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Alumni

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**TORSO
OF THE
WEEK**

The Beaver

13 October 2009
Newspaper of the
London School of Economics
Students' Union
thebeaveronline.co.uk

LSE falls from World Ranks



Phyllis Lui

The London School of Economics has been placed 67th out of 200 in the 'World University Rankings 2009', a ranking conducted by the Times Higher Education Supplement (THES) magazine.

While the LSE has dropped one place from 66 overall in 2008, it was ranked 5th for social sciences in a separate league table of specialist universities. This was also a drop from 4th place last year. Harvard University topped both tables.

Unlike previous years, the top ten list was not just dominated by American universities. University of Cambridge followed behind Harvard, whilst University College London (UCL) and Imperial College London (Imperial) were respectively ranked 4th and 5th, pushing University of Oxford to equal 5th place.

The table is compiled based on data from six categories: academic peer review (40 per cent), employer review (10 per cent), faculty student ratio (20 per cent), citations per faculty (20 per cent), international faculty (5 per cent) and international students (5 per cent).

The LSE scored 29 out of 100 for citations per faculty and 53 out of 100 for faculty student ratio, which is explained to be a "commitment to teaching". It was comparatively lower to those of UCL and Imperial who both scored 100 for faculty student ratio.

LSE Pro Director for Research and External Relations Professor Sarah Worthington believed the citations per faculty category to be "dramatically under-representative of any peer assessment of our work". Furthermore, she explained that the faculty student ratio employed publicly available data, which does not accurately reflect the teaching quality.

"The World University Rankings were set up to measure general universities, not specialist colleges and schools, and that is what they do. The LSE has long complained that its social science specialism prevents it from featuring as highly in our rankings as it should. It is, in fact, the only H1 institution in our top 200, showing that it is the best medium-sized, research-intensive specialist university in the world," Worthington continues.

LSE has produced a report detailing problems with the rankings, which states that, "The company producing the university rankings for the THES is QS. For a variety of reasons it has been difficult to precisely replicate the QS methodology as QS do not make it transparent."

"The THES table has been largely discredited because of its in-built prejudice against social science institutions. League tables in general offer little utility, and this table in particular does little to reflect the reality of study at any of the institutions listed. The most important rankings to students will continue to be specific measures of quality of education and student satisfaction," stated LSESU General Secretary Aled Dilwyn Fisher.

Third year Social Anthropology student Alice Pelton said, "It's a huge shame, seeing as you start to think about what University you want to go to about 4 or 5 years before you graduate with its name on your degree. That's clearly enough time for its reputation to fall into disrepair."

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comment**
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Michaelmas term elections go online

Zeeshan Malik

LSE Students' Union elections have been shifted entirely to online balloting.

The Michaelmas Term elections, which will take place in Weeks 3 and 4 this term, will no longer have voting on paper ballots.

The decision was reached by the new Returning Officer Shanti Kelemen in consultation with the Constitution & Steering Committee. Section 9 of the Codes of Practice gives the Returning Officer discretion to choose between methods of voting.

The Codes of Practice also dictate that such a decision cannot be reached without the approval of C&S. "We came to an agreement that we would try it this term," said Kelemen. "The first question the new staff asked me was why the Union still using paper ballots and how successful on-line balloting had been in other Unions."

In relation to the system used in previous years, Kelemen added, "Paper ballots create an enormous amount of work which detracts from elections as a whole, being a coherent and efficient process. Election night went onto 1 am because of counting paper ballots and melding them with the online ballots."

The cost of paper balloting used in previous years reportedly costs between £700 and £1200 depending on the number of candidates.

Under the Codes of Practice, every race in the elections must be printed on a separate ballot. The online system would eliminate all expenditures on printing.

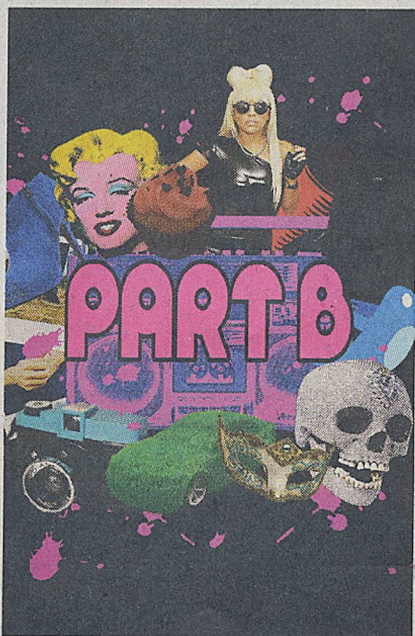
Voting online will also give all voters the opportunity to view candidates' manifestos on the voting page, instead of "relying on a five-word slogan."

When asked about his views on how this year's elections were shaping up to be, LSESU General Secretary Aled Dilwyn Fisher said, "The Michaelmas Term elections are extremely important. I believe that Shanti's fantastic organisation and new ideas will increase turnout and engage more students in this vital process."

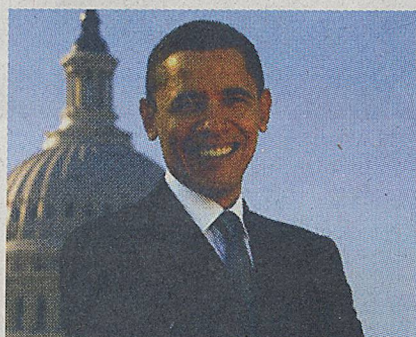
The positions open for election this term will be those of Postgraduate Officer, General Course Representative, five openings on the Court of Governors, three openings on the Academic Board, two NUS Delegates, the Honorary President and Vice President.

Following Priscilla Abishegam's recent resignation from the Constitution & Steering Committee, the seat will also be contested during this term's elections.

2009	2008	Institution	Peer Review	Employer Review	Staff/Student	Citations/Staff	International Staff	International Students	Overall
1	1	Harvard	100	100	98	100	85	78	100
2	3	Cambridge	100	100	100	89	98	96	99.6
3	2	Yale	100	99	100	94	85	77	99.1
4	7	UCL	98	99	100	90	96	99	99.0
5=	6	Imperial	100	100	100	80	98	100	97.8
5=	4	Oxford	100	100	100	80	96	97	97.8
23	22	Kings	91	98	90	67	92	88	88.4
67=	66	LSE	89	100	53	29	100	100	73.7



Comment



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Collective

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

China and Financial Reform
 Howard Davies
 Tonight, SZT, 1830-2000 (Ticketed)

Beyond Terror and Martyrdom: the future of the Middle East
 Professor Gilles Kepel
 Tonight, OT, 1830-2000

Gender and Participation in the Arab Gulf
 Dr Wanda Krause
 Wednesday, A318, 1630-1800

Cities and the Environment
 Peter Head
 Wednesday, SZT, 1830-2000

Islam: what I believe
 Professor Tariq Ramadan
 Wednesday, OT, 1830-2000 (Ticketed)

The Power of Comparison in History
 Dr Kent Deng
 Thursday, HKT, 1305

China—UK Relations in the Changing World
 Ambassador Ma Zhengang
 Thursday, OT, 1700-1800

The Government of Uncertainty: how to follow the politics of oil
 Professor Tim Mitchell
 Thursday, SZT, 1830-2000

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

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<http://theBeaveronline.co.uk/getinvolved>

Women-only gym hours receives mixed reception



Zeeshan Malik

The decision to implement women-only hours at the gym has become the subject of much debate.

The LSESU gym announced the implementation of "Women-Only" hours starting 5 October, 2009.

Under the new policy, male students will not be able to use the gym facilities for an hour every Monday, Wednesday and

Saturday.

John Lang, a regular user of the gym facilities said, "Let me be perfectly clear - I take no issue with the concept of Women Only Sessions. What I do disagree with is that male members are forced to pay the same rate as female members while they receive fewer services." Lang, who paid his annual membership of £100 on 7 September 2009, felt "[he] was not even given a choice on whether or not [he] wanted to subsidize fellow female gym members."

2nd Year Economic History Student and 1st Team Rugby player Matthew Box

said, "I would have appreciated a notification about this before forking out for my hundred-quid membership. Does my full membership fee entitle me to train at specific 'male-only hours'? Because that seems to be what women are getting for the same amount of money as I have paid."

Student Patrick Waismann said, "We [the staff members] were told the hours were implemented based on surveys. Although we never heard of any such surveys... The problem here is that nobody was told about this when they paid for their membership."

LSESU Treasurer George Wetz said, "There was a pretty clear demand for it. Women-only hours have been implemented several times before, but were never successful because of poor publicity. They were part of my manifesto, and we've successfully implemented them this time." When asked about the concerns of an unequal balance between male and females, Wetz added, "If we have male students who are really serious about also having their own dedicated hours, they should come forward and campaign for it."

LSESU Islamic Society President Talha

Ghannam commented, "LSE provides a very culturally-rich environment where people have all sorts of different needs. I see these Women-only hours as another way to cater for all LSE students. There's always going to be problems and someone's bound to be unhappy. But I do feel there are many more people who would benefit from it."

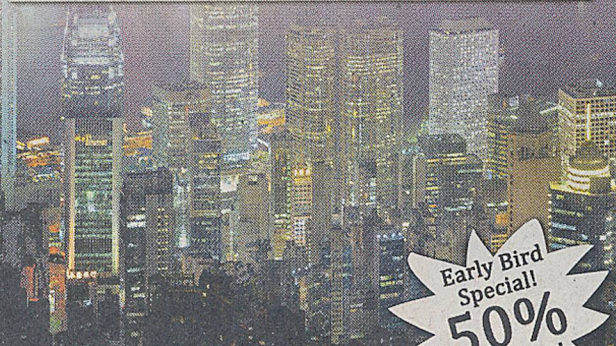
Although LSE gym staff mentioned that some pressure for women-only hours was brought about by the LSESU Feminists' Society, the President for the Society was unavailable for comment.

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Undergraduates win prize for paper

Madeeha Ansari

Two LSE students won top accolades for an economics competition, it was announced last night.

Final year undergraduate students Anders Jensen and Markus Gstoettner contacted the school from Boston last to announce their success in the International Atlantic Economic Society competition. Their joint paper entitled "Aid and Public Finance: A Missing Link?" was ranked above 65 other entries, winning the award for "Best Undergraduate Paper 2009".

This is the second award for their work, which also won one of three "Distinguished Participant Awards" at Georgetown University's prestigious research conference, the Carroll Round. They were then short-listed by the AES panel and made a final presentation of the paper on October 10.

Jensen and Gstoettner were part of a series of research workshops organised by the Economics Department over the past year. Spearheaded by Dr. Judith Shapiro, the group was given guidance regarding research tools and quantitative analysis.

This knowledge was aptly utilized by the students in their work, which is an econometric analysis of why development aid may be ineffective.

The Economics Department is "thrilled to congratulate" the students on their initiative. They themselves approach their work with self-deprecatory humour. To quote their "Acknowledgements", "For any mistakes or inconsistencies, the authors blame each other."

After its disappointing performance in the league tables, the success of the aspiring academics comes as heartening news for the LSE.



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For further information, please visit our Facebook Group "LSESU Business Society 2009-2010" or email su.soc.business@lse.ac.uk.



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***General Course Representative**
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Positions available on LSE governing bodies:

***Court of Governors**
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***Academic Board**
(3 positions available)

Conference delegates:

***National Union of Students' Annual
Conference delegates**
(2 positions available)

Nomination forms and an explanatory
guide are available from Students' Union
Reception and www.lsesu.com

**Nominations close at 5PM on 19
October.**

Voting occurs on 28 and 29 October.

www.lsesu.com

LSE STUDENTS'
UNION



Motion to let Othman study passed at UGM

>> New keeper, chair and vice-chair elected
>> Motions for re-sits and rent guarantors also passed

Marie Dunaway

The first Union General Meeting (UGM) of the year was held last week, during which motions were passed concerning Othman Sakallah and LSESU campaigns.

The campaign to allow Othman Sakallah, a Palestinian student, to leave Gaza to commence his studies at LSE continued, as a motion in support of his right to study was passed at the first UGM of the academic year.

The motion titled "Let Othman study - free the LSE student trapped in Palestine" passed with a large majority. Following the debates regarding the Gaza conflict and Israel's actions earlier this year, there was some concerns raised, including the comments that the Union resolved to "press Howard Davies to issue a statement condemning the siege and its impact on the ability of LSE students to pursue their right to education".

Ben Grabiner, who spoke to amend this point, was concerned that by demanding the school to make statements on political actions outside the LSE, it would take the emphasis off encouraging the school to take actions which directly affect students on campus. The amendment did not pass as it was argued that the Council had agreed to make state-

ments if such political actions were to affect students.

There was also a question raised about whether there was "proof that it's only the siege that prevents Sakallah" from coming to the LSE.

Other motions which were proposed included a motion to lobby the school to relax current regulations on resits, to allow students who experience serious mitigating circumstances the opportunity to take their exams earlier. This would allow them to enter the next academic year, without taking a year out of study. Some comments were made from the floor that this could potentially make students have a negative relaxed attitude to examinations; however the motion passed with a vast majority.

A Rent Guarantor motion was also passed in order to support international students and home students from paying very large deposits when there are difficulties over guarantors.

The new Sabbatical Officers and Executive board gave a brief introduction and outlined their main plans for the year including open consultation over the Governance Review, as well as some comments regarding the successes of the Orientation Festival.

Aled Fisher, General Secretary of the Student Union also announced the results of the naming of the Beaver, LSE's mascot. The Beaver is to be named Biggles.

How economics makes us happy

Sachin Patel

Tim Harford, celebrated microeconomist and the brains behind the Financial Times' popular Undercover Economist column, used his lecture last Tuesday not only as a vehicle for treating attendees to selections from his latest book, but also to enlighten them with regards to the economic theories underpinning such esoteric subjects as happiness, love and dinner parties.

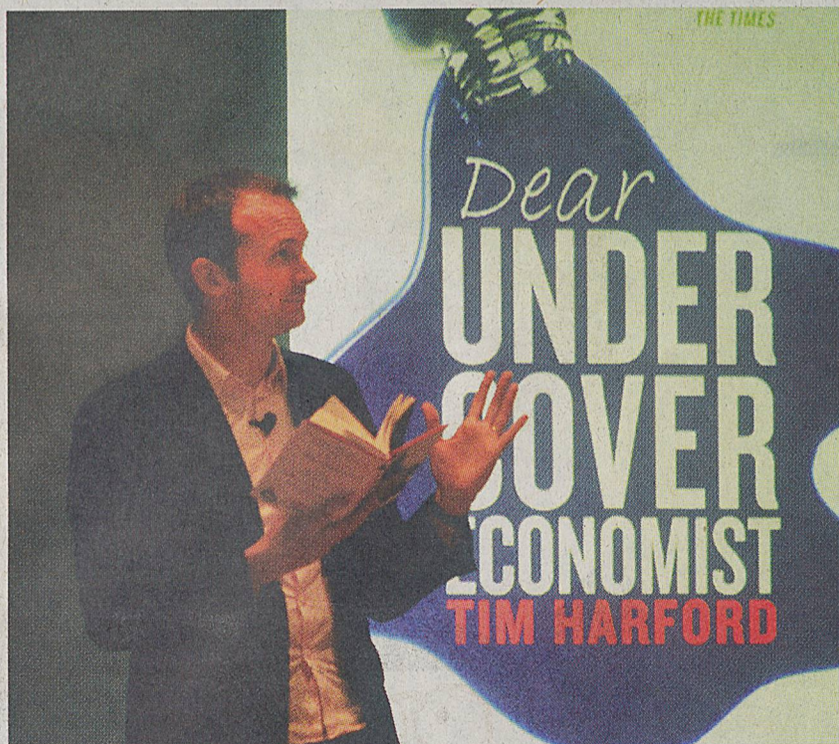
Over the course of his talk, Harford never failed to inform and amuse, equally at ease at poking fun at pop psychology as at explaining rational choice theory.

The book in question, entitled Dear Undercover Economist, features more choice cuts from Harford's much-loved column, wherein readers have been invited - over the last six years - to write in with their problems, be they amorous, financial or wholly bizarre, in order to obtain typically lucid but witty advice and solutions, underpinned by compelling economic evidence.

Critics of the column may be sceptical of the need to use such weighty knowledge in such a manner - and, as Harford himself admits early on, "I felt guilty that I didn't understand how banks were run" - but the economist is adamant that economics can be a force of good, adding that the subject is "a wonderful tool to help people."

Judging by the excerpts to which Harford treated the audience, the book undoubtedly bears testament to the efficacy with which economics can solve everyday problems. Though we may initially regard the notion as being "like asking Spock for dating advice", what quickly emerges is the idea that empirical research and rational choice theory are ideal bedfellows with dilemmas as diverse as middle-aged men pondering whether to continue affairs, and Canary Wharf-based escorts contemplating relocating in the wake of the Lehman Brothers collapse.

Moving away from the book, and into Harford's wider research, lecture-goers were subsequently treated to detailed analyses of the economics of happiness and of speed dating. In the first instance,



Harford referenced the studies of Andrew Oswald (having recounted telling Alan Krueger to "Cheer up!") to provide a substantial account of the factors that make us happiest.

The key lessons, it would appear, are that money does indeed make us happy; marriage is the happiest relationship status in which to be; but that the optimum number of children to have if one wishes to remain happiest is a resolute zero. Again, the facility with which Harford connected with his audience was evident in his concise précis of the research - "Get rich but stay at college; get married but use a lot of birth control."

The subject of speed dating provided the opportunity for another excursion into fringe economic theory. Sadly, though "when it comes to love, people don't always tell the truth", the efficiency of speed dating is such that a lot of honest information is collected very quickly. For economists such as Marco Francesconi and Michèle Belot, Harford elaborates, the data suggests that whereas women are more likely to raise their standards and

only select two potential dates regardless of the quality of the men on offer, "Men's standards are more forgiving... more desperate."

The crucial advice? If you do go on a speed date, take a short and ugly friend with you.

Harford concluded the lecture with a question-and-answer session, not only answering the problems offered up by members of the audience, but also recounting some favourite solutions of his. From the floor, a disillusioned 2nd year student was advised to continue with her degree even if it was only to stall the point at which she would have to enter the job market; from his earlier work, he reminisced about advising a man to stick with his girlfriend in spite of their chemistry only sparking when the man was reasonably drunk.

Though it is easy to be sceptical of the value of such advice to the economic world, it is easy to see the converse - that economic models can provide tangible solutions in the real world.

Sir Davies takes centre-stage

Snnjiv Nanwani
Phyllis Lui

As the financial crisis tore through the city and the economy drowned in toxic securities, this spring the National Theatre commissioned a prominent English playwright, Sir David Hare, to stage a production that would shed light into the origins and developments of the crisis.

Cambridge-educated Hare, who was knighted in 1998 with an impressive set of accolades including the 1979 BAFTA Award and the 1990 London Theatre Critics' Award, met with many key players in the financial world in order to establish an accurate record of events.

Working with director Angust Jackson, Hare marshalled a cast of 24 men and women and created The Power of Yes - a "compelling, enlightening and entertaining" narrative of the recent Great Recession.

Described as a "passionate political documentary" by the Evening Standard, the production reportedly provides "a jaw-dropping account of how, as the banks went bust, capitalism was replaced by a socialism that bailed out the rich alone."

Although the show was greeted by initial excitement and fanfare, critics were abundant in condemning the show's dramatisation of events. "The Power of Yes deserves a 'No'", exclaimed the Wall Street Journal in headline that splashed across its broadsheet.

A spokeswoman for the theatre said that many of the leading figures who had talked to Hare during his research for the play, subtitled "A dramatist seeks to understand the financial crisis", had already seen the work in preview.

They include financier and LSE alumni George Soros, and Sir Howard Davies, former head of the Financial Services Authority and currently director of the London School of Economics.

The play's success at the box office echoes that of Lucy Prebble's Enron, which sold out its run of nearly 22,000

tickets at the Royal Court before the play even opened.

Ticket sales for its West End transfer in January 2010, to the Noel Coward Theatre, are going briskly.

Hare said in an interview with the Financial Times last month that he was not optimistic that the lessons learned from the crisis would translate into reform.

"We have a situation now where the financial sector is basically blackmailing us all, saying that there cannot be a recovery unless you treat us well," he said. "It's like what the miners did in Britain. But this time the trade union is in Canary Wharf."

Commenting on his role in the production, Davies noted that he was "mainly a commentator and explainer", and that he enjoyed the "brave attempt to explain the crisis in dramatic terms." He added, "My only complaint is that the actor who portrays me needs to lose about 15 kilos to be credible."

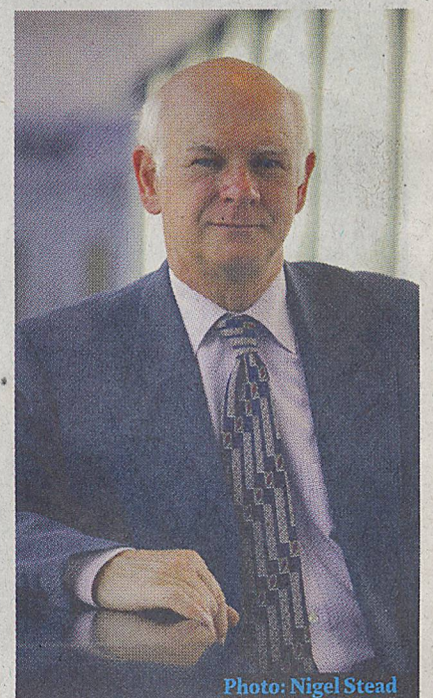


Photo: Nigel Stead



Dr. Bike, a surgery for LSE students and staff to take their bicycles to, took place last week, with the Metropolitan Police tagging bicycles as to deter thieves and make tracking easier if they were to get stolen. Over 50 bikes were treated, 37 of which were tagged, with everyone receiving a free LSE bike seat cover courtesy of LSE Director Howard Davies. There are more LSE bike seat covers available at the Students' Union Helpdesk in the East Building.

If you would like to find out more about future bike-related events, please get in touch with LSESU Treasurer George Wetz.



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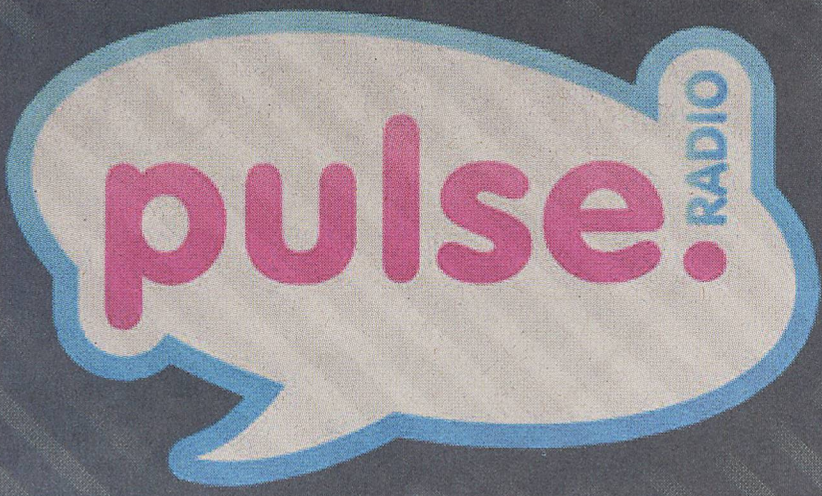
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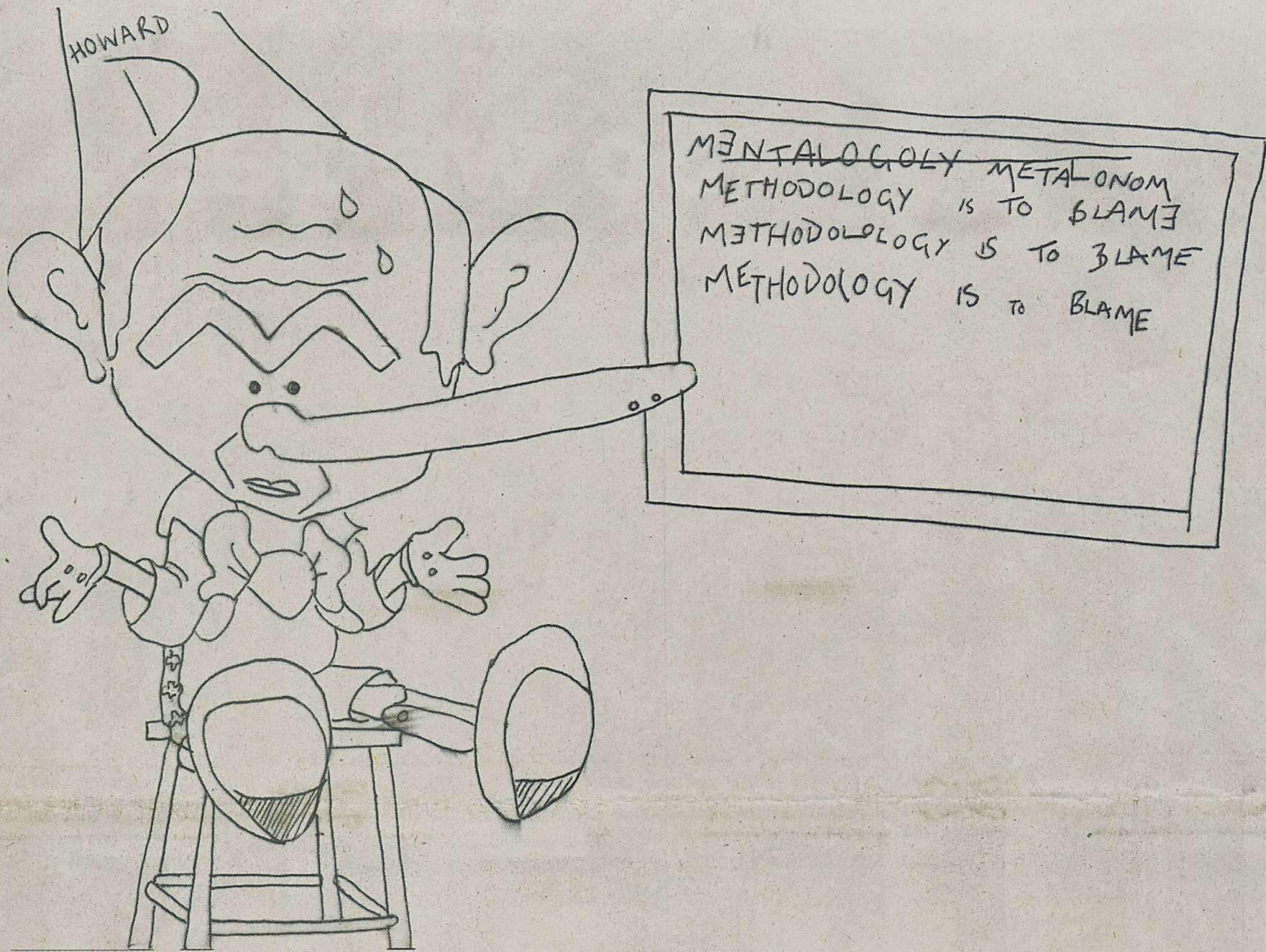
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Comment



The Beaver

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Issue No. 709

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The long slide to mediocrity

Another year, and we slip even further. Last week, Facebook statuses and tweets of LSE students reflected the shock that we had, yet again, dropped in the Times Higher Education Supplement rankings. Adding salt to the wound, UCL, Imperial, Bristol, Manchester, Edinburgh, King's, Warwick, Birmingham and even Trinity College Dublin were all far ahead of us in the league tables.

A year ago, the school launched a fiery defense against the THES, accusing the league system of systematic bias

against social science specialist institutions. This argument, however, bears no merit given that the LSE has slipped even within the social science table. Even with the world stage competing with the LSE on its own terms, the School has failed to defend its turf and deliver what we as students expect of it.

The School's utterly abysmal performance has brought disgrace upon its staff and students alike. LSE received a disappointing faculty-student ratio rating of 53 - an embarrassing comparison to Oxbridge, UCL, Imperial College and other institutions, all of which scored

a perfect 100. This paper believes that the score is a reflection of the School's poor commitment to teaching and the disposal of academic resources for a student's personal and professional development.

For far too long, the School has taken its hard-earned international reputation for granted. Sir Davies and his team evidently do not appreciate the toil of our alumni; is it hence any wonder why we continue to struggle with dwindling receipts of alumni donations, and a poor overall relationship with students and staff who have travelled through the School's

hallowed halls?

Some might argue that a number means nothing; that rankings are irrelevant. This is the argument frequently used by the School, claiming that LSE's reputation still remains untainted in the eyes of employers, students and academics alike - a defense that shows the unwillingness of LSE's administration to face up to the reality of its declining prestige.

Despite poor academic peer reviews, this paper will not criticise LSE's staff. The blame, rather, lies in the hands of the technocrats who embody the saddening spirit of the Davies

regime - one of corporate sovereignty and financial efficiency without an iota of regard for the welfare of students.

Sir Howard Davies must be held accountable for his scandalous performance. Students and staff must rally behind a common banner of progress; we must maintain unquestionable resolve in ensuring that we receive the treatment and support that we deserve; one that transcends the minimum standards that we have long lobbied for. This preposterous negligence is unconscionable, and the regime must not be allowed to continue to function in its current state.

Two small steps for LSE

The School must seize the initiative on issues of re-sits and rental guarantors



Revising for re-sits is a painful and solitary process
Photo: Cherie Leung

Aled Dilwyn Fisher



Two oft-quoted clichés applicable to LSE's predicament are "size matters" and "big is beautiful", or so they say. And, as articles in the Beaver over the past few weeks (and indeed years) have shown, there are some big steps needed at LSE to address consistent issues of teaching quality.

But, as Vincent Van Gogh commented, "Great things are done by a series of small things brought together". Little things make a big difference – from the flapping of a butterfly's wings to the way you shake hands when you first meet someone.

And this should be no different with regards to our university experience. Minor disagreements and comparatively trivial problems can snowball into apathy, anger and discontent.

At this week's Union General Meeting (UGM), which takes place every Thursday at 1PM in the Old Theatre, students voted on two seemingly small issues that could make a huge difference to LSE. Students voted overwhelmingly to support campaigns to win resits, and to lobby the School to act as a rent guarantor to students forced to pay six months' rent in advance.

To some, particularly in the School, these will not seem like small issues at all – resits have always been controversial, and the rent guarantor scheme can, on face value, appear to be a risky initiative. But precedents have been set at other universities, and the act of implementing them is very easy indeed – if there is the will.

The lack of provision for resits affects an admittedly sizeable minority of students, but the effects can be devastating, leaving students utterly adrift from the university experience they naturally expect. Currently, students are allowed to sit "specially-prepared written examinations" if they present "very exceptional circumstances", namely "serious injuries incurred in an accident, the sudden contraction (or complication) of a very severe disease or illness or the death of a close relative". Nonetheless, not only have these circumstances been interpreted extremely strictly, but they clearly omit less exceptional circumstances that would still affect a student's ability to sit an exam under fair conditions.

The provision of resits would be, administratively, a small step, and would simply permit LSE to catch up with pretty much every other university. But beyond the huge bonus it would be for those students disadvantaged by current

arrangements, it would also send a clear message from the School. It would say, loud and clear, that LSE really does care about its students – all of them – and will leave none of them behind. In the current climate of league tables and surveys, that message would have great symbolic resonance for past, current and prospective students.

Another small step from LSE would further reinforce that message – that is, the School acting as a rent guarantor for students. At the moment, international students can be forced to pay up to six months' rent in advance if they cannot provide a UK resident to act as a guarantor for their rent; similarly, UK students whose guarantors fail credit checks can also be asked to stump up that very large sum.

While many students can either afford to do this or find the financial support to do so, it adds an enormous financial burden to them and their families, which

will detrimentally affect their university experience.

Again, there is a precedent here – UCL, York and Kent already act as guarantors for students – and it is clear that a similar scheme could be adopted here. The relative increase in risk to LSE would be mitigated by the fact that, when students default on their rent currently, they are likely to come to LSE anyway looking for emergency financial support.

Admittedly, these small steps will not accrue benefits to each and every LSE student. But it will make a massive difference to a substantial minority – and I'm sure the majority will be supportive and grateful for that fact.

Adolph Monod, a famous theologian, said, "Between the great things we cannot do and the small things we will not do, lies the danger that we shall do nothing." I look forward to seeing LSE take two small steps in the right direction.

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A slap in the face to Mother Teresa

Obama receiving the Nobel Peace Prize sets a dangerous precedent

Marion Koob



Yes, it's all a joke. A well-devised publicity campaign to revive the US president's saintly appeal. A fanciful scheme to stimulate interest in the Nobel Foundation. Or simply a means to see the world violently react - either in horror or admiration - at the enormity of the news. Indeed, Barack Hussein Obama II, after one hundred and forty-three days in office, has won the 2009 Nobel Peace Prize.

The issue is, no one is quite sure why - and not even him. After all, nominations closed twelve days after Obama took office in the White House. On these grounds, it is fair to say that the award has not been solely based upon his (so far brief) performance as a president. And his actions in office, although a welcome change from the Bush administration's dangerous nonsense, are nothing which would lead one to describe as humanitarian. Yet the Norwegian Nobel Committee has commented otherwise: the prize is to be awarded to Obama "for his extraordinary efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and co-operation between peoples."

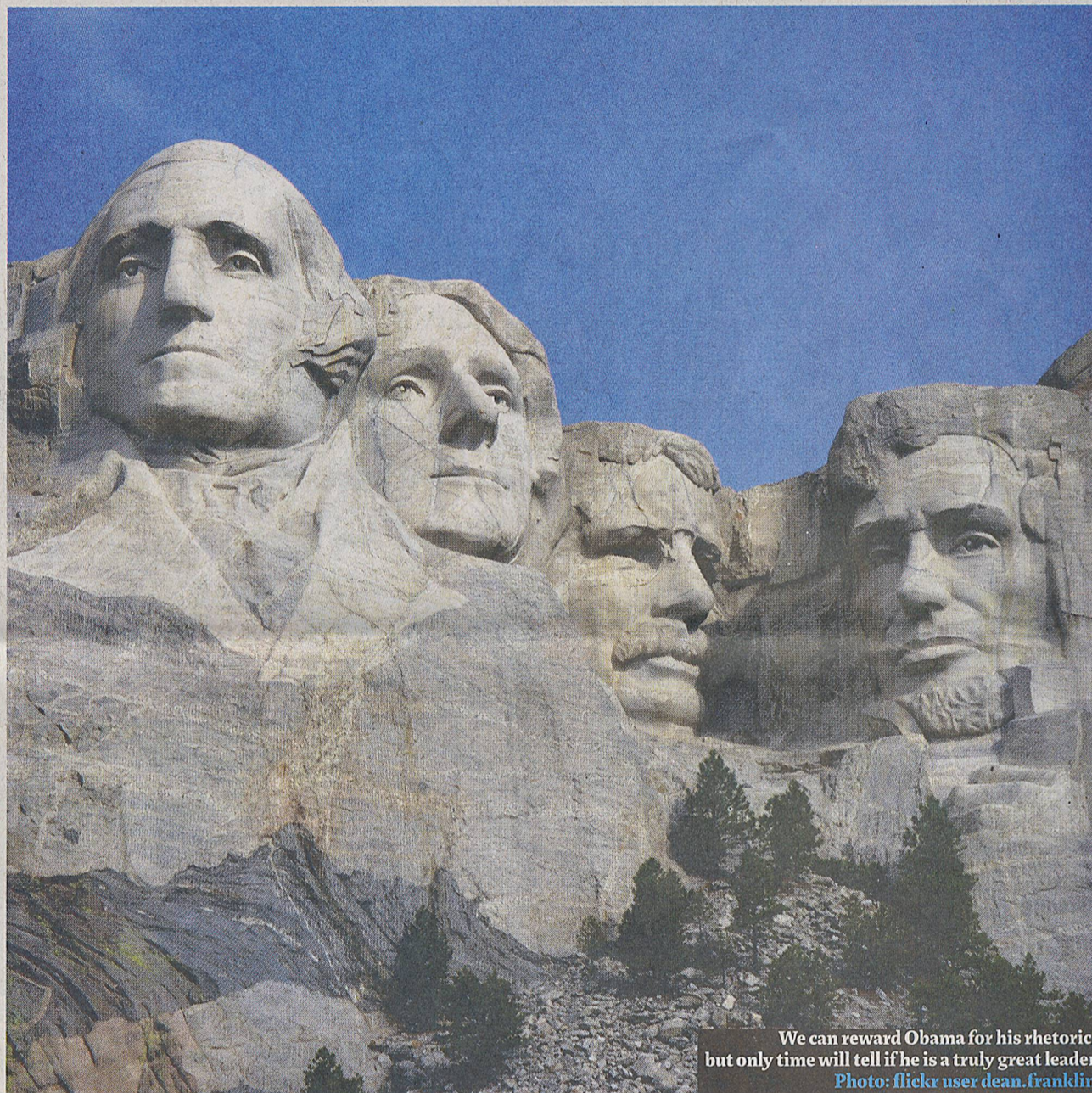
Hence, he has, as many others have argued, won solely on the basis of a well-phrased rhetoric. His speeches have indeed been awing, from his call to understanding between peoples; his condemnation of nuclear armament, and his stand against global warming. What has actually been achieved, however, is a whole other matter. And the simple answer is, very little - to justify a Nobel Peace Prize, anyhow. Yet the Norwegian Nobel Committee does not care. The award is described as an encouragement, a means of showing support for his potential to achieve. I remain firmly convinced, however, that the point of the Nobel Peace Prize is not to encourage probable great figures but, rather, to recognise those who have already become so. From the com-

mencement of his rise to fame, Obama has been more or less become the 'beacon of hope' for the US and the world at large. This exaggerated symbolism is very misleading: after all, he is only human - and a still-practicing politician at that. There is therefore much risk that the whole enterprise will end up like an overcooked cheese soufflé: as a result of overheating, it is destined to explode, leaving nothing but the empty space within. And what a farce it would be, having awarded the Prize to someone who never went on to achieve anything significant.

On the other hand, the Norwegian Nobel Committee will find themselves in a bit of a pickle if he does go on to do great things - how to further reward him? A Super Nobel Peace Prize may just have to be created solely for his case.

Thankfully, Obama has the sense to seem just as confused as everyone else - and to recognise the ridiculousness of the situation. He rightfully stated that he does not deserve the company of the historical figures who have preceded him as Nobel Laureates. This displays a refreshing sincerity. The rest of the world leaders (although no doubt thinking the same) have rejoiced over the madness and joined the general state of hypocrisy. To say the truth would, after all, sound incredibly childish. And they must all be terribly jealous. Surely, Nicolas Sarkozy and Angela Merkel are envisaging posing their candidature in the course of the next year for their collaborative efforts over the (dysfunctional) Lisbon treaty. Aside from the expected protests from Hamas and the Taliban, only Mairead Corrigan, 1973 Laureate, has at this time been brave enough to share her discontent.

In comparison with many individuals who have dedicated their lives and energies to humanity, Obama stands weak. Perhaps, during the coming years of his presidency, he will prove his worth. To decide anything beforehand, however, is premature. Obama has so far represented the interests of his country, not those of the globe. All of his calls, as mighty and noble as they may have been, have had the aim of advocating the United States' position on the world scale. That is what makes the difference.



We can reward Obama for his rhetoric, but only time will tell if he is a truly great leader
Photo: flickr user dean.franklin

Letters to the Editor

Madam - It appears your headline 'Palestinian student denied right to study' is somewhat misleading. Being a Palestinian myself, although from the West Bank, neither UCL nor Israel has denied me the right to study at this institution or anywhere else. After some quick research it has been understood that Mr. Sakallah is not able to get a UK visa as his government, Hamas, is on the UK's and EU's terror list therefore making the visa process next to impossible. Hamas, of course, was not mentioned in any of the three articles you published on this terrible breach of human rights. It would have been fitting seeing as their actions are as oppressive as the Occupiers. Unfortunately this aspect was entirely ignored by your clearly, and thankfully, pro-Palestinian student newspaper.

Also, one has to wonder: prior to the alleged bulldozing of Mr. Sakallah's house, did he or his family have the necessary funds to enrol at the LSE? If so, these bundles of cash were surely not hidden in the walls of the house? I hope students from equally poor and ravaged countries will now benefit from the economic generosity offered by Mr. Davies' office. That would be a true human rights policy.

It seems there is a gap in your reason-

ing that Mr. Sakallah was denied entrance due to Israeli interference. Although I am no proponent of our bullying neighbours, I'm not convinced you can blame the situation on them as politically expedient as that may be: Hamas, indirectly, is the culprit here as their policies, for better or for worse, have ostracised them from a large part of the world which has negative consequences on the Palestinians it purports to represent.

In addition, this type of irresponsible divisive journalism can only complicate the understanding that needs to be forged between these two traditional enemies. Please stop with the propaganda - including defending Shariah law by ignoring its uglier sides (pg. 16) - for you are doing the LSE no favour by displaying your editorial bias.

Please do not print my name as I do not wish to be called an American dog, or 'closet-Jew' by my brethren, as I often am, due to my centrist leanings. We must fight for the Palestinian cause, but in an honest and legitimate way.

Anonymous

Madam - We note Howard Davies' lukewarm response to the plight of Othman Sakallah.

Howard has indicated that LSE may be able to help with "some financial assistance", but unfortunately this would not be enough. Even in ordinary circumstances, Othman would need to provide full proof of how he can finance his entire studies and his cost of living in London. However, his circumstances are far from ordinary.

Specifically, the military actions taken by the Israeli government last winter has

Madam - It seems that under the leadership of Aled Fisher, the LSE SU has become a prototype of a budget- and influence-maximising bureaucracy. The organisation charts of the (smaller) old and (larger) new SU structure, published in the Beaver two weeks ago, speak for themselves. The SU bureaucrats have yet to deliver evidence for their claim that the new structure is more efficient.

A more striking, and for most students

left Othman and his family homeless and they are currently living in a tent. He is unable to viably secure independent funding nor the diplomatic agreement to leave Gaza and take up his place at LSE.

The continuing siege imposed by Israel leaves Othman with no practical way of financially providing for his future studies in order to continue his studies at LSE.

Therefore we call on LSE to waive Othman's tuition fees, provide a basic living allowance for himself and his family

far more relevant example is, however, the new society sign-up system. Societies have been stripped of their responsibility for collecting membership fees and for the administration of their members. This so-called "service" was imposed upon societies without consultation by the SU bureaucrats, eager to influence everything going on in the student body.

If the SU's top bureaucrat, Aled Fisher, states that this year's Freshers' Fair has

and assist with the diplomatic hurdles which are preventing Othman from studying his course at LSE.

Yours faithfully,

James Caspell, Michael Deas and Ziyaad Lunat
Palestine Solidarity Initiative (www.palestinesolidarity.org),
LSE Alumni and Honorary Students, LSE Students' Union

been the best organised one in five years, this just shows his detachment from the general opinion among the student body. Not offering services required by students but increasing their own power is the true driving force behind Aled Fisher's and his fellow bureaucrats' actions.

Lorenz Caspar-Bours
BSc Government and Economics, 3rd year

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Seeing double standards

It is wholly hypocritical to offer American students the General Course, but deny LSE students a similar exchange programme



Which LSE student wouldn't escape the concrete grime of Houghton Street for the Ivy League beauty of Harvard?

Photos: flickr users Wagner T. Cassimiro "Aranha", SomeDriftwood, chensiyuan

Poorna Harjani

At our 'Student Welcome' speech, LSE parades its statistics of having such a diverse regional student composite, and this global networking aspect is one of its key selling points as a university. I have interacted with exchange students in my classes from Ivy League institutions such as Brown, George Washington and Columbia, because students from America have the freedom and opportunity to study at the LSE for a taster of British university life. However, LSE's own students - barring one or two exceptions - are not as fortuitous. They have to endure three years without any similar substitute. LSE is one of the best institutions to study worldly subjects such as International Relations and Social Policy, so why does LSE confine its students to a purely London-based experience?

This drawback of the LSE made me use my own initiative, and take a course on 'Writing about Social and Ethical Issues' at Harvard University. My first class consisted of brainstorming the concepts of 'luck' and 'skill'; my next classes applied these to scholarly work and then to real life issues. My last essay was on the topic of gambling with the flexibility to

choose one's question. I did mine on card counting, basing it on the movie 21, and whether it is immoral to 'count one's way to success in the winning stakes'.

It is the different style of teaching, class structure and open mindedness that made me grow to love the American way. All writing course students registered at Harvard are given a book on writing style by the legendary Gordon Harvey, as well as a handout called 'Elements of an Academic Essay' which teaches students the backbone of successful essays such as a thesis statement, motive, stance, orienting and so forth. For example, one difference is that at the LSE, marks are deducted if a conclusion is left out in an essay. However, at Harvard I was taught that it is not necessary for an essay to have a conclusion. This is because if someone is reading an essay, they will remember what they are currently processing, so they do not need another paragraph to re-summarise everything they read five to ten minutes ago.

As well as a different educational format, studying abroad also provides educational opportunities that may not be available on home campuses. At Brown University, students can choose electives on Che Guevara or astronomy, which would be unheard of in Britain. There is the chance to research other potential graduate and professional schools abroad, as well as exploring career options. Like myself, many others have taken gap years and others may have job offers meaning they cannot take another year out for a Masters to get a sample of a different

University life.

An exchange programme provides multicultural and meaningful educational experiences for students. When I returned from America I found myself more self-confident, independent, having greater decision-making skills, and with more clearly defined academic, career, and personal goals. Since the cost of tuition at Harvard has risen by 3.5% to \$33,696 for this academic year, an exchange programme is a cost-effective way for British students to gain the benefits of an American experience.

Here is one response I received from LSE regarding a transfer: "As far as I am aware LSE does not accept credits from overseas universities, so if you were to spend a year at Harvard I think you would need to 'de-register' here and then re-register on your return, into the 2nd year, before completing your 2nd and final years as normal, graduating in 2012. I'm not sure what the impact of spending a Term at Harvard would be, as you may have to take an 'approved' break, before starting your 2nd year of study here in October 2010, as above, graduating in 2012". This complicated reply is in stark contrast to a further, more blunt, response that I received: "I've checked with my Erasmus colleague and sadly we don't have any undergraduate Erasmus programme."

LSE should open its eyes and realise it is depriving its students of a once in a lifetime opportunity. Surely it would be easy, using our General Course connections with Ivy League universities, to institute such a scheme. This is a clear

A more blunt response to my request was, "I've checked with my Erasmus colleague and sadly we don't have any undergraduate Erasmus programme."

double standard for LSE students, in that American universities accept LSE credits yet LSE do not recognise theirs?

If LSE gave its students the chance to experience another culture and educational philosophy, this could allow LSE students to further develop their character, and to improve their competitive edge, CV-wise. Were I to have read Social Policy at Bristol, I would be doing my second year in Hong Kong; it is such kinds of opportunities that help students prepare themselves to live and work in a more culturally diverse society.

Travel will always benefit students studying a degree to do with government policies, development and law - all popular subjects at the LSE - as these degree programmes are about countries' welfare systems, political value systems and ideologies. LSE may deem exchange programmes as a distraction, but they can be the greatest learning experience. I felt that not only did I take away a broader way of learning, but I contributed to the University life at Harvard itself, sharing with them my culture, educational background and even a bit of British humour!

So this is the question I pose: is one term abroad asking for too much when American students can come to our campus for a whole year? They get equal priority to our prestigious talks, and the chance to join our British Freshers experience. This double standard must be eradicated; an exchange programme may even be a way for LSE to improve its student satisfaction ratings too. Think about it, Howard.



Features



Photo: flickr user gioquo

God meets the recession

Ossie Fikret discusses the age old ties between the spiritual and economic worlds

A recent report from the United States suggests that approximately 10-15 per cent of all congregations are in serious financial trouble, brought on by the recession. The destruction of the economic community is precipitating the collapse of the community spiritual. Recession prompts unemployment, which in turn promotes geographic dislocation as the unemployed are forced to move county, city or state. The recession bites, indiscriminate of denomination. Christian, Islamic and Jewish congregations are closing across the states as a response to massive budget deficits and the collapse in the price of land (which is far more apparent in the USA than in the UK).

Religions across the world have always been dependent upon small donations, from individuals in the congregation. The tithe, zakah and the *dasvand* are the foundations upon which the religions of the world have been built. As these decrease and donations from the lay membership collapse, the results are plain to see. The decline in turnout is not a new event; in the West, congregations have shrunk massively over the course of the twentieth century. The decline in membership has been slowly promising to change the face and approach of religion since. What the recession - arguably the worst since 1929 - will do, is speed up this process of change and regeneration, leaving a lasting impact. Nietzsche's claims regarding the Deity may never have been as true as in the modern context. Organ-

ised Religion diffuses through a population via two central means; the church and education. It is here that the long-term impact of the financial world on the religious is most obvious. As congregations collapse, parochial schools in the United States are closing in unprecedented numbers.

God has no place in the classroom, according to the 1962 Supreme Court decision which ruled school prayer as unconstitutional. Thus, unlike in much of Europe, the faithful in the United States must send their children to fee-paying establishments. Jewish Community Schools have found their intake down by 7 per cent, while Christian schools have seen a slightly lower decrease of 5 per cent over the previous financial year. Furthermore, approximately 200 Christian schools merged or closed in the last year alone. This drop in education is not only affecting the compulsory education age range, a massive 20 per cent decrease in enrollment at Seminaries has occurred since the dawn of the recession. Religion appears to be no match for financial hardship. Previously the faithful may have felt the obligation to follow the 'calling' and preach, now they feel the financial pinch and hear the calling of a family dependent upon another income. Piety, it seems, is no match for economic realities.

This echoes the Great Depression of 1929, where while congregations grew by an average of 5 per cent in the decade starting 1929, this fell far short of the expectations of the Church. The Church

Nietzsche's claims regarding the Deity may never have been as true as in the modern context.

expected congregations to swell dramatically, with an expectation that unemployment and poverty would foster a more devoted, more pious congregation. Despite expectations, the age and gender of the average churchgoer (over 30, female), remained unchanged. If anything, the affect of recession upon religion is almost always negative. Pessimistically, one could also explain the 5 percent increase in membership as based on the welfare measures that the church offered, in place of an unwilling state. Piety was induced through economic need.

The Roman Catholic Church, which was in dire financial straits for years prior to the economic troubles, is particularly struggling. Congregation numbers have seen a secular decline since the 1960s, which has coincided with empty seminaries across North America and most of Western Europe. This, combined with several massive out of court settlements over child abuse scandals and aging church structures, has led to serious cutbacks in staff numbers and pay. The American branch is rumoured to be \$14 million in the red (of a yearly budget of \$48 million). This comes at a time when there are strong divides between the laity and the clergy, over contraception, gay rights and, with the recent reintroduction of the Latin Mass, the relevance of Mass itself. God may not be dead, but his/her relevance is most certainly dwindling to an audience who are increasingly accepting evolution, condoms and the pill as part of their day-to-day life.

Religion post the recession will be different, but quite how different is up for discussion. Religion could, in an attempt to attract a wider, more varied audience, liberalize some of its stances on any of the aforementioned issues. A declaration from Rome, supporting condoms as a legitimate means to control HIV-AIDS in Sub-Saharan Africa, could reignite the faith of millions of liberal westerners. The same could be said of gay rights or abortion in North America, where many 'sins' are accepted by the laity as *de facto* 'non-sins' despite the church hierarchy viewing them as *de jure* sins. In particular this has been the approach of several New England convents, who see abortion in the context of a chimera of the Protestant 'social gospel' and Catholic 'liberation theory'. Thus, religion may regenerate itself as a more relevant force for the twenty-first century. Alternatively, Conservatism may ensure that the practices and teachings of the church remain consistent, pre and post recession. Wherein the lasting effect will be that the recession acted as a 'locomotive of history' - decreasing school and seminary enrollment, forcing church closures and further precipitating a decrease in congregation numbers. Religion is obliged to react to the recession, ultimately, its reaction will determine whether God is truly dead, or simply on a life-support machine.

Talking films



Richard Dewey speaks to the producer of *Wall Street* about his experience at LSE and the

Edward R. Pressman, LSE Alumni, is an internationally renowned movie producer with over 70 motion pictures to his credit. His work includes critically acclaimed films such as *Das Boot*, *Plenty*, *Wall Street*, *Reversal of Fortune* and *The Cooler*. Mr. Pressman is known for discovering and fostering new talent and is credited with giving Oliver Stone, Terrence Melnik and Sylvester Stallone their directorial debuts. He has received career achievements from the French Cinematheque, New York's Museum of Modern Art, London's National Film Theatre and the Pacific Film Archives.

What brought you to the LSE? Can you talk a little about what the atmosphere was like when you arrived?

I had just graduated from Stanford with a degree in Philosophy and I wasn't really clear on what I wanted to do with my life. Going to London and LSE was a way of exploring and continuing my studies.

Those were exciting days - it was (the) "new London" and the atmosphere was very electric. London was the center of culture. Film was a very big part of that as were music, fashion and art - it was all happening in London in 1966. It was also a very politically active time and film also was to be a big part of that movement. Film seemed to be about changing political aspects of the culture, even more so than it did later. It was a very time both all around the school and in the LSE - the feeling permeated the city.

Did you always know that you wanted to

work in film?

I had always been interested in film, but it seemed very remote to me. I had an uncle who owned a couple of movie theatres - I would work at the theatre and see 3 or 4 pictures a day - so I had seen quite a lot of films and had a little taste of the movie theatre world. When I was at Stanford I had a roommate whose father was a director and we talked about making a film quite a bit, but never did anything. I also had a brief internship for a studio executive.

My first actual project happened while I was at the LSE and met a young American named Paul Williams. Paul had just finished at Harvard and was at studying at Cambridge and wanted to do a short film based on a Beatles song. Over Thanksgiving we formed a partnership at a mutual friend's house and began shooting this 10 minute film called *Girl*. It did well, won a couple of little prizes and gave us the confidence to continue working together.

What did you do after LSE? What was your first job?

I was enrolled in the Politics, Philosophy and Economics program, which was a two year course. After completing *Girl*, Paul wanted to shoot a big, ambitious Western film. In the end we focused the film, called *Out of It*, more on a personal story that was influenced by the Truffaut films of the time. After the first year of my program at LSE I went to New York for the summer to start shooting the film. After *Out of It* was completed, we ended up obtaining a deal

Those were exciting days - it was (the) "new London" and the atmosphere was very electric.

with United Artists so I didn't return to LSE and Paul didn't go back to Cambridge; we had our start in the movie business.

Can you talk a little about the process of producing that first film? What was it like putting together a feature at that time?

We initially approached the studios and we were lucky enough to have a friend at one of the studios who showed us the real pitches. They were being nice to us, but they were also sort of showing us how far off we were. It helped because we were able to see the truth of the situation and ended up doing an independent movie. We sold shares like you would in a stage play and borrowed money from various sources. At that time independent film was really not established, so this was a very unorthodox approach. We were able to make the film for about \$170,000, sold it to United Artists and subsequently signed a three picture contract. We thought it was easy. *Out of It* turned out to be Jon Voight's first movie and our cameraman was John Avildsen, who went on to direct *Rocky* and *Stand by Me*. Within the film community in New York, Paul was the first to make a feature, even before Scorsese and De Palma. A lot of young filmmakers in New York who would go on to great acclaim were working out of our offices at that time and Paul was the Kingpin.

What aspect of working as a producer is most appealing to you?

For the same reason I pursued Philosophy as an undergraduate, film seemed to be the most encompassing subject. It fed my

interest in academics, history and business. I didn't know how successful I would be or if I could make a living at it, but I knew when we made our first film that it was something that I wanted to pursue.

One area you have explored seems to be the world of finance in both *Wall Street* and *American Psycho*. In the twenty plus years since *Wall Street* was released it has achieved a unique place in popular culture. Can you tell us a bit about making that film and did you have any sense in 1987 that it would have such an enduring presence?

Oliver [Stone] was a bit surprised by the reaction to the film, because the hero of the film is Bud Fox, but the public tended to view Gordon Gekko as the hero. Right now we are filming *Wall Street 2: Money Never Sleeps*, which is not so much a sequel to *Wall Street* as a reinvention - kind of like *The Color of Money* was to *The Hustler*. In the new version it is twenty years later and Gekko is out of jail. It's interesting because the film still resonates today and the references to Gekko are so plentiful. Gekko has become a modern day version of Sinclair Lewis's Babbitt. *Wall Street* was very New York-centric, but that won't be the case with the new film as the finance industry has become much more global.

Could you give students at LSE a sense of what a typical day for you is like as a producer?

As a producer, my job is to establish the context for an artist to achieve his or her vision, which can mean different things



and finance

world that lies beyond

in different situations. Doing a film with Oliver when he was starting out, such as *The Hand*, is completely different from doing a film with him years later such as *Talk Radio* or *Wall Street*. Everything from getting the financing in place to the role I play as producer changes. If I'm working with an established director my role might be more of a sounding board, as opposed to working with a first time director such as Jason Wright on *Thank You for Smoking*, where it is often more of a collaborative process. It varies tremendously from film to film and director to director.

For example, with *Money Never Sleeps*, the studio is Fox, they did the original, so bringing it back to them is a given. Setting everything up is fairly straightforward with a project such as that. On the other hand, there are some films that present very hairy situations. An example of this was our film *The Crow*, where Brandon Lee died on the last day of shooting. All of the distributors dropped it because we couldn't deliver it on time. We had to break up the original company and the film was sort of tainted. No one wanted it and we really had to struggle, but in the end it was a big success. Each new project has advantages and obstacles that must be overcome.

What are the keys to pursuing an entrepreneurial career path or making headway in a creative field? Moreover, what advice would you give to a student at LSE right now who wants to enter the film business?

Handling rejection well is needed in any

entrepreneurial endeavor. The studios have brought in organizational people to run the business side, but as a producer it is not as stratified or "corporatized" as the studios. Every time I make a movie it is similar to creating a new company, so it needs a different skill set than working up a corporate ladder. And with producing it is never easy because with the exception of Spielberg, producers never have the momentum to propel a film without the star or big director - the package that makes it commercially viable.

Just wanting to do a movie is not enough. A producer has to know all the elements and stay ahead of the curve. Independent producers over my time in the business have had to adjust to a number of different factors. Financing films is a constantly evolving game. Years ago financing came from cable television and video. Then German tax shelters and insurance-backed debt instruments came into vogue. In the last ten years the large slate financing deals that were done by the big banks became the primary financing tool. So there are always new sources of capital that need to be figured out. A few people start doing it and then everyone rushes in to do similar deals.

Given the current economic climate, the absence of capital and the technological changes that have reshaped the music industry and are on the cusp of changing the film business, what changes do you see on the horizon?

The film business is always changing and going through new cycles. Now there are

Every time I make a movie it is similar to creating a new company, so it needs a different skill set than working up a corporate ladder.

two different systems operating: the big, studio, 3,000 screen release films and the platform movies. They are two different models and I try to straddle those two systems. It is very difficult to have a big movie without all of the resources of a big studio, but once in a while a film still comes out of nowhere and that will continue to happen. *Slumdog Millionaire* is a great example of that and so was *Juno* last year. Films still have the capacity to break through and touch a nerve.

On the technological front, I'm sure that 3D will play a bigger role. A lot of money is going into developing 3D technology not just for theatres, but also for home use. Some studios are even saying that they are going to make everything in 3D.

What's interesting is that during this recessionary period theatre attendance has gone up. That is something that people said would happen as it did in the 1930's, but in the 1930's there wasn't gaming and internet and all of the other distractions. So far it has held true and people are still very willing to go out and see movies. Movies are much less expensive than concerts or theatre, so it makes sense. I'm sure there will be less movies made by hedge fund and private equity guys, but a lot of that extra money created a glut of films over the last couple years anyway.

What projects do you have on the horizon?

In addition to the new *Wall Street* film, we are also doing a follow up to *The Crow* with a company called Relativity Media. We are

also working again with Mary Harron who did *American Psycho* on a new film called *The Moth Diaries*, based on a book about young prep school girls coming to terms with their sexuality. We are working again with Chris Buckley on a film called *God is My Broker* about the self-help movement. Another film in development is *The Man Who Knew Infinity*, which is about the great Indian mathematician Ramanujan.

The great thing about working in film is that it allows you to explore different worlds - geographically, politically and socially. That is one of the most satisfying parts of the job. In working with some friends on a film about the great Russian composer Rachmaninov, I travelled to St. Petersburg and learned a great deal about the classical music world. That is about as far away from Wall Street as you can be. Film has introduced me to so many fascinating aspects of the world, that I would not have become involved in under other circumstances.

My year at LSE was crucial in making me much more of a man of the world and I'm not sure all this would have happened without it. LSE was really the starting point in opening up my mind to the world of possibilities that was out there.



Photo: Flickr user kkk+

Winning in Vancouver

Rahim B. Kanani views the 2010 Olympic Games as an opportunity to change the world

It's true. Canada has been dealt a royal flush in Olympic poker with a chance to host the 2010 Winter Olympic Games. Approximately 6700 officials and athletes will hail to Vancouver from nearly 100 countries, to be photographed and written about by more than 10,000 media representatives, all in front of 3 billion viewers around the globe. With 4.7 billion people tuning into Beijing's 2008 Summer Olympics, one wonders: what was the global legacy left behind? With all this attention, Canada is in a unique position to tackle pressing social challenges on an unprecedented scale, and by doing so, ripple-effect lasting positive change throughout the world. This would be a good time to reignite Canada's commitment to gender equality and the international advancement of women's rights.

"In this century, the paramount moral challenge will be the struggle for gender equality in the developing world," Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn of the New York Times write in their new book, "Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity Worldwide". Indeed, while at the 5th Annual Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) in New York just a few weeks ago, investing in women and girls was central to the weeks' discussions both on and off the stage. The message was clear: women and girls are not the problem, but the solution. Investing in them is the key to unlocking the seemingly keyless deadbolts

placed on the world's toughest challenges, from poverty to war to economic growth. The energy and motivation for change was palpable at CGI, and the movement has already begun.

Canada is a model for the world on immigration, diversity, pluralism and now smart financial policies, as we host the G8 Summit next year. We must continue the tradition of being a world leader in human rights and follow in the example of Canadian John Humphrey, the principal drafter of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Hosting the 2010 Olympic Games in Vancouver this winter allows Canada to once again serve as a model for the world and lead the fight to equalize access and opportunity for women and girls around the globe.

Stephen Lewis, former Canadian Ambassador to the United Nations and Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS in Africa under then-Secretary-General Kofi Annan, recently remarked that "the single most important struggle on the planet is the struggle for gender equality." As International Women's Day takes place on March 8th next year—firmly in the midst of the Games—Canada has yet another reason to align celebration with responsibility, awareness with renewed commitment, and the wisdom to lead with the courage to act. We need to learn from 1GOAL, a campaign co-founded and co-chaired by Her Majesty Queen Rania of Jordan, and based around the FIFA 2010 World Cup

With all this attention, Canada is in a unique position to tackle pressing social challenges on an unprecedented scale

to be held in South Africa next year. The campaign is aimed at mobilizing public support to hold governments to their promises and enable the remaining 75 million children around the world to enroll in primary education by 2015—the second of the eight UN Millennium Development Goals. The third goal is to promote gender equality and empower women. Using the Olympic platform, this is where Canada can make a world of difference.

This is a call to action aimed at the Vancouver Organizing Committee for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games and the Canadian Government. With a \$1.8B price tag to host the Games, we can afford to buy a 60-second spot of advertising to announce International Women's Day, and encourage fans around the world to make an online contribution to BRAC—the world's largest development organization and one of the leading providers of microfinance services that have already supported nearly 7 million women. Moreover, with 1.8 million tickets available for the momentous event ranging from \$25 to \$775, we can afford to give a percentage of the sales to the Global Fund for Women, or Women for Women International, or another international organization dedicated to the cause. In fact, let's add a section to the ticket purchasing process online where buyers can donate to women and girls programs around the world—a pot of money that the Canadian Government can commit to doubling or

tripling. By the time Canada withdraws from Afghanistan in 2011, the total cost of the war will range from \$14B to \$18B. As we withdraw, we can surely afford to divert millions of those would-be-war-dollars to reinforcing our gender equality efforts in our partner countries throughout the developing world. At an event that prides itself on universality while celebrating the ultimate potential of the human spirit, Canada must seize the opportunity to emphasize the larger picture of truly unequal playing fields—not only because the billions of women and girls around the world are counting on us, but also because the quest for equality is very much a part of Canada's coming of age.

In framing the session on investing in women and girls at the Clinton Global Initiative, moderator Diane Sawyer aptly labeled it "the river of what is right converging with the river of what is needed." We need to take a stand, harness the momentum, and utilize this unique platform to engage the world in the biggest challenge of the 21st century: gender justice. This Olympic Games, let's leave a lasting legacy of awareness and action by igniting the torch of gender equality to brighten the stars that light up half the sky. The women and girls of the earth have already waited far too long to be recognized as more than half the world's population and they simply cannot wait any longer. Neither can we. The time is now, and Canada has a duty to act.

From Right to Left: the political columns

Hayek



David Whitaker

To debate or not debate

The latest development in the long run-up to next year's General Election is an intriguing one; the tantalising possibility of a televised debate between the leaders of the main UK political parties. For David Cameron, the Sky News proposal should be an excellent opportunity to expose Gordon Brown in front of millions of viewers. As for the potential viewers, many may well see the debate as a pointless PR exercise, an unnecessary American import which will do more to promote image rather than meaningful debate. In fact, such television debates are already part-and-parcel of many countries' political processes, including Iraq and Mongolia.

A television debate will offer Cameron a chance to expose the contradictory nature of Brown's policies. It will offer a chance to bring 'Progressive Conservatism' to a wider audience who are ready

for change after over a decade of the failed 'New Labour' project. A decade that has seen the rise of political correctness, the shift of power from London to Brussels and the national debt rise exponentially. The allies of democracy and free speech should have nothing to fear, for a more aware population is a more informed electorate. It is the enemies of free speech who fear these television debates.

Whilst in-depth knowledge of policy and facts are the most important prerequisites for a political debate, appearances will no doubt also prove important in a Brown/Cameron clash. Cameron should thrash Brown, in a manner similar to when a fresh-faced Jack Kennedy faced off against a tired, worn-looking Richard Nixon in the 1960 Presidential debates. Nixon, the superior communicator, was undermined by the infamous 'five-a clock shadow'. David Cameron has already demonstrated his considerable flair for

eloquent argument at Prime Minister's Questions, and should take confidence in his successful reinvention of the Conservative brand, these factors should hold him in good stead.

The United States has become well-accustomed to political TV debates, and one of the most memorable was the Reagan/Mondale contest in 1984. President Reagan had developed a reputation for formidable on-screen performances, and his famous 'youth and inexperience' jibe effectively brought Walter Mondale's presidential campaign to a halt. In a similar episode, Democrat Senator Lloyd Bentsen's 'Senator, you're no Jack Kennedy' taunt utterly deflated his opponent Dan Quale in 1988, and has since entered political lexicon. Clearly one-liners can seriously damage a candidate and even a campaign, and despite David Cameron's ability to deliver soundbites, he could himself fall victim to a damning phrase or

untimely gaffe.

To be successful, Cameron would have to hammer home his proposals for Europe, public sector reform and the national debt, and must not allow Gordon Brown's 'saving the world' mantra to upset his vision for change.

Laski



Estelle Cooch

Just in jest?

I have a confession to make: I may have watched more than one episode of "Strictly Come Dancing". I may in fact at one point, in a long hot and boring summer, have seen a whole series. Sometimes I might even watch it back on BBC iPlayer. Please don't judge me. Yet last week, one of the lead dancers on the show (and interestingly my Grandma's favourite), Anton Du Beke, was revealed as having said to his co-star "Oh my God, you look like a Paki", after she arrived wearing fake tan. Since then a furore has emerged, where any attack on Du Beke is dismissed as 'political correctness gone mad'. One Daily Mail writer simply asked: "What's happened to Britain's sense of humour?"

In an attempt to shut down the row which has gripped the tabloid press, the BBC pulled out the big guns (or the old antique guns in this case) and forced Bruce Forsyth to make a statement last week. Forsyth said, "You go back 25, 30 or 40 years and there has always been a bit of humour about the whole thing. At one time the Americans used to call us 'limeys' which doesn't sound very nice, but we used to laugh about it. Everybody has a nickname."

Now let me be clear; Bruce Forsyth has never represented any great bastion of anti-racist activity to me. This comment did not come as a surprise, and yet the ignorance within it is still unbelievable. Forsyth's comments are reflective of a wider backlash within society, post 9/11, against the gains won through anti-racist struggles. When Forsyth talks of how 20, 30 or 40 years ago there would have been "a bit of humour about the whole thing", I agree. Of course there would have been; black people were largely excluded from public services, faced colour-bars in some areas of Britain and in America didn't even have the privilege of a vote. And the humour that Forsyth talks of is of course racist humour.

The suggestion that there is a parallel between the American term 'limey' and the term 'Paki' is equally ludicrous. Limey was not a term daubed on walls in predominantly British areas next to swastikas. It was not a term that preceded being spat on. It was not a term used as racist abuse, screamed at British people before they were assaulted or harassed. The term 'Paki' was all of those things.

Similarly it is not simply an abbreviation of the word Pakistani. If it is purely

an abbreviation, why is it directed at Indians (like Du Beke's dancing partner), Bangladeshis and South Asians? The term 'Paki' is not half of the word 'Pakistan'. It is a word that came with the racist legacy of colonialism. It was first used in response to South Asian immigration to Britain in 1964.

Much of the media has focused on the fact that the word was used 'in jest' and that the intent of the word is far more important than the content. But what does it say about someone if the word can so easily flow out of their mouth? Do most people often find themselves restraining from using the 'n-word' or the word 'Paki'? Unlikely. For the majority even thinking about the word fills them with a sense of nausea.

The War on Terror, invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan and now the recession all brought with them the massive potential for racism to grow. The BNP now receive millions pounds of funding from the European Union. They have begun to build their street army in the form of the English Defence League which attempts to mobilize populations in predominantly Asian areas of Britain, in order to intimidate and harass. This in turn leads

to attacks, such as those that occurred last week, when 60 Muslim graves were desecrated in Manchester. Now is the time to reject racist language, whether in private like Du Beke's comment or in the mainstream with Nick Griffin on Question Time. The struggle against racism in Britain has come a long way since the years that Bruce Forsyth harks back to, but there is much further to go. Can we get rid of racism completely? I think so. Madder things have happened. A man who increased troop numbers in Afghanistan and threatens Iran with military action won the Nobel Peace Prize this week - but that's a column for another time.

Measured musings



Flickr user: jurek d.

Political Myopia

While deciding content for the week, both Features editors automatically assumed very distinct roles. UK and EU politics were Ossie's domain, while my mind drifted towards rather different international issues. Although this would be a convenient kind of status quo, we realised the extent of our myopia. Beyond our respective comfort zones were separate worlds, neither of which stood still.

It is understandable that the public of any country would be concerned only by its immediate surroundings. However, it is also true that geographical distance is no longer as significant as it used to be. Today's world is one of overlapping (sometimes conflicting) interests, as well as economic destinies. The recession did not only have dire consequences in the West, but spelt disaster for trade and employment overseas. Who controls natural resources, who is capable of uranium enrichment and why they would

be interested in it, all are questions of international concern.

There are other questions, too, which do not seem immediately relevant to the average citizen of Country A. The education policy in Afghanistan, for instance, will determine the future of an entire generation that has seen a foreign invasion. Support offered to weak or corrupt leaders will determine the lives of millions of people and how they will react to the rest of the world. Countries that may never have been mentioned in the West are thrown into the limelight when catastrophe strikes closer to home. Then there is talk; moreover, there is action. Then, however, it is too late to delve into the background.

At the same time it is equally true that much of the Third World demonises the abstract idea of "the West" without troubling to understand it. Conspiracy theories abound; everything that goes wrong in Pakistan, for example, is blamed on some kind of outside influence. There

is a general sort of interest in who comes to power in Europe and America, but little actual knowledge. Uninformed hostility cannot be healthy.

This is not to underestimate the effects of globalisation. When it comes to culture, there seems to have been quite an effective transfusion across borders and fibre-optic cables. It no longer makes sense to bring gifts and curios from my part of the world; they would not be considered a novelty in London. Children grow up watching the same kind of television in Asia as well as Europe and America; teenagers worship similar icons and fashion gurus. While food and music tastes are never homogeneous, urban populations across the globe may access a range of fairly similar options including rock, jazz, curries and tiramisù. The concept of cultural sensitivity means that most of us are quite careful about treading round the feelings of others. Even if beliefs or cultural values are not quite understood, they are treated with a polite kind of respect. Every time

I decline alcohol, I get the same kind of serious little nod.

When it comes to politics, the scenario is different. It may not be enough to nod and look away. While it is of the utmost importance to respect the sovereignty of nations, it is also necessary to develop a dimensional understanding of the world. Perhaps nurturing a simple interest in other parts of the world would be the way to start caring about casualties on both sides of existing and potential battle-fronts. Correcting short-sightedness in the public today may just be the way to sidestepping international crises in future.



Photo: Flickr user fzero

Propaganda in the press

Shibani Mahtani explores how the independence of the Beaver is crucial to its survival

The bastions of Communism used it and the leader of the democratic world has used it. You could name a small African country, or perhaps a country nestled in Southeast Asia and it's likely they would have been guilty of it too: propaganda.

The past weeks saw the People's Republic of China celebrating its diamond jubilee with much military muscle-flexing and hundreds of people gathering in Moscow to mark the third anniversary of the killing of Russian journalist Anna Politkovskaya, a harsh critic of the Kremlin. Forms of propaganda from the powers that be range from the little things - like national songs or school children singing national anthems daily - to the manipulation of history and, in the case of Politkovskaya, murder to silence any opposing voices. There are more subtle instances of propaganda that creep into our day to day lives, perhaps unnoticed. Undoubtedly, there is always one medium of choice that becomes the natural go-to when infiltrating the minds of masses - newspapers.

Bringing this closer to home, it is not just political bodies that are guilty of using the media as tools for furthering their own

agendas. Propaganda is indeed alive at our esteemed institution, the London School of Economics. This paper has always tried its best to report the news and to keep to our principle of making sure that as the only newspaper on campus, we constantly try to hold the School and the Union to account. If we do not, who would?

That does not stop various groups from seeing the Beaver as LSE's very own version of what Pravda was for the Soviet Union. From Left to Right, General Secretary of the Union to Directors, various groups and individuals have bristled upon reading stories that do not necessarily fit in with their agenda.

We hardly have to look far back into our history for examples of this. Last year, a police officer instructed a Beaver photographer to delete a photograph taken at an LSE NotforProfit protest. The police officer had assaulted one of the protesters, who was also an LSE student, and wanted any photographs that identified the police officers deleted, even though he had no legal premise to do so. During the occupation of the Old Theatre last year in response to Israel's massacre in Gaza, the Beaver ran a survey asking if the student body supported the actions of

Propaganda is indeed alive at our esteemed institution, the London School of Economics.

the occupiers. Survey results showed that the student body mostly believed that the actions were counterproductive and did not support the occupation. When this was published, members of the occupation believed the Beaver was against them and their actions, rather than reflecting the mood of the students; we were not furthering their cause, however well-intentioned. As recently as last week, Students' Union Treasurer George Wetz said to the Beaver that they have been trying very hard to ensure that they make positive changes and "do good things", but the Beaver and its reporting frequently gets in the way of this. Again, another example of groups assuming that as the only editorial voice on campus, we have to be an editorial voice that agrees with them. And then there are numerous political societies that have approached this paper to discuss their plans for the coming year, to ensure that a plurality of views are heard - in some cases, genuine sentiment, in others, obvious lobbying.

There is a slippery slope here, and there is a dangerous trap any journalist can fall into when they try too hard to pander to every single group with their multitudes of differing views on campus.

Quickly glancing through the Society of Professional Journalists' Code of Ethics, there is a headline which says "Act Independently - Journalists should be free of obligation to any interest other than the public's right to know". Obviously, we are under no illusions that this is a hard balance to strike. With every lead we choose for a story, with every survey question we ask, we are taking an angle on something which comes with judgement. This clearly conflicts with the principle of completely unbiased and fair journalism, even though this should be an ideal that all journalists aspire to achieve; an aspiration that one cannot reach if one gives in to groups with political or personal agendas.

We are under no illusions that our task as student journalists is as noble as that of Anna Politkovskaya, writing about human rights abuse and corruption in Chechnya. We do however, need to hold ourselves to the same standards of independent and hard-nosed journalism, and the same code of ethics. In an industry that is fast changing and evolving, the backbone of journalism needs to remain - even if we are a mere student paper.

Social

Sociologically yours

Cameron Paige takes a step into the post-recession working world

As procrastination tactics go, applying for jobs sounds almost plausibly excusable. It came, however, at a point in my dissertation-writing at which I was already 5000 words behind schedule, having watched the entire back catalogue of Dexter, redecorated the kitchen and assembled a new mail-order bicycle from scratch. At the time, however, I considered job-hunting on a par with painting my toenails and baking cupcakes, ergo: a purposeless diversion. LSE campus was plastered over with posters reminding me that Yes, You Can (and suggesting that I might not be able to) find a job in the recession. Newspapers were full to overflowing of fearful stories

At the time, however, I considered job-hunting on a par with painting my toenails and baking cupcakes, ergo: a purposeless distraction.

of spreading unemployment, crashing markets and general apathy. And finally, I was just about to complete a degree in a subject more discredited than economics. The economists, at least, were 'evil'. A sociologist-to-be, I was less than that. I was dispensable, hackneyed. Worst of all, my subject was 'easy'.

"Sociology, eh?" yet another acquaintance would pleasantly beam at me, "I've done Sociology for my A-Levels. I quite liked it. It was easy."

"MSc in Sociology?" the less polite would say incredulously, "I've thought one could only get a science degree in science."

After four years of similar comments, I had as little faith in sociology as did – ironically – the majority of people to whom I'd ever mentioned the discipline. Thus, while listlessly reading yet another

article in support of a dissertation thesis I believed nobody would consider important (let alone interesting), I decided to jump ship.

I had a modicum of design and publishing experience, I certainly was a little more than computer literate, and in my gap year I had managed a large team. Dissertation forgotten for the day, I set about preparing my CV. The end product was disturbingly flashy, with a vector image behind my name and snazzy grey headings above black Helvetica sound bites of previous experience and responsibilities. As a finishing touch, I printed this



Photo: flickr user Fabiana Banca

single-page summary of my life to-date on thick photo-quality paper. It was past midnight, but I was finally ready to take on the publishing world.

The publishing world would not have me. Over the next week, I would spend a couple of hours every day searching for jobs, composing cover letters and sending them off with the CV. If I truly wanted to get into publishing, I might have. But I was still at a university, still writing a dissertation, still under no pressure to start work. So I let myself be picky, and didn't consider any entry-level jobs. I wanted a decent salary and a challenging range of responsibilities. I did not have enough experience to warrant those. I was trying my luck. After about a week, however, I could recite publishing job's advertisements from memory,

and they did not sound that exciting any more. Left out on the table, the print-out of the CV was starting to look somewhat tatty, too, and reluctantly I was forced to admit it was time to get back to writing the dissertation. Spitefully, I sent out a few more applications to a random selection of jobs, closed the website and went back to writing.

A few days before the dissertation deadline, an email arrived with an invitation to an interview. The company, I realised, was the only one with an online form that prevented me from submitting an actual CV. I made a mental note to ditch

the pretentious design and put together something more conservative for future applications. I still had a dissertation to finish, however, so for once I left it at that. Especially as I had already planned a long holiday in September, and there seemed to be little point in applying for jobs if I was going to be away from the country and unable to answer any emails for most of the month. I told myself I'd go to this one interview just to get some practice before selecting realistic jobs and hitting the interview circuit hard. The post, interestingly enough, was not in publishing but in research. I must have filled out the form almost as a farewell to arms, I thought, because it actually had something to do with sociology and I knew, as I handed in my dissertation, that sociology and I were done.

On the day of the interview, I took it easy. I put on a navy trouser suit, but underneath I was wearing a vintage red-and-white striped shirt with a frilly collar and cuffs, and a pair of violently red stilettos. I had read the job description again. It was actually exciting. There was no chance I was getting it.

I walked into the reception with barely a minute to spare. The assistant came to collect me straight away, and before I knew it, I was sitting in a room with three severe-looking women, one of whom seemed to hold a grudge against LSE.

"That's absolutely appalling," she said through clenched teeth when I told her a particular issue had not been covered on my course, before firing off another practical question. By then, I knew I stood no chance. Crying seemed like an infantile solution, so I laughed.

"I'm sorry," I said, shaking my head, "I remember we had a lecture on the subject,

I was just about to complete a degree in a subject more discredited than economics.

but no particulars. I know the association can be non-linear, but I wouldn't be able to give you any formulas off the top of my head."

Later on, I caught myself saying 'whatever', and 'and the like'. I was done for.

As I left the room, the assistant asked me to fill out a medical questionnaire. I wanted to say 'What for?', save her time and effort, but she was all smiles and I couldn't bring myself to be so abrupt. Instead, I trundled after her into another office and sat down to fill out the form. With gallows humour, I wrote "fell over roller-skating in 2008 and bruised the coccyx" and "eye irritation after Bonfire Night caused by fireworks' ash" under Past Injuries. In comments on my hospital admissions, I put "boyfriend nearly fainted

at the sight of a needle, and doctor very disappointed I got better so soon". When I finished, I folded the sheets, sealed them in the envelope, and gave them back to the assistant. She saw me out of the building, chirping all the way down eight flights of stairs, to the effect that I looked set to get the post. I gave her a wry little smile back, and walked out into the sobering din of Oxford Street.

By the time I made it home, I resigned myself to working as a store manager for Aldi. The pay was good, the position challenging enough, and I wouldn't be constantly quizzed on anything as 'easy' as sociological research. I sat down at the computer and started reading up on Aldi's graduate scheme. The phone rang. I answered.

"Hello!" said a woman at the other end, "It's Dr So-and-so, we've had an interview today. Congratulations! We were very impressed, and we'd like to offer you the job!"

I managed not to say "What?!" Instead, I gave my thanks.

"So we'll just check your references and HR will go through your medical questionnaire, and you can start!"

I knew the references would be good. I swallowed hard when she mentioned the medical.

"Is there anything you'd like to ask me now?"

"Would you like me to do some background reading while we're waiting for the paperwork to come through?" I said timidly, stalling.

A couple of weeks later, when I came back from holidays, I got another call.

"Looks like the HR never got your questionnaire. Must be the postal strikes. I'm really sorry. If I send you the form, would you mind filling it out again?"

I said I certainly would not mind that at all. I was ecstatic. I have just spent two weeks answering 'clinical research' to questions about my occupation, and the reaction was nothing like what I used to get to 'sociology'. I've also been reading the background material I got from the office, and it was fascinating. I was rearing to go.

The forms arrived, and I answered all questions seriously. I smiled. I was an adult now. Doing clinical research. Say what you may, it's still sociology. I knew there was a reason I chose it. I love it.

Death by Lecturing

Fahd Humayun spends his time watching the clock tick...

The French playwright Marcel Achard once commented, "When I give a lecture, I accept that people look at their watches, but what I do not tolerate is when they look at it and raise it to their ear to find out if it stopped." Waspish, much? Perhaps. One may well argue that every lecturer digs his own grave. Many LSE lecturers, in particular, would benefit from having once worked as stand-up comedians. Simply because it is the LSE. (And also, the Garrick should also be held responsible for disconcertingly distracting chocolate items which tend to make their way into the minds of students held up in their respective lecture halls). Weary students sit listlessly, their vapid gazes transfixed on the lecturer at the front of the room. Many contemplate the possibility of interrupting the lecturer just to check the score of the sports match which inconveniently happened to coincide with that afternoon's Economic History session. Students lifelessly etch the letters FML on their armrests, while at the back of their minds grow silent fulminations against their LSEforYou timetables. The complaints are varied, but follow along roughly the same lines:

"9 o'clock on a Monday morning?

Seriously?"
"My last Law lecture ends at 5 on Friday. Hell just froze over".

And let's be fair. No right-minded student in London would rather spend a glorious weekday afternoon cooped up



Photo: flickr user mosmi

in the Old Theatre with their textbooks open in front of them, than outside under the shade of a leafy green tree growing in Lincoln's Inn Fields. Not to say what's being taught isn't interesting, because it is. The Arab-Israeli conflict, Cicero's Roman Republic, even Calculus – are all fascinating subjects in their own right. However, once you introduce into the equation the balmy autumn weather, and throw in the wafting smell of French fries and ketchup fresh from Wrights Bar, things quickly find themselves unravelling. In the conundrum that is the hierarchy of student priorities, a warm bed trumps 9 am lectures, an afternoon with friends on the steps of St Clements Building takes precedence over the irksomeness of having to spend the same time in the Hong Kong Theatre, and late-ending Friday lectures – well, they're simply taboo.

Lecturers who are entertaining enough to captivate their audience's fifty-five minute attention-span quickly become the talk of the Quad, heroes in the limpid eyes of admiring students. Other professors, who aren't as lucky, find themselves facing their worst nightmare: teaching rooms punctuated by spiritless sighs, obvious yawns, and quite often the odd paper plane. Romeo sits thinking of

his Juliet. Juliet wonders what she should wear to CRUSH tonight. You can tell things are going badly when the interest generated by the lecturer is equivalent to the interest inspired by Sarah Palin within a group of non-moose hunters. Philosophies, algebraic variables and law anecdotes find themselves swirling, twirling and tangling into a knot of unabashed perplexity that would leave even the Hermione Grangers of LSE in a state of semi-comatose. The sound of a mobile phone can provide much-needed comic relief to the monotony of the lecture; the two-hundred born opportunists cash in on the momentary confusion caused by an anonymous Jay-Z ringtone by stealing glances at the clock behind them. And then, at last, the end of the hour is marked by a moment of epiphany: emancipation from the obstacle-ridden gauntlet of insufferable boredom – splendid enough to make a believer out of the most vilifying cynic.

If you're interested in a tongue-in-cheek twenty-first century homage to Marcel Achard, look around you and count the number of students in your lecture theatre hitting Refresh on their Facebook pages. And then watch your lecturer sweat it.

Sex, Drugs and Time Saving Technology

Noah Bernstein has three alternative ways to make the most of your university experience

Recent weeks have seen a slew of articles advising students on how to make the most of their academic experience. So now that we all know about hard-work, focus, and getting involved-essential ingredients to a successful academic year- let's explore a few unsung efficiency-boosting tools that can make your semester that much easier. They're not for everyone, but they may work for you.

TIME-SAVING TECHNOLOGY

The evolution of once unreliable voice recognition software (VRS) has made exceptional progress over the past few years. And it's not just doctors, lawyers, and the disabled who can benefit from this great leap forward in usability. Note-taking becomes significantly easier (and faster) when all you have to do is talk into a headset and your every word obediently pops up on screen a few seconds later. Formatting and toggling are equally simple. And the price is very right. The leader in commercial VRS is Dragon NaturallySpeaking, currently on version 10. The standard package is a reasonable £70 with reduced upgrades thereafter. While it may take some time for the software to learn your speech patterns and recognize your Brummie accent, in a few weeks time you will have cut your note-taking time in half. Your voice may be slightly hoarse, but VRS will certainly give you extra time to take some...

DRUGS

If you're a fan of caffeine, nicotine and/or alcohol, it may be time you sampled some of the other new and legal neuro-enhancers out there, such as Modafinil or Adrafinil. The progeny of ADD drug Ritalin, these mail-order analeptics are usually associated with the treatment of narcolepsy, shift work sleep disorder, and excessive daytime sleepiness. However, they can also provide a ten to twelve hour 'awake' period without the heart palpitations of coffee and nasty side-effects of other caffeine pills. The cost of one pill, around £1, is offsetting at first, but at one-

fifth the cost of your average Starbucks product it's a wise economic decision: a triple-triple wears off after a few hours while Provigil, a brand of Modafinil, is reported to last all day. Analeptics are legal; however they do require a prescription (see next week's column on how to convince your doctor to write you one). Like any drug there are risks associated with the use of Modafinil and its older cousin Adrafinil: dizziness, blurred vision and, of course, addiction. Critics correctly assert that that long-term risks are unknown due to the lack of any longitudinal studies. But cynics beware: these FDA approved pills are likely a lot less damaging to your system than the barrels of alcohol, cartons of cigarettes, and pots of coffee students are consuming on a daily basis on campuses around the world. Plus, they will keep you nice and alert for...

SEX

Studies have shown that regular breaks, particularly ones that include mild to rigorous physical activity, are beneficial to the learning process. A recent Mayo clinic study found that frequent physical activity helps pump up your brain's production of endorphins, those feel-good neurotransmitters often associated with "runner's high". The study also showed, amongst other positive benefits, that regular exercise can increase self-confidence and lower the symptoms associated with mild depression and anxiety. So locking yourself in your coffin of a room for twelve hours a day and only coming out for greasy meals and cheap pints may not be the best path to your Nobel Prize. Taking a short walk, playing a team sport, or even cleaning may give you that mind-boost that we sometimes desperately need. And if this rigorous activity can come through bedroom Olympics, all the better for you - and your study partner.

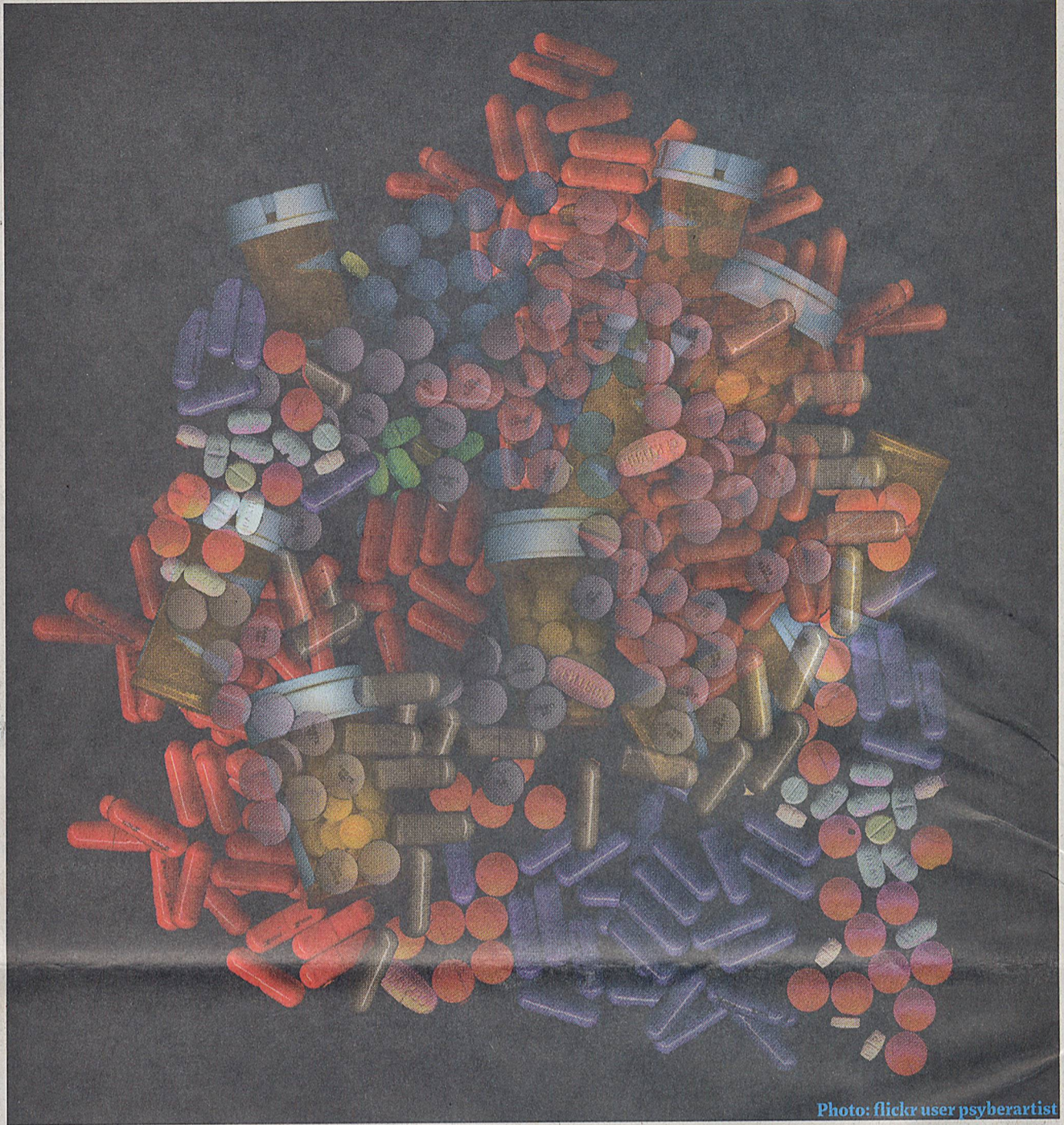


Photo: flickr user psyberartist

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Here's to second year

Sadir Zayadine shares the musings of a disjointed student

Upon beginning of my second year of study, it is becoming forcefully apparent that the real work starts now. Now. How overjoyed ought I to be then, after a first year that began in a blur and ended with a calamitous slap upside the head! Interestingly, a few of us, including myself, are able to remain calm and push on as planned. Perhaps this attitude stems from my longing for a return to the workless holidays, or perhaps my mundane feelings towards studies. Unfortunately my giant middle finger attitude has, so to speak, done a complete 180 and is, as such, swearing right back at me.

As a bleak consequence, I have not learnt from last years' ridiculously overpriced text book panic buy extravaganza, renewing my 'amazon.co.uk' loyalties and in turn turning my back on the expensive 'Economist's bookshop' (by the way, why is it called that when it clearly sells a fine range of philosophy and cookery books?). Stupider still, while I wait 3-5 working days for them to arrive, I cast my weary eye over last year's mint conditions, still searching for that eager (gullible) first year to palm them off to.

Why then my sudden change of heart? If I had more space perhaps I could delight you with sordid tales of family pressure and disappointment but I fear this article would descend into a laughable farce...

Instead I'll keep to this. LSE, as I had been told and have come to know, is wickedly competitive, not just for admissions, but also during your 3 years (or plus) of stay. Business-like in its nature, I have now come to expect a focused atmosphere of people who know by their second week back which banks to apply to for internships. They will all have submitted their forms before Guy Fawkes' night of this

Yet, those of us who exist at the LSE (and yes, we do exist) whom have no absolutely straight and narrow path, nor are compelled at all to go anywhere near a job in finance, feel inexplicably left out.

year. Yet, those of us who exist at the LSE (and, yes, we do exist) whom have absolutely no straight and narrow path, nor are compelled at all to go anywhere near a job in finance, feel inexplicably left out. In my case, I often react by a flash-forward to graduation. Oh, I can see it now. Bachelors awarded with 2.1 (2.2). My family beaming at me. They'll say: "There goes my son, leaving this fine institution with a degree in Economics (neglecting the Philosophy part of course...who does Philosophy, honestly?)"

And then, just as soon as it's over I'll be thrust into the real world with nought but my ukulele, forced to fend for myself. But hold on! I know nothing. I've worked nowhere. Tesco won't hire me, I'm over qualified. That fancy bank who I never wanted to work for in the first place, won't hire me. I have never interned for them. And so, the struggle of being inexperienced has come back to bite me in the nether-regions and I'm left alone to sing 'Five years time' by Noah and the Whale on my ukulele in the middle of the street.

Returning to the present day, I snap back to life in a cold sweat. Drama aside, Is this really what I want from life? To be stuck in a 12 hour a day job in something which is completely dissatisfying, and which arguably provides me with little inner fulfilment? Perhaps I've been conditioned or indeed duped by the LSE establishment into thinking that this is the only option available to me, especially since so many have similar aspirations. Am I turning into one of them?

I'll pick up my ukulele and play 'Somewhere Over the Rainbow' by Israel Kamakawiwo'ole. I'll leave 'Five years time' for now and return to my dreams. Here's to second year.



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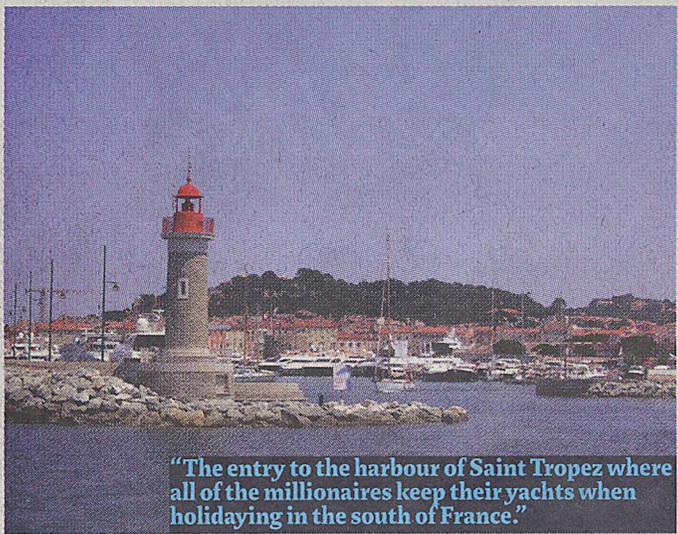
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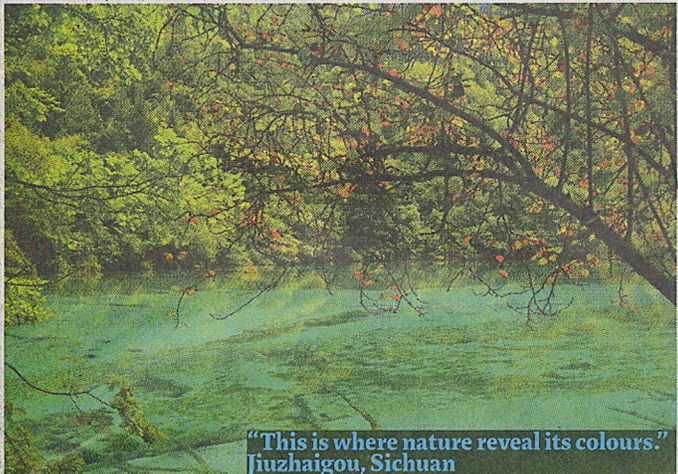
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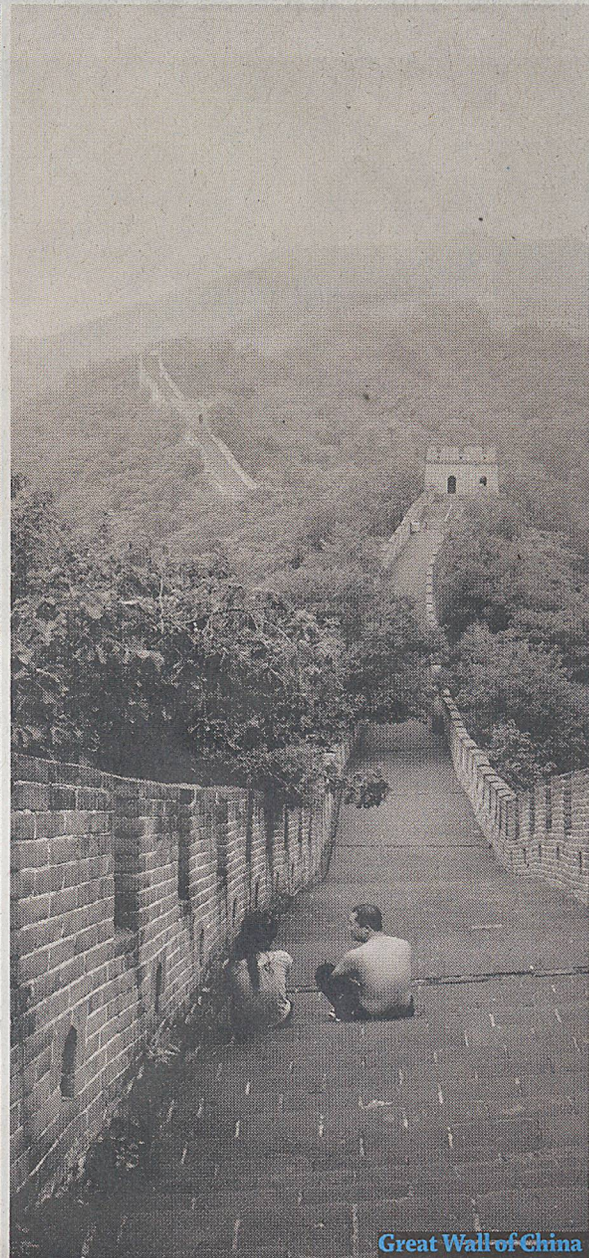
"The entry to the harbour of Saint Tropez where all of the millionaires keep their yachts when holidaying in the south of France."



"Taken on a beach in Belgium, easily the most photogenic sunset I have ever seen."



"This is where nature reveal its colours." Jiuzhaigou, Sichuan



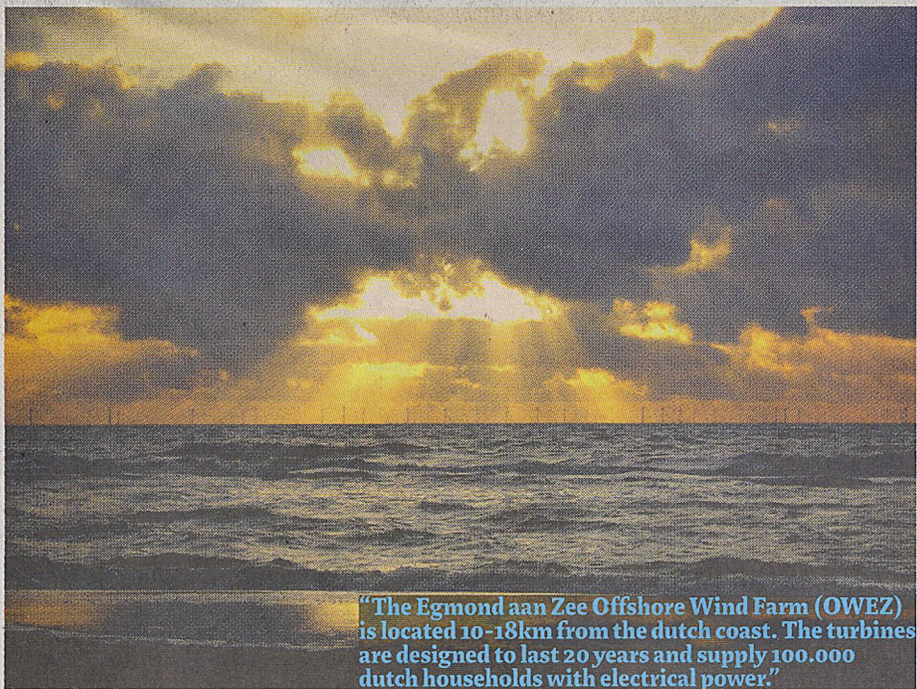
Great Wall of China

JET-SETTERS

Photos from top left: Jaynesh Patel; bottom left: Natalie Wong; centre: Duncan McKenna; right: Katy Staten

We would rather be somewhere else right now....

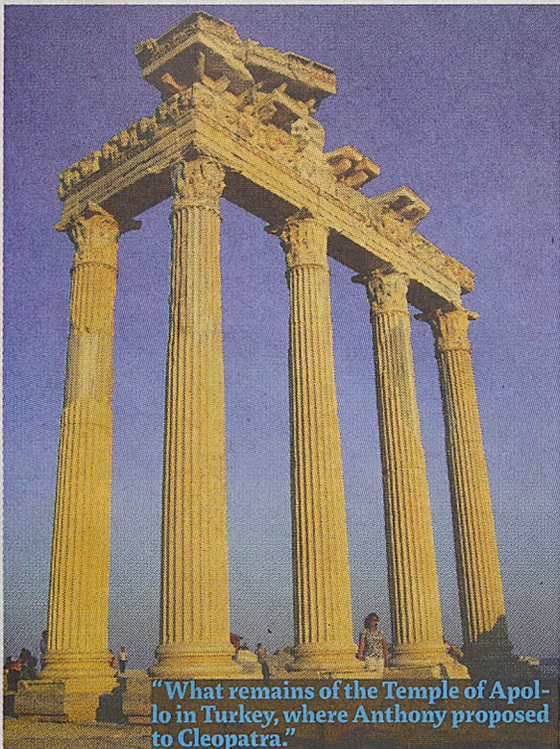
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"The Egmond aan Zee Offshore Wind Farm (OWEZ) is located 10-18km from the dutch coast. The turbines are designed to last 20 years and supply 100.000 dutch households with electrical power."



"I photographed this after about 3 hours of sleep while on holiday in Zakynthos. Despite the hangover the sunrise was special enough to drag me out of bed."

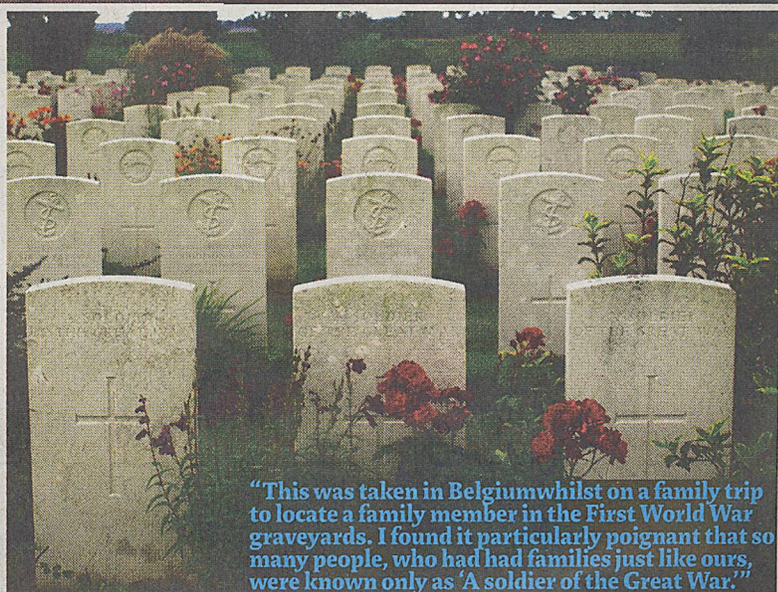


"What remains of the Temple of Apollo in Turkey, where Anthony proposed to Cleopatra."

Photos Clockwise from Top Left: Angelina Castellini; Duncan McKenna; Duncan McKenna; Katy Staten; Jaynesh Patel



Chinese Liberation Army, Beijing



"This was taken in Belgium whilst on a family trip to locate a family member in the First World War graveyards. I found it particularly poignant that so many people, who had had families just like ours, were known only as 'A soldier of the Great War.'"

Ten slices of Bacon



Lizzie Bacon
Women's Rugby

Most people will acknowledge that memories for a fresher can be difficult to extract considering the amount of snakebite that they consume over the 'academic' year. This fact happens to apply to me too, making the challenge of writing about my best AU memories of my first year just that little bit more difficult. If I am going to be completely honest, most Wednesday nights ended up with me stumbling onto a bus home (despite living up the road) after drinking far too much Snakebite and Double Vodka Red Bull. If any fresher is to take anything from my memories, it is that theirs will be vaguely similar to mine and will be just as silly, which can never be a bad thing.

1) Getting thrown out of Zoo Bar. This is almost a rite of passage for every first year as most will find out. The first time I was forcibly removed from Zoo, I have to admit, I was the most sober I had been in about a month. The bouncer quite upset me when he announced to a friend and myself that we were "too drunk", despite being both capable of conversation and able to walk in a straight line (the best tests of sobriety if you ask me).

2) Making the discovery that Walkabout is actually 1,000 times better than Zoo bar. Everything that is wrong in Zoo bar (dreadful music, low ceilings) is made right by Walkabout. Did I mention £1.50 Reefs too?

3) Making my 9am Class on Thursdays at least 3 times. I sympathise with

every person who happens to have a Thursday morning class; and those who have one this year will be able to relate to me when I say just how much of an achievement it is to make it. If I were to give freshers ANY words of advice, it would be to lie, cheat and blag your way to getting it changed.

4) Realising how awful everyone is at karaoke. Musical talent is a hard ask at the LSE, especially when you consider how academically minded we all are. Check out the Tuns on a Wednesday night for an example of how far this concept of "musical talent" stretches at the LSE. Expecting decent karaoke was a bit of a hard ask, especially when (with the benefit of hindsight) I consider how many pints the typical AU member has before they take to the stage.

5) Realising that I'd made it back from Calella without getting liver failure. This was one of my proudest memories of the year, honestly! 4 nights (and a coach ride) of excessive drinking are enough to send any normal person down the route of liver damage, at the very least. If you happen to decide to go to the sh**hole that is Calella over the Easter Holidays (when you should be revising) then you will learn to appreciate how lucky you will be to arrive home in one piece. Don't let this put you off though. Four nights of LASH LASH LASH and epic fancy dress are enough to send any AU veteran wild.

6) The trips to the Fortress and the ACTUAL sport. I suppose it would be wrong to include this outside of my top five. Train rides filled with epic gossip and fun never wear thin, and playing rugby

in the cold and wet weather will always bring a smile to my face. You'd have to be crazy not to appreciate the wind and rain...

7) Going to the Ball. My Cinderella moment as it were. The tickets may be pricey but the memories are priceless. Getting all smart is something every AU member HAS to see. Just once in a year do we slip on our finest glad rags and make our way to some swanky hotel where we sip wine and cause inevitable carnage. I distinctly remember being dragged under a table by a friend to sip on vodka that she had smuggled in. Good work.

8) Church. Probably as religious as my entire year got. This wonderful venue has become a bit of a tradition for rugby, and definitely features in my top three. Even if you do not have the pleasure of being affiliated with rugby, then I recommend you check the Church out (and join rugby). For the princely sum of £5 you get a stripper, a comic, and hundreds of crazy people just like you. The concept of being hungover by 9pm is one that you HAVE to experience at least once in your life.

9) Discovering what tampons actually taste like. This has to be up there as one of my favourite memories of my fresher's year, and quite rightly so. The loss of dignity incurred by having two super absorbency tampons shoved into your mouth at the Carol is at the very least, humorous. When a pint of red wine is added to the mix then the situation becomes absolutely hilarious.

10) Kicking the arse of the Poly on the Strand. No elaboration required

Results

Men's Rugby

LSE 1st XV 24-0 Kent
2nd XV

LSE 3rd XV 0-74
Buckinghamshire
New University 2nd
XV

Men's Football
friendlies against
University of the
Arts

LSE 1st team 10-2
LSE 2nd team 6-0
LSE 3rd team 5-1

Yeah alright we know that's not a lot of results...bring on next week.

Good Luck Everyone

AU Cave Rave

AU Welcome Party

| 8pm - 12am |

| In the Quad |

| Cheap drinks all night |

| Entry: £3 (AU) £5 (non-AU) |



He's a Keeper

With her brother Barry on sabbatical, his sister talks us through 'the beautiful game' of relationships



Philosophical Sally

Last year wasn't my greatest. If truth be told, it was pretty miserable. My love life was quite simply, shit. My clitoris curled up like a leaf, and blew away in the autumnal dusk.

In my period of sustained unintentional abstinence I realised that a relationship is a lot like a game of football. You can fight long and hard to secure a win, and it still ends up 0-0; but when you least expect, you can pull off a 3-0 corker away at Old Trafford. Sometimes you get broken during the match, and spend months rehabilitating yourself, only to be surprised years later that you're still injured.

Every game is different, occasionally you make new ground, but inevitably you end up making the same mistakes. At times you wonder why you play football, why you bother going through the misery of losing a game, and then the dry spell ends, literally, and you score that all-important goal.

I've also noticed how some of the men I've dated in the past year are like certain footballers.

The first player I quickly transferred

at the beginning of last year can easily be likened to Ali Dia, the infamous lying Senegalese footballer who was played just 16 minutes for Southampton, before it became clear that he was 'spectacularly below premiership standard'. He had convinced his agent to phone the Saints boss pretending to be World Footballer of the Year George Weah, recommending 'his cousin' Dia. Dia was full of lies; had never played for Paris Saint-Germain, or 13 times for Senegal for that matter.

My ex-boyfriend had a habit of telling the odd porkie pie, I fell for every one, quicker than Robert Pires looking for a penalty, and I ended up feeling as cheated and stupid as Graeme Souness. The aforementioned gentleman also had Vinnie Jones tendencies; he was 'a characterful meathead' to say the least.

The second player onto the transfer market last year wasn't exactly a great keeper. Let's just call him Gary Sprake, he was brilliant, but occasionally prone to appalling mistakes, including spectacularly throwing the ball into his own net. See, this one had real potential, we had a great first date (lots in common, nice guy, lived close by, bangable) but he managed to somehow forfeit the match at half-time. Second date came around; he walked over to watch a DVD, and then announced that he was going to stay the night, got under my bed covers and pretty much refused to get out of my bed and go home. It was awkward; I didn't really know what to say, so I went and hid in the loo until he got the hint.

Then there was that awkward controversial transfer that was too close to home. One word of advice if you have a brother; don't play with their friends. Just imagine that my brother is his former club, Barcelona, and I'm his new club Real Madrid, and the man in question is Luis Figo in 2000. Once he transferred to play with me, Luis found it hard to negotiate the hostile reception he got whenever he met Barcelona; Barcelona was in no mood to talk-tactics and discuss whether Real Madrid thought he was a skilful player or not. Luckily it was no great loss; I thought he had a bad first-touch all along.



Flickr user: Aromano

'My clitoris curled up like a leaf, and blew away in the autumnal dusk'

I'm torn between likening the last player to Luis Figo or Robbie Fowler. I mean, my brother's mate was tight with money. He took me on a date to see a band that I'd never heard of, I believe they were called 'Enter Skakari', and then afterwards asked me to the pay for my ticket. I wasn't going to shell out £20 to pretend to enjoy the delights of this screamo emo shite in a basement in Camden. To add insult to injury I paid for most of dinner, and when we got to the bar he had the cheek to say, 'it's your round'. Next!

My most recent transfer was Ashley Cole. He thought a bit too much of himself, was young and inexperienced, and didn't play for a team that I like at all; infact one of my most hated. Just imagine that Chelsea is Kings and you can get the picture. Apparently, there's a little known

secret in showbiz that Cheryl Tweedy married Ashley Cole because she was accused of being a racist, and he married her because he was rumoured to be homosexual. The same rings true for my Ashley; one day we were in bed discussing whether he could find a man attractive, and he announced that he had kissed several men on his team.

I had to let Ashley go; things got a pretty boring when I realised he didn't find me attractive because I didn't have a penis. At least that's what I hope anyway.

Philosophical Barry is on Sabbatical. He'll be back next week to provide his own unique insight into the sporting world.

Athletics Union is BUCS'ing the Trend

Sam Tempest Keeping
Sports Editor

LSE has risen four places to 49th in the latest British University and Colleges Sport (BUCS) Overall Points table. The rankings, released earlier in the summer, are based on a points system which covers fifty different sports.

Crucially for London based universities the rankings exclude matches organised by the University of London Students Union (ULU). Loughborough topped the pile for the 29th year running and by substantial margin.

Given the size of the student population here at the LSE added to the difficulties faced by all metropolitan (this does not make us a Poly in the true sense) universities with regard to accessing facilities, breaking into the top fifty is massive achievement for all involved. More importantly the School has finished above both Kings and Royal Holloway, our two fiercest rivals when it comes to sporting competition (this is obviously discounting Nottingham Trent who only come to the fore in the outskirts of Girona).

It should also be noted that below the LSE sat such distinguished universities as Birmingham School of Cakes, Anglia Ruskin, Medway, Cranfield and UHI Millennium Institute.

The colleges of our new sister Union, SUARTS, stayed firmly in 129th, a position they have now occupied for two years. Results from friendlies staged over the weekend between the two unions would appear to justify the rankings. These developments have apparently led to calls for a new 'super team', blending the efficiency of an economist with the flair of a graphic designer, to be silenced on one side at least.



TORSO OF THE WEEK



Mens Officer, where are you?



Men's rugby firsts leave Kent rucked

In their first game of the season the the LSE's resident muscle bound behemoths dish out a right good thrashing!

Johnny Jackson
Self Professed Pornstar

The first match of the season saw LSE 1st XV facing the weather as the main opposition, with Kent 2's a secondary matter. During the first half Kent had no answer to the onslaught from the LSE forwards, and after much build up play from the LSE pack, the backs spun the ball wide (via a Carlos Spencersque - through - the legs pass from Will Wilson) to send a rampaging Matthew Box over in the corner.

Kent restarted, but unfortunately still did not have the answer to LSE's confrontational pack play. Sustained pressure resulted in a debut try for Olly 'Ciderhands' Cook. After the game Cook remarked that he merely 'picked the ball up and put it over the line.' Textbook stuff Olly.

A stellar first half performance was capped off by a try from Rich 'The Athlete' Anderson. Set up by a barnstorming run from the aforementioned Box (as in cardboard) the ensuing juggernaut of a maul took Anderson to within two metres of the Kent try line - and no one would be stopping him from that range. After two conversions from Will Wilson, the score stood at LSE 19 to zero.

In deteriorating conditions the second half progressed in much the same vein as the first - LSE controlling the majority of the possession and territory. The introduction of Hamdi 'The Enforcer' Talib compounded the LSE packs' domination in all facets of forward play, and eventually the pressure told, with Box again barging his way to the line.

Despite strong kicking from Matt Walker's finely crafted right leg and excellent chasing up from the LSE back three, further tries proved as elusive as a clearly articulated syllable from Boca. In reflection, it was the terrible conditions that saved Kent from a cricket score.



The Ecstasy of Victory: (Above, centre left) New captain Ben Robinson celebrates with his team mates after a fine performance. Boca (top right) struggles to recreate his sparkling form on the pitch while dancing at Zoo Bar.

Special Mentions:

Rob O'Donovan - Just keep doing roly-polys and you might get to the try line....

Stuart Whiteford - 'It was meant to be a grubber kick....honest!'

Kent's Full Back - 'MARK!....shit'

Captain Robinson - A solid start for the new regime.

Tom Davies - Disgraced ex 1st XV captain, not a bad game though.

Will Wilson - Apparently he can kick...really, really well. Dick

Dispelling myths of hockey

Kathryn Eastwood

I can't deny that I thoroughly enjoyed my first year without the AU at LSE, however by second year I had seen the errors of my ways and realized that I was missing out. The stories from Wednesday nights and the unrelenting echoes of "banter and lash" made me determined to join a sports team. Hockey was the obvious choice for me having played it for years at school, however, no matter who I told this to I was greeted with the same response: "Why?! Do you not know how to play netball?" (Actually I don't, but that's a matter for another day).

Thankfully I decided to ignore the various attempts to warn me against joining a squad of apparently raving lesbians who supposedly maintained a feud with netballers comparable to that of the Bloods and Crips. At last year's fresher's fayre I signed up for hockey and consequently signed away my Wednesdays for the next two years. Things were looking up already.

Being part of the hockey club at LSE has been truly lethal (in the distinctly Northern Irish sense of the word). As the club is relatively small, friendliness and familiarity immediately ensued upon joining. By week two everyone knew each others' name, drink of choice and in-depth boy dilemmas. We were soon a team in every sense of the word and the guarantee of general hilarity at every training session and match made the slight trek to Battersea Park worthwhile. We even met a few celebrities upon the way...well,

that's if the little boy from Love Actually can be branded as such. Furthermore, the friendly atmosphere among the hockey squad hasn't been reserved for individual team bonding. In fact, I can confidently say that the relations between Men's and Women's hockey are on the rise, or so social secretary Christina informs me.

Now time to clear up a few myths. Raving lesbians? I think not. After approximately two hours with captains Heaps and Pickles this myth was most certainly dispelled...and it continued to be so on many a Wednesday night to follow (just ask them about Golden Balls). As for this feud with netballers, they definitely aren't so bad at all, we even have a couple of converts among our ranks this year. What can I say, they must have seen sense!

The hockey club has undoubtedly provided the AU with some great characters and is certainly much more social than it is given credit for. Luke Davies made us proud last year with his unremitting and perhaps unbeatable attendance record to Zoo/Walkabout. Not forgetting that the club made its first and seemingly lasting impression on Calella. In fact the horror stories of "piss banter" continue to make me feel slightly nauseous.

We have however lost some infamous members of the team. Parents of the team Danni and Alex have ventured into the big bad world of work along with Colin, our quick witted Canadian and Emily (affectionately known as "Gine") the ex-sorority girl who never failed to shock. However, even with these losses many team legends remain and they undoubtedly promise to provide as much limitless amusement in the new few years. Furthermore, Fresher's fayre recruitment proved highly success-

ful (probably due to that amazing banner) and we have signed up more new players than we imagined possible. Hockey at LSE is getting bigger and better...maybe in a few years time a keen fresher will talk of joining the netball squad somebody will ask her, "Why? Can you not play hockey?!"

Let's end with a few words of wisdom, take note as I tend to impart such gems on a less than frequent basis. If you aren't in the AU, join now. It's never too late and will definitely be one of your best discoveries at LSE, that's if you haven't quite figured out how to sneak into Crush for free. Being part of the AU has made my LSE experience so much better in so many ways - a welcome relief from the academic pressures and one of the few arenas where investment banking isn't the hot topic of conversation. So if you have the banter and the balls, this is the place for you.



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EDITORIAL

PartB loves email. We're not really sure why, but email really seems to get him off. In fact, he loves email so much that he's only gone and given each section editor their own sexy new PartB email address. Why not send an email or two to the section editors and say hello? It would make their day - we promise.

If you want to hit the mothership though, **partb@thebeaveronline.co.uk** is the place to go.

PartB still has space on his mailing list for new writers to get involved too. Click on our button at **www.thebeaveronline.co.uk/getinvolved** and we'll send you a happy email with lots of happy things in it to make you happy.

Peace out,

**Julian Boys &
Graeme Birrell**

COVER DESIGN BY:

AMIE ROGERS

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DON'T BE APOSTROPHOUS

THIS IS AN ARTICLE WHAT **ALEX WHITE** WRIT

There comes a point in each young person's life, however wonderful he or she may be accustomed to thinking of themselves as, when they look at themselves and think, 'you're a bit of a dick'.

Looking at a war crime commemoration plaque in a Cambodian prison, I went right ahead and corrected the grammar on the English plaque for the benefit of my likewise literate companions. It was then that I decided that I am, in fact, a total dick. Not only for the sheer callousness of what I had done, but because I am often hideously grammatically inaccurate myself, and not even in an ironic way.

If I was better at grammar perhaps, I wouldn't daily be called up on the fact that it should be were. If I cared more about it, it wouldn't annoy the hell out of me every time I am corrected, maybe. Which makes me an even worse person. Note my cavalier use of semi-clauses and field of unnecessary commas. Pay attention to the fact that I have yet to use a single exclamation mark because I am on a one woman crusade to eradicate the use of them unless entirely and totally called for. Maybe you, too, take a certain

pride in your anal retentiveness over punctuation and grammar. Maybe you, also, shout out with misplaced pride, 'I GIVE A FUCK ABOUT AN OXFORD COMMA! I really do!'

Those exclamation marks were warranted, unlike my snobbish attitude to grammatical accuracy. It is pedants like myself, filled with a sense of purpose endowed by a three year long essay course, who ruin the development and variation of the English language. Fact. The greatest of poets win accolades for their inventive restructuring of language to reinvent meanings. The void and hope created by a well placed bit of enjambment is not lost on me, friend, oh no. I'm only really cool with it because it's all high-brow and stuff. Again, what a prick.

A great big blog LOL for many is the pure joy of 'Chinglish', where signs or menus are translated literally from the Chinese characters into 'exploding general chicken' or 'chicken mushroom rape', and the like.

What most Anglophones don't consider though, is that the English does not exist for their benefit. Just as I'm madly impressed by 'Canard au confit' on a menu, the English translations signal class and status to customers, who couldn't care very

much less if their chicken had any ranking in the army, nor how it was killed.

Agreement, word order, personal pronouns: these are fairly arbitrary to anyone who hasn't been schooled to think that the English language must be upheld as a sign of the strength of Britain and our wonderful education system.

So for my resolution on a new term, I say: screw the grammar police! Ima leave yo' ranks! I ain't yo' footsoulja no more! I'm havin fun wit yo' gramma! Not your grandmother, just the strict rules and regulation by which you govern if I'm speaking proper English or what. Out go the semi-colons of old! See my positive gush of avoidable exclamation marks!

With my new, liberated sense of abandon, I invite you, dear reader, to cavort with me in the jungle of my favourite sentence of all time, with fresh delight. 'Buffalo buffalo Buffalo buffalo buffalo Buffalo Buffalo buffalo'. It's a real, accurate sentence, but it feels dirty and wrong! It's full on grammar porn: Verb, noun, and adjective are all the same word, but mostly, it's all sorts of fun to be saying. Suck on that, conventionally constructed sentences! I'm pretty much a massive word master.

In one of my classes last year, a friend of mine told our teacher that she hadn't written an essay we were assigned because the very exercise of essay writing limited creativity and bounded thought, and thus the true originality behind the words were necessarily constrained and thus undermined. Surprisingly enough, she sort of got away with it.

That's my excuse for this article. I could have descend into a pretentious stream of consciousness, or just given up and written only in infinitives. But my hardwired essay writing training is begging me to reign in, punctuate, and make all of my verbs agree. This attempt to chill out on the grammatical dickishness has invariably returned to a platform on which I can flaunt just how much I think I know about grammar. Like I said, I pretty much think I'm a word master. As long as I don't mess with the prescribed path.

Think about that next time you tell me the use of language in my essay is just 'generally good', teaching assistant bastard.



VAGABONDAGE

GARETH LEWIS ON CHILEAN WRITER ROBERTO BOLANO AND THE PERILS OF BEING INFRAREAL

You wouldn't have wanted Roberto Bolano in your book club. Indeed, most bibliophiles would wince with shame and recoil in horror at the novelist's extra-literary habits. Bolano would thief books from libraries the same way graffiti artists in the 70's would rack paint from hardware stores in New York. He and his company – a group of writers and poets who called themselves Los Infrarealistas, The Infrarealists – had the South American literary establishment firmly in between the crosshairs. To them, the hallowed and beloved – Garcia Marquez and Octavio Paz in particular – were just gristly strips off the great spinning rack, lacking in meat or flavour, boxed and garnished in all the right ways.

Poetry recitals and readings were routinely interrupted by one or more of the group, who preached something akin to a Beat manifesto (an Infrarealist Manifesto, incidentally, very much exists. It is written by Bolano and impossibly titled 'Leave Everything Behind, Again'). Attendees at such events were heckled and jeered (it is thought that Paz once had wine poured over him), and then invited to join the movement, to give up everything, to hit the asphalt. For much of his adult life, Bolano did just that. He took menial jobs and wrote in his spare time.

He allegedly developed a heroin habit, something he'd kicked before his death in 2003 (but which may well have been a contributing factor to his liver failure). In the 70's, he returned to his homeland of Chile in support of the socialist cause, and became one of the many interned and few to survive after Pinochet's coup (incredibly, two guards were old school friends and sprung him from the cells). In essence, Bolano's life has become the stuff of legend, and his final work, a monster epic, has anchored this myth with a golden sinker.

In an early passage of 2666 – the enigmatic title of Bolano's last novel – one of the book's protagonists remarks gloomily how modern readers are 'afraid to take on the great, imperfect, torrential works, books that blaze paths into the unknown'. Clocking in at 898 pages, 2666 is one such work. It is decidedly hard to locate a single epicentre for the novel's vast concerns, prised apart as it is into five sections of quite unequal length. Feasibly, some traction

could be gained by focussing on the figure of Archiboldi, a spectral character who haunts the pages until the last section (titled, in a rare moment of clarity, 'The Part About Archiboldi'), where he appears in a kind of bathetic maelstrom: poetic, melancholy, a drifter. An admired novelist and possible contender for the Nobel Prize, Archiboldi has a loyal following of fans and academics, all keen to meet the man in person and suspicious of anybody who claims to know too much about him.

The novel's first part, 'The Part About the Critics', closes in on the interrelationships between four of these scholars. Some of the

rative shockwaves – is the pseudo-fictional town of San Teresa. Situated near the US border, the community of San Teresa is tightly bound to nearby maquiladoras (Mexican manufacturing facilities, typically making products for distribution in the US). It is a location of rust and wear, prostitution and dust. It is also a crucible of slaughter.

The experience of reading the novel's fourth section, 'The Part About The Crimes', is one of the most extraordinary you will ever encounter in the pages of a book. Narrative practically expires, unable to ground itself amidst the deluge of rape, mutilation and execution that flows

on for three hundred pages. Women are being pulped in San Teresa at a rate that seems likely to overtake supply. Indeed, the pace and scale of execution mirrors grotesquely the physical and material grind of the nearby factories. It comes as no surprise that these churning warehouses provide much of the fodder for the gleeful spree of San Teresa's anonymous killers. In the end you lose count of numbers, identities, stories. This is a whirlwind town that gulps up the unknown and coughs them out unsparingly. There are enough sparse and arid city spaces to hold many more bodies, and when the price of life becomes – quite literally – this low, there are always more to come. Admittedly,

watching the gruesome fusillade makes for tough reading. The novel quite suddenly halts, and becomes a record, a grisly list. Lovers of narrative development might start to choke and splutter here, but there's no denying the force of this assault.

What more to say? This is a novel whose title carries with it the stench of apocalypse, and then gives no indication as to what this date (assuming it is one) entails. It's a work which jumps from London to Mexico to Nazi Germany, develops multiple principle characters and is packed full of dead-ends as well as dead bodies. It is a story that manages, despite vastness and fragmentation, to knot a great deal of disparate plots and places together in a remarkably satisfying conclusion. It's a book which bothers you, and which sits perched on your shelf like a monstrous, hulking owl – prophetic, poetic, anarchic. Leave Everything Behind, Bolano said, and absorb.



Los Infrarealistas, with Bolano second from right, in glasses.

connections established here echo and reverberate through the rest of the book, serving as platforms for fresh stories, anecdotes and associations. Others, typical of Bolano's style, are abandoned. Sentences are caught in the rush of a gusty, sprawling narrative, and are swept away. Meaning gets snagged in doubt, daydream or another story, which takes us somewhere else and makes us question the relevance of the original utterance. Just as the critics struggle to pin Archiboldi, the novel invites us into a world which is always just out of our conceptual grasp. Fate and fiction seem equally able to propel events, and the subconscious and cerebral play uneasily with incident and exchange, creating interactions that veer from poetry to porn, splitting genres and upending the very notion of expectation.

A second plausible epicentre for the novels meanderings – though more like a crusty, phlegm spattered plug at the bottom of a filthy sink, swallowing up rather than disgorging nar-

A GRAND DAY OUT

MARK TWYFORD IMBIBES SOME CULCHA

It's the start of a new year, and hopefully after a hectic week of Freshers' Fair, and an even more hectic one packed full of lectures, you have a least a little bit of time left for yourself. So take a deep breath, step out and enjoy what this city has to offer you, besides copious amounts of alcohol, and a ridiculous number of clubs.

So why not try an art gallery? For those unfamiliar with London, the best place to start on the art scene is with the general exhibitions at the city's three main art galleries; the Tate Modern, Tate Britain and the National Gallery, all conveniently located within Zone 1 of the underground.

One of the best things about these galleries is that their permanent exhibits are all free, which means that even if you're not sure you like art you can go along, hate everything, and you still won't have wasted any money (and time spent on art is never time wasted). An ideal day out for the average London student, living off a can of beans and Sainsbury's value vodka (at £7 a bottle your liver just can't say no!).

But rest assured, within these three massive galleries there is surely something for nearly everyone. For the lover of classical art, whether it be renaissance or early impressionism, the National Gallery is easily the best place to start (and the easiest to find from the LSE, being located on Trafalgar Square; follow the big column, but if you are catching the Tube, Charing Cross is the station of choice). The building itself is a neo-classical monstrosity that dominates

the northern side of Trafalgar Square, and frankly dwarves the National Portrait Gallery behind it (a bizarre curio which will undoubtedly be covered at some point - watch this space!).

The majority of the collection is devoted to renaissance era paintings, usually filled with Christian symbolism, ranging from the impressive (some of the battle pieces in particular) to the downright awful (check out the portrait of the King on horseback for the most outsized horse you'll ever see). A personal favourite in the National are the last three or so rooms containing a fine collection of Cezanne's, Van Gogh's (including his Sunflowers if you must insist on seeing it) and also Pissarro's fantastic Boulevard Montmartre at Night, to name but a few.

But that really is about as cutting edge as the National Gallery gets (apart from temporary exhibitions such as last year's one on Picasso). For a greater array of post-impressionism and a forage into cubism and early to mid-twentieth century art, the Tate Britain (located near Pimlico Tube station) would be better. While the Tate houses a collection of Turner's that far exceeds that of the National Gallery (if the moody seascapes of this classic British artist are your thing), it also possesses a modernist collection that spans from the tortured paintings of Francis Bacon to the bizarre sculptures of Henry Moore.

The Tate Modern is undoubtedly the new kid on the block, and amongst a frequently rotating permanent exhibition, also houses several temporary exhibitions (which like

temporary exhibitions in the other galleries cost money, so are best avoided unless they're either really good or really cheap) and also an alternating (and free) sculpture exhibition in the giant turbine hall.

The building itself is a fantastic modernist monolith; the gallery effectively being housed in a disused power station, and the views across the millennium bridge to Saint Paul's (your nearest tube stop) are breathtaking. But it is the art inside that, inevitably, steals first prize. With a broad collection that can encompass anything from the famed Spaniards Picasso and Dali, through to Young British Artists such as Damien Hirst.

Finally at the end of a long day out, there's nothing quite like a cool pint of beer (or lager if that's your poison). Down the Strand from the National Gallery, just of Aldwych, is the fantastic Lyceum Tavern, with cheap beer and a nice atmosphere. At the other end of the scale is the Waterfront Bar opposite the Tate Modern; expensive beer, but blessed with one of the best views in London (and the best kept pint of Staropramen). The Tate Britain seems to largely be surrounded by cafes, so nothing of interest there...

Ultimately, as a student in London, at the very least you have one year here. And it would seem a shame if in that time you didn't at least sample one of these great institutions, it really can't be stressed enough how free they are. So don't be afraid, dive in and take a bite of culture, it might bore you, it might be the best thing you've ever



CAN I HAVE A FRIEND PLEASE?

LOUISA EVANS SAYS THANKS FOR THE FRIENDS SHE FOUND

Making friends at university is a social minefield. In fact it's even more nerve-wracking than trying to snare a mate. For if your friends reflect badly on you, this makes the mate-sharing all the more difficult. Not to mention the need to have a pool of fabulous friends to give you alternately crap and good advice when said mate is messing you around. The rules and bonds of friendship are sacred. As Oscar Wilde said, 'anybody can sympathise with the sufferings of a friend, but it requires a very fine nature to sympathise with a friend's success.' There are crimes friends can commit that can be worse than those of a philandering partner and in a matter of moments years of friendship disappear down the toilet.

During my daily fix of Hollywood gossip, declining multiple email offers of Viagra (they know me so well) and choosing the best of several horoscopes that I get sent direct to my email account, I found a blog written by a thirty-something about friendship. Or, as it seemed in her case, a lack thereof. The gist of it was that of her 3 friends, one had moved out of the same transport zone, one had come out and was busy discovering herself and the other had totally outgrown her. So she was after any advice on how to go about meeting and making new friends.

This is tragic on two levels: One, the blogger was essentially asking the wider world to be her friend, or at least tell her where she might find one; and two, instead of actually going out there to make friends, she sat in front of the computer, reinforcing all the anti-social stereotypes that come with being so dependent on the bloody machine in the first place. To be fair, she was clearly scared shitless of re-airing all her dirty laundry. Not that that this the recommended method for making new friends: 'Hello there, I barely know you but in order for us to have a long and lasting friendship I feel compelled to tell you about my brief stint in hospital and the invasive treatment of my colon.' This camp of people believe that sooner or later it's all going to come out anyway and as this new person still doesn't know them particularly well and wasn't there when it happened, is prone to being a trifle more judgemental than the galpal circa 2002. So they decide to be done with it, share all the horrid stuff and if the silly mug on the receiving end sticks around, they know they've got themselves a true friend. Either that or the silly mug has a fetish.

Thankfully I am not thirty-something, (though as one of my friends kindly pointed out this week my next 'big' birthday will be my 30th whereas hers will be her 21st) but alas, I have been on the friendship hamster wheel time and time again.

Contrary to popular belief I did not end up at boarding school

because my parents didn't love me, (at least that's what they say) it was to provide a bit of stability as I had been to 3 schools in as many years- ah the merry life of the forces. This basically meant that by the age of 12 I was a connoisseur of small talk (read precocious) and had 'friends' all over the place. It also meant, though, that by the time I was 14 I had actually become rather cynical. I knew swapping emails was not really going to cut it and despite the endless hours of giggling, note-swapping in class and proud declarations of being BFFs, it was quite depressing to realise I would not be best friends with them forever. Then came the magic of Facebook and so I'm once again in touch with these former BFFs, mainly through the pull of nostalgia and yes, a little bit to do with upping my friend count. Of those I actually still meet rather than just occasionally 'share' a wallpost with, it's alarming how little we have to say to each other. We have nothing in common save our shared history and when it comes down to it, that's not really enough except for a general bullet-point list from My Life Over The Past 6 Months.

But once my 15 year-old self got used to the bizarre, unique and often invasive proximities of the boarding house, the friends I made there have been and will probably remain some of the best I have ever made. A true measure of friendship is, we discovered, daring someone to get into their trunk to see if they fit, closing it and throwing them down the stairs and still talking to you afterwards. We also realised by the end of 6th form that really we had very little in common except that our parents lived in a country far from where we had been deposited. But unlike our 'pre-big-school' friendships we had a few

more life experiences and those were strong enough, or scarring enough, to keep us together. (What happens in the House, stays in the House. That kind of thing.)

So then we get to Fresher's Week. Unsurprisingly, I can't really remember what happened, or how I met the people I now consider my friends. It seems that I woke up one morning and there they were. And for the more salacious-minded of you, I don't mean literally 'there'; I mean 'there' as in my phone-book and replying, quite happily it seemed, to my invitation for lunch at 1 in the Quad. Three years down the line and my bestest buds are a few from halls and those I happened to talk to in my first classes, (plus a few others along the way). But doing Fresher's Week as a proper Fresher is totally unique. Even we oft-reserved British folk get off our seats (and faces) and chat, somewhat desperately to everyone, anyone. In fact you get so carried away introducing yourself to people you have to remind yourself not to strike up conversation with the gentleman sat next to you on the tube. But it seems that doing a Masters is a whole different ball game. I still report my first encounter with an LSE Masters student with horrified glee: Door opens part-way. 'Hi. My name is Marcus. I live in the room next door. I just graduated from Durham. I'm not looking for friends.' Door shuts. And based on tales from friends doing Masters here this year, not a lot has changed. Except for the Americans. What a super-friendly bunch... as long as you too are a rootin'-tootin', beer-ponging Yank.

Avoid the peak of friendship making. When it seems too much of a hassle and you would rather stick with the reassuringly familiar, persevere. Be warned fair reader, the tale of the 3-friended 30-something. Don't become her.



FASHION ROCKS

ADETOUN & JACQUI FUSE FASHION WITH MUSIC

Music and fashion have an undeniable link. Like the tale of the chicken and the egg, both mediums of expression cannot be differentiated; their development occurred independently yet simultaneously. Nowadays most style trends appear to start with musicians; music videos, appearances, magazine covers, Yet the musicians themselves, the music videos, the appearances AND the magazine covers have all been styled by an army of people with one thing in common; the fashion industry.

Just think about the amount of people involved in the production process that goes into your average musician. Take Rihanna for example; the infamous hair cut, the signature red lips and the edgy clothes, have all been juxtaposed together to create an image for her then new album ' Good Girl Gone Bad'.

In a nutshell, its clear to see the connection being made. The art forms fundamentally come together creating the best of both worlds.

Music being one of the most influential and widespread forms of art, its impact is global, reaching even the furthest nooks and crannies of the world. Fashion contributes an important element to music's success through imagery. Without imagery in music so many trends that we consciously or unconsciously subscribe to would certainly not exist. If we narrow it down, we can see that each genre of music essentially possesses its own 'look' which not only aids the impact of the type of music but also the musicians themselves.

Do you think Lady Gaga's performance in the recent MTV video music awards would have had the same effect if she was wearing jeans and a t shirt? Or would that famous Britney/Madonna/Christina kiss, have caused so much controversy, if they weren't dressed in wedding outfits? Probably not!

Even the most elite of fashion houses use musicians to promote their campaign. Madonna has not only been on the cover of countless fashion magazines, she has also been the face of various fashion campaigns such as Louis Vuitton, and Versace.

On the other hand, music also plays an important role in the world of fashion. Musicians don't only promote fashion through product placements in their videos, but also through guest appearances and red carpet events wearing designer clothes. By seeking publicity they essentially enhance their status and that of the designers. This fact is obvious, even through the lyrics of their songs; Beyonce overtly promotes her glamorous lifestyle in her song 'Upgrade you'; 'Audemars Piguet watch, Dimples in your necktie

Hermes briefcase, Cartier top clips Sink lined blazers, Diamond cren facials VVS cuff links, six star pent suites'

As both worlds evolve, we start to see collaborations between the two. In the twenty first century the middle man has been all but eliminated, as we have begun to see musicians forming their own fashion lines. From Sean Combs aka Puffy aka, Puff Daddy, aka P. DIDDY, aka Diddy, we got

Sean John. Gwen Stefani coined the clothing label L.A.M.B, and who can forget the ultimate WAG, Posh aka Victoria Beckham and her new label The Collection? They've ultimately bridged the gap between fashion and music; and if anything its been done so well it deserves its own title!

Just like the chicken and the egg the question remains as to which one came first; fashion or music. We leave that one for you to decide. One thing we do know however, is that although the fashion industry has a part to play in music, music also returns the favour by promoting fashion. Maybe the reason why they work so well together so well is because they sell the same lifestyle whatever that lifestyle may be.



HEY THERE DELILAH
WE MET AT THE FIRST
CRUSH. I WAS VIOLENT-
LY SICK ON YOUR FROCK.
DINNER?
YOURS,
ALBERT

ALICE
THE FROZEN CHICKEN YOU
LEFT IN MY BED HAS DE-
FROSTED AND IS START-
ING TO SMELL. DO YOU
STILL WANT IT?
ELEANOR

DAVE,
PLEASE COME AND COL-
LECT THE SEVEN ROAD
SIGNS YOU LEFT IN MY
BEDROOM.
BEST,
JOE

LIBRARY GIRL,
DON'T EVER TAKE MY
PLACE AGAIN OR I'LL
THROW YOU DOWN THE
STAIRS.
KATE



TO THE GENERAL COURSE
GIRL I MET AT ZOOBAR,
I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE
CANADIAN. I'M SO SORRY.
TREV

TO THE TWO 18 YEAR
OLDS MAKING OUT AG-
GRESSIVELY AT THE
FIRST CRUSH, I NABBED
BOTH YOUR IPODS.
ANONYMOUS

DEER HOWARD DAVIES,
I DON'T FINK I SHULD
BE AT LSE, ITS REALLY
HARD LOL!
QUENTIN
X

SOS GOT LOST LOOKING
FOR LIBRARY STOP AM
STUCK IN BASEMENT IN
WANDSWORTH STOP COME
QUICKLY AM EATING TOE-
NAILS FASTER THAN THEY
CAN GROW

MUSIC

ETHNOMUSICOLOGY RETURNS TO FINE FORM

SORCHA MAGUIRE, EVENTS OFFICER, PUBLICISES THE ANTHOPOLOGY SOC WORLD MUSIC NIGHT COMING UP ON OCT 22ND

Well known as LSE's best society event, last year's 'Ethno' was a blooming success. This year is going to be bigger and better.

Eleven-piece reggae-ska band **Mama Skank** are back as the headlining group and the very popular **Eliane** returns, this time bringing six members of her Cuban collective. There are also some refreshing new faces - soul/funk legend **Jeremy Harris** kicks off the night with his brand spanking new band, a group so funky even LSE students will be moving their hips! The night's carnival atmosphere will be maintained by live percussion, then some experimental spoken word.

Free from all pretensions, Ethno provides the perfect escape from the excess of "too cool for school" London nights. No need for awkward jerky dancing, just come along and enjoy the easy atmosphere and experience a kaleidoscope of world sounds. The evening is wrapped up with DJ-ing from **Chris John** who has (and I quote) "some sick African vinyl".

A night like no other and at a tiny price... get your tickets fast!

Ethnomusicology
22nd October, 8pm-1am
Underground @ LSE
£3 anth soc, £4 otherwise



REVIEW-HELIOS

The ambient indie genre may have been done to death recently; it seems like the word 'ambient' is often thrown into reviews of any modern music just for good measure. However, before we close the door on this musical genre let's discuss Helios, the artist behind some very beautiful atmospheric indie synth pop.

Helios is the current alias of Boston music grad Keith Kenniff and produces a sound that reflects real musical skill. The composition and flow of each track seem to carry the mark of a truly talented man. Throughout the handful of albums he has released to date you can find a whole plethora of instruments

at work, all producing the perfect sound for the track, and these albums carry a great ambient sound crafted together seamlessly.

Each track on each album has the same clear and chimey acoustic guitars layered on top of fuzzy rhythms, resonating electronic sounds and the familiar and comfortable rustle of lo-fi noise. There are no catchy rhythms or real separation between tracks, just a continual run of music weaving in and out of different rhythms and sounds.

Wonderful ambient pop at its finest.

REVIEW OF EXCITING NEW LONDON BASED BAND

CATHY DRUCE JOINS THE FANCLUB

Last Monday I popped down to Hoxton to watch a band from my hometown play some pretty cool music. **The Fanclub** are a 3-piece originally from Bournemouth but now based mainly in London where two of their members go to uni. They are about to release their first EP of powerful indie tracks and you can catch them yourself around London soon, so this new band are the perfect subject for an early review.

The Fanclub cite **The Smiths**, **Joni Mitchell** and **Fleetwood Mac** amongst their influences; and certainly their music does reflect the lyricism and rhythm of The Smiths, the beautiful melodies of Mitchell and the liveliness of Fleetwood Mac, but The Fanclub also have their own sound which is unlike that of much of today's indie scene.

With a sound harking back to the British guitar led rock sound of the **Manic Street Preachers**, Josh Todd's lead guitar plays punchy rhythms and melodies with a skill rarely seen in your average pop band. Lewis Tobia on bass deepens the rocky sound of this band which is not afraid to give the bass a major role in their music; think Brit rock rather than today's common jangly indie music. Bags of rhythm and life in each track are provided by drummer Ben Morse, and the whole thing is tied together by Tobia's beautiful lyrics sung by Todd's wonderfully expressive clear voice.

These boys really are talented musicians. Not your average teenage project, rather they have worked hard to craft some really great indie rock-pop tunes with memorable melodies. They perform with stage presence

unexpected in a new band and are genuinely nice people, sincerely thanking crowds for their support and having a chat afterwards.

When I saw them on Monday they were playing their first gig of many around London in the next couple of months in run up to their up and coming EP release. They played first in the line up, but seemed to outshine, in both presence and sound, the more established young bands that fol-

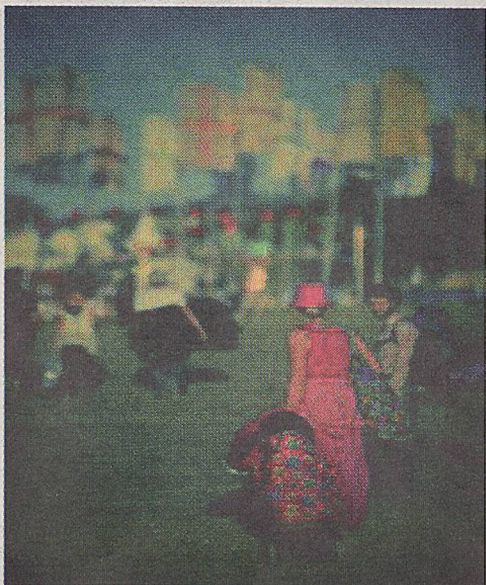
lowed. The Fanclub seem set for bigger things and are definitely one to check out.

The Fanclub's track 'Poets Die Too' – is available to download for free from October 1st 2009 for one month via their website: www.thefanclubmusic.co.uk



REMEMBER WHEN IT WAS STILL THE SUMMER HOLIDAYS?

ADAM UTTING ON BESTIVAL 2009.



What's in a name? Well the organisers (Rob da Bank of Radio 1 fame and Sunday Best) of the Isle of Wight-based festival would probably say an awful lot. With a beautifully eclectic line up ranging from electronic giants **Kraftwerk** to the medieval acoustic harmonies of **Fleet Foxes**, I had high hopes for the ambitiously titled festival.

Some of you may remember the horror stories from last year's Bestival where the combination of rain and a main stage at the bottom of a valley made for a muddy experience. Thankfully, this year the sun was shining and the weather was sweet.

The stars also came out to play, and not just at night time; the fancy dress theme was "space". A lot of effort was made by most of the 43,000 "Bestivalers", a significant number of which were families who partied alongside the younger campers, making for a friendly and safe atmosphere. In fact Bestival

lived up to its reputation for all-round friendliness, most noteworthy of which was free tea and cake tent, Oxfam activities and the carbon neutrality of the whole affair.

Musically, Bestival was a thoroughly good time, personal "faves" being **Florence and the Machine**, **2manydjs**, and **Kitty, Daisy & Lewis**. In all honesty the festival could have stood solely on the musical diversity and talent, but it went further than that, with all sorts of weird and wonderful activities; helter skelter, ferris wheel, knees up tents, and a closing bonfire of epic proportions. A couple of technical hitches sound-wise, a distinct lack of phone signal and mad queueing for buses were the obvious downsides.

Is it really "best of all"? I'm not sure, but it was definitely enjoyable, and is definitely one of the better ways to spend a weekend at the end of our long summers.

INHERIT THE WIND

SOPHIE MARMENT IS BLOWN AWAY

First performed in 1955, *Inherit the Wind* has enjoyed a series of revivals in the last two decades, the most recent of these being Trevor Nunn's production at the Old Vic, timed to coincide with the 150th anniversary of the publication of Charles Darwin's 'The Origin of Species.'

The play is based upon the 1925 Scopes "Monkey" Trial – a trial much publicised at the time – which saw the defendant John T. Scopes' conviction for teaching Charles Darwin's evolutionary theories in his high school science class. The teaching of evolution was then illegal in the state of Tennessee, the so-called heart of the 'Bible-belt'. Although the writers Jerome Lawrence and Robert Edwin Lee state that their account is not one of a historical nature, the key characters in the play correspond quite clearly with those figures who took part in Scopes trial. Scopes himself corresponds to the character of Bertram Cates whilst the prosecutor, William Jennings Bryan is brought to life on stage as Matthew Harrison Brady, a proud and perspiring man played magnificently by David Troughton in Nunn's production. Kevin Spacey takes to the boards of his own theatre as the defence attorney Henry Drummond, the stage counterpart of Clarence Darrow. Finally the wily, self-satisfied reporter who is, to some extent, the audience's guide and narrator, E. K. Hornbeck is based upon the renowned journalist 'sage of Baltimore', H. L. Mencken.

Whilst the play appears to be a battle between science and reli-

gion, Darwin and the Bible, it is clear that this is not the key issue in contention. The play is, as one of its authors, Jerome Lawrence, stated in 1996, about the right to think. *Inherit the Wind* was written during the McCarthy period and is a clear criticism of the methods used by Senator John McCarthy and the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HCUA) in their anti-Communist investigations. This is most strikingly brought out in the character of Bertram Cates lover (and the vicar's daughter), played by Sonya Cassidy. Cassidy brings her character's inner turmoil to the stage with immense realism, though her character's unwillingness to stand up to her father is at times frustrating, it is her ability to reason despite her strict religious upbringing which demonstrates the plays critical message.

Nunn's production is refreshingly without pretension in an age when theatrical substance is increasingly sacrificed for style. The set is large and relatively immobile, reflecting the fanatical mindset of the town's inhabitants, while the costumes are muted. Against this visually neutral backdrop the 30 strong cast shines. Spacey's shuffling Drummond is a commanding stage presence, wrestling to restrain his emotions as his personal and professional fields blur, while the quick-witted Hornbeck, played by Mark Dexter, is a fantastic polar opposite to the town folk's ignorance – at once fascinating and frustrating with equal measures of intelligence and arrogance.

David Troughton is a mastercard, his blustering, self-promoting politician making

the perfect counterfoil to Spacey's down-to-earth Henry Drummond. Between the two they manage to draw out the real humour in a play that could otherwise have the potential to be a stale courtroom drama.

Nunn's hand can be detected in the musical interludes which slip seamlessly into the dialogue and create the atmosphere of many of the scenes. Renditions of 'Amazing Grace' and other well crooned biblical hymns and at the same time moving and sinister, displaying the rigid faith of this small American town.

The audience are also treated to the ravings of the town's charismatic preacher, accompanied by his mournful performing monkey who lives up to expectations by pinching a young girl's coin from her sweaty little palm. However though the monkey was delightful it did not steal the show from a cast full of strong performances.

Inherit the Wind is without a doubt the one to watch. The humour is excellent, the performances are brilliant and the whole production is just jolly good fun. This is unpretentious theatre with a strong message - Darwin would be proud.

Inherit the Wind plays at the Old Vic until 20th December.

PICK OF THE WEEK

Othello

Starring Lenny Henry in the title role. So wrong and yet somehow, so, so right.

Trafalgar Studios until 12 December
Box Office 0870 0606632

The Fastest Clock in the Universe

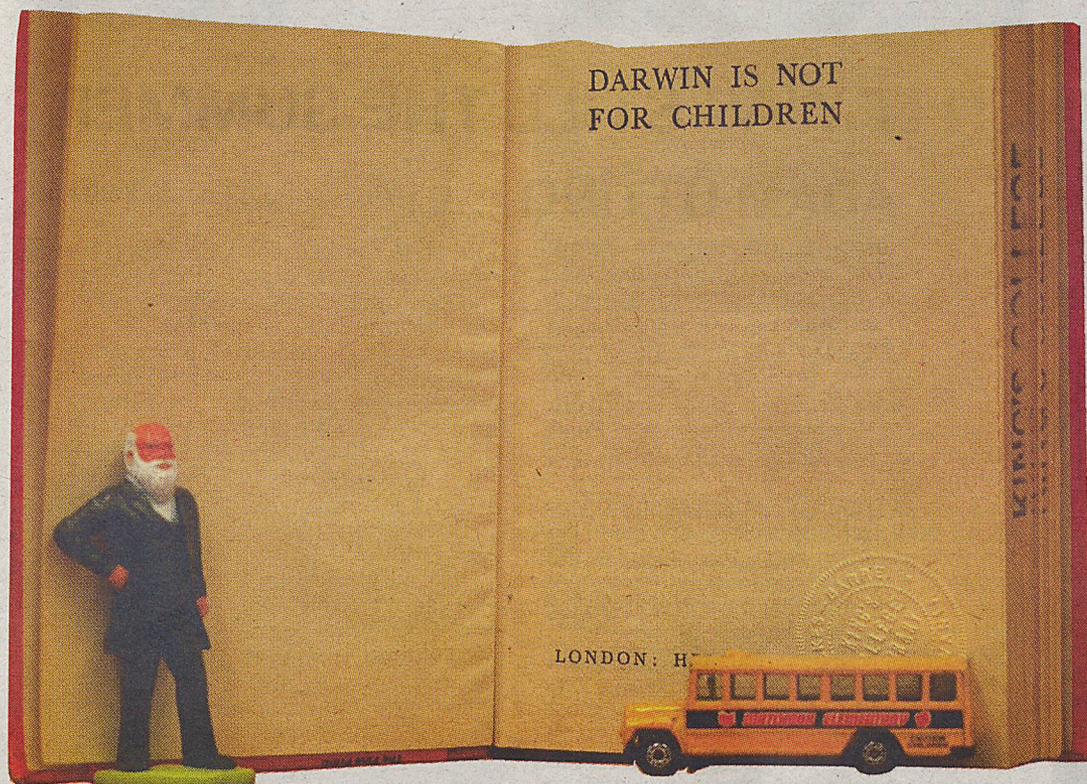
The revival of a Philip Ridley classic. Stark and shocking this is theatre about our home city of London. Well worth a watch.

Hampstead Theatre until 17 October
Box Office 020 7722 9301

Mother Courage and Her Children

A new translation of a Brecht Classic. Four star reviews ensure this will be another quality production from the National.

National Theatre until 8 December.
Box Office 020 7452 3000.



the truth about lying

AHMED PEERBUX PUTS LYING ON THE POLYGRAPH



Middle-aged loser Mark Bellison (Gervais) lives in an alternate universe where no one can fib. There's no such thing as fiction; 'films' are no more than historical or scientific facts being read out. Check out this month's gripping blockbuster: *The Invention of the Fork* for example. Mark one day discovers he can 'say something that wasn't', by withdrawing more money than he actually has. This initially seems great; a tool that can aid his waning career and non-existent love life. Things get problematic however when he tells his dying mother a comforting white lie about mansions in the sky, only for it to earn him the title of the Messiah, spokesman for the 'Man in the Sky'.

I'm a big fan of Ricky Gervais. I don't believe, like some critics do, that he's over the hill; I believe some of his best days are ahead of him, with a new series of podcasts, *Cemetery Junction* and *Flanimals* in the pipeline. But still, I'd be spinning a yarn if I was to tell you his directorial debut is any good.

Lying is so full of contradictions and inconsistencies, you will by the end of it be endlessly nitpicking on technicalities. Think David Brent differentiating into someone similar to Spock; half Vulcan, half human, rather than simply Vulcan. If Mark Bellison lives in a world without lies (and therefore without religion, apparently), why is the Christian calendar used? Why does the Black Plague wreak havoc in the fourteenth century, and not some other arbitrary date? Then there's Edward Norton's cameo as a corrupt policeman – how can he even exist in a world without lies?

People aren't just unable to lie; they are also compelled to tell the absolute truth, in acerbic intricate detail. Anna McDoogles (Garner) orders a Caesar salad, but this isn't enough; she must also explain to the waiter why she is ordering it, which is because she doesn't want to be fat. In principle, the idea of people saying exactly what is on their minds at all times sounds hilarious, but instead this merely serves as a platform for puerile playground insults ('fat faggot' is one).

Of course, there are also the social satirical undertones, a Gervais hallmark. *The Office* and *Extras* were social commentaries on fame, desperation, arrogance, shallowness, jealousy and all the other general unpleasantnesses of human behaviour. Along with all this, *The Invention of Lying* explores new territory: religion and advertising.

The pop at religion is altogether banal. We are confronted with that old GCSE favourite: the problem of evil ('did God cure my cancer?... Did God also give me the cancer?'), and told that religion is simply an opiate of the masses. This fails to bite in the way *Life of Brian* does, for example when Brian tells his unwanted followers that they need to think for themselves, and that they're all individuals, only for them to say 'Yes! We ARE all individuals!'

Coke implores you to buy it "because it's famous", and Pepsi hits back with "Pepsi: for when they don't have Coke", stripping advertising of all its (unethical) lies to fairly average products. Ironically though the end result feels like a bombardment of product placement. Ever heard of Budweiser and Pizza Hut? You certainly will have done after *Lying*.

As well as product placements, *Lying* is also crammed with celebrity cameos. However, the combined comedic prowess of Tina Fey, Jonah Hill, Christopher Guest and Jason Bateman only ends up feeling like an attempt to prop up an ailing patient. After all these big Hollywood appearances, the genuinely most fulfilling is from Shaun Williamson: Barry off *Eastenders*. To be fair though, Rob Lowe's role as Brad Kessler has a lasting impact: a genuine nemesis; everything that comes out of his square-jawed mouth sounds menacingly sincere, as opposed to Tina Fey's character's wash-off petty insults.

In the *Ricky Gervais Podcast*, Gervais cites Groundhog Day and early Woody Allen films as big influences. Credit to Gervais, *Lying* does see him move into new territory: the Rom-Com. However, the relationship between Gervais and Garner offers no incentive for audience "ahs". Clearly, Garner's character is a vile narcissist who is more concerned with "good genes" than even the most fervent National Socialist eugenicist. Even with all the folksy acoustic guitar on the soundtrack (and there is a lot) we still don't want it to work out for them in the way we do for Bill Murray and Andie MacDowell, or Woody Allen and Diane Keaton.

When writing together, Merchant and Gervais each have a veto, so only the mutually agreed (and therefore best) material is carried forward. Perhaps Merchant's veto is what was missing on *The Invention of Lying*.

TOO MUCH TV?

ANGELA CHOW CAN'T MAKE UP HER MIND

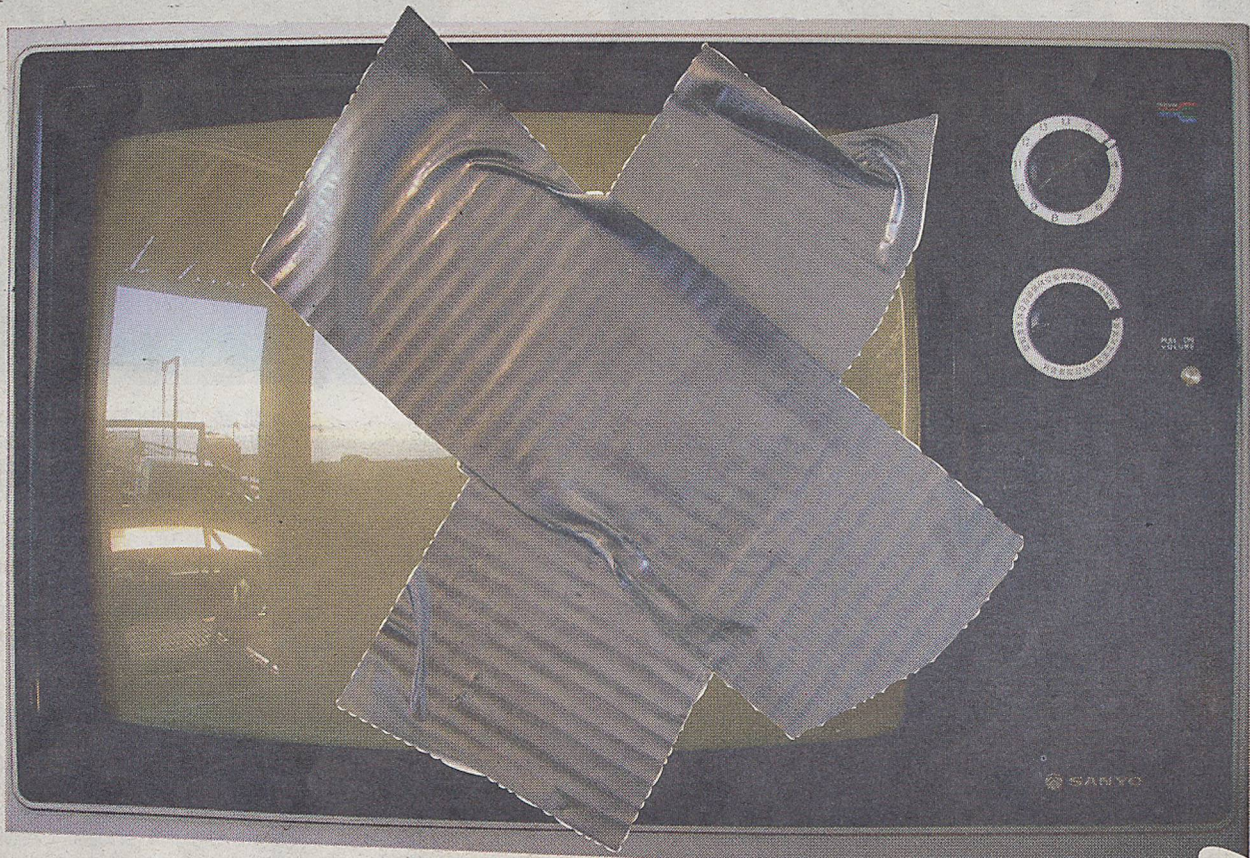
Are we, as a nation, spending too much time watching television? A quick mini survey has shown me that most of us watch a lot of TV. I will always have at least one of my friends surf the internet for TV show news on her laptop next to me during lectures and every time I prance into my flatmate's room, she is watching TV, without fail. The same applies to me, so that already makes three of us. Whilst I know that this is not even representative of our student body, let alone the nation, deep down within our innate intuitions, I think we all know that TV has a big,

just two examples of media which make video content available online pretty much immediately after its airing time on our actual televisions. Take the *Apprentice* for example; it was found that this show caused record usage on the BBC iPlayer, increasing the traffic to their site threefold. So the main question is, can we now ever go back to live in a post-modern non-television-imbued world?

Some of you reading this would answer yes, in which case I applaud you for your discipline and resistance. However, just pause for a moment to think about the av-

superficial and pointless but entertaining shows, however, I am under no illusion that I could be doing something much more productive with my time. Yet, despite this, I still choose to spend countless continuous hours crouched in front of whatever device is showing me vivid moving colours of a fake digital world.

So after all that, I still haven't come to a conclusion. Whilst the television has absolutely and undeniably become a phenomenon, providing us with endless hours of entertainment and distraction from reality, it doesn't come without a price. Like the



and probably unhealthy, part to play in our lives in the current sedentary and consumer electronics-saturated 21st Century.

I want to invite you to think back to the times when TV was not around, and people had to find some other way to entertain themselves. Seriously, you'll be hard pushed to think of something which is as enjoyable and informative as our trusty silver screens full of bright colours, comedy and the sorts. Even the thought of black and white TV already depresses me, highlighting that in our present fashionable generation, we expect and demand nothing less than the best from our HD TV boxes. Moreover, our television boxes no longer monopolise our TV watching hours in this new technology advanced era where shows are easily accessible on our iPods, PSPs and most importantly, our computer screens. The iPlayer and 4OD are

average American who undertakes 2 months of nonstop TV-watching per year according to Nielson viewing statistics, which, shockingly, can be equated to the deplorable reality that in a 65-year life, that average person will have spent '9 years glued to the tube'. Furthermore, these shameful statistics show that by the time an average child finishes elementary school, they would have seen 8,000 murders on TV and 200,000 violent acts by age 18. So maybe the reality is that we probably cannot ever go back to life without our televisions, but even so, should something be done about the modern excessive usage of these lethal machines?

I'll admit that I'll be the first in line to defend my dearly loved television/iPod/laptop/any other digital device that will emit *Gossip Girl*, and be the last to acknowledge that I may have a slight addiction to these

age old saying, there is no such thing as a free lunch; we obviously pay for it by walking into a lifestyle of inactivity and obesity, a generation with an epidemic of violence and an early tendency towards image problems. Obviously, what I have described is very extreme, but the point is that it is by no means untrue.

So, whilst I am in no way even attempting to take the moral high ground by telling you to stop watching telly, as that would unquestionably make me a hypocrite, I am merely suggesting that the next time you feel like a bit of a healthy and deserved break, maybe you should challenge yourself to refrain from pressing that inviting red button on your TV remote control and instead, do something else...anything else. Obviously, the same goes for me.

MAKING PLANS FOR PETEY AND CRESSIDA

NATHAN BRIANT LISTENS TO RADIO FOR THE MIDDLE CLASSES

So many things at the BBC, however accurately, are deemed aching-ly middle-class; Home Counties fodder. It's hard not to agree to some extent when listening to the **News Quiz** (Friday, BBC R4). The long-running programme - now remarkably into its sixty-ninth series - is driven very much in the ho-ho-ho guffaw mode in keeping with the Radio 4 at half-six tradition. What is deemed crude language, for example, will simply not be tolerated by the show's audience of (judging by their laughs) fiftysomethings. Panellist Hugo Rifkind mentions a place that he (wrongly) thought sounded vaguely like 'shit': a blanket of silence from the audience greeted the gag. But later, panellist Sue Perkins mentions that a cutting from an advert sent by a viewer mentions a holiday home's 'decking incorporating a twenty-foot poo'. The audience resolves to split their sides. What we must take from this is that parents wouldn't mind Petey and Cressida hearing defecation described as poo but - come on BBC - shit is too much.

From the selection of rather safe panellists on show it's the aforementioned Steel who doesn't seem that concerned in offending Petey and Cressida's parents or the rest of the Chilterns. Decrying New Labour as

behaving like 'lost wet dogs' to The Sun a couple of weeks ago his jibes are the spikiest jokes throughout the show: 'Shall we sand our tongues down so it doesn't hurt when we lick your arse? Do you want a quick go on Cherie?'

Though Rifkind is noticeably less vocal than the other panellists - something which dents taking the show's quiz format seriously - it doesn't take away from a few pretty good, albeit in the main infrequent British giggles, even if at times it is as if you're listening to a script written by a church-attending insurance salesman from High Wycombe.

Though it's difficult not to commend George Galloway's rich enthusiasm for politics (perhaps arguing might be a more accurate word to use), however odd and incompatible his views tend to be, his show **The Mother of All Talk Shows** (Friday and Saturdays, talkSPORT) is more liable to criticism. His staged soliloquies are now legendary; they appear on about a ten minute basis, just as listeners around the country must reach over to switch the Nutter Hour for once and for all. On evidence here Galloway could probably talk in a locked room alone until the last joule of energy in his body had been used prattling on about the faults of New Labour and George W. Bush.

Though once again it's to Galloway's credit that once a caller is on the line he lets them speak freely, and while this does make a welcome change from other talk shows, hearing Jonny from Northumberlandshire rattle on about this and that for three minutes is more than enough.

Once the programme was solely based around the Irish 'yes' vote on the Lisbon Treaty - the result having been declared earlier in the day - it was inevitable that Galloway was going to get the odd Empire-lover ringing in as he kept on bashing on about how the EU was a brilliant concept to defeat the neo-con USA. I knew that, he knew that - it's ammunition for Galloway to blast a poorly educated and seemingly permanently unemployed Brummie out the political waters which is really disappointing, especially in the way that it's done so blatantly for the host's benefit.

A show either of total disagreement and verbal punch-ups (until talkSPORT HQ cuts the phone line), or one of absolute conformity and deference towards the host, it struggles greatly to stand up as a show of cogent argument and reason. The only thing coming out improved here is Galloway's hideously inflated ego and income.

A Month of Sundays (Sundays, BBC

6 Music) is a push-a-thon for the half of Supergrass who have decided to leave the band's bass player and keyboardist in bed (see the band's video of their 1995 single 'Alright') and go it alone by recording a cover album of 'their very favourite songs' as the Hot Rats. Fortunately, Gaz Coombes and Danny Goffey don't go over the top where the luxury of free advertising is concerned; in two hours of radio they play two songs worth of 'Hot Rats' work. Both regularly stress through the programme that they've never done any radio work before, but this probably works to their advantage; their musings are enough fun and make for a decent listen. The best thing of this two hours, however, was its formidable playlist, however haphazard their organisation regarding picking the songs clearly was (they play the Talking Heads at one point and then they play Brian Eno. I think those two records may have been stacked close together for a good reason...) To think what fifty per cent of Supergrass were pumping out on a Sunday afternoon and comparing that with what Radio 1 and commercial pop stations were playing at that time made me feel a bit smug, which can't necessarily be a bad thing.



Stars, Stripes and Pussy

RUBY BUCKLEY STAYS TRUE TO HER VAGINA

I don't have a pussy. I've reclaimed my cunt, maybe I'll accept minge and I definitely have a vagina (unlike Lady GaGa, apparently). The p-word has very little anatomical relevance to me, detached from myself as a woman. It resides in the world of porn, American colleges and the chat of pubescent boys.

This debate certainly has a cultural element to it. Pussy is associated with American culture, and it has reached our shores just as Levi Jeans and McDonalds has. They have Disney-fied vaginas and sold them to us as part of the American dream. Maybe American women feel differently about it all. Perhaps it is a more tangible term for them. But for me, like corndogs, homecomings and Sweet 16s it seems a world away.

So I have grown up thinking a pussy is someone who 'chickens out' from asking that cheerleader to the dance, who doesn't jump off a diving board or down that double vodka. And anyway, isn't it such a terrible analogy to use as an insult? What is weak and cowardly about female genitalia? Whoever used the insult got pushed out by a mighty powerful one which endured hours of pain and agony.

The term cannot escape the world of sweaty encounters with online pornography and puerile humour. I love a good

innuendo as much as the next, but I tired of "stroking your pussy" wink-wink, nudge-nudge pretty early on. The boys would snigger and I would wonder when they could get over the fact that yes, we do have vaginas. Maybe if you grew up you could really touch my pussy.

But even then I wouldn't have high expectations of someone who refers to my lady flower like that. Those who look to "score some pussy" are often too brain-washed by porn to enjoy mature sexual encounters. The pussy of the porn world is sterile, plastic and a vessel to be filled by man's enjoyment. There is no greater turn off than hearing the newly pubescent 14 year-old announce cunninglingus by telling me, voice breaking, that he is going to "lick my pussy".

No wonder the female orgasm is so elusive. The myth and reality are not compatible.

The vagina is so different in terms of needs and response when compared with the tight, shaven pussy of porn.

It's not that I want my pussy back. It's not lurking in dark alleyways waiting for me to pour it a bowl of milk and call it home. It's not purring up against my leg and it certainly isn't purring at anyone else.



**THE FRESHERS PARTIES ARE OVER. THE NIGHTS ARE DRAWING IN.
YOUR FRIENDS APPEAR TO BE DOING SOME WORK...**

LEAVE THEM. JOIN US!

PART B

PARTB@THEBEAVERONLINE.CO.UK