wednesday night so feel free to communicate with me in any way you want...



Alice Pelton

As the only candidate who has edited and consistently written for The Beaver, liaised with various members of

the media group and worked within the school's public events program; I know how to get the AU's message out better than anybody.

My passion for the AU lies in its appreciation that university is not just about grades but the social lessons that students can use for the rest of our lives.

If elected I will work hard to publicise the AU in and around campus; you will never hear anyone utter the phrase; "Who the fuck is Alice?"

LIAISONS



Chris Cattermole

I love the AU, it's the best part of LSE life but does anyone actually have a clue what liaisons does?

I will make the position more transparent and accountable within the exec setup.

I have a proven track record liaising with different clubs to create the first ever Calella hockey team; made up of rugby, football and mainly hockey players.

My main aim is to give the smaller clubs a voice and increase their participation in everything AU based and to generally make the AU a more inclusive organisation.



Hannah Davies

For those of you who did not see my intoxicated speech on Wednesday - I'm Hannah and am running for AU

Liaisons.

I'm Social Sec of the Netball Club; 1st team player; NEVER missed an AU night in two years; fined twice at the Carol; organised Netball tour to Calella and most importantly live for the AU!

Please vote for me - I feel very strongly about minority clubs.

EVENTS



Hugo Adefope

The AU events this year were quality, so apart from carry on the traditions, I will cook up the odd genius event.

Unfortunately, it was mainly the big clubs that came out in force, e.g. football, netball, rugby. This deeply saddens me, there will be better representation from all the clubs. I know for a fact there are plenty of fit girls (and boys) in all the smaller clubs, so in turn will create events that cater to the whole of the AU.

A wise man once said: The better the event, the more drunken the girls. (Adefope 2009).



Emma Heap

Want your AU Life to come on HEAPS and BOUNDS? Want to continue your AU degree? As AU Events Officer,

amongst others, I will:

*Host INTRA AU Sporting events throughout the year to encourage intra team bonding in a competitive and social atmosphere.

*Ensure the BARREL returns with a BANG, taking the BARREL to GIMPE-RIAL(!)

*Organise a LOCK-IN(occupation) in the TUNS- Pints are just too pricey!

*Instigate a pool ladder.

As hockey captain I've shown I'm organised and dedicated to the AU, let me give something back to the only part of LSE that I love.



Rees Sutton

Vote Rees Sutton for AU Events officer! The AU has been amazingly important to me during

my time at LSE and I want to play an important role in it. As part of the Executive I want to further promote the AU to students and enhance its importance to existing members. I want to:

*Make Wednesday nights and the Tuns un-missable

*Successfully introduce more new events as seen with Party in the Park and Mr LSE this year

*Get more minority sports out on Wednesdays

*Negotiate the Barrel's return.

LSE finds profitable trade in body blows



Photo: Alfred Li

David Woodbridge

In the hierarchy of exoticism within British sport, taekwondo undoubtedly ranks somewhere up in the nether regions. Unlike, say, football, a game which you can deduct from its name involves at some level the lower limbs and a spherical object, there's nothing quite so obvious about taekwondo (unless you happen to speak Korean).

This exoticism holds true in the competitive, tournament aspect of the martial art, too; rather than bus rides to muddy pitches in the Home Counties, the LSE Taekwondo team gets whisked away by train to attractive, castled, medieval cities in the North East to trade kicks with the rest of the country's university teams in the National Championships.

As with our last tournament in Cambridge, however, the prospect of competing in such romantic surroundings came with a price - in this case, having to be at King's Cross Station at a quarter to seven on Saturday. Although this paled in comparison to the corresponding price to the AU, which involved the exchange of quite a considerable sum of money for train tickets. Thanks, guys.

Upon arrival at Durham, everybody fitted comfortably into their weight categories, a relief to those of us - Stella and Kooyeon - who had been foregoing such luxuries as 'breakfast' and 'food in general' to do so. I hadn't actually been engaging in such madness, owing to an absurd metabolism, so would just like to point out that Yibo's attempts to make me feel hungry by eating mass-produced clammy Tesco chicken pies on the train in front of me failed miserably.

The theme of Yibo and food is, incidentally, a recurring and perhaps the central theme of this saga - ironic, considering he wasn't competing and only came along as a cheerleader-forgoing miniskirts and pom-poms, thank God - so just bear in mind that Yibo likes food and may also be fat.

Anyway, with the sports hall containing a myriad of young people in doboks warming up, cracking their knuckles, popping their shoulders and engaging in all manner of other machismo bullshit, the atmosphere was charged, and it was in this context that our Treasurer, Alex, stepped up for his fight.

He's actually sworn me to secrecy regarding the outcome, so all I'll say is that, after dispatching his opponent with an upside-down 540° spinning back hook kick never before seen performed by a yellow belt, while simultaneously causing all the suspiciously attractive minge of the Bristol and Newcastle University teams to swoon and propose marriage, the people

of Durham elected him to their Bishopric and the University donated the castle to him as a personal gift.

What totally didn't happen to the Rt. Rev. Alex Boyce was, performing in a difficult time slot so soon after we'd arrived and with barely any time to warm up, a good fight in which he showed considerable skill, but which was unfortunately ultimately lost 5-3.

Vice-Captain Kooyeon, his fast long-forgotten and buried under a pile of empty packets of stuff from Sainburys, fought next, winning comfortably 2-0 but sustaining an injury in the process. This, unfortunately, plagued him in his second fight and contributed to the very slim loss which nonetheless saw him earn a bronze medal for his efforts.

Stella kicks the other girl in the head numerous times in quick succession, ending the match in a shorter time than it's taken me to write this paragraph

Stella, who'd taken a gold medal in the Cambridge tournament last November, fought against a hapless red belt in her first, 'blink and you've missed it' match. For those who don't know how taekwondo scoring works (i.e. almost everyone at the LSE), two points are awarded for kicks to the head, and the fight ends if one competitor gets to seven points ahead of the other. The format of Stella's match went something like this: Stella kicks the other girl in the head numerous times in quick succession, ending the match in a shorter time than it's taken me to write this paragraph.

Since I was warming up for my own fight, I didn't actually get to see Chris' fight or Stella's final, so will just have to rely on hearsay and rumour to fill in the gaps. Chris, fighting in a tournament for the first time, was unfortunately pitted against an

aggressive fighter who quickly got into his stride, although Chris still came away with a bronze medal, owing to the scarcity of competitors in his weight category (more on this later).

Chris, incidentally, also demonstrated a work ethic remarkable even by LSE standards, calmly tackling his Econ problem sets even within the sweaty, noisy confines of the sports hall, to the amazement of all.

Stella, on the other hand, found herself against the same opponent as she'd had in the Cambridge final and effected here much the same result as there. Pulling ahead 2-0 early on, and maintaining the lead throughout with no real danger of losing it, she exited the ring, deservedly, as a gold medalist.

Now, the exoticism of taekwondo is tied fairly intimately with its status as a 'niche' sport. This is usually fine if you are of a normal weight, but if not... well, I had just one opponent in my weight category, and he didn't bother to show up (presumably being scared off by the 53kg of raw terror that I exhibit). Probably the least amount of effort exerted for a gold medal, ever.

So, in all, a pretty good overall medal haul of two gold and two bronze, even if one of the golds wasn't exactly hard-won. Alex, Yibo and I wandered around Durham for a bit after all the fights were over and were charmed by the city's disarming beauty, as well as lamenting the fact that the Durham Students' Union building is really cool and why can't we have one?

As an aside, Durham takes its sport extremely seriously, with an entire glass display case at the tournament venue being filled with silverware that various Durham teams had won. If the LSE administration is seriously committed to tackling the isolation on campus that it has at last identified, it could maybe start by raising the profile of sport here, too.

All the same, the lack of Burger King outlets in and around the cobbled streets probably rendered the city unliveable as far as Yibo was concerned. Leaving the two of them to continue their date around the cathedral and castle, I wandered back to the tournament where we stayed for the opening part of the awards ceremony. When it became evident that it was going to take too long and missed trains would be the tragic outcome, we bailed - unnecessarily, as it turned out.

Someone had taken the quite drastic decision to die on the railway line, which delayed everything by hours; our train only rolled back into King's Cross at half eleven. The ride in between was, however, filled with banter of the most riotous sort, mostly centred around Yibo's tales of how much Burger King he eats (answer: a lot), to the bemusement, but evident amusement, of a random couple we sat with.

The economists' friendship series

Rishabh Jain

The Pakistan Society has just hosted its first Pakistan week. The talks, the food, the movies and the boat party contributed to a week that the Pakistan society will remember. Yet there is something they will desperately want to forget - the windy Wednesday afternoon at Regents Park.

Regents' Park witnessed a familiar rivalry, one which each of us has heard of, and that inevitably gets the adrenaline pumping - yes, it was India versus Pakistan on the cricket pitch. Memories raced back to the Twenty20 world cup final, one believed that the world cup runners-up would seek revenge, yet it was not to be.

India won. Again. The boys in blue triumphed over those in green and the Indian tricolour had reason to flutter once more.

It was to be a ten-over-a-side match. Once the match began, the sledging started, the nerves tensed and the pulses raced. It was not going to be a cold evening after all. India, batting first, posted a modest yet competitive total of 56 courtesy some fast yet wayward bowling from Pakistan.

It was a typical Pakistani performance, with an early wicket in the first two balls and then a mixed bag of wides and no-balls. Fast bowler after fast bowler was churned out of the Pakistani pace machine, but some unwavering and solid batting by Ashish, Abhishek & Aditya ensured India survived some intense swing bowling. The last overs were then manhandled

by Dhruvil & Rishabh who clubbed the Pakistani bowlers in a performance reminiscent of the Twenty20 world cup final. Was this going to be enough? With the Pakistan team looking confident and riding on the support from their raucous audience, we had a match on our hands.

It was up to the Indian bowlers to do the job, and they did it well. Abhishek Singh and Arjun Talwar gave India just the start they needed with some pretty frugal overs, but an over of solid Shahid Afridi styled hitting by Zohaib Khalid off Aditya's bowling suddenly pulled Pakistan back in the reckoning.

In spite of a slow stretch in which the Pakistani team impolitely encouraged one of their own to let his bat 'fall' on the stumps, overall they did well to recreate the Twenty20 world cup final - thirteen runs were needed from six balls. Would one big hit change the match? Would the batsmen melt under the mounting pressure?

The Indian captain, Abhishek Singh, turned to a 'veteran' of the LSE cricket team to bowl this deciding over. Dhruvil Parikh was unanimously the correct choice. What happened in that last over cannot be captured in words. Balls were changed, fielders were moved, a boundary was hit, wickets were displaced, and arguments ensued between the players and the umpire. But after the last ball had been bowled, Pakistan had fallen short of three runs.

Passions ran high, but everyone had a good time. Just like a cricket match for Pakistan week is truly appropriate for this cricket-loving nation, a last over match is truly appropriate for an India-Pakistan encounter.

Wanted: Track and Field stars



The University of London Athletics Championships are on Sunday 8th March (p.m.), at Parliament Hill Athletics Track, Hampstead Heath. It's the annual track and field competition between all the colleges of the University of London, and Team LSE needs you!

The atmosphere is reminiscent of school sports day, and the emphasis is very much on giving things a go (although there are usually also a few uni athletes competing). Everyone who completes an event scores a point for LSE, even if

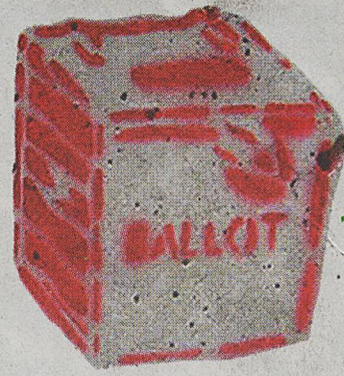
they don't make the final or finish on the podium, so you have nothing to lose!

Maybe you used to do the long jump at school? Or you always fancied giving the javelin a go? Or you just want another chance to kick some Kings/UCL arse? Well now's your chance!

If you're interested in taking part, please email Vikram Balachandar (v.balachandar@lse.ac.uk) as soon as possible.



Sport



AU elections
 << page 22

Beav Ballers nail a triple slam

Justin Gest describes LSE Basketball's steamrollering exploits in London and beyond

The University of London Basketball Cup has known no other home beyond the Old Building Atrium since February 2007—and that won't change for another twelve months.

LSE's extraordinary Beaver Basketball Programme took home another accolade last Sunday, with a dominating 70-56 victory over outmatched Queen Mary University in the London Cup finals at Roehampton—a borough which is only barely in London.

But there was little time to admire their newest silverware.

The team then went back to work Wednesday and disposed of Brunel University in a laugher—a 81-52 whipping for the purple and gold in their National Cup quarterfinal at Brixton.

The win qualified them for a semi-final match-up versus a resurgent side from De Montfort University—wherever that is.

Either way, the Beavers are eyeing up their second trip to Sheffield for the basketball national championships in the last three seasons. Last time, LSE hoisted the Division II trophy to cap an undefeated 2006-2007 season.

This year, however, things have not been so easy for LSE's basketball team.

To begin with, they have been coping with severe communication difficulties. Fresher wingman Francesco Rinaldi is a voluntary mute, preferring not to talk but signal with limited hand gesticulations acquired from a childhood in the streets of Rome. So far the team has discerned the motions for "Give me a break," "Did you have sex with her?," and "I have feelings of inadequacy."

Head Coach Ronnie Baker is currently working with third-year player Giovanni Graglia to develop a corresponding gesture for "You're not even trying."

To make matters more complicated, forward Sean Sosnovik will simply not remain silent. "Look man, I know I like to yap, but I mean, I know what I'm talkin' about," he told The Beaver. "You know, sometimes a guy will make a play—a good play—but you know, they can always get better. Much better. That's what being a good teammate is all about. Talking to each other, and tellin' them wassup. It's like the Portland Trail Blazers, before they got Nate MacMillan. And I'll tell you another thing, the best way to—"

Mercifully, our tape recorder's battery died.

Sosnovik has remained a key component of the Beavers' defence which has been superbly stingy. With the only exception being a 101-66 spanking of Herfordshire on 28 January, the team has



Sean Sosnovik (gold strip, flying) drives to the basket for an easy two
 Photo: Monika Hargitai

not allowed more than 60 points in a game since the end of 2008.

Point guards Rob Dagger and Paul DiStephano have helped the effort by controlling the tempo from the top of the key.

Dagger is a slippery ball handler with an awkward shooting form that has earned him the nickname, "Tayshaun." Despite his stellar play, he has received little recognition from the team's followers in Brixton. Upon hearing his name chanted, locals tend to look for a taller, black person.

DiStephano is a mature masters student from Canada, and the only member of the team to be born in the 1970s. (Note: Rinaldi was born in 1990.) DiStephano could not be reached for comment, however, because he is still a self-proclaimed "cell phone hold-out." A letter was placed in the post instead.

Having won their last seven games, the Beavers' destiny truly lies in the tenuous hands of their top scorers—Ignazio de Ferrari, Matt Caverly, and Jonny Wright—

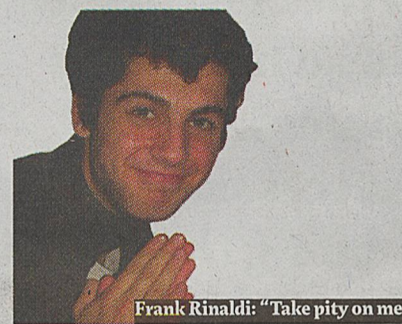
all of whom are currently trying to break nasty clubbing habits.

Ringleader Jonny Wright has a lethal three-point shot, and an equally noxious obsession with the drink and dance. The man carries glow sticks in his back pocket "just in case."

Meanwhile, the Beavers' 6'8" Peruvian centre de Ferrari is still knee-deep in a paternity controversy with a bird he met at Fabric last week. The lanky London Cup MVP pounced on the unexpected woman during a Kanye West remix, but now he is the one accused of being "heartless." "Esta puta no sabe nada," he said. "Siempre son las chicas. ¡Déjame!"

Big Iggy has since sought guidance from Welsh teammate Mike Hall, who has gone through girls like weightlifting gloves recently. "We talk about lots of stuff together, and I try to just tell him the truth," Hall said. "Most cases of the human pappiloma virus don't even affect men." Such camaraderie has been the hallmark of a very tightly knit club.

"Most cases of the human pappiloma virus don't even affect men"



Frank Rinaldi: "Take pity on me."

Indeed, that's why the team has been frustrated with the flaky tendencies of forwards Joe Allen and Moritz Schneider.

Allen, a brawny, physical power forward, has been essential on the boards for the Beavers this year, but often absconds tense situations that make him feel vulnerable. Allen sat down for an interview after Wednesday's match, but left after he was asked about his behaviour.

Schneider has been held up at home often. He rents a basement flat from an overbearing Jewish family in Golders Green.

Supporters are encouraged to attend the 4pm do-or-die matchup with De Montfort at Brixton Recreation Centre, where they would join the team's usual fans—janitors on their break, kids who want the court next, and a gang of Brixton streetwalkers dubbed "The Walking Clap."

For more details, contact captains Nick Broadway and Justin Gest.

Romford rugby boys rinse LSE's 1st XV

Josh Olomolaiye

Essex 1st XV 23
 LSE 1st XV 18

It was another Wednesday, so it meant another match for the cream of the LSERFC crop. Past the half way point in the season, the squad has showed much passion but, despite early promise in the early parts of the season, we have found ourselves in what is shaping up to be a relegation battle. With this fact well in mind, we set out for our return fixture, away from home against Essex's 1st XV.

We seem to have lost crucial games by less than one score on a number of occasions this season and our loss against

Essex at The Fortress that is Berrylands earlier was just one of these. This fixture was our first coach trip so admin exceeded it's usual levels - everyone outside Nat-West for 10.15, the coach not there until 11.15. No one was complaining; Wright's Bar made a mini-fortune while we waited.

An hour and a half later, we were on Essex's grounds despite our quality "Mint Coaches" driver arriving on an estate 10 minutes earlier and insisting we had reached our destination.

Without the fattest man in the RFC to captain us, responsibilities fell to Jacko. The huddle before the game was pretty concise - forget claiming we are a good team, it's time to show it and prove we deserve to be in the league.

Suffering from a number of injuries to notable members of the squad and also a withdrawal because of an academic conscience (RIP Cage, 2007-09), we started the match in a fired up fashion.

The coach was not there until 11.15. No one was complaining; Wright's Bar made a mini-fortune while we waited

We threw absolutely everything at them, our forwards were immense, our backs precise. Essex were on the back foot right from the off, they knew there were in for a fight. It wasn't long before our domination was converted into points, as Boca crashed over for a try in his "move the hell out of my way or you will get hurt" fashion.

You could say that at this point we got a little over-excited. We hadn't played this well as a team since the very beginning of the season. As is the custom, at that point, we let Essex right back into the game. They came back at us hard and scored a try. Soon, indiscipline the England team are all too familiar with, kicked in. We gave away penalties and had Piers sin binned.

We plugged away though, as a team. Without 15 men, the tide was turning so when his 10 minutes were up and he was called back onto the pitch, he stood

there staring lovingly at the sky. Captain Fantastic, not too pleased with his lack of urgency, told him to do one, and subbed him off for a confused Uncle Hamdi.

In the second half, we temporarily took the lead again, however our shoot ourselves in the foot instinct kicked in again and they scored another try. From then, even though we battled as a cohesive unit the game was lost - perhaps because of our indiscipline, it was the penalties that had hurt us in the end.

Not one member of the team could be faulted, it was a fine performance. After the match, the Essex captain said as much. We have 3 matches left to save our season and if we play anything like we did that Wednesday it shouldn't be a problem.

A bit of commitment to training on a Monday night and we could well stay up and have reason to go out on a massive celebratory lash. It's time to pull our collective finger out.

PART B



03.03.09

3 RANT**lizcheesbrough**

should we pity kids, or spit on them?

4 THE LOST GENERATION**calumyoung**

today's youth are a disgrace to their ideals

6 TV**angelachow**

let someone else deal with my kids

7 VISUAL ARTS**christinaschmidt zur nedden**

the con is on!

≠ 8 CENTRE ≠

and now we know why they're famous

10 MUSIC**liammclaughlin & cathydruce**

weller tells ida to folk off

12 FILM**trentmaynard**

exploiting youth on screen; others just go on a shopping spree

13 THEATRE**loisjeary**

an architect dies; pretentious muck gets duly trashed

14 LITERATURE**tomsimpson**

dahl-ing, youth is jolly spiffing!

15 IDENTITY**louisaevans**

youth without youth without dresses

16 SEX & GENDER**helenreeves**

when you've had enough of youth and want the exact opposite

EDITORIAL

Contrary to popular belief, I was never a child. That's right. I emerged headfirst from the womb as an artsy, just-about-acceptably pretentious wastrel, instantaneously primed for crass cultural commentary. That's why we've commissioned everyone to give us a lesson on youth this week, in the hope that

I might recapture my misplaced childhood. Judging by their efforts, I didn't miss out on much - apparently, youths are morally bankrupt, materialistic wasters who should be shipped off to their own trash-heap island. Oh, and it's patently NOT THEIR FAULT!

SACHIN PATEL & JULIAN BOYS

FAQ! FAX! FACTS!

dear satchin (sic),
Wot i fink is dat us kids is well misunderstood and you should leave us kids alone. don't you have any problems of your own, without hoisting us with our own petard? its not my folt that you have no life and only get your kicks out of our misery.

Fuck you,
Stephen (aged 8 and three months).

Dear Julian,
Amidst all the nonsense of PartB, you've continually omitted to point a rather important event taking place this week. That's right, it's the annual elections of the Kidderminster Dishwasher Owners' Society. Please remind your readers that there are a number of posts one can stand for, so don't forget to hand in your application forms.
Yours, Charles Hubert Featherstonehaugh.

SORRY (Insert sad face)

Last week we erroneously suggested that **ART FROM THE SEOUL** was written by **unknownperson**. It wasn't. So, **inesgramegna**, this one's for you. Just to reassure you, we haven't completely lost our minds. It won't happen again. **PEACE.**

THE KIDS AREN'T ALRIGHT

howardismariksonli takes down the juveniles

That "They say we too young to get ourselves sprung, but we didn't care and made it very clear..." raps Sean Kingston, over the bassline of Ben E. King's Stand By Me. Which is pretty hilarious if you consider that young folks these days have a) never heard of the original song, b) never fail to make it VERY clear they don't care, and c) forget the spring, you'd need a catapult to get their lazy gluteus maximi off the couch.

Actually, I take the last one back. The couch was my generation – the good old days, where you actually had to sit on the couch and wait for your favourite show, spending the requisite five minutes putting ice in your Coke in order to avoid the commercial breaks. Now, with a little invention called TiVo, kids don't even need to go through any character-building experiences to get their fill of *High School Musical: The Return of the Spontaneously Breaking Into Song*. They don't even get to rewind the vee-aitch-ess; it's all about the chapter buttons on the DVD-read-write-mix-upload-recordable-player, which all kids under the age of six can now operate better than most professional technicians, this despite the fact that those machines have small parts un-

suitable for children under the age of six.

Blame it on technology for bringing the ideas of instant gratification. Everyone's been a bratty adolescent at some point, but today's tweens are barely forming their first sentences when they start asking/whining/threatening for stuff. Imagine how that would've worked out for Oliver Twist: "Please sir, could I have a new iPod?" We've all seen the classic supermarket scenario with the kid wanting the whole store plus the one next door, bashing down the defenses of their overworked mothers who are already battling either acne or the menopause. Nor is there a modicum of respect in their requests – manners are as foreign as vegetables for this generation of spoiled brats.

Yesterday, I read an article about how hormones are changing in the younger generation, making them more prone to behavioral irregularities. Those poor, victimized sods; their childhood messed up by God, pollution, technology, biology, possibly the moon cycles. My parents are always busy with work, so I'm an unloved, suicidal emo child. My teacher didn't praise my pasta art, so I need psychological counselling. My printer broke, so I couldn't hand in that drawing assignment. There's no end to the excuses, although "I'm stupid, so I'm a victim" would probably sum them all up.

Boys will be boys? That old idiom might soon be changing, given the sensitive crybabies who inhabit our schools these days. Hell, even I used to get into fights at school before they were broken up by (admittedly female, but trust me, when you're seven, everything looks big!) teachers. Today's boys? They've mastered the art of tearing up when you call them silly doodoo heads. Unless of course they've had a few beers, and then start becoming increasingly belligerent towards you, providing that ten of their friends 'got their back, bro'. And the girls? Let's just say that bras are usually designed for women's breasts, not the stuffed pieces of Kleenex belonging to some ten year old girl.

Finally, a note on sex: you shouldn't be having it before middle school. Alfie Patten, the 13-year old father from Eastbourne, and the horrendously ugly 15-year old mother of his child, have been prominently featured on tabloids recently, and apparently his voice hasn't even broken yet. And despite the squeaky-clean image of some of our tween idols, for all we know, they may have slept with as many minors as Gary Glitter.

All I can advise on that note is to heed the words of Frank Sinatra, a legend these kids have probably never heard of, who sang that "Love like youth, is wasted on the young".

GROWING PAINS

lizchezboro pities the young fools

School is where you learn the Darwinist domination of strong over weak, the value of your beauty or sporting skill over moral worth – you learn how life is shit, and that you will continue to jump through the hoops of examination and social scrutiny for all of eternity. Worse still – you're meant to feel as if you're wholesomely enjoying it. It's inevitable that teens go and grope each other behind bus stops and get drunk on stolen gin left over from Christmas: youth is shit and nobody even feels sorry for you.

Youth is synonymous with bad behaviour and idolised perfection – the hoodies, chavs, slags and thugs step up next to the Hanna Montanas and the pricks that present Blue Peter. Young people are lucky with their natural vitality and blossoming futures, but paradoxically demonised by their bad behaviour as if they should be satiated on some natural high of youthfulness. It is truly torturing to be a teen, and indeed this anomie of age has always been the case. Nearly one hundred years ago it was said "It is an illusion that youth is happy, an illusion of those who have lost it; but the young know they are wretched, for they are full of the truthless ideals which have been instilled into them, and each time they come in contact with the real they are bruised and wounded."

What youth does is take a world that you have continually considered to be a perfectly splendid place full of swimming pools, legitimately geeky hobbies and best-friends-forever; only to then rip the flesh from your childlike ideals to show that every swimming pool is full of piss; geeky hobbies will get you beaten up and that people are only your best friend because they want to try their very first blow on your elder brother.

It's a time that sets you against everything – your family, your friends, the universe and even your own body rebel against you in a flurry of rampant destruction, smashing your physical and psychological matter to mere crumbs. Teenagers really do need 12 hours sleep a day just to recover from the daily dramas of growing up, so no wonder they spend the best part of a decade slamming doors and screaming for no reason.

Youth is the antithesis of all that is proper in a

person – they do not work for their copious pleasures, they are lazy, objectionable, self-centered and righteous (apologies if you regard yourself as having been an upstanding, ideal teenager; although I do doubt the objectivity of these recollections). This rejection of responsibility and simultaneous grasping for the adult joys of deviancy leave you no longer welcome in either camp of young or old; you don't deserve to get drunk or have sex, but neither can you play with Lego or you'll look like a tit. On top of the feelings of isolation, rejection, newfound disillusionment with the entire universe AND physical and emotional turmoil; people tell you you're lucky. That school days are the best days of your life was obviously said by somebody who hadn't been at school for a number of years.



Time was those in their youth did reckless things: they rioted in the streets and attacked the conservative establishment. The LSE still markets itself on the image created in 1968, that of a hotbed of left-wing radicalism. But those days have long since passed. Our youth is spent not destroying the establishment, but queuing up to join it. This was literally the case when the visits of Ben Bernanke and David Cameron brought frenzied levels of excitement to campus. Personally I find it difficult to remember when it was that interest rate-setters became teen idols. Today, the LSE is a place of interning not injecting; networking not narcotics. We are all it seems acting with the mentality of our parents, were they physically thirty years younger. Somewhere, we have misplaced our youth.

Paradoxically though, the absence of a youthful mentality isn't a product of increased maturity: on the contrary, it has emerged because, as a generation, we have been infantilised. We grew up in an age when filial fears reached their apotheosis. Throughout the nineties, you couldn't move for reports of paedophilia, child snatching or scare stories about the latest disease which would specifically target 'the kids'. In this environment, parenting became hyper-sensitive and, whereas our forebears were encouraged to go into the world and discover, we received the opposite message: "Stay where I can see you."

Paternal protectionism easily leapt from the physical to the intellectual realm. We were told not only where to be, but how to be. So many parents made the mistake of moulding their children to be just like them, rather than encouraging them to develop their own rational faculties. Parents weren't willing to allow their children to make a decision, lest it be the wrong one. Though of course a child's development doesn't hinge on making right rather than wrong decisions, the important thing is that they learn to make deci-

"Our youth is spent, not destroying the establishment, but queuing up to join it"

sions at all. Whilst nobody ever truly transcends their background, never before have so many young people emerged as carbon copies of their parents.

Even now at university, where our parents are out of sight, they are rarely out of mind. Most of the people I speak to still find themselves analysing the events in their life by exactly the same criteria that their parents gave them. That stock condemnation "What would your mother say?" needs to be rejected. It should no longer be of any consequence what her views might be; today, as individuals, we have to make our own decisions and step out of the increasingly long shadow of our home life and what has gone before. Those who still haven't made this leap are living only half a life; critical analysis is the cornerstone of human nature.



THE LOST GENERATION

calumyoung is not on the conveyor belt



"For the youth of today politics is a subject of tacit acceptance rather than something to make the blood boil"

The current lack of youthful dynamism is also a product of historical circumstance. Following the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 we have been living in a post-ideological world. Indeed, while the current financial system may be failing, there are no clear alternatives. The battle of ideas which gripped the twentieth century had been won by liberal capitalism by the time our generation reached adulthood. It's as though our parents answered all the questions of political philosophy in just the

same manner that they dealt with questions about which shoes fitted best. We live in a part of the world which enjoys incredible prosperity and in a state which faces no threat of war. In short, our world is one of peace and prosperity. Thus it seems reasonable to ask, are we the generation for whom all the questions have been answered?

Politics in Britain has also reached its ideological nadir; the goal of the modern politician is to conflate issues until policy neither arouses hatred nor love from voters. In trying to appeal to everyone, British politics has eradicated any sort of passionate commitment. For the youth of today, politics is a subject of tacit acceptance rather than something to make the blood boil. The great statesman of our time stands with the totally vacuous slogan of "Yes we can". And when asked at the Democratic primaries to define his political position, this omnipotent leader answers, "Progressive". Presumably, then, those who refute him are deemed Regressive?

In academia and the media, those who rise to the top are also frequently from the middle ground. The contrarian viewpoint is now given minimal airtime, because we implicitly live in a culture which holds that the right answers lie somewhere between extremes. There is no place for an angry young man (or woman) in the political debate because so often their views are considered too hard-line. People have forgotten that the middle ground itself is mapped out by where the extremes in any argument lie. Today, youthful extremism is considered unconstructive where twenty or thirty years ago it was considered an essential part of the debate.

Polite society too has done its bit to keep our

youths as calm and measured as possible. It is now de rigueur to reject the views of a genuinely passionate debater because they are prepared to raise their voice or look outside of the system for an answer. David Davis' summer by-election bid was a prime example of someone sacrificing their career for a cause they believed in. Davis' desire to bring about a dramatic change in the way Britain is monitored and continue the fight for civil liberties was pilloried in the media. Passion, it seems, is now policed.

The journey to recapturing our intellectual

"The journey to recapturing our intellectual exuberance and with it our youth begins with finding the great questions which our generation has to answer"

exuberance - and with it our youth - begins with finding the great questions which our generation has to answer. This starts at home with questions about how to end inequality in London, but spans the globe in terms of solving the problems of African development. Critically however, we need to step out from the twilight of parental control and start exercising our own powers of critical analysis. The realisation that we are the sole architects of our own lives is the essential part of rediscovering our lost youth.

BRIT BRAT NATION

jonathanstorey applauds crap tv

In a time where the economy is taking a nose-dive; a Students' Union election campaign is getting into gear; and exams are just over the horizon, it's good to switch on the telly (or the iPlayer for the TV-less among us) and watch some good old fashioned light-hearted cheese. That's where **The World's Strictest Parents** (BBC Three) comes in. It is wonderful news to hear that BBC Three has re-commissioned this criminally underwatched show for a second series.

I should explain. Normally, I like what would be considered 'intellectual shows': *The Wire*, *Mad Men*, *Arrested Development*... the TV shows no one seems to have heard of. I'm also not the biggest fan of reality television (with the sole exception being *The Amazing Race*). However, when I turned on the TV to watch the first episode of TWSP, I instantly fell head over heels in love.

On the surface, it's basically a condensed version of *Brat Camp* - a revolutionary TV show that lost its revolutionary appeal as it graced our television screens year after year after year. In TWSP, two 'unruly' teenagers are sent to live with predictably strict parents in a different country! THE ORIGINALITY! Of course, the parents impose really strict rules on the Brit-brats (which don't seem to vary from country to country: Americans seem to hate fornication and alcohol just as much as Ghanaians and Indians). Again, the laws of reality television require conflict: the Brit-Brats rebel, the parents punish. Wash, rinse and repeat. By the end of the hour, lessons are learned and the unruly teens miraculously become model citizens.

From that description I'll admit that it sounds like a pile of crap: something thrown around in a TV-executive brainstorming session, addressing the worry that there isn't enough television aimed at the 'real issues' affecting the 'yoof'; concerned about the MTV-demographic losing interest in television, life and everything (although mostly television: they need to keep the ratings up). However, it's hard to express the pure goodness and joy that one experiences from watching it. I guess that this TV show makes the world a better place once you've seen and experienced it. One thing it has over *Brat Camp* is that everything is resolved in the hour. With *Brat Camp*, people had to endure six weeks of teenage angst and moan-

ing about lack of cigarettes, sex and drugs. By the second week, people wondered if anything was going to happen to the so-called brats and, by the fourth week, their level of progress was so slow that viewers' homicidal tendencies towards teenagers had increased at an exponential rate (something that hasn't quite dissipated in this reviewer's mindset). With TWSP on the other hand, the change can be seen during the course of an hour. Yes, it's seven days of toil and trouble simplified down. There is probably deep psychological and sociological breakdown occurring, what with the dramatic culture change, the rebellion and the strict parental influences on the kids, and these are glossed over for the most part. However, I never said that this was intellectual television. It's

whom threatened to send her new children to bed at 7pm ... if it were me, I wouldn't have had any problem smacking the little shits, but I'm not a crazy religiously-devout, right-wing, workaholic American patriarch) and, eventually, the unruly teens. At the end of one episode, everyone ended up dancing to some horrible Indian raga, (sorry to all the Indians at the LSE, but I hate raga with a passion after having to study it at GCSE for three months: Jai Ho is great and all, but the rest isn't my cup of tea) and I'll admit my eyes started welling up just a little.

So why am I writing this article? To be frank, this is one of the best shows on TV about children. Channel 4 commissioned a show entitled **Boys and Girls Alone** which simply attracted contro-

versy from all angles for its premise: putting a bunch of pre-pubescent children alone in a house and seeing the society they'd come up with. 4oD doesn't work on my laptop, so the only information I got about the show came from a vicious attack on the executive producer in an interview on *This Morning*. (Yes: I watch *This Morning*. Yes: I actually admit it. Yes: I am duly ashamed.) Needless to say, if Ms Britton truly reflects the sentiment of Great Britain, this will be one short-lived social experiment. Our American friends may also remember the CBS-produced *Kid Nation*: essentially the same premise, but



cheese, pure and simple. If it became a *Newsnight* feature on how to bring up children, it would take itself too seriously and be horribly pretentious about child development and become a quasi-Supernanny style show for teenagers, which would be a horrible direction to go towards.

One thing TWSP does highlight is the perceived failures of some aspects of British life, and chief among its concerns seems to be the education system. Indeed, lots of the Brit-brats on the show are either failing education-wise or not achieving what they ought to be. The foreign schools are practically run by army drill instructors hell-bent on uniform inspections, neat handwriting and punctuality. The brats usually have to be put in classes three or four years behind their age-level because the home-grown kids are so smart. As well as this, one does begin to warm to the - on the outside - cold temperaments of both the new strict parents (one of

with the necessary American-reality-show rule of BIG DOLLAR PRIZES at the end of it. Seriously, there were \$20,000 and even \$50,000 prizes at the end of the show for the 'best' kids. The series was fraught with legal issues involving actors' unions and child safety laws, and saw its initially sceptical support diminish as the weeks went on. Suffice to say, it probably won't be re-commissioned.

The selling point, to me at least, is that TWSP doesn't try and break new sociological frontiers nor conform to the standard reality-TV cliché of "there's some money, now go embarrass yourself on national TV". It's standard, meat-and-potato programming which should be applauded in an age where parental standards (as well as those of the whole country, if you're a *Daily Mail* reader) are apparently slipping. A second series has been confirmed and, hopefully, I will have attracted at least two more people to tune in on its return, meaning we could double its audience share!

FAKING IT

christinaschmidt zur nedden on the world's greatest art forger

What exactly is art? Staring at a giant piece of poop in The Saatchi Gallery's re-opening show on new Chinese art, I asked myself that same question. Okay, so the poop was actually made of miniature toy soldiers representing all the crap that happened in the Chinese Cultural Revolution, but what about artists like Marc Quinn who extract blood from their arms for half a year to mold it into a sickening statue of their own head? Brilliant or bollocks? Do things that we put in a museum automatically become art? Or is it the prestige that we associate with an artist's name that makes us believe that everything he produces deserves to be called art?

Some people say that art is something objective and wins its legitimacy in the eyes of the observer. And still, if someone like Matisse draws three blue lines across a white canvas, it is considered to be art. Who hasn't heard of that story where some modern artist lets his four-year old child draw a giant mess of interwoven lines, hangs it up in a gallery, and gets it estimated to be worth over £5000? The reality is that we often get blinded by the context in which we look at art. A Van Gogh would easily be recognised on the walls of MoMA, but would a layman identify a lesser known work of his if it was put on sale in some unimposing street market stall? What does the name of an artist actually mean?

"Nothing at all" is what Elmyr de Hory, the

greatest art forger of our time, would say. This man had an extraordinary talent. He could accurately copy any major artist's style in less than a few hours and then sold the pictures to museums and galleries all over the world. He couldn't be sued as the pictures were unsigned and not exact copies of existing works, making him unique among art forgers who usually attempt to reproduce existing works by famous artists. In the belief that they were making the deal of their lifetime, art purchasers didn't inquire on the background of a painting as de Hory simply told them that the pictures were remains from his family's estate. Who would ask a lot of questions if they were offered a painting that looked like a Picasso, for next to nothing? Elmir de Hory could paint like no other but he lacked his own style; and he lacked the name. Failing to sell his original artwork he stuck to the forgery business and specialised in painting in the style of Picasso, Matisse, Modigliani and Renoir. He claims to have sold more than a thousand of his forgeries to distinguished galleries and museums all over the world.

Although most of the forgeries were discovered later on, De Hory's life is a prime example of the thin line between reality and illusion. His biography, written by Clifford Irving, and Orson Welles' documentary *F For Fake*, tell the story of a man who saw truth as a fluid concept easily changed by deception. In the documentary, de

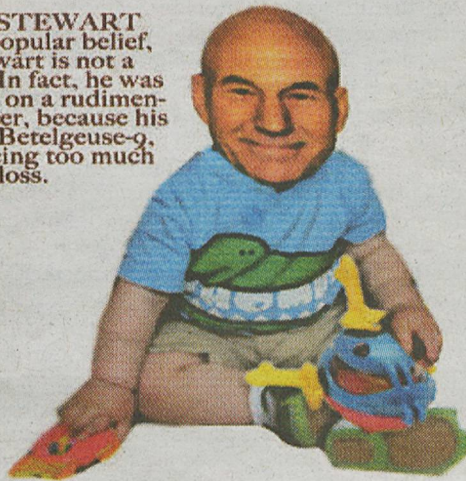
Hory claims to have managed to get a series of twenty-two pictures taken to be Picassos exhibited in a museum in Aix-en-Provence. When the real Picasso called him up to question his motivations he replied: 'you had so many art periods already, why don't you just let me do one?' Whether or not this story is true remains a mystery. It is believed that de Hory even faked his own death to escape from the police. Ironically, after his death - or disappearance - his paintings gained a certain cult status and forged de Horys began entering the market!

Museums exhibit pictures on the basis of art experts' assessments and estimations. What is art if the value of a painting depends on the subjective verdict of a so-called expert, and does the name behind a painting really matter? The same question goes for any other form of art. In January 2007, Joshua Bell, one of the world's most talented violinists, played for forty-five minutes on a seventeenth century Stradivarius at 7 am in a Washington tube station. Considering people paid an average of \$100 to see him play at Boston's Symphony Hall three days earlier, guess how many of the 1097 people who passed by stopped to appreciate the free treat. Seven. Context matters. At least, for adults it does. It is remarkable that the one demographic that wanted to stop and listen but was scooted away by their parents were children.



IF ONLY THEIR PARENTS KNEW WHAT THEY WERE DOING

PATRICK STEWART
Contrary to popular belief, Patrick Stewart is not a human being. In fact, he was flown to Earth on a rudimentary flying saucer, because his home planet, Betelgeuse-9, was experiencing too much hair loss.



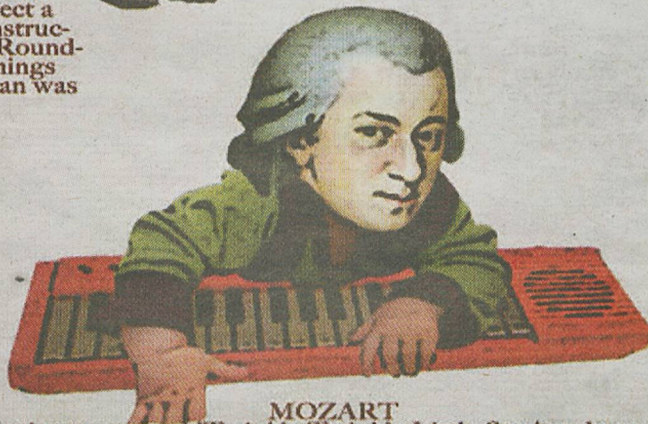
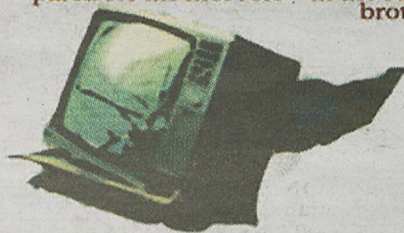
THOM YORKE
Several botched eye operations later, Thom hid away in the dark corners of Abingdon, consulting self-help books, and emerging only to terrorise the local rabbit population.



CHARLIE BROOKER
Brooker's parents attempted to educate him by letting him watch children's television. They didn't expect a considered deconstruction of the Magic Roundabout, but, all things considered, the plan was a success.



CHRISTIAN BALE
A little known fact about the child prodigy is that he had an identical twin. Sadly, the young method actor Christian prepared for his first role - in the school Nativity play - by eating his brother.



MOZART
Having composed 'Twinkle Twinkle Little Star' at the age of five, the young Wolfgang tormented the neighbours with early krautrock, and broke the record for the youngest case of syphilis.



IGGY POP
A hyperactive child, instead of binging on the pick-n-mix, Iggy preferred injecting melted Haribo and snorting sherbet.

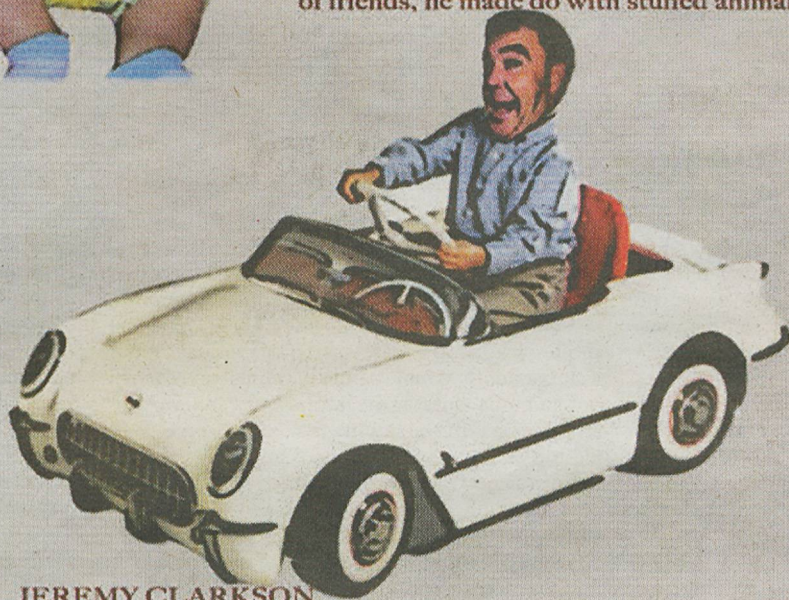
PARENTS KNEW RE TO BECOME...

KEIRA KNIGHTLY
Keira had no childhood, so to speak, because the pressures of being an allegedly anorexic, supremely talented, yet criminally misunderstood starlet did not afford her any innocence. While her friends played lacrosse and netball, Keira munched on celery.



SIMON AMSTELL
In between making a fool of himself on national TV and enraging his parents by interviewing them incessantly, Simon delighted in hosting slightly kitsch tea parties. Sadly, in the absence of friends, he made do with stuffed animals.

CAROL THATCHER
Because she grew up knowing her mother would one day be hated for crimes against the working classes, Carol spent her childhood in constant, acute anxiety. Her sole relief came from gorging on Robertson's Jam whilst watching reruns of Noddy. Occasionally, she would escape to the jungle, in order to further insult the indigenous tribes.

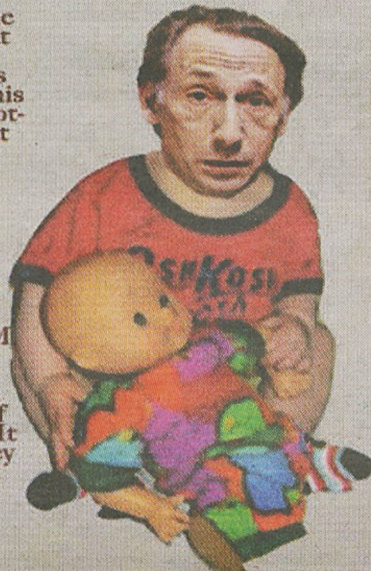


JEREMY CLARKSON
The POWER!!! Having seen his family's fortune disintegrate into nothing, Clarkson realised that true virtue comes from overcoming obstacles, succeeding where others failed, and... fitting his pedal car with a turbocharger and running over his cousins at high speed, whilst simultaneously shooting foxes and spewing unfunny jokes. A pleasant childhood, then.



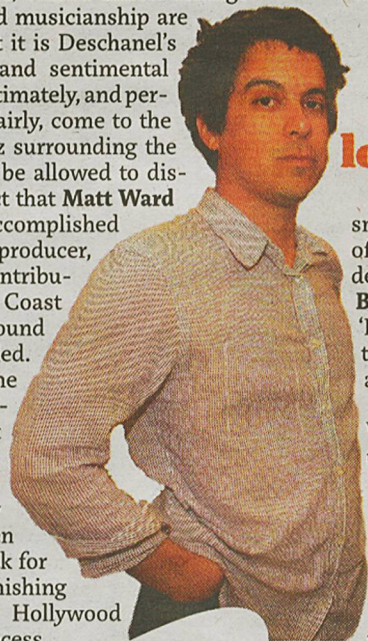
DAMIEN HIRST
When the enfant terrible Damien visited a farm on a school trip, he didn't so much learn about the animals, as pickle them.

CHRIS LANGHAM
Langham's parents initially mistook his fondness for playing with dolls as a sign of an effeminate nature. It was only later that they discovered the truth.



M. Ward's star has been shining brighter in the past year, following his highly successful collaboration with Zoey Deschanel as **She & Him**: the pairing of the musical troubadour with the offbeat actress fulfilling the indie world's wildest fantasies. On their album, Volume One, Ward's classic arrangements and skilled musicianship are omnipresent, but it is Deschanel's timeless vocals and sentimental lyricism which ultimately, and perhaps slightly unfairly, come to the fore. Yet the buzz surrounding the band should not be allowed to distract from the fact that **Matt Ward** is a highly accomplished musician and producer, whose long *contribution to the West Coast folk-country sound is unparalleled. Standing on the stage at the Borderline, his first visit to London in some years, Ward let his raw talent, and even rawer voice, speak for themselves, banishing all thoughts of Hollywood starlets in the process.

Matt Ward's voice is entirely ineffable.



When recorded it comes across as raspy and unpolished, which is enhanced by his typically lo-fi approach to making music. But live, his voice takes on an even more intriguing tone and it becomes clear that the true quality of his voice can never be adequately captured by recording devices. Its soulfulness harks back to the sound of old,

FOLK OFF

loisjeary awards m.ward

smoky jazz clubs, and complements the blues vibe of his songs, while it also has the raucous quality demanded by his band's frantic cover of **Chuck Berry's** 'Roll Over Beethoven'. On songs such as 'Fuel for Fire', accompanied simply by an acoustic guitar, his voice alone was ultimately more arresting than any of the words that it produced.

Which is not to suggest for a second that M. Ward's lyrics are unremarkable; they cover all of those classic themes, from love to death via the inevitable question of religion, that have long occupied songwriters from across the generational and genre divides. His band invigorated 'Chinese Translation' with a fervour again not captured on record, yet the sweet refrain "if life is really as short as they say/then why is the night so long" was never lost. The poignancy of "God it's great to be alive/takes the skin right off

my eye/to think I'll have to give it all up someday", which comes at the end of 'To Go Home', a **Daniel Johnston** cover, was made all the more striking by the sheer energy cultivated on stage in the build up which preceded it.

Like his lyrics, the distinct sound of Ward's songs are also rooted in America's musical past with many of the melodies and chord progressions following a familiar rock'n'roll form, which makes them perfectly suited to having a bit of a (rather self-conscious in the true indie fashion, you understand) boogie. Collaborations have always been important to Ward's music, but with harmonies ably provided by his all-male band, he was able to capture the spirit of 'Big Boat' and 'Never Had Nobody Like You' without any need for the female sex. Ward also treated the audience, and from the blissed-out look on his face, himself, to moments of unbridled guitar playing, and although instrumental jams are often self-indulgent and tedious, these were performed with such talent and discipline so as to entertain from start to finish.

With his time in the UK brief, and no plans to return in the near future, the admission of his one 'Magic Trick' – disappearance – which brought to show to an end, seemed all too true. It is because the live performance is so much better in every way to the recorded version, that by the end of the concert I was left with both the euphoria of having experienced it all and a sad sense of the fleeting, intangible nature of the musical experience which M. Ward cultivates.

'E'D 'AVE A MARIA

canopenergirl loves norse pop

The NME Shockwaves Tour, currently bombarding the capital and other UK cities beyond Zone 2, purports itself as a blitz of 'new and up coming music'. However, given the breadth and experience of most acts on the tour, **Ida Maria, Glasvegas,** and the **Black Kids,** this is a rather supercilious claim. The web has fundamentally changed the genealogy of success for most musicians. Class acts such as **Florence and the Machine,** the **Black Kids,** and the Norwegian **Ida Maria** can hardly be dubbed 'upcomers' given the hundreds of thousands of devoted web-junkies that have faithfully followed acts from their first Myspace murmurings to the elated release of their debut albums. Rather than finding and backing young talent, the Shockwaves Tour lends pretty experienced and unique musicians that unexplained, vulgar legitimacy that comes of popular commercialism. Not two months ago, disciples could fondle **Florence** (of **Florence and the Machine**) on a dirty Brixton stage for a few quid. These days, with the launch of hot single 'Dog Days Are Over', an upcoming debut album and an Oh-Christ-did-I-really-just-hear-her-single-muzak-used-for-a-Channel-4-promo, NME tickets for **Florence** and the **Machine** are commanding up to £15.

Ida (pronounced like Eid-A, as in the holy month) **Maria** is another one of the artists frequently presented with the moniker 'New and Upcoming Talent' who just so happens to have been well entrenched in the music scene for many years. In 2007, the *Guardian* called her 'a nervy little imp of the perverse' and ever since, her catchy singles have darted up and down the *Billboard* Top 10 Charts. Last year's sell-out international tours to the States and Australia sit like trophies on her musical mantles. When Universal Music released her self-titled debut album last year, the cover dripped with images of a daring, kohl-eyed

vixen. Her fans found it strange that this master songwriter/performer had suddenly been reinvented as a Norwegian femme fatale. **Ida** must have found it strange too because only last month, she pluckily announced that she'd given Universal the boot and was re-releasing the entire album independently, singles and all. Itunes now carries both albums, but it is the latter that is superior.

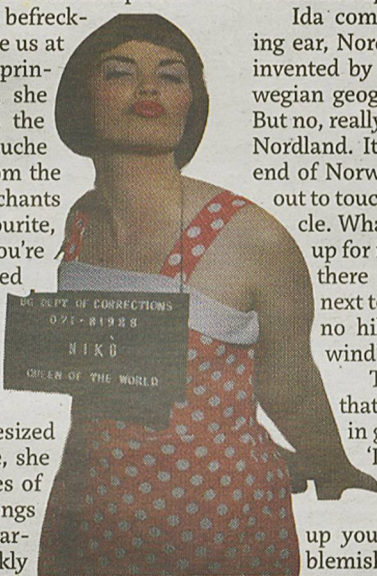
And so, the scrawny, befreckled **Ida** that appeared before us at *Koko* was far from the pop princess of 2008. Barefaced, she came prettified only with the charming twin motifs of gauche and awkwardness. Far from the childishly risqué, singsong chants of last year's festival favourite, 'I Like You Better When You're Naked', the show revealed **Ida's** true mischievous penchant for cacophony and discord. She flitted between standard melodic and staccato styles, refusing to tally to our synthesized harmonic predictions. Live, she refuses to smooth the edges of her songs, sending her songs into a joyous jolting disharmony. The crowd quickly abandoned all reserve. 'Oh My God', **Ida's** penultimate song, transformed the contents of *Koko* into a churn of agitated, heaving flesh.

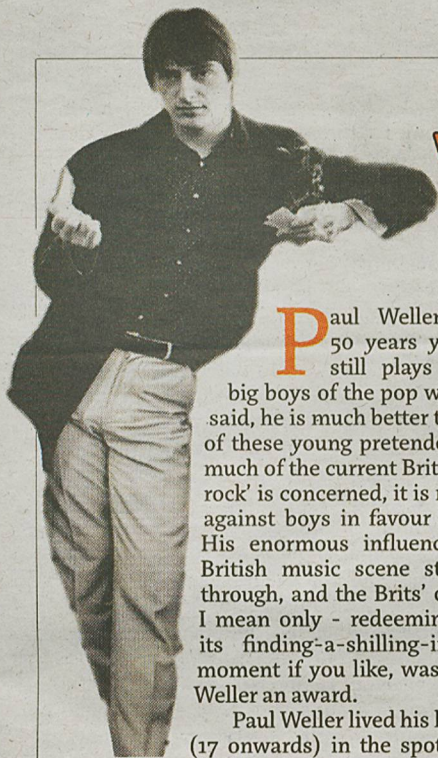
Without the vampy wisdom those kohl-rimmed eyes lent her, the lyrics of her songs hang from **Ida** like the crumpled oversized red blazer she wore. Her lyrics speak of things you think are too big for her to understand. Her songs of love are always viewed from some external vantage-point.

How can she possibly know the tragic vulnerability of 'Leave Me, Let me Go'? Or, as in 'Stella & God', of 'how much you want to give away, just to feel loved'. These are the songs of a drunken, staggering **Janis Joplin,** not an angry teenage **Pippi Longstocking.** But it is precisely the raw authenticity of her pain juxtaposed against this scrunched up little thing that draws you in.

Ida comes from *Nordland*. To the discerning ear, *Nordland* sounds like a province hastily invented by an Anglo-Saxon blagging her Norwegian geography at an Oxbridge dinner party. But no, really, Norway does boast a county called *Nordland*. It sits perched on the northern most end of Norway, like a limb mournfully stretched out to touch the blue-green ice of the Arctic circle. What *Nordland* lacks in people it makes up for in sheer terrain. "There's nothing out there man", yelled the sporty Norwegian next to me over 'Louie'. "No grass, no trees, no hills, no fucking nothin'. There's just wind".

This makes perfect sense. That voice, that huge hoarse howl that she unleashes in gems like 'We're All Going to Hell' or 'Drive My Heart Away' could only have one mentor – the wind. For what else but a relentless gale can open up your lungs and deafen you to cracked blemishes of voice? Here lies **Ida's** addictive charm. Watching **Ida** live is to experience the thrilling, cathartic shiver of air rushing through her body to produced a sound to vie the tempest blowing outside. **Ida** might wear awkwardness as a brooch on her heart, but that unabashed use of voice suggests there is much more to this woman. She pushes forth where the temptation is to back down. This new **Ida,** actually the old **Ida,** is ugly, scrawny and befreckled, but dear God, she is fearless.





YOUNG AT HEART

age doesn't matter to **nathanbriant**

Paul Weller is now 50 years young and still plays with the big boys of the pop world. That said, he is much better than many of these young pretenders; where much of the current British 'indie-rock' is concerned, it is really men against boys in favour of Weller. His enormous influence on the British music scene still shines through, and the Brits' only - and I mean only - redeeming feature; its finding-a-shilling-in-the-shit moment if you like, was awarding Weller an award.

Paul Weller lived his later youth (17 onwards) in the spotlight, and didn't simply Hanson-like Mmm-bop his way to the top of pop music; he led one of the most successful bands of the late 1970s and early 1980s, **The Jam**. Their albums - *All Mod Cons*, *Setting Sons*, and particularly their fourth album, *Sound Affects* - set the pop sound at the height of their fame. Much of these records' sound was indebted to **The Who**, **The Beatles**, **The Kinks** and, particularly, **The Small Faces**.

'Town Called Malice', 'Start!', 'Fly' and 'Art School' are just four examples of Weller-crafted seminal pop masterpieces taken from various points of The Jam's success. Furthermore, to highlight the man's genius, when Weller wrote the amazingly poignant 'That's Entertainment', he was only 22. In comparison to today's pop and the its lack of lyrical emphasis (with the possible exception of the **Arctic Monkeys**, in places), that's staggering. Still, today, Weller claims that he wrote it 'half-pissed' after he'd returned from the pub. Where I'm concerned, The Jam provided the soundtrack to my mid-teenage years, thirty years after their heyday.

Weller is a pop genius, there's no doubt about that. He clearly loves music more than money or his public persona amongst the general "oh I like that, I heard it on the radio" brigade. This was shown by his shock decision to break up The Jam in 1982, at the height of their fame, when he was still 24 years old, after their sixth album, *The*

Gift (Can you imagine the godawful **Kooks** doing that?)

Next, Weller went onto form the pretty lamely named **Style Council** with pianist Mick Talbot, his future wife Dee C Lee on backing vocals, and the brilliant Steve White on drums in 1983. Although he didn't necessarily continue his chart domination with the band - the pop world didn't warm to the band's R'n'B and soul influences as they did to the vastly popular Jam - there are some masterpieces on their records, particularly on (the albeit patchy) *Our Favourite Shop*, where Weller exhibits his anger at mid-Thatcherite Britain, his most overtly political album.

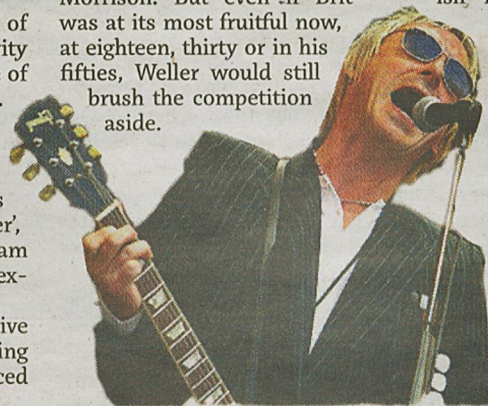
However, the band's moderate success wasn't built to last. The Style Council towards the end of the 1980s, even after Weller's success only a decade before, had a prospective album, *Modernism: A New Decade* rejected by their record label, the massively influential major, Polydor. By then, Weller's compositions had outgrown themselves; they were becoming increasingly, even for the most devout of fans, ridiculously pompous. The group's last album *Confessions Of A Pop Group* blows any merit that the band earned on *Our Favourite Shop*, by plopping all over it in vast wastelands of crap such as on the pretentiously titled 'The Gardener Of Eden (A Three Piece Suite) I' In 'The Beginning II' The Gardener Of Eden III) Mourning The Passing Of Time'. Despite the fact that Weller had grown up in the media spotlight and had learnt his trade during this period, as he now recognises, he had a barren spell.

Thankfully, since then, despite a couple of scrappy albums, Weller has retained his creativity and flair in different styles of music; he is one of the most versatile British pop musicians ever. His latest album, *22 Dreams*, released in 2008, is arguably the most varied collection of music in his career. There's folk, power-pop, spoken word, classical arrangements and more on this double album; the marvellously lazy 'Black River', with drums provided by **Blur** guitarist Graham Coxon, is an exceptional example of Weller's expansive talents.

Wild Wood and *Stanley Road* are both decisive solo Weller works. They are both more touching for the fact that they can be seen to be influenced

from indelible parts of Weller's own life at the time of their production. *Wild Wood* is his folk album, made during his **Neil Young**-ish period; and is relatively simple in terms of music - one chord sequence repeated over and over - but is one of the most touching of his works. It is, though, *Stanley Road*, that will be forever his magnum opus, an album which retraces Weller's life from his working-class upbringing in Woking, Surrey, and his meteoric rise with The Jam up to the point of the birth of his children in the 1990s. From this album, 'The Changingman' is probably his most famous song today, but as is typical with pop music, the most creative song is one of the most unsung: the dazzling 'Whirlpool's End' is one of the most underrated songs in Weller's back catalogue.

All we have to conclude here is that Weller was young at a time when the youth movement was the totem of all popular culture - Bill Grundy's career hit the pan after his confrontation with the **Sex Pistols**, for example; young people were in their ascendance, certainly in the late '70s - and despite being well out of his formative years, he's still the dog's bollocks. To a certain extent, it can be argued that Weller's prize winning at the Brits would suggest a lack of British musical talent - Weller's opponents in the 'British Male Solo Artist' were the really piss-poor Will Young, the past-it Ian Brown, the Streets (well, Mike Skinner, who was at his peak about five or six years ago) and the okay-I-guess-but-nevertheless-he-has-the-voice-of-a-busker-at-New-Street-station, James Morrison. But even if British music was at its most fruitful now, at eighteen, thirty or in his fifties, Weller would still brush the competition aside.



FIRST AID KIT

cathydruce
introduces you to
folkids

"Don't you find it strange how so many male singers unfathomably position their microphone stands far too low, so that they have to stoop down and caress the microphone in a strangely phallic manner? A prime example of this disturbing habit would be Liam Gallagher."

This charming band is made up of two Swedish sisters that are insufferably young and talented, at the ages of 18 and 15 years old, I'm not sure it's really okay for **First Aid Kit** to be this good.

First Aid Kit have the same sun-soaked rusty old bluegrass that **Fleet Foxes** have been enchanting us all with. They sound wistful beyond their



(lets not forget it, incredibly limited) years, their vocals twist round beautiful melodies and their lyrics are a little bit creepily deep.

While most teenagers are blindly stumbling into the not altogether comfortable terrain of adulthood, First Aid Kit sound like they've lived life a million times over in some dusty run-down isolated town and have somehow managed to put a drop of that feeling into each of their well crafted intricate songs. Their lyrics talk about weary marriages and fading love and all those things that they shouldn't know about in a captivating, wise way that should really jar with the reality of their innocent youthful voices, but instead adds that bit of misplaced adult melancholy that makes their sound pretty special.

All that haunting, golden, sun-drenched sound is printed onto a debut EP entitled *Drunken Trees*, released on 23 February on Wichita Recordings

GET OUT OF JAIL FREE

trentmaynard on the exploitative dance between youth and cinema

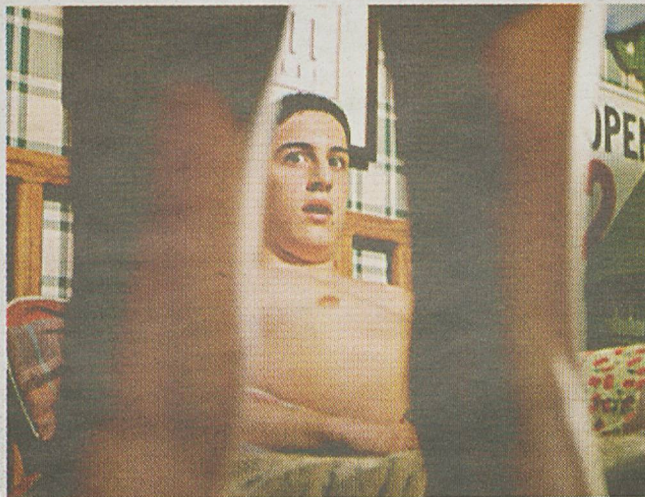
Filmmakers of all traditions and backgrounds have continually been drawn back to one common subject matter in their storytelling: youth. In all mediums of narrative, youth has been, and will always be, prominent; sometimes it is seen as the logical starting point of a story, and sometimes as the story itself.

What is it that is so enigmatic about those "formative years" that filmmakers continue to dwell upon them, dissect them and celebrate them, right on into old age? And does this obsessive reoccurrence of youth serve as a reflection on youth itself, or rather on the realities of aging and change, and ensuing nostalgia?

Beyond the apparent tendency of filmmakers to delve into autobiographical accounts of their own adolescence, youth, as a venue for a narrative exploration, provides opportunities that few other subjects do. To quote an old screen-writing professor of mine, "a good coming-of-age story must contain two key ingredients: sex and death". And in the modern world (and film industry), these are two ingredients that sell.

Adolescence, inherently, is a time of self exploration and discovery, when the individual must come to terms with his/her self, and find their place within their respective society. The

flexibility of this position, as the character is still awakening and is not yet fully governed by a solidified personal morality or by societal constraints, means that mistakes - sometimes grossly inappropriate - are excusable. They are a



work in progress, hovering in some sort of moral limbo.

Because of their 'youth,' adolescents can experiment with drugs, sex, and violence; they can

forgo responsibility, betray, steal, cheat and lie. Youths sometimes even 'get away' with murder - they are just kids, after all. A person is rarely judged by their youth, but rather by the legacy of their adulthood. We have our whole lives to seek penance for the sins of our youth; in a way, it's kind of expected of us.

One can't help but wonder whether this quasi-safe zone has meant filmmakers aren't always tackling the issues of youth, but are actually exploiting it. The fact that adolescents sometimes get off the hook too easily means that filmmakers by default, get to use a proverbial get-out-of-jail-free card in using explicit content. An example of this is the *American Pie* movies, in which teenagers run around sticking their genitalia in - quite literally - everything. If adults were placed in the same situations as the *American Pie* youth, it would be completely horrifying. Filmmakers can only get away with that much semen flying around in a teen movie, after all. But this is a problematic fact.

Has 'youth' in cinema become just a convenient screen for waving through objectionable - and highly marketable - explicit content?

CONFESSIONS OF A SHOPAHOLIC

georginabutler stands up for the shopper in reviewing the new film

Shopping is an essential part of life in the capitalist world, but to a self-confessed shopaholic it is much more: it's an act driven by pure desire which results in feelings of extreme pleasure and gratification. This idealistic vision of shopping was epitomised for me by the character Becky Bloomwood in the film *Confessions of a Shopaholic*, based on the series of books by Sophie Kinsella. The escapism of shopping; the thrill of entering a store and the sense of excitement, desire - need! - for an item was brilliantly portrayed by a character who represents any young woman (or man) who has ever been enticed into a shop by stunning window displays and purchased an item that they probably did not need, yet somehow convinced themselves they had to have.

The effervescent Isla Fisher, in the title role of Rebecca Bloomwood, is endearing, bringing the much-loved compulsive shopper from the chick-lit books to life. The film departs somewhat from the books, but the key elements are all there - from the hilarious (and categorically untrue) assertion that Becky speaks Finnish, to the key motif of a scarf (purchased, after her cards are declined, with money from a handsome benefactor - "for my grandmother"). In the books, Becky is English but the film is based in New York and merges two titles from the series. The plot centres around our protagonist's huge debts, accrued through a lifestyle of uncontrollable shopping.

This impulse stems back to the frugal ways of her mother, whose idea of a "find" is something from a second-hand shop, or an item from a car boot sale that will "last". Unfortunately, as it happens, items of appropriate durability are rarely of

any great beauty. Hence, the adult Becky breaks free from her mother's thrift and loves to shop for shiny, new things. Like a magpie, she stockpiles her acquisitions.



In an ironic twist of fate, in her ambition to write for fashion magazine 'Alette', she secures a job as a financial journalist on its sister magazine and becomes a successful advisor to read-

ers about how to look after their financial assets, whilst simultaneously trying to avoid her bank manager with madcap excuses, and falling for her boss.

In the current economic climate, everyone can empathise with the need to cut back (shopping sprees do not accessorise well with recession), but the guerrilla sales staged by major retailers are a constant draw to those shopaholics amongst us. This film is bright and bubbly (not unlike the lead actress) and embodies the essence of pleasure-shopping through its candid central character and quirky special effects, which see the mannequins in shop windows coming to life as they endeavour to tempt Becky with their wares.

What shopaholic can say they have never had such an experience in their own psyche - hopefully minus the animated mannequins - as they try to rationalise making a purchase that may seem extravagant, but would bring so much happiness? Such attempts at justification may occur in less opulent surroundings than the boutiques Becky finds herself in (Primark anyone?), but the underlying principle remains the same.

Whilst this film is likely to come under attack for its frothiness, obsession with labels and stereotyped approach to female materialism, its undeniable warmth, engaging main character and fresh-faced lead actress, who allows the audience to identify with her anguish and relish at her joy, makes *Confessions of a Shopaholic* the perfect romantic comedy for these turbulent times. After all, no one goes to the cinema to receive a lesson in fiscal responsibility.

THE GENERATION GAME

annikaranga sees james mcavoy grapple with his past

Three Days of Rain takes place a year after the death of famous architect Ned Janeway, and sees his two children, Walker, played by James McAvoy, and Nan (Lyndsey Marshal), come together for the reading of his will. Also present is Pip, played by Eastenders' Nigel Harman, who is Ned's business partner, Theo's, son.

During the first half of the play, the audience realises that Walker is a troubled guy, who is still mentally stuck in his youth and has childish ways, where he likes to run away and leave his sister worried and continuously wishing he was dead. Walker finds Ned's journal in the Manhattan loft where his father worked. This is a big turning point for Walker, as he sees it as a way of getting to know his father better, ironically after his death.

The setting of the loft represents rundown Manhattan, the rundown life that Ned led and more importantly, rundown Walker. The gloomy set is full of dull colours with a smoky effect that reflects the situation in which Walker feels that he is in. The loft plays such an important part in the play, as it is where all the main action takes place, that it in effect represents a character

of its own.

The play is split into two sections: in the first we see the three young people meet together for the first time in a year and learn many home truths about one another. But many questions are left unanswered, for example why is there a need for Pip, who is completely unrelated to Ned, to be at the reading of the will? All of these questions

are then answered in the second part of the play, where the story fully unfolds, as the action goes back in time, to the period when Ned and Theo worked together in the loft. This is done in such a way that McAvoy switches to playing his father and Harman to his father, with Marshal taking the role of the love interest. This is a clever technique, as we see these characters now taking the adult role in life but still finding it hard to cope.

Three Days of Rain sees the various issues of love, life, work, family and friendship not only causing, but also facing, hardships. McAvoy gives his all in the play and does a great job as playing both the 'responsible' adult and the 'troubled' son. Harman adds comedy to the play: my favourite line being, 'I'm talking at the moment. And it feels good', while Marshal's two characters both act as the responsible figure of reason. The whole cast put in great, strong performances, with their emphasised and capable New York accents enhancing the entertainment of the piece.

Three Days of Rain runs at the Apollo Theatre until 9th May.



Image: Johann Persson

TORTURE CHAMBER

antoniastrachey endures hell in hoxton

Howard Barker's *The Possibilities* is a selection of loosely connected sketches depicting everything from a Russian brothel, World War One, Islam and high heels, war in the Middle East and a bookseller's gripes about pigeon shit. It is a selection that could provide abundant artistic possibilities one may, optimistically, have thought. Unfortunately I, along with the other six people in the audience at Hoxton's Courtyard Theatre, was totally disappointed by the unsympathetic depictions of foreign cultures, which left the grating impression of an outsider peering in to a half understood world.

One scene saw two women in niqabs discuss female responsibility for provoking sexual arousal in male strangers. One of the women's slightly shorter skirt revealed a pair of very high heels which sparked interrogation by the other. Half way through the sketch the women got up, approached each other under bright red lights,

spun around and rolled up and rolled down their skirts respectively. Then the interrogation continued as the woman with her now covered ankles grilled the other, whose high heels were now exposed. This bizarre and inelegant sequence left me completely unmoved and was in close competition for the lowest point in the evening with the closing scene where the cast fired toy guns at the audience.

The only highlight came from a convincing portrayal of a Russian prostitute's relationship with her crushed guardian/mother. The older lady is berated for her faith in Communism that promised much but delivered nothing, while the young girl gets ready for her evening's liaison with a precision utterly devoid of romance. The prostitute's proud disgust at the expression of faith in a principle, as she works out what the evening's takings would be, was momentarily arresting; however that moment was fleeting

and soon forgotten as scenes involving voodoo dolls, dyed red water splashed on a wall and Central Asian carpet weavers limped past.

Before we collected our tickets, we were warned that there was a chance that the low turnout would stop the performance from going ahead. It must be said that there were points when the near emptiness of the auditorium added to the atmosphere of the action - a wartime scene showing a commander tormented by the screams of his men meeting their deaths was rather enriched by the bleakness of the theatre which was also practically devoid of human life.

Yet the one enjoyable scene was not worth the rest of the two hours of crass, baffling jumble, which left me wishing that they had not gone to the effort of coming on stage at all.

The Possibilities runs at the Courtyard Theatre until 8th March.

HOW REVOLTING

judehutchinson takes a trip to dahl's dark side

My favourite memories of reading when I was a child are not of *The Tiger Who Came To Tea*, or *The Velveteen Rabbit*, or any of Enid Blyton's alliteratively titled adventures. Worthy though these are I was clearly of a far more sinister disposition. I loved the more mischievous Roald Dahl: the enduring image of *George's Marvellous Medicine*; the grotesque *Mr and Mrs Twit*.

I was especially fond of Dahl's *Revolting Rhymes*, where traditional fairy tales are twisted to become more grotesque. Goldilocks, for instance, is presented through the use of impeccable logic as a vandal and a thief. In *Snow White* our eponymous heroine pays her rent to the seven dwarfs by using the magic mirror to win bets on the horses. Little Red Riding Hood takes sweet revenge on the wolf that ate Grandma by whipping a pistol from her knickers, shooting woofie in the head and turning him into a coat. Dahl was particularly adept at sneaking in life lessons whilst all the time adding to the grimness. His villains are not just cut and dry nasty, they are unappealingly selfish and petulant and consequently far more fun to hate.

In *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* the variously spoiled, gluttonous and unimaginative pint-sized antagonists, along with the one who commits the rather more dubious crime of perpetual gum chewing, cannot compete with the charming Charlie Bucket. Much of my impeccable moral code was developed through my brother reading Hilaire Bel-

loc's 'Cautionary Tales' to me, complete with silly voices, and we morbidly relished the tragic tales of children with terrible fatal flaws such as 'Matilda, who told lies and was burnt to death', and 'Rebecca, who slammed doors for fun and perished miserably'. I also learnt not to run away from my nurse for fear of being eaten by a lion, or chew bits of string at the risk of being early cut off in dreadful agonies.

This childhood reading has obviously had an effect; I shudder at the sound of a slammed door and chewing gum genuinely makes me nauseous. Time well spent. I'd be worried about this dark literary upbringing and the consequent affect on my mental health, but it's clear I'm not alone. Fairy tales have always been dark at best, macabre at worst, right up to the point where Disney claims the rights. The fantastic world of children's fiction becomes instantaneously and infinitely more exciting, to kids and adults alike, when there is a collection of predictably foul but unrealistic bad-dies with, of course, the reassurance that they will get their comeuppance. The fates that befall those who stand in the way of our underdog heroes are unrealistic enough to avoid being horrific and simply remain grotesque, so authors can indulge children's love of being scared without terrifying or disturbing them. After reading a book like that the world changes. Shadows become witches and a creaking floorboards at night bring back that child-ish thrill of fear. Be honest, compared to that, the sickeningly sweet Nancy Drew just can't cut it.



ABSOLUTELY WIZARD

holliestman gets along famously with enid

Before Harry, Hermione, and Ron, the coolest kids in literary town the Famous Five were the only children everyone wanted to invite round for fish fingers. The *Famous Five* series, written by Enid Blyton, totalled twenty-one stories, a big achievement considering the Harry Potter series didn't achieve even half as many.

Today we live in an age filled with toddlers with Facebook pages and tweenagers with iPhones it is often questioned whether or not the innocence traditionally associated with childhood still exists. The Famous Five go to Treasure Island was first released in 1942, and of course society has changed a great deal in the past sixty odd years. Nevertheless, the tales of youthful adventures are as enjoyable today as ever.

Every school holiday siblings Julian, Dick, and Anne were shipped off to moody, tomboy cousin George's house on the coast, and throughout the next two-hundred pages a plethora of adventures would ensue. Golly, spiffing, and absolutely wizard, the books have been described as only appealing to those seeking a middle class dream. But they are more than that. No matter the trouble, all the drama was easily dealt with using common sense, raw pluck, and of course lashings of ginger beer.

Recently the stories topped the poll of most loved children's book by adults, beating both Harry Potter and the Chronicles of Narnia to

the number one spot; in spite of being rendered hopelessly out of date and out of touch by the majority of the literary world in the nineteen seventies.

Critics have accused the characters of being trapped in a pre-pubescent time warp of seemingly endless summers. Blyton has frequently been charged of sexism in her writings. The character of Anne is continually subservient to her elder brothers. George, the other female character, dons boys clothing and a brutish stubborn attitude to match is portrayed as being on a level par with the two boys. Surely by displaying a polarity of female characters Blyton was illuminating the different roles the genders could adopt.

Today the stories have to be read with a different mindset. The language and values held by society have changed. The character of Aunt Fanny, who unfortunately had cruel enough parents to name her after female genitalia, definitely

lacks the street credentials to make it in today's literary world.

Perhaps as testament to the stories timeless appeal the Famous Five has recently been bastardised for the modern age into a cartoon series. The smugglers and the afternoons spent scoffing Chelsea buns are gone, in their place tracking DVD bootleggers and jamming on their iPods. By lifting the stories into the twenty-second century, are the creators responding to a demand? Or merely adding to the younger generation becoming increasingly imaginatively vacant?

Nevertheless my childhood was spent with the four children; and of course Timmy the dog. I went with them to Mystery Moor, and fought smugglers with them at Kirren Cove. Many evenings I argued with my mum to let me sleep on the tiny patch of heather in our front garden. Suburban Andover may have been a world, and several decades, away from theirs, but I embraced it all the same.



A WRINKLE OR TWO IN TIME

marionkoob on the value of youth

Youth without youth. Although I have never had the chance to see the film by Francis Coppola, the title is compelling: is it possible to possess youth without being young? In this, we contrast the condition of youth as a state of mind to the one of physical capacity. Which of these two elements is deemed as wasted, when our elders enunciate the timeless adage "Youth is wasted on the young"? Is the state of our early years truly something which we should cherish, at the peril of regrets?

Our obsession with physical youth is palpable in all aspects of this society. All adults strive to dress and look young, driven on by the image we are spoon-fed from the media. Actresses look young, singers look young, and models look young, and if they can do it, why can't we? The point most often missed is that these individuals usually *are* younger than us, and that being caught in a perpetual age denial is a battle lost from the start. After all, ageing is our common, inescapable destiny (provided that we are not brought to face death prematurely). The desire to counter the degradation of our bodies and minds, however, is only natural. The elderly remember the days when they could look at themselves in the mirror without distinguishing a single ripple in their skins, a time when white hair seemed like a laughable matter and they felt like they possessed enough energy to conquer the world. Sound familiar? This is the epoch students are now travelling through - and,

never having known anything else, take our optimal physical condition for granted. It is conceivable - and very likely - that in a few decades we find ourselves sighing that 'youth is wasted on the young', wishing that we had enjoyed these ir-retrievable moments even more intensely.



On the other hand, the value of mental youth is often underplayed. The young brim with idealism, their heads full of abstract concepts, which we are all too ready to believe will change the world around us. It is only a matter of looking back to the student uprisings of 1968 all over Europe, or the involvement of university pupils in the Cultural Revolution in China, the latter being a horrific example of the desire of the young to

apply ideals to reality in hope of a better world. And even now, within our day to day lives we are faced with two main approaches to the idealism, and, let's face it, relative naivety which we still possess. Some are desirous to cast it away at the first opportunity, hungry to be part of the 'serious, cynical adult world'. Others attempt to cling to their innocence and lack of responsibilities like a drug. In my opinion, a balance needs to be found in between the two: be wary of casting away ideals and insouciance too soon, once lost, they are difficult to regain, and the energy of optimism is required in an ever-more sombre world. This optimism, however, must be driven: locking ourselves in a loop of mindless fun may be comfortable, but is not a productive way of spending our energies.

Paradoxically, these suggestions originate from a youthful perspective on the matter. I cannot pretend to be any wiser in my experience than any other student, and am yet to reach the age where I can understand the full meaning behind the over-used proverb 'Youth is wasted on the young'. But let us drift away from the pursuit of a 'youth without youth', whether now or in the future. Your innocence is worth preserving, just as the efforts of our elders to appear younger are, in the logical sense, fruitless. We're all doomed to wrinkle: we might just as well come to terms with it now, and enjoy our youth while we can.

AND THE WINNER IS...

katiejanepEEK has been let down by young hollywood

The Oscars. The year's most celebrated movies fight to grab the film industry's most prestigious prize - the coveted twelve-inch gold man. But the Oscars have come to represent much more than this, with talk of 'who's wearing what' and 'who's with who' dominating the red carpet and gossip magazines worldwide thereafter. The Oscars is a place where a bad dress choice can ruin careers (well, maybe that's a little dramatic). And so, here is your guide to the good, the bad and the just plain ugly at the 81st Annual Academy Awards.

First prize goes to Sarah Jessica Parker in a stunning Dior Couture gown she described as 'barely mint'. Hardly surprising, Carrie Bradshaw never gets it wrong. (I hear you blasphemous SJP haters deeming her 'The World's Most Unsexy Woman' and I mentally slap you in the face). Next comes Marisa Tomei - one of those people you vaguely know, she only has small roles in films which you can't really remember. But hell did she pull out a memorable dress



- a white, one shoulder Versace gown flowing into a pleated train. Just perfect. Lastly is 'Brit of the moment', Kate Winslet. Now I can't say I've completely forgiven her for letting Leonardo DiCaprio die in *Titanic*, and more recently telling him she hated him in *Revolutionary Road*, but her sophisticated YSL dress did help to slightly quell my resentment. A one shoulder gown in grey with black lace embellishment, accompanied with a severe hair-do (and potentially a whole can of hair spray). But it worked; the British national treasure was truly transformed into Oscar winning gold.

Now for the bad, the terrible, nay the downright wrong. And I must say - while many outfits were simply uninteresting or indistinctive (cough, Angelina Jolie) - very few ruined their future careers with a dress choice. Firstly, Beyoncé in a potential bid to dress like an Oscar statuette. Her black dress with gold patterning was a strange and restricting shape causing her to shuffle awkwardly along the red carpet, accompanying which was absolutely no jewellery and hair in a plain ponytail. Lucky for her she was able to redeem herself later with a red sparkly leotard. Secondly on the black list is Anne Hathaway. Why oh why does she insist on continually wearing 'nearly white' colours when she has such a pale complexion? Again the dress was a weird

shape - with the waistband coming too high, almost making the super-slim actress look fat. Although, Miss Hathaway seemed to have changed once inside the Kodak Theatre - a wise choice in my eyes. And next we come to Evan Rachel Wood - another actress whose name rings a bell (I wonder if she knows she's named after a plus-size shop) but actual acting credits fail to spring to mind. She is in this category merely for her appalling hairstyle. Imagine tying your hair in a bun and leaving your fringe down. Next you gel your fringe from one side to the other in some kind of horizontal quiff. This is the exact method employed by Evan to ruin her fantastic Elie Saab gown.

A strange pattern emerges when analysing the red carpet successes and distresses. The actors who were the best-dressed are all over forty (well Kate Winslet is 38 but who's checking?). Even fifty-six year old Mickey Rourke rocked the red carpet in a dapper white suit accompanied with characteristic chains. The majority of the people who fall into the badly dressed category are in their twenties. Even Zac Efron failed to excite me, having employed a similar hair gelling method as Evan Rachel Wood. And so, youth does not win out over experience. When it comes to the big night, the best-dressed are overwhelmingly the old crowd, while the amateurs fail to keep up with the pace.

THE FOUNTAIN OF AGE

aliciafry is not afraid of growing old

I went to the cinema this past weekend to watch the new chick flick, *He's Just Not That Into You*. The movie was cute, aside from its constant hammering of the point that a woman will not be happy until she finds a *man* to fall in love with, but that is beside the point. The point I wish to convey is the film's inadvertent demonstration of the attraction to youth and the tension between woman and the passing of time.

Betty Friedan was an active American feminist and a leader in many women's rights movements. She is most famously known for her book *The Feminine Mystique*, in which she examines the sadness felt by educated housewives because of the loss of identity they developed from living for their husbands and children. Later in her life she began to study ageing and in particular media ageism; basically keeping the old out of view.

Friedan mulled over a stack of news clippings: people over 65 were absent, and a large number of the stories were about reversing ageing, and maintaining your youth. Friedan's gripe was that aging should not be stigmatised, with negative social connotations, but embraced as a new stage of opportunity and strength. The denial of the old to contribute to society is limiting the potential difference they can make. Friedan believes that old people may be more inclined to forget names and dates, but they are better at conceptualising the world and understanding abstract knowledge.

Could it be the loss of femininity that raises so much fear in women about growing old? Friedan theorises that ageing links the division of masculinity and femininity. An easy joke to insert here is – women grow facial hair and men develop breasts. The spectrum from femininity to masculinity begins to shrink and identifying with our gender roles be-

comes harder. Judging ourselves on youthful parameters is never going to produce a positive effect. Look at Madonna: her incredible tenacity to look young has turned her into a freakish anomaly, someone who doesn't look old or young.

The film *He's Just Not That Into You* does a good job of showing the anxiety people feel toward needing to fall in love while in their youth because without youth on your side you have to rely on your confidence, hu-

mour, charisma, dignity and personality; characteristics not really possessed by the characters in the film.

A couple of months ago I confided in my brother about the relationship doubts weighing heavily on my mind, and he graciously offered me up an assessment of the situation. He said, "Alicia, you are already 26 years old and if you break up with Geoff and date somebody else for two years you will be almost 29. You will be one year away from thirty and if that relationship doesn't work out either you will end up over thirty, in which case, your chances of ever getting married will plummet."

My brother is verbally abusive with good intentions so I am never shocked when he talks to me in this manner. I think of him as a judgemental grandmother; he has the world figured out and still clutches onto a traditional 1950s mentality. His assessment shows the centrality youth plays in long-term happiness, and that happiness in old age is attained through the use of one's youth.

Surprisingly though, my mother's outlook emulates Friedan insofar as she doesn't think of youth as an alarm clock that rapidly ticks to zero as time passes. My mother, who correlates love with jewellery, said to me, "Darling, don't worry about love. You can fall in love with anybody. When you're ready to settle down just pick somebody." Her attitude is very *Fiddler on the Roof*; unromantic, and more representative of a business agreement. Her and Friedan are both not afraid of aging, and they recognise that it is a new stage of opportunity.

Friedan, who famously said, "No woman gets an orgasm from shining the kitchen floor," also said, "Ageing will create the music of the coming century." To put it in terms of Pascal's Wager, believing in the opportunities of aging, and not believing that aging is lost youth, you will be granting yourself a happier existence, one in which you don't limit or belittle yourself.

