

# The Beaver

18.10.2011  
Newspaper of the  
LSE Students' Union  
thebeaveronline.co.uk  
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## The road to the Demo

» 3 The LSE Students' Union started planning for school wide participation in the National Demonstration against the government's cuts on education, which will take place on the 9th of November. The main emphasis of the meeting was to extend support beyond the Students' Union and to get more students involved, especially those who are less politically active. Suggestions included organising student debates and publishing a simplified version of the White Paper.

## Students' Union to strip off for Ethics

» 7 Alex Peters-Day, Students' Union's General Secretary, Lukas Slothuus, Community and Welfare Officer held a meeting on Thursday evening to discuss future plans on this year's Students' Union's primary campaign the Only Way is Ethics. A number of ideas were put forward, including a naked protest on Houghton Street and debates around ethical issues. A report was also given by a research group regarding specific policies that should be implemented to make the School more ethical.

## Freshers' Festivities

» 4 The Raising and Giving Society (RAG) held the Freshers' Ball at Penthouse this Monday, raising £3500 for three charities - Action Against Hunger, National Aids Trust and War Child. Most students commented that the evening was both enjoyable and for a worthwhile cause. At the same time, some students thought that certain aspects of the event could have been improved. For example, the price of drinks could have been more "student friendly". Jen Wilkins, president of RAG, was pleased with how the night went as a whole.

## Correction

The Beaver would like to apologise for a mistake made in last week's issue. This correction is in relation to the article titled "Deputy Governor of BofE lectures a new course," from the issue dated 11th October, located on page 7 in the News section. Our apologies go out to Dr Andrew Bailey, whose position at the Bank of England was misquoted. Dr Bailey is actually the Executive Director at the Bank of England and the former Chief Cashier of the Bank of England. In 2013, he will be come the Deputy Chief Executive of the new Prudential Regulation Authority. The Beaver assumes full responsibility for this error, and would like to apologise to our readers for any confusion caused by the article

# Suspiscions of foul play in UGM vote

Nicola Alexander  
Bethany Clarke

Serious questions have been raised over the legitimacy of the online voting procedure the LSE Students' Union employs to pass Union General Meeting (UGM) motions, after technical errors with the website this week prompted the General Secretary of the Students' Union to extend the voting period by three and a half days.

This week's UGM motion, "Unpaid Internships," was put forward by Alex Peters-Day, General Secretary of the Students' Union, and Alexander Young, BSc Politics and Philosophy, and was open to vote from Thursday 13th October at 2pm as per the constitutional requirements. On Friday afternoon, shortly after voting was due to close, students received an email from Peters-Day informing them that voting would remain open until 5pm on Monday 17th October. According to Peters-Day's campus-wide e-mail,

there had been reports during the course of the voting period that "Some students weren't able [sic: to] login [sic: to] the LSE SU voting system."

According to the Students' Union eight students emailed the Returning Officer stating that they were unable to register their vote on the website. The General Secretary therefore made an executive decision to extend the voting period by 72 hours; "to ensure that every student who wanted to vote, even if they hadn't got in touch, would be able to do so."

When asked why voting was extended by three times the original period rather than just by one day, Peters-Day commented; "The decision was made that it should be open until 5pm on the next working day. As a result it was held open over the weekend."

Peters-Day stated that once the technical difficulties were brought to the Students' Union's attention they considered all possible opinions; "The options were to either stop the vote and re-run it at a later date, or extend the vote. It was felt, given elections

coming up, and that the debate at the meeting was most fresh in people's minds now, to extend it until Monday."

Some students have expressed concerns that there is a potential conflict of interest between Peters-Day's role in proposing the "Unpaid Internships" motion and her involvement, as General Secretary, in the decision to delay the voting deadline.

The Students' Union's constitution insists that in order for a motion to pass there must be a majority of 'yes' votes, however, it also requires that a minimum of 250 votes be cast within the 21 hours of voting time. These constitutional rules are in place to ensure that any motion that is passed is supported by a significant portion of the student body.

There is concern that the prolonged voting period and additional publicity that the motion received through Peters-Day's Friday e-mail will see the motion reach the threshold for the minimum number of votes, even though it might not have if the original voting period had been enforced. According to the Students'

Union, it is not possible to ascertain how many votes were cast within the original time period, therefore it will be difficult to measure the effect that the three and a half day extension had on the polls.

Last week's UGM motion, "Too Late To Apologise," proposed by Sherelle Davids, Anti-Racism Officer of the Students' Union, received 56 votes in support of the motion, 25 votes against it and one undecided vote. However, with only 82 votes cast in total, the motion failed to meet the minimum threshold and consequently did not pass.

Several students have pointed to the slight discrepancy in how the voting procedures of the two motions have been handled. No technical difficulties were reported with the voting on the first UGM motion, although the system was plagued with the same faults.

It is believed that the main problem of the Students' Union's website is that the Students' ebsite to vote on the motion as the records had not been

## Students fast in solidarity

Bethany Clarke

The Palestine Society held a one-day fast and ran a stall on Houghton Street on Thursday in order to raise awareness of the "ongoing plight of Palestinian political prisoners." They claim that thousands of Palestinians are being imprisoned for "resisting against Israel's illegal occupation of Palestinian territory" and vocalising "their desire for self-determination and the liberation of the Palestinian people."

Many of the prisoners are participating in an open-ended fast in the hopes of raising awareness about their present situation and pressuring the Israeli Prison Service (IPS) into meeting a list of demands, which includes lifting the ban on educational resources and books, ending solitary confinement and stopping provocative incursions.

The fast was intended as a "symbolic gesture" to express the society's solidarity with the prisoners, who are "subject to imprisonment, torture and are tried in military (rather than civilian) courts at the hands of Israel," said Yasmin Ahmed, President of the Palestine Society. Ahmed estimated that ten students participated in the fast.

In addition to this, the society is

also collecting signatures for a letter they are addressing to the Israeli government, which expresses "deep concern regarding the treatment of Palestinian political prisoners" and demands the enactment of the demands made by the prisoners. The letter is specifically geared towards the ongoing hunger strike.

The Palestine Society collected over seventy signatures at its stall on Thursday, and hopes to send the letter within the week, due to the urgent nature of the issue.

The society is also currently planning a lecture on political prisoners, particularly child prisoners, in November.

According to a United Nations (UN) report there were 6,000 Palestinian prisoners held in 22 prisons in Israel and the West Bank as of March 2011. These prisoners have been denied contact with their families and the outside world for as long as five years, the report states.

According to a flier the society handed out at its stall, 38 women and 224 are currently being held by the IPS, and 136 of the prisoners have been held for over 20 years.

The Palestine Society is currently planning a lecture on political prisoners, particularly child prisoners, in November.



Palestine Society fast on Houghton Street | Photo: Bethany Clarke

## Editorial Board

### Executive Editor

Nicola Alexander  
[editor@thebeaveronline.co.uk](mailto:editor@thebeaveronline.co.uk)

### Managing Editor

Duncan McKenna  
[managing@thebeaveronline.co.uk](mailto:managing@thebeaveronline.co.uk)

### News Editors

Bethany Clarke  
 Heather Wang  
[news@thebeaveronline.co.uk](mailto:news@thebeaveronline.co.uk)

### Comment Editor

Rimmel Mohyidin  
[comment@thebeaveronline.co.uk](mailto:comment@thebeaveronline.co.uk)

### Features Editor

Alex Haigh  
 Gurdeep Cchina  
[features@thebeaveronline.co.uk](mailto:features@thebeaveronline.co.uk)

### Design Editor

Ahmed Alani  
[design@thebeaveronline.co.uk](mailto:design@thebeaveronline.co.uk)

### Social Editor

Shrina Poojara  
[social@thebeaveronline.co.uk](mailto:social@thebeaveronline.co.uk)

### Sport Editors

Maz Fletcher  
 Maxim Owen  
[sports@thebeaveronline.co.uk](mailto:sports@thebeaveronline.co.uk)

### PartB Editors

Kerry-Rose O'Donnell  
 Aameer Patel  
[partb@thebeaveronline.co.uk](mailto:partb@thebeaveronline.co.uk)

### Photo Editor

Aisha Doherty  
[photo@thebeaveronline.co.uk](mailto:photo@thebeaveronline.co.uk)

### Web Editor

Liam Brown  
[web@thebeaveronline.co.uk](mailto:web@thebeaveronline.co.uk)

### General Manager

Anoli Mehta  
[info@thebeaveronline.co.uk](mailto:info@thebeaveronline.co.uk)

### Collective Chair

Chris Rogers  
[collective@thebeaveronline.co.uk](mailto:collective@thebeaveronline.co.uk)

### With thanks to our

Copy Editors  
 Kanika Singh  
 Ehae Longe  
 Lisa Strygina

## Union Bashō

### Strange Slumber

Quorum  
 Piecing together  
 the leftover grains of rice:  
 'Unpaid internships'.

*Bashō is the Beaver's evasive haiku poet and goes to the Union General Meeting so you don't have to.*

*UGM Chair Jack Tindale would like us to stop printing that byline.*



# The Beaver

Established in 1949

Issue No. 753

Telephone: 0207 955 6705 Email: [editor@thebeaveronline.co.uk](mailto:editor@thebeaveronline.co.uk)

## Saatchi? Saatchi?

There are few sights on campus more depressing than the Old Theatre, a venue that has hosted speakers such as George Osborne and Bill Clinton, at one pm on Thursday. Of the 42 students who attended this week's Union General Meeting (UGM) in an effort to keep the flailing democracy of the Students' Union alive, at least nine were there under compulsory obligations, at least one was completing his or her latest LLB readings and over half chose to sit on the upper level of the theatre. The picture was grim.

The Students' Union made some effort to inspire attendance this week; several fliers were handed out encouraging students to "come along on Thursday", e-mails were routinely sent out, and Tindale even sported a UGM-branded sandwich board on Houghton Street for much of Wednesday. Yet, attendance remained low. Historically low.

If this Students' Union have any hope of upholding the tradition of weekly UGM's during their year in office, they need to do whatever it takes to get students out of the bar or away from the books and into Old Theatre come Thursday at one pm. Over the past week, this editor has heard more than a handful of individuals bemoan the Students' Union's 'protected time'

every week. One teacher was overheard stating that 1pm on Thursday was the only feasible time she could reschedule a missed class but the stronghold that the Students' Union have over timetabling and room booking had prevented her from doing so. She is having to reschedule the class in week six, out of sequence with the course. As the well-versed and well-trained activists that they are, the Students' Union Sabbatical Officers will appreciate that individual dissent around campus won't add up to much, but should it find a united voice, say, amongst the frustrated faculty members or disillusioned third years, it could pose a serious threat. It would be a great shame to see an institution as strong as the UGM crumble under the only Students' Union that has actually launched decent campaigns in recent history. It would be deeply unfair to them.

On one hand the problem lies in the students, who would rather see an extra hour of application time than hear about campaigns that may carry their name. The apathy on campus is tangible. Whether evident in the under-attended lectures or on the blank faces of students as they pass you by on Houghton Street. At some point between the Fabians and the Bankers,

we stopped caring about what our university stands for, we stopped thinking that being a student at a prestigious university wasn't just the journey to the higher truth of consultancy but a destination in itself. We don't have the empirical evidence on hand but priorities have clearly changed and that's a problem.

Short of inviting representatives from Goldman Sachs, McKinsey and Slaughter and May to run the UGM, there is little the Students' Union can really do to garner more attention. Yet, we still urge them to rise to the challenge. Burn the fliers, stop with the e-mails and for goodness sake get Tindale some better apparel. If you REALLY think that one hour of 'protected time' is worth it, if you really believe that students have the right to stand in the front line of democracy and if you honestly think that more is gained from UGM than in a rescheduled class or the library - you're going to need to prove it to us all over again. Be prepared to meet a sceptical audience. This is surely the greatest legacy that you could leave; at a pivotal point in Students' Union's history when the LSE had forgotten its rich past, you sought to fight the battle of those before you.

## Collective

Presca Ahn; Raidev Akoi; Ahmed Alani; Nicola Alexander; Hasib Baber; Fadhil Baakeer-Markar; Vishal Banerjee; Ramsey Ben-Achour; Alex Blance; Liam Brown; James Bull; Georgina Butler; Benjamin Butterworth; Adam Burk; Bobby Cee; Simon Chaudhuri; Gurdeep Chhina; Bethany Clarke; Oliver Courtney; Tomas Da-Costa; Aisha Doherty; Eden Dwek; Kareem Elsayi; Allie Fonarev; Katy Galbraith; Yan Giet; Justin Gest; Ira Goldstein; Aula Hariri; Yisum Heneghon; Charlie Hodgson; Tahiya Islam; Harriet Jackson; Judith Jacob; Felipe Jacome; Alex Jones; Megan Jones; Naem Kapadia; Sam Tempest Keeping; Pooja Kesavan; Vivek Kotecha; Andreas Kuersten; Ashok Kumar; Daniel Lahey; Dominic Lam; Elizabeth Lowell; Jamie Mason; Duncan McKenna; Nitya Menon; Anna Mileda; Rimmel Mohyidin; Vincent Mok; Maaike Mossel; Aditi Nangia; Bianca Nardi; Chu Ting Ng; Brett Noble; Kerry-Rose O'Donnell; Kyle Packer; Aameer Patel; Anup Patel; Rajan Patel; Sachin Patel; John Peart; Alex Peters-Day; Chloe Pieters; Shrini Poojara; Danielle Priestley; Pern-Yi Quah; Rahim Rahemtulla; Annika Ranga; Anjali Raval; Ricky Ren; Aimee Riese; Chris Rogers; Leonora Rumsey; Conor Rushby; Ahman Sahni; Thienthai Sangkhaphanthanon; Amrita Saraogi; Lukas Slothuus; Luke Smolinski; Katerina Soukeras; Andre Tartar; Kerry Thompson; Jack Tindale; Vladimir Unkovski-Korica; Aliabbas Virani; Heather Wang; Sam Williams; Matthew Willis; Chris Wilkins; Oliver Wiseman; Natalie Wong; Vincent Wong; Daniel Yates; Alexander Young.

The Collective is The Beaver's governing body. You must have contributed three pieces of work, or contributed to the production of three issues of the paper (editorially or administratively), to qualify for membership. If you believe you are a Collective member but your name is not on the list above, please email

[collective@thebeaveronline.co.uk](mailto:collective@thebeaveronline.co.uk)

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

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## New to the LSE?

LSE is the only university to have Union General Meetings on a weekly basis.

So why not pop down this Thursday between 1-2pm in the Old theatre and see what it's all about for yourself?

## Collective Meeting

This is where the whole paper - editors, contributors and fans - come together to celebrate all things Beaver. There will be updates from all the editors and as promised last week (and the week before), the Beaver will be holding elections for Editorial Board positions. The Beaver will be holding elections for Editorial Board positions. The elections will be held on Tuesday 25th October 2011, in room 1.05 Connaught House at 7pm. The following positions is available on the Editorial Board:

### • News Editor (x1)

The usual word limit of a 150-word manifesto must be emailed in by 12:00pm Friday 21 October. Send your manifesto to [collective@thebeaveronline.co.uk](mailto:collective@thebeaveronline.co.uk). You will also be required to prepare a 1 minute speech, which will be followed by questions. You must be a member of the Collective to vote, although any non-collective members are also eligible to stand for the position. However, elections are open to all, so whether you're running, voting or just interested in the Beaver, come one, come all and witness the wonders of democracy first hand.

## continued from page 1

updated with the names of students new to the LSE as of September 2011. Peters-Day said that the Students' Union had immediately acted to rectify the situation by loading "all students' data into the voting system, so that any students who had registered with the School since the beginning of Orientation should be on the system."

This is the latest in a series of problems that have beleaguered the Students' Union's online applications. Earlier this term, students reported difficulties in signing up for societies through the online registration system. Young commented; "It is unfortunate that the SU's voting records were out-of-sync with current student records. The vote extension, however, is an apt remedy to the problem."

According to Jack Tindale, Union General Meeting Chair, "the General Secretary has the power to make a discretionary decision" to prolong the voting period, which will later be checked by the Democracy Committee. If the Committee judges the decision to have been unconstitutional, then there is the "possibility" that the vote will be declared invalid and a re-run ordered. Tindale noted that he doesn't see anything to suggest that the vote

was undemocratic, adding, "When people's democratic right to vote is affected by things that are not their fault, it is only right to err on the side of caution and give them more time to do so."

Emma Clewer, Democracy Committee Chair, who consulted with Peters-Day as well as several other members of the Executive Committee on the decision to prolong the voting period, stated, that "as much as we would have wanted to hold a whole Democracy Committee meeting" it came down to "making a decision then and there." Clewer defended the decision to extend the voting period, commenting that she "thought it was the fairest thing to do" and that it was "in the interest of the students." As the decision was made before the close of voting on Friday, it is within the bounds of the constitution.

The Democracy Committee held a meeting to discuss the General Secretary's decision further on Monday. The possibility of putting last week's "Too Late to Apologise" motion to a re-vote was also discussed at the meeting. The outcome of this meeting was not known when this newspaper went to print. The Students' Union's website is that the Students' Union's voting records are out of date. New students were unable to sign onto the Students' Union's website to vote on the motion as the records had not been updated with the names of students new to the

LSE as of September 2011. Peters-Day said that the Students' Union had immediately acted to rectify the situation by loading "all students' data into the voting system, so that any students who had registered with the School since the beginning of Orientation should be on the system."

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Both the Democracy Committee and the Student's Union have said that there will be a thorough investigation into the voting of "Too Late to Apologise". Clewer, speculated that technical problems "could be a reason" why Davids' motion failed to reach the minimum number of votes required. Young commented; "I hope the Kanazawa motion is resubmitted to the UGM in order that a fair vote take place."

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# Twenty-six in attendance at most publicised UGM of term

John Armstrong  
Sydney Saubestre

This year's second Union General Meeting saw the proposal of the "Unpaid Internships" motion.

Alex Peters-Day, the LSE Students' Union General Secretary, proposed the motion, arguing that "internships tend to go to the few with the right connections not those with the exceptional talent" and that the cost of undergoing an internship in London can be incredibly expensive if one is unable to commute or live with friends or relatives. Campaigning against unpaid internships, is one of the platforms upon which Peters-Day was elected.

After the motion was proposed, an opposing argument was presented, with a student saying that people should not get payment for work experience.

Peters-Day rebutted, saying: "internships are not the same as volunteering or work experience." According to the Students' Union, volunteering serves to benefit an organisation or the wider society and predominantly occurs in the not-for-profit and third sectors, while work experience often takes the form of short term placements or shadowing.

Earlier this year the Trade Union Congress (TUC) published the first code of best practice for high-quality internships, backed by the government and supported by several major employers' institutes. The report stated that companies offering placements lasting more than six weeks should pay the national minimum wage to interns. Campaigners estimate that at least 100,000 young people will work as unpaid interns this year.

Research recently published by the Guardian showed that 26 per cent of interns have completed three or more placements and that 39 per cent of internships last three or more months, thus meeting the minimum requirements for the national minimum wage.

Alexander Young, a third year BSc Politics and Philosophy student, seconded the motion, stating, "where you live should not affect your prospects."

If the motion is passed, the Students' Union will back a campaign

against unpaid internships and support the InternAware organisation, which campaigns and lobbies against this practice. Peters-Day commented; "I have already been to parliament with Intern Aware and the NUS to discuss the issues with MPs but by launching a union wide campaign we can get more students involved with the lobbying and campaigning process as well as raising awareness of the issue and providing practical support where possible."

The motion was quickly put forth for a vote, but it will need to meet the minimum requirement of 250 votes.

Jack Tindale, Union General Meeting Chair, urged everyone in attendance to vote, and to encourage their friends to do the same.

"If you could all just encourage 28 of your friends to vote," Tindale said, "it would make the world a better place. Maybe bring your extended family next time."

Though there are no lectures or classes scheduled at the same time as the UGM, students still do not see attending the UGM as a priority.

"I just don't think I'd find the issues very interesting," one first year Government and Economics student said, "and I don't think my voice will make much of a difference."

Other students were unaware of the time and location of the UGM, nor what issues would be discussed.

"It would be helpful if they publicized it more and if they would let us know what the issues to be addressed were beforehand," said Megan Zutter, a General Course student.

Besides the debate on unpaid internships, the Sabbatical Officers reported on the work they had done during the week and shared information about upcoming events.

Many of the Sabbatical Officer's updates revolved around student involvement. Peters-Day urged everyone interested to nominate themselves for the Michaelmas Term elections.

Amena Amer, the Students' Union Education Officer, discussed her various upcoming plans to improve student satisfaction at the LSE. Amer hopes to make more course lectures available online to ensure that students who have to miss lectures for religious reasons are not disadvantaged.

The Students' Union's will be launching its Education Manifesto next week, and direct student feedback is central to the five-year strategic plan to improve teaching quality.

"The campaign is focusing on what students would do," Amer said, "if they were in charge of teaching and learning."



Photo: Aisha Doeherty

## News in brief

### ACADEMICS VISIT UAE

A delegation of senior academics from the LSE visited the Emirates Foundation for Philanthropy this week to discuss the foundation's grants given to the School in support of Middle Eastern Studies. Members of the delegation include professor Fawaz Gerges, director of the Middle East Centre at the LSE and Avi Shlaim, professor of International Relations at the University of Oxford. From this visit the LSE hopes to strengthen ties with United Arab Emirates Universities and to promote PhD dissertation assistance for LSE scholars of Middle East Studies.

### LSE PAPER CITED BY THE PM

A working paper by Zack Cooper, health economist at the Centre for Economic Performance at the LSE, and his colleagues, was cited by the British Prime Minister to support his plan to introduce more opportunities in the private sector of NHS when he announced the legislative pause of health bill. The study found that hospitals in areas with more competition have lower death rate. But Professor Pollock at the LSE said that the study does not suggest a causal inverse relation between the number of choice the patients have and death rate.

### AUTO-ENROLMENT: A CATASTROPHE

Auto-enrolment will be "the next catastrophe in the pension industry", suggested Dr. Tim Leunig from the Department of Economics History at the LSE. He said that auto-enrolment will harm the poor and in turn force the government to pay out more welfare benefits. He reasoned: "we're moving to a world where some people are going to be dead before they get any reasonable return but also moving to a world where fewer people are owner-occupiers therefore more people will be on benefits after retirement"

### FISCAL SQUEEZE IS RISKY, SAYS PISSARIDES

Christopher Pissarides, professor in the Department of Economics at the LSE and Nobel laureate, said that the government's budget cuts could cause double-dip recession. Tax should be cut in order to boost demand and employment. According to an e-mail released by a London-based magazine, in an open letter to George Osborne, the Chancellor of Exchequer, Pissarides wrote: "Deficit reduction is best done with spending cuts when the economy is recovering, not with higher taxes in a downturn."

### CLOUD COMPUTING STIMULATES INNOVATION

A new study carried out by Accenture, a management consultancy firm, and the LSE states that cloud computing could be a big platform for business innovation. 1,035 business and IT executives participated in the survey. "With traditional IT models, a decision to prototype a new system involves the procurement and installation of expensive hardware, with the associated checks and delays...While cloud provisioning can be implemented rapidly and at low cost" authors of the survey said. It is believed that cloud computing could help with storage and processing.

### GOT A SCOOP?

Got a story that you think we should be printing? Send us an e-mail: [news@thebeaveronline.co.uk](mailto:news@thebeaveronline.co.uk)

# Freshers have a ball

## RAG charities announced after online vote

Abir Qazilbash

The Freshers' Ball, organised by the Raising and Giving Society (RAG), raised £3500 last Monday. The event was held at the popular Penthouse Club in Leicester Square, which is renowned for its panoramic views of London. About 350 LSE students enjoyed a selection of Pop, R&B, Urban, among other genres.

The proceeds will be split evenly between the three charities elected by the student body – Action Against Hunger, an international humanitarian organisation dedicated to fighting against malnutrition and hunger; National Aids Trust, which campaigns for the rights of people with HIV and for a change in societal perceptions of the condition, and War Child, a North-London based charity who are on the ground striving to improve the lives of children in the world's most dangerous and war-ravaged countries.

David Ren, a first year Economic student who is rapidly gaining popularity for his dance moves, under the alias "Big Dave" said that "the night could be summed up like this – 'glorified clubbing in suits'. This is awesome because everyone looks super fly in a suit."

Students also suggested that certain aspects of the night could have been improved. For example, the prices of drinks could have been more "student friendly" and it would have been better if everyone was on the same floor. Some students thought the Penthouse was rather divisive.

Jen Wilkins, President of RAG, explained that "we did a couple of things differently this year, given last year's feedback we reduced the venue to two floors rather than three. We also had a slightly later start time of 9pm and made it easier for people to buy tickets with a range of options available." Wilkins added that she thought, "it had been a great night and people seemed to enjoy themselves!"

The general freshers' consensus of how the night turned out was overwhelmingly positive. Nona Buckley-Irvine, a first year Philosophy student, said: "everyone dressed up to the occasion. It was also great having only LSE students on our floors, and overall it was very well organized!"

Sana Currimbhoy, a fresher studying International Relations from Passfield Hall, emphasized the great atmosphere there and said: "it was a great chance to get to know people from other halls and courses, and the music selection was really good. Also the fact that it was all for charity made it more worthwhile!"



Photo: Chiwei So

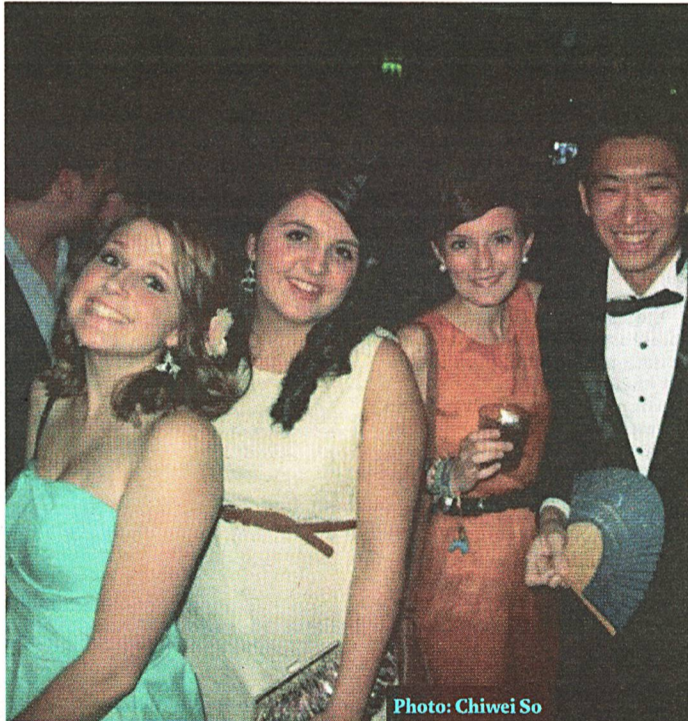


Photo: Chiwei So

Bethany Clarke

The Raising and Giving Society (RAG) has announced the charities it will be supporting this academic year: Action Against Hunger, War Child and the National Aids Trust. The money that the society raises this year will go to these three organisations.

For the first time ever, RAG made the vote available to the entire student body online.

"We feel it's important for more people to have a say – after all we couldn't raise any money without the students that come to our events or take part in our fundraising efforts!" said Jen Wilkins, President of RAG.

Action Against Hunger (ACF) is an international humanitarian organisation working to combat child hunger. ACF currently runs projects in over forty countries benefiting some five million people worldwide every year.

War Child is a small international charity that works to protect children from the brutality of war by providing on the ground support to vulnerable children. The charity works in Afghanistan, Iraq, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda, and will be initiating projects in Central African Republic later this year.

The National Aids Trust is the UK's leading charity dedicated to transforming society's response to HIV. They primarily work to educate key-decision makers to ensure that people currently living with HIV are given the highest standards of medical care and are treated with respect, and to ensure that the general public is aware of how to protect themselves from contracting the disease.

This is the first time that RAG is working with these charities.

So far this year, RAG has already organised the Battle of the Halls, the Freshers' Ball and a Pub Quiz. The society's next big event will be RAG Gets Lost in week seven, when teams of students will be dropped off in random locations throughout the UK and have to make their way back to London as quickly as possible.

RAG is also planning a Winter Ball for the end of Michaelmas Term.

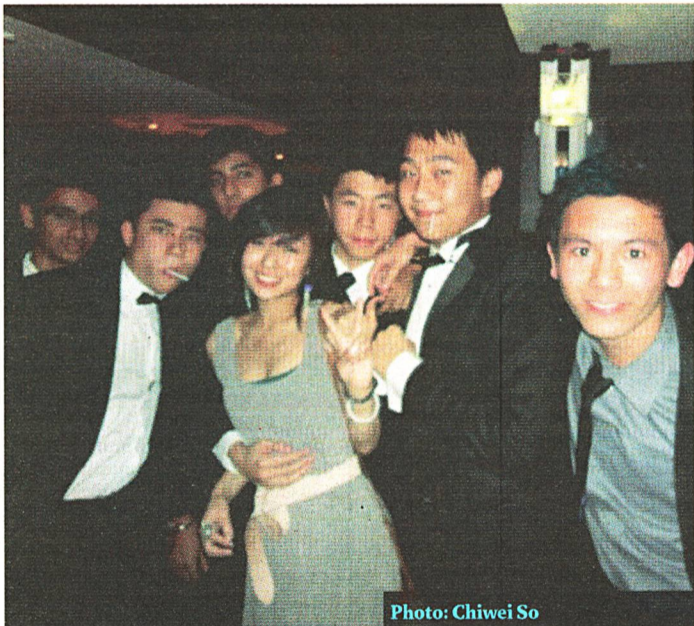


Photo: Chiwei So

# Portugal to go "faster and further"

Sofia Horta-E-Costa

Ahead of the Portuguese government's announcement of its 2012 budget plan, Paulo Portas, the Portuguese Minister for Foreign Affairs, promised that "Portugal can be a success story. We [Portugal] will deliver," at a lecture given at the LSE last Wednesday.

Portas' speech was part of the "Perspectives on Europe" lecture series designed to analyse the challenges that Europe faces in the midst of the sovereign debt crisis. Throughout the lecture, he stressed the Portuguese government's commitment to the austerity programme introduced this May.

"We will fulfil our program and honour our word," he said. "We are on track and, in some areas, ahead of schedule. We are delivering it faster and further."

He highlighted that the first 22 measures proposed for June and July have been implemented, despite a political crisis and a change of government caused by the Socialist Prime Minister's resignation in March.

Portas' lecture focused on Portugal's inherent structural problems which, in his opinion, run far deeper than "a simple scandal of a debt rollover." He claimed that the government views the current crisis as an "opportunity," and has plans to reform key areas such as the labour market, social security, public administration and justice. He added that these areas

required significant reforms regardless of the debt crisis: "Our structural problems meant that – with the current sovereign debt crisis – a financial 'perfect storm' has been created."

Portas described Portugal's public debt as "a typical case of spend today, use tomorrow, pay some day." Today, Portugal has the highest public debt of the last 160 years, with current debt levels at over 100 per cent of GDP. It is also facing the highest external debt of the last 80 years, which is now eight-fold its national exports.

Portas stressed that to restore competitiveness and place Portugal on the path of sustainable growth there is much work to be done, and the methods that have been proposed are nothing short of "ambitious." He

acknowledged the strain that cuts will place on low-income families, and said that discounts on services such as utilities and public transport are in place "despite and because of the crisis."

"What I ask for in public spending is efficiency," Portas said when questioned on cuts to the health sector, "quality is key."

Regarding environmental policies, he said that the government will honour its commitments "to the point where we can pay them." He also hinted at a strategy for the future generations of Portugal, asserting his belief that "in a society where you have rights and duties, money to pay those rights comes from hard work and merit."

Portas addressed the fact that

the program implemented by the troika has broad support among the Portuguese population, who recognise the need for change and cuts in public spending. "We are acting as one nation," he said.

Portas' lecture divided the opinions of the many Portuguese audience members. Siiri Oliveira, an MA International Relations student, disagreed "with the cuts to pensions for those who need it the most, like widows who are unable to find work."

Ana Canedo, an MSc Management and Strategy student, appreciated the Minister's pragmatic but optimistic perspective and commented that she would like to launch her career in Portugal despite current conditions.

# Library reform: overdue

Chris Rogers  
Senior Reporter

Over the holidays, the Library has overhauled the method by which books in the Course Collection are loaned. Under the new system, all Course Collection books can be borrowed for a three day time period, which is renewable online.

Last year the course collection books were divided into three different loans tiers. Set Texts were available for non-renewable 24 hour loans, while other books were available for three or seven day loans, both of which could be renewed. The fifty pence an hour overdue fees for Set Text books and the fact that they could not be renewed online strongly encouraged students to return those books on time.

The new system has caused problems for some students, who have

had difficulty accessing the required readings for their courses due to high demands for a limited number of copies.

The Library explained: "The Library buys multiple copies of course books but does not have sufficient funds to buy every student a copy of every book on a reading list. Inevitably this leads to pressure on course books when many students need to read the same title in the same week."

Students are able to request books, both at the Library and online, but then have to wait for a copy to be returned by another student. This has impacted some students who have been unable to access books in time to read them before weekly classes.

The change in the loans system was prompted by the results of a survey held by the Library last October, which asked staff and students for feedback on the library system and specifically about loan periods for Course Collection texts. The Library

canvassed opinions from academics and students alike at official Departmental meetings and on an informal, individual.

The survey itself was sparked by feedback received from students regarding the complexity of the three different loan periods in operation in the Course Collection. Students expressed that the steep overdue fines for Set Texts left them feeling anxious whenever they borrowed the books.

The survey results showed support for the 3 day loan period, which was considered by students to be the fairest way of enabling high circulation amongst students while still providing sufficient time to read the required readings.

The survey also showed strong demand for an increase in the number of texts available electronically. The Library has increased the number of E-books available considerably in hopes of keeping student demand for required readings as low as possible.

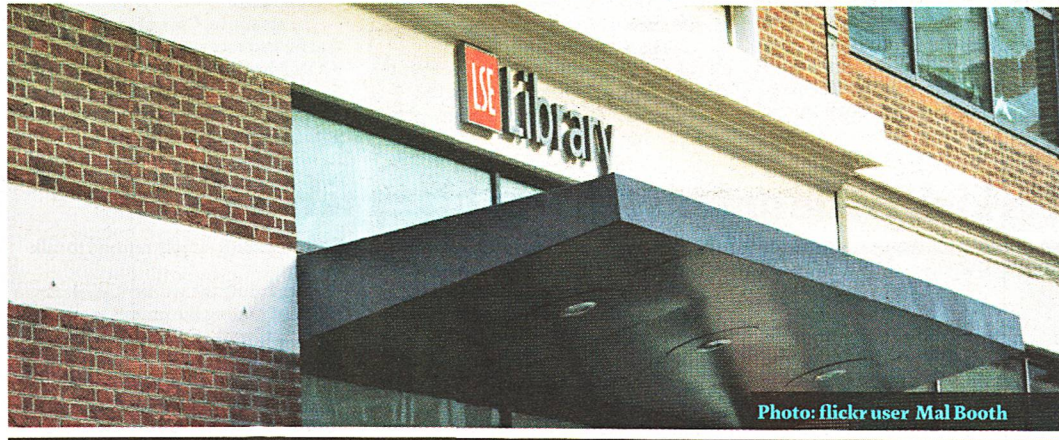


Photo: flickr user Mal Booth

# Quah speaks of China's diplomatic deficit

Vincent Wong  
Senior Reporter

Professor Danny Quah of the Department of Economics surprised some of his listeners with the content of his public lecture at the LSE last Tuesday.

His lecture, entitled "627 Million Chinese Brought Out of Poverty: Where Did it All Go Wrong?" focused not on China's growth itself, but the country's foreign relations. It was the first lecture in an annual series hosted by the Confucius Institute of Business London, which is based at the School.

"There is a huge amount of bad press on China," said Quah. "There is a fear that China is unbalancing and distorting the global economy... that it will upset the international political order. There is the view that something must be done - that the West must respond."

This, he thinks, is the wrong approach: "When the world's economic centre of gravity is located 10 time zones away from Washington DC, I suggest it is difficult for us to continue thinking about global policy as being Washington-centric. The world's priorities must adjust."

"It's a dream that China, as it grows richer, will be able to teach the US a lesson."

Quah said that those hostile to China's growth often downplay its contribution to poverty reduction and its stabilising influence during past downturns: "If in 1981 the world community had been really concerned about poverty, it is China they should have been paying attention to. China has done amazing things for the lot of humanity, practically unnoticed."

He went on to suggest that hostility to China was also due to the country's poor presentation of itself to the world. He cited "Chinglish" as one example. That the maiden flight of China's J-20 interceptor coincided with a visit of US Defence Secretary Robert Gates, he argued, was a not a sign of defiance, but a serious coordination failure. He said that a similar failure had occurred during the Beijing Olympics, when its leaders' plans to open the Great Firewall for journalists reporting on the Games were upset by local police.

"Such problems with internal and external communication" he said, "could constrain China's future growth, whether it manages to overcome commonly cited problems such as inequality and gender imbalances." He went on, noting that if the world were to take action against China, the result would be a "tragedy."

He added: "The rise of China has not gone hand in hand with soft power. Let's not forget the soft skills."

In the question and answer session following his lecture, the chair, Nick Byrne of the LSE Language Centre, asked Quah what China had gotten right in its public and foreign relations.

Quah said that China's leaders had shown they were able to learn quickly from mistakes. He gave the example of their response to the Sichuan earthquake in 2008 and the lessons learnt from their blunders during the winter storms earlier that year.

Responding to a question about Sino-African relations, he said that China had generated positive reactions in Africa because it approached countries as business partners.

Other questions concerned the nature of China's growth; Quah was asked whether minorities and

persecuted groups had benefitted from growth, and whether males had benefitted proportionately more than females.

He replied that the benefits of growth might not have been distributed proportionately between societal groups. He added that he hoped the Chinese authorities will become more liberal as their country grows richer.

Quah was also asked whether the inequality that has resulted from China's growth goes against the ruling Communist Party's ethos, and whether it will constrain future growth.

He replied that the aim of China's leaders was to make China and its people rich, and that they saw inequality as inevitable. He went on to say that because inequality there is mostly rural-urban, it could be remedied in "one fell swoop" by "going West" - that is, attracting industry to poorer areas.

Responding to a question about the trustworthiness of China's official statistics, Quah said that when researching, he tried to triangulate those with international measures, and had found poverty reduction and trade statistics to be especially reliable.

Other questions concerned China's future. Quah was asked how the international community might try to stop China, and what it needed to do to prevent this.

He said that the response was likely to be subtle, and probably involve trade wars.

On the subject of prevention, he said: "[China] needs to create cultural tokens that make it evident [it] is a good society so that others will want to come to, learn from, participate in, and be a part of it. That's the direction China and the rest of the emerging world need to take."

# Women of LSE unite

Stephanie Gale

"Zero tolerance to sexual harassment" was the message conveyed at the LSE Students' Union's Women's Assembly this week, where a motion was passed enacting measures to stop or prevent sexual harassment from occurring on campus. Over thirty women attended the assembly held on Thursday 13th October, which Lucy McFadzean, the Students' Union's Women's Officer, described as, "a space where women can meet and develop."

The passing of the "Zero Tolerance" motion means that all Students' Union staff will undergo training so that women who have been subjected to sexual harassment are able report it to them. A report will result in the immediate removal of the transgressor from the event and prompt a consequent investigation into the accusation.

The motion was put forward by McFadzean, who presented attendants with research claiming that 68 per cent of female students have been victims of sexual harassment during their time at university or college.

Sexual harassment was defined by the proposers of the motion as ranging from verbal abuse, including cat-calling, to physical abuse, such as groping a woman without her permission.

Attendants discussed the findings of the research, with some arguing that because such harassment has become embedded in certain social cultures, often women do not feel confident enough to report harassment when it happens to them. There was also a general consensus among the group that even if women do wish to report harassment, it's often unclear how

to do so, and that this new policy will provide clear people to confide in.

The group debated whether or not to vote on the motion within the Women's Assembly or at the Union General Meeting (UGM). One attendant pointed out that the Women's Assembly has democratic legitimacy given that the student body elected Lucy McFadzean as the Women's Officer.

Another argued that she felt the purpose of the Women's Assembly is for women to take power into their own hands and to make decisions that affect them. Following a ballot, it was decided that the motion for the "Zero Tolerance" campaign would be voted upon at the Assembly. Subsequently, the motion passed and the "Zero Tolerance to Sexual Harassment" motion is now the Students' Union policy.

As well as discussions about the "Zero Tolerance" campaign, the group also highlighted other aims they would like to achieve around campus. One attendant commented that it is important not to separate gender from other forms of oppressions, in particular oppression based on race.

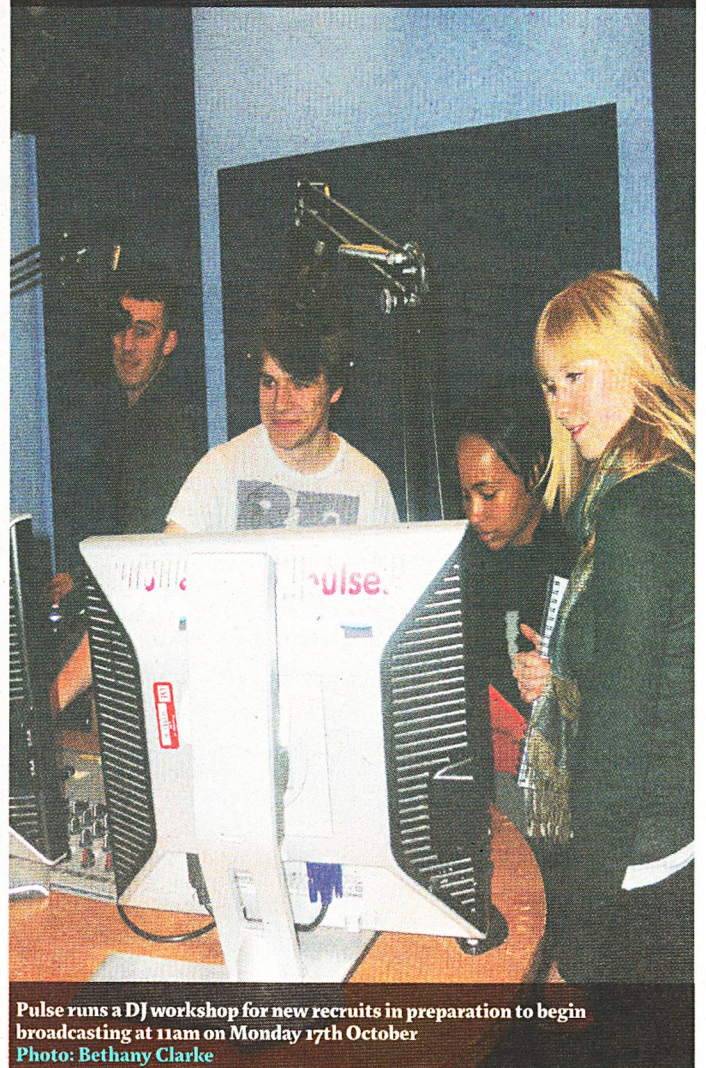
Consequently the Assembly established the necessity to focus on supporting women who are the victims of multiple oppressive forces.

There was also discussion about setting up public speaking workshops for women, aimed to help increase their confidence in the work environment.

The assembly drew in a range of women, from those who introduced themselves as curious and attending to find out more about women's campaigns on campus, to others who have been involved in nationwide campaigns for women's rights.

McFadzean commented: "I was very pleased with the high number of women who attended."

# LSE's musical heartbeat



Pulse runs a DJ workshop for new recruits in preparation to begin broadcasting at 11am on Monday 17th October  
Photo: Bethany Clarke

## On the 9th, we march

Naomi Russell

The Students' Union has begun planning for school wide participation in the 9th of November National Demo against the the looming education cuts.

A small but dedicated group of students attended the Students' Union's first planning meeting last Thursday. The issue at the heart of the meeting was the supposed threat posed to Britain's education system by the proposals made by the Coalition government's White Paper published in June. Emphasis was placed on working within the School to extend support for the movement beyond the Students' Union.

The Higher Education White Paper proposes to cap the number of students in the British higher education system and to allow top universities to compete for "high-achieving" students who attain the equivalent of AAB or above at A-level. Students at the meeting expressed fears that this would enable top universities to expand by accepting students that would currently go to middle ranking institutions, prompting a reduction in the price and hence quality of courses offered at middle ranking universities and resulting in a two tier system. The meeting focused on the implications of this, with particular emphasis being placed on the detrimental effects on widening participation initiatives.

Amena Amer, the Students' Union's Education Officer, claimed that the LSE does "pretty well when it comes to widening participation, and it is something we [the Students' Union] are proud of. Under the new system top universities will be fighting over AAB students to fill widening participation quotas and others will

be forced to attend less prestigious institutions."

She also expressed concern about the White Paper's recommendation that Key Information Sets should be published in order to give applicants as much information about universities as possible. Among the sets of data to be published would be the average graduating salaries of individual courses. Amer claimed, "We [the Students' Union] don't think students should be choosing their courses on the basis of their graduating salaries and this encourages the marketization of education."

While the proposed changes will not directly affect current LSE students, it is hoped that the movement will gain School wide support as a matter of national importance.

"There is a hugely important debate happening at the moment about the future of higher education. Students at Russell group Universities like LSE need to recognise their role in this as some of the most intelligent and privileged members of society," said Matt Wild, a PhD student in the Department of Anthropology attending the meeting.

The fear was that students at the LSE may be unaware of or apathetic towards the debate, so the meeting was used as a chance to brainstorm ways to overcome this problem. Discussion centred on how to make the Higher Education White Paper accessible to all and a subject of debate on campus. Plans were made to organise student debates by working with political societies in order to raise awareness that this is not a niche issue. Other suggestions included the publication of a simplified version of the White Paper by the Students' Union in order to increase accessibility and a day of action on Houghton Street to put the National Demo on the student agenda.

## Does size matter?

Michal Zuk

Martin Cave, BP Centennial Professor at the LSE, spoke about the trouble that the Internet giant Google has run into with competition authorities in Europe, the U.S. and elsewhere at a public lecture he gave last Wednesday.

The lecture, entitled "What Should We Do About Google?" was very well attended by students, academics and members of the public alike. In it, Cave specifically addressed whether or not Google's economic strength in the search engine market is large enough to require public intervention to protect or assist its competitors.

He began the lecture with an overview of the history of Google and its uniqueness in the marketplace, often referred to as "Google Exceptionalism."

Cave then proceeded to outline a series of legal cases involving Google and the competition authorities, which resulted in the launch of a long-term investigation into Google's activities by the European Commission. The investigation will look into the possibility of unfavorable treatment of certain companies in Google's unpaid and paid search results, preferential treatment of Google's own services in

its paid results and exclusivity impositions on companies using its services.

Cave went on to present some of the possible evidence against Google.

He described how Google could "cook the paid search results by giving [its] competitors low scores, because where you appear in the page rankings depends on how much you pay and also your quality scores."

Google's "quality score" is a dynamic metric assigned to advertisement keywords based on a variety of measures of how relevant an ad is to users' search queries. The higher a keyword's quality score, the lower its cost-per-click and the better its placement.

Quality scores can be altered drastically by modifying the search algorithm and Cave showed the audience a chart comparing the paid search ranking of various companies over time. The graph showed a wide variation in an individual company's ranking, supporting Cave's claim that changes in search algorithms has great effects on a company's position in the search rankings.

The same did not apply for Google's own services, which consistently remained near the top of the search rankings despite changes in the algorithm.

Cave also pointed out that in 2007, a Google Vice-President stated, "when we started out Google Maps and Google Finance, we put them on the top."

The lecture was concluded with a call for appropriate investigation into Google's practices and caution in jumping to any premature conclusions regarding Google's conduct. Cave said, "I have no idea what the result of that investigation will be, we just have to wait and see, but I think its hard to argue that it's premature to do so in the circumstances and given the market share that Google has in [the search engine industry]."

The audience reacted positively to Cave's speech and had plenty of questions to ask. However, there was some criticism. Audience member Dr. Theo Bertram, an employee of Google U.K, noted that Cave's research received funding from an organization called Initiative for a Competitive Online Marketplace (ICOMP), which is sponsored by Microsoft, one of Google's competitors.

In response, Cave acknowledged that he had receiving funding from ICOMP but insisted that his work was not biased and that he had not spoken with anyone from Microsoft or Google in the course of his research.

## Turkish trade unionist shares his experience

Heather Wang

Asaletin Arslanoglu, a trade unionist from Turkey, came to speak about his experience at the LSE on Wednesday as part of an event arranged by Lois Clifton, LSE Students' Union's Ethic and Environment Officer.

Arslanoglu told the audience that he was not allowed to contact work-

ers around the factories, therefore he had to resort to other strategies, such as waiting at the bus stop, to tell the workers about the trade union. Even when workers do want to join the union, Arslanoglu continued, they cannot simply fill out a form and give it to him; they have to travel to another part of Turkey and pay a substantial fee.

Arslanoglu continued by describing his interactions with the companies concerned. He said that most of

the companies simply refused to talk to him.

Regarding the workers, Arslanoglu said that joining the unions made it likely that workers would lose their jobs.

After the lecture, Clifton said: "getting the LSE to affiliate to the worker rights consortium is the first step... We need to stand in solidarity with trade unionists across the world by supporting them here."

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# events

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Professor Judith Rees, director, LSE

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# SU to strip off in the name of ethics

Connor Russell

At a campaign meeting on Thursday night, the Students' Union resolved to make The Only Way is Ethics one of the highest profile campaigns at the LSE yet, involving all students, faculty and staff in the debate on how the LSE should approach ethical issues.

The meeting, run by Alex Peters-Day, the Students' Union's General Secretary, and Lukas Slothuus, the Students' Union's Community and Welfare Officer, focused primarily on planning events to generate a larger scale campaign. Despite the low attendance at the meeting, they were keen to set an optimistic note, with Peters-Day suggesting that the campaign could achieve its goals in the new calendar year.

Among the events proposed was that of a naked protest on Houghton Street, in which campaigners will wear "I'd rather go naked than wear sweatshop clothing" sandwich boards. Other more conservative ideas included a proposal for a series of events and debates around ethical issues. These are expected to span topics such as pay for postgraduate teaching assistants and the possibility of co-ordination with the Greater London Assembly to introduce ethically sourced clothing for all staff in compliance with the standards already maintained at the LSE. There are also preliminary plans for a screening of the documentary "College, Inc.," which looks critically at the topic of for-profit universities in the United States.

The range of the campaign was highlighted as a key strength, as Peters-Day said, "I think it's really great that it's such a broad campaign, with many different choices for different people to determine for themselves

what is ethical."

There was also a report given by a research group established in a previous meeting to investigate specific policies that could be implemented in order to make the LSE more ethically conscious. The research group found inspiration in the models currently in place at Yale University and Brown

University in the United States, where independent committees screen all major institutional expenditure. There was much discussion on adapting and expanding this model at the LSE, with the same panel also screening the origin of donations in order to avoid the sort of controversy experienced over the Libya scandal last academic year,

and to promote a better awareness of where the School's finances originate.

The campaign is open to all students at the LSE. Those involved are currently hoping to expand awareness and interest, as well as to improve attendance of the weekly campaign meetings. There is still much to be determined in the campaign, with

Peters-Day affirming, "Today has really shown the breadth of what people are doing, whether you're interested in what other universities are doing with respect to ethical financing, or whether you're interested in human rights work, there are so many things to get involved in."



Photo: LSE Students' Union

## "Extended Selves": is your iPhone a part of you?

Amanda Vanderboegh

The relationship between technological advancement and philosophy of the mind was examined by Dr. Katalin Farkas of the Central European University, Budapest, last Monday in Wolfson Theatre.

She began by stressing the obscurity of her field, adding that "only 5 people in the world" truly understand what she studies.

The main objective of this lecture was to discuss the groundbreaking theory presented in Andy Clark and David Chalmers' 1998 publication, "the Extended Mind". This widely contested thesis explains how some objects or devices can be utilized by the mind in such a way that qualifies them as extension of the mind itself.

Dr. Farkas provides the audience with a simple narrative to conceptualize this theory.

She tells the story of "Otto" and "Inga." Inga and Otto both plan to go to the Museum of Modern Art. Inga, on the one hand, is able to recall simple directions. She remembers that it is located on 53rd street and sets off on her journey. Otto, on the other hand, has a problem with his memory. He cannot store the relevant information - the location of the museum - in his brain, so he has it written in a notebook. Otto consults the notebook for directions to the museum and sets off on his way. For Otto and Inga, the end result is the same; they both arrive at the museum.

"So what," Dr. Farkas asks, "is the problem with Otto?" The Extended Mind theory contends that Otto's belief that the museum is on 53rd street is just as valid as Inga's. He has just taken a different path to arrive at

that belief. Inga stores the relevant information in her brain, while Otto stores it in an object outside of his head. Otto has lost the ability to store information in his brain, just the same as someone may lose the ability to maintain a steady heartbeat.

Dr. Farkas explains that we are more likely and willing to accept that a prosthesis, such as an artificial pacemaker, is indeed a part of the body. What if that prosthesis was located outside of the body, like in the case of Otto?

She maintains that the mere storage of information does not denote intelligence. "Real" intelligence lies in being able to discern and apply that information in a relevant and constructive way. Another example was used by Dr. Farkas: who is the better lawyer? A person who can recall every date of every major ruling in the past 20 years but can't apply that knowledge in any meaningful way, or

a person who can access that information from an external source and apply it in a way that is convincing enough to win a case? "Mind extension" in Clark and Chalmers' sense presents an interesting, albeit radical way of understanding the mind.

After the convoluted philosophical talk, Dr. Farkas linked the thesis with the iPhone phenomenon. Many people nowadays feel a legitimate sense of panic when they stray 4 feet away from internet-capable mobile devices, but to what extent do we literally feel they are part of us? With a world of information at our fingertips, the mind, in this sense, has been extended like never before.

Dr. Farkas ended with a warning, "the more we use our smart phones and computers, the less we become [ourselves]."



Flickr user: Yutaka Tsutano

## Is the party over? Mitter analyses the future of China

Alice Dawson

Rana Mitter, a BBC Radio 3 presenter and Professor of the History and Politics of modern China at the University of Oxford, visited the LSE on Wednesday to deliver a public lecture about the Chinese Communist Party.

Professor Mitter's lecture was particularly relevant as he spoke two days after the centenary celebrations of Double Ten Day, which marks the start of revolution against the established Qing Dynasty and the subsequent formation of the People's Republic of China.

The lecture was so popular that the venue became full long before the event's scheduled start time. Those lucky enough to get a seat gained a captivating insight into the history of Communism in China, during which Professor Mitter outlined reasons for the party's survival in the light of its nine decades of power.

Firstly, he discussed China's ever-increasing influence on the global economy and international affairs. In attributing the success of the Communists to the inherent failures of China's previous leaders, he commented that the Party offered an alternative to the existing "backward-looking type of government."

Professor Mitter went on to question whether China was finally saying "farewell to revolution," particularly as no conflict occurred in China following the Arab Spring uprisings. He suggested that "consternation in China" following revolution in countries such as Tunisia, Libya and Egypt has been

avoided largely due to the economic disparity between China and the affected countries.

In terms of the CCP's future, Professor Mitter believes that the growth of social networking and communication devices such as SMS and the Internet will result in "freer media," bringing an end to existing state censorship policies.

Despite this prediction, he highlighted the lack of clarity surrounding freedom of speech; for example, it is alleged that an opera cancelled by the state on Wednesday was disallowed because its content ran contrary to censorship rules.

Professor Mitter classified the Chinese system of government as a "social dictatorship." Drawing parallels between the CCP and the former Nationalist government, he suggested that the Chinese social welfare system has been improved substantially by both parties. In addition, Professor Mitter highlighted that China has recently assumed "a small but increasing role in dealing with trouble spots in the rest of the world."

He acknowledged that, while the CCP is "heavily shaped" by Marxist thinking, there is room for a more "pragmatic Chinese government" which could incorporate the "plurality of views" which were less common twenty-five years ago. He believes that the state will "eventually pluralise."

One member of the audience described the lecture as "very impressive," while Professor Arne Westad, Chair of the lecture and co-director of LSE IDEAS, commented that an exploration into the CCP's history was an essential way "to link the past with the present."

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# Crush



# Comment

## Crapberry Holiday

Mark Worby longs for the 48 or so hours where his Blackberry remained silent

**Mark  
Worby**



I must admit that I own a Blackberry, or "Crapberry" as some are now taking to call it. As an owner I was bereft of e-mail, Facebook, Twitter and the internet on my mobile device for just over two whole days. All because some dopey tit in Slough decided to press the wrong button and eliminate RIM services for Europe and some of the Middle East. I'm sure the Met Police will inevitably investigate, probably looking for tips in case another riot kicks off, but that doesn't serve the problem at hand. It raises the interesting question of the ever increasing peril of an increasingly globally interconnected world. Already pan-European power links have been integrated, and if one believes the boffins at some think tanks, we're one abnormal sunspot away from a huge black out (as has happened in Canada). Or if you're a paranoid Harry Pearce type, you'll be stock piling for when Russia turns off Western Europe's gas supply for jokes. Either way, the failure of Blackberry services raises interesting questions

about just how much connectivity is good. Either way you fall on that particular issue, as you can imagine, for 48 and a bit hours, my life should have been over.

Except it wasn't. I thoroughly enjoyed having no e-mail or the ability to tweet my latest everyday activity. While it pained me not to hear about what happened after Jack Tindale's trip to Ikea and of course, it would have been nice to see the fall-out from him tearing up someone's rug, I moved on. It turns out that I don't need to know just which book Rio Ferdinand has just finished colouring in, or if Graham Swann is actually going to let his wife sleep indoors on that particular night. I knew nothing of the news, both nationally and on Facebook unless I logged onto a PC. This was gratifying in several ways. Firstly, with just texts and calls I could only contact those who were actually interested in my pathetic existence; it curtailed any and all pathetic cyberspace flailing for attention while I wandered around campus.

It meant that I actually did my reading for the class on the day of the meltdown, nice and early, with no distractions such as e-mails informing me about the latest deals I could get from Tesco or STA travel (if anyone's remotely interested, there are some

cracking discounts on games such as Fifa 12 and trips to Australia). This enabled me to actually pay full attention and contribute in class instead of nervously nodding and hoping I wasn't called upon for the finer details.

Thirdly, it led to far more efficient browsing sessions when feeding my addiction to breaking news. Instead of listlessly wandering through second-rate political blogs for stories I hadn't yet seen, and probably wouldn't believe, I could read the big stories of the day and then get on with my life, having read about things I didn't know had happened.

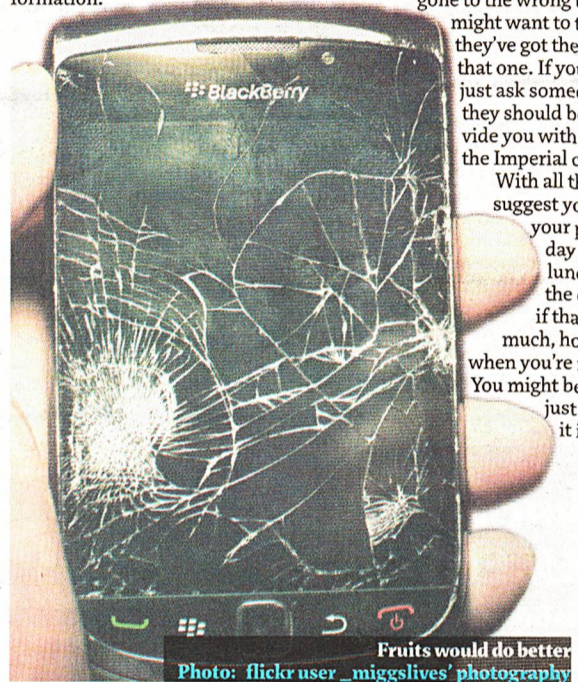
Finally, I'm positive that road safety statistics will record an anomalous safe period roughly equal to the time of the RIM blackout. I vehemently believe this is because there would be fewer pricks needing to update their Facebook status on the move, walking with their Blackberry seemingly surgically grafted to their hand. No service freed up their obviously incredibly important time to look out for moving vehicles and such other dangerous objects.

I freely admit whether this was beneficial to society is debatable. So when my service is finally restored I'll probably have a slight pang of regret. As a friend once prophetically stated, "Modernity stifles the greatness of

Man". I think we spend so much time communicating with each other that the most important messages can get somewhat drowned out by the torrential flow of other pieces of information.

There's probably a neuroscientists explanation about distractions, and an evolutionary theory behind this, but if that interests you and you want an actual article on that I contend you've gone to the wrong university. You might want to try Imperial, they've got the caboose on that one. If you're desperate just ask someone at King's, they should be able to provide you with directions to the Imperial campus.

With all this in mind, I suggest you turn off your phone for the day (apart from lunch time and in the evening) and if that's asking too much, how about just when you're in the library? You might be surprised at just how liberating it is.



Fruits would do better  
Photo: flickr user \_miggslives' photography

## Raising false hope

A reality check for last week's article daring LSE to raise the fees to £25,000

**Alec  
Webley**



In an insightful article in last week's Comment section of the Beaver, Mark Worby says you should "raise the fees" for reasons based on American comparisons that are, and I say this with love, false. Raising the fees will not improve teaching, nor will it improve access. It will do very little – except, of course, catastrophically increasing our student debt burden.

Worby looks with some envy at the systems of Harvard and Yale, where he assumes, just because those glossy websites say so, that all real financial need to attend university at those institutions is met. Maybe so, but it's not being met by fees.

That Harvard, Yale and friends can offer these financial aid packages depends almost solely on earnings on those universities' endowments. The Harvard University endowment – post recession, mind you – is a cool £20 billion. Yale's is £12 billion. The London School of Economics? £57 million. Harvard has an endowment 350 times larger than that of the School.

And they need every penny of it. The University of Pennsylvania, a pri-

vate university with a "full need" no-loan policy but a titchy £4.17 billion in the bank, spends a whopping £95 million (that's twice LSE's endowment) on undergraduate financial aid alone every single year. Nearly half of that sum comes from alumni donations and the endowment. That's just meeting the needs of their students – there are no bonuses, no merit scholarships, nothing but a calculation of need. And the sticker price, remember, is £31,000.

This is why many schools like UPenn (full disclosure: I went there for my undergraduate) have embarked on ambitious fundraising campaigns solely for the purpose of getting enough money to feed the insatiable monster of their financial aid budgets. How could LSE possibly compete? It is this, perhaps above all, that weighs against the LSE going private; the sure and certain knowledge that even if you raised fees to astronomical levels, you still could not support the kind of financial aid the Harvards, Yales and Penns of the world engage in.

If Worby wants to increase assistance to students, the answer is quite easy: get on those phones and start raising money from alumni (perhaps give Saif Gaddafi a miss). This, and not high fees, is how these universities pay for their generous financial aid policies.

But let's turn to the second of Worby's claims (which is inconsistent

**Worby says he "would expect far superior teaching, both in quality and in access hours" if he paid much higher fees and that is all he would do – expect it.**

with the first, since if we're taking the money from rich students to subsidize poor students we can't spend it on other things, but no matter): the claim that higher fees will lead to better services and better teaching.

I, and every postgraduate who went to a \$50,000-per-year institution in the States, have only one thing to say to this: "bogus."

Higher fees most certainly do not lead to better teaching. Worby says he "would expect far superior teaching, both in quality and in access hours" if he paid much higher fees. Quite so. And that is all he would do – expect it.

What possible incentive would an academic have to spend time with a non-Ph.D. student? There is a word for academics who love teaching to the exclusion of research: unemployed. They got into this job for the research; the teaching is a nice side-bonus that helps clarify their ideas and, occasionally, get that warm fuzzy feeling you get when you open young minds to the world.

Perhaps you might be able to hire more staff with the extra revenue, but what would these staff do? You guessed it: research. Research is after all what you get ranking points for. The reason American schools are ranked better in the Social Sciences has everything to do with their endowments, their control over high-impact journal editorial board, and their number of

teachers.

It has exactly nothing to do with their fees (indeed, Berkeley's fees for in-state students are comparable with the LSE's for domestic students). It has even less to do with their teaching. A massive revenue boost for the school would lead, in the best possible circumstances, to a massive increase in the number of researchers. Class sizes, access hours, all these would stay the same. What possible rationale would the LSE have to change them? Student demand? Students have been demanding these things since the 19th century and they're not changing anytime soon.

I do not doubt that higher fees would lead to some benefits. A gold dome on the Old Building; a marble statue to Howard Davies ("He resigned to save us all"); an Even Newer Academic Building; these could all be on the cards. But financial aid? Better teaching? Paying Ph.D.s a living wage? These require a shift in priorities. They will not be brought about by higher fees.

# The price tag of success

Hello, dream, meet pocket - clearly you two won't get along

**Chloe Kiliari**



Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe said, "Dream no small dreams because they have no power to move the hearts of men." According to successful people who share their stories with the rest of us, the importance of dreams should be emphasised. They insist that one's determination to fulfil their aspirations can greatly contribute to reaching goals and making a difference in the world. In the context of any discussion on rewarding career paths, the power of dreams plays a leading role. But behind the scenes, there is a darker side to what may first appear as a harmless passion.

Every society is in need of people who strive to succeed and change their surroundings in positive and creative ways. But the dreams of future politicians, economists, leaders and innovators, come at an extremely high price. Investment in education and "human capital" is becoming increasingly costly and possibly unaffordable for people from poorer, disadvantaged backgrounds. Moreover, it seems that receiving the necessary education largely depends upon family choices. In particular, children's rights to op-

portunities are determined not only by the income of but also the options available to their parents.

The story is much more complicated than it may first appear to be. We all know that those entering UK universities in the year to come will be paying almost triple the amount of what we as students are currently paying. But the cost of university level education is only a tiny part of the costs that the decision to provide sound education and aid in the formation of highly skilled individuals imposes on parents.

"Decision-making" within a household starts as early as when time comes for children to go to primary school. Wealthy and well-educated parents are often inclined towards passing on values of dedication to learning and high-achieving to their children and begin to develop their "success path" in private primary schools. Of course, at such an early age children have not yet formed their views on education so the quality of learning they receive is, we could say, out of their control. Adults, who have faith in the efficiency of the private sector, ensure that their children proceed to private secondary education. As children grow up to be teenagers, the choices their parents have made for them come to enhance their chances of excelling in A-levels and getting accepted into top universities.

Education is barely the only cost

that parents with the available income have to undergo when sacrificing their current consumption for the future of their children. Reading the personal statements of students applying for university enables us to see that those who have enjoyed a full life are those who have been engaged in rather expensive extracurricular activities. We are talking about an endless process of "buying skills", where people buy the skill to play a musical instrument, the skill to debate at international competitions, the "skill" to volunteer abroad.

Households of lower income are likely to have priorities and preferences with regards to education choices that are similar to those of richer families. But "will" and "ability" are two completely different things. Regrettably problems for poorer families seem to accumulate, if we come to consider the tendency of top universities and employers to extend the criteria they base their decisions on, shifting importance to one's involvement in out-of-school activities and work experience. Two crucial questions arise. How fair is the system in assessing academic ability if the rich get more chances to "essential education?" Secondly, why is the possibility to acquire life-changing experiences to a large extent in the hands of those who can afford it? As crazy as it may sound, in today's modern world success seems to be another (luxury) good in the basket of those who can

purchase it. I am convinced that the probability of success for those who have been funded throughout their lives is higher than the probability for those who deserved it but could not possibly fund their own studies beyond a certain level.

And what about all of us LSE students? Mine and your journey is nowhere near the end, just because we have joined an internationally reputable university. Let's face it. Building up your CV is a costly procedure, regardless of whether you want to pursue your own interests or give back to the world. Whether you want to be an investment banker or join the United Nations makes no difference whatsoever.

Ironically, those of us who have dreamed of joining international organisations or NGOs throughout our early life, grow up to realise that success in our desired career has less to do with our passions and more to do with what we can show on paper. If you are thinking of merely interning at the United Nations, then you should know that even for three months of work experience, a Master's degree is a minimum requirement. Just like any other organisation, NGOs recruit people who are highly specialised in their field. In addition, I thought it was necessary to mention that as a student you may have original ideas to promote economic or political change,

but ideas do not translate into success. To be on the safe side, you need to invest effort and money into your education; preferably acquiring a Ph.D. eventually.

Everyone who wants to succeed gets dragged into this vicious cycle. There are no exceptions and no escape routes. I may be going too far, but think about it. Your parents have invested in your education to enable you to obtain a job that will make your aspirations a reality, but more importantly one that will be financially rewarding. Once you succeed, your parents' role as guardians is over. And then you become the guardian, relying on the income of your "dream" job to provide for the education needs of your children.

I am not against education. On the contrary, I am one of its truest supporters. But to passively pursue what is perceived to be a successful career is most certainly a mistake and I believe we should all take some time to consider how lucky we are. Lastly, as intelligent and mature individuals we should understand that success is less the result of "passion" and more the result of the effort we put into our work together with our ancestors' sacrifices. Believe in yourself, but not too much. Dreams can be misleading and reality is out there waiting. ☘

## -Quick- COMMENT

How satisfied are you with the teaching at LSE?

*It's like going to the Ritz Carlton and being served a Nando's meal. Satisfaction but not association.*

- Siddharth Viswanath, 3rd year, BSc Economics

*It's not all that it's cracked up to be.*

- Anna Gavurin, 2nd year, BA Geography

*We will be never satisfied with the teaching at LSE because we all think that we deserve Oxbridge teaching*

- Ahmed Alani, Design Editor, The Beaver

*It's of a high standard, but it's up to you to make the most of it*

- Anya Clarkson, 2nd year, BSc Government

*I don't know about the teaching, but she can't speak English.*

- Heather Wang, News Editor, The Beaver

*Inspiring lecturers, deplorable teachers!*

- Waqas Adenwala 3rd year, BSc Economics

*Many teachers have written books which support the course. Quite satisfied.*

- Leena Patel, 3rd year, LLB Laws

## NEXT WEEK...

LSE by digits!

Watch this space....

# Why they're firing and not hiring

Stop playing the blame game and recognize why we're all responsible for the job cuts

**Sam Langton**



A topic that is seldom out of the headlines, and rarely not present in tedious debates at LSE, is unemployment.

It's become an even more prominent topic since recent announcements to cut thousands of jobs by companies such as the Royal Mail and BAE Systems. Not to mention, youth employment is at a 17-year high at something like two and a half million.

This is all fairly grim, and people have wasted little time in pointing fingers. Targets have ranged from David Cameron, Goldman Sachs, Nick Clegg, Chewbacca, Howard Davies, America, Pikachu or just capitalism in general. Some of those I made up, but the general idea is that there is a lot of finger pointing going on, most of which is misguided.

The bottom line is that most of the time it's our fault when there are British job losses in the private sector, and to some extent the public sector. If we don't buy the products, use the services or accept high tax rates, there will always be job losses and there will always be unemployment in Britain.

People fail to see the irony in blogging about how terrible unemployment in the UK is from a laptop made in China. Others go on marches protesting against unemployment wearing clothes from Thailand and using a megaphone produced in Germany. Some people even reminisce about how terrible it was when the MG Rover Group went under, despite the fact they mouthed off about how they wouldn't be seen dead in a Rover 25 six months earlier.

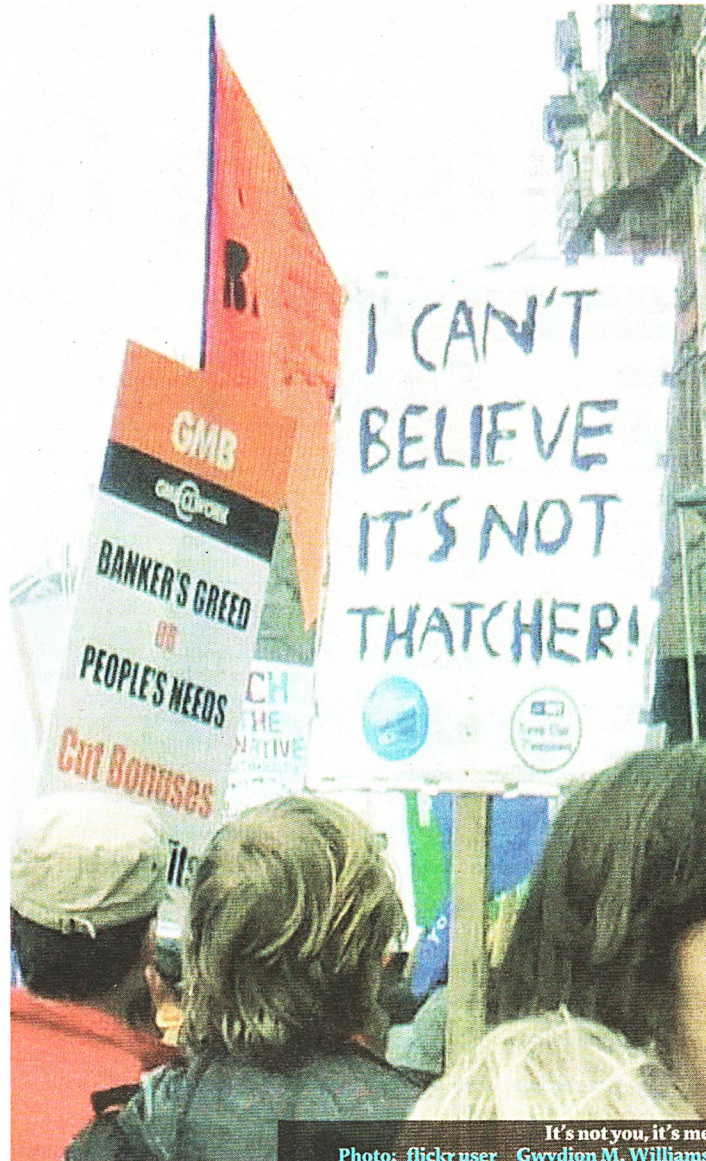
If we don't support British manu-

facturing and British services, we have no right to complain or point fingers about job losses. I may have only got a C in A-level Economics, but the nature of private enterprise to simpletons such as myself can be made very simple. The employees are paid when the company makes money. The company makes money when you buy their stuff. If you don't buy their stuff, they won't make money, and they can't pay anyone. When they can't pay anyone, they will let people go.

So the next time you send a picture message from a £400 phone designed by Americans and made in China instead of sending the photo in a letter for 40 p, ponder about why you think the Royal Mail is going to fire instead of hire.

We are lucky enough to live in a relatively free market in this country. Many criticise this fact, despite the fact they use every single benefit it offers and flourish because of it. It is unfortunate that many people accept the benefits of the free market and seem unwilling to accept its disadvantages. We all love British services and most are screaming for more manufacturing in the UK, but if we're not willing to pay for it then don't expect it to make a revival.

Of course, as usual, there is always mass-abuse pointed in the direction of anyone who defends the free market at the LSE, but you probably won't be able to hear how little I care over the sound of your shitty earphone imported from 9000 miles away sorry. ☘



It's not you, it's me  
Photo: flickr user Gwydion M. Williams

# It's human to ape

How so many of us tend to not take the path less travelled

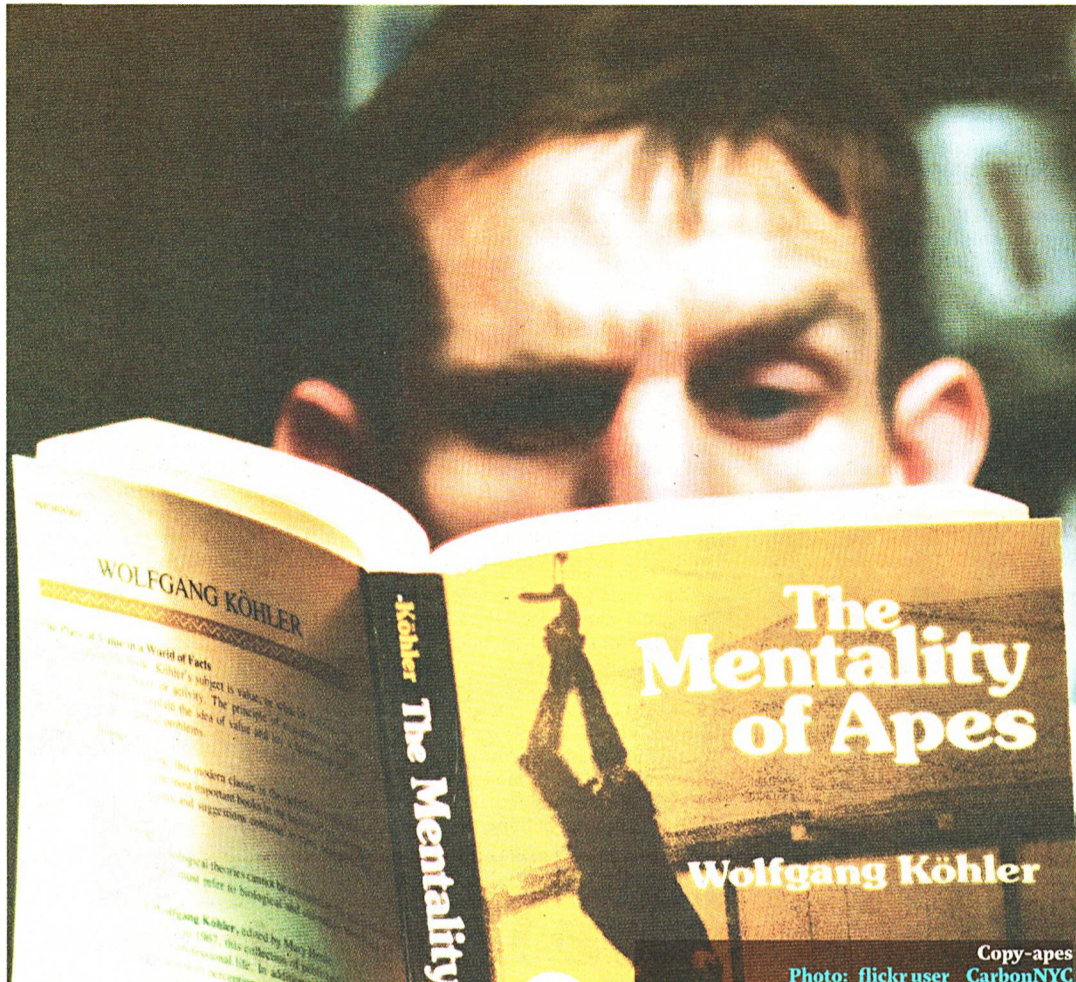
Ehae  
Longe



So there I was, in my slack white hoodie, feeling like one of those losers I see so often in American teen movies, waiting on the sidelines for the triumphant entry of the cool kids. The half-marathon scene was littered with people just like me - the support staff could not manage 13 miles even if we got to crawl the whole way. The old, the kids, the lazies, the crazies. We were all waiting, right there in the park, where we had followed our cooler friends. Once they said it was time to go, we would follow them home too. Pitiful stuff.

I leaned against the iron railing, as close as I could come to the track, eager for the runners to return. They began to pour in - an endless wave of people. They received their medals and complementary waters, and were ushered down the length of the track to keep the traffic moving. My focus on my "where's Wally" friend-finding game was broken by a sweaty middle-aged man who came to a stop in front of me. He had been waving to his family who were standing alongside me, and now, motioning to the funny latch thing on the railing, asked me if he could get past. I opened the gate to let him through, happy to have helped him find a shortcut, but content to close it back and continue my search for my running buddies.

I was not in luck. Another sweaty man, faster in his movements than I was in mine, squeezed past me through this newly formed exit. He was followed by a deservedly breathless woman, and slowly, the drones of successful runners began coming through the make-shift gates instead of the rightful passage that now-tired ushers had been begging them to go through. It was a ridiculously funny



Copy-apes  
Photo: flickr user CarbonNYC

sight. It could not even be credited to good sense, as the other way was now an empty open road compared to the narrow sweat-vacuum beside me. The zombie-like runners at the back didn't even know what was happening - they just followed the obstinate ones at the front. This was the case until one of the ushers, now red-faced from screaming, firmly closed the railings

beside me. He gave me a fierce look, as if to say, "It's your fault." Blame them, I thought.

This little pantomime made me realise that the cool kids we had all been waiting for were not really that cool after all. They were just like us - the lazies and the crazies - following others without thinking twice. I guess it's just in our nature. It's the weird

thing that happens in a big group, when they're all walking to dinner, distracted by conversation and mindless chatter, but still end up arriving at the right destination. There tend to be only one or two people who actually know where they are going, or what they want, and the others just follow. Sometimes, everyone walks in circles until they realise that no one actually

had the right idea! I think it comes from an intrinsic faith in others and the knowledge they may possess - a possibly irrational, all-embracing faith that we sometimes don't want to admit to ourselves.

I don't know why it is in most of our natures to "follow" in these subtle ways, but what I do know is that this trait slips into so many other aspects of our lives - aspects that we wouldn't even expect. Most people wait for their styles to be dictated to them by the gods of fashion. Think of the girl with her hair in a bun, a transparent maxi skirt and huge platform shoes, and you could point to ten of your friends! Think of the guy with the printed sweater, the super skinny jeans and the moccasins, and you could do the same. Each of those 20 people would say that their styles are unique and vintage-y. But even vintage is now a trend. People follow stereotypes too. In those American highschools reflected in the movies, kids are forced to express themselves in one of a set number of ways - by being cool, not cool, sporty, artistic, emo or a waster, for instance. And these kids fit. I struggle to believe that people could slide so neatly into labels, but then I understand. I get it when I see a guy with impossibly black spiky hair, black nail polish, and guess what, a black leather outfit. I know there is no way this guy watches "Glee." I feel I could read into his life story - he probably plays in a rock band or listens to rock music, hates life and detests popular stuff. I want to tell this guy, "Dude, there are at least 3 million people exactly like you. Sorry, but you ARE popular stuff."

Apparently, it's in human nature to ape. I discovered this at a lecture I went to. But still, it's not comforting news. So I realise that most of us, including me, are actually the lazies and the crazies - too lazy to find our own thing, or crazy enough to believe that we did. I guess the moral of the story is, it's hard to be a trailblazer. But at least it's kind of fun to follow. ☘

# Listening to reason

David Grossman's advice for the apparently unresolvable Arab-Israeli crisis

Jay  
Stoll

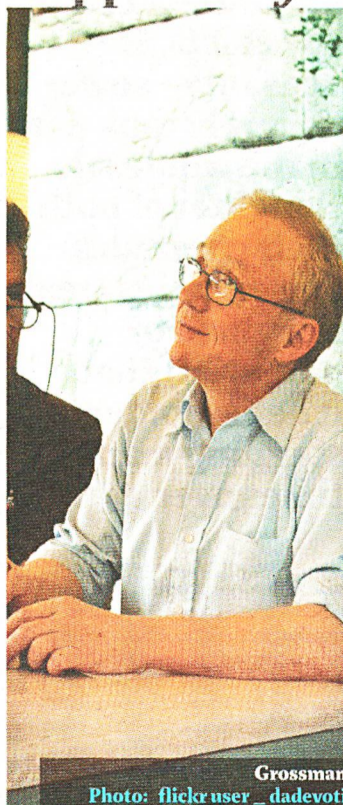


I don't "do" book reviews. As someone whose only semi-serious literary experience is confined to writing a pre-tenacious essay on the Moodle journals once every five weeks, I tend to leave the assessments to those with greater literary knowledge and stature. While I will keep to this tradition, I feel compelled to briefly report on an incredible audience with Israeli author and political activist, David Grossman. Speaking at an event run by Intelligence Squared, Grossman provided his audience with a timely reminder of why he is one of the world's great men of letters. Modestly presented as a "conversation with Linda Grant," the event at Cadogan Hall provided much more than a casual chat.

While an obvious focus would be to detail the discussion provided for his latest work, the international bestseller, 'To The End of the Land,' this would be to betray the political inspiration that would follow. Grossman is a noted critic of Israeli foreign policy, in part due to the loss of his son,

Uri, killed in conflict with Hezbollah in the Lebanon War of 2006. His unique ability to simultaneously account for a bloody, perpetual conflict, while demanding the right to speak with genuinely impartial emotion, sets him apart. A refusal to associate with and emulate the advocates for the two traditional narratives, disguised as literary compatriots, has led to great international acclaim for Grossman as a truly special light in a country devoid of any politically bright sparks.

For those present, specifically for those unfamiliar with his works, the indelible mark left by such a personal loss was crucially apparent. For those who had read 'To The End of The Land,' it was impossible not to get caught up in the emotion of his recollections. For those who had not, his telling confirmation that "the power to invent, infuse life into characters" had become a way of acting against the gravity of his grief, thus "a way of choosing life," left little doubt of personal attachment. Audience members lauded him with pronounced pride as their "inspiration, an absolute hero," as he continued to divulge how he saw the future for the region. Whilst my intolerance to outbursts of "cringe" prevented me from following suit, I couldn't help but get lost in the appreciation for this absolute legend.



Grossman  
Photo: flickr user dadevoti

Rising above the airy-fairy fringe talk of improbable, impractical and unwanted solutions to the conflict, the audience was provided with a genuine vision for what could become of the current dire stagnant mess. Grossman labeled the two state solution as the only option that he "deeply believes in" ... not exactly revolutionary in principle, but his eloquence in explaining why was another matter. He pleaded for mutual self-determination, for "the people that deserve to go back to their own identity in an environment other than war". He then further questioned the one state "solution" asking, "How on earth they start to function together in one political entity that is totally unrealistic and counter productive?"

Grossman is famed in literature for his ability to emphatically and empathetically grapple with the role of "the other," in this case the Palestinians. He embodies, in my opinion, what is required for true progress in a region scarred by imbecilic, self-interested politicians, (Netanyahu, Lieberman, Abu Mazen, Meshaal etc). The "Law of Malicious furniture" mentioned early in his novel, suggests that furniture seeks its spiteful revenge on unsuspecting human being when the lights are turned out. Nowhere is this more relevant in the real world than the Israeli-Palestinian question.

If all known routes of discussion are blocked, then we must meticulously fumble in the dark until we discover a

**Grossman is a noted critic of Israeli foreign policy, in part due to the loss of his son, Uri, killed in conflict**

new direction, which in turn leads us to the light or peace. For the audience at Cadogan Hall, this metaphor rang true, as he implored all to move past "difficulties in distinguishing between dangers faced and the echoes of past traumas."

Grossman's vital message will probably sail over the heads of the Facebook politicians seen posing in an abundance of differently coloured Keffiyahs or IDF jumpers to associate with their cause. Yet thankfully, foreign policy is not determined by such beings (yet!) and for that reason Grossman's message should be seized with haste. ☘

# Shalit last?

## Questioning the wisdom of the prisoner swap happening in Israel and Palestine

**Aimee Riese**



Israelis and Palestinians both taking to the street to celebrate at the same time is worth comment. The voices of critics of Netanyahu celebrating the "most left-wing thing" he has ever done are equally note-worthy.

The "Shalit Deal" agreed last week is expected to take place in its first stages on Tuesday. It details the release of 1027 Palestinian security prisoners from Israeli jails in exchange for the release of one Israeli soldier, Gilad Shalit, held captive illegally in Gaza by Hamas.

In a country of national conscription, where the military plays such a prominent role in society, it is difficult

to underestimate the significance of the plight of Gilad Shalit upon the Israeli national consciousness. There is a poster with the hope, "Gilad is still alive" on the corner of most streets in Israel and his parents set up a protest camp in Jerusalem as a focus point of solidarity. Moreover, international campaigns for his release and for access to the Red Cross have been running since his capture in 2006. Some Synagogues, including my own, incorporate prayers for missing soldiers as part of their services. The plight of Gilad Shalit has been etched into both the Israeli and the international Jewish consciousness and has served as one of Hamas' most powerful bargaining chips.

In a conflict that is all too often reduced to maps and buildings, this swap offers a rare glimpse into the human aspects of real people's suffering on both sides. It further reveals the complexities and nuances of societies

where simplifications, exaggerations and plain mistruths are bandied about as part of campus politics, fail to understand and engage with. The sheer contrast of numbers involved show an inspiring humanity in Israeli society.

I celebrate the release of Gilad, the release of any innocent Palestinian prisoners and the release of any guilty Palestinian prisoners who have been held longer than their crime necessitates. Optimistically, this swap is a cautious step towards both societies understanding that the liberation of one people cannot be at the expense of the other.

However, I see a few key problems with this deal. Among the prisoners to be released are those responsible for major terror attacks such as the 2001 bombing of the Sbarro restaurant in Jerusalem; the lynching of two IDF soldiers in Ramallah in 2000; the 1989 attack on bus 405; the abduction of soldier Nachshon Wachsmann, who

was killed during a rescue attempt; and the abduction and murder of soldiers Avi Sasportas, Ilan Sa'adon and Shahar Simani. It is impossible for me to rejoice at the release of these terrorists and is frankly sickening to see the reactions of those celebrating this.

The swap places Israelis at an increased security risk. Yoram Cohen, the Security Chief of the Shin Bet, stated that based on previous experiences, 60 per cent of prisoners released return to terror. It is certainly a courageous and risky decision the Israeli government has taken.

A major flaw in the swap is the weakening of the Palestinian non-violent resistance movement. It sends a message that may encourage future soldier abductions for bargaining purposes. A look at Hamas' websites and support groups shows that this is certainly very much still on the agenda.

Last Friday's "price tag" desecration of Rabin's memorial exemplifies

the extremist Israeli reactions to the deal and prediction that many Israeli analysts have of Israeli society shifting even further to the right. If indeed there is a resumption of terror attacks inside Israel, a society that is currently so precariously unbalanced, in what I can only describe as part of a national, post-traumatic stress syndrome, will suffer.

The ultimate failure of the deal however, is the lack of placing the prisoners into the larger context of peace negotiations. This deal does not come as part of a framework for peace, an agreement to address any of the issues made blatantly clear at the United Nations last month. An isolated moment of joy on both sides, which brings no long-term peace and increasing instability, is something to be celebrated only so far.



Gilad Shalit's supporters  
Photo: flickr user \_zeevveez

# Ignoring SoSo's buddies

## It's time we take note of one of the most degenerate moments in human history

**Asad Rahim Khan**



A long time ago, Fox News' anchor Bill O'Reilly was busy screaming at professional atheist Richard Dawkins (to his face). One gentleman made his living "disproving God," the other gentleman by foaming at the mouth on weekdays. O'Reilly was refuting the old paganism that religion has been the biggest killer of them all by naming a string of mass murderers united in their non-belief: Hitler, Pol Pot, Stalin etc. Both men then descended into the ultimate argument of whether Hitler was marginally religious or not.

The show actually got me thinking, unlike the vast majority of the sad, sad material the O'Reilly Factor usually comes up with, this drew me in. On a totally unrelated tangent, I thought while the public knows, to phrase Simon Montefiore, a lot about Hitler's Görings and Goebbels and Himmlers, and even, a lot thanks to the trials, something about the hideous Khmer Rouge cadres, Joseph Stalin's guys have somehow managed to evade the glare of history, which is truly amazing.

To the Communist Party's credit, never has degeneracy been so democratically spread around as it had been in Stalin's circle. History must have been laughing at the odds; I don't think there was a single one of Joseph's senior henchmen didn't merit an entire exploitation movie dedicated to his life. Except boring Kalinin, who suffered in dutiful silence as the Party executed his friends and tortured his wife (while he served as

president). The not-so-boring men around Stalin - bureaucrats, spy chiefs, ex-peasants - so believably took part in the wholesale slaughter of both their comrades and enemies (real, imagined or potential) that it defies understanding many times over.

Stalin himself, a Georgian peasant beaten by his father and nicknamed SoSo by his mother, robbed banks all the way to becoming Secretary-General of the rising Communist Party. After Lenin died, Stalin maneuvered the world against Trotsky to come a step closer to becoming the all-in-all, a career move immortalized by George Orwell in the visual of two squabbling pigs. Like a reformed high school cheerleader, Stalin then turned his new Party friends against his old Party friends, in the process killing almost anyone that had to do with the original "vision" of Lenin's Marxists. And this was before the serious killing began.

Helping the process along was the KGB's ugly elder sister, the NKVD. Its list of directors reads like the ultimate monster cottage industry. First director Yagoda, who helped Stalin bump off Lenin's original Bolsheviks, was himself executed by his successor Yezhov. During "the Party's Glorious Governance," Yezhov led Stalin's Great Purge, a frenzy of state-sponsored trials-and-executions that would come to define one of the communists' worst legacies. Like SoSo, Yezhov was also nicknamed such endearments as Blackberry, the Iron Hedgehog, and the Poisonous Dwarf. Like Yagoda, he too was tortured and executed by his own deputy. And like Yagoda, he maintained his love for Stalin right to the end, "hiccupping and weeping uncontrollably" at his trial and fainting as his death sentence was read out.

But even the NKVD climaxed under Yezhov's deputy. Lavrenti Beria, successor and killer of Yezhov, who

**The not-so-boring men around Stalin - bureaucrats, spy chiefs, ex-peasants - so believably took part in the wholesale slaughter of both their comrades and enemies (real, imagined or potential) that it defies understanding many times over**

was successor and killer of Yagoda, was a murdering psychopath who stood out in a crowd of murdering psychopaths. Gulag boss, syphilis-infected rapist according to the evidence of dozens of victims, summary executioner of the now infamous criteria "turncoats, deserters, cowards and suspected malingerers," Beria was also a useful administrator, helping the Soviets get the Bomb as well as

imposing its Iron Curtain post-World War II. Feared and hated by the most hardened of Stalin's associates, and especially repellent to their wives and children - whom he sporadically imprisoned - Beria was thought to be the next Soviet leader by just about everyone. After Stalin died, Beria's plans for Russia were to say the least ambitious, involving economic liberalization and getting out of East Germany.

Once fighting for succession rights, he fatally underestimated Khrushchev, whom most had written off as a backwoods hick. Stalin's boys, previously terrified of Stalin and now terrified of Beria, rallied around Khrushchev and had Beria stripped of his rank and thrown in prison, then hauled off to an NKVD basement and shot. Khrushchev took power and acknowledged the bloodlust of the past quarter-century, which he had been a substantial part of, by starting the process of de-Stalinization; doing away with Stalin's shadow over the USSR, which would return to exactly where it was under Brezhnev, who encouraged the stupidly named "de-de-Stalinization."

But even leaving behind the actual killers, the men that made Stalin's state machinery grind along were no less accessories to what was happening to them and around them. Vyacheslav Molotov, one of the Old Bolsheviks who the Party didn't have killed, and perhaps the most famous communist leader of that time after Stalin, was a signatory to the Katyn massacre, in which Beria's proposal for a mass execution of Polish nationals continues to haunt diplomatic relations between today's Russia and Poland. Georgi Malenkov, whom Beria called "Melanya" for his thick hips,

was one of the party's most intelligent bureaucrats, even rising to succeed Stalin and becoming Russian premier, before being overpowered by Khrushchev. Fond of literature, Melanya also discovered Christianity and would sing in choirs, but was better known for being one of Stalin's closest collaborators during Yezhov's Purges.

So why aren't these men done proper justice? The recurrent motif in all Holocaust literature is "never again." But why is so little known about the men who killed so many in virtually the same place? Why is there so little interest in them? It could be because a great many Russians, and a great many historians, still celebrate Stalin for modernizing Russia. They laud him for being a necessarily firm leader in times of crisis. It could be because the Soviet Union played among the greatest roles in defeating the Nazis. It could be because later leaders have attempted to turn the page on that part of history, not by facing it but by sweeping it under the carpet.

Maybe all those are incentives to forgetting. But there's another world record the Stalin era holds: the most prolific executioner in written history. Vasili Blokhin executed tens of thousands of prisoners by his own hand (which peaked at 7,000 Polish prisoners of war, condemned to die, in one mass execution). One of Beria's favourites, Blokhin was stripped of his rank under Khrushchev, succumbing to alcoholism, insanity and eventual suicide. So maybe where history has shown a lukewarm reception, there should instead be a monument to human depravity.

art

18 October 2011



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Akutagawa | Late Night Food | **Saved** | **Breaking Bad** | Private B

# Contact

## PartB Editors

Aameer Patel  
Kerry-Rose O'Donnell  
partb@thebeaveronline.co.uk

## Fashion

Emma Beaumont  
partb-fashion@thebeaveronline.co.uk

## Film

Aameer Patel  
partb-film@thebeaveronline.co.uk

## Food

Max Jenkins  
partb-food@thebeaveronline.co.uk

## Literature

Rachel Holmes  
partb-literature@thebeaveronline.co.uk

## Music

Ankur Vora  
partb-music@thebeaveronline.co.uk

## Private B

Jack Tindale  
partb@thebeaveronline.co.uk

## Theatre

Rory Creedon  
Hannah Payne  
partb-theatre@thebeaveronline.co.uk

## TV

Rasha Al-Dabagh  
partb-tv@thebeaveronline.co.uk

## Video Games

Hassan Dar  
partb@thebeaveronline.co.uk

## Visual Arts

Roberta Cucchiaro  
partb-visualarts@thebeaveronline.co.uk

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## Vacancies

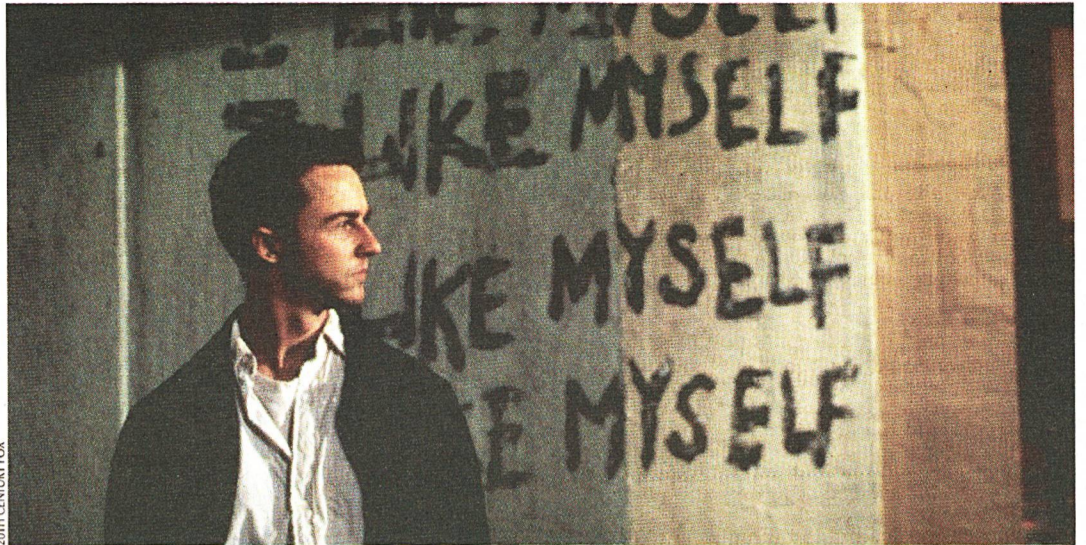
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# Perspective: Fight Club

Does anyone remember a film in which towards the climax two people are stranded with an anonymous killer in a desert as they await the arrival of a van that contains the decapitated head of Gwyneth Paltrow inside a cardboard box? Hilarious, wasn't it? OK, only Kevin Spacey was chucking his little bald head off, but he had reason to do so – it was a great practical joke, right? Well, that film was David Fincher's *Seven*, an atmospheric and grisly serial killer film that managed to reignite a tired genre and make a serious attempt to investigate killing as an art form. Fincher has been one of the most prolific directors of recent years, making a wealth of good films (*Fight Club*, *Zodiac*, *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*, *The Social Network*) as well as some downright bewildering or nonsensical ones (*The Game*, *Panic Room*). Personally, I'm just glad he is still making movies in an age of CGI-swamped, pointlessly dim, Robert Pattinson-imbued and inately acted cinema. Have you seen cinema listings recently? It's comparable to staring puerility and simple-mindedness straight in the face. There ought to be a pity jar allocated to people who will even step into a cinema with Johnny English Reborn playing, a group of wailing mourners will congregate outside with the jars and bemoan the inevitable obliteration of the poor soul's disposition for thought and acceptable humour like widows at a graveside. Anyway, arguably Fincher's best and most appraised film is the blisteringly powerful social treatise *Fight Club*, based on the novel by Chuck Palahniuk, which thus far is the Fincher film to have had the most profound and lasting impact on me. I'm going to give you my perspective.

The film is largely a tale about modern society's infatuations with consumerist tripe and how we can fight back. Ed Norton plays narrator Jack who is tortured by insomnia and feelings of listlessness in his life and thirsts for something else. He tries self-help groups for testicular cancer, tuberculosis and more, but eventually meets the charismatic and troublesome Tyler Durden (Brad Pitt) who educates him in making changes to his banal existence. Now that's really all the exposition anyone new to the film needs and I won't go into too much detail about the plot from here on in. Helena Bonham Carter is also present as Marla, a brooding woman who is Jack's jilted love interest for most of the film. For any music fans, Meat Loaf makes an appearance too, with chest udders so enormous they could feed every malnourished child south of the Sahel. But all of that is practically irrelevant compared to the effect the film has on its viewer. I remember first seeing *Fight Club* in about 2008 and was quite frankly awestruck and spellbound by it. I recognised that I had seen something incredible and truly brilliant, but couldn't massage it into a coherent thought. That year was when the likes of Facebook really began to take off and infect the lives of everybody around me, and rather than playing a dumb game of football outside or talking to each other like normal human beings, people were being mesmerised by luminous dullness. It was the preoccupation with something 'artificial' that perplexed me; you couldn't make a personal connection or intimately understand someone through a screen – you could just gaze at it and sigh like a deflating punctured whoopee cushion when the typed discussion inevitably descended into unremitting tedium. At the same time, the obsession with Barbour coats, Helly Hansen jackets, designer handbags and all



Edward Norton as The Narrator

that material piffle was gripping my age group and I was still walking around in £5 raincoats and shoes that would make the average street beggar vomit uncontrollably. I was alarmed by what I saw as a movement towards an empty and effete lifestyle. There's nothing wrong with flamboyancy and foppishness (unless you are Richard Littlejohn), but the trite obsession with material goods and image are omnipresent today.

The physical and figurative fight against artificiality that pervades *Fight Club* strives to transcend the confined boundaries of modern life and search for a more primordial truth that we have lost along the way to technological and consumerist bliss. I'm not saying that it wanted us to start donning Flintstone-esque garments, go kill sabretooth, or senselessly fornicate like rabbits, but the extrapolation of the principles that guided humanity for so many centuries have slowly become disfigured or omitted from an increasingly bland society is what *Fight Club* attempts to rediscover. Essentially, it is a study of predominantly male aggression and how it has been surrendered to a narrow stratification of roles in a society which values artificial commodity above anything else. Norton's character experiences the initial disillusionment that the grey collar job he clings to is ultimately meaningless and his quest for meaning in a post-modern world of wage earning which jettisons a search for anything greater is what made the film so compelling. Like the Epsilons and Deltas of *Brave New World*, the men can't attain anything of true value from their current position. "An entire generation pumping gas, waiting tables; slaves with white collars. Advertising has us chasing cars and clothes, working jobs we hate so we can buy shit we don't need." It was this revulsion towards an unnervingly superficial lifestyle that I had experienced in my own life that spoke volumes to me.

A further reason why I related to *Fight Club*, probably on a more personal level, was the vague theme of empowerment (how I perceived it when I was fifteen years old anyway), which plays more as self-destruction and nihilism throughout the film. I had been suffering from a debilitating stammer since I was 3 years old and I didn't really believe I had much to offer my friends or family. Verbally incapacitated and ineffectual in conversation – not as socially ill-equipped as Bridget Jones but ill-equipped nonetheless – and this was the film that encouraged me to take action. Honestly, I can't remember the exact manner in which it ignited a determined fire within me (I think it may have been the scene where Tyler

speaks about the spiritual depression), but ignite it did and I took action to assist my speech. The subsequent years have been an important transitional phase in my life and it was mainly down to *Fight Club* that I developed the indefinable spirit to go through with it.

A critic once described the film as "Marxism for dummies". I wonder if he ever considered this film to be anything other than a piece of entertainment? When I watched it for the first time, I wasn't slumped on my couch considering whether the proletariat were going to start butchering business executives midway through the film and erecting a big ass statue of Karl. Furthermore, if it educates people about their neurotic attachment to their possessions, as it did with me, it should be praised and not denigrated by smarmy intellectuals.

Some of my female friends saw

.....  
**It changed my perspective on life for the better and allowed me to envisage doing something I wanted to do for passion**  
.....

it as psychotic violence with nothing else to add (admittedly, upon first glance, it just looks like a middle-class Tekken game). The real reason why many women complain about the film is not its overtly anti-feminist messages but the admonitions of it being a misogynistic movie are wildly misplaced and overlook the overall anti-consumerist message the film embodies. It has been argued that Marla represents Jack's true self rather than the quixotically masculine version in Tyler, and his embrace of Marla at the climax indicates an acceptance of the feminine that can restore balance to the chaos that has ensued from the testosterone-fuelled destruction. Although the film certainly doesn't extol the role of women, it doesn't wholly neglect them as non-entities and they are incorporated into the bigger themes it addresses.

Since its release 1999 it has lost none of its critical pertinence to the society it condemns. We still tolerate commercials with David Beckham flogging aftershave as a magic potion capable of turning you into a chiselled, swaggering, pea-brained hunk. Or shows centred around 'fashion ex-

perts' (expert being a euphemism for vacuous void of judgemental nothingness) telling some poor, disoriented sods how to dress to make them look less like Topshop having a harrowing breakdown. Whatever the medium, whether television, magazines, the Internet or billboards, we are still bombarded with items and aspirations we are meant to want. This will only worsen. Since my subsequent viewings of *Fight Club*, I have only grown more resilient and stoic in the face of hollowness and artifice. It left me prepared to grapple with whatever Gok Wan gleefully propelled into my living room. It allowed me to harbour the sort of piercing resentment and loathing usually reserved for death-row inmates for Nivea skin cream and made me aware of being sceptical of society's expectations and conformities. Yes, that was like all philosophical and whatnot. If you're willing to look past the whizzy aesthetics, the unavoidably impressive special effects and the hard, perspiring man-on-grunting-man violence which makes *Green Street* the equivalent of Barbie's tea party with Ken, you'll uncover a sociological treasure cove. It changed my perspective on life for the better and allowed me to envisage doing something I wanted to do for passion – not just because I wanted to buy the new trendy coat for winter or fit into something resembling a comfortable home for the rest of my life.

Perhaps television and the movies in general are the main aspirational culprits which *Fight Club* chooses to target. They have tweaked and meddled with our desires since we were toddlers and along with the internet, they hold a death grip on what we perceive to be admirable and elegant lifestyles, but which ultimately only provide a shallow and tawdry means of life. Whoever the primary target of *Fight Club* is, the moral is the same. Critics who were only prepared to see Edward Norton and Brad Pitt's bloody pulps of faces and a bunch of freebooting hooligans tearing up the city tendentiously condemned it as a dangerous film – a controversial flick that would make men everywhere rise up from their Match-of-the-Day induced comas and destroy civilisation with their bare hands. Through their narrow-mindedness, they squandered a chance to calmly evaluate one of the best films of the last twenty years.

It would be fitting to end with Tyler Durden's sagacious words. "We've all been raised on television to believe that one day we'd all be millionaires, and movie gods, and rock stars. But we won't. And we're slowly learning that fact. And we're very, very pissed off."

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## New Album: Biophilia – Björk

**B**iophilia is one of the most ambitious albums in recent memory, both financially and conceptually. In an interview, Björk, the Icelandic pop innovator stated that they'll be "lucky to break even" – not from expected lack of interest, but more the mammoth creation costs of the project. The Biophilia tour makes a Lady Gaga show look like a fancy dress karaoke night: Thunderbolt uses as its baseline two enormous Tesla coils rhythmically arching electricity synced to a melody, mimicking the phenomenon where jagged lightning bolts geometrically resemble the changing pitch of arpeggios. Songs like "Crystalline" have a gigantic bespoke instrument playing them via iPad called a gameleste – a cross between a celeste and a gamelan. There's a towering solar powered, pin-barrelled harp with gigantic gramophone-esque amplifiers that takes a day to manually hammer in a program for 60 seconds of music. There's a 24 piece all female Icelandic backing choir. There's David Attenborough. Elaborate 3D videos accompanying the music have left the animation industry's mouths wide open and there's a unique requirement saying any city that wants to become part of this abstract two year tour provides venues (like science museums) where Björk can teach school children music, giving a somewhat moral dimension to the project. Music videos return

to arduous moulded animation and manual visual effects – reminiscent of her iconic "Hyperballad", where what appears to be advanced digital fiddling is actually incredibly talented double exposing, with no post-production.

All of this is to neglect what is perhaps the most interesting aspect of *Biophilia* – it is the first 'app album'. Each song has an innovative interactive iPad/iPhone app, intrinsically changing the listener's experience of the music. Björk is no stranger to touchpads: her Volta tour utilised them before Apple invented the app, but a new approach was required since their rapid skyrocketing. After 'going' to the App Store, calling the top ten developers in the charts, and spending months planning in a deserted Icelandic restaurant, the designers of each song suggested they work for free, splitting the proceeds fifty-fifty. Agreements like this demonstrate a greater commitment to innovative funding within the entire music business. Bandcamp are creating a counter-intuitively lucrative music market based on pure donation models, Kaiser Chiefs encouraged listeners to "create their own album", some intrepid artists are pre-selling entire tours using Kickstarter and Imogen Heap is crowdsourcing lyrics. The uptake of innovation is painfully slow within many conservative record labels, but musicians who break away or have more freedom to deviate are

pioneering art in the digital age and cutting out middlemen.

Back to *Biophilia*, and the music this time. The album topic is anything but timid, tackling the start of everything in the universe all the way through to an apologetic love song to nature, begging man to make amends. Time, death, genetics, symbiosis and the elements synthesise with emotional parallels and metaphors to create a coherent and interwoven album about human relationships with the animate and the inanimate. Sounds are broken up and silent space around noises gives the feeling that the music bypasses complications, made itself from fundamental forces it describes, suspended in a vacuum. Rhythmic chiming and chiselling in "Crystalline" breaks down into a crashing and breath-stealing cacophony, "Mutual Core" combines gentle contemplation with unexpected, deep eruptions and scientific observations. The time signature in "Hollow" is based upon increasing prime numbers. The atonal "Dark Matter" is written without a musical key, and involves words not from any language, perhaps to symbolise its subject matter.

This is clearly a project that has had a lot of devotion and thought behind it without the restrictive commercial considerations popular music usually drags along for the ride. While Björk is a highly esteemed and well regarded artist, the most famous



Icelander alive and an icon in style, creativity and technical ability, she appears to be one of the last household names to take the public out of their comfort zones and far away – taking gambles for the sake of concepts and messages. Let's hope the advent of

accessible entrepreneurial funding and the decay of populist record labels makes this less the exception and more the rule.

Michael Veale

## New Band: Savaging Spires

Savaging Spires are a band to watch out for. Their eponymous debut album develops a unique, haunting sonic texture, where cello meets toy piano and creative household percussion. Playing live at the Dalston home of improvisational jazz, rock and experimental electronics, Café Oto, 1960s telephones replaced microphones with no apparent compatibility issues and words were instruments as well as lyrics.

Keep an eye out for their small label, Critical Heights, too, who have signed a whole host of talented performers acutely focused on making brilliant art, including the Dead Rat Orchestra, a top-notch team of avant-garde lumberjacks.

Michael Veale

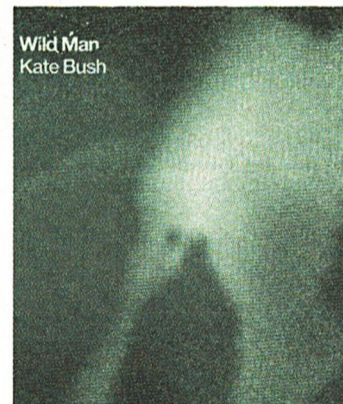


## New Track: Wild Man – Kate Bush

Kate Bush's new single "Wild Man", from upcoming album *50 Words For Snow*, is a true return to her vivid storytelling of the '80s.

A love song to a Yeti, part whispered, part shouted over the sound of snowflakes with a Jeff Wayne style chorus, it takes the listener through decades of anecdotal sightings in the areas around Tibet. "We found footprints in the snow/We brushed them all away" – the album promises to be full of winding winter tales and time will tell if it stands shoulder to shoulder with its sunnier sister, the 2005 conceptual masterpiece, *Aerial*.

Michael Veale



## This week's live highlights

**18 October:** Real Estate – Rough Trade East

**19 October:** Hudson Mohawke – XOYO

**20 October:** Sam Amidon – Cecil Sharp House

**22 October:** Flying Lotus – Roundhouse

**23, 24 October:** Bon Iver – HMV Hammersmith Apollo

**24 October:** Why? – Union Chapel



FUCKER USER PANHUIE

Sam Amidon at 92Y Tribeca in April 2010

# The Veil, Lyttelton: National Theatre

**Director:** Conor McPherson  
**Playwright:** Conor McPherson  
**Key Cast:** Brid Brennan, Caoilfhionn Dunne, Ursula Jones, Peter McDonald, Adrian Schiller  
**At Lyttelton: National Theatre until 11 December 2011**

The programme for *The Veil*, a new play by Conor McPherson that opened at the National Theatre last week, contains two heavy-weight essays about German Idealism and the colonial history of Ireland in the 1820s. One suspects that either of these themes would be a sufficient basis for a work of drama, so to have them both running alongside a ghost story, a love story and family drama meant that no theme is ever explored to satisfaction, and one is left wondering exactly what sort of a play this was supposed to be. It felt like gothic horror-cum-melodrama-cum-farce-cum-comedy-cum-historical drama. The mish-mash of

ideas and genres certainly made for an entertaining and at times very funny night, but it was not always clear that what the audience found mirthful was in fact intended to be so, and ultimately one was left wanting more.

The setting, the grand but dilapidated Irish home of an aristocratic English family, was gloriously recreated on the Lyttelton stage. At the centre of the story is Hannah (Emily Taaffe), the daughter of the lady of the house, a troubled young girl who believes she sees and hears the spirit of her father whom she witnessed hang himself in the drawing room. The ebullient and slightly manic defrocked priest and family friend Reverend Berkley (Jim Norton), has travelled to the house with his companion, a drug addicted waif and mystic philosopher Adelle (Adrian Schiller) for the purpose of escorting the girl to England. However, before embarking on their

journey, they encourage her to release the echoes of the past and to explore their own uncertain futures by holding séances that have catastrophic effects for the household and farther afield. This is all set against a background of stand-offs between the landowner and her tenants, and a tale of unrequited love between the lady of the house and her violent and drunk estate manager Mr Fingle (Peter McDonald).

Performances are strong throughout, although Fenella Woolgar, who plays Lady Lambocke, is rather too wet for the stern mother and landowner who marries off her daughter for money and does not pay her staff, yet balks at her tenants being unable to pay their rent due to crop failure. Jim Norton, who perfectly embodies the near mad yet frightfully jovial Berkley, tends at times to overact which keeps the pace very fresh but adds an unwelcome touch of ridicule

to the supernatural centerpieces of the play. Caoilfhionn Dunne plays Clare Wallace, a housemaid, with great sensitivity, and she stole perhaps the most moving moment when asked to perform a sad Irish melody for the assembled household.

Ultimately this is a play about emancipation; freedom from overbearing family, freedom from an oppressive class system, and freedom from the demons that haunt the characters. While certainly captivating, unfortunately the text suffers from overextension, and that is reflected in the direction that leads to an uneven patchwork of dramatic styles that cries out for some simplification and unification.

↳ Rory Creedon



Left to Right: Emily Taaffe, Ursula Jones, Fenella Woolgar, Jim Norton, Brid Brennan, Adrian Schiller

# Saved, Lyric Hammersmith

**Director:** Sean Holmes  
**Writer:** Edward Bond  
**Key Cast:** Susan Brown, Calum Callaghan, Michael Feast, Joel Gillman, Bradley Gardner  
**At Lyric Hammersmith until 5 November 2011**

*Saved* has not been permitted by the author, Edward Bond, to be performed in London for over twenty-five years: only in the wake of the summer riots and austerity cuts crippling the masses was he satisfied enough for it to finally make its return. Set in South London during the 60s, against a backdrop of social degradation, it skillfully exposes the way in which working people had been left by the wayside. An excellent cast dealt with the characters' disillusionment marvellously, exposing a group of people forgotten by a society that no longer needed them, unable to adapt to what we know now as modern life. Everyday scenes briefly opened the door to the problems present in 60s society. Problems that we are still dealing with today.

Strong performances were present throughout. Len (Morgan Watkins), a struggling and honest youth, is the link between the other characters; loitering in most scenes, regardless of whether he is wanted. Len is in love with Pam (Lia Saville), a likeable but difficult young woman. Their relationship becomes marred with arguments, and although things end between them, Len stays in the house only for the sake of Pam's baby. Their fractious relationship is cleverly mirrored by

that of Pam's parents', showing that dissatisfaction was felt across the generations, not just by young people. Harry, Pam's father (Michael Feast), provided a welcome and uncomplicated comedy as he distanced himself from the rest of the family – but his disregard for his wife Mary (Susan Brown) was nonetheless evident. Bond wrote that people responded to their feelings of disenchantment by "[turning] their anger against the nearest target – themselves", and there is a noticeable lack of unity amongst the characters.

The play has a chequered past. It was banned by the Lord Chamberlain's office in the 60s because of the now infamous scene that sees a baby stoned to death. There was public outcry then, and its capacity to shock has waned little since it seems that it was as unpleasant as you are likely to see at the theatre. Gasps and jolts rippled through an unsettled audience leaving a bad taste in the mouth. A gang of youths murder the baby in a park, the main instigator being Barry, with Bradley Gardner his Barry's mindless hatred brilliantly. This unthinkable act of violence however was much more than an artistic gimmick: it is an attempt to demonstrate the extent of youth disrepair. A generation that had lost its identity responded in the only way they can – with violence. The youths murder the baby to regain their self respect; it is not that people are immoral – more that they are suffering.

Silence pervades the action; we see a part of society that appears to

have lost its voice yet the characters make use of the set to vent their frustration. Indeed, the director, Sean Holmes should be commended for his excellent use of the stage. Shouted exchanges with characters off stage successfully gave the impression there was a house beyond the one room on view. This was coupled with background noise heard from other, unseen, rooms – often in stark contrast to the action unfolding on stage. Colourful arguments drowned out pleasant music from downstairs

and unrelenting wails from the baby caused irritation amongst the characters, who snapped at each other with venom.

By the end, the characters were dejected, exhausted even. Exhausted by themselves, exhausted by each other, and exhausted by life – which had become little more than a struggle. Not for the light hearted, *Saved* is as gritty as it is thoughtful, and remains remarkably current for its age.

↳ Laurence Vardaxoglou



Sean Palmer and David Burt in *Crazy for You*

# Crazy for You, Novello Theatre

**Director:** Timothy Sheader  
**Writer:** Ken Ludwig  
**Composers:** George and Ira Gershwin  
**Key Cast:** Sean Palmer, Clare Foster, Kim Medcalf, Harriet Thorpe  
**At Novello Theatre until 28 July 2012**

After much anticipation, *Crazy for You* has finally arrived at the West End, having moved from its open theatre home in Regent's Park. Over the course of the evening, Novello's small stage played host to an action-packed pantomime of a production, made up of lively dance numbers and overplayed slapstick humour intertwined with witty double entendres.

The story revolves around a banker's son, Bobby Child (Sean Palmer), who decides to give up his job in the city to pursue a career on stage. His mother sends him to the small town of Deadrock, Nevada with the task of repossessing an old theatre in the hope that the trip will knock some sense back into the heir of her millions. Unsurprisingly, Child falls in love with the owner of the theatre (Clare Foster) and decides to help her repay the debt by organising a show. In a quick attempt to gain her trust, he dresses up as a renowned Broadway impresario, Bela Zangler (David Burt), which ultimately backfires in his face. This is a multicultural mishmash of a musical that culminates in a bizarre ending with a travelling English couple singing about "keeping their chins up", while waving the British flag ostentatiously, and yes, drinking tea.

The big dance numbers were at times a little too big for the Novello's compact stage, with the male lead falling and almost sliding off the stage to the excitement (and panic) of the elderly in the front rows. That being said, that one literal slip-up aside, the main troupe was captivating to watch and were successful in drawing attention away from Clare Foster's somewhat lacklustre vocals.

The Gershwin brothers' classics like "I Got Rhythm" and "Embraceable You" draw attention away from the cheap humour, making the production really quite enjoyable. As a heavily revised version of *Girl Crazy*, the 1930 Gershwin creation, *Crazy for You* benefits from the impressive line-up of catchy and pleasant musical numbers, with songs borrowed from their other productions (*Damsel in Distress*, *Shall We Dance*) fitting seamlessly into the story. The music explains why the production earned itself a Tony Award back in 1992.

↳ Aleona Krechetova



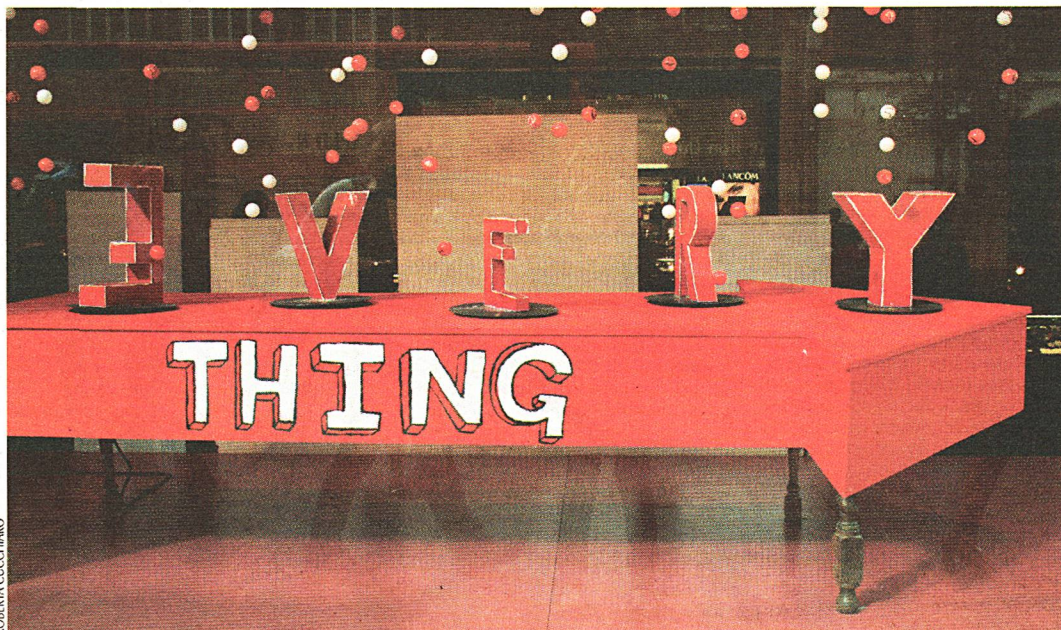
## Exhibition #4

The Museum of Everything is presenting Exhibition #4 at Selfridges, which is said to be one of the largest displays of innovative art by self-taught artists from all around the world. These artists are not the big names we have studied in our art history books, but are the unintentional, untrained and undiscovered artists whose works are not only art, but also a way to communicate their thoughts, feelings and perhaps their grievances against an unjust world. The 400 works, encompassing paintings, sculptures and multimedia installations, have all been created in various studios for artists with developmental and other disabilities. Thanks to all those who have supported the artists during their creative processes, and to The Museum of Everything who arranged this exhibition, we in London are now able to submerge ourselves in a world which very much resembles a dream, a world of Everything.

“The Museum of EV'RRYTHING?!” The Italian lady widened her large brown eyes as she asked. “Do you have everything inside?”

“Er, no.” I stammered, searching hard inside my head for something catchy to say – it was my first day of work. “But you are going to see something you would never see elsewhere...”

It is hard to believe that one can find a haven, a refuge in the midst of the highly consumerist department store Selfridges (which has already started selling Christmas decorations). Wooden boards with red and white stripes resembling those on a circus tent make up the entrance. The corridor leading to the exhibition is dimly lit yet fully accessible for those adventurous enough. Indeed, walk through that corridor and you will be



The Museum of Everything display window on Oxford Street

transported to a magical world. Sweet ambient light shines on the brown walls of the main exhibition space, complemented by jovial, rhythmic Ethiopian folk music. The space is further divided into petit rooms and extensions, separated at the thresholds by curtains made of delicate and colourful strips of fabric.

On the walls are hanging paintings curated by James Brett and produced by artists from all over the world in a wide range of different styles. In one corner you will find a series of angry, frustrated doodling that swirls out from a huge black dot at the centre and sprawls all over the canvas. In another, there is a collection of urban paintings depicting an unknown city, with irregular grids determinedly drawn on top of the buildings.

Despite my praise of some of these paintings, I must admit I was not overly impressed the first time I saw them. I first went with some friends. Within five seconds of entering, my friends started making the usual jeer about modern art: “Oh, even I can draw that. It's just a splash of paint,” or “I really can't tell the difference between this and any child's painting.” Our visit was swift and brief, hardly allowing time for reflection. But before we stepped out, I caught a glimpse of a small advert on the wall looking for more volunteers. Determined in my heart to revisit the place to fully explore its potential, I sent in my application.

My new job dramatically changed my view of the show. It is the fourth exhibition of a series hosted by the

charity, the Museum of Everything. “We are a poor charity relying on donations. That's why we need YOU GUYS (my fellow volunteers and I) to be nice and chat with visitors so they are willing to donate!” my supervisor Marta often stresses. But there must be a strong enough reason to convince people, and I, personally, am very convinced.

The ‘Everything’ in the name underscores the effort of the organisation to challenge the concept of art as defined by mainstream galleries. Institutions such as the Tate Modern usually limit themselves to the view that only artists from the academia are true artists, but this is a criterion that the artists supported by the Museum of Everything often fall short of.

Artists featured in the current

exhibition mostly have developmental disabilities. Past exhibitions such as that in Primrose Hill (2009) featured marginalised and psychologically fragile individuals. For various reasons they are unable to attend traditional art college. Their main source of creativity develops through progressive workshops supported by the charity and the various studios promoting such initiatives.

It is needless to say that not everyone agrees with the cause of the Museum. A colleague once ran into a ranting woman, “I spend several thousand pounds on my son's painting lessons. And you are showing works of people who are untrained!” But the Museum insists on helping because the talents deserve to be recognized, not simply because these people are disadvantaged, but because the talent of some of them is beyond dispute.

My favourite paintings from this exhibition are a series depicting sumo wrestlers. The figures are dramatised by large curves, enhancing the contours of the tensed muscles. Bodies are painted with patches of bright colours, making the painting more vivid and vibrant than ever.

Technically, there is no entrance fee for the exhibition. There is however a suggested donation amount and we do hope that you adopt that suggestion.

The next time you are in Selfridges, instead of absorbing yourself in a shopping adrenaline rush, why not come by the exhibition or the shop in the ground floor called Wonder Room to relax, drink some coffee, enjoy art and donate your money to something more meaningful.

**The Museum of Everything Exhibition #4 runs until 25th October 2011 at Selfridges on 400 Oxford Street.**

↳ Zoe Leung

## East London: Photomonth 2011

With the recent opening of the 2011 Photomonth, October and November are going to be two of the busiest months for the East London photographic scene. It is along the always amusing Brick Lane, covered up by some of London's most famous graffiti and home to more vintage shops than you will ever be able to discover, that there are the many galleries hosting this year's Photomonth. The Photomonth is indeed the most inclusive photography festival in the city, featuring works by emerging as well as established artists.

The Bohemian air that can be breathed walking from Whitechapel Road to Shoreditch High Street is in perfect harmony with the photographic artworks that are now in exhibition in more than one hundred galleries across the East End. Even though the Photomonth does not have one main theme and the galleries are not linked by the same ideological thread, the artworks in exhibition do seem to have jumped on the same train of thought.

The large majority of photographs are documentary, portraying the lives of people – their daily vicissitudes, their joy and suffering, their neglected existence in the modern world. There are not many bright colours. With high unemployment rates striking the world in recent years and an economy vacillating on the stock exchange, many of these young artists speaking from their own experiences rarely choose bright colours over darker ones such as an ocean deep blue, algae green or a simple black and white. Through the images these artists are portraying, we, as spectators and as students who will have the world's economy in our hands, can be given an enriching source for further thought. For decades photography has



Photograph of Phil Maxwell's Brick Lane Launderette, London, 1983 in exhibition at Rough Trade East

been radically changing the way we perceive the world and continues to do so today.

While solitude, incomprehension and fear are often a theme for those photographs, several artists are instead able to evoke in their pictures the beauty of a simple life, a concept which although of primary importance, is often forgotten by youngsters whose obsessions are often encircling the God of Money. But the beauty of innocent children playing football on an empty road, perhaps right there along Brick Lane, is incomparable just like the smiles, big and wide, on those children's faces.

One of the Photomonth's highlights and one of the most influential documentary photographers represented is Phil Maxwell, whose exhibition is entitled 40 Years On – A Retrospective. This exhibition opened the Photomonth in late September and is co-hosted at the Bishopsgate Institute, home to a beautiful and quiet library, and at Rough Trade East, a favourite record store for 60s-70s vinyls and of post-rock and indie music lovers.

It is definitely a unique experience to be able to contemplate Phil Maxwell's photographs while being submerged at first among old books

inebriating the senses with a smell very much resembling an eighteenth century memory and then among post-rock music records that remind us of what the future could sound like.

Phil Maxwell's photographs serve as a documentary portraying the life and culture of the East End of London from the 70s to the present day. To a certain extent, Maxwell could be named the genuine photographer of Brick Lane as hardly anyone has been able to fully document this long stretch of road better than him. Mainly due to the multicultural features of the East End, Maxwell was able to capture the diversity as well as express his

own interpretation of society, human relationships, culture and class. His photographs try “to capture and celebrate the reality of life as it is for the majority of the people”, life as it really is among the people living a simple, but not easy life.

One of the most famous photographs is the Brick Lane Launderette, London (1983), exhibiting at Rough Trade East. It is a photograph bursting with passion, easily comparable with Robert Doisneau's Kiss by the Hotel de Ville (1950). Other photographs you should not miss are Man with Teddy Bear, Cheshire Street (1984), also at Rough Trade East, Children on Housing Estate, Liverpool (1979), and Conversation in Lodge Lane Pub, Liverpool (1981), exhibiting at the Bishopsgate Institute.

**Phil Maxwell's 40 Years On – A Retrospective runs until 30 November 2011 at both the Bishopsgate Institute Library and at Rough Trade East Record Store on Brick Lane.**

Something else you do not want to miss is photographer Simon Roberts's Photomonth lecture. Through the lecture and his photographs of the British landscape, Roberts aims to express his opinion on public life, from the most extreme to the most mundane activities. At the lecture he will also be introducing the first London screening of his new video installation, “Landscapes of Innocence and Experience”.

**Simon Roberts's Photomonth lecture is at 19:00 on 27 October at Whitechapel Gallery**

↳ Roberta Cucchiario

# Rashômon and Seventeen Other Stories by Ryunosuke Akutagawa

Akutagawa is a name probably familiar to Japanese students and admirers of Japanese culture. My own dawning curiosity for ancient Asian culture, particularly artistic taste, is what drew me to this collection of short stories. But until I noticed the book on a friend's desk I'd never even heard his name. "It's the best thing I've ever read," he said with glowing eyes – this from a person who is remarkably well read.

"The best thing I've ever read" in relative terms seems reserved for books with sentimental value. For, if critical criteria did exist, it could really only be applied once you have read everything you ever will, days before death or senility.

Nonetheless, every once in a while a reader can stumble upon something capable of appalling previous norms, in describing a universe you had no inkling of, with a thus far unheard lyricism.

Akutagawa's artistry is sharp, capable of creating 'pictures of the floating world' with a few strokes of his brush, with the compelling, sensi-

tive and also stark simplicity so seemingly characteristic of Japanese art. His stories are a provoking exploration of samurai mentality or 'Bushido': the uncompromising nobility of his characters begins to transcend social interaction and become something sublime, inhumanly artistic. As does the absurd and grotesque. I particularly recommend *In a Bamboo Grove* for its existential reflection on the nature of human isolation.

As a collection of short stories, the book does not require a lot of commitment, it's an easy read – on the underground en route to campus or in a spare hour between classes. Akutagawa nonetheless preserves his ability to shock and simulate. Access to an author Murakami describes as 'a writer of genuinely national stature' should be an appetising opportunity to lovers of literature and the curious alike!

£12.99, Paperback, Penguin Classics

↳ Rachel Holmes



Rashômon sketch for theatrical study by Steve Loya, 2007

## The Perpetual Virginity of the Soul: Maud Gonne and William Butler Yeats – A Tragedy

Maud Gonne, notable in her own right for activism during the Irish struggle for Home Rule, enjoys another type of immortality, one which only poets can bestow. Upon their meeting in 1889, W. B. Yeats fell immediately love-struck, dedicating thereafter innumerable poems to her infamous charisma and beauty. His meeting with Maud Gonne, and the unrequited love subsequently contracted, proved catalytic for Yeats's artistic career: "it seems to me that she [Gonne] brought into my life those days... the middle of the tint, a sound as of a Burmese gong, an over-powering tumult that had yet many pleasant secondary notes."

Over the course of a decade, Yeats proposed to Gonne four times, in 1891, 1899, 1900 and 1901, but was each time rejected, supposedly because of his reluctance to participate in nationalist activism. In 1903, Gonne married the Irish nationalist Major John MacBride instead, prompting a vicious afflux of poetry written to humiliate the new husband. Gonne's further conversion

to Catholicism drove another nail into the coffin of any relationship, despite continued contact.

However, the marriage fell apart early on. MacBride was supposedly an alcoholic, although at court Gonne's only substantial grievance was that her husband had been drunk once. Divorce fell through and separation was granted instead.

Finally, after prolonged confidence and heartache, Yeats and Gonne consummated their relationship in 1908. Yet this keenly anticipated event proved in some spiritual sense a disappointment for Yeats, who later remarked "The tragedy of sexual intercourse is the perpetual virginity of the soul".

The relationship didn't progress beyond this shared night in Paris, despite a further and final proposal in 1916 (MacBride had been executed for his involvement in the 1916 Uprising), with Gonne instead remaining relegated to the lines of Yeats's verse and his imagination.

↳ Rachel Holmes

### No Second Troy

Why should I blame her that she filled my days  
With misery, or that she would of late  
Have taught to ignorant men most violent ways,  
Or hurled the little streets upon the great,  
Had they but courage equal to desire?  
What could have made her peaceful with a mind  
That nobleness made simple as a fire,  
With beauty like a tightened bow, a kind  
That is not natural in an age like this,  
Being high and solitary and most stern?  
Why, what could she have done, being what she is?  
Was there another Troy for her to burn?

↳ W. B. Yeats



Maud Gonne, 1901

## Why I Love... Breaking Bad

Breaking Bad, a rather unusual name for a television show, is a Southern colloquialism from the United States, meaning to go off the rails, to raise hell. The show's protagonist, Walter White, (Bryan Cranston, best known for his roles in *Seinfeld* and *Malcolm in the Middle*) does exactly that when he turns to a life of crime following his diagnosis of stage IIIA lung cancer. Having taught high school chemistry for most of his life, and with an unexpected second child on the way, Walt decides to use chemistry to provide financial stability for his family when he's gone: by cooking methamphetamine.

With a DEA agent for a brother-

in-law, Walt goes on a ride-along to a drug bust, only to see one of his former chemistry students sneaking away from the crime scene. Walt, who doesn't have much of a business head for the drug trade, proposes a partnership with former student Jesse (Aaron Paul). Thus, we have an odd couple forged in black comedy heaven. The unlikely partnership of a staid, unassuming chemistry teacher and a lazy street urchin is the source of much comedy throughout the show.

Any show with a cancer-sufferer as the lead will verge into depressing territory every so often, but *Breaking Bad* is far from a melancholic slice of television. Indeed, the show is

drama, thriller and comedy all at once. Despite the fact that Jesse, Walt's partner, doesn't know how to use a gun even by the second season, the show does not shy away from violence, with some particularly gruesome scenes in season one. The scriptwriters's skill at creating tension is fantastic, with even the most innocuous of devices employed: in the second season even the ringing of a bell (of the sort you might find at a hotel reception) is used to great effect. The contrast of these scenes with the more touching ones involving the relationship between Walt and his wife, Skyler, is striking.

One of the most satisfying aspects of the show is witnessing the meta-

morphosis of Bryan Cranston's character. Walt changes from a man who has been downtrodden his whole life into what his son describes as a 'badass'. One such moment is when teenage boys in a shopping mall are mocking his son, who has cerebral palsy. Old Walt, who would normally walk away at such a scene, gives way to New Walt, who starts a fight instead. When an obnoxious, BMW-driving, Bluetooth headset-wearing man steals his parking space, he calmly destroys his car.

A recurring theme in the show is contrast. The contrast between the peacefulness of suburbia and the drug war that rages in so many inner cities

in the US. The contrast between an unassuming teacher and the fearless cook of crystal meth that Walt quickly becomes. The contrast between appearances and reality. To give some perspective to the extent of its critical acclaim, it has often been compared to *The Sopranos* and *The Wire*, and yet, the show has not reached such a wide audience here in the UK. *The Wire* and *The Sopranos* are long gone, but *Breaking Bad* started in 2008 and has been renewed for a fifth and final season for 2012, so if you're looking for something in the same veins then this might be for you.

↳ Simon Chaudhuri

### The Hunt for Tony Blair

Channel 4, 21:00, Friday

A sixty minute film portraying Prime Minister Tony Blair (Stephen Mangan), wanted for murder and on the run. Escaping from Number 10 and leaving behind his adoring wife Cherie (Catherine Shepherd), Tony vows to clear his name no matter what the consequences.

### The Mentalist

Sky Atlantic, 22:00, Wednesdays

After the ambiguous end to the last season, the fourth starts in prison where Patrick Jane (Simon Baker) is serving a sentence for killing his nemesis and must now prove that the man he shot really was Red John.

### Southland

E4, 21:00, Thursdays

A character-driven drama rather than the police procedural you would expect from the US, with Seth from the OC (Benjamin McKenzie) playing an unrecognisable rookie cop who battles crime in a less glamorous and a more authentic Los Angeles.

### Modern Family

Sky1, 20:00, Fridays

Now several episodes into the third season, this family life based comedy has just seen the introduction of David Cross as a councilman. Phil spends the day with Haley on a tour of his old college, while Manny must sit down for a serious conversation with Gloria and Jay.

TV Tips for the week

# The dangers of late night fast food

Have you ever been to your favourite kebab shop in the light of day? Have you ever gone in and ordered your all-time favourite after-club snack? Suddenly this manna from heaven, in the light of day, becomes something that most of us wouldn't touch with a stick, let alone eat.

Just in case you didn't know, drinking is bad for you. Worse still, it's the combination of drinking and then going out for that greasy kebab that we all seem to crave. Simply look into any late-night fast food joint and they are overrun with drunken people looking to get their fatty food fix. And it's not just kebabs – it's everything from KFC to Burger King. At the end of the night we all seem to crave food that we know is bad for us.

For a lot of people, eating junk food simply isn't an issue. Many just don't care that they are eating food that is bad for them. I am not one of these people. I am not an obsessive calorie counter, but I am someone who after two years of university (eating and drinking whatever I like) is starting to think more and more about being healthy. I know that I will never stop going out – you need to go out to recharge your warrior spirit so you can drag yourself into the library every day. What you can do is cut out

the most unhealthy part of going out – the late night snack.

For the sceptics who do not believe that the late night binge is that bad for you, I will provide a simple example. The average kebab contains 1,000 calories. A 150-pound man burns 100 calories per mile walked. This means that in order to fully burn off a kebab you will have to walk ten miles. To put this into spatial terms, walking 10 miles is the equivalent of walking from the LSE to The O2 arena. And as anyone who has been knows, that's a long bus ride, let alone a long walk (which would take about 3 hours, assuming you knew where you were going).

The story is much the same with other types of fast food. A Big Mac with fries and a Coke comes to around 1,010 calories. At Domino's, a medium Americano has 248 calories per slice. This means that if you eat an entire pizza (8 slices) you will have had 1,984 calories, and that's before you factor in toppings. A Burger King XL Bacon Double Cheeseburger has 933 calories even before fries and soft drink. If you're just getting regular chip shop chips you're looking at 956! And that's just the calories – it's not taking into account the low nutritional value and the high amounts of fat and salt.

However, there is good news for

those of us who like to eat after few drinks. Eating late at night is not, as the myth says, worse for you than eating during the daytime. While it's true that if you exercise during the day you are more likely to burn off the calories you have eaten, eating at night in itself is not especially unhealthy. What matters is that you stay within your recommended calorie intake (which is 2,000 calories for women and 2,500 for men). This does not mean that you should starve yourself during the day so that you do not go over your calorie intake at night, because eating at regular meal times helps you regulate the amount of food you eat. So the good news is that eating junk food is always bad for you, not just at night.

The bad news, for those of us who like a late night snack, is that, after four units of alcohol the ability for your brain to regulate food intake decreases. The alcohol affects the hypothalamus gland in our brains, making us crave high-fat foods in larger quantities than we normally would. Combine this with the reduction in inhibitions that also comes with alcohol and we are far more likely to eat unhealthy and normally unappealing food.

So, what are the alternatives to getting a kebab? If you are determined to go down the Mediterranean route, you can always get falafel. While being reasonably high in calories at 376, it can boast a higher nutritional value than a kebab, especially if you have a couple of vegetables chucked in – and they taste amazing. And if you're really hungry I would suggest a curry. While you can't exactly say they're healthy due to the large amount of ghee, you can still have a slightly healthier meal. Popular favourites like Rogan Josh and Jalfrezi can be reasonably healthy and they provide vitamin C and antioxidants like lycopene. Order some saffron rice alongside (335 calories) and you have yourself a delicious meal. So, the next time you're out and craving flavoursome food, head to your local curry house, especially if you're near Brick Lane, where you are practically guaranteed a decent curry.

To be honest, after a few drinks most people aren't going to resist that



A healthy silverbeet, broccoli & leek stir-fry

kebab at the end of the night. Beer goggles work just as well for food as they do for the opposite sex. However, if you're like me and are trying to live a little healthier this year, rethink your kebab eating ways and spring for an alternative.

## Do it yourself

The obvious alternative to getting a takeaway is cooking at home. For those of you who like getting for too drunk to cook, I suggest cooking something that holds well in the fridge and then simply reheating it like steaks. Simple enough.

For those of you who are slightly more confident in their ability to handle fire when intoxicated, my favourite simple snack is popcorn. Now I'm not talking about the type that you microwave, although that is an option, but processed popcorn can be high in fat and other things that you are trying to leave in the kebab shop. In itself, popcorn is low in fat and high in fibre – and is delicious. Just buy some cheap popcorn kernels from the supermarket, get your wok out and fill the base with popcorn. Add a splash of oil to the pan and then cover with foil. Then turn on the heat and shake the

pan over the heat until the popcorn has stopped popping. It is important to keep moving the pan, otherwise the popcorn will settle and burn – this is where the shape of the wok comes in handy. Be sure to continue shaking when you take the popcorn off the heat and then pour into a bowl. Top with a pinch of salt and some grated cheese and you've got delicious popcorn. If you like garlic, chop a knob of butter in a bowl with a crunched clove in the microwave until the butter has melted. The best thing about this is that you can regulate the amount of toppings, so it is as healthy as you want. The entire process can take less than ten minutes.

For those who are a little more adventurous and are absolutely sure that they can be trusted to wield a knife and handle hot pans, the sky's the limit. Even so, you might want to keep it simple. My favourite thing to cook after a night out is a simple stir-fry. Just add some vegetables to a wok and sauté with butter, soy sauce and garlic, before adding noodles or rice. It's delicious, you get some nutrition, and it's probably even quicker than a kebab in a crowded, rowdy take-away.

↳ Max Jenkins



A lamb doner kebab on bread

# The Coach and Horses, Whitefriars Street

Drab red is the order of the day when one turns off Fleet Street and enters the Coach and Horses. Old worn leather and carpets, even the bar mats have the same tired red shade. This would have been fine if the seating area had been stocked with tables and various ancillaries, but there are glaring gaps. Some with slightly fresh indentations indicating the recent presence of some furniture, due to which the pub gives off the feel of a bizarre Darwinian experiment – survival of the fittest, or in this case the sturdiest, table. I suppose one could take comfort in the fact that the nearest furniture weapon to hand is likely to be able to be used for multiple swings, but on the flip side you could conceivably be battered for far longer than you were anticipating by that odd shifty bloke wielding the small barstool.

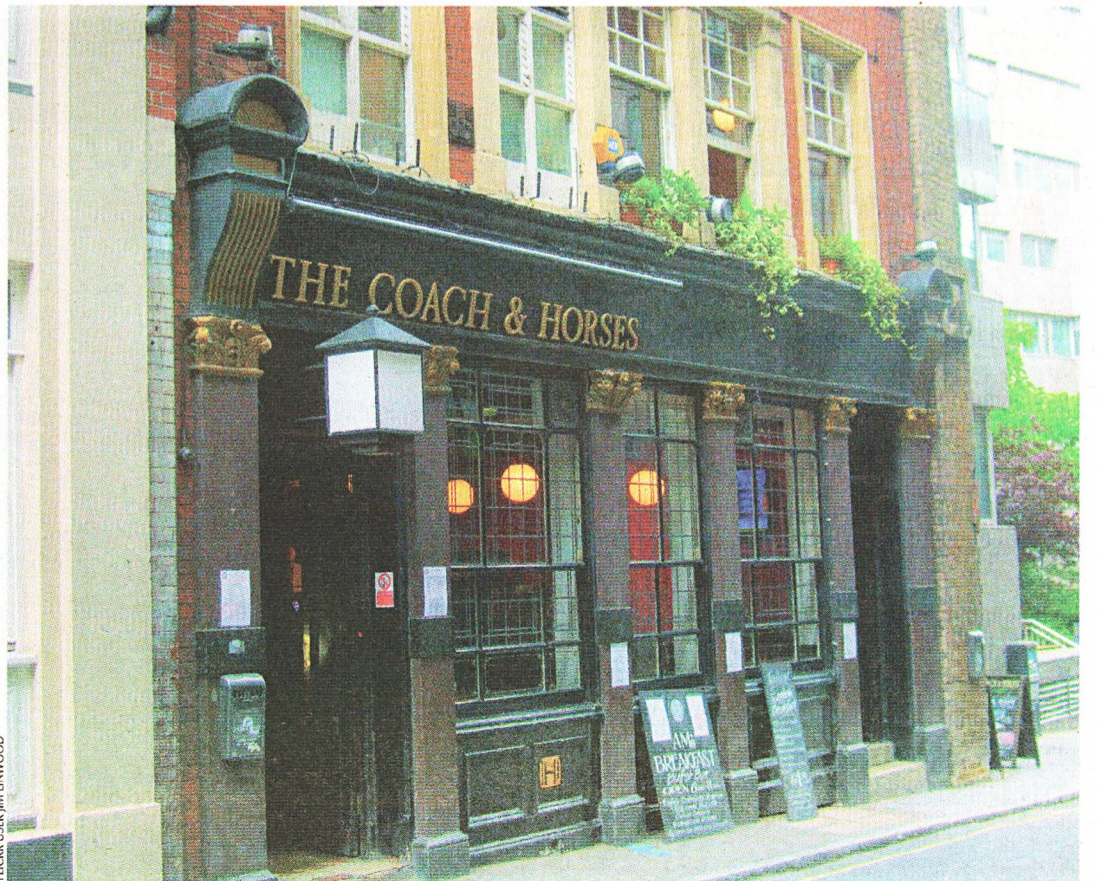
From the outside, the pub looks like a bank, not at all like the coaching inn the name would suggest. Then you see the awfully modern sign hanging from above the door, with those terrible words 'Greene King'. You might as well replace that with "Shit IPA served here, mediocre Lager too". I'm sure an advertising team with people probably named Kevin and Byron could spend several hours working on something snappier, but you get the point. I had a Hardy and Hamptons instead, nothing special – a marginal improvement on the usual stuff hawked by Greene King as ale. It had a good hue, but little else. There's also a worrying amount of vodka behind the bar, making you instantly hesitant to visit late – it

changes when the sun goes down. Mister inconspicuous probably has a Ford Mondeo somewhere nearby. With a shed load of law firms situated next door, the relatively cheap price and lack of pretensions this place fills up around home-time. Factor in the long term refurbishment of part of the upstairs and it can get very packed at certain times of the day.

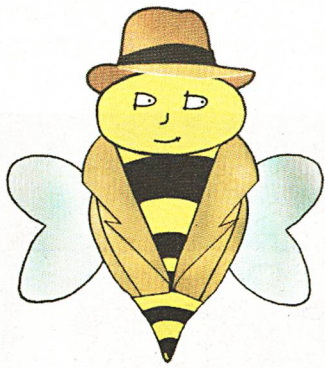
Behind the bar there are a series of interesting knickknacks and leather bound books, all of which look like they've been untouched for several years. Aside from the fantastically engraved mirror behind the bar, there is little I would recommend about this pub. Maybe the coat hangers at the bar, but they were so low to the ground I doubt any reasonable man would use them. The staff were friendly, but on the brusque side. In terms of recommendations they were able to point and tell me the name of each variety of drink they could serve – it's a start.

Apparently, if you want to inflict terrible beer on your friends, or enemies, the pub can be hired out. Short of having a gun held to my head I can't figure out why you would. Especially when somewhere like the Knights Templar is just up the street. The pub should be a place to relax, but I was never at ease in this establishment. I were to go back with friends, I'd probably try and steer the group to one of the many establishments nearby – I'd take a chance on finding a nicer atmosphere around the corner.

↳ Matthew Worby

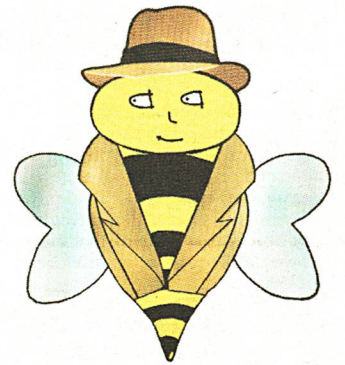


The Coach and Horses, Whitefriars Street



# PRIVATE B

## UNION CONVERGE FOR DEMONSTRATION



### High Turnout at LSE100 Lecture

Students packed the Peacock Theatre for the weekly LSE100 Lecture on Monday, eager to catch the first appearance on campus of a man who many felt would not come back to the School since his resignation over the Libya scandal last March.

However, if Dr. (?) Saif al-Islam Gaddafi was worried about the reception that he would receive from students, it failed to materialise as he bounded onto stage with the same manic energy seen at his central Tripoli comeback gig in August.

"It is great to be back at the LSE!" Dr. Gaddafi started, "Although it was a nightmare getting here on the Tube" he said to widespread laughter before beginning the lecture on his speciality subject of Potemkin Democracy.

Students were evenly split with regard to allowing Dr. Gaddafi to be welcomed back onto campus mere months after being disgraced. However, few were in doubt that the lecture itself was a remarkably lucid one.

"Normally, I'd have thrown a shoe at the murdering traitor to my country", University of Benghazi exchange student Abdul Mahmood told the B, "But the PowerPoint he did was really



interesting. Also, he'd printed out the lecture notes for everyone, so that was nice of him. Lord Stern never did that."

The lecture concluded with a brief question-and-answer session in which Dr Gaddafi defended his argument against the audience. Sixteen students

who originally argued against his arguments have since left the School following an investigation into their academic credentials.

Despite an almost universally popular reception from the students present, Dr Gaddafi's forty-five minute presentation did not get such a

positive response elsewhere. Writing in the Daily Mail, former Foreign Secretary David Miliband stated, "The report into Dr Gaddafi's associations with the internationally rejected Howard Duvets' regime has not concluded. As a result, it is perhaps not suitable for him to be allowed back to

Our mediocre micro-poet has been really 'on' target this week in getting his Haiku to us. Sadly his work still leaves something to be desired.

### Union Rubbishō

Sat in UGM  
Autumn leaves me cold because  
There are fewer speakers than  
syllables,  
Damn, too long again

the school at this juncture."

Despite this criticism from elements of the political arena, Dr. Gaddafi was upbeat following his first of three lectures for the LSE100 Course.

"The whole affair with the Duvets directorship is still a source of regret for me" he later told the B. The school is now under the interim leadership of General Rees.

L Tanned Ale

## Those Rejected LSESU App Proposals in Full...

### 1. NEWS

Once again will leave you shaking your head and thanking your lucky stars that you're only paying three grand a year.

### 2. CALENDAR

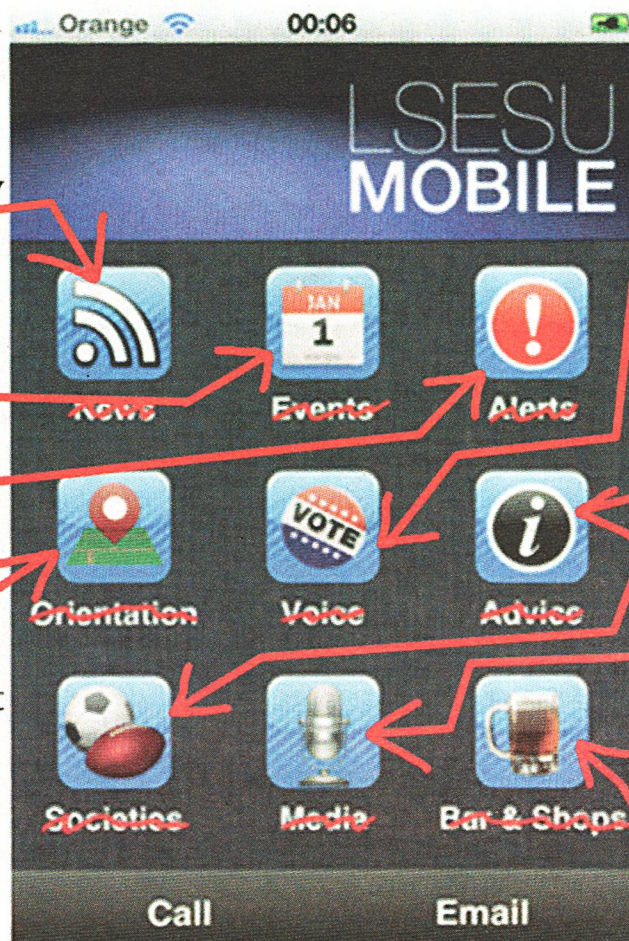
Reminders about UGM, as if you care...

### 3. CONSTRUCTION NOISE WARNING

Constantly on

### 4. FIND MY FRESHER

Gives the location of the nearest First Year having a mental breakdown. Accurate to three meters.



### 5. VOTING PORTAL

Removed owing to lack of interest.

### 6. INFORMATION

That fucking Guinness advert in the Tuns is on AGAIN

### 7. SPORT PORTAL

[Insert sexist/homophobic joke here]

### 8. PuLSE LINK

Bringing you the best tunes of the 1980s, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, two weeks a year

### 9. FOOD AND DRINK

The HOTTEST places to get botulism on campus.

Arrows inspired by LSE Campus tours

# Features

## Rock and Roll Revolution

**Başak Arslan** looks at the powerful relationship between music and politics

**M**usic is not only a type of entertainment but it is also a tool for global communication and, in that sense, we can harness its power for freedom of expression. Where freedom of expression is concerned, one cannot think of any subject but politics. Thus, the fusion of music and politics has always been inevitable. There has long been a history of music aiding political causes and politics inspiring musicians.

Even classical musicians used their lyric-less compositions as a means of expressing their political opinions. Beethoven's Third Symphony is a rather quirky example of political activism; Beethoven, who was an admirer of the French Revolution, considered Napoleon Bonaparte to be the embodiment of the ideals behind it. With this admiration in mind, he named his composition "Bonaparte." However, when Napoleon became the First Consul and later declared himself Emperor of the French in May 1804, the composer tore apart the title page of the composition in an outburst of rage; "So he is no more than a common mortal! Now, too, he will tread under foot all the rights of man, indulge only his ambition; now he will think himself superior to all men, become a tyrant!" Hence, he changed the title to "Sinfonia Eroica." Verdi's opera, "Nabucco," on the other hand, is regarded as a watchword for "il Risorgimento," the movement that brought about the country's unification. With the chorus of the Hebrew slaves, "Nabucco" urged the Italians to get rid of the Austrian and French domination. As deference, Verdi was offered a seat at the parliament after

**Even classical musicians used their lyric-less compositions as a means of expressing their political opinions.**

the unification.

During the first half of the 20th century, political expression in music lost its ground due to the social oppression of the world at war. Although many songs criticizing World War I and World War II were composed decades after the events took place, only a few political songs were written during the period.

The manifestation resurfaced with a blast in the late 1960's and early 1970's with the new leadership of John

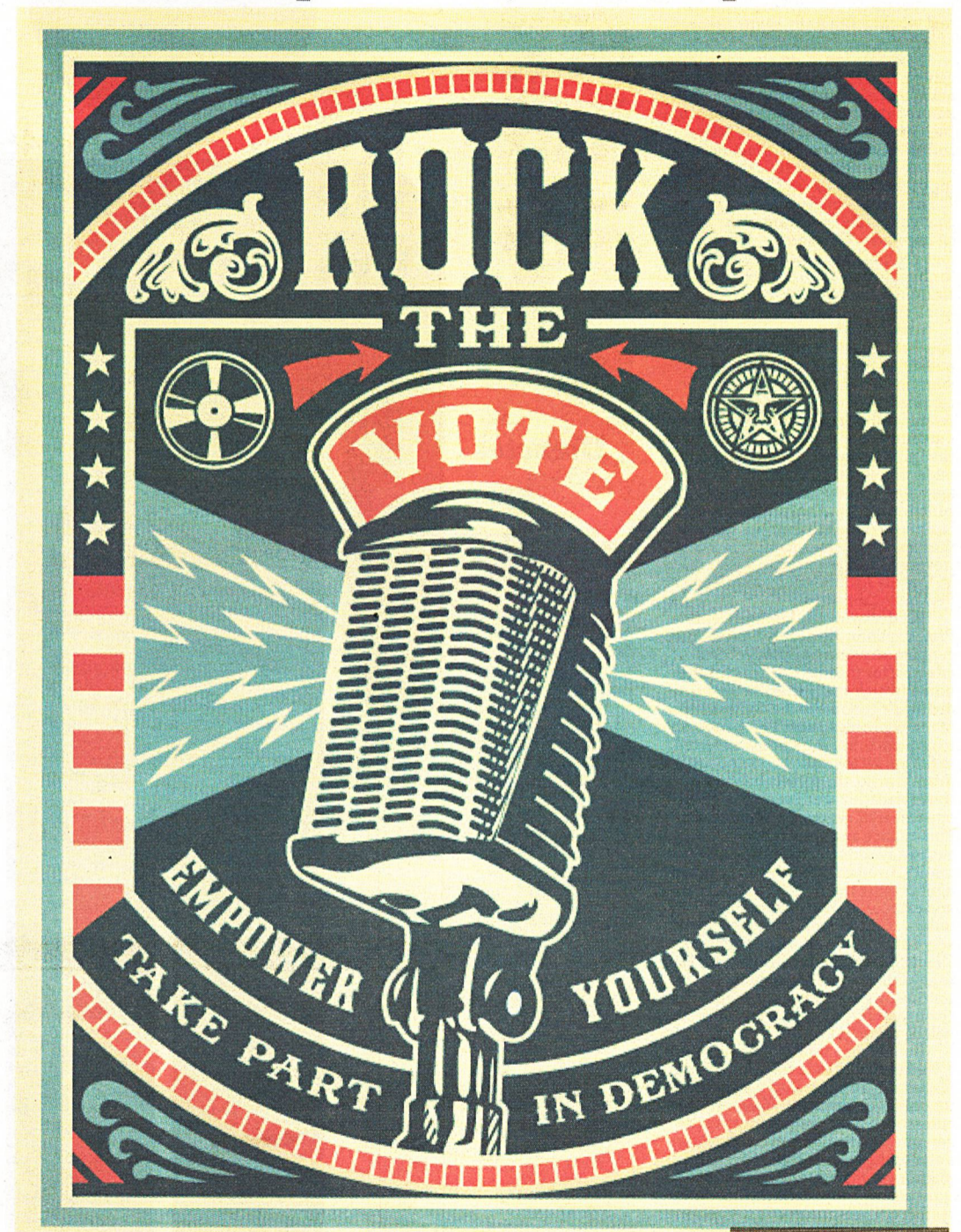
Lennon and various punk rock groups. Lennon's political and philosophical song "Imagine", became the most influential song of all time, according to Rolling Stone magazine. When asked about the song, Lennon stated, "With 'Imagine' we're asking, can you imagine a world without countries or religions? It's the same message over and over. And it's positive."

The Vietnam War, which drew broad criticism from the public, inspired many artists, including Lennon. As a reaction to the Vietnam war, "Give Peace a Chance" became an anthem for the flower children with its iconic line, "All we are saying is give peace a chance!" Moreover, the British punk rock band The Clash criticized the abandonment of Vietnamese children fathered by American soldiers in their song "Straight to Hell" with the lyrics: "When it's Christmas time in Ho Chi Minh city, Kiddie says papa-san take me home, See me got photo of you and mama-san."

Meanwhile, the BBC banned the song "God Save the Queen" by The Sex Pistols, the band that triggered the punk movement, due to its equation of the British monarchy to fascism. Although the title of the song was directly taken from the British national anthem, the lyrics claimed that England had no future under the monarchy. A few years later, the Australia band "Midnight Oil" became the first to raise the issue of environment with their lyrics, "How can we dance when our earth is turning? How do we sleep while our beds are burning?" in their song "Beds are Burning."

The Troubles, a period of unrest in Ireland during the 1970s, was criticized in many songs of the period. Former band mates Paul McCartney and John Lennon expressed different views on the issue via their songs. However, the most striking song related to the Irish rebellion and Bloody Sunday events came from the Irish band U2 in 1983 with "Sunday Bloody Sunday" from their album "War." Contrary to popular belief, the song was not a rebel song but rather urged politicians to find a solution to this dispute without violence or brutality. In response, Sinead O'Connor released a song titled "This is a Rebel Song," "I love you my hard Englishman, Your rage is like a fist in my womb."

The politically charged 1980s also hosted many charity-based political activism events within the music industry. After seeing the news reports about the famine in Ethiopia, Bob Geldof and his colleague Midge Ure co-wrote the song "Do They Know It's Christmas?" Later on, Geldof formed a group called "Band Aid", consisting of 43 influential musicians of the era including David Bowie, George Michael, Paul McCartney, Bono and Sting. Band Aid recorded the song written by Ure and Geldof and the record, which was released on 29 November 1989, became the biggest selling single in the history of the UK music charts, selling one million copies in the first week. The follow up project was "Live Aid", a dual venue concert held simultaneously at Wembley Stadium in London and JFK Stadium in Philadelphia. 172,000 people attended the concert and an estimated of 1.9 million people across



Flickr user: Rock the Vote

the globe watched the live broadcast.

The 1990s however, was a rather barren decade for political activism in music in comparison to the previous ones. The artists of the infamous Gen-

**Political analyses appeals to a few, but musical appeals to all.**

eration X abstracted themselves from the political environment by choosing

to reflect personal problems. However, the feminist "Riot Grrrl" movement brought the issue of women's rights into consideration and triggered the third wave of feminism. Furthermore, Sonic Youth criticized how women were turned into a commodity by listing the names of the female models featured in the 1992 Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Issue in their song "Swimsuit Issue."

After the lull in the 1990s, protest songs found renewed popularity around the world following the 9/11 attacks and the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan. The former president of the United States, George Bush, was the "inspiration" for various artists. R.E.M., who had composed many political songs during the 80s, released "Final Straw" in 2003 as a response to US actions in Iraq. Even Eminem

directed three songs to Bush: "Mosh," "We are Americans" and "White America." In the UK, George Michael's anti-Blair single 'Shoot the Dog' became highly controversial due to its video in which Blair was characterised as President Bush's dog.

The common pattern observed from all of the previous examples is an unsurprising one: the volume and popularity of politically charged songs tends to increase around periods of important global events. By criticizing or questioning the controversial problems and integrating them into song, musicians take a crucial role in raising awareness. Although their songs reflect their own opinion, they also effectively publicise current issues. Deep political analysis and discussion appeals to a certain of people, but music appeals to all. ☛

# I'll take my chances

Edward Larkin explores a website that calculates your personal risk of disease

Last Friday started much as any other morning would. Given that this is the year 2011, the typical morning routine, consisting of showering, dressing and such, also includes checking Gmail.

Waiting for me incongruously between "Seminar sign-up" and "Careers Newsletter" was the simple title "Your 23andMe results are ready." I opened the e-mail and clicked on the link – a simple connection between two points in cyberspace, yet with implications that would profoundly shape my sense of self.

23andMe is a direct-to-consumer genetic testing company. Each human being on the planet has 6 billion base pairs of genome – about 3 billion from each parent. Every cell in the body (minus red blood cells) contains all 6 billion – strings of chemicals consisting of the four base units A, G, C, and T. The consequences of even marginal changes to this "software of life" can be immense. For example, human beings are 99.4% genetically equivalent to chimpanzees, and the gene causing sickle cell anemia is brought about by just a single mutated base pair.

Around 10 years ago, scientists sequenced the entire human genome and published the results in the prestigious journals "Science" and "Nature." The completion of the human genome sequence brought with it great hope for a golden age of medicine in which disease predilections are understood at a molecular level, and targeted therapies are tailored directly to a person's own genetic makeup. That era, however, has not yet come to fruition. Indeed, the New York Times published a controversial article earlier this year titled "A Decade Later, Genetic Map Yields Few New Cures."

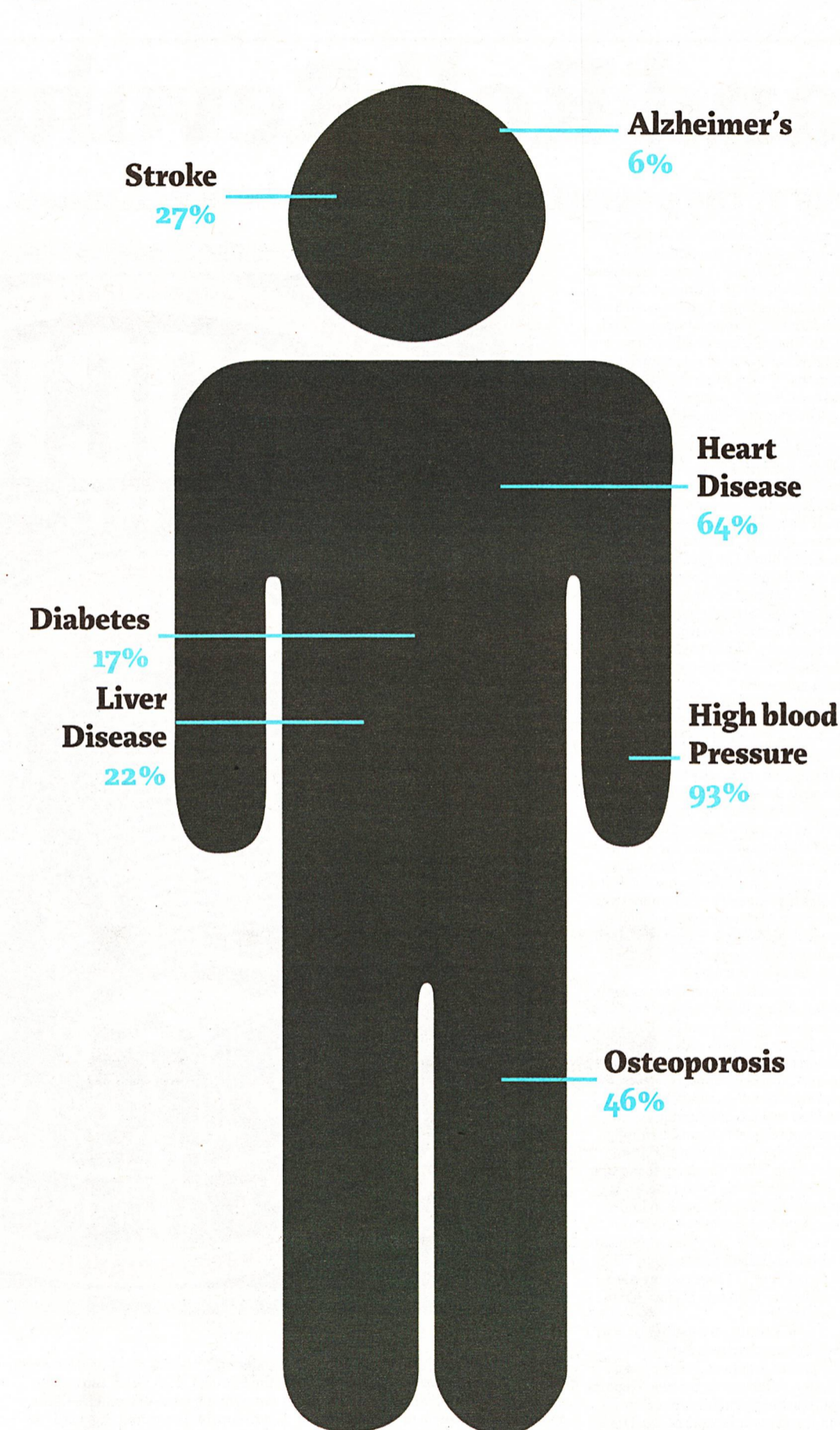
Yet declaring the Human Genome Project a failure is deeply flawed. First, genome sequencing is not yet cost-effective for the masses. This first genome (which really wasn't even an individual's genome, but a combination of many peoples') cost \$3,000,000,000 to sequence, but the price is expected to fall below the hallowed \$1,000 mark in 2013. Also, the project has had a transformational effect on basic biology research, where it has induced a renaissance and sprung new fields such as synthetic biology and bioinformatics, in addition to shedding much light on how the genome is regulated and expressed. The revolution will indeed come to medicine, most likely very soon. While grandiose predictions should be regarded cautiously, it's safe to say full genome sequencing will be routine by the mid twenty-teens. The corresponding advances in health care will be profound.

In the mean time, companies like 23andMe have taken the lead, offering fascinating insights into the genome for only \$99. 23andMe analyzes common "SNPs," tiny changes in the genome that result from changing one letter of the genetic code. Given the plethora of mutations that can occur – inversions, duplications, deletions – testing SNPs is analogous to checking a car's status by tire pressure alone. Yet, SNPs can often be powerful predictive tools – in many cases, they are inherited along with other large-scale mutations on the same chromosome.

After clicking on the link and signing in, I was greeted by a wealth of fascinating information about my genetic sequences – whether I was a "carrier" for certain genes (which means my children could be at risk), drug response information, and random personal facts. For example, since I am a slow caffeine metabolizer, caffeine increases my risk of heart attacks. Thus, perhaps I should think twice about coffee in the morning.

After thoroughly enjoying an initial scan of this data, I looked to the menu on the left and hesitantly clicked on a heading called "disease risk." This section lists the odds of developing many different diseases – whether I had high, low or typical odds. The fun was indeed finished.

Near the top of the page stood a line that read "Alzheimer's Disease." Unlike the other diseases, which con-



tained my risk percentage compared to that of the general population, and a confidence level, the "Alzheimer's Disease" line showed only a grey lock icon. I clicked. My heart began to pound, and I paused at the screen explaining how genes were simply part of the bigger picture, that there may be other genes involved that the one tested, etc. While I sincerely believe

that Alzheimer's will be both curable and preventable by the time I reach old age, people said that about cancer in the 1960s, and the "emperor of all maladies" has proved cunningly resistant and astonishingly complex. In one click I would be able to tell whether I had the famous variants of the APOE gene that cause heightened susceptibility to Alzheimer's. And unlike other

23andMe diseases, the APOE gene is well-suited for SNP analysis. Carrying two copies of the "e4" allele likely means an eleven times greater risk of Alzheimer's than the general population – thus, above 50 per cent. Even one copy of e4 would mean a twofold greater risk.

Part of the reason I was so nervous was because I had seen it before. Ear-

lier this year, a college friend showed me his results. As we were scrolling through, I joked, "So do you have the APOE variant?" not even knowing it was tested by 23andMe.

"Actually, yes, I do," he said, and scrolled upwards. There it was: Alzheimer's disease. Your risk – 14.2 per cent, in bright red type. Average risk – 7.2 per cent. All of a sudden, it didn't seem quite so funny anymore. I don't quite remember how I responded. Probably along the lines of "huh" or "OK."

While I waited to unlock my results, reality began to feel "thin", as author Stephen King would say. I was looking at a computer screen, and with a single click, I would be able to determine a fundamental part of my future. A click – a rote, mechanical action, an afterthought. That a single click on a man-made machine could even begin to convey such a fundamental reckoning is at least as poetic as it is disconcerting. I looked down at my finger and allowed it to push down slightly, then after a pause, all the way. "I understand, show me my results."

The next screen loaded. Your risk – 4.9 per cent. Average risk – 7.2 per cent. I was overwhelmingly relieved, I had two normal "e3" alleles. The feeling of elation lasted for the rest of the day.

The science behind Alzheimer's is far from conclusive, and there are many valid reasons to question 23andMe's simplistic analysis (one recent report even found that two "e4" alleles only increases risk about twofold). But I've often wondered about people that aren't so fortunate. What happens to those who find that they could have an eleven times greater risk for developing Alzheimer's? Maybe for my generation, that boundless optimism that things will work out tends to block out the mental burden. But perhaps you're 55 years old. What happens when you forget where the car keys are? What happens when you miss a lunch? Do you ever think the same way about memory again?

Some would no doubt say that arming consumers with such information is harmful. But this view inherently assumes that people are too fragile to understand their own genetics, a proposition with which I fundamentally disagree. Might direct-to-consumer genetic testing cause more paranoia among hypochondriacs, or even fear among us average people who get poor results? Sure. But it could also induce people to make beneficial lifestyle changes. It could also quiet as many hypochondriacs as it spawns. Indeed, the noted American cardiologist Eric Topol and colleagues published a paper earlier this year in the New England Journal of Medicine that reported no significant change in psychological health after utilizing direct-to-consumer genetic testing. The unfortunate fact of the matter is that we don't live in an ideal world – there are risks both ways. The inherent inertia we've developed over centuries by doing things haphazardly shouldn't be an argument against an embrace of new technology. Indeed, isn't pure uncertainty perhaps the most difficult thing to deal with? In the history of mankind, only now can we make inroads on truly changing that. For example, I've already cut down noticeably on caffeine.

So throw the doors open. Peer inside yourself. Spit into the 23andMe vial and unlock the treasure chest of previously unknown information about that most intimate object – your own physical body. You will likely find yourself joyful about some results. But there will undoubtedly also be fear about others. But if we have learned one thing since developing the capacity to consider our condition – our ultimately fragile yet transiently tough bodies, our physical finitude but peculiar ability to imagine the infinite, our happiness and suffering in the face of an apparently unresponsive universe – it is that joy and fear go hand in hand. Life has never, and will never, be devoid of either. So start spitting. ☘

# Save the NHS

**Akinyemi Nicholas Apampa** examines lessons learnt from the student protests

**H**ere are a few things I know; I know that students ran Millbank for an hour or two to protest about cuts on education spending and that was something. I know that we have our hearts in the right place. I know that this doesn't always make us right. I know we did everything we could to stop the cuts. I know they did it anyway.

I know that most students (current and prospective) thought that the new fees system would make going to university harder. Now I think that this is not necessarily the case. The obvious point is that there are still no upfront costs - in fact, there will be bigger grants for poor students. The most overlooked or under appreciated factor, I think, is that you will only pay nine per cent on earnings over and above £21,000 i.e you always have an untouchable £21,000 (set to rise with average incomes) to live on.

Of course, you'll pay more in the end. But quoting the 'total cost' of a debt paid over 30 years at varying rates dependent on your income is misleading. Every year the remaining amount will decrease in today's prices with inflation but increase with the RPI + (up to) three per cent interest. For me to delve frivolously into the unpredictability of inflation, RPI and their interactions over the next 30 years would be like trying to hit a tiny piñata, blindfolded with a metal bat, in a small and overcrowded room: a lot of swings, a lot of misses and a big bloody mess.

What I can say is that repayments will be spread in smaller portions over a longer time period; reducing the amount you could be liable to pay in

any one year. Under the old system at £22,000 you pay £52.50 a month, £630 annually. Under the new, you would pay £7.50 a month and only £90 annually. That's more money in your pocket

## Maybe there was nothing we could have done about the cuts, but we can learn from our mistakes

and you're likely to need it. Should things really go to pot, which many believe is perfectly likely, you can find shelter under that £21,000 for a few years rather than having to hide under the present system's £15,000.

But you tell any struggling young college student or her parents that a few years not earning (though increasing potential earnings) will cost £80,000 they will run a mile. Actually the family could spend less while the

student is away living on the loan and earn more if she gets a good job from her degree.

The middle classes may consider more cautiously the prospect of higher education and a few nepotistic parents of not-so-bright rich kids will skip the façade of sending their kids to university before they go into the family business or take a lifelong 'gap yah'.

I think this was the point: to cut university attendance and deter the 'wrong type of entrants' from applying. Unfortunately poorer students have been grouped with less academic students who want to do pointless (or prospect-less) subjects. Politicians created a system that was justifiable in parliament, but ultimately discourages poorer students from taking advantage of the closest thing they have to 'equal opportunities' (student loans and grants). If poorer students are tricked into retreating, once again, to the peripheries of higher education we will slip a little further down the slope from democracy to plutocracy.

We cannot change the fees system at this point. Not while the Tories are still in office. What we can do is go to schools and use our education to inform others on how they can still get university education if they want it.

Maybe there was nothing we could have done about the cuts, but we can learn from our mistakes. Certainly we raised awareness. Awareness of what exactly, though? Of the fact that students were against increasing the cost of studying?

Had we used our education we might have brought more people on side by pointing out that increasing the cost of higher education will reinforce the treacherous trend of upward

wealth redistribution seen in the UK over the last 30 years. We might have made more of a fuss about how the first private sector university in over 30 years was opened in 2010. Now professional private educator BPP is undercutting public university fees.

## I know that if our health service is transformed into a competitive market it will be profits over patients

One wonders whether private universities will teach students to question the relentless private sector drive for profits - a drive unencumbered by any concern for, well, people.

With the aggressive promotion of

Friedman's free-market, is it surprising that anything can be bought? Saif Gaddafi can buy a degree - even from the once socialist London School of Economics. The colonel can buy Howard. Murdoch can buy police and politicians and sell public opinion.

Now our health service is for sale. You may not believe it but ask yourself: why is Ali Parsa, ex Goldman Sachs banker, running Circle Health? Why is Circle Health running NHS hospitals? Will US private medical insurer, United Health - running the referral system for all Hounslow's GPs - be referring in the interests of patients or profits?

Every time a patient is referred to private practice over NHS, money from the public purse formerly allocated to the NHS is spent on the private sector. How can the NHS compete with a competitor that feeds off its losses?

Here are a few things I know: I know nobody wants to lose the NHS. I know NHS services are already closing; NHS staff already losing jobs. I know that if our health service is transformed into a competitive market it will be profits over patients. I know that for every private healthcare facility that opens we can expect more NHS services to close. I know that Ali 'Goldman' Parsa's Circle Health plans to open its new BP-funded hospital in Reading in 2012. I know we should not allow it.

## Warning: This article contains product placement

**Sanni Nissilä** weighs up the benefits of product placement

**N**ow that the laws on product placement have been loosened by the European Union, I am sure that I am not the only person suffering its consequences. Sure, we've been used to seeing it in the American media since the beginning of time, but it doesn't seem to fit so nicely into the European context.

At the beginning of every television programme, and after every advertising break, a little message at the bottom of the screen alerts me to the existence of product placement. I understand that this is an attempt to control any subconscious effects of the advertising, and an attempt to give people back the right to decide what they watch, but no one stops watching because of the tiny 'product placement' warning. It may even have the opposite effect - so we notice the products more than we would have, and hence the advertisers are given even more power. As I said earlier, in American TV shows, they have figured out how to slot it in without too much effort and in a way that doesn't distract us from the actual content of the show but Europe, being new to this, is still finding it a little bit awkward. When a car pulls up in the first scene, with the make and name much larger than they are in real life, and the number plate being the name of the car, some would argue it is simply taking things too far.

I don't mind advertising, in fact, I quite like it. On many occasions it has provided more entertainment than the programme itself, and being such a competitive industry it probably has more innovation than many others. But I don't like this new approach, trying to move the world of obvious adverts into one where only the subtle version can thrive. Hiding something right in front of me has never worked very well, especially if I have previously been alerted to its presence.

So far this is all a little one sided, and I cannot bemoan the negatives of product placement without recognizing some of its benefits. Making



Photo: Ahmed Alani

big companies pay for our TV shows is a great idea. If overtly showing a Coca-Cola can in a few scenes is the price we pay for the existence of that programme, then I would argue that viewers are the winners in this situation. With the many billion pounds of revenue lost due to pirated shows, all these wonderful new TV channels probably owe their existence to advertising. Product placement is only the next step forward if we wish to continue growing and modernizing the empire of media and television. Loosening the rules and laws do not by any standard mean complete lawlessness. Although Ofcom, the media watchdog, has had debatable levels of success, it still has a large say in media regulation and has stepped forward to claim responsibility and control. The area of product placement is not a free-for-all, but is still strictly regulated. By making sure that products do not have excessive prominence, we are saved from prospects of watching hour long adverts rather than the latest episode of our favourite TV-show.

So who gains in this situation? Having watched TV in a few countries I must say it depends very much on the skill of the producer, some countries being more skilled than others. While I am usually the first to defend my homeland, I have to admit Finland has botched a few good shows with the aforementioned painfully obvious product placement and viewers have probably suffered more than they have gained, unless you like having brands plastered across your television screen. Larger and more media-developed countries, who have been making their own programmes for longer have managed to slip products in almost seamlessly. While the advertiser gets what they want - ie. more screen time - so does the viewer; a new, better programme paid for by the advertiser. For those of you who absolutely detest any form of advertising; you still have the BBC.

# To QE or not to QE?

Matthew Edwards questions the Bank of England's decision to print money

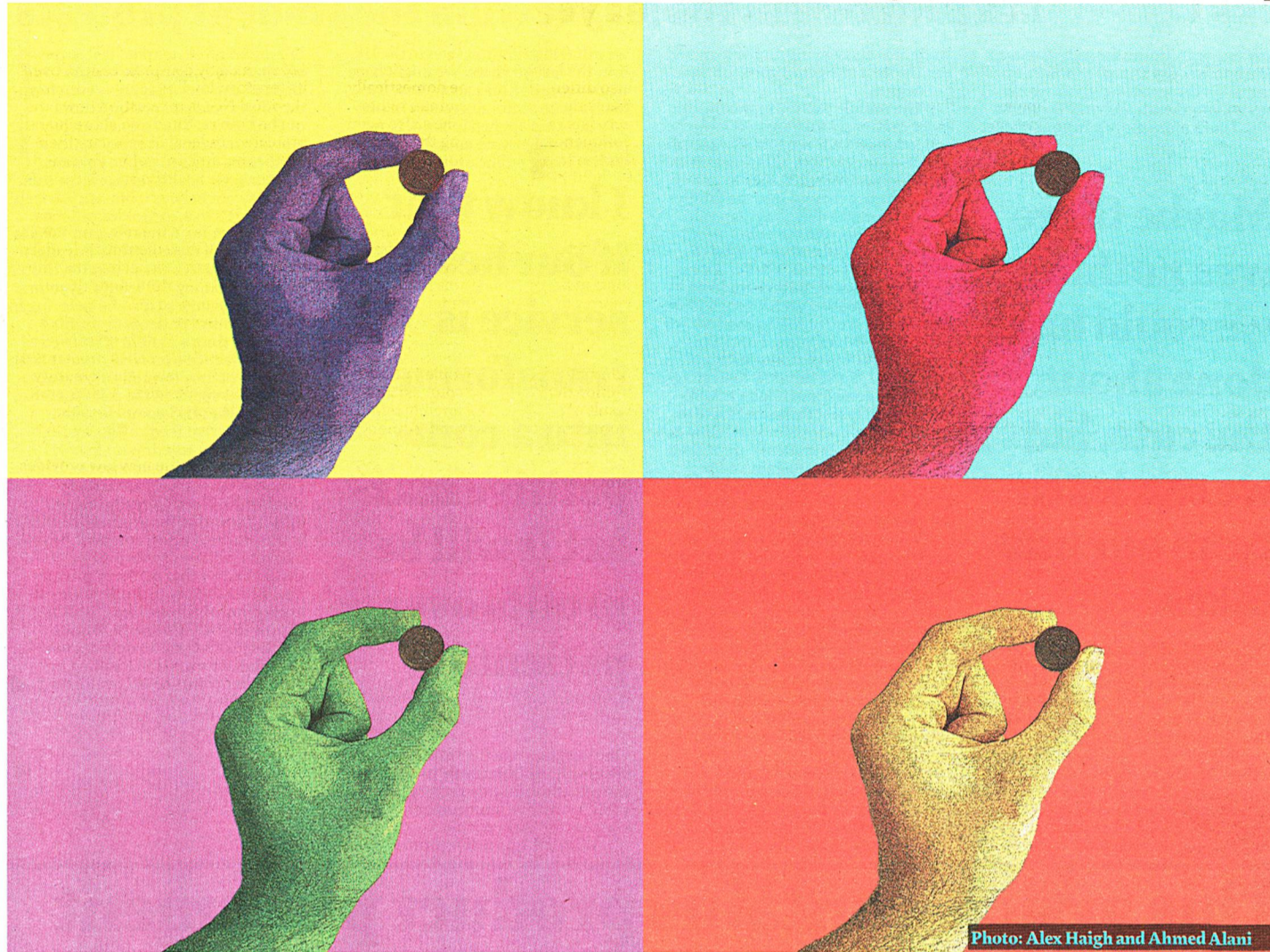


Photo: Alex Haigh and Ahmed Alani

Printing £75bn in cash does not sound like a plan to make us all richer. It sounds like a plan to turn us into Zimbabwe. But last week Mervyn King, Governor of the Bank of England, announced that printing hoards of notes is exactly what he will be doing. When complete, the Bank's Quantitative Easing, or QE, programme will have seen £275bn leave the printing presses, nearly £5000 for every person living in the UK.

Informing the Bank's decision is the news that, according to government statistics, more than two and half million people are now unemployed, including nearly a million young people. In fact, many students reading this will have chosen to come

to LSE because finding a job has been difficult. Urgent action is obviously needed to tackle this, but printing money is of dubious merit. Of course, there is some method behind the Bank of England's madness, especially from the perspective of a graduate.

The Bank's actions appear odd, even dangerous, only because of the rarity and extremity of our situation. In "normal" times the Bank doesn't announce how much money it will be printing, it just changes the interest rate at which it will lend. The target is to keep growth steady. If the economy is decelerating, they cut interest rates to encourage spending and if the economy is accelerating they raise interest rates to discourage spending. You can raise the interest rate as high

as you like, but can only cut it to zero, and that is where it's been since March 2009. This means they have to try and encourage spending through other methods.

Over the last nine months, the economy has seen no growth when normally it would be almost two per cent larger. If an economy stops growing, it may be because bad policies prevent new companies from setting up shop and creating and employing new technologies. Alternatively, an economy may falter because there is too little demand for those new industries and technologies. Whether the Bank's actions are wise will depend very much on which describes our current situation.

The idea that firms and people may

be lying idle because nobody wants their produce is a strange idea at first. If people are willing to work that must mean they want to consume. If they didn't, people would be happy to stay at home and relax. But there is one good person to work to buy that won't put others to work. You buy a car to get from A to B and you employ a mechanic. You buy a sheep because you want mutton or wool and you employ a shepherd. You "buy" money to swap it for something else by working or saving, but you don't employ anyone because money can be created for free.

In nervous times, we all would like to improve our balance sheets, we all want to build up buffers of savings, and that often involves wanting to hold more money in our current ac-

counts. When one person does this it causes no problems, but when we all grow nervous we all end up wanting to build up a safety buffer. Now with only so much money in circulation this can only happen if we each spend less than we earn. But this is impossible because everyone's spending is someone else's earnings. Unless extra money is put into circulation we get slowly poorer until people decide they have the right amount of money relative to their earning and spending. We have a recession. We have our current stagnation. QE is designed to put more money into circulation and to create more safe places to invest that money. That should lead to healthier balance sheets and more demand to employ people and will bring the economy back to life.

In an economy held back by bad policy, printing money does exactly what you would expect it to and makes everything more expensive. At a time of stagnant wages and austerity budgeting this would be a terrible result. Some people have pointed to high inflation as proof that the bank has already printed too much money. In one story growth falters because people start demanding relatively more money than goods and services. In that world, printing money - whether through changing interest rates, QE or targeting total cash spending - will make us richer. In the other it makes us poorer.

Looking at the UK and global economy, three things imply the Bank's actions will help more than hinder. One major source of inflation has been successive increases in VAT. In the last two years it has increased from 15 per cent to 20 per cent, adding at least a percentage point to inflation. A lot of inflation is also still working through import prices since sterling devalued. Lastly, crisis in Europe and continued depression in the US means the UK's economy can expect little external support. The Bank of England has little influence over any of this and has ignored them to focus on what it can influence in the domestic economy.

In the last three years a lot has changed. Whether more QE is a good idea or not depends on whether the economy has been damaged to the point where we can only employ a million fewer people than we used to. If the financial crisis or government policy has wrought such damage upon us, then QE will merely produce ever higher prices. If there is still some slack in the economy then we will see more people employed and better living conditions for everyone. Simplistic comparisons with Zimbabwe may be attention grabbing, but in reality QE may be the best hope we have to get the UK back on track.

## Wanted: Tall, dark, handsome, google-able

Azeem Sulemanji urges you to check out his online dating profile

eHarmony, the online dating site, now claims to be responsible for 5% of all new marriages in the USA. Their supposed reasons for this success is the belief that true love comes from a lasting relationship, and their patented matching algorithms. Further claims from dating sites are that marriages between partners who met online - as a result of dating sites' algorithmic personality matching - are happier and more enduring than those which arise from more traditional circumstances (crushing loneliness and abundant alcohol).

This phenomenon begs two questions; are our attitudes towards love changing? Or is this just an inevitable delegation of another aspect of our lives to the efficiency and proficiency of the Internet?

First some historical context: the mid-late 1990s saw the technological

capabilities of the internet evolve from static HTML pages, to the inclusion of more sophisticated and powerful dynamic databases, enabling early dating sites such as match.com to offer their services initially through an online classifieds framework which was effectively a people-ebay for loners. Over time, many sites diversified the services they offered by including partner matching facilities based on generic personality questions. These became increasingly complex as the internet progressed technologically. As we shifted greater aspects of our life online - social, entertainment, gastronomic - greater numbers of people decided to broadcast also their need for love. However, until recently, online dating sites suffered from - and you'll love this LSE - the problem of adverse selection, where the very fact that something is available suggests its underlying undesirability. Why

else would someone post their details online, other than because they have consistently failed in the real world to find a partner, due most-likely to a borderline personality disorder.

Since then, because the distinctions between our online and offline lives are swiftly disappearing, and also as online dating has embedded itself in popular culture, public perceptions of online matchmaking services have significantly changed. Further, the web experienced a proliferation of dating sites which were tailored to specific races, religions, and sexual orientations, making it marginally easier for those with more specific partner-requirements to find love. This kind of efficiency has enticed more and more people to sign up, but does it also reflect a shift in attitude?

Using and trusting matching services like eHarmony - which uses information about an individual's be-

liefs, values and characteristics to algorithmically find the most compatible match - is an almost implicit concession that falling in love has elements of rationality. Because eHarmony's matching of prospective partners is based on whether they are supposedly compatible not solely in terms of superficial hobbies and interests but moreover in the most fundamental aspects of their personalities, users of such sites are recognising that perhaps love can be considered an emotional expression of a rational conclusion based on almost objective similarities in outlook and personality. eHarmony may be showing us that enduring love is likely based on practical compatibility rather than some intangible burning desire. Maybe those Romantic poets over the centuries were wrong and that love isn't "a spirit of all compact of fire", but rather a recognition that "we're both of a passive sanguine

temperament" - thanks eHarmony.

But are these 'pal-gorithms' just encouraging unrealistic expectations? It's difficult to tell, but I think we can say that relationships between people are far too complex and idiosyncratic for a present-day computer programme to entirely predict. Love probably can't just be simplified, condensed and represented on a linear compatibility scale, but I think that the "homo economicus" section of our minds still can appreciate the utility in basing those kinds of relationships on congruities of values and fundamental beliefs. What is clear, is that online dating sites in all their newfound complexity are swiftly becoming a multi-billion dollar industry and - unless someone blows up the internet - are here to stay.



# Cocaine and Pablo Escobar

Tom Heydon tracks Colombia's progress in recent years

**W**hat comes to mind when you think of Colombia? Until recently that answer would have been "Cocaine and Pablo Escobar." Nowadays, well, it's probably more or less the same. But Colombia is changing, and with it the image it transmits to the international community. The Colombian tourism ministry's playful slogan - "The only risk is wanting to stay" - exaggeratedly alludes to the significant security progress that Colombia has made in recent years, which has allowed it to reap the benefits of booming tourism and increased foreign investment. Yet as Colombia seeks to move away from its violent and still-unresolved armed conflict, it is faced with the question of human rights and impunity that continues to undermine this progress.

Under former President Alvaro Uribe, whose legally questionable second term ended in 2010, Colombia's armed forces were able to significantly beat back the nation's main left-wing guerrilla group, the FARC. Uribe, a controversial authoritarian figure, effectively flouted human rights in favour of the more pressing concern - security. Besides diminishing the FARC areas of control, he also oversaw the large-scale demobilization of some 30,000 members of the notorious right-wing paramilitary umbrella group, the AUC. Despite the widespread wiretapping of political opponents and the infamous "false positives" (dressing murdered civil-

ians as FARC members) scandal, Uribe's continued high-approval rates in Colombia suggest that the population largely support this prioritisation of security over human rights. Certainly one cannot underestimate the emotional power of being able to travel safely and freely between major cities, a freedom largely absent in previous years.

Yet these gains must be kept in perspective. Colombia remains locked in an internal armed conflict that has raged for almost 50 years, and the AUC demobilization process has been a controversial and flawed policy. Although the Uribe administration extradited many notorious leaders to the US and demobilized numerous foot soldiers, the remaining power vacuum was gratefully filled by former mid-level paramilitaries profiting from their leaders' misfortune and continuing their drug trafficking operations. This flawed aspect serves only to arm critics with more ammunition. They have already criticised the process for not providing justice to the countless victims of paramilitary atrocities. Under amnesty, many perpetrators receive lenient, if any, punishment. Indeed, the maximum sentence is a paltry eight years. The near-paralysis of the judicial system does not provide much optimism. A delegation of international lawyers recently noted that the legal system is under-staffed and under attack. Some lawyers preside over an "insurmountably high" number of cases (in the thousands) re-

lated to the AUC, leading to a sense in the nation that the process was "fatally flawed" and "designed to benefit the perpetrators." The delegation added that the assassination threats against activists and lawyers "do not seem to receive the attention that such threats deserve."

As Colombia attempts to transform its international image and heal the wounds of its armed conflict, it must address these concerns of impunity and lack of protection. Even in cynical self-interest, improved human rights would encourage more tourism and allay fears of foreign investors. The imminent Free Trade Agreement with the US has been held up for years over Colombia's human rights record (although Republican control in congress appears now to be forcing Obama's hand), and even companies not particularly concerned with human rights still care about their workers - as the Chinese oil company who had four workers kidnapped by Colombian rebels this year will confirm.

I have painted a bleak picture but it need not be entirely so. Incumbent President Juan Manuel Santos initially appeared to be "Uribe Part II," with the ex-defence secretary during the "false positives" campaigning as Uribe's natural successor. Yet upon assuming power, he surprised many by deviating from his predecessor's antagonistic line, demonstrating admirable pragmatism in cooling the fiery rhetoric of Colombia's neighbours, Ecuador and Venezuela, that had led many

commentators to predict war. Santos also differed from Uribe domestically. Refusing to denigrate human rights activists as "terrorists," he's also been commended for allowing the judicial system to conduct important cases without political interference. Most importantly, though, he pushed landmark legislation through congress that Ban Ki-Moon heralded as "historic." The Victims and Land Restitution Law - passed in June - will provide long-awaited reparations to the victims of Colombia's internal armed conflict, as well as aiming to address Colombia's age-old problem - land. Colombia currently leads the world in internally displaced people (3.6-5.2 million depending on sources) as a result of people being forcibly removed from their homes and land. Although the new law has the cut-off of only victims since 1985, there are two key provisions that suggest the law could live up to its "historic" billing. First, the law includes the victims of state violence (despite Uribe's public protestations), rather than just criminal groups. Secondly, and equally pleasing, is the "reverse burden of proof" that demands that landowners prove their legal ownership, as opposed to the claimants - who often owned land communally without deeds.

I need not point out that the practicalities of implementing this law are fraught with difficulties. In cases where stolen land was sold to unwitting owners, do they deserve to be displaced? Moreover, the government still

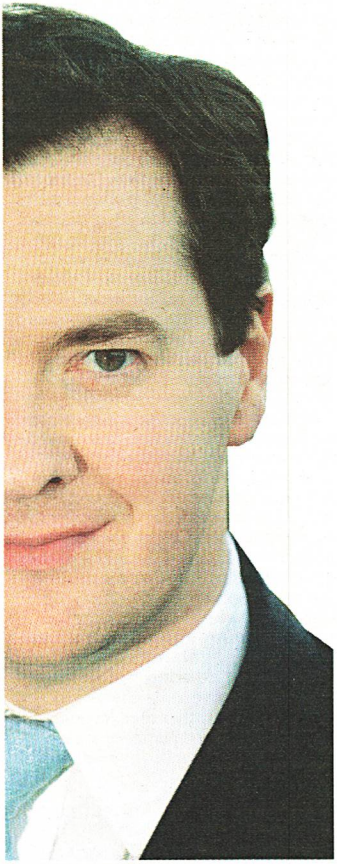
does not enjoy complete control over its territory, leading many cautiously skeptical NGOs to question how land can be both restored and subsequently protected. Indeed, in February their worries became real when thousands of acres were razed within hours of being restored. Further, violence against human rights activists, trade unionists and teachers is on the rise. Ominously, the murder of land restitution leaders increased in 2011, indicating that the recipients of ill-gotten lands do not aim to relinquish them quietly.

The challenge facing the Colombian government is immense. Nobody can expect the entrenched problems of corruption, inequality and impunity to be resolved overnight. Colombia's undeniable progress over the last decade may be tempered by the population's lack of belief that justice has been served, but the new law provides the government with the opportunity to prove that Colombia's progress is not purely cosmetic. Much will be judged by how effectively the new law is implemented. Critics question the ability - and indeed the will - of the government to fully enforce the law, but the pragmatic Santos is saying and doing the right things thus far. Colombians are a proud and resilient people, offering warmth that belies their historic experience of violence, and they deserve to be allowed to look forwards rather than backwards by being provided justice and thus closure over Colombia's violent past.



# Blue before Green

**Gurdeep Chhina** discusses whether the environment is a political priority



I was recently delighted to discover that, thanks to cultural gender bias plus the one-child family planning policy, China now has an unbalanced male-heavy population: 162 single men aged 27 to 34 for every 100 single women. It basically means that we Chinese girls enjoy more choices, though individual quality is not necessarily guaranteed by this demographic pressure.

After George Osborne's firm declaration that Britain would not strive to lead the way on the green front and that the environment could not be saved for the sake of big businesses, serious questions are being raised about the sincerity of the government's eco-policy. It also leads to wider question about the issue of environmentalism. How much of it is a genuine commitment and not just simply following a 'green' trend?

Can we ever take Politicians seriously on the promises they make about the environment? Or is proposed policy simply a reaction to populist opinion, an attempt to jump on the 'green' bandwagon in order to woo voters? The recent revelation from the Chancellor make us question this government's commitment to environmentalism as whole. It's all very well making grand gestures and branding yourself "the greenest government ever", but when the recession bites and it gets difficult to put the environment first, it seems the government may

have stumbled at the first hurdle.

The cost of environmental regulation is now under the spotlight. Perhaps in the past it may have been easier to come out with green rhetoric, but now when government budgets are heavily strained, it's not as fashionable.

When David Cameron first became leader of the Conservative party, he made it clear that he had a green agenda and this inspired much of his popularity amongst 'yuppies'. He seemed to be the first Tory leader to give environmental issues a place of importance and Cameron was famously seen cycling around parts of his constituency. The party logo was even changed to a sketch of tree.

It is not as easy as just blaming it on the government though. Surely the fact that the status of the environmental issue has been downgraded from in importance is simply a reflection of public opinion. With unemployment amongst young adults as high as 991,000, according to government statistics, the environment is not high up on the priority list of most of the electorate.

This is a very telling sign about the idea of environmentalism as whole. As a general public, how committed are we to saving the environment? According to the Guardian it costs £300 to save one tonne of carbon, if offshore wind is used. They also report that by 2020 half of all bills on climate policies

can be attributed to the cost of renewable subsidies. Perhaps there is a point here. More focus needs to be devoted to cutting emissions at a cheaper rate, but the message that is being given out is a dangerous one.

As a Politician, the environment issue is one of the most difficult. It requires fundamental restructuring of the economy and major lifestyle changes. How do you sell this to the public? Especially when there is an economic crisis.

Maybe, though, this is more of a reflection of our behaviour as a society. I came across Anthony Downs' theory on the "issue attention cycle." He explores how certain issues can capture our attention as a public, but then easily fall out of favour.

According to Downs, issues have different stages. There is the "alarmed discovery and euphoric enthusiasm" stage, whereby an issue is first noticed by the public. This probably occurred towards the end of the twentieth century, when environmental concern first became widespread. There is, however, also a stage entitled "realising the cost of significant progress" whereby the cost of protecting the environment is realized by the public. Is this where we are now?

Surely it would be unwise to take the view that environmental issues should take a backseat. In a speech at the Conservative party conference, George Osborne said; "We're not going

to save the planet by putting our country out of business. So let's at the very least resolve that we're going to cut our carbon emissions no slower but also no faster than our fellow countries in Europe." Isn't this slightly unwise? Environmental problems threaten us all and big businesses are not immune.

There are widespread fears that sea levels are rising at a faster rate than first predicted. Questions are being raised about how long the Thames barrier can keep on functioning. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change predicted that by 2100 sea levels will have risen by 59 cm, most climate change specialist now believe this underestimated.

The Thames barrier protects approximately £80 billion in property and business. The capital's business hub is in direct risk and will be majorly affected by future rises in water levels. Surely then, any government wanting to plan a secure future for business, would have to factor in environmental risk.

Isn't George Osborne missing a point here? He doesn't wish to prioritise the environment at the expense of businesses, but surely these both go hand in hand.

## Measured musings | The divided kingdom

Rule from Westminster has been resented by many Scots since the Act of Union in 1707. The independence movement, with 39 per cent support, is as strong as it has ever been and Alex Salmond, Leader of the Scottish National Party, is using this support to his advantage. The cost to the traditional parties is dear; Lib Dem support has been as low as 3 per cent of Scottish voters in recent years; Tories hold a single seat; and Labour's hegemonic voice in Scottish politics is on the wane. In the words of David Cameron, Leader of the Conservative party, "all's not well with the Union".

However, this political takeover cannot be put down entirely to Salmond's populist policies and keen eye for political advantage. The leaders of the traditional parties are as much to blame as he is to praise.

During an interview on the last day of his party's conference, Ed Miliband, leader of the Labour party, could not name the front-runner for the race for leader of the Scottish branch of his party. He referred to Ken Macintosh as "the third candidate who is putting himself forward". That is a serious political gaffe if ever I have seen one. This may be because the Labour party is complacent about its position in Scotland; it may be because Miliband is a dithering leader who is incapable of leading his party well and was voted in simply to appease the hard Left of his party. I do not know. What I do know is that Labour are beginning to lose their once strong position in Scotland. This will endanger the future of the Union, which they claim to want to keep intact. It will also endanger the future of their party; many of the most powerful members of Tony Blair's New Labour were Scottish MPs, from Gordon Brown to Douglas Alexander. They also hold over 40 Scottish seats in Westminster.

If Scotland were to secede from the Union it would be disastrous for the party. The party must find a way to promote the benefits of Union while addressing the problems Scottish people face. The countries' rivalry is healthy but Labour must continue to promote a united front.

The Labour party are not the only party that have been ruffling feathers in Scotland recently. David Cameron has ignited a feud between his party and Alex Salmond. Cameron's government has decided to increase the supplementary tax on North Sea Oil extraction from 20 per cent to 32 per cent, equal to £2bn, to fund a cut in fuel duty. North Sea Oil is a big earner for the Scottish Economy, indeed one of Salmond's key points for why Scotland should go it alone. He feels that this new tax could prevent investment in Scotland's oil industry and would prefer a more "progressive" tax regime. However, with BP launch-

ing a £4.5bn project in the Shetlands Cameron does not see oil extraction as an important project to save from the cuts.

The Conservatives are already unpopular in Scotland. Holding only one Scottish seat in Westminster and running only one of the 32 Scottish councils, the Conservatives have flourished in the face of strong opposition from Labour and the SNP. Now, the Scottish Conservatives want to break away from the party in Westminster and form a separate party.

Murdo Fraser, the favourite in the leadership race for the Scottish Conservative and Unionist party, believes the Conservative party has become "a toxic brand" in Scotland following Thatcher's guinea pig like policies, including the hated poll tax of the 1980s. Fraser still believes in a strong and united Kingdom and a centre Right ideology but he believes the perception of the Conservatives in

Scotland is hindering the ability of the Scottish party to make strides with the country's electorate.

Fraser's plans bring into question the Conservatives' plans for the protection of the Union. Without a presence north of the border it would appear more and more that Britain under the Conservatives resembles English dominion over Scotland more than joint and fair union between the two countries.

The traditional parties should address this problem if they really are committed to the Union. With Plaid Cymru gaining support in the Westminster elections as well as in the Welsh assembly, the four nations within one will begin to resemble four distinct countries and the case for continued union will be very weak.

Alex Haigh  
Features Editor



# Social

## Can you keep a secret?

Shrina Poojara talks to **Tiffany Phillippou**, the creator of Secret London, about the hidden gems of London town



Flickr user: OUCHcharley

**S**ecret London is a community that aims for Londoners to inspire Londoners by sharing the secrets of the city. Started by Tiffany Phillippou as a Facebook group in January 2010, as part of her application process for a summer internship with advertising agency Saatchi & Saatchi, the concept's popularity soon exploded. Over a weekend, a website was born: [www.secretcities.com](http://www.secretcities.com). Currently only covering London, it is a social media site, with user generated comments with a huge variety of topics covered about the city. There is currently no editorial; all content is provided by members of the community. It's not just about where best to go out, it's about people sharing their stories of the city and their secrets. There is also a popular Twitter page (@secret\_london), which has over 26,000 followers, where people tweet the team questions about everything from where they can impress a date to where to find some obscure food in London.

### What inspired you to come up with the idea?

The brief for the Saatchi application was to create a Facebook group and to try and get as many members as possible. And so with that view I had to think about what my friends would join and what their friends would join. I had only been in London a few months after

graduating from Bristol, and I felt a bit lost in my city, so the inspiration came from me wanting to find out about cool places to go in London.

It turned out that "secret" is an extremely powerful word, and many people have told me that they were very curious about this thing called "Secret London" all their friends were joining on Facebook. And so it spread.

### How do you respond to the few Secret London critics who say sites like Secret London are spoiling sites not yet uncovered by huge numbers of tourists?

In response to these criticisms, one Secret London member, Kerry Tucker, recently argued, "Today I've visited three places I've seen mentioned here; none of them needed extra security and crowd control." It is clear that the fear of everyone descending on your favourite cafe at once is extreme and completely unfounded.

But this is about more than an irrational fear of having to queue for coffee. The question is whether taste should be something shared or guarded. Isn't it elitist to keep hidden gems private? To share these places encourages independent business to thrive, which raises the level for everyone and encourages a better standard for our city. This is about building a more shared community instead of one that guards personal space. In the words of mem-

ber Robert John Haughton: "If I can get one person to step out of Starbucks and walk down the street to an independent coffee shop that I feel has a better experience, then this system works."

### How indeed does one go about finding the "hidden gems" of London, especially an international student who's unfamiliar with London?

I suggest you follow some of London's great bloggers and London experts. Follow @secret\_london on Twitter, of course. Londonist is a great blog, as is Lecool. I definitely recommend asking friends or people who have lived in London and know it well - that's all essentially Secret London is, a (rather large) group of friends telling each other where to go.

### What are some of your personal favourite lesser known places in London?

My favourite place at the moment is the East End Thrift Store in Stepney Green, just round the corner from my house on a cobbled alleyway - it's an amazing vintage store, which often is giving out free wine and I just bought an amazing sheepskin coat which looks better than the designer ones out this season - and it was only £15! My other recommendation, also round the corner from my house is Tayyabs (Whitechapel) - the best curry in London and it's bring your own so perfect for students

on a budget!

There are so many other secrets I don't even know to begin! It's incredible how good quality the content is on Secret London. I love the quirky little facts, like the one at about Dover Street "Ghost" Tube: with no public access, you can only see the station as the trains decelerate between Green Park and Knightsbridge. The last person to use it was Winston Churchill, and it still has all the original posters, walkways and hand-painted signs.

There's also Knit the City, a scheme where people are "graffiti knitting" across London, so look out for that!

### With the weather confirming we are officially in autumn, are there any upcoming events for fall (Thanksgiving, Halloween etc.) taking place in London that our readers may be interested in?

People are just beginning to talk about Halloween, so follow Secret London to find out! As for Thanksgiving, I'll be in New York and intend to be hunting down as many of its secrets during my time there as I can.

*While the Secret Cities website is currently under refurbishment, readers are encouraged to follow @secret\_london on Twitter for more information.*

## Secret London recommends:

The Polpetto gastropub in Soho for a cool, chic date

Jack The Clipper in Aldgate for a unique shaving experience

The Arts Theatre Club in Soho for a bar venue hire

The Phoenix Cinema in East Finchley as one of the UK's oldest purpose-built cinemas

## From a suburb in Sutton to Central London

**Laura Aumeer** on how central and south London are, in fact, worlds apart

**I** have to admit that, with respect to distance, I didn't come from as far away to start my university life as many at the LSE. Considering the fact that, for many, a visit home requires a 14-hour flight, my 14-mile trip seems pretty insignificant. Yet, I've learnt there are big differences between life in my hometown of Sutton (south of central in Zone 5) and my new home in East Central London.

If you think I'm exaggerating, take a trip from zone 1 to zone 5 on the tube. In the 45-minute journey from Old Street to Morden on the Northern line, you see peoples' fashion sense decline dramatically. You won't be able to help but notice the transformation from East London indie style where people spend a lot of time putting an outfit together in an attempt to look like they

haven't, to South London's tracksuits and trainers as uniform. When I go back to Sutton, I get odd looks when I wear a maxi-dress to pop to the high street and I haven't seen anyone on a night out in Sutton in a lace leotard yet. However, I don't bat an eyelid if someone wears a jumpsuit into a lecture and would be more surprised to see my friends in trainers than brogues.

And it's not just in terms of fashion; all aspects of lifestyle are changed. In Sutton, I can't ever say I've bothered going out for breakfast with friends. Even if we wanted to, where would we go: the local 'Spoons or McDonalds? In Central, however, with the fashionable 'Breakfast Club' and American-style "The Diner" catering to early-morning hunger-pangs, it's not abnormal to have breakfast or brunch out, or even fit

a meeting in over pancakes and bacon. You could spend months in Soho, just eating out and drinking in different places, from American style cupcake houses to speakeasy style bars.

As you will all know, or will soon find out, living in Central London burns money very quickly, not just because rents are higher but because there's just so much more to do. It is not like I live in the wilderness in Sutton - there are even three 'Starbucks' within 5 minutes-walk of each other on the high street - but there's just so much more in London, and always something new.

I won't deny it - there are definitely benefits to living in the 'burbs. For similar rent, I could get somewhere much larger without prison-style grills on the windows and doors, and there is more green and open space. I wouldn't go

as far as to say people are friendlier in greater London - people still wouldn't say hello to a stranger - but they'll probably give you the time of day. I was always brought up to say "thank you" to the bus driver, something I've never seen in Central. The pace of life in Sutton is slower than in Central, yet still fairly acceptable. The city-banker is a distant stereotype, not a fact of life, and not everyone in Greater London owns a 'Blackberry', or if they do, it's not glued to them as most people seem able to separate work and home life.

But, I will defend living in Central strongly. Why wouldn't you want to live with all these restaurants, cafes, galleries, museums, shops and history on your doorstep? In fact, I'm shocked my parents made the move from a cramped, run-down flat off Soho

Square to a spacious semi in Sutton. And as I get defensive, in an almost gang-like manner, of my postcode, I realise that there is indeed a community spirit in Central London, a unifying feeling that we have something in common: that we're living in such a great place.

It is definitely possible to criticise the city-style arrogance that exists within it. Not being able to place areas north of Camden or south of Brixton and considering anywhere outside the M25 as being in a strange and foreign land, is an unfortunate side effect. But when you can experience a million cultures in London, it is possible to see why living in Central, you become very London-centric, and after living here, I doubt I'll be moving back to Sutton any time soon.



## Kirsty Kenney on working for a dairy company in Beijing

Flickr User: Jelles

**B**ased in Beijing, Wondermilk is a small dairy company that strives to produce world-class dairy products by combining excellent animal welfare and the latest technology. A brilliant but baffling city, Beijing is where I spent three months working as an intern this summer. Taking me on adventures that I just couldn't have imagined and showing me the world in a different light, it really was a great experience.

I arrived late the night before I was due to start. After checking into a long stay hostel downtown and failing miserably with the chopsticks when I ordered Ji ozi (dumplings), I was ready for bed.

The following morning, with half-shut eyes and a jet-lagged head, I made my way to the underground, line 10, to Shuangjing. From there, while rushing to find the 24 bus and panicking when I realised I had gone six stops in the wrong direction, it still hadn't hit me - I was in China!

The first day is all a bit of a blur

now, a bit like Freshers' week - lots of introductions, names going in one ear and out the other, finding my way around and figuring out how to work the printer. And then there was the drama of my roommates being evicted: they'd turned out to be hookers. Did I mention my purse got stolen too? But at least you don't need I.D. to get served in Beijing.

The next day, I stuffed my money down my bra and didn't bother with a bag! I made it safe and sound and soon realised that, being one of only two native English speakers in the office, there was going to be a lot for me to do. I spent hours rewording English (Chinglish) web texts, drafting newsletters, considering new marketing strategies and having to deal with the odd angry expat "mom". "Don't you know that our milk is 100% natural, with no additives, hormones or antibiotics, so I'm afraid it's not going to taste exactly the same as last week. We can't guarantee homogeneity, but at least we're melamine free."

When I wasn't working, I spent

my time exploring the city, watching, chatting, thinking and getting lost. Unless, of course, it was a Friday, in which case you would have found me with my colleagues singing my heart out at a KTV, one of the mega-popular karaoke bars.

By month two, I was really getting somewhere with my tasks at Wondermilk. The website was looking much better, although still not great, and my first newsletter had been sent to over 500 customers. The work was hard, communication was challenging and the bureaucracy was frustrating, yet despite all this, it felt very rewarding. I'd found a job where I could, quite literally, see the impact I was having.

Everything still seemed exciting, if a little mad: the manic roads, all the people, the staring, the spitting and the smog. Don't even get me started on having to eat duck heads for dinner because you're the guest, the split-panted babies, the face whitening creams and the impossibility of trying to find tampons - which is very difficult by the way.

But once I'd ticked off the Great Wall and a photo in Tiananmen, I stopped feeling like a visitor and all the things that had overwhelmed and shocked me began to fade away. What I started to notice then were all the contrasts around me.

The Beijing Oxymoron is what I've decided to call it. A Communist political centre with a McDonald's on every corner. A thriving art scene and repressive political regime at home in the same city. The gold Rolls Royce parked outside my favorite grimy diner where a beer and dumplings will cost you a quid. Where the ancient meets the modern, rich meets poor, clean meets filthy, East meets West.

I feel that in Beijing there is an air of anything goes, in terms of culture and fashion, people take pride in expressing themselves freely, spontaneously and outrageously at times. And here's the other thing, it was so easy to forget that China remains a communist state. Everyone is mad about money, making money, making more money and showing off about it.

Beijingers are fervent capitalists!

Still, it is impossible to lose sight of the fact that Beijing is a city of nearly 20 million people, in a country home to over 1.3 billion people, and, believe me, there aren't all that many Rolls Royce driving, Gucci strutting Mr. Zhang's. (Not real Gucci anyway.) Most of my colleagues had a phone but not an iPhone, rent a room but not an apartment, own a bike but not a car. These people might be yuppies, but they're only making £200 a month. There's a lot to be said about China's economic "miracle;" I'm just not convinced there are enough winners.

Before I knew it, my internship had come to an end. I feel confident that I achieved all that I could have in such a short space of time. I learned something about communication and marketing, but I learnt an awful lot more about Chinese people, their customs and culture. It feels almost nostalgic to be writing this: it really is a unique place filled with opportunity and adventure for those willing to take it.

## Overheard at LSE

We're always listening...

### Guy talking about internships in the library:

You've heard of the Big Four right? Deloitte, KPMG, Ernst & Young and... Price Waterstones.

**Guy 1:** What is the LSESU computer room like?

**Guy 2:** It's like the Zoo bar but with computers

**Guy 1:** So how were results?

**Guy 2:** Not so great - how about you?

**Guy 1:** I'm just so happy I managed to pass - what did you get?

**Guy 2:** Four firsts

**Guy 1:** "Not so great?!"

**Guy 2:** They were only low firsts

### Fresher on Houghton Street:

See, thing is you've got to be nice to girls to get them.

# Where are we from?

## Sakina Badamasuiy considers the history of black people in Britain

Does the question, "Where are you from?" bother you? Heck, it annoys me. It's probably because it is almost impossible for me to pretend I'm from another country even if I wanted to. Don't get me wrong, I am fiercely proud of my Nigerian heritage, and the fact that I attend as multicultural an institution as the

**My West African features and unmistakably Nigerian accent prevent me from claiming to be from, say, Narnia**

LSE invigorates that. However, my West African features and unmistakably Nigerian accent prevent me from claiming to be from, say, Narnia in those crucial times I need to. To amuse myself, I simply retort, "Wherever you'd like me to be from," while my interrogator squirms to find a suitable reaction to that answer.

You see, what many people fail to realise is that these seemingly well-meaning questions about people's origins often imply that a few inaccurate assumptions have been made. In the UK in particular, it perpetuates the silly idea that the presence of Africans and people of non-Caucasian descent is a recent phenomenon in England. The very familiar, "Yes, I know you're British but where are your parents really from?" proves my point. Indeed, nothing could be further from the truth. Not only have there been Africans in Britain's major cities for centuries, they have contributed significantly to what is today known as British history and identity.

So how early did Africans get to Britain? Well, how about even before Stonehenge was built? Some historians and ancient folktales tell us of Africans invading Britain thousands of years ago and, yes, even building Stonehenge. A few millennia later and there were many African soldiers stationed in England in the

third century, fighting in legions and numbering about 10,000. The most popular stories (and my favourite ones too) about ancient African diaspora in Britain are that of Septimius Severus and Victor. Septimius was a Libyan Roman Emperor - the first one not born and raised in Italy. Arriving in Britain in the 190s AD as emperor, he stationed himself in York and is said to have commanded the reconstruction of Hadrian's Wall (protecting Britain's northern border from invasions) as well as led one of the most significant African diaspora into Europe. Victor's story is significantly less elaborate. He was a young black soldier in Roman Britain from Mauretania. We don't really know much about him except that his tombstone was found at South Shields, Tyneside, and it tells us that he came to Britain as the slave of a soldier named Numerianus. I, for one feel particularly touched by his story because he died at the age of 20, but such was typical in Roman Britain.

The migration of "Blackmoors" or "Moors" (the names given to North African conquerors of Spain) to England thus continued well into the Middle Ages up until around the 1500s. At this point, I must point out that Africa's economic and social development before 1500 was arguably ahead of Europe's. It was gold from the great empires of West Africa, Ghana,

Mali and Songhay that enabled the economic prosperity of Europe in the 13th and 14th centuries and awakened the interest of Europeans in western Africa. In the 14th century, the West African empire of Mali was larger than Western Europe and believed to be one of the richest and most powerful states in the world.

So, back to England. If you've read Shakespeare's play Othello, you would be aware of the fact that he (Othello) was a "Moor." So was the Prince in The Merchant of Venice, who was Moroccan. At the time Shakespeare wrote those plays in the late 16th century, there may have been hundreds of Africans in England - especially London. There is evidence that in 1555, five Ghanaians visited England to be trained as translators for London merchants but it was also during this Elizabethan period that the transatlantic slave trade began in 1570. Now, if you are still in doubt about how many Africans in England there were back then, the fact that Queen Elizabeth in 1596 ordered the arrest and deportation of Africans in London points to that fact that she believed the population of Africans in Britain was too high and was depriving English people of jobs and food. One would wonder why she didn't simply abolish the slave trade at that point.

The start of the transatlantic slave

trade is one that led to the devastation and depopulation of Africa, but contributed to the wealth and development of Europe. It made Britain one of the wealthiest nations in the world but the trade itself led to the forced migration of between 100-200 million people - the largest in human history. Despite the terribly inhumane treatment of these slaves, stories of bravery and resilience that ultimately led to freedom are not uncommon. Indeed, Olaudah Equiano, Ignatius Sancho, Ukawsaw Grammosaw and Mary Prince are among the most prominent figures in this period of our history.

This history is very relevant not only for people who can be easily identified (by virtue of skin colour) as descendants of Africans but also for every person living in the UK. It should be recognised that given the significant population of Africans all over the world, there's a strong argument that our ancestral ties are not as tenuous as one might think. Perhaps, on some level, this realisation will enable us to understand our shared history and allow us to focus on building stronger ties regardless of race, creed, gender or nationality.

And who knows? Maybe next time I'm asked where I'm from, I'll attempt to reproduce this abrupt history lesson. I guess my days of being from Narnia are over.

# Keepsakes from Kashmir

## Holly Brentnall finds beauty in Kashmir, a region with a history marred by violence

To be surrounded by the surreal tranquillity of the Dal Lake and the unmatched beauty of the Himachal Pradesh mountains gives you a feeling of elation inexpressible in words. However, for the people who've lived there over the last decades, this superficial paradise has had a hellish underside easily missed by the bedazzled eyes of tourists who bring hope and a continuous stream of income to the locals after the "loss" of thousands of young men.

I had flown South from volunteering in Nepal to rendezvous in Delhi with my cousin, Lily, who has also been travelling. Despite numerous warnings about security from relatives and in the media, Kashmir was the first place recommended to us at the tourist information centre. We submitted to their advice on the basis that there had been no recorded deaths of tourists and that to travel north would mean an escape from the unbearable heat of the capital. Since violent protests in 1989, tourism in Kashmir declined dramatically and we would be among the first of a returning flurry of sightseers. With strict and unsettling instructions not to talk to anyone else on the bus to avoid getting "conned," we were promptly packaged into a sleeper compartment and sent on our way.

The bus journey from Delhi to Srinagar lasts 28 hours: 28 long hours of lying horizontally in a sleeper, watching scenes of miserable grey sky broken by the dramatic contour of the Himalayan foothills slide past. Every couple of miles, we'd also pass by the barbed wire fences and khaki uniforms of an Indian military base.

As the land around us began to level out into the wide green basin that makes up central Kashmir, the bus was stopped at a checkpoint. Lily and I, besides the two other foreign passengers, were extracted from the other passengers to show our travel

documents. "You are staying on the Serafina?" asked the official when he saw our booking form for a canal boat on Dal Lake. "The man who owns that boat is a good man - my best friend," said the official, and our passports were returned to us with warm smiles. It was a different case for the German boy and American girl whose boat, the Alexandria, is owned by "an infamous drug-runner. You must be very, very careful." The former went slightly pale at this news.

Arriving in Srinagar, we took a noisy little auto-rickshaw to the landing-point on Dal Lake. The streets on either side were lined by warehouses, stalls selling fruit, like mangos and bananas, and many open-fronted workshops manufacturing cricket bats and wooden toys. The cricket bat industry is a large source of Kashmiri employment and income, reliant upon wealthy and cricket-crazy Indian tourists. Yet after revolts in 2010, followed by a crackdown and indiscriminate curfew, the industry suffered a 50-70 per cent loss in sales, a huge chip in the country's economy.

Onboard the Serafina, we were shown to a cosy cabin room adorned with elaborate rugs, where we were served golden tea before a dinner of fragrant pilau rice and vegetables. The next day, the boat-owner's uncle took us to his antique carpet shop. After being charmed and beguiled by the wonderful process of antique rug making - the time and effort spent weaving each individual strand of silk into a pattern dictated by a scroll written in "carpet language" followed by the years of wear in palaces of powerful Kashmiris before it could be considered "antique" - it is inevitable that every customer leaves with their own magic carpet.

Finally, we were driven up for a walk in the mountains. By the road, a sign welcomed us to "The valley of mystical qualities and eternal riches,"

after which we were faced by snow covered slopes swooping down to meet emerald fields, cradling villages of wooden buildings, home to nomads in the winter months. A family of holidaymakers trudged through the snow towing sledges behind them, and two men with donkeys rushed to meet us with the offer of a ride up to the summit.

Back on the lake, we slid over the glassy surface in a shikara - a small boat similar to a gondola - until we reached the canal boat. The ferryman, Farak, talked in lulling tones of his love for the peace of his home country, while scooping fresh water chestnuts from the lake and passing them to us to taste.

But amid such tranquillity, what about the stories on the news? What of the terrorism and bombings? I asked Farak. "There are no terrorists here," he said, "We only want to be free from the Indian soldiers who are everywhere." His voice at that point took on a sharp tone in complete reversal from his usual soft drawl.

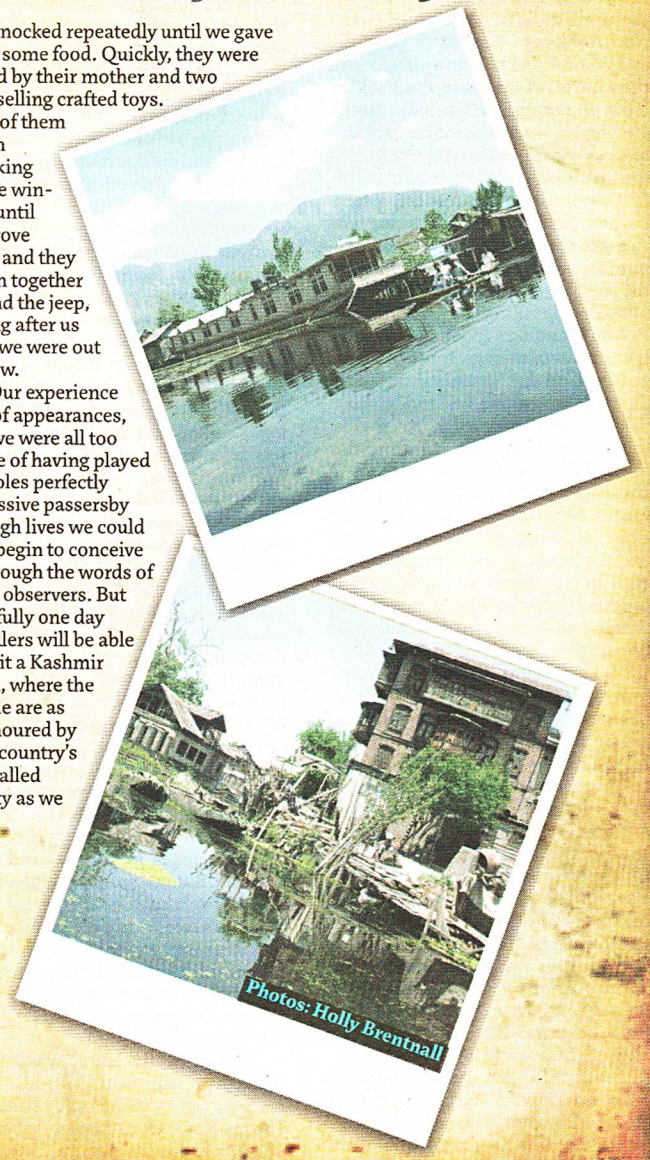
It is not easy to judge from such a brief encounter the plight of a country or the mission of its administrators. However, it is questionable what can unfold under the auspices of conflict management when reading news reports of mass murder, torture chambers of the likes of Abu Ghraib, and the 'disappearances' of 8,000 people from Jammu and Kashmir. Thousands missing from the working force means that the region needs all the tourism it can get.

For Lily and I, Kashmir was one of the most unforgettable landscapes we saw throughout our travels in Asia. Yet we left the country not with a sense of elation but instead feeling utterly drained. We travelled south, bypassing the huge army base at the edge of the city before stopping at a petrol station to refuel. Two malnourished girls pressed their faces against our window

and knocked repeatedly until we gave them some food. Quickly, they were joined by their mother and two men selling crafted toys.

Each of them began knocking on the window until we drove away and they all ran together behind the jeep, calling after us until we were out of view.

Our experience was of appearances, and we were all too aware of having played our roles perfectly as passive passersby through lives we could only begin to conceive of through the words of other observers. But hopefully one day travellers will be able to visit a Kashmir again, where the people are as enamoured by their country's unrivalled beauty as we were.



# WEEKLY GUTBUSTER!



Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
<b>Breakfast:</b>	<b>Breakfast:</b>	<b>Breakfast:</b>	<b>Breakfast:</b>	<b>Breakfast:</b>	<b>Breakfast:</b>	<b>Breakfast:</b>
Weetabix and Yoghurt	Egg and soldiers	Oatmeal, flaxseeds, blueberries and almonds	Fresh berries, yoghurt, granola	Peanut butter on wholemeal toast	Two egg omelette	Wholewheat bagel topped with cottage cheese
<b>Lunch:</b>	<b>Lunch:</b>	<b>Lunch:</b>	<b>Lunch:</b>	<b>Lunch:</b>	<b>Lunch:</b>	<b>Lunch:</b>
Chicken and roasted vegetable tortilla wrap	Cous cous with fresh vegetables and chopped herbs	Chicken, spinach and rocket salad with fresh veg	Half a jacket potato with cottage cheese and chives	Covent Garden soup with wholegrain bread	Tuna and avocado salad	2 egg omelette
<b>Dinner:</b>	<b>Dinner:</b>	<b>Dinner:</b>	<b>Dinner:</b>	<b>Dinner:</b>	<b>Dinner:</b>	<b>Dinner:</b>
Grilled tuna steak with corn on the cob and fresh salad	Chicken pesto with broccoli, green beans and	Homemade chicken fajitas	Grilled salmon with lentils and boiled potatoes	Tofu and broccoli stirfry	Turkey burger and salad	Chicken and spinach soup with fresh pesto
<b>Snacks:</b>	<b>Snacks:</b>	<b>Snacks:</b>	<b>Snacks:</b>	<b>Snacks:</b>	<b>Snacks:</b>	<b>Snacks:</b>
Handful of grapes 1 Banana	2 jaffa cakes	1 orange 1 kiwi	Handful of berries	Grilled chicken breast	Vegetable crudites and houmous	Unlimited fruit 2 pieces of dark chocolate

## How to Solve a Problem like Mark

Can the 'Sanchize' deliver a Superbowl for the New York Jets?

Maatin Patel

Rex Ryan, upon becoming head coach of the New York Jets in 2009, sought to build a franchise around a quarterback. The Jets traded up in order to pick Mark Sanchez 5th overall in the 2009 NFL Draft, instantly earning him the moniker 'Sanchize' amongst the New York press. Rex Ryan's 'Ground and Pound' offence was a plan to take pressure off of the quarterback with a focus on running the football, a decent strategy for a starting rookie to find his feet. He started brightly, becoming the first rookie to start and win their first 3 games, but was less consistent beyond, finishing his first season with 12 touchdowns and 20 interceptions. A number one overall ranked defence led the Jets to their first playoff berth since 2006, finally falling at the hands of Peyton Manning's Indianapolis Colts. It wasn't until midway through the 2010 season that Sanchez threw for his first 300-yard game, and though his passer rating improved to 75.3 for his second season, the murmurs questioning Sanchez's potential to be a franchise quarterback continued to grow louder. Nevertheless, the defence continued to impress, ranked 4th overall, and the Jets again made the playoffs with an 11-5 record. Again they went to the AFC Championship game, coming within one touchdown of reaching the Superbowl. One would imagine that the achievements in Mark Sanchez's first two seasons would invite only positive response; he has tied the highest number of road playoff victories in NFL history at 4, and this includes beating the two greatest quarterbacks of this generation, Peyton Manning and Tom Brady in consecutive rounds in 2010. He has led the Jets to the AFC Championship game in each of his 2 seasons as quarterback, a feat only matched by Pittsburgh's mighty Ben Roethlisberger. Providing Sanchez with the right weapons to create a balanced offence, whilst maintaining the defensive strength seemed to be the right recipe, missing just one essential element that would take the Jets to a Superbowl and emerge victorious. Yet heavy questioning and criticism from New York's notorious media continues to surround Sanchez's calibre and ability to deliver in a quarterback-

driven league, characterised by Aaron Rodgers and Drew Brees, the two most recent Superbowl-winning quarterbacks. Would 2011 be the year for Mark Sanchez to put these critics to bed?

The 2011 off-season was unconventional for a number of reasons, most noticeably the lockout between owners and players, but also some of the decisions taken by the Jets in their personnel changes. Plaxico Burress, having just been released from prison, is an unproven replacement for Braylon Edwards, who whilst plagued with off-field troubles had the ability to stretch the field with Santonio Holmes and create trouble on the field for corners and safeties as well. This summer's top free agent, Nnamdi Asomugha, was hotly tipped to join Darrelle Revis in the Jets' lauded secondary, but opted for the Philadelphia 'Dream Team' Eagles in a surprise decision. His 'replacement', the resigned Antonio Cromartie, has shown flashes of brilliance but huge inconsistency, and a redesigned defensive line after the loss of key players Shaun Ellis and Kris Jenkins have meant that the Jets defence has fallen far short of its own expectations early on. Running backs such as Darren McFadden and BenJarvus Green-Ellis have torn gaping holes in a rush defence that in 2010 was ranked 4th in yards allowed yet currently languishes in 26th, allowing 134.8 yards a game. Mark Sanchez, without the comfort of a watertight defence and a running game to fall back upon, has been thrown centre stage. However, an injury to Pro Bowl centre Nick Mangold, who is the heart of the offensive line and hence Sanchez's protection, coupled with new right tackle Wayne Hunter struggling to get up to speed has meant that Sanchez has been tormented by pass rushers; sacked 13 times, fumbling the ball on 6 occasions and throwing 5 interceptions. People have asked questions of Sanchez's role within the Jets - now is the time to answer such questions. As the core elements of the Jets struggle, can Mark Sanchez prove himself as a reliable, consistent leader upon whom the team can now rest?

5 weeks in, the Jets sit with a 2-3 record in a hotly contested AFC East, reeling from a 3 game losing streak. The problems facing the Jets' offence penetrate all levels, stemming from

offensive coordinator Brian Schottenheimer. The offence is extremely slow starting, with seven 3-and-outs bringing them to a grinding halt last week against the Patriots. Mark Sanchez is forced to hurry to overturn early deficits, and with no support from the running game, the passing game looks transparent and predictable. Sanchez does not struggle under the pressure of playing in New York or feel the weight of the expectations on the Jets; in fact he has shown himself to thrive under it. The Jets' 4th quarter rallies in the 2010 season saw Sanchez make clutch throws and big plays to win games from behind against Detroit, Cleveland and Houston. Mark Sanchez is more than capable of making plays, but the offence requires stability and consistency, wire to wire. Nick Mangold has returned to lead the offensive line, which has to improve in order to provide Sanchez with time in the pocket as well as get the running game started. The receiving personnel need to stretch opponents' defences further; whether Plaxico Burress is up to the task as a second receiver remains to be seen.

A Superbowl winning team does not have one specific blueprint, and Mark Sanchez has done more than his part to prove himself as a capable quarterback within an organisation with huge potential. The combination of great defence and balanced offence has delivered two Superbowls to Pittsburgh under Ben Roethlisberger, and if the Jets' defence can find their form from the last two seasons, they will emerge again as contenders. Their current struggles may even prove to be a blessing in disguise, if Mark Sanchez can emerge from their shadow and establish the New York Jets as the 'Sanchize' he so desperately seeks.

## BARCLAYS

ASPIRING FOOTBALL WRITER

### Barclays Aspiring Writers Competition

Barclays has teamed up with the Football Writers' Association to launch the Barclays Aspiring Football Writer Competition, to find the next generation of football writers in the UK.

The winner will be rewarded with a trip to a Barclays Premier League match at Manchester City and a tour of the press box from a leading member of the Football Writers' Association, plus a week's work experience with Mail Online to give them a priceless insight into the life of a football writer.

Entrants are invited to submit their own articles and match reports of 500 words or less on Barclays Premier League football, with the best entries published on the competition website - [www.barclaysfootballwriter.com](http://www.barclaysfootballwriter.com)

The competition website will also act as a valuable resource for fans, with video tips and advice on getting into the industry from some of the most celebrated football writers in the country, including the Daily Mail's Matt Lawton, The Sun's Shaun Custis and Matt Dickinson of The Times.

The competition closes on 6 February 2012 and a panel of expert judges including footballer-turned-journalist Mark Bright, FWA Chairman Steve Bates, Mail Online Sports Editor Mike Anstead and Dan Wass of Barclays will choose the best entry.

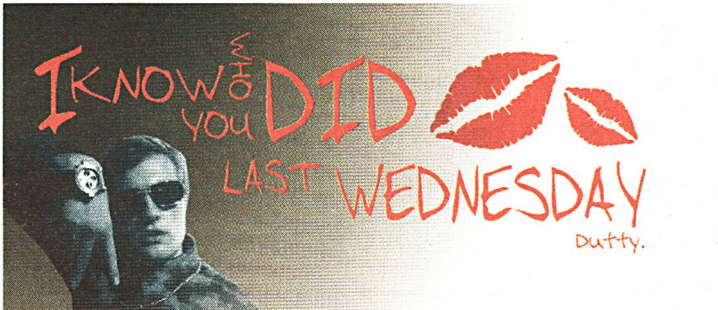
Mark Bright said, "I'm delighted to be judging the Barclays Aspiring Football Writer Competition. I've really enjoyed being involved in the media since my playing days finished and I've got a lot of experience to pass on to aspiring journalists. It's a tough profession to break into but this competition can provide a real platform for the winner."

To enter articles or for more information, please contact the Sports Editors at: [sports@thebeaveronline.co.uk](mailto:sports@thebeaveronline.co.uk)

# ALERT

Listen up guys and girls,

In the name of experimenting with things, be it your mixology skills, your "life partners" or your banking applications, your lovely AU Exec has decided to fuck with your brains a bit. So this week, we're cheating on Zoo bar with the treacherous establishment that is Sway Bar. It's bang smack on LSE's doorstep, just on Great Queen Street, so we won't tolerate any absences on Wednesday. Don't be a tit and turn up to Zoo - it would just be awkward. And for those looking for a happier ending, there's a strip club a few doors down ;-)



This Wednesday was full of the standard shanter and mess. Rugby freshers were fratised, tennis freshers were seen chugging milk and oil and 8 hockey team players were rushed off in ambulances. Netball initiations were eventful...girls were blindfolded and squirted with cream, tour whores were fined and one fresher admitted to shagging her Spanish teacher and murdering a cat.

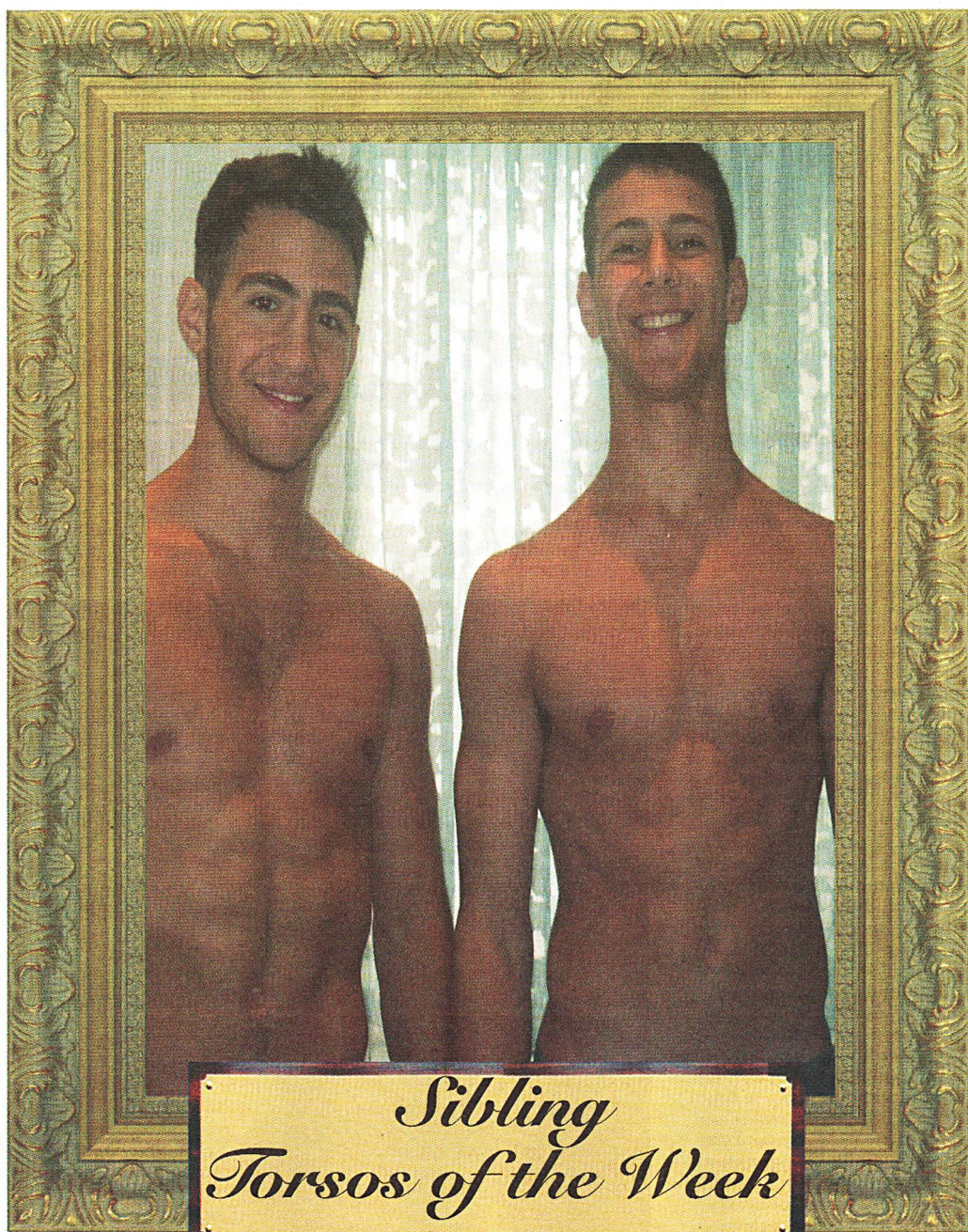
The AU welcome party began with a certain vice club captain, whose parents drew their inspiration from Rio de Janeiro, being taken home due to drunkenly disorder and one unnamed fresher decided to vom all over the tuns - still unsure if he was ever found. The bucking bottle went down a treat...everyone chafed their thighs and Butler-Biggs was seen clambering back on 5 times and shortly after mechanics were called as Dawson decided the best way to break the record was to pull it off the floor! Stimpson was spotted stealing certain items of army clothing from vulnerable 2nd years - we hear that the pleas to return these coveted items are still resounding throughout LSE. And a curly haired Italian enjoyed continuously doing army dives and throwing her drinks over everyone.

Next up was the boat race. Rugby lads took the title...miles ahead of football and rowing. Netball girls also took the title (with a small head start)...still winning miles ahead of womans rugby...guess there's just no competition anymore.

Zoo bar is all a bit of a blur for most of us. But the Prince was spotted throwing around his title and once again Johnston fell for his charm. Rugby's most Scottish skier and the

6th team netball hottie once fell onto each others lips - apparently the superglue on their lips was from a pound-shop, as their marathon pulling session didn't quite match up to last week's record breaker. The Netball Social Secretary was also up to her usual tricks and was seen mounting a more than keen Rugby player. On the football side of things, the 2nd team captain disappeared into the night with an unknown brunette. Our sources suggest that this female is a military enthusiast - no wonder she honed in on the Tank. However, not all of the FC were busy getting knee deep, others were more preoccupied with fisticuffs. Apparently the 6th team's captain's scuffle ended as any FC matter does - with tearful boys. The Women's Hockey Club captain was also sighted eating the face off one unknown boy.

It seems though, that some of you learned your lesson this week, and Zoo bar seemed considerably more tame for last week's named and shamed - though that may have something to do another week of flying sweat - cammo paint was flowing as much as the alcohol was. Despite this, your Netball 5ths Captain was spotted with three different men as the evening progress, thought it seems the gameplan for the evening was simply to be a cock-tease. There's no word yet as to how your torso of the week feels about these antics. Lastly, it seems LSE's very own 'Peppy' Longstockings was on form and was making up for the distinct lack of her vice-captain. Things were hot and steamy as she was seen munching the face of a unknown lady to an engaged audience of Rugby lads. Until next week...



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# Sport

## Murray's Mint Form

Timothy Poole

As a die hard Tim Henman fan, I detested Andy Murray... at first. The scruffy Scot who announced that he was in full support of England not winning the 2006 World Cup never seemed suave or charismatic enough for the world-renowned position of 'British Number One'. Yet, as time has passed, Murray's sheer grit on court and occasional tears off it have proven him worthy of representing Britain on the global stage. As 2011 edges to a close, the World Number 4 is stealing all the limelight.

After a mixed season, Murray has won back-to-back tournaments in Asia: first in Thailand and then Japan, (at the time of this article he is also hoping to complete a hat-trick in Shanghai). 2011 has undeniably been a disappointing year for Team GB's leading man, but after making 3 Grand Slam semis and 1 final, Murray's season is quickly starting to look somewhat decent. His aim is to finish the year at world Number 3 and, at this rate, it can, unquestionably, be done.

Murray lifted the Thailand Open after a 48 minute victory over America's Donald Young; no huge names were overcome during the tournament, but a week later, Murray defeated one of the biggest names in the game, Rafael Nadal. Arguably, if Novak Djokovic had been fully fit and partici-

pating in Japan, it may not have been Murray's title. Nonetheless, nothing can be taken away from an impressive victory that handed Murray his third title in his last four tournaments.

His win in the final came in spectacular fashion: after losing the

first set, 6 aces and 2 breaks of serve made it 1 set each, whilst the deciding set was taken 6-0, an astonishing feat. Murray was pleased with his consistency and declared that he'd played some 'great tennis'. It appears that Murray is a big fan of the Asian tour-

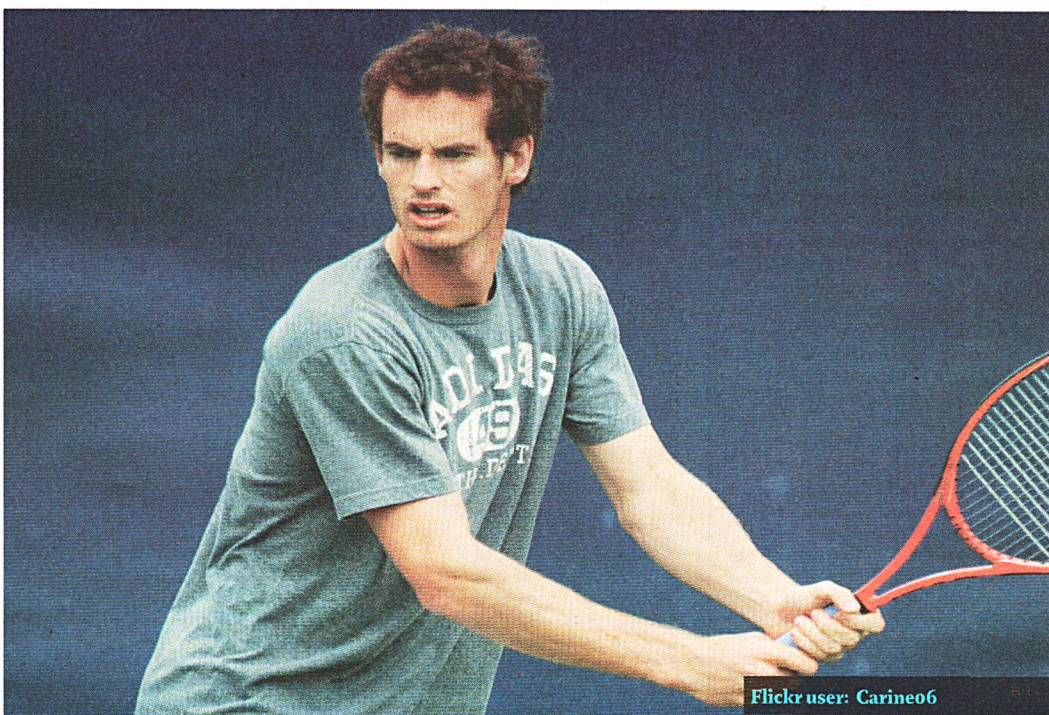
naments and BBC's Jonathan Overend makes a fine point in stating that he 'must wish for a major to be magically created in Asia.'

Analysts are now heaping praise on Murray's recent run of form. His first set performance, in particular, has

attracted the finest compliments - he allowed Nadal only 4 points in the set's entirety. Even when one considers that Murray only lost to Nadal in 4 sets in the US Open Semi, it paints a picture of a grand vein of form. Yet, the question is (and will always remain) can Murray win a Grand Slam?

Judging by Murray's career, the evidence would point towards the answer 'no'. The Scot, regardless of his immense talent, does not seem to possess what is needed to conquer the world of best-of-5-set tennis and always falters mentally at the crucial moments of semis and finals. The Australian Open earlier this year showed the world a hopeless Murray, one who looked as though he simply did not belong on a tennis court. Meanwhile, his Wimbledon semi-final against Nadal showed the world a Murray who was in control but then gave up on himself, as though refusing at point-blank the opportunity to become glorious.

However, Murray still has many promising years ahead of him and, if there's anything to be learnt from the recent success of world number 1, Djokovic, it is that, with hard work, Murray, too, can become the best and have his day. One thing for certain is, on recent form, Murray is the man to beat. In the coming months, he must take this form into the ATP World Finals (November) and into the new season, kicking off with the Australian Open.



Flickr user: Carineo6

## Michel Platini's '9+9' Homegrown Rule

### The future of European Football?

Amit Singh

In August Platini floated plans to propose a new '9+9' rule which would, if implemented, drastically change the face of the European game. Platini's plans would mean that 9 of the 18 man match day squad would be 'home grown'. The European Commission have blocked similar moves, but Platini now believes a move could be more likely with increased cooperation with the EC.

Currently a team must have 8 home grown players in its 25 man squad, of which players such as Alex Song at Arsenal count as home-grown, having spent 36 months in the UK whilst under the age of 21.

In theory the 9+9 rule is a noble idea. Platini wants to protect the local identity of teams which in the modern day is arguably being lost. Sides like Chelsea and Manchester City who have seen an influx of foreign money come in have at times neglected their home grown stars in favour of some of the continent's highest profile players. Nobody can deny that this is a problem in England. During the 2009-10 season only 40% of players in the Premier League were English, compared to 77% of players in La Liga being Spanish.

One stumbling block would be that clubs will be incredibly hesitant to agree to a rule which would make them less competitive as well as to such excessive UEFA interference in their

day to day running. There have already been grumbings this year from European Clubs Association chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge, who has implied that the ECA clubs could break off and form a European Super League if they continued to be ill treated by FIFA and UEFA.

The players do not need to be youth team products of individual clubs. They can be English players from other clubs. In this instance the richest teams would most likely buy up the best English talent for way above premium. This has already begun to happen as can be seen by the

huge sums Manchester United have paid to bring in Phil Jones and Chris Smalling, and Liverpool have paid to bring in Jordan Henderson and Andy Carroll. In the 2011 summer transfer window Premierleague clubs spent £165 million on English player which accounted for roughly 34% of the total spending. The reason for this transfer flurry is as Deloitte allude to because of a tightening of UEFA regulation.

In England it also wouldn't change the culture of bringing in youngsters from abroad. These youngsters technically count as being home grown, as previously stated, despite the fact that they are not English. A hardening of 'home grown' rules would mean that the richest European clubs would increasingly look to monopolize the best young talent from abroad at the expense of the smaller clubs. As Chelsea did to Lens with regards to their signing of Gael Kakuta, where they not only procured the players services through questionable means but also paid significantly less than Lens wanted.

It should be noted that in some leagues, notably the Ukrainian Premierleague, quotas already exist. Clubs in Ukraine are not allowed to have more than 7 foreign players on the pitch at one time. There has been significant opposition to the quota in some quarters. One side Metalurh Donetsk threatened legal action over the rules claiming that Shakhtar Donetsk and Dinamo Kiev, the two richest clubs buy all the best young

Ukrainian talent forcing other clubs to look abroad, or play Ukrainian players who are simply not of the same standard as Shakhtar's or Kiev's young players.

It is difficult to say how effective the quota has been in improving the game in Ukraine. The two big sides as stated swallow up the best young players making it difficult for other sides to compete due to their increased financial muscle. The rules have exacerbated the duopoly that exists within Ukraine as Kiev and Donetsk continue to dominate the footballing landscape, aided and abetted by the rules due to their superior financial muscle.

With regards to the '9+9' rule being implemented internationally, it is unlikely that the ECA would agree to such a ruling especially in the context that as stated they are already unhappy with UEFA and FIFA over corruption and releasing players to friendlies. It is also unlikely that the European Commission would agree to a rule that is perceived to violate its rules on freedom of labour. In its current format the rule probably won't materialize but it is possible that a derivative of the rule will be proposed.

Amit Singh is the editor of a blog called Think Football. Read more of his work over at [www.thinkfootball.co.uk](http://www.thinkfootball.co.uk)



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